



FLORIDA'S
Early
Childhood
COURT

Improving outcomes for infants and toddlers in Florida's dependency court

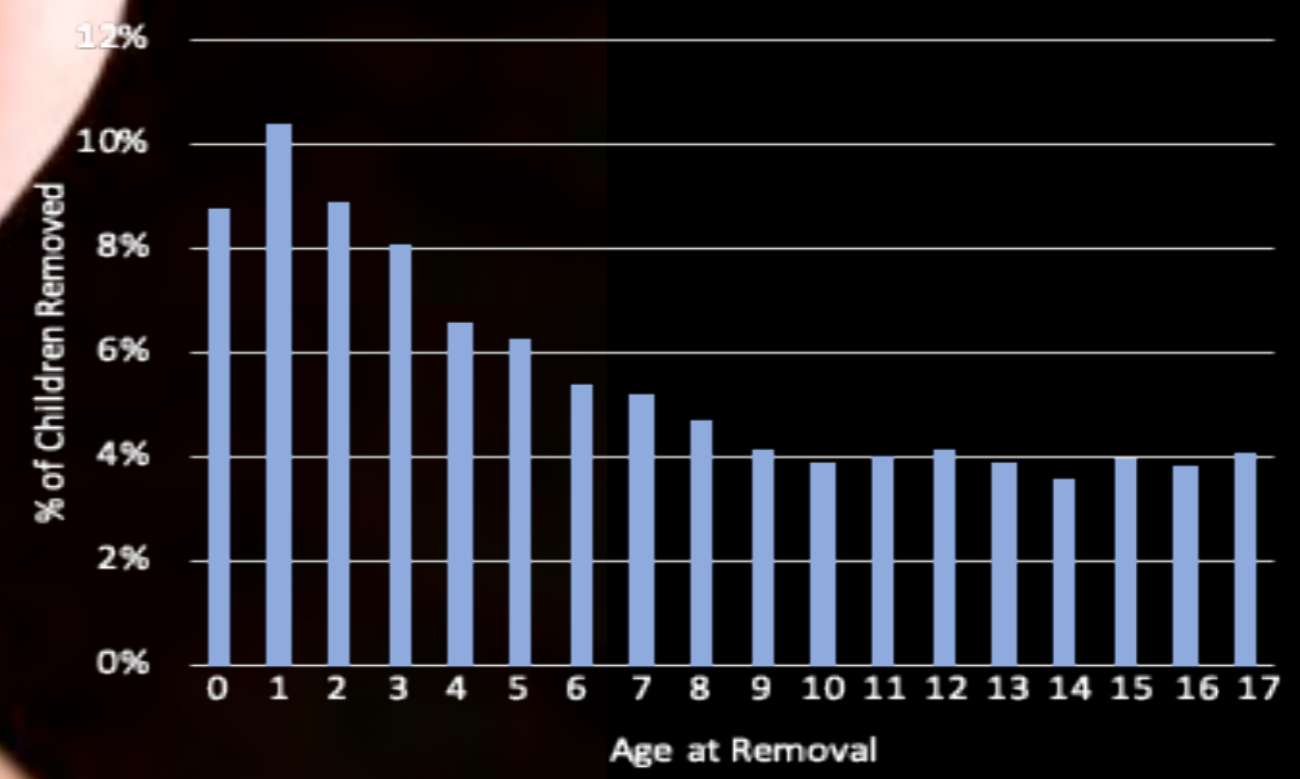
**Judge Lynn Tepper, Retired
Florida's 6th Judicial Circuit**

**Dr. Mimi A. Graham, Director
FSU Center for Prevention & Early Intervention Policy**



Infants are the Largest Age Group in Florida's Child Welfare

49% Age 5 or younger



Source: Florida DCF, June 2020. Retrived from: <https://www.myflfamilies.com/programs/childwelfare/dashboard/c-in-oooh.shtml>

