



Wake County (Raleigh), North Carolina

OVERVIEW

Wake County, North Carolina, became involved in the third phase of Family to Family beginning with initial discussions in late 2000. At this stage, the initiative involved the state Division of Social Services, which oversees the child welfare program in North Carolina, and five counties. In the mid-1990s, Wake County had been one of the counties that participated in the Families for Kids initiative sponsored by the W.K. Kellogg Foundation and in 1997 it was one of the counties participating in a federally authorized Title IV-E waiver demonstration that continued until 2007. In addition, the state began implementing a new approach to child protective services called the Multiple Response System (MRS). Under MRS, counties were encouraged to conduct family team meetings using a family group conferencing approach that was not entirely compatible with the Team Decisionmaking (TDM) approach promoted in Family to Family. In 2007, when Family to Family moved into the anchor site phase, two North Carolina counties, Guilford and Wake, were invited to continue as anchor sites.

The county had an estimated population in 2007 of 832,970 persons, including 375,806 in the city of Raleigh and 121,796 in the city of Cary.¹ Perhaps more significant is the rapid growth of the county indicated by Census Bureau population estimates of 627,865 in 2000 and 786,522 in 2006.² The local child welfare agency exists within a consolidated human services agency that includes the former departments of housing, social services, transportation, and public health, and the mental health agency. Midway through the anchor period, leadership changed at the Department of Human Services. In 2008, Wake County completed a transition to blended Child Welfare teams assigned to geographic zones within the county. A central office serves four zones in the city of Raleigh while other areas of the county are served by four regional offices of Wake County Human Services. Local child welfare administrators attribute the impetus for geographic assignment of staff to the county's involvement with Family to Family.

Since 2006 the number of children from Wake County in out-of-home placement has been steadily declining. In December 2006 there were 667 children in placement compared to 536 in 2008.³ This represents a 20% reduction in three years.

¹ Population estimates for 2007 obtained from *City-data.com*, Retrieved June 23, 2009, from <http://www.city-data.com/>.

² See US Census Bureau population estimates for the 100 fastest growing counties in the United States: <http://www.census.gov/popest/counties/CO-EST2006-08.html>.

³ State-level data obtained from Duncan, D.F., Kum, H.C., Flair, K.A., Stewart, C.J., and Weigensberg, E.C. (2009). *NC Child Welfare Program*. Retrieved June 23, 2009, from University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill Jordan Institute for Families website. URL: <http://ssw.unc.edu/cw/>.

SITE-LEVEL PLACEMENT EXPERIENCE INDICATORS

Initial entries to out-of-home care in Wake County declined steadily from 301 in 2005 to 204 in 2007, then rose slightly to 213 in 2008. This is consistent with a statewide decline in North Carolina from 6,094 entrants in fiscal year 2006 to 5,043 entrants in 2008.⁴ During the anchor-site period, infants have accounted for between 36.0% and 40.8% of initial admissions. Among initial entrants in Wake County in 2008, 57.3% were five or younger, slightly higher than the statewide rate of 51.1% for this group in fiscal year 2008.

Exhibit A.6.1: Demographic Characteristics of Children Initially Entering Out-of-Home Care —Wake County, NC

