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JLP Research Report

Parents for Parents Outcome Evaluation: Additional Examination of Case Outcomes & Racial Differences



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For more information about the NCJFCJ or this report, please contact:

National Council of Juvenile and Family Court Judges
Juvenile Law Programs
University of Nevada
P.O. Box 8970
Reno, Nevada 89507
(775) 784-6012
www.ncjfcj.org
caninfo@ncjfcj.org

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Mari Kay Bickett, J.D., Chief Executive Officer, National Council of Juvenile and Family Court Judges

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Report Contributors

Alicia Summers, PhD, Senior Research Associate, Juvenile Law Programs, National Council of Juvenile and Family Court Judges

Crystal Duarte, MPA, Senior Program Manager, Juvenile Law Programs, National Council of Juvenile and Family Court Judges

Steve M. Wood, MS, Research Assistant, Juvenile Law Programs, National Council of Juvenile and Family Court Judges

Theresa L. Bohannon, MPH, Research Associate, Juvenile Law Programs, National Council of Juvenile and Family Court Judges

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Introduction

Since the implementation of King County's Parent for Parent (P4P) program, the goal has been to improve outcomes for families involved in the dependency system. Process and outcome evaluations were performed by the National Council of Juvenile and Family Court Judges (NCJFCJ) and they demonstrated that the program has been successful in accomplishing this goal. However, the previous evaluation did not contain enough closed cases to assess differences in outcomes and was difficult to calculate how effective this program is for Native and African American families. This report explores racial differences in parental engagement and case outcomes as they relate to Dependency 101 participation. It is important to note that the study sample size (n=133) was small and therefore statistically significant findings are limited, but trend in a positive direction.

Summary of Key Findings

Statistically significant findings from previous outcome evaluation confirmed in this analysis:

- An association between mothers who participated in Dependency 101 and full compliance of services at both review and permanency hearings.
- An association between fathers who participated in Dependency 101 and full compliance of services only at review hearing.
- An association between mothers who participated in Dependency 101 and compliance of visitation at review hearings only.
- An association between mothers who participated in Dependency 101 and an increased participation in court hearings.

Statistically significant findings within races:

- Native American women who participated in Dependency 101 were more likely to be in some form of compliance (full or partial) at their review hearing.
- Caucasian men who participated in Dependency 101 were more likely to be in compliance with services at their review hearing.
- African American men who participated in Dependency were more likely to be in some form of compliance with services at review and permanency hearings.
- Caucasian families who participated in Dependency 101 were more likely to be reunified and less likely to have their parental rights terminated.

Statistically significant findings across races:

- Native American fathers were less likely to be compliance with services or visitation at review and permanency hearings.

Other findings of interest not statistically significant:

- Overall positive trends among Dependency 101 participants for an increased level of parental engagement and case outcomes.
- Parents of children 12 and older participated in Dependency 101 at higher rates compared to parents of children in different age groups.
- Dependency 101 participants had greater rates of reunification and lower rates of termination of parental rights compared to non-participants
- Dependency 101 participants (mothers) attended more hearings overall.

As of September 30, 2011, 9,857 children in Washington state were in foster care and Native and African American children were represented at a rate of 5.1 and 7.0%, respectively (U.S. Department of Health and Human Services [HHS], 2013). Native American children made up 1.5% and African American 4.0% of the state's overall population of children (HHS, 2013). In May 2013 NCJFCJ published *Disproportionality Rates for Children of Color in Foster Care*. Researchers found that Washington had a disproportionality rate of 5.0 and 2.2 for Native and African American children, respectively, in the foster care system (NCJFCJ, 2013). With children of color overrepresented in the foster care system, it is critical to ensure that effective interventions are taken to reduce their numbers. In 2009, King County implemented a peer-to-peer model program for families who are involved in the dependency system to better engage them. The Parent for Parent (P4P) program uses veteran parents who have successfully navigated the dependency system.

Dependency 101, a component of the P4P program, is a two-hour team-taught informational session that provides parents tools and resources intended to increase empowerment, engagement and self-advocacy. During the session, parents watch a video about the dependency process, meet the professionals involved (social workers, attorneys, etc.), and receive a packet of information about the dependency system. Professional stakeholders discuss their roles in the dependency process and veteran parents tell their stories about what it takes to reunify with their children. In 2011, process and outcome evaluations were performed by researchers at NCJFCJ to examine the effectiveness of Dependency 101. The process evaluation found that all parents who participated in Dependency 101 reported they learned at least one thing from the class and felt the session was helpful (NCJFCJ, 2011). Parents also reported reduced anxiety about the dependency process, increased trust in Child Protective Services (CPS), more awareness of how CPS could help reunify their family, and a better understanding of the roles of dependency professionals (NCJFCJ, 2011). Many parents reported they believed they were less alone after taking the class and some believed they had more control over the outcome of their case (NCJFCJ, 2011).

Results from the outcome evaluation demonstrated that participation in Dependency 101 was related to increased compliance in case plans for mothers and fathers. Dependency 101 participation also demonstrated increased parents' compliance with visitation at review hearings, but not at permanency hearings. Dependency 101 was also associated with increased involvement by mothers at key court events and they were more likely to be present for court hearings. During the original outcome data evaluation, less than 15% of cases had closed making it inadequate to demonstrate differences in case outcomes for Dependency 101 participants. Additional data collection included more African and Native American families and coded closed cases with their outcomes.

In partnership with the Washington Administrative Office of the Courts, the National Council of Juvenile and Family Court Judges (NCJFCJ) examined the effect Dependency 101 had on case outcomes and for Native American and African American families who participated in the program. An Excel spreadsheet with a list of all parents who were approached to participate in the Parent for Parent program from 2009-2010 was provided to NCJFCJ researchers that identified additional cases for coding and analysis. The additional cases were stratified by whether they had participated and race, then randomly selected and a vetted instrument was used to code on site. Case outcomes were added to the original outcome evaluation dataset for additional analysis. The dataset was expanded to include the additional cases to further explore racial differences among participants.

The specific research questions selected included:

- 1) Were previous outcome findings confirmed?
- 2) Is there a difference in effect for Dependency 101 by racial groups?
 - Difference in effect of parental engagement by race?
 - Difference in effect of case outcome by race?
- 3) Are case outcomes different for Dependency 101 participants compared to those who did not participate?