Child Welfare Needs Change

Tragic child fatalities

Child maltreatment

Failure to meet 12-month
permanency mandate

Multiple placements

Billions spent on child welfare

Repeat maltreatment

Multigenerational cycle of ACES



Multigenerational Cycle of Trauma & Court Involvement



Dependency
Court



Delinquency
Court



DV & Drug
Court

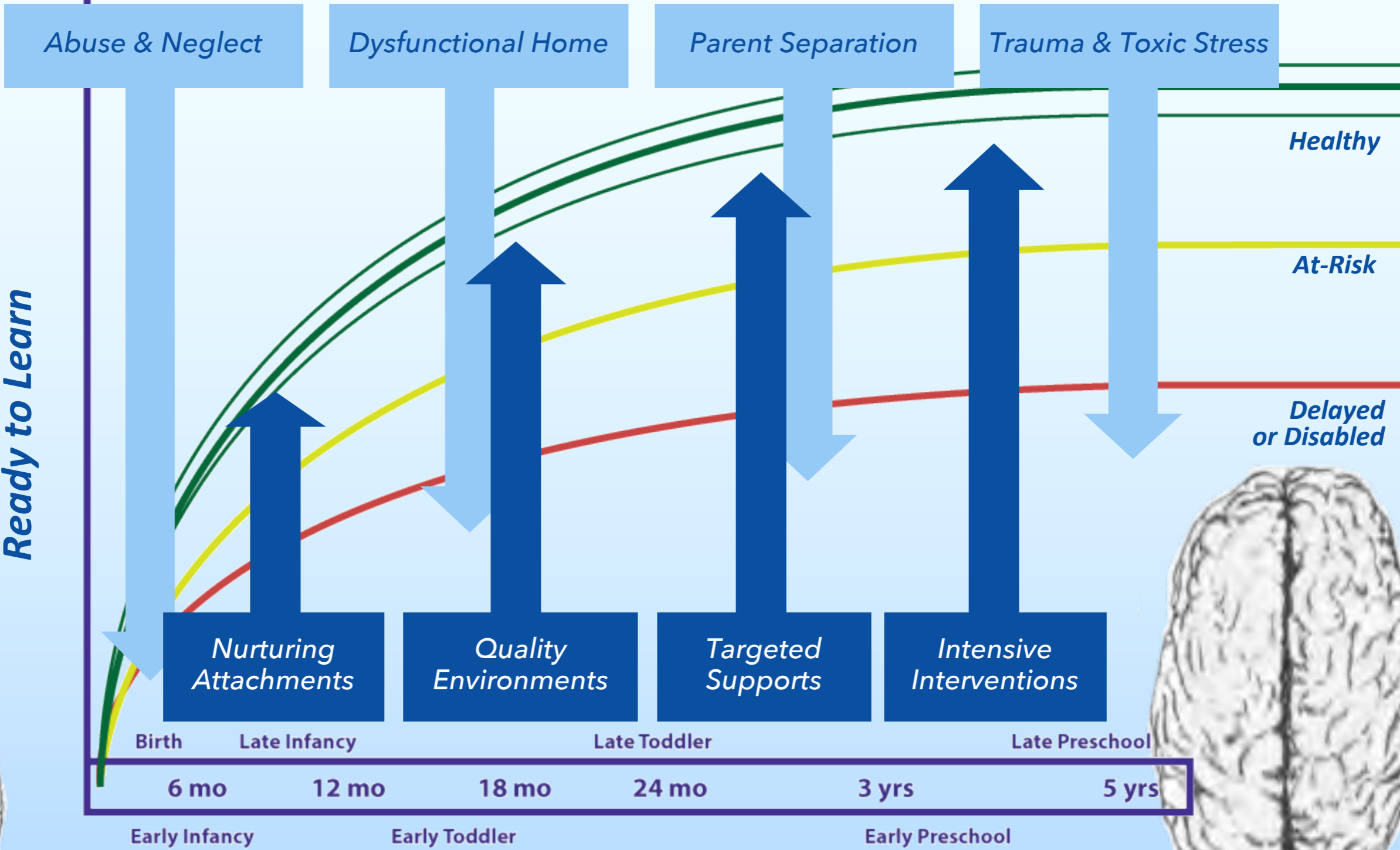


Criminal Court

ACE
Transmission Risk

Anxiety
Hopelessness
Suicide Attempts
Current Depression
Mental Illness
Insufficient Sleep
Victim of Sexual Assault
Victim of IPV
Current Smoking
Binge Drinking
Alcoholism
High Risk for HIV
Promiscuity (≥30)
Drug Abuse IV
Drug Use
Painkillers to Get High
Drunk Driving
Adult Incarceration
≥ 14 Days MH Interrupts Work
≥ 14 Unhealthy P or MH Days
Spec. Equip. Needed Fair or Poor Health
Activity Limits Health
Divorce/Separation Life Dissatisfaction

Changing the ACEs Trajectory

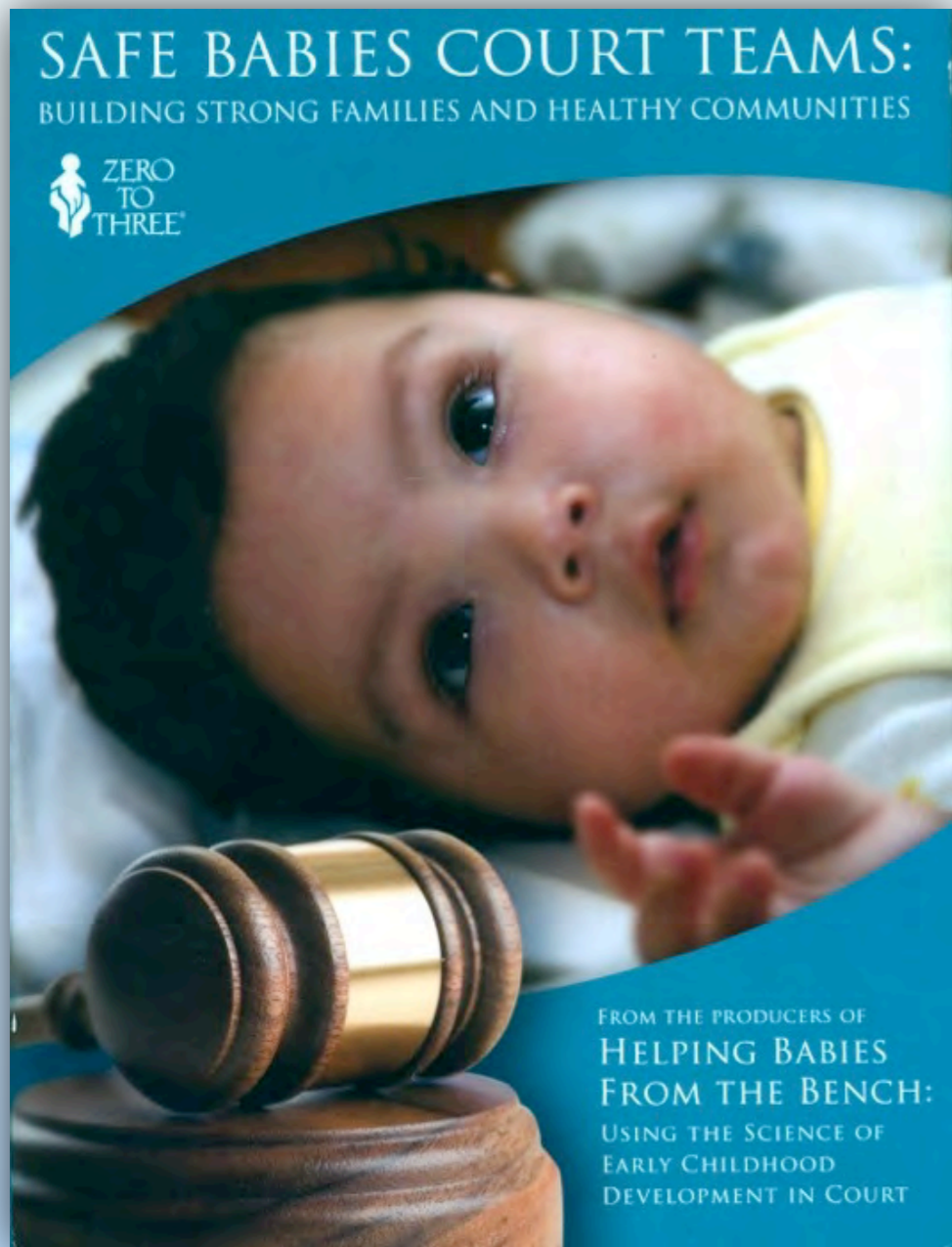


What Baby Court Does

Heals multigenerational trauma by bringing the science of child development into decision-making for infants & toddlers who have been removed from their homes



