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# **Changing Times: CFSR, Families, Caseworkers and Courts- What Now?**

**Fostering Change: a New Visions for  
Family Engagement- Michigan  
September 23, 2010**



# GOALS

- **Set the stage**
- **The history**
- **Changing landscape of child welfare**
- **CFSR and beyond**
- **Child Welfare and the Courts**
- **Where from here**



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**MY  
TRIP  
HERE**

YOU' LL NEVER  
GET TO WORK  
ON TIME  
HAHA!!





# **History of Child Welfare: Understanding the Responses**



# History

- 1<sup>st</sup> reported case of abuse in US
- 18<sup>th</sup> century - Children were indentured to work and learn a trade
- 1832 Cholera epidemic- orphan asylums
- 1853 response to them was NY Children's Aid Society– 1853-1890 moved 92,000 kids to Midwest
- 1886- Charles Birtwell of Boston Champions **return home**
- 1909- White House Conference adopts Birtwell and **temp foster care payments**



# History p 2

- **1923- 34 states had Children's Aid Societies- kids exploited- criticism of placing kids out and multiple placements**
- **1959- Maas and Engler study- Children in Need of Parents- kids spent 3 years in care- neglect, abandonment and poverty reasons for placement**
- **The 60's- Fleming Rule- can't refuse AFDC for bad homes- keep AFDC & reasonable efforts to improve**
  - **AND SO THE FEDS STEPPED IN!!**



# 1974 Child Abuse Prevention and Treatment Act (CAPTA)

- **Child abuse prevention- Children's trust funds**
- **National Standards for child protection**
- **Coordinated community response for investigation and prosecution**
- **GAL/CASA for every child**
- **Research and other grants**



# 1978 Indian Child Welfare Act

- **Set out for children of native American heritage**
- **Process to address problems**
- **Different standards**
- **Choice of tribe**



1980

Public Law 96-272

- **The Adoption Assistance and Child Welfare Act of 1980**
- **To get Federal funds (IV-E), States must:**
  1. **implement services,**
  2. **provide protections for families,**
  3. **develop mandates and timetables**
- **Policy- END FOSTER CARE DRIFT**
- **TRUST IN STATE JUDICIARY- juvenile and family courts to monitor**



# Federal Requirements of 96-272

- Evaluation of reasonableness of services to preserve families
- **Periodic review** hearings in foster care cases
- **Adherence to deadlines** for permanency planning decision
- Procedural safeguards concerning placement and visitation



# 1993 Court Improvement Act

- **Review Court data to improve practice**
- **\$\$ to Supreme Courts for surveys**
- **Revelations from those reports- opinions of stakeholders, time frames, permanency issues, etc**
- **Flexible funding for ID'd programs**



**1994**

# **Multi-Ethnic Placement Act**

- **MEPA**
- **Response to some state policy initiatives delaying permanency**
- **Some limits on placement standards**
- **Has severe penalties- total loss of IV-E funding**



# 1995 Block Grants

- **Just what it says**
- **Feds provide \$\$ for states to use as best they saw it with limited regulations- WAIVERS**

# Adoption & Safe Families Act

Nov 19, 1997



- Promotes health & safety of the child
- Continues Family Preservation Program
- Promote **TIMELY** decision making
- Clarifies “reasonable efforts”
- Foster care is **TEMPORARY- AGAIN!!**
- Permanency planning begins immediately
- Requires TPR in certain situations
- Need for innovation- where do new ideas come from, typically?



# 1999 Foster Care Independence Act

- **Provides resources for kids aging out of the system**



# 2001 Strengthening Abuse and Neglect Courts Act

- **SANCA**
- **Helping Courts fulfill the mission of ASFA**
- **Brings \$\$ to the Courts**
- **But not enough**



**2008**

# **Fostering Connections Act**

- **Education stability- attend/achieve**
- **Health care- Medicaid- EPSDT**
- **Can extend foster care to 21**
- **Can us subsidized guardianship**
- **Kinship care- ID relatives- training**
- **Over time- delinks to 1996 AFDC**
- **Training support**
- **Tribal issues- again**



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**DOES  
IT  
SOUND  
LIKE  
THE  
SYSTEM  
DIDN'T  
GET  
IT?**

# ILLITERATE?

WRITE FOR FREE HELP.

