



# Effectively Implementing Family Engagement and Involvement Practices for Youth in the Juvenile Justice System

**Date: August 24<sup>th</sup>, 2017**

Brought to you by the National Reentry Resource Center and the U.S. Department of Justice's Bureau of Justice Assistance



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# Panelists

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The National Reentry Resource Center (NRRC) is supported by the Bureau of Justice Assistance.

NRRC staff have worked with more than 600 Second Chance Act (SCA) grantees.

The NRRC provides individualized, intensive, and targeted technical assistance, training, and distance learning to support SCA grantees.

✓ Register for the monthly NRRC newsletter at:

[csgjusticecenter.org/subscribe/](https://csgjusticecenter.org/subscribe/)

✓ Share this link with others in your networks that are interested in reentry

In January 2017, the CSG Justice Center released resources to help the juvenile justice field implement research-informed policies and practices

## Juvenile Justice Research-to-Practice Implementation Resources: Family Engagement and Involvement

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# Key Challenges and Strategies for Involving and Engaging Families of Youth in the Juvenile Justice System

# Identifying family members or other supportive adults who can promote positive outcomes for youth

1. Define "family" broadly
2. Identify family members and other supportive adults using visual tools, questionnaires, and other models developed by the field

# Supporting families in navigating the juvenile justice system and remaining involved with their children

1. Establish a culture of alliance with families who have children in the juvenile justice system
2. Educate families about their children's experience in the justice system
3. Provide peer support
4. Outreach to families



# Engaging families to play an active role in youth's case planning and treatment

1. Involve families in supervision and service decision
2. Provide opportunities for family contact with youth placed in facilities

# Establishing and tracking family engagement performance measures

1. Solicit family input on agency policies, practices, and outreach efforts
2. Hold staff accountable for family outreach and support

To access the *Juvenile Justice Research-to-Practice Implementation Resources* on family engagement and involvement visit:

<https://csgjusticecenter.org/youth/family-engagement-and-involvement/>

# For other resources on family engagement visit...

- The Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention (OJJDP) Policy Guidance:  
<https://www.ojjdp.gov/policyguidance/Youth-Family-Engagement/>
- OJJDP's Juvenile Drug Court guidelines discuss research and research-informed examples of family engagement:  
<https://www.ojjdp.gov/pubs/250368.pdf>
- National Center for Mental Health and Juvenile Justice's family engagement resources:  
<https://www.ncmhjj.com/topics/family-engagement/>



# Examples of Family Involvement and Engagement

# Missouri Division of Youth Services:

*“Family is vital to the Treatment Process”*

# A Shift in Thinking

- Agency beliefs and philosophies
- Definitions of families (i.e., who does the youth and family identify as family?)
- Positions specifically focused on family (family specialists and service coordinators)
- Family decision making in youth's treatment plan

## Traditional/Correctional

## Developmental/Rehabilitative

Youth-centric: Goal is for the youth to stay out of trouble	Goal is for youth and their families to be productively involved and contributing to the community
Deficit focus: Family viewed as part of the problem	Strengths focus: Build on assets and improve well-being
Systemic barriers: Strict adherence to program rules and policies that discourage family engagement, e.g., inflexible visiting hours  Large institutions, geographically isolated, inaccessible to family/community	Meet Individual/family needs; small programs to fit the youth/family; flexible, adaptive, culturally competent e.g., flexible visiting hours to meet families' needs, transportation, and gas cards  Build positive relationships, reduce isolation, placement in close proximity to home
Focus solely on youth	Systemic focus: youth, family, neighborhood, community
Neighborhoods seen or viewed as being "Bad"	Focus on achieving stability; community and neighborhoods seen as resources
We are the "experts"	Families are experts that know the youth better than anyone



