

STRENGTHENING PRACTICE • INFORMING POLICY
BUILDING EVIDENCE

2011



NATIONAL CHILD WELFARE EVALUATION SUMMIT



August 29–31
Washington, DC
Grand Hyatt



U.S. DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES
Administration for Children & Families
Administration on Children, Youth and Families
Children's Bureau



Highlights & Notes

- Participant diversity is an important asset
- Research discussions are strengthened when applied to practice
- Evaluation opportunities and challenges call for partnership with communities, e.g., Tribes, LGBTQ, Courts
- Disproportionality and disparities deserve further reflection and discussion
- Dissemination and implementation evaluation command greater attention
- Workforce and training remain an important focus
- Evaluation partnerships are powerful and necessary
- Value of research and evaluation is in its utility
- Evaluation in child welfare is complex
- Building evidence and knowledge remain a shared priority

Making Connections

Building Evidence - Themes

- How we define evidence has great implications for the field and for practice
- Rigorous and relevant evidence is needed
- Experimental design is important and necessary
- Experimental design is not sufficient
- Rigor and appropriateness are not incompatible
- The “noise” *is* the context – and this variability demands thoughtful attention
- Different ways of knowing are valuable
- Culture is critically important
- Adaptation *and* fidelity are possible
- Participatory approaches can build trust and investment
- Evidence exists for many interventions that have not been designed for delivery in child welfare

Possibilities?

Child welfare has an opportunity to more deliberately conceptualize, articulate, and pursue its translational path from innovation to effectiveness to implementation.

Revisiting Research to Practice: Children's Bureau Perspectives on Implementation and Evaluation in Child Welfare Initiatives

Brian Deakins, Program Specialist, Division of Child Welfare Capacity Building

Jane Morgan, Director, Division of Child Welfare Capacity Building

Catherine Nolan, Director, Office on Child Abuse and Neglect

Jan Shafer, Director, Division of Research and Innovation

“Implementation”

A “specified set of activities” designed to put a policy, activity, or program of “known dimensions” into routine practice. (Fixsen et al. 2005)

“Implementation Science”

An emerging body of scientific knowledge about how to promote the use of research findings and successfully put a policy, activity, or program into routine practice.

Applying the Science

Moving from: Conversations about implementation as the process of completing an approved set of planned activities by agreed upon milestones.



Moving to: Thinking about implementation as a series of evidence-informed steps and strategies guided by theory and research-based frameworks that are expected to increase the likelihood that well-defined, promising practices will be adopted and spread with fidelity.

Where are we hearing the term “implementation” from the Bureau?

- Replication Projects**
- Demonstration Projects**
- Evaluation Projects**
- Workforce Leadership Training**
- Technical Assistance**
- Program Improvement**

Increasing Emphasis on Implementation in Discretionary Grant Announcements

“Funds will support a range of activities needed to build infrastructure systems that can fully adopt, implement, and sustain high quality home visitation programs that have strong fidelity to proven effective models.”

-- Supporting Evidence-Based Home Visitation Programs to Prevent Child Maltreatment [HHS-2008-ACF-ACYF-CA-0230] FY2008

“The principal goal of each [center] is to facilitate the institutionalization of principles, policies, and proven or promising practices that a State or Tribe has adopted.”

-- Cooperative Agreements for Child Welfare Technical Assistance Implementation Centers [HHS-2008-ACF-ACYF-CO-0058] FY2008