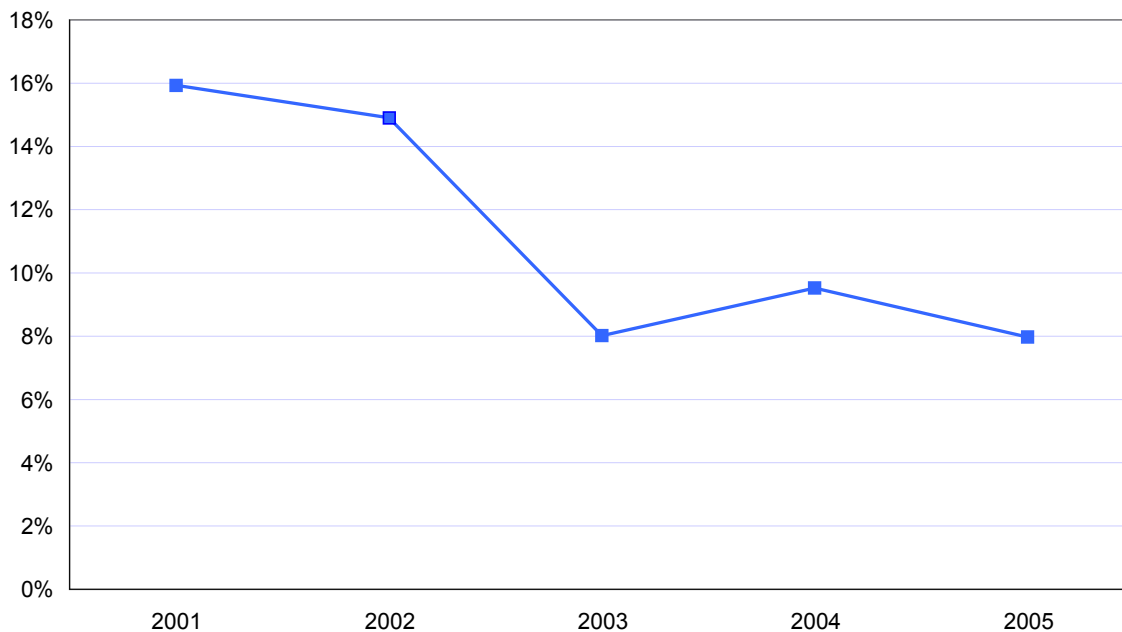
Characteristic	2005 (N=301)	2006 (N=272)	2007 (N=204)	2008 (N=213)
Gender				
Male	149 (49.5%)	136 (50%)	93 (45.6%)	112 (52.6%)
Female	152 (50.5%)	136 (50%)	111 (54.4%)	101 (47.4%)
Race				
White Non-Hispanic	81 (26.9%)	66 (24.3%)	69 (33.8%)	59 (27.7%)
Black Non-Hispanic	194 (64.5%)	167 (61.4%)	108 (52.9%)	110 (51.6%)
Hispanic	21 (7%)	31 (11.4%)	23 (11.3%)	33 (15.5%)
Native American/Alaska Native	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)
Asian American/Pacific Islanders	5 (1.7%)	8 (2.9%)	4 (2%)	11 (5.2%)
Other	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)
Age				
Birth - 1 year	75 (24.9%)	74 (27.2%)	65 (31.9%)	56 (26.3%)
2-5 years	75 (24.9%)	67 (24.6%)	52 (25.5%)	66 (31%)
6-11 years	80 (26.6%)	72 (26.5%)	39 (19.1%)	44 (20.7%)
12-14 years	43 (14.3%)	29 (10.7%)	25 (12.3%)	21 (9.9%)
15-17 years	28 (9.3%)	30 (11%)	23 (11.3%)	25 (11.7%)
18-21 years	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	1 (0.5%)
Siblings entering care at same time				
Single child	149 (49.5%)	111 (41.3%)	98 (48%)	90 (42.5%)
2	70 (23.3%)	73 (27.1%)	56 (27.5%)	58 (27.4%)
3	42 (14%)	36 (13.4%)	21 (10.3%)	36 (17%)
4	20 (6.6%)	26 (9.7%)	24 (11.8%)	15 (7.1%)
5	20 (6.6%)	10 (3.7%)	5 (2.5%)	5 (2.4%)
6 or more	0 (0%)	13 (4.8%)	0 (0%)	8 (3.8%)

⁴ State-level data obtained from Duncan, D.F., Kum, H.C., Flair, K.A., Stewart, C.J., and Weigensberg, E.C. (2009). *NC Child Welfare Program*. Retrieved June 23, 2009, from University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill Jordan Institute for Families website. URL: <http://ssw.unc.edu/cw/>.

More than half of the children and youth entering care for the first time in Wake County from 2005 through 2008 were black, but their share of entries declined from 64.5% in 2005 to 51.6% of the 2008 cohort. This stands in contrast to a rate of 19.7% for black persons in the general population of the county. The number of children of Hispanic descent entering care for the first time has increased consistently from 21 in 2005 to 33 in 2008. Just below half of the children enter out-of-home care without at least one sibling entering care at the same time.

In contrast to some other Family to Family anchor sites, reliance on congregate care was not the focus of the initial phase of work on the initiative. **Exhibit A.6.1** shows that only one in six children or youth were initially placed in congregate care settings in 2001. Nevertheless, as the trend line indicates, initial placements into congregate care had been reduced by half prior to the beginning of the anchor-site phase in 2006.