ILLITERACY FOUNDATION  
806 MAIN STREET

EXIT

[www.StrangeCosmos.com](http://www.StrangeCosmos.com)



# Recent Changes Effecting Child Welfare

# CHANGING LANDSCAPE OF CHILD WELFARE SERVICES



- **Tighter Time-Lines and Higher Level of Accountability to:**
  - Ensure the safety and well-being of children– health & safety
  - Assess the **willingness and ability** of parents/caregivers
  - Mobilize services for the child and family
  - Expedite the achievement of the permanency goal within unless there are “Compelling Reasons

# CHANGING LANDSCAPE OF CHILD WELFARE SERVICES



- **Greater Emphasis on Collaboration and Partnerships**
  - **Community-Neighborhood Responses, Systems and Services - Keeping the services as close and as accessible to the child and family as possible**
  - **Partnerships - Emphasize Partnerships within the system families, the family's natural supports, service providers, **court participants** and foster families**

# CHANGING LANDSCAPE OF CHILD WELFARE SERVICES



- **Accountability of all:**
  - **parents**                      **providers**
  - **system**                      **funders**
- **Three targets:**
  - **Youth Partnerships Tribes**
- **Measurements:**
  - **Composites, not measures**
- **0 to 3 Initiatives: best practice**



# CHANGING LANDSCAPE OF CHILD WELFARE SERVICES

- **Outcomes:**
- **Measurable and real- agency, Court and programs**
- **Examples- ACE, CFTM, case manger visits, education, health issues, grandparents, aging out, time in care**
- **Philosophy and Practice:**
- **Will change with outcomes and accountability- the CFSSR**



# Initiatives



# The Children

- **Ensure early appropriate placement**
- **Provide personal items for security**
- **Work on school consistency**
- **Provide neighborhood placement-  
avoid out of county- education,  
etc**
- **Visitation with parents**
- **Sibling placement and/or visits**
- **Inform of status regularly**



# Help for Individual Children and Families

**Advise families and others in the case and community about rules & timetables**

- **Make sure families are engaged in assessing, planning and decision making**
- **Develop case plan that really responds to the child and family needs- services, accessible, available, timely & culturally competent**
- **Explore relative placements early**
- **Help & force families to watch the clock**



# Community

- **Involve all stakeholders**
- **Expand the network of informal and formal supports**
- **Establish prevention, reunification and permanency options**
- **Assist the community to have financial resources to “do the job”- Judges get out & advocate**
- **Support the efforts of those who take care of those least capable of taking care of themselves**



# Heightened Need for Partnerships

- **Give priority to child safety**
- **Keep focus on individual children and families & case by case decision making**
- **Increase attention to prevention and early support**
- **Engage families in shared decision making from the beginning**
- **Focus on strengths of family and community**



# Doing Things Early



# Early

- **Find absent parent//father/family**
- **Extended family involvement**
- **Establish paternity**
- **Good assessments-reassessments**
- **Concurrent planning**
- **30-30-30**
- **Reward families for changes and active positive participation**
- **Ensure frequent, quality CW visits**



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# Who Likes Change Anyway?



**RED**

**YELLOW**

**GREEN**

**BLUE**

**RED**

**BLUE**

**YELLOW**

**GREEN**

**BLUE**

**RED**



# Statements of Change

- **If you want to make enemies, try to change something** Woodrow Wilson
- **The main changers in this life are the people who want to change everything- or nothing** Lady Astor
- **If you don't like change, you're going to like irrelevance even less.**  
Gen. Eric Shinseki, Former Army Chief of Staff
- **Change is the law of life. Those who look only to the past or present are certain to miss the future**

John F. Kennedy



# Things to Look At

- **Kids aging out**
- **CW frequent visits**
- **Cases open too long**
- **Filing per statute and timelines**
- **Family structure and abuse Nos.**
- **Educational advocates**
- **Health care initiatives**
- **Kids in home- Parents out**
- **DATA, DATA, DATA,**



# The CFSR and the PIP



# Things You Know

- **CFSRs are mandated by law**
- **CFSRs have changed the focus of our reviews from process to outcomes**
- **CFSRs have required States to**
  - **Develop program improvement plans**
  - **Focus on self-evaluating their systems**
- **CFSRs review the entire State system not just the Child Welfare Agency**



# CFSR Accomplishments

- **Common language & outcomes established- state to state**
- **Continuous Quality Assurance institutionalized by all States**
- **Dialogue and collaboration ongoing in States where this was not occurring**
- **Opportunities for reviewers to “step back” and examine other State policies**
- **Results are driving the Children’s Bureau research and demonstration grant agendas**



# Key Changes for Round 2 CFSRs

- **Larger sample – 65 cases instead of 50**
- **Stratification of sample to ensure minimum number of cases in key program areas**
- **Changes in criteria- composites**
- **Automation of CFRS Onsite Review Instrument and Stakeholder Interview Guide**
- **Four permanency related National Standards revised to include composite measures**

