

2017 Strategic Partnership Outcomes: SAFE BABIES COURT TEAM

Safe Babies Court Team (SBCT) is a pathway to hope for families. The goal of the team is to enhance parent agency (or motivation) by ensuring comprehensive needs are identified early in a child abuse or neglect case and appropriate services are provided. We help parents navigate barriers to safety, security, and well-being for their children, and provide pathways to success for families. We do this by facilitating three monthly points of contact.

Before Safe Babies Court Teams, very young children might spend 2-4 years in the foster care system before their case was resolved. These children experienced frequent moves and their developmental needs were missed, causing additional harm to them while in foster care. Under these circumstances, it was difficult for families to maintain motivation, and navigate barriers.

Now, with the Safe Babies Court Team approach, it is a priority for the first placement for a child to be the last placement. Developmental screening and assessment are completed in every case, and children's medical and mental health needs are being addressed timely. This reduces additional harm from occurring, and allows

young children to catch up developmentally. These changes result in stronger motivation for parents, and an increased ability to meet their challenges with the support of a team.

Stakeholders from the community meet to brainstorm solutions to barriers for court involved families. Family team meetings bring the professionals and the families together to discuss progress and identify areas for further growth as a team. Families and professionals participate monthly in court before the Honorable Judge Doris Fransein. She hears the cases and recommendations of the team, providing final authority on how the case proceeds. She celebrates successes with the team and families. She sets the tone for parents' enhanced motivation throughout the course of their cases.

Between inception of the program in July of 2015 and March of 2018, the Tulsa SBCT **served 42 families, impacting the lives of 55 children.** During the course of this time period, the program was evaluated for several outcomes, including cost savings to the system, and its ability to reduce the amount of time infants spend in foster care.



SBCT – A COMPREHENSIVE SOLUTION FOR COMPLEX NEEDS

Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACES) - Childhood experiences, both positive and negative, have a tremendous impact on future violence victimization and perpetration, and lifelong health and opportunity. An ACE score is a tally of 10 different types of abuse, neglect, and other hallmarks of a rough childhood. According to the research, the rougher your childhood, the higher your score is, the higher your risk is for later physical and mental health problems.

- Alcoholic Parent
- Emotional Abuse
- Emotional Neglect
- Estrangement from parent
- Mother treated violently
- Parental Incarceration
- Parental Mental Illness
- Physical Abuse
- Physical Neglect
- Sexual Abuse

ACE Scores of SCBT Parents:

- 87% of our parents have an ACE score of 4 or more
- Average ACE of our parents is a 6*
- 9 of our parents have an ACE of 10
- 33 of the first 55 children served had an ACE of 4+
(Of these, 12 were under 1 year old)

"Average life expectancy for someone with ACE score of 6 or more is 20 years shorter, and they have a 4600 percent greater likelihood of becoming an IV drug user." - Brown, D. et al 2009

SBCT MEASURES UP!

BEST PRACTICE STANDARDS

- 100% of children receive screening & assessment in medical home compared to 45% of non-SBCT children
- 100% of these assessments guided treatment planning in cases
- First placement was last placement for 77% of SBCT children compared to 33% of non-SBCT children

FEDERAL & PINNACLE PLAN GOALS MET

COST SAVINGS

Average time in care reduced from 21 months to 15 months with:

- \$244,000 savings to DHS (foster care stipend, worker caseload)
- \$214,000 savings resulting from no jury or non-jury trials for SBCT cases
- \$36,000 savings realized from 5 infants not entering custody

TOTAL \$494,000

HEALTH & WELLBEING

- 33% of babies returned safely to their biological parent (45% non-SBCT)
- 66% of babies adopted into permanent homes (53% non-SBCT)
- SBCT children were in permanent homes within 3.4 months of removal

REDUCING ADDITIONAL HARM & SUFFERING

SUSTAINING SBCT LOCALLY = SAVINGS

THEN:

SBCT PILOT

(ZERO to THREE Expense)

\$250,000 PER YEAR

NOW: (County Contract)

JUVENILE BUREAU RELOCATION

\$90,113 PER YEAR

(64% reduction in cost from beginning of project.)

Successful stewardship of local resources during implementation led to readiness for independence.



SBCT HAS THESE EXCITING DEVELOPMENTS UNDERWAY IN 2018.

- One new SBCT are currently being formed for the Cherokee Nation.
- There is momentum in Oklahoma County toward best practices in infant court team development.
- SBCT has spread best practice influence at the Juvenile Bureau by:
 - Consulting for Family Drug Court
 - Cross training other courtroom teams
 - Supporting the Juvenile Bureau as it expands to new space
 - Adding a District Attorney designated liaison from the DA's office to SBCT to coordinate criminal & juvenile dockets
- The American Institute of Research has selected Tulsa as a site for Randomized Control Trials to establish SBCT as Evidence Based Practice.
- A new law has been passed in Oklahoma to establish Zero to Three courts as a best practice approach for child welfare. (HB3104)