



FROM POLICY TO PRACTICE: A TRAUMA INFORMED APPROACH TO CHILD CARE IN NORTHERN IRELAND

Reshaping the child care model in partnership

A journey from a rescue model of state intervention to a family support partnership model

Bernie McNally,

Chair Safeguarding Board for Northern Ireland (SBNI)



Institutionalisation 1980's

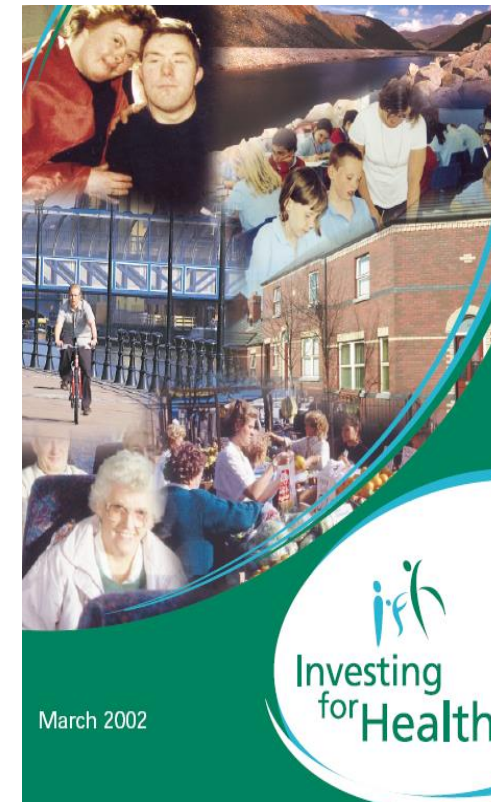
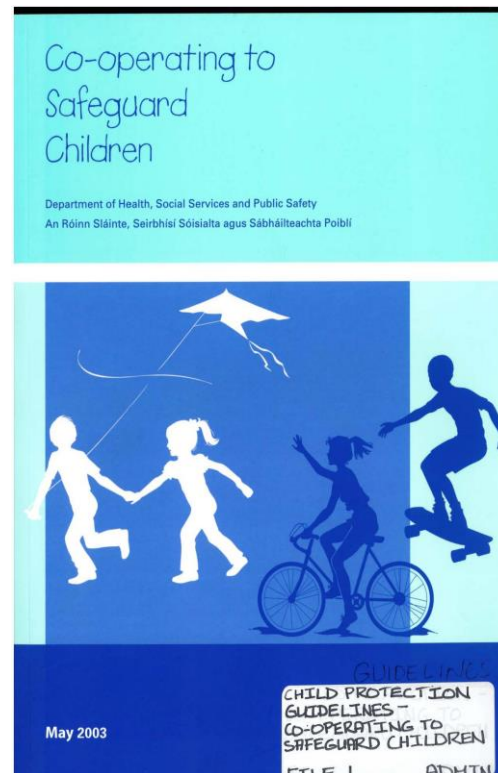
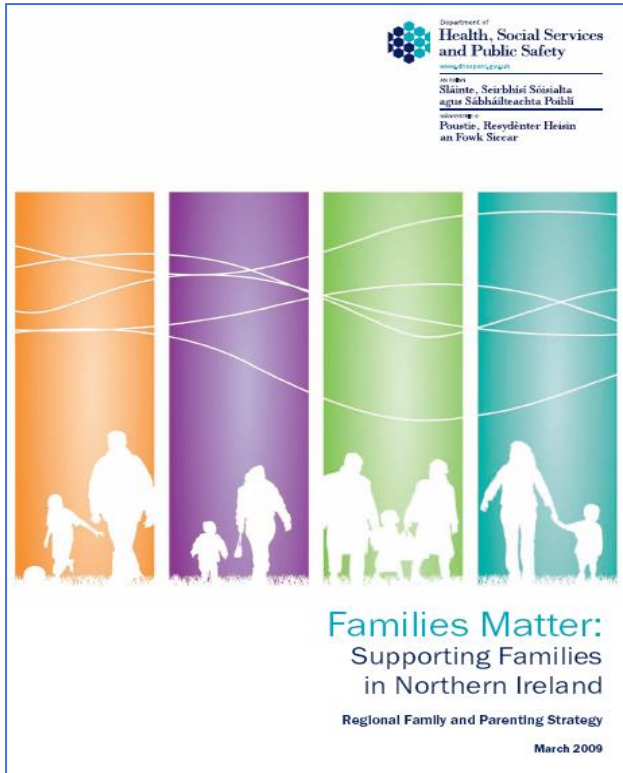
90% of care
Religious orders
100+ children