# What is Being Learned



- **First round of reviews showed relationship between certain practice and achievement of outcomes- CW visits**
- **Mix of results across States from Round 1 to Round 2 in meeting outcomes**
- **See a focus on particular areas of practice to improve outcomes**
- **Recognize challenge States face in moving practice at the field level**

# Permanency Challenges



**Achieving timely permanence continues to be a struggle in Round 2**

- **Sequential planning rather than concurrent planning**
- **Permanency goals that fit the case circumstances rather than child's needs**
- **Courts refusing to terminate parental rights without an adoptive family identified**
- **Long attempts at reunification despite minimal, if any, progress by parents**

# Well-Being Challenges



- **States struggle with performance regarding assessment of needs, engagement in case planning and worker contacts**
- **Ongoing issues**
  - **Assessments that focus on presenting problem but don't identify the underlying needs**
  - **Need to engage non-custodial parents**
    - **Lack of father involvement continues to impact ratings across permanency and well-being outcomes.**



# What It Takes To Make Significant Improvements

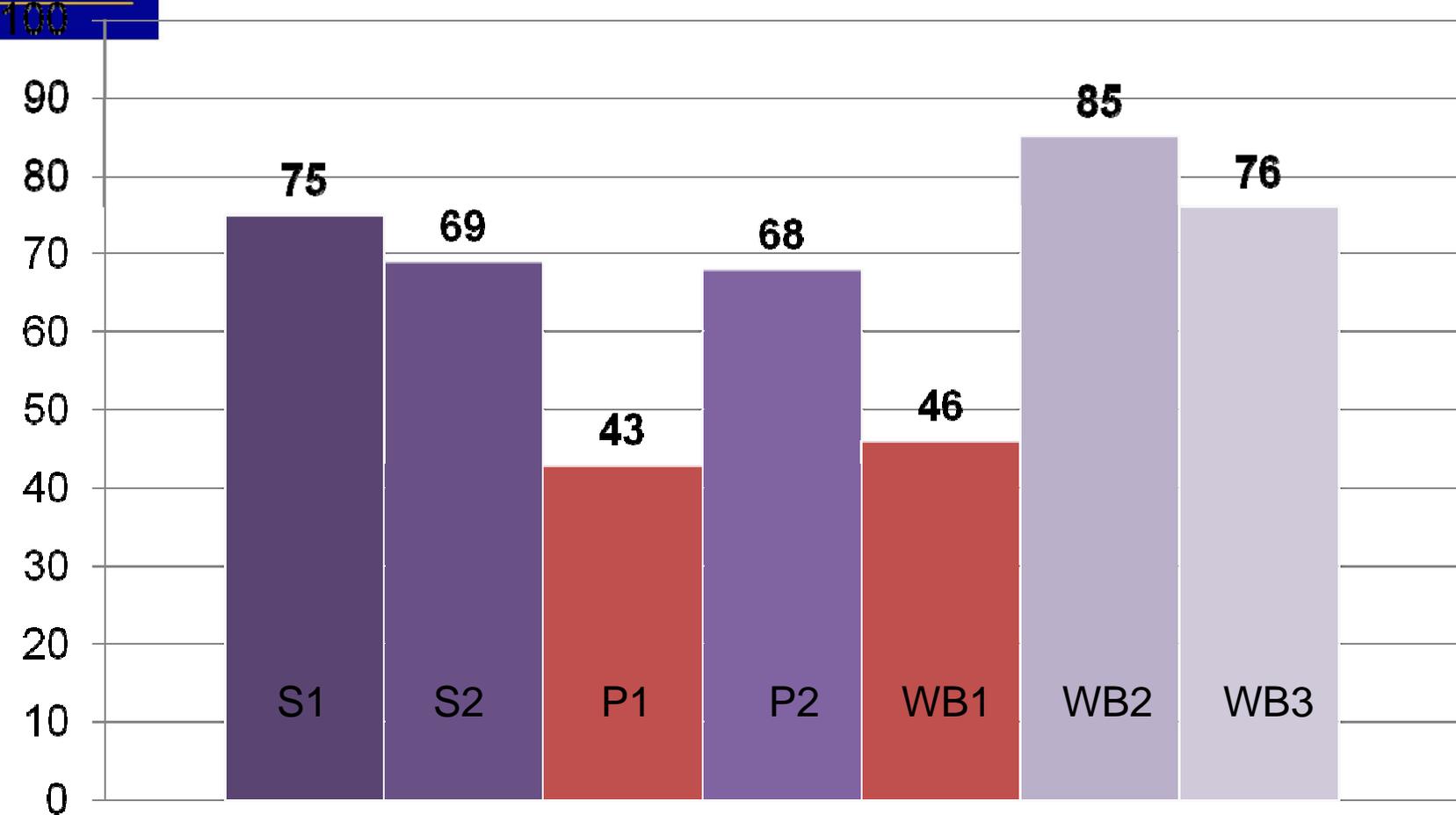
**Involve all levels within the State, from the Governor to the front-line workers**

