



Children and Family Research Center

Child Welfare and Allied Services *Substance Abuse and Juvenile Justice*

Joseph Ryan, Ph.D.
CCA
November 8, 2007



School of Social Work
University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign



Substance Abuse and Child Welfare

- Substance abuse compromises appropriate parenting practices, creates problems in the parent-child relationship, and significantly increases the risk of child maltreatment.
- Children in substance abusing families have poorer developmental outcomes and are more likely to abuse drugs and alcohol as teenagers and adults.
- Family reunification for children in substance abusing families is low. Only 14% of the substance exposed infants entering care in 1994 were reunified by June 2001



Current Child Welfare and Substance Abuse Initiatives

Illinois AODA Waiver: *Increase timely access to substance abuse treatment and thus speed up time to family reunification*

How is this Accomplished: *Recovery Coaches*

- Contracted through an independent agency (TASC)
- Works in collaboration with caseworker; not a replacement
- Assigned to family for the life of a case
- Provide ongoing outreach, engagement, and re-engagement
- Coordinate AOD planning efforts
- Standardized, regular (monthly) reporting to worker

Is the AODA Waiver Working?

Group Assignment by Permanency Status (child level)

Living Arrangement Type	Control	Demonstration
Home of Parent	16%	22%
Home of Adoptive Parent	32%	30%
Subsidized Guardianship	11%	12%
Permanency Totals	59%	64%

The difference between the proportion of children returning home is statistically significant, $p < .01$

Families with Co-occurring Problems

Substance Abuse (SA)



56% Housing



30% Mental Health



30% Domestic Violence.

62% report SA and at least 2 additional problems

27% report SA and all 3 additional problems

Co-occurring Problems and Reunification

The *Problems* and the *Progress* are Important

Problems indicated by Caseworker	Not Reunified	Reunified	Totals
Substance abuse only	79%	21%	8%
One additional problem	89%	11%	30%
Two additional problems	88%	12%	35%
Three additional problems	89%	11%	27%
Totals	88%	12%	100%

Co-occurring Problems and Reunification

The *Problems* and the *Progress* are Important

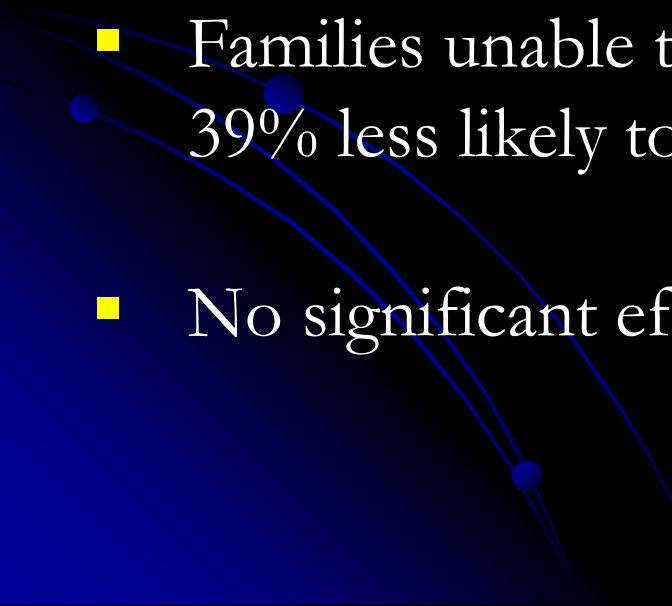
Problem Area	% progress	Not Reunified	Reunified
Substance Abuse			
Complete	18%	74%	26%
Substantial	24%	87%	13%
Reasonable effort	15%	91%	9%
Unsatisfactory	43%	93%	7%
Domestic Violence			
Complete	15%	75%	25%
Substantial	9%	76%	24%
Reasonable effort	18%	90%	10%
Unsatisfactory	58%	95%	5%

Co-occurring Problems and Reunification

The *Problems* and the *Progress* are Important

Problem Area	% progress	Not Reunified	Reunified
Housing			
Complete	10%	69%	31%
Substantial	13%	83%	17%
Reasonable effort	22%	88%	12%
Unsatisfactory	55%	93%	7%
Mental Health			
Complete	5%	58%	42%
Substantial	18%	88%	13%
Reasonable effort	20%	92%	8%
Unsatisfactory	56%	93%	7%

