



The Child Protection & Family Services Agency (CPFSA)

Presented by: Newton Douglas
Director, Policy Planning & Evaluation



“Beyond Institutionalization”

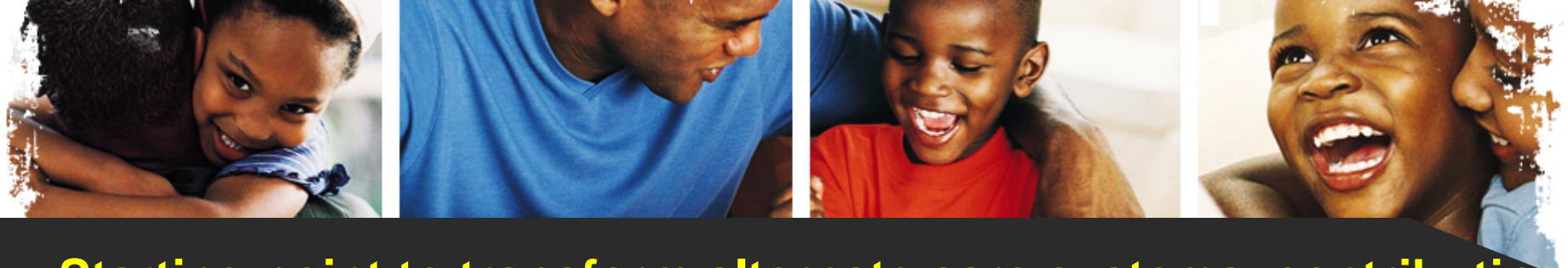
Module I The process of transformation of Alternative Care Systems

June 16th, 2022



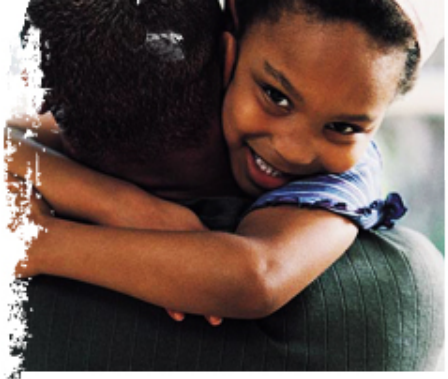
Starting point to transform alternate care systems, contributing factors & conditions for promoting change.

- ❑ Government of Jamaica ratified the CRC in May 1991
 - ❑ Recognizing rights of all children to survival, development, protection and participation.
 - ❑ Modernization public institutions and strengthened the protective environments to secure the development, wellbeing and welfare of children.
 - ❑ Effected changes at the legislative, policy and institutional levels.
 - ❑ Enactment of the Child Care and Protection Act in 2004 and since then others such as Trafficking in Person Act, Sexual Offences Act, Child Pornography Act, etc.
 - ❑ Established the Child Development Agency, Office of the Children's Registry, Office of the Children's Advocate, Children and Family Courts.
 - ❑ Child Development Agency and the Office of the Children's Registry merged in November 2017 to form the Child Protection and Family Services Agency.



Starting point to transform alternate care systems, contributing factors & conditions for promoting change.

- ❑ Changes were prompted by Jamaica's ratification of the UNCRC;
 - ❑ Jamaica own commitment to bring about meaningful changes to the issues impacting children nationally and those served by the child protection system;
 - ❑ Comprehensive review of the residential child protection system; and
 - ❑ Increase advocacy by non-governmental agencies.
- ❑ Jamaica's commitment to reduce the proportion of children living in institutions relative to those living in familial environment to better promote and protect their rights.
- ❑ Over the last 14 years children in alternative care reduced by 28%, falling from 6,201 in 2008 to 4,565 in 2021. Boys were slightly more likely to be in care than girls.
- ❑ In 2004 the number of children in State care living in a family oriented environment stood at 40%. There is a 27% increase in 2022, at 67%



**Why
deinstitutionalisation
(Raising Children in
Families) is needed?**

- ✓ The best place for a child to grow is in a caring and nurturing family.
- ✓ Children need responsive relationships and positive experiences to build a strong brain architecture.
- ✓ To provide a stable and supportive environment for children, adults need a set of core life skills.



The Planning of Transformation: Stages and Strategies

- ❑ Five year strategic planning cycle:
 - ❑ **Alternative Care:** Familial (84%) vs. Institutional (16%).
 - ❑ **Alternative Familial:** Adoptive Care (40%) vs. Family Reintegration (40%) vs. Foster Care (20%).
- ❑ Conducted a comprehensive review of its Living in Family Environment (L.I.F.E.) programmes in collaboration with over 20 stakeholder / partner groups inclusive of UNICEF Jamaica & guided by oversight body.
- ❑ Creation of the Raising Children in Families Strategic Framework



The Planning of Transformation: Stages and Strategies

Our vision

A Jamaica where all children belong, feel loved and thrive in families and communities, where their rights are respected, they are safe and have access to child protection and social care services they need.