SPL

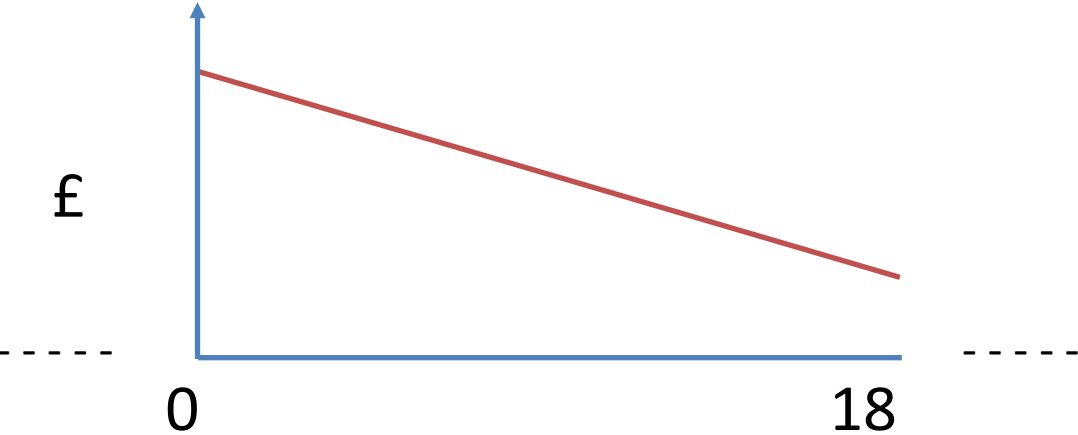
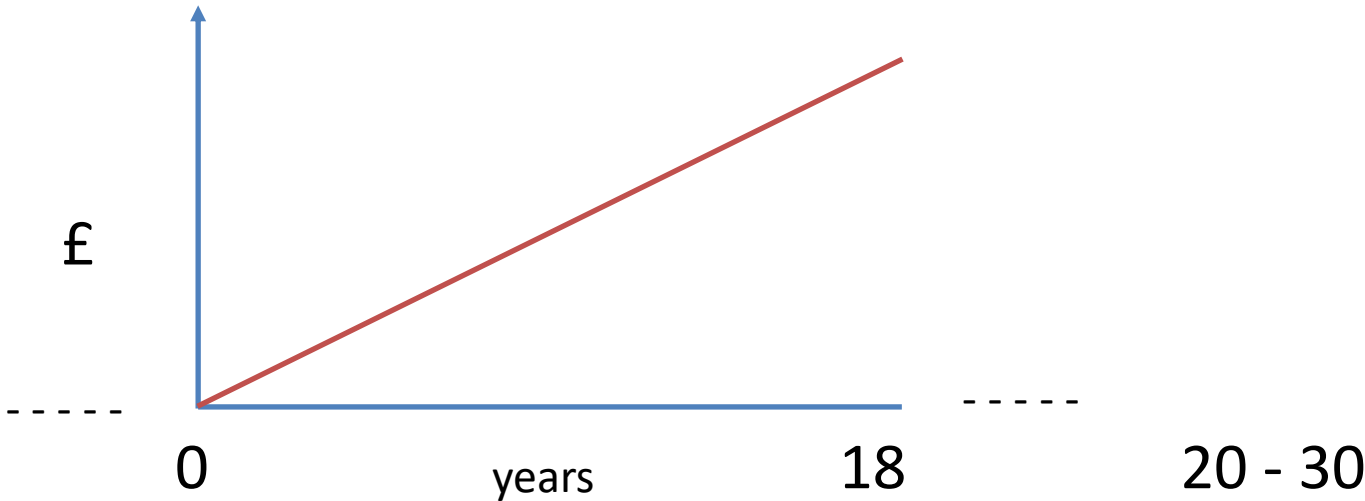
Policy development

