

MHFC research is dedicated to understanding how children and families develop. Much of our research has included families of color with limited access to financial resources. This is for two main reasons:

1) Children and families of color have been historically underrepresented in child development research. The experience of white middle-class families does not represent all families. BIPOC children and families are particularly under-represented in studies of clinical services. This can lead to mistrust about the usefulness of providing evidence-based services to children and families of color. In order to decrease inequities in access to high quality services, it is important that children and families of color have the opportunity to participate in evaluation research.

2) Much of our research at MHFC focuses on the negative effects of child abuse and neglect, as well as factors that contribute to healthy functioning in the face of adversity. Because BIPOC families are disproportionately and differentially impacted by the child welfare system and because our participants are often recruited from the child welfare system, a higher percentage of children of color have participated in our research. We fully recognize and acknowledge the inequities inherent in the child welfare system and in society more broadly. Our goal is to contribute to reducing inequities in access to care.

We are committed to the following best practices to advance an anti-racist research agenda at MHFC:

1. Systemic racism and discrimination represent a trauma that can worsen stress and challenges for children and families of color. We are committed to including measures of racism and discrimination in our research protocols so that these important influences can be included in our understanding of development among children of color.
2. Research designs will include thoughtful and evidence-based inclusion of race/racism, as well as other salient social determinants of health and wellbeing.
3. We will partner with individuals with lived experiences in all phases of the research process from study conceptualization to interpretation of findings and dissemination.
4. We will make thoughtful efforts to disseminate our findings outside of academic settings and we will be intentional with our language.