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Here's the briefing
materials ~~from~~
on the Child Welfare
Study

-Lori Schuck

X54718

OMB Briefing

National Survey of Child and Adolescent Well-Being (NSCAW)

January 4, 1999

Briefing Overview

- Background and goals
 - Authorization and development
 - Study goals, features, and products
 - Implications of goals for design and operations
- Study design and operations
 - Sampling
 - Instrumentation
 - State and agency recruitment
 - Field operations

Need for Study

- Changing environment
 - Child welfare and population trends
 - Welfare reform
- Need for new data
 - National
 - Longitudinal
 - Data from families, children, caseworkers

Study Authorization and Planning

- Authorization
 - PRWORA (P.L. 104-193, Title V, Section 429A)
- Planning and development
 - ACYF lead
 - Federal workgroup: ACYF, ASPE, ACF
 - Expert panel conference (4/97)
 - RFP (6/97)

Contract

- National Survey of Child and Adolescent Well-Being (NSCAW)
- October 1997--September 2003
- Contractor team
 - Research Triangle Institute (RTI)
 - University of North Carolina
 - University of California at Berkeley
 - Caliber Associates

Study Goals

- Address key policy and research issues
 - National, eight state, and subgroup data
 - Families in contact with child welfare system
 - History, experience, and change over time
- Multiple perspectives and levels
 - Child welfare and child/family development
 - Collect and analyze data from child, family, caseworkers, teachers

Study Features

- Draw on national expertise
- National sample and subgroups
 - 6,700 children and families
- Prospective longitudinal study: three years
- Multiple perspectives
- Support wide range of analysis

National Expertise and Consultation

- Federal agencies: steering committee
- Experts in field
 - Project team
 - Expert panel
 - Technical work group
- Field
 - Major organizations
 - States and agencies

Schedule

- Design and preparation 10/1997-5/1999
- Data collection 6/1999-5/2003
- Analysis and reporting 9/2000-9/2003

Study Goals: Research Questions and Analyses

- Conceptual framework and research questions
- Analyses for policy and program use
- Implications for study design

Research Questions

- Who are the children and families who come into contact with the child welfare system?
- What pathways and services do children and families experience while they are in the child welfare system?
- What are the short- and longer-term outcomes for these children and families?

Conceptual Framework

- Multiple levels: community, system, services, caseworker, child/family
- Initial state and change over time: child and family experience, child welfare and other services, environment, outcomes

Study Products

- Annual reports
 - Tasks performed
 - Analysis results
- Briefings and special analyses and reports
- Reports to participating states and agencies
- Data files

Examples of Analysis Report Topics

- Description of child welfare system
- Characteristics of children and families at system entry
- Experiences over time: services received, other experiences
- System exits and re-entries
- Outcomes for children and families

Implications for Study Design: Instrumentation

- Capture family and child characteristics, services, history
- Sensitive topics
- Measure services and outcomes: safety, permanence, well-being
- Appropriate for diverse cultural groups and ages
- Maintain comparability with other research
- Minimize burden

Implications for Study Design: Sample

- National and state samples
- Longitudinal
- Comprehensive
 - All parts of child welfare system
 - All categories of children
- Sufficient cases for analysis and comparisons of key groups

Implications for Study Design: Operations

- Sensitive issues
 - Cooperation and participation in study
 - Confidentiality and protection of children
- Burden on agencies and families
 - Engage and recruit agencies early
 - Minimize instrument length
 - Reduce or compensate for burden
- Need to monitor and control data collection
 - Multiple sources and time points
 - Diverse experiences

Instrumentation

- Measurement domains
- Data sources
- Process
- Constructs and measures

Measurement Domains

- Child experiences and functioning
- Caregiver characteristics, attitudes, and functioning
- Family and community environment
- Services to children and families
- Caseworker and agency characteristics

Data Sources

- Children
 - Assessments
 - Interviews (older children)
- Caregiver and parent interviews
- Caseworker and agency interviews
- Teacher/day care provider questionnaires

Longitudinal Data Collection

- Baseline: characteristics, history, risks
- Annual agency data collection
- Annual in-person data collection
 - Child and family assessment
 - Services and experiences
- Six-month mid-wave telephone interviews
 - Services received

Instrument Development Process

- Determine needs
 - Identify and prioritize questions and constructs
- Identify and evaluate candidate measures
 - Standardized measures
 - Measures from other large studies
- Develop measures and instruments
- Review and revise instruments (iterative)
 - Focus groups and cognitive interviews
 - TWG and other review
 - Time and costs

