“Deputized Agents:” An Analysis of State Training Curricula for Mandated Reporters of Child Abuse and Neglect

Claire Choi
Abstract

“Deputized Agents:” An Analysis of State Training Curricula for Mandated Reporters of Child Abuse and Neglect

Claire Choi

In the United States, Black children are disproportionately the subjects of reports to child protective services, investigated by child welfare agents, and removed from their families. In order to identify where disproportionalities originate or are reproduced, it is necessary to critically examine the point at which children first enter the system: the report. The majority of calls to child protective services are made by “mandated reporters,” individuals from the educational, medical, and other professions legally obligated to report suspicions of child maltreatment to child protective services. Under federal law, mandated reporters must receive proper training to fulfill their responsibilities, though there is wide discrepancy in what such training entails, and research indicates that mandated reporters frequently overreport and may be influenced by racial and socio-economic biases. Thus, this thesis examines the role that state mandated reporter training curricula, by shaping the critical decisions to involve families in the child welfare system, may play in producing racially disproportionate patterns of reporting. I analyze the content of twenty different state-produced and state-sponsored mandated reporter training curricula alongside levels of disproportionality of Black children’s involvement in the studied states’ child welfare systems. I additionally examine the data collected across all studied states to identify where gaps collectively lie in material included in mandated reporter training curricula.
# Table of Contents

Table of Contents  
Chapter 1: Introduction  
Chapter 2: Framework and Literature Review  
  2.1: The Family Policing System  
  2.2: Disproportionate Harm to Black Communities  
  2.3: It Begins with a Call: Mandated Reporting  
  2.4: Situating the Issue within the Field of Human Rights  
Chapter 3: Methodology  
  3.1: Training Curricula as the Subject of Analysis  
  3.2: Identifying Themes  
  3.3: Collecting Data  
  3.4: Analysis  
Chapter 4: Findings and Discussion  
  4.1: The Family Support Index and Racial Disproportionality  
  4.2: Frequency of Themes  
  4.3: Limitations  
Chapter 5: Conclusions  
Bibliography  
Appendices  
  Appendix A: Further Information About Studied Mandated Reporter Training Curricula  
  Appendix B: Purposes and/or Learning Objectives of Training Curricula
Chapter 1: Introduction

Every year, hundreds of thousands of American children are separated from their families and placed into foster care.\(^1\) Over three million are the subjects of child welfare investigations and 8 million are the subject of reports to child protective services hotlines.\(^2\) The pervasive presence of the child welfare system in American families’ lives inflicts numerous forms of harm upon children and parents: unannounced investigations into homes violate families’ privacy, separation from loved ones induces lasting psychological and emotional damage, and placement in foster care has been found to increase children’s likelihood of abuse, behavioral and health problems, and adverse long-term life outcomes.\(^3\)

This system, however, does not impact all families equally. Broad statutory definitions of neglect that criminalize symptoms of poverty punish, rather than support, low-income families in need, and enable racial bias to heavily influence reporters and investigators’ decisions. As a result, Black children are disproportionately the subjects of reports to child protective services, are at twice the risk of having child welfare agents enter their homes and investigate their families, and are removed from their parents at rates that exceed those of children of all other races, second only to Indigenous children.\(^4\) The racially disproportionate involvement of Black families in the child welfare system constitutes a violation of Black families’ human rights, including, among others, the human rights to freedom from unlawful interference in one’s

---


\(^4\) Naveed, “‘If I Wasn’t Poor, I Wouldn’t Be Unfit’: The Family Separation Crisis in the US Child Welfare System,” 39, 58, 71.
privacy, family, and home; the right to family integrity; and the right to freedom from discrimination.

In order to identify ways to mitigate and eliminate these disproportionalities, it is necessary to critically examine the first point of entry into the child welfare system: the report. The majority of calls to child protective services are made by “mandated reporters,” individuals from certain professions who are obligated under law to report any suspicions of child abuse or neglect to child protective services. Under the Child Abuse Prevention and Treatment Act of 1974 (CAPTA), every U.S. state receiving federal funding must implement mandated reporter laws. Mandated reporters include expansive categories of individuals, including teachers, medical professionals, social workers, substance use counselors, firefighters, and summer camp directors, extending the reach of the child welfare system far beyond the eyes of child protective services agents. Mandated reporting laws thus produce from ordinary citizens what scholar Dorothy Roberts calls “deputized agents” of the child welfare system.

Currently, mandated reporters have a high tendency to overreport: of the nearly four million reports of suspected child abuse or neglect that were made to child protective services in 2021, 48.5 percent, or nearly half, were screened out. Research also suggests that mandated reporters may frequently be swayed by racial and socio-economic biases: studies have found that hospitals report Black, Latino, and low-income children for suspected abuse at higher rates than

---

white and higher-income children,⁹ and teachers frequently tend to interpret signs of socio-economic hardship as neglect among Black students.¹⁰

Under federal law, mandated reporters must receive training on how to fulfill their responsibilities, though there is wide discrepancy in what such training entails.¹¹ Amid recent criticism of the overrepresentation of Black families in New York’s child welfare system—including an investigation by the U.S. Commission on Civil Rights about the ways New York’s system harms Black families—New York State announced in February 2023 that it had produced a new training curriculum for mandated reporters of child abuse and neglect intended to eliminate unnecessary reports of families of color.¹² Acting Commissioner Suzanne Miles-Gustave has characterized the changes to the training curriculum as a means of reducing racially disproportionate reporting, stating in a press release, “This updated training is not only a step in the right direction, it is downright necessary to put an end to the practice of punishing race and poverty.”¹³

The question consequently arises of what role training curricula, in shaping mandated reporters’ critical decisions to involve families in the child welfare system, may play in producing racially disproportionate patterns of reporting. Conversely, the question also arises of

---


¹⁴ New York State Office of Children and Family Services.
how reporter training curricula, as in the case of New York, may offer a means with which to reduce the overreporting of Black families and prevent ongoing rights violations resulting from racially disproportionate involvement.

Bearing this in mind, this thesis analyzes the content of 20 different state-produced and state-sponsored mandated reporter training curricula. Having identified from existing literature thirteen themes that foster greater awareness of racial discrimination, promote understanding of the harms of child welfare involvement, and encourage support to families, I examine the inclusion of such themes in the studied states’ curricula and compare the occurrences of such themes with the levels of disproportionality of Black children’s involvement in the studied states’ child welfare systems. I additionally assess the data collected across all studied states to identify where gaps collectively lie in content included in mandated reporter training curricula.

Thus, this thesis seeks to answer the following research question: Do state-sponsored mandated reporter training curricula contribute to racially disproportionate reporting of Black families? I also ask the following sub-questions:

(1) Which states’ training curricula include the most and least content aimed at reducing racial disproportionate child welfare involvement?

(2) What is the relationship between the presence of such content in a state’s training curriculum and the disproportionality of involvement of Black children in its child welfare system?

(3) Across all studied states, which themes are most and least present?

This paper is the first paper to analyze the content of state mandated reporter training curricula with regards to the racially disproportionate involvement of Black families in the child welfare system. Following New York’s transformation of its training curriculum and calls among
family advocates to reform mandated reporter training curricula to include more content that is supportive of families and reduces racial bias, this paper offers timely and valuable findings about the need for and potential efficacy of such reforms.

---

Chapter 2: Framework and Literature Review

2.1: The Family Policing System

A growing body of children’s rights practitioners have raised calls for the apparatus long identified as the “child welfare system” or “Child Protective Services” to be more accurately termed the “family regulation system,”16 “family destruction system,”17 or “family policing system.”18 A framework of family regulation acknowledges that the child welfare system surveils and controls families’ behavior in a deeply pervasive way.19 The denomination “family destruction system” recognizes the ways that the system causes lasting harm to families by separating children from their parents.20

“Family policing” has become favored by leading scholar Dorothy Roberts, as the term recognizes not only the shared philosophical model that the policing system and child welfare system use, but also the deeply interwoven operations of both systems in practice.21 Like the law enforcement system, the primary purpose of the child welfare system is to charge parents with misconduct, which is then used to justify investigations, control, and punishment against them.

Given the low burden of proof, some have likened the child welfare system to “stop-and-frisk” in

20 Polikoff and Spinak, 432.
21 Rise, “‘Abolition Is the Only Answer’: A Conversation with Dorothy Roberts.”
both theoretical grounding and its disproportionate application against communities of color.\textsuperscript{22}

Roberts writes:

To me, the most accurate term is “family policing system.” Family regulation doesn’t quite get at how brutal and destructive these practices and policies are…Family destruction does not capture the whole range of ways these policies and practices work, because they don’t succeed in destroying every family they touch. They harm many families that stay together. Policing captures what this system does. It polices families with the threat of taking children away. Even when its agents don’t remove children, they can take children and that threat is how they impose their power and terror. It is a form of punishment, harm and oppression.\textsuperscript{23}

The child welfare system is also operationally integrated into the law enforcement system, despite child protection proceedings being a civil, not criminal, affair. Law enforcement and child welfare agents frequently act in tandem, entering homes together during child welfare visits and escalating the perceived threat to children and families.\textsuperscript{24} Fifteen states and the District of Columbia mandate under law that calls be mutually reported between both systems—despite the majority of reports being unsubstantiated, thus needlessly exposing families to the criminal legal system.\textsuperscript{25} Eighteen legally obligate both systems to disclose records to each other and investigate cases in partnership.\textsuperscript{26}

Furthermore, law enforcement officers are responsible for the majority of reports to child welfare agencies nationwide, making up more than a fifth of reports.\textsuperscript{27} They are often the individuals who remove children from the home, which they may do without a court order in


\textsuperscript{23}Rise, “‘Abolition Is the Only Answer’: A Conversation with Dorothy Roberts.”


certain cases under the majority of state laws.\textsuperscript{28} Research finds, however, that despite law enforcement officers very often reporting and removing children from their families, states fall short in providing law enforcement officers with training about the trauma that removals inflict, and ways to avoid removals to begin with.\textsuperscript{29} In Minnesota, for example, child removals were carried out via police emergency holds more often than any other form of removal, making up 65 percent of child removals over the five-year period from 2014-2019.\textsuperscript{30} However, police officers in Minnesota are not mandated to engage in any continued education about child protection, leaving individuals ill-equipped to work with families carrying out highly traumatic separations of families.\textsuperscript{31}

Above all, both systems disproportionately surveil and inflict harm upon Black communities. Increased police presence coincides with greater involvement of Child Protective Services (CPS) in Black neighborhoods,\textsuperscript{32} threatening families who are already the frequent subjects of brutality with the prospect of losing their children.

