



Effective Child Protective Services

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safe children | strong families | supportive communities

Outline

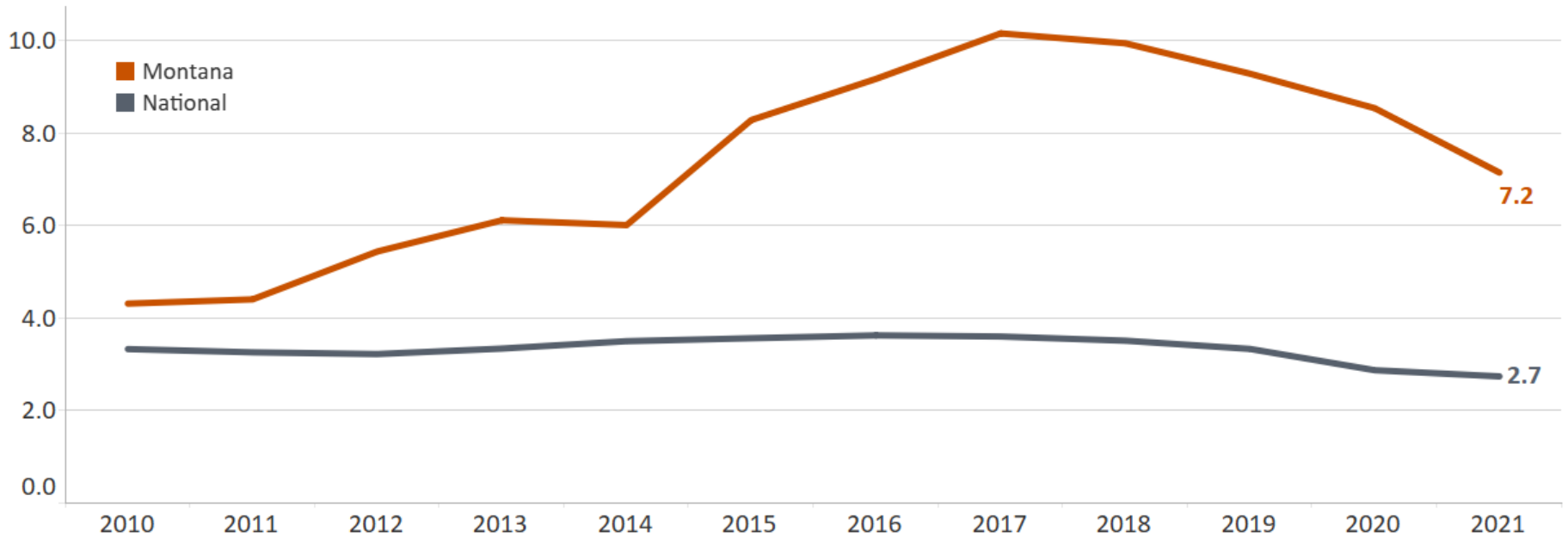
- A. Selected national and Montana CPS statistics
- B. Why we want to safely prevent children from unnecessarily being placed in out-of-home care
- C. Components of effective child protective services

