

Three bright green apples are arranged on a white background. One apple is in the foreground, slightly to the right, and is the most prominent. Two other apples are behind it, one to the left and one to the right, partially overlapping. The apples have a smooth, glossy texture and a small brown stem at the top. The text 'Using Outcome Data to Guide Program Enhancement and Improvement' is overlaid in a bold, black, sans-serif font across the middle of the image.

# Using Outcome Data to Guide Program Enhancement and Improvement

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# **The IARCCA Outcome Project**

# IARCCA ... An association of children and family services

- Founded in 1944
- 90 agencies across the state are member agencies
- Provides
  - Training
  - Advocacy, legislative monitoring
  - Information dissemination
  - Liaison activities



# How it all began...

- Ten years ago, 1995
- Indiana Council of Juvenile and Family Court Judges' challenge
- IARCCA's response



# The state of outcome measurement

- Most common outcome measures:
  - Satisfaction
  - Level of functioning
- Common design was Pre/Post/Follow-up
- Responsible person spent less than ¼ of time
- Response rates of 20% were common



# Stakeholder Input

- Difficulty of child must be included
- All programs should be evaluated
- Avoid biased judgment
- Follow-up time must be appropriate
- Attaching payment is ill advised
- Personal opinions should not be eliminated
- Outcome design takes time



# Task Force

- Volunteers
- Charged to:
  - Define programs, outcome measures, risk factors
  - Identify reporting procedures
  - Review / refine process



# Pilot Study

- The Pilot Study
  - Training
  - 19 agencies
  - Approximately 2,000 cases
  - Paper / pencil, Excel spreadsheets
- The findings
  - Data submitted to IARCCA anonymously
  - Data reported *only* in aggregate
  - The data collection process is effective



# Full Project

- Roughly 70% of IARCCA member agencies participate annually
- Over 69,000 forms have been submitted from 1998-2004
- Data in SPSS databases
- External evaluators / consultants
- Annual reports of aggregate data



# Project Expansion

- Original 5 programs expanded to 9
- Examination of services provided
- Computerized data entry
- Grant funding
  - Project outcome coordinator
  - Matched analyses
  - Training / consultation to agencies
  - Continued sustainability





**The IARCCA Project data**

# Programs

- Home-based
- Day treatment
- Foster care
- Transitional / independent living
- Shelter care
- Crisis stabilization
- Residential care (3 types)
  - Utilizing *only* public schools
  - Utilizing public and on-grounds schools
  - Locked / staff secure facilities



# Sample definition

## Foster Care

Foster care programs provide community-based services to a child in a family or mentor setting other than his/her own family on a long- or short-term basis. A major component of more intensive foster care programs includes case management support, school advocacy, supervised family visitations, and counseling.



IARCCA, 2003

# Sample definition

## **Foster Care (continued)**

A goal of foster care programs is to meet permanency goals: family reunification, emancipation, adoption, and community re-integration from residential or institutional settings.

IARCCA, 2003



# Outcome measures

- Clinical outcomes
  - Difficulty of child, family
- Functional outcomes
  - Education, employment, abuse, court
- Program effectiveness
  - Met permanency goal, restrictiveness
- Consumer satisfaction
  - Youth, parent, referral source



# Risk Factors

- Characteristics which identify client severity
- Research-based
- Includes demographic and historical information



# Services

- Specific services provided to youth and family during program
- Includes services in:
  - Alcohol / drug treatment
  - Early childhood & educational
  - Employment
  - Family-based supports
  - Legal, medical, psychosocial, rehabilitative
  - Recreational



# Data collection process

- Collected at Intake
  - Global Assessment of Functioning (GAF; American Psychiatric Association, 1994)
  - Child Problem Checklist (IARCCA, 2005)
  - Family Risk Scale (Magura, Moses, & Jones, 1987)
  - Family Problem Checklist (IARCCA, 2005)
  - Risk Factor Survey (IARCCA, 2005)



