

University of Minnesota  
Center for Advanced Studies in Child Welfare

# New Directions for Child Welfare in the New Decade: Messages from Policy and Practice

## Creating an Agenda for the New Decade: A Theory for Policy and Practice

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**ChapinHall** at the University of Chicago  
Policy research that benefits children, families, and their communities

# Can We Change the Mandate?

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Safety

Permanency

Well-being  
Education  
Behavioral Health

# Main Challenge in the Next Decade

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- Integrate social epidemiology of maltreatment and service utilization into the knowledge base
- Public health impact and going to scale
- Illustrate the point as follows:
  - Social structural context and reunification
  - Disparity
  - Developmental effects in placement utilization and outcomes

# Core Theoretical Questions

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- Models of individual change
  - What is the path of individual change?
    - What factors are associated with reunification?
    - How are interventions related to service/developmental trajectories?
- Models of population dynamics
  - How do populations change?
    - Is the population getting bigger or smaller?
    - How are these trends related to the use of evidence based interventions?
- Models of system dynamics
  - How do systems change
    - How is the size of the caseload related to bed capacity?
    - Are there system interventions?
- How are these levels related to each other?

# Social Epidemiology

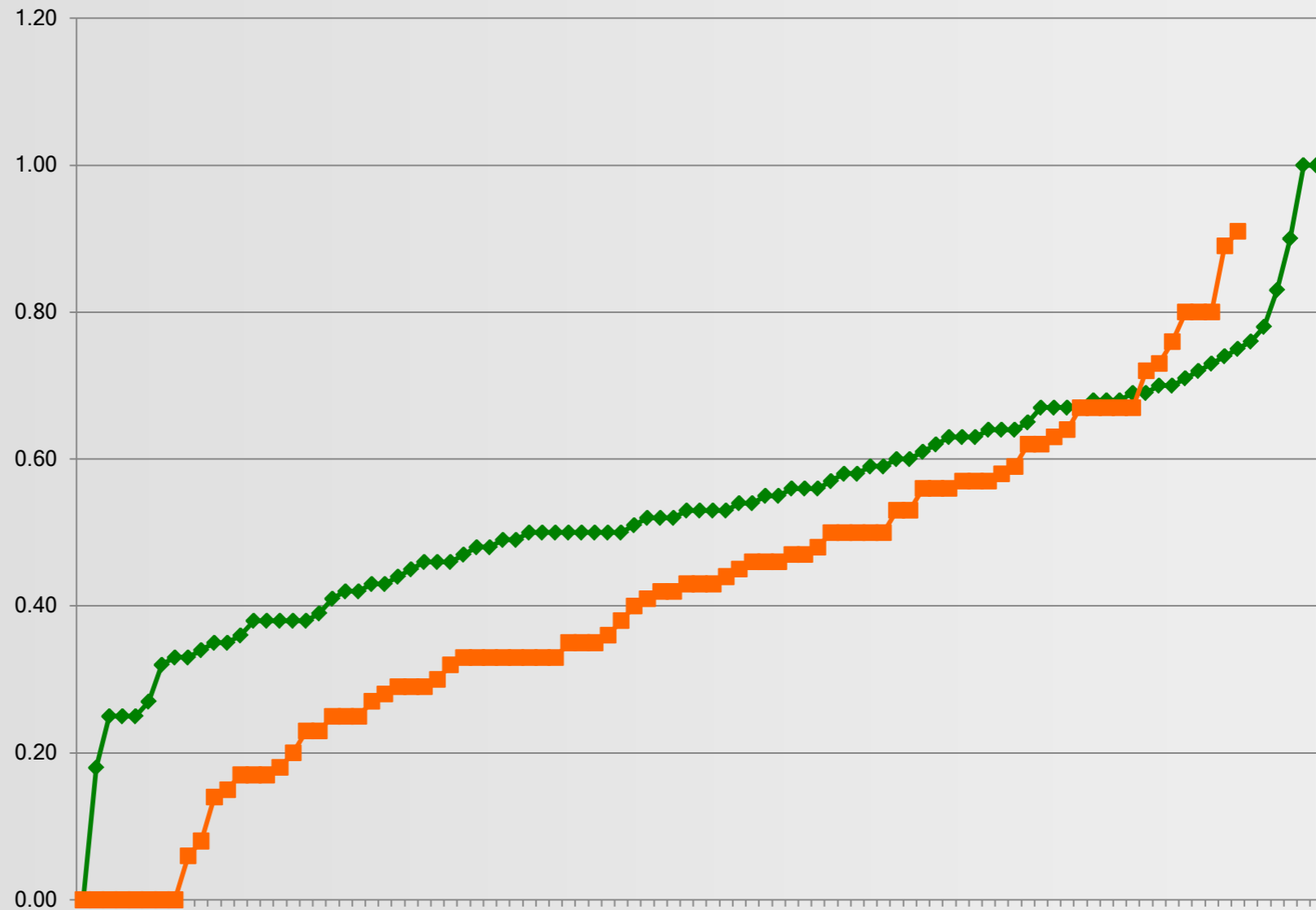
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- What is the role of context with respect to reunification?
  - What is the variation in reunification rates?
  - Are other attributes of place related to reunification

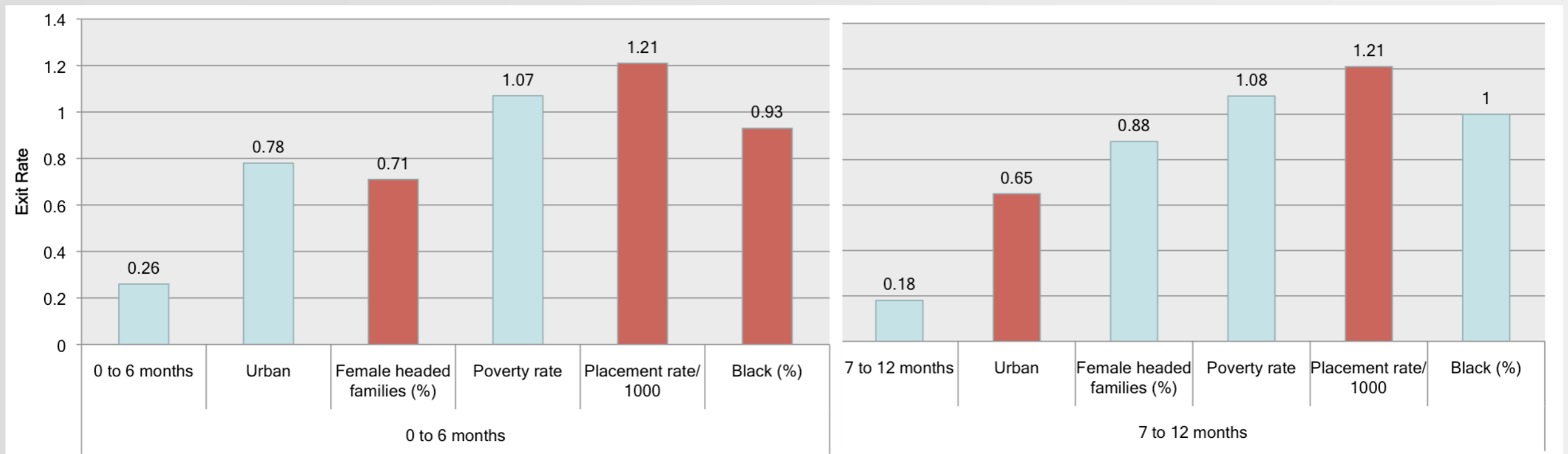
# Reunification at the County Level

Percent Reunified in 2 Years (2 states)



