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A national evaluation of

Wendy's Wonderful Kids®

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Technical Report: Program Description and Implementation

The Impact of Child-Focused Recruitment on Foster Care Adoption: A Five-Year Evaluation of Wendy's Wonderful Kids

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SUGGESTED CITATION

TABLE OF CONTENTS

INTRODUCTION

Despite recent increases in annual adoptions, the number of children waiting to be adopted has consistently exceeded the number of finalized adoptions in each year for which national data are available. At the end of 2009, state child welfare agencies classified nearly 115,000 children in foster care as available to be adopted. To recruit adoptive parents, agencies need to do more than persuade the general population to call adoption hotlines. Child welfare agencies need recruitment strategies to attract or identify individuals interested in children who need families, who are able and willing to complete the logistical requirements of the adoption process, and who have the capacity to make a permanent commitment to a child or children. Data on the large number of "waiting" children indicate that to do this, services as usual have not been sufficient. For this reason, some agencies have been turning to more targeted strategies aimed at recruiting specific groups of people and finding families for specific children.

While rigorous evaluation of adoption recruitment programs should be standard practice given the importance of the outcomes, until now, none has been evaluated using methods that yield rigorous evidence that they work differently from the status quo.[1] This report summarizes findings from the rigorous evaluation of a child-focused adoption recruitment program — Wendy's Wonderful Kids (WWK) — carried out over the last five years.

This report, Technical Report 1, provides details and findings of the implementation and descriptive analyses carried out as part of the evaluation of a child-focused adoption recruitment program — Wendy's Wonderful Kids. **The Evaluation Report Summary** provides a non-technical overview of the key findings from the evaluation. A detailed description of experimental findings from the evaluation can be found in **Technical Report: Impact Findings**.

Wendy's Wonderful Kids

Since its inception in 1992, the Dave Thomas Foundation for Adoption (DTFA) has aimed to increase the numbers of

Child Trends' research includes both an impact and process evaluation. The impact evaluation uses experimental methods to identify program impacts — that is, to assess whether, and the degree to which, the program improves permanency outcomes for children waiting to be adopted, as compared to children receiving traditional adoption services. The process evaluation is designed to explain the results of the impact evaluation. Given the existing evidence and substantial lack of rigorous studies focusing on child-focused recruitment, the WWK program evaluation presents the most rigorous empirical study of child-focused adoption recruitment completed to date.

The analyses conducted as part of this study relied on a variety of data sources. WWK recruiters entered child-level information into a web-based case-management system, the WWK Online Database, on a monthly basis. Research staff conducted visits to program sites twice during the evaluation period. During these visits, staff conducted interviews and focus groups with WWK and child welfare agency staff and managers. WWK recruiters and supervisors also completed surveys upon beginning their work with WWK and at annual conferences for WWK staff. We also conducted in-person interviews with older children and telephone interviews with prospective and current adoptive parents. For the impact analyses, local child welfare administrative data on child outcomes were obtained and analyzed.

adoptions for children waiting in the U.S. foster care system. In 2004, DTFA launched the Wendy's Wonderful Kids (WWK) initiative to further this goal. The WWK program is unique for several reasons, among them the fact that it represents a corporate philanthropic commitment to solving a social problem. DTFA adopts a business model in its philanthropy, through its emphasis on producing measurable results, i.e., numbers of children adopted. At the same time, DTFA focuses particularly on harder-to-place children, allowing for the time necessary to achieve the goal of adoption.[1]

To support the WWK program, Wendy's restaurants and their customers raise funds for DTFA, which in turn issues grants to local adoption organizations in the communities where the funds are raised. The adoption organizations hire WWK adoption recruiters who spend 100 percent of their time finding permanent, loving families for children in their local foster care systems. Between 2004 and April, 2010, the program grew to 122 recruiters in all 50 states and the District of Columbia, as well as four Canadian provinces. Thus, another unique aspect of the program is its breadth.

The program is also relatively unusual in its approach to adoption recruitment. Unlike many efforts, WWK is designed to identify specific parents to meet the specific needs of each child awaiting a permanent family. In addition, because WWK recruiters carry small caseloads — they actively serve only 12 to 15 cases at a time[2] — and focus exclusively on adoption recruitment, they can more easily provide a comprehensive and intensive recruitment effort. Through October, 2011, WWK has served 7,500 children, including 2,500 who have had adoptions finalized.[3]

The Dave Thomas Foundation for Adoption describes the Wendy's Wonderful Kids model of adoption recruitment as "child-focused," requiring WWK recruiters to focus exhaustively on an individual child's history, experiences, and needs in order to find an appropriate adoptive family. In this section, each of the eight components of the WWK model is described, including DTFA's expectations for model implementation. First, the section provides a discussion of how children are selected for WWK and guidelines for how WWK recruiters are expected to manage their caseloads.

WWK model

Eligibility, caseload size, and service duration

Children are eligible for WWK services if they have a permanency goal of adoption, or are free for adoption, and do not have an identified adoptive resource. The program is designed to serve children for whom it has traditionally been difficult to find families because of age, sibling group membership, or disability. Children served by WWK can be in any type of out-of-home-care placement setting, including family foster care, group care, and residential settings. In addition, DTFA makes it clear that a child's interest in being, or desire to be, adopted is not a prerequisite for participation in the program.

Because the WWK program is intended to be very intensive with regard to the recruitment activities provided by staff, WWK recruiters are expected to carry small caseloads. WWK program sites are permitted to prioritize among eligible children. For example, some sites focus on older teens, children in care for the longest periods of time, or those who have already had significant adoption recruitment activities conducted on their behalf.

The recommended caseload size for each recruiter is 20, with a maximum of 25. Children on the caseload may be at different levels of adoption preparedness, may have different levels of prior recruitment, and may have been waiting for varying lengths of time. A recruiter's caseload should consist of both "active status" children and "monitoring or inactive status" children. At any given time the recruiter should be intensively recruiting for 12 to 15 children, or those in "active" status. The remaining children on the recruiter's caseload may be in a less intensive phase of the recruitment process,

and would be classified as "monitoring" or "inactive" status. For example, a child who is matched with a family and is in a pre-adoptive placement, or a child who requires greater adoption preparation, may not be in the active recruitment phase but is still on the recruiter's caseload and being monitored by the recruiter. A child may also be considered part of the caseload but "inactive" if he or she is a runaway or is continuously and adamantly opposed to adoption, or is physically unavailable due to incarceration or hospitalization. Even if active recruitment is not occurring on behalf of a particular child, recruiters are still expected to have periodic contact with the children or the child's child welfare worker.

No time limit is set for the provision of WWK services for a particular child. However, DTFA allows recruiters to remove children from the caseload when the child's adoption has been finalized, the court has granted legal guardianship, or the child welfare worker has changed the child's permanency goal and the recruiter no longer has access to the child and child's files, the child ages out of foster care and his/her case is closed, or if the recruiter has employed every possible child-focused recruitment strategy with active recruitment for at least two years. Additionally, recruiters may remove children for certain other circumstances, including the child being over the age of consent for adoption and consistently and adamantly opposed to adoption, or the recruiter determining that he or she cannot successfully match the child with an adoptive family (though this is considered a unique situation requiring further explanation).

Model components

The WWK model as described by DTFA contains eight major components, all of which are expected to be employed for each child being served by WWK. In Section 4, we describe how research sites are actually implementing these components in practice. However, below are DTFA's brief descriptions of what each component entails.

• *Initial case referral.* Recruiters are expected to contact the child's child welfare worker to introduce the role of WWK, gather initial referral information, establish a date to begin review of the child's case file, and schedule an initial meeting with the child.

• *Relationship with child.* Recruiters are expected to meet with the child monthly, at a minimum, to develop trust and openness and facilitate their assessment of the child's adoption readiness, prepare the child for adoption, and develop an appropriate recruitment plan, preferably in person and one-on-one.

• *Case record review.* Recruiters are expected to conduct an in-depth review of the existing case file. An exhaustive case record review may take several days. The recruiter is expected to develop a system to document: date and reason child entered the system; child's most recent profile/assessment; chronological placement history; significant services provided currently or in the past; identification of needed services; all significant people in the child's life past and present including child welfare worker, foster parents, attorney, CASA (Court Appointed Special Advocate) volunteer, teacher, therapist, relatives, mentor, faith-based representative, extracurricular activity leader, etc.; and the next court date.

• *Assessment.* Recruiters are expected to determine the child's strengths, challenges, desires, preparedness for adoption and whether the child has needs that should be addressed before moving forward with the adoption process. If so, the recruiter is expected to work with the child's child welfare worker to assure that these needs are met. A written assessment should be developed initially and updated quarterly to enhance the child-focused recruitment plan.

- *Adoption preparation.* Recruiters are expected to ensure that the child is prepared for adoption. During the matching process, the recruiter is expected to assure that the prospective adoptive family is adequately prepared to meet the needs of the child.

- *Network building.* Recruiters are expected to meet with significant adults and maintain regular and ongoing contact with the following individuals: child's child welfare worker, foster parent, attorney, CASA volunteer, teacher, therapist, relatives, mentor, faith-based representative, extracurricular activity leader, etc. Regular and ongoing contacts with persons close to and knowledgeable about the child are expected to facilitate recruitment activities. Monthly contact with the child's child welfare worker is expected and seen as essential.

- *Recruitment plan.* Based on the case file review, interviews with significant adults, and the input of the child, recruiters are expected to develop a comprehensive recruitment plan or enhance the existing recruitment plan. The recruiter's plan for each child is expected to be customized and defined by the child's needs. It is expected that the plan will be reviewed quarterly and updated as needed.

- *Diligent search.* Recruiters are expected to conduct a diligent search of potential adoptive families and identify connections to additional resources. Recruiters are expected to conduct aggressive follow-up with contacts identified, with the knowledge and approval of the child's child welfare worker.

In addition to the above components, the child may be included in other general adoption recruitment efforts; however, general efforts such as internet photo listings and media profiles are not permitted to be the initial or predominant recruitment effort for the child. Additionally, a component not explicitly included in the model formally delineated by DTFA, but consistently implemented in practice, is quality control and technical assistance from the Foundation staff. At least once every 18 months, grant managers from DTFA regularly provide on-site visits to WWK staff to discuss and assess each recruiter's implementation of the WWK model. During on-site visits and also through ongoing consultation, the grant managers provide assistance on how to implement components with which recruiters may be struggling, and they also provide assistance on navigating the WWK program's relationship with the public agency. Grant managers also provide close monitoring of each recruiter's caseload and ensure that staff are diligently entering data into the WWK Online Database, to make sure that recruitment activities are accurately documented. DTFA staff are generally available on a daily basis by email and phone to address any issues that may arise for program staff.

Table 1 contrasts the child-focused recruitment activities expected and required by the WWK model with the child-specific/targeted recruitment activities frequently used in adoption agencies.

Recruitment activity	Child-focused WWK model	Child-specific
Initial child referral	Recruiters contact the child's caseworker to introduce the role of WWK, gather initial referral information, establish a date to begin review of the child's case file, and schedule an initial meeting with the child.	Summary of child's history only
Relationship with child	Recruiters meet with the child monthly, at a minimum, to develop trust and openness and facilitate their assessment of the child's adoption readiness, prepare the child for adoption, and develop an appropriate recruitment plan, preferably in person and one-on-one.	Contact with child focused on recruitment activities
Case record review	Recruiters conduct an in-depth review of the existing case file. An exhaustive case record review may take several days.	Summary of child's history only
Assessment	Recruiters determine the child's strengths, challenges, desires, preparedness for adoption and whether the child has needs that should be addressed before moving forward with the adoption process.	Not typically the job of the recruiter
Adoption preparation	Recruiters ensure that the child is prepared for adoption. During the matching process, the recruiter is expected to assure that the prospective adoptive family is adequately prepared to meet the needs of the child.	Assumed to have been completed when recruitment begins
Network building	Recruiters meet with significant adults and maintain regular and ongoing contact with the child's caseworker, foster parent, attorney, CASA volunteer, teacher, therapist, relatives, etc. Monthly contact with the child's caseworker is expected.	Minimal involvement beyond approval of recruitment activities
Recruitment plan	Based on the case file review, interviews with significant adults, and the input of the child, recruiters develop a comprehensive customized recruitment plan or enhance the existing recruitment plan.	Existing recruitment tools used for children as appropriate
Diligent search	Recruiters conduct a diligent search for potential adoptive families and identify connections to additional resources. Recruiters conduct aggressive follow-up with contacts identified, with the approval of the child's caseworker.	Assumed to have been completed when recruitment begins

Table 1. WWK child-focused recruitment compared to child-specific recruitment

Overall WWK program

Through April, 2010, the Dave Thomas Foundation for Adoption had funded 133 Wendy's Wonderful Kids recruiter positions across the United States and Canada. The map below (Figure 1) depicts the locations of the active recruiter locations as of April, 2010, distinguishing among locations that participated in the study in different ways. Red markers indicate Wendy's Wonderful Kids sites, and the subset of these denoted with stars also participated in the impact evaluation and interviews.

Legend:
- ● WWK site
- ⭐ WWK impact study & interview site
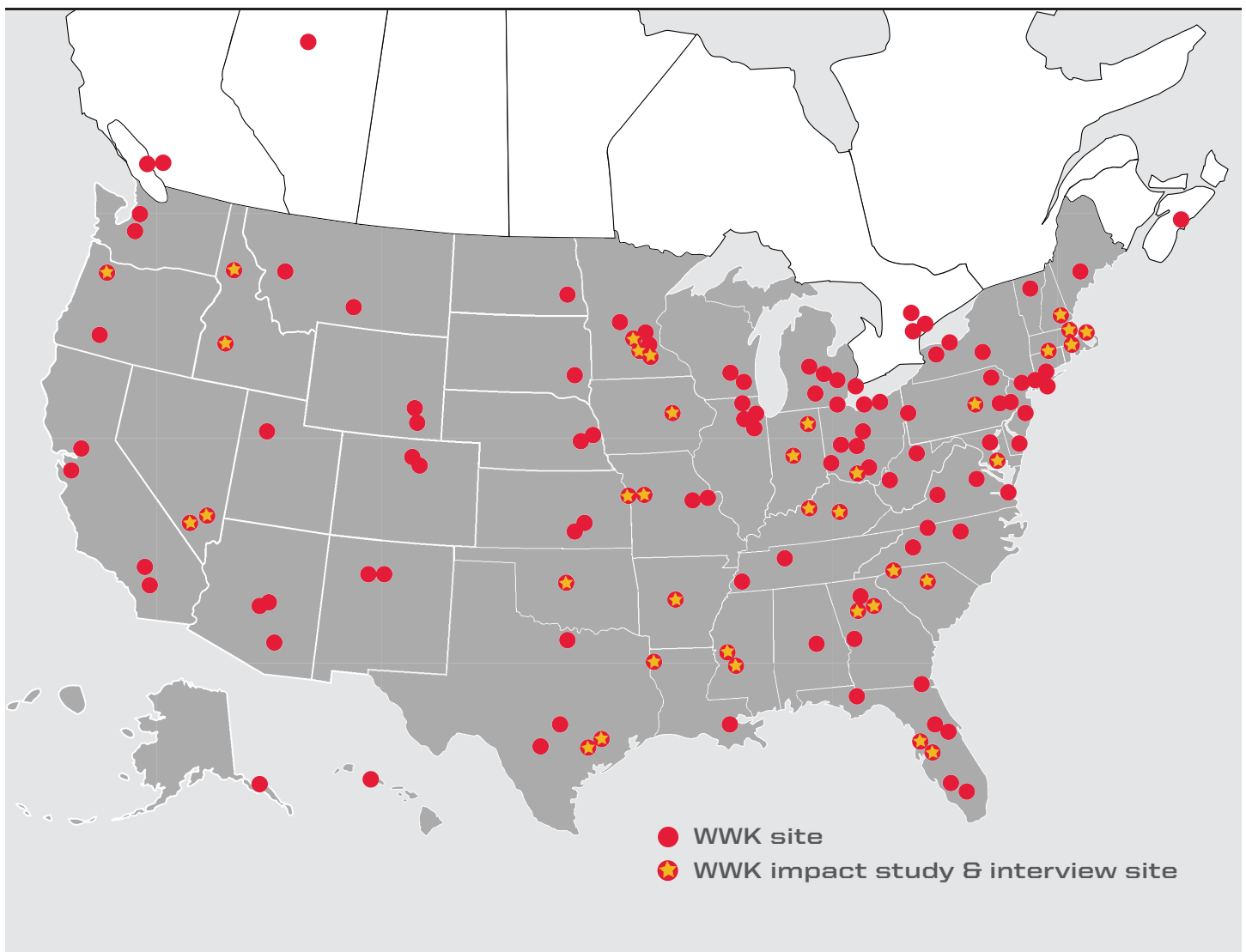
Figure 1. WWK recruiter locations, as of April, 2010

The first WWK programs were launched in 2004 in seven American states, and by 2010, 122 active recruiters were in all 50 states and the District of Columbia, as well as in four Canadian provinces. Figure 2 below depicts the timeline for the growth of WWK programs between 2004 and April, 2010.
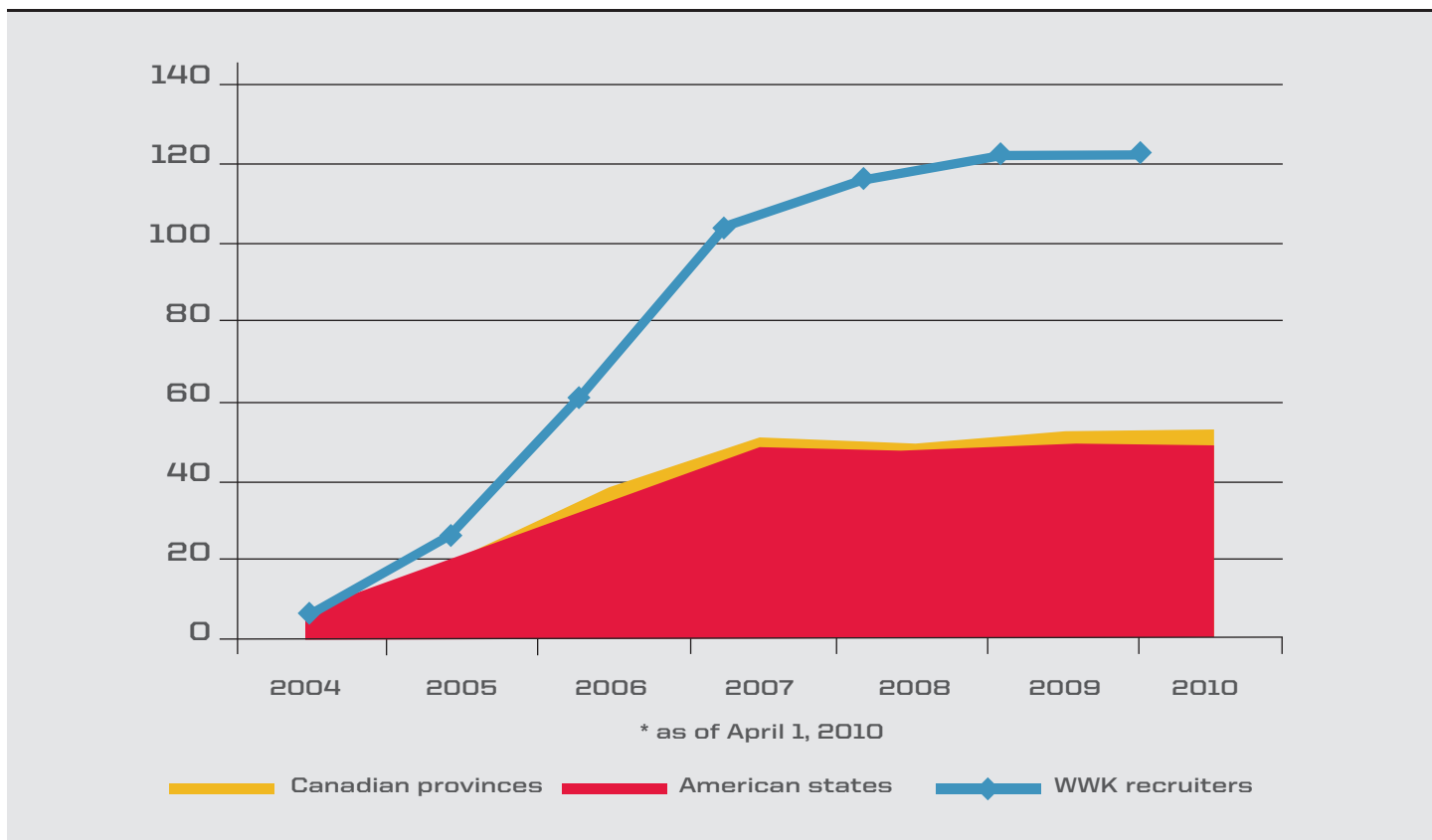
Figure 2. WWK recruiters during the study period, 2004-2010*

WWK grant recipients have been both public child welfare agencies and private adoption agencies. Agencies with WWK recruiters do not have to have custody of the children in foster care they are serving; however, they must have access to these children and the children's files. As illustrated in Figure 3 below, the majority of WWK recruiters have been located in private agencies.
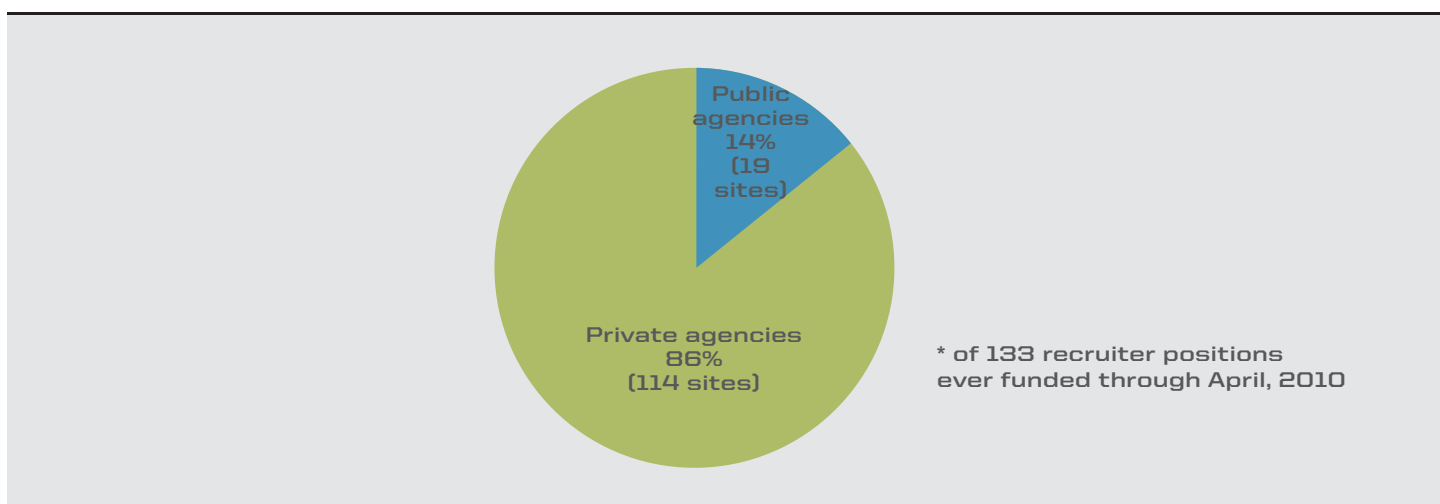
Figure 3. Location of Wendy's Wonderful Kids recruiters: Public vs. private agencies*

Background information collected at the time a recruiter or supervisor started working with WWK and survey data collected at the WWK Summits in 2007, 2008, and 2009 provide information on the characteristics of WWK staff.[4] Through April 1, 2010, information has been collected on a total of 198 recruiters and 167 supervisors, as presented in Table 2 below.[5]

Data for this analysis came from written surveys of the WWK recruiters and supervisors. Further details on the surveys are available in Appendix A.

