A photograph of four children playing outdoors in a grassy area with trees in the background. They are all smiling and reaching out towards numerous large, clear bubbles that are floating in the air. The child on the far right is a girl with curly hair, wearing a white shirt with a rainbow pattern. The child in the center is a boy with light brown hair, wearing a white long-sleeved shirt. The child on the left is a boy with blonde hair, wearing a blue and white striped polo shirt. A fourth child is partially visible behind the central boy. The entire image has a soft blue overlay, and the text is centered within a semi-transparent teal rectangle.

Advancing Prevention and Problem-Solving in Tennessee's Safe Baby Courts

What is Safe Baby Court?

Tennessee adopted the National Zero to Three organization's Safe Babies Court TeamTM (SBCT) approach: A community engagement and systems change initiative focused on improving how the courts, child welfare agencies, and related child-serving organizations work together to improve and expedite services for children who are under court supervision.





Tennessee Safe Baby Court Vision Statement

- To achieve lasting safety, permanency, and well-being for Tennessee's infants, toddlers, and families through a collaborative team approach.

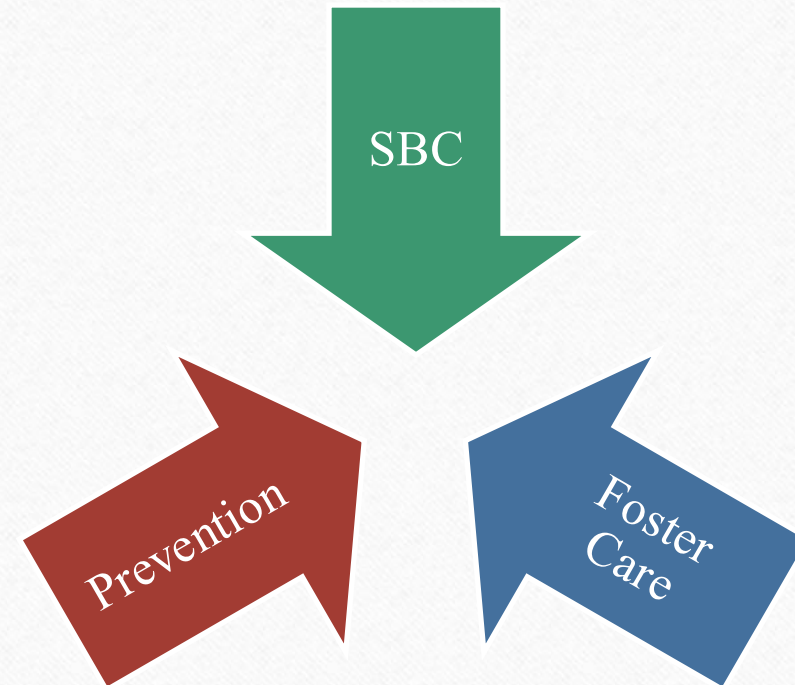
A map of Tennessee showing all 95 counties. Fifteen counties are highlighted in different colors: blue, orange, yellow, and green. The highlighted counties are: Stewart, Henry, Gibson, Lauderdale, Madison, Perry, Maury, Rutherford, Cannon, De Kalb, Coffee, Grundy, Hamilton, Bradley, Blount, Knox, Jefferson, and Washington. The other 35 counties are in white.

County	Color
Stewart	Blue
Henry	Blue
Gibson	Yellow
Lauderdale	Orange
Madison	Blue
Perry	Yellow
Maury	Blue
Rutherford	Blue
Cannon	Green
De Kalb	Yellow
Coffee	Blue
Grundy	Blue
Hamilton	Yellow
Bradley	Yellow
Blount	Orange
Knox	Blue
Jefferson	Blue
Washington	Yellow



TENNESSEE
**SAFE
BABY**
COURTS

Tennessee's Focus



How is SBC Different?

- Holistic, non-adversarial approach to serving families
- Addresses infant mental health and child development
- Engages parents in decision-making process
- Engages community partners to meet the needs of families
- Reduces time to permanency and recidivism
- Frequent and quality parent-child visitation
- Co-parenting and mentoring

1

Stop cycle of
repeat
maltreatment

2

Prevent
entering
foster care

3

Promote
timely
permanency

4

Promote
public safety

5

Empower
communities

6

Improve
child safety
and
well-being

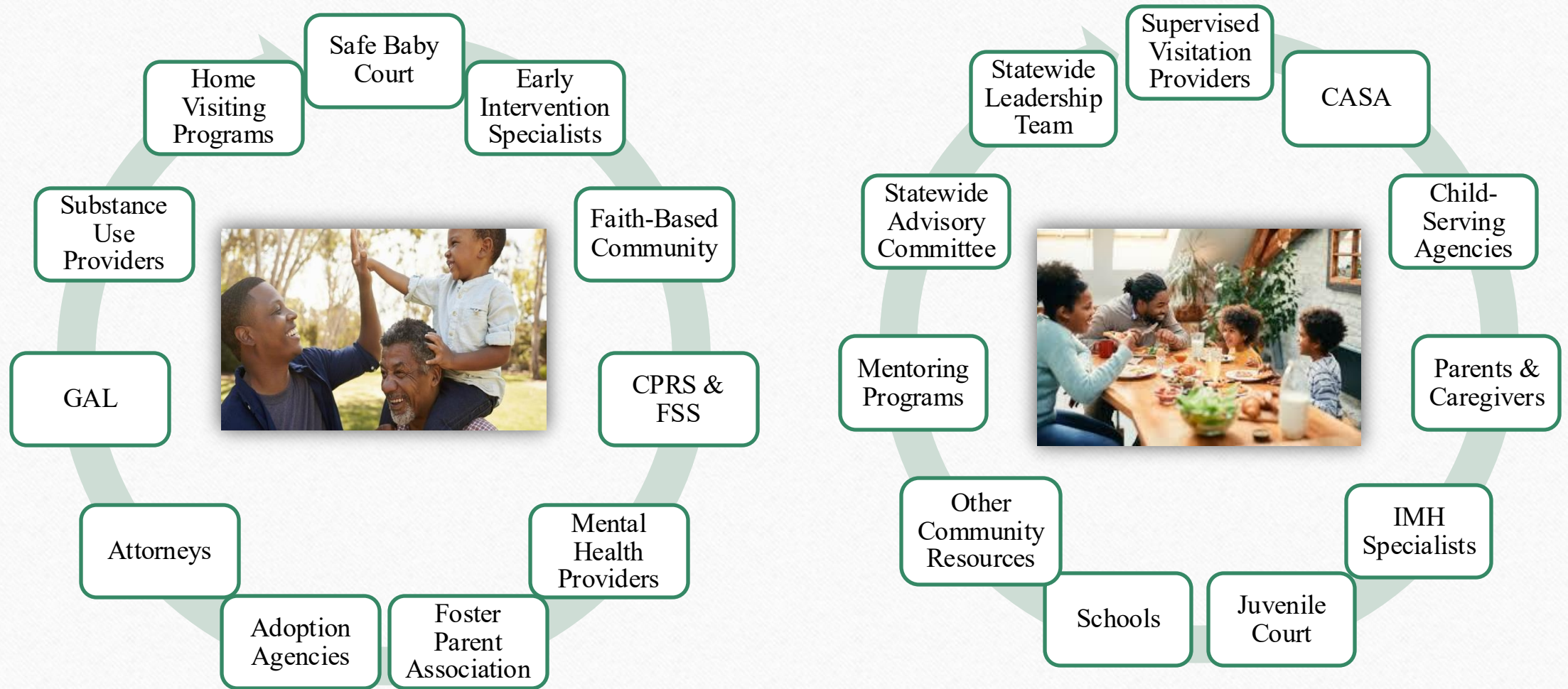
7

Heal trauma
and repair
parent/child
relationship

ARE WE DOING THIS

ZERO TO THREE Core Components





Working Together for Families

Family Engagement



Effective family engagement facilitates the safety, trust, encouragement and caring that affect the well-being of the both the child and the family



Ongoing, intentional and meaningful engagement with the family is at the core of SBC



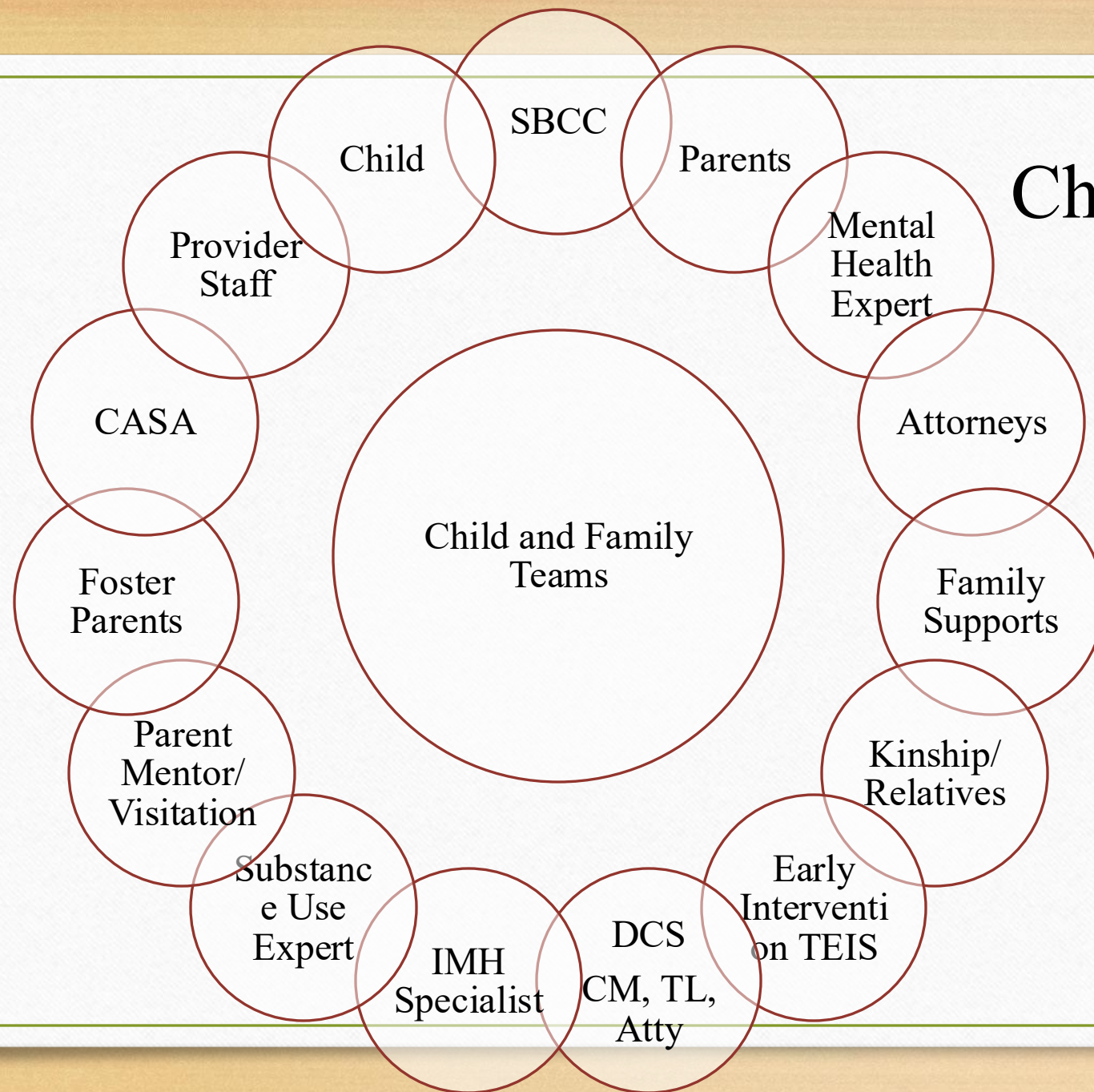
Ensuring the family's voice is heard and they are able to advocate for themselves and their family as they see fit