# Theoretical Frameworks

## **National customs:**

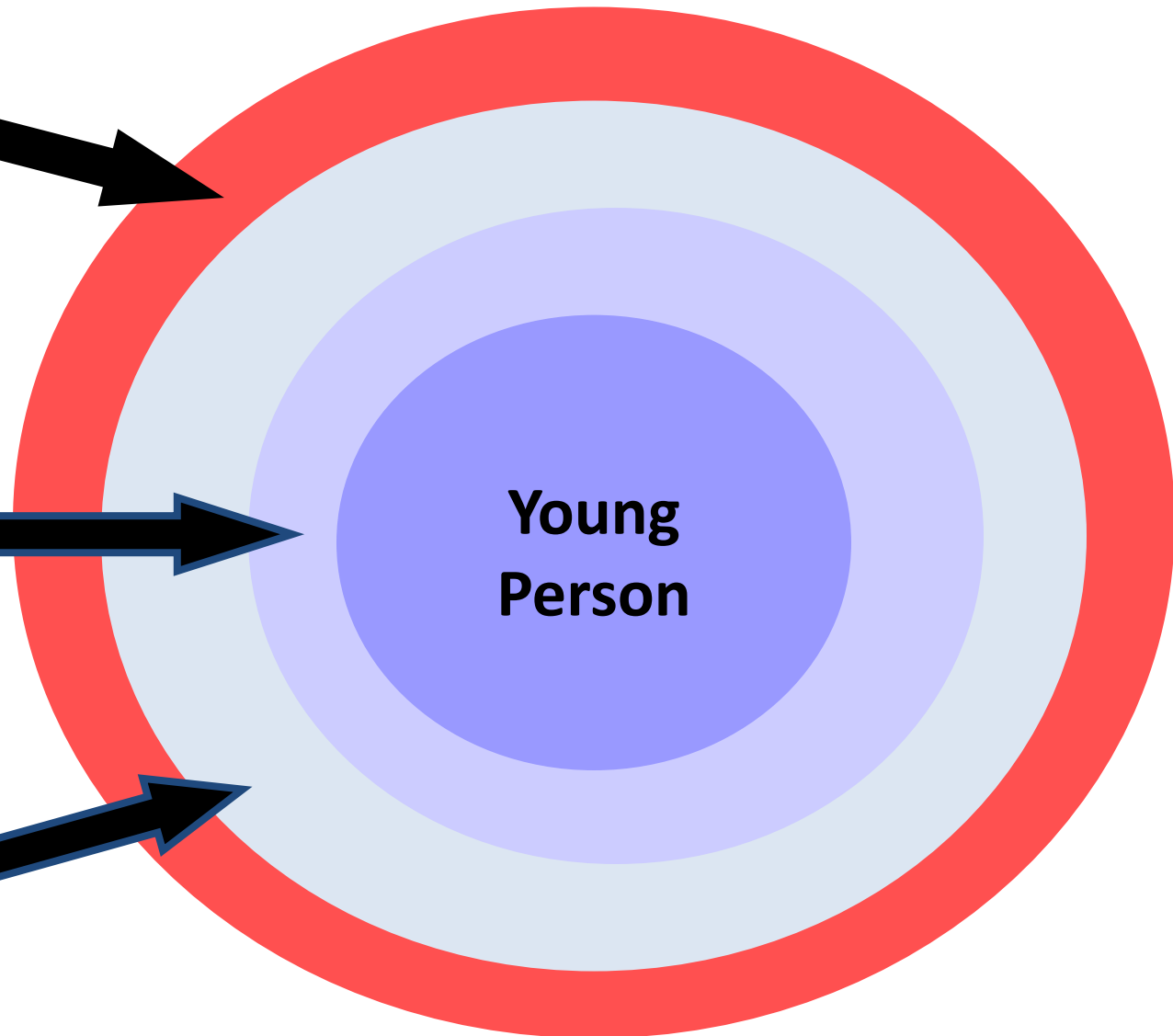
Cultural values  
Mass Media  
Social conditions  
Economic patterns  
Political philosophy

## **Intimate & immediate**

**effects:** Family, School,  
Peers, Religious  
Institutions

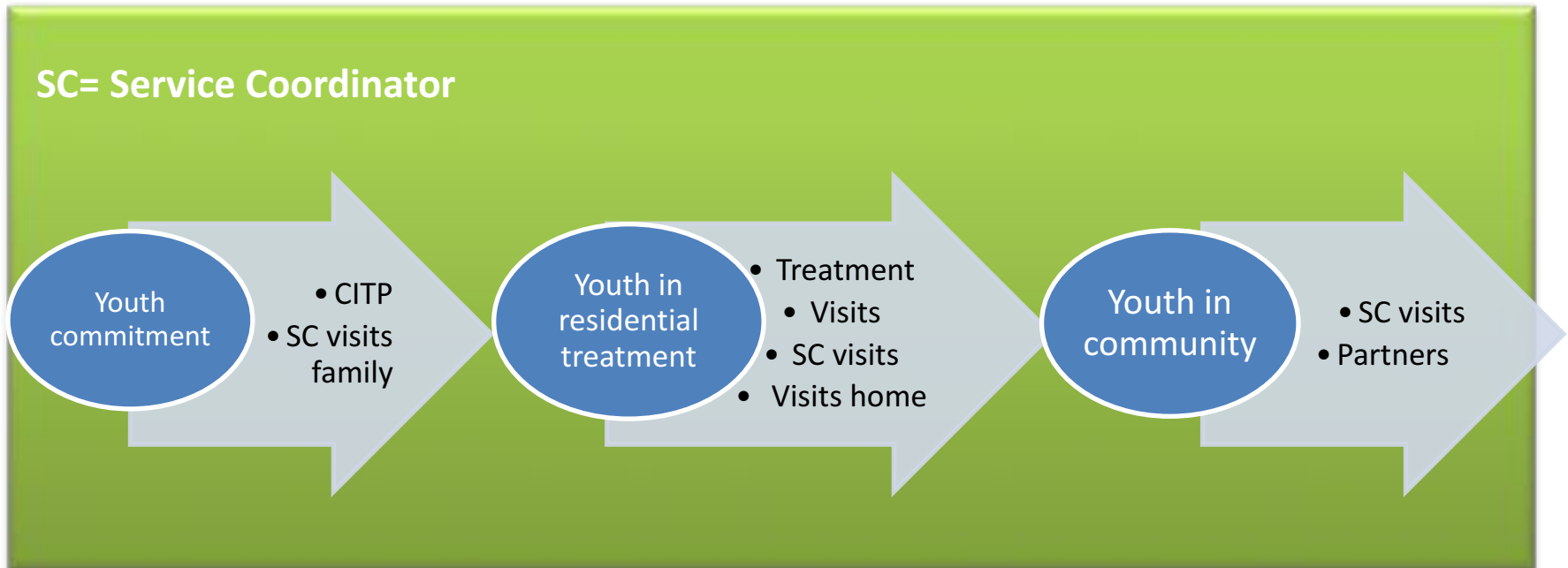
## **Extended family & work:**

Neighbors and Friends  
of the Family,  
Mental Health and  
Social Service  
Agencies