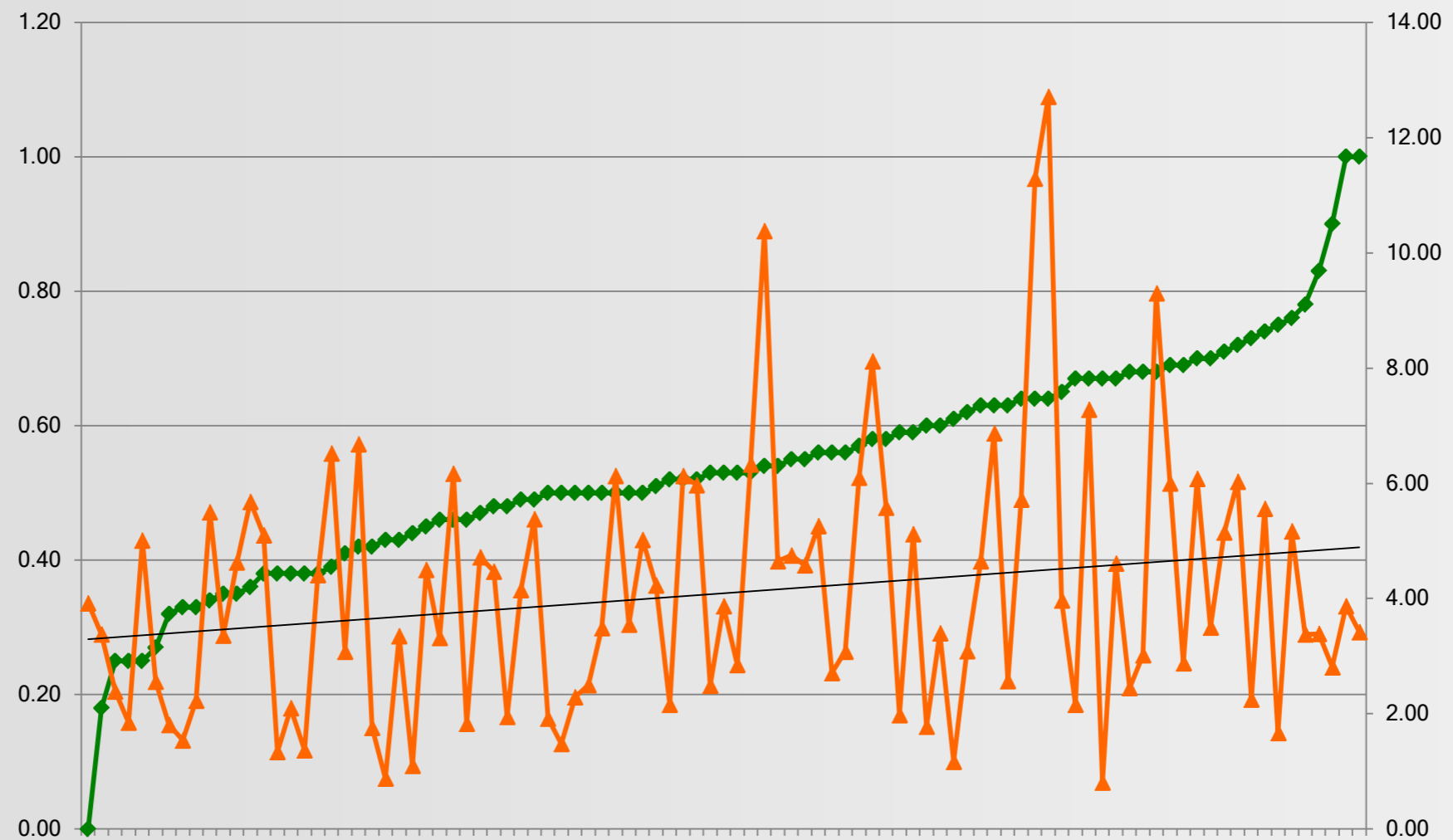
# Reunification in Social Structural Context

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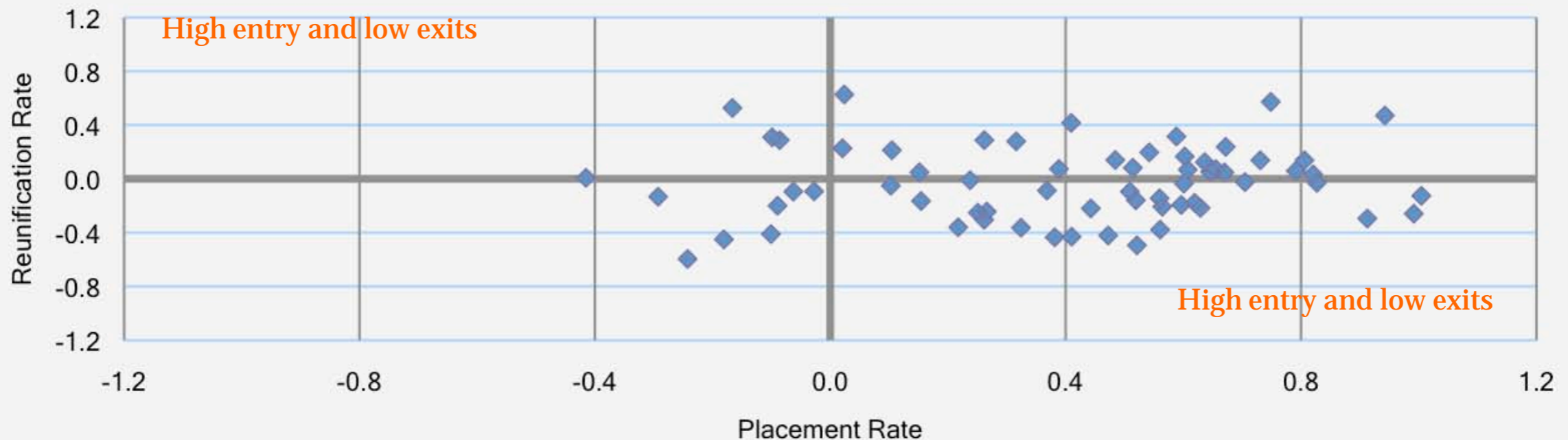
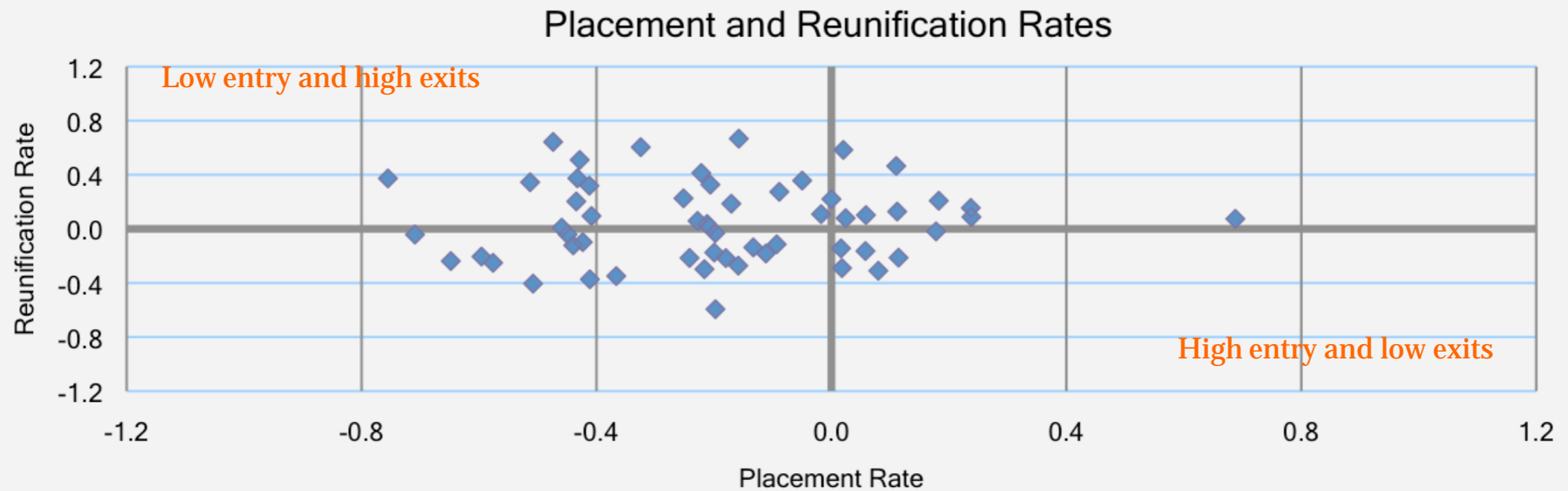
# Reunification and Placement

Percent Reunified in 2 Years (2 states)