- **Make collaboration a priority among partner State agencies**
- **Need “consumer” input in the process**
- **Connect PIPs to the overall agency vision**
- **Use data, and encourage workers to use data, to monitor improvement**
- **Need accountability at all levels of the organization**
- **May need a culture change within the org.**



# Preliminary Results: Initial 18 Reviews Outcomes

## Average "Percent Achieved" Across States





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**Safety**

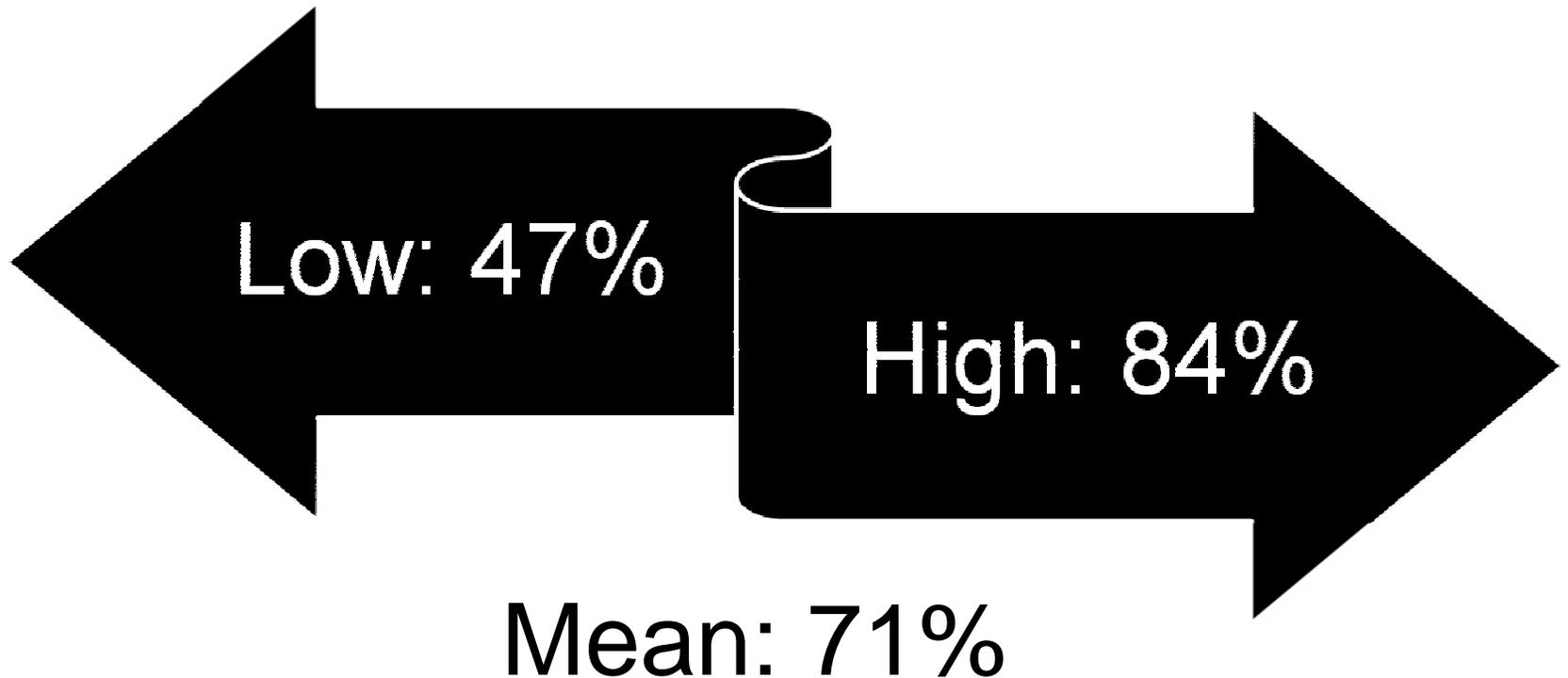


# Preliminary Findings: Initial 18 Reviews

## Safety Outcome 2

### Item 4

**Risk assessment and safety management**





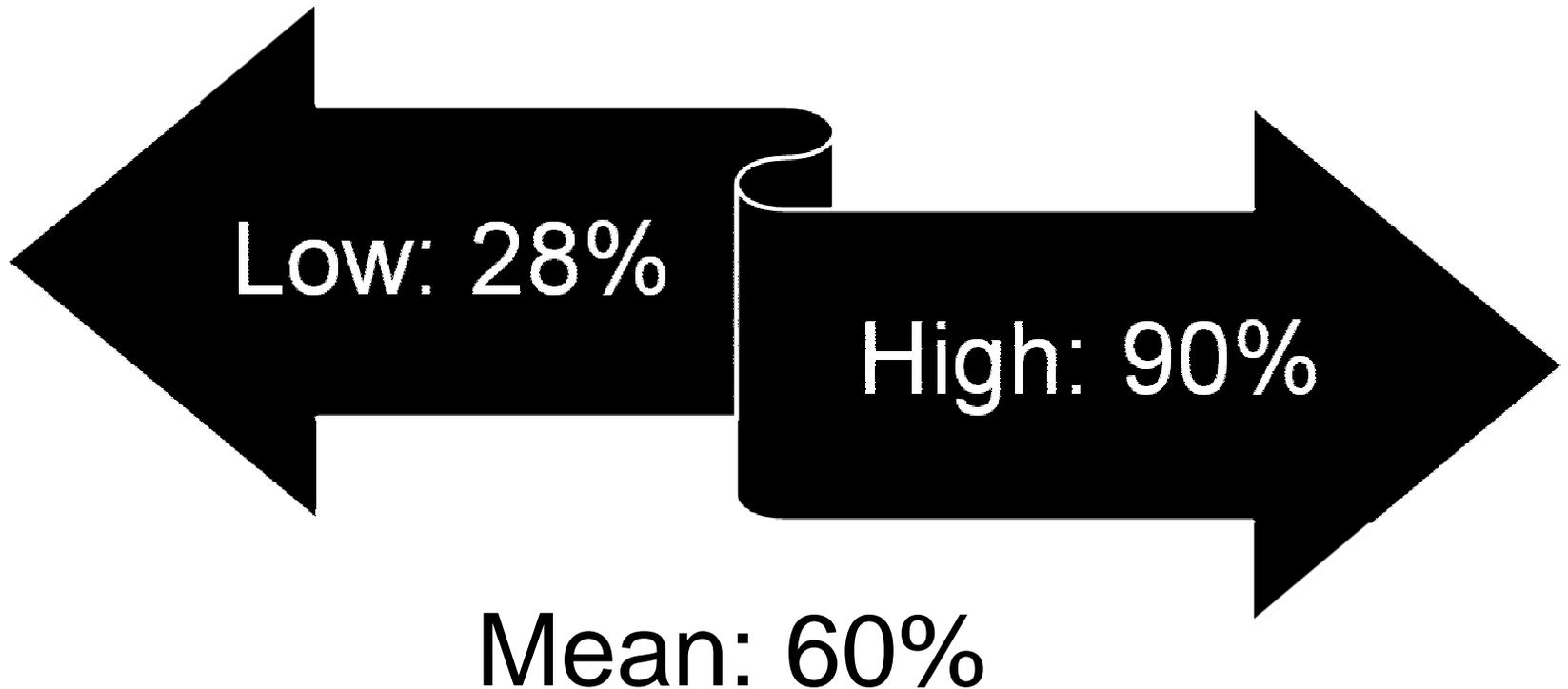
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# Permanency



# Preliminary Findings: Initial 18 Reviews Permanency Outcome 2 Item 16

**Making concerted efforts to promote, support,  
and/or maintain positive relationships between  
child(ren) in foster care and their parents**





## Preliminary Findings: Initial 18 Reviews Relationship with Parents

Concerted agency efforts to promote, support, and maintain a positive and nurturing relationship between the child in foster care and his/her parents (through means other than visitation)

