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Examining Oregon's Juvenile Dependency Differentiated Case Management Pilot

Process and Early Outcome Evaluation

Alicia Summers, PhD
Independent Consultant
National Center for State Courts



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Examining Oregon's Child Welfare Differentiated Case Management Pilot: Process and Early Outcome Evaluation

Executive Summary

Oregon's Juvenile Court Improvement Program (JCIP) recently implemented a differentiated case management (DCM) pilot in four pilot sites. The DCM Pilot was meant to ensure courts have a systematic method to screen dependency cases and assign them to tracks that would include an appropriate level of court oversight, depending on the unique needs of the case. The pilot began mid 2017 in four sites – Clackamas, Deschutes, Lane, and Polk – that were interested in participating in the model. At disposition, courts are using a Case Assignment Sheet to assign cases one of three pre-permanency-hearing tracks – Standard (Track 1), Intensive (Track 2), or Expedited (Track 3). If the permanency plan changes to something other than reunification, cases are assigned to one of three post-permanency-hearing tracks for adoption (Track 4), guardianship (Track 5), or placement with a fit/willing relative or another planned permanency living arrangement (Track 6).

JCIP contracted with the National Center for State Courts to conduct a process evaluation of the DCM Pilot in order to answer questions around six key issues. These included: track assignment, track implementation fidelity, stakeholder opinions about the DCM pilot, changes in court time, tool validation, and preliminary outcome evaluations. An independent evaluator conducted focus groups with stakeholders in each of the project sites, met with project staff and reviewed survey findings. In addition, JCIP provided seven Excel datasets, representing multiple data collection efforts, to answer the questions provided. These data were analyzed and integrated into findings where appropriate to answer the research questions of interest. Key findings from the study are presented below.

Track Assignment

- The majority of new cases were assigned a Track (72-98% depending on county). Cases that were not assigned a track were often in-home cases where tracks were not applicable.
- Outside of Lane County (where they decided not to assign tracks to older cases), upwards of 95% of old cases have been assigned to an appropriate track.
- In most counties, the majority of incoming cases are assigned to Track 1 (Polk is the exception, where it is Track 2).
- When cases move from an initial track to a permanency track, it is most often Track 4.
- Ninety-four percent of cases followed the recommended track based on the Case Information Sheet criteria.

Track Implementation Fidelity

- The majority of case events are occurring within 30 days of the target date outlined in the Track schedule.
- Fidelity does not vary significantly by track. All tracks have a fairly high percentage of fidelity to the timeliness of the model.

- Clackamas had significantly lower fidelity to the model in terms of timing of case events when compared to other pilot sites.
- Limited review hearings, which are short check-in hearings (as opposed to a full reviews), varied in terms of the topics discussed. A few significant differences in discussion – explaining the hearing purpose and child well-being in current placement – emerged between sites. Stakeholder opinions revealed some confusion over the expectations for the limited reviews.

Stakeholder Options

- Stakeholders expressed mixed ideas about whether the pilot is working. Most felt that it is too early to determine if the pilot is working or not.
- Across sites, stakeholders felt that improvements could be made in the Case Information Sheet as a tool for assigning tracks.
- There was site variation in ideas for improving the model, with a couple focused on improving the limited review.
- Most agency workers felt that the model increased their workload in some way, either in in-court time or in time spent preparing reports for Citizen Review Board panels. Other legal professionals were more mixed in whether they felt the model increased their workload.

Change in Court Time

- From pre-implementation to post-implementation there was a statistically significant difference in time spent in review hearings. It decreased from 18 minutes (pre) to 15 minutes (post).
- While time in review hearings decreased, the time in other hearings significantly increased from 23 minutes prior to implementation to 30 minutes per hearing post implementation.
- The time spent in reviews post-DCM was significantly lower for pilot sites (15 minutes per review) compared to non-DCM sites (22 minutes per review).
- There was not significant difference in pilot sites for the amount of time spent per petition filed in the cases

Tool Validation

- A sample of closed cases was assigned Tracks as if they had come into the system to explore the validity of the Tool. There was no significant difference in timeliness of permanency for cases assigned to the initial tracks.
- Track 2 (Intensive Track) cases were less likely to reunify than Track 1 or Track 3 cases.
- Few of the Case Information Sheet factors were significant predictors of timely permanency. Parents having a criminal case was related to timelier permanency. When the parent was less than 18, those cases took longer to achieve permanency. When cases had a sibling assigned to a higher track, those cases also took less time to achieve permanency.
- Some of the data indicate that the tool could be moving in the right direction. For example, the percentage of closed cases by track indicated track 1 has more closures

in 12 months than the other tracks. However, data also indicate that the tool could be improved to better predict family needs and track assignment.

Preliminary Outcome Evaluation

- Preliminary outcome data explored whether there was a change in cases achieving permanency within 12 months. While no significant differences were found between pilot sites pre- and post-implementation or between pilot sites and non-DCM sites in closure within 12 months, there were trends toward positive outcomes. DCM courts did increase in the number of cases achieving permanency in 12 months post implementation.
- Cases assigned to Track 1 were also more likely to have achieved permanency in 12 months in comparison to other tracks.
- More data are needed across a longer time to explore outcome questions.

Conclusions

The data do show good fidelity to the DCM pilot model. Some areas for further exploration include examining the limited review hearing process to clarify expectations and enhance consistency and exploring opportunities to enhance the Case Information Sheet by identifying other factors that may be better/more robust predictors of timely permanency and case resource needs. JCIP should explore opportunities to enhance their current process evaluation datasets to include additional outcome variables for a more robust outcome evaluation. Further, the DCM pilot should be continued for at least 2.5 years so that data can be collected to explore outcomes of the DCM pilot and links between fidelity and outcome on DCM pilot cases.

Introduction

The U.S. Department of Justice Bureau of Justice Assistance (BJA) has described Differentiated Case Management (DCM) as “a technique courts can use to tailor the case management process—and the allocation of judicial system resources—to the needs of individual cases.”¹ The premise of DCM is that cases can differ significantly in the court time needed for resolution. As such, courts should look at the characteristics of their cases and place them on pathways, or tracks, that ensure that the hearing schedule is suited to the characteristics of the case. In 1987, the BJA launched demonstration sites to pilot a DCM approach in trial courts. Since then, courts around the country have employed DCM to improve case processing, particularly in civil and criminal cases.

Courts that implement DCM create tracks (or pathways) and assign each case to a track based on the unique needs of the case. Since simpler cases go to tracks with less intensive review schedules, judicial time can be focused on the most complex cases, which should reduce delays in case processing and lead to more efficient use of judicial resources and stakeholder time. Until recently, the model was almost exclusively implemented in criminal and civil courts, but, in the last several years, juvenile dependency courts have begun to implement this strategy as a way to improve efficiency of case processing and use of judicial resources to better benefit families involved in child welfare.

Oregon’s DCM Pilot

Oregon’s Juvenile Court Improvement Program (JCIP), which works to improve outcomes in juvenile dependency cases, embarked on a DCM Pilot after a statewide assessment conducted by the National Center for State Courts (NCSC) as part of NCSC’s Reimagining Dependency Courts project. Oregon’s courts have historically had a wide-range of review practices for dependency cases, with some courts holding only the statutorily-required shelter hearings, jurisdiction hearings, and annual permanency hearings on most cases, and some holding review hearings as often as every 60 days. The assessment determined that limited judicial resources and the varying needs and complexity of dependency cases meant that

¹ Bureau of Justice Assistance (1993). *Differentiated Case Management Implementation Manual*. Washington, D.C.: Author. Available online at <https://jpo.wrlc.org/bitstream/handle/11204/1591/Implementation%20Manual.pdf>

courts would benefit from having a systematic method to screen dependency cases and assign a frequency of reviews that would be best suited to the needs of the case.

JCIP discussed the recommendation with its advisory committee and identified four counties – Clackamas, Deschutes, Lane, and Polk – whose courts were interested in implementing a DCM Pilot. The four courts represented a range of sizes and prior court practices, and JCIP convened a meeting of juvenile judges, trial court administrators, and juvenile court staff from the four jurisdictions to lay out case management tracks for different types of dependency cases and identify factors for assigning cases to the tracks.

The courts focused on reducing the number of children who remain in foster care for two years or more, and the discussion about factors for assigning cases led to a long list of potential case characteristics that the participants thought would increase the risk that a child would remain in foster care for more than two years. Because there is little research on DCM projects in juvenile dependency cases nationwide and the group did not have a validated set of factors to draw on, it narrowed the list based on the factors that participants believed were most important, the information available to the court at the time of disposition, and the ability of court staff to make an objective determination as to whether or not the factor applied.

This process led to the creation of a *Case Information Sheet* that included six case assessment factors and four child-focused areas of concern.

Case Assessment Factors

- One child in the sibling group is 3 or younger
- The child was a ward of the court and that wardship was terminated prior to this dependency petition
- There is a prior termination or relinquishment as to other children for either parent
- Either parent is a restrained person in an active FAPA protective order
- Either parent has current criminal charges related to the incident that led to the removal of the child from the home.

- Either parent is under 18 years of age

Child-Focused Areas of Concern

- Case results from a failed adoption or failed guardianship
- Child is unable to be maintained in a family-like setting due to a mental, physical, psychological, or behavioral condition of the child
- Child has been abandoned
- Child has a history of developmental disability (DD) placements

The group also created six *case management tracks* for dependency cases. The first three tracks – the Standard Track, Intensive Track, and Expedited Track – were for new cases and cases where the permanency plan is reunification (pre-permanency-hearing tracks). The Standard Track included statutorily-required permanency hearings and CRB reviews, and one additional limited review hearing. The Intensive and Expedited Tracks included progressively more frequent reviews and earlier permanency hearings, with the more frequent reviews intended to keep the case moving toward permanency and deal promptly with any issues, and the earlier permanency hearings intended to provide an opportunity to change to a different permanency plan if reunification would not be possible.

The courts decided to assign new cases to track at disposition, and to assign new cases to tracks as follows:

Track 1 – Standard Track: Cases with one or fewer Case Assessment Factors and no Child-Focused Areas of Concern

Track 2 – Intensive Track: Cases with two Case Assessment Factors and no Child-Focused Areas of Concern, and cases with one or fewer Case Assessment Factors and at least one Child-Focused Area of Concern

Track 3 – Expedited Track: Cases with three or more Case Assessment Factors, and cases with two Case Assessment Factors and at least one Child-Focused Area of Concern

If the criteria above dictated that two or more siblings should be assigned to different tracks, the group decided that all siblings should be assigned to the track of the sibling with the highest track assignment.

The group also created three post-permanency-hearing tracks – Adoption, Guardianship, and Placement with a Fit and Willing Relative (PWFWR) / Another Planned Permanent Living Arrangement (APPLA) – for cases for which the permanency plan is changed to something other than reunification.

Cases that have a permanency plan change back to reunification from another plan are assigned to Track 3.

The details of each track are as follows:

- 1. Track 1 – Standard Track:** Includes a Citizen Review Board (CRB) review four months from disposition, a limited review hearing three months later, a second CRB review 10 months after disposition, and a permanency hearing 12 months after disposition or 14 months after removal.
- 2. Track 2 – Intensive Track:** Cases have reviews every two months after jurisdiction, starting with a limited review hearing. Cases alternate between limited review hearings and CRB reviews every two months until a permanency hearing is held ten months after disposition or one year after removal.
- 3. Track 3 – Expedited Track:** Cases have more frequent reviews, starting with limited review hearings 45 days and 90 days after Disposition, followed by a CRB review 120 days after disposition and a permanency hearing 180 days after jurisdiction.
- 4. Track 4 – Adoption:** Includes frequent reviews, starting two months after changing the goal and holding a hearing or CRB review every 2-3 months.
- 5. Track 5 – Guardianship:** Cases have a hearing or CRB review every two months until the 12-month mark when a permanency hearing is scheduled. The hearings begin with a limited review hearing and alternate between limited review hearings and CRB reviews.
- 6. Track 6 – PWFWR & APPLA:** Includes alternating CRB reviews and permanency hearings every six months.

Because the four pilot courts had previously each had their own schedules for reviewing dependency cases, implementing the DCM Pilot required varying degrees of process changes for the four courts, and JCIP held monthly calls with the dependency coordinators in each court to ensure standardization. One change that was notable in some courts was the introduction of limited review hearings, which were intended as a check-in for the court to help keep the case on track. As compared to the more robust full judicial reviews, which have findings that are required by statute, limited reviews are supposed to be less burdensome on the courts and juvenile dependency stakeholders.

JCIP is committed to integrating a continuous quality improvement effort into their projects and decided a process and outcome evaluation were needed to determine whether the DCM Pilot has been implemented with fidelity and how it may have affected practice. JCIP contracted with the NCSC to conduct a process evaluation of the DCM Pilot in late 2018, and this report explains the results of that evaluation.

Methodology

A process evaluation examines whether a program has been implemented with fidelity and is often considered a critical step in determining whether a program is effective in meeting its goals. The DCM Pilot had a very specific set of goals, including allocating resources to the families that had higher needs so that reunification could occur timelier, and, when reunification is not possible, children could achieve alternative permanency more quickly, resulting in fewer children in care after two years. While most of the goals of the DCM Pilot cannot be assessed until it has been underway for at least two years, a process evaluation can explore whether the DCM model has been implemented with fidelity in pilot sites, explore what practice current looks like, and examine early outcomes for DCM cases. To that end, the process evaluation seeks to answer several research questions in six broad categories. These include:

1. Track Assignment

- Are cases being assigned to the tracks recommended by the Case Information Sheet?
- How many cases have been assigned to each track?

- How many cases filed since the beginning of the DCM Pilot have not been assigned to a track?
- What percentage of new cases (*i.e.*, those filed since the pilot began) in the DCM Courts have been assigned to each track / not assigned to a track?
- What percentage of old cases (*i.e.*, those filed prior to the start of the pilot) have been assigned to each track / not assigned to a track?
- What case characteristics from the Case Assignment Sheet are driving the assignment of new cases?
- What percentage of cases assigned to each pre-permanency-hearing track are reassigned to each post-permanency-hearing track?