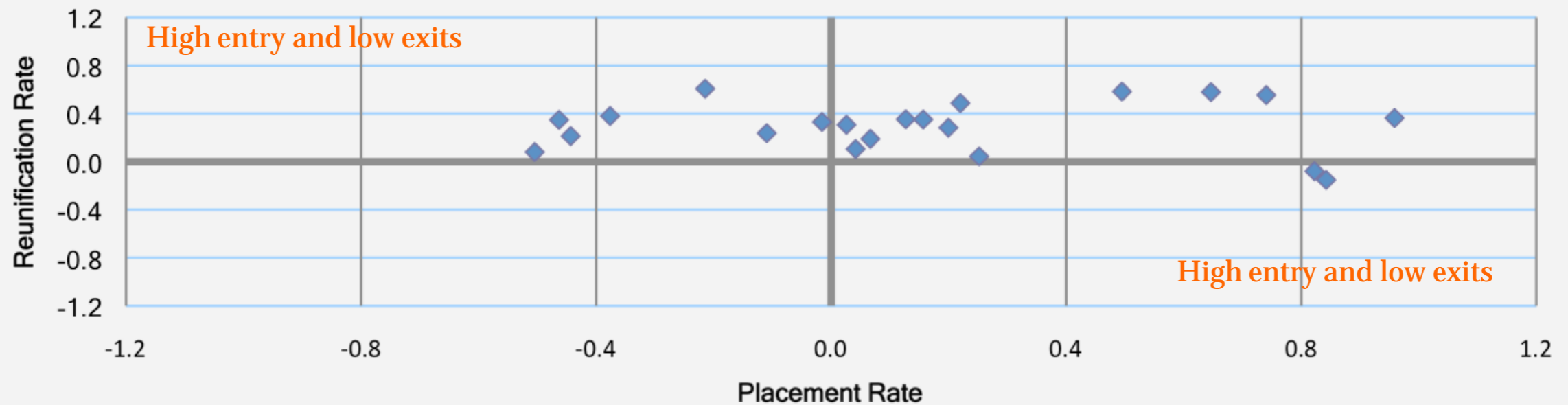
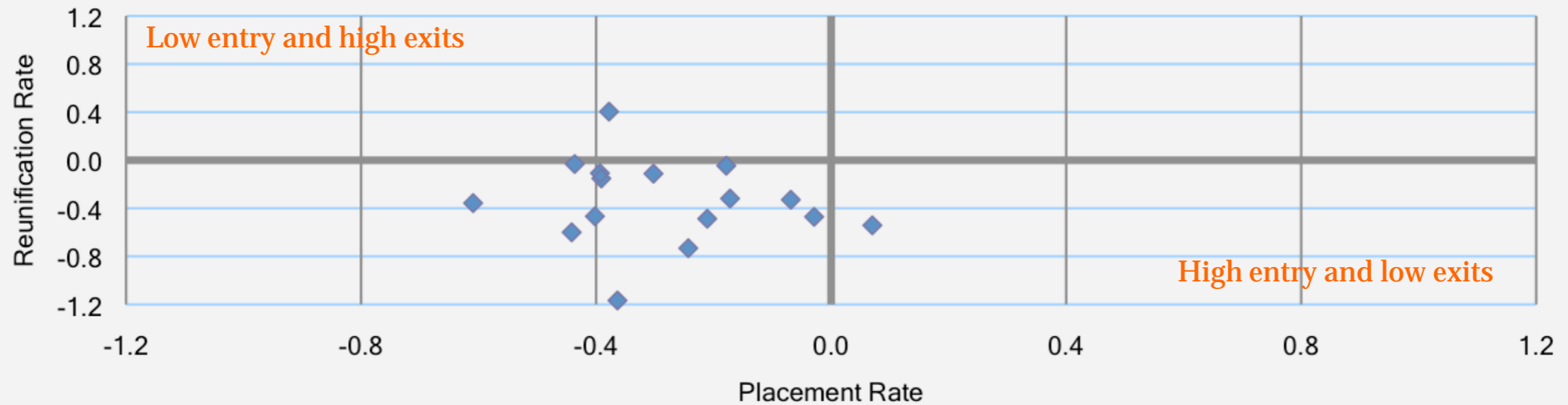


# System Dynamics: Patterns Identify Targets of Policy



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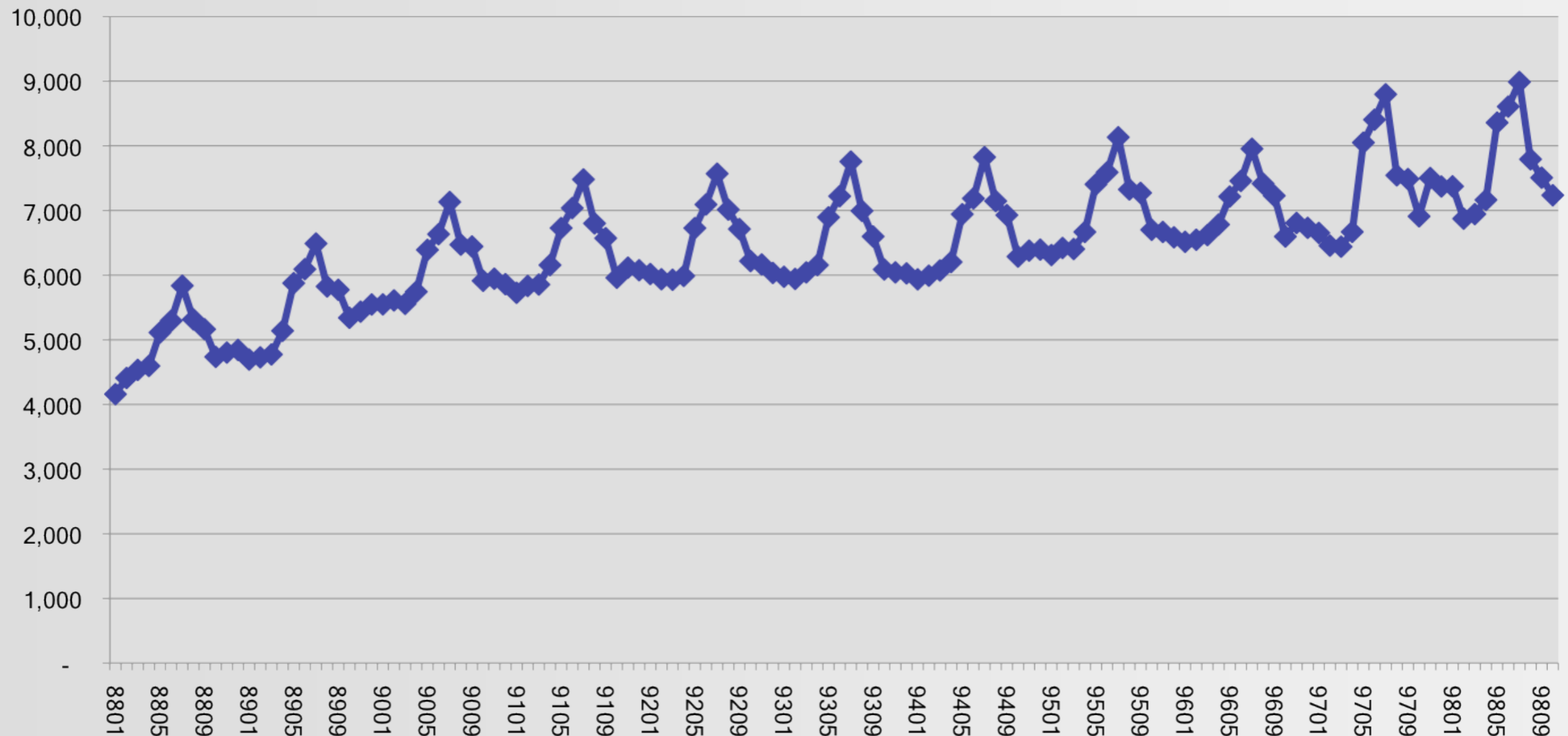
Adjusted Placement and Reunification Rates



# System Dynamics: Patterns Identify Targets of Policy

Number of children leaving out-of-home care  
(by month)

