

California Child and Family Services Review
2009-2012 Riverside County Integrated
System Improvement Plan

ANNUAL UPDATE

MARCH 2011

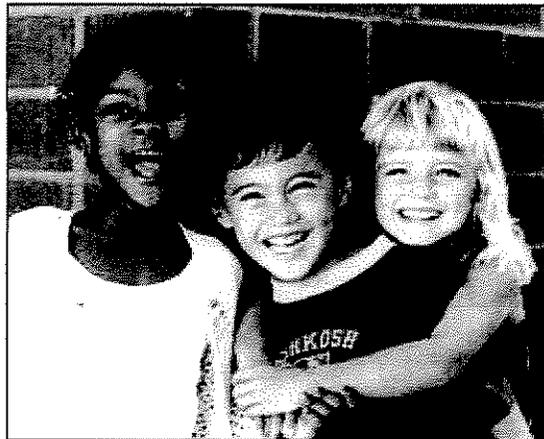


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"Critical to our success are people at the State, County, community and neighborhood levels joining together in a comprehensive effort to ensure every child in California will live in a safe, stable, permanent home, nurtured by healthy families and strong communities."

--Child Welfare Services Redesign, Stakeholders Group Final Report (September, 2003)

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Executive Summary

Background:

In 2001, California Legislature passed Assembly Bill (AB) 636, the Child Welfare System Improvement and Accountability Act, setting forth the development of the California Outcomes and Accountability System (COAS). Focusing on child safety, permanency and well being factors, COAS required all counties in California to develop a performance monitoring and accountability system known as the System Improvement Plan (SIP). Consistent with the COAS requirement, Riverside County developed the SIP involving three key collaborative planning stages: County Self Assessment (CSA), Needs Assessment, and Peer Quality Case Review.

Purpose:

As required by the CDSS-COAS, this report provides an annual update on the overall progress of the Department of Public Social Services (DPSS Children's Services Division) and the Probation Department in implementing the second Riverside County SIP for 2009-2012. The update includes progress made on specific measures that DPSS and Probation have prioritized ("Priority Focus Areas") within the three critical child welfare areas of *Safety, Permanency and Well Being*:

1. Reduce child re-entry to foster care (DPSS)
2. Improve out-of-home placement stability for all youth (DPSS)
3. Decrease the total number of youth in group homes (DPSS)
4. Improve family reunification rate (Probation)

Accomplishments:

It has been two years since the implementation of the Riverside County SIP. During 2009 and 2010, DPSS and Probation have made continuous improvements on performance for four out of six SIP improvement goals in the areas of Safety, Permanency and Well Being:

1. The rate of foster care re-entry has declined from 12.9%¹ to 9.2%. Riverside is below the national standard (9.9%) and the state average (12.1%).
2. The number of youth placed in group home care continues to decline from 6.5%² to 5.5%, and is below the state average of 6.8%.
3. Placement stability for children in out-of-home care (less than 12 months) has improved from 82.9%³ to 83.7%⁴. For children who remained in foster care for a longer period of time, placement stability rates have stayed fairly steady at 62.0%⁵ for children in foster care between 12-24 months; and at 30% for those in care for 24 months or longer.
4. Reunification rate (within 12 months) for Probation youth remains relatively stable at 50%.

Strategies:

DPSS and Probation will continue to work collaboratively with community leaders and organizations to achieve improvements on all child welfare outcome areas. In partnership with key community stakeholders, the following core strategies have been identified and implemented to improve child welfare outcomes: enhanced management information systems; training and recruitment of caregivers, staff and service providers; quality assurance systems; and agency collaboration.

¹ Source: SafeMeasures, Extract date 11/4/2011 for Jan – Dec 2009.

² Source: California Department of Social Services / University of California at Berkeley, 10/6/2010 (UCB) for Jan – Dec 2009. (This was the most current data as of March 2011.)

³ Source: UCB for Jan – Dec 2008. (This was the most current data as of March 2011.)

⁴ Source: UCB for Apr 2009 – March 2010. (This was the most current data as of March 2011.)

⁵ Source: UCB for Apr 2009 – March 2010. (This was the most current data as of March 2011.)

SIP Progress Report: March 2010-2011

Purpose

As mandated by the *Child Welfare System Improvement and Accountability Act* (AB 636, 2001) and the California Outcomes and Accountability System (COAS), Riverside County developed an integrated System Improvement Plan (SIP) in 2008. The SIP incorporated results from the Needs Assessment and the Peer Quality Case Review, reflecting a systems-wide planning and feedback process that maximizes continuous community involvement.

Riverside County has identified the following SIP goals and strategies along with thirty milestones to improve its child welfare service provision as led by the Department of Public Social Services-Children's Services Division (DPSS) and the Department of Probation:

GOALS:

1. Promote successful reunification
2. Reduce foster care re-entries
3. Improve placement stability

STRATEGIES:

1. Improving relevant Management Information Systems (MIS)
2. Improving foster/relative caregiver training, recruitment and retention
3. Improving quality assurance systems
4. Improving staff and provider training, and
5. Improving agency collaboration

This Riverside County SIP Progress Report is being submitted to CDSS by Riverside County to provide the current status of the SIP implementation strategies during reporting period, March 2010 to March 2011. A similar SIP update report was provided to the Riverside County Board of Supervisors on March 2011.

Participation

In collaboration with more than 200 community stakeholders, DPSS and Probation relied on partners from public and private agencies to develop the 2009-2012 Integrated System Improvement Plan. Starting in 2007, the planning process included a county-wide Needs Assessment, ongoing outcome performance review, Peer Quality Case Review (PQCR), and engagement of internal and external stakeholders during the County Self Assessment (CSA) process in 2008.

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SIP Progress Report: March 2010-2011, Continued

Ongoing Stakeholders Communication

To ensure active engagement of staff and community partners in the ongoing SIP efforts, Riverside County has been facilitating bi-annual Community Partners Forums to evaluate and review progress made on the SIP objectives since 2009. For this reporting period, two forums were held (April 29, 2010 and November 4, 2010), each attended by more than 200 stakeholders (see Attachment 1 for a partial list of attendees).

At each forum, the following information was provided and discussed:

1. Review of the collaborative goals, strategies and milestones
2. Updates on each improvement goal, milestone, and the effectiveness of each strategy
3. Evaluation of the overall effectiveness of the SIP
4. Possible changes of goals/strategies as appropriate

Riverside County also continued to convene and/or actively participate in other community-wide convening's and workgroups to support stakeholders' involvement in and awareness of the SIP goals and strategies. These include (but not limited to) participation in the following partnership meetings:

- Foster Youth Student Information System (FYSIS) Steering Committee
 - Tribal Alliance
 - Juvenile Court & DPSS Quarterly Meeting
 - Racial Disproportionality and Disparity Workgroup
 - Family Preservation Steering Committee
 - Faith Based Collaborative Meeting
 - Structured Decision Making Steering Committee
 - Quarterly Regional Foster Parent Recruitment
 - Independent Living Program Youth Summits and Forums
 - Child Welfare Attendance Monthly Meetings
 - Bi-Annual Partners Conference with CAPIT/PSSF Providers
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Outcome Measures, Goals, Strategies, Milestones

Overview

The following sections provide data trends⁶ from June 2009 through March 2011, demonstrating Riverside County DPSS and Probation Department’s progress toward achieving improved results for children and families involved in child welfare and juvenile probation systems. Each section describes the following:

- current performance on each outcome measure as provided by the University of California, Berkeley
- future and/or ongoing efforts to achieve the desired outcome within the designated timeframe
- education, training and technical assistance needed

For sections that apply to Riverside County SIP *Focus Areas*, the following additional information is provided:

- how strategies will continue to build on progress
 - status of each milestone established
 - systemic changes needed to further support improvement goals, and
 - role of partners in achieving SIP goals
-

**Measure S1.1-No
Recurrence of
Maltreatment
(4/1/09-9-30-09)**

Riverside County	CA State Average	National Standard
92.9%	93.0%	94.6%

The number of children in Riverside County that had recurrence of maltreatment is below the National Standard (by 1.7%). While the State and National Standards have been met, Riverside’s current rate of 92.9% shows a very slight decline (1.4%) in performance when compared to prior year’s data (94.3% in 2009). Riverside County will closely monitor this outcome measure to ensure that the current decline is not an ongoing trend and to identify any environmental factors that may be impacting this performance outcome.

Future improvement on this measure is expected based on the following:

- Ongoing training of DPSS staff on Structured Decision Making (SDM) assessment tools to increase utilization and compliance, along with continuous monitoring to assess for additional training needs
 - Expanded use of the Case Quality Review tool that includes a random review of cases from all child welfare programs in order to examine timely and accurate completion of the risk and safety assessment tools (SDM)
-

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⁶ This report contains percentages from individual performance measures and composite score (over 100%). The **composite score** combines individual measures of different performance outcomes that are weighted based on the formula defined by federal standards. When the composite score is reported, the various performance measures that are included in the composite are provided in the footnote.

