

Outcome Evaluation Report for Washington State's Parents for Parents Program



Capacity Building
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Outcome Evaluation Report for Washington State's Parents for Parents Program

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Executive Summary

Parents for Parents (P4P) seeks to engage families early in the child welfare process. The primary goals of the program are to educate parents about the child welfare system and to provide support for families. The theory of change suggests that this education and support would then lead to increased engagement in case plans which would ultimately lead to reunification and permanency for families. This evaluation used a quasi-experimental design to examine if there are relationships between P4P and compliance with services and case outcomes. Overall, the findings suggest a positive relationship between P4P and parental engagement and case outcomes.

Summary of statistically significant findings:

Survey Results

- A relationship between Dependency 101 attendance and increased knowledge of the roles in the child welfare system and an increased level of trust in CPS

Parent Engagement

- A positive relationship between Dependency 101 attendance and service compliance at the first review hearing and permanency planning hearing for mothers and fathers
- A positive relationship between Dependency 101 attendance and visitation compliance at review and permanency planning hearings for mothers; a positive relationship between Dependency 101 and visitation compliance at the permanency planning hearing for fathers
- A positive relationship between Dependency 101 and mother attendance at all key hearings; a positive relationship between Dependency 101 and father attendance at the permanency planning hearing and second review hearing

Case Outcomes

- A relationship between parent participation in Dependency 101 and increased reunification rates
 - 70% of parents who participated in Dependency 101 reunified with their children
 - 53% of parents who did not participate in Dependency 101 reunified with their children
- A relationship between parent participation in Dependency 101 and decreased TPR rates
 - 26% of parents who participated in Dependency 101 had their parental rights terminated
 - 39% of parents who did not participate in Dependency 101 had their parental rights terminated
- No relationship between parent participation in Dependency 101 and length of time until permanency
- Initial support of a positive relationship between additional mentoring components of P4P and case outcomes
 - 79% of parents who participated in Dependency 101 and received additional mentoring reunified with their children
 - 67% of parents who participated in Dependency 101 but did not receive any additional mentoring reunified with their children

Introduction

As of September 2018, there was an estimated 437,283 youth in foster care in the United States and an estimated 11,399 youth in foster care in Washington State (U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, 2019). Treatment and support that target the parents who are involved in child welfare can be important in reducing incidences of child maltreatment (Littell, Alexander, & Reynolds 2001). Early engagement on behalf of parents is important for their success in treatment and the success of their case (Edwards, 2007; Littell et al., 2001). However, the child welfare system can be overwhelming and difficult for parents to navigate (Healy Darlington, & Feeney, 2011). Parents often feel they are blamed and shamed for their current situation which can result in punitive treatment by child welfare workers (Corwin, 2012; Nilsen, Affronti, & Coombs, 2009). This can lead to reluctance for people to help parents and also for parents to accept help from the system. In addition, parents are often dealing with adversity and trauma, which is a common contributor to child maltreatment (Thompson, 2018). With the challenges that children and families face, it is important to recognize that children and families might be best served if effective services can be provided to their parents (Brooks, 1999; Neilson, 2019). Thus, addressing the needs of the parents in the child welfare system can provide a more stable and permanent solution for families involved in child welfare. The current evaluation examines case engagement and case outcomes for system-involved parents who participated in a mentoring program in Washington State. As required by Washington Senate Bill 5486, this evaluation serves as the Phase II evaluation and provides statistics on service compliance, reunification, and time to permanency (Senate Bill 5486, 2015).

Parents for Parents (P4P) is an early engagement and education program for parents involved in the child welfare system. P4P is run by parent allies, or parents who were previously involved in the child welfare system and have successfully resolved the safety concerns that led to their involvement in the system. P4P started in Pierce County, WA in 2005 by a birth mother. The birth mother who started the program experienced substantial trauma throughout her lifetime and was involved in the child welfare system as a child and as a parent. Pierce County asked her to start the program and she coined the term Dependency 101, a core component of the P4P program. Since then, P4P has expanded to 16 counties in Washington and continues to grow state-wide.

Dependency 101, a core component of P4P, is 2-hour session designed to educate and empower parents with the tools, strategies, and support they can use in order to be successful in the dependency process. During Dependency 101, parents watch an informational video about the child welfare system and the importance of engaging with services. Parents receive an

information packet that contains important resources for navigating the system and accessing treatment. Parents also hear directly from professionals in their jurisdiction including an assistant attorney general (lawyer for the department), a parent lawyer, a guardian ad litem (GAL) or a court appointed special advocate (CASA), and a social worker. Some counties also have a judge attend Dependency 101. Each professional explains their role to the parents and how they can help them and their family throughout their case. In addition to explanations of roles, these presentations can help to destigmatize an “us” versus “them” mentality that often exists between parents and child welfare stakeholders. Last, parents hear directly from parent allies who share their own child welfare story and show how they overcame their challenges.

In addition to Dependency 101, parents have the opportunity to receive other support from P4P. Telephone mentoring is available to parents in which parents can call or text parent allies for additional mentoring support. Parent allies also use telephone mentoring to reach out to parents to remind them of upcoming Dependency 101 sessions, or to check-in about their case and see if they need any additional support. Parent allies can provide additional support for parents at court hearings or other key events during their case. Parents can also attend Dependency 201 sessions, which are additional educational and support sessions for parents. Dependency 201 differs in every county, but generally involves formal structure around a specific topic such as visitation, housing, or parent resources, as well as an informal support structure that allows parents to get support from other parents and parent allies. Although Dependency 201 varies from program to program and does not have an established model fidelity¹, it can be an important support system and “touch-point” for parents. Dependency 201 is also newer than 101; in most places not starting until 2017.

