A Comparison of Near-Term Outcomes of Foster Children Who Reunified, Were Adopted or Were in Guardianship

by

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A dissertation submitted in partial satisfaction of the Requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy in Social Welfare in the Graduate Division of the University of California, Berkeley

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ABSTRACT

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This descriptive, retrospective longitudinal study used California child welfare administrative data to follow a cohort of 5,873 foster children born in 1999 who first entered care at less than one year of age. This study used a birth cohort rather than the usual entry cohort and followed the children through multiple placement episodes rather than a single episode. The cohort was followed to age 9. At age 9, 51% of these children had been adopted, 36% were reunified with parents, 7% were with guardians and 5% were in care. These are higher adoption and in care rates and lower reunification rates than found when only considering the first placement episode.

Three broad themes emerge from the experiences of these children. The first is that not all outputs defined as permanency provide the same level of stability. Although reunification has the crucial advantage of maintaining a child with his or her family, for some children it is inherently less stable than adoption or guardianship. The second theme is that the vast majority of the cohort children have achieved permanency, most often in the form of adoption but also in the forms of reunification and guardianship. This is consistent with the permanency focused child welfare policy changes of the past thirty plus years. These changes, which are, in turn, consistent with attachment theory, have striven to replace open-ended foster care with more secure relationships. The third theme is that first placement episode data alone provide an inadequate, distorted description of the experience of children in the foster care system. First episode data alone overstate the frequency of stable reunification and understate the number of children who are adopted and the number who are in care. A sub text for this theme is that longitudinal data have the power to allow an understanding of these differences.
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CHAPTER 1

BACKGROUND AND LITERATURE REVIEW

Introduction

There are about 500,000 children in foster care in the United States, including 62,500 in California. Each year, about 300,000 children enter care after being removed from their parents’ care, including 32,000 in California (Needell et al., 2010; United States Department of Health and Human Services Administration for Children and Families, 2009). For at least the last thirty years, child welfare policy and practice have focused on achieving what is referred to as “permanence” for these children. What is meant by permanence? Definitions tend toward circularity, e.g., ‘’permanency’ for children in foster care encompasses family-based living situations that are permanent: reunification with parents, permanent placement with relatives, or adoption” (Freundlich, Avery, Munson, & Gerstenzang, 2006). The implicit assumption is that a child cannot achieve permanence if he or she remains in foster care, but only by leaving the status of being a foster child. Leaving foster care may not require a physical move. It may be a legal recasting of the child’s relationship with the caregiver, as when a foster parent adopts. Permanency, rather like marriage, is a statement of intent, an intent with a legal component. If possible, a child should return to his or her parents’ home from foster care, i.e., should “reunify.” When this happens, the expectation is that the birth parents will nurture the child throughout the remainder of his or her minority. If return to the parents’ home isn’t possible but the child becomes the ward of a legal guardian or is adopted, the same expectation applies to the guardian or adoptive parents. A second implicit expectation, at least for birth and adoptive parents, is that the social, as well as legal, relationship of parent and adult child, as well as a multiplicity of extended family relationships, will continue until either the parent or child dies.

While the concept of permanence is intuitively attractive, there is a lack of research comparing the degree to which children who leave foster care to the various sorts of what are intended to be permanent families actually experience permanence. In addition, there are few data on the comparative safety or near- or long-term well-being of children placed in these various settings. Extant studies frequently suffer from small sample size, lack of control populations, and high sample attrition rates.

This dissertation is a descriptive study based on administrative data that considers the degree to which children who leave foster care to various sorts of intended permanency experience permanence over the first 9 years of life. It uses data from the Child Welfare Services Case Management System maintained by the California Children’s Services Archive at the Center for Social Services Research at the University of California, Berkeley to follow a birth cohort of children who entered care as infants. The children are followed until age 9, which is as long as available data allow. It considers the relationship between the different forms of near-term permanency outcomes, more accurately called outputs, and subsequent returns to care and recurrences of maltreatment. The working null hypothesis is that the type of exit would not make a difference in the frequency of either reentry (i.e., in whether apparent permanence was achieved) or in subsequent substantiated maltreatment allegations. There are two implicit second null hypotheses. The first is that there is no evidence that children receiving child welfare services achieve permanency in any great numbers. The second is that following children over
multiple placement episodes will yield no more information about their status than would following the children through a single episode.

Problem Statement

A permanent placement is one that, unlike foster care, is intended to last indefinitely (Pike, Downs, Emlen, Downs, & Case, 1977). In other words, calling a particular placement, e.g., adoption, a permanent placement is a statement of intent or desired outcome, not a statement of actual outcome. Forms of permanent placement, in a general order of preference, include reunification with parents, adoption, guardianship, and long-term foster care with kin.

In considering the effect of child welfare programs, it is necessary to separate program process, outputs and outcomes (McDonald, Allen, Westerfelt, & Piliavin, 1996). Program process, the provision of foster care itself, is expected to lead to near-term outcomes in areas such as safety, health, and education. Program outputs are countable events that, in the case of foster care, mark the end of a foster care episode (e.g., reunification or adoption) or a specific change in a child’s foster care status to one that is expected to last until adulthood (e.g., placement with kin). Thus, the various events referred to as achieving permanency actually are types of outputs.

Outputs that mark the end of a foster care episode that are considered to be permanent, such as reunification, adoption and guardianship, are relatively clearly defined and easily tallied. For example, approximately 31,000 California children of all ages entered foster care for the first time in 1999. When only the first placement episode is considered, after 5 years about 63% had returned to their parents, 15% had been adopted, and 7% had been placed with guardians. However, not all of those who reunified remained at home. About 14% of the children who reunified in 2000 (the most common year of reunification for children who entered care in 1999) reentered care within two years of leaving care (Needell et al., 2010). Finally, for the 7% of children that were still in care in their first placement episode after 5 years, there is no way to determine the number of children in long-term foster care or with kin whose placements could be expected to last until adulthood.

The characteristics of permanency outputs, such as timeliness, household composition, sibling placement, also can be measured, usually with administrative data. However, the outcomes experienced by children following the various permanency outputs are more elusive. Some outcomes are relatively near-term; others are long-term. For purposes of this discussion, near-term outcomes occur before the child reaches adulthood and might include a lack of recurrence of maltreatment (i.e., safety) and a stable, nurturing living arrangement (i.e., permanence). These outcomes primarily speak to the first two of the three Federal child welfare goals of safety, permanency and child and family well-being (United States Department of Health and Human Services Administration for Children and Families, 2000). It is these near-term outcomes, primarily associated with recurrence, that this dissertation addresses by considering the status of children at age 9. Long-term outcomes are only fully evident after the child reaches adulthood and might include educational achievement, economic self-support, stable partner relationships, and abuse- and neglect-free parenting. These outcomes primarily reflect the third of the Federal child welfare goals.
Figure 1 illustrates the temporal relationship between outputs and outcomes:

Figure 1 Temporal relationship between outputs and outcomes

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>birth</th>
<th>out-of-home care</th>
<th>output (e.g., reunification)</th>
<th>adulthood</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>out-of-home care</td>
<td>near-term outcomes</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Outcomes are a product of both the foster care process and foster care outputs. For example, an outcome of permanence may be both a product of the foster care process (e.g., a minimization of the number of moves, the use of fost-adopt homes) and the foster care output (e.g., adoption). Thus, a child may well experience permanence (as well as safety and well-being) as the child and family work their way through the foster care experience toward the output event of adoption. Finally, outcomes may be built on each other. For example, near-term outcomes related to permanency and safety may help shape long-term well-being outcomes.

The remainder of this chapter places permanency in context by discussing the history of its development in the United States, especially in California. It then reviews the relatively few comparative studies of the near- and long-term outcomes of children in foster care. These studies have either compared outcomes of children receiving child welfare services with those of children not receiving services or have compared outcomes of children who have experienced different forms of child welfare service outputs (e.g., reunification, adoption, long-term foster care).

**Background**

Beginning in the late 1950s, a series of studies, especially that of Maas and Engler (1959), highlighted the problems of long-term foster care. A decade later, a beginning theoretical base for these concerns was provided by Joseph Goldstein, Anna Freud, and Albert Solnit in Beyond the Best Interests of the Child (1973). The later, research based work by Bowlby and Ainsworth on attachment, which is discussed in detail in Chapter 2, provided a theoretical basis for the emphasis on permanency within clearly defined time frames. These works laid the groundwork for current child welfare policy and practice.

In the 1970s, several pilot projects, including at least two in California, built on the perceived need to resolve the problems identified by Maas and Engler and others and to apply the theories developed by Goldstein et. al. and Bowlby and Ainsworth. These pilot projects focused on achieving permanency for children in foster care. They encouraged reunification of children with their parents within specific time limits and, should those efforts fail, the development of alternate permanent plans in the form of placement with kin; adoption; guardianship or; in some schemas, structured long-term foster care. Among them were the *Freeing Children for Permanent Placement* project in Oregon (Pike et al., 1977), the *Alameda Project* in California (Stein & Gambrill, 1977) and California’s *Family Protection Act* project in Shasta and San Mateo Counties (California Department of Health, 1978).
The first of these projects was the Oregon *Freening Children for Permanent Placement* project. This project, which began in 1973, worked with children who had already spent at least a year in care. It provided intensive casework services and legal counsel to 509 children. The basic project lasted two years, followed by a third year to complete court work. Subsequently, the project’s methods were integrated into the Oregon child welfare program. The 509 children were selected from 2,283 children referred to the project by their social workers. In addition to having been in care for more than one year, these children were perceived by their social workers as being unlikely to reunify and as being adoptable. Ninety-five percent were under twelve years of age. The number of children accepted by the project was determined by the Federal grant funding available to provide for protected caseloads of 25 children, as compared to the usual caseloads of 50 to 60 children. The project worked within the confines of then current Oregon child welfare statutes. However, the state’s termination of parental rights statute had been revised to be more specific a few months before the project began and this revision facilitated termination of parental rights for many of the children.

In spite of the assumption that reunification was not possible, the Oregon project focused first on reunification and then on adoption. The relatively small caseloads allowed for aggressive social work services that attempted to establish and maintain a working relationship with parents in which the parents’ abilities, service needs and motivation to parent could be assessed and where mutually agreeable case plans could be developed and implemented. The steps that parents needed to take to facilitate reunification were carefully defined and facilitated, primarily through the use of existing community programs. At the same time, parents were presented with the option of relinquishing their children for adoption and of the agency’s intention to seek termination of parental rights if reunification was not possible. Agency efforts and the parents’ activities were carefully documented to facilitate termination of parental right actions. In spite of the fact that children had been selected for the project because reunification did not appear possible, after 3 years, 26% of the children had reunified. Another 36% had been placed for adoption (19% with foster parents, 17% with others), 4% had been placed with relatives, and 7% were in formalized long-term foster care. Adoption was expected for almost all of the 17% of the children for whom plans were still in progress. In 10% of the cases, the efforts to achieve permanence were considered not successful (Emlen, Lahti, Downs, McKay, & Downs, 1977; Pike, 1976).

The *Alameda Project* was a two-year project that began in 1974. Unlike the Oregon project, the Alameda Project used an experimental design to test the effect of early case planning, including written contracts with parents, on increasing permanence. The project began with 227 experimental and 201 control children. More than half (54% of the experimental cases and 66% of controls) of these cases were open cases volunteered by their social workers. The remaining cases were randomly assigned at intake. The experimental group finally included 145 children; the control group, 148 children. The attrition was the result of factors such as changes in court jurisdiction to another county, the child running away, and changes in legal status.

The experimental group received enhanced services. In addition to the county social worker assigned to the child, a social worker from a private children services agency (Children’s Home Society) provided services to each parent. This social worker was trained in behavioral assessment and intervention. By design, there was a shift in focus of services from services to foster parents to services to the child and parent. As a result, parents in the experimental group
had 50% more contact with social workers than did parents in the control group (mean of 21.53 contacts vs. 13.57 over the life of the case); the experimental group cases also had more collateral contacts but fewer contacts with the foster parents. In addition to the increase in parent contact, the content of the contact between social workers and parents was different. Control case social workers spent almost half of their time with parents on tasks defined as “exploration” – the gathering of relevant information – and almost no time on “behavioral treatment.” Behavioral assessment and treatment were the core of the work with the experimental group, focusing on helping parents identify and modify behaviors that influenced the quality of parent-child interaction. Both experimental and control case social workers spent about a quarter of their contact time on “structuring” activities, i.e., explaining agency roles and expectations to enhance the client’s functioning as a client. For both groups, the remaining quarter was a mix of other forms of interaction. Parents of children in the experimental group were actively encouraged to visit with their children in care and the timing and content of these visits were carefully planned with the parents. The written contracts with parents described the overall goals of client-worker contact as well as the objectives required to achieve them. Goals included, for example, reunification and termination of parental rights as a prelude to adoption if agreed-on objectives were not met. While preceding the development of concurrent planning terminology by twenty years, the project practiced at least the full disclosure part of what is now known as concurrent planning. The project demonstrated its effectiveness. At the end of the project, 21% of the children in the experimental group, and 60% of the children in the control group, were headed for long-term out-of-home placement. Sixty (41%) of the children in the experimental group and 45 (30%) of the children in the control group either had reunified, or were expected to reunify with their parents. Of these, 2 children, 1 each from the control and experimental groups returned to placement within a year after returning home. Within the experimental group, parents who had signed contracts were much more apt to have achieved reunification. The Alameda project did not involve statutory changes (Stein, Gambrill, & Wiltse, 1978; Stein & Gambrill, 1977).

California’s Family Protection Act was a seven-year demonstration project in two California counties: San Mateo and Shasta. The project extended from the Fall of 1977 to mid 1984. It was intended to test whether a combination of statutory changes and intensive service could: “keep children in their own homes whenever possible; provide stable and permanent placements when it was not possible to keep children with their families; and reduce tax payers’ costs for services provided to children in out-of-home care (California Department of Social Services, 1983 p. i).” Among the statutory changes were the establishment of time limits for voluntary out-of-home placements, the tightening of removal criteria leading to involuntary placements, the establishment of time limits on reunification services to children in involuntary out-of-home placements and the setting of time frames within which alternative forms of permanency such as adoption must be considered and implemented. The Family Protection Act used the term “family reunification services” to describe the services to be provided to families whose children were placed in foster care. The Act placed a priority on services that would either prevent placement or help a family care for a child who returned home including “homemaker services, housekeeper services, day care services, respite care on a 24-hour basis, emergency housing, emergency 24-hour shelter care, and crisis intervention care on a 24-hour basis.” (California Department of Health, 1978; California Department of Social Services, 1983)
The objectives of the *Family Protection Act* were met in the study counties. However, the control counties (Humboldt and Sacramento) also experienced increases in the number of children returned home and decreases in the mean length of placement and in the number of placement moves. The control counties did not have the benefit of the statutory changes associated with the Family Protection Act that supported early permanency through the use of time limits and increased court oversight. However, the control counties were providing an increased array of services, albeit not necessarily in the same form as that of the demonstration counties. A qualitative study compared 19 children receiving in-home services in San Mateo County with 13 children in comparable circumstances in adjacent counties who were placed in foster care. The results were not conclusive, but where there were differences, it appeared that the children in foster care fared better (Wald, Carlsmith, & Leiderman, 1988).

These three projects demonstrated that it was possible to change the outputs of child welfare service programs. That is, children could be diverted from out-of-home care; children could be reunified when reunification appeared unlikely; and children who could not be reunified could be adopted. Intensive services, especially in the form of smaller caseloads, appeared to be associated with the achievement of these outputs. The effect of statutory change was uncertain. The clarification of the termination of parental rights statute in Oregon appeared to facilitate adoption. The fact that California control counties that did not have the benefit of statutory changes but did increase service provision had similar outputs raises questions about the necessity of the California statutory changes.

These early projects drew national attention. They, especially the *Family Protection Act*, provided the base for the enactment of the Federal Adoption Assistance and Child Welfare Act of 1980 (Public Law 96-272). Public Law 96-272 was drafted, at least in part, by Michael Wald, a Stanford Law Professor who had worked closely with the implementation of the *Family Protection Act* (Wald, 2005; Wald et al., 1988). This amendment to the Social Security Act eliminated the foster care funding portions of the Aid to Families with Dependent Children program, Title IV-A of the Act, which had provided open-ended funding for long-term foster care. The new program, Title IV-E of the Act, established goals of preserving families and securing permanence for children, and conditioned federal financial participation in state foster care programs on a number of factors intended to achieve these goals. Among these were the provision of pre-placement, preventive services prior to entry into care, the development of written case plans, the provision of reunification services, and regular court hearings, including a “dispositional hearing” within 18 months of the child’s entering into care addressing the child’s permanent plan. Public Law 96-272 also provided for federal financial participation in the provision of subsidies to families adopting special needs children and required that states develop information systems providing child-specific tracking and demographic data (Allen, Golubock, & Olson, 1983; Pew Commission on Children in Foster Care, 2004). Of necessity, states adopted legislation conforming state statutes to federal requirements.

The Federal goals were later revised, first in administrative interpretation and later in the Adoption and Safe Families Act (Public Law 105-89), to include safety, permanence and child and family well-being (Golden, 1996; Pew Commission on Children in Foster Care, 2004; United States Department of Health and Human Services Administration for Children and Families, 2000).
Implicit in all of these efforts to modify child welfare policy and practice is the assumption that if children spend less time in open-ended foster care, if they achieve earlier “permanency,” preferably in the form of reunification with parents or adoption by new parents, the quality of their lives, their outcomes, will be better. Unfortunately, little is known about either the near- or long-term outcomes experienced by children who have received child welfare services, either before or after the recent system modifications.

Measurement of foster care/permanency outcomes

Need for comparison

There is a paucity of literature describing either near- or long-term outcomes of children in foster care by type of permanency. As noted above, near-term outcomes are those experienced by the child before becoming an adult (e.g., recurrence of maltreatment, stability of living arrangement), while long-term outcomes are those that are more evident in adulthood (e.g., educational achievement, economic self-support, stability of relationships).

McDonald, et al. (1996), in their review of 29 long-term care outcome studies completed between 1960 and 1992, stressed the necessity of using comparison groups. Comparison is necessary to give meaning to data regarding outcome. However, meaningful comparison is not simple. Comparing children who have experienced foster care with those who have not is problematic. Entry into foster care is not a random event. Children enter foster care because of a high perceived risk that they will experience harm if they remain in their parents’ care, a harm that they usually already have experienced. Thus, prior to entering foster care, these children have had experiences that set them apart from children in the general population. It follows that comparison of outcomes between children who have experienced foster care and those who have not (i.e., the general population of children) is not a comparison of similar groups. It is a comparison of children who have experienced abuse and neglect, as well as separation from parents, with children who, for the most part, have not had these experiences. Even comparison of children who have had substantiated experiences of maltreatment but who have not been removed from their parents’ care with those who have been removed is not a comparison of similar groups, because the decision to remove is based on perceived risk (See, for example, Sawyer & Dubowitz, 1994).

In similar fashion, the outputs of foster care (reunification, adoption, etc.) are not random events. Rather, the social service and court systems’ perceptions of children’s needs and parents’ rights determine outputs. These are, of necessity, subjective determinations. Children are reunified (i.e., returned to the parents’ care) if, within statutory time frames, child welfare agencies and courts determine that the children can safely live in their parents’ care. If timely reunification is not possible, the remainder of the hierarchy of permanent placements is explored, beginning with adoption. Multiple factors, most not random (e.g., age, ethnicity), influence this process.

In spite of these problems, understanding of the effect of child welfare interventions requires that both types of comparisons be considered. First, the outcomes of children who have experienced foster care need to be compared with outcomes of children in the general population. Logic
suggests that these outcomes will be different and, in this case, existing studies suggest that children who spend at least some of their childhood in foster care do not fare as well as children who do not have this experience. Secondly the outcomes of groups of children who have experienced different sorts of child welfare outcomes need to be compared with each other if we are to begin to understand the relationship between differing outputs and outcomes. The limited work that has been done in this area does not necessarily support the generally accepted hierarchy of permanency outcomes. What few studies there are suggest that children who do not enter foster care or who reunify may not fare as well as children who remain in foster care or are adopted, and that the outcomes of adoption and long-term foster care, whether by kin or non-kin, may be similar.

The following discussion considers the contribution of studies, most of which were published after McDonald’s 1996 review, all of which have made comparisons, either between children receiving child welfare services and children not receiving services, or among different forms of child welfare service (e.g., reunification, adoption, long-term foster care).

Comparisons with the general population

One way to address the problems associated with a lack of comparison, attrition and, to a lesser degree, sample size is to use national studies of youth or families, comparing subjects who report having spent some portion of their lives in out-of-home care with those who have not done so. For example, Bueler et al. (2000) used data from the 1988 National Survey of Families and Households to compare the adult adjustment of 101 adults who had spent at least six months of their childhood in foster care with two control groups: 101 adults selected at random and 101 adults matched on demographic indicators (age, race, gender, parents’ education and presence of a stepparent). The study examined adjustment using 36 indicators in the following areas: adult self-sufficiency, behavioral adjustment, family and social support, and personal well-being. Because the study subjects were adults of any age, their foster care experiences ranged over many decades and may well have been quite unlike the foster care experiences of children now in care. The adults who had experienced foster care were less well adjusted than the random group on 20 of 36 indicators. However, their adjustment was similar to that of those in the matched group, suggesting that the foster care experience may not have been as important a predictor of adult adjustment as was socioeconomic status.

Data from the 1995 National Survey of Family Growth was used by Carpenter et al. (2001) to compare high-risk sexual experience and adolescent pregnancy among women who had been in foster care (n = 89), in kinship care (n = 513) and in neither form of care (n = 9,018). The survey did not record whether there was child welfare service involvement in the kinship care placements. Women who had lived in foster or kinship care were more likely to have had high-risk, and sometimes unwanted, sexual experiences and to have experienced earlier pregnancy than women who had not. There were no significant differences between the experiences of women in the foster and kinship groups.

Carpenter and Clyman also used data from the 1995 National Survey of Family Growth to study both the long-term physical and long-term emotional wellbeing of women who had spent part, but not all, of their childhood in kinship care (Carpenter & Clyman, 2004). Women who had lived part of their childhood in their parents’ care and part in kinship care (n=471) were
compared with women who had only lived in their parents’ care (n=8,289). Women who had never lived with their parents and women who had spent any time in foster care were not included in the analysis. As with the previous study, whether there had been child welfare services involvement with the kinship setting is unknown. After controlling for predictor variables that have been found to be associated with poor physical health outcomes (e.g., ethnicity, tobacco use), the multiple logistic regression models found that kinship care was not associated with self-reported fair or poor health or limited life activities. However, having experienced kinship care was found to be negatively associated with indicators of emotional wellbeing. These women were more apt to have had a period of anxiety of more than six months duration and to have unhappiness with life in general.

Blome (1997) used the High School and Beyond Survey, a national cohort study that followed youth over a six year period beginning in 1980, to compare the educational outcomes of foster and non-foster youth. The 167 foster youth in this survey were compared with a matched group of 167 youth. The match was based on basic demographics and standardized math and verbal test scores. Attrition was relatively low. In 1986, 84% of the foster youth and 90% of the matched youth were still in the survey. Even with the use of matched samples, the foster youth did not fare well in this comparison. They were less likely to have had family support and to be on a college preparatory high school track. They were more apt to have dropped out of school and have had “more discipline problems.” The author did not provide specific figures.

Courtney, et al. (2005) are following a cohort of youth from Illinois, Iowa and Wisconsin who either have aged out, or will age out, of foster care. These youth entered care before they were 16 years of age and were 17 years of age when selected for the study. First interviews were completed with 736 of the 767 youth in the original sample. The second interviews were conducted when the youths were 19. Study staff were able to locate and interview 603 (82%) of those interviewed in the first wave. At the time of these second interviews, 47 percent were still in care, as Illinois allows youth to remain in care until they are 21 years of age. The results of this study compare those still in care with those not in care. In addition, the entire sample was compared with a sample of 502 19-year-olds from the National Longitudinal Study of Adolescent Health. Because the latter study is a nationally representative sample, its demographics could be expected to be quite different from those of the foster youth, who are 56.5 percent African American and all from the upper Midwest.

On almost all measures, the youth in the Midwest Evaluation study are not doing as well as those in the national sample. For example, while 86.6 percent of the national sample have a high school diploma, only 57.8 percent of the foster youth have a high school diploma ($\chi^2 = 110.18$, p <.001). The foster youth report more emergency room visits and hospitalizations in the past 5 years than do the youth in the national sample. They were more likely to have received psychological or emotional counseling and substance abuse treatment in the past year. They are twice as likely to have had children (23.4 percent vs. 9.8 percent, $\chi^2 = 35.854$, p <.001). They are more likely to be “disconnected.” That is, while 10 percent of the national sample were neither in school, employed nor parenting, 24.3 percent of the foster and former foster youth were neither in school, employed nor parenting ($\chi^2=468.85$, p <.001). The differences between the foster youth still in care, no longer in care and the national sample are sometimes more striking. For example, 36 percent of the national sample, 11 percent of foster youth still in care and 4 percent of former foster youth were enrolled in a 4-year college. Twenty percent of those still in
care, but 28 percent of those no longer in care were neither in school, employed nor parenting. Unfortunately, because of the nature of the comparison sample, the study does not provide information on how these youth are faring as compared to socioeconomically similar youth who have not been in care, let alone similar youth who have experienced maltreatment, but have not been in care.

There have been a number of studies comparing the adolescent and adult outcomes experienced by people who have been adopted with those raised in various forms of birth families. (See, for example: Feigelman, 1997; Fergusson, Lynskey, & Horwood, 1995.) However, these studies do not separate the experience of persons adopted after having been in foster care from persons adopted as infants or from another country. The work of Bohman and Sigvardsson discussed below suggests that the outcomes experienced by persons placed for adoption as infants and those of persons adopted after a period of time in foster care are quite different (Bohman & Sigvardsson, 1990). If this is the case, then research on the outcomes experienced by persons who have been adopted that does not consider the type of adoption will not aid in understanding child welfare outcomes.

These studies comparing children who have spent time in foster care or in the care of kin with those who have not suggest that outcomes for people who have experienced foster or kinship care may be worse than outcomes for people who have not experienced foster care. However, the survey data on which they are based do not allow consideration of variables such as reason for placement, age of entry, length of stay, or how the foster care episode ended.

An exception is a study by Macomber, et al., that used unemployment insurance data to compare the employment histories through age 24 of youth who aged out of foster care in California, Minnesota and North Carolina (as defined by being age 17 and in care at the end of 1998 and later exiting to “emancipation” or “age of majority”) with two groups. The first was a low income sample including youth in TANF families who were 17 at the same time. The second was a national sample from the National Longitudinal Survey of Youth 1997. The youth who aged out of foster care did not fare as well as the national sample in any of the states. After controlling for demographic factors, youth in California and Minnesota were not faring as well as the low-income sample from their state. Faring well, or not, was defined in two ways: income and degree of workforce connection. Because this study used foster care administrative data, this study was able to consider the relationship between employment and both demographics and basic facts of the children’s foster care experience. Demographic differences were limited. In general, youth that had employment experience before age 18 appeared to have better employment outcomes. The relationship between gender, race/ethnicity and urban/rural differences and employment varied among the three states. Foster care factors included age at exit, placement type, maltreatment type, and time in care. There were limited relationships between these factors and employment. As with most demographic factors, the relationship between these factors and employment were not consistent among the states (Macomber et al., 2008).

Comparisons among differing foster care outputs

In-home services vs. foster care
Studies comparing children who have been removed from their parents’ care and placed in foster care with those whose circumstances were similar but who were not removed have yielded contradictory findings. Three recent studies have compared near-term outcomes of children who were placed in foster care with those of similar children who were not placed in care. The earlier of these studies, in North Carolina, compared delinquent behavior, school performance and recurrence of maltreatment of a group of 114 maltreated children aged 11 to 18 who were in foster care for 3 or more years (mean = 8 years) with a matched group of 106 maltreated children who had not been placed in care (Runyan & Gould, 1985a, 1985b). The match was based on date of report and age. There was no difference in the level of delinquent behavior between the two groups, although children who had been in four or more foster placements were more likely to have delinquent behavior. However, the high number of placement changes was reported to be a result of the children’s behavior. School attendance improved for the children in foster care from an absence rate of 15.6% in the year prior to the maltreatment report to 3.5% in the most recent school year. School attendance improved only slightly for the children who remained in their own homes, from 8.5% to 7.2%. After controlling for maternal education, gender and race, the difference between the two groups was significant (p = .048). Although the foster children had slightly better grades (44% average or above vs. 32% average or above) the difference was not significant (p = .2).

