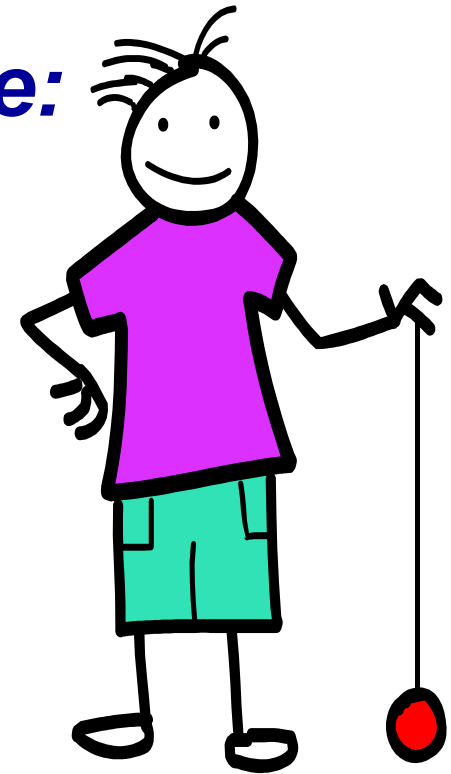


6th March – Auckland
***Empowering Grandparents Raising
Grandchildren***

***Kinship and Grandparent Care:
Research and practice***

**Paul Nixon Chief Social Worker
Child, Youth and Family
New Zealand**

6th March 2014 Auckland





mā mātou
mā tātou
Changing young lives



Our three year strategy

Children are the taonga of New Zealand

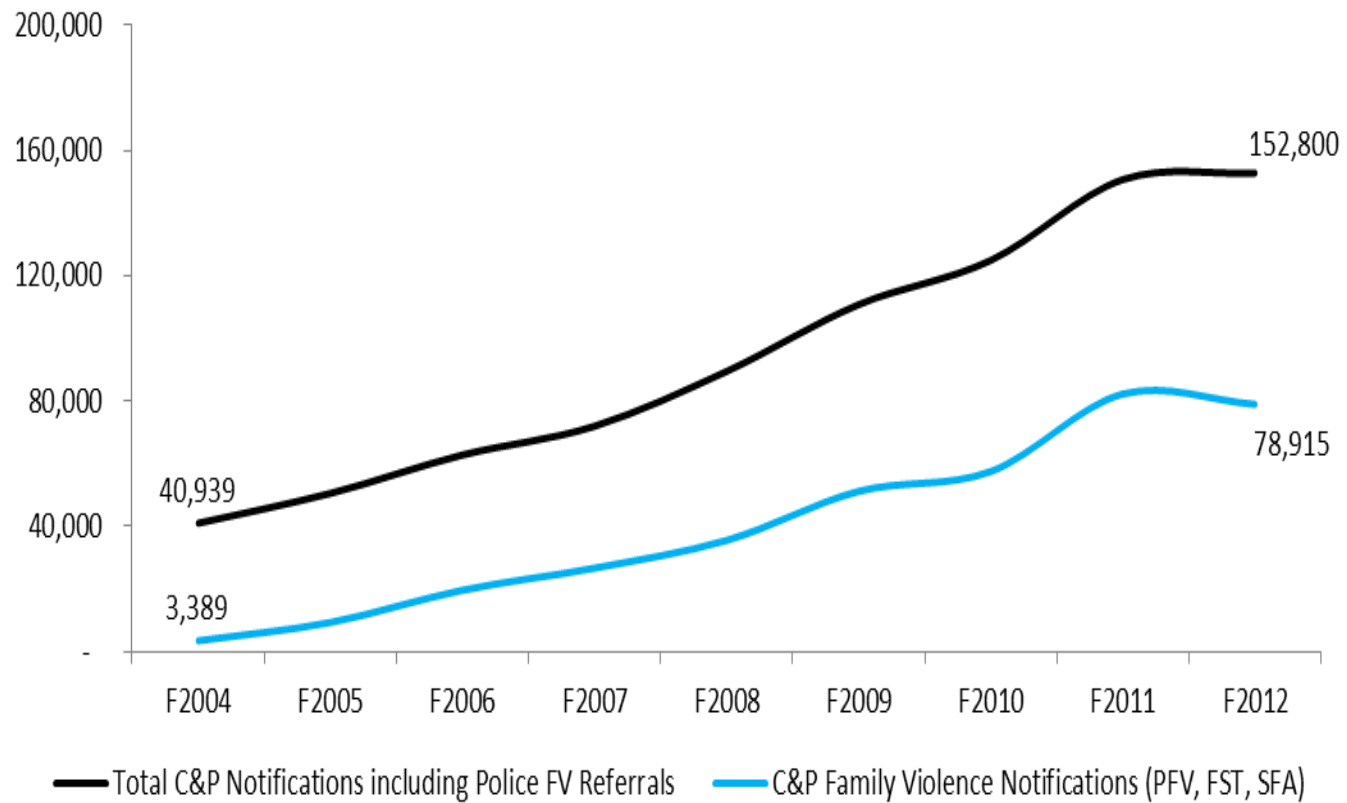
- > 1.2 million children live in New Zealand
- > 148,000 notifications in 2013....3 year plateaux?
- > High levels of awareness and national debate on Child Abuse
- > Substantiations of abuse 22,000
- > Emotional Abuse stands out (12,000)
- > Neglect (5000), Physical (3000) Sexual abuse (2000)
- > Care numbers are stable
- > Increasing complexity of needs

