How Often and Why Are Marginalized Families Dismissed from EI Services?

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Agenda

1. Who are we?
2. Background
3. Research frameworks
4. Method
5. Results
6. Discussion
7. Reflections

Who are we?

Part C (EI)

Part B (ECSE/K-12)
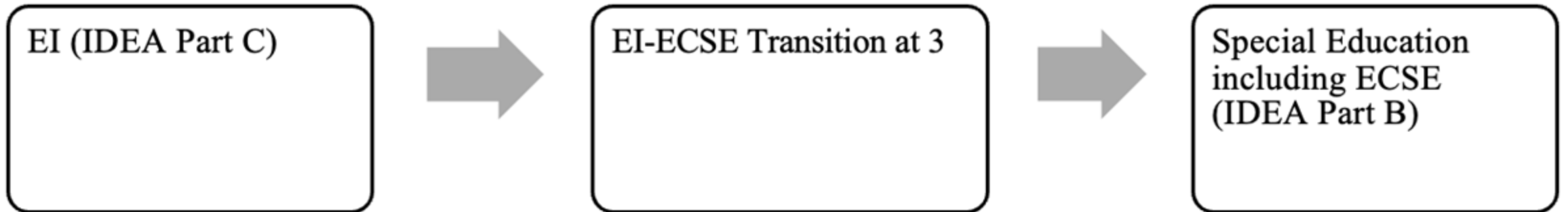
Teacher Trainers

Researchers

Who is Maiko?

Doctorate candidate &
Early Intervention/Early Childhood
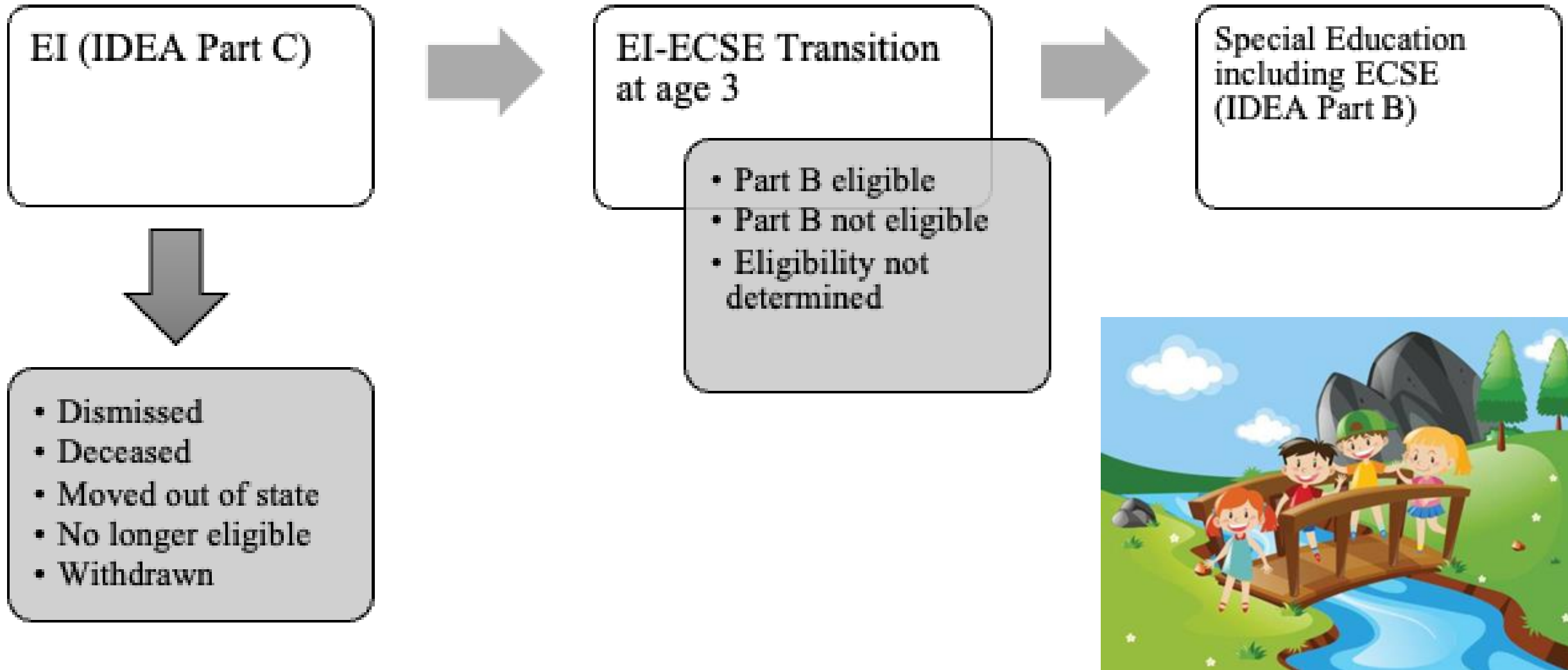Special Education (EI/ECSE) Specialist

- Serving families and their children 0-5 with developmental delay and/or disability
- Worked with thousands of international students
- Immigrated from Japan
- Autistic
- Universal Design for Learning advocate
- … And I was scared.

Background

EI serves infants and toddlers under age 3 under IDEA Part C. When they turn three, they transition to IDEA Part B which provides special education for children ages 3-21 (Early Childhood Technical Assistance Center, 2024).

EI (IDEA Part C) → EI-ECSE Transition at 3 → Special Education including ECSE (IDEA Part B)

Background/Problem

EI (IDEA Part C)

→

EI-ECSE Transition at age 3

- Part B eligible
- Part B not eligible
- Eligibility not determined

→

Special Education including ECSE (IDEA Part B)

↓

- Dismissed
- Deceased
- Moved out of state
- No longer eligible
- Withdrawn

Problem

Racially marginalized infants and toddlers are more likely to exit EI due to lost contact (**Dismissal**)

OSEP, 2024.
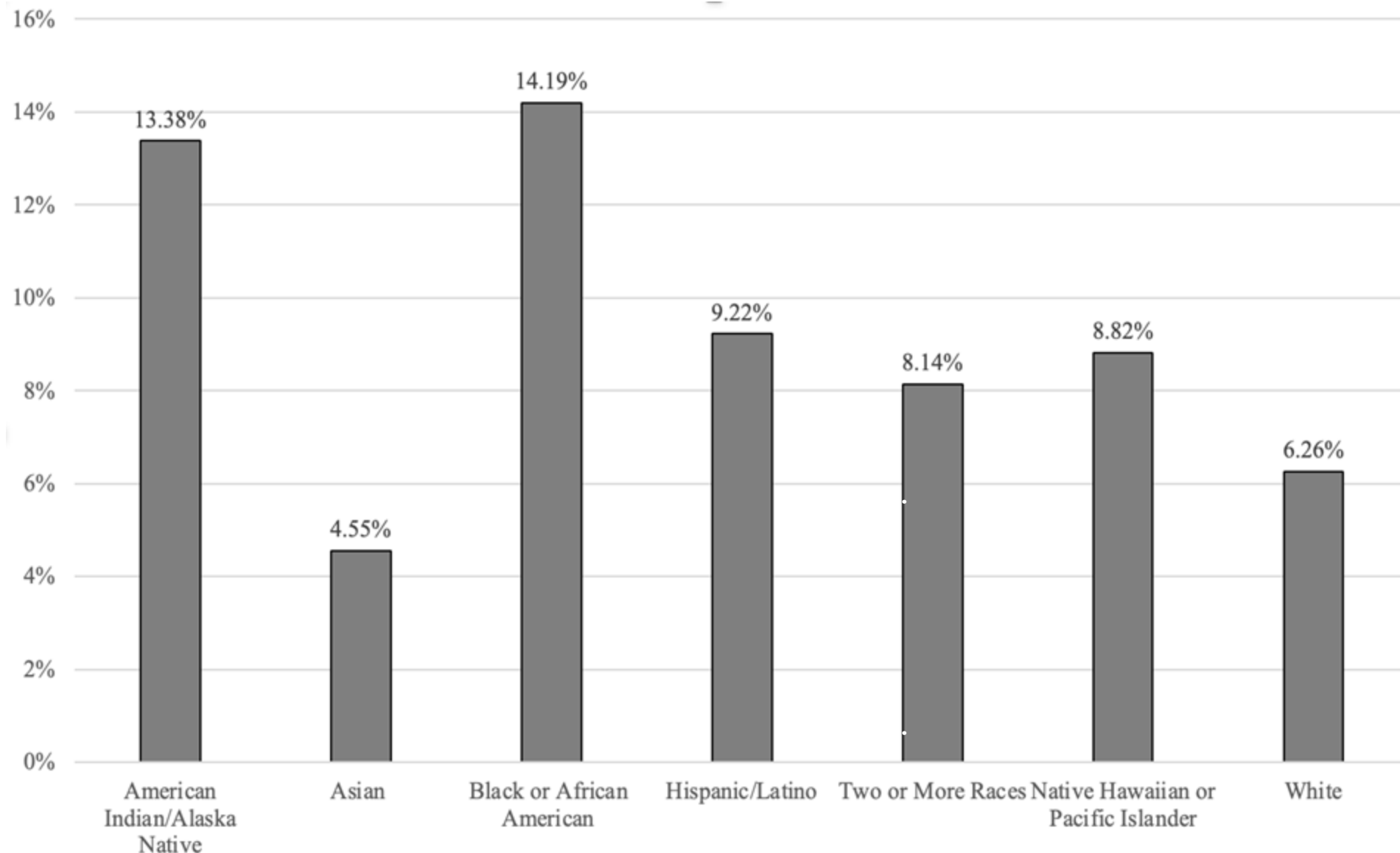
Framework 1: Intersectionality

