

Safe Babies & their CASAs

Rocky Mountain Children's Law Center & CASA of Pueblo

Rocky Mountain Children's Law Center

Direct Representation & Supports

- Advocacy for Caregivers
 - Advocacy for Students
- Advocacy to Protect Children
- Advocacy for Young Adults

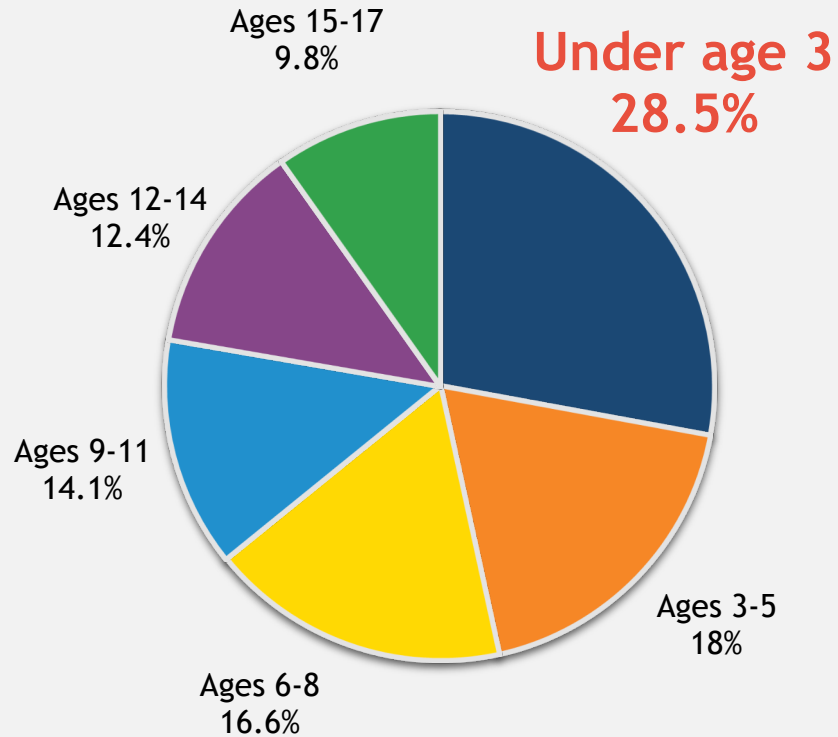
+ Multidisciplinary Teams
+ Bloom Yoga

Systemic Reform

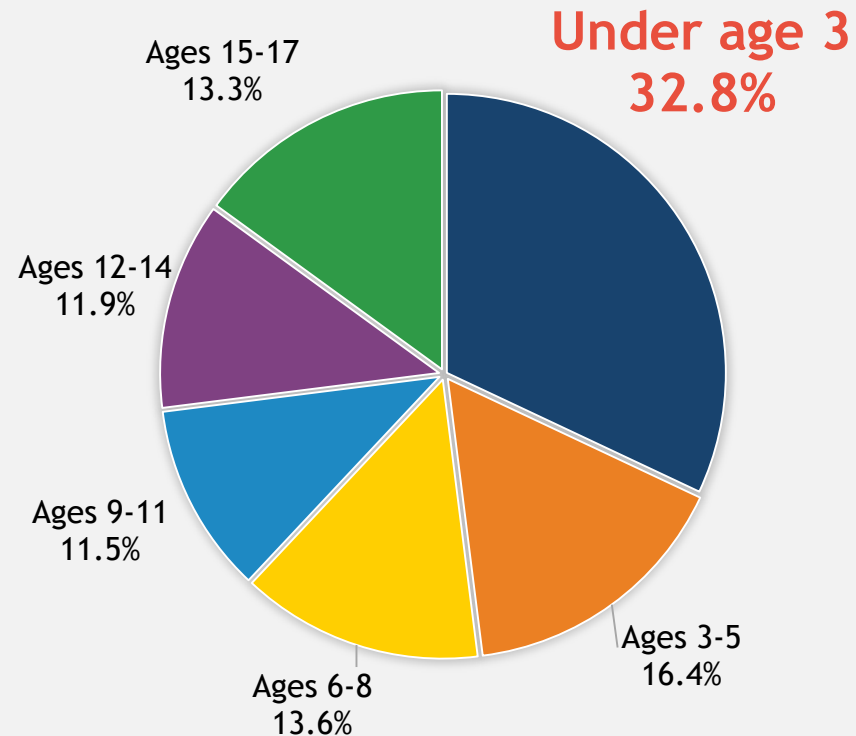
- Policy & Training
- project Foster Power
 - Catalyze for Kids
- Safe Baby Court Pilot

