

# Do Infant-Toddler Court Teams impact permanency outcomes for families?

CASANUEVA, C., WILLIAMS, J., KLUCKMAN, M., HARRIS, S., & GOLDMAN FRASER, J. (2024). THE EFFECT OF THE ZERO TO THREE INFANT-TODDLER COURT TEAMS ON TYPE AND TIME OF EXITS FROM OUT-OF-HOME CARE: A NEW STUDY TEN YEARS AFTER THE FIRST COMPETING RISKS ANALYSIS. *CHILDREN AND YOUTH SERVICES REVIEW*, 156, 107327.

## What can we learn from this study?

Rates of substantiated maltreatment have risen more for infants than any other age group in the past five years. These cases often result in children being separated from their parents, which can compound trauma and hinder development. This study explored permanency outcomes for children under 3 years old when Infant-Toddler Court Teams (ITCTs) are involved. ITCTs aim to expedite family referrals to comprehensive services in order to reduce the need for child removals, enhance timely reunifications, and improve permanency outcomes.

### Study details

- **Population:** 183 families with a child aged 0 to 3 years that received ITCT services for at least one year.
- **Data sources:** National Survey of Child and Adolescent Well-being (NSCAW) II; nine ITCTs across six states.
- **Methodology:** Retrospective, quasi-experimental design with an intervention (ITCT) and a matched comparison group using propensity score matching; logistic regression model.
- **Dates:** 2010 to 2018

## What are the critical findings?

Permanency outcomes for children exiting foster care were better for those in families receiving ITCT services compared to those in the NSCAW II cohort:

- Children involved with ITCTs experienced reunification at a significantly higher rate (43.7%) than the comparison cohort (25.6%).
- The ITCT group was less likely to remain in foster care by the end of the study period than the cohort (2.7% compared to 16.9%).
- Children involved with ITCTs were 1.6 times more likely to exit foster care to permanency.
- Achieving permanency for children involved with ITCTs was significantly quicker than for the cohort group, at 450.6 days vs. 654.9 days.
- Mean times for exiting foster care to reunification were 310 days for the ITCT group, compared to 476 days for the cohort.
- Adoption and guardianship took longer than reunification across all models.

## Why is this important to our work?

Children need a safe and nurturing environment for their well-being and development. When they experience maltreatment and are separated from family, comprehensive services are crucial to address their traumas. ITCTs focus on preventing maltreatment and separation by securing front-end services for families, including integrated trauma and substance use disorder treatment, and illustrate how creating supportive environments can improve permanency outcomes. Using cross-system collaborations, ITCTs help ensure that family needs are met, while enhancing parents' ability to achieve case plan goals and, if child removal has occurred, increasing the likelihood of timely reunification.

To learn more strategies to improve placement stability, see: [\*How does the Safe Babies Court Team™ approach improve outcomes for infants and toddlers?\*](#), [\*How can we improve placement stability for children in foster care?\*](#), and [\*How did Cradle to Crayons adapt the Safe Babies Court Team™ approach in Maricopa County, Arizona?\*](#)

This summary synthesizes the findings from a single research study. For additional information, see the article [abstract](#) or contact: [KMResources@casey.org](mailto:KMResources@casey.org)