Several previous evaluations of Dependency 101 have shown promising results. A 2011 evaluation indicated that in King county, parents who attended Dependency 101 reported decreased anxiety about the dependency process, increased trust in CPS, and increased understanding of the system compared to before they attended Dependency 101 (Summers, Wood, Russell, & Macgill, 2012). Although case outcomes such as reunification were not examined, results did show that parents who attended Dependency 101 were more likely to comply with services compared to parents who did not attend Dependency 101. These results were replicated in an evaluation conducted in 2013 which also found that parents who attended Dependency 101 were more likely to reunify with their children compared to parents who did not attend Dependency 101 (Bohannon, Gonzalez, & Summers, 2016). A third evaluation examined

¹ Efforts are currently underway in King County to develop a standardized Dependency 201 curriculum that can be used in all P4P programs.

approximately 100 child welfare cases of parents who participated in P4P in King, Spokane, and Thurston counties from November 2014 to January 2015 (Wulczyn, Orlebeke, Syrjanen, Lockaby, & Wilkins, n.d). They found that attitudes about the child welfare system shifted in a positive direction after parents attended a Dependency 101 session. However, long-term outcomes such as reunification were not examined (Wulczyn et al., n.d).

The primary focus of this evaluation will be to examine how Dependency 101 attendance relates to case outcomes. Additionally, we explore other aspects of P4P such as additional mentoring parents can receive and Dependency 201. These components of P4P have not been examined in any previous evaluations. Mason, Snohomish, and Spokane counties are included in this evaluation. Although the program is modeled after what was initially created in Pierce county and later King county, these programs are not included in the current evaluation because they had been operating too long to fit the scope of the study. The counties included in this evaluation have been fully operating since at least 2014 (but not earlier than 2012) which allowed us to evaluate relatively newer programs and compare these cases to child welfare cases that were closed before P4P programs were implemented. These counties serve different populations (e.g., rural vs. urban) and therefore represent a statewide sample.

While the findings from these evaluations suggest that P4P is a promising practice, there were several limitations that will be addressed in the current evaluation. The current evaluation expands on past evaluations in three keys ways:

First, the current evaluation uses a much larger sample than previous evaluations. Previous evaluations have used very small samples (e.g., 133 total cases; Bohannan et al., 2016). The current evaluation will use a much larger sample size, which can lead to more robust statistical conclusions. One hundred thirty-six treatment cases will be examined (compared to a total sample of 133 from a previous evaluation), and will be compared to 349 comparison cases. A larger comparison group is appropriate in order to create more potential for “best matches” (discussed next).

Second, the current evaluation will use a quasi-experimental matched design (QED), which has not been used in previous evaluations. In a matched design, attempts are made to equate the treatment and a comparison group in order to better estimate possible causal effects without using a random controlled trial (Cook, Shadish, & Wong, 2008). In the current evaluation, in order to reduce the effects of selection bias, cases will be selected from before P4P was

implemented and compared to cases after P4P was implemented. In addition, propensity score weighting will be used to better equate the two groups. Propensity score weighting is used to weight each case on similar case characteristics for a stronger comparison of the treatment and comparison group. Cases are matched on variables such as the age of the child, race, the allegations, presenting problems, etc.

Last, we explore some of the other components of P4P (e.g., telephone mentoring) that might be beneficial for families. These program components have not been examined in previous evaluations. Mentoring and support programs tend to be more effective when mentoring relationships are long-lasting (Lawner, Beltz & Moore, 2013). These additional supports are important for the successful implementation of P4P. However, these additional program components have not been examined in previous evaluations. These data are difficult to collect and are thus not often included in evaluations. One county was able to provide us with such data.

The current evaluation examines the following research questions:

1. Do parents report increases in trust in CPS and understanding of the roles of the professionals in the child welfare system after attending Dependency 101?
2. Does participation in Dependency 101 relate to parent engagement such as increased service compliance, increased visitation compliance, and increased hearing attendance?
3. Does participation in Dependency 101 relate to case outcomes such as increased reunification rates and decreased termination of parental rights (TPR rates)?
4. Do additional supports provided by P4P relate to parent engagement and case outcomes?

Evaluation Methodology

An initial questionnaire was sent out to all P4P supervisors and coordinators to assess evaluation readiness. We asked questions such as what data were collected and how long the program had been at model fidelity. Spokane, Mason, and Snohomish counties were selected to be included in the evaluation because they are geographically diverse, they all started around the

Propensity Score Weighting is a statistical technique used to account for selection bias in research. This technique increases the robustness of the research design when experimental designs cannot be used to be more confident that results between two groups are related to the program/intervention instead of differences in the samples. In this technique, a propensity score is calculated to determine the likelihood that someone will or will not participate in a program based on a set of characteristics. This propensity score is then used to weight the comparison group to “look like” the treatment group.

same time (each program had reached model fidelity by 2014), and they were determined to be evaluation ready. That is, they were collecting the data necessary for the evaluation and were operating at model fidelity. Figure 1 shows the breakdown of the cases included in the sample.

Figure 1. Counties Represented in Sample

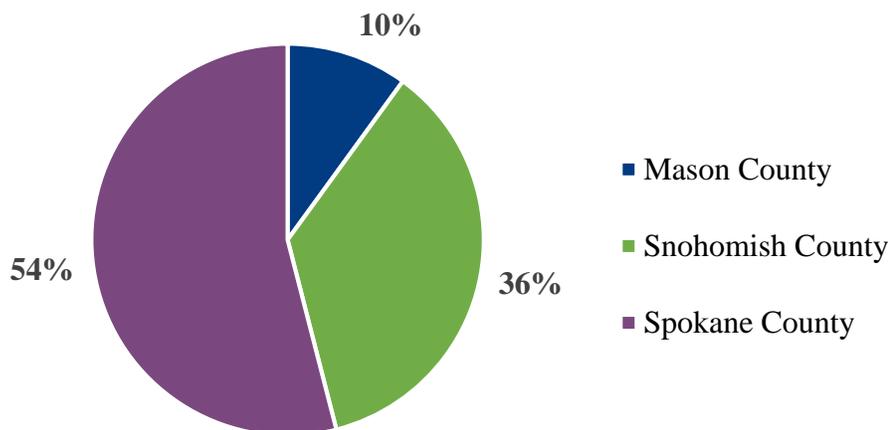


Table 1 shows the estimated number of youth in foster care at the end of the fiscal year in 2018 based on the most recent AFCARS data (U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, 2019). Both Snohomish and Spokane are mid-sized urban counties representing the west side and east side of the state. They are comparably smaller than King and Pierce counties but both of these counties have already been included in past evaluations. The programs in these counties were also started long before 2014 and would not have fit the timeframe for the current evaluation. Mason County was included in the evaluation to represent a smaller, rural county. Data are not available on specific foster care numbers for smaller counties in the publicly available AFCARS data. Figure 1 shows the majority of the sample came from Spokane, which is consistent with the size of the counties selected.

