Bridge to the Future

Building Bridges Together

A collaboration between the Oklahoma Department of Human Services Children and Family Services Division & the University of Oklahoma's Center for Public Management

Bridge to the Future – Logic Model

Core Services & Activities →	Outputs →	Short-Term Outcomes	Intermediate Outcomes	Long-Term Outcomes
Recruitment • Create a Resource Support Center for central info & support • Develop materials and do target marketing	• # of recruit ads/items: PSAs, events • # of Spanish/Faith-Based events • # of calls to dedicated Rapid Response Call Center	• % and # people with a more positive image of OKDHS • % and # of Kinship Resource families • % and # of families accessing personalized support	• Increase in diversity of families recruited • % and # of quality Bridge families • % and # of visits by relatives & fictive kin	• Children are safely maintained in their homes whenever possible & appropriate (CFSR Safety Outcome 2) • Children have permanency & stability in their living situations (CFSR Permanency Outcome 1)
Retention • Measure/Identify family characteristics and assess with current resources	• # of current families assigned to new ones • # of retention items produced: help guide, web portal, training guide	• % and # of families retained & sharing info with each other • % and # of families receiving expedited services (decreased response time)	• Reduced time frames for Bridge approval, starting with inquiry to application. • Expedited time to placement • Families build support systems within community • Increased utilization of services	• Foster care re-entries reduced (CFSR Permanency Outcome 1 Item 5) • Reunification, guardianship, or permanent placement with relatives (Item 8) • Other planned permanent living arrangements are provided (Item 10)
Foster Care Analysis • Measure/Identify family characteristics and assess with current resources	• # of current agencies • # foster families awaiting approval • # of target groups • metrics produced on existing fosters	• % and # of people with increased awareness of Bridge Program • % and # of smooth transitions of families awaiting placement.		
Training • Focus on customer service curriculum and multi-format training implementation	• # of trainings regularly offered • # of pre-resources, bio parents, court officials, and staff trained	• % and # of "Bridge-ready" families • % and # of staff with increased customer awareness	• Coordinated & streamlined State-wide training curriculum • % and # of families participating in training • Improved OKDHS customer service	• Families have enhanced capacity to provide for their children's needs (CFSR Well-Being Outcome 1) • Needs & services of child, parents, & foster parents are addressed (Item 17) • There is consistent child & family involvement in case planning (Item 18)

Process Evaluation →

Outcome Evaluation →

Goals & Objectives

Years 2-5

Implement customer service interventions with staff

Increase core skills and capabilities of resource families, community partners & child welfare staff through training

Implement systematic process improvements to increase program recruitment, retention and the completion of the approval process

Collaborate & continue to develop public/private partnerships

Integrate grant initiatives with other existing grants, projects, and recruitment acitivies throughout the state to insure system change and sustainability

Because we understand that satisfied resource families are most often our best recruiters, we aim to support and empower our current resource families to recruit on behalf of foster children who need permanency

Activities

Activities will be focused on creating a consistent alignment between the needs, numbers, and characteristics of children that come into the care of the Oklahoma Department of Human Services (OKDHS) and the available families:

- Develop a comprehensive recruitment plan
- Apply innovative approaches for the recruitment & retention of resource families
- Develop our resource support center
- Use technology to provide training and impart information
- Provide mentoring and support groups to resource families

Accomplishments

• Successful launch of the **Bridge Support Call Center**

• System integration work through the **Bridge Leadership Committee and Grant Steering Committee**

• Process re-design using LEAN/Six Sigma methodology and **Rapid Process Improvement**

• **Data Collection:** focus groups, surveys, and system analysis through data mining

• **Completion of 4 Community/Faith-based events** – (2 in Tulsa, 2 in Oklahoma City)

• **Product development** – customer service training for staff, Bridge Family Portal website, English/Spanish translations of Bridge Orientation video, Oklahoma's version of an "Answering the Call: Family Pocket Guide," a customized recruitment toolkit for counties

Bridge Support Call Center

• Our resource support center **began taking phone calls on February 1, 2010.**

• **Over 1200 contacts from families received to date** where parents are educated on the Bridge Philosophy.

• **Hundreds of inquiries have been made, and over 485 inquiry packets sent out** to families desiring to know more about Bridge program.

• The support center **answers internet and phone inquiries**, provides Bridge resource parents with general information and resources, serves as a point of contact throughout the process, and keeps the workers informed of contacts made.

• Outside of inquiry-based calls, **payments and policies** are the two next largest categories of calls.

System integration work

Steering Committee – a small, involved group made up of staff from Field Operations (for both rural and metro areas), Adoptions, Foster Care, OUCPM, and the Grant Evaluation Team

- Committee meets quarterly with conference calls monthly and discusses tools to aid counties in recruitment and retention.

