



Kids in Care: Best Practices at the Intersection of Child Support and Child Welfare

Moderator: Eric Olberding

Speakers: Steven Eldred, Bonnie Hommrich
and Trish Skophammer

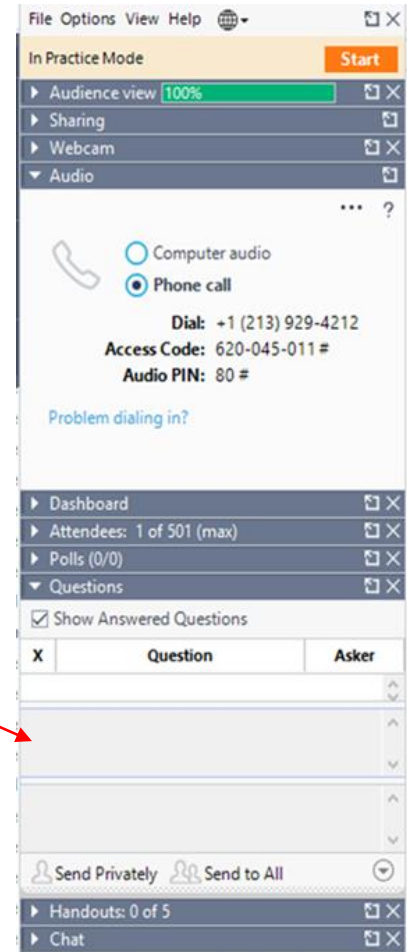




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- **Questions**

- Time for Q & A after the presentation
- Submit using the “Questions” box on your GoToWebinar dashboard
- Submit throughout the presentation and we’ll fit them in where we can!





Meet our Moderator



Eric Olberding

Management Analyst, Ramsey County Attorney's Office

Eric has been with the Ramsey County Attorney's Office for 9 months as a Management Analyst in the Administration Division. He is currently the Project Manager of a multi-county project involving Child Support and Foster Care. His primary work experience is in the Medical Device industry in Process Development, Business Analysis, Analytics and Continuous Improvement. Eric is a University of Minnesota graduate with a bachelor's degree in Operations Management and hold a Lean Six-Sigma Certification from Villanova University.

Eric is married (3 years) with two boys (ages 4 months and 2 ½ years). He enjoys fishing, hiking, snowboarding, mountain biking and a good book.





Meet our Speakers



Steven Eldred

Director, Orange County Child Support Services

Steven Eldred is the Director of the Orange County, California Child Support Services. He has been in the Title IV-D program for 22 years, as an attorney and administrator. Mr. Eldred's focus in Orange County is on superior customer service, incorporation of community-resource-based parent success, and data-driven policy and practice management. He has been a frequent lecturer on a variety of legal topics, ethics, and strategic planning.

Mr. Eldred holds a B.A. from the University of California; a law degree (J.D.) and Masters degree in taxation law (LL.M.) from Golden Gate University; and a Masters in Public Administration from California State University. He holds the rank of Lieutenant Colonel in the U.S. Army Reserve Judge Advocate General Corps. He serves as the Staff Judge Advocate for the 311th Sustainment Command in Los Angeles, supervising the legal services for a 6,500-soldier command spanning three states. Mr. Eldred and his lovely wife Marci lead an idyllic life in Southern California, midway between the beach and Disneyland.





Meet our Speakers



Bonnie Hommrich

Senior Associate, Center for Support of Families

Bonnie Hommrich serves as a Senior Associate for the Center for the Support of Families. Ms. Hommrich brings over forty years of experience in child welfare leadership with the last twenty serving in senior level positions with statewide responsibility. Her most recent experience was serving as the Commissioner for Tennessee's Department of Children's Services. During her employment with the Department she led the successful exit of the Brian A. Federal Lawsuit in Tennessee, facilitated the implementation of Performance Based Contracting, supported the development of the Quality Service Reviews in Tennessee and was engaged in the state's IV-E waiver. Her prior experience was with the Kentucky Child Welfare system for over thirty years beginning as a frontline caseworker and ending as the Principal Assistant to the Secretary for the Cabinet for Families and Cabinet. Her past work experiences have been concentrated in the areas of management and administration, resource development and direct child welfare activities. At CSF, her work is focused on assisting State and local child welfare agencies in evaluating their child welfare programs and implementing needed improvements in their practice, policies and procedures.





