



Erwin McEwen, Director

Human Services Commission Presentation

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Director

- DCFS should not be in the business of raising children, it should be in the business of strengthening families.
- “Primary responsibility for the development and well-being of children lies within the family, and all segments of society must support families as they rear their children.” -
-Family Resource Coalition, 1996

Vision for IDCFS

- Department that is approachable
- Can provide help and support to parents who are stressed and struggling to meet the needs of their children

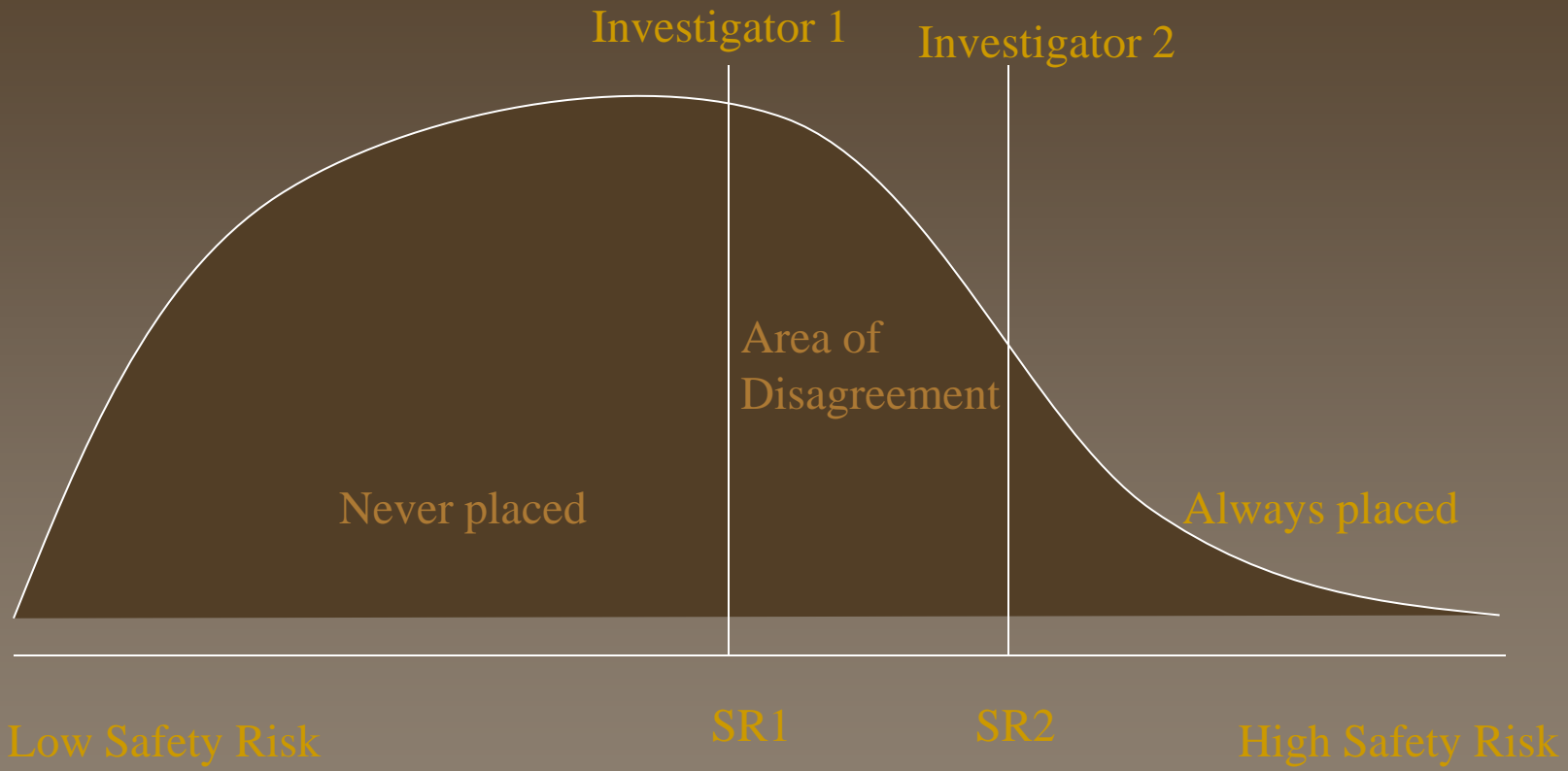
Vs.

