California's Child and Family Services Review
County Self-Assessment Cover Sheet

County:	MADERA
Responsible County Child Welfare Agency:	MADERA COUNTY DEPARTMENT OF SOCIAL SERVICES
Period of Assessment:	2009 – 2012
Period of Outcome Data:	OCTOBER 2012; Q2 2012
Date Submitted:	

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County Self-Assessment Cover Sheet (continued)

Submitted by each agency for the children under its care	
Submitted by:	**County Child Welfare Agency Director (Lead Agency)**
Name:	**Kelly Woodard**
Signature:	
Submitted by:	**County Chief Probation Officer**
Name:	**Rick Dupree**
Signature:	

In Collaboration with: County & Community Partners	Name(s)	Signature
Board of Supervisors Designated Public Agency to Administer CAPIT/CBCAP/PSSF Funds	**Madera County Department of Social Services**	
County Child Abuse Prevention Council	**Robin Leppo, Director**	Robin Leppo
Parent Representative	**Faith Aguilar**	Faith Aguilar
As Applicable[1]	**Name(s)**	
California Youth Connection	**Rudy Duarte Orozco**	
County Adoption Agency (or CDSS Adoptions District Office)	**Patricia Caudillo, County Adoption Supervisor**	
Local Tribes	**Theresa Sam (North Fork Rancheria Mono Tribe) AND Orianna Walker (Chukchansi Picayune Band of the Mono Tribe)**	
Local Education Agency	**Madera County Office of Education**	

Board of Supervisors (BOS) Approval	
BOS Approval Date:	MARCH 12, 2013
Name:	MAX RODRIGUEZ, CHAIRMAN OF THE BOARD OF SUPERVISORS
Signature:	

☐ Name and affiliation of additional participants are on a separate page with an indication as to which participants are representing the required core representatives.

[1] **As applicable**, provide the name of a representative from each of these entities as pertinent to relevant outcomes (the adoption composite would include a representative that was engaged in that portion of the CSA, likewise, IEP measure (5A), IWCA (4E), etc. No signature is required.

Approved as to Legal Form:
COUNTY COUNSEL

By _____

Approved as to Form:
RISK MANAGEMENT

By _____

TITLE OF DOCUMENT:

Department of Social Services

Self Assessment (90 pages)

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A. LEAD AGENCIES

AGENCY	NAME
Madera County Department of Social Services	Kelly Woodard, Director
Madera County Probation Department	Rick DuPree, Chief
Child Abuse Prevention Counsel	Robin Leppo, Director

B. CSA TEAM COMPOSITION

CORE TEAM:

AGENCY	NAME
DSS	Elizabeth Inman, Administrative Analyst II/OCAP Liaison
DSS	Kelly Woodard, Director
DSS	Danny Morris, Deputy Director
DSS	Debbie Blankenship, Deputy Director
DSS	Terry Hurt, Protective Services Manager
DSS	Jeff Dent, SWS II
DSS	Cynthia Suarez, SWS II
DSS	Amparo Williams, SWS II
DSS	Paige Garcia, SWS II
DSS	Patricia Caudillo, SWS II
DSS	Nick Cha, SWS II
DSS	Shanel Moore, SWS II
Probation	Rick DuPree, Chief
Probation	Gloria Garcia, Deputy Probation Supervisor
Probation	Sofia Abarca, Deputy Probation Officer
CDSS	Sarah Davis, Social Service Consultant
CDSS – OCAP	Irma Munoz, Social Service Consultant

ADDITIONAL STAKEHOLDERS:

Chrysalis House – FFA	Brandy Lucas
North Fork Rancheria	Theresa Sam
Kings view – Ready, Set, Go! Program	Eugene Bell, Executive Director
Koinonia Family Services	Dennis Orender
Koinonia Family Services	Cricket Chatfield
Madera County Sheriff Dept.	Kristine Hawk
Child Abuse Prevention Counsel	Robin Leppo, Director
Positive Attitudes – FFA	Bobby McGee
Public Health	Van Do-Reynoso, Director
Public Health	Susan Bullard
Public Health	Rhoma Porras