	All recruiters		All supervisors	
	N	%	N	%
Educational background				
Bachelor's degree or less	34	17%	17	6%
Bachelor's degree in social work or related field	82	42%	24	15%
Master's degree in social work or related field	53	27%	80	50%
Master's degree or higher	28	14%	39	24%
Professional background				
Licensed social worker	53	27%	69	43%
Previously employed by WWK agency	54	27%	118	77%
Previously employed by child welfare agency	87	44%	67	43%
Prior experience in child welfare services	154	78%	138	83%
Prior experience in foster care adoption	121	61%	124	74%
Prior experience in child-focused adoption recruitment techniques	61	31%	88	53%
Prior experience working in the local community	143	72%	133	80%
Prior experience working with local child welfare agency	121	61%	119	71%
Supervisor has prior experience supervising…				
Social workers	—	—	120	72%
Workers conducting adoption recruitment	—	—	93	56%
Workers carrying a caseload of children available for adoption	—	—	89	53%
How recruiter heard about WWK position				
Was working at WWK agency	54	27%	118	77%
Recruited for position by WWK agency	34	17%	12	7%
Word of mouth	44	22%	12	7%
Other	87	44%	50	30%
Employment				
Full-time recruiter	172	87%	—	—
Part-time recruiter	25	13%	—	—
Supervisor works at same location as recruiter				
All the time			125	79%
Sometimes	—	—	23	14%
Never	—	—	11	7%

Table 2. WWK staff characteristics, as of April 1, 2010

Table 2. Continued

Demographic characteristics	All recruiters		All supervisors	
	N	%	N	%
Age				
Less than 30 years	62	32%	7	5%
>= 30 and <40 years	78	40%	51	34%
>= 40 and <50 years	24	12%	39	26%
50 years or older	30	15%	52	35%
Female	178	90%	132	86%
Hispanic	9	5%	10	7%
Race				
Caucasian	123	62%	121	79%
African American	60	30%	24	16%
Other	14	7%	8	5%
Total	**198**		**167**	

• *Education.* Approximately half of the WWK recruiters have a college degree and half have master's degrees. Two out of three recruiters have training in social work at either the bachelor's or master's level. The majority of WWK supervisors are trained at the master's level or higher.

• *Professional background.* Both recruiters and supervisors bring a wealth of experience to their roles with WWK. The majority of recruiters and supervisors have experience in child welfare services and foster care adoption, and many were previously employed by the child welfare agency. Knowledge of child-focused adoption recruitment techniques is also common, with approximately one-third of recruiters and one-half of supervisors having such experience when hired. Most recruiters and supervisors bring knowledge of the local area and its resources to their roles with WWK, having previously worked in the same community.

Supervisors were also asked about their prior supervisory experiences; most had experience supervising social workers and over half of all supervisors had experience supervising workers conducting adoption recruitment and/or carrying a caseload of children available for adoption.

• *Staff recruitment.* WWK staff described how they first heard about WWK position openings. Recruiters commonly learned about openings through prior employment with the WWK agency or word of mouth. Approximately one out of five recruiters was recruited for the position by the WWK agency. Most supervisors already were working at the WWK agency at the time they started their position, while a handful were recruited specifically for that position or found out about the opening through word of mouth.

• *Employment status and location.* Most recruiters work full-time in their WWK capacities. Supervisors were asked whether they work at the same location as the recruiter. While most do, a few supervisors never work in the same location as the recruiter and some are only sometimes co-located with the recruiter.

- *Demographics.* Recruiters and supervisors answered questions about their age, gender, race and ethnicity. Most recruiters are women under 40 years old. Five percent are Hispanic, and recruiters are predominantly white or African American. The vast majority of supervisors are also female and non-Hispanic, although a higher percentage of supervisors are white. Supervisors tend to be older than recruiters, with very few under the age of 30 and one in three older than 50.

- *Tenure.* Based on account activation and deactivation dates for the WWK Online Database, we estimated the tenure of those recruiters and supervisors; see Figure 4 below. The majority of recruiters and supervisors worked with the program for one year or longer, although approximately one-third of WWK staff worked with the program for less than one year. These estimates include temporary recruiters and supervisors who may have been covering a colleague's caseload on a short-term basis. Staff turnover by site varied, with many sites (50 percent) having just one recruiter over the course of their grant and some sites having up to four recruiters due to turnover (three percent). Each WWK site employed an average of 1.7 recruiters over the course of its grant. Sites may have multiple supervisors at one time, making supervisor turnover less straightforward to estimate. Approximately 40 percent of sites had just one supervisor, while one in 10 sites employed four or more supervisors over the course of their grants; the average number of supervisors at each site was two.
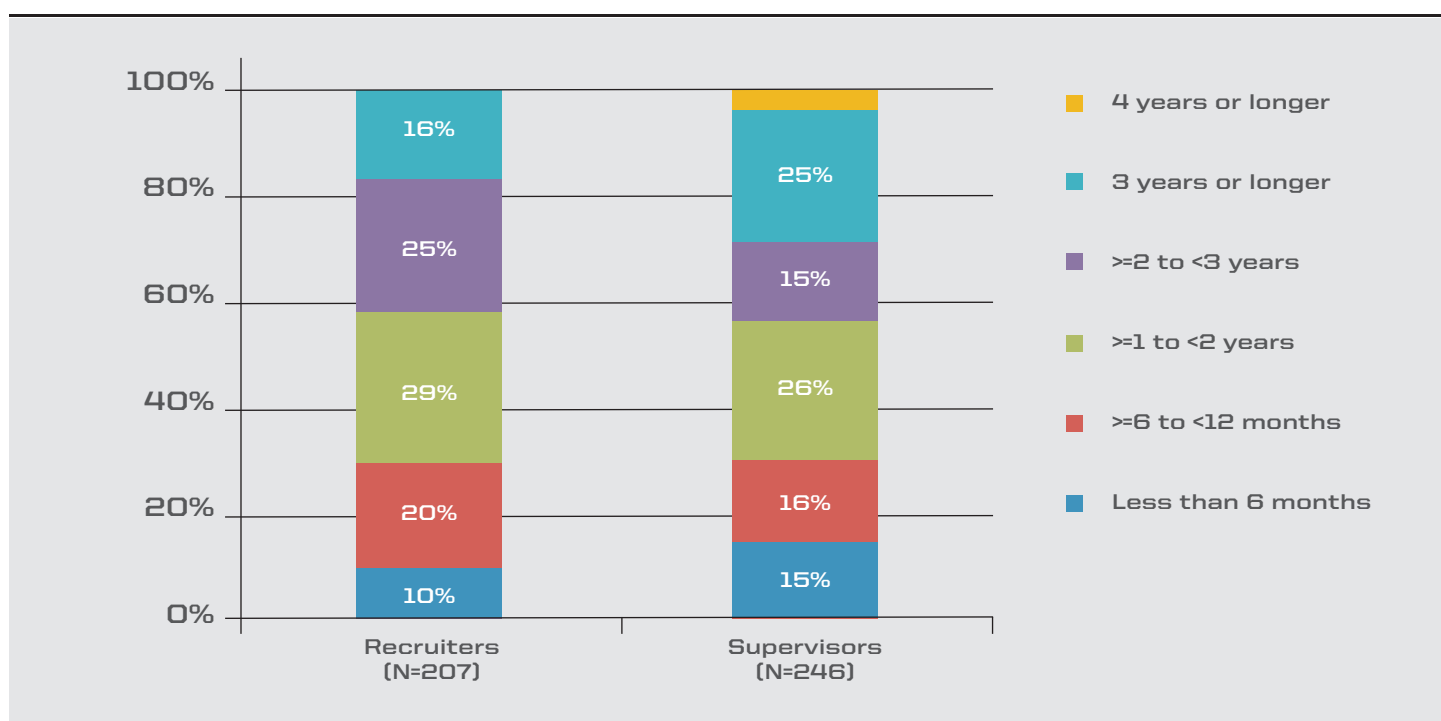
Figure 4. Distribution of WWK staff by tenure, as of April 1, 2010

WWK clients

As of April 1, 2010, 5,635 children had ever been served by the WWK program.[6] Table 3 presents information on child characteristics and child welfare history among those children ever served (i.e., regardless of whether their case was open or closed by April 1, 2010), and Figure 5 presents information on those children whose cases were closed as of April 1, 2010.

Data used for this analysis came from the WWK Online Database, the case management system used by the WWK recruiters to track information about the children on their caseload. Further information about the WWK Online Database is available in Appendix A.

	All children served	
	N	%
Child characteristics		
Age at referral		
0-2 years	248	5%
3-5 years	545	10%
6-8 years	869	16%
9-11 years	1,256	23%
12-14 years	1,639	30%
15 or older	849	16%
Sex		
Male	3,289	58%
Female	2,344	42%
Race/Ethnicity		
Non-Hispanic white	1,989	37%
Non-Hispanic black	2,265	42%
Other or multiple races, non-Hispanic	390	7%
Hispanic	691	13%
Diagnosed disability		
Emotionally disturbed	1,495	30%
Physical handicap	179	4%
Learning disability	1,113	22%
Prenatal drug exposure	433	9%
Drug/alcohol	105	2%
Medically fragile	146	3%
HIV positive	6	0%
Other	508	10%
One diagnosed disability		
Yes	2,279	45%
No	2,803	55%
Two or more diagnosed disabilities		
Yes	1,180	23%
No	4,036	77%
Referred with siblings		
Yes	2,329	42%
No	3,261	58%
Child's child welfare history		
Reason for entering court system (current episode)		
Neglect	3,710	70%
Physical abuse	1,442	28%
Emotional abuse	978	19%
Unable to care for child	1,263	24%
Abandonment	519	10%
Substance abuse	1,293	25%
Sexual abuse	732	15%
Voluntary relinquishment	305	6%
Other	490	9%

Table 3. Children served by WWK, as of April 1, 2010

Table 3. Continued

	All children served	
	N	**%**
Parental rights terminated by time of referral		
Yes	4,284	78%
No	1,209	22%
Years between first court contact and referral		
<= 1 year	286	6%
> 1 year and <= 2 years	697	14%
> 2 years and <= 3 years	781	16%
> 3 years and <= 4 years	704	14%
> 4 years and <= 6 years	985	20%
> 6 years and <= 10 years	986	20%
More than 10 years	500	10%
Placement at referral		
Family foster (relative)	115	2%
Family foster (non-relative)	3,721	74%
Runaway	11	0%
Trial home visit	4	0%
Institution	9	0%
Supervised independent living	626	13%
Group home	358	7%
Other	164	3%
Prior failed adoptions[1]		
Pre-finalization		
Yes	718	14%
No	4,522	86%
Post-finalization		
Yes	408	8%
No	4,846	92%
Past recruitment efforts		
Minimal - general/targeted	1,627	29%
Minimal - child specific	903	16%
Extensive - general/targeted	402	7%
Extensive - child specific	223	4%
Number of placements before referral to WWK		
0-1	1,195	24%
2-5	2,374	47%
6-10	1,033	20%
More than 10	478	9%
Total	**5,635**	

[1]*Among children added to the database after September, 2007 when this question changed.*
NOTE: Percentages may not sum to 100 in percent distributions within categories due to rounding.

• *Demographics*. Almost half of the children served by the WWK program are age 12 or older, and few children were under age 5 at the time of their referral. More males are served by the program than females (58 percent, compared

to 42 percent). Forty-two percent of children are African American/black (non-Hispanic), and slightly fewer (37 percent) are white (non-Hispanic). Hispanic children make up 13 percent of the program population. Children are commonly referred to WWK in sibling groups, and approximately four in 10 children served by WWK have a sibling who is also in the program.

• *Disabilities.* Almost half (45 percent) of all children served by WWK have at least one diagnosed disability, with approximately one in four having two or more diagnosed disabilities. Most commonly, it is reported that children are emotionally disturbed or have a learning disability.

• *Prior child welfare history.* Most children served by WWK (70 percent) entered the child welfare system due to neglect. Physical abuse, substance abuse, and parental inability to care for the child were other common reasons for entry. By the time children are referred to WWK, most (78 percent) have had their parental rights terminated, and in most cases, over two years have lapsed since the child's first court contact. For three in 10 children referred to WWK, more than six years have passed since their first court contact, although they may not have been in the custody of the child welfare agency for that entire time.

At the time of referral to WWK, most children (74 percent) were living in a non-relative foster home, and 20 percent were living in a group home, institution, or supervised independent living placement. While the majority of children served by WWK had lived in five or fewer placements at the time of referral, 20 percent had lived in six to 10 placements and nine percent had lived in 10 or more placements.

Many of the children served by WWK have experienced unsuccessful previous recruitment efforts. However, children have typically received minimum general recruitment, with only four percent of children having experienced intensive child-focused recruitment similar to the core components of the WWK model. Some children served by the program have also experienced prior failed adoptions; 14 percent have had a pre-adoptive placement disrupt pre-finalization and eight percent have had an adoption dissolve post-finalization.
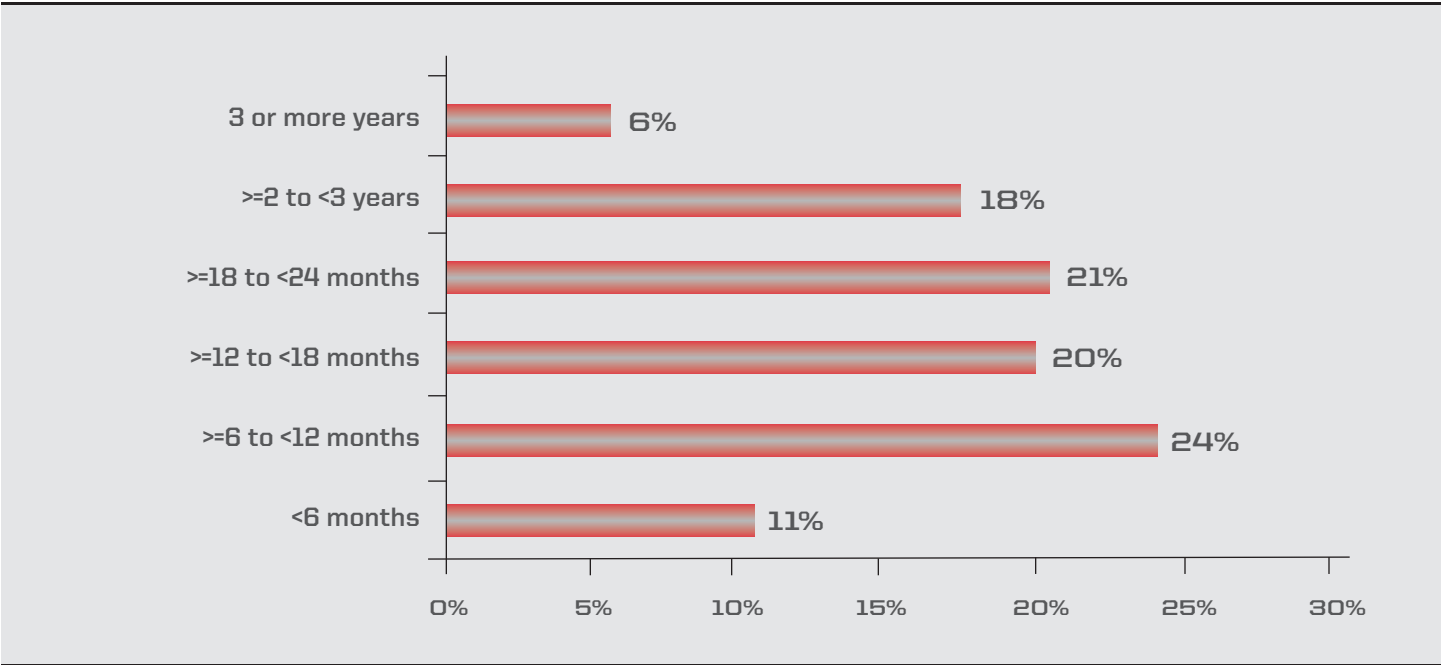
Figure 5. Time spent on WWK caseload among children with closed cases, as of April 1, 2010 (n=3,3,40)

Case closure

Among children with closed WWK cases, most received services for at least one year, according to data from the WWK Online Database. Six percent of cases remained open for three or more years. Adoption is the most common case closure reason, and almost half of children with closed cases have been adopted (see Figure 6 below). Among these children, nearly one in 10 (nine percent) had a recruiter report that the child had been adopted either by someone who previously knew the child, or by someone who was related to the child. It is not clear from available data how many of these children were already living with the family who ultimately adopted them. For one in four children, the reason for case closure is that the public child welfare agency closed the child's case or changed the child's goal. Overall, the overwhelming majority of WWK cases are closed either because a child has achieved permanency or due to reasons outside of the WWK program's control, such as the child's child welfare case closing, or the goal changed to something other than adoption. For only a small minority of children are cases closed because recruiters have expended every possible effort over at least a two-year period (one percent, described as "sufficient effort" in Figure 6 below).
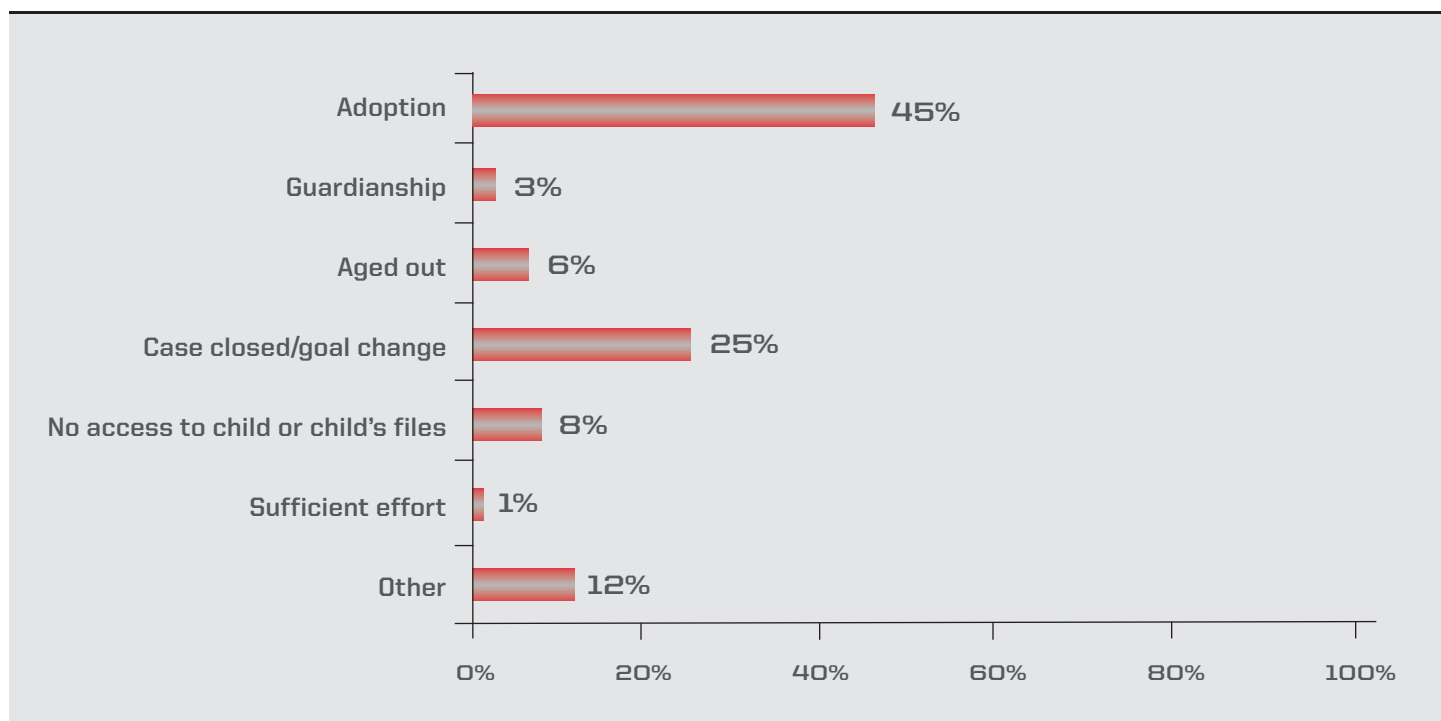
Figure 6. Case closure reasons among children with closed cases, as of April 1, 2010 (n=3,3,40)

For 12 percent of the children, the recruiter selected "other" in the WWK Online Database as the reason for case closure and had the opportunity to write in a reason. Often, these open-ended responses overlapped with other reasons explicitly asked about in the system, such as adoption and guardianship.[7] If adoption or guardianship was described as an "other" reason for case closure, we back-coded the data to ensure that we included these children in our tabulations of children with adoption and finalized guardianships. Other individual responses included such unique case circumstances as children who wanted to stay with a family but did not want to be adopted, reunification with members of the child's birth family, and reasons for a child's unavailability (e.g., incarceration, long-term hospitalization).

Disruption

One measure of the "success" of an adoption is whether it dissolves or disrupts, but both events have been difficult to study in prior research. The field has not come to a consensus on a concrete, universally accepted definition of adoption disruption. Not only do data systems define these events differently across localities, but they also do not adequately capture these events when they do occur. Information on adoption dissolution — that is, adoptions that fail post-finalization — is particularly difficult to obtain, given the privacy and confidentiality of adoptive families after legal finalization. The available research finds disruption rates to be between 10 and 25 percent for children adopted from foster care.[8] Rates of adoption dissolution appear far lower with a recent study finding a seven percent figure.[9] Prior research has shown that rates of disruption and dissolution increase with the age of the child[10] and families in which children display behavioral or emotional problems are more likely to disrupt.[11]

It is not possible to track dissolutions among children served by WWK, because at this point, the children's cases would be closed and data no longer entered into the WWK Online Database. However, recruiters are asked to enter information about disruptions that children on the caseload experience. Among all children ever served through April 1, 2010 and who had ever experienced a pre-adoptive placement through WWK, two out of 10 (21 percent) have had a recruiter report a disrupted placement while the child was on the WWK caseload. Among children who experienced a disruption, reasons that recruiters have reported include child behavior problems (58 percent), a lack of needed resources (12 percent), the child wanted to end the placement (13 percent), the family wanted to end the placement (65 percent), a relative came forward to adopt the child (less than 1 percent), and the custodial agency chose not to move forward with the adoption (8 percent). Additionally, if none of these reasons (which were specifically asked in the WWK Online Database) applied, or if an additional reason applied, the WWK recruiter could manually enter a reason for the disruption. Among children who experienced a disruption, an "other" reason was entered for 22 percent. Reasons often had to do with problems with the adoptive family (e.g. marital problems or illness), problems with the siblings already in the home, or difficulties managing the child's behavior.

Given that the rate of disruptions found in prior research is 10 to 25 percent, and given that the disruption rate is expected to be on the higher end for older children and children with behavioral problems — specifically the groups targeted for services by the WWK intervention — the rate of 21 percent found among WWK children who had been placed pre-adoptively seems within the range of what might be expected.

When looking at the subset of children whose cases were closed within the subsequent 11 months among those served by April, 2010, and who had experienced a pre-adoptive placement, the disruption rate is 17 percent. Of these children, 41 percent were later adopted through the WWK program.

