



# San Francisco Juvenile Probation Department Intensive Services Foster Care Program Evaluation

---

JI-WON CHOI, UC BERKELEY GOLDMAN SCHOOL OF PUBLIC POLICY

MAY 14, 2025

# Agenda

---

- Project Introduction
- Overview of ISFC Program
- Evaluation Findings
- Recommendations

A solid blue vertical bar on the left side of the slide.

# Project Introduction

# Context of ISFC Program

---

- Prior research in 2021 found that youth on average **wait in detention 25 days** from out-of-home placement (OOHP) disposition to placement
- Lack of non-kinship placements available to JPD increased time waiting for placement while in Juvenile Hall
- JPD contracted with Alternative Family Services (AFS) to launch Intensive Services Foster Care (ISFC) program in Sept. 2021

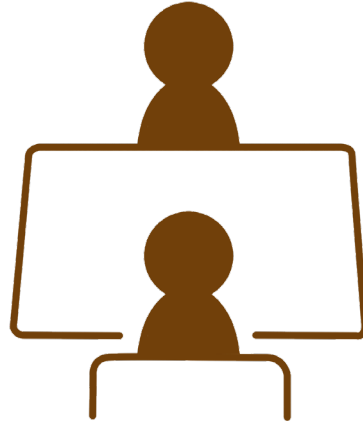
# Purpose of Evaluation

---

- Understand demographics of youth served by ISFC program
- Analyze outcomes for youth, e.g., time spent in detention, permanency, and recidivism
- Identify program strengths, weaknesses, and recommendations



Literature Review



Interviews



JPD Data

## Data Sources

# Overview of ISFC Program

# Overview of ISFC Program

---

- 8 ISFC beds – program at capacity as of March 2025
- ISFC placements located in Alameda County, Contra Costa County, and Solano County
- Intended to serve Black, Indigenous, and youth of color who are disproportionately impacted by the juvenile justice system and OOHP; monolingual Spanish speakers; gender-expansive youth; unaccompanied minors, and youth who have experienced commercial sexual exploitation
  - Specifically intended to serve girls, who tend to have higher AWOL rates from STRTPs
- Provides emergency and long-term placements for youth

# ISFC Program Operating Costs

*JPD pays monthly  
reservation fees to ISFC  
resource families to ensure  
consistent program capacity*

*JPD pays vacancy fee to AFS  
when ISFC beds are not filled*

## OPERATING COSTS:

EXPENDITURE CATEGORY	Allocation One (12-months)
Probation Homes Fees (8 homes; \$2,580/month)	\$ 247,680
Youth and Family supports (Flexible fund)	\$ 18,000
Vacant Bed Fees (direct to AFS) at vacancy rate	\$ 28,800
Resource Family Recruitment Campaign	\$ 15,000
Staff & Family Training &	\$ 15,000
Transportation	\$ 21,600
Telecommunications	\$ 2,310
Office Supplies	\$ 9,938
Insurance	\$ 8,400
Rental of Property (Occupancy)	\$ 24,000
Repairs & Maintenance	\$ 7,200
Equipment Rental	\$ 1,200
Subcontractor - SF CASA	\$ 35,000
OPERATING EXPENSE TOTAL	\$ 434,128