Co-parenting. It's not a
competition between two homes.
It's a collaboration of parents
doing what is best for the kids.

Valuing Birth Parents

- Parents are supported from pre-removal to post-permanency
- Court team focuses on family strengths
- Court team increases parents' capacity of self-advocacy, motivation, and confidence
- Supports families in building support systems
- Refers parents to trauma informed services
- Creates opportunities for peer support/mentorship
- Meets parents where they are

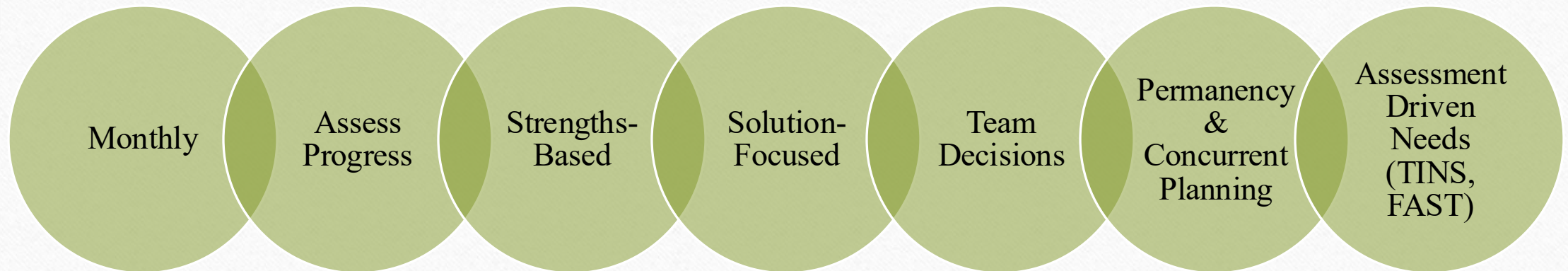
Child and Family Teams



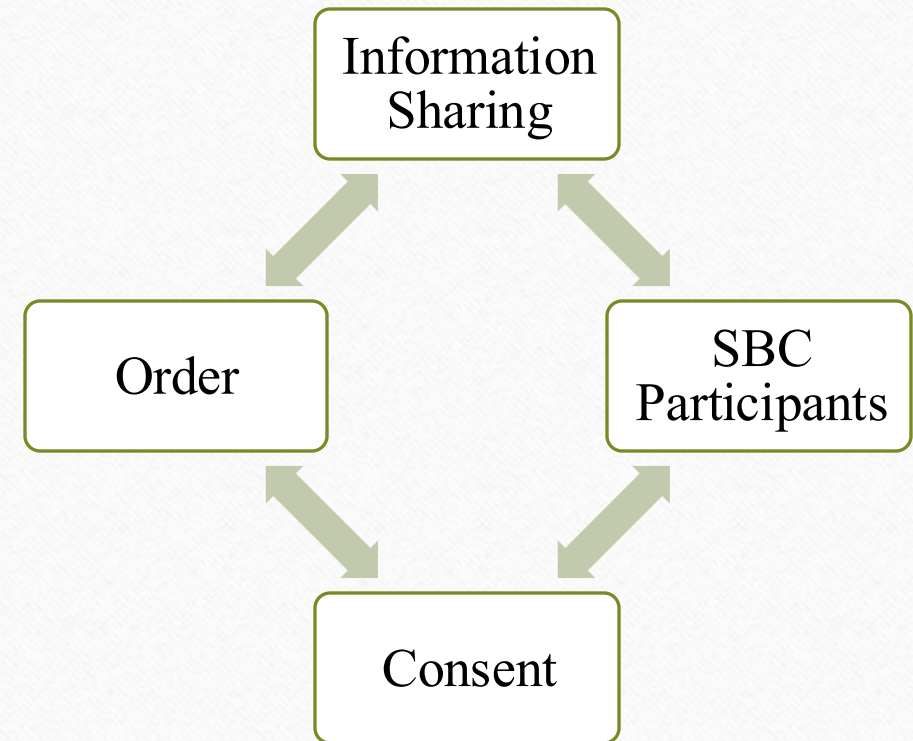
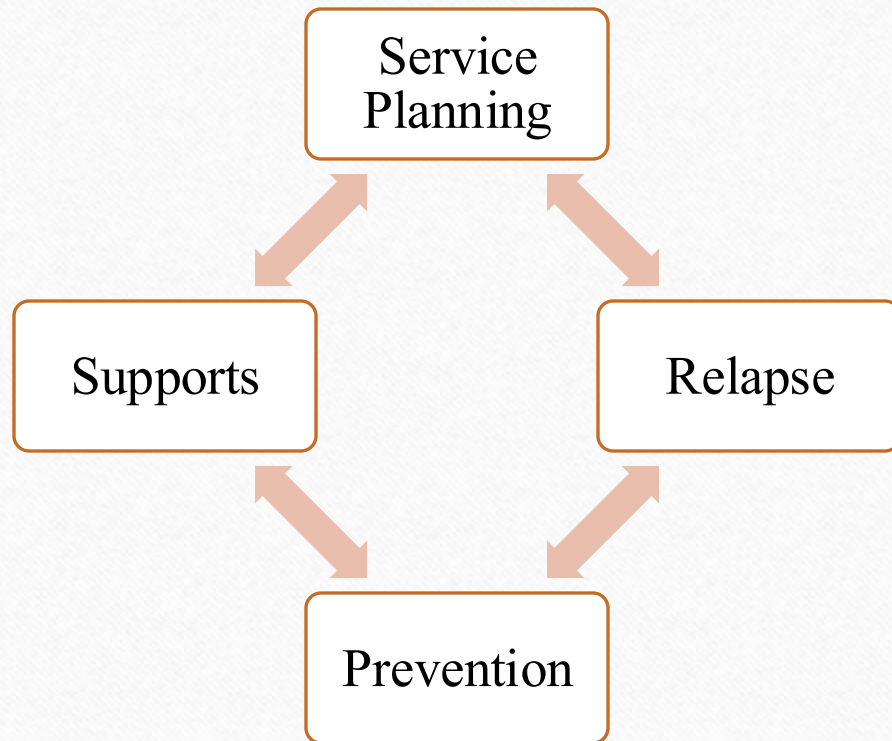
Child and Family Team Meetings

SBC Coordinator Facilitates

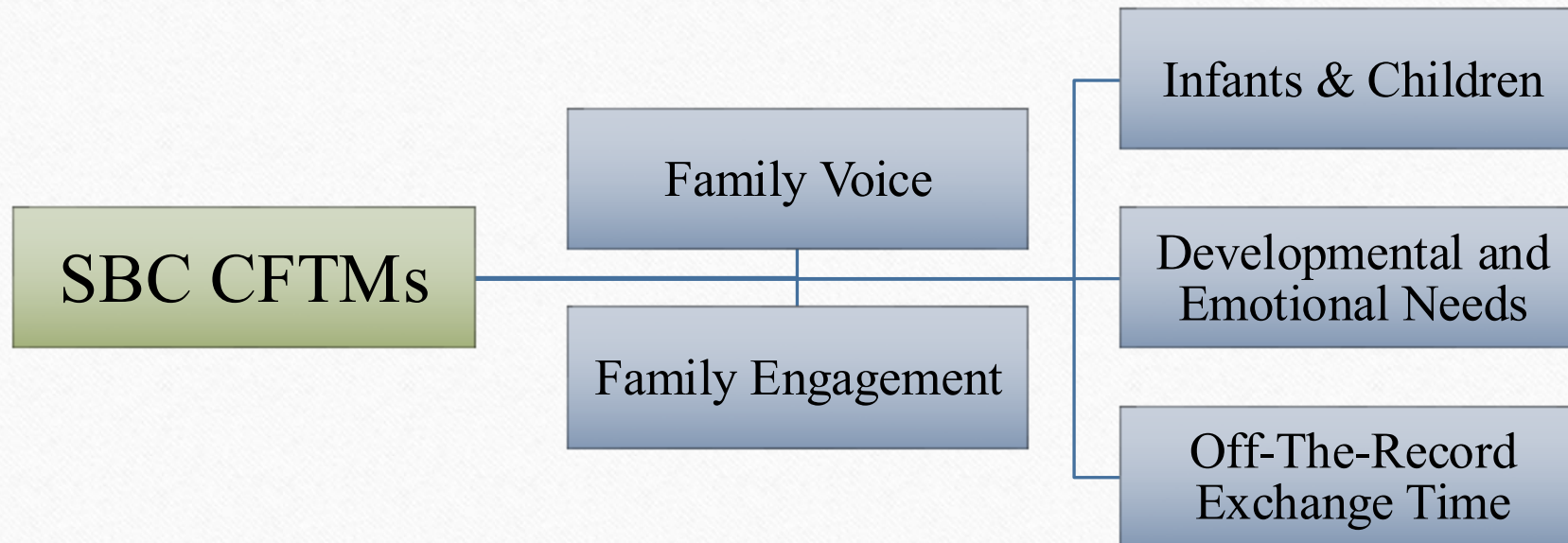
Unless DCS policy requires a DCS facilitator to lead the CFTM



