

DHS Office of Child Welfare Programs

Family Visitation

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Title IV-E Waiver Program



Visitation Values

- ❑ **Visitation** *is essential for a child's well-being*
- ❑ **Visitation** *is fundamental to permanency*
- ❑ **Visitation** *is vital to a child maintaining family relationships and cultural connections*



Governing OAR

- Oregon Administrative Rule
 - 413-070-0800 thru 0880



Visitation Principles

- Visits should:
 - Be in the best interest of the child
 - Develop or enhance attachment with the child's family
 - Reduce the trauma to the child associated with separation from primary attachment figures; and
 - Assure that the safety and well-being of the child or young adult are the paramount concerns in developing a child-family contact plan
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Visitation Rights

- ❑ The child, a parent or guardian, and each sibling have the right to visit each other as often as reasonably necessary to develop and enhance their attachment to each other.



Discontinuing Visits

- ❑ Reason to believe a parent's acts would result in child abuse or neglect during the visit;
- ❑ Safety of the child cannot be managed by supervision
- ❑ The visit does not meet the best interests of the child
- ❑ A court order prohibits visits.



Supervision

- DHS
- Family and community resources
 - Relative placement resources
 - Tribal and other community supports
 - Contracted providers



Court Review

- If a parent objects to the visitation plan the parent may seek the juvenile court's review.



Visit Priority

- Court Order
 - When Reunification
 - Parents, siblings, and each intervener granted visitation by the court
 - When the permanency plan is no longer return to parent
 - Balance of preserving a child's attachment to parents and siblings and promote the child's attachment to the permanent placement resource.
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Visits with Others

- Safety First
- Other family members
- Non-related persons with whom the child has a significant attachment.



Temporary Visitation Plan

- Must occur when the child first enters substitute care or at the time of the first court hearing whichever is first.
 - Created jointly with parents and may involve the child, family members, safety service providers and the substitute caregiver
 - Includes:
 - The names of each person, including the child's siblings, with whom the child may have contact
 - A description of the contact permitted with each person that includes:
 - The type, time of day, frequency, length, and location of the visits and the reason for supervision.
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On-going Visitation Plan

- Supports child safety, case plan, child's best interests court orders
 - Created within 30 days from the date that the child enters substitute care.
 - Created jointly with parents and may involve the child, family members, including grandparents, safety service providers and the substitute caregiver
 - Visits must be in the least restrictive manner in which the child or young adult's safety can be managed.
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On-Going Visit Plan

- The written plan includes:
 - The purpose and conditions of visits and contacts including type, time of day, frequency, length, and location
 - The reason for supervision when supervision is required;
 - Individual who will supervise the visit



On-Going Visit Plan

- Maximize contact and support the ongoing safety plan and support the child's permanency plan
 - Meet needs of the child, age, school schedule
 - Arrange additional contact as appropriate
 - Address barriers to visitation
 - Ensure parent understands plan, and consequences of not adhering to expectations
 - 90 days review
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Supervision

- Protect the child from harm
- Manage child safety
- Provide therapeutic intervention
- Person supervising must understand:
 - Dynamics of the individual family
 - Purpose of supervision
 - Specific circumstances that require the supervision
 - Documentation requirements
 - The ongoing safety plan



Research

- Frequent visitation promotes child well-being, and promotes permanency.
- Visitation and family contact should never be used as a reward or punishment, but should always be considered a right of families and children.***



Relationship-Based Visitation: A provider's perspective

Gabriela Maldonado Bell
Family Building Blocks

Relationship Based Visitation...Big Picture

- Oregon IV-E waiver demonstration project
- Partnership between Portland State University and the Oregon Department of Human Services
- New parenting intervention delivered in a visitation context
- Delivered in 29 Oregon counties by contracted agencies

Timeframe

- RBV services were offered from February 2012 thru March 2015.
- Program evaluation will continue through the end of 2015.