- Department that “Takes away your kids”

Goal

1. Prevent families from coming into care
2. Help families in care reunite as soon as possible

Intervention Dilemma Cases



Strict Investigator 1 removes if $SR > SR1$

Lenient Investigator 2 removes if $SR > SR2$

Detrimental Impact of Foster Care

Children at the margin of removal perform *worse* when they are removed from home¹:


- 3x Higher Arrest Rate
- 3x Higher Delinquency
- 2x Higher Teen Motherhood
- 40% Lower Employment
- No Effects for Childhood Burns / Broken Bones;
- But 3x more likely to receive well-child visits.

¹Doyle, J. J. (2007a). Child protection and child outcomes: Measuring the effects of foster care. *The American Economic Review*, 97(5), 1583—1610. Doyle, J. J. (2008). Child protection and adult crime: Using investigator assignment to estimate causal effects of foster care. *Journal of Political Economy*, 116(4), 746—770.

System Integration in Illinois

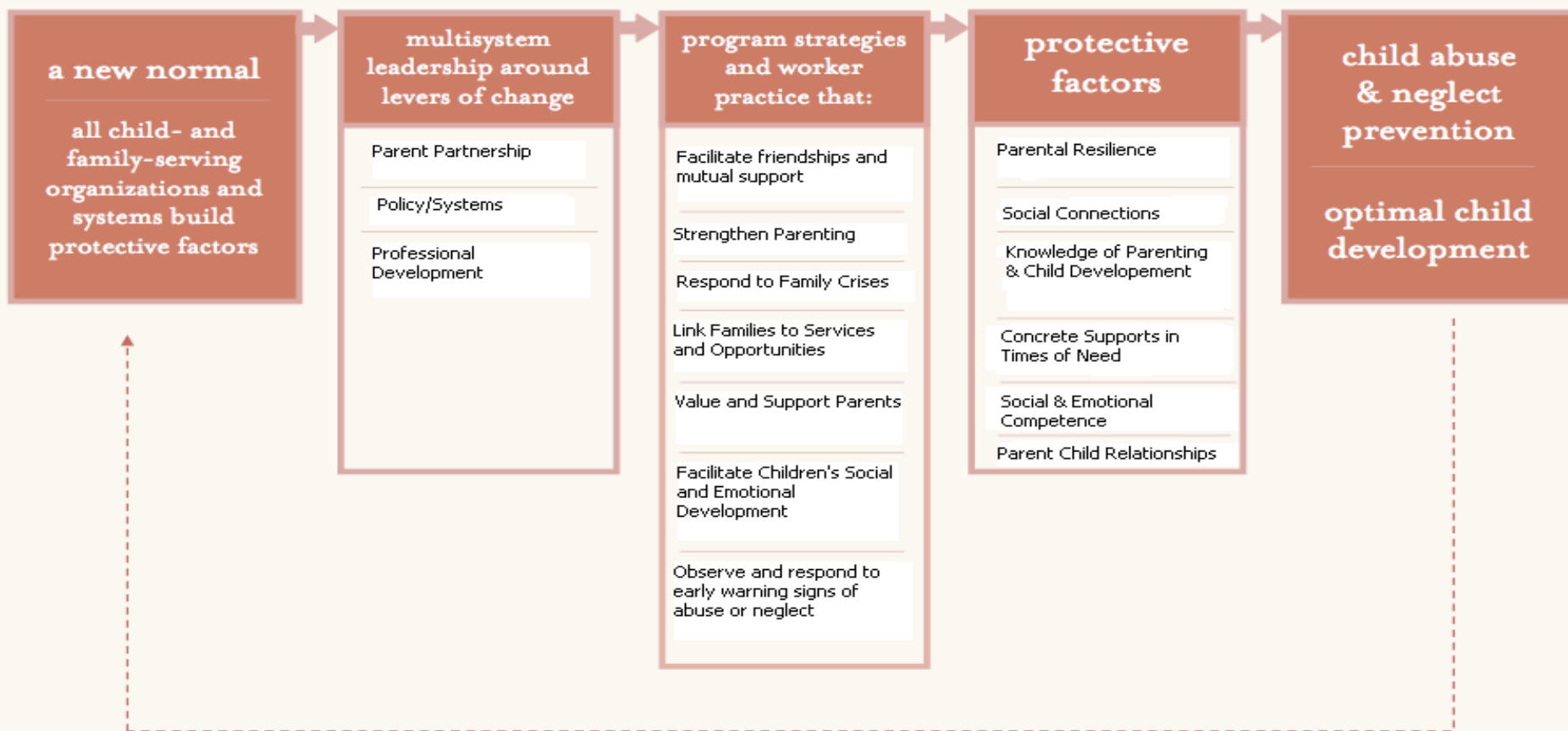
- Strengthening Families Illinois established in 2006 with the overarching framework to build:
 - Parental Resilience
 - Social Connections
 - Knowledge of Parenting and Child Development
 - Concrete Support in Times of Need
 - Social and Emotional Competence of Children
 - Healthy Parent-Child Relationships
- Trauma Informed Practice Program infused throughout rules, assessments, services plans and case work practice