Both groups of children experienced some subsequent maltreatment. Twelve of the 114 children in foster care had a subsequent substantiated report of maltreatment, half by foster parents and half by birth parents while on visits. Twenty-seven of the 106 controls had subsequent substantiated maltreatment. The relative risk of subsequent abuse for children in the control group was 2.42 (95% confidence interval of 1.33, 4.39). Thus, foster care appeared to have reduced, but not eliminated the possibility of future maltreatment (Runyan & Gould, 1985b). This is the only study that compared the near-term outcome of safety for foster care and non-removal. The study does not provide any information on the level of services received by the children who were not removed.

The second study, by Johnson-Reid and Barth (2000), used welfare and corrections administrative data to study the relationship between child welfare system involvement and subsequent commitment to the California Youth Authority, the state correctional system for serious juvenile offenders. They found that males who had at least an investigated referral were more than twice as likely (2.9 vs. 1.4 per 1000) as those in the general population to have a later admission to a Youth Authority facility. Females were almost three times as likely (0.2 vs. 0.07 per 1000). Children initially referred for neglect were more likely to have a Youth Authority admission than children referred for abuse.

Overall, whether the child received services beyond the initial investigation was not related to admission to a Youth Authority facility. However, when ethnicity was considered using a proportional hazards model, they found that Black and Hispanic children who had received in-home or foster care services were less likely to enter the Youth Authority than those whose only child welfare contact was an investigation of possible maltreatment. This same effect was not observed for white children. The sample size did not allow for differentiation between children receiving in-home services and those receiving foster care services nor did it consider other forms of incarceration.
The third study, conducted in Israel, compared short term (six month) changes in the quality of life of three groups of children (Davidson-Arad, Englechin-Segal, & Wozner, 2003). These groups were 23 children who had been removed from their parents’ care, 18 children whose removal had been recommended by the social worker but who had not been removed and 51 children whose removal had not been recommended and who had not been removed. The quality of life was determined using a 16-item “Systemic Quality of Life Scale” developed in Israel (Shye, 1998) and administered by the case-carrying social worker. The measured quality of life was similar for the three groups at the time of the initial assessment, which was before the possible removal of the child from the home. However, at the subsequent assessment the quality of life had significantly improved for the children who had been removed.

A common theme of these studies is that children who remained at home did not fare as well as those who were in care.

In contrast to these studies, recent work by Doyle (2007; 2008) raises serious question as to the benefit of removal and placement in care of children on the “margin of placement.” Doyle used data regarding children who entered foster care in Illinois in the 1990s. Agency practice assigned initial investigations to social workers by rotation, so that any differences in removal rates by social worker would reflect differences in social worker practice rather than child characteristics and thus allow the categorization of social workers by their removal thresholds and thus removal rates. The result of this process is the conclusion that children on the margin, children who would be removed by some investigators but not others, were at greater risk of teen motherhood and arrest as both juveniles and adults and of lower levels of earnings and employment.

Finally, Berger, et al. (2009) used data on 2,453 children aged 4 to 17 from the National Survey of Child and Adolescent Well-Being, a longitudinal study of a sample cohort of children who either began receiving child welfare services in 1999 or 2000 who were in care at that time. Five increasingly rigorous models were used to compare cognitive function and behavior problems of children who had been in care with those who hadn’t. Although the less rigorous models found more behavior problems with the children who had been in care, the fixed effects model using a matched sample found no difference in either cognitive functioning or behavior problems over the 2 ½ year study period.

Reunification vs. non-reunification

The Chapin Hall Center for Children has used data from California, Illinois and South Carolina to study employment outcomes of foster children during the two year period following their 18th birthdays (Goerke et al., 2002). The study compared youth who had aged out of foster care (i.e., left foster care when they were about 18) with two groups: youth who had left foster care to reunify with their families after age 14, and non-foster care youth who exited an Aid to Families with Dependent Children (AFDC) or a Temporary Assistance to Needy Families (TANF) case after age 14. Youth included in all three groups were those who reached their 18th birthday during the study period. Data on the youths’ employment histories were obtained from Unemployment Insurance wage reporting records. These data understate employment because not all employment is covered by unemployment insurance. For example, informal employment, Federal Government employment and self-employment are not covered. The study period was
1995 and 1996 in California and 1996 and 1997 in Illinois and South Carolina. The California universe included 2,824 youth who aged out of care, 3,138 who had reunified, and 186,637 who had received AFDC.

A logistic regression that included gender, ethnicity, and time in care found that the employment experience of youth during the 2 years beginning at age 18 in the three groups was different in each of the states. In California the aging-out group was more likely to be employed than either the reunification group (adjusted odds ratio = 1.515 p<.001) or the AFDC group (adjusted odds ratio 1.472, p<.001). However, in Illinois there was no significant difference between the aging-out and the AFDC/TANF groups, and both of these groups were less likely to be employed than the reunification group (adjusted odds ratios 0.765, p<.05, and 0.818, p<.01, respectively). Finally, in South Carolina, there also was no significant difference between the aging-out and the AFDC groups. However, both groups were more likely to be employed than the reunification group (adjusted odds ratios 1.727, p<.01, and 1.381, p<.001, respectively). The effect of ethnicity is also inconsistent. For example, in California, Hispanics were more likely to be employed than whites, in Illinois Hispanics were less likely to be employed. In all states, the older youth were when they entered care, or began receiving AFDC/TANF, the less likely they were to be employed (Goerge et al., 2002). In short, no pattern emerged in the relative employment level of young adults who had aged out of foster care in the three states.

A similar study in Wisconsin studied youth who aged out of care between 1992 and 1998 (Dworsky & Courtney, 2001). This study found that, during the first two years after leaving care, youth who had aged out of care or had been discharged to independent living earned significantly more than youth who had returned home, been adopted or moved from foster care to relatives’ homes. Half of the youth in this study had been in care because of delinquency. They noted that one possible reason for the higher earnings was the lack of family supports that the youth who had been reunified or adopted probably had.

Neither of these studies was able to examine the reasons for employment or lack of employment. That is, there are no data as to whether youth who were not employed were, for example, seeking employment, continuing education, or incarcerated.

There has been limited work in San Diego County, California comparing relatively near-term outcomes of children who reunify with those who do not. Several related studies have considered the experiences of children in various subgroups of a large sample that included all of the approximately 5,000 children who entered foster care between May 1990 and October 1991. Taussig, Clyman and Landsverk (2001) studied 200 children who were seven to twelve years of age when they entered care, first interviewing these children on entry. Seventy-five percent (149) were located and interviewed six years later. Of these, 63 had reunified and 86 had not reunified. At the time of the second interview, the reunified youth reported more self-destructive behaviors, substance use, total risk behavior problems, and arrests. They reported lower grades. There were no significant differences in sexual risk behaviors, pregnancy or school suspensions.

From the same larger sample, Lau, Litrowink, Newton and Landsverk (2003) studied 218 children at age six who entered care before the age of 3.5 years, remained in out-of-home care for at least five months and were in the same placement between ages four and six. The study compared children who reunified by age four (35.8% of the sample) with those who did not, i.e.,
were in care at least until age six. The study did not consider differences between those non-
reunified children who had been adopted (25.7%) and those who remained in kin care (17.9%) or
non-kin foster care (20.6%). Children who reunified were exposed to more adverse life events in
the form of elevated family dysfunction, instability and harm (e.g., suffering serious accident or
illness). Reunified children received fewer mental health services, however they were less likely
to feel socially isolated.

Using the same sub sample and similar methodology, Litrownik, Newton, Mitchell and
Richardson (2003) studied children’s exposure to violence. They found that both reunified
children and their parents reported more family violence than did children who had not reunified
and their caretakers. This study contrasted the experiences of children who were adopted, those
placed with kin and those placed with non-kin foster families. Adoptive parents reported using
more physical discipline, but adopted children reported less exposure to violence than children in
either relative or non-relative foster care.

**Kin vs. non-kin foster care**

The differences in long-term outcomes for children placed in out-of-home care with kin and non-
kin caregivers have not been extensively studied. An exception is a study by Benedict, Zuravin
and Stallings of a group of 214 adults who had been in licensed kin and non-kin foster care in
Baltimore (Benedict, Zuravin, & Stallings, 1996). These adults were interviewed in 1993 and
1994. The study sample was not random. Rather, it was selected from a group of cases used in
another study that concerned maltreatment in foster care. That study used a sample of 652
former foster youth, 423 of whom had been selected because of an allegation, not necessarily
substantiated, of maltreatment while in foster care between 1984 and 1988. The remaining cases
in that sample were selected at random from children who had no allegations of maltreatment
while in care during the same time period. The children included in this outcome study were
those from the maltreatment study who were over age 18 at the time the interviews for the
outcome study were conducted. There were 322 such children. Of these, 214 were located and
were able and willing to be interviewed. The predominant placement (over 50 percent of the
time in care) for 86 was with kin, who were licensed as foster parents. The predominant
placement for the remaining 128 was with licensed non-kin caregivers. The portions of the kin
and non-kin groups that had had allegations of maltreatment while in care are not stated. Three
percent of those with kin and ten percent of those with non-kin had substantiated reports. This
difference was not significant and not otherwise discussed. Most (87 percent) of the subjects
were African American.

There were few differences in outcome between the two groups. In the bivariate analysis, those
adults who had been kin care were more likely to have used heroin (28 vs. 11 percent, p <.001)
and to have traded sex for drugs (13 vs. 5 percent of drug users, p <.03). Thirty-eight percent of
both groups had had “trouble with the law.” However, children who had been in kin care were
less likely to have been sentenced to jail (10 percent vs. 22 percent of the entire sample, p <.02).
A multivariate analysis found only one significant difference. This involved the interaction
between birth parent drug use and placement type. Subjects placed with kin whose birth mothers
had a history of drug use reported more symptoms of non-psychotic psychiatric illness.
Studies that examine differences between kin and non-kin foster care at times consider factors that verge on being near-term outcomes such as the child’s mental health status and educational achievement. One such study considered the placement adjustment of 990 adolescents who were in care in Los Angeles County in 1988 (Iglehart, 1994). Three hundred fifty-two of these adolescents were in kinship foster care and 638 were in non-kin foster care. There were no significant differences between the two groups’ educational performance or behavioral functioning. There were significant differences, at the p<.001 level, in the mental health of the two groups. Ten percent of the kinship care adolescents and 18 percent of the non-kin foster youth had serious mental health problems. However, the study was not able to draw any conclusions about cause and effect. For example, does placement with kin ameliorate mental health problems or are children with mental health problems less likely to be placed with kin?

Foster care vs. adoption

The focus of child welfare services for at least the past twenty years has been on providing permanence for children in foster care. The assumption is that the needs of children who enter foster care are best met if they are able to return home in a timely fashion. Should that reunification not be possible, if the child’s family is unable to meet the child’s needs in a minimally adequate manner, the assumption is that children should be placed with a permanent family, preferably an adoptive family. In view of this assumption, it is perhaps surprising that there have been few studies that compare either the near- or long-term outcomes experienced by foster children who are adopted with those of foster children who are not adopted, i.e., who return home, remain in care, or become the ward of a guardian.

The long-term outcomes of infant adoption, long-term foster care that usually ended in adoption, and rearing by birth parents were compared in a prospective, longitudinal study of a cohort of 624 Swedish children. These children’s mothers sought the assistance of a public adoption agency in Stockholm at the time of the children’s birth in the mid-1950s (Bohman & Sigvardsson, 1990). The study had a very low attrition rate, with attrition basically limited to children who died or emigrated. For example, at age 15, data were available on 577 of the children. Of these, 160 had been adopted as infants, 213 had remained with their biological mothers, and 204 had been placed in foster homes at a mean age of 9 months. By the time they were seven, 70 % of the latter group had been adopted, usually by their foster parents. These outputs were not random. The birth parents of the children who were initially placed in foster care were significantly more likely to have criminal records and alcohol problems and the birth mothers were more likely to have had complications during pregnancy or delivery than were the parents of those in the other two groups. There were also differences between the adoptive parents and the foster parents. The adoptive parents lived in larger towns than did the foster parents. They were socially more advantaged. The adoptive parents, but not the foster parents, had preplacement preparation.

Data was collected on the children at four points. Adjustment and school achievement data were collected at ages 11 and 15. Psychological and intellectual capacity data were collected on the boys at the time of their compulsory military enlistment at age 18. Criminal record and substance abuse data were collected on all children at age 23. Matched controls were used in each phase of the study. At age 11 children in all three groups were showing more maladjustment in school than were the controls, with the type of placement not making a great
deal of difference. By age 15 this had changed substantially. While the frequency of maladjustment, as rated by their teachers, of the adopted children was slightly less than that of their controls, the frequency of maladjustment for children raised by their mothers or by foster parents was two or three times that of their controls. These differences continued. At age 18, there was no significant difference between the intelligence and psychological test scores of the adopted boys and those of their controls. However, both the boys raised by their biological mothers and those raised, and usually adopted, by foster parents had significantly lower test scores than their controls. Finally, the study considered whether, between age 16 and age 23, the now young adults had criminal or alcohol abuse records. Similar proportions of the male subjects who had been adopted or who had been raised by their mothers and their controls had these records. But, the male subjects who had been placed in foster care were about twice as likely as their controls to appear on these registers. Five of the females, all either raised by their parents or in foster care, and three of the controls had records of alcohol abuse.

In sum, the children who were adopted as infants fared better than did those who entered foster care, even though most of the latter group were eventually adopted. They also generally functioned better than those who remained with their mothers. Bohman and Sigvardsson offer a number of possible explanations for these differences including birth parent differences, the social and preparation differences in the adoptive and foster parents, and the lengthy uncertainty of foster placement.

The background and experience of the foster care population in this study is similar to that of children in the present era who are adopted by their foster parents after a relatively lengthy foster care stay. Perhaps the study’s primary contribution to the understanding of foster care outcomes is the finding that the outcomes experienced by children adopted as infants are not necessarily the same as those experienced by children adopted after a time in foster care. Thus, studies of the outcomes of generic adoptions cannot be assumed to describe the outcomes experienced by children who are adopted after a time in foster care.

The long-term outcomes of adoption and foster care have been compared in a study of 115 youths placed by Casey Family Services. This study found that the young adult functioning of children who were adopted and children who had remained in foster care and received intensive extended services after age 18 was relatively similar. Both groups were functioning better than youth who had exited care at age 18 or before (Casey Family Services, 2001; Kerman, Wildfire, & Barth, 2002). Young adult functioning was described in terms of self-sufficiency (e.g., employment status), personal well-being (e.g., use of alcohol and drugs) and an overall measure that melds the other two and adds arrest history and community involvement. Understanding of the meaning of the findings of this study must be tempered by the fact that it was only possible to interview 115 of the 209 in the original sample. In addition, because services provided to children by Casey Family Services are probably more intensive than those provided to most children in the public foster care system, the degree to which these findings can be generalized to the experience of most children in foster care is uncertain.

Near-term outcomes include the stability of placements intended to be permanent such as adoption or long-term foster care. Triseliotis reviewed existing research on differences in outcomes of long-term foster care and adoptive placements in the United States and the United Kingdom. He concluded that the differences in the “breakdown rates” for long-term foster
placements and adoptions, with adoptions having the lower rates, may have declined in recent years. He found that the principal difference between long-term foster care and adoption is that adoption provides “higher emotional security, a stronger sense of belonging and a more enduring psychosocial base in life” (Triseliotis, 2002 p. 31). Left unanswered, however, is whether the stronger sense of belonging, for example, comes from the experience of being adopted or whether those foster families who nurture a strong sense of belonging are the ones who opt to adopt.

While the output of a completed adoption does not provide assurance of the outcome of stability, the ending of an adoptive placement (disruption) or a completed adoption (dissolution) is perhaps the clearest statement of the failure of a permanency output, in this case adoption, to achieve the intended near-term outcome of stability for the child. Both adoption disruption and dissolution have been extensively studied. (See, for example: Barth, Berry, Yoshikami, Goodfield, & Carson, 1988; Festinger, 2002; Goerge, Howard, Yu, & Radomsky, 1995) These studies often fail to differentiate between disruption and dissolution and do not differentiate between temporary and permanent removals from the adoptive home. However, even if they did, they do not compare adoption with other permanency outputs such as guardianship and long-term foster care. Thus, they do not provide insight into the relative long-term stability of the various forms of permanency outputs.

Summary

Recent comparative studies on the foster care outcomes experienced by children provide limited insight into the outcomes of the foster care experience. In the context of the Federal child welfare goals, existing comparative studies provide some information about the goal of child and family well being, very limited information about the goal of safety and no information about the goal of permanence. The limited conclusions that can be drawn from the existing studies follow.

Children who spend part of their childhood in foster care do not fare as well as children in the general population who have not been in foster care. The same is true for children who have spent part of their childhood in the care of kin and children who have experienced maltreatment but have not been removed from their parents’ care. These findings are neither new nor surprising. With the possible exception of educational achievement, these differences disappear when former foster children are compared with people who are demographically similar. In short, differences among outcomes that at first appear to be associated with foster care are probably differences of social class.

The few comparative studies regarding the outcomes of children who have received child welfare services are limited and sometimes contradictory. In terms of well-being, maltreated children who are removed from their parents’ care appear to fare somewhat better than children who are not removed. In similar fashion, children who are not reunified may fare better than those who are reunified. Little is known about the outcomes of different permanent placement outputs experienced by children who are removed and not reunified. Clear differences between the well-being outcomes of kin and non-kin placements and between long-term foster care and adoption have yet to be demonstrated. There has been no work examining the differences between guardianship and either long-term foster care or adoption. There are no comparative studies of permanency outcomes. Finally, there has been only very limited work comparing the
degree to which the goal of safety is achieved by children who have experienced differing foster care outputs.

The present study begins the process of filling this gap by comparing the near-term permanency outcomes for children who have experienced the outputs of reunification, adoption and guardianship, using a method that is transferable with little difficulty to cohorts other than the one selected for this study. It does not provide data on long-term outcomes, outcomes that for the study cohort children are still far in the future. However, the study is based on the assumption that understanding of long-term outcomes is dependent, in part, on an understanding of near-term outcomes.
CHAPTER 2
ATTACHMENT THEORY

Introduction

To the degree that emphasis on permanency in present day child welfare has a theoretical base, that base is found in attachment theory. This chapter provides a basic review of attachment theory from a theoretical, evolutionary perspective. It begins by separating attachment itself from attachment behaviors. This is followed by discussions of normative attachment, attachment that is shared by all humans, if not all primates; individual differences in the form of attachment, including a discussion of the types of infant attachment and, to a limited degree, adult attachment; transmission of attachment type from caregiver to child; and the continuity of attachment form as the child ages. Finally, the chapter considers the relevance of attachment theory to child welfare services policy and planning.

Attachment and Attachment Behaviors

Ainsworth and Bell have defined attachment as “…an affectional tie that one person or animal forms between himself [sic] and another specific one—a tie that binds them together in space and endures over time” (1970). In the context of infants, attachment is a quality or feeling developed by the infant toward a specific caregiver, generally a mother. Although its form appears to be developed in response to the quality of contact with the caregiver, attachment is not a mutual relationship but, rather, something the child feels towards the caregiver, a quality held by the child. Especially in pre-verbal toddlers, the existence and nature, i.e., the security, of the child’s attachment can not be measured directly, but can only be inferred from the child’s attachment behaviors (Solomon & George, 1999). Although attachment itself is seen as a constant, the behaviors that indicate its presence wax and wane in strength and change in quality in response to the child’s circumstances. Perhaps because attachment itself, like love or beauty, is so ephemeral, most discussion of the realm of attachment focuses on attachment behavior, for it is these behaviors that can be observed, both qualitatively and quantitatively. Thus, of necessity, this chapter focuses on the manifestations of attachment, attachment behaviors.

Development of Attachment Theory

Attachment theory is a middle-level evolutionary theory with two major principles or components, the normative and the individual difference (Simpson, 1999). The normative, or environmentally stable, component speaks to those parts of attachment that, as best can be determined, are universal human characteristics. These characteristics are present in infants in all cultures, irrespective of the nature of the parenting they are exposed to. The individual difference, or environmentally labile, component speaks to the different types of attachment behavior, differences that apparently reflect, in large measure, caregivers’ adult attachment styles, which, in turn, are products of adults’ life experiences. Classifications of both infant and adult attachment behaviors have been developed, including Ainsworth’s now four-way classification of infant attachment behaviors as secure, avoidant, ambivalent or resistant and disorganized (Ainsworth, Blehar, Waters, & Wall, 1978; Dozier, Stovall, Albus, & Bates, 2001; Simpson, 1999).
The core of attachment theory was developed in the post World War Two era by John Bowlby and Mary Ainsworth. John Bowlby was a British psychoanalyst who took pains in his writing about attachment to show that his theory was consistent with psychoanalytic thought, that what he was doing with consistent with the work Freud had done, or at least consistent with a path that Freud would have taken (See, for example, Bowlby, 1958, 1982). Mary Ainsworth was an American psychologist whose graduate work had been in security theory (Ainsworth & Bowlby, 1991). In general, the focus of Bowlby’s work was theory regarding normative attachment and the focus of Ainsworth’s work was individual differences.

In spite of Bowlby’s efforts to demonstrate the consistency of his work with psychoanalytic theory, psychoanalysts have rejected his work, finding it too simplistic and one dimensional (Fonagy, 1999; Hinde, 2005). Clearly, Bowlby also rejected elements of psychoanalysis as he understood it. Perhaps most importantly, he rejected the learning theorists’ idea that a human’s need for interaction with another human, i.e., the infant’s need for interaction with its caregiver, could only be a secondary drive, derived from the infant’s primary drives to meet its physiological needs, especially for food. Here, Bowlby was guided by ethologists who, based on their observations of animals, understood the need for social interaction to be a primary drive. In addition, Bowlby may well have alienated psychoanalysts because he based his theory on his and others’ direct observation of infants and their interactions with people, especially mothers, rather than on attempts at historical reconstruction based on adult recollections of early experiences (Bowlby, 1958, 1969/1982).

In a sense, the development of Bowlby’s theory of attachment began shortly after his graduation from college, when he worked in a residential treatment center for children. His experience with two specific children in that center led him to continue his medical education and to specialize in child psychiatry (Ainsworth & Bowlby, 1991). In the late 1940s Bowlby worked with a social worker, James Robertson, at the Tavistock Clinic. Robertson had worked with children who had been separated from their mothers, either by their own hospitalization or by placement in a residential nursery. He observed that infants over six months of age had a consistent response to this separation, irrespective of the type of institution, the child’s condition (sick or well), or the quality of care. This response was present even when all of the child’s physiological needs were fully met. It was not present when the child went with the mother to an unfamiliar environment. Thus, the infant’s response appeared to be dependent upon perceived proximity to the mother, not upon familiarity with the environment or the quality of care.

When Robertson studied children between the ages of ages of 15 and 30 months, he observed that their response to separation from their mothers had three stages: Initial protest, followed by despair and, finally, detachment (Bowlby, 1969/1982). These stages have a set sequence, but their initiation and length are variable. In protest, the child cries and throws him or herself about while looking for any sign of the mother’s return. The child clearly expects the mother to return and rejects all who attempt to help. In the second stage, despair, the child is clearly preoccupied with the missing mother and becomes withdrawn and inactive. These signs of a state of deep mourning can be misinterpreted by his caregivers as a lessening of distress. Detachment, the third stage, is often wrongly seen as a time of recovery. The child accepts the care of others and does not seem interested in the mother when she visits. Staff changes are no longer upsetting, and the child is preoccupied with toys, food and other material things. As discussed below, this pattern appears to be a product of human evolution.
Bowlby came to understand attachment behavior patterns as instinctive behaviors that had evolved in the human “environment of evolutionary adaptedness” (Bowlby, 1969/1982, p. 50).

Bowlby identified four main characteristics of instinctive behaviors: (1) They have a similar and predictable pattern that is present in almost all members of a species, or at least all members of a species of the same gender. (2) They usually have a predictable sequence. (3) The consequence of the behavior is the preservation of the individual or the continuity of the species. (4) Finally, the behaviors develop in individuals even when the individual has no opportunities to learn them (Bowlby, 1969/1982). There are seemingly infinite arrays of such instinctive behaviors in non-human animals. A few examples are nest building by many animals, territorial marking by dogs, and seasonal migrations. Bowlby was clear that instinctive behaviors are not limited to non-human animals. In the case of attachment, he proposed that attachment behavior is the product of the coming together of several instinctive signaling and approach behaviors.

Just as the evolution of basic human physical characteristics has been a slow process requiring millions of years, the evolution of human instinctive behaviors has occurred, not over recent centuries or millennia, but over a much longer period of time. Thus, to understand the origins of human instinctive behaviors in general and attachment behaviors specifically, it is necessary to consider, not how humans function in their current, mostly urban, environment, in the environment of written history or even in the environment of the pre-historic agriculturist. Rather, it is necessary to attempt to understand how humans functioned in the environment that humans and their predecessors lived in during most of the last several million years. Bowlby assumed this period to be two million years (Bowlby, 1969/1982). However, as the evolution of human instinctive behaviors is only a continuation of the evolution of quite similar behaviors in other primates and at least somewhat similar behaviors in both mammals and birds, in many ways it is a much longer period of time.

Bowlby concluded that the “environment of evolutionary adaptedness” for humans and other higher primates was the African savanna environment, an environment that included predators such as leopards and wolves. The instinctive human attachment behaviors that evolved in this environment increased the probability of survival of these ground-dwelling primates who lived as hunter gatherers in small social groups (Bowlby, 1969/1982). Attachment behavior, that is behavior where the young primate sought closeness with its mother when endangered, reduced the risk of predation and thus increased the probability of survival. This was not just the human condition. The higher primates all live in social groups that, with the exception of chimpanzees, include males and females of all ages. A primary function of these groups is protection, especially of the young, from predators. The individual who lives apart from the group and the infant who does not seek the protection of its caregiver when in danger is at much greater risk of predation. The three stages of the child’s response to separation from the mother observed by Robertson were relevant in this environment. First, when separated or endangered, the infant protests to get its mother’s attention. The mother’s attention is the surest path to safety. When the cries of protest fail and despair sets in, the infant becomes quiet so as not to draw the attention of predators. Finally, with detachment, the infant becomes open to forming a relationship with a new potential caregiver, a new attachment, as survival depends on it.
Understanding of evolutionary processes has changed substantially since Bowlby’s initial work on attachment was completed. Modern, or neo-Darwinian, evolutionary thought has benefited from an understanding of genetics not available to Darwin. At its core, this has meant a shift from a focus on the survival of individuals (the “survival of the fittest”) to a focus on the survival and continued reproduction of the individual’s genetic material (Belsky, 1999; Simpson, 1999). This shift in the understanding of evolution helps to explain behaviors such as altruism. For example, siblings share roughly half of their genetic material. Thus the sibling who helps to raise his or her nieces or nephews to reproductive age without having his or her own children, or who loses his or her life while saving those of the nieces or nephews, is facilitating the survival of a large fraction of his or her genetic material. This understanding helps to explain the development and survival of the various types of attachment behavior.

Belsky (1999) and Simpson (1999) posit that the human environment of evolutionary adaptedness was not the relatively constant environment assumed by Bowlby. Although they agree with Bowlby’s assumption that these early humans were hunter-gatherers who lived in closely related small groups, they differ with Bowlby in that they understand the environments in which evolution occurred to have varied over both geography and time. In some places and at some times the environment was primarily one of stability and plenty. In other times and places, it was primarily one of uncertainty and scarcity. These differing environments led parents to adopt differing child rearing strategies to maximize the probability of the continued reproduction of their genes. Belsky expected that in an environment of plenty parents would invest a high level of resources in a relatively few children. On the other hand, in an environment of scarcity, parents would invest limited resources in as many children as possible.

These differing parental strategies favored differing attachment strategies on the parts of infants. Those infants who had access to differing instinctive attachment strategies, i.e., using Ainsworth’s classification, avoidant and resistant as well as secure, to respond to the different parental strategies increased the probability that their genes would continue to reproduce. Belsky saw the functionality, at least in the “environment of adaptedness” not only of the secure, but also of the resistant and avoidant, and possibly the disorganized, forms of attachment as the explanation for their genetic survival. The availability of alternative forms of attachment may well continue to foster survival in some settings, for example in the poverty stricken, high infant mortality Brazilian town described by Scheper-Hughes (1987).