Leadership Committee – a larger group that includes all the OKDHS stakeholders with participation from the OUCPM, and the National Resource Center for Youth Services

- The committee meets once a month in a centralized location to serve as an "oversight" committee and ensure that the grant is sticking to its stated goals and vision.

Process Improvement

• A Rapid Improvement Project began in June 2009 and will continue throughout the life of the grant

• There is currently a pilot in Tulsa County, to **make the application/approval process easier and friendlier to families interested in becoming Bridge Resource Families**. The team is analyzing and improving the approval process for parents.

• Our problem statements:

> • **Not enough families are navigating the Bridge Resource Family application process successfully from inquiry to approval**

> • Customer service and support for families in the process was **not always meeting the needs of families**. Families would then often drop-out prior to approval.

• Next steps: take to a rural county, expand to an area, then take statewide.
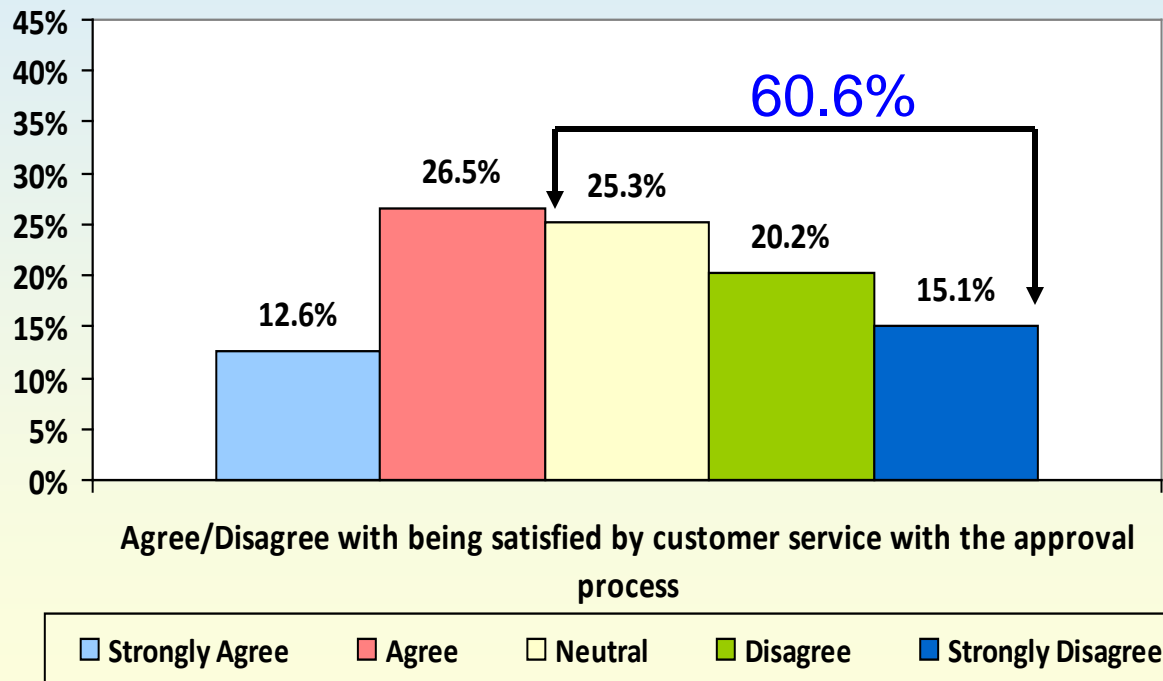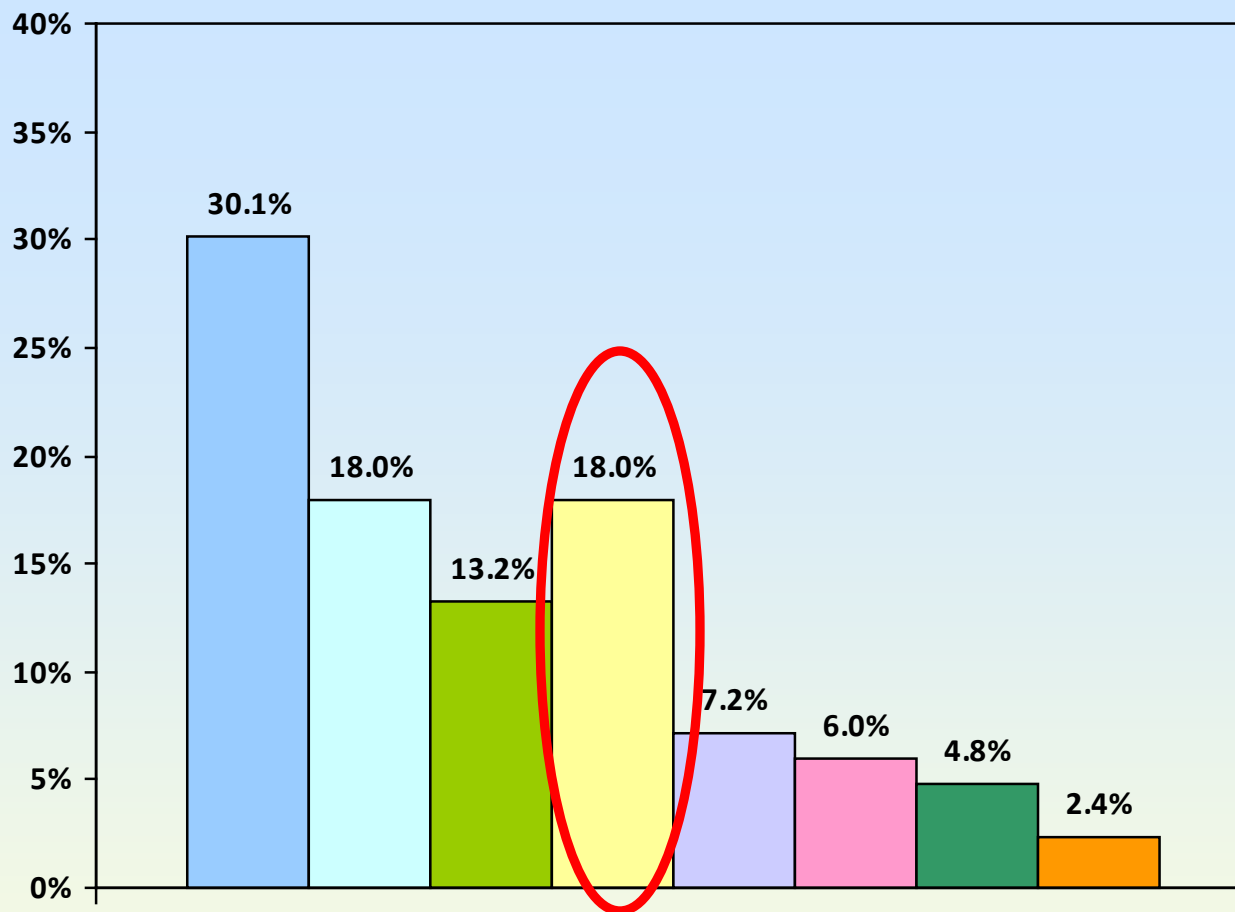
Process Improvement – Surveys & Data Analysis