Mother

**74%** of  
applicable  
cases

Father

**53%** of  
applicable  
cases

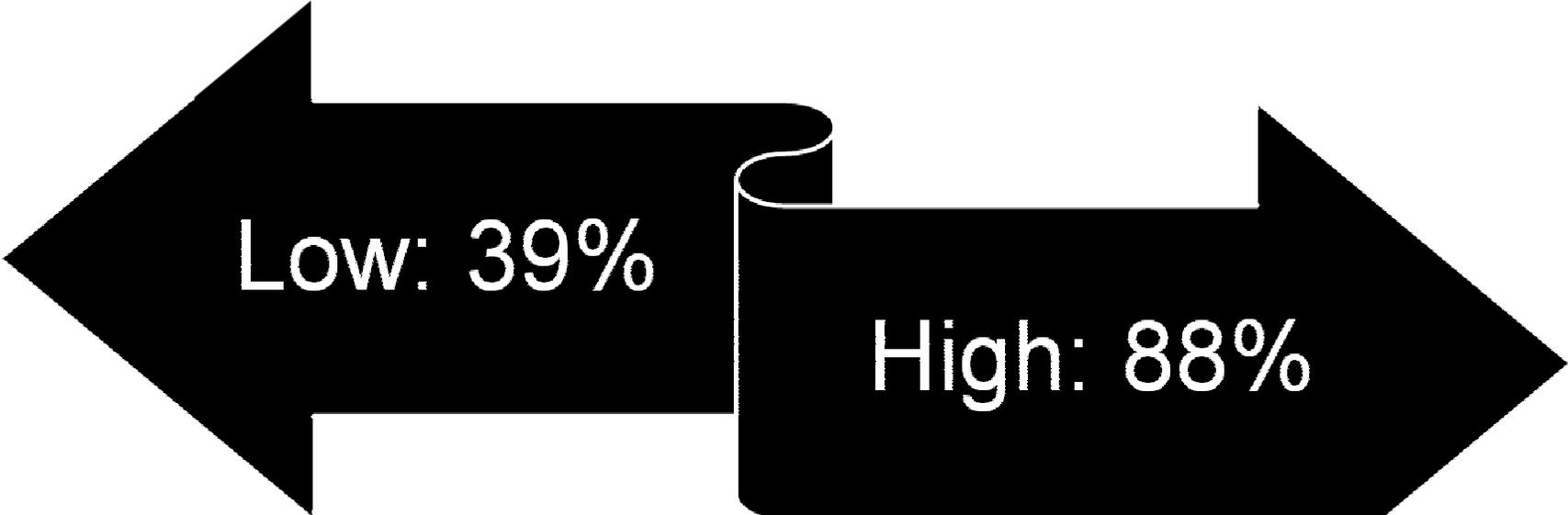


# Well-Being



**Preliminary Findings: Initial 18 Reviews  
Well-Being Outcome 1  
Item 19**

**Caseworker visits  
with child**



**Mean: 75%**



# Preliminary Findings: Initial 18 Reviews Items 19 and 20: Comparison of Frequency and Quality of Visits

The frequency and quality of visits between the caseworker and the parents, and the caseworker and child, were sufficient in:

Mother

Frequency: <b>70%</b> of applicable cases
Quality: <b>69%</b> of applicable cases

Father

Frequency: <b>44%</b> of applicable cases
Quality: <b>46%</b> of applicable cases

Child

Frequency: <b>83%</b> of applicable cases
Quality: <b>79%</b> of applicable cases