Findings from Multivariate Models

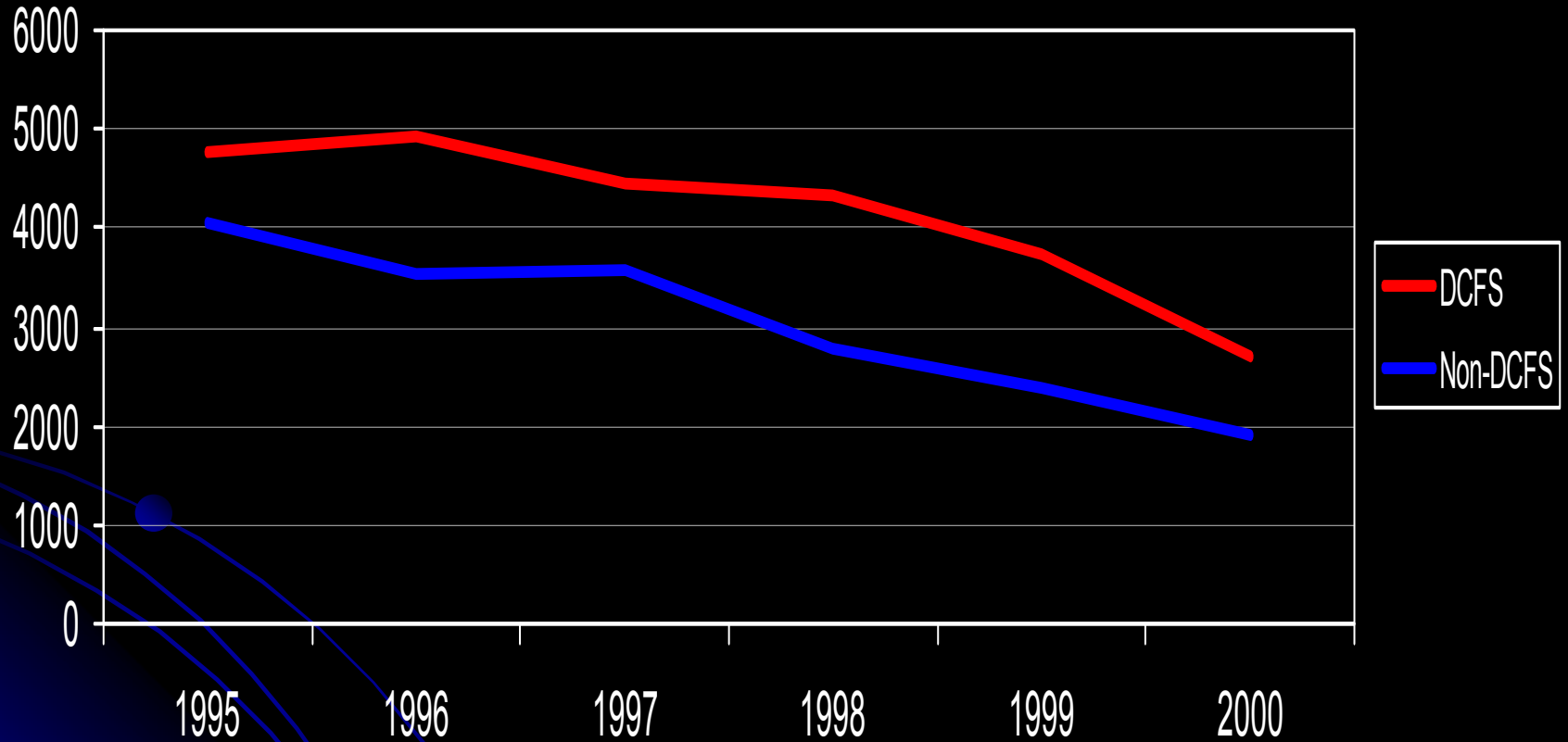
- Families unable to make sufficient progress in SA are 42% less likely to achieve reunification
 - Families unable to make sufficient progress in DV are 53% less likely to achieve reunification
 - Families unable to make sufficient progress in MH are 39% less likely to achieve reunification
 - No significant effect associate with housing
- 

Conclusions

- Co-occurring problems significantly decrease the likelihood of reunification.
- Yet – when progress is achieved – the likelihood of achieving family reunification is significantly increased – especially with regard to MH and DV.
- **Implications:** Integrated service models designed to increase treatment access and reunification must target services to specific problem areas and be effective enough to insure client progress.
- How can social service systems and individual agencies facilitate progress in these areas?

