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Jan 12

Engaging Parents in Child Welfare Services

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REDEFINING
WHAT'S
POSSIBLE

partners
for our children

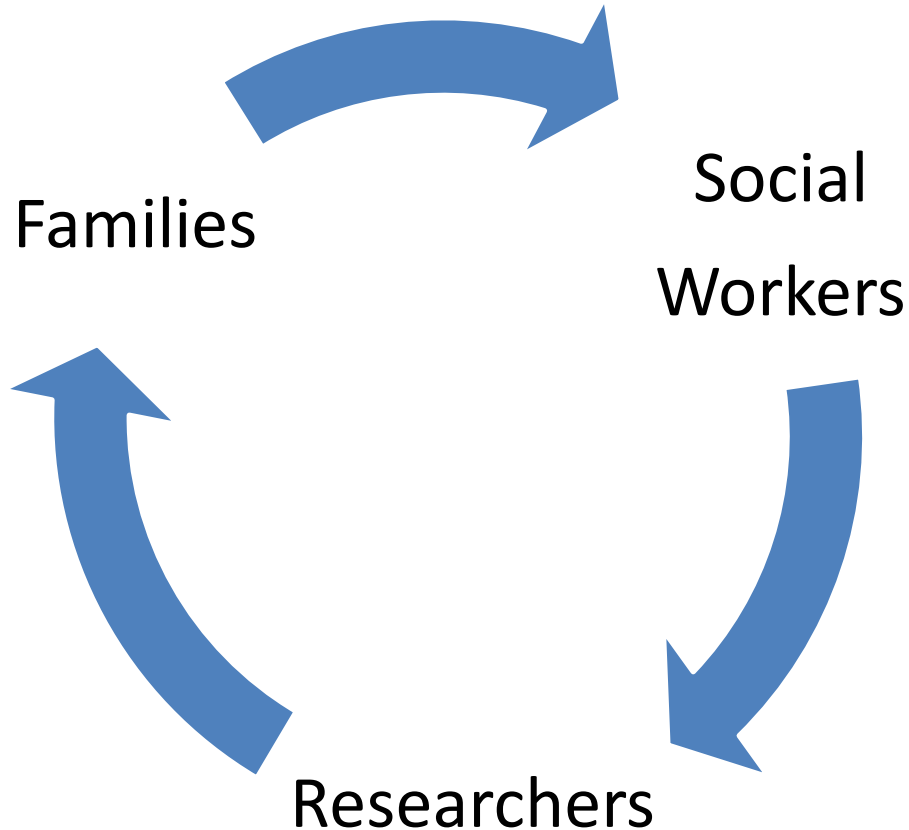


defining what's possible
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My Purpose

- Research on parent needs and resilience
- Innovations in parent engagement
- Future opportunity

A Synergistic Partnership



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Parent Engagement

- What is it?
- Why is it important?

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Parent Engagement Defined

Positive involvement in
the helping process

(Yatchmenoff et al., 2001)

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How will you recognized it?

- Parents informed and actively involved:
 - Identifying issues
 - Deciding needed services
 - Participating in services
 - Staying connected to children

Social Justice

Families are disproportionately:

Poor

Of color

Female headed

Good for Children

- Go home more often, sooner (Davis, 1996).
- Parents more likely to benefit from services (Atkinson et al, 1996).
- Stay connected with family (Hess et al, 2003,2005).

DSHS/CA Goal

- To safely reduce the number of children in out-of-home care.