Outcome Measures, Goals, Strategies, Milestones, Continued

Measure S1.1-No Recurrence of Maltreatment (4/1/09-3/31/10), *continued*

- Implementation of the SafeCare home visiting model: SafeCare targets families with children 0-5 years old that have allegations of abuse and/or neglect, which accounts for a high percentage of child maltreatment reports
- Continued funding of core services (Parenting Education, Anger Management, Domestic Violence, and Counseling) that are based on evidence-based models
- Continued collaboration with community partners to jointly design and deliver services such as the Family Preservation Court (also known as “drug court”), to prevent re-occurrence of abuse/neglect as a result of parental substance abuse

In addition, DPSS has partnered with the Children’s Research Center to conduct an in-depth case study analysis of re-entry cases in order to identify specific areas of improvement for SDM utilization (as well as social work case management practices).

Measure S2.1-No Maltreatment in Foster Care (4/1/09-3/31/10)

Riverside County	CA State Average	National Standard
98.5%	99.6%	99.68%

Riverside County’s performance of 98.5% on the number of maltreatment in foster care remains steady from the prior year (99.35%) while below the National Standard (by 1.18%). Continued efforts to reduce maltreatment of children while placed in foster care include the following:

- Ongoing development and training for all out-of-home (relative/non-relative) caregivers using different modalities (in-person/classroom setting, videos, and web based)
- Improved placement matching process, especially for children with special needs
- Continued specialization and training of social worker staff to investigate all allegations of abuse involving Riverside County’s out-of-home caregivers
- Establishment of service agreements with and regular performance monitoring of Foster Family Agencies (FFA) and Group Homes (GH)
- Establishment of an Inter-Agency Review, Evaluation, Mentoring and Support Team (IREMS) to monitor all contracted FFAs and GHs
- Continued mental health assessment of all out-of-home children ages five to seventeen (5-17) and linkage to mental health resources

Outcome Measures, Goals, Strategies, Milestones, Continued

Composite C1-
Reunification
(4/1/09-3/31/10)

Riverside County	CA State Average	National Standard
123.3	114	122.6

The family reunification composite⁷ score of 123.3 shows an overall improvement for Riverside DPSS by 2.5% when compared to the prior year's⁸ performance (120.8). This rate is slightly above the National Standard (by 0.7%).

Current Probation family reunification rates are as follow (National Standard is provided):

- Reunification within twelve months (Exit Cohort): 53.8% (75.2%)
- Median time to reunification: 11.1% (5.4%)
- Reunification within twelve months (Entry Cohort): 21.1% (48.4%)
- Reentry within twelve months: 13% (9.9%)

When compared to the prior 12 month period (4/1/08 – 3/31/09), the data suggested minimal variation and little significant change (reunification within twelve months [Exit Cohort] reflected a 0.3% increase, and median time to reunification decreased from 12.2 to 11.1). The Probation Department is working on improving case tracking and data entry to ensure that accurate data are reported to inform future planning.

DPSS has chosen to focus on Re-entry Following Reunification (C1.4) as a priority Focus Area based on data showing a decline in performance. As of Quarter 1 2010, Riverside's rate of re-entry was 9.2%; as of Quarter 1 2011, the re-entry rate showed an increase to 12.8%.

Riverside County's reentry data over the last ten years show a yearly reentry average rate of 12.87%. Reentry rates for children 0-5 years of age are generally higher than reentry for older children.

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⁷ "Reunification Composite" includes four specific outcome measures: 1) reunification within 12 months; median time to reunification; reunification within 12 months; re-entry following reunification

⁸ Data are compared with the same quarter from prior year.

Outcome Measures, Goals, Strategies, Milestones, Continued

**Composite C1-
Reunification
(4/1/09-3/31/10)**

Riverside is continuing to identify factors leading to the increase in re-entry rates. Based on preliminary information received through in-depth case review⁹ and community/parent partner feedback, a decline in performance may be attributed to the following systemic factors¹⁰:

- Incorrect use of the SDM risk assessment tool
- Insufficient discussion with parents about case plans, compliance, and assessment regarding whether parents benefited from services
- Lack of follow up services during and after Family Maintenance (FM) transition
- Inadequate visitation plan to facilitate progressive visits between parents and children

Progress for this Focus Areas is discussed in detail on pages 10-23.

**Composite C2-
Adoption
(4/1/09-3/31/10)**

Riverside County	CA State Average	National Standard
128.1	105.7	106.4

This reporting period's performance of 128.1 on the adoption composite score¹¹ shows a 1.4 % improvement when compared to the prior year (126.3). Riverside's rate exceeds the National Standard by 17%.

Current and ongoing successful performance on this composite has been supported in part by Riverside's use of the Heart Gallery, Adoptions Finalization Ceremonies, Adoptions Support Contracts and an ongoing agreement with Family Builders and California Kids Connection. The DPSS permanency events brought successful adoption stories to many children in our foster care system, especially those who have been a challenge to match due to being part of a large sibling group, being older and/or having a disability. During this 12-month reporting period, Riverside finalized and closed a total of 84 adoption cases.

⁹ The DPSS case quality reviews and Children's Research Center in-depth case reviews included cases with an SDM reunification assessment prior to reunification during the period between July 1, 2008 and December 31, 2009, who subsequently returned to foster care with a standardized 12-month follow-up period.

¹⁰ The systemic issues stated above are being addressed Countywide through random monthly case reviews.

¹¹ Adoption composite includes five specific outcome measures: 1) adoption within 24 months; 2) median time to adoption; 3) adoption within 12 months (17 months in care); 4) legally free within 6 months (17 months in care); 5) adoption within 12 months (legally free)

Outcome Measures, Goals, Strategies, Milestones, Continued

Composite C3-
Long Term Care
(4/1/09-3/31/10)

Riverside County	CA State Average	National Standard
134.0	107.6	121.7

Current performance of 134 on the long term care composite score¹² shows a 1.8% improvement when compared to prior year's data (131.6). Riverside's current rate exceeds the National Standard by 10.1%.

Ongoing successful performance on this composite is attributed to DPSS and Probation's continued partnerships with

- Local schools, unified school districts, and Riverside County Office of Education (RCOE) foster youth liaison through Child Welfare Attendance Office and joint operations meetings
- County agencies and community partners to provide Wraparound services
- Department of Mental Health (DMH) to provide Multidimensional Treatment Foster Care (MTFC) services, and to coordinate placement and case management services to children in group home placement RCL 12-14 as established in a Memorandum of Understanding
- Riverside Community College (RCC) to provide Independent Living Program (ILP) services for foster youth ages sixteen to twenty-one (16-21).

In addition, DPSS and Probation created specialized Independent Living Program (ILP) units, designating staff to work specifically with foster youth ages 16 to 19. These ILP social workers and probation officers provide youth with an array of support services (e.g. life skills training, advocacy, mentoring, education and career development, health and safety, and financial resources) in collaboration with the primary case workers and contracted vendors. Further, DPSS implemented the "Transitional" Team Decision Making meetings for all emancipating youth to ensure their transition from foster care to adulthood is supported by better outcomes in education, employment, health/safety, and permanent housing.

¹² Long Term Care composite includes 3 specific outcome measures: 1) exits to permanency (24 months in care); 2) exits to permanency (Legally free at exit); 3) in care 3 years or longer

Outcome Measures, Goals, Strategies, Milestones, Continued

Composite C4-
Placement
Stability (4/1/09-
3/31/10)

Riverside County	CA State Average	National Standard
93.5	94.5	101.5

Riverside’s performance of 93.5 on placement stability composite score¹³ shows a slight decrease of 1.0 when compared to prior year (94.5). Riverside’s rate falls below the National Standard by 8%.

DPSS continues to work on this outcome as a priority, recognizing that placement stability is imperative to support a child’s development of secure, meaningful relationships and their overall social/emotional development. Our goal is to reduce the number of placement moves for children in out of home care less than twelve months, twelve to 24 months and more than 24 months by continuing to

- eliminate the practice of using foster homes as “emergency shelter” or temporary receiving homes
- work with the Children’s Research Center to finalize the Structured Decision Making placement screening tool which was developed and piloted in Riverside
- fully implement the new Specialized Care Increment screening and approval process to ensure that caregivers of children with special needs receive appropriate financial support.
- restructure Riverside’s placement processes to identify the most permanent placement upon a child’s initial entry into out-of-home care by identifying available relative caregivers and expediting emergency relative placement approval

Riverside County is exploring if any of the following practices and systemic factors may negatively impact placement stability performance:

- Placement moves to place children with siblings, family members and others important to the child/youth (NREFM)
- Placement moves to place children in their communities of origin (and/or near their schools of origin)
- Placement moves to ensure the least restrictive placement (i.e., use of Wraparound, Multi-Dimensional Therapeutic Foster Care to move youth from Group home to lower levels of care)

Although these placement moves may appear to impact a decrease in placement stability performance, changes as described above are aligned with best practices and legal mandates, and are expected to ensure better permanency for children.

