

FOSTERING AND ADOPTION DISRUPTION RESEARCH

SECONDARY ANALYSIS

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“This report sets out findings from a secondary analysis of data gathered between 1982 and 1988 as part of a study of disruptions in permanent placements conducted by Strathclyde Regional Council and supported by the then Scottish Office. The author of this secondary analysis was the senior researcher of the original SRC team who undertook the work. The author has undertaken and funded the re-analysis of the data at his own request. The views and opinions expressed in the report are those of the author and are not necessarily those of the Scottish Executive”

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I Acknowledgements

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The author volunteered to carry out this Secondary Analysis of the Permanent Placements.

II Executive summary

II.1 The Strathclyde study remains the last, most comprehensive and inclusive study of disruptions. The Strathclyde study was exceptional in its comprehensive and inclusive nature and deserved to have a secondary analysis with a main focus upon the description and prediction of disruptions.

II.2 During the 1980's, local authorities and voluntary agencies in Scotland cultivated schemes for placing children in care with families on a permanent basis. Central to childcare policy in Strathclyde Regional Council was a belief that children have a right to family care. Of particular concern was the unhappiness which can be caused by placement disruptions, especially where continuous family care in the community was the goal.

II.3 Research was commissioned during 1982 to predict placement disruptions and the report was published in 1990 as FOSTERING AND ADOPTION DISRUPTION RESEARCH IN STRATHCLYDE REGION: THE PERMANENT PLACEMENTS. Scottish Office Central Research Unit Paper, Reference ISSN 0950-2254. This will be referred to in this report as the 'earlier study'.

II.4 This secondary analysis of the 1983-88 data has been undertaken to explore in greater depth, the factors leading to disruptions and the significance of these factors in explaining the process of disruption in the Strathclyde study. The aim of the re-analysis is to provide a basis for considering these factors as predictors of disruptions in permanent placements.

II.5 For the purposes of this study, the definition of a placement disruption shall mean that:

- there has been a disruption in the relationship between the child and the substitute family, or that a satisfactory relationship was never established;**
- that the child should be physically removed from the placement because of such problems in relationships;**
- or that the child should be physically removed from the placement because of other problems.**

II.6 Disruptions are important:

- to children and young people because they have lost continuity of care in their lives;**

- to foster and adoptive parents because all the material and emotional investment in the training, preparation and placement seems worthless;
- to some natural parents who are interested in the continuity of care for their children;
- to social workers because all the work and planning in placements has been brought to an untimely end;
- to other professionals like social work managers, GP's, psychiatrists, school teachers and researchers who have to cope with the difficulties involved;
- to everyone in society who may have to deal with the consequences of the broken dreams of children and young people when they become adults.

II.7 Disruptions in permanent placements have been studied before. Trasler [1960] used the case files and the childcare officers knew their case was in the study before disruption or three years. There were contacts with the foster parents, but no formal interviews. In the SRC study the inclusion of cases in the study was not revealed to social workers and formal interviews were conducted with foster / adoptive parents. The Strathclyde social workers, however, could have known of the existence of the disruption study. Parker [1966] limited his study to placement decisions. George [1970] used case records and mail questionnaires to social workers and foster parents. The low response to mail questionnaires was evident in the George's study. Berridge & Cleaver [1987] used social work records only in their extensive study and ten placements which disrupted in their intensive study. Borland, O'Hara and Triseliotis [1991] used case records, but reported a degree of inconsistency inherent in information from social workers during the placement.

II.8 Other research in this area identifies the following reasons for placement disruptions: poor capacity for emotional response in the child; effects of earlier rejection experiences upon the child; problems associated with backwardness in the child; inappropriate expectations of foster parents; lack of affection in the foster home; foster parent's behavioural difficulties; a change in circumstances of foster parents; and disagreements between foster parents and professionals.

II.9 In this study, a wider range of problems was studied and these are discussed in detail when identified as predictors of placement outcome.

II.10 The study design had several key elements:

- it was prospective and followed placements made in one year;
- it was a survey of practically all placements rather than a sample;
- it was longitudinal in that placements were examined [through forms] when they were made and through interviews when they ended or had lasted three years.

II.11 Core elements of the research were to:

- monitor, by the observation of official forms, the beginning and ending, if ended, of all 'hard-to-place', permanent, non-related foster and adoptive placements, made by Strathclyde Regional Council in one year, for a period of three years;
- examine the disruption rates for these placements for each year of a three-year period;
- and study, with regard to their relevance for disruptions, over one thousand background features.

II.12 This last aim – the predictive aim – is the focus of the secondary analysis.

II.13 The research was adventurous in gathering information about all placements from so many sources. As far as is known, this was the last study which focussed entirely upon disruptions in permanent placements.

II.14 Appropriate quantitative and qualitative methods for the collection and analysis of data were used which seemed appropriate: data collection from social work files, semi-structured interviews and questionnaires. Cartoon strips were devised and used depending upon the type of information sought from whom and where. Information gathered from case files focussed upon pre-placement characteristics and decisions. Information from interviews with foster / adoptive parents, social workers and children, concerned the placement and, if applicable, the ending. This involved asking different people the same questions about distinct stages of placements. All cases were studied intensively and involved over one thousand bits of quantitative information per case and masses of qualitative material.

II.15 The author was contracted by Strathclyde Regional Council to carry out a predictive study in 1982. A management committee for the research was set up with representatives from University, Scottish Office, Strathclyde Regional Council and the author and his research assistant, Helen Brownlie. The management committee met monthly near the beginning of the project and when required during the later stages. The management committee and the disruption research project were independent of the Strathclyde social work research unit.

II.16 Information about the beginning of placements was obtained through change of circumstances forms. These forms notify social work management about children being admitted to care, being discharged from care, and transfers of placement and other changes of circumstances such as a placement change from temporary to permanent with the same foster parents.

II.17 The end of placements were notified by administrative staff involved in the weekly returns of change of circumstances forms, adoption and fostering advisers and the computerised register of children in care. Fieldwork took place as soon as possible when a disruption occurred or after a placement had become established after three years. That is, 1983-1987. As eight placements disrupted in the first three months, the fieldwork could begin in 1983. Fieldwork continued

into 1987 when the last placements made in 1984 had lasted three years. Some interviews were conducted in 1988.

II.18 The major differences between the earlier work [1991] and the secondary analysis [2005] are:

- the secondary analysis contains a categorisation of the process of disruptions which was omitted from the first report;
- the emphasis is upon studying the factors that lead to disruptions in placements and not on describing fostering and adoption;
- the focus of the analysis is on developing an understanding of the interplay of these factors in order to develop predictive models;
- the secondary analysis reports upon the nature of the evidence about disruptions.

II.19 Main Findings

- Half of placements which disrupted did so within the first year.
- Over two fifths of placements disrupted within three years of being made.
- The process towards the disruption differed in every placement: sometimes it was seen as just wearing people down, sometimes a sibling placed with the study child was said to be involved, often the social workers felt that the placement should never have been made.
- Substitute parents and social workers frequently disagree about who was mainly responsible for the disruption, which problems combined to end the placement, and over which course the troubled waters ran. The various parties in disrupted placements also disagree, on many occasions, as to what should have been done to prevent the final split-up of children and their substitute parents.

II.20 Key Findings

- When all predictors of disruption and establishment in permanent placements are considered together, most of the variance is explained by the number of problems the child's social worker rated 'severe', during the placement. This accounts for two-thirds of the variance explained by the best five predictors.
- The second best predictor of disruptions / establishment was whether or not fostering / adoption literature was said to have been used during the assessment of the new parents.
- The third best predictor is the number of specific difficulties the social workers mentioned in giving support to the placement.
- The fourth and fifth best predictors explain 13% of the variance in the best five predictors. Where foster / adoptive parents recorded a higher problem score regarding the placement and where placements were said to be 'permanent', but 'time-related'. It is important to recognise that single variables, considered in isolation, are misleading.
- The variance between disruptions and established placements explained by these predictors is illustrated in the secondary analysis. The most important

group [n=34], for established placements, is contained in a category where there was only one disruption: where social workers reported fewer severe problems; literature had been used during assessment; and there were one or no difficulties in rendering social work support to the placement. [Disruption rate = 3%]

- The most important group for disruptions [91%] in thirty-four placements is where social workers reported four or more severe problems during the placement. That the disruption rate does not rise much higher when additional predictors are used indicates that the report of four or more severe problems in a placement, is the outstanding predictor of disruptions.
- II.21 Conclusion: In predictive analysis it is important to distinguish between stronger and weaker predictors. The best background predictors, available before the placements were made, explain only three-quarters of the variance that is explained by the three best placement predictors. What becomes apparent from this study is that what happens during a placement is more important for disruptions than the care used in assessing, matching and preparing parents for the placement. When social workers begin to perceive a number of 'severe problems' during a placement, and there are in addition, some difficulties in rendering support, post-disruption planning should begin, especially if that young person is twelve years of age and over, has 'emotional problems' in his / her 'profile' and the foster / adoptive family has one natural child of their own. This is not to suggest that the assessment and preparation stage should be neglected, rather those skilled social workers need more time to support placements.

III Aims and Objectives

III.1 This report presents a secondary analysis of the data on disruptions to permanent placements from the research carried out by the former Strathclyde Regional Council between 1982 and 1990.

III.2 The aims of the earlier study were to monitor, by the observation of official forms, the beginning and ending, if ended, of all 'hard-to-place', permanent, non-related foster and adoptive placements, made by Strathclyde Regional Council in one year, for a period of three years. To examine the disruption rates, for these placements, for each year of a three-year period. To study, with regard to their relevance for disruptions, a large number of background features from forms and interviews. This last objective - the predictive aim – is the focus of this study. The specific tasks undertaken to accomplish these aims are described under the following sections.

III.3 The rationale for this re-analysis are: the data set is the most comprehensive in the United Kingdom; it is the most recent study to focus entirely upon disruptions; it draws upon materials which were not used before.

IV Methods and Approach

IV. 1 There appears to have been little original data collected on disruptions since the Strathclyde study. Trasler [1960] extracted information from case notes about the child, natural parents and foster parents. He also reports 'contacts' with the child, foster parents and child care officers responsible for the case. These 'contacts' were not intended to be interviews, but to form impressions of placements. Parker [1966] focussed on one of the early stages of the fostering process, placement decisions, and used pre-placement data from case files only. Records of the child, natural family and foster family were examined. George [1970] used the case records of the child, natural parents and foster parents. He also used a mail questionnaire to childcare officers and foster parents. Berridge and Cleaver [1987] used social work records only in their main study. The Lothian study [1985] depended mainly upon forms and minutes of meetings. There was, however, a degree of inconsistency inherent in the Lothian data collection process. [Chapter 1.13]

IV.2 In this study, methods for the collection and analysis of data were chosen which seemed appropriate for quantitative and qualitative material: data collection from social work files, semi-structured interviews and questionnaires, including cartoon strips, were used depending upon the type of information sought from whom and where.