**Preliminary Findings: Initial 18  
Reviews  
Well-Being Outcome 2  
Item 21**



**Educational needs of the child**

**Low: 71%**

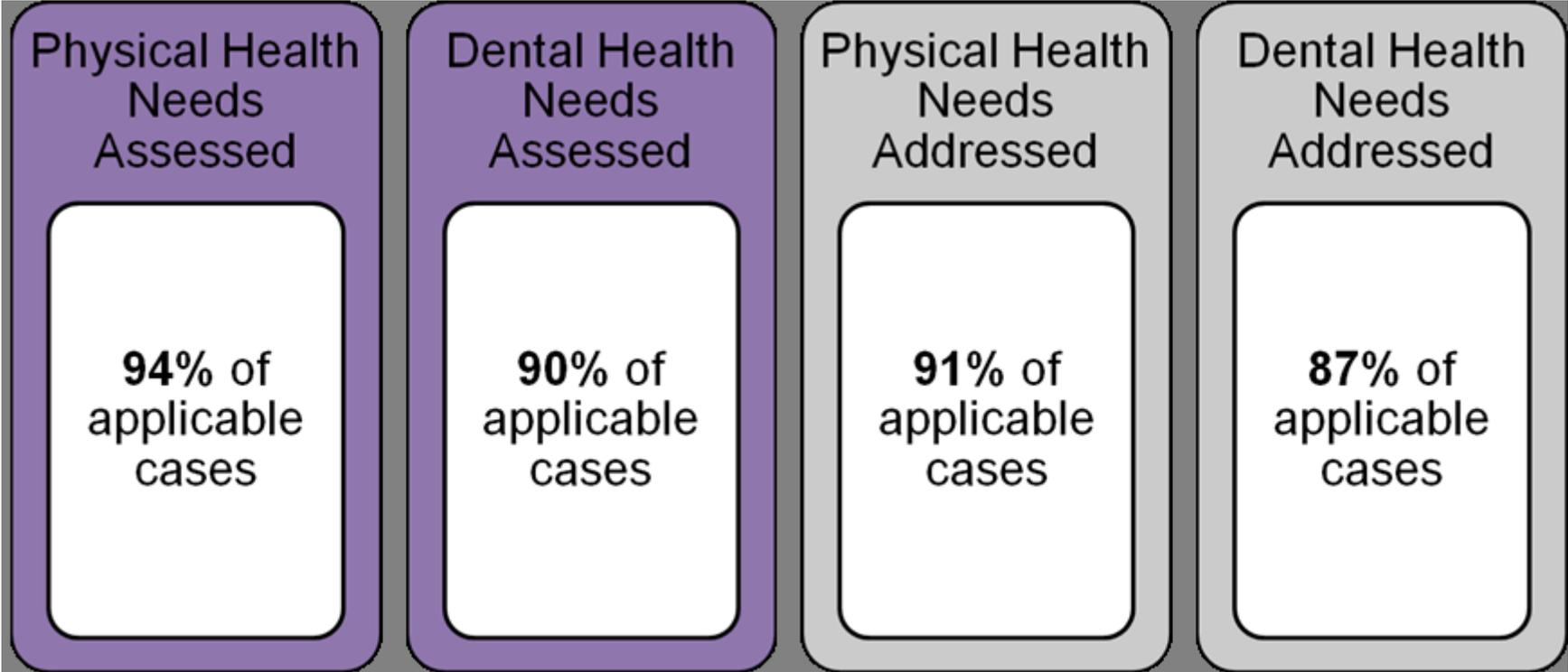
**High: 96%**

**Mean: 85%**



# Preliminary Findings: Initial 18 Reviews Physical and Dental Health Needs of the Child Assessed & Addressed

The physical and dental health needs of the child were assessed and addressed in:





## Preliminary Findings: Initial 18 Reviews Overall Challenges Across Lowest- Performing Items within Outcome Areas

**Risk and safety assessments  
must be completed in all cases.**

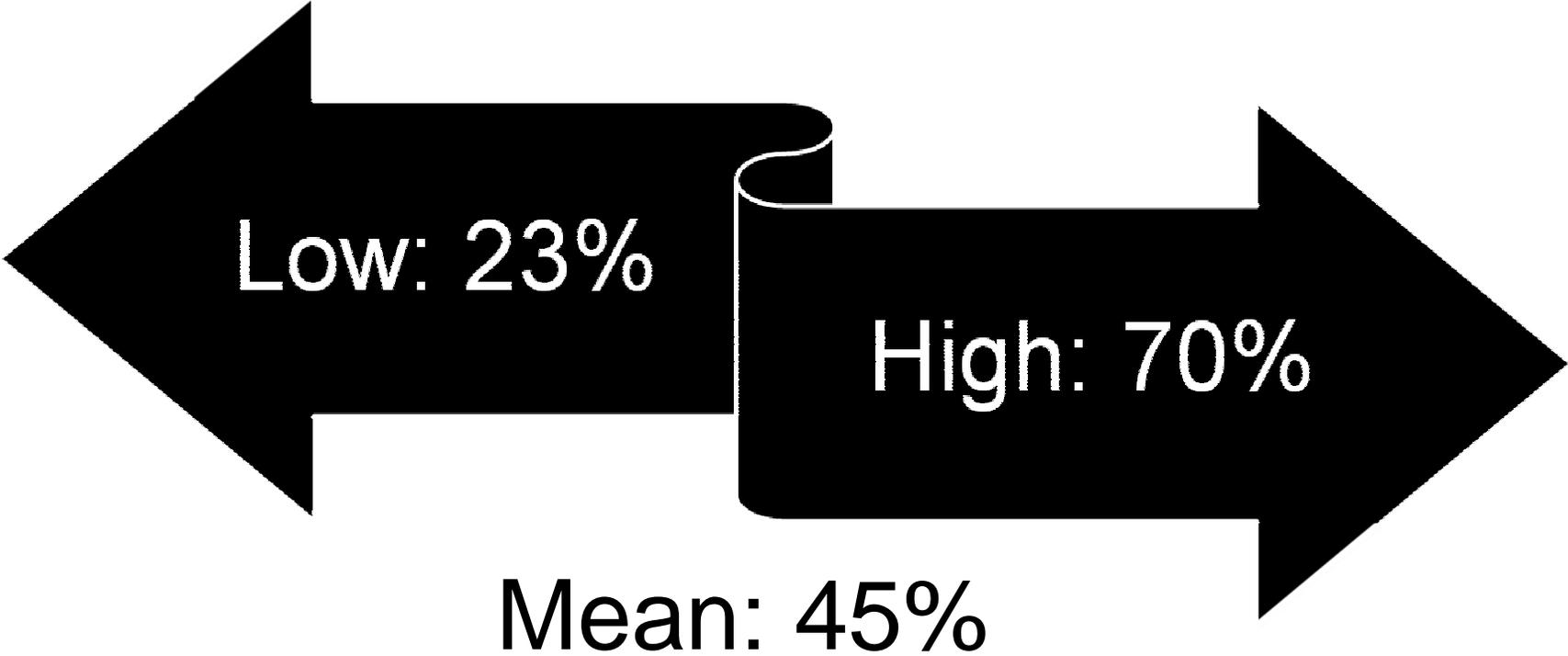
**Renewed focus on addressing  
identified risk and safety needs.**