A. Select Montana and National Data

Entry Rate: Montana & Nation

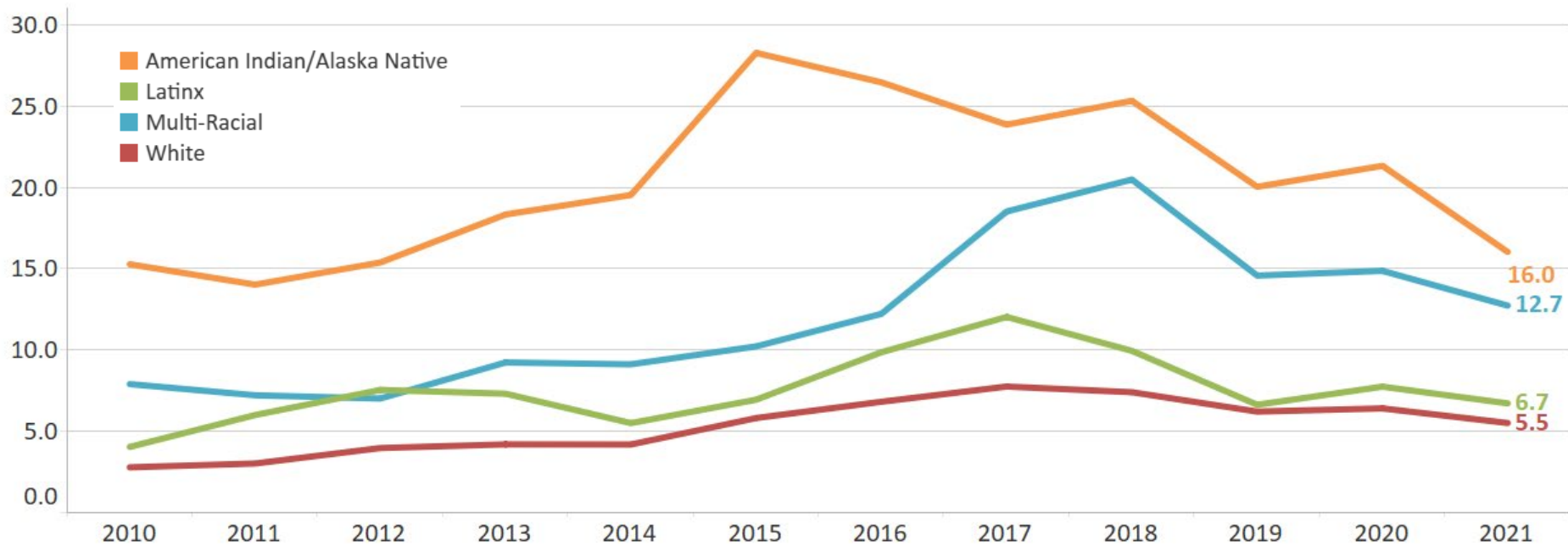
What is the rate of children (< age 18) entering out-of-home care?

(per 1,000 children in general population; federal fiscal year)