This paper retains the use of the term “child welfare” to describe the family policing system both because it is more widespread and is the term used in the state-sponsored training curricula that are the primary object of study in this investigation. Nevertheless, throughout the paper, I use the framework of family policing as the framework through which to understand the structure and impact of the child welfare system.\textsuperscript{33}

\textsuperscript{29} Sankaran, Church, and Mitchell, 1170.
\textsuperscript{31} Randall, 37.
\textsuperscript{33} I will also use the term “child protective services” or “CPS,” predominantly when referencing the individuals, structures, and operations of the child welfare system responsible for hotline response, investigation, and removal. The same considerations apply, as I recognize that “child protective services” functions are also more accurately described as family policing.
2.2: Disproportionate Harm to Black Communities

*Black Families are Overrepresented at Every Stage of the Child Welfare System*

Like the policing system, the child welfare system disproportionately impacts Black families at every phase of contact. Such disproportionality first emerges in the reporting process. Nationwide, 24 percent, or nearly one in four, children who are the subjects of calls to child protective services are Black; however, only 13.7 percent of the American child population is Black. Referrals involving Black children are screened in by child welfare agents at double the rate of those involving white children, and more often than those involving children of any other racial demographic. More than one in every two Black children—52 percent—will be involved in a CPS investigation by age 18. This is far higher than the average likelihood for children of all races.

Once they are screened in and investigated, child welfare investigators find Black children be victims of maltreatment at a higher rate than nearly any other race, second only to Indigenous children. They are also less likely to receive post-response services than children of any other race. Among the most traumatic impacts of child welfare involvement, however, is the separation of Black children from their parents and loved ones. Twenty percent of children

---

34 While my thesis focuses on harms to Black families, it is nevertheless essential to recognize that both Black and Indigenous families are disproportionately impacted by the child welfare system, historically and in the present day. However, due to the limitations to thoroughly examining the nuances to the experiences of both communities, more expansive literature about the involvement of Black communities in child welfare, and significantly smaller portion of the American population that is Indigenous—1.3 percent American Indian and Alaskan Native alone and 0.3 percent Native Hawaiian or Alaska Native alone—this thesis focuses predominantly on Black communities, but does not intend to discount the harmful impact that the child welfare system also has on Indigenous families.


37 Children’s Bureau, 93–94.


40 Children’s Bureau, 105.
entering foster care in Fiscal Year 2021 (FY 2021), and 22 percent of those in foster care at the end of that same year, were Black. In comparison, white children are underrepresented in foster care, making up only 46 percent of those entering care and 43 percent of those in foster care at the end of FY 2021, despite comprising 49.6 percent of the child population. Black children are also much more often placed in congregate care—group institutions known to be isolating and unsafe, which house children in “prison-like” conditions—than with foster families. Black children are more likely to be placed in congregate care than children of every other race by the time they are sixteen years old, and are twice as likely to be placed in congregate care than their white counterparts over the course of their childhood. They are also more likely to experience multiple placements during their time in care, which can be highly destabilizing for children.

Lastly, Black children also experience worse outcomes upon exiting care, indelibly transforming the trajectory of Black families’ lives. Research has found that the probability of a Black child being reunified with their parents is one fourth that of a white child. Black and

42 Children’s Bureau, 2.
46 Covington, Sernaker, and Wildeman, 5–7.
Indigenous children are also more likely than any other racial group to have their parental rights irreversibly terminated; this is true for Black children 1.7 times as often as white children.49

Ample research finds that the inherent act of separating a child from parents inflicts deep psychological trauma on children, resulting in distress, grief, or depressive symptoms.50 Such psychological impacts also result in lasting physical harm to the child: increased levels of the stress hormone cortisol produced when a child is separated from their parents have been found to cause elevated risk of serious health conditions such as diabetes, cardiovascular diseases, and cancer.51

The enduring harms to Black children extend beyond the trauma of separation alone. Studies find that children who have been involved with the child welfare system consistently experience adverse lifelong outcomes as a result, including lower educational attainment and increased likelihood of criminal legal involvement, homelessness, and economic insecurity. For example, a longitudinal study of former foster youth found that one out of five studied young adults with a history of involvement in the child welfare system were unable to graduate high school, nor obtain a General Equivalency Degree (GED).52 This proportion is three times the fraction of individuals in the general population lacking high school diplomas or GEDs.53

51 Goudarzi, “Separating Families May Cause Lifelong Health Damage”; Eck, “Psychological Damage Inflicted By Parent-Child Separation Is Deep, Long-Lasting Here’s What Happens in the Brain and the Body When a Child Is Forcibly Separated from His or Her Parents.”
53 Courtney et al., 21.
Criminal legal involvement is also linked to involvement in the child welfare system. The same study found that more than 80 percent of male and 59 percent of female former foster youth had been involved in the criminal legal system, either through an arrest, conviction, or period of incarceration. These proportions equaled nearly four times the percentage of young women and two times the percentage of young men in the general population who have been involved with the criminal legal system. Furthermore, approximately one out of every five individuals incarcerated in state prisons and one out of every six individuals incarcerated in state or federal prisons have previously spent time living in foster care. Individuals involved in the child welfare system also confront high rates of financial insecurity and housing instability after exiting care. By their twenty-first birthday, 42 percent of youth aging out of the child welfare system have been homeless. By age 26, 46.8 percent are unemployed, and those who are employed earn a median average income over $18,000 less than their same-aged counterparts. More than one in every four is food insecure. Because of the outsized number of child welfare-involved youth that are Black, these consequences disproportionately harm Black children and families.

*Criminalizing Poverty*

Most families of color are drawn into the child welfare system, not from abusive homes, but merely ones that are struggling to make ends meet. The vast majority—76 percent—of all

---

54 Courtney et al., 92.
55 Courtney et al., 93.
59 Courtney et al., 36.
60 Courtney et al., 41–42.
substantiated maltreatment cases are of neglect, rather than abuse. Under the Child Abuse Prevention and Treatment Act, the minimum federal definition of “child abuse and neglect” remains ambiguous and broad, allowing states to define the terms inconsistently, and most often, in similarly nebulous terms. Most state statutory definitions of neglect include caregivers’ failure to supply children with adequate food, housing, clothing, medical care, education, and supervision in a way that places the child’s well-being at risk. Such conditions are common symptoms of poverty, but are nevertheless frequently cited as a cause to separate a child from their parents, rather than to provide the family resources that would ameliorate difficult living conditions.

Moreover, because Black families much more often live in poverty than white families, criminalizing consequences of financial hardship, such as a lack of adequate food or housing, disproportionately implicates Black families in Child Protective Services investigations. The official poverty rate among Black communities is higher than that of white, Hispanic, and Asian American and Pacific Islanders, and currently stands at 19.4 percent; this far eclipses the 8.1 percent official poverty rate of white communities. The median household income of Black families is also less than 62 percent of the income of white households. Black individuals are also more likely than white, Asian, and Hispanic or Latino individuals to hold multiple jobs, especially Black women, potentially increasing the likelihood that a child may be left

---

65 “The Latest Poverty, Income, and Food Insecurity Data Reveal Continuing Racial Disparities.”
unsupervised if a parent cannot afford child care. They are more likely to lack health insurance coverage than white families, are more than 2.8 times more likely to be food insecure than white families, and own homes at 60 percent of the rate that white families do. All of these factors increase the risk that Black families would be unable to meet the provisions included in the definition of child neglect. Ambiguous definitions of what constitutes “failure to provide,” as well as what constitutes “reasonable cause to suspect” such cases leaves ample room for racial bias to influence reporters’ and child welfare agents’ interpretations.

One would be remiss to overlook the fact that the expansion of the child welfare system over the past several decades has coincided with an erosion of the welfare state. Public rhetoric stoked in the 1980s about “welfare queens” reliant on public aid for drugs fomented false notions that poor Black mothers gave birth to children solely for welfare benefits and were incapable of caring for their children. The Personal Responsibility and Work Opportunity Reconciliation Act of 1996 (PRWORA) and the replacement of the Aid to Families with Dependent Children (AFDC) program with Temporary Assistance to Needy Families (TANF) rolled back welfare provisions by allowing states to lower aid amounts, imposing five-year lifetime limits on welfare receipt, requiring parents to find employment, and sanctioning families unable to do so. Forcing low-income parents to work—while gutting previous child care entitlement programs—at jobs that frequently require irregular hours and a long commute from home made the task of caring

---

68 “The Latest Poverty, Income, and Food Insecurity Data Reveal Continuing Racial Disparities.”
71 Roberts, 64–65, 194.
72 Roberts, 180–81.
for children exponentially more difficult. Unsurprisingly, research concludes that welfare cuts under PRWORA exacerbated child welfare system involvement. Out-of-home placements rose by 9 percent as a result of immediate employment mandates, and the total number of substantiated neglect and abuse cases rose by as much as 21 percent following strict sanctions that cut benefits to all family members. “For the first time in American history,” youth law attorney and current California Superior Court Judge Martha Matthews wrote shortly after the passage of PRWORA, “states have a federal mandate to protect children from abuse and neglect but no corresponding mandate to provide basic economic support to poor families.”

