The PolicyLab approach:
Bridging research and policy to improve the behavioral health of children in child welfare

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Today’s goal

To use PolicyLab’s experience to examine the strengths and opportunities of bridging research and policy
The PolicyLab approach

Our mission is to achieve optimal child health and well-being by informing program and policy changes through interdisciplinary research.

PolicyLab is engaged in projects across several domains of child health

For more information, please visit www.research.chop.edu/policylab
Federal child welfare legislation can be used to develop more coordinated solutions

- **Fostering Connections Act (2008)**
  - Increases support for kinship care
  - Promotes educational stability
  - Mandates state-level health care plan for children in care

- **Child and Family Services Improvement and Innovation Act (2011)**
  - Oversight and monitoring of psychotropic medication

- **Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act (2010)**

A multi-year agenda that evolves based on research findings and the changing policy environment
Early NSCAW work indicated system impact on behavioral health outcomes

Behavioral outcomes based on placement stability and placement type

% Likelihood of Behavioral Health Problems

General Foster Care

Kinship Care

N = 729

Early Stable

Late Stable

Unstable

Children’s Stability and Well-being study (CSAW)

- Study following 407 children in the Philadelphia child welfare system from 2006-2008
  - How placement stability affects a variety of outcomes related to child well-being
- Working with city, state, and foundation partners to improve placement stability

CSAW data investigates system factors affecting placement stability and behavioral health

- The impact of placement stability on educational outcomes
- Agency characteristics affecting placement stability
- The relationship between kinship care, placement stability and behavioral health
- Behavioral health access and service receipt

Introducing an evidence-based behavioral health intervention with a focus on sustainability

**CSAW Pilot Intervention Project (CSAW PIP)**
- Implementation and evaluation of an evidence-based behavioral health intervention in the City of Philadelphia

**Policy activities**
- Blended Medicaid and child welfare funding
- Focus on procurement, sustainability

**Challenges to implementation remain**
- Policy analysis and data sharing project

Understanding the role of psychotropic medications for children in foster care

**Study**
- Study looking at national sample of Medicaid data, 2002-2007, to determine trends in pediatric psychotropic medication prescription over time

**Policy activities:**
- Qualitative policy analysis
- Work with state-level partners
- Federal-level work
Concluding remarks

- Bridging research and policy necessitates
- An attention to timeliness
- True collaborative relationships
- A framework that emphasizes both content and process
- A research approach that is solution oriented

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