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# THE MEANING OF PERMANENCE

# Family and Kinship in East London – Young and Willmott (1957)

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# 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary

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"the voices they found described a world rich in social relationships, networks of dependence and mutual support that were central to the people's resilience in facing the adversity of insecure and low paid employment."

*Madeline Bunting*

# Question???

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If a child in your extended family were to lose their parents – temporarily or permanently - which would you opt for –

1. The local authority to step in and care for the child?
2. To step in and care for the child yourself?

*Can you foresee any circumstance in which you would opt for 1) rather than 2)?*

# Quote 4

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*In the second 6 months of care*

The earlier social work strategy of ‘wait and see’ now emphasises the ‘wait’ rather than the ‘see’, for social worker activity shows a marked decline.

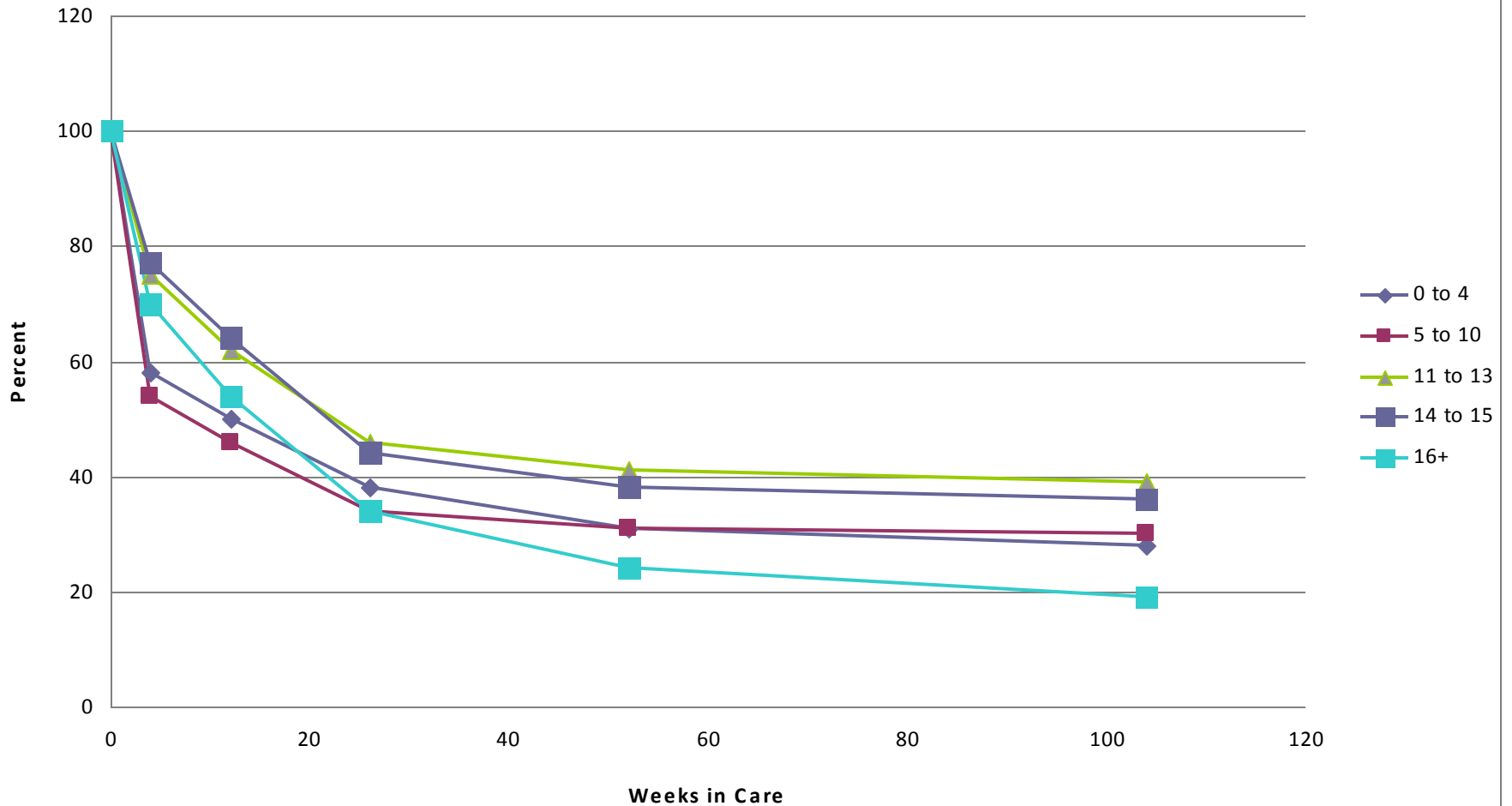
# Leaving Care Curve

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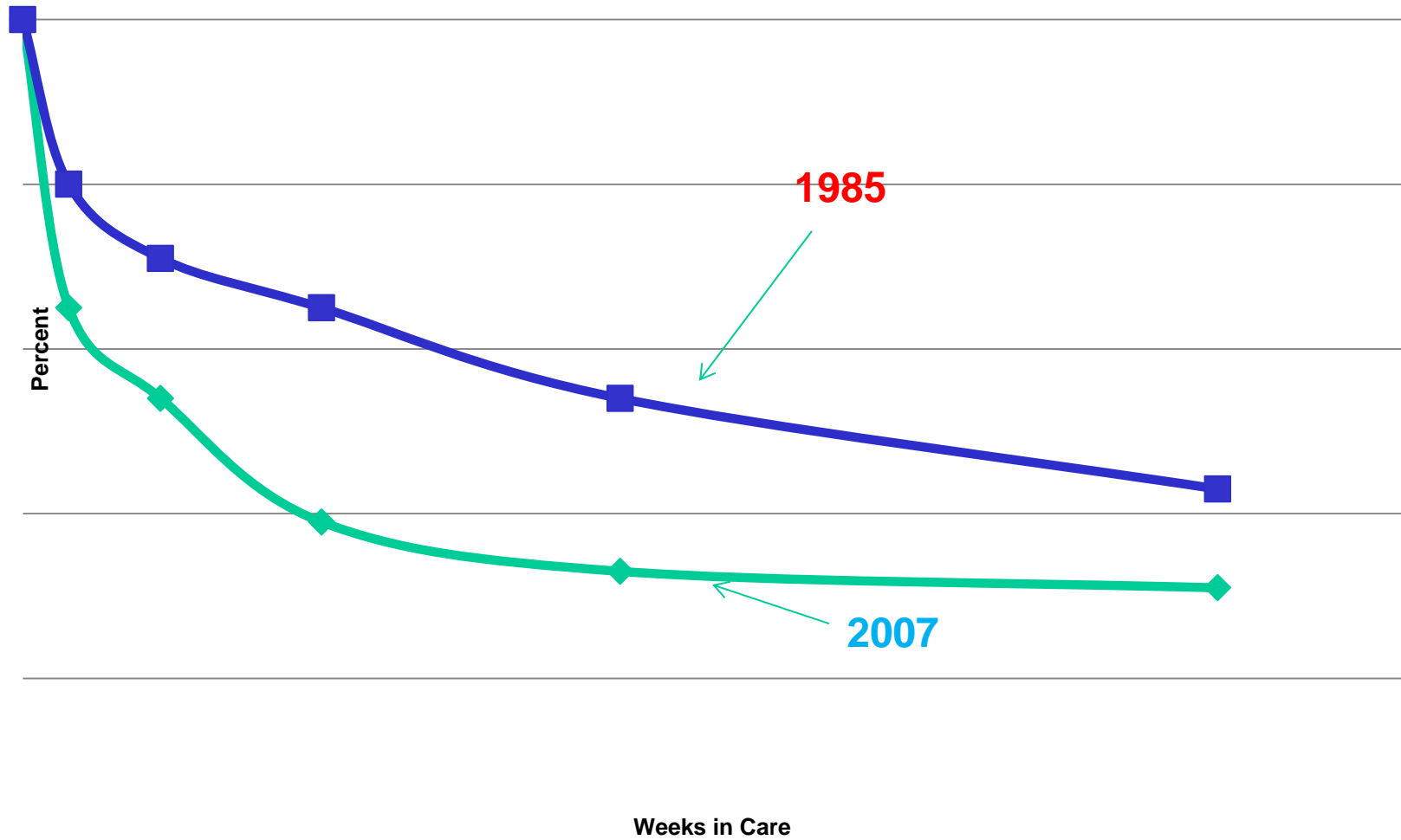
- 89% who entered care *stayed for at least a week*
- If they stayed for a week, *90% would stay for 4 weeks*
- If a stayed for 4 weeks, *89% would stay 12 weeks*
- If they stayed for 12 weeks, *91% would stay for 26 weeks*
- If they stayed for 26 weeks, *83% would stay for 52 weeks*

# Leaving Care Curve by Age

Rowe 1985



# Leaving Care Care over 20 Years





# Message

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- A child 'looked after' for more than 6 months has a 60% chance of remaining in care for 4 years or more
- A child 'looked after' for more than 12 months has a 80% chance of remaining in care for 4 years or more