¹³ Placement composite includes 3 specific outcome measures: 1) in foster care less than 12 months, % with 1-2 placements; 2) in foster care 12-24 months, % with 1-2 placements; 3) in foster care 24 months, % with 1-2 placements

Strategies & Milestones for SIP Focus Area #1: Re-entry Following Reunification

Overview

Riverside County identified Re-entry Following Reunification (Measure C.14) as a SIP Focus Area. To improve on this measure, DPSS has been working on the following strategies (the number of milestones are indicated in parenthesis):

- A. Improve management information systems (MIS) (5)
 - B. Improve foster/relative caregiver training, recruitment and retention (6)
 - C. Improve the quality assurance (QA) system (5)
 - D. Increase staff cultural competency by enhancing cultural awareness training for staff (3)
 - E. Improve agency collaborations (6)
-

A. Improve Management Information Systems

Milestone A.1: *Develop a monitoring system to ensure that TDM meetings are being held for all children in targeted community areas prior to initial placement and prior to all placement changes.*

Despite diminished public and private funding to support staffing and resources for the Family to Family (F2F) Initiative, Riverside County continues to implement F2F strategies (including Team Decision Making, and community and family engagement strategies) as an explicit division-wide priority. DPSS has accomplished and will continue to work on sustaining the following efforts:

- a. Monthly tracking and placement reports as safeguards to ensure TDMs happen for all children in targeted communities
 - b. Expansion of TDM data collection using Efforts to Outcomes and data evaluation in collaboration with UC Berkeley
 - c. Facilitation of "Exit TDMs" prior to case closure to assure that families obtain services and supports to help them transition to life after case termination
 - d. Facilitation of "ninety-day transition TDMs" for all youth who are emancipating from the foster care system
 - e. Quarterly TDM Facilitators Meeting to discuss and address ongoing practice improvements
-

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**Strategies & Milestones for SIP Focus Area #1:
Re-entry Following Reunification, Continued**

A.
Improve
Management
Information
Systems
(continued)

Milestone A.2: *Expand the use of the Safe Measures web based application so that supervisory staff and line staff have access to the application (June 2009-March 2012).*

Riverside established a Safe Measures workgroup that worked on expanding the use of the Safe Measures application. All DPSS social workers and supervisors received training on Safe Measures, increasing Safe Measure utilization as a case management tool to assist them in tracking mandated child welfare case management activities. Similarly, access and utilization of Safe Measures have been expanded to include Probation ILP staff. Continued work on this milestone will include ongoing staff training along with continuous monitoring of usage and compliance to assess for additional training needs. Riverside will also continue to actively participate in the statewide Safe Measures committee to assist in the improvements of existing as well as in the development of new reporting tools.

Milestone A.3: *Develop a monitoring system to ensure accurate demographic information is consistently entered into the Child Welfare Services Case Management System (CWS/CMS) and the Juvenile and Adult Management System (JAMS) (July 2010-March 2012).*

The enactment of the National Youth Transitional Database in October 2010 bolstered Riverside's efforts to review and update current demographic information of foster youth ages sixteen and older. At the same time, Probation completed staff training on CWS/CMS, further improving utilization, completeness, and accuracy of data in CWS/CMS. Using the reports provided to counties by CDSS, Riverside plans to regularly review and update all demographic information for this age group. Additionally, new data reports have been initiated and provided to social workers on a biweekly basis to track missing demographic information, allowing for ongoing monitoring of data entry compliance. DPSS Staff Development has also developed a user's guide to provide clear instructions to staff on how to enter demographic information in CWS/CMS.

Milestone A.4: *Develop a monitoring system to ensure accurate use of Structured Decision Making Assessment tools (June 2009-March 2012).*

The Structured Decision Making (SDM) Steering Committee was established in 2009 to monitor SDM compliance and to develop strategies for accurate and increased utilization of this tool. Significant progress has been made on this milestone through the following activities:

- a. Development of a case review tool known as Case Quality Review
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**Strategies & Milestones for SIP Focus Area #1:
Re-entry Following Reunification, Continued**

A.
Improve
Management
Information
Systems
(continued)

- b. Division-wide Implementation of monthly random case audits to ensure compliance and correct completion of the SDM tools
- c. Mandatory SDM training for all supervisors and social workers

Continued work will include additional and advanced staff training on SDM to improve utilization across all programs, with future emphasis on SDM utilization for ongoing (FR/FR/PP) cases.

Milestone A.5: *Increase partnership with Riverside County Office of Education (RCOE) to further implement the use of the Foster Youth Services Information System (FYSIS) to track/monitor children's educational status (June 2009-March 2012).*

FYSIS is a secured web-based application that provides a single point of reference for information on foster and probation youth enrolled in the Riverside County public school system. To ensure progress on this strategy, the following activities have been completed:

- a. Established a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) and a Juvenile Court Blanket Order to facilitate exchange of information between Riverside County Probation, DPSS, and RCOE
- b. Piloted the use of FYSIS among the DPSS/Probation Independent Living Program social workers and probation officers
- c. Ongoing monthly meetings by the FYSIS Leadership Committee that includes Juvenile Court bench officers, school district personnel, DPSS and Probation management staff to plan for countywide implementation of FYSIS
- d. Automated and regularly scheduled download of CWS/CMS data to the FYSIS database
- e. Collaboration with FYSIS and San Bernardino County to share educational information of foster youth who are placed across counties

Continued work on this milestone will include ongoing collaboration with FYSIS partners to support further development and wider data entry participation and utilization (by schools, DPSS, Probation staff, and other neighboring counties) of the FYSIS application, along with continuous data monitoring to assess for data validity.

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**Strategies & Milestones for SIP Focus Area #1:
Re-entry Following Reunification, Continued**

**B.
Improve Foster/
Relative Caregiver
Training,
Recruitment &
Retention**

Milestone B.1: *Expand the Family to Family Initiative in Riverside by initiating the use of Ice Breaker meetings to foster mentoring relationships between biological parents and out-of-home caregivers (June 2009-March 2012).*

DPSS has initiated a countywide process for facilitating and tracking Ice Breaker meetings. TDM facilitators also provide the management team with a report on Ice Breaker meetings. Riverside County has conducted approximately 200 Ice Breaker meetings countywide since the initiation of SIP in March 2009. However, a number of barriers have been encountered when implementing Ice Breakers requiring that this strategy be re-evaluated for continued implementation. Barriers include competing timelines and participant demands for attending TDM meetings and Ice Breakers as well as increasing workload presented by significant staffing reduction and other pressing priorities and strategies. Based on these, DPSS plans to assess whether adequate resources are available to continue the implementation of Ice Breakers.

Milestone B.2: *Enhance foster parent recruitment and retention efforts by collaborating with community partners, such as faith based and tribal organizations (June 2009-March 2012).*

Riverside remains actively engaged in efforts to recruit and retain quality relative/non relative resource families. DPSS continues to implement child specific and targeted recruitment strategies as well as county-wide and region-specific caregiver events relying on significant assistance from community partners such as the Foster Parent Associations, Prevent Child Abuse Riverside County, and faith based organizations.

Over the last three years, DPSS continues to facilitate monthly Faith-Based Collaborative meetings attended by county staff, community partners, service providers, and faith-based organizations. The Collaborative works to increase community and organizational involvement in meeting the needs of children and families in the child welfare system.

The Faith-Based Collaborative has been engaged in the following activities:

- a. Fundraising Events—community partners jointly plan fundraising events to assist foster youth and families.
 - b. Adoption Efforts – presentation of children in foster care who are awaiting a permanent home; planning for Riverside County’s Third Annual Adoption Finalization Day during which 48 adoptions were finalized on this one day at two Riverside Juvenile Court sites.
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**Strategies & Milestones for SIP Focus Area #1:
Re-entry Following Reunification, Continued**

B.
Improve Foster/
Relative Caregiver
Training,
Recruitment &
Retention
(continued)

- c. Foster Parent Recruitment Efforts – outreach planning to increase resource families
- d. Family Assistance Efforts – identifying available tangible support and basic assistance through churches to assist specific needs requested by youth and families
- e. Independent Living Program (ILP) Efforts- presentation of emancipating youth needing assistance from the collaborative members which promotes better independent living outcomes for emancipated youth

Other examples of recruitment and collaborative efforts include the following:

- *Spanish Language Recruitment:* DPSS purchased radio announcements in English and in Spanish to recruit caregivers in the Desert Region where more foster homes are needed. These efforts resulted in tripling of attendance for new foster parent orientations.
- *Collaborative Meetings with Indian Tribal Representative:* DPSS meets regularly with the Indian Child and Family Services (ICFS) agency to develop plans for placement of Native American children and in recruiting tribal foster homes. Tribal partners are also invited and actively participate in TDM meetings held regarding Indian children and families.