After the data collection phase, data were analyzed utilizing IBM SPSS, Version 20. Relative risk ratios were calculated from cross tabulation tables to assess any relationship (or association) between Dependency 101 and various aspects of the dependency case (e.g. service and visitation compliance, case outcomes, etc.). Unadjusted relative risk (RR) can provide a crude estimate of relative effect between exposure (Dependency 101) and outcome of interest (e.g. Reunification). Confidence intervals (CI) were calculated to measure the uncertainty of the relative risk ratios. Differences within races were explored by stratifying (or “isolating”) race into its own strata and then Dependency 101 participation was controlled for. Difference across races was explored utilizing binary logistic regression and including an interaction term between race and Dependency 101. Linear regression was used to assess differences in hearing attendance for mothers and fathers who participated in Dependency 101 compared to those who did not. Level of confidence (p-value) was set to 10% because the sample size was small (n=133), making the statistical power low. Any p-value equal to 0.10 or less should be considered statistically significant for the purposes of the results reported here.

Case Characteristics

The study sample consisted of 133 cases and 73% of the cases were closed at the time of coding. Of those who participated in Dependency 101, 75% had their cases closed and among those who did not, 72% had their cases closed. Within the sample, 55% participated in Dependency 101 and 45% did not participate (see figure 1). The majority of participants were mothers (48%), followed by both mothers and fathers (23%), and fathers only made up 10% of the sample (see figure 2). For more sample descriptives see tables 1 – 3.

Figure 1 -Participation in Dependency 101



Figure 2 - Who participated in Dependency 101?

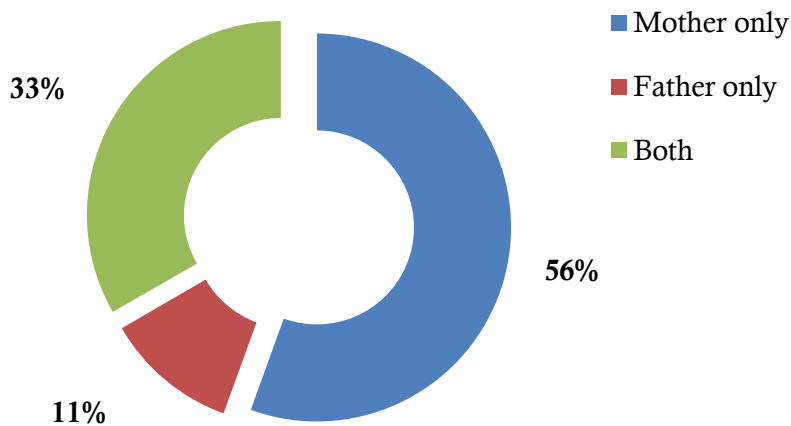


Table 1. Race Characteristics of the Sample

	Participated in Dependency 101 55% (n=72)	Didn't participate in Dependency 101 45% (n=60)
<i>Race</i>		
Caucasian	28%	31%
African American	35%	29%
Hispanic	8%	2%
Native American	28%	36%
Mixed	1%	2%

Table 2. Age of Children in the Sample

Age of Child at time of Petition	Percentage of Sample (n=133)	Percentage among those who participated in Dependency 101 (n=72)	Percentage among those who did not participate in Dependency 101 (n=60)
0-3	58%	54%	62%
4-7	15%	14%	17%
8-11	8%	7%	8%
12 and older*	14%	19%	8%
Unknown age	5%	6%	5%

**Larger percentage (11 percentage points) difference among the 12 and older group for Dependency 101 participants compared to all other age groups.*

Table 3. Characteristic of Sample

	Mothers	Fathers	Both
Who was approached to participate in Dependency 101 (n=130)	52%	9%	39%
Who participated (n=72)	56%	11%	33%

Effects of Dependency 101

Parental Engagement

Researchers examined whether participation in Dependency 101 increased parent engagement overall and explored racial differences. This was examined by looking at case service plan compliance, visitation compliance, and the percentage of hearings in which both mothers and fathers attended.

Case Plan and Visitation Compliance

For case service plan compliance analysis, compliant parents were compared to non-complaint parents and stratified by whether they participated in Dependency 101. Partial compliance was eliminated from the analysis. When race was examined, partial and full compliance were collapsed into one category.

Mothers who participated in Dependency 101 were more likely to be in full compliance with case plan services at the *review hearing* compared to those who did not participate (see table 4). Among mothers in Dependency 101, 77.78% were in full/partial compliance partial compliance of their service plan at review hearings (see figure 3). Mothers who participated in Dependency 101 compared to those who did not, were more likely to be in full compliance with case plan services at the *permanency hearing* (see table 4). Among mothers in Dependency 101, 75.0% were in full/partial compliance of their service plan at their permanency hearing (see figure 3).

Fathers who participated in Dependency 101 compared to those who did not, were more likely to be in full compliance with case plan services at the *review hearing* (see table 4). Among fathers in Dependency 101, 65.5% were in full/partial compliance with their service plans at their review hearing (see figure 4). No association was found for fathers who participated in Dependency 101 compared to those who did not, in relation to compliance with case plan services at the *permanency hearing* (see table 4). Among fathers in Dependency 101, 58% of fathers were in full/partial with their service plan at their permanency hearing (see figure 4).

Figure 3 - Service Compliance among all Mothers at Review and Permanency Hearings by Dependency 101 Participation

