

**California
Outcomes and
Accountability System**

**Siskiyou County
System Improvement Plan**

August 2008

Michael Noda, Director

BEFORE THE BOARD OF SUPERVISORS
COUNTY OF SISKIYOU, STATE OF CALIFORNIA

September 16, 2008

PRESENT: Supervisors Bill Overman, Jim Cook, Marcia H. Armstrong and Michael N. Kobseff.
Chair Overman presiding.

ABSENT: Supervisor LaVada Erickson

COUNTY ADMINISTRATOR: Brian McDermott

DEPUTY COUNTY CLERK: Wendy Winningham

COUNTY COUNSEL: Frank DeMarco

PURPOSE OF MEETING: Regular

HUMAN SERVICES – Approve the Siskiyou County Self-Assessment, July 2008 and the Siskiyou County System Improvement Plan, August 2008 for submission to the State Department of Social Services.

Human Services Director Michael Noda and Adult and Children's Services Program Manager Connie Lathrop appeared before the Board and provided an overview of the County's Self Assessment that was completed in July, 2008.

Mr. Noda further provided an overview of the System Improvement Plan that was developed through community stakeholders' meetings, advising that the Plan will guide the Department in improvements in the Child Welfare System. Mr. Noda provided highlights from the Plan, including steps to protect children from abuse/neglect, prepare youth who are transitioning from foster care to adulthood, provide adequate physical/mental health needs to children and provide permanency/stability to a child's living situation.

Discussion followed between members of the Board, Mr. Noda and Ms. Lathrop regarding the Family Resource Centers and Community Services Council as community stakeholders, the funding available to the Department for the various programs, the effect of substance abuse and available treatment on children and their families, and community/private sector involvement in youth transitioning.

MOTION: Kobseff/Cook
AYES: Overman,
Armstrong, Kobseff and
Cook
ABSENT Erickson

Approve the Siskiyou County Self-Assessment, July 2008 and the Siskiyou County System Improvement Plan, August 2008 for submission to the State Department of Social Services.

STATE OF CALIFORNIA)
) ss
COUNTY OF SISKIYOU)

I, COLLEEN SETZER, County Clerk and Ex-Officio Clerk of the Board of Supervisors, do hereby certify the foregoing to be a full, true and correct copy of the minute order of said Board of Supervisors passed on September 16, 2008.

c: File *4 cert MO to Hum Serv*

Witness my hand and seal this

20th day of October, 2008

COLLEEN SETZER, County Clerk and ex-Officio Clerk of
the Board of Supervisors of Siskiyou County, California

By: Wendy Weingart
Deputy Clerk

These minutes are subject to change when read by the Board of Supervisors

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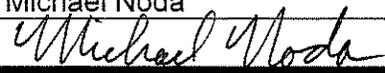
California's Child and Family Services Review System Improvement Plan

County:	Siskiyou
Responsible County Child Welfare Agency:	Siskiyou County Human Services Department
Period of Plant:	August 2008 – July 2011
Period of Outcomes Data:	April 2008
Date Submitted:	September 2, 2008

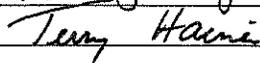
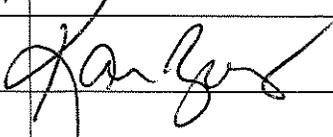
County Contact Person for County System Improvement Plan

Name:	Michael Noda
Title:	Director of Human Services
Address:	818 South Main Street, Yreka, CA 96097
Phone:	(530) 841-2761
Email:	mnoda@co.siskiyou.ca.us

Submitted by each agency for the children under its care

Submitted by:	Siskiyou County Human Services Department
Name:	Michael Noda
Signature:	
Submitted by:	County Chief Probation Officer
Name:	Adele Arnold
Signature:	

In Collaboration with:

County & Community Partners	Name(s)	Signature
California Youth Connection Siskiyou County Chapter	Ashly Dyke	
Foster Parent Representative	Terry Haines	
Siskiyou Domestic Violence and Crisis Center	Linda Miles Executive Director	
Siskiyou Court Appointed Special Advocates	Karen Bowers Executive Director	
Local Tribes	Lavon Kent Quartz Valley Rancheria	
County Mental Health Department	Lauri Hunner, Director	

Please provide name and affiliation of other participants on separate page.

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County & Community Partners	In Collaboration with: Name(s)	Signature
Northern Valley Catholic Social Services	Sher Barber Siskiyou County Director	<i>Sher Barber</i>
Children First Foster Family Agency	Mike Logan Administrator	
Remi Vista Inc.	Dr. Robert Hughes Clinical Director	
CDSS or Other County Adoption Agency	Richard Smith	

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I. Introduction:

The Siskiyou County Child Welfare System Improvement Plan was developed in compliance with California's Child and Family Services Review and is a product of the Siskiyou County child welfare community stakeholder's workgroup. This workgroup process was facilitated by the nonprofit organization, Life Remedies & Celebrations and their Executive Director Rochelle Parkinson. The stakeholder process covered a period of three months and consisted of five meetings. Concurrent with the SIP process was the conducting of the county self assessment which was contracted to Madeline Olea, former program manager of the Siskiyou County CPS program. The complete review process took three months and was submitted for County Board of Supervisor approval on September 2, 2008.

The 2008 Self Assessment and SIP plan is Siskiyou County's second plan since initiation of the CCSFR triennial review requirements in 2004. The Self Assessment was scheduled for completion in January 2008 and the System Improvement Plan was due in May 2008, but due to the lack of sufficient CWS staff and the appointment of a new Human Services Department Director in January 2008, the plan process was never initiated. The State Department of Social Services granted Siskiyou an extension to August 31, 2008, and contractors were obtained in early April to conduct the required review.

The use of contract services to conduct the triennial review is a reflection of the Siskiyou child welfare system staffing problem that has been a chronic issue and challenge for the department to address. The remoteness factor of Siskiyou County has contributed to the county's difficulty in recruiting and retaining staff for its CWS program. Additionally, Siskiyou Children's Services program has lacked the funding base and staffing capacity to have analyst staff that can conduct the review requirements of the CSSFR. This is an inherent deficiency of the CCSFR process and a particular challenge that all small counties must deal with. In small counties there is insufficient support staff funding to have analyst positions to conduct the many administrative functions required to manage the child welfare system. Siskiyou County has 13 CWS staff positions and only one staff analyst for the program. Larger counties have the advantage of having staff analyst units due to their large number of staff positions. The workload requirements of the analyst position is the same for both small and large counties, i.e., writing policies and procedures, analyzing and implementing regulation changes, managing program contracts, completing required program reports, and conducting the CSSFR process. Small counties are fortunate to have one staff analyst; large counties have the luxury of having a unit of staff analysts to address the workload requirements.

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1. CWS System Stakeholder Group / Local Planning Body:

The CCSFR requires that three groups of representatives participate in the review process:

“Core Representatives: CWS Administrators, Probation Administrators, California Youth Connection, Foster Parents, and the CDSS Adoptions District Office.

Groups that must be consulted or represented: Court Appointed Special Advocates, County Health Department, County Mental Health Department, County Alcohol and Drug Department, Labor, Law Enforcement, representatives of children and parents, Juvenile Court Bench Officer, Education Agency, Tribes, and the Regional Training Academy.

Other examples of groups that may be consulted or represented: Children and Families Commission, Welfare Department, Department of Developmental Services Regional Center, Domestic Violence Prevention Provider, Economic Development Agency, Child Abuse Prevention Council, Workforce Investment Board, Public Housing Authority, and Special Education Local Planning Area.”¹

The Siskiyou CWS Stakeholder Group consisted of all of the Core Representatives plus representatives of CASA, Behavioral Health (representing both mental health services and drug and alcohol services), Domestic Violence Prevention, the Karuk Tribe and the Quartz Valley Tribe. The administrators of the three local foster family agencies were able to attend and the Executive Director of the Child Abuse Prevention Council was available to attend on a limited basis.

Siskiyou County Chief Probation Officer Adele Arnold, was an active partner throughout both the Self Assessment process and the stakeholders System Improvement Plan process. She provided partnership oversight of both parts of the plan.

A welcome member of the stakeholders group was the input and influence of the local California Youth Connection chapter. The chapter President had taken the initiative to attend every meeting and additionally invite two of the CYC State Representatives to address the SIP Stakeholders. The stakeholders group unanimously supported their issues of successfully transitioning youth to

¹ California Department of Social Services ACL 04-05, Feb 3, 2004, Attachment C p. 4 & 5

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independence as one of the main concerns of the Siskiyou CWS system. This focus and their recommendations are high priorities in the System Improvement Plan.

Additionally, other community based organizations supported system enhancements that are reflected in the Siskiyou SIP, specifically the development of a visitation center and the development of enhanced treatment services to children. We are very grateful for the time and energy our stakeholders contributed to the development and planning of the 2008 CWS System Improvement Plan.

The Department's special thanks and appreciation go to:

*California Youth Connection Siskiyou Chapter
Ashly Dyke Siskiyou Chapter President*

*Northern Valley Catholic Social Services
Sher Barber NVCSS Siskiyou County Director*

*Siskiyou Domestic Violence and Crisis Center
Linda Miles Executive Director*

*Siskiyou CASA
Karen Bowers Executive Director*

*Remi Vista
Dr. Robert Hughes Clinical Director*

*Children First Foster Family Agency
Mike Logan Administrator*

*Quartz Valley Indian Rancheria
Lavon Kent*

*Karuk Indian Reservation
Lesie Aubrey*

*Behavioral Health Department
Laurie Hunner Director*

*Probation Department
Adele Arnold Chief Probation Officer*

Terry Haines Foster Parent / CYC Supporter

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*Community Services Council
Executive Director Jill Phillips-McClain*

2. Emphasis on Prevention Strategies:

Excerpt from Siskiyou County Self Assessment August 2008:

County-Wide Prevention Activities and Strategies for the Future

Family Resource Center Network

In 2003, Siskiyou County's Community Services Council secured a competitive grant from the Office of Child Abuse Prevention to develop and support Family/Community Resource Centers (FRCs/CRCs). There are now nine FRCs/CRCs throughout the county: Dunsmuir, Happy Camp, Hub Communities, McCloud, Mt. Shasta, Scott Valley, Tulelake/Newell, Weed and Yreka, with promising efforts to re-develop an FRC in the Butte Valley area. Each existing FRC/CRC is its own 501 (c) 3 nonprofit organization.

During the last two years, FRCs/CRCs have truly become community hubs of intergenerational activity and support. From parenting classes to AOD relapse programs to senior assistance, family members of every age and economic status can find services to provide basic necessities or enhance the quality of life.

Transitional Housing

Transitional housing for youth emancipating from the foster care system was identified as a priority need by a group of child welfare stakeholders who came together recently for a series of meetings. There has not been a transitional housing program in the county for about five years and many youth struggle with the circumstances in their lives. Not only are they disconnected from family, community and significant persons in their lives, they then face the economic hardships that come with high unemployment, low wages and lack of resources.

The Transitional Housing Placement Program (THPP) is for foster youth 16-18 years of age. In January 2007, the department submitted a County Plan and two Provider Plans for THPP that were approved by the state. It is now incumbent upon the two providers for THPP, Remi Vista and Environmental Alternatives, to implement their plans. At the time of this writing, it appears that at least one provider plan needs to be revised and resubmitted to the state for approval.

The Transitional Housing Program for Emancipated Foster/Probation Youth (THP-Plus) is for emancipated foster/probation youth aged 18-23. In January 2007, the department also submitted a County and two Provider plans for THP-Plus to the state. Originally, the State indicated it would review and approve all THP- Plus County and Provider plans. However, the state subsequently notified

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counties it would be each county's responsibility to approve the THP-Plus provider plans, programs and living facilities and certify that they meet the requirements. The department will need to work closely with the two THP-Plus providers, Remi Vista and Environmental Alternatives to review and implement the plans.

Subsequent to the submission of the THPP and THP-Plus plans, a new foster family agency has opened an office, Children's First. At the time of this writing, there has been some information that they might wish to submit provider plans for THPP and/or THP-Plus. The department is very open to expanding the possible options for foster youth and is willing to review new plans.

California Youth Connection

The Siskiyou County branch of the California Youth Connection (CYC) is very active and participates in state activities to ensure foster youth have a meaningful voice on issues that affect them. Recently, CWS has taken steps to strengthen its relationship with the CYC in an effort to acknowledge and support local youth in foster care. The local CYC president participated in Stakeholder meetings and CYC members have met with the Human Services Director. The Director's goal is to strengthen the collaborative network of community and services for foster care youth.

CYC members expressed their concern over not knowing the dates of their hearings and not being consulted regarding where or when they would be placed or moved. They are promoting a form on which an attorney or social worker would sign that he/she had made contact with the youth and they have the support of the Juvenile Court Judge in this effort. In large part, it was the CYC's concern over the lack of transitional housing in the county that made the issue a top priority. All CYC concerns will be considered during the SIP process.

In collaboration with the local CYC, a Youth Summit is being planned for October of this year. The Summit will provide a forum for communication by foster care youth to community leaders about their particular needs. It will also provide support and encouragement to current and former foster care youth through motivational speakers, interactive workshops and related activities. CYC youth are taking an active role in the planning and execution of this noteworthy event.

Visitation Center

The Dependency Court Judge is particularly concerned about attachment and bonding issues for infants and young children who come into the court system. He tends to order liberal visitation by parents in an effort to maintain those critical connections. No one argues the benefit to parents and minors, but the workload issue is significant for social workers. Even though FFA social workers supervise visits for children placed in FFA homes, it is estimated 67 hours per week are

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devoted to supervision by CWS social workers when children are placed with relatives.