Continued work on this milestone will include strengthening and expanding partnerships to recruit, train and retain resource families; streamlining relative assessment approval processes; increasing joint recruitment with faith based organizations; increasing support services for kinship caregivers in the DPSS Family Resource Centers; and developing a partnership with CASA¹⁴ to conduct case-mining to identify potential permanent relative caregivers.

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¹⁴ CASA: Court Appointed Special Advocates

**Strategies & Milestones for SIP Focus Area #1:
Re-entry Following Reunification, Continued**

B.
Improve Foster/
Relative Caregiver
Training,
Recruitment &
Retention
(continued)

Milestone B.3: *Expand education for out-of-home caregivers, to include instruction that will assist caregivers to develop strategies for parenting children exposed to abuse and neglect and instruction on how to utilize the JV 290 Caregiver Information Form (June 2009-March 2012)*

In addition to the training provided by the DPSS Resource Family Training and Recruitment Unit, Riverside has partnered with the Riverside Community College (RCC) and California Family Life Center to increase Foster and Kinship Education. Caregiver training classes are offered at various times (morning and evening) throughout Riverside County, and are available in both English and Spanish.

Classes address how to meet the special needs of abused/neglected children in foster care by focusing on attachment and developmental issues as impacted by chronic trauma (in the form of abuse and/or neglect). Positive Parenting education is also widely offered to address children's challenging behaviors (lying, stealing, hoarding food) that may be exacerbated as children struggle with separation, grief and loss. Other specific topics include "Attachment Re-Parenting"¹⁵, and "Parenting from the Heart"¹⁶. Classes are also provided on "Caregivers Rights and Responsibilities" which includes information on the JV 290 Caregiver Information Form and procedures.

Continued work on this milestone will include ongoing collaboration between DPSS, Community Care Licensing, foster parent associations and training/education institutions¹⁷ agencies to jointly develop and coordinate courses; to improve outreach to caregivers; and to share resources for providing caregiver training.

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¹⁵ "Attachment Re-Parenting" is a 12-hour course covering attachment, brain development, physical and socio-emotional development and behavior/discipline focused on children with trauma histories

¹⁶ "Parenting from the Heart" is a 6-hour course which focuses on discipline for children with abuse and neglect histories.

¹⁷ Riverside Community College, California Family Life Center, Riverside County Office of Education, Riverside Office on Aging Raising Grandchildren

**Strategies & Milestones for SIP Focus Area #1:
Re-entry Following Reunification, Continued**

B.
Improve Foster/
Relative Caregiver
Training,
Recruitment &
Retention
(continued)

Milestone B.4: *Educate out-of-home caregivers on how to access available services to meet the needs of the children in their care (June 2009-March 2012).*

Riverside uses the following activities to educate caregivers regarding available services:

1. *Quarterly Resource Reader Newsletter:* This is distributed to out-of-home caregivers with their foster care payment checks providing caregivers with information such as: available (free or low-cost) community support services; educational support (financial aid for college); upcoming trainings, events and workshops; foster parent association updates; licensing requirements; and child abuse reporting and after hours emergency contact numbers.
2. *Warmline:* The Warmline is a central telephone resource and referral hotline that caregivers can call to find needed support and resources.
3. *Quarterly Regional Caregiver Training:* Throughout the year, staff in regional offices coordinates training for caregivers in partnership with foster parent associations, which includes information on community resources.
4. *RCC Education Brochure:* RCC publishes a list of available classes that are distributed to DPSS foster parent trainers and foster parents associations. It is also available through the RCC website.

Continued work on this milestone will include ongoing partnerships with agencies to jointly coordinate outreach to caregivers to ensure they are aware of available support services.

C.
Improve the
Quality Assurance
(QA) System

The following milestones have been identified to improve Riverside County's quality assurance system which is a fundamental need in order to measure both quantitatively and qualitatively the effectiveness of programs and services.

1. Develop a monitoring system to ensure that TDM meetings are being held for all children in targeted communities prior to initial placement and prior to all placement changes (June 2009-March 2012).¹⁸
 2. Expand Quality Assurance activities to assess the proper use of Structured Decision Making (SDM) assessment tool on all cases (June 2009-March 2012).¹⁹
 3. Expand quality assurance activities to ensure that demographic data in the Child Welfare Services Case Management System (CWS/CMS) and the Juvenile and Adult Management System (JAMS) are accurate and routinely updated (July 2010 March 2012).²⁰
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¹⁸ Refer to the activities and results update for milestone one (1) in Section A.

¹⁹ Refer to the activities and results update for milestone four (4) in Section A.

²⁰ Refer to the activities and results update for milestone three (3) in Section A.

**Strategies & Milestones for SIP Focus Area #1:
Re-entry Following Reunification, Continued**

C.
Improve the
Quality Assurance
(QA) System
(Continued)

4. Expand the tracking, monitoring and reporting of the quality and effectiveness of services provided by both CAPIT/CBCAP/PSSF and CWS funded service providers (July 2010-March 2012).
5. Increase quality of assessments and decision making on risk and safety as evidenced by a decreased recurrence of abuse/neglect from 5.3% to 4% (July 2011-March 2012).

Updates and results for milestones 1 – 3 are described in Section A, pages 9-10. Updates for milestones 4 – 5 are as follow:

C.4: Quality and Effectiveness of Services: DPSS submits an annual report to the Riverside County Board of Supervisors to provide results of ongoing client satisfaction surveys. Client satisfaction surveys both written and telephonic, have been conducted at the DPSS Family Resource Centers, at Team Decision Making meetings, and to closed cases during the county wide Needs Assessment process in 2010.

Surveys gather client responses regarding overall quality of service, helpfulness of services in meeting client needs, convenience of services, professionalism of staff, accessibility of location, and other items. Client satisfaction surveys are distributed in English and Spanish at least three (3) times per fiscal year, to all clients served during an identified “survey week.” To further ensure that quality services are provided, DPSS has also contracted with Parent’s Anonymous to collect data from PSSF-funded agencies. In addition, DPSS conducts regular performance contract reviews of service providers to assess the quality of services provided.

C.5: Quality of Assessment: Riverside County uses Structured Decision Making (SDM) tools in determining risk and safety factors affecting children starting from initial child abuse investigation through the closure of the case. The SDM Steering Committee, established in 2009, convenes bi-monthly to develop strategies and monitoring tools to ensure that social workers are adequately trained and correctly use the tools according to established policies and procedures.

The SDM Steering Committee’s Quality Assurance workgroup has developed the Case Quality Review (CQR) tool now used by supervisors and managers to conduct random case audits. The CQR tool is intended to assess timely completion of the SDM tool as well as to evaluate the accuracy of SDM tool rating as supported by information entered in CWS/CMS and court reports. Continued work on this milestone will include ongoing staff training to increase SDM utilization and compliance, along with use of the CQR tool to identify specific areas for practice improvement.

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**Strategies & Milestones for SIP Focus Area #1:
Re-entry Following Reunification, Continued**

**D.
Improve
Staff/Provider
Training**

Milestone D.1: *Increase staff cultural competence by enhancing cultural awareness training for staff (January 2010-March 2012).*

Riverside is committed to enhancing cultural competency in its provision of child welfare services. As such, DPSS has provided and/or participated in the following training since the implementation of the 2009-2012 SIP:

- a. Tribal Star Summit ²¹
- b. Morongo Indian Child Welfare Act (ICWA) ²²
- c. Understanding Lesbian, Gay, Bi-Sexual and Transgender Youth ²³
- d. ICWA law and cultural awareness by local ICWA experts

In addition, through DPSS' participation in the California Racial Disproportionality and Disparity (RDD) Collaborative (7/07-6/10), we have raised awareness (through staff brown bag presentations, newsletters, and school presentations) among staff and various community agencies as to the disproportioned number of African-American children in the Riverside foster care system. Despite the elimination of public/private funding and technical assistance for the RDD Collaborative, Riverside continues to facilitate RDD workgroup meetings as well as participate in RDD training and convenings.

For FY 09-10, Probation doubled the amount of classes that address cultural awareness for employees. The new courses that were created include Gender Differences, Boomers: Generation X and Generation Y, and Maintaining a Stable Environment Milieu. Each of these courses identifies the differences in culture of juvenile clients and their families. These courses are available to both institution and field employees using training curricula that are certified by the Standards and Training for Corrections (STC)²⁴. Continued work on this milestone will include ongoing staff training, along with continuous monitoring to assess for additional training needs.

