

Lassen County

Family and Children Protective Services County System

Improvement Plan

September 2006

Division of Health and Social Services



**MaryJo, Cameron, Kara and Stacy
Under the Oak Tree, August 2006**

"Hope sees the invisible, feels the intangible, and achieves the impossible."

California Child and Family Services Review System Improvement Plan

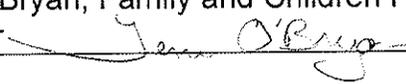
County:	Lassen County
Responsible County Child Welfare Agency:	Lassen County Family and Children Protective Services
Period of Assessment:	June 30, 2004 through July 30, 2006
Period of Outcomes Data:	July, 2006
Date Submitted:	September 12, 2006

County Contact Person for County System Improvement Plan

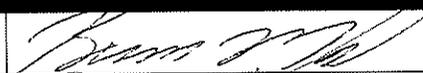
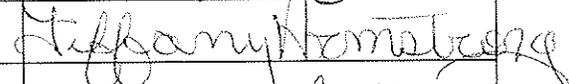
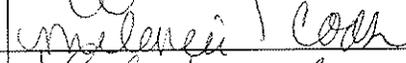
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Submitted by each agency for the children under its care

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Approved by:	Name:	ROBERT PYLE
	Title:	CHAIRMAN, BOARD OF SUPERVISORS
Signature:		
		

Lassen County System Improvement Plan

September 2006

Written by Danielle McGuire

Graphs by Melanie Cook

*Lassen County System Improvement Plan
September 2006*

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Abstract

This report is the new 2006 three-year Lassen County Self Improvement Plan (SIP). It is the third component of the California-Child and Family Services Review (C-CFSR). Updated on an annual basis, the County SIP is the operational agreement between the County and the State outlining how the County will improve its system of care for children and youth. It also forms an important part of the system for reporting on progress toward meeting agreed upon improvement goals using the C-CFSR outcomes and indicators.

Additionally, the System Improvement Plan's purpose is to provide pertinent information in a statewide report which analyzes Lassen County's System Improvement Plan. This plan will detail successes, as well as, continuing needs of the County. This particular report will be disseminated to the State, Community Stakeholders, Board of Supervisors and policy makers, in order to impact future child welfare programs in the State of California.

In 2004, when the System Improvement Plan was first implemented, Lassen County was going through some very difficult times. There was a lack of front line supervision and there was a huge staffing shortage. However, with a change in administration, Lassen County Family and Children Protective Services have seen a huge improvement over the last three years.

In addition, Lassen County Probation Department has also gone through some changes as well. They too have had staff shortages, as well as, a few changes in administration over the last few years.

Even though the two County Agencies have had some difficult times, both were fortunate to have workers that stuck around, persevered and continued to work for the betterment of Lassen County children and families. The beautiful family on the front cover is a true testimony to that fact.

Lassen County has continuously worked hard over the last couple of years and has made some significant improvements. However, there is still more to do to improve the system. As a result, the Lassen County System Improvement Plan details some of those efforts that Lassen County hopes to employ to continue to improve the system, which includes, foster care recruitment efforts, new Independent Living Programmatic (ILP) efforts and case plan improvement efforts. A new Quality Improvement/Quality Assurance Division will oversee all of these efforts as a means to improvement outcomes for children and families in Lassen County.

I. Introduction

January 2004, pursuant to California State Law, Assembly Bill 636, hence the name (AB 636), a new Child Welfare System Services Outcome and Accountability System began in California. This new system is referred to as the California Child and Family Services Review (C-CFSR) and consists of three reports, the (1) Peer Quality Case Review (PQCR), (2) the County Self Assessment (CSA) and lastly (3) The System Improvement Plan (SIP). The emphasis of these three reports (for all California Counties) is the measurement of safety, wellness, and permanency. Updated on an annual basis, the County SIP is the operational agreement between the County and the State, outlining how the County will improve its system of care for children and youth and it also forms an important part of the system for reporting on progress toward meeting agreed upon improvement goals using the C-CFSR outcomes and indicators.

While this document is the three-year System Improvement Plan (SIP), it encompasses information from the County Self Assessment (CSA), as well as, the County Peer Quality Case Review (PQCR).

Since our last three-year plan, which was completed in June, 2004, Lassen County has had some amazing improvements. The year 2005 brought some fantastic changes to Lassen County and it just keeps getting better.

If we reflect back to the year 2004, Lassen County was experiencing great difficulty. We were at zero percent or not too far from zero percent compliance in practically every area of measurement.

Only four of eight social worker positions were filled. Because of this, several referrals regarding abuse and neglect were not investigated. In addition, there were vast administrative problems, including lack of first line supervision. There were even several negative newspaper articles. However, Lassen County has made some drastic changes and while we still have room for improvements, we are slowly getting there. The Lassen County Grand Jury said it best (In regards to Lassen County), "Fourteen years of bad history has been erased!"

Just about every aspect of 2004 has been turned around. There are now nine social worker positions filled. For the first time, we have an administrative pyramid, which entails two first line supervisors and a permanent director, who is well known to the community. The community has restored its trust in Lassen County Family and Children Protective Services. Instead of zero percent compliance, we are now ninety percent and over in several measurements, such as referral response, investigations and monthly face to face contacts. Again, while we still have many areas in which we can improve, we are making steady progress and are trying to do the very best that we can.

Excitedly, Lassen County is no longer estranged from the community and is now working diligently as collaborative partners with several community agencies. Some of these agencies include Mental Health, Alcohol and Drug, Probation, CalWorks, Lassen Family Services, Diversified Management and 0-5, Public Health, CASA, Family Resource Centers, Schools and several other organizations. The Lassen County Grand Jury recently completed the 2005/2006 Grand Jury Report and for the first time ever, no response was required from Health and Social Services. This was very exciting for Lassen County Family and Children Protective Services and it just shows the power of hard work, perseverance and the strive towards excellence.

Our featured cover picture is also an indication of the changes that Lassen County Family and Children Protective Services has made. Moreover, it is a true heartfelt testimony to the power of hope, perseverance and willpower. Later you will read the very words of this featured family. In addition, as you look at our statistics and notice some of the many changes that Lassen County has made, you will see how these changes have greatly impacted the featured family, as well as, the other families that we presently serve. Furthermore, you will be moved by the quotes at the end of this booklet. These quotes are straight from the mouths of individuals that Lassen County Family and Children Services works with on a regular basis. As you read these quotes, please meditate on their heartfelt words. These words are amazingly powerful and they are evidence of the wonderful work that Lassen County Family and Children Protective Services strive towards on a daily basis. Many times, social work can feel very much like a thankless job but as you read the words of these parents, substitute care providers and community partners, I hope you will feel the magic of their words and appreciate the wonderful work that social workers, probation officers and community partners, so diligently do every single day.

So sit back, relax and enjoy this new three-year plan, County Self Assessment and Peer Quality Case Review. We hope you will find them as exciting, motivating and moving, as all of us here at Lassen County Family and Children Protective Services and Lassen County Probation does.

II. Local Planning Bodies

Several local planning bodies had input into the Lassen County Child Welfare Agency's Self Assessment and System Improvement Plan, such as, administrators and social workers from Family and Children Protective Services, the Chief and Assistant Chief from Probation, Executive Director and Social Workers from the two placement Foster Family Agencies, Mountain Circle and Environmental Alternatives and Foster Parents who also currently work for the County. Also in attendance were individuals from Health and Human Services, Alcohol and Drug, Probation, Public Health, Mental Health, Lassen Family Services, Susanville Rancheria, Fort Sage Resource Center, Child and Families Commission, CASA, Lassen Community College, PROMISES and Lassen County Police Department.

Stakeholders who so graciously worked on the System Improvement Plan with Lassen County Family and Children Protective Services and Lassen County Probation include the following individuals:

NAME	AGENCY
Kevin Mannel , Deputy CAO	<i>Lassen County Health and Social Services</i>
Terri O'Bryan , Director	<i>Family and Children Protective Services</i>
Danielle McGuire , Special Projects	<i>Family and Children Protective Services</i>
Melanie Cook , QA & QI SW	<i>Lassen County Health and Social Services</i>
Tiffany Armstrong , QA & QI Manager	<i>Lassen County Health and Social Services</i>
Mike Beard , Director	<i>Lassen County Alcohol and Drug</i>
Julia Terrill , Director	<i>Lassen County Public Health.</i>
Ken Crandall , Director	<i>Lassen County Mental Health</i>
Darla Freeman , Deputy Director	<i>Lassen Family Services</i>
Eugene Pasqua , ICWA Coordinator	<i>Susanville Rancheria</i>
Roy Thiels , Chief	<i>Lassen County Probation</i>

Tammi Vial , Manager	<i>Lassen County Mental Health</i>
Rod Colvin , Agency Representative	<i>Fort Sage Family Resource Center</i>
Kathy Colvin , Agency Representative	<i>Lassen County Family Resource Center</i>
William Paul , Therapist	<i>Lassen Family Services</i>
Laura Roberts , Exec. Director	Child and Families Commission
Gaylynn Garcia , Coordinator	CASA
Calli Beeson , CASA	CASA
Fran Warren , Social Worker	<i>Environmental Foster Family Agency</i>
Pat Arnold , Social Worker	<i>Environmental Foster Family Agency</i>
Shawna Rossington , Exec. Director	<i>Mountain Circle Family Agency</i>
Mae Sherman , Director	<i>City Care</i>
Tillie Baker , Parent Specialist	<i>PROMISES</i>
Kimberley Perkins , Social Worker	<i>Lassen Works</i>
Denise Stevenson , College Representative	<i>Lassen College, Americorp</i>
Jackie Musick , Patient Advocate	<i>Mental Health</i>
Diane Wemple , Fiscal Manager	<i>Health and Social Services</i>
Mary Jo Hirlbach , Social Worker	<i>Lassen Works</i>
Sally Garcia , Social Worker/ILP Coord.	<i>Family and Children Protective Services</i>
Mary Barry , Supervising Social Worker	<i>Mountain Circle Foster Family Agency</i>
Ryan Hibbs , Detective	<i>Lassen County Police Department</i>
Rodd Joseph , Detective	<i>Lassen County Police Department</i>

III. Findings that Support Qualitative Change

Lassen County used both qualitative and quantitative data in the County Self Assessment, as well as, the System Improvement Plan. These data sources include: The Child Welfare Services Outcome and Accountability County Data Report for Lassen, The Child Welfare Services Outcome and Accountability County Data Report for California, Safe Measures, Business Objects, California Employment Development Department, Child Welfare Services/Case Management System (CWS/CMS), U.S. Census Bureau, First 5 Lassen County Children and Families Commission 2006 Needs Assessment and Lassen County Economic and Demographic Profile.

Lassen County also used qualitative data for the Peer Quality Case Review. The purpose of the Peer Quality Review is to provide understanding of actual practices in the field of Child Welfare by bringing outside expertise to partner with County Agencies to highlight both weaknesses and strengths. In addition, the goal of the PQCR for probation is to assist them identifying key patterns of agency strength and concerns for the services for youth in out-of-home care. The focus of this review was Family Engagement.

All safety outcomes identified as an area needing improvement in the County Self-Assessment are to be addressed in the System Improvement Plan. Fortunately, Lassen County does not have too many safety outcomes that need to be addressed. However, they do have some areas of concern that warrant expeditious improvement. Some of the outcomes identified through the County Self Assessment and/or the PQCR that needed improvement and/or addressing are the following:

- ✚ Development of more placement resources (explore county licensing, foster care recruitment and work with local tribes to recruit and certify ICWA approved homes).
- ✚ Staff recruitment and retention
- ✚ Family engagement and family inclusion in the creation of case plans

IV. Summary Assessment of the County Self Assessment Update, June 2006

A. Discussion of System Strengths and Areas Needing Improvement

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

With the current full somewhat experienced staff (the majority being employed with Lassen County Family and Children Protective Services for well over a year), a current active administrative pyramid, implementation of SDM and the utilization of Differential response principles, and most importantly, the communities restored faith and trust in FCPS, all contributed to the increase in investigated referrals. However, FCPS is making a strong effort and has been very successful in investigating referrals over the last year and a half.

2. *Children are maintained safely in their homes whenever possible and Appropriate.*

Lassen County's mission is to serve, aid and protect needy and vulnerable children and adults in ways that strengthen and preserve families. In doing so, Lassen County's goal is always first and foremost to keep children in the home whenever possible, which is why Lassen County encourages and promotes up front preventative services when necessary, including Voluntary Family Maintenance, Anger Management through Lassen Family Services, Mental Health Services, Public Health Services and Alcohol and Drug Services. Lassen County Family and Children Protective Services completed memorandums of understanding for each of the above agencies. As a result, the service providers are readily able to assist with the needs of the family. Several of these agencies have a representative that responds to the home with the Lassen County Family and Children Protective Services Social Worker, when necessary (Differential Response - Path 2) and sometimes a representative from the various agencies meet with the family alone, without the assistance of Lassen County Family and Children Protective Services (Differential Response - Path 1). In working with the various agencies, our goal is to promote a seamless approach of services for children and families. Moreover, in working with the various community agencies, it ensures that families are being followed up with for their issues surrounding anger management, substance abuse, domestic violence and mental health. Also, in an effort to follow up and ensure that families receive the services they need, in 2005, Lassen County Family and Children Protective Services began to hold weekly staff meetings, which included an employee or two from Alcohol and Drug, Public Health, Mental Health, Promises, CASA and several other service providers. At these weekly staffings, the various agencies

discuss the needs and progress of individual families and strategize on how the needs of the family can continue to adequately being met.

