

2011 Solano County System Improvement Plan Update



Department of Health & Social Services Child Welfare Services Division,
Solano County Children's Alliance and Juvenile Probation Services

January 16, 2011

Enduring Wisdom . . .

According to [Aboriginal] tradition, children are gifts from the spirit world and have to be treated very gently lest they become disillusioned with this world and return to a more congenial place. They must be protected from harm. . . They bring a purity of vision to the world that can teach their elders. They carry with them the gifts that manifest themselves as they become teachers, mothers, hunters, counselors, artisans and visionaries. They renew the strength of the family, clan and village, and make the elders young again with their joyful presence. (Royal Commission on Aboriginal People, 1196:2:23)



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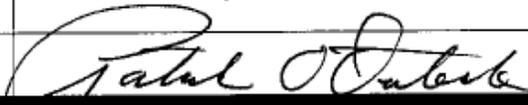
**California's Child and Family Services Review
System Improvement Plan**

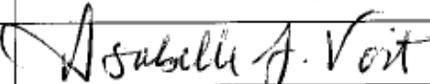
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| Child Welfare Agency: | Solano County Health & Social Services Child Welfare Services Division |
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County System Improvement Plan Contact Person

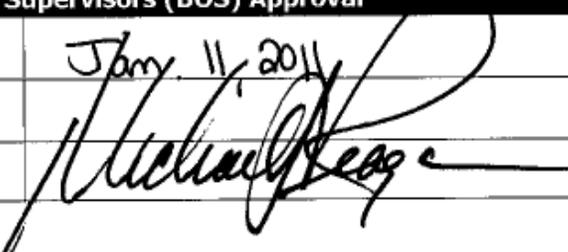
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Submitted by each agency for the children under its care

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Board of Supervisors (BOS) Approval

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| BOS Approval Date: | July 11, 2011 |
| Name: MICHAEL J. REAGAN, Chair Solano County Board of Supervisors |  |
| Signature: | |

Solano County Child Welfare Services System Improvement Plan Update

Overview

In an effort to replace the state's process-driven compliance monitoring system for counties, in 2001, the California State legislature enacted Assembly Bill 636 (AB 636), the Child Welfare System Improvement and Accountability Act that defined a system of assessing the quality of service through tracking performance results on a delineate set of critical outcome measures.

In January 2004, the implementation of Assembly Bill 636 brought this new Child Welfare Services Outcome and Accountability System to California, referred to as the California Child and Family Services Review (C-CFSR). Driven by a philosophy of continuous quality improvement, interagency partnerships, community involvement and public reporting of program outcomes, the C-CFSR operates on a three-year review cycle that allows the state to gauge its performance against national standards while measuring individual county performance on critical outcomes. The principle components of this accountability and monitoring system include:

- **County Peer Quality Case Review (PQCR)**
Issue/case specific information gathered from social worker and supervisor interviews conducted by peers from other counties provide the host county with qualitative information from which to evaluate the effectiveness of child welfare practices and policies across child safety, permanency and stability as well as in the areas of family connections and well-being.
- **County Self- Assessment (CSA)**
In combination with probation, prevention network partners, community partners, and stakeholders, counties engage in a six-month process of reviewing the full scope of child welfare and probation services provided within the county as well as identifying the need for prevention and community-based services specific to each county.
- **County Three-Year System Improvement Plan (SIP) and annual Updates**
Developed every three years and serving as the operational agreement with the state, the SIP incorporates the results of the PQCR and the CSA to define specific milestones, timeframes and improvement targets that will enhance outcomes for children, youth and families. The SIP update provides stakeholders, the California Department of Social Services (CDSS) and the community with the status of the county's progress as well as any CWS or Probation changes to the SIP.
- **CWS Outcomes Systems Summary**
Quarterly quantitative, data reports provide by the state which serve as a management tool to track county- specific performance on outcome measures related to safety, permanency, and well-being.
- **State Technical Assistance and Monitoring**
Provided by CDSS to monitor the completion of these activities under the C-CFSR for each county, including: ongoing tracking of county performance measures, reviewing county self-assessments for completeness, participation in peer quality case reviews, and review and approval of the county system improvement plans.

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The CDSS provides guidance and technical assistance to counties during each phase of C-CFSR process.

- **Formal State Compliance Action**

If a county demonstrates a lack of good faith effort to actively participate in the C-CFSR and/or consistently fails to follow State regulations and/or make the improvements outlined in the SIP, the State has the authority under W&I Code Section 10605 to compel county compliance through a series of measured formal actions up to State administration of the county program.

The C-CFSR prescribes three integrated processes of system improvement which together provide a comprehensive picture of county child welfare practices. The Peer Quality Case Review (PQCR), the first of three key components of the Child Welfare Outcomes and Accountability System mandated by the California-Children and Family Services Review (C-CFSR, 2004) was designed to help counties evaluate the effectiveness of child welfare practices and policies across child safety, permanency and stability as well as in the areas of family connections and well-being. Targeting a selected outcome, the goal of the PQCR is to review randomly selected cases, analyze specific practice areas, and to identify key patterns of agency strengths and concerns. The process uses peers from other counties to promote the exchange of best practice ideas between the host county and peer reviewers.

In January of 2009, Solano County Health and Social Services Department, Child Welfare Services (CWS) Division and Probation's Juvenile Division partnered to study the outcome area of permanency. Probation focused on the Federal Composite, Long Term Care, and the specific performance measure, Exits to Permanency for Children in Care 3 Years or Longer. Child Welfare Services concentrated on the Federal Placement Stability Composite and specifically on two performance measures: Placement Stability 8 days to 12 months in care and over 24 months in care. The qualitative information was used to inform improvement recommendations for child welfare and probation practice, service capacity and training.

Following the PQCR, CWS, Probation and Children's Alliance began their joint County Self-Assessment (CSA) process. Comprised of the following, a CSA Advisory Committee was formed:

- Child Welfare Services (CWS) administrators, managers and staff
- Probation Administrators
- California Department of Social Services
- Presiding Juvenile Court Judge
- The Children's Network of Solano County
- Children's Trust Fund Commission
- County BOS designated agency to administer CAPIT/CBCAP/PSSF Programs
- County Health Department
- County Mental Health
- Solano County Office of Education/CAPC
- Solano County SELPA

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- Parent/Consumer
- Solano County Foster Parents Association
- Resource Family/CAPC
- Foster Youth
- County Alcohol & Drug Department
- Court- Appointed Special Advocates
- Children's Alliance/CNP

For the purpose of the Solano County CSA, the County Data Report provided to CWS by California Department of Social Services (CDSS) was based on data from the Child Welfare Services/Case Management System (CWS/CMS) for Quarter 4 of 2008.

In August of 2009, the CSA Advisory Committee considered the quantitative data and qualitative information that was gathered from the PQCR and the CSA and tentatively identified the following outcomes on which the county would focus for the SIP: S1.1 No Recurrence of Maltreatment, C3.1 Exits To Permanency (24 Months In Care), C4.3 Placement Stability (At Least 24 Months In Care) and C2.1 Adoptions Within 24 Months (Exit Cohort). At the same time, acknowledging their original choice to address the needs of transitional aged youth, Probation made the decision to continue its focus on C3.3 In Care 3 Years of Longer (Emancipated/Age 18).

Following the completion of the CSA, a diverse group of CWS, Probation and Prevention staff, other agency personnel, community stakeholders, members from multiple community based organizations, and biological parents some of whom comprised the Self Assessment Advisory Committee were invited to continue their involvement in the development of the System Improvement Plan (SIP).

Although the Self Assessment revealed a need to continue to focus on permanency for children and youth, initially becoming the basis for the CWS' consideration to include four (4) outcomes in the SIP, during the first SIP planning meeting held on November 16th, the team reviewed this proposal and determined instead to concentrate on only two (2) outcomes: S1.1 No Recurrence of Maltreatment and C3.3 In Care 3 Years of Longer (Emancipated/Age 18). Following this meeting, on November 17th, the CWS Executive Committee, the Deputy Director, Administrator and Managers, met to consider the planning team's findings and to make any further recommendations with regard to the selection of SIP outcomes. The Executive Committee concurred with the planning team's recommendation to focus on the two outcomes.

The motivation for this decision was both economic and based on best practice. Given the current and continuing, our economic situation and the reduction of CWS staff (We estimated that by the time CWS began to implement the SIP, our staff would have been reduced from a high of 140 to the current reality of 106 staff), the county felt the need to develop a conservative, achievable plan, thus having led to our desire to focus on only two outcomes. The best practice piece of CWS' decision to focus on two (2) outcomes was the belief that anything done to impact Exits to Permanency for children and youth at the end of the system would also positively impact all permanency outcomes, including adoptions and placement stability; thus most of the strategies for any of the permanency outcomes would

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have been the same. Albeit, CWS has been concentrating on (2) two outcomes, we continue to be aware of others in which improvement is needed; therefore, CWS has been and will remain committed to maintaining levels that meet the national standards as well as to improving outcome measures that do not meet standards. During the CSA, Probation focused on only one (1) outcome, C3.3 In Care 3 Years or Longer (Emancipated/Age 18), and continued to concentrate on this outcome for the SIP.

Over the next few months, CWS will issue Requests for Proposals in the following areas: ILSP, THP+, Twenty-Three Hour Receiving Center, satellite homes, and WRAP services. Solano County will focus on the lessons we have learned about permanency in selecting vendors who have the knowledge and experience to work with us in meeting our permanency goals for children in our care.

System Improvement Plan Narrative

In recent years, federal and state levels have required child welfare agencies to move beyond compliance monitoring to a system of assessing the quality of service through tracking performance on a defined set of outcome measures that will consequently affect positive changes in policy, service delivery and case practice, ultimately translating into real and meaningful improvement in the lives of children, youth and families. The California Child and Family Services Review (C-CFSR) has provided a broad framework that under which these outcomes or goals fall:

- Safety 1 & 2: measures that track Child Welfare Services'(CWS) progress toward effectively protecting children from abuse and neglect

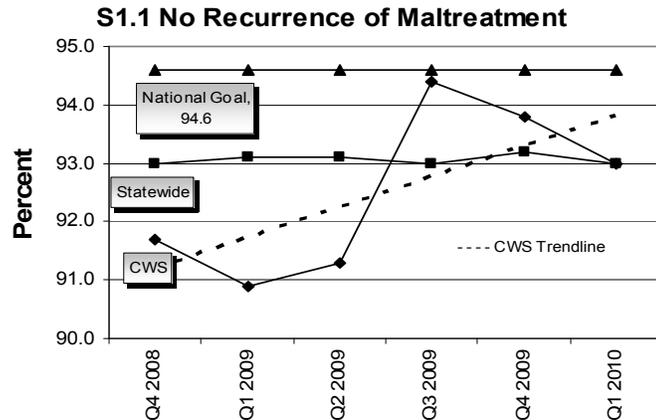
- Permanency & Stability 1 & 2: measures that focus on providing children permanent and stable living situations that will preclude reentry into foster care including:
 - timely reunification with parents and caretakers,
 - adoption,
 - exiting to a permanent care arrangement,
 - number of foster care placement changes
 - safeguarding and developing family and cultural relationships and connections.
 - supporting foster care youth who are transitioning to self-sufficient adulthood
 - reentry following reunification

- Well-being Outcomes 1, 2 & 3:
 - Outcome 1: Families have enhanced capacity to provide for children's needs
 - Outcome 2: Children receive services to meet their educational needs
 - Outcome 3: Children receive services to meet their physical and mental health needs

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A. SIP Activities (since SIP submission)

1) For the safety outcome S1.1 Solano County's Improvement Goal is to improve to a rate of 93% for No Recurrence of Maltreatment.



From Q4 2008 through Q1 2010, the Solano County CWS trendline shows a consistent percentage increase toward the CWS (93%) and national goals on this outcome. From Q4 2008 through Q1 2010, CWS averaged 92.51%, 0.49 percentage points from the CWS stated goal of 93% and 98.3% relative to the national standard. During Q3 and Q4 of 2009, Solano County exceeded the CWS goal of 93%. Q1 2010 data show Solano County at CWS' 93% goal. Safe Measures' data, a more current calculation, show Solano County at 95.1% for the 07/01/2009 through 12/31/2009.

a. Discussion (CWS Efforts)

Solano County has performed fairly consistently over time with respect to the Federal Indicator S1.1 No Recurrence of Maltreatment, and speculates that several well established practice strategies appear to be instrumental in CWS' positive progress on this outcome.

In 2006, Solano County began using the Structured Decision Making (SDM) tools to assess response to referrals, safety, and risk, as well as family needs. The tools guide the decision as to whether to investigate, response timeline and whether to promote to a case. ER workers determine if a case will remain open for 30 days in order to provide short-term case management through which family needs are identified and specific, supportive services are put into place to prevent further CWS intervention. These services include, but are not limited to, referrals to community resource:

- Family Resource Centers that receive the majority of the CBCAP/CAPIT/PSSF funding and play an important role in preventing and reducing the recurrence of child abuse and neglect, and in assisting families to enhance family capacity to provide for their children's needs. The FRCs are community-based sites which have forged close ties with families and other service providers in the local area. Many of the families served at the FRCs have children at risk of abuse and/or neglect because of poverty, homelessness, isolation, and lack of access to resources or support services.

The FRCs are coordinated by the Children's Network. On October 26, 2010, the Solano County CAO instructed H&SS to explore the possibility of having one organization handle the Children's Trust Fund, the PSSF funding, and the Child Abuse Prevention Council rather than the current two organizations, Children's Network and

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the Children's Alliance. Funds saved by such a re-structuring will be used to provide direct services to families. Any such change would be effective July 2011. These services may include:

- Substance Abuse Services
- Domestic Violence Services and/or
- Solano County Mental Health Access, for adults and children to provide assessment for possible services.

In addition, at the time of the referral response, families that are identified through the SDM Risk and Safety assessment to be appropriate for services are offered Voluntary Family Maintenance (VFM) for a period of up to six months. Both voluntary and court ordered Family Maintenance cases receive services targeted to improve parents' ability to adequately meet children's needs. The SDM tools assist in determining priority service areas and in the frequency of contact with family. VFM social workers manage cases and determine if/when circumstance require intervention through court action and/or removal of children.

TDMs are now provided for children removed or at imminent risk for removal throughout Solano County, rather than focused on Vallejo only as in the past. CWS believes that Family to Family TDMs have been a significant factor in our improved outcomes, in general and in No Recurrence, specifically, and will continue to support improvement in the future. In order to consolidate efforts the concept of the TDM has been incorporated into CWS' overarching philosophy that embraces establishing "Permanency" for all children through PTMs.

Finally, due largely to the successes of the services provided by Family Resource Centers, Voluntary Family Maintenance, and Team Decision Making, Solano County has had fairly manageable caseloads over the past two years, allowing our social workers to provide more intensive focus to families, a dynamic that is unfortunately changing.