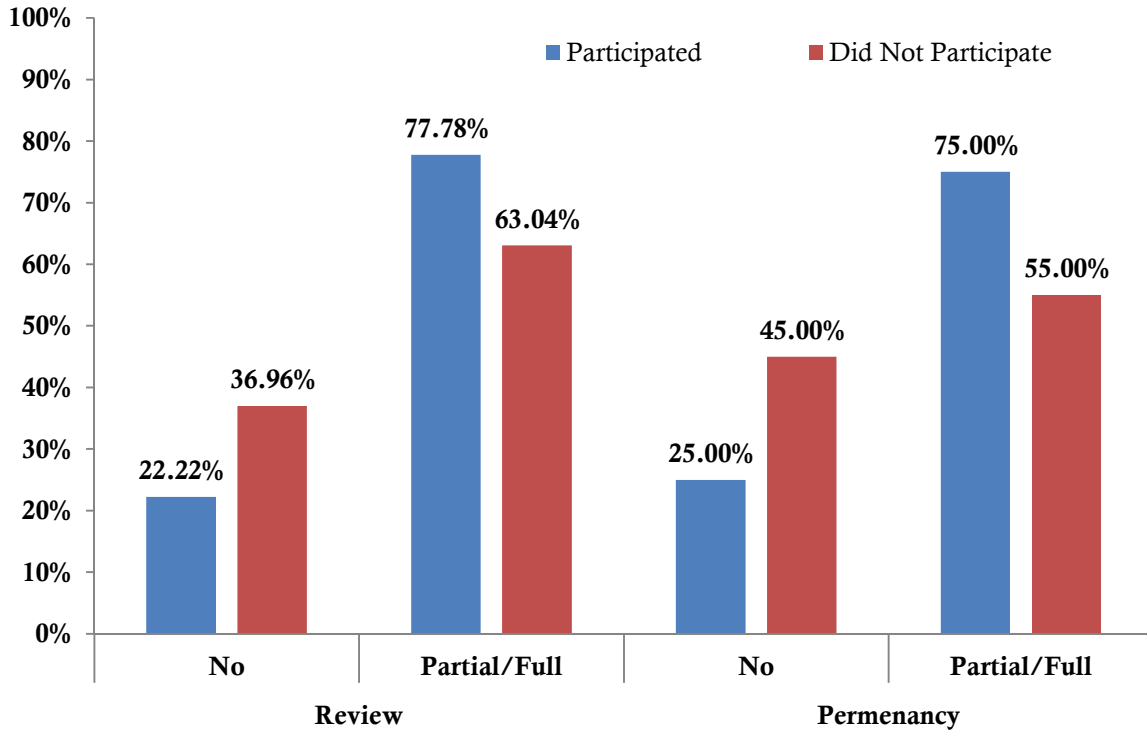


Figure 4 - Service Compliance among all Fathers at Review and Permanency Hearings by Dependency 101 Participation

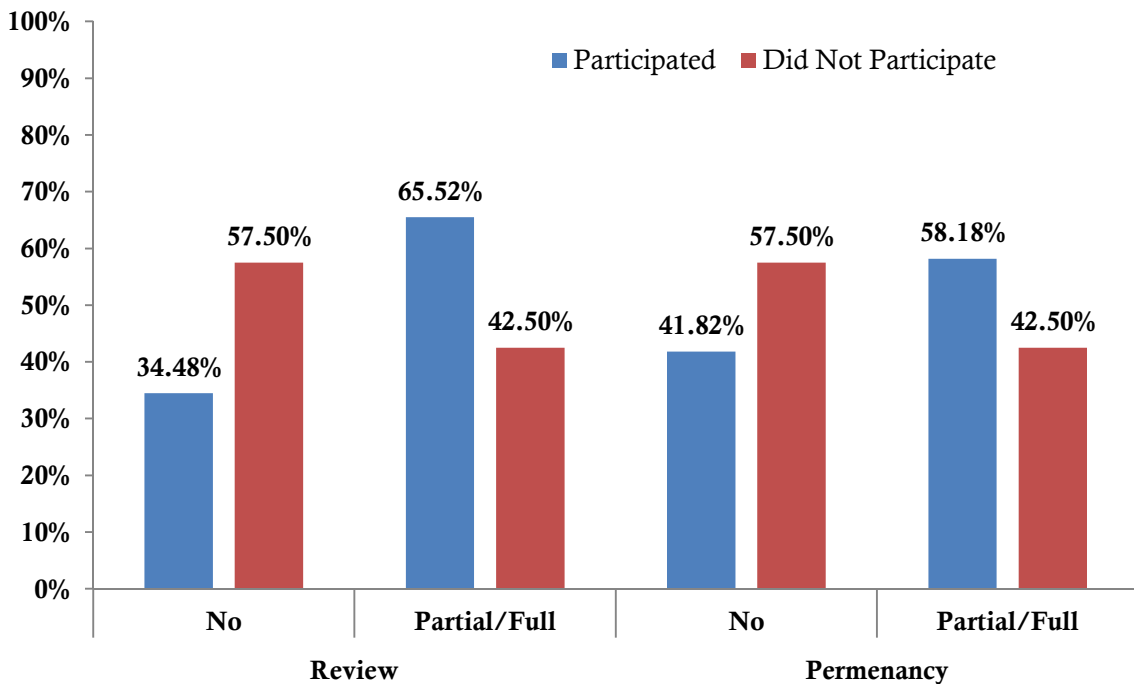


Table 4. Effects of Dependency 101 Participation compared with non-participants

	Percent among Dependency 101 participants	Percent among Dependency 101 non- participants	Relative Risk Ratio (95% Confidence Interval)	p- value
<i>Mothers</i>				
Full compliance with services at review hearing**	50.8%	28.26%	1.61 (1.02 – 2.05)	0.04
Full compliance with services at permanency hearing*	36.7%	22.5%	1.78 (0.98 – 3.24)	0.06
Compliance with visitation at review hearing**	68.6%	46.2%	1.49 (1.01 – 2.19)	0.04
Compliance with visitation at permanency hearing	57.5%	48.5%	1.18 (0.77 – 1.82)	0.44
<i>Fathers</i>				
Full compliance with services at review hearing**	50.0%	22.5%	2.10 (1.15 – 3.83)	0.02
Full compliance with services at permanency hearing	38.2%	25.0%	1.58 (0.86 – 2.88)	0.14
Compliance with visitation at review hearing	41.3%	29.7%	1.38 (0.76 – 2.54)	0.29
Compliance with visitation at permanency hearing	34.8%	36.8%	0.94 (0.53 – 1.68)	0.84
* Statistically significant findings at the p<0.10 level. **Statistically significant findings at the p<0.05 level.				

Mothers who participated in Dependency 101 compared to those who did not, were more likely to be compliant with visitation at their *review hearing* (see table 4). No association was found for mothers in Dependency 101 compared to those who were not, in relation to visitation compliance at their *permanency hearing*. No association was found for fathers in Dependency 101 compared to those who were not, at either *review or permanency hearings* and visitation compliance (see table 4).

There were no statistically significant findings for mothers or fathers related to their progress at either review or permanency hearings. All groups were more likely to be progressing, but results were not significant. There does appear to be a possible waning in effect of Dependency 101 from review to permanency.

Figure 5 - Visitation Compliance among all Mothers at Review and Permanency Hearings by Dependency 101 Participation