"Because the **intersectional experience is greater than the sum of racism and sexism**, any analysis that does not take intersectionality into account cannot sufficiently address the particular manner in which Black women are subordinated."

- Crenshaw (1989)

Framework 2: QuantCrit

- Acknowledge the history of quantitative research.
  - *How Eugenics Shaped Statistics*
- Outline challenges and strengths.
- Use nonparametric statistics for small/unbalanced sample sizes.
- Incorporate community voices.
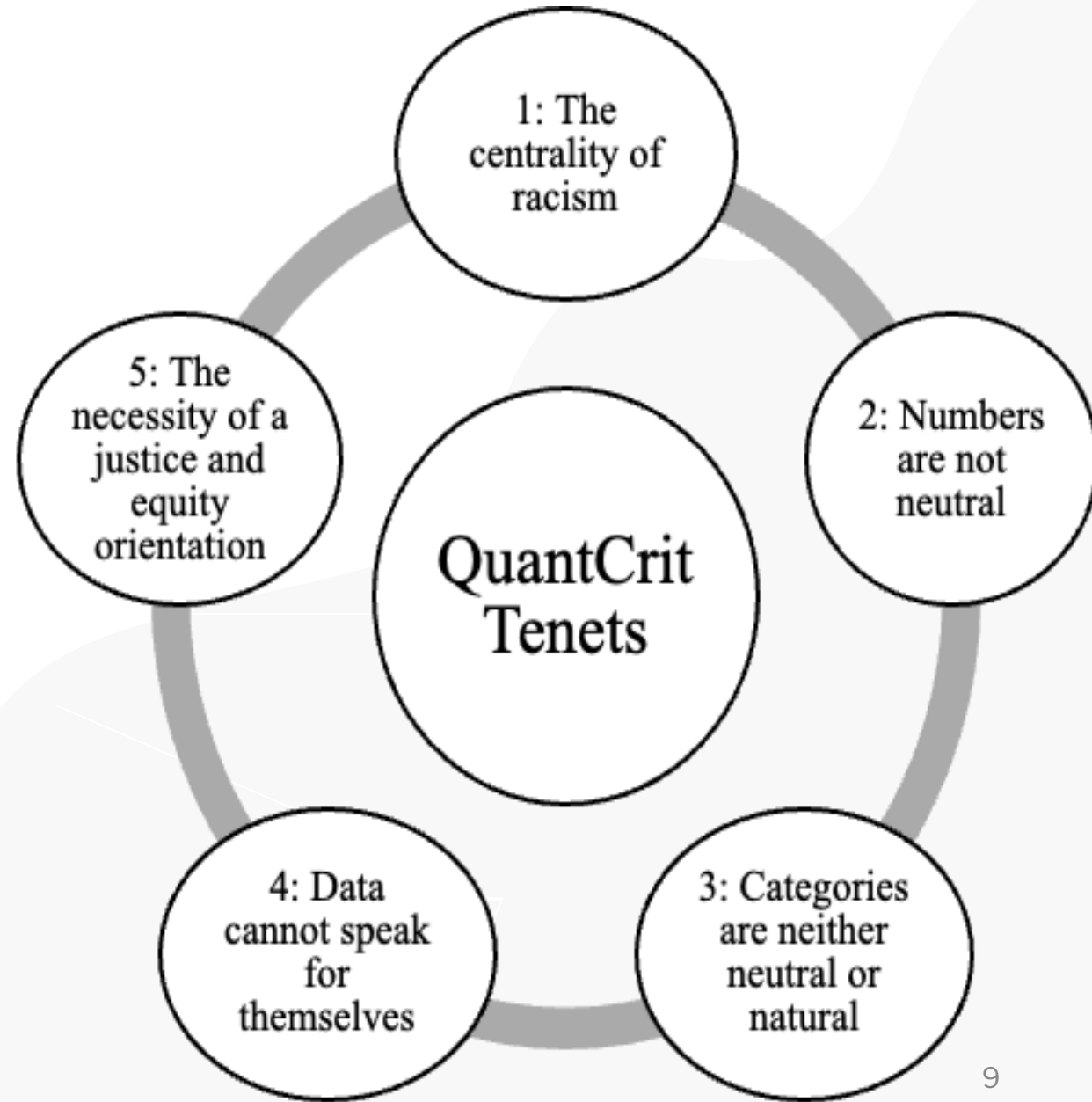
Framework 3: Social Determinants of Health (SDOH)

"**Medical care alone cannot adequately improve health** overall or reduce health disparities without also addressing where and how people live".

Braveman et al., 2011, p. 381.

Research Question(s)

- How are EI systems serving children of color nationally and in Oregon?
  - Specifically, How do **EI exit patterns vary by race and ethnicity** nationally and in Oregon?
  - (I also analyzed **by home language(s)**)

Lit Synth: Disparities in EI Exit

- **Children of color have been more likely to enter EI at an older age with more significant delays**.
- **Black children under 5 involved in child welfare were half as likely** as White children in similar contexts **to get educational, mental, or primary care services**.
- 46% of children who mainly received speech therapy were Latinx. Yet, **fewer than one-third had been referred to EI**, and nearly one-fourth who qualified **never** got services.
- **Odds ratio for Dismissal was higher for Hispanic children**.

Barnard-Brak et al., 2020; Stahmer et al., 2005; Barfield et al., 2007; Feinberg et al., 2011; Magnusson, 2015; Romo, 2020; Romo et al., 2023.