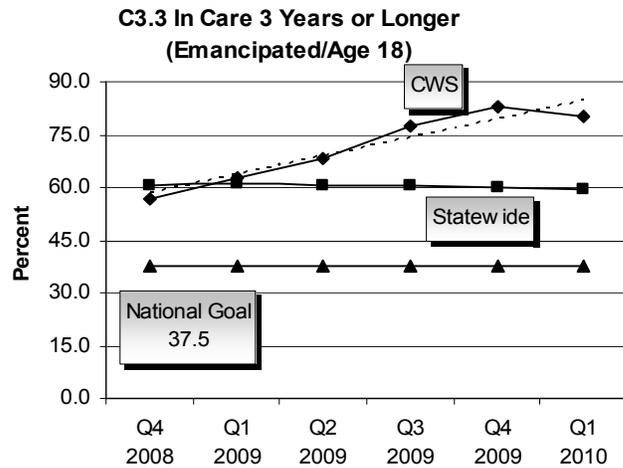
Some of the challenge to achieving greater success on this outcome exists in the state of California's economic crisis. Although CWS social workers routinely refer families to various community resources, dwindling funding for these support systems is creating situations of limited access, reduced quantity and quality of services/supports, and lack of availability of aftercare services. It is generally believed that this dynamic contributes to repeat maltreatment as families may not be receiving the support and services needed to make lasting progress and behavioral change. For example, limited numbers of trained/experienced providers may mean the difference between parents engaging in much needed mental health or, more specifically, substance abuse services that may be instrumental in helping to change negative patterns of behavior or continuing destructive behaviors while lingering on long waiting lists. In particular, as in most counties, Solano County has a lack of culturally appropriate and bi-lingual providers to assist families, without which there is an increased risk of failure and possible repeat maltreatment.

CWS families who are engaged in working on case plan activities in Voluntary Maintenance Services, Court Family Maintenance or through short-term, 30-day services in Emergency Response are facing the challenges of an economy in which public and CWS transportation has become extremely limited. For some of these families the inability to access transportation can severely hinder progress towards fulfilling of their case plans. Families for whom CWS is providing services are those whose needs are markedly greater than the

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general public's, yet these families are competing with the general public for resources that ultimately factor into helping them to achieve stability with their children.

C3.3(In Care 3 Years or Longer (Emancipated/Aged18) Solano County set a goal of reducing the percentage by 5.8%, bringing the county to 51.0%



From Q4 2008 through Q1 2010, the Solano County CWS trendline shows a consistent percentage increase away from the CWS and national goals on this outcome; however, although these data are accurate for the time period shown, the information is not current. Solano County CWS began implementing most of the strategies to address C3.3 In Care 3 Years or Longer (Emancipate/Age 18) late 2009, thus the outcomes of our efforts have yet to be measured and reported

More importantly, Solano County CWS has increased the percentage of children reunified (68% in 2008 versus 71% as of September 2010) and concomitantly reduced the number of children being referred to the Permanency Planning Unit. As a result, the percentage of youth in the Permanency Planning program who have been in care three years or more has increased from 54% (20 youth) in 2008 to 75% (21 youth) as of September 2010. In addition, cases that are currently in and those being referred to long term foster care are characteristically complex and extremely challenging. With reduced funding affecting available services, cases such as these will likely take more time to achieve permanency for the children involved.

Solano County CWS is committed to achieving the expected goal of reducing the number of children in long term foster as stipulated in C3.3. At the same time, the latest Outcomes System Summary shows CWS above the national standard on the two other permanency measures, C3.1 and C3.2, which indicates that we are reunifying children earlier and which supports the thinking that the cases in long term care are proving to be more difficult to achieve permanency.

a. Solano County CWS C3.3 In Care 3 Years or Longer (Emancipate/Age 18) Discussion (CWS Specific Efforts)

Child Welfare Services, Probation and our continuum of care have partnered with transition-aged youth to engage them in their own permanency and transition planning and activities. While CWS is focused on, and firmly committed to, permanency, including adoption, we are equally dedicated to improving emancipation outcomes for youth through strategies that

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enable greater stability, self-esteem, coping skills, educational and employment opportunities, etc. When youth feel secure shaping their identity and structuring their future, the notion of actually attaining permanency becomes real and achievable.

The CC25I grant funding we received as well as the CPYP activities helped us structure a seamless continuum of care from time of entry until achievement of permanence. The foundations for our efforts are the permanency workgroups which have become part of the daily efforts of CWS. In addition, this funding has enabled numerous trainings for our staff and community partners focused on permanency for youth.

- **Permanency Training:** On November 3, 2010, the Bay Area Academy facilitated an all-day, training concentrating specifically on permanency for youth. All staff from the CWS Permanency Unit attended this training.
- **Permanency Team Meetings (PTMs):** PTMs arose from the CPYP model and have become a major, fundamental strategy for permanency that begins when a child enters care and occurs every six months for the life of the case. The strength of the PTM team and process helps establish the best possible “permanency” plan for the child/youth at the earliest possible time. The PTM process also identifies relatives and non-related extended family members (NREFM) that support the child/youth and family, or individuals who may be considered for placement.

Youth provide input to the protocol for Permanency Team meetings regarding who should be included in the meetings. Youth also actively participate in determining their own permanency options and priorities. In spite of loss of staff and other budget constrictions, Solano County CWS has and continues to dedicate time, effort and staff resources to the PTM process.

- **Permanency Workgroup:** Solano County CWS Permanency Workgroup is dedicated to ensuring the integration of all permanency activities so that these activities occur concurrently and as early as possible in the life of a case.
- **Secondary Assignments for Adoption Workers:** This year, adoptions staff began working with case workers to evaluate the potential for concurrent options such as adoptions and legal guardianship and to begin working towards developing a child’s plan immediately.
- **Permanency Consultant:** Case specific technical assistance is available via a permanency consultant to CWS Social Workers for help with family finding issues/problems. The consultant is available three days a week.
- **Family Tree (Attachment #1):**The Family Tree document is given to parents and relatives who attend the TDM to help identify all potential family members who may be instrumental in providing a permanent connection for children.
- **Accurint Services:** Accurint is an electronic database that is used by Solano County CWS Social Workers to help in the process of locating family/extended family members, non-related extended family members or others who may provide permanency or become a permanent connection for youth in care.

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- **Money Matters financial literacy initiative** Youth were actively engaged as participants in a three-pronged financial literacy initiative sponsored by the Solano Connected by 25 financial literacy work group. 1) **Money Matters class.** An average of 26 students including three emancipated youth attended the five-session *Money Matters* class. Students completed interactive activities to help them set financial goals, budget their income, plan for their education, and learn about credit, debt, insurance and investing. 2) **Savings accounts.** Through a Memo of Understanding developed by Travis Credit Union, Solano County and Alternative Family Services (AFS), Solano County foster youth *Money Matters* participants ages 15-17 were provided the opportunity to open their own personal savings account at Travis Credit Union. These accounts permit youth direct management and control of their savings. 3) **Financial Mentors.** Youth who are at least 17 ½ and who have completed the *Money Matters* class are eligible, at their option, to build an ongoing relationship with a financial mentor. Travis Credit Union managers and executives work one-on-one with youth to provide financial guidance to manage day-to-day financial skills and promote responsible financial behavior.
- **Summer Employment Intake.** The Employment Work Group, in collaboration with the Workforce Investment Board (WIB) and AFS, sponsored an intake session for youth interested in participating in the WIB Summer Youth Employment Program. The Session prepared youth to complete applications, interview and present themselves to employers in a positive manner.
- **CWS Youth Advocate,** a former foster youth was hired to act in the capacity of a mentor to foster youth. She attended training offered by the Youth Advocacy Center in California and New York, to develop skills that have enabled her to work closely and effectively with current foster youth providing:
 - one-to-one, peer support during TDMs and PTMs by assisting youth with preparation prior to these meetings, answering questions, addressing youth's needs and concerns and encouraging youths' active participation during these meetings
 - advocacy by accompanying social workers to home visits when youth are having difficulty fully engaging in resources
 - mentorship/leadership to youth by facilitating the agency's Youth Action Council.
 - advocacy through participation in planning meetings, workshops, steering committee meeting and case staffings to ensure that the perspective of foster youth is considered and incorporated into policy and programs.
- **Youth Action Team:** members focus on developing self-advocacy skills to prepare themselves for college or vocations. This youth have provided specific input on the following:
 - Job City: prioritized the soft skills and activities to be included in the workshop.
 - Supporting Academic Success: provided input on the agenda for the conference

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- Sexuality Survey: provided input and feedback on the topics and questions to be included in the survey sponsored by the Asset Development work group.
 - Money Matters: provided feedback on the content areas included in the financial literacy course; chose the name of the program.
-
- **Individual Development Account (IDA)** – Youth who are involved in the housing program through First Place for Youths and are doing well are invited to participate in a specialized savings program. The youth’s account is matched by First Place for Youths up to \$1,000. Use of the money is reserved for permanent housing, education, child care, and/or starting a new business. Any other use of the account funds must be approved.
 - **Job City** Twenty-six youth participated in the daylong Job City program sponsored by the Solano Connected by 25 Employment work group, CWS, Solano County Office of Education, CASA, and local businesses. This program provided youth with the opportunity to practice employment “soft skills” including dressing for job interviews, personal grooming, firm handshakes, interviewing, etc.
 - **Alternative Family Services**, our Independent Living Skills Program contractor, provides one-to-one case management to all Solano County youth. The program focuses on education, employment, housing stability, money management, interpersonal skills, permanent connections and a variety of necessary life skills through workshops and classes.
 - **First Place for Youth**, our Transitional Housing contractor, supports youth in their transition from foster care to successful adulthood by promoting choices and strengthening individual resources. Through a supportive housing program, an academic enrichment program, counseling, youth community center, Individual Development Account (IDA) program and collaboration with other organizations, the organization helps 37 Solano County youth obtain skills in financial literacy and saving, employment, education, tenancy rights, independent living skills and healthy living.
 - **Supporting Academic Success.** Foster Youth Services and the Education Workgroup sponsored a day-long conference for youth and their caregivers providing information on college preparation, study skills and techniques for improving school achievement. Solano County is in process of developing an MOU with the Office of Education to provide additional case managers for Solano County youth.
 - **Sexuality Survey.** Developed and conducted by the CC25I Asset Development Workgroup, the primary purpose of this survey was to use the information gathered from youth to help them with the prevention of teen pregnancy and parenting. Twenty-five youth age twelve and older responded to a survey assessing their level of knowledge about sexuality, and the extent to which they discuss sexuality with caregivers, social workers and ILSP workers. The survey

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found that knowledge was relatively high, but communication with key adults was very low.

- **Focus group on Foster Youth Services Tutoring Program (FYS).** FYS convened a focus group of tutoring program participants to identify issues and ideas for program improvement. The focus group resulted in redesigning the program. Youth are now required to complete an Organizational Workshop on study skills and Cornell note taking skills, replicated from the Advancement Via Individual Determination (AVID) curriculum, before being assigned to subject matter assistance
- **Peer Quality Case Review** – A youth focus group was conducted as part of the triennial child welfare services Peer Quality Case Review, which focused on placement stability. Input from the focus group shaped the county's System Improvement Plan.

Engaging caregivers has proven to be extremely challenging. Recognizing that caregivers play an extremely important role in successful permanency and transition planning for foster youth, Solano County Child Welfare Services and Connected by 25 have made many efforts during the past year to engage caregivers in virtually all permanency and Connected by 25 activities including:

- **Participation in Solano Connected by 25 Steering Committee and workgroups.** Two foster parents, including the head of the Foster Parent Association and the lead instructor for the Solano College Foster and Kinship Education program participate regularly in the Solano Connected by 25 Steering Committee and the education and permanency work groups.
- **Workshops at the annual Foster and Kinship Education conference.** Solano Connected by 25 and CPYP work groups offered workshops at the annual caregiver conference on the concept of permanency, the foster parents' role in PTMs as well as youth employment preparation, supporting educational success, teen sexuality and financial literacy. Attendance at these workshops, however, was low, ranging from 0 to 3 participants.
- **Foster Care City:** This training session was attended by foster parents and CWS staff, offered a simulation experience for the learner. The simulation consists of people *walking in the shoes* of the various people who are part of the foster care system. During this event, foster parents were acknowledged for their commitment to the children and families of Solano County.
- **Supporting Academic Success.** This conference was designed to attract youth-caregiver teams. After canceling the conference during Year 1 due to very low enrollment, conference organizers sent special invitations to caregivers emphasizing the importance of attendance, offered continuing education credits and child care, and made individual telephone calls. Twenty-one caregivers attended the conference.

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- **Training focused on transition-aged youth and Permanency.** Caregivers are invited to all trainings and workshops concerning foster youth, including those sponsored by the Breakthrough Series and Connected by 25. A small group of caregivers participated in these efforts.

Engaging caregivers has been an ongoing challenge. Although CWS attempted to schedule events such as training and supportive activities at more convenient times – evening and/ or weekends – for the most part, foster parents did not respond. While these attempts to engage caregivers have not been as successful as CWS had hoped, we plan to renew our efforts and try new approaches in the coming year. To improve caregiver engagement, CWS has recently started implementing new efforts and policies to promote or require greater caregiver participation including:

- **Changes to caregiver training:** Beginning August 1, 2010, Solano County requires that all prospective resource families (foster and adoptive homes) participate in the Parent Resources for Information, Development, and Education (PRIDE) course *prior* to attending our Foster Parent orientation. By having prospective resource families attend PRIDE first, it is the intention of Solano County to orient them to the Child Welfare Services system and give interested families a full picture of the emotional, behavioral, and relational dynamics of becoming a foster and adoptive parent as well as the unique and special needs of those children who may be placed in their care. Families that complete the program and make the commitment to providing quality care and creating permanency for a foster child are then invited to attend the Foster Parent orientation. The orientation will review the application process, the specific needs of Solano County's foster children, and answer outstanding questions presented by participants.
- **Foster parent coaches:** Using CC25I strategies, Solano County plans to engage two experienced, well respected foster parents as coaches to support foster parents with a youth's ILP, educational activities, and permanency related activities. The coaches will be on call and referred by social workers or the foster parents themselves.
- **Diligent recruitment:** Solano County partnered with two local counties (Contra Costa and Napa) and a local community based organization (Lilliput) to apply for the Diligent Recruitment grant. Through the grant, the partners hoped to increase the number of adoptive homes for youth, improve their efforts at finding and engaging family and improve the support available to current and potential adoptive parents. Although CWS did not secure this grant, the preparation process for the application led to stronger partnerships committed to working together on future endeavors.
- **New requirements/differential reimbursement:** During the next year, CWS will explore increasing the number of continuing education hours required for caregivers, or providing additional reimbursement for caregivers attending additional training.

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- **CWS Program Efforts:** This year CWS developed and implemented a well organized and structured procedure for Emergency Placements with relatives and for an expedited Relative Appeals process

Year 2009 ushered in extreme economic changes throughout California and as a result created an incredibly challenging period for many counties. Solano County Child Welfare lost essential social work positions, and was forced to re-organize the division to maintain our primary responsibility to ensure the safety and wellbeing of the foster children entrusted to us by the courts. The re-organization took a toll on staffing key priorities such as permanency and preparing our youth for self-sufficient adulthood. CWS social workers understand the importance of permanency and self-sufficiency for youth, and to the best of their ability, endeavor to support CWS' initiatives promoting these concepts; however, at a time that includes extreme reductions in both support and social work positions, the increased, myriad of responsibilities with which social workers are charged greatly affect their ability to fully and consistently implement all of the best practice changes at this time.