Due to this workload impact for CWS social workers, the Department is attempting to develop a Visitation Center operated by a local non-profit agency. An RFP for this purpose may be issued within the next few months. The thought is that the non-profit agency will lease a home that can also be used for ILP activities and parenting programs.

Kinship Support Services Program (KSSP)

The goal of the Kinship Support Services Program is to provide community-based family support services to relative caregivers and the dependent children placed in their homes by the Juvenile Court and post-permanency services to relative caregivers who have become legal guardians or adoptive parents of formerly dependent children, as well as to those who are at risk of dependency or delinquency.

Late in FY 2006-2007, the department received notice it was successful in its application to participate in KSSP and was subsequently awarded a \$25,000 "planning" allocation. Due to staff shortage, the department was not able to accomplish all that was needed to apply for the next level, the "start-up" allocation. In FY 2007-2008, a subsequent "planning" allocation was awarded. The Department is in the initial stages of its planning process and hopes to apply for a "start-up" allocation in FY 2008-2009.

Girls Circle

Girls Circle, a program to promote resiliency in adolescent girls, was recently introduced to the county by the Probation Department. Funded through a grant, training in Girls Circle was provided in November, 2007 to 35 female professionals in the county. Participants included school counselors and nurses, probation officers, FRC staff, NVCSS staff, Heal Therapy staff, the Public Health foster care liaison, and a private therapist. The only obligation on the part of trainees was to facilitate one group within a year after receiving the training.

The Community Service Council is coordinating the delivery of the Circles in the community. Circles are 6-8 weeks in duration depending on the subject matter. The modules are as follows:

- #1 – Friendship
- #2 - Being a Girl
- #3 - Body Image
- #4 - Honoring Our Diversity
- #5 - Mind/Body/Spirit
- #6 - Expressing My Individuality
- #7 - Relationships with Peers
- # 8 - Who I Am, How I Relate, Where I'm Going
- #9 - Paths to the Future.

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Girls Circle is a comprehensive program and is considered a "best practice." Sonoma County Probation has been using the program with delinquent girls and is experiencing great success. In that county, every female ward of the court is ordered to complete one Circle and many complete more.

Family Finding

CWS is interested in implementing a Family Finding strategy. This program helps reconnect children and youth with family members and significant adults who can provide safe and healthy relationships and possible permanent homes. Some CWS staff have participated in Family Finding training and the State CASA director has attended workshops. Both are interested in a collaborative approach to the process.

The concept of Family Finding is compatible with much of what CWS is trying to accomplish. It is a branch of concurrent planning, establishing early permanency for children and making lifelong connections. The Dependency Court Judge, CWS and CASA are strong advocates for the program.

Parenting Programs

In January of 2006, the CSC received a \$200,000 four-year grant to develop a countywide, evidenced-based parenting education and support program. In partnership with the Human Services Department, sixty-two individuals received three full days of facilitator training directly by Dr. Stephen Bavolek, founder of the evidenced-based *Nurturing Parenting* program. Since this time, an additional 6 individuals have been trained through the CSC as facilitators in the *Nurturing Parenting* program. Another fifty-two individuals have been trained in the researched-based, *Parenting Now!* curriculum.

Through June of 2008, 274 weeks of parenting classes have been held in seven communities with participation by 559 adults and 511 youth and children. An additional seven hundred and forty-three adults attended parenting workshops and 11,511 individuals participated in family activities at which parenting education and support opportunities were provided. The CSC currently works with a cadre of 20 facilitators, teaching throughout the county. Family Law, schools, FRCs, CWS, Dependency Court, Behavioral Health Services and Remi Vista are among those agencies and organizations referring parents to the CSC parenting classes.

As of this writing, CWS is exploring the development of an evaluation methodology to test the impact of this parenting program on reunification, re-entry into foster care, and reduction of recurrence of maltreatment. Oregon State University produced the table below showing findings of significant improvement in parenting skills of class participants. This is a self-assessment, using a measurement of 1-6 for each question.

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Parenting Skills	Before Participation	After Participation
Know normal behavior for my child(ren)'s age level	3.1	4.5***
Show my child(ren) love and affection frequently	4.4	5.2***
Listen to my child(ren) to understand their feelings	3.6	4.9***
Help my child(ren) feel good about themselves	3.9	5.0***
Set and stick to reasonable limits and rules	3.4	4.8***
Know fun activities to help my child(ren) learn	3.5	4.6***
Find positive ways to guide and discipline my child(ren)	3.5	4.9***
Play with my child(ren) frequently	3.8	4.7***
Protect my child(ren) from unsafe conditions	4.8	5.4***
Talk with other parents to share experiences	3.6	4.8***
Deal with the day-to-day stresses of parenting	3.4	4.7***
Understand my goals and values as a parent	3.7	5.2***

Dependent t-tests were used to calculate significance levels. ***Significant results indicate parenting skills improved after the parenting education series, $p < 0.01$. N=111.

3. Describe Performance, Standards, Gals, and Strategies, along with corresponding milestones and timeframes:

This section of the SIP document includes the summary section from the self assessment that addressed system strengths and areas needing improvement along with the templates of the SIP improvement plan. The SIP designated four improvement areas with subsequent strategies to address the areas:

1. Prepare youth emancipating from foster care to transition into adulthood.
2. Provide children permanency and stability in their living situations.
3. Ensure children receive adequate services to meet physical and mental health needs.
4. Protect children from abuse and neglect.

Excerpt from Siskiyou County Self Assessment August 2008:

System Strengths and Areas Needing Improvement

Children are, first and foremost, protected from abuse and neglect.

CWS and Probation are protecting children from recurrence of maltreatment and re-offense. Maltreatment of Siskiyou County children in foster care is rare. The county rates on these two outcomes are above the Statewide average, even with

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extreme staff shortages during the study period. Community activities, services managed by non-profit agencies, and public programs collaborate to strengthen and empower families who come to the attention of CWS or the Probation Department.

Children are maintained safely in their homes whenever possible and appropriate.

The timely response of CWS when a referral has been identified as requiring an immediate response surpasses the required 90 percent compliance threshold. While the Department has historically struggled to meet compliance on its timely response to referrals identified as requiring a 10-day response, recent reports reveal a significant turnaround in that outcome. Safe Measures reports for March and April, 2008, show a 100 percent compliance on both immediate and 10-day responses. The outcome will continue to be addressed in the county SIP.

The Probation Department consistently maintains 100 percent compliance on timely child visitation. CWS has been unable to meet compliance on this outcome for several reasons: significant staff shortages, unmanageable workloads, and lack of updated and approved case plans documented into CWS/CMS (preventing face-to-face visits from being counted). All these issues have been thoroughly examined and most are being resolved. This outcome will continue to be addressed in the SIP as a top priority.

Children have permanency and stability in their living situations without increasing reentry to foster care.

Reunification outcomes for CWS and Probation appear to be within the norm in spite of substantial obstacles. Maintaining parent/child relationships is difficult when children are placed out of the county. There are few drug and alcohol treatment services in a county with high generational abuse. Juvenile sex offender treatment programs run for 18-24 months. Nevertheless, a supportive Juvenile Court Judge, realistic case plans by social workers and probation officers, and programs offered by public and private agencies work together to re-build families, create safe homes, and keep reentry into foster care low.

Adoption outcomes are respectable considering serious staffing problems during the study period. There is no longer an in-house Adoption Specialist but the backlog of cases has been cleaned up and new staff are working well with CWS social workers. It is anticipated Adoptions outcomes will continue to improve with the development of a concurrent planning protocol. Adoption issues will be addressed in the county's SIP.

Long term care outcomes will also improve when concurrent planning is in place. The Juvenile Court Judge demands specific permanency plans and forms have

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been created to help identify and locate family members and significant adults who can provide a safe home.

The county's rates on placement stability are higher than the statewide average. The social work screener is now responsible for entering placement changes into CWS/CMS to ensure it correctly reflects the movement of children. Probation wards are more likely to require multiple placements due to their behavior and special needs. The Probation Department is in the process of implementing evidence-based risk & needs assessments, specifically the Positive Achievement Change Tool (PACT) for juveniles, that will help them better define the needs of minors under their supervision.

The family relationships and connections of the children served by the CWS and Probation will be preserved, as appropriate.

While every effort is made to place siblings together, the reality is there are few placement resources for sibling groups. Keeping siblings together is not always an available option but having them maintain contact with one another is. CWS and Probation should consider a formal protocol of visitation when one sibling is in the CWS system and one is in the Probation system.

CWS is becoming more comfortable with the placement of children with relatives and is considering implementing Family Finding to help locate them. CWS has also been approved for the Kinship Support Services Program and is in the planning stage. Probation is cautious about relative placements when the minor's behavior could pose a threat to other children in the home.

CWS and Probation have protocols in place to involve the local Tribes when ICWA-eligible children enter their systems. The Karuk Tribe or Quartz Valley Indian Reservation social worker is contacted immediately and becomes an integral decision-maker for the life of the case, especially in regard to placement decisions.

Youth emancipating from foster care are prepared to transition to adulthood.

The county ILP program is currently being reorganized to provide better services to youth in the foster care system. The backlog created when the previous ILP social worker terminated employment is being cleaned up with the help of the Office of Education Foster Youth Services Liaison. Probation is receiving a portion of the ILP funding to provide ILP services to wards. The County and provider plans for Transitional Housing programs (THPP and THP-Plus) have been approved and are in the process of being developed. Fresh ideas are revitalizing the system.

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Families have enhanced capacity to provide for their children's needs.

Families throughout the county are taking advantage of the numerous and varied activities and programs offered by Family/Community Resource Centers. Funding for these programs is provided through a variety of sources, including collaborations with the County, Community Services Council and First Five Siskiyou. The FRCs/CRCs are effective because they provide their local community such an array of nurturing and fun activities the participants are not aware they are also preventing child abuse and neglect.

Children receive services adequate to their physical, emotional and mental health needs.

Children in Siskiyou County receive services to meet their physical and mental health needs through public agencies such as the Public Health Department and the Department of Behavioral Health Services and through private endeavors such as Heal Therapy, Early Childhood Mental Health, and Cascade Counseling. The FRCs/CRCs also provide appropriate services such as Healthy Families/ Medi-Cal sign-ups, car seat and bicycle helmet safety, mental health outreach, health and nutrition promotion, and Al Anon support groups.

Children receive services appropriate to their educational needs.

Four years ago, the Siskiyou County Office of Education introduced the position of Foster Youth Services Liaison. The impact and success of this individual on the educational wellbeing of children in foster care cannot be understated. The liaison has become an arm of CWS and Probation, gathering and documenting pertinent information, leading groups, and functioning as an advocate on many levels, not just educational. She has filled a void in the system and she is much appreciated.

Reference Matrix of Goals and Activities in the Following Pages:

System Improvement Plan #1
Protect Children From Abuse and Neglect

<p>Outcome/Systemic Factor: Protect Children From Abuse and Neglect, 2A Timely Social Worker Visits with Child.</p>																													
<p>County's Current Performance: The Outcomes and Accountability County Data Report indicated that between July 2007 and September 2007, Siskiyou County's performance for completion of monthly visits was below the state performance average. During the self assessment process it was discovered that visit contacts were not being documented properly in the CWS/CMS system. When the May 2008 Safe Measures abstract was reviewed CWS was at 80.8% compliance. Further analysis identified that face to face visit data was not being input properly, specifically that social workers were not correctly updating the system for the coordination of case plans with court reports. Training has addressed this issue and once the data input problem was resolved the corrected compliance data indicated a 94.6% compliance rate for May 2008. The CWS manager and supervisors will continue to monitor the staff input into the system to sustain this compliance rate.</p>																													
<p>Siskiyou County CWS corrected input Siskiyou County CWS State Average Siskiyou County Probation</p>	<table border="1"> <tr> <td>May 2008</td> <td>94.6%</td> <td>Safe Measures Data System</td> <td></td> </tr> <tr> <td>July 2007</td> <td>48.1%</td> <td>August 2007</td> <td>69.7%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>July 2007</td> <td>89.3%</td> <td>August 2007</td> <td>89.7%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>July 2007</td> <td>100.0%</td> <td>August 2007</td> <td>100.0%</td> </tr> <tr> <td></td> <td></td> <td>September 2007</td> <td>67.1%</td> </tr> <tr> <td></td> <td></td> <td>September 2007</td> <td>89.1%</td> </tr> <tr> <td></td> <td></td> <td>September 2007</td> <td>100.0%</td> </tr> </table>	May 2008	94.6%	Safe Measures Data System		July 2007	48.1%	August 2007	69.7%	July 2007	89.3%	August 2007	89.7%	July 2007	100.0%	August 2007	100.0%			September 2007	67.1%			September 2007	89.1%			September 2007	100.0%
May 2008	94.6%	Safe Measures Data System																											
July 2007	48.1%	August 2007	69.7%																										
July 2007	89.3%	August 2007	89.7%																										
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		September 2007	67.1%																										
		September 2007	89.1%																										
		September 2007	100.0%																										
<p>Improvement Goal 1.0 Increase the percentage of timely social worker visits with child within 6 months.</p>																													
<p>Strategy 1.1 Improve the data entry process for accurate face to face visitation documentation.</p>																													
<p>Strategy Rationale¹ Internal reports generated through the Self-Assessment process showed that data entry significantly affected the performance on Outcome 2A.</p>																													
<p>Milestone</p>	<p>1.1.1 Develop protocols for data entry.</p>	<p>3 months (11/1/2008)</p>	<p>Assigned to Program Manager, Supervisors, Systems Analyst.</p>																										
	<p>1.1.2 Provide staff training.</p>	<p>1 month (6/15/2008)</p>	<p>Program Manager.</p>																										
	<p>1.1.3 Monitor data entry related to timely social worker visit.</p>	<p>Continuously</p>	<p>Supervisors, Systems Analyst.</p>																										
<p>Strategy 1.2 Provide tools and processes to proactively address barriers to data entry and practice.</p>		<p>Strategy Rationale Analysis of individual and unit performance revealed non-standard data entry procedures.</p>																											

