

Evaluating Family to Family

Children 2007: Raising Our Voices for Children
Child Welfare League of America National Conference

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Stages of the Evaluation

- 2005: Self-Assessment
- 2006: Implementation Analysis
- 2007: Enhanced TA to anchor sites; analysis of baseline outcomes; process evaluation monitoring efforts implemented
- 2008: Ongoing process and outcome analysis; possible focus groups and/or surveys of participants—staff, resource families, birth families
- 2009: Process and outcome analyses for final report



Implementation Analysis

- Effort to understand the challenges of implementing F2F and how relatively successful sites have responded to that challenge
- Specific focus on systemic implementation issues that had to be addressed before work on core strategies could proceed— explores any fundamental systemic conflict with F2F values and principles
- Cross-site lessons rather than site-specific assessments
- Objectives of report: (1) inform “enhanced TA;” (2) share lessons with less mature sites; and (3) determine when it would be feasible to conduct an outcome evaluation

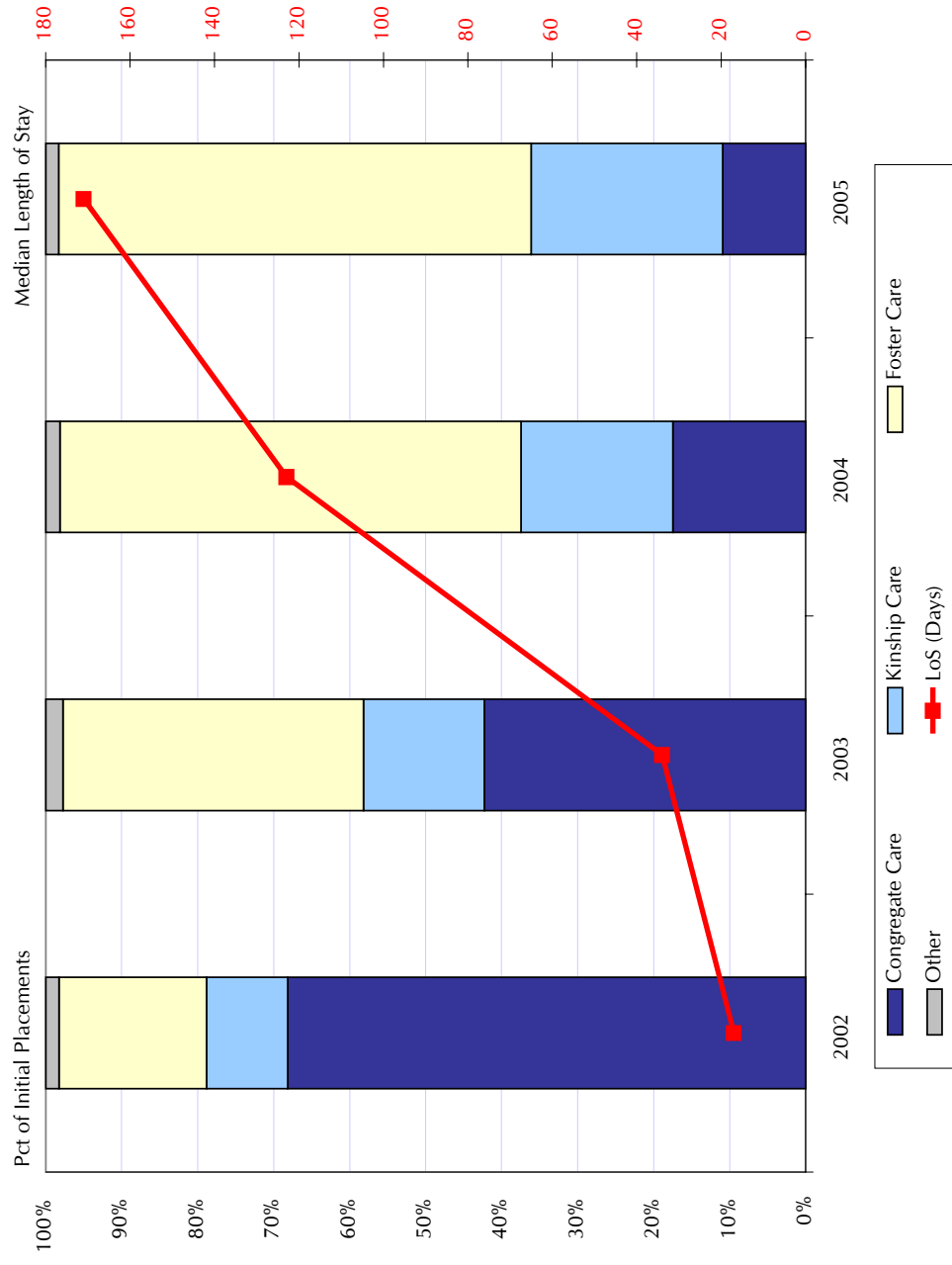


Findings

- ❑ Validation of the real accomplishment represented by overcoming systemic challenges to pave the way for effective implementation of core strategies