Exhibit A.6.2: Percentage of Children Initially Placed in Group Care



During the anchor-site phase, the data in **Exhibit A.6.3** indicate that Wake County continued to rely on foster homes and placements with unlicensed relatives for more than 80% of initial placements with the larger segment being placed in foster homes; however, the placement of children outside Wake County had been a greater concern to local officials. Based on data assembled for local self-evaluation efforts, 39% of children were in placements outside the county in 2001. As a result, considerable attention was given to this issue in ensuing years and, according to local monitoring data, the rate of placements outside Wake County had declined to 26% in 2008.

In further response to this concern, a focus of work during the anchor-site phase was to keep children in their own neighborhoods when appropriate. This has been operationally defined as placing children in their geo-zone of origin based on Human Services service regions. Over the past four years, approximately one-third of initial placements have been in the same Human Services service region as the child's original home. Among children entering care with siblings, 2008 is the only year in which a substantial segment (23.4%) of children with siblings were not placed with at

least one sibling. As a result, the percentage of initial placements with a “family connection” (i.e., placed with a relative or placed with a sibling) has ranged from 54.9% to 62.5%.

Compared to other Family to Family anchor sites, Wake County has been relatively successful in placing older youth in family settings. Across the four cohorts, the rates of family placement for youth aged 15-17 ranged from 52.2% to 80.0%. Among youth aged 12-14, rates ranged from 71.4% to 88.0% across the four cohorts, rates that are not different from younger children.

Exhibit A.6.3: Characteristics of Placement in Wake County, NC				
Characteristic of Initial Placement	2005	2006	2007	2008
Initial Placement				
Foster Home	150 (49.8%)	150 (55.1%)	105 (51.5%)	124 (58.2%)
Relative Home - Licensed	0 (0%)	2 (0.7%)	1 (0.5%)	3 (1.4%)
Relative Home - Unlicensed	103 (34.2%)	64 (23.5%)	64 (31.4%)	49 (23%)
Group Home	10 (3.3%)	3 (1.1%)	2 (1%)	3 (1.4%)
Residential Treatment	1 (0.3%)	0 (0%)	5 (2.5%)	2 (0.9%)
Emergency Shelter	13 (4.3%)	12 (4.4%)	8 (3.9%)	18 (8.5%)
Other Institutional	12 (4%)	10 (3.7%)	5 (2.5%)	3 (1.4%)
Own Home	4 (1.3%)	5 (1.8%)	2 (1%)	5 (2.3%)
Adoptive Home	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)
Other	8 (2.7%)	26 (9.6%)	12 (5.9%)	6 (2.8%)
Sibling Placement Status for Children Initially Placed in Foster Homes				
No Siblings Entered Placement	62	50	51	45
Placed with All Siblings	45 (56.1%)	46 (47.4%)	32 (69.6%)	43 (55.8%)
Placed with Some Siblings	25 (30.5%)	41 (42.3%)	9 (19.6%)	16 (20.8%)
Placed with no Siblings	11 (13.4%)	10 (10.3%)	5 (10.9%)	18 (23.4%)
Initially Placed in Neighborhood¹	32%	27%	33%	35%
Family Connection at Initial Placement²				
No	116 (38.5%)	102 (37.5%)	92 (45.1%)	90 (42.3%)
Yes	185 (61.5%)	170 (62.5%)	112 (54.9%)	123 (57.7%)

¹ Neighborhood is defined as geographic zone. A geographic area that the PCWA uses to assign its workers. These data were reported by the site on the Semi-Annual Outcome Report dated January 2009.

² Family connection components include placed with relative and placed with sibling

Exhibit A.6.4 shows that Wake County’s has had consistently strong performance in terms of placement stability for children remaining in care less than one year. The 2005 baseline year for the anchor-site phase is actually down from previous cohort years, so that the experience of children entering care during the anchor-site phase are only slightly better than those of children who entered care in earlier years. Among children remaining in care for longer periods, however, the trend line suggests continuing improvement during the anchor-site phase.

