



Building Bridges and Bonds (B3): An introduction

[Presentation location]
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(Confirm ABT logo)

Building Bridges and Bonds (B3)

- A rigorous, multi-site study testing innovative services offered by fatherhood programs



- An opportunity for the fatherhood and research communities to produce new evidence about specific service approaches

Study goals

- Provide evidence about effective strategies
- Focus on individual program components
- Test program impacts in three areas
 - Parenting and co-parenting interventions
 - Employment services
 - Participant recruitment and engagement strategies

Why B3?

- Fathers play a unique role in children's lives
- However, they may face barriers to positive involvement with their children
- Improving outcomes for low-income fathers and children is a high priority for policymakers
- Programs use a number of promising approaches, but there is a limited evidence base



Complementary studies

- B3 is one of several studies providing this evidence
- Others include
 - The Parents and Children Together: Focuses on “whole package” of Responsible Fatherhood programs
 - Fatherhood Research and Practice Network: Supports evaluations of several promising approaches to services for fathers
- B3 complements these studies with its focus on individual components

Study team

- Sponsored by the Administration for Children and Families' Office of Planning, Research and Evaluation within the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services
- Conducted by
 - MDRC, in partnership with
 - MEF Associates
 - Abt SRBI
 - Leading experts in the field

Study components

- Impact analysis: What results do the services produce?
 - Measures effects of program components on participant outcomes
 - Uses random assignment
 - Focuses on relatively short-term outcomes
- Implementation analysis: How are impacts achieved?
 - Gives context to impact analysis findings
 - Describes program participants, how program services were delivered, and any challenges faced along the way

Impact analysis

- Sample research questions
 - Does a focused co-parenting model help fathers spend more and better time with their children?
 - Do enhanced employment services increase work and earnings?
 - Can behavioral interventions increase participant engagement in program services?
- Sample data sources
 - Participant surveys
 - Federal administrative data (new hires, child support)
 - Program management information systems (MIS) data

Implementation analysis

- Sample research questions
 - What are the characteristics of participating fathers?
 - What services are offered and to what extent are they used?
 - How are services perceived by participants and staff or partners in the community?
- Sample data sources
 - Program management information systems (MIS) data
 - On-site interviews with program staff and participants
 - Participant surveys

Random assignment

- The most rigorous and reliable method for demonstrating program effects
- Program participants are randomly assigned to one of two groups
 - **Group 1:** Receives program services, *including* the component intervention being tested
 - **Group 2:** Receives program services, but *not* the component intervention being tested
- The difference in the outcomes of the two groups shows the intervention's impact

