Jackson County Collaboration in Support of Families

Using Evaluation for Long-Term Sustainability

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Oregon Foster Care Rates Relative to the Nation

Rate of Children In Care per 1000 in Population: FY09

Source: data throughout slides is from NCANDS and AFCARS, unless otherwise noted.
Despite the increase in open cases, Jackson County has reduced foster care consistently between 45 and 50 percent over 2007 rates while keeping children safe.
How Did We Do This?

- Leadership
- Collaboration
- Two ACF Grants
  - Housing, dyadic treatment, front end interventions that pair treatment and child welfare staff on investigations, attendance at shelter hearings, etc.
- Outcome Data
- Legislative Support
- Long-term Sustainability
Most children will be returned.

If not, moms will likely have another child.

Little changes with separation other than degrading the parent/child relationship.

Growing concern about the number of foster care placements with greater understanding of the poor child outcomes that result.
Maintenance of parent/child attachments is critical for both the positive outcomes it produces and the avoidance of the negative impacts that occur when attachments are disrupted.
Clearly, childrens’ best interests lie in the preservation of their attachment ties, and repeated ruptures of such ties constitute a severe trauma (Gauthier et. al., 2004).

Fostering a child is always the last resort decision because of the potential trauma to the child, including infants.

A fostered child normally should keep contact with the biological parents to whom he or she should return as soon as possible, except when contraindicated due to serious concerns about the child's safety.
Most Importantly

The impacts of removal are passed on inter-generationally.
Leadership

- Jackson County had leaders willing to listen to what we were learning about children and foster care.

- They then became champions to change the way children are handled in the Child Welfare system.
Deliberate and Strategic Collaboration to:

- Achieve what we knew could not be realized in isolation.

- This has required not an inward view, which we have all been paid to do – to look at how we survive to reach our goals. Instead, we have looked outward and found the power of working together.
Our efforts are conducted in partnership with:

- Child Welfare
- OCF (Walker)
- OnTrack, Inc.
- The Courts (Dependency)
- Family Nurturing Center
- Foster Parents Association
- Court-appointed special advocates (CASA)
- Commission on Children and Families
- Public Defender and District Attorney
- Media
Collaboration: Second Step Form an Advisory Committee

- Must be composed of top level staff who can make needed system changes and find ways to remove or move around barriers to accomplish outcomes.

- Must represent all partners contributing to the outcomes, whether paid for in the grant or not, and with equality.

- Cannot overemphasize the importance of this, because --
Collaboration: Third Step Need Support at All Levels

- Managers not only make decisions, but are connected to, and can influence:
  - Community members and agencies
  - State level administrators
  - The Legislature
Very importantly, they can disseminate data, which is required to keep local and statewide partners interested and moving the project forward.

Demonstrating progress toward outcomes empirically is the best motivator we know to keep high level management engaged.
Dissemination assumes valid outcome data collected using rigorous research designs.
- Random assignment uncommon in child welfare
- Ethically questionable

Numeric data substantiates humanistic outcomes.

We are dependent on child welfare for key outcome data.
- Bureaucracies have known data problems
- Non-profits are not known for accurate and complete databases
Marny’s Advice

- Carefully operationalize populations and outcomes

- Be patient! Don’t share your outcomes before they hatch
  - Expect delays in obtaining data
  - Expect to find errors and missing data

- Compelling data clearly conveys message and is presented simply
Family Connection Key Results

- 100% of children discharged from foster care for 12+ months remain free from foster care re-entry.
- 97% of removed children reunified in less than six months.
- 94% of removed children reunified before end of parents’ treatment.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Family Connection N</th>
<th>Comparison N</th>
<th>Family Connection %</th>
<th>Comparison %</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Reunified within 6 months</td>
<td>83</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>97.6</td>
<td>50.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>85</td>
<td>76</td>
<td>100.0</td>
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</table>
## Family Permanency Outcomes
### Regional Partnership Grant

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>RPG N</th>
<th>Comparison N</th>
<th>RPG %</th>
<th>Comparison %</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Reunification</strong></td>
<td>109</td>
<td>53</td>
<td>98.2</td>
<td>52.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Adoption</strong></td>
<td>1</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>.9</td>
<td>26.7</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Guardianship</strong></td>
<td>1</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>.9</td>
<td>14.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Foster care</strong></td>
<td>--</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>--</td>
<td>5.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td>111</td>
<td>101</td>
<td>100.0</td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
## Subsequent Maltreatment Report

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>N</th>
<th>Subsequent Substantiated Maltreatment Report N</th>
<th>Subsequent Substantiated Maltreatment Report %</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>RPG children</td>
<td>107</td>
<td>12*</td>
<td>11.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Comparison children</td>
<td>54</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>33.3%</td>
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*Removals all associated with relapse and the presumed neglect that follows; no abuse was noted.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>N</th>
<th>Subsequent Removal N</th>
<th>Subsequent Removal %</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>RPG children</td>
<td>107</td>
<td>10*</td>
<td>9.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Comparison children</td>
<td>53</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>27.8%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Only four children (in 2 families) were removed due to a subsequent founded report.*
Legislative Interest

- Find a legislative champion and work with her/him to develop a legislative understanding of the data and the long term financial and human benefits.
Members of the Permanency Collaboration met with Oregon State Senator Alan Bates and other legislative leaders for a year to develop our legislative agenda.

Representatives from the judiciary and Child Welfare joined us to testify in multiple legislative hearings.
Senate Bill 964

Sponsored by Senator BATES, Representatives BUCKLEY, ESQUIVEL, RICHARDSON; Senators KRUSE, MONNES ANDERSON, MORSE, SHIELDS, WINTERS, Representatives FREEMAN, GREENLICK, THATCHER, THOMPSON

SUMMARY

The following summary is not prepared by the sponsors of the measure and is not a part of the body thereof subject to consideration by the Legislative Assembly. It is an editor’s brief statement of the essential features of the measure as introduced.

Requires Department of Human Services and county partners to implement Strengthening, Preserving and Reunifying Families programs to provide family preservation and reunification child welfare services. Allows department to enter into contracts with and make payments to eligible programs. Directs department to seek federal approval to access federal savings accrued as result of reduction in costs of foster and substitute care to reinvest in programs under Act. Includes programs’ services in definition of “purchase of care.”

Creates Strengthening, Preserving and Reunifying Families Program Fund. Continuously appropriates moneys in fund to department for specified purposes.

Requires department and juvenile court to include in reasonable efforts considerations and determinations whether preservation and reunification services provided by programs are most likely to prevent or eliminate removal of child from child’s home or most likely to make it possible for child to safely return home.

Requires department to adopt rules.

Declares emergency, effective on passage.

A BILL FOR AN ACT

Relating to child welfare services; creating new provisions; amending ORS 418.480, 418.485 and 418.495; appropriating money; and declaring an emergency.

Be It Enacted by the People of the State of Oregon:
Legislation

- Targets statewide implementation.
- Will require federal waiver request.
- Passed the legislature with two party support and testimony of Child Welfare administrators, judges, foster parents, and participating families.