**Normative Attachment**

Normative attachment behaviors are instinctive behaviors common to all children in all cultures. That is, children are instinctively predisposed to form an attachment with a caregiver and will do so unless they are prevented from doing so by, for example, an unstable institutional environment. There are, however, individual differences in the quality of the attachment with a caregiver. As noted above, these differences appear to be selected from a broad, but limited instinctive palette in response to caregiver cues (Weinfield, Sroufe, Egeland, & Carlson, 1999). Normative attachment behaviors will be considered first.

Bowlby proposed that infants have two main classes of instinctive behaviors: signaling and approach behaviors. These behaviors come together at as early as six months of age in the form of clear-cut attachment. In addition to their attachment function, these behaviors may have
functions outside of the realm of attachment. In the context of attachment, these behaviors serve to establish and maintain the infant’s proximity to the mother.

Signaling behaviors begin with crying, which at first conveys the child’s hunger or pain and expands to convey the need for social attention. Other early signaling behaviors are smiling and babbling, which differ from crying in that they are not signs of distress, but tools for gaining and holding another person’s attention. At about six months, infants begin to raise their arms, apparently signaling their desire for attention. The latter behavior probably is related to the clinging behavior, which Bowlby considered an approach behavior. Finally, with speech comes the ability to seek the mother’s attention, to signal the mother, by calling her.

Approach behaviors are behaviors that allow the older infant to achieve and maintain proximity, if not contact, with the caregiver. Bowlby included various forms of locomotion (rolling over, crawling, walking) and also sucking, especially non-nutritional sucking, and clinging among these approach behaviors (Bowlby, 1969/1982). These behaviors would seem to also have attachment signaling functions. Outside of attachment, they would also be part of the infant’s repertoire of exploratory behaviors.

Bowlby and Ainsworth organized the development of attachment behavior into four phases, the first three of which occur during the child’s first year. Using Ainsworth’s terminology, these are the phases of (1) preattachment, (2) attachment-in-the-making, (3) clear-cut attachment, and (4) goal-corrected partnership (Ainsworth et al., 1978). The preattachment phase begins at birth with the infant able to signal his need for attention by crying and, later, by smiling and making other sounds. In this phase, the infant does not discriminate between people, i.e., the mother and others. When the infant is in physical contact with a caregiver he can seek closer contact by behaviors such as sucking, rooting and grasping. This phase ends, and the second begins, when the infant is able to visually discriminate the caregiver from other people – generally between 8 and 12 weeks of age.

During the second phase, the infant’s ability to discriminate between people expands. The infant can separate familiar from unfamiliar people and can discriminate between familiar people, accepting efforts to terminate attachment behavior (i.e., the infant’s crying) more readily from some than from others. Other active attachment behaviors, especially reaching, develop during this phase. Although the infant shows a preference for a specific person in this phase, Ainsworth did not see this as attachment because the infant is only able to use signaling behavior to achieve proximity to the attachment figure.

In the third phase, which may begin as early as six months of age, the child begins to use locomotion, and later speech, to maintain contact with the attachment figure. The toddler is learning to use goal-correcting behavior in efforts to effect and maintain contact with the preferred adult, to achieve his or her attachment goal. This involves not only changing the direction of locomotion, but changing the attachment behaviors, whether smiling, crying or crawling, to meet the needs of the situation. At the same time that the child is refining these attachment behaviors, the child is learning to explore his or her environment, balancing the need for new experience with the need for attachment. Indeed, it may be that the separation distress that is often a part of the third phase has the function of establishing safe boundaries for the
child’s explorations. The individual differences in the security of attachment that are present in this third phase have been extensively studied and are discussed below.

In the fourth phase, which begins at about three years of age, the child’s attachment behaviors change yet again. The relationship between the mother and child becomes more complex. The child becomes comfortable leaving the mother to spend time with other familiar people (e.g., relatives, pre-school teachers), especially when the child has gotten to know these people in the context of time with the mother, is healthy, and is confident about the mother’s return (Ainsworth et al., 1978; Bowlby, 1969/1982)

As part of his understanding and explanation of attachment behaviors, Bowlby used a control systems model. This model uses the analogy of a machine that changes, or corrects, its functioning to reflect a change in circumstances to explain differences in human attachment behavior. An example of this analogy is a heater that uses a thermostat to detect the temperature and turn the heater on or off depending on the detected temperature. The heater’s responses are all built in, hard-wired. However, the response varies depending on the detected temperature. In the same way an infant learns to use his or her senses in increasingly sophisticated ways, to modulate behavior, including attachment behavior. At a basic level, an infant ceases crying (as well as smiling or babbling) when picked up by the mother. As the infant matures, the control behavior becomes more sophisticated. The infant learns to follow the mother with his or her gaze and, later, to crawl then walk after the mother (Bowlby, 1969/1982). Although, Bowlby’s use of the control system analogy was applied to normative attachment behaviors, it can also be applied to individual differences.

**Individual Differences in Attachment**

Attachment theorists, in general, have seen attachment behavior, as universal. However, they identify individual differences in the form attachment takes, especially in the security of the child’s attachment to the caregiver. These differences in security, these patterns of attachment, to use Mary Ainsworth’s terminology, seem to be responsive to the caregiver’s approach to the child, another example of the control systems analogy. As with attachment in general, attachment security itself cannot be observed, but must be inferred from that which can be observed, from attachment behavior. The form of attachment behaviors are not infinite. Rather, in all cultures that have been studied they seem to be selected from the same universal, but limited, palette of instinctive behaviors, a palette developed by the evolutionary process described above. It is possible that the palette includes other patterns of attachment that the present human environment, in all its variations, simply doesn’t elicit. Perhaps glimpses of these patterns are reflected in Group D, disorganized attachment (Ainsworth et al., 1978; Belsky, 1999; Solomon & George, 1999). In large measure, it is the existence of a relationship between caregivers’ approaches to children and the nature of the children’s attachment that make attachment theory relevant to child welfare policy and practice.

**Categorization and Measurement of Individual Differences**

The primary means of measuring the quality of an infant’s attachment to his or her caregiver is the Strange Situation, which was developed by Mary Ainsworth. A second means of measuring
the quality of both infant and young child attachment is the Attachment Q-Sort, developed by Waters and Dean.

Attachment behavior is especially elicited by stress, i.e., perceived danger, and thus may not be evident in low-stress settings. Because of this, in the late 1960s, Mary Ainsworth developed the Strange Situation, a method that uses the stress of separation to assess the quality of a child’s attachment to his or her caregiver, usually the mother. This 20-minute, 8 segment, highly structured laboratory test places a stress on the child, who is about one year of age, in the form of two brief separations from the caregiver, usually the mother. The behavior of the child and caregiver before, during, and after these separations is systematically observed and recorded. Analysis of the data led to the tripartite, and later four-way, classification of attachment behaviors.

The initial analysis of the Strange Situation data included four studies or samples with a total of 106 infants. The analysis of the data from these 106 sessions led Ainsworth and her colleagues to identify three broad types of attachment behavior, initially simply referred to as Groups A, B and C. Later, B was named secure attachment; A, avoidant attachment; and C, resistant attachment. Somewhat later a fourth type, disorganized attachment, was added to describe children who do not consistently fit into the first three groups (Ainsworth et al., 1978; Ainsworth & Bowlby, 1991; Lyons-Ruth, 1996).

Based on work with 23 of the infants and their mothers who had been tested with the Strange Situation and who had been intensively studied in their homes during the first year of life, Ainsworth et al. concluded that there was a significant association between the mother’s behavior towards the child and whether the child displayed secure (Group B) attachment, or not (Ainsworth et al., 1978). The mothers of Group B infants were more sensitive to the infant’s signals and communications. She further hypothesized that avoidant (Group A) infants experience maternal rejection, especially of close body contact, submerged anger and generally compulsive adjustment (Ainsworth et al., 1978), all of which are linked to lessening the mother’s awareness of, and thus responsiveness to, the infant’s signals.

In the Strange Situation the Group B infants were slow to become distressed by the mother’s leaving the room because of their expectation that they would return. When the mothers returned, the infants sought comfort from them, and were quickly soothed. The Group B children were described by Ainsworth, et al., as having a more positive, harmonious, cooperative, compliant relationship with their mother than infants in the other groups. These infants cried less, seemed less anxious. They appreciated close bodily contact with the mother. They were confident in their exploration because the mother was a secure base from which to explore. This secure attachment was seen as giving the infants advantage in both social and cognitive development.

In the Strange Situation the Group C infants were less apt to explore their surroundings when their mothers were present, were more distressed when their mothers left the room and were difficult for the mothers to console when they returned. The infants become angry if the mothers’ timing – e.g., in picking the children up – did not meet their expectations. The Group C children’s mothers, while not rejecting, were less responsive to the children’s crying and other
signals. Ainsworth, et al. noted that Main and others have suggested that, as a result, these infants appear less competent than other infants.

The Group A infants avoided contact with their mothers when the mothers returned to the room after the Strange Situation separations. They ignored their mothers, even when their mothers coaxed the infants to come to them. These mothers were described as being rejecting and to be much less likely to hug and cuddle their infants when the infants were distressed.

In her initial study of these 23 infants and their mothers, Ainsworth found that there was no significant difference between the total number of maternal affectionate acts of all kinds. However, there was a difference in the type of acts. The mean number of hugs or cuddles, acts that require close physical contact, that Group A infants received from their mothers during their second six months was 0.02 per hour. For Group B infants it was 0.66 and for group C it was 0.31 hugs per hour. The differences between Group A and both Groups B and C were both significant (p = .003 for the former and p = .04 for the latter) (Ainsworth et al., 1978; Tracy & Ainsworth, 1981).

Over time, Ainsworth and others found that there were children who did not fit neatly into these three classifications, who did not make consistent use of a single organized attachment strategy, i.e., a type A, B or C strategy. These children were defined as having “disorganized,” or type D, attachment. In disorganized attachment there is an “…apparent lack of, or collapse of, a consistent strategy for organizing responses to the need for comfort and security under stress.” (Lyons-Ruth, 1996) Van IJzendoorn, et al., in a meta analysis of “nearly 80” studies, found that overall, about 15 percent of middle class American children display disorganized attachment (M. H. van IJzendoorn, Schuengel, & Bakermans-Kranenburg, 1999).

Although Ainsworth, et al., refer to other studies of attachment style, the bulk of their work is based on four studies of 105 infant-mother pairs, especially the 23 initially studied by Ainsworth. In an effort to determine whether the distributions of attachment styles identified by Ainsworth, et al., is typical, van IJzendoorn and Kroonenberg conducted a meta analysis of published Strange Situation studies available in the mid 1980s. They limited their analysis to studies that used the A, B and C classification, did not focus of special groups of infants (e.g., disabled infants), had no overlapping samples and did not include children over 24 months of age. They found 32 such studies of a total of 1990 children. These studies came from the United States, Western Europe, Israel, Japan and China. There were considerable variations in the findings of these studies within cultures. However, there was little intercultural variation. Indeed, 65% of all infants were found to be securely attached (Group B). This is the same as was found in studies from the United States and only slightly different than the 67% that Ainsworth, et al. found in their initial studies of 105 children. Similarly, 21% of all infants studied, infants studied in the United States, and infants initially studied by Ainsworth et al., had avoidant attachment (Group A). Resistant attachment was found in 14% of all infants studied, 14% of those studied in the United States and 12% of the infants studied by Ainsworth, et al. Van IJzendoorn and Kroonenberg concluded that there was no reason to doubt the cross-cultural validity of the Strange Situation as a measure of attachment quality. However, they did note that Strange Situation studies had only been done in relatively Westernized countries and that studies in Africa, South American and Eastern Europe were needed (M. H. van IJzendoorn & Kroonenberg, 1988). Others have questioned the universality of the interpretations of these
classifications, suggesting that they are laden with western cultural values. (See, for example, Rothbaum, Weisz, Pott, Miyake, & Morelli, 2000.)

One of several alternatives to the Strange Situation is the Attachment Q Sort. This measure was developed for use with children between the ages of 12 and 48 months. In this method an observer, either an outside observer or the parent, observes the child in its home setting for several hours. The observer then sorts a set of 75, 90 or 100 cards (depending on the version) which describe possible child behaviors into a fixed number of fixed size piles ranging from most descriptive to least descriptive of the particular child. Scoring compares this distribution with the distribution for a prototypically secure child. The scoring is a correlation that ranges from +1.0 to –1.0. The Attachment Q Sort only measures the security of a child’s attachment. It does not have a specific cut-off score below which a child is not securely attached nor does it differentiate between types of insecure attachment as does the Strange Situation. Because it is based on relatively unobtrusive observation and not a set laboratory experience that the infant learns from as does the Strange Situation, it can be repeated, thus allowing easier measurement over time (Pederson et al., 1990; Solomon & George, 1999; M. H. van IJzendoorn, Vereijken, Bakermans-Kranenburg, & Riksen-Walraven, 2004). Van Ijzendoorn, et al.(2004), conducted a meta analysis of 139 studies with a total of 13,835 children that compared the Attachment Q Sort with the Strange Situation. Their general conclusion was that, while the Attachment Q Sort could not replace the Strange Situation, it does free the measurement of the security of attachment in infants from dependence on a single measurement tool.

Relationships between parental qualities and infant attachment

If the individual differences in the form of infant attachment to caregivers were not related to the nature of the caregivers’ interactions with those infants and to the caregivers own attachment styles, then attachment would not be particularly relevant to child welfare. However, as will be discussed in the following pages, the nature of a child’s attachment to his or her caregiver is related to the nature of the caregiver’s relationship to the child, and for the child forming a new attachment, factors such as the child’s age and time with the caregiver. The latter issues are relevant to child welfare because child welfare services frequently involve moving children from one primary caregiver to another (e.g., from parent to foster parent; from foster parent to foster parent; from foster parent to parent (reunification); from foster parent to adoptive parent). Because children who receive child welfare services have usually been maltreated, the effect of maltreatment on attachment is particularly cogent.

There have been numerous efforts to identify those maternal characteristics that are associated with the development of secure attachment in infants. Beginning with Mary Ainsworth, maternal sensitivity has been identified as one of these characteristics. However, more recent work suggests that maternal sensitivity, while important, is not the only maternal characteristic, or perhaps even the most important maternal characteristic, associated with the development of secure attachment. A meta-analysis of 30 relevant studies by De Wolff and van IJzendoorn found that both mutuality and synchrony had a slightly stronger effect size ($r = .32$ and $.26$, respectively) than did maternal sensitivity ($r = .22$) (De Wolff & van IJzendoorn, 1997; M. van IJzendoorn, 1995).
A fuller explanation may be found by considering the parent’s adult attachment style overall. There is a strong relationship between the mother’s adult attachment style, as measured using the Adult Attachment Interview, a structured interview developed by Mary Main, et al. When coded, this structured interview yields classifications of autonomous (or secure), dismissing, preoccupied and unresolved/disorganized, classifications that parallel Ainsworth’s infant attachment classifications. Persons classified as unresolved/disorganized are secondarily classified in one of the first three groups. In a meta analysis of 18 studies, including 854 cases, that included a three-way cross tabulation of adult attachment and infant attachment, van IJzendoorn found a 70% correspondence between the adult’s attachment representation and the child’s attachment type. When limited to a two-way (secure/insecure child and autonomous/non-autonomous parent), the correspondence was 75%. The 9 studies, including 548 cases, that allowed a four-way cross tabulation, i.e., that included the unresolved adult attachment representation and the disorganized infant attachment, found a four-way correspondence of 63% and a two-way correspondence of 74% (M. van IJzendoorn, 1995). While the means of transmission is not clear, it is clear that children’s attachment style to a caregiver is associated with that of the caregiver.

Maltreatment, the reason that most children become involved with the child welfare system, appears to play a particular role in the development of children’s attachment. Maltreated children are less likely to develop secure attachment and more likely to develop disorganized attachment to their parent. Morton and Brown identified 13 studies reported between 1981 and 1993 that specifically studied the attachment of infants who had been abused or neglected. The types of abuse and neglect varied among these studies. In all 13 of these studies, the abused infants were less likely to have a secure attachment. In 11 of these studies, the difference between abused and non-abused populations was significant, although significance was not further defined. Overall, 76% of the maltreated infants and 34% of the controls were classified as insecurely attached (sign test; $n = 13, k = 0, p = .001$). As most of these studies were completed before disorganized attachment was identified as a separate type, only two considered disorganized attachment (Morton & Browne, 1998).

More recent studies, which have included the disorganized attachment classification, have found a close relationship between maltreatment and disorganized attachment. As noted above, Van IJzendoorn, et al., found that about 15 percent of middle class infants demonstrate disorganized attachment. However, this same meta analysis found significantly higher rates for children of lower socioeconomic status (25 percent, $p < .001$), children with alcoholic or drug abusing mothers (43 percent, $z = 8.80$), and, especially, children with maltreating parents (58 percent, $z = 11.02$). Children with neurological abnormalities such as cerebral palsy, autism or Down syndrome (35 percent overall, $z = 8.28$) were also found to have higher rates of disorganized attachment. On the other hand, the effect sizes for the relationship between the child’s disorganized attachment and the parent’s unresolved and early loss or trauma, marital discord, parental depression, parental insensitivity, and dissociation and frightening behavior were found to be small or erratic (M. H. van IJzendoorn et al., 1999).

**Attachment among different caregivers**

A child’s attachment is caregiver specific and the quality of the child’s attachment to a given caregiver may change over time. At the same time, although the quality of the child’s
attachment to one parent is not necessarily the same as the quality of the attachment to the other, at least one study identified a significant, but weak relationship between children’s attachment to their two parents (Goossens & Van Ijzendoorn, 1990). Perhaps adult attachment style is one of the factors that leads people to become couples. The attachment of children to two groups of non-familial caregivers, day care providers and foster parents, provides additional understanding about the development of attachment.

There has been limited work comparing children’s attachment to their primary caregiver and to other, non-familial, caregivers. Most of this work has been with day care caregivers. The day care and foster care situation is not the same for many reasons, including the presence of an ongoing, daily relationship between the child in day care and his or her parents, who continue to be the primary caregivers. For the child in foster care the relationship is much different. The foster parent becomes the primary caregiver and, from the perspective of the child, the parents become an erratic presence, if not absent. In spite of this, studying attachments to day care caregivers provides some insight about the attachments children form with new caregivers, including the ability of infants to form an attachment to a day care caregiver that is different from his or her attachment to either parent. This understanding may well be transferable to attachments to foster parents.

In a recent meta-analysis of 40 studies completed between 1977 and 2003, Ahnert et al., found that, overall, 60% of children were securely attached to their mothers and 62% to their fathers, but only 42% were securely attached to their day care caregivers. The difference between attachment to mothers and attachment to caregivers was significant (OR=2.93, Z=3.93, p<.001) for those studies that used the Strange Situation, but not significant for those studies that used the Attachment Q Sort. The security of attachment to day care caregivers was not associated with the child’s age at day care entry, but was positively associated with the length of time the child had been in care and with continuity of care (Ahnert, Pinquart, & Lamb, 2006). There are children who do not have secure attachment relationships with either parent who are able to form secure attachments to day care caregivers. In one of the above studies, of 75 children, 7 of the 14 who did not have a secure attachment to either parent had a secure attachment to their day care caregiver (Goossens & Van Ijzendoorn, 1990).

Special cases of attachment to different caregivers, and ones especially relevant to this research, are those of attachment to foster parents and to adoptive parents. Cole studied a group of 46 infants and their foster parents, assessing the infants with the Strange Situation when they were between 10 and 16 months of age (mean 12.57, S.D. 1.61). Neither the age at entry nor the length of time in care was specified. Sixty-seven percent of the infants had secure attachment with their foster caregiver, 5% had an insecure attachment (type not specified) and 28% had disorganized attachment. The rate of secure attachment is similar to that of the general population. The disorganized attachment rate is similar to that of lower socio-economic status children as reported by Van IJzendoorn, et al. The disorganized attachment rate of children to their foster parents is lower than the rates of children to their birth parents reported for maltreated children. In addition, the study found that the prevalence of secure attachment was related to foster parent motivation. Foster parent motivations of spiritual expression, the desire to adopt or to replace a grown child were less likely to be associated with secure attachment while motivation to increase family size or social concern for the community were more likely to be associated with secure attachment (Cole, 2005).
The degree to which infants are able to form secure attachments appears to be influenced by both the age at which the infant enters care and the foster parent’s state of mind. Specifically, children who entered foster care at a younger age and whose foster parents had autonomous states of mind were more apt to be securely attached than were those of foster parents with non-autonomous (dismissing or preoccupied) states of mind (Stovall-McClough & Dozier, 2004). Further research would be necessary to understand why age at entry or adoption is relevant to attachment with foster parents, but not with day care caregivers. These findings, coupled with the data about maltreatment, suggest that infants who enter foster care are able to form a secure attachment with the foster parent in spite of the lack of secure attachments and the frequent presence of disorganized attachments, to birth parents. Unfortunately, longitudinal studies comparing children’s attachments to their birth parents and to their foster parents are not available and, indeed, would be virtually impossible to conduct.

The age of adoption is also related to the frequency of secure attachment. In a meta-analysis of attachment in adopted children van den Dries, et al., found that the frequency of secure attachment in children adopted before 12 months of age was similar to that of non-adopted controls. However, children adopted after 12 months had significantly less attachment security. (Although adoption was not defined, it is probable that adoption age referred to placement with the adoptive family rather than the date of legal adoption.) Most of the adoptions in these studies were inter-country adoptions (van den Dries, Juffer, van IJzendoorn, & Bakermans-Kranenburg, 2009).

**Attachment over time**

Attachment is not always stable over time. For example, while multiple administrations of the Strange Situation result in the percentage of infants with each form of attachment remaining relatively constant over time, the same infants do not remain in the same groups. Belsky, et al., in two studies of 125 and 90 infant-mother pairs did not find significant stability between administrations of the Strange Situation at 12 and 18 months of age when using either the three-way (A, B, and C types) classifications or secure-insecure classification methods. They noted that their work, unlike most past work that had found significant stability, adjusted for chance associations before testing for significance (Belsky, Campbell, Cohn, & Moore, 1996).

The National Institute of Child Health and Human Development Study of Early Child Care has followed a sample of about 1000 “low risk” children from birth through age 6. The study included a number of measures including the Strange Situation at age 15 months, the MacArthur coding system of attachment at 36 months, repeated structured measures of the sensitive and stimulating quality of maternal parenting, and parent and teacher reports of the child’s social competence and behavior. The study collected longitudinal data on numerous demographic variables, maternal depression, and maternal attitudes towards child rearing. At both 15 and 36 months, 62% of the children demonstrated secure attachment to their mothers. However, only 64% of those who were securely attached at 15 months were securely attached at 36 months. In similar fashion, 16% of children demonstrated disorganized attachment at both 15 and 36 months, but only 20% of these children were the same (NICHD Early Child Care Research Network, 2001). The reasons for these differences are not fully understood. However, differences over time suggest that changes in the quality of a child’s attachment may reflect
changes in the nature of the parenting the child is receiving, or at least the child’s experience of that parenting.

By itself, the attachment classification at 15 months appeared to predict the child outcome on the mother’s rating of the child’s social skills and the teachers’ ratings of both externalizing and internalizing behavior when the child entered school. Infants who were classified as avoidant and disorganized were more likely to have later behavior problems than those classified as secure. However, when parenting quality was added to the model, the attachment classification ceased to predict outcomes. Indeed, it was parenting quality, not attachment classification, that predicted outcomes in the form of mother and teacher-rated social competence, mother and teacher-rated externalizing scores and teacher-rated internalizing scores. This is not to say that attachment played no role. Securely attached infants were less likely to be negatively effected by decreases in parenting skills than were infants with insecure attachment. Secure attachment appeared to be protective. Conversely, children with insecure-avoidant and disorganized attachment appeared to benefit, i.e., show improved behavior as 5 year olds, from improved parenting skills. It should be noted that these changes in parenting quality were relative, not absolute (NICHD Early Child Care Research Network, 2001, 2006).

Children who have had disorganized attachments as infants appear to be susceptible to long-term problems including both externalized problem behaviors, i.e., aggressive behavior, and dissociative tendencies. There has been a substantial body of work on the relationship between disorganized attachment in infancy and later, school age, aggressive behavior. The meta analysis of 12 available studies by van IJzendoorn, et al., found a combined effect size of $r = .29$ (M. H. van IJzendoorn et al., 1999). These findings regarding disorganized attachment raise questions, which will not be further explored here, about whether attachment, or at least children’s performance on measures such as the Strange Situation, is only a marker for the quality of parenting the child has experienced.

The relationships between a person’s attachment as an infant and his or her attachment style as an adult are only beginning to be explored, let alone understood. Some longitudinal studies suggest that secure infants are more likely to become autonomous adults than are those who are not secure. (See, for example, Main, Hesse, & Kaplan, 2005; Sroufe, Egeland, Carlson, & Collins, 2005). On the other hand, Grossmann, et al., did not find a relationship between attachment as measured in the Strange Situation and adult attachment, but did find a relationship between early parental behavior and later attachment representations (2005).

Relevance for Child Welfare

Attachment theory has an appeal to both practitioners and policy makers because of its seeming simplicity. It speaks to the child’s need for relationship with a caregiver without the distractions of the child’s other needs or complex development theory. It appears consistent with current Federal statute in that it can be applied to all three of the Federal child welfare goals of safety, permanency and child and family well-being (United States Department of Health and Human Services Administration for Children and Families, 2000).

The universality of attachment theory compels child welfare policy makers and practitioners to constantly consider children’s need for attachment and the effect of service decisions on
attachment. Mennen and O’Keefe have stressed the importance of applying attachment theory to practice, from the initial assessment and possible removal, through placement to reunification or other permanence. They conclude that the barriers to doing so include a lack of professionally trained agency staff and trained foster parents and inadequate fiscal supports, which especially limit access by birth families to mental health services (Mennen & O’Keefe, 2005).

Assessment and Initial Intervention

Attachment theory presents dilemmas. The importance of the child’s attachment with a parent as primary caregiver supports the provision of reasonable efforts to help a child remain safely with his or her parents. Thus, it appears that successful efforts to keep a child with the parent are consistent with attachment theory and thus in the child’s interest. At the same time, although the results of studies on the effect of age at placement have not been consistent in identifying the exact age at which detriment occurs, it is clear that that forming secure attachments becomes more difficult as infants age (Dozier, Manni, & Lindhiem, 2005; Stovall-McClough & Dozier, 2004; van den Dries et al., 2009). The dilemma is that efforts to prevent removal may not serve children’s best interests if they only delay inevitable removals, removals that are increasingly problematic as children age. Should program evaluations consider changes over time in the proportion of substantiated abuse and neglect cases of infants under, for example, 4 months of age that did not result in immediate removal, but where the child was removed after, for example, 6 months of age? As a partial solution to this dilemma, attachment theory would appear to support the very difficult development of more accurate assessment of parents and the development of effective services.

Foster Placement and Permanency

There are similar issues around the movement of children among foster placements. Attachment theory suggests that current child welfare evaluation standards such as the Federal “National Standards To Be Used in the Child and Family Services Reviews” may not be nuanced enough. Among other things, these standards consider the proportion of children (by length of stay) who had two or fewer placements (United States Department of Health and Human Services, 2006). While the quest for fewer placements is consistent with attachment theory, attachment theory also requires consideration of the age at which children move between placements. A move to a new caregiver at 3 months of age is not expected to have the same effect on a child’s ability to develop a secure attachment that a move at 10 months of age has. The relationship between age and the development of attachment suggests that moves that occur in the first six months of life, that is before the third phase of attachment behavior development, should be of lesser concern than moves after six months of age.