**Renewed focus on agency and  
court efforts to achieve  
permanency goals (specifically  
adoption) in a timely manner.**



# Preliminary Findings: Initial 18 Reviews Well-Being Outcome 1 Item 20

## Caseworker visits with parents





# Preliminary Findings: Initial 18 Reviews Overall Challenges Across Lowest- Performing Items within Outcome Areas

**Renewed efforts to engage mothers and fathers in assessment, service provision and case planning.**

**Renewed efforts to engage fathers when appropriate.**

**Improve frequency and quality of visits between caseworkers and parents.**



# Program Improvement Plans (PIPs)

- **States required to outline action steps for all outcomes or systemic factors for which they are not in compliance**
  - **PIP in every State in Round 1 as well as States reviewed thus far in Round 2**
- **Focus in Round 2 PIPs on interconnectivity**
  - **Encourage States to look at PIPs in a thematic way rather than simply listing out tasks by each item**
- **Ongoing Support from CB Staff and our Training and Technical Assistance Network**
  - **(New) Regional Implementation Centers**
- **Engagement of Stakeholders**



# Characteristics of Successful PIPs

## **Strong & consistent leadership with a long-term plan and vision**

– Ongoing monitoring of State improvement in PIP areas

- **Addressing supervision issues as a key to making change at the practice level**
- **Identified practice model that also includes addressing agency change**
- **Supporting PIP implementation through funding or a shift in resources**
- **Inclusion of stakeholders at all levels**
- **Good use of Training and Technical Assistance in program and practice change**



# Where Does It Go From Here?

## BACK TO THE BASICS

- **Grounding the Workforce in Good Practice**
- **Bolstering the Workforce**
- **Addressing Disproportionality**
- **CFSR as a Strategic Tool**



**WE CANNOT  
LET THE  
WRECK  
HAPPEN TO  
CHILDREN  
& FAMILIES**





# Things I Have Learned



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**If the agency isn't  
working well, the  
system won't  
either**



**Caseloads are  
important!!**



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**The whole system  
tends to keep  
doing things the  
same way**



**Change comes  
from few and  
threatens many**



**Courts are  
important and a  
Judge can fix a  
little but not the  
whole thing**



**Money is  
important**



**The only way to  
fix it is to....**



## In These Times

- **Look at the next year, plan the next 5**
- **The theory of small wins-  
incremental**
- **Be innovative- find a bottleneck: FIX  
IT**
- **Be out front and open**
- **Find new partners and cultivate**
- **Understand the local finances**
- **Focus on staff**



## Focus on Staff

- **This CHANGE is when people in the field believe in what being done**
- **Understand resistance to change**
- **Know organizational behavior**
- **Understand your role is to influence people**
- **Understand the new worker mentality**
- **Understand how to motivate**



# This really is About Workforce

- **Can't work on margins- out front**
- **External relationships**
- **Follow the data**
- **Know the Caseload, outcomes, CFSR**
- **Be visible, available, approachable**
- **Work with distance communication**
- **Travel, travel, travel**
- **Teach, motivate, guide, show, instill, reward**



# REDEFINE:

- **Who we serve**
- **Who we support**
- **Who we include**
- **Who must include**
- **What we insist on**
- **Who the team is**
- **How we work with**
- **Success**
- **Failure**