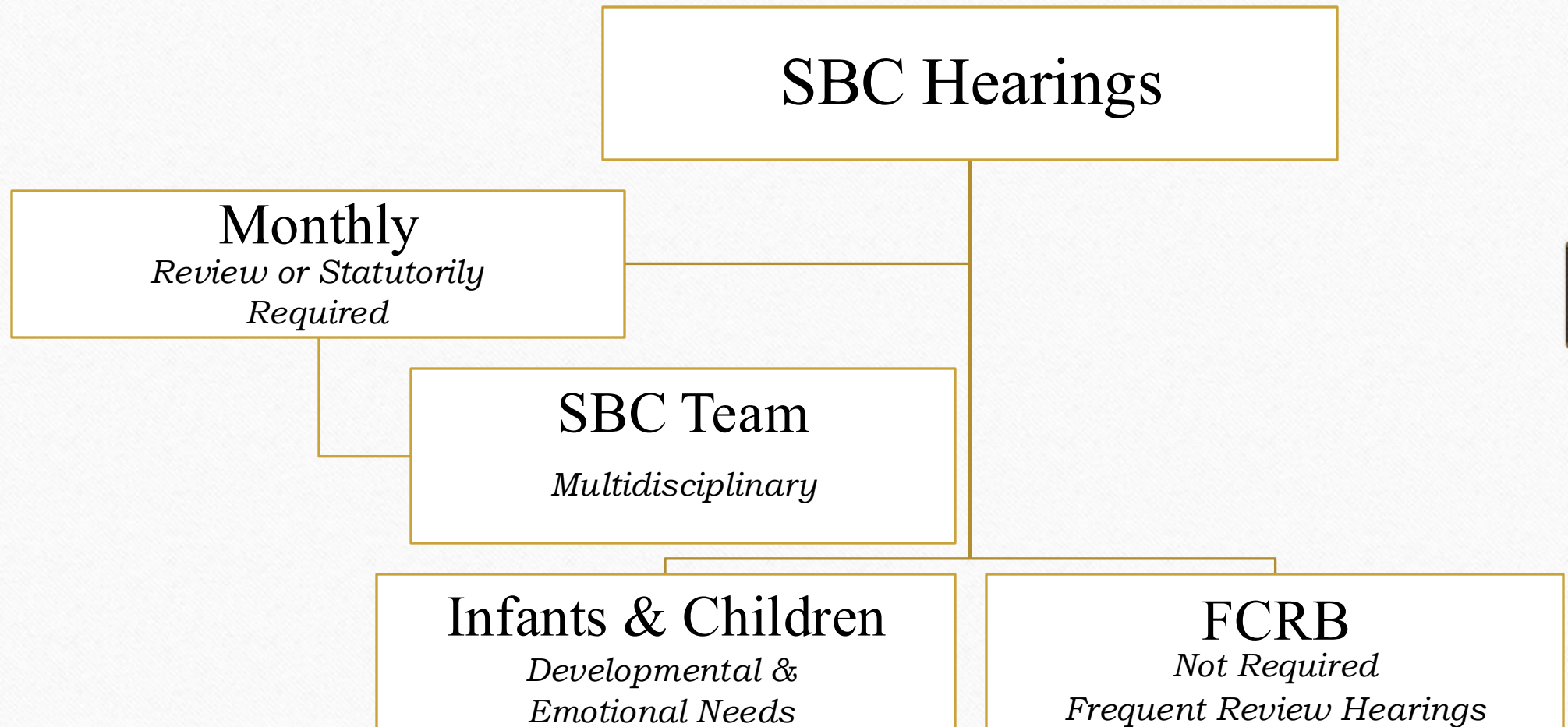
Child and Family Team Meetings



Child and Family Team Meetings



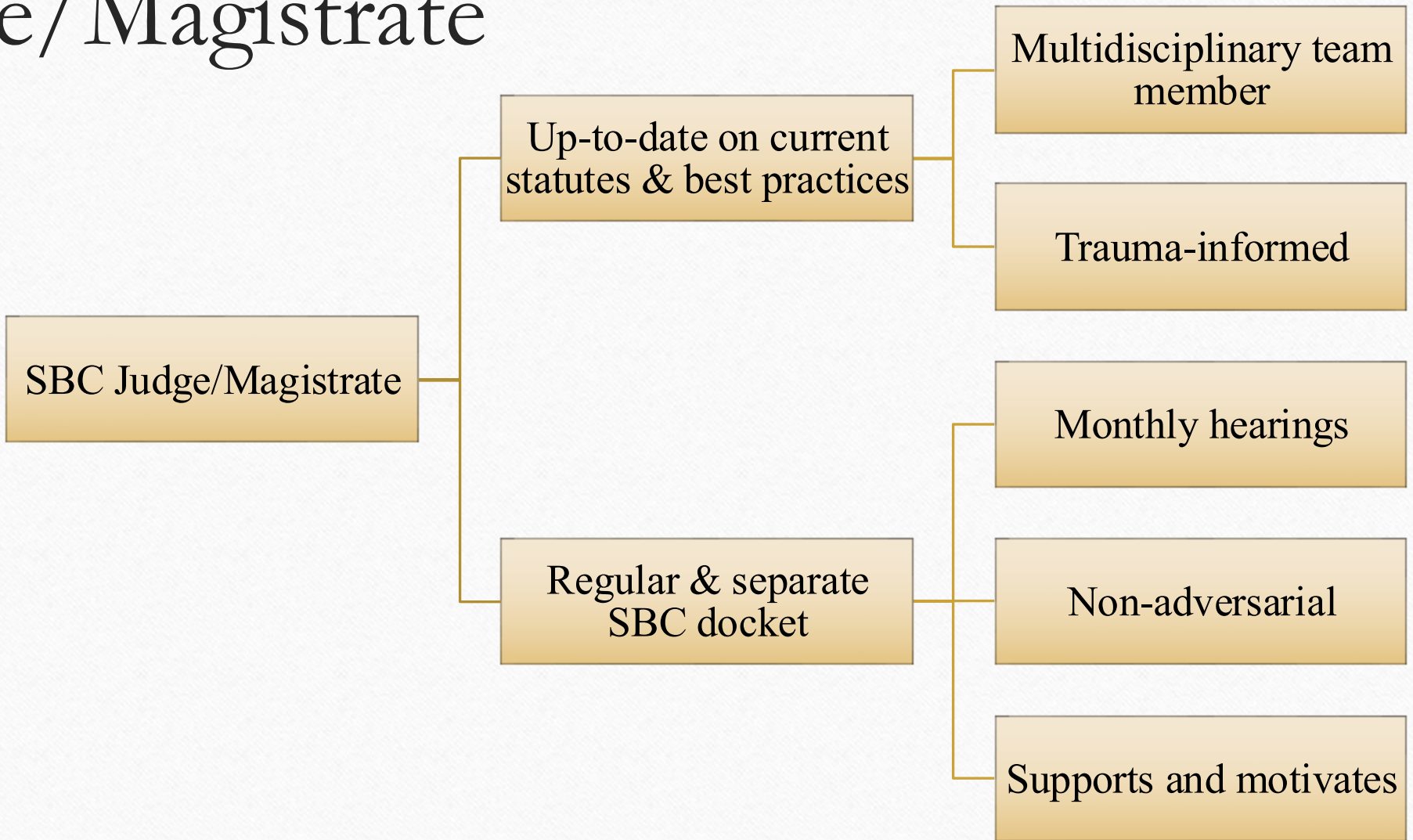
Hearings



Roles and Responsibilities



Judge/Magistrate





Makes all final, factual,
and legal determinations



Considers input of the
multidisciplinary team
members and trained
treatment professionals



