Rethinking the Child Welfare System: From Child Protection to Child and Family Well-Being
SAFE
STRONG
SUPPORTIVE
Overview

• How should we view the “System”?
• Child Protection System: Responsibilities and Structure
• Current Issues in Child Protection
• Child Welfare System
• Child Well-Being System
• Supporting Families
Personal Introduction
David Hansell

• Senior Advisor for Child Welfare Policy at Casey Family Programs
• Served as the Commissioner of the NYC Administration for Children's Services
• Previous roles in state and federal government
Personal Introduction
Terry Stigdon

• Registered Nurse 25+ Years
• Indiana Department of Child Services
• American Red Cross
Big Picture

- Child Well-Being
- Child Welfare
- Child Protection
Child Protection System

Child Well-Being

Child Welfare

Child Protection
Core responsibilities of the child protection system

SAFETY  PERMANENCY  WELL-BEING
Structured Process

- Reports
- Screen in/screen out
- Investigation
- Determination
- Response
Organizational Structure

- State supervised/state administered
- State supervised/county administered

* Child Welfare Information Gateway
Balancing family preservation and child safety

- Minimizing system involvement
- Reunification priority
- Permanency alternatives: adoption, guardianship
- Foster care as most extreme intervention, when prevention efforts fail
Current issues/trends in child protection

“Right-sizing” child protection systems

Focusing on the “front door”

Responding to critical incidents
“Right-sizing” child protection systems

46% of reports are screened out nationally

53% of Black children in the U.S. will be reported to CPS by age 18

Roughly 75% of reports nationally are for neglect, not abuse

Question: Are child protection resources being used efficiently and appropriately?
Focusing on the "front door":
Federal definition of neglect

Act or failure to act
Parent or caretaker responsible
Serious physical or emotional harm
Imminent risk or serious harm
Responding to critical incidents

- Traditional critical incident/response cycle: Why it’s problematic
- Safety culture: learning from other fields about how to enhance safety
- Home-grown in Tennessee
Child Welfare System
Core Components

Prevention
- Primary
- Secondary

Intervention

Federal Legislation
- Family First Prevention Services Act (FFPSA or Family First)
Primary Prevention

Preventing involvement with child welfare system and services

- Evidence-based
- Responsibility falls to community, healthcare, education, etc.
- Examples – Healthy Families America, prenatal-to-3 programs
Secondary Prevention

- Historical shift for federal legislation
- From intervention to prevention
- Reimbursement for prevention services
- Clearinghouse for approved programs
- Community pathways

FFPSA
Core Components

- Supportive services
- Continuum of service delivery
- Examples: Child care, early learning, economic supports, SNAP, TANF, Medicaid, WIC
Economic supports

- Economic security and prevention of maltreatment
- Implications for child welfare systems
- COVID lessons
  - Concrete supports