# Features of ISFC Program

---

Home-based  
alternative to STRTPs  
and detention

Specialized care and  
support

Comprehensive case  
management

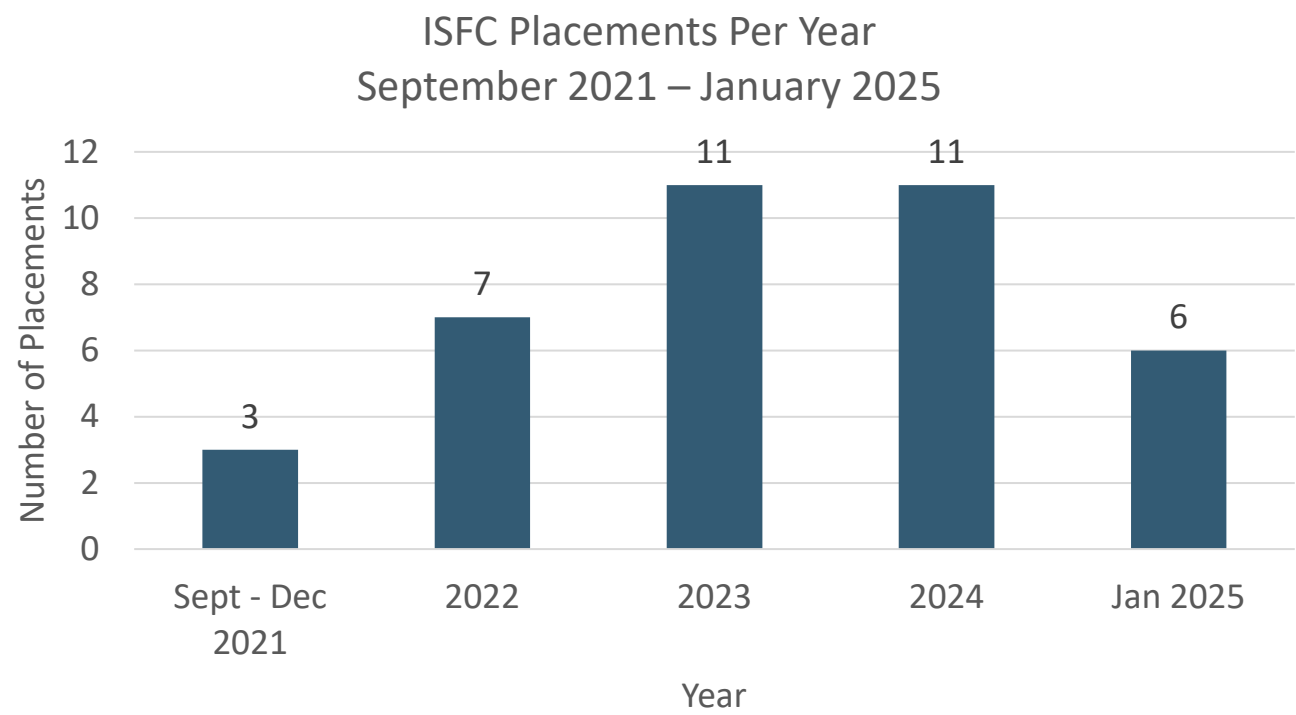
Access to mental  
health services

Trainings for ISFC  
resource families

Monthly reservation  
rate

# Evaluation Findings

# ISFC Program Statistics, Sept 2021 – Jan 2025



Placements	38
Unique youth	33
Avg. age of youth	16
Minimum age of youth	12
Median placement length (in days)	46
Avg. placement length (in days)	107
Max. placement length (in days)	556