¹ Describe how the strategies will build on progress and improve this outcome or systemic factor

System Improvement Plan #1
Protect Children From Abuse and Neglect

Milestone	1.2.1 Design reports capable of assisting workers in achieving compliance.	3 months (11/1/2008)	Assigned to	Program Manager, Supervisors, Systems Analyst.			
	1.2.2 Develop protocols for supervisor monitoring of monthly visit status.	8 months (2/1/2009)		Program Manager, Supervisors.			
	1.2.3 Monitor and track to identify areas of strength and areas needing improvement.	Continuously		Supervisors, Systems Analyst.			
	1.2.4 Develop management resources and evaluation processes to increase accountability throughout the system.	12 months (9/1/2009)		Program Manager, Supervisors, Systems Analyst.			
	Improvement Goal 2.0 Develop Family Visitation Center.						
Milestone	Strategy 2.1 Contract visitation center and services to a Community Based Organization.	Strategy Rationale ¹ More frequent visits have been ordered by the court to help children in care have more consistent visits with family. Accessibility for family members, children and professional support personnel is needed to meet the state mandates and to support the children in reunification and permanency. Availability of services and support systems will be addressed and centered in one location. A healthy environment is needed for parents and children to visit and interact.	Assigned to	Director and Program Manager.			
				Timeframe			
				2.1.1 Form a community collaborative with family law court, interested community based organizations and CWS to develop the plan for a family visitation center.	3 months (11/1/2008)	Community Based Organization.	
				2.1.1 Assist CBO in applying for grant funding for a visitation center.	7 months (1/1/2009)	Program Manager, Systems Analyst.	
				2.1.2 Develop contract for visitation services program with a local community based organization.	7 months (1/1/2009)	Program Manager.	
				2.1.3 Negotiate and award contract for a visitation center.	8 months (2/01/2009)	CWS and Center CBO	
				2.1.4 Develop needed forms and protocols for visitation center and CWS.	9 months (3/1/2009)		
				Improvement Goal 2.0 Develop Family Visitation Center.			
				Strategy 2.1 Contract visitation center and services to a Community Based Organization.			
				Strategy Rationale ¹ More frequent visits have been ordered by the court to help children in care have more consistent visits with family. Accessibility for family members, children and professional support personnel is needed to meet the state mandates and to support the children in reunification and permanency. Availability of services and support systems will be addressed and centered in one location. A healthy environment is needed for parents and children to visit and interact.			

System Improvement Plan #1
Protect Children From Abuse and Neglect

<p>Strategy 2.2 Develop onsite parenting and family support services. Use visitation center for transitioning youth services.</p>	<p>Strategy Rationale¹ Visitation center will provide a healthier environment for parents/families and children to interact. Classes and one on one support will help the reunification process. Locate will alleviate work load issues for Social Workers. Accessibility for transitional youth to receive ILP support.</p>
<p>Milestone</p>	<p>4 months (12/1/2008) 8 months (2/1/2009) 4 months (12/1/2008) 9 months (3/1/2009)</p>
<p>2.2.1 Research appropriate parenting programs and curriculum for the visitation center. 2.2.2 Implement parenting program for visitation center. 2.2.3 Research appropriate curriculum and life skills programs for youth. 2.2.4 Implement life skills programs for youth.</p>	<p>Assigned to CBO, Program Manager, Supervisors CBO, Program Manager, Supervisors CBO, ILP staff, Program Manager, Supervisors CBO, ILP staff, Program Manager, Supervisors</p>
<p>Outcome/Systemic Factor: Protect Children from Abuse and Neglect – 2B Child Abuse/Neglect Referrals with a Timely Response Face to Face (10 Day Response).</p>	
<p>County's Current Performance: Recent data drawn from Safe Measures System for the months of March and April 2008 reveals that Siskiyou County's performance has improved to 100% compliance. The 07/01/07 – 09/30/07 data indicated the 10 day response at 81.3% which was below the state average of 91.8%. The quantitative and qualitative analysis identified several issues affecting the compliance rate. The primary issue was identified as data entry. Areas identified for improvement included data entry practices, quality assurance practices, staff training as well as protocols for managing and supervising resources. Since this is such a critical performance data element a monitoring process will be implemented to maintain the current performance as reflected in Safe Measures Data.</p>	
<p>Improvement Goal 3.0 Maintain timely responses for face to face visits with child (10 day response) at 95+% and monitor departmental performance through the Safe Measures System.</p>	
<p>Strategy 3.1 Improve the accuracy and timeliness of data entry into CWS/CMS.</p>	<p>Strategy Rationale² Analysis revealed data entry significantly impacts performance on this measure. Individual and unit performance on this indicator varied indicating non uniform practices. Improvement in the accuracy and timeliness of data entry will increase the overall compliance rate.</p>

System Improvement Plan #1
Protect Children From Abuse and Neglect

Milestone	3.1.1 Develop standardized protocols for data entry.	Timeframe	4 months (12/1/2008)	Assigned to	Program Manager, Supervisors, and System Support Analyst.
	3.1.2 Monitor workload issues and consider assignment of clerical support staff if necessary.		6 months (2/1/2009)		Program Manager, Supervisors, and System Support Analyst.
	3.1.3 Monitor input data practices and provide additional training if necessary.		Continuously		Program Manager, Supervisors, and System Support Analyst.
Strategy 3. 2 Apply quality assurance practices to assure compliance with 10 day referral response.			Quality assurance will result in improved continuity of policies and procedures and will standardize practices. Quality assurance will result in improved outcomes and performance requirements.		
Improvement Goal 4.0 Maintain the Path 2 Differential Response system currently in practice.					
Strategy 4. 1 Currently Path 2 Differential Response is contracted to a local community based organization. They are able to engage families and provide services in a manner that is not perceived to be adversarial and are thus able to address family issues productively.				Strategy Rationale³ Families served by a community partner through Path 2 Differential Response may receive more and longer services than would ordinarily be possible during the 30 day period of an open ER referral. Family issues would be able to be addressed and recurrence of maltreatment would be reduced.	
Milestone	4.1.1 Designate the Child Welfare Outcome Improvement Project funds to the Path 2 Differential Response.	Timeframe	Currently utilized.	Assigned to	Program Manager and System Support Analyst.
	4.1.2 Maintain current Path 2 services contract with community based organization.		Currently utilized.		Program Manager and System Support Analyst.
	4.1.3 Monitor contract to ensure Path 2 services are optimally provided.		Continuously		Program Manager, Supervisors, and System Support Analyst.

**System Improvement Plan #2
Prepare Youth Emancipating From Foster Care and Transitioning Into Adulthood**

Outcome/Systemic Factor: Prepare youth emancipating from foster care and transitioning into adulthood.	
County's Current Performance: There are no state generated data indicators for this area regarding youth transitioning into adulthood. This issue is one the stakeholder group and the department have agreed to be a priority for the safety and well being of foster youth transitioning into adulthood.	
Improvement Goal 1.0 Provide a system of services to assist youth in transitioning out of foster care.	
Strategy 1. 1 Implement the THP and THP Plus Program for a minimum of 6 youth.	Strategy Rationale¹ Provide supportive housing services to youth transitioning out of the CWS system.
Milestone	Assigned to
1.1.1 Assist vendors in program development.	2 months (October 1, 2008)
1.1.2 Certify homes for THP & THP Plus.	3 months (November 1, 2008)
1.1.3 Implement program and begin placing youth.	3 months (November 1, 2008)
Strategy 1. 2 Coordinate Enhanced ILP Services	Strategy Rationale¹ Provide Supportive Life Skills Education to youth transitioning
1.2.1 Select curriculum.	4 months (December 1, 2008)
1.2.2 Collaborate with community partners.	4 months (December 1, 2008)
1.2.3 Implement Program.	5 months (January 1, 2009)
Strategy 1. 3 Coordinate with community Youth Employment programs to provide a work services program for foster youth as part of the THP & THP Plus programs.	Strategy Rationale¹ A critical piece to a successful transitional housing program is that the participating youth have a job, both for added income and for the development of independent self sufficiency skills.
Milestone	Assigned to
1.3.1 Collaborate with other youth employment programs.	4 months (December 1, 2008)
1.3.2 Ensure Job Coaching support services are available.	5 months (January 1, 2009)
1.3.3 Ensure job sites for youth with community collaborators and foster youth are placed in jobs.	6 months (February 1, 2009)

¹ Describe how the strategies will build on progress and improve this outcome or systemic factor

System Improvement Plan #2
Prepare Youth Emancipating From Foster Care and Transitioning Into Adulthood

Strategy 1.4 Plan a youth summit		Strategy Rationale ¹ Bring community and youth together to support youth who are transitioning into adulthood and searching for educational opportunities, work opportunities, and self sufficiency support.
Milestone	1.4.1 Collaborate with other youth programs by attending the statewide CYC conference.	Assigned to Staff and Contractor
	1.4.2 Plan summit with help from State CYC, local CYC chapter, ILP social worker, and UC Davis.	Assigned to Contractor, local CYC and state CYC and UC Davis
	1.4.3 Hold Youth Summit.	Assigned to Contractor, local CYC and state CYC and UC Davis
Timeframe		
	1 month (August 1, 2008)	
	2 months (October 2008)	
	October 2008	
Notes: Plan for youth summit will coincide with a planned dinner for community and youth in mid- October 2008.		

**System Improvement Plan #3
Ensure Children Receive Adequate Services to Meet Physical and Mental Health Needs**

<p>Outcome/Systemic Factor: Families and children will be provided with appropriate intensive mental health and drug and alcohol services to ameliorate the effects of abuse and neglect. Reduce reoccurrence of mal treatment.</p>			
<p>County's Current Performance: The stakeholder meetings found that there were sometimes long waiting periods for families to access mental health and drug and alcohol services which made it difficult to serve the families and children who were entering the CWS system. The long waiting period sometimes prevents families from receiving timely services and impacts the reunification timeframe. It has been reported that Behavioral Health services are sometimes not available for up to three months. There is a lack of therapists available for counseling services. Despite the outcome data for enhancing families' capacity to provide for their children's needs being within the state standards the committee indicated this to be a critical community issue to address. It was felt that families should be provided every resource possible to optimally address their children's needs.</p>			
<p>Improvement Goal 1.0 Provide an enhanced system of family therapy treatment services for children and families in the CWS system.</p>			
<p>Strategy 1.1 Work collaboratively with community in assessing and developing enhanced family treatment services for children and families in the child welfare system.</p>			
<p>Milestone</p>	<p>1.1.1 Participate in juvenile court Judges workgroup to address the development of enhanced family treatment services.</p>	<p>Timeframe Immediately</p>	<p>Assigned to Program Manager and Director</p>
	<p>1.1.2 Implement the product of the workgroup to provide enhanced family treatment services.</p>	<p>9 months (3/1/2009)</p>	<p>Program Manager and Director</p>
<p>Improvement Goal 1.2 Provide an enhanced system of drug and alcohol treatment services for children and families in the CWS system</p>			
<p>Strategy 1.2.1 Work collaboratively with community in assessing and developing countywide drug and alcohol services.</p>			
<p>Strategy Rational: Immediate and effective drug and alcohol treatment services are a necessity for families in the child welfare system since 90% of families experience drug and alcohol related issues. The development of a community strategic plan to address families with education and treatment of drug and alcohol abuse will provide families with education and treatment to complete case plans and reunify with children who are in the system.</p>			

**System Improvement Plan #3
 Ensure Children Receive Adequate Services to Meet Physical and Mental Health Needs**

Milestone	Timeframe	Assigned to
1.2.1 Participate in community stakeholder process to develop a strategic plan to enhance the drug and alcohol treatment system.	Immediately	Program Manager and Director
1.2.2 Implement the product of the workgroup to provide enhanced drug and alcohol treatment services.	9 months (3/0/2009)	Program Manager and Director

System Improvement Plan #4
Provide Children Permanency and Stability In Their Living Situation

<p>Outcome/Systemic Factor: Provide children permanency and stability in their living situations.</p> <p>County's Current Performance: At the present time concurrent planning for adoption has not been fully implemented.</p> <p>Improvement Goal 1.0 Develop and implement concurrent planning program that is amenable and workable for all parties in the dependency system.</p>	
<p>Strategy 1.1 Develop and implement concurrent planning for children in foster care that is amenable and workable for all parties in the dependency system.</p>	<p>Strategy Rationale¹ The County recognizes the value and importance of concurrent planning and the timely benefit to children in the system.</p>
<p>Milestone</p>	
<p>1.1.1 Meet with the Dependency Court Judge to discuss the process needed to complete the implementation of the concurrent planning program.</p>	<p>2 months (10/ 1/ 2008)</p> <p>Program Manager</p>
<p>1.1.2 Arrange for training.</p>	<p>3 months (11/1/2008)</p> <p>Dependency Court Judge / Human Services Department</p>
<p>1.1.3 Implement process.</p>	<p>4 months(12/1/ 2008)</p> <p>CWS and Court System</p>
<p>1.1.3 Review for challenges and successful operation of process.</p>	<p>6 months (2/1/2009)</p> <p>CWS and Court System</p>
<p>1.1.4 Implement changes if needed</p>	<p>9 months (5/1/2009)</p> <p>CWS and Court System</p>
<p>Notes: As of July 14th 2008 a meeting had already taken place with Judge Davis and the agreement to implement training for concurrent planning will be scheduled in the near future.</p>	
<p>Improvement Goal 1.2 Evaluate the feasibility of implementing programs to facilitate the effective establishment of permanency for children.</p>	
<p>Strategy 1.2 Examine and evaluate best practices for assisting placement of foster children in permanent placements.</p>	<p>Strategy Rational: The Department is aware of new and emerging strategies that assist in the effective placement of children in permanent placements.</p>

¹ Describe how the strategies will build on progress and improve this outcome or systemic factor

**System Improvement Plan #4
Provide Children Permanency and Stability In Their Living Situation**

Milestone	1.2.1 Staff will research and evaluate programs such as Family Finding and Designated Relinquishments.	1.2.2 If a program is selected it may be implemented within the current year utilizing Child Welfare Services Outcome Improvement Project funds.	Timeframe	Assigned to	Program Manager and Director
			12 months		Program Manager and Director
			12 months		Program Manager and Director

*Siskiyou Child Welfare System Improvement Plan
August 2008*

4. Siskiyou System Improvement Plan and California State Performance Improvement Plan.

The Siskiyou County Human Services Department vision statement is:

“Strengthening Families, Building Community”

We believe by working to strengthen and support families we are building our communities future through the children that we are raising. In that regard we also embrace the State of California’s Child Welfare Services vision of:

“Every child in California lives in a safe, stable, permanent home nurtured by healthy families and strong communities.”