## **Bronfenbrenner's Ecological Model of Development**

# How & When Families Engage with DYS



## **DYS Treatment Belief:**

Family is vital to the treatment process. Families want the best for their children. Services provided to youth must take into account the values and behaviors established within the family system. Family expertise and participation is essential in the youth's treatment process, and facilitates change within the youth's family.

# Missouri DYS Basic Expectations for Family Engagement

## **Parents and guardians, family members, and youth have an active voice in treatment planning and implementation:**

- One-on-one or small group meetings at a time and place that is most comfortable for the family
- Active participation in treatment and educational planning
- Regular face-to-face contact between service coordinators and family throughout the youth's residential and non-residential stay
- Regular visits from family members or natural support networks arranged by the service coordinator during each youth's residential stay and beyond
- Comprehensive and collaborative transition planning and implementation prior to a youth's release from residential care, including both formal and natural support systems for the youth and family
- Established relationships between DYS youth and positive adults that are long-term

# When a Family Walks in the Door

Support the family in participating in child's treatment

Demonstrate respect and empathy for family members

Be consistent, reliable, and honest

Understand the family's past experiences, current situation, concerns, and strengths

Be clear about the purpose of the family's involvement and your involvement with the family

Be aware of your own biases and prejudices

*Based on principles put forward by Childtrends,*

# Our Partnerships with Families

## **Family Strengthening & Well-being**

Treatment & education plans (goals, needs, and dreams)

Family counseling, site visits

Multi-family Groups (Families & Schools Together & FASTWORKS)

## **Parent Support Services**

Resource centers, parent groups and connection to resources

Support, empathy during triumphs and struggles

## **Family Engagement Activities**

Family days, graduation and family oriented outings

## **Family Governance (Voice and Choice)**

Family focus groups, advisory boards and surveys

## **Family and Community Engagement**

Partner with communities to reduce isolation, promote safety and stability, and achieve mastery

# Examples of Our Partnerships with Families



**Treatment Plans**

**Family Transition Worksheet**

**Youth Family Treatment Work**

**Community Partnerships**

**FAST**

# Missouri Division of Youth Services Comprehensive Individual Treatment Plan

Youth Name		DOB		DYS Case File #	
DOA		DOC		Region	

## Part A: Assessment and Goals

### I. Youth and Family Strengths

A1. What are the key strengths and developmental assets of the youth?

A2. What are the key strengths and developmental assets of the family?

B1. What are the interests, hopes and dreams of the youth?

B2. What are the interests, hopes and dreams of the family?

## TRANSITION MEETING: YOUTH AND FAMILY WORKSHEET

This worksheet should be filled out both before and during the transition meeting by the youth and family with help from the program and SC. This should include progress and goals for the youth and family. We will review this worksheet and set goals for transition.