• Data analysis and Six Sigma tools identified that on average, there were **87-226 days of non-value added time in the process for parents**

• The team's research also demonstrated that **parents felt overwhelmed and uninformed about the process itself** as well as feeling a lack of support from the agency

• Lack of consistent communication

• Typically takes us longer than a week to follow up on inquires

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Process Improvement – Surveys & Data Analysis

"At present, I am satisfied with my customer service experience in the approval process."

60.6%

Bar chart values:
- Strongly Agree: 12.6%
- Agree: 26.5%
- Neutral: 25.3%
- Disagree: 20.2%
- Strongly Disagree: 15.1%

Agree/Disagree with being satisfied by customer service with the approval process

Legend: □ Strongly Agree ■ Agree □ Neutral ■ Disagree ■ Strongly Disagree

Reasons for Dropping Out

- ☐ Expressed a Desire for a Specific Child (Child no longer available)
- ☐ No longer interested
- ☐ Bad time right now
- ☐ Appeared to be due to stops/gaps in the process
- ☐ Withdrew due to family pregnancy or additional people moving into household
- ☐ Duplicate Data (purge actions needed)
- ☐ Turned toward another agency
- ☐ Appeared to be denied

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Process Improvement
Focus Groups Jan. – Aug. 2009

• **Eleven (11) focus groups were held with County Directors, Child Welfare Field Liaisons, CW program staff, and community partners/service providers** to discuss strengths, obstacles, and solutions for families in becoming foster/adoptive resources.

Findings included:

- **Training topics for parents** - such as "coping with grief/separation/loss," family/team partnerships and roles, & trauma-based care of children
- **Addressing approval process** (lengthy home assessment, working with multiple workers/contractors)
- **Training topics for Child Welfare Staff**: basic customer service, follow-up, and partnering with families
- **After-hours help desk** to support approval process for parents
- **Support groups and mentoring programs** - provide logistical and financial support including incentives/prizes for attendance, food, training credits, setting up rooms/meetings, and arranging for guest speakers.