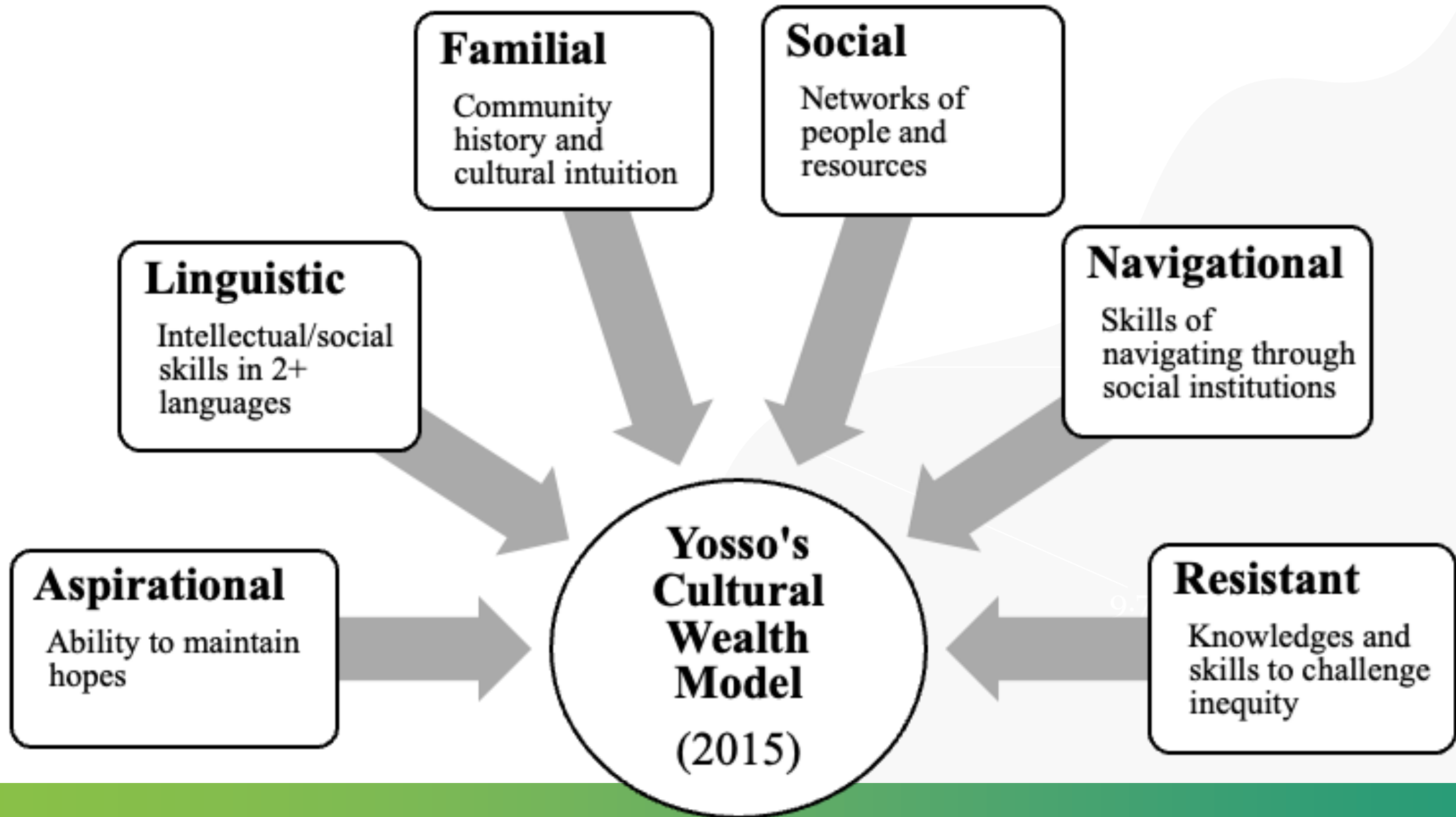# Lit Synth: Inconsistent Reporting

Dismissal rates ranged from 1% to 23% across states, with a national average of 8%:

- **Confusion over how to categorize** exits among "Moved out of state," "Withdrawal," and "Contact unsuccessful."
- **Unclear guidelines** on the number and type of contact attempts required before dismissal.
- Pressure to meet the **timeline**.

Hansen et al. (2016)

Lit Synth: Family Strengths

Familial
Community history and cultural intuition

Social
Networks of people and resources

Linguistic
Intellectual/social skills in 2+ languages

Navigational
Skills of navigating through social institutions

Aspirational
Ability to maintain hopes

Yosso's Cultural Wealth Model
(2015)

Resistant
Knowledges and skills to challenge inequity

Analysis

1. **Chi-square with adjusted standardized residuals** will be calculated following standard statistical practice (Agresti, 2013).
2. **Odds ratios** to describe potential associations where large differences are observed.

