# **EVALUATION OF ARC REFLECTIONS:**

# Final Report on the Implementation of a Trauma Training for Resource Parents

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#### **Report submitted to:**

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James BRUKe
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#### **EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

#### **Background**

In 2015, an estimated 683,000 children in the United States were victims of abuse and neglect,¹ and 428,000 children were living in foster care.² For children in foster care, the harmful effects of maltreatment are often intensified by exposure to additional traumatic events, such as separation from family members and multiple placement disruptions.³.⁴ For example, while in care, children experience an average of 3.2 placement changes.⁵ In turn, they may exhibit more severe problems with attachment, behavior problems, and mental health, including higher rates of posttraumatic stress disorder compared with their peers who remain at home or are not maltreated.⁶.⁷ Child welfare systems that are sensitive and responsive to trauma are better positioned to support the safety, permanency, and well-being of children in foster care.⁶ Nevertheless, the vast majority of child welfare agencies do not provide resource parents (foster parents and kinship caregivers) adequate preparation to manage the daily challenges of caring for children who are exposed to trauma and to support their recovery.⁶ To help address this gap, The Duke Endowment worked with Child Trends to evaluate a pilot implementation of a new training for resource parents and child welfare staff—ARC Reflections. The training is based on the principles of Attachment, Self-Regulation, and Competency (ARC), a widely disseminated, evidence-informed framework and clinical trauma treatment model.¹0

This report presents findings from a mixed methods evaluation of the implementation of ARC Reflections in five counties in North Carolina. The evaluation focused on identifying essential elements of ARC Reflections, assessing fidelity to the model, and highlighting adaptations that may increase the model's effectiveness in child welfare settings. An additional component of the evaluation was an exploratory analysis of associations between ARC Reflections and placement stability and resource home retention. Prior to presenting findings, we provide an overview of ARC Reflections and the ARC model on which it is based.

#### **Key Findings**

Overall, resource parents, child welfare leaders, and caseworkers held positive perceptions of ARC Reflections. The results of the evaluation revealed the following strengths:

- ARC Reflections was implemented with high fidelity. Trainers followed the format of the training 90 to 100 percent of the time (except in one county, where trainers elected to reduce the use of icebreakers after the first few sessions).
- Resource parents found the training interesting, useful, and practical. A high percentage of resource parents (73 to 99 percent) agreed the training was interesting and balanced, presenters were clear, and activities were helpful. In focus groups, they reported learning useful and practical tools and approaches to caring for children exposed to trauma.
- Resource parents gained knowledge and skills related to child trauma. Resource parents' scores on the Resource Parent Knowledge and Beliefs Scale<sup>11</sup> increased significantly from pre- to post-training, showing improvements in trauma-informed parenting, tolerance of children's misbehavior, and parenting efficacy. These gains were maintained at follow-up three months after the implementation period ended.
- Family protective factors increased. Resource parents completed the Protective Factors Survey<sup>12</sup> prior to the training and again at follow-up and reported a significant increase in praising children when they behaved well and in feelings of closeness between resource parent and child.
- **Fewer trained resource homes closed compared with untrained homes.** The percentage of resource homes with resource parents trained in ARC Reflections that closed for negative reasons (i.e., reasons other than adoption or guardianship) as of three months after the implementation period was significantly smaller than the percentage of homes that closed for negative reasons during the year prior to implementing ARC Reflections (2 percent vs. 16 percent).
- Fewer children exited trained homes compared with children in untrained homes. A significantly smaller percentage of children in trained resource homes exited for negative reasons (i.e., move to another placement setting, transferring to another agency, running away) as of three months after the implementation period compared with children in untrained homes during the year prior to implementation (7 percent vs. 43 percent).

• Several child welfare agencies plan to continue offering ARC Reflections. Three of the five counties plan to offer ARC Reflections training for resource parents beyond the pilot period. They will also offer the ARC Reflections training for new child welfare staff. One county plans to provide booster trainings for existing staff, and another county will offer trainings for staff who work with kinship caregivers. Adequate resources (e.g., financial, number of trained staff), leadership support, and staff "buy-in" appear to be factors that support sustainability of the training.

In addition to lessons learned and suggestions for improvement, findings also elucidated specific challenges to implementing ARC Reflections in child welfare:

- A more integrated approach to training would further support a trauma-informed system. Child welfare staff and leaders
  suggested that training all staff and resource parents would facilitate shared knowledge of how to understand and address
  child trauma.
- Additional support for implementing ARC Reflections may enhance outcomes. Trainers and child welfare leaders
  indicated that they would benefit from additional instruction, supervision, and coaching, such as more guidance on training
  caseworkers, booster sessions, and follow-up with resource parents during and after training. Caseworker training was the
  least developed component of the ARC Reflections curriculum, and all counties expressed the desire for more guidance and
  direction on how and when to train caseworkers. These types of support may allow for more consistent and higher quality
  integration of ARC Reflections and trauma-informed care into child welfare practice.
- Careful selection of trainers is important. Child welfare staff reported that, although they were generally satisfied with trainers, successful implementation required careful selection of trainers, prioritizing high-quality trainers with prior training experience. One county also suggested including a resource parent as a co-trainer, a practice utilized in several other child welfare trauma training initiatives.
- Limited time and resources in child welfare agencies impeded sustainability. Child welfare staff and several resource parents reported that the length and duration of the training was a barrier to sustaining ARC Reflections given other commitments and concurrent initiatives. In addition, some agencies did not have the financial resources to cover costs such as child care and food for resource parents during training sessions, which were important to resource parent attendance and engagement. Given many competing priorities, successful implementation of ARC Reflections requires child welfare agencies to give high priority to trauma training.

#### **Implications and Conclusions**

The results of this evaluation indicate that ARC Reflections was successfully implemented in the five North Carolina counties. Resource parents, child welfare leaders, and caseworkers found the training to be useful and practical, and resource parents made significant gains in knowledge and skills related to caring for children who have experienced trauma. A preliminary analysis also suggested the ARC Reflections training was associated with improvements in resource home retention and children's placement stability. However, more rigorous study is needed to confirm these findings and to attribute positive outcomes directly to the training. Lessons learned include the importance of gaining support from leadership and staff early in the implementation process, selecting experienced trainers, providing system-wide training, and ensuring that training is accessible and convenient for resource parents.

#### INTRODUCTION

In 2015, an estimated 683,000 children in the United States were victims of abuse and neglect, <sup>13</sup> and 428,000 children were living in foster care. <sup>14</sup> The most common reasons for placement in foster care include neglect (61 percent), drug abuse by a parent (32 percent), a caregiver's inability to cope (14 percent), and physical abuse (13 percent). <sup>15</sup> These and other forms of childhood trauma (e.g., domestic violence, parental mental illness, abandonment) often are compounded by experiences of separation, loss, and placement disruptions while in the foster care system. <sup>16,17,18</sup> For example, while in care, children experience an average of 3.2 placement changes. <sup>19</sup> In turn, children in foster care are at especially high risk for insecure attachment, behavior and mental health problems, developmental delays, and academic difficulties. <sup>20,21</sup> Compared with their non-maltreated peers, they are also more likely to encounter adversity in adulthood, including low educational achievement, unemployment, homelessness, mental illness, and difficulty forming and maintaining healthy relationships with others. <sup>22</sup>

The vast majority of child welfare agencies do not provide resource parents (foster parents and kinship caregivers) with adequate preparation to manage the daily challenges of caring for children who are exposed to trauma and to support their recovery.<sup>23</sup> With the aim of mitigating the negative effects of childhood trauma, improving placement stability, and increasing resource home retention, several experts in the field have adapted evidence-based and evidence-informed trauma treatment models to train resource parents, caseworkers, and other service providers who work with children involved with the child welfare system. <sup>24,25,26,27,28,29,30</sup> Initial results from evaluations of these initiatives indicate that training the adults in children's lives to recognize and respond appropriately to child trauma can lead to system-wide improvements in the provision of trauma-informed care in child welfare<sup>31</sup> and more favorable outcomes for children. <sup>32,33,34</sup> However, definitions of trauma-informed care in child welfare vary widely, as do approaches to training, making it difficult to assess their effectiveness and to identify the core components that lead to optimal outcomes. <sup>35</sup> The degree to which fidelity to a particular model is feasible and sustainable in child welfare agencies is unclear. <sup>36</sup>

Recognizing these gaps, The Duke Endowment worked with Child Trends to evaluate a pilot implementation of a new training for resource parents—ARC Reflections. The training is based on the principles of Attachment, Self-Regulation, and Competency (ARC), a widely disseminated, evidence-informed framework and clinical trauma treatment model.<sup>37</sup>

This report presents findings from Child Trends' evaluation of the implementation of ARC Reflections in five counties in North Carolina. The evaluation focused on identifying essential elements of ARC Reflections, assessing fidelity to the model, and highlighting adaptations that may increase the model's effectiveness in child welfare settings. An additional component of the evaluation was an exploratory analysis of associations between ARC Reflections and placement stability and resource home retention. Prior to presenting evaluation findings, we provide a brief overview of ARC Reflections and the ARC framework.