IV.3 In the earlier study, satisfaction in placements was investigated by asking children and young people what they thought and felt was limited to questions about the needs of children in care. The needs operationalised [by questionnaire and cartoons for younger children] were the need for love, new experiences, security, responsibility, praise, knowledge of identity, to have a social worker who knew them, to have their wishes and feelings taken into account and to maintain contact with their own culture. Care was taken to make sure the children and young people understood the concepts being used in the questions.

IV.4 However, as only seventy interviews could take place with children and young people, their answers could not be included in the predictive study of all the placements, as this would have entailed leaving forty-seven cases out of the analysis.

IV.5 Information gathered from case files focussed upon pre-placement characteristics and decisions. Information from interviews concerned the placement and, if applicable, their ending. All cases were studied intensively and involved over one thousand items of quantitative information per case. This involved asking different people the same questions about distinct stages of placements.

IV.6 The author conducted almost a third of the interviews and extractions from case records. A research assistant, Helen Brownlie, other research staff, social and residential workers, and early retirement social workers carried others out.

No social or residential worker was assigned to a case within his or her own current or former area.

IV.7 Irrespective of previous experience the interviewers were trained and briefed by the author. After interviewers had completed their first observed case, they were presented with written comments on the quality of their work. When the interviews and background information was returned, the author read, edited and coded them. Results were analysed using the Statistical Package for Social Sciences having recourse to the sub-programmes of frequencies, zero-order cross-tabulations, partial correlations and step-wise multiple regression and the appropriate statistics for levels of measurement.

Terms and Definitions

IV.8 After a review of literature, discussions with the management committee and social work advisors, a definition of a disruption was agreed. Trasler [1960] wrote of 'failures' when children were removed from long-term foster homes during a three-year period, whatever might be the immediate overt reason for this removal. He described 'success' in long-term foster placements, which had lasted three years and were rated 'excellent' by all judges. To Parker [1966] and George [1970] 'success' meant that a child remained permanently in the foster home during a period of five years. If he or she was removed during the period of five years, the placement was classified as a 'failure'. In Parker's study, if a child was removed because of the death or the long-term illness of one foster parent, he asked if the circumstances leading up to the removal were such that they might have caused the foster parent's own child to be cared for by someone else. If the answer was 'no' the placement was classified as a failure. Berridge & Cleaver [1987] defined 'long term fostering' as having been planned to last at least three years and a 'breakdown' as a placement ending before the three years that was not included in the social work plan, either in the ending itself or the timing of the termination.

IV.9 During the 1970's a new term had been introduced to replace 'failure' and 'breakdown' of substitute family placements. The premature ending of a placement was called a 'disruption' of the care plan. The term has been most commonly used in discussions of adoptive placements, but was later used in all sorts of substitute family placements. Donely [1978], who introduced the term, defined a disruption as '...the interruption of an adoptive placement, after the actual placement of the child, and before confirmation or finalisation of the legal adoption process.'

IV.10 Berridge & Cleaver [1987], believed that the term 'breakdown' was more appropriate to the premature ending of long-term foster placements, considering 'disruption' to be a euphemism suggesting a 'temporary set-back to the care plan and an unfortunate hiccup for the social worker'. In their research, the unplanned changes in placement were often highly distressing to children and foster parents. They suggested that a more extensive use of the term 'breakdown' might result in greater sensitivity in managing children's care careers.

IV.11 In Borland et al [1991], the term 'disruption' was applied to any placement which was intended to be permanent, but which ended by the child leaving or being removed from the family before reaching the age of sixteen.

IV.12 In this study, non-related and permanent substitute family placements which may have ended with a disruption, or become established, are investigated.

IV.13 The placements are *non-related* in that there is no extended family relationship between the child and the substitute parents. The placements are *permanent* in intention where the decision to place includes a definite plan that the child will remain in that placement until reaching independence, leaving care, or moving on to adoption by the substitute parents. The placements are *substitute family placements* that can be either permanent fostering, or adoption after fostering, or adoption after a family placement. Some placements are reckoned to be 'time-related' when they involve teenagers preparing for independence. Upon questioning the social workers involved, these 'time-related' placements were also regarded as permanent until independence and were included in the analysis.

IV.14 For the purposes of this study, the definition of a placement *disruption* shall mean that:

- [1] there has been a disruption in the relationship between the child and the substitute family, or that a satisfactory relationship was never established, and
- [2] that the child should be physically removed from the placement because of such problems in relationships, or
- [3] that the child should be physically removed from the placement because of other problems.

IV.15 The child's withdrawal from the placement may be requested by the foster/adoptive parents, the social worker or by the child/young person. There was one case in this study, however, where the social work department ended the foster placement and a disruption meeting was held, but the teenager refused to leave the house of the previous foster parents. This was classified as a 'disruption to the social work plan'.

Contrast groups: established and disrupted groups.

IV.16 An *established* placement, in this study, is either one, which has lasted three years or until the young person reaches independence. Only a few 'time-related' placements, which lasted one year or more before independence, were included in the study.

IV.17 This study seeks to avoid the words 'success', 'failure' and 'breakdown'. Some the placements which lasted longer than three years may not have

flourished in every respect. Also, there are a minority of placements which disrupt after three years. For this reason the choice was made to call placements which last three years or until independence, 'established', as it was thought that that three years is an adequate test of 'establishment'.

IV.18 It was also thought that the term 'disruption' is more appropriate than 'breakdown' or 'failure'. With some unplanned endings, the substitute parents and children parted amicably. Here, indeed, was a disruption in the care career of the child and the original social work plan but little, if any, distress. In other endings, the lives of the foster/adoptive parents and children were disrupted in a grave way. It was difficult to classify amicable endings as breakdowns, but believe that the term 'disruption' covers situations which have something in common: the interruption of the social work care plan.

Monitoring

IV.19 In Strathclyde there was an urban centre [Glasgow, Scotland], large and small towns, villages and more isolated areas including islands. Placements made by area and specialists teams were included and social workers and families were not informed that their case was included in the research until the interviews were arranged after the placement had ended or lasted three years.

IV.20 The sample population included all placements made in one year. The only sampling procedure took place where siblings were placed together and one was selected, by random methods, at the beginning of the placement, for follow up. It was thought it would be placing too large a burden on families to follow up on all siblings placed together.

IV.21 Information about the beginning of placements was obtained through 'change of circumstances' forms. These forms notify social work management about children being admitted to care, being discharged from care, and transfers of placement and other changes of circumstances such as a placement change from temporary to permanent with the same foster parents.

IV.22 The ends of placements were notified by administrative staff involved in the weekly returns of 'change of circumstances' forms, adoption and fostering advisers and the computerised register of children in care.

IV.23 A total of two-hundred-and-fifteen non-related permanent substitute family placements were made in the one year of monitoring, but eighty-eight of these were 'easy-to-place' children, mainly infants. Most were 'hard-to-place' over two-year-olds, but five 'hard-to-place' under two-year-olds were included in the study. But this involved one-hundred-and-fifty-eight children: one-hundred-and-two single placements; nineteen of two siblings; six with three siblings placed together. When one child was selected, by random methods, there were one-hundred-and-twenty-seven placements to examine. Ten of these had to be withdrawn from the study because:

[a] with seven teenagers the placement was expected to be permanent until independence and this involved a period of less than one year. It was decided to exclude such placements, if they ended as planned, as they could not be

appropriately considered as demonstrating factors associated with placements that became established.

[b] A few placements were reported as permanent placements, but it was discovered that they had been made before the year of monitoring. This left one-hundred-and-seventeen placements for detailed investigation.

IV.24 When considering disruption rates one should remember that the children and young people in this study are older than those in samples which have included babies and infants. Trasler [1960] reported that terminations in placements tended to occur early, the first two years of fostering being particularly vulnerable with three-quarters of all breakdowns taking place within this period. Parker [1966] and George [1970] report very similar findings as Trasler. Berridge and Cleaver [1987] report that of all planned long-term placements that eventually broke down, 40% were terminated during the first year with a further 20% occurring within the second year. The Lothian study [Borland, O'Hara & Triseliotis 1989] suggests that the type of placement included in any study will influence the disruption rates.

IV.25 In this study the disruption rate of 'hard-to-place' children in permanent non-related placements was 43% [i.e. fifty out the one-hundred-and-seventeen studied].

Table 1. The disruption rate over time.

Disruptions occurring within:	3 months	6 months	9 months	1 year	2 years	3 years
Number	8	14	21	24	39	50
% of all disruptions	16	28	42	48	78	100
% of all placements	6.83	11.96	17.94	20.51	32.47	42.73

IV.26 That so many placements disrupted caused a great deal of sorrow, but also made an excellent base from which to contrast disruptions with established placements.

The pilot study

IV. 27 The aims of the pilot study, before final questionnaire / schedule writing, were to explore how best to phrase which questions. With extractions from case notes the purpose was to investigate which questions were answered most frequently.

IV.28 After preliminary discussions with foster and adoption advisers, and a scrutiny of the relevant research literature, the pilot study instruments were

constructed for interviews and recording background information about children, natural and foster / adoptive parents.

IV.29 Twenty cases: ten disruptions and ten established placements were included. The ten disruptions occurred in placements made before the monitoring period and established placements were the first ten in the major study which had lasted three years. These established placements were studied in detail, in order to make any changes to the research instruments and to pass on major lessons to other interviewers about established placements.

IV.30 The cases included in the pilot studies were selected from across the Strathclyde region. After the pilot, questionnaires and schedules were written and cartoons drawn for interviewing younger children.

The sampling strategy

IV.31 The earlier research was based upon a survey of all hard to place children and young people placed in one year. The only sampling procedure took place where two or more siblings were placed together and one was selected by random methods for inclusion in the survey. Trasler [1960] included in his study sample children who had experienced a failure in a long-term foster home during a three year period [n=57]. His contrast group were children who were judged to be satisfactorily placed in foster homes for longer than three years [n=81], but this group did not include all placements which lasted longer than three years. Parker [1966] used the records of 209 children and an arbitrary five-year criteria of success and failure. He only included children who were on, or before, their 13th birthday. George [1970] studied 201 placements for five years or until terminated before five years. He also excluded children who had passed their 13th birthday. Berridge and Cleaver [1987] analysed the social work records of 189 long-term, non-related, foster placements. They used an arbitrary three-year test of success [n=117] and breakdown [n=72]. In the Lothian Study, a total of forty placements out of one-hundred-and-ninety-four made during the study period had subsequently disrupted, and those formed the sample of disrupted placements. It was agreed to form the on-going sample from a group of sixty placements from the remaining one-hundred-and-fifty-four placements which were continuing. It was further decided that the sixty would be stratified to include 60% of young people who were over ten years of age and 40% of children aged two to ten at placement.

IV.32 In this study, the permanent non-related placements of difficult to place children were made in one year by Strathclyde Regional Council Social Work Department. There were one-hundred-and-seventeen placements in the study and an arbitrary length of three years was used to divide disruptions from established placements.