2.3: It Begins with a Call: Mandated Reporting

A Brief History of Mandated Reporting

Though CAPTA conditioned the provision of federal funding on states’ enactment of mandated reporting laws, such laws had emerged in the United States nearly a decade before. The impetus for mandated reporting laws began with a landmark 1962 paper authored by physician C. Henry Kempe and other medical professionals entitled “The Battered Child Syndrome.” The paper, which diagnosed child maltreatment as a clinical condition, had unmatched influence on medical practitioners, lawmakers, and the general public, and has been credited as a primary driver of the wave of mandated reporting legislation that followed swiftly after. Several components of the paper are salient: first, “The Battered Child Syndrome”

---

74 Roberts, 187.
galvanized, to an extraordinary degree, public fears about child abuse; it introduced neglect, from a medical perspective, as an indicator of abuse,\textsuperscript{78} and, perhaps most critically, it critiqued the hesitance of doctors to report child maltreatment.\textsuperscript{79}

One year later, in 1963, the Children’s Bureau produced blueprint legislation which states imitated in crafting their own mandated reporting statutes.\textsuperscript{80} By 1966, mandated reporting laws had been implemented in 49 out of 50 U.S. states; all 50 had soon after.\textsuperscript{81} In 1974, the Child Abuse Prevention and Treatment Act codified baseline federal reporting standards for states receiving federal funding, and notably, legally required neglect to be considered a reportable offense, in addition to abuse.\textsuperscript{82} Since mandated reporting laws first emerged, the categories of individuals required to report have exploded, and have now grown to include a range of professionals such as teachers, dentists, therapists, coroners, substance abuse counselors, summer camp directors, and others.\textsuperscript{83} Reports grew fourteen-fold over the two decades from the 1960s through 1980s.\textsuperscript{84}

\textit{Mandated Reporting Today}

Today, calls from mandated reporters inundate child protective services hotlines with unfounded reports. Notably, no evidence existed demonstrating the efficacy of mandated reporting when it was first written into state and federal law,\textsuperscript{85} and today, there remains no such

\begin{footnotesize}
\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{78} Dubowitz, 52.
\item \textsuperscript{79} Kempe et al., “The Battered-Child Syndrome.”
\item \textsuperscript{81} Kalichman, 14.
\item \textsuperscript{82} White et al., “Fighting Institutional Racism at the Front End of Child Welfare: A Call to Action to End the Unjust, Unnecessary, and Disproportionate Removal of Black Children from Their Families,” 8.
\item \textsuperscript{83} “Social Services Law,” Article 6, Title 6, and Section 413 Laws of New York § (2023), http://public.leginfo.state.ny.us/lawssrch.cgi?NVLWO:
\item \textsuperscript{84} Kalichman, “Mandatory Child Abuse Reporting Laws: Origins and Evolution.,” 17.
\end{itemize}
\end{footnotesize}
evidence. Eighteen states have implemented “universal mandated reporting” laws in which every member of the public is a mandated reporter. Research finds, however, that states with such vastly expanded populations of mandated reporters experience more inaccurate reporting, with child physical abuse cases decreasing in likelihood of substantiation. A meta-analysis of existing research about mandated reporting laws across twelve countries found that reporting was associated with adverse results in 73 percent of analyzed studies.

What distinguishes child maltreatment reporting laws from other forms of public safety mechanisms are that they conscript ordinary citizens—such as teachers, doctors, and counselors—to serve as compulsory instruments of the law enforcement apparatus. Because of how deeply interwoven such individuals are with every sphere of the personal lives of individuals, the reach of state surveillance permeates far beyond those engagements with state child welfare employees. Mandated reporting laws construct a “surveillant assemblage” that links together observers from schools, day camps, social service centers, and spaces of expected support, such as hospitals and substance use counseling offices.

Furthermore, scholar Kelley Fong finds that the perceived dual role of child protective services as a rehabilitative service-providing entity (one that may connect families in need with critical resources) and a coercive, punitive entity (one that prevents abusive parents from harming children) generates many more calls to CPS about poor and otherwise marginalized children.

---

families than wealthier families, regardless of concern about children’s safety. Through a series of interviews with mandated reporters and families, Fong found that most studied reporters call CPS not because they believe that the children are threatened by malicious parents, nor that they need to be removed from their homes, but rather that the family was in need of support—be it financial aid, parental counseling, or other—that child protective services would better be able to respond or provide than them. As Fong writes:

[C]oupling assistance with coercive authority—a hallmark of contemporary poverty governance—generates an expansive surveillance of U.S. families by attracting referrals from adjacent systems. Educational, medical, and other professionals invite investigations of families far beyond those ultimately deemed maltreating, with the hope that child protection authorities’ dual therapeutic and coercive capacities can rehabilitate families, especially marginalized families. Yet even when investigations close, this arrangement, in which service systems channel families to an entity with coercive power, fosters apprehension among families and thwarts their institutional engagement.

Thus, because of potential misplaced reliance on an institution of perceived rehabilitative as well as coercive care, mandated reporters more often refer families who lack resources to child protective services. Ultimately, due to the fear that investigation instills within families—both through the trauma of the investigative process itself and the fear that one’s children might be removed—reporting to CPS only further drives already marginalized families away from accessing necessary services. Fong finds that many parents she interviewed were resentful or wary of individuals who had reported them, thus making them more hesitant to open up to service providers and receive necessary help.

There are many reporters, however, who do report with the belief that a child should be removed from the home, which is often heavily influenced by racial bias. One investigation found that Black women were ten times more likely than white women to be the subject of

---

92 Fong, 620–21.
93 Fong, 610.
94 Fong, 628.
prenatal or neonatal substance exposure allegations, though they were no more likely to use drugs.\textsuperscript{95} A study of children's hospital records found that the probability of a non-white child being the subject of a child protective services call for accidental bone fractures was triple the probability of the same action being taken for a white child.\textsuperscript{96} Outside of the medical realm, research with social workers in Minnesota found that, when presented with images of a home portraying a white infant, Black infant, or no infant, child welfare agents perceived an image depicting a Black infant both a case of statutory neglect and justified cause to report more often than an image of a white infant or one in which no infant was present.\textsuperscript{97}

2.4: Situating the Issue within the Field of Human Rights

Mandated reporting and the disproportionate harm inflicted upon Black families by the child welfare system violate several internationally enshrined human rights. Most notably, the child welfare system infringes upon families’ freedom from interference to privacy, family, and home; the right to family integrity; and the right to freedom from racial discrimination. Three treaties suffer violations: the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR), the Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC),\textsuperscript{98} and the International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination (ICERD).

\textit{Freedom from Interference with Privacy, Family, and Home}


\textsuperscript{98}While the United States is the sole country that has not ratified, and thus, is not legally bound to, the Convention on the Rights of the Child, the treaty nevertheless offers a body of all but universally recognized children’s human rights norms.
Article 17(1) of the ICCPR and Article 16(1) of the CRC protect all individuals, and specifically children under the CRC, from “arbitrary or unlawful interference with [their] privacy, family, home or correspondence.” 99 Article 12 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR), widely recognized as customary law, also affirms such rights. 100

Child welfare investigations entail tremendous violations of families’ privacy and homes. Child protective services agents knock on families’ doors without warning, enter their bedrooms, comb through belongings, and question children without their parents present. 101 Investigators frequently strip search children, and may take them to be subjected to invasive physical examinations that include inspecting and photographing children’s genitals. 102 Such searches, or “body checks,” are highly traumatic to children, 103—particularly those with prior experiences of sexual assault—and may induce mental health conditions such as depression, anxiety, and impaired neurological development. 104 Invasions of families’ privacy are not limited to the home: investigators frequently arrive at children’s schools unannounced, removing them from their

103 Naveed, “‘If I Wasn’t Poor, I Wouldn’t Be Unfit’: The Family Separation Crisis in the US Child Welfare System,” 3.
104 Saha Shah and Feierman, “Strip-Searching Children Is State-Imposed Trauma.”
peers and forcing them to sit for questioning. They may also obtain medical and other private records.

An investigation continues for a period of 60-90 days in which any of these steps recur on any occasion without prior warning to a family or child. As legal scholar Doriane Lambelet Coleman writes:

Home visits epitomize deep intrusion in both symbolic and actual respects. During these “visits,” state officials do not merely cross the threshold into the realm of what is deemed to be ultimately private as a political and philosophical matter. They also quite literally storm the castle, opening closed bedroom doors to find, talk to, examine, and remove the children; opening and looking through refrigerators and cupboards to see if the children have sufficient food to eat; opening and searching closets and drawers to check if the children have enough clothing and that no inappropriate disciplinary methods are being used in the family. They do this both during the day and at night.

Because of exceptions to Fourth Amendment protections that apply to child welfare investigations, all of this is done without a warrant, probable cause, and, more often than not, without sound justification, as the overwhelming majority of child welfare investigations ultimately find that no abuse or neglect had occurred; from 2019-2021, 79.3 percent of children in investigations following screened-in referrals were entirely unsubstantiated. Roberts writes, “Child welfare investigations are the stop and frisk of family surveillance without the safeguards of law and public scrutiny that are present in the criminal context.”

---

**Family Integrity**

A second human rights violation of concern is the right to family integrity. Article 23(1) of the ICCPR, affirmed in Article 16(3) of the UDHR, declares, “The family is the natural and fundamental group unit of society and is entitled to protection by society and the State.” The Preamble to the CRC also recognizes the family “as the fundamental group of society and the natural environment for the growth and well-being of all its members and particularly children,” and declares that as such it “should be afforded the necessary protection and assistance.”

Article 9(1) of the CRC declares that “States Parties shall ensure that a child shall not be separated from his or her parents against their will, except when competent authorities subject to judicial review determine, in accordance with applicable law and procedures, that such separation is necessary for the best interests of the child.” Separations of families that are most often the product of racial biases or conflations of poverty with neglect violate Article 9 protections, as they inflict far more lasting trauma on children and do not further the best interests of children. The Committee on the Rights of the Child, which interprets and monitors states’ compliance with the CRC, has affirmed that “separation should only occur as a last resort measure” in its General comment No. 14, and the General Assembly has similarly affirmed, in Resolution 64/142, that “[r]emoval of a child from the care of the family should be seen as a

---

114 United Nations General Assembly, Article 9(1).
Nevertheless, in FY 2021, 206,812 children entered foster care and a total of 391,098 remained in care, separated from their families, at the end of the fiscal year.\textsuperscript{117}

\textit{Freedom from Racial Discrimination}

These rights violations are disproportionately experienced by Black families, thus also constituting violations of the right to freedom from discrimination.

