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Foster care outcomes and experiences of infants removed due to substance abuse

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ABSTRACT

This exploratory study used administrative data from the 2015 foster care file of the Adoption and Foster Care Reporting System to examine the experiences and outcomes of infants who had substance abuse indicated as their reason for removal. Logistic regression was used to explore the relationship between removal for substance abuse and race/ethnicity, placement setting, case plan goal, and discharge manner. T-tests were used to compare infants groups with respect to average placement duration. Separate analyses were conducted to compare outcomes for infants with substance abuse as their sole removal reason and for infants with substance abuse included as at least one removal reason amongst others. Nearly 17% of infants had substance abuse

indicated as their sole removal reason and over 50% of infants had substance abuse included among multiple removal reasons. Infants removed due to substance abuse differed on a number of key outcomes compared to infants whose cases did not include substance abuse as a removal reason. Findings suggest that local child welfare systems would benefit from ongoing assessment of trends in substance abuse removals and that more attention to the long-term child welfare outcomes of children who were removed due to substance abuse as infants is warranted.

KEYWORDS: [Infants](#), [foster care](#), [substance abuse](#), [removal reason](#)

Additional information

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Reiko Boyd, PhD, is an Assistant Professor at the University of Houston Graduate College of Social Work. Her research focuses on racial disparities and equity in the child welfare system, Black infant health and wellbeing, youth emancipating from foster care, and structural inequality and opportunity in communities of color.

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