Public Health	Dalene Roth
First 5	Chinayera Black, Director
County Counsel	Woodrow Whitford, Deputy County Counsel
Aspira Net (Transitional Housing Provider)	Samantha LaGrasse
Community Action Partnership	Tina Figueroa
Angels of Grace	Lisa Casarez
Aspira Net	Kathy Steele
BHS	Debby Estes
BHS	Janice Melton, Director
BHS	Cesar Velasquez, Division Manager
BHS	Art Galindo, Supervising Mental Health Clinician
Board of Supervisors	David Rogers
California Youth Connection	Kate Teague
Camerena Health	Eric Linville
Community Action Partnership	Mattie Mendez, Director
Community Action Partnership	Milly Renteria
CASA	Nathan Lee
CASA	Amanda Duarte
Children's Hospital of Central California	Leanne Kozub
Chowchilla Union High School District	Debbie Herzog
Chrysalis House	Brandy Lucas
Parent	Rick Deniz
Families Together FFA	Ronald Plumb
Family Builders Foster Care	Katie Snyder
Family Builders Foster Care	Adina Villareal
Foster Parent	Nancy Hermosillo
Foster Parent	Cheryl Mahaffy
Golden State Family Services	Rick Asherda
Golden State Family Services	Kathy Valdez
Housing Authority	Maria Juarez
Big Sandy Rancheria	Dorothy Dodie Barton
Kings County Probation	John Green
Merced County CWS	Tony Xiong
Merced County CWS	Elizabeth Sanchez
Merced County Probation	Christina Twart
Madera County Office of Education	Elizabeth Rodriguez
Madera Unified School District	Rachel Donatelli
Positive Attitude Outlook INC	Adolfo Resendez
Madera County Probation	Rick Galindo
Probation Parent	Jeff Krueger
Promesa Behavioral	Andrea Christiansen
Promesa Behavioral	Cindy Friesen
Riverside DSS	Feledier Thrower

Riverside DSS	Vivian Dunipace
Riverside DSS	Dana Young
Tulare County Probation	Erica Martinez
Valley Teen Ranch	Alicia Longcor
Valley Teen Ranch	Amanda Rodriguez
DSS – CWS	Anthony Yrigollen, SW IV
DSS – Adoptions	Lily Spees, SW IV
DSS – Adoptions	Rachel Garcia, SW IV
DSS	Paul Yankey, Administrative Analyst II
DSS - Fiscal	Frank Schnadarle, Fiscal Manager
DSS – FC Eligibility	Marilyn Quick, EW III
DSS – FC Eligibility	Dawn Fowler, EW III
DSS – FC Eligibility	Kelly Avila, Eligibility Supervisor
DSS - CWS	Beverly Webb, SW III
DSS - WTW	Miguel Gonzalez, E.T.S.
DSS - CWS	Genever Thomas, SW IV
DSS - WTW	Champagne Brown, E.T.W. II
DSS - CWS	Pada Vang, SW IV
DSS - CWS	Maria Cruz, SW IV
DSS - CWS	Amber Davis, SW IV
DSS - Fiscal	Kathy Johnson, Fiscal Analyst II
DSS - CWS	Brandy Curran, SW III
DSS - CWS	Michelle Marin, Fresno State Intern
DSS - CWS	Sharlene Garringer, SW IV
DSS - CWS	Shanisha Augustine, SW IV
DSS - CWS	Mee Wang, SW IV
DSS - CWS	Edgar Guerrero, Fresno State Intern