Response rates

IV.33 This study used all the case records and had a high response rate in interviews with foster and adoptive parents, social workers for the child and substitute families. Trasler [1960], Parker [1966], and Berridge & Cleaver [1987] included the case files for all the children in their samples of placements. George [1970] also included the case records of all the children in his study and received mail questionnaires from twenty-eight child care officers for all the two-hundred-and-one cases in the sample. The response rate for mail questionnaires to foster homes, however, was 67%. The Lothian research team [1991] found a degree of inconsistency inherent in some aspects of their data collection process.

IV.34 In this study, we will now examine the response rate and reasons for non-response for the complete study [n=117]. All the case notes were examined. Three substitute families did not take part because one family had emigrated; another refused to take part without giving a reason; and one because they did not want the child's name to appear again in any social work records following adoption. In one case, no social worker would take responsibility to be interviewed about the placement. Four social workers for the family [link workers] did not take part for the following reasons: emigrated; left Strathclyde and could not be found; no social worker would take responsibility; left the area team and could not be found.

IV.35 There were also seventy interviews with children by either questionnaires or cartoons. Nine were too young to take part; with seven, communication was difficult; five refused an interview themselves and thirteen substitute parents did not want the child to be involved. In thirteen cases, it was decided that there was too long a time between the disruption and interview for reliable remembrances. The children / young people survey will not be taken forward to the predictive chapter as this would mean having forty-seven missing cases.

IV.36 The most striking difference between this and other studies is the percentage of children aged under five years at age of placement: Trasler [50%]; Parker [55%]; George [59%]; Berridge & Cleaver [52%]; this study [19%]. The Lothian study was more comparable [18.5%].

Disruptions: A discussion of the evidence.

IV.37 A number of critical issues have surrounded the disruption debate such as: what is a disruption; how long do placements last before they disrupt; how many placements actually disrupt; what are the major reasons leading to a disruption; should some placements have been made? Trasler [1960] identified with confidence the following reasons for failures in foster placements: poor capacity for emotional response in the child [30%]; effects of earlier rejection experiences upon the child [56%]; problems associated with "backwardness" in the child [12%]; inappropriate expectations of foster parents [23%]; lack of affection in the foster home [20%]; other inadequacies in foster parents [26%]. Two or three reasons were identified in some placements. Parker [1966] investigated the pre-placement predictors of success and failure without noting the reasons leading up to a breakdown. George [1970] identified the following main reasons for failures in his study: child behavioural difficulties [33%]; foster parent's

behavioural difficulties [22%]; both child and foster parents behaviour [30%]; a change in circumstances of foster parents [15%]. Berridge & Cleaver [1987] reported that the primary reasons given in social work records for long-term fostering breakdowns were focussed upon the child and the placement [37%], the placement [31%], the child [20%], foster parents and placement [3%], the child and foster parents and placement [3%], child and foster parent [1%], natural parent [1%], other reasons [4%]. They comment that many foster parents were clearly unprepared for the sorts of demands that severely emotionally deprived children would make on them. They also reported that 'placement focussed' reasons for breakdown [n=22] were extremely varied and give as examples: foster mother pregnant, foster parents moving to Scotland, disagreements between foster parents and professionals, and foster mother received in-patient treatment for depression. The Lothian study [1991] found an average disruption rate over a minimum of three years – maximum of five years period to be 21%. The disruption rate for children under nine years of age was only 6%, but rose to 30% for those nine years and over.

IV.38 In this study, fifty placements disrupted within three years of being made [43%]. These will be contrasted with the sixty-seven placements [57%] which lasted three years or more, or ended as planned within one to three years of being made.

IV.39 Two placements lasted less than one month with another six disrupting within three months of being made. Inside the first five months almost one-quarter of disruptions occurred [24%]. Before ten months, almost half of all placements that were going to disrupt within three years had done so. Three quarters of disruptions were over in slightly less than two years. In general, there was an initial sharp rise in disruptions in the first year since placements were made, followed by a more gradual increase in the following two years. [Mean 14.7 months; standard deviation 10.6 months].

The view of the substitute parents :

IV.40 Nineteen foster/adoptive parents said that disruptions took place without much warning. In other disruptions the warning lights were flashing well in advance of the actual ending, with three substitute parents saying they felt the placement would end sometime within a year or more in advance of the disruption.

IV.41 In just over two-fifths of disruptions, the foster/adoptive parents saw the study child alone, as the principal actor in ending the placement. In more than three-quarters of the disruptions, the substitute parents felt that the study child alone, or with others, had played a major role in the premature ending. In seven cases, the foster/adoptive parents acknowledged that they played an important part in the disruption. As we shall see later, the view of who was principally involved in the disruption contrasts sharply between substitute parents and social workers.

IV.42 After discussing problems the substitute parents experienced during the placement, they were asked to indicate those that made them think the child/young person had left them.

IV.43 No clear pattern emerges in the total problem content leading to disruptions. There were almost as many answers to this question as there were disruptions. The most frequently mentioned combinations of dilemmas emerge in placements which included the personal characteristics of the child placed; behaviour of the study child towards substitute parent; problems with the Social Work Department. Although there is a wide diversity of combinations of problems leading to disruptions, the characteristics of the study child was mentioned as a problem in three-fifths of disruptions.

IV.44 After foster/adoptive parents had indicated the problems which seemed to lead to disruptions, they were asked, if they could, to list these problems according to their order of importance to the ending of the placement. Five substitute parents found this task impossible as they felt that all problems were of equal importance in the disruption.

IV.45 By using the first three problems which were ranked, there were almost as many answers as there were disruptions. The major exceptions being the foster/adoptive families who ranked: [1] the study child's characteristics; [2] his/her behaviour to the substitute family; [3] the study child's conduct to the community. The one type of problem, which was most frequently ranked by foster/adoptive parents as having the greatest importance in disruptions, was the personal characteristics of the study child, which appeared in two-fifths of disruptions [40%].

IV.46 Five foster/adoptive parents, with hindsight, saw the placements as doomed to failure even before they began. For example, Brian's foster parents said the placement contained a negative lesson for them.

'This was a case of institutionalisation that he couldn't overcome.'

Brian's social worker agreed, *'I felt he should not have got into that fostering situation. There was not enough preparation or assessment of Brian.'*

These five placements are categorised as 'precursive disruptions' as they demonstrate fault-lines, which suggest that such placements should never have been made.

IV.47 The words 'wearing', 'slit', 'cracked' and 'volcanic' were used or implied by respondents to describe the process of disruption.

IV.48 Nine foster/adoptive parents described 'wearing placements' where no clear divisions seemed to occur, but they were gradually worn down emotionally by the slow, but persistent pressure upon them.

IV.49 Ten foster/adoptive parents saw the process towards disruption beginning with tiny 'slits' in the placement like that which Kevin's social worker observed an 'own child' gradually changing. These tiny 'slits', unnoticed at first, began to

lead to a gradual widening of divisions in relationships until the disruption seemed almost inevitable.

IV.50 Twenty-one foster/adoptive parents observed a clear 'crack' developing in the placement, which led, in their view, to the disruption. For example, Harry's foster mother saw the placement 'cracked' open by the Social Work Department's accusation of alcohol dependence. The social worker agreed that the 'crack' appeared. 'The drink problem was the main worry and the lack of trust this built up between the Social Work Department and the foster parents due to the foster mother's denial of alcohol dependence.' This case was followed in great detail and there was no conclusive proof that the foster mother had a drink problem.

IV.51 Only Betty's substitute parents saw the disruption as 'volcanic', and maintained that they did not expect her to leave them, right up to an emotional outburst which flowed over them all with surprising force. The social worker for Betty disagreed, in that she saw a 'crack' developing in the placement when the marital life-style was put under stress, until the foster mother began to cope by distancing herself from Betty. The social worker for the foster family thought the placement should have been stopped during the introduction, which suggests that she saw the disruption as 'precursive'.

IV.52 Two foster/adoptive parents saw the process towards disruption being mainly dominated by a sibling placed with the study child. For example, in one case the foster parents felt sorry for Anne when her placement ended after two years.

'She was coming on super. Sorry she had to leave with her sister.'

The problems in the sibling placed with Anne were said to be too much for them.

IV.53 The social worker for Anne disagreed when she said that the placement was a mis-match, with children from a working class and institutionalised background placed with middle class parents, who had high expectations. The assessing social worker for the family told the foster parents, during their assessment, about behaviours with which they might have to cope. She admitted to, '*...almost trying to put them off.*' To the social worker, this was a 'precursive disruption'.

IV.54 Looking at disruptions through the eyes of the foster/adoptive parents suggests that few disruptions, if any, followed exactly the same course. The principal component, however, was seen as the characteristics of the child/young person placed. In the next section we shall view the same disruptions from the perspective of the social workers.

The view of the social workers:

IV.55 Social workers often use different sets of actors as those mainly responsible for the disruption, and their emphasis on the same actors varies widely. In almost one third of disruptions, the social workers for the child thought the foster/adoptive parents and the study child were mainly responsible for the ending, compared with only one-tenth of substitute parents who shared this view.

Another major difference emerges where social workers attributed one-tenth of disruptions to the study child alone, compared with two-fifths of substitute parents. In eight disruptions, the social worker for the child saw the foster/adoptive parents as mainly responsible for the ending. No substitute parent shared this view.

IV.56 After discussing the problems the social workers for the child saw in the placement, they were asked to indicate those, which they thought, contributed to the disruption. As with foster/adoptive parents, there are almost as many combinations of problems in answer to this question, as there were disruptions. In thirty-two disruptions, however, the characteristics of the child were listed as a contributory influence.

IV.57 When the social workers were asked to rank the problems in order of significance to the disruption, the most common answer came from eight workers who felt they could not list the problems in this way, as a number of dilemmas had equal significance.

IV.58 By using the first three problems ranked according to their importance to the disruption, we find almost as many answers [38] as there were disruptions [50]. Looking at the first two problems most frequently mentioned, we find four social workers saying that these were: [1] the characteristics of the study child; [2] the behaviour of the study child to the foster/adoptive family.

IV.59 If one concentrates attention on the one most important problem type in the disruption, the characteristics of the child is mentioned by social workers in fourteen disruptions. Although social workers agree with foster/adoptive parents that the characteristics of the study child was most important in contributing to disruptions, they are much more likely than substitute parents to mention the foster/adoptive family as playing a major role. For instance, in twenty-two disruptions [44%], the social workers mention something about the foster / adoptive parents, and/or their families, as having greatest significance in disruptions.

IV.60 After consulting social workers about problems and their importance in disruptions, the workers for the child were asked to comment whether or not one problem led to another? If they were connected, how were they joined? Were there some single and unrelated problems, which complicated matters?

IV.61 The process towards disruption, which they described, could be classified in the same way as the foster/adoptive parent answers, even though they were describing different routes in the same disruptions. The most obvious differences occur where placements were seen by the social workers as 'precursive' or 'cracked', and the social workers do not acknowledge the role of the sibling of the study child as playing the most vital part in the disruption.

