Measure Twice, Cut Once: Using the Major Outcomes Report to Unlock New Knowledge and Action

Jennifer Haight
Sara Feldman
Center for State Child Welfare Data
Chapin Hall at the University of Chicago
Agenda

✓ Major Outcomes Report: Overview and contents

✓ The benefits of using the Major Outcomes Report to fuel the process of improvement:
  – Build your working knowledge: know what’s typical
  – Identify obvious opportunities for improvement
  – Access and use the resources of the Data Center to build capacity for ongoing inquiry

✓ Recap and next steps
The Major Outcomes Report: Overview

A report that asks and answers a set of mission-critical questions about outcomes for children in foster care:

- The flow of children in and out of care (admissions & exits)
- Length of Stay (Duration)
- Permanency
- Placement Stability
- Reentry
The Major Outcomes Report: Overview

A report that reflects a commitment to a set of priority concepts in measurement:

- State your question first
- Know the population from which you are measuring
- (Almost always) use entry cohorts to answer general questions about system characteristics or outcomes
- Stratify: identify diagnostically relevant groups
- Likelihood or probability: Using the past to predict the future
Major Outcomes Report: Contents

**Preface:** Technical detail about the FCDA and organization of the workbook.

**Tables:** Each numbered tab answers a set of questions pertaining to the topic noted. Outcomes are provided at the state level and for the relevant administrative entities for the last five fiscal years.

**Measurement notes:** Detail about the questions answered in each tab, as well as the methods for answering them.
### Major Outcomes Report: Measurement Notes

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Tab</th>
<th>Table Title</th>
<th>Questions Answered</th>
<th>Denominator / Population</th>
<th>Numerator</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>3. Permanency</td>
<td>Cumulative exits to permanency (adoption, reunification, exit to relative), by child age at entry</td>
<td>Of all children entering foster care for the first time, what percent exited to permanency within 6 months?</td>
<td>First admissions to foster care during the calendar year</td>
<td>First admissions who exited to permanency within 6 months</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Of all children entering foster care for the first time, what percent exited to permanency within 1 year?</td>
<td>First admissions who exited to permanency within 1 year</td>
<td>First admissions who exited to permanency within 1 year</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Of all children entering foster care for the first time, what percent exited to permanency within 2 years?</td>
<td>First admissions who exited to permanency within 2 years</td>
<td>First admissions who exited to permanency within 2 years</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Of all children entering foster care for the first time, what percent exited to permanency within 3 years?</td>
<td>First admissions who exited to permanency within 3 years</td>
<td>First admissions who exited to permanency within 3 years</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Of all children entering foster care for the first time, what percent exited to permanency within 4 years?</td>
<td>First admissions who exited to permanency within 4 years</td>
<td>First admissions who exited to permanency within 4 years</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Of all children entering foster care for the first time, what percent exited to permanency within 5 years?</td>
<td>First admissions who exited to permanency within 5 years</td>
<td>First admissions who exited to permanency within 5 years</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Does the cumulative probability of exit to permanency vary by child age at entry?</td>
<td>Same as above, stratified by the child's age at entry</td>
<td>Same as above, stratified by the child's age at entry</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Moves</td>
<td>Conditional probability of initial move (3-month intervals), by first placement</td>
<td>Of all children entering foster care for the first time, what percent experienced an initial placement move in the first three months of care?</td>
<td>First admissions to foster care who were in care at the start of the interval and had experienced an initial placement move during the interval</td>
<td>First admissions who experienced an initial placement move during the interval</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Benefit #1: Knowing what’s typical over time

In this system, about 40 percent of children exit to permanency within one year of entry.

- The Major Outcomes Report graph depicts a relatively flat line; this seems typical.
- Note the table: we don’t have all of the information for 2016, but given the past, what seems likely? What could you reasonably predict for 2016? For 2017?
- How might this help you structure an improvement goal?
Benefit #1: Knowing what’s typical about variation across administrative entities

Path to permanency (first admissions) for two different regions within the same system:

- In the red region, over 25 percent of children exit to permanency within six months of entry – and that path reaches 60 percent within three years, and then flattens.

- In the blue region, a much smaller proportion of the cohort exits quickly. We see the same steady increase, albeit at a slower pace. Ultimately, a greater proportion of children from the blue region achieve permanency: over 70 percent within 5 years.