Risk Disproportionality by Age

MALTREATMENT RATES



FOSTER CARE ENTRY RATES



U.S. Department of Health & Human Services, Children's Bureau (*Child Maltreatment 2017*).

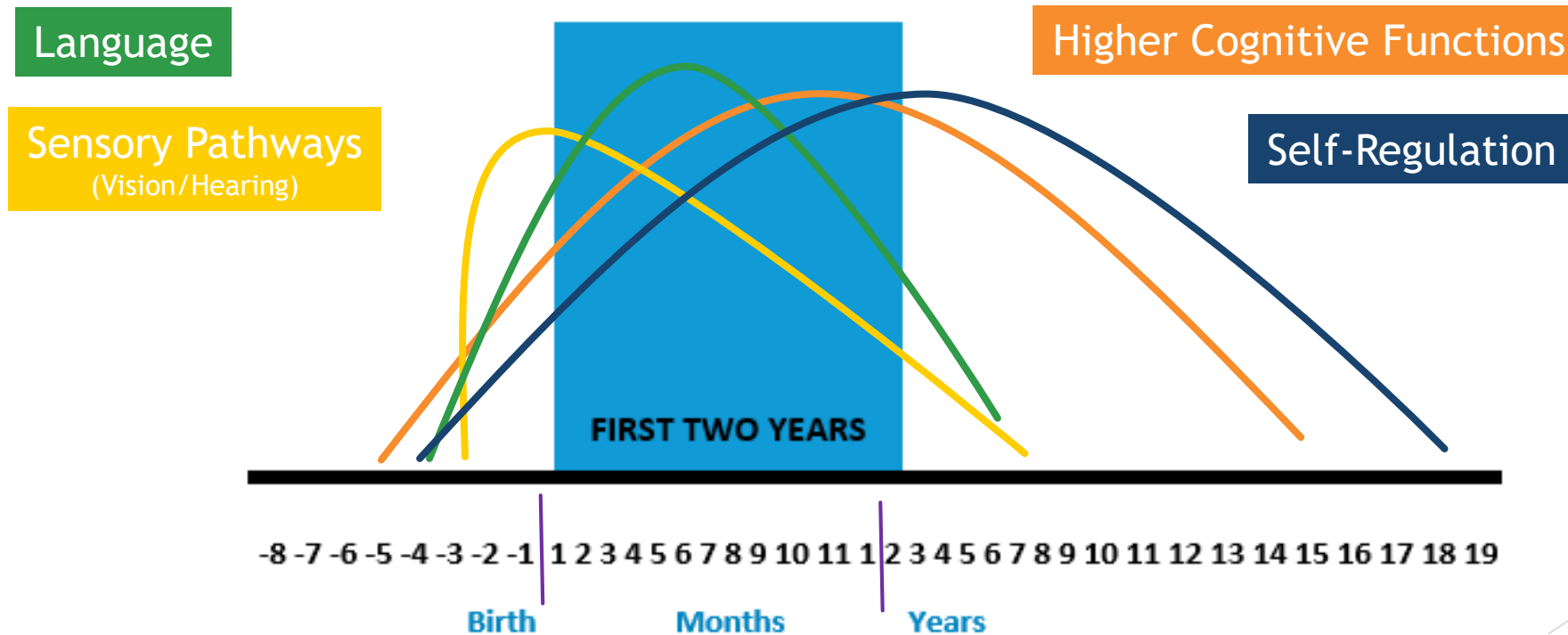


Every 6 minutes in the U.S., an infant or toddler is removed from their parents' care due to abuse or neglect and sent to live in a new home.

U.S. Department of Health & Human Services, *AFCARS*, 2016.