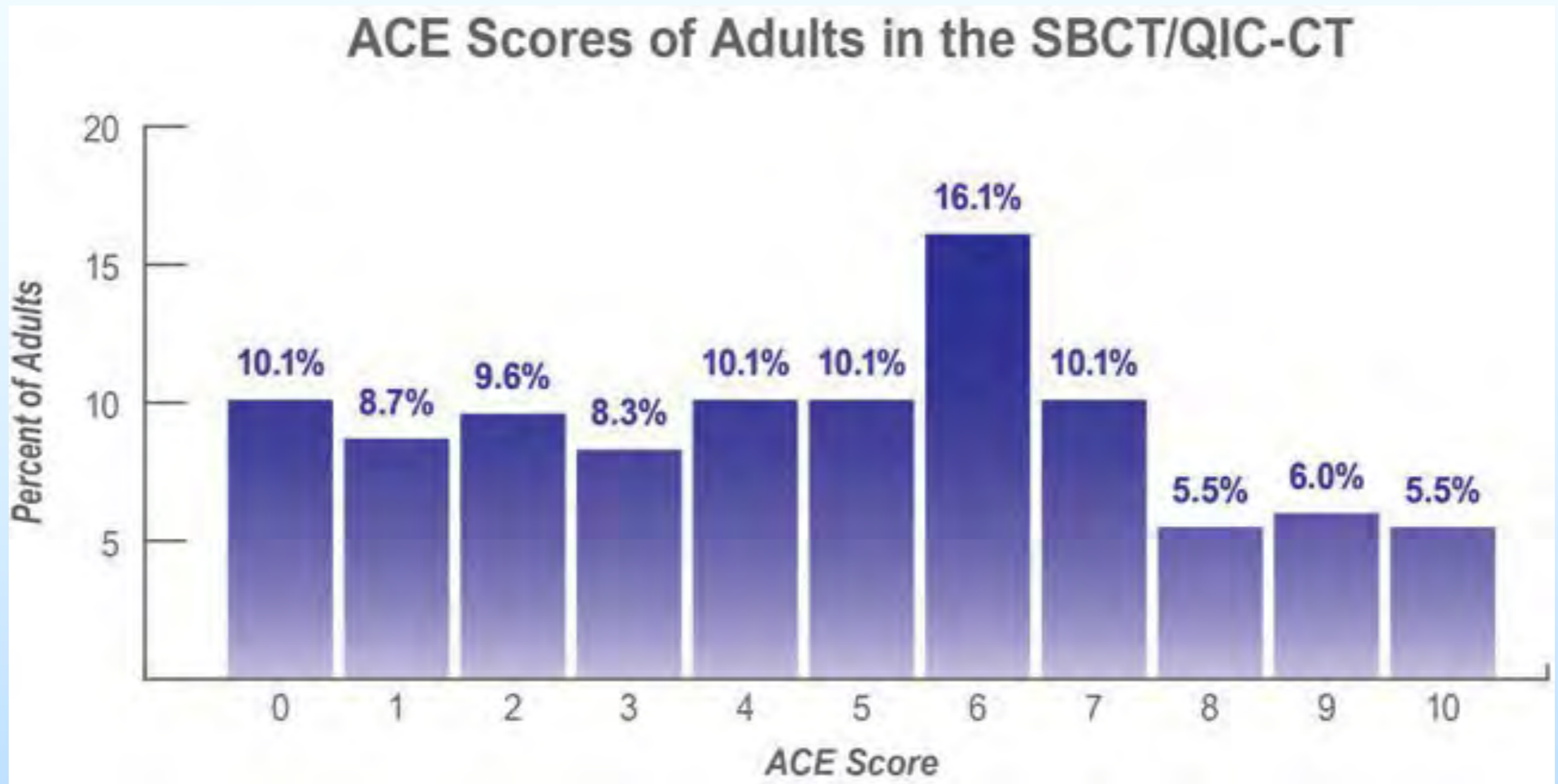
Zero to Three's Safe Baby Court Teams



An evidence based model for young children in child welfare



63% of parents had 4 or more Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs)



Quality Improvement Center for Research Based Infant Toddler Court Team.

Prepared for ZERO TO THREE by Cecilia Casanueva, Keith Smith, Sarah Harris, Christine Carr, Chelsea Burfeind, RTI International, 2018.

70% of the children
had at least 1 parent with 4+ ACEs.



How Do We Know the Approach is Working?

83.7%

reached permanency within 12 months among children with closed cases.

Compared to the Children's Bureau national standard at 40.5%



48.6%

were reunified with parents



32.2%

were adopted



14%

were placed with a fit and willing relative



74.3%

was the lowest percentage among SBCT sites for reaching permanency within 12 months across all analysis of ACEs and risk factors

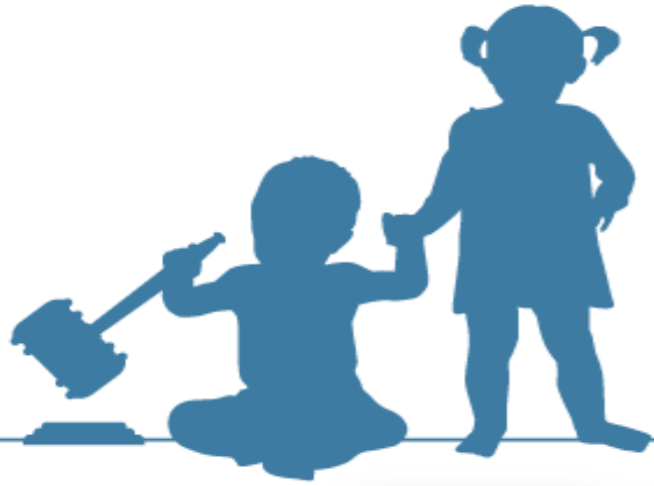
Note: No significant differences for permanency within 12 months by child's race/ethnicity.



Quality Improvement Center
for Research-Based
Infant-Toddler Court Teams

CITATION

Adverse Childhood Experiences, Family Risk Factors, and Child Permanency Outcomes of Very Young Children Involved in Safe Babies Court Team™ Sites is part of a series of briefs based on the evaluation of the Quality Improvement Center for Research-Based Infant-Toddler Court Teams.