Current Data on Parent Needs

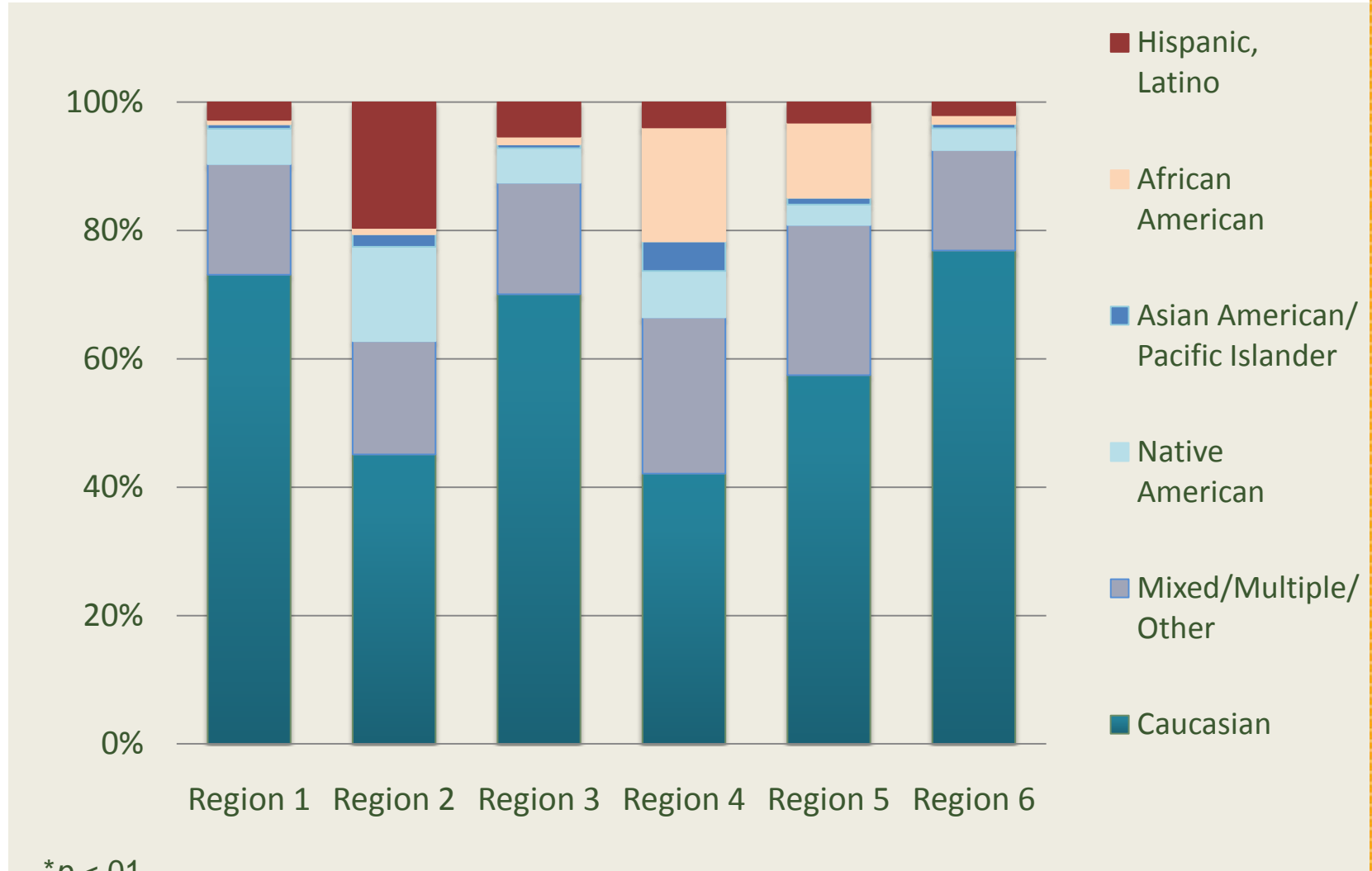
POC Survey of 809 parents statewide:

- 82% response rate
 - 345 (43%) children in-home
 - 464 (57%) children out-of-home

Snapshot of WA Parents

- female (92%)
- mostly single (68%)
- low income (47% < \$10,000/yr.)
- 58% high school or less

Parent's Race/Ethnicity by Region



*p < .01

Financial Experience of Parents

67% unemployed

54 % lacked money for clothing or shoes

35% move in with family/friends

31% not enough money for food

Other Challenges

- A third report drug or alcohol abuse/dependence
- Over half with mental health issues
- 3 out of 10 experienced DV
- Half experienced sexual abuse as a minor.

