



Gettin'em & Keepin'em: Recruiting & Retaining Resources

Permanency Conference Presentation

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Why is recruiting & retaining resource families important?

- We need adequate number of quality foster and/or adoptive parents
- It is a IV-B requirement that states have potential foster/adoptive families that are reflective of the ethnic and racial diversity of children



How is the Agency doing?

- 2007 CFSR completed by Children's Bureau indicated Diligent Recruitment is an **area needing improvement** in Alabama's Child Welfare System
- Family Services Staff also note issues with resources as we work in counties in a variety of ways.



On-site CFSR review findings

- Diligent recruitment has not addressed the need for culturally and ethnically diverse F/A homes
- 6 of 17 State QA reviews indicated counties needed more FFH
- Resource worker positions sometime vacant or worker pulled to help with other duties



Family Services experiences

- ✓ Resource files often incomplete;
- ✓ Out of home CA/N Assessment Protocol not adhered to when PARAN is a FP;
- ✓ Child welfare staff not familiar with “supports to FP’s” section of Out of Home Care Manual;



Family Services experiences continued

- ✓ FP's do not demonstrate understanding of standards, policies, etc that impact the care they provide to our children.
- ✓ Foster parents not always given adequate information about the needs of child at time of placement.
- ✓ Our own actions and conversations can lead to conflicts later on.

Three balloons (green, blue, and purple) are positioned on the left side of the slide, each with yellow triangular streamers trailing behind them.

APAC's Pre-Adoptive Services

- Part of contract between APAC & SDHR
 - Recruit & Pre-screen potential adoptive families interested in special needs adoption
- Recruitment done in collaboration with other in collaboration with SDHR, Heart Gallery, AdoptUsKids, etc.



APAC, Pre-Adoptive Services, continued

Potential Families carefully pre-screened to determine that child-desired characteristics meet the special needs adoption criteria:

- African American Child 2 years or older
 - Child of any race 8 or older
- Sibling group of 3 or more placed together at same time
- Child with significant emotional, behavioral, physical, mental or cognitive special needs



Preparation & Assessment

- GPS Training – geographically planned based on volume of prospective families in a given area.
 - Complete ten week series
- Background clearances (CA/N, ABI/FBI) & Reference Checks
- Family consultations, individual interviews



Study document/record

- Home study (summary & recommendation document) is completed by APAC
- Goal to complete within 6 week of final GPS session
- Internally reviewed by APAC staff prior to submission to SDHR for approval review.



Partnering with County

- Pre-screening communication (does County have a history with this family?)
 - County invited to GPS meetings
2,5 & 9
- County invited to participate in 2nd family consultation (home visit)