# Data collection process

- Collected at Discharge
  - GAF, CPC, FRS, FPC
  - ROLES (Hawkins, et al., 1992)
  - Nature of discharge (IARCCA, 2005)
  - Permanency plan
  - Satisfaction (IARCCA, 2005)
  - Education (IARCCA, 2005)
  - Employment (IARCCA, 2005)
  - Services provided (IARCCA, 2005)



# Data collection process

- Collected at Follow-up (3 or 6 months)
  - ROLES (Hawkins, et al., 1992)
  - Education (IARCCA, 2005)
  - Employment (IARCCA, 2005)
  - Court Involvement (IARCCA, 2005)
  - Subsequent abuse of child (IARCCA, 2005)
  - Subsequent abuse in family (IARCCA, 2005)





**Using the Data**

# Methods for using the data

- Comparing agency data with aggregate program benchmark
- Identifying common issues in youth and families at intake / discharge
- Finding risk / protective factors



# Identify common problems

- Common issues of program population at intake and discharge
- Compute average incidence of problems at intake / discharge
- Rank order / create “Top 10 list”



# Child Problem Checklist

## Intake – Foster Care

Fail to follow instructions	59.9%
School learning problems	53.6%
Depression or withdrawal	43.4%
Improper boundaries	42.1%
Peer problems	39.1%
Out of control of parental inst.	38.4%
Hyperactivity / attention problems	38.2%
Verbally aggressive to peers	35.2%

... ..



# Family Problem Checklist

## Discharge – Foster Care

Caregiver judgment impaired	48.4%
Children unsupervised	44.6%
Lack of outside support	41.9%
Severe family conflict	36.6%
Caregiver not invested in treatment	36.0%
No transportation	31.2%
Caregiver unemployed	25.8%
Neglect suspected / reported	23.7%

... ..