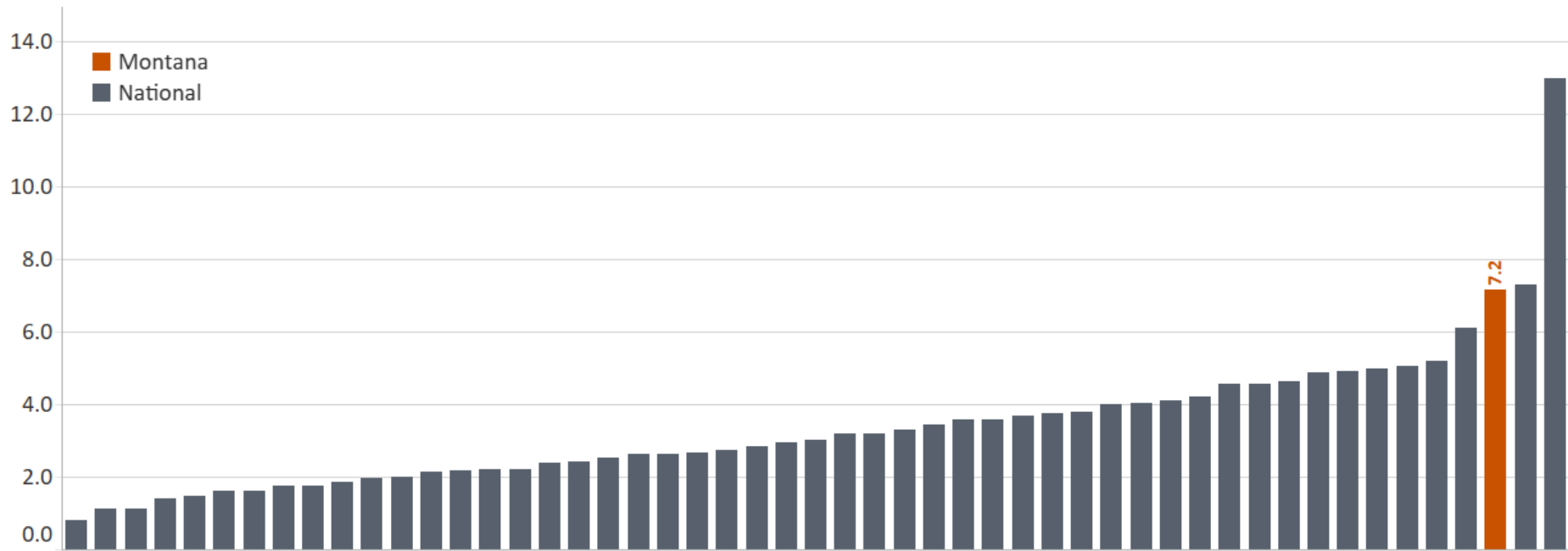
Entry Rate: Montana

What is the rate of children (< age 18) entering out-of-home care by race/ethnic group?
(per 1,000 children in general population; federal fiscal year)



Entry Rate: State Comparison

How does Montana rank to other states in rate of children (< age 18) entering out-of-home care?
(per 1,000 children in general population; federal fiscal year 2021)



CPS Statistics Highlights

- In 2020, child protection agencies received an estimated 3.9 million total referrals of maltreatment, involving approximately 7.1 million children.
- Nearly half (45.8%) of all the referrals were screened out, because of a lack of information on which to base an investigation or the maltreatment report does not concern child abuse or neglect.
- A well-functioning child protection agency would investigate these maltreatment referrals and intervene with families only where an assessment identified a ***significant threat to the child's safety.***

B. Why do we want to safely prevent children from unnecessarily being placed in out-of-home care?

- ❖ Children grow up best when raised in a family – preferably their birth family, relatives or tribal clan members
- ❖ CPS investigations and child placements are often deeply traumatic to children, their siblings and other family members
- ❖ Research shows that outcomes among children placed in foster care are worse than other children in terms of education, employment, homelessness, involvement in the criminal justice system and mental health

A Well-Functioning Child Protection Agency

- Federal laws lay the foundation for states on child maltreatment by identifying a minimum set of behaviors that define child abuse and neglect.
- However, because each state is responsible for defining child maltreatment in state law, there is significant variation and inconsistency which has led to definitions that expand beyond circumstances of abuse or neglect.
- Federal, state, local, and tribal governments have entrusted state child protection agencies with the authority to uphold safety through identification, assessment, and the provision of appropriate services.

Core Components of Effective CPS

- A CPS investigation is one of the most intrusive actions that government can take.
- Policymakers should hold the child protection agency accountable for ensuring that children are never removed from their families in response to ***non-safety*** related concerns, or when safety concerns can be addressed through community-centered supports or services.

Core Components of Effective CPS

- For those children in foster care, a well-functioning child protection agency works with urgency to reunite them with family as soon as is safely possible.
- The financial and other challenges some families experience, which often lead to reports to child protection, can be more appropriately addressed through financial assistance or supports.
- Montana has access to federal resources through their approved Family First Prevention Services plan to safely support children with their family.

Core Components of Effective CPS

An effective CPS agency targets its resources to:

1. Utilize the best evidence-based assessment tools, safety approaches, reasonable caseloads, and multidisciplinary teaming to assess the family situation
2. Identify those children at imminent risk of being harmed by abuse or neglect.
3. Make timely determinations as to whether and how best to intervene with families based on data and other information.

Core Components of Effective CPS

4. Apply trauma informed expertise to ensure that services to keep a family together safely. (E.g., partnering with other agencies to provide economic and concrete supports to families at risk of child maltreatment)
5. Develop and maintain collaborative relationships with service provider agencies -- actively pursuing the best and appropriate service delivery for families that is culturally appropriate
6. Montana's *Family First* state plan is a pathway that can help the state implement some of these best practices.

In summary, research and data tell us that children do better with their families. If there is a safety concern that warrants placement in foster care, children should be placed with, and supported temporarily with, relatives in their communities.