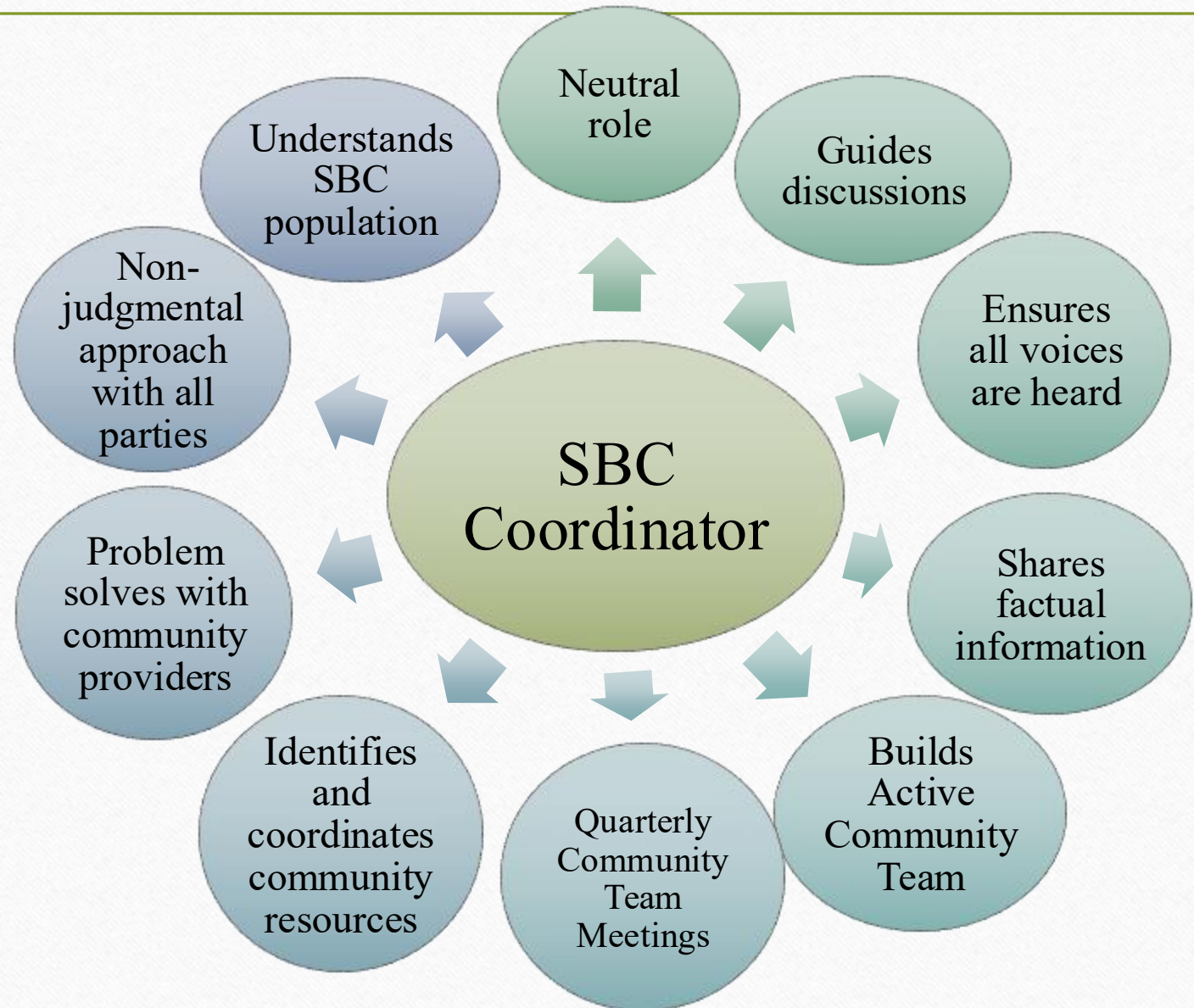
Explains the basis for
decisions to team
members and
participants during
hearings