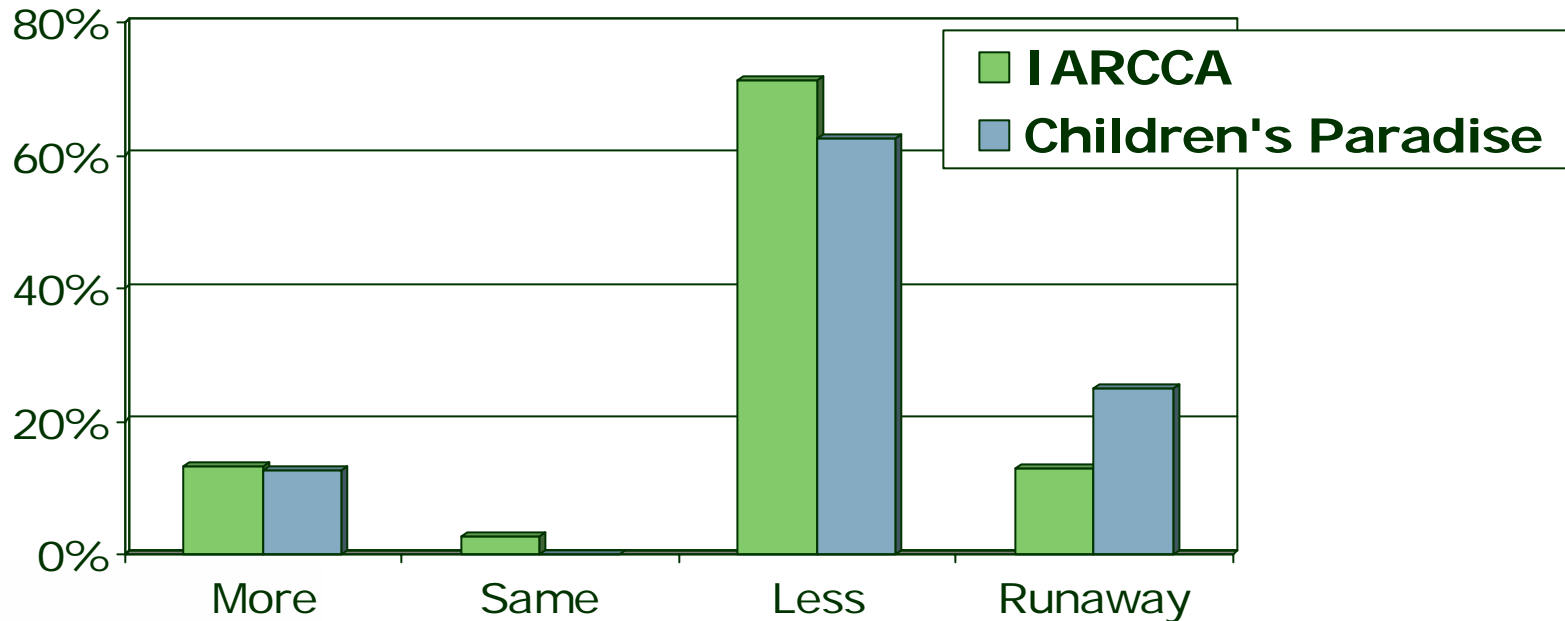
# Comparing to benchmark

- Compare agency's data with IARCCA program aggregate data from most recent Annual Report
- Look at intake and discharge variables
- Compute agency averages
- Create table / graphs of comparison



# Comparison graph

## Restrictiveness of Discharge Placement Transitional Living



# Comparison Table

## Discharge – Transitional Living

Restrictiveness of Discharge Placement	IARCCA	Children's Paradise
More	13.3%	12.5%
Same	2.6%	0.0%
Less	71.2%	62.5%
Runaway	12.9%	25.0%



# Risk factor analyses

- Identify potential risk and protective factors that correspond to outcome success
- Cross tabulation or chi-square analyses
- Identification of risk / protective factors for each outcome variable
- Rank order by frequency



# Risk Factor Analysis

- Risk Factors

- Length of Stay
- Age
- # Previous Placements
- Ethnicity
- Sexual Abuse
- Medication
- Special Education
- ...

- Outcome Variables

- GAF at Discharge
- CPC at Discharge
- FRS at Discharge
- FPC at Discharge
- Education
- Employment
- Permanency Plan Achieved?
- ...



# Risk Factor Analysis

Permanency Plan Met		Medication		Total
		No	Yes	
No	Count	35	25	60
	Row %	58.3%	41.7%	100.0%
	Column %	38.0%	55.6%	43.8%
Yes	Count	57	20	77
	Row %	74.0%	26.0%	100.0%
	Column %	62.0%	44.4%	56.2%
Total	Count	92	45	137
	Row %	67.2%	32.8%	100.0%
	Column %	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

Pearson Chi-Square = 3.765 (df = 1), p = .052



# Risk Factor Analysis

Was permanency plan achieved?

- Length of stay (protective)
- Previous placements (risk)
- Ethnicity: African American
- Neglect
- Physical abuse
- Sexual abuse
- Witness domestic violence
- Medication
- ...



# Risk Factor Analysis

- Summary: Rank Ordering of Factors

RISK

6 Age

5 Previous placements  
Medication

4 Grade Retention

DSM: Depression

DSM: Childhood D/O

... ..

PROTECTIVE

7 Length of Stay

3 Neglect

GAF at intake

2 Previous placements

1 CPC at intake

Physical abuse





**Next Steps**

# What have we learned?

- Most agencies continue to struggle with data analyses (Koch & Wall, 2005).
  - Agencies receive agency data reports from IARCCA twice yearly. These reports often sit on the executive director's desk with little action
  - Most outcome coordinators report spending less than 2 hours per week in outcome activities
  - Agencies report wanting to use the data, but are uncertain how to do so



# What can we do?

- Train agency staff (outcome coordinators) on how to conduct data analyses
- Obtain grant funding to increase agency staff knowledge on data analysis techniques