#### Attachment, Self-Regulation, and Competency (ARC)

The ARC framework was co-developed by Margaret Blaustein, PhD, and Kristine Kinniburgh, LICSW, of the Trauma Center at the Justice Resource Institute in Brookline, Massachusetts. ARC is an overarching framework for clinical intervention with children and youth, ages 2 to 21, who have experienced trauma. It is named for its three core domains (targets of intervention): Attachment, Self-Regulation, and Competency. The domains encompass 10 foundational "building blocks," as shown in Figure 1. ARC is an adaptable framework for use in multiple settings that serve children and youth, including mental health clinics, community-based programs, schools, foster and congregate care, and acute care facilities. ARC is presently used in more than 300 agencies and child-serving systems in the United States and abroad.<sup>38</sup>

**Figure 1** Attachment, Self-Regulation, and Competency building blocks

Attachment	<b>Self-Regulation</b>	Competency
		•
☐ Caregiver affect	Affect identification	Developmental tasks
management	Affect modulation	Executive functions
Attenement	Affect expression	Self development
Consistent response		and identity
Routines and rituals		

ARC is operationalized with individual children as well as at the system level, with the central goal of supporting the ability of the child, family, and the system to engage thoughtfully in the present moment (i.e., trauma experience integration). Routines and rituals (i.e., consistent and recurring structure, consistency, and predictability) and psychoeducation (i.e., education and information about mental health functioning) are integrated throughout the intervention.<sup>39</sup> Research has shown that the ARC clinical model is associated with decreased posttraumatic stress, fewer behavior problems, and improved mental health in children and youth. For example, a recent study of children involved in the child welfare system who received ARC found reductions in internalizing, externalizing, and total behavior problems, as well as a decrease in symptoms of posttraumatic stress disorder (PTSD).<sup>40</sup> Other research has shown that parents and other caregivers who have participated in ARC experience less parenting stress and view their children's behaviors as less dysfunctional compared with those who have not participated in ARC. In addition, one study of ARC with youth in congregate care found improved rates of permanency.<sup>41</sup>

#### **ARC Reflections**

Kinniburgh and Blaustein used the ARC framework to develop a resilience-based skills training for resource parents—ARC Reflections.<sup>42</sup> The training teaches resource parents how trauma impacts children in their care and provides tools for effective caregiving and adult stress management. The goals of ARC Reflections are to support resource parents' motivation and skills while improving children's well-being, stability, and permanency.<sup>43</sup> A notable difference between the ARC treatment model and ARC Reflections is that the latter is more structured and prescriptive. Consisting of nine manualized sessions, the ARC Reflections training program provides support for trainers, resource parents, and caseworkers, any of whom may have limited experience and training in mental health or child trauma. Specifically, the ARC Reflections training includes:

- A curriculum for resource parents to increase their knowledge of traumatic stress, emotional regulation, and resilience, and to provide them with other tools that will support their parenting;
- Concrete resources for resource parents, including handouts to capture salient intervention points; and
- A guide for staff who work with resource parents that will help them to identify and reinforce key concepts from the training and to generalize skills to the home caregiving environment.

**Prior research on ARC Reflections.** Only one evaluation of ARC Reflections has been conducted to date. The Annie E. Casey Foundation partnered with the model's developers to pilot ARC Reflections in the Fairfax County child welfare system in Virginia. Employing a trainthe-trainer approach, the developers prepared local trainers to offer the training to resource parents. The Annie E. Casey Foundation provided technical assistance and partnered with Child Trends to conduct an implementation evaluation. Key findings were:

- Trainers were effective and well-received by resource parents and child welfare staff.
- The training was practical and provided valuable social support for resource parents.
- Resource parents made significant gains in knowledge and skills in child trauma.
- The model was implemented with high fidelity.
- Retention of resource parents and kinship caregivers in training was a challenge.
- Exploratory analysis suggested that resource home retention and children's placement stability were better among resource parents who received ARC Reflections compared with those who did not receive the training.
- The child welfare agency was able to build in mechanisms for sustaining ARC Reflections.
- Resource parents and trainers identified areas that could be improved, including additional opportunities for in-depth discussion, information-sharing, and problem-solving during sessions. They also recommended system-wide training and implementation, including additional guidance for caseworkers.<sup>44</sup>

Applying lessons learned from the evaluation, the Annie E. Casey Foundation and the model's developers made adjustments to the manualized version of ARC Reflections, which now includes a facilitator guide for each session with accompanying handouts, a separate guide for case managers, and survey and feedback materials developed by Child Trends (see <a href="http://www.aecf.org/blog/arc-reflections-trauma-training-for-foster-parents-and-caregivers/">http://www.aecf.org/blog/arc-reflections-trauma-training-for-foster-parents-and-caregivers/</a>). The revised materials were not available for the current evaluation, as ARC Reflections was piloted and evaluated concurrently in North Carolina and Virginia, with North Carolina continuing data collection for an additional six months.

#### **Implementation of ARC Reflections in North Carolina**

Five county departments of social services in North Carolina committed to implementing ARC Reflections: Agency A, Agency B, Agency C, Agency D, and Agency E. The counties range in size and demographic characteristics (see Appendix A), number of resource parents, number of children in resource homes, and in the types of training they typically offer to resource parents. As of early 2016, Agency A had the greatest number of resource homes (81), including licensed non-relative and relative homes; Agency B had 67 resource homes; Agency D 11; and Agency E 38.

Figure 2 below depicts the ARC Reflections implementation process, including variation among counties when relevant. Appendix B provides additional details on participation in ARC Reflections and other trainings for each county. All counties offered training to staff: Agency B and Agency D trained case managers; Agency A trained case managers and supervisors; Agency C trained foster parent and child protective caseworkers; and Agency E trained foster parent and permanency caseworkers. Agency C and Agency E held agency kickoff events that included community partners (Agency C) and resource parents (Agency E). Three counties held regular implementation planning meetings that included the trainers—one weekly (Agency B) and two monthly (Agency C and Agency E). Two counties held implementation planning meetings on an as-needed basis (Agency A and Agency D); one held weekly meetings for trainers (Agency A). All counties invited licensed resource parents to participate in ARC Reflections training, and two counties also invited licensed kinship caregivers. See Appendix C for details on training and attendance by county.

**Figure 2**ARC Reflections implementation process in North Carolina

#### **ARC REFLECTIONS TRAINERS CHILD WELFARE STAFF** · Kickoff event Training of trainers CHILD WELFARE LEADERSHIP Implementation Kickoff event meetings In-depth staff training **RESOURCE PARENTS** · Weekly trainers meetings · Weekly calls with Kickoff event • Consultation with resource parents Implementation developers Implementation meetings Recruitment · Technical assistance meetings · Consultation with Resource parent from AECF Technical assistance developers training from AECF Technical assistance • Weekly calls with from AECF staff Implementation meetings

Approach to training and consultation. ARC Reflections was implemented in North Carolina using a train-the-trainer approach. The implementation team in each county selected staff to attend the training. Most of the selected staff were experienced trainers, although a few had limited experience. The developers provided a two-day training session on how to present the curriculum to resource parents. Trainers then offered ARC Reflections to resource parents using a manual and PowerPoint materials. Developers provided three one-hour telephone consultations to the counties throughout the nine-week training. They also gave each county a caseworker guide and a condensed version of the resource parent materials. Unlike the resource parent trainings, ARC Reflections' developers did not provide specific training or instructions on how to train caseworkers. As a result, staff trainings varied from in-depth weekly training to one-hour overviews during lunch. Trainings for trainers were offered from October to December 2015; staff and resource parent trainings were provided between January and June 2016.

**Technical assistance.** The Annie E. Casey Foundation assigned a technical assistance (TA) consultant to each county to serve as a liaison with the developers and the evaluation team. The TA consultants also provided financial and practical assistance to the counties, such as paying for training materials for facilitators and participants, providing training completion certificates for resource parents, ordering and paying for food during trainings, covering the costs of child care, and administering and collecting pre- and post-training paper surveys immediately before and after the training. In addition, they offered ongoing practical suggestions and support to counties.

#### **EVALUATION DESIGN**

#### **Research Questions**

The evaluation used a mixed methods approach over a two-year period (January 2016 to December 2017) with the aim of answering specific questions on the implementation and preliminary outcomes. See Appendix D for a sample of focus group questions and Appendix E for measures. Table 1 below displays the specific evaluation research questions and associated data sources.

**Table 1**Evaluation research guestions and sources of data

Re	search Question	Data Sources
1.	How well and with what level of fidelity is ARC Reflections implemented in each county?	<ul> <li>Fidelity checklists completed by trainers after each session</li> <li>Attendance sheets completed by trainers at each session</li> <li>Focus groups with child welfare staff, consultants, curriculum developers, and resource parents</li> </ul>
2.	Does ARC Reflections increase resource parents' and caseworkers' knowledge of child trauma and trauma-informed care?	<ul> <li>Pre-, post-, and follow-up surveys for resource parents who participated in ARC Reflections training</li> <li>Focus groups with child welfare staff, TA consultants, curriculum developers, and resource parents</li> </ul>
3.	To what extent are child welfare agencies able to sustain ARC Reflections training?	<ul> <li>Questionnaire on agency practices to TA consultants</li> <li>Focus groups with child welfare staff, TA consultants, curriculum developers, and resource parents</li> </ul>
4.	Is ARC Reflections associated with improvements in placement stability and resource home retention?	Quarterly administrative data

#### **Sample and Procedures**

Agency B held two resource parent trainings with a total of 13 participants (19 percent of resource homes)<sup>a</sup> and the other counties held one training, with 12 participants in Agency A (15 percent of resource homes), 22 in Agency C (33 percent), 10 in Agency D (91 percent), and 25 in Agency E (66 percent). The demographic profiles resource parents did not differ significantly across the counties. There was fairly even participation by gender across the counties (46 percent men, 54 percent women). Half of participants were over 40 years of age, 81 percent were white, 14 percent were black or African American, 5 percent were American Indian, and 78 percent had at least some college education. Nearly all resource parents (over 97 percent) reported that they were financially stable enough to pay their bills, buy food, and maintain transportation. See Appendix F for more details.

