Innovative Partnerships to Achieve Permanency Competence

If Not Now, When?

Texas Department of Family and Protective Services

The University of Texas at Austin
Texas Institute for Child & Family Wellbeing
School of Social Work

Kinship Center®
Five-year project that will implement evidence-based interventions or develop and test promising practices which if proven effective can be replicated or adapted in other child welfare jurisdictions.

October 1, 2014 - September 30, 2019
Achieve long-term, stable permanence in adoptive and guardianship homes for waiting children as well as children and families after adoption or guardianship has been finalized.
Governance Structure
• State run system, divided into 11 regions

Demographics
• 254 counties: 82 urban and 172 rural
• FY 2014: 7,266,760 child population, 0-17
• Border Issues: Undocumented adults and children
Children in Texas Permanent Managing Conservatorship

- Termination of Parental Rights for both parents
- Partial/No Termination of Parental Rights in care 2+ years

Placement Stabilization

- Preparing Families, Children and Staff to address Trauma, Grief and Loss issues

Kinship Center’s Education Institute

Mission Driven

- Specialty Mental Health Clinics
- Adoption
  - Permanency
  - Relative Care
- Family Ties
  - Relative Care
- Adoption Wraparound

Core Values
Clinical Constructs
Psychoeducational Curricula for Parents and Professionals

Attachment, Trauma, and Permanency

Skill building

Sound practice across programs
ACT: An Adoption and Permanency Curriculum for Child Welfare and Mental Health Professionals

Post-Training Evaluation: Impact and Value

- Daily-weekly use of information/tools/resources: 78%
- Increase in job satisfaction: 74%
- Increase in job performance and staff: 60%

Utilizing Adult Learning Theory
What and how we teach are equally important.
Adoption and Permanency Practice

Policy & paradox

Divergent views

Impact of media & language of adoption

ACT’s basic beliefs

Ethical practice
The Seven Core Issues

- Rejection
- Mastery/Control
- Intimacy
- Identity
- Loss/Grief
- Shame/Guilt
Normative Child Development

“I’ve Missed Critical Steps”
A child is born with five empty “buckets of development”

How much “filling” did your child get?
Filling your child’s developmental buckets

- Physiological
- Cognitive
- Emotional
- Social

0-3

Pleasure, Pleasure, Pleasure
Predictability, Predictability
Safety, Safety, Safety
Punishment vs. Discipline

**Punishment**
To inflict pain or harm

**Discipline**
To teach (root: Disciple)

Attachment Precedes Discipline!
Evaluation Overview

- Fidelity
- Short-term outcomes (STOs)
- Long-term outcomes (LTOs)
Evaluation Timeline

Pathways 2
Survey Only

Fidelity

Pre 1M Intervention 9M Post

= 1 month
How is information collected?

Facilitators
- Facilitator Questionnaire
- Participant Attendance
- Fidelity Assessment Logs

Evaluators
- Core Components Form

Participants
- Participant Evaluations
Fidelity: What are we measuring?

Use of experienced facilitators
Experiential delivery of material
Participant engagement
Opportunities to apply techniques
Preliminary findings: Change in goals

“Learn new parenting skills for adoptive child.”

“I want to be a better parent!”
Preliminary findings: Change in goals

“To navigate the difference in developmental vs. biological age.”

“Develop new and different attachment.”
Preliminary findings: Change in goals

“Actively recognize own triggers.”

“To talk to my child more about birth parents in a way that is age appropriate.”
Integration of Concepts

“I am seeing ways to ‘fill the buckets.’

“Lead by example, more active listening”

“Actively recognize my own triggers to try to minimize my response”
What are participants suggesting?

Offer at time of placement

“I am mindful each week how much help it would have been to have this information at the beginning of the placement.”

Expand scope

“A version of this class should be taught to educators. It would be amazing if teachers could reinforce what we are doing at home. Just think of the results!”
Caregiver Testimonials
Q & A
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