### Core issues

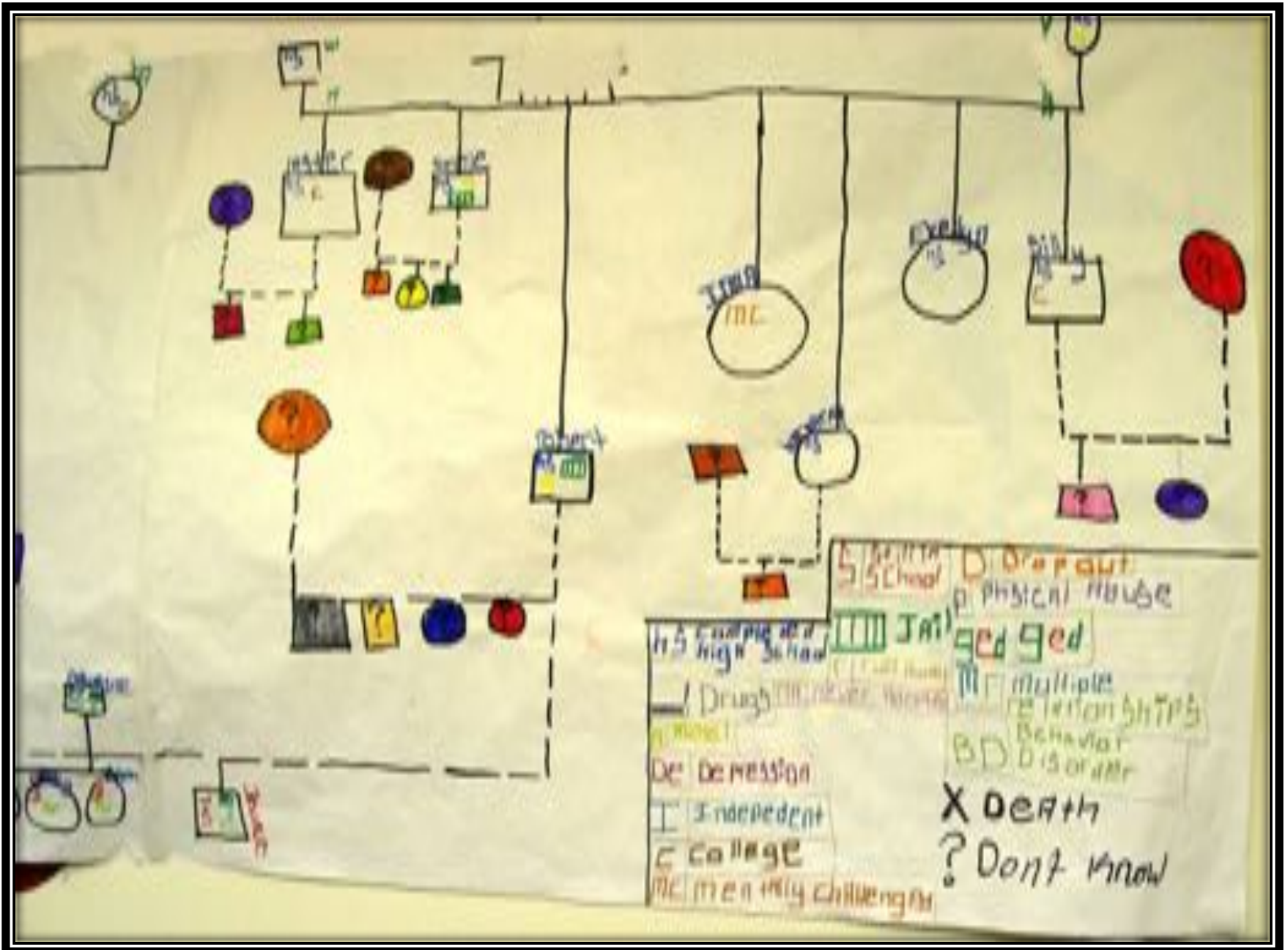
1. What have we learned and accomplished and how have we grown in dealing with our personal and family issues (our treatment program and other counseling)?

2. What do we need to do to maintain our progress and continue growing and moving forward in addressing our personal and family issues?

3. Who are the people that will be able to help us do this?







DYS Student Family Genogram

# Community Partnerships

DYS has community partners across the state. They provide:

- Case management services for youth and families
- Positive youth development and other services
- Partnership in FAST
- On the ground connections in the community and resources for the entire family
- Services and supports to the youth and family after discharge from DYS



# FAST® - Families and Schools Together

Families and Schools Together (FAST) was developed by Dr. Lynn McDonald in 1988 in order to enhance the protective factors in young people and their families in the school setting. DYS & FAST have adapted the program for a juvenile justice setting. Since DYS's implementation of FAST in 2013, 178 families have graduated the 8-week program.

Teen FAST Goals	DYS Goals
Enhance youth's relationships with adults in family, school, and community	Strengthen social supports for youth in their homes and communities
Prevent youth from experiencing school failure	Enhance youth's sense of mastery of skills and support continued success in the community
Prevent alcohol and drug use in the youth and family	Positively impact the stability of the entire family system
Reduce stress experienced by youth and parents related to daily life situations	Connect families with people in their communities who can provide them with the resources necessary to reduce stress and social isolation

# Family Flags: We are Family....



# Example of an Evening in FAST

## **Family Meal and Check-In**

- Youth and parent/mentor eat meal together, one family brings dessert

## **Youth Group**

- Youth partners lead decision making

## **Parent/Mentor Group**

- Parents/mentors support one another

## **One-on-One time**

- Private talk between youth and parent or mentor

## **Family Reciprocity**

- Family wins prize; then brings dessert for others

## **Closing Circle or Ending Ritual**

- Youth-led; builds sense of community

# Comments from FAST Participants

*"I have regained my grandson and our life will definitely be different, and it [is] way past time. Thank you from the bottom of my heart."*

**Grandparent, Southeast, MO**

*"My mom listens now when I tell her things. We can talk."*

**Youth, St. Louis, MO**

*"It has made me feel like I'm not alone and helped me overcome my own fear about people and made me feel comfortable in public surroundings, and has also helped family problems."*

**Youth,  
Springfield, MO**

# Challenges

- Family mistrust of systems
- Engaging with complex family systems
- Family isolation
- Creating connections in the community for youth and families
- Community/neighborhood challenges
- System barriers

**Indiana Division of Youth Services:**  
*Improving Family Engagement  
Strategies*



# Initial Strategies

- Reviewing Data
- Creating buy-in
  - Staff concerns
- Correlation to youth behavior (VERA Institute)
- Impact on youth reintegration



# Family Survey

- Piloted in October 2012
- Collected information regarding:
  - Facility orientation and welcome
  - Visiting and contact
  - Treatment planning and communication
  - Discharge preparation
- Survey has expanded since the pilot questionnaire