Even though our examination of disruption among children added to the WWK caseload by April, 2010, allows for a follow-up period of 11 months, it is important to note that one out of four had not had their cases closed by the end of the follow-up period, and some of these children may yet experience a disruption. Indeed, a survival analysis examining all children served through March, 2011, indicates that the longer a case remains open, the more likely a child who has been placed pre-adoptively is to experience a disruption. Eight months following pre-adoptive placement, the cumulative hazard of disruption is 0.21; looking at cases that were opened before April, 2010 but closed due to adoption by March, 2011, 46 percent had pre-adoptive placements lasting eight months or less. The cumulative hazard increases with greater time among the remaining children who have not had their adoptions finalized; for example, from 0.29 at 12 months, to 0.40 at

18 months, to .50 at 24 months. Among children adopted by March 2011, and who were served by WWK on or before April, 2010, 70 percent had pre-adoptive placements lasting 12 months or less, 87 percent had pre-adoptive placements lasting 18 months or less, and 95 percent had pre-adoptive placements lasting 24 months or less. Thus, while the cumulative hazard of disruption does increase with longer pre-adoptive placements, few children have pre-adoptive placements lasting 18 months or more.

In analyses not reported here, we have also seen that, while many children served by WWK are matched, not all matches result in pre-adoptive placements, and some children experience multiple matches. A challenge for WWK program staff is determining how aggressively to move forward with matches and pre-adoptive placements. The more aggressive, the greater the likelihood that a child may experience a failed match or a disruption, an experience that is likely disappointing and potentially traumatic for children (and one reason reported in some of the site visits for the reluctance to make matches and pre-adoptive placements in the services-as-usual framework). But moving forward less aggressively with matches and pre-adoptive placements means that some children may be less likely to ever find themselves in a permanent adoptive family, or if they do, they may achieve permanency more slowly.

It is interesting to consider that much of the extant research on factors linked to the success or failure of adoptions focus on child and family characteristics, rather than agency-related factors. However, some evidence indicates that lack of parent preparation and misinformation or lack of information about the child are common in failed adoptions; additionally, the availability of social supports and informal supportive services and formal post-adoption supports, agency and staff turnover, and having different staff members responsible for preparing the child and family are other factors that may be associated with disruptions or dissolutions.[2] Given this, the design of the WWK program includes components that not only facilitate adoptive matches, but might also reduce the likelihood of disruption or dissolution of those adoptive matches. However, further research would be needed in order draw any conclusions about the impact of WWK on the likelihood of the success of adoptions, compared with the success of adoptions occurring through non-WWK services.

SECTION 1: WWK CASELOAD CHARACTERISTICS AND CORRELATES OF ADOPTION AND PRE-ADOPTIVE PLACEMENT

In this section, we examine how some child characteristics — as well as a few agency and recruiter characteristics — are associated with adoption and pre-adoptive placement among children served by WWK. Because the emphasis in this section is on examining correlates of adoption, analyses focus on children who were added to the WWK caseload long enough ago that they have had a realistic opportunity both to receive the WWK intervention as intended, and to experience an adoption or a pre-adoptive placement. For this analysis, we selected a sample of children that included all those who had been served for at least six months. Children whose cases were open for fewer than six months were omitted from the analysis, regardless of their reasons for case closure. Additionally, because WWK is an ongoing program, a cut-off date was established such that children added to the caseload after September 1, 2009, were excluded from the sample. The final sample included 4,636 children. Key characteristics of the children and information about the recruiters' educational background are provided in Tables 2 and 3.

Data used for this analysis came from the WWK Online Database, the case management system used by the WWK recruiters to track information about the children on their caseload. Further information about the WWK Online Database is available in Appendix A.

Beginning with a look at how child characteristics are correlated with adoption is important, because any factors that are related to adoption may mediate the association between program implementation and program success, particularly if such factors are also related to the way in which the program is implemented. For instance, if recruiters work particularly diligently to implement the model for children for whom agencies have traditionally experienced challenges in finding adoptive families (that is, for children with characteristics related to a lower likelihood of adoption), then it may appear that optimum performance is associated with lower levels of program success. That is, analyses could identify an inverse relationship between program implementation and program success if we fail to control for the effect of the level of "challengingness" of children. Therefore, identifying child characteristics associated with the likelihood of adoption is important, so that we can untangle these associations from the effect of program implementation on adoption.

Understanding the child correlates of adoption is also important for providing context about the work the WWK staff members are doing. As noted above, the intervention was designed specifically to increase adoptions among children typically considered harder to place. A better understanding about which groups have a lower likelihood of adoption further enhances (and reinforces) our understanding of the groups of children for whom adoption efforts need to be targeted and focused. Some information about correlates of adoption has already been developed in prior research, but this broad sample of children provides a valuable opportunity to add to the prior research.

A recent review of the literature[12] indicates that most studies of permanency among children in foster care find that children who are older, who are African American, or who have physical or mental health problems are less likely to be adopted than other children. This review also found that most studies have not found child gender to be associated with permanency, but those that do identify girls as having a higher likelihood than boys of achieving permanency. One recent study also found the likelihood of adoption to be higher when children's foster parents are married or unmarried couples rather than single, and for children who are girls, and who are Asian American/Pacific Islander or white, who do have a diagnosed physical disability, and who do not have an emotional disturbance. However, the same study found that the effects of these characteristics sometimes vary, depending on the state in which a child resides, and the effect of foster family structure on the likelihood of adoption may vary depending upon child characteristics.[13]

As shown in Table 4, 41 percent of the children in the sample were adopted and 61 percent were either adopted or were in a pre-adoptive placement. The 41 percent include children who had finalized guardianships, as well as those who had been adopted. Overall, 39 percent of children had been adopted, and two percent (representing 107 of the 4,636 children in the sample) had finalized guardianships. Subsequent analyses combine children with guardianships in the group of adopted children. Most of the children were either non-Hispanic black (43 percent) or non-Hispanic white (37 percent), and almost half were age 12 or older at the time of referral to the WWK program. For 79 percent of the children, parental rights had been terminated prior to referral to the WWK program.

Table 4 also shows how the distribution of these characteristics differs across three mutually exclusive subgroups of children, divided according to whether children have been adopted, have not been adopted but have had a pre-adoptive placement, and have been neither adopted nor placed pre-adoptively. The distributions of all the child, recruiter, and agency characteristics differ across the three groups. Notably, compared with children in the other two groups, those who have neither been adopted nor in pre-adoptive placements have higher shares of children who are non-Hispanic black, are boys, were age 12 and older at referral to WWK, had been in six or more placements at referral, who have not had their parents' rights terminated by WWK referral, who are <u>not</u> members of sibling groups, and who are served by private agencies with the WWK grant (rather than public agencies with the WWK grant). The share of children served by WWK

	All children	Adopted[1]	Pre-adoptive placement	Neither adopted nor pre-adoptively placed
Child adopted[1] (N=4,636)	41%			
Children adopted (excluding guardianships)	39%			
Children with finalized guardianships	2%			
Child adopted[1] or in pre-adoptive placement (N=4636)	61%			
Length of time served (N=4636)				
>=6 to <8 months	4%	3%	1% AAA	6% AAA,PPP
>=8 to <12 months	11%	14%	2% AAA	12% AA, PPP
>=12 to <24 months	43%	53%	24% AAA	41% AAA, PPP
>=24 to <36 months	27%	22%	39% AAA	25% A, PPP
>=36 to <48 months	11%	6%	21% AAA	12% AAA, PPP
>=48 months	5%	2%	12% AAA	5% AAA, PPP
Child race and Hispanic origin (N=4384)				
Non-Hispanic white only	84%	37%	40%	34% A, PPP
Non-Hispanic black only	43%	41%	38% A	48% AAA, PPP
Non-Hispanic other/multiple races	7%	7%	8%	7%
Hispanic	13%	14%	14%	11% AAA, PP
Child is male (N=4634)	59%	58%	55%	61% AA, PPP
Child age at referral (N=4442)				
Age 0-2	4%	8%	3% AAA	2% AAA, PPP
Age 3-5	10%	16%	10% AAA	4% AAA, PPP
Age 6-8	16%	23%	16% AAA	9% AAA, PPP
Age 9-11	23%	25%	27%	20% AAA, PPP
Age 12-14	31%	22%	33% AAA	40% AAA, PPP
Age 15 or older	15%	7%	12% AAA	25% AAA, PPP
Child is part of sibling group served by WWK (N=4598)	42%	53%	41% AAA	31% AAA, PPP
Child had any failed adoption prior to WWK (N=4329)	21%	17%	28% AAA	21% AA, PPP
Number of child's placements at referral to WWK (N=4148)	25%	29%	19% AAA	23% AAA, PPP
0-1 placements	45%	51%	43% AAA	39% AAA, PP
2-5 placements	20%	15%	28% AAA	22% AAA, PPP
6-10 placements	10%	5%	10% AAA	15% AAA, PPP
>10 placements				
Parental rights terminated by time of referral2 (N=4528)	79%	81%	74% AAA	78% AA, PP
Child entered foster care due to sexual abuse (N=4148)	14%	11%	17% AAA	14% AA, P
Child has any disabling conditions (N=4197)	44%	42%	50% AAA	43% PPP

Table 4. Percentage of children adopted, pre-adoptively placed, and neither adopted nor pre-adoptively placed by child characteristics among children added to caseload by September 1, 2009 and served at least 6 months

Table 4. Continued

	All children	Adopted[1]	Pre-adoptive placement	Neither adopted nor pre-adoptively placed
Agency administering grant is public (N=4618)	12%	13%	14%	10% AAA, PPP
Recruiter's educational attainment (N=4227)				
College degree or less	19%	21%	17% AA	18% AAA
College degree in social work or related field	40%	37%	47% AAA	40% A, PPP
Master's degree in social work or related field	26%	25%	23%	28% A, PPP
Master's degree or higher	15%	16%	12% AAA	14% A

Note: Adoption/pre-adoptive placement is associated with all characteristics shown (p<.05).
[1]107 children with cases closed due to guardianship are included with adopted children.
[2]This indicator includes some children whose TPR occurred after referral to WWK. Recruiters recorded each child's TPR status at the time the child was added to the WWK caseload, but some recruiters updated the child's TPR status at a later time. Of children recorded as having had TPR, 89 percent had the TPR occur prior to referral, four percent had it occur after being added to the caseload, and seven percent did not have a date indicated for TPR.

[A]Statistically significantly different from the percentage for adopted children (AAA: p<.01, AA: p<.05; A: p<.10)
[P]Statistically significantly different from the percentage for children pre-adoptively placed (AAA: p<.01, AA: p<.05; A: p<.10)

recruiters with a college degree in social work or a related field is highest among the group of children placed pre-adoptively.

Other differences involve children with previous failed adoptions, disabilities, and histories of sexual abuse. Specifically, the percentage of children with previous failed adoptions (including dissolutions or disruptions) is higher among children in pre-adoptive placements than among children who are adopted or those in neither adoptive nor pre-adoptive placements. The share of children with disabling conditions is similar among adopted children and among those who have neither been adopted nor placed pre-adoptively, but it is higher among children placed pre-adoptively, and this same pattern is true for children with histories of sexual abuse.

In sum, it is clear that child and recruiter characteristics differ among children who have been adopted, placed pre-adoptively, and neither adopted nor placed pre-adoptively. It does seem that children in the group who have been neither adopted nor placed pre-adoptively tend to have a larger share of characteristics that have been traditionally viewed as linked with difficulty in adoptive placements.

Many of the characteristics shown in Table 4 above, of course, are interrelated. For instance, older children have had time to experience more placements than younger children and to have experienced a failed adoption. For this reason, we also carried out multivariate analyses that allow us to untangle the interrelationships of the child and recruiter characteristics with adoption. We examined this by estimating a model to see how these characteristics are independently associated with the likelihood of adoption, expanding the sample to all children ever served by the WWK program through April 1,

2011. In this model, to account for the fact that children in the sample have been served for differing lengths of time (which affects their likelihood of adoption), we used a Cox proportional hazard model, a method for event history analysis, which accounts for the censoring of the data (i.e., the fact that the outcome of children with open cases is not yet known, as well as the fact that service began at differing times over several years.[14] Standard errors in this model are adjusted for within-agency correlations.[15] Table 5 summarizes findings from this analysis.

A number of characteristics are independently associated with a lower likelihood of adoption. Specifically, the likelihood of adoption is lower among older groups of children than among younger groups (hazard ratios range from 0.77 for ages 6-8 to 0.38 for ages 12-14 with children ages 0-5 as the comparison group, $p<.01$). It is also lower among children with disabling conditions than for those without disabling conditions (hazard ratio=0.84, $p<.05$). Adoption is less likely among non-Hispanic black children than among non-Hispanic white children (hazard ratio=.78, $p<.01$). Children who had experienced six or more placements had a lower likelihood of adoption than those who had been in one placement at referral (hazard ratio=0.70 for six-10 placements and 0.49 for those who had been in more than 10 placements, $p<.01$). Adoption is more likely for children who have had their parental rights terminated than for those who have not (hazard ratio=1.51, $p<.01$). The recruiter and agency characteristics, including recruiter education and whether the agency was

	Hazard ratio	s.e.	
Child race and Hispanic origin (*non-Hispanic white*)			
Non-Hispanic black	0.78	(0.060)	***
Non-Hispanic other	0.84	(0.109)	
Hispanic	0.88	(0.084)	
Child is male	0.92	(0.047)	*
Child age at referral to WWK (*age 0-5*)			
Age 6-8	0.77	(0.060)	***
Age 9-11	0.59	(0.060)	***
Age 12-14	0.38	(0.043)	***
Age 15 or older	0.41	(0.058)	***
Recruiter's educational attainment (>= *college degree*)			
College degree in social work or related field	0.82	(0.112)	
Master's degree in social work or related field	0.81	(0.115)	
Master's degree or higher	1.06	(0.146)	
Length of time child was served in months	—	—	
Child has any disabling conditions	0.84	(0.066)	**
Agency administering grant is public	0.96	(0.139)	
Child is part of sibling group served by WWK	1.23	(0.074)	***
Number of child's placements at referral (*0-1*)	0.79	(0.061)	***

Table 5. Cox proportional hazard model predicting adoption,[1] among all children served (N=6,634)

Table 5. Continued

	Hazard ratio	s.e.
2-5 placements	0.99	(0.075)
6-10 placements	0.70	(0.078) ***
>10 placements	0.49	(0.064) ***
Parental rights terminated by time of referral[2]	1.51	(0.159) ***
Child entered foster care due to sexual abuse	0.85	(0.086)

*: p<.10, **: p<.05, ***: p<.01
[1]Children with cases closed due to guardianship are included with adopted children.
[2]This indicator includes some children whose TPR occurred after referral to WWK. Recruiters recorded each child's TPR status at the time the child was added to the WWK caseload, but some recruiters updated the child's TPR status at a later time. Of children recorded as having had TPR, 89 percent had the TPR occur prior to referral, four percent had it occur after being added to the caseload, and seven percent did not have a date indicated for TPR.

public or private, were not associated with the likelihood of adoption, nor was a child history of sexual abuse. A lower likelihood of adoption for males compared with females was marginally significant (hazard ratio=0.92, p<.10).

SECTION 2: WWK PROGRAM SITE VARIATION IN SERVICES

This section presents implementation findings from focus groups and interviews with WWK staff, public child welfare agency staff, and court representatives in jurisdictions served by 24 WWK grantees, including 35 WWK recruiters. These locations are, with only a few exceptions, the same locations involved in the experimental impact evaluation.[18] We begin with a description of traditional recruitment services and then present WWK staff descriptions of program implementation, including their perceptions of the WWK model, and descriptions of the relationship between WWK programs and the collaborating public child welfare agency. In addition, public agency and court barriers and facilitators to WWK program implementation and outcomes are presented.

During site visits with each WWK random assignment site, we carried out semi-structured, in-person interviews with WWK recruiters, supervisors, and agency directors who are serving children involved in the WWK impact evaluation, as well as interviews and focus groups with public child welfare agency staff and court representatives to collect information on the implementation of the WWK program and the traditional recruitment services provided to children in each locality. The semi-structured approach helped to ensure that similar questions were asked and that a core set of data were collected from all participants, but also allowed for flexibility to pursue topics, where appropriate and relevant, in greater depth. Details on how these interviews were carried out are provided in Appendix A.

Important to the overall evaluation of the WWK program is a description of the traditional recruitment services as well as the preparation of prospective adoptive parents and children. These traditional services are often referred to as "services as usual" in an evaluation framework. Children assigned to the evaluation's control group receive only the traditional services while children assigned to the WWK program receive both traditional services and the services provided by the WWK recruiter. The more similar traditional services are to the WWK model, the less likely WWK is to have a positive impact on adoption above and beyond the effect of traditional services. During visits with each WWK random assignment site, interviews and focus groups with public child welfare agency staff focused on collecting information that would adequately describe the "services as usual" provided by the agency.

Typical recruitment process

The typical adoption recruitment process can best be described in terms of identifying what type of worker is responsible for recruitment efforts, the timing of recruitment efforts, the type of recruitment activities, and how the matching process is implemented.

The WWK random assignment sites are almost equally divided in terms of what type of worker has primary responsibility for the recruitment of adoptive homes for individual children. For almost half the sites, the child's current worker who has primary responsibility for all aspects of casework is also responsible for adoption recruitment efforts. In slightly more than half the sites, a secondary worker has primary responsibility for adoption recruitment; this includes adoption workers who have met the child, as well as recruitment-only workers who tend to have far larger caseloads and who do not maintain a relationship with specific children.

For the most part, adoption recruitment occurs only after termination of parental rights has occurred and the child's case goal is officially changed to adoption. Concurrent planning during which efforts are made toward an adoption goal and another permanency goal simultaneously occurs in only a few sites.

Only a few sites reported their adoption recruitment efforts mirror the WWK program's components, though one-third of the sites reported their recruitment efforts include some of the WWK program elements. However, even in these sites, the similarities to the WWK program are primarily focused on publicizing children on existing adoption websites and reviewing prospective adoptive parents with completed homestudies. Almost half of the sites do not conduct any child-centered recruitment activities as part of their recruitment process.

All sites reported using the media in their recruitment efforts including Wednesday's Child television broadcasts, Thursday's Child newspaper advertisements, and photos of available children as part of a Heart Gallery. In addition, about half the sites reported interagency or internal networking, including collaboration with public agency partners to find/match families or to host regional public agency meetings where information is exchanged about prospective families and available children. Almost every site uses external networking in which private adoption agencies that license and homestudy prospective adoptive families meet with public agency staff to exchange information. Almost every site also utilizes community resources such as faith-based programs, e.g., One Church One Child.

Generally, site visit participants describe no single recruitment activity as being emphasized above others. In fewer than half of the sites, participants reported media activities having the most emphasis; participants in a smaller number of sites reported emphasizing child-focused recruitment and conducting diligent searches for potential kinship adoptions. In very

few sites are recruitment activities conducted earlier in cases with a focus on concurrent planning, while a child's permanency goal was still typically reunification.

Site visit participants were also asked to describe the process by which prospective adoptive parents are "matched" with children needing adoptive homes. In some sites a matching committee makes decisions regarding the adoptive placement, while in only a few sites does an individual worker make these decisions.

Typical child preparation process
Site visit participants were asked who was responsible for preparing children for adoption and to describe the general process for this preparation. Responses were almost equally divided among the child's child welfare worker, adoption worker, and therapist as having primary responsibility for preparing children for adoption. However, about a third of the sites reported that other child team members (e.g., the foster parent, GAL [guardian *ad litem*] or CASA) prepare the child for adoption.

In almost half the sites, respondents reported that more than one individual is responsible for preparing the child for adoption and there is no clear designation of responsibility. In about one-third of the sites, more than one individual is responsible for adoption preparation but there is a clear delineation of responsibility of specific adoption preparation tasks. In over half the sites, the child's therapist assists with the adoption preparation while slightly fewer than half reported engaging other members of the child's team. Only a few sites conduct assessments of children's readiness for adoption and only one site reported having adoption preparation groups for children. Almost one-third of the sites reported no formalized preparation process.

While the sites vary with regard to the age at which children must consent to adoption, over half of the sites reported that recruitment efforts continue even if children of consent age say they do not want to be adopted. However, not all of these sites actually have a policy or practice that requires recruitment efforts to continue even if children report not wanting to be adopted.

Typical family preparation process
The majority of sites reported a team approach to preparation of prospective adoptive families. In fewer than one-third of the sites, one person is responsible for preparing the family. Most sites reported training for prospective adoptive parents as their method of preparation, as well as providing information about the child to the family and assisting the family with the homestudy and other paperwork, i.e., adoption application. In addition, over half of the sites give the prospective adoptive family the opportunity to talk with the members of the child's team. More than half of the sites reported training as the method by which they prepare parents for adoption. In addition, more than half of the public agencies reported hiring private agencies to conduct the trainings and preparation. Post-placement services including respite care, crisis response, and family therapy, were mentioned in several sites. Other resources reported include parent support groups, local foster parent and adoptive parent associations, and parent conferences.

WWK staff descriptions of program implementation

Interviews with WWK recruiters, supervisors, and agency directors followed pre-developed protocols with questions and probes covering individuals' backgrounds and qualifications, as well as the degree to which individual program staff are

providing WWK services in accordance with the WWK child-focused recruitment model. During interviews with WWK recruiters and WWK supervisors, detailed information on all steps of the WWK model was obtained, including (1) the referral process; (2) the WWK recruiter and child relationship; (3) the case record review; (4) assessment of the child's adoption readiness; (5) preparing children for adoption; (6) network building; (7) development of recruitment plans; and (8) diligent search. WWK staff were also asked about adoption matching and post-match activities. Finally, staff were asked about supervision activities and communication between recruiters and supervisors. General processes, similarities, and variation across the 25 random assignment sites are described in the sections below.

This section presents information on the variation across WWK random assignment sites of the different components of the WWK model from initial referral of the child to diligent search efforts. In addition, matching and post-match activities and WWK recruiter supervision are described.

Initial referral process

The referral process is the beginning of the WWK program model. In most of the sites, the public agency worker, i.e., the child's child welfare worker, refers the child to the program. However, in about half of the sites, the WWK recruiter solicits referrals to the program, and in some sites, WWK staff reported working together with the public agency worker to identify appropriate children. Some sites have had to revise their referral processes over time depending on whether the WWK program was receiving a sufficient number of referrals to fill the WWK recruiter's caseload. More often than not, soliciting referrals occurred at the start up of the WWK program and most sites now receive sufficient referrals by allowing public agency workers to refer children to the program. In most sites, WWK staff consider there to be a formalized referral process, primarily consisting of the use of a referral form to track referrals to the program.

Dave Thomas Foundation for Adoption's description of INITIAL CHILD REFERRAL

Contact the child's caseworker to introduce the role of Wendy's Wonderful Kids, gather initial referral information, establish date to begin case file review and schedule initial meeting with child.

The referral process is important to maintaining a full caseload for the WWK recruiter. As mentioned above, in at least some sites, the process was modified at some point during the evaluation period to allow for a sufficient number of referrals to be obtained. In most sites, WWK staff members feel that their referral and recruitment process is effective at maintaining a full caseload. WWK staff in only one site reported that the WWK recruiter's caseload is generally not at capacity. Only a few WWK staff reported that the referral process is ineffective. In these sites, WWK staff noted that child welfare workers do not seem to understand the referral process and are not sure which children are eligible for the program. In some sites, child welfare workers mentioned not wanting to refer children because of the random assignment design and some children not being able to receive the services.

In most sites, WWK staff noted the referral process has improved over time. WWK staff in almost all sites reported that the referral procedures, the characteristics of the children referred, and/or eligibility requirements for the children have changed over time. Many sites reported that over time, they began receiving a larger number of referrals for children who have previously been thought of as the most difficult for whom to recruit adoptive families, such as medically fragile children, those exhibiting more severe behaviors, and those with disrupted pre-adoptive placements or dissolved adoptions. Only a few sites reported that they began receiving more referrals for younger children (age 8 to 12), and for children who have spent less time in foster care. As child welfare workers became more familiar with the program, they seemed to become more willing to refer cases to the program.

