



Human Services
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Use of Fidelity Scores in Assessing Outcomes

For Children Served Through Three Targeted
Child Welfare Initiatives in Ohio

AEA Panel Presentation, November 2010

Ohio's Title IV-E Waiver

- County-level flexibility in services offered & population served with IV-E funds
- Targeted service interventions:
 - Family Team Meetings (FTM)
 - Structured Visitation w/ children in foster care
 - Supports for Kinship Caregivers
- 2004-2010; likely extension to 2015
- 18 demonstration sites; 17 comparison sites

Common Process of Developing the Service Interventions

- County child welfare administrators/managers reflected on practice, promising models
- Evaluation team proposed measurement approaches and data elements
- Training, technical assistance, feedback on implementation progress
- Written evaluation reports 2007, 2010



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Integrating Child-level Fidelity Scores into an Outcomes Analysis: An Evaluation of Family Team Meetings

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American Evaluation Association Conference

November 2010

What is FTM?

- Way to engaging family members and other people to support the family for shared case planning and decision-making
 - Regularly-scheduled meetings throughout the life of the case, facilitated by a trained professional
 - Goal: develop creative and effective solutions to case challenges, ultimately to reduce the need for foster care placement and improve permanency outcomes
- Demonstration sites conducted approximately 21,000 FTMs, for 13,800 children, in 6,850 families

Key Components/Fidelity Measures

1. Target population: all children in cases that open to ongoing services with initial case goal to reunify/ maintain in-home
2. Initial FTMs occur within a month of case opening
3. Subsequent FTMs are held at least quarterly
4. A range of attendees attend the FTMs
5. Independent, trained facilitator leads the FTM

Additionally:

- Meeting process includes: agenda, introductions, information sharing, planning, and decision-making.
- Facilitator supports families prior to and during meetings

Evaluation Outcomes

Primary FTM Outcomes	Demo. Counties (9,996)	Comp. Counties (15,294)	Significant Differences
Average case episode length	329 days	366 days	-37 days
Whether child placed	15%	17%	-2%
If placed, % placed with kin	47%	40%	+7%
Whether subsequent case opening	11%	12%	-1%

Practice Fidelity

- **57%** of the children had their first FTM within 50 days
- **63%** of the children had a subsequent FTM within 100 days of their previous FTM.
- **49%** of the FTMs had a minimum grouping of attendees (at least one parent/primary caregiver, at least one PCSA staff, and at least one other person).
- **100%** of counties had an independent facilitator, and **50%** of them had medium-level training.

Fidelity (cont'd)

- Created child value for each fidelity component
 - Y/N initial meeting on time; % subsequent meetings on time; % meetings with minimum attendees
- Created child value for overall fidelity
 - Average % timely meetings + % minimum attendees
 - Defined High/Low groups:
High is $\geq 85\%$, Low is $\leq 30\%$
 - Fidelity Mean = .48 (SD = .42); Fidelity Median = .50

Child Fidelity & Outcomes

- Selected outcomes:
 - Length of Placement
 - Length of Case Episode
- Looked at impact of:
 - each fidelity component
 - overall fidelity

INDIVIDUAL FIDELITY COMPONENTS:

High fidelity group = significantly shorter case episodes than medium and low fidelity groups

Fidelity Measure	Minimum Set of Attendees		Time Between FTMs	
	N	Case Episode Length (days)	N	Case Episode Length (days)
Low	2739	400	1281	433
Medium	1820	482	2354	517
High	2191	375	3115	329

OVERALL FIDELITY MEASURE:

High fidelity group = significantly better outcomes than medium or low fidelity groups

Overall Fidelity	N	Case Episode Length (days)	Placement Length (days)
Low	1076	422	38
Medium	4381	438	69
High	1293	327	49

Moving Forward: Tackling harder to measure aspects of practice, e.g. Family Engagement

- Preparing family prior to the meeting
- Encouraging the attendance of the family's support people (relatives, friends, advocates)
- Holding the meeting in a comfortable, family-friendly environment

Discussion

- Measuring the measurable: what did we miss?
- Fidelity variations among cases that received FTM: selection bias?