Brain Development in the Early Years

KEY CONNECTIONS PEAK, LAYING CRITICAL FOUNDATIONS
FOR LATER SUCCESS IN SCHOOL AND LIFE



Nelson, C. (2000). *From Neurons to Neighborhoods*. Adapted from Ross A. Thompson.

Denver Metro Area and Pueblo Juvenile Court Filings

County Court	2015 D&N age 6-18	2015 D&N age 0-5	2016 D&N age 6-18	2016 D&N age 0-5	2017 D&N age 6-18	2017 D&N age 0-5
Adams	92	236	92	212	103	247
Arapahoe	83	143	105	153	93	172
Douglas	49	26	45	44	55	28
Denver	129	248	179	264	171	256
Jefferson	133	173	167	227	104	188
Pueblo	40	125	37	102	32	110
Weld	30	84	50	97	53	118

Source: Colorado State Judicial Department Annual Reports 2015, 2016, 2017

The Safe Babies Court Team Approach

Scientific
Rating

3

Promising
Research Evidence
Scale 1 - 5

Child Welfare
System
Relevance
Level

High



CEBC
THE CALIFORNIA EVIDENCE-BASED
CLEARINGHOUSE
FOR CHILD WELFARE

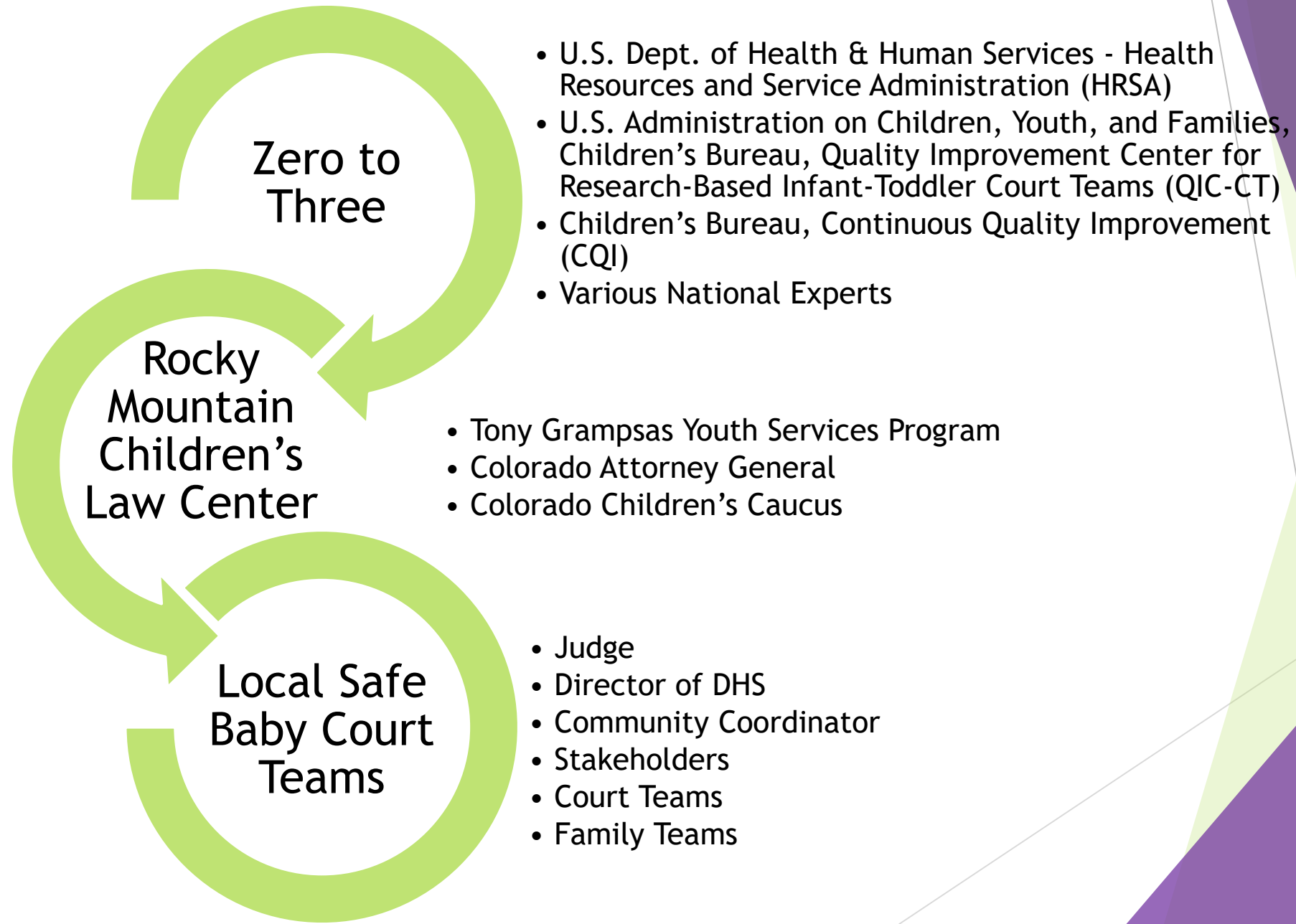
SBCT Objectives

GOAL: Achieve timely and nurturing permanent placement of infants and toddlers under the Court's jurisdiction.

- Concurrent planning
- Evidence-based practices
- Minimize placement changes
- Access to mental health services
- Access to early intervention services
- Comprehensive and consistent healthcare
- Post-permanency services and supports