Continued on next page

²¹ The Tribal Star Summit provides an opportunity for child welfare staff and local Native American tribes to meet and share cultures and experiences. The Summit opens the lines of communication and helps increase cultural competency in working with children and families with Indian decent.

²² Morongo Indian Child Welfare Act (ICWA) provides an opportunity for child welfare staff and local Native American tribes to meet and learn about the laws and its application to child welfare service provision. This training was purposed to increase knowledge of ICWA and its application when working with children and families of Indian decent.

¹⁸ The Understanding Lesbian, Gay, Bi-Sexual and Transgender Youth training is designed to increase social worker competency in providing services to lesbian, gay, bi-sexual and/or transgender children involved in the child welfare system.

¹⁹ STC is a function of the Corrections Standard Authority, a Division of the California Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation.

**Strategies & Milestones for SIP Focus Area #1:
Re-entry Following Reunification, Continued**

D.
Improve
Staff/Provider
Training
(continued)

Milestone D.2: *Enhance staff training on the Family to Family Initiative, Structured Decision Making, Safe Measures, Court Report writing, transition planning, the Child Welfare Services Case Management System (CWS/CMS) and Juvenile and Adult Management Systems (JAMS), to further enhance the provision of effective child welfare services.*

Riverside County is committed to ongoing staff training as a means to ensure continuous improvement in child welfare service provision. The DPSS Staff Development Department provided 111 trainings to over 1,638 staff since the implementation of the 2009-2012 SIP. Some of these mandatory staff trainings included, but are not limited to the following: Family to Family Initiative; Structured Decision Making; Court Report Writing; Safe Measures; CWS/CMS; and better outcomes.

Probation continues to roll out the use of its new JAMS system, offering beginner training to all staff to aide in its use and implementation. As the need arises, Probation will continue to provide more advanced training to facilitate the full utilization of the system by all staff.

Continued work on this milestone will include ongoing staff training, along with continuous monitoring to assess for additional training needs.

Milestone D.3: *Hold bi-annual meetings with community partners and stakeholders, out-of-home caregivers, service providers, staff, parent partners, and youth to review data on SIP progress and provide a forum for collaboration on continued quality improvement of child welfare services provision (November 2009-March 2012).*

DPSS, Probation, and Prevent Child Abuse Riverside County (PCARC) hosted the Bi-Annual Community Partners Forum on April 29, 2010 ("Spring Forum"), and on November 4, 2010 ("Winter Forum"). The theme for the Spring Forum was, "Collaboration Creates Success", with a presentation from *First 5 Riverside County* and a panel discussion on Racial Disproportionality and Disparity in the Riverside child welfare system.

The theme for the Fall Forum focused on the "Needs Assessment Kick-Off." An update was provided on SIP outcomes, and the forum was used as an advisory meeting for the 2013-2016 Needs Assessment. Numerous individuals attended both forums which include county staff, community partners, stakeholders, parent leaders, foster/adoptive parents, and service providers.

Continued work on this milestone will include expanded and early engagement of key community partners (e.g. California Youth Connection, Tribal Representatives and Parent Partners) and increased outreach to non-traditional partners (e.g. faith based, grass-roots, and philanthropic organizations).

Continued on next page

**Strategies & Milestones for SIP Focus Area #1:
Re-entry Following Reunification, Continued**

**E.
Improve Agency
Collaborations**

Milestone E.1: *Increase communication with local schools and the Juvenile Court to enhance transition planning for families when children move between schools or school districts, or when children return to their parental home (January 2010-March 2012).*

By implementing the FYSIS data-sharing project (see Milestone 1.1.5), DPSS, Probation, school districts, and Juvenile Court continuously work on developing a unified communication tool that allows access to key foster youth educational information across systems, such as grades, high school credits, attendance records, Individualized Education Plan, and others.

Also, DPSS and Riverside County Office of Education (RCOE) have partnered to fund a Foster Youth Educational Liaison position to increase attention to the educational needs of foster youth. Co-located in the DPSS office, the Foster Youth Educational Liaison:

- Provides advocacy for the educational needs of children placed in out-of-home care, especially those who are medically fragile, placed in a group home, and/or are eligible for the ILP;
- Works with all Riverside County school districts and personnel, group home providers, foster parents and youth to ensure appropriate and timely admissions, transitions and discharges to and from schools in Riverside County;
- Assists with issues related to education/special education, due process for student discipline and programs/services offered in alternative education, IEP/SST/504 meetings for foster youth, and records transfer; and
- Oversees the Educational Representative Program, a program that develops and trains volunteers from the community to become court-appointed educational representatives for foster youth.

Continued on next page

**Strategies & Milestones for SIP Focus Area #1:
Re-entry Following Reunification, Continued**

E.
Improve Agency
Collaborations
(continued)

Milestone E.2: *Continue to improve collaborative relationships with service providers to ensure services are available and accessible throughout the county (June 2009-March 2012).*

DPSS has maintained strong collaborative relationships with service providers to ensure that services are available and accessible throughout the County through the following activities:

- *Biannual Partners Conference for CAPIT/PSSF Providers:* This open forum conference provides the opportunity for the County and service providers to increase transparency in service provision by openly discussing staffing changes, victories and challenges experienced. It also provides an opportunity for service providers to get their questions answered and allows the County a forum to discuss changes in contracting processes or funding.
- *Contract Program Liaisons:* The DPSS Children's Services Liaison serves as a go-between for service providers, DPSS administrative staff (contract, budget and audit), and field social worker. The program liaisons maintain a smooth working relationship with service providers through on-site monitoring visits, regular communication, joint trainings and community partnership events. They meet with social workers to address concerns and unmet service needs and facilitates regular joint operations meetings.
- *Joint Operations Meeting (JOMs):* DPSS facilitates quarterly JOMs with contracted services providers to develop joint processes and problem-solve barriers to access client services.

The efforts listed above will be continued in order to sustain the results on this milestone.

Milestone E.3: *Hold bi-annual meetings with community partners and stakeholders, out-of-home caregivers, service providers, staff, parent partners, and youth to review data on SIP progress and provide a forum for collaboration on continued quality improvement of child welfare services provision (November 2009-March 2012).*²⁵

Discussion of this milestone is addressed on page 2-3.

Continued on next page

²⁵ Refer to the activities and results update for milestone three (3) in Section D

**Strategies & Milestones for SIP Focus Area #1:
Re-entry Following Reunification, Continued**

E.
Improve Agency
Collaborations
(continued)

Milestone E.4: *Increase the number of aftercare programs in identified communities from one (1) to four (4) aftercare programs (March 2010-March 2012).*

Efforts to increase the number of aftercare programs resulted in the development and pilot implementation of RePreve. RePreve was designed to prevent children from re-entering foster care by providing voluntary case management services to parents after the dependency was terminated. The goals were to assist parents in their adjustment with children now that they are home and to link families to needed community resources. This program was implemented in the Desert (2008-2010) and Hemet and Nuevo (2009-2010).

Preliminary RePreve client data in the Desert did not show significant difference in re-entry rate in families who completed RePreve and families who did not. In addition, the engagement and completion rates were extremely low. More than 200 families were referred to RePreve, but only 19 families completed the program. With these outcomes, coupled with discontinued foundation funding, DPSS decided to end future program implementation beyond FY 2010-2011.

Other efforts being considered for aftercare support include the following:

- a. Continue utilization of the existing aftercare program available through Family Preservation Court (FPC).²⁶

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²⁶ FPC is a collaborative effort among many Riverside County agencies, including the Superior Court, The Riverside County Sheriff's Department, the Department of Mental Health and others. FPC's goal is to prevent the unnecessary separation of children from their families or to reunite children with their parents, adoptive parents, kinship providers, or legal guardians as soon as safety issues are resolved. The program provides immediate access to a comprehensive network of services which includes direct substance abuse treatment, drug testing, life skills classes, parenting education, recovery support group, education/employment services, primary health care/mental health referrals, Family Reunification (FR) Support group, and aftercare services. These services substantially reduce substance abuse, improve family functioning, and establish healthier lifestyles for the families referred. FPC currently provides services to two-hundred and seventy-two (272) parents with substance abuse issues.