Meet our Speakers



Trish Skophammer

Director, Child Support Services, Ramsey County
District Attorney's Office

Trish Skophammer is currently serving as the Director of the Child Support Services Division in the Ramsey County Attorney's Office located in St. Paul, Minnesota. She has over 20 years of child support experience and previously worked as an assistant director, supervisor and a support enforcement agent. She has experience in all areas of child support, from intake to arrears. She has been involved in the NCSEA Leadership Symposium Policy Forum planning committees for the past 6 years, and is currently serving as co-chair for the 2018 Leadership Symposium. Trish is also serving as co-chair for the Emerging Issues and Best Practices subcommittee. Trish has presented on numerous topics at national, regional and local conferences as well as web talks and training workshops. Trish is on the NCSEA Board of Directors and is involved in several associations and committees at the local level. In addition to her expertise in child support policy and practice, Trish's expertise includes leadership topics such as performance management, process improvement, and strategic planning. Trish has a master's degree from Bethel University in Organizational Leadership and a doctorate degree in Public Administration from Hamline University.





History: Child Welfare Referrals

- Part of the Child Support Enforcement Amendments of 1984
- Requires Title IV-E agencies to secure assignment of support rights for child in foster care
- Requires Title IV-E agencies to refer cases to Title IV-D for child support enforcement
 - But afforded some degree of flexibility





Tennessee's Child Welfare and Child Support Partnership

Bonnie Hommrich, Senior Associate
Center for the Support of Families





Child Welfare's Focus

- Children are first and foremost protected from abuse and neglect
- Children have permanency and stability in their living situations
- Families have enhanced capacity to provide for their children's lives





Tennessee's Collaboration

- Child welfare view of child support:
 - Child support payments offer a way to help ensure that each parent, within the limits of their resources, is making efforts to support and maintain a sense of normality for their child
- Child welfare and child support collaboration:
 - Training
 - Meetings





Tennessee's Collaboration

- Challenges included:
 - Legal
 - Cultural
 - Resources
 - Technology and data sharing





Minnesota Research Project

Trish Skophammer, Director
Child Support Services Division
Ramsey County Attorney's Office





Who are the children?





Circumstances of the families

- Drug addicted parents, opioid epidemic, now #1 reason
- Poverty- neglect, homelessness, inadequate supervision
- Single parent households
- Incarcerated parents
- Lack parenting skills





Circumstances of the families

- The neighborhood connection- high crime and unemployment, deteriorating housing, inadequate health care facilities, no safe places to play
- People of color over-represented
- Families in crisis





Income levels

- Minnesota study-
 - 47% of parents had no recorded earnings
 - 32% of parents had income less than \$10,000
 - Only 20% had income above \$10,000

Source: Skophammer, 2017

Child Support Collections to Offset Out-of-Home Placement:
A Study of Cost-Effectiveness





Income Levels

- Wisconsin study, in the year prior to placement-
 - 59% of mothers has no recorded earnings
 - 26% of mothers had earnings below \$10,000
 - Only 15% has earnings above \$10,000

Source: Cancian, Cook, Seki, Wimer, 2012

Interactions of the Child Support and Child Welfare Systems:
Child Support Referrals for Families Served by the Child Welfare System





Racial disparities

Race	General population	In out of home placement	Living in poverty
African American	13%	23%	34%
Native American	1%	2%	34%
Hispanic	18%	21%	28%
Asian	6%	1%	12%
Two or more	3%	7%	20%
White	61%	44%	12%
Total population	n/a	n/a	19%





Cost-effectiveness

Estimated expenditures	Expenditures	Cost-per-case	Cost of collections	Expenditure per dollar collected	Cost effectiveness ratio
Total expenditures	\$138,301,873	\$632	\$6,830,024	\$2.70	\$0.36
Salary & fringe, attorney	\$91,298,249	\$417	\$4,506,519	\$1.80	\$0.55
One-half salary & fringe, no attorney	\$38,857,294	\$177	\$1,912,839	\$0.76	\$1.31





Goals of Child Support

- Establish paternity
- Establish child support orders
- Collect on those orders
- Locate parents
- Are we “families first?”
- Welfare reimbursement?
- Questions about cost-effectiveness, parental responsibility





Data sharing

- Foster Care Independence Act of 1999
- Fostering Connections to Success and Increasing Adoptions Act of 2008
- Social Security Act - 453(c)(4), 453(j)(3), 454(8)
- Safeguarding Child Support Information Final Rule
- [OCSE- IM-12-02: Requests for Locate Services Referrals and Electronic Interface](#)





