

## **Backgrounder**

### **A snapshot into the lives of Black youth in the province's care systems**

- There are an estimated 539,205 African Canadians, representing 4 per cent of Ontario's total population. (1)
- Despite representing a small proportion of the population, Black youth are over-represented in the child welfare and youth justice systems.

### **Interactions with Youth Justice**

- Young black males are five times more likely to be jailed than the general youth population. (2)
- Black students make up approximately 12 per cent (32,000) of total high school students in the Toronto public board – yet account for more than 31 per cent of all suspensions. (3)
- Young Blacks males are 3 times more likely to be stopped by police compared to white males. (4)

### **Interactions with Child Welfare**

- In Toronto, African Canadians make up 6.9 per cent of the city's population – yet they represent an overwhelming 65 per cent of the children in care. (5)
- When a report is made to child welfare authorities, individuals of African descent are investigated twice as often as whites. (6)

### **Special Needs and Mental Health Systems**

- A US study found that Black children and young adults are half as likely to get mental health care compared to whites despite having similar rates of mental health problems. (7)
- A US study found an overrepresentation of Black students (especially Black males) in special education due to biased testing and the cultural misunderstanding of Black people. (8)

## **Poorer Outcomes for Black Canadians Adults**

- Compared with the non-Black population, Black individuals earn less income, have higher rates of unemployment, suffer poorer health outcomes, and are more likely to be victims of violence. (9)
- A 2016 Census found that blacks face one of the highest rates of unemployment at 10.7 per cent compared with other racialized groups (e.g. Japanese at 5.1%) and non-racialized groups at 6.2 per cent. (10)
- Those who identify as Black earn approximately 75.6 cents for every dollar compared to a non-racialized worker earns, with an annual earnings gap of \$9,101. (11)

### **Sources:**

- (1) OACAS, August 2015. *Fact Sheet: The African Canadian Population in Ontario*.
- (2) Toronto Star, 2013, [article](#)
- (3) Toronto Star, March 2013, [article](#)
- (4) Toronto Star, 2010, [article](#)
- (5) Gordon Pon et al, "Immediate Response: Addressing Anti-Native and Anti-Black Racism in Child Welfare" 2011) 3 & 4 *International Journal of Child, Youth and Family Studies*, pg. 385 at 386.
- (6) Y. Yaun, J. Fluke, J. Hedderson and P. Curtis, "Disproportionate Representation of Race and Ethnicity in Child Maltreatment: Investigation and Victimization," *Children and Youth Services Review*, 25 (2003): 359-373.
- (7) Marrast, Himmelstein & Woolhandler. "Racial and Ethnic Disparities in Mental Health Care for Children and Young Adults: A National Study" [article](#). *International Journal of Health Sciences*.
- (8) Peterz, 1999. *Motion Magazine*, "The Overrepresentation of Black Students in Special Education Classrooms" [article](#)
- (9) Attewell, Kasinitz, & Dunn, 2010; Brooks, 2009; Nestel, 2012; Wortley & Tanner, 2004.
- (10) Block & Edward Galabuzi, "Canada's colour coded labour market" <http://www.policyalternatives.ca/sites/default/files/uploads/publications/National%20Office/2011/03/Colour%20Coded%20Labour%20Market.pdf>
- (11) Ibid