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# Disparity

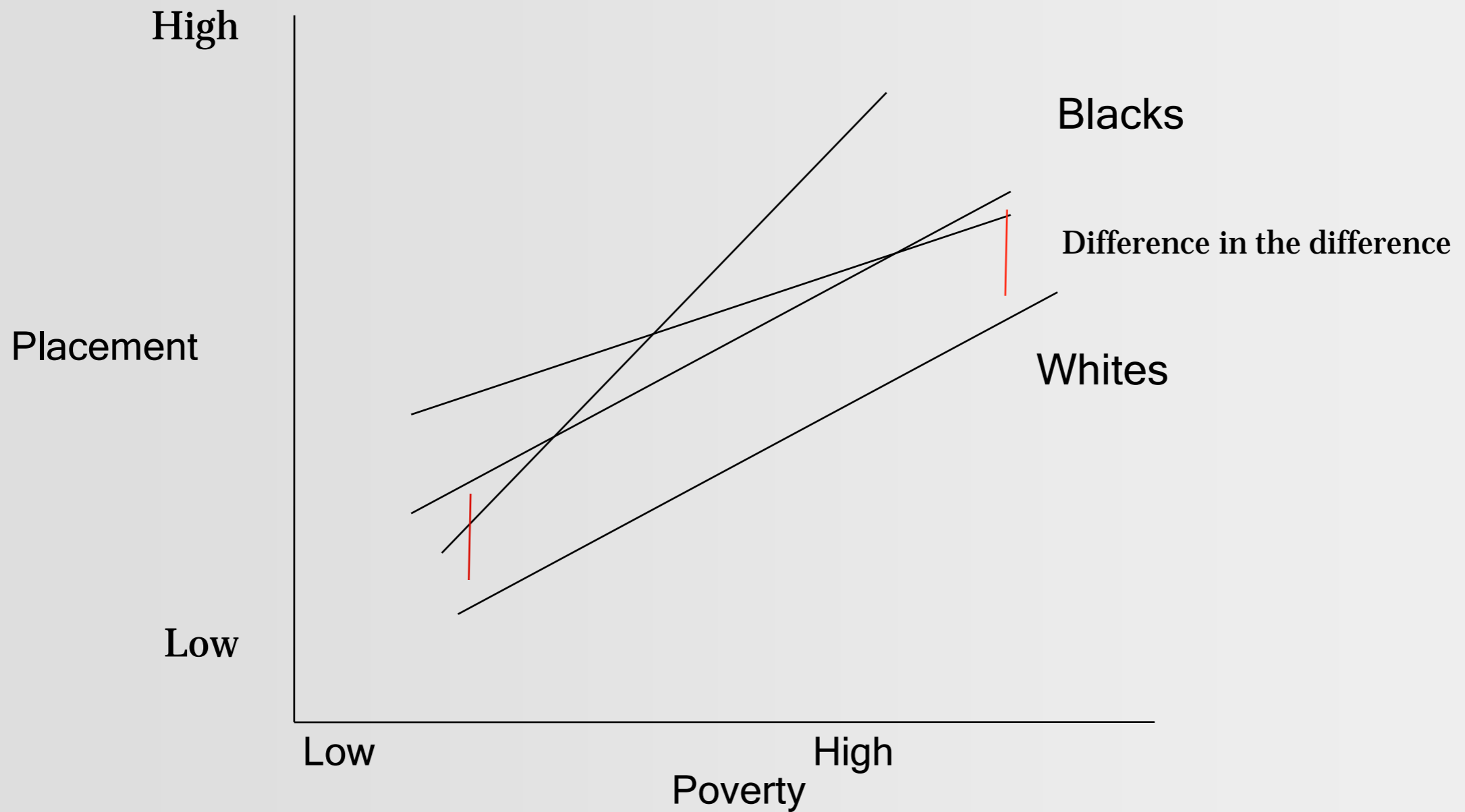
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- Theory of ecological dissimilarity
  - Shaw and McKay (1943)
  - Communities have a differential capacity to organize around the task of raising children
  - Social organization/social capital/collective efficacy
  - Poor African Americans are much more likely to reside in the midst of poverty than poor whites

# POVERTY AND PLACEMENT

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# DISPARITY & SOCIAL STRUCTURE

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Quartiles	Black Residents	Child Poverty	Female-Headed Households	Less than High School	Moved in the Last Year
1 (low)	3.2	4.4	3.8	4.4	2.9
2	3.0	2.7	2.6	3.0	2.7
3	2.8	2.2	2.5	2.1	2.8
4 (high)	2.1	1.9	2.3	1.7	2.7
Difference Š low to high	51%	133%	65%	159%	6%

# PLACEMENT, DISPARITY, AND SOCIAL STRUCTURE

## Placement Rate

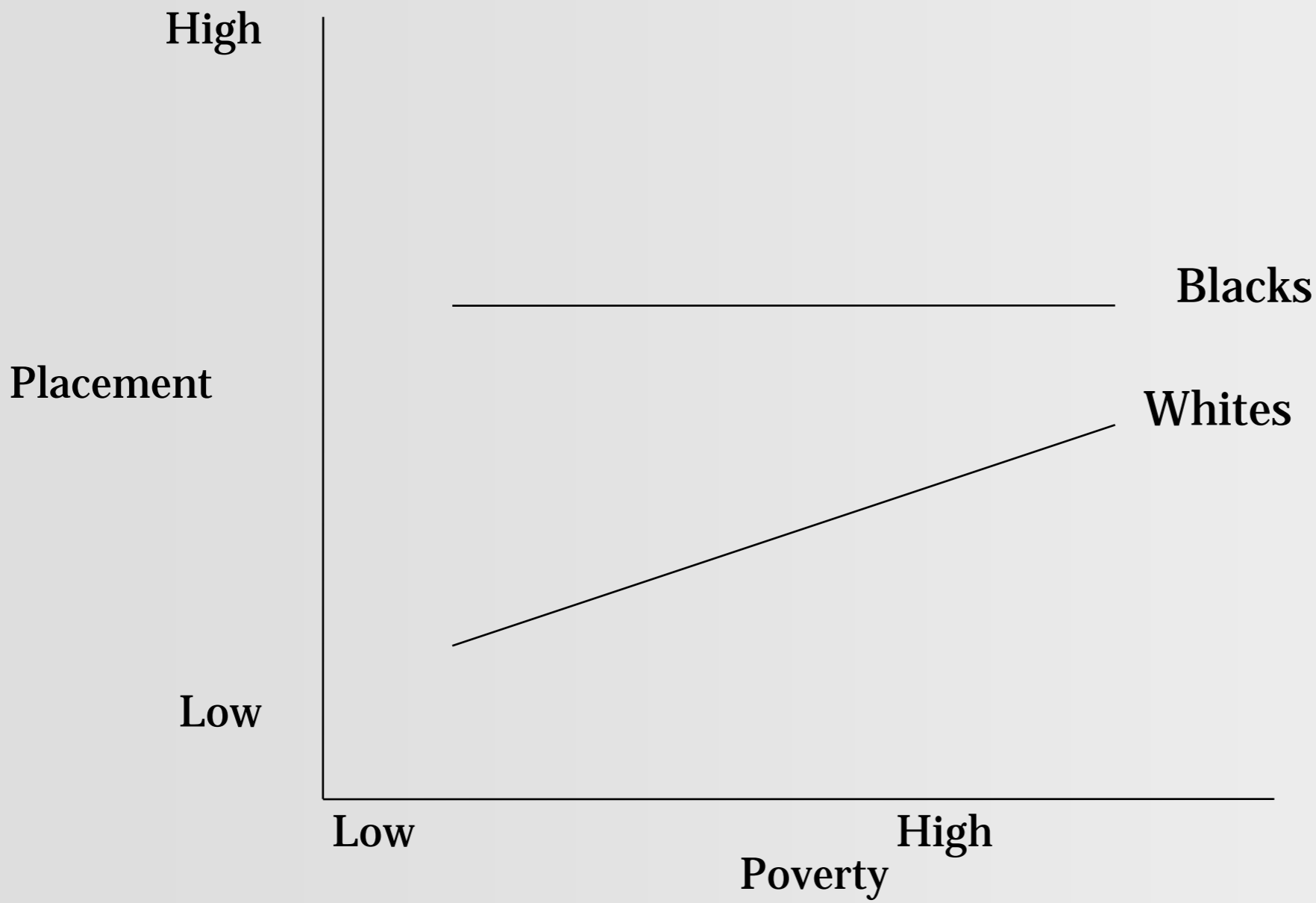
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Population Characteristic	Placement Rate			
	Overall	Black	White	Disparity
Black Residents	-0.05	-0.11	-0.17	-0.10
Child Poverty	→ 0.21	-0.04	0.17	-0.09
Black	0.04	-0.08	-0.01	-0.14
White	0.33	0.04	0.40	-0.04
Single, Female-Headed Households	→ 0.10	-0.11	-0.04	-0.13
Black	0.05	-0.05	-0.03	-0.10
White	0.30	-0.02	0.31	-0.08
Less Than High School	→ 0.22	-0.03	0.24	-0.09
Black	0.03	-0.06	0.02	-0.07
White	0.28	0.01	0.33	-0.07

