

A collage of images showing children and families. In the top left, a child is being carried on a parent's back. In the top center, a young girl looks thoughtfully to the side. In the top right, two boys smile broadly. In the bottom right, a woman and a child share a tender moment, kissing on the cheek.

Children *and* **F**amily
Research Center

**EMERGING RESEARCH AND PRACTICE
ISSUES IN A POST-PERMANENCY WORLD**

September 2007



School of Social Work

University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign

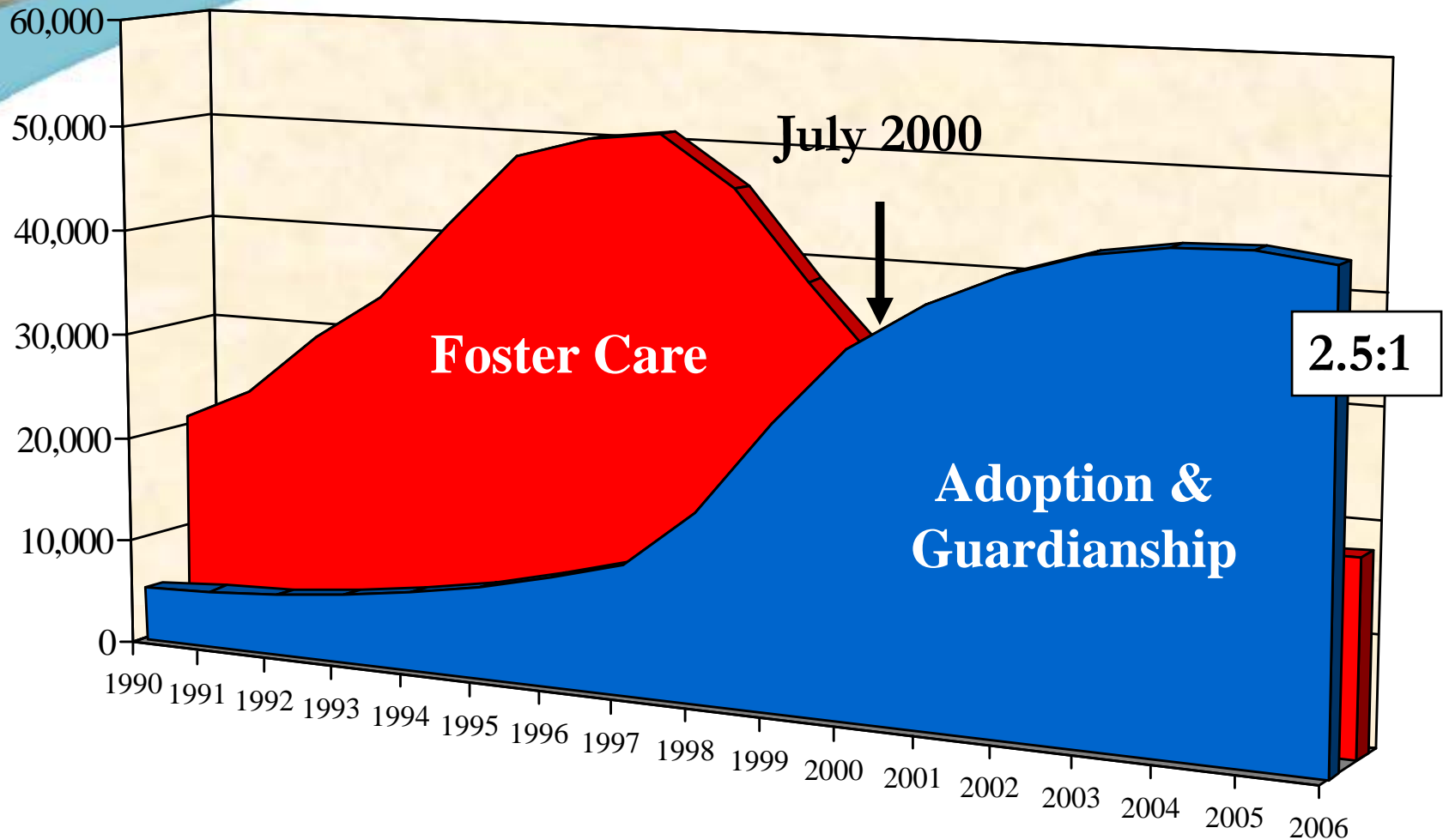


Adoption and Guardianship Trends

Numerous reforms in Illinois and at the federal level have led to an increase in the number of children achieving permanence from the child welfare system through adoption and guardianship.