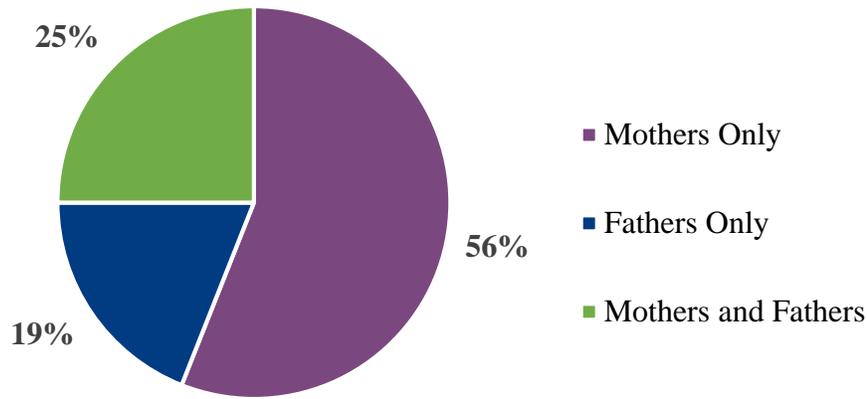
Table 1. Estimated number of youth in foster care at the end of the 2018 fiscal year

Washington County	Estimated Number of Youth in Foster Care
Clark County	754
King County	2,133
Pierce County	1,590
Snohomish County	1,013
Spokane County	1,177

Sample

One-hundred seventy parents who attended Dependency 101 were included in the sample. Because some parents attend together, only 136 cases were coded and used for analyses. Cases were randomly selected from a complete list of all parents who attended Dependency 101 that each program provided to the researchers. All cases were completed or there had been a termination order in 2018 and all petitions were filed between 2014 and 2018. Figure 2 shows the breakdown of who attended Dependency 101 in the sample.

Figure 2. Who Attends Dependency 101



Three-hundred forty-nine comparison cases were coded. We selected comparison cases in which a petition was filed between 2008 and 2012. These years were selected to mitigate the effects of selection bias. Because P4P is voluntary, parents who choose to participate might be more likely to reunify with their children compared to parents who choose not to participate. In order to mitigate these possible biases, we compared to cases that were opened and completed before P4P was implemented in any of these counties.

All comparison cases were either completed or there was a TPR order in 2012. The comparison group is larger than the treatment group for two primary reasons 1) to ensure an adequate sample size and 2) to increase the likelihood that there are more cases to better “match” with the treatment group.

Each county clerk’s office provided the researchers with a list of case numbers in that sampling frame. However, Mason County was unable to provide a complete list. Only a list of cases from 2011-2013 could be obtained. Thus, we were able to examine case outcomes but could not examine length of time until permanency in Mason County.

From that list, cases were randomly selected. Comparison cases were only coded if parents would have had a non-zero probability of participating in P4P. In other words, it had to be possible for parents to participate if P4P had it been available. Cases that were not included involved instances in which the child was in foster care because the parents had died, or the parents had suffered an injury or medical crisis that made it impossible to engage in services. For instance, one parent had a severe stroke that was going to leave him nonverbal for the rest of his life.

Measures and Data

Data were collected from two sources: P4P program data and court case files.

P4P Program Data. P4P program coordinators in each county provided the researchers with complete de-identified lists of parents who have participated in P4P going back to 2014. The lists included case numbers, the dates parents attended Dependency 101, and who attended Dependency 101 (mother, father, or both parents). One county also provided the researchers with additional dosage data such as telephone mentoring and additional hearing support.

The program coordinators provided the researchers with pre and post Dependency 101 survey responses. When parents arrive at Dependency 101, they complete a brief survey which asks general questions such as age and living situation, and five questions related to their overall attitudes and knowledge of the child welfare system. For instance, parents are asked to rate on a scale from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree) if they “feel like they can trust CPS to be fair and see my side of things”. Parents are asked those same five questions after the Dependency 101 class and their responses can be compared to their pre-class responses.

Case File Review. The researchers were granted remote access to each county’s case file management system. Two counties (Mason and Snohomish) use an Odyssey system to manage their case files. Spokane uses an independent system via a Citrix server in which case file images can be viewed as PDF documents. Three trained coders coded each case for various case characteristics and outcomes such as important dates (e.g., petition, hearings, case closure), presenting problems, service compliance, and case outcomes. The key variables of interest for the purposes of this evaluation were allegations and presenting problems, parental attendance at key hearings, compliance with court-ordered services, compliance with visitation, and case outcomes such as reunification and TPR/adoption. For both survey data and case file data, the findings indicate whether the differences are statistically significant. *Statistical significance is a way for researchers to quantify their confidence that the results would not have occurred by chance alone.* Statistical significance (indicated as *p*) of less than 0.05 is the standard in the field

and could be approximated to imply 95% confident that the results represent “real” differences between groups. We also included cases with a significance level less than 0.1 (90% confident) and determined those values to be marginally significant.

Matching Procedure

To better ensure that the comparison group represents the treatment group, we ran an analysis called inverse propensity-score weighting (IPW). IPW weights cases based on certain selection criteria to make them “look more like” the treatment group. In other words, comparison cases that have a higher probability for treatment are given higher weights and comparison cases with a lower probability for treatment are given lower weights. IPW is an approach under a broad umbrella of propensity score matching in which a propensity score is calculated to predict how likely or unlikely (or the propensity) someone is to participate in the treatment given observed case characteristics (Rosenbaum & Rubin, 1983). A recent study out of Iowa used propensity score matching and found a relationship between parents who received mentoring and parents who did not and reunification rates (Chambers et al., 2019). Because we have a smaller sample size and finding exact matches for all cases can be difficult, we chose IPW instead of matching. Further, IPW allows you to include two treatment groups (which we examine later in the evaluation by including additional mentoring parents received).