Most WWK recruiters make contact with the child's child welfare worker immediately or within days following a referral. In a few sites, WWK staff reported that it is usually a couple of weeks before the recruiter and child welfare worker make contact with each other.

During on-site interviews, WWK staff were asked about the goal of the first contact with the child welfare worker. There appear to be several goals. The most frequently cited goal is to obtain information about the child and the status of the child's case. WWK staff typically gather information such as the child's current placement, background on the child's case, previous recruitment activities conducted for the child, the child's likes and dislikes, any past disrupted matches or pre-adoptive placements, and the child's level of understanding about adoption. Other goals mentioned less frequently include educating the child's worker about WWK and the recruiter's role (if the worker has not previously worked with the WWK recruiter), as well as building a relationship with the child's worker. In addition, WWK staff mention that this first contact allows for a discussion about logistics for conducting the case record review and the recruiter's first contact with the child.

Barriers and facilitators. The most frequently cited challenge to obtaining referrals is the lack of knowledge about the WWK program among public agency workers. In addition, in some sites, WWK staff reported the public agency workers do not want to work with other specialized recruitment staff. Some child welfare workers seem to be territorial about having another person work on their case. Also, some child welfare workers may not feel that recruitment will be effective, or that adoption is appropriate for a particular case, and thus will not refer certain children to the program. WWK staff in very few sites reported a poor relationship with public agency staff; however, WWK staff in a few sites noted that public agency workers object to the random assignment design of the evaluation and this reduces their willingness to refer children to the program. A few sites also noted insufficient communication between the WWK staff and public agency workers as a barrier to effective recruitment of children for the program.

None of the barriers appears unique to WWK staff. In fact, WWK staff reported many ways in which they have overcome the challenges. WWK staff in almost all sites noted ways in which they educate public agency workers about the WWK program and improve communication and relationships with public agency staff. WWK staff may regularly attend public agency-led matching meetings or staffings during which children who are waiting for adoption are discussed so that the program remains visible. WWK staff will also make presentations to adoption staff on a regular basis to increase the visibility of the program.

Along with challenges there are also many facilitators to the referral processes. For example, in several sites, the WWK staff's prior history with the public agency is a facilitator to obtaining referrals to the program. In addition, the good reputation of the WWK staff and successful adoptive placements with previous cases has also "greased the wheels" for referrals to the program. Staff in several sites also noted that establishing a process for WWK staff having a lot of communication with the public agency staff and having the WWK staff be a part of the child's "team" are factors that facilitate obtaining referrals.

Relationship-building with children

WWK staff were asked how they build a relationship with a child. In the majority of sites, WWK recruiters accompany the child's child welfare worker for the initial visit with the child, although in a significant number of sites the recruiter meets the child for the first time without the child welfare worker present. In every site, the first contact with the child is face-to-face.

The purpose of the first visit with the child is to explain the role of the recruiter and the WWK program in general. However, in about half of the sites, the WWK staff noted that the first visit provides an opportunity to gather information or have conversations, which does not have to center immediately on adoption. In about one-third of the sites, WWK staff reported talking with the child about adoption and adoption-related topics during this first visit. The purpose of the initial visit appears two-fold; in about half of the sites, WWK staff reported the purpose is to obtain enough information about the child to know how to proceed with the child's case, and in another group of sites, WWK staff noted the visit's main purpose is to establish rapport and a connection with the child. Some recruiters refrain from talking about adoption when they first meet a child until they have had time to better assess the child's receptiveness to adoption and have a stronger bond with him or her.

During site visits, WWK staff were asked about the amount of time it takes between a child's referral to the WWK caseload and the first visit with the child. In most sites, WWK staff noted being able to schedule the first visit with the child within one month of the child's referral to the program. In very few sites, WWK staff reported not being able to schedule a visit within a six-week period. WWK staff in almost all of the sites noted that they meet with the child at least once a month.

While most contact between the WWK recruiter and the child is face-to-face, other types of contacts are occurring. While WWK staff in several sites generally have only face-to-face contact, most also reported additional contact by telephone, email, and text.

> *"I think you can't change the world in one day, but you can change it one person at a time. So sometimes people get mad and ask where's [recruiter])? And I know I'm probably out in a park with a 13-year-old African American kid, building a relationship with him and becoming a father figure to him. I'm someone in whom the child can count on to be in touch with once a month, through email, phone, or in person."* — WWK recruiter

During visits with children, WWK staff focus primarily on adoption-related issues and activities involving the child's interests. The child's interests could include making connections to siblings and other family members as well as recreational activities. WWK staff explained that they address adoption-related issues during the recreation to increase the child's comfort in discussing adoption. The recruiters will participate in activities in line with the children's interests to help build a stronger bond with them. For example, with younger children, the recruiter may bring coloring books or play with the children; for girls they may bring nail polish, and with boys, recruiters may play sports with them. Some recruiters go to see the children at sporting events or participate in extracurricular activities in which the children are involved. Visits with the child occur in a variety of settings. In most sites, WWK staff noted that they meet the child in the child's placement. WWK staff in most sites also noted meeting with children in community locations such as restaurants, movies, ballgames, and parks. WWK staff in a far smaller number of sites reported taking the child to adoption events such as matching parties.

The importance of building a trusting relationship with the child is voiced by WWK staff in all sites. WWK staff were asked how they built trust with the child. In all sites, WWK staff noted being honest, being consistent and following through, and not making promises that can't be kept as key to building a relationship with a child. WWK staff in many sites reported involving the child in the trust-building process.

> *"I push the fact that one day you're going to have your own kids, you want a family that you can call and ask for somebody's advice or opinion … You want somewhere you can call home. The biggest thing I push is that a lot has happened and I understand that, but allow me to work with you so we can work on finding you a committed family, that regardless of what you do or what happens, they're going to love you in spite of it all ... I tell the children I'm not going to lie to you, and I'm not going to promise you something that I can't keep."*
> — WWK recruiter

> *"When you look at a child on paper, it's a lot different when you meet the kid. And when I present a child, a lot of times I just have a piece of paper and a picture. You miss that. You have to be more involved with them. They're [the child] not going to talk to me as openly as they would with somebody they've been seeing."* — Adoption worker

> *"Every child is different. It depends. The thing that has helped me is I don't rush it … Listening to them, figuring out what works or doesn't work. It might just be playing basketball with them, and … I finally out of nowhere get this: 'Ohhh kaay!' "*
> — WWK recruiter

In most sites, WWK staff noted that changes have occurred over time in how they build relationships with the children on their caseloads. Some noted changes in the locations of their visits with children; others mentioned changes in the content and type of contact they have with children, noting that they may have more phone contact with the children if they are placed farther away from the WWK agency. Still others mentioned increased frequency of contact with the child, and a few mentioned that over time the child welfare worker or other agency person is less insistent on being present during visits; child welfare workers are more comfortable allowing one-on-one visits between the recruiter and child.

Barriers and facilitators. During site visits, barriers were reported by the WWK staff with regard to visiting with the child and building a relationship. Frequently noted barriers include distance and/or travel times and having access to children restricted by public agency staff, foster parents, or residential facility staff if they do not agree on the plan of adoption. Placement changes and children who refuse to meet with recruiters were noted with less frequency as barriers to the process.

Facilitators to the visits with the children and relationship building include recruiters' consistency, honesty, and reliability. In addition, strategies for engagement with older children, such as building rapport with a child before talking about adoption and recruiters' understanding the older children population, as well as doing things children like to do are also mentioned as facilitators by about half of the recruiters. In a few sites, WWK staff mentioned having relationships with others in the child's network also facilitated visits and relationship building.

Case record review
WWK staff are almost evenly divided with regard to whether the case record review is conducted before or after meeting the child, with the review conducted before meeting the child in a slight majority of sites. However, in all sites WWK

recruiters reported conducting the case record review fairly quickly after a child is referred. In most sites, this is done within the first month following referral. However, WWK staff in a couple of sites reported conducting the review three or more months after the child is referred.

Dave Thomas Foundation for Adoption's description of CASE RECORD REVIEW

Conduct an in-depth review of the existing case file. An exhaustive case record review may take several days. The recruiter will develop a system to document: date and reason child entered the system; child's most recent profile/assessment; chronological placement history; significant services provided currently or in the past; identification of needed services; all significant people in the child's life past and present; and next court date.

The length of time it takes to complete the case record review varies across sites. The sites divide almost equally into four groups with one group reporting the review takes about half a day to complete, a second group reporting that it takes approximately a full day, another reporting that it takes between 2-3 work days, and a final group reporting that it takes more than three days to complete.

In almost all sites, WWK staff noted using a case record review form, although WWK staff in a few sites do not use such a form. In addition, in most sites, WWK staff have access to the entire case file either in paper form or through electronic access, though in some sites, WWK staff must make a special request for more historical files. In some sites, WWK staff have a memorandum of understanding between the WWK agency and public agency that allows for access to the child's case file.

The goal of the case record review appears two-fold. In almost all sites, WWK staff review the case specifically in order to identify people ever or currently connected to the child both as prospective adoption resources but also as life connections for the child. In almost all sites, the case review is used as a method of gathering information about the child such as their child welfare history, placement history, family history and current placement status. In a few sites, the purpose is to identify the child's treatment or service needs and to identify potential barriers to adoption, including the child's attitude about adoption and his/her readiness.

During interviews, WWK staff were asked if they ever returned to the child's case record after their initial review of the record. In approximately one-third of the sites, WWK staff go back to the case record for roughly half of their cases. In another third of the sites, the WWK staff rarely return to the case record. In a small number of sites, WWK staff never go back to the case record.

Barriers and facilitators. WWK staff reported few barriers with regard to reviewing case records. In a very small number of sites, child welfare workers restrict access to the case records or otherwise restrict the case file reviews. In another small number of sites, WWK staff have limited access to the case files because some files are difficult to physically access or older records are difficult for the public agency to recover. Other barriers, not specific to WWK access, include incomplete, inaccurate or disorganized case files, restrictive agency policies regarding copying or removing case files, and difficulties in scheduling time to review files due to busy child welfare workers.

A few facilitators to the case review process are also reported by a few sites. These include 1) the prior experience of the WWK recruiter with the files or the agency workers; 2) formal agreements between the WWK program and the public agency, including access to files; 3) co-location of the WWK program within public agency offices; and 4) easy access and the ability to make copies of portions of the file or take the files out of the office.

Assessment of adoption readiness

For most sites, the goal of the recruiter's assessment is to better understand the child's level of adoption readiness (e.g., level of understanding about adoption and attitudes toward adoption). Other commonly reported goals include aiding in the development of a recruitment plan (e.g. identifying which types of families would be the best match for the child) and identifying the services the child is currently receiving and/or evaluating the child's strengths and needs.

When assessing a child's readiness for adoption, recruiters at more than half of the sites use a standard form. In many additional sites, recruiters informally gather information about the child's adoption readiness while engaging the child in other activities (e.g. working on art projects or talking about what family and adoption mean to the child). Among those sites that reported changes to their assessment process, the adoption of a standard form is the most commonly reported change.

Dave Thomas Foundation for Adoption's description of ASSESSMENT
Determine the child's strengths, challenges, desires, preparedness for adoption and whether or not the child has needs that should be addressed before moving forward with the adoption process. If so, work with the child's caseworker to assure those needs are met. A written assessment plan should be developed initially and updated quarterly to enhance the child-focused recruitment plan.

Assessing the child's adoption readiness appears to be a collaborative effort, based on information from multiple sources. At most sites, WWK staff also noted that caregivers (either foster parents or residential facility staff), public agency staff, and other members of the child's team (e.g. clinicians) provide information used in the recruiter's assessment. A handful of sites add that guardians *ad litem* (GALs), CASAs, and attorneys also provide information used for the assessment. Not surprisingly, WWK staff at almost all of the sites also reported that talking with the child and observing his or her behaviors and attitudes toward adoption are important sources of information for this assessment. (See Table 6.)

Child's knowledge about adoption	Child's definition of family
Child's feelings about adoption	Characteristics children are looking for in a family
Child's strengths and weaknesses	Child's diagnoses and behaviors
Child's education history	Child's personality
Child's medical history	Child's social history
Reasons the child came into foster care	Foster placement history
Child's current relationship with family members	

Table 6. Topics addressed during adoption assessment

Some recruiters noted that assessment occurs every time they meet with the child. They will continually discuss the meaning of adoption and assess the child's readiness to broach certain topics, and tailor their recruitment activities based on the child's reaction to the conversations. Once the initial assessment has been completed, recruiters at most sites update them on a monthly or quarterly basis. In only a few sites do recruiters update assessments less frequently than every four months. Common reasons for updating a child's written assessment include child behavioral changes or placement changes/disruptions.

> *"The main thing is restoring hope. There's this feeling of hopelessness amongst the kids, this is as good as it's going to get. So if I can get them past that ... but I tell them that they are their own greatest advocate, and I'm just the tool. Nobody can talk about you better than you can talk about yourself ... That's empowering."* — WWK recruiter

> *"Restoring hope, and building that relationship. Getting the child invested. I always laugh when people give me credit for a finalization — I did nothing. When you think about all the things the kid did, the risks that they take, opening up, to trust you … it's mind-boggling … they're incredibly resilient.* — WWK recruiter

Barriers and facilitators: The vast majority of sites did not report barriers to the adoption assessment process. The use of a standard form is the most commonly cited facilitator of the adoption assessment process. A handful of sites also noted that utilizing team meetings and conferences and having age-appropriate conversations about adoption with the children, along with the recruiter's education, experience, and training, are facilitators of the adoption assessment process.

Adoption preparation
The WWK model charges recruiters with ensuring that the children on their caseloads are prepared for adoption; however, activities, resources, and processes can vary across sites.

Dave Thomas Foundation for Adoption's description of ADOPTION PREPARATION
Assure that the child is prepared for adoption. During the matching process, assure that the family is adequately prepared to meet the needs of the Wendy's Wonderful Kids child.

WWK staff were asked to describe the recruiter's general process for preparing children for adoption. In their descriptions, WWK staff at most sites use only individual preparation activities (e.g. conversations or discussions with the child, using books or other tools, or role-playing with the child) rather than group-based activities. In some sites, recruiters use both individual and group-based preparation activities, such as an adoption preparation group or a peer support group, though recruiters do not rely solely on group activities for adoption preparation in any sites. Recruiters in many sites use only resources for preparation that are internal to the WWK program or agency, while recruiters in many other sites use a combination of internal and external resources (e.g. therapeutic services, camps, or panel discussions involving older children). Some children initially express opposition to adoption, or have received inaccurate information about the adoption process. WWK recruiters have found that providing more education and talking more may increase these children's receptiveness to adoption.

Recruiters and supervisors provided information about the types of resources they use to prepare children for adoption. The most frequently cited resources include materials or tools such as books, toolkits, handouts, and videos. Many sites also describe group-related activities for children, such as support groups, activity groups, or camps. Some sites specifically noted using Lifebooks with children as a preparation tool, though one recruiter no longer uses this method because of a lack of funding for them. Lifebooks are often used by adoption workers as a therapeutic tool to help the child come to terms with losing his or her birth family ties, and to embrace the idea of adoption. Workers help children complete the books which chronicle the child's life using words, pictures, and other memorabilia.

The model requires only that the recruiter assures the child is prepared, but does not explicitly state that the recruiter him- or herself must do the adoption preparation work. Sites vary notably with regard to how they <u>assure</u> children are prepared. In some sites, the recruiter is the only individual preparing children for adoption. Other sites, however, describe a shared responsibility for this task among the child's team members. While the recruiter leads this process in a sizeable number of sites, various individuals such as the child's child welfare worker, other child welfare agency staff, or another team member (e.g. the child's therapist) take the lead in the preparation activities in other sites.

In some sites, it was unclear whether any changes have occurred over time in the process of adoption preparation. Among the other sites, half have undergone changes. The most frequently reported change involves WWK staff improving the preparation process in some way, such as through a change in the resources or tools used, or the level of child involvement. A few sites noted that the level of WWK staff involvement in child adoption preparation has increased, though the reverse is true in one site.

"No one person's statement to a kid is going to change their life … it's like one grain of sand. You put one grain of sand down and you don't have anything, but after a while all those single grains of sand add up and you have something … you have a bucket full, you have a beach full. If enough people make comments or talk about the value of adoption or the importance of a family, it eventually starts to add up and they [the child] start thinking about it." — Judge

"You have to work at the child's pace. If they're just adamant that they do not want to be adopted, it's not going to make sense to put them in an adoptive home. They're going to disrupt the placement. So you have the counselor really work with them about adoption and explaining the process and have the workers continue to talk to them. You go slower. You go at the child's pace." — WWK recruiter

"A lot of children, once they realize that they're not being forced into it, that they're in control, all of a sudden they decide they want to be adopted. It takes them a while to realize that saying yes to adoption isn't disrespecting their biological parents and I think that we need to come up with a better way to explain that to the kids." — Judge

Barriers and facilitators: Adoption preparation is one model component in which WWK staff reported a myriad of barriers. The most frequently cited factors are child-related challenges, such as the child not wanting to be adopted, trust issues (e.g. children may not trust the adoption process due to placement disruptions in the past), or the child being bonded to foster parents. Another barrier in some sites involves challenges with people in the child's network, such as foster parents or therapists not being aligned with adoption as the child's goal. Along similar lines, child preparation was hampered in

some sites by child welfare agency-related factors such as the child welfare worker not being "on board" with adoption as the child's goal because he or she felt that adoption was not an appropriate or realistic goal for the child, or the recruiter being restricted from discussing adoption with the child if the child welfare worker feels that the child is not prepared to discuss adoption. Finally, staff in a couple of sites noted funding-related barriers to adoption preparation (i.e., funding mechanisms that encourage foster care rather than permanency).

WWK staff also noted several factors that facilitate their work to prepare children for adoption, though there are fewer shared themes across sites than with the barriers. The most common facilitating factor cited involves resources available for adoption preparation, such as equine therapy (horseback riding), books, community resources, and specialized therapists. Facilitators mentioned in a handful of sites include child empowerment support groups or panels and using a team approach to preparation.

Network building

Recruiters communicate with multiple members of the child's network, ranging from public agency staff and team members to birth family members and other connections. In almost all sites, recruiters work with the child's child welfare worker and/or other public agency staff, the child's clinicians (e.g. therapists, psychiatrists, and doctors), and the child's foster parent/placement provider. Other common contacts include teachers/school personnel, mentors and coaches, birth family members, and court-related personnel. At most sites, the recruiters identify these individuals by asking the child about adults in his/her network, speaking with other adults in the child's life, or completing the case file review. A handful of recruiters also noted that they identify individuals in the child's network through attending meetings or through searches on Facebook or US Search.

Dave Thomas Foundation for Adoption's description of NETWORK BUILDING
Meet with significant adults and maintain regular and ongoing contact (caseworker, foster parent, attorney, CASA volunteer, teacher, therapist, relative, mentor, faith-based representative, extracurricular activity leader, etc.). Regular and ongoing contact with persons close to and knowledgeable about the child will facilitate recruitment activities. Monthly contact with the child's caseworker is essential.

Recruiters' contact with these individuals takes a number of different forms, most commonly by phone. In many sites, contact also occurs through email and participation on the child's team. In a few sites, recruiters have face-to-face contact with members of the child's network, or communicate by mail or through activities such as court hearings.

In the majority of sites, the purpose of communication with the child's network is to increase recruiters' knowledge about the child and acquire accurate and up-to-date information. Recruiters at approximately one-third of the sites also noted that they communicate with members of the child's network to increase the pool of individuals who may serve as or be able to identify adoptive resources for the child. In a handful of sites, recruiters increased their understanding of the public agency and court plans for the child through their communication with individuals in the child's network.

At most sites, the process of networking with other significant adults in the child's network was consistent over time. In a few sites, the types of individuals contacted or the methods of contact have changed. In a handful of sites, the recruiter's role within the child's network has changed (e.g. increased participation in team meetings).

Barriers and facilitators: In most sites, recruiters do encounter barriers in their process of engaging the child's network. Most commonly, WWK staff noted that key professionals working with the child do not consistently respond to the recruiter's attempts to engage that individual. In many sites, recruiters are denied access to key professionals working with the child or are not consistently invited to participate in meetings or decision-making processes regarding the child. The worker may not view the recruiter as an integral part of the child's team, or some workers are so overwhelmed and simply forget to include the recruiter in regular team meetings. Finally, in a handful of sites, some key professionals are confused about the recruiter's role, which leads them to not be as open with information about the case. No themes in facilitators to the network building process emerged across sites.

Recruitment plan
Across sites, WWK staff reported that they begin to develop recruitment plans for the children on their caseloads at different points in time. Most recruiters develop their recruitment plans concurrently with another step of the model; approximately one-third complete the recruitment plan after their first visit with the child; and a handful begin as soon as the child is referred. Other recruiters wait until the case file review or the initial assessments have been completed.

Dave Thomas Foundation for Adoption's description of RECRUITMENT PLAN

Based on the file review, interviews with significant adults, and the input of the child, develop a comprehensive recruitment plan or enhance the existing recruitment plan. The Wendy's Wonderful Kids recruiter's plan for each child will be customized and defined by the child's needs. The plan will be reviewed quarterly and updated as needed.

At the majority of sites, WWK staff reported that recruiters use a standard form to develop their recruitment plans. Among those sites where information is available on the frequency with which recruiters update their recruitment plans, all recruiters reported updating the plans, usually every two to three months. At a few sites, WWK staff reported that recruiters update the recruitment plans on an "as needed" basis, depending on the life events of that particular child.

In sites in which the participation of children in recruitment plans was mentioned, recruiters say that children do participate in the development of that plan. In most sites, the child's participation varies, however, depending on child characteristics such as age, cognitive ability, and physical limitations. Common forms of child participation include providing input on the type of recruitment activities included in the plan (e.g., asking not to participate in televised media recruitment), providing input on the type of family desired, and participating in the development of recruitment tools (e.g., helping to write biographical material for recruitment tools). In some sites, children help identify individuals in their lives they would like to see considered as adoptive resources.

While children at most sites are involved in some way in the development of their recruitment plans, WWK staff reported that recruiters share different levels of information about the plan itself with the child. At approximately one-third of the sites, recruiters reported that they describe the plan to the child; in contrast, recruiters at an almost equal number of sites do not describe the plan in detail to the child but let the child know in more general terms that he or she is receiving recruitment services.

In most sites, WWK staff reported changes to the recruitment plan process over time. Common changes include the use of standard forms, recruitment strategies, and/or search strategies. A handful of recruiters also noted that they have become more skilled in developing recruitment plans over time. As they feel more comfortable implementing the model, recruiters noted gaining skill at developing more targeted plans which are related to the needs of the child. Recruiters tend to consult children more on the recruitment processes with which they are most comfortable. The addition of new recruitment activities and resources that have surfaced in recent years, including the Heart Gallery, US Search and other search techniques have helped the recruiters further tailor plans for the children.

Barriers and facilitators: While no overarching barriers to recruitment plan development are apparent across the sites, a handful of sites have staff who noted that child opposition to certain approaches to recruitment poses a barrier to the recruiter's work. Other barriers include limitations in accessing information about the child, limitations to the recruiter's role, and opposition from the child welfare worker or other team members to certain approaches to recruitment. Similarly, while few themes in facilitating factors emerge across different sites, WWK staff in a few sites noted the importance of taking a team approach to recruitment and the availability of various recruitment resources as facilitating factors.