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The Predictive Utility of a Child Level Measure of Fidelity: Its Relevance to the Understanding of Outcomes Associated with Enhanced Visitation Practices

Linda Newton-Curtis, MS

American Evaluation Association Conference

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What is Structured Visitation

- Opportunity for contact with family when child is placed out of home
- Visitation Plan
 - How often visits occur
 - With whom
 - Supervised?
- Support for positive interaction

Structured Visitation

- Population of interest
 - Children in agency foster homes
 - Abuse or neglect the reason for placement
 - Case plan goal of reunification
 - Case opened after the implementation of the strategy

Key Components/Fidelity Measures

- Visit
 - Should last one hour or more
 - Be attended by at least one parent or caregiver
 - Be supervised
 - Occur within 7 days of previous visit

AND

****Structured Activities Planned and Completed****

Evaluation Outcomes ITT

Primary Visitation Outcomes	Visitation Counties (n=1810)	Comparison Counties (n=2577)	Difference (Significance represented with *)
Average Length of First Case Episode	490 days	533 days	- 43 days *
Average Length of Time in Care	227 days	220 days	+ 7
% Reunified	46%	60%	- 14% *
% Exit to Kin	41%	31%	+10% *
Subsequent Case Openings (n = 3941, children with at least 12 months post-case closure)	1.1% (n = 1958)	1.6% (n = 2343)	.5%

Practice Fidelity (visit n=8482)

- 96% of visits lasted one hour or more
- 78% of visits were attended by at least one parent or caregiver
- 96% of visits were supervised
- 76% occurred within 7 days of previous visit
- 53% of activities planned and completed

Child-Level Fidelity (n=436)

Created a value for child on each component of fidelity

Mean Values:

- .94 (sd=.34) of visits lasted one hour or more
- .79 (sd=.26) of visits were attended by at least one parent or caregiver
- .95 (sd=.17) of visits were supervised
- .76 (sd=.27) occurred within 7 days of last visit
- .52 (sd =.27) of activities planned and completed

Individual Fidelity Component Influences on Length of Case Episode (mean = 559 days (SD=266))

	Within 7 days	Activity	Parent or Caregiver	Supervised	1 Hour or more
Low	623 * (n=142)	568 (n=141)	631* (n=125)	619* (n=65)	624* (n=128)
Medium	593 * (n=164)	545 (n=149)	563* (n=140)		
High	449 (n=130)	567 (n=146)	504 (n=171)	549 (n=371)	533 (n=308)

Individual Fidelity Component Influences on Length of Placement (mean=265 days (SD=206))

	Within 7 days	Activity	Parent or Caregiver	Super-vised	1 Hour or more
Low	300* (n=142)	258 (n=141)	301* (n=125)	319* (n=65)	348* (n=128)
Medium	308* (n=164)	264 (n=149)	317* (n=140)		
High	173 (n=130)	274 (n=146)	198 (n=171)	256 (n=371)	231 (n=308)

Final Fidelity Measure

	Length of Case Episode		Length of Placement	
	5 Component Fidelity	4 Component Fidelity	5 Component Fidelity	4 Component Fidelity
Low	610* (n=154)	610* (n=145)	295 (n=154)	304* (n=145)
Medium	528 (n=131)	618 * (n=127)	230 (n=131)	298* (n=127)
High	535 (n=151)	469 (n=164)	265 (n=151)	205 (n=164)

Discharge from Foster Care by Fidelity

	Reunification	Kin	Other
Low	29.6% (75)	35.9% (51)	46.3% (19)
Med	27.3% (69)	34.5% (49)	34.1% (14)
High	43.1% (109)	29.6% (42)	19.5% (8)

$$X^2 (4) = 13.38, \pi < .01$$

Follow-up focused analyses suggest that the odds of reunification versus placement with kin is almost 2 times more likely (1.76) for families in the high fidelity versus those in low fidelity ($X^2 (1) = 4.94, p < .05$)

Discussion

- What does it all mean?
- Limitations
 - Loss of data
 - More thought about what structured activity really means
 - Should we have also measured the degree to which parents received feedback?
- Lessons Learned
- Future work



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Kinship Support Index: Do more intensive programmatic efforts result in better outcomes for children?