Despite CWS' extensive efforts toward reaching or exceeding our goal on outcome C3.3, In Care 3 Years or Longer (Emancipated/Age18), Solano County is showing a consistent percentage increase away from the CWS and national goals on this outcome. Change takes time; however, CWS is hopeful that our increasingly close ties and collaborative efforts with community partners ranging from the Solano County Office of Education and Solano College to Travis Credit Union and Chabot-Las Positas, CPYP, to United Way and CASA, as well as to our ILSP and THP+ contractors, and to other County services such as mental health and the Board of Supervisors, are enabling us to continue moving forward. CWS plans to incorporate three major themes into our efforts to improve outcomes for transitional aged youth.

- **Sustainability:** We are committed to finding the means to sustain and institutionalize the initiatives.
- **Youth engagement, empowerment and leadership.** Building on the efforts started in the last year and recent training received by foster youth, we intend to build a more youth-directed program. We believe that a strong youth voice will better engage youth in transition planning, and build self-confidence and leadership skills. First, we will explore how we can strengthen and more effectively use the Youth Action Team. CWS hopes to increase the Youth Advocate position from 25 hours per week to 40, and hire a second half-time Youth Advocate to assist with PTM attendance and engagement of youth with ILP, employment and educational efforts. Budget and funding, however, are issues that may preclude this from happening.
- **Caregiver involvement.** During the past year, throughout multiple initiatives, we have become increasingly aware of the critical need to better engage caregivers in transmitting crucial independent living skills to foster youth. As noted above, our efforts to involve caregivers on a voluntary basis have met only limited success. Our goal is to explore new methods, such as increasing required caregiver training, tying reimbursement levels to participation and engagement and offering online financial literacy training to caregivers. We will also engage experienced foster parents as foster parent coaches.

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Solano County CWS also plans to implement the following strategies:

- continue to focus our efforts on education, employment and permanency, with a reduced number of workgroups.
- continue to support education efforts by increasing the number of foster youth who participate in the Advancement Via Individual Determination (AVID) program and forge closer ties with Solano College.
- finalize an MOU with the Office of Education to increase the number of case managers to work with foster youth on educational goals.
- look beyond the Workforce Investment Board to find other pre-employment and employment options for our youth.
- implement a reunification prognostic tool called the Concurrent Planning Resource Allocation Assessment (CPRAA) that was recently developed by the Children's Research Center, (the creators of Structured Decision Making) to identify those youth for whom reunification appears to be unlikely. This tool has already been piloted and validated in Santa Cruz County. By the use of this tool, we hope to more quickly identify these youth and to more aggressively implement permanency activities to reduce their length of time in care.
- use our Solano Connected by 25 Steering Committee to discuss and interpret the data generated by the process, and to recommend program shifts and enhancements.

b. Probation C3.3 In Care 3 Years or Longer (Emancipate/Age 18)

Discussion (Probation Specific Efforts)

The Family Preservation Program, one of Solano County's specialty countywide programs, has been designed to provide treatment interventions for minors and their families, with the intent of assisting them in addressing issues which will result in preserving the minor's place in the family and avoiding out of home placement. Probation staff works in partnership with Seneca Center to provide in-depth assessments, in home services and interventions for minors and their families. The extent and length of intervention is dependent upon the individual needs of the minors and their families. Community based services are also relied upon to provide certain components of the intervention and to support the minor and their families after program completion.

Services Include:

- Comprehensive assessments with the minor and family
- Intensive supervision and monitoring of the minors
- In-home assessment, counseling and intervention services by Seneca Center

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- Collaboration with schools to monitor and encourage positive academic achievement and behavior
- Drug testing
- Referrals for specialized treatment needs in the community (i.e.; substance abuse counseling, mental health needs, academic needs)
- Crisis intervention
- Referrals for psychological, psychiatric, and medical evaluations
- Administering and monitoring community sanctions such as Electronic Monitoring, Weekend Academy, curfew restrictions, etc.
- Ongoing parental support

The probation department has implemented the following changes in an effort to improve outcomes for transitional aged youth:

- instituted family finding initiative
- trained all staff and increased connections for youth exiting the juvenile justice system
- uses mobility mapping as a vehicle for engaging youth and their families.
- implemented the use of a family tree at the intake stage in an effort to locate relative and positive adults
- engages youth in the transitional planning process by actively working with them in developing goals and ensure their participation in ILP activities.

IV. Program Improvement Plan PIP/SIP Support

As stated above, CWS has chosen the safety measure S1.1 No Recurrence of Maltreatment as a focus of the SIP. Relevant to this measure, the list of SIP strategies that contribute to the achievement to the PIP are as follows.

PIP Strategy IV: *Expand options and create flexibility for services and supports to meet the needs of children and families.*

According to the literature:

- Families who had a lack of social support and high family stress were more likely to experience recurrence of maltreatment.
- If families were unable to engage in agency services in previous maltreatment events they were more likely to experience recurrence of maltreatment.
- The length of time that families engaged in services after the first instance was associated with less recurrence of maltreatment.
- Families experiencing poverty were positively associated with recurrence of maltreatment.

Supportive SIP Strategy 1. 1: *Strengthen collaboration between CWS and FRC Network.* Solano's FRCs are neighborhood-based agencies that provide services to support families and strengthen communities. The FRCs help families identify and access local resources to meet their needs, including parenting education, family recreation, job search, transportation, child care, basic needs, etc. as well as offering additional services ranging from mentoring programs to food pantries. While all Solano FRCs provide these core services, each FRC is unique to the community it serves, offering additional services ranging from mentoring programs to food pantries. A more robust partnership between CWS and the FRCs will ensure

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that families receive the types of support services that allay stressors associated with recurrence and become more grounded within the community.

Discussion: Solano County CWS consistently works on strengthening our relationship with the FRC's. In order to affect this goal, CWS staff routinely attends FRC Network meetings. In addition, an already strong relationship between CWS and FRC staff continues to improve through the collaborative efforts that occur during monthly IFSI case staffings. Also, FRC staff is invited to, and attend, TDMs and PTMs in order to help identify family needs and make recommendations for possible services/community resources. During PTMs in which the FRCs have already had contact with a particular family, FRC staff will provide the team with a status update of the family's involvement with services/resources that have been provided. CWS' Program Specialist is working with Solano County's FRC contract manager to help develop a plan that supports a consistent flow of information between the FRCs and CWS in order to ensure that families receive, and take advantage of, the supportive services that help to change dynamics linked recurrence.

Supportive SIP Strategy 1. 3: *Continue to build agency and community support for Team Decision Making (TDM) meetings.*

The process of bringing together birth families, community members, along with resource families, service providers and agency staff to ensure an individualized network of support for the child and the adults who care for them can be a factor in preventing children from entering or reentering the foster care system by immediately identifying support systems that enable children to remain in the home and relative placements as well as establishing lifelong connections for children and their families. In addition, as literature indicates, family involvement in service planning has been associated with increased family engagement which decreases the likelihood of recurrence. The level of engagement inherent in the TDM process that enables input into decisions as to whether to remove children as well as development of a safety plan also contribute to the achievement of the PIP Strategy I. Expand the use of participatory case planning.

Discussion: In the past, this type of ongoing, community outreach was accomplished through a dedicated part-time position; however, due to budget cuts the position was eliminated, severely hindering CWS' active outreach efforts to educate and gain support for TDMs in the community at large. In order to consolidate efforts the concept of the TDM has been incorporated into CWS' overarching philosophy that embraces establishing "Permanency" for all children, whether initially, in a TDM or later in the case, during PTMs. The Permanency Workgroup, including community representatives, meets quarterly to continue, among other objectives, developing community support for permanency throughout Solano County.

As of March 1, 2010, rather than focus on Vallejo only, TDMs are being provided for children removed or at imminent risk for removal throughout Solano County, thus expanding the opportunity for participatory case planning to all Solano County birth families who may become involved with CWS as well as to supportive resource families, service providers and community members.

Supportive SIP Strategy 1. 4: *Continue to provide intensive short-term (30 day) case management in ER.*

As indicated in the literature, the use of a diversified response system decreases recurrence of maltreatment.

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These 30 days provide families and social workers the opportunity to establish a strength based relationship leading to engagement in community based services and increased parenting skills for families at risk of recurrence of maltreatment. Emergency responders routinely offer 30-day case management service to families whose situation does not require CWS intervention. The exact number of times this service has been provided is under represented in the ER statistical tracking system.

PIP Strategy VI: Strengthen implementation of the statewide, safety, risk and needs assessment system

According to the literature:

- The use of accurate, reliable risk and safety assessments that have been well implemented throughout the agency decreases recurrence of maltreatment by 28%.
- When agencies do multi-factor and prioritized assessments that identify interventions specifically targeted at risk and safety factors recurrence of maltreatment decreases.

Supportive SIP Strategy 1. 2: Continue to build agency support for Structured Decision Making (SDM) program model.

The use of SDM tools has been successful in identifying the appropriate level of intervention for a family. They have also assisted in prioritizing a parent's needs and focusing on the three most significant goals rather than expecting them to address all needs at one time, thus enabling implementation of the most effective interventions. This allows parents to be more successful with their case plan. The tool also assists in more accurately assessing their progress and readiness to provide care for their children.

Discussion: SDM Hotline tools have been/are consistently used in Solano County. The most recent SDM report for year 2009 indicates that Solano County ranks higher than the total of all other SDM counties for completion of the both the safety and risk assessments. In 2009, Solano's Hotline completion rate was 99.1%, and from January through July 2010, 99.0% of the tools have been completed

For August of 2010, SafeMeasures shows 98.58% for Solano County's SDM Safety & Risk Completion at {Case} Closure. From September 2009 through August 2010, the Safety & Risk Completion at Closure remained above 90% for the 12 month period and above 95% for 9 of the 12 months. The SDM Risk Reassessment Timeliness Trend shows Solano at an average of 71.4% for August 2009 through August 2010, percentages that are consistently above the State percentages. According to SafeMeasures, completion of the initial Family Strengths and Needs Assessment (FSNA) is averaging 82.63% for the 12-month period September 2009 through August 2010, and for a 13 month period, August 2009 through August 2010, Solano County is averaging 75.57% on the ongoing completion of the FSNA.

Safety and Risk Assessment Tools have been used in 39 referrals where a voluntary case was opened. Once opened the safety tool is used to monitor immediate safety threats and the risk assessment used before closing the case either to validate recommendation to close or support recommendation for court intervention. These tools continue to be use in all new cases by Voluntary Family Maintenance staff. The use of the SDM tools is closely monitored closely by CWS supervisors.

Additionally, advanced SDM usage training for line staff was completed May 26th and June 1st:

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The second area of focus for both Probation and CWS is C3.3 In Care 3 Years of Longer (Emancipated/Age 18). Relevant to this measure, the list of SIP strategies that contribute to the achievement to the PIP are as follows:

PIP Strategy I: *Expand the use of participatory case planning strategies*

According to the literature:

- If families are involved and engaged in case planning they are more likely to succeed.
- Children who have a range of permanency options from the beginning are more likely to have permanency.
- The more concurrent planning is built into every aspect of the case the more likely the child is to find permanency.
- Exploring options for permanency early and often leads to success.

Supportive SIP Strategy 2.3: *Continue to build agency and community support for Team Decision Making (TDM) meetings*

The TDM procedure engaging birth families, community members, along with resource families, service providers and agency staff enables a participatory, team assessment process that identifies and establishes supportive placement and services promoting permanency for youth that remain with him or her through exit from care.

Please see above "Discussion" found in Supportive SIP Strategy 1. 3

Supportive SIP Strategy 2. 2: *Implement a plan for improved concurrent planning developed in Adoption Unit assessment*

Implementing a plan for improved concurrent planning developed in the Adoption Unit assessment would result in more children/youth exiting to a planned permanent home prior to emancipation, thus reducing the number of children/youth who fall into this outcome group and allowing the county to utilize transitional age youth resources for a smaller number of youth (enhancing services an individual youth might receive without having to increase available resources).

Discussion: In TDMs (prior to removal or in the case of child having been placed in protective custody) discussion and information gathering for permanency/concurrent planning begins immediately. Adoptions workers are present in TDMs. As of December 2009, Adoption staff was given secondary assignments to cases needing support for achieving permanency, thus enabling ongoing consultation on concurrent planning throughout the life of the case

PIP Strategy II: *Sustain and enhance permanency efforts across the life of the case.*

According to the literature:

- Children who have a range of permanency options from the beginning are more likely to have permanency.
- The more concurrent planning is built into every aspect of the case the more likely the child is to find permanency.
- Exploring options for permanency early, often leads to success.
- With older adolescents exploring family members again is often successful (revisiting reunification).

Supportive SIP Strategy 2. 1: *Strengthen use of Family Finding and other such search tools*

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Locating relatives or extended family members who can provide placement and/or support for child/youth and family and assist in establishing connections will have a positive impact on preventing entry into care or facilitating timely exit into permanence

Discussion: Finding families and life-long connections for children and youth is supported by Solano County CWS in a number of ways. An “Absent Parent Search Form (Attachment #2)” is referred by any Social Worker to a specific unit’s Office Assistant (OA), who facilitates the search. All known relatives are invited to TDMs, where information regarding family connections is gathered and subsequently entered into the Maternal Family Chart (Attachment #3) {Paternal and Collaterals Family Charts same as maternal) located in Solano County’s CWS/CMS documents. All known relatives are invited to PTMs in which information is gathered regarding relative connections. A Relative Notification Letter (attachment #4) is sent to all known relatives from the Court Dependency Investigations (DI) unit as a means of identifying family who may be supportive of youth who have been removed from their homes.

Supportive SIP Strategy 2. 2: Implement a plan for improved concurrent planning developed in Adoption Unit assessment

Implementing a plan for improved concurrent planning developed in the Adoption Unit assessment would result in more children/youth exiting to a planned permanent home prior to emancipation, thus reducing the number of children/youth who fall into this outcome group and allowing the county to utilize transitional age youth resources for a smaller number of youth (enhancing services an individual youth might receive without having to increase available resources).

Discussion: Please see Supportive SIP Strategy 2.1 above

Supportive SIP Strategy 2.3: Continue to implement California Permanency for Youth Project strategies for permanence

Providing a team assessment approach to identify and establish supportive placement and services will promote permanency for youth that will remain with him or her through exit from care

Discussion: As a participant in the California Permanency for Youth Project from June 2008-December 2009, Solano County identified 20 youth without a lifelong connection. These youth were the recipients of targeted activities including family search, family engagement, case-file mining, permanency team meetings, a sibling outing and job shadowing. Of the 20 identified youth, five youth returned home to a biological parent, ten youth identified lifelong connections and four youth located a parent/relative/sibling with whom this youth did not have contact or a relationship. All case carrying social workers in the family reunification and permanent planning units have been trained in the Six Steps for Family Finding, and CPYP principles and practices have been infused throughout the CWS service continuum. Staff now has access to the Accurint search service, a widely accepted locate-and-research tool available to help social workers find relatives as well as potential life-long connections for foster youth.

A former foster youth was hired for 25 hours per week as the Foster Youth Advocate in November 2009. She continues to coordinate and facilitate the Youth Action Team youth advisory group, co-facilitates ILP classes, attends Permanency Team Meetings to support youth and represents youth on the Breakthrough Series Collaboration (BSC) Solano Team. CWS is committed to keeping this position and hopefully increasing the hours to full time.