2. Track Implementation

- Are court hearings and CRB reviews occurring according to the track schedules?
- Has fidelity to the track schedules differed between the DCM Courts?
- What issues are being addressed at limited review hearings?
- How do the issues addressed in limited review Hearings differ across courts?

3. Stakeholder Options

- Do stakeholders believe that the DCM Pilot is making a positive impact on their court's dependency system?
- What improvements do stakeholders think could be made to the DCM Pilot?
- How has the DCM Pilot affected the workload of court stakeholders?

4. Change in Court Time

- How did the amount of time spent on dependency court hearings per dependency case change in each DCM Court from prior to the DCM Pilot?
- How has the total amount of time spent on dependency court hearings changed in each DCM Court from prior to the DCM Pilot?

5. Tool Validation

- For a sample of prior cases in the DCM Courts, are there differences in the percentages of cases closing *within 12 months of filing* between cases that, under DCM, would have been assigned to the Standard Track, Intensive Track, and Expedited Track?
- For a sample of prior cases in the DCM Courts, are there differences in the percentages of cases closing *within 18 months of filing* between cases that, under DCM, would have been assigned to the Standard Track, Intensive Track, and Expedited Track?
- For a sample of prior cases in the DCM Courts, are there differences in the percentages of cases closing *within 24 months of filing* between cases that, under

DCM, would have been assigned to the Standard Track, Intensive Track, and Expedited Track?

- For a sample of prior cases in the DCM Courts, are there differences in the percentage of cases exiting to reunification between cases that, under DCM, would have been assigned to the Standard Track, Intensive Track, and Expedited Track?
- For a sample of prior cases in the DCM Courts, are there particular file review characteristics that are predictive of a longer or shorter stay in foster care?

6. Preliminary Outcome evaluation

- In the DCM Courts, are a higher percentage of cases closing *within 12 months of filing* than prior to implementation of the Pilot?
- How do any changes in the percentage of cases closing *within 12 months of filing* compare with changes in the Non-DCM Courts (*i.e.*, courts that did not implement DCM)?
- In the DCM Courts, are there differences between the tracks in the percentages of cases closing *within 12 months* of filing?

To answer these questions, a multi-method approach was required, including a combination of stakeholder surveys, focus groups with key participants in each pilot site, interviews, court observation, case file review, and collection of administrative data (these methods are described in more depth below). The evaluator worked closely with JCIP to design tools for data collection purposes, discuss needed data, and collect additional data. Data for this pilot come from multiple sources, identified below.

Surveys. JCIP created a survey and sent it to professional stakeholders in each of the pilot sites, including the Department of Human Services (DHS), judges, dependency attorneys, CRB staff, court staff, and other stakeholders. The survey asked about perceptions regarding how the process was going, including about the benefits of limited review hearings, permanency hearings, and CRB reviews, as well as perceptions of how the pilot has impacted workload. One hundred and fifty-seven stakeholders responded across the four sites.

Focus Groups and Interviews. In November of 2018, the evaluator came on site and visited each of the four pilot sites. At each site, the evaluator conducted structured focus groups with judges, court staff and CRB staff; DHS staff; dependency attorneys; and Court Appointed Special Advocates (CASAs). The focus groups asked participants about their perception of DCM, whether tracks were appropriate, what positive impact they saw from the pilot, whether

and how it affected their workload and what suggestions they had for improvements. The evaluator conducted fourteen focus groups and three interviews while on site. This included 97 participants across the four sites.

Additional Data. JCIP compiled data from various sources to evaluate how many cases have been assigned to each track; why the cases have been assigned to each track; how well the hearing and CRB review schedules on the DCM cases has matched the assigned tracks; how the amount of court time spent on dependency cases has changed; what items were discussed during the limited review hearings; and the success of the DCM Pilot in closing cases more quickly. These data were provided to the evaluator in Excel datasets. The datasets are listed below.

- ***Case Closure Data.*** To compare how time to case closure has differed for cases filed before and after implementation of the DCM Pilot, JCIP compiled case-level data on time from case filing to case closure for all dependency cases filed in the DCM courts between Jan 1, 2014 and September 30, 2017, as well as aggregate data on time to closure for cases filed between those dates in non-DCM courts.
- ***DCM Track Assignment.*** JCIP compiled data on 1,584 case assignments entered into Odyssey by the four pilot sites prior to September 30, 2018 and 839 dependency cases that were open and had a jurisdiction judgment as of September 30, 2018 but had not yet been assigned to a track. The case assignments included both new cases that opened after the implementation of the pilot and older cases that were opened prior to implementation, and both initial case assignments and subsequent assignments to different tracks.
- ***DCM Pilot Tracks and Hearing Data.*** JCIP identified 937 track assignments in the DCM Track Assignment dataset that either 1) concerned cases filed after the start of the DCM Pilot or 2) were on cases filed prior to the start of the DCM Pilot but were not the initial track assignment on case. For these cases, JCIP calculated the target date for each court hearing and CRB review, and determined whether or not the hearing or review was held, and for hearings and reviews that were held, how many days before or after the target they took place.
- ***Case File Review Data.*** To determine whether cases that the Case Information Sheet recommends for assignment to the Standard, Intensive, and Expedited tracks have

different likelihoods of the child remaining in foster care for two years or more, one of the DCM coordinators conducted a review of older cases in the DCM Courts. This review covered a sample of 146 cases filed in the DCM Courts between January 1, 2015 and March 31, 2015. JCIP linked the file review information on which tracks the cases would have been assigned to if they were part of the DCM Pilot with data on when the cases were opened and closed, allowing an analysis of whether, prior to pilot implementation, there were differences in time to closure across cases that would have been assigned to the various tracks.

- *Case Information Sheet Data.* Starting in September 2017, court staff at each DCM site entered information from new case information sheets into Microsoft Access databases. A temporary OJD staff person reviewed new cases assigned prior to the creation of the database and entered information on those cases. Because courts generally assigned all siblings in a family to the same track, both the DCM courts and JCIP entered one case information sheet per family instead of entering a separate sheet for each case. JCIP combined the case information sheets entered at each site with those entered by JCIP to create a dataset of 687 case information sheets that 1) concerned cases filed after April 1, 2017 (i.e., cases that were new at the time that the DCM Pilot started) and 2) were entered into the database prior to September 30, 2018. This was used to analyze which factors were most frequently identified and used in determining track assignments. It is important to note that some of the 687 case information sheets concern more than one case.
- *Limited Review Court Observation Data.* Two JCIP staff conducted in-person and remote audio observations of 55 limited review hearing observations across the four pilot sites. The observers recorded how long the hearings took, how long participants waited for hearings, who was present and who participated, what topics were discussed, how much discussion occurred and whether there were findings made.
- *DCM Dependency Filings, Hearings, and Time.* This dataset includes aggregate quarterly data from each of the pilot sites as well as the non-DCM data from the third quarter of 2016 to the third quarter of 2018. It includes number of hearings of specific types, the amount of time spent in those hearings, and the total filings.

The evaluator analyzed findings from the focus groups and data from all of the Excel datasets to answer the research questions posed above. JCIP provided a wealth of data on the project. The evaluator identified the best dataset to pull information from and used that data to answer the research questions. For example, multiple datasets included track assignment. The evaluator chose the dataset with the most robust data, that included the outcomes of interest to use in the analysis. These datasets often included overlapping information but varied by whether they were entry cohorts (no exit data), point in time data, or exit cohorts (closed cases). The dataset used is identified to findings to better clarify the sample size the data are drawn from. Findings are reported by research question.

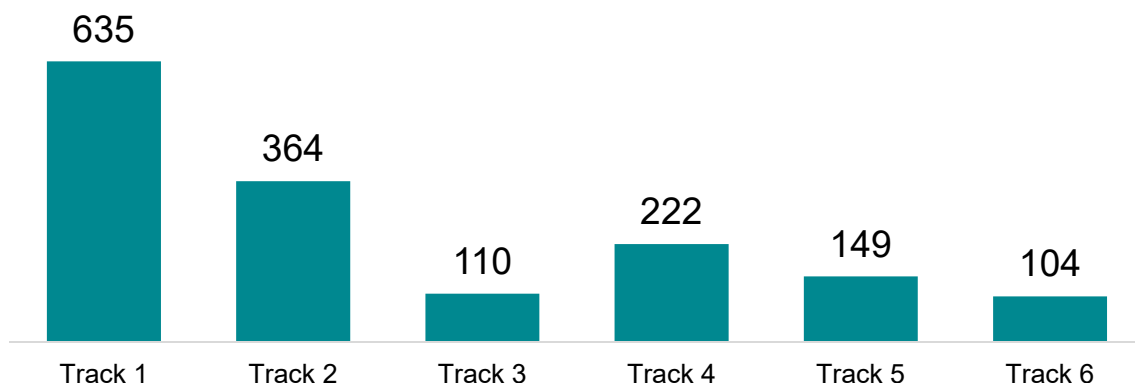
Findings

Track Assignment

How many cases have been assigned to each track?

Data from the *Track Assignment by Court* dataset provided information on track assignments on new cases filed after implementation of the DCM Pilot and assignments on pre-existing cases filed prior to implementation. This includes 1,584 case assignments. Figure 1 illustrates the findings across tracks. The majority of new filings and pre-existing cases were assigned to Track 1 (Standard Track).

Figure 1. Number of Cases Assigned to Each Track
(New and Pre-existing)



The case assignment information is also provided by court. Table 1 on the next page, illustrates both the number of cases assigned to each track by pilot site as well as what percentage of overall cases this number represents. For example, Clackamas had 525 cases assigned to a track. One hundred and eighty-three of these were assigned to Track 1, representing 35% of the overall sample of Clackamas cases assigned ($183/525 = 35\%$). Sites were fairly similar in their assignment of cases. However, Lane county had significantly more cases in Track 1 than other pilot sites. This may be because Lane did not assign pre-existing cases to tracks, so they have fewer cases in the permanency tracks (4,5,6).

Table 1. Number and Percentage of Cases Assigned to Each Track by Pilot Site
(Note: Cases can move from track to track, therefore, some cases have been assigned to more than one track).

	Clackamas	Deschutes	Lane	Polk	Overall
Total # Cases Assigned	525	324	563	172	1584
Track 1	183 (35%)	81 (25%)	329 (58%)	42 (24%)	635 (40%)
Track 2	106 (20%)	75 (23%)	138 (25%)	45 (26%)	364 (23%)
Track 3	33 (6%)	31 (10%)	30 (5%)	16 (9%)	110 (7%)
Track 4	78 (15%)	70 (22%)	37 (7%)	37 (22%)	222 (14%)
Track 5	65 (12%)	49 (15%)	23 (4%)	12 (7%)	149 (9%)
Track 6	60 (11%)	18 (6%)	6 (1%)	20 (12%)	104 (7%)

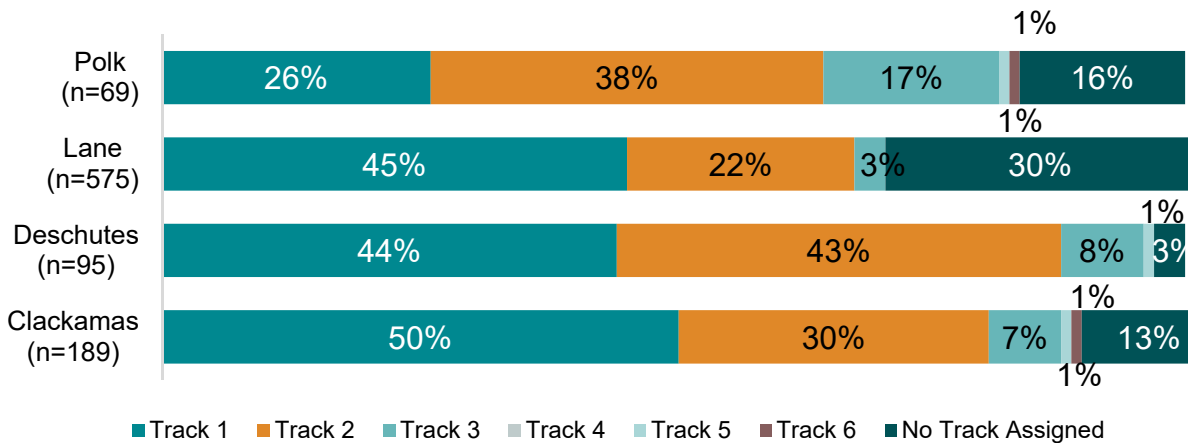
What percentage of new cases (i.e., those filed since the Pilot began) in the DCM Courts have been assigned to each track / not assigned to a track?

Figure 2 illustrates the percentage of new cases assigned to each track across the four pilot sites. This includes the percentage of cases not assigned to a track (excluding cases that had not reached disposition by September 30, 2018). The primary reason for cases to not be assigned a track was that the case was an in-home case, as cases were not assigned a track unless the child was removed from the home. Lane County has the highest percentage of new cases not yet assigned to a track. This is not unexpected as in-home cases are

particularly prevalent in Lane County. Sites were fairly equal in distribution across tracks, except Polk County had a higher percentage of cases assigned to Track 2 in comparison to Track 1 than other pilot sites.