Strategies

- ✓ Strengthening Families Initiative
 - ✓ Family Advocacy Centers
 - ✓ Differential Response
 - ✓ Trauma Initiative
 - ✓ Partnership with Schools
 - ✓ DCFS/DJJ Collaboration
 - ✓ Performance Based Contracting & Evaluation
 - ✓ Statewide Provider Database
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strengthening families logic model

HOW POLICIES, PROGRAMS, AND PRACTICE CAN PREVENT CHILD ABUSE AND NEGLECT AND PROMOTE OPTIMAL DEVELOPMENT



Parent Leadership In Communities


Strengthening Families Illinois Initiative:

- Parent Cafes
- Parent Leadership Training
- Parent Café Training Institutes
- Community Cafes
- Statewide Parent Leadership Team (Currently 300 parents)

DCFS targeting parents through ...

- Strengthening Families Networks
- Teen parents in DCFS care
- Birth Parent Councils
- Foster and Adoptive Parents Councils
- Youth Advisory Board

Family Advocacy Centers

- In communities with high levels of child welfare system involvement
 - Building on community-based family support
 - Assisting child welfare-involved families with meeting goals of service plans
 - Promoting strong families and preventing child welfare system involvement
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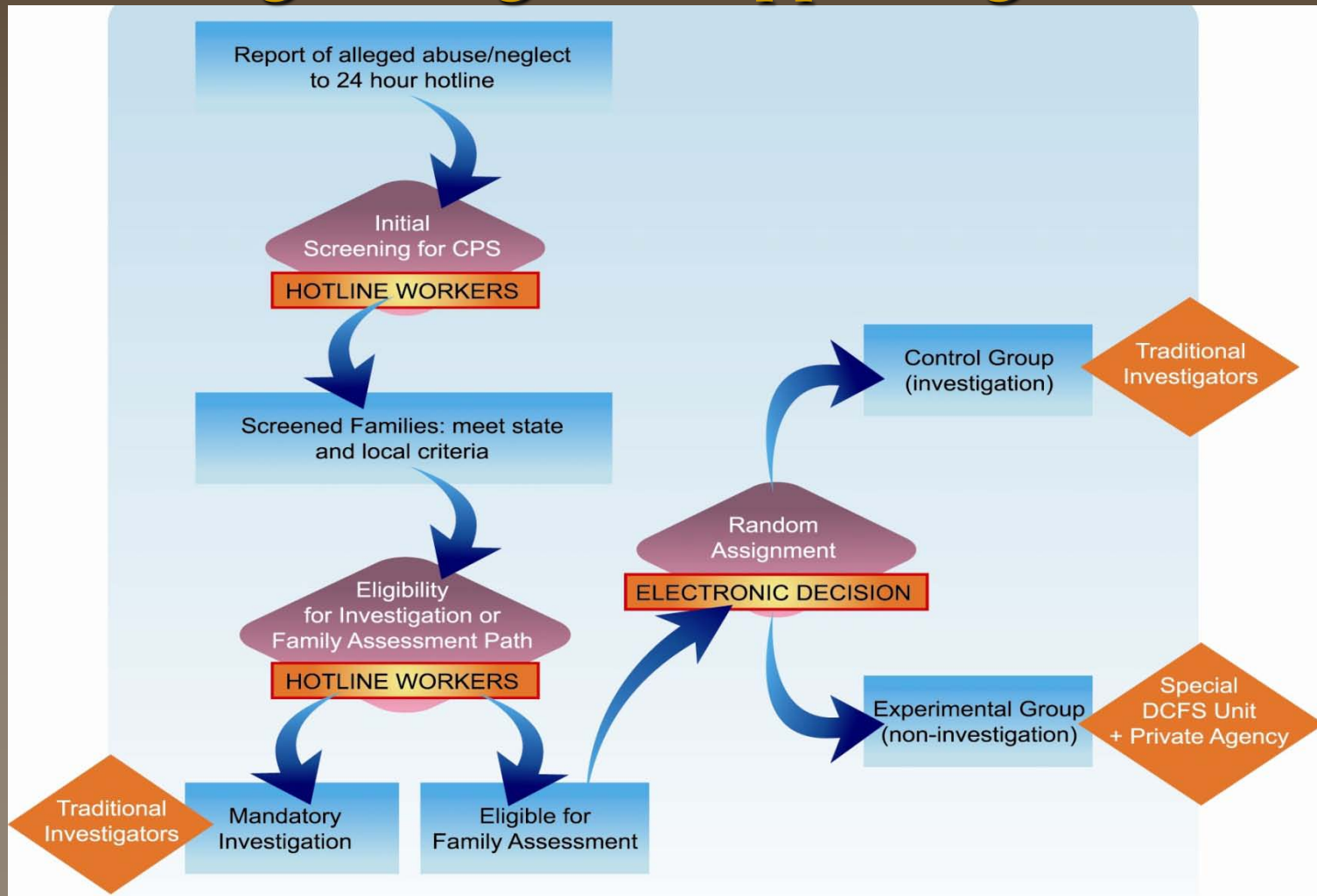


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Differential Response

- Alternative pathway to investigation -- family assessment
- Targeting “low-risk” families
- Evidence-based practices embedded
 - home visiting
 - recovery coach
 - protective factors