As a result of working with the partner agencies, consistently using SDM and Differential Response, and follow through with policies and procedures training, Lassen County looks forward to data improvement when the next data report comes out.

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

Lassen County continues to be concerned about permanency and stability of children in CWS. Unfortunately Lassen County does not have their own Adoptions Unit. They utilize the State Adoptions office in Chico for adoption assessments. The new Lassen County Director recently learned that there is \$2,000.00 in the budget to address recruitment efforts. Lassen County is currently exploring insightful ways to spend the money for recruitment efforts, such as articles in the newspaper, which is currently being done by one of the foster family agencies. If Lassen County were able to recruit pre adoptive parents who want to take older children, it would greatly assist with permanency and stability for Lassen County children in foster care. Lassen

County is also exploring the possibility of hosting a dinner for Lassen County children in foster, as well as, for substitute care providers as a way of celebrating the children, thanking the care providers and soliciting their assistance with recruitment efforts. During the stakeholder's meeting for the Systems Improvement Plan, several community partners came up with ideas on how to address recruitment of substitute care providers as a means of addressing the permanency rate. Some of the suggestions included, Partnering with Foster Family Agencies to fund an outreach coordinator. Also several stakeholders suggested providing incentives to foster parents, such as college credit in Health and Social Services though Lassen Community College. These suggestions will be further explored in the Systems Improvement Plan.

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

Lassen County is just slightly under the State rate in some time periods in regards to siblings placed together in foster care, which is largely due to the lack of foster homes in Lassen County and the lack of foster home capacity. This was also noted in the PQCR, which was completed in 2005 (the lack of foster homes for siblings). Over the next year, Lassen County's goal is to explore the possibility of foster parent recruitment.

Lassen County has a new emergency shelter bed contract with Environmental Alternatives, which helps keep siblings together at intake. Environmental Alternatives Foster Family Agency has two substitute care providers who each can take four kids total (2 in an emergency capacity and two in a regular foster care placement). As a result, children who come into the home on an emergency basis can then move to one of the regular foster care slots if it works out to be in the best interest of the child (ren) and there is availability. This is helpful to siblings in an emergency capacity when they are first detained, which is essentially the most crucial time due to fear, insecurity and loneliness. This is the time when siblings need each other the most. They've just been removed from one or both parents, so siblings are the next closest of kin and when they can be placed together, it is best. Over the next few months, Lassen County intends to explore recruitment efforts and relative placements to increase and preserve family relationships of children served by CWS.

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

Lassen County ILP program has struggled for a few years. However, they are currently working hard to implement a positive, independent living, results oriented program. Lassen Community College teaches an ILP class at the college, which Lassen County Family and Children Protective Services has

been contracting with for a couple of years now. The class has proven to be very successful for those in attendance. In fact, the Ansell Casey test showed that Lassen County children who took the test scored very high in the different areas of readiness for independence. Moreover, the college class offers possible high school credits for those in attendance. This is very rewarding as many children in the system are behind in high school credits, so this is a way to help them gain loss credits, while at the same time, provide vital information for future emancipation from the system.

Currently Lassen County does not have housing for transitioning foster youth. However, the ILP social worker is obtaining the information for possible implementation of THP and THPP.

In order to assist transitioning youths in developing personal, supportive relationships, Lassen County will begin holding emancipation conferences at Lassen Community College. The youth will be able to have any person available whom they feel will assist them with successful emancipation, including their biological parents and relatives. These conferences will be held when a youth is 17 years old and again at age 17.5. There will also be some efforts to create similar meetings for children starting at fifteen years of age, in order to start the process much earlier to alleviate children possibly falling through the cracks.

System Improvement Plan (SIP) Plan Components

FAMILY AND CHILDREN PROTECTIVE SERVICES OUTCOMES/SYSTEMIC FACTORS

Outcome/Systemic Factor: RECURRENCE OF MALTREATMENT

1B: Of all children with a subsequent referral during the 12-month study period, what percent had a subsequent substantiated referral within 12 months?

1B: Of all children with a first substantiated referral during the 12-month study period, what percent had a subsequent substantiated referral within the 12 months?

County's Current Performance:

For the federal measurement (first six months), Lassen County is not doing as bad. However, for the State measurement (twelve months), Lassen County has a high percent of children with a subsequent substantiated referral within twelve months.

Dates	Outcome Measures	Fed or State	Lassen County Performance Rate, July 2006	State Performance
10/01/03-09/30/04	1B	State	17.8%	12.6%
10/01/03-09-30-04	1B	State	10.5%	10.9%

Improvement Goal 1.0 Decrease the percentage of children with subsequent referrals over a twelve-month period to reflect percentages lower than the State rate. Overall, lower the rate of recurrence of maltreatment for children in Lassen County.					
Strategy 1. 1 Continue the use of Structured Decision Making. Ensure that every social worker from intake to ongoing, is utilizing the Hotline, Safety Assessment and Risk Assessment tools.			Strategy Rationale Use of the tool will ensure that social workers are assessing children and families on a consistent basis. Moreover, utilization of this tool for families in a plan of family maintenance and family reunification will ensure that children are not assessed prematurely. The tool helps assess the family for risk and safety factors, which overall could decrease the chances of a substantiated referral.		
Milestone	1.1.1 All social workers will be monitored for the continued and consistent use of SDM, whether an intake social worker or ongoing social worker.	Timeframe	Ongoing	Assigned to	Supervisors and Director
	Strategy 1. 2 Implement and utilize Differential Response when practical and necessary.				Strategy Rationale Providing Community interventions and upfront preventative services to families identified as having low to moderate risks for abuse and neglect and is willing to engage in preventative services, is expected to decrease the rate of maltreatment.
Milestone	1.2.1. Social workers and social worker supervisors will ensure that families willing to engage in preventative services have been referred to and receiving services through Differential Response, Path I or II.	Timeframe	Ongoing. However, progress and compliance in this area is to be analyzed on a yearly basis, starting in September, 2007.	Assigned to	Social Workers
	1.2.2 Supervisors will ensure compliance with 1.2.1 and report progress to Director.		Ongoing. However, progress and compliance in this area is to be analyzed on a yearly basis, starting in September, 2007.		Social Worker Supervisors
	1.2.3 Develop quality assurance system to track compliance.		By January 31, 2007		Quality Assurance Division, Supervisors and Director

Strategy 1.3 A Multi-Level Team, such as Team Decision Making, will assess all referrals and cases (when necessary and applicable) that have been identified as having recurring patterns of high-risk behaviors that continue to place children at risk for abuse and neglect. This team will meet on at least a monthly basis or as determined necessary and possible.		Strategy Rationale A multi level decision making team of professionals from various county agencies, such as from probation, mental health, alcohol and drug and others will assist the social worker in the determination of a referral or case, based on the identified risks in the family, the identified needs of the family and availability of services. The group in turn will come up with a plan to address the needs of the family. This multi level group decision making will only take place when deemed necessary and appropriate.			
Milestone	1.3.1 A Memorandum Of Understanding will be generated to include members of the multi-level decision making team.	Timeframe	By January 31, 2007	Assigned to	QA/QI Division and Director
	1.3.2 When documenting in CWS/CMS on the initial face-to-face contact with the family, the social worker will include the identified recurring high-risk behaviors that are placing the child (ren) at risk. The social worker will then schedule a case conference with the supervisor and apprise the supervisor of the high-risk behaviors. The supervisor in turn will schedule a team decision meeting to take place during the next monthly team meeting.		By January, 2007 and ongoing thereafter.		Social Workers and Supervisors
	1.3.3 QA/QI division is to create a system to track compliance.		By January 31, 2007 and accurately track thereafter.		Quality Assurance Division and Director

<p>Strategy 1.4 When the multi level decision making team (decision making team panel) is utilized and it is determined that Voluntary Family Maintenance services are necessary, the family will be included in the meeting to determine the most appropriate services, identify any barriers to services, and develop the case plan, to include services that will treat the entire family. The family will return for reassessment with the multi-level decision making team within three months of the initial case plan and quarterly thereafter.</p>		<p>Strategy Rationale Engaging the family will assure that the family strengths and needs are incorporated into the determination of the most appropriate case plan objectives and services. Also, providing treatment of the family as a whole, in addition to any identified individual services and reassessing case plan progress quarterly, is expected to result in a reduction of recurrence of maltreatment.</p>			
Milestone	<p>1.4.1 Social Workers will ensure that families attend the multi level decision-making team meetings and participate in the development of the case plan when necessary and appropriate.</p>	Timeframe	<p>Meetings are to begin by January 31, 2007 and ongoing thereafter.</p>	Assigned to	<p>Social Workers</p>
	<p>1.4.2 Social workers will ensure that families return to the multi level decision making team meetings within three months following the initial assessment and quarterly thereafter for progress update and reassessment. Social workers will complete a new SDM Family Strengths and Needs Assessment and gather all progress reports from service providers to present the case to the review panel. Social workers will notify their supervisor, who will in turn, schedule the quarterly plan reassessment for review for the next multi level decision making team meeting.</p>		<p>Meetings are to begin by January 31, 2007 and ongoing thereafter.</p>		<p>Social Workers and Supervisors</p>
	<p>1.4.3 Supervisors will ensure compliance with 1.4.2.</p>		<p>By January 01, 2007 and ongoing thereafter.</p>		<p>Supervisors</p>
	<p>1.4.4 QA/QI division is to create a system to track compliance.</p>		<p>By January 31, 2007 and accurately track thereafter.</p>		<p>Quality Assurance Division and Director</p>
<p><u>Describe any additional systemic factors needing to be addressed that support the improvement plan goals.</u> Lassen County currently has a couple of teams, such as S.A.T (Service Allocation Teams), as well as, other teams. However, there needs to be a multi level team that makes decisions on referrals and/or cases (when necessary and appropriate) in regards to risk and safety features. In addition, the team (when necessary and appropriate) will include the assessment of referrals and cases with previous history, as well as, quarterly reassessments of cases and after care plans. Thorough and in depth assessments and reassessments are expected to result in reducing both recurrence of maltreatment and reentry rates.</p>					

As was identified in the Peer Quality Case Review, a promising practice is social workers dedication and enthusiasm in making a concerted effort to make case plans accurately address families and children needs. These above mentioned strategies help ensure that. Moreover, the PQCR encourages improvement in the area of family engagement.

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

Social Workers should continue to attend CORE training through UC Davis, as well as, advanced trainings regarding interview techniques, case narrative documentation, case plan creation and SDM update trainings. Supervisors should work with UC Davis to provide quarterly trainings on the topics above. It would be extremely beneficial if trainings could be offered onsite or closer to the county. This would facilitate more attendance efforts by the social workers and would definitely minimize the additional time away from work, (i.e., the two extra days for travel time).

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

Collaboration with other agencies, such as the improved relationships with Lassen County Mental Health, Lassen County Office of Education, Lassen County Probation, Non-Profit Agencies and the Local Tribal Office were identified in the most recent PQCR as a promising practice. Family and Children Protective Services Currently have Memorandums of Understandings with a couple of the collaborative agencies. In addition, Lassen County Family and Children Protective Services was in the process of creating a flow chart with Mental Health and Alcohol and Drug to be included in the current memorandum of understanding. This was to outline the process of developing Differential Response Path I and Path II responses. In addition, there is a goal to create universal case plans for children and families so that children and families are treated as whole individuals, rather than, to deal with pieces of their problems. The special outcome improvement augmentation funds should assist with employment of staff with Alcohol and Drug work experience, as well as, staff with Mental Health work experience, to assist with the outcome strategies listed above.

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

None noted.

Outcome/Systemic Factor: PERMANENCY

3F: For all children in child welfare supervised foster care for less than 12-months during the 12-month study, what percent were subsequent entries within 12 months of a prior exit?

3G: For all children who entered child welfare supervised foster care for the first time (and stayed at least five days) during the 12-month study period and were reunified within 12 months of entry, what percent re-entered foster care within 12 months of reunification?

County's Current Performance:

Dates	Outcome Measures	Fed or State	Lassen County Performance Rate, July 2006	State Performance
10/01/04-09-30-05	3F	Federal	16.9%	10.2%
10/01/02-09/30/03	3G	State	51.4%	11.9%

Improvement Goal 2.0

3F: Decrease the rate of re-entry by 2% to 14.9% or less,

3G: Decrease the rate of re-entry by 10% to 41.4% or less. This measure is way above the State rate.

Strategy 2. 1

All cases where children have been detained for a second time or more or are re-entering the system, will be assessed by the multi level decision making team when necessary and appropriate.