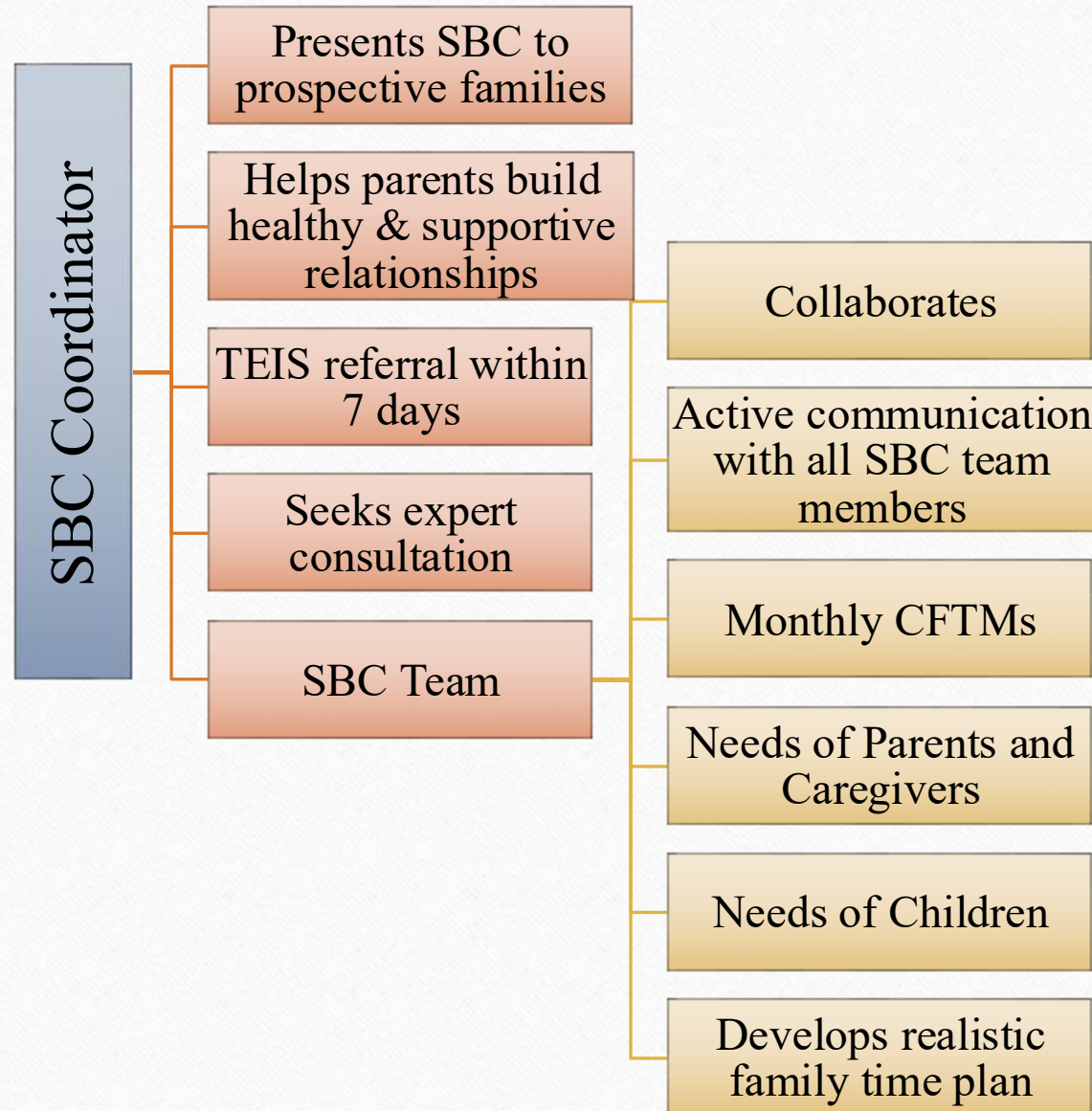


Communication with the
Judge/Magistrate occurs
**on the record in a
hearing**

Judge/Magistrate

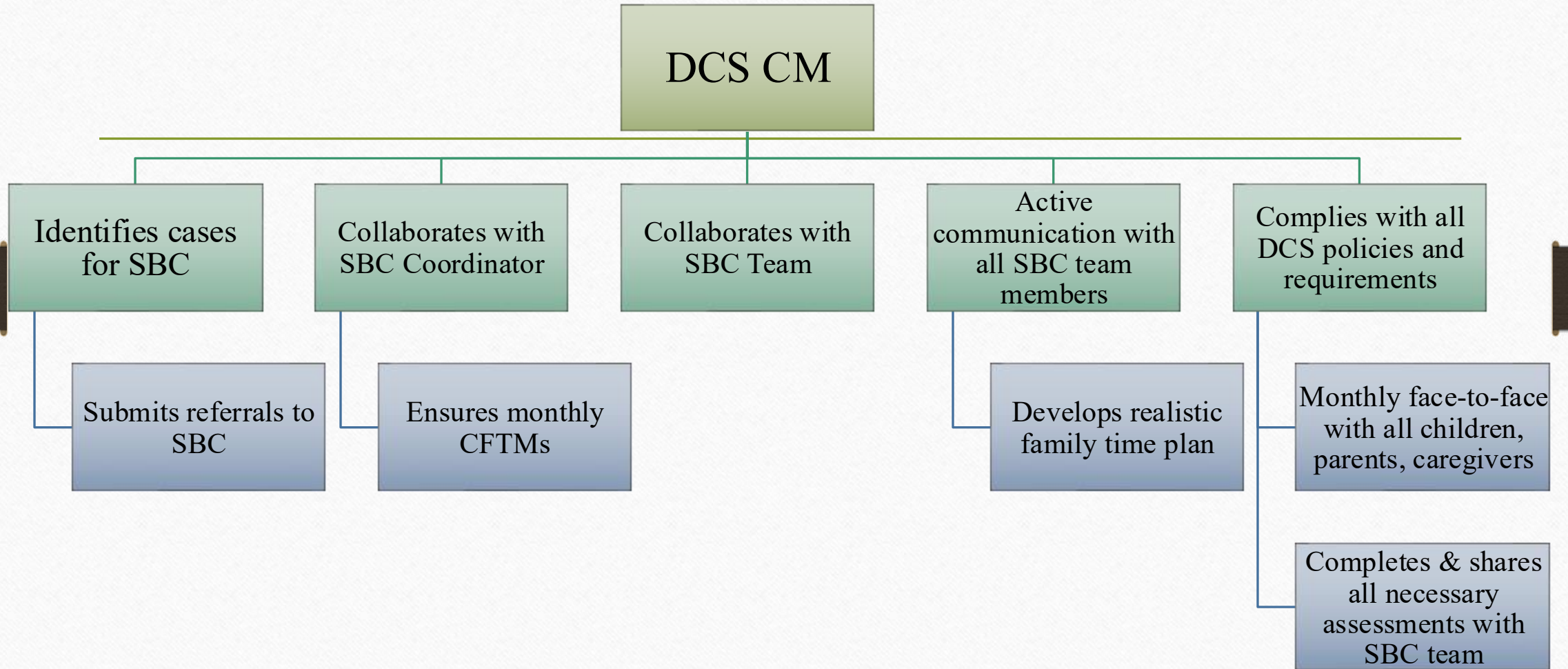
SBC Coordinator



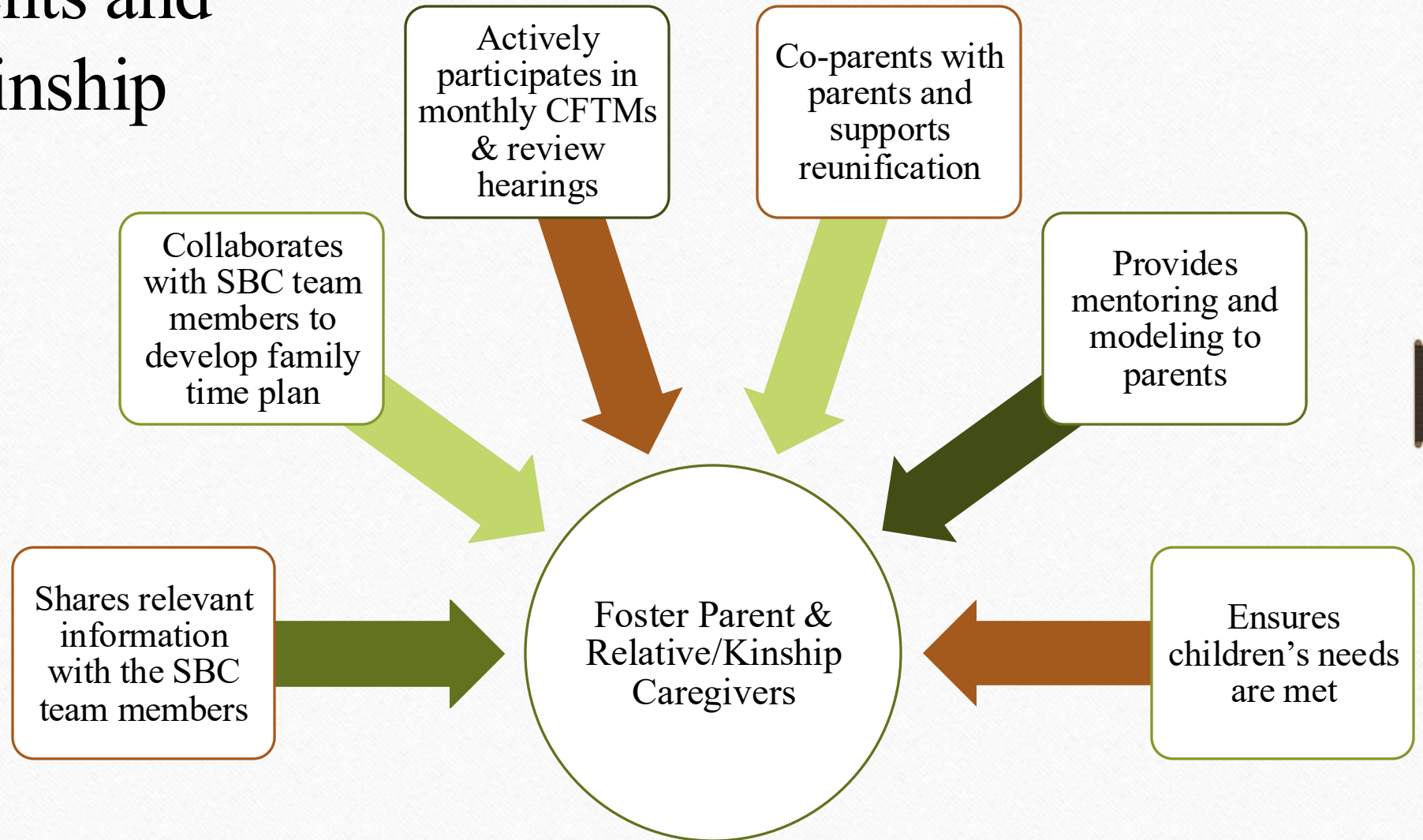


SBC Coordinator

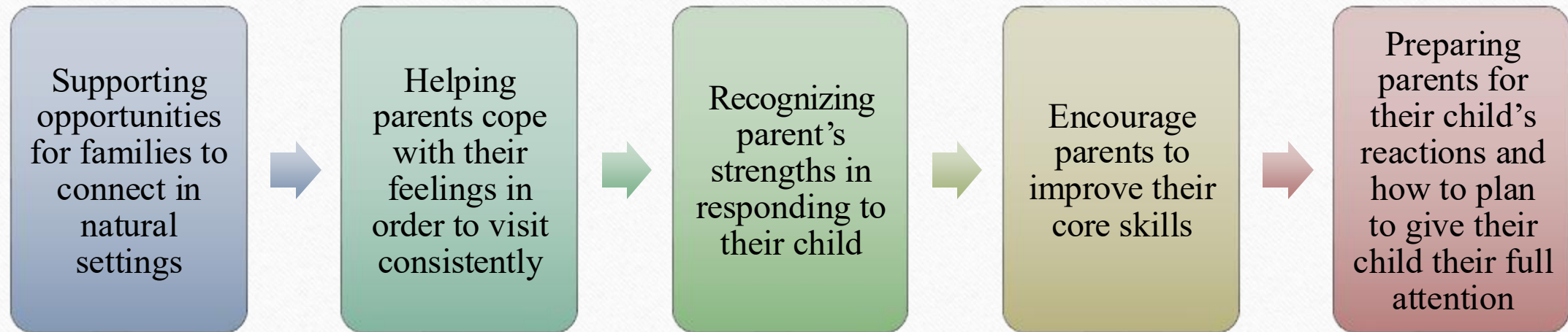
DCS Case Manager



Foster Parents and Relative/Kinship Caregivers



Foster Parents and Relative/Kinship Caregivers



Collaborate

- Collaborate to avoid painful and damaging conflicts among adults

Share

- Freely share vital information about the child's needs, routines, likes and dislikes

Facilitate

- Facilitate smooth and mutually-beneficial visits

Plan

- Collaboratively plan for transitions

Preserve

- Preserve the child's relationships with both families and all trusted adults

Thrive

- Help children thrive in placement to avoid unnecessary placement disruptions

Promote

- Promote positive experiences and minimize grief and loss due to being placed in foster care