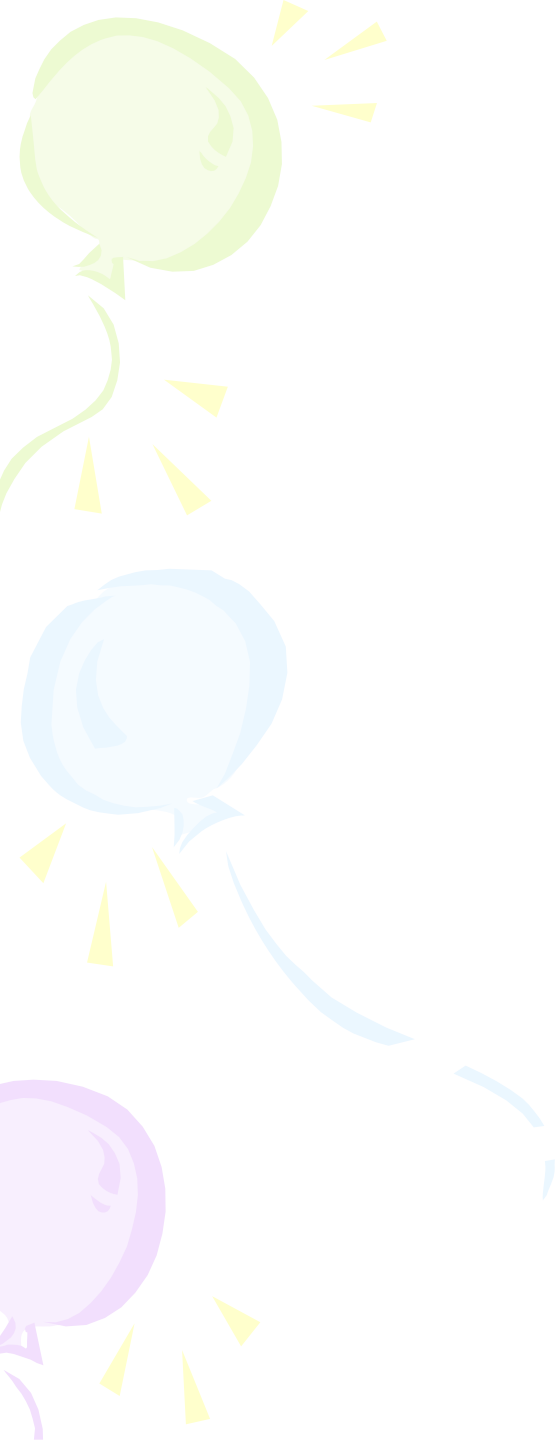
Partnering with County, continued

- County should review study when they receive their copy (sent at same time original sent to SDHR)
- If did not participate in 2nd consult, meet family within 30 days of receipt of study
 - Getting to know family is important because of role in post-placement supervision if family matched with a child
- Semi-annual updates of Study to SDHR

A decorative graphic on the left side of the slide featuring three balloons: a light green one at the top, a light blue one in the middle, and a light purple one at the bottom. Each balloon has a string and several small yellow triangular flags attached to it.

Additional Supports

- Guidance for families registering with AdoptUsKids
- Supporting families with child-specific inquiries
- Participate in placement staff meetings
- Engage family in other APAC supports and services



The Waiting Family



Role of RRT & County Resource Worker

Who is the State RRT?

- ✓ Contract between SDHR & APAC
- ✓ Past contract between AU\$K & CAS/APAC

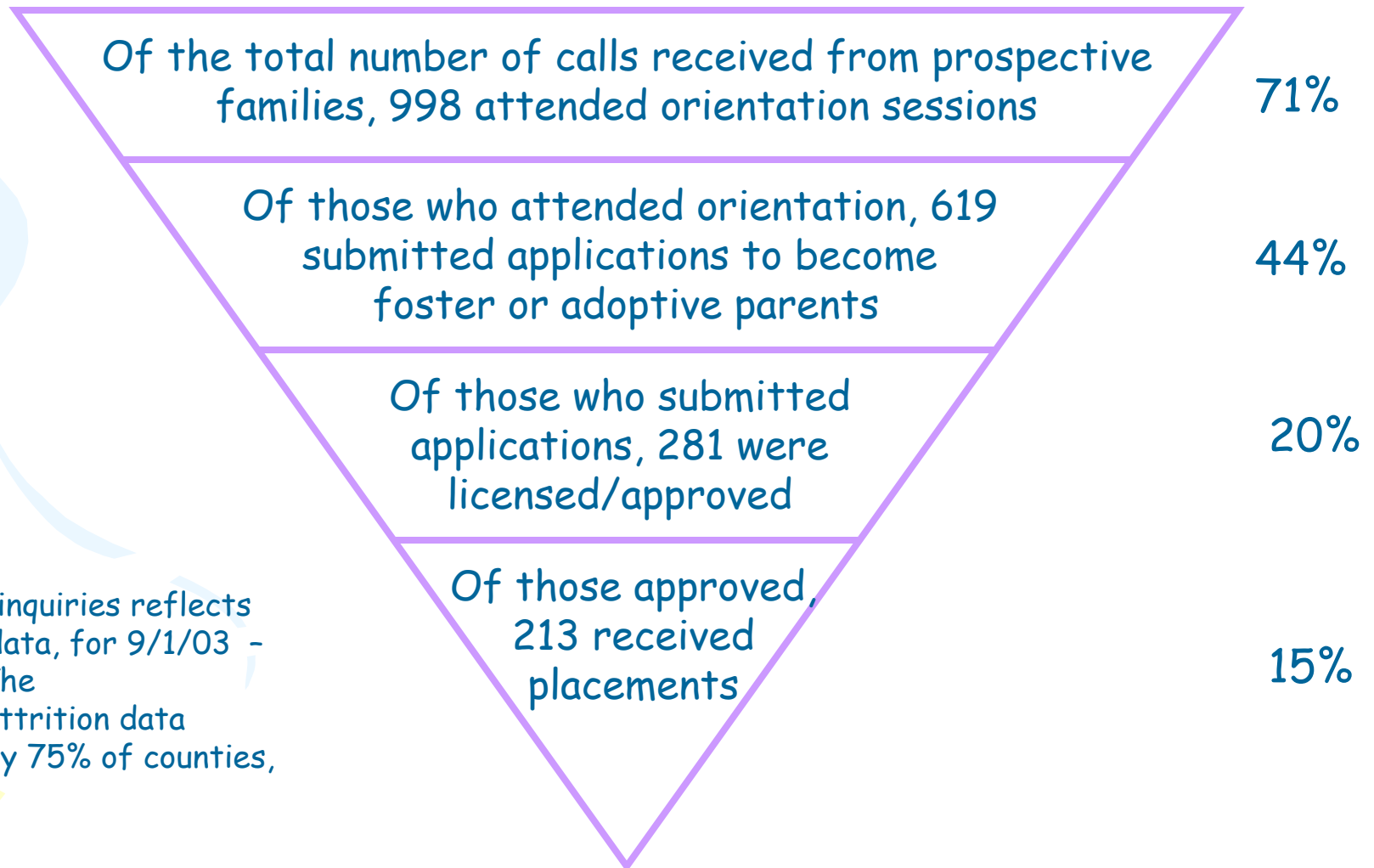
What does the State RRT do?

