



CabinetOffice
Social Exclusion Task Force

Reaching Out: Think Family

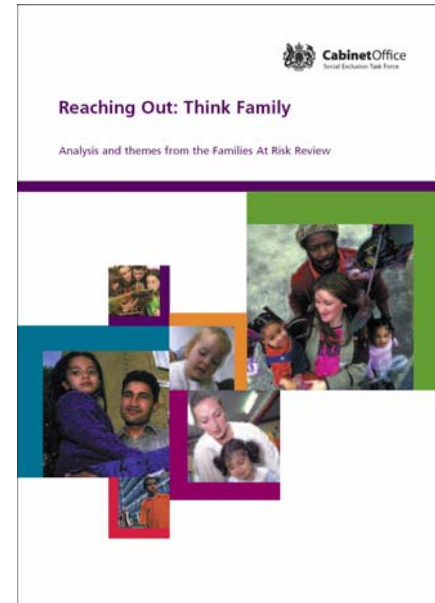
Naomi Eisenstadt



Families At Risk Review: Overview

June 07 analytical report *Reaching Out: Think Family*

1. Families at Risk: Focus on parent-based drivers of exclusion and the role of adults' services
 - Nature and scale of individual risk factors as they impact on child outcomes
 - Compounding effect of multiple (parent-based) family risks
2. Working with families – key areas of opportunity for systems change
 - Extending the logic of Every Child Matters beyond children's services
 - Ensuring the systems and services have the right incentives to focus on families at risk
 - Capitalising on the reach and expertise of the public and third sectors to identify and intervene earlier



The next piece in the puzzle?

Adult services can play a key role in improving outcomes for children

✓ Children's services

Investing in the individual child

- ECM integration of children's services
- Investment in education
- Expansion of early years provision

✓ Parenting support

Promoting effective parenting

- Increased investment in parenting support
- National Academy of Parenting Practitioners
- Expansion of Family Intervention Projects



Opportunities and outcomes for children
and families

Adults' services ?

- Do adults' services recognise and respond to the parental and family roles of their clients?
- Are we exploiting the opportunities to tackle the parent-based drivers of poor child and family outcomes?



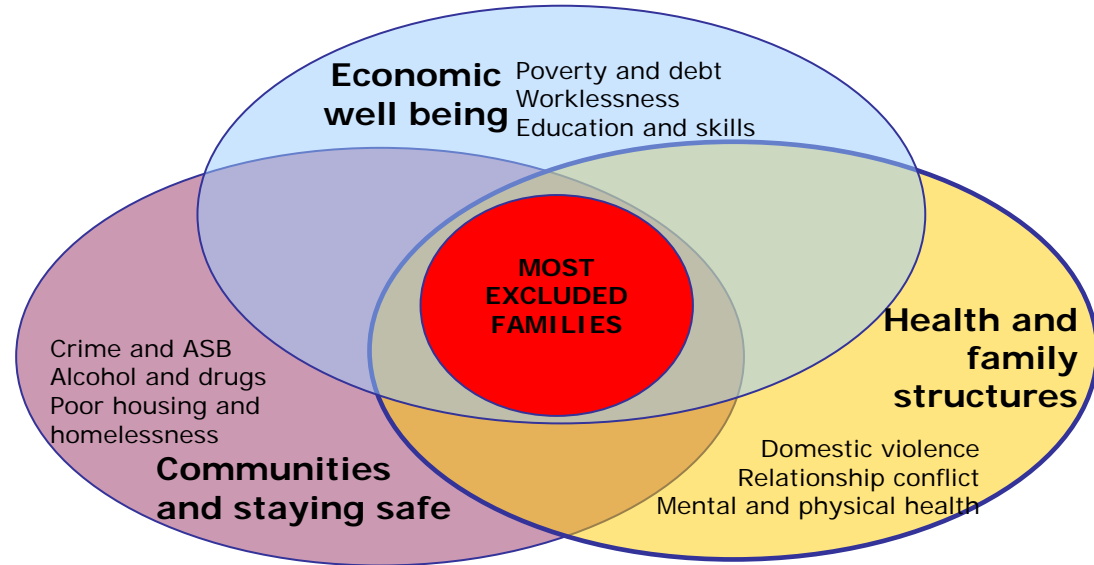
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The influence of family and parents is rarely neutral:

1. There is lots of evidence about the individual family and parent-based risk factors associated with poor outcomes for children

- **Homelessness** increases the risk of being on the Child Protection Register from 1% to 12%
- 63% of boys with **convicted fathers** go on to be convicted themselves
- **Parental alcohol misuse** is a factor in >50% child protection cases
- **Parental disability or mental health problems** strongly associated with poor outcomes for children
- 1:4 children witnessing **domestic violence** have serious social and behavioural problems
- Strong association between **parental income** and child's future income as an adult
- Strong association between **mother's educational qualifications** and child's future earnings
- Children from **workless households** are much more likely to become poor and workless adults



