California's Child and Family Services Review
System Improvement Plan

County:	Lake
Responsible County Child Welfare Agency:	Lake County Department of Social Services, Child Welfare Services
Period of Plan:	June 1, 2008 – June 1, 2011
Period of Outcomes Data:	January 1, 2005 – January 1, 2007
Date Submitted:	May 22, 2008

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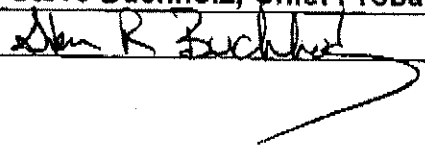
Signature:	

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BOARD OF SUPERVISORS, COUNTY OF LAKE

STATE OF CALIFORNIA

MINUTE ORDER

MEETING DATE: MAY 20, 2008

CONSENT AGENDA ITEM C-15 - Approve County of Lake AB 636 Self-Improvement Plan (SIP) 2008/2010 for local child welfare services and probation services. -

"...Approved County of Lake AB 636 Self-Improvement Plan (SIP) 2008-2010 for local child welfare services and probation services."

Clerk to the Board
Kelly F. Cox

By: Mireya Turner
Mireya G. Turner
Assistant Clerk of the Board

BOARD OF SUPERVISORS LAKE COUNTY, CAL

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Lake County System Improvement Plan 2008

I. Purpose

In 1997, the federal government enacted the Adoption & Safe Families Act (ASFA), which mandated the development of outcome measures for safety, permanency and child/family well-being. In 2001, the California State Legislature enacted Assembly Bill 636 (AB 636), the Child Welfare System Improvement and Accountability Act to improve outcomes for children in the child welfare system while holding county and state agencies accountable for the outcomes achieved. The statewide system is an enhanced version of the federal oversight system mandated by Congress and used to monitor states' performance.

Under California's accountability system which went into effect January 1, 2004, each county receives quarterly data reports on their outcomes in the areas of safety, permanency and well-being of children and families who come into contact with the child welfare system. (For Probation, this means the children who are placed in foster care by use of federal Title VI-E and Title IV-B funds).

Other principle components of the California Outcomes and Accountability System (COAS) include:

- County Peer Quality Case Reviews (PQCR)
- County Self-Assessments
- County System Improvement Plans
- State Technical Assistance and Monitoring

In 2004, Lake County completed the first 3 year Self-Assessment and System Improvement Plan based on California Department of Social Services (CDSS) - county triennial schedule. Lake County is now embarking on round two, with the PQCR held in Lake County May of 2007 and the County Self-Assessment approved by the Board of Supervisors submitted to CDSS in February 2008.

The complete list of federal indicators can be found on the Children's Bureau website at: http://www.acf.hhs.gov/programs/cb/cwmonitoring/data_indicators.htm

California outcomes and accountability data indicators can be found on the California Department of Social Services website at: http://www.childsworld.ca.gov/PG1356.htm

II. Local Planning Bodies

Lake County Department of Social Services – Child Welfare Division (LCDSS) and Lake County Probation Department partner and collaborate with a wide array of agencies to assure that the needs of children and families are addressed and that systems continue to be updated to improve outcomes. The following are collaborative meetings regularly attended by departmental representatives:

- Children's Council
- Children's Council Executive Committee
- Interagency Placement Review Team
- Multi-Disciplinary Team
- The Child Abuse Response Team
- School Attendance Review Board
- Differential Response Administrative Oversight
- High Risk Infant Team
- Death Review Committee
- Early Start Council
- Healthy Start Council
- Health Leadership Network
- Indian Child Welfare Act Round Table
- Tribal Representatives
- Gang Task Force
- Law Enforcement
- Juvenile Justice Committee
- Delinquency / Dependency Drug Court
- Juvenile Court

With ongoing input from all partner agencies listed above, an invitation to attend six sub-committee workshops to work directly on the county System Improvement Plan was sent out. LCDSS wishes to thank the following for their time and contributions:

- Child Welfare Services; Kathy Maes – Deputy Director, Toni Jones – Program Manager, Sara Buske – Emergency Response Supervisor, Paula Austin – Staff Services Analyst , Leila Haddad - Staff Services Analyst, Mary Pagan – ILP Coordinator
- Probation Department, Sheli Wright – Senior Probation Officer
- Health Department; Jane Maclean – Director, Kellie Furia – CHDP Coordinator,
- Alcohol and Other Drug Services, Laura Solis - Director
- Mental Health Department, Terry Rooney – Deputy Director
- Health Leadership Network, Susan Jen – Director
- ICWA Differential Response, Marsha Lee – ICWA Representative Robinson Rancheria
- Redwood Children's Services, Lorraine Montano – Assistant Director

Data collected from state provided quarterly reports, Safe-Measures, in-house monthly reports, the Census Bureau, the California Office of Education, Children Now, and the newly updated Lake County Children's Report Card, as well as input from parents, foster parents, children, local tribes, Foster Family Agencies, the courts, service providers, community partners, U. C. Davis, and California Department of Social Services, continue to be assessed to improve systems, services and outcomes in Lake County. As Lake County Department of Social Services and Lake County Probation Department cannot improve all outcomes

alone, the departments will continue to rely on community partners to work jointly for the benefit of all families and children in Lake County.