**Strategies & Milestones for SIP Focus Area #1:
Re-entry Following Reunification, Continued**

E.
Improve Agency
Collaborations
(continued)

- b. Expand utilization of Parent Partners program²⁷ to serve as mentors to parents during entry and after exit from the child welfare system by incorporating Parent Partners as part of the F2F Community Partners and Team Decision Making teams.
 - c. Identify after-care support services that can be housed and facilitated in the DPSS Family Resource Centers.
 - d. Evaluate evidence-based models with successful client engagement strategies for potential application and pilot as an after-care support services (e.g., SafeCare In-Home Parent Education).
-

Milestone E.5: *Increase percentage of TDMs utilized at critical case decision points for all families in identified communities by 15% (March 2010-March 2011).*

During FY 09-10, DPSS completed 1,513 TDMs (serving 2,759 children), a six percent increase compared to prior year²⁸. The majority (40%) of all TDMs involved placement change decisions (Placement Change, 33%; and Emergency Placement, 7%), and one third involved children exiting foster care (Exit TDM, 35%). One in four TDMs were done during the initial emergency response/investigation process (Imminent Risk TDM, 25%).²⁹

Recently, DPSS also started conducting TDMs 90-days prior to youth emancipation ("Transition TDM"). In addition to this effort to expand TDM utilization, continued work on this milestone includes recruitment and training of Parent Partners so they can assist social workers and TDM facilitators in engaging families before, during and after TDM meetings.

²⁷ The Parent Leaders program is a joint effort and a contractual partnership between DPSS and the Mental Health Services (Family Preservation (Drug) Court). Initiated in 2010, the mission of the Parent Leaders Program is to promote faster, but more successful reunification rate among families by using prior DPSS parents to support and engage current DPSS parents in child welfare services. Though our initial emphasis would be with current CPS parents, there is likelihood that we will extend the mentor relationship between parent leaders and their parent clients after case closure. This will ensure that our clients will continue to get the support needed in this transition phase.

²⁸ In FY 08-09, a total of 1,421 TDM Meetings were held which served 2,771 children.

²⁹ When DPSS first started holding Team Decision Making (TDM) meetings in 2004, most TDMs were conducted prior to initial placement (Emergency Placement TDM) and only in targeted zip codes. As time progressed, TDMs were made available to all families in these zip codes prior to removal (Imminent Risk TDM), placement changes, and prior to exit from placement (Exit TDM).

Strategies & Milestones for SIP Focus Area #2: Placement Stability (C4)

Overview

In addition to Re-entry, Riverside County identified Placement Stability (Measure C.4) as a second SIP Focus Area. To improve on this measure, DPSS has worked on the following strategies (the number of milestones are indicated in parenthesis):

- A. Improve Placement Stability (2)
 - B. Improve Child Placement in Least Restrictive Setting (4)
-

A. Improve Placement Stability

Milestone A.1: *Improve best placement match as evidenced by decreased placement moves (January 2010-March 2012)*

DPSS' specialized Placement Region currently has a procedure in place to promote a "goodness of fit" between children and their potential placement. This procedure embraces critical child welfare factors when considering which placement best fits the child's needs, with emphasis on maintaining children in their community of origin and placing them with siblings. Other factors considered include: ethnicity, language and cultural background, schools of origin, special medical and educational needs.

In an effort to improve the process for matching children with caregivers who can best support their needs, DPSS worked with the Children's Research Center (CRC) to develop and pilot a new Structured Decision Making placement screening tool. DPSS will continue its partnership with CRC to finalize this tool and to fully implement once completed.

To further enhance the matching process, DPSS submitted and received approval from CDSS to implement a new and comprehensive Special Care Increment (SCI) plan. The SCI allows increased financial assistance for children with special needs, thereby improving caregivers' ability to support and provide for these children. Riverside will continue to work on developing the SCI assessment process and recruitment of support families who are willing to provide permanency for children with special needs when adequate resources are made available through the SCI.

Finally, Riverside has also worked on eliminating the use of licensed "shelter" foster homes as temporary or receiving homes through staff and caregiver re-training and through streamlining of the emergency relative placement approval process. By expediting the approval process as well as identifying available relatives as early as possible, Riverside intends to continue improvement efforts to identify the best placement for children at the initial point of entry into foster care.

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**Strategies & Milestones for SIP Focus Area #2:
Placement Stability (C4), Continued**

A.
Improve
Placement
Stability
(continued)

Milestone A.2: *Increase parent engagement by increasing the number of Ice Breaker meetings held countywide from 106 to 144 (January 2010-March 2011).*

DPSS has completed eighty-three (83) Ice Breakers from July 2009-June 2010, less than the targeted number. As previously discussed (see Milestone 1.2.1), Riverside needs to re-evaluate whether there is capacity to continue implementation of Ice Breakers.

B.
Improve Child
Placement in
Least Restrictive
Setting

Milestone B.1: *Enhance partnership with the Department of Mental Health (DMH) through the development of customer service surveys to be completed by social workers and DMH (ACT) clinicians (January 2010-March 2012).*

Since 2004, DPSS has funded DMH licensed clinicians to assist social workers in identifying needed mental health services for children and families. A customer service survey needs to be developed in order to evaluate the quality and utility of provided services.

Based on current budget constraints, DPSS and DMH are also reviewing various options to improve the use of DMH clinicians. Continued work on this milestone will also include assessing what critical services are needed by child welfare clients that DMH can provide in partnership with DPSS staff.

Milestone B.2: *Enhance partnerships with Foster Family Agencies and Group Homes by execution of service agreements with sixty (60) Foster Family Agencies and Group Homes (January 2010-March 2012).*

Riverside has implemented vendor contracts for 73 Foster Family Agencies (FFAs) and 57 Group Homes (GHs) that provide services to Riverside County children. DPSS also established the Inter-agency Review, Evaluation, Mentoring, and Support Team (IREMS), involving DMH, Probation, and Public Health staff. The IREMS Team conducts monitoring reviews of all contracted FFAs and GHs to assure contract compliance.

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**Strategies & Milestones for SIP Focus Area #2:
Placement Stability (C4), Continued**

B.
Improve Child
Placement in
Least Restrictive
Setting
(continued)

Milestone B.3: *Increase the number of children/youth in Multi-Dimensional Treatment Foster Care (MTFC) from one to ten (January 2010-March 2012)*

MTFC homes specialize in providing care for children who have mental health issues and are in counseling through the DMH. Caregivers in these homes attend additional training and work collaboratively with the DMH, DPSS and/or Probation staff to assure that the children placed in their care receive appropriate, ongoing, individualized mental health treatment aimed at improving the child's stability, wellness and ability to function within their environment. A total of eight children were served during this reporting period. Reaching the objective of enrolling 10 children in MTFC has been challenging due to the following factors:

1. This is a voluntary placement for the youth; thus, at any time, the youth could decide to drop out and opt for a less regimented placement.
2. The MTFC screening process is rigorous and may take up to several weeks, a delay which may impact client's entry into the program.
3. The family whom the youth would be returning has to agree to participate in all aspects of treatment as well, presenting a barrier if family members are not fully committed to the treatment plan or MTFC requirements.

DPSS, Probation and DMH will continue to work on identifying strategies for increasing the number of children served by MTFC.

Milestone B.4: *Increase the number of slots in Wraparound services from 50 to 125 (January 2010-March 2012).*

For the last three fiscal years, Wraparound has served an average of 63 Riverside County youth per month (39 DPSS youth and 24 Probation youth). Wraparound is a collaborative partnership between the Departments of Mental Health (DMH), Public Health, Probation, DPSS and community service providers to offer individualized, comprehensive, and intensive care for youth at high-risk of group home placement so that they may live with their families or in other home-like settings. The goal of the Wraparound (WA) program is to help stabilize children/youth and to facilitate their return to their birth family or placement with a relative caregiver.

In January 2011, DPSS contracted with a second WA service provider to increase the number of Wraparound slots from fifty (50) to seventy-five (75). As the WA slots are filled to the current maximum capacity of 75 and the new provider gains experience and shows success, DPSS will evaluate the capacity to provide more WA services to up to 125 youth at any time.

Other Successes & Promising Practices

Introduction

Riverside County's cross-agency partnerships have successfully resulted in new program development and program expansion designed to safely reunify and maintain children with their families, such as:

- Children and adults affected by methamphetamine abuse (CAM)
 - SafeCare In-Home Parent Education
 - Parent Partner Program
-

Children and Adults Affected by Methamphetamine Abuse (CAM)

Since 2002, DPSS has established a formal partnership with Mental Health Services (community based substance abuse treatment agency) and the Riverside Juvenile Court to implement the Family Preservation (Drug) Court (FPC). FPC provides immediate access to a comprehensive network of services to substantially reduce substance abuse, improve family functioning, and establish healthier lifestyles by delivering intensified substance abuse treatment, mental health, and other support services. FPC has been serving both voluntary and court-mandated child welfare families.

In 2010, Riverside's Family Preservation Court program was awarded a 4-year grant totaling \$1.48 million to serve Children and Adults Affected by Methamphetamine Abuse (CAM). This grant expands the existing FPC program by providing additional services such as in-home visitations; education advocacy; child developmental screenings; family dynamic assessments; fatherhood program; and peer support groups.