Threat to Validity

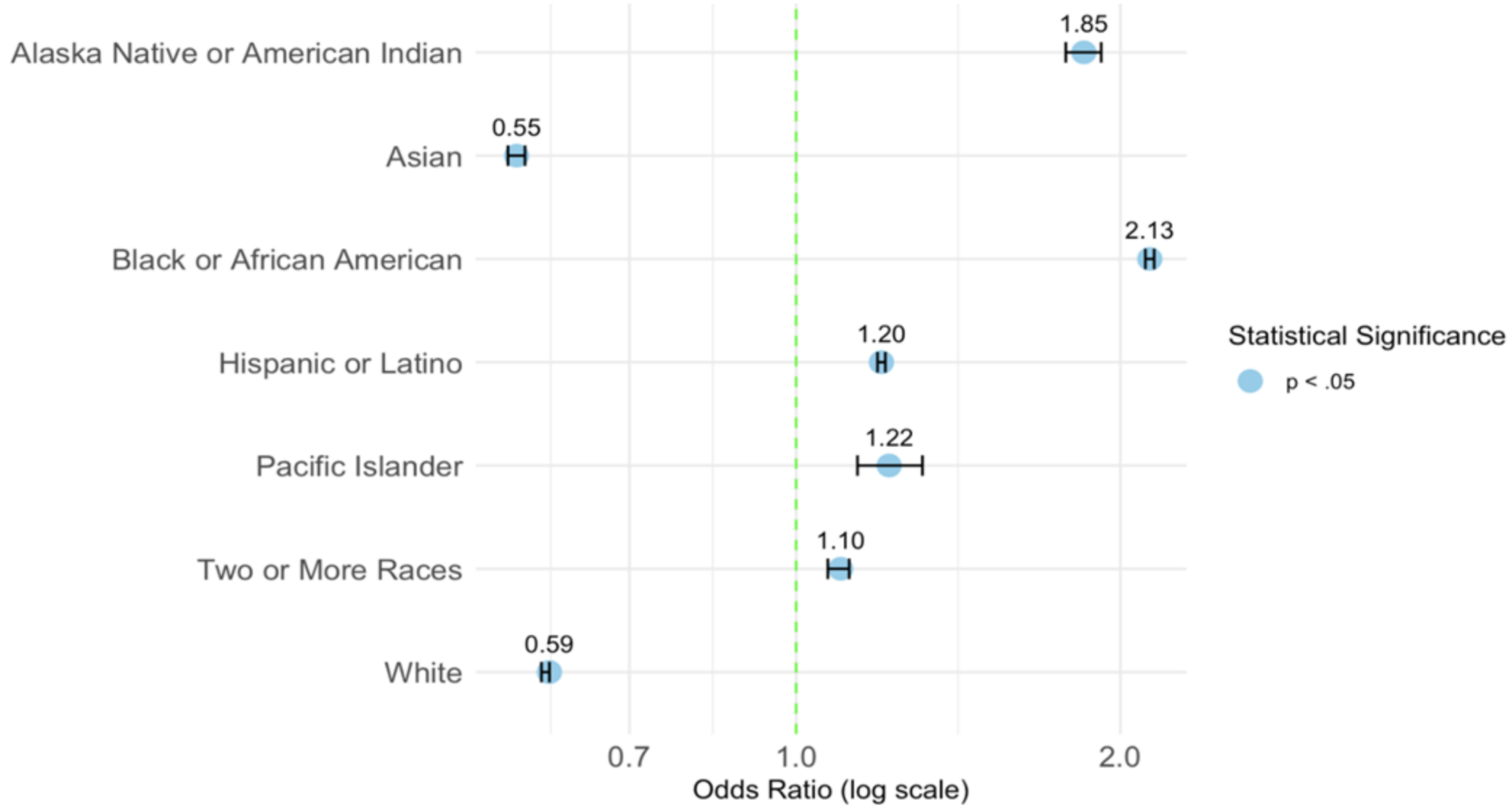- This study **assumes accuracy in demographic information on ecWeb**, but...
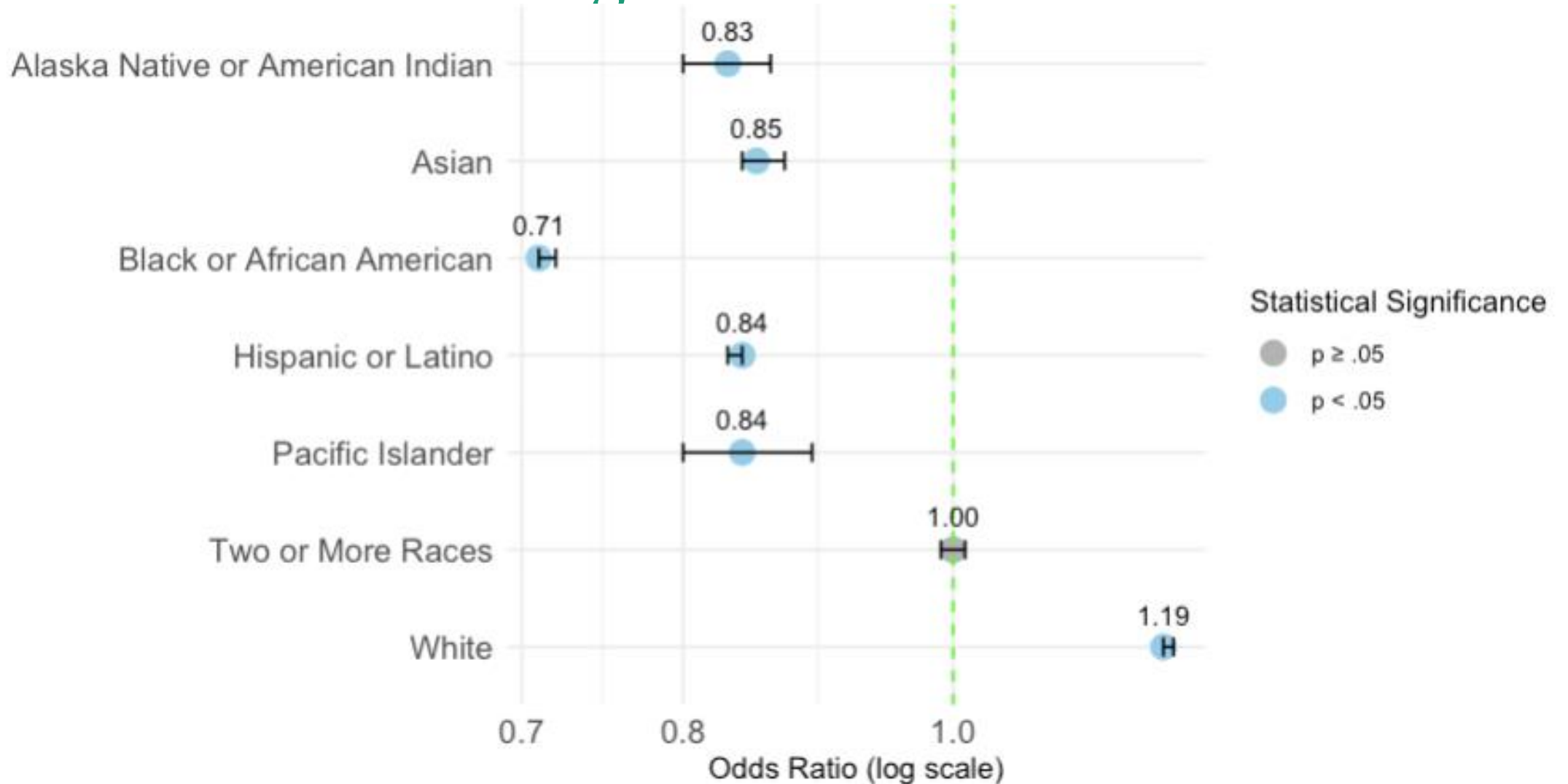
Results: National

What groups experienced exits via:

- Dismissal?

- Not Eligible?

Results: National "Dismissed"