Exhibit A.6.4: Percentage of Children With 1 or 2 Placements in Initial Spell

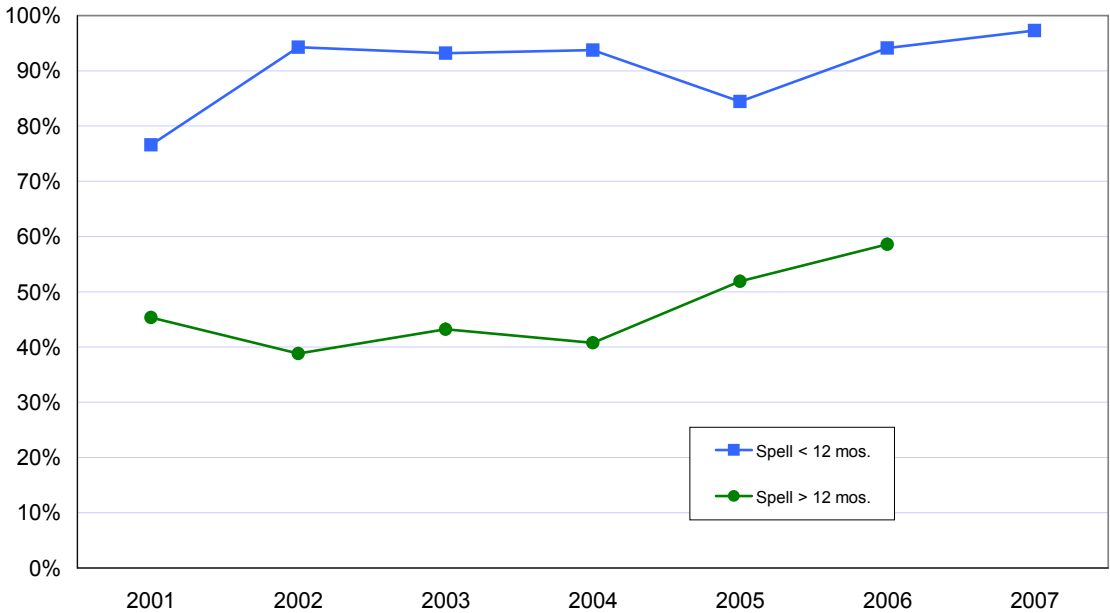


Exhibit A.6.5: Placement Stability by Year of Initial Entry—Wake County, NC

	2005	2006	2007
All ages			
No. of Placements in 1st Spell for Children Remaining in Care 8 - 365 days			
1 or 2 placements	38 (84.4%)	48 (94.1%)	39 (97.5%)
3 or more placements	7 (15.6%)	3 (5.9%)	1 (2.5%)
No. of Placements in 1st Spell for Children Remaining in Care 1 - 2 years			
1 or 2 placements	38 (62.3%)	51 (70.8%)	na
3 or more placements	23 (37.7%)	21 (29.2%)	na
12 - 17 years			
No. of Placements in 1st Spell for Teens Remaining in Care 8 - 365 days			
1 or 2 placements	14 (77.8%)	15 (93.8%)	8 (100%)
3 or more placements	4 (22.2%)	1 (6.3%)	0 (0%)
No. of Placements in 1st Spell for Teens Remaining in Care 1 - 2 years			
1 or 2 placements	8 (40.0%)	7 (63.6%)	na
3 or more placements	12 (60.0%)	11 (36.4%)	na

na: insufficient follow-up time to report the data

The table shown in **Exhibit A.6.5** provides a more focused analysis of youth 12 years of age or older when they entered out-of-home care. This age group is of concern because in many places they have been vulnerable to placement moves. The basic pattern remains the same in that more of the youth

with longer lengths of stay tend to have three or more placements. Also, youth 12 or older consistently had more placements than younger children in their respective cohorts. In spite of this general pattern, the same improvements for children and youth entering care in 2006 and 2007 are indicated for youth, including those remaining in care longer than one year. While these results are based on very small numbers of youth in each cohort, and should be interpreted cautiously, they do point to progress in a very challenging area of work.