Zero order correlations

# POVERTY AND PLACEMENT

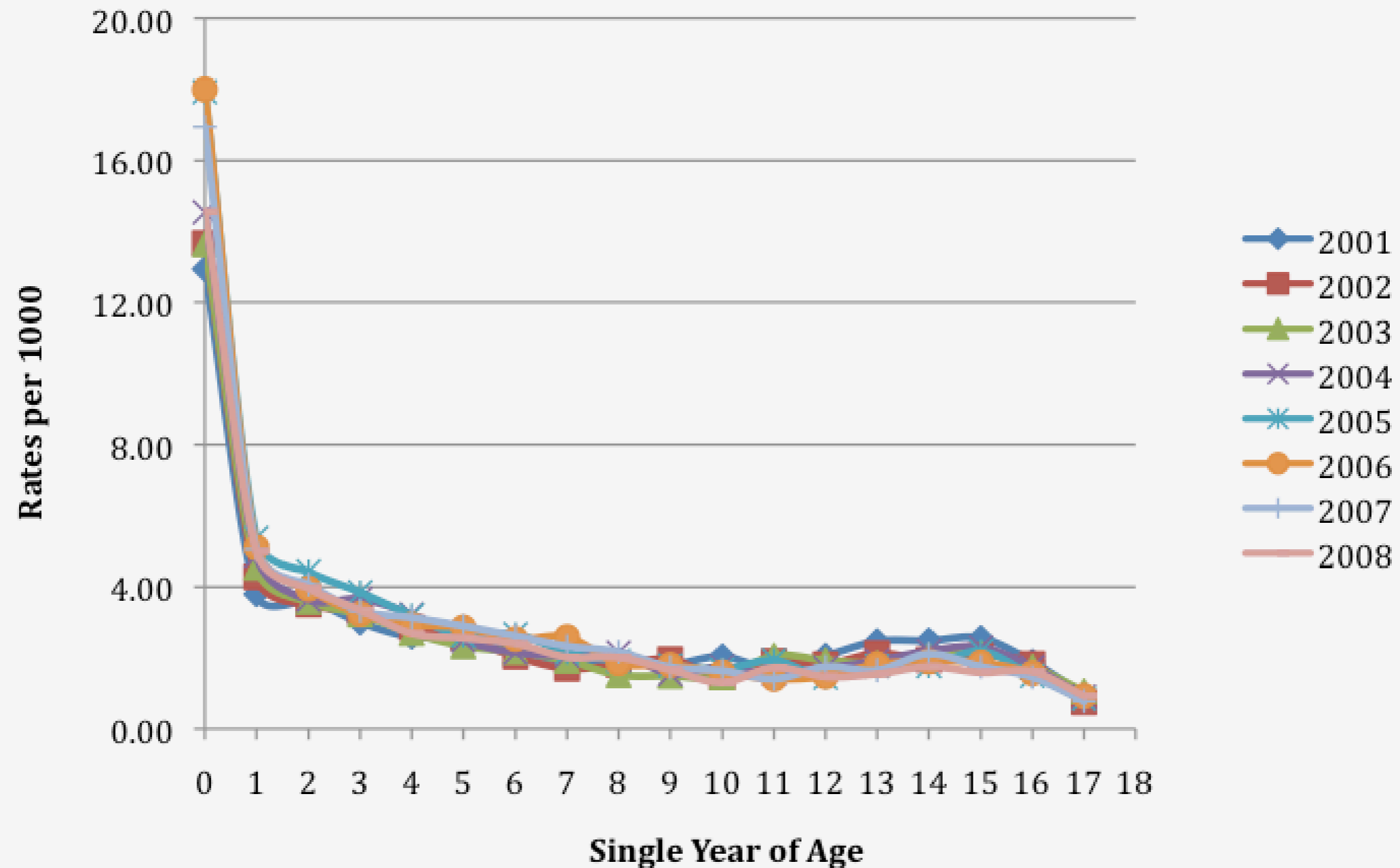
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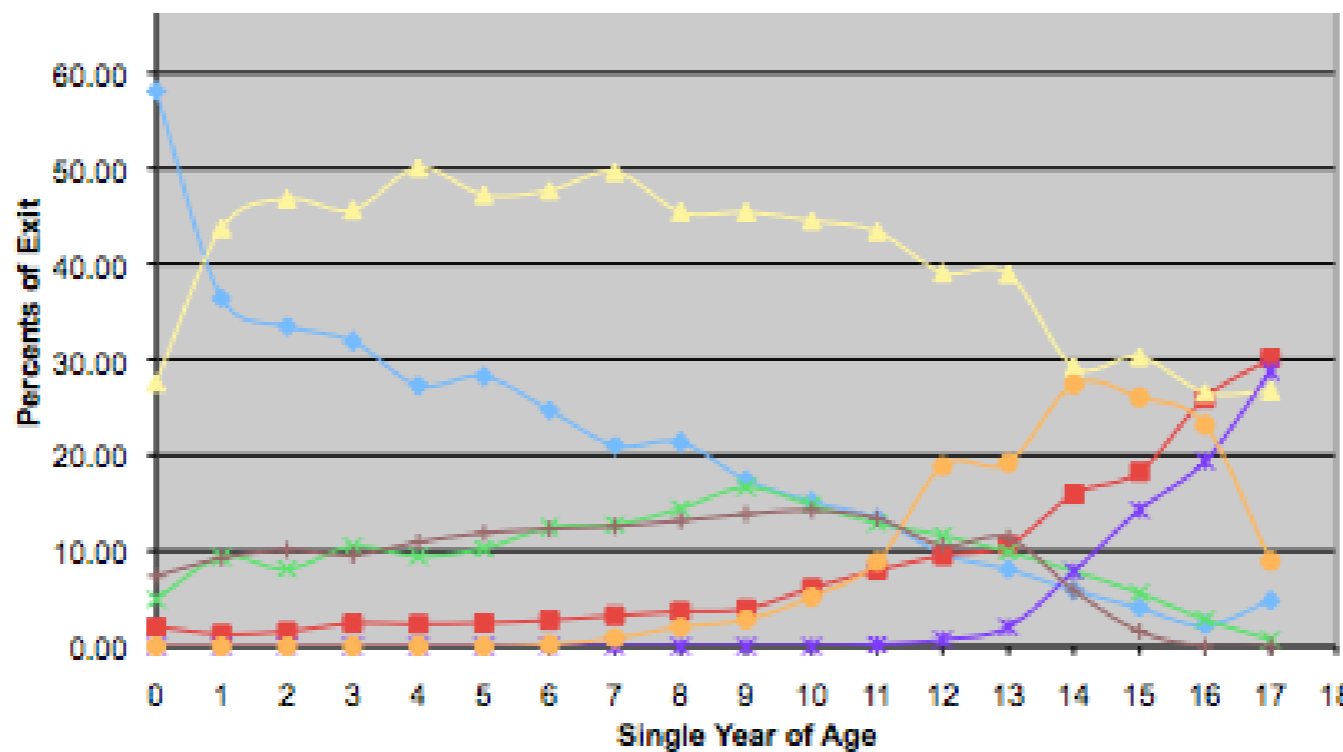
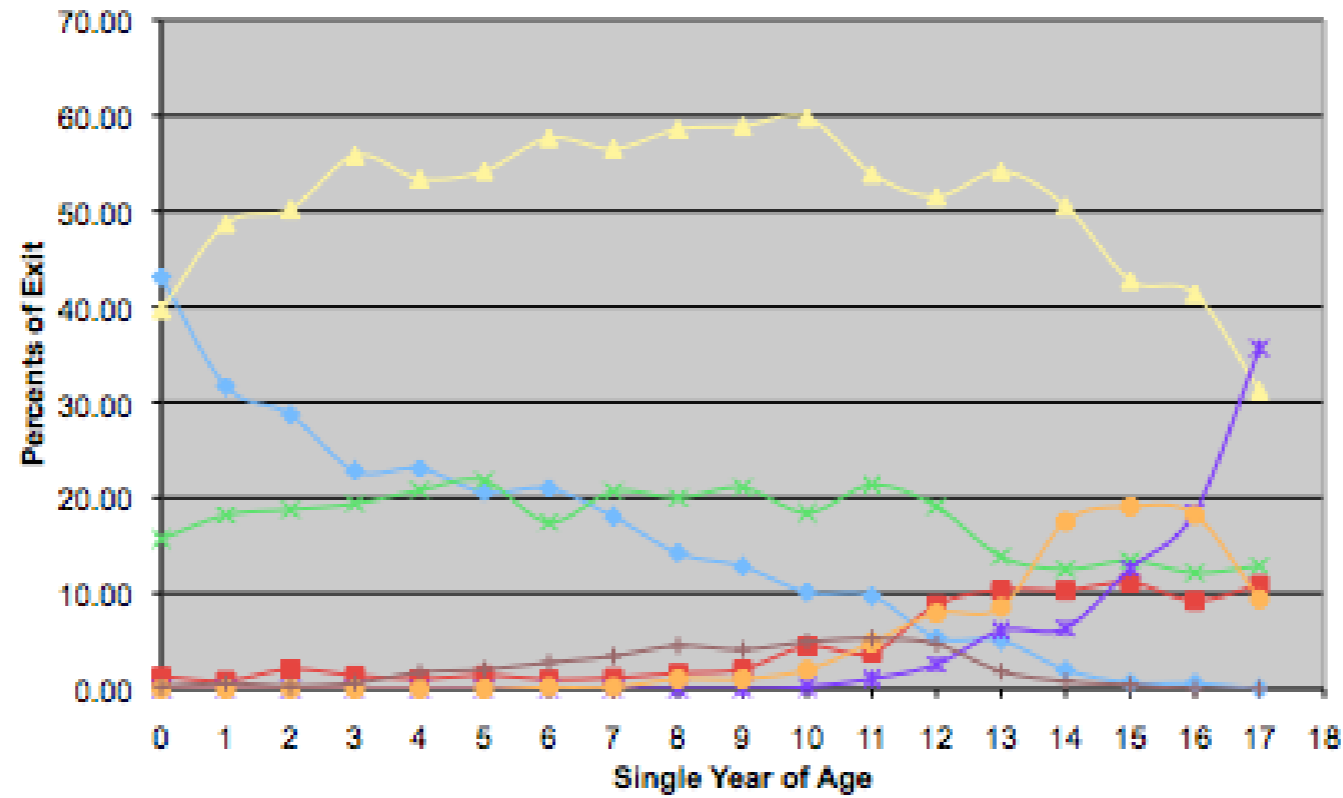
# Age and Entry into Placement