# Demographics of ISFC Youth

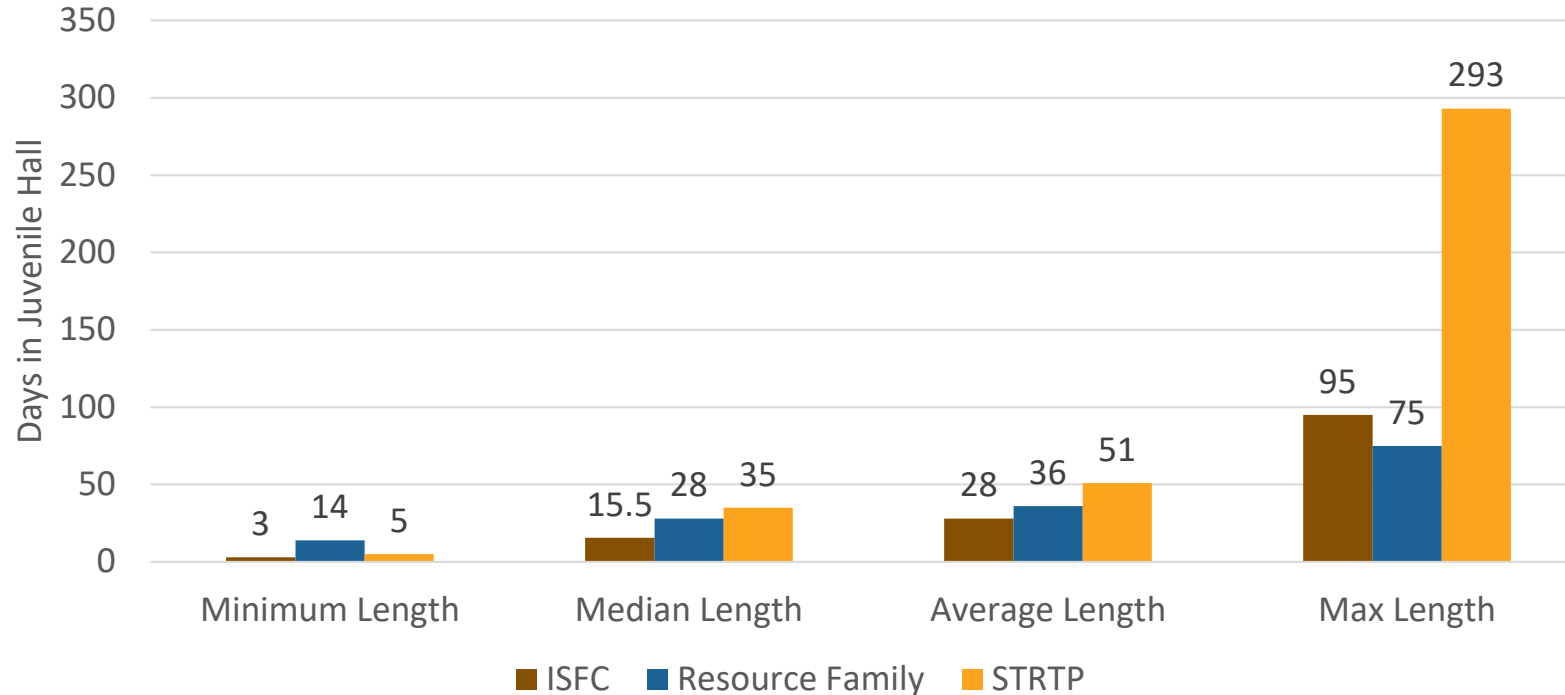
*75% of ISFC youth are African American and 25% are Latinx*

*The ISFC program serves a relatively high proportion of girls (only 11% of youth placed STRTPs are girls)*

	Male	Female	TOTAL
African American	38.7%	35.5%	74.2%
Latinx	19.4%	6.5%	25.8%
TOTAL	58.1%	41.9%	100%

# Time in Juvenile Hall Prior to Placement

Summary Statistics on Time in Juvenile Hall Before OOHP  
by Placement Type



*ISFC placements are associated with shorter time held in Juvenile Hall compared to other OOHPs in non-detained settings, but the difference is not statistically significant*