What percentage of old or pre-existing cases (i.e., those filed prior to the

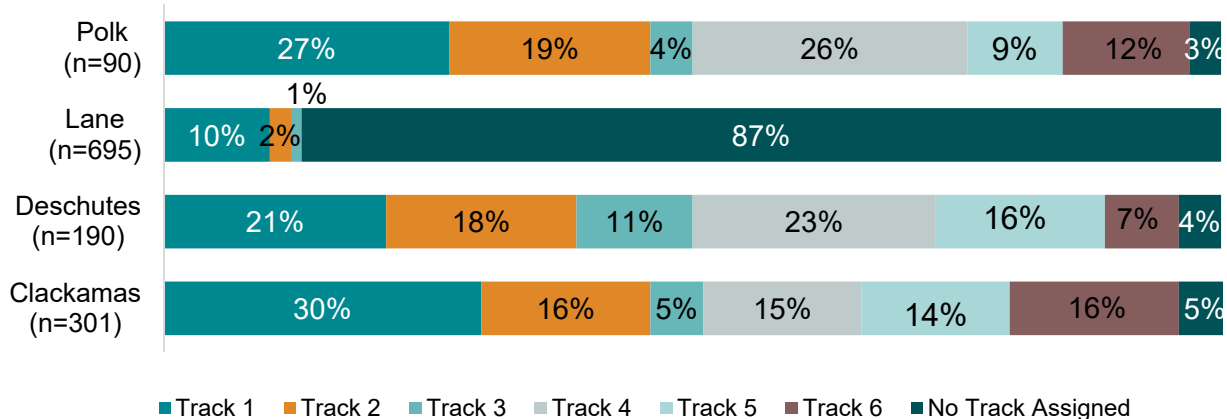
Figure 2. Percentage of New Cases Initially Assigned to Each Track



start of the Pilot) have been assigned to each track / not assigned to a track?

Three of the four sites assigned tracks for older cases as well as new cases. Lane County only assigned tracks in 13% of older cases. For new incoming cases after DCM started, sites looked somewhat similar in distribution of cases. As noted in Figure 3, most sites were assigning pre-existing cases to tracks in a similar ratio as they did to new cases, with higher numbers in Track 1 than Track 2, and higher numbers in Track 4 than Track 5.

Figure 3. Percentage of Pre-Existing Cases Initially Assigned to Each Track



How many cases filed since the beginning of the DCM Pilot have not been assigned to a track?

Of the new cases that were filed since the DCM Pilot began (and had a jurisdiction judgment and remained open as of September 30, 2018), 210 cases have not been assigned a track. The primary reason for not assigning cases to a track was that the child was not removed from the home. The majority of unassigned new cases (82%) belong to Lane County, which also has a higher proportion of in-home cases than the other sites.

Are cases being assigned to the tracks recommended by the Case Information Sheet?

JCIP put together data from 687 Case Information Sheets filled out for new cases at the DCM sites. Judges had discretion to assign a case to a different track from that recommended by the Case Information Sheet, and this data allowed for analysis of how frequently courts deviated from the recommended assignment. Overall, of the 687 cases that were identified, 94% did not deviate between the recommended and assigned track. Of the 6% that did deviate, most were moved from the Standard Track to the Intensive Track. It is important to note that some of the cases where deviations were present were due to the child already having an open case assigned to a different track.

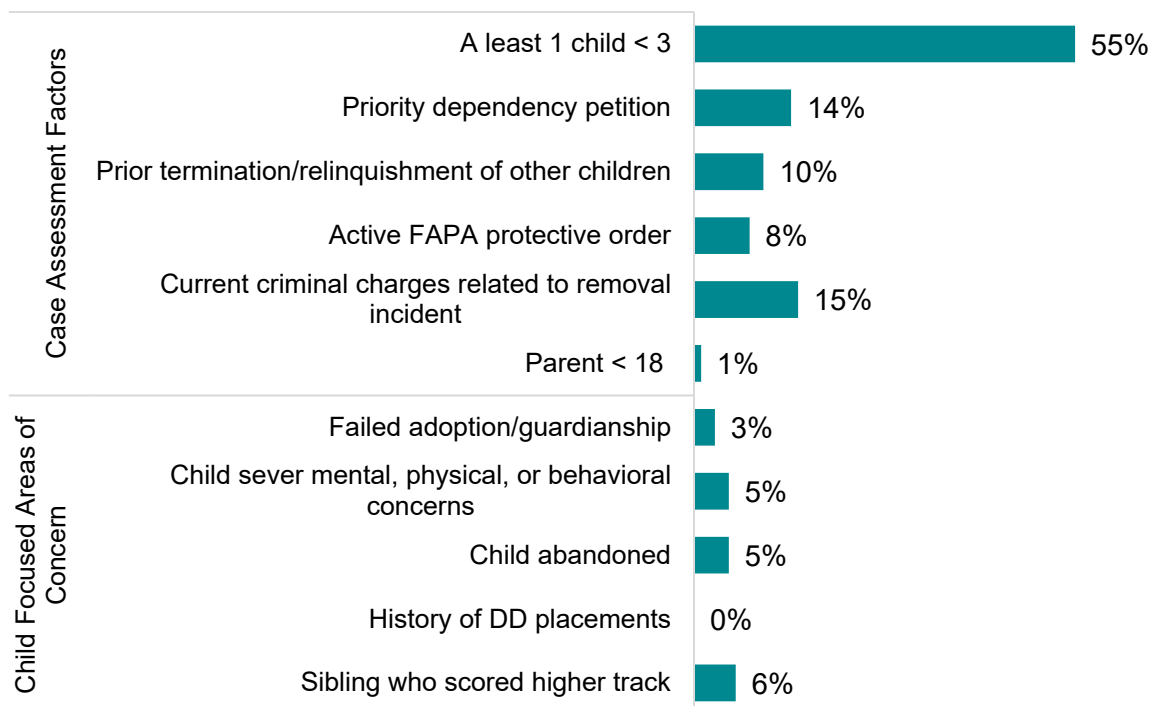
Table 2. Recommended and Assigned Tracks		
Recommended Track	Assigned Track	Number of Cases
Assigned to a Higher Track Than Recommended		
Standard Track	Intensive Track	23
Standard Track	Expedited Track	4
Standard Track	Guardianship Track	2
Intensive Track	Expedited Track	6
Intensive Track	Guardianship Track	1
Intensive Track	PWFWR/APPLA Track	1
Assigned to a Lower Track Than Recommended		
Intensive Track	Standard Track	3
Expedited Track	Intensive Track	2

The evaluator also explored the percentage of deviation across pilot sites. Overall 94% did not deviate. This varied by site. Deviation was lowest in Clackamas (4%) and Deschutes (4%), followed by Lane (6%) and Polk (12%).

What case characteristics from the Case Assignment Sheet are driving the assignment of new cases?

Data from the Case Information Sheet database (examining 687 cases) revealed that the biggest factor driving assignment to pre-permanency-hearing tracks was having at least one child under the age of three. As noted in Figure 4, 55% of cases included at least one child under the age of three. All other case factors occurred less than 25% of the time.

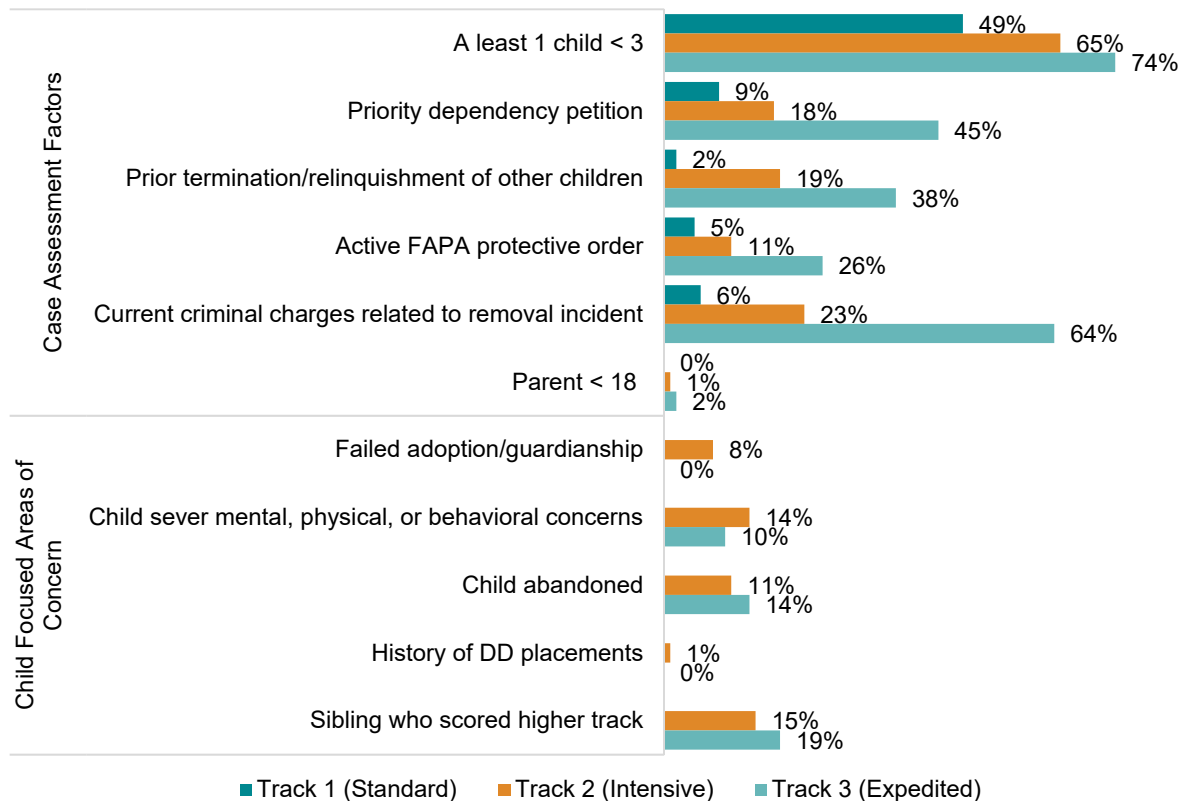
Figure 4. Case Information Sheet Identified Factors



In addition to exploring the most common factors across tracks, case assessment factors and child focused areas of concern are reported by the initial track so that it is apparent how variation occurs across tracks. There will not be child focused areas of concern in Track 1 cases as this would move them to Track 2. A large variation appears to be current criminal

charges related to removal incident. Sixty-four percent of Track 3 cases had this as a case assessment factor compared to 23% of Track 2, and only 6% of Track 1.

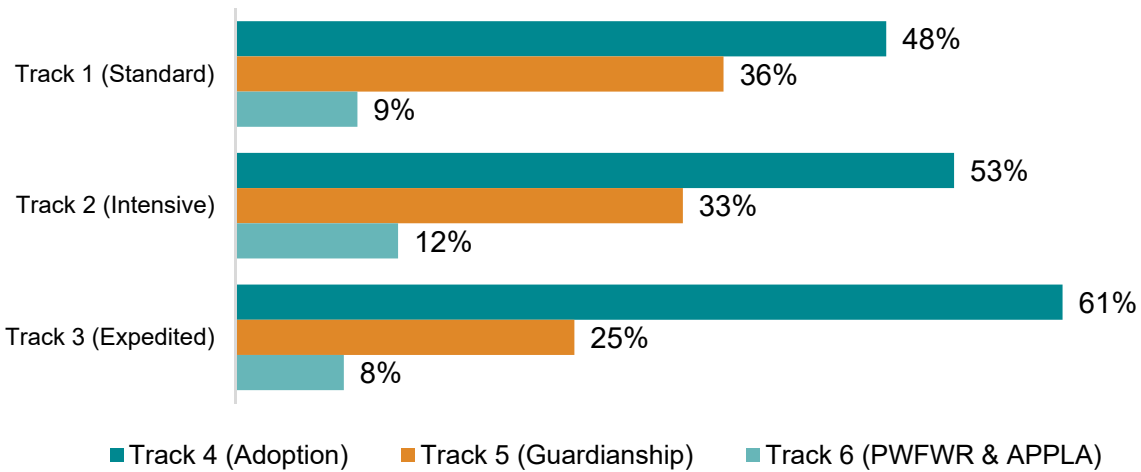
Figure 5. Percentage of Cases (by Track) that Include the Specific Factor Identified from the Case Information Sheet



What percentage of cases assigned to each pre-permanency-hearing track are reassigned to each post-permanency-hearing track?

Figure 6 identifies the percentage of cases that are reassigned from initial tracks to post-permanency-hearing tracks. Eighteen percent of Track 1 cases were reassigned to a post-permanency-hearing track (n=118 of 35). Twenty-five percent of Track 2 cases were reassigned to a post-permanency-hearing track (n=91 of 359). Thirty-six percent of Track 3 cases were reassigned to a post-permanency-hearing track (n=36 of 99). The numbers in Figure 6 will not equal 100% as some track reassignment occurred between pre-permanency-hearing tracks. That is, for cases in Track 1, 7% were reassigned to Track 2 or 3, 2% of Track 2 cases were reassigned to Track 3, and 6% of Track 3 cases were reassigned to Track 2. While Track 3 had more reassignments to adoptions than other tracks, this difference was not statistically significant.

Figure 6. Track Reassignment by Initial Track



Track Implementation

Are court hearings and CRB reviews occurring according to the track schedules?

Data were provided to the evaluator on the timeliness of hearings and CRB reviews for the 937 case assignments across the four pilot sites that either 1) concerned cases filed after the start of the DCM Pilot or 2) were on cases filed prior to the start of the DCM Pilot but were not the initial track assignment on case. Initial case assignments on cases that were open prior to implementation were excluded because those assignments were added while the case was in progress, and there was no way to determine at what point in the track the court would be starting.

It is important to note that there were several factors that impacted scheduling per site. In the sites with smaller dependency caseloads (Deschutes & Polk), dependency court only occurs once a week, making scheduling a challenge. Clackamas used a judicial rotation system for most of the pilot in which four judges shared the dependency caseload, with each hearing dependency cases for one week per month. Because the court scheduled each case to always be heard by the same judge, the rotation limited the dates available for each case's reviews to the one week per month that the case's judge was hearing dependency cases. Lane's large caseload leads to a lot of conflicts in scheduling, which sometimes caused delays in hearing cases. CRB scheduling was impacted by the fact that most CRBs meet only once per month, which meant that sometimes CRB dates did not fall close to the target dates for CRB reviews. These variations could impact timeliness of events and are noted to provide context for the sites. Analyses reflected early and late hearings to identify where the challenges are.