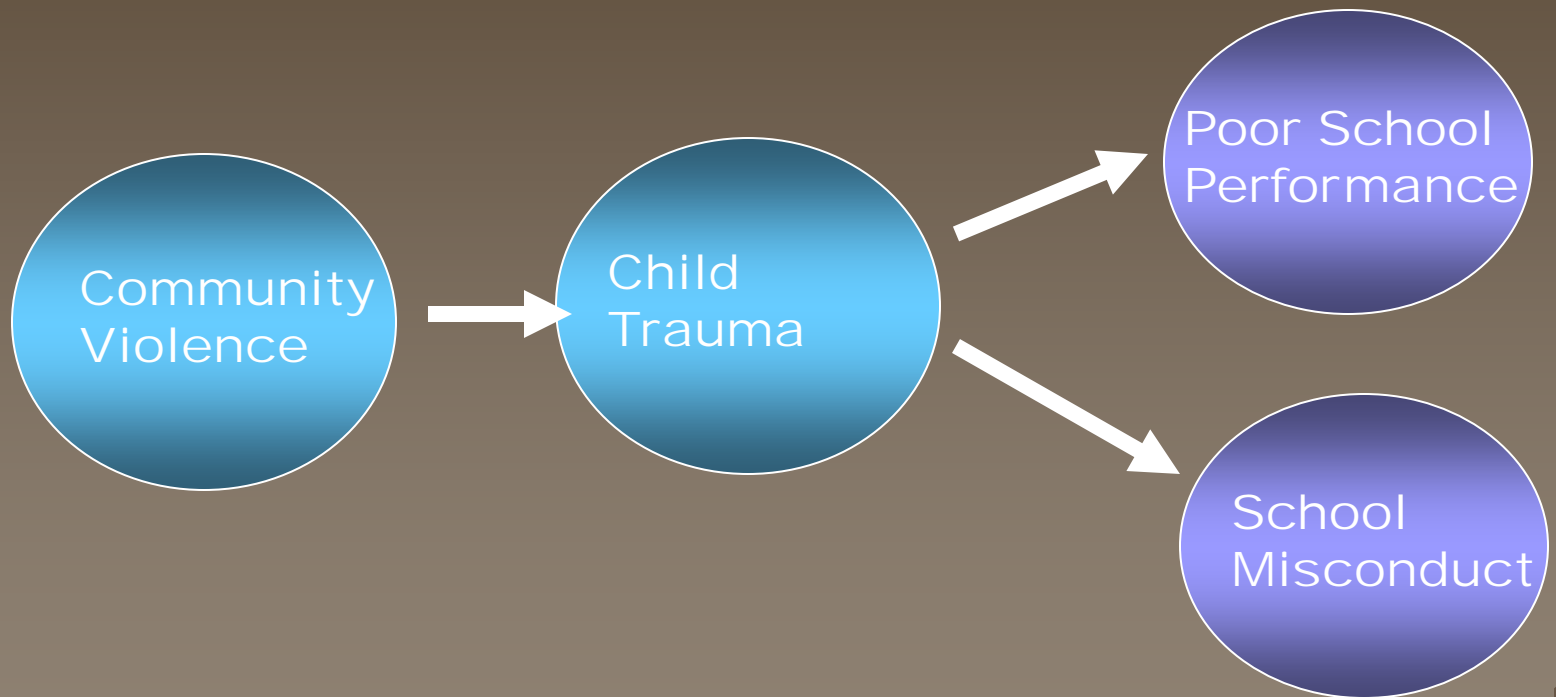
IL DCFS Pathways to Strengthening and Supporting Families