Using IPW, we calculated the average treatment effect on the treated, or the ATT. The ATT estimates the effects of various outcomes only for the treated group (in this case, parents who attended Dependency 101 are the treated group). It does not estimate the effects of anyone in the comparison group. In other words, for those who are treated, the ATT estimates the effect of the outcomes if they had not been treated. We chose the ATT due to the relatively small sample size of the treatment group, and because we had a much larger sample for the comparison group.

To weight the groups, we first examined all case variables that were included in the case file review such as physical abuse, neglect, criminal activity, substance use, history with agency, race, and child age. We also weighted groups on whether one or both parents were on the petition or the child was removed from one or both parents. Some of the variables did not differ between the two groups and thus they were not included in the IPW analysis. A full list of variables that were matched on can be found in Appendix A.

Results

Survey Results

Parents complete a survey before and after attending Dependency 101. They answer the same five questions in each survey and thus we are able to compare their pre and post responses

using a paired-sample t-test to see if their attitudes changed after attending Dependency 101. Parents respond to each question on a 5-point scale from 1 (“disagree strongly”) to 5 (“strongly agree”). A total of 155 parents completed the pre and post surveys (some parents left early, others did not turn in a survey) before and after attending Dependency 101. The greatest changes pre and post Dependency 101 were trust in CPS and understanding the roles of professionals in the child welfare system. Results to all questions can be found in Table 2. All questions were statistically significant at the 0.05 level.

Table 2. Dependency 101 Pre and Post Survey Results

	Pre Dependency 101	Post Dependency 101	Change
I realize I need some help to make sure my kids have what they need.	3.8	4.0	+0.2**
I believe my family will get help we really need from CPS.	3.3	3.6	+0.3**
I feel like I can trust CPS to be fair and see my side of things.	2.8	3.2	+0.4**
I understand the roles of the professionals in the child welfare system.	3.7	4.1	+0.4**
I believe there are things I can do so that the Court will return my children to me.	4.5	4.6	+0.1*

** $p < 0.01$; * $p < 0.05$

Parent Engagement

Next, we examined parent engagement in the services they needed to participate in in order to reunify with their children. Parent engagement in their cases was examined by court-ordered service compliance, visitation compliance, and hearing attendance. For each finding, we calculated the ATT and presented the raw (not weighted) values for each outcome. The results from the full statistical models, including weighted values, can be found in Appendix B.

Service Compliance

In each case file, service compliance was coded for either “full compliance”, “partial compliance”, or “no compliance” with court-ordered services. For the cases that closed in 2018, there was a court order at each hearing indicating full, partial, or no compliance. However, cases that closed in 2012 only provided an order for full compliance or no compliance. In those cases, coders indicated “full compliance” and “no compliance” when it was ordered by the court, but coded “partial compliance” if the court indicated that parents were complying with some services but not others even if it was not an official court order. Compliance was coded at three different hearings: the first two review hearings and the permanency planning hearings. In almost all cases, the second review hearing (if any) came after the permanency planning hearing. In addition, due

to small numbers and large standard errors, we collapsed service compliance into two categories: “full compliance”, and “partial or no compliance” with court ordered services. “Full compliance” was compared to “partial or no compliance” because of the ambiguity of “partial compliance” in cases that closed in 2012. Thus, we were able to compare parents who were in full compliance with their services to parents who were only in partial or not in compliance with their services.

Recall that the ATT is the average treatment effect on the treated. Because the outcome variable is a percentage (i.e., percentage service compliance), the ATT can be interpreted as a percent. In other words, if the ATT is 0.10, that suggests that parents who participated in Dependency 101 were 10% more likely to be in compliance with their services than if they had not participated in Dependency 101. At the first review hearing, mothers (ATT = 0.10, SE² = 0.04, $p = 0.06$) and fathers (ATT = 0.14, SE = 0.08, $p = 0.08$) who participated in Dependency 101 were marginally more likely to be in full compliance with their court-ordered services. At their permanency planning, both mothers (ATT = 0.13, SE = 0.06, $p = 0.03$) and fathers (ATT = 0.27, SE = 0.08, $p < 0.01$) were significantly more likely to be in compliance with their court-ordered services compared to the comparison group. In other words, parents who participated in Dependency 101 were more likely to engage in court-ordered services than if they had not participated in Dependency 101 and this relationship was the strongest at the permanency planning hearing. Dependency 101 participation did not relate to service compliance for mothers or fathers at the second review hearing. Table 3 and Figure 3 illustrate these findings.