IV.62 Many more social workers than foster/adoptive parents were able, with hindsight, to identify reasons why the placements should never have been made. In the assessment, preparation and introductions they were much more likely than foster/adoptive parents to see precursive fault-lines which would inevitably

widen into disruptions. On the other hand, the substitute parents were much more likely than social workers to see 'cracks' appearing in the placements, after they were made, many of which they attributed to the Social Work Department. Overall, the different view of the process towards disruption, held by the two groups, is not large.

Table 2. Substitute parent & social worker view of the process towards disruption.

	Substitute parents		Social workers	
	n	%	n	%
Don't know/ no interview	2	4	2	4
Precursive	5	10	12	24
Wearing	9	18	8	16
Slit	10	20	12	24
Cracked	21	42	15	30
Volcanic	1	2	1	2
Sibling	2	4	0	0
	50	100	50	100
Difference index=16%				

The difference index is calculated out of the total differences in row percentages divided by two, as its potential is 200.

The ending of placements.

IV.63 The foster/adoptive parents and social workers often disagree as to how a placement ended, but there is broad agreement between them as to who asked for the placement to prematurely end. The study child was involved in requesting the ending in twenty-two placements and in thirteen of those he/she was alone responsible for this request. Sometimes, however, this request was at a non-verbal level, which could involve running away from the foster/adoptive home. The substitute parents were involved in requesting the ending of thirty cases and they were personally responsible in twenty-two of these. The Social Work Department was alone responsible for demanding, or suggesting, four endings and was involved with others in asking for eight disruptions. Natural parents played some part in ending two disrupted placements and the children of the foster parents asked, or rather pleaded, that one placement should end.

IV.64 Half of the foster/adoptive parents who experienced a disruption felt that something could have been done, which was not done, to prevent it. For example:

'If we'd got him younger it might have been different. Had we got a three-year-old we might have done better.'

'If things about the child had been explained to us and not hidden, I wouldn't have accepted the responsibility [Mrs].' *'I would have accepted him, but it would have been easier if things about the child had been explained. [Mr]'*

'The Social Work Department should have been letting her have contact with her mum instead of her getting mum's address in a Christmas present and going of her own accord. She had a pipe dream about her mother.'

IV.65 The foster/adoptive parents give widely varying responses about what could have been done to prevent the disruption, but the clearest message from them was given by eleven substitute parents who felt they should have had more support from the social workers in terms of information, counselling and visits. For instance, one foster parent said:

'There should have been more support from the Social Work Department. They should have been doing something about the problems we experienced. Also, we should have been given the written information that we got at the end, much earlier, saying that the sibling of the [study] child had been to child guidance. If we had known this in the first six months of the placement, it would have helped us understand his stealing.'

IV.66 The foster/adoptive parents gave numerous single answers as to why something was not done to prevent the disruption, but named the social workers on fourteen occasions: social work inflexibility [4]; social workers did not maintain contact with past carers [2]; social workers had to keep us in ignorance to get the child placed [2]; the social worker was doing a job we saw as interference[1]; our link worker said she didn't know what the child was like [1]; the matching was wrong [1]; there was a dispute between social workers as to what to do [1]; the social workers were stupid, incompetent and didn't know what to do [2].

IV.67 Out of fifty disruptions, twenty-seven social workers for the child thought that something could have been done, that was not done, to prevent the disruption.

IV.68 Seven social workers felt that there could have been better planning for the welfare of the child. For example:

'We could have moved the child when it was still a temporary placement.'

'Court proceedings fell through due to poor representation by the lawyer. The Court presentation by the Social Work Department's lawyer was poor. We discussed the representation with him on two occasions beforehand, but he didn't ask the questions.'

IV.69 Five workers said there should have been more contact between the foster/adoptive parents and a social worker. For example:

'The Department could have tried to sort things out had they known about the problems.'

'We should have confronted the adoptive parents a lot earlier. I'd shown my anger to my senior regarding their attitude to me. She said, "adoptive parents tended not to like social workers.'"

'There should have been more confrontation with the adoptive parents, more emphasis on regular visiting and contacts should have been much more intense than they were.'

IV.70 Numerous single answers were given by social workers for the child as to why something was not done to prevent the disruption and only six answers occurred more than once. These were: the placement was too far from the social workers [3]; the foster parents were resisting the social workers [2]; social workers thought it was in the best interests of the child to do nothing [2]; the area team did not follow an active policy towards fostering [2]; there should have been a link worker for the substitute family all the time [2]; the problems did not emerge until it was too late to do anything about them [2].

IV.71 In approximately half of the disruptions the foster/adoptive parents and/or the social worker felt something could have been done, that was not done, to prevent the ending. When questioned about why this was not done, many foster/adoptive parents tended to turn upon the social workers, but on only four occasions do the social workers reflect the lack of saving action back to the foster/adoptive parents. The social workers were much more concerned with such questions as lack of foster groups, the pressure of other social work upon them, the distance of the placement from them, the belief that their senior persuaded them from taking saving action, that such action was not departmental policy and that their area team was not following a strong course in fostering.

IV.72 At least six weeks after the disruption, the older children and young people who filled in a questionnaire, were invited to say why they left the placement. Many did not want to comment and no pressure was put upon them to do so.

IV.73 Commenting upon, 'What they did', the most common answers were: *just walked out, couldn't cope, couldn't settle, just drifted apart, didn't have anything in common with them, displeased them*. For example:

'She [foster mother] was trying to make my life a misery and I could not let her, so I said I wanted to leave.'

'I felt I couldn't cope.'

'I thought they were far too old for me. I wanted to do things that they didn't want me to do. They didn't like my friends and I didn't like them for not liking the things I liked.'

IV.74 Other replies, or combinations of replies, were given by individual young people such as: *they [foster parents] had the problem; they didn't want me; my*

social worker felt I should leave; I just left to stay with my mother; I was fighting with the foster parents and I was angry with myself.

IV.75 Writing about, 'what anyone else did' to end the placement, the most common answers from the young people were: *foster parents behaved badly; foster parents lacked understanding; foster parents asked the social worker to move me; the foster parents couldn't cope with the trouble I was having in the district; people in the district were behaving badly to me.* For example:

'The foster mother lost her temper, argued and flung a plate.'

'I hated them all, and I felt as if my mind was cracking up, putting things into my head about Jesus Christ, and if I wasn't baptised God would come any day, or any moment, and take the Christians away, and leave all the one's who weren't. That frightened me a lot.'

'I feel the foster mother was spoiled when she was young and wanted everything her own way.'

'Really because I hated staying there.'

'Some people in the district got me into trouble.'

'A lot of boys surrounded me and one boy beat me this time.'

IV.76 From the children/young people who experienced a disruption, and also filled in a questionnaire, it was fairly clear from their replies that they often held different views of the premature ending of their placement than that presented by substitute parents and social workers.

'She [foster mother] 'phoned the social worker to pick me up.'

'The foster mother 'phoned the social worker and told her she wanted me to move that day. I was quite glad.'

V Analysis of the process of disruptions

V.1 Disruptions occur after placements have lasted varying times which allow for different developments. Often the social worker for the child, who was involved at the time of the placement, has been replaced. Frequently the link worker for the foster/adoptive family has been withdrawn.

V.2 Substitute parents and social workers frequently disagree about who was mainly responsible for the disruption, which problems combined to end the placement, and over which course the troubled waters ran. The various parties in disrupted placements also disagree, on many occasions, as to what should have been done to prevent the final split-up of children and their substitute parents.

V.3 There seems to be agreement between social workers and substitute parents that the characteristics of the children were of great importance in the

disruptions. At least three notes of caution should be given here: [1] characteristics of children include physical, mental and emotional problems; [2] there may be children with similar characteristics in the established placements [contrast group] and their problems may have been overcome by different coping methods and greater levels of support; [3] although the largest group of social workers [28%], see the characteristics of the child as most important in disruptions, there are twenty-two disruptions [44%] where they mention something about the substitute families and/or their families as having greatest significance in disruptions.

Types of family placements.

V.4 Before we proceed to the main aim of this research: to study, with regard to their relevance for disruptions, a large number of back-ground features, we should be aware that some placements which became permanent during the year of monitoring, began as temporary placements during that year. The nature of placements in this study, when first made, is given below:

Table 3. 'Which type of family placement was this when it was first made?'

	n	%
Temporary [permanence not visualised]	10	8.5
Temporary [trial period before permanence]	3	2.6
Time-related [permanent until independence]	22	18.8
Permanent fostering	34	29.1
Fostering with a view to adoption	45	38.5
Family placement with a view to adoption	3	2.6
Total	117	100.0

VI Findings

Prelude to findings.

VI.1 Of the one-thousand-two-hundred variables in this study approximately five-hundred-and-fifty were drawn from interviews with foster / adoptive parents and social workers; one-hundred from interviews / cartoons with children; fifty from interviews with current carers following a disruption. These variables could have been influenced by hindsight upon a placement, which disrupted or became established. Approximately five-hundred were drawn from case notes written before the placement, which could have been available to those making the placement and were not influenced by case clues.

VI.2 The information from children and current carers was withdrawn from the multivariate analysis because, in the case of children, only seventy took part, and current carers were only interviewed where there had been a disruption.

VI.3 The method for selecting variables for comment in this chapter was to correlate all interview questions, [except questions to children and current carers], and background notes, with disruptions and established placements, and select those for further analysis which were statistically significant. [.001 level] This reduced the list to approximately fifty variables. These were prepared for predictive analysis by splitting them into two categories by whether or not individual values were above or below the normal disruption rate for the sample. This procedure further reduced the list of variables to thirty-eight which had a strong relationship with disruptions / established placements. [.30] We used Pearson's R to measure the strength of relationship between variables at the interval level. This can be used with dichotomies. The scale is -100 to +100 with higher numbers denoting a stronger relationship between two variables. The minus [-] sign will be used when established placements are being emphasised. That is, a low disruption rate.

Variables in multivariate analysis.

VI.4 The following is a list of significant and strongly related variables used together with disrupted and established placements in multivariate analysis.

Characteristics of children.

- 1. Age of child /young person at placement [.41].**
- 2. Background profiles on the child suggested emotional problems [.40].**
- 3. Case notes reported that the first grounds of referral to the Reporter to the Panel were either ' beyond parental control', 'falling into bad associations' or 'alleged to have committed an offence' [.37].**
- 4. Social workers for the child said that the views of the study child played little or no part in making placement decisions [-.35].**
- 5. Social workers said that the child did not really understand the role of the Social Work Department in his / her life [-.34].**

Characteristics of foster or adoptive parents.