C. DEMOGRAPHIC PROFILE

1. Demographics of the General population

a. Required Elements

i. County population = 152,925 (2011) http://quickfacts.census.gov/qfd/states/06/06039.html

ii. Active Tribes

a. North Fork Rancheria Mono Tribe

b. Picayune Rancheria Chuckchansi Tribe

iii. Number of children attending school = 30,308 (2011-2012) http://dq.cde.ca.gov/

iv. Number of children attending special education classes = 3,038 (2011-2012) http://dq.cde.ca.gov/

v. Number of children born to teen parents between = 2,468 (2002 – 2008) http://www.cdph.ca.gov/data/statistics/Pages/CountyBirthStatisticalDataTables.aspx

vi. Number of children who are leaving school prior to graduation = 373 (2010-2011) http://dq.cde.ca.gov/

vii. Number of children on child care waiting lists = 877 (2010) http://www.rrnetwork.org/rr-research-in-action/2011-california-child-care.html

viii. Number of children participating in subsidized school lunch programs = 17,185 (2012) http://datacenter.kidscount.org/data/bystate/Default.aspx?state=CA

ix. Number of children receiving age-appropriate immunizations = 94.19% (2011-2012) http://dq.cde.ca.gov/

x. Number of babies who are born with a low-birth weight = 6.9% (2010) http://www.cdph.ca.gov/data/statistics/Pages/CountyBirthStatisticalDataTables.aspx

xi. Number of families receiving Public Assistance (CalWORKs) = 3,127 (CA 237 CW for October 2012)

xii. Number of families living below the poverty line = 31% (2010) http://www.kidsdata.org/data/topic/table/child_poverty20.aspx?loc=2,127,1763,331,348,336,171,321,345,357,332,324,369,362,360,337,327,364,356,217,328,354,320,339,334,365,343,330,367,344,355,366,368,265,349,361,4,273,59,370,326,322,341,338,350,342,329,359,351,363,340,335

b. Suggested Elements

i. Number of families with no health insurance = 17% (2009) http://datacenter.kidscount.org/data/bystate/Default.aspx?state=CA

ii. County unemployment rate = 13.9% (December 2012) http://www.labormarketinfo.edd.ca.gov/cgi/databrowsing/localAreaProfileQSResults.asp?selectedarea=Madera+County&selectedindex=20&menuChoice=localareapro&state=true&geogArea=0604000039&countyName

iii. County rate of drug and alcohol abuse = 650 people were served by County Behavioral Health Services for AOD in 2011

2. CWS Participation

a. Required Elements:

i. Number of children age 0-18 in population = 44,125 (2012)

http://quickfacts.census.gov/qfd/states/06/06039.html

ii. Number and rate of children with referrals = 2807/64.55 (2011)
http://cssr.berkeley.edu/cwscmsreports

iii. Number and rate of first entries 110/2.53 (2011)
http://cssr.berkeley.edu/cwscmsreports

b. Suggested Elements:

i. Number and rate of children with substantiated referrals 390/8.97 (2011)
http://cssr.berkeley.edu/cwscmsreports

ii. Number and rate of children in care = 175/4.02 (July 1, 2011)
http://cssr.berkeley.edu/cwscmsreports

There are two significant changes in data from the last CSA (2009) and this one. The first is in the area of the number of families living below the poverty line. In 2007, the number of families equaled 16.9% and in 2010, that number climbed to 31% of the population in Madera County live below the poverty level. As this number is captured in "families", this difference could be attributed to an increase in people with no children, the elderly who no longer have children in their homes, and the economy. The second area is in the number of children on a child care waiting list. In 2009 the number waiting was 327. In 2010, there were 877 children on the waiting list. The increase correlates with budget cuts and reduction in child care funding.

D. PUBLIC AGENCY CHARACTERISTICS

Information and Considerations

1. Size and Structure of Agencies

a. County-operated shelters:
There are no county-operated shelters.

b. County licensing:
Community Care Licensing provides foster family home licensing for Madera County.