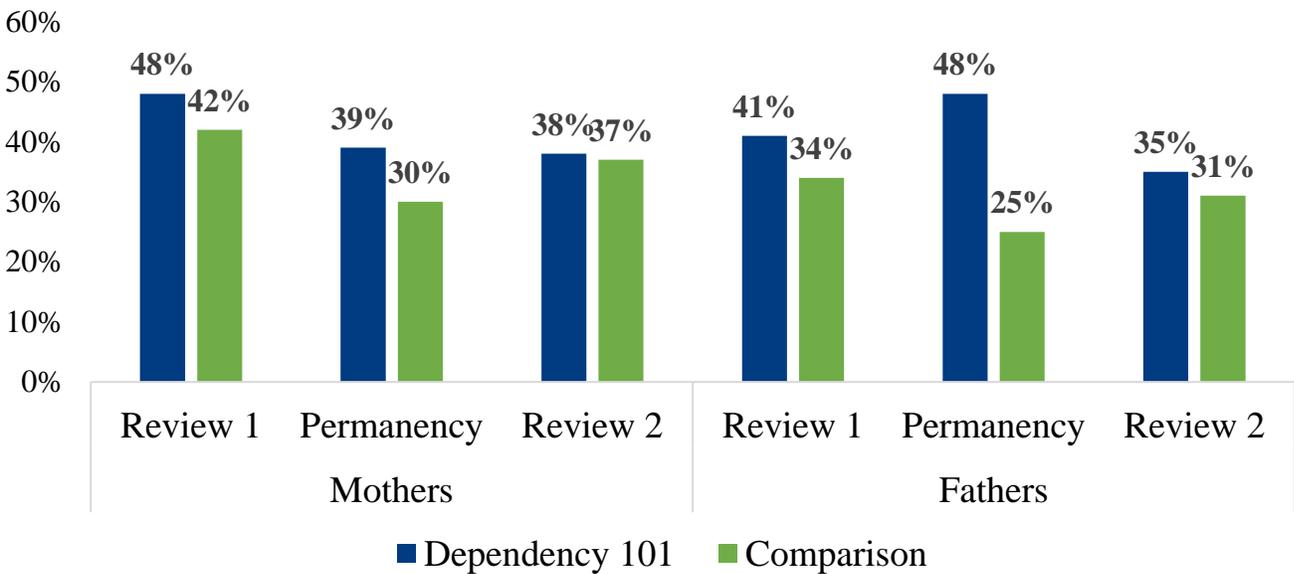
Table 3. Service Compliance

Percent Service Compliance			
Hearing Type	Parents who participated in Dependency 101	Comparison group	ATT
<i>Mothers</i>			
Review 1	48%	42%	0.10 ⁺
Permanency Planning	39%	30%	0.13*
Review 2	38%	37%	0.06
<i>Fathers</i>			
Review 1	41%	34%	0.14 ⁺
Permanency Planning	48%	25%	0.27**
Review 2	35%	31%	0.04

** $p < 0.01$; * $p < 0.05$; ⁺ $p < 0.1$

² SE stands for standard error and is commonly reported as part of statistical analysis.

Figure 3. Full Compliance With Services



Visitation Compliance

Coders indicated whether parents were in full, partial, or no compliance with visitation. At each hearing, the court gave an order as to parent visitation compliance. Most courts only provided an order for full or no compliance (there was no separate order for partial compliance), and thus coders turned to the agency report to determine if parents were in partial compliance. However, agencies often reported compliance differently and the agency reports were not available for one county and so like with service compliance, we combined “partial visitation compliance” and “no visitation compliance” and compared that to parents who were in full compliance with visitation.

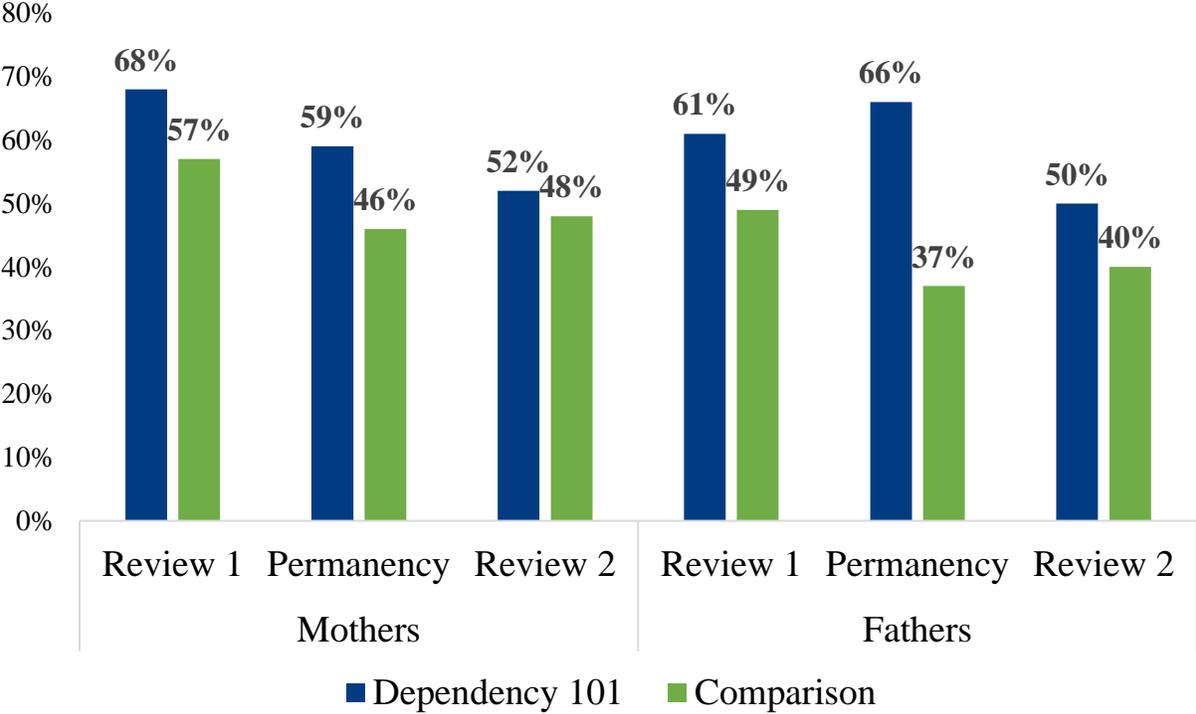
Mothers who participated in Dependency 101 were marginally more likely to be in full compliance with their visitation at the first review hearing (ATT = 0.14, SE = 0.06, $p = 0.06$), the permanency planning hearing (ATT = 0.19, SE = 0.05, $p = 0.01$), and at the second review hearing (ATT = 0.12, SE = 0.169, $p = 0.09$). Dependency 101 participation did not relate to fathers’ visitation compliance at the first review hearing (ATT = 0.15, SE = 0.10, $p = 0.13$) or at the second review hearing (ATT = 0.07, SE = 0.122, $p = 0.57$). Dependency 101 participation marginally related to fathers’ visitation compliance at the permanency planning hearing (ATT = 0.19, SE = 0.1, $p = 0.08$). Table 4 and Figure 4 illustrate these findings.