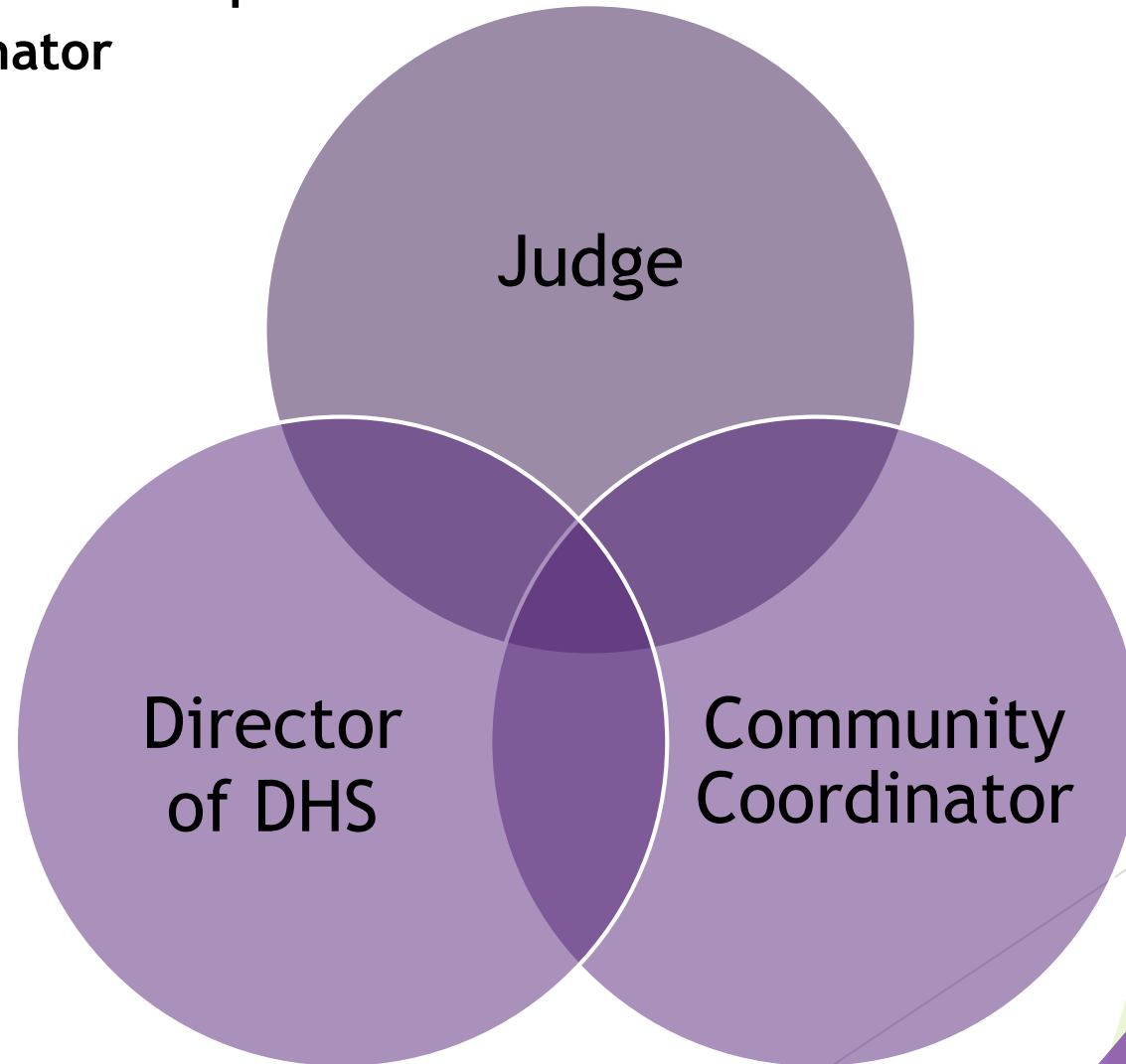


Ongoing Support - State and National Partnerships



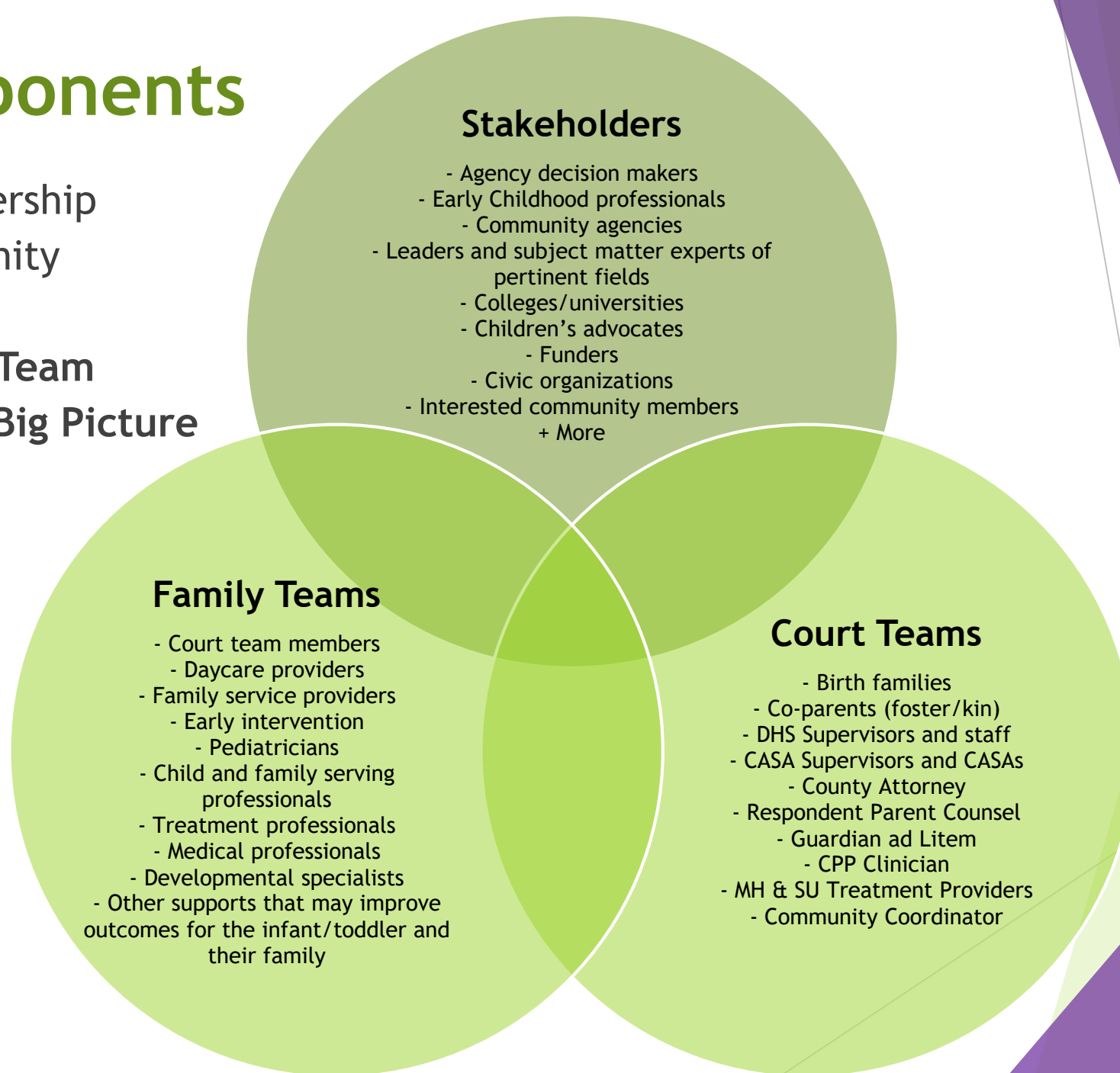
Safe Baby Court Team Core Components

- ▶ 1. Judicial & Child Welfare Leadership
- ▶ 2. Local Community Coordinator



Core Components

- ▶ 1. Judicial Leadership
- ▶ 2. Local Community Coordinator
- ▶ 3. Active Court Team focused on the Big Picture



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- ▶ 4. Targeting Infants and Toddlers in Out-of-Home Care