Strategy Rationale

The multi level decision making team will determine the most appropriate treatment for the family based on the safety and risk factors present in the home. This process is expected to decrease the rate of re-entry rate for families in child welfare services.

Milestone	Timeframe	Assigned to
<p>2.1.1 When children have been detained or are in jeopardy of being detained, the social worker will schedule a case conference with the supervisor, who in turn will arrange for a multi level decision making team meeting if necessary and appropriate.</p>	By January 31, 2007 and ongoing thereafter.	Director and Supervisors
<p>2.1.2 The current procedures for referral assessment and case management will be revised to include the multi level decision making team when necessary and appropriate (if it is not already included in the procedure). Social workers will then be trained on the new procedure.</p>	By January 31, 2007 and ongoing thereafter.	Director, Supervisors and QA/QI Division

	2.1.3 Supervisors will ensure that social workers are compliant in this area.		By March 1, 2007 and ongoing thereafter.		Supervisors
	2.1.4 Quality assurance, along with supervisors will track compliance in this area.		By March 1, 2007 and ongoing thereafter.		QA/QI Division
Strategy 2. 2 If the multi level decision making team determines that family reunification or family maintenance services are appropriate, family members will be invited to the team meeting to determine the most appropriate case plan.			Strategy Rationale Engaging the family empowers them. It also provides them with the opportunity to employ tell the team what they feel are their needs.		
Milestone	2.2.1 Again, the family will be assessed for services. The family is to be reassessed within three months of the initial assessment.	Timeframe	Ongoing	Timeframe	Social Workers and Supervisors
	2.2.2 The social worker is to ensure that all information from the multi review decision making team meeting is documented into CWS/CMS in a timely manner.		Ongoing		Social Workers and Supervisors
Strategy 2. 3 During the multi-level reassessment, if the family is in a plan of family reunification and the case plan progress has been substantial and the children are likely to return home in a plan of family maintenance, FCPS will develop a plan, along with the multi review decision making team (when necessary and appropriate) for continued care, monitoring and support for the family to prevent re-entry into the system.			Strategy Rationale Reassessment will allow the various experienced professionals to work with the family in a capacity, (similar to a wraparound) to offer services that are supportive to the family and beneficial for keeping the children in the home. This in turn is expected to decrease the re-entry rate.		
Milestone	2.3.1 Supervisors will ensure compliance and provide ongoing training in this area.	Timeframe	February 15, 2007 and ongoing thereafter.	Timeframe	Supervisors
	2.3.2 Create quality assurance measures to ensure compliance		By March, 2007		Director and QA/QI Division
	2.3.3 QA/QI Division will ensure compliance.		By April, 2007 and will accurately track ongoing thereafter.		QA/QI Division

Strategy 2.4 Social Workers are to ensure that parents understand what the Court and FCPS' expectations are for them and the family. Also ensure that they understand the consequences of not following through with those expectations. Monitor the family closely prior to making a recommendation for reunification		Strategy Rationale Once parents understand the components of their case plan and what is expected of them, they are more likely to understand what they need to do to keep the children in the home.			
Milestone	2.4.1. Social Workers will have an in person contact with the parents and the children and go over the case plan, whether Family Maintenance or Family Reunification.	Timeframe	By November 1, 2006 and ongoing thereafter.	Assigned to	Social Workers
	2.4.2 After going over the case plan in depth with the family, the social worker will have the parents and children (when applicable) sign the case plan, which indicates that they have at least seen their case plan. If parents or children refuse to sign the case plan, the social worker will note on the signature line that the parents and/or child refused to sign the case plan.		By November 1, 2006 and ongoing thereafter.		Social Workers
	2.4.3 Social Workers will update case plans every six months or as needed (after the disposition court report), which should have the initial case plan attached.		By November 1, 2006 and ongoing thereafter.		Social workers
	2.4.4 Social Workers will ensure that a new case plan is attached to every dispositional and status review report and even supplemental reports (when necessary and applicable).		By November 1, 2006 and ongoing thereafter.		Social workers
	2.4.5 If a new updated and signed case plan is not attached to the court report when the supervisors review it, they are not to sign off on the report.		By November 1, 2006 and ongoing thereafter.		Supervisors

	2.4.6 Supervisors and the QA/QI divisions will track and ensure compliance with all of the above.		By November 1, 2006 and thereafter.		Supervisors and QA/QI Division
Strategy 2.5 Social Workers will write court reports that effectively reflect case plan needs and objectives for the family. In addition, the court reports will contain progress or lack of progress when making a recommendation to the court.			Strategy Rationale Court reports that effectively reflect case plan progress will support the recommendation to the court to either terminate family reunification or continue services. In addition, providing an in depth report noting progress or lack of progress provides the judge with the necessary information to make a sound decision regarding the placement needs of the children.		
Milestone	2.5.1. Social Workers will write court reports that effectively reflect updated case plan objectives and updated progress or lack of progress.	Timeframe	By November 1, 2006 and ongoing thereafter.	Assigned to	Social Workers
	2.5.2 Supervisors will ensure compliance during their review of Court Reports.		By November 1, 2006 and ongoing thereafter.		Supervisors
	2.5.3 Supervisors will not sign off on the report if there is no signed updated case plan attached.		By November 1, 2006 and ongoing thereafter.		Supervisors
	2.5.4 QA/QI Division will ensure that every case in FCPS has an updated and signed case plan attached to a court report.		By January 2, 2007 and ongoing thereafter.		QA/QI Division

<p>Strategy 2. 6 If the Agency has exhausted all efforts with the family, by the use of the multi review decision making team and the parents clearly did not mitigate the problem that brought them in the system previously, after careful consideration, the social worker will consider if the parents fall under Welfare and Institutions Code 361.5 (b) and if it appears that the parents will not benefit from services, reunification will not be recommended and concurrent planning will begin.</p>	<p>Strategy Rationale Clearly identifying families that fall under W&I 361.5 (b), wherein the family is not likely to benefit from reunification services, will decrease the rate of re-entry.</p>
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Milestone	<p>2.6.1 If the social worker decides that Welfare and Institutions Code 361.5 (b) applies, they will hold a case conference with the supervisor and County Counsel.</p>	Timeframe	Assigned to	Social Workers
	<p>2.6.2 All social workers that are unfamiliar with Welfare and Institutions Code 361.5(b) will be fully trained in this area.</p>			Supervisors
	<p>2.6.3 Supervisors will contact UC Davis for training on Welfare and Institutions Code 361.5(b).</p>			Director and/or Supervisors
	<p>2.6.4 Supervisors will ensure compliance and provide ongoing training to the social workers.</p>			Supervisors
	<p>2.6.5 QA/QI to track compliance in this area and keep data.</p>			QA/QI Division
<p><u>Describe any additional systemic factors needing to be addressed that support the improvement plan goals.</u></p>				
<p>Social Workers need to consistently engage the families in the creation of the case plan, which many times they do not do. They also need to ensure that the parents and children are signing them. Otherwise the case plan really isn't valid. If the parents or children refuse to sign the case plan, the social worker will write "refuse to sign" on the signature line. In addition, family engagement was also the main focus of the Peer Quality Case Review in 2005 and getting the family engaged in the creation of the case plan is highly desirable.</p>				
<p>Lassen County will also continue to utilize Structured Decision Making. In fact, sometime in March 2007, Mr. Rod Casky (who is from the Children's Research Center) will complete a comparative case reading and provide training to the FCPS Director and staff.</p>				

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

Welfare and Institutions Code training and Case Plan should be offered either on site or within decent traveling distance. This can be accomplished through U.C.Davis.

Lassen County will work with Diversified Management in the full implementation of Differential Response, Path I and Path II responses.

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

The role of the community is participation in the multi review decision making team process, where they would lend their knowledge and expertise to help assess risk and safety factors that exist in certain families.

Moreover, collaboration with other agencies was noted as a positive practice in the 2005 Peer Quality Case Review.

Lassen County is also getting ready to work with Laura Roberts of Diversified Management, in an effort to contract services for home visiting for high risk Lassen County CWS families.

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

None noted.

Outcome/Systemic Factor: PERMANENCY

3C: For all children who entered child welfare supervised foster care for the first time (and stayed at least five days) during the 12-month study period, and were in care for 12 months, what percent had no more than two placements?

County's Current Performance:

Dates	Outcome Measures	Fed or State	Lassen County Performance Rate, July 2006	State Performance
10/01/03-09-30-04	3C	State	64.3%	66.4%

Improvement Goal 3.0

While Lassen County currently does not have a problem with multiple placements for children, we would like to keep it that way. As a result, we are exploring ways to continue to keep children in less than two placements.

Strategy 3.1

Promote foster home recruitment and foster adopt home recruitments through community participation and the use of local newspaper ads and community service announcements/commercials.

Strategy Rationale

Local newspaper ads and television commercials reach a broader and larger audience. In addition, recruitment efforts will ensure that children are placed in the lowest level of care as required by AB 636. It will also increase the number of local foster family homes and local foster adopt homes in the Susanville area.

Milestone	Timeframe	Assigned to
<p>3.1.1 Advertise on Lassen.networkofcare.org website (Mental Health Network of Care website). Also advertise on Susanvillestuff.com.</p>	By January 1, 2007 and ongoing thereafter.	Director and Supervisors
<p>3.1.2 Provide incentives to foster parents, such as, community college credits in the health and social services field, in exchange for being a foster parent.</p>	By March 1, 2007 and ongoing thereafter.	Foster Family Agencies and Lassen County Director
<p>3.1.3 Provide and encourage local foster parent support groups through advertisements, flyers and the social workers.</p>	By March 1, 2007 and ongoing thereafter.	Foster Family Agencies and Lassen County Director
<p>3.1.4 Provide and encourage foster parent shadowing for a period of time through advertisements, flyers and the social workers.</p>	By March 1, 2007 and ongoing thereafter.	Foster Family Agencies and Lassen County Director

	<p>3.1.5 Facilitate contact, when possible, between children in care and their former foster parent(s), even when child is reunified with parents or emancipates.</p>		Ongoing		Social Workers
	<p>3.1.6 Partner with local foster family agencies to fund an outreach coordinator.</p>		By January 31, 2007 and ongoing thereafter.		Director
	<p>3.1.7 The County will utilize foster care recruitment funds in the budget, as well as, outcome improvement funds to advertise the need for foster homes and foster adopt homes in the Susanville area.</p>		By January 31, 2007 and ongoing thereafter.		Director
<p>Strategy 3.2 Explore the possibility of county licensed foster homes.</p>			<p>Strategy Rationale If Lassen County licensed their own foster homes, it would greatly reduce the cost of foster care payments, as foster family agencies and group homes are very costly. The savings would free up funds for expanded training, support and recruitment efforts. Moreover, if Lassen licensed their own homes, it would provide them with more direct access to the foster parents and would also create more of a partnership, rather than having to go through the foster family agency.</p>		
Milestone	<p>3.2.1. The County will explore the requirements for licensing own homes by contacting the State. (Mary Ellen Borba can be of great assistant in this matter).</p>	Timeframe	February 1, 2007 and ongoing thereafter.	Assigned to	Supervisor or Director
	<p>3.2.2 The Director will meet with fiscal (Yvonne Smith) for possible funding for a licensing social worker.</p>		February 1, 2007 and ongoing thereafter.		Director
	<p>3.2.3 The Director will notify other small counties in Northern California regarding their county licensing process for ideas and assistance.</p>		February 1, 2007 and ongoing thereafter.		Director

Strategy 3.3 Hold a foster parent appreciation and recruitment dinner. Provide incentives to foster parents who bring along a potential foster parent.		Strategy Rationale By showing appreciation to the current foster parents, this encourages them to continue to provide foster care for children as it shows that Lassen County is very appreciative of them and the care that they provide. Moreover, the best way to recruit foster parents is with the assistance of those who are already current foster parents.	
Milestone	3.3.1 Invite youth speakers and hold a forum for those who have been fostered themselves to speak at the dinner.	Timeframe	August 1, 2007
	3.3.2 The Director will meet with fiscal person (Yvonne Smith) to discuss possible funding for the event.		By January 2, 2007
	3.3.3 Invite a positive role model in from the community like Ken Shamrock to speak at the foster parent appreciation dinner.		By January 1, 2007 and continue to follow up to ensure that the person will attend on the day of the event.
Assigned to			
Director, Supervisors and Social Workers			
Director			
Director and Supervisors			
<u>Describe any additional systemic factors needing to be addressed that support the improvement plan goals.</u> The FCPS Director recently learned that there is \$2000.00 in the budget for recruitment efforts. This money can be used to purchase recruitment materials and purchase public service announcements to be unveiled at the foster parent appreciation dinner.			
<u>Describe educational/training needs (including technical assistance) to achieve the improvement goals.</u> Licensing training should be offered either on site or within decent traveling distance. This can be accomplished through U.C.Davis. If possible, a recruitment consultant should be contacted or extensive research should be done to improve recruitment efforts.			
<u>Identify roles of the other partners in achieving the improvement goals.</u> The foster family agencies can assist with recruitment efforts because the agency will still need to utilize their placement services. They too will benefit by trying to recruit more families for the foster family agency.			
<u>Identify any regulatory or statutory changes needed to support the accomplishment of the improvement goals.</u> If a licensing worker is hired, they will need to familiarize themselves with State Regulations regarding licensed foster home requirements, as well as, relative approval home requirements.			

