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PROMOTING REUNIFICATION THROUGH FAMILY FOCUSED COLLABORATIVE TREATMENT SERVICES AND SYSTEM CHANGE

ASC ANNUAL MEETING
SAN FRANCISCO
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UAA Justice Center
UNIVERSITY of ALASKA ANCHORAGE



Background Problem: Substance Abuse and Child Maltreatment

- ◎ Children of substance abusing parents are more likely to be abused and neglected
- ◎ Suffer poorer outcomes
- ◎ Increased reports of abuse and neglect have overwhelmed foster care systems
- ◎ Adoption and Safe Families Act (1997)





Response

- ◎ Legislation: Child and Family Services Improvement Act of 2006
- ◎ Funding:
 - Improve permanency outcomes
 - Enhance safety
- ◎ Integrated, collaborative, and comprehensive services for:
 - Families whose children are at risk of removal
 - Families with children in out-of-home care



Collaboration & Change

Partners

- Treatment provider
- Circuit court
- CASA
- Regional Child Welfare office
- Children's crisis relief nursery
- Mental health care service provider
- Interagency advisory committee
- Cross-Systems:
 - Training
 - Policies and procedures
 - Information and data sharing
- Co-location of staff
- Result: Systems change



Family Treatment Services

- ◎ Early intervention:
 - Treatment specialists at initial investigations
 - Shelter hearing within 24 hours
 - Access to treatment
- ◎ Family-centered treatment programs
 - Treatment retention, completion, and service utilization
 - Residential, day, and intensive outpatient
 - Gender-specific and evidence-based
 - Recommended: One year



Family Treatment Services

- Service plans and case management
- Mental health treatment for parents
- Housing: Emergency and sober housing units
- Assessments: Physical, developmental, education, and mental health
- Parent skills training: Attachment & bonding
- Family therapy and relationship counseling
- Removals:
 - Trained foster parents mentor bio parents
 - Early and routine visitation





Research Questions

- ◎ Is there an association between treatment and comparison groups in terms of:
 - Reunification rates
 - Speed of reunification
 - Time spent in out of home placement
 - Subsequent occurrence of child abuse or neglect
 - Subsequent foster care placement



Population Description

- ◎ Population size: 150 children and 108 parents
- ◎ Age: 67% children 5 years or less at entry
- ◎ Type of abuse: Neglect or deprivation (includes parental substance abuse)
 - 37% prior victims
- ◎ Parent's drug of choice: Methamphetamine
 - 39% primary drug of choice
 - 60% any meth use



Preliminary Results

- ◎ Reunification rate: 87.7%
- ◎ Timely reunification: 100% reunified within 1 year of removal
 - Average: 9 months
- ◎ Time in out of home care: Average of 70 days
- ◎ Subsequent maltreatment:
 - 6 months (N=122): 4.1%
 - 12 months (N=100): 10%
 - 18 months: (N=69): 14.5%
- ◎ Subsequent foster care placement: 12.5%



Conclusions & Next Steps

- ⦿ Promising preliminary findings
- ⦿ Next steps
 - Analysis of comparison group
 - Continued follow up
 - Pre-post analyses
- ⦿ Sustainability and dissemination
- ⦿ Statewide implementation
- ⦿ Promote:
 - Long-term funding
 - Collaboration
 - Data sharing
 - Systems change