RBV Services Breakdown

- Weekly visitation sessions
- 120 minute total duration
 - 30 minute parenting lesson delivered by a trained RBV coach
 - 75 minute parent-child interaction with hands-on coaching
 - 15 minutes post-visit debrief with the parent and RBV coach

Eligibility

- At removal, families are screened for RBV eligibility based on the following:
 - At least one child under the age of 13 was removed from care
 - No safety issues exist that would prevent a supervised visit in a community agency
 - An identified need for parenting services
- Eligible parents randomly assigned to visitation as usual or RBV services.
- Once eligible, always eligible

Referral Process

- Eligible RBV parents are referred by DHS Caseworkers to local RBV provider agencies
- Post-referral, provider agencies conduct outreach to engage families

Goals of the Service

- Improve parenting skills
- Increase interaction between foster parents and bio-parents
- Decrease the amount of time that children spend in out-of-home settings
- Reduce the rate of foster care re-entry

RBV Service Duration

- RBV services start at any point in the case
- RBV services end at case closure, alternative custody arrangement, or graduation
- Components of service graduation
 - 16 Nurturing Parenting lesson completed
 - Child(ren) returned to parent's care
 - 2 post-reunification visits in home

Parenting Lesson Component

- Evidence-based Nurturing Parenting curriculum
- Parenting skills assessed at intake and exit
- Individualized lesson plans
- Lesson completion measured by explanation and demonstration of competencies
- Minimum of 16 lessons

Parent-Child Interaction Component

- RBV Coach and parent plan visit activities
- Parents practice learned skills during visits
- RBV Coach gives hands-on coaching
- Facilitated interaction between bio-parent and foster parent at drop-off/pick-up

Example of Coaching

- Parenting lesson: Recognizing and understanding feelings
- During a visit mom is feeding her 9 month old baby while her 2 ½ year old son Johnny plays with blocks. Johnny repeatedly goes over to mom, pulls on her shirt, say “mommy look!” Focused on feeding, Mom shrugs Johnny off and continues attending to her squirmy baby. As Johnny continues to pull at mom’s shirt, she turns abruptly to him and snaps, “Stop! Can’t you see I’m feeding your brother!”
- RBV Coach response: Wow, managing two kids’ needs at one time can be so tough. What do you think Johnny was wanting? How do you think it might have felt for him to hear you respond like that? Lets think of some ways we could do that differently next time.

Example of Coaching

- Parenting lesson: Improving self-worth
- Mom and 6 year old Annie are sitting at the table painting. Mom looks over at Annie’s painting and says, “wow that looks beautiful! I love all the colors you’re using. You’re a great artist.”
- RBV Coach response: Nice mom, great job offering praise. I see that made Annie smile when you said that.

RBV Visit Environments

- Visitation literature suggests when possible visits should occur outside of child welfare agencies
- Parents often associate child welfare offices with trauma experienced during the removal of their children
- Sample RBV visit locations:
 - RBV provider's facility
 - Churches
 - Parks
 - Residential treatment homes

Smariga, M. (2007). *Visitation with infants and toddlers in foster care: What judges and attorneys need to know*. Retrieved from http://www.americanbar.org/content/dam/aba/administrative/child_law/visitation_brief.authcheckdam.pdf

Debrief Component

- Parent and RBV Coach meet post-visit
- Discuss strengths and challenges
- Time to process difficult post-visit emotions
- Plan for next visit

Trauma Informed Practices

- Parents review all progress notes
- Education on how trauma affects the brain
- Parent permission required for any observer
- Regular review of lesson progress and observed parenting skills

“Take Aways”

- Strengths-based approaches build relationships
- Parents do the best that they can
- Quality visits improve parent-child relationships regardless of case outcome
- Consistent, collaborative communication is key

Strengths and Challenges

- **Strengths**
 - Three component visitation sessions
 - Community visitation environments
 - Incorporation of parent voice

- **Challenges**
 - Minimal advocacy in court
 - Transportation
 - Complexity of parent needs

Suggestions for the Future

- Increased training in strength based approaches

- Community collaboration to identify visitation locations outside of DHS

- Continued education on the importance of visitation

Continued Visitation Work at Family Building Blocks

- **Therapeutic Visitation**
 - Contracted service in Marion and Polk Counties
 - Utilizes a modified RBV model
 - Continued focus on quality visits
 - Available to all parents with a child under 5
 - Provides glide-path from DHS contracted services to community support services

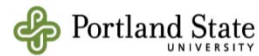
What can CRB members and CASAs do?