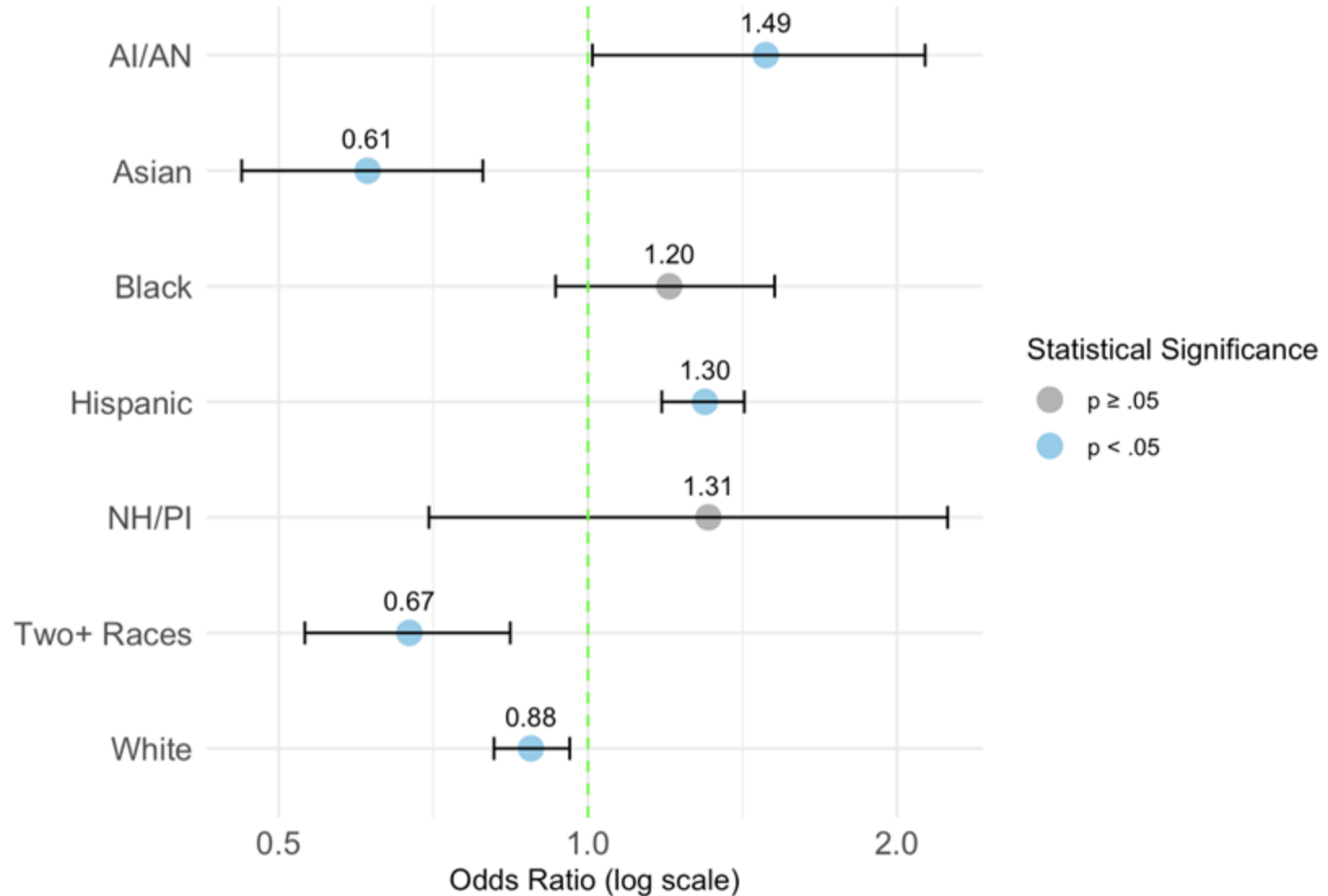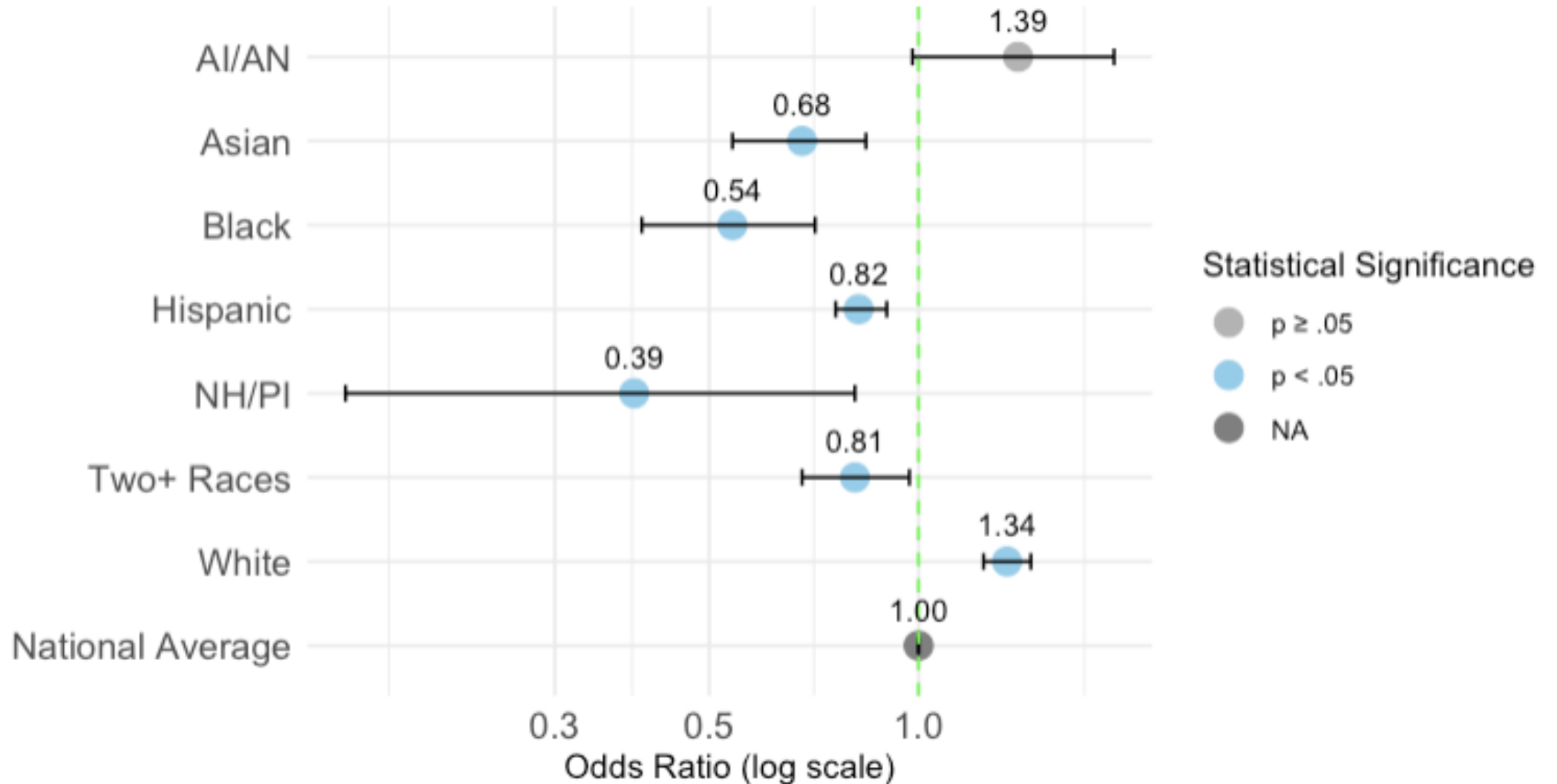# Results: National "Not Eligible"

Results: Oregon

What groups experienced exits via:
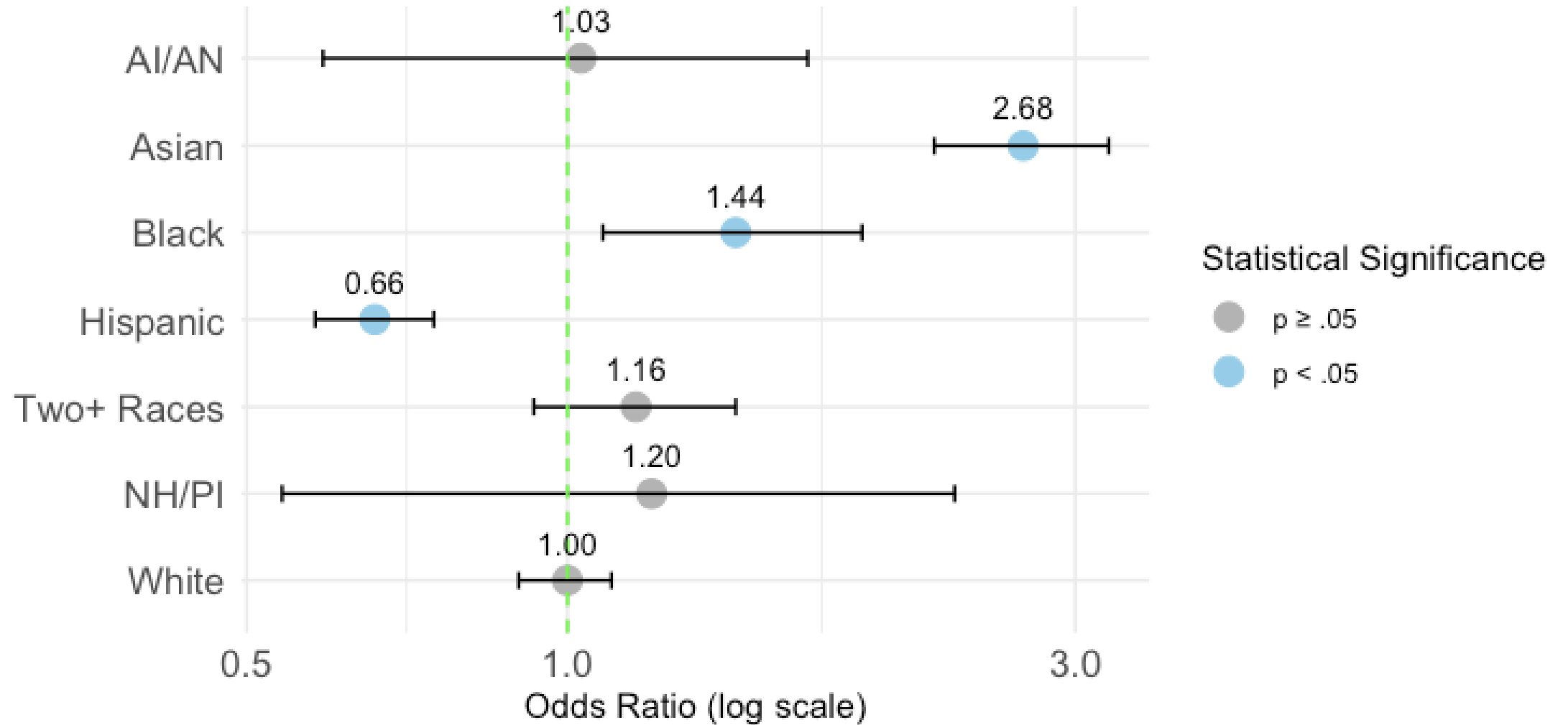
- Dismissal?

- Not Eligible?

- Moved Out?

