Working Across Systems to Improve Outcomes for Young Children

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Sounding the Alarm

- 250,000 maltreated infants and toddlers - the highest rate for all children
- 100,000 maltreated babies under age 1
- < 75% of maltreatment deaths involve children under age 3
- 100,000 maltreated children are removed and placed in foster care
- Infants and toddlers constitute the majority of substantiated medical neglect cases

DHHS, 2008
Sounding the Alarm (cont’d)

• 1/3 of all children admitted to care under age 3
• 1 in 6 children admitted to care under age 1
• Half of infants found maltreated are placed in care
• Infants and toddlers are more likely to remain in and return to care than older children

DHHS, 2008
Sounding the Alarm (cont’d)

- Nearly 80% of young children exposed prenatally to substance use
- Nearly 40% are born premature or low-birth weight
- > 50% have a chronic medical condition
- > 50% have a developmental delay
Sounding the Alarm (cont’d)

• 4 – 5x rate of developmental delays as age cohorts
• > 50% have a speech or language delay
• 30% have motor delay
• Half have behavior or emotional delays warranting clinical intervention

- Designed to preserve families and promote permanency planning
- Required states to develop preventative care and family reunification programs
- Required case plans for services
- Required “reasonable efforts” to avoid removal of children from their biological homes
- Increased reliance on kinship foster care
Adoption and Safe Families Act (ASFA)

- Passed in 1997
- Changed the paradigm
- Move from focus on preventive services to permanency
- Child’s health and safety are paramount concerns in child protection procedures
Adoption and Safe Families Act (cont’d)

• Emphasized child welfare system’s goals of:
  ▫ Safety
  ▫ Permanency
  ▫ Child & Family Well-being

• Clarifies circumstances under which states do or do not remove or reunify

• Child’s health and safety is the paramount concern

• Time frame for Termination Parental Rights
  ▫ 15/22 months
Adoption and Safe Families Act (cont’d)

- Federal ASFA regulations specifically hold States accountable for providing services to address the "safety, permanency and well-being of children and families." (45 C.F.R. Part 1357 §1355.33 b (2))

Child’s health and safety is the paramount concern

- States must ensure that:
  - "families have enhanced capacity to provide for their children's needs;"
  - children receive appropriate services to meet their educational needs; and
  - children receive adequate services to meet their physical and mental health needs."
Medicaid/EPSDT

- All foster children eligible for Medicaid
- All children under age 21 enrolled in Medicaid are entitled under federal law to receive EPSDT services
- Includes immunizations, physical and mental health, vision, hearing, dental, lead exposure screening and health education
- Includes care coordination and transportation
Early Intervention Program
Part C of IDEA

- Children age 0-3 having developmental delay or a condition with a high probability of resulting in developmental delay
- Child and family support services
- “Parent” includes birth or adoptive parents, legal guardian, relative and some foster parents
- Surrogate parent appointed where no parent available
Early Intervention Services

- Assistive technology services and devices
- Parent training and counseling
- Respite
- Home visits and support groups
- Medical services for diagnostic purposes
- Nursing services
- Nutrition services
- Occupational therapy
- Physical therapy
- Psychological services
- Service coordination
- Social work services
- Special instruction
- Speech-language therapy
- Vision services
- Hearing services
- Transportation and related costs
The Keeping Children and Families Safe Act of 2003

- Amends the Child Abuse and Prevention Treatment Act (CAPTA)
- Requires States to develop “provisions and procedures for referral of a child under age 3 who is involved in a substantiated case of child abuse or neglect to early intervention services funded under Part C of the Individuals with Disabilities Act (IDEA).”
- Focus on infants exposed to maternal substance abuse
States receiving Part C funds must describe “State policies and procedures that require a referral for Early intervention services of a child under the age of three who is involved in a substantiated case of abuse or neglect.”
Fostering Connections Act of 2008

- Creates kinship guardian assistance program
- Requires states to develop state plan to coordinate health care for all children in foster care
- Enhances school stability for school-aged children
- Clarifies requirements for adoption assistance
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Checklist for the Development of Foster Children

• Has the child received a comprehensive health assessment since entering foster care?
• Are the child’s immunizations complete and up-to-date for his or her age?
• Has the child received hearing and vision screening?
• Has the child received screening for lead exposure?
• Has the child received regular dental services?
• Has the child received screening for communicable diseases?
Has the child received a developmental screening by a provider with experience in child development?
Has the child received mental health screening?
Is the child enrolled in an early childhood program?
Has the adolescent child received information about healthy development?
Infant Checklist

- What are the medical needs of this infant?
- What are the developmental needs of this infant?
- What are the attachment and emotional needs of this infant?
- What challenges does this caregiver face that could impact his or her capacity to parent this infant?
- What resources and supports should be tapped to enhance this infant’s healthy development and prospects for permanency?
Portals for Healthy Development

Paving a path to evidence-based stepping stones—availability of strong and stable family, provision of basic and consistent health care, participation in the 2-generational Early Intervention program and enrollment in a quality early childhood education program

Portals or gateways:

- Oversight by the courts
- Provision of medical home
- Participation in Early Intervention (Part C) or Preschool Special Education
- Enrollment in a high quality early childhood education program
Early Head Start and Head Start

- Not entitlements
- Abused and neglected children priority
- Requires 10% special needs
- Head Start for School Readiness Act of 2007- linkage with CAPTA agencies, inclusion of children in foster care for training, needs assessments and demonstration projects