Rapid Improvement Event Communication – September 2009

• Two events were held (morning session – 20 Tulsa Child Welfare staff; evening session – 9 current resource parents\pre-resource parents)

• Key question: **What do parents need to know from inquiry to approval?**

• Outcomes:

   • Tulsa County leadership to conduct random Customer Service Quality Checks.

   • A *"Resource Parent Checklist"* and *"Steps in the Approval Process"* for parents are currently being implemented.

   • Include county worker and supervisors contact info on the parent folder/packet to establish further accountability to the process.

Rapid Improvement Event Homestudy Process – Jan. 2010

○ A second event was held with child welfare leadership in Tulsa to examine the home study assessment piece of the process

○ Staff and contractors gathered to discuss and map the process start to finish

○ Improvement items under review:

- Expediting the collection and assist with the costs of medical exams

- Improving hand-offs and reviews of the paperwork

- Better communication up front with parents

- Establishing deadlines to resolve missing pieces of the assessment.

Rapid Improvement Event Fast Track Process – Feb. 2010

○ A third process improvement event was held in Tulsa to create a "Fast Track Process" for "ready-parents" (those with a high level of readiness and preparedness) to be approved in a quicker fashion. The goal is for us to be able to meet family's pace in the approval process.

○ The team:

- Identified steps in the process that can be done concurrently and/or accelerated

- Identified criteria for "fast track" parents (our needs for them, and their readiness/interest)

- Plans to create an electronic application

- Is working on condensing training into a shorter time interval

System analysis through data mining

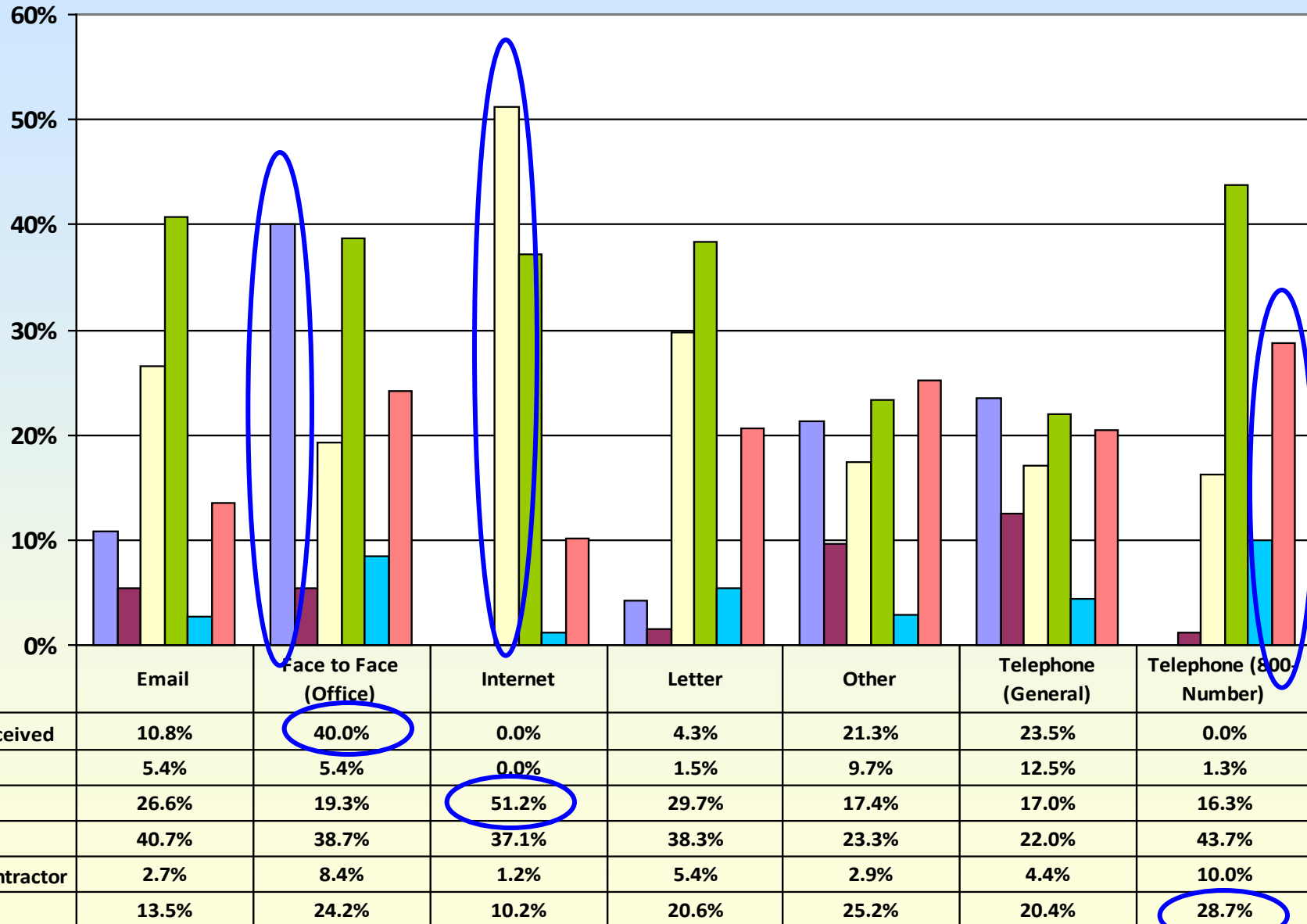**Pre-resource parent data (n = 1,357) from Tulsa county**