Pueblo Criteria:

All cases MUST:

- ❑ Have one child under the age of 4 at the date of assignment to the Community Coordinator.
- ❑ One parent living in Pueblo County must consent by the conclusion of the Family Voice Conference.

Priority is given to cases where:

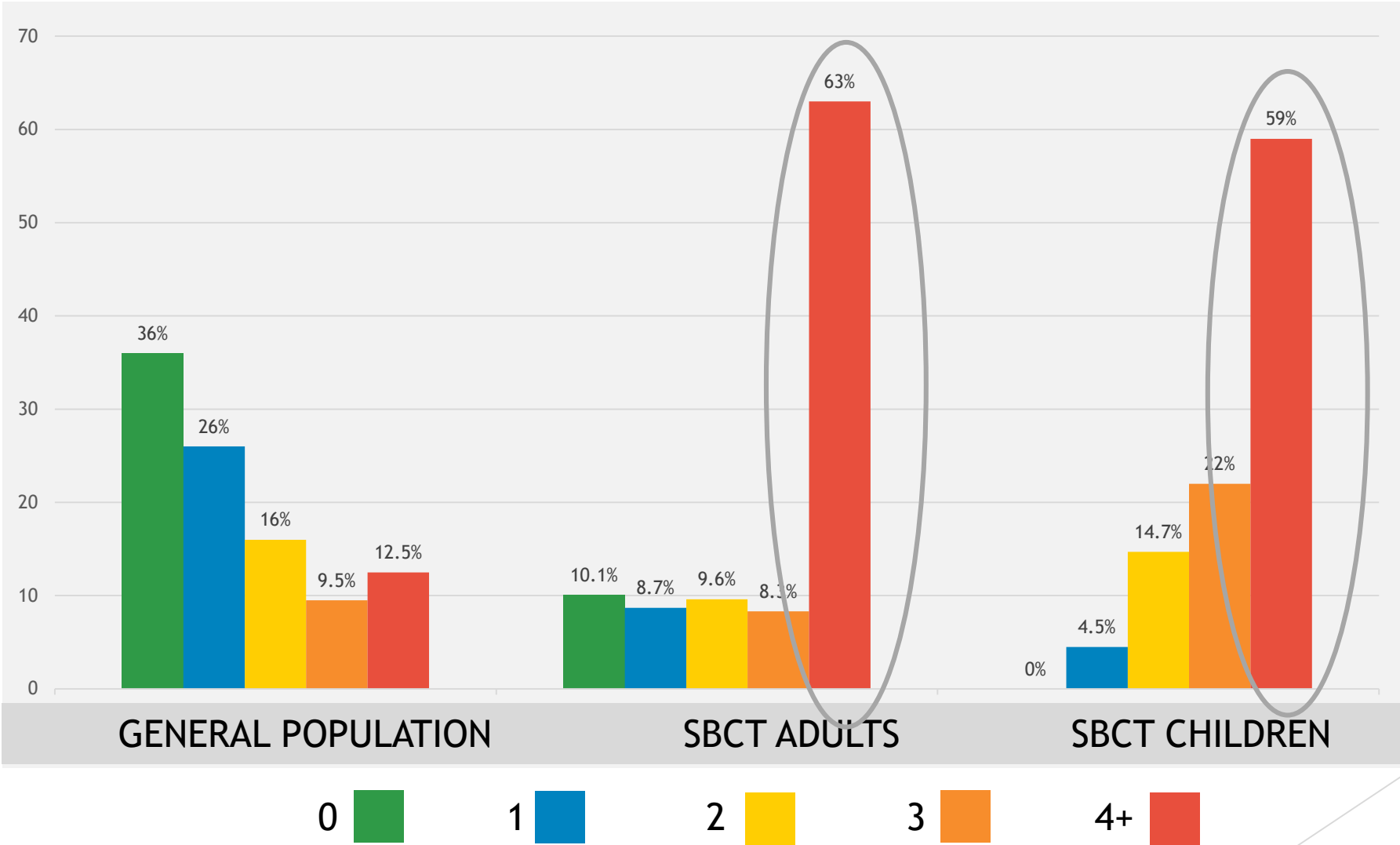
- ❑ Mental Health is a factor noted in the investigation
- ❑ The named infant is under 1 year of age
- ❑ There is a history of or suspicion family violence in the investigation
- ❑ There is a history or suspicion of substance (regardless of legality) dependency/ misuse
- ❑ The infant/ toddler is the first child of one parent
- ❑ Family history reveals prior involvement with child welfare (children, parents, grandparents, etc.)
- ❑ Infant/Toddler out of home placement has expressed interest in the project and other mandatory criteria are met.