Increasing Emphasis on Implementation

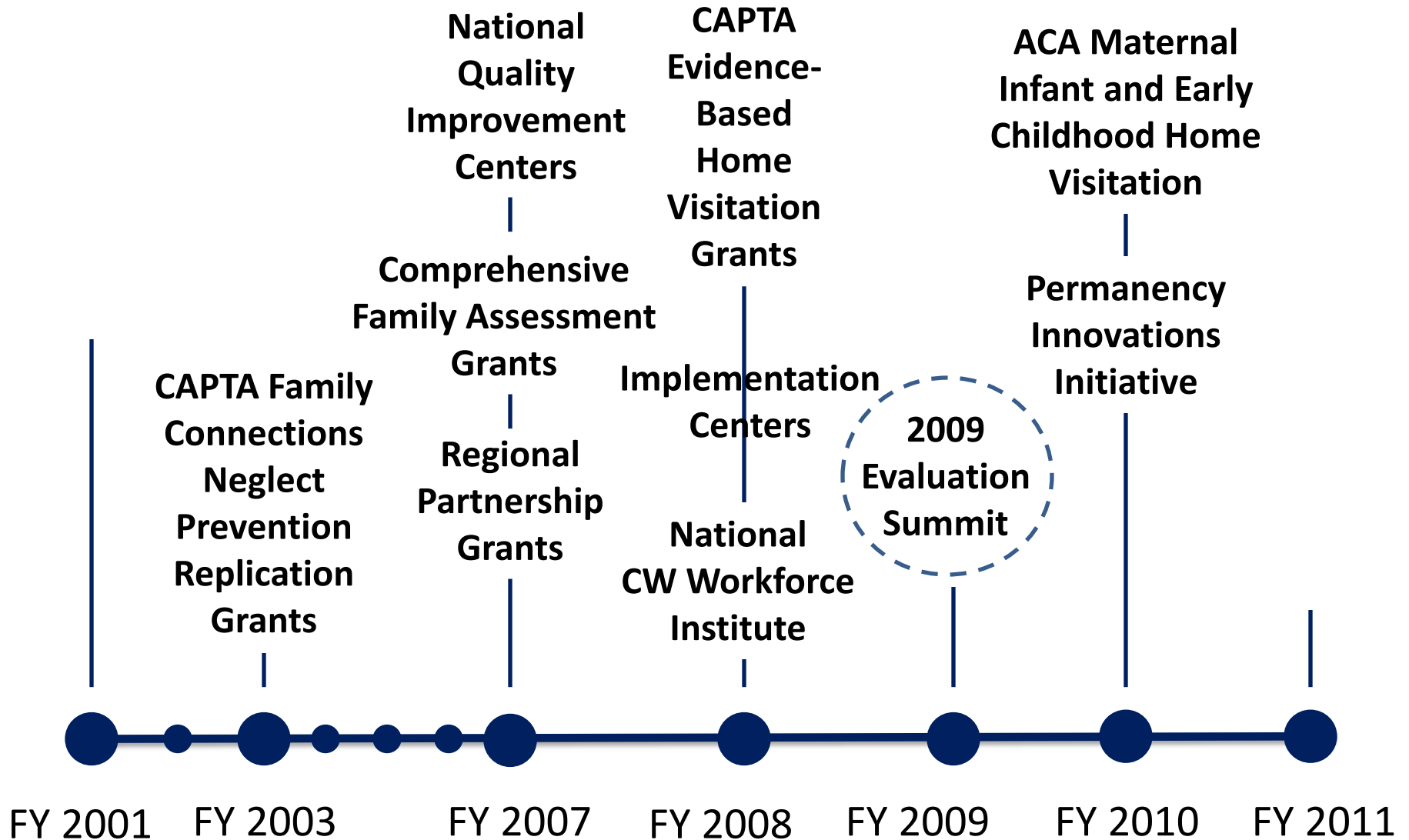
“The [project’s] process evaluation should capture...data about the degree to which adoption and implementation (e.g., uptake, penetration, fidelity, etc.) of the interventions has occurred.”

-- Permanency Innovations Initiative [Initiative to Reduce Long-Term Foster Care HHS-2010-ACF-ACYF-CT-0022] FY2010

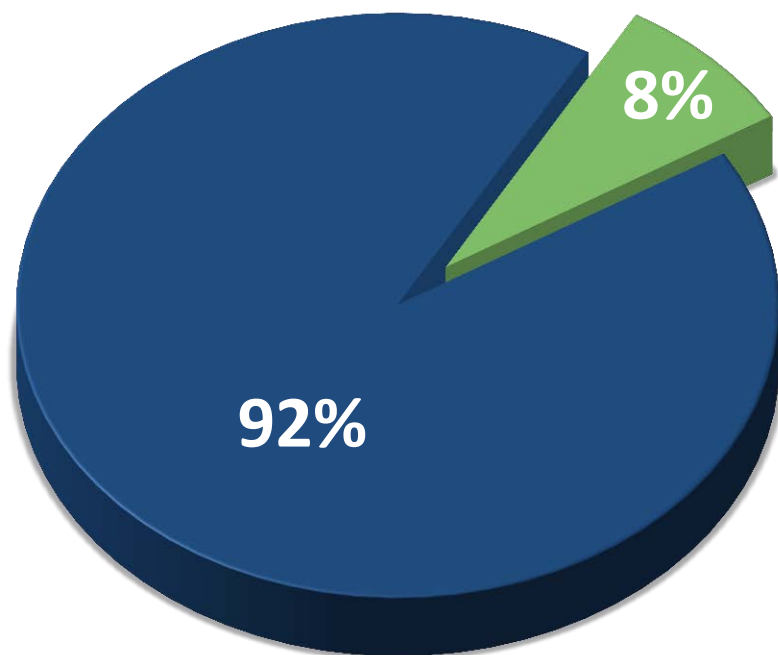
“...each grantee will have developed a comprehensive [plan]... to strategically guide the system through a deliberate process of adoption, installation, implementation, and institutionalization...”

