



University-Based Child & Family Policy Consortium

Developing, Implementing and Evaluating an Evidence
Informed Supervised Visitation Program for Child Welfare
Involved Parents

June 10, 2019
1:00-2:00 PM Eastern

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Developing, Implementing and Evaluating an Evidence Informed Supervised Visitation Program for Child Welfare Involved Parents

June 10, 2019

Presenters

- Laura Orlando, MSW - *Strive* Project Director
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- Kimberlee Shoecraft, MSW - *Strive* Training and Curriculum Manager
- Susan Barkan, PhD - *Strive* Principal Investigator

About Partners for Our Children

- Part of the School of Social Work at the University of Washington
- Works to improve the lives of vulnerable children and families, especially those touched by the child welfare system
- Founded in 2007, Partners for Our Children:
 - Supports evidence-informed child welfare policies and practice
 - Advances research and innovation to strengthen the child welfare system
 - Work in partnership with the public and private sector and with communities to advance healthy child and youth development and prevent the need for system involvement.

Goals of this presentation:

- Provide background on Strive development process
- Connect Strive to larger system reform efforts
- Discuss Pilot Study Results
- Share our plans moving forward and for sustainability



Where did we start?

- With a desire to develop a parenting intervention specifically to meet the needs of child welfare involved parents
- Low cost for use by the system; use of paraprofessionals
- Build the rigor for program over time
- Goal to help improve the system and it's response to parents

Took a look at the data...

Out-of-home care

- United States: **400,000** children (AFCARS 2015)
- Washington state **8,500+** children in out-of-home care in WA State
 - **2/3** are eight years of age or younger
- Potential for **thousands** of parent-child visits each week

Enlisted research and community...

- Conducted over 100 stakeholder interviews (legal community, administrators at WA State Department of Children, Youth and Families (DCYF), researchers, parent allies, and service providers)
- Completed a scan of the child welfare literature
- Worked with a design committee (staff, faculty, provider and instructional designer)
- Engaged with parent allies (parents who successfully navigated the child welfare system)

What did we learn?

- Gap in programming related to parent-child visits; missed opportunity
- Chaotic and highly stressful time for children and parents
- Lack of structure and accountability regarding visits; little known about number and quality of visits taking place
- WA State is estimated to spend >\$26 million annually for visits
- Important (and often missed) opportunity to reduce trauma and maintain/build bonds

What did we hear from Parent Allies?

"I was terrified."

"I felt worthless. When the setting and the environment is intimidating and you don't feel supported, it's hard to leave the visit feeling positive."

"I'm in complete self-loathing, I'm feeling inadequate, and you sitting there taking your notes only adds to that..."

"Families are in a process of trying to turn around their lives, and it's very emotional and traumatic."

Strive Development Goals

- **Collaborate** with WA State Department of Children, Youth and Families
- **Create new parent support** and education program designed to meet **the unique needs** of child welfare-involved families
- **Improve the quality of** parent-child visits
- **Reduce trauma, increase resilience and wellbeing** for children and parents
- **Increase useful visit data and accountability** through use of technology (Oliver)
- **Evaluate *Strive's*** effectiveness through rigorous research
- Create a **freely available program and training – disseminate widely and adapt for other populations and locations**



Policy work behind the scenes...

- Policy work leading up to 2014 legislative budget ask
- 2014 legislative budget language

What is Strive?

Strive Supervised Visitation Program

- A structured **parent support and education curriculum** for parents **visiting** with their children (**birth to 8** years of age)
- **Evidence-, practice-, trauma-informed, and developmentally tailored**
- Developed **by and for child-welfare stakeholders**
- Delivered by ***Strive*-trained paraprofessional visit supervisors** in the context of parent-child visits over 5 weeks, early in the case

Why is *Strive* Focusing on Visits?

- Early parent-child visits are challenging
- Parents need information and support up front
- Higher quality parent-child visits may reduce trauma for parents and children
- Early engagement may support continued engagement
- Fills a gap in needed support for parents



Strive Supervised Visitation Program Sessions



Strive Delivery Model

Part One

- One-on-one skills training just prior to visit

Part Two

- Supported visit with parent and child

Part Three

- 15 minute debrief (one-on-one)

What Makes *Strive* Different?