The proposed collaborative outcomes for the CAM grant project include the following outcomes which will further support Riverside's SIP goals and priorities:

- Reduce the average length of stay in foster care to six (6) months or less.
 - 80% of families will demonstrate improvement in family functioning.
 - 95% of children will receive linkages/referrals to needed physical/mental health services.
 - 95% of children identified at-risk will receive links to special educational services.
 - Improve overall child well being.
 - Improvements in parents' criminality, employment, mental health status, and substance abuse use.
 - 98% of families who complete the program will not reenter the foster care system.
-

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Other Successes & Promising Practices, Continued

SafeCare In-Home Parent Education

Riverside County DPSS and Community Health Agency-Department of Public Health (CHA-Public Health) jointly applied and were selected by the Safe Kids California Project (SKCP) to receive free training and technical assistance to pilot the SafeCare In-Home Parent Education program. This is an evidence-based, skill-based parent training program for parents who are at risk or have been reported for child maltreatment. Offering weekly home visits for 18-20 weeks, SafeCare aims to improve parents' skills in several domains: Health, Home Safety, Parent-Child Interaction, and Structured Problem Solving and Counseling. SafeCare follows an "explain-practice-feedback" model sequence to teach skills to parents of children ages 0-5.

DPSS and CHA-Public Health are targeted to implement SafeCare in January 2012, with a total of 14 public health nurses and supervisors to be trained as home visitors and future SafeCare trainers. This initial phase and first cohort of SafeCare providers will target families that can be maintained together if in-home services are provided thus avoiding the need to remove children from parental care. The second target group includes families who are preparing to reunify with their children and require in-home services to successfully maintain children at home, and reduce the risk for subsequent removal.

The second phase of implementation is intended to widen the reach of SafeCare by using it as a differential response intervention model starting July 2012. To be supported by CAPIT/PSSF/CBCAP funds, qualified community based organizations will be selected to be trained by CHA-Public Health staff (from Cohort 1) to deliver in-home parent education to families that have been reported for suspected abuse but have moderate risk and safety factors which do not require formal court intervention.

Parent Partner Program

The partnership between DPSS and Department of Mental Health (DMH) has resulted in further improvement in and expansion of the DPSS Family Partner (FP) program. To capitalize on DMH's long-term experience with Family Partner implementation, DPSS and DMH have formed a joint planning team to develop the DPSS-FP curriculum, policies and procedures, and supervision and hiring guidelines.

DPSS and DMH are exploring the following joint activities to further expand the Family Partners program to support families in the child welfare system: ongoing train-the-trainer education and support and funding for additional positions for the Family Partners Program.

Other Outcome Measures Not Meeting State & National Standards

Other Areas for Improvement

During 2009 and 2010, DPSS and Probation have met or exceeded four out of the six goals set forth by the State in the areas of Safety, Permanency and Well Being. Within the three major child welfare outcomes, DPSS has identified six focus areas to prioritize for improvement. While a majority of the outcomes identified as a priority have been met and/or exceeded, there are remaining measures in which Riverside is under-performing, or has consistently fallen below National Standards:

C4: Placement Stability for Out-of-Home Care:

- Overall Placement Stability Composite Score, 93.5³⁰ (National Standard, 101.5)
- Placement Stability in Out-of-Home Care for 12-24 Months, 62.4%³¹ (National Standard, 65.4%)
- More Than 24 Months, 29.6% (National Standard, 41.8%)

C1.3-Reunification within 12 months (entry cohort), 46.3%³² (National Standard, 48.4%): Riverside County has experienced a 15.2%³³ decrease in this measure when compared to the same quarter last year.

Riverside continues in its efforts to improve on these measures. Specifically for measure C4, Placement Stability has been a priority for DPSS since 2009 (details of specific strategies and milestones for this measure were discussed in pages 23-25).

³⁰ Source: CWS Outcomes System Summary for Riverside County, 10/5/2010

³¹ Source: California Department of Social Services / University of California at Berkeley, 10/6/2010 (UCB) for Apr 2009 – Mar 2010. (This was the most current data as of March 2011.)

³² Source: California Department of Social Services / University of California at Berkeley, 10/6/2010 (UCB) for Apr 2009 – Mar 2010. (This was the most current data as of March 2011.)

³³ Source: California Department of Social Services / University of California at Berkeley, 10/6/2010 (UCB) for Oct 2008 – Mar 2009 and Oct 2007 – Mar 2008. (This was the most current data as of March 2011.)

Link to the Program Improvement Plan (PIP)

California's PIP

In response to the findings by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services Children's Bureau Report in 2003, California's Performance Improvement Plan (PIP) has proposed to improve its child welfare outcomes in the following areas:

1. Recurrence of Maltreatment
 2. Incidence of child abuse and neglect in foster care
 3. Foster care re-entries
 4. Stability of foster care placement
 5. Length of time to achieve reunification, and
 6. Length of time to achieve adoption
-

Riverside County's Efforts

Riverside County's SIP addresses all the outcome measures identified in the California PIP, making significant positive contribution toward achieving the PIP goals. As previously discussed, Riverside continues to identify and implement strategies to improve its performance in reducing re-entry, improving placement stability, and ensuring timely reunification rate for all Probation youth.

Attachment I: List of SIP Participants

The following list represents team members who actively participated in the Community Partners Forums that were held on April 29, 2010 and November 4, 2010.

Note: The list below is not exhaustive of all persons who continue to actively participate in the SIP process through their participation in other meetings and activities.

Name	Agency	Name	Agency
Tami Alexander	Prevent Child Abuse Riverside County	Emily Dooley	Community Partner
Eldon Baber	Prevent Child Abuse Riverside County	Melissa Duffield	DPSS-Children's Services
Alexis Balkey	Indio Center for Change	Laurie Fineman	DPSS-Children's Services
Todd Bellanca	DPSS-Children's Services	Susan Francis	John F. Kennedy Memorial Foundation
Lonetta Bryan	DPSS/Staff Development	Harry Freedman	First Five Riverside County
Rena Cantu	Riverside Center for Change	Gingi Fulcher	Community Partner
Denise Chavez	Court Appointed Special Advocates	Elsa Garcia	DPSS-Family Resource Center (Desert Hot Springs)
Karen Christiansen	Board of Supervisors-District 2	Monah Hanson	DPSS-Children's Services
Darrell Clark	DPSS-Children's Services	Jaci Hasemeyer	Foster Parent
Anne Coleman	John F. Kennedy Memorial Foundation	Jennifer Hastings	DPSS-Children's Services
Trey Cumming	Community Partner	Guillermo Henry	DPSS-Children's Services
Mark Dassaro	DPSS-Children's Services	Bridgette Hernandez	DPSS-Children's Services

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Attachment I: List of SIP Participants, Continued

Name	Agency	Name	Agency
Craig Demeres	Community Partner	Veronica Hilton	Department of Public Health
Sylvia Deporto	DPSS-Children's Services	Lillian Hobbs	Riverside County Sheriff's Office
Bryce Hulstrom	Riverside County Probation Dept.	Vanessa Holm	Family Services Assoc.
Ivy Jackson	DPSS-Children's Services	Jennifer Pabustan-Claar	DPSS-Children's Services
Rosemary Jiron	DPSS-Children's Services	Tammy Palmer	DPSS-Children's Services
Mary Ellen Johnson	DPSS-Children's Services	Zavda Patton	DPSS-Foster Care
Susan Johnson	Community Partner	Jennie Pettet	DPSS-Children's Services
Renita Lewis	DPSS-Children's Services	Jim Powell	Community Partner
Greg Lindsey	Community Partner	Veronica Rodriguez	Prevent Child Abuse Riverside County
Lynette Lindstrom	Community Partner	Chris Rosselli	DPSS-Children's Services
Susan Loew	DPSS-Riverside County	Jennifer Saldan	DPSS-Children's Services
Maria Machuca	DPSS-Family Resource Center (Mecca)	Robert Sanchez	DPSS-Children's Services
Susan Mahoney	DPSS-Children's Services	Nancy Satterwhite	DPSS-Children's Services
Monica Mathis	DPSS-Children's Services	Giovanna Sedgwick	DPSS-Family Resource Center (Rubidoux)
Pamela Miller	Family Preservation Court Director	Rabya Shenghur	DPSS-Children's Services
Gary McMane	Catholic Charities	Tim Smith	Mental Health Systems
Pat O'Boyle	DPSS-Children's Services	Monica Stewart-Cobb	DPSS-Children's Services
Veronica Ocegüera	Community Partner	Ryan Uhlenkott	DPSS-Children's Services
Katherine Ohta	DPSS-Contract Unit		