Adoption and Guardianship Trends

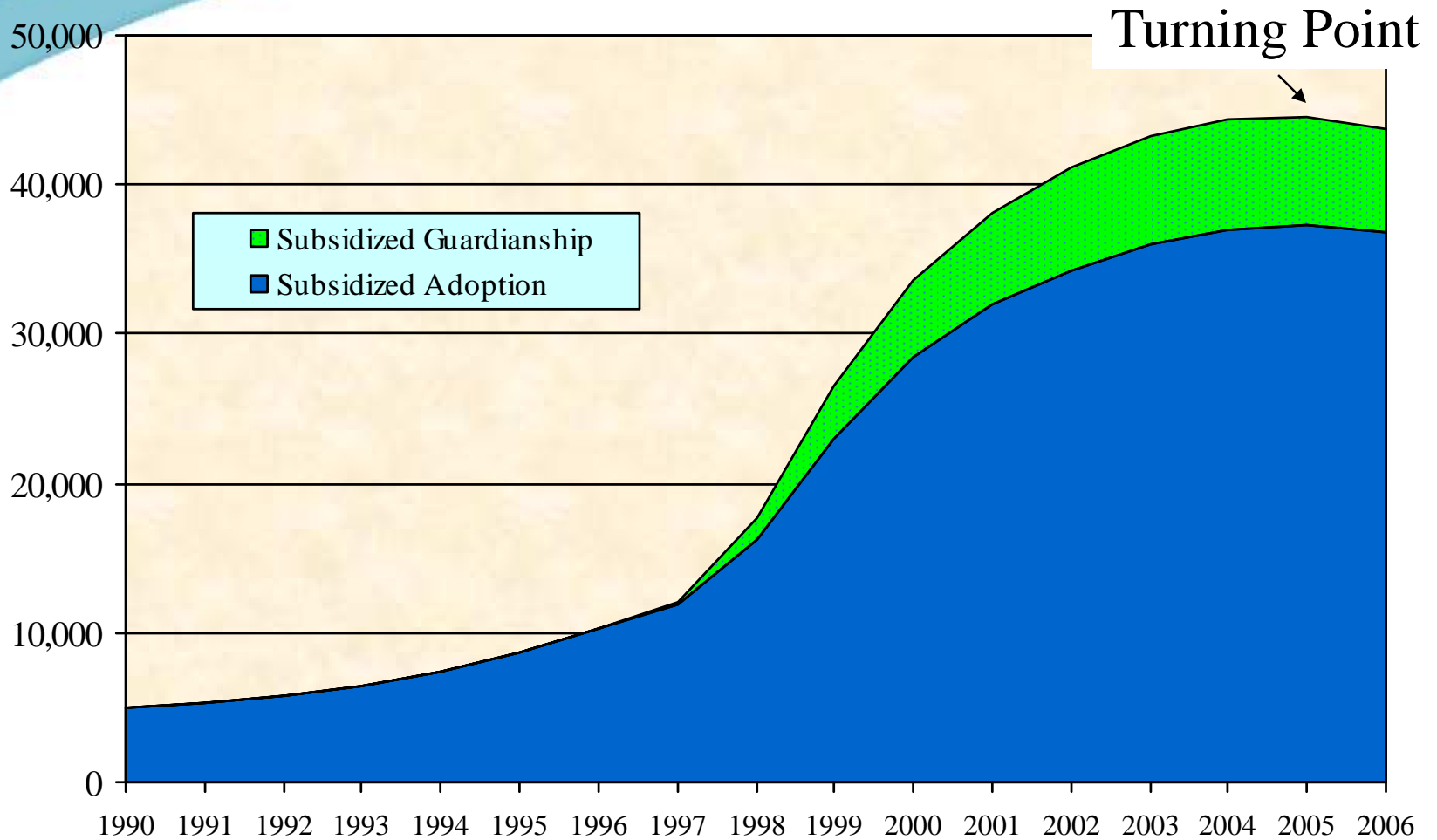




Adoption and Guardianship Trends



Active Subsidized Adoption and Guardianship Cases



Adoption and Guardianship Trends



The major successes that have been realized in achieving permanence for families bring new questions and challenges:

- Do children remain in the homes of AA/SG families, or do they rupture?
- What are the needs of these families?
- What is the most effective way to support these needs?
- How can such programs and services be financed?
- What is the state/federal government's role in supporting these children and families?