- 6. Families had fostered / adopted babies before the study child [-.31].**
- 7. Assessing social workers said that the new parents had a good understanding of the tasks involved and could handle a lot of problems [-.32].**
- 8. Foster / adoptive parents applied specifically to foster or adopt the study child [-.35].**
- 9. Foster or adoptive parents had one child of their own at placement [.32].**
- 10. Social workers or case notes reported that fostering or adoption literature was used during assessments [-.40].**
- 11. Link social workers mentioned childlessness as a motivating influence during the recruitment of the foster or adoptive parents [-.35].**

Making the placement.

12. Placements were said to be 'time-related' [.34]. These include the specialist 'community parent' team and other such placements made by area teams. 'Community parents' placements compared to other placements, have lesser significance and strength of relationship with placement outcomes [.22] than all 'time-related' placements considered together [.34]. This suggested that time-related placements, not made by a specialist scheme, are less likely to succeed.

Problems during the placement.

[a] Foster / adoptive parent view.

13. Foster / adoptive parents were concerned about the behaviour of the study child with / towards members of the local community [.35].

14. Foster / adoptive parents were concerned about the personal characteristics of a member of their household, excluding study children [.35].

15. Foster / adoptive parents were concerned about the personal characteristics of the study child [.33].

16. Foster / adoptive parents were concerned about the behaviour of a member of their household towards the study child [.42].

17. Foster / adoptive parents mentioned four or more severe problems during the placement [.43].

18. Foster / adoptive parents recorded a higher problem score [25+] regarding the placement [.50].

[b] View of social workers.

19. Placements had poor relationships between the study child and other children [.35].

20. Workers for child said there were severe problems in the characteristics of the study child during the placement [.33].

21. Workers for the child said there were severe concerns about the behaviour of the study child to the foster / adoptive family [.36].

22. Workers for the child mentioned severe problems in the lifestyle of the foster / adoptive parents [.40].

23. Workers for the child mentioned severe problems in the characteristics of a member or members of the foster / adoptive household, excluding study children [.43].

24. Workers for the child mentioned severe emotional issues in the characteristics of the study child [.38].

25. Workers for the child mentioned severe problems in how a member or members of the foster / adoptive family were behaving towards the study child [.44].

26. Workers for the child said there were severe concerns about the behaviour of the study child to the foster / adoptive family [.34].

27. Workers for the child said there were severe problems with the Social Work Department during the placement [.42].

28. Workers for the child said there were four or more severe concerns during the placement [.63].

Social work support during the placement.

[a] View of foster / adoptive parents.

29. Foster / adoptive parents said they experienced no severe problems, or were prepared for them all [-.41].

30. Foster / adoptive parents said the Social Work Department did nothing about some severe problems [.43]. It is fitting at this point to mention that some of these foster / adoptive parents said that there was little or nothing the Social Work Department could have done about some concerns.

[b] View of the social workers.

31. Workers for the child said nothing was done about some severe problems, during the placement [.38]. Again, it was sometimes stated that nothing could have been done.

32. Social workers mentioned there was a lack of confrontational work with problems during the placement [.33].

33. Social workers said that there were support difficulties because foster / adoptive parents let issues build up [.36].

34. Social workers said there were support difficulties due to lack of confrontational work with problems [.38].

35. Social workers mentioned two or more difficulties in giving support to the placement [.42].

Further reduction of variables for multivariate analysis.

VI.5 Younger children had fewer disruptions, as did those who were said to 'play little or no part in placement decisions', and those who were said not to understand 'the role of the Social Work Department in their lives'. As these variables are closely related to each other, the age of the child will be used. All concerns expressed by foster / adoptive parents during the placement are contained in a composite variable recording their 'problem score' and this will be used in multivariate analysis. Problems were rated 0 - 6 by the foster parent. The problem score was calculated for each new family ranging from zero [where no problems were mentioned] to their total score.

VI.6 Social workers gave difficulties a higher rating [i.e. 'severe'] before they became more strongly related to disruptions. These were all contained in a composite regarding the number of problems that social workers rated 'severe' during the placement, and that was used in multivariate analysis. Nevertheless, not all 'severe' problems led to disruptions.

VI.7 Two variables dealing with difficulties that the social workers found in rendering support to the placement are contained [with others] in a composite regarding the number of support difficulties, and it is the composite which will be used.

VI.8 This leaves nineteen variables to be used in multivariate analysis. All are statistically significant [.001 level] and strongly related to outcome [.30 or greater].

The five best predictors of disruptions Interpreting figure 1

VI.9 Multivariate analysis is a statistical technique through which one can analyse the relationship between a dependent variable [placement outcome] with a set of independent or predictor variables. The above nineteen variables were submitted to multivariate analysis along with disruptions and established placements. Multivariate analysis automatically selects these variables most associated with placement outcome while controlling for the effects of other variables. This procedure is carried out with the best predictor first, followed by the second, third, fourth and so on until less and less variance is explained between other variables and placement outcome.

VI.10 When all predictors of disruption and establishment in permanent placements are considered together [multiple regression], most of the variance is explained by the number of problems the child's social worker rated 'severe', during the placement. This accounts for two-thirds of the variance explained by the best five predictors. The disruption rate was 91% among the group of social workers who said there were four or more severe problems during the placement. The nature of these severe problems will be identified in the Discussion Section. The question of problems in placements was so vast that it had to made a composite variable. This finding can also be used by practitioners in assessing when disruption planning should begin. Also, there were three established placements where the social workers saw four or more severe problems.

VI.11 The second best predictor of disruptions / establishment was whether or not fostering / adoption literature was said to have been used during the assessment of the new parents. This information was drawn from case notes and from interviews with link workers. Where such literature had been used, in sixty-nine cases, there were eighteen disruptions [26% rate]. Where no mention of such literature was made in forty-eight cases, there were thirty-two disruptions [67% rate].

VI.12 The third best predictor is the number of specific difficulties the social workers mentioned in giving support to the placement. Where fifty-eight social workers mentioned two or more difficulties in giving support to the placement, there were thirty-seven disruptions [64% rate]. The major difficulties contributing here are: [1] foster / adoptive parents letting problems build up and [2] lack of confrontational work with problems by social workers. The nature of these difficulties are identified in the discussion section. Chapter VII.

VI.13 The fourth and fifth best predictors explain 13% of the variance in the best five predictors. Where thirty-one foster / adoptive parents recorded a higher problem score [25+] regarding the placement, there were twenty-six disruptions. Where twenty-two placements were said to be 'permanent', but 'time-related', there were seventeen disruptions.

VI.14 The explanatory power of the other fourteen variables entered into the equation drop off considerably after the fifth step when they are considered alongside the five best predictors.

VI.15 This statistical procedure also highlighted a strong relationship between 'the number of problems rated severe by social workers' and the 'difficulties they saw in giving support' [R=.34]. That there was a strong association between 'number of problems rated severe by social workers' and 'the foster / adoptive problem score' [R=.46] should not conceal the fact that they were often referring to different specific problems.

VI.16 Each of the five best predictors has an individual contribution to make towards understanding disruptions. When each of the best predictors is controlled by the other four [partial correlation], they all maintain a strong individual association with disruptions and established placements. They all remain significant [.001] and only 'time-related' v 'other placements' falls to below .30 when controlled by the other four [.29].

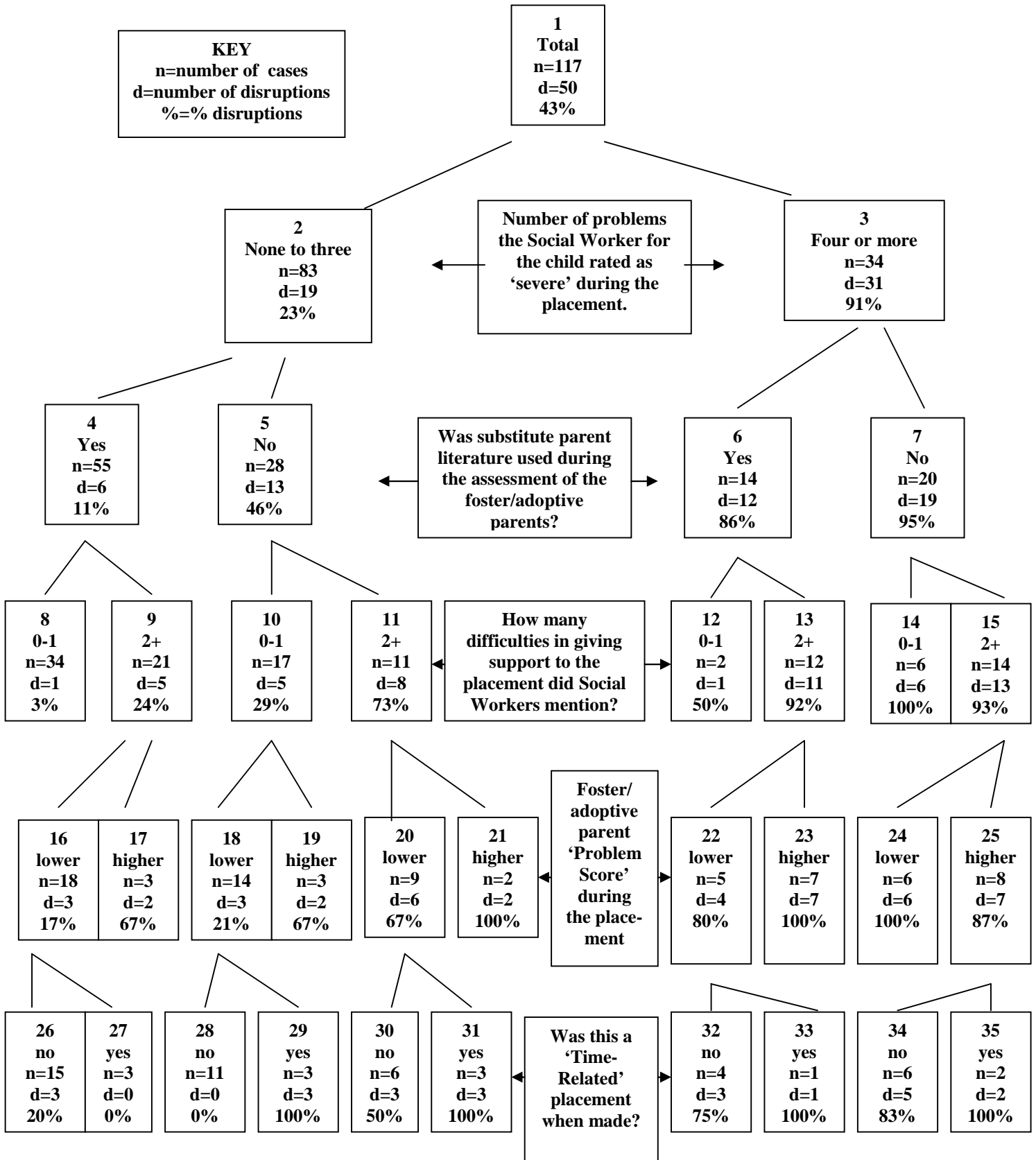
VI.17 The variance between disruptions and established placements explained by these predictors can be illustrated [see figure 1]. The most important group [n=34], for established placements, is contained in box 8 where there was only one disruption where: social workers reported fewer severe problems; literature had been used during assessment; and there was one or no difficulties in rendering social work support to the placement. [Disruption rate = 3%]

VI.18 The first right division in the figure sees the disruption rate soaring to 91% in thirty-four placements, where social workers reported four or more severe problems during the placement [box 3]. That the disruption rate does not rise much higher when additional predictors are used indicates that the report of four or more severe problems in a placement, is the outstanding predictor of disruptions.