Article 2(1) of the ICERD, affirmed in Article 5, declares that states party commit to eliminate racial discrimination, to ensure “all public authorities and public institutions, national and local, shall act in conformity with this obligation,” and “shall take effective measures to review governmental, national and local policies, and to amend, rescind or nullify any laws and regulations which have the effect of creating or perpetuating racial discrimination wherever it exists.”\textsuperscript{118} Articles 2(1) of the ICCPR and CRC and Article 2 of the UDHR affirm this right. Article 1(1) of the ICERD defines “racial discrimination” as any distinction, exclusion, restriction or preference based on race, colour, descent, or national or ethnic origin which has the purpose or effect” of denying the exercise of rights to those of a certain race (emphasis added).\textsuperscript{119} As such, the Committee interprets this obligation to extend beyond narrower national laws that require demonstration of an intent to discrimination, such as those of the United States.\textsuperscript{120} Rather,


\textsuperscript{117} Children’s Bureau, “AFCARS Report #29,” 1.


other than in cases with a legitimate purpose, such as affirmative action, “indirect—or *de facto*—discrimination occurs where an apparently neutral provision, criterion or practice would put persons of a particular racial, ethnic or national origin at a disadvantage.” As Human Rights Watch notes, this would acutely apply to discrimination in the child welfare system. Thus, the implementations of CAPTA and mandated reporting laws, despite not explicitly including a directive to racially discriminate, would still constitute a violation of internationally protected human rights under the United States’ obligations to the ICERD, which legally compel the United States to “amend, rescind, or nullify” laws that *de facto* perpetuate discrimination.

International human rights bodies have also publicly denounced the racially discriminatory impact of the child welfare system on Black communities and called for the eradication of policies and practices that uphold such discrimination. In May 2022, the United Nations Working Group of Experts on People of African Descent convened to specifically evaluate forms of discrimination against children of African descent. In its recommendations submitted to the Human Rights Council following the twenty-ninth and thirtieth sessions, the Working Group condemned the racially discriminatory harms imposed upon families of color by the child welfare system and declared that “[f]amily policing should be replaced by care and strength-based interventions.” In August 2022, the Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination, which monitors state compliance of the ICERD, concluded its tenth to twelfth periodic reviews of the United States, and, in the concluding observations that followed, also denounced the disproportionate rates of reports, investigations, separations, and lack of

121 Committee on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination, 2.
122 Naveed, “‘If I Wasn’t Poor, I Wouldn’t Be Unfit’: The Family Separation Crisis in the US Child Welfare System,” 133.
reunifications of Black and Indigenous families. The Committee explicitly recommended taking measures such as “amending or repealing laws, policies and practices, such as the Child Abuse Prevention and Treatment Act.”

Chapter 3: Methodology

To answer my research question, “Do state-sponsored mandated reporter training curricula contribute to or reproduce racially disproportionate reporting of Black families?”, I conducted a qualitative coded analysis of publicly available mandated reporter training curricula across different U.S. states.

3.1: Training Curricula as the Subject of Analysis

It is critical to examine the decisions of mandated reporters to investigate how disproportionalities in child welfare involvement are produced, because their reports are the first point of entry for families into the system. A mandated reporter’s call enables child welfare agents to obtain the right to enter families’ homes, violate families’ privacy, and remove children from their parents. By analyzing how and why mandated reporters report, we may thus begin to understand how to stop the flow of poor families of color into a system that violates their rights. Because mandated reporting laws shape ordinary citizens—who, beyond working in professions that engage with children, lack professional expertise in child protection—into actors who bear the responsibility of making critical decisions about whether or not a family will be drawn into child welfare system, understanding the way that they are trained is paramount in exploring how we may change current patterns of racial disproportionality.

Research indicates that existing forms of training provide insufficient information for mandated reporters to perform their roles. Surveys of teachers have consistently found that they feel inadequately prepared by training they have received to serve as reporters of child abuse and neglect.\footnote{Maureen C. Kenny, “Teachers’ Attitudes toward and Knowledge of Child Maltreatment,” \textit{Child Abuse & Neglect} 28, no. 12 (2004): 1311–19, \url{https://doi.org/10.1016/j.chiabu.2004.06.010}; Maureen C. Kenny, “Child Abuse Reporting: Teachers’ Perceived Deterrents,” \textit{Child Abuse & Neglect} 25, no. 1 (January 2001): 81–92.} One study, for example, found that 77 percent of surveyed teachers stated that they
were not aware of the indicators of child neglect, 81 were not aware of the indicators of physical abuse, and 54.5 were not aware of the indicators of sexual abuse. A study by Baker et al., on which this thesis builds, conducted a thematic analysis of the content of mandated reporter training curricula available for all fifty states and found that there are significant gaps and inconsistencies in the content included. Notably, training materials also fell short in adequately providing information about how to identify different forms of child abuse. Training that leaves mandated reporters poorly prepared to distinguish between situations that constitute abuse or neglect and situations that do not, equip reporters with no tools with which to perform their duties other than subjective, ill-informed judgements, personal feelings, and implicit biases.

Beyond the failure to include fundamental information about how to accurately identify child maltreatment, most recently, literature by researchers and advocates has also critiqued training materials’ inadequate inclusion of information that would reduce racial disproportionality in mandated reporter training curricula. Critiques include that training curricula do not enable reporters to adequately comprehend the consequences of reporting for families, they overly encourage reporting, and they devote attention to legal technicalities, rather than critical themes of socio-economic hardship, implicit bias, systemic racial discrimination, trauma, or different cultural norms. Baker et al.’s analysis found that only 43.2 percent of states’ training curricula addressed the fact that poverty does not constitute neglect and 4.5


128 Baker et al., 7–8.

129 Itzkowitz and Olson, “Closing the Front Door of Child Protection: Rethinking Mandated Reporting,” 84–85.
percent of training curricula, those of only two out of fifty states, included information about supporting families if a report was not necessary.\textsuperscript{130}

Including improved content in training curricula for mandated reporters has been advocated as an important step to reducing racial disparity in the child welfare system. A study of child social workers, for example, found that 79 percent believe that incorporating cultural sensitivity training into teachers’ mandated reporter training would actively reduce the inordinate quantity of unsubstantiated cases they receive.\textsuperscript{131} The content that researchers and advocates recommend incorporating into trainings to reduce racial disproportionality includes: distinguishing between poverty and neglect, implicit bias, cultural sensitivity, disproportionate representation of families of color in child welfare, the way the child welfare system surveils families of color, the damage that child welfare involvement inflicts upon families, cultural sensitivity, the importance of considering whether to report or whether the family is in need of support services, and trauma.\textsuperscript{132}

Incorporating such information into trainings is not merely a beneficial; it is inherently necessary to protect the right to freedom from discrimination. In its conclusions following the convening on children of African descent, the United Nations Working Group of Experts on People of African Descent explicitly critiqued child welfare and juvenile justice trainings that do not actively reduce individual bias:


\textsuperscript{131} Cox, Bowens, and Newman, “Children’s Social Workers’ Views on Cultural Sensitivity in Mandated Reporting,” 70.

Across the diaspora, training and policy reform in family regulation and juvenile justice systems have failed to disrupt proven, systematic abuses and violations of the rights of children of African descent, instead escalating harms and risk. Training programmes are presumptively inadequate if they merely raise awareness rather than require confrontation and a measurable reduction of individual bias.\footnote{133 United Nations Working Group of Experts on People of African Descent, “Children of African Descent: Report of the Working Group of Experts on People of African Descent,” 15.}

Thus, building upon critiques of existing mandated reporter training materials and calls to action by researchers and family rights advocates, this study conducted a thematic analysis of state mandated reporter training curricula focused on identifying content that might counteract the disproportionate reporting of Black families.

3.2: Identifying Themes

My research design is partially modeled off of that of Baker et al. in their 2021 study of state-sponsored mandated reporting curricula.\footnote{134 Baker et al., “Training for Mandated Reporters of Child Abuse and Neglect.”} Baker et al. offer the only comprehensive study of mandated reporter curricula in the United States, having conducted a thematic survey of online training materials available in 44 states. In their study, Baker et al. identify a total of ten general themes in their survey of mandated reporter training: “legal requirements and protections; the role of the mandated reporter; reasons why reporters should make a report; identifying maltreatment; dealing with disclosures by children; barriers to reporting; the mechanics of reporting; the impact on the reporter; how to help families; and format of training.”\footnote{135} While comprehensive, the themes to which the authors attend largely do not address the ways that the trainings’ content may encourage or prevent racially disproportionate overreporting. The only two themes relating that should, according to my hypothesis, reduce overreporting, are the differentiation of neglect from poverty, which Baker et al. find among the
content identifying child maltreatment, and ways to help families in cases that do not warrant a call to CPS.\textsuperscript{136}

Because I am chiefly interested in how training materials enable and reproduce patterns of overreporting of families of color, I thus build upon Baker et al.’s more general thematic findings by applying a racially aware lens, specifically analyzing training curricula for the presence of information that would reduce disproportionate reporting of Black families.