- ✓ Respond to potential F/A Parents
 - ✓ Provide Information
 - ✓ Refer families to county

County Resource worker's role

Prospective Family Drop-out rates Alabama 2004

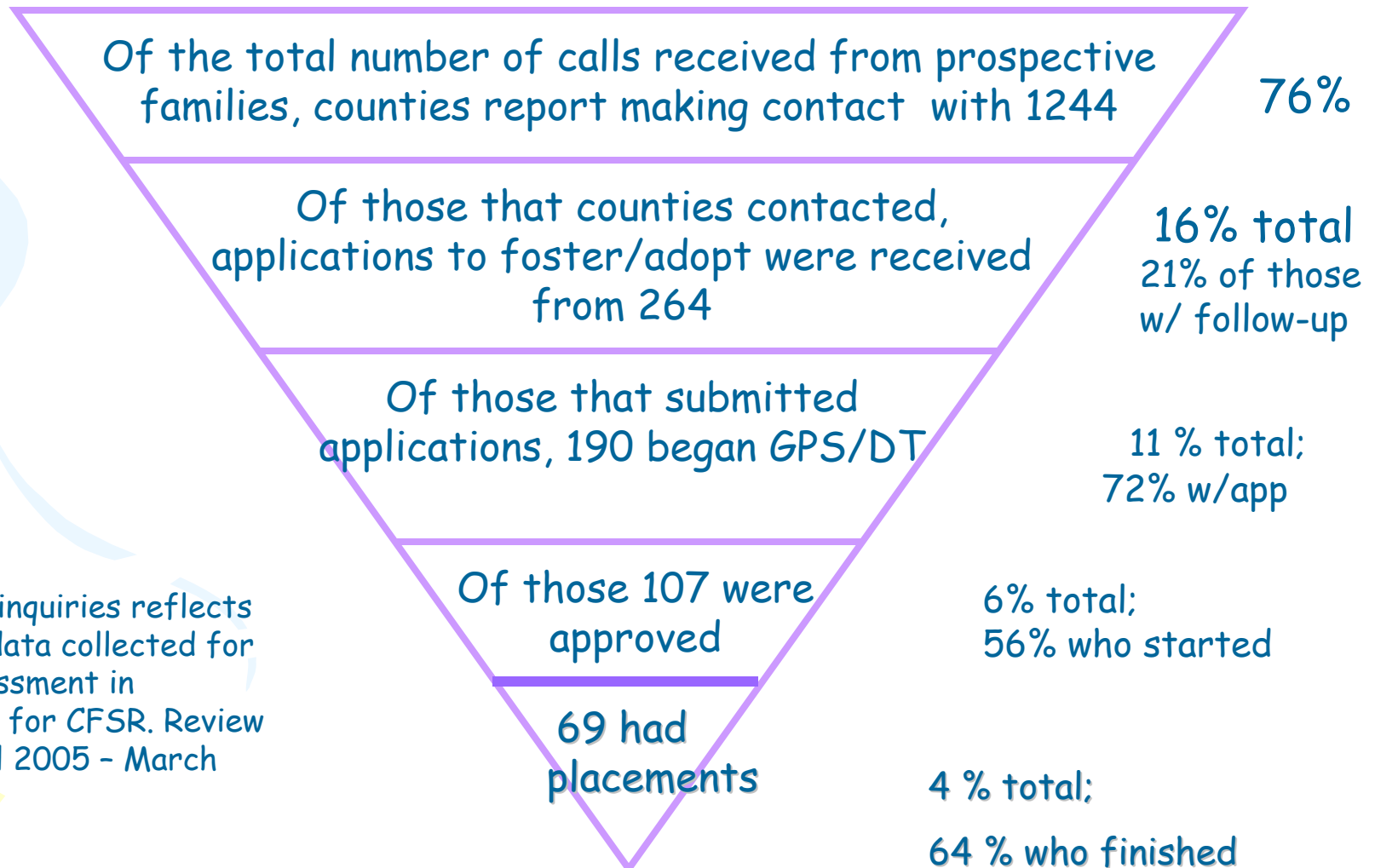
Number of calls from prospective foster & adoptive parents = 1,395