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# Age and Outcomes

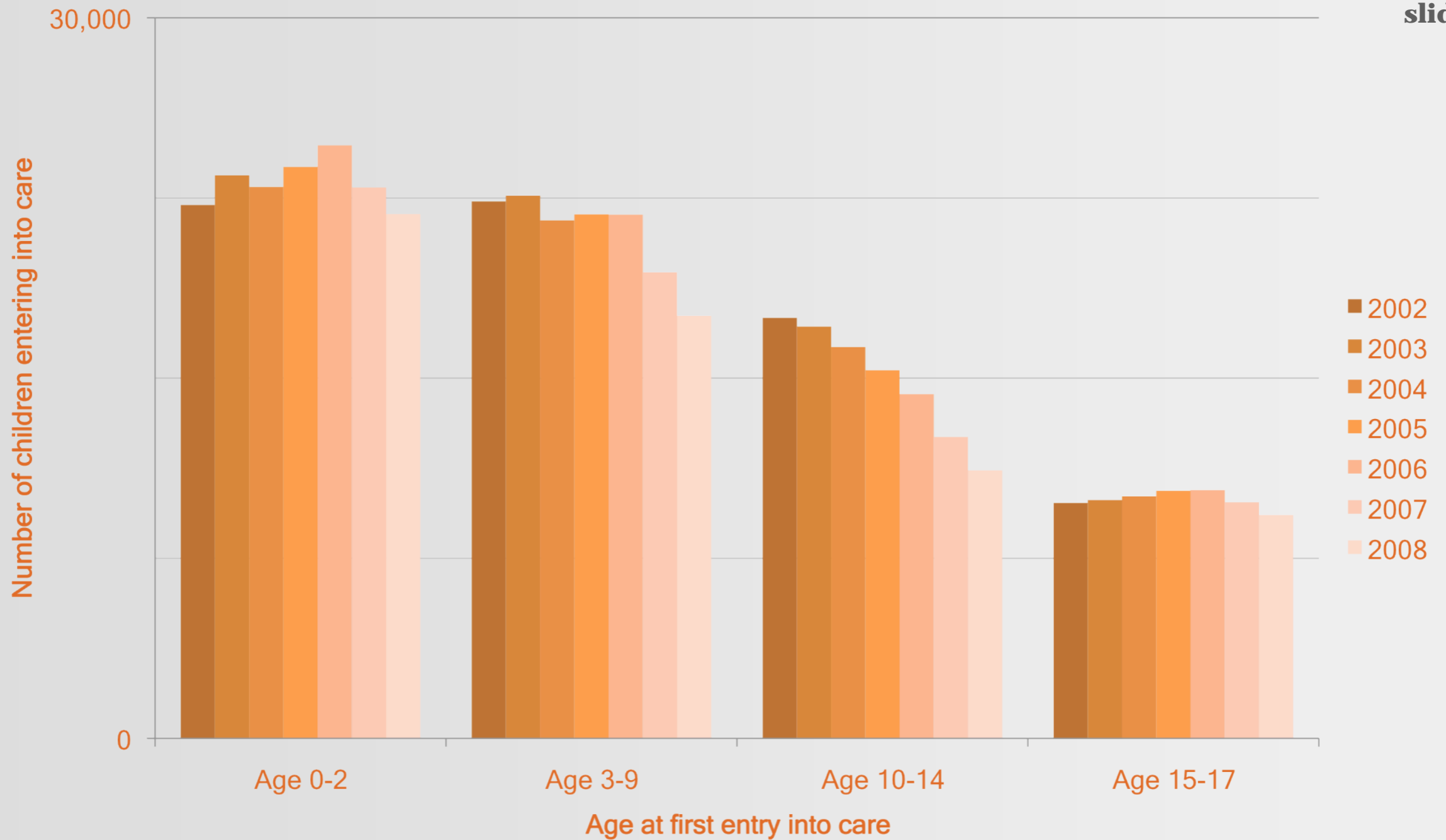
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# Population Dynamics

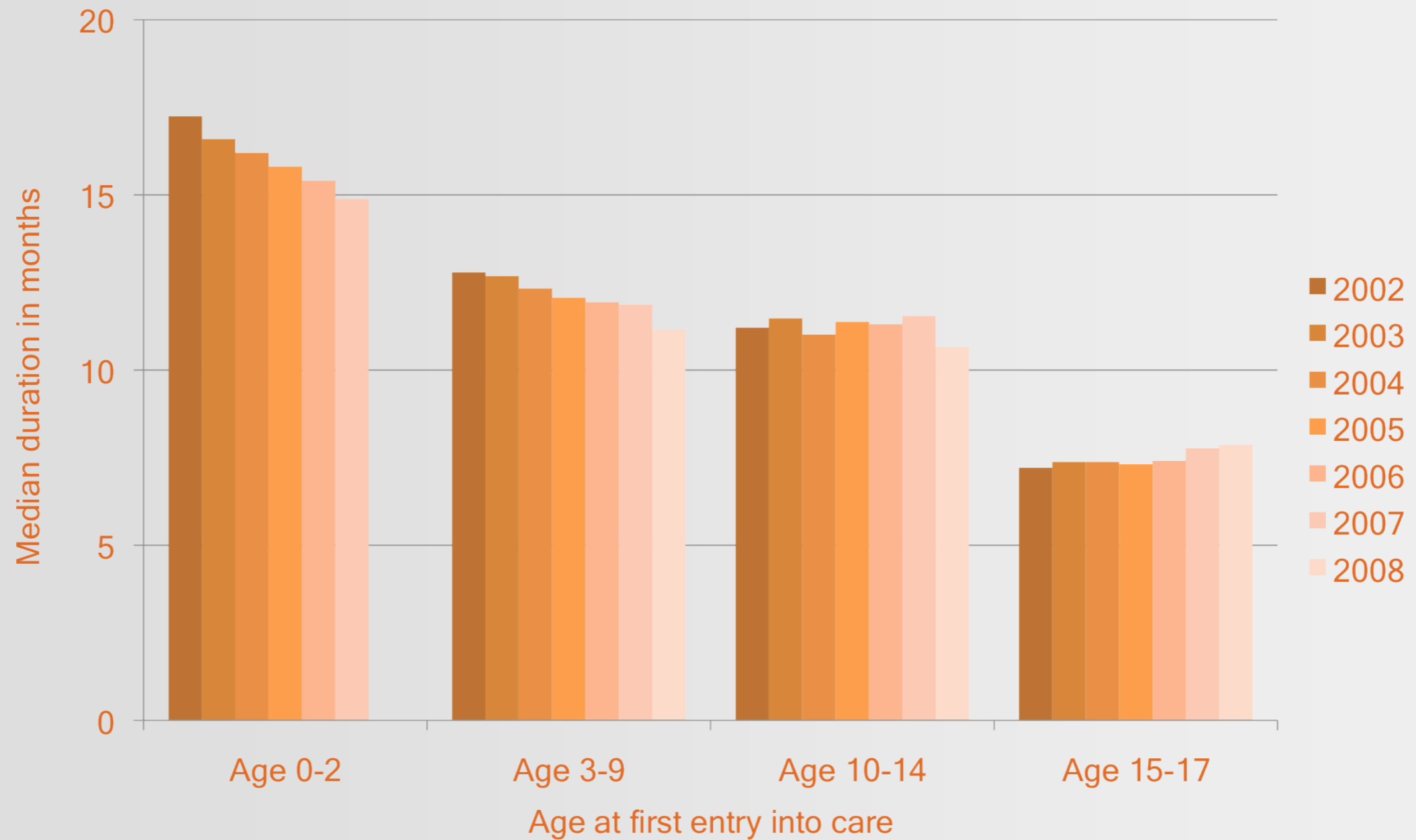
- Getting better at seeing the past
- What about looking forward to see the future?