Random assignment

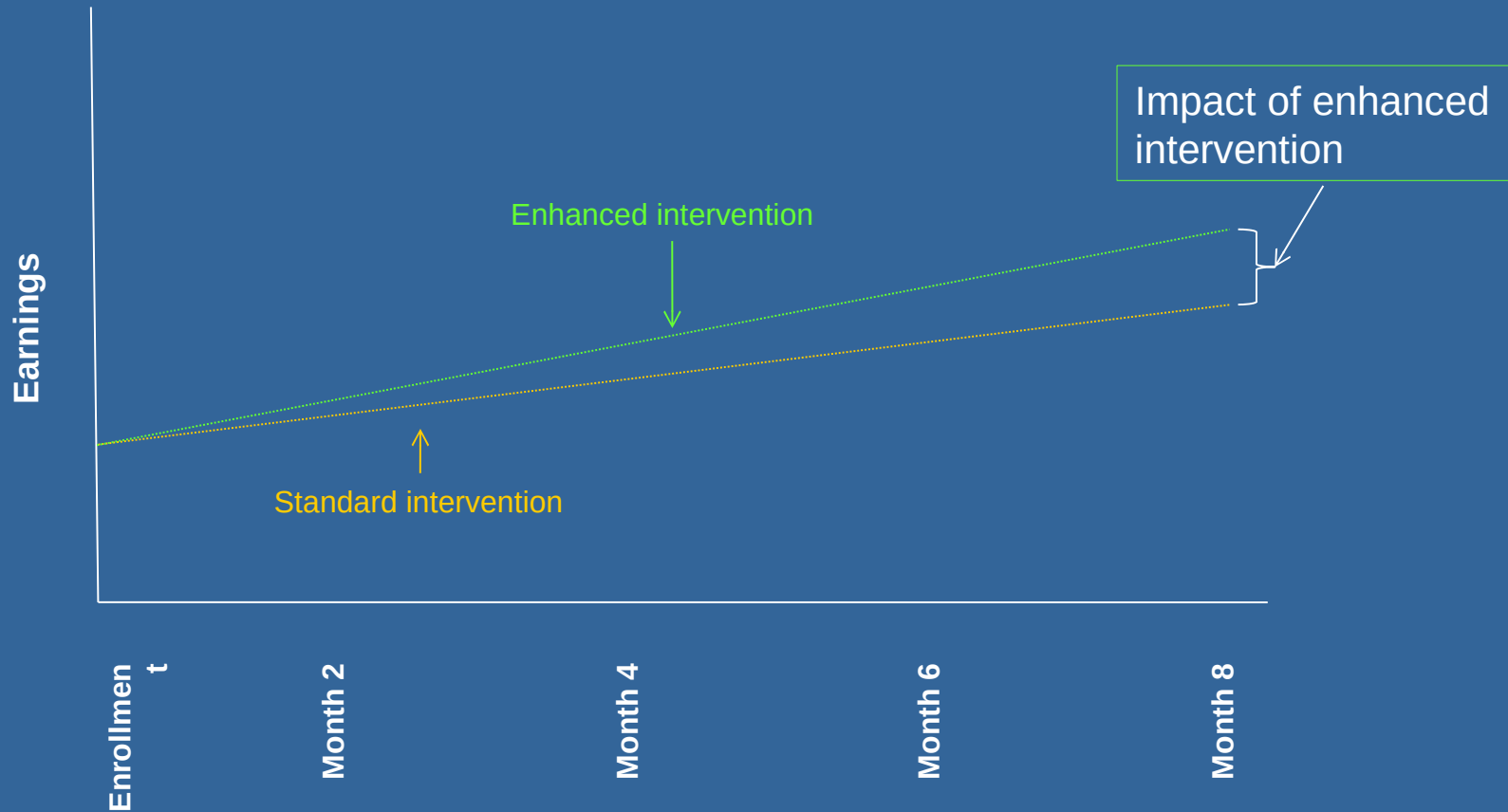
- Individuals are assigned to the groups randomly



- The two groups will have similar characteristics on average, at enrollment
- We can be confident that any differences in outcomes are attributable to the program