The majority of the 937 assignments with hearing and CRB review timeliness information were from Lane (50%), followed by Clackamas (26%), Deschutes (15%), and Polk (9%). These cases represented a variety of tracks. The dataset included a variable to identify whether the hearings were occurring within 15 days before or after or within 30 days before or after their target date per the track schedule. In some cases, the court held a full review instead of the scheduled limited review hearing or CRB review. Courts might choose to hold a full review due to the request of a party or if the child has been placed in an in-home placement. If the court held a full review instead of a track scheduled event, it is reflected in the Table. An (n=) denotes the number of the total number of hearings that turned into full reviews. The timeliness of the full reviews is represented in Table 3, their percentages in the columns (in italics) represent percentage of the overall sample. The “Held within 30 days of due date” column includes all the hearings that occurred within 15 days of their due date. Columns starting with “Held within 30 days of due date” and continuing to the right will equal 100% of cases (this may actually be 99% or 100% depending on rounding errors). Table 3 illustrates the percentage of hearings that are occurring close to their scheduled time.

Table 3. Overall DCM Pilot Adherence to Timing of Events					
	Held Within 15 Days of Due Date	Held within 30 Days of Due Date	Held > 30 Days Early	Held > 30 Days Late	Not Held
First Review <i>Full review instead(n=43)</i>	72% 4%	82% 5%	3% 1%	3% 1%	6%
Second Review <i>Full review instead (n=17)</i>	70% 2%	79% 3%	2% 3%	3%	10%
Third Review <i>Full review instead(n=4)</i>	44% 19%	63% 25%	0	0	13%
First CRB Review <i>Full review instead(n=62)</i>	51% 5%	69% 6%	5% 1%	4% 2%	14%
Second CRB Review <i>Full review instead(n=31)</i>	45% 4%	61% 7%	2% 2%	2% 1%	24%
First Permanency Hearing <i>Full review instead(n=20)</i>	60% 5%	71% 6%	7% 1%	9% 1%	5%
Second Permanency Hearing <i>Full review instead(n=7)</i>	24% 8%	42% 18%	16%	5%	18%

The data were also examined by Track to determine if adherence to track schedule varied by track. Table 4 illustrates the pre-permanency-hearings tracks adherence to scheduling and Table 6 illustrates the post-permanency-hearing tracks adherence to timelines. As noted, the majority of hearings are held within (before or after) 30 days of the due date. Within each row, 15 and 30 days are cumulative (the Within 30 days includes the within 15 days sample). Counting forward from Within 30 days, the percentage will equal 100% of the hearings.

Table 4. Timing of Events for Pre-Permanency-Hearing Tracks Standard, Intensive and Expedited Track					
Track 1					
	Within 15 Days	Within 30 Days	More than 30 Days Early	More than 30 Days Late	Not Held
First CRB Review (n=327)	47%	67%	4%	4%	14%
<i>Full review instead (n=37)</i>	8%	10%	1%	1%	
First Review (n=265)	76%	84%	3%	2%	5%
<i>Full review instead (n=15)</i>	4%	4%	<1%	1%	
Second CRB Review (n=140)	39%	59%	4%	0	28%
<i>Full review instead (n=13)</i>	4%	6%	2%	1%	
First Permanency Hearing (n=93)	66%	73%	7%	7%	2%
<i>Full review instead (n=11)</i>	11%	11%	0	1%	
Track 2					
	Within 15 Days	Within 30 Days	More than 30 Days Early	More than 30 Days Late	Not Held
First Review (n=212)	70%	77%	4%	4%	6%
<i>Full review instead (n=18)</i>	6%	6%	2%	1%	
First CRB Review (n=202)	49%	63%	6%	3%	19%
<i>Full review instead (n=16)</i>	4%	5%	1%	3%	
Second Review (n=175)	70%	81%	2%	4%	9%
<i>Full review instead (n=9)</i>	2%	3%	2%	0	
Second CRB Review (N=127)	48%	62%	0	4%	21%
<i>Full review instead (n=17)</i>	6%	9%	3%	2%	
First Permanency Hearing (n=103)	66%	73%	7%	12%	4%
<i>Full review instead (n=5)</i>	3%	3%	2%	0	
Second Permanency Hearing (n=55)	33%	50%	8%	0	21%
<i>Full review instead (n=5)</i>	13%	21%			

**Table 4. Timing of Events for Pre-Permanency-Hearing Tracks
Standard, Intensive and Expedited Track**

Track 3					
	Within 15 Days	Within 30 Days	More than 30 Days Early	More than 30 Days Late	Not Held
First Review (n=41) <i>Full review instead (n=2)</i>	56%	71% 5%	0	5%	20%
Second Review (n=47) <i>Full review instead (n=3)</i>	60% 2%	68% 4%	0 2%	2%	23%
First CRB Review (n=42) <i>Full review instead (n=5)</i>	50% 2%	74% 5%	2% 7%	0	12%
First Permanency Hearing (n=34) <i>Full review instead (n=4)</i>	47% 0	62% 9%	3% 0	6% 3%	18%
Second Permanency Hearing (n=14) <i>Full review instead (n=2)</i>	7%	29% 14%	29%	14%	14%

The data in Table 4 reveal that the majority of hearings are occurring within 30 days of their scheduled time except for second permanency hearings in Track 3. Only 29% of second permanency hearings were held within 30 days of their due date. Even adding in the converted full reviews, still less than half of cases had this event timely (43%). This number should be considered in the context of the small sample of cases (only 14) that fit into this category.

The data is also presented in Table 5 by the post-permanency-hearing track to determine how frequently hearings are held timely on the post-permanency-hearing tracks.

Table 5. Timing of Events of Post-Permanency-Hearing Tracks

Track 4					
	Within 15 Days	Within 30 Days	More than 30 Days Early	More than 30 Days Late	Not Held
First Review (n=108) <i>Full review instead (n=1)</i>	73% 1%	89% 1%	3%	2%	6%
First CRB Review (n=75)	69%	92%	3%	3%	3%
Second Court Review (n=55) <i>Full review instead (n=2)</i>	76% 4%	89% 4%	6%	0	2%
Second CRB Review (n=24)	63%	67%	4%	0	29%
First Permanency Hearing (n=17)	35%	71%	6%	18%	6%

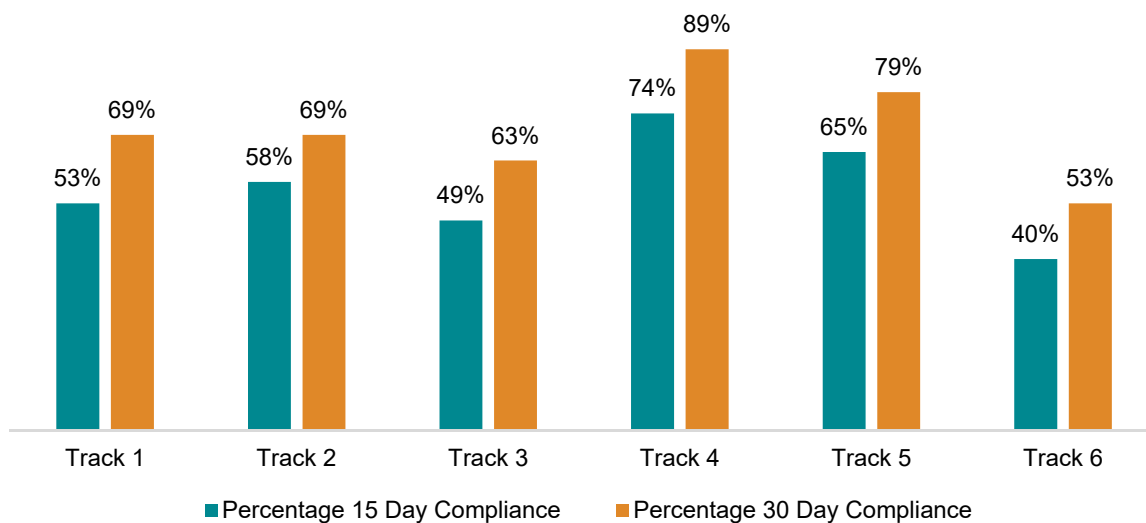
Table 5. Timing of Events of Post-Permanency-Hearing Tracks

Track 5					
	Within 15 Days	Within 30 Days	More than 30 Days Early	More than 30 Days Late	Not Held
First Review (n=63) <i>Full review instead (n=7)</i>	70% 5%	83% 11%	2%	0	5%
First CRB Review (n=49) <i>Full review instead (n=4)</i>	62%	82%	3%	0 10%	5%
Second Review (n=24) <i>Full review instead (n=3)</i>	71%	71%	0 13%	4%	13%
Third Review (n=16) <i>Full review instead (n=4)</i>	44% 19%	63% 25%	0	0	13%
Second CRB Review (n=8)	63%	63%	12%	25%	0
First Permanency Hearing (n=6)	50%	50%	17%	17%	17%
Track 6					
	Within 15 Days	Within 30 Days	More than 30 Days Early	More than 30 Days Late	Not Held
First CRB Review (n=6)	40%	53%	7%	20%	7%
First Permanency Hearing (n=5)	40%	60%	40%	0	0
Second CRB Review	--	--	--	--	--
Second Permanency Hearing	--	--	--	--	--

The data were also combined into an overall fidelity percentage. That is, data were collected about whether each hearing type occurred within 15 days or within 30 days of the target date as per the pilot program’s implementation model. Each “yes” response that the hearing was timely (i.e., within 15 or 30 days) was then aggregated to a percentage of “yesees” across the life of the case to get an overall percentage of fidelity to the timeliness of hearings in the model. This allows for a more comprehensive view of fidelity across the life of the case, as opposed to one hearing type. For occurrence within 15 days of the target date, data indicate that percentage fidelity ranged from 0 to 100%. That means that some cases never had fidelity to any hearing scheduled and some cases had 100% fidelity to scheduling. The average percentage of fidelity within 15 days of scheduling was 55%. That means 55% of hearings were held within 15 days of their target date. This improved when the range was

adjusted to include hearings that occurred within 30 days of their target date. For these cases, the average was 69%, indicating 69% of cases had fidelity to the target hearing schedule.

Figure 7. Percentage of All Track Assignment Hearings Held Timely by Track



As depicted in Figure 7 above, the timeliness of hearings across the life of the case varied somewhat by track. While the majority hovered between 50 and 70%, Track 4 hearings were significantly more likely to be held timely than any other track (except Track 5). Track 5 was not significantly different than any other track.

In addition to examining the timeliness of hearings across the case, the data also tracked additional hearings (those held outside of the model). Table 6 identifies the percentage of cases within each track that held at least one additional hearing. Additional hearings are not prohibited within the model. Rather, this is to determine how often additional hearings might be required. In addition, Table 6 identifies the percentage of cases that held a full review in lieu of other hearing types. The percentage in the Table is followed by the percent that only held one of the applicable type of additional hearing or review.

Table 6. Additional Hearings Outside of the Model				
	Additional Limited Review Hearings	Additional CRB Reviews	Additional Permanency Hearings	Full Reviews
Track 1	18% 15% =1 more	12% 11%=1 More	23% 19%=1 more	28% 23%=1
Track 2	22% 16% = 1 more	15% 15%=1 more	27% 23%=1 more	26% 19% =1
Track 3	27% 18% =1 more	10% 10%=1 more	42% 32%=1 more	35% 32% =1
Track 4	33% 26% =1 more	23% 23%=1 More	12% 12%=1 more	7% 7%=1
Track 5	33% 30% =1 more	3% 3% =1 more	12% 12%=1 more	16% 16%=1
Track 6	16% 10%=2 more	20% 20%=1 more	10% 7%=1 more	19% 16%=1

Has fidelity to the track schedules differed between the DCM Courts?

Fidelity to the tracks by pilot site was calculated in two ways. First, a comparison was made between each of the project sites for each of the key hearing types. Figures 8-10 examine the main hearing types across the DCM model, including limited review hearings, CRB reviews, and permanency hearings. Sites were compared on their timeliness across all timeliness variables, including holding hearings within 15 and 30 days of the due date, holding hearings more than 30 days early or more than 30 days late, or not holding the hearing. A chi square test of significance explored differences in percentages across pilot sites. Sites varied significantly in their fidelity to timeliness. Each figure only presents statistically significant differences between sites. The differences are primarily between the lowest and highest percentages in the figure. For example, in Figure 5, Clackamas had 40% of limited review hearings within 15 days of the due date. This was significantly different from

the other pilot sites. However, the other sites were not different from each other. Lane typically had the best fidelity to timing of events; however, Polk was timelier for CRBs.