• Majority of these families were using phones as a means to initially inquire about becoming a resource parent (45.5%).

• Of all parents inquiring, 62.5% (848 cases) were inquiring about a specific child.

• Parents were mainly referred by the internet (23.2%), OKDHS employees (22.9%), and relatives (10.2%).

• Most parent inquiries were for "fostering only" or "kinship care only" meaning we have an opportunity to educate families on concurrent planning and reunification.

System analysis through data mining

• Few parents were willing to accept children who were: alcohol/drug exposed, emotionally maltreated, physically abused, neglected, sexually abused, or medically fragile.

•Our response to **internet and 1-800 number parent inquires** for fostering, adoption, and bridge resources **almost never yielded an application submitted** and included extremely high withdrawal rates.

• Our best methods used in **yielding completed applications** were **face-to-face and telephone contacts** followed by email and letters.

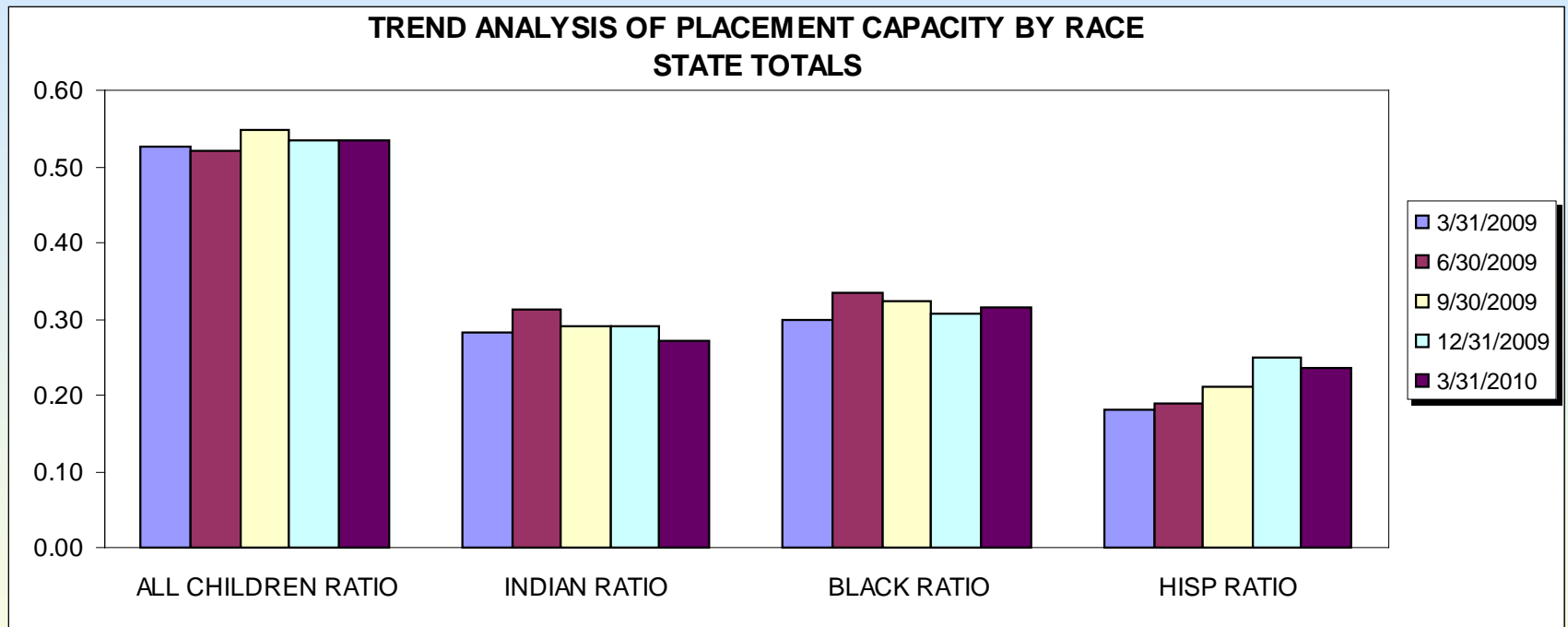• For the families that dropped out, 18.0% did so due to frustration with the process **(almost 1 out of 5 families).**