Child-Level Constructs

Social Competence	Health & Cognitive Status	Adaptive Behavior & Functional Status	Behavior Regulation, Emotional and Mental Health	Life Experiences
Relationships with Parents/ other Significant Adults	Developmental Status	Adaptive Skills	Temperament	Child Maltreatment
Peer Relationships	Communication Skills	Academic Achievement	Behavior Problems and Mental Health	Family Placement/ Disruptions
Global Social Competence	Health and Disabilities	Special Ed Status and Support Services	Criminality/ Delinquency	Violence Experiences
		School Socialization	Substance Abuse/ Sexual Behaviors	Service Experiences and Satisfaction
		School Engagement	Adoption Plans	
		Future Expectations		

Caregiver and Family Constructs

Caregiver Physical and Mental Health	Caregiver Attributes/Behaviors	Involvement with the System	Contextual Factors
Mental Health and Substance Abuse	Cognitive Stimulation and Emotional Support	Domestic Violence	Neighborhood Factors
Physical Health	Behavioral Monitoring and Discipline	Criminal Involvement	Family Demographics
Health/Mental Health Services Received by Biological Parent	Family Compliance	Child Welfare Involvement	Social Support
		Court Decisions	
		Risk Assessment	

Caseworker and Agency Constructs

Caseworker Factors	Local Agency Factors	State Agency Factors
Job Role and Work Unit	Agency Structure and Expenditures	Type of C W S Administration
Caseload	Staff Resources	Report Classification and Substantiation
Job Satisfaction	Foster Care Resources	Educational and Licensing Requirements
Family Involvement	Staff Training Requirements and Practices	Placement Options
Demographics	Macro-Policy Environment	State Expenditures
	Agency Policies	Participation in Federal Waivers
	Service Activities	Impact of Federal Legislation and Social Service Developments

NSCAW Sample Design and Analysis

Presentation outline

- Goals of sample design
- Target population
- Sample selection
- Analysis

Goals of the Sample Design

- Coverage of all parts of the child welfare system
- Longitudinal estimates
- Estimates for subgroups of special interest
- National estimates
- Separate state estimates to the extent possible

Target Population

All children age 0 - 14 years who

- are subjects of investigations of child abuse/neglect
- are not subjects of investigations but are assigned a case worker; e.g., dependency cases, status offenders, voluntary placements