1. Juvenile Detention Facility/Correctional Camp (Boot Camp):

1-Deputy Chief

6-Juvenile Detention Officer Supervisors (2 positions unfunded/vacant)

6- Juvenile Detention Officer III's(Lead Officer)

36- Juvenile Detention Officers I and II's (Line Staff/8 positions unfunded)

1-Administrative Assistant

1-Program Assistant

Average Daily Population 30 in Juvenile Detention Facility 23 in Boot Camp

Average length of stay 20.72 days in Juvenile Detention Facility 118.31 days in Boot Camp.

c. Adoptions of Madera County Children:

On July 1, 2012, Madera County Department of Social Services began providing Adoption Services for Madera County families. Prior to this date, State Department of Social Services, Fresno District Office provided all adoption services to Madera County. At the time Madera County took over its adoption program in July of 2012, there were a number of children being served by the District Office who were close to adoption finalization. Therefore it made sense to continue to work with the Fresno D.O. for adoption services for these particular children to ensure that no delays to the adoption process were experienced. Since July 1, 2012, the Fresno District Office and the Madera Adoption unit have completed 11 adoptions.

2. County Government Structure

There are two departments within the County Governance structure that are responsible for providing Child Welfare Services, the Department of Social Services and the Probation Department. Both agencies have participated in Child Welfare training since the last assessment.

a. Staffing characteristics/issues

Child Welfare:

i. Turnover

FY 2011 –2012, for Child Welfare Services:

Deputy Director	1 (Filled)
Program Manager	2 (Filled)
Social Worker IV	3 (Filled)
Social Worker Supervisor II	1 (Filled)

From January 2012 - November 2012, the average caseload per worker per month varied by program as shown in the table below. This table is not meant to indicate the degree of difficulty of any case. Workers are assigned to multiple areas so the average caseload per worker per month is shown by program type, not by individual worker.

Program Area	**Number of workers in each unit**	**Average caseload size per worker**
Emergency Response	12	25
Family Reunification	4	23
Family Maintenance	4	25
Permanency Planning	5	30.5

In November 2012, in order to have consistency in social workers as cases move through family reunification into family maintenance, the Department combined the FR and FM caseloads.

Probation:

The staffing characteristics of the Juvenile Services Division Placement Unit of the Madera County Probation Department include the following positions:

- Deputy Chief-oversees 16 officers in the Juvenile Services Division and 3 clerical staff
- 1 Deputy Probation Officer Supervisor-oversees 10 staff(5 probation officers, 1Probation Technician and 3 Clerical), court, intake and placement services
- 2 Senior Deputy Probation Officers- Intake/Court officers oversee juvenile investigations and all juvenile court matters along with field supervision matters
- 1 Deputy Probation Officer- Group Home/Foster Care Placement Officer
- 1 Probation Technician-assists Group Home/Foster Care Placement Officer, and oversees an informal probation caseload
- 1 Program Assistant- inputting information in CWS/CMS for Group Home/Foster Home Placement, additional duties include preparing documents for court, closures of probation cases/referrals

The Probation Group Home/Foster Home Caseload numbers vary and average approximately 15 cases a month.

b. Bargaining Unit Issues:

Union membership is available to Child Welfare Services staff; however it is not a closed shop (you do not have to join the union) for Social Workers or Mid-Management staff. There are currently no outstanding collective bargaining issues that negatively affect the provision of Child Welfare Services.

Union membership is available to Probation staff and is a closed shop. The Probation Department Probation has three bargaining units, including Probation administration/DCs absent the Chief. Madera Probation Peace Officers Association for line staff and the Madera Peace Officer Management Association, and Probation Administration/DCs. The only exempt position is the Chief Probation Officer.

c. Financial/material resources:

MCDSS funds a local Transitional Housing Program Plus (THP Plus/FC). The department uses both the host family model and scattered sites model (The Scattered Site model provides participants the opportunity to live in housing located in multiple locations in the community); and has six (6) after care youth involved in the THP Plus program. An additional four (4) slots are available for AB12 youth. Aspiranet provides case management services to the youth through a contract with MCDSS.