mā mātou
mā tātou
Changing young lives

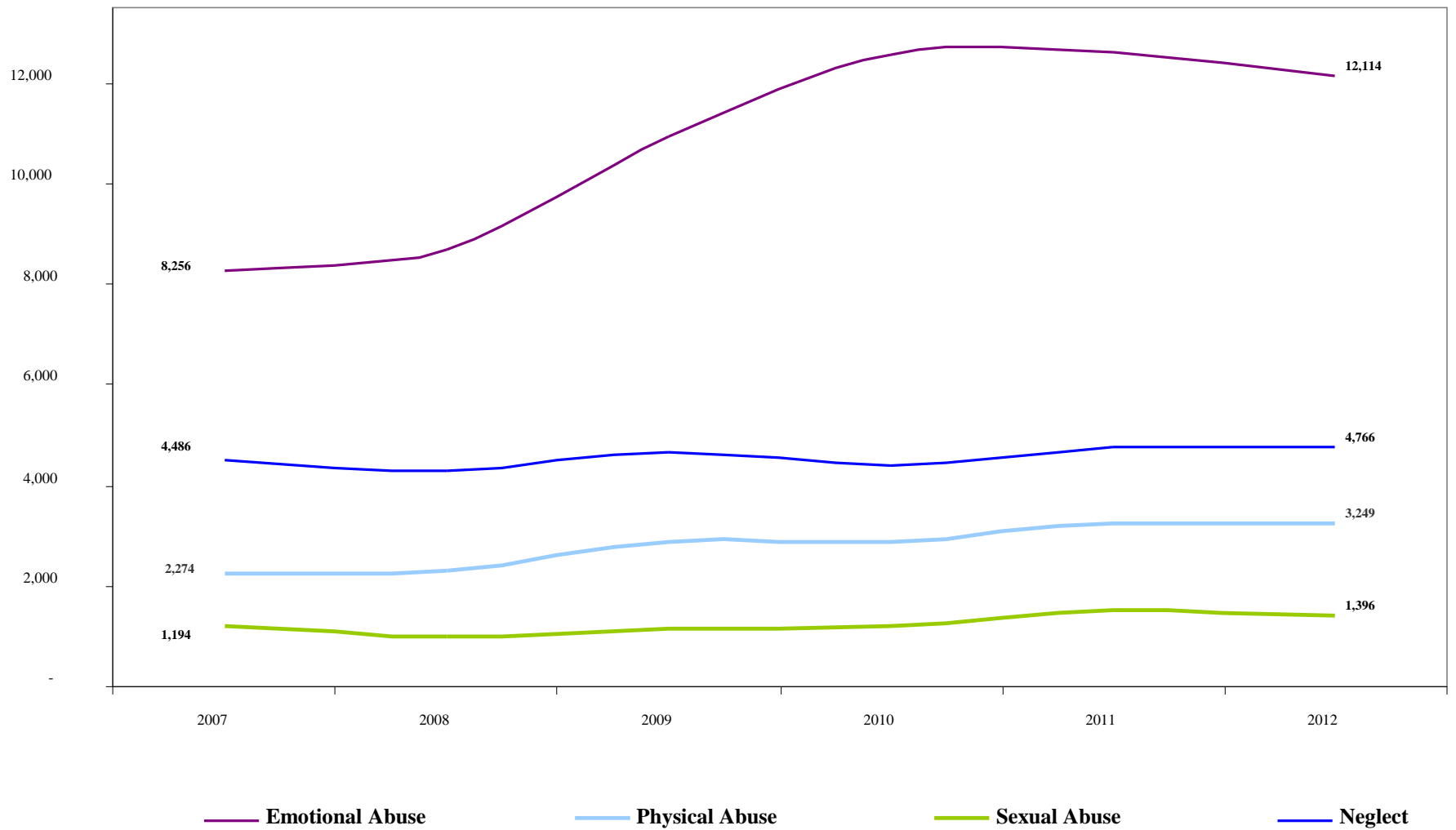


Care & Protection notifications