The influence of family and parents is rarely neutral:

2. However, parents and family can be a source of strength and resilience

Every family has the potential to build resilience through internal family strengths, relationships and resources – for example:

Parents can build key protective factors for children

- **Authoritative parenting** and an attached parent-child relationship can mitigate against risk of later negative outcomes
- **Parental interest in education** is a highly significant factor in child educational attainment
- **Strong family relationships** help children build other protective factors such as strong social and emotional skills

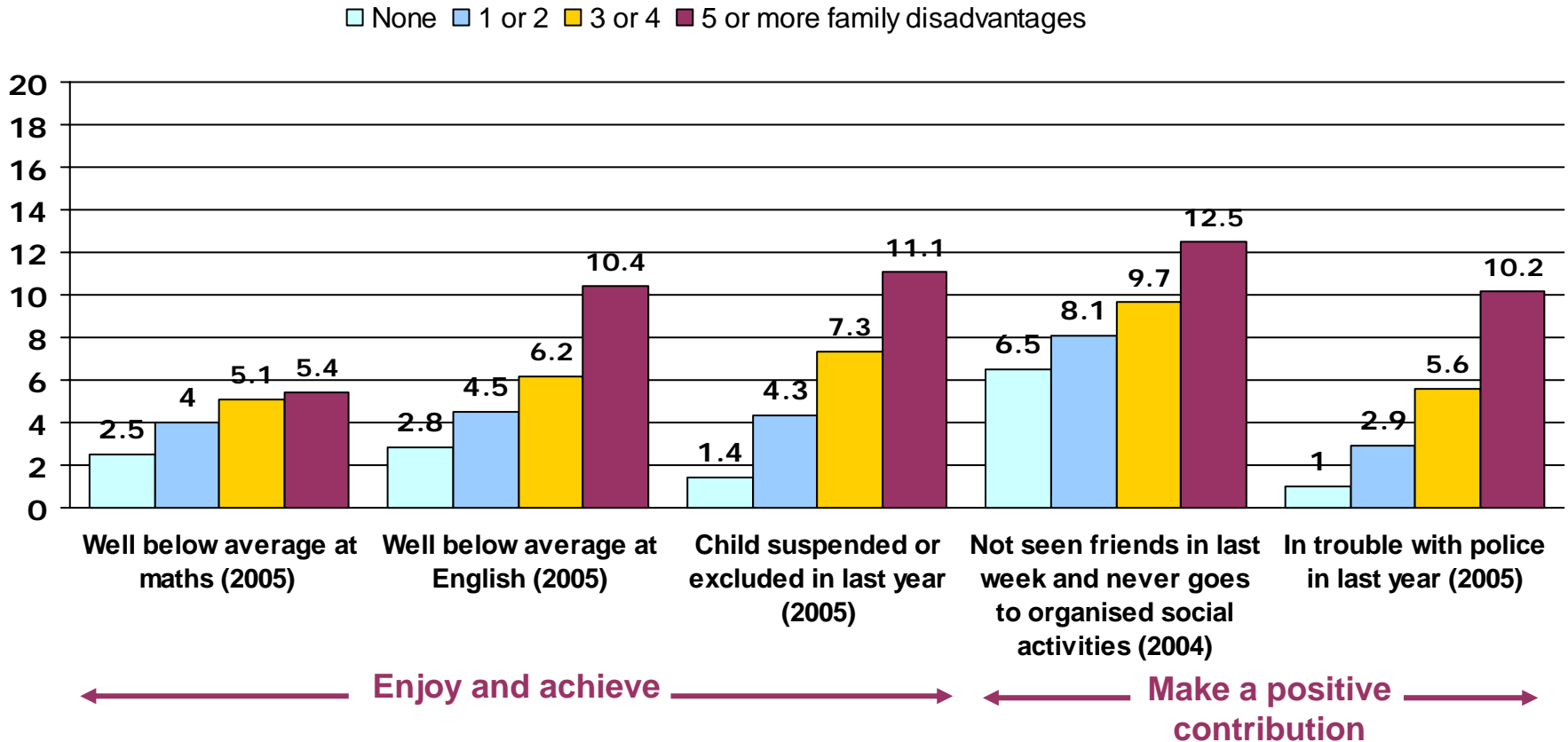
Wider family members and networks can also provide support and care

- For example, grandparents or other relatives frequently take care of children when parents experience problems. Adfam estimates over 250,000 grandparents are raising their grandchildren – often due to parental substance misuse.