FLORIDA'S Early Childhood COURT



ACE Science



**Early
Childhood
Systems**



**Early
Childhood
Court
Teams**

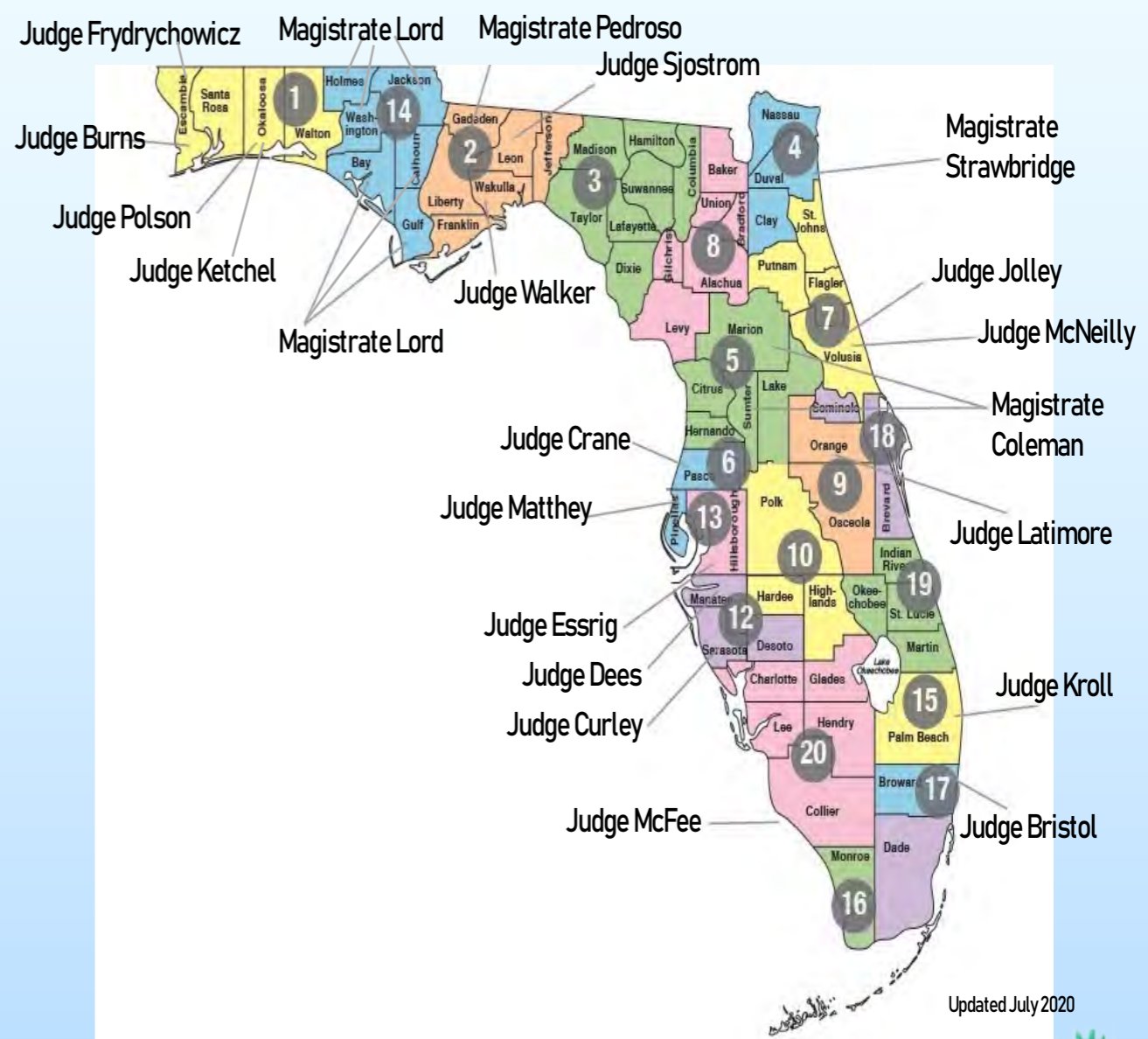
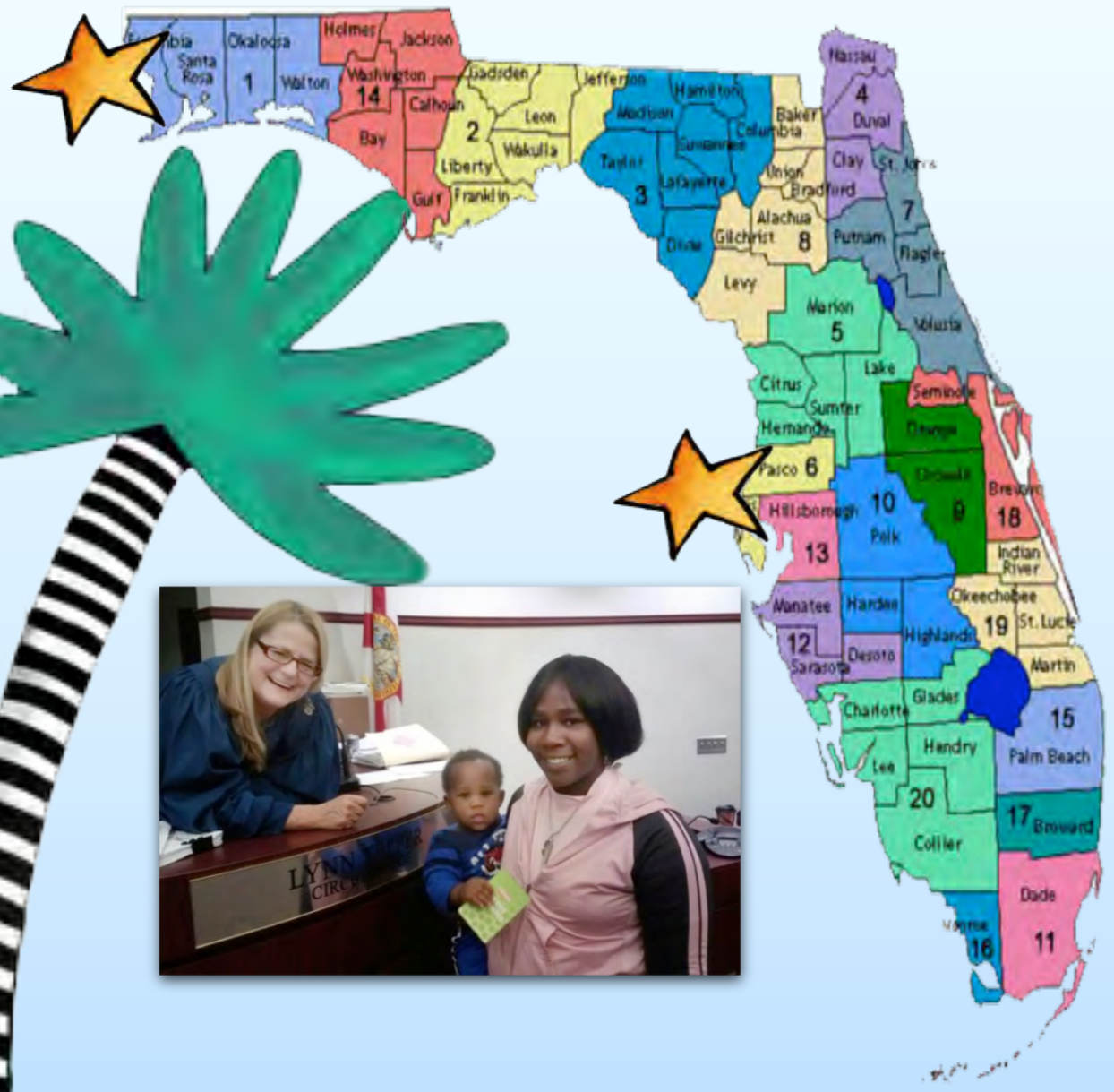


**Trauma
Treatment**



2 Pilots 2012-2015

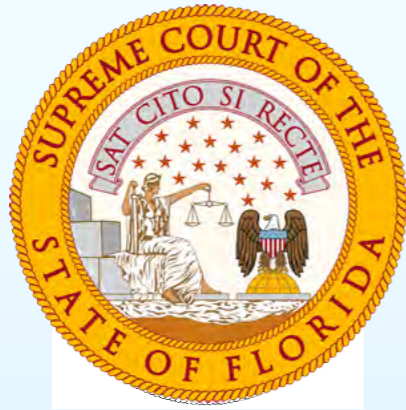
27 Sites 2020



Updated July 2020



What is Early Childhood Court?



Florida Early Childhood Court Best Practice Standards

November 2019

1. Judge Educated in Trauma Science

2. Community Coordinator & Multidisciplinary Team

3. Child Parent Therapy

4. Frequent Visitation

1. Trauma-informed Judges Educated in ACES Science

- Uses ACES science in judicial decision-making
- Informed by a multidisciplinary team with therapeutic services
- Monthly court hearings
- Facilitates trauma trainings
- Non-adversarial demeanor



Our Wonderful ECC Judges!