Core Components

- ▶ 1. Judicial Leadership
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- ▶ 5. Valuing Birth Parents



Adverse Childhood Experiences



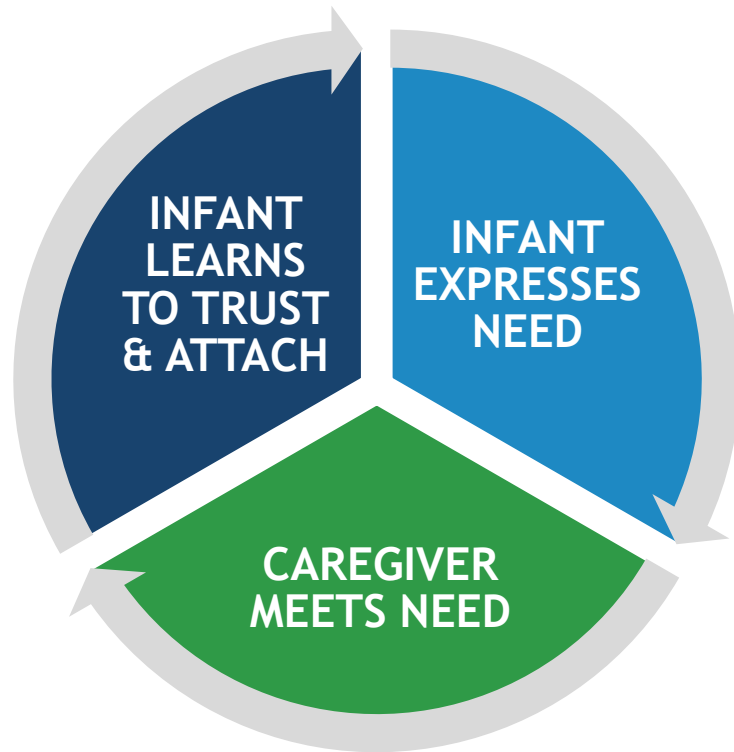
Osofsky, et al. (2018). *The Adverse Childhood Experiences of Very Young Children and Their Parents Involved in Infant-Toddler Court Teams.*

Quality Improvement Center for Infant-Toddler Court Teams.