To conduct my analysis, I first constructed an additive index, which I designated the “Family Support Index,” based on fourteen indicators. Thirteen indicators consisted of themes that I determined as information that would counteract racially disproportionate reporting. The fourteenth indicator that I tracked was whether or not any themes were reinforced in training review questions. The themes I used were derived from three sources: (1) literature about current contributors to the overreporting of Black families, (2) the aforementioned recommendations from family justice advocates and researchers, and (3) inductive identification of any additional themes that emerged as I analyzed the training curricula. The indicators that I identified are as follows:

1. Racial disproportionality of families involved in child welfare system (or information demonstrating that Black families/families of color are represented at high rates)
2. Implicit bias (either the concept alone or an explicit inclusion of the term)
3. Cultural humility/respect
4. Symptoms of poverty do not inherently constitute neglect
5. Reporting to Child Protective Services may not be necessary to support a family
6. Encouragement for mandated reporter to refer families to community-based services (instead of reporting, if appropriate, or alongside reporting)

\textsuperscript{136} Baker et al., 5–6.
7. Involvement in the child welfare system can be traumatic/damaging to families

8. Parents may have had prior traumatic experiences with the child welfare system

9. Families may have prior traumatic experiences with other service providers or systems

10. Surveillance of families and/or use of term “surveil”/"surveillance"

11. Recognition that a significant proportion of reports are screened out

12. Encouragement for mandated reporter to collaborate with families

13. Overreporting may negatively impact trust with family (and, for example, deter families from accessing essential social services)

14. Theme(s) is/are present in review questions

For this study, I reviewed a total of twenty state mandated reporter training curricula. In order to select the states that I was to review and the order in which I reviewed each training, I input the names of all fifty states into an online randomized list generator, and selected the first twenty states that were generated. Because three of the states that I had initially selected (Kansas, New Mexico, and Montana), did not offer publicly available state-produced or state-sponsored mandated reporter training materials online,\(^{137}\) I selected the next three from the randomized list.


\(^{137}\) New Mexico and Kansas only offered live training events for participants, but did not publish asynchronous training curricula online. I was unable to find any form of state-produced or state-sponsored training content for Montana online.
3.3: Collecting Data

I first located a mandated reporter training for each state via the following web search query: “[State] State Mandated Reporter Training” e.g. “Connecticut State Mandated Reporter Training.” Some states issue their own mandated reporter trainings, while others outsource the development of training materials to approved providers, such as research universities. A state that has outsourced its training curriculum to another provider will typically indicate this by stating on the website for its departments of children and family services (or a similar government agency) that the external training has been approved for mandated reporter certification in that state. The training may also indicate that it is approved by the state via a message at the beginning or inclusion of the state’s logo. In a few cases, states offered multiple approved training providers or multiple training curricula for reporters in different professions; for example, some states offered specialized training curricula for medical personnel, educational personnel, and generalized training curricula for all mandated reporters. In such cases, I selected the training that was free of charge and generalized. In Kentucky, the only publicly available state-sponsored or state-produced training curricula were for educators, which I analyzed in the absence of a generalized one; however, I did not observe any content in this training that would not be applicable to mandated reporters of any profession.

While the format varied somewhat between states, most mandated reporting training curricula followed a similar general structure. They presented textual content, often accompanied by video clips, images, and audio with transcripts, in a self-paced online module format. Some programs presented information as a series of slides that the participant clicked through, while others presented content on a web page, with more information appearing on the page as the participant completed each section or as the participant clicked through different tabs. For one
state, West Virginia, the curriculum was presented as published PowerPoint slides, and for Kentucky, the curriculum was presented via a video of a speaker delivering a PowerPoint presentation. All but one, West Virginia, included a series of short comprehension assessment questions. Each training was typically between thirty minutes to three hours in length. Further information about each of the training curricula I used may be found in Appendix A.

Having located the training curricula, I then analyzed each state’s training curriculum for the presence of the fourteen designated Family Support Index indicators, assigning an integer score between 0 and 3 for each indicator. For the thirteen thematic indicators, I assigned an indicator a score of 0 if a theme was not present, 1 if the theme was present only once, demonstrating it was given only cursory reference, 2 if the theme was mentioned twice, and 3 if the theme was mentioned three or more times, demonstrating that the training emphasized to reporters that the concept was an important component of their duties. Similarly, for my fourteenth indicator, which was whether any of the themes were present in review questions, I assigned a state a score of 0 if none of the thirteen Family Support Index themes appeared in any review questions, 1 if one theme appeared once, 2 if two themes appeared or a theme appeared in two separate questions, and 3 if one or more themes appeared, in total, in three or more questions.

I counted the number of occurrences of each theme by the number of slides, or slide equivalents, on which the theme was present. I chose to count occurrences by slides, rather than by words, phrases, or sentences, because many themes were often not directly stated in one sentence, but were conveyed collectively through a longer description or scenario presented on the slide, a video clip, or a combination of words, images, and audio presented on a slide. For the purposes of counting indicator occurrences, I excluded slides at the beginning of modules that
merely presented an outline or “road map” listing themes that would be discussed in upcoming slides, but contributed no substantive content. If multiple themes were present on one slide or section of text on a slide, I counted that slide as an individual occurrence for each indicator. For example, one slide in New York’s training curriculum stated the following:

- Research also shows that these biases [implicit biases] contribute to a disproportionate number of reports being called to the SCR on certain individuals or groups
- CPS involvement is disproportionately higher in certain groups or communities as demonstrated by OCFS’ data
- This disparity has long lasting and devastating impacts on both families and communities.\(^\text{138}\)

In this case, I counted this slide as one occurrence of Indicator 1, racial disproportionality of families involved in the child welfare system, one occurrence of Indicator 2, implicit bias, and one occurrence of Indicator 7, that involvement in the child welfare system can be traumatic or damaging to families, because all three themes were present. However, because Indicator 14 regarding the presence of themes in review questions measured the total number of questions containing any of the themes, if multiple themes appeared in one question, I nevertheless counted the question as only one occurrence of Indicator 14.

I included material that was written on slides, audio and transcripts that accompanied the slides, and embedded videos in my analysis. I considered the audio and transcript that accompanied a slide and the text on that slide collectively as one slide; I did not double-count audio material that was said alongside material that was written on a slide. Because the training for West Virginia was a PowerPoint, which included speaker notes, I included the content written in the PowerPoint speaker notes as well, as such material would have been analogous to audio that would have accompanied the other states’ modules. In some cases with different formats, it became more difficult to distinguish what I counted as the unit of “one slide” equivalent. For

example, the training curricula for some states, such as Maine, took the form of scroll-through modules that appeared in sequence on one web page as the participant proceeded through the training, rather than on distinct click-through slides. In these cases, I equated “one slide” to a group of text or bullets that was sufficiently spatially demarcated from another segment on the page. In the case of Massachusetts, the training occasionally included a pop-up window when the participant clicked on an indicated part of the page, which included sufficiently large quantities of text to equate to another separate slide. In this case, I counted each pop-up window as a separate slide equivalent. However, I excluded from my analysis material contained on external websites, which several training programs included links to for further reading.

3.4: Analysis

Once I had assigned scores to each indicator for a state’s training curriculum, I calculated the Family Support Index for that state’s curriculum by finding the sum of the fourteen indicator scores. Because each of the fourteen indicators could receive a score between 0 and 3, each state could be assigned a potential Family Support Index between 0 and 42.

After analyzing each training and calculating the Family Support Index for each, I then compared the Family Support Indices for each state’s training to the disproportionality of Black children’s involvement in the child welfare system of that state, as measured by the percentage of substantiated maltreatment victims who are Black, the percentage of children in foster care who are Black, and the percentage of children entering foster care who are Black. I used the most recently available data reported by the Children’s Bureau from Fiscal Year 2021.
To measure disproportionality, I calculated the “disproportionality index” for each state, a metric employed by the National Council of Juvenile and Family Court Judges (NCJFCJ) in its annual state-level and national analysis of racial disproportionality in child welfare.139 The NCJFCJ defines disproportionality index as the share of the foster care population consisting of one racial demographic divided by the share of the general child population consisting of that racial demographic. For example, if 25 percent of a state’s foster care population consists of Black children, but Black children comprise only 20 percent of the state’s general child population, the disproportionality index for that state would be 1.25.

I applied the NCJFCJ’s model to calculate states’ disproportionality indices for the percentage of children in foster care who were Black at the start of FY 2021 (on October 1, 2020) the percentage of children who entered foster care who were Black in FY 2021, and the percentage of substantiated maltreatment victims who were Black in FY 2021. To do so, I divided each statistic (the percentage of children in care on the first day of FY 2021 who were Black, the percentage of children entering care in FY 2021 who were Black, and the percentage of substantiated maltreatment victims who were Black in FY 2021) by the proportion of the child population consisting of Black children in each state.

I then plotted the Family Support Index for each state’s training curriculum in relation to the racial disproportionality index for each state. Because New York’s training was redeveloped in February 2023, I excluded it from my assessment of the correlation between Family Support Indices and racial disproportionality because the racial representation of Black children in FY 2021 would not be reflective of the impact of the current training being implemented.

Lastly, I also sought to obtain a sample-wide understanding of what themes were most present and absent in training curricula across U.S. states. To calculate this, I converted the indicator scores (between 0 and 3) into simple 0 or 1 values to indicate whether the themes were present or absent in states’ curricula, regardless of the number of occurrences. Then, I found the percentage of states of the twenty studied in which each theme was present. For context about the overall focus and intent of the content of each state’s curriculum, I also tracked the stated purposes and learning objectives in each training, which were typically stated at the beginning of the training. Purposes designated what the training intended to accomplish and learning objectives indicated the skills or knowledge the training intended the participant to obtain. A list of purposes and learning objectives is included in Appendix B.
Chapter 4: Findings and Discussion

4.1: The Family Support Index and Racial Disproportionality

I found that across the studied states, Family Support Index scores remained low, with the average Family Support Index being 4.85. Given that the maximum potential Family Support Index was 42, and, if each indicator were present only once, 14, these findings demonstrate that state mandated reporter training curricula significantly lack content that promotes racial awareness, encourages support for families, and informs reporters of the harm that child welfare involvement may cause. This is consistent with criticisms in existing literature and the continued disproportionality of Black children represented in the child welfare system.

Of the studied states, several states received indices of 0—Texas, North Dakota, New Jersey, Arkansas, Arizona, and Kentucky—meaning that none of the indicator themes were present. The states with the highest Family Support Indices, and thus, the inclusion of the most content that discourages racially disproportionate reporting, were, in order of highest index to lowest: New York (29), Massachusetts (13), Pennsylvania (12), West Virginia (11), and North Carolina (8). New York’s curriculum, which received the highest score, included nearly every indicator, with the exception of Indicator 11 (recognition that a significant proportion of reports are screened out) and Indicator 13 (overreporting may negatively impact trust with family). Given New York’s recent overhaul of its mandated reporter training curriculum, it is expected that its training received the highest Family Support Index. New York’s reform effort may serve as a model for other states to incorporate more content in their training curricula that discourages racially disproportionate reporting.