Number of Care and Protection Notifications



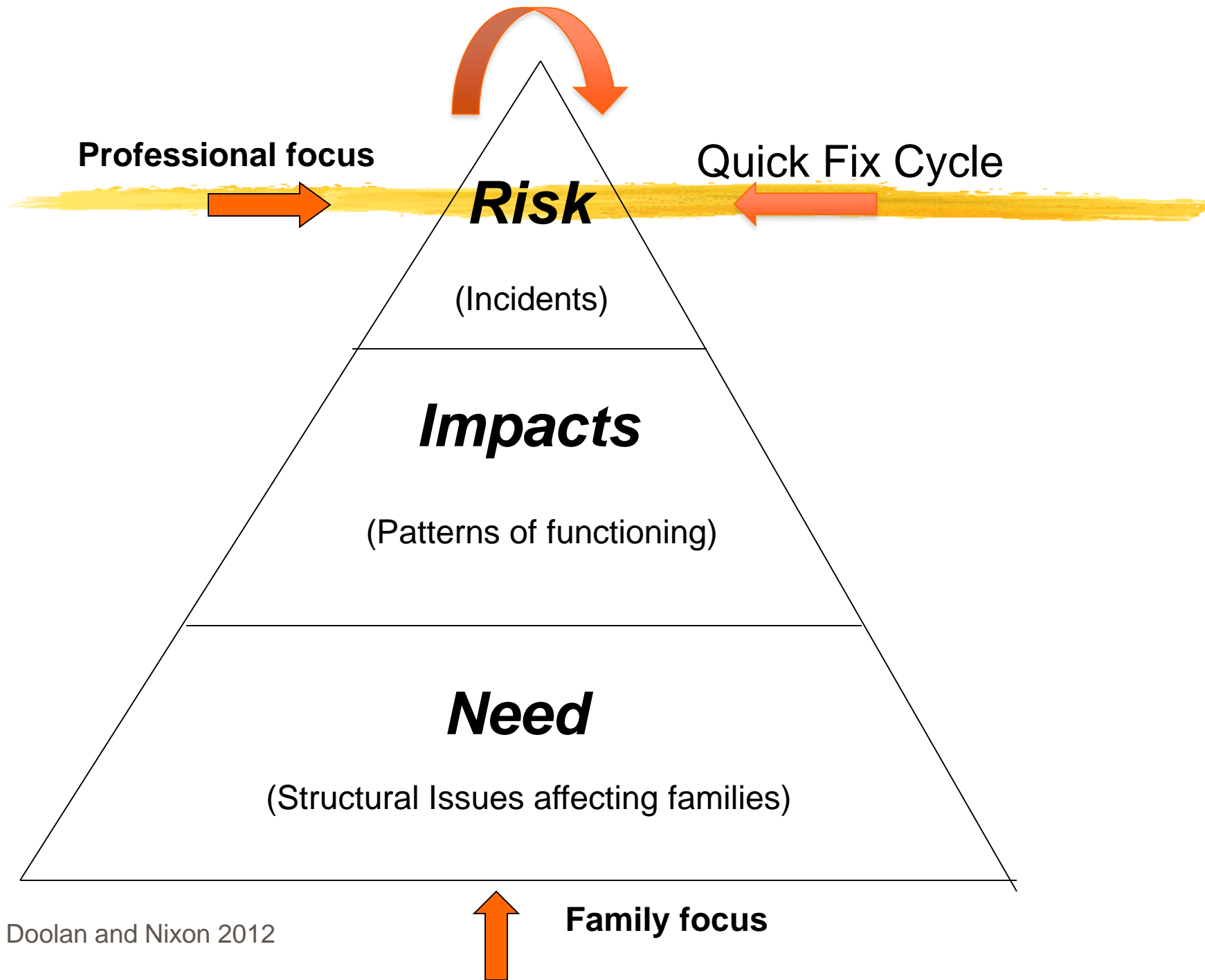
Substantiated abuse findings by type: 2006/2007 to 2011/2012



