




Building the Evidence in Child Welfare

Moderator – Meghann Dygert, Policy Associate – Child Welfare and Family Well-Being




Thriving Communities Built on Human Potential

WWW.APHSA.ORG @APHSA1

1



Our Vision

Thriving Communities
BUILT on Human Potential

www.APHSA.org | Washington, D.C.

@APHSA1

2

Our Mission

American Public Human Services Association advances the well-being of all people by *influencing* modern approaches to sound policy, *building* the capacity of public agencies to enable healthy families and communities, and *connecting* leaders to accelerate learning and generate practical solutions together.

... Because we build well-being from the ground up.

www.APHSA.org | Washington, D.C.



3

National Association of Public Child Welfare Administrators (NAPCWA)

Who We Are

The National Association of Public Child Welfare Administrators (NAPCWA) represents state and local public child welfare agencies through their child welfare administrators, deputies and other agency staff who are responsible for administering a continuum of safety, permanency and well-being supports and interventions for children and families.

www.APHSA.org | Washington, D.C.

Our Purpose

To provide children with the opportunity to live a healthy life, be well and reach their full potential, NAPCWA provides national leadership for the development of sound policy, innovative practices, and critical capacity building to improve outcomes for children and families



National Association of Public
Child Welfare Administrators



@APHSA1

4



August 1, 2019


Building the Evidence in Child Welfare

APHSA Webinar

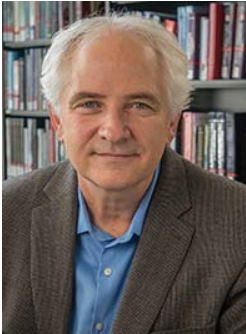
URBAN
INSTITUTE • ELEVATE • THE • DEBATE

5

Today's Presenters



Michael Pergamit
Senior Fellow, Urban Institute



Mark Courtney
*Professor, University of Chicago
School of Social Service Administration*

• URBAN • INSTITUTE •

6

Agenda

- Current state of evidence in child welfare
- How evidence is established
- What is required to rigorously evaluate programs
- The Supporting Evidence Building in Child Welfare project
- Q & A

What is the state of evidence in child welfare?

- Few interventions evaluated
- Even fewer shown to be effective
- Many not tested specifically in child welfare population
- Limits ability to achieve better outcomes

What is meant by *evidence*?

- “Proof” clients improved *because* of the service provided
- Those who participate in a program are compared to similar people who didn’t get service
- Without comparison group, can’t be sure that the treatment is what caused the change

Evidence requires rigorous evaluation methods

- Randomized Control Trial (RCT)
- Quasi-Experimental Design (QED)
- **Must** have comparison group
 - Service as usual
 - No treatment

Randomized Control Trials

- Participants randomly assigned to treatment and comparison groups
- Enough demand for the program to create treatment and comparison groups
 - Fair allocation of limited resources
- Randomization can be at multiple levels:
 - Individual – children, parents, agency staff, judges
 - Clusters – families, offices, counties, regions, providers
- Requires strict adherence to randomization procedures

11

Quasi-Experimental Designs

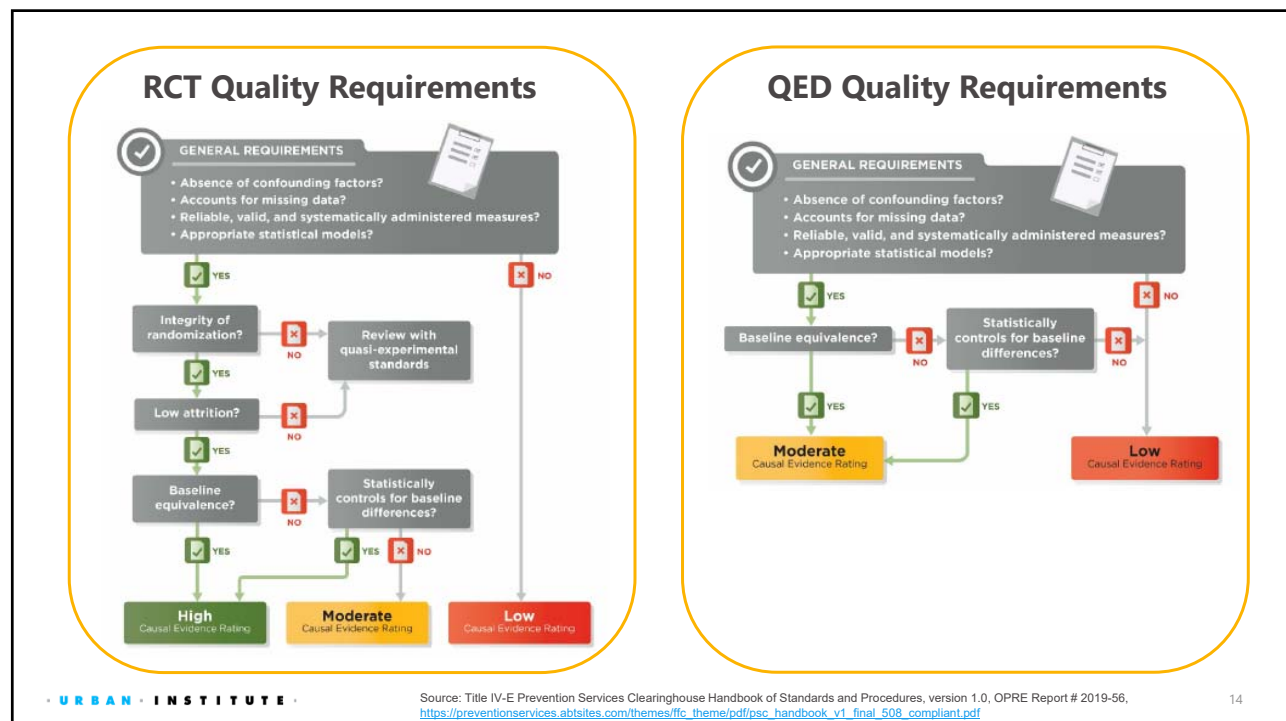
- When random assignment is not viable
- Treatment and control groups must be similar
- Must reflect the service population – no “creaming”
- Must be strategic in making comparison group
 - Can be regions, offices, or providers not yet implementing program
 - For example, staggered roll out to new offices