In doing this Siskiyou Child Welfare services has embraced the concept of continuously improving our system to meet the challenges of a fluid society and an ever evolving community. As we have embarked on this new era of change in child welfare services Siskiyou County has worked hard to adopt the characteristics of a progressive outcome oriented family focused system. In doing so we have specifically adopted the following practices:

- Full implementation of the California Child and Family Services Review system. The department utilizes all aspects of the review system.
- A department emphasis on continuously evaluating best practices and implementing proven system changes to continuously improve our system performance.
- A department emphasis on community collaboration and participation in all applicable aspects of the child welfare system.
- A system emphasis on initial services and the use of structured assessments and collaborative decision making.
- Full utilization of the Safe Measures data system to quantitatively measure our system performance. Our CWS supervisors have had advanced training on Safe Measures and utilize real time data to manage staff casework.
- A focus on preparing all foster children for life so that they may successfully transition into self sufficiency.

Two remarkable examples of our efforts appear in our current CCFSR System Improvement Plan that we will be implementing: a transitional youth program and development of a family visitation site. Both these projects require the collaboration and support of our community and the focus of addressing the qualitative aspects of the services we provide.

In addition to these identified projects we will be specifically using our Child Welfare Services Outcome Improvement Project funds for Probation to continue

*Siskiyou Child Welfare System Improvement Plan
August 2008*

with their enhanced treatment services through Heal Therapy. And for the CPS program to utilize their CWSOIP funds to continue contracting for Path II Differential Response with Remi-Vista, a community based service provider.

5. Analysis and findings of data collection conducted as part of the Self-Assessment and PQCR.

See Siskiyou County 2008 Self Assessment Section 1. Outcomes Data Analysis.

6. Identify any regulatory or statutory changes needed to support accomplishment of identified goals.

The department will continue to actively participate with the state welfare directors association to lobby statutory changes to provide the needed program flexibility and funding to address both the basic workload deficiencies and the innovations that need to occur in our child welfare system.

Siskiyou County Child Welfare
System Self Improvement Plan
2008

Attachments

CHILD WELFARE SYSTEM
IMPROVEMENT and ACCOUNTABILITY
ACT (AB 636)

In 2001, the California Legislature passed the
Child Welfare System Improvement and
Accountability Act (AB636). The
groundbreaking legislation was designed to
improve outcomes for children in the child
welfare system while holding county and state
agencies accountable for the outcomes
achieved. This statewide accountability
system, which went into effect January 1,
2004, is an enhanced version of the federal
oversight system mandated by Congress and
used to monitor state's performance.

CHILD WELFARE SYSTEM IMPROVEMENT and ACCOUNTABILITY ACT (AB 636)

GOALS OF AB 636

- Protect children from abuse and neglect
- Have children safely maintained in their own homes whenever possible and appropriate.
- Provide children permanency and stability
- Preserve the continuity of family relationships and connections for children
- Enhance families' capacity to provide for their children's
- Ensure children receive appropriate service to meet their educational needs.
- Ensure children receive adequate services to meet physical and mental health needs.
- Prepare youth emancipating from foster care to transition into adulthood.

WHAT "OUTCOMES" MEAN FOR CHILDREN AND FAMILIES

SAFETY OUTCOMES

We will know if children are safer if:

- Fewer children are abused and/or neglected
- Fewer children enter foster care
- Fewer children are re-abused and/or neglected when they remain in the home after a child abuse report investigation occurs
- Fewer children are abused and/or neglected while in foster care
- More children receive timely visits from their social worker

PERMANENCY AND STABILITY OUTCOMES

We will know if children have more stable and permanent homes if:

- Fewer children re-enter foster care
- Fewer children move from one foster care provider to another
- Children are reunified with their parents or caretakers more quickly
- Children who are freed for adoption enter permanent homes more quickly

FAMILY RELATIONSHIPS AND COMMUNITY CONNECTIONS

We will know if family relationships and community connections are maintained if:

- More children are placed with some or all of their siblings
- A higher percentage of children in care are placed in the least restrictive foster care setting possible (i.e., a relative care placement or foster family home rather than group care).

WELL-BEING OUTCOMES

We will know if the well-being of children has improved if:

- Youth exiting foster care are more self-sufficient (i.e., more foster youth transitioning to adulthood have a diploma, independent living skills training and a means of support)
- Foster children receive more health and mental health services/support
- Foster children are making more educational progress and increasing school attendance



Life Remedies & Celebrations

P.O. Box 125

Corning, CA 96021

800-260-5432

lrcinc01@comcast.netdomestic

RECEIVED

MAY 14 2008

**SISKIYOU COUNTY
HUMAN SERVICES**

Michael Noda, Director
Siskiyou County Human Services
818 South Main Street
Yreka, CA 96097

Dear Michael,

I would like to take this opportunity to introduce Life Remedies and Celebrations and to express our excitement at being selected to participate in your CWS System's Improvement Plan. We will be working closely with you and the other stakeholders to listen to your ideas and gather information. It is important to meet the state requirements by assisting you in designing a plan and recommendation that will improve and enhance the lives of the children in Siskiyou County. This process will ideally highlight the accomplishments, as well as reveal the challenges of the many people and agencies who serve the families of the community.

Enclosed please find a survey to be completed and returned to us by May 16th to our postal address listed above. This survey will be a tool for us to use when determining the needs of the community partners and how that need can be addressed and implemented to improve the lives of the children in our care.

You may also receive this letter by email and can respond to the survey on the internet at Survey Monkey.com by holding the Ctrl key while clicking on this link:

http://www.surveymonkey.com/s.aspx?sm=3gfZzAFsQ8EhOk7CD_2bTjFg_3d_3d

If you did not receive the letter by email and wish to, please send a request to lrcinc01@comcast.net and we will promptly reply with a copy.

We look forward to meeting you on May 20, 2008.

Sincerely,

Rochelle D. Parkinson

Rochelle Parkinson M.A.

Executive Director

Life Remedies and Celebrations

Susan Lamoureux

Susan Lamoureux MSW

Consultant

Life Remedies and Celebrations



Life Remedies & Celebrations

P.O. Box 125

Corning, CA 96021

800-260-5432

lrcinc01@comcast.net

Stakeholder Name

Agency/Position

Address

Yreka, CA 96097

Dear

I would like to take this opportunity to introduce Life Remedies and Celebrations and to express our excitement at being selected to participate in your CWS System's Improvement Plan. We will be working closely with you and the other stakeholders to listen to your ideas and gather information to not only meet the state requirements but to assist you in designing a plan and recommendation that will improve and enhance the lives of the children served by your agency as well as lighten burdens of the many people and agencies who serve the families of the community.

Enclosed please find a survey to be completed and returned to us by May 14th, either by return e mail at lrcinc01@comcast.net or to our postal address at:

Life Remedies and Celebrations

P.O. Box 125

Corning, CA 96021

This survey will be a tool for us to use when determining the needs of the community partners and how that need can be addressed and implemented to improve the lives of the children in our care.

I look forward to meeting you on May 20, 2008 at 4:00 p.m. at Siskiyou County Human Services Department, 818 South Main Street, Yreka, CA 9607.

Sincerely

Rochelle Parkinson M.A.

Executive Director

Life Remedies and Celebrations



Life Remedies & Celebrations

P.O. Box 125

Corning, CA 96021

800-260-5432

lrcinc01@comcast.netdomestic

Siskiyou County CWS SIP Survey

From your perspective, what is the greatest wish of children in custody?

From your perspective, what are three things (internally and/or externally) that could be implemented to improve the Siskiyou County Child Welfare System?

Do you have any suggestions to increase collaboration with community partners to better serve children and families?

Siskiyou County CWS SIP Survey Answers

From your perspective, what is the greatest wish of children in custody?

- Children in custody often yearn for an understanding of why they are not with their families. They need an age appropriate explanation. They also want to be reassured that where they are placed will be a safe, contained and consistent environment
- Permanency!!! A permanent “forever” home, with their parents if possible, or with another family if not possible
- Return home to their parents no matter what
- That they be provided with frequent contact with parents, siblings and extended relatives, that they have meaningful relationships. Also that they are allowed to remain in the school they were attending before removal occurred
- Be reunited with their parents. If placed in foster care children should have a safe, caring and supportive environment.
- Their wish is to be loved and safe
- To go home (11 responses)
- To be reunited with their families and just feel like they hold a place in the world
- To be reunited with their families or find a permanent home
- To be home with their family or to be safe
- To have their family –go home. If they can’t go home, permanency
- To have a safe family and to be with their parents.

SIP Survey Answers (continued)

2. From your perspective, what are three things (internally or externally) that could be implemented to improve the Siskiyou County Child Welfare System?

- Increased staffing levels
- Concurrent planning even though it is mandated by law, by and large Siskiyou County CWS does not do any concurrent planning, If it was done within legal timelines (disposition) children would not languish in foster care. I have MUCH more to say about this
- Strong initial family services-health, drug and alcohol treatment, therapy
- More in-county foster homes (5 responses)
- More services in the area for parents to participate in: drug treatment programs, job training, and much more.
- More interaction between social workers/lawyers and youth
- Foster youth need a voice in their cases
- Visitation Center
- Monthly meetings of agencies and community partners that provide services to children and families
- CWS having a better attitude around collaboration and less defensiveness
- Collaborative treatment systems-drug treatment consisting of several partners (4 responses)
- Financial support to SDV and CC to provide semi monthly support groups facilitated by a licensed therapist to allow women who are currently working toward reunification or who are involved in custody disputes to express their frustrations.
- It would benefit this agency if needs were identified according to geographic area. We would be able to do better recruiting foster parents
- Lose the “us against them” mentality
- Better communication between partners to ensure that the families are getting appropriate services.
- More communication between community partners and more exchanging of ideas /brainstorming on how to better serve. Also, there is a need to treat cases not so much as a file but a person who can or will be affected by any decision made.

SIP Survey Answers (continued)

- Partners need ways to seek funding to support themselves and their programs...Funding from state/feds can't be guaranteed from year to year. Outside funding is necessary to ensure continuity of services
- Discuss the goals of each partner and discuss how those goals can be achieved
- Meet with all FFA representatives at the same time to coordinate care-visits-reports-placements-court etc
- Better dental service, more providers
- Better communications with providers
- Identify partners and ask what they would like to bring to the table for foster youth
- MDT to take care of confidentiality issues
- Increased Services
- Drug testing sites (6 responses)
- Drug and alcohol treatment systems
- More and higher quality services providers
- The department (CWS) could provide psycho/social rehabilitation instead of contracting out. Could bill Medi Cal
- Printed directions of system for parents
- Prompt drug and alcohol treatment (14 responses)
- Visiting and testing off site
- Drug test people on welfare as they would be randomly tested if working
- Increased availability of drug and alcohol recovery services
- Visit Center
- Service provider improvement/access/selection (4 responses)
- Inpatient drug and alcohol services
- Consistent tools for clients (handouts, correspondence with specific measurable explanation.
- Training for foster parents regarding stability and education (they ask that kids be moved when they runaway or pull something that a parent should just work with a kid about—need psychological training to help talk to kids)
- More services available ie Drug and Alcohol counseling and mental health

3. Do you have any suggestions to increase collaboration with community partners to better serve children and families?

- Increased multi disciplinary team meetings
- Historically CWS is pretty resistant to collaborating; More inclusiveness from CWS department
- More meetings with all stakeholders represented
- Develop an information release so all who work on case are able to share information
- Listen respectfully to each partner
- Job shadow or learn about the responsibilities of other agencies to the community



EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Draft Recommendations

California Blue Ribbon Commission on Children in Foster Care March 14, 2008

The Role of the Courts in Improving the Lives of Children and Families

“When I was 12 years old—in a court hearing I was not invited to, and that I did not even know about—a decision was made that I was not appropriate for a foster family but needed to be in group homes. That decision was made in only a few minutes, with most of the people in the room having never met me, not knowing my hopes and dreams, only knowing one or two of the facts that represented 1 percent of the 100 percent child I was.”