Child Abuse Prevention Intervention and Treatment (CAPIT) and Community Based Child Abuse Prevention (CBCAP) allocations are used by Child Welfare Services to provide Parent Education Training, Support Networks and Resource Guides. The CAPC provided education classes – Staying Connected to your Teens; Mandated Reporter Training and various activities for Child Abuse Prevention Month including a two day Annual Day for Children Conference. These were funded by CAPIT/CTF. Staying Connected to your Teens served 42 adults and 38 children and youth. 44 participants participated in Mandated Reporter Training; 72 participants participated in Child Abuse Training and 106 people participated in the Day for Children's Conference.

Another program funded through Social Services with the aid of these funds is the Parent Support and Advocacy Center. This program provides evidenced based parenting education and home visitation to both child welfare and probation families and families at high risk of having their children removed from their care. The two parenting classes being offered are Strengthening Families and Triple P. These programs served 101 parents and 176 children in FY 2011-2012 with 85 parents completing the program. The Children's Trust Fund (CTF) is used to support this program, as well as the operations costs associated with the local Child Abuse Prevention Council.

The Madera County Behavioral Health Services has been the primary provider for the provision of mental health assessment and treatment to children and families in CWS programs through the Lake Street Center Collaborative. Additionally, in 2010, through a Memorandum of Understanding with Behavioral Health, a certified Drug and Alcohol Counselor was stationed at the child welfare office at 629 E. Yosemite, Madera, CA, in order to provide immediate screening and follow up of parents with an alcohol and/or drug issue.

The Madera County Department of Public Health provides integral support to the children and families served by CWS in various joint program efforts. Health advocacy, psychotropic drug protocol coordination, and tandem visits are provided to families in CWS through the Foster Care –Public Health Nurse. A second FC-PHN provides services to families in CWS Family Maintenance program to educate and support families in accessing services for health issues.

PSSF funds are used to support the Healthy Beginnings Program and child welfare direct services. The Healthy Beginnings Program is a collaboration of individuals from multiple disciplines who provide family-focused, in-home, strength-based, advocacy-driven and culturally competent assessment and services to families in Madera County with children 0 – 5. Child Welfare families with moderate to high service needs who receive services from multiple agencies are referred. The Healthy Beginnings program provides direct services, intensive home visitation, transportation to and from services, temporary housing needs, domestic violence classes, parenting classes, and other services to assist families in crisis.

Probation:

Madera County Probation Department receives state funding through Corrections Standards Authority (CSA), Title IV-E funds and two grants for the Juvenile Division. The department does not leverage the Title IV-E or CSA funds.

The Youth Offender Block Grant (YOBG) and Juvenile Justice Crime Prevention Act provides funding which provides additional programming, tools, curriculum and staff for at risk youth or lower level offenders and also the higher level and more sophisticated offenders. The Division of Juvenile Justice commitments are no longer supervised by the State but are now supervised by Probation under community supervision following their release/parole back into the community. The Proud Parenting Program Grant is approximately $140,000. Under this grant, Probation contracts services with Match Two, and Vicki Teran, Mentor Coordinator; both provide mentoring services for juveniles (14 and over) and young adults from 18-25 years old who are already parents or are expecting a child.

d. Political Jurisdictions:

Madera County has two incorporated cities within its boundaries, Madera and Chowchilla. Child Welfare Services refer families to the services each city offers its citizens. Although there are no formal MOU's in place between CWS and these jurisdictions, the Housing Authority of the City of Madera, in partnership with CWS, supports the Foster Care Independent Living Program by means of referrals for preference on Housing Authority waiting lists.

Madera County has three law enforcement agencies within its boundaries; the Chowchilla Police Department, Madera City Police Department, and the Madera County Sheriff's Office. The Department has a good relationship with all three agencies;

working closely with them in the Child Sexual Abuse Team and Child Death Reviews. In addition, the Madera County Sheriff's Office has an officer on the Board of the CAPC.