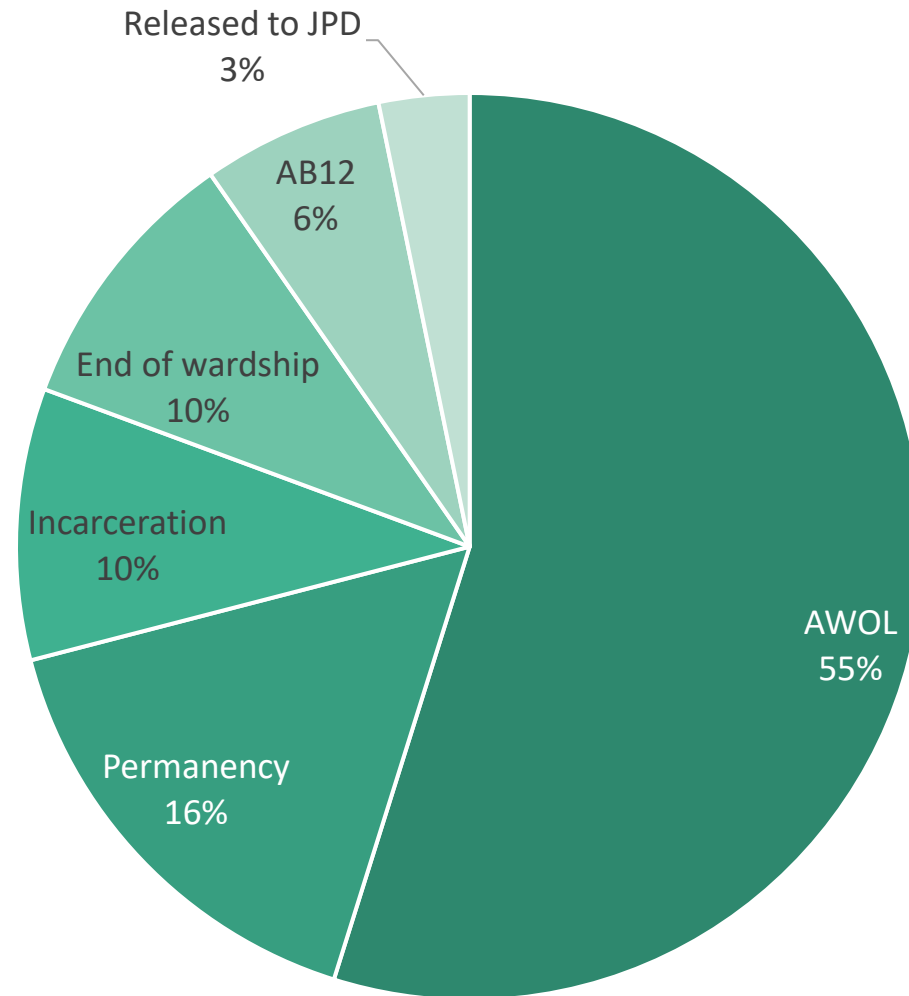
# Average Juvenile Justice System Contact Before & After Placement

---

	ISFC			STRTP		
	Pre	Post	% Change	Pre	Post	% Change
Referrals	4.9	1.5	-69%	5.5	2.2	-60%
Bookings	2.4	1.0	-58%	2.9	1.3	-55%
Petitions Filed	2.9	0.9	-69%	3.4	1.4	-59%
Petitions Sustained	1.5	0.9	-40%	1.6	1.1	-31%
Dispositions	1.1	0.9	-18%	1.3	1.1	-15%

*Youth in the ISFC program have lower levels of system involvement prior to placement than youth in STRTPs and have slightly lower recidivism after placement*