Figure 8. Permanency Hearings Timeliness

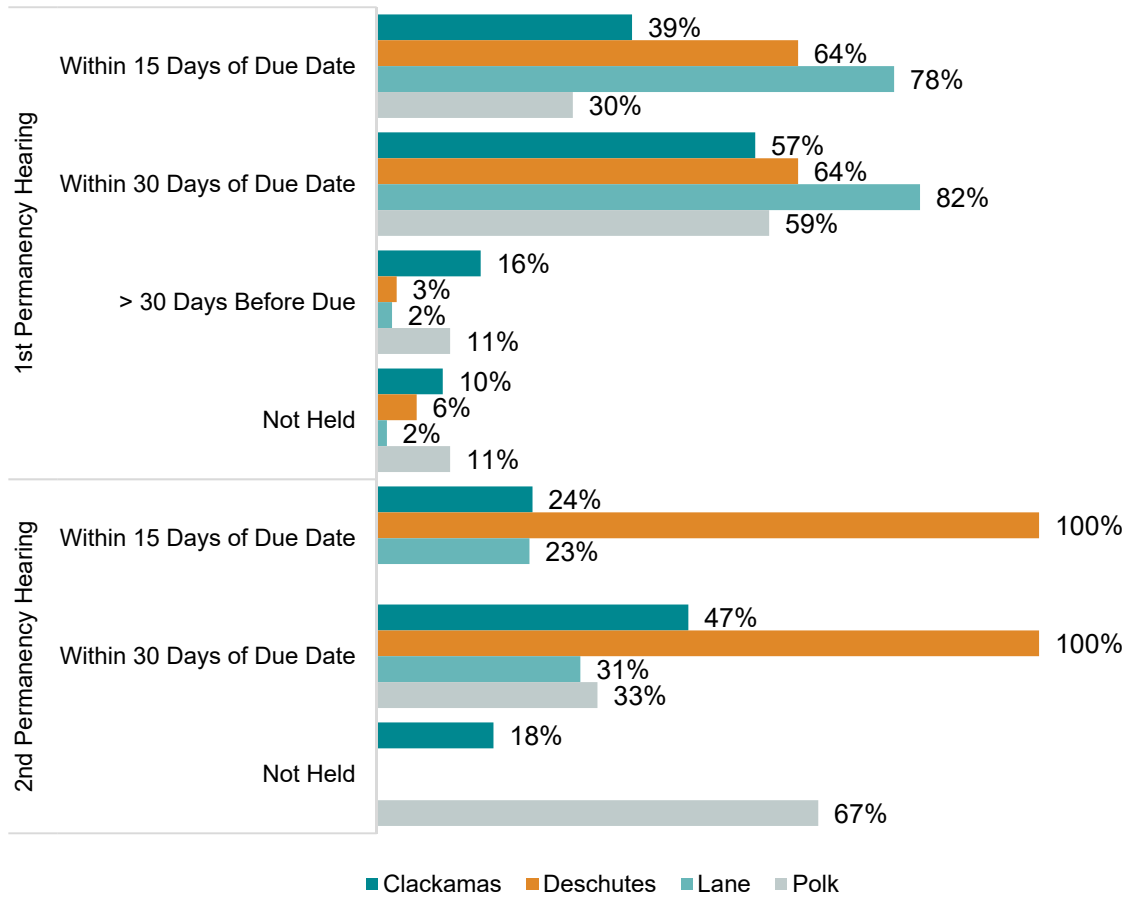


Figure 9. Limited Reviews Timeliness

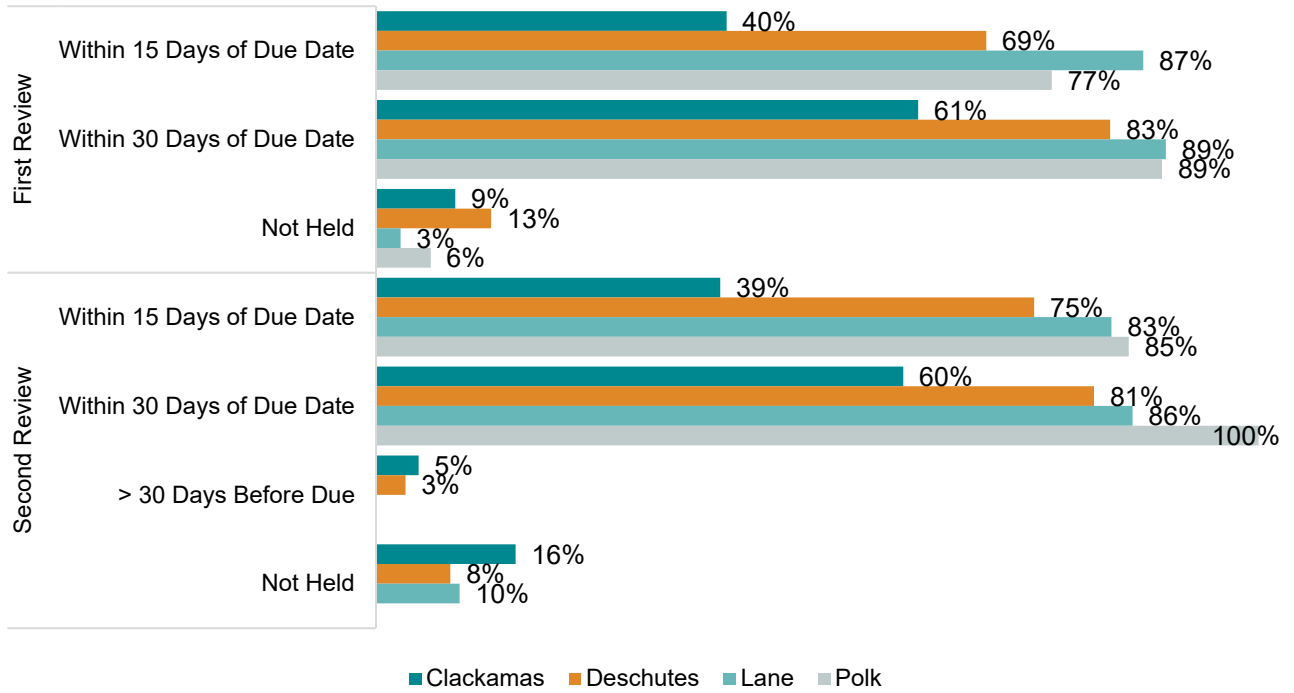
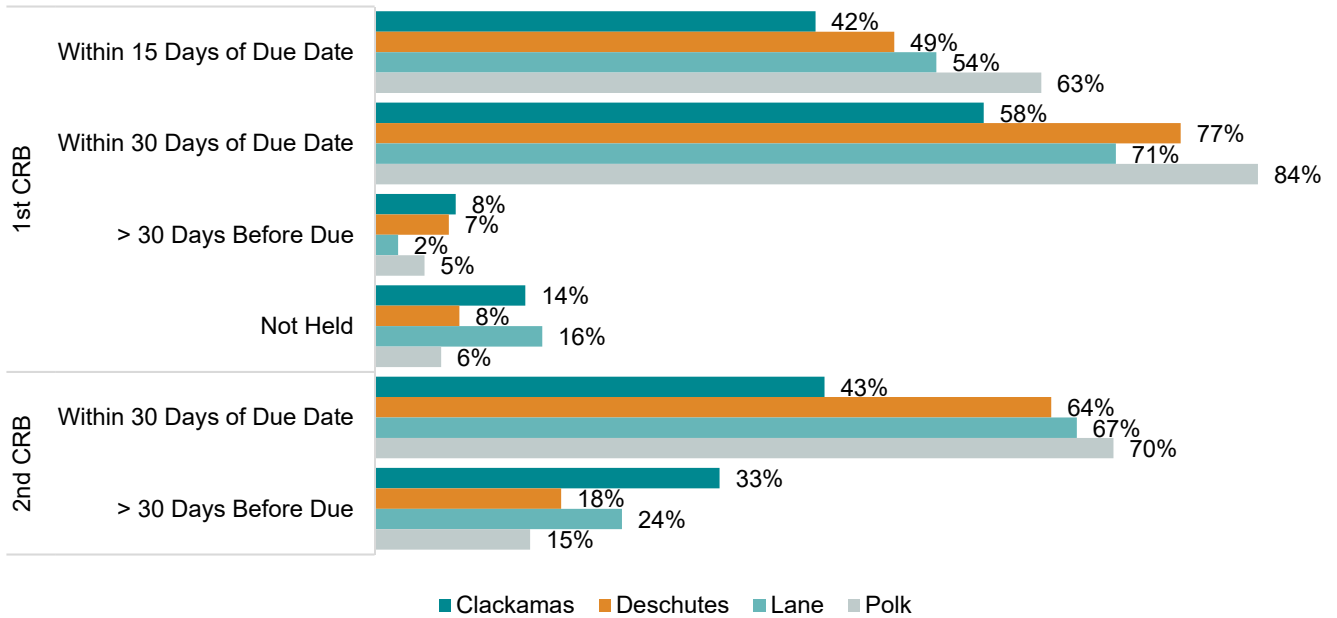


Figure 10. CRB Timeliness



The second way that site differences in fidelity were measured was by calculating the percentage of hearings that were within 15 days and 30 days of their target date to align with the DCM model for the specific track the case was on (see Table 7). For example, Lane County had an average of 67% of hearings across the life of the track assignment held within 15 days of their target date. Sites were significantly different. Specifically, Clackamas was different from all other pilot sites (as indicated in Table 7 by an asterisk). All other sites were statistically similar to each other. Clackamas indicated that their judicial rotation system in effect for most of the study period created scheduling challenges, and stakeholders there stated that the need for a conflict docket after the court moved to having a single juvenile judge as presented issues. These challenges may have impacted their ability to schedule and hold hearings in the target timeframes.

Table 7. Percentage of Timeliness Across the Life of the Case		
	Percentage of Hearings Timely (within 15 Days)	Percentage of Hearings Timely (within 30 Days)
Clackamas*	40%	56%
Deschutes	58%	76%
Lane	67%	77%
Polk	58%	77%

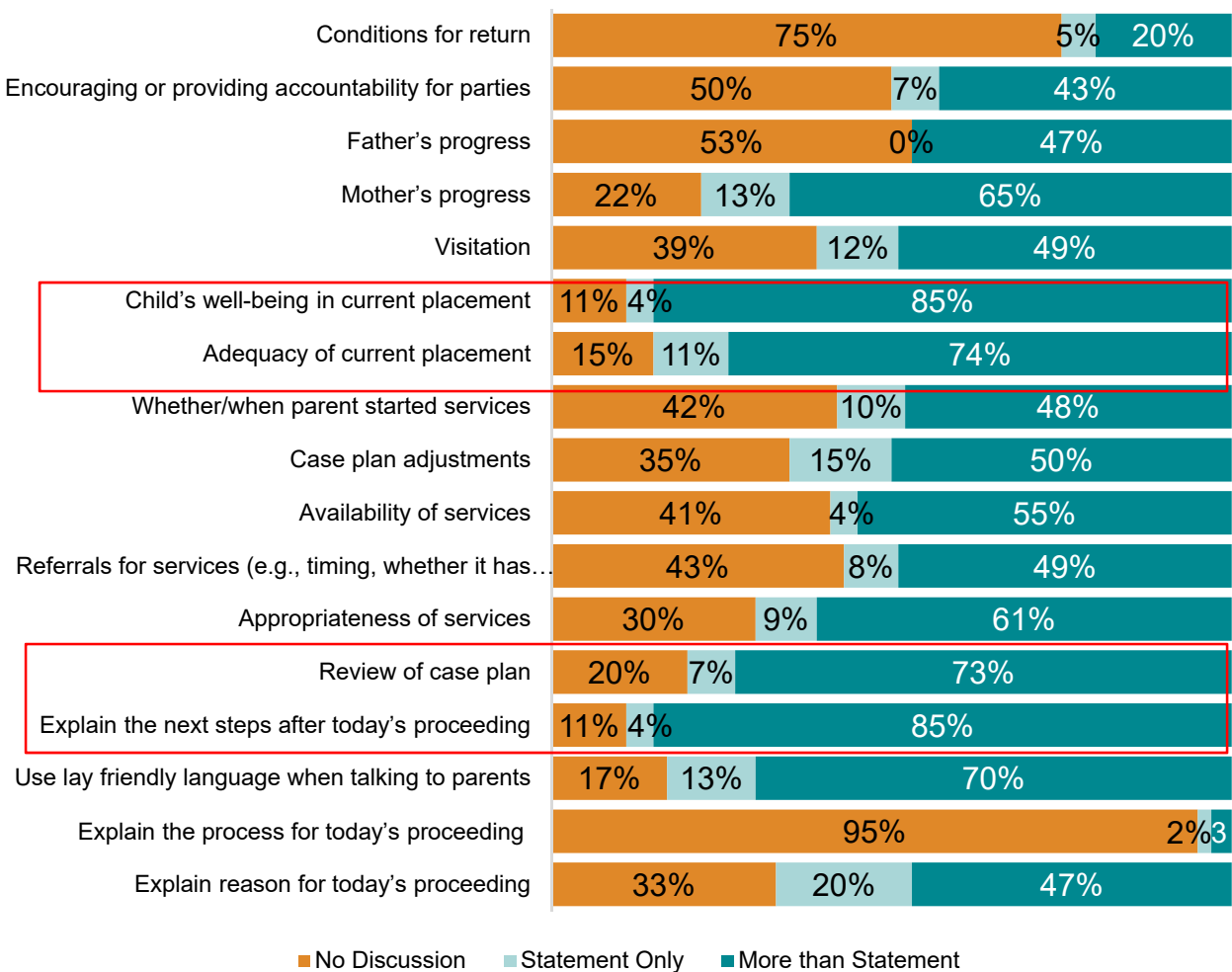
What issues are being addressed at limited review hearings?

Limited review hearings were new to some of the DCM sites. Unlike full reviews, which have statutory requirements for reporting and findings, the limited review hearings were meant to be a way to provide a shorter check-in on the case, encourage accountability of all parties and allow an opportunity for early problem-solving on barriers.

Data to answer this question came from the Limited Review Court Observation dataset that examined 55 cases across the four pilot sites. Observed limited review hearings took an average of 11 minutes (median = 8 Minutes). Wait time was also calculated by deducting the actual start time of the hearing from the scheduled start time. Participants had an average

wait time of 20 minutes (median 13 minutes) for their reviews. Mothers were present in 40% of limited review hearings and fathers were present in 39%. Discussion was explored on a three-point scale, with 0=discussion, 1=statement only, and 2=more than a statement. Items that were considered not applicable were not included in the analyses. So, for example, when applicable, Limited reviews discussed conditions for return in 25% of cases (20% more than a statement and 5% statement only). Figure 11 below depicts the topics discussed and amount of discussion at the limited review hearings.