III. Summary of the Self-Assessment

A. Child Welfare Services Discussion of System Strengths and Areas Needing Improvements

Lake County has many strengths that contribute to the well being of its children and families. Agencies and county departments have numerous on-going collaborative meetings that have forged partnerships and provided valuable information on individual and community issues. Through the new Differential Response Program (DR) and Dependency Drug Court (DDC), LCDSS has initiated cross training with key partner agencies. Through these trainings, agencies are becoming more knowledgeable of each other's systems and mandates. As a result, LCDSS is building strong working relationships that better serve the agencies' mutual clients

Since the last self assessment, LCDSS identified the need to develop specialized positions to support the social workers to enhance their ability to provide quality services for their clients. As a result, new positions were developed, including a full time social worker assigned to the Independent Living Skills Program, three social service aides, a placement specialist, a social worker assigned as an instructor for the Nurturing Parent Program, and the development of a position to oversee quality assurance.

Existing LCDSS social work positions have also been redefined to include an ICWA Specialist, Dependency Drug Court FR/FM worker, and a social worker that acts as a juvenile court liaison. Additionally, the use of the Strategic Decision Making tool (SDM) and the expansion of the case staffing process has enhanced assessment and decision making abilities. Case staffings have also proven to be a valuable training tool for new employees.

However, like all social service departments, LCDSS recognizes the challenge to meet the outcome standards set by the state and federal government. Like most CWS agencies, LCDSS has social worker retention and recruitment difficulties, especially in the recruitment of experienced and master level social workers.

There are rarely enough service providers to meet the needs of Lake County families. In particular, drug treatment programs have waiting lists, especially residential programs for addicted parents. And, there are few, if any, on-going support groups for parents who have completed formal treatment. Qualified counselors or therapists who understand the dynamics of families in relation to substance abuse and child abuse are lacking. LCDSS is committed to supporting any and all efforts by treatment agencies to expand their services. It is anticipated that with additional and appropriate treatment and aftercare

programs, the number of children entering and re-entering the foster care system will decline.

Additionally, Lake County has difficulty finding appropriate stable placements within the county for children with behavior problems. As a result, placing children out of county makes it more difficult for successful reunification to occur, produces a travel and time burden for social workers and makes coordination of services and family visitation difficult. Lastly, removal of children from their communities exacerbates their loss. LCDSS recently received approval from the State, and contracted with Redwood Children's Services, for intensive treatment foster care homes. It is anticipated that placement in ITFC homes will assist in lowering the number of children placed in out-of-county group homes.

Although LCDSS is making progress in its collaborative relationships, attention still needs to be focused on the relationship with the schools. Currently, the Child Abuse Prevention Council is the provider of community mandated reporter training. However, as a way to build rapport and strengthen the relationship with the schools it is LCDSS's intent to take on the responsibility of the mandated reporter training and offer additional CWS training at each of the school sites.

Although LCDSS currently has long standing protocols for MDT and High Risk Infant Team monthly meetings, LCDSS believes that the potential benefits of these collaborations are not being maximized. LCDSS's goal is to work with the agencies involved to restructure the process for improved outcomes.

B. Child Welfare Services Areas for Further Exploration Through the Peer Quality Case Review

- Lake County held the Peer Quality Case Review May 22-24, 2007. The area of focus was to improve outcomes in the recurrence of maltreatment in 12 months. Three social workers and three probations officers from Mendocino, Shasta, Sutter, Yolo and El Dorado counties were invited to Lake County to review cases, interview social workers and provide input for outcome improvement. Although Lake County's rate was within the federal range of no more than 6.1% of recurrence of abuse within six months, LCDSS will maintain an ongoing focus on continuing to improve efforts to keep children from being re-abused within one year. As Lake County has high substance abuse, poverty and neglect issues, LCDSS reviewed the strengths of current practice and looked to infuse new practices and ideas for collaboration with other agencies and service providers. LCDSS has implemented processes to improve this outcome through the use of SDM, DR, DDC, case staffings, and ongoing training and collaboration with service providers. LCDSS will also continue to refine its efforts by collaborating with other agencies and local tribes to develop protocols, procedures, training, and memorandums of understanding in such areas as DR, ICWA, Linkages, and Positive Toxicology protocol.