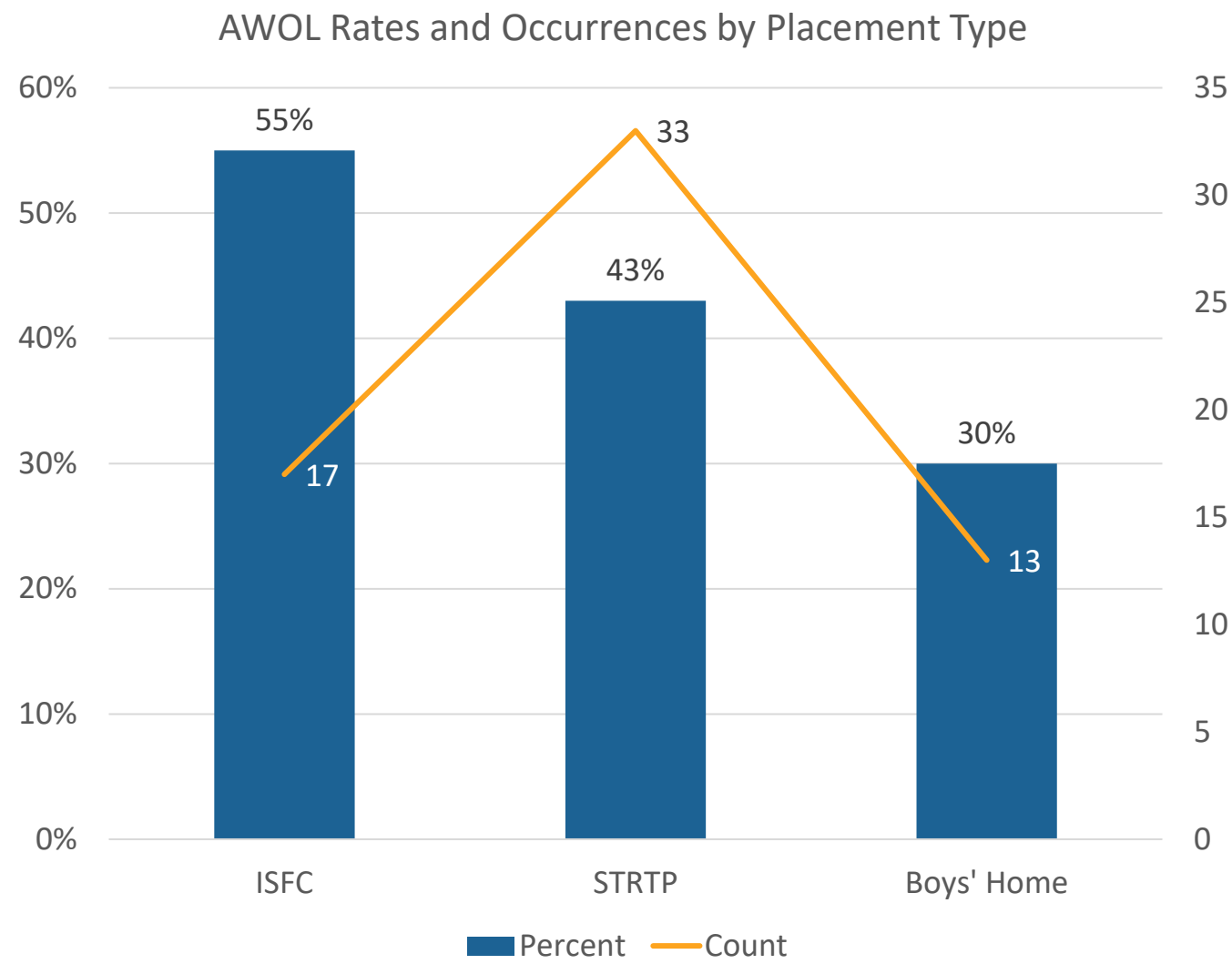
# Post-ISFC Placement Outcomes



# AWOL Rates

*ISFC placements have the highest AWOL rates, but the difference between ISFC and STRTP AWOL rates is not statistically significant*

