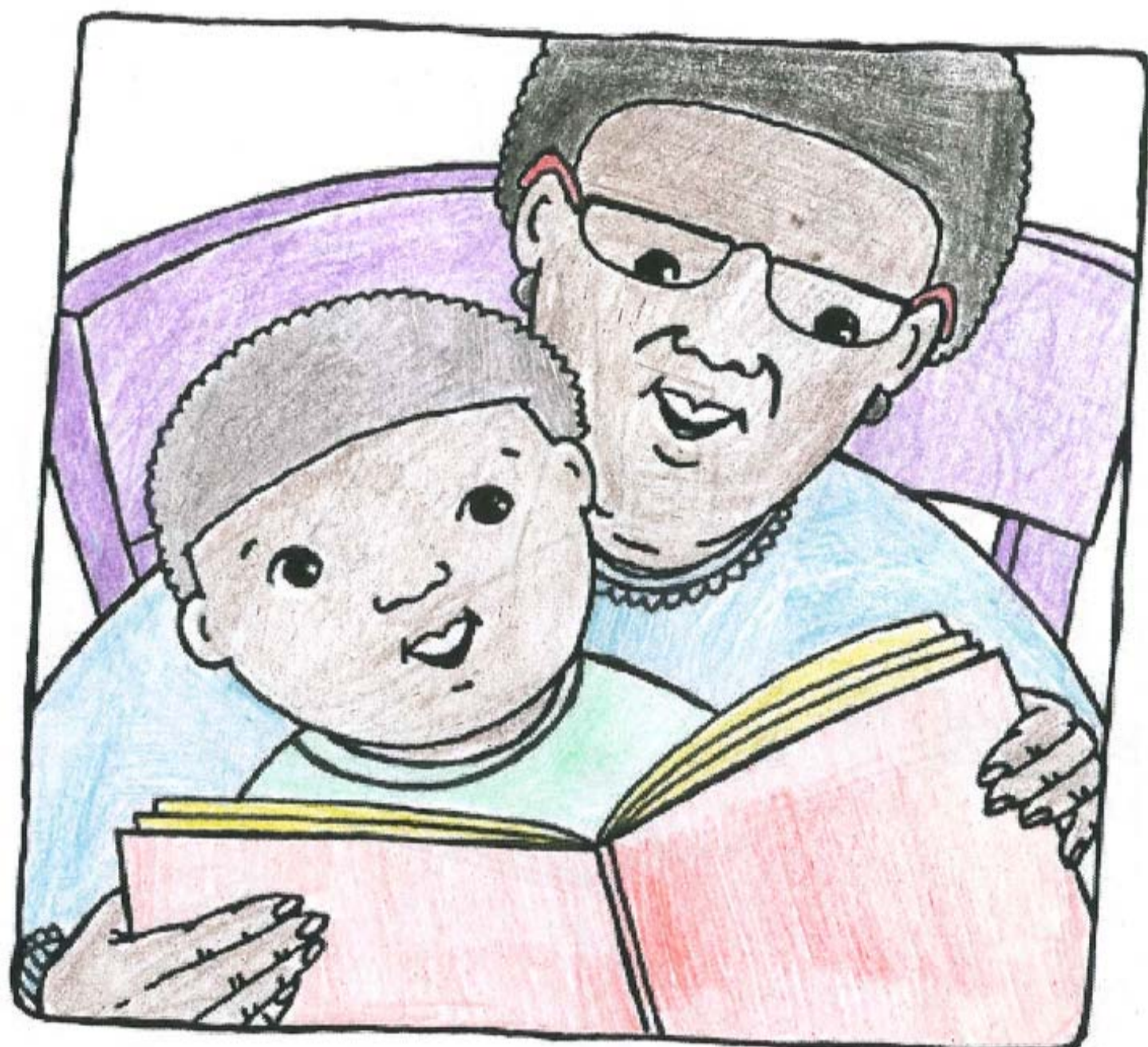


Protecting and Promoting the Wellbeing of Very Young Children

A prospective study of babies in need or at risk of significant harm

Study aims

- ◆ Trace the decision-making process that influence the life pathways of very young children at high risk of significant harm from birth until age two
- ◆ Look at differences in service response for children with similar levels of need and reasons for variations
- ◆ Comparison of experiences and progress of young children placed with foster carers or adoptive carers with those supported in their families



Methods

- ◆ Case file collection and interviews on two to three separate occasions
- ◆ As near as possible to core assessment
- ◆ At the child's first birthday
- ◆ At child's second birthday
- ◆ Anonymous summary data on cases fitting the sample criteria but where parents declined to participate

Progress

- ◆ 10 Local Authorities recruited
- ◆ Sample of 59 babies at high risk of significant harm
- ◆ Initial stage of data collection complete and data collection at 1st and 2nd birthdays ongoing



Themes and issues

- ◆ High proportion of parents who experienced abuse or neglect in their own childhoods
- ◆ The pregnancy and removal cycle (longstanding children's services involvement, multiple children permanently placed away from home)
- ◆ High prevalence of mental health need
- ◆ Under recognition of pre-birth health needs and risks
- ◆ Different attitudes concerning the impact of family and environmental factors on well-being
- ◆ Parental engagement with services at the point of pregnancy: facilitating successful outcomes in spite of multiple risk factors?