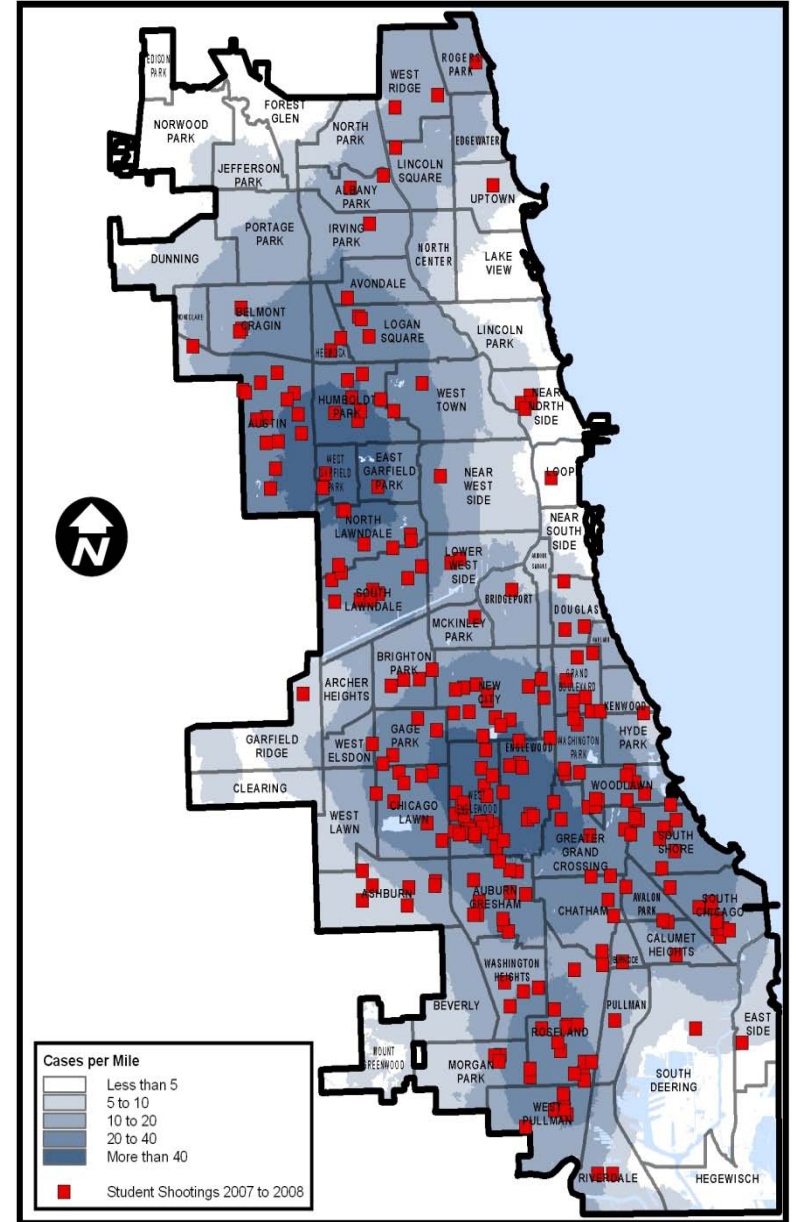