Results: Oregon "Dismissed"

Results: Oregon "Not Eligible"

Results: Oregon "Moved Out"

Implication 1: Data Equity

GUIDE-EI (Gathering Unbiased Information for Demographic Equity) Electronic System Design & Infrastructure

- For race and language fields:
  - Use checkboxes to allow multiple selections
  - Include a list of the state's top 10+ most common languages to promote consistency.
  - Limit free-text entry to "Other" only to reduce errors.
- Do *not* use the Language Use Survey to capture linguistic diversity; Reserve it for EL identification only.
- Add a separate 'Service Language' field to capture additional languages needs for service provision. This ensures languages are recorded proactively, not just when translation or interpretation services are requested.
- Record reasons and contexts for Dismissal, Moved Out, Eligibility Not Determined, even if not required by IDEA Part C.

Implication 1: Data Equity 8/22/25

ED Proposal Removes Federal Data Collection for Special Education Racial Disparities
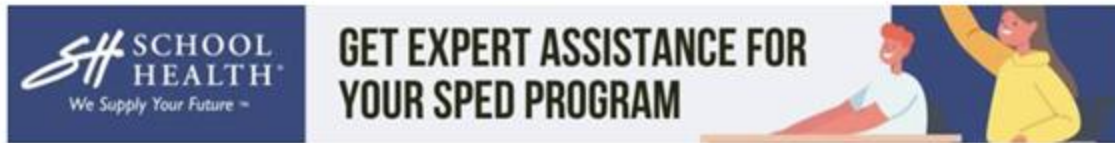
Home > Special Education TODAY > ED Proposal Removes Federal Data Collection for Special Education Racial Disparities

According to a notice published in the Federal Register today, the U.S. Department of Education (ED) proposes to eliminate a requirement for states to report on racial disparities in special education. The process of tracking racial overrepresentation or underrepresentation in special education—called significant disproportionality—aims to identify states and districts where rad gaps exist in special education identification, placement, and discipline.
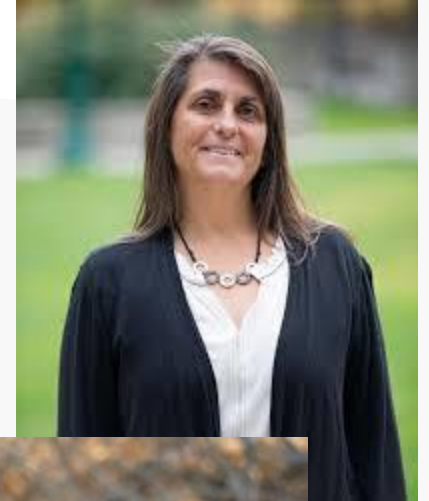
Federal data show that in the 2020–21 school year, roughly 5% of school districts across the country were flagged for signific

"If you eliminate us in the data, we don't exist. We don't exist for the allocation of resources."

- Abigail Echo-Hawk (Pawnee), Director of the Urban Indian Health Board and Chief Research Officer at the Seattle Indian Health Board (Nagle, 2020).

Implication 1: Data Equity

- Drs. Cycyk & Durán's Data Sovereignty session (Thursday, 10/9 1:30)
- Data equity tools:
  - A toolkit for centering racial equity throughout data integration by AISP https://aisp.upenn.edu/centering-equity/
  - CARE Principles https://www.gida-global.org/care
  - How eugenics shaped statistics https://nautil.us/how-eugenics-shaped-statistics-238014/

Implication 2: Clear Procedure for Dismissal

- Making the process less subjective may help reduce the influence of implicit bias by promoting clearer, more consistent procedures across cases (Henson et al., 2016).
- Minimizing subjectivity and clarifying expectations can lower the risk of bias in decision-making, particularly for students from marginalized communities (Staats, 2014). These insights might be relevant for improving family retention in EI.
- Flag SDOH support needs early.

Guidelines

Implication 3: Supporting Needs of Families

"ここには、進学に至るまでの経路が、個々人の自由意志で決められているという暗黙の前提があります…しかし現実には、女性が優遇されるどころか、大きな格差が存在するままで、それが可視化されていないという状況が長く続きました。

There is **an implicit assumption here that the path to higher education is determined by individual free will**... However, in reality, far from being given preferential treatment, women have continued to face significant disparities - disparities that have long remained invisible."

Yokoyama (2022).

Social Determinants of Health

Implication 3: Supporting Needs of Families

Raise Up Oregon: A Statewide System Plan

- An Oregon strategic plan on actions that state agencies can use with families, communities, and the private sector to build a comprehensive early childhood system
- All young children in Oregon should have an early start that promote positive health, education, and life outcomes regardless of zip code, race, and family income.

Oregon Early Learning Council, 2023.
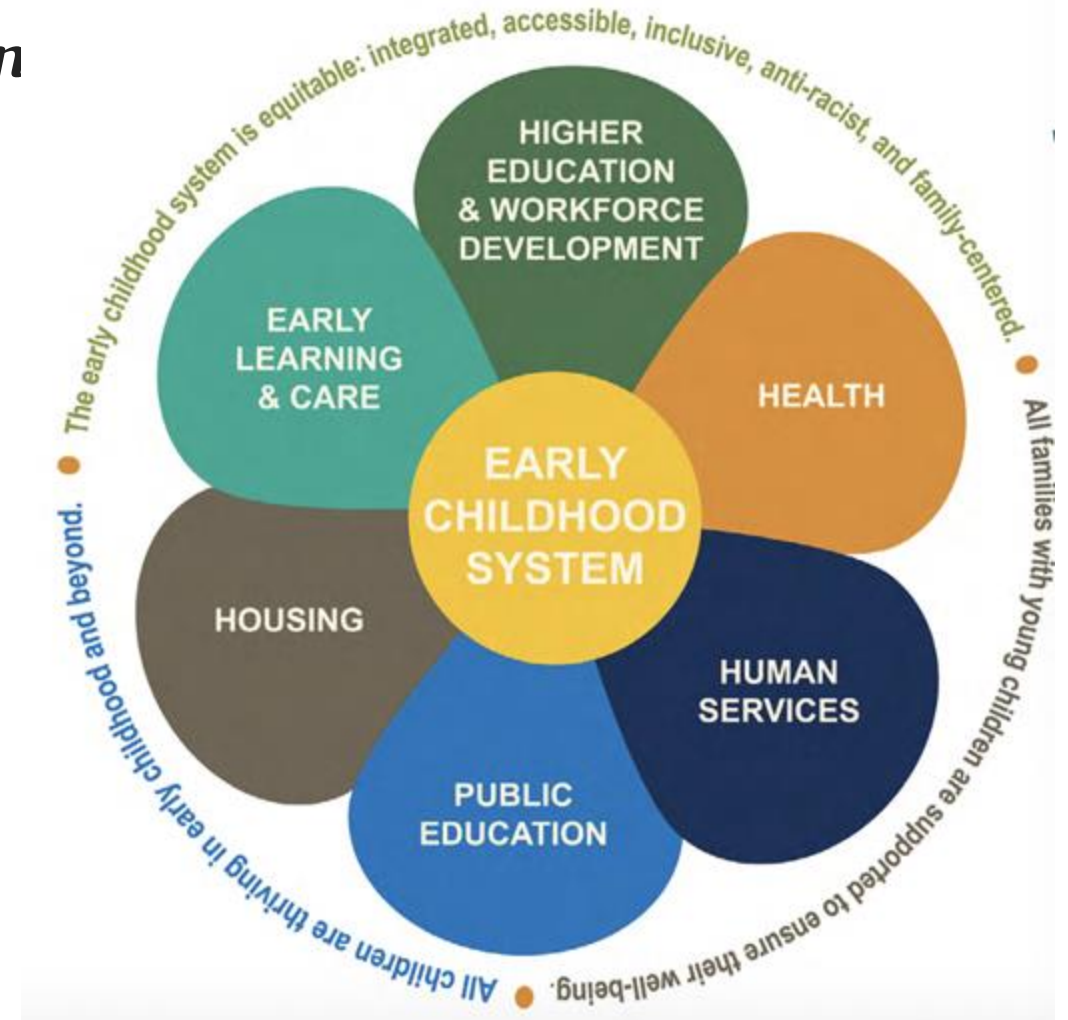
Implication 4: Strengthen Provider Training

"Wishful thinking, I want to see more people of color service providers, that would be nice. I think there needs to be more Native service providers because they get us and it's not as intimidating. They understand us and will hear us. I'd feel like I'd be on the same level as them. Sometimes service providers make me feel like a dumb parent until I let them know my background and education as a social worker. Then the attitude changes." Parent in the Native community listening session."

p. 43, Education Northwest, 2022.