PROBATION OUTCOMES/SYSTEMIC FACTORS

Outcome/Systemic Factor: FOSTER CARE PLACEMENT IN LEAST RESTRICTIVE SETTINGS

County's Current Performance:

	2003	2004	2005	2006
Total Juvenile Caseload	132	110	97	91
Formal Probation and Wards	120	99	90	85
Informal	12	11	7	6
Wards in J.H.	52	31	46	37
Wards in Placement	19	27	30	34

IMPROVEMENT GOAL 4.0

Keep children in their homes whenever possible and appropriate. When it is not possible, place children in the least restrictive placements.

Strategy 4.1

Decrease the number of group home placements.
Decrease the number of out of county group home placement.

Strategy Rationale

By decreasing the number of group home placements, more funding opportunities are available for preventative services.

Milestone	Timeframe	Assigned to
<p>4.1.1 Work with Melody Brawley and Ken Crandall towards implementation of wraparound services for children and families in Lassen County.</p>	March, 2007	Chief and Assistant Chief
<p>4.1.2 Make note of what children would be eligible for wraparound services and able to be placed in the home, provided wraparound services are available and implemented here in Lassen County.</p>	By March, 2007	Probation Officers and Assistant Chief

	4.1.3 Complete the process to open the dual diagnosis level 10 group home, which will assist in keeping children placed locally.		By March, 2007		Probation Chief
Strategy 4. 2 The Probation Officer will evaluate each case and refer the minor and parents to appropriate local resources.			Strategy Rationale If a referral is made to appropriate community resource providers to assist the family with their needs, it can decrease or prevent behaviors which may lead to removal from the home or cause the minor to be placed in a high level placement (if the child is already removed from the home).		
Milestone	4.2.1. The probation officer will review case files and assess the child and family's needs. They will discuss these needs in depth with the minor and parents. If a case plan is appropriate, the probation officer will have the child and parents engage in the case plan and sign it, as proof of their involvement.	Timeframe	Ongoing	Assigned to	Probation Officers
	4.2.2 The supervising probation officer or assistant chief will review cases regularly to ensure appropriate local resources are in place for the child and the family.		Ongoing		Supervisor or Assistant Chief
	4.2.3 The probation officer will continue to monitor the child on probation during and after completion of a program for children on probation, including monitoring the child at PACE.		Ongoing		Probation Officers
Strategy 4. 3 If a minor is ordered by the Court to participate in a placement program, the minor will be supervised by a probation officer while in the program and will be referred to PACE and/or other local resource upon release from placement.			Strategy Rationale After a minor has completed a placement program, continued counseling and support is often necessary. If the minor is immediately immersed into appropriate services, they are likely to transition back into society and their home life successfully.		
Milestone	4.3.1 The probation officer will provide in person contact on at least a monthly basis to the minor on probation to assess their needs and the appropriateness of placement.	Timeframe	Ongoing	Assigned to	Probation Officers
	4.3.2 The probation officer will talk with community providers to ensure that the minor and family are obtaining the services needed.		Ongoing		Probation Officers
<u>Describe any additional systemic factors needing to be addressed that support the improvement plan goals.</u> Information is being obtained from the State currently in regards to the process for implementation of wraparound in Lassen County. Roy is also currently working with a building contractor in regards to the completion of the dual status group home here in Lassen County. He is anticipating completion of the group home around					

March 2007.
<p>Describe educational/training needs (including technical assistance) to achieve the improvement goals. Prior to making a referral, the probation officers will need to familiarize themselves with the resources available in the community. Moreover, they will need to meet with the fiscal department in order to familiarize themselves with funding streams, which may be necessary to provide the minor and family with the services they need.</p>
<p>Identify roles of the other partners in achieving the improvement goals. The community partners will provide the services to the minor and family and will provide feedback in the way of verbal or written communication. However, written communication is most preferred.</p>
<p>Identify any regulatory or statutory changes needed to support the accomplishment of the improvement goals. None</p>

Outcome/Systemic Factor: AGENCY COLLABORATION

County's Current Performance: Current collaboration between Probation and CWS can improve, especially in regards to ILP eligible children. Currently, there is a gap in some areas in regards to probation children and ILP services.

Improvement Goal 5.0
Improve communication between FCPS ILP Coordinator and Probation Staff

<p>Strategy 5. 1 The ILP social worker will meet on a regular basis with probation staff to ensure that children on probation are receiving the same ILP services as children in CWS.</p>	<p>Strategy Rationale Currently children on probation are not receiving all of the same ILP services as children in CWS. Probation officers are having a hard time receiving ILP services for some of their children.</p>
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Milestone	<p>5.1.1 The new ILP social worker or ILP provider will meet with the probation placement officer on at least a monthly basis to ensure that children on probation (who are ILP eligible) are receiving adequate ILP services.</p>	Timeframe	<p>January 2,2007 and ongoing</p>	Assigned	<p>ILP social worker or ILP contractor</p>
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	5.1.2 During monthly meetings, the Probation Placement Officer will provide the ILP coordinator with accurate data (numbers) of ILP eligible children on probation who graduate, do not graduate, leave the area, go to college, etc. for outcome measures.		January 2,2007 and ongoing		ILP social worker or ILP contractor
Strategy 5. 2 CWS Director and Probation Chief will ensure that communication between the two agencies take place.			Strategy Rationale The ILP program is the one program available that promotes independence for children in foster care, as well as, children on probation. However, it has been slow moving in getting off the ground and the program has changed hands very frequently in the past. Because of this, communication has disintegrated. In addition, CWS tends to have a high turnover rate in staff, so this collaborative effort needs to be monitored to ensure that communication takes place on a regular basis.		
Milestone	5.2.1. Probation Chief and FCPS Director will meet on at least a quarterly basis to ensure that active collaboration in regards to ILP, is taking place between the two agencies.	Timeframe	Beginning March, 2007 and ongoing	Assigned to	Probation Chief and FCPS Director
	5.2.2 Probation Chief will ensure compliance with 5.1.1		February, 2007 and ongoing		Probation Chief
Strategy 5. 3 In conjunction with FCPS, Probation staff will promote the ILP class at Lassen Community College for children on Probation.			Strategy Rationale By promoting the ILP classes at the college, probation is encouraging successful emancipation from the system and promoting independence and appropriate life skills for children involved with probation.		
Milestone	5.3.1 Probation officers will promote the ILP class at the college by discussing the class and providing pamphlets to the children in PACE. The probation officer will also do this in conjunction with the ILP coordinator so that the students at PACE are familiar with the ILP coordinator.	Timeframe	Ongoing	Assigned to	Probation Officers
	5.3.2 Probation Officers will discuss the ILP class at the college with both children and their parents during each in person contact with the child and the parents.		Ongoing		Probation Officers
<u>Describe any additional systemic factors needing to be addressed that support the improvement plan goals.</u> It should be noted that the current ILP coordinator has worked with Probation in providing services to children on probation. However, Lassen County will be hiring a					

new ILP social worker or will contract it out until they find an ILP coordinator. Due to the fact that this person will be new, it is even more pertinent that communication takes place between FCPS and Probation so that children on probation do not fall through the cracks and not receive appropriate ILP services.

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

The probation officers will need to meet with the new ILP coordinator to apprise them of eligible children on probation. Moreover, the probation officer will need to meet with the new ILP coordinator to discuss who will input the Transitional Living Plans and how that will be done in a timely manner.

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

Lassen Community College staff, Denise Stevens and Sandy Beckwith are instrumental in partnering with Lassen County Probation, as well as, Lassen County Family and Children Protective Services, as they are the ones offering the ILP classes at the college.

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

None

There are several other systemic factors that Lassen County plans to address but could not include in the plan (Please see below). In the instructions provided by the State, California Department of Social Services, recommended that each county address no more than 3 to 4 outcome indicators or systemic factors. As a result, Lassen County included the systemic factors that were most pressing for the System Improvement Plan. Again, Lassen County will address the systemic factors below but could not include them in this System Improvement Plan.

-  Recruitment and retention
-  Collaboration with the local Native American Rancheria
-  Family-to-Family

APPENDIX 1 - Glossary

AB 636	In 2001, the California State Legislature enacted Assembly Bill 636 (AB 636), the Child Welfare System Improvement and Accountability Act, to replace the state's process-driven county compliance review system with a new system that focused on results. AB 636 provides the legal framework for the California Child and Family Services Reviews - a new system for measuring and monitoring the performance of each county child welfare system. This new system was implemented in January 2004 and operates on the philosophy of continuous improvement, interagency partnerships, community involvement and public reporting of outcomes. It will allow the state to gauge its performance against national standards while measuring the performance of counties on other critical outcomes and tracking improvement over time.
Annual update	A Board of Supervisors-approved update of the SIP is due to CDSS by the anniversary of the acceptance of the original SIP by CDSS.
California Child and Family Services Review (C-CFSR)	California's version of the federal Child and Family Services Review that is used to assess county performance on child welfare outcome indicators. See AB 636.
County Self Assessment (CSA)	The County Self-Assessment is the first step in California's new California Child and Family Services Review that implements a process of continual system improvement. The purpose of the County Self-Assessment process is to analyze, in collaboration with key partners, the County's performance on eight critical child welfare outcomes. These outcomes are measured by data or outcome indicators that make up the County Data Profile. The County Data Report is provided to the County by CDSS based on data from the Child Welfare Services/Case Manage System (CWS/CMS).
Improvement goal	A program/process improvement that is linked to positive change in an outcome indicator or systemic factor OR a proposed numeric change (+/-) in an outcome indicator.
Local planning body	Local planning bodies are usually composed of local stakeholders and agencies that serve the families and children who are in the CWS system or who are at risk of entry to the system, along with consumers of CWS services and advocates. The SIP Team is an example of a local planning body. A local planning body is referenced in the SIP document is the same as the SIP Team.
Milestone	A measurable progress to achieving a goal. Milestones can be viewed as analogous to "activities" in a case-planning process but they should be stated in an action-completed manner ("Training for all staff completed." versus "All staff will be trained.")
Partners	Stakeholders in the child welfare system who work together to share responsibility and accountability for the safety and well-being of children and families within the community. Partners include faith-based organizations, county and community human services agencies, parents, youth, foster parents, the business and education communities, law enforcement and probation.
Peer Quality Case Reviews	A key component of the C-CFSR designed to enrich and deepen understanding of a county's actual practices in the field by bringing experienced peers from neighboring counties to assess and help shed light on the subject county's strengths and areas in need of improvement within the child welfare services delivery system and social work practice.
Performance Indicators	Specific, measurable data points used in combination to gauge progress in relation to established outcomes.

Probation involvement	Probation is a mandated member of the SIP Team as Title IV-E funds are used for probation-involved children and youth in placement. Some children are also dual jurisdiction (both W&I Code, Sections 300 and 602 dependents). Improvement goals, strategies and milestones that are targeted towards these populations should be identified as probation-related.
Regulatory or statutory changes	The SIP Template asks counties for regulatory or statutory changes needed to meet improvement goals. Examples may include changes in statute regarding family maintenance, changes in the definition of “family” or “relative”, flexibility to expend certain funds, etc.
(Statewide) standards	Minimally acceptable performance on child welfare outcome indicators. At this time, only the federal government has established such benchmarks for the federal outcome indicators only.
SIP (System Improvement Plan)	A performance-based action plan created by a county child welfare agency in collaboration with its partners to drive positive change within the local county child welfare system resulting in outcome improvements for children and families.
Stakeholders	A group of child welfare agency staff and partners who are involved in the creation and approval of the System Improvement Plan. Mandated members include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • CWS Administrators, Managers, and Social Workers • Probation Administrators, Supervisors, and Officers • California Youth Connection, if available • Foster Parents • CDSS Adoptions District Office or the Licensed County Adoption Agency providing adoption services to the County when the County does not provide adoption services.
Strategy	The plan(s) or technique(s) the CW agency will take to reach the identified improvement goal.
Strategy rationale	A brief explanation and justification of the selected strategy discussing how the strategy will build on progress and lead to improvements in the identified outcome indicator or systemic factor.
Systemic changes	These references those systemic factors that were revealed and explored in the analysis of the outcome indicators conducted during the Self-Assessment.
Systemic factor	In addition to outcome indicators needing improvement, a SIP template can also be developed to address a particularly problematic systemic factor. Seven systemic factors are identified in the Self Assessment (management information system; case review (includes relationship to the court and family participation in case planning); recruitment, licensing and retention of foster and adoptive parents; training of staff and partners; quality assurance system; and agency collaboration). Any systemic factor that is repeatedly identified in conjunction with multiple outcome indicators likely deserves individual treatment in the SIP.
Technical assistance and training	A limited amount of training and technical assistance will be offered to counties by CDSS and the Regional Training Academies in support of SIP-related activities. Requests for training and technical assistance should go to CDSS through your county’s analyst.
Threshold	See statewide standards. In AB 636, CDSS is instructed to establish “compliance thresholds” for the outcome indicators. This will be done within the next few years.
Timeframe	The period of time by which a milestone will be accomplished. As the SIP is a 3-year plan that is updated annually, most timeframes will occur within 1 year. One month, 3, 6, 9 and 12-month timeframes are most practical.