Diligent search

According to the WWK model, recruiters should conduct a diligent search for potential adoptive resources for all children on their caseload. Based on interviews conducted at the random assignment sites, misunderstanding among WWK staff about this component of the model is apparent, and notable variation occurs in its implementation. Specifically, staff in some sites seem to interpret the term "diligent search" (and thus describe recruiter activities within this component) as activities to identify, locate, and contact people to whom the child is connected, which could include family members, friends, former foster parents, neighbors, etc.[19] However, some sites responded to questions about diligent search with more general descriptions of their efforts to locate adoptive resources for children on their caseload through recruitment techniques, though not necessarily with a focus on individuals with existing connections to the children. Thus, it is important to add this caveat to the descriptive data presented below, in that it is apparent that WWK staff at these sites may not be using consistent language or application of the term "diligent search" in either their understanding of the model's requirement, or their actual implementation of the component.

Dave Thomas Foundation for Adoption's description of DILIGENT SEARCH
Conduct a diligent search of potential adoptive families and identified connections to additional resources. Conduct aggressive follow up with contacts identified, with the knowledge and approval of the child's caseworker.

WWK staff were asked whether and how often the recruiter conducts diligent searches for children on their caseload, and to describe circumstances (if any) when they would not conduct these searches. At most sites, staff reported that recruiters conduct diligent searches, although the frequency with which they do so varies. At the sites where frequency could be determined, the two most common responses were that recruiters conduct these searches some of the time — for half of the children on their caseload or fewer, or (reported not quite as frequently) all of the time — for every child on their caseload. WWK staff in a slightly smaller group of sites reported conducting diligent searches most of the time — for more than half, but not all, of their caseload. Finally, staff in a couple of sites noted that the recruiter conducts diligent searches rarely or not at all. Many recruiters noted that diligent searches are completed for teenagers or children with disabilities, children they felt relatives would be more willing to adopt. Recruiters also mentioned that diligent searches are

the responsibility of the children's child welfare workers, but they will conduct these searches if they feel a thorough search for relatives has not been done in the past.

WWK staff were asked about their reasons for not doing a diligent search for a child. At the sites where this information could be determined, recruiters most commonly responded that they believe the child's child welfare worker would prohibit contact between the recruiter and identified resources, or that the child welfare worker asked the recruiter not to do a diligent search. There seems to be a belief among some child welfare workers that family members are not appropriate, and workers may associate the actions of birth parents with the entire extended family. Some WWK agencies are also grappling with how to handle relative placements after a child's parental rights have been terminated.

Staff were asked to describe the sources of information the recruiter uses to identify potential adoptive resources through the diligent search process. The most frequently noted source is the review of the child's case file, followed by online search tools (including US Search), and interviews with the child. In many sites, recruiters also talk with the child's relatives, birth parents, or other connections, or interview the worker. Finally, a few staff described accessing agency case management databases or talking with other members of the child's team.

In about half the sites where information was available, recruiters mentioned adoption or placement to individuals identified through diligent search efforts. The staff described that during this initial contact they first explore the person's interest in being a resource for the child in any way, such as serving as a connection for the child.

In addition to conducting diligent searches for potential adoptive resources already known to the child, WWK staff were asked about other searches for adoptive resources that recruiters may conduct for children on their caseloads. The most common activity reported is the outreach such as connecting with other staff or agencies familiar with waiting families, or tapping into agency resources such as databases or other information about inquiring families. Other types of searches conducted by WWK recruiters for potential adoptive families include using web-based or media recruitment, as well as presentations for waiting families.

The most frequently cited change is that resources for the recruiter to do diligent searches have increased. In only one site have diligent search resources decreased. In a couple of sites, staff reported that diligent searches have decreased (either by the recruiter's own choice or because of limitations from the public agency), and one site reported that they have increased.

Barriers and facilitators: WWK staff noted several barriers to the recruiter's implementation of the diligent search component of the model, with a lack of public agency support for the recruiter to conduct diligent searches reported most commonly. Another challenge is recruiters' lack of success in locating individuals through diligent search. Factors that facilitated the diligent search component include increased or improved search resources available (for example, access to US Search or "family finders"), and an increase in the public agency's emphasis on kinship placements.

Matching and post-matching activities
WWK staff were asked to describe the process they go through when a possible match for a child has been identified.[20] Involvement in the matching process and continued contact with the child and family post-match vary across sites.

At the majority of sites, recruiters are involved in the matching process by participating on decision-making teams; however, more than half of the recruiters who participate on such a team reported that they do not have a vote, or someone else (e.g., agency child welfare worker) makes the final matching decision. In the remaining sites, recruiters provide information to the agency about potential matches but do not participate in the decision-making process. Many sites noted that recruiter participation in the matching process has remained unchanged over time. In every site that experienced a change, recruiters' involvement in the matching process has increased. A variety of factors has contributed to this change, such as increased trust of the WWK program among public agency staff and recruiters becoming more proactive in the process as they become more experienced.

Once a child has been matched with a family, in the vast majority of sites, recruiters continue to have at least some contact with the child and family. Most recruiters continue to work with the child and family by assisting with the adoption process and monitoring placement status. Additionally, at many sites, recruiters do not continue to work directly with the families but will maintain contact with the child and family until finalization. At some sites, the level of recruiter involvement post-match can depend on a number of factors such as the preparation the family has already received, the capabilities of the other workers assigned to the case, child needs, and family receptiveness to the recruiter's assistance.

Barriers and facilitators: The most commonly reported barriers include team members and public agency staff who do not support the match proposed by the recruiter and agency delays that may result in the loss of a family's interest in pursuing the match. Agency delays can occur throughout the process and may be caused by a lag in processing paperwork, completing homestudies, or approving potential matches. WWK staff at some sites also noted that the public agency hesitates to place children out of county or out of state, citing reasons such as the lengthy interstate compact on the placement of children (ICPC) process.[21] A positive relationship among the recruiter and public agency staff and team members is the most commonly reported facilitator of the matching process. At a handful of sites, the matching process is facilitated by the recruiters' extensive knowledge of the families they propose as matches.

Supervision

Each WWK recruiter has a WWK supervisor with whom he or she meets on a formal (scheduled, routine) and/or informal (unscheduled, "as-needed") basis. While DTFA requires that each grantee assign a designated supervisor to provide supervision, training, and support to the recruiter, the WWK model does not prescribe in detail how these activities should be carried out. Therefore, sites have some discretion with implementing a process of supervision (i.e., meetings between recruiters and supervisors and the supervisors' oversight of the recruiters' work) at their sites. WWK staff were asked to describe how these activities and communications between recruiter and supervisor are carried out.

WWK staff at most sites reported using a combination of formal and informal supervision. For example, the recruiter and supervisor may have a regularly scheduled meeting once a week or every other week for a set duration, but also supplement these set meeting times with "check-ins" between recruiter and supervisor when warranted. A handful of sites use only a formal supervision model, in which their supervision time follows a set schedule. On the other hand, some sites use only an informal supervision model, in which case no regularly scheduled, designated meeting times are set between recruiter and supervisor, but rather communication takes place on an as-needed basis.

Some variation exists among sites in the frequency and duration of meetings between recruiters and supervisors. In the majority of sites, supervision between the recruiter and supervisor takes place weekly or every two weeks. Some sites reported less frequent (monthly) supervision, and a smaller group reported more frequent meetings, with supervision

taking place daily or more than once a week. Staff at some sites also described frequent email or phone contact between recruiter and supervisor. The time a recruiter spends with a supervisor is usually one hour.

Supervision may be individual (one-on-one meetings between the supervisor and recruiter) or take place in a group setting (such as when a supervisor meets with multiple staff, or two recruiters together at one time). At most agencies one-on-one supervision occurs. However, some sites use a combination of group and individual supervision, and one site reported group supervision only.

WWK recruiters and supervisors were also asked whether they thought the amount of supervision they receive or provide is adequate. In general, program staff are largely in agreement in this area. At the majority of sites, both recruiters and supervisors feel that the level of supervision is adequate. In no instance do both the recruiter and supervisor at a site view the level of supervision as inadequate. However, at a couple of sites, recruiters view the level of supervision they receive as adequate while their supervisors reported feeling that the amount they provide is not adequate. In no site was the inverse situation reported — that is, it was never the case that the supervisor viewed the level of supervision he or she provided as adequate but the recruiter disagreed.

The two most commonly noted areas of focus in supervision sessions were addressing barriers that recruiters have encountered in recruiting adoptive families for children and reviewing the recruiter's WWK cases (such as discussing the status or needs of particular children, or the types of recruitment activities being done for them). Examples of barriers or issues the recruiter and supervisor might discuss in supervision include challenges the recruiter is having with communicating with other members of the child's team, disagreements about a child's plan among team members, or simply brainstorming about recruitment ideas for particular children. Other areas of discussion cited less frequently by WWK staff include the recruiter and supervisor reviewing policies and budget, reviewing data and/or reports, planning recruitment events, discussing referrals, sharing successes, and matching families.

At most sites, WWK staff reported that changes have occurred over time with the supervision process. Of these sites, the most frequently reported change is that supervision has become more frequent or more formalized over time. Conversely, a smaller number of sites reported supervision becoming less frequent or less formalized over time. Staff at a few sites also mentioned the development of new relationships due to WWK staff changes as a modification to the supervision process.

WWK staff perceptions of the model

During site visits, WWK recruiters and supervisors were asked to describe the most and least important elements of the WWK program model. Overwhelmingly, recruiters and supervisors felt that building a relationship with the child is the most important component of the model. Recruiters reported that building a relationship with the child, really getting to know the child, spending time with the child, and building trust encourage children to open up about adoption. Recruiters reported being able to get to know the child "on a different level" than the child's child welfare worker, who has to report on the child's behaviors. None of the other components of the model were mentioned as most important by more than a couple recruiters and supervisors. Almost half the recruiters and supervisors reported other aspects of the model including smaller caseloads, the relationship with the child welfare workers, and being an advocate for the prospective adoptive

parents, as most important elements. However, these responses were far fewer than the importance of building a close relationship with the child.

While almost half of the recruiters and supervisors reported that all the model components are important, they mentioned other aspects of the model, including engaging the child's network and general recruitment activities, as being less important. A few recruiters noted that the assessment of the child's readiness for adoption is not as important because other staff are already responsible for doing formalized assessments, and this makes their work in that area redundant. Diligent search and case record reviews were mentioned by a few recruiters and supervisors as being less important compared to the other model components. Recruiters reported not having a lot of success in using diligent search techniques such as internet searches. Paperwork was also mentioned as taking time away from other, more important, aspects of the work.

Relationship between WWK program and the public agency
During site visits, questions were asked of both the WWK staff and public agency staff about the quality of the relationship between the two agencies, and whether there had been changes in the relationship over time. Almost all sites reported a good or excellent overall relationship between the WWK program and public agency. However, staff in a handful of sites reported that the relationship could be improved or that the relationship varies across the agency and with individual child welfare workers. Staff in slightly fewer than half of the sites reported the relationship between the WWK program and public agency had improved over time, staff in a somewhat smaller share reported the relationship had remained the same over time, and staff in a few sites reported a fluctuating relationship.

Staff in several sites reported that high levels of child welfare worker turnover and agency reorganization mean the WWK recruiter is continually faced with forging new relationships with workers. In more than half the sites, at times, the relationship between individual child welfare workers and the WWK recruiter is tense. According to WWK staff, some public agency workers have negative attitudes about the program and some feel that the recruiter is infringing on their responsibilities or somehow monitoring their casework. At several sites, staff held misperceptions about the functions of the WWK recruiter. At a few sites, there was a lack of communication between the WWK recruiter and the child welfare worker, as well as some disagreements over specific placement decisions. In more than half of the sites, staff reported the public agency bureaucracy to be a challenge. Specifically, WWK staff reported a lack of access to Statewide Automated Child Welfare Information System (SACWIS) data (that is, data from child welfare administrative data systems) and court records as well as budget cuts.

In addition to other challenges, sites reported the random assignment process for enrollment of children onto the WWK caseload sometimes caused tension in the relationship between the WWK recruiter and individual child welfare workers. In general, public agency child welfare workers do not like the random assignment procedures, as they feel all children who needed the services should have been able to receive them. As noted earlier, some child welfare workers' dislike of the random assignment process sometimes caused them to limit referrals to the program.

While sites face challenges, many also experience facilitating factors. These include strong relationships between the WWK agency and public agency, as well as strong individual relationships between the WWK recruiter and child welfare workers. At several sites, WWK staff reported routinely making efforts to ensure public agency staff understand the WWK program. In addition, staff at several sites reported a number of opportunities for ongoing communication, specifically co-

location of staff and frequent group meetings. A few WWK staff reported specific successes in finding homes for hard-to-place children as facilitating the overall relationship between the agencies.

Public agency and court facilitators and barriers

WWK staff provided a number of examples of ways the public agency and the courts facilitate WWK program implementation and outcomes. At some sites, WWK staff reported receiving support from the public agency and the courts as facilitators in their work. Specifically, WWK staff perceived some court personnel as having minimal biases against families and as familiar with adoption laws and subsidies, and therefore as helpful in their work. Additionally, judges who are timely in scheduling hearings and are proponents of adoption are helpful in assisting the WWK recruiters to achieve timely permanency for foster children.

As for the public agency, policies around the timeliness of permanency planning are also reported to be helpful in supporting the recruiters' work. Additionally, agency staff members who value the work of the WWK program, work with the WWK staff as a team, continually educate other staff members about the WWK program and its successes, and maintain regular communication with the WWK staff are perceived to be influential in the success of the WWK program.

At some sites, WWK staff also reported that having the WWK recruiter stationed within the public agency further facilitated relationship-building and a team orientation between the WWK program and public agency staff, and provided for easier access to internal resources and case files. Likewise, existing collaborations between the public agency and private WWK agencies in providing social services are perceived as helpful in fostering a team atmosphere. WWK staff also reported that their relationships with different agencies in the community could often benefit the WWK program. For example, participating in adoption coalitions or task forces and having a strong working relationship with residential facilities and adoption agencies assist WWK staff in obtaining information on prospective families, keep them informed about general recruitment activities in the community, and assist them in working with the community to address adoption barriers.

At some sites, WWK staff reported key state and local area characteristics as facilitators to their work. For example, states that allow WWK recruiters to work with children in foster care in legal risk placements make it possible for more children to benefit from the WWK program. Also, states that allow placements of children in foster care with non-traditional families (e.g., gay or lesbian couples or single parents) allow for a broader pool of prospective adoptive parents. Larger counties also tend to have more adoption resources than smaller counties. Also, when a general consensus exists among the courts, the public agency, and the community that children need permanent homes, it helps the WWK program gain and maintain support to achieve its goals.

WWK staff in a few sites identified improved processes and procedures at the public agency and WWK program as facilitators to meeting program goals. For example, WWK staff have improved their referral process to be able to gather the most accurate information about the children that are referred. Also, a few public agencies have improved their adoption match process and training program for foster and adoptive parents.

WWK staff also provided a number of examples of ways the public agency and the courts serve as barriers to WWK program implementation and outcomes. In most sites, WWK staff reported unrealistic or inappropriate requirements of the courts as major barriers to their work. For example, child welfare workers are expected to complete what recruiters perceive as an unrealistic amount of court paperwork during the adoption process, which causes unnecessary delays. Some court personnel are also perceived as using their personal beliefs about adoption in their practice.

At some sites, WWK staff also reported the adoption process and lack of availability of sufficient subsidies as a barrier. Some WWK staff perceived the adoption process (e.g. homestudy and ICPC paperwork) to be too lengthy, which can be frustrating both for children in foster care and their prospective adoptive parents. Additionally, child welfare workers and their supervisors can be uncooperative in responding to the WWK recruiter's calls, allowing the WWK recruiter access to the children, and providing updated placement information to the WWK recruiter, which further delays the adoption recruitment process. Concerns were also raised about the adoption subsidy being significantly lower than the foster care subsidy, thereby making adoption less appealing to foster parents. In a few sites, WWK staff also reported that court personnel and public agency staff were not always in support of adoption as a choice for some children and/or disagreed over particular prospective adoptive families. Finally, in a few sites, WWK staff reported child welfare workers to be a barrier by expecting the recruiters to take on tasks outside of their scope of work. For example, recruiters have been asked to serve as therapists by court personnel, and some child welfare workers expect recruiters to make routine home visits to see children in foster care on their behalf.

SECTION 3: IMPLEMENTATION ASSESSMENT

In recent years, program funders and evaluators in the field of child welfare have increased their attention not only on identifying the outcomes achieved by child welfare programs, but also on the process of implementing those programs. This increase in attention grew out of concerns in the field about the lack of evidence regarding what is and is not effective in achieving specific goals for children and families in the child welfare system. Experimental evaluations have been described as "black boxes" because they identify the presence or absence of causal impacts. That is, they provide information about whether and the degree to which an evaluated program is more effective than some comparison. However, they do not explain why an observed impact occurred. An analysis of implementation processes allows for identification of factors that may have contributed to success or have been barriers to it. In addition, when research finds a program to be effective, results of implementation analyses can yield important considerations for model replication and expansion.

Because of the non-experimental nature of the analyses presented in this section, it is important to keep in mind that findings about how implementation is linked with positive outcomes must be considered tentative and exploratory. Nevertheless, taken together, evidence regarding both outcomes and implementation can aid program funders and developers in maximizing resources to achieve desired outcomes. In summary, we found that the WWK model was implemented unevenly across children. We also found evidence that children who receive more of the component services are more likely to be adopted than are those for whom the model is implemented with less intensity. Lastly, we found evidence worthy of further exploration indicating that some model components — in particular, relationship building with the child and diligent search — may be more important than others for successful outcomes.

Measuring WWK program components and optimum practices

Data for this analysis came largely from the WWK Online Database, but some data also came from written surveys of WWK recruiters. The sample was limited to children who had been added to a WWK recruiter's caseload by September 1, 2009, and excluded all cases that had been closed within a shorter period than six months. Excluding cases that had

been open for fewer than six months ensured that all children had an adequate chance to receive the WWK intervention as intended.

To gain evidence about how the WWK program model contributes to program success, our first step was to calculate for each child a score that reflected the extent to which the model was implemented. Using data entered by recruiters in the WWK Online Database on children served across all program sites, we defined the score as the WWK recruiters' use of specific "optimum practices" identified across six components of the model. The six components include initial case referral, case record review, recruiter-child relationship, assessment, recruitment plan, and diligent search. (Two of the eight components, adoption preparation and network building, were excluded because neither the WWK Online Database nor the surveys of WWK staff included data elements specifically related to those components.) The components of the WWK program are described earlier. (See pages 8-9.) Table 7 below shows how we "operationalized," or quantitatively defined, optimum practices. Essentially, children received one point for each bulleted item shown in Table 7. The points could be summed across all components for an overall implementation score ranging from 0 to 14, or within components for component-specific scores ranging from 0 to 2, or 0 to 3, depending on the component.

Because data were available to assess the timeliness of specific activities, but not the quality of those activities, criteria for optimum practices focus on whether each activity occurred in a timely manner. Where possible, we assessed for each child served whether recruiters followed expectations set by DTFA for model components. (Practices required by DTFA are followed by an asterisk in Table 7.) However, while DTFA has identified various requirements within components in the WWK model, specifications regarding the time frames for most model activities were intentionally viewed by DTFA as flexible because of the need to accommodate variation in child welfare and adoption policies, practices, and procedures and the unique features of individual children and families. For those components for which DTFA did not establish clearly measurable guidelines, we developed indicators that reflected what might be considered to be "optimal" with regard to

Model component	Optimum practices
Component 1: Initial case referral	• Recruiter met with child in person within or before first month of the child's active status. • Recruiter began review of the case record within or before the first month of the child's active status. • Recruiter contacted the child's child welfare worker within or before the first month of the child's active status.
Component 2: Case record review	• Recruiter spent at least six hours reviewing the child's case file. • Recruiter used a standard instrument to review the case file.
Component 3: Relationship with child	• Recruiter met with child at least once per month while case was on active status.* • Recruiter communicated with the child by phone or email at least once per month while the case was on active or monitoring status.
Component 4: Assessment	• Recruiter developed the child's assessment within three months of the child's first active date.* (While the model proscribes that the assessment be carried out "initially," it can be inferred from the fact that quarterly updates are required that the initial assessment should occur in the first quarter.) • Recruiter updated the child's assessment every quarter, beginning in the second quarter that the case was on active status.* • Recruiter used a standardized instrument to conduct assessment.

Table 7. Model components and optimum practices

Table 7. Continued

Model component	Optimum practices
Component 5: *Recruitment plan*	• Recruiter worked on developing a recruitment plan within or before the first three months of active status.* (While the model proscribes that the assessment be carried out "initially," it can be inferred from the fact that quarterly updates are required that the initial assessment should occur in the first quarter.) • Recruiter updated the recruitment plan every quarter, beginning in the second quarter that the case was on active status.*
Component 6: *Diligent search*	• Recruiter identified at least two potential adoptive resources within the first three months that the case was on active status. • Recruiter contacted at least two potential adoptive resources within the first six months that the case was on active status.
* Practices required by the Dave Thomas Foundation for Adoption as part of the program model.	

WWK program implementation. Therefore, the assessment cannot be considered a program fidelity assessment, because not all of the optimum practices identified were specified by DTFA as program model requirements.

As noted above, the data used to measure the optimum practices come primarily from the WWK Online Database. Several data elements were not available through the WWK Online Database and came instead from data collected via paper-and-pencil surveys from recruiters at several annual meetings of WWK program staff. These data elements include: 1) recruiter spends at least six hours reviewing the child's case record; 2) recruiter uses a standard instrument to review case file; and 3) recruiter uses a standard instrument to conduct assessment. While variables from the WWK Online Database are specific to individual children, allowing us to assess variation in implementation among the children served by a single recruiter, for example, the data elements based on survey data from the recruiters were assumed to be the same for all children served by that recruiter. An opportunity for measurement error further arises because the records of dates when specific recruiters left their jobs and new recruiters began were not always accurate. For children served in sites with turnover in recruiter positions, the data for the three elements based on the recruiter survey data may not always accurately reflect the recruiter who served them or who served them for the majority of the time on their caseload. We hope that this limitation is minimized by the likelihood that practices within WWK grantee agencies are fairly similar across staff.

Although the optimum practices refer to recruiter activities, the unit of analysis for the implementation performance assessment is the child. That is, for each child included in the sample, the assessment used data depicting activities of the child's recruiter. While children may not have had the same recruiter throughout the child's case, the recruiter who served the child during a particular month entered data regarding his or her activities on a monthly basis. Ultimately, 3,997 out of 4,636 children included in the sample were assigned scores from 0 to 14 depending on the number of optimum practices the recruiter had achieved in serving the child. (Children did not receive a score if the recruiter had not provided data in the database relevant to all optimum practices.) Each child also was assigned a score for each component, again depending on the number of optimum practices the recruiter had followed within that component. Component scores ranged either from 0 to 3 or 0 to 2.

Analytical methods

The analysis was designed to test the following hypothesis: If implementation practices are key contributors to program success, then children who achieved finalized adoptions or pre-adoptive placements should have higher optimum practice scores than children who did not achieve these outcomes, net of other factors associated with success (such as child characteristics that are associated with a greater or lesser likelihood of adoption). The assessment also examined performance for individual components within the program model to determine if some components were more highly associated with program success than others.