Correlations between Type of Inquiry Contact and Inquiry Status

	Email	Face to Face (Office)	Internet	Letter	Other	Telephone (General)	Telephone (800-Number)
Application Received	10.8%	40.0%	0.0%	4.3%	21.3%	23.5%	0.0%
Denied	5.4%	5.4%	0.0%	1.5%	9.7%	12.5%	1.3%
No Response	26.6%	19.3%	51.2%	29.7%	17.4%	17.0%	16.3%
Pending	40.7%	38.7%	37.1%	38.3%	23.3%	22.0%	43.7%
Referred to Contractor	2.7%	8.4%	1.2%	5.4%	2.9%	4.4%	10.0%
Withdrawn	13.5%	24.2%	10.2%	20.6%	25.2%	20.4%	28.7%

All were statistically significant, (not due to chance alone) using Chi Square tests.

Needs Identified through System Analysis via Data Mining

TREND ANALYSIS OF PLACEMENT CAPACITY BY RACE
STATE TOTALS

Legend:
- 3/31/2009
- 6/30/2009
- 9/30/2009
- 12/31/2009
- 3/31/2010

Categories: ALL CHILDREN RATIO, INDIAN RATIO, BLACK RATIO, HISP RATIO

• We need to continue to focus on targeted recruitment, though some progress has been made to date with Hispanic family recruitment.

• These data are currently being used to create data dashboards for county-level measures of recruitment for county directors.

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Solutions & Adjustments Made

• We now have a consistent message about Bridge practice through the Resource Support Center.

• Inquiries from hotline and internet now coming through the Resource Support Center which allows for more timely responses and immediate mailing of inquiry packets.

• Surveys have been developed for families that have withdrawn from the process to continue to plan for improvements where possible.

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Bridge Resource Family Web Portal

The Bridge Portal (www.okbridgefamilies.com) has many resources for families such as:

• Bridge Orientation Training in both **English and Spanish** giving an overview of Oklahoma's program.

• Over 20 existing training videos have been posted to the web portal in a convenient, **24/7 format.**

• We are currently working on five additional online training videos: **Psychotropic Medications, Bridge Handbook/contract, Intentional Visitation, the Legal Process, and Trauma-informed Care.**
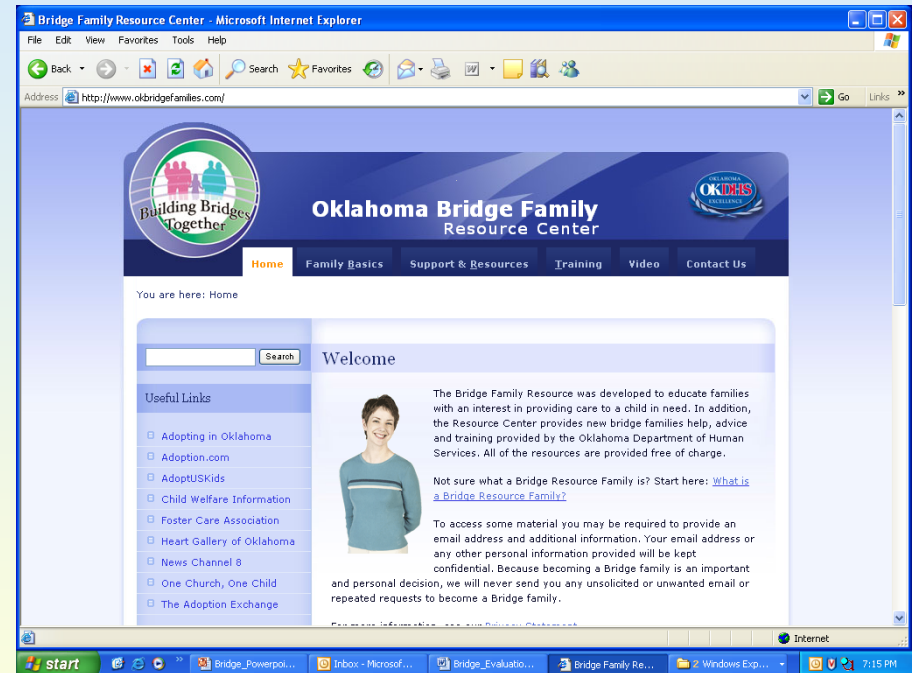
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What is a Bridge Family? > Introduction

We found out that being a Bridge family is so much more than we had imagined. Not only would we be giving a child a stable, loving home, but we would be working with his birth parents as well to help the child's whole family.

