

## CONTENTS

FOREWORD BY MARK E. COURTNEY IX

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS XIII

INTRODUCTION XV

### CHAPTER ONE

► Social Welfare Policy and Child Welfare 1

### CHAPTER TWO

► An International Exploration of Disproportionality 24

### CHAPTER THREE

► Best Practices/Promising Practices 36

### CHAPTER FOUR

► Child Welfare System Change 91

### CHAPTER FIVE

► Social Work Curriculum 244

### CHAPTER SIX

► Future Directions for Research and Policy 298

APPENDIX: CHILD WELFARE LAWS 307

INDEX 319



AT LEAST AS FAR BACK AS THE MIDDLE of the nineteenth century, would-be child protectors in the United States have sought to “save” children from what they perceived to be unfit families and communities. The savers were generally established members of European American political and economic elites, whereas the children being saved generally came from socially excluded communities, including immigrants and, later, after coming to be seen by the white majority as fully human and therefore worthy of salvation, Native Americans and African Americans. Given this history it should not be surprising that children of color, particularly African Americans and Native Americans, are much more likely than their white peers to end up in the care of the state. Nevertheless, a debate continues over the extent to which this disproportionate representation of races within the child welfare system should be a cause for concern and, if so, what actions should be taken to reduce disproportionality.

I am not at all surprised that my friend and colleague Marian Harris has succeeded in moving this debate forward in a practical way with her new book, *Racial Disproportionality in Child Welfare*. I have known Dr. Harris since the 1990s, when she came to the University of Wisconsin–Madison on a National Institute of Mental Health postdoctoral fellowship at the School of Social Work, where I was a faculty member at the time. While I was supposed to be her postdoc mentor, I learned at least as much from Dr. Harris as she could have possibly learned from me. She immediately impressed me as a thoughtful scholar whose work was informed by a comprehensive knowledge of the research literature combined with her own