- Further, the LCDSS continues to work towards improving all outcomes:
  1. Children are, first and foremost, protected from abuse and neglect.
  2. Children are maintained safely in their homes whenever possible and appropriate.
  3. Children have permanency and stability in their living situations without increasing reentry to foster care.
  4. The family relationships and connections of the children served will be preserved, as appropriate.
  5. Children receive services adequate to their physical, emotional and mental health needs.
  6. Children receive services appropriate to their educational needs.
  7. Families have enhanced capacity to provide for their children's needs.
  8. Youth emancipating from foster care are prepared to transition to adulthood.

C. Probation Discussion of System Strengths and Areas Needing Improvements

Although the dependency system and the delinquency system have significant overlap in objectives and treatment stemming from some of the same problems, they have completely different entry criteria. The threshold criteria for a juvenile to enter the juvenile justice system are successful prosecution of the juvenile as a delinquent (criminal) by the District Attorney and an order from the court that the probation officer supervises the juvenile. The disposition of the delinquent must include an assessment of the juvenile's threat to the community. The threshold criteria for a juvenile to enter the dependency system are successful adjudication of the parent showing abuse/neglect of the juvenile (victim) and an order for supervision from the court.

One of the inherent strengths of the 602 W&I process is that for at least 30 days prior to the disposition, the "at risk" minor will remain in custody. During that time, the minor is in a controlled environment where he/she can be observed and treatment can begin. Health screening is completed, and referrals for mental health evaluations are made and often completed. Additionally, the minor remains in custody until placed, which may be weeks after disposition. During this extended period of confinement, potential placements can interview the minor and increase the chances for a better placement "fit".

The Probation Department's major strength is that the placement officers have face-to-face contact with every child and the placement providers every month. Every contact whether by telephone or in person is entered into the Department's computer case file database. If there is a problem with the minor or the placement that necessitates termination of the placement, the minor may immediately be taken into custody and returned to the juvenile hall. If the parents need help to meet their objectives, the probation officer will assist and make referrals as needed. Should the parent have the ability to comply but refuse to

do so, the refusal is documented and a criminal investigation of the parent may be initiated. Problems of a day-to-day nature are discussed and solved by the probation officer working with the placement and the minor and the parent if needed.

Another strength of the juvenile division is that each morning the division meets to discuss law and policy changes, staff cases, identify and discuss resources, evaluate juveniles/families performance, and coordinate treatment and supervision. This daily meeting helps to keep all staff briefed while maximizing resources.

Areas that need improvement would include more 602 W&I foster homes and group homes in the county. This would enhance family involvement, facilitate continued attendance in the same school, reduce the expenditure of Department resources on travel, and intensify supervision, thus (hopefully) accelerating the reunification process. Additionally, it is hoped that with the future implementation of a local AB163 program, many of the families with mental health needs may be able to be served without being placed.

There has been a steady increase in the number of juveniles coming into the 602 W&I system with significant mental health issues. Lake County has done an excellent job in meeting the need in this area by providing a mental health staff to work exclusively with 602 W&I juveniles and their families to address their mental health issues. Probation could not have met this goal without the dedication of the Mental Health Department in providing this valuable service to juveniles detained in the juvenile hall.

Often one of the vital needs of a family is to make the home livable and provide necessities. This would include repairing or providing home appliances, windows, doors, and locks, etc. This also requires the means to clean up a home and haul trash to the landfill. In order to accomplish this, the Probation Department would require rapid access to funding to make such purchases and to pay fees.

D. Probation Areas for Further Exploration Through the Peer Quality Case Review

Lake County held its first Peer Quality Case Review May 22-24, 2007. The area of focus for the Probation Department was family engagement and contact as it relates to reunification.

The Probation Department chose to focus on reunification cases because of the belief that early services, where parents are actively involved and participate in their children's cases and treatment, are usually the families that are successful in reunifying. The Department also chose engagement as it relates to reunification because of the Department's desire that the probation officer ensure

that all children, who are able to return home, do so as soon as possible and in the most effective way for both the child and the family.

The Department wanted to look at the success of current practices and to get ideas for enhancements to the current practice and services which could increase engagement and family reunification success for probation children and their families.

The following is a summary of what the Probation Department learned during this process:

Probation officers in Lake County feel supported by their supervisors, better enabling them to do their jobs.

Probation officers take the time and effort needed to find the right placement home for the child. They strive to maintain family connections by transporting the child and family on home passes and visitations.