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Multi-Dimensional

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Caring but not coping

In the context of parenting

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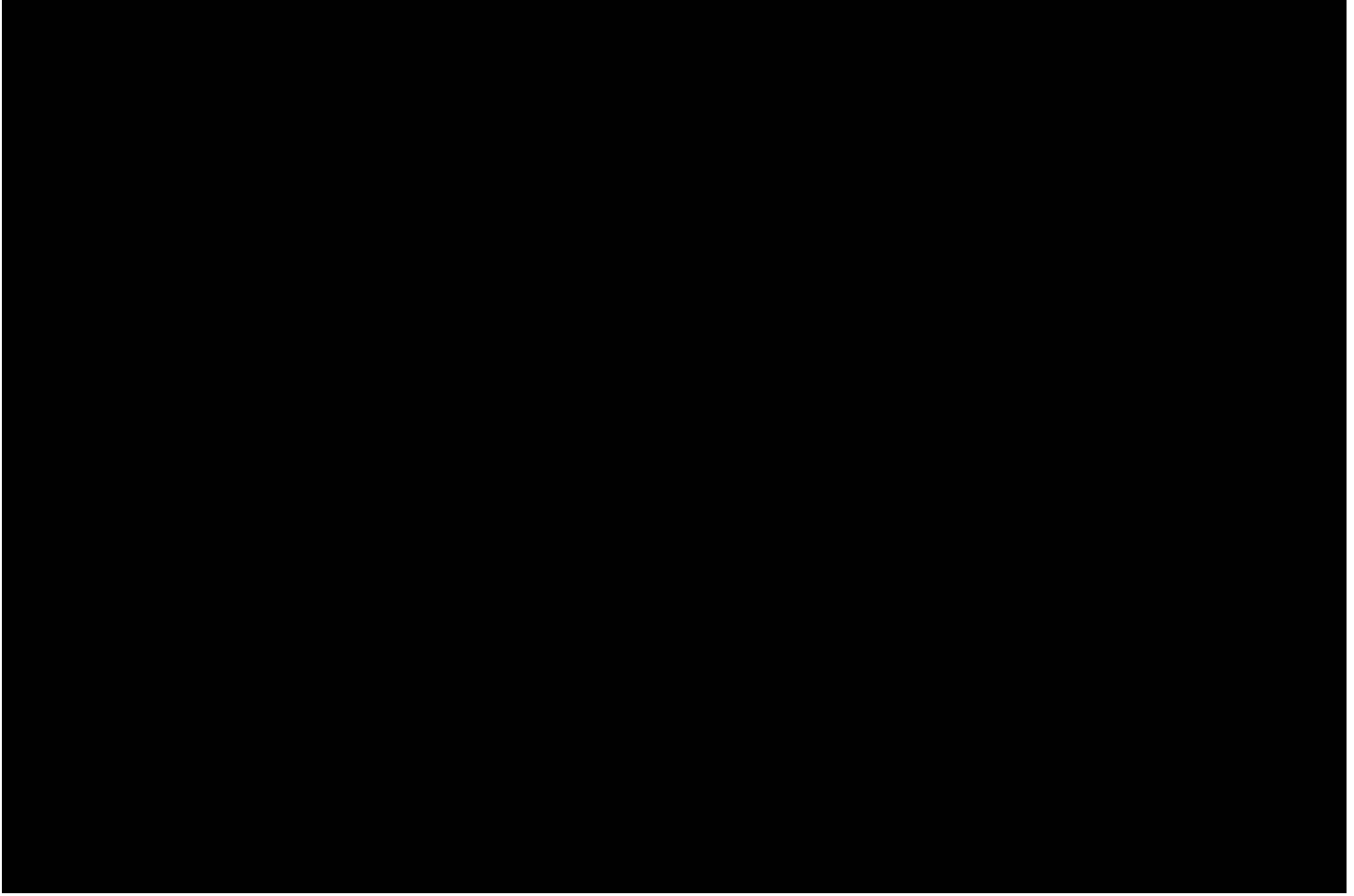
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Caring but not coping



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Innovative Programs

Support Caring
Build Coping

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A Change is Afoot in Our State

- Solution Based Casework
- Parent Mentoring
- Parent to Parent Programs

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Solution Based Casework

3 Goals:

1. Develop partnership with families
2. Focus on everyday family tasks
3. Promote specific prevention skills tied to tasks.

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Parent Mentoring

- Developed by CA social worker
- Specially selected and trained foster parents
- Work with parents 5 hours per week, for 3 to 6 months
- Based on parent needs.

Preliminary Evaluation

Compared to a similar parents:

- Increased rate of reunification
- Decreased length of stay

Parent to Parent Program

- Goal
 - Increase early parent engagement through:
 - Education
 - Peer Support
 - Spearheaded by a parent.