2. Community Coordinator & Collaborative Court Team



Serves as liaison with judge, team, and family to achieve permanency



Learns family needs & integrates with clinical and team input to fast track services



Coordinates monthly team meetings

Community Coordinators



Florida's Early Childhood Court Teams



Circuit 1A Escambia



Circuit 1B



Circuit 1 Escambia



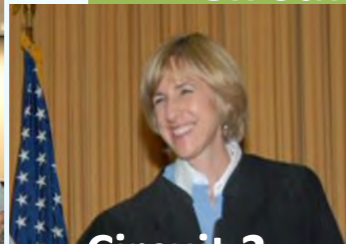
Circuit 1 Okaloosa



Circuit 1 Okaloosa



Circuit 2 Leon



Circuit 2 Wakulla



Circuit 4



Circuit 5 Marion



Circuit 9 Orange



Circuit 6 Pasco



Circuit 7 Volusia



Circuit 12 Sarasota



Circuit 12 Manatee



Circuit 14 Bay



Circuit 15 Palm Beach



Circuit 17 Broward

Collaborative Court Team

Children's
Hospital

DCF

Judge

Foster
Parents

Early
Intervention

Broward's Early Childhood Court Team

Local
Universities

Domestic
Violence

Healthy
Start

Infant Mental
Health

Substance
Abuse
Treatment

Early Learning
Coalition



Attorneys

Court
Admin

GAL

Early Head
Start

3. Child Parent Psychotherapy (CPP)

CPP: Evidence based intervention for children 0-5 with trauma

- Clinician evaluates and makes recommendations to the court.
- Helps the parent & child heal trauma
- Focuses on strengthening the child parent relationship

The California Evidence-Based Clearinghouse for Child Welfare
Information and Resources for Child Welfare Professionals

This information was printed from: www.cebc4cw.org/program/child-parent-psychotherapy/ compare (?)

Child-Parent Psychotherapy (CPP)

Scientific Rating: **2**
Supported by Research Evidence

Child Welfare System Relevance Level: **High**

About This Program

The information in this program outline is provided by the program representative and edited by the CEBC staff. **Child-Parent Psychotherapy (CPP)** has been rated by the CEBC in the areas of: Domestic/Intimate Partner Violence: Services for Victims and their Children, Infant and Toddler Mental Health Programs (Birth to 3) and Trauma Treatment (Child & Adolescent).

Target Population: Children age 0-5, who have experienced a trauma, and their caregivers.

For children/adolescents ages: 0 – 5
For parents/caregivers of children ages: 0 – 5





The concept that the child has been harmed in the relationship and will be healed in the relationship is key to integrating CPP into work and the courts.

Dr. Joy Osofsky

Keeping the Baby in Mind while simultaneously addressing parents' needs



**Quality Early
Childhood Education**



**Medical Home &
Health Care**



Home Visiting



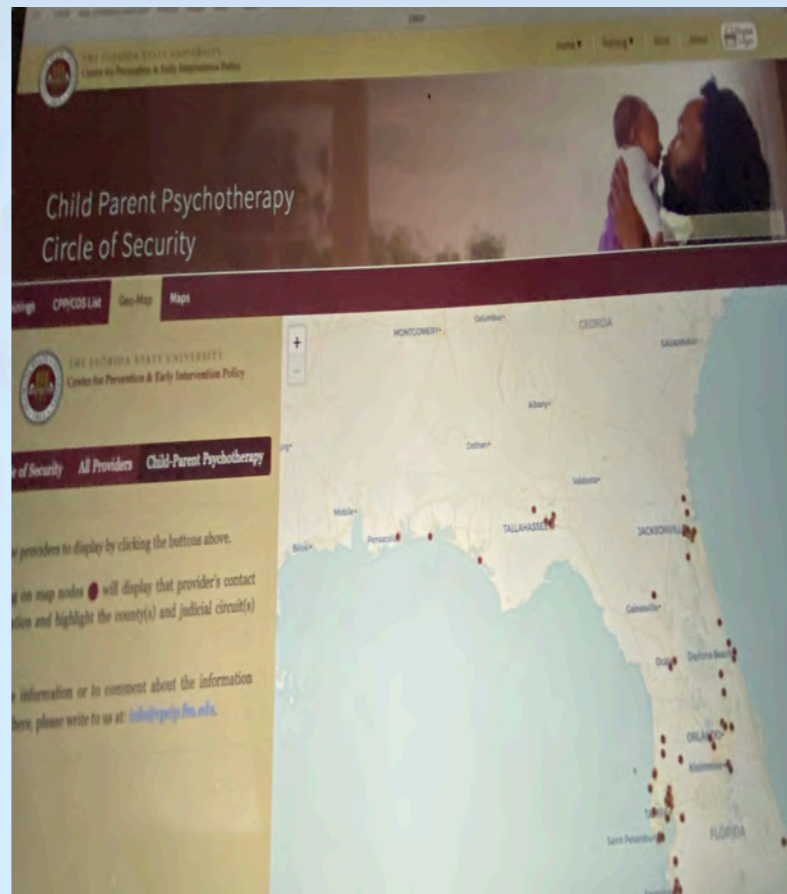
Early Intervention

Florida Continues to Build Capacity for Child Parent Psychotherapy

Trained 450+ CPP clinicians
2002-2020



Geo-mapped & recruited clinicians
for underserved areas



Secured Medicaid
reimbursement for therapy



<https://cpeip.fsu.edu/cpp/index.cfm>



4. Frequent Parent-Child Contact

Informed by IMH clinical evaluation

Recommendation:

As close to daily parent child contact as possible



For every additional day per week visitation takes place, reunification is 3x more likely.



What is Early Childhood Court?

1. Judge Educated in Trauma Science Monthly Court Hearings Quickly Solves Problems

2. Community Coordinator Leads Monthly Parent Team Meetings to Fast Track Families to Trauma Informed Services

3. Child Parent Therapy Addresses Two Generational Trauma Informs team & judge of progress

4. Frequent Visitation Builds attachment & increases reunification



Accelerates Permanency

Reduces Re-abuse

Enhances Well-Being

How Does Trauma Informed Baby Court Differ From Current Practice?

Area	Current FL Statutory Requirement	Trauma-Informed Baby Court Process
Case Reviews/Hearings	ASFA requires status review every 6 months.	Monthly case reviews
Visitation	1x per month required	Daily contact recommended 3x visitation minimal visitation
Judges	Trauma training not required	Training in science of attachment, brain development, trauma & resiliency
Mental Health/Focus	Rarely if ever	Predominant role of IMH & CPP
Wellbeing	Developmental screen	Early Identification & treatment



The Secret Ingredient: *Relationships!*

The Parallel Process at every level:

In the Courtroom



**In CPP & in Family Team Meetings
with Community Coordinators**



With Foster Parents



In the Home





*Alone we can do
so little;
together we can do so
much.*

Helen Keller

Florida's Success

Outcomes in Early Childhood Court vs. Traditional Dependency Court

- More likely to be reunited with parents
- Reunited 8.5 months faster on average
- Overall permanency was 143 days faster (adoption, permanent guardianship, reunification)
- 40% less recurrence of maltreatment