Probation officers work hard to get the family's "buy-in" and participation in the case plan. Probation officers go out of their way to engage the family, as well as the child. In one case, the probation officer saw the mother daily and helped her develop basic life skills (i.e., budgeting, developing a resume, filling out job applications, and practiced interviewing skills with her).

The supervisor staffs cases with the probation officers regularly, reads over contact notes, and is generally aware of the cases, while assisting with decision-making and resource access.

However, many of the children are placed in out of county placements and probation officers have to travel great distances to visit the children. The distance limits their time available to practice effective strengths-based family engagement strategies.

Group homes have "blackout" periods when children first arrive where they are not allowed contact with the family. This can sever the relationship that may already be delicate between the family and child. Group homes also do not start therapy with the family right away, which does not capitalize on the parent/child relationship which may be present when a child first arrives. Group homes use visitation and family contact as a "carrot", which can lead to less and less contact with the family and less investment in the relationship from both the child and parent.

There is a need for additional resources that would support engagement with the child and family and successful reunification.

- There is a need for a wraparound program.
- There is a need for parents to have support and information about probation and the judicial system. A parent partner program would be helpful.

- There is a need for more local foster families and group homes so that children can be placed near their families. There is a need to develop local homes that can act as "step down" levels of care so that children can transition effectively once they have completed their program and return home more quickly and with more success.
- There is a need for an effective transportation system that would allow families access to services, and to allow consistent visitation and contact with the child.
- There is a need for flexible/incentive funds, so that children have the financial resources to attend social and other appropriate activities, and to be used for rewards for good behavior. (At the current time probation officers have used their personal funds for this)
- There is a need for a more comprehensive Independent Living Program (ILP).
- Turnover is high among probation officers, and the demands of the work are so high that there is not enough time to train new probation officers.

Future PQCR goals should include information on how to access creative funding to implement further services and ideas on better collaboration among agencies in order to utilize the fullest extent of the services that Lake County does offer:

There is a need for more teaming and collaboration to serve families holistically. Many of the families that come in contact with CWS, Probation, Mental Health, and Alcohol and Other Drug Services need to be served as a team with common goals.

There is a need for a universal release of information, and/or Memorandums of Understanding between agencies, so that information can be shared expediently when needed. There is also a need to work together with a "team" approach to serve families in need.

Resource Issues

- Families need better access to transportation to enable compliance with the case plan.
- There is a lack of preventative or intensive pre-placement services.
- There are no wraparound services.
- The Probation Department needs a probation aide to help with placement
- There is a need for family advocates/parent partners.
- There is a need for better ILP services.

Outcome/Systemic Factor:
Safety: S1.1 No Recurrence of Maltreatment. *Of all children who were victims of a substantiated or indicated maltreatment allegation during the last 6 months of 2006, what percent were not victims of another substantiated or indicated maltreatment allegation within the 6-months following that maltreatment incident?*

County's Current Performance:
During the time-period 7/1/2006 – 6/30/2007, CWS was at 95.6%. The national standard is 94.6% or higher. Though CWS is above the National standard for this time-period, the outcome is included in the SIP as it was the focus of the PQCR and systems improvements in this area are ongoing.

Improvement Goal 1.0
To remain at or above the national standard of 94.6%.

Strategy 1. 1	**Strategy Rationale**[1]
Improve assessment and decision making through the use of Structured Decision Making (SDM) in conjunction with case conferences.	A self-assessment indicated that social workers differed in their decision-making processes without the use of SDM. Training new staff in the use of SDM and case conferencing shall provide for uniform assessments and decision making.

Milestone	Timeframe	Assigned to
1.1.1 Train new social workers in the use of SDM, ER Protocol and provide them with policies and procedures.	As new social workers are hired.	U. C. Davis and CWS-Supervisors CWS Staff Services Analyst
1.1.2 Case conferencing.	When major decisions are to be made, such as removal of a child from the home, termination of services or termination of parental rights.	CWS-Supervisors CWS-Program Managers CWS-Social Workers Parents, other agencies, services providers and tribal representatives and county counsel on a situational basis.

[1] Describe how the strategy will build on progress and improve this program/outcome area.