- Advocate to judges and caseworkers for high quality, frequent visitations.
- Identify alternative visitation environments in the community
- Continue to raise awareness of trauma informed visitation practices
- Seek out and incorporate parent feedback into visitation planning
- Use language that builds on parent's strengths

Evaluation of the Relationship Based Visitation Demonstration Project (RBV)



FOR MORE INFORMATION, CONTACT BETH GREEN AT



Presentation Overview

- “Logic Model” Expected short and long term outcomes
- Data Collection Overview
- Share Preliminary Results
- Discuss: “What we would do differently”



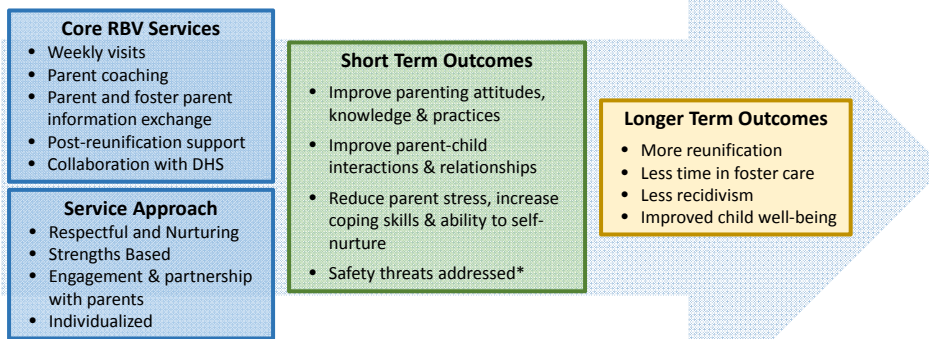
RBV Study Context/Background

- Funded through the Children’s Bureau IV-E Waiver Demonstration Project funds
- Allows dollars to be spent on innovative programs if “cost neutral” with foster care costs
- Required rigorous evaluation of programs – random assignment to RBV vs. Control