- State and federal law increasingly require the use of Evidence-Based Programs (EBPs)
- Adoption of EBPs has been slow, in part due to high implementation costs (manuals, training and supervision)
- High cost of customization so poorly adapted to specific populations
- **Few EBPs have been developed for child welfare involved families and none are specific to visitation**
- Unlike other EBPs that are expensive, Strive was designed to be scaled at a low cost, using paraprofessional visitation supervisors and integrated into a naturally occurring structure (supervised visits)
- \$1.5 million of private dollars have been used to create and test a program that is available to the public for free

***Strive* Pilot 1 - Western Washington State:** (June 2016- September 2017)

7 DCYF Offices

3 Visitation Providers

Pilot enrollment goals:

- 50 *Strive* parents
- 50 parents in comparison group

Parent Data	Data Sources
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Visit Attendance • Visit Punctuality • Unusual Incident Reports 	<p>Parent-Child Visit Report Form/Oliver</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Engagement • Quality of Parent-Child Visit • Stress Management • Program Satisfaction • Social Support • Demographics 	<p>Parent Survey/REDcap</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Program Participation/Fidelity 	<p>Visit Navigator Activity Checklist/REDcap</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Skill Demonstration and Practice 	<p>Visit Navigator Observation Tool/REDcap</p>

Demographics

- Parents' average age: 30 years
- Children's average age: 2 years
- ¼ of parents were homeless or unstably housed
- 28% hadn't completed high school or GED
- >30 % reported need for assistance with:
 - Parenting (52%)
 - Housing (50%)
 - Employment (42%)
 - Transportation (38%)
 - Food (36%)
 - Other (36%) – Substance Use Treatment, Mental Health services, emotional support

Selected findings from Pilot 1: Parents

88% completion rate (44 of 50 parents)

Were not able to recruit a comparison group

***Strive* parents:**

- were **less likely to miss their visits** compared to propensity score matched controls (7% vs. 14%)
- were **more prepared** for visits (96% vs 82%)
- **increased their use of stress management strategies** (66% vs 30%) and were **less anxious** about visits (12% vs 26%)
- **found the program to be helpful** (100%) and **felt supported** by their Visit Navigator (100%)
- **would recommend *Strive*** to other parents (95%)

“Strive helps bring down that wall between the parent and the system. It makes things more comfortable and helps explain a lot of questions and emotions throughout everything in the beginning. It's pretty scary and Strive is doing a great job with helping. It's good to have a program that can help families and be a strong voice for both kids and parents and help parents in a positive manner without being controlling.” –Parent

Strive Pilot 2: Washington State (October 2017 – July 2019)

5 DCYF Offices (2 in eastern WA and 3 in western WA)

4 Visitation Providers

Pilot enrollment goals:

- 50 *Strive* parents (45 enrolled to date)
- 50 parents in comparison group (34 enrolled to date)

Preliminary analyses appear promising and consistent with Pilot 1 findings

What we have learned from piloting *Strive*

100% of parents in both Pilots 1 and 2 (still underway) said:

- the *Strive* program **helped** them in visits and
- covered most of what **was needed**
- there was **mutual respect** between them and their Visit Navigator
- they planned to **continue to use what they learned** (stress management, communication techniques, and maintaining a visit routine)

Where are we to date?

- Nearly 100 parents have completed the program (to date) in the two pilots
- Developing the evidence base for *Strive*
- Listed on the California Evidence Based Clearinghouse
- Created a train-the-trainer program
- Working with other jurisdictions both within and outside of the United States to deliver *Strive*
- Program materials being translated to Spanish
- Received grant to work with local tribal service provider to adapt *Strive* for use with Native families

Regional Expansion of *Strive*

Funding in 2020-2021 state budget for expansion

Expansion goals:

- Build on current pilot experience and expertise
- Use existing visitation referral and tracking infrastructure
- Expand training capacity within Alliance for Child Welfare Excellence the training arm for child welfare in WA State
- Assess usefulness of *Strive* in assisting with decision-making re: safe and appropriate visit supervision level
- Track visitation outcome data via parent child visit report forms in Oliver-technology solution developed by Partners for Our Children

More policy work behind the scenes...

- Work sessions with Human Services and Early Learning committees on Parent Child Visitation
- Growing legislative interest in Parent-Child Visitation
- Convening of interim work group culminating in legislative ask for funding for Strive expansion in 2019-2021 biennium budget

Strive Progress to Date and Development Timeline

**Jan 2014 –
Mar 2015**

- ◆ Stakeholder interviews, focus groups & research to inform program development