Table 4. Visitation Compliance

Percent Visitation Compliance			
Hearing Type	Parents who participated in Dependency 101	Comparison group	ATT
<i>Mothers</i>			
Review 1	68%	57%	0.14 ⁺
Permanency Planning	59%	46%	0.19*
Review 2	52%	48%	0.12 ⁺
<i>Fathers</i>			
Review 1	61%	49%	0.15
Permanency Planning	66%	37%	0.19 ⁺
Review 2	50%	40%	0.07

**p < 0.01; *p < 0.05; +p < 0.1

Figure 4. Full Compliance With Visitation



Hearing Attendance

A general hearing participation percentage was calculated by dividing the total number of hearings attended by the total number of hearings in the case. Mothers who participated in

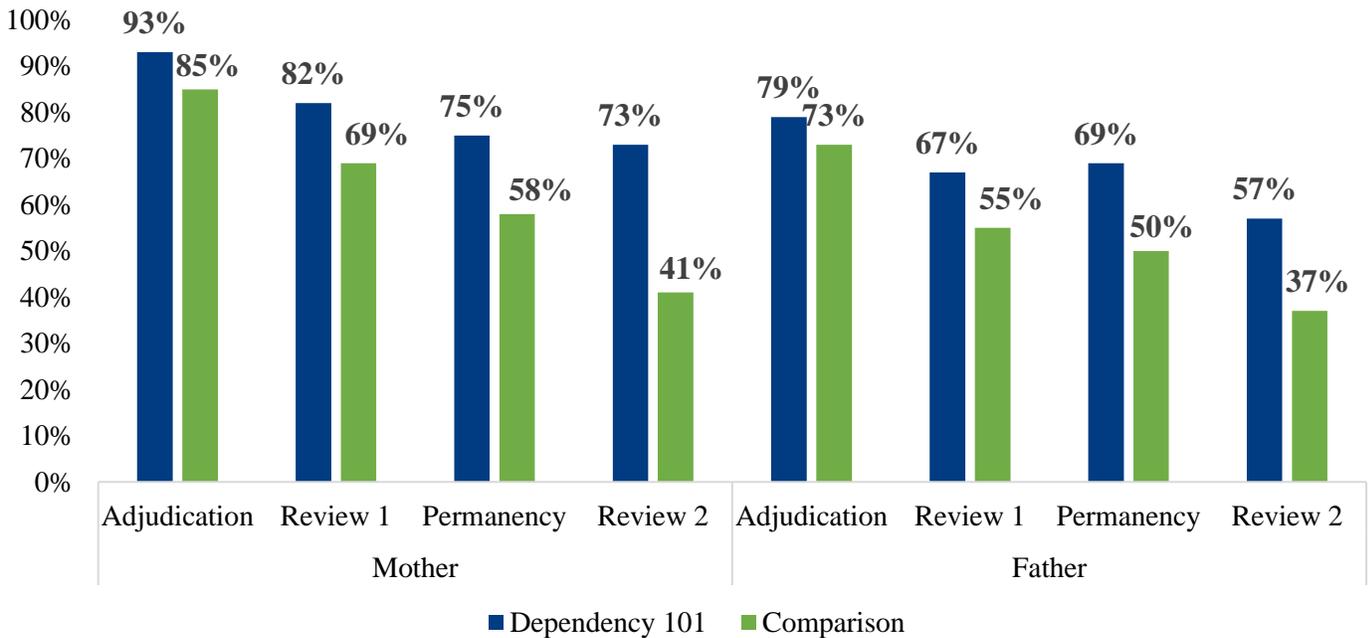
Dependency 101 attended more of their case hearings (78%) compared to mothers who did not participate (67%; ATT = 0.11, SE = 0.04, $p = 0.01$). Father participation in Dependency 101 did not relate overall hearing attendance (67% vs. 63%; ATT = 0.04, SE = 0.08, $p = 0.60$). Table 5 shows that mother participation in Dependency 101 related to hearing attendance at five important hearings during their cases. Father participation in Dependency 101 did not relate to hearing attendance at the adjudication hearing and first review hearing, but marginally related to hearing attendance at the permanency planning hearing (ATT = 0.15, SE = 0.09, $p < 0.1$) and second review hearing (ATT = 0.17, SE = 0.10, $p < 0.1$).

Table 5. Hearing Attendance.

Percent Hearing Attendance			
Hearing Type	Parents who participated in Dependency 101	Comparison group	ATT
<i>Mothers</i>			
Adjudication	93%	85%	0.1*
Review 1	82%	69%	0.13*
Permanency Planning	75%	58%	0.18**
Review 2	73%	41%	0.35**
<i>Fathers</i>			
Adjudication	79%	73%	0.05
Review 1	67%	55%	0.13
Permanency Planning	69%	50%	0.15 ⁺
Review 2	57%	37%	0.17 ⁺

** $p < 0.01$; * $p < 0.05$; ⁺ $p < 0.1$

Figure 5. Hearing Attendance



Case Outcomes

The most common outcomes were reunification and TPR/adoption (a smaller percentage of cases ended in guardianship or relative placement/third party custody agreements). We coded one reunification variable as 1 = reunified and 0 = all other outcomes, to examine the effects Dependency 101 had on reunification. Cases in which the petition was dismissed (8%) were coded as reunification.

Cases in which parents participated in Dependency 101 were more likely to end in reunification compared to cases in which parents did not participate in Dependency 101 (ATT = 0.27, SE = 0.05, $p < 0.01$). We also compared cases in which the outcome was TPR compared to all other case outcomes. Parents who participated in Dependency 101 were significantly less likely to have cases that ended in TPR compared to parents who did not participate (ATT = -0.23, SE = 0.04, $p < 0.01$).

Table 6. Case Outcomes

Case Outcome	Dependency 101	Comparison group	ATT
Reunification	70%	53%	0.27**
TPR	26%	39%	-0.23**

** $p < 0.01$

Participation in Dependency 101 did not affect the time to permanency. Cases in which parents participated in Dependency 101 were open an average of 585 days and cases in the comparison group were open an average of 536 days and this difference was not statistically significant (ATT = 12.56, SE = 32.18, $p = 0.70$).

Additional Participation in P4P

Dependency 101 is a core component of P4P and is what has been the subject of all prior evaluations. In addition to Dependency 101, parents can also receive additional mentoring and support through telephone calls or texting, support at additional hearings, or support at other outside meetings. Further, parents can attend Dependency 201 which is a group session that provides structured additional education and support for parents. Because ongoing contact with P4P might be beneficial to parents, we examined how these additional “touch-points” might be related to case outcomes. One county was able to provide the researchers with detailed data on how often parents had additional support from P4P. Of the 136 cases in the sample, 48 parents engaged in P4P beyond Dependency 101. Due to this small number, we grouped all of these parents into one group even though parents had differing levels of engagement (see Table 7 for details regarding additional support offered by P4P). Further, we could only examine case outcomes and compliance with services at the first review hearing and the permanency planning hearing for mothers only because too many cases were closed by the permanency planning hearing to run any additional statistical analyses.