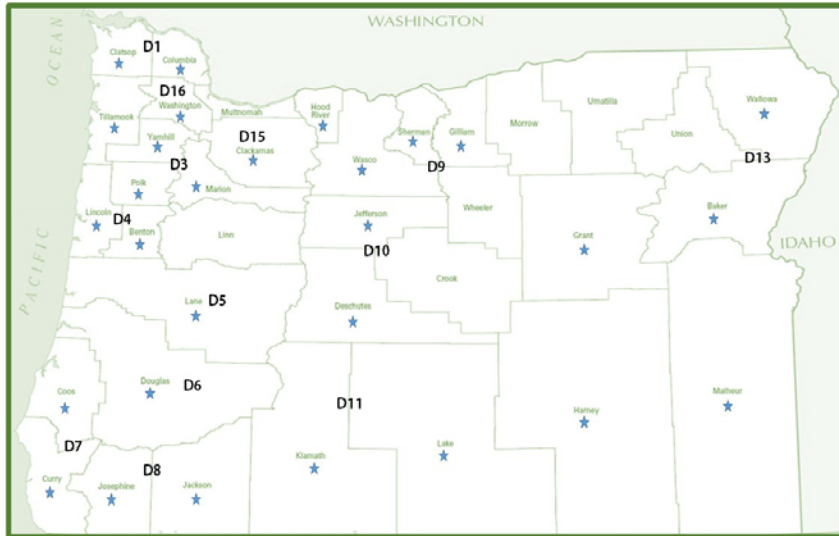


Relationship Based Visitation Logic Model

A parenting intervention in a visitation context



RBV was implemented in 13 child welfare districts (28 counties) in Oregon

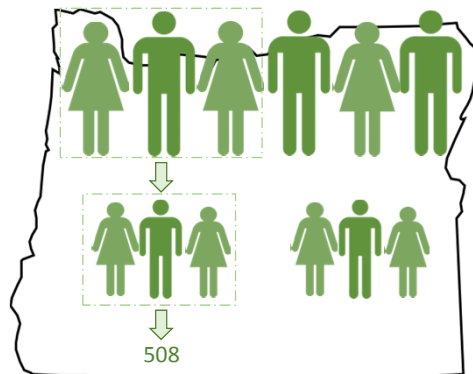


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Enrollment

- 2000 families were eligible for RBV
- Half were randomly assigned for referral
- Statewide, 508 families were eligible, referred, and started RBV services



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Evaluation Goals & Approach


- **Document, describe, and evaluate** the effectiveness of Relationship Based Visitation in Child Welfare

- **3 Components**

- Fidelity
- Outcome
- Process



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Fidelity

- Program services delivered = Program as designed
- Fidelity Indicators: Dosage and Structure:
 - Session structure (session, visit, debrief)
 - Duration of sessions (2 hours)
 - Number of sessions (at least 16, usually more)
 - Providing 2 post-reunification visits

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RBV Fidelity—More than How Much Service

What else contributes to outcomes?

- Quality of Coaching
- Family Voice/Input
- Collaboration between RBV Providers & DHS
- Parent Engagement in Visits



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What did Fidelity Look like across Programs?

Data collection included:

- Programs documentation
- Site visits by PSU
- Reviewed case files
- Interviews with RBV and DHS staff



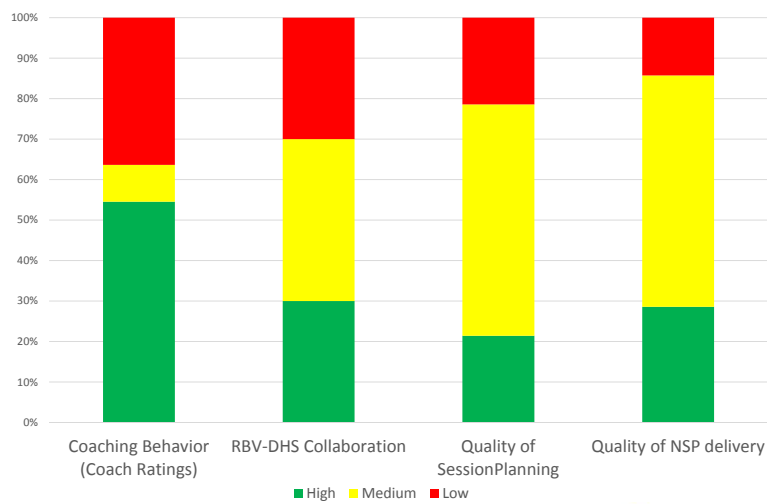
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Fidelity Results (Examples)