- What kinds of questions could this raise?
Benefit #1: Knowing what’s typical within diagnostically relevant groups

- Younger children, especially infants, typically have longer durations in care.
  - In fact, enough time has not elapsed for us to observe the median duration of the younger children who were admitted to foster care in 2016.

- Teenagers generally have the shortest duration in care.

- In this system, most children under 13 years of age at entry will remain in foster care for 12 months or more.
Benefit #2: Identify the obvious targets for improvement

- Across both initial placement types, the probability of a child experiencing their initial move is highest in the first 3 months of placement.
- It is almost twice as high, though, for children initially placed in non-kinship homes.
- We also see an interesting flip in the 15-18 month interval, with otherwise stable kinship placements starting to erode.
- What are the practical implications of this evidence? What might change in the system in response?
Benefit #3: Access and use the resources of the Data Center to continue to fuel the improvement process

Anticipating the inevitable: the Major Outcomes Report answers fundamental questions about major outcomes. This will inevitably lead you to ask more questions.

✓ The data file that produced the MOR is available for additional queries

Capacity building: education/training arm of the Data Center can meet you where you’re at:

✓ Work with your staff to build internal capacity to craft and answer the next set of questions you have

✓ Provide ongoing technical assistance and consulting

Asking and answering questions is essential to the process of improvement
Recap: The Major Outcomes Report
What it is, what it isn’t

✓ Outcomes for children and families
  • Admissions, exits, duration, placement stability, permanency, reentry

✓ The process of care
  • What percent of children entering foster care receive a family team meeting in the first two weeks of care?

✓ The quality of care
  • Are social workers using best practices to foster the parent/child relationship during visits?

✓ The capacity to deliver care
  • Do we have a sufficient number of workers to manage the foster care caseload?
Recap: Benefits of the Major Outcomes Report

Internalize working knowledge of system dynamics.

*Lean on your knowledge of typical patterns in order to be proactive and strategic as circumstances arise.*

*Knowledge of what’s typical enables you recognize something that’s atypical.*

*Knowledge of what’s typical enables you to predict future performance*

Clearly see opportunities for targeted improvement efforts.

Use the Major Outcomes Report as an entryway to a more nuanced set of performance questions. The resources of the Data Center can help: to leverage existing capacity, build new capacity, or serve as external capacity.
A sneak peek…

*Example: Reentry rates*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Administrative Entities</th>
<th>FY12</th>
<th>FY13</th>
<th>FY14</th>
<th>FY15</th>
<th>FY16</th>
<th>FY17</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Statewide</td>
<td>10%</td>
<td>10%</td>
<td>9%</td>
<td>10%</td>
<td>9%</td>
<td>2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>District 1</td>
<td>13%</td>
<td>15%</td>
<td>14%</td>
<td>16%</td>
<td>17%</td>
<td>1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>District 2</td>
<td>13%</td>
<td>12%</td>
<td>12%</td>
<td>15%</td>
<td>10%</td>
<td>2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>District 3</td>
<td>11%</td>
<td>7%</td>
<td>7%</td>
<td>7%</td>
<td>3%</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>District 4</td>
<td>7%</td>
<td>6%</td>
<td>9%</td>
<td>10%</td>
<td>8%</td>
<td>2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>District 5</td>
<td>8%</td>
<td>10%</td>
<td>7%</td>
<td>10%</td>
<td>7%</td>
<td>3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>District 6</td>
<td>9%</td>
<td>15%</td>
<td>5%</td>
<td>8%</td>
<td>8%</td>
<td>1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>District 7</td>
<td>11%</td>
<td>10%</td>
<td>5%</td>
<td>8%</td>
<td>8%</td>
<td>4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>District 8</td>
<td>4%</td>
<td>6%</td>
<td>8%</td>
<td>6%</td>
<td>7%</td>
<td>2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>District 9</td>
<td>16%</td>
<td>11%</td>
<td>15%</td>
<td>11%</td>
<td>11%</td>
<td>3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>District 10</td>
<td>12%</td>
<td>13%</td>
<td>2%</td>
<td>4%</td>
<td>8%</td>
<td>1%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The full version of the Major Outcomes Report provides information across time, across administrative entities and – not shown here – across age groups for all of the core outcomes discussed today.
How do I get my hands on the Major Outcomes Report?!

✓ Member states recently received a sample Major Outcomes Report.
   If you’re a member and you’d like to see more, reach out!

✓ Not a member and want in?
   Contact us after the webinar to talk about joining the Data Center.

Email Lily Alpert at lalpert@chapinhall.org