A total of 50 child welfare staff participated in the evaluation: 19 implementation team members, 17 trainers, and 14 caseworkers (6 in Agency A; 10 in Agency B; 14 in Agency C; 9 in Agency D; and 11 in Agency E).

**Study procedures.** In this mixed methods study, quantitative data were gathered from resource parent surveys at pre-training, post-training, and follow-up (3 months post-training). Training fidelity checklists were collected after each of the nine sessions. Child welfare administrative data were gathered from child welfare agencies at baseline (2015) and then quarterly from January 2016 through October 2017. Qualitative data were gathered from telephone interviews with the developers and TA consultants (August 2017), observations of training sessions, and two rounds of focus groups (August 2016 and February 2017). Focus groups included implementation team members, trainers, caseworkers, and resource parents. See Table 2 for additional details.

**Table 2**Focus group participants

Participant Type	Round 1	Round 2	Characteristics
Implementation team	17	19	3–25 years of experience; members included directors, supervisors, trainers, community members
Trainers	15	17	Most were TIPS-MAPP* trainers; some were novice trainers
Caseworkers	9	14	1–20 years of experience; some had RPC and TIPS-MAPP* training
Resource parents	25	18	1–10 years of experience; average of 2.5 children in household
AECF consultants	7	_	One consultant was assigned to each of the five ARC Reflections counties; two were consultants on a related project
ARC Reflections developers	2	_	Both developers developed ARC as well as ARC Reflections
Total	75	68	

<sup>\*</sup> Trauma Informed Partnering for Safety and Permanence–Model Approach to Partnerships in Parenting (TIPS-MAPP)

**Resource parent survey response rate.** The average response rate for the pre-training survey was 92 percent, with a range of 88 to 100 percent across the five counties. Some participants started the training after the first session and so did not complete the pre-training survey. The average response rate for the post-training survey was 84 percent, with a range of 80 to 89 percent. Participants who did not complete the training, however, did not take the post-training survey. The average response rate for the follow-up survey was 33 percent, with a range of 9 to 43 percent. Not all resource parents agreed to be contacted for a follow-up survey, and those who did agree to be contacted did not all participate.

a This is an estimate, as the child welfare administrative data did not specify the number of resource parents that lived in the same home.

We tested to see if there were any significant differences in age, gender, race, or level of education between participants who completed only the pre-training survey and those who completed both the pre-training and follow-up surveys. A statistically significant higher proportion of the group that took the pre-training and follow-up surveys was female (81 percent, compared with 44 percent of the pre-training-only group). No other variables were significantly different between the two groups.

Data analysis plan. We employed both qualitative and quantitative data analyses, using the method most appropriate for each data type: quantitative analysis for closed-ended survey data, attendance records, fidelity checklists, and administrative data to examine placement stability and resource home retention; and qualitative analysis for examining information obtained through interviews and focus groups and responses to open-ended survey questions. We conducted descriptive and exploratory analyses (including t-tests) to assess changes in group averages from one time point to another, and descriptive analyses to examine training attendance patterns and topics included in each training session. We had limited ability to compare results across time points due to missing data for resource parents at follow-up as a result of attrition following the completion of the training. We analyzed qualitative data from fidelity checklists, identifying patterns related to fidelity, as well as facilitators and challenges to training implementation. We used a qualitative data software program to analyze transcribed recordings of focus groups. We identified and refined all themes through a constant comparative model in accordance with their relevance to specific research questions. Two coders worked together to reach consensus on focus group themes.

#### **EVALUATION FINDINGS**

The results of the ARC Reflections implementation evaluation are presented below, organized by each of the five research questions.

#### How well and with what level of fidelity was ARC Reflections implemented?

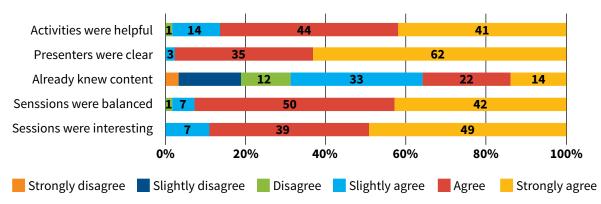
To answer our first research question, we analyzed data from two sources: training fidelity checklists (see Appendix G) and focus groups. Overall, counties were able to implement the ARC Reflections curriculum with a high level of model fidelity. The curriculum had a well-developed manual, with a clear format that was easy for trainers to follow. Each session had the following elements: icebreaker, opening, review, report back, self-reflection, take home, and closing. Trainers followed this format 90 to 100 percent of the time, with the exception of trainers in one county who only used the icebreaker 56 percent of the time. During focus groups several trainers across counties reported that the icebreaker became less useful in the later sessions because participants already knew each other. The developers reported being "impressed by the implementation and fidelity to what we asked them to do." See Appendix H for additional information about session attendance.

We also examined the extent to which trainers adhered to the design of the curriculum. Two of the counties (Agency A and Agency B) followed the suggested training schedule of nine weekly sessions. Agency C and Agency E combined the first two sessions into one, an option suggested by the developers to reduce the burden of multiple sessions on trainers and parents. Agency D offered the training every other week, both as a way to fit in with their other resource parent training schedule and to accommodate resource parents' other commitments. All counties lengthened the sessions from 90 minutes to two hours, which they agreed was the minimum time it took to cover all materials.

#### Strengths of ARC Reflections Implementation in Child Welfare

**Trainers were well-trained, skilled, and effective.** All counties were able to identify staff to conduct the training, most of whom had conducted other resource parent trainings. Resource parents in all counties reported that the trainers were skilled and were able to implement the training with high quality. As shown in Figure 3, on the post-training survey using a six-point scale (strongly disagree to strongly agree), the majority of resource parents agreed or strongly agreed that the presenters were clear (M = 5.59, SD = 0.547) and interesting (M = 5.36, SD = 0.694), and that the sessions were well-balanced (M = 5.32, SD = 0.664). Most trainers felt the guidance they received from the developers prepared them well to train resource parents. One trainer described the developers as "competent, interesting, and not boring."

**Figure 3** Resource parent post-trauma training opinions



Appropriate audience for training. All counties trained licensed resource parents, the majority of whom, either currently or in the recent past, had a child placed in their home. Trainers and resource parents agreed that this is the appropriate target audience for ARC Reflections. As one trainer said, "I think they get more out of it if they have children in their home. Because then you have a way to go home and practice it."

Caseworkers reinforced the implementation. Agencies offered a range of training to their staff, some more comprehensive than others (see "Implementation of ARC Reflections in North Carolina" above). Counties that provided more in-depth training for staff (Agency B, Agency D, and Agency E) generally reported a higher level of engagement in and support for ARC Reflections compared with the other counties. Agency E had the only agency that required caseworkers to check in (via telephone) with families every week following each training session. Some Agency E caseworkers stated that they were able to do this as a natural part of their work, and some resource parents appreciated the contact. Others felt it was slightly forced.

ARC Reflections taught useful skills and concepts. Trainers and resource parents reported that ARC Reflections taught practical skills and tools through the use of real-life examples, such as the case example of Olivia, mirroring exercises, the road map concept, homework, modeling and demonstrations, de-escalation skills, and icebreakers. (See ARC Reflections materials at <a href="http://www.aecf.org/blog/arc-reflections-trauma-training-for-foster-parents-and-caregivers/">http://www.aecf.org/blog/arc-reflections-trauma-training-for-foster-parents-and-caregivers/</a> for additional information on these curriculum activities.) Figure 4 lists the activities that staff and resource parents reported were most useful.

**Figure 4**Perceptions of most useful ARC Reflections activities, by role

#### Staff Resource parents PowerPoint slides PowerPoint slides Homework activities Homework activities Skills-based activities that had Discussion built into the trainings practical applications The case example of Olivia The case example of Olivia Examples of how to handle The toolbox for resource parents trauma-based behaviors The mirroring exercise The mirroring exercise The road map for visualization The road map for visualization The self-care component

Resource parents and child welfare staff in four counties (Agency A, Agency B, Agency C, and Agency D) also noted that the training increased resource parents' awareness and use of self-care techniques. Resource parents and child welfare staff in all counties reported gaining understanding of the importance of their own self-awareness and self-regulation. They learned that the child's behavior is not a personal attack, but a trauma-related response.

#### County characteristics aligned with and supported implementation.

Child welfare staff from Agency B, Agency D, and Agency E reported that the ARC Reflections model was aligned with agency goals and practice changes that were already underway. The training also met licensing requirements. As one county leader said, "I think it aligned with what the agency believed in anyway and where we were heading to try and change practice as a whole." There were several instances of county characteristics supporting implementation, which we highlight briefly here. Agency D has a small workforce, and staff have multiple responsibilities (such as trainer, caseworker, and resource parent licensor). Despite these constraints, county leaders were understanding and supportive of staff, and in turn staff were willing to put in the extra hours needed to implement ARC Reflections; Agency B had a well-developed understanding of implementation science and the need for systemic integration of ARC Reflections. They used this knowledge to build a staff training model to help support the implementation. Having a common initiative allowed for increased communication among participating counties, especially between the neighboring counties of Agency A and Agency D. The two counties have discussed the possibility of holding joint resource parent trainings in the future to maximize use of trainer and agency resources.

"I feel more confident in my ability.... You don't try to take things personal.... When I am taking it personal, I kind of step back and say, 'Well, remember, I'm not supposed to take this personal because it's not that she's personally attacking me, it's just because of her behaviors, right?""

- Resource parent

**Technical assistance-aided implementation.** Trainers and child welfare leaders reported that the financial and practical assistance from the Annie E. Casey Foundation TA consultants was very helpful, especially funding for child care and dinner and for "getting people together and organizing." As one child welfare staff member said, "There was child care provided ... for ... all the children that were impacted so that their families could come. It was a huge barrier that was removed." One county reported having a less positive experience with a TA consultant, though the challenges identified were related to the evaluation requirements (e.g., requests for documentation and administrative data), which the agency found burdensome.