— Jennifer Rodriguez, staff attorney, Youth Law Center;
former commissioner, Blue Ribbon Commission

The courts and child welfare agencies share “parental” responsibility for nearly 80,000 children in foster care in California, more than any other state in the nation. Fifty percent of these children are in care for two years or more, 17 percent of them for more than three years. These children too often find themselves in foster-care limbo, shifted from placement to placement, separated from siblings, friends, and schools.

To many, the courts are the unseen partners in the lives of foster children, yet every child and parent in the system knows it is in the courts where life-changing decisions are made—where a child will live and with whom, when and if a family can be reunited.

The State of the Courts

California’s dependency courts are overstressed and underresourced, burdened by crowded dockets and inadequate information. For example:

- Fewer than 150 full-time and part-time judicial officers preside over the entire dependency court system.
- Full-time dependency court judges carry an average caseload of 1,000, which directly affected the amount of time and attention given to any one case.
- Dependency court attorneys, who represent children and parents in court, have an average caseload of 273, which far exceeds the recommended caseload standard of 188 recently adopted by the Judicial Council.
- Children and parents sometimes do not meet their attorneys until moments before their hearings, which not only limits their opportunity to speak in court, but means attorneys often have inadequate information about a child’s life.
- The median time for a hearing is only 10–15 minutes, far less than the recommended 30–60 minutes.

- Judges are often assigned to juvenile court for short rotations, discouraging development of the field as a preferred career.
- Families are often involved with more than one system, yet the courts and other agencies do not easily share data or information.

Creation of the California Blue Ribbon Commission on Children in Foster Care

With these problems in mind—and with the goal of better serving children and families in the foster-care system—California Chief Justice Ronald M. George appointed a high-level, statewide panel in March 2006 to make recommendations to the Judicial Council, the policy body for the California court system.

The commission's charge was to develop politically viable and fiscally responsible recommendations focused on outcomes related to safety, permanency, well-being, and fairness for children and their families. In doing so, the commission joined forces with legislative and executive branches and philanthropic organizations that are building momentum for child welfare reform.

The California Blue Ribbon Commission on Children in Foster Care is a first for the state focusing on the courts' leadership role in child welfare. Its members know the system well. They are judges and attorneys, legislators and child welfare directors, community leaders and academics, tribal leaders and philanthropists, foster youth, caregivers, and child advocates.

Draft Recommendations for Change

The Blue Ribbon Commission issued draft recommendations for public comment on March 14, 2008. The commission will take comments until May 13, after which it will finalize the recommendations for consideration by the Judicial Council in August.

The bottom line of the commission's work over the last two years has been a commitment to the principle that *all* children deserve safe, nurturing, and permanent homes. Within that framework, the commission's proposals were guided by a set of values and beliefs that included:

- The need for timely court decisions to ensure quick reunification whenever possible and to deliver appropriate services to children and families;
- The importance of collaboration between the courts and the other agencies in child welfare that serve vulnerable families and children;
- Increased accountability on the part of the courts and their partner agencies.
- The opportunity for parents, caretakers, and children to have their voices heard in court; and
- The availability of adequate and flexible funding, even in the midst of tight fiscal times.

The commission's recommendations focus on four areas:

1. Efforts to prevent removal and achieve permanency
2. Court reforms

3. Collaboration
4. Resources and funding

Highlights of the recommendations include the following:

Child abuse prevention and services funding

The Judicial Council should work with state and federal leaders to allow greater flexibility in the use of funds for prevention and to eliminate barriers to coordinating funds for prevention and services.

Prioritizing foster care

All agencies and the courts should make children in foster care and their families a top priority when providing services and when allocating and administering public and private resources.

Caseloads

The Judicial Council should advocate reasonable judicial, attorney, and social worker caseloads.

Data and information

The Judicial Council should support the courts and all partners in the child welfare system in eliminating barriers to the exchange of essential information and data about the children and families they serve. The Judicial Council should implement court performance measures to improve foster-care outcomes as mandated by state law.

Disproportionality

The courts and child welfare agencies should examine and address why a disproportionate number of African-American and Native American children are in the child welfare system.

Kinship

Child welfare agencies should engage family members earlier and the Judicial Council should work with state and federal leaders to develop greater flexibility in approving relative placements when necessary.

Indian child welfare

The courts, child welfare, and other agencies should collaborate with Indian tribes and tribal courts to ensure that Indian children and families get the services for which they are eligible.

Extended support for transitioning youth

The Judicial Council should urge Congress and the state Legislature to extend the age for children to receive foster-care assistance from 18 to 21.

A voice in court

The courts should ensure that all participants in dependency proceedings, including children and parents, have an opportunity to be present and heard in court. CASA programs should be available in all counties.

Local commissions

The courts and child welfare agencies should jointly convene multidisciplinary commissions at the county level to identify and resolve local concerns and to help implement commission recommendations and related reforms.

The commission invites all interested parties to read the full set of draft recommendations and comment on them. The Blue Ribbon Commission Web site includes the full text of the proposals and an invitation to comment at www.courtinfo.ca.gov/blueribbon.



FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

The California Blue Ribbon Commission on Children in Foster Care released its draft recommendations for improving foster care outcomes on March 14, 2008. Public comment is now being solicited. Visit the commission's website to learn more about the commission's draft recommendations: www.courtinfo.ca.gov/blueribbon.

What is the purpose of the Blue Ribbon Commission?

- The purpose of the commission is to recommend to California's Judicial Council the steps that courts and their partners can take to improve outcomes for children in foster care. (The Judicial Council is the policy-making body for the judicial branch of government.)

Why do we need a focus on the role of courts and foster care?

- The courts play an important statutory role in foster care, overseeing critical decisions on the removal of children from their homes, services they and their families will receive, and where and with whom children will live. As Chief Justice Ronald M. George has noted, the courts are vested with providing protection, due process, and supervision as demanded by the law.
- Every one of the nearly 80,000 children in foster care comes before a dependency court. More than half of our state's foster children are in care for more than two years and shuttle unacceptably between multiple foster homes, often separated from their siblings and any sense of stability that they may have. These are children caught in "foster care limbo."
- The commission was appointed by the Chief Justice in 2006 and reflects the seriousness of the judiciary in supporting court and foster care reforms. It is the first statewide body to focus on the courts' leadership role in foster care and child welfare.

Who serves on the commission?

- The commission is a high-level, multidisciplinary panel, including a wide range of participants with experience and expertise in child welfare. It includes judges, attorneys, legislators, child welfare directors, community leaders, academics, tribal leaders, philanthropists, foster youth, caregivers, and child advocates.

Why does California need "another blue ribbon commission" to examine foster care? Isn't there already an understanding of the problems and what needs to be done?

- Few efforts have focused on the role of the courts in improving foster care outcomes. California's Blue Ribbon Commission builds on the work and momentum of the national Pew Commission on Children in Foster Care and its examination of the ways in which courts can improve foster care outcomes.
- The Blue Ribbon Commission is needed to call public attention to a dependency court system that is chronically overstressed and underresourced. We have fewer than 150 full-time and part-time judicial officers who preside over the state's entire dependency court system. Our full-time judicial officers carry an average caseload of 1,000. The median

time for a court hearing is only 10–15 minutes, far less than the recommended 30–60 minutes. Attorneys who represent children and parents in court have an average caseload of 273, which far exceed the caseload standards of 188 for attorneys recently adopted by the Judicial Council. With such an overburdened system, we are not always able to meet our legal obligations for timely hearings or make sure children and parents have a voice in court.

- The Blue Ribbon Commission looked specifically at how the courts and a range of agencies work together on behalf of foster children and their families. Many families struggle with a complex set of problems, often influenced by poverty, substance abuse, mental health problems, and domestic violence. These families are likely to be involved with more than one state agency at a time and sometimes get conflicting advice or case plans. The commission wants to coordinate the work of these agencies and make sure they do a better job of sharing data and information.

How is this commission or its recommendations different from other reform efforts that have come before it?

- This commission was specifically charged with developing “politically viable” recommendations for the Judicial Council – in short, concrete and practical steps that can be taken to improve foster care outcomes. Because that is what we have done, the recommendations can be readily implemented. When we present our final recommendations to the Judicial Council in August we will provide an implementation plan that includes key milestones for ensuring accountability and measuring our success.
- Other key factors that help differentiate this commission include: 1) diverse membership on the commission, including foster youth; 2) broad outreach and collaboration during the life of the commission in working with child welfare and other agencies responsible for children and families; 3) the opportunity for public and stakeholder feedback during a 60-day comment period *before* the recommendations are finalized; 4) an implementation plan that will take into account the state’s fiscal realities as well as the long-term goal of improving the lives of foster children and their families; and 5) formation of local commissions (co-led by courts and child welfare agencies) to guide implementation of reforms.

What is the commission recommending?

- Chief among our recommendations are that we 1) keep families together whenever it is safe and possible to do so; 2) change the way that dependency courts do business in California; 3) increase collaboration between courts and their partners to better serve children and their families; and 4) provide the resources that are needed to get the job done.

Specifically, what are the commission’s recommendations?

- First and foremost, we recommend keeping families together whenever it is safe and possible to do so, providing services that address a family’s needs. If a child must be removed, we recommend that family reunification happen as soon as possible or that another permanent home be found. We also recommend increasing efforts to find relatives who can play a role in a child’s life. And we recommend that the federal and state government extend the age for youth to receive foster care assistance from age 18 to age 21.
- In the area of court reform, we recommend a series of targeted reforms to increase court performance and accountability, and to ensure a meaningful voice for children and

families in the court process. Key proposals include implementation of reasonable caseloads for judicial officers and dependency court attorneys, court performance measures, a single judge to hear each case from beginning to end, and judicial assignments of at least three years.

- In the area of collaboration between courts and their partners, we call for strengthening communication, building and implementing better data systems, and ensuring access to data and information across agency lines. We are also calling for the creation of local commissions that will bring together the courts, child welfare, and other key agencies to address local barriers to services.
- In the area of resources and funding, we need adequate and flexible funds. We urge Congress to allow states to use federal foster care dollars flexibly and we call on the courts and all our partner agencies in California to prioritize foster children and their families when making decisions about services and allocation of resources.

Why is the commission issuing its recommendations as draft recommendations?

- Our recommendations are draft recommendations so that we can use a 60-day public comment period to hear from the public and the various stakeholders that are involved in child welfare. After the public comment periods ends in May, the commission will meet in June to finalize the recommendations and prepare a final report for submission to the Judicial Council in August. Our final report will also include an implementation plan.

The recommendations call for judicial and attorney caseload standards. What standards are being recommended?

- Currently, there are no approved judicial caseload standards in California. That is why we are recommending a caseload study to determine what is needed and urge the Judicial Council to set standards based on that review. We know that the current average caseload of 1,000 for full-time judicial officers is far too high.
- In terms of attorney caseload standards, we are recommending that the Judicial Council seek the funding needed to implement the caseload standards for attorneys that it recently adopted.
- Recommended attorney caseload standards are 188 cases per attorney (for attorneys who have appropriate support staff). Currently, the statewide average is 273, with some counties experiencing caseloads of more than 500 to 600.

What are court performance measures?

- Court performance measures will assist the courts in meeting mandated timelines for dependency hearings, securing due process for all and, along with child welfare agencies, improving safety, permanency and well-being outcomes for children and families under the jurisdiction of the juvenile dependency court.
- Examples of court performance measures include: number of continuances, sibling placements, appointment of counsel, length of dependency court hearings, timeliness of permanency hearings and recurrence of maltreatment.
- Court performance measures are now required by state law. To advance their adoption and implementation, the commission has developed measures for the Judicial Council to consider.

How much will it cost to implement the commission's recommendations?

- It is important to note that there is a broad spectrum of resources that can be leveraged to implement the commission's proposed reforms, including related efforts that are already

- In terms of fiscal impact, not all of the commission's recommendations will cost money. Some recommendations have little fiscal impact, focusing on structural issues within the courts. Many call for using existing resources differently, implementing policies already in place, or phasing in proposals over time in order to reduce reliance on new funds. Other proposals call on Congress to give states more flexibility in how they use federal child welfare funds.
- If the commission's recommendations are implemented successfully, we project that there will be fewer children in foster care or in other more costly out-of-home placements. Money saved can be invested to pay for these reforms.
- Some of the commission's recommendations *will* cost money and we need to find the public will and resources to get the job done. In tough budget times, we may not be able to do everything at once, but we must have a plan for how we will meet our legal obligations.

What will it cost if we do *not* implement these needed reforms?

- The cost of inaction dwarfs the resources that are needed to meet our legal obligations to foster children. Children who grow up in foster care face increased risks of dropping out of school, unemployment, homelessness, mental illness, and becoming involved with the criminal justice system. All of these present fiscal costs to society, not to mention the tragedy they represent for the young people themselves.
- We can either invest the dollars that are needed upfront – or continue to pay far more in terms of the costs to society.

If the commission's recommendations are implemented, what improvements will we see?

- Some recommendations will lead to rapid and meaningful improvement when they are implemented. For example, reducing caseloads should immediately translate to more time for attorneys to spend with foster children and their parents and more time for judicial hearings in court. With reduced caseloads and longer hearings, judges should be able to make sure everyone understands the decisions made in hearings and be able to invite more participation from children and their families.

Where can one learn more about the commission's recommendations?

- Visit the commission's website to read the full set of draft recommendations and other information about foster care reform: www.courtinfo.ca.gov/blueribbon. It is also possible to submit public comments on the draft recommendations through the commission's website (or also by mail or fax).



The Web Site of The Sacramento Bee

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Editorial: Choice for Bass and Steinberg: Kids or guards?