Example from Denver



Findings

- ❑ Validation of the real accomplishment represented by overcoming systemic challenges to pave the way for effective implementation of core strategies
- ❑ Strong and consistent leadership from the local child welfare director is a crucial element of success, but some sites were able to move ahead in spite of changes in leadership
- ❑ Persistence was ultimately reinforcing in that seeing the actual benefits of the strategy work helped break down resistance and encourage broader commitment among agency staff and community partners



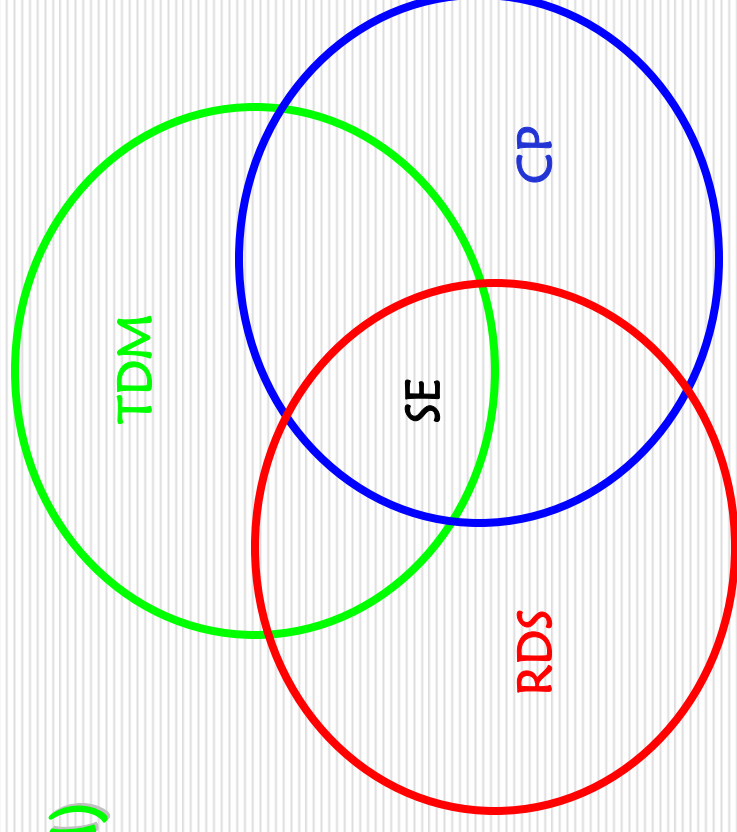
Findings

- Broader and deeper support among frontline supervisors and staff is challenging given turnover and departure from past practice
- Relationship with the courts needs continuing attention
- Taking F2F to the next level requires focus on building linkages across strategies



Family to Family: Integration of Core Strategies

- **Team Decision-Making (TDM)**
- **Building Community Partnerships (CP)**
- **Recruiting and Supporting Resource Families (RDS)**
- **Self-Evaluation (SE)**



Animation developed by Tom Crea; for more information, visit <http://www.aecf.org/initiatives/familytofamily/>



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Process Evaluation

- Process monitoring mechanisms needed in 2007
- TDM monitoring system is well-established, but monitoring mechanisms in RDS and BCP must be put into place with targeted help
- Growing investment of human and other resources in self-evaluation
 - Internal: CFRS / PIP and CQI processes
 - University-based database and analytic support
 - Subscriptions to the State Data Center at Chapin Hall



Outcome Evaluation

- Encompasses both system transformation and changes in outcomes for families and children
- F2F's use of longitudinal data to track each child through the system and to compare the experiences of successive cohorts yields two perspectives:
 - Changing patterns of experiences and associated safety and permanency outcomes for children and families
 - Distinct patterns of service across localities within states, across neighborhoods within cities, and across different groups of children (race, ethnicity, age, type of maltreatment, etc.) that reveal how systems work