`Toxic trio'.....



- 1. Substance abuse: alcohol and drugs**
- 2. Domestic Violence**
- 3. Untreated parental mental health problems**



Children are the taonga of New Zealand

- > 52% of children in care and protection are Maori
- > 7% Pacific children
- > Gateway assessment revealing very complex needs – social, behavioural, health and education
- > 3,800 children with caregivers
- > 60% care with child's family / whanau mostly grandparents
- > Increasing Home for Life
- > 760 front line Social Workers (Care & Protection)

mā mātou
mā tātou
Changing young lives



Kinship Care

What does the evidence say?

Key Messages

- Placement Stability
- Safety
- Contact with family
- Cultural ties
- Identity and positive self-concept
- Children feeling loved and happy



Kinship Care

What does the evidence say?

- Well-being similar overall
- Carers profile different: tend to be older, less financial resources, more health problems, more single carergivers
- Most are grandparents
- 'Stranger' foster carers have more text book knowledge and resources at their disposal
- Children *and* carers in kinship care get less help, less support and services



Kinship Care

What does the evidence say?

- Children slower to reunify and less likely to be adopted
- Proportionally more kinship placements with Maori and Pacific caregivers
- Family participation and kinship placement are connected
- Distinct policy is almost 'invisible'
- Enormous variations in prevalence and services
- Lack of skills and knowledge in working with kinship care



Kinship Care - what children say

Key Messages

- Better/more natural with family
- School important
- Contact amplified: good and bad
- Wider family & siblings
- Staying in touch with friends
- Give information
- Be involved in decisions
- Consistent Social worker please!





*` This would be a better world for children, if
parents had to eat spinach'*

(Groucho Marx)

Outcomes?



How do we define and good outcomes in kinship care?

Would children describe the outcomes they want differently to adults?

Children's voices?



Would children define good outcomes differently?

Do adults necessarily know better?

`Double-jeopardy' with social workers

Adult anxiety

Children's wishes and feelings

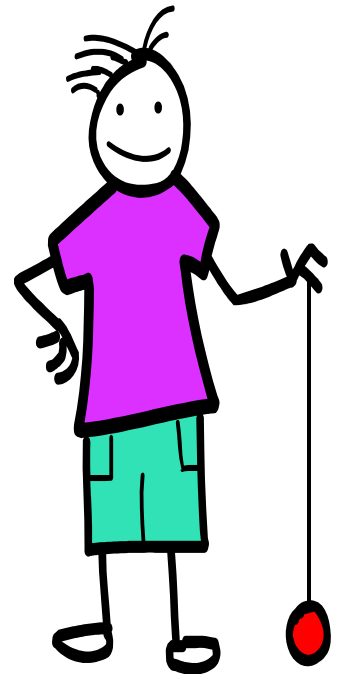
‘Family members know more about their family than any professional can possibly know. They have a unique knowledge and understanding’



DH1995

What would make the biggest
difference to grandparent
caregivers?