Data sharing

Person has, or may have parental rights to the child

- Name
- Address
- Social Security number
- Employer's name
- Employer's address
- Wage & benefit info
- Asset & debt info

Relative of the child

- Name
- Address
- Social Security number
- Employer's name
- Employer's address





Referrals

- In order for a State to be eligible for payments under this part, it shall have a plan approved by the Secretary which—
- provides that, where appropriate, all steps will be taken, including cooperative efforts with the State agencies administering the program funded under part A and plan approved under part D, to secure an assignment to the State of any rights to support on behalf of each child receiving foster care maintenance payments under this part;

Source: 45 CFR 471(a)(17)





Referrals

- Locate
- Establish paternity
- Establish and enforce a child support order
- When it is appropriate to do so





Referrals

- Not appropriate;
 - Adoption proceedings are pending in court
 - Parents would be unable to comply with the permanency plan of reunification due to the financial hardship caused by paying child support
 - Short term placement
 - Non-custodial parent is a potential placement resource (however removal may still be referred)





Partnership

- Develop a good partnership
- Use good referral policies
- Use child support to promote the goals of child welfare





Financial and Policy Impacts of Foster Care/Child Support Cases California's Experience

Steven Eldred

Child Support Services
Orange County, California





Federal, State Roles

- Federal Guidance leaves great latitude to the states on which if any foster cases to refer to the child support program (42 U.S.C. 671)
- Once the case is referred, most states leave little discretion to the child support program on whether to establish/enforce.
- Overall, child-welfare-guided structure.





Original Approach:

- Child Support collections on foster cases, like all public assistance cases, was seen as a way of recouping the state money expended on these poverty-level cases.





Original Approach:

- California Welfare and Institutions Code 903.4:
 - (2) *It is the purpose of this section to substantially increase income to the state and to counties through court-ordered parental reimbursement for the support of juveniles who are in out-of-home placement. In this regard, the Legislature finds that the costs of collection will be offset by the additional income derived from the increased effectiveness of the parental support program. [Emphasis added]*





First, Do No Harm

- California recognized that asking parents to pay support when they are in reunification programs was not a good idea – those parents have enough on their plate, and are usually poor.
- 20 years ago the Legislature passed Family Code 17552 – requiring the State Department of Social Services to work with the State Department of Child Support Services to promulgate regulations limiting referrals for support in reunification cases.
- California has extensive regulations on referrals, based on child's best interests.
- https://www.sccgov.org/ssa/opp2/18_financial/18-2.html





California Structure – Best of Intentions

- Family Code 17552:
 - (1) Whether the payment of support by the parent will pose a barrier to the proposed reunification, in that the payment of support will compromise the parent's ability to meet the requirements of the parent's reunification plan.
 - (2) Whether the payment of support by the parent will pose a barrier to the proposed reunification in that the payment of support will compromise the parent's current or future ability to meet the financial needs of the child.





https://www.sccgov.org/ssa/opp2/18_financial/18-2.html

- The social worker determines whether if it is in the child's best interest to refer each child's parent(s) to child support for repayment of foster care funds.
- The social worker considers whether the payments will pose a barrier to the proposed reunification, in that the payment of support will compromise:
 - The parent's ability to meet the requirements of the parent's reunification plan.
 - The parent's current or future ability to meet the financial needs of the child.
 - The parent's ability to meet the needs of other children in the household who may be at the risk of removal.





https://www.sccgov.org/ssa/opp2/18_financial/18-2.html

- In considering the best interest of the child, the social worker evaluates each case on an individual basis and takes into consideration the circumstances of the family (CDSS MPP 31-503), which may include:
 - The parent's employment status
 - Housing status
 - The impact on other children who may be at the risk of removal
 - Availability of community-based services
 - Effort to reunify
 - Whether parental rights have been terminated
 - Connection with CalWORKs or other public assistance programs.





Best of Intentions

- *California*—Of those States we identified as having policies that went beyond a statement that a referral was to be made, California's had the most extensive criteria for assessing the best interests of the child and the circumstances of the family.