Number of inquiries reflects **statewide** data, for 9/1/03 - 8/31/04. The retention/attrition data reflects only 75% of counties, responding.

Prospective Family Drop-out rates Alabama - most recent

Number of calls from prospective foster & adoptive parents = 1,631



Number of inquiries reflects **statewide** data collected for State Assessment in preparation for CFSR. Review period April 2005 - March 2006



APPROVED HOMES

	2005	2006	2007	June '08
Total	2050	2071	2166	2103
African American	915	922	969	926
Caucasian	1101	1113	1159	1134
American Indian	2	2	2	2
Hispanic	5	5	4	6
Unknown	3	2	0	0
Asian	0	0	0	1
Multi racial	24	27	31	35



Retention means...

Supporting the waiting family

- In addition to timely follow-up (mentioned previously)
- Engage all families, despite what they think their child preferences are at time of initial inquiry.



HOMES CLOSED

	Provider Request	Moved out of County	Death of Provider	Approval Revoked	TOTAL
Sept 06	889	26	3	83	1001
Sep 07	747	20	3	97	867
June 08	660	21	11	92	784



Retention means, cont'd

- **Supporting existing foster families** (just a few basics)
 - ✓ **Returning phone calls**
 - ✓ **Providing accurate information**
 - ✓ **Recognizing Red Flags** – child & family worker should report to supervisors & resource workers and they should address when there are red flags



Plans for Improvement (PIP)

- NRCRRFAP – Training & Tech. Asst.
 - Market research on existing successful families
 - Development of targeted recruitment plan and strategies
 - Training and implementation of the plan
 - Policies on Recruiting, Training/Preparing, Assessing, and Approving/re-approving FFH under development.



Plans for Improvement (PIP) continued

- Developing a mechanism for monitoring resource case to ensure not just compliance with standards and policies but availability of quality resources
- Developing a foster parent mentoring program



What can Counties Do (in the meantime)

- Commit yourself and your staff to excellence
- Recognize foster parents as a vital essential part of a quality service delivery system.
 - Target your recruitment efforts.
 - Work with current successful families



What can Counties Do (in the meantime)

- When potential families inquire make timely contact and periodic follow-ups
 - Recruit them as volunteers until FFH approval activities can commence
 - Offer orientation sessions periodically and allow them to attend
 - Give them some of the time-intensive GPS paperwork (profile) to work on.



What can Counties Do (in the meantime)

- Supervisors conduct a review of foster family homes, check them for completeness
- Workers – if you're not sure what should be in a Resource Record – check with your supervisor or check on-line documents.
- Examine your annual and semi-annual approval process and consider enhancements