The rates of predicted exit from care within six months, one year, and two year changed slightly across cohorts. The most notable changes were increased rates of reunification within one year of entry for the 2006 and 2007 cohorts and increased likelihood of reunification within two years for the 2006 cohort. Already at a low rate of nine percent for the 2005 cohort, rates of reentry to care following the end of a child's first spell declined to even lower levels for the 2006 and 2007 cohorts. Although a low rate of reentry to care tends to prevail throughout North Carolina, rates for the more recent cohorts are exceptionally low. Although these results are consistent with the low rate of reentry to care and the relatively long lengths of stay that tend to prevail throughout North Carolina, they run counter to lengths of stay trends that have changed little in the past few years in the state as a whole.⁵

Exhibit A.6.6: Time in Care and Reentry—Wake County, NC				
		2005	2006	2007
Probability of Exit by:				
Exit to Reunification				
	6 months	0.06	0.06	0.12
	1 year	0.09	0.11	0.14
	2 years	0.17	0.27	--
Exit to Adoption				
	6 months	0.00	0.00	0.00
	1 year	0.00	0.00	0.00
	2 years	0.06	0.08	--
Exit to Relative				
	6 months	0.02	0.04	0.03
	1 year	0.05	0.07	0.06
	2 years	0.13	0.13	--
Probability of Reentering Care After 1st Spell by Number of Days in First Spell¹				
	0-7 days	na	na	na
	>7 days	0.09	0.01	0.03

¹ Wake County has very few children who enter placement and remain for less than 8 days.

⁵ State-level data obtained from Duncan, D.F., Kum, H.C., Flair, K.A., Stewart, C.J., and Weigensberg, E.C. (2009). *NC Child Welfare Program*. Retrieved June 23, 2009, from University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill Jordan Institute for Families website. URL: <http://ssw.unc.edu/cw/>.

The longer that children remain in custody, the more challenging it becomes to help them achieve a permanent placement. As **Exhibit A.6.7** shows, however, from 2004 through 2007 Wake County made some improvements in achieving permanency in the subsequent year for children and youth who had been in care for two years or more on December 31 of the preceding year. Whereas only 28.3% of children in care at the end of 2005 achieved permanency in the following 12 months, 39.7% of children in care at the end of 2007 with similarly long lengths of stay found a permanent home in the next year. The rising rate of permanent placements for the children in care at the end of 2007 is particularly encouraging given that efforts to reduce movement into this “stuck-in-care” population often yields a smaller group that presents special service challenges.

Exhibit A.6.7: Achieving Permanency for Children and Youth in Care for Two Years or More—Wake

	2004	2005	2006	2007
Number in care for two years or more	255	191	189	229
Number who exited to reunification, adoption, relative in the subsequent year	85	54	61	91
Percent achieving permanency	33.3%	28.3%	32.3%	39.7%

PROGRESS IN IMPLEMENTING CORE STRATEGIES

Given that it embarked on Family to Family in 2000, Wake County DSS had gained considerable experience with each of the core strategies by 2005, the baseline year for the anchor-site phase. As a result, the implementation of Family to Family core strategies in the anchor years focused on going deeper in each strategy.

Building Community Partnerships

Connecting with the Community. Prior to implementing Family to Family, Wake County Child Welfare experienced a steady loss of foster homes, contributing to the previously described problem of children being placed outside the county. To support the county’s commitment to BCP values and practices, Wake County reorganized their staff into eight geographic zones, maintained an existing contractual commitment with a community collaborative in downtown Raleigh, and began a faith partnership that focused on recruiting and supporting foster families. Invited community members and staff volunteers also joined together to form a work group to assess the causes of racial disparities in Wake County Child Welfare and to recommend strategies to reduce them.

Site Infrastructure. A full-time member of the agency staff serves as project manager and coordinates Wake County’s BCP activities via their community and faith partnerships. The site has over 55 faith partners in the eight geographic zones who provide resources in recruiting and supporting foster families as well as providing support for kinship and birth families to prevent children from entering into care. A community-based contract agency, Choices for Children, provides additional resources to serve and support families in the downtown area. Specifically, it provides services to families referred through the child welfare agency and assists in recruitment of potential foster families. In addition, the agency’s community and faith partnerships offer resources to community youth who are at risk of aging out of the foster care system. To help the community and faith partners track outcomes related to BCP work, the agency provides data to inform recruitment and support strategies.