Separate analyses were conducted for the two outcomes, as reported in the WWK Online Database: 1) finalized adoptions/guardianships, and 2) finalized adoptions/guardianships or ever having been in a pre-adoptive placement while served by the WWK program. For both outcomes, the following was conducted: 1) multivariate analyses to examine the relationship between the overall optimum practices score and attainment program success; 2) multivariate analyses to determine whether variation in implementation was associated with child and recruiter characteristics; and 3) multivariate analyses to examine the relationships between implementation of individual components and program success.[23]

Further details regarding the analysis methods, including the treatment of missing data, can be found in Appendix B.

Findings

Overall optimum practice scores. Figure 7 shows the distribution of children by overall optimum practice scores. As shown, there was a considerable range in optimum practice scores, with fewer than 20 percent of the children having an optimum practice score of 9 or higher (indicating optimum practice in 9 or more out of 14 practices), and almost 29 percent of the children having an optimum practice score of 3 or lower (indicating optimum practice in 3 or fewer out of 14 practices). Distributions on each of the 14 practices, as well as component-specific optimum practice scores, are shown in Appendix Table B.2.
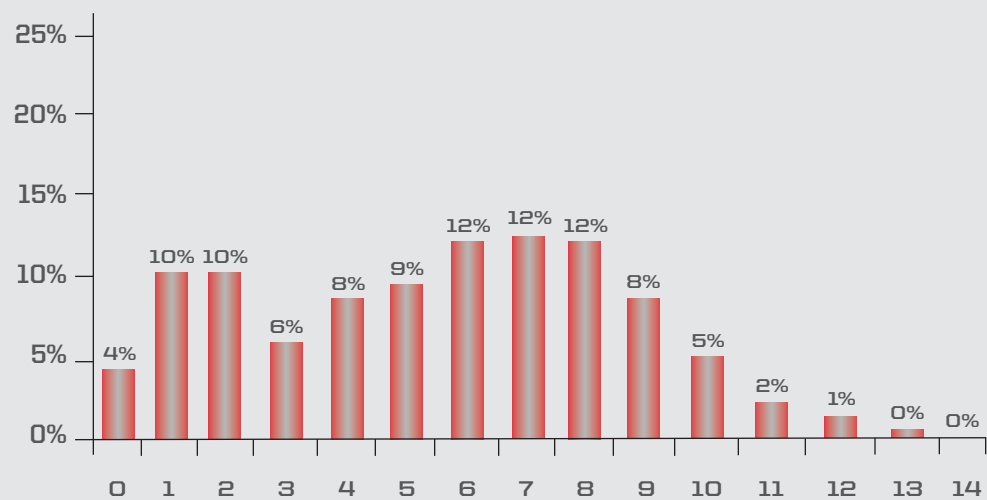
Figure 7. Percentages of children by optimum practice scores, among children served >=6 months and added to caseload by September 1, 2009 (n=3,997)

Analyses of the relationship between program success and the optimum practice scores indicated a positive association, net of child and recruiter characteristics. (See Appendix Table B.3 for complete results.) Specifically, the optimum practice score was over half a point higher for children with a finalized adoption or guardianship, on average, than for other children (b=0.6, p<.01), and it was over one point higher for children who had been adopted, placed in guardianship, or who had a pre-adoptive placement, compared with children who had not (b=1.2; p<.01). That is, with all other variables held constant, children who achieved program success had, on average, higher optimum practice scores than children who did not achieve outcome success. *This finding suggests that the quality of program implementation is significantly linked with program success.*

Additionally, we found that implementation of the model did vary depending upon child characteristics. Specifically, net of the other child and recruiter characteristics, optimum practices are more consistently implemented for:

• Children who had experienced a failed adoption prior to referral to the WWK program (either a disruption or dissolution), compared to those who had not (b=0.68, p<.01).

• Children with disabling conditions, compared to those who did not have a disabling condition (b=1.18, p<.01).

• Children with two or more out-of-home placement settings at the time of referral, compared to those who had fewer than two placements at the time of referral (coefficients ranged from 0.60 to 0.99; the difference was marginally significant for children who had experienced more than 10 placements; otherwise, p<.05).

• Children who entered foster care due to sexual abuse, compared to those who did not (b = 0.47, p < .05).

• Children served for longer periods of time, with each additional month the case was open associated with an increase of 0.035 average increase in the optimum performance score (p<.01). Correspondingly, an additional year of service would be associated with an increase of 0.42 points on the optimum performance score.

Almost identical results occurred when predicting just adoption and guardianship, but also pre-adoptive placement.

Component-specific optimum practice scores. Analyses of the correlates of each component with the optimum practice scores were also conducted. The primary goal was to identify the components that were most highly associated with program success. Appendix Table B.4 includes results from analyses of each of six components. We found a positive association between two of the specific components and program success: building a relationship with the child (component 3) and diligent search (component 6). Initial referral, case record review, assessment of the child, and recruitment plan were not significantly associated with program success.

While the association of relationship-building with adoption finalization or guardianship is marginally significant (OR=1.38; p<.10), the finding for the broader success group is stronger (OR=2.52; p<.01). When other variables in the model were held constant, children who had a finalized adoption or guardianship or who had been placed pre-adoptively were two-and-one-half times more likely than children who were not to have a higher optimum practice score on component 3. Regarding diligent search, when all other variables were held constant, children who were adopted (OR=1.68; p<.01) or who had a finalized guardianship or adoption or had ever had a pre-adoptive placement (OR=2.20; p<.01) were significantly more likely than children who were neither adopted nor ever in a pre-adoptive placement to have higher optimum practice scores.

The optimum practice scores for relationship-building and diligent search (as well as the other components) are presented in the table in Appendix B. The relationship-building component included two optimum practices, one of which is an expectation for recruiters specified by DTFA in the program model. Nevertheless, for the vast majority of the children, recruiters did not meet either of the two optimum practices. This finding is somewhat surprising because many of the recruiters interviewed for the evaluation study indicated that building a relationship with the child through face-to-face contact was the most critical component of the model.

For diligent search, for nearly one-half of the children, the recruiter had a score of 0 for diligent search. That is, they had neither identified at least two potential adoptive resources within three months of active date nor contacted at least two potential adoptive resources within six months of the active date. However, for one-third of the children, the recruiter had engaged in both of these practices.

KEY FINDING:
The extent of program implementation is significantly associated with program success.

Discussion

Interpreting the associations between program success and the implementation scores is tricky, because implementation might vary depending on child characteristics, which are in turn associated with program success. For example, in thinking about how child characteristics and implementation might be interrelated, one might expect a recruiter to implement model components with the greatest rigor for a child seen as potentially challenging, with the belief that extra effort may be needed to place such children with adoptive families. Yet conversely, some "challenging" characteristics of children may indirectly hamper recruiters' efforts to implement the model components. For instance, older children may be resistant to meeting with yet another social worker, or they may simply be too busy with friends, school, and extra-curricular activities to meet with the recruiter. And while older children could themselves serve as resources in aiding the recruiter with the diligent search, perhaps some recruiters feel that for older children in particular whose child welfare cases may have been active for several years, someone else must have completed the diligent search already.

Our findings in this analysis will be biased to the degree that we have not accounted for all the factors related to children's "challengingness." We have attempted to minimize such bias by accounting for child and recruiter characteristics that likely affect recruiters' implementation efforts in our multivariate analyses of the association between implementation and program success. Still, we cannot be certain that we have controlled for all relevant factors that confound the association between program implementation and program success.

Analyses of the relationship between outcome success and the overall implementation score indicated a positive association, net of child and recruiter characteristics. Specifically, the implementation score was higher for children with a finalized adoption or guardianship, on average, than for other children, and it was also higher for children who had been adopted, placed in guardianship, or who had a pre-adoptive placement, compared with children who had not. That is, with all other variables held constant, children who achieved outcome success had, on average, higher implementation practice scores than children who did not achieve outcome success. This finding is consistent with (but cannot prove) the hypothesis that the degree to which program implementation occurs contributes significantly to program success.

When we examined the association of individual model components with program success, we found two in particular — relationship building with the child and diligent search for adoptive resources — to be associated with adoption/guardianship and pre-adoptive placement. This finding corresponds with what program staff have told us in individual, in-person interviews: They overwhelmingly reported that building a relationship with the child is the most important component of the WWK model, as it encourages children to open up about adoption and to become more receptive to it.[3]

> **KEY FINDING:**
> Two WWK model components — relationship building and diligent search — are positively associated with program success.

Our analyses also showed great variation across children in the implementation of the WWK model components. In light of findings from this analysis, it is possible that more consistent implementation of the WWK model — particularly in the areas of relationship building and diligent search for adoptive resources — could yield even greater success.

Current and prospective adoptive parents as well as older children for whom recruitment was conducted, were interviewed to examine client experiences of the WWK program. Youths' impressions about adoption, specifically, their opposition was also explored. Youth opposition to adoption has been documented by multiple sources yet there is minimal research that explores youths' perceptions on the topic. Likewise, little is known about what helps foster youth to consider or reconsider adoption as a permanency goal. Finally, prospective and current adoptive parents' perspectives are also paramount to determining what facilitates successful adoption including overcoming common service and community-level barriers.

Prospective and current adoptive parent perceptions

Semi-structured, telephone interviews[24] were conducted with a sample of parents[25] who are currently pursuing or previously pursued, an adoption of a Wendy's Wonderful Kids (WWK) child.[26] A total of 101 parents from 19 states participated in the phone interviews.[27] The average age of the parents was 44 years old and nearly two-thirds (63 percent) of the parents were married. The majority of participants identified as white (60 percent) or African American/black (31 percent).[28] At the time of the interview, almost two-thirds of the parents (62 percent) were working with or had worked with a recruiter who was employed by a private child welfare agency.

The parents represent different stages of the adoption process with about half (52 percent) either having finalized the adoption of a child or having a child placed with them pre-adoptively with finalization dates a few months to over a year from the time of the interview. A smaller percentage (15 percent) has pre-placement visits with a child or had inquired about a specific WWK child. One third of the parents were not in the process of adopting a WWK child. A little over half (54 percent) of the parents were in the process of pursuing or had pursued an adoption of a sibling group at the time of data collection. The majority of parents (80 percent) was pursuing or had pursued an adoption of a child or sibling group who were wards within their state, while a smaller share (20 percent) were pursuing or had pursued an adoption of a child or sibling group residing outside of their state.

Adoption application and homestudy
Although assisting parents through the process of receiving approval to adopt is not a formal component of the model, nearly one-third (30 percent) of parents reported that the recruiter assisted them in applying to become an adoptive parent. Among parents who received assistance with the adoption process, parents reported that the recruiter provided information (e.g., about the child and local services) and referrals (e.g., attorneys), walked them through the process, assisted with paperwork, provided general support (e.g., checking in by phone, home visits, and court visits), kept the parent informed of timelines and application status, and was available to answer questions. Many parents who did not receive assistance from the recruiter reported that they did not need assistance (69 percent) since the application process had already begun or been completed by the time the recruiter became involved.

Fewer than one-quarter (22 percent) of the parents reported that the recruiter assisted them in completing a homestudy. However, most of the other parents reported that the homestudy process was completed prior to meeting the recruiter or that another adoption professional assisted them with the homestudy process.

Post-placement assistance

Although assisting the parents post-placement is not a formal component of the model, most parents (84 percent) who made it to the placement phase of the adoption process reported that the recruiter continued to work with them and the child or sibling group post-placement. Most commonly, recruiters routinely checked in (via phone, email or in-person) with the parent and child post-placement. Parents noted that recruiters provide moral support, assess parent and child satisfaction with the match, provide referrals to services for the child or family, and observe parent-child interactions.

Parents also noted the benefit of sustained relationships between their family and the WWK program. For example, one family explained that their child had formed a relationship with another child on the WWK caseload and the WWK recruiter and supervisor ensured that the children maintained their friendship after placement. The child's friend was ultimately placed out-of-state, but the recruiter and supervisor made sure that the child was able to talk with her friend over the phone prior to the move. This parent feels that the supervisor and recruiter "look after the hearts of the kids, not just the permanency."

A small group of parents (16 percent) reported that they did not receive assistance from the recruiter after the child was placed in their home. Many of these parents noted they did not need post-placement assistance because they had other agency support (e.g., adoption worker). In contrast, a few parents reported that they could have benefited from post-placement assistance. Specifically, these parents reported needing assistance in stabilizing the child in their home, sharing insight on what to expect during the finalization stage, and coordinating post-placement services. For example, a few parents reported that they needed assistance to ensure the appropriate mental health services were in place to minimize the chance of a placement disruption. Several of these parents reported the child had been removed from their home.

Adoption finalization

Among parents who have reached the adoption finalization process, most (71 percent) reported that the recruiter was still involved in their case at finalization. However, it should be noted that assisting the parents at this stage is not a formal part of the WWK model. Similar to the adoption application process, parents note that recruiters assisted with paperwork (e.g. facilitating interstate paperwork in order to expedite the process) and answered questions in order to educate parents and inform them of progress and talking to children about the meaning of finalization. Recruiters also advocated for parents throughout the process and helped them troubleshoot problems. Other parents noted that the recruiter assisted with securing important documents like the child's birth certificate, as well as with ensuring that the subsidies and Medicaid would be in place once the adoption finalized. Finally, many parents described the emotional support that was provided to them before the adoption finalization through visits and calls, and the recruiter attending the finalization proceedings.

Parent preparation

Over three-fourths of the parents (80 percent) reported that the recruiters prepared them to be adoptive parents very well or somewhat well. These parents noted that recruiters helped them manage their expectations (e.g. explaining that there would be a "honeymoon phase" when the child was placed), were open and honest, educated parents about the child's specific needs and history, and helped them understand the adoption process, policies, and paperwork. The remaining parents (20 percent) reported that the recruiter did not assist them in adoption preparation but explained that they did not seek assistance because they had previously adopted and were familiar with the process, or had received preparation from other individuals in the child's network. Some parents also noted that they felt the recruiter's role was to prepare the child, not the family, for adoption.

Knowledge of the child

Parents were asked how well they felt the recruiter knew the child (e.g., knew all of the child's needs). Almost all parents (92 percent) reported that the recruiter knew the child very well or somewhat well. A very small group of parents (four percent) reported that the recruiter did not know the child very well or not at all.

General barriers to adoption

About one-quarter (26 percent) of the parents reported experiencing barriers to adoption, which eventually led to the adoption process ending prematurely. The majority of these barriers seemed to occur post-placement. The most common reason for not continuing the adoption process was experiencing a placement disruption. Parents reported a variety of reasons for disruptions, including agency failure to disclose the child's emotional health or history, being unprepared to meet the child's needs, feeling rushed by the recruiter through the process, difficulty integrating the child into their family, and the child running away or opposing the adoption. Other parents reported safety concerns such as threats of violence and sexual advances from the child. Other reasons reported include the parent believing that the child was not a good match, and the child declining to move forward. Only 16 percent of parents who reported barriers and did not continue the adoption process said that the recruiter assisted in addressing the barriers. However, in some cases there appeared to be nothing the recruiter could have done to address the barriers.

Older children's perceptions

In addition to interviews with parents, in-person interviews[29] were conducted with a sample of older children in foster care affiliated with the WWK program to obtain additional client perspectives of the program.[30] A total of 74 children ages 12 to 18 from 18 different states participated in the in-person interviews. Nearly half (49 percent) of the children who participated were between the ages of 16 and 18, slightly more males than females (55 percent vs. 45 percent), and the majority were African American/black (65 percent) or white (31 percent).[31] Half of the children were residing in a foster family home while the other half were living in a pre-adoptive/adoptive home (24 percent), group home (22 percent), or medical or mental health institution (four percent). The children had spent an average of eight years in out-of-home-care and had an average of seven placements. Prior to participating in the WWK program, one-quarter of the children experienced a past adoptive placement disruption or dissolution.

Experiences with adoption services prior to participating in the WWK program

Over two-thirds of the children (70 percent) reported that someone talked to them about adoption prior to participating in the WWK program. The impressions of the discussions around adoption (prior to participating in WWK) differed; two-thirds (67 percent) of the children reported the discussions to be positive. Slightly over one-quarter (27 percent) reported the prior discussions to be unfavorable or unwanted. A little over half (54 percent) of the children reported that someone else tried to help them find an adoptive home prior to participating in the WWK program. However, only 30 percent of these children reported having been asked about individuals in their lives that could potentially serve as an adoptive resource, and only 35 percent of these children reported that their voice was heard in this process.

Descriptions of the WWK program activities

The children were asked to describe the types of activities they participated in with their recruiter. Some of the activities reported included eating at restaurants, visiting the mall, zoo, or park, driving around town, or just simply taking a walk. Other activities with the children consisted of accompanying them to recruitment events, taking pictures of children to be used in recruitment work, and working on adoption books and life memory banners together.

During their time together, the children and recruiter talked about a number of different topics, including their future goals and their overall well-being. Nearly all (95 percent) of the children reported that the recruiter discussed adoption with them, although the frequency in which this topic is discussed varied. A little over half (55 percent) of the children reported that the recruiter discusses adoption with them every time they met or most of the time, while the remainder reported only discussing adoption some of the time.

A little more than half (58 percent) of the children reported that their recruiter described how he or she would find them a permanent family.[32] Most (87 percent) of the children reported that their recruiter asked them what they were looking for in a permanent family. Additionally, 60 percent of the children reported that their recruiter has asked them if they knew anyone who might provide a permanent home for them. Of those who were asked about potential adoptive resources, less than one-third of children knew for certain that the recruiter had made attempts to get in touch with the individuals the children proposed as potential placement resources.

The majority of children (81 percent) reported having first been introduced to their recruiter in-person. Of these, almost half (49 percent) were introduced to their recruiters at their placement location, while others (31 percent) reported having first met their recruiter at the child welfare agency, an adoption recruitment event, school, court, a therapist's office or other community locations. A few children (seven percent) reported having been introduced to their recruiters by phone. Most of the children (78 percent) reported having a good first impression of the recruiter, while a handful (seven percent) reported indifference.

The children reported having routine in-person meetings with the recruiter. The majority (78 percent) of children reported that this meeting occurred monthly (49 percent) or every few months (29 percent). In addition to in-person meetings, almost half of the children (45 percent) reported that they also keep in contact with their recruiter by phone. A smaller group (14 percent) of children also noted that they keep in contact with their recruiters by email or text.

Feelings about adoption before and after working with the recruiter
The children were asked about their feelings toward adoption prior to working with the recruiter. Over one-third (37 percent) of the children reported not wanting to be adopted prior to working with the recruiter, one-quarter (24 percent) did have a desire to be adopted, 15 percent reported uncertainty or conflict about being adopted, and 15 percent reported being indifferent or never having thought about adoption prior to working with the recruiter. Experiencing failed past placements and not having enough information about what adoption entails are reported as contributing to these conflicting feelings.

The children were also asked about their feelings toward adoption since working with the recruiter. Many children reported that their feelings about being adopted have changed. Specifically, of the children previously opposed to being adopted, 43 percent reported feeling open to adoption after working with the recruiter. Only three children reported now feeling opposed to adoption since working with the WWK recruiter. However, this was mainly due to a desire to remain in their current foster placements.

Comparisons of relationship with recruiter to relationship with child welfare worker
The children were asked if their relationships with their recruiters were different than the relationships they have had with their primary child welfare workers. Almost two-thirds (65 percent) of the children reported that these relationships are different. Many children feel closer to the recruiter than their child welfare worker, while others reported feeling closer to

their child welfare worker. There were distinct reasons for feeling closer to their recruiter including the recruiter being more informal and relatable as opposed to the child welfare worker. Some children also noted having a "real friendship" with the recruiter in which they can be open and honest about things they are going through without the recruiter passing any judgment on them. The children who reported no difference between the relationships with their recruiters and primary child welfare workers (31 percent) described both professionals as spending time with them, being personable, and caring about their well-being.

Strengths and challenges of the WWK program
Nearly all (91 percent) of the children reported that their recruiter has been helpful to them. Additionally, the vast majority (89 percent) reported enjoying their time with their recruiters. Very few children reported challenges or concerns with their recruiters or the WWK program in general and the challenges revolved around miscommunications or a general negative feeling toward adoption, rather than the recruiter or program.

Variation in older children's perceptions and experiences by child characteristics
None of the children's perceptions and experiences with the recruiter or program is associated with the children's age, ethnicity, placement status, time in care, or number of past placements. However, children's openness to adoption is associated with disruptions. Specifically, the children who have not experienced a past adoption placement disruption or dissolution are more likely to report having been opposed to adoption prior to working with the recruiter than older children who had experienced an adoption placement disruption or dissolution. These children may also have been less likely to have had a prior pre-adoptive or adoptive placement so this is not too surprising. However, this finding does suggest that experiences other than placement instability can impact openness to adoption.

The children who have not experienced a past adoption disruption or dissolution are more likely to report a desire to be adopted since working with the recruiter compared with children who have experienced a placement disruption or dissolution. This finding suggests that not experiencing this type of trauma may make it easier to become open to adoption over time.

SECTION 5. CONCLUSION

The implementation and descriptive analysis findings presented in this technical report are meant to further inform the impact findings presented in Technical Report 2: **WWK Impact Findings**. This report also provides important detail for the overall findings presented in the Wendy's Wonderful Kids **Evaluation Report Summary**.

A comprehensive understanding of the WWK model — including the local context within which the random assignment sites operate, adoption recruitment "services as usual" in the sites, and youth and parent perceptions of the model — sheds light on **impact analysis findings**. Additionally, an examination of the characteristics of children served by the program and the correlation of those characteristics with adoptive or preadoptive placements helps to identify those children with lower likelihoods of adoption who could most benefit from interventions such as the WWK program.

Information on WWK program implementation was collected over several years from a wide variety of sources including the WWK Online Database, site visits to the 25 random assignment sites, and client interviews with children and parents

who have worked with the WWK program. Taken together, this information underscores the following key findings presented in the **WWK Evaluation Report Summary**.

• **The relationship between recruiters and children matters.** Net of child characteristics, relationship-building was more consistent among children who were adopted than among others. Children who were adopted or who had ever been in a pre-adoptive placement were more likely to have had monthly contact with their recruiters than children who were not adopted and had never been in a pre-adoptive placement. In addition, WWK recruiters cite building a relationship with the child as the most important component of the model.

• **Early and diligent search efforts contribute to more successful outcomes.** The identification of and contact with potential adoptive resources early on in the case is linked with the likelihood of adoption. Children who were adopted or had been placed pre-adoptively were more likely than children who had never been adopted or in a pre-adoptive placement to have recruiters who identified at least two potential adoptive resources within the first three months of the case being active and contacted at least two potential adoptive resources within the first six months.

• **Children and adults need better support before and after an adoption in order to ensure successful placements.** According to interviews with prospective parents, parents need assistance in understanding children's needs and how best to work with the child both pre- and post-placement. Many recruiters reported helping prepare families and noted the importance of their role in assisting parents in navigating the adoption process. Recruiter involvement in the adoption matching process appeared inconsistent across sites. Many prospective parents we interviewed experienced barriers which ended the process prematurely and some felt that the child had not been a good match.

• **The WWK program changes child attitudes about adoption.** According to the WWK recruiters, many children they serve initially say they do not want to be adopted or express feeling unsure or conflicted about adoption. Our interviews with older children found that many changed their feelings toward adoption after working with the WWK recruiter. Nearly all of the children interviewed reported that their recruiter was helpful to them and they reported having a different type of relationship with their recruiter than with their child welfare worker, with this relationship being more informal and open and honest.

These key findings from the WWK implementation analyses can be used to bolster key components of the WWK model such as relationship-building with children and diligent search methods, and inform adoption recruitment practice more generally to better serve the approximately 107,000 foster children[33] waiting for adoptive families.