Appendix A

Peer Quality Case Review (PQCR)



LASSEN COUNTY

Health & Social Services Department

ADMINISTRATION 545 HOSPITAL LANE SUSANVILLE, CA 96130-4302 (530) 251-8128

ALCOHOL & DRUG 476 Alexander Ave. Susanville, Ca 96130 (530) 251-8112 PROMISES 1400B Chestnut St (530) 251-2687 PROP 36 1400B Chestnut St (530) 251-8473	MENTAL HEALTH 555 Hospital Lane Susanville, Ca 96130 (530) 251-8108 B.R.I.D.G.E.S. 1445 Paul Bunyan (530) 251-8400 PACE 1600 Chestnut St (530) 251-2610	PUBLIC GUARDIAN 720 Richmond Rd Susanville, Ca 96130 (530) 251-8337 PATIENTS RIGHTS 720 Richmond Rd Susanville, Ca 96130 (530) 251-8322	PUBLIC-ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH 1445 Paul Bunyan Rd Susanville, Ca 96130 (530) 251-8183	VETERANS SERVICE Memorial Building 1205 Main Street Susanville, Ca 96130 (530) 251-8192	COMMUNITY SOCIAL SERVICES & LASSEN W.O.R.K.S. P.O. Box 1359 Susanville, Ca 96130 (530) 251-8152 LASSEN CAREER NETWORK 2545 Main Street Susanville, Ca 96130 (530) 251-8200	FAMILY & CHILDREN PROTECTIVE SERVICES 1445 Paul Bunyan Rd Susanville, Ca 96130 (530) 251-8277
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REPORT OF PEER QUALITY CASE REVIEW CONDUCTED FOR CHILD WELFARE SERVICES IN LASSEN COUNTY

On site Peer Quality Review Dates: 05/31/2005 to 06/03/2005

Report Prepared by: Jessica Herman, M.A.,
Interim Director of Lassen County Family and Children Protective Services

Child Welfare Agency Peer Quality Review

Pursuant to State Law (Assembly Bill 636, Steinberg, Ch. 978, Statutes of 2001) effective January 2004, a new Child Welfare Services Outcomes and Accountability Systems began operation in California. The new system, referred to as the California-Child and Family Services Reviews (C-CFSR), was developed in accordance with the provisions of WIC & 10601.2 and focuses primarily on measuring in safety, permanence, child and family well-being. The new system replaces the former Child Welfare Services Oversight System which focused exclusively on regulatory compliance and brings California's oversight into alignment with the Federal Child and Family Services Review oversight system of the states.

Introduction

Purpose

The purpose of the Peer Quality Case Review (PQCR) is to provide an understanding of actual practices in the field by bringing in outside expertise to help shed light on the strengths and challenges for county Child Welfare Services (CWS) delivery systems

and social worker practices. For Probation, the goal of the PQCR is to identify key patterns of agency strength and concerns for the services for youth in out-of-home care. Both agencies benefit by using peer reviewers that can offer objectivity to the process and serve as an immediate training resource. The PQCR is an extension of the county's Self-Assessment (SA) process, is an integral part of a complete review and is to be used to update the county's System Improvement Plan (SIP).

Scope

A representative random sample of cases receiving child welfare services were selected for the PQCR process to provide an in-depth, qualitative examination of Social Worker application of practice in the area of **Foster Care Re-entry**. The decision to focus on this area was made after examining the Quarterly Outcomes and Accountability Reports (QOADR) compiled by the California Department of Social Services (CDSS) and the University of California, Berkeley (UCB). The identified focus area reflected cases which:

- Children reunified with their parent or guardian and *re-enter* the system in Quarters 3 and 4 of 2004 and Quarter 1 of 2005.
- Children reunified with their parent or guardian and *did not re-enter* the system in Quarters 3 and 4 of 2004 and Quarter 1 of 2005.

A representative random sample of cases receiving Probation services were selected for the PQCR process to provide an in depth, qualitative examination of Probation Officers application of practice in the area of **Family Engagement**.

Methodology

Lassen County conducted concurrent CWS and Probation interviews. Probation staff participated by volunteering a staff member to participate as an interview panel member for the review week. Probation staff was included in the interview schedule and the resulting information regarding practices was gathered for inclusion in this report.

In addition to Probation staff, the PQCR interview teams consisted of social workers and social worker supervisors from Butte, Humboldt and Shasta Counties, staff members from the California Department of Social Services (CDSS) and the local Court Appointed Special Advocate (CASA).

The PQCR process called for data to be analyzed by a variety of sources. Lassen County included the following in its development of the methodology:

- Data obtained from case files pulled from Children's Research Center (CRC) Safe Measures Case Review Tool
- Social Worker interviews
- Social Worker Supervisor interviews
- Probation Officer interviews

Interviewers were given the allowance to deviate from the structured interview questions in order to ascertain general social work practice and to allow the social

workers/supervisor to express their thoughts on what they believe in their words were the barriers/successes/challenges that affected the percentage of families that reenter the Child Welfare System.

Interviews were conducted using an interview tool modified from core tools provided by the California Department of Social Services (CDSS). The modified social worker, social worker supervisor, and probation officer tools are attached.

The use of the interviews tools were useful but not as useful as the allowance to deviate from them. The interview panels reported that it was difficult to follow the interview tools due to the differences in social worker/probation officers.

Much of the success of with the PQCR for Lassen County was the partnership with the Northern California Training Academy (NCTA). NCTA provided critical components that included but not limited to, assisting with findings counties willing to send participants, providing training to management staff in regards to how to conduct the PQCR, providing the structure for the week of the PQCR, facilitating the daily debriefs and providing general support for all who were involved with Lassen County PQCR.

NCTA as stated above facilitated the daily debriefing with the interview teams. These daily debriefings were vital due to the need to consolidate information received during the interviews. Debriefings further assisted the teams with summarizing their daily experiences and the opportunity to assess the interview process.

Case selection

The case samplings that were pulled by Lassen County staff are not statistically valid. Cases were identified in collaboration with the Children's Research Center (CRC). The case sampling was limited to children who re-entered or re-unified with their families in the third and fourth quarters of 2004 and in the first quarter of 2005.

The selection of the cases was difficult due to the amount of turnover that Lassen County has encountered in the past three years. The cases were pulled so that each Social Worker in the agency would have an opportunity to participate in the PQCR process. Each Social Worker in the Agency was interviewed. Only one of the cases that was selected for review was not utilized due to the fact that the Social Worker assigned to the case was called out the field. This specific Social Worker was, however, interviewed in conjunction with another case.

Selection of interview reviews teams

A total of two Interview Review Teams were selected for the PQCR review, with three members to each team for a total of six interviewers. The two teams conducted

interviews with Probation staff and F&CPS staff. The Interview Team members are listed below:

- Lassen County Probation Supervisor
- Humboldt County Child Welfare Supervisor
- Lassen Family Services, Court Appointed Special Advocate (CASA) Program Supervisor
- Butte County Child Welfare Supervisor
- Shasta County Child Welfare Supervisor (retired)
- California Department of Social Services Staff Member

Collection of data

All of the information that was collected by the Interview Teams was recorded by a staff member from the California Department of Social Services. The complete data collection is attached to this report.

Summary of Data/Practices

Lassen County has made great strides in the past 18 months in many areas, the most significant being the focus on the needs of the client population and the needs of the community. The hope of Lassen County in completing the PQCR process was to highlight recurring themes that would emphasize and reflect areas that can be improved and if need be, changed. We also hoped that this process would convey staff recommendations and observations in regards to the practices and needs of F&CPS.

As expected, reoccurring themes arose during the review process. Following is a summary list of the principal promising practices, recommendations and barriers discovered during the PQCR process.

Promising practices

- Collaboration with other agencies; examples that were specifically identified were the improved relationship with Lassen County Mental Health, Lassen County Office of Education, Lassen County Probation, Non-Profit Agencies, and the local Tribal Office
- Commitment to clients; examples that were given were availability of social workers to client by phone and in person, making weekly home visits a priority, and honesty with families
- Social Workers dedication and enthusiasm making a concerted effort to make the Case Plan accurately address the Families and Child's needs

Challenges/barriers

- Lack of County cars and the inability to keep cars maintained in good working condition
- Lack of local foster homes, especially for children 7 years and older and for sibling groups

- Understaffing, lack of qualified Social Workers
- Need for more training for Social Workers
- Need for more clerical support

Recommendations

- Develop more placement resources (e.g. explore county licensing, recruit other Foster Family Agencies to open in Lassen County, work with Local Tribes to recruit and certify ICWA approved homes)
- Ability to use personal vehicles for work purposes
- Purchase more vehicles with four-wheel drive
- Increase staff (e.g. need for continual recruitment, creating funding in order to hire more Social Workers, explore strategies to entice experienced worker)
- Ensure that Lassen County is utilizing the UC Davis Extension training to its full potential
- Explore in-patient treatment options for Alcohol and Drug treatment that are closer to Lassen County
- Well maintained and available County cars

Conclusions

Overall the PQCR process was very well received by both Staff and Administration. The process identified areas that can be addressed in the upcoming year. What made this process so effective was the focus on the staff being allowed to share their needs and struggles and their clients' needs and struggles as they view them. Lassen County's commitment to the PQCR outcomes will be vital to ensuring that the positive direction that the agency is moving in continues.

Appendix B

Stakeholder's Meeting Agenda and Minutes

New Three Year Plan (AB 636)

New Three Year Plan (AB 636)

Agenda

August 17, 2006

- 9: 00 – 9:30 Welcome – Kevin
- 9:30 – 9:45 Introductions- Danielle
- 9:45 – 10:45 Review of current AB 636- Melanie
- 10:45 – 11:00 Break
- 11:00 –12:00 Workgroup Exercise (Discussion of topics)- Danielle
- 12:00 – 12:30 Lunch
- 12:30 – 1:30 Finish up with workgroup exercise- Danielle
- 1:30 – 1:45 Break
- 1:45 – 2:45 Presentations of work- Melanie
- 2:45 - 3:00 Wrap up and conclusion- Melanie

Because of the lack of time element for this project, this stakeholder's group will include a working lunch. For your convenience, lunch will be provided.

Workgroup Exercise Discussion Topics for August 17, 2006

- 1. ILP- Sally**
- 2. Lack of Dental/Medi-Cal- Danielle**
- 3. Current On Call System- Danielle**
- 4. Re-entry Rate of Families- Melanie**
- 5. Foster Care Recruitment/Placement of Sibling Groups- Terri**

AB636 (Three-Year Plan) Family & Child Protective Services Redesign Meeting

Minutes

August 17, 2006

Lassen Career Network

Present:

Kevin Mannel, *Deputy CAO, Health and Social Services*
Terri O'Bryan, *Director, Family and Children Protective Services*
Danielle McGuire, *Special Projects, Family and Children Protective Services*
Melanie Cook, *QA & QI, Lassen County Health and Social Services*
Tiffany Armstrong, *QA & Q, Lassen County Health and Social Services*
Mike Beard, *Director, Alcohol and Drug*
Julia Terrill, *Director, Public Health.*
Ken Crandall, *Director, Mental Health*
Darla Freeman, *Dep Director, Lassen Family Services*
Eugene Pasqua, *ICWA Coordinator, Susanville Rancheria*
Roy Thiels, *Chief Probation Officer, Lassen County Probation*
Tammi Vial, *Lassen County Mental Health*
Rod Colvin, *Fort Sage Family resource Center*
Kathy Colvin, *Lassen County Family Resource*
William Paul, *Therapist, Lassen Family Services*
Laura Roberts, *Exec Director, Child & Families Commission Diversified Management*
Gaylynn Garcia, *CASA*
Fran Warren, *Environmental Alternatives FFA*
Pat Arnold, *Environmental Alternatives FFA*
Shawna Rossington, *Exec Director, Mountain Circle FFA*
Mae Sherman, *Director, City Care*
Tillie Baker, *Promises*
Kimberley Perkins, *Lassen Works*
Denise Stevenson, *Lassen College, Americorp*
Jackie Musick, *Patients Advocate, Mental Health*
Diane Wemple, *Fiscal Manager, Health and Social Services*
Mary Jo Hirlbach, *Lassen Works*
Sally Garcia, *Family and Children Protective Services*

Meeting started at 9:20am

Kevin Mannel welcomed everyone and gave a brief background of the Stakeholders Meetings

Mike Noda and Carolyn Williams were hired to put together the three-year plan document. The aim was to reach the Federal Guidelines of 90% or better. We were at 0% – mid 60% at that time. Kevin said we can truly better serve the public. Lassen Family Children and Protective

Services developed good professional relationships after the implementation of the three year Child Welfare Re-design Plan. The Plan was not just a document that was produced and then put on the shelf to collect dust. When we look at the past, present and into the future, we can see the positive changes that have taken place. Family & Children Protective Services and Probation are the primary departments that need to endorse the document.