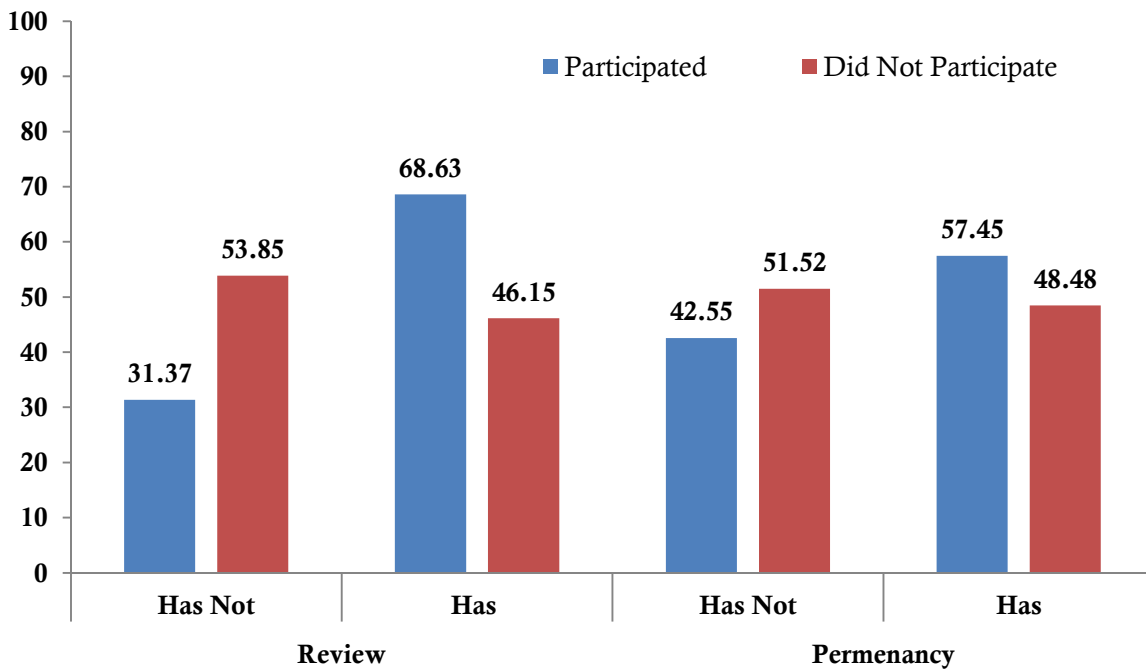
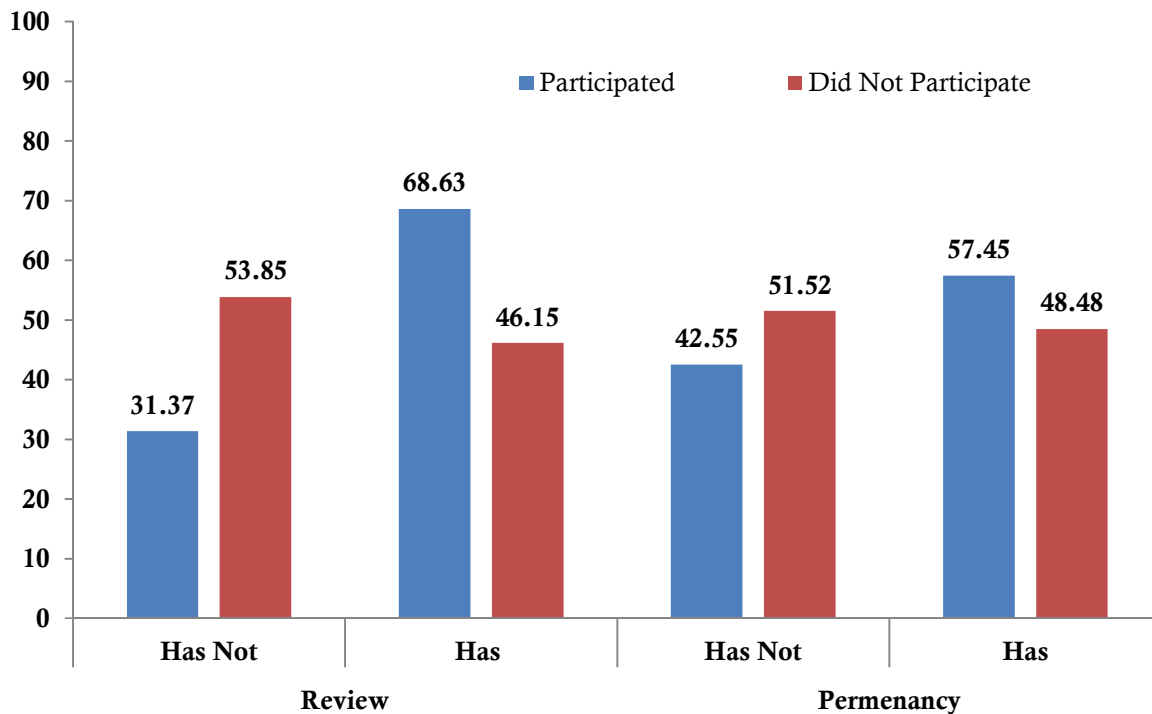


Figure 6 - Visitation Compliance among all Mothers at Review and Permanency Hearings by Dependency 101 Participation



Presence at Hearings

Mothers who participated in Dependency 101 on average attended 65.6% of total hearings possible. Mothers who did not participate on average attended 49.6% of total hearings possible. Fathers who participated in Dependency 101 on average attended 44.8% of total hearings possible. Fathers who did not participate on average attended 35.7% of total hearings possible. Researchers ran a linear regression model and found mothers who participated in Dependency 101 had an increased participation in court hearings compared to mothers who did not participate ($\beta=0.178$, $p=0.04$). There were no significant findings for fathers in Dependency 101 in relation to an increased participation in court hearings compared to fathers who did not participate ($p=0.129$). See table 5 for hearing attendance percentages.

Table 5. Hearing Attendance

Hearing Type	Percent attendance of those who participated in Dependency 101	Percent attendance of those who did not participate in Dependency 101	Percent difference (increase or decrease for Dependency 101 participants?)
<i>Mothers</i>			
Shelter care	93.1	81.4	14.4% increase
30 Day	55.7	35.7	56.0% increase
Adjudication	48.5	30.8	57.5% increase
Review	64.7	48.1	34.5% increase
Permanency	66.1	52.2	26.6% increase
<i>Fathers</i>			
Shelter care	67.2	55.6	20.9% increase
30 Day	41.5	28.8	44.1% increase
Adjudication	23.0	22.9	0.44% increase
Review	46.0	32	43.8% increase
Permanency	46.3	39.1	18.4% increase

Racial Differences in Engagement

Researchers compared racial groups by level of engagement of services and visitation at various stages in their case (review and permanency hearings). For mothers of all racial groups there did not appear to be any statistically significant difference in efficacy of Dependency 101. Therefore this appears to demonstrate Dependency 101 is equally effective for mothers of various racial groups. However, there were statistically significant differences in outcomes for fathers in different racial groups on select outcome measures. African American fathers were more compliant with their services at permanency hearings. Caucasian fathers were more compliant with their services at review hearings. Dependency 101 appears to be less effective for Native American fathers because they were less compliant with their services at review and permanency hearings and with their visitation at their review and permanency hearings.

Caucasian Families

The effect of Dependency 101 on Caucasian families appeared to have a greater effect for men rather than women. There was no association for Caucasian women who participated in Dependency 101 compared to those who did not for service compliance at *review or permanency hearings*. Among those who participated in Dependency 101, 74% of Caucasian women were in full/partial compliance at their review hearing and 78% at their permanency hearing (see figure 7).