The largest educational jurisdiction in Madera County is the Madera County Office of Education. Madera Unified School District is the second largest educational jurisdiction in Madera County.

Other jurisdictions are the Native American Tribes, specifically the North Fork Rancheria and the Picayune Rancheria. Madera County is involved in the local, regional and State Indian Child Welfare Association (ICWA) Task Force so as to collaborate more effectively with the tribes. In addition, the County works with the tribal liaisons in addressing areas of concerns for identified ICWA families, as well as linkage to services.

3. Madera County Peer Review

In an effort to ensure continuous quality improvement for children, youth and families in the child welfare and probation systems, Madera County conducted its Peer Review November 6 – 9, 2012.

Throughout the planning and the Peer Review event itself, Madera County was committed to the principle that the Peer Review is an informative process that assists in examining more deeply the practice areas which address the needs of the children, youth and families they serve. This commitment led Child Welfare and Probation to learn more about Reunification within 12 months. Its current performance for C1.3: Family Reunification within 12 months (entry cohort) is below the federal measure of 48.4%.

Child Welfare Current Performance: 43.6% (17 out of 39 youth)

Probation Current Performance: 0% (0 out of 6 youth)

In an effort to glean as much information as possible from peer counties, Madera invited the counties of Riverside, Merced and San Mateo (Child Welfare) and Kings, Tulare and Merced (Probation) to participate on the interview teams and provide peer county insights and recommendations. These counties were selected due to their excellent outcomes in these areas or because of the promising practices that had been observed by staff. Child welfare and probation staff was interviewed.

Background and Methodology

Madera County Child Welfare had 211 children in placement on July 1, 2012. Juvenile Probation has 15-20 youth in placement. Both agencies are committed to ensuring the best outcomes for its children and youth in care.

Peers interviewed a total of 16 cases; 14 from child welfare and 2 from probation. In addition, the same two cases that were interviewed for probation were used for case reviews, in which peers reviewed documentation in the case file.

Summary of Practice

The Peer Review is a process that covers a large quantity of information which we have attempted to synthesize and organize in this summary. This section is a summary of the

practice that was found in the completed process and is intended to be presented in a manner that concisely explains the trends found throughout the interviews and process debriefs.

CHILD WELFARE STRENGTHS AND CHALLENGES

Background

Strengths:

- Social workers are well versed in all different service components (PP, FM, adoptions, etc.) and have lots of experience.
- Families experienced consistency with their social workers. Some have kept their cases from initial removal through disposition.
- Social workers receive a lot of training and this translates into strong social work knowledge.

Maintaining Connections:

Strengths:

- Persistence of locating services and maintaining connections with family members was noted among the case reviews. Some examples include:
- Diligently working to keep the child in their community and school and with same counselor/therapist.
- Social worker and onsite Alcohol and Other Drug (AOD) counselor were able to do initial assessment of the parent right away.
- Social workers made an effort to place with relatives first, at beginning, and continuously throughout the case.
- Social workers made efforts to maintain connection with family, organizing visits with family.

Challenges:

There were factors noted that created challenges in maintaining connections:

- Transportation of getting child(ren) to services from mountain area is often difficult. Only one bus goes in and out.
- Parent(s) is unwilling to participate with child or a child is refusing to visit.

Engagement

Strengths:

In terms of engagement, there was an overall strength noted in this area. A number of activities indicate an effort with families to engage them.

- Case planning starts prior to detention
- Concurrent planning begins at initial placement
- Use of team decision meeting to determine placement

- Workers conduct relative assessment at time of removal
- Continuous outreach to families despite the parents' reluctance to reunify

Social workers also work hard to engage children on their caseloads and conduct quality contacts. Some spend time with children, taking them to different places: animal shelter, ice cream and spend time talking to them about goals and school.