Published 12:00 am PDT Wednesday, May 7, 2008

When quizzed about Gov. Arnold Schwarzenegger's proposal to cut \$82 million from programs for foster care, Assembly Speaker-elect Karen Bass, a longtime champion of foster care, made it clear she opposes the cuts. "When we remove a child from a home, the state of California becomes the parent and, one can argue, is guilty of abuse if we don't take care of the children in our care," Bass said.

State Sen. Darrell Steinberg, the soon-to-be president pro tem of the state Senate, is also troubled by Schwarzenegger's plan to cut programs that support the state's most vulnerable children. "(A)nother example," he called the cuts, "of the deep distance between the rhetoric of cutting and reality."

It's clear that painful choices await the governor and Legislature as they struggle to balance the state budget. But some choices shouldn't be all that hard. The math alone should take foster care cuts off the table. If the Legislature goes along with the governor's proposal to cut foster care by \$82 million the state would lose even more, \$108 million in federal support for foster children.

On top of the direct cuts to foster care, the governor is proposing to reduce state funding for child welfare services. That cut would also reduce federal funding, for a combined \$130 million reduction. That would force counties to lay off 840 social workers responsible for monitoring vulnerable children, including those in foster care. In 2001, the state was hit with a \$9 million fine when it failed to meet several federal child welfare performance standards. If new cuts are approved, the state risks additional fines.

Legislators looking for ways to protect vulnerable children need look no further than the Department of Corrections budget. The legislative analyst has advised rejecting the governor's 5 percent pay raise for California's 30,000 prison guards this year. Since 2003, guards have received pay raises of 35.7 percent, more than twice the increase for other state workers. At top scale, guards earn \$73,728 a year, excluding benefits. The average correctional officer takes home \$16,000 annually in overtime pay on top of that.

Not surprisingly, the state receives 130,000 applications a year from people who want the job. Clearly a pay raise is not needed to recruit and retain prison guards.

If the state did not give pay raises to prison guards this year, California could save \$260 million – more than enough to preserve current levels of support to foster kids. The right thing to do here is obvious – but so is the reason why some politicians would be unwilling to

say "no" to the prison guards. The California Correctional Peace Officers Association, the prison guards union, has been a strong political force over the years. The union is a generous contributor to members of both parties who support it and has helped unseat legislators who don't. So legislative leaders who want to retain their leadership posts have rarely dared to defy the guards union.

Foster children, on the other hand, have nothing to give. They have no union, no campaign fund and precious few allies. There is, unfortunately, no political price to be paid for ignoring their needs.

The choice could not be more clear. How Bass, Steinberg and other legislative leaders respond will be telling.

Go to: [Sacbee](#) / [Back to story](#)

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Siskiyou County System Improvement Plan Workgroup
Agenda
May 20, 2008
4:00 pm to 6 pm

*Primrose Conference Room
Siskiyou Human Services Department
818 South Main Street, Yreka*

- | | | |
|-------|--|-------------------------|
| I. | Introductions. | M. Noda |
| II. | Statement of purpose. | M. Noda |
| III. | Self Assessment. | Madeline Olea |
| IV. | Logistics. When & where. | Rochelle Parkinson |
| V. | Process and Outcome. | M. Noda |
| VI. | Foster Youth Input.
➤ Community partner input. | CYC Siskiyou Co. |
| VII. | Brainstorm Issues. | Rochelle Parkinson |
| VIII. | Record Key Issues. | Rochelle Parkinson |
| IX. | Next Steps – Survey. | Rochelle Parkinson |
| X. | Next Meeting. | M. Noda |

**If you need directions contact Executive Secretary Sandy Cook,
841-2761**



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Siskiyou County System Improvement Plan Workgroup

Minutes

May 20, 2008, 2008

4.00 p.m. To 6:00 p.m.

Yreka, CA 96097

Attendees: Michael Noda, Human Services, Karen Bowers, CASA, Robert Hughes, Remi Vista, Adele Arnold, Probation, Todd Heie, Probation, Connie Lathrop, Human Services, Terry Haines, Foster Parent, Ashly Dyke, Foster Youth, Sher Barber, NVCSS, Madeline Olea, Consultant, Linda Miles, SDVCC, Joie DeFond, Remi Vista

The meeting began with introductions at 4:10 p.m.

Michael Noda explained the purpose of the CWS Self Assessment and Self Improvement Plan.. Stakeholders were encouraged to participate and explain the needs of their agencies and ideas that would improve services to children and families in Siskiyou County.

Madeline Olea presented the previous Self Assessment and an update on the current data being analyzed.

Michael Noda continued mapping out the process and procedure to be used and the development of outcomes for the plan.

Meeting Minutes Continued
520/2008

Ashley Dyke, Siskiyou County foster youth and president of CYC spoke regarding the work of CYC and the needs of foster youth in the county. Miss Dyke spoke of the need for foster youth to have a voice in their cases. She mentioned that many times the youth have not met their attorneys and are not aware of what will be presented in court.

A discussion regarding the SIP Survey results followed. The survey responses included key issues and suggestions to improve collaboration and services to children and families in the system.

Stakeholders identified common themes of need in the county.

The next meeting will be held May 28th from 4:p.m. to 6 p.m. at North Valley Catholic Social Services, 1515 South Oregon Street, Yreka, CA

The meeting was adjourned at 6:20 p.m.

Siskiyou County CWS SIP
Stakeholders Input
May 20, 2008



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Foster Youth aging out of the system

- Present system is counter productive, there is "nowhere" for them to go.
- Transitional Housing needed
- No job; employment is almost nonexistent for them.
- "Home" is not an option, they are homeless
- Need more skills, they are not equipped...

CONCERNS:

- They lack resilience – no services/no money
- Revert back to the family of origin
- Need positive peer support
- "50% of kids who age out will either be dead, incarcerated or homeless" – "a high percentage go to prison".

OBSTACLES:

- Funding is lacking
- "Need to share the load" Social Workers need/want help from other agencies
- "they" (social workers) have no place to go to for client celebrations/birthdays
- Drug & alcohol treatment needs go months without consistent services
- Delay in D & A initial assessments
- Transportation is a high need

OBSTACLES:

- Foster children are housed too far away
- No respite homes – Emergency shelter care – Emergency Foster Care
- No drop in – no crisis counseling – some in house counseling began in March 2008
- Need transporters for medications – extra help drivers
- Lack of dental providers – no medical in camp

OBSTACLES:

- New population of kids, coming out of OJJ - no resolution –only 15 days/state
- Behavioral Health services are needed – 9 month wait.
- Foster care is meant to be temporary care
- There's duplication of services
- No funds for expensive evaluations

SUGGESTIONS:

- Focus on the "beginning" – Bio –
Psycho – Social assessments
- Foster Parent support
- Foster Youth need a stronger political
voice



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Siskiyou County System Improvement Plan Workgroup
Children's Protective Services Social Workers
Agenda
May 28th, 2008
11:00 a.m. to 12:30 p.m.
Yreka, CA 2008

- | | | |
|------|-------------------------|----------------|
| I. | Introductions | M. Noda |
| II. | SIP Program Information | M. Noda |
| III | Sailboat Exercise | M. Noda |
| IV. | Survey | Rochelle/Susan |
| V. | Discussion | Rochelle/Susan |
| VI. | SW Recommendations | Rochelle/Susan |
| VII. | Next Meeting | |



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Siskiyou County System Improvement Plan Workgroup
Child Welfare System Social Workers

Minutes
May 28, 2008, 2008
11:00 p.m. To 12:30 p.m.
Yreka, CA 96097

Attendees: Michael Noda, Human Services, Connie Lathrop, Program Manager
Jim Gail, Sandy Groom, Tina Montgomery, J. Morris, Sandy Pierce, S. Zufelt, Valerie
Linfoot, S. Hogue. Phillips, Doug Vader, A. Brophy, Karen Varga, Susan Cervelli, Debby
Joslin, Madeline Olea.

The meeting began with introductions and Michael Noda explained the purpose of the CWS Assessment and Self Improvement Plan.

An exercise was facilitated depicting the organization as a sailboat and each participant describing where they were in the organization in "sailboat terms". Many people felt they were in rough to dangerous waters needing support to move through the changes and needs of the programs in which they were providing services. A dialogue was opened regarding the needs of the agency and the social worker's input to meet the demands of their caseloads and the families they serve.

The SIP Survey was distributed to each social worker to be completed. The surveys were returned at the end of the meeting, with some workers asking to e mail the surveys confidentially.

Meeting Minutes (continued)
May 28th Social Workers

Key issues were identified, reviewed and recorded. A discussion was held regarding supports that would aid workers in meeting the mandates of the Child Welfare system. The consensus of the group was that teamwork and support from Behavior Health to expedite evaluations and to become proactive in helping parents access treatment were the two most important issues to be addressed. Social workers asked that a policy and procedure manual and closer support from supervisors and program managers be addressed.

Michael Noda discussed the next steps in the SIP process.

The meeting was adjourned at 12:15 p.m.

Siskiyou County CWS SIP
Social Workers Input
May 28, 2008

DISCUSSION:

Reinvigorate THP - THP plus & Visitation Center, other

OBSTACLES:

- Enough kids for THP – THP+ or a visitation center?
- Startup costs/funding
- Lack of staff
- Lack of quality service providers (private & public) – Particularly Drug & Alcohol - Dental
- Estimated 2% of children in care are UTD on medical & dental checkups, Inadequate
- Younger children especially are not getting med/dental services
- Parents cannot access Medi-Cal after removal of child(ren)
- Trying to get kids placed
- Court system could work better sometimes – seems adversarial, interference, contested hearings , wastes time
- Lack of CWS support staff
- Lack of services for teens –frustrated parents

SUGGESTIONS:

- Contract out for testing, observers for testing
- Dental Van – Coordinate with Foster Parents
- Need consistent tools/handouts for parents – ie; approved correspondence templates that are specific & measurable explanation, parent booklet, visit evaluation tool, system needs to be simplified
- ILP support – COS changes – refining format & curriculum
- Incentives for youth – money management
- In home service providers – PH cut in home infant visitation program
- Kinship Care – KSSP
- Timely initial assessments needed
- Policies & Procedures needed
- Consistent training & updates for Social Workers – Training Manual
- Review job descriptions/definitions – consider reassessing and/or reassigning
- In-house (CWS) therapist
- Emergency shelter – 6 kids
- Homeless Assistance



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Siskiyou County System Improvement Plan Workgroup
Agenda
May 28, 2008
4:00 pm to 6:00 pm
1515 South Oregon Street
Yreka, CA 96097

- | | | |
|-------|-----------------------------------|--------------------|
| I. | Introductions. | M. Noda |
| II. | Review First Meeting | M. Noda |
| III. | Transitional Housing Presentation | Remi Vista |
| IV. | Additional Presentation | Stakeholder |
| V. | Identification of Key Issues | Rochelle and Susan |
| VI. | Innovative Services | M. Noda |
| VII. | Next Steps | Rochelle |
| VIII. | Next Meeting. | Rochelle |



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Siskiyou County System Improvement Plan Workgroup

Minutes
May 28, 2008, 2008
4.00 p.m. To 6:00 p.m.
Yreka, CA 96097

Attendees: Michael Noda, Human Services, Karen Bowers, CASA, John Tillery, Remi Vista, Adele Arnold, Probation, Leslie Finch, Remi Vista, Connie Lathrop, Human Services, Terry Haines, Foster Parent, Ashly Dyke, Foster Youth, Sher Barber, NVCCSS, Madeline Olea, Consultant, Marie Robison SDVCC, John Tillery

The meeting began with introductions at 4:10 p.m.

A review of the May 20, 2008 meeting and a discussion of the process and status of the SIP Self Assessment and SIP Improvement Plan was held.

John Tillery of Remi Vista gave a thorough presentation explaining the process and development of Transitional Housing Programs in California. The Remi Vista organization has implemented Transitional Housing Programs in several counties. It is necessary for all youth who participate in the program to meet criteria and be motivated to become eligible for services. In-Home Support workers and case managers are assigned to participants and work to help the transitional period. A question and answer period followed the presentation. The possibility of establishing a similar program in Siskiyou County was discussed.

Meeting Minutes Continued
5/28/2008

A discussion was held regarding innovative services and options for foster youth.

The next meeting will be held June 5, 2008 from 4:00 p.m. to 6:00 p.m. at North Valley Catholic Social Services, 1515 South Oregon St. Yreka, CA

The meeting was adjourned at 6:30 p.m.

SIP STAKEHOLDER CONCERNS AND SUGGESTIONS

- Involve extended families when child enters the system.
- Family conferencing at onset
- Input from extended family leads to buy in and more positive outcomes
- Continue to emphasize involving family and relative placements
- Increased counseling and support service for system kids
- Develop a program that extends services or provides mentors for teens exiting the foster care system
- Smaller caseloads for social workers
- Require higher level of education for staff and increase supervision and support
- Better partnership between agencies providing services to children and families
- Increased interagency collaboration
- More inclusiveness from the CWS department
- More MDT meetings and conferencing on difficult cases
- Less resistance from CWS in regard to collaboration with other agencies
- Partner with Family Resource Centers
- Improved access to health and dental care providers
- Design a system that is more responsive to the child in regard to their mental health needs
- A visitation program to benefit agencies, children and parents.
- Allow parents to receive aid prior to the children being returned home so that parents can actually provide safe appropriate housing.
- Transitional housing for youth aging out of foster care.
- Greater financial support for aging out youth
- Service availability improved
- Drug testing sites
- CWS policies and procedures
- Drug and Alcohol treatment program that works
- CWS provide psycho/social rehabilitation instead of contracting out.
- Printed directions of system and procedures for parents
- Prompt drug treatment
- Visiting and testing off-site
- Drug test welfare recipients randomly as if working to ensure their check
- Increased availability of drug/alcohol recovery services
- Service provider improvement/access/selection
- Inpatient Drug and Alcohol services
- Consistent tools for clients (handouts, correspondence w/specific measurable explanation)
- Training for foster parents regarding stability and education (foster parents ask kids to be moved when they run away or do something that a parent should just work with the child about.
- Foster parents required to complete psychology program for children
- Increased multi disciplinary team meetings
- More inclusiveness from CWS department.
- Visitation Center

SIP STAKEHOLDER CONCERNS AND SUGGESTIONS

- Monthly meetings of agencies and community partners that provide services to children and families
- CWS developing a better attitude around collaboration and being less defensive.
- Collaborative treatment systems, drug treatment consisting of several partners
- Financial support to Siskiyou Domestic Violence and Crisis Center to provide semi monthly meetings for women who are working toward reunification or involved in custody disputes.
- Lose the “us against them “ attitude.
- Better communication between partners to ensure that the families are getting appropriate services.
- More exchanging of information and ideas between community partners.
- Meet with all FFA representatives at the same time to coordinate care, visits, reports, placements, court.
- Identify partners and ask what they expect or would bring to the table for foster youth.
- MDT to take care of confidentiality issues
- Job shadow CWS workers to develop a better understanding of what CWS does.