- "I become passive. Teachers talk about many things, but I don't get all of them."
- "Koreans are very compliant to professionals... We are taught to say 'yes'"
- "I felt so embarrassed because they show me no respect."
- "Conversations moved quickly so the interpreter only gave us a summary"
- "The interpreter did not value my statements as much as the providers', and my assertiveness was not interpreted"

Wolfe & Durán, 2023.

Implication 4: Strengthen Provider Training

What do you do already to promote culturally responsive practices?

Implication 4: Strengthen Provider Training

- How frequently, in your experience, does the following problem occur?
  - Employees being afraid to express disagreement with their managers?

- How comfortable do you feel talking about race?

- In your first language, how many different words are there for "I"?

Implication 4: Strengthen Provider Training

**Power Distance
by Hofstede (2010)**
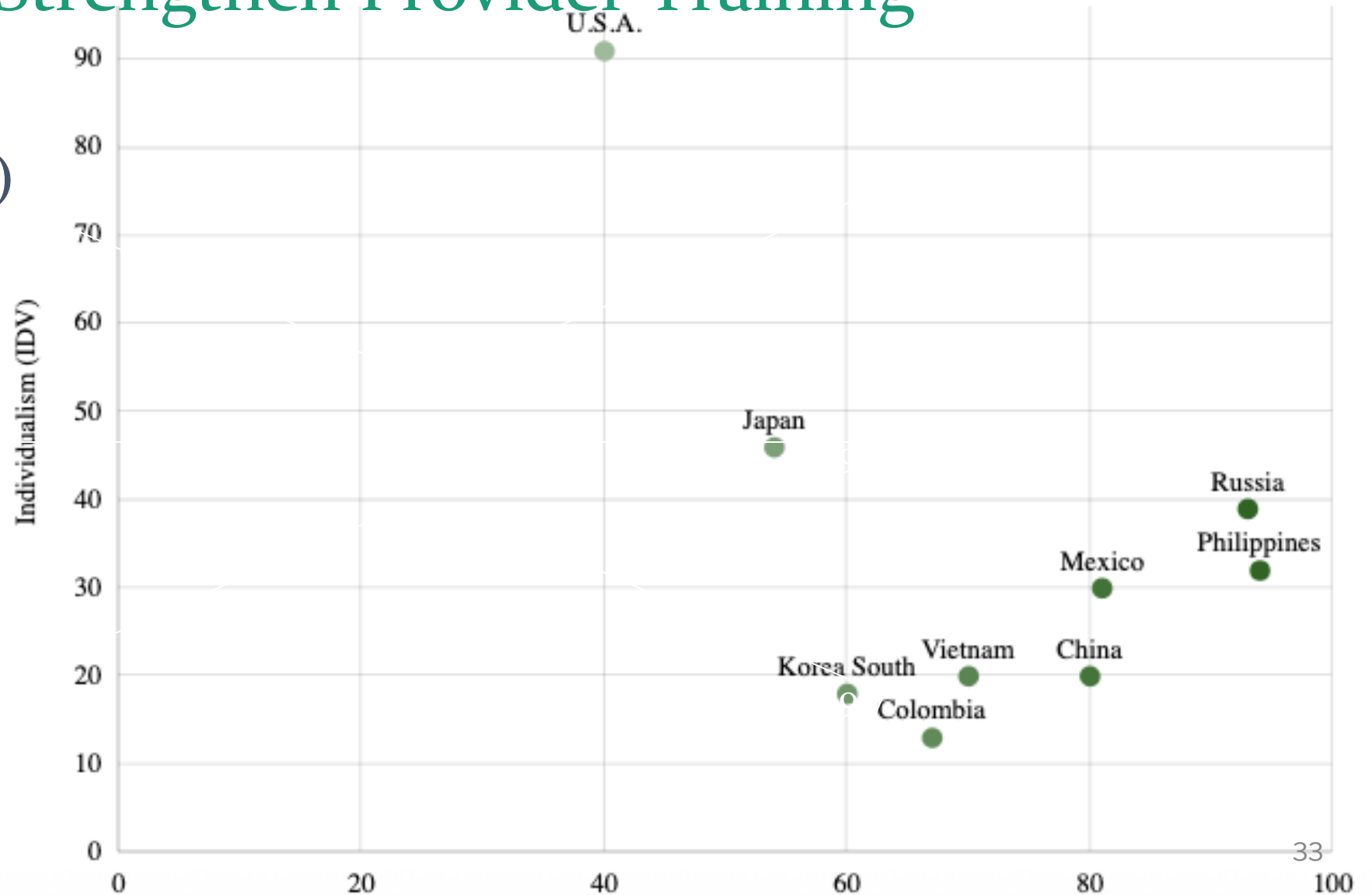
Implication 4: Strengthen Provider Training

- "White people and people of Color enter race dialogues from different positions. Thus, the needs of these groups in addressing racism, specifically in education, are radically different."

    p. 131, Strong et al., 2017.