BCP Activities. Wake County’s primary BCP efforts focus on utilizing their community and faith partnerships to support and recruit foster families. However, they have expanded their activities to include provision of services and support to kinship and birth families of children who are at risk of entering foster care, including participation in TDM and Child and Family Team (CFT) meetings carried out as part of North Carolina’s Multiple Response System (MRS) approach to child protection services. Recently, kick-off meetings were held to begin integration of community partnerships into each of the County’s four major regions (north, south, east, and west). Participants in each meeting included: Family To Family consultants, Human Services Office of Community Affairs staff members, Child Welfare agency supervisors, and other regionally assigned human service supervisors. The meetings were co-led and coordinated by the agency Family To Family coordinator and Office of Community Affairs staff.

Wake County recently began a Human Capital Development Initiative throughout Human Services in collaboration with its community partners. In part, this initiative’s purpose is to strengthen the site’s youth engagement efforts in helping foster and former foster youth transition successfully into adulthood. Brighter Futures is a component of this effort, pairing youth with life coaches and offering scholarships to help youth realize post-high school graduation goals. Reducing racial disparities continues to be a goal of Wake County Child Welfare, but following 2007, administrators discontinued their use of the Undoing Racism trainings due to the determination of the county administration that the training was not constructive for Wake County.

Funding. Wake County Child Welfare provides Choices for Children \$73,000 annually for BCP activities. This amount provides funding support for one full-time and one part-time staff member.

Impact on TDM Meetings. One way that community partnerships can affect the experience of children and families that encounter the child welfare system is in the decisionmaking process.

Exhibit A.6.8 shows how community partnerships were reflected in Team Decisionmaking (TDM) meetings in Wake County. Service providers other than Wake Human Services attended 42% of removal TDMs and nearly three-fourths of change of placement (COP) TDMs. A family member or friend attends 46% of removal TDMs and 23% of meetings related to changes in placement.

Exhibit A.6.8: Community Partnerships Reflected in TDM Meetings				
	2005	2006	2007	2008
Removal TDMs				
Community representative present	19%	17%	19%	15%
Service provider present	47%	39%	43%	42%
Family member or friend present	48%	60%	58%	46%
Held in a community location	0%	0%	1%	2%
Change of Placement TDMs				
Community representative present	5%	8%	16%	19%
Service provider present	69%	68%	76%	73%
Family member or friend present	29%	24%	31%	23%
Held in a community location	1%	1%	1%	4%

Resource Family Development and Support

The story of RDS in Wake County is mixed. In July 2007 Wake DSS reported having 249 foster homes across the county. By December 2008 this number had declined to 209. In contrast the number of homes in the part of the county supported by the community partner, Choices for Children (CFC), increased from 21 in July 2007 to 42 at the end of 2008. This suggests that Wake began targeted recruitment and enhanced support for families interested in becoming a resource family from this neighborhood where a large number of child welfare cases came from. **Exhibit A.6.9** summarizes information on the flow of families through key processes of training and licensure. While the number of inquiries throughout the county appears to be decreasing, the number from the CFC neighborhood has remained stable. Among those inquiring, however, the estimated rate of licensure for CFC families increased over this period and, in fact, surpassed licensure rate for the county as a whole during the last half of 2008.⁶

Exhibit A.6.9: Inquiries from Prospective Foster Families and Progress Toward Licensure—Wake County, NC

	Initial Inquiries	Started training	Completed training	Families licensed
Wake County:				
July – September 2007	419	16.2%	13.8%	9.3%
January – June 2008	359	17.0%	11.7%	10.3%
July – December 2008	260	8.5%	11.9%	5.0%
CFC Neighborhood:				
July – December 2007	48	18.8%	10.4%	2.1%
July – December 2008	47	10.6%	10.6%	6.4%

Wake County is one of only two Family to Family anchor sites that report frequent use of “ice-breaker” meetings that are held soon after children enter placement to help birth families and resource families to share information that helps children adjust to out-of-home care and promotes their reunification. Responses to the Family to Family coordinators survey also indicate that Wake County is one of five counties that frequently try to meet the needs of resource families. Responses to the survey also indicated that resource families frequently work with community partners, social workers, and birth families to promote reunification or to achieve another permanency goal; however, this report was made in the context of lengths of stay in Wake County that are among the longest of all anchor sites.