Strategy 1. 2 Continue to build upon programs that improve stability and outcomes for children and families at risk.			**Strategy Rationale** By engaging families early and providing them with needed services, LCDSS hopes to empower parents to address the issues that brought them to the attention of CWS and keep children from being re-abused.
Milestone	**Timeframe**	**Assigned to**	
1.2.1. Nurturing Parent Program - expand training and services within the community.	Within 12 months (5/2009)		CWS-Deputy Director CWS-Program Manager CWS-Supervisors Lake Family Resource Center Children's Council
1.2.2 Differential Response Services (DR) – expand services within the local tribes and to more families within the community	Within 12 months (5/2009)		CWS-Deputy Director CWS-Program Manager Lake Family Resource Center Lake County Office of Education / Healthy Start Local ICWA Representatives
1.2.3 Revamp collaborative partnerships in the community, i.e. Multidisciplinary Team (MDT), High Risk Infant Team (HRIT), and Wrap Around Services. Develop new memorandums of understanding, policies, protocols and training.	Within 12 months (5/2009)		CWS-Deputy Director, CWS-Program Manager in partnership with Local Agency Representatives
1.2.4 Linkages – to begin implementation and to provide training to the social workers and eligibility workers for creating joint case plans with the family's input and expand to include Tribal TNAF	Within 12 months (5/2009)		CWS-Deputy Director Cal Works-Deputy Director Tribal TANF CWS-Program Manager CWS-Supervisors CWS-Staff Services Analyst

Describe any additional systemic factors needing to be addressed that support the improvement plan goals.

Recruitment and retention of CWS social workers issues has left this county, like many others, understaffed. The Lake County Board of Supervisors recently approved a 15 % higher salary adjustment for CWS – Social Workers and CWS - Supervisors. It is hoped this salary adjustment will help when competing with other nearby counties who have ongoing recruitment of experienced CWS – Social Workers and Supervisors.

Describe educational/training needs (including technical assistance) to achieve the improvement goals.

With ongoing recruitment of Social Workers and legislative changes, CWS will rely on U.C. Davis, the Northern Training Region, CDSS, CWS Supervisors, the CWS Staff Services Analyst and community agencies to meet the ongoing training needs of staff. These areas of training include, but are not limited to: CWS/CMS data entry, SW Core, ER Protocols, Motivational Engagement, SDM, DR, Linkages, Strength Based Case Plans, ICWA, and services provided by community agencies. The collaborative partners can provide community based planning and training to build relationships. Technical assistance will be requested of various state and contracted agencies to provide assistance in training

the collaborative groups on an as needed basis.
Identify roles of the other partners in achieving the improvement goals. Early prevention services and education remain key factors in improving outcomes for children. For example, education in the area of the effects of using methamphetamine, the effects of drinking alcohol when pregnant, self esteem, the Nurturing Parent Program, can be taught by community agencies and partners. Ongoing collaborative meetings are needed with partner agencies to improve and expand upon services provided to families at risk. The High Risk Infant Team and the Multidisciplinary Team need to be restructured. As many of the collaborative members have changed, training will be needed on the rolls of members to refocus on early intervention models.
Identify any regulatory or statutory changes needed to support the accomplishment of the improvement goals. During the county PQCR it was found that families who received intensive services and Social Worker contact fared much better than those who did not. State caseload standards are still too high, which impedes the ability for Social Workers to provide the high level of contact and intensive services needed for all families.

Outcome/Systemic Factor: **Well-Being:** 8A Children Transitioning to Self-Sufficient Adulthood	
County's Current Performance: During the time-period 10/1/2006 – 9/30/2007 for CWS & Probation: Youths 15 ½ to 20 who received Independent Living Program (ILP) services – 75 (29 from Probation, 46 from CWS); Youths who received ILP services that had special needs (educational, mental and/or physical) - 26; Youths determined unemployable, SSI eligible, or other similar special category - 3; Youths who emancipated – 13; Youths who completed high school/GED or adult education 11; Youth enrolled in college – 4; Youth enrolled in vocational training – 22; Youths enlisted in military, Job Corps, or California Conservation Corps - 1, Youth who obtained employment – 19.	
Improvement Goal 1.0 Improve and expand services to assist youth exiting CWS & Probation foster care to emancipation and youth who have emancipated.	
Strategy 1. 1 Conduct inclusive, flexible and comprehensive case planning that engages youth in planning to prepare for transition to adulthood.	**Strategy Rationale**[2] Former foster youth are a vulnerable population at risk of homelessness, unemployment, welfare dependency, incarceration and other adverse outcomes if they exit the foster care system unprepared to become self-sufficient and without stable housing. LCDSS shall increase the chances for a successful transition to independent living for Lake County foster youth.

[2] Describe how the strategy will build on progress and improve this program/outcome area.