Child Support Referrals for Out-of-Home Placements:

A Review of Policy and Practice

Chellew, Noyes, Selekman, Institute for Research on Poverty, 2012 p.13)





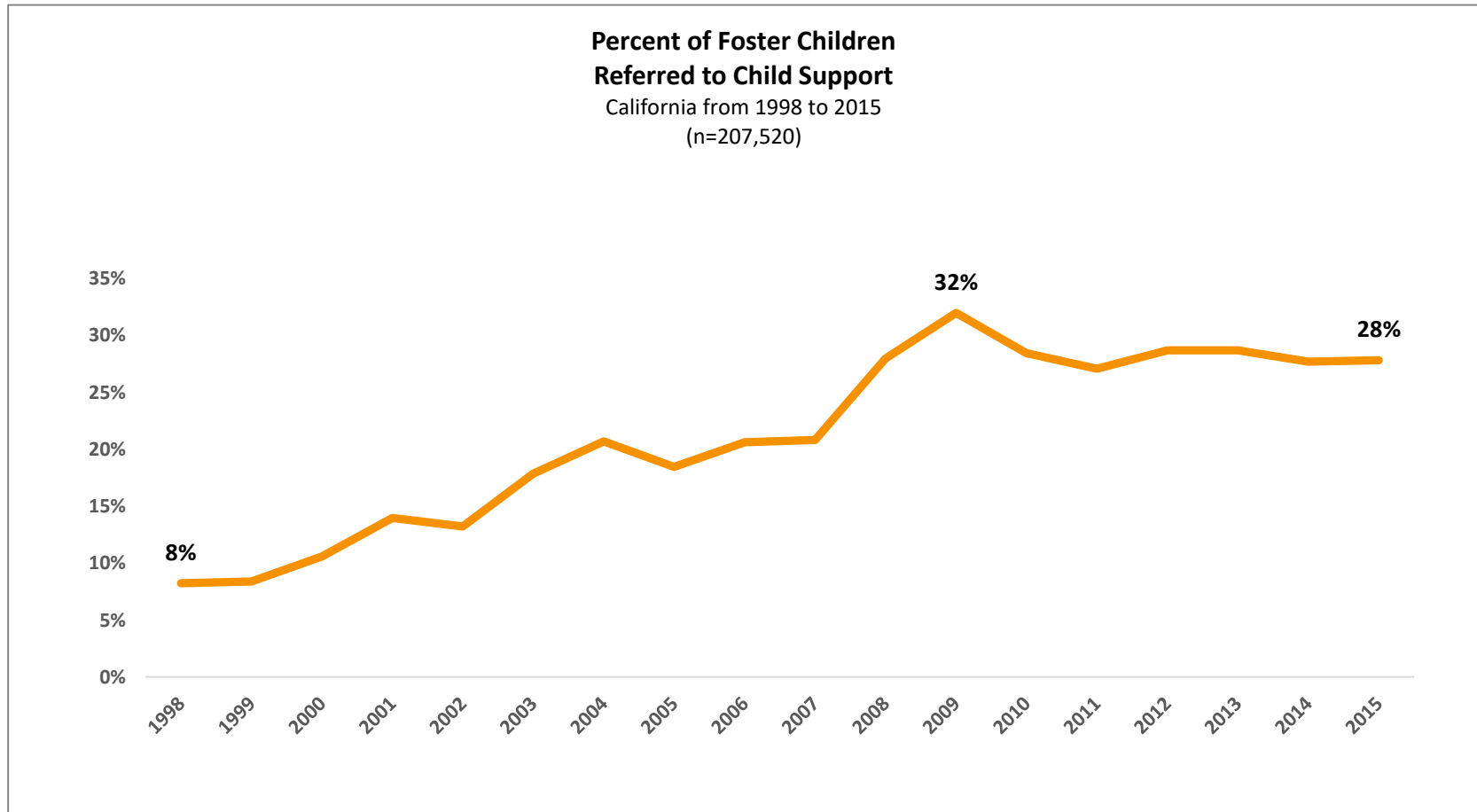
Best of Intentions

- Child welfare services workers are required to
 - “...evaluate each case on an individual basis considering the best interests of the child and the circumstances of the family, which may include but are not necessarily limited to, the parent(s)’ employment status, housing status, the impact on other children who may be at risk of removal, availability of community-based services, efforts to reunify, whether parental rights have been terminated, connection with CalWORKs or other public assistance programs” (California Department of Social Services, 2009).





But did it work?