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Siskiyou County System Improvement Plan Workgroup

Agenda

June 5, 2008, 2008
4.00 p.m. To 6:00 p.m.
1515 South Oregon Street
Yreka, CA 96097

- | | | |
|-------|-----------------------------------|--------------------|
| I. | Introductions | M. Noda |
| II. | Review May 28,2008 Meeting | M. Noda |
| III. | Presentation Behavioral Health | Lauri Hunner |
| IV. | Presentation Remi Vista | Robert Hughes |
| V. | Review Plans/Move Forward | Rochelle and Susan |
| VI. | Innovative Services | Mike Noda |
| VII. | Recommendations from Stakeholders | Rochelle |
| VIII. | Next Meeting June 19, 2008 | |



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Siskiyou County System Improvement Plan Workgroup

Minutes
June 5, 2008,
4:00 p.m. To 6:00 p.m.
Yreka, CA 96097

Attendees: Michael Noda, Human Services, Karen Bowers, CASA, Robert Hughes, Remi Vista, Adele Arnold, Probation, Leslie Finch, Remi Vista, Connie Lathrop, Human Services, Terry Haines, Foster Parent, Ashly Dyke, Foster Youth, Sher Barber, NVCSS, Madeline Olea, Consultant, Linda Miles SDVCC, Mike Logan, Children First, Joie De Fond, Remi Vista, Todd Heie, Probation, Sharon Shepard, Lauri Hunner, Behavior Health, LaVon Kent, Quarts Valley Tribe

The meeting began with introductions at 4::15

A review of the May 28, 2008 meeting and a discussion of the process and status of the SIP Self Assessment and SIP Improvement Plan was held.

Robert Hughes of Remi Vista gave a presentation of Mental Health Screening for Foster Youth explaining the Need, Child Victim Characteristics, Effective Treatment, the current system and how it is working, Obstacles to System Improvement, and a proposed plan. A discussion was held following the presentation. The possibilities of implementing the plan were discussed. Funding and the use of local therapists were explored.

Meeting Minutes Continued
6/5/2008

A presentation by Lauri Hunner from Behavioral Health was held. The explanation of funding sources and the process of referring people to Behavioral Health for services was presented. A discussion was held regarding the time frame in place for those parents and children entering the Child Welfare System was held. Lack of timely evaluations and support for those who needed drug or alcohol treatment was discussed.

Rochelle and Susan reviewed the current planning recommended and the steps to move forward.

Michael Noda and the group discussed innovative services that would support the Child Welfare System.

Rochelle presented a Power Point presentation with recommendations from Social Workers.

The meeting was adjourned at 6:15 p.m.

The next meeting will be held June 19th at 4:00 at North Valley Catholic Social Services

Mental Health Screening for Foster Youth

Robert Hughes, Psy.D.

The Need

- "The incidence of emotional, behavioral, and developmental problems among children in foster care is 3 to 6 times greater than children in the community. This finding holds true even when foster children are compared to children in the community who have known similar kinds of deprivation." (California Institute of Mental Health study notes that this finding holds true in multiple studies).

The Need

- Same review by CIMH found that up to "85% of children entering foster care have significant mental health problems..."

Child Victim Characteristics

- Aggression/behavioral dysfunction (most consistent finding).
- Poor social competence
- Trauma-related emotional symptoms
- Developmental deficits in relationship skills
- Cognitive/neuropsychological impairment
- Long term effects: (violence, depression, suicide, substance abuse).
- (Kolko & Swenson, 2002).

Characteristics of Effective Treatment:

- For trauma, happens as soon as possible for the child.
- Addresses needs of child, family, and community.
- Includes comprehensive assessment using standardized instruments.
 - Allows for comparisons
 - Allows for measurement of treatment progress

Characteristics of Effective Treatment:

- The assessment is designed specifically for child victims of maltreatment.
 - Leads directly to an evidence-based treatment plan.

Characteristics of Our Current System:

- Mental health assessment occurs only *after* child has been in placement long enough to demonstrate a need for services:
 - Often takes over 90 days just decide the need exists.
 - Foster parent reports often treated as "subjective."
 - Once need is identified, it takes time for the CPS Social Worker to make the referral.
 - Once referral is made, it takes time for Behavioral Health to contact the client.

Characteristics of our current system:

- Because of this delay, the mental health assessment and treatment plan is now out-of-sync with the reunification plan, which has already been established:
 - Makes it very difficult to adequately integrate treatment for the biological parents.
 - Mental health assessment may call for a treatment plan that requires an alteration to the reunification plan (such as visit frequency, activities of visits, etc.) This causes conflict and ultimately serves to delay reunification and/or other permanency planning.

Characteristics of our current system:

- Mental health assessment process the same for all children:
 - Thorough intake interview, review of records, and standardized assessment (CAFAS).
 - Primary goal: to establish "medical necessity," as defined by MediCal.
 - Not necessarily designed to lead to an evidence-based treatment plan for foster youth.

Needs for System Improvement

- A system that facilitates a mental health assessment for *all* foster youth.
- A system that facilitates this assessment immediately upon detention into foster care.
- A system that better integrates the child's mental health needs with the overall permanency planning.
- Mental Health assessments that lead to evidence-based treatment planning.

Obstacles to System Improvement

- Funding: MediCal covers mental health treatment only *after* a "medical necessity" is established.
 - Not all foster youth will have a "medical necessity" for mental health treatment.
- Protection of Client Information: This legitimate need often complicates and delays the collection of all necessary information for adequate assessment.
- Stigma: There is a strong cultural stigma associated with anything related to "mental health," "therapy," or "assessment."

Obstacles to System Improvement

- Geographical spread and transportation
 - Immediate and adequate assessment is often hindered by the client's inability to get themselves to the clinic or office.
- Poverty and Social Marginalization
 - Poverty increases family stress.
 - Social marginalization reduces their resilience to stress.

A Proposed Plan

- Fund through Mental Health Services Act:
 - The need clearly meets criteria as meeting an unmet mental health need in the community.
- Create an assessment team consisting of a Master's (or higher) level clinician and Personal Service Coordinators (PSC's)
 - PSC's are trained professionals qualified by having a high school diploma and experience working in social service, mental health, or educational environments
 - The Clinician supervises the work of the PSC's through weekly meetings.

A Proposed Plan

- Devote a "Personal Service Coordinator" (PSC) to the court.
 - PSC would be present at all detention hearings.
 - Would meet bio parents, obtain necessary releases/consents, etc., obtain preliminary information from parents, and schedule first meeting with them to begin screening.
- PSC would obtain all pertinent records regarding the child:
 - Educational, Medical, Dental, Mental Health.
 - Would arrange for copies to be either faxed or picked-up physically.
 - Would share information with CPS social worker.

A Proposed Plan

- PSC's conduct screenings for child and family in their home settings:
 - Case Characteristics and Abuse History:
 - Structured, standardized interviews might include:
 - The Abuse Dimensions Inventory (ADI)
 - The Brief Assessment of Traumatic Events (BATE)
 - Record of Maltreatment Experience (ROME)
 - Behavioral Difficulties:
 - Child Behavior Checklist for Children (CBCL, TRF)
 - Eyberg Child Behavior Inventory (ECBI, SESBI)

A Proposed Plan

- PSC's conduct screenings for child and family in their home settings:
 - Trauma-Related Emotional Symptoms
 - Trauma Symptom Checklist for Children (TSC-C)
 - Revised Children's Manifest Anxiety Scale (RCMAS)
 - State/Trait Anxiety Scale of Children (STAIC)
 - Children's Depression Inventory (CDI)
 - Child Attributions
 - Children's Impact of Traumatic Events Scale - Revised (CITES-R)

A Proposed Plan

- PSC's conduct screenings for child and family in their home settings:
 - Parent/Caregiver history of abuse/trauma
 - Child Abuse and Neglect Interview Schedule (CANIS-R)
 - Maltreatment Classification System (MCS)
 - Violent behavior and abuse risk
 - Child Abuse Potential Inventory (CAPI)
 - Parent-Child Conflict Tactics Scales (CTSPC)

A Proposed Plan

- PSC's conduct screenings for child and family in their home settings:
 - Parental Adjustment:
 - The Parenting Stress Index (PSI)
 - Brief Symptom Inventory (BSI)
 - Parental Attributions:
 - Parent Opinion Questionnaire (POQ)
 - Parent Attribution Test (PAT)

A Proposed Plan

- Results reviewed and integrated with clinician.
- Screening Report written within two weeks of detention.
- Screening report might be integrated with initial physical examination.
- If indicated by screening, further assessment by the clinician (in family homes) might include:
 - Determination of "medical necessity"
 - Educational deficits:
 - Wide-Range Achievement Test (WRAT-III)
 - Parent-Child Interaction:
 - Dyadic Parent-Child Interaction Coding System (DPICS)

A Proposed Plan

- PSC facilitates treatment planning (family team) meeting.
 - Establish goals and objectives

References

- Cohen, J.A., Mannarino, A.P., & Deblinger, E. (2006). Treating Trauma and Traumatic Grief in Children and Adolescents. New York: Guilford Press.
- Kolko, D. J. & Swenson, C.C. (2002). Assessing and Treating Physically Abused Children and Their Families: A Cognitive-Behavioral Approach. Thousand Oaks, CA: Interscience Press.
- Marsenich, L. (2002). Evidence Based Practices in Mental Health Services for Foster Youth. California Institute of Mental Health.



Life Remedies & Celebrations

P.O. Box 125

Corning, CA 96021

530-824-0915

lrcinc01@comcast.net

Siskiyou County System Improvement Plan Workgroup

Agenda

June 19, 2008

4:00 pm to 6:00 pm

1515 South Oregon Street

Yreka, CA 96097

- | | | |
|-----|--------------------------------|----------|
| I. | Introductions. | M. Noda |
| II | Presentation Visitation Center | NVCSS |
| III | Summarize Plan Points | LRC |
| IV | Youth Conference Discussion | M Noda |
| II. | Next steps | Rochelle |



Life Remedies & Celebrations

*P.O. Box 125
Corning, CA 96021
800-260-5432
530-824-0915
Ircinc01@comcast.net*

Siskiyou County System Improvement Plan Workgroup

Minutes
June 19, 2008
4.00 p.m. To 6:00 p.m.
Yreka, CA 96097

Attendees: Michael Noda, Human Services, Karen Bowers, CASA, Lavon Kent, Quartz Valley Tribe, Adele Arnold, Probation, Leslie Finch, Remi Vista, Terry Haines, Foster Parent, Ashly Dyke, Foster Youth, Sher Barber, NVCSS, Madeline Olea, Consultant, Linda Miles, SDVCC, Sharon Shepard, Behavioral Health, Kathy Jablonski, Children First, FFA, Wendy Jacobsen, Children First FFA, Susan Kirsher, College of The Siskiyou, Janay Swain, CYC Adult Supporter, Cristina Gelzpd, CYC Northern Region Policy Coordinator, Richard Haines, CYC Member Foster Youth, Veronica Casteneda, CYC Member, Foster Youth, Melissa Lopez, CYC Member, Foster Youth Jeff O'Neill, CYC Member, Foster Youth, Jill Phillips McLie, CSC Community Services Council.

The meeting began at 4:18 with introductions and welcome to the foster youth and the CYC California State representatives by Michael Noda.

A Power point presentation of the Tehama County Family Visitation Center for families in Tehama County was facilitated by NVCSS Tehama County Executive Director and visitation Supervisor. A question and answer period followed.

Rochelle summarized the plan points and presented a compilation of the recommendations made by stakeholders, social workers, and community partners.

Mike Noda led a discussion regarding the youth conference that will be held in the fall.