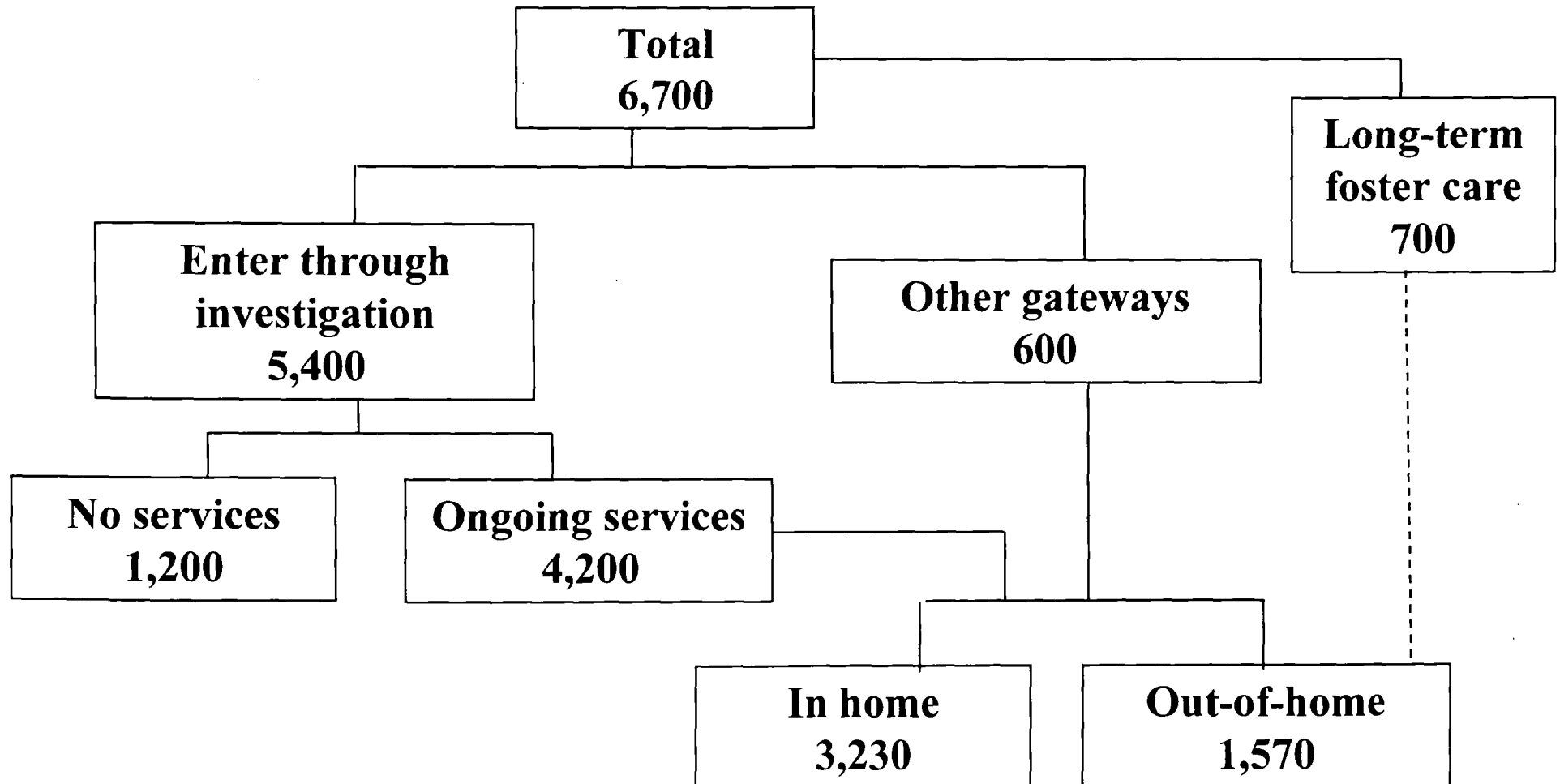
Oversampled Subgroups

- Receiving services (open cases)
- Age less than one year
- Out of home services
- Alleged sexual abuse

PSU Sample Selection

- Develop composite measures using NCANDS and other administrative data
- Eliminate smallest counties ($\sim 1\%$)
- Form nine sampling strata
- Sort frame within stratum
- Select 100 PSU's using systematic pps sampling

Sample Design



Data Analysis: Goals

- Quick turnaround descriptive analysis
 - Basic system characteristics
- Comprehensive descriptive analysis
 - Children and families in contact with the system
 - Pathways and services they experience
- Longitudinal analysis
 - Short- and longer-term outcomes for children and families

Target Audiences and Products

- | | |
|-----------------|--|
| • Policy makers | Reports
Briefings |
| • Program staff | Reports: own agency
and comparisons |
| • Researchers | Reports
Data |

Annual Reports

- Annual
 - Tasks performed
 - Quality assurance procedures and results
 - Attrition
- Analysis results

Analysis Reports: Content

- Baseline and six months
 - Characteristics, history, risks at entry
 - Investigation process
 - Services received
 - Children in out-of-home care 12 months
 - Child welfare in U.S. states

Analysis Reports: Content

- Follow-up waves
 - Experience over time and status at end of interval
 - System exits, re-entries
 - Change in children and families
 - Child welfare in U.S.

Schedule: Data Availability for Analysis

Wave 1: baseline	July 2000
Wave 1: 6 mo.	December 2000
Wave 2: 12 mo.	May 2001
Wave 3: 24 mo.	May 2002
Wave 4: 36 mo.	May 2003

Recruitment: Process

- Early involvement of states
 - Explained study and solicited involvement
 - Responded to issues (confidentiality, workload)
- Visits to states, counties in sample
 - Send ahead letter, materials
 - Meet with key staff
- Follow-up
 - Obtain agreement, maintain contact
 - Request information for sampling, operations

Recruitment: Status

- 40 states in sample
 - Agreement letters received from 28
 - Verbal agreements from 7
 - No refusals
- 100 PSUs in sample
 - Agreement letters received from 47
 - Verbal agreements from 32
 - 4 refusals (replaced counties)
- Remaining visits being conducted

Recruitment: Special Requirements

- Require family consent prior to contact
 - 34 states: send information, then field staff contact family after 5-7 days
 - 1 state: send information, then field staff contact families who do not return refusal postcard
 - 4 states: agency staff contact family and seek agreement to be contacted for study
- Access to unsubstantiated cases
 - 3 states cannot include unsubstantiated cases in sample

Operations

- Challenge of standardizing procedures for a national study that is being conducted out of local Child Welfare agencies with their own policies and procedures
- Working with local Child Welfare agencies on:
 - Methods to access selected children and their families
 - Direct contact
 - Return of postcard to refuse further contact about the study
 - Contact by agency staff regarding written permission to release name for contacting
- Reporting of situations involving imminent harm (suicide, threats of homicide) or serious ongoing abuse

Use of Cutting-Edge Technology

- All interviews, except the Teacher/Day Care Providers questionnaire, will be conducted with computer-assisted interviewing technology
 - Advantages
 - Allows us to tailor the instruments for the respondent and the situation
 - Reduces errors made by interviewers and respondents, thereby improving data quality
 - Reduces the burden on respondents
 - Ensures more timely delivery of data because inconsistency and other anomalies can be resolved with the respondent during the interview

Use of Cutting-Edge Technology (continued)

- Other systems will minimize burden and reduce errors — for example, the case management system will alert interviewers to cases reaching the end of the allowable time frame for each respondent
- Systems like the case management system and survey control system provide the project team with up-to-date status reports, powerful tools with which to monitor the project progress