Adoption and Guardianship Trends

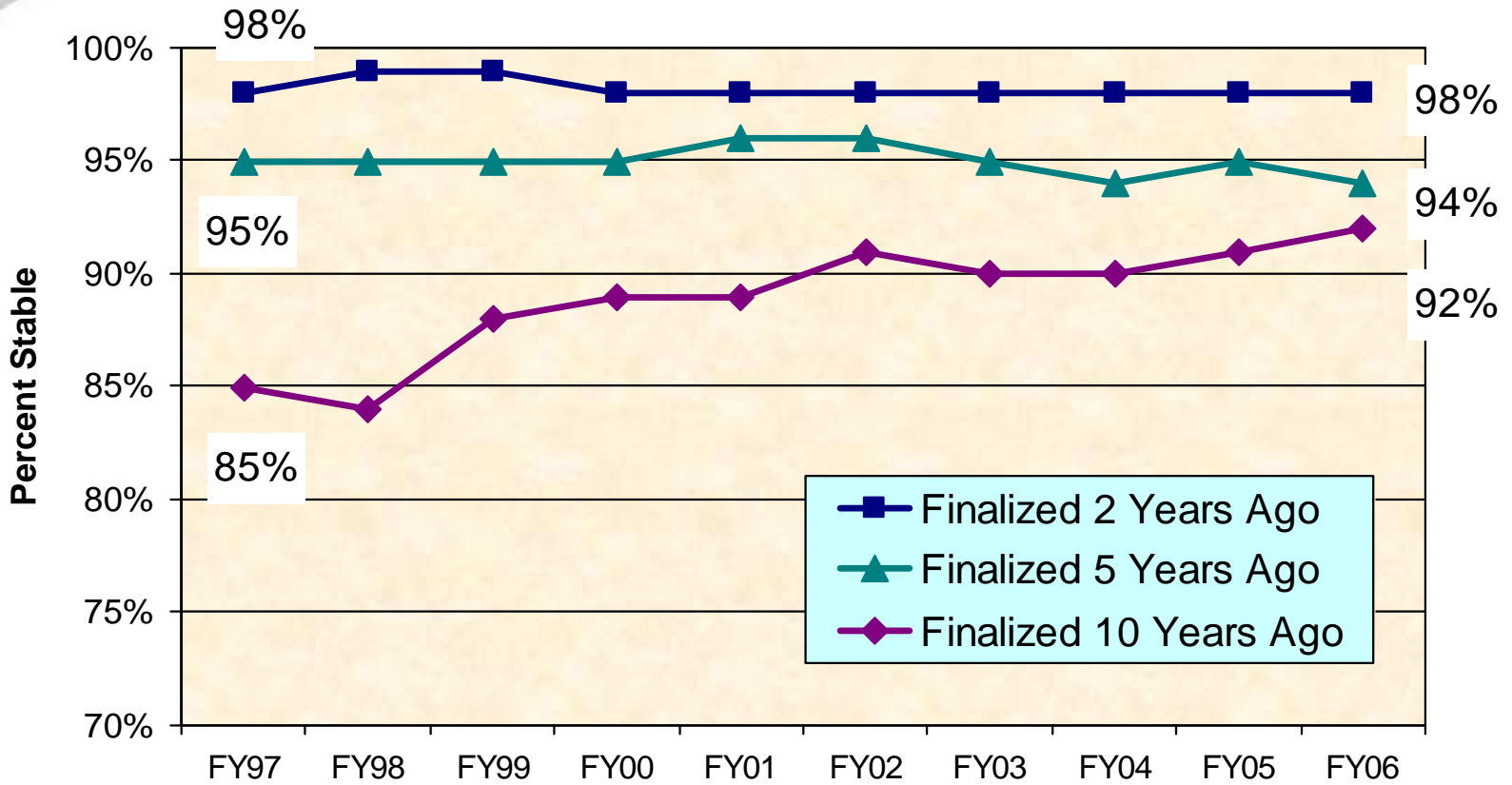
Do children remain in the homes of AA/SG families, or do they rupture?