Trainers and child welfare leaders reported that consultation sessions with developers were generally useful. For example, leaders and trainers from all child welfare agencies stated that the developers were responsive to questions and available to share their expertise. However, several participants reported that the calls were not "intended for us to get feedback," but rather for developers to ask questions about the implementation. The developers stated that some counties appeared to have less experience using consultation and suggested that having such experience would be helpful in maximizing the use of the developers' expertise.

#### Challenges of ARC Reflections Implementation in Child Welfare

"I think just in general it's hard for parents to commit to nine sessions—in the evenings and that sort of thing. I don't always know as a trainer if I'm at my best in the evening, and I don't know if families are at their best learning in the evening. I think that's one of those things that we struggle with too." —Trainer

The five child welfare agencies in North Carolina also encountered challenges during the implementation process. Key challenges are presented below.

Most counties had difficulty recruiting resource parents. Staff and resource parents attributed recruitment difficulties to other commitments in resource parents' lives and the nine-week training commitment. Agency A trainers thought the distance needed to travel to the training may have been problematic for resource parents; they noted that the location selected was not convenient for all resource parents. Another possible explanation for difficulty recruiting resource parents in Agency A and Agency B was that they had already participated in a trauma training prior to ARC Reflections, which may have reduced their level of interest in the topic. Staff in Agency A stated that they would have liked more time to plan and prepare for integrating ARC Reflections into their ongoing activities and felt rushed in implementing the training. They hypothesized this resulted in lower enrollment than anticipated.

The length of ARC Reflections training posed challenges. Trainers in several counties reported that the length of the training and the evening format was challenging for staff and resource parents. Agency D attempted to alleviate the burden on resource parents by holding a training every other week. The trainers reported that this approach had both benefits and drawbacks: The schedule was less burdensome, but resource parents tended to forget content from one session to the next. The number of sessions made it difficult for resource parents to participate in the entire training. Trainers in three counties (Agency B, Agency C, and Agency D) had difficulty deciding how to accommodate resource parents who missed sessions and felt they would have liked guidance on how to address this challenge. Agency D offered individual make-up sessions to resource parents who missed a class.

"We have ... six different major initiatives, and this just falls to the back burner." —Trainer

Staff in Agency B, Agency C, and Agency E found the task of adding training to their already busy schedules burdensome. They also had other initiatives that sometimes took precedence over ARC Reflections, such as the new parent and family engagement (PFE) initiative and the new automated record system.

Limited communication and lack of resources impeded implementation. In general, resource parents reported limited follow-up with their caseworkers after the training (other than those in Agency E). Some resource parents in Agency E found the weekly telephone contacts intrusive. Child welfare staff also mentioned lack of resources—such as adequate space and funding to pay for child care—as challenges to implementation. This was mitigated in part by assistance from the TA consultants. Finally, staff from one child welfare agency believed poor communication between caseworkers and leadership was an impediment to successful implementation of ARC Reflections.

# Does ARC Reflections increase resource parents' and caseworkers' knowledge of child trauma and trauma-informed care?

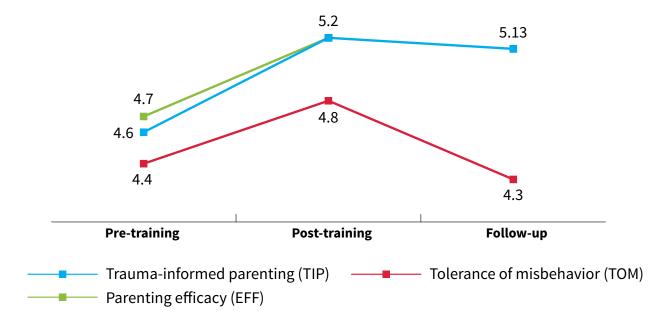
To explore whether resource parents and caseworkers increased their knowledge about trauma, we analyzed data from three sources: (1) attendance sheets; (2) pre-training, post-training, and follow-up surveys for resource parents; and (3) focus groups/interviews with implementation team members, trainers, caseworkers, TA consultants, developers, and resource parents. We first examined attendance as a proxy for training dosage. Average attendance rate varied across counties from 73 to 88 percent. The county with the lowest rate of attendance offered individual make-up sessions, and 9 out of 10 resource parents attended at least one of those sessions.

Resource parents had minimal prior training in trauma overall, with the least training in parents' own exposure to trauma and self-care (33 percent had no training and 45 percent had very little training) and the most training in child trauma (49 percent had some training and 10 percent had a lot of training). There were no significant differences by county. Agency A and Agency B had offered trauma-informed resource parent training previously, but resource parents did not report more exposure to trauma training compared with parents from other counties.

Resource parents' knowledge and beliefs related to child trauma. To assess resource parents' knowledge and beliefs related to child trauma, we compared their scores on the Resource Parent Knowledge and Believe Survey<sup>45</sup> on each of the three subscales: Trauma-Informed Parenting (TIP), Tolerance of Misbehavior (TOM), and Parenting Efficacy (EFF). Parents rated their agreement to statements on a five-point Likert scale (strongly disagree to strongly agree). From pre-training to post-training, resource parents from the five counties combined increased their skills in trauma-informed parenting, had more tolerance of misbehavior, and felt a greater sense of efficacy as parents. These changes were maintained from pre-training to follow-up.

There were several notable differences at the county level. Agency A did not maintain their gains from pre-training to follow-up. Agency B had significant gains from pre-training to post-training in TIP and in TOM from pre-training to follow-up. Both counties offered other trauma-training to their resource parents, and they began the training with higher scores on TIP compared with parents in other counties. Parents in Agency C maintained the gains they made from pre-training to follow-up and from post-training to follow-up in the TIP and EFF scales. Agency E had significantly lower scores in TOM at follow-up compared with post-training. See Figure 5 below for more details. See Appendix I for pre- to post-training scores and Appendix J for pre-training to follow-up scores.

**Figure 5** Changes in resource parents' knowledge and skills related to child trauma



Findings from focus groups with resource parents and staff indicated several positive trends related to ARC Reflections in knowledge and beliefs about child trauma, how it can impact a child's behavior, and how to manage their levels of stress related to these behaviors. Resource parents, caseworkers, and trainers from several counties discussed how ARC Reflections increased their understanding of child trauma. Specifically, they found the psychoeducation component useful. (This component describes the concept of fight or flight and the "trauma brain.") After completing the training, resource parents described themselves as "more knowledgeable" and "better equipped" to handle difficult situations. They also credited the training with teaching them the skills to view and respond "differently" to the child's behaviors. Additionally, resource parents attributed their improved ability to communicate with the child's therapist and advocate for their child's needs to the knowledge, insight, and terminology obtained from the ARC Reflections training. One resource parent commented, "The training does help you be a better advocate for the children in your home or school."

"Really remembering not to just react and to respond. That was big at our house because I'm bad to react and remembering just, 'Okay, let's think about what they're going through and what could be triggering this and looking at that." —Resource parent

Following the training, resource parents spoke about the importance of looking at the situation through the "lens" of the child. Resource parents and caseworkers alike reported that ARC Reflections explained the association between the child's behavior and their trauma experiences. One parent commented, "It showed me that even though he's young, as he grows up ... we may see even more behaviors come out as a result of what he experienced." One leadership team member described how the training created an awareness and understanding about the reasons behind the child's behaviors: "Those behaviors, there's something behind it.... You just see some of the things that shaped [people] and you know it's trauma." Finally, several resource parents talked about gaining insight into their own trauma experiences and how the information they received was applicable to themselves as well as to the children in their care.

Family protective factors. Resource parents completed the Protective Factors Scale<sup>46</sup>, which measures the presence or absence of protective factors. There are 20 items, which combine to form the following four subscales: family functioning/resiliency, social support, concrete support, and nurturing and attachment. Five items related to knowledge of child development are scored individually. Parents respond to statements on a seven-point Likert scale (never to always or strongly disagree to strongly agree). Overall, resource parents across counties showed significant improvements from pre-training to follow-up on two items: "Praise child when he/she behaves" and "My children and I are very close to each other." Resource parents in Agency E showed significant improvement on the "Nurturing and attachment" scale as well as the "Praise child when he/she behaves" item. See Appendix K for detailed scores by county and Appendix L for specific significant findings.

"I think ... taking care of myself is something that I forget to do. [ARC Reflections training] reinforced that I need to make sure I'm taking care of me so that I can take care of them." —Resource parent Managing caregiver stress. A number of resource parents reported that ARC Reflections training assisted them with developing self-awareness about working together as parenting partners and the importance of realizing when one partner needs to take a break. They spoke about "tag teaming" as a way of managing the stress. One resource parent commented that as a result of the training "I think we've done a better job at that, working as a team." Resource parents also appreciated the self-care component, which assisted them with managing their own stress levels. One caseworker provided an example of a resource parent who took a vacation by herself after the training. Other resource parents reported participating in yoga classes and utilizing respite care.

#### To what extent are child welfare agencies able to sustain ARC Reflections training?

To investigate the extent to which the counties plan to sustain ARC Reflections, we analyzed data from focus groups and interviews with child welfare staff and leadership and resource parents. Specifically, we focused on each counties' plan for the use of ARC Reflections in the future, including planned modifications and supports to improve training effectiveness.

Overwhelmingly, staff and resource parents reported that the training was helpful, interesting, enjoyable, beneficial, and imparted good information on how to care for children exposed to trauma. Trainers and leadership thought other groups could also benefit from training, including informal, unlicensed kinship families; group home staff; in-home workers; biological parents being reunified with their children; and adoptive parents.