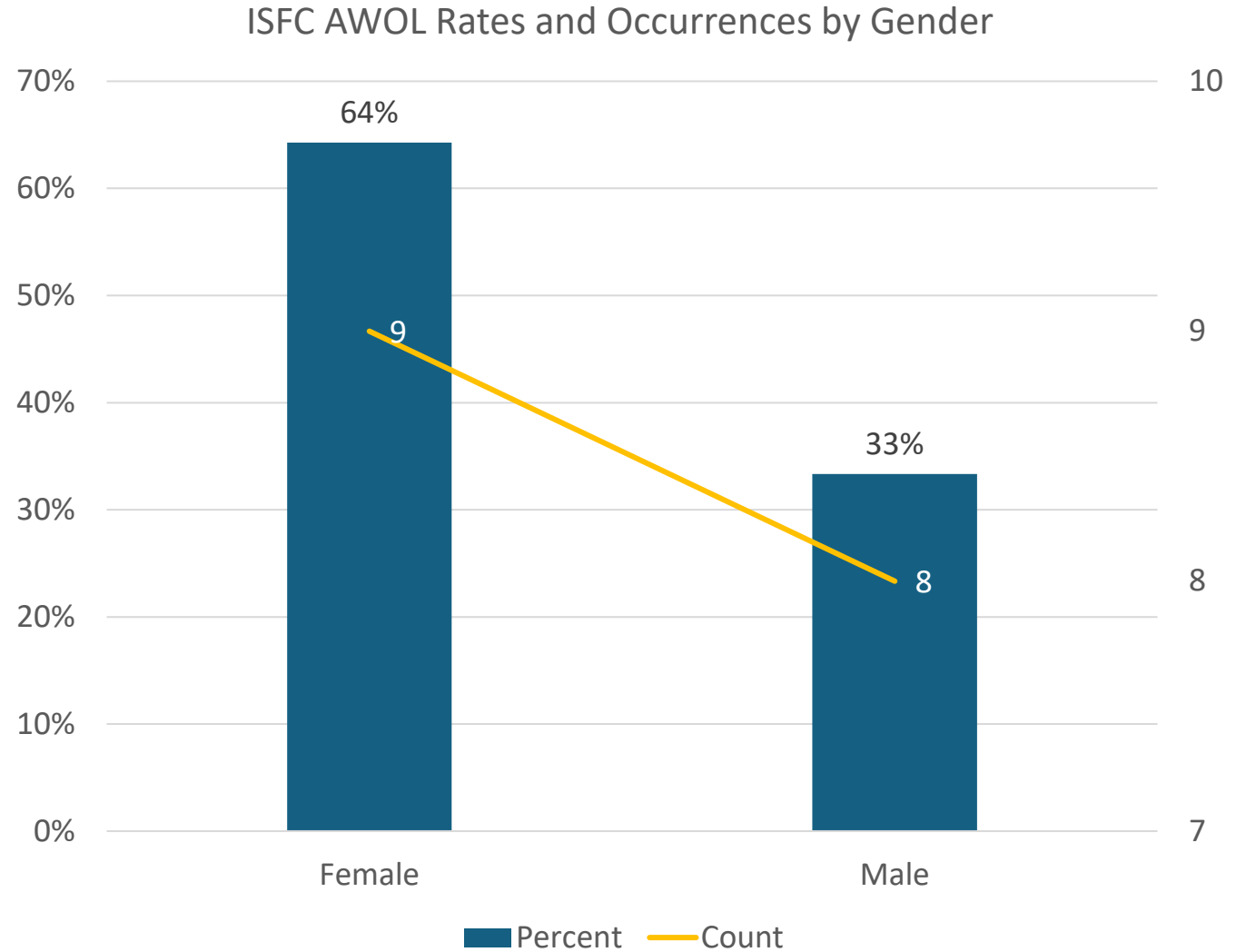
*Prior JPD analysis found that 61% of in-state STRTP placements in 2019-2020 ended in AWOLs*