One of the key elements of Family to Family RDS practice is active participation of caregivers in decisionmaking about the appropriateness of placement settings for children in their care. As a result, they are encouraged to participate in COP meetings when the child welfare agency is deciding whether a change in placement is necessary and appropriate for a child or youth. Participation by foster parents or relative caregivers in 2008 (56%) was higher than the median participation rate of 55% across all anchor sites for that year. Across all four cohorts, caregivers attended more than half of COP meetings related to children in their care.

⁶ These data should be interpreted with some caution because they are drawn from a new system developed to track such events and it is likely that information is incomplete for some events.

Team Decisionmaking

The estimates of “penetration rates” for TDMs in Wake County shown in **Exhibit A.6.10** are among the highest achieved by Family to Family anchor sites. A comparison of the number of children initially entering care during these years reveals a steady increase in the percentage having a removal TDM from 39% in 2005 to 78% in 2008. A similar comparison of children from these entry groups who changed placements indicates that approximately two-thirds of these children had a change of placement TDM. Again, this is among the highest rates of all anchor sites outside California.

Although most anchor sites began TDM implementation by instituting removal meetings, in 2002 Wake County began its TDM implementation by rolling out change of placement meetings. A year later the county began piloting removal meetings and in 2004 they went to scale on having removal meetings and also began permanency TDMs. In 2008 Wake had four full-time trained facilitators.

Exhibit A.6.10: TDM Implementation Progress in Wake County				
	2005	2006	2007	2008
Removal TDMs:				
Percentage of children entering care for 1st time each year who had a removal TDM during this time period	39%	34%	61%	78%
No. of removal TDMs held	191	203	310	475
No. of removal recommendations made	401	415	594	914
TDM held prior to placement	100%	79%	80%	87%
Parents present	81%	88%	90%	87%
More than 1 DSS staff person present	81%	84%	85%	85%
Experienced Facilitator	80%	84%	75%	99%
Change of Placement TDMs				
Percentage of children entering care for 1st time during these years and experiencing more than 1 placement who had a change of placement TDM during these years	56%	64%	62%	66%
No. of COP TDMs held	214	230	237	218
No. of COP recommendations made	285	295	325	278
Parents present	81%	88%	90%	87%
More than 1 DSS staff person present	50%	64%	59%	59%
Experienced Facilitator	75%	77%	74%	99%

Team Decisionmaking (TDM) meetings in Wake County tend to reflect a relatively high number of Family to Family key elements. Removal TDMs in 2008 averaged 4.6 key elements, the second highest level among anchor sites outside California. Similarly, change of placement (COP) TDMs in the most recent year averaged 3.7 key elements, only slightly lower than the highest levels of 3.9 and 3.8 achieved by two other sites. Several patterns of participation in 2008 meetings influence these high ratings. First, more than one Human Services staff member attends most removal TDM (85%) while 59% of COP meetings involve multiple agency staff. Wake County has made concerted efforts to

engage fathers. The success of these efforts is reflected in the increased percentage of removal TDMs attended by fathers increasing from 29% in 2005 to 48% in 2007 and 42% in 2008 (not shown). Notably, the number of Family to Family key elements reflected in TDMs of both types has been consistent across all four years.

In spite of a substantial increase in the number of meetings conducted in 2008, **Exhibit A.6.11** indicates that the pattern of recommendations produced by removal TDM meetings in Wake County remained fairly consistent with previous years. Most notable is the result that the most common recommendation is for children to remain in their homes (or in the case of emergency removals, to be returned home immediately). Although recommendations to remove children and place them in child welfare custody occur in only one in six cases, slightly more than one-third of cases (36% in 2008) involve children who are removed, but placed in the custody of a relative. Therefore, the effective rate of removals is just over half of the cases involved in removal meetings.

Exhibit A.6.11: Recommendations of Removal TDM Meetings by Cohort—Wake County

Recommendation	2005	2006	2007	2008
Remove	30%	16%	18%	16%
Maintain in own home or return immediately	34%	44%	49%	44%
Custody to relative or non-custodial parent	0%	0%	0%	3%
Remove, no custody	36%	40%	33%	36%
Total	100%	100%	100%	100%
N	392	411	585	908

As reflected in the **Exhibit A.6.12** the percentage of children who experience a subsequent substantiated referral within 6 months of a TDM recommendation to remain in home ranges from 4% in 2005 to 9% in 2006 and 22% in 2007. Local officials interpret the increase in 2007 to be an artifact of a changing data system related to MRS implementation.