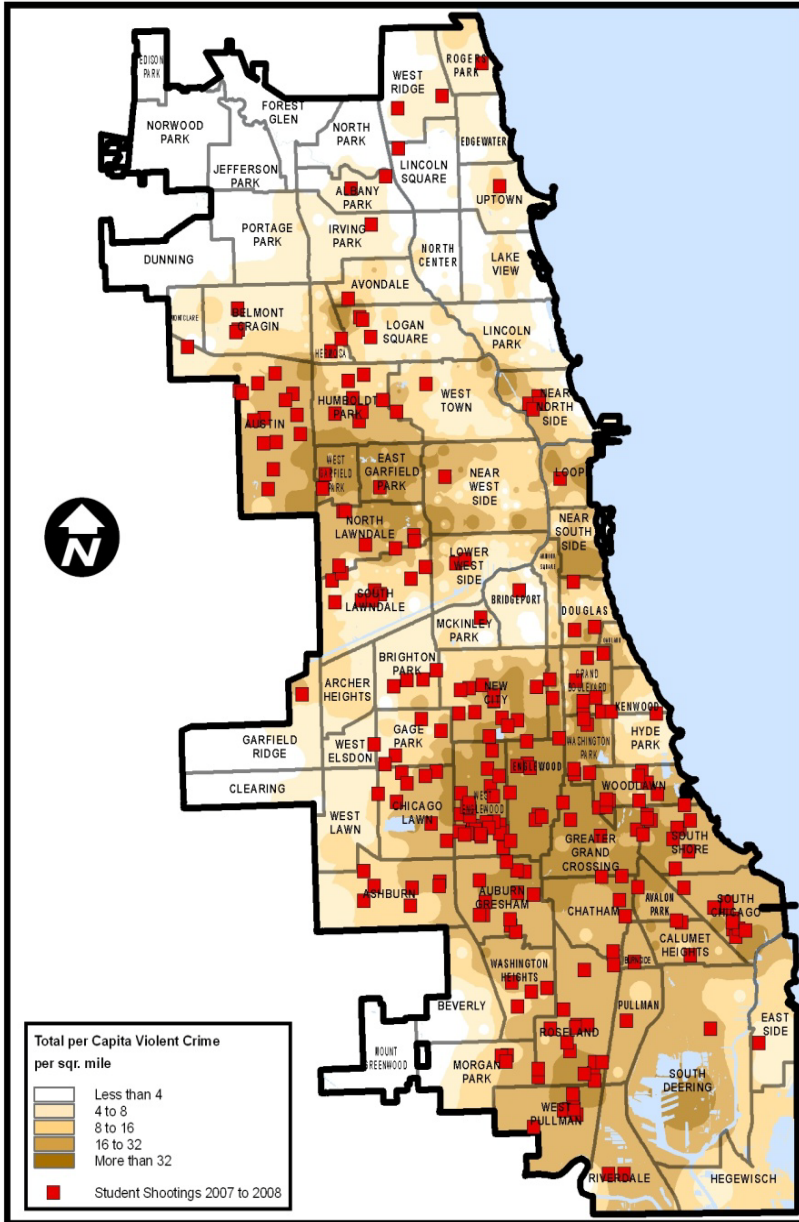
Common Cause: History of Trauma