# AWOL Rates by Gender

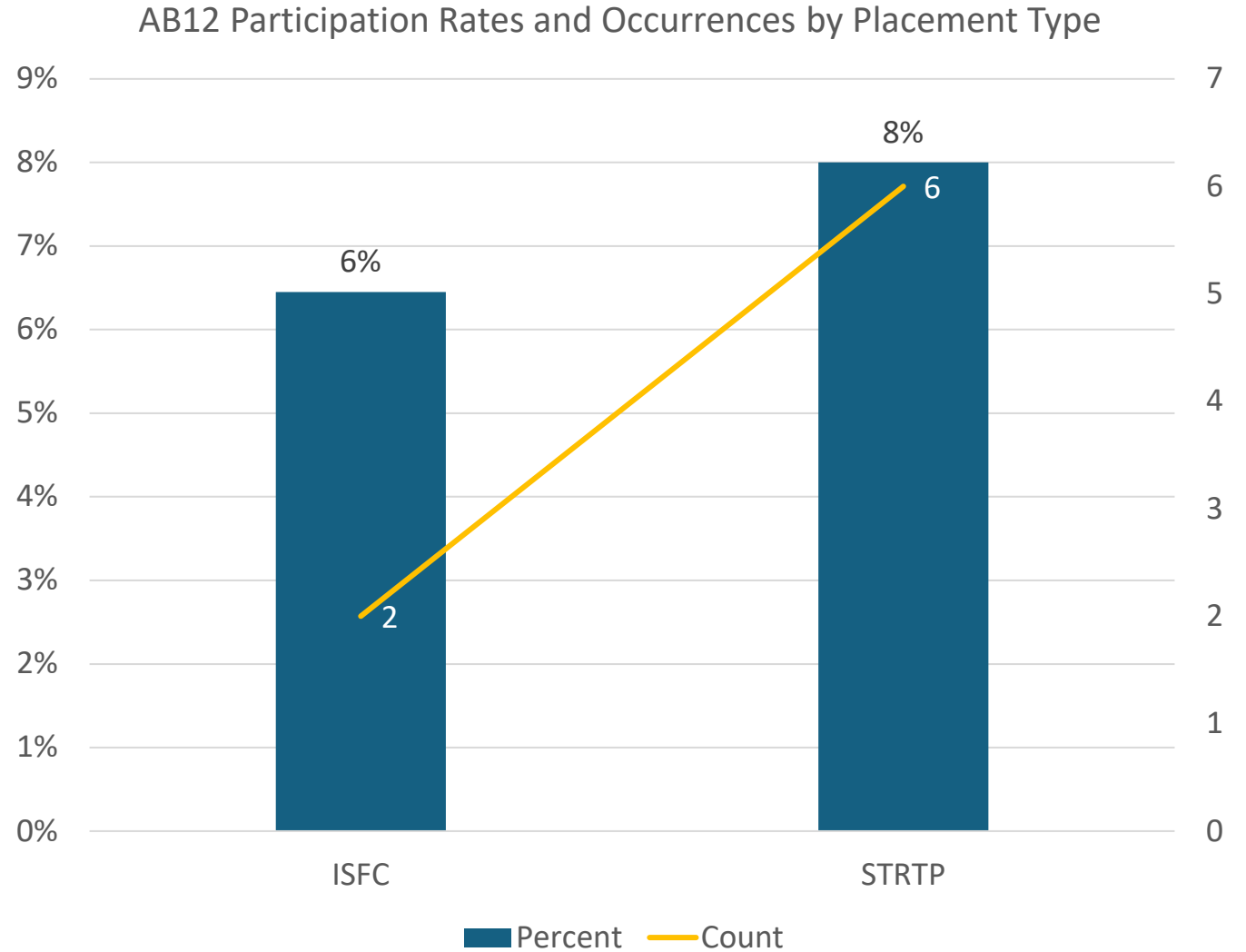
*Girls run away from ISFC placements more often than boys, but the difference is not statistically significant*

*Prior research showed that 81% of girls went AWOL at least once, compared to 55% of boys*



# Extended Foster Care (AB12) Participation

*A small proportion of ISFC and STRTP placements end in the youth transitioning to the AB12 program*



# Strengths of ISFC Program

---

- ❖ Holistic services and wraparound care for youth
- ❖ ISFC resource parent recruitment
- ❖ Comprehensive training and support for ISFC resource families
- ❖ Stable and culturally competent home environment for youth

“[My ISFC resource parents] were caring and everything like that. We might have had some ups and downs, but it was my first Black foster parents. All the other ones were a different color and did not know how to take care of me.”

- Former ISFC participant, 2025

# Challenges Facing ISFC Program

---

- ❖ Lack of ISFC beds in San Francisco (as of April 2025)
- ❖ Barriers to youth accessing health care services through Medi-Cal
- ❖ Instability and service gaps when youth transition out of ISFC program, which may increase risk of recidivism
- ❖ Aligning program capacity with efficient resource allocation

# Recommendations

# Evaluative Standards

---

## EFFECTIVENESS

Family Reunification/Permanency

AB12

AWOL

Recidivism

## PRACTICAL CONSTRAINTS

Collaboration between stakeholders

Staff capacity

Funding

## PROCEDURAL EQUITY

Placement process

Quality of care

## Data Collection Recommendations

- ❖ Collect data on placement discharge reasons for all youth ordered to OOHP
- ❖ Require consistent data entry of the monolingual data field
- ❖ Assess if youth receive similar baseline levels of care from their ISFC resource families
- ❖ Conduct follow-up evaluation of the ISFC program

## Programmatic Recommendations

- ❖ JPD and AFS should consider adding family reunification services to the ISFC contract
- ❖ JPD and AFS should collaborate to expand transition supports for youth exiting the ISFC program

## Procedural Recommendations

- ❖ JPD should consider using a structured decision-making tool to determine the appropriate level of OOHP
- ❖ AFS should provide ISFC resource families more information on accessing medical care, dental care, and vocation support for youth

# Thank You!

---

ANY QUESTIONS?