Milestone	Timeframe	Assigned to
1.1.1 Foster youth will begin receiving ILP services by age 15 ½. The first assessment of needs will utilize the Ansell-Casey Life Skills to assess needs and strengths. The Case Managing Social Worker shall develop the Transitional Independent Living Plan (TILP) with input from the Ansell-Casey assessment, the ILP coordinator, the youth, the care provider and the Placement Specialist. The TILP assessment shall be comprehensive and the plan shall lay out a road map to assist the youth in obtaining needed education and services for emancipation. The assessment will include a screening process regarding eligibility for Supplemental Security Income/State Supplemental Payments (SSI/SSP). If the youth is eligible, the Case Managing Social Worker will follow through with the application process until the youth is in receipt of the benefits. The assessments and case plans will be reviewed and updated at a minimum of every 6 months.	Begin 5/2008	The Case Managing Social Worker / Probation Placement Officer shall work with the youth, care provider and ILP-Coordinator (at a minimum) to develop the case plan. The ILP - Coordinator will review the TILP assessment and plan to provide input prior to supervisor approval. The Case Managing Social Worker / Probation Placement Officer will refer and monitor the ongoing services to ensure all youths are receiving the necessary individual services to meet their needs for emancipation. The ILP-Coordinator will provide workshops and trainings to meet the needs of the youths. The Placement Specialist will assist in identifying the best care options for the youth, including kinship, guardianship and adoption.
1.1.2 Improve collaborative communication with partner agencies and seek access to services in other counties to expand and improve ILP services for Lake County foster youth placed in and out of the county.	Begin 5/2008	Case Managing Social Worker Probation Placement Officer Probation-Supervisors ILP-Coordinator CWS-Supervisors CWS-Program Manager
1.1.3 Eligible youths shall receive: 1) Stipends for attending workshops and events, and completing courses toward GED or High School diploma, and trust accounts for SSI/SSP youth. 2) Documents for emancipation, including: certified birth certificate, social security card, identification card, health and education summary, proof of dependency/wardship, and a folder containing resources and information from	Begin 5/2008	ILP-Coordinator Case Managing Social Worker Probation Placement Officer CWS-Supervisors Probation-Supervisors

	workshops. 3) Assistance with applications for health insurance, mental health, college, vocational training, employment, housing, or financial support including SSI/SSP. 4) Assistance to identify significant adults in their lives who can assist them through their transition.				
Strategy 1. 2 Explore the options of implementing Transitional Housing Placement Program (THPP) and Transitional Housing Placement Plus (THP+)			**Strategy Rationale** THPP will provide a transitional placement and training to prepare youths for emancipation and THP+ will provide much needed housing for youth that have already emancipated from foster care.		
Milestone	**1.2.1.** Develop plans for implementation and submit to CDSS for approval.	Timeframe	1/29/2008 - Completed	Assigned to	CWS-Staff Services Analyst
	1.2.2 If approved, work with foster family agencies to begin implementing programs.		7/1/2008 – If approved		CWS-Staff Services Analyst CWS-Program Manager CWS-Supervisors Redwood Children's Services Foster Family Agencies Probation
	1.2.3 Provide training to CWS-Social Workers and Probation Officers on use of programs and criteria for eligibility.		7/1/2008 – If approved		CWS-Staff Services Analyst CWS-Program Manager Redwood Children's Services Foster Family Agencies Probation
Strategy 1. 3 Explore the feasibility of implementing the Family Finders program.			**Strategy Rationale** Youth who emancipate from foster care are often left without caring adults and resources that other children have. They need extended family (or mentors) to assist them through the daily hurdles of life. By finding extended family members more youth will have the connections they need when they exit foster care.		
Milestone	**1.3.1** Research program and costs and prepare analysis.	Timeframe	5/30/2008	Assigned to	ILP-Coordinator
	1.3.2 If analysis is approved, Request Board of Supervisor approval for 2008/2009 budget.		6/2008		Director

	1.3.3 Implement program, develop policies and training for staff.		7/2008 (if approved)		ILP-Coordinator CWS-Staff Services Analyst CWS-Supervisors CWS-Program Manager Probation

Describe any additional systemic factors needing to be addressed that support the improvement plan goals.

Assessments and Independent Living Plan templates need to be improved in the Child Welfare Services / Case Management System (CWS/CMS).

Describe educational/training needs (including technical assistance) to achieve the improvement goals.

New Ways to Work Organization and Casey Family Programs provide technical assistance to counties and could be contracted to come to a Lake County collaborative youth work group.

Identify roles of the other partners in achieving the improvement goals.

LCDSS needs the assistance of schools, community organizations, government agencies and the private sector to build resources targeted to prepare youth for success as adults. ILP Liaisons from other counties, immediate and extended family members, caregivers, teachers, churches, youth groups are all important in assisting youth through their transition into adulthood, in the areas of health care, transportation, tutoring, mentoring, identifying appropriate placement, or other services.