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American Evaluation Association

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Kinship Strategy Logic Model

ACTIVITIES

New or additional staff dedicated to kin

ID and recruitment of potential kin placements

Array of supportive services & financial supports

Frequent communication with caregivers

Systematic use of placement and team meetings

OUTPUTS

Kinship Caregiver utilized

children in kinship placements

services delivered, \$ services purchased

Child able to stay with familiar caregiver

Community more familiar with PCSA work

OUTCOMES

More children placed with kin/guardian

Lower # CAN reports

Fewer children/days in agency custody, more children avoid out of home placement

Less re-entry into care

Shorter time in placement/to achieve permanency/closure

Increased stability

More children are safe (lower # CAN reports, fewer allegations in placement)

Kinship Index: Why & What

Why

- Efforts not unique to strategy counties (6 of 35)
- Better picture of practice, impact, in all counties

What

- Based on 7 common kinship practice elements
- Qualitative & Quantitative data
- Scores on elements and overall total (weighted)
- Iterative

Composition of Kinship Index

Index Element	Weight	Data Elements	Logic Model/ Common Practice Element
Overall strategy	5%	Philosophical/ cultural/ practice emphasis that didn't fit elsewhere, FTM use	All – overall emphasis on kinship supports
Staffing	30%	Internal or external staff	Staff to support kin
ID & Recruitment	12%	Methods for and scope of efforts	Increased ID & recruitment, use of genograms
Services & Supports	33%	Written materials, general availability of services/ supports, supportive activities w/in and external to agency, outreach efforts	Provision of supports/ services, increase in communication, outreach
Financial Supports	15%	Qualitative data re: subsidy, per diem provision, etc., KPI data as proportion of children served by PCSA	Provision of supports/ services
'Formal' KP	5%	Average 2005 & 2006 % days in unpaid placement	Overall intent to place more children w/ Kin

Kinship Index Results

2010 Kinship Index Results			
	Low	Middle	High
Number of Counties	17	10	8
Range of Scores	12.7 – 30.4	34.7 – 50.5	52.5 – 69.5

How are High and Low groups different?

Applying Index Findings to Case-Level Findings

- Why?
- How this approach differs from FTM & Visitation fidelity-outcomes analysis

Findings: Safety

Substantiated or Indicated Incidents of Abuse/ Neglect		
	Low Index Group	High Index Group
During Kinship Placement Episode	3.4% (4 of 118)	3.9% (8 of 205)
Following Kinship Placement Episode	6.0% (7 of 117)	5.0% (10 of 199)

No significant differences found

Findings: Kin Placement Episode End

End of Kinship Placement		
	Low Index Group	High Index Group
'Good' Kin Placement End	81% (58 of 72)	66% (77 of 116)
'Bad' Kin Placement End	19% (14 of 72)	34% (39 of 116)

No significant differences found

'Good' end = reunification, legal custody/guardianship with kin, adoption

'Bad' end = foster care, detention, group home/residential, aging out

Discussion

- Caveats
- Do Kinship supports make a difference?
- Did we capture the essence of kinship support?
- Was there room to 'move' the needle with children in kinship placement?
- Other contextual or analysis factors?

Lessons Learned

- Carrying this forward to new Waiver
 - All 18 counties strive for consistency
 - Revised Kinship Support Strategy approach
 - Evaluation methods
- Limits of application:
 - is use of an index in this manner the right way to measure impact of these efforts?

Discussion

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Full report, executive summary, briefs, and other information on ProtectOHIO
IV-E Waiver at: www.hsri.org/project/evaluation-of-ohio-title-iv-e-waiver