There were a lot of significant issues with the services that the children were receiving and there was a huge effort by many people to come up with a plan to reach compliance with the State and Federal Guidelines. Safe Measures and Business Objects are just some of the ways of measuring compliance. Philosophy change, staffing pattern changes and a direct impact on Out Of Home (OOH) placements.

We are now at the stage where we can look at quality and capacity. ILP issues that overlap F&CPS and Probation is both taking an active role and moving forward. As a community there is a lot more we can do. Hopefully where we are going, if we look at ILP for instance, no one should leave the system without success or continued success. Optimism can prevail; small communities have the advantage of being able to turn their “ship” around faster than larger systems. We can access positive change quicker, build infrastructure – build success – represent our agencies and work well. Look forward to the new three-year plan with meaningful roles and with an understanding of where we are going and add tools to our tool chest.

Introductions

Terri O'Bryan, the new Director for Family & Child Protective Services, gave a brief history of her career and experience. She welcomed everyone for coming to the meeting and looked forward to hearing any ideas and suggestions that may come out during the workshops.

Danielle McGuire introduced herself and Melanie Cook. They will be putting together the new three-year plan.

Stakeholders introduced themselves and answered the following:

Name
Agency you represent
Services you can offer
Why your presence is important

AB636

Melanie Cook gave a presentation reviewing the AB636

Mission Statement: Our mission is to serve, aid, and protect at risk and vulnerable children and adults in ways that strengthen and preserve families, encourage personal responsibility, and foster independence.

Where Lassen County Family and Children Protective Services was in 2004:

Only 4 Social Workers (SW) positions were filled. There were no first line supervisors. There was a need for an Integrative System of Care, Alcohol and Other Drug and Public Health into staff meetings. The SW's carried anywhere from 30 – 70 cases each, and training was minimal at best.

Where Lassen County Family and Children Protective Services is currently in 2005/2006:

There are currently 9 Full time Social Workers, 2 First Line Supervisors, and a Director. The average caseload is down to 25 cases or less. SW's are attending CORE Training Program at UC Davis where they learn about law changes, risk assessment, and interviewing skills amongst others. Every Thursday, Alcohol and Drug, Public Health, Mental Health and PROMISES are invited to staff cases in an attempt to better serve our clients. Structured Decision Making, (SDM) is now being utilized by F&CPS social workers. In August, 2006 a Quality Assurance / Quality Improvement Social Worker was assigned to F&CPS. The QA/QI worker ensures that Social workers follow the laws and regulations and identifies ways of improving existing services so that families can better be served. An Independent Living Skills Program, (ILP) is now being taught at Lassen Community College. F&CPS now has a social worker dedicated to ILP. On July 31, 2006, a Policies & Procedure's manual has been completed for F&CPS.

Social Services Realignment Base History

Diane Wemple gave a presentation on the fiscal state. We have stopped the rate of growth, financially speaking. Kevin Mannel also spoke "putting things into layman's terms". He explained how the finances are worked out and gave a brief explanation of the fiscal graph. "The \$1 m cash flow issue has been corrected.

ILP

Sally Garcia gave a brief outline of the Independent Living Skills Program, stating that a Youth Transition Council had been formed. This is a multi agency meeting where all agencies involved can discuss each case to ensure that no repeat services are done. Sally Garcia also stated that there were some incentive programs being implemented, including a Nutrition Program. Once completed, the ILP participants will be given a microwave oven. A Youth Binder is also being created for the youth so that when they emancipate, they can have all of the important paperwork they will need for future, such as Identification card, social security card, birth certificate, rental applications, etc.

Statistical Data 2004 – 2005

Melanie Cook gave a presentation on the Statistical Data covering the period 2004 – 2005. The way we measure the quality of our service is given to us using Federal guidelines that cover a number of categories. The percentile of 90% or better is what Lassen County is striving for. We look at the following categories:

Reporting Category	Sub-Category	% in 2004	% in 2005	Remarks
Referral Response				
	Immediate (2 hours)	42%	95%	
	10 day response	67%	95%	
Social Worker Visits		65%	98%	1 visit per month
Recurrence of Maltreatment		20 cases	10 cases	Overall reduction after initial Substantiated referral.
Exit Reunification		31 cases	26 cases	
Stability of Foster Care Placements			5 of 6 cases had in the first Quarter of 2005 had less than 2 placements, (Federal guideline)	80 – 120 children in foster care at any given time
Receipt of ILP Services (1)		19 cases	29 cases	Estimate as no hard data collected in 2005

- (1) ILP started a tracking system for ILP participants in July 2006. Therefore data is not readily available for this meeting, as data was not being tracked. Lassen Community College has some data that they said they would give to the QA/QI team.
- (2) Health for Children, Dental and Medical Exams.
In the past few years, progress has been made towards getting children in foster care physically examined when they first enter foster care. Recently, the information that was being inputted into the F&CPS database was behind. Therefore the data was not up to date when the child moved placements or returned home. Public Health and F&CPS have worked on correcting this problem. The medical and dental information for FCPS children is now current. There are still issues with a lapse in time from when the Doctor examines, to when the information is sent to the placing agency and when the placing agency sends the information to F&CPS.

Workshop Topics

Danielle gave a short explanation of how the workshop will be conducted. There are 5 subjects/questions in the workshop. She wanted each one of the 5 groups to come up with ideas for improvement and implementation of those ideas. Before the discussion though, she introduced each speaker to give a short outline of the 5 topics.

ILP

Sally Garcia gave a short presentation on ILP covering: Eligibility Criteria, Transition Housing Program (THP), Early Start To Emancipation Program (ESTEP), Computer Camp, Budgeting, Hygiene, and Nutrition.

The workshop question is “How do we make ILP a huge success in the future?”

Health and Education Passport

A short discussion took place on the current system for the Dental and Physical examination of children when they come into care. The Federal guidelines states that a child should have a dental and physical exam within 30 days of a placement change. Because there is no fast track for these children, F&CPS is looking into the suitability of a hygienist appointment being sufficient for the initial dental exam.

The workshop question is “How do we address the current medical and dental needs?”

Family and Children Protective Services “On-Call” System

A discussion of the current “On-Call” system took place. Some of the issues raised were that reporters weren’t getting enough feedback for their referrals. The system allows the In-take worker to send a generic letter to the reporter stating that we are conducting an investigation of the referral, and in some cases whether the investigation was completed and the result. Confidentiality issues are looked at with every case.

Explanation of the Mandated Reporter system was discussed. The CDSS website gives a complete explanation of the criteria and responsibilities.

The workshop question is “How can we improve the “on-call” system?”

Re-entry Rates of Families

Melanie Cook gave a brief talk on the re-entry rates.

The workshop question is “How can we decrease the re-entry rate?”

Foster Care and Foster Family Recruitment.

Because the State legislates on sibling group placements, it is sometimes difficult to find homes that have enough beds to house all the siblings in a multi-child case. State guidelines say that placements can have no more than 2 children per room. Teenagers are harder to place than babies or younger children.

The workshop question is “How do we recruit more Foster Families?”

Working Lunch

During the lunch break, group was given one of the topics/questions to discuss.

Ideas and Implementation of Those Ideas

Question: How do we recruit more Foster Families?

- Finding Speakers – Dynamic speakers at Clubs, Elks, and Rotary. (Ken Shamrock for example)
- Partner with FFA's to fund an outreach coordinator.
- Community Plan – marketing tools.
- Identify the target families – who qualifies- what are we looking for?
- Education – Lassen Community College classes.
- How to market – Lassen.networkofcare.org MH Network of Care website, Jeremy Couso, Susanvillestuff.com.
- Youth speakers – speakers who have been fostered themselves.
- Incentives – Outcome based, Foster Parents could get college credit possibly in the HSS field? Tickets to amusement parks etc.
- Promote Continued contact – Shawna Rossington from Mountain Circle FFA, said that many new foster parents become attached to their children and lose that bond when they are returned to their birth parents. A program, training them in keeping contact with the children after they have returned would be a good incentive for them to stay in the system. Many of the foster parents get disillusioned by the fact that they have no contact with the children after they leave. They leave the system because they don't want to go through the emotional break again. This point produced a lot of interest and Kevin Mannel asked for it to be looked at more closely.
- Support group for the foster families – comprising other foster families in the system. This would benefit all members of the family.

Kevin Mannel – “What is the turnover rate of foster families and what is the “ballpark figure” of how many families we need to place children effectively”?

Terri O'Bryan – There are currently about 31 foster homes in the system, this doesn't mean that they are ready to take children in right at this moment, as licensing issues etc. effect their availability.

Shauna Rossington – Turnover of foster family homes is 1 – 5 years. About 20 more families are needed.

Ken Crandall – There is an injunction with regard to “Katie A.” concerning group home levels of care that may affect us.

Rod Colvin – Religious communities could be asked about fostering. Shawna Rossington stated that religious groups have been targeted for recruitment of foster families in the past but historically they don't produce a great amount of response. Shawna stated that the FFA's

generally did recruiting of foster families, but they don't have a funding stream for it so they are constrained by their budgets. That is why a partnership would be useful.

Laura Roberts – we could possibly place pre-designed advertisements in the various agency newsletters that are produced.

How to make ILP a huge success in the future.

- Job Placement Program at Lassen Career Network could be expanded.
- Job coaches – Americorp – Teaching work ethics and etiquette.
- Transportation discounts – Bus passes?
- Networking – Coordinating agencies – informing about resources.
- Savings accounts / checking – could be done through CASA's or FFA's.
- Teaching age appropriate living skills in the home.
- Educate on the Independent Education Plan process.
- Supporting adults – mentor CASA, teacher etc. Statistics show that children have a higher rate of success if they have a supporting adult in their life.
- Improve school success – provide tutors – connect with tutors from other areas.

Ken Crandall – Exposure to possibilities - currently children have low level goals. So it would be great if we could increase their exposure to bigger possibilities in hopes that it will raise their level of ambition.

William Paul – There are some excellent ILP programs throughout the State. It would be worth checking them out for ideas. Colleges have a good knowledge of sources of grants – educate the youth that they don't have to think they can only stay in Susanville. Provide visits and field trips to other colleges. Mentoring systems could be implemented – peer support also plays a role.

Danielle McGuire – It is great having the ILP classes on campus because it provides the youth exposure to the campus and give them something to aspire towards.

How can Family and Children Protective Services improve the “On-Call” system?

- More community awareness of what the system is. There has been bad press and misunderstandings of how F&CPS work.
- Follow-ups with the reporting party – phone call or a letter.
- Training on the mandatory reporter process with the agencies.

Rod Colvin – Education into the role of F&CPS would be helpful as opposed to having an “enemy” among us.

Kevin Mannel – Existing staff, are responsible for the on-call – are there other designs within the community that would be acceptable to codes that can be used, and stay within the affordable range of the budget?

Mike Beard – Marketing, Marketing, Marketing. The more we inform the public about why F&CPS is so important etc. the more understanding there is within the community.

Rod Colvin – This meeting should be summarized and reported in the newspaper showing that active measures are being taken to improve the way we do things.

Kevin Mannel – I would like to pursue the marketing theme a bit more. The leadership group has discussed how we can coordinate articles in the newspaper in order to inform the community. Some good comments and ideas have come that can be explored.

How do we decrease the re-entry rate?

- Immediate, mandatory drug testing.
- Before the case is closed hook the clients up with other agencies.
- Extending the cases / treatment programs.
- Research why the families are re-entering the system.
- Educate Families in Substance abuse.

Tillie Baker – Training in field sobriety testing could be useful for the F&CPS social workers. Bringing additional agencies to the Thursday morning staff meetings would increase the care community awareness of their clients.

There could be triage/staffing meetings at the initial contact with clients. Automatically extend classes / programs, by 6 months, if the clients are not finishing their courses. Automatically include education programs in the case plan.

Mike Beard – It takes on average of 7 treatment sessions for A&D clients to succeed. Also the length of treatment is a direct factor in success.

How do we address the current medical and dental needs?

- Create Fast-Track Clinics – quick access to oral health assessments.
- Utilize the mobile dental van in Westwood / Doyle.
- Identify a coordinator for the Mental Health passport.
- Design a plan to implement access strategies.
- Train oral health providers about the tracking form needed by the FFA's.
- Train foster parents in basic oral health care, nutrition and all aspects of creating and maintaining healthy mouth and teeth.

Lester Ruda puts together the Health and Education passports.

Mike Beard – Methamphetamine use has caused a huge requirement for an effective dental treatment program.

Conclusion

Terri O'Bryan thanked everyone for their thoughts and interesting ideas for the re-design plan, and reminded everyone that the second meeting will be on Mon Aug 21, 2006.