Other dilemmas arise when foster placement alone is considered. Although, for a multitude of reasons, it is not ethical to base a decision to remove a child from a parent based on the parent’s adult attachment style, is it ethical to consider a potential foster parent’s adult attachment style when making a placement decision? The question is, of course, clouded by the limited availability of foster parents, the cost of assessment, and the fact that the relationship between autonomous foster parent state and secure attachment is not absolute but only one of greater likelihood. Another dilemma arises from the finding that foster children are less likely to form a secure attachment to foster parents whose motivation to foster is adoption, perhaps because of
the foster parents’ anxiety about whether they will ultimately be able to adopt. If moves between placements are more detrimental as children age, i.e., if secure attachment is less likely, at the same time that foster parents who want to adopt are less likely to foster secure attachment, what is to be done? There is no easy answer. Foster parent training and social worker support may help. The ideal foster parent may be one who does not need to adopt, but who is willing to do so if necessary. The supply of such potential foster parents would appear to be limited.

Finally, perhaps the ultimate question has to do with the child’s attachment state of mind as a young adult, a question that is well beyond the scope of this study. Which child welfare interventions are associated with the development of an autonomous state of mind, the state of mind that appears to facilitate secure attachment on the part of one’s infant?
CHAPTER 3
METHODOLOGY

Study Design

This descriptive, retrospective study used longitudinal administrative data to follow a cohort of children born in 1999 who were under one year of age when they first entered foster care. This cohort differs from the usual foster care study cohort in two ways. It is a birth cohort, i.e., a cohort based on the year of birth, not an entry cohort, i.e., a cohort entering care in a certain time period. The cohort was followed until a specific age, age 9, irrespective of the number of placement episodes, rather than until a specific event, e.g., the first placement episode exit. These differences were chosen so that orientation of the study would be the children’s experience over a period of their lives (birth to age 9) rather than on service events.

Longitudinal studies using administrative data have certain inherent advantages and disadvantages. They make use of available data collected as events occur and thus are not dependent on the subjects’ recall of those events (Johnson-Reid & Barth, 2000). The size of the cohort allows the detection of bivariate and multivariate patterns. Because such studies use all persons who fit the study criteria, sampling bias is minimized. With exceptions noted below, attrition is not an issue.

Studies using administrative data also have disadvantages. They are dependent on the accuracy of the data, in this case California’s Child Welfare Services Case Management System (CWS/CMS) data. While some checks for logical consistency are possible, it is not possible to determine the accuracy of most variables. Attrition generally is not a problem. However, the CWS/CMS does not include data on reunified children who die or move out of the state. Thus deaths of children, whether from maltreatment or other causes, that occur after children leave care are not reported. Similarly, subsequent maltreatment and/or entries into care of children who have moved to other states after leaving care in California are not reported. Studies using administrative data are limited by the data elements included in the data set. Although the breadth and depth of the CWS/CMS data are unusual, data limitations about the child and family still impede the study process. In addition, because the CWS/CMS data only reports problems serious enough to cause the child to interface with the child welfare system, CWS/CMS does not include more subtle indicators of functioning, especially after the child leaves care, such as the child’s post placement educational performance, let alone indicators of the child’s quality of life, other than in the form of subsequent allegations of maltreatment.

The study cohort also has advantages and disadvantages. This cohort has experienced relatively constant child welfare policies regarding permanency. The children entered care well after the implementation of the Adoption Assistance and Child Welfare Act of 1980 (P. L. 96-272), after the implementation of California’s Adoption Initiative in 1996 (Marker & Magruder, 2001), which markedly increased the emphasis on adoption, and contemporaneously with the implementation of the Adoptions and Safe Families Act of 1997 (P. L. 105-89). Because CWS/CMS was operational in all counties at the beginning of 1998, the children’s complete case histories are included in the CWS/CMS. In addition, the social workers had had at least a year to familiarize themselves with the use of CWS/CMS before the first children in the cohort entered care.
While the implementation of CWS/CMS made this study possible, the relative newness of CWS/CMS also placed limits on the study. At the time of the study data for the 1999 birth cohort were only available for the first 9 years of the infants’ lives. This prevented any analysis of the children’s functioning as adolescents or adults. A substantially earlier cohort was not possible. Although data from the legacy paper-based Foster Care Information System is part of the California Child Welfare Services Archive, that system did not include data on parents or siblings nor did it include data on maltreatment allegations that did not result in removal from the home.

The study was not an experimental study. That is, whether a child was reunified, adopted, remained in care, etc. and the timing of these events was not based on random assignment, but was determined by the social service and court systems’ perceptions of the child’s needs and parents’ rights. Such determinations are, of necessity, subjective. A child is reunified (i.e., returned to the parent’s care) if, within statutory time frames, the child welfare agency and the court determine that the child can safely live in the parent’s home. If timely reunification is not possible, the remainder of a hierarchy of permanent placements is explored, beginning with adoption. Multiple factors influence this process. This study is intended as a pilot for future studies that will address adult functioning.

Study Population

The study population consisted of all children born in 1999 who were under one year of age when they first entered out-of-home care under the supervision of a California child welfare services agency (i.e., county welfare department). There were 5,873 such children. Of these, 3,079 infants entered care as neonates (i.e., under 29 days of age) and 2,794 entered at more than 28 days of age but less than 1 year of age. Children who were placed in out-of-home care by other service systems, primarily healthy newborns relinquished to private agencies for adoption and developmentally disabled infants placed by the Regional Centers for the Developmentally Disabled, were not included in the study. The selection methodology was designed to exclude delinquent children placed by probation officers, but this was not an issue with this cohort due to age.

Study Site

The study site was the Children’s Services Archive, which is maintained by the University of California, Berkeley, Center for Social Services Research. This archive includes demographic and placement data on all California children who have been in out-of-home care in California since 1988. Data for the period from 1988 to 1997 are from the California Foster Care Information System, and include only basic child and placement characteristics. Since the CWS/CMS was placed in operation in 1998, the Archive also has included comprehensive demographic, placement and child welfare services data not only on children in out-of-home placement, but also on all children who have been referred to county welfare departments because of abuse and/or neglect as well as on all children who receive child welfare services in their own homes. The primary source of Archive data is data downloaded quarterly from the CWS/CMS, which is the California version of the federally mandated Statewide Automated Child Welfare Information System (SACWIS). Data are entered into CWS/CMS, which also serves as an automated case management system, by county case carrying social workers and/or
clerical staff. In addition to the raw CWS/CMS tables, the Archive creates several derived tables to facilitate longitudinal data analysis. The relevant derived table for this study is a table ("UCB_FC") that includes data on each out-of-home placement of each child including basic demographic data about the child, data about the placement, data about the placement episode, and identifiers to facilitate linkages to other data tables.

California is an appropriate site because of the size and ethnic and cultural diversity of the child welfare services population, because children are probably less likely to move in to or out of the state than if the state were smaller and because the archive data are accessible to researchers. The researcher worked with the Archive as a graduate student researcher for more than five years before beginning the study and previously was involved with the development of the CWS/CMS and the analysis of CWS/CMS data as an employee of the California Department of Social Services.

Study process

The data study process was divided into two parts. The first, data collection, included the identification, cleaning and organizing of data about the sample children. The second, data analysis, was the summarization and interpretation of the resultant data using both descriptive and logistic regression methods.

Data Collection Procedures

California Children’s Services Archive data was used for this study. The specific data set utilized for the study was based on the 2009 Quarter 2 download of CWS/CMS data, which was created on September 4, 2009. Identifying data such as names and social security numbers are not included on the data files used for the Archive’s usual work, including this study. Two SAS programs with a combined total of about 7,000 lines controlled the identification, cleaning and organizing of the study data set.

Before describing this process, a clarification of the meaning of two similar terms, “placement” and “placement episode” is necessary. A placement episode, which is sometimes referred to as a “spell” of care, begins when the child leaves his or her parents’ care, an event sometimes referred to as “removal.” The placement episode ends when the child returns the parents’ care, which is referred to as “reunification,” is adopted, ages out of care, or otherwise leaves care. The placement episode contains one or more placements. For example in a single episode a child may first be placed in a traditional foster home. Later, and without returning his or her parents’ care, the child may be placed with a relative. Finally the child may return home. In such a scenario the child had two placements within a single placement episode. The child may continue to have court and agency supervision after returning home, but, unless the return home is a short trial home visit, no longer is in a placement episode. If the child returns to care at later time, either with or without a break in agency and/or court supervision, the return to care is a new placement episode. Consideration of placement episodes is further complicated by legal guardianship. If the relative caring for a child as a foster child becomes the child’s legal guardian the placement episode usually ends even though the child remains in the home, albeit with a change in the way in which the caregiver is reimbursed. The situation is defined as one where the child has left care, in spite of the fact that the only changes are ones of legal status and
funding. On the other hand, if a non-relative foster parent becomes a child’s legal guardian the placement episode continues because non-relative legal guardians are reimbursed and otherwise treated as foster parents.

The data identification, cleaning and organizing process began with selecting all placements from the UCB_FC file for children born in 1999 who had been in at least one county child welfare agency supervised placement before age 9. There were 18,580 such children who collectively had had 54,406 placements in 21,719 placement episodes. Data cleaning reduced all three of these counts as explained below. Only about a third of these children had entered care in their first year of life. Records of the remaining children, the two-thirds who appeared to have first entered care after their first birthday, were retained because some in the group might be children reentering care with a new (adopted) identity after adoption. Data from other CWS/CMS tables on non-foster care placements of these children (primarily hospitalizations) and data from CWS/CMS tables on adoption were added to the placement data from the UCB_FC file as were demographic data about primary caregivers for those placements that were in family settings (foster homes, foster family agency homes, small family homes and adoptive placements). This placement level file required extensive cleaning at both the placement and the episode level. This cleaning was designed to make corrections to the study data so that the findings and conclusions would reflect the experience of the child rather than administrative events and so that similar events would be consistently reported.

Corrections were first made at the placement level to allow an accurate count of the number of times the child experienced a change of caregiver and an accurate count of the number of days the child was in care. These corrections are necessary because of data entry errors and duplications. Duplicate records of the same placement were eliminated. When these records did not agree about placement end dates, the later placement end date was retained. Consecutive placements where the subsequent placement started within a day of the end of the previous placement and the primary caregiver was the same were merged. When two placements in different homes overlapped, the ending date of the earlier placement was adjusted to equal the start date of the subsequent placement. Most, but not all, of the above corrections were to records of children who were placed for adoption with their foster parents. This was because the foster care and adoptive placement data used to create the UCB_FC table come from separate sets of tables within the CWS/CMS. In five instances the placement start date preceded the birth date. In these instances, the placement start date was reset at the birth date. However, if both the placement start and end dates preceded the birth date, or the placement episode start preceded the birth date by more than 10 days, the child’s data was not used as it was not possible to determine whether the birth date or the initial placement data was incorrectly reported. The net effect of these changes was to reduce the number of children in the file from 18,580 to 18,559 and the number of placements beginning before the 9th birthday by 11.3%, from 54,406 to 48,277.

Corrections were next made at the placement episode level, primarily to achieve a consistent definition of the first placement episode. A placement episode is composed of one or more placements. It begins when a child leaves his or her parent’s (or guardian’s) care and ends when the child leaves out-of-home care, either by what is intended as a permanent return to a parent’s care, or by another event such as adoption, guardianship or emancipation. Placement episode start dates were adjusted to conform to the start of the first reported placement in the episode. To consistently describe the children’s experience, data cleaning included the merging or dividing of
reported placement episodes in certain circumstances. Placement episodes were merged if an episode ended on one day and the next episode started on the same or following day. A single placement episode was divided into two or more episodes if the child left a placement for a trial home visit and returned to care after a visit of more than 30 days. The ending date of the original episode would be the date the trial home visit started and the starting date of the new episode would be the date the child returned to care. This process would be repeated if there were additional trial home visits of more than 30 days followed by reentry. If the child didn’t return to care after a trial home visit that lasted more than 30 days, the placement episode termination date was changed to the date the child left the placement. This division of episodes was made to reflect the probability that an 8 month old child interprets a return to her parent’s care, especially if it lasts more than 30 days, as reunification, whether it is recorded as a trial home visit or a reunification in the case record. These trial home visit related changes increased the apparent number of first episode reunifications because children who returned to care following a lengthy trial home visit often exited to something other than reunification, usually adoption. The net effect of these changes was a slight increase in the number of placement episodes beginning before the ninth birthday of all children born in 1999 from 21,719 to 21,810.

After the modifications described in the previous paragraphs were made, the number of times a child changed primary caregivers was counted. At the first entry into care the counter was incremented by 1, even if the child entered care at birth. The counter was incremented by 1 if the child changed placements and the primary caregiver changed. If the child reunified the counter was incremented by 1 as that was a change in primary caregiver from foster parent to parent. If the child was adopted by a foster parent or if the foster parent became a guardian, the counter was not incremented because the primary caregiver did not change. When there was a gap between placements of more than a day and the reason for leaving the placement was either trial home visit or one of several reasons indicating a placement problem (e.g., caregiver request), the counter was incremented twice on the assumption that the child had been somewhere in the interim (e.g., on a trial home visit, in emergency shelter), even though there was not an explicit record of that placement. Thus, if the child was placed in one foster home when she entered care, moved to a second foster home with a different primary caregiver and then reunified the number of moves counted would be 3. If this same child returned to care and then reunified a second time the number of moves counted would be 5. If the child entered care and was adopted by the first (and only) caregiver, the number of moves counted would be 1. This count process was independent of placement episode. To conform to attachment theory, separate counts were made of the number of moves occurring before and the number of moves occurring after 6 months of age.

After the data on the children’s placements were cleaned and restructured, the children’s parents and maternal siblings were identified and these data were added to the child’s record. The CWS/CMS records basic information about most individuals on a client table and uses a client relationship table to identify the relationship between individuals. The two tables work in tandem as follows. A child and a parent each have a record on the client table. A record on the client relationship table includes the identifiers for the child and parent, the nature of the relationship (e.g., “son/mother”), and, sometimes, start and end dates for the relationship. This structure allows one person to have many relationships, e.g., with several children, a spouse, parents. The general exception to this process are substitute care providers, i.e., foster parents, adoptive parents and guardians. Demographics of these substitute care providers are maintained.
on a different set of tables. However, these substitute care providers, and their relationship to the child, may also be included on the client table and their relationships to children on the client relationship table.

Both biological mothers and fathers were identified using the relationship table method described above. The address file was searched for each parent to determine whether the parent had a prison or jail address at any time. This method would probably not identify brief incarcerations, but because the address file is used to generate notices of juvenile court hearings, should include longer incarcerations. If the parent had any incarceration history, the dates associated with the address were used to determine the temporal relationship between the incarceration and child’s stay in care.

A number of children had multiple identified mothers and/or fathers. Sometimes it was clear that these were duplicate records of the same person. For mothers, the identified parent record retained was that of the mother for whom the most information, including incarceration history, was available. In a tie, the record of the younger mother was retained. For fathers the process was more complicated in that a child may have several possible fathers due to the uncertainty of paternity. These fathers are identified on the relationship table, in descending order of certainty, as birth fathers, presumed fathers and alleged fathers. When there were multiple fathers with differing degrees of certainty, the most certain were retained. If a child had multiple fathers with the same degree of certainty, the same selection method was used as was used with multiple mothers.

After the parents were identified, the maternal siblings of each child were identified. For this process, the children of all women who had been identified as a mother of the child were considered. That is, if a child had had two possible mothers and each mother had one child, both children were defined as maternal siblings. Once the siblings were identified, a determination was made as to whether the sibling had been in care before the study child entered care and whether the sibling had been on a highly probable adoption track before the study child entered care. The latter was defined as having been freed for adoption or placed for adoption before the study child entered care or having had an adoption finalized or placement episode ended due to adoption before or within 6 months after the study child entered care. Using these multiple options were necessary because adoption data, especially from the Foster Care Information System that preceded the CWS/CMS, were often incomplete. It is very likely that not all siblings were identified, especially older siblings who had had no contact with the child welfare system. Also, children who shared a common father, but not mother, were not treated as siblings.

Study cohort children who reentered care following adoption were identified. Usually, adopted children who return to care are assigned a new client identifier. The identification of these reentering children was made with a simple matching process. Names were not used because they are not part of the Children’s Services Archive file available for the study. For each study child who was adopted, all records of children who shared the same gender and birth date who entered care after the adoption was finalized were reviewed to determine if either of the entering children’s parents shared gender and birth date with the child’s adopted parents or if an entering child’s address had the same geographic information system (GIS) coordinates as that of the adopted study child’s adoptive home. This matching methodology would not work with a much larger cohort and, would not necessarily identify correctly a reentering same-gender twin if both
were placed for adoption on the same day and only one reentered care following adoption. Following the identification of children who reentered following adoption, corrections were again made for overlapping and duplicate placements. For example, there were situations where there were two records for the post adoption placement – one with the child’s pre-adoption identity and one with the child’s post-adoption identity. Counts of moves were also recalculated to include post-adoption moves, although a separate count of pre-adoptive moves was retained as was a separate count of pre-guardianship moves. It is probable that this methodology did not identify all adopted children who reentered care.

The CWS/CMS includes data on disability and medical conditions. These tables were searched for those chronic conditions that are reportable to the Federal Adoption and Foster Care Analysis and Reporting System (AFCARS) (National Resource Center for Child Welfare Date and Technology, 2003). These data were identified for both child and parents. Parents’ data are not reportable to AFCARS and, because they were found to be quite incomplete, were not used in the analysis of the study data.

The Archive also includes a derived file of child maltreatment allegations. This file was searched to determine which of the study children had been the subjects of maltreatment allegations both after their first placement episode and after last leaving care. For adopted children the search methodology was similar to that used to identify returns to care following adoption.

The data from the above processes were merged together into a single file that included all 18,559 children born in 1999 who had entered care before their ninth birthday. This file includes 285 variables. A separate file was then created for the 5,873 children who had entered care before their first birthday and it was this file that was used for data analysis. In addition to these core files, files were created at the placement episode and individual placement level.

Data Analysis

Data analysis using SAS software included a combination of descriptive and multivariate analysis, primarily, logistic regression. Logistic regressions were utilized to provide a better understanding of the relationships between the large number of independent variables that are known to be related to each step of the child welfare process. Data analysis considered cohort children’s circumstances at key points in the child welfare process including entry into care; the end of the first placement episode; reentry into care, if reentry occurred; the end of the last placement episode, which for children with only 1 placement episode would have been the same as the end of the first episode; and at age 9 if the child was in care. To provide a comparison with other studies, the data analysis also considered the point in time status of the first placement episode at four years after entry. In addition to these analyses, separate analyses were run for children who exited to adoption and for children who exited to guardianship. These analyses were based on the first exit to guardianship and the first exit to adoption, which may have occurred at the end of either the first or a subsequent placement episode.

These analyses used consistent sets of variables. The base set included the child’s demographics and basic placement data (e.g., race/ethnicity, age at entry) that are commonly used in foster care data analysis. These analyses also included a second set of parental and sibling variables not
usually utilized in foster care data analysis (e.g., whether there was a prior sibling in care, whether the parent was incarcerated). Analyses of events later in the placement process (e.g., reentry) included variables associated with earlier aspects of the placement process (e.g., age at reunification).

The findings from these analyses are discussed in the following chapters.

*Human Subjects Approval*

This study was approved by the University of California, Berkeley Office for the Protection of Human Subjects, effective on October 31, 2008. The approval was renewed on October 31, 2009. The approval number is 2008-9-20.
CHAPTER 4
CHARACTERISTICS OF THE STUDY CHILDREN

Introduction

This study identified 5,873 infants born in 1999 who entered California foster care during their first year of life. Administrative data from the California Child Welfare Services Case Management System provides a previously unavailable window into the experience of these children with the child welfare system during the first nine years of their lives.

By their 9th birthday, all but 109 of these 5,873 children had left care at least once. A sizable majority (82.5%) of the 5,764 who left care had not reentered care and only 170 of the 1,009 who reentered care were in care at age 9. Thus 279 of the 5,873 (4.8%) were in care at age 9. Reentry into care was not a random event. It was, first of all, linked to the type of exit from care. Children who reunified were much more likely to reenter after their first exit than were children who exited to adoption or guardianship.

The results are presented in two chapters. This chapter describes the basic characteristics of the cohort children and their parents, with particular focus on the differences between children who enter as neonates and children who enter later in their infancy. Chapter 4 describes the near-term child welfare outputs (i.e., status at age 9) experienced by these children and the factors associated with these outputs. The tables referred to in these discussions are in the Appendix.

The Children

The study population is from the California Child Welfare Services Case Management System and includes the 5,873 California children born in 1999 who entered child welfare supervised foster care before their first birthday. Slightly over half (3,079, 52.4%) entered care as neonates, i.e., before 29 days of age. Most (2,507, or 42.7% of the cohort) who entered as neonates entered before 8 days of age. Because this cohort is based on the year of birth, it includes children who entered foster care in both 1999 (76.6%) and 2000 (23.4%). The characteristics of these infants are summarized on Table 1.

The 5,873 infants in this study cohort represent about 1.13% of the 518,073 children born in California in 1999 (California Department of Health Services, 2002). A few of the 5,873 were born in states other than California or, in rare instances, in other countries. At the same time, some infants born in California may have entered care in other states. The number of migrants is uncertain. Although 98.7% of the children for whom the birth state was reported were born in California, the birth state was not reported for 18.3% of children and the birth country for 15.4%. Non-reporting of birthplace may not be random for a variety of reasons, including immigration status. Only 12 cohort infants were reported to have been born outside the United States, 11 in México and 1 in Guatemala.

The gender distribution of the cohort (51.2% male) is similar to that of 1999 California births (51.1% male) (California Department of Health Services, 2002). The ethnic distribution is not similar. Although exact comparison is not possible because of missing cohort data on maternal ethnicity and differences in classification, in general entry rates for Hispanics and Whites are similar to each other, rates for Blacks are about 4 times those of Whites and Hispanics and entry
rates for Asians are about a quarter of those for Whites and Hispanics. Entry rates for American Indians appear to be higher than those of Whites and Hispanics, but exact rates are elusive because of inconsistencies in the reporting of American Indian status in both CWS/CMS and vital statistics data.

The composition of this cohort may be compared to other cohorts of infants who have entered foster care in California in recent years. Two cohorts are especially relevant – that of infants entering care in 1999 and the cohorts of infants entering care between 1988 and 1994 studied by Needell. The cohort in this study is similar in gender and ethnic composition to the cohort of children reported by the University of California at Berkeley Center for Social Services Research website who entered foster care in 1999 at less than one year of age, 24.6% of whom were born in 1998 (Needell et al., 2010).

The cohort in the current study is both similar to and different from the cohort of infants entering care between 1988 and 1994 studied by Needell (Needell, 1996). The age of entry into care is similar. Half of the infants entered as neonates in both cohorts. Needell found that 52.1% entered on or before 30 days of age. In this study, 53.1% entered on or before 30 days of age, an age division not otherwise used in this analysis, which defines neonates as infants 28 days of age or less. In both this cohort and the cohort studied by Needell, almost 80% entered before six months of age. The differences in the ethnic composition of the infants in the two cohorts reflect the change in the ethnic composition of California’s child population during the intervening years. This study cohort has a smaller proportion of African American and White children and a larger proportion of Hispanic children than in the Needell study cohort. Table 2 compares these three study cohorts.

About a third, 36%, of the study children were reported (at some point while in the child welfare system) to have a “diagnosed disability” (Table 1). Most of these disabilities (30.6% of all children) were ones the Federal Adoption and Foster Care Analysis and Reporting System (AFCARS) classifies as “Diagnosed Other Conditions.” Some children were reported to have disabilities that the AFCARS system reports separately, including mental retardation (4.8%), visual and/or hearing impairments (2.4%), and emotional disturbance (3.6%). Less than one percent (0.8%) of the children were reported to have had prenatal alcohol exposure and 6.1% were reported to have had prenatal drug exposure, rates much below those reported in the literature. (See, for example, Brook & McDonald, 2009; and Fuller & Wells, 2003.) A child may have had more than one reported condition. The meaning and accuracy of the reported frequency of disability is uncertain and little independent verification is possible. An exception is mental retardation. Adoption Assistance Program payment data on cohort children who exited to adoption reports that the most recent Adoption Assistance Program payment for 86 of the adopted study children was based on the California Regional Center rate structure, a rate structure that only applies to children with developmental disabilities, primarily mental retardation. Only 32 of these 86 adopted children were reported to be mentally retarded prior to their adoption. This raises doubt about the accuracy of the reporting of disability described at the beginning of this paragraph, or at least the disability of mental retardation in the early years of CWS/CMS implementation. Because of these doubts and because reporting of disability appears to increase with age, disability status is not a variable in the logistic regressions.
Most of the children (86.6%) initially entered care because of neglect. The remainder entered care because of physical abuse, sexual abuse or for other reasons such as emotional abuse, relinquishment for adoption and child’s disability. The entry reasons for some of the children in the “Other” category suggest data entry errors, e.g., the entry reason for 33 infants was “law violation.” Because of the relatively small number of children entering care for reasons other than neglect, the logistic regressions in this study simply separate entrance reasons into neglect and other.

**Mothers**

At least some data are available on all but 225 of the mothers of the children in the cohort. These data are summarized on Tables 3 through 8. A logistical regression using the child characteristics included on Table 1 and the reason the first placement ended suggests that the lack of data on these 225 mothers is not random. The most important factor was the child being adopted at the end of the first placement episode (odds ratio = 2.206, p < .0001). The reasons for this lack of data are not clear. Some children may have been abandoned and no mother ever identified. It may also be that the link between the mother and child in the CWS/CMS was severed after the termination of her parental rights. These odds ratios are reported on Table 4.

The reported race and ethnicity of the mothers and children were similar. The primary difference is that the ethnicity of children of white mothers is sometimes reported to be Hispanic (16%) or Black (4%). These similarities and differences in reported ethnicity are shown on Table 6.

The median age of the mothers at the time of the child’s birth for whom age was reported was 27 years. The lower quartile was 22, the upper quartile was 32. African American mothers were somewhat older and Hispanic mothers somewhat younger than the median. Greater differences in age were associated with the child’s age at entry. The median age of mothers of neonates was 29 while the median age of mothers of older infants was 24. These differences are shown on Table 7 and discussed in more detail later in this section.

About 10% of the mothers were incarcerated while the child was in care for a long enough period to have had a jail or prison address recorded in the child’s case record. At least 170 of these mothers were incarcerated during the first month the child was in care, 126 of these at the time the child entered care. These last two numbers are minimums because for 52 other mothers the beginning dates of the jail or prison addresses were missing, whether this was because the start of the incarceration preceded the agency’s involvement with the child or for another reason is unknown. These data are included on Table 5.

The CWS/CMS is designed to collect data on characteristics such as the parent’s disability status, immigration status, literacy and marital status. However, at least for this cohort from the second year of CWS/CMS implementation, these data are usually missing. For example, whether the mother had a clinically diagnosed disability is not reported for 97.9% of mothers; the immigration status is not reported for 46.2% of mothers; the literacy is unknown for 63.7% of mothers; and marital status is not reported for 60.0% of mothers. For those for whom marital status is reported, at the last update of the data 52.4% were never married, 34.3% married and the remainder were divorced, legally separated or widowed. Available data are shown on Table 8.
Data on the mothers’ primary language has the, probably false, appearance of being complete. English is reported as the primary language of 87.9% of the mothers; Spanish of 10.1% of the mothers. However, given that 43.7% of mothers of children born in 1999 in California were foreign born (California Department of Health Services, 2002), this seemingly complete reporting of language may reflect the fact that the system defaults to English rather than the rate at which immigrant mothers become proficient in English.

Maternal Siblings

About a quarter (23.7%) of the children of the identified mothers in the study cohort had no other reported siblings, in care or not, at the time of foster care entry. Fewer than a fifth (18.2%) of the mothers of neonates had no other children. The proportion of children without siblings may be overstated because the mother may have had other children who were not recorded in the CWS/CMS. For many mothers with older children, this was not the first experience with a child in foster care. Forty-one percent of all mothers and 53.3% of those mothers who had older children had had another child in care. More than ten percent (10.7%) had a child who either had been adopted, or was well into the adoption process, that is who had been freed or placed for adoption when the cohort child entered care or whose adoption was completed within six months after a cohort child’s entry into care. When only mothers for whom the cohort child was not their first child were considered, 65.4% of the neonates and 38.1% of the older infants had had a sibling in care and 19.8% of the neonates and 6.8% of the older infants had had a sibling adopted. These data are summarized on Tables 9 and 10.