Figure 11. Limited Reviews Topics Discussed and Amount of Discussion



The most commonly discussed items (highlighted by the red boxes in Figure 11) were *child's well-being in current placement*, *next steps after today's proceeding*, *review of case plan*, and *adequacy of placement*. Courts rarely explained the process for today's hearing or

discussed conditions for return. Discussion was also explored as a percentage of the total applicable items discussed. On average sites ranged from discussing 20% of these topics (found in Figure 11 above) to discussing 100% of these topics.

How do the issues addressed in limited review hearings differ across courts?

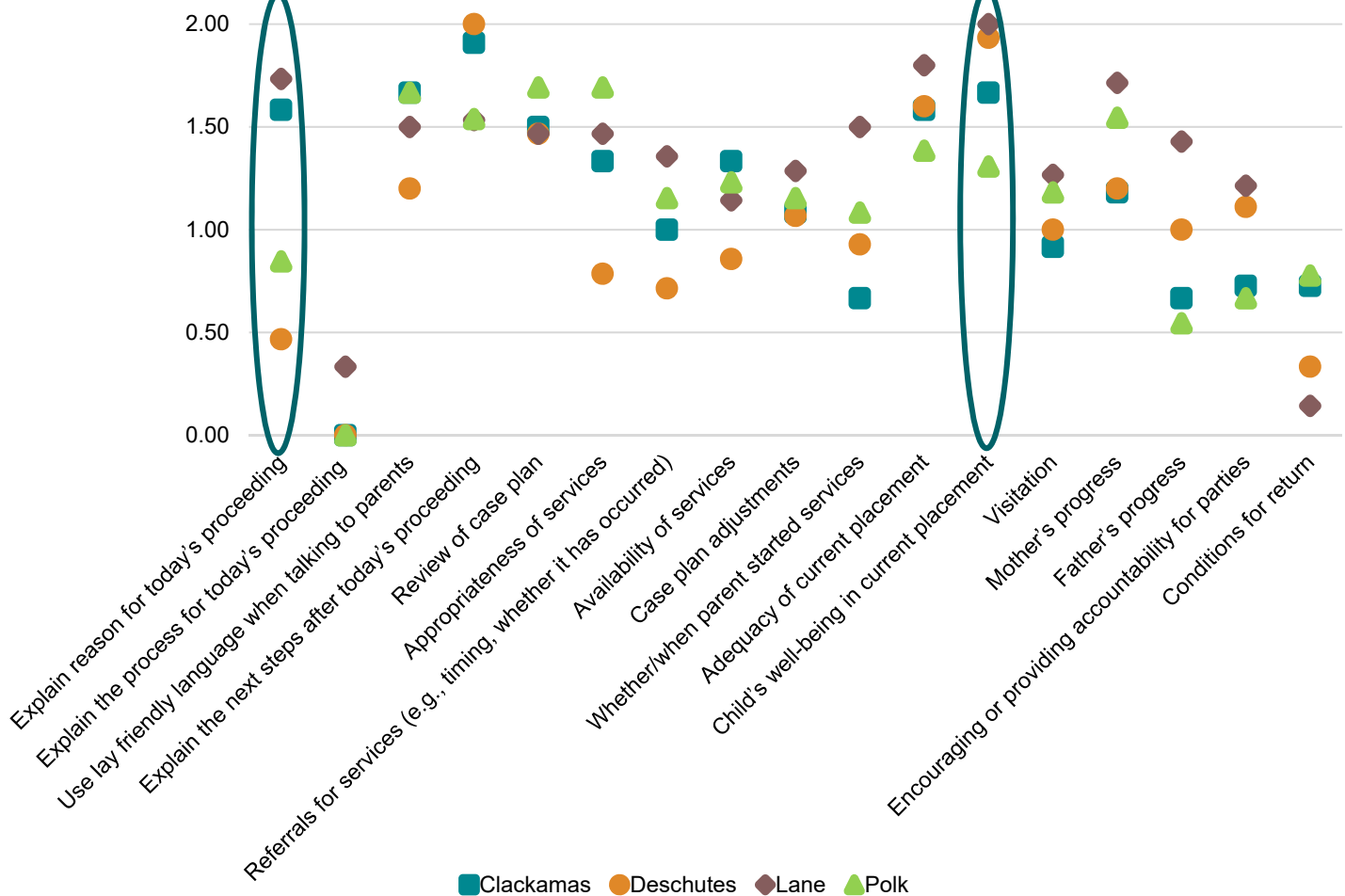
Limited review hearings looked slightly different by pilot site. Stakeholder interviews suggested that many stakeholders struggled to fully understand the intent of the limited reviews, the expectations for parents and for professionals, and what should and should not be discussed at these. Others also noted a big discrepancy in how these limited reviews were implemented in practice, varying by judge.

Table 8 below identifies the average and median time that sites spent in limited reviews as well as the average/median wait time that participants had to wait for their hearing to start. These data are pulled from the sample of 55 court observations completed for this study. Polk averaged the longest limited review hearings. Deschutes had significantly shorter wait times for participants.

Table 8. Average and Median Time in Hearings and Wait Time		
Site	Average/Median Time in Hearings (in minutes)	Average/Median Wait Time (in minutes)
Clackamas	8 / 7	27 / 24
Deschutes	11 / 8	5 / 5
Lane	9 / 6	23 / 17
Polk	16 / 11	28 / 20

Sites also varied slightly in the focus of their limited review hearings. Figure 12 illustrates the variation in court practice for limited reviews across the sites. The data is portrayed as an average of discussion on a 0 to 2 scale. A zero indicates no discussion and a two indicates that the topic was discussed with more than a statement in the majority of hearings.

Figure 12. Site Variations in Limited Review Discussion



There were only two statistically significant variations in what was discussed in limited reviews (highlighted by the circles in Figure 12). Clackamas and Lane were significantly more likely than Deschutes and Polk to explain the reason for today's hearing and to do so in depth. Polk was significantly less likely than Deschutes or Lane to discuss child's well-being in current placement in depth. Site variations ranged from an average of 54% of topics discussed in observed limited review hearings in Deschutes to an average of 72% of topics in Lane. Clackamas averaged 60% discussion of topics and Polk averaged 63%. The sites were statistically similar with Deschutes and Lane being the most different.

There was also a statistically significant difference in whether parents were present in sites for mothers' presence, but not for fathers for the small sample of 55 Limited Reviews that

were observed (see Table 9). This was due in large part to the fact that Clackamas had no mothers present.

Site	Percent Mother Present	Percent Father Present
Clackamas	0	25%
Deschutes	31%	23%
Lane	47%	47%
Polk	83%	58%

Stakeholder Opinions

Stakeholder opinions provide a unique perspective on the DCM process. Stakeholders can identify what they feel is working best for them and provide context that may not be apparent by merely looking at the numbers. While stakeholders were asked multiple questions in the focus groups to gain a better understanding of practice, three questions are articulated here with a summary of responses. Unless identified as unique to one site or one stakeholder group, responses are those most commonly found.

Do stakeholders believe that the DCM Pilot is making a positive impact on their court’s dependency system?

Stakeholders were asked about whether they believe that the DCM Pilot is making a positive impact on the dependency system. The most common response across participants was that *they felt that it was too early to tell* if the program was having an impact. This response was given across all sites and stakeholder groups. Other common responses were:

- It provides an opportunity to address barriers and problem solve.
- Issues get addressed sooner.
- It keeps eyes on the family.
- Parents feel heard.
- It keeps professionals involved in the case.
- It has increased accountability for parents and agency.

- There is less time in court so more time can be spent working with families (only 1 site).

In addition, several stakeholders felt that the program sounded good on paper, but they believed it was not working well in practice. This comment was made in three of the four sites. Some stakeholder groups thought the program was not having a positive impact but indicated they could not be sure.

What improvements do stakeholders think could be made to the DCM Pilot?

In every site and across all stakeholder groups, focus group participants identified a *desire to explore the criteria on the Case Information Sheet* and see what could be done to make the tool more scientific. Other improvements were site specific:

- Lane
 - Hold a court review (not CRB) before 6 months into the case.
 - Consider making the CRB review a permanency hearing so that findings can be made.
 - Train new workers to understand tracks and provide refresher training to current staff.
 - Ensure that limited review hearings do not just focus on barriers, but also indicate the strengths of the family.
 - Move hearings to afternoon for youth to participate.
- Clackamas
 - Increase time slots for limited reviews so that there is more time to hold them.
 - Consider holding a full review early in case, perhaps 60-90 days into the case.
 - Look at CRB reviews in terms of timelines, and update case plan if it is close to being updated so reports are not outdated.
 - Figure out what to do after initial track extends beyond schedule
 - Improve the limited review hearings.
 - Get rid of the limited review hearings.

- Polk County
 - Explore a concise and consistent template for information at different stages of the process, so that reporting to the court is consistent.
 - Set clearer expectations regarding the limited review and follow them.
- Deschutes
 - Connect the CRB review process with the court process in a more robust way.

How has the DCM Pilot affected the workload of court stakeholders?

Stakeholders were surveyed early in the process to assess their opinions about the process. Three of the four sites indicated that they felt their workload had increased, including their time in court, their time in CRB reviews and workload overall. Follow-up questions were asked of participants in focus groups to determine how (and for whom) workload had increased. The most common response from *DHS* was that workload increased primarily in the reports needed for CRB reviews, with *DHS* agency workers indicating that CRB review reporting is intensive. *DHS* workers (at least some in every site) indicated an increase in workload in some way.

- Judges and court staff in two sites indicated that it increased workload in terms of docketing time. One judge indicated more time in court. CRB staff indicated increases in cases in two of the pilot sites.
- *CASA* were varied in their workload responses. In one site, they said no change in workload, in two sites they said a slight increase, and in one site they indicated that workload had decreased a little. The increase in workload was primarily when *CASA* was required to provide written reports for hearings or CRB.
- Attorneys in Lane and Clackamas report more time spent in court. Attorneys in Polk reported no change in workload. Deschutes' attorneys indicated that they have less time in court so they have to pick up more cases, indicating an increase in caseload.

Overall, it seems that most stakeholders believed the workload increase was for time in court. Caseworkers, on the other hand, when they thought there was an increase in workload, often attributed that increase largely to the amount of reporting they were required to do for the CRB review process.

Change in Court Time Spent on Dependency Cases

A series of questions examined the change in court time spent on dependency cases per quarter and per case filed. Anecdotal evidence from stakeholders suggest that the DCM Pilot is resulting in more time in court for them. Data from the Excel document on hearings, filings and time, provided context on how much time is tracked both before and after DCM implementation. Quarterly data were provided for each site and non-DCM sites beginning in quarter 3 of 2016, up until quarter 3 of 2018. These data provide quarterly averages and sums for the variables of interest. As the DCM Pilot began in the summer of 2017, data for 2016 quarter 3 through 2017 quarter 2 were collapsed into a “pre” DCM-Pilot sample. Data from 2017 quarter 3 through 2018 quarter 3 were collapsed into “post” DCM sample. This allowed for direct comparison of pre and post numbers of hearings, hearing time, and average hearing time for dependency cases.

Note on Data Quality and Considerations: The numbers and durations of hearings are based on information entered manually by court staff into Odyssey at the time of the hearing. JCIP has worked with courts to ensure that hearings that concern multiple cases (e.g., a review hearing that concerns three siblings) are counted only once for statistical purposes, but incorrect data entry practices sometimes cause multi-case hearings to be counted multiple times. In reviewing the data, it appeared that data entry for the DCM sites has been consistent over time, with the exception of Lane County, which improved its data entry practices at the beginning of 2018. The improvement during the study period, however, means Lane County numbers of hearings and total time spent on hearings in 2016 and 2017 are somewhat inflated compared with 2018. Data entry in Deschutes County also caused some multi-case hearings to count multiple times throughout the study period. While their data entry practices appear to have been consistent over time, the actual numbers of hearings held and time spent in hearings in Deschutes County were somewhat lower than what is reported here.

How did the amount of time spent on dependency court hearings per dependency case filed change in each DCM Court from prior to the DCM Pilot?

Overall, for the pilot sites, there was a statistically significant difference in minutes per review (including both limited review hearings and full reviews) from pre to post implementation. It was 18 minutes pre-implementation and 15 minutes (on average) post-implementation. Also, there was a statistically significant increase in minutes per other hearings, with 23 minutes prior to implementation and 30 minutes post-implementation. No other overall differences were found. As shown in Figure 13, the average minutes per review go down over time for the pilot sites. For the Non-DCM sites, there is no difference.