Support

- Support positive long-term outcomes for both parents and children

Birth Parents and
Caregivers are

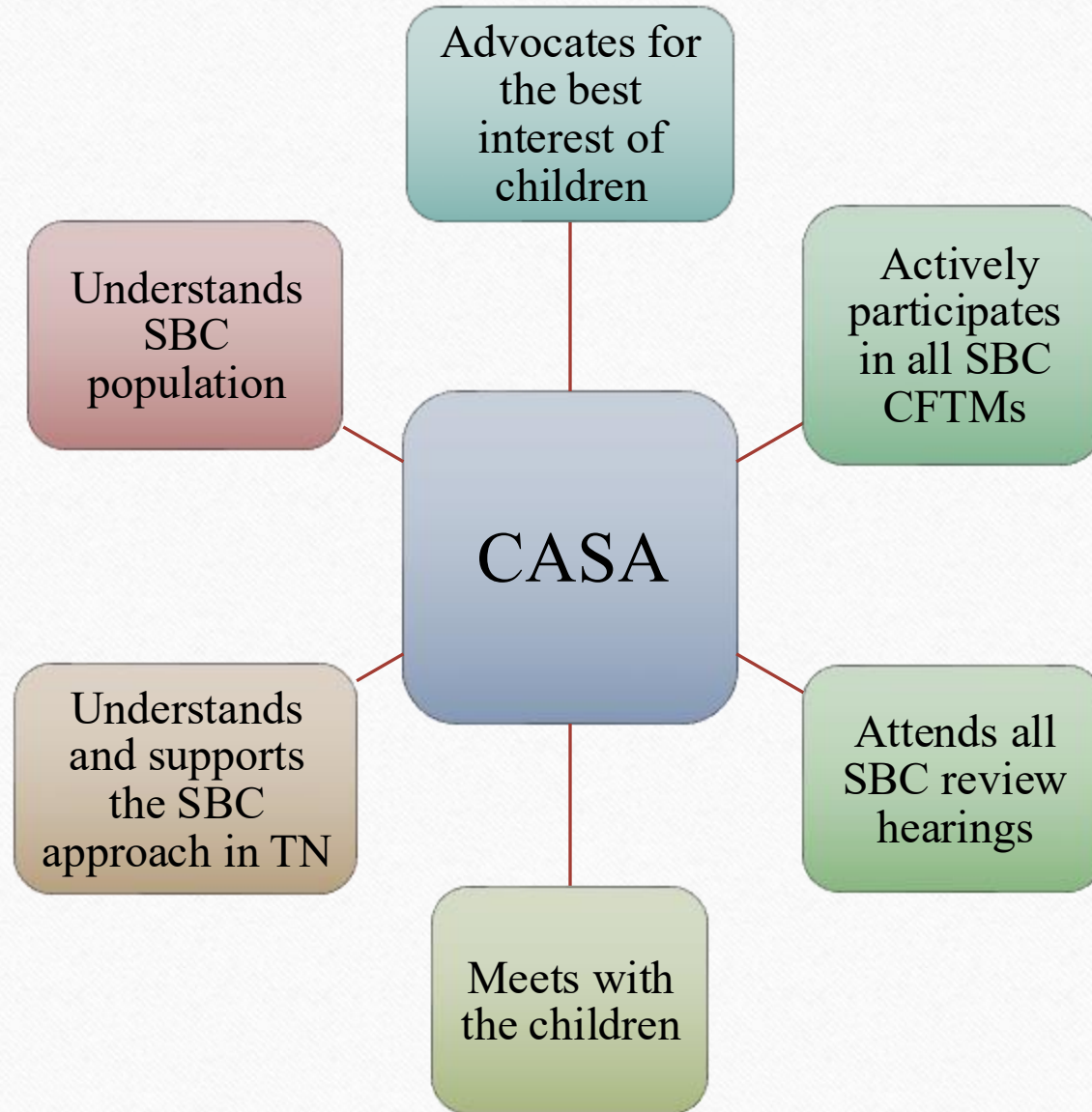
CO-PARENTING
PARTNERS

Foster Parents and Relative/Kinship Caregivers

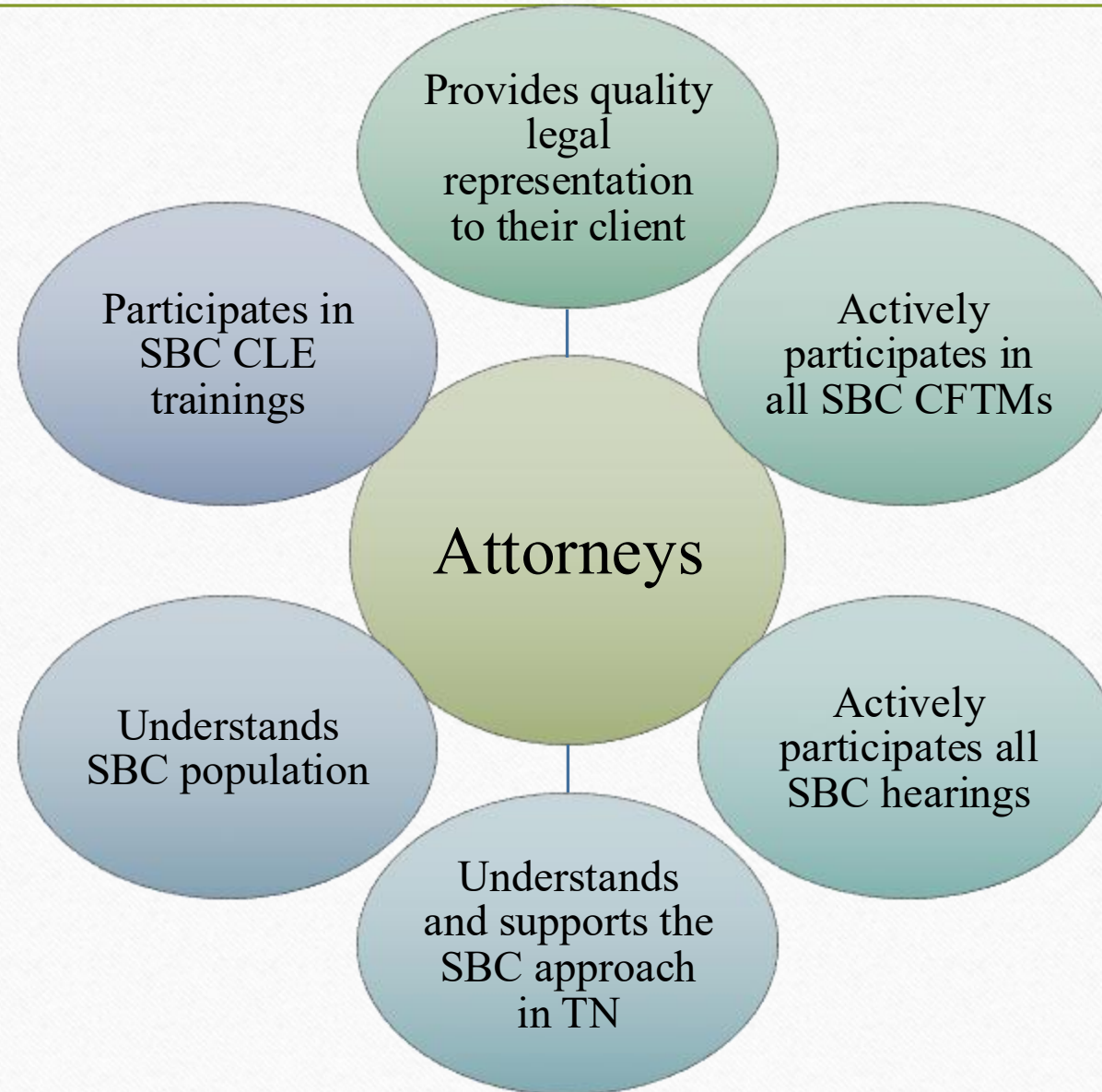


2-4-2 Book Project

C A S A



Attorneys



Providers

Address the
individual
and/or
familial
needs of the
SBC
families

Collaborate
with all
team
members

Actively
participates
in SBC
CFTMs

Actively
participates
in SBC
hearings

Understands
and
supports the
SBC
approach in
TN

Understands
SBC
population

Participates
in SBC
trainings

Providers

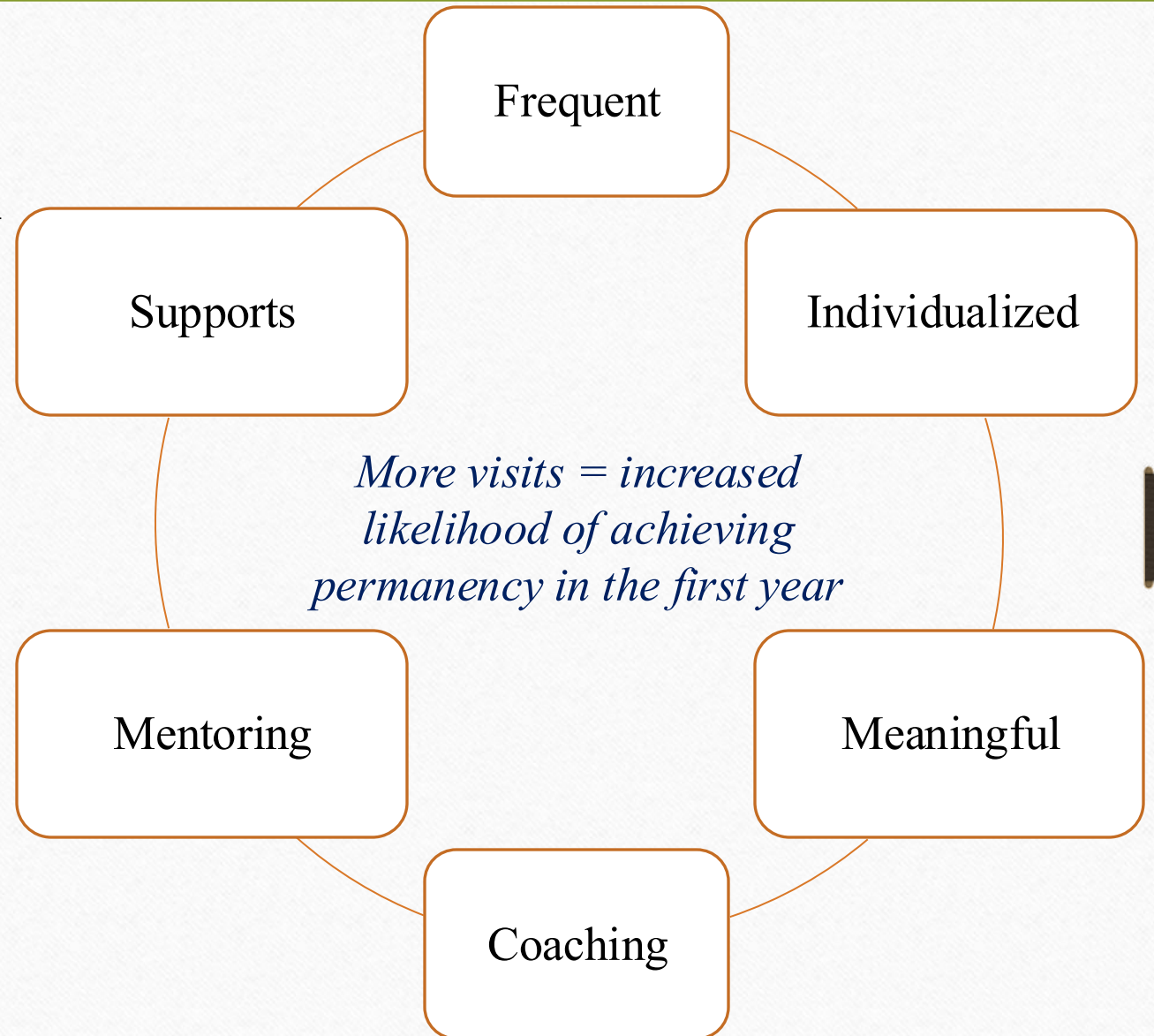


Family Time: Coaching and Visitation

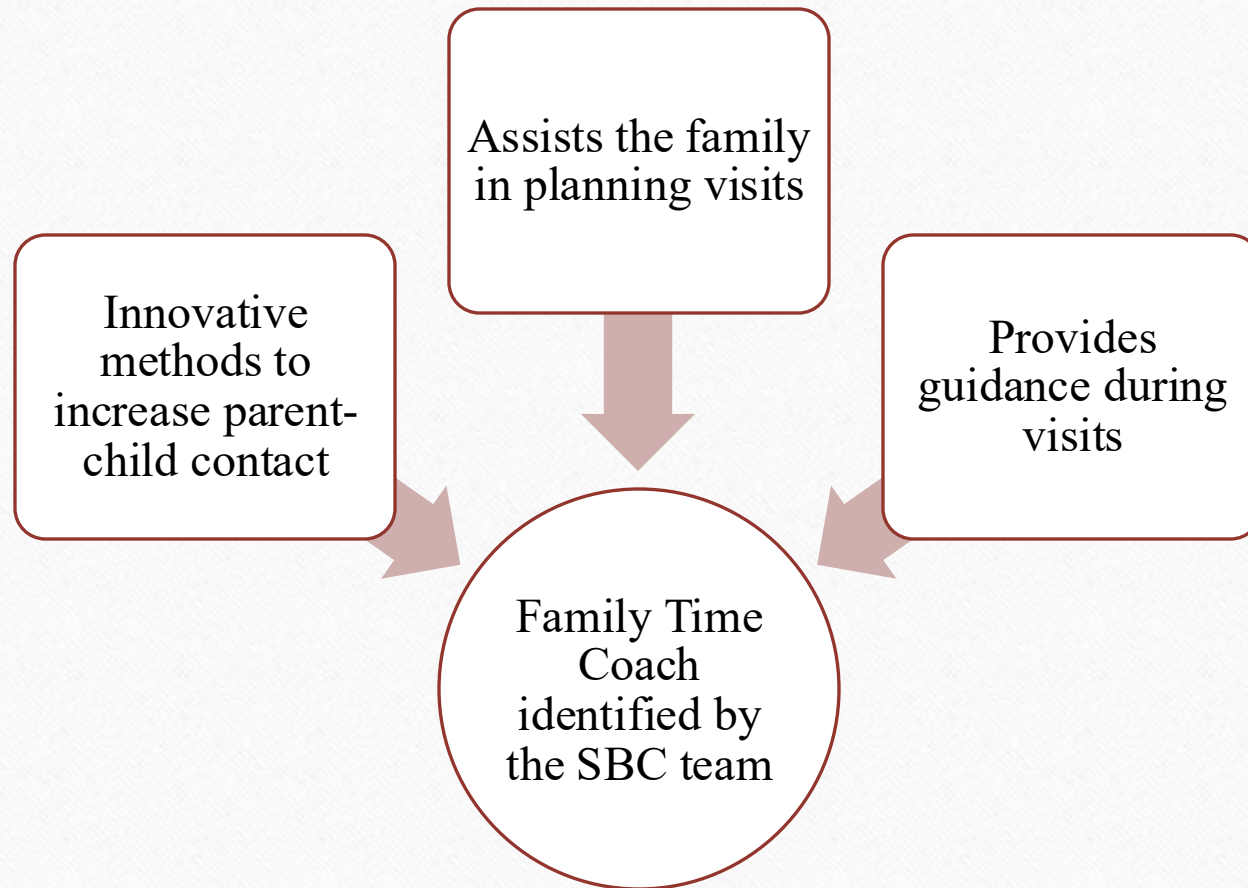
Family Time: Coaching and Visitation



*Judge/Magistrate and the entire
SBC team ensures frequent, quality
parent-child contact occurs*



Family Time/Visitation



