Evaluating Family to Family

School of Social Work

The University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill

May 2007
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

Pct of Initial Placements

2002 2003 2004 2005

Congregate Care Kinship Care Foster Care Other LoS (Days)

Median Length of Stay

0 20 40 60 80 100 120 140 160 180

0% 10% 20% 30% 40% 50% 60% 70% 80% 90% 100%
Findings

- 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/](http://www.aecf.org/initiatives/familytofamily/)
Process Evaluation

- Process monitoring mechanisms needed in 2007
- TDM monitoring system is well-established in most sites, 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: CFSR / PIP and CQI processes
  - University-based database and analytic support
  - Subscriptions to the State Data Center at Chapin Hall
Data to Support the Evaluation

- Anchor sites agree to provide the evaluation team case-level data for independent analysis of outcomes and implementation of core strategies.

- In addition to providing data, anchor sites will provide periodic reports on changes in outcomes and progress in implementing core strategies to demonstrate capacity for self-evaluation—spelled out in addendum to Foundation’s letter of agreement with anchor sites.
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

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year of 1st substantiation
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