Trainers and caseworkers who had an opportunity to provide input into the decision to implement ARC Reflections generally supported the continuation of ARC Reflections. To ensure success, however, staff thought a more integrated approach to training would be beneficial: Trainers and leadership in Agency B and Agency C recommended training all staff prior to training the resource parents and ensuring that they follow-up with resource parents during and after training.

"[ARC Reflections would be] very valuable training for a new employee ... new to child welfare and ... foster care and to be working directly with families and children."

—Caseworker

There were many suggestions for improving the staff training in order to sustain implementation, with county staff indicating the need for a detailed training that mirrors the materials covered in the resource parent training. Similar to leadership, most staff thought the training should be offered not just resource parent caseworkers but to all staff, including protective service caseworkers, supervisors, and permanency caseworkers. Staff and leadership thought ARC Reflections would be especially beneficial for new staff. Leadership in Agency B emphasized the need for a booster training to integrate ARC Reflections into their practice profile and supervision. They also suggested conducting observations of the staff as they work with resource parents. Trainers suggested a longer training, with more "hands-on" demonstrations.

Staff and resource parents had several suggestions for adapting the curriculum in order to sustain implementation, such as reducing the jargon (e.g., "lens," "arousal," "check yourself") by using simpler and

"I think one of the challenges for us was we like the training ... but we didn't feel it had a good 'supervision' [or] a coaching model with it. That's something that we continue to look at ... because we know that's key to sustaining this framework—is the coaching and supervision of the staff who are doing it." —Child welfare leader

less value-laden terminology (e.g., using "check-in," "check-up," or "check your energy level" instead of "check yourself"). Other suggested adaptations include finding times of day that are most convenient to resource parents (Agency D and Agency E), keeping groups small (Agency B, Agency D, and Agency E), offering the training to kinship caregivers (all counties), offering an online version of the training, having refresher or booster sessions, and offering ARC Reflections after TIPS-MAPP training.

Continuation of training in ARC Reflections. To explore the extent to which ARC Reflections was infused into agencies' training agendas, we interviewed agency leaders in September 2017 to inquire about trainings offered since the end of the pilot period as well as plans for future trainings. Agency B was the only county that offered training to staff and resource parents after June 2016 (the end of the pilot). In addition to foster care caseworkers, they trained resource parents, adoption caseworkers, and licensure caseworkers. However, three of the five counties (Agency B, Agency D, and Agency E) plan to offer ARC Reflections training to resource parents and staff: new staff (all three counties), boosters for existing staff (Agency B), and staff who work with kinship placements (Agency D). Agency A's leadership discussed holding ARC Reflections training in the future—either in a condensed format or in a hybrid version that incorporates elements of the Resource Parent Curriculum—but do not have any definite plans. Agency C does not have plans to offer ARC Reflections training to either staff or resource parents due to competing initiatives (PFE, among others) and wanting to see what the state mandates in terms of trauma training before investing more time and effort into ARC Reflections.

# Is ARC Reflections associated with improvements in placement stability and resource home retention?

To examine potential trends in placement stability associated with the implementation of ARC Reflections, we examined both resource home retention and children's placement disruptions. To increase the sample for analysis, we averaged data across the five counties, as individual county samples were quite small. See Appendix M for baseline and follow-up data.

First, we compared out-of-home placements and resource home retention for resource parents (and their children) who were trained with those who were not trained. We gathered data from counties prior to implementation in 2015 (baseline) and during and after implementation, from January 2016 through September 2017 (follow-up). To assess resource home retention, we tested the hypothesis that resource parents would be less likely to close their homes after they were trained in ARC Reflections because they would have more skills and tools to manage their children's behaviors and to take care of their own needs and the needs of their children. Specifically, we compared:

- Untrained homes at baseline (January to December 2015) and ARC Reflections-trained homes at follow-up (October 2016 through September 2017); and
- ARC Reflections-trained homes and untrained homes at follow-up (October 2016 through September 2017).

We used the follow-up period of October 2016 to September 2017 to allow for sufficient time following implementation for changes in practice to emerge. We examined the difference in percentage of resource homes closed for negative reasons (i.e., closed by resource parents or the child welfare agency for reasons other than adoption or guardianship) at these two points in time.

To investigate children's placement stability, we used the same comparisons as described above to analyze data on child exits from resource homes for negative reasons (i.e., aging out; transferring to another agency; running away; or moving to another resource home, group home, residential facility, or other institutional setting). We hypothesized that ARC Reflections-trained resource parents would be better able to manage difficult behaviors of children and that these children would be less likely to leave their resource homes for negative reasons.

**Resource home retention.** Few homes closed for negative reasons in the overall sample, and the number of ARC Reflectionstrained homes that closed was even smaller. Resource home retention was higher among ARC Reflections-trained homes at follow-up than for homes overall at baseline. This is indicated by the significantly smaller percentage of ARC Reflections-trained homes closed for negative reasons at follow-up than the percentage of untrained homes closed for negative reasons at baseline (2 percent vs. 16 percent, p = 0.016). However, at follow-up, only a slightly smaller percentage of ARC Reflections-trained homes closed due to negative reasons than untrained homes (2 percent vs. 3 percent, p = 0.785), which was not statistically significant. Given the small sample size, all findings on resource home retention should be interpreted with caution. See Table 3.

**Table 3**Percentage of homes closed for negative reasons, baseline to follow-up

	Resource Homes	Homes Closed for Negative Reasons	Significance		
Baseline to follow-up			p = 0.016		
Baseline	263	43 (16%)			
Follow-up: ARC Reflections-trained	42	1 (2%)			
Follow-up: ARC Reflections-ti	rained to other		p = 0.785		
Other	221	7 (3%)			
ARC Reflections-trained	42	1 (2%)			

**Placement stability.** During the same time period, few children exited homes for negative reasons overall, but even fewer children exited ARC Reflections-trained homes compared with children in untrained homes. A significantly smaller percentage of children exited ARC Reflections-trained homes for negative reasons after the implementation and follow-up periods than exited untrained homes for negative reasons at baseline, prior to training (7 percent vs. 43 percent, p < 0.000). In addition, a smaller percentage of children at follow-up exited ARC Reflections-trained homes compared with children exiting untrained homes (7 percent vs., 13 percent, p = 0.191), although the difference did not reach statistical significance. Again, given the small sample size—along with the fact that we could not link specific children to exits and did not have information on how many times a particular child exited a home—these results should be interpreted with caution and viewed as preliminary. See Table 4.

**Table 4**Percentage of exits from homes for negative reasons, baseline to follow-up

	Children in homes Children exiting for negative reasons		Significance
Baseline to follow-up			p < 0.000
Baseline	414	177 (43%)	
Follow-up: ARC Reflections-trained	42	3 (7%)	
Follow-up: ARC Reflections-trained to ot	her		p = 0.191
Other	545	70 (13%)	
ARC Reflections-trained	42	3 (7%)	

Resource parent and caseworker perceptions of placement stability. Resource parents, caseworkers, and trainers reported that the skills and tools learned in ARC Reflections gave resource parents a greater willingness to continue providing care for their children. As one trainer remarked, the resource parent "does attribute ARC Reflections to saving the placement." Resource parents learned that taking care of themselves could help stabilize the placement, as they would be more able to take care of their children. One resource parent commented, "Having the class, I think I look at it more now of making sure we knew we need to take care of ourselves.... And so now we try harder." One caseworker noted that resource parents who took the training seem "more patient." Several other caseworkers commented that resource parents who used a trauma lens learned in ARC Reflections were more able to tolerate difficult behavior in children. Most resource parents reported that having a connection with other resource parents in the training also helped stabilize their placements, as it provided support in stressful times. As one resource parent said, "I think ... one of the big things about connection within this group, (is) to be able to pick up the phone and ... feel like they're a resource."

"I've seen tremendous, positive change with [resource parent's name] and the stability of the placement that they have."—Caseworker

#### SUMMARY AND IMPLICATIONS

The results of Child Trends' evaluation of ARC Reflections in North Carolina indicate that the training was implemented effectively, was well-received by child welfare leaders, staff, and resource parents, and was associated with increases in resource parents' knowledge and skills related to caring for children exposed to trauma. In addition, a preliminary exploration of child welfare outcomes indicates that ARC Reflections may support resource home retention and children's placement stability. In sum, we found:

- ARC Reflections was implemented with high fidelity. Trainers followed the format of the training 90 to 100 percent of the time (except in one county, where trainers elected to reduce the use of icebreakers after the first few sessions).
- Resource parents found the training interesting, useful, and practical. A high percentage of resource parents (73 to 99 percent) agreed the training was interesting and balanced, presenters were clear, and activities were helpful. In focus groups, they reported learning useful and practical tools and approaches to caring for children exposed to trauma.
- Resource parents gained knowledge and skills related to child trauma. Resource parents' scores on the Resource Parent Knowledge and Beliefs Scale45 increased significantly from pre- to post-training, showing improvements in trauma-informed parenting, tolerance of children's misbehavior, and parenting efficacy. These gains were maintained at follow-up three months after the implementation period ended.
- Family protective factors increased. Resource parents reported a significant increase in praising children when they behaved well and in feelings of closeness between resource parent and child. There was a nonsignificant but statistical trend toward improvements in family functioning and resiliency, nurturing and attachment, and knowledge of what to do as a parent.
- Fewer trained resource homes closed compared with untrained homes. The percentage of resource homes with resource parents trained in ARC Reflections that closed for negative reasons (i.e., reasons other than adoption or guardianship) as of three months after the implementation period was significantly smaller than the percentage of homes closed for negative reasons during the year prior to implementing ARC Reflections (2 percent vs. 16 percent).
- Fewer children exited trained homes compared with children in untrained homes. A significantly smaller percentage of children exited ARC Reflections-trained homes for negative reasons (i.e., move to another placement, group setting, or other institutional care; transferring to another agency; running away) compared with children who exited homes the year prior to implementation (7 percent vs. 43 percent). This finding—coupled with the finding on resource home closures—should be viewed with caution, as it was an exploratory analysis with a small sample. However, staff and resource parents also observed greater placement stability in ARC Reflections-trained homes.
- Several counties plan to continue offering ARC Reflections. Three of the five counties plan to offer ARC Reflections training for resource parents beyond the pilot period. They will also offer the ARC Reflections training for new child welfare staff. One county plans to provide booster trainings for existing staff, and another county will offer trainings for staff who work with unlicensed kinship caregivers. Adequate resources (e.g., financial, number of trained staff), leadership support, and "buy-in" from staff appear to be factors that support sustainability of the training.