Meeting closed at 3:20 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

David Rothery
F&CPS, OAIII

New Three Year Plan (AB 636)

New Three Year Plan (AB 636)

Agenda

August 21, 2006

- 9: 00 – 9:30 Welcome and Recap- Melanie
- 9:30 – 9:45 Introductions- Danielle
- 9:45 – 9:55 Melanie/Tiffany- QA/QI
- 9:55-10:15 Introduction of topics- Melanie
- 10:15 – 11:00 Workgroup Exercise (Discussion of Topics)- Danielle
- 11:00 –11:15 Break
- 11:15 – 12:00 Finish up group work exercise- Danielle
- 12:00 – 12:30 Lunch
- 12:15 – 1:00 Presentations, wrap up and conclusion- Melanie

****Because of the lack of time element for this project, this stakeholder's group will include a working lunch. For your convenience, lunch will be provided. Also for the afternoon session, there will be no scheduled break. However, if you need to take a break, please feel free to do so.***

Workgroup Exercise Discussion Topics for August 21, 2006

- 1. Social Worker Recruitment and Retention- Danielle**
- 2. Family-To-Family- Melanie**
- 3. Home Visiting- Laura**

AB636 (Three-Year Plan) Family & Child Protective Services Redesign Meeting

Minutes

August 21, 2006

Lassen Career Network.

Present:

Kevin Mannel, *Deputy CAO, Health and Social Services*
Terri O'Bryan, *Director, Family and Children Protective Services*
Danielle McGuire, *Special Projects, Family and Children Protective Services*
Tiffany Armstrong, *QA & QI, Health and Social Services*
Melanie Cook, *QA & QI, Health and Social Services*
Darla Freeman, *Dep. Director, Lassen Family Services*
Mary Barry, *Mountain Circle Foster Family Agency*
Tammi Vial, *Lassen County Mental Health*
Calli Beeson, *CASA*
Gaylynn Garcia, *CASA.*
Mary Jo Hirlbach, *Lassen Works*
Kathy Colvin, *Lassen County Family Resources*
Ken Crandall, *Director, Lassen County Mental Health.*
Laura Roberts, *Exec Director, Child & Families Commission/Diversified Management.*
William Paul, *Therapist, Lassen Family Services*
Frances Warren, *Environmental Alternatives FFA.*
Ryan Hibbs, *Susanville PD.*
Rodd Joseph, *Susanville PD,*
Kimberley Perkins, *Lassen Works*
Mae Sherman, *Director, City Care*

Meeting started at 9:20am

Kevin Mannel welcomed everyone and gave a brief outline of H&SS and an overview of the Child Welfare Re-design. He gave a brief overview of the Structured Decision Making (SDM) paths, and an outline of the Grand Jury Report. "Now how can we build on that and improve services?" Ideas from this forum will be assessed and analyzed then put into the three-year plan, which will be presented to the Board of Supervisor's in Sept/Oct, 2006.

Introductions

Danielle McGuire introduced herself and Melanie Cook. They will be putting together the three-year plan.
Personal introductions from around the room followed.

AB636

Melanie Cook gave a brief overview of the AB636.

Where we were in 2004:

Where we are in 2005/2006:

What is QA & QI?

Tiffany Armstrong gave a presentation on the role of Quality Assurance and Quality Improvement. What is the definition of Quality? Quality is a multidimensional and subjective concept; it means different things to different people. Dimensions of Quality are safe, timely, effective, efficient, and person and family centered. How do we measure quality? Through performance measures and collection/tracking of Data.

What is QA?

Any systematic process of checking to see whether a product or service being developed is meeting specified requirements.

What is QI?

Actions taken throughout the organization to increase the effectiveness of activities and processes to provide added benefits to both the organization and its customers.

What does QA/QI mean for F&CPS?

Assures compliance with program regulations and program integrity, Implementation and monitoring of Policy and Procedures, and a review of F&CPS records and training.

Discussion Topics

Danielle McGuire gave a short explanation of how the workshop will be conducted. There are 3 subjects/questions in the workshop. She wanted each one of the 5 groups to come up with ideas for improvement and implementation of those ideas. Before the discussion though, she introduced each speaker to give a short outline of the 3 topics.

Social Worker, Recruitment and Retention.

Retention rates throughout the US are poor; Lassen County is no exception. States are looking into initiatives to recruit and retain SW's. Title IV-E program is an excellent way to fund a MSW degree. The State pays for the tuition of a Master's Degree in Social Work and in return the applicant has to work for a county for 2 years.

Family-To-Family Initiatives.

The Family-to-Family program is committed to improving results for children and families involved in the Child Welfare system by helping to reduce the number and rate of children

placed away from their birth families. Development of a Foster Family Care Network that is community based by establishing relationships with a wide range of community organizations in neighborhoods where referral rates are high and collaborating to create an environment that supports families involved in the child welfare system.

Home Visiting Program.

Laura Roberts gave a brief presentation of the Home Visit Program. She stated that it was funded through the Tobacco Sales Taxes.

Mission - To help pre-natal - 5 year olds to enter Kindergarten and enable them to learn, (school readiness).

Priorities - Home visiting - target population is: Teens with children, Homeless with children, Calworks clients, and substance abusing women.

Staff - 5 Full time positions - 4 current employees.
 -1 Director - 0 current.

Workshop Topics - Ideas and Implementation

Retention and Recruitment of Social Workers.

<u>Idea</u>	<u>Implementation.</u>
Better benefit packages	-----
More flexibility in work hours	4 x 10 hour shift, etc
Promotional opportunities	Extend Title IV-E to BA or AA
Sabbatical leave	To avoid stress outages
Focus on individual talents	In the hiring process utilize
experience	
Lateral movements	Gain experience in all areas
Training	Improve accommodations
Staff input on training	-----
Improve communications between Supervisors -Staff.	Support staff, appreciation

Wisconsin State has a good website on mental health / stress at work.

Danielle McGuire stated that the Title IV-E program has a new BSW program, as well as, an MSW (in Fresno, for sure. She was not sure what other schools have both.).

Family to Family.

<u>Idea</u>	<u>Implementation</u>
Recruit families from AA or the Aurora network.	Rate family strengths

Train about recovery
Kinship Care Program

monitor
Assessments for parents not just
children

Target Specific communities
Active child abuse prevention counsel

Have some sort of filter to look
through to enable proper
collaboration between agencies

Hire a professional consultant
Family support network plan

Meets their needs, Advocates,
multidisciplinary team, family
advocate for parents.

Home Visitation.

Idea

Implementation

Additional Training
Weekly meetings for participants
Administrative support
Flexible work schedule
Recognition program
M.O.U for all agencies
program
Interagency communication for multi agency families
Program specific evaluations
Early literacy
Referral to Library
aids

Team membership
County wide, Secret shopper

Checklist during visit
Grants for training aids / Instructional

Story time, reading program, book
donations, educate parents to
maintain effective parent child
communications.

Fund raising programs
School supplies
Grants
Continuing programs through foster care.

Conclusion

Terri O'Bryan thanked everyone for their thoughts and interesting ideas for the re-design plan.

Meeting closed at 1:00 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

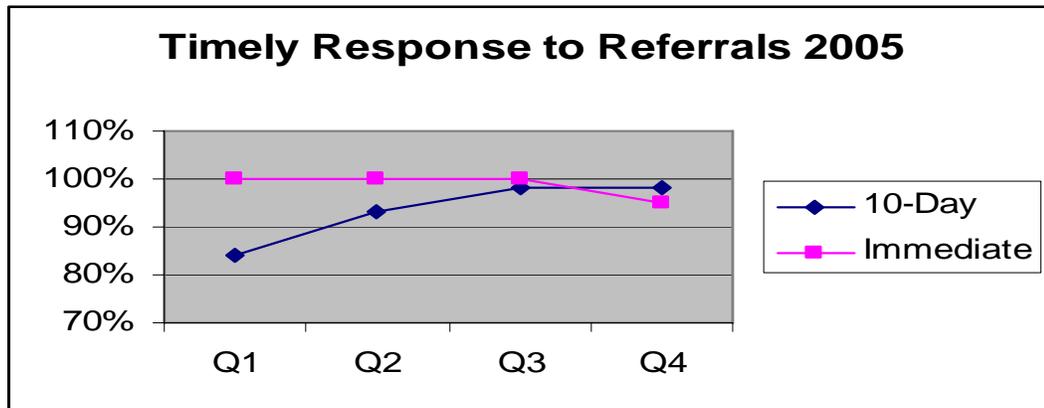
David Rothery
F&CPS, OAIII

Appendix C

Progress from previous three-year System Improvement Plan

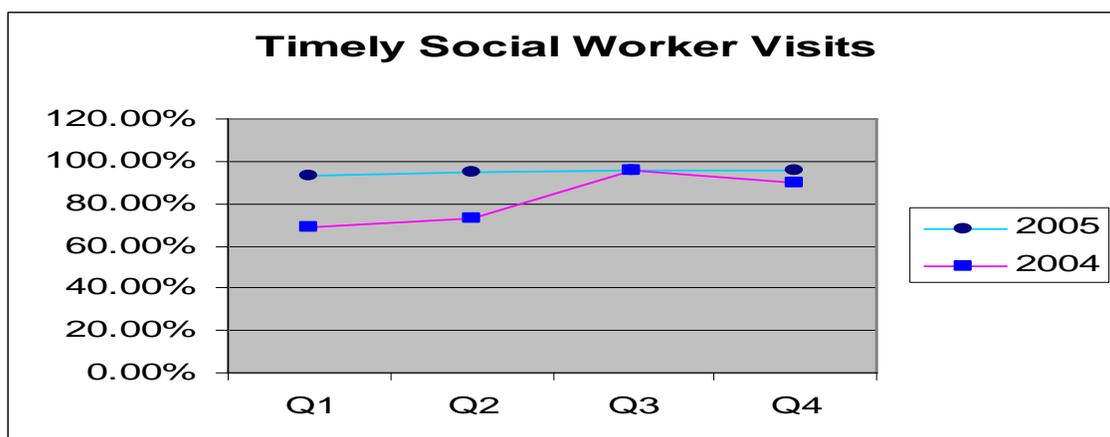
The following graphs show the improvement that Lassen County Family and Children Protective Services has made from 2004 to 2005. The areas below are factors that the state and federal governments monitor and expect the agency to be improving in continuously.

Measure 2B: Percent of children in a referral with a timely response.



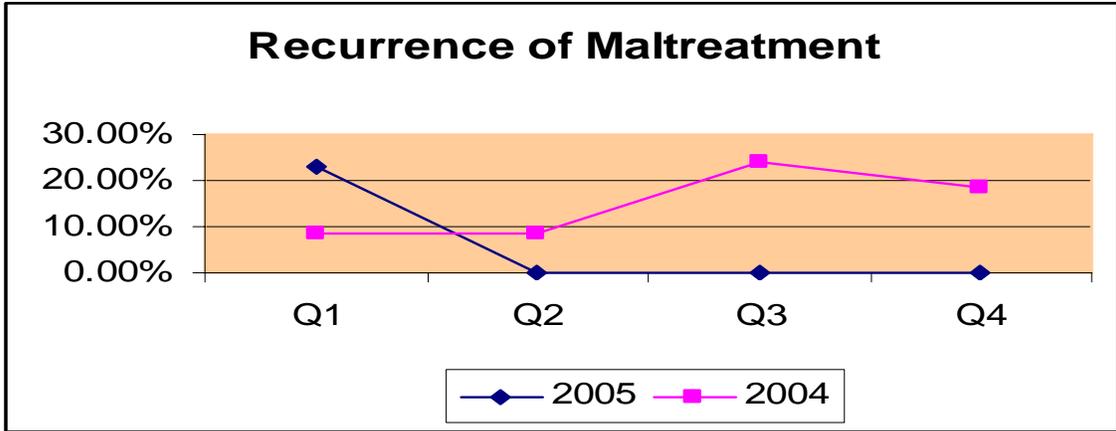
Response time to referrals has dramatically increased from 67% in 2004 to 95% in 2005 for 10-day response. Response to immediate referrals was as low as 42% in 2004 and rose to 95% or better in 2005. In 2004 there were 481 referrals received by the Lassen County Family and Children Protective Services department. In 2005 there were 537 referrals.

Measure 2C: Percent of children with a monthly contact.



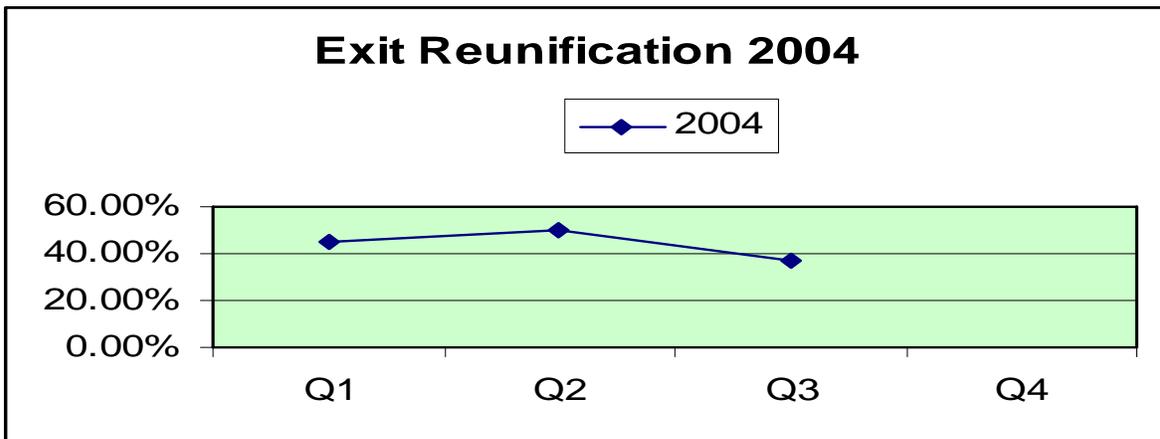
Timely in person contact, which is a contact made between the social worker and were placed in a foster home or group home, rose from 65% in 2004 to 98% in 2005.