The indicator scores and Family Support Indices for each studied state are presented in Table 1.
I then compared the Family Support Indices for each state’s training with each state’s disproportionality indices for the percentages of Black children substantiated as victims of

---

140 Indicators are abbreviated as follows: I.1: Racial disproportionality of families involved in child welfare system, I.2: Implicit bias, I.3: Cultural humility/respect, I.4: Symptoms of poverty do not inherently constitute neglect, I.5: Reporting to child protective services may not be necessary to support a family, I.6: Encouragement for mandated reporter to refer families to community-based services (instead of reporting, if appropriate, or alongside reporting), I.7: Involvement in the child welfare system can be traumatic/damaging to families, I.8: Parents may have had prior traumatic experiences with the child welfare system, I.9: Families may have had prior traumatic experiences with other service providers or systems, I.10: Surveillance of families and/or use of term “surveill”/“surveillance,” I.11: Recognition that a significant proportion of reports are screened out, I.12: Encouragement for mandated reporter to collaborate with families, I.13: Overreporting may negatively impact trust with family, I.14: Themes are present in review questions
maltreatment, in foster care, and entering care in FY 2021. Table 2 summarizes the percentages of children who are Black for each of the three metrics of child welfare involvement by state. Table 3 summarizes the disproportionality indices for the twenty studied states alongside states’ Family Support Indices.

Table 2. Percentages of children involved in child welfare who are Black, by state
(Data from the Children’s Bureau)\(^{141}\)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>State</th>
<th>Percentage of Substantiated Maltreatment Victims in FY 2021 who were Black</th>
<th>Percentage of Children in Foster Care on the First Day of FY 2021 (10/1/2020) who were Black</th>
<th>Percentage of Children Entering Foster Care in FY 2021 who were Black</th>
<th>Percentage of Black Children in General Child Population</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Connecticut</td>
<td>20.5</td>
<td>24.2</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>11.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pennsylvania</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>34.7</td>
<td>27.5</td>
<td>12.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>West Virginia</td>
<td>3.6</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4.1</td>
<td>3.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Maine</td>
<td>1.5</td>
<td>3.3</td>
<td>2.1</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Colorado</td>
<td>11.3</td>
<td>10.9</td>
<td>10.8</td>
<td>4.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>North Carolina</td>
<td>32.5</td>
<td>29.1</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>22.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Maryland</td>
<td>31.6</td>
<td>56.1</td>
<td>50.3</td>
<td>30.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Missouri</td>
<td>15.2</td>
<td>17.9</td>
<td>15.5</td>
<td>13.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Louisiana</td>
<td>46.9</td>
<td>38.8</td>
<td>42.5</td>
<td>36.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Texas</td>
<td>21.4</td>
<td>22.5</td>
<td>18.7</td>
<td>12.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>North Dakota</td>
<td>9.4</td>
<td>4.7</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>4.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>South Carolina</td>
<td>38.3</td>
<td>32.8</td>
<td>35.3</td>
<td>29</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>New Jersey</td>
<td>29.6</td>
<td>40.8</td>
<td>37</td>
<td>13.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Indiana</td>
<td>17.7</td>
<td>17.9</td>
<td>17.5</td>
<td>11.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Virginia</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>26.8</td>
<td>24.6</td>
<td>19.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>New York</td>
<td>27.3</td>
<td>39.1</td>
<td>33.6</td>
<td>14.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Arkansas</td>
<td>19.4</td>
<td>20.5</td>
<td>18.3</td>
<td>17.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Arizona</td>
<td>[Data not available]</td>
<td>11.6</td>
<td>9.3</td>
<td>5.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Massachusetts</td>
<td>12.4</td>
<td>14.2</td>
<td>13.7</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kentucky</td>
<td>9.3</td>
<td>11.5</td>
<td>10.4</td>
<td>9.3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Table 3. Disproportionality indices for Black children’s involvement in child welfare, by state

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>State</th>
<th>Disproportionality Index of Maltreatment Victims</th>
<th>Disproportionality Index of Children in Foster Care on the First Day of FY 2021 (10/1/2020) who were Black</th>
<th>Disproportionality Index of Children Entering Foster Care in FY 2021 who were Black</th>
<th>Family Support Index</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Connecticut</td>
<td>1.752</td>
<td>2.068</td>
<td>1.709</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pennsylvania</td>
<td>1.550</td>
<td>2.690</td>
<td>2.132</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>West Virginia</td>
<td>0.973</td>
<td>0.811</td>
<td>1.108</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Maine</td>
<td>0.500</td>
<td>1.100</td>
<td>0.700</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Colorado</td>
<td>2.568</td>
<td>2.477</td>
<td>2.455</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>North Carolina</td>
<td>1.451</td>
<td>1.299</td>
<td>1.161</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Maryland</td>
<td>1.033</td>
<td>1.833</td>
<td>1.644</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Missouri</td>
<td>1.134</td>
<td>1.336</td>
<td>1.157</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Louisiana</td>
<td>1.296</td>
<td>1.072</td>
<td>1.174</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Texas</td>
<td>1.754</td>
<td>1.844</td>
<td>1.533</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>North Dakota</td>
<td>2.136</td>
<td>1.068</td>
<td>1.818</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>South Carolina</td>
<td>1.321</td>
<td>1.131</td>
<td>1.217</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>New Jersey</td>
<td>2.226</td>
<td>3.068</td>
<td>2.782</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Indiana</td>
<td>1.539</td>
<td>1.557</td>
<td>1.522</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Virginia</td>
<td>1.206</td>
<td>1.347</td>
<td>1.236</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>New York</td>
<td>1.870</td>
<td>2.678</td>
<td>2.301</td>
<td>29</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Arkansas</td>
<td>1.096</td>
<td>1.158</td>
<td>1.034</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Arizona</td>
<td>[Data not available]</td>
<td>2.231</td>
<td>1.788</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Massachusetts</td>
<td>1.378</td>
<td>1.578</td>
<td>1.522</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kentucky</td>
<td>1.000</td>
<td>1.237</td>
<td>1.118</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Plotting the Family Support Indices and disproportionality indices revealed very mild correlations between Family Support Indices and disproportionality indices for the proportion of Black children among substantiated maltreatment victims (Figure 1) and the proportion of Black children entering foster care in FY 2021 (Figure 3). There was a negligible correlation between Family Support Indices and disproportionality indices for the proportion of Black children in foster care at the start of FY 2021 (Figure 2). As noted in Chapter 3, I excluded New York in
such calculations because racial disproportionality data from FY 2021 would not be reflective of the content in the current training.

Figure 1: Relationship between Family Support Index of mandated reporter training curriculum and disproportionality index for Black children who are substantiated maltreatment victims (FY 2021), by state

Family Support Index vs. Disproportionality Index for Black Children who are Substantiated Maltreatment Victims (FY 2021)

Figure 2: Relationship between Family Support Index of mandated reporter training curriculum and disproportionality index for Black children in foster care on the first day of FY 2021 (10/1/2020)

Family Support Index vs. Disproportionality Index for Black Children in Foster Care (on 10/1/2020)
Thus, these findings suggest that the increased inclusion of content that discourages racially disproportionate reporting, as identified by the Family Support Index indicators, may mildly contribute to lower levels of disproportionality in the representation of Black children in child welfare.

Recalling the conclusions of the Working Group of Experts on People of African Descent, “Training programmes are presumptively inadequate if they merely raise awareness rather than require confrontation and a measurable reduction of individual bias,”142 I thus posit that the training materials of states with lower Family Support Indices, such as Texas, North Dakota, New Jersey, Arkansas, Arizona, and Kentucky, which included none of the identified themes, perpetuate infringements upon Black families’ human rights rights to freedom from intrusion, family integrity, and freedom from racial discrimination. I hold that states with higher Family Support Indices, and thus, greater inclusion of content that seeks to reduce racially

---

disproportionate reporting of Black families, such as New York, Massachusetts, Pennsylvania, West Virginia, and North Carolina, contribute to the protection of Black families’ human rights. Many limitations condition these findings, however, which will be discussed in depth later in this chapter.

4.2: Frequency of Themes

In addition to assessing the number of different themes present in each state’s training curriculum, I also analyzed the frequency of each of the individual themes I identified across all studied states. These findings are presented in Table 4. Because only the presence of themes is concerned, Indicator 14 regarding the inclusion of content in review questions, is omitted. Among all the themes, the theme that was most prevalent among the studied states’ training curricula was the distinction between poverty and reportable neglect (Indicator 4). This theme was present in thirteen states, or 65 percent of states. Content addressing racial disproportionality (Indicator 1) and implicit bias (Indicator 2) were the next most common themes, appearing in seven out of twenty, or 35 percent, of states’ mandated reporter training curricula. Lastly, content addressing cultural humility and cultural respect (Indicator 3) appeared in six out of twenty, or 30 percent, of states’ training curricula. These four themes are valuable in combating racial disproportionality and realizing the rights to freedom from interference, family integrity, and freedom from discrimination.

Nevertheless, several equally critical themes remain absent among the states’ training content. Content that informs reporters of the negative impacts of child welfare involvement was absent in nearly every state. Only one state’s training curriculum recognized the trauma or damage to families that may result from involvement in the child welfare system (Indicator 7),
and only one state’s training recognized that overreporting might negatively impact a family’s trust with the reporter (Indicator 13). The latter is significant because research demonstrates that wariness of mandated reporters discourages families in need from reaching out to, or being honest with, providers of essential forms of support. If not properly trained, mandated reporters will continue to overreport, pushing families of color further to the margins and potentially impeding the fulfillment of other essential rights, such as access to medical care. Content that informs the reporter that families may have had prior traumatic experiences with other service providers or systems (Indicator 9), builds upon both of these indicators, as, alongside Indicators 7 and 13, such information enables the reporter to understand the ways that involvement in the child welfare system, when not necessitated by true cases of child abuse, generates compounded trauma that may impede families from engaging with and accessing the services they need.