The Planning of Transformation: Stages and Strategies

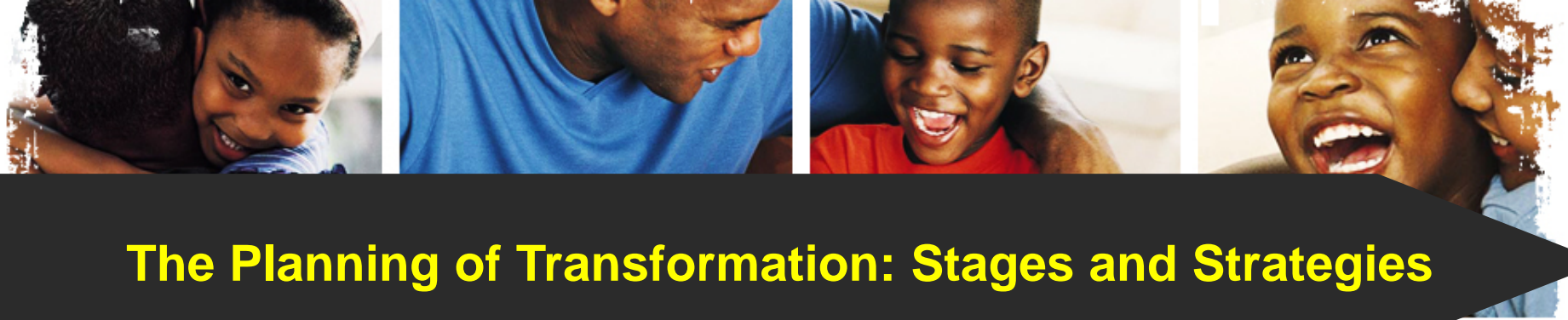
Our guiding principles

Best Interest
of the Child

The
principle of
necessity

The
principle of
suitability

**No child
left behind**



The Planning of Transformation: Stages and Strategies

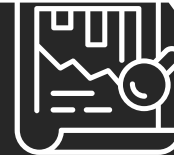
STRATEGIC PRIORITY 1

Strengthen the policy and governance framework for care reform



STRATEGIC PRIORITY 2

Implement evidence-based change pathways



STRATEGIC PRIORITY 3

Build the capacity of the national workforce



STRATEGIC PRIORITY 4

Direct resources towards family-based services



STRATEGIC PRIORITY 5

Engage communities to support the mission



Raising Children in Families

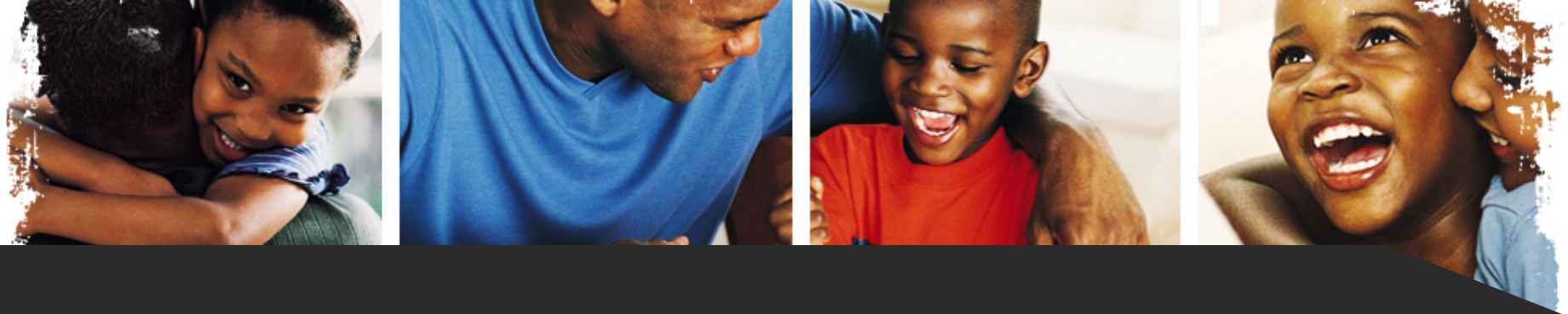
Preventing
Family
Separation

Providing
Family-Based
Alternative
Care



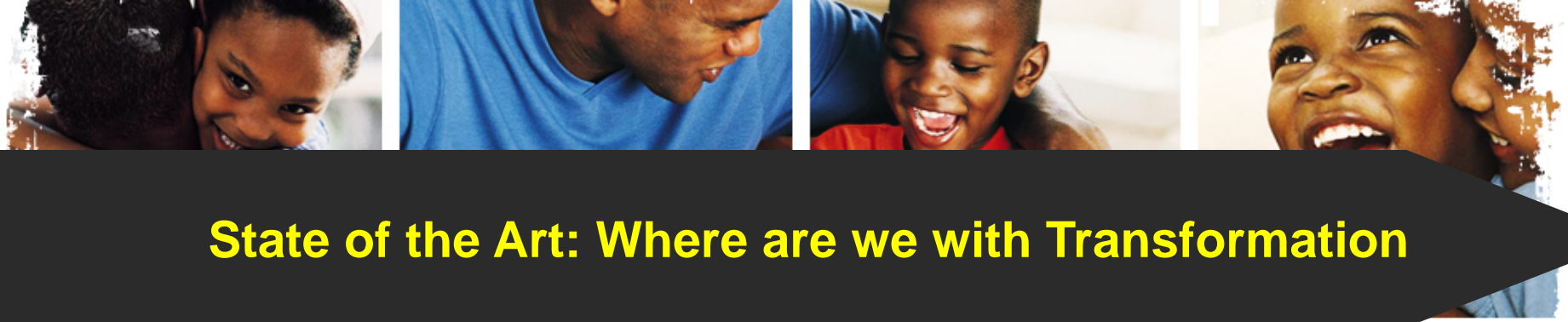
Opportunities for Transformation

- Proven track record in reducing the number of children in residential care.
- Growing experience in supporting children in families and diverting them from formal care.
- Evidence of significant challenges in residential care & its negative impact on children in Jamaica.
- A strong commitment to improving outcomes for children at risk and those without parental care.