Table 7. P4P Additional Support

Support Type	Average	Median	Minimum	Maximum
Telephone Mentoring	3	2	1	21
Outside Meetings	4.58	1.5	1	23
Additional Hearing Support	1.86	1	1	5
Dependency 201	1.86	1	1	4

We were only able to assess the effects of additional P4P mentoring on service compliance at the first review hearing for 36 mothers who engaged in additional mentoring and 67 mothers who only attended Dependency 101. Compared to the comparison group, additional mentoring did not predict service compliance at the first review hearings for mothers (ATT = 0.11, SE = 0.1, $p = 0.29$). There were 30 mothers who had a permanency planning hearing and received additional P4P mentoring and this did relate to service compliance at their permanency planning hearings (ATT = 0.36, SE = 0.11, $p < 0.01$). We could not run analyses for fathers as the sample

size was too small. Table 8 illustrates these findings for mothers.

Table 8. Service Compliance for Additional P4P Services

Hearing	Dependency 101 Only	ATT	Comparison group	101 + Additional Mentoring	ATT
<i>Mothers</i>					
Service Compliance Review 1	48%	0.14 ⁺	42%	50%	0.11
Permanency Planning Service Compliance	39%	0.16*	30%	43%	0.36**

** $p < 0.01$; * $p < 0.05$; ⁺ $p < 0.1$

Additional P4P mentoring and support also related to mothers' visitation compliance at the first review hearing (ATT = 0.25, SE = 0.12, $p = 0.04$). However, there was no difference in visitation compliance between parents who only attended Dependency 101 and parents who received additional mentoring. Due to a small sample size (either because cases were closed or the child was placed with the parent), we could not assess mothers' visitation compliance at the permanency planning hearing or second review hearing. We could not run analyses for fathers as the sample size was too small. Table 9 illustrates these findings.

Table 9. Visitation Compliance for Additional P4P Services

Hearing	Dependency 101 Only	ATT	Comparison group	101 + Additional Mentoring	ATT
<i>Mothers</i>					
Visitation Compliance Review 1	70%	0.19*	57%	71%	0.25*

* $p < 0.05$

Compared to the comparison group (i.e., parents who did not attend Dependency 101) additional P4P mentoring did not predict mothers' attendance at adjudication hearings (ATT = 0.09, SE = 0.07, $p = 0.18$) but did predict attendance at the first review hearing (ATT = 0.22, SE = 0.07, $p < 0.01$) and the permanency planning hearing (ATT = 0.20, SE = 0.09, $p = 0.03$). Compared to fathers who did not participate in Dependency 101, additional P4P mentoring did marginally predict fathers' adjudication hearing attendance (ATT = 0.16, SE = 0.09, $p = 0.08$).

The results for case outcomes indicate that cases in which parents received additional P4P mentoring were more likely to end in reunification compared to the comparison group (ATT = 0.36, SE = 0.8, $p < 0.01$). Further, parents who received additional mentoring beyond Dependency 101 were more likely to have their cases end in reunification compared to parents who only received Dependency 101 (ATT = 0.15, SE = 0.07, $p = 0.03$). This pattern was similar for TPR and table 10 and figure 6 show these trends.

We did not explore whether additional P4P mentoring was related to timely permanency. Although services such as telephone mentoring and hearing support have been available since the program was implemented, they were more consistently implemented and better documented in later years. Further, Dependency 201 was not offered until the beginning of 2017. Thus, there is not a sufficient timeline of these additional services to accurately assess how they might be related to timely permanency. Programs should continue to collect these data and future evaluations should explore how these additional supports relate to timely permanency.

Table 10. Case Outcomes for Additional P4P Services

Case Outcome	Dependency 101 Only	ATT	Comparison group	101 + Additional Mentoring	ATT
Reunification	67%	0.24**	53%	79%	0.36**
TPR	31%	-0.19**	39%	19%	-0.31**

Figure 6. Case Outcomes

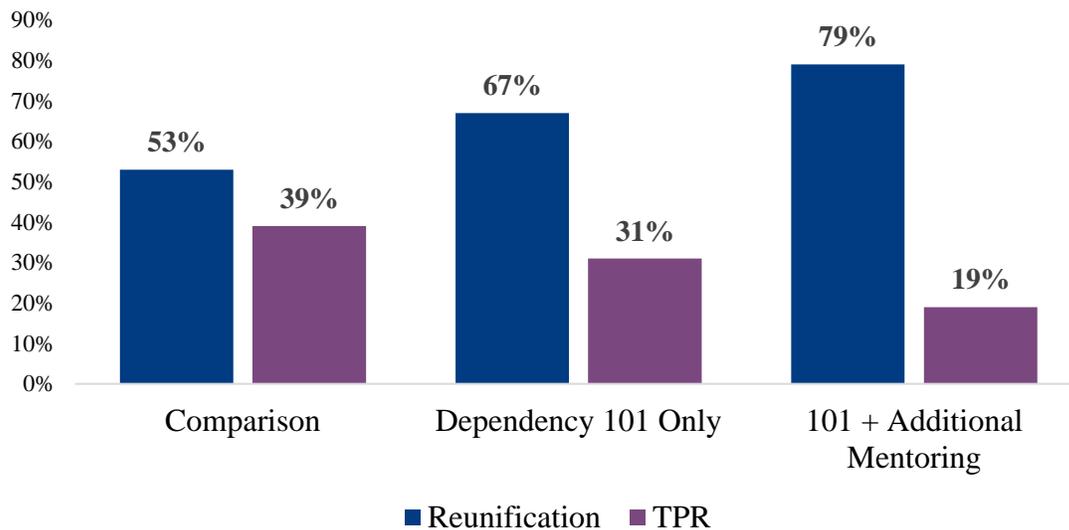


Table 11. Summary of Findings

Case Outcomes of Interest	Adjudication	Review 1	Permanency Planning	Review 2	Reunification	TPR	Time to Permanency
Program effects on case outcomes					(+)	(-)	--
Mother's Service Compliance		(+)	(+)	--			
Father's Service Compliance		(+)	(+)	--			
Mother's Visitation Compliance		(+)	(+)	(+)			
Father's Visitation Compliance		--	(+)	--			
Mother's Attendance at the Hearing	(+)	(+)	(+)	(+)			
Father's Attendance at the Hearing	--	--	(+)	(+)			