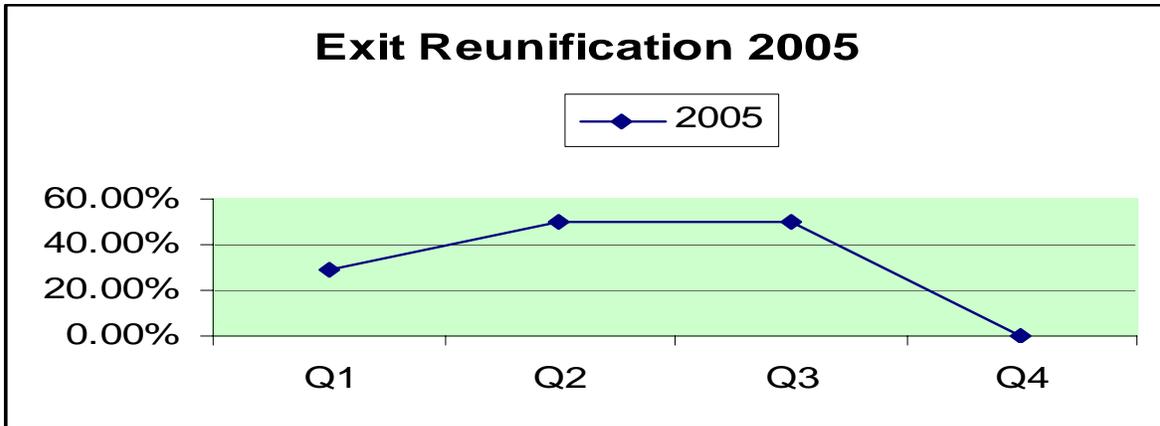
Measure 1B: Percent of children whose first referral is substantiated, within a 12 month time period have another referral.



The percent of children having a second referral within a 12 month time period dropped from 2004 to 2005. With the use of treatment team meeting and a multi disciplinary approach families are being served sooner and with more services so that the rate of recurrence is dropping.

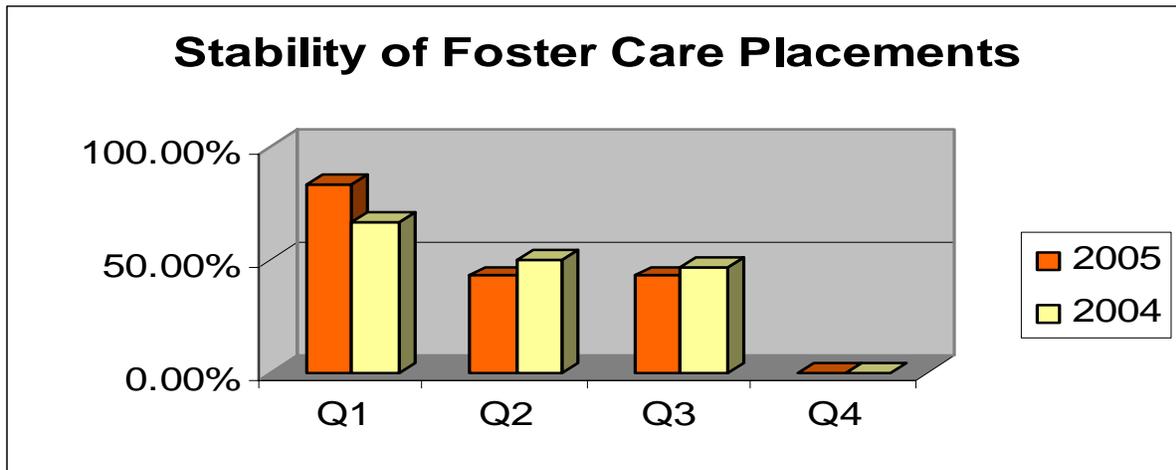
Measure 3A: Percent of children who returned to the initial home of removal within 12 months.





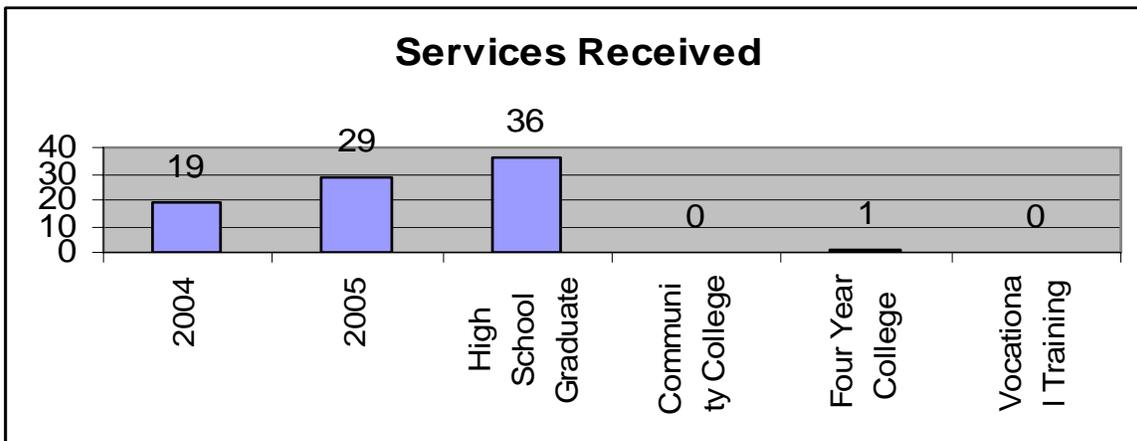
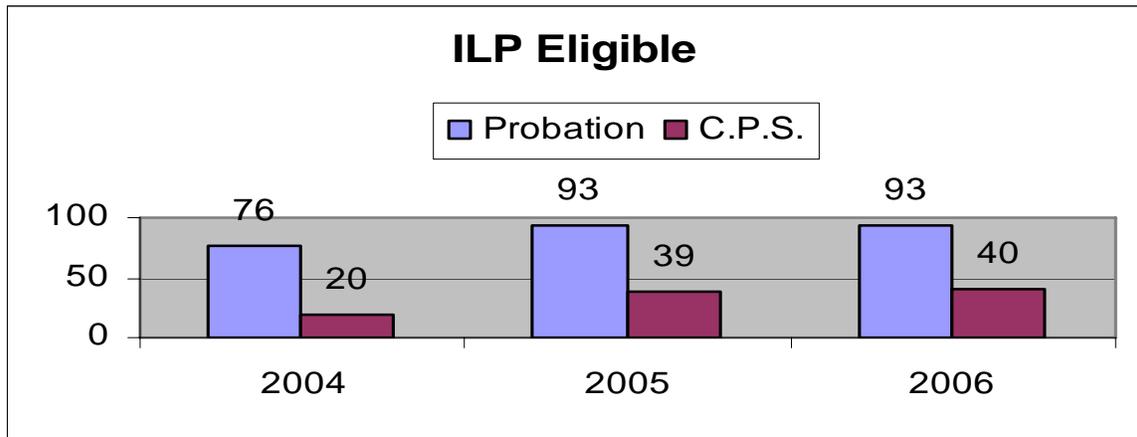
From 2004 to 2005, children were returning to the home of initial removal faster. There were also less children entering the system in 2005, compared to 2004. For this measure, 31 children were looked at in 2004 and 26 for 2005.

Measure 3C: Percent of children who were in 2 or less placements.



Over the past two years the number of children moving from foster placement to foster placement has decreased as children are being placed in homes that are better suited for their needs. An emergency shelter home has also been established so that there is time to find a home that is fitting for the child without having to move them from home to home.

Measure 8A: Percent of children who transition to adult hood.



ILP did not have a tracking system until July, 2006, so there was no way of tracking who was eligible for services, which eligible children had graduated from high school or who were employed. The data for this graph is not a complete picture as there are children who were eligible, and that there is no current information on there whereabouts. Cps has intently been trying to find these youth to provide services to them in an efficient manner.

Appendix D
Personal Quotes From The Community

Personal Quotes From The Community...

"Lassen County Family and Children Protective Services have afforded the opportunity to do more networking and teambuilding." – **Karen Embree –Smith, Substance Abuse Specialist, Lassen County Alcohol and Drug**

"Working for Lassen County Family and Children Protective Services is an extremely difficult job and we should be grateful that we have someone willing to do it." – **Mike Beard, Director, Lassen County Alcohol and Drug**

"I have enjoyed being part of the collaborative process with F.C.P.S. in regards to the quality services for our mutual clients". – **Karen Ready, Rehabilitation Specialist, Lassen County Mental Health**

"Although I still have an open case, I can honestly say I worked hard to get my kids back. If I have something to say about Lassen County Family and Children Protective Services, they listened and helped me through one of the most difficult times." – **A.D., Parent, Lassen County**

"I would not have a life without Lassen County Family and Children Protective Services and for that, I am truly gratefully." – **M.S., Parent, Lassen County**

"There has been a significant improvement in coordination, cooperation and service delivery for F.C.P.S. children and families who have mental health needs." – **Ken Crandall, Director, Lassen County Mental Health**

"F.C.P.S. is many great people with caring hearts who strive to preserve the family unit in our community." – **P.D., Substitute Care Provider, Lassen County**

"FCPS' cooperative and collaborative work with Mental Health's Children Services has made our work more effective for the families that we treat." - **Bill Jost, Program Manager, Mental Health Children's System of Care**

"FCPS has greatly improved. However, there are still some areas that need improvement"- **N.V., Substitute Care Provider, Lassen County**

"Over the past 2 years I have seen improvements in FCPS." – **F.W., Social Worker, Environmental Alternatives**

Saving the best for last.....

Appendix E

MaryJo's Personal Story



My Success Story



I will never forget the day Lassen County Family and Children Protective Services became a part of my life! First let me start by letting you now that I was a single mother of three (9yrs., 3yrs., and 1yr.). I had left my children at home alone (again), asking a neighbor I vaguely knew to keep an “ear out”, so that I could go to the casino that is near my apartment. It was roughly 11a.m. I didn’t return until approximately 6-7p.m. The ONLY reason I left the casino was because I had this God awful feeling in my stomach that would not go away. When I got home I remember walking in my 2 bedroom apartment looking everywhere for the kids. I was freaking out, crying hysterically, when the neighbor came over swearing she didn’t have anything to do with CPS taking my children. That’s when I found a note from one of the CPS workers asking me to call. I guess I should mention they had called on me several times before they actually removed the children from my home. You see, I was using methamphetamines on a daily basis, and drinking from the time I woke up until I finally went to bed. Truly, I don’t remember too much after that. I know that I went from feeling sorry for myself and cussing/blaming CPS because in my mind they were way out of line for taking my kids. I truly believed that I was a great mother, today I know otherwise. After a short time, that attitude changed into “Cool, now I can really party!” This lasted for a few months. Then I had what I like to call a “God Thing” happen. For whatever reason, out of the blue I started doing what CPS was asking of me in order for my kids to return home. I completed an assessment at Alcohol & Drug, and began taking parenting classes offered by Lassen Family Services. Alcohol & Drug wanted me to enter their PROMISES program, a program designed for women of child bearing age with addiction issues. Before I knew it, I was doing an alcohol & drug program, attending parenting classes, as





well as going to Mental Health. During this time I was thinking that I wanted to stay off the meth, but I wasn't so willing to give up my beer. That led me to being terminated from Promises, but not for that long. Though at that time I felt I was doing really well, I learned quickly in order to even see my kids I would have to change. I re-entered the PROMISES program, this time remaining completely abstinent from ALL drugs. I figured I would go without my beer long enough to get my kids back. Family & Children Protective Services started allowing my children to come to the program with me where daycare was provided. After a little time of staying clean & sober I started having supervised visits. These supervised visits progressed to overnight, and before too long my kids were home. In conclusion, thanks to the Lassen County Family & Children Protective Services' intervention, my children are now home. I am now married to their father; I am a full time student at Lassen Community College, doing my internship with Lassen County Alcohol & Drug, and am 20 months clean & sober, still not drinking my beer. It wasn't always an easy process but I am eternally grateful. I would like for people to try to understand that the workers at F&CPS, have an extremely difficult job but if clients would take the advice given to us, people may be able to experience the life that I have been given. I am truly thankful that I listened and accepted the advice Family & Children Protective Services gave to me. Thanks to everyone at Lassen County Family & Children Protective Services. I now have the life I never thought possible.

I am forever grateful to them ALL!

Thankfully,
MaryJo Streible