Permanency Rupture: A permanency rupture occurs when a child for whom a permanent guardianship or an adoption has been finalized is no longer living in the home of the original guardian or adoptive parent.

Adoption and Guardianship Trends



How many did *not* experience a permanency rupture at 2, 5 & 10 years after finalization?





Adoption and Guardianship Trends

Permanency Rupture Defined

Displacement occurs when a child is no longer in the physical care of his/her guardian(s) or adoptive parent(s), but guardianship / parental rights remain intact.

Dissolution occurs when guardianship is vacated or adoptive parent(s)' rights are terminated for a reason other than 'death or incapacitation' of guardian or adoptive parent.

Death/incapacitation occurs when a caregiver or adoptive parent can no longer exercise guardianship of a child because the guardian dies or is incapacitated and there is no other guardian or parent.

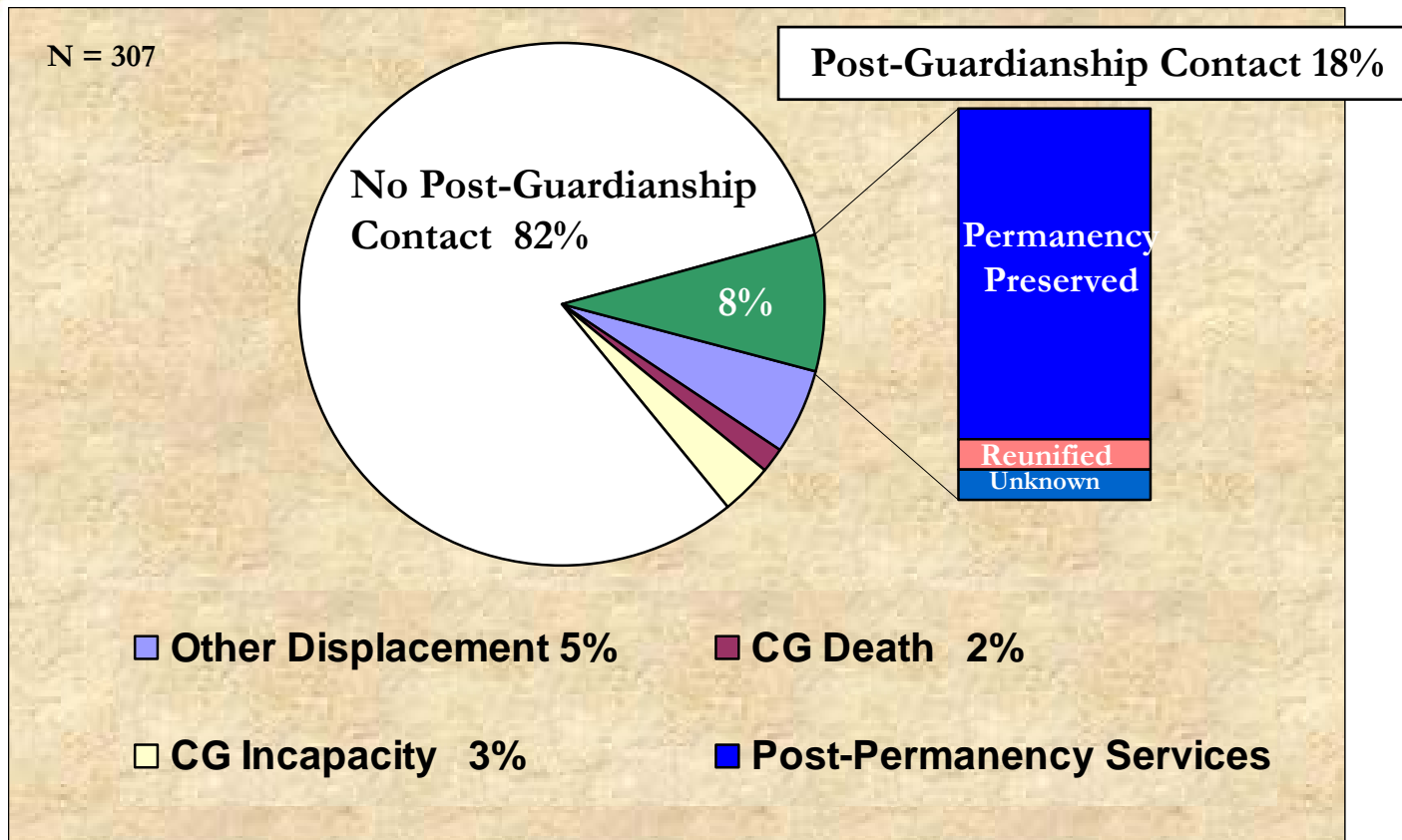
Ruptures can also be distinguished from:

Disruption occurs when a child is removed from a prospective guardian's or adoptive parent's home prior to finalization.