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Parent to Parent Program

Program Components:

- Veteran parent support at shelter care
- Dependency 101 and 201
- Parent-to-parent mentorship

Birth Parents Said

- Provided valuable information
- Decreased social isolation
- Increased taking responsibility
- Helped move from anger to action

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Opportunity

Support Caring

Build Coping

The Heart of Parent Engagement

Keeping children and their parents connected



Visitation

- Parents who attend visits 10 times more likely to reunify (Davis, et al, 1996),
- Children go home sooner (Mech, 1985).
- Strong relationship between visitation and child well-being (Hess, 2005).
 - Behavior
 - Developmental progress
 - Post-reunification outcomes

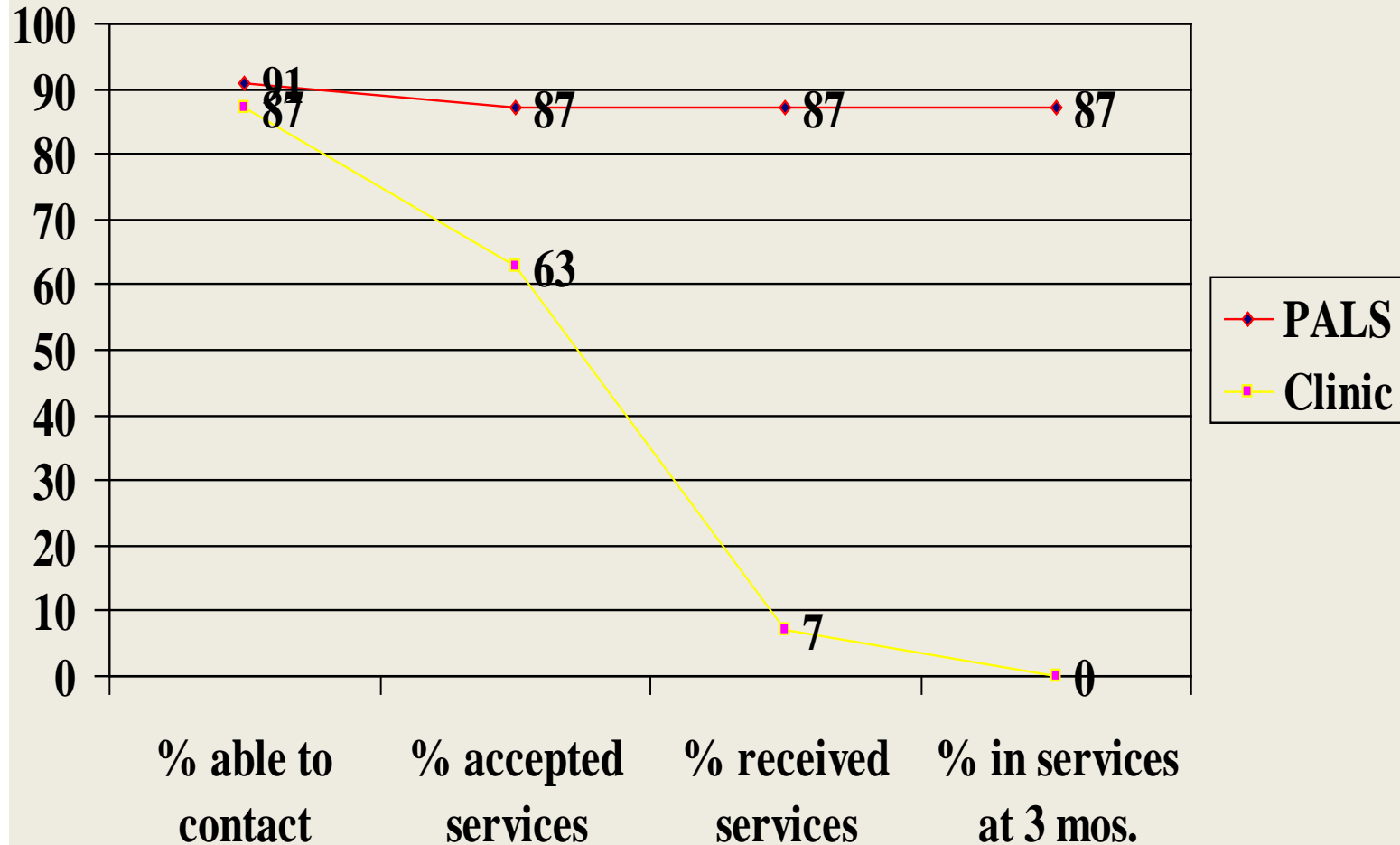
Visitation: Resource Intensive

- Second largest contracted ticket item
- Still about 40% of visits are done by social workers

Engaging parents in child mental health services

- Developed by Mary McKay (1996) and her social work students.
- Low-income, mostly single parent, families of color in an urban setting.
- Two components:
 - Telephone Engagement
 - First Visit Intervention

PALS vs Usual Care (McKay, 2003)



What if?

Telephone Engagement:

- Stressed the importance of connection
- Provided logistic information
- Problem solved barriers
- Planned activities, snacks
- Addressed concerns, negative expectancies

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Support Caring Build Coping