Caucasian men who participated in Dependency 101 compared to those who did not, were more likely to be in some form of compliance at their *review hearing*. Among those in Dependency 101, 67% of Caucasian men were in full/partial compliance at their review hearing and 53% at their permanency hearing (see figure 8). Caucasian mothers and fathers who participated in Dependency 101 were more likely to be compliant with visitation at the review hearing, but not at permanency.

Figure 7 - Service Compliance among Caucasian Mothers at Review and Permanency Hearings by Dependency 101 Participation

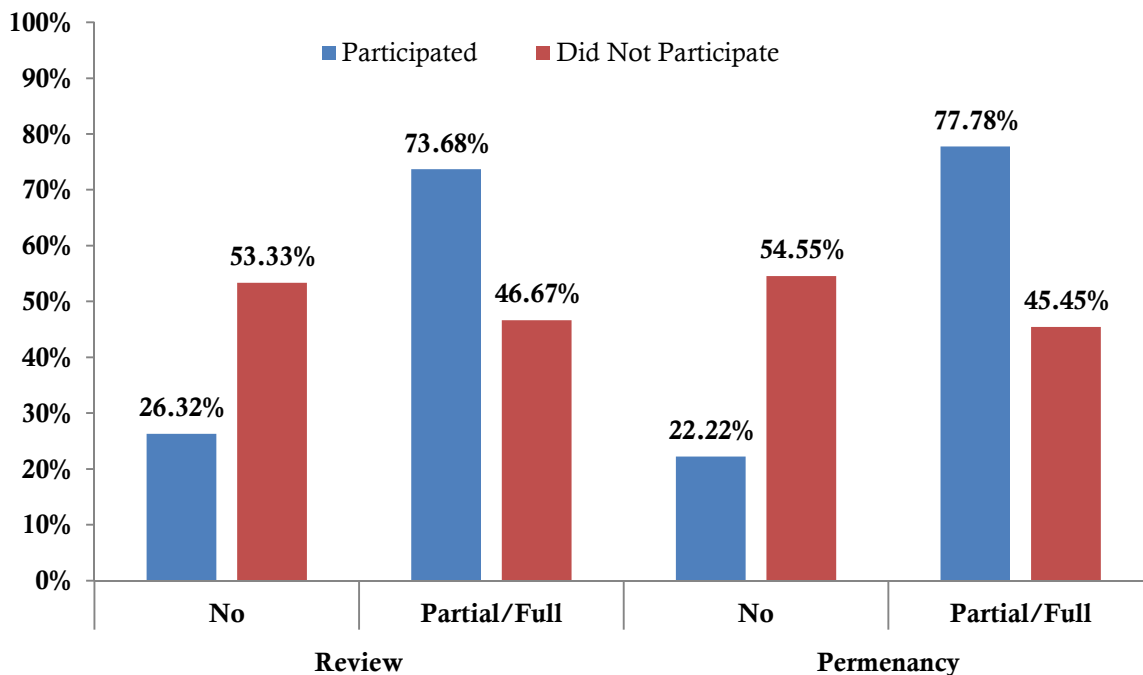
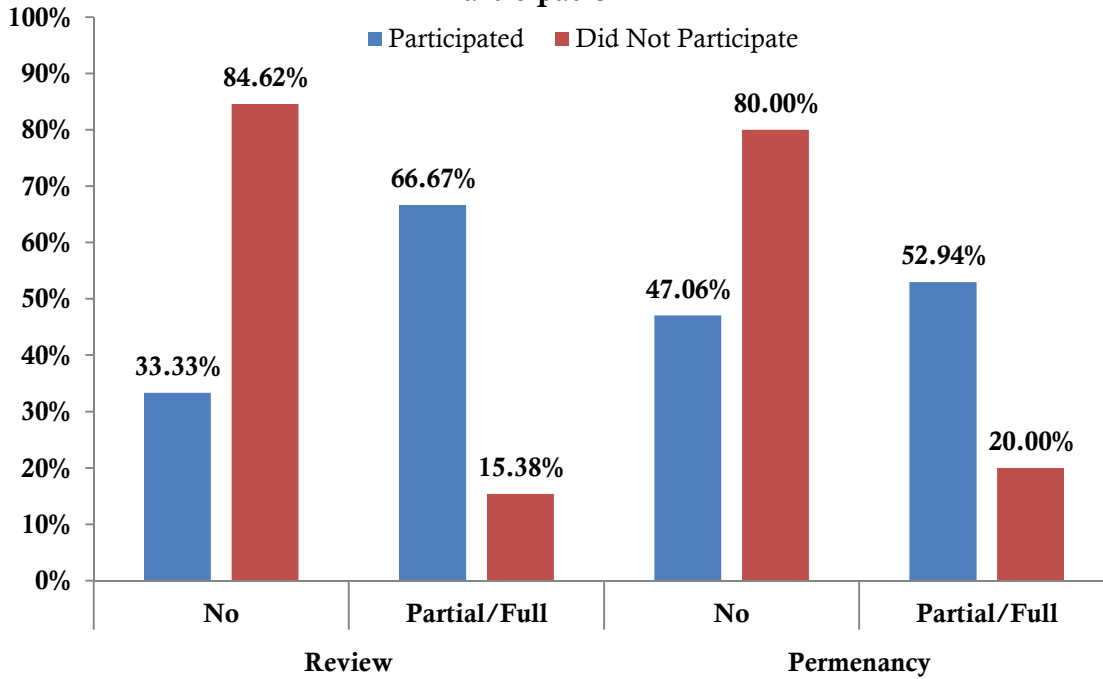


Figure 8 - Visitation Compliance among Caucasian Fathers at Review and Permanency Hearings by Dependency 101 Participation



African American Families

The effect of Dependency on African American families was more pronounced for male participants than female. There was no association for African American women who participated in Dependency 101 compared to those who did not for service compliance at review or permanency hearings. Among those in Dependency 101, 70% of African American women were in full/partial compliance at their review hearing and 67% at their permanency hearing (see figure 9).

African American men who participated in Dependency 101 compared to those who did not, were more likely to be in some form of compliance at their *review hearing*. Among those in Dependency 101, 68% of African American men were in full/partial compliance at their review and permanency hearing (see figure 10). African American men who participated in Dependency 101 compared to those who did not, were more likely to be in some form of compliance at their permanency hearing.

No associations were found for either African American mothers or fathers for compliance with their visitation at review or permanency.