The Lake County Youth Council meets regularly to improve community efforts in educating foster youth. The members consist of Office of Education, California Conservation Corp., Teen Parenting Program, Job Corps, Probation, Mental Health, Arbor Education and Training, North Central Counties Consortium, and Child Welfare Services.

Lake Center for Support, a division of Children's Therapeutic Service contracted through Redwood Children's Services and Lake County Mental Health, provides a youth drop in center in Clearlake for 16-24 year olds. This valuable center assists youths with their mental health and independent living issues and provides workshops and support groups. They also provide a shower, food, and many other resources for youth.

The Mental Health Services Act of 2004 provides an ongoing source of funding for counties to extend and even to reinvent systems of care and specifically names transition age youth in the foster care system as one of the populations to be served by monies from the bill.

Lake County Office of Education meets with youths individually to assess their goals regarding post secondary education and to assist them in applying for grants. They also provide foster youth education tracking and assist youth with counseling, resume writing and job placement.

Arbor Education and Training provides a MiZone teen center in Lower Lake for youth 16 – 19. The center provides workshops, tutoring, computer/internet access, career or secondary education planning, job placement and a safe place to hang out and just play games.

Women, Infants and Children services (WIC) and Teen Parenting assist pregnant youth with training and mentoring.

Redwood Coast Regional Services assist youth with learning disabilities.

AmeriCorps, Job Corps, and California Conservation Corps assist youth with mentoring, tutoring and job skills, and housing for emancipated youth.

ICWA Representatives assist in the writing of the case plans for culturally appropriate services for Indian youth.

The Chafee Education and Training Voucher program assists youths with grant monies for secondary education.

The Workforce Investment Act (WIA) provides a resource center to assist youth with job search, interview preparation, career planning, and information on vocational / trade schools and computers skills.

Identify any regulatory or statutory changes needed to support the accomplishment of the improvement goals.

None at this time.

Outcome/Systemic Factor:
Permanency & Stability: C1.4 Reentry Following Reunification. *Of all children discharged from foster care to reunification during the year, what percent reentered foster care in less than 12 months from the date of discharge.*

County's Current Performance:
During the time-period 7/1/2005 – 6/30/2006, CWS was at 13.6%. The national standard is at 9.9% or less.

Improvement Goal 1.0
Reduce the number of children re-entering the foster care system.

Strategy 1. 1
Develop comprehensive case plans addressing all services from which the family may benefit.

Strategy Rationale[3]
Social Workers engage parents in developing case plans so that the plan is comprehensive, reflecting all the family needs and corresponding relevant services. This assures greater success for the parents in completing their plans and improving their life skills.

Milestone	Timeframe	Assigned to
1.1.1 Case plans developed with parent input. Including parents in the formulation of the case plan helps them to better commit to participation because they have a clearer understanding of what is being included and why. Parents also contribute additional ideas regarding the services they need. Training for new Social Workers in such areas as Motivational Engagement, Motivational Interviewing, Building Skills for Working with Families, and Linkages will further the goal of LCDSS.	Ongoing as new Social Workers are hired.	CWS-Supervisors CWS-Staff Services Analyst U.C. Davis

Strategy 1. 2
Continue to improve assessment and decision making when returning a child home by using the Structured Decision Making (SDM) tool in conjunction with case conferences.

Strategy Rationale
A Self-assessment indicated that Social Workers differ in their decision-making processes. Incorporating SDM and case conferences shall provide for uniform assessments and decision making to ensure child safety and reduce re-entry into foster care.

Milestone	Timeframe	Assigned to
1.2.1. Continue to develop policies, procedures and training in the use of SDM and case conferencing for ongoing and newly hired Social Workers.	Ongoing	CWS-Supervisors CWS-Staff Services Analyst U.C. Davis

[3] Describe how the strategy will build on progress and improve this program/outcome area.

Strategy 1. 3 Continue to improve in services for families in Lake County. *(All strategies from section 1.2 under Recurrence of Abuse above are incorporated for herein for this outcome)*		**Strategy Rationale** For continued success, families need tools and resources to continue to provide for the health and safety of their children when CWS is no longer involved in their lives.	
Milestone	**Timeframe**		**Assigned to**
1.3.1 Drug Dependency Court (DDC) – continue to implement, improve upon and monitor outcomes. Assess families before and after services.	Ongoing		CWS-DSS Social Worker CWS-Supervisors Alcohol and Other Drug Services DDC-Judge
1.3.2 Develop parent support groups with the use of federal monies from Promoting Safe and Stable Families (PSSF). The group meetings will provide parents with: orientation to the Child Welfare / Court process (as they enter the system) and expectations of the parents to reunify with their children, expedited substance abuse assessments and services, strategies to assist in developing their case plans, techniques to cope, and ongoing help when children have been returned home.	5/30/2008		CWS-Deputy Director CWS-Program Manager CWS-Supervisor Parents will be recruited to assist in running the support groups
1.3.3 Continue to expand the Nurturing Parent Program for in-house and in the home services.	Ongoing		CWS-Deputy Director CWS-Program Manager CWS-Supervisor Social Services Aides

Describe any additional systemic factors needing to be addressed that support the improvement plan goals.