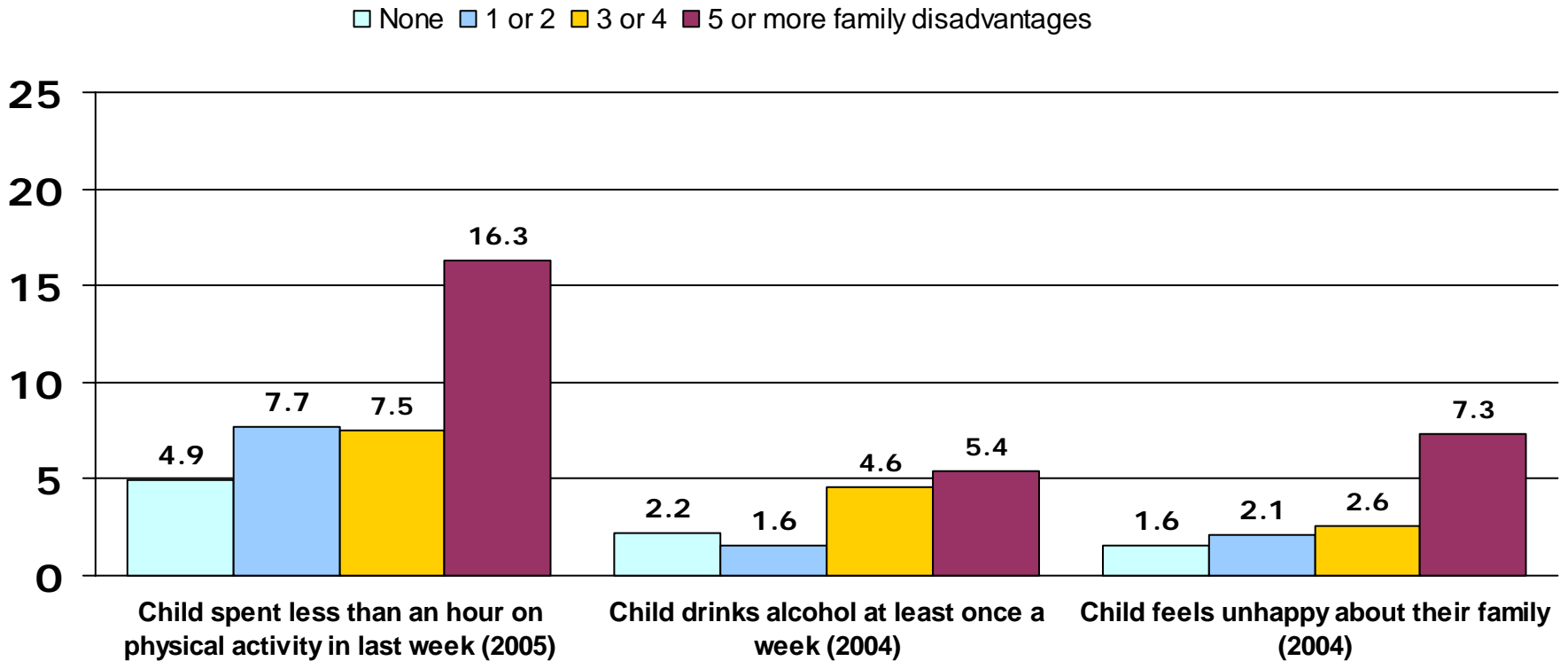
Outcomes for children:

Children from families facing multiple disadvantages are at greater risk of a range of negative outcomes