Figure 9 - Service Compliance among African American Mothers at Review and Permanency Hearings by Dependency 101 Participation

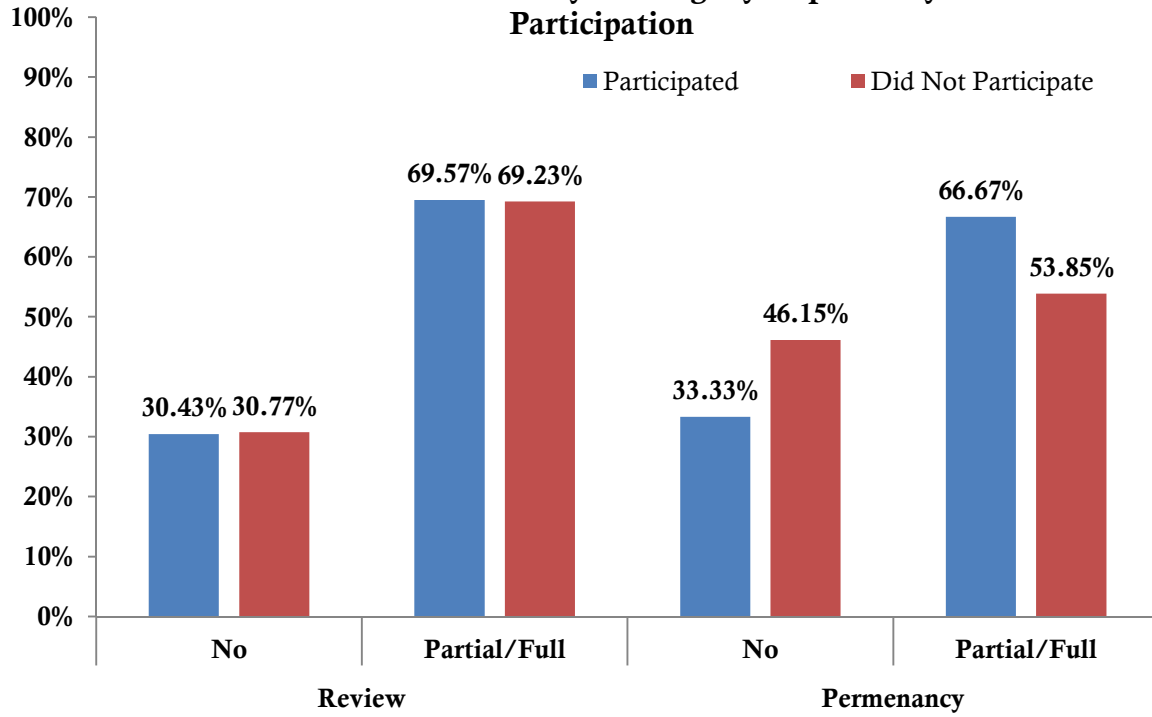
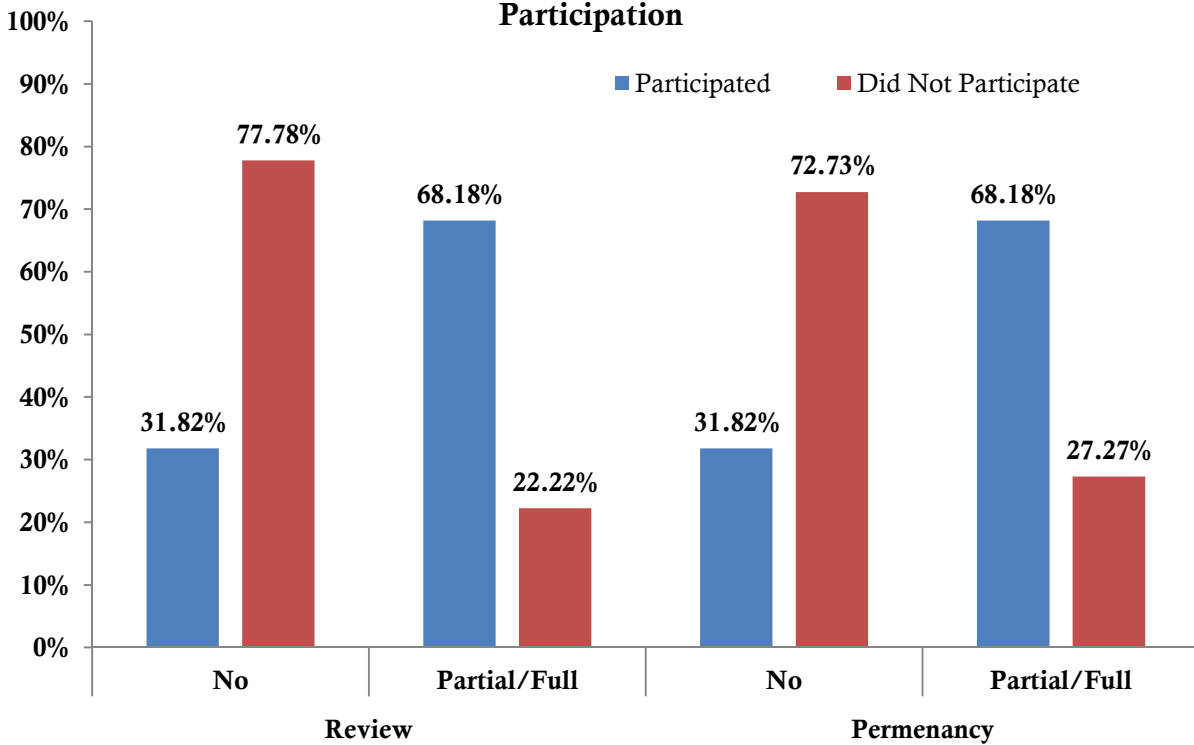


Figure 10 - Visitation Compliance among African American Fathers at Review and Permanency Hearings by Dependency 101 Participation



Native American Families

The effect of Dependency on Native American families was more pronounced for women participants compared to male participants. Native American women in Dependency 101 compared to Native American women who did not participate were more likely to be in some form of compliance with their services at the *review hearing*. Among those in Dependency 101, 94% of Native American women were in full/partial compliance at their review hearing and 79% at permanency. No association was found among Native American women who participated in Dependency 101 compared to those who did not, in relation to compliance with their services at the *permanency hearing*. Native American women in Dependency 101 compared to Native American women who did not participate were more likely to be in compliance with visitation at the review hearing but not at permanency.

No associations were found for Native American men who participated in Dependency 101 compared to those did not, in relation to service compliance at their review hearing or at permanency hearing. Among those in Dependency 101, 56% of Native American men were in full/partial compliance at their permanency hearing and 50% at their permanency.