Fathers

Data on fathers are less complete than are data on mothers and are summarized on Tables 11 and 12. No data are available on 660 (11.2%) of the fathers. Birth dates, which may be an indicator of the level of agency involvement and/or the mother’s involvement with the fathers, are available for 4,510 (86.6%) of the 5,213 identified fathers. While missing data on mothers maybe an artifact of either abandonment or the child’s adoption, missing data on fathers appears related to the child’s characteristics, especially the child’s ethnicity. The logistic regression found that fathers were less likely to be identified when the children were Black; when the first placement episode ended with reunification or adoption; and when the child had a reported disability. On the other hand, the father was less likely to be identified when the child was removed because of neglect. The higher likelihood of fathers being identified when the first episode ends in adoption probably reflects the fact that adoption cannot occur without the legal termination of the father’s rights, a process that strongly encourages the identification of the father. These odds ratios are shown on Table 13.

The median reported age of the fathers at the time of the child’s birth was 30 years. The lower quarter was 24, the upper quartile was 37. As with the mothers, African American fathers were somewhat older and Hispanic fathers somewhat younger than the white fathers. Also as with mothers, the greater differences in median age were associated with the child’s age at entry. The median age of fathers of neonates was 33 and of fathers of older infants was 28.

About two-thirds of the fathers were identified as either birth fathers or presumed fathers. The remaining third were identified as alleged fathers.
As with the mothers, the reported ethnicities of the fathers were similar to that of their children. These similarities and differences are shown on Table 14.

A higher proportion of the fathers than mothers were reported to have been incarcerated, with 13.8% of the known fathers, but 10.0% of mothers, having been incarcerated at some point while the child was in care. The incarceration data about fathers at specific points in time is even less certain than that of the mothers because specific dates of incarceration are not available for 154 of the 719 fathers with a jail or prison address. Fathers’ incarceration data are shown on Table 11.

The levels of missing data for fathers on other demographic indicators of immigration status, literacy and marital status are all above 70%. As with the mothers, these data do not appear to be useful because of their sparseness and the possibility that the missing data may not be random.

Both Parents

There were 5,062 children for whom both a mother and a father could be identified from CWS/CMS relationship data. After identifying these pairs, an effort was made to identify the relationship at any point in time between the two members of each of the pairs. The CWS/CMS only reported a relationship between the identified parents for 3,435 of the 5,062 pairs. Of these, 1,476 were identified as having lived in the same home at some point in time. The most common relationship between two parents with an identified relationship was that of significant other (38.0%). There are no time boundaries on these reported relationships, so it isn’t possible to know whether, for example, the parents were in the same home at the time of initial removal or at the time of the first reunification. The frequency of missing data makes understanding of the relationships between the parents difficult. It may be that social workers did not enter relationships between parents as an oversight, or it may be that relationships were not entered when they were not perceived as being relevant. Finally, it is difficult, if not impossible, to more than speculate about which children might have been a part of a two-parent family at a specific point in time, e.g., removal or reunification. These relationships are shown on Table 15.

The above discussion noted that 10.0% of mothers and 13.8% of fathers had been incarcerated at some time during the child while the child was in care. When only children where both parents are known are considered, only 3.1% of the children had parents who were both incarcerated (not necessarily at the same time), but about one in five (19.4%) children had at least one parent who was incarcerated at some point in time during his or her placement. However, the proportion of children who had an incarcerated parent during their first month of care was less, between 5.7 and 9.9%, depending on what portion of the parents whose incarcerations were undated were incarcerated during the child’s first month in care. Incarceration figures may be subject to distortion because of unidentified parents. If unidentified parents, especially fathers, are either much more or much less likely to be incarcerated than identified fathers, then overall incarceration rates would change substantially. They also wouldn’t include brief incarcerations that didn’t result in an address change in the CWS/CMS system. Incarceration rates are shown on Tables 16, 17 and 18.
Because the descriptive data discussed above frequently suggests differences between children who entered care as neonates and those who entered in later infancy and because of the associations between the timing of entry into care and the foster care outputs of reunification and adoption discussed in the next section, these differences were further examined using logistic regression. Model 1 (Table 19) which only included the child characteristics of gender and race/ethnicity and service characteristics of removal reason and removal county found significant differences in all of these factors between children who entered care as neonates and children who entered later in infancy.

Model 2 (Table 20) added parent and sibling variables including whether the mother’s identity was known, whether father’s date of birth was known, whether the mother was incarcerated at some time during the placement, whether the father was incarcerated, the mother’s age at birth and whether other of the mother’s children (i.e., prior sibling in care) had been in care before the cohort child. The association with county of removal present in the initial model was not present in this model. The association with race/ethnicity in the initial model was substantially less with the only significant difference being between Black and White children, with the latter being less likely to enter as newborns (odds ratio = 0.806, p = 0.0079). Neglect, although the primary reason for removal for all groups, continued to be strongly associated with likelihood of entry as newborns (odds ratio = 3.751, p <.0001). Several factors including whether the father’s date of birth was known, whether the mother was incarcerated within a month of the child entering care, the mother’s age at the child’s birth and all three factors associated with prior siblings were all associated with removal as a newborn. Children who had one or more older siblings, but none in care, were less likely to enter as neonates while children who had had older siblings in care were more likely to enter as neonates. The association with a prior sibling having been adopted was especially strong (odds ratio = 3.287, p <.0001).

An understanding of the reasons for the strong association between having had another child in care, and especially having had another child adopted, and removal as a newborn requires additional research, probably involving mixed methods. However one can speculate that these are mothers who suffer both from having very severely limited parenting skills, perhaps further compromised by substance abuse, and from being watched closely by public agencies, medical providers and family.

Considering the differences between those infants who enter as neonates and those who enter later in infancy is important. First of all, their experience at the beginning of life is very different. The opportunity for the parent, especially the mother, and infant to interact before the infant’s removal was limited and often non-existent. For the parent, there is a danger of the infant being only an abstraction, not a person requiring care, protection and affection. For the infant, beginning the process of attaching with the mother is precluded. Secondly, as described in the next chapter, while the prospect of returning to the parent’s care is limited for all infants, it is especially so for children who enter as neonates. The resolution of the first placement episode, that is whether the child returns home, is adopted, exits to guardianship, or remains in care and the child’s status in future years, is much different for infants who enter as neonates than for other infants.
CHAPTER 5
THE CHILD WELFARE EXPERIENCE OF THE STUDY CHILDREN

Introduction

This section describes key events in the child welfare experience of the 5,873 study children during their first nine years of life. It begins with a discussion of the end of the first placement episode, focusing on the ways in which the cohort children left the episode and characteristics associated with these different exits. To allow comparison with the experience of other infant cohorts, the discussion of the first episode begins with a comparison of the first placement episode status of the children in this cohort after four years in care with earlier and later cohorts of infants at the same point in time. This is followed by a discussion of the outputs of the first episode as they are known at age 9. Consideration of the first episode is followed by an examination of those children who returned to care by type of exit: reunification at the end of the first episode, adoption either after their first or subsequent episodes and guardianship, also after both initial and subsequent episodes. The discussion of placements concludes with an examination of the placement status of children at age nine. Finally, there is a brief discussion of referrals for abuse and neglect that follow the last exit from care.

First Episode - status after four years in care

The first placement episode experience of the children in this study cohort may be compared with the earlier California infant cohorts studied by Needell (Needell, 1996) and a six-month California infant entry cohort from 2004 (the most recent period for which 4 years of data are available) reported by the Center for Social Services Research at the University of California at Berkeley (Needell et al., 2010). Because the available data from these comparison cohorts was based on time in care, the data from the study cohort are reported by time in care for the comparison. Four years in care is used because Needell examined the first placement episode status of infants who entered care between 1988 and 1994 four years after the children entering care.

Comparison of the three cohorts shows a slight increase in reunification rates and marked changes in the adoption and still in care rates. Needell reported a 42.4% reunification rate, the rate for this study was 45.6%, and the 2004 CWS/CMS cohort had a 45.5% reunification rate. Adoption and still in care rates were markedly different between the Needell study and this cohort. Four years after entry, 12.5% of the children in the Needell study cohort had exited to adoption. In this study 38.1% had exited to adoption and an additional 5.1% had exited to guardianship. Needell did not separately report on guardianship, a relatively rare exit type before the implementation of California’s Kinship Guardianship Assistance Payment Program (KinGAP) in 2000. The differences in these adoption rates are mirrored in the still in care rates which were 42.1% in the cohort studied by Needell and 9.8% in this study cohort. In short, in the 5 to 11 years between the Needell study cohort and this study’s cohort, the proportion of children still in their first care episode after 4 years and the proportion of children exiting to permanency in the form of adoption and guardianship roughly traded places. Data from the 2004 infant entry cohorts suggest that this first placement episode trend has continued. The proportion adopted has increased to 46.6%, and the proportion in care has continued to decline to 4.4%. These cohorts are compared on Table 21. This comparison suggests that, at least when only the
first placement episode is considered, this study cohort is one that was strongly affected by the transition to permanency planning, but that the transition was not complete, and may still not be complete.

First Episode – Status at age 9

By their ninth birthday, all but 109 children (1.9%) had exited from their first care episode. Most had left either by reunification with one or both parents (45.9%) or by adoption (44.2%). A few (6.5%) exited to guardianship, usually with kin. Table 22 summarizes these first episode exits. Not unexpectedly, the median time to reunification was much shorter (181 days) than the median time to adoption (880 days) or guardianship (803 days). Mean and median times to first episode exit are shown on Table 23. Chart 2, which is in Chapter 6, shows these exits over time. The basic characteristics of cohort children by first exit type are shown on Table 24. The second page of this table includes the number of moves experienced by type of exit. About half of the children exiting to adoption (49.3%) and guardianship (56.7%) experienced no moves after six months of age.

In addition to the primary exits of adoption, reunification and guardianship, some children exited in other ways. Thirty-five died during their first placement episode. The cause of death was reported for 23 of these 35 children. Of these, 10 died of natural causes, 2 of homicide or confirmed or suspected abuse and 3 of accidents. The cause of death for 8 of the children was reported as “undetermined.” Earlier unpublished work by this author suggests that deaths while in foster care that are reported to be from abuse are usually the result of injuries suffered prior to entering care. Fifty-six children left care for other reasons, 31 of these were because other agencies were responsible for the case. Because of the lack of data about many of the deaths and the heterogeneity of those exits reported as “other,” these exits were not separately analyzed and are not described in further detail.

The output of each episode of foster care involves the implementation of a series of decisions regarding the most appropriate plan for a child. This process appropriately defaults to reunification. Only if reunification can not be achieved within a reasonable time frame, if reunification is rejected by the court at the outset because of the severity of abuse or the parents’ past history with other children, or if the parents decide to voluntarily relinquish their child for adoption are other options implemented, the principal ones (in priority order) being adoption, guardianship and long term foster care. These latter options are further weighted by giving value to placement with kin. The structure established by California Welfare and Institutions Code Section 366.21 is an example of this prioritization (California Legislative Counsel, 2009). Because of this structure, this analysis is in two parts. The first compares those children who reunified with those who did not. The second compares those non-reunifying children who exited to adoption, exited to guardianship or remained in care.

Reunification

By nine years of age, 2,698 (45.9%) of the children had ended their first placement episodes by reunifying with their parents. For most, this was the child’s last exit from care, but some reentered care later. These reentries are discussed later in this chapter. More than half (1,581, 58.6%) of these first episode reunifications occurred before the child’s first birthday and 89.5%
(2,414) occurred before the second birthday. In this analysis, children who left care for more than 30 days on trial home visits were treated as having reunified when the trial home visit began. If they returned to care from the visit after more than 30 days, they were treated as having begun a new placement episode.

A logistic regression (Table 25) identified factors associated with reunification at the end of the first placement episode. This regression included the independent variables used in the earlier consideration of children entering care as newborns and added the additional variable of whether the child entered as a newborn. Because this model included the mother’s age at the child’s birth, 247 cases were dropped from the logistic regression because of missing data. A model which did not include the mother’s age, and thus included all records, yielded similar findings, i.e., there were no changes in which independent variables had statistically significant associations with the dependent variables.

With the exception of gender and, for the most part, ethnicity, all of the regression variables were associated with either a decreased or increased likelihood of reunification. As shown on Table 25, entering as a newborn (odds ratio = 0.590, p <.0001), entering due to neglect (odds ratio = 0.637, p <.0001), having an incarcerated mother during the first 30 days of care (odds ratio = 0.646, p = 0.0134), and having been removed in Los Angeles County (odds ratio = 0.744, p <.0001) all were associated with a reduced probability of reunification. Children whose father’s date of birth was known (odds ratio = 1.772, p <.0001) were more likely to reunify. Hispanic children were slightly more likely to reunify than were Black children (odds ratio = 1.205, p = 0.0099). Children who had older siblings who had not preceded them in care were more likely to reunify than children with no older siblings (odds ratio = 1.209, p = 0.0127). Children who had had siblings in care who had not been adopted were less likely to reunify (odds ratio = 0.631, p <.0001) and children whose siblings had been adopted were much less likely to reunify (odds ratio = 0.240, p <.0001).

First Episode Exits for those children who didn’t reunify

There were 3,084 children who either left their first placement episode by adoption or guardianship or who were still in care at age 9 (i.e., children who did not reunify, die or exit for “other” reasons). Most (2,594, 84.1%) left their first placement episode by adoption. However 381 (12.4%) exited to guardianship and 109 (3.5%) were still in their first placement episode at age 9. Adoption was a more common first episode exit for children who entered care as neonates than for children who entered care in later infancy. The exit and placement status of children after their first placement episode is shown on Table 22.

A multinominal logistic regression (Table 26) identified factors associated with each of these first placement episode outputs. The resulting odds ratios suggest that although adoption was by far the most likely outcome for all non-reunifying children, the odds of adoption were greater for some children than for others. Adoption was less likely for children in Los Angeles than for children in other counties. Adoption was more likely for children who entered as neonates than for children who entered in later infancy and more likely for White and Hispanic children than for Black children. Shifting the ethnic baseline to white indicated that adoption was more likely for White children than for either Hispanic or Black children.
Children who had older siblings who had not preceded them in care were less likely to be adopted and thus more likely to be in care (odds ratio = 2.834, p = 0.0020) or to have exited to guardianship (odds ratio 1.703, p = 0.0029) than were children with no identified siblings. It may be that the continuing needs for placement for these children are more apt to be related to their specialized care needs than to their parents’ limitations. Children who had had older siblings who were adopted were less likely to exit to guardianship (odds ratio = 0.372, p = 0.0003) to be adopted.

Several of the variables reported on Table 24 which might appear to be related to how the child left the first episode may reflect the structure of the child welfare system. For example, children who remain in care or exit to guardianship appear more likely to be identified as disabled than were children who were adopted. Disability may discourage adoption. It is also possible that children who remain in care are more likely to have existing disabilities identified as they age. Children who are placed with relatives appear more likely to exit to guardianship and less likely to exit to adoption than are children in non-kin foster care. While this may be linked to the reluctance of some relatives to adopt, it is also linked to fiscal constraints. Financial assistance at the foster care rate level is only available to kin guardians from the Kinship Guardianship Assistance Payment Program, which requires that the child leave formal foster care. Relative placements may also be a function of time in care in that agencies may be more able to identify appropriate relative caregivers when children spend more time in care thus leading to more relative placements for children who don’t reunify quickly. Financial assistance at the foster care rate level is only available to non-kin guardians by remaining within the foster care system. Because of the endogenous character of these variables, they are not included in the logistic regressions.

**Those who never left care**

Although there were 109 cohort children who remained in care from the time of their entry into foster care until at least their ninth birthday, this figure overstates the number of children who had not achieved some semblance of permanency. Although the CWS/CMS data are internally contradictory, it appears that somewhat more than half of these 109 children were living with relatives and/or non-relative legal guardians. Unlike children with relative guardians who may exit the formal foster care system and receive financial support equivalent to that of foster care, children with non-relative guardians must remain in the foster care system if their placement costs are to be publicly funded. Most of the children not with relatives or legal guardians were living in foster family settings of some sort. Only 5 of the children were living in institutional settings, that is in group homes (3) or in non-foster care placements (2). The latter placements are usually medical facilities.

The contradictions are a result of both the design of this portion of the CWS/CMS and inaccurate data entry. The conclusion that more than half of the children have achieved some degree of permanency is based on the assumption that there is a degree of permanency if the children are reported to be living with either relative (10) or non relative (24) guardians (whether in a guardian’s home or foster home), with relative, non-guardians in either relative homes (21) or in adoptive placement (1). If only these combinations are accepted, at least 56 of the 109 children who never left care were living with relatives and/or guardians at age 9. These combinations are shown on Table 27.
Reentry

Reentries after the first episode in care

By their ninth birthday, all but 109 of the 5,873 children who entered care in their first year of life had left care at least once. More than a sixth (1,009 of 5,729, 17.2%) of those who left care (other than by death) had reentered care, but only 170 of these children were in care at age 9. Reentry into care was not a random event. It was, first of all, linked to the type of exit from care. Children who reunified were much more likely to reenter after their first exit than were children who exited to adoption or guardianship. A third (33.7%) of those children who initially reunified reentered care at least once before their ninth birthday, as did 12.1% of those who exited to guardianship and 1.7% of those who exited to adoption. Reentries from guardianship and adoption often were brief. Discussions of reentries from adoption and guardianship will combine the reentries of those children who were adopted or exited to guardianship after their first placement episode with those who reentered after subsequent placement episodes. Table 28 compares the reentry status with the status at the end of the first placement episode.

Reentry following First Placement Episode Reunification

Nine hundred eight (33.7%) of the 2,698 children whose first placement episode ended with reunification reentered care at least once before their ninth birthday. The characteristics of children who reentered are compared with those who did not on Table 30. Logistic regression (Table 31) found many of the observed differences to be significant. Children whose initial removal was due to neglect were more likely to reenter (36.3 vs. 22.0%, odds ratio = 1.857, p < .0001). Asian children had lower reentry rates (17.2%) than members of other identified ethnic groups, which all had reentry rates above 30%. The differences between Asians and Blacks and Whites, but not Hispanics, were significant at the p = 0.05 level. Children who had older siblings were more likely to reenter. Those with older siblings who had been in care but not adopted (43.2% vs. 26.5%, odds ratio = 2.239, p < .0001) and those with older siblings who had been adopted (43.0% vs. 26.5%, odds ratio = 1.855, p = 0.0061) were especially more likely to reenter.

Two findings may be related to agency practice. Children whose initial removal was in Los Angeles County were less likely to reenter (26.0 vs. 36.3%, odds ratio: 0.623, p <.0001). They also were less likely to reunify after their first placement episode (38.9 vs. 49.1%). It should be noted that in more recent cohorts, both reunification and reentry rates for Los Angeles infants have become similar to those of the remainder of the state (Needell et al., 2010).

The second factor is related to the time in care and/or the child’s age at reunification. Among children who reunified between 0 and 4 years of age, reentry rates declined with age. However the differences among these rates were not only significant.

Children who had a reported diagnosed disability appear to have reentered more frequently (56.8% vs. 24.3%) than those without reported disability. It is not clear whether children with disability are more apt to reenter or whether children who reenter have a greater chance, because of age and exposure, of being diagnosed.
The most common status at age 9 for the children who reentered after a first episode reunification was adoption (377, 41.5%) followed by reunification (313, 34.5%). This status was not necessarily how the second episode ended, as some children had more than one reentry (Table 29).

Reentries Following Adoption

2,993 of the children in the study were adopted prior to their ninth birthday. Most (2,594), but not all, of these children were adopted at the end of their first placement episode. The other 399 children were adopted after a second or subsequent placement episode. Fifty-one cohort children who reentered care after adoption were identified. Because adopted children who reenter care are usually assigned a new client identifier in CWS/CMS, the identification of these children required matching of child and adoptive parent gender and birth dates as described in the methodology. It is possible that not all reentering adoptive children were identified. Characteristics of these 51 children, and of the 2,942 adopted children who apparently did not reenter, are shown on Table 32. The mean and median numbers of moves prior to the initial (or only) adoption are shown on Table 33.

Thirty-two of the 51 children who reentered care following adoption returned to their adoptive home, 13 within a week of reentry. The CWS/CMS data do not shed light on the circumstances surrounding these brief reentries. Six of the remaining children were adopted by other families. Thirteen were still in care at age 9, 1 of whom was placed in a group home. The number of children in each of these three groups is small and drawing conclusions about each group is risky. However, the fact that the median age at reentry of children who were adopted by a new family after reentry was 4 and of those still in care at age 9 was 7 suggests that a new adoption, or return to the adoptive home, may be possible for at least some of the children who were in care at a age 9. Basic characteristics of these three groups of reentering children are shown on Table 34.

A logistic regression of characteristics associated with adopted children reentering care found no association between most characteristics and reentry (Table 35). Exceptions included race ethnicity, age at adoption and moves before 6 months of age. White children were less apt to reenter than were Black children (Odds ratio = 0.355, p = 0.0157). As age of adoption increased, the likelihood of reentry decreased. This last may be a function of less exposure to the risk of reentry. Probably the most interesting finding concerns the number of changes of primary caregiver the child experienced before adoption. There was no significant association between the number of moves before six months of age and reentry. However, there was a significant association between the number of moves at six months of age and later and reentry (Odds ratio = 1.565, p = <.0001). The mean number of moves between six months of age and adoption for the 13 children who remained in care at age 9 was 3.8, for those who reentered, but were not in care the mean was 2.6 moves. For those who never reentered, the mean was 1.4 moves (Table 33).

In addition to returning to formal care, it is possible for adopted children to be placed outside of the adoptive home, usually in group homes (i.e., residential treatment), by their adoptive families. These placements usually are funded by the Adoption Assistance Program (AAP). Available data do not support the conclusion that children in the study cohort have had
placements outside of the adoptive home funded by AAP. There are AAP payment data for all but 97 of the 2,993 children who were adopted. None of these children are reported to have been placed out of the adoptive home at AAP expense. Although, 78 children are reported to have received payments of over $2,000 at some time during their placement, the reasons for these payment levels are reported to be the Regional Center (i.e., developmentally disabled) rate structure (59 children) and, to a much lesser degree, the Foster Family Home rate structure, reasons that are consistent with these payment levels while in the adoptive home.

Reentries Following Guardianship

Four hundred sixty children left a first and/or subsequent placement episodes to guardianship. Sixty-one (13.2%) of the children who exited to guardianship later returned to care. However, just as exits to guardianship are a change in legal status (from that of foster child to ward of a guardian) and placement funding (from foster care funding to Kinship Guardian Assistance Payment Program (Kin-GAP) funding) and seldom a change of caregiver, reentries from guardianship may be only a change in legal and funding status in the opposite direction or they may be a change in both legal status and caregiver.

It is difficult to form generalizations about the experience of these 61 children. The first foster placement upon return to care for 30 of the 61 children were living with the former guardian. Eight of these later left that caregiver’s home. But, 4 of the 31 who were placed with a caregiver other than the former guardian upon return to care later returned to the former guardian’s care. The net result of these children’s moves and changes in legal statuses is that at age 9, almost half (26) were living with the former guardian, either as adopted children (11), guardianships (6), foster children (8) or in some other relationship (1). Nine of the 61 had reunified with parents and 6 had been adopted by somebody other than the former guardian. One had died. Although almost a third (19) were in care at age 9, as noted above 8 of these were in their former guardian’s care as foster children. Three were placed in group homes. The children’s statuses are summarized on Table 36.

Status at age 9

Altogether this chapter has focused on returns to care, it is important to remember that 4,671 (81.9%) of the 5,717 children who left their first placement episode other than by death had not returned to care, even in the technical way that some of the guardianship children returned to care, by their ninth birthday. However, because returns to care were not evenly distributed by type of first episode exit, the overall status of children at age 9 was different from that at the time of first episode exit.

At the end of their first placement episode, slightly more children had reunified (2,698, 45.9%) than had been adopted (2,594, 44.2%). At age 9, after reentries and, for most, subsequent exits, 2,114 (36.0%) of the children had last exited to reunification and 2,980 (50.7%) had last exited to adoption. At age 9, 109 (1.9%) of children were still in care in their first placement episode. They were joined by 170 children who had returned to care and not exited so that 279 (4.8%) of the cohort children were in care at age 9. There were small changes in the proportions of children exiting to guardianship, other exits or because of death. The children’s statuses at the end of the first and last placement episodes are shown on Table 37.
Chart 1. Case Flow – Children Born in 1999 who Entered Foster Care Before their First Birthday.

**First Exit**

- **Reunified**
  - 2698 (1790/908)

- **Adopted**
  - 2594 (2550/44)

- **Guardianship**
  - 381 (331/50)

- **Death**
  - 55 (35/0)

- **Other**
  - 56 (44/12)

- **In care**
  - 109 (109/0)

**Status at Age 9**

- **Reunified**
  - 2114 (1790/324)

- **Adopted**
  - 2980 (2550/430)

- **Guardianship**
  - 412 (331/81)

- **Death**
  - 36 (35/1)

- **Other**
  - 52 (44/8)

- **In Care**
  - 279 (109/170)

Explanation for first exit and status at age 9: The first number is the total with that status. The first number is parenthesis is number who did not reenter between first exit and age 9. The second number is the number that reentered. The numbers on the lines show what happened to those who reentered.

* 28 adopted children reentered care then returned to adoptive home.
** 4 guardianship children and 1 other child were adopted after leaving first episode but without formal reentry.
The net result of these changes is that at age 9, 584 (21.6%) fewer children were reunified than had been reunified at the end of their first placement episode. The proportion adopted was greater by 14.9%, the proportion exiting to guardianship was greater by 8.1% and the proportion in care by 156%. It is important to remember that these changes are the result of the experience of the minority of children who reentered care (1002). For most children, the first and last placement episodes were the same episode.

Two charts show the differences between first and last exit. Chart 1 shows the status flow between the first and last exit. Chart 2, which is in Chapter 6 and is discussed in that chapter, shows the number of children by first and last episode status over time. Chart 1 traces the child welfare system careers of the 5,873 children in the study cohort. The first box on the left shows that 109 of the 5,873 children who entered care had not exited by their ninth birthday. The remaining 5,764 children had exited at least once.

The boxes in the second column show the type of first exit. The numbers in each box show how many exited and, of those, the number that had, and had not, returned to care by their ninth birthday. For example, 2,698 children had a first exit of reunification. Of these, 1,790 had not returned to care and 908 had returned to care at least once. (These returns include the technical returns from guardianship discussed above.)

The space between the second and third columns shows the path between the first return to care and the last exit before the child’s ninth birthday for the 1,009 children who returned to care. This is a simplification of what may have happened. Some children returned to care more than once. One hundred seventy-eight of the 1,009 children reentered care a third time, 25 a fourth time and 5 a fifth time. In the simplified chart, of the 908 children whose first exit was reunification, 377 last exited to adoption, 313 to reunification, 67 to guardianship, and 6 to another exit. One hundred forty-five were in care at age 9.

The last column shows the last exit before the ninth birthday. For example, 2,114 children had last exited to reunification. Of these, for 1,790 children the first exit was also their last exit. But, for 324 children the last exit followed one or more returns to care. Of these 313 had first exited to reunification, 9 to guardianship and 2 to another type of exit.

There were five children who were adopted after their last placement episode exit. These children are shown as having first exited to guardianship (4) and other (1) and last exited to adoption. One child who last exited to adoption is known to have died of natural causes following adoption.

Factors Associated with Status at Age 9

While 36% of all children had last exited to reunification and 50.7% had last exited to adoption at age 9, these proportions varied with different child, parent and placement characteristics. The proportions last exiting to reunification, adoption and guardianship, as well as the proportions in care are shown for various characteristics on Tables 38 and 39. The former table shows column percents, the latter shows row percents. These tables do not provide detail on the 36 children who died or the 52 children with “other” exits, but do include these 88 children in the totals. Some examples of row percentage differences follow. While 27.4% of neonates had exited to
reunification, 45.5% of older infants exited to reunification. Conversely, 60.1% of neonates and 40.4% of older infants exited to adoption. While 33.0% of children removed because of neglect reunified, 62.1% of children removed because of physical abuse reunified. Nineteen percent of the children of mothers incarcerated at some time during the child’s placement and 26.5% of those incarcerated during the first 30 days of placement reunified. On the other hand, 64.6% of those children of mothers incarcerated at some time and 60.6% of those incarcerated during the first 30 days were adopted. Of those children who had had older siblings who had been adopted, 10.6% reunified and 81.4% were adopted. Of those children who had older siblings in care, but no older siblings in adopted, 26.4% reunified and 56.7% were adopted.

