• 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

Investigator 1

Never placed

Area of Disagreement

Investigator 2

Always placed

Low Safety Risk SR1 SR2 High Safety Risk

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 home:\(^1\):

– 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.

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
strengthening families logic model

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

a new normal
all child- and family-serving organizations and systems build protective factors

multisystem leadership around levers of change

Parent Partnership
Policy/Systems
Professional Development

program strategies and worker practice that:

Facilitate friendships and mutual support
Strengthen Parenting
Respond to Family Crises
Link Families to Services and Opportunities
Value and Support Parents
Facilitate Children's Social and Emotional Development
Observe and respond to early warning signs of abuse or neglect

protective factors

Parental Resilience
Social Connections
Knowledge of Parenting & Child Development
Concrete Supports in Times of Need
Social & Emotional Competence
Parent-Child Relationships

child abuse & neglect prevention

optimal child 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
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

1. Report of alleged abuse/neglect to 24 hour hotline
2. Initial Screening for CPS
   - HOTLINE WORKERS
3. Screened Families: meet state and local criteria
4. Eligibility for Investigation or Family Assessment Path
   - HOTLINE WORKERS
5. Random Assignment
   - ELECTRONIC DECISION
6. Control Group (investigation)
7. Experimental Group (non-investigation)
8. Traditional Investigators
9. Special DCFS Unit + Private Agency
10. Traditional Investigators
11. Mandatory Investigation
12. Eligible for Family Assessment
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.
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
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

Data on Child/Family Needs
- IA CANS
- ACR CANS
- ACR CANS

Analytic Tools
- Gap Analysis: Are resources sufficient to meet needs?
- CANS Changes Report: Did services address needs?
- Trajectory Analysis: Are the services effectively addressing needs?

Data on Community Resources
- Statewide Provider Database
- Record of services delivered
- Record of Services Delivered
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 empowering 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
In Closing...

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

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