Figure 11 - Service Compliance among Native American Mothers at Review and Permanency Hearings by Dependency 101 Participation

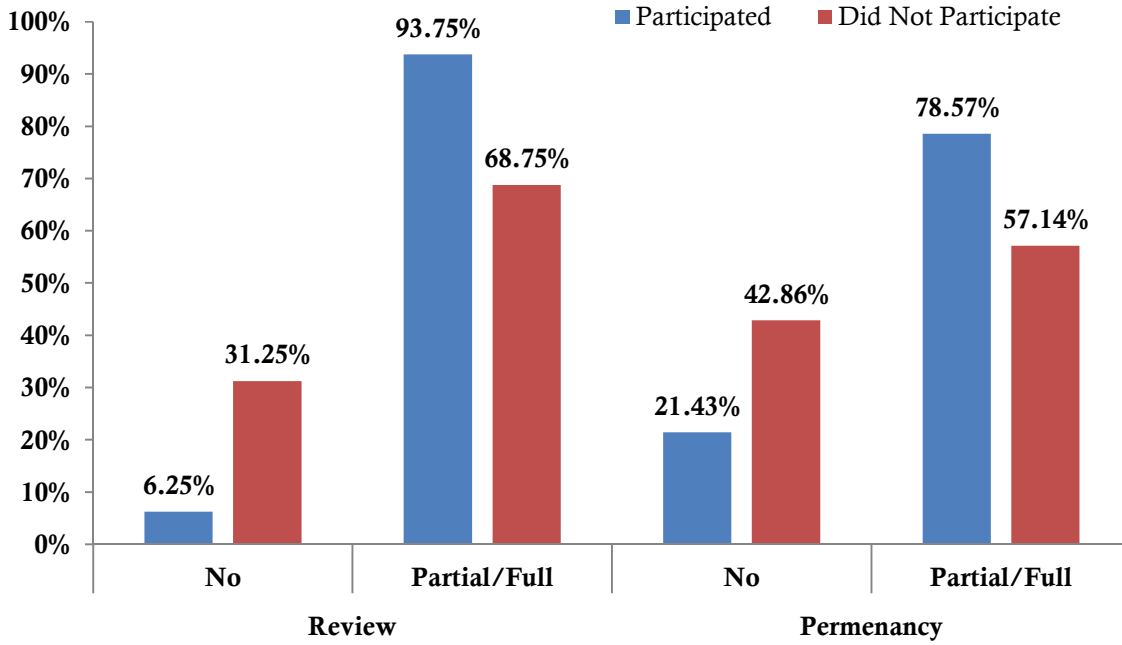
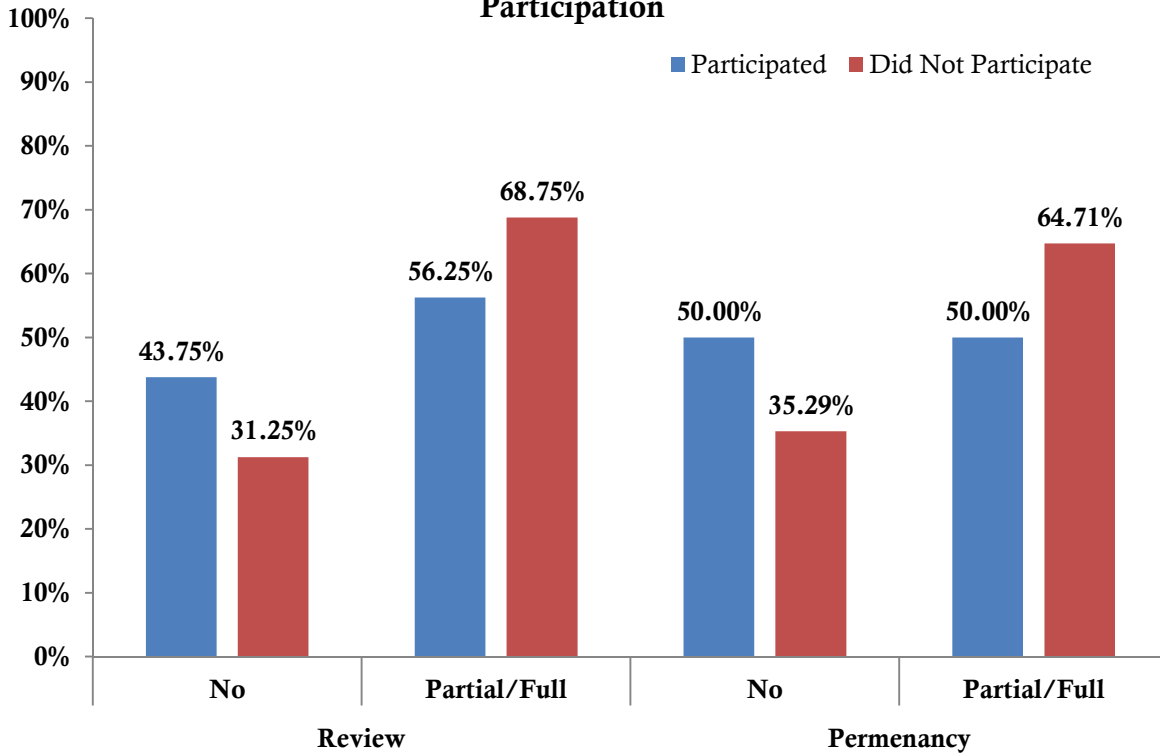


Figure 12 - Service Compliance among Native American Fathers at Review and Permanency Hearings by Dependency 101 Participation



Case Timeliness & Outcomes

Approximately 74% of cases were closed at the time of case file review. Case outcomes were examined by comparing Dependency 101 participation and case outcomes to assess any association [relative risk ratios (RR)].

Timeliness was measured by time from petition to closure and restricted to only include closed cases. A linear regression model did not demonstrate an association between participation in Dependency 101 and a decreased time from petition to closure ($\beta=0.12$, $p=0.91$). See figure 13 for a breakdown of time from petition to closure by years stratified by Dependency 101 participation.

There was no association between participation in Dependency 101 and the likelihood of having parental rights terminated compared to all other case outcomes [RR= 0.62 (0.31-1.20), $p=0.15$]. Parents who participated in Dependency 101 were more likely to be reunified compared to all other outcomes compared to families who did not participate (RR=1.46 (0.93-2.28), $p=0.10$).

Caucasian families who participated in Dependency 101 were times more likely to be reunified than to have their parental rights terminated (TPR) compared to Caucasian families who did not participate in Dependency 101 [RR = 2.04 (0.98-4.28), $p=0.06$]. Caucasian families who participated in Dependency 101 were less likely to have their parent rights terminated when compared to all other possible case outcomes [RR= 0.33 (0.11-1.05), $p=0.06$]. No association was found for African American families in Dependency 101 when comparing reunification to all other possible case outcomes [RR=1.28 (0.58-3.12), $p=0.71$]. No association was found for Native American families in Dependency 101 when comparing reunification to all other case outcomes [RR = 1.30 (0.55-3.27), $p=0.70$]. See table 6 for percentages of case outcomes stratified by Dependency 101 participation.