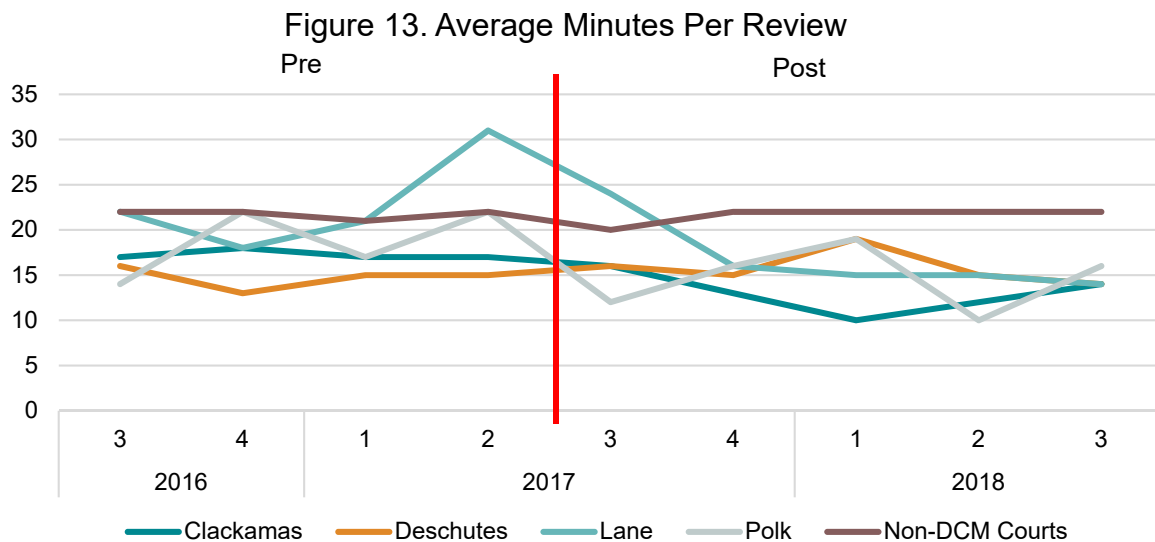
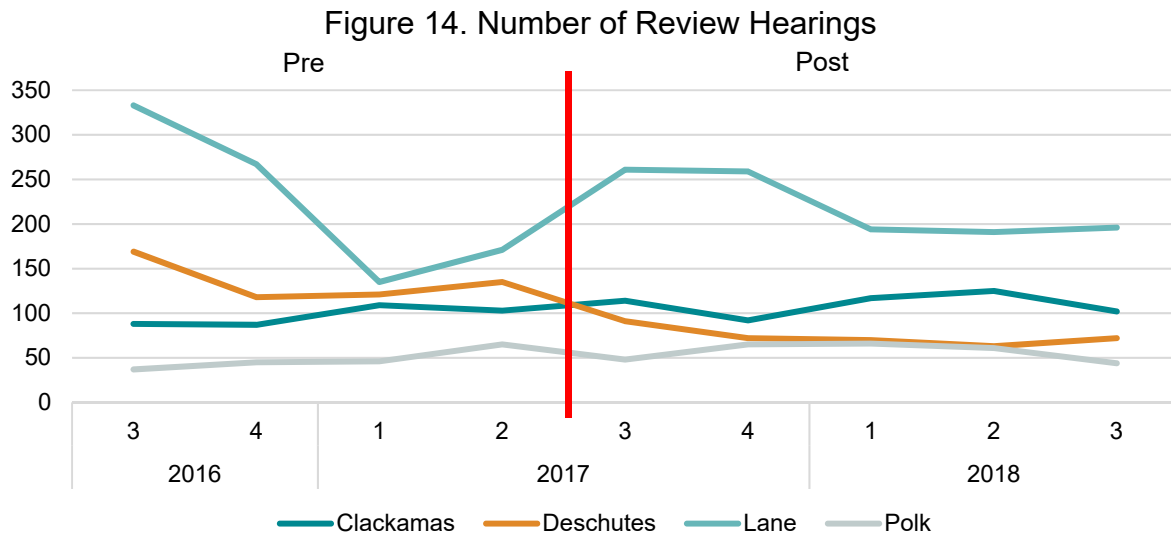


Figure 14 illustrates the changes in the number of Review Hearings over time. These differences were not statistically significant. This quarterly data illustrates some variation in number of reviews over time, with spikes in certain quarters. However, the numbers have stabilized in 2018.



There was also a significant difference between the length of reviews in the DCM and non-DCM sites post-implementation. Average time in reviews for non-DCM sites was 22 minutes compared to the average time in DCM sites (15 minutes). This difference was not statistically significant pre-implementation (22 minutes compared to 18 minutes).

Analyses were conducted for each site individually to explore pre-post differences in time. In Clackamas, the only significant difference pre and post implementation was in minutes per Review Hearings which dropped from an average of 17 to an average of 13 per Review Hearing. In Deschutes, there were several significant differences. Table 10 illustrates all of the pre-post differences in hearings and time. It is important to note that all time is a quarterly average. So average review hearings held in the quarters that were part of the pre sample for Clackamas were 97 (per quarter). When the table identified average minutes per review, that is a per hearing (per quarterly average). So, in Clackamas pre sample, on average (by quarter) review hearings took 17 minutes per hearing. Statistically significant differences are denoted with bold text and an asterisk (*) in the post column.

Table 10. Minutes Spent in Dependency Hearings Across Pilot Sites and Non-DCM Courts

	Clackamas		Deschutes		Lane		Polk		Non-DCM	
	Pre	Post	Pre	Post	Pre	Post	Pre	Post	Pre	Post
Average Review Hearings Held	97	110	135	74*	227	220	48	57	1231	1324*
Average Minutes Per Review Hearing	17	13*	15	16	23	17*	19	15	22	22
Average Total Minutes in Reviews Per Quarter	1678	1414	2001	1157*	5042	3779	922	827	26438	28446
Average Other Hearings Held	245	244	103	118	578	470	60	54	4105	4091
Average Minutes Per Other Hearings	27	24	23	44*	22	21	20	31*	25	25
Average Total Minutes in Other Hearings Per Quarter	6400	5864	2427	5200*	12495	9605	1193	1686	100639	102346
Average Total Dependency Hearings	342	353	238	191*	804	690	108	111	5336	5415
Average Minutes Per Dependency Hearing	23	20	18	33*	21	19	19	22	23	24
Average Minutes per Petition Filed	164	121	199	253	99	87	120	146	129	141

The increases in Deschutes County in the amount of time spent in other dependency hearings and in all dependency hearings are surprising given the decreases in that court’s number of Review Hearings and total minutes spent in reviews. The increase in Deschutes total time in hearings was due to the increase in total minutes in other hearings. A closer look at the Deschutes County data shows that the increase in other dependency hearings was driven by three factors: an increase in contested Jurisdiction Hearings, an increase in the number of permanency hearings held, and an increase in the average length of permanency hearings.

While an increase in the number of permanency hearings is not surprising given that some DCM tracks called for early permanency hearings, the increase in contested Jurisdiction Hearings is likely unrelated to DCM, as cases are not assigned to DCM tracks until after

jurisdiction has been established. Data on the duration of permanency hearings shows that the increase in average hearing length was also likely due to an increase in contested hearings, as there was an increase in the number of permanency hearings that took an hour or more to complete. It is unknown whether the increase in contested permanency hearings was due to the earlier permanency hearings held on some DCM tracks, or to other factors.

How has the total amount of time spent on dependency court hearings changed in each DCM Court from prior to the DCM Pilot?

The total time spent on dependency court hearings for the four DCM sites has not significantly changed. There was no difference in the overall amount of time per case filed (averages 146 minutes pre and 152 minutes post). Figure 15 illustrates an average time per case filed. A time per case filed variable was calculated by dividing the total time in hearings by the number of petitions filed. While this is not a perfect measure of exact time per case, it does provide an opportunity to get a picture of hearing time within a caseload context. Figure 16 illustrates the average amount of overall minutes per quarter spent on cases pre and post DCM.

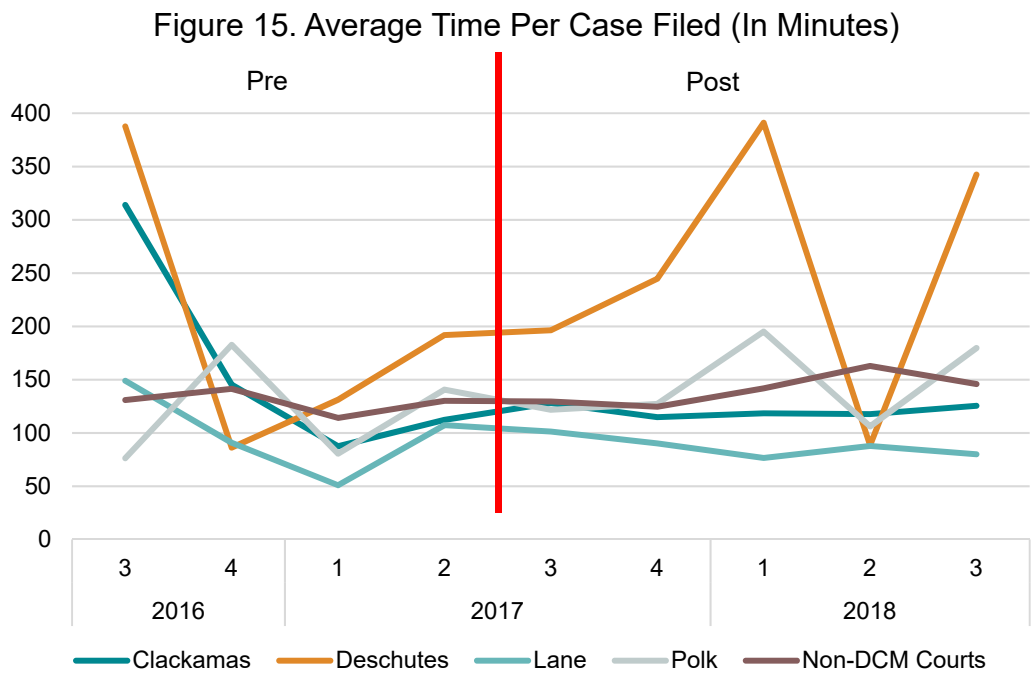
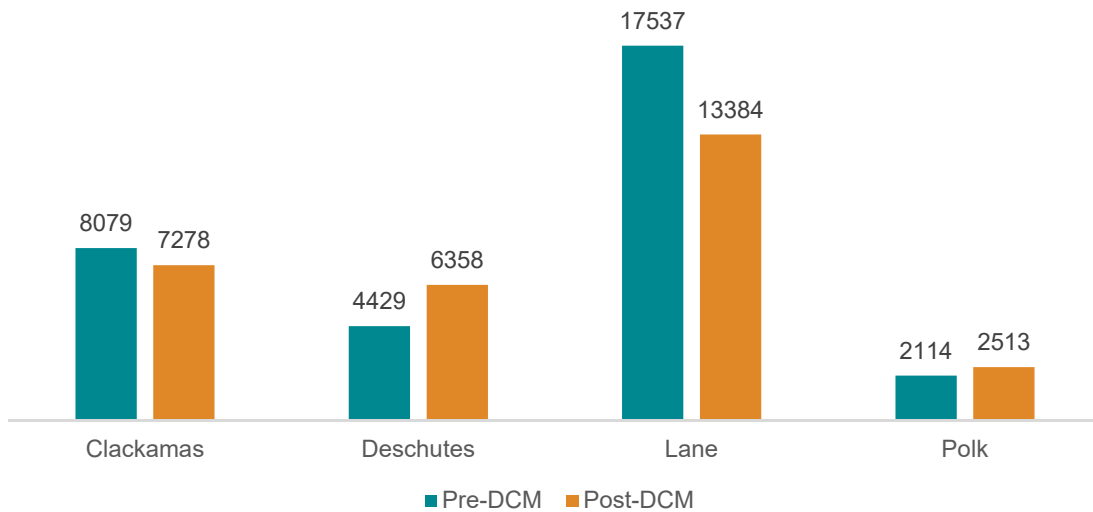


Figure 16. Total Time Spent in Dependency Cases per Quarter
(in Minutes)



Since the total dependency time is a function of the number of petitions filed, the number of hearings held, and the time in hearings, it is important to try to determine the extent of dependency time change *per case filed*. Time per case filed varied widely between jurisdictions, however, there were no significant pre-post differences in minutes per case filed for any of the pilot sites.

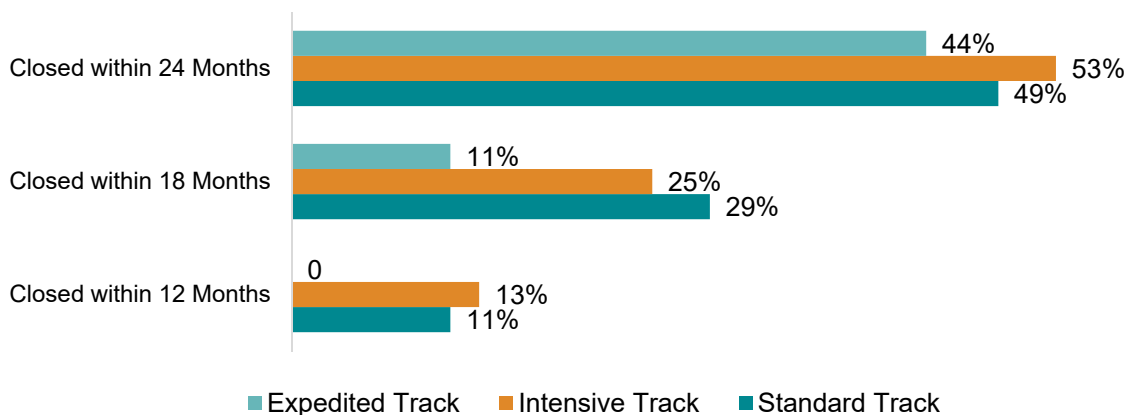
Table 11. Pre and Post Differences in Minutes Per Case Filed		
Site	Pre-DCM (Minutes per Case)	Post-DCM (Minutes per Case)
Clackamas	165	120
Deschutes	199	253
Lane	99	87
Polk	120	146

Tool Validation

For a sample of prior cases in the DCM Courts, are there differences in the percentages of cases closing within 12 months of filing, 18 months of filing, and 24 months of filing between cases that, under DCM, would have been assigned to the Standard Track, Intensive Track, and Expedited Track?

A random sample of 146 cases that opened in the DCM sites between January 1, 2015 and March 31, 2015 were examined using a structured case file review process. These cases were assigned a Track as if they had been part of the DCM Pilot to explore how Track assignment was related to case outcomes. Figure 17 illustrates outcomes in 12, 18, and 24 months across the various tracks. While there were some notable differences, there were *no statistically significant* differences in outcomes by track.