VI.19 All the variables in figures 1, 2 & 3 were statistically significant and strongly related to placement outcome when considered alone. It should be expected that numbers in individual boxes should become less as the total is split in so many ways. This method, used consistently, will produce end boxes with low numbers.

VI.20 It is also important to note which possible predictors [like the age of the child at placement] do not enter into the variance, although age was included in the equation. There is, however, a fairly strong association between age at placement and the number of problems reported as severe [.28].

Figure 1. The Best Predictors of Disruptions in Permanent Placements



VII Discussion

The discussion section is highly structured to follow the main and pre-placement findings and comment upon them. It is also designed to get to the heart of the study without describing everything about disruptions and their prediction.

Getting to the heart of the matter: the best predictor of disruptions

VII.1 The number of problems the social worker for the child rated as 'severe' during the placement is the best overall predictor of disruptions. The power of these severe problems to predict disruptions is much greater than pre-placement information with nine-tenths of placements disrupting where they saw four or more severe problems. When any problem was mentioned by the social workers they were asked to describe it in detail, rate it from minor to severe for the placement and report what, if anything, the SWD did about that specific problem. One should be aware that problem areas were covered twice in this study: with social workers and also with foster / adoptive parents.

VII.2 The list of problem areas discussed with social workers for the child were:

- physical condition of the area of the foster / adoptive home;
- physical type of the area [e.g. urban, rural, public, private];
- type of community;
- community behaviour to family including study child;
- foster / adoptive family [excluding study child] behaviour to the community;
- study child behaviour with and to others in community;
- domestic circumstances of the family;
- life style of the family;
- personal characteristics of members of new family;
- personal characters of the study child;
- how members of new family behaved towards the study child;
- the behaviour of the study child towards the new family;
- the natural family of the study child;
- relations of foster / adoptive family;
- how the study child behaved towards relatives of new family;
- problems regarding the Social Work Department.

Summary of problems rated 'severe' by social workers: VII.3 to VII.14

VII.3 Six out of ten placements disrupted when the physical type of the area was regarded as a problem. The disruption rate was only a little above normal where the type of community where the new parents lived created some problems during the placement, but all three placements disrupted when this problem was viewed as 'severe.' On two occasions, where local community intimidation of the new family and / or child was mentioned, the placements disrupted. Six of the eight placements disrupted where social workers saw the behaviour of the study

family, excluding the study child, towards the community as a problem. All placements disrupted when this problem became 'severe.'

VII.4 Forty-one social workers for the child saw the behaviour of the study child towards or with others in the local community as a concern during the placement. In thirteen placements the behaviour created 'severe' problems related to school indiscipline and truanting, fighting, making sexual advances, alcohol, drugs and solvents. Ten out of thirteen placements disrupted where these problems were 'severe'. How can the background notes on a boy like Andrew, aged six, say he was '*a pleasant boy who had settled and related well to children*' when school reports note that he was '*a bit of a loner and not assertive enough in his dealings with other children*'?

VII.5 There were twenty-one disruptions in thirty-five placements where social workers thought the domestic circumstances of the new parents created problems and six out of nine disrupted where this problem was considered 'severe'. These 'severe' problems involved finance, bereavement, employment and illness. For instance, in the case of Anne [aged 12], why should a clothing grant take so long to process and pay to a family who were having financial problems?

VII.6 What can be done to make certain that financial disputes near the beginning of a placement do not smother the more important issues of how the child and foster family are getting along together?

VII.7 There were thirty-two disruptions in forty-five placements where workers for the child saw the life style of the new families producing some problems and nineteen out of twenty-three disrupted when such problems were 'severe'. There was an extremely high disruption rate where the life style of the new family changed after the placement to the detriment of the study child.

VII.8 Twenty-seven social workers for the child saw severe problems in the personal characteristics of members of the new family, excluding the study child. For instance, nine social workers reported that the foster / adoptive mother was inflexible, rigid, set in her ways, determined to have her own way or cold and hard. There were twenty-two disruptions in twenty-seven placements where such problems were regarded as severe. A very high rate. One foster mother was described in different places in her assessment form as 'brusque' and 'brisk'. A brusque person is blunt and abrupt in manner. A brisk person is spruce, lively, full of life and spirit. A typing error in assessments can cause confusion.

VII.9 There were twenty-five disruptions in forty placements where problems in the characteristics of the study child were reported. A high rate of disruptions occurred most frequently when personality and emotional problems were 'severe'. When the specific types of problems are examined in detail it becomes clear that there were no disruptions when the severe difficulties concerned physical, medical, mental aspects or hereditary fears. On the other hand, the characteristics most associated with disruptions were identity problems,

unpredictable emotional tendencies, attention seeking, lack of social training of the child which affected personality, withdrawn emotional problems, unruly behaviour emerging from personality, moodiness, sullen-ness or emotional flatness, wildness, and temper tantrums. It was disturbing in Bertha's [aged 7] case to hear social workers saying that the foster parents could have been told something which they were not told and which later put a strain on the placement. This was the extent of the emotional damage from a previous placement.

VII.10 Twenty out of twenty-three placements disrupted when, 'how other members of the new family were behaving towards the study child', was a 'severe' problem. There were thirteen answers or combinations of answers in describing this severe concern. The most common answer was that the study child was rejected or neglected by the foster parents. Sometimes the foster parents were trying to absorb the study child into their family too quickly. On a few occasions the children of the foster parents were seen as rejecting, disliking and neglecting the study child. In at least one placement, there appeared to be secret bullying by the study child towards the children of the foster parents. Their children seemed to keep quiet about this until they could no longer stand it and pleaded that the study child should be removed.

VII.11 More than half of the workers for child expressed concern regarding the behaviour of the study child to the new family. There was a high disruption rate in thirty-three placements where problems of this nature were regarded as 'severe.' Social workers spoke of abuse, aggression, defiance, violence, attention seeking, secret stealing, and lying. The underlying and secret life became a 'severe' problem as the placement continued.

VII.12 Problems regarding the natural family are not associated with disruptions. There is, however, a fairly low disruption rate where problems included the child being rejected by the natural family and / or not wanting natural parents.

VII.13 Ten workers for the child saw problems in the relatives of the new family, but only four saw the problems emanating from the study child in behaviour towards such relatives. Severe problems noted by the social worker included the paternal grandmother being unwilling to accept the study child as she could not believe that her son was infertile, and where the study children were being treated differently than 'own children' by relatives of the foster parents. There were four disruptions in five placements when such problems were noted as being 'severe'.

VII.14 There were twenty-nine disruptions in forty-nine placements when social workers for the child felt that problems emanated from the Social Work Department and a very high disruption rate when these problems were perceived as 'severe'. It became obvious during the study that the Social Work Department had some difficulties with paying grants, travel expenses, holiday and adoptive allowances. That almost half of the foster families had incomes that were below the average wage, shows the importance of setting allowances at a realistic level and paying them on time.

VII.15 Despite the acknowledged fact by the social worker for a child that the adoptive parents needed a lot of reassurance during the first six months of placement, there was no social worker for the child and only one visit from a link worker. The worker for Jack [aged 7] had left the area and these were new foster parents with no children of their own. During assessment, foster parents are encouraged to believe that they will receive a lot of social work support.

VII.16 There was a general problem about making people feel comfortable with each other and developing a good working relationship with new parents. Some social workers also complained of lack of co-operation in some foster parents and their failure to confront difficulties at an early stage. Social workers would have liked to visit as frequently as they felt was needed and have some joint visits by both the social worker for the child and foster parents in the early stages of the placement.

The second best predictor of disruptions.

VII.17 The second best predictor of established and disrupted placements is whether or not substitute parent literature was used during the assessment of the foster / adoptive parents.

VII.18 This characteristic appears in the analysis because there is a large group in the survey, which had used literature, with a few disruptions. On the other hand, in ten placements where such literature was said to be 'not at all good' or 'just repeated what we already knew,' there were eight disruptions. A very high rate.

VII.19 Receiving good literature about fostering and adoption is probably associated with more imaginative work on the part of those being assessed and a greater awareness of possible problems, how to cope with them and knowledge of Social Work Department help. It is also thought that using foster / adoptive literature involved meeting and talking with other foster parents; using B.A.F.F. form F in assessment; and placements where expectations were explicit.

The third best predictor of disruptions.

VII.20 The number of difficulties the social workers mentioned in supporting the placement appears as the next best predictor of disruptions. For instance, there was a high disruption rate where social workers mentioned:

- a lack of understanding and / or co-operation from new parents;
- new parents allowing problems to build up;
- a lack of confrontational work with problems;
- a lack of monitoring the placement.

VII.21 Social workers did, however, often mention their lack of opportunity to visit the placement as often as they would have wished. For example, one-third of the children / young people interviewed, reported that social worker visits were 'less frequent than monthly.' In one-quarter of cases the foster / adoptive parents

said that social worker visits were 'less frequent than monthly.' On the other hand, there was a fairly high disruption rate where social workers knew the children well. This is probably due to the greater frequency of contact in troubled placements and their longer time in care.

VII.22 Placements were supported by:

- the standard grant, enhanced, discretionary and travel allowances, holiday and attendance allowances, support with clothing, equipment and furniture;
- practical support such as help in handling the study child;
- respite care;
- filling in forms;
- information about the study child and natural families;
- confronting difficulties at an early stage;
- developing working relationships;
- visiting at least once a fortnight;
- setting up joint social work meetings with the new parents;
- making frequent telephone calls;
- setting up contacts between the parents and previous carers;
- meetings with other foster parents;
- giving extra literature during the placement;
- involving the study child in community activities;
- increasing support from schools, churches and other community resources;
- calling in other professionals in childcare;
- visiting trouble spots in the community;
- receiving support from the residential home where the study child had previously lived;
- holding reviews to help the placement;
- helping with the access of the natural family;
- ensuring that foster / adoptive parents were aware of changing circumstances in the child, natural family, and variations in decisions about the future of the study child.

The list seems endless, but the type of support mentioned most frequently was 'helping people feel comfortable with the placement.'

VII.23 If the number of ways in which placements were supported seems boundless, so do the number of ways in which the rendering of support can be hindered. The difficulties in giving support which were mentioned in ten or more cases were:

- two social workers had different views of the placement;
- the placement was too far away from social workers;
- there was a need for more social work contact including a need to keep in touch with the link worker for the family;
- a lack of understanding and / or co-operation from the new parents;
- financial problems related to the Social Work Department;
- new parents allowing problems to build up;
- a lack of confrontational work with issues;

- a lack of information given by the Social Work Department to the new parents;
- foster parents resisting advice from the Social Work Department;
- a need to monitor the placement;
- and new parents resisting contacts with foster support groups.

