



Keeping contact between parents and children in care

Strengthening connections between children in care and their parents

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kContact Research Partners

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VICTORIA	ACT	NSW
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • University of Melbourne • Bapcare • Berry Street • CAFS Ballarat • Centre for Excellence in Child and Family Welfare • MacKillop Family Services • Ozchild • Salvation Army Westcare • Wesley Mission Victoria 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Institute of Child Protection Studies (ACU) • Barnardos ACT • Marymead Child and Family Centre • ACT Community Services Directorate 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Anglicare • Care South • Life without Barriers • Uniting Care • NSW Department of Family and Community Services

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Research Fellows: Dr Margaret Kertesz, (UMelb), Dr Tracey Bullen (ACU), Dr Aino Suomi (ACU)

Overview of kContact in ACT & Vic

Dates	Activity
2014	Literature Review & Consultations
April-Oct 2015	Baseline interviews – intervention and comparison sites
October 2015 – April 2016	Intervention – intervention sites Business as usual – comparison sites
Feb – Oct 2016	Follow up interviews – intervention and comparison sites
2014-2016	Children’s Study ACT (PhD project)
2016	Patterns of Contact Mapping

191 children in study sample (ACT & Vic)

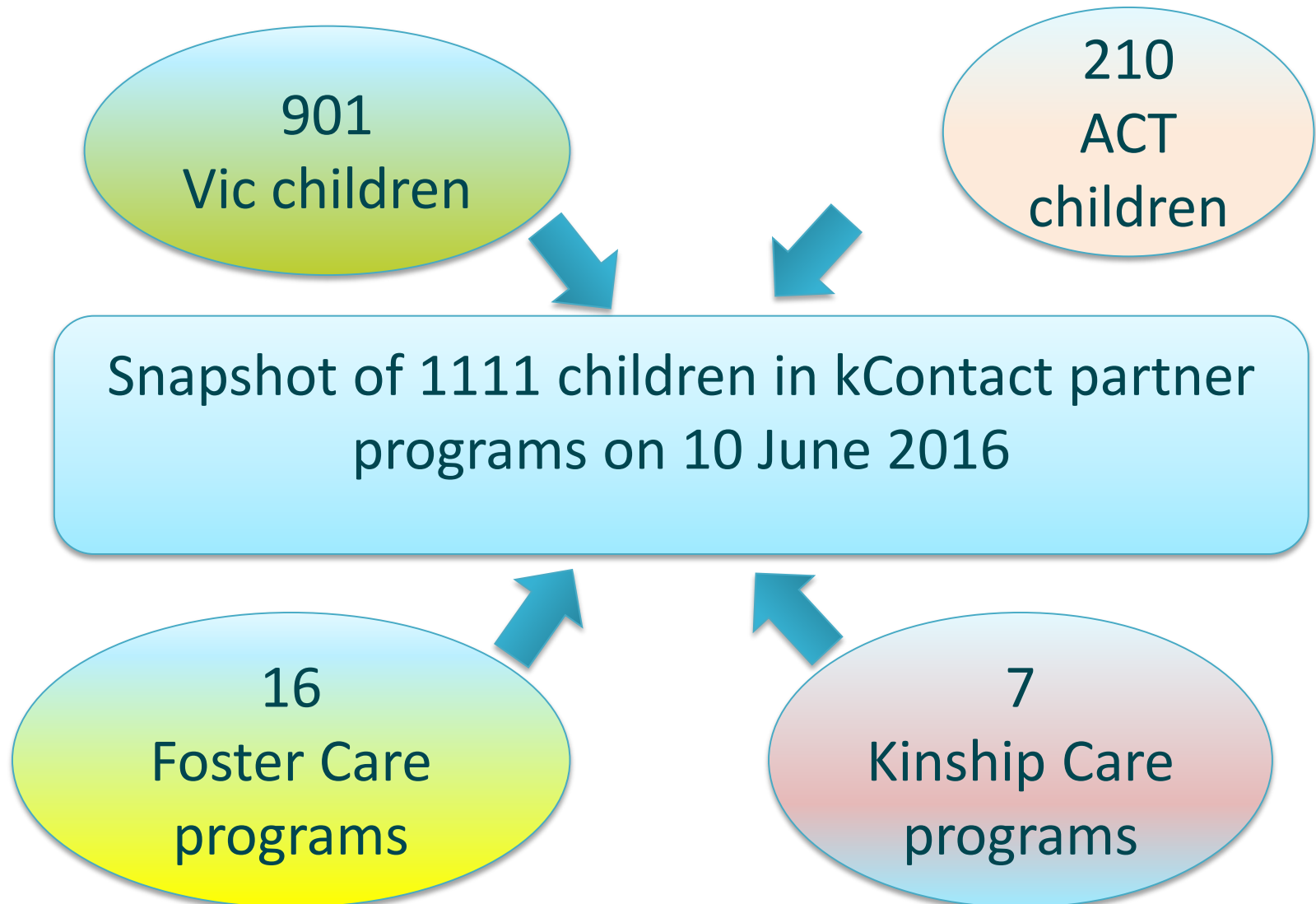
Sample Criteria:

- 0-14 years
- Foster care or Kinship Care
- Long-term care
- Supervised Contact arranged by a kContact partner

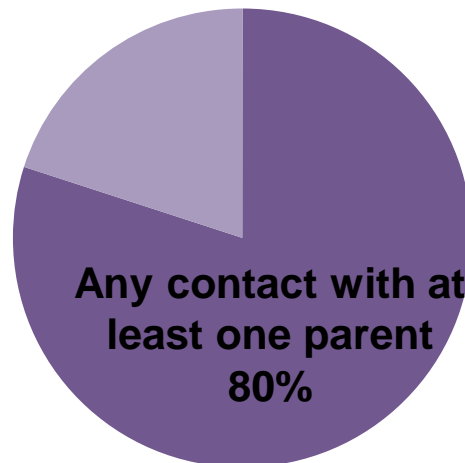
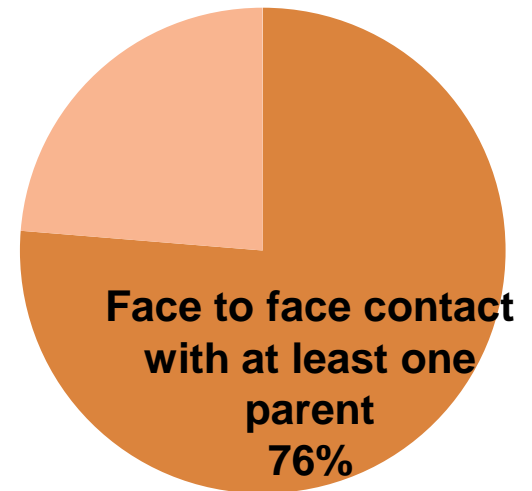
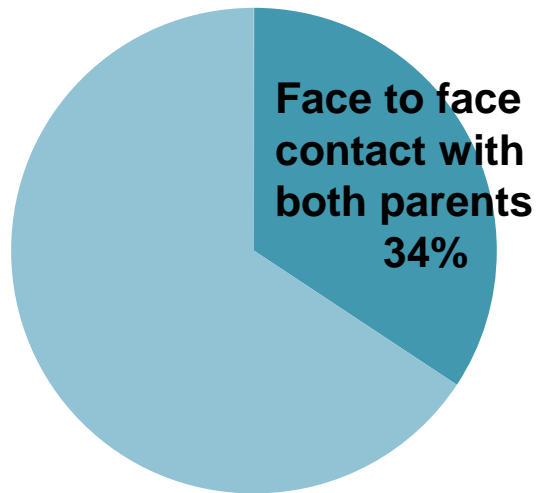
Interviews with children's:

- 68 Parents
- 100 Carers
- 88 Workers involved in contact arrangements

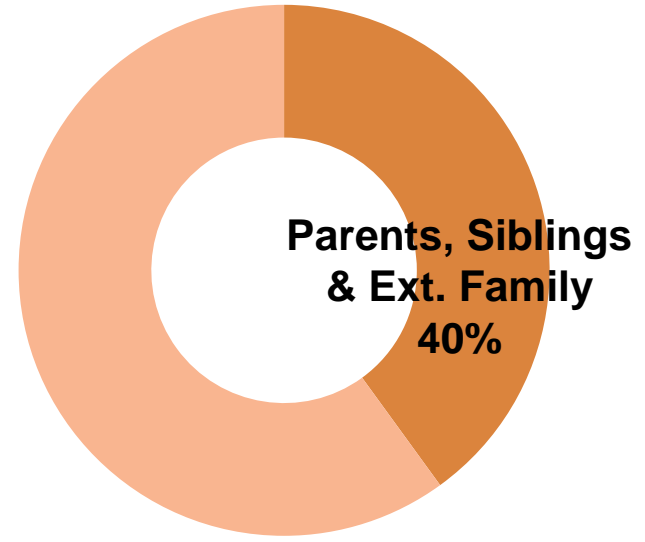
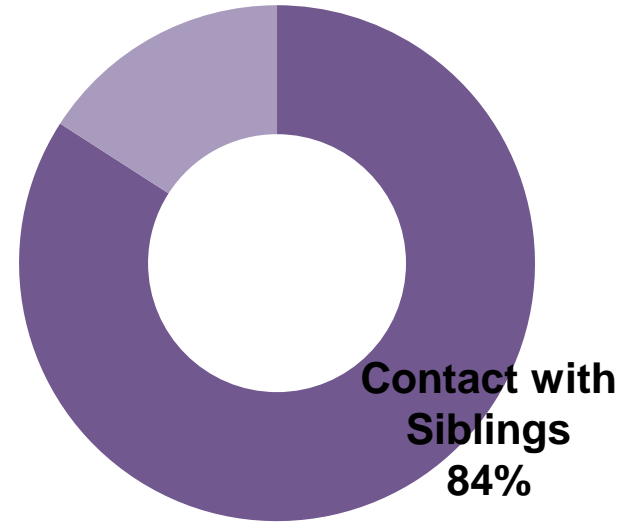
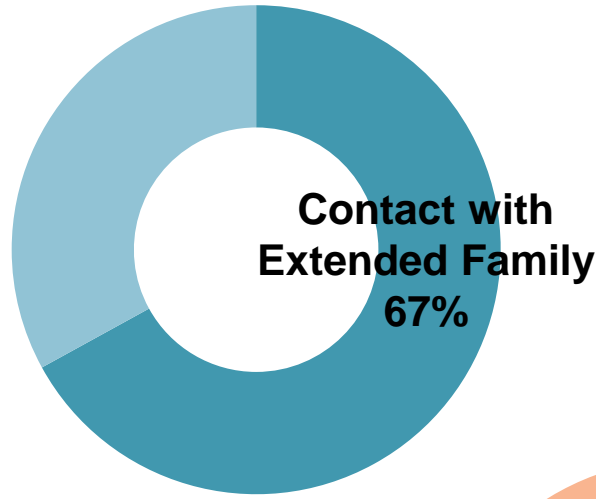
Patterns of Contact Mapping