- Families Matter
- Cooperating to safeguard
- Investing for Health



Macro Economics

Where do we want to focus our attention and our resources



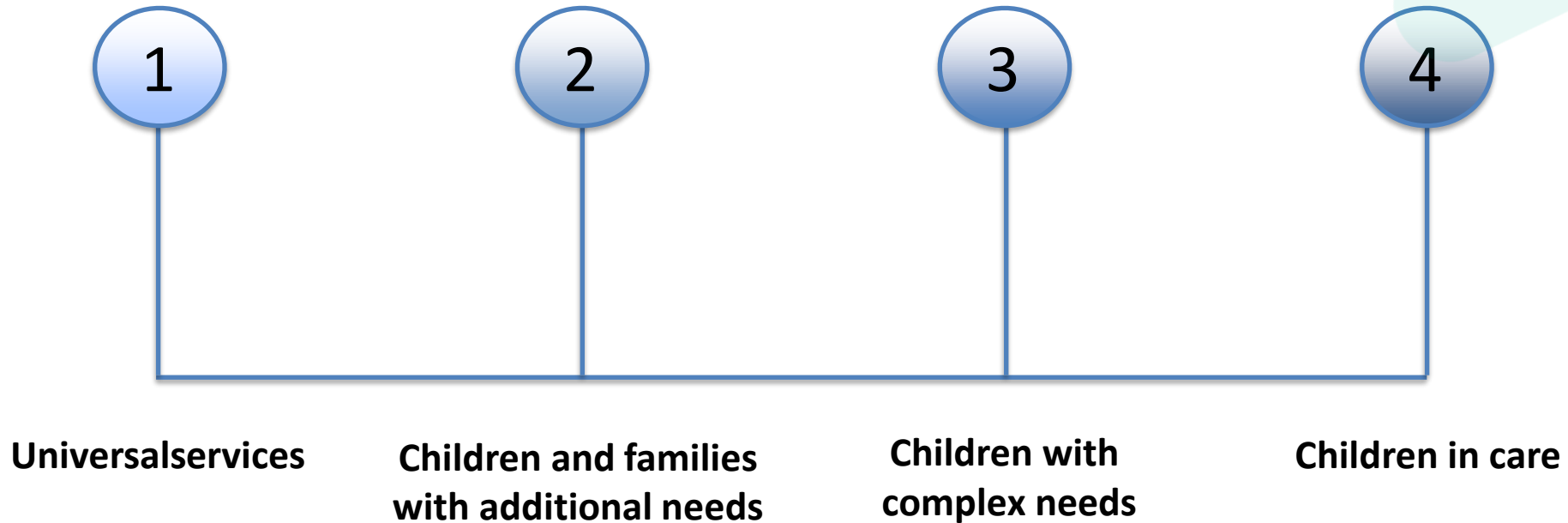
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Where would it have most impact