# Family Engagement

## Visitation

- Policy
- Family orientation
- Family council
- Facility tours
- Parent/guardian Bill of Rights and handbook



# Family Engagement

## Programming

- Family counseling with mental health staff
- Treatment team review part
- Incident reviews
- Mental health staffing



# Family Engagement

## Facility Events

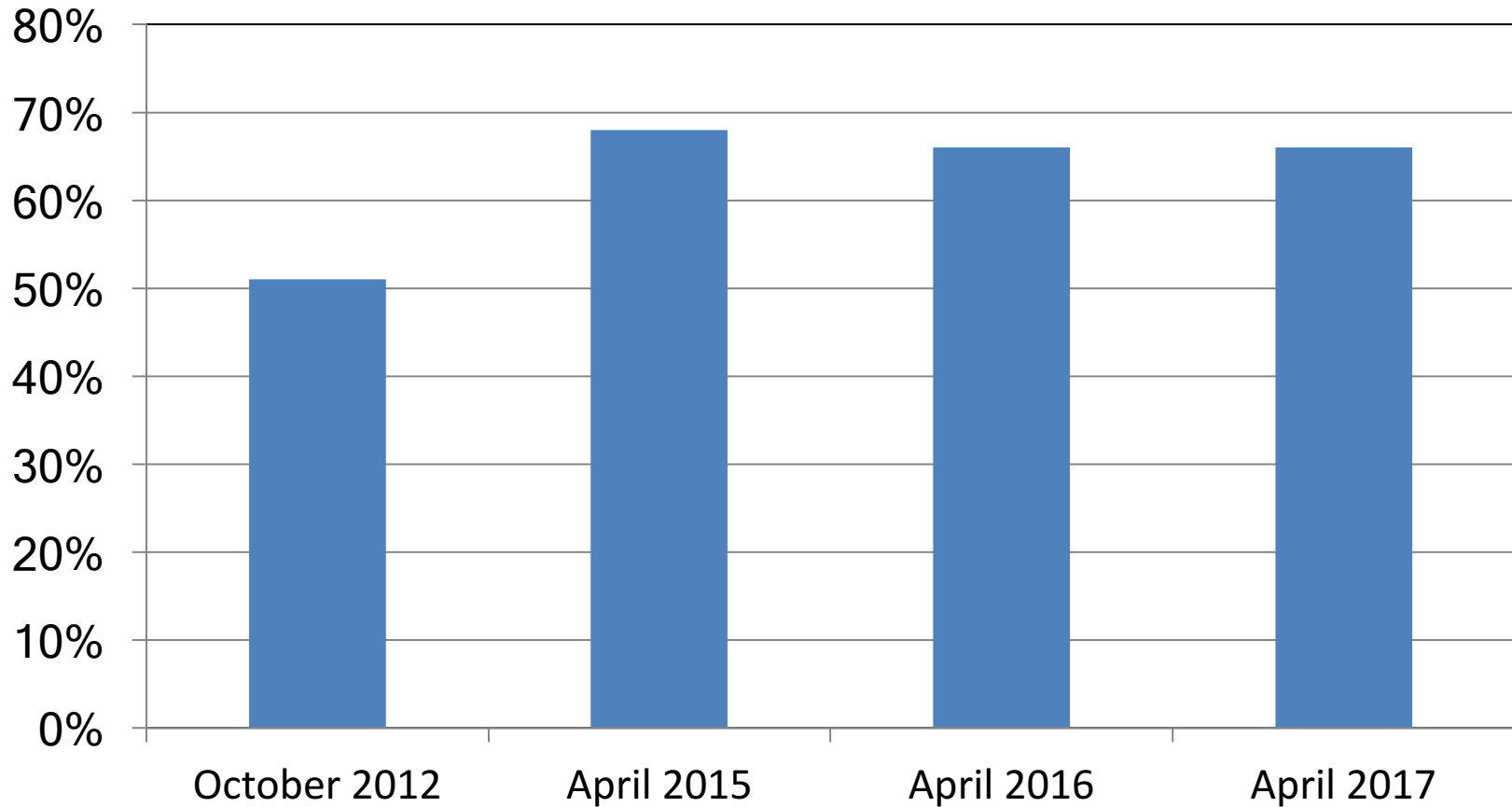
- Open Houses
- Family Fun Days
- Programming (AA/NA meetings, chapel services)
- Education and program graduations
- Healthy Families workshop
- No Visit party
- Staff mentor

# Challenges

- Distance
- Transportation
- Non-participating families
- Approval process for visitation