The principles of CPYP – now referred to as Permanency – have been incorporated into CWS’ overarching philosophy that embraces seeking and ultimately establishing “Permanency” for all children. Permanency workgroups have been meeting bi-monthly; however, effective

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September have moved to meeting on a monthly basis. Permanency has been integrated into practice throughout organization through TDMs, PTMs and CC25I workgroups.

TDMs are now provided for children removed or at imminent risk for removal throughout Solano County, rather than focused on Vallejo only as in the past. Using CPYP/Permanency strategies, as of March 1, 2009, PTMs were implemented and occur at a minimum of every six months for each child/youth in out of home care. (Please see SIP Strategy 2.4 discussion below for additional information.)

Supportive SIP Strategy 2. 4: Continue to implement CC25I Initiative

Implementation/enhancement of services will enable foster youth to exit care with stable supportive systems in place to ensure a successful transition to adulthood.

Discussion: Our increasingly close ties and collaborative efforts with community partners ranging from the Solano County Office of Education and Solano College to Travis Credit Union and Jelly Belly, to United Way and CASA, as well as to our ILSP and THP+ contractors, and to other County services such as mental health and the Board of Supervisors, have enabled CWS to keep Solano Connected by 25 on track to meet expected outcomes in key focus areas of education, permanency and financial literacy.

In education, we have increased the staff available to provide individual educational case management to foster youth, augmented efforts to educate caregivers about supporting education (although we have a ways to go), and have started to build a program to promote foster youth participation in the college-preparatory AVID program, preparing all students for college readiness. The plan to use IV- E funds for foster youth education systems is on the verge of implementation.

In permanency, we have established a successful family-finding program, convene regular permanency team meetings for all youth in out of home care, and employ a former foster youth as an advocate for youth seeking permanent families.

Our youth are also becoming financially literate. Almost half of eligible Solano County foster youth completed a financial literacy class and opened their own savings accounts; many others will participate in the class this fall.

We are also making progress in ensuring housing for youth leaving care through the THP+ program, Mental Health Services Act housing, and new community programs. The THP + program has been extremely effective at leveraging available funding; funding for 30 slots has been leveraged to serve 37 youth. ILSP services have become more focused on preparing Solano County youth for adulthood.

In the midst of a deep recession, we continue to struggle with employment preparation and jobs. After a first year of trying to find our bearings, we are now laying the groundwork for employment preparation through the Job City program and closer ties with the Solano County Office of Education career technical education programs and Solano College. We also continue to seek closer engagement with the Workforce Investment Board and programs funded through the Department of Rehabilitation. In Year 3, we also hope to engage a broader circle of employers in our efforts. We acknowledge that we have a ways to go in this area.

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Supportive SIP Strategy 2. 5: Implement Permanency Team Meetings for all youth in out of home care

Foster youth who develop a specific and individualized plan will enable exit from care with stable supportive systems in place to ensure a successful transition to adulthood. In addition, including youth in developing a plan idiosyncratic to their needs will also contribute to the success of the PIP Strategy I: Expand the use of participatory case planning strategies.

Discussion: Permanency Team Meetings began on March 1, 2010 and occur at a minimum of every six months for each child/youth in out of home care. Permanency Team Meetings facilitation skills training occurred on August 9th and 10th 2010.

V. Additional Outcomes On Which Performance Is Below Statewide Standards

C1.4 Reentry Following Reunification

Discussion: Q/QI Program Specialist is currently conducting a study on 25 reentry cases indicated in Q4 2009 Outcomes System Summary report and identified through SafeMeasures. CWS anticipates that this study will provide insight as to why these cases reentered by identifying common variables across cases, potentially leading to policy and practice changes.

C2.1 Adoption Within 24 Months (Exit Cohort)

Discussion: Many of our adoptions cases are appealed, and these appeals are heard in the San Francisco Superior Court, taking about eight to twelve months before a decision is handed down indicating whether the adoption unit can proceed with services.

The Adoptions Unit has been challenged by the need to find adoptive homes for older children, sibling groups and children/youth with significant physical, emotional and behavioral problems. As a result, we have had to delay some adoptions while stabilizing the placement, and in other cases, we have had to search intensively for many months to secure an adoptive home.

Community volunteers, in conjunction with the Lilliput Agency, are reestablishing a Heart Gallery in the hope that this national strategy will be successful in helping children find permanent homes and inspiring community members to become adoptive or foster parents

C4.2 Placement Stability (At Least 24 Months In Care)

Discussion: This outcome was a focus of the Solano County Self Assessment, which revealed:

1. Need for Earlier, Concurrent, as Opposed to Sequential, Planning: There is a need to consider early a range of permanency options for a child and develop several concurrently.
 - As of Q2 2010: (1) concurrent planning begins in TDMs (prior to removal or in the case of child having been placed into protective custody) discussion/information gathering for permanency begins immediately, (2) The Dependency Investigator (DI) routinely sends to all known relatives a "Family Finding letter in an attempt to find potential relatives willing to provide permanent/stable care and (3) DI has also created a 19 page document titled "Important Information for Relatives and Non-Related Extended Family Members (NREFM)" (Attachment #5) that is provided to caregivers who may be providing permanency.
 - As of December 2009, Adoption staff was given secondary assignments to cases needing support for achieving permanency, thus enabling ongoing consultation on concurrent planning throughout the life of the case.

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2. Permanency Team Meetings (PTM): After the initial TDM, PTMs occur at least every six months for the life of the case. PTMs are instrumental in helping to identify supportive permanency options.
3. Thorough and Effective Assessments: There is a need for more consistent, effective early mental health, medical, behavioral, developmental and educational assessments for a child in order to effectively match them to the "first, best and last" placement. This also includes more time to get these done so that placement matching and decision making can be well informed.
4. Mental Health Services are Difficult to Access: Early mental health assessments and services are difficult to access, particularly for children over age 5.

Cutbacks are making it increasingly difficult to achieve #3 and #4.

VI. CWSOIP Narrative

CWS utilizes the CWSOIP funds to support the TDM facilitator position. This strength-based, solutions oriented model gathers as many concerned and invested people as possible to work together to find the best solutions and plan for the safety, permanency and wellbeing of a child. The TDM process enables the identification of resources and services that provide families and other caregivers with a network of support that can be the stabilizing factor which ultimately promotes permanency and mitigates the potential for recurrence. The TDM facilitator position is essential to this process. Once having gone through 40 hours of training, the facilitator's key responsibilities include:

- Focus Group's Energy on a Common Task
- Assure Purpose of the Meeting Understood
- With the Caseworker, Lead the Group Discussion
- Provide Environment to Permit Communication
- Manage Conflict and Emotions
- Summarize, Clarify, Reframe and Identify Areas of Agreement to Assist the Group.
- Assure Situation Thoroughly Examined, Risks Stated, Family Strengths Recognized, Goals Verbalized, Ideas Brainstormed, Quality Decisions Made with Safety, and Action Plans Developed.
- Act as an Information Resource
- Model Behavior – Respectful, Non-threatening
- Move Group Through Process, Maintaining Reasonable Time Frames
- Manage the Process/Structure of the Meeting
- Intervene, if necessary, as an Experienced/Knowledgeable Participant.
- Strive to Develop a Consensus Decision with all
- Accurately Record Information/Decisions and Provide a Copy of the Safety/Action Steps
- Debrief with Colleagues – the Good and Bad

Probation utilizes the CWSOIP funds to support their new Family Finding program which includes training for and implementation of the program, searches for family members, activities to engage family members who are identified by the searches, and collaboration with CWS on CC25I and CPYP.

VII. Challenges

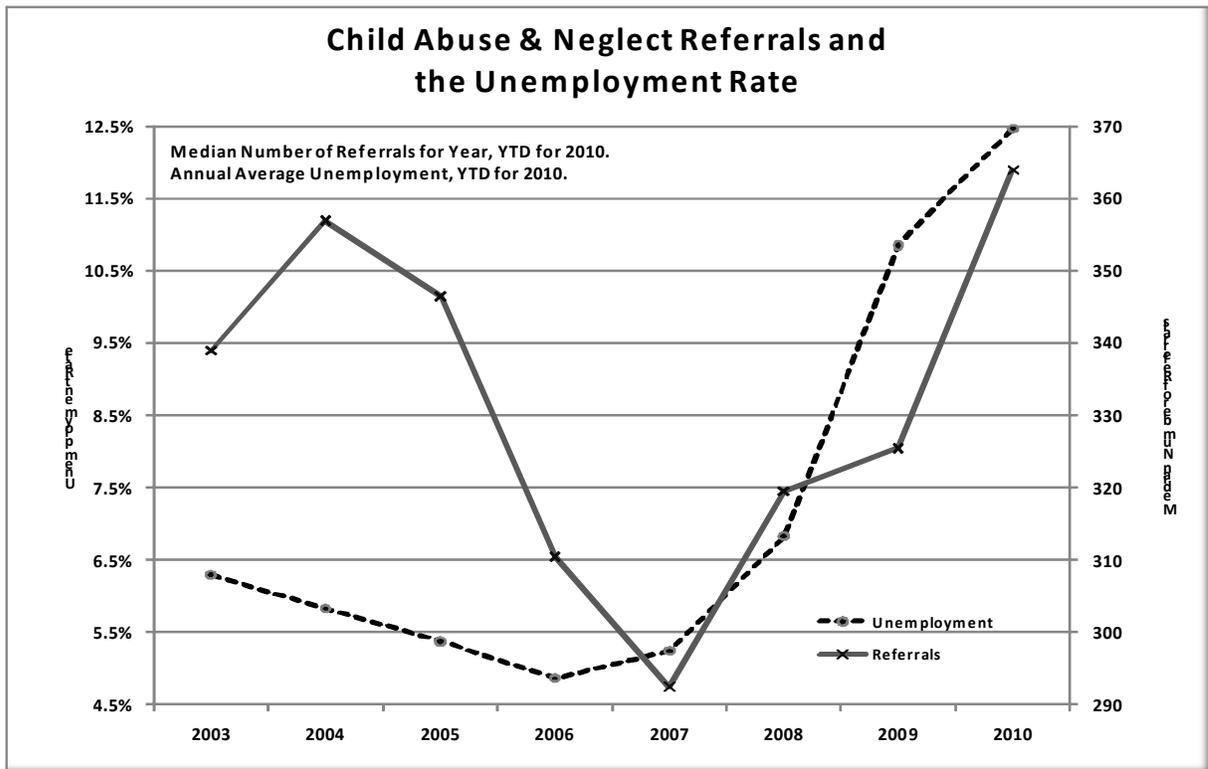
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Recently, the Solano County Board of Supervisors sponsored two forums to which our community partners and the public were invited. The forums focused on the current state of Child Welfare Services. The following information was included in these forums.

In the past five years, Solano County Department of Health and Social Services, Child Welfare Services (CWS) Division has implemented extensive safety and quality improvements, designed to enhance our performance on all mandated outcomes. Although CWS continues to remain fully engaged in the state and federally required continuous quality system improvement process, over the past few years, the impact of the economic decline and the state budget cuts have challenged our ability to serve abused and neglected children and their families.

With greater numbers of Solano County residents experiencing the loss of employment, the increased need for some type of financial assistance and decreasing funding sources, the vulnerability of family systems that are already stressed has become a factor that increased referrals necessitating entry or reentry into care. Not only is there a strong correlation between child maltreatment and the unemployment rate, but CWS is receiving more difficult and complex cases, including more families with domestic violence and more severe physical abuse, especially with infants, toddlers, and teenagers.

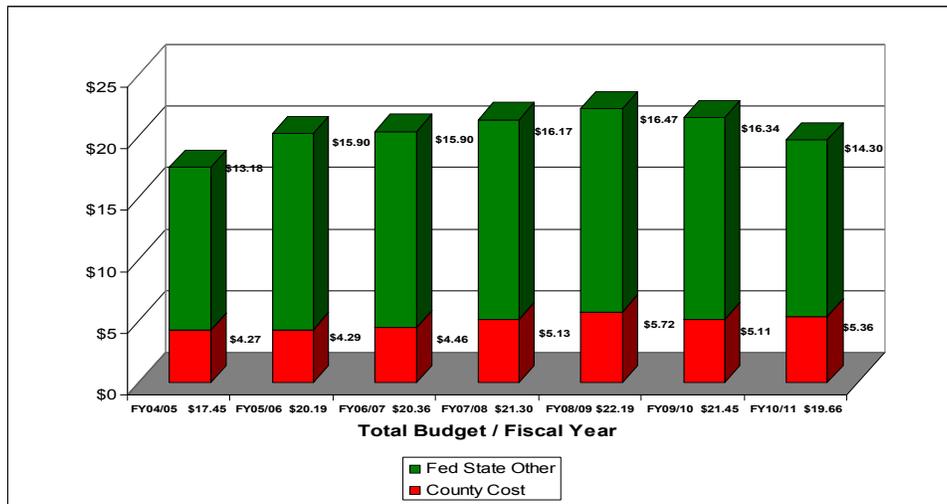
Solano County Health and Social Service Child Welfare Services Division



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From 2004/05 the CWS budget grew significantly, peaking at \$22 million in 08/09. In the past 2 years, keeping pace with economic downturn, the budget dropped by \$2.5 million.

Child Welfare Services Working Budget Comparisons (in millions)
FY 2004/05 to FY 2010/11



The decline in funding brought with it an unavoidable and unwelcomed reduction of staff. All levels of staffing were affected by the cuts, including a manager, supervisor, and program specialist; however, the majority of positions lost were social workers. For all of 2010, due to these vacancies, CWS operated with only 98 people in the entire Division, staffing numbers that mimic those of 2001. The following is a listing of the positions eliminated in the 24% reduction of staff over the past 2 years.

Position Allocations (decreased by a net 33 FTE over past 2 years)

- 1 Social Services Manger

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- 1 Social Services Supervisor
- 1 Program Specialist
- 1 Organizational Assistant II
- 10 Social Services Workers
- 12 Social Worker II
- 6 Social Worker III
- 1 Eligibility Benefits Specialist

For the past 5 years, Solano County CWS has made a resolute effort to strengthen and add to the safety net in which we are currently having to tear holes. The following briefly chronicles the program reforms and improvements, both positive and negative, that have occurred between years 2006 to current.

2006/2007

Programs added:

- Youth Action Team (YAT) for transitional age youths
- Structured Decision Making assessment
- Staff added: Family to Family SWII to support TDMs; Recruitment and support of foster parents; and building community partnerships.
- CWS/CMS SWIII to train and provide in-house TA on using the IS
- TDM Facilitator SWIII
- Foster Home Support/PRIDE SWIII
- VFM-SWIII, ILSP

2007/2008

Programs added: Ca Permanency for Youth Program Technical Assistance

- Transitional Aged Youth (TAY) Self Assessment
- ICPC SWII
- Rel/NREFM SWII
- Training SWIII
- THPPlus SWIII
- ILSP SWIII
- THP Housing

2008/2009

Program deleted:

- TAY Self Assessment

Programs added:

- Life Conference for emancipating youth
- Wraparound to help children in group homes transition to more family-like settings
- CC25I Grant to create a continuum of services for TAY
- Substance Abuse Clinical Services Associate

Staff deleted:

- Foster Home/PRIDE
- Concurrent SWII

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2009/2010

Programs deleted:

- Family to Family work groups and staff
- Life Conferences

Program added:

- Permanency Workgroup

Program staff deleted:

- 4 Social Worker IIs
- 11 Social Workers
- 10 Social Services Workers

Program staff added:

- AAP SWII

Programs and staff positions deleted

- Transition Aged Youth SWIII
- Funded Court Ordered Services
- Ombudsman
- Self-Assessment Group Youth and Family Services
- Substance Abuse Clinical Services Associate

2010/2011

Program and staff positions deleted:

- Placement SWIII
- Court Officer SWIII
- CWS/CMS SWIII
- Training SWIII
- In-Home Services (Seneca)
- Policy development staff

2010/2011

Supervisor positions vacated since SIP update was submitted for review:

- Adoptions Unit supervisor
- FM/FR supervisor

At this time, it is not known if CWS will be allowed to fill these vacancies. To ensure support for case carrying social workers, the training supervisor was redeployed to the recent supervisor vacancy in the Adoptions Unit, leaving no training staff.