- "What is safe for one group (Whites) may not be safe for another (people of color)."
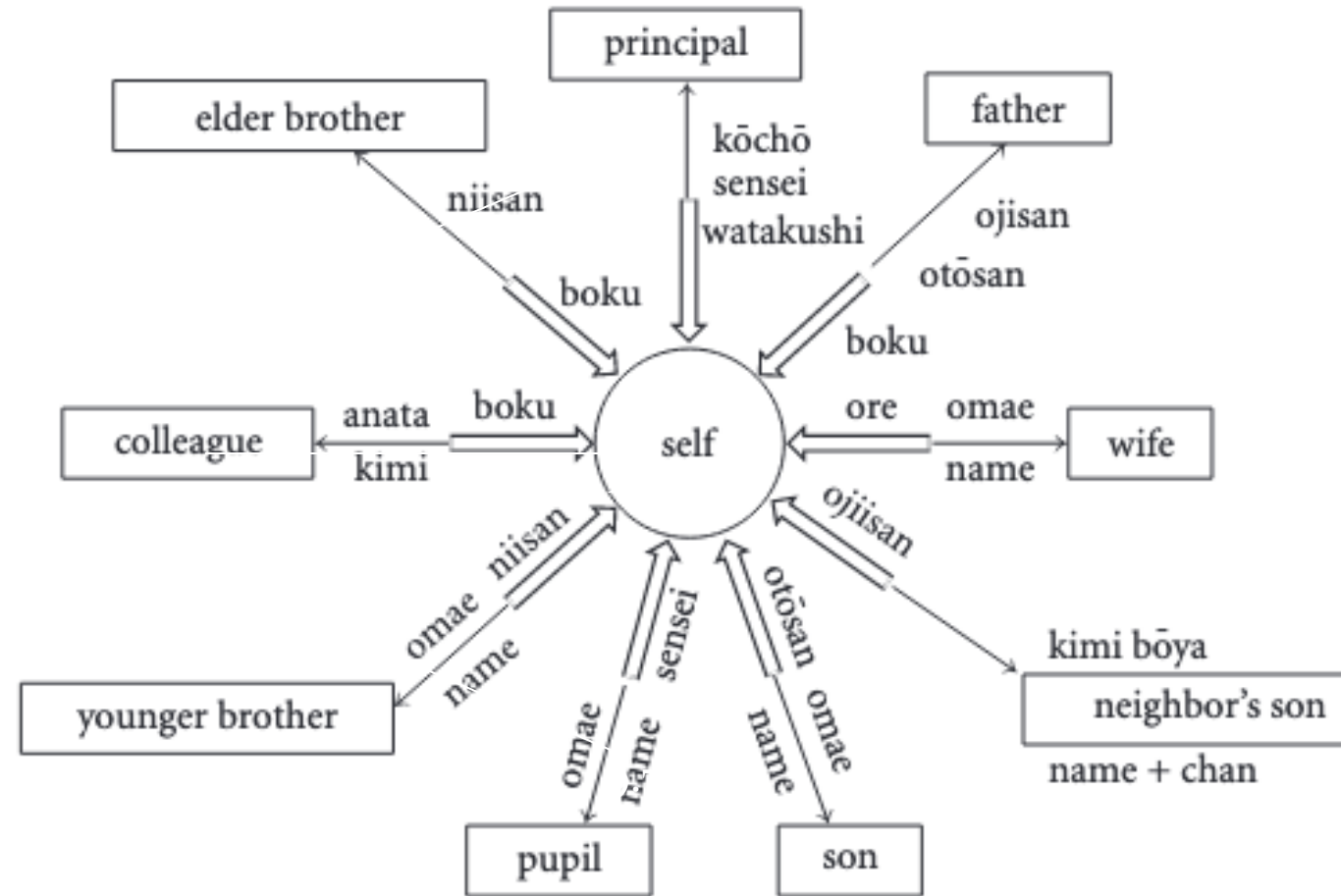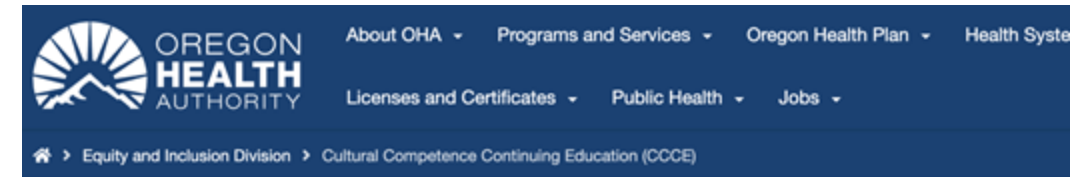
    p. 243, Sue, 2016

Figure 1. Rules for self and addressee reference terms (Suzuki 1987: 43)

Implication 4: Strengthen Provider Training

- Reflect on your skills and awareness
- Identify areas of strength and areas that can use more development

- *Implementation of transformative SEL standards for preparing future educators*
- *Cultural Competence Self-assessment Checklist*
- *Goals for Becoming Culturally Competent & Practicing Cultural Humility*
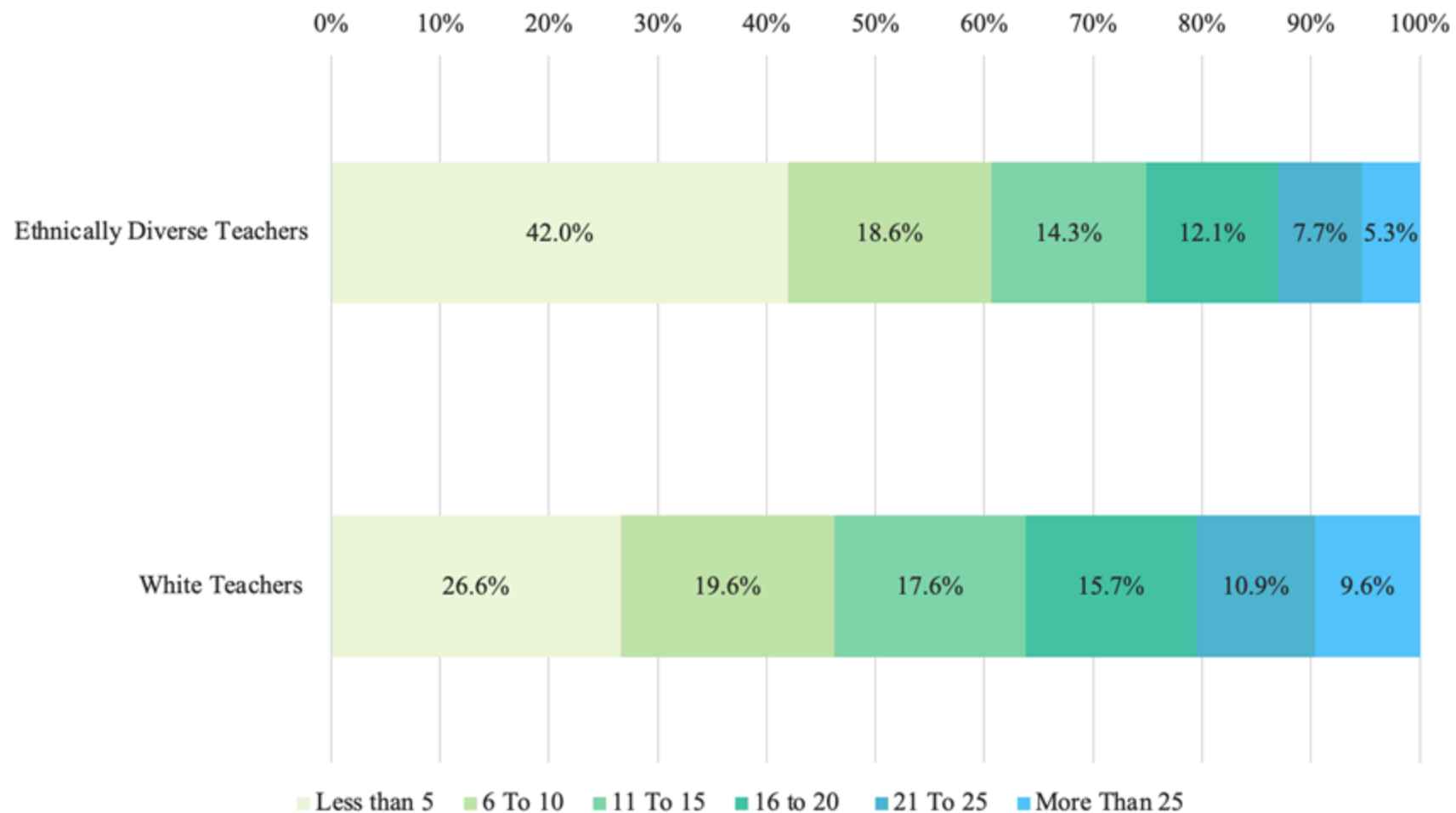
Strengthen Provider Training

Infant Early Childhood Mental Health (IECMH)

- National priorities emphasize the mental health of caregivers, especially because that of caregivers with children with developmental delays and/or disabilities often experience heightened stress.
- ECTA (2025) advocates for state EI programs to explore ways of integrating IECMH practices into a range of professional development opportunities.
- AND, burnout is real.
  - Please check out Erin Wennerstrom's presentation!

Strengthen Provider Retention

Chart: Provider retention by teacher group

	Less than 5	6 To 10	11 To 15	16 to 20	21 To 25	More Than 25
Ethnically Diverse Teachers	42.0%	18.6%	14.3%	12.1%	7.7%	5.3%
White Teachers	26.6%	19.6%	17.6%	15.7%	10.9%	9.6%

Tonya Coker's presentation on retention F, 10/10 1:30

> "THE MOST COMMON WAY PEOPLE GIVE UP THEIR POWER IS BY THINKING THEY DON'T HAVE ANY."
>
> ALICE WALKER

"To be a truly antiracist and intersectional public health agency and effectively eliminate health disparities requires recognition of the subjectivity of data and of the power of data to dictate and reinforce narratives, accompanied by intentional reform of data practices."

p. 12, Gould, et al., 2023

Questions?

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