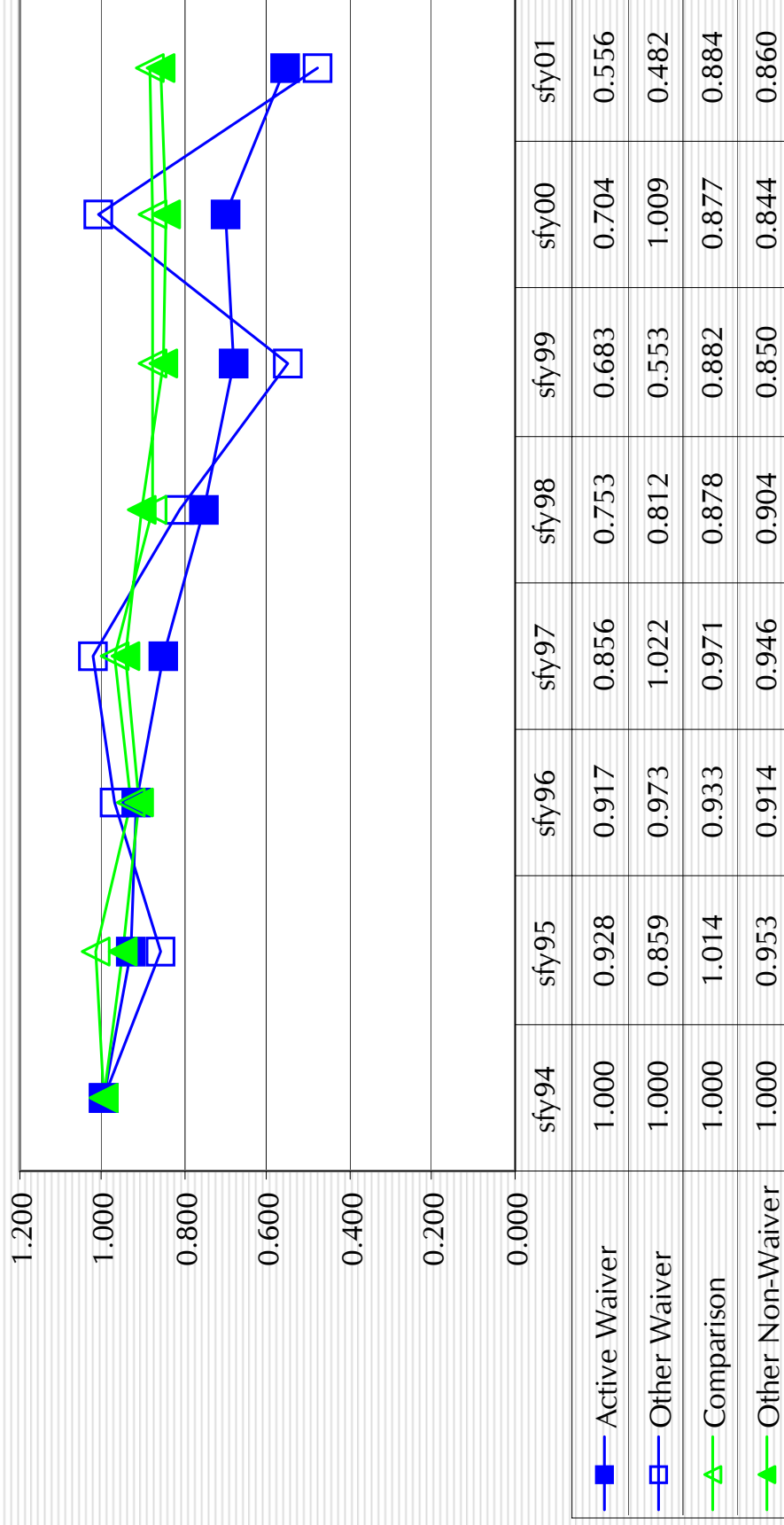
Outcome Evaluation Approach

- The basic framework for the analysis is a comparison of successive cohorts within sites in terms of changes in specifically defined outcomes that are used by site self-evaluation teams as well as the F2F evaluation team