Specific Changes and Concerns

One (1) less hotline social worker and increasing hotline referrals may compromise the:

- quality of referral information and hotline SDM assessments
- working relationships with mandated reporters and community partners

Emergency Response (ER) is staffed to basic mandates and cannot be further cut. Reductions, thus far, may be affecting:

- TDMs. ER services to hotline referrals are the priority, not TDMs.
- follow-up services to stabilize families and prevent removal of children **(directly impacts SIP outcome S1.1 No Recurrence of Maltreatment.**

Solano County Child Welfare Services System Improvement Plan Update

- emergency relative placement assessments may be reduced, necessitating placement with strangers.

The reduction of Voluntary Family Maintenance social workers by one (1) will result in:

- forty (40) children and their families will not receive services to prevent recurrence of abuse (**directly impacts SIP outcome S1.1 No Recurrence of Maltreatment.**)
- an increased likelihood that more children will be placed in foster care

The reduction of Relative Approval social workers by one (1) will result in:

- an increased likelihood that children will be placed in foster care, not with relatives.
- a delay in relative placement

The reduction of Foster Home Licensing social workers by .5 FTE will result in:

- the necessity to respond to licensing complaints and conduct renewals, leaving no time for foster care home recruitment.

The reduction in social worker II positions has resulted in difficulty:

- meeting court-ordered supervised visitation requests
- meeting transportation needs for children's visitation and other services

Timely court reports are a priority; however, the incidence of late reports have increased resulting in:

- more court continuance, with increased court costs
- delay in families reaching resolution of problems and children's return to family

Deletion of a social worker position to coordinate special services for transitional aged youth has:

- reduced the likelihood that youth will be connected to these services
- created a greater risk of more foster youth aging out without the support they need, resulting in costs to other public systems (**directly impacts SIP outcome C3.3 In Care 3 Years or Longer (Emancipated/Age 18).**)

Reduction of Transitional Housing Program Plus (THP+) services and housing has caused:

- 5 fewer former foster youth to receive housing and supportive services (**has the potential for impacting SIP outcome C3.3 In Care 3 Years or Longer [Emancipated/Age 18].**)

Due to reduced funding for court-ordered services, CWS no longer offers the following essential, contractual services:

- in-house substance abuse assessments for parents
- support group for substance abusing parents
- in-home supportive services for families enrolled in family maintenance services (**has the potential for impacting SIP outcome S1.1 No Recurrence of Maltreatment.**)

Solano County Child Welfare Services System Improvement Plan Update

Some of the cuts CWS has been forced to make have turned back the clock on some of those significant reforms and improvements that had been achieved. In the past 5 years, we have reduced the number of children in foster care. CWS has been concerned that the economy and reduced CWS resources will reverse this trend. It takes a significant investment of a social worker's time to assess a family and provide them with the services necessary to safely prevent a child's removal from a home or to safely return a child home within mandated time frames. Without sufficient time, a social worker will protect a child by removing her/him from home instead of trying to improve family functioning while the child remains home; or a social worker keep in foster care longer to be sure that a child can return home safely.

Families have fewer CWS staff available to help them and less time with the staff who remain. Previously families had a team of CWS staff assigned to them – a Social Worker III, the case manager position in our system; and the services of Social Worker IIs and Social Services Workers. Together they provided families with supportive services to assist families in meeting their case plan requirements. Now families only have a Social Worker III. Social Worker IIIs are now responsible for meeting the totality of a child's and family's needs. The staff are coping admirably, but they have been working nonstop, at a highly pressured rate, for about a year. The CWS system is starting to show the strain and families are feeling it.

In the past 5 years, there has been a reduction in the number of customer service complaints that come to the department. There may be more complaints as social workers hurry to try to meet multiple demands.

Since the majority of CWS services are mandated and/or court-ordered, CWS cannot significantly reduce the number of clients served. With less time for families and children, CWS must rely more on other county- and community-based services and indirect methods of support. Partner agencies and organizations are themselves undergoing significant resource decreases and finding themselves stressed to try to meet the increased needs of CWS clients and other families.

CWS realizes that Solano County is one of many counties that are experiencing the challenging effects of these uncertain economic times; nonetheless, our concern for the safety of Solano's children and families is real.

VIII. CWS Matrix

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| A. Outcome/Systemic Factor #1 | | | | | |
| S1.1 No Recurrence of Maltreatment | | | | | |
| County's Current Performance: Between 04/01/09 and 09/30/09, (Data extract Q1, 2010) 7.0% (estimated 8 children affected) of Solano County children who had a prior substantiated CWS report experienced recurrence of maltreatment within 6 months. | | | | | |
| Improvement Goal 1.0 At the time that the SIP was written, CWS' goal included improve to a rate of 93% of No Recurrence of Maltreatment, an increase of 1.3% | | | | | |
| Strategy 1. 1 Strengthen collaboration between CWS and FRC Network | | <input type="checkbox"/> CAPIT <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> CBCAP <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> PSSF <input type="checkbox"/> N/A | Strategy Rationale Enhanced collaboration leading to increased community support will increase likelihood that clients will access available community based services to reduce recurrence of maltreatment | | |
| Milestone | 1.1.1 CWS staff will attend quarterly FRC Network meetings | Timeframe | Completed/ongoing: (1) FRC Network meetings are attended regularly by a combination of the staff assigned in "Assigned to." (2) In addition: CWS conducts monthly IFSI case staffings that include IFSI social workers, VFM and other CWS staff as well as FRC staff. | Assigned to | CWS Program Manager , 1 Supervisor from ER, 1 from VFM and 1 from FM/FR, CWS QA/QI Program Specialist |
| | 1.1.2 Enhance referral process to include a closing letter outlining needed services from ER worker which client can provide to FRC | | Q2, 2010: not completed: Although an individualized referral letter is currently being sent with clients to the FRCs, CWS' goal is to develop a standardized form. Timeframe Q4 2011 | | ER Manager and Supervisors |
| | 1.1.3 Referral feedback from FRC staff to CWS regarding community services provided to referred families and level of family engagement | | Q2, 2010:Completed/ongoing (1) A referral form exists for those clients receiving a formal referral to the FRCs ; however, at this time a) feedback from FRCs is limited and b) neither the FRCs or CWS can control client's decision to self-identify as a CWS client (2) Program Specialist has attended two meetings with First 5 to work on issue, | | FRC Staff and CWS QA/QI Program Specialist |

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| | | prioritized due to the reduction in staff, including reassignment of Policies & Procedures position to case carrying position for approximately 6 months. Timeframe Q4 2011 if funding becomes available to reinstate Policies & Procedures position. | |
| | 1.2.3 Provide training to implement new SDM case review procedure | Q1, 2011 Training is on hold at this time due to (1) the reduction of staff having necessitated redeployment of training staff to case carrying units and (2) current workload issues. Timeframe Q4 2011 if funding becomes available to staff training. At this time, the training supervisor was redeployed to the recent supervisor vacancy in the Adoptions Unit, leaving no training staff. | Staff Development |
| | 1.2.4 Provide training to staff on advanced SDM usage | Q1, 2011: Completed/ongoing (1) Some portions of the advanced training for line staff were completed May 26 th and June 1 st : (2) Advanced training for supervisors is on hold at this time due to the reduction of staff having necessitated reassigning training staff to case carrying units.(3) CWS anticipates revisiting this objective in 2011. | Staff Development |

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| Strategy 1.3 Continue to build agency and community support for Team Decision Making (TDM) meetings | | <input type="checkbox"/> CAPIT <input type="checkbox"/> CBCAP <input type="checkbox"/> PSSF <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> N/A | Strategy Rationale Provide team assessment identifying support for child resulting in more children remaining at home or in placement with relatives | |
| Milestone | 1.3.1 TDMs will be provided for children removed or at imminent risk for removal throughout Solano County, rather than focused on Vallejo only as in the past | Timeframe | Assigned to | ER Manager and Supervisors |
| | 1.3.2 Develop community support for TDMs in communities other than Vallejo | | | Q2, 2010: (1) Completed/ongoing as of March 1, 2010. (2) Manager approval is required for not holding a TDM in these cases (3) Increased capacity by training 3 back-up facilitators in April 2010. |

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| Strategy 1. 4 Continue to provide intensive short-term (30 day) case management service | | <input type="checkbox"/> CAPIT | Strategy Rationale Families and social workers establish a strength based relationship leading to engagement in community based services and increased parenting skills for families at risk of recurrence of maltreatment | | |
| | | <input type="checkbox"/> CBCAP | | | |
| | | <input type="checkbox"/> PSSF | | | |
| | | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> N/A | | | |
| Milestone | 1.4.1 Continue to utilize SDM safety tools to identify appropriate families and to focus on most needed service areas | Timeframe | Completed/ongoing: a) The 2009, year-end SDM report shows an 87.8% completion rate for the Safety Assessment. For the first half of year 2010, Solano is performing at 87.0% completion on the Safety Assessment b) the use of the SDM Safety tools is monitored consistently monitored by CWS supervisors. | Assigned to | ER Staff |
| | 1.4.2 Provide short-term, 30-day case management services including follow-up to ensure engagement with community resources beyond the 30 days | | Completed/ongoing: ER responders routinely offer 30 days of case management services to family who do not require CWS intervention. The exact number of occurrences is underrepresented in CWS' system for tracking ER data. | | ER Staff |
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| Strategy 1. 5 Continue to provide Voluntary Family Maintenance services for up to six months | | <input type="checkbox"/> CAPIT | Strategy Rationale Families receive continued CWS and community support to address family issues and reduce risk for maltreatment so that fewer children will experience recurrence of maltreatment | | |
| | | <input type="checkbox"/> CBCAP | | | |
| | | <input type="checkbox"/> PSSF | | | |
| | | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> N/A | | | |
| Milestone | 1.5.1 Continue to utilize SDM safety and risk tools to identify appropriate families and to focus on most needed service areas | Timeframe | Completed/ongoing:(1) Safety and Risk Assessment Tools have been used in 41 referrals where a voluntary case was opened. Once opened safety tool is used to monitor immediate safety threats and risk assessment used before closing the case either to validate recommendation to close or support recommendation for court intervention (2) Ongoing use of tools is closely monitored by unit Supervisor. | Assigned to | ER Staff |
| | 1.5.2 Provide Voluntary Family Maintenance services for up to six months | | Completed/ongoing: (1) A total of 335 total cases (children) have been served in the VFM since from January '07 through Dec '09 (2) VFM services have been/are being provided to 41 new families (cases), 81 children since January 1, 2010. | | Voluntary Family Maintenance Staff |
| | 1.5.3 Collaborate with community resources which can continue providing supportive services beyond six months | | Completed/ongoing: (1) Community resources currently being consistently used by VFM staff include, but are not limited to, Mental Health, County Substance Abuse, FRCs, Child Haven, Children's Nurturing Project, Youth and Family Services, Public Health Nurses, Baby Coach, Nurse Family Partnership. These and other services are used during the 6-month period and at the end of a case and an individualized letter recommending specific resources is sent and the case closure. CWS | | Voluntary Family Maintenance Staff and Community Partners |

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| | | | would hope to create a standardized form to be used in these instances (2) out of 51 current cases, VFM social workers averaged 2 referrals per case (3) CWS supervisors ensure referrals to community services through case reviews and in direct supervision. | |
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| Strategy 1. 6 Continue to ensure that referrals are made to FRCs, Catholic Social Services, Mental Health, Domestic Violence resources and Substance Abuse to address issues which contribute to recurrence of maltreatment. | | <input type="checkbox"/> CAPIT <input type="checkbox"/> CBCAP <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> PSSF <input type="checkbox"/> N/A | Strategy Rationale Ensuring that families receive services to address these issues will help to reduce recurrence of maltreatment as well as entry/re-entry into the system | | |
| Milestone | 1.6.1 Maintain existing collaboration with other H&SS divisions (Mental Health and Substance Abuse for example) to facilitate service referrals | Timeframe | Completed/ongoing (1) Existing H&SS divisions with whom CWS collaborates are invited to TDMs , PTMs and Interagency Meetings (2) 3 Mental Health clinicians and 1 supervisor are co-located with CWS, helping to facilitate ongoing collaboration. | Assigned to | CWS Management and Supervisors |
| | 1.6.2 Continue to collaborate with the FRC network and participate in the network meetings to resolve any issues in providing services/referrals to mutual clients | | Completed/ongoing: (1) FRC Network quarterly meetings are attended regularly by a combination of the staff assigned in "Assigned to." 2)CWS conducts monthly IFSI case staffings that includes IFSI social workers, VFM and other CWS staff as well as FRC staff. well as FRC staff. | | CWS Management and Supervisors |
| | 1.6.3 Continue to monitor case plans to ensure that clients' needs in these areas have been met | | Completed/ongoing: (1) Social Workers make monthly home visits in which case plans are discussed routinely (2) At least, every six months the Social Worker reports case plan progress to the court (3) Case plan development and progress are discussed with supervisor in regularly scheduled, individual supervision. | | Supervisors and Juvenile Court staff |

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| Strategy 1. 7 Collaborate with clients and service providers to assure that clients have an adequate after care plan to prevent recurrence of maltreatment and/or entry/re-entry to care | | <input type="checkbox"/> CAPIT | Strategy Rationale A family's access to ongoing follow up services developed in collaboration with them as a plan for after care can reduce recurrence of maltreatment and/or entry/re-entry to care. | | |
| | | <input type="checkbox"/> CBCAP | | | |
| | | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> PSSF | | | |
| | | <input type="checkbox"/> N/A | | | |
| Milestone | 1.7.1 Ensure that clients whose cases leave CWS have a plan including provision for follow up services if needed to address any remaining issues and reduce risk to children | Timeframe | Q2 2010:Completed/ongoing: (1) When a case ends, case carrying Social Worker advises the court (in court report) and parents of any remaining issues as well as of CWS' plan for mitigating the risk or risks (2) An Action Plan is developed during the youth's last PTM, which will include steps for mitigating any remaining risk issues. | Assigned to | CWS Supervisors |
| | 1.7.2 Provide clients with this written plan which can be given to service providers if/when they access follow up services | | Q2 2010: (same as 2 & 3 above) | | CWS Supervisors |
| Strategy 1. 8 (NEW STRATEGY) To provide therapeutic visitation between children and the non-custodial parent(s) in a protected environment | | <input type="checkbox"/> CAPIT | Strategy Rationale While children are in out-of-home care placements, it is important to maintain connections with their birth families. Therapeutic parent-child visits are a key strategy to helping parents understand the dynamics that led to removal of their children and making changes which enable a reunification that will provide children with a loving, safe family environment and that will preclude recurrence. | | |
| | | <input type="checkbox"/> CBCAP | | | |
| | | <input type="checkbox"/> PSSF | | | |
| | | <input type="checkbox"/> N/A | | | |
| Milestone | 1.8.1 Develop the referral process for use by CWS social workers | Timeframe | By end of Q4 2010 | Assigned to | Program Manager |