APPENDIX A: DATA SOURCES

Interviews with older children

We carried out half-hour, in-person, semi-structured interviews with a subset of older children who have been served by the WWK program. Among children served by the 35 WWK recruiters involved in the impact evaluation, we aimed to randomly select five youth per recruiter age 12 and older who have been involved in the WWK program for at least three months, with the expectation of a sample of about 175 youth. Ultimately, we interviewed 74 youth. The semi-structured interviews followed a pre-developed protocol with questions and probes covering children's experiences with and

satisfaction with the WWK program, as compared with other adoption services they have experienced. This approach helped to ensure that similar questions were asked and that a core set of data were collected from all participants as well as to allow for flexibility to pursue topics, where appropriate and relevant, in further depth. Participants received $10 in cash for their participation. These interviews were carried out one-on-one by a single Child Trends staff person and were not recorded.

Interviews with adoptive parents and prospective adoptive parents

We also carried out semi-structured interviews via telephone with a subset of (prospective) adoptive parents that had contacted WWK agencies involved in the impact evaluation. These individuals may or may not have had finalized an adoption of a child through WWK. For the sake of simplicity, we refer to them here as "parents." Five parents from each WWK site who met these criteria and who agreed to be contacted about the interview were randomly selected to participate, which was meant to yield a sample of 150-175 parents. Ultimately, we interviewed 101 parents. The interviews were intended to help us understand how WWK recruiters work with prospective adoptive parents during the adoption process. The interviews followed a pre-developed protocol with questions and probes covering their experiences with and satisfaction with the WWK program, as compared with other adoption services they have experienced. This approach helped to ensure that similar questions were asked and that a core set of data were collected from all participants as well as to allow for flexibility to pursue topics, where appropriate and relevant, in further depth.

Prior to the interview and after permission had been recevied to contact participants (WWK recruiters asked for their permission for Child Trends to contact them), Child Trends sent selected participants an introductory letter by mail, a $10 cash incentive to thank them for their participation in advance, and a background information sheet about the WWK program, as well as a consent form. These interviews were not recorded.

Individual, in-person interviews with public agency adoption directors

To learn more about the local context in which the WWK program operates, Child Trends conducted 45-minute semi-structured interviews with the director of adoption services in public child welfare agencies in localities that have jurisdiction over the children involved in the experimental evaluation of the WWK program. In some instances, the WWK supervisor and/or WWK agency director was the same person as the director of adoption at the public agency. The interview followed a pre-developed protocol with questions and probes covering practices regarding adoption recruitment, preparation of children and families for adoption, and factors that challenge or facilitate these activities.
To recruit participants, Child Trends asked the WWK recruiter and supervisor to help coordinate a location and time that would be convenient for the public agency director. Child Trends staff typically carried out the interview at the public agency director's office at an agreed-upon time. The public agency directors were interviewed privately, with two Child Trends staff members participating in each interview (one asking questions and the other taking notes on a laptop and making digital recordings of the interviews). Child Trends conducted two rounds of site visits to localities which were approximately 18 months apart from each other. The adoption directors were interviewed in both rounds. During the second round, interviews with adoption directors were completed by telephone.

Individual, in-person interviews with program staff (WWK recruiters, WWK supervisors and agency directors)

We also carried out semi-structured, in-person interviews with WWK recruiters, supervisors, and agency directors that served children involved in the impact evaluation. Interviews lasted approximately one hour for recruiters, and 45 minutes for supervisors and agency directors. These interviews were intended to help us understand how the WWK program was implemented. The interviews followed pre-developed protocols with questions and probes covering their background and qualifications, as well as the degree to which individual program staff provided WWK services in accordance with the WWK child-focused recruitment model. Each interview was carried out privately, with two Child Trends staff members participating in each interview (one asking questions and the other taking notes on a laptop and making digital recordings of the interviews). Child Trends conducted two rounds of site visits which were approximately 18 months apart from each other. WWK staff were interviewed in both rounds.

Focus groups with social workers from the public agency (referring workers and adoption workers)

To learn more about the local context in which the WWK program operates, Child Trends conducted hour-long focus groups with social workers from the public child welfare agencies in localities that have jurisdiction over the children involved in the experimental evaluation of the WWK program. To recruit participants, Child Trends asked either the WWK recruiter and supervisor, who worked for the local public agency or had an existing relationship with the local public agency, or a contact at the public agency to invite eight to 12 caseworkers from each of two categories (referring workers and adoption workers) to participate in the focus groups, with the goal of having six to eight agree to participate in each group. The referring workers were caseworkers who carried caseloads of children in foster care and who were responsible for referring children for adoption services (either within or outside of the agency) if reunification was ruled out or not likely to occur. The goal was to include caseworkers who had referred cases to WWK as well as caseworkers who had not referred cases to WWK. The adoption workers were caseworkers who carried cases in which children either had a goal of adoption or for whom adoption was being considered as a concurrent goal or a possible goal and who were responsible for finding adoptive homes for these children.

The referring worker focus group followed a pre-developed protocol with questions and probes covering how children are referred for adoption and the adoption recruitment and matching process. Participants were also asked their opinions of which practices are more or less effective for placing children with adoptive families, and how practices have changed in recent years. The adoption worker focus group followed a pre-developed protocol with questions and probes covering how adoption recruitment and preparation typically takes place. Participants were also asked their opinions of facilitators and barriers to the process of finding adoptive homes for children in foster care. Two Child Trends staff members participated in each focus group (one moderating the group and the other taking notes on a laptop and making digital recordings of the discussion). Child Trends conducted two rounds of site visits which were approximately 18 months apart from each other. We conducted focus groups with adoption and referring workers in both rounds.

Written surveys of WWK recruiters and supervisors

In order to gain information about the training, education, experience, and activities of WWK recruiters and their supervisors, we administered written surveys in the form of self-administered questionnaires to WWK recruiters and supervisors when they first began working with the WWK program, and approximately annually at a conference for WWK recruiters and supervisors typically held in the spring in Columbus, OH. All recruiters and supervisors (approximately 200), regardless of participation in the experimental evaluation, were included. Generally, each self-administered questionnaire took less than 20 minutes to complete.

WWK Online Database

WWK recruiters record information about the children on their caseloads and their activities and interactions with the children on a monthly basis in a database structure created by the study team,[34] known as the WWK Online Database. (No data are collected in the WWK Online Database regarding the children in the control group who do not receive WWK services, other than their child welfare case ID, name, and experimental group membership.) WWK staff, DTFA staff, and research staff from Child Trends access the WWK Online Database through personal password-protected accounts. Personally identifiable information regarding children in the WWK Online Database is encrypted.

For children on the WWK caseload, recruiters enter information about the child's case history, such as years in foster care, reasons for coming into care, and disabilities. WWK recruiters also record information regarding their knowledge of the children's histories and children's readiness for adoption. This information includes topics such as the reasons for a child's entry into the child welfare system, disabilities, and placement outcomes. All of the WWK grantees are required to submit data via the Online Database as part of their grant agreement with DTFA regardless of whether or not they participate in the impact evaluation.

In some localities, agreements with the child welfare agency prohibit WWK recruiters from recording certain information in the WWK Online Database, such as children's last or middle names, dates of birth, state identification numbers, or social security numbers. Recruiters can check "cannot provide" for data elements that their agreement with the agency prohibits them from providing.

Additionally, the WWK recruiters use the database to track the families interested in adoption, and to track families they have recruited as potential adoptive resources. The information they enter on prospective adoptive families is limited to one or two adults per family, and includes identifying information (limited to names and home addresses) as well as basic socio-economic and demographic information. For these families, the Database asks for information on family income, housing status, employment, and education, which could be considered sensitive. This information is critical to inform the field about the types of families interested in adopting children from foster care.

Data are entered by the WWK recruiter and Child Trends has provided extensive ongoing training on definitions and entry requirements. The training component is critical because of recruiter turnover and the their general lack of familiarity with data entry. Child Trends periodically provides training webinars to the WWK program staff; we also staff a Database "hotline" during business hours to provide technical assistance to Database users.

Major revisions to the database. In September, 2007, there was a major upgrade of the WWK database to ensure more consistent and accurate data entry. Examples of modifications that were made include the development of stop measures which prevented recruiters from entering impossible dates (e.g., February 30th); features that required recruiters to answer all relevant questions for each child to prevent missing data; ensuring that data elements that had been skipped or inappropriately not completed could be distinguished from data elements that were inapplicable or to which the recruiter did not know the response or was prohibited from answering; and the ability for recruiters to skip inapplicable screens to reduce response burden on them.

Data quality. Child Trends is responsible for maintaining the Database and monitoring data entry. Despite the revisions to the Database over time that were intended to prevent data entry errors, we quickly learned that not all errors could be prevented in an automated way. For this reason, we developed a system of producing monthly reports to cross-check recruiters' data entry. When we found data that appeared to be questionable, we contacted recruiters for clarification and hard-coded corrections to the Database.

Data elements used in analyses. Variables used in the quantitative analyses that are not part of the impact analyses come from data extracted from the WWK Online Database.

• Child age at referral (based on child's date of birth and date of referral to WWK)
• Child gender
• Child race and Hispanic origin
• Diagnosed disability
• Referred to the WWK program with siblings
• Years between first court contact and WWK referral
• Placement at WWK referral
• Number of foster care placements prior to WWK referral
• Any failed adoptions (disruptions/dissolutions) prior to WWK referral
• Past recruitment efforts (whether minimal or extensive, whether child-specific or general/targeted)
• Reason(s) for removal from home
• Whether parental rights had been terminated before WWK referral
• Reasons for WWK case closure and date of case closure

APPENDIX B: ANALYSIS OF CORRELATES OF WWK PROGRAM IMPLEMENTATION AND PROGRAM SUCCESS

Analysis methods

Levels of missing data across covariates included in the implementation analysis were low, with most missing for fewer than 10 percent of cases and the highest levels for whether the child has a disabling condition (10 percent), the recruiters' educational attainment (8 percent), and whether or not the child had entered foster care as a result of sexual abuse (10 percent). However, due to sporadic missing data, complete case analysis for the regression models would have resulted in 37 percent of cases being dropped. Because analyses conducted using single imputation generally produce biased results,[35] we chose to impute missing data due using the ICE procedure in Stata 11.[36] Using this approach, the production

of (in our case) five plausible values for each missing value allowed us to incorporate the uncertainty of the missing data into our later regression analyses. We included a set of auxiliary variables in our multiple imputation model in order to increase the plausibility of the assumption necessary for this approach, that data are missing at random.[37]

We carried out our analyses in Stata, which allowed us to use the VCE command to account for the clustering of children within Wendy's Wonderful Kids program agencies. Failing to account for such clustering could have resulted in downwardly biased standard errors. We generated frequency distributions using the original, non-imputed data. We generated the logistic regression models using Stata's MIM command with the multiply imputed data. We would like to have identified the amount of variation in the well-being measures explained by each of our models, as is frequently done by calculating a pseudo R-squared with logistic regression models. Unfortunately, calculating such a statistic is not appropriate with multiply imputed data. However, we were able to generate F-statistics pertaining to overall model fit using the TESTPARM command in conjunction with Stata's MIM command.

The multiply imputed data and robust standard error corrections were used for the multivariate models that examine correlates of adoption as well as for the multivariate models that examined correlates of optimal practice in the implementation analysis. Bivariate analyses used the data that had not been multiply imputed.

Operationalization of optimum practice components of the WWK model

The variables for the optimum practice analysis are summarized in the table below. The "source" refers to the data source for each item. Items came either from the WWK Online Database (noted as "database" below) or a paper-and-pencil survey of the recruiters at annual meetings of WWK program staff. Some of the variable definitions depended upon the status of the child's case in a given month. A child who is matched with a family and is in a pre-adoptive placement, or a child who requires greater adoption preparation, may not be in the "active" recruitment phase but is still on the recruiter's caseload and being "monitored" by the recruiter. A child may also be considered part of the caseload but "inactive" if he or she is a runaway or is continuously and adamantly opposed to adoption, or is physically unavailable due to incarceration or hospitalization. Even if a child is not being actively recruited for, recruiters are still expected to have periodic contact with the children or the child's caseworker. Otherwise, the child's status is typically "active"— that is, the recruiter should be actively working with and recruiting on behalf of the child.

Several of the components depended upon identifying the month in which the child was first "active" (as opposed to in monitoring status or inactive status), or on identifying quarters in which the child was on active status. Typically, the requirements for implementing the WWK model are not as stringent when children are on monitoring or inactive status, so we did not want to downgrade children's optimum performance scores for the months in which they were not actively

being recruited for. Particularly prior to the 2007 revision of the WWK Online Database, children's case status were frequently not entered in the monthly updates. Therefore, we describe our decisions regarding the handling of missing information on case status.

Approximately 20 percent of the sample is missing on first active date. For 75 percent of the sample with first active date, the referral date is within one month of that date. For those missing on first active date, we imputed the first active date as being 31 days after the referral date. If referral date was also missing, we imputed first active date as being 31 days after

Definition	Source
Component 1: Initial referral and contact	
Recruiter met with child in person within one month of first active month, *or before first active month*	Database
Initial review of the child's case record within first active month, *or before first active month*	Database
Caseworker contact occurred within first month, *or before first active month*	Database
Component 2: Case record review	
Recruiter spent at least six hours reviewing the child's case record	Recruiter survey
Recruiter uses a standard instrument to review case file	Recruiter survey
Component 3: Building relationship with child	
Met with child once per month while active • Note: Those with NO active months are assigned to 0.	Database
Communicated with child by phone or email once per month while child active or monitoring • Note: Those with NO active months are assigned to 0.	Database
Component 4: Assessment of the child	
Recruiter worked on (prior to 8/25/08) or completed (after 8/25/08) assessment within three months of first active date • Note: Prior to 8/25/08, only the variable CHCFAS was available, which indicated that the recruiter worked on the assessment. After that, the variable CHCFAS_DONE was available, which indicated whether the recruiter completed the assessment. To create this variable, we tracked whether the assessment was worked on (in months prior to 8/25/08) or completed the assessment within 93 days (three months) following the first active date, regardless of whether the child was on "active" status, or had monthly updates submitted to the database, during those subsequent three months or not. Children are scored 0 if they have not had an assessment completed, even if they have had fewer than three months.	Database
Child's written assessment was updated every quarter, *beginning in the second quarter* • Note: We begin tracking this component in quarter two regardless of whether the assessment had been created in quarter one. Because we found that often updates occurred in inactive months, we include in this element all months in which an update occurred OR months when the child was on active status, in order to avoid the problem of "missing" a quarterly update that occurred during an inactive month. Also, we do not examine months unless a full quarter was completed. Thus, if the last monthly updated represented only the first or second month in the quarter, we don't count those months toward this element (in order to avoid "dinging" a recruiter who would have done the update in the third month.) Those with fewer than two quarters of active months (i.e., five months) are assigned a 0 (unless they had an update in month four or five, in which case we assigned them a 1 for this component).	Database
Recruiter uses a standard instrument to conduct assessment	Recruiter survey
Component 5: Recruitment plan	
Recruiter worked on (prior to 8/25/08) or completed (after 8/25/08) recruitment plan within three months of first active date, *or before first active month*	

Table B.1. Operationalization of and data sources for optimum practice components

Definition	Source
• Note: Created similarly in logic/structure to the completion of the child's written assessment within the first three months, above. Prior to 8/25/08, only the variable CHCFRP was available, which indicated that the recruiter worked on the plan. After that, the variable CHCFRP_DONE was available, which indicated whether the recruiter completed the plan. To create this variable, we tracked whether the plan was worked on (in months prior to 8/25/08) or completed the assessment within 93 days (three months) following the first active date, regardless of whether or not the child was on "active" status, or had monthly updates submitted to the database, during those subsequent three months. Children are scored 0 if they have not had a plan completed, even if they have had fewer than three months.	Database
Child's recruitment plan was updated every quarter, *beginning in the second quarter.* • Note: This element is created very similarly — in terms of structure and logic — to the component for assessing the child on a quarterly basis. Tracking for this element begins in the second quarter because it is assumed a plan must first be created in quarter one. We begin in quarter two regardless of whether the plan had been created in quarter one. Also, initially we looked only at active months but found that often updates occurred in inactive months. Therefore, we include in this element all months in which an update occurred <u>or</u> months when the child was on active status in order to avoid the problem of "missing" a quarterly update that occurred during an inactive month. Also, we don't examine months unless a full quarter was completed. Thus, if the last monthly updated represented only the first or second month in the quarter, we don't count those months toward this element. *Those with fewer than two quarters of active months (i.e., five months) are assigned a 0 (unless they had an update in month four or five, in which case they were assigned a 1).*	Database
Component 6: Diligent search	
Identified at least two resources in three months of first active date	Database
Contacted at least two resources in six months	Database
TOTAL SCORE	
Sum of the six component scores	

the date for the first submission to the WWK Online Database (which we tend to think of as the date added to the caseload.)

Ten percent of the sample only had monthly updates submitted to the database for five months, meaning they have fewer than two full quarters worth of monthly update data. Thirty-seven percent of the sample had only monthly updates submitted to the database for five months that were also coded as active, meaning they have fewer than two full quarters of active months.

For those months that were missing on status, we coded the child as inactive if the child had been in a placement described as preadoptive, adoptive, or guardianship, or if the child had been matched (or in a continuing match that had not disrupted), during the prior month. Otherwise, if a monthly update had been submitted for the child, we assumed the status was active. (Some children are allowed to be in inactive status if the recruiter temporarily does not have access to the child; our coding does not account for this.) Among those children who were not missing on active status, and who were identified as being active, our imputation method correctly identifies 89 percent.

	Percent	N
Component 1 - Initial referral and contact		
No elements	25%	1136
1 out of 3 elements	18%	821
2 out of 3 elements	32%	1488
3 out of 3 elements	26%	1191
Total	*100%*	*4636*
1) Met with child in person within first month		
No	61%	2818
Yes	39%	1818
Total	*100%*	*4636*
2) Worked on case record review within first month		
No	54%	2502
Yes	46%	2134
Total	*100%*	*4636*
3) Contacted child's caseworker within first month		
No	26%	1218
Yes	74%	3418
Total	*100%*	*4636*
Component 2 - Case record review		
No elements	20%	824
1 out of 2 elements	58%	2383
2 out of 2 elements	22%	883
Total	*100%*	*4090*
1) Spends at least six hours reviewing child's case record		
No	64%	2618
Yes	36%	1493
Total	*100%*	*4111*
2) Uses a standard instrument to review case file		
No	35%	1426
Yes	65%	2664
Total	*100%*	*4090*
Component 3 - Building relationship with child		
No elements	89%	4127
1 out of 2 elements	10%	464
2 out of 2 elements	1%	45
Total	*100%*	*4636*

Table B.2. Implementation of WWK model among children added to caseload by 9/1/09 and served at least six months

	Percent	N*
1) Met with child once per month		
No	90%	4161
Yes	10%	475
Total	*100%*	*4636*
2) Communicated with child by phone or email once per month		
No	98%	4557
Yes	2%	79
Total	*100%*	*4636*
Component 4 - Assessment of the child		
No elements	29%	1171
1 out of 3 elements	37%	1485
2 out of 3 elements	26%	1026
3 out of 3 elements	8%	321
Total	*100%*	*4003*
1) Developed child's assessment in first quarter		
No	49%	2270
Yes	51%	2366
Total	*100%*	*4636*
2) Updated child's written assessment every quarter		
No	79%	3615
Yes	21%	975
Total	*100%*	*4590*
3) Uses a standard instrument to conduct assessment		
No	59%	2395
Yes	41%	1648
Total	*100%*	*4043*
Component 5 - Recruitment plan		
No elements	42%	1938
1 out of 2 elements	42%	1936
2 out of 2 elements	16%	715
Total	*100%*	*4589*
1) Developed recruitment plan within first quarter		
No	46%	2147
Yes	54%	2489
Total	*100%*	*4636*
2) Updated child's recruitment plan every quarter		
No	81%	3700
Yes	19%	889
Total	*100%*	*4589*
Component 6 - Diligent search		
No elements	49%	2275
1 out of 2 elements	18%	829
2 out of 2 elements	33%	1532
Total	*100%*	*4636*
1) Identified at least two resources within three months of first active date		
No	60%	2804
Yes	40%	1832
Total	*100%*	*4636*

	Percent	N*
2) Contacted at least two resources in six months		
No	56%	2575
Yes	44%	2061
Total	*100%*	*4636*
OPTIMUM PRACTICE SCORE - Sum of components 1-6 (potential range 0-14)		
No elements	4%	153
1 out of 14 elements	10%	404
2 out of 14 elements	10%	419
3 out of 14 elements	6%	233
4 out of 14 elements	8%	324
5 out of 14 elements	9%	366
6 out of 14 elements	12%	466
7 out of 14 elements	12%	495
8 out of 14 elements	12%	472
9 out of 14 elements	8%	316
10 out of 14 elements	5%	193
11 out of 14 elements	2%	95
12 out of 14 elements	1%	47
13 out of 14 elements	<1%	14
14 out of 14 elements	0%	0
Total	*100%*	*3997*

	Model 1			Model 2		
	Coef.	s.e.		Coef	s.e.	
Child ever adopted[1]	0.625	(0.168)	***	—	—	***
Child ever adopted or in preadoptive placement	—	—		1.215	(0.190)	
Child race and Hispanic origin *(non-Hispanic white)*						
Non-Hispanic black	-0.21	(0.209)		-0.13	(0.207)	
Non-Hispanic other	0.14	(0.236)		0.16	(0.231)	
Hispanic	0.24	(0.220)		0.24	(0.214)	
Child is male	-0.14	(0.120)		-0.09	(0.120)	
Child age at referral to WWK *(age 0-5)*						
Age 6-8	-0.29	(0.182)		-0.28	(0.181)	
Age 9-11	-0.37	(0.221)	*	-0.31	(0.216)	
Age 12-14	-0.57	(0.255)	**	-0.41	(0.260)	
Age 15 or older	-0.07	(0.313)		0.15	(0.319)	
Recruiter's educational attainment *(>= College degree)*						
College degree in social work or related field	0.32	(0.425)		0.30	(0.418)	
Master's degree in social work or related field	-0.19	(0.515)		-0.17	(0.489)	

Table B.3. OLS regression model predicting optimum practice total score - Sum of components 1-6 (N=3997), among children added to caseload by 9/1/09 and served at least six months

Table B.3. Continued

	Model 1			Model 2		
	Coef.	s.e.		Coef.	s.e.	
Master's degree or higher	-0.23	(0.524)		-0.25	(0.510)	
Length of time child was served in days	0.035	(0.008)	***	0.03	(0.008)	***
Child has any disabling conditions	1.18	(0.171)	***	1.18	(0.165)	***
Agency administering grant is public	-0.84	(0.759)		-0.88	(0.764)	
Child is part of sibling group served by WWK	0.28	(0.162)	*	0.22	(0.162)	
Child had any failed adoption prior to WWK	0.68	(0.187)	***	0.63	(0.185)	***
Number of child's placements at referral *(0-1)*						
2-5 placements	1.00	(0.200)	***	0.95	(0.192)	***
6-10 placements	0.60	(0.251)	**	0.58	(0.235)	**
>10 placements	0.59	(0.311)	*	0.67	(0.289)	**
Parental rights terminated by time of referral	-0.32	(0.268)		-0.32	(0.260)	
Child entered foster care due to sexual abuse	0.47	(0.198)	**	0.467	(0.194)	**
Constant	3.59	(0.461)	***	3.18	(0.432)	***