And we didn't have to worry about losing children we became attached to. We've kept in touch with each of the kids we've fostered, and consider them and their birth parents our extended family.

It's not exactly the house full of kids we had imagined, but we've been able to do something a bit different with our family, home, and parenting skills that has made a difference in other people's lives. To us, there's no bigger reward.

Menu   Help

Click Next to continue.

Back   Next

Training in Development

○ The following trainings for resource families are currently in different stages of the development process.

- 1. Intentional Visitation
- 2. Psychotropic Medications
- 3. Legal
- 4. Handbook/Contract
- 5. Trauma Informed Care

Customer Service Training: "Valuing Our Resource Families"

Customer service was not only something we knew we had within our control to change, **it was also something that our families identified as an area for improvement.**

Training Objectives:

• The importance of providing excellent customer services to our families

• Why resource families are hard to retain

• Who our families are and how to help them

• Results that describe the needs and perceptions of families from OKDHS's research, surveys, and focus groups

• How to overcome common misconceptions about families revealed from the research

• Eleven (11) "how to" tips to provide excellent customer service

• Examples of what great customer service looks like in action

Finding resource families and keeping them engaged is a challenge. They have to make a remarkable commitment when they decide to partner with the Oklahoma Department of Human Services.

We ask these families to love these children as their own; to mentor the birth family; to meet the mundane daily obstacles of doctors' appointments and temper tantrums. We ask our resource families to accomplish an incredible amount.

Therefore, just as OKDHS cannot function without our employees, we also need our partners – our resource families to do our jobs!

We need to be asking ourselves, "Are we doing everything we can to value our partners?"

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CUSTOMER SERVICE Valuing our Resource Families

EXIT
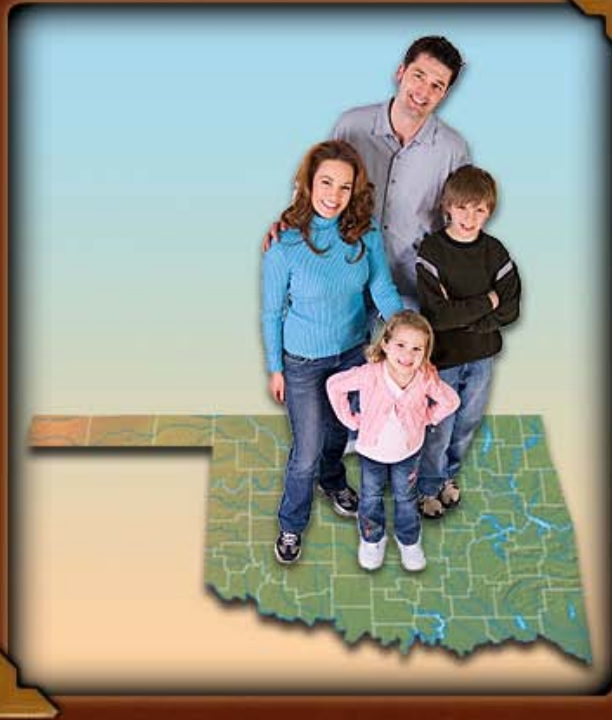
In the last module we discussed that everybody at OKDHS can influence how resource families feel.

Now let's talk a little bit about who resource parents are, and how they are selected.

This will help us determine ways that we can show the respect that we have for their commitment to help OKDHS care for the children of Oklahoma.

MENU HELP PRINT

Click Next to continue.

BACK NEXT

Done

Internet

As we have already discussed – in less than five years only 1/4 of resource parents remain to work with OKDHS.

Why do resource families leave? There are a number of reasons.

Here is one of the most encouraging. Approximately 7% of resource families leave because they have adopted the children they are fostering.

But what about the rest?

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When you talk to a resource family, do you find yourself lost in details – spouting information and citing policy and procedures – or do you genuinely listen and create a partnership with the resource parent?

Making our resource families feel listened to and valued is a mind-set of respect and accountability that needs to be practiced by everyone in our agency. Before we can successfully support and retain our resource families we must establish that we provide excellent customer service.