Barriers:
Despite efforts to engage, sometimes a parent's reluctance to participate in services and reunification can make the process challenging. The agency cannot force parents to participate in case planning and some birth parent are hostile towards providers and their social worker. Some parents' mental health or substance abuse issues create barriers to engagement, and sometimes children have been coached by parents not to talk with social workers. System wide, not all social workers utilize TDM meetings. They do participate in case staffing meetings and conduct family meetings, but there seems to be confusion about what meeting to use. Another challenge is that there can be difficulty placing children with relatives due to their past criminal background and/or health issues.

Assessment and Services

Strengths:
Case staffing meetings were noted as keeping workers on top of assessments and maintaining case plan goals. Efforts by social workers to make referrals for children and families was noted and in some cases services started very quickly and ran smoothly. There are no gaps for children referred to mental health services which start at the beginning of the case. Therapy includes both the child and the parent.

Challenges:
Despite efforts to engage and connect families with resources, there are a number of challenges. There are insufficient resources in Madera including support staff, Spanish speaking mental health providers, therapists, and not enough anger management classes. Additionally the location of services and lack of adequate transportation makes getting to services difficult for families. In other situations, parents denied the need for services or were in and out of incarceration and could not get engaged in services.

Placement Matching

Strengths:
In the cases reviewed, the following placement matching efforts were identified:

- Social worker kept children near home and community of origin
- Child was placed in Spanish speaking home with similar cultural background
- Child was placed with siblings
- Child was placed with relatives or NREFM

Challenges:

The agency does not have a placement matching procedure; just an emergency placement process. Additionally there were geographical challenges such as there are no group homes in the county for young children and another child had to be placed out of county due to a lack of homes that could handle the child's medical needs.

Other barriers to placement matching include the child being placed with relatives and the biological parent showing up and disrupting the placement, and although it is positive to place with relatives, sometimes this necessitates a school change which can be difficult.

Reunification

Strengths:
System wide, strength is that concurrent planning reviews and case staffing meetings are done consistently. Social workers are diligent in transitioning visitation to longer and more frequent. Social workers made good connections between agency and community partners (behavioral health, AOD, Wrap around, Lake Street/mental health) and the social worker made sure services were in place so that when they went home they were maintained and helped to maintain placement.

Challenges:
In some instances, the parent and/or child was a barrier to reunification, as they did not want to reunify and would not engage in services or the reunification plan.

CHILD WELFARE NEEDS

Systemic/Policy and resource issues:
A variety of systemic issues were noted:

- Cases get continued by court too often
- There needs to be more morale boosting and employee appreciation events
- Need more support staff so case carrying workers can spend more time on cases
- Only have one therapist for all children in care, sessions are only 30 minutes instead of an hour - need more therapists
- Lack of inpatient drug program
- Need more housing resources for clients, i.e. Section 8 vouchers

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PROBATION STRENGTHS AND CHALLENGES

As noted above, only two cases were reviewed so it may be difficult to generalize all the issues identified below.

Background

There is only one placement probation officer. The strength of this is that they carry the case throughout its duration. The challenge is that this is a lot of work for one officer and it is a very challenging work load.

Maintaining Connections:

Strengths:
Probation officers also worked to maintain connections with families with the support of service providers. For example, the agency and group home gave families a gas card to facilitate visits. Another group home facilitated visits for minor and family.

Challenges:
- The group home was too far away for frequent visits to occur
- There are limited group home placements for teen mothers.

Engagement

Strengths:
- Probation officer went over case plan with minor
- Probation officer communicated openly with minor and parent

Assessment and Services

Strengths:
A number of strengths were noted in providing assessments and services:
- Contact between service provider and PO was good
- Transitional Independent Living Plan completed
- Mental Health:
  - Psychological evaluation completed
  - Mental health provider was onsite at the home
  - Group home provided therapy
  - Minors counseling received before placement was continued when Placement started (with a new therapist)

- Group Home Supports:
  - Group homes provided good quarterly reports, good documentation
  - Group home provided ILP and AOD