We also identified several challenges and lessons learned:

- A more integrated approach to training would further support a trauma-informed system. Child welfare staff and leaders suggested that training all staff and resource parents would facilitate shared knowledge of how to understand and address child trauma.
- Additional support could enhance training outcomes. Trainers and child welfare leaders indicated that they would benefit
  from additional instruction, supervision, and coaching, such as more guidance on training caseworkers, booster sessions,
  and follow-up with resource parents during and after training. Caseworker training was the least developed component of
  the ARC Reflections curriculum, and all counties expressed the desire for more guidance and direction on how and when to
  train caseworkers. These types of support may allow for more consistent and higher quality integration of ARC Reflections and
  trauma-informed care into child welfare practice.
- Careful selection of trainers is important. Although they were generally satisfied with trainers, child welfare staff reported that successful implementation required careful selection of trainers, prioritizing high-quality trainers with prior training experience. One county also suggested including a resource parent as a co-trainer, a practice utilized in several other trauma training initiatives in child welfare.
- Limited time and resources in child welfare agencies impeded sustainability. Child welfare staff and several resource parents
  reported that the length and duration of the training was a barrier to sustaining ARC Reflections given other commitments
  and concurrent initiatives. In addition, some agencies did not have the financial resources to cover costs such as child care
  and food for resource parents during training sessions, which were important to resource parent attendance and engagement.
  Given many competing priorities, successful implementation of ARC Reflections requires child welfare agencies to give high
  priority to trauma training.

#### Limitations

There are several limitations of the evaluation that warrant attention. First, ARC Reflections implementation began just three months prior to the evaluation period. Thus, we were limited in the number of trainings we could observe and the data we were able to gather early in the implementation process. Second, the response rate was low on resource parent follow-up surveys. This was not unexpected, given that the training was complete and surveys were emailed; unfortunately, follow-up email and telephone reminders did little to improve the response rate. Third, child welfare administrative data were provided in aggregate, which limited detailed analysis. For example, we were not able to link specific children with specific trained or untrained homes, and we were not able to look at how many exits were for the same child out of the same home. Finally, because this is an implementation study and did not utilize a randomized control group, the results do not allow us to attribute findings directly to ARC Reflections.

#### **Implications**

Several implications for the field emerge from the findings. Here, we present recommendations for future training:

- Ensure support from leadership. Consult with staff prior to implementing a new curriculum such as ARC Reflections, which requires significant commitment in terms of staff time and resources. Allow staff to have input into key decisions, such as when to hold the classes, who should be invited, and who will take on the role of trainer. Offer ongoing support and advice to maintain the implementation.
- Provide training and coaching for staff. Provide comprehensive training to staff, so that they have the same knowledge as, and can support, the resource parents. Offer booster trainings to staff to maintain their knowledge base. Build in coaching for staff.
- Offer learning supports for resource parents. Make the training more accessible for resource parents in terms of location, time of day, or day of the week, and by providing dinner and child care. Build in ways for caseworkers to connect with resource parents that are supportive and not forced, such as during convenient times for the parents or when needed. Offer booster sessions for resource parents, possibly online, so they can maintain the gains made during training.

- Take a systemic approach. Make the training mandatory for resource parent licensure. Offer the training annually, or more often depending on the size of the resource parent pool. Make sure all levels of staff are trained in ARC Reflections. Integrate the ARC Reflections training into the array of trainings, so that it complements other programs and does not compete or overlap with other trainings. Consider inviting external partners to participate in ARC Reflections trainings, or offer training to their staff and resource parents at their facility.
- Use data to promote continuous improvement. Support the practice by reviewing data to show if ARC Reflections is associated with changes in placement stability, resource home retention, and child well-being. Provide data to the state and other funders to solicit additional support, if appropriate. Share data with staff during unit meetings so they see the benefits of the training. Seek comments from staff regarding changes they observe in resource parent/child interactions as well as from resource parents regarding changes they observe in their own ability to parent and the behavior of their children.

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### **APPENDICES**



# **Appendix A**

#### **Census data information by county**

	Agency A		Agency B		Agency C		Agency D		Agency E	
	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%
Total Population	247,336		154,610		97,178		59,170		79,578	
Race									,	
Non-Hispanic white	207,380	83.8	119,091	77.0	71,546	73.6	55,244	93.4	67,925	85.4
Non-Hispanic black/ African American	15,307	6.19	13,032	8.43	20,064	20.6	521	0.88	4,008	5.04
Hispanic	15,720	6.36	13,537	8.76	2,997	3.08	2,109	3.56	5,599	7.04
Other	8,929	3.61	8,950	5.79	2,571	2.65	1,296	2.19	2,046	2.57
Income										
Median household income	\$45,167		\$44,376		\$39,453		\$42,257		\$49,215	
Families with income below the poverty level		11.0		11.6		15.7		13.8		10.9
Families, with related children, with income below the poverty level		19.7		19.6		25.2		25.9		18.9

# **Appendix B**

#### Resource parent training requirements (n = 6)

	n	%
Groups required to attend the ARC training		
Licensed foster parents	4	66.7
Licensed kinship caregivers	3	50.0
Groups included (but not required) in the ARC training		
Licensed foster parents	6	100.0
Licensed kinship caregivers	2	33.3
Foster parent training syllabus offered		
Local county has a calendar of trainings offered regularly	6	100.0
Local county has other trainings focused on trauma	6	100.0
Local county has set criteria for required trainings	4	66.7
Groups for whom training completion is tracked		
Licensed foster parents	4	66.7
Licensed kinship caregivers	4	66.7
Groups for whom retention rates are tracked		
Licensed foster parents	3	50
Licensed kinship caregivers	2	33.3

# **Appendix C**

#### **Training participants, by county**

County	# of Sessions	Participants
Caseworker/s	staff training	
Agency A	1	Caseworkers and supervisors
Agency B	1	Caseworkers
Agency C	1	Foster parent and child protective caseworkers
Agency D	1	Caseworkers
Agency E	1	Foster parent and permanency caseworkers; session was 9 weeks long
Agency/all st	aff kickoff	
Agency A	1	Combined with caseworker training
Agency B	1	Combined with caseworker training
Agency C	1	Community partners
Agency D	1	Combined with caseworker training
Agency E	2	All staff and foster parents, children, and community partners
Foster paren	t training	
Agency A	1	Foster parents
Agency B	2	Foster parents
Agency C	1	Mostly foster parents and some kin
Agency D	1	New foster parents
Agency E	1	All licensed foster parents and licensed kin parents
Other meetin	igs	
Agency A	Ad hoc, trainers met weekly	Training facilitators, project coordinators, and program managers.
Agency B	Weekly	Trainers
Agency C	Monthly through June, then ad hoc	Parent, administrators, agency director, community members, trainers
Agency D	Ad hoc	Training facilitator, project coordinator, program manager
Agency E	Monthly through June, then ad hoc	Parent, administrative staff, and community partners

#### **Appendix D**

#### Questions posed to focus group participants included:

- How did the agency decide to implement ARC Reflections?
- 2. How well do you think the ARC Reflections resource parent training is working at your agency?
- 3. How, if at all, has this agency used information from the ARC Reflections training?
- 4. What, if any, other trauma-informed curricula have been used in this agency?
- 5. Were there any changes or adjustments that your agency made to ARC Reflections trainings, including the resource parent training and the staff training?
- 6. What were your overall impressions of the ARC Reflections training for staff?
- 7. What were your overall impressions of the ARC Reflections training for resource parents?
- 8. How effective were the ARC Reflections trainings, including the staff training and training of trainers?
- How helpful was the training and support you received from the ARC Reflections developers?
- 10. How helpful was the support offered by AECF staff in implementing ARC Reflections in your agency?
- 11. What challenges have you encountered during the implementation of ARC Reflections in your agency?
- 12. What factors, if any, have helped facilitate the implementation of ARC Reflections in your agency?
- 13. Would you like to see the agency continue to use ARC Reflections?
- 14. For those of you who would like to see ARC Reflections continue, what do you think would be needed for it to succeed at your agency?

