

NewMexico_CIP_QRL

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FULL TRANSCRIPT (with timecode)

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Hello, my name is Lindsay Fuks, and I'm from the state of New Mexico. I'm the director of Children's Court programs for the New Mexico Administrative Office of the Courts and specifically the program director for the New Mexico Family Advocacy Program, a program piloting interdisciplinary team representation of parents that abuse neglect matters in New Mexico. The New Mexico Family Advocacy Program was developed to attempt to address lack of permanency throughout the state of New Mexico. When identifying the problem, our program creators looked at New Mexico data specific to timeliness, to permanency, permanency outcomes and children's continued connection to their parents and community.

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The data was sourced and analyzed from Odyssey, the New Mexico Judiciary's Court and Case Management Data ROMME, which is our.

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Child welfare agencies, Data QFES are Pippi reports.

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And an initial iteration of the New Mexico Family Advocacy Program, then called Family Support Services, promised programmatic data and literature from relevant organizations and reports. The issue was supported by identifying three poorly performing Child and Family Service Review, or QFES, are outcomes. To understand the problem, we consulted our partners in the judiciary. Attorneys representing parties in abuse neglect matters. Our agency counterparts CFD in representation models around the nation addressing similar issues.

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When we initially decided to tackle this issue, the team looked very different than it does now. Initially, back in 2013, a group of attorneys attended a conference in which New York's interdisciplinary representation model was presented. A small group of attorneys and social workers began to plan what it would look like if we could pilot a similar program in New Mexico with little to no funding. Sandoval County in New Mexico's 13th judicial district, a suburban county to Albuquerque, came up with a plan to begin a program.

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The initial iteration use the services of social work interns due to the lack of funding. The team that arose from that iteration dreamed up what the program could be with actual funding and outside support.

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The root cause was identified as parents not being valued by the child welfare system. The root cause was determined using data analysis, combined with experiential observational insight from child welfare practitioners, including social workers and attorneys participating in the Family Support Services Program. The theory is the program will initiate change by example. Modeling behavior and by working more collaboratively together will have better case outcomes.

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We anticipate that the effect will be the beginning of change to the embedded mindsets around parents and engagement. The programs interdisciplinary legal team highly values parents and keeping families together as much as possible. The legal team pushes judges to challenge the idea on the recommendations. The team is working with CYF d in regards to taylored case planning and identifying appropriate services, increased visitation and visitation quality. And this in turn will help the agency broaden their perspective of how to work with parents and improve their perception of parents.

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The extra support of the team theoretically should also provide greater credibility in the eyes of the judges to what is being presented by CFT to the courts, thus reducing any mistrust of caseworkers. Also, with the additional support the team provides, parents should become more trusting and more open to engaging in meetings and working with CFT. When parents become more trusting, generally, they become more collaborative, collaborative. And the theory is that CYF de workers will see this change and grow to have more positive perception of parents.

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This is how we perceive our programmes capacity to affect change directly in the court system, but also by influencing CFD. The intervention chosen is the interdisciplinary team approach. Each parent that is part of the program will be appointed an attorney as usual in a case and in addition a master's level social worker and a parent mentor, which is a parent with lived experience as a respondent in a CYF case. This intervention was chosen because of the promise of the initial effort that was initiated in New Mexico with no funding.

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The team was also inspired by the outcomes of similar programs that they had seen in states like New York. Currently, the interventions working well, we began implementation on February 1st, 2020, after a significant planning period. We've engaged in evaluation team from the National Center for State Courts to develop and execute robust evaluation and data production. We've had some challenges with the current public health emergency as there are a combination of mandated and recommended restrictions on in-person contact, which is a large component of the rapport and team building.

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But each team members adjusting and the program continues to move forward.

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The three keys to success that I would share with another VIP that wanted to launch this project or a similar project are one stakeholder buy support from the Judiciary, Child Welfare Agency, individual judicial districts and attorneys that practice in this area of law has been significant. The second key to success I would state is collaboration with the state's child welfare agency. We have seen the most

success in counties where the CYF team is fully on board, understands the roles and views, the legal team additions as an asset.

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And the third key to success, I would say, is education of community stakeholders. So the stakeholders I've already mentioned, such as the Judiciary, Child Welfare Agency and attorneys, but also an expanded set of stakeholders such as treatment providers, foster parents, Kos's and others involved on what the program is, the goals of the program, and the roles that each member of the team play. Thank you.