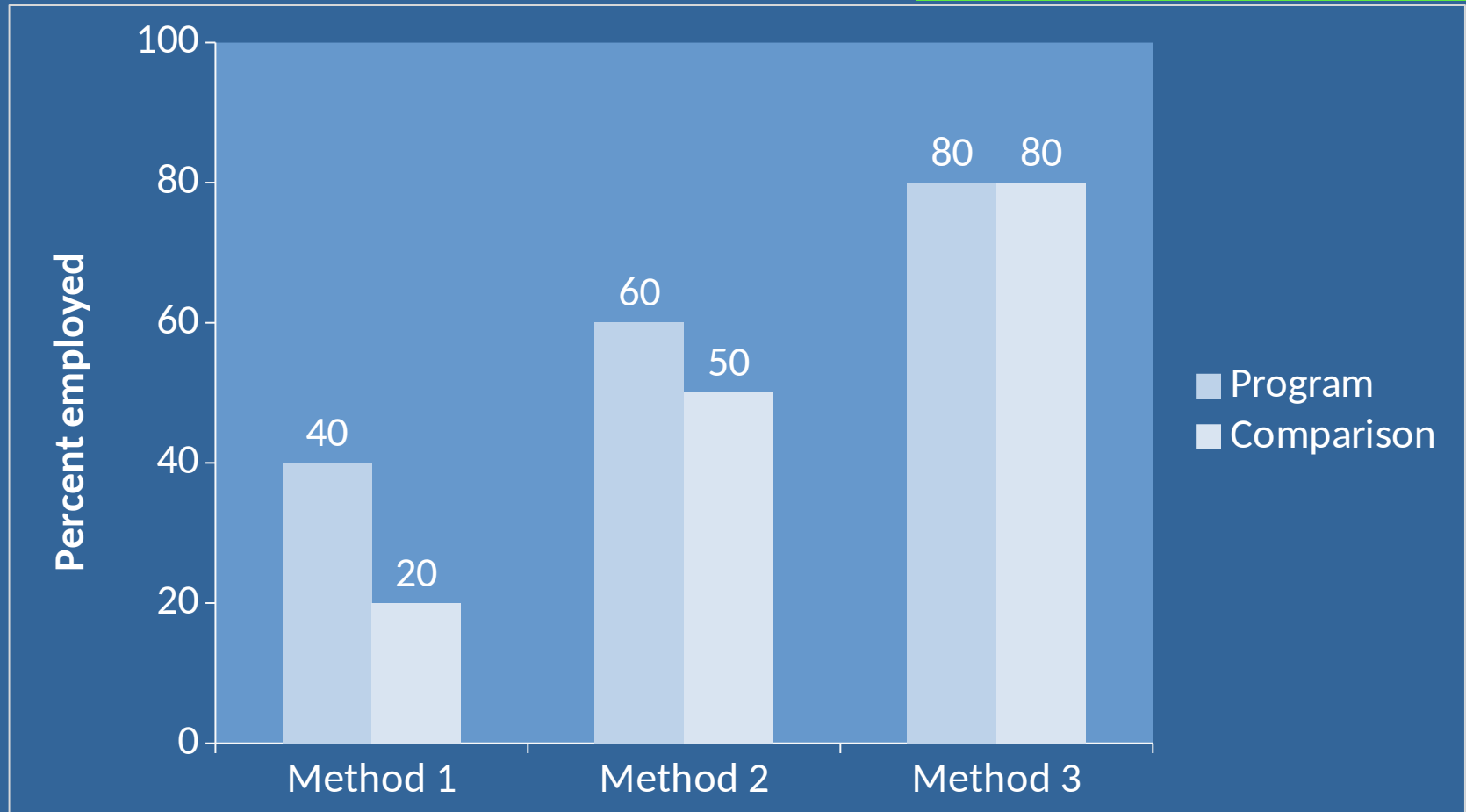
Random assignment

Placeholder for suggested chart/graph to explain random assignment



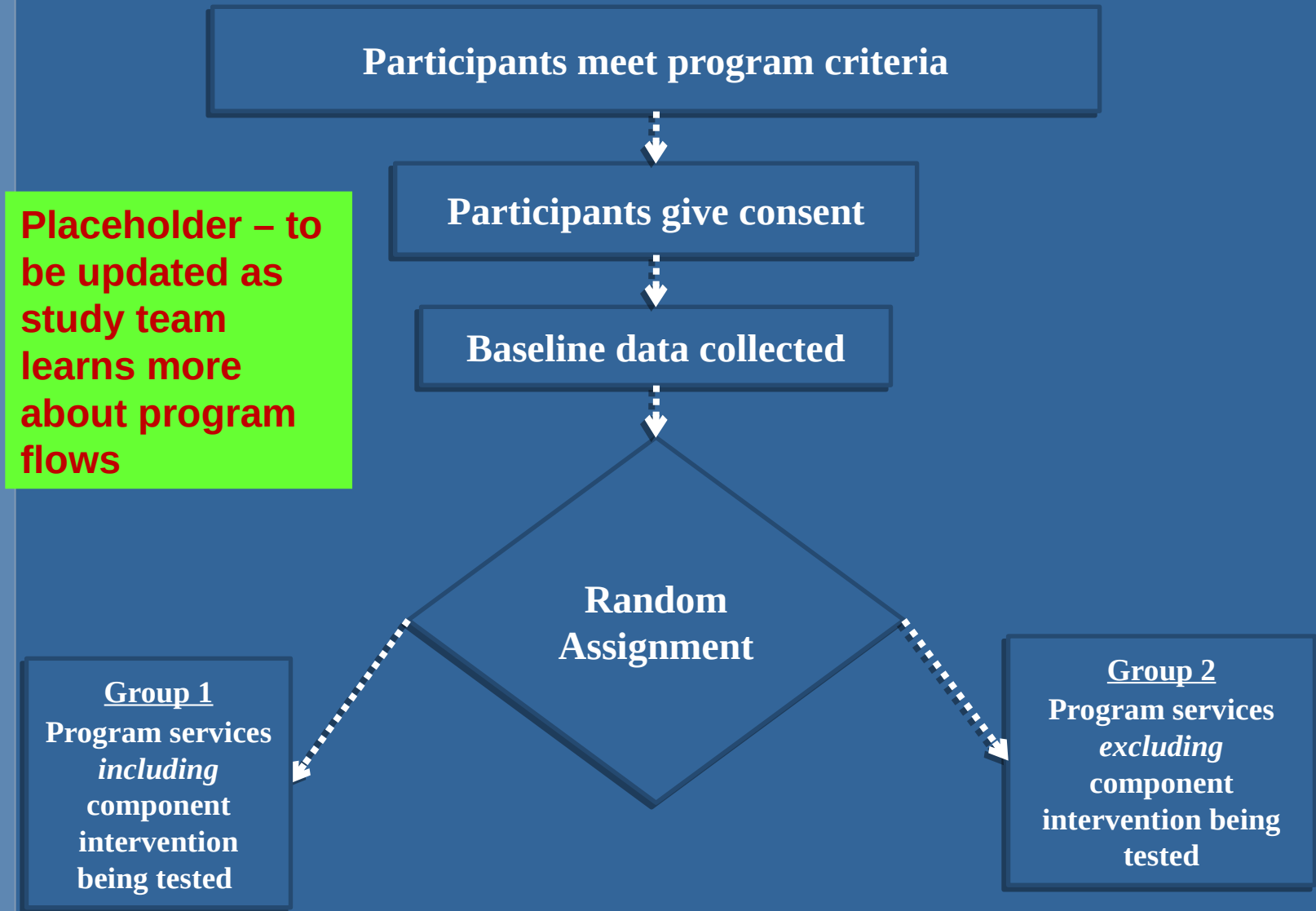
Random assignment

Placeholder for suggested chart/graph to explain random assignment



Without a comparison, Method 3 might appear to be the most effective.