Figure 13 - Time from Petition to Case Closure in Years by Dependency 101 Participation

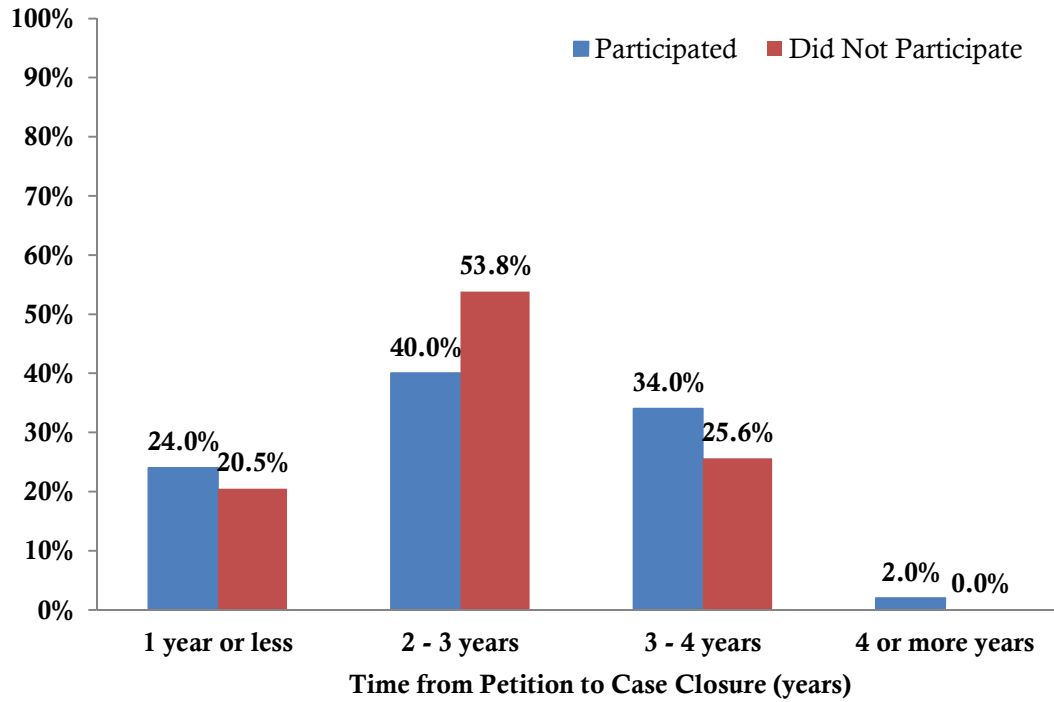


Table 6. Frequency table of Case Outcomes**

	Percent among Dependency 101 participants (n)	Percent among Dependency 101 non-participants (n)
<i>All Families</i>		
Termination of parental rights	19.6 (10)	31.8 (13)
Reunification	56.9 (29)	38.6 (16)
Relative Placement	7.8 (4)	2.3 (1)
Dismissed	7.8 (4)	13.6 (6)
Other	7.9 (4)	13.7 (5)
<i>Caucasian families</i>		
Termination of parental rights	16.7 (3)	50.0 (7)
Reunification	61.2 (11)	31.3 (5)
Relative Placement	0.0	0.0
Dismissed	5.6 (1)	12.5 (2)
Other	16.7 (3)	6.3 (1)
<i>African American families</i>		
Termination of parental rights	26.7 (4)	33.3 (4)
Reunification	53.3 (8)	41.7 (5)
Relative Placement	20.0 (3)	0.0 (0)
Dismissed	0.0 (0)	16.7 (2)
Other	0.0 (0)	8.3 (1)
<i>Native American families</i>		
Termination of parental rights	21.4 (3)	15.4 (2)
Reunification	50.0 (7)	38.5 (5)
Relative Placement	7.1 (1)	7.7 (1)
Dismissed	14.3 (2)	15.4 (2)
Other	7.2 (1)	23 (3)

**Analysis was restricted to only include closed cases

Previous process and outcome evaluations have demonstrated the King County Parent for Parent (P4P) program has had successes in enhancing parental engagement through the use of a peer-to-peer model. The purpose of this additional research was to investigate if P4P is also successful at engaging Native and African American families involved in the dependency system and explore if there are differences in case outcomes for Dependency 101 participants.

A limitation to this study was the small sample size (n=133) and interpreting results from a study with a small sample size, one should be particularly cautious. Larger sample sizes can help produce smaller standard errors and better estimates of the effect of interventions. However, smaller sample sizes are convenient, less expensive, and have a short duration.

Dependency 101 appears to be equally effective for mothers of all racial groups. For fathers, there were some differences. The relationship between Native American fathers and Dependency 101 was negative, with participating fathers less likely to comply with services or visitation. This could be due to low overall numbers in the study or there could be a reverse effect for Native American men in P4P. Without additional data, it is difficult to understand what the true relationship or interaction may be. Conducting focus groups with Native American fathers to assess what may be the cause of this negative trend may provide insight for programming.

Positive associations (statistically significant) for those who participated in Dependency 101 include:

- 1) *Mothers were more likely to be in full compliance of their services at both review and permanency hearings.*
- 2) *Fathers were more likely to be in full compliance of their review hearing.*
- 3) *Mothers were more likely to be in compliance with visitation at review hearings.*
- 4) *Mothers had an increased participating in court hearings across the life the case.*
- 5) *No race differences for the effectiveness of Dependency 101 for mothers.*
- 6) *Caucasian fathers were more likely to be in full or partial compliance of their services at the review hearing.*
- 7) *African American fathers were more likely to be in full or partial compliance of their services at both review and permanency hearings.*
- 8) *Native American fathers were less likely to be compliance with services or visitation at review and permanency hearings.*
- 9) *Increased likelihood of reunification compared to other outcomes when families participated in Dependency 101.*
- 10) *Caucasian families were more likely to reunify compared to termination of parent rights.*

Overall, the findings from this study suggest that there is a positive association between participating in Dependency 101 with improved parent engagement and case outcomes. Although statistically significant findings were limited, there were overall positive trends among Dependency 101 participants which included: greater participation in services and visitation, increased rates of court hearing attendance, increased rates of reunification, and lower rates of termination of parental rights. To continue to demonstrate these positive results, it would be advantageous to track and monitor participants engagement and case outcomes from the program.

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