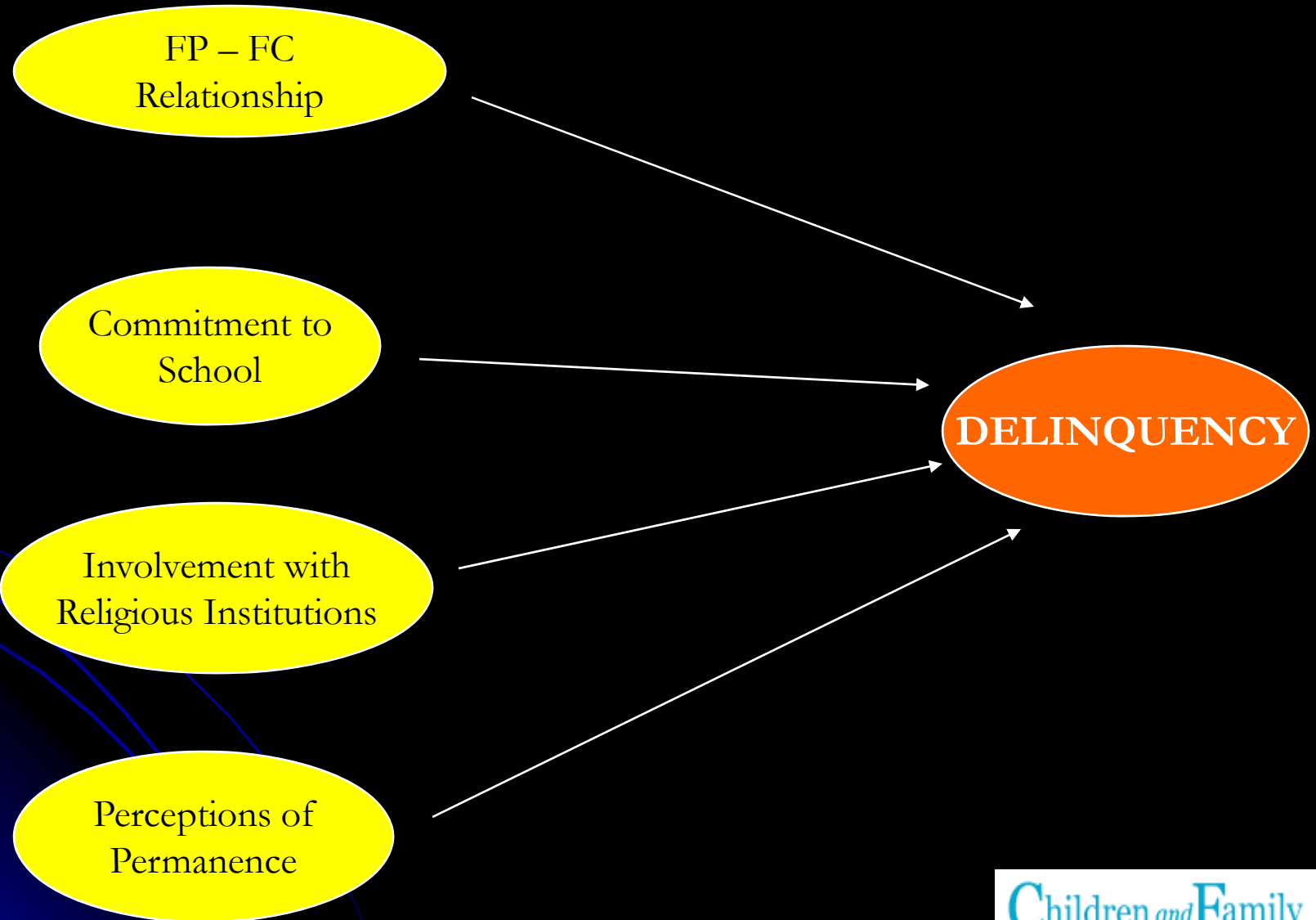


Child Welfare and Juvenile Justice





The Importance of Social Bonds in Foster Care



Placement Types and Crossover in Los Angeles County

Group Home Effects

- Adolescents in group homes are 2.5 times more likely to be arrested

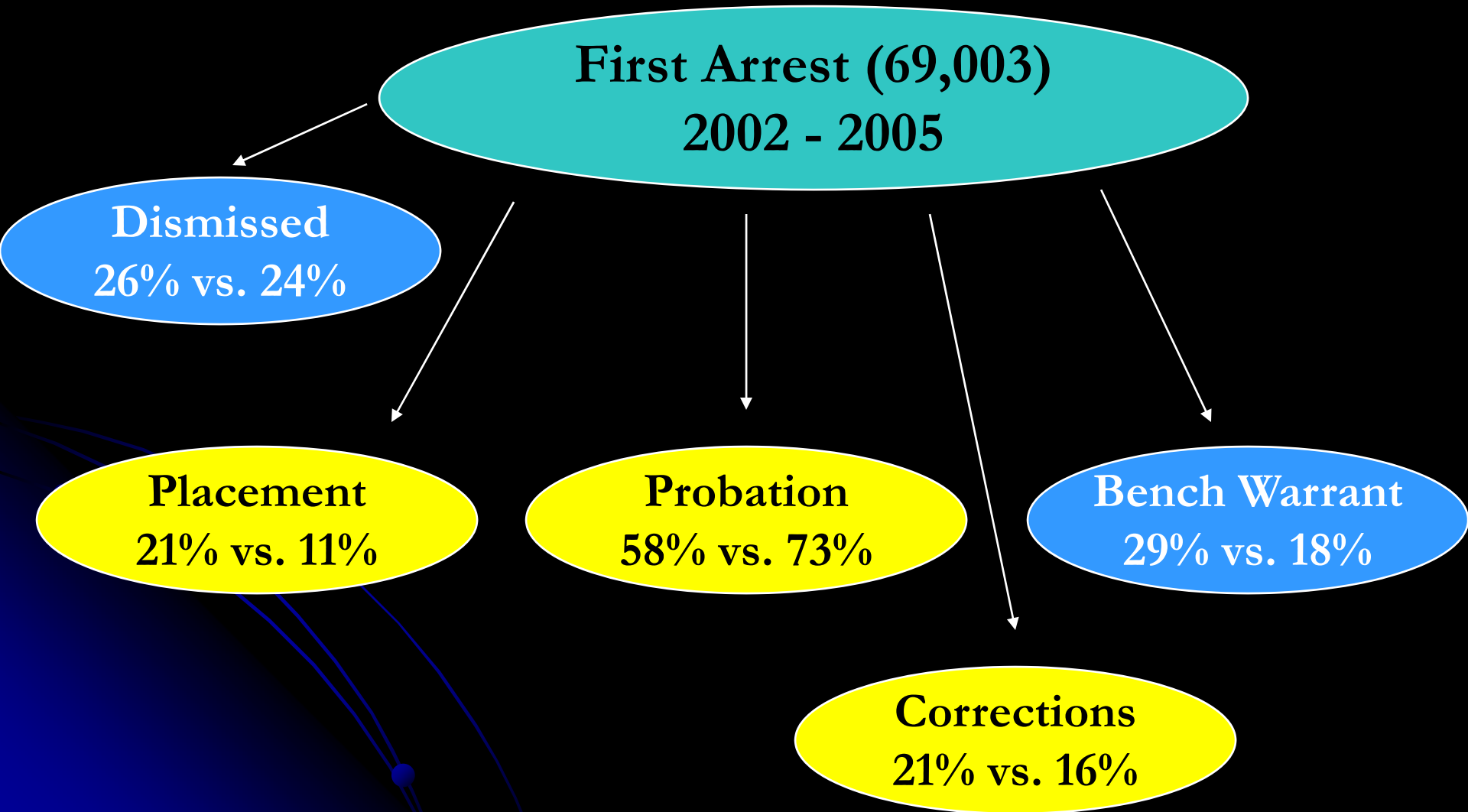
Location of Youth at Time of Arrest

- 37% of all arrests occur while the child is in the group home

Offense Type

- Group home youth more likely to have a violent offense (38% v. 20%)
- Group home youth more likely to have a threat offense (10% v. 5%)

What Happens After Initial Arrest?



Conclusions and Questions

Placement and Delinquency

- Less than 20% of adolescents enter group home placements and a relative short period of time is spent in such placements – non random selection into group care.
- Group homes associated with significant increase.
- 37% of all arrests for open child welfare cases occur while the adolescent is in the group home
- What is it about such placements that increases the risk of arrest? Policies and peers are likely areas of interest.
- How can agencies facilitate and support positive social bonds?

Conclusions and Questions

Child Welfare Status and Judicial Dispositions

- Adolescents coming to probation from CW are less likely to receive probation and more likely to enter secure settings.
- This is problematic for at least two reasons – the cost associated with secure setting placements – and the relative ineffectiveness.
- What are the long term implications for moving maltreated youth into secure setting justice oriented placements?
- What types of placements within the child welfare system work best for crossover youth?
- Would improved communication decrease bench warrants and probation violations?