*: p<.10, **: p<.05, ***: p<.01
[1]Children with cases closed due to guardianship are included with adopted children

| | Component 1 (N=4636) | | | | Component 2 (N=4090) | | | |
| | Model 1 | | Model 2 | | Model 1 | | Model 2 | |
	OR	s.e.	OR	s.e.	OR	s.e.	OR	s.e.
Child ever adopted[1]	1.07	(0.134)	—	—	0.92	(0.112)	—	—
Child ever adopted[1]/preadoptive placement	—	—	1.04	(0.096)	—	—	0.8	(0.099) *
Fidelity components								
Component 1	—	—	—	—	1.09	(0.088)	1.09	(0.087)
Component 2	1.05	(0.094)	1.05	(0.094)	—	—	—	—
Component 3	6.39	(1.156) ***	6.39	(1.159) ***	1.12	(0.167)	1.15	(0.175)
Component 4	1.3	(0.091) ***	1.3	(0.091) ***	1.86	(0.433) ***	1.87	(0.437) ***
Component 5	2.64	(0.280) ***	2.63	(0.279) ***	0.76	(0.162)	0.76	(0.163)
Component 6	1.73	(0.128) ***	1.73	(0.127) ***	1.03	(0.107)	1.05	(0.111)
Child race and Hispanic origin								
(Non-Hispanic white)								
Non-Hispanic black	0.96	(0.097)	0.96	(0.097)	1.16	(0.210)	1.15	(0.207)
Non-Hispanic other	1.32	(0.172) **	1.32	(0.171) **	1.07	(0.335)	1.06	(0.334)
Hispanic	1.06	(0.182)	1.06	(0.182)	1.1	(0.242)	1.1	(0.242)
Child is male	1.09	(0.077)	1.09	(0.076)	1.02	(0.084)	1.01	(0.082)
Child age at referral to WWK *(age 0-5)*								
Age 6-8	1.22	(0.184)	1.22	(0.186)	1.05	(0.157)	1.05	(0.157)
Age 9-11	1.06	(0.144)	1.05	(0.140)	1.1	(0.191)	1.09	(0.189)
Age 12-14	1.3	(0.220)	1.29	(0.212)	1.24	(0.256)	1.21	(0.249)
Age 15 or older	1.36	(0.269)	1.35	(0.249)	1.37	(0.355)	1.3	(0.337)
Recruiter's educational attainment								
(>=College degree)								
College degree, social work/related field	0.95	(0.187)	0.95	(0.186)	1.02	(0.668)	1.02	(0.670)
Master's degree, social work/related field	0.91	(0.187)	0.91	(0.187)	1.2	(0.773)	1.19	(0.771)
Master's degree or higher	0.86	(0.255)	0.86	(0.255)	2.91	(1.982)	2.93	(1.999)
Length of time child was served in days	1.04	(0.004) ***	1.036	(0.004) ***	0.99	(0.007)	0.99	(0.006)
Child has any disabling conditions	1.57	(0.204) ***	1.57	(0.203) ***	1.09	(0.161)	1.08	(0.161)
Agency administering grant is public	1.37	(0.305)	1.37	(0.307)	0.61	(0.379)	0.62	(0.382)
Child is part of sibling group served by WWK	1.01	(0.091)	1.01	(0.091)	1.29	(0.141) **	1.31	(0.143) **
Child had any failed adoption prior to WWK	1.27	(0.136) **	1.27	(0.136) **	1.03	(0.162)	1.04	(0.162)
Number of placements at referral *(0-1)*								
2-5 placements	1.45	(0.203) ***	1.45	(0.202) ***	1.02	(0.130)	1.02	(0.131)
6-10 placements	1.32	(0.220)	1.31	(0.216)	1.25	(0.205)	1.25	(0.204)
>10 placements	1.18	(0.209)	1.18	(0.208)	1.47	(0.278) **	1.44	(0.271) *
Parental rights terminated by time of referral	0.75	(0.137)	0.76	(0.138)	1.27	(0.257)	1.28	(0.264)
Child entered foster care due to sexual abuse	1.07	(0.138)	1.06	(0.138)	1.29	(0.263)	1.29	(0.262)
constant$_1$	4.3	(2)	4.216	(1)	0.81	(1)	0.75	(1)
constant$_2$	15.3	(6)	14.98	(5)	15.1	(10)	14	(10)
constant$_3$	108	(43)	105.4	(40)				

*:p<.10, **:p<.05, ***:p<.01
[1]Children with cases closed due to guardianship are included with adopted children

Table B.4. Ordinal logistic regression models predicting implementation components, among children added to caseload by 9/1/09 and served at least six months

	Component 3 (N=4636) Model 1		Component 3 (N=4636) Model 2		Component 4 (N=4003) Model 1		Component 4 (N=4003) Model 2	
	OR	s.e.	OR	s.e.	OR	s.e.	OR	s.e.
Child ever adopted[1]	1.38	(0.243) *	—	—	0.96	(0.124)	—	—
Child ever adopted[1]/preadoptive placement	—	—	2.52	(0.447) ***	—	—	1.21	(0.160)
Fidelity components								
Component 1	4.02	(0.489) ***	4.06	(0.502) ***	1.25	(0.090) ***	1.25	(0.089) ***
Component 2	1.2	(0.166)	1.22	(0.171)	1.95	(0.519) **	1.96	(0.525) **
Component 3	—	—	—	—	1.39	(0.202) **	1.34	(0.194) **
Component 4	1.36	(0.168) **	1.32	(0.164) **	—	—	—	—
Component 5	0.74	(0.122) *	0.73	(0.119) *	6.31	(0.971) ***	6.29	(0.961) ***
Component 6	1.3	(0.124) ***	1.22	(0.115) **	1.17	(0.081) **	1.15	(0.079) **
Child race and Hispanic origin (Non-Hispanic white)								
Non-Hispanic black	1.24	(0.226)	1.29	(0.236)	1	(0.169)	1.01	(0.173)
Non-Hispanic other	1.1	(0.279)	1.09	(0.276)	0.91	(0.159)	0.92	(0.159)
Hispanic	0.97	(0.163)	0.98	(0.159)	0.71	(0.156)	0.71	(0.158)
Child is male	1.18	(0.138)	1.22	(0.144) *	0.89	(0.072)	0.89	(0.072)
Child age at referral to WWK (age 0-5)								
Age 6-8	0.92	(0.152)	0.93	(0.150)	0.85	(0.115)	0.85	(0.116)
Age 9-11	0.91	(0.169)	0.95	(0.173)	0.86	(0.129)	0.87	(0.132)
Age 12-14	0.72	(0.194)	0.79	(0.205)	0.81	(0.149)	0.85	(0.156)
Age 15 or older	0.67	(0.178)	0.85	(0.205)	0.83	(0.172)	0.9	(0.186)
Recruiter's educational attainment (>=College degree)								
College degree, social work/related field	2.46	(0.742) ***	2.52	(0.770) ***	1.01	(0.519)	1.02	(0.523)
Master's degree, social work/related field	1.91	(0.497) **	1.9	(0.491) **	1.29	(0.732)	1.3	(0.735)
Master's degree or higher	1.54	(0.604)	1.54	(0.599)	0.33	(0.186) **	0.33	(0.185) **
Length of time child was served in days	0.94	(0.008) ***	0.94	(0.009) ***	0.99	(0.006)	0.99	(0.006)
Child has any disabling conditions	0.83	(0.118)	0.86	(0.123)	1.4	(0.176) ***	1.4	(0.177) ***
Agency administering grant is public	1.37	(0.236)	0.77	(0.228)	0.58	(0.272)	0.58	(0.270)
Child is part of sibling group served by WWK	0.81	(0.098) **	0.68	(0.098) ***	1.03	(0.093)	1.01	(0.090)
Child had any failed adoption prior to WWK	0.61	(0.100) ***	0.6	(0.100) ***	1.07	(0.146)	1.06	(0.144)
Number of placements at referral (0-1)								
2-5 placements	1.52	(0.272) **	1.51	(0.269) **	1	(0.160)	1	(0.159)
6-10 placements	1.2	(0.274)	1.2	(0.275)	0.94	(0.170)	0.95	(0.172)
>10 placements	1.04	(0.406)	1.12	(0.441)	1.09	(0.268)	1.12	(0.275)
Parental rights terminated by time of referral	0.64	(0.132) **	0.63	(0.131) **	1.09	(0.217)	1.07	(0.216)
Child entered foster care due to sexual abuse	0.73	(0.178)	0.74	(0.181)	0.91	(0.122)	0.92	(0.124)
constant1					2.14	(2)	2.48	(2)
constant2					25	(19)	29.1	(22)
constant3					290	(221)	340	(255)

*:p<.10, **:p<.05, ***:p<.01
[†]Model 3 is a logistic regression model, with the model predicting fidelity on 1 or 2 elements versus 0 elements
[1]Children with cases closed due to guardianship are included with adopted children

| | Component 5 (N=4589) | | | | Component 6 (N=4636) | | | |
	Model 1		Model 2		Model 1		Model 2	
	OR	s.e.	OR	s.e.	OR	s.e.	OR	s.e.
Child ever adopted[1]	1.04	(0.134)	—	—	1.68	(0.148) ***	—	—
Child ever adopted[1]/preadoptive placement	—	—	1.12	(0.147)	—	—	2.2	(0.183) ***
Fidelity components								
Component 1	2.13	(0.160) ***	2.13	(0.158) ***	1.82	(0.124) ***	1.83	(0.124) ***
Component 2	0.81	(0.138)	0.81	(0.140)	1.06	(0.121)	1.08	(0.126)
Component 3	0.67	(0.107) **	0.66	(0.106) **	1.33	(0.176) **	1.24	(0.161)
Component 4	4.36	(0.486) ***	4.34	(0.481) ***	1.19	(0.084) **	1.16	(0.081) **
Component 5	—	—	—	—	1.69	(0.147) ***	1.67	(0.145) ***
Component 6	1.47	(0.095) ***	1.46	(0.095) ***	—	—		
Child race and Hispanic origin								
(non-Hispanic white)								
Non-Hispanic black	1.12	(0.147)	1.12	(0.148)	0.76	(0.087) **	0.79	(0.090) **
Non-Hispanic other	1.07	(0.179)	1.07	(0.179)	0.95	(0.253)	0.95	(0.258)
Hispanic	1.51	(0.276) **	1.51	(0.276) **	0.96	(0.179)	0.95	(0.179)
Child is male	1.04	(0.061)	1.05	(0.061)	0.82	(0.057) ***	0.85	(0.059) **
Child age at referral to WWK *(age 0-5)*								
Age 6-8	0.99	(0.109)	0.99	(0.109)	0.72	(0.089) ***	0.73	(0.091) **
Age 9-11	1.01	(0.143)	1.01	(0.144)	0.75	(0.110) *	0.77	(0.112) *
Age 12-14	0.95	(0.164)	0.97	(0.164)	0.55	(0.080) ***	0.58	(0.083) ***
Age 15 or older	1.24	(0.275)	1.27	(0.272)	0.58	(0.096) ***	0.65	(0.104) ***
Recruiter's educational attainment								
(>=College degree)								
College degree, social work/related field	1.12	(0.401)	1.12	(0.404)	0.83	(0.144)	0.81	(0.136)
Master's degree, social work/related field	0.75	(0.290)	0.75	(0.291)	0.78	(0.190)	0.78	(0.185)
Master's degree or higher	1.65	(0.585)	1.65	(0.584)	0.75	(0.180)	0.74	(0.173)
Length of time child was served in days	1.01	(0.006)	1.01	(0.006)	1.02	(0.005) ***	1.01	(0.005) **
Child has any disabling conditions	0.89	(0.096)	0.89	(0.098)	1.41	(0.165) ***	1.43	(0.169) ***
Agency administering grant is public	0.62	(0.137) **	0.62	(0.136) **	1.13	(0.186)	1.11	(0.176)
Child is part of sibling group served by WWK	1.06	(0.090)	1.06	(0.090)	1.04	(0.083)	1.02	(0.083)
Child had any failed adoption prior to WWK	1.2	(0.154)	1.2	(0.154)	1.24	(0.125) **	1.22	(0.123) **
Number of placements at referral *(0-1)*								
2-5 placements	1.12	(0.164)	1.12	(0.164)	1.15	(0.127)	1.13	(0.127)
6-10 placements	1.02	(0.185)	1.01	(0.184)	1.07	(0.133)	1.03	(0.131)
>10 placements	1.02	(0.197)	1.02	(0.199)	0.9	(0.120)	0.94	(0.126)
Parental rights terminated by time of referral	0.89	(0.139)	0.88	(0.140)	1.21	(0.198)	1.23	(0.201)
Child entered foster care due to sexual abuse	1.42	(0.176) ***	1.43	(0.175) ***	1.23	(0.163)	1.23	(0.167)
constant$_1$	15.3	(8)	16	(9)	6.64	(2)	7.99	(3)
constant$_2$	426	(249)	447	(265)	17.6	(6)	21.5	(7)
constant$_3$								

*:p<.10, **:p<.05, ***:p<.01
[1]Children with cases closed due to guardianship are included with adopted children

[1]Ostrower, Francie. (2010). From Awareness to Action: A Case Study of the Dave Thomas Foundation for Adoption's Philanthropic Strategy. The Urban Institute.

[2]Because the WWK program is intended to be very intensive with regard to the recruitment activities provided by staff, WWK recruiters are expected to carry small caseloads. The recommended caseload size for each recruiter is 20, with a maximum of 25. At any given time the recruiter should be intensively recruiting for 12 to 15 children, or those in "active" status. The remaining children on the recruiter's caseload may be in a less intensive phase of the recruitment process, and would be classified as "monitoring" or "inactive" status.

[3]These numbers are current as of April 1, 2010.

[4]Recruiters and supervisors who began working with WWK prior to the 2007 Summit answered demographic and background questions at the 2007 Summit. Recruiters and supervisors who started their positions after the 2007 Summit responded to these questions at the time of employment.

[5]Missing from these estimates are those recruiters and supervisors who did not complete a survey at the 2007 Summit or did not submit a new user survey and the staff at the WWK pilot sites.

[6]Excluded from this sample are children who were added to the WWK Online Database but were subsequently removed due to a recruiter data entry error (i.e., presumably these are children for whom database records should not have been created in the first place) or because the recruiter later discovered that the child was not available to be recruited for or was not appropriate for the WWK caseload (e.g., the child already had an identified family or lived outside of the geographic service delivery area).

[7]Anecdotally, we heard that simply checking an "adopted" box in the WWK Online Database was somehow anticlimactic for recruiters who had expended such effort to achieve adoption for children. For instance, one recruiter reported: "Adoption Finalized. This is my first official adoption, and many waiting to finalize. I'm extremely excited about this. The [name of] family has been very patient with the adoption process so I know that I could not have done this without them being patient. I stayed in contact with the family. I talked to the family about doing a success story, which was aired on [date]. I believe these things helped me help the family adoption finalization a great success." Or, as one recruiter wrote: "This child was successfully adopted on [date]!!!!!!!"For this reason, one modification we made in 2007 to the WWK Online Database was to have a congratulatory message pop up for recruiters who checked off adoption as a case closure reason, along with the total number of adoptions completed to date program-wide.

[8]See: Barth, R.P., and Berry, M. (1988). *Adoption and disruption: Rates, risks and resources*. New York: Aldine; Goerge, R. M., Howard, E. C., Yu, D., & Radomsky, S. (1997). *Adoption, disruption, and displacement in the child welfare system, 1976-94*. Chicago: University of Chicago, Chapin Hall Center for Children.; Festinger, T. (2002). After adoption: Dissolution or permanence? *Child Welfare*, *81*(3), 515-533; Festinger, T. (2005). Adoption disruption: Rates, correlates and service needs. In G. P. Mallon & P. Hess (Eds.), Child welfare for the 21st century: A handbook of children, youth, and family *services—Practices, policies, and programs. New York: Columbia University Press*.

[9]Coakley, J. & Berrick, J.D. (2008). Research Review: In a rush to permanency: preventing adoption disruption. *Child & Family Social Work, 13*(1), 101-112.

[10]Zill, N. (1996). Adopted children in the United States: A profile based on a national survey of child health (Serial 104-33, pp. 104-119). Washington, DC: U.S. Government Printing Office.; Barth, R.P., and Berry, M. (1991). Preventing adoption disruption. *Prevention in Human Services, 9*, 205-222; Festinger, T. (1986). *Necessary risk: A study of adoptions and disruptive adoptive placements*. Washington, DC: Child Welfare League of America.; Goerge, R.M., Howard, E.C., and Yu, D. (1996). *Adoption, disruption, and dissolution in the Illinois child welfare system, 1976-94*. Chicago: Chapin Hall Center for Children.; Groze, V. (1986). Special-needs adoption. *Children and Youth Services Review*, 8, 363-373; Smith, S.L., and Howard, J.A. (1991). A comparative study of successful and disrupted adoptions. *Social Service Review*, 65(2), 248-265.

[11]Barth, R.P., and Berry, M. (1991). Preventing adoption disruption. *Prevention in Human Services, 9*, 205-222; Smith, S.L., and Howard, J.A. (1994). *The adoption preservation project*. Normal, IL: Illinois State University; Partridge, S., Hornby, H., and McDonald, T. (1986). *Learning from adoption disruption: Insights for practice*. Portland, ME: University of Southern Maine.

[12]Akin, Becci A. (In press.) Predictors of foster care exits to permanency: A competing risks analysis of reunification, guardianship, and permanency. *Children and Youth Services Review*.

[13]Snowden, Jessica; Leon, Scott; Sieracki, Jeffrey. (2008.) Predictors of children in foster care being adopted: A classification tree analysis. Children & Youth Services Review, 30(11): 1318-27.

[14]A good primer on censored data and the need for specific analytical methods to address them is: Allison, Paul D. 1984. Event History Analysis: Regression for Longitudinal Event Data. Sage University Paper Series on Quantitative Applications in the Social Sciences, series no. 07-046. Beverly Hills, CA: Sage.

[15]We used Stata's stcox estimation command with the vce(cluster *clustvar*) option to obtain a robust variance estimate that adjusts for within-cluster correlation of recruiter characteristics.

[16]Or "hazard," using the event history analysis terminology.

[17]A hazard ratio is the probability that one subgroup of children will experience adoption at a particular time, given that the child has not yet been adopted, relative to the probability for a second subgroup of children.

[18]One of the WWK grantee agencies, with two recruiter positions, closed and a new grantee agency, also with two recruiter positions, took its place. The first agency was visited during the first round of site visits, and the second agency was visited during the second round of site visits. Three additional grantee agencies only participated in one of the two site visits. Three of the grantee agencies (including one that participated in only one site visit) were included in our analysis of site visit data, but were not included in the experimental impact analysis because we never received outcome data needed for the impact analysis for children in those jurisdictions. In the Impact Analysis Report, we provide a comparison of the characteristics of children randomly assigned to the treatment group (i.e., children served by WWK and who were involved in the impact evaluation) with all children served by WWK. We also compare the characteristics of WWK staff across the entire nation with WWK staff involved in the impact evaluation. This information indicates that, while there are some differences between all WWK sites and those involved in the site visits, they are generally similar, suggesting that the sites we visited are reasonably representative of all WWK sites.

[19]Per the Dave Thomas Foundation for Adoption's guidance to sites, "diligent search" as a part of the WWK model should in fact involve activities as described above—the "ongoing and intensive process of identifying, locating, and contacting persons with whom the child already has or had a bond or positive relationship" (from "Wendy's Wonderful Kids Child-Focus Recruitment Strategy" document, DTFA). However, information presented in this section does illuminate many important and interesting facets of recruiters' search for adoptive resources for the children on their WWK caseloads.

[20]This activity is not a prescribed component of the WWK program model; however, we include it in this report because it is essential to the adoption process.

[21]The ICPC establishes procedures for placing children across state lines but this process can be wrought with lengthy delays because other state or county public agencies may take a long time processing approval for adoptive homes in their local area.

[22]Or, in the case of the WWK program being housed within the public agency, questions were asked about the relationship between the unit the WWK program was housed in and other public agency units.

[23]It is important to note that these interviews were not recorded. Each interviewer made efforts to describe the parents' statements as accurately as possible. However, the quotes included in this report may not be verbatim descriptions of parents' statements.

[24]For the sake of simplicity, we will refer to all study participants as "parents" in this report.

[25]To be eligible to participate in a 20-minute phone interview, the following criteria had to be met: 1) at minimum, the parent had expressed interest to the Recruiter in potentially adopting a particular child (or children) on the WWK caseload, and 2) the parent had direct contact with the Recruiter (e.g. 2-way communication by phone, email, letters, in-person, etc.) on two or more occasions. To develop a list of eligible parents, the recruiters for each site were consulted. Once this list was finalized, five parents from each WWK evaluation site were randomly selected to participate in the phone interview. In addition to interview and consent information, a $10 cash incentive was sent to each prospective participant to thank them in advance for their time. Data collection began in June of 2009 and ended in June of 2010.

[26]This represents a 48 percent response rate.

[27]Other parents identified as Native-American (three percent), Hispanic/Latino (two percent) or multiracial (two percent).

[28]It is important to note that these interviews were not recorded. Each interviewer made efforts to describe the children's statements as accurately as possible. However, the quotes included in this report may not be verbatim descriptions of children's statements.

[29]Children eligible to participate in the 30-minute interviews included those who: 1) were at least 12 years old, 2) had been involved in the WWK program for at least 3 months at the time of data collection, and 3) had an active WWK case in the past 9 months. To develop a list of eligible older children, the recruiters for each evaluation site were consulted. Once this list was finalized, five older children from each site were randomly selected to participate in an interview. These children were invited to participate in an interview after the randomization process. A total of 117 older children were invited to participate. The majority of interviews took place in the children's current placement, while a few took place in other settings such as a park or restaurant. The children who participated in an interview were provided $10 in cash as a thank you for their time. Data collection began in July of 2009 and ended in May of 2010.

[30]Other children were described as "other" (three percent) or Hispanic/Latino (one percent).

[31]It is important to point out that the strategies described by the children do not represent child-focused recruitment (exhaustive recruitment of families for a specific child based on a child's history, experiences, and needs) but general recruitment (recruiting families through media and public outreach such as adoption fairs and adoption websites). It is unclear why most of the children did not share any examples of child-focused recruitment activities.

[32]The database was initially developed at the Urban Institute, the organization that initiated the WWK evaluation project, and was revised by Child Trends. The Urban Institute no longer has access to any of the data.

[33]Allison, Paul D. (2009). Missing Data. Pp. 72-89 in *The SAGE Handbook of Quantitative Methods in Psychology*, edited by Roger E. Millsap and Alberto Maydeu-Olivares. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

[34]Royston P. (2005). Multiple imputation of missing values: update. *Stata Journal*, 5(2), 188-201.

[35]Allison, Paul D. (2009). Missing Data. Pp. 72-89 in *The SAGE Handbook of Quantitative Methods in Psychology*, edited by Roger E.

[1]That is, few have been evaluated rigorously, and prior to the evaluation of Wendy's Wonderful Kids, none had been evaluated experimentally using random assignment methods.

[2]For reviews, see: Coakley, Jennifer F., and Jill D. Berrick. (2008). Research review: In a rush to permanency: Preventing adoption disruption. *Child and Family Social Work*, 13(1):101-112; Barth, Richard P., Marianne Berry, Mary Lou Carson, Regina Goodfield, and Barry Feinberg. (1986). Child Welfare, 65(4): 359-371; Child Welfare Information Gateway. (2004). Adoption disruption and dissolution. Retrieved from: http://www.childwelfare.gov/pubs/s_disrup.cfm September 15, 2011. See also: Smith, Susan Livingston, and Jeanne A. Howard. (1999). *Promoting Successful Adoptions: Practice with Troubled Families*. Thousand Oaks, CA, US: Sage Publications.

[3]We carried out in-person interviews to learn about program implementation with program staff in the sites participating in the impact evaluation.

NOTES:

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