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| Strategy 1.9 (NEW STRATEGY) Provide support/mentoring to parent(s) while family is working toward reunification | | <input type="checkbox"/> CAPIT | Strategy Rationale Parents who have successfully completed reunification can provide parents with the type of support and mentorship that will provide a clear understanding what is required of them to affect successful reunification with their children | | |
| | | <input type="checkbox"/> CBCAP | | | |
| | | <input type="checkbox"/> PSSF | | | |
| | | <input type="checkbox"/> N/A | | | |
| Milestone | 1.9.1 Develop a job description for parents who will become mentors and partner with Drug Court to identify potential mentors as well as parents who will benefit from mentors | Timeframe | Q2 2011 | Assigned to | CWS Director and Program Manager |

B. Solano County CWS Matrix

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| Outcome/Systemic Factor #2: C3.3 In Care 3 Years or Longer (Emancipation/Age18) | | |
| County's Current Performance: Between 04/01/09 and 03/31/10, (Data extract Q1, 2010), 80.0% (an estimated 2 children) of Solano County youth in foster care who were either discharged to emancipation or turned 18 while still in care had been in foster care for 3 years or longer. CWS is showing a consistent increase away from the standard of 37.5% | | |
| Improvement Goal 2.0 When the SIP was written, 56.8% of Solano County youth in foster care who were either discharged to emancipation or turned 18 while still in care had been in foster care for 3 years or longer. At that time, the decision was made to set a goal of reducing by 5.8%, which would bring the county to 51% (which would require us to regain the lost ground as well as demonstrate improvement). | | |
| Strategy 2. 1 Strengthen use of Family Finding and other such search tools | <input type="checkbox"/> CAPIT | Strategy Rationale Locating relatives or extended family members who can provide placement and/or support for child/youth and family and assist in establishing connections will have a positive impact on preventing entry into care or facilitating timely exit into permanence |
| | <input type="checkbox"/> CBCAP | |
| | <input type="checkbox"/> PSSF | |
| | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> N/A | |

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| Milestone | 2.1.1 Continue training for staff on importance of locating relatives and use of tools | Timeframe | Ongoing: At this time, due to budget cuts, there is no training supervisor, which has necessitated de-prioritizing this milestone. Timeframe Q4 2011, if funding becomes available to staff training. | Assigned to | Staff Development |
| | 2.1.2 Utilize family finding by ER and Juvenile Detention Facility staff and continue throughout life of case | | Completed/ongoing (1) The "Absent Parent Search Request Form (attachment # 2) is referred by any Social Worker to a specific unit's Office Assistant (OA), who will facilitate the search. (2) All known relatives are invited to TDMs, where information regarding family connections is gathered and subsequently entered into the Family Chart located in CWS/CMS (3) All known relatives are invited to PTMs in which information is gathered regarding relative connections (4) Relative Notification Letter (Attachment #4) is sent to all known relatives from the Court Dependency Investigations (DI) unit as a means of identifying potential relative connection/ permanency (5) Case specific technical assistance is available via a permanent consultant to CWS Social Workers for help with family finding issues/ problems | | CWS and Probation staff |
| | 2.1.3 Increase CASA involvement in efforts to locate and engage family members for placement and/or support of children/youth | | Q2, 2010: This milestone has not been accomplished. A number of factors have affected both CWS and CASA's ability to move forward with this milestone by the stated timeframe, most notably, CASA's change of the Executive Director and subsequent organizational restructuring. CWS was working on a December 2010 date for training/ retraining CASA staff | | FM/FR/PP Manager and Supervisors and Probation Manager and Supervisor |

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| | <p>on family finding and engagement techniques; however, December 2010 is not possible. Timeframe Q4 2011, if funding becomes available to staff training. At this time, the training supervisor was redeployed to the recent supervisor vacancy in the Adoptions Unit, leaving no training staff.</p> | |
| <p>2.1.4 Continue to provide support groups for relative caretakers and adoptive parents to assist in stabilizing these placements</p> | <p>Completed/ongoing: (1) Social Worker who is contracted through CWS continues to facilitate ongoing support groups for relative caregivers and adoptive parents (2) A CWS contract agency, Lilliput, provides an ongoing, monthly support group for adoptive parents.</p> | <p>Social Worker provided through contract for supportive services</p> |

| Strategy 2. 2 Implement a plan for improved concurrent planning developed in Adoption Unit assessment | | <input type="checkbox"/> | CAPIT | Strategy Rationale Improved concurrent planning will allow placement of children/youth in the most permanent placement as early as possible thus reducing the number of youth who exit to permanence by emancipation | |
|---|---|-------------------------------------|---|--|--------------------|
| | | <input type="checkbox"/> | CBCAP | | |
| | | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | PSSF | | |
| | | <input type="checkbox"/> | N/A | | |
| Milestone | 2.2.1 Concurrent planning to begin while case is in ER with requirement for a family finding search within the first 30 days of the case | Timeframe | Q2, 2010: Completed/ ongoing: (1) In TDMs (prior to removal or in the case of child having been place into Protective Custody) discussion/information gathering for permanency begins immediately (2) Dependency Investigator (DI) routinely sends to all known relatives a "Family Finding letter in an attempt to find potential relatives willing to provide permanent/stable care .(3) DI has also created a 19 page document titled " Important Information for Relatives and Non-Related Extended Family Members (NREFM)" (Attachment #5) that is provide to caregivers who may be providing permanency.(4) As of December 2009, Adoption staff were given secondary assignments to cases needing support for achieving permanency, thus enabling ongoing consultation on concurrent planning throughout the life of the case | | Assigned to |
| | 2.2.2 Adoption staff to be available for consultation on concurrent planning throughout life of case | | Q2, 2010: Completed/ ongoing. As of December 2009, Adoption staff were given secondary assignments to cases needing support for achieving permanency, thus enabling ongoing consultation on concurrent planning throughout the life of the case | | |

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| | 2.2.3 Adoption staff will have secondary assignment to cases needing support for achieving permanence (search for appropriate homes, engage relatives to consider permanent options, etc.) | | Q3, 2010: Completed/ ongoing (Please see above) | | Adoption Unit Staff |
| | 2.2.4 Implement plan for Permanency Team Meetings, which would include concurrent planning, to occur at a minimum of every six months for each child/youth in out of home care | | Q2, 2010: Completed/ongoing as of March 1, 2010 (1) PTM full implemented and protocol finalized August 2010. | | FM/FR/PP/Adoption Managers and staff |

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| Strategy 2.3 Continue to implement CPYP strategies for permanence | | <input type="checkbox"/> | CAPIT | Strategy Rationale Provide team assessment identifying and establishing supportive placement and services that promote permanency for youth and that remain with him or her through exit from care | |
| | | <input type="checkbox"/> | CBCAP | | |
| | | <input type="checkbox"/> | PSSF | | |
| | | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | N/A | | |
| Milestone | 2.3.1 Continue to support CPYP workgroups and collaborate with Probation to ensure services to Probation youth | Timeframe | Completed/ ongoing: The principles of CPYP have been incorporated into CWS' overarching philosophy that embraces seeking and ultimately establishing "Permanency" for all children. The title, Permanency, has replaced the acronym CPYP. (1) Permanency workgroups had been meeting bi-weekly; however, effective September moved to monthly (2) Permanency workgroups have been integrated into practice throughout organization through TDMs, PTMs and CC25I | | CWS and Probation staff |
| | 2.3.2 Implement plan for Permanency Team Meetings to occur at a minimum of every six months for each child/youth in out of home care | | Q2, 2010: Completed/ ongoing as of March 1, 2010 | | FM/FR/PP Manager and staff |
| | 2.3.3 Continue providing training for CWS, CASA and Probation staff on CPYP strategies | | Ongoing/not completed: At this time, due to budget/funding cuts, the training supervisor was redeployed to the recent supervisor vacancy in the Adoptions Unit, leaving no training staff, which has necessitated de-prioritizing this milestone. Timeframe Q4 2011 if funding becomes available to staff training. | | CWS and Probation Staff Development |
| | | | | Assigned to | |

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| Strategy 2. 4 Continue to implement CC25I Initiative strategies | | <input type="checkbox"/> | CAPIT | Strategy Rationale Implementation/enhancement of services will enable youth to exit care with a stable supportive system in place to ensure a successful transition to adulthood | |
| | | <input type="checkbox"/> | CBCAP | | |
| | | <input type="checkbox"/> | PSSF | | |
| | | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | N/A | | |
| Milestone | 2.4.1 Continue to support CC25I workgroups including Probation staff and community partners | Timeframe | Completed and ongoing: (1) CC25I workgroups meet monthly. Community partners include, but are not limited to, Solano County Office of Education, Alternative Family Services, Travis Credit Union, United Way. Probation has experienced several significant challenges – major layoffs, 100% change in staff assigned to their placement unit, restructuring – that has precluded their participation for several months. | | Assigned to |
| | 2.4.2 Collaborate with Walter S. Johnson Foundation for technical support for CC25I | | Completed and ongoing: (1) technical support was received for identification of educational objectives and job resources for youth and through the Workforce Investment Board (WIB) (2) technical support was instrumental in facilitating a successful relationship with Solano Community College, who is now providing on-campus space for ILP staff. | | |
| | 2.4.3 Continue to recruit community partners to collaborate on and support permanency initiative | | Completed and ongoing; (1) potential community partners have been invited to trainings and a regional meeting in an effort to obtain their initial and ongoing support (2) current partners routinely advocate in community for support and have received numerous offers of support for families leaving CWS. | | |
| | | | | CWS and Probation Management and staff | |
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| Strategy 2. 5 Continue to build agency and community support for Permanency Team Meetings | | <input type="checkbox"/> | CAPIT | Strategy Rationale With strong agency and community support, individualized permanency plans for youth created with the youth's input and reviewed with them on a regular basis increases engagement and motivation to follow through on plan | |
| | | <input type="checkbox"/> | CBCAP | | |
| | | <input type="checkbox"/> | PSSF | | |
| | | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | N/A | | |
| Milestone | 2.5.1 Continue to recruit community partners to collaborate with CWS for permanence for youth | Timeframe | Completed and ongoing (1) To date, the Solano County Office of Education, CASA and ILP provider have joined Solano in efforts to support permanency for youth.(2)a community team meeting occurred on June 17, 2010,to advise community members about the permanency initiative underway in Solano County CWS and the potential role they may play in support of the initiative. | Assigned to | CWS Management and staff |
| | 2.5.2 Provide ongoing training on how to conduct such meetings and their importance | | Completed and ongoing: (1) Facilitation skills training occurred in August 9 th and 10 th 2010. Additional training is contingent upon the availability of funding. | | Staff Development |
| | 2.5.3 Involve youth to participate in a meaningful way in each Permanency Team Meeting | | Completed and ongoing: (1) Solano County's Youth Advocate/Mentor attends PTMs to help involve youth/support youth's participation. (2) in conjunction with personnel from ILSP, THP+ and Solano County Office of Education, CWS' Youth Advocate co-facilitates the Youth Action Team monthly meeting in which, among other goals, she helps youth to build self-advocacy skills. (3) during some face-to-face contacts, social workers along with the Youth Advocate involve youth in addressing issues related to permanency and transition to adulthood, focusing on establishing reunification, adoption, guardianship | | Case Management Staff |

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| | | | or other permanent life long connection with a trusted, caring adult. | |
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| Strategy 2. 6 (NEW STRATEGY) To provide a protected visitation and therapeutic intervention between children and the parent(s) | | <input type="checkbox"/> | CAPIT | Strategy Rationale While children are in out-of-home care placements, it is important to maintain connections with their birth families. Parent-child visits are a key strategy to accomplish this and to work toward permanent reunification of the family. Therapeutic visitation can assist in reunification of youth whose mental health and/or behavioral issues have precluded reunification. | |
| | | <input type="checkbox"/> | CBCAP | | |
| | | <input type="checkbox"/> | PSSF | | |
| | | <input type="checkbox"/> | N/A | | |
| Milestone | 2.6.1 Develop the referral process for use by CWS social workers | Timeframe | By ending of Q4 2010 | Assigned to | Program Manager |
| Describe any additional systemic factors needing to be addressed that support the improvement plan goals. The current economic situation is necessitating a disconcerting reduction of our staff (we estimate that by the time we begin to implement the SIP, staff will have been reduced from a high of 140 to approximately 98. As of October 2010 staffing is at 104). This severe reduction of staff whose primary responsibility is to serve and protect the vulnerable children and families of Solano County obligates CWS to develop a conservative plan of improvement with goals which we can hope to achieve with the limited resources remaining | | | | | |
| Describe educational/training needs (including technical assistance) to achieve the improvement goals. Providing educational/training to achieve the improvement goals will be affected by the lack of funding. | | | | | |
| Identify roles of the other partners in achieving the improvement goals. The support that the FRCs and other community based organizations provide to strengthen needy and vulnerable families and children is crucial to achieving the improvement goals; however, these supportive organizations have also been impacted by a reduction in funding. | | | | | |
| Identify any regulatory or statutory changes needed to support the accomplishment of the improvement goals. | | | | | |