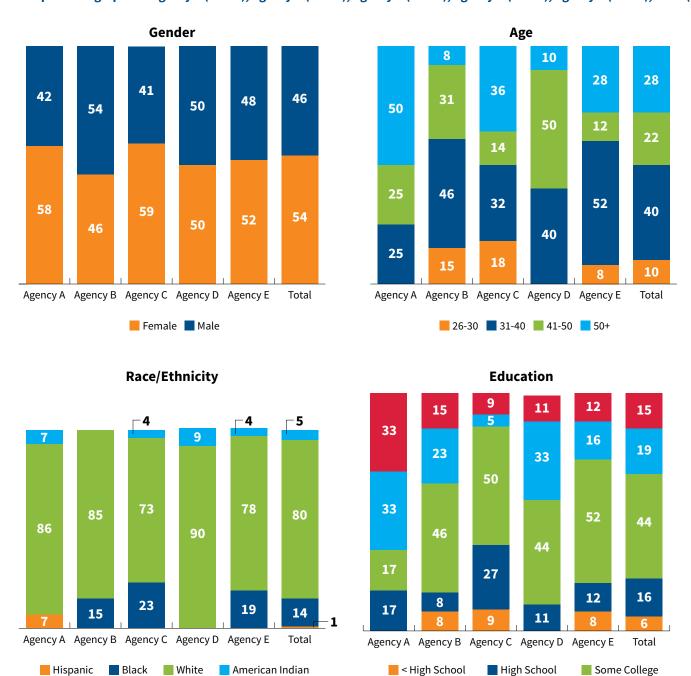
# **Appendix E**

#### **Evaluation measures**

Source	Construct	Measure	Time point(s)
Resource parents	'	'	
	Demographics	Project developed survey	Pre-training
	Prior trauma training	Project developed survey	Pre-training
	Knowledge and beliefs about child trauma	Resource Parent Knowledge and Beliefs Survey	Pre-training; follow-up (3 months)
	Family protective factors	Protective Factors Survey	Pre-training; follow-up (3 months)
	Perceptions of ARC Reflections training and approach	Focus groups	Post-training; follow-up
	Use of ARC Reflections approach and tools	Focus groups	Post-training; follow-up (3 months)
	Foster home retention	Child welfare administrative data	Pre-implementation; during implementation; post-implementation
	Sustainability	Focus groups	Post-training; follow-up
Child welfare staff			
	Fidelity	Focus groups	Post-training; follow-up
	Perceptions of ARC Reflections training and approach	Focus groups	Post-training; follow-up
	Sustainability	Focus groups	Post-training; follow-up
ARC trainers	_		
	Fidelity	Fidelity checklist	During implementation
	Perceptions of ARC Reflections training and approach	Focus groups	Post-training; follow-up
	Sustainability	Key informant interviews	Post-training; follow-up
ARC developers	,		
	Fidelity	Key informant interviews	Post-training; follow-up
	Sustainability	Key informant interviews	Post-training; follow-up
Children in foster ca	re		
	Placement stability	Child welfare administrative data	Pre-implementation; during implementation; post-implementation

### **Appendix F**

Sample Demographics: Agency A (n = 12); Agency B (n = 13); Agency C (n = 22); Agency D (n = 10); Agency E (n = 25); Total (n = 82)



Bachelors

>= Masters

#### Resource parent demographics (n = 82)

Characteristic	Frequency	Percent
Gender	n = 82	
Female	44	53.7
Male	38	46.3
Age	n = 82	
26-30	8	9.8
31-40	33	40.2
41-50	18	22.0
50+	23	28.0
Race/Ethnicity	n = 86	
Hispanic	1	1.2
Black	12	14.0
White	69	80.2
American Indian	4	4.7
Education	n = 81	
Less than high school	5	6.2
High school	13	16.0
Some college	36	44.4
Bachelors	15	18.5
Masters	11	13.6
Doctorate	1	1.2

	A٤	gency A	Ag	gency B	Age	ency C	Ag	ency D	Age	ency E	To	otal
Gender	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%
Female	7	58.3	6	46.2	13	59.1	5	50.0	13	52	44	53.7
Male	5	41.7	7	53.8	9	40.9	5	50.0	12	48	38	46.3
Total	12	100	13	100	22	100	10	12.2	25	100	82	100

	Agency A		A	Agency B		Agency C		Agency D		Agency E		Total	
Age	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	
26-30	-	-	2	15.4	4	18.2	-	-	2	8.0	8	9.8	
31-40	3	25.0	6	46.2	7	31.8	4	40.0	13	52.0	33	40.2	
41-50	3	25.0	4	30.8	3	13.6	5	50.0	3	12.0	18	22.0	
50+	6	50.0	1	7.7	8	36.4	1	10.0	7	28.0	23	28.0	
Total	12	100	13	100	22	100	10	100	25	100	82	100	

	Agency A		Age	Agency B		Agency C		Agency D		Agency E		Total	
Race/Ethnicity		%	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	
Hispanic	1	7.1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	1.2	
Black	-	-	2	15.4	5	23.0	-	-	5	18.5	12	14.0	
White	12	86.0	11	84.6	16	73.0	9	90	21	78.0	69	80.2	
American Indian	1	7.1	-	-	1	4.0	1	10	1	3.7	4	4.7	
Total	14	100	13	100	22	100	10	100	27	100	86	100	

	Agen	су А	Ager	Agency B		Agency C		Agency D		ncy E	Total	
Education	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%
< High school	-	-	1	7.7	2	9.1	-	-	2	8.0	5	6.2
High school	2	16.7	1	7.7	6	27.3	1	11.1	3	12.0	13	16.0
Some college	2	16.7	6	46.2	11	50.0	4	44.4	13	52.0	36	44.4
Bachelors	4	33.3	3	23.1	1	4.5	3	33.3	4	16.0	15	18.5
Masters	3	25.0	2	15.4	2	9.1	1	11.1	3	12.0	11	13.6
Doctorate	1	8.3	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	1.2
Total	12	100	13	100	22	100	9	100	25	100	81	100

#### **Child demographics**

	Pre-tra (n =			p survey : 23)
	n	Percent	n	Percent
Gender	n = 188		n = 75	
Female	106	56.4	38	50.7
Male	81	43.1	26	49.3
Age	M = 6.0		M = 9.2	
Relationship				
Birth parent	10	9.3	10	9.3
Adoptive parent	27	25.2	10	9.3
Grandparent	Grandparent 6		2	1.9
Foster parent	51	47.7	19	17.8

# **Appendix G**

**Fidelity Checklist** 

**Session One: Understanding Trauma** 

<u>Did you complete the following:</u>

(If NO, µ	olease comment)		Comments
	Icebreaker	Yes	No
	Opening Check Yourself	Yes	No
	Report Back	Yes	No
	Self-Reflection	Yes	No
	Take-Home	Yes	No
	Closing Check Yourself	Yes	No
Check a	ıll topics covered during this sessio	<u>n:</u>	
	Definition of trauma, including ex <i>Notes:</i>	ploration	n of potentially traumatic experiences
	Impact of trauma on developmen Notes:	it	
	Impact of trauma on child's view Notes:	of self, ot	hers, and relationships
	Impact of trauma on child's sense Notes:	of dang	er
	Trauma responses and survival <i>Notes:</i>		

# **Reflections Curriculum Feedback Session One**

The following questions will help us to continue to refine the Reflections Curriculum. Please answer these questions based on your experience with the group <u>today</u>:

What aspect(s) of today's group did you think was most useful for your participants?
Did any content or activity seem to not resonate with your group? Please describe.
Did any content feel redundant to other training offered by your county / office? Please explain.
Did you choose to skip any content or elements? If yes, and not captured by your responses on page 1, please indicate which items/topics, and why they were omitted.
Did you choose to add any additional content or elements not originally included? If yes, please briefly describe what you added and why.

# **Appendix H**

#### Core elements of curriculum with completion frequencies

	Yes		No		Missing/Not /	Applicable
	n	%	n	%	n	%
Icebreaker	53	91.38	4	6.90	1	1.72
Opening check	54	93.10	3	5.17	1	1.72
Review	50	86.21	1	1.72	7	12.07
Report back	54	93.10	1	1.72	3	5.17
Self-reflection	53	91.38	3	5.17	2	3.45
Take home	55	94.83	1	1.72	2	3.45
Closing check	46	79.31	9	15.52	3	5.17
Topic 1*	56	96.55	1	1.72	1	1.72
Topic 2	56	96.55	1	1.72	1	1.72
Topic 3	56	96.55	1	1.72	1	1.72
Topic 4	56	96.55	0	0.00	2	3.45
Topic 5	37	63.79	0	0.00	21	35.21
Topic 6	6	10.34	0	0.00	52	89.61

<sup>\*</sup>The topics varied for each session and were related to the curriculum for that session. Appendix G has examples of topics for Session One.

# **Appendix I**

#### Changes in resource parents' knowledge and skills related to child trauma pre- to post-training

County	Pre-training	Post-training	95% CI for Mean Difference	t	df
All Counties	n = 78	n = 74			
TIP	4.6 (0.5)	5.2 (0.5) PPP	(-0.74, -0.49)	-10.05	47
ТОМ	4.4 (0.8)	4.8 (0.7) PPP	(-0.65, -0.29)	-5.28	57
EFF	4.7 (0.7)	5.2 (0.5) PPP	(-71,-0.40)	-7.21	55
Agency A	n = 12	n = 10			
TIP 4.9 (0.5) 5.5 (0.4)PPP		(-0.83, -0.33)	-5.59	6	
TOM 4.5 (0.8) 5.0 (0.5) PP		(-0.98, -0.22)	-3.58	9	
EFF	4.8 (0.5)	5.5 (0.4) PPP	(-1.10, -0.38)	-4.69	9
Agency B	n = 13	n =12			
TIP	4.8 (0.4)	5.2 (0.5) PP	(-0.71, -0.16)	-3.77	7
TOM	4.3 (0.6)	4.6 (0.6)	(-0.71, 0.39)	69	11
EFF	4.9 (0.4)	5.2 (.51)	(59, -0.86)	-1.67	10
Agency C	n = 22	n = 19			
TIP	4.6 (0.6)	5.1 (0.5) PPP	(-0.79, -0.35)	-5.78	9
ТОМ	4.5 (0.8)	4.7 (0.9) P	(-0.78, 0.03)	-2.05	11
EFF	4.9 (0.7)	5.3 (0.6) PPP	(-60, -0.23)	-5.04	10
Agency D	n = 10	n = 9			
TIP	4.4 (0.5)	5.2 (0.6) PP	(-1.21, -0.40)	-4.55	8
ТОМ	3.9 (1.0)	4.8 (0.9) PP	(-1.42, -0.25)	-3.29	8
EFF			(-1.50, -0.10)	-2.71	7
Agency E n = 21 n = 24					
TIP	TIP 4.5 (0.5) 5.0 (0.4) PPP		(-0.93, -0.34)	-4.62	13
ТОМ	TOM 4.4 (0.7) 4.8 (0.6) PP		(-0.76, -0.20)	-3.71	14
EFF	EFF 4.6 (0.7) 5.2 (0.5) PPP		(94, -0.29)	-4.00	15