-- Integrating Trauma-Informed and Trauma-Focused Practice in Child Protective Service Delivery [HHS-2011-ACF-ACYF-CO-0169] FY 2011

Timeline of Select Discretionary Projects with Dissemination & Implementation Components

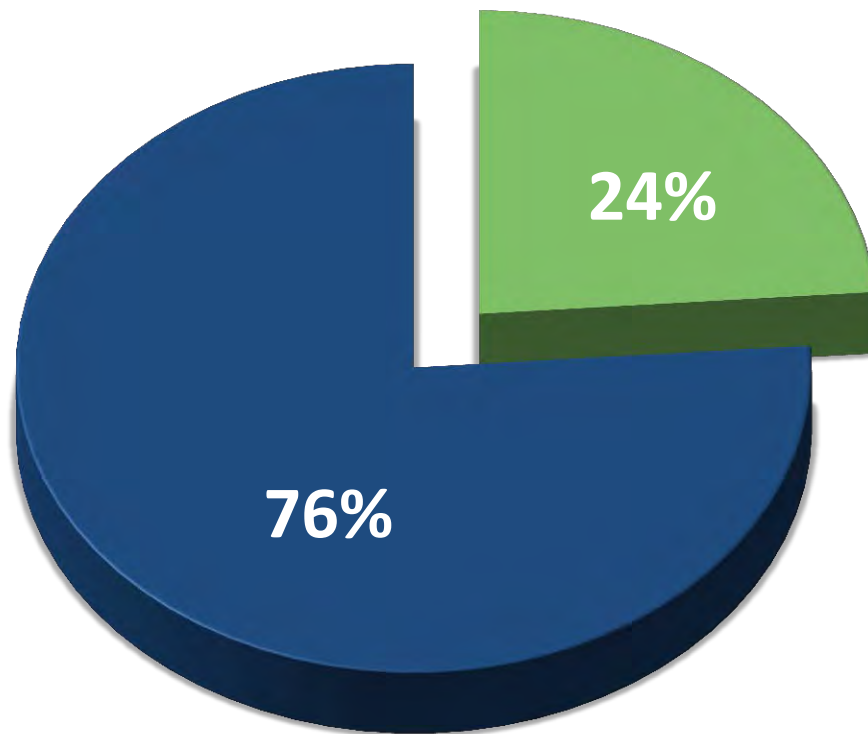


Dissemination & Implementation Sessions at the 2009 Evaluation Summit



- Implementation & Dissemination (6)
- Other Session Topics (69)

Dissemination & Implementation Sessions at the 2011 Evaluation Summit



- Implementation & Dissemination (26)
- Other Sessions Topics (83)

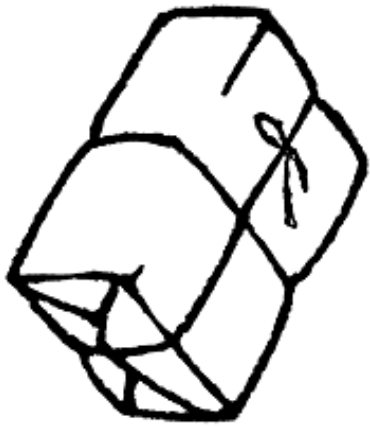
Implementation Matters

When Testing New Practice

When Scaling Up Effective Practice

When Facilitating Systems Change

Implementation Matters



Intervention
(Practice or
Program)



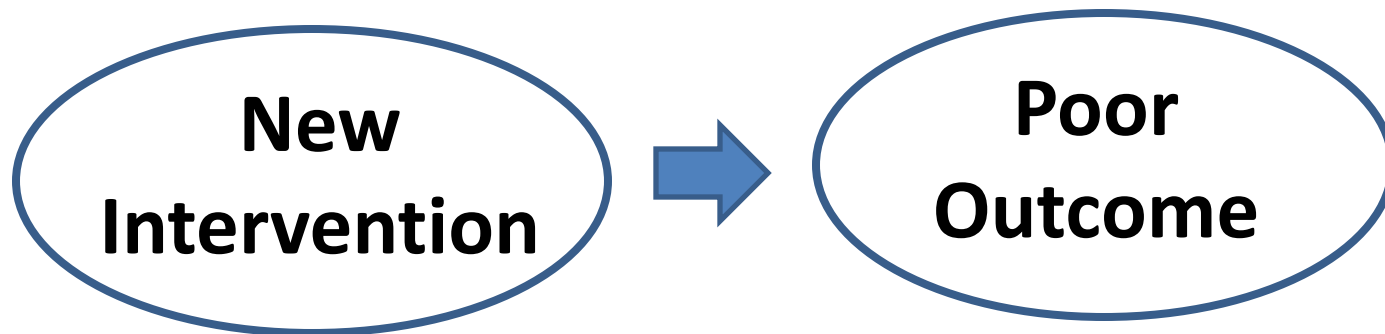
Implementer
(Delivery System)



Outcomes

How well is it being implemented?