Illustration of Successive Cohorts

Analytic Framework



year of 1st substantiation

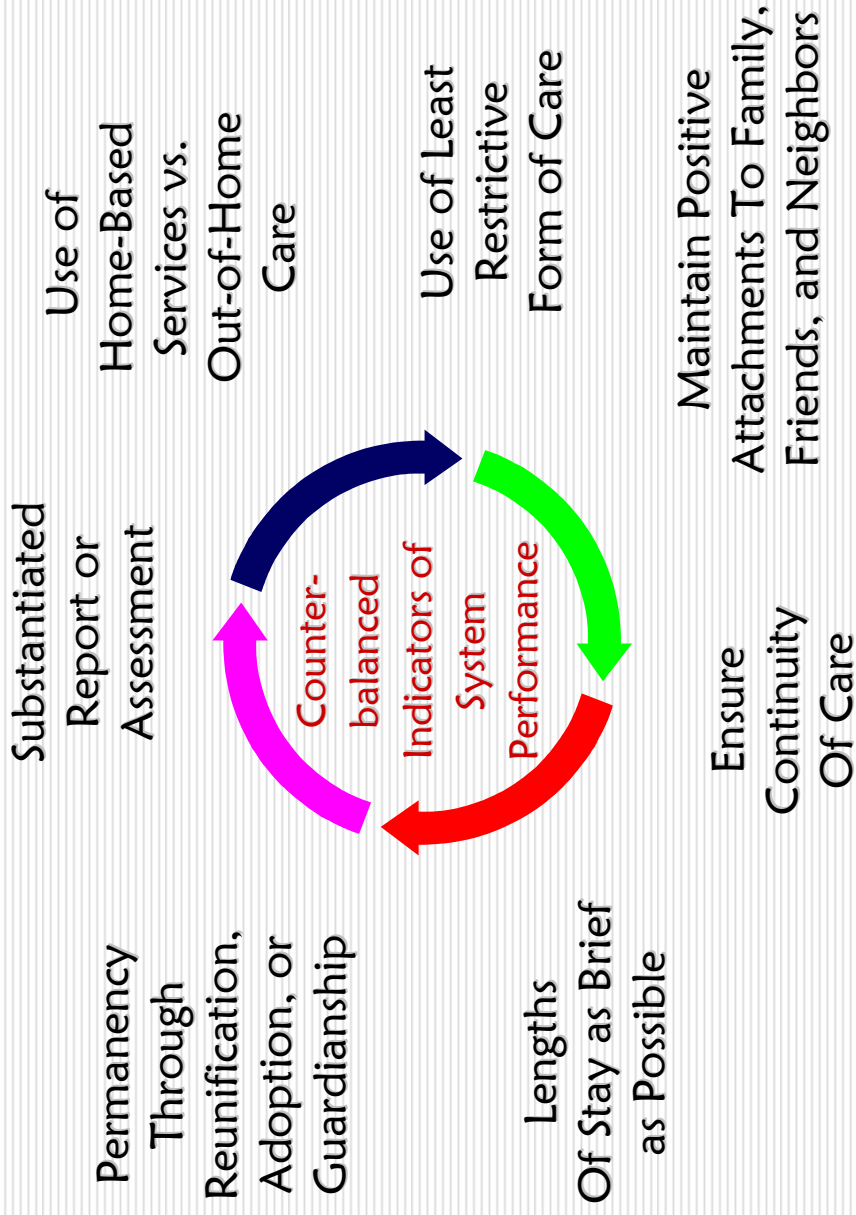


Key Outcomes in Family to Family

- Set of indicators that grow out of the “cycle of experiences” perspective used in F2F