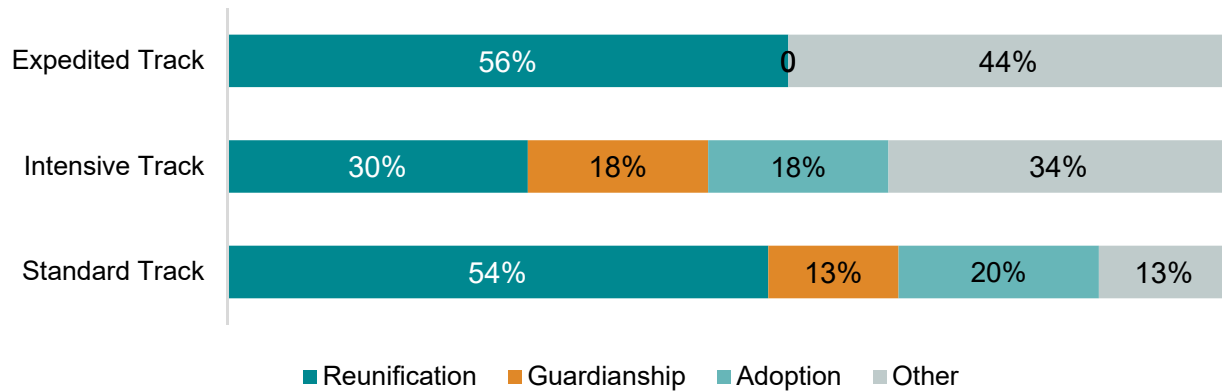
Figure 17. Percentages of Cases Closed within 12, 18 and 24 Months By Track



For a sample of prior cases in the DCM Courts, are there differences in the percentage of cases exiting to reunification between cases that, under DCM, would have been assigned to the Standard Track, Intensive Track, and Expedited Track?

The case file review comparison data also allowed for an opportunity to look at the types of outcomes by track. Track 2 was statistically different from the other tracks with respect to reunification outcomes. Specifically, Track 2 cases were much less likely to reunify. Track 1 (Standard track) was significantly different from other tracks regarding whether the cases were closed at the time of the review. Track 1 cases were much more likely to be closed at the time of the review. Figure 18 illustrates the outcomes for the tracks for the case file review data set. No other statistically significant differences emerged in the data.

Figure 18. Closed Case Outcomes by Track



For a sample of prior cases in the DCM Courts, are there particular file review characteristics that are predictive of a longer or shorter stay in foster care?

To examine this question, a series of regression analyses explored the Case Information Sheet factors’ relationship to time to permanency. Regression analysis is a statistical method used to explore relationships to determine how factors might influence each other. Three of the Case Information Sheet factors were significantly related to time to permanency: 1) When parents had a criminal case related to the dependency matter it took less time to achieve permanency (580 days compared to 710); 2) When parents were under 18, it took longer to achieve permanency (1249 days compared to 683 on average); and 3) When a sibling was assigned to a higher track, those cases took less time to achieve permanency with an average of 461 days compared to 702 days for cases when there was no sibling on a higher track. The count of variables (i.e., the number of case factors or child factors) was not significantly related to timely permanency. Thus, having more factors did not relate to having a longer case.

None of the case factors predicted reunification on the case.

Preliminary Outcome Evaluation

It is still early for an outcome evaluation for the DCM Pilot. The pilot was implemented in May of 2017 and the data were collected in November of 2018. That only allows 18 months for new cases in the system. However, some preliminary data was examined to explore whether there were differences in cases closing in 12 months.

In the DCM Courts, are a higher percentage of cases closing within 12 months of filing than prior to implementation of the Pilot?

How do any changes in the percentage of cases closing within 12 months of filing compare with changes in the Non-DCM Courts (i.e., courts that did not implement DCM)?

Both research questions can be addressed with the same data set. Summary data (in the form of Table 12 below) were provided to the evaluator. These data explore the percentage of cases that close within one year of filing for DCM and non-DCM courts and over time. The percentage of cases closing within one year in DCM courts has risen over time. The percentage of cases in DCM courts achieving permanency in 12 months is 35% for the new cases which is higher than the 2014-2016 numbers (range of 24-28%). The numbers did increase in DCM sites in 2017. Additional data will be needed to explore the effects of DCM. While DCM courts used to be lower in their percentage of cases achieving permanency in 12 months, as of 2017 they are now equivalent with non-DCM courts in this number. Further data are needed to determine whether this is a trend or is statistically significant. Table 12 illustrates the percentage of cases closed within 12 months for the years leading up to and including the DMC Pilot (which began mid 2017).

Table 12. Cases Closed Within 12 Months of Filing, For Cases Filed Jan 2014 - Sept 2017
(Note: For the purposes of these statistics, a case is considered 'Closed' if a guardianship has been finalized. Cases that transferred between circuit courts are excluded from the statistics.)

Courts Type	Filing Period	Dependency Cases Filed	Dependency Cases Closed within 12 Months of Filing	Percentage Closed within One Year of Filing
DCM Courts	2014	1133	320	28%
Non-DCM Courts	2014	3188	1127	35%
DCM Courts	2015	1086	260	24%
Non-DCM Courts	2015	3461	1270	37%
DCM Courts	2016	1005	257	26%
Non-DCM Courts	2016	3724	1322	35%
DCM Courts	January - March 2017	329	128	39%
Non-DCM Courts	January - March 2017	1023	338	33%
DCM Courts	April - June 2017	204	79	39%
Non-DCM Courts	April - June 2017	675	245	36%
DCM Courts	July - September 2017	398	138	35%
Non-DCM Courts	July - September 2017	1354	482	36%

In the DCM Courts, are there differences between the tracks in the percentages of cases closing within 12 months of filing?

Reviewing the data from the DCM Track assignment data, only 377 cases were available where the case had been assigned to one of the three pre-permanency tracks and had a petition filing date to calculate whether the case was closed within 12 months. Of those,

there was a statistically significant difference between Tracks 1 and 3 but not between 1 and 2 or 2 and 3.

Table 13. Cases Closed in 12 Months By Pre-Permanency-Hearings Track	
Tracks	Case Closed in 12 Months
Track 1	15% (n=6 of 39)
Track 2	11.5% (n=29 of 153)
Track 3	6% (n=5 of 85)

Conclusions

JCIP was able to provide a robust set of data to conduct a process evaluation of the DCM Pilot. The data are able to speak to the fidelity of the DCM model. While the fidelity is not at 100%, it does appear that the majority of cases follow the DCM model as prescribed. Of note, positive fidelity findings indicate that:

- The vast majority of cases have been assigned to a track. The largest variation is in Lane County where 30% of new cases have yet to be assigned. This is likely due to the large number of in-home cases in Lane County, which would not be assigned to a track.
- 94% of cases are assigned to their recommended track with little deviation. Polk County has the highest deviation (12%)
- The majority of case events are occurring within 30 days of their scheduled due date (42%-82%). When you add in the events that are happening more than 30 days early, then the majority of every key event is occurring timely or before the scheduled time.
- Fidelity does not vary much by track. That is, all tracks have a fairly high percentage occurring timely.
- Fidelity does vary significantly by site. In particular, Clackamas has the lowest timeliness fidelity for limited reviews and CRBs, while Lane has the best for limited reviews, and Polk has the best for CRBs.

Some components of the process evaluation warrant further exploration and may have less fidelity to the model. Concerns were expressed around:

- *Limited Reviews.* The limited reviews are a source of concern for many stakeholders. There appears to be variation by implementation site as to what

these look like and how long they take. Many stakeholders expressed lack of clarity around this issue.

- *Case Information Sheet.* Representatives from all of the stakeholder groups identified a concern with the tool, indicating they felt it could be enhanced with more rigorous statistical evidence as to what it should include. Tool validation indicates that the case assessment factors may not be the best predictors of time to permanency or reunification.

It is a little early for outcome analysis, but the data do point toward the potential for a positive impact of DCM. The percentage of cases closing in 12 months increased in the DCM sites for cases filed the year DCM was implemented. Track 1 cases are more likely to reach permanency in 12 months than cases assigned to other tracks.

Recommendations

This process evaluation report of the DCM Pilot provides a wealth of information to answer the posed research questions. The answers to these questions can help inform next steps on the project. The recommendations section takes the findings from the multiple data sources and poses ideas for consideration for next steps on the project. Recommendations are made around (1) improving fidelity to the model, (2) considerations for the case assessment tool, (3) considerations for implementing DCM in new project sites, and (4) next steps for the DCM Pilot (including an outcome evaluation). It is important to note, JCIP should consider these recommendations in the context of their current court culture and climate, other projects, resources, and needs when determining next steps on the project. The evaluator is not suggesting that these recommendations are required, merely that these could warrant consideration by the JCIP in thinking through next steps for the project.

Improving Fidelity to the Model

Fidelity to the model was good across project sites. There were very few deviations in assignment from the Case Assessment Tool recommendation. Only 6% of cases were assigned to a different track than recommended from the tool. Further, hearings were held timely in the majority of cases. While this varied from 42% to 82% held within 30 days of the

scheduled date, across the board, most were scheduled within the appropriate timeframes. However, there were some challenges with achieving higher fidelity that could be addressed. Suggestions for improving fidelity of the model:

- Share the process evaluation report with all project sites and provide an opportunity to debrief and discuss the findings in the context of their court.
- Work with Polk county to identify why they deviated from the recommended track to see if they can reduce their percentage of deviance (currently 12%).
- Work with sites to identify additional barriers to holding hearings within the prescribed timeframes of the model. Sites identified some challenges already. It would be helpful for JCIP to work with sites to brainstorm potential solutions.
- Work with sites to set clear expectations for limited review hearings. This may include identifying a template for a short report to the court by the agency to ensure consistency of the hearing information for the model.
- Identify whether the timing of events is critical to the model. Data are available to explore this issue. Use predictive modeling to determine if holding the event within 15 days (or 30 days) is related to the outcomes anticipated (e.g., timelier reunification, timelier adoption). If not, consider whether the timing of the hearings is as relevant as holding a hearing.

Considerations for Case Assessment Tool.

The Case Assessment Tool was identified by stakeholders as an opportunity for enhancement. The data indicate that the Case Assessment Tool could be improved. Consider, for example, the assumption that increasing the number of factors should move families to a higher track. The predictive analyses did not find that more case factors were related to time to permanency or to an outcome of reunification. There were some factors significantly related to timely permanency. However, they did not always go in the direction expected. If a parent had a criminal case, it took less time to achieve permanency. When parents were under the age of 18, the cases took significantly longer. None of the case factors significantly predicted reunification. Recommendations for the Case Assessment Tool:

- Consider increasing the sample size to validate the tool. The sample included 146 cases. While there were some findings, a larger sample might be able to better demonstrate nuances of items or item pairs (i.e., combinations of items) that are most predictive of the outcomes of interest.
- Consider validating the tool with a more robust administrative dataset that includes more data variables. Several stakeholders noted ideas about assessing substance abuse, mental health, or domestic violence of parents. Look to available data to see what type of predictive analytics can be used to explain timely permanency in child welfare cases in Oregon to see if other factors are identified that are not included on the tool.

Considerations for Implementing DCM in New Project Sites

The fidelity to the model was good. Data from focus groups, JCIP comments on data and data quality, and data derived from quantitative analyses yielded some recommendations for further rollout of the DCM Pilot in the state. It would be ideal to wait until the outcome evaluation is completed before rolling out to new sites to determine the effectiveness of implementing the DCM model into practice. Some considerations for implementing DCM:

- Set clear expectations for limited review hearings. Provide stakeholders an opportunity to discuss the limited review and work together to come to a conclusion for how to best meet the needs of the case within the parameters of the limited review.
- Consider identifying a template narrative/summary report for the agency to provide to the court. Several of the project sites have implemented this already into practice and consistency would be helpful.
- Work with the agency to identify the challenges and needs to prepare reports for the court CRB review process, including identification of whether this is an increase in workload for agency workers. If it is an increase, strategize ways to reduce the burden of generating court and CRB review reports.
- Talk with sites about workload considerations and concerns. For some sites this increased time in court, for others it decreased. As each site has a different court process, these early discussions can help sites better understand the change in resources required for cases.

- Talk with project sites about the importance of fidelity to the model and provide ongoing check-in and support for any barriers that arise. Use process evaluation findings to help sites brainstorm potential barriers.
- Train appropriate staff on data quality and needs so that all data is entered timely and appropriately for analyses.

Next Steps for the DCM Pilot Sites & Outcome Evaluation

DCM Pilot sites should continue to consistently implement the DCM model into practice. The process evaluation has shown good levels of fidelity to the model but the model should be further evaluated in terms of its effectiveness on improving timely permanency of dependency cases. In order to maximize JCIP resources in exploring the outcome evaluation, it is recommended that:

- DCM Pilot sites continue to consistently implement the DCM model into practice for at least 2.5 years. This should allow enough time to elapse on cases to explore the percentage of cases achieving their permanency outcome as expected for reunification (12 months), guardianship (18 months) and adoption (24 months).
- Identify opportunities to enhance process evaluation findings to answer any additional questions that arose from the initial findings report. For example, consider exploring specific Case Assessment Tool item combinations that may be more predictive of cases outcomes. Another consideration might be breaking out the time in hearings and total hearings by Track. The assumption of DCM is that judges will allocate more resources to the more challenging cases. From the current data it is impossible to determine how much time judges are spending on Track 1 versus Track 2.
- Maximize the use of the current datasets for the outcome evaluation. In particular, the addition of a case outcome variable to the DCM Track and Hearings data could assist in conducting more complex analyses in the future, identifying whether and how fidelity to timeliness measures may be related to case outcomes. The “percentage timely variable” and “specific timing variables” (e.g., Whether 1st Review was held within 15 days of target), could be used in a predictive analysis to determine how the fidelity to timing of events relates both to timely permanency and to specific permanency outcomes. Quarterly outcome data, such as percentage of cases that

reunified or were adopted, or median time to permanency could also be added to the DCM Filing Hearings and Time dataset to allow for pre-post comparisons in outcome and their relationship to the DCM Pilot. Further, the DCM Track Assignments by Court data could also include a case outcome variable and be updated on cases closed. Any of these datasets could be beneficial for the outcome evaluation and are already in existence.

- Ensure that comparisons for outcome evaluation include the pilot sites *prior to* implementation of DCM and a comparison statewide sample of non-DCM cases both prior to and after DCM was implemented to ensure a more robust comparison group.