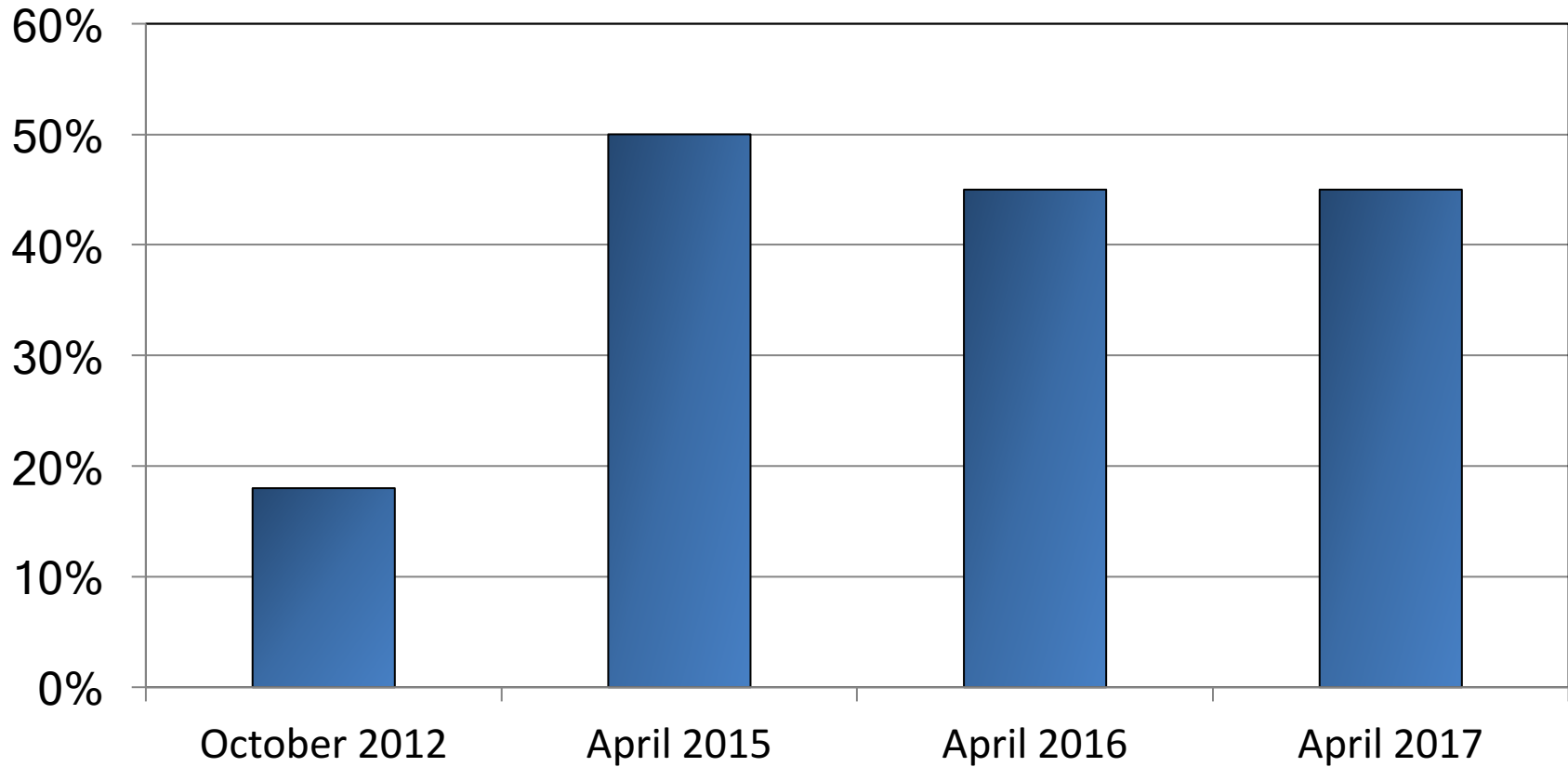
# Family Engagement Data

## % Participated in Orientation Meeting



# Family Engagement Data

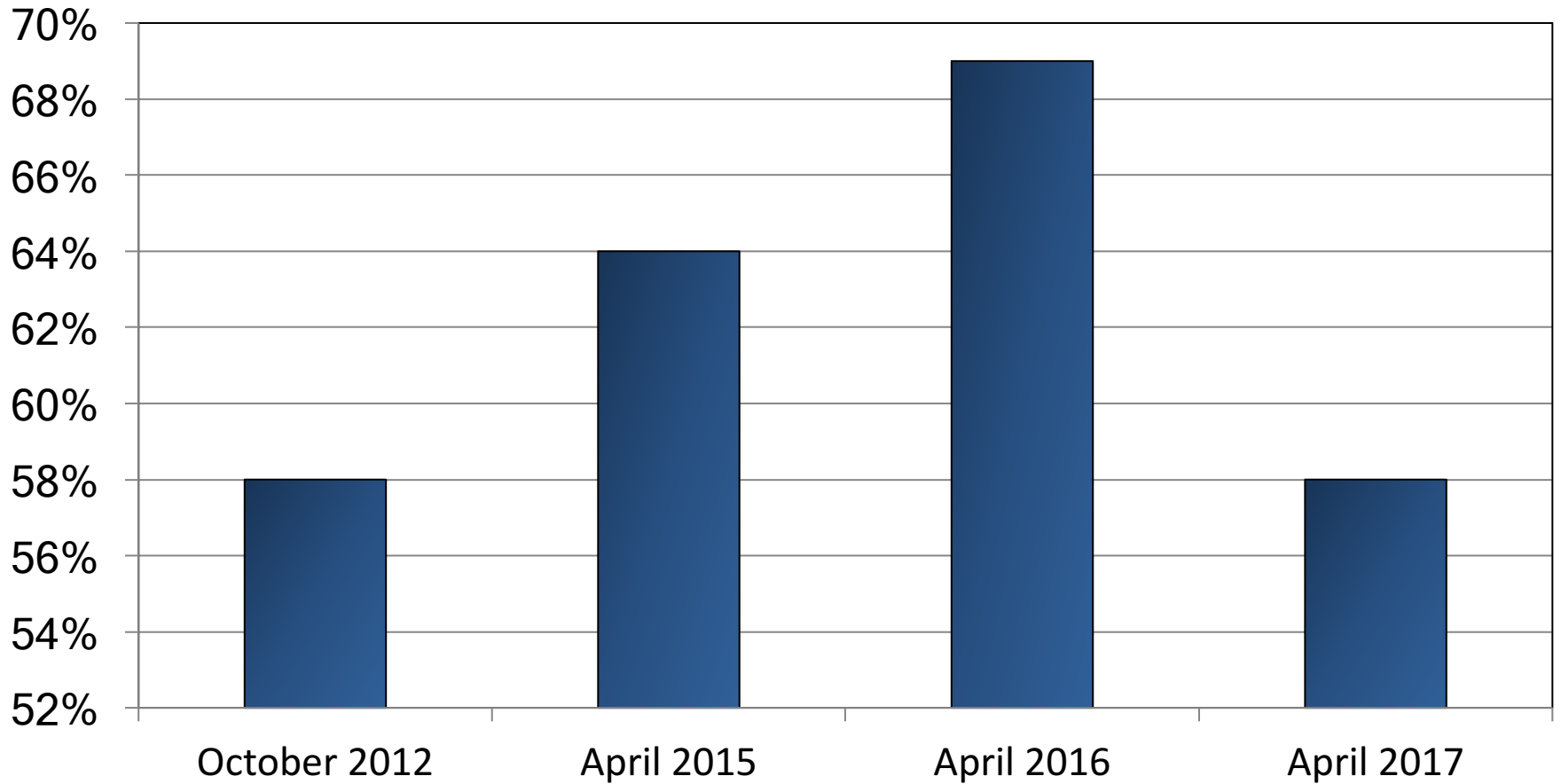