As with the first placement episode, two logistic regression models were developed as with the end of the first placement episode. The first, a logistic regression, identified factors associated with reunification from the last placement episode. The second, a multinomial logistic regression, identified factors associated with the status of those children who did not reunify, or exit for “other” reasons or death.

Children who entered care as neonates were less likely to reunify (odds ratio = 0.644, p <.0001); to have had prior siblings who had been adopted (odds ratio = 0.187, p <.0001); and to have had prior siblings in care, none of whom had been adopted (odds ratio = 0.517, p <.0001). Children whose mothers were older at birth were more likely to reunify (odds ratio per year = 1.014, p = 0.0038). Data from this model are shown on Table 41-.

The multinomial logistic regression model for children who did not reunify at the end of their last placement episode including the same independent variables as the model used for first placement episode children who did not reunify. The findings were parallel to those for the first placement episode.

When compared to adoption, children who entered care as neonates were less likely to be in care at age 9 (odds ratio = 0.499, p <.0001) or to exit to guardianship (odds ratio = 0.588, p <.0001). White and Hispanic children were less likely than Black children to remain in care or to exit to guardianship (odds ratios range from 0.302 to 0.517, all p <.0001). That is, adoption was a more likely output for White and Hispanic children than for Black children. When compared with children with no known older siblings, children with prior siblings who had been adopted were less likely to be in care at age 9 than to be adopted (odds ratio = 0.453, p = 0.0117) and also less likely to be in guardianship (Odds ratio = 0.452, p = 0.0025). On the other hand, children who had older siblings who had not been in care, were more likely to be in care (Odds ratio = 2.134, p = 0.0001) or to have exited to guardianship (Odds ratio = 1.970, p <.0001) than to have been adopted. Finally, children from Los Angeles were more likely than children from other counties to be in care (odds ratio = 1.909, p <.0001) and to exit to guardianship (odds ratio = 3.152, p <.0001) than to exit to adoption.

Although whether children entered care because of neglect or for other reasons is a significant factor in reunification, it is not significantly associated with whether the child was adopted, exited to guardianship or was in care at age 9. These data are shown in detail on Table 42.
Children in care at age 9

In addition to the 109 children who were still in care in their first placement episode at age 9 there were 170 other children in care who had returned to care after their first placement episode. A smaller proportion of the reentering children appear to be placed with relatives or guardians at age 9. While about half of the 109 children who had never left care were placed with relatives or guardians, about 69 of the 170 returning children (40.6%) were placed with relatives or guardians at age 9. While 14 of the 109 were placed with foster family agencies; 52 of the 170 were placed with foster family agencies. While 3 of the 109 were placed in group homes; 13 of the 170 were placed in group homes, an unusually high utilization rate for children this young and one which suggests a higher than usual need for intensive care and services. Table 43 shows the living arrangements of the children who had returned to care and were in care at age 9 and Table 44 shows the living arrangements of all children in care at age 9.

Subsequent Reports of Maltreatment

At age 9, 5,558 of the cohort children were not in care and had not died (or at least had not had a death reported in the CWS/CMS). Most of these children had not been the subject of substantiated maltreatment allegations after leaving their last placement episode; however 9.2% had been the subject of such allegations, but had not reentered care. The proportion of children with substantiated allegations, and the type of allegations, varied with the type of exit. Three percent of adopted children, 8.7% of children with guardians and 17.7% of reunified children had substantiated allegations. When only the most severe substantiated allegation is considered, general neglect was the most common allegation for all exit types, but the relative frequency of allegation types varied. General neglect was more common for reunification (46% of reports) than for adoption (29.7%) or guardianship (27.8%). Table 45 provides more detail.

Subsequent referral data are problematic and may understate agency involvement. Almost a third of the children (330 of 1,009, 32.7%) who returned to care at least once after their first placement episode had no substantiated referral allegations after that first placement episode. The proportion of reentering children without substantiated allegations varied by type of exit from the first episode: 28.1% for reunification, 58.7% for guardianship and 71.9% for adoption. This suggests that subsequent substantiated allegations may not be an adequate measure of the post placement maltreatment experience of children.

Summary

The findings that especially set these data apart from the foster care data usually presented (see, for example, Needell et al., 2010) are those that relate to multiple placement episodes, those that relate to the age at which the infant entered care, those that place the infant in the context of other family members, especially older siblings and mothers, and the lesser importance of race and ethnicity. The traditional analysis that is limited to the first placement episode markedly overstates the proportion of children who successfully reunify and understates the proportion of children who, in the longer term, are adopted, exit to guardianship and are in care. Infants who enter as neonates are significantly less likely to reunify and are much more likely to be adopted. Infants who have had older siblings in care are more likely to enter care as neonates, less likely to reunify and more likely to be adopted. Parental incarceration decreases the likelihood of
reunification. Older mothers’ children are more likely to enter as neonates, but, in the end, are slightly more likely to reunify. The implications of these, and other findings, are discussed in the next chapter.
CHAPTER 6
CONCLUSIONS, IMPLICATIONS FOR PRACTICE, DATA SYSTEMS AND FUTURE RESEARCH

This descriptive study uses data from the Child Welfare Services Case Management System maintained by the California Children’s Services Archive at the Center for Social Services Research at the University of California, Berkeley to examine near-term outcomes in the form of recurrence of abuse and returns to care for children who enter care as infants and who experience different forms of permanency or outputs. The null hypothesis is that the type of exit (i.e., output) would not make a difference in the frequency of either reentry (i.e., in whether apparent permanence was achieved) or in subsequent substantiated maltreatment allegations. The implicit null hypotheses are that there is no evidence that children receiving child welfare services achieve permanency in any great numbers and that following children over multiple placement episodes would yield no more information about their status than would following the children through a single episode.

This chapter discusses the major conclusions of the study beginning with those concerning the null hypotheses, limitations of the study, and recommendations for both child welfare practice and supporting data systems.

Conclusions – Null hypotheses

The conclusions drawn from the study data regarding the basic hypothesis, while limited to a specific cohort of infants during their first 9 years of life, are quite straightforward: Almost all of the children in the study cohort had left care at least once. Less than 20% of the children had reentered care, however reentry rates varied by exit. About a third of the children who reunified returned to care. For these children, initial reunification was not permanency, but part of a series of placements that led to permanency. Children who left either a first or subsequent care episode to guardianship, usually kin guardianship, were much less likely to return to care than were children who reunified and, when they did return to care, these returns often only involved a change in legal status, including adoption by the guardian, and no change of caregiver. Children who left the first or subsequent care episode to adoption were even less likely to return to care and these returns to care often were brief, ending in the child’s return to the adoptive home. Substantiated maltreatment referrals received after children’s last placement episode followed the same pattern, being most common for children who reunified and least common for children who were adopted.

These conclusions do not speak to guardianships that did not lead to formal exits from care. Most such guardianships were non-kin guardianships. There are too many uncertainties in the CWS/CMS data to confidently separate periods of non-kin guardianship from other periods of time in care. These conclusions regarding the stability and apparent safety of adoption and guardianship are encouraging, although they must be tempered by the fact that the study was only able to follow children until age 9.

The data also suggest that both implicit null hypotheses should be rejected. Almost all of the children in the study cohort achieved permanence, most after their first placement episode. At age 9, few cohort children were in open-ended long-term foster care. Rather, when reunification
was not possible, or when reunification failed, adoption appears to have been the preferred option, and certainly was the option most often implemented. Furthermore, about 45% of the 279 children in care in what appeared to be open-ended foster care were with kin or legal guardians.

The importance of this finding cannot be over emphasized. At least for infants, the normative experience for those who cannot return home has ceased being open-ended foster care, but has become adoption and, to a much lesser degree, guardianship. This study was not designed to identify the reasons for this sea change; however, the author would suggest that it has been the result of a congruence of multiple factors including the early work of Goldstein, Freud and Solnit and, more recently the theoretical work of Bowlby and Ainsworth; the multiple early demonstration projects that showed that adoption was a viable alternative to long-term foster care; the development of subsidized adoption programs first at the state level and later at the Federal level; the series of Federal statutes that both set a moral compass towards permanency and reinforced this by tying Federal funding to increasingly early efforts to establish permanency; the growth in foster care caseloads through the 1980s and 1990s which must have encouraged states to think of alternatives such as California’s Adoption Initiative in the late 1990s; the transition in agency staffing to a generation that had been academically trained in the practice of permanency; the continual stream of foster care exposés in the press, reflecting a general societal loss of faith in foster care; pressure from foster parents seeking a more secure legal relationship with the children in their care; the development of administrative data bases such as CWS/CMS which yield heretofore unavailable knowledge about the foster care experience; and, perhaps, even the state-level bureaucrats, such as this author, continual posing of the question, “What about adoption as a plan for this child?”

The second implicit null hypothesis should also be rejected. Exit data from the first placement episode provides an inadequate, and indeed distorted, picture of the near term status of the children in the study cohort, a difference that can be extended to the status of foster children in general, albeit in form but not degree. That is, for any given cohort of children and at any point in time, first episode exit data systematically overstate the number and proportion of children who successfully reunify and systematically understate the number and proportion of children who have been adopted and who are in care. This difference for the study cohort is illustrated by Chart 2, which begins at age 1, after the last child in the cohort had entered care.. The difference begins almost immediately after the first children exit from their first placement episode and grows over time before eventually stabilizing. The dashed lines represent first episode exits and the solid lines the point in time status. (For children who did not reenter, the first episode exit and the point in time status are the same.) This chart show that the proportion of children reunifying peaked at about age 3. At any point in time, the proportion of children who were in reunification status was lower than the proportion whose current status was reunification. Similarly, the proportion in care and the proportion adopted were greater than after their first exit.
This difference is defined as systematic for two reasons. Children who reunify are much more likely to return to care than are children who exit to guardianship who, in turn, are more likely to return to care than are children who were adopted. Many children who return to care do not end their new placement episode with reunification. While the specific differences between first exit and last exit in the proportion of children reunifying are unique to this study cohort, California Children’s Services Archive data on subsequent entry cohorts support the conclusion that with each reentry the proportion of children who have reunified decreases, albeit in numbers that vary depending on the child’s initial entry age, time and county (Needell et al., 2010).

Conclusions - Other

Whether by design or accident, the experiences of the children in this cohort, at least those who were adopted, are consistent in many ways with what one would expect if agencies were applying attachment theory to practice. For example, almost half of the children adopted after their first placement episode did not change primary caregivers after six months of age, a crucial point in a child’s development from the perspective of attachment theory. For those children for whom reunification was not possible, or for whom reunification efforts failed, adoption rather than long-term foster care was the usual path of choice. This change from earlier practice is illustrated by the comparison with the first episode experience of the infants in Needell’s earlier
study of children who entered care between 1988 and 1994 (1996). Needell found that long-term foster care was the most common first episode path for children who did not reunify. In this study cohort, adoption was the most common first episode path for non-reunifying children. The proportion of infants in care and the proportion adopted within four years of first entry had almost reversed. This was a major shift towards permanency, a shift consistent with the stability desired by attachment theory. Of equal importance is the similarity between the first episode reunification rates in the two studies, a similarity that continues in more recent cohorts. It appears that child welfare agencies are continuing to honor the importance of maintaining the parent child relationship. In short, at least when only the first placement episode is considered, the policy emphasis on permanency may well be having its intended effect. There has been a marked increase in the rate of adoption, the addition of the use of guardianship, and the marked decrease in the proportion of children remaining in care. These changes suggest that for those children for whom reunification is not possible open-ended foster care has been replaced with more permanent forms of care – adoption and, to a lesser extent, guardianship.

There was an association between the number of moves after 6 months of age and reentry into care following adoption. The number of moves after 6 months of age was especially high for those few adopted children who were in care at age 9. On the other hand, there was no significant association between the number of moves before 6 months of age and reentry. This finding suggests that the timing of moves from one placement to another is important and that delaying moves is not in a child’s interest. Caution is needed here as association is not causation. The association between a higher number of moves and more frequent reentry may both reflect the child’s underlying needs and condition. Although there were no differences in the mean and median ages at adoption of children who did and did not reenter, the logistic regression raises doubt about this finding. The logistic regression found a significant relationship between age at adoption and reentry with reentry being less likely with increasing age at adoption. This suggests that when the effects of other variables (e.g., ethnicity) are controlled for, age does make a difference.

Although the association between moves and adoption reentry is consistent with attachment theory, the reentry experience of many children who first reunified before six months of age is not. That is, attachment theory would suggest that children who return home before six months of age would have fewer attachment problems and thus more stability. However, reunifying before six months of age increased infants’ likelihood of reentering care. It may be that the child’s attachment plays a stronger role in the context of adoption than in that of reunification.

Finally, there are a number of other findings that may bear further consideration. Timing matters. Children who enter as neonates are less likely to reunify and more likely to be adopted than are children who enter in later infancy. Location matters. Children who entered care in Los Angeles were less likely to reunify, and consequently less likely to reenter care. For those Los Angeles children who didn’t reunify, adoption was less likely than it was for non reunifying children in the remaining counties. Race matters at some points in the process, but not as much as in traditional analyses. Reunification was more likely for Hispanic children. When reunification didn’t occur, adoption was more likely for White children and least likely for Black children. Asian children were markedly less likely to reenter after reunification than Black, White, Hispanic or American Indian children. Having an older sibling in care matters at almost every step in the process.
Limitations

The study describes the child welfare experience of a specific cohort of children – children born in 1999 who first entered California foster care during the first year of life. These experiences are not necessarily those of children in other geographic locations. They certainly are not those of children born in earlier years and of children who first entered care at later ages. Thus, while the conclusion regarding the importance of the child’s status at the end of the last known placement episode can be generalized to other cohorts of children, conclusions regarding the apparent degree of permanence (e.g., the levels of reunification, adoption, guardianship and being in care at age 9) are unique to this cohort. Only with replication of the study with other populations will it be possible to begin to know the degree to which findings regarding permanence may be generalized.

The use of administrative data has many advantages, e.g., an almost 100% sample without problems of low initial survey response rates or high attrition. However, the study is dependent on the accuracy of data from a single source, the Child Welfare Services Case Management System (CWS/CMS). That accuracy is dependent upon both the structure of the system and on the quality and completeness of the data social workers enter into the system. Checks for logical consistency seldom are possible. These problems were exacerbated because the study cohort was from 1999, the second full year of CWS/CMS operation. This year was used to allow as long an observation period as possible, but its use meant that much of the data was from a time when social workers were still becoming familiar with the system’s nuances. The CWS/CMS design also created gaps. Guardianship placements can not be identified with certainty. There are no data on household composition at crucial times, a special problem in attempting to understand the reasons for removal and successful reunification. Adoption reentries are difficult to track.

Because the data were limited to California, reentries of children who left California after reunification, adoption or guardianship only to reenter care in other states are not reported in CWS/CMS. Most deaths after leaving care, including maltreatment related deaths, also would not be reported in CWS/CMS. These moves out of state and deaths are a hidden form of attrition. To the degree that these events occurred, the study overstates the number and proportion of apparently successful reunifications, adoptions and guardianships.

A serious limitation of the study is the nine-year time frame that prevents any analysis of the children’s experience as adolescents and adults. Of necessity, the study ended at age 9. At age 9 relatively few children had reentered care after guardianship and, especially, adoption. Whether this pattern will continue or whether the stresses of adolescence, perhaps accompanied by the stresses of aging on the part of guardians and adoptive parents, will result in increasing numbers of reentries into care is a major unanswered question.

Finally, the study provides a quantitative picture of the status of these children at age 9, a picture that suggests that permanency has been achieved for the vast majority. However, the study cannot provide data about the current quality of the children’s lives. Writers have suggested that much more than placement stability is necessary for an adequately nurturing childhood. (See, for
example, Bridge, 2008.) The study also cannot provide data about the quality of these children’s future lives as adults. It is hoped that this study will be a pilot for future studies that will address quality of life.

Recommendations

Practice

This study does not suggest the need for major changes in child welfare policy or practice. Rather, it supports the conclusion that, at least for infants, the changes in policy that have occurred in the past several decades finally have been reflected in practice and, therefore, in children’s experience. That is, child welfare services have focused on, and are achieving, permanency and the avoidance of long-term foster care for children who first enter care as infants. There are, however, some issues surrounding reentry, both after reunification and after adoption, that require further consideration.

Reunification, especially early reunification, is risky. One third of the children who reunified after their first placement episode reentered care before age 9. Two thirds of those who reentered were not with their parents at age 9. Reentry was most common for infants who first reunified before 6 months of age. These reentry rates suggest the need for intensive post-reunification services. They may also suggest the need for more caution in decision making regarding reunification. The quality of decisions regarding reunification and post-reunification services might be enhanced by the development of predictive tools, on the same model as those used to assess risk at initial referral. At the same time, reentry is the price paid for taking the risk of reunification. About a fifth of those infants who initially reunified found themselves in other circumstances, mostly adoption, at age 9. While reunification, reentry and finally adoption must be a traumatic experience, it may leave all parties to the process – the child, birth parents, adoptive parents, social workers, court – able to know that efforts were made, hopefully serious efforts, to preserve the parent-child relationship. Acceptance of the inevitability of a limited degree, of post-reunification reentry may be necessary and even desirable.

The greater risk of reentry after adoption for children who have had many moves before adoption, although perhaps association and not causation, suggests three things. If possible, and consistent with attachment theory, moves should occur before 6 months of age. This supports the aggressive, early use of concurrent planning. It also supports moving children at the earliest opportunity when future moves appear inevitable, for example, when an infant’s foster caregiver is not a viable option as an adoptive parent. Secondly, it may be desirable to increase accessibility to post-adoption services for adoptive families when the children have experienced multiple pre-adoptive moves after 6 months of age. Finally, evaluations of foster care programs need to consider the timing of moves and not weigh all moves equally.

Future research and near-term application of this methodology

There are near and longer term applications for the methodology developed by this study; in addition, the study raises questions that cannot be answered with research based on administrative data alone.
In the near term, the study methodology, including its SAS programs, could be used to analyze the experience of other California cohorts of both the same age and of differing ages with very minor modification. An example of the former would be a comparison of the experience during the first 5 years of life of single year cohorts of infants born between 1999 and 2004, allowing for identification of trends in the experiences of infants. An example of the latter would be a comparison of the experience of children first entering care as infants with that of children first entering at older ages to determine the degree to which older children are experiencing the increases in permanency experienced by infants. A practical application of these modifications, which would make these data publicly available, would be the addition of a report to the Child Welfare Dynamic Report System maintained by the Center for Social Services Research at the University of California, Berkeley and using Child Welfare Services Case Management System data. This report would use a portion of the basic logic developed for this study to identify and display the most recent known child welfare system status of children at set intervals (e.g., 12, 24, 36, 48 and 60 months) after first entry into care. The resulting reports would be similar to existing reports that display the most recent known first episode status, but would account for the child’s status after multiple reentries and exits from care, except for reentries following most adoptions. This application methodology would differ from the study methodology in that it would conform to the current structure of the Child Welfare Dynamic Report System and follow entry rather than birth cohorts.

There are several longer term applications of the study methodology. The study of this cohort can be extended in time and/or content. If possible, the author intends to follow the study cohort into adolescence where the analysis of areas such as reentry from adoption and guardianship will be especially important. The study methodology could be modified to follow a referral cohort, for example a cohort of children who were first referred to child welfare services before one year of age. Such a study would consider the relationships between factors such as referral source, parental demographics, past child welfare history and factors such as the decision to remove the child or provide services in the home. Another modification could examine services provided to reunifying parents and their children in an effort to determine whether, for example, there are associations between the provision of post reunification services and reentry into care.

The methodology could be applied to data from other states. Unfortunately, the Federal Adoption and Foster Care Analysis and Reporting System (AFCARS) data base is not configured in a way that would allow children to be followed over time as this study has done. However, this may change in the future and administrative data from other states may currently be in a form that would allow the application of at least some of the methodology of this study.

The study methodology could be modified to include data from other data sources. Although the CWS/CMS is a rich source of data about the experience of children who receive child welfare services in California, understanding of these children’s circumstances would be enhanced by the linking of these data with other data. The current California Children’s Services Archive work by Putnam-Hornstein linking CWS/CMS data with vital statistics birth and death records for some children will, at a minimum, provide more information about health problems observed at birth and about deaths that occur after children reunify or otherwise leave care. In the future, links between CWS/CMS data and education, employment, and medical data would be beneficial.
Quantitative research using administrative data raises important questions about the dynamics that underlie the children’s and parents’ experiences that administrative data alone cannot answer. This study has identified a number of such issues, beginning with entry into care. It is only with qualitative work that we may begin to understand the specific factors that lead to the earlier entry into care of infants who have had older siblings in care, let alone the reasons that having an older mother increases the chances of entering care as a neonate, especially for those infants who haven’t had an older sibling in care. There is a similar need to understand the low reunification rates for infants who enter as neonates, the lower reunification rates for children whose parents have been incarcerated, the higher reentry rates of children who reunify before six months of age, and the low reentry rates for Asian children. Although few of the cohort children are in what appears to be long-term foster care, it appears that these are children with unusual needs. More should be known about the nature, including caregiver intentions, of these children’s placements and service needs. Finally, although the number of reentries from both guardianship and adoption were low, the circumstances of these reentries should be better understood. One place to begin would be to seek to understand meaning of the relatively high number of pre-adoptive moves experienced by those children who reentered care after adoption, especially of those few reentering children who were still in care at age 9.

Data System Modifications

Any analysis of administrative data is constrained by the structure of the data. This analysis was especially hampered by the structure of the California Child Welfare Services Case Management System (CWS/CMS) in three areas: adoption reentry, guardianship and point-in-time family composition.

Although the CWS/CMS reports whether a child entering care has been adopted in the past, and the child’s age at the time of that past adoption, because children who have been adopted receive new client identifiers when they reenter care, pre and post adoption placements and referrals cannot be linked except with the use of matching methods such as were used in this study. Either of two system changes would facilitate linking pre and post adoption records and thus understanding of the frequency and nature of reentries into care. Recording of the fact that the child had been adopted could be modified to include the recording of the child’s prior client identifier. The CWS/CMS client and substitute care provider tables could be merged. This would allow linking because there would be a single record for the persons who now are parents and who were substitute care providers in the form of adoptive parents. The latter change would have other benefits in that it would provide more information about kin foster care providers and guardians, including the nature of their generational relationship to the child. It would also simplify/reduce data entry.

It is not possible to positively identify when children are living with both kin and non-kin legal guardians for several reasons including the fact that guardianship status changes over time. This problem could be resolved by treating guardianship data in a manner similar to, but simpler than, adoption. This would require the addition of a table that would include the names (actually client identifiers) of the child and guardian, the dates the guardianship was established and terminated, and the courts establishing and terminating the guardianship. The use of client identifiers would provide information about the type of guardianship (kin vs. non-kin) and the generational relationship of kin guardians. This would allow identification of guardianship
status independent of placement status and would allow a fuller understanding of guardianship duration, which may only encompass part of a child’s placement with a caregiver or may extend beyond a specific placement.

Family composition may affect the removal, reunification and the success of reunification. While a review of case notes would probably allow a qualitative researcher to know the family composition at crucial times, the elements of the CWS/CMS record that can be analyzed quantitatively come frustratingly close, but do not include these data. That is, the client relationship table, which identifies the child’s parents, siblings, extended family members, etc., includes a data element that indicates whether the person lives in the same home as the child. But there is no temporal reference for this indicator. Resolving this problem would not be easy. Social workers may feel burdened by data collection as it is. Household composition is often fluid. A first step might be to modify CWS/CMS instructions to provide that “lives in the same home” as the child refers to a specific time, for example the time of the initial referral or immediately before the first removal (or to the household that the child would have gone to if he or she hadn’t entered foster care directly from the hospital). This would not describe the home the reunified child returned to, but would be a start.

Summary

Three broad themes emerge from the experiences of these children. The first is that not all outputs known as permanency provide the same level of stability. Although reunification has the crucial advantage of maintaining a child with his or her family, for some children it is inherently less stable than adoption or guardianship. The second theme is that the vast majority of the cohort children have achieved permanency, most often in the form of adoption but also in the forms of reunification and guardianship. This is consistent with the policy changes that have occurred in the field of child welfare over the past thirty plus years. These changes, which are, in turn, consistent with attachment theory, have striven to replace open-ended foster care with more secure relationships. The third theme is that first placement episode data alone provide an inadequate, distorted description of the experience of these children in the foster care system and, by extension, the experience of foster children in general. First episode data alone overstate the frequency of stable reunification and understate the number of children who are adopted and the number who are in care. A sub text for this theme is that longitudinal data has the power to allow an understanding of these differences.

In the end, this work provides grounds for optimism. The multidimensional efforts of the past several decades to modify the child welfare system to provide children with more certainty and support than open-ended foster care can provide have had a substantial degree of success, at least with children who enter care as infants. The concurrent development of longitudinal data bases has made identification and measurement of the effect of these changes possible. All of this should be welcome news to children, caregivers, child welfare agencies and the society at large.
REFERENCES


## Table 1. Characteristics of Children Born in 1999 Entering Care in First Year of Life

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Table 2. Comparison of Infant Characteristics in Three Study Cohorts.

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<td>144 2.4</td>
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<td>82 1.4</td>
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<td>&gt;182</td>
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*Not reported.

Comparison data source: Barbara Needell 1996.
Table 3. Identified Mothers of Cohort Children.

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<td>%</td>
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<tr>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Los Angeles</td>
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Table 4. Characteristics Associated with Mother Not Being Identified - Logistic Regression

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<tr>
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<tr>
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<tr>
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<td>0.731</td>
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<td><strong>Initial Removal Reason</strong> (base = Other than Neglect)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Los Angeles</td>
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* p < .05
** p < .01
*** p < .0001

Wald test: Chi-Square 57.0586, DF 14, p < .0001

n=5,873
Table 5. Basic Characteristics of Identified Mothers of Cohort Children.

<table>
<thead>
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<th>Older Infants</th>
<th>Entire Cohort</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>n</td>
<td>%</td>
<td>n</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yes</td>
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<td>95.2</td>
<td>2,716</td>
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<table>
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<th>Mother's Ethnicity</th>
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<th>Older Infants</th>
<th>Entire Cohort</th>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>n</td>
<td>%</td>
<td>n</td>
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<tr>
<td>Black</td>
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<td>568</td>
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<td>985</td>
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<td>1,001</td>
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<table>
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<tr>
<td></td>
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<td>n</td>
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<tr>
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<td>616</td>
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<td>20-24</td>
<td>613</td>
<td>21.0</td>
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<td>25-29</td>
<td>704</td>
<td>24.1</td>
<td>571</td>
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<tr>
<td>30-34</td>
<td>693</td>
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<td>674</td>
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</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Incarceration</th>
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<th>Older Infants</th>
<th>Entire Cohort</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>n</td>
<td>%</td>
<td>n</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>During Placement</td>
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<td>213</td>
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<table>
<thead>
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<th>Entire Cohort</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
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<td>61</td>
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<td>In First Month</td>
<td>80</td>
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Table 6. Reported Race/Ethnicity of Children and Their Mothers.

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<td>12</td>
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<tr>
<td>Nat. Am.</td>
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<td>18</td>
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<tr>
<td>Missing</td>
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Table 7. Median Ages of Mothers of Cohort Children

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<th>Entire Cohort</th>
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<td>years</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
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<td>27</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hispanic</td>
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<td>23</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Asian</td>
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<td>25</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Native American</td>
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<td>26</td>
<td>26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Missing</td>
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<td>24</td>
<td>27</td>
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Table 8. Other Characteristics of Mothers of Cohort Children.

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<th>Entire Cohort</th>
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<td>79</td>
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<td>5,527</td>
<td>97.9</td>
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<td>2,716</td>
<td>100.0</td>
<td>5,648</td>
<td>100.0</td>
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<td>100.0</td>
<td>5,648</td>
<td>100.0</td>
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</tr>
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<td>2,716</td>
<td>100.0</td>
<td>5,648</td>
<td>100.0</td>
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<td>12.8</td>
<td>573</td>
<td>10.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>0.9</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>0.9</td>
<td>51</td>
<td>0.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Missing</td>
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<td>28</td>
<td>1.0</td>
<td>58</td>
<td>1.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
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<td>100.0</td>
<td>2,716</td>
<td>100.0</td>
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Table 9. Reported Older Maternal Siblings of Cohort Children with Identified Mothers.