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>P</sup> Significantly different from pre-training to post-training (P: p < .09, PP: p < .05, PPP:  $p \leq .001$ )

# **Appendix J**

Changes in resource parents' knowledge and skills related to child trauma pre-training to follow-up\*

County	Pre-training	Follow-up	95% CI for Mean Difference	t	df
All Counties	n = 78	n = 30			
TIP	4.6 (0.5)	5.1 (0.5) FFF	(-0.76, -0.42)	-7.28	18
ТОМ	4.4 (0.8)	4.3 (0.9) FF	(-0.63, -0.23)	-2.26	19
EFF	4.7 (0.7)	5.1 (0.6) FFF	(-0.66, -0.32)	-5.93	19
Agency A	n = 12	n = 4			
TIP	4.9 (0.5)	5.1 (0.7)			•
ТОМ	4.5 (0.8)	4.3 (1.3)			•
EFF	4.8 (0.5)	5.1 (0.2)		•	•
Agency B	n = 13	n = 5			
TIP	4.8 (0.4)	5.3 (0.5)	(-0.64, 0.09)	-2.09	4
ТОМ	4.3 (0.6)	4.5 (0.5) <sup>FF</sup>	(-0.79, -0.11)	-3.67	4
EFF	4.9 (0.4)	5.3 (0.4)	(-0.65, 0.17)	-1.63	4
Agency C	n = 22	n = 8			
TIP	4.6 (0.6)	5.3 (0.6) FFF,II	(-0.59, -8.97)	-8.97	5
ТОМ	4.5 (0.8)	4.6 (0.9) <sup>,II</sup>	(-0.35, -1.43)	-1.43	6
EFF	4.9 (0.7)	5.2 (0.7) FFF	(-2.46, -4.15)	-4.15	6
Agency D	n = 10	n = 0			
TIP	4.4 (0.5)		•	•	•
ТОМ	3.9 (1.0)			•	•
EFF	4.1 (1.1)		•		•
Agency E	n = 21	n = 12			
TIP	4.5 (0.5)	5.0 (0.4) <sup>FF</sup>	(-0.88, -0.25)	-4.35	6
ТОМ	4.4 (0.7)	3.9 (0.8) FF, ,II	(-0.30 -0.37)	0.26	6
EFF	4.6 (0.7)	5.0 (0.6) FF	(-0.92, -0.23)	-4.05	6

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>F</sup> Significantly different from pre-training to follow-up (FF: p < .05, FFF:  $p \leq .001$ )

Significantly different from post-training to follow-up (II: p < .05)

<sup>\*</sup>Missing data is a result of too few follow-up numbers to produce any results

# **Appendix K**

#### Descriptive Statistics on protective factors at pre-training and follow-up

Mean scores in protective factors at pre-training and follow-up

Subscales	Age	ency B	Age	ncy C	Age	ency E	Total		
Item	Pre- training M (SD) n=12	Follow-up M (SD) n=5	Pre- training M (SD) n=68	Follow-up M (SD) n=68	Pre- training M (SD) n=24	Follow-up M (SD) n=12	Pre- training M (SD) n=68	Follow-up M (SD) n=28	
Family functioning/	6.1	6.3	6.0	6.0	5.8	5.7	6.0	6.0*	
resiliency	(0.8)	(0.8)	(0.9)	(0.9)	(0.8)	(0.6)	(0.9)	(0.8)	
Social Support	6.4	6.1*	6.4	6.4	6.1	6.1	6.4	6.4	
	(0.5)	(0.6)	(0.8)	(0.8)	(1.0)	(0.7)	(0.8)	(0.6)	
Concrete Support	6.1 4.3 (2.5)		5.6 (1.6)	5.6 (1.6)	5.8 (1.6)	6.0 (2.0)	5.6 (1.6)	5.8 (2.1)	
Nurturing and attachment	6.4	6.5	6.2	6.2	5.9	6.1**	6.2	6.2*	
	(0.9)	(0.6)	(0.8)	(0.8)	(0.9)	(0.5)	(0.8)	(0.7)	
My children and I are very close	6.5 (1.0)	6.6 (0.5)	6.32 (0.9)	6.32 (0.9)	5.96 (1.1)	6.33** (0.5)	6.32 (0.9)	6.46** (0.6)	
Child development/know	ledge								
Know what to do as a parent	5.8	3.5	5.0	5.0	5.5	6.3	5.0	4.5*	
	(1.5)	(1.3)	(1.8)	(1.8)	(1.2)	(1.5)	(1.8)	(2.1)	
Know how to help my child learn	6.3	6.0	6.2	6.2	6.1	6.3	6.2	6.3	
	(0.7)	(0.0)	(0.9)	(0.9)	(0.7)	(0.5)	(0.9)	(0.5)	
Child's misbehavior is not to upset me	6.0	4.5	5.4	5.4	5.5	7.0	5.4	5.5	
	(1.4)	(2.0)	(1.5)	(1.5)	(1.2)	(0.0)	(1.5)	(1.8)	
Praise child when he/	6.0	6.0	6.1	6.1	6.0	6.1**	6.1	6.2**	
she behaves well	(0.8)	(0.7)	(0.9)	(0.9)	(0.7)	(0.8)	(0.9)	(0.8)	
Don't lose control when disciplining	6.5	5.2	6.2	6.2	6.5	6.4	6.2	6.3	
	(0.7)	(2.4)	(1.0)	(1.0)	(0.7)	(0.7)	(1.0)	(1.0)	

Significance: \*\*p < .05; \* p < .09

Standard deviations are presented in parentheses

Agency A did not use the PFS in the pre-test (the county began before IRB approval)

No Agency D resource parents completed a PFS follow-up survey.

Note: M = Mean. SD = Standard Deviation

# **Appendix L**

#### Data on resource home retention and placement stability

	Baseline: January-December 2015					Follo	ow-up: Octo	ober 2016–9	September 2	2017
	Agency A	Agency B	Agency C	Agency D	Agency E	Agency A	Agency B	Agency C	Agency D	Agency E
Number of active resource homes	81	67	66	11	38	85	59	71	22	25
Number of active ARC Reflections homes						4	11	8	5	14
Number of homes closed	16	31	19	2	7	7	10	19	1	1
Homes closed because resource parents adopted child	3	15	10	0	5	4	6	3	0	1
Homes closed due to resource parent decision	13	11	10	1	2	2	2	3	0	0
Home closed due to agency decision	0	5	0	1	0	0	1	0	0	0
% Homes closed because resource parents adopted child	19%	48%	53%	0%	71%	65%	62%	16%	33%	100%
% Homes closed due to resource parent decision (not adoption)	81%	35%	53%	50%	29%	31%	23%	13%	33%	0%
% Homes closed due to agency decision (not adoption)	0%	16%	0%	50%	0%	4%	13%	1%	33%	0%
Number of ARC Reflections homes						1	1	1	1	0
Homes closed because resource parents adopted child						0	1	0	0	0
Homes closed due to resource parent decision						0	1	1	0	0
Home closed due to agency decision						0	0	0	0	0
% Homes closed because resource parents adopted child						50%	60%	0%	50%	0%
% Homes closed due to resource parent decision (not adoption)						50%	40%	100%	50%	0%
% Homes closed due to agency decision (not adoption)						0%	0%	0%	0%	0%
Number of children placed in homes							194	34	25	53
Children in resource homes first day of period	151		178	15	70	166	148	208	24	47
Children who were placed in a resource home	•	•		•	•	53	48	23	6	15
Children who exited a resource home during the period	217		103	3	30	65	46	14	4	11
Children in resource homes on last day of period						169	159	234	21	49

		Baseline: Ja	anuary-Dec	ember 2015	;	Follo	ow-up: Octo	ber 2016–9	September 2	2017
	Agency A	Agency B	Agency C	Agency D	Agency E	Agency A	Agency B	Agency C	Agency D	Agency E
For children who exited, reasons for exit:										
Exited to reunification	25		26	1	5	9	8	9	1	4
Exited to adoption or guardianship	6		17	0	6	18	12	1	1	1
Exited other negative reasons	14		19	0	3	7	4	0	0	1
Moved to another RH (ARC Reflections or other home)	103		1	2	4	28	13	0	0	0
Moved to a relative home	40		40	0	10	11	5	3	1	3
Moved to congregate care	29		0	0	2	11	9	1	1	0
% Exited to reunification	12%		25%	33%	17%	14%	17%	62%	25%	36%
% Exited to adoption or guardianship	3%		17%	0%	20%	28%	26%	10%	19%	12%
% Exited other negative reasons	6%		18%	0%	10%	10%	9%	2%	6%	12%
% Moved to another resource home	47%		1%	67%	13%	43%	28%	0%	6%	2%
% Moved to a relative home	18%		39%	0%	33%	17%	11%	21%	13%	29%
% Moved to congregate care	13%		0%	0%	7%	16%	19%	5%	13%	2%