C. Solano County Probation Matrix

| | | |
|--|--|---|
| Outcome C3.3 In Care 3 Years or Longer (Emancipation/Age 18) | | |
| Strategy 1 To enhance systematic approach to locating relatives and assist with permanency starting at the Intake level and throughout the probation system | | |
| Milestones | Timeframes | Updates |
| 1.1.1: Transition youth down in care level on placing in Solano County for stronger connections to ILP and THP | Family Finding Training to begin in FY 2009-2010 and Ongoing | Training has been provided for all probation staff. However, due to reduced funding CWS will not be able to assist by utilizing their search engine to locate relatives. All training information is available for probation staff on the network (NAS). Placement staff will now complete referrals for ILP/THP services for all youth returning to Solano County following placement, if appropriate. |

| | | |
|---|-----------------------|--|
| Strategy 1.2 To ensure that all relatives/caring adults are assessed before utilizing camp/ranch, foster care or GPO | | |
| Milestones | Timeframes | Updates |
| 1.2.1: Apply permanency and connectedness practices to all case work at the beginning stage of the juvenile justice system | July 2010 and Ongoing | Throughout the Intake and Court process, we attempt to identify caring adults to assist in possible placement and/or reunification efforts. Through placement screenings (facilitated by the Placement Supervisor) we ensure that all options are considered and thoroughly supported in the evaluation section of the social study report. We also facilitate Placement Review Meetings (PRM) on a monthly basis and review progress for all youth in placement to include reunification and permanency efforts made. |

| Strategy 1.3 To ensure that all relatives/caregivers complete the home approval process | | |
|---|--|---|
| Milestones | Timeframes | Updates |
| 1.3.1: Ensure staff is aware of the approval process, including funding and other aspects associated with placement | Training to begin FY 2009-2010 and Ongoing | Juvenile Division staff completed training on 6/30/10. All information is available on the network for staff to access when needed. |

| Strategy 1.4 To educate Probation Staff to refer parents, relatives, and caregivers to community based services | | |
|--|---|---|
| Milestones | Timeframes | Updates |
| 1.4.1: Ensure staff are aware of community based services (FRC's) and referral process | March 2010 and Ongoing | Probation distributed a list of all FRC's to staff, including location and type of services provided. |
| 1.4.2: Following training, staff will begin to make referrals to the FRC's | April 2010 or upon completion of training and Ongoing | Recently informed by CWS that we would not be able to create a separate referral form to track probation referrals. Staff is making referrals to the FRC's but no mechanism to track number of probation families served. In addition, still need department training from FRC staff. All material received thus far have been through email. |

| Strategy 2.1 Strengthen use of Family Finding and other such search tools | | |
|--|-------------------|--|
| Milestones | Timeframes | Updates |
| 2.1.2: Utilize family finding y ER and the Juvenile Detention Facility staff and continue throughout life of case | Ongoing | Completed division training 6/30/10 |
| 2.1.3: Increase involvement for CASA in efforts to locate and engage family members for placement and/or support of children/youth | Q2, 2010 | Completed family tree template and incorporated form in case mgmt system (CASE). We are sending Notification of Relatives letter once placement is being recommended. CASA not feasible for probation due to a lack of volunteers. |

| Strategy 2.3: Continue to implement CPYP strategies for permanence | | |
|---|-------------------|---|
| Milestones | Timeframes | Updates |
| 2.3.1: Continue to support CPYP workgroups and collaborate with Probation to ensure services to Probation youth | Ongoing | Completed 12/2009 Probation staff provided training on Family Finding strategies from Kevin Campbell |
| 2.3.3: Continue providing training for CWS, CASA and Probation Staff on CPYP strategies | Ongoing | Completed family finding training with CWS in 12/2009. Completed relative approval process training for probation staff on 6/30/10. |

| Strategy 2.4: Continue to implement CC25I Initiative strategies | | |
|---|-------------------|---|
| Milestones | Timeframes | Updates |
| 2.4.1: Continue to support CC25I workgroups, including Probation staff and community partners | Ongoing | Currently attending Steering Committee meetings, however, due to staff reductions unable to attend meetings on a monthly basis. |

IX. Potential Additional CWS Strategies

In keeping with Solano County CWS' tradition of ensuring staff's ongoing contribution to the System Improvement process, on October 12, 2010, an update of our SIP was presented during a morning and an afternoon quarterly "All Staff" meeting. Following each presentation staff broke into focus groups in order to provide feedback regarding their experience with our SIP progress as well as to brainstorm possible additional strategies to accomplish our improvement goals. Because CWS consistently performs well on S1.1 No Recurrence of Maltreatment, the decision was made to center our attention on C3.3 In Care 3 Years or Longer (Emancipate/Age 18). In the interest of time, the SIP milestones for C3.3 were summarized and placed into one of the following four broader categories.

Involvement of Community Partners

- renew our efforts to work with CASA to streamline sharing of information
- take a more active role in encouraging CASA participation at PTMs
- work with Section 8 Housing Authority to reduce barriers to obtaining housing
- increase involvement of faith based organizations to help provide support to families (e.g., food, clothing etc)

Family Finding and Engagement/Support

- would benefit from having a dedicated position (family finding specialist)
- fully utilize CWS/CMS to track efforts (ensure all staff are trained in use of)
- optimize Family Tree (1) assist families with completion of tool (2) use PTM forum to update and/or complete Family Tree
- work with CASA to resume efforts to mine historical information about relatives and Non Related Extended Family Members (NREFM)
- ensure more "user friendly" support group (i.e., available child care, incentives, training opportunities, mentors)

Permanency Team Meetings

- more support needed to help arrange PTMs (i.e., calling service providers etc, reserving the room)
- train bilingual facilitator
- PTMs for every child (long-term goal that has potential for impacting several outcomes)

Concurrent Planning

- expand PTMs for all children/youth
- mandatory TDMs for families entering with a substantiated investigation who have had a prior substantiated referral
- simplify Legal Guardianship process for ER workers
- adoption staff/supervisor present at FR/FR PTMs to inform attendees of permanency options
- permanency information – Legal Guardianship/Adoptions – needs to be available at TDMs

Integrating these action steps into practice would be ideal; however, the uncertainty of the budget necessitates CWS' management judicious analysis of which strategies might be possible to implement at this time and which will need to be considered for future implementation.

FAMILY TREE



Case Name: _____
Focus Parent: _____
Date: _____
Assigned SWIII: _____

NON-RELATED SUPPORT

NON-RELATED SUPPORT

| | | | |
|-------------------|-------------------|-------------------|-------------------|
| GREAT GRANDFATHER | GREAT GRANDMOTHER | GREAT GRANDFATHER | GREAT GRANDMOTHER |
| GREAT AUNT | GREAT UNCLE | GREAT AUNT | GREAT UNCLE |

NON-RELATED SUPPORT

NON-RELATED SUPPORT

GRANDFATHERS

| | | | |
|------------------------|-------------|------------------------|------------------------|
| AUNT | STEP PARENT | UNCLE | ONCLE |
| 1 ST COUSIN | PARENT | 1 ST COUSIN | 1 ST COUSIN |
| HALF SISTER | CHILD | BROTHER | HALF BROTHER |

NIECE/NEPHEW

Please complete each box with the associated name, address & telephone number of each relative or non-related support member.

NIECE/NEPHEW

FAMILY TREE

The diagram consists of 12 oval shapes and 12 rectangular shapes arranged in a hierarchical structure. The ovals are labeled "NON-RELATED SUPPORT" and the rectangles are shaded. The layout is as follows:

- Top row: 3 ovals (left, center, right), each labeled "NON-RELATED SUPPORT".
- Second row: 6 rectangles (left, center-left, center-right, right), all shaded.
- Third row: 6 rectangles (left, center-left, center-right, right), all shaded.
- Bottom row: 3 ovals (left, center, right), each labeled "NON-RELATED SUPPORT".

Vertical lines connect the ovals to the rectangles below them, and horizontal lines connect the rectangles in each row. A dashed vertical line runs through the center of the diagram.

ABSENT PARENT SEARCH REQUEST

| | | | |
|--|--|---|--|
| 1) Mother's Case Name: | | 2) Date Submitted: | |
| 3) Primary SW's Name: | | 4) Ext.: | |
| 5) DUE DATE: (at least one full month from the received date) | | | |
| Declaration for Due Diligence | | | |
| 6) What is the purpose of your search? | | | |
| a) <input type="checkbox"/> Declaration of Due Diligence Report needed for Court | | Hearing Date: _____ | |
| Hearing Type: <input type="checkbox"/> Juris or Dispo <input type="checkbox"/> Status Review | | <input type="checkbox"/> 366.26 <input type="checkbox"/> Other: _____ | |
| b) <input type="checkbox"/> Just need to locate the parent and an official report is not needed. We will provide the APS results via e-mail. | | | |
| 7) Name of the Person you are searching for: _____ | | | |
| Child Name | | Relationship | J# |
| Child #1: | | | DOB |
| Child #2: | | | |
| Child #3: | | | |
| Child #4: | | | |
| 8) Please give all information you have about the person to be located. | | | |
| DOB: | | Social Security #: | |
| Place of Birth: | | Driver's Lic #: | |
| Where grew up: | | High School: | |
| Military Service (branch): | | Enlisted/Discharged dates: | |
| Prison: | | State: | |
| Mental Hospitalization (where): | | When: | |
| Employment History: | | Types of Jobs: | |
| Employment Skills, union, trades: | | | |
| Prior Names Used: | | | |
| Prior Marriages to: | | | |
| Divorces (dates) other children (their location & names): | | | |
| Physical Description: | | | |
| 9) List known or prior addresses, phone numbers for absent parent. (List with whom he/she lived if known.) | | | |
| | | | Did you contact them: <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No |
| | | | Did you contact them: <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No |
| | | | Did you contact them: <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No |
| Have relatives and friends been questioned?: <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No | | | |
| Have you entered the above information and results on Search Log tab? <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No | | | |
| Additional Comments: | | | |
| 10) List attorneys for the case: | | | |
| | | Mother's attorney: | |
| | | Father's attorney: | |
| | | Minor(s) attorney: | |
| Search Specialist Use Only: | | | |
| Initial π | | ReCheck π | |
| Vine Line: | | Prison Locator: | |
| MEDS: | | CWS/CMS: | |
| | | CalWIN: | |

FAMILY CHART - MATERNAL

| | | |
|----------------------------|----------------------|----------------------------|
| Child: DOB: Court #: | 1. 2. 3. 4. | Sibling Name(s) (same dad) |
|----------------------------|----------------------|----------------------------|

| | |
|--|---------|
| Mother: Date of Info: Name: Address: Phone: Birthplace: DOB: Marriage Place: Date: Divorce Place: Date: Death Place: Date: Spouse name/Info: Source of Info (name): | Maiden: |
| Comments: | |

FAMILY CHART - MATERNAL

| | | | |
|---|--|--|--|
| Maternal Grandmother: Date of Info: Name: Maiden: Address: Phone (Ph#): Birthplace: DOB: Marriage Place: Date: Divorce Place: Date: Death Place: Date: Spouse name/Info (SP/Info): Source of Info (name): | | Maternal Grandfather: Date of Info: Name: Address: Phone (Ph#): Birthplace: DOB: Marriage Place: Date: Divorce Place: Date: Death Place: Date: Spouse name/Info (Sp/Info): Source of Info (name): | |
| Comments: | | | |
| Mat. Great-Grandmother Date: Name: Add: Ph#: BOP: DOB: MP: Date: DvP: Date: DP: Date: SP/Info: Source: | Mat. Great-Grandfather Date: Name: Add: Ph#: BP: DOB: MP: Date: DvP: Date: DP: Date: SP/Info: Source: | Mat. Great-Grandmother Date: Name: Add: Ph#: BP: DOB: MP: Date: DvP: Date: DP: Date: SP/Info: Source: | Mat. Great-Grandfather Date: Name: Add: Ph#: BP: DOB: MP: Date: DvP: Date: DP: Date: SP/Info: Source: |
| Comments: | | | |

FAMILY CHART - MATERNAL

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| Adult Sibling #1 Date: Name: Add: Ph#: POB: DOB: MP: Date: DvP: Date: DP: Date: SP/Info: Source: | Adult Sibling #2 Date: Name: Add: Ph#: POB: DOB: MP: Date: DvP: Date: DP: Date: SP/Info: Source: | Adult Sibling #3 Date: Name: Add: Ph#: POB: DOB: MP: Date: DvP: Date: DP: Date: SP/Info: Source: | Adult Sibling #4 Date: Name: Add: Ph#: POB: DOB: MP: Date: DvP: Date: DP: Date: SP/Info: Source: |
|---|---|---|---|

Comments:

| | | | |
|---|---|---|--|
| Maternal Cousin #1 Date: Name: Add: Ph#: POB: DOB: MP: Date: DvP: Date: DP: Date: SP/Info: Source: | Maternal Cousin #2 Date: Name: Add: Ph#: POB: DOB: MP: Date: DvP: Date: DP: Date: SP/Info: Source: | Maternal Cousin #3 Date: Name: Add: Ph#: POB: DOB: MP: Date: DvP: Date: DP: Date: SP/Info: Source: | Maternal Cousin #4 Date: Name: Add: Ph#: POB: DOB: MP: Date: DvP: Date: DP: Date: SP/Info: Source: Date: |
|---|---|---|--|

Comments:

FAMILY CHART - MATERNAL

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| Maternal Aunt #1 Date: Name: Add: Ph#: POB: DOB: MP: Date: DvP: Date: DP: Date: SP/Info: Source: | Maternal Aunt #2 Date: Name: Add: Ph#: POB: DOB: MP: Date: DvP: Date: DP: Date: SP/Info: Source: | Maternal Aunt #3 Date: Name: Add: Ph#: POB: DOB: MP: Date: DvP: Date: DP: Date: SP/Info: Source: | Maternal Aunt #4 Date: Name: Add: Ph#: POB: DOB: MP: Date: DvP: Date: DP: Date: SP/Info: Source: |
| Comments: | | | |
| Maternal Uncle #1 Date: Name: Add: Ph#: POB: DOB: MP: Date: DvP: Date: DP: Date: SP/Info: Source: Date: | Maternal Uncle #2 Date: Name: Add: Ph#: POB: DOB: MP: Date: DvP: Date: DP: Date: SP/Info: Source: Date: | Maternal Uncle #3 Date: Name: Add: Ph#: POB: DOB: MP: Date: DvP: Date: DP: Date: SP/Info: Source: Date: | Maternal Uncle #4 Date: Name: Add: Ph#: POB: DOB: MP: Date: DvP: Date: DP: Date: SP/Info: Source: Date: |
| Comment: | | | |

Solano County Health & Social Services Department

Mental Health Services
Public Health Services
Substance Abuse Services
Older & Disabled Adult Services



Employment and
Eligibility Services
Children's Services
Administrative Services

Patrick O. Duterte, Director

Linda Orrante, Deputy Director
Child Welfare Services

P.O. Box 12000, MS 5-230, Vallejo, CA 94590
(707) 784-8260 Fax (707) 421-7709

DATE

Name
Address
State

Re: Minor(s)

Dear :

I am a social worker for Child Welfare Services in Solano County. I am sending you this letter to let you know that a petition has been filed in Solano County Juvenile Court, and the child(ren) has/have been currently placed in foster care.

California law requires that when a child is removed from their home, relatives should be located, contacted and told about the child's removal and how the relative can choose to help the child during this difficult time. Because you are related to the child(ren), I am sending you information about ways you can be of help, if you choose to, and how you can contact me about that.

A few of the ways that you can help include being involved with helping the child(ren) get back together with their/her/his parent, participating in Permanency Team Meetings, letting me know about other relatives who may want to help, visiting with child(ren), or to having the child(ren) live with you. You may also provide information to the juvenile court verbally or in writing. You may have other ideas about how you can help that we can talk about.

I've enclosed some additional information that you may find helpful. I would be very pleased to speak with you and answer any questions you have. Your reply to this letter does not obligate you in any way, but please know that this may be the only notification you receive. Failure to respond may result in decisions about the child(ren)'s care, placement or adoption without your input.

Relative Letter
Page 2

Please contact me at the number listed below as soon as you can. If you are calling long distance, you may make a "collect call" and identify yourself as a relative of the child(ren)..

Sincerely,

Social Worker III
275 Beck Avenue, MS 5-230, Fairfield, CA 94534
707-784-

Enclosures:

1. Brochure-The Dependency Court: How it Works

Action Required:

For your information

**Important Information for
Relatives and Non-Related
Extended Family Members
(NREFM)**

Relative Assessment Workers
Charm Lee (707) 784-8285
Trisha Gutierrez-Magwood (707) 784-8296

Out-of-Home Services Supervisor
Christina Stimmann (707) 784-8496



Solano County
Department of Health and Social Services
Child Welfare Services Division
275 Beck Avenue
Fairfield, CA 94533

Solano County
Department of Health and Social Services
Child Welfare Services Division
275 Beck Avenue
Fairfield, CA 94533

NOTES

Dear Prospective Caregiver,

When a child must be removed from his or her own family, we search for members of the family and extended family to provide care for the child. These individuals share a common history and experience and may provide the most family-like atmosphere for the child. Being removed from his or her family of origin can be a very traumatic experience, so Solano County Department of Health and Social Services strives to achieve the best possible plan for the child.