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<th>Older Infants</th>
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<th>Entire Cohort</th>
<th></th>
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</thead>
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<td></td>
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<td>%</td>
<td>n</td>
<td>%</td>
<td>n</td>
<td>%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
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<td>29.6</td>
<td>1,337</td>
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<td>293</td>
<td>5.2</td>
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<td>433</td>
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<td>100.0</td>
<td>2,716</td>
<td>100.0</td>
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</table>

Older Sibling Prior Placement Experience

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<th>Older Infants</th>
<th>Entire Cohort</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>years</td>
<td>years</td>
<td>years</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No Reported Older Siblings</td>
<td>533</td>
<td>18.2</td>
<td>804</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>None in Care</td>
<td>830</td>
<td>28.3</td>
<td>1,184</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Siblings in Care, None Adopted</td>
<td>1,094</td>
<td>37.3</td>
<td>598</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Siblings in Care, 1 or more Adopted</td>
<td>475</td>
<td>16.2</td>
<td>130</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>2,932</td>
<td>100.0</td>
<td>2,716</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: Table 9 only includes siblings linked through a common mother. Siblings reported on other tables include children linked directly as Child A is sibling to Child B.

Table 10. Median Ages of Mothers of Cohort Children

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Prior Siblings</th>
<th>Neonates</th>
<th>Older Infants</th>
<th>Entire Cohort</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>years</td>
<td>years</td>
<td>years</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>29</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>27</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 11. Basic Characteristics of Fathers of Cohort Children.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Neonates</th>
<th></th>
<th>Older Infants</th>
<th></th>
<th>Entire Cohort</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Father Identified</strong></td>
<td>n</td>
<td>%</td>
<td>n</td>
<td>%</td>
<td>n</td>
<td>%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>2,705</td>
<td>87.9</td>
<td>2,508</td>
<td>89.8</td>
<td>5,213</td>
<td>88.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No</td>
<td>374</td>
<td>12.1</td>
<td>286</td>
<td>10.2</td>
<td>660</td>
<td>11.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>3,079</td>
<td>100.0</td>
<td>2,794</td>
<td>100.0</td>
<td>5,873</td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Legal Status</strong></td>
<td>n</td>
<td>%</td>
<td>n</td>
<td>%</td>
<td>n</td>
<td>%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Birth Father</td>
<td>1,293</td>
<td>47.8</td>
<td>1,524</td>
<td>60.8</td>
<td>2,817</td>
<td>54.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Presumed Father</td>
<td>423</td>
<td>15.6</td>
<td>327</td>
<td>13.0</td>
<td>750</td>
<td>14.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Alleged Father</td>
<td>989</td>
<td>36.6</td>
<td>657</td>
<td>26.2</td>
<td>1,646</td>
<td>31.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>All</td>
<td>2,705</td>
<td>100.0</td>
<td>2,508</td>
<td>100.0</td>
<td>5,213</td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Ethnicity</strong></td>
<td>n</td>
<td>%</td>
<td>n</td>
<td>%</td>
<td>n</td>
<td>%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Black</td>
<td>676</td>
<td>30.4</td>
<td>494</td>
<td>22.5</td>
<td>1,170</td>
<td>26.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>White</td>
<td>649</td>
<td>29.2</td>
<td>729</td>
<td>33.3</td>
<td>1,378</td>
<td>31.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hispanic</td>
<td>816</td>
<td>36.7</td>
<td>902</td>
<td>41.1</td>
<td>1,718</td>
<td>38.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Asian</td>
<td>61</td>
<td>2.7</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>2.3</td>
<td>111</td>
<td>2.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Native American</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>0.9</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>0.8</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>0.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Missing</td>
<td>484</td>
<td></td>
<td>316</td>
<td></td>
<td>800</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>2,705</td>
<td>100.0</td>
<td>2,508</td>
<td>100.0</td>
<td>5,213</td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Age at Birth</strong></td>
<td>n</td>
<td>%</td>
<td>n</td>
<td>%</td>
<td>n</td>
<td>%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&lt;20</td>
<td>99</td>
<td>4.4</td>
<td>259</td>
<td>11.5</td>
<td>358</td>
<td>7.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20-24</td>
<td>309</td>
<td>13.7</td>
<td>572</td>
<td>25.3</td>
<td>881</td>
<td>19.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>25-29</td>
<td>423</td>
<td>18.8</td>
<td>485</td>
<td>21.4</td>
<td>908</td>
<td>20.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>30-34</td>
<td>445</td>
<td>19.8</td>
<td>397</td>
<td>17.6</td>
<td>842</td>
<td>18.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>35+</td>
<td>976</td>
<td>43.3</td>
<td>549</td>
<td>24.3</td>
<td>1,525</td>
<td>33.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total Age Known</td>
<td>2,252</td>
<td>83.3</td>
<td>2,262</td>
<td>90.2</td>
<td>4,515</td>
<td>86.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Age Not Known</td>
<td>453</td>
<td>16.7</td>
<td>246</td>
<td>9.8</td>
<td>699</td>
<td>13.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>2,705</td>
<td>100.0</td>
<td>2,508</td>
<td>100.0</td>
<td>5,213</td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: Individual age percent is percent of identified fathers with known age.

<p>| <strong>Incarceration</strong>        | n        | %        | n             | %        | n            | %        |
| During Placement         | 251      | 9.3      | 314           | 12.5     | 565          | 10.8     |
| Yes, uncertain date      | 87       | 3.2      | 67            | 2.7      | 154          | 3.0      |
| No record                | 2,367    | 87.5     | 2,127         | 84.8     | 4,494        | 86.2     |
| Total                    | 2,705    | 100.0    | 2,508         | 100.0    | 5,213        | 100.0    |
| At Placement Start       | 62       | 2.3      | 75            | 3.0      | 137          | 2.6      |
| In First Month           | 92       | 3.4      | 105           | 4.2      | 197          | 3.8      |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Ethnicity</th>
<th>Neonates Years</th>
<th>Older Infants Years</th>
<th>Entire Cohort Years</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Black</td>
<td>37</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>34</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>White</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>31</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hispanic</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>28</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Asian</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>31</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Native American</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>28</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Missing</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>29</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 13. Characteristics Associated with Father Being Identified - Logistic Regression

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Effect</th>
<th>Odds Ratio Estimates</th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Point Estimate</td>
<td>95% Wald Confidence Limits</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gender (base = Male)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female</td>
<td>1.066</td>
<td>0.905</td>
<td>1.257</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Age at First Entry (base = Older Infant)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Neonate</td>
<td>0.881</td>
<td>0.741</td>
<td>1.047</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Child’s Race/Ethnicity (base = Black)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>White</td>
<td>1.581 ***</td>
<td>1.265</td>
<td>1.977</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hispanic</td>
<td>1.536 ***</td>
<td>1.261</td>
<td>1.871</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Asian</td>
<td>3.149 **</td>
<td>1.449</td>
<td>6.846</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Native American</td>
<td>2.075</td>
<td>0.876</td>
<td>4.919</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Missing</td>
<td>0.802</td>
<td>0.344</td>
<td>1.872</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>County of Initial Removal (base = Other Than Los Angeles)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Los Angeles</td>
<td>0.874</td>
<td>0.728</td>
<td>1.051</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Initial Removal Reason (base = Other than Neglect)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Neglect</td>
<td>0.752 *</td>
<td>0.569</td>
<td>0.993</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Diagnosed Disability (base = No Disability)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Diagnosed Disability</td>
<td>1.336 **</td>
<td>1.114</td>
<td>1.602</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>First Episode Termination Reason (base = Reunification)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>In Care</td>
<td>0.462 **</td>
<td>0.282</td>
<td>0.756</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Adoption</td>
<td>1.022</td>
<td>0.849</td>
<td>1.23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Guardianship</td>
<td>0.558 **</td>
<td>0.414</td>
<td>0.751</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>0.264 ***</td>
<td>0.165</td>
<td>0.422</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* p < .05
** p < .01
*** p < .0001

Wald test: Chi-Square 117.7116, DF 14, p <.0001

n = 5,873
Table 14. Reported Race/Ethnicity of Children and Their Fathers.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Father’s Reported Ethnicity</th>
<th>Child’s Reported Ethnicity</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Black</td>
<td>White</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Black</td>
<td>1,014</td>
<td>41</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>White</td>
<td>61</td>
<td>1,135</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hispanic</td>
<td>80</td>
<td>159</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Asian</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nat. Am.</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Missing</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>1,170</td>
<td>1,378</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note 1: Only those children where both parents are identified are included.
Note 2: CWS/CMS data do not specify the time periods of these statuses.

Table 15. Reported Relationship Between Identified Parents

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Parent’s Relationship</th>
<th>Not Reported</th>
<th>No</th>
<th>Yes</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>n</td>
<td>%</td>
<td>n</td>
<td>%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not Reported</td>
<td>1,627</td>
<td>100.0</td>
<td>.</td>
<td>.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Spouse</td>
<td>.</td>
<td>.</td>
<td>293</td>
<td>15.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sig. Other</td>
<td>.</td>
<td>.</td>
<td>1,096</td>
<td>55.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Live-in</td>
<td>.</td>
<td>.</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>1.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other Relative</td>
<td>.</td>
<td>.</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>1.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>.</td>
<td>.</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>1.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>None</td>
<td>.</td>
<td>.</td>
<td>441</td>
<td>22.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unknown</td>
<td>.</td>
<td>.</td>
<td>52</td>
<td>2.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>All</td>
<td>1,627</td>
<td>100.0</td>
<td>1,959</td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note 1: Only those children where both parents are identified are included.
Note 2: CWS/CMS data do not specify the time periods of these statuses.
Table 16. Incarceration of Both Parents of Cohort Children When Both Parents Known.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Incarceration</th>
<th>Neonates</th>
<th></th>
<th>Older Infants</th>
<th></th>
<th>Entire Cohort</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>n</td>
<td>%</td>
<td>n</td>
<td>%</td>
<td>n</td>
<td>%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>During Placement</td>
<td>54</td>
<td>2.1</td>
<td>72</td>
<td>2.9</td>
<td>126</td>
<td>2.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yes, uncertain date</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>0.7</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>0.5</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>0.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No record</td>
<td>2,530</td>
<td>97.2</td>
<td>2,374</td>
<td>96.5</td>
<td>4,904</td>
<td>96.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>2,603</td>
<td>100.0</td>
<td>2,459</td>
<td>100.0</td>
<td>5,062</td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>At Placement Start</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>0.3</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>0.5</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>0.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>In First Month</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>0.5</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>0.9</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>0.7</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 17. Incarceration of Either Parent of Cohort Children When Both Parents Known.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Incarceration</th>
<th>Neonates</th>
<th></th>
<th>Older Infants</th>
<th></th>
<th>Entire Cohort</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>n</td>
<td>%</td>
<td>n</td>
<td>%</td>
<td>n</td>
<td>%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>During Placement</td>
<td>446</td>
<td>17.1</td>
<td>431</td>
<td>17.5</td>
<td>877</td>
<td>17.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yes, uncertain date</td>
<td>92</td>
<td>3.5</td>
<td>71</td>
<td>2.9</td>
<td>163</td>
<td>3.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No record</td>
<td>2,065</td>
<td>79.3</td>
<td>1,947</td>
<td>79.6</td>
<td>4,022</td>
<td>79.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>2,603</td>
<td>100.0</td>
<td>2,459</td>
<td>100.0</td>
<td>5,062</td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>At Placement Start</td>
<td>112</td>
<td>4.3</td>
<td>119</td>
<td>4.8</td>
<td>231</td>
<td>4.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>In First Month</td>
<td>150</td>
<td>5.8</td>
<td>166</td>
<td>6.8</td>
<td>316</td>
<td>6.2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 18. Incarceration of Either Parent of Cohort Children When Either Parent Known.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Incarceration</th>
<th>Neonates</th>
<th></th>
<th>Older Infants</th>
<th></th>
<th>Entire Cohort</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>n</td>
<td>%</td>
<td>n</td>
<td>%</td>
<td>n</td>
<td>%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>During Placement</td>
<td>494</td>
<td>16.3</td>
<td>455</td>
<td>16.5</td>
<td>949</td>
<td>16.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yes, uncertain date</td>
<td>96</td>
<td>3.2</td>
<td>78</td>
<td>2.8</td>
<td>174</td>
<td>3.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No record</td>
<td>2,424</td>
<td>80.6</td>
<td>2,232</td>
<td>80.7</td>
<td>4,676</td>
<td>80.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>3,034</td>
<td>100.0</td>
<td>2,765</td>
<td>100.0</td>
<td>5,799</td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>At Placement Start</td>
<td>118</td>
<td>3.9</td>
<td>123</td>
<td>4.4</td>
<td>241</td>
<td>4.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>In First Month</td>
<td>158</td>
<td>5.2</td>
<td>173</td>
<td>6.3</td>
<td>331</td>
<td>5.7</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### Table 19. Characteristics Associated with Entering Care as Newborns - Logistic Regression – Model 1

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Effect</th>
<th>Odds Ratio Estimates</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Point Estimate</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Gender (base = Male)</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female</td>
<td>1.117 *</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Race/Ethnicity (base = Black)</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>White</td>
<td>0.719 ***</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hispanic</td>
<td>0.710 ***</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Asian</td>
<td>0.874</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Native American</td>
<td>1.301</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Missing</td>
<td>0.428 *</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Initial Removal Reason (base = Other than Neglect)**

| Neglect                         | 4.286 ***  | 3.593 5.113                  |

**County of Initial Removal (base = Other than Los Angeles)**

| Los Angeles                     | 1.237 **   | 1.099 1.394                  |

* p < .05  
** p < .01  
*** p < .0001

Wald test: Chi-Square 331.8721, DF 8, p < .0001

n=5,873
Table 20.  Characteristics Associated with Entering Care as Newborns - Logistic Regression – Model 2

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Effect</th>
<th>Point Estimate</th>
<th>95% Wald Confidence Limits</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Gender (base = Male)</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female</td>
<td>1.147 *</td>
<td>1.023 1.286</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Race/Ethnicity (base = Black)</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>White</td>
<td>0.806 **</td>
<td>0.687 0.945</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hispanic</td>
<td>0.925</td>
<td>0.799 1.07</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Asian</td>
<td>1.139</td>
<td>0.774 1.677</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Native American</td>
<td>1.647</td>
<td>0.952 2.852</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Missing</td>
<td>0.578</td>
<td>0.258 1.296</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Initial Removal Reason ( base = Other than Neglect)</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Neglect</td>
<td>3.751 ***</td>
<td>3.1 4.539</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>County of Initial Removal ( base = Other than Los Angeles)</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Los Angeles</td>
<td>1.013</td>
<td>0.89 1.154</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Parents</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mother’s Identity Known</td>
<td>0.71</td>
<td>0.188 2.674</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Father’s DOB Known</td>
<td>0.719 ***</td>
<td>0.624 0.828</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mother Incarcerated – 1st month</td>
<td>0.584 **</td>
<td>0.417 0.818</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Father Incarcerated – 1st month</td>
<td>0.766</td>
<td>0.557 1.052</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mother’s Age at Birth</td>
<td>1.066 ***</td>
<td>1.057 1.076</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Sibling Status at Entry (base = No Known Older Siblings)</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Siblings, but none in Care</td>
<td>0.818 *</td>
<td>0.700 0.955</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Siblings in Care, none Adopted</td>
<td>1.861 ***</td>
<td>1.579 2.194</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Siblings Adopted</td>
<td>3.287 ***</td>
<td>2.587 4.177</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* p < .05  
** p < .01  
*** p < .0001

Wald test: Chi-Square 772.3965, DF 16, p < .0001

n=5,626 of 5,873
Table 21. First Episode Placement Status at 4 Years

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>n</td>
<td>%</td>
<td>n</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reunified</td>
<td>18,251</td>
<td>42.4</td>
<td>2,678</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Adopted</td>
<td>5,377</td>
<td>12.5</td>
<td>2,235</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Guardianship</td>
<td>300</td>
<td>5.1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Death</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>0.6</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>48</td>
<td>0.8</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Missing/Other</td>
<td>1,296</td>
<td>3.0</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Still in Care</td>
<td>18,142</td>
<td>42.1</td>
<td>578</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>43,066</td>
<td>100.0</td>
<td>5,873</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Notes: The Needell study did not separate guardianships and deaths from other exits. The CSSR 2004 cohort is a 6 month (July to December) entry cohort. Comparison data sources: B. Needell 1996 and B. Needell et al., 2010.

Table 22. First Episode Placement Status at 9 Years of Age.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Placement Status</th>
<th>Neonates</th>
<th>Older Infants</th>
<th>Entire Cohort</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>n</td>
<td>%</td>
<td>n</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reunified</td>
<td>1,106</td>
<td>35.9</td>
<td>1,592</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Adopted</td>
<td>1,672</td>
<td>54.3</td>
<td>922</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Guardianship</td>
<td>195</td>
<td>6.3</td>
<td>186</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Death</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>0.7</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>1.0</td>
<td>26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Still in Care</td>
<td>55</td>
<td>1.8</td>
<td>54</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>3,079</td>
<td>100.0</td>
<td>2,794</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 23. Time (Days) in Care – First Placement Episode.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Placement Status</th>
<th>Neonates</th>
<th>Older Infants</th>
<th>Entire Cohort</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>mean</td>
<td>median</td>
<td>mean</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reunified</td>
<td>262</td>
<td>181</td>
<td>245</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Adopted</td>
<td>919</td>
<td>833</td>
<td>1,038</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Guardianship</td>
<td>1,081</td>
<td>770</td>
<td>989</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Death</td>
<td>260</td>
<td>98</td>
<td>474</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>602</td>
<td>123</td>
<td>518</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>In Care</td>
<td>3,119</td>
<td>3,278</td>
<td>3,109</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>725</td>
<td>596</td>
<td>615</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 24. Characteristics of children and parents by status at end of First Placement Episode.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Reunified</th>
<th>Adoption</th>
<th>Guardianship</th>
<th>In Care</th>
<th>All</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>n</td>
<td>%</td>
<td>n</td>
<td>%</td>
<td>n</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Gender</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Male</td>
<td>1,400</td>
<td>51.9</td>
<td>1,316</td>
<td>50.7</td>
<td>186</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female</td>
<td>1,298</td>
<td>48.1</td>
<td>1,278</td>
<td>49.3</td>
<td>195</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>All</td>
<td>2,698</td>
<td>100.0</td>
<td>2,594</td>
<td>100.0</td>
<td>381</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Entry Age</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Neonate</td>
<td>1,106</td>
<td>41.0</td>
<td>1,672</td>
<td>64.5</td>
<td>195</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Older Infant</td>
<td>1,592</td>
<td>59.0</td>
<td>922</td>
<td>35.5</td>
<td>186</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Child’s Race/Ethnicity</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Black</td>
<td>621</td>
<td>23.0</td>
<td>718</td>
<td>27.7</td>
<td>169</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>White</td>
<td>790</td>
<td>29.3</td>
<td>813</td>
<td>31.3</td>
<td>57</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hispanic</td>
<td>1,163</td>
<td>43.1</td>
<td>966</td>
<td>37.2</td>
<td>140</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Asian</td>
<td>67</td>
<td>2.5</td>
<td>61</td>
<td>2.4</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Amer. Indian</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>1.1</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>1.0</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Missing</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>1.0</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>0.3</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Mother’s Race/Ethnicity</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Black</td>
<td>567</td>
<td>21.0</td>
<td>646</td>
<td>24.9</td>
<td>165</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>White</td>
<td>907</td>
<td>33.6</td>
<td>936</td>
<td>36.1</td>
<td>62</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hispanic</td>
<td>1,008</td>
<td>37.4</td>
<td>751</td>
<td>29.0</td>
<td>122</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Asian</td>
<td>79</td>
<td>2.9</td>
<td>66</td>
<td>2.5</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Amer. Indian</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>1.3</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>1.2</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Missing</td>
<td>103</td>
<td>3.8</td>
<td>163</td>
<td>6.3</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Removal Reason</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Neglect</td>
<td>2,199</td>
<td>81.5</td>
<td>2,357</td>
<td>90.9</td>
<td>353</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Phys. Abuse</td>
<td>365</td>
<td>13.5</td>
<td>126</td>
<td>4.9</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sexual Abuse</td>
<td>42</td>
<td>1.6</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>0.4</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>92</td>
<td>3.4</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>3.9</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>AFCARS Diagnoses</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Clinical Dx.</td>
<td>778</td>
<td>28.8</td>
<td>1,076</td>
<td>41.5</td>
<td>151</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No Dx.</td>
<td>1,920</td>
<td>71.2</td>
<td>1,518</td>
<td>58.5</td>
<td>230</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Parental Characteristics</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fa. DOB</td>
<td>2,241</td>
<td>83.1</td>
<td>1,887</td>
<td>72.7</td>
<td>263</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mo. Incarc.</td>
<td>145</td>
<td>5.4</td>
<td>333</td>
<td>12.8</td>
<td>51</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fa. Incarc.</td>
<td>250</td>
<td>9.3</td>
<td>393</td>
<td>15.2</td>
<td>53</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>All</td>
<td>2,698</td>
<td>100.0</td>
<td>2,594</td>
<td>100.0</td>
<td>381</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 24. Characteristics of children and parents by status at end of First Placement Episode (continued).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Placement Characteristics</th>
<th>Reunified</th>
<th>Adoption</th>
<th>Guardianship</th>
<th>In Care</th>
<th>All</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>n</td>
<td>%</td>
<td>n</td>
<td>%</td>
<td>n</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Prior Siblings in Care</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No siblings</td>
<td>737</td>
<td>27.3</td>
<td>592</td>
<td>22.8</td>
<td>67</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Siblings</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not in care</td>
<td>1,204</td>
<td>44.6</td>
<td>646</td>
<td>24.9</td>
<td>124</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FC only</td>
<td>650</td>
<td>24.1</td>
<td>879</td>
<td>33.9</td>
<td>166</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Adoption</td>
<td>107</td>
<td>4.0</td>
<td>477</td>
<td>18.4</td>
<td>24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Episode 1 Last Placement With Relative</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>960</td>
<td>35.6</td>
<td>909</td>
<td>35.0</td>
<td>353</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No</td>
<td>1,738</td>
<td>64.4</td>
<td>1,685</td>
<td>65.0</td>
<td>28</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Removal County</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Los Angeles</td>
<td>699</td>
<td>25.9</td>
<td>766</td>
<td>29.5</td>
<td>239</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>1,999</td>
<td>74.1</td>
<td>1,828</td>
<td>70.5</td>
<td>142</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Moves in First Placement Episode</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>504</td>
<td>19.4</td>
<td>142</td>
<td>37.3</td>
<td>21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>914</td>
<td>35.2</td>
<td>152</td>
<td>39.9</td>
<td>27</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>647</td>
<td>24.9</td>
<td>39</td>
<td>10.2</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>269</td>
<td>10.4</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>7.6</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>139</td>
<td>5.4</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>2.6</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6+</td>
<td>121</td>
<td>4.7</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>2.4</td>
<td>22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Moves in First Placement Episode After 6 Months of Age</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>0</td>
<td>1,279</td>
<td>49.3</td>
<td>216</td>
<td>56.7</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>674</td>
<td>26.0</td>
<td>82</td>
<td>21.5</td>
<td>28</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>295</td>
<td>11.4</td>
<td>52</td>
<td>13.6</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>179</td>
<td>6.9</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>2.9</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>81</td>
<td>3.1</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>2.9</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>43</td>
<td>1.7</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6+</td>
<td>43</td>
<td>1.7</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>1.3</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

n=5,873

Note 1: Data for children with “other” exits or who died are not shown separately, but are included in the total column.

Note 2: Placement episodes are continuous periods in care and may include placement in more than one home or other setting. Moves are changes of caregiver (including parents) not changes in legal status.
Table 25. Characteristics Associated with Reunification Following first Placement Episode- Logistic Regression

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Effect</th>
<th>Odds Ratio Estimates</th>
<th>95% Wald Confidence Limits</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Point Estimate</td>
<td>95% Confidence Limits</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Gender** (base = Male)
- Female: 0.955 (0.854, 1.067)

**Age at First Entry** (base = Older Infant)
- Neonate: 0.590 *** (0.523, 0.664)

**Race/Ethnicity** (base = Black)
- White: 1.018 (0.872, 1.190)
- Hispanic: 1.205 ** (1.046, 1.389)
- Asian: 0.999 (0.685, 1.457)
- American Indian: 0.942 (0.560, 1.583)
- Missing: 2.226 (0.990, 5.006)

**Initial Removal Reason** (base = Other than Neglect)
- Neglect: 0.637 *** (0.537, 0.755)

**Parental Characteristics**
- Father DOB Known: 1.772 *** (1.540, 2.038)
- Mother Incarcerated in 1st month: 0.646 * (0.456, 0.913)
- Father Incarcerated in 1st month: 0.749 (0.547, 1.025)
- Mother’s Age at birth: 1.008 (0.999, 1.017)

**Sibling Status at Entry** (base = No Known Older Siblings)
- No Siblings in Care: 1.209 * (1.041, 1.404)
- Siblings in Care, none Adopted: 0.631 *** (0.537, 0.741)
- Siblings Adopted: 0.240 *** (0.187, 0.308)

**County of Initial Removal** (base = Other than Los Angeles)
- Los Angeles: 0.744 *** (0.655, 0.845)
  - * p < .05
  - ** p < .01
  - *** p < .0001

Wald test: Chi-Square 570.7472, DF 16, p < .0001

n = 5,626 of 5,873
Table 26. Characteristics Associated with Status at End of First Episode for Children who did not Reunify [child’s ethnicity]

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Effect</th>
<th>End of Episode Status (base = Adoption)</th>
<th>Odds Ratio Estimates</th>
<th>95% Wald Confidence Limits</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Point Estimate</td>
<td>95% Wald</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gender (base = male)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female In Care</td>
<td>0.651 *</td>
<td>0.430</td>
<td>0.986</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Guardianship</td>
<td>1.050</td>
<td>0.832</td>
<td>1.324</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Entry as Newborn (base = older than 28 days)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Neonate In Care</td>
<td>0.475 **</td>
<td>0.306</td>
<td>0.735</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Guardianship</td>
<td>0.529 ***</td>
<td>0.412</td>
<td>0.679</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Race/Ethnicity (base = Black)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>White In Care</td>
<td>0.158 ***</td>
<td>0.076</td>
<td>0.328</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Guardianship</td>
<td>0.416 ***</td>
<td>0.294</td>
<td>0.589</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hispanic In Care</td>
<td>0.306 ***</td>
<td>0.191</td>
<td>0.491</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Guardianship</td>
<td>0.609 **</td>
<td>0.466</td>
<td>0.796</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Asian In Care</td>
<td>0.244</td>
<td>0.033</td>
<td>1.831</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Guardianship</td>
<td>0.773</td>
<td>0.347</td>
<td>1.721</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Am. Indian In Care</td>
<td>2.187</td>
<td>0.607</td>
<td>7.885</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Guardianship</td>
<td>2.242</td>
<td>0.874</td>
<td>5.750</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Missing In Care</td>
<td>&lt;0.001 &lt;0.001 &gt;999.999</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Guardianship</td>
<td>1.183</td>
<td>0.138</td>
<td>10.148</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Initial Removal Reason (base = Other than Neglect)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Neglect In Care</td>
<td>1.009</td>
<td>0.498</td>
<td>2.044</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Guardianship</td>
<td>1.302</td>
<td>0.837</td>
<td>2.026</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Parental Characteristics</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Father DOB Known In Care</td>
<td>0.624 *</td>
<td>0.405</td>
<td>0.962</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Guardianship</td>
<td>0.869</td>
<td>0.670</td>
<td>1.127</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mo. Incarcerated in In Care</td>
<td>0.904</td>
<td>0.271</td>
<td>3.015</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1st Month Guardianship</td>
<td>1.020</td>
<td>0.522</td>
<td>1.992</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fa. Incarcerated in In Care</td>
<td>1.248</td>
<td>0.428</td>
<td>3.639</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1st Month Guardianship</td>
<td>0.963</td>
<td>0.501</td>
<td>1.851</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mo. Age at Birth In Care</td>
<td>0.995</td>
<td>0.963</td>
<td>1.028</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Guardianship</td>
<td>0.995</td>
<td>0.976</td>
<td>1.013</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 26. Characteristics Associated with Status at End of First Episode for Children who did not Reunify (Continued)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Effect</th>
<th>End of Episode Status (base = Adoption)</th>
<th>Odds Ratio Estimates</th>
<th>95% Wald Confidence Limits</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Point Estimate</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Sibling Status at Entry</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No Siblings in Care</td>
<td>In Care</td>
<td>2.834 **</td>
<td>1.464 5.485</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Guardianship</td>
<td>1.703 **</td>
<td>1.200 2.417</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Siblings in Care, none Adopted</td>
<td>In Care</td>
<td>1.494</td>
<td>0.749 2.980</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Guardianship</td>
<td>1.403</td>
<td>0.990 1.987</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Siblings Adopted</td>
<td>In Care</td>
<td>0.679</td>
<td>0.275 1.680</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Guardianship</td>
<td>0.372 **</td>
<td>0.216 0.639</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>County of Initial Removal</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Los Angeles</td>
<td>In Care</td>
<td>2.801 ***</td>
<td>1.815 4.323</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Guardianship</td>
<td>3.797 ***</td>
<td>2.959 4.872</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*pr> ChiSq <.05
**pr> ChiSq <.01
***pr> ChiSq <.0001

Wald test: Chi-Square 297.3116, DF 32, p <.0001

n = 2,921 of 3,084
Table 27. Living Arrangement of Children in Care at Age 9 – Children in Placement Continuously Since First Entry.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Placement Type at Age 9</th>
<th>Child-Caregiver Relationship</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Non-relative Non-guardian</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>n</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Foster Family Home</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Foster Family Agency</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Adoptive Placement</td>
<td>.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Relative Home</td>
<td>.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Guardian Home</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Group Home</td>
<td>.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Non_F C</td>
<td>.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>24</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: Most plausible relative and/or guardian placements in *italics*.