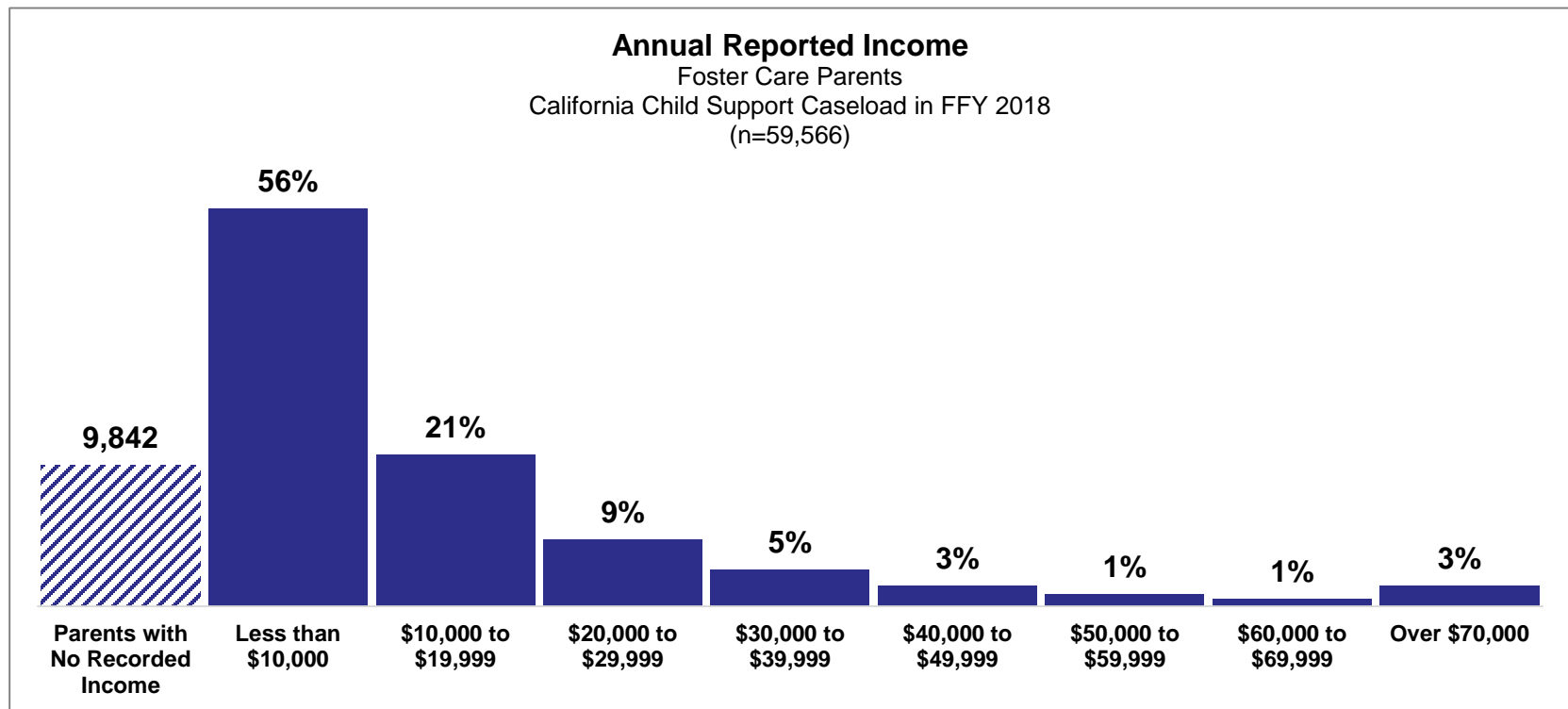
Economics of Foster Care Collections

- How do Foster Cases compare to general population cases?
 - Less?
 - Same?
 - More? - - 1.5 times? Double?
- Using a double – general case estimate, cost-to-collection ratio is \$0.21 collected for every dollar expended. Even at even-ratio, collections would be \$0.40 for every dollar collected.
- Based on 62,000 cases in one fiscal year.





Foster Care Parent Reported Income





Lessons Learned

- If a state wants to limit referrals, vigilance is required – annual training and reinforcement of state policy.
- 1984 systems could not pull accurate data on family income, collection rates, etc. Now we can, and should adjust policy accordingly.
- Foster populations are almost exclusively poverty-level. Integrated child welfare/child support policy is critical for effective management of outcomes.
- Child Support Program involvement may have a social welfare benefit, but as a recoupment program it is a clear failure.





Lessons Learned

- Not enough to block referral of custodial parent's case for establishment – what about the income stream from non-custodial parents into the custodial parent's household?
- Interference with that income stream may jeopardize custodial parent's housing stability, ability to complete reunification programs.
- But support follows the child!
- Exceptions for needy caretaker cases ? (grandparents, aunts/uncles)
- Integrated Child Welfare/Child Support review of policy is critical!





Questions





Thank You!

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<https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/WT32819>





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