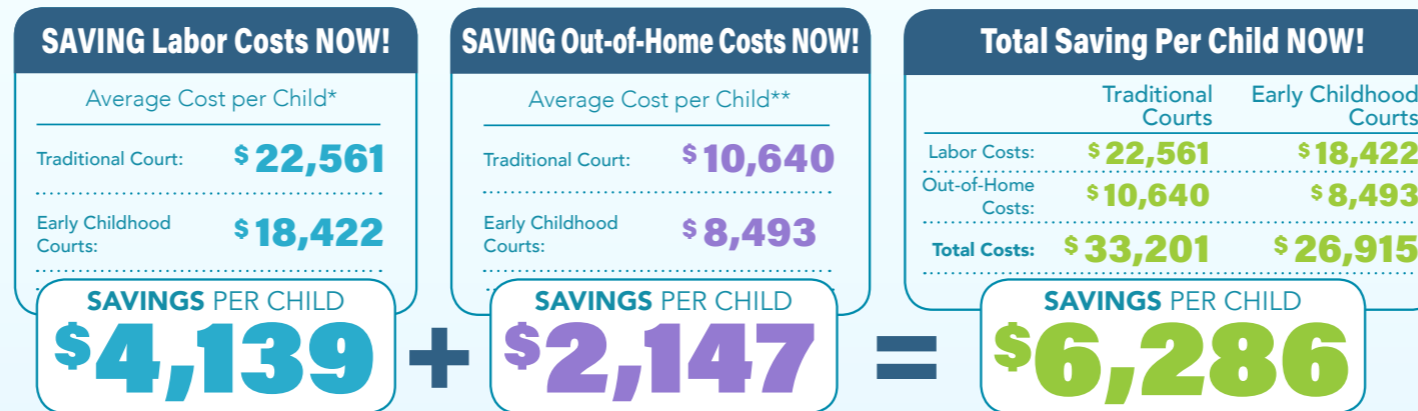


Florida Tax Watch Productivity Award for Early Childhood Court



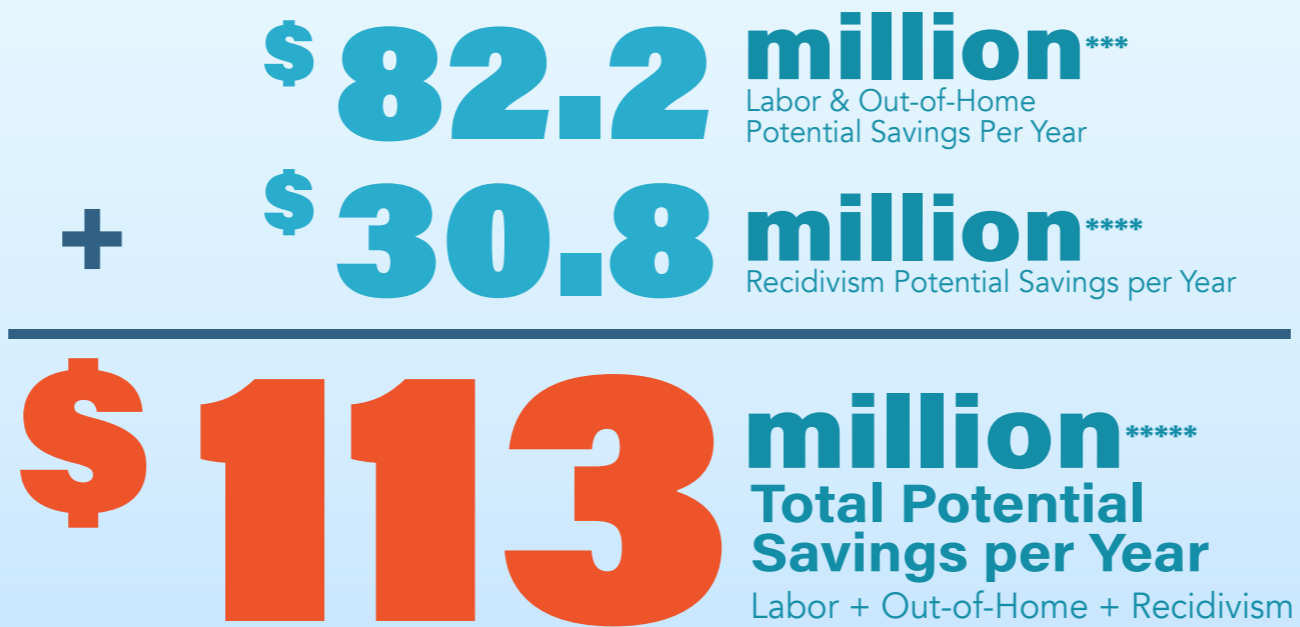


Florida's Early Childhood Courts: Return on Investment



Potential Savings Per Year

If the ECC model was used for all children ages 0-3 in dependency court



*Estimates based on Florida Dependency Court Information System 1/9/19 of 13,175 children ages 0-3 in out-of-home care multiplied by the average labor cost per case provided by Florida Institute for Child Welfare in 2018-2019 Early Childhood Court Evaluation (2019). Average Labor Costs Per Case: Traditional versus ECC, p. 31. Traditional courts costs estimated at \$22,561; ECC costs estimated at \$18,422. Estimated savings per case \$4,139. Note: Estimated labor costs per child are a proxy for per case. Cost estimates are preliminary and based on non-random assignment which will continue to be refined in future efforts.

**Estimates based on Florida Office of Child Welfare 2019 monthly \$466.65 rate for out-of-home care for ages 0-3 multiplied by average time to permanency (ECC 552 days (18.2 months) vs 695 Non ECC days (22.8 months) (Early Childhood Court Data Analysis Report, 2019). Estimated traditional court OHC cost per child (\$466.65 x 22.8 months)=\$10,640. Estimated cost of ECC (\$466.65 x 18.2 months)=\$8,493 per child. <https://www.flcourts.org/content/download/426426/4628486/file/early-childhood-court-data-analysis-report.pdf>.

*** Florida's traditional dependency courts are currently spending an estimated \$33,201 per child per year (\$22,561 in estimated labor costs + \$10,640 in OHC costs) for 13,175 children ages 0-3 in OHC=\$437.4 million. If the ECC model was used for all 13,175 children @ \$26,915 per child (\$18,422 in estimated labor costs + \$8,493 in OHC cost), costs are estimated at \$354.6 million, potentially saving an estimated \$82.8 million per year.

**** Florida Office of Child Welfare recidivism report 10/22/19 shows 12.8% rate for Non ECC compared to ECC at 7.1% from August 2014-August 2019. With 13,175 children 0-3 in care as of 1/9/19, Non ECC 12.8% recidivism would total 1686 children at case cost of \$33,201 for total \$55.9 million compared to ECC at 7.1% (935 children at case cost of \$26,915 for a total of \$25 million); potentially saving \$30.8 annually.

***** Traditional dependency court cost estimates of all 13,175 children ages 0-3 in OHC include \$297 million in labor costs, \$140 million in out-of-home costs, plus \$55.9 million in recidivism costs for a total estimate of \$493.4 million. If Early Childhood Court served all 13,175 children ages 0-3 in OHC, costs are estimated to be \$242.7 in labor costs, \$111.9 million in out-of-home care costs, \$25 million in recidivism costs for a total of \$379.7 million. Annual projected savings would be \$113.6 million.