# Young Entrants

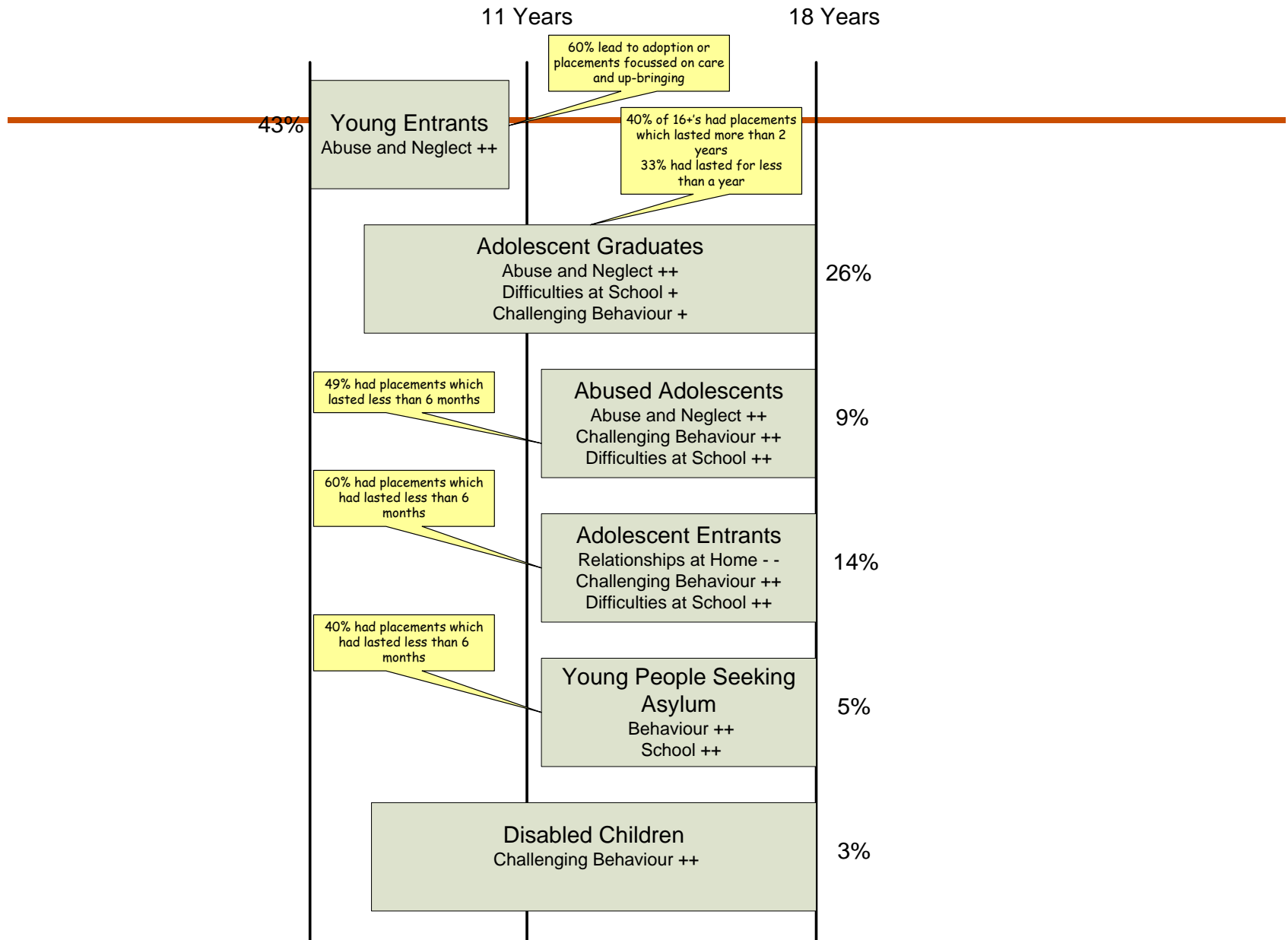
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- The leaving care curve produces a ‘build up’ of a population of children requiring ‘care and upbringing’
- Many of these children are in stable placements but are deeply unhappy

# Model of the Care System

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- Young Entrants
- Adolescent Graduates
- Abused Adolescents
- Adolescent Entrants
- Unaccompanied Asylum Seekers
- Disabled Children



# Abused Adolescents

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- Nearly half (49%) had been in their latest placement for no more than six months.
- Only 18 per cent had been in their placement for more than two years.

# Continuity and Discontinuity

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- Human beings adapt to survive
- Learning is key to being able to adapt
- Transmission of learning from one generation to the next is fundamental
- Trust is core to learning
- Secure, stable relationships are central to establishing trust

# Continuity and Discontinuity

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- Trust is an individual characteristic
- But Social Groups – our capacity to trust others and work cooperatively together is key to survival and adaptation over time.
- Family Life is a key social grouping with embedded beliefs, tradition, connections and ways of learning – families also need to adapt to survive

# The Child

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- Preparation of the child – *‘What happened to Mummy and Daddy and why you are coming to live with us forever.’*
- Adjustment and settling in – *Building relationships – establishing trust*
- Life Story Work – *Who are you, what has happened to you, who are the most important people and what have been the most important experiences in your life?’*



# Any Permanent Carer Needs to..

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- Understand their life long commitment to the child
- Understand their legal status and the nature of parental responsibility.
- Understand their entitlements.
- Understanding the entitlements of the birth parents
- Be able to managing contact
- Understood the significance of having two family trees
- Understand the issues for the child (loss, trauma) and issues of developmental recovery over time
- Understanding child's entitlements to ongoing support

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- As humans, we need to adapt to survive
  - We need to learn to trust in order to learn, grow and prosper
  - Relating and relationships are core to building trust
  - Family life in its many forms is key to relating and relationships

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In the context of maltreatment, we cannot underestimate the challenge to any family in re-building trust and relationships with the child at the centre.

Responsive, non-blaming, evidence aware family support services are absolutely key.

But how far have we resourced and developed these services to ensure that when we make decisions about the future of vulnerable children, we are confident about what is going to re-built?