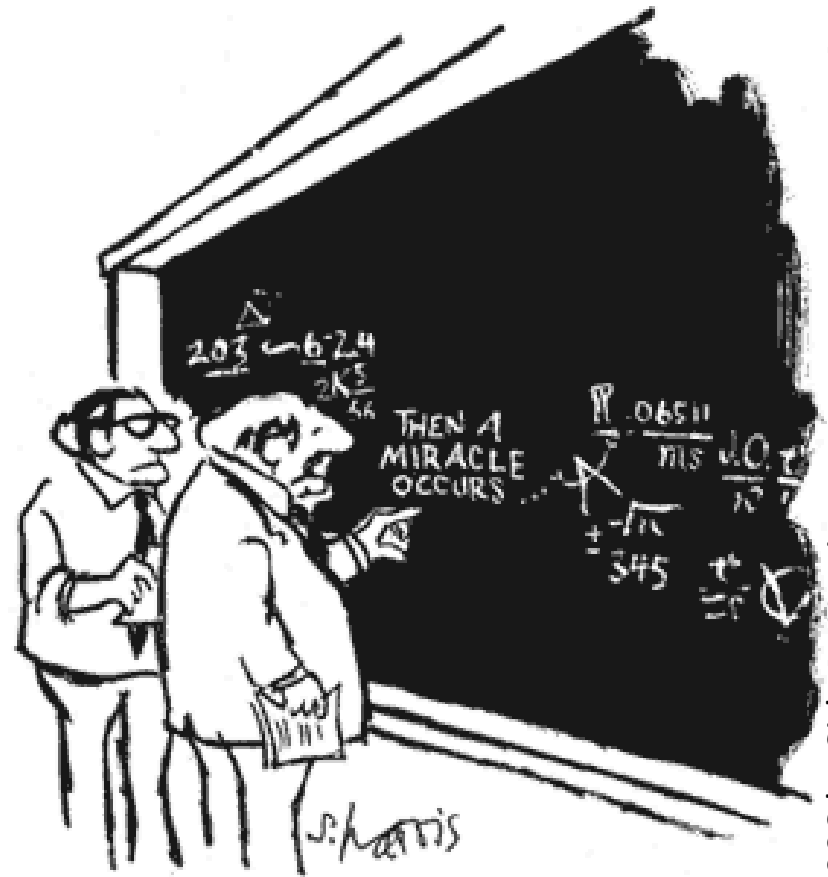
Using an implementation lens pushes us to ask more than whether the intended outcome was achieved.



Was the intervention bad? Should we just throw it out?

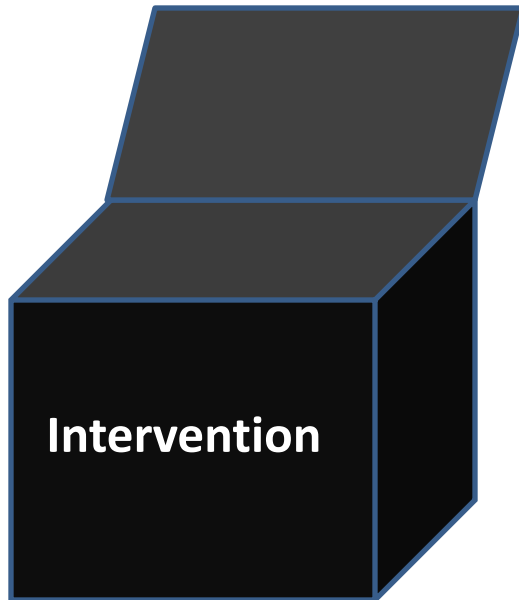
What is being implemented?

Measuring implementation requires that we define the practice well enough to measure fidelity and pushes us to articulate a theory about how and why the practice is intended to work.