Attachment 2: Matrix

System Improvement Plan Components

Outcome/Systemic Factor: Measure C1.4 Rate of Foster Care Reentry			
County's Current Performance: Riverside 9.2%			
Improvement Goal 1.0 Reduce Reentry to Foster Care from 9.8% to 7% by 03/2012			
Strategy 1.1 IMPROVE MANAGEMENT INFORMATION SYSTEMS (MIS)	<input type="checkbox"/>	CAPIT	Strategy Rationale Improving relevant management information systems (MIS) will support successful reunification and assist in the reduction of reentry through the development of comprehensive, integrated data systems that track client outcomes through services provided.
	<input type="checkbox"/>	CBCAP	
<input type="checkbox"/>	PSSF		
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	OTHER		
1.1.1	Develop a monitoring system to ensure that TDM meetings are being held for all children in targeted community areas prior to initial placement and prior to all placement changes.		06/2009 to 03/2012
1.1.2	Expand the use of the Safe Measures web based application so that supervisory staff and line staff have access to the application.		06/2009 to 03/2012
1.1.3	Develop a monitoring system to ensure accurate demographic information is consistently entered into the Child Welfare Services Case Management System (CWS/CMS) and the Juvenile and Adult Management System (JAMS).		07/2010 to 03/2012
1.1.4	Develop a monitoring system to ensure accurate use of Structured Decision Making Assessment tools.		06/2009 to 03/2012
1.1.5	Increase partnership with Riverside County Office of Education to further implement the use of the Foster Youth Services Information System (FYSIS) to track/ monitor children's educational status.		06/2009 to 03/2012
Milestone			Timeframe

Continued on next page

VII. Matrix, Continued

System Improvement Plan Components, continued

Strategy 1.2	CAPIT	Strategy Rationale
IMPROVE FOSTER/RELATIVE CAREGIVER TRAINING, RECRUITMENT & RETENTION	<input type="checkbox"/> CAPIT <input type="checkbox"/> CBCAP <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> PSSF <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> OTHER	Improving foster/relative caregiver training will support successful reunification and help reduce reentry by encouraging mentoring relationships between caregivers and biological parents through TDM meetings and Ice Breakers. Improving foster/relative caregiver recruitment and retention will support successful reunification and help reduce reentry by having foster parents who are familiar with local resources, willing to facilitate visitation and who are willing to support biological parent and child relationships after dependency has been terminated.
1.2.1.		Expand the Family to Family Initiative in Riverside by initiating the use of Ice Breaker meetings to foster mentoring relationships between biological parents and out-of-home caregivers.
1.2.2		Enhance Foster Parent Recruitment and Retention efforts by collaborating with community partners, such as faith based and tribal organizations.
1.2.3		Expand education for out-of-home caregivers, to include instruction that will assist caregivers to develop strategies for parenting children exposed to abuse and neglect and instruction on how to utilize the JV 290 Caregiver Information Form.
1.2.4		Educate out-of-home caregivers on how to access available services to meet the needs of children in their care.
Milestone		Timeframe
		06/2009 to 03/2012

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VII. Matrix, Continued,

System Improvement Plan Components, continued

Strategy 1.3 IMPROVE THE QUALITY ASSURANCE (QA) SYSTEM	CAPIT				Strategy Rationale	06/2009 to 03/2012
	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>		
1.3.1 Develop a monitoring system to ensure that TDM meetings are being held for all children in targeted communities prior to initial placement and prior to all placement changes.						06/2009 to 03/2012
1.3.2 Expand Quality Assurance activities to assess the proper use of Structured Decision Making (SDM) assessment tools on all cases.						06/2009 to 03/2012
1.3.3 Expand Quality Assurance activities to ensure that demographic data in the Child Welfare Services Case Management System (CWS/ CMS) and the Juvenile and Adult Management System (JAMS) is accurate and routinely updated.						07/2010 to 03/2012
1.3.4 Expand the tracking, monitoring and reporting of quality and effectiveness of services provided by both CAPIT/CBCAP/ PSSF and CWS funded service providers.						07/2010 to 03/2012
1.3.5 Increase quality of assessments and decision making on risk and safety as evidenced by a decreased recurrence of abuse/neglect from 5.3% to 4%.						07/2010 to 03/2012
Milestone						

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VII. Matrix, Continued,

System Improvement Plan Components, continued

Strategy 1.4 IMPROVE STAFF/PROVIDER TRAINING	Strategy Rationale			
	<input type="checkbox"/> CAPIT	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> CBCAP	<input type="checkbox"/> PSSF	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> OTHER
Milestone 1.4.1 Increase staff cultural competence by enhancing cultural awareness training for staff. 1.4.2 Enhance staff training on the Family to Family Initiative, Structured Decision Making, Safe Measures, Court Report writing, transition planning, the Child Welfare Services Case Management System (CWS/CMS) and Juvenile and Adult management System (JAMS), to further enhance the provision of effective child welfare services. 1.4.3 Hold Bi-Annual Meetings with Community Partners and Stakeholders, out-of-home caregivers, service providers, staff, parent partners and youth to review data on SIP progress and provide a forum for collaboration on continued quality improvement of child welfare service provision.	Timeframe			
	01/2010 to 03/2012			
	01/2010 to 03/2012			
11/2009 to 03/2012				

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VII. Matrix, Continued

System Improvement Plan Components, continued

Strategy 1.5 IMPROVE AGENCY COLLABORATIONS	Strategy Rationale				
	<input type="checkbox"/> CAPIT	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> CBCAP	<input type="checkbox"/> PSSF	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> OTHER	
1.5.1 Increase communication with local schools and the Juvenile Court to enhance transition planning for families when children move between schools or school districts, or when children return to their parental home.	Timeframe				01/2010 to 03/2012
1.5.2 Continue to improve collaborative relationships with service providers to ensure services are available and accessible throughout the county.					06/2009 to 03/2012
1.5.3 Hold Bi-Annual Meetings with Community Partners and Stakeholders, out-of-home caregivers, service providers, staff, parent partners and youth to review data on SIP progress and provide a forum for collaboration on continued quality improvement of child welfare service provision.					11/2009 to 03/2012
1.5.4 Increase the number of aftercare programs in identified communities from 1 to 4 aftercare programs.					03/2010 to 03/2012
1.5.5 Increase % of TDMs utilized at critical case decision points for all families in identified communities by 15%.					03/2010 to 03/2011
Milestone					

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VII. Matrix, Continued

System Improvement Plan Components, continued

Outcome/Systemic Factor: Composite C4 Placement Stability			
County's Current Performance: Riverside 93.5			
Improvement Goal 2.0 Increase Placement Stability for Children in Out-of-Home Care < 12 Months from 82.9% ² to 86% by 03/2012 Increase Placement Stability for Children in Out-of-Home Care 12-24 Months from 62.0% ² to 65.4% by 03/2012 Increase Placement Stability for Children in Out-of-Home Care > 24 Months from 30.6% ² to 33.6% by 03/2012			
Strategy 2.1 IMPROVE PLACEMENT STABILITY	<input type="checkbox"/>	CAPIT	Strategy Rationale Improving placement stability will assist in maintaining supportive social connections for children in out-of-home care and reduce additional trauma caused by severed social connections and frequent placement changes.
	<input type="checkbox"/>	CBCAP	
<input type="checkbox"/>	PSSF		
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	OTHER		
Milestone 2.1.1 Improve best placement match as evidence by decreased placement moves. 2.1.2 Increase parent engagement by increasing the # of Ice Breaker meetings held countywide from 106 to 144.			01/2010 to 03/2012
			01/2010 to 03/2011

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Outcome/Systemic Factor: Composite C4 Placement Stability

System Improvement Plan Components, continued

Outcome/Systemic Factor: Measure 4 B Least Restrictive (PIT Placement: Group/Shelter)			
County's Current Performance: Riverside 5.5%			
Improvement Goal 3.0 Decrease the total number of kids in group homes from 6.5% ² to 5% by 03/2012			
Strategy 3.1 IMPROVE CHILD PLACEMENT IN LEAST RESTRICTIVE SETTING	<input type="checkbox"/>	CAPIT	Strategy Rationale Improving child placement in the least restrictive setting appropriate to meet their needs will support a child's ability to maintain continuity in care and establish consistent, caring attachments to their caregivers.
	<input type="checkbox"/>	CBCAP	
<input type="checkbox"/>	PSSF		
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	OTHER		
3.1.1 Enhance partnership with the Department of Mental Health through the development of customer service surveys to be completed by social workers and ACT clinicians.			01/2010 to 03/2012
3.1.2 Enhance partnerships with Foster Family Agencies and Group Homes by execution of service agreements with 60 Foster Family Agencies and Group Homes.			01/2010 to 03/2012
3.1.3 Increase the number of children/youth in Multi-dimensional Treatment Foster Care (MTFC) from 1 to 10.			01/2010 to 03/2012
3.1.4 Increase the number of children/youth in Wraparound services from 50 to 125.			01/2010 to 03/2012
Milestone	Timeframe		