## % Given Tour of Facility





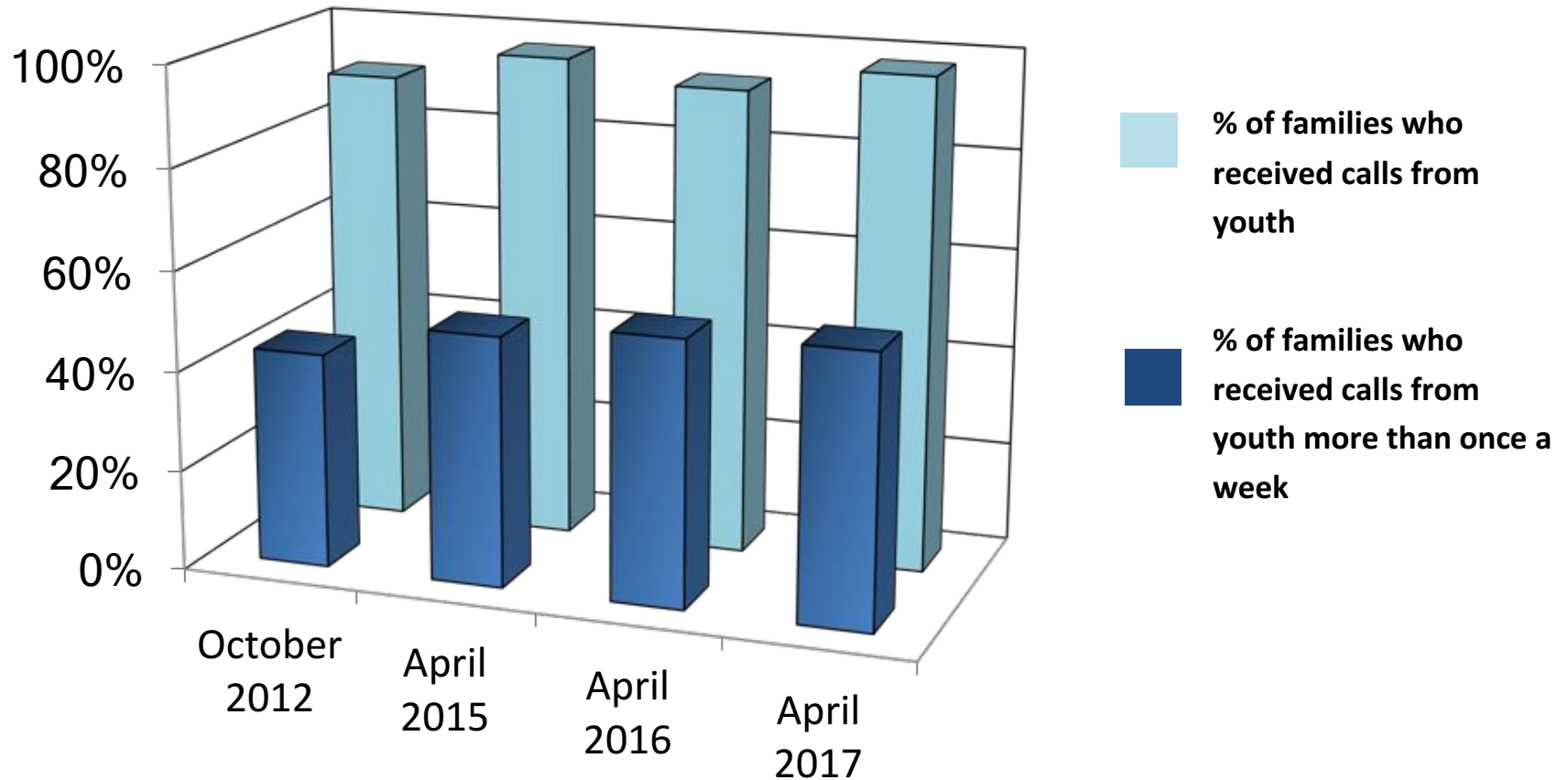
# Family Engagement Data

## % Visited



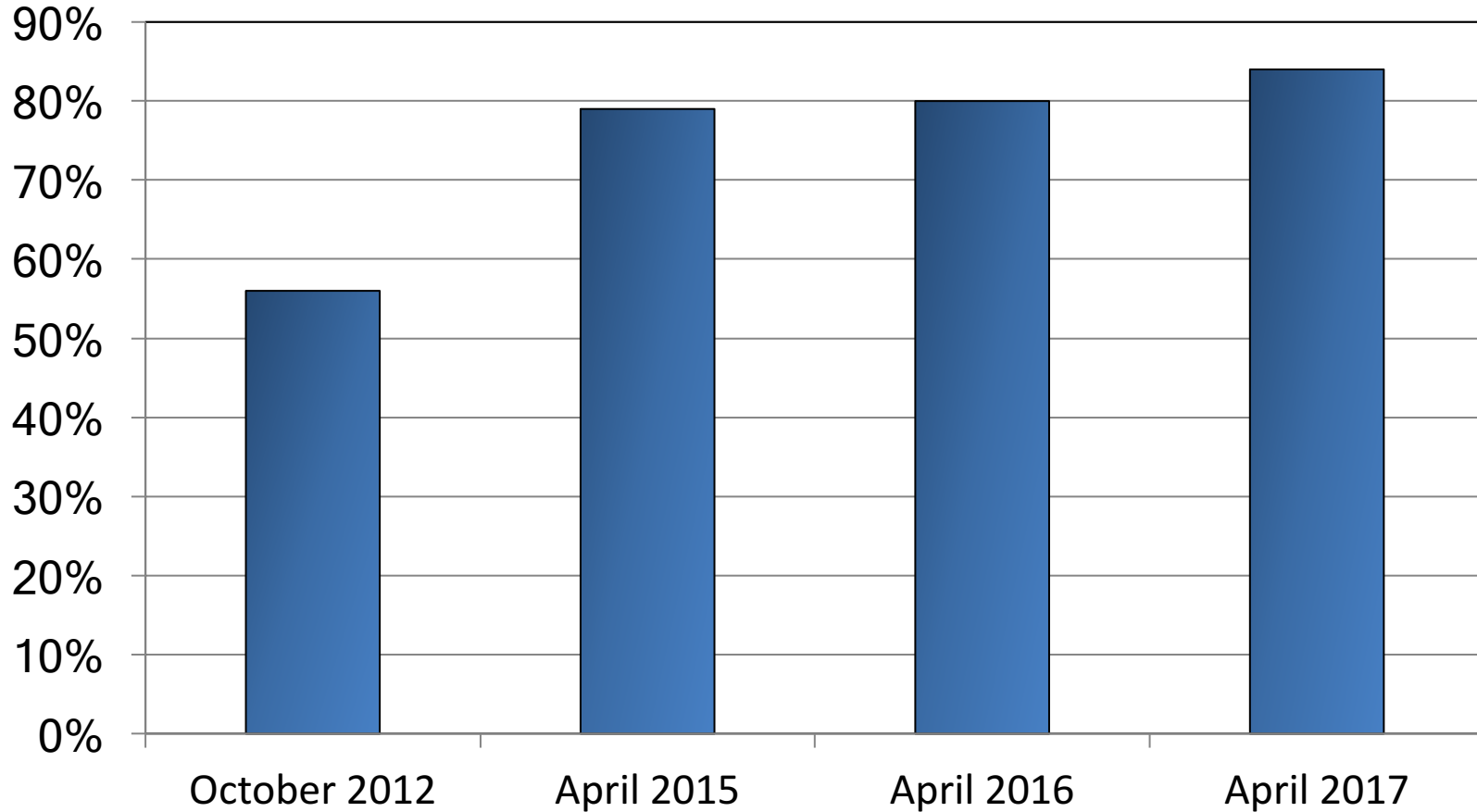
# Family Engagement Data

## Phone calls



# Family Engagement Data

**% Invited to facility events/programs**



Questions?



## Thank You

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