Innovative methods to increase parent-child contact

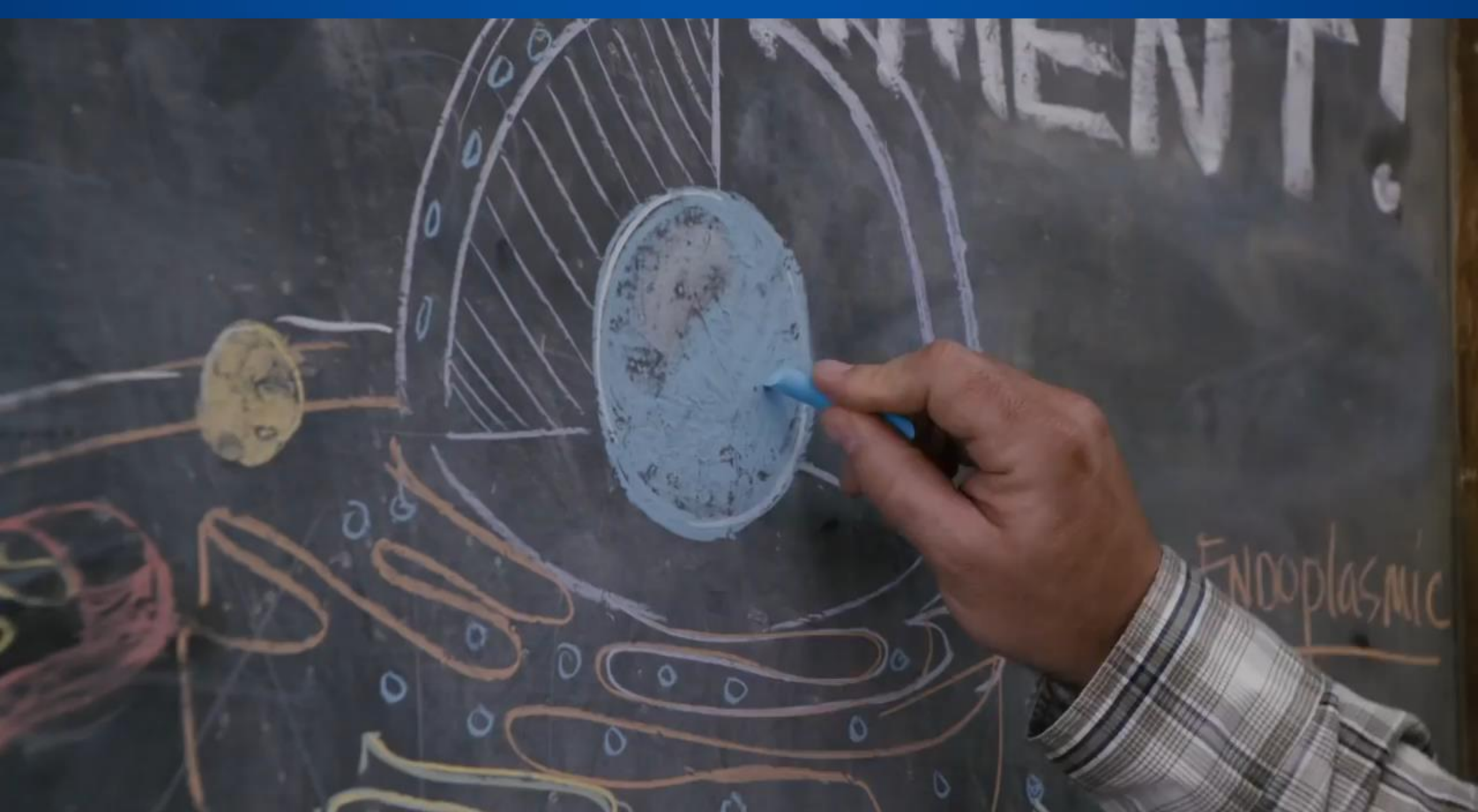


Review of family time plan and quality of visitation at monthly CFTMs and/or court hearings



Withholding visitation should not be used as a punitive measure/response

Visitation should occur unless there is an identified and specific risk of harm to the child(ren)



Infant Mental Health and Child-Parent Services

Infant and Early Childhood Mental Health The foundation of all future development

Everyone who touches the life of a child can promote social and emotional well-being

Social and emotional development, or **infant and early childhood mental health**, is the developing capacity of a child from birth to 5 years old to...



Form close and secure
adult and peer
relationships...



Experience, manage
and express a **full**
range of emotions...



Explore the
environment
and learn...

...all in the context of family, community, and culture.