- Consequences of trauma are risk factors for delinquency:
 - Hyper vigilance
 - Impulsivity
 - Poor attention
 - Inability to accurately anticipate and weigh consequences of behavior
- Implications for response:
 - Assessment strategies should assess trauma history and effects
 - Treatment should be trauma-informed

DCFS tools built on an understanding of trauma as the underlying problem



COMMUNITY/YOUTH VIOLENCE AND CHILD WELFARE CASES PER MILE





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DCFS Offers Schools:

- ◆ Statewide Provider Database
- ◆ Parent Cafes—elementary and high schools
- ◆ Psychological First Aid

Dually Involved Youth

- ◆ 82.7% of detainees reported any maltreatment; only 16.3% of these had a court report of the maltreatment (Swahn et al, 2006)
- ◆ Rates of delinquency are 50% higher to twice as high among children with maltreatment histories, with the strength of the relationship increasing with the seriousness of the maltreatment (Smith & Thornberry, 1995)

Strategies for Inter-Departmental Collaboration

- Uniform tool across systems
 - Assessment strategy that can be used reliably by staff in both systems (probation officers as well as social workers)
 - Assessment strategy that can facilitate decision making
 - Strengths-based, trauma-informed assessment
 - Treatment Service Provisions
 - Outcomes Management
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SPD Contents

- ◆ Currently contains information on:
 - 1,320 agencies
 - 2,700 programs across the state
 - Over 15,000 services
- ◆ Includes programs with and without DCFS contracts
- ◆ Includes data on which of state departments contract for services

Community Collaboration – SPD Training

- Chicago Public Schools
Social Workers
- YMCA
- Chicago Police Department
Community Policing Unit
- Kane County Learning
Network
- Youth 1st
- Alternative Schools
Network (mentors)
- South Suburban Family
Shelter
- CDPH
- Northwestern Legal Clinic
- La Rabida
- Family Focus - Nuestra
Familia
- LAN 79
- Birth Parent Council
Summit
- Safety Networks
- Cook County Probation

Strategies for Maximizing Evaluation & Outcomes

- ◆ Performance Based Contracting
- ◆ Make use of existing resources (data, technology, staff, collaborations)
- ◆ Re-align incentives to encourage reliable data collection
- ◆ Practice Total Clinical Outcomes Management Strategies (TCOM; Lyons 2007) to feed data back into the system