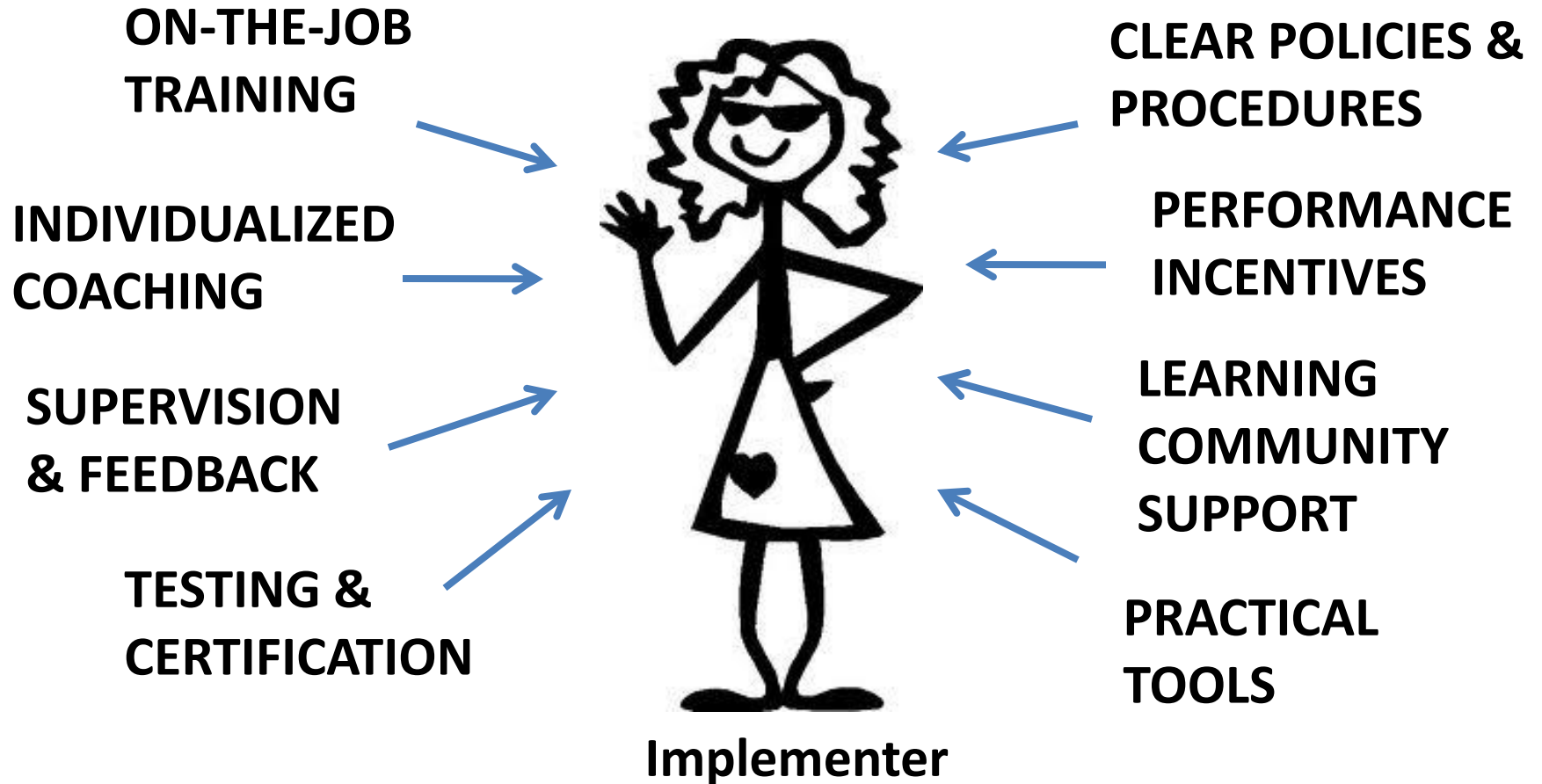
"I THINK YOU SHOULD BE MORE EXPLICIT HERE IN STEP TWO." 17

Were core elements present, and were key protocols followed as intended?



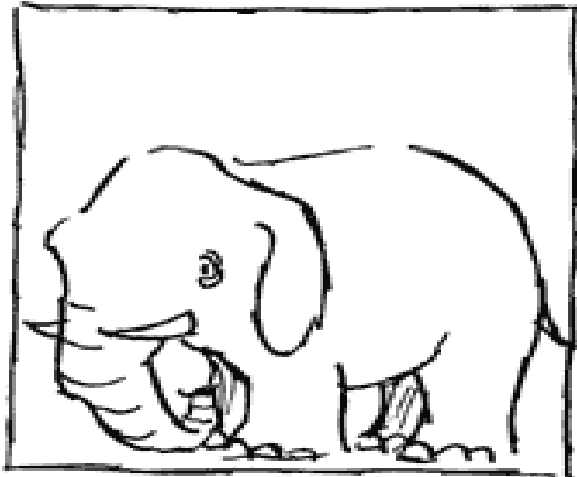
- ✓ Required activities
- ✓ Core components
- ✓ Necessary structure
- ✓ Service standards
- ✓ Specific protocols

Which strategies most effectively scale consistent and best practice?

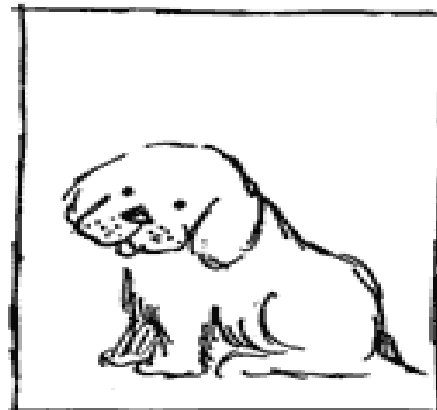


Was there practice drift? Why?