Additional Supports and Services

Continuum of
additional supports
& services

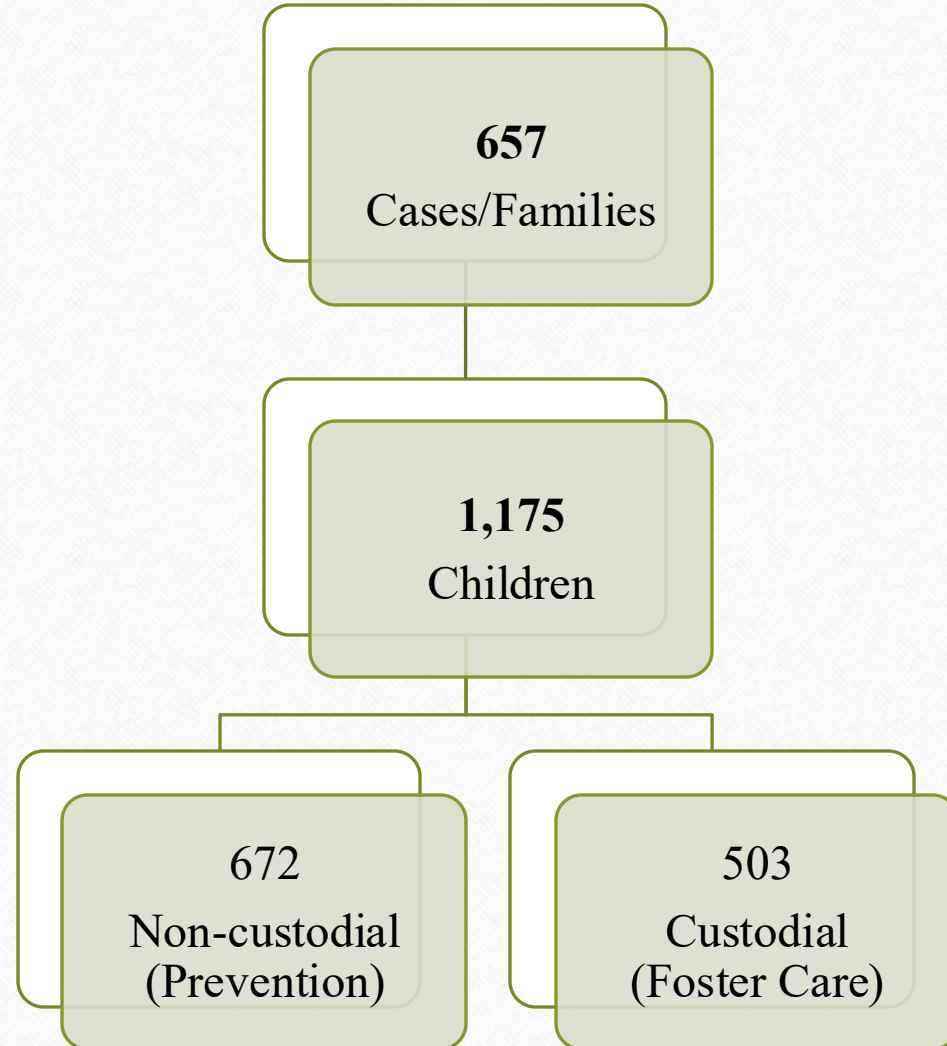


Robust active
community teams
help expand the
community supports

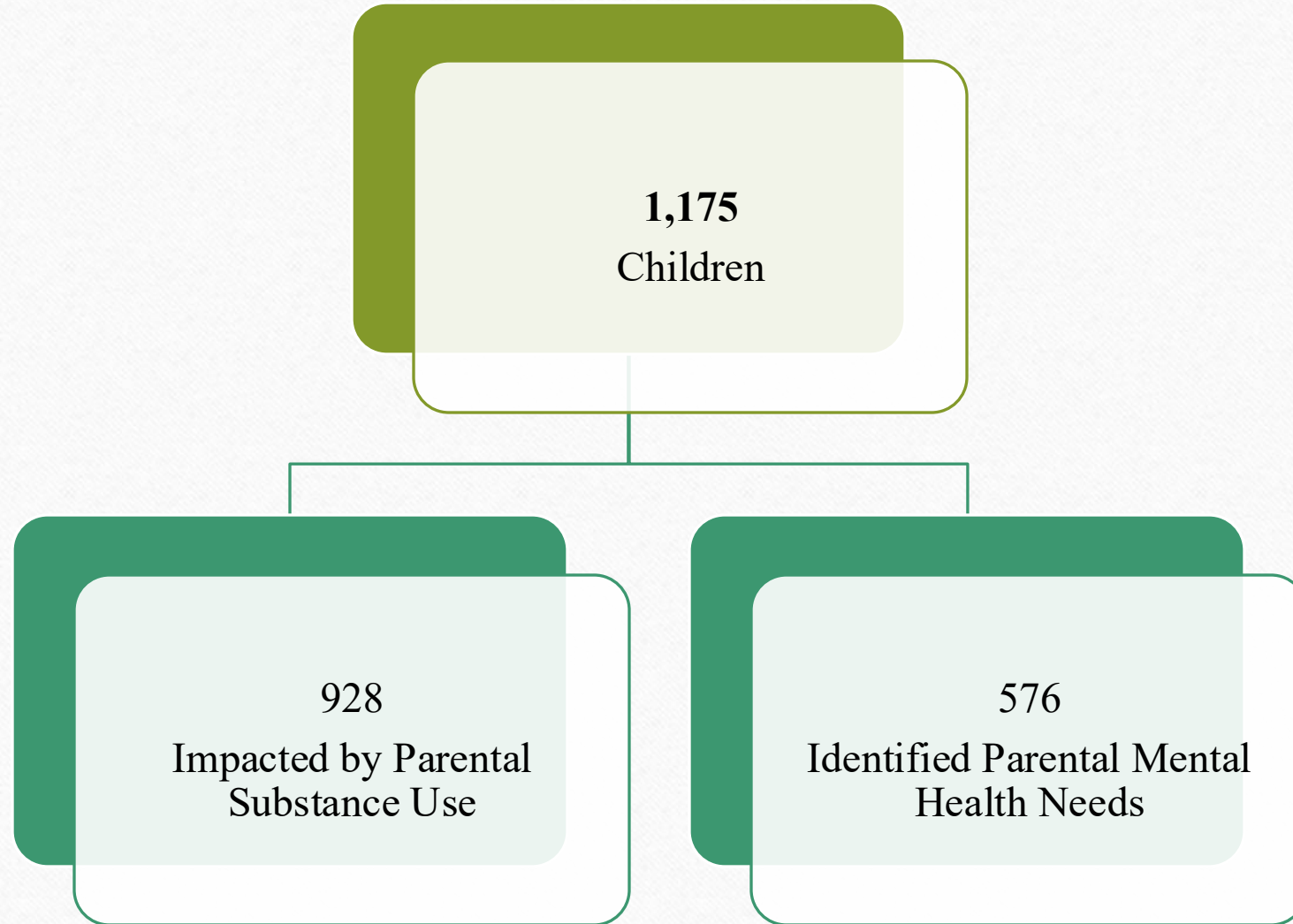


Positive Impact of SBC

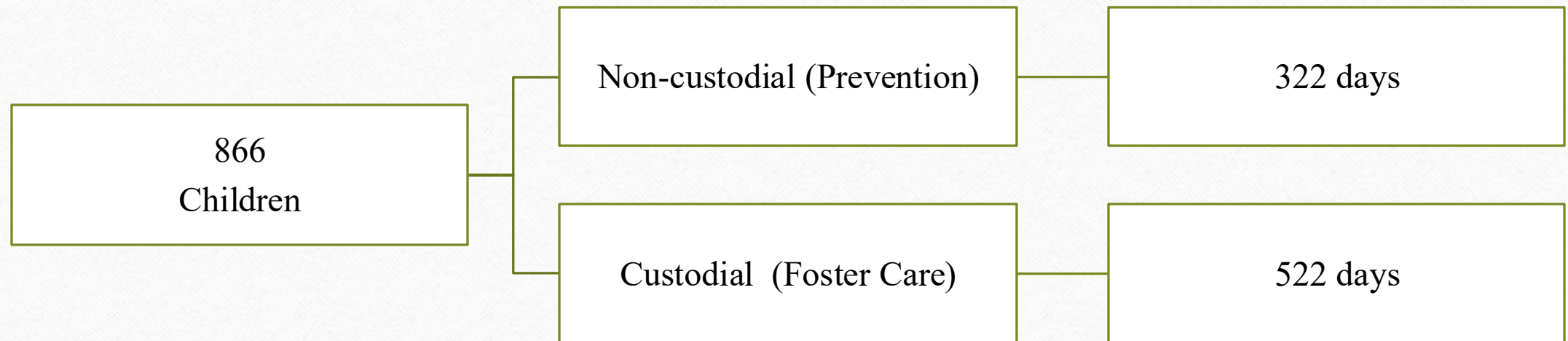
SBC Cases Since Inception



Top Needs Since Inception



Permanency Since Inception




Permanency Outcomes

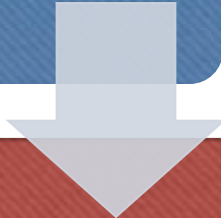
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2023 Length of Stay Comparison

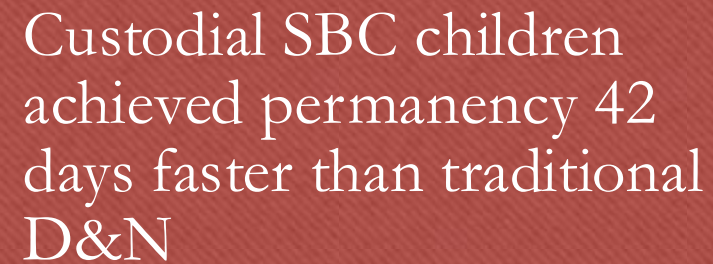
Average length of stay
for SBC children in
foster care was 585 days.



Average length of stay for
all D&N children in foster
care was 627 days.



Custodial SBC children
achieved permanency 42
days faster than traditional
D&N



Family Time

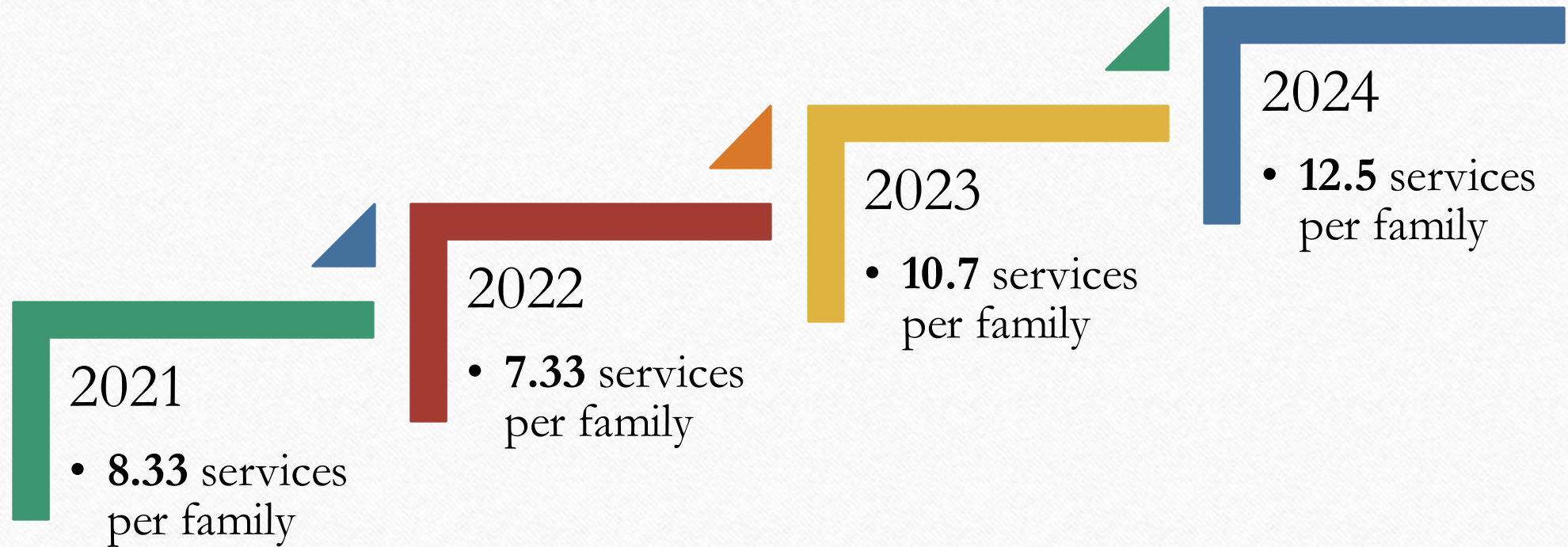
2021: 9.3 visits per month

2022: 8.89 visits per month

2023: 10.6 visits per month

2024: 12.9 visits per month

Service Interventions Per Family



Reentry within 6 months

FY2020:

- Traditional D&N: 3.1 %
- SBC: 0 %

FY2021:

- Traditional D&N: 3.7 %
- SBC: 0 %

FY2022:

- Traditional D&N: 3.2 %
- SBC: 1.5 % (2 children)

FY2023:

- Traditional D&N: 3.9 %
- SBC: 2.4 % (2 children)



Rutherford County Safe Baby Court

October 2023

Reunification

14 months / 434 days



Maury County Safe Baby Court

May 2024

Adoption

13 months / 420 days



Grundy County Safe Baby Court

June 2024

Reunification

27 months / 826 days

QUESTIONS

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