The good news about contact with parents



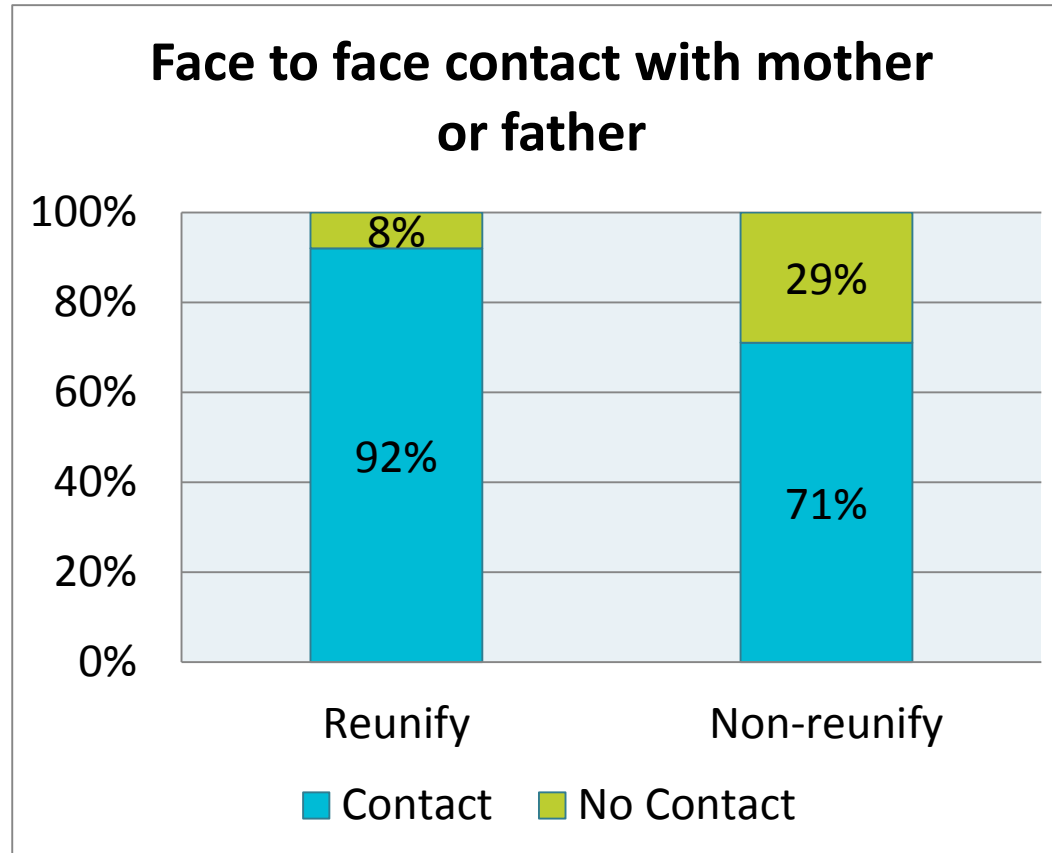
The good news about contact with family



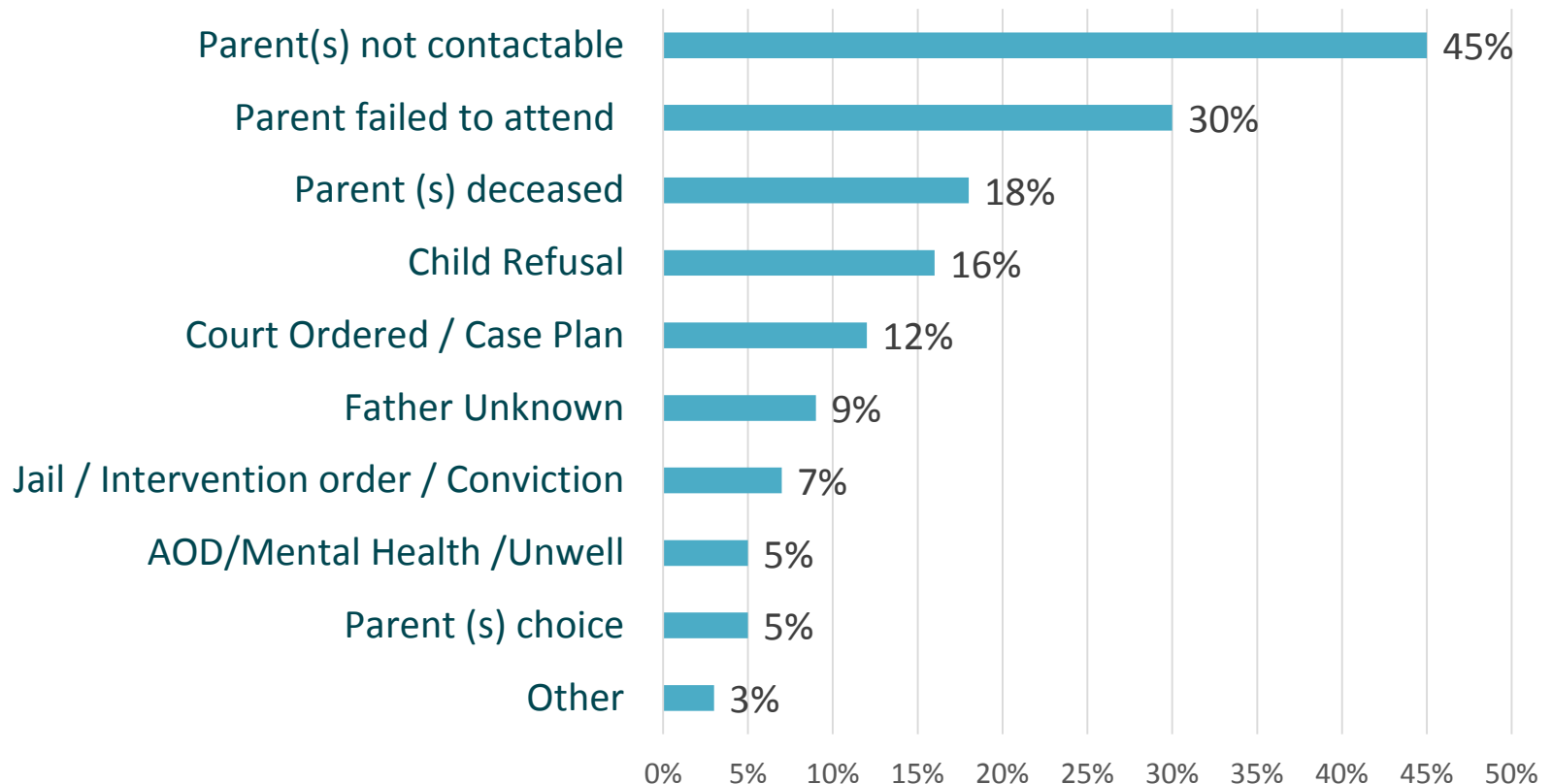
How many children have had no contact with family in 12 months?

- 1 in 5 – no contact with either parent
- 1 in 6 – no contact with any siblings
- 1 in 11 – no contact with parents or siblings
- 1 in 30 – no contact with parents, siblings or extended family

Change in case plan



Why have children had no contact with their parents?



Some thoughts about contact with parents



What was a good contact visit? – the adult point of view

Positive interactions
between everyone

The children
were happy

Fun activities

Children's perspectives

Rhys Thorpe: Children's Study - Rhys.Thorpe@acu.edu.au

- Children liked:
 - ★ “Being with” family
 - ★ Doing fun activities together, not just talking
- Children didn't like it when:
 - ★ there was so much activity that they felt unseen or left out
 - ★ Mum or Dad did not join in
- Unsafe / Difficult visits – fun activities are crucial

A word about Kinship Care



Purpose of contact

To support, maintain and enhance the relationship between children in care and their parents (and family)

Reunification

Assist parents to build skills

Assess & support reunification

Non-reunification

Maintain connections with family

Promote cultural & spiritual identity

Every family is individual.

Consider:

- The Purpose of contact
- Parental history / presentation / needs
- Children's choices
- Views about supervision
- Views about presence of Foster carers
- Need for professional support v. the 'natural environment

A focus on family connections

Letters / Social
Media

Photos

Contact

Update parents
about their children
during periods of no
contact

Life Story
Work

Family
History

Connections
with extended
family



kContact website:

<http://www.acu.edu.au/icps-kcontact>

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