



UNIVERSITY of
DENVER

COLORADO EVALUATION
AND ACTION LAB

Working Together: The Impact of Denver’s Multidisciplinary Response Team (MDT) on Caregiver Engagement and Child Outcomes following Child Abuse and Neglect

Following child abuse or neglect reports to law enforcement, children and their families can become involved in investigations that span multiple government systems including child welfare, criminal justice, and health agencies. In the face of this complex investigative process, caregivers may become confused, intimidated, or alienated, which can decrease engagement and negatively affect child outcomes. Meeting with a multidisciplinary team (MDT) following the report may help mitigate these challenges for caregivers. MDTs are comprised of representatives from Child Welfare, the Police Department, and the Denver Health Family Crisis Clinic who work to ensure that caregivers understand the investigation process and can participate fully in efforts to meet their children’s needs to prevent out-of-home placements.

Little research is available on the efficacy of MDTs as a strategy to increase caregiver engagement, reduce out-of-home placements, and improve child and family outcomes. This project will examine variation in program referral to the MDT using administrative data and propose a strategy for leveraging that variation to design a causal evaluation of MDT efficacy. Surveys of caregiver engagement along with the results of a causal evaluation of MDT will inform programmatic decisions in the City of Denver. The results will also be positioned to inform state-level policy decisions around the expansion of Denver’s approach to MDT across the state.

Researchers:

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