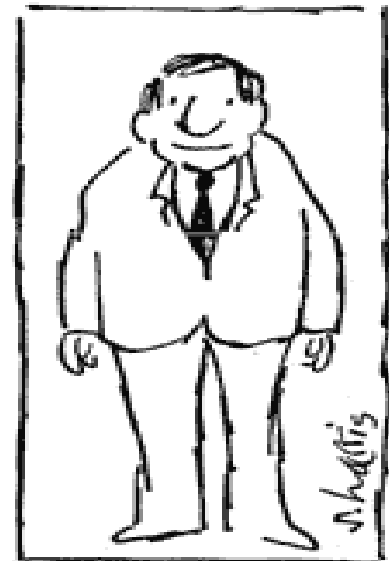
Achieving successful implementation often demands that we monitor whether we are delivering the intervention as intended and provide important and timely feedback.



NEVER FORGETS



SOMETIMES FORGETS



ALWAYS FORGETS

Which capacities and conditions are necessary to support implementation in systems and sustain change?

- Climate & Culture
- Workforce stability
- Leadership
- Service array
- Sustained financing
- Stakeholder buy-in
- Legislation/policy
- Networks
- Data infrastructure
- Quality assurance
- Penalties or Incentives
- Mission & Values
- Organizational health
- Selection
- Training & Coaching
- Supervision
- Inter-agency collaboration
- Workforce knowledge/skills
- Supportive administration
- Performance management
- Embedded Evaluation
- Change agents

Select References

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Panelists

Catherine Nolan

Director, Office on Child Abuse and Neglect

Jan Shafer

Director, Division of Research and Innovation

Jane Morgan

Director, Division of Child Welfare Capacity Building

How is your division applying
implementation science in its work
today?

Office on Child Abuse and Neglect (OCAN)

Purpose: To provide leadership and direction on issues related to child maltreatment and prevention under the Child Abuse Prevention and Treatment Act (CAPTA):

- Build the evidence base through research & demonstration projects
- Federal interagency collaboration & partnerships
- Support State and local child abuse and neglect prevention efforts

Division Guidance and Oversight

Formula grants to States:

- Community-Based Child Abuse and Prevention Program (CBCAP)
- Community Justice Act (CJA)

Discretionary Grants:

- Rigorous Evaluations of Existing Child Abuse Prevention Programs
- Regional Partnership Grants
- Supporting Evidence-based Home Visiting Programs
- CBCAP Tribal and Migrant Programs

T/TA through National Resource Centers and Quality Improvement Centers:

- National Quality Improvement Center on Differential Response in CPS
- National Quality Improvement Center on Early Childhood
- FRIENDS National Resource Center for Community-Based Child Abuse Prevention
- National Resource Center on Child Protective Services

“Waves” of OCAN’s Progress in Implementation Science (2001 -2007)

Publication: *Emerging Practices in the Prevention of Child Abuse and Neglect* (contract started in 2001)

- Initial effort to identify best practices/model programs
 - Demonstrated Effective Programs
 - Reported Effective Programs
 - Innovative Programs

Family Connections Neglect Replication Grants (2003)

- 8 grants awarded nationwide
- Replication of prevention program with fidelity measures
- Cost evaluation and cross-site evaluation

“Waves” of OCAN’s Progress in Implementation Science

Regional and National Quality Improvement Centers

- Regional and national systemic change efforts on focus topics
- Research partnerships to support implementation, knowledge development and targeted dissemination

Community-Based Child Abuse Prevention Program

- Focus on strengthening evaluation of prevention efforts
- Increased use of evidence informed programs

Regional Partnership Grants

- Strengthening collaboration across different disciplines
- Instrumentation to assess collaboration

“Waves” of OCAN’s Progress in Implementation Science

Home Visiting

- Family Connections Replications (FY03- 09): fidelity criteria, economic evaluation, cost analysis framework
- Supporting Evidence-Based Home Visiting (EBHV) grants (FY08 – 13): supporting infrastructure for high quality implementation, implementing with fidelity, sustaining programs
- Maternal, Infant and Early Childhood Home Visiting collaborative work with HRSA (FY10 – 14): more stringent evidence criteria, benchmark reporting, competitive grants based on Race to the Top criteria

Division of Research & Innovation (DRI)

Purpose: To provide leadership and direction in program development, innovation, research. To define critical issues for investigation and make recommendations regarding subject areas for research, demonstration, and evaluation.