Random assignment procedures



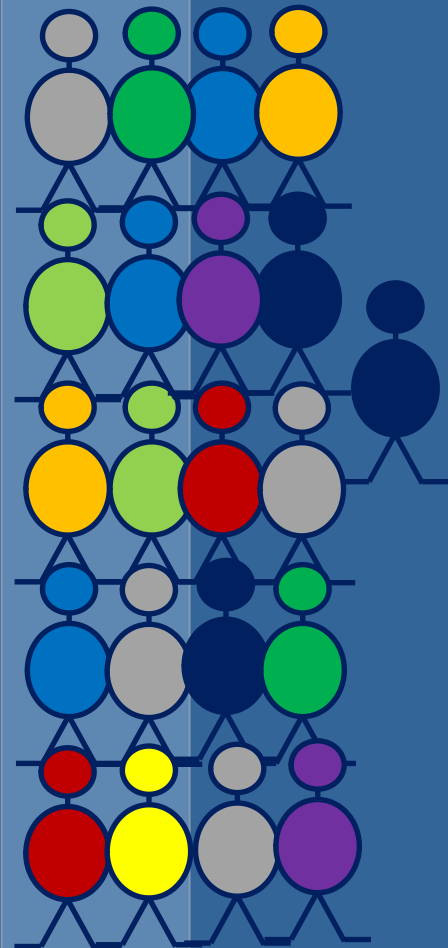
Example: co-parenting intervention

Participants
enroll

Placeholder example –
example of interventions to
be updated as the study
design process progresses

Fatherhood workshop
covering multiple topics

Parenting workshop
during group sessions
PLUS intensive co-
parenting curriculum



Program services to be studied

- Three areas will be tested
 - Parenting/co-parenting component(s)
 - Employment services component(s)
 - Recruitment and engagement
- Design process
 - Considering evidence-based or promising interventions
 - Also seeking to identify promising strategies fatherhood programs use
 - Each component likely to be tested at multiple program sites
 - Expect six programs will be chosen as study sites



Program services to be studied

- Sample parenting/co-parenting interventions
 - A.....
 - B.....
 - C.....
- Sample employment services interventions
 - D.....
 - E.....
 - F.....

**Placeholder slide –
potential interventions to
be filled in as the study
design process progresses**

Program recruitment & engagement

- Participant recruitment and engagement are challenging for many fatherhood programs
- B3 seeks to
 - Identify and test new approaches in this area
 - Apply learnings from behavioral economics
- The study team will help sites
 - Identify current challenges
 - Develop and quickly test new strategies
 - Use internal data to assess and refine enhancements

Study implementation

- Sample designs
 - Site already implementing strategy to be studied
 - Program recruits additional participants to a second group that gets some services but *not* the strategy being tested
 - Site not yet implementing strategy to be studied
 - Program provides half their participants with the intervention services as an *enhancement* to their existing program
- Study sites will be provided with resources to expand recruitment and/or add enhancements

Benefits of participation

- Program funding to support enhanced services and/or increased recruitment
- Expert technical assistance on
 - Participant recruitment and engagement,
 - Program service being tested, and
 - Study procedures
- Contribution to a growing evidence base that will help programs serve disadvantaged fathers more effectively
- Program-specific findings
- Increased visibility as part of a national study

Study team responsibilities

- Visit organizations to learn about program operations and brainstorm study options
- Facilitate meetings to design and plan study implementation
- Provide funding and other resources to support program enhancements and research activities
- Train and support program staff on study procedures
- Analyze data and produce reports
- Provide ongoing technical assistance to achieve highest-quality program enhancement and research procedures

Study site characteristics

- Programs funded through OFA Responsible Fatherhood grants and other sources
- Demonstrated experience running strong fatherhood programs
- Operating a strategy to be tested, or willing to implement new program enhancements
- Capacity to recruit and serve at least 500 fathers over 18 months
- Open to implementing evaluation processes, including random assignment

Study timeline

- 2015-2016: Site recruitment
- 2016-2017: Enrollment of fathers into the evaluation; sites receive evaluation support
- 2017: Implementation study report
- 2018: Impact study report
- 2019: Final synthesis report

Contact information

- [Placeholder to include contact information of presenters]

- NOTE: The Paperwork Reduction Act Statement: This collection of information is voluntary and will be used to gather preliminary information about the fatherhood field and explore with fatherhood programs the research questions that are of interest and the design options that are feasible. An agency may not conduct or sponsor, and a person is not required to respond to, a collection of information unless it displays a currently valid OMB control number. Send comments regarding this burden estimate or any other aspect of this collection of information, including suggestions for reducing this burden to Anna Solmeyer; anna.solmeyer@acf.hhs.gov; Attn: OMB-PRA (0970-0356).