There are certain State and Federal requirements that must be met in order to care for a child. A relative or non-related extended family member (NREFM) that wishes to apply as a caregiver to a dependent child is requested to thoroughly read this booklet, as you will be required to meet all of the standards described. However, in specific circumstances, criminal clearances and waivers (allowable exceptions to the rules) may be given consideration provided they are in the child's best interests. The social worker may be able to assist you in resolving any difficulties or problem areas. The approval of the home does not create an entitlement to placement, which is based on the "best interest" of the child(ren) involved.

Financial and medical assistance may also be available to cover the child's basic needs.

This booklet provides an overview of the State and Federal requirements and will be explained in detail during your in-person interview with the Relative Assessment Social Worker. At that time, you can discuss any questions or concerns you may have.

Thank you.

NOTES

This Booklet Contains Information About:

1. General qualifications
2. Criminal record clearance
3. Emergency plan
4. Reporting requirements:
 - ❖ Danger to child
 - ❖ Changes
 - ❖ Absences
5. Children's records
6. Personal rights
7. Discipline
8. Telephones
9. Transportation
10. Food services
11. Responsibility for providing care and supervision
12. Activities
13. Buildings and Grounds (Exceptions may be considered in some situations)
 - ❖ Bedrooms
 - ❖ Beds
 - ❖ Home Hygiene and Safety Standards
 - ❖ Pools/Bodies of Water
 - ❖ Other Safety Standards and Regulations
14. Outdoor Activity Space
15. Storage Space
16. Court orders
17. Planning for the child's future
18. Role of the Social Worker



*You are responsible for transportation to court-ordered services (visitation, medical, dental, mental health, court hearings, school, etc.), unless otherwise arranged and approved by the child(ren)'s case manager.

18. Planning for the Child's Future

Our goal is to reunify the child with their parent(s) whenever possible. If the child cannot be returned home after twelve (12) months (six months if the child is under three years), the law requires that a permanent plan for adoption, guardianship, or long-term placement be made for the child. You may be given the option of providing a permanent home for the child or assisting the child to move on to a permanent home.



19. Role of the social worker:

The social worker is:

- ❖ The case manager for the child and his/her family.
- ❖ Responsible for ensuring the safety of the child.
- ❖ Responsible for assisting the parent(s) to successfully accomplish the goal of the case plan.
- ❖ Responsible for ensuring that the Court orders are followed.
- ❖ Responsible for arranging and monitoring services for the child.
- ❖ Your link with Solano County Child Welfare Services and the Court.

1. General Qualifications

- Ability to provide care and supervision for specific children, including ability to communicate with the children.
- Knowledge of the laws and regulations and demonstrate the ability to comply.
- Ability to maintain financial and other records.
- Complete trainings provided by the Department.
- Ability and willingness to follow all orders of the Juvenile Court, including specific instructions regarding visitation between the child and the parent(s).
- Be educated, trained, or experienced in areas related to the qualifications.

Please discuss any difficulties or problem areas with your Social Worker as exceptions can be made to some of the requirements described in this booklet.

2. Criminal Record Clearance

All caregivers and other adults who may have significant contact with the child are subject to federal, state, and local criminal record review, including fingerprint clearance and clearance of state, FBI and local child abuse records.

3. Emergency Plan

Each caregiver shall post emergency telephone numbers, discuss emergency situations with children, and practice emergency procedures every 6 months and at the time of new placements.



15. Outdoor Activity Space



The caregiver must provide access to yard or outdoor activity space, which is free from hazards to life and health.



16. Storage Space

- ❖ Medicines, disinfectants, cleaning solutions, poisons, firearms, and other dangerous items shall be stored where inaccessible to children.
- ❖ Storage areas for firearms and other dangerous weapons shall be locked. Alternatively, trigger locks shall be used or the firing pin removed from the firearm.
- ❖ Firing pins shall be stored and locked separately from firearms
- ❖ Ammunition shall be stored and locked separately from firearms.



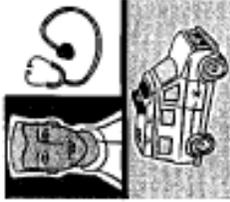
17. Court Orders



The Juvenile Court has, and/or will be making, specific orders for visitation with the parent(s), siblings, or grandparents, as well as attending therapy, etc. It is critical that you follow these orders exactly. The social worker will explain these orders to you. The child(ren) may have a court-appointed special advocate (CASA) assigned to them. These individuals work one-on-one with the child(ren). Be sure that you understand each order as it pertains to your responsibilities.

4. Reporting Requirements

The caregiver must report the following to the Department by contacting the assigned Social Worker by telephone and using an Incident Report:



- ❖ **Danger to Child Incidents (must be reported immediately)**
 - Death of any child from any cause.
 - Any injury to any child which requires medical treatment.
 - Any unusual incident or child absence which threatens the physical or emotional health or safety of any child.
 - Any suspected physical, sexual, or psychological abuse of any child.
 - Communicable diseases as reported to the caregiver by a health professional.
 - Poisonings.
 - Catastrophes.
 - Fires or explosions which occur in or on the premises.



❖ Changes

- Any change in the caregiver's residence or mailing address is to be reported prior to the occurrence, at least 30 thirty days prior to the move if known.
- All changes in household composition must be reported **immediately**, including any additions to the family.
- Any new individuals moving into your home require immediate notification, fingerprinting, and criminal record clearance.

❖ Absences

When the caregiver intends to be absent from the home for 48 hours or longer, the approval agency must be notified in writing or by telephone and include the following information:

- Dates of intended absence.
- Whether the child will accompany the caregiver or remain in the home.
- Telephone number where caregiver may be contacted.
- Name, address, and telephone number of APPROVED substitute caregiver.

5. Children's Records

❖ The caregiver must maintain a separate, complete, and current record or file in the home for each child placed. A Health Education Passport will be



given for each child. A current placement agreement with the name, birth date, and date of placement in the home, educational records, and case plan information should be kept in the Passport.

- ❖ The file should also contain a written consent which authorizes the caregiver to obtain routine medical and dental care in an emergency if the Department cannot be reached.
- ❖ A record of all medical, dental, and mental health appointments must be maintained, including the doctor's name and the date of appointments.
- ❖ The Juvenile Court requires that the social worker provide all of this information in the Court Report.
- ❖ All information and records regarding the children shall be confidential.

❖ Other Safety Standards and Regulations

- Caregiver shall maintain a comfortable home temperature for children at all times.
- Caregiver shall ensure the safety of the child in homes with fireplaces and open-faced heaters and woodstoves.
- The caregiver shall provide lighting in all rooms and other areas to ensure the comfort and safety of all persons in the home.
- Faucets shall deliver hot water at a safe temperature.
- Garbage shall be stored, located, and disposed of in a way that will not permit the transmission of disease or odors, create a nuisance, or provide a breeding place or food source for insects or rodents.
- All containers used for storing garbage are to have tight fitting covers, be in good repair, be leak-proof and rodent-proof, and shall be maintained in clean conditions.
- Garbage containers, including movable bins, receiving rotting waste shall be emptied at least once per week or more often if necessary. Each movable bin shall provide for suitable access and a drainage device to allow complete cleaning at the storage area.
- All caregiver homes shall have an approved and functioning smoke detector installed in the hallway of each sleeping area, or outside each sleeping area, which is clearly audible within each sleeping area.

❖ Pools /Bodies of Water

The following rules apply to homes with swimming pools (or other "bodies of water" such as hot tubs, fish ponds, fish ponds, and similar bodies of water), *who have children under 10 years of age OR a child that is developmentally disabled, mentally handicapped, or needs special care and supervision:*



- The water must be inaccessible when not in use by having a pool cover or by surrounding the pool with a fence. Pool covers shall support the weight of an adult and be placed on the pool and locked while not in use.
- Gates shall swing away from the pool, self-close, and have a self-latching device located no more than six inches from the top of the gate.
- Fences shall be at least five feet high and must not obscure the pool from view.
- Where an above-ground pool structure is used, the ladder must be removed when pool is not in use.
- All in-ground pools and above-ground pools, which cannot be emptied after each use, shall have a working pump and filtering system.
- An adult who has the ability to swim shall provide supervision at all times when children are using a pool or a body of water from which rescue requires the rescuer's ability to swim.



6. Personal Rights

Each child shall have personal rights that must be protected by the caregiver. These rights include safe accommodations, freedom from corporal punishment, freedom to attend religious services of his/her choice, not to be locked in any room, not to be placed in any restraining device, not to be given any medications unless directed by their physician (psychotropic medications can only be authorized by the court), and many others. These rights are described, in detail, in the separate 'Child's Rights' document provided to the child and caregiver. The caregiver will be required to sign this document indicating he or she will protect the child's rights.

7. Discipline

Any form of discipline which violates a child's personal rights is prohibited.

Any, and all, forms of corporal punishment are prohibited, including any action of a punitive nature. Spanking is NOT allowed at any time.



8. Telephones

All relative/non-related extended family member homes shall have telephone service, unless alternative telephone access is approved and documented in the Child Welfare file.



9. Transportation



The caregiver shall ensure that all transportation provided for children in their care is provided in vehicles that are in safe operating condition and that the drivers comply with applicable laws. The caretaker must have a valid Driver's License and current auto insurance, as required by law. Seat belts are required at all times. Booster seats are required for children under eight (8) years or 80 pounds.



10. Food Service



The caregiver shall provide or ensure at least 3 nutritious meals per day, which meet each child's dietary needs. Whenever children in placement eat at the home, they will have their meals with family members in a family setting. Infants who are unable to hold a bottle shall be held during bottle-feeding.



11. Reasonable and Prudent Parent Standard

This standard is intended to assist caregivers in normalizing the life of a child, while making careful and sensible parental decisions that maintain the child's health, safety, and best interest. Every child is entitled to participate in age-appropriate extracurricular, enrichment, and social activities.

12. Responsibility for Providing Care and Supervision

- ❖ The caregiver shall provide care and supervision appropriate to the type of child(ren) to be served, including ability to communicate with the child(ren).

❖ Home Hygiene and Safety Standards

- ✓ The home shall be clean, safe, sanitary and in good repair at all times for the safety and well-being of the children. The caregiver shall take measures to keep the home reasonably free of flies and other insects.
- ✓ All outdoor and indoor passageways, stairways, inclines, ramps, open porches and other areas of potential hazard are to be kept free of obstruction.
- ✓ The caregiver who accepts a child with a disability is expected to make special provisions, including changes to the buildings and grounds to protect and assist the child and maximize the child's potential for self-help.
- ✓ Additional equipment, aids, and/or conveniences shall be provided in homes accommodating children who need such items.
- ✓ The caregiver shall maintain at least one toilet, sink, and tub or shower, in safe, clean operating condition.



- If two children have been sharing a room, and one of them turns 18, they may continue to share the bedroom as long as they remain compatible and the agency has granted an exception.
- Each bedroom shall have portable or permanent closets and drawer space to accommodate the child(ren)'s clothing and personal belongings.

❖ Beds

The caregiver must provide each child with an individual bed, which is equipped with a clean, comfortable mattress, clean linens, blankets and pillows, all in good repair.

- Linen shall be changed at least once per week or more often when necessary to ensure that clean linen is in use by children at all times.
- Beds shall be arranged to allow easy passage between beds and easy entrance into the room.
- The caregiver shall provide each infant with a safe and sturdy bassinet or crib, appropriate to the child's age and size. An infant who can climb out of a crib shall be provided with an age-appropriate bed.
- Bunk beds of more than two tiers shall not be used.
- Bunk beds shall have railings on both sides of the upper tier to prevent falling.
- Children under six years of age, or those who are unable to climb into or out of the upper tier unassisted, shall not be permitted to use the upper tier.



- ❖ The caregiver shall provide the services identified in each child's case plan.
- ❖ The caregiver is responsible for ensuring care and supervision of the child of any minor parent in placement and the direct care and supervision of the child of a minor parent during the hours that the minor parent is unavailable.

Occasional Short-term Babysitter

- If the caregiver anticipates being absent from the home for **no more than 24 hours** at a time, on an **occasional** basis, the caregiver is permitted to arrange for an occasional short-term babysitter to provide care and supervision to a child.
- An occasional short-term babysitter may be under 18 years old, but **must** have the maturity, experience, and ability necessary to provide adequate care and supervision to a child.
- A child in care may act as an occasional short-term babysitter; however, the caregiver must apply the reasonable and prudent parent standard to determine that it is appropriate.
- A child in care **cannot be required** to babysit.

Alternative Caregiver

- If the caregiver anticipates being absent from the home for **longer than 24 hours**, the caregiver is permitted to arrange for an alternative caregiver to provide care and supervision to a child **unless prohibited** by the social worker, probation officer, court order, or the Department.
- The alternative caregiver must be 18 years or older.
- The alternative caregiver must have a criminal record clearance and a child abuse central index clearance through the Department.

- The alternative caregiver must provide care and supervision to the child *in* the approved relative/NREFM caregiver's home.
- The caregiver must provide verbal and written notification to the child's social worker or probation officer *prior to* the caregiver's absence from the home.
- ***If the caregiver will be absent for more than 72 hours, the caregiver must receive prior approval from the social worker or probation officer.***

Respite Care

- Respite care ***shall not exceed 72 hours.***
- The caregiver may prearrange child care when the caregiver is absent or incapacitated.
- Respite care is offered as part of a case plan to allow a temporary respite of parental duties, so that a caregiver is able to fulfill other responsibilities necessary to improve or maintain the parenting function.
- Respite care is not to be used for routine, on-going child day care.
- Respite care ***must*** be provided by a ***licensed, approved, or certified caregiver.***

Leaving a Child Alone without Adult Supervision

- If the caregiver anticipates being absent from the home on an *occasional* basis, the caregiver is permitted to leave a child alone without adult supervision.
- A child ***shall not*** be left unsupervised overnight.
- The caregiver shall apply the reasonable and prudent parent standard, to determine the appropriateness of leaving a child alone without adult supervision.
- The child must know where emergency numbers are posted, must know emergency procedures, and must know where and how to contact the caregiver.

13. Activities

The caregiver shall provide the child(ren) opportunities for, and encourage participation in, group sports, leisure time, family, school, daily living activities, and other age-appropriate activities.

14. Buildings and Grounds (exceptions may be permitted)



❖ Bedrooms

The bedroom arrangements in the home must, at a minimum, meet the following requirements for everyone in the home including adults where relevant:

- No more than two children shall share a bedroom.
- Children of the opposite sex shall not share a bedroom unless each child is under five years of age.
- No room commonly used for other purposes shall be used as a bedroom. For example: living rooms, halls, stairways, unfinished attics or basement, garage, storage areas, and sheds or similar detached buildings.
- No bedroom shall be used as a public or general passageway to another room.
- Except for infants, children shall not share a bedroom with an adult.
- In bedrooms shared by adults and infants, no more than two infants and no more than two adults shall share the room.