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Oklahoma's version of "Answering the Call"

- Includes a letter from the OKDHS Director Howard Hendrick

- Top 10 Things You Can Do for a Foster Child

- A "Steps in the Process" List

- A "Resource Parent Application Checklist" (including names of forms and form #s for OKDHS)

County Tool Kit: RECRUITMENT

We are currently working on developing a tool kit that is **specific to counties** that will be **coupled with data reports** provided by the part-time data analyst and presented to the counties by members of the Bridge Leadership team **to help them form recruitment plans that are both reflective of specific county needs and are consistent with an overall statewide recruitment plan.**

Challenges from Year One

• System stress - dramatic agency budget developments this year (upcoming furloughs this summer, losing contracts for home assessments and other services)

• Recent legislative energy around the privatization of services (specifically foster care)

• Coordination of grant initiatives with pre-existing program improvement activities between grant leaders and throughout the state.

PIP and Grant

PIP: Assessment of Child Safety

- Grant: Rapid Approval Process (RAPT) Pilots, training on trauma informed care, enhancement of integrated assessment and reassessment

PIP: Bridge Program

- Grant: Centralized Support Center, Online Bridge Orientation, Online Customer Service Training, RAPT Pilots, Recruitment tool kits, Data on trend analysis (monthly), Ongoing evaluation.

PIP and Grant

PIP: Enhanced Visitation Model Training

- Grant: Training on enhanced visitation and mentoring birth families

PIP: Concurrent Planning

- Grant: Consistent messaging, data gathering, and utilization of enhanced Integrated Assessment

PIP and Grant

PIP: Broaden Service Array/Resource Development

- Grant: Customer Support Center, Surveys, Bridge web Portal, Data on trend analysis (monthly), local community partner meetings, trainings for resource families

PIP: Develop Kinship Placements

- Grant: Pilot work on process improvement with kinship unit, Working collaboratively with Family Connections Grant, and development of kinship surveys

Supporting our PIP

• Develop county-specific targets for the recruitment and approval of diverse pools of homes, aligned with the county profile of children in care.

• Develop/enhance county and state partnerships to meet recruitment needs.

• Maximize utilization of kinship resources as placements for children.

• In-service training for resource families will be targeted to meeting the needs of children in placement.

• Our expectation is that:

   • Resource and Kinship families will report higher levels of satisfaction with OKDHS in focus groups and surveys

Year 3

We will continue:

- to develop the information available on the web portal for Resource families,
- to provide data dashboards,
- to collaborate and share information with all stakeholders,
- to use faith-based events to raise awareness,
- to use national partnerships with One Church, One Child and AdoptUSKids.
- to support families through the resource support center,
- to conduct process improvement projects in pilot counties (including kinship – kick-off May 2010)
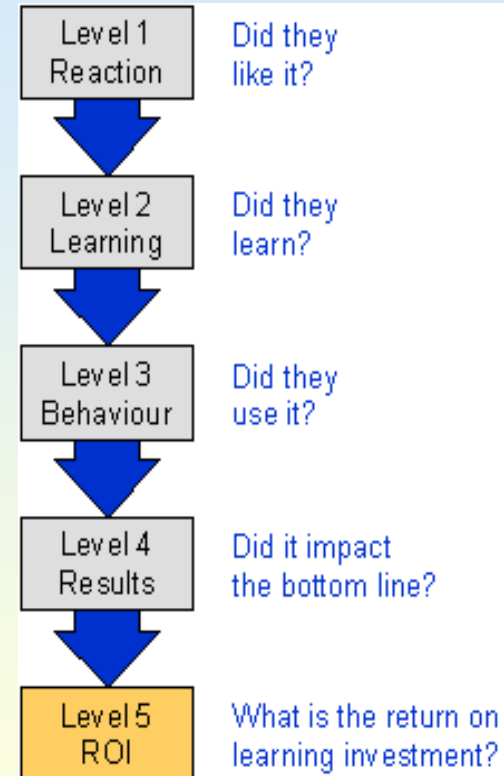
Additionally, we will:

- Provide workers with multicultural/cultural competency training.
- Evaluate effectiveness of training and customer support function.
- Provide logistics for support and mentoring groups within counties.

Training Evaluation Plan – Kirkpatrick Model: Feb/March 2010

•The Kirkpatrick Model was analyzed and drafts of instruments based upon the learning levels (Reaction, Learning, Behavioral, Results) were created.

• A training evaluation plan was drafted including:

  • Timelines and descriptions for pre-& post- test survey instruments

  • Performance appraisal surveys with supervisors at future evaluation intervals (3-, 6-, 12-, 18-months)

  • Interviews with supervisors regarding behavioral change

  • Focus groups with Child Welfare Staff.

Level 1 Reaction	Did they like it?
Level 2 Learning	Did they learn?
Level 3 Behaviour	Did they use it?
Level 4 Results	Did it impact the bottom line?
Level 5 ROI	What is the return on learning investment?

Questions?

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