12

Design & execution of rigorous evaluation includes...

- Baseline equivalence of treatment and comparison populations
- Enough participants to detect differences
- Low attrition
- Follow-up time after treatment

13



14

Title IV-E Prevention Services Clearinghouse

| | Well-Supported | Supported | Promising |
|--|-----------------------------------|----------------------------------|------------------|
| Number of evaluations | 2, with different participants | 1 | 1 |
| Treatment delivery setting | Usual care or practice | Usual care or practice | No requirement |
| Persistence of favorable effects | 12 months beyond end of treatment | 6 months beyond end of treatment | No requirement |
| Level of evaluation design & execution | High or moderate | High or moderate | High or moderate |

15

Child welfare evaluation challenges

- Lack of support for random assignment
- Maintaining treatment fidelity
- Getting enough participants
 - Small jurisdictions
 - High attrition rates
- Workforce turnover

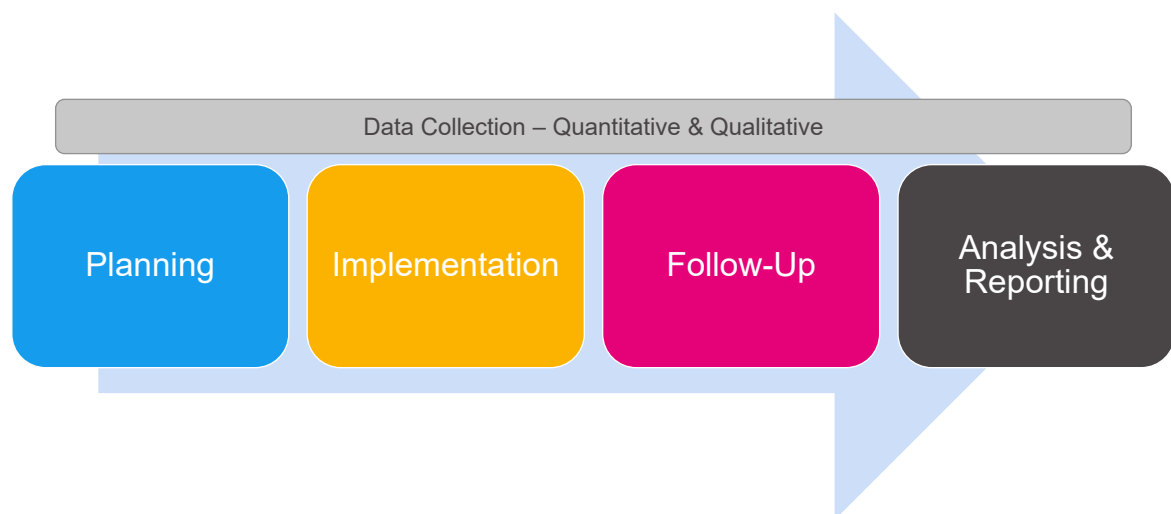
16

Rigorous evaluation is possible!

- Plan strategically for evaluation from the beginning
- Data on many outcomes and service inputs are available in administrative systems
 - Administrative systems good source of demographic, safety, and permanency data
 - If needed data aren't currently collected, develop a plan to do so
- Train staff who will be responsible for random assignment

17

Typical evaluation process



18

The Supporting Evidence Building in Child Welfare Project

- Contract with ACF to perform rigorous evaluations
- Goal: increase number of evidence-supported interventions
- Project progress:
 - One evaluation is underway and others are in development
 - The project is currently seeking additional programs and services for evaluation
- Selected interventions will have two studies:
 - Impact study
 - Implementation study
- Project only funds the evaluation – not the provision of services

Project Eligibility

- Preference for interventions in the following areas:
 - community-based primary prevention models
 - mental health prevention and treatment services
 - substance abuse prevention and treatment services
 - in-home parent skill-based programs
 - kinship navigator programs
 - programs for transition-age youth
- Program currently operating, or will be in near future
- Has established at least a Promising level of evidence

Interested?

*Send a brief description of the intervention, your name, and
contact information to*

cwinterventions@acf.hhs.gov

by August 30, 2019

More information at: <https://tinyurl.com/SEBCW>