None at this time.

Notes: Lake County's numbers for this outcome have been improving since the inception of the SIP. LCDSS is still in the process of implementing strategies that began in 9/04. Social Worker job assignments were restructured to emphasize offering early intervention voluntary services with closer monitoring of progress in order to lessen entry into the court system and foster care. All referrals of children born with a positive toxicology for methamphetamine, other illegal substances and alcohol in their system are opened and the situations evaluated for risk and necessary services. LCDSS will utilize SDM and case conferencing at major decision points. When children are returned home, LCDSS will continue to monitor the family situation under court ordered family maintenance services for up to six months. Families are linked to community services before a case is closed.

Describe educational/training needs (including technical assistance) to achieve the improvement goals.

LCDSS will continue to offer training for Social Workers to strengthen their skills and better equip them to assess the safety of the child, the needs of the caregiver/parent/child, and to motivate the families to participate in case planning and services. LCDSS will continue to recruit for candidates possessing a master's degree to assure the maximum ability of workers to engage parents in lasting remedial behavior. LCDSS will encourage workers meeting the requirements to consider application to masters programs, if appropriate.

Identify roles of the other partners in achieving the improvement goals. LCDSS will continue to work with California Department of Social Services (CDSS), UC Davis, and the Northern Regional Training Academy to bring pertinent in-house training to the Social Workers. CDSS - Adoption and Licensing branches, The Board of Supervisors, Foster Family Agencies, the Children's Council, the Placement Review Team, the Tribes, Redwood Coast Regional Services, Mental Health Department, and the Probation Department can all play an important role in increasing services, training and placement options in Lake County. LCDSS will collaborate with all on an ongoing basis to improve safe placements for foster children. Children's Research Center will provide LCDSS assistance and reports regarding the use of SDM and Safe Measures to monitor and evaluate outcomes.
Identify any regulatory or statutory changes needed to support the accomplishment of the improvement goals. None at this time.

Probation SIP Component 2008

Outcome/Systemic Factor: **Permanency**				
County's Current Performance: When a child is currently determined at risk, but not placed, the intensive supervision probation officers are assigned the case. Currently there are two intensive supervision officers with case loads of approximately twenty each. These officers work with the family and see the minor approximately three times per week in order to achieve case plan goals. Due to high cases and few officers, probation has been unable to review these cases. Because these cases go un-reviewed, they may stay on intensive supervision longer than needed or the child may need a higher level of care and this is not addressed until the minor goes back to court.				
Improvement Goal 1.0 To reduce out of home placement.				
Strategy 1. 1 Develop ongoing assessments of cases		**Strategy Rationale**[4] To prevent abuse/ neglect and future criminality		
Milestone	**1.1.1** Develop policy and procedures on intensive supervision cases and develop a schedule for in-house six month reviews of cases.	**Timeframe**	By May 30, 2008	**Assigned to** Chief Deputy Probation Officer, Senior Probation Officer
Milestone	**1.1.2** Calendar all intensive supervision cases for in-house six month reviews Request petitions to vacate findings of at risk for children who no longer meet that criterion. Continue to develop	**Timeframe**	Continuing Weekly, as cases come off the court calendar they will be assigned a six month review date beginning May 30, 2008. Every six months after the case has been	**Assigned to** Chief Deputy Probation Officer, Senior Probation Officer, and Intensive Supervision Officers

[4] **Describe how the strategies will build on progress and improve this outcome or systemic factor**

	case plans and goals for children and families who continue to be at risk.		determined at risk beginning May 30, 2008.		

Describe systemic changes needed to further support the improvement goal.
Competitive wages to attract or retain employees, filling vacant positions, and smaller caseloads would help with the consistency of response to caseloads. Consistency of caseloads would greatly improve the officer's knowledge of the cases, and thus would increase the number of families completing case plan goals and seeking services, with less children ultimately requiring out-of-home placement.

Describe educational/training needs (including technical assistance) to achieve the improvement goals.
None at this time

Identify roles of the other partners in achieving the improvement goals.
None

Identify any regulatory or statutory changes needed to support the accomplishment of the improvement goals.
None known