Indicator 6, content that encourages reporters to refer families to community-based services instead of reporting whenever possible, was also only present in one state. This theme is of paramount importance because it offers reporters alternative means of supporting families in need, thus creating a constructive avenue to stop the continued patterns of overreporting and consequent violations of Black families’ rights.

In order to prevent further intrusions upon Black families’ human rights through surveillance, privacy violations, traumatic separations, and obstructed access to necessary services, states must include more content in their training curricula that discourages racially disproportionate reporting and encourages collaboration with families, referrals to community-based resources, and cultural humility.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Theme</th>
<th>Number of States in which Theme is Present</th>
<th>Percentage of States in Which Theme is Present</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Indicator 1. Racial disproportionality of families involved in child welfare system (or information demonstrating that Black families/families of color are represented at high rates)</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>35%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Indicator 2. Implicit bias (either includes the term explicitly, or concept)</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>35%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Indicator 3. Cultural humility/respect</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>30%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Indicator 4. Symptoms of poverty do not inherently constitute neglect</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>65%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Indicator 5. Reporting to child protective services may not be necessary to support a family</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>10%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Indicator 6. Encouragement for mandated reporter to refer families to community-based services (instead of reporting, if appropriate, or alongside reporting)</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Indicator 7. Involvement in the child welfare system can be traumatic/damaging to families</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Indicator 8. Parents may have had prior traumatic experiences with the child welfare system</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>10%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Indicator 9. Families may have prior traumatic experiences with other service providers or systems</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Indicator 10. Surveillance of families and/or use of term “surveil”/”surveillance”</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>10%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Indicator 11. Recognition that a significant proportion of reports are screened out</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>20%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Indicator 12. Encouragement for mandated reporter to collaborate with families</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>15%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Indicator 13. Overreporting may negatively impact trust with family</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>5%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
4.3: Limitations

These findings include many limitations. First, the conclusions that may be drawn about the impact of the Family Support Index indicators on racially disproportionate representation are tempered by the mildness of the correlations found. The inverse correlations identified between states’ Family Support Indices and states’ disproportionality indices for the proportion of Black children who are substantiated as victims of maltreatment and the proportion of Black children entering care were relatively weak, and may not necessarily be evidence of a consistent relationship. Furthermore, the correlation between states’ Family Support Indices and disproportionality indices for the proportion of Black children in foster care at the start of FY 2021 was negligible. Thus, further research is needed to confirm whether the patterns observed are indicative of more substantiated relationships.

In addition, the sample size of the study encompasses only twenty U.S. states, rather than all fifty; thus, findings may differ with a more comprehensive review of training curricula across the country. Furthermore, I omitted data from New York in my correlational calculations because the content contained in the recently revised training would not reflect the impact of mandated reporter training curricula on FY 2021 racial disproportionality rates. However, it is possible that other states’ training curricula have also recently undergone significant changes, and that the content contained in the curricula studied are also not consistent with reporting patterns, and the racial disproportionality that might result, from FY 2021.

The methodology also shares the limitation identified by Baker et al. that reporters may receive training beyond the content of the state-provided or state-sponsored material available online.\textsuperscript{144} Some institutions may include an in-person training option that might also offer space for discussion with other participants, which may produce content not captured by an online

training. With regards to the question of anti-bias training and recognition, it is also possible that institutions may compel employees to engage in a separate anti-bias or diversity, equity, and inclusion training. However, given the unique racial dynamics that specifically accompany contact between communities of color and the child welfare system, I believe that a detached anti-bias training would not have the same impact as the incorporation of content that specifically addresses mechanisms of reducing racial bias in the context of mandated reporting. Many of the themes I identified in the Family Support Index specifically counteract behavior that reproduces overreporting of Black families to child protective services, and would likely not be found in a generalized anti-bias training. For example, referring families to community-based services is an action that may reduce overreporting of Black families, and thus overrepresentation of Black families in the child welfare system, but would not be relevant in a generalized anti-bias training.

Lastly, the findings of my study are also limited by the fact that mandated reporter training curricula are certainly not the only factor that produce racially disproportionate representation of Black families in the child welfare system. Factors such as the political climate of a state, differences in the mandatory reporting statutes between states, economic disparity between states, and other available services to which individuals may refer families in crisis situations are just several of many possible factors that cause and reduce racially disproportionate rates of child welfare involvement. My findings merely suggest that the inclusion of the content I identified in the Family Support Index in mandated reporter training curricula may be one of many possible ways of reducing racially disproportionate reporting.
Chapter 5: Conclusions

The American child welfare system disproportionately surveils, polices, and separates Black families. Such a system inflicts enduring trauma upon families and communities of color and violates the fundamental human rights to freedom from interference, family integrity, and freedom from racial discrimination.

This paper examined the content of state mandated reporter training curricula to better understand how current training curricula may contribute to harmful patterns of overreporting of Black families by mandated reporters. It suggests that there may be a mild correlation between the increased inclusion of such content in mandated reporter training curricula and reduced disproportionality in the percentage of substantiated victims of child maltreatment who are Black, and reduced disproportionality in the percentage of children entering foster care who are Black. It also finds that there is a significant lack of content in state mandated reporter training curricula that would discourage the disproportionate reporting of Black families to child welfare authorities. These findings offer evidence of an urgent need to reevaluate and reform existing training content to incorporate information that raises awareness of issues such as implicit bias, the distinctions between poverty and statutory neglect, and the trauma that child welfare investigations may inflict upon families. New York’s recently revised mandated reporter training curricula offers a promising example for other states to emulate, though future research is necessary to concretely evaluate the impacts that these changes may have.

As only the second study, after Baker et al. (2021), to analyze online state-sponsored mandated reporter training curricula, and the first to do so specifically examining the presence of content that would reduce racial disproportionality, this thesis presents important data about the current content of training curricula mandated reporters receive. The findings also provide

analysis about which states may be in greatest need of curriculum reform and which issues are most and least addressed in the training curricula of American states as a whole. Such information may prove useful to advocates and state child welfare agencies in identifying where content reform is most needed. The discrepancy in information that is included between states’ training curricula also indicates a need for federal standards regarding what information is included in mandated reporter training curricula, which should mandate the inclusion of content discouraging racially disproportionate reporting.
Bibliography


phg.tbe.taleo.net/phg01/ats/careers/jobSearch.jsp?org=UNICEFUSA&cws=1.


https://assets.website-files.com/60a6942819ce8053cefd0947/60f6b1eba474362514093f96_Away%20From%20Home%20-%20Report.pdf.


https://jamanetwork.com/journals/jama/fullarticle/195342.


https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC5652515/.


Social Services Law, Article 6, Title 6, and Section 413 Laws of New York § (2023). http://public.leginfo.state.ny.us/lawssrch.cgi?


## Appendices

### Appendix A: Further Information About Studied Mandated Reporter Training Curricula

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>State</th>
<th>Training Title</th>
<th>Training Link</th>
<th>Training Producer</th>
<th>Date of Publication</th>
<th>Format</th>
<th>Estimated Time</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Connecticut</td>
<td>Connecticut Mandated Reporter Training Community Providers - June 2022</td>
<td><a href="https://www.propros.com/training/course/?title=communitytymrt2022_6282bf9c17eb23">https://www.propros.com/training/course/?title=communitytymrt2022_6282bf9c17eb23</a></td>
<td>Connecticut State Department of Children and Families (state-produced)</td>
<td>June 2022</td>
<td>Click-through online modules with audio content and transcript</td>
<td>30-45 minutes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pennsylvania</td>
<td>Recognizing and Reporting Child Abuse: Mandated and Permissive Reporting in Pennsylvania</td>
<td><a href="https://www.reportabusepa.pitt.edu/">https://www.reportabusepa.pitt.edu/</a></td>
<td>University of Pittsburgh Pennsylvania Child Welfare Resource Center (state-sponsored)</td>
<td>Not stated</td>
<td>Click-through online modules (no audio)</td>
<td>3 hours</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>West Virginia</td>
<td>Making a Difference: Mandate to Report and Responsibility to PREVENT Child Abuse and Neglect</td>
<td><a href="https://teamwv.org/prevent-child-abuse-wv/">https://teamwv.org/prevent-child-abuse-wv/</a></td>
<td>Team for West Virginia Children (state-sponsored)</td>
<td>March 2022</td>
<td>Powerpoint slides (content included in slide notes was included in analysis, as this would be analogous to including information in transcript/audio for an online module-based training)</td>
<td>N/A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>North Carolina</td>
<td>Recognizing &amp; Responding to Suspicions of Child Maltreatment: A Training for Adults Working with Children and Families</td>
<td><a href="https://www.preventchildabusenc.org/recognizing-responding-online-course/">https://www.preventchildabusenc.org/recognizing-responding-online-course/</a></td>
<td>Prevent Child Abuse North Carolina (state-sponsored)</td>
<td>Website copyright date 2023</td>
<td>Click-through online modules with audio, transcript, and embedded videos</td>
<td>2 hours</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>State</td>
<td>Mandated Reporter Training</td>
<td>Website or Link</td>
<td>Instructor/Provider</td>
<td>Time Required</td>
<td>Certification Details</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-------------</td>
<td>---------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>---------------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>--------------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>----------------------------------------</td>
<td>------------------------------------------</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Maryland</td>
<td>Mandatory Reporter Training</td>
<td><a href="https://www.reportabusemd.com/training">https://www.reportabusemd.com/training</a></td>
<td>Baltimore Child Abuse Center (state-sponsored)</td>
<td>Not stated</td>
<td>Website modules with embedded videos</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Missouri</td>
<td>Missouri Child Abuse and Neglect Mandated Reporter Training</td>
<td><a href="https://protectmokies.com/">https://protectmokies.com/</a></td>
<td>Protect MO Kids (state-sponsored)</td>
<td>2023</td>
<td>Click-through online modules with audio and embedded videos</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>North Dakota</td>
<td>Mandated Reporters Interactive Training</td>
<td><a href="https://mandatedreporter.pcan.org/welcome.html">https://mandatedreporter.pcan.org/welcome.html</a></td>
<td>North Dakota Department of Human Services (state-produced)</td>
<td>2023 (website copyright date)</td>
<td>Web page modules with multiple page sections and embedded videos</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>South Carolina</td>
<td>Recognizing and Reporting Child Abuse and Neglect</td>
<td><a href="https://dss.sc.gov/child-well-being/mandated-reporters/">https://dss.sc.gov/child-well-being/mandated-reporters/</a></td>
<td>Children's Law Center, University of South Carolina School of Law (state-sponsored)</td>
<td>Website copyright date 2023</td>
<td>Web page modules with audio and some embedded videos</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>New Jersey</td>
<td>Reporting Child Abuse</td>
<td><a href="https://reportchildabuse.dcs.in.gov/">https://reportchildabuse.dcs.in.gov/</a></td>
<td>New Jersey Department of Children and Families (state-produced)</td>
<td>2023</td>
<td>Web page modules with embedded videos</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Indiana</td>
<td>Don't Wait! Make the Call. Report Child Abuse and Neglect in Indiana</td>
<td><a href="https://reportchildabuse.dcs.in.gov/">https://reportchildabuse.dcs.in.gov/</a></td>
<td>Indiana Department of Child Services (state)</td>
<td>Not stated</td>
<td>Click-through modules with audio</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