- A strong desire to end the institutionalisation of children 3 years of age and under.
- A pathway country committed to ending violence against children.
- Increased focus on improving quality of care.
- Get young people involved with lived experience of care.
- Engaged and supported cross section of key stakeholders.



Barriers for Transformation

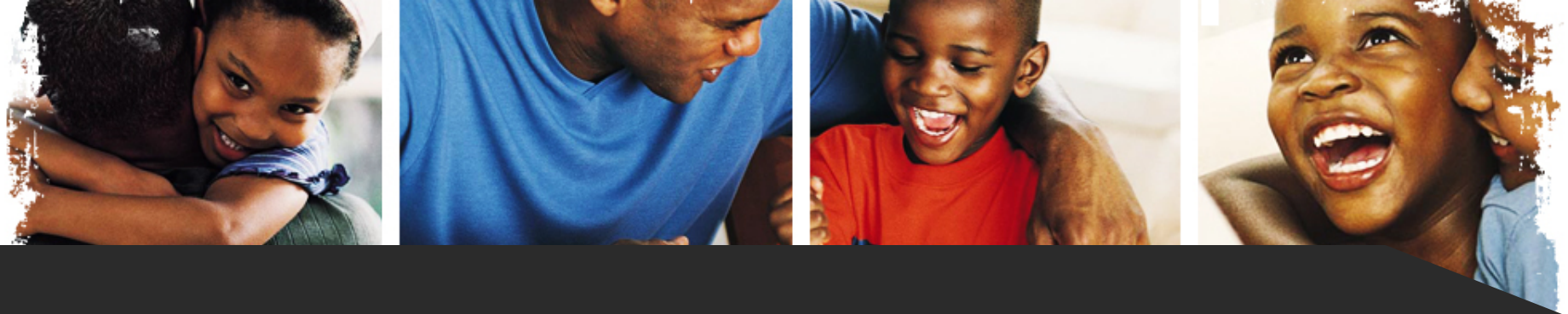
- Resistance to change, at the level of residential care providers.
- Significant challenges experienced by families in adversity, heightened by Covid-19.
- Limited community services available for children and families.
- Limited support available to parents caring for children with disabilities, apart from residential care. The way children with disabilities are viewed culturally.
- Limited availability of alternative care services for children, including for children with disabilities.
- Limited funding available for additional transition costs, and infrastructure.
- Level of violence experienced at community level affecting children and parents alike.
- Fragile community level gatekeeping and family support services.
- Entrenched attitudes influence parenting and how challenging behaviours are managed.



