

NACC Statement Condemning Police Brutality and Racist Violence

There can be no children's justice without racial justice.

NACC strongly condemns the killings of George Floyd, Ahmaud Aubrey, Breonna Taylor, and so many more Black lives lost to police brutality and racist violence. From Emmet Till to Tamir Rice to Trayvon Martin to today, we are heartbroken and stand in solidarity with demonstrators demanding long overdue reform.

As members of the legal profession, we have a special responsibility to speak out against state-sponsored injustice. We should all ask ourselves what can we do? What is our moral and ethical responsibility, as humans, and as lawyers?

Racial disproportionality for black children in the child welfare system exists at every decision point in the process due to a legacy of individual, institutional, and systemic racism. Black youth are overrepresented in foster care at twice their rate in the U.S. population. Black families and communities are more likely to be surveilled and Black youth are more likely to be removed from their families, placed in congregate care, and charged with crimes. Due to the arrests of Black youth in foster care, *the child welfare system has been identified as a significant source of racial disparities in the juvenile justice system* .

NACC policy calls for the elimination of racial disparities and disproportionality in our child welfare, juvenile justice, and other child-serving systems. Child welfare practitioners must understand the role that race has played and continues to play in policies that separate and incarcerate families and which criminalize the adolescence of Black youth. Change begins at the individual level, addressing implicit bias through candid reflections on how our perspectives and advocacy are shaped by our own privileges and biases, as well as engaging and listening to the people and communities who rely on our legal representation. This work continues at the systemic level, where a structural lens is necessary to understand how racial inequities are produced and addressed. Alongside including impacted communities in decision-making, identifying and implementing tools for racial equity must become a daily practice for individuals, organizations, and governments.

In furtherance of our strategic plan, last month our team at NACC completed race equity training with the Race Matters Institute, a program of JustPartners, Inc. NACC identified that if we do not grapple with the challenges needed to actualize racial equity, diversity, and inclusion as an organization and a membership association, NACC will not achieve our mission and the impact we wish to have on the field. This summer, our Board of Directors will also participate in this training.

We hope you will join us in this journey because there can be no children's justice without racial justice. Black Lives Matter.

We are NACC. Together we are Promoting Excellence, Building Community, Advancing Justice.

June 3, 2020