

David Crampton is an Associate Professor of Social Work at the Jack, Joseph and Morton Mandel School of Applied Social Sciences at Case Western Reserve University. He first became engaged in social work research and practice when he joined a research team at the University of Michigan School of Social Work that was examining foster care in Michigan. An overwhelming finding of that research was that African American children were far more likely to be in foster care compared to White children in Michigan. This holds true where he works now. While 30 percent of the children in Cuyahoga County, Ohio are African American, 53 percent of the calls to the Child Protective Services hotline at the Cuyahoga County Division of Children and Family services (CCDCFS) are African American and 50 percent of the children in the custody of CCDCFS are African American. He decided to pursue his interest in the experience of African American children in foster care by earning an MSW and PhD in social work from the University of Michigan. His doctoral dissertation was an evaluation of a program that used Family Group Decision Making to divert children of color from foster care into placement with relatives. He continued to pursue his interests in foster care research and the use of Family meeting practices in child welfare services when he joined the Mandel School faculty in 2002. CCDCFS uses a practice similar to FGDM called Team Decision Making (TDM). Since joining the Mandel School faculty, he has published numerous articles about TDM and related family meeting practices used in Cuyahoga County and throughout the United States and Internationally.

In 2014, Cuyahoga County government wanted to experiment with a social reform effort called Pay for Success. In this model, a method of delivering government services more cheaply is proposed, and the new program is paid for by outside investors who get paid back with interest if the program is successful. Cuyahoga County developed their Pay for Success program to serve homeless families who have children in foster care <https://case.edu/socialwork/povertycenter/our-work/human-development-and-social-programs/pay-success>

Dr. Crampton and his colleagues at the MSASS Center on Urban Poverty and Community Development helped design the program and evaluate its success. In 2020, they found that the 5-million-dollar program had not saved as much as they projected. Rather than characterize the program as a failure, they looked for other benefits of the program. They found that the program increased the safe reunification of children with their families and that this higher reunification rate was even higher for African American children compared with White children in the program. They have published numerous articles about the Pay for Success program.

Dr. Crampton's work to date demonstrates that reducing the disproportionate impact of foster care on African American children requires broad engagement of community organizations, neighborhoods and families. He builds on this work through his teaching of MSW students by teaching community practice and policy advocacy courses. He empowers his students to confront racism in human services, building upon his own practice experiences.

In 2023, the Cuyahoga County Division of Children and Family services (CCDCFS) experienced a crisis of hundreds of young adults with severe behavioral health needs entering foster care. The proposed response in a Youth Wellness Campus. Dr. Crampton and his colleagues at the MSASS Center on Urban Poverty and Community Development are using their expertise to contribute to the design and evaluation of the Youth Wellness Campus.