Note: We are limited in our ability to count any displacement that has been made outside the formal child welfare system such as a private psychiatric care.

Post-Guardianship Ruptures & Services

Sample of SG cases (1997-2000) tracked through IV-E Waiver Post-Guardianship Database





A Call for Action in Illinois

In March 2005, the Illinois House of Representatives passed a resolution that called for an in-depth study of post-adoption services and subsidies, specifically including:

- Survey of adoptive parents to determine their post-permanency service needs
- Comparative analysis of post-permanency services and subsidies available in Illinois and other states



Caregiver Survey: Sample

The population of children eligible for selection into the study included those who:

- Were adopted or taken into subsidized guardianship between July 1, 1997 and June 30, 2002;
- Had an open adoption or guardianship subsidy case as of June 30, 2005; and
- Were between the ages of 6 and 17 as of June 30, 2006.



Caregiver Survey: Sample

- 18,708 adopted children and 2,951 children in subsidized guardianship were eligible for inclusion in the study.
- Two separate random samples of approximately 250 were selected for the study, one from Cook County and one from non-Cook counties.
 - Despite the fact that 74% of the subsidy population is from Cook, equal representation was given.
 - One child was randomly selected into the sample from each household.

Caregiver Survey: Sample



The final sample consisted of 498 families (caregiver-child pairs). Of this sample, 350 caregivers were interviewed (70% completion rate):

- 87% adoptive parents
- 13% subsidized guardianship caregivers



Caregiver Survey: Results

Most families in the survey had post-finalization service needs:

- Dental care/orthodontia
- Day care
- Counseling
- Camp
- Psychological evaluation

Caregiver Survey: Results



84% of families said that were able to meet their service needs on their own (although some reported difficulties in the process of obtaining services).



Caregiver Survey: Results

16% had unmet service needs. The services families needed and most frequently couldn't access are:

- Drug/alcohol treatment
- Educational advocacy
- Respite care
- Preservation services
- Day care
- Dental Care/Orthodontia

Approximately 5% may require intensive diagnostic and therapeutic services.

Families with unmet service needs often expressed a profound feeling of frustration that impacted their family functioning.¹⁶



Caregiver Survey: Results



Families had difficulty accessing services due to a lack of:

- Services in their subsidy agreement
- Knowledge of available services
- Available & responsive post-adoption workers
- Comprehensive & accessible Medicaid service coverage



Summary of Findings

These families are much like “traditional” families in that most require few services

- Most families that need services are able to obtain them – 84% had no unmet service needs.
- A small but significant portion of the families reported unmet service needs (16%).

Conclusions



The successful movement to bring permanence to the lives of foster children through adoption and guardianship is one of the great success stories in recent child welfare history.

To preserve this success, we believe that state and federal governments must increase their commitment to support these families post-finalization. This increased support should occur through changes in programming and financing.



DCFS Post-Permanency Innovations

- **A-PAL Program:** DCFS has embarked upon a program that changes post-adoption and guardianship service delivery to include outreach to families so that unmet needs can be identified and addressed before the family is in crisis.
- **Finance:** Federal child welfare finance reform needs to allow states to use the savings that have occurred from moving children out of foster care to provide additional funding to post-adoption and guardianship services.

The background features a collage of images related to children and families. On the left, a man in a blue shirt carries a young child on his shoulders. In the center, a young girl with yellow flower accessories looks thoughtfully to the side. To her right, two young boys smile broadly. On the far right, a close-up of a young girl's face is visible. A large, dark blue, curved graphic element sweeps across the lower half of the page, framing the text.

Children *and* Family Research Center

Supporting Adoptions and Guardianship in Illinois

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Report available at:
<http://cfrcwww.social.uiuc.edu/>



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