# Admission Trends

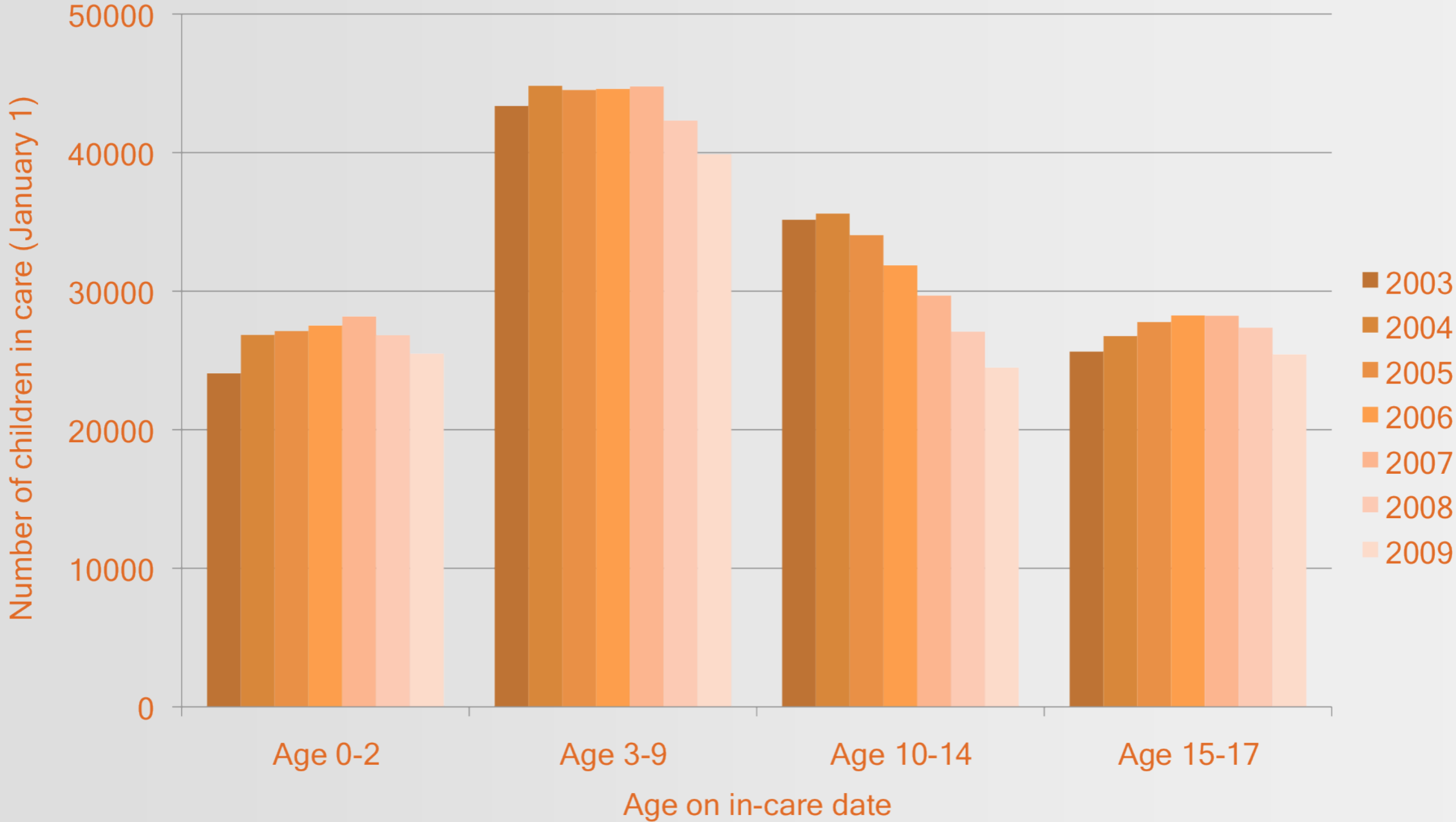


# Length of Time in Care

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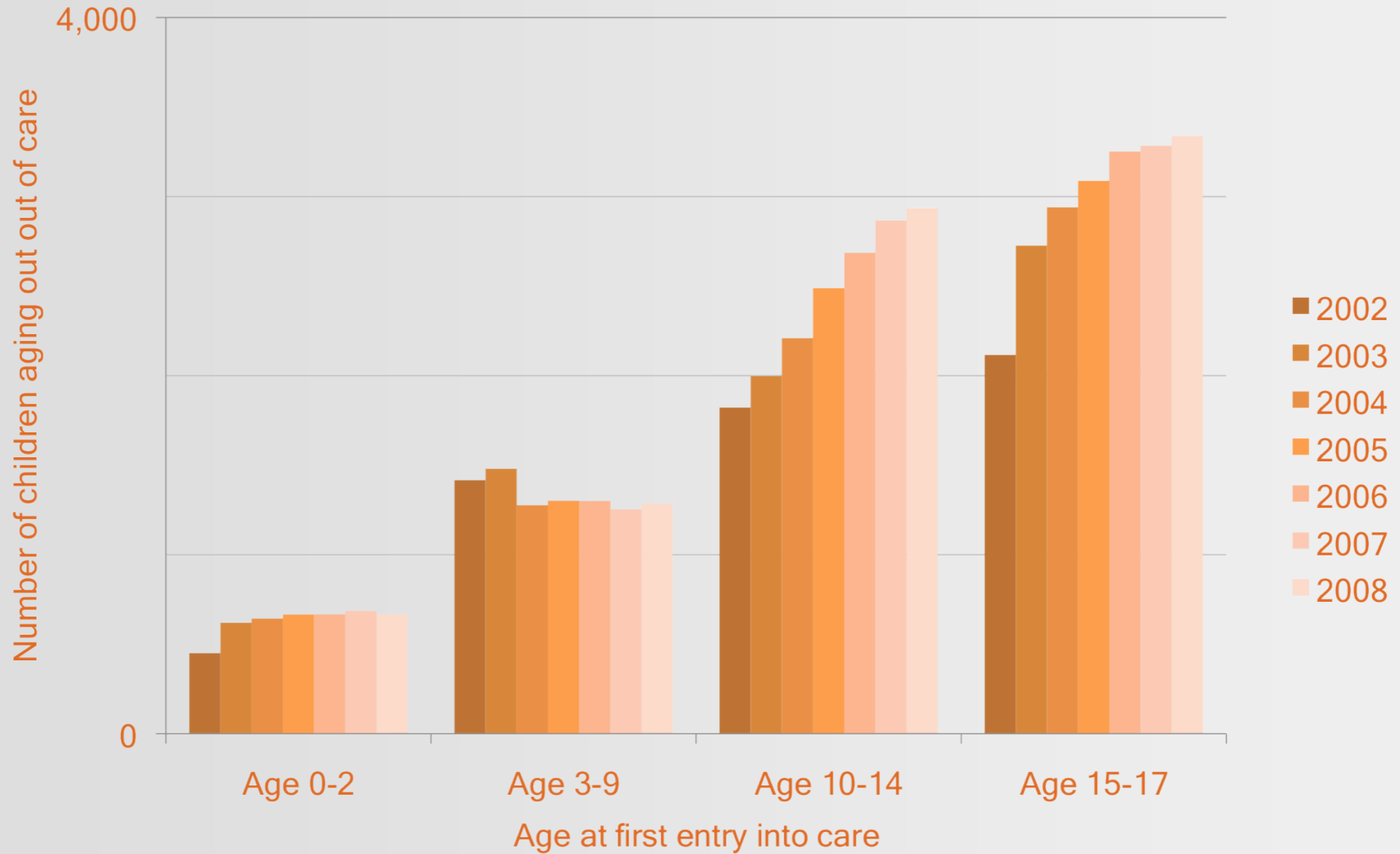