- Administers the Bureau's discretionary grant programs, and awards project grants to State and local agencies and organizations nationwide.

Division of Research & Innovation

- Provides oversight and management to discretionary initiatives including the Permanency Innovations Initiative, Family Connections Grants, Comprehensive Family Assessment Grants, and recently completed Child Welfare Systems of Care Grants.

Making strides in dissemination and transparency:

- Promoting improved knowledge dissemination from discretionary grants to the field
- Facilitating greater transparency by making process evaluation findings more visible as implementation is happening

Division of Research & Innovation

Comprehensive Family Assessments Grants Cluster

First Round of CFSRs Found...

- Need for Comprehensive Family Assessments
- Assessments over the life of the case
- Connections between identified needs and services provided

National Resource Centers Developed

- Comprehensive Family Assessment Guidelines

Children's Bureau Funded

- CFA Discretionary Grants Cluster 2007-2012

Division of Research & Innovation

- What does it take to IMPLEMENT & SUSTAIN the use of Comprehensive Family Assessment in a child welfare system?
- Dissemination Plans (Year 4 of 5)
- Translate both WHAT and HOW

Supports for Implementation

- Create learning communities among clusters of grantees
- Discretionary Grants Library

Permanency Innovations Initiative

- The PII is a Presidential Initiative focused on decreasing the number of children in long-term foster care. Over the next five years, this program will invest \$100 million in new intervention strategies to help foster youth move into permanent homes, test new approaches to reducing time spent in foster care placements, and remove the most serious barriers to finding lasting, loving environments.
- The goal of the PII is to improve permanency outcomes for children and youth who face serious barriers to permanency and to build the evidence for innovative interventions and replicable strategies.

Permanency Innovations Initiative

Six Cooperative Agreements

- Implement innovative intervention strategies to reduce long term foster stays and improve child outcomes

Technical Assistance Contract

- Use tenets of implementation science, combined with child welfare programmatic expertise, to improve implementation, effectiveness, fidelity and sustainability of PII interventions

Evaluation Contract

- Design and conduct local-level and cross-site evaluations of the interventions' ability to remove barriers and reduce long-term foster care, design and conduct evaluations of the implementation process and cost

Division of Child Welfare Capacity Building

Purpose: To build the capacities of State and Tribal child welfare systems (agencies and courts) to achieve safety, permanency, and well-being for children, youth, and families

Division Guidance and Oversight

- Children's Bureau's Training & Technical Assistance (T/TA) Network, including the National Resource Centers and Implementation Centers
- IV-B Training Projects, including National Child Welfare Workforce Institute
- Child Welfare Information Gateway

Building Capacity Through Tailored Training & Technical Assistance

Taking deliberate steps to improve T/TA:

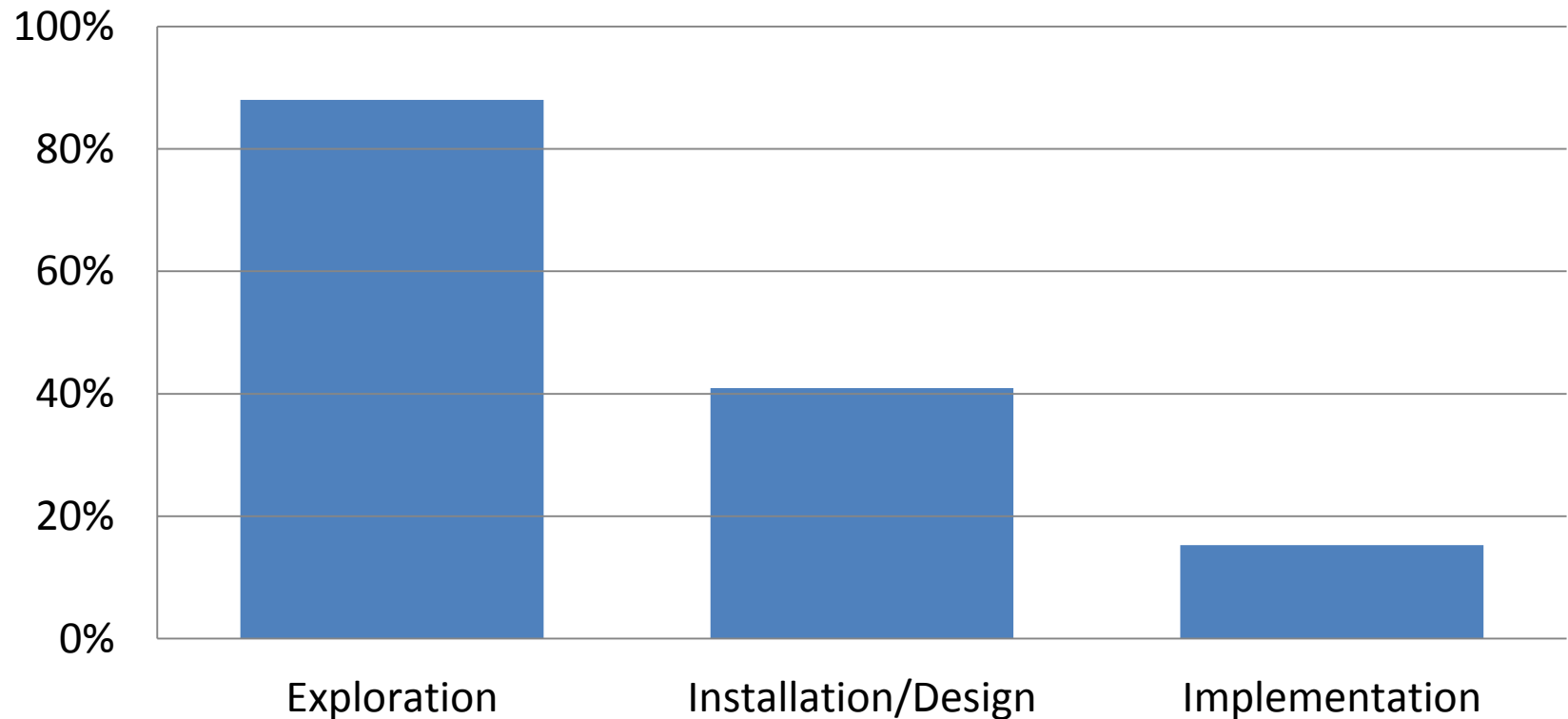
- Moving from reactive to proactive TA
- Investigating and examining underlying systemic issues and barriers to improved child welfare practice and performance
- Building capacity and leadership at multiple levels in the child welfare workforce to agency build resilience when confronted with adversity, including turnover
- Becoming a more coordinated and integrated system of technical assistance service delivery
- Devoting greater attention and resources to evaluation
- Sept 2008 announcements of Child Welfare Workforce Institute & CW Implementation Centers