Exhibit A.6.12: CPS Referrals Following TDM Recommendation Not to Remove

Post-TDM Status	2005	2006	2007	2008
No. of Children	108	152	227	327
No subsequent referral	59%	59%	62%	88%
Unsubstantiated referral	10%	9%	7%	3%
Substantiated referral within—				
1 - 7 days	0%	0%	0%	0%
8 - 30 days	0%	1%	3%	2%
31 - 180 days	4%	8%	19%	--
More than 180 days	27%	23%	9%	--
Total	100%	100%	100%	100%

Exhibit A.6.13 shows that only about one-fourth of change-of-placement (COP) meetings in Wake County result in maintaining the placement. The most common recommendation was for a lateral move and represented 34-39% of COP recommendations from 2006 through 2009. This pattern suggests that, in spite of reports that frequent efforts were made to find resources for caregivers, Wake County was having some difficulty in this area.

Exhibit A.6.13: Recommendations of Change of Placement TDM Meetings by Cohort— Wake County				
Recommendation	2005	2006	2007	2008
Maintain placement	17%	26%	26%	23%
Move less restrictive	24%	15%	17%	15%
Move more restrictive	27%	21%	22%	23%
Move same level	32%	38%	34%	39%
Total	100%	100%	100%	100%
N	280	246	316	275

Self-Evaluation

During the initial years of its involvement in Family to Family, Wake County committed time from an experienced analyst to support the self-evaluation process. Wake’s commitment to self-evaluation is demonstrated in recent years by the presence of two data analysts who support self-evaluation efforts. Wake County’s self-evaluation team meets each month to review data reports and, in general, assume the leadership for the agency in many child welfare data related issues. The team is comprised of managers and workers from the agency.

In recent years the focus of the self-evaluation team has been to identify and provide data for the 8 child welfare zones. Implementation data and outcome data are available for each zone including regular data on the number of children entering care, whether children are placed within the zone, the number of children served in-home, and management data that summarizes investigations. All of these data are available by race.

Wake County was one of two anchor sites that elected to implement a data system to track the recruitment, training and licensing of foster families. One of the data analysts has been assigned to manage this system. Although the implementation of the system has taken longer than expected, data reports are now available that will help the workers target recruitment and licensing efforts to part of the county most in need.

The Evaluation of the Anchor-Site Phase of Family to Family

In 1992, the Annie E. Casey Foundation embarked on an initiative entitled *Family to Family: Reconstructing Family Foster Care*. By the time it concluded in 2009, dozens of large urban areas in more than 20 states had participated in Family to Family. The final phase from 2006 through 2009 focused on a smaller set of “anchor sites” in nine states. Drawing on earlier experience with the initiative, each anchor site developed a workplan to integrate efforts across four core strategies designed to achieve the transformation of policy and practice envisioned for Family to Family. To assess the impact of resulting changes in policy and practice on outcomes for children and their families, the Foundation sponsored an evaluation by a team of researchers from the University of North Carolina, Wildfire Associates, the University of California at Berkeley, and Case Western Reserve University. The evaluation team included: Judith Wildfire of Wildfire Associates, Inc., Co-Principal Investigator; Daniel Webster of the Center for Social Services Research (CSSR) at the University of California at Berkeley, Co-Investigator; David Crampton of Case Western Reserve University, Co-Investigator; and Lynn Usher of the School of Social Work at the University of North Carolina, Principal Investigator.

Reports from the evaluation include an executive summary, a comprehensive report with technical appendices, and profiles of each anchor site. Each report is available online at:

<http://www.unc.edu/~lynnu/f2feval.htm>

The evaluation team appreciates the cooperation it received from Family to Family participants in each site and from state child welfare officials who provided the data on which this evaluation is based. We also appreciate the efforts of Regional Operations Managers and Site Team Leaders in coordinating the review of draft site profiles, including: Suzanne Barnard; Bill Bettencourt; Fred Harris; Lisa Paine-Wells; Jana Rickerson; Sheila Spydell; and Kate Welty.

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