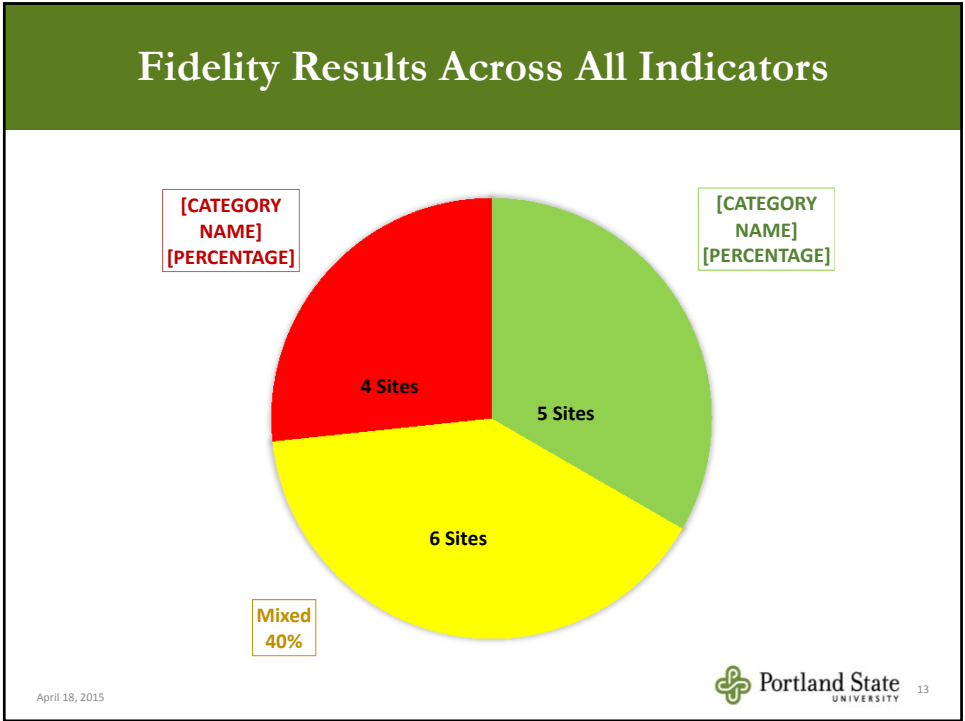
STRUCTURAL INDICATORS	
1. % received an average of one RBV visit per week	20%
1a. % received an average of one RBV visit every two weeks	68%
2. Length of RBV session 120 minutes	60%
3. % received pre-visit lesson at least 75% of the time	88%
4. #/% received debriefing session at least 75% of the time	84%
5. #/% with complete parent assessments at intake	97%
6. #/% of exited with complete final parent assessments	85%
7. #/% of focus adults receiving 2 or more post-reunification visits (of those reunified)	83%

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Fidelity Results: Qualitative Indicators (Example)




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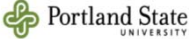


Outcome Evaluation – Is RBV Effective?

- **Two primary sources of data:**
 - Short Term: Parenting
 - Long Term: Child Welfare Data
- **Compared RBV families to “control” families (visits as usual)**



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What we Did to measure outcomes

1. DHS administrative records (“ORKIDS”)
2. Standardized Parenting assessments administered by RBV program (also in interviews)



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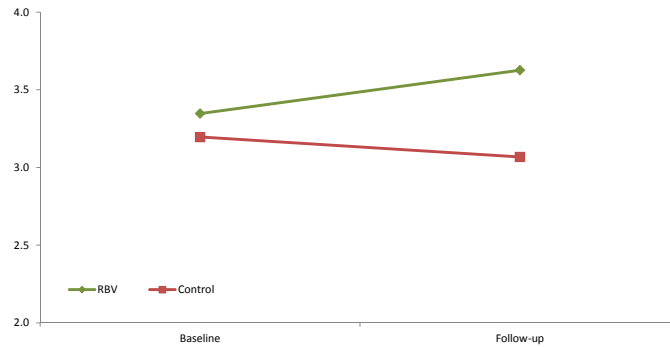
What we Did to measure outcomes

3. Parent Interviews with 303 parents ($\frac{1}{2}$ RBV, $\frac{1}{2}$ control)
 - Mostly Mothers
 - About $\frac{3}{4}$ white/Caucasian, Single
 - Average 31 years old, with 2-3 children
 - History of Adverse Life Circumstance:
 - 65% report being abused/neglected as children
 - 52% report alcohol and/or drug problem
 - 23% report being abused by partner or spouse

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Preliminary Results:

RBV Parents Increased Knowledge of Age Appropriate Expectations

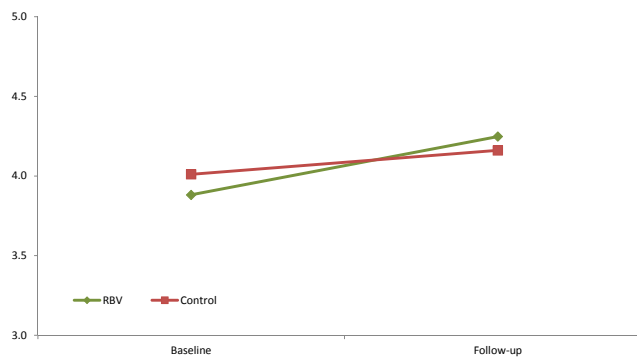


Appropriate expectations: Age-appropriate expectations for child; understands normal child growth & development

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Preliminary Results:

RBV Parents Improved in Understanding Appropriate Parent-Child Roles

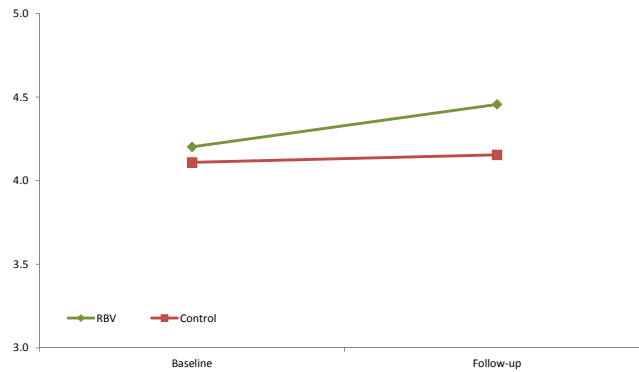


Appropriate parent-child roles: Takes ownership of behavior; finds support from peers, not child

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Preliminary Results:

RBV Parents More Likely to Avoid Corporal Punishment

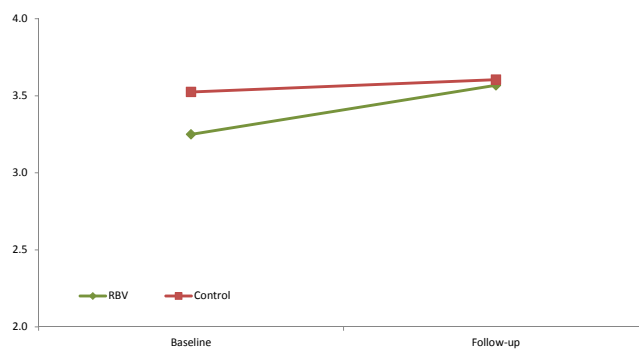


Avoid corporal punishment: Uses time-out/other discipline strategies instead of corporal punishment; democratic rule making

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Preliminary Results:

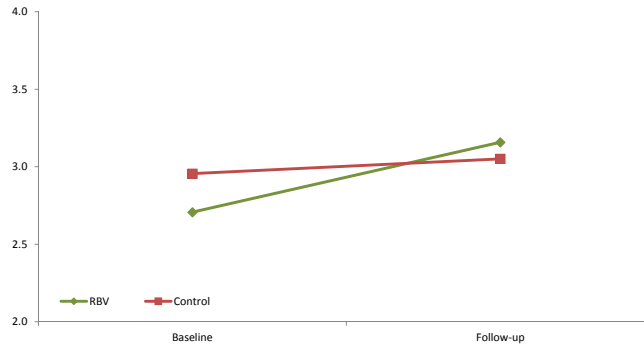
RBV Parents Improve Their Ability to Manage Children's Behavior



Behavior management: Parent gives child choices and consequences; refers to family rules to guide discipline; reinforces appropriate behavior

Preliminary Results:

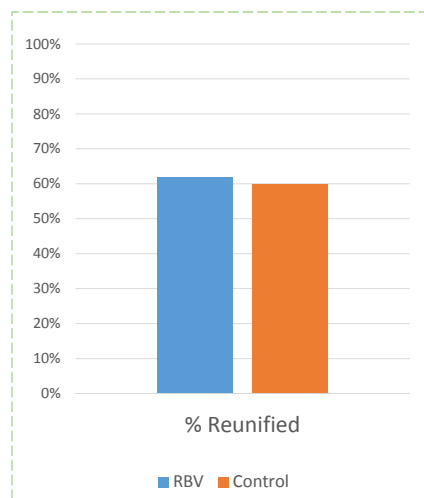
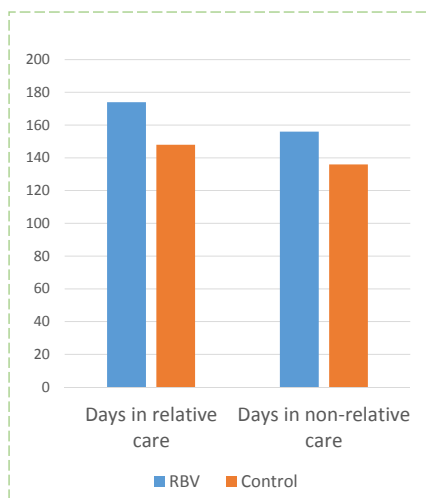
RBV Parents Increase Their Self-Care Skills



Self-Care: Parent takes time to nurture self; get own needs met; acknowledge personal strengths; models appropriate stress & anger management

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Preliminary Child Welfare Outcomes – Many Cases Still “In Progress”



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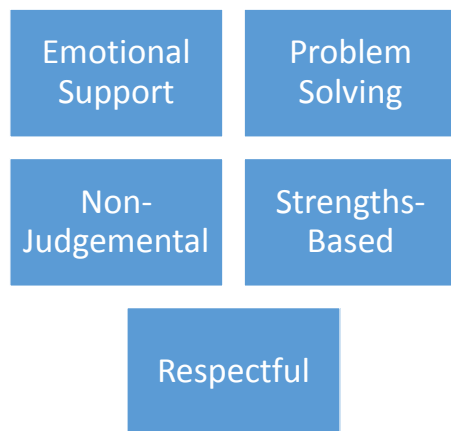
Parent Interviews: What Did RBV Parents Find Most Helpful?



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Elements of Successful Relationship-Based Visitation: What Was Most Helpful to Parents?

Coach's Approach & Relationship



"The support. They're there for you and they help you through situations that might seem difficult"

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Elements of Successful Relationship-Based Visitation:

What Was Most Helpful to Parents?

One-on-One Coaching

Getting feedback

“Real time” coaching

Planned activities

Debriefing after

“Time with the coach after visits. We discuss how things went, and how I can go about making them better”

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Elements of Successful Relationship-Based Visitation:

What Was Most Helpful to Parents?

Relevant Curriculum/Information

How to discipline

Child development information

Creating structure for children

How to nurture & support

“They taught me how to be nurturing, which I didn’t know from being a child, because my mom wasn’t nurturing to me”

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Elements of Successful Relationship-Based Visitation:

What Was Most Helpful to Parents?

Practice Time

Time to try out
new skills

Activities
during visits

*"Practice time with my
child after the lesson.
Just being able to
implement it or try to
use it with my kid"*

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Elements of Successful Relationship-Based Visitation:

What Was Most Helpful to Parents?

More Comfortable/Non-DHS Setting

Family friendly
setting

Children more
comfortable

Not being
observed through
a window

*"RBV was comfortable, a
home environment"*

*"The children seemed more
relaxed during RBV visits,
the seemed more willing to
talk than at DHS"*

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Parents' Suggestions for Improvement & Recommendations

Most parents were unequivocally positive about RBV & found visits very different from "typical" DHS visits

Some Suggestions/Recommendations:

- Expand curriculum to older ages, or limit age range for participation
- Develop more curriculum for parents with children with special needs
- Reduce changes that parents feel "criticized" by coaching by providing trauma-informed training to coaches



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Questions About RBV?



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