

RESEARCH RESULTS OF A COLLABORATIVE, SURVIVOR-CENTERED APPROACH TO SYSTEMS CHANGE

Demonstration projects in Massachusetts, Pennsylvania, and Illinois yielded promising results that warrant additional investment and exploration. The goals of the projects were to improve child and adult survivor safety, child permanency, and child and family well-being.

Some of these goals were realized, but many questions remain!



Child outcomes

Improved child safety outcomes at one site, and improved permanency outcomes at two sites.



Changes in mindsets

Adoption of new language (e.g., people who use violence vs. batterer) contributed to positive changes in mindsets, child welfare case planning, and decision-making.



Collaboration & communication

Enhancements in communication and collaboration at the team and case levels created space for new thinking and decision-making, such as avoiding removals of children for exposure to DV.



Child welfare practice

Caseworkers reported increased awareness of adult survivor protective capacities and resilience, and improvements in their practices:

- Building protective factors with survivors
- Creating accountability with people who use violence



Racial equity

Improved equity-focused goal setting, staff preparedness for anti-racism work, and enhanced practices emerged.

1 The demonstration projects (2017-2021) were part of the Quality Improvement Center on Domestic Violence in Child Welfare (QIC-DVCW), which was a cooperative agreement between the Children's Bureau at the Administration for Children and Families and Futures Without Violence (FUTURES). Projects involved a variety of agencies which varied from one state to another, but all 3 project sites had partners from child welfare, domestic violence agencies, and dependency courts.

QUESTIONS FOR FURTHER INVESTMENT & EXPLORATION



There were no significant improvements in child or adult survivor well-being.

- > Did child safety and permanency improve **at the expense of survivors' well-being**? What's safety without well-being?



Are there strategies for addressing racial, gender, and economic disparities in child welfare that create **real and personally meaningful results** for Black, Indigenous, and Latina/o survivors and families? For low-income families?



Adult survivors feel judged and held responsible for the harm of their partner's violence to children. Some questioned whether caseworkers even believed that they love and try to protect their children.

- > Is the child welfare system a place where child and adult survivors of domestic violence can get help to be **safe together**?
- > Does the bureaucracy of child welfare (policies, procedures, hierarchy, etc.) **overshadow, negate, or undermine the impacts of practice improvements** on families' experiences?



Are you a bold leader in a jurisdiction seeking to do better?

- > Read the [Executive Summary](#) of the final report to learn more.
- > Explore [BridgestoBetter.org](#) and find resources for your specific work:
 - [Resources for Service Providers and Local Leaders](#)
 - [Resources for Policymakers and Policy Advocates](#)
 - [Resources for Researchers and Evaluators](#)