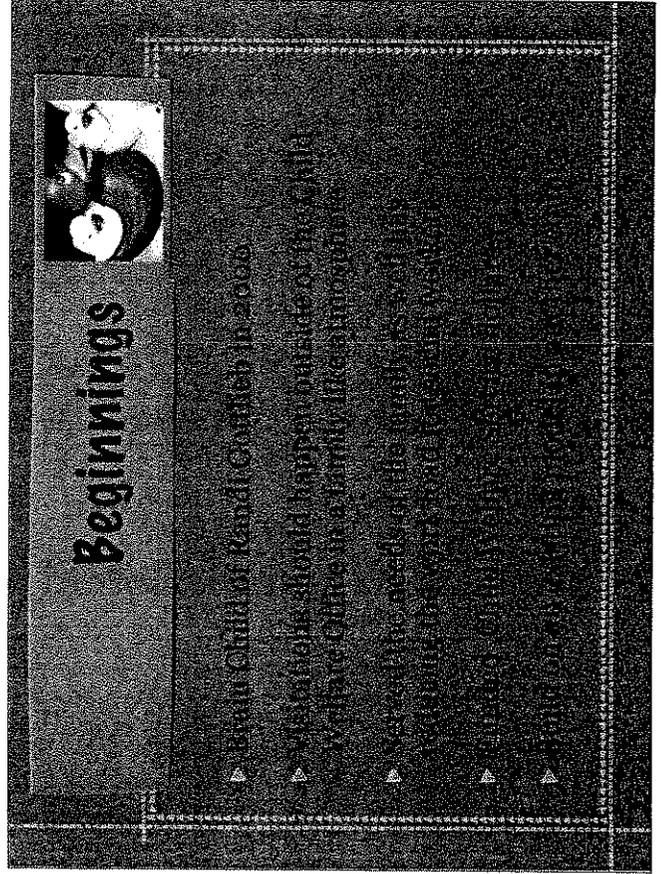
6/19/2008

Meeting Minutes continued

Mike Noda and expressed appreciation for the wonderful participation and interest shown by the stakeholders . The meeting ended at 6:45 p.m.



Red Bluff FVC is serving Tehama County with court ordered visitations. It is a fun and family oriented place where parents can spend quality time with their children.



This model requires a solid partnership with CPS and is successful because it is not operated by a county agency. Families are already familiar with NVCSS through other programs, especially counseling. One of the pluses of this model is that families who are in our

Overview

- ▲ Strong relationship between the involved agencies is essential for success. CPS entities such as the program manager, supervisors, and social workers should ideally be part of the planning process.
- ▲ Site needs to be identified based on the organization's ability.

Basics

- ▲ The selected house with two bedrooms and full basement. Landlord was willing to lease and sign up this project. House was renovated to fit the area.
- ▲ Each San Diego State University foster child and well-trained, highly skilled and experienced staff members all worked together to
- ▲ ...

Referral Process

- ▶ First visit always in CPS to determine if the family is suitable for the FVC environment
- ▶ CPS social worker refers to FVC staff who schedules the visits with both bio parents and foster parents
- ▶ CPS assist in access to transportation and activities for the visits

The Visit

- ▶ Three levels of visits supervised, monitored, and visited
- ▶ There are 40 minutes for each level of visit and 10 minutes for each FVC staff member to be present
- ▶ FVC staff are present for the entire visit
- ▶ FVC staff are present for the entire visit

Some families are not suitable for this environment and need to be screened out at the beginning, hence the first visit being at CPS. Using the FVC is also a privilege, which means that if families repeatedly violate the rules, they lose the privilege of having their visits at the FVC.

Visit

- ▶ Snacks are provided
- ▶ Depending on instruction of CPS social worker, a visit can involve parent education coaching by FVC workers, or involve only observation.
- ▶ Childbirth class workshops are offered during a visit.
- ▶ Home nurse will provide home visit services during the visit.

Some families have the privilege of bathing their babies at the FVC. This is only possible if the reason for removal does not include sexual abuse. When sexual abuse is part of the reason, the parent cannot even take the child to the bathroom during a visit.

Important!

- ▶ All CPS social workers and all family members are required to follow the FVC policies and procedures.
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Policies, procedures and forms must be in place to run a successful program.

Some Pictures

FAMILY VISITATION CENTER

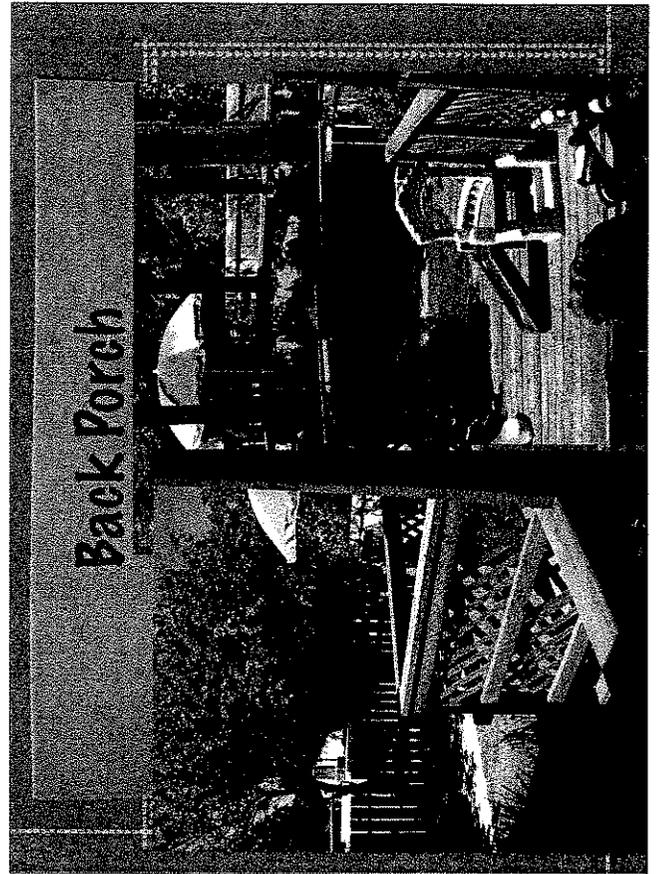
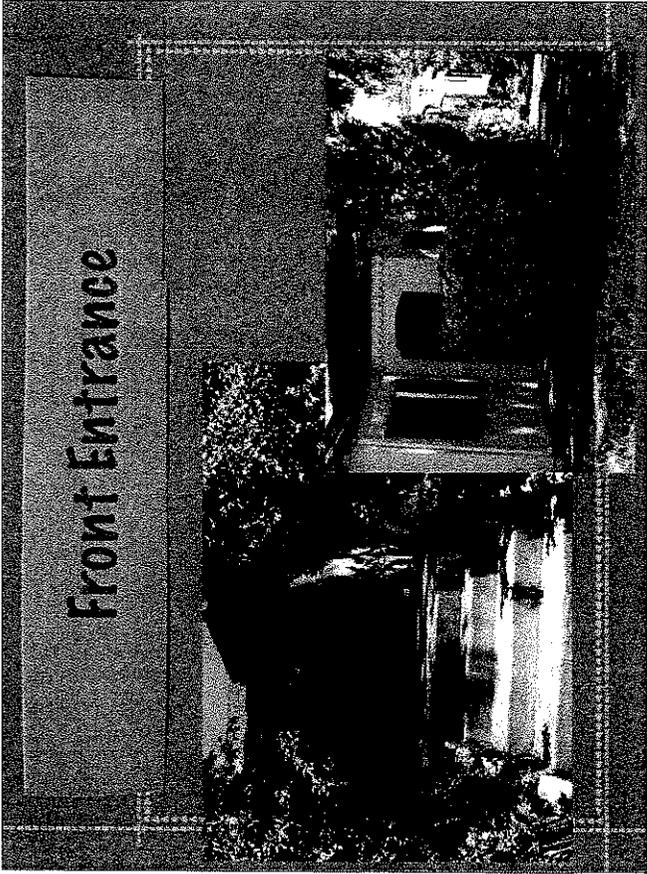


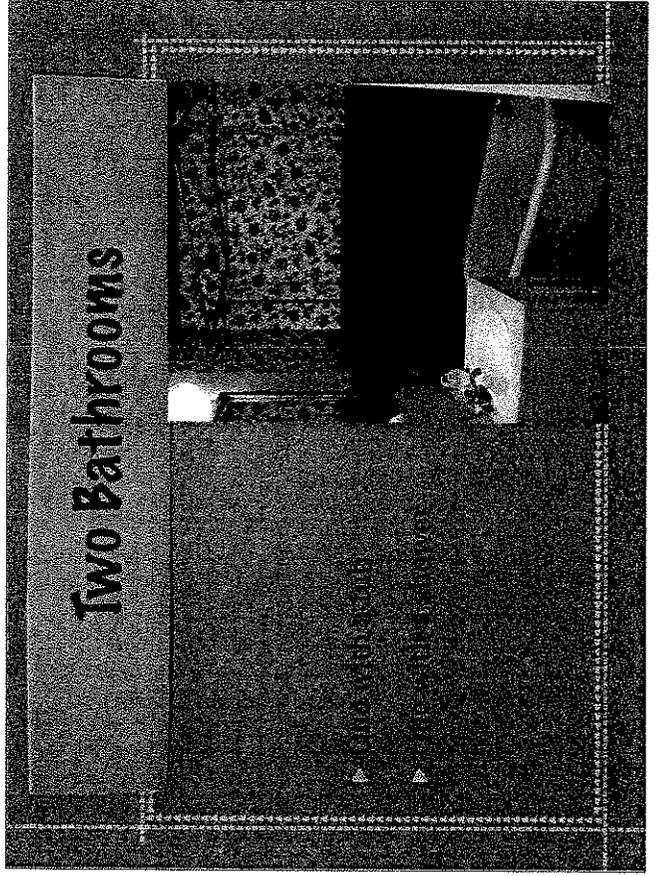
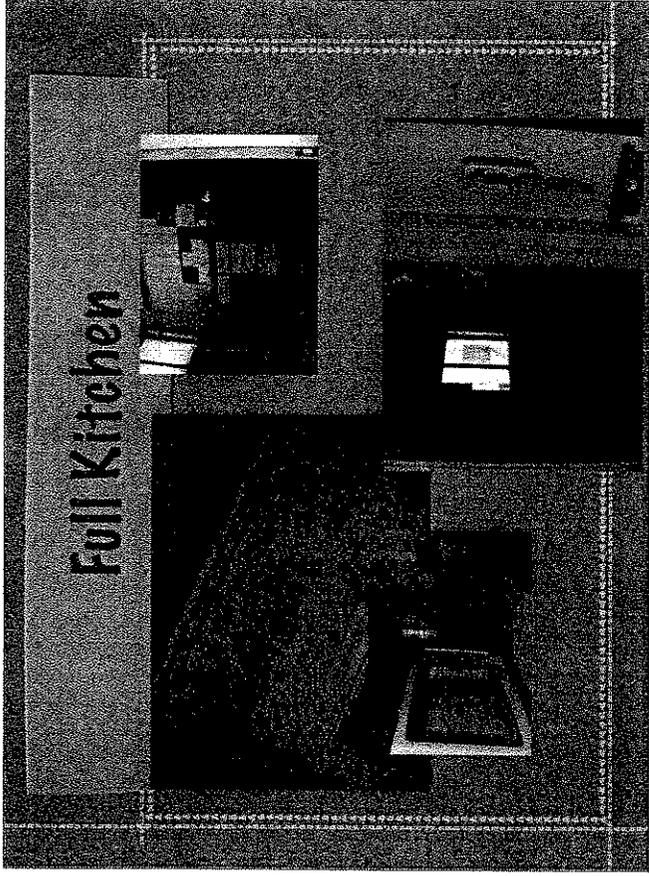
WORKING VALUES IN THEIR SOCIAL SERVICE

Back Entrance



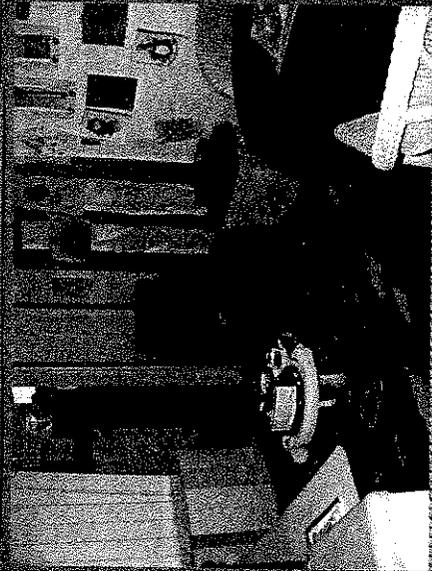
Separating foster parents from bio parents has its place and has been useful when both or one of the parties has been aggressive towards the other. With current Family-to-Family philosophies and best practices, there are other ways of getting the parties to the visits.





Not shown: Large bathroom with shower.

Visitation Rooms



Visitation Rooms



Visitation Rooms



Office Area



Other Areas not shown

- ▲ Wellbeing for families
- ▲ Flexible Family Resilience Library
- ▲ <https://190.190.190.190/employees.wv>
- ▲ www.wv.gov
- ▲ www.wv.gov

Slideshow Credits

- ▲ Photograph: Emily McNeil, www.fox.com
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Implement THP and THP+

- Collaborate with community partners
- Job Coaching development
- Collaborate with other youth programs
- Mentorship
- Work training partnerships
- Specific needs of youth considered i.e. Drug and Alcohol treatment progress
- Counseling services, mentoring, life long connections
- Expand ILS curriculum, Educate THP as a positive opportunity, speakers
- Adoption for teens

Collaborate for enhanced ILP services

- Work/Training partnerships
- Mentoring
- Life skills training
- Collaborate with other THP programs
- Money Management services
- Use available resources

Collaborate for employment services

- Collaborate with community agencies
- Meet with community and economic development groups
- Research innovative entrepreneur groups
- i.e. JEDI
- Work training partnerships
- Job search training programs

Siskiyou CWS SIP

Stakeholder Input and
Suggestions

**PROVIDE CHILDREN
PERMANENCY AND STABILITY
IN THEIR LIVING SITUATIONS**

Develop a Family Visitation Center

- Family environment for visitation
- Relative Care Provider Visitation
- Extended families involved sooner
- Parenting classes
- Life skills for parents
- Family finding
- Utilize for teaching environment
- Develop classes and curriculum