Duration of services

State intervention increasing



Health
Education
Housing
Benefits
Preschool
education

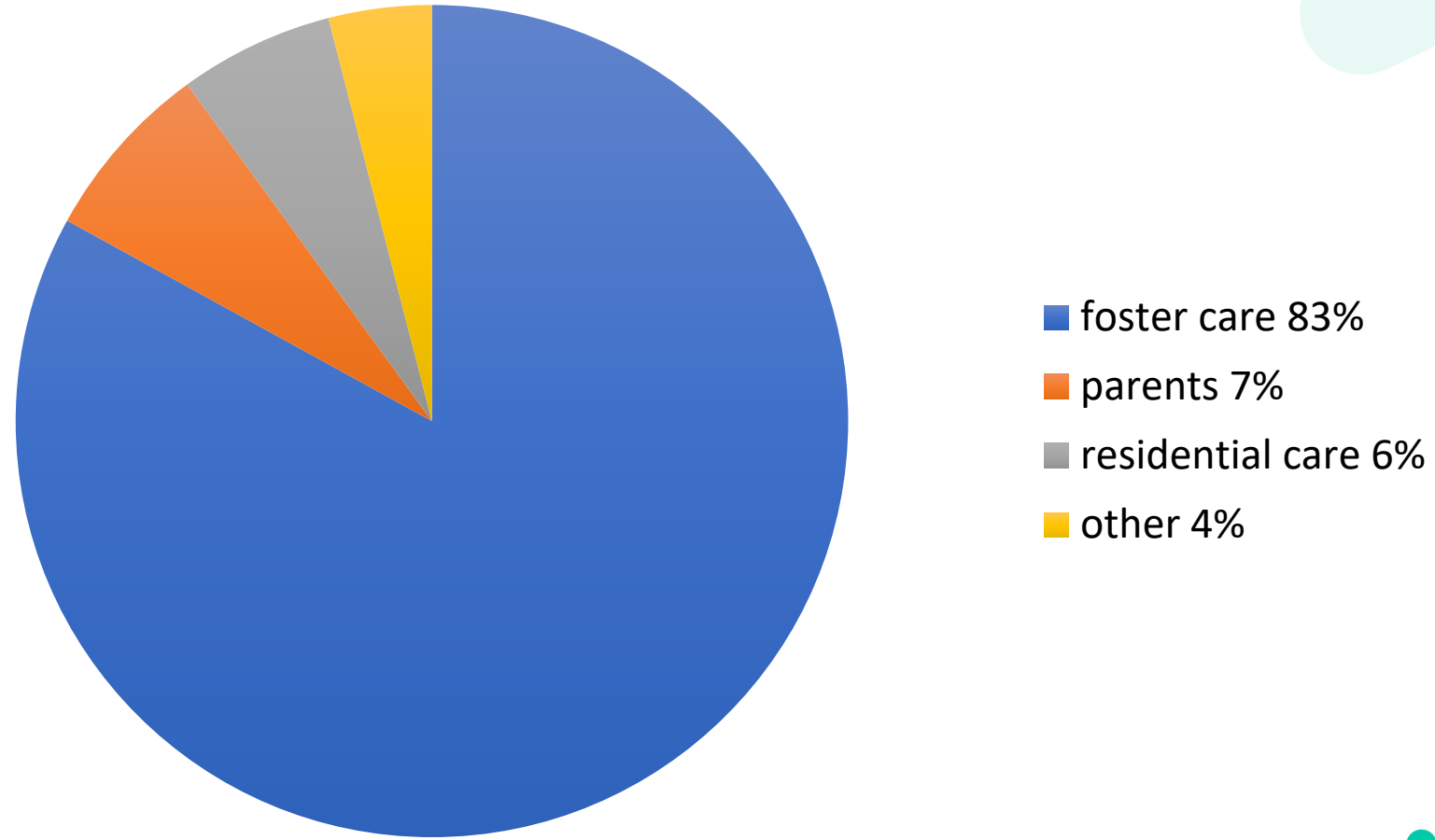


*Quality on all levels
Now and here*

Family based services
Foster care
Adoptione
Specialized hospitals
Leaving care

3,801 Children in Northern Ireland State Care

March 2023



Small group homes



Intensive support units (Glenmona and Lakewood)



Intensive support units (Glenmona and Lakewood)



Change our thinking

“Often the best way to change troubled children is to change the way work with them”

(Ross, Grenier, & Kross, 2005)

Therapeutic Models

Model	Origin
Sanctuary	Philadelphia USA – Dr Sandra Bloom psychiatric settings.
Social Pedagogy	Europe – holistic relationship centred approach.
Children and Residential Experiences (CARE)	USA – Cornell University 2005 Trauma informed practice .
MAP – Model of Attachment Practice	Queens University Belfast 2004 - relationship centred approach
ARC – Attachment, Regulation & Competency	USA – National Child Traumatic stress network

Understanding trauma...

It's not just about acquiring knowledge,

It's about changing the way we view the world,
changing the way we view the young people you care
for.

Dr S. Bloom, Sanctuary Institute

SICKNESS → INJURY MODEL

Change the fundamental question from

“WHAT’S WRONG WITH YOU?”

To

“WHAT’S HAPPENED TO YOU?”

Historically

- Treatment was conceived as being distinct from care.
- “Counselling” from only psychologists or social workers.
- Everyday tasks were not viewed as a ‘professional’ task.



Stigma



We don't want you!
You are: sick!
dangerous! threatening!
acting like a criminal!

We are not hurting the mentally ill.
They are crazy!

Mike Lakin - NoCMAA.com



Change of thinking

- Redl and Wineman in 1950's. Potential of the group as a medium for changing behaviour
- 'The Other 23 Hours' (Trieschman, Whittaker and Brendtro, 1969)



Lifespace Theory

Life space theory suggests that **everyday life events**, from getting children up in the morning to putting them to bed at night **offer opportunities** which can be as powerful as more formal interventions to enhance children's development.



Head

The use of reflective skills

- knowledge/theory/concepts to help assess the kind of action to take in particular circumstances. For the pedagogue there is no universal solutions. Instead each situation requires a response based on a combination of information, emotion, self knowledge and theory gained from study.



Heart



- The closeness of relations that can develop when everyone shares the same living space
- Importance of warmth and compassion
- Use of self – using ones own humanity to gain access to a child's thoughts and feelings
- Self awareness – understanding of ones own reactions, triggers.

Hands

- Practical aspects of daily life
- Use of daily events with a therapeutic intent
- Use of arts and crafts', games, outside activities/games, shopping, cleaning, baking, drama or music
- Making use of the 'lifespace' that you inhabit with the young person.



'the golden thread' **relationships**

- Renewed focus on nurturing positive relationships
- Need to engage with birth family
- Manage and negotiate complex family relationships
- Renewed focus on nurturing positive relationships



It takes time to build trust!!

Children are more likely to talk to people they know and trust.



Workforce Planning

“Getting the right people, with the right skills, in the right place at the right time.”

It's all about outcomes!!!



Child Centred Services



- “It is easier to build strong children than to repair broken men”

Frederick Douglas



Bernie McNally Bsc MSW MBA

Final reflections...

If you plant a lettuce and it fails to thrive..
don't blame the lettuce!



Thank you