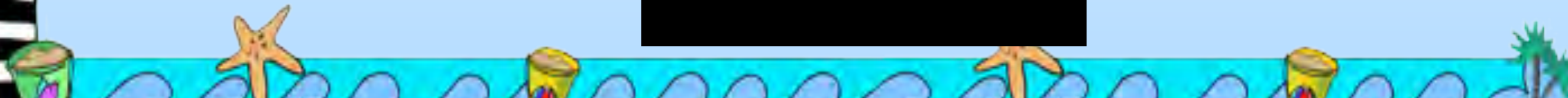
Cost estimates are preliminary and calculated on 10/29/19 by FSU CPEIP. For more information, contact mgraham@fsu.edu

Video: <https://www.cpeip.fsu.edu/babyCourt/court.cfm>



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Improving outcomes for infants and toddlers in Florida's dependency court



Strengthening America's Families Act (SAFA)

**Bilirakis, DeLauro, Suozzi, Rutherford, Soto, and Steube
Lead Bipartisan Effort to Protect Children**



Specifically, **SAFA** would:

- **Provide seed money to states** to develop, stabilize and enhance Infant-Toddler Court Teams
- **Ensure communities and states have the training and technical assistance** to deliver evidence-based services
- **Expand the reach** of an already proven successful program to **transform how communities and the child welfare system support the wellbeing of infants, toddlers, and families.**



Mom: He can help you. This is mommy break!
Court: Well, Ms. Fuller, why are we here?

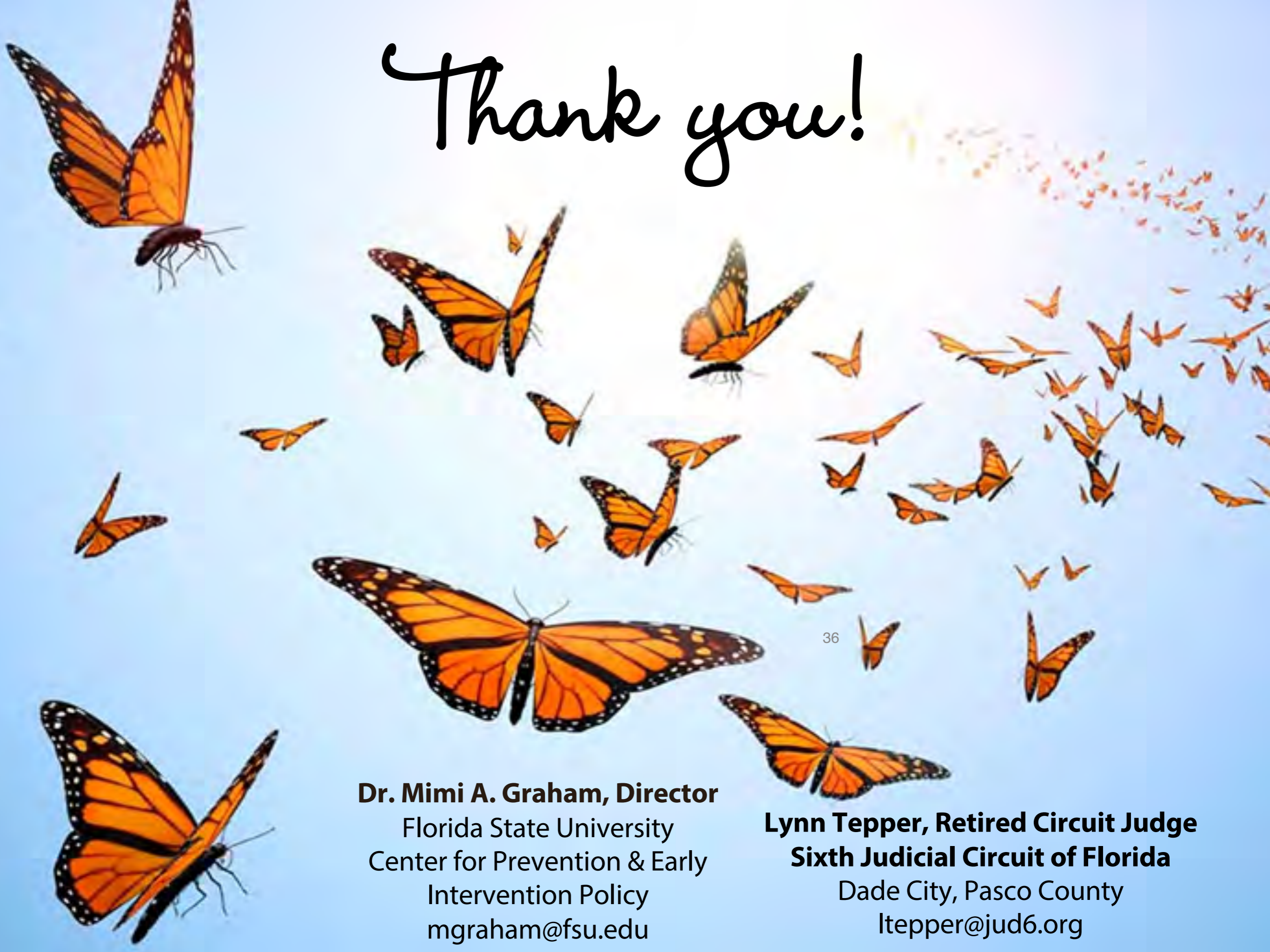
Early Childhood Court can change the tragedy that brings families into our courtrooms into an opportunity to heal.



That's an
old photo



Thank you!



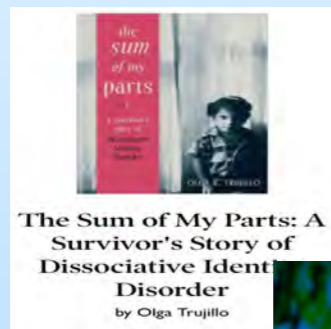
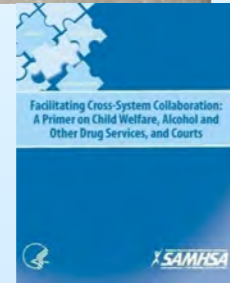
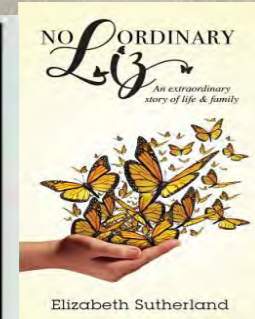
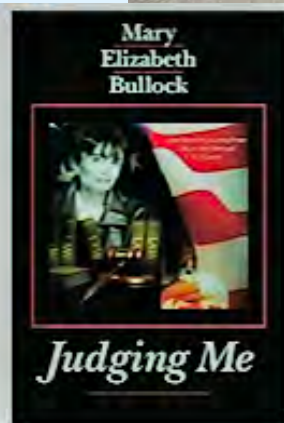
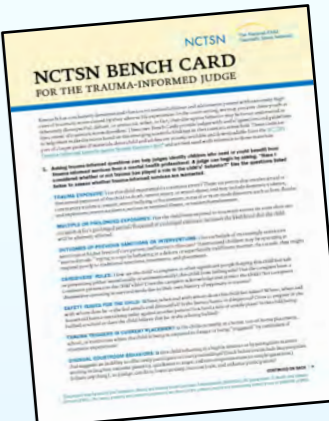
Dr. Mimi A. Graham, Director
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Lynn Tepper, Retired Circuit Judge
Sixth Judicial Circuit of Florida
Dade City, Pasco County
ltepper@jud6.org