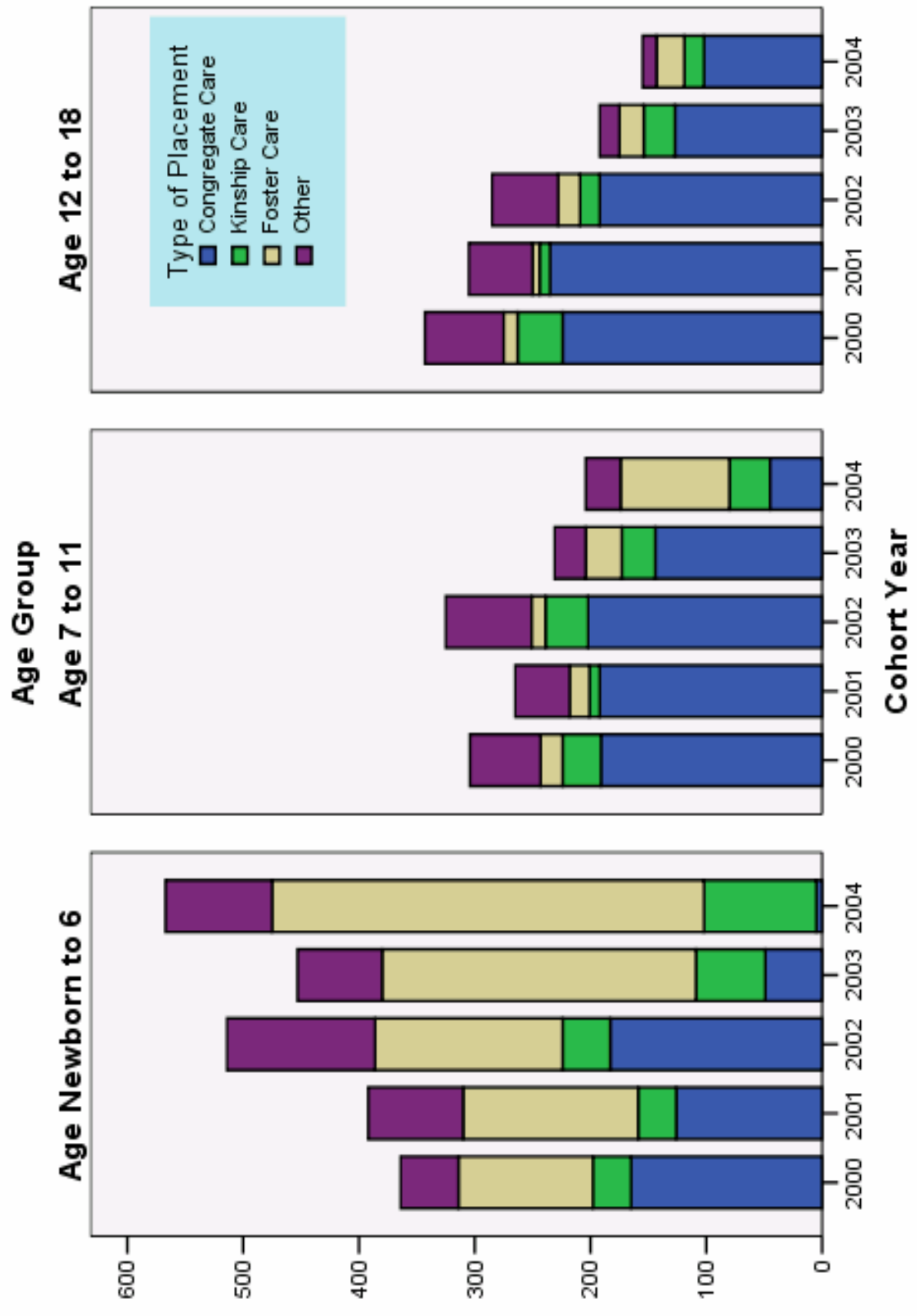
The Cycle of Experiences in the Child Welfare System



Evaluation Issues Inherent in This Perspective on Systems and Outcomes

- ❑ Changes in any single indicator of system performance cannot be viewed in isolation from changes in other indicators
 - Changes in one part of the system, such as reducing reliance on emergency shelters, have repercussions that are reflected in changes in other indicators
 - Changes in practice, such as increased use of kinship care, have implications for children's outcomes, such as stability of care, length of stay, and permanency
 - The notion of cross-site “standards” is antithetical to the approach because improvements in performance are rooted in each site's experience
- ❑ Formal comparisons of sites (i.e., pooling of data for statistical analysis) is not pursued, but efforts are made to discern patterns of improvement or decline in outcomes as they are linked to system changes





EBP and the F2F Evaluation

- The designation of evidence-based practices occurs within formal processes established by specific bodies such as the Campbell Collaboration and APHSA, all of which emphasize experimental or quasi-experimental testing of narrowly defined interventions or intervention components
- This contrasts with the F2F “saturation” approach that seeks to transform systems to create a policy and program *context* that is conducive to the adoption of a *bundle* of practices that seeks to improve outcomes for families and children



Information Available Online

- Implementation Analysis:

<http://www.unc.edu/~lynnu/ImpleF2F.pdf>

- Evaluation Plan:

<http://www.unc.edu/~lynnu/f2fevalplan.pdf>

- Today's presentation:

<http://www.unc.edu/~lynnu/cwla207.pdf>

