Collaborating to Design, Pilot, and Evaluate a New Case Practice Intervention: How Permanency Roundtables Affected Practice and Outcomes in Georgia

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Abstract

In 2003-2004, the State of Georgia piloted 50 Permanency Roundtables (PRs), which are structured professional case consultations that encourage innovative thinking, the application of best practices, and the “busting” of barriers to expediting permanency. Key differences between PRs and routine case staffing: (1) singular focus on permanency; (2) external permanency experts; and (3) immediate availability of resource personnel in the policy, legal, and mental health areas to assist with barrier-busting.

Method

Data from 918 children included in the project was collected from case abstracts and from a data collection form completed by PR facilitators. Statistical analyses were performed using standard descriptive and inferential procedures. The overall PR sample included 50% female children, 93.5% African American, 34.5% Hispanic, 57.6% female, and 64.9% siblings in care. The PR duration was 12 months, with a visit frequency of 1-2 times per month.

Background

• 50% of children in foster care do not achieve permanency.
• 50% of children in foster care are 11 years or older.
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• Permanency is a critical function, yet outcomes are typically poor.
• Increasingly, states are turning to innovative strategies to improve outcomes.
• Permanency Roundtables (PRs) are structured professional case consultations that encourage innovative thinking, the application of best practices, and the "busting" of barriers to expediting permanency.

Permanency Roundtables: Permanency Roundtables are designed to enhance outcomes by focusing on permanency planning and decision-making, encouraging innovative thinking, and providing expert assistance in policy, legal, and mental health areas.

Impact of PRs on Outcomes

• 50% of children in PRs achieved permanency within 12 months.
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• PRs improved outcomes for children in care.
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Questions for Future Research

• What factors mediate the link between PR participation and outcomes?
• How do PRs impact the well-being of children in care?

Implications & Recommendations

• PRs are a promising practice to improve outcomes for children in care.
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References