62
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>State</th>
<th>Mandated Reporter Training</th>
<th>Website/Link</th>
<th>A/Agency</th>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Format/Duration</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>New York</td>
<td>Recognizing And Reporting Child Abuse: Training For Arkansas Mandated Reporters</td>
<td><a href="https://ar.mandatedreporter.org/UserAuthentication/Login!loginPage.action">https://ar.mandatedreporter.org/UserAuthentication/Login!loginPage.action</a></td>
<td>University of Arkansas For Medical Services (state-sponsored)</td>
<td>Not stated</td>
<td>Web page modules with embedded video 1 hour (certifies for 2 hours)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Arkansas</td>
<td>Childhelp Mandatory Reporter Training</td>
<td><a href="https://its-s-site.thinkific.com/courses/mandatory-reporting">https://its-s-site.thinkific.com/courses/mandatory-reporting</a></td>
<td>Childhelp with the Arizona Governor’s Office – Children’s Justice Programs (state-sponsored/state-produced)</td>
<td>Website copyrighted dated 2023</td>
<td>Click-through modules with embedded videos 45 minutes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Massachusetts</td>
<td>Recognizing &amp; Reporting Child Abuse, Neglect, and Exploitation</td>
<td><a href="http://51a.middlesexxcac.org/">http://51a.middlesexxcac.org/</a></td>
<td>Middlesex Children’s Advocacy Center with the Middlesex District Attorney’s Office and the Children’s Justice Unit of the Massachusetts Office of the Attorney General (state-sponsored/state-produced)</td>
<td>June 2022</td>
<td>Click-through modules with embedded videos/audio clips 60-75 minutes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kentucky</td>
<td>Recognizing and Reporting Child Abuse and Neglect</td>
<td><a href="https://education.ky.gov/teachers/Documents/CANtraining.CHFS.pdf">https://education.ky.gov/teachers/Documents/CANtraining.CHFS.pdf</a></td>
<td>Kentucky Cabinet for Health and Family Services, Department for Community Based Services, Division of Protection and Permanency (state-produced)</td>
<td>January 2019</td>
<td>Recorded video of speaker presenting PowerPoint slides with follow-up assessment (and answer key) 30 minutes</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### Appendix B: Purposes and/or Learning Objectives of Training Curricula

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>State</th>
<th>Training Purposes or Learning Objectives (Verbatim from Training)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Connecticut</td>
<td><strong>Purpose of Mandated Reporter Training</strong>  &lt;br&gt;• Provide information  &lt;br&gt;• To keep you to date with your roles, responsibilities and changes in the law and possible preventative measures you can take to protect yourselves as well as the children and families you serve  &lt;br&gt;• To hear concerns, answer questions, and develop ways to work together to better protect children</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pennsylvania</td>
<td><strong>Course Learning Objectives</strong>  &lt;br&gt;By the end of this course, you will be able to:  &lt;br&gt;• Identify the infrastructure for protecting children from abuse in the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania  &lt;br&gt;• Identify the legal definition of Child Abuse according to Pennsylvania's Child Protective Services Law  &lt;br&gt;• Recognize potential indicators of child abuse  &lt;br&gt;• Determine when to report suspected child abuse  &lt;br&gt;• Recognize the effect of trauma on children who have been abused  &lt;br&gt;• Recognize how disproportionality and disparity effect the reporting of child abuse  &lt;br&gt;• Describe the roles, rights, and responsibilities of mandated and permissive reporters of suspected child abuse  &lt;br&gt;• Recognize mandated reporter protections as well as consequences for failure to report  &lt;br&gt;• Identify the process that follows after a report is made  &lt;br&gt;• Understand the roles and responsibilities of the county agency once a report is received  &lt;br&gt;• Define the process for reporting suspected child abuse</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>West Virginia</td>
<td><strong>Purpose</strong>  &lt;br&gt;This workshop will help mandated reporters of suspected child abuse and neglect understand their role and responsibilities to help protect and support children.  &lt;br&gt;<strong>Learning Objectives</strong>  &lt;br&gt;Participants will be able to:  &lt;br&gt;• Identify signs and indicators of child abuse and neglect,  &lt;br&gt;• Understand what to do when a child discloses abuse or neglect, and  &lt;br&gt;• Implement strategies and approaches that help prevent abuse and neglect from occurring.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Maine</td>
<td>The purpose of this training is to promote child safety by increasing the knowledge of Mandated Reporters, explaining the process for reporting abuse, and identification of the signs of abuse and neglect.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Colorado</td>
<td>Not stated</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>State</td>
<td>Topics</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>------------------</td>
<td>------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>North Carolina</td>
<td>- Indicators of child maltreatment&lt;br&gt;- North Carolina mandatory reporting laws&lt;br&gt;- Legal definitions of abuse and neglect&lt;br&gt;- Referrals&lt;br&gt;- Reporting barriers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Maryland</td>
<td>- Legal definitions of abuse and neglect&lt;br&gt;- Referrals&lt;br&gt;- Reporting barriers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Missouri</td>
<td>- Legal definitions of abuse and neglect&lt;br&gt;- Reporting barriers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Louisiana</td>
<td>- Legal definitions of abuse and neglect&lt;br&gt;- Reporting barriers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Texas</td>
<td>- Legal definitions of abuse and neglect&lt;br&gt;- Reporting barriers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>State</td>
<td>Objectives</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-------------</td>
<td>----------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| South Carolina | 1. Identify who mandated reporters are according to South Carolina law  
2. Identify the role and responsibilities of mandated reporters  
3. Describe statutory requirements and protections  
4. Recognize signs of possible abuse and neglect  
5. Describe when to make a report of child abuse or neglect | This training provides a short but comprehensive overview on what mandated reporting is, what behaviors or physical symptoms may constitute abuse and neglect, how to report reasonable suspicions to authorities, and what to expect when reporting | The purpose of this course is to educate you about the meaning of child abuse and neglect in Indiana, how to recognize report child abuse and neglect, that everyone is required to report it in Indiana, and what happens once child abuse or neglect is reported to the Indiana Department of Child Services, also known as DCS. | Learning Objectives:  
1. Identify the legal basis for child abuse and neglect services and reporting  
2. Understand your role and responsibilities  
3. Define types of child abuse and neglect  
4. Recognize the indicators of child abuse and neglect  
5. Determine the appropriate responses to disclosure  
6. Follow procedures for reporting  
7. Know information needed by CPS  
8. Describe the typical response and what to expect |
| New Jersey | Purpose  
To help you:  
- Understand when you are legally required to call the SCR, including when it is more appropriate for community based services  
- Reduce bias in the decision-making process  
- Foster a greater understanding of the impact of trauma and Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs)  
- Foster a greater understanding of protective factors and supports you can refer families to in lieu of making a report  
Objectives  
By the end of this training you will:  
- Be able to determine if a child shows indicators, including virtually  
- Recognize the impact of trauma and ACEs on children, families and yourself  
- Recognize the mitigating effects of the five protective factors  
- Recognize the impact of bias on your decision-making  
- Understand when you have a legal obligation to call the SCR  
- Recognize how you may better connect individuals and families with services  
- Know how to prepare to make the call to the SCR  
- Know how to complete the LDSS 2221A form  
- Understand your rights as a mandated reporter | | |
<p>| Indiana | | | | |
| Virginia | | | | |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>State</th>
<th>Requirements</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Arkansas</td>
<td><strong>When you have completed this course you will be able to:</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>● Better recognize the signs of child abuse and neglect</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>● Define the types of child abuse and neglect</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>● Determine what professions/individuals are mandated to report</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>● Know your role as a Mandated Reporter</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>● Understand your legal obligations as a Mandated Reporter</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>● Know when and how to report abuse and/or neglect to the Hotline</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>● Identify the steps and tools to use when making a child abuse report</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>● Identify which groups of children may be at a higher risk of being</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>being abused or neglected</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>● Understand the process that occurs after a hotline call is made</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Arizona</td>
<td><strong>Mandated Reporters will better understand:</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>● A.R.S. 13-3620 – Mandatory Reporting Statute</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>● The various types of Abuse</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>● Maricopa County Protocol for the Investigation of Child Abuse</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>● How and who to report to</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>● Advocacy Centers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Massachusetts</td>
<td><strong>This training was designed to help mandated reporters in Massachusetts:</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>● Understand their legal obligations under the 51A Law</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>● Recognize the various forms child maltreatment (and what is not maltreatment)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>● Know how to file a 51A Report</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>● Know how to respond when a child makes a disclosure</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>● Understand what happens after a 51A Report is filed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kentucky</td>
<td><strong>None included in training video; however, website states that all trainings in Kentucky must include under law (KRS 156.095, Section 8(b)):</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1. Recognizing child physical, sexual, and emotional abuse and neglect;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2. Reporting suspected child abuse and neglect in Kentucky as required by KRS 620.030 and the appropriate documentation;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>3. Responding to the child; and</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>4. Understanding the response of child protective services</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>