Resources



- FSU CPEIP: Florida's Early Childhood Courts: <https://cpeip.fsu.edu/babyCourt/court.cfm>
- Florida's Early Childhood Courts: www.flcourts.org/Resources-Services/Court-Improvement/Problem-Solving-Courts/Early-Childhood-Courts
- [Harvard University's Center on the Developing Child](http://www.harvard.edu/center-on-the-developing-child)
- [Centers for Disease Control and Prevention's ACE Study](http://www.cdc.gov/ace)
- [The National Child Traumatic Stress Network](http://www.nctsn.org)
- [National Council of Juvenile and Family Court Judges](http://www.nctsn.org)
- [Aces Too High](http://www.aces.edu)
- **CTIPP (Campaign for Trauma Informed Policy & Programs)**
<http://www.ctipp.org>
- Zero to Three's Safe Baby Court Teams:
<https://www.zerotothree.org/resources/services/the-safe-babies-court-team-approach>
- **National Registry of Evidence-based Programs and Practices**
(www.nrepp.samhsa.gov)
- **Trauma Toolkit for Judges:** www.flcourts.org/resources-and-services/court-improvement/judicial-toolkits/family-court-toolkit





Creating a Trauma Informed State

A Showcase of Florida's Cutting Edge Trauma Initiatives

August 2018



Creating a Trauma Informed State photos from the event A Showcase of Florida's Cutting Edge Trauma Initiatives (PDF)

To see the recording Click Here

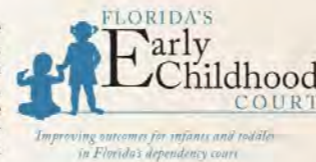
Send your trauma innovations to: info@floridatrauma.org

Join our Trauma Initiatives Mailing-List by sending an email here: join@floridatrauma.org

Florida's Early Childhood Courts

Florida's Early Childhood Court Initiative:
Breaking the Multigenerational Cycle of Trauma

Florida's Early Childhood Court Initiative (ECC), fondly called "baby court," is an evidence-based approach toward ensuring a stable permanent family for young children. Early Childhood Court uses trauma science to break the multigenerational cycle of early adverse experiences (ACEs) and prevent future court involvement.



Started as a pilot collaboration between the Office of Court Improvement and the Florida State University Center for Prevention & Early Intervention Policy, Early Childhood Courts are modeled after Safe Baby Court Teams, a national evidence-based model. Multidisciplinary teams work together led by a trauma-informed judge, facilitated by a community coordinator to prioritize family needs and fast track integrated services, and treated with intensive child/parent therapy to heal trauma, build parenting capacity, and optimize child well-being.

Early Childhood Courts are more effective than typical dependency courts as children get to a permanent home quicker (4 months faster on average) and have less re-abuse than non ECC children (only 2 repeat abuses in 2016). As a result of these successes, Florida now has 22 judicial sites serving more than 300 families. ECC was awarded the 2017 Florida Tax Watch Productivity Award. See short video overview of Florida's Early Childhood Courts that explains how shifting the courts' focus toward therapeutic approaches to address shared trauma can break the multigenerational cycle of maltreatment, and be part of the solution to the opioid and child welfare crisis at: www.cpeip.fsu.edu/babyCourt/court.cfm

The program is administered from the Supreme Court, Office of Court Improvement. For more information, contact Carrie Toy at: ToyC@flcourts.org. See website: www.flcourts.org/resources-and-services/court-improvement/trauma-solving-courts/early-childhood-court.html



Broward County's Early Childhood Court

Broward's Early Childhood Court:
A Trauma Informed Problem Solving Court

In 2016 a new specialized Unified Family Court division in the Seventeenth Judicial Circuit was established with oversight by Judge Hope Bristol and Magistrate Randi Boven. This "therapeutic" division piloted the new Early Childhood Court, which is modeled after the Safe Babies Court Teams Project and utilizes best practices from the Florida Early Childhood Court Initiative.

Similar to dependency drug court, Early Childhood Court is a trauma-informed problem-solving court that addresses the root causes of justice system involvement through specialized dockets, multidisciplinary teams, and a non-adversarial approach.

Early Childhood Courts applies the science of early brain development (the building blocks of secure attachment, self-regulation, cognitive functioning, and impulse control) and implements best practices for infants and toddlers and their parents. A strong emphasis is placed on addressing the trauma and attachment needs of both the parents and toddlers through Child Parent Psychotherapy services, expanded visitation, and family team meetings.

Since the inception of Broward's Early Childhood Court in 2016, about 90 infants and toddlers have been served (both pending and closed cases). About 50% of the parents also interfaced with child welfare as either a parent or parent/foster youth. Trauma-informed practices and



Trauma Informed Court in Dade City

Dade City's Nationally Ranked Trauma Informed Court

Dependency, Delinquency, and Family Court offers a different experience in Dade City, the county seat for Pasco County, Florida, a blend of rural and suburban communities with pockets of poverty and crime, including opioid, meth and heroin use, human trafficking, and violence, often among generations of the same families.

Judge Lynn Tepper, a fierce champion of trauma-informed courts, requires that all cases before the court, regardless of their division, are screened for ACEs. Court personnel, including bailiffs and professionals representing clients, all attend trauma-informed care training with a judge from Judge Tepper, absorb content upon discussion of ACEs in the courtroom, or stay learn of the impact of viewing videos that loop in the courthouse lobby.

Judge Tepper utilizes the science of trauma and child development, understanding that of nurturing caregivers during children's early years when brain development is occurring. Dade City was one of the first pilot Early Childhood Courts ("Baby Court") sites. Judge Tepper understands the long reach of early adverse experiences and recognizes that as the roads each take with "a trauma lens" and offers encouragement and referrals based trauma-informed services. Instead of "cookie-cutter" assessments, case plans or services, there is a tailored, trauma-informed approach to each individual.

Since 2012, Judge Tepper's Court has been one of six exemplary National Council on Family Court Judges' Project (NCFJ) Courts and her court ranked among highest in a trauma assessment as indicated by:

- A family friendly waiting room is filled with children's art and community and stuffed animals for children to take home.
- The Courtroom is filled with items to reduce stress for families—children's books & stuffed animals, and therapy dogs that provide comfort and "hand-outs" are community resources from where to get a hot meal or a ride to work.
- Docketers are set to accommodate the realities of fragile (public transport, school attendance) as well as other underserved staff; all cases involve a coordinator.
- Docketers are time certain so those who must appear in court are not in unnecessary courtrooms and wait times.
- Domestic Violence Injunctions are accompanied by safety-focused information. Petitioners are safe and not subject to intimidation in and out of the courtroom and safe space for Petitioners and DV advocates to meet.
- The Clerk and Comptroller, Dr. Paula O'Neill, created the "Children's Art, Music, and Display local elementary and middle school students' art in the trauma-informed courthouse.
- Stakeholders in East Pasco County provide liaison to Court to assist in crisis. In-home evidence-based services are widely available. They assist to support, observe, and problem solve on behalf of parents and children.

A true collaborative, trauma free environment is fostered from the bench.



www.floridatrauma.org