**Apr 2015 –
Jul 2019**

- ◆ Pretest
- ◆ Refine curriculum
- ◆ Pilot test 1
- ◆ Pilot Test 2

**Jan 2019 –
Jul 2020**

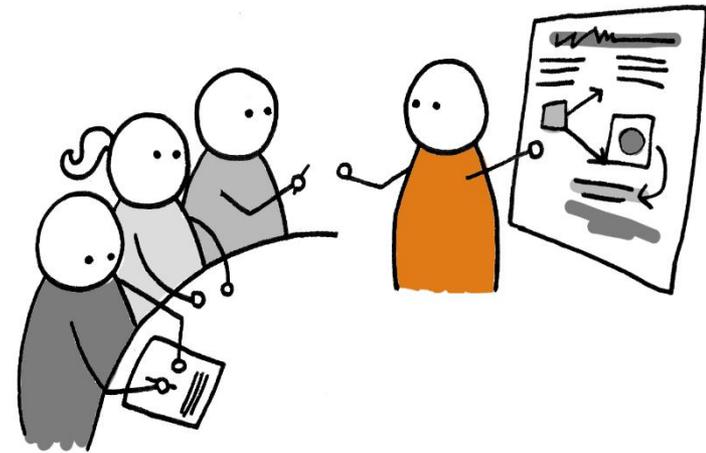
- ◆ Expand program in WA Region 1
- ◆ Assess *Strive's* usefulness for decisions re: level of supervision

**Aug 2018 –
Dec 2020**

- ◆ Expand training capacity, create online platform
- ◆ Plan for broad dissemination
- ◆ Adapt for other groups/locales

Sustainability Plans

- Training
- Ongoing Coaching and Support



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Strive Training

Three days of face to face training

- Training is practical and prepares Visit Navigators to use the program with families
- Future goal: Develop parts of the training to be delivered online
 - This will bring costs down by having fewer days of face to face training.
 - Face-to-Face training will still happen, as the practice element with feedback is critical when learning a new program

Ongoing Monitoring, Coaching and Support

Weekly Check in calls

- Calls are facilitated by a trained Strive trainer currently
- Calls are meant to monitor fidelity to the Strive model, as well as provide positive feedback to Visit Navigators and problem solving for any issues they are facing
- Navigators also enter information about their *Strive* sessions and visits into a database that is monitored



Ongoing Monitoring, Coaching and Support

Rapid Trainings

- These trainings have been developed and completed as issues arise for Visit Navigators
- A recent example of a rapid training our team developed was called “Cultivating Compassion”. This included information about developing compassion for self and the families served by *Strive*

Ongoing Monitoring, Coaching, and Support

- Research from several evidence-based parenting programs tells us that there is less model drift and more job satisfaction by providers when they have ongoing coaching and support after their initial training.
- There is also research to suggest that when providers of evidence-based parenting approaches have ongoing quality assurance monitoring, outcomes for parents are better.

Gunderson, L. M., Willging, C. E., Trott Jaramillo, E. M., Green, A. E., Fettes, D. L., Hecht, D. B., & Aarons, G. A. (2018). The good coach: implementation and sustainment factors that affect coaching as evidence-based intervention fidelity support. *Journal of Children's Services*, 13(1), 1-17.

Aarons, G.A., Fettes, D.L., Sommerfeld, D.H., & Palinkas, L.A. (2012). Mixed Methods for Implementation Research: Application to Evidence-Based Practice Implementation and Turnover in Community Based Organizations Providing Child Welfare Services. *Child Maltreatment*, 17(1), 67-79.

Building a Sustainable Training Model

- Partnership with the Alliance for Child Welfare Excellence – child welfare training arm for Washington State
- Will be trained as *Strive* trainers, in order to provide ongoing training and support for community agency partners interested in using the *Strive* program
- We are developing a certification process for Visit Navigators and Trainers/ Coaches
- We are also in the process of looking at creating agency level coaches to keep costs down for agencies in providing ongoing Visit Navigator monitoring and support

What we have learned about visitation system challenges:

1. **Lag** between removal and first visits
2. **Inadequate visitation spaces**
3. **Transportation** is a huge barrier to visitation
4. **Lack of coordination**
5. **Parents not systematically oriented** to visit expectations
6. **Many parents are struggling with substance abuse, mental health and homelessness**
7. **No systematic process** for making decisions about safe and appropriate levels of supervision so supervision continues when possibly not necessary

What we have learned leads to better visits for families:

- Having a safe, consistent and family friendly space in which to visit
- Consistently orienting parents to rules and expectations surrounding visits
- Providing parents support in the context of their visits; celebrate what's going well to create more of that vs. documenting mistakes
- Transparency with parents about the data being collected on them in visits
- Having Visit Navigators who understand and respect the parents and their struggles
- Supporting connections to other services/resources needed by families

“This program can be a light in a dark place for families.”

Parent Ally

Questions, Comments, Thoughts?

Thank you!

For more info please visit:
www.striveparenting.org
www.partnersforourchildren.org



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