Applying Implementation Science to Tailored Training & Technical Assistance

- Implementation science offers a new lens through which to think about initiatives intended to implement policies, programs, and practices
- Key concepts and lessons from NIRN's implementation framework resonated with Federal staff and technical assistance providers
- Implementation science became a frame for thinking about stages of technical assistance delivery

In which stages of implementation have we been attempting to build capacity?

**Percent of Hours by Implementation Stage
July 2010 - June 2011 (NRCs and ICs)**

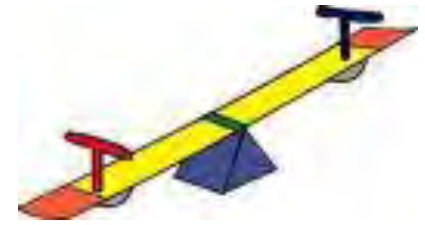


Applying Implementation Science

- “Drivers” offer particular areas in which capacity can be assessed
- Implementation frameworks align well with literature about technical and adaptive leadership challenges when attempting to pursue change
- Emphasis on coaching, implementation teams, and innovation zones encourage reflection on our current T/TA and an opportunity to adjust technical assistance strategies, further investigate organizational capacity, and experiment with staged implementation

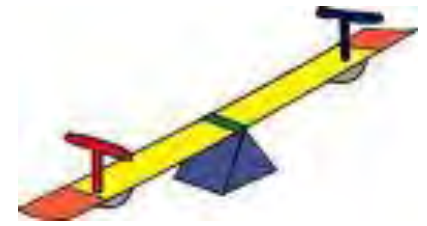
What dilemmas or “dynamic tensions”
have emerged during our efforts to
apply implementation science?

Dynamic Tensions at Play



- Model adherence (fidelity) *and* adaptability (flexibility)
- Calls to use the strongest available evidence *and* limited research in critical areas of child welfare practice
- Needs for sufficient time and resources to test promising interventions *and* pressure to scale evidence-based or promising practice to improve performance
- Urgency to meet the immediate needs of the service population (program-driven projects) *and* urgency to build evidence about effective practice for the broader field (research-driven projects)

Dynamic Tensions at Play



- Multiple conditions (including readiness) and capacities upon which successful implementation is believed to be dependent *and* limited consensus about which to prioritize and how to best assess them
- Demands for implementation-focused technical assistance (TA) *and* sparse evidence for effective TA approaches, few proven implementation strategies, and limited consultant capacity (expertise and resources for implementation) in the field
- Research-informed frameworks for implementing discrete evidence-based programs *and* needs for equally applicable approaches to facilitate implementation in complex and comprehensive systems change initiatives

What do you think are important areas for growth in your division's work to support successful implementation?
What role might evaluation play?