State of the Art: Where are we with Transformation

- **Five Year Raising Children in Families Strategic Plan developed.**
 - **Roadmap / Plan of Action being developed.**
- **Good Practices**
 - **Establishment of a 0-3 Policy**
 - **Foster Care Public Private Partnership**
 - **Ramping up placement practices**
 - **Children and Family Support Unit**
 - **Automation of Child Protection Services**
 - **Modernization of the Residential Child Protection Sector – Family Oriented environment**
 - **Child Protection Early Warning System (creation stage)**





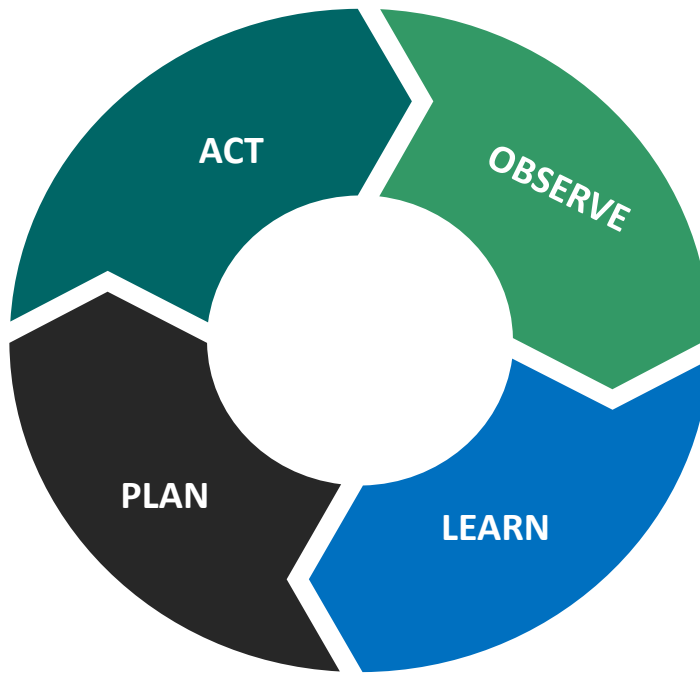
What is missing for sustaining transformation

1. Implement projectized or pilot-based innovations

2. Establish Transitional Teams to track progress

3. Document successes, lessons & feedback

4. Integrate expansion plans in annual workplans

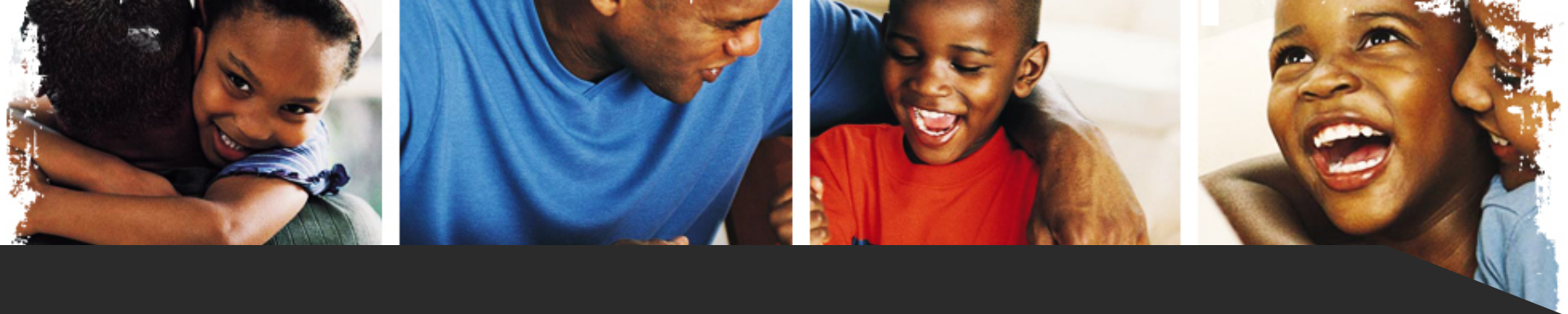


Action-Learning Process & Culture Change Cycle



Lessons Learned from Transforming Care Systems

- Genuine interest in seeing children served within their families;
- Participation and inclusion of children in the planning and decision making process is a key success factor;
- Children do better when they are raised in families or in alternate familial environments;
- Deinstitutionalization can be utilized as a key driver of change at all service levels that impacts children;
- Strong multi-stakeholder collaboration is a key ingredient;
- A mindset shift and changes of social norms and expectations needed;
- Having the supportive legislative and institutional framework and experience is crucial as one would not be building from the ground up.



Next Steps for Transformation: Concrete Action

Next Steps