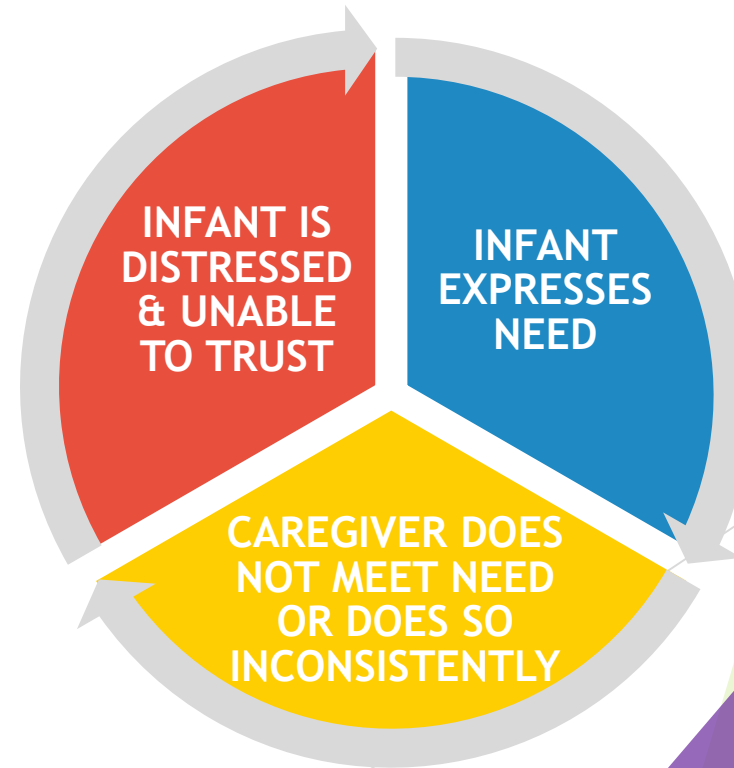
Core Components

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- ▶ 6. Placement and Concurrent Planning

HEALTHY ATTACHMENT CYCLE



UNHEALTHY ATTACHMENT CYCLE



Core Components

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- ▶ 6. Placement and Concurrent Planning
- ▶ **7. The Foster Parent Intervention, Mentors and Extended Family**

Childhood	Adolescence	Adulthood
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Anxiety• Aggression• Conduct Problems• Depression• PTSD• School Problems	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Anxiety• Depression• Revictimization• PTSD• School Dropout• Substance Abuse	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Depression• Domestic Violence• Maternal Depression• Parenting Problems• Poverty• PTSD• Substance Use Disorders



2nd GENERATION

Core Components

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- ▶ 5. Valuing Birth Parents
- ▶ 6. Placement and Concurrent Planning
- ▶ 7. The Foster Parent Intervention, Mentors and Extended Family
- ▶ **8. Pre/Post-Removal Conferences & Family Team Meetings**

Safe Baby Court Teams

- Intensive Court Supervision (Every 2-4 weeks as recommended by Judge and Coordinator)
- Frequent family meetings (2-4 weeks) of success, progress, and needs by a team of professionals selected with the family to include the caretakers of the infant
- Frequent Training and Technical Assistance for community, targeted professionals, and families as the need is identified

Traditional Child Welfare

- Review Hearing approximately 90 days apart
- Meetings held every 90 days with DHS, legal professionals when invited (county decision), the parent, and professionals as allowed by county.
- Formal training is hosted through structures and contracts of each agency as funding allows

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- ▶ 7. The Foster Parent Intervention, Mentors and Extended Family
- ▶ 8. Post-Removal Conferences & Family Team Meetings
- ▶ 9. Parent-Child Contact (Visitation)

Support and solidarity between the co-parenting adults.

Consistency and predictability in the approaches they take in guiding the child's development.

Security and integrity of the family's home base (regardless of whether that home base is a single domicile or spans multiple residences).

Accurate attunement to the young child's fears, needs, wishes and sensibilities.

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- ▶ 9. Parent-Child Contact (Visitation)
- ▶ **10. Continuum of Mental Health Services**

Infant and Early Childhood Mental Health

- Heal from traumatic events and separation
- Form close and secure relationships
- Explore the environment and learn
- Experience, regulate and express emotion



Safe Babies Court Team

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- ▶ 9. Parent-Child Contact (Visitation)
- ▶ 10. Continuum of Mental Health Services
- ▶ 11. Training and Technical Assistance
- ▶ 12. Understanding the Impact of Our Work

Thank you!

To learn more about the Safe Baby Court Team
Pilot in Colorado, contact **Anna Neal** at the
Rocky Mountain Children's Law Center
aneal@childlawcenter.org