VII.24 There were hosts of other support difficulties which were mentioned by social workers about less than ten placements:

- timetable of foster parents made support difficult;
- relationship difficulties between social workers and foster parents;
- lack of information from the residential home;
- lack of a telephone in the home of the new parents;
- dearth of support groups in the district of new parents;
- insufficiency of respite care available;
- new parents are resisting offers of specialist support;
- a social worker was only a 'nominal' link worker for the family;
- reviews were not arranged quickly enough to help;
- the supervisor of the worker for the child did not give enough support;
- and the foster parents resisted the different approach of a new social worker;
- other support difficulties were mentioned only once, and are not reported here.

Some foster parents demonstrated their need to speak to someone about the placement, even if this was only an interviewer. Some foster / adoptive parents found that interviewing helped them sort matters out in their own minds and begin their lives again.

VII.25 Where social workers mentioned two or more difficulties in giving support to the placement there was a high disruption rate. When this is combined with problems experienced by the social worker and foster / adoptive parents, there is a very high disruption rate.

The fourth best predictor.

VII.26 The fourth best predictor of disruptions was the foster / adoptive parent's problem score. This had a separate power in explaining disruptions although many of the same problems, as mentioned by the social workers, emphasised the role of different people and followed a different course to the disruption.

VII.27 The same broad problem areas as discussed with social workers were used. Problems were rated zero to six by the foster parent. The problem score was calculated for each new family ranging from zero, where no problems were mentioned, to their total score.

VII.28 There is a distinct rise in the proportion of placements disrupting after the total problem score per placement is higher than twenty-four. When a higher problem score is combined with social workers seeing four or more severe problems in the placement, disruptions sweep to an extremely high rate.

Unfolding the problem score VII.29 to VII.44

VII.29 Some new parents felt that the community they lived in might have adverse effects for the placement of the study child. This included the social class or racial make-up of the community and not necessarily the behaviour of the members of the community towards them.

VII.30 Eighteen foster / adoptive parents put their emphasis upon the dubious way in which members of their local community were behaving towards their family. This could be a tendency by others to avoid them, or a self-interest that reduced contact. It also included unreliable behaviour by neighbours who could sometimes be abusive and show little concern for foster families. In a few cases this involved harassment

VII.31 Some new parents had no 'private space' just outside their dwelling; lived where the area near their house was poorly maintained and untidy; roads or pavements were in poor condition and there were hardly any trees, shrubs or grassed open spaces. One foster home was on the twelfth floor and the lift was working when the placement was visited.

VII.32 When a score was constructed for the area just outside and around the new home, there were one-fifth of new parents living in areas where it was obvious that a lot of improvements could be made.

VII.33 A small number of four foster / adoptive parents were concerned about the way their family, excluding the study child, were behaving towards others in the community.

VII.34 Forty-nine new parents, regarding the behaviour of the study child towards others in the local community, expressed a much more common concern. This included the study child being delinquent or fraudulent or making unreasonable demands upon others and failing to meet obligations. It sometimes involved abusive behaviour towards others in the community which included behaviour at school, clubs or with groups.

VII.35 One fifth of new parents were concerned that their domestic circumstances might affect the placement. Sometimes this included taking on more work or becoming unemployed and their level of income falling. It also involved the type of house they were living in and their need for more space and additional domestic appliances.

VII.36 Eighteen new parents were concerned about their life style that always had to change to accommodate a new member of the family. This included misunderstandings between parents, conflicting opinions about how differences should be dealt with, and how to respond to opportunities.

VII.37 One fifth of foster / adoptive parents were concerned that the personal characteristics of members of their household, excluding the study child, might adversely affect the placement. This included the physical and mental health of

other members of the household, but was frequently directed towards the emotional characteristics of another foster child.

VII.38 The most frequently mentioned concern about placements was the personal characteristics of the study child. This was stated to be a worry by three-fifths of new parents. This problem included the study child's physical and mental life, but most frequently referred to emotional life and memories of the past. The previous life of children in residential homes or with natural parents was regularly mentioned as a reason for emotional troubles.

VII.39 One quarter of foster / adoptive parents were concerned about how family members were behaving towards the study child. The behaviour included selfish and aggressive acts towards the study child, failure to consider their welfare and sometimes disregarding their needs.

VII.40 Most new parents who had mentioned the emotional characteristics of the study child as a problem also stressed his or her behaviour to the family. Half of the foster / adoptive parents were concerned about actions such as taking advantage of them, making irritating remarks, playing them off against each other, testing them out, behaving in an inconsistent way, being selfish, aggressive, rejecting and withdrawing into deep moods. In extreme cases they spoke of study children finding their weak spots or things they did not like and indulging in whatever hurt them.

VII.41 More than two-fifths of foster / adoptive parents were concerned that natural families might affect the placement in some way. For example, this often included natural parents making promises that could not or were not kept and raising false hopes before the child's expectations were dashed. On many occasions this referred to the emotional state of the study child after an access visit to the foster home or a meeting in the Social Work Department. In extreme cases, it involved older siblings encouraging study children to stay with them after a visit to where they were, and not to return to the foster home. However, even when such problems were regarded as 'severe' by the foster parent, the disruption rate was nearly normal for the study. For this reason one could ignore problems with natural parents in the analysis of higher problem scores calculated for foster / adoptive parents. Whatever the circumstances of the natural families, it seems fairly obvious that some social workers put more emphasis on rehabilitation than others did. Thus, a change of social workers in at least one case, changed the practice. The new parents felt 'messed about' by the lack of clarity in planning but, with the support of their link worker, stuck to what they saw as the first plan of 'long term fostering or adoption'.

VII.42 The detailed examination of permanent placements, which was carried out in this research, raised questions about whether, in some cases, more could have been done to support the natural families. For some problems families' experience, such as ill health and financial stress, intensive support at an early stage can help prevent family break-up. It is important that we do not write off families too early, but give them the chance to care. This is particularly true in

the case of natural fathers whose potential for caring did not seem to be thoroughly assessed by social workers in some of the cases in this study.

VII.43 Very few new parents thought that their own relatives might affect the placement, but twelve felt that the study child's behaviour to their relations was a concern.

VII.44 Two fifths of foster / adoptive parents were concerned that the Social Work Department could adversely affect the placement. This included lack of clarity about the length and aims of the placement, lack of support from social workers or finance. Delays in payment of allowances and haggling over 'what was due to them' were a frequent concern. Also, there were plans made by the Social Work Department, which were not kept, and complaints about a lack of specific preparation for the placement. In extreme cases, the Social Work Department was accused of misleading them on purpose to cover up their own mistakes.

VII.45 A question which frequently arises in this research concerns 'extent' and 'degree.' For instance, Matthew's new parents said they were prepared for the involvement of natural parents, but not for the possible 'extent' of this involvement. Others said they were prepared for a disturbed child, but did not know about the 'degree' of his disturbance. Thus, it was necessary to have all problems rated by respondents for their degree of importance to the placement.

VII.46 Overall, the disruption rate rises steeply as the number of severe problems, mentioned by the foster / adoptive parents, increase.

The fifth best predictor of disruptions.

VII.47 Although there was a great deal of concern about including 'time related' placements in the study, it only appears as a weaker predictor of disruptions when considered along with the stronger indicators. However, the fact that it entered the final equation tells us that the type of placements in a study can influence disruption rates. This can only happen if significantly different disruption rates are found in the categories of placements. This predictor is worthy of comment, especially on the grounds that in a small number of 'time-related' cases, nine placements disrupted, even after four previous predictors had divided the cases in the study. [See figure 1]

Disruptions: gap between knowing and acting.

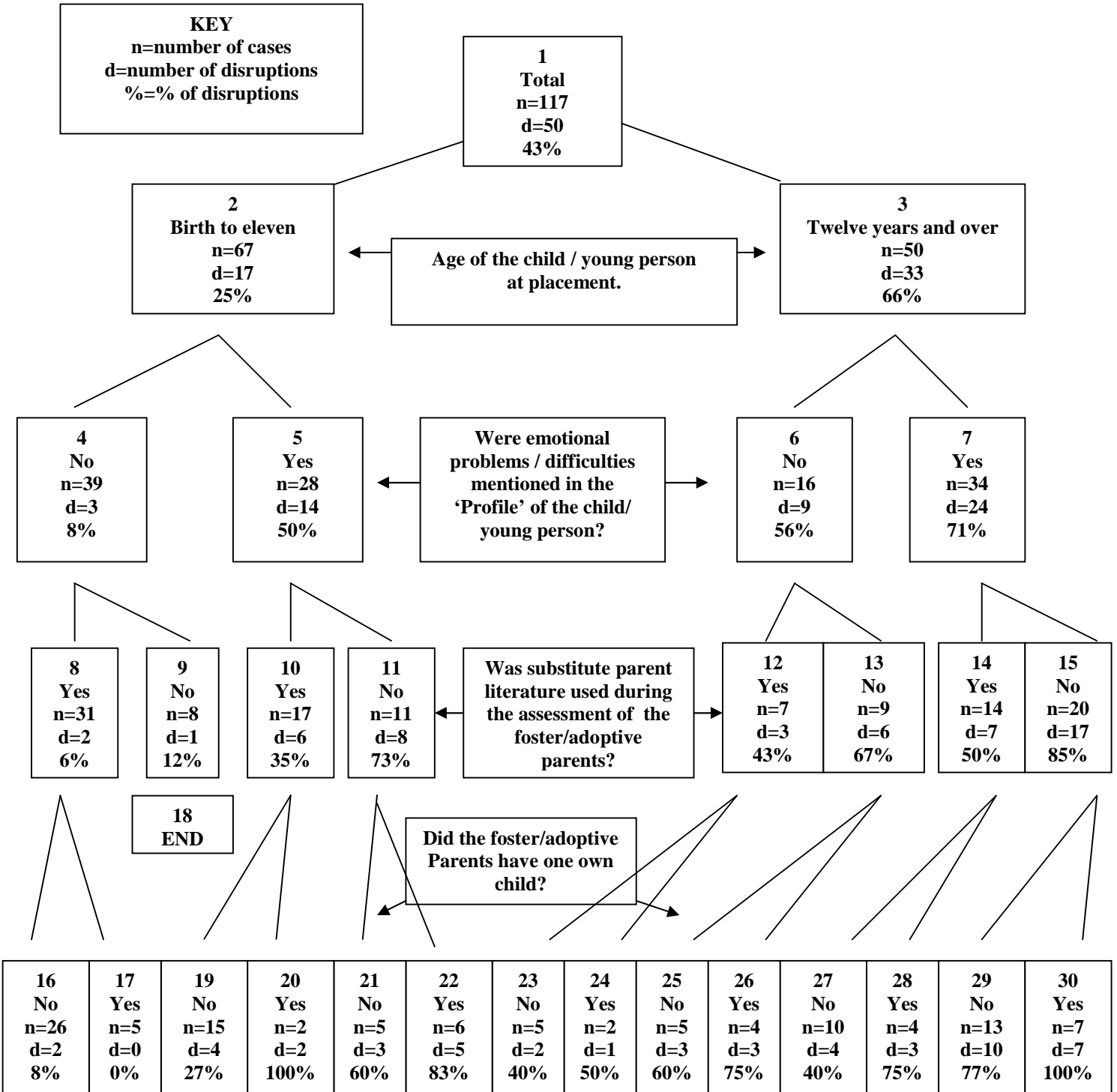
VII.48 Once the disruption process is underway there seems to be a limit as to what can be done, so it is important to ensure that assessments and the early support is right. A note of encouragement: even when four or more severe problems in a placement were noted by the social workers, one in ten placements was rescued from a disruption with the co-operation of substitute parents and children.