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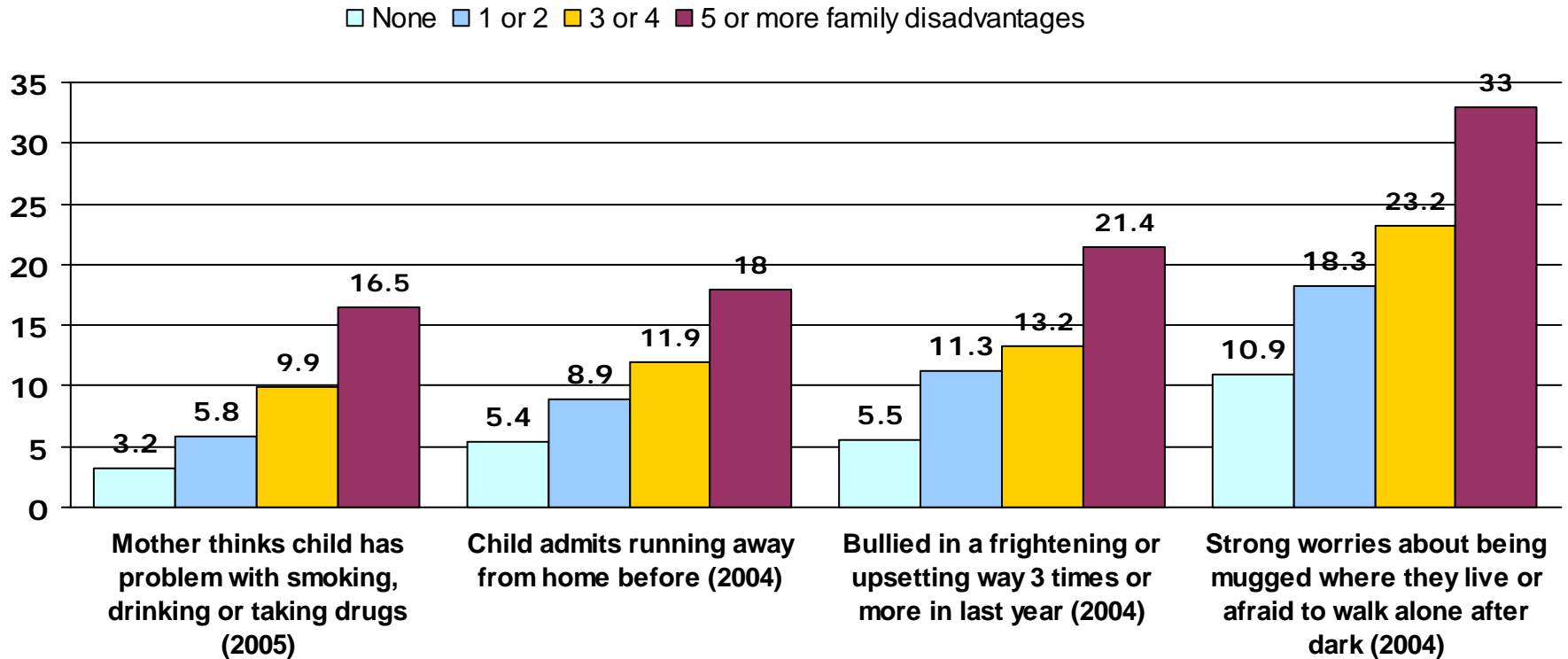


← Be Healthy →



Outcomes for children:

Children from families facing multiple disadvantages are at greater risk of a range of negative outcomes



← Stay safe →



Services and programmes

Services that 'think family' can improve outcomes

Why we need to 'think family'

- **To build on family strengths** – Family belief systems, family cohesion and coping strategies can all have a major impact on how effectively family members are able to respond to adversity.
- **The problems of the individual do not exist in isolation** – Understanding the whole family situation can be highly important in diagnosing the root causes of a problem and in developing appropriate responses.

Examples

- **Family Nurse Partnership** is a strengths based and goal orientated programme offered to disadvantaged families in the context of universal maternal and child health services from pregnancy until age 2.
- **Family Group Conferencing (FGC)** is a system of family-led decision-making. It draws on the resources of the extended family and empowers those involved to negotiate their own solutions to a problem.
- **Multi-systemic Therapy (MST)** is an intensive therapy that combines family and cognitive behavioural therapy strategies with a range of other support services. Central to the model is an acceptance that school, work, peers and the wider community are inter-connected systems that can influence the behaviour of individual young people and families
- **Family Intervention Projects (FIPs)** 'grip' some of the most difficult families in an intensive programme which both challenges and supports the whole family to achieve positive outcomes.



Systems reform

There are opportunities to improve outcomes by building on progress in systems reform

- **The systems of support around families at risk are inadequate because they:**
 - Are complex and highly fragmented
 - Lack a focus upon the most at risk families
 - Intervene too late
- **Three key areas of opportunity for systems change**
 - Extending the **logic of collaboration** from Every Child Matters beyond children's services to better coordinate all of the services working with families at risk
 - Ensuring the systems and services have the **right incentives** to focus on families at risk
 - Capitalising on the reach and expertise of the public and third sectors to **identify and intervene earlier** to support families better



Systems reform: getting the incentives right

Challenge

- Families with multiple problems are often perceived by services and staff as too challenging to work with (in a context of limited resources)
- Families often perceive services as ‘the enemy’ and so actively disengage
- Incentives to focus on families experiencing multiple and complex problems are weak at all levels in the system

Key opportunities for change

- At the national level, there is no shared framework of outcomes for adults and there are inadequate incentives to target the most challenging families.
- At the local level, Local Area Agreements and joint commissioning frameworks may be instrumental in shifting the local focus more clearly on to the needs of families at risk.
- At the frontline, individual workers need better training and incentives to engage proactively and work with at-risk families.



Systems reform: early identification and intervention

Challenge

- Intervention is crisis driven – meaning that problems have to get worse before they get better
- Services maintain high eligibility thresholds to protect resources – but crisis intervention is more costly than prevention

Key opportunities for change

- We are failing to capitalise on the reach of the public sector work force and the data and information within services
- There are key staff and agencies that could play a greater role in supporting families at risk eg. housing officers
- Information could be better used across the system to identify and target families at risk to halt the escalation of problems eg. Jobcentre Plus management information