# Children and Youth in Care by Age

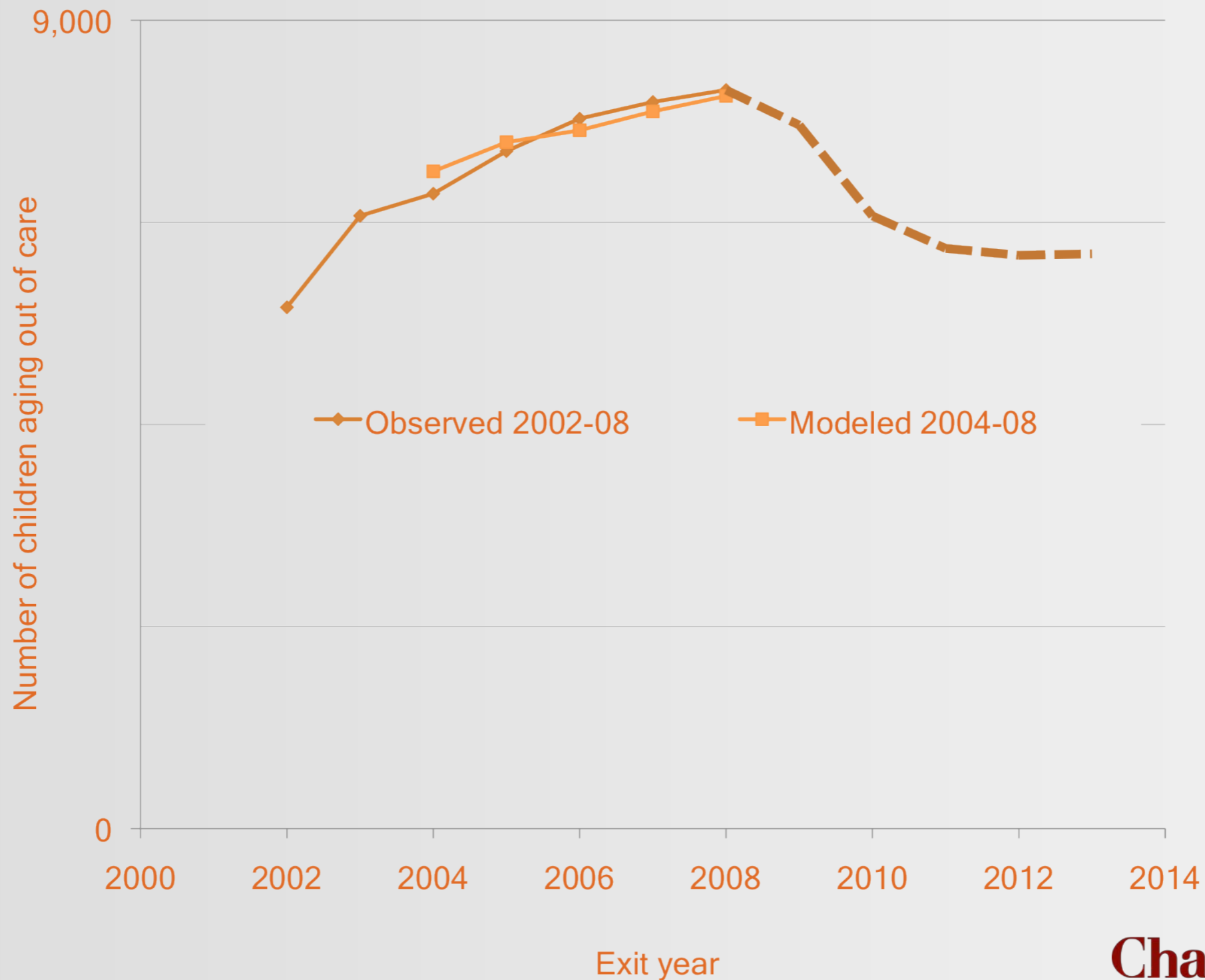


# Youth Aging Out - Baseline

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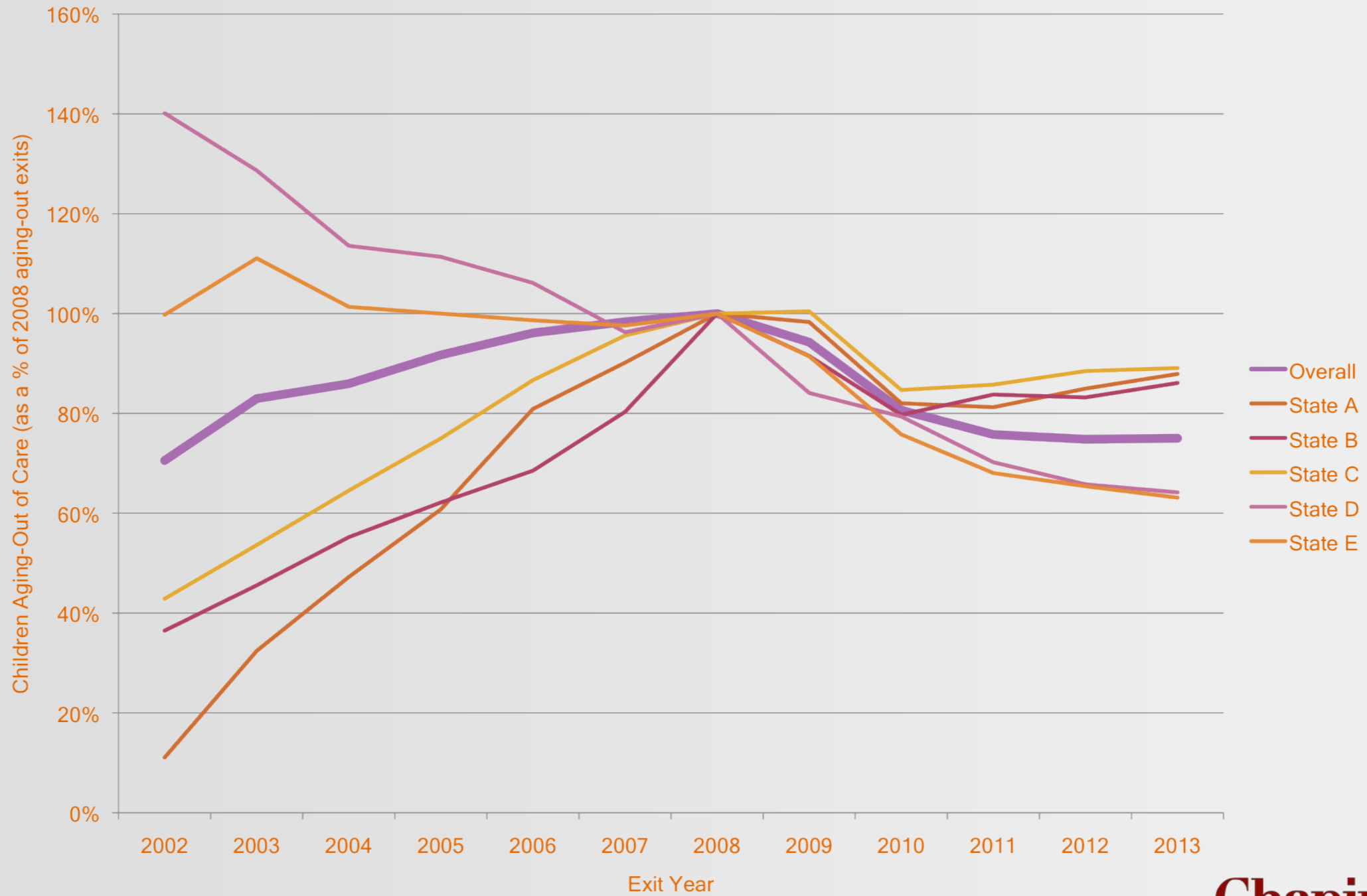


# Projection - Youth Aging Out





# The State View



# Recap

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- Child welfare systems operate a multiple levels
- Creating public health impact is both dependent on and different from creating change at the individual level
- So is the research agenda
- What next . . .