VII.49 Social workers generally felt that if they knew about problems in the early stages they might have been able to offer some support and help. Social workers must listen carefully to what the foster families and children are saying to pick up early indicators of problems. Social workers need to speak to the children and young people alone. There was also a need to provide post disruption support. In some cases no visits had been made to the family after the disruption. Post-disruption visits are important, not only to help foster families talk through their problems, but also because by finding out what went wrong, it might be possible to use the experience positively.

Pre-placement information.

VII.50 One of the secondary aims of the research was to use pre-placement information alone as this was thought to be more valuable to those planning placements. It should be carefully noted that the following pre-placement information was entered into the general multivariate analysis of best predictors, but explained less variance between disruptions and established placements than placement information. [Figure 2 next page]

Figure 2 The Best Pre-Placement Predictors of Disruptions in Permanent Placements



VII.51 The best pre-placement predictor of disruptions and established placements is the age of the child or young person with disruptions being more likely among those who are twelve years or over. It should be noted, however, that this is not the best overall predictor. The disruption rate is always below the norm for the study until age twelve where it is consistently above the average. Because children under twelve years are less likely to experience disruptions, does not mean that only under twelve's should be placed, but that extra care should be taken when placing older children. For instance, the assessment forms for Brian's [aged 15] foster parents clearly stated that they should not foster someone who needed more parenting as their skills lay in giving independence to teenagers. Brian needed more parenting!

VII.52 No clear pattern emerges which links time spent in care prior to the researched placement with disruptions, but children who had been with more than six previous carers experienced a fairly high disruption rate. Of the nineteen children who had moved nine times or more during their care history, fourteen experienced a disruption in the study placement. A high rate.

VII.53 If pre-placement 'profiles' had alerted the placing social workers of possible emotional difficulties more frequently, it seems highly likely that the 'profile' would have explained most of the variance between disruptions and established placements. Such 'profiles', on the other hand, could have prevented some children experiencing family life in the community and the disruption rate would have fallen at the expense of some children staying in residential homes. On the other hand, many social workers for the child complained that they were not told enough about the study child before placement.

VII.54 The use of literature during the assessment of the foster / adoptive parents has already appeared as a strong predictor and has been discussed.

VII.55 The explanatory power of variables begins to drop off when we reach end groups where all the placements disrupted and the strength of relationship becomes weaker when considered together with the other three variables in the equation. This happens at the fourth best pre-placement predictor of disruptions: did the foster / adoptive parents have 'one' own child? Where foster parents had 'one' natural child as opposed to 'none' or 'more than one,' disruptions were more common.

VII.56 This is thought to be associated with an 'own child' being no more than three years older or younger than the study child. One of the 'severe' problems mentioned by social workers was that the study child was rejected and / or the foster parents were neglecting his problems. This sometimes took the form of giving preferential treatment to their own child.

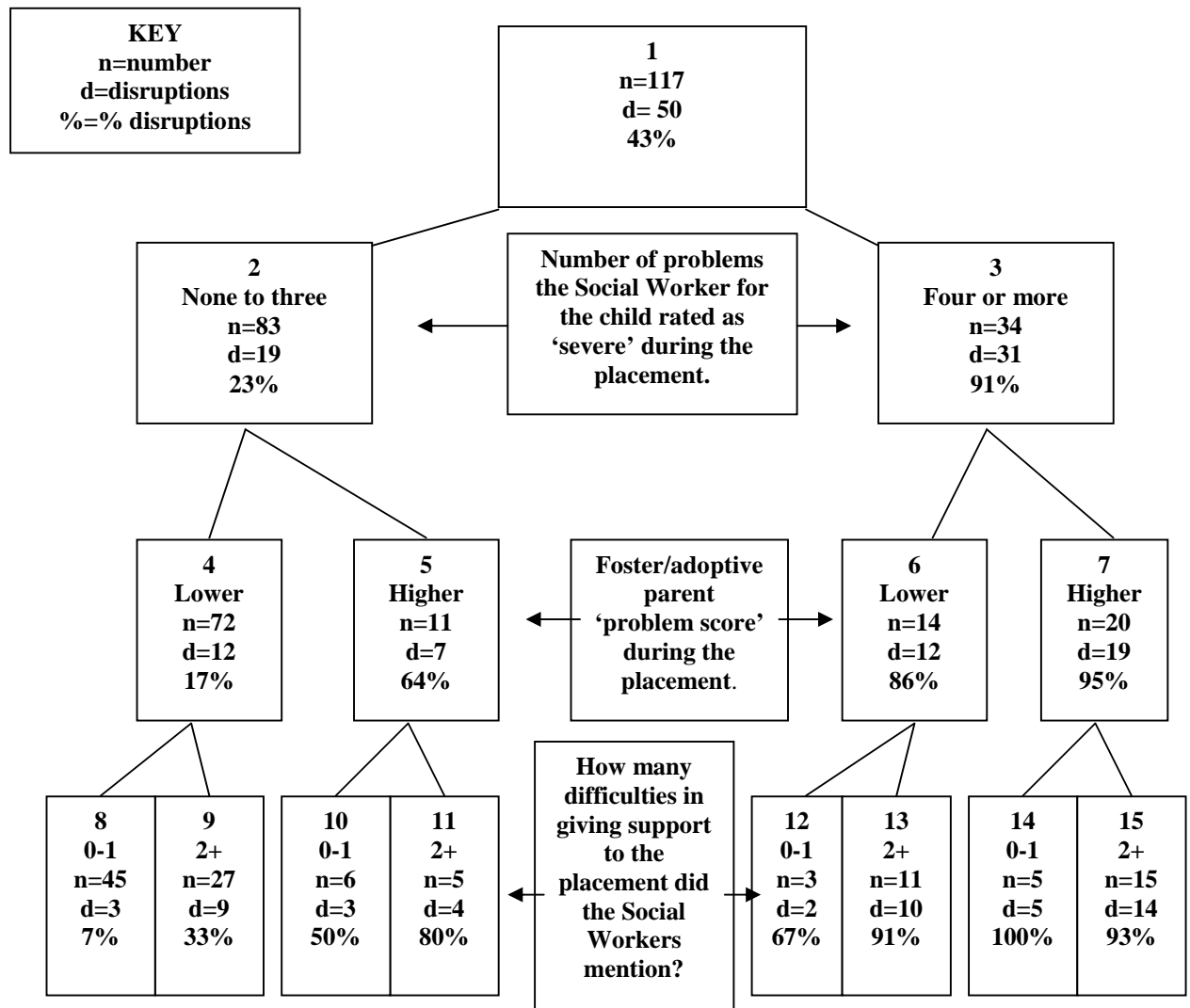
Key finding.

VII.57 The key finding, like all other predictive findings, is wholly automatic. For example, in Figures 2 & 3, the first two predictors in placement

characteristics [Figure 3] raises the disruption rate much higher than the first two variables in pre-placement findings. [Figure 2] What becomes apparent from this study is that what happens during a placement is more important for disruptions than the care used in assessing, matching and preparing parents for the placement. Problems during the placement, mainly emotional, are the best predictors of disruptions. Because many concerns, including severe problems, had been overcome, with or without social work help, it was not clear during the course of the survey that they would explain most of the variance between disruptions and established placements. Thus, when social workers begin to perceive a number of 'severe problems' during a placement, and there are in addition, some difficulties in rendering support, post-disruption planning should begin, especially if that young person is twelve years of age and over, has 'emotional problems' in his / her 'profile' and the foster / adoptive family has one natural child of their own.

Figure 3 on next page.

Figure 3. The Best Placement Predictors of Disruptions in Permanent Placements



Author's opinion.

VII.58 This study does not to suggest that the assessment and preparation stage should be neglected, rather that skilled social workers need more time to support placements. It is important at the assessment stage that social workers look at the personal strengths families have to offer. Time needs to be spent talking about how they would cope with particular types of child behaviour, with the focus on practical examples rather than abstract lists.

VII.59 Just because intuition indicates that there are some foster parents who can cope with almost anything does not mean that they can do so without support. Social workers have to carefully feel their way forward, taking care how best to ask which questions and, as far as is humanly possible, lay presumptions to one side. Listening attentively to people in positions of authority and the voices of history and being prepared to resist them if the theories do not stand up to rigorous testing. When something is found which seems to be important, be ready to accept that predictors or indicators are only partial guides and need to be tested again and again until repeated patterns are reached which enables one to tentatively speak of causal relationships.

VII.60 Implications for further research includes:

- ✓ studying confrontational work between substitute carers of children and social workers because many social workers saw lack of confrontational work with problems as a difficulty in rendering support to the placement;
- ✓ an examination of the type and use made of substitute parent literature because it remains a mystery how and why such literature is linked to a lower disruption rate;
- ✓ measuring the difficulties in giving support to substitute parents because there is a clear [if inconsistent] rise in the disruption rate as the number of difficulties in rendering social work support increases;
- ✓ looking for clarity at various stages of placements as lack of clarity between substitute parents and the Social Work Department can undermine placements;
- ✓ further research into the emotional life of children in care because when emotional problems or difficulties are mentioned in the profiles of children of all ages, the disruption rate rises;
- ✓ studying the role of the children and relations of substitute parents in placements because a parent of the foster / adoptive parents could come to live with them after the placement had been made and thus were not included in the assessment;
- ✓ looking at the role of the natural family in permanent placements because a change in their role can effect the placement;
- ✓ studying social work decisions where there were difficult choices to make between residential and community care for children in care because such 'border-line' choices may predict disruptions;
- ✓ an examination of swift changes in social work plans for children in care because such changes may be hidden from the substitute parents and undermine the placement.

VIII List of Tables and Figures

Table 1: The disruption rate over time

Table 2: Substitute parent & social worker view of the process towards disruption.

Table 3: 'Which type of family placement was this when it was first made?'

Figure 1: The best predictors of disruptions in permanent placements.

Figure 2: The best pre-placement predictors of disruptions in permanent placements.

Figure 3: The best placement predictors of disruptions in permanent placements.

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