Creating Synergy between practice & evaluation

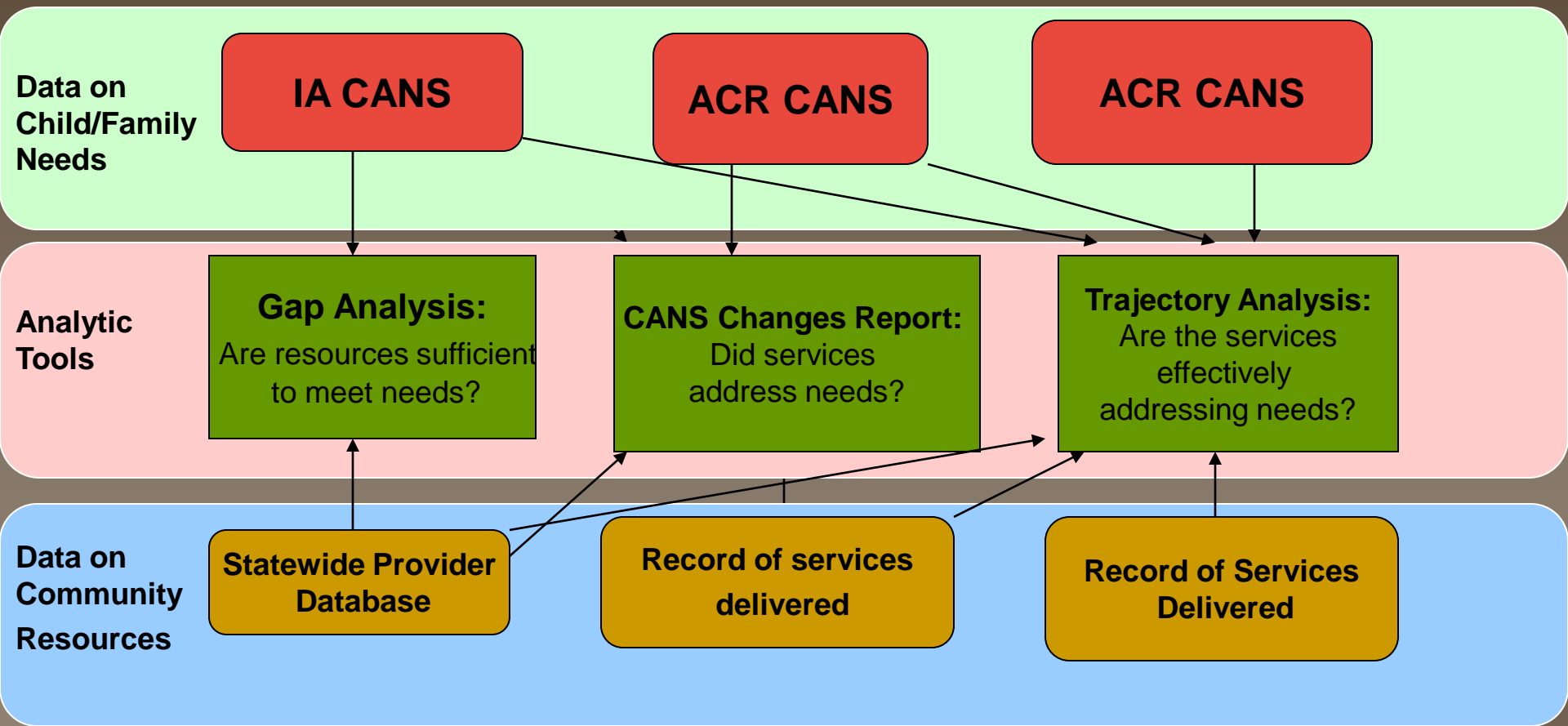
- The information caseworkers collect to determine risk, intervention, & need for services becomes the data used for evaluation
- The tools staff use to enter the data provide benefits to them as well
 - Automatic provider searches using SPD
 - Access to data on progress to support decision-making

Building on Intake with subsequent assessments

Initial

6 Months


12 Months



Long Term Vision

- Child welfare – continuously define and refine child welfare so that it becomes more closely aligned to child well-being (Don't always achieve child well-being using best child welfare tools.)
- Broad-based community impact around:
 - School performance
 - School misconduct
 - Youth violence
 - Community violence
 - Family well-being
 - Optimum Child Development
- Requires all of us!

Identified Challenges for Illinois

- Overcoming stakeholders' fears about the safety of children as we embark on these new initiatives
 - Dealing with entrenched organizational culture which does not prioritize engaging families
 - Shifting the paradigm from compliance with case plan tasks to the needs of families and empowers the families with "how" to meet those needs
 - Budgetary crisis of 2009 had an impact on the morale of the human service system as a whole
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In Closing...

**All improvement requires change,
but not all changes lead to
improvements.**

**“Every system is perfectly designed to
achieve the results it gets.”**