Note: (+) indicates an increase for program participants, (-) indicates a decrease for program participants, -- indicates no significant difference, and grayed cells were not part of that analysis

Conclusion

The results of this evaluation join a growing body of research that suggests a positive relationship between P4P and child welfare case outcomes (Bohannon et al., 2016; Summers et al., 2012). A summary of key findings and the direction of the relationship between Dependency 101 and case outcomes can be found in Table 11. Both mothers and fathers were more likely to be in compliance with court-ordered services at their first review hearing and permanency planning hearings compared to the comparison group. Mothers were more likely to be in full compliance with court-ordered services and visitation at review and permanency planning hearings. Mothers who participate in Dependency 101 are also more likely to attend their hearings throughout the life their cases. Fathers who attended Dependency 101 are also more likely to be in compliance with their court-ordered services and visitation at the permanency planning hearings, but not review hearings. This is only a small, but positive, relationship between father participation in Dependency 101 and permanency planning hearing attendance, but no relationship between father Dependency 101 participation and adjudication and attendance at the first review hearing.

Participation in Dependency 101 was also positively related to case outcomes. Cases were more likely to end in reunification and less likely to end in TPR when parents participated in Dependency 101. There is also emerging evidence that additional support is related to even higher reunification rates above and beyond Dependency 101 participation. Dependency 101 is an important component of P4P as it provides parents with that initial education and support, but additional support beyond 101 can be especially beneficial for parents. Future evaluations should continue to assess the effects of implementation and other supports that parents receive from

P4P.

Dependency 101 participation did not relate to length of time until permanency, however, if the ultimate goal is to provide a safe and permanent home for children that might not always be able to be accomplished in a shortened amount of time. Further, Dependency 101 is one, 2-hour class that parents attend toward the beginning of their case and thus might not be sufficient in leading to timely permanency. We were not able to examine the relationship between additional P4P mentoring and time to permanency due to sample and timing constraints, but programs should continue to document these supports and future research should explore if there is a relationship between ongoing case supports and time to permanency.

One significant limitation of the evaluation is comparing cases that were completed six years apart. We matched the groups by comparing case closure years in order to reduce the effects of selection bias, but one limitation of this is that there could be other historical factors in those six years that could affect case outcomes. Treatment services could have expanded and improved during that time which could affect outcomes. There were also differences in case documentation. In 2018, courts provided an order of full, partial, or no compliance whereas in 2012, the order was only full or no compliance. Reunification rates across the state also increased during this time period. According to AFCARS data, reunification rates in Washington in the 2018 fiscal year were around 64% (U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, 2019) whereas were around 60% in 2012 (U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, 2013). Thus, some of the differences in reunification rates between groups could partially be a reflection of other historical changes not related to the P4P program. States reporting could have also improved. For instance, the reunification rate in this sample for the comparison group (53%) is quite a bit lower than what is reported in the AFCAS data in Washington State. The accuracy of reporting practices could have changed and improved between 2012 and 2018. It will be important for future research to use a random controlled trial methodology to better isolate the effects of P4P on case outcomes. Despite this limitation, the results suggest that P4P is positively related to case outcomes and provides much needed education and support to families involved in the child welfare system.

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Appendix A

	Unweighted	Weighted
Unable/Unwilling	0.19	-0.01
Domestic Violence	0.27	0.003
Failure to protect	0.33	-0.01
Homeless	0.28	0.06
Substance Use	0.15	0.04
Mental Health Issues	0.19	-0.002
Criminal History	0.19	-0.001
History with Agency	0.03	-0.004
Total Number of Allegations	0.24	0.03
Total Number of Problems	0.3	0.02
Child Removed form Mother Only	-0.27	0.01
Child Removed from Both Parents	0.3	0.01

Standardized coefficients greater than 0.1 indicate that the two groups are not evenly weighted. In the unweighted column, all values are greater than 0.1. However, in the weighted column all values are less than 0.1 indicating that the weighting procedure was successful in weighting the two groups.

Appendix B

Full Compliance with Court-Ordered Services

	Dependency 101	Weighted Comparison	Unweighted Comparison	ATT (SE)
<i>Mothers</i>				
Review 1	0.48	0.38	0.42	0.10 (0.04) ⁺
Permanency	0.39	0.26	0.30	0.13 (0.06)*
Review 2	0.38	0.32	0.37	0.06 (0.07)
<i>Fathers</i>				
Review 1	0.41	0.27	0.34	0.13 (0.08) ⁺
Permanency	0.48	0.21	0.25	0.27 (0.08)**
Review 2	0.35	0.31	0.31	0.04 (0.05)

** $p < 0.01$; * $p < 0.05$; + $p < 0.1$

Full Compliance with Visitation

	Dependency 101	Weighted Comparison	Unweighted Comparison	ATT (SE)
<i>Mothers</i>				
Review 1	0.68	0.54	0.57	0.14 (0.06) ⁺
Permanency	0.59	0.40	0.46	0.10 (0.05)*
Review 2	0.52	0.40	0.48	0.12 (0.17) ⁺
<i>Fathers</i>				
Review 1	0.61	0.46	0.49	0.15 (0.10)
Permanency	0.66	0.47	0.37	0.19 (0.10) ⁺
Review 2	0.50	0.43	0.40	0.07 (0.12)

** $p < 0.01$; * $p < 0.05$; + $p < 0.1$

Hearing Attendance

	Dependency 101	Weighted Comparison	Unweighted Comparison	ATT (SE)
<i>Mothers</i>				
Adjudication	0.93	0.83	0.85	0.10 (0.04)*
Review 1	0.82	0.69	0.69	0.13 (0.05)*
Permanency	0.75	0.57	0.58	0.18 (0.06)**
Review 2	0.73	0.38	0.41	0.35 (0.07)**
<i>Fathers</i>				
Adjudication	0.79	0.74	0.73	0.05 (0.07)
Review 1	0.67	0.54	0.55	0.13 (0.08)
Permanency	0.69	0.50	0.54	0.15 (0.09) ⁺
Review 2	0.57	0.40	0.37	0.17 (0.10) ⁺

** $p < 0.01$; * $p < 0.05$; + $p < 0.1$

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