Table 28. Reentries to care following first placement episode.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Reentry Status</th>
<th>Reunified</th>
<th>Adoption</th>
<th>Guardianship</th>
<th>In Care</th>
<th>All</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Reentry</td>
<td>908</td>
<td>33.7</td>
<td>44</td>
<td>1.7</td>
<td>1,009</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No Reentry</td>
<td>1,790</td>
<td>66.3</td>
<td>2,550</td>
<td>98.3</td>
<td>335</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>All</td>
<td>2,698</td>
<td>100.0</td>
<td>2,594</td>
<td>100.0</td>
<td>109</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

n=5,873

Note: Data for children with “other” exits or who died are not shown separately, but are included in the total column.

Table 29. Placement and Reentry Status at Age 9 of children who Reunified at the end of their First Placement Episode.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Status at Age 9</th>
<th>No Reentry</th>
<th>Reunified (col. %)</th>
<th>Reentry (col. %)</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Reunified</td>
<td>1,790</td>
<td>100.0</td>
<td>313</td>
<td>34.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Adopted</td>
<td>377</td>
<td>41.5</td>
<td>377</td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Guardianship</td>
<td>67</td>
<td>7.4</td>
<td>67</td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>0.7</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>In Care</td>
<td>145</td>
<td>16.0</td>
<td>145</td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total (row percents)</td>
<td>1,790</td>
<td>66.3</td>
<td>908</td>
<td>33.7</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 30. Reentries Following First Episode Reunification.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Gender</th>
<th>No Reentry</th>
<th>Reentry</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>n</td>
<td>%</td>
<td>n</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female</td>
<td>882</td>
<td>68.0</td>
<td>416</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Male</td>
<td>908</td>
<td>64.9</td>
<td>492</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Age at First Entry</th>
<th>No Reentry</th>
<th>Reentry</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Neonate</td>
<td>699</td>
<td>63.2</td>
<td>407</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Older Infant</td>
<td>1,091</td>
<td>68.5</td>
<td>501</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Race/Ethnicity</th>
<th>No Reentry</th>
<th>Reentry</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Black</td>
<td>386</td>
<td>62.2</td>
<td>235</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>White</td>
<td>504</td>
<td>63.8</td>
<td>286</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hispanic</td>
<td>802</td>
<td>69.0</td>
<td>361</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Asian</td>
<td>55</td>
<td>82.1</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>American Indian</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>56.7</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Missing</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>96.3</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Removal Reason</th>
<th>No Reentry</th>
<th>Reentry</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Neglect</td>
<td>1,401</td>
<td>63.7</td>
<td>798</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>389</td>
<td>78.0</td>
<td>110</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Father’s DOBKnown</th>
<th>No Reentry</th>
<th>Reentry</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>1,465</td>
<td>65.4</td>
<td>776</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No</td>
<td>325</td>
<td>71.1</td>
<td>132</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Mother Incarcerated in 1st Month</th>
<th>No Reentry</th>
<th>Reentry</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>55.2</td>
<td>26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No</td>
<td>1,758</td>
<td>66.6</td>
<td>882</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Father Incarcerated in 1st Month</th>
<th>No Reentry</th>
<th>Reentry</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>52</td>
<td>63.4</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No</td>
<td>1,738</td>
<td>66.4</td>
<td>878</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Older Sibling Prior Placement Experience</th>
<th>No Reentry</th>
<th>Reentry</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>No Older Siblings</td>
<td>542</td>
<td>73.5</td>
<td>195</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sibs, None in Care</td>
<td>818</td>
<td>67.9</td>
<td>386</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>In Care, None Adopted</td>
<td>369</td>
<td>56.8</td>
<td>281</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1 or more Adopted</td>
<td>61</td>
<td>57.0</td>
<td>46</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Removal County</th>
<th>No Reentry</th>
<th>Reentry</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Los Angeles</td>
<td>517</td>
<td>74.0</td>
<td>182</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>All Other</td>
<td>1,273</td>
<td>63.7</td>
<td>726</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 30. Reentries Following First Episode Reunitification (Continued).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Children who Reunified</th>
<th>No Reentry</th>
<th>Reentry</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>AFCARS Diagnoses</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Any Clinical Dx.</td>
<td>336</td>
<td>442</td>
<td>778</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>43.2%</td>
<td>56.8%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No Clinical Dx.</td>
<td>1,454</td>
<td>466</td>
<td>1,920</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>75.7%</td>
<td>24.3%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Last Placement with Kin</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>676</td>
<td>284</td>
<td>960</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>70.4%</td>
<td>29.6%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No</td>
<td>1,114</td>
<td>624</td>
<td>1,738</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>64.1%</td>
<td>35.9%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Age at Reunification</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&lt; 6 months</td>
<td>513</td>
<td>299</td>
<td>812</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>63.2%</td>
<td>36.8%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6mo to 1 yr</td>
<td>514</td>
<td>255</td>
<td>769</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>66.8%</td>
<td>33.2%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Age 1</td>
<td>554</td>
<td>279</td>
<td>833</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>66.5%</td>
<td>33.5%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Age 2</td>
<td>158</td>
<td>62</td>
<td>220</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>71.8%</td>
<td>28.2%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Age 3</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>39</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>79.5%</td>
<td>20.5%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Age 4</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>61.5%</td>
<td>38.5%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Age 5 +</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>.</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>100.0%</td>
<td>.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Status at Age 9 (column percents)</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reunified</td>
<td>1,790</td>
<td>313</td>
<td>2,103</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>100.0%</td>
<td>34.5%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Adopted</td>
<td>377</td>
<td>77</td>
<td>454</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>41.5%</td>
<td>16.3%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Guardianship</td>
<td>67</td>
<td>67</td>
<td>67</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>7.4%</td>
<td>100.0%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>0.7%</td>
<td>100.0%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>In Care</td>
<td>145</td>
<td>145</td>
<td>145</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>16.0%</td>
<td>100.0%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>1,790</td>
<td>908</td>
<td>2,698</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>66.3%</td>
<td>33.7%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Effect</td>
<td>Point Estimate</td>
<td>95% Wald Confidence Limits</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-------------------------------</td>
<td>----------------</td>
<td>-----------------------------</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Gender</strong> (base = Male)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female</td>
<td>0.858</td>
<td>0.726</td>
<td>1.015</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Age at First Entry</strong> (base = Older Infant)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Neonate</td>
<td>1.055</td>
<td>0.861</td>
<td>1.293</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Race/Ethnicity</strong> (base = Black)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>White</td>
<td>0.883</td>
<td>0.699</td>
<td>1.114</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hispanic</td>
<td>0.753 **</td>
<td>0.606</td>
<td>0.935</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Asian</td>
<td>0.429 **</td>
<td>0.221</td>
<td>0.832</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>American Indian</td>
<td>1.067</td>
<td>0.492</td>
<td>2.314</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Missing</td>
<td>0.067 **</td>
<td>0.009</td>
<td>0.507</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Initial Removal Reason</strong> (base = Other than Neglect)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Neglect</td>
<td>1.857 ***</td>
<td>1.456</td>
<td>2.370</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Parental Characteristics</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Father DOB Known</td>
<td>1.289 *</td>
<td>1.018</td>
<td>1.631</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mother Incarcerated in 1st month</td>
<td>1.467</td>
<td>0.837</td>
<td>2.571</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Father Incarcerated in 1st month</td>
<td>0.882</td>
<td>0.539</td>
<td>1.443</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mother’s Age at Birth</td>
<td>0.981 **</td>
<td>0.968</td>
<td>0.995</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Sibling Status at Entry</strong> (base = No Known Older Siblings)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No Siblings in Care</td>
<td>1.328 *</td>
<td>1.063</td>
<td>1.659</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Siblings in Care, none Adopted</td>
<td>2.239 ***</td>
<td>1.737</td>
<td>2.887</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Siblings Adopted</td>
<td>1.855 **</td>
<td>1.193</td>
<td>2.885</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>County of Initial Removal</strong> (base = Other than Los Angeles)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Los Angeles</td>
<td>0.623 ***</td>
<td>0.504</td>
<td>0.771</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Placement Experience</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Moves after 6 months of age</td>
<td>1.013</td>
<td>0.919</td>
<td>1.117</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Last Placement with Kin</td>
<td>0.786 **</td>
<td>0.654</td>
<td>0.944</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 31. Reentry into Care Following First Episode Reunification
(Continued)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Effect</th>
<th>Point Estimate</th>
<th>95% Wald Confidence Limits</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Age at Reunification</strong> (base = 0 to 6 months)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6mo to 1 yr</td>
<td>1.000</td>
<td>0.766 – 1.305</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Age 1</td>
<td>1.002</td>
<td>0.747 – 1.344</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Age 2</td>
<td>0.733</td>
<td>0.469 – 1.143</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Age 3</td>
<td>0.498</td>
<td>0.210 – 1.181</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Age 4</td>
<td>1.269</td>
<td>0.389 – 4.143</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Age 5 +</td>
<td>&lt;0.001</td>
<td>&lt;0.001 – &gt;999.999</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* p < .05
** p < .01
*** p < .0001

Wald test: Chi-Square 393.4376, DF 23, p < .0001

n=2,621 of 2,698
Table 32. Reentries Following First Finalized Adoption.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Children with Finalized Adoptions</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>No Reentry</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gender</td>
<td>n</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female</td>
<td>1,449</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Male</td>
<td>1,493</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Age at First Entry</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Neonate</td>
<td>1,830</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Older Infant</td>
<td>1,112</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Race/Ethnicity</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Black</td>
<td>780</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>White</td>
<td>940</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hispanic</td>
<td>1,121</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Asian</td>
<td>62</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>American Indian</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Missing</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Removal County</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Los Angeles</td>
<td>2,134</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>All Other</td>
<td>808</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Removal Reason</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Neglect</td>
<td>2,665</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>277</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AFCARS Diagnoses</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Any Clinical Dx.</td>
<td>1,232</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No Clinical Dx.</td>
<td>1,710</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kin Adoption</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>1,074</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No</td>
<td>1,824</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Missing data</td>
<td>44</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Placement Episode of Adoption</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>First Episode</td>
<td>2,550</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Later Placement Episode</td>
<td>392</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Totals</td>
<td>2,942</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 32. Reentries Following First Finalized Adoption (Continued).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Age at Adoption</th>
<th>No Reentry</th>
<th>Reentry</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>n</td>
<td>%</td>
<td>n</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>0</td>
<td>107</td>
<td>100.0</td>
<td>.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>667</td>
<td>98.2</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>917</td>
<td>98.1</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>594</td>
<td>98.5</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>319</td>
<td>98.2</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>153</td>
<td>97.5</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>92</td>
<td>97.9</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>57</td>
<td>100.0</td>
<td>.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>100.0</td>
<td>.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>2,942</td>
<td>98.3</td>
<td>51</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Status at Age 9 (Column Percent)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Status at Age 9</th>
<th>No Reentry</th>
<th>Reentry</th>
<th>All</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>In Care</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>25.5</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Adoptive home</td>
<td>2,942</td>
<td>100.0</td>
<td>32</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>New adoptive home</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>11.8</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>2,942</td>
<td>100.0</td>
<td>51</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 33. Reentries Following First Finalized Adoption (Age and Move Data).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Status at Age 9</th>
<th>No Reentry Mean</th>
<th>Median</th>
<th>Reentry Mean</th>
<th>Median</th>
<th>All Mean</th>
<th>Median</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>In Care</td>
<td>3.4</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3.4</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3.4</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not in Care</td>
<td>2.6</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2.3</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2.6</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>All Adopted</td>
<td>2.6</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2.6</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2.6</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Moves Prior to First or Only Adoption

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>All Moves</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>Median</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>Median</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>Median</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>In Care</td>
<td>5.2</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5.2</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5.2</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not in Care</td>
<td>3.1</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4.0</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3.1</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>All Adopted</td>
<td>3.1</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4.3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3.1</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Moves Before 6 Months of Age

| In Care                  | 1.3  | 1      | 1.3  | 1      | 1.3  | 1      |
| Not in Care              | 1.6  | 2      | 1.4  | 1      | 1.6  | 2      |
| All Adopted              | 1.6  | 2      | 1.4  | 1      | 1.6  | 2      |

Moves After 6 Months of Age

| In Care                  | 3.8  | 3      | 3.8  | 3      | 3.8  | 3      |
| Not in Care              | 1.4  | 1      | 2.6  | 2      | 1.4  | 1      |
| All Adopted              | 1.4  | 1      | 2.9  | 2      | 1.4  | 1      |
Table 34. **Adoption Reentries by Status at Age 9.**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Last Termination Type</th>
<th>Reunified*</th>
<th>Adopted</th>
<th>In Care</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>mean</td>
<td>mdn</td>
<td>mean</td>
<td>mdn</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Adoption Age</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Years</td>
<td>2.9</td>
<td>2.7</td>
<td>2.7</td>
<td>2.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reentry Age</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Years</td>
<td>6.5</td>
<td>6.7</td>
<td>4.1</td>
<td>4.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reentry length</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Days</td>
<td>142.8</td>
<td>56.5</td>
<td>771.7</td>
<td>726</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Moves &gt;6 mo</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number</td>
<td>2.6</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2.2</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gender</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>43.8</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>33.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Male</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>56.3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>66.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Relative Adoption</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>43.8</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>33.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>56.3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>66.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ethnicity</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Black</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>31.3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>66.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>White</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>18.8</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>33.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hispanic</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>43.8</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>30.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Asian</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3.1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>7.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Missing</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3.1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>7.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>51</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Note: Reunified means reunified with adoptive family. Adopted means adopted by family other than original adoptive family.
Table 35. Reentry into Care Following Adoption

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Effect</th>
<th>Point Estimate</th>
<th>95% Wald Confidence Limits</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Gender (base = Male)</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female</td>
<td>0.821</td>
<td>0.463  1.456</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Age at First Entry (base = Older Infant)</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Neonate</td>
<td>1.372</td>
<td>0.640  2.941</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Race/Ethnicity (base = Black)</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>White</td>
<td>0.355 *</td>
<td>0.153  0.823</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hispanic</td>
<td>0.569</td>
<td>0.293  1.105</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Asian</td>
<td>1.081</td>
<td>0.240  4.874</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>American Indian</td>
<td>&lt;0.001 *</td>
<td>&lt;0.001 &gt;999.999</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Missing</td>
<td>18.869 *</td>
<td>1.798  198.066</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>County of Initial Removal (base = Other than Los Angeles)</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Los Angeles</td>
<td>1.885</td>
<td>0.945  3.758</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Initial Removal Reason (base = Other than Neglect)</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Neglect</td>
<td>2.878</td>
<td>0.664  12.468</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Diagnosed Disability (base = No Disability)</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Diagnosed Disability</td>
<td>1.137</td>
<td>0.623  2.077</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Relative Adoption (base = Other than Relative)</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Relative</td>
<td>1.804</td>
<td>0.975  3.338</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Placement Episode (base=Other than First Episode)</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Episode One</td>
<td>2.039</td>
<td>0.723  5.750</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Preadoptive Moves</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Moves before age 6 mo</td>
<td>0.946</td>
<td>0.689  1.300</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Moves after age 6 mo</td>
<td>1.565 ***</td>
<td>1.364  1.796</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Age at Adoption (years)</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Age</td>
<td>0.632 **</td>
<td>0.475  0.841</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* p < .05
** p < .01
*** p < .0001

Wald test: Chi-Square 59.4966, DF 15, p <.0001
n=2,949 of 2,993
Table 36. Status at age 9 of children returning to care following guardianship.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Years of Age</th>
<th>Status at 9</th>
<th>Status After Reentry after Exit to Guardianship</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>With Guardian upon Return</td>
<td>Not with Guardian upon Return</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Remained with Guardian</td>
<td>Later Left Guardian</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reunified</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Adopted</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Guardianship</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Death</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>In care</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: “Return from Guardianship Placement” refers to the child’s legal status. Those children who were with the guardian upon return to care had no change of caregiver unless and until they left the guardian’s care at a later date.

Table 37. Comparison of Placement Status at end of First Placement Episode and at Age 9.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Status at end of Episode 1</th>
<th>Status at 9 Years of Age</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Reunified</td>
<td>Adopted</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2,103</td>
<td>377</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Adopted</td>
<td>2,583</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Guardianship</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>2</td>
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Table 38. Characteristics of children and parents by status at age 9 – column percents

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<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Reunified n</th>
<th>Adoption n</th>
<th>Guardianship n</th>
<th>In Care n</th>
<th>All n</th>
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108
Table 38. Characteristics of children and parents by status at age 9 – column percents
(Continued).

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<th>In Care</th>
<th>All</th>
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<td>n</td>
<td>%</td>
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n=5,873

Note: Data for children with “other” exits or who died are not shown separately, but are included in the total column.
Table 39. Characteristics of children and parents by status at age 9 – row percents

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<th>Guardianship</th>
<th>In Care</th>
<th>All</th>
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<td>n</td>
<td>%</td>
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<td>1,465</td>
<td>51.2</td>
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<td>2,980</td>
<td>50.7</td>
<td>412</td>
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<td>948</td>
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<td>717</td>
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<td>181</td>
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<td>685</td>
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<td>1,100</td>
<td>56.8</td>
<td>71</td>
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<tr>
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<td>831</td>
<td>42.8</td>
<td>879</td>
<td>45.2</td>
<td>126</td>
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<td>45.9</td>
<td>69</td>
<td>43.9</td>
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<tr>
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<td>29.1</td>
<td>174</td>
<td>58.8</td>
<td>16</td>
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<td>33.0</td>
<td>2,702</td>
<td>53.1</td>
<td>379</td>
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<tr>
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<td>152</td>
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<td>22</td>
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<td>283</td>
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<td>Mother Incarceration</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1st 30 days</td>
<td>45</td>
<td>26.5</td>
<td>103</td>
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<td>10</td>
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<tr>
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<td>Father Incarceration</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1st 30 days</td>
<td>62</td>
<td>31.5</td>
<td>110</td>
<td>55.8</td>
<td>13</td>
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Table 39. Characteristics of children and parents by status at age 9 – row percents (Continued).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>AFCARS Diagnoses</th>
<th>Reunified</th>
<th>Adoption</th>
<th>Guardianship</th>
<th>In Care</th>
<th>All</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
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<td>n</td>
<td>%</td>
<td>n</td>
<td>%</td>
<td>n</td>
</tr>
<tr>
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<td>478</td>
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<td>1,251</td>
<td>59.2</td>
<td>155</td>
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<tr>
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<td>43.5</td>
<td>1,729</td>
<td>46.0</td>
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</table>

Placement Characteristics

Prior Sibling in Care
- No siblings  | 619 | 43.0  | 684 | 47.6  | 65  | 4.5   | 43  | 3.0   | 1,438 | 100.0 |
- Siblings
  - Not in care | 965 | 47.0  | 792 | 38.6  | 146 | 7.1   | 114 | 5.6   | 2,054 | 100.0 |
  - FC only    | 464 | 26.4  | 997 | 56.7  | 174 | 9.9   | 105 | 6.0   | 1,758 | 100.0 |
  - Adoption   | 66  | 10.6  | 507 | 81.4  | 27  | 4.3   | 17  | 2.7   | 623  | 100.0 |

Episode 1 Last Placement With Relative
- Yes          | 786 | 34.3  | 1,017 | 44.4 | 356 | 15.5   | 104 | 4.5   | 2,293 | 100.0 |
- No           | 1,328 | 37.1 | 1,963 | 54.8 | 56  | 1.6    | 175 | 4.9   | 3,580 | 100.0 |

Removal County
- Los Angeles | 594 | 33.0  | 821 | 45.7  | 233 | 13.0  | 119 | 6.6    | 1,798 | 100.0 |
- Other       | 1,520 | 37.3 | 2,159 | 53.0 | 179 | 4.4    | 160 | 3.9    | 4,075 | 100.0 |

All           | 2,114 | 36.0 | 2,980 | 50.7 | 412 | 7.0    | 279 | 4.8    | 5,873 | 100.0 |

n=5,873

Notes: Data for children with “other” exits or who died are now shown separately, but are included in the total column.
Row percents do not sum to 100% because columns for other exits and deaths are omitted.
### Table 40. Total Number of Moves by Status at Age 9.

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<th>Guardianship</th>
<th>In Care</th>
<th>All</th>
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<td>%</td>
<td>n</td>
<td>%</td>
<td>n</td>
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<td>Total Moves</td>
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<td>30.6</td>
<td>657</td>
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<td>909</td>
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<td>131</td>
<td>31.8</td>
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<td>1,383</td>
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<td>11.4</td>
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<td>2,980</td>
<td>100.0</td>
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Note: Moves for children with “other” exits or who died are not shown separately, but are included in the total column.
Table 41. Characteristics Associated with Reunification at Last Placement Episode- Logistic Regression

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<th>95% Wald Confidence Limits</th>
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<td>1.454</td>
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<tr>
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<td>0.514</td>
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<td>Father Incarcerated in 1st month</td>
<td>0.770</td>
<td>0.552</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mo. Age at Birth</td>
<td>1.014 **</td>
<td>1.004</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Prior Siblings in Care (base = none)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No Siblings in Care</td>
<td>1.065</td>
<td>0.917</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Siblings in Care, none Adopted</td>
<td>0.517 ***</td>
<td>0.438</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Siblings Adopted</td>
<td>0.187 ***</td>
<td>0.139</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>County of Initial Removal (base = Other than Los Angeles)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Los Angeles</td>
<td>0.985</td>
<td>0.863</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* p < .05
** p < .01
*** p < .0001

Wald test: Chi-Square 510.1746, DF 16, p < .0001

n=5,626 of 5,873
Table 42. Characteristics Associated with Status at End of Last Episode for Children who did not Reunify

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>End of Episode Status (base = Adoption)</th>
<th>Odds Ratio Estimates</th>
<th>95% Wald Confidence Limits</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Gender (base = male)</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female In Care</td>
<td>0.775</td>
<td>0.597</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Guardianship</td>
<td>0.973</td>
<td>0.782</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Entry as Newborn (base = older than 28 days)</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Neonate In Care</td>
<td>0.499 ***</td>
<td>0.378</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Guardianship</td>
<td>0.588 ***</td>
<td>0.465</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Child’s Race/Ethnicity (base = Black)</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>White In Care</td>
<td>0.302 ***</td>
<td>0.209</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Guardianship</td>
<td>0.401 ***</td>
<td>0.291</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hispanic In Care</td>
<td>0.395 ***</td>
<td>0.292</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Guardianship</td>
<td>0.517 ***</td>
<td>0.401</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Asian In Care</td>
<td>0.537</td>
<td>0.207</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Guardianship</td>
<td>0.622</td>
<td>0.271</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Am. Indian In Care</td>
<td>1.512</td>
<td>0.597</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Guardianship</td>
<td>2.012</td>
<td>0.876</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Missing In Care</td>
<td>&lt;0.001 &lt;0.001</td>
<td>&gt;999.999</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Guardianship</td>
<td>1.057</td>
<td>0.124</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Initial Removal Reason (base = Other than Neglect)</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Neglect In Care</td>
<td>1.143</td>
<td>0.732</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Guardianship</td>
<td>1.191</td>
<td>0.798</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Parental Characteristics</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Father DOB Known</td>
<td>1.108</td>
<td>0.813</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Guardianship</td>
<td>0.838</td>
<td>0.654</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mo. Incarcerated in 1st Month</td>
<td>1.020</td>
<td>0.495</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Guardianship</td>
<td>0.861</td>
<td>0.434</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fa. Incarcerated in 1st Month</td>
<td>1.003</td>
<td>0.503</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Guardianship</td>
<td>1.016</td>
<td>0.548</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mo. Age at Birth</td>
<td>1.004</td>
<td>0.984</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Guardianship</td>
<td>0.992</td>
<td>0.975</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 42. Characteristics Associated with Status at End of Last Episode for Children who did not Reunify (Continued)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>End of Episode Status (base = Adoption)</th>
<th>Odds Ratio Estimates</th>
<th>95% Wald Confidence Limits</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Sibling Status at Entry</strong> (base = No Known Older Siblings)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No Siblings in Care</td>
<td>In Care</td>
<td>2.134 **</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Guardianship</td>
<td>1.970 ***</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Siblings in Care, none Adopted</td>
<td>In Care</td>
<td>1.383</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Guardianship</td>
<td>1.546 *</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Siblings Adopted</td>
<td>In Care</td>
<td>0.453 *</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Guardianship</td>
<td>0.452 **</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>County of Initial Removal</strong> (base = Other than Los Angeles)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Los Angeles</td>
<td>In Care</td>
<td>1.909 ***</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Guardianship</td>
<td>3.152 ***</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*p < .05
**p < .01
***p < .0001

Wald test: Chi-Square 322.4242, DF 32, p < .0001

n = 3,465 of 3638
Table 43. Living Arrangement of Children in Care at Age 9 – Children Who Returned To Care Following Exit From The First Placement Episode.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Placement Type at Age 9</th>
<th>Non-relative</th>
<th>Relative</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Non-guardian</td>
<td>Guardian</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>n</td>
<td>n</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Foster Family Home</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Foster Family Agency</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>51</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Adoptive Placement</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Relative Home</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Guardian Home</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Group Home</td>
<td>13</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Non_F C</td>
<td></td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: Most plausible relative and/or guardian placements in *italics*.

Table 44. Living Arrangement of All Children in Care at Age 9.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Placement Type at Age 9</th>
<th>Non-relative</th>
<th>Relative</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Non-guardian</td>
<td>Guardian</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>n</td>
<td>n</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Foster Family Home</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>39</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Foster Family Agency</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>63</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Adoptive Placement</td>
<td>.</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Relative Home</td>
<td>.</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Guardian Home</td>
<td>39</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Group Home</td>
<td>.</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Non_F C</td>
<td>.</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>.</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>46</td>
<td>146</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: Most plausible relative and/or guardian placements in *italics*. 
Table 45. Substantiated Referral Allegations Following Last Placement Exit

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Most Serious Substantiated Allegation</th>
<th>Last Exit Type</th>
<th>Total not in care or deceased</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Reunification</td>
<td>Adoption</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>None</td>
<td>n</td>
<td>%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1,736</td>
<td>82.3</td>
<td>2,889</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Subst. Alleg.</td>
<td>378</td>
<td>17.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>2,114</td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Type of allegation as percent of all children with substantiated allegations

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Allegation</th>
<th>Reunification</th>
<th>Adoption</th>
<th>Guardianship</th>
<th>Other</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Sexual Ab.</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Phys Abuse</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sev Neg.</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gen Neg.</td>
<td>174</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Emot Abuse</td>
<td>42</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ctr Ab /In</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>At Risk</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unk/ Miss</td>
<td>56</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sub Total</td>
<td>378</td>
<td>91</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>