

## Parental Disability and Termination of Parental Rights in Child Protection

*Translating research to practice may be difficult, yet a better understanding of current research is necessary to ensure child welfare workers engage in best practices when working with children and families. The Minn-Link Discussion Guide is designed to help facilitate thoughtful discussions about the information presented in the research brief in order to inform practice and enhance discussion surrounding meaningful issues.*

*In this issue, we were interested understanding the prevalence of parental disability among Termination of Parental Rights (TPR) cases in Minnesota and in determining whether parents with disabilities were overrepresented in child protection TPR cases. Additionally, this study sought to understand the characteristics of parents with disabilities who experienced TPR. Findings of this study suggested that parents with disabilities are significantly overrepresented in TPR cases as well as out-of-home placement (OHP) cases. The proportions of parents with disabilities who experienced at least one TPR or who had at least one child in OHP were consistently greater than they were for the general population of non-disabled parents.*

### Discussion on Practice Implications

1. This study found that parents with disabilities were disproportionately overrepresented in TPR and OHP cases. Why do you think it is important to examine potential disproportionality among parents with disabilities involved in Child Protective Services (CPS)? What factors do you believe have contributed to the disproportionate representation of parents with disabilities in TPR and OHP cases? Does this appear to be a systemic issue? How so?
2. What are some ways to reduce the overrepresentation of parents with disabilities in TPR and OHP cases? What are ways we can support parents with disabilities involved in CPS? Are there early intervention services available to support parents with disabilities in your area?

### Discussion on Agency- & System-Level Changes

1. Although parents with disabilities are overrepresented in TPR cases in Minnesota, Minnesota is one of the few states that does not include disability as grounds for termination of parental rights. Policies that allow for TPR as a result of parental disability may be unfair for fit parents. What systems are in place in your organization to assist parents with disabilities? What community and systemic supports may be useful for parents with disabilities? How can we advocate for parents with disabilities involved in CPS?
2. What alternatives are available to assess parenting practices? What assessment tools do workers in CPS have to determine parental capacity and ability for parents with disabilities? What changes are needed to better meet the needs of parents with disabilities?