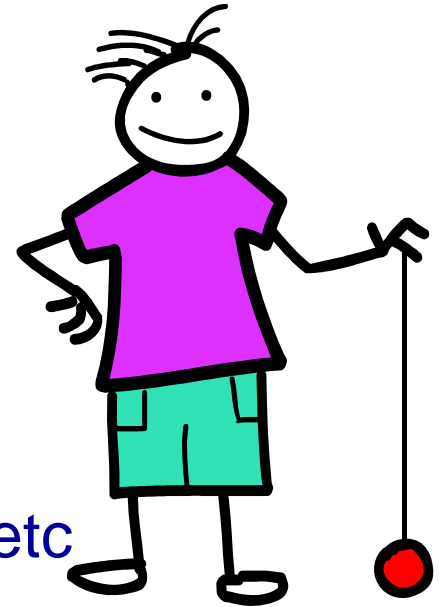
Agree your top 3!



Kinship Care

What do kinship carers need?

- Information
- Financial Support
- Specific Practical Help
- Emotional Support and Advice
- Social Work
- Help with Contact
- Contact with other caregivers
- Work across agencies: schools, health, etc



Caregivers recommendations?

- Proper Financial Support
- Better Information
- Improvements in Social Work
- Collaborative Assessment
- Involvement in decisions
- Whole family approach –all agencies
- Sustained Support
- Respect





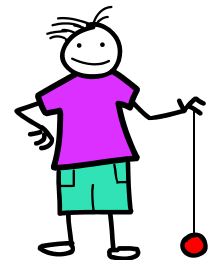
"Of course we want your participation. Just not now or here or with us."

Kinship Care

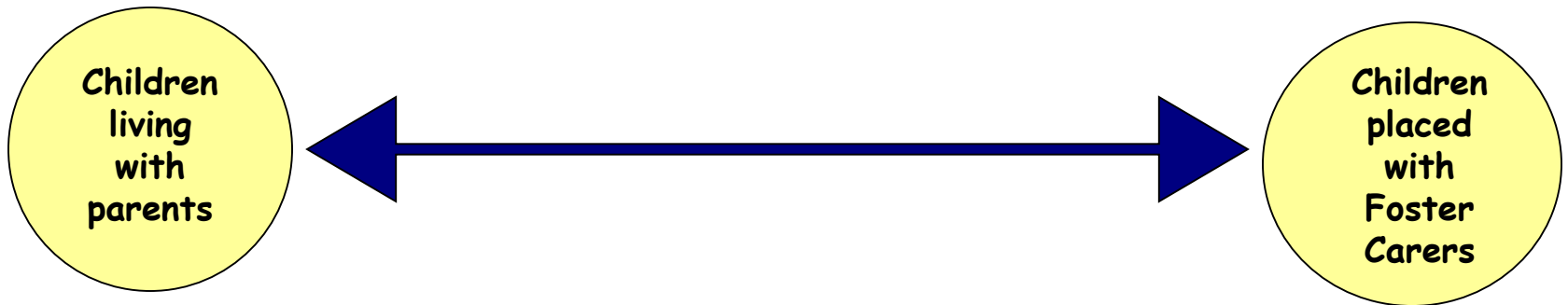
What do the Social Workers say?

Key Messages

- Support for the concept
- Clear on law but uncertain about practice & services
- Concerns about child safety dominates
- Understanding of advantages matched research
- Understanding of disadvantages did not match research
- Most saw organisational barriers



Where to locate kinship care?



Kinship Care Service Framework



1. Distinct policy framework
2. Improved financial support
3. Unique assessment model
4. Information
5. Inclusive decision making
6. Carer's network
7. Work with Iwi
8. Bespoke services
9. Training for staff
10. Co-constructed evaluation



child, youth
and family

Partnerships with Iwi

A service of the Ministry of Social Development

Ngapuhi
Ngati Porou
Tuhoe
Waikato-Tainui
Ngai Tahu



Social workers need to...



- ◆ Be child centred & think about relationships
- ◆ Engage children, caregivers, families in decision making
- ◆ Inter agency work
- ◆ Make assessments collaborative
- ◆ 'Have questions, not answers'
- ◆ Develop skills in partnership.....



*"I'm afraid you misunderstood.
... I said I'd like a mango."*

Innovations?



- Involving children, carers, parents in service design
- New research and using research
- Collaborative evaluation
- Integration of services around kinship care
- Training and learning
- Sharing best policy & practice around the world

Final words...



`my gran, she's 100 per cent, she's been our rock and kept the whole family together.... If it wasn't for her we'd probably all be separated and not grown up together.... I wouldn't be the stable person I am today if it wasn't for my gran'