Challenges:
A number of service gaps were noted:
- No initial assessments before placement, can't be used to determine placement
- Lack of parenting classes for probation parents
  - Triple P Parenting classes are available to child welfare parents, but need it for probation families
- Lack of individual counseling for probation parents

Placement Matching

Strengths:

- Probation Officer calls neighboring counties to learn resources of where to send teen mother
- Group home able to facilitate transportation for youth and mom

Challenges:

- Placements are far away
- Practice is to place youth far away due to runaway risk and falling back into criminal element

Reunification

Strengths:
It was noted that appropriate services were offered on the two cases. In one case the Probation Officer, counselor and mother worked together to prepare for going home and support return of minor to home environment. Visitation included overnight and weekends. Also assure that services for return home are in place including counseling and parenting support.

Challenges:
In general, there is a need for more services for probation parents to help reunify.

PROBATION NEEDS:

It was noted that the Probation Officer is able to handle large caseload and is committed to engaging minors in services and working with group home staff.

Training Needs:

- Need AB 12 training including how to write court reports
- Reunification training

Systemic/Policy Changes:

- Identified need for another PO to handle AB 12 youth and assist with current youth.

On the final day of the Peer Review, our County peers shared some promising practices being utilized in their counties which might be helpful for Madera County. These included:

Child Welfare

- Placement unit –locates appropriate placement for children

- Visitation Center – contracted CBO
- Formal TDM's with facilitator

Probation

- Wrap around services
- Meet with the minor at Juvenile Hall to discuss placement options
- Family Finding Practice – lifelong connection

Focus Groups

There were 9 focus groups held during the peer review. These focus groups included, but are not limited to foster parents, social worker supervisors, eligibility workers, foster youth, and service providers. Although most of the focus groups were facilitated by independent practitioners with no ties to Madera County, a few were facilitated by child welfare supervisors. A lot of the themes from these groups mirror the barriers we face as a County.

In the Child Welfare Social Worker Supervisor focus group we learned that available resources were very difficult to access in order to provide effective services to the client. Madera County has a lack of mental health and inpatient services. Although there are services for the 0 – 5 population; there is not much for older kids – over the age of 8. In addition, we learned that there is a need for parent partners/mentors as well as youth mentors.

Eleven youth participated in the Child Welfare youth focus group. The youth provided insight into their view of the system, which included the following:

- Youths felt that sometimes staffing meetings were a negative experience. When everyone went around the table to share what was going on that was positive, no one had anything to say. The process made the youth feel bad. "Felt like everyone was against me. It felt like people didn't like me."
- Youths state that they don't always get a copy of their court reports.
- Youths don't always get to talk to their attorneys about their cases.
- Youths are not told why when relatives come forward but youths are not placed with them.
- Youths who had CASAs liked them. A CASA is "somebody to listen to you instead of argue with you." CASAs helped youths with anger because it felt like someone was listening and trying to help. "Having a CASA is like having a friend."
- Looking back, I realize system helped although at the time didn't like it. After left got into trouble. Would have been better if I'd stayed

- Foster parents help you change. Help you find tutoring, help with school work, help you improve. Foster parents talked to her.
- Youths saw ILP as a big support. Teaches financial skills, to be independent: how to manage money/budget, pay bills, open a bank account, teaches proper hygiene, safe sex, about STDs, applying for college and scholarships, how to plan for turning 18.
- Youths would like social workers to check with them before making placement decisions. Ask kids what kind of home they want to go into before placing them.
- Youths want to feel heard and cared about by their social workers. Youths want social workers to listen to them.

Within all of the focus groups, various themes were identified as barriers to reunification. These include:

1) Lack of services available in Madera County (In patient AOD, Dual Diagnosis, Anger Management, youth services over age 8)
2) Transportation in remote areas is unavailable
3) Lack of prevention services
4) Parents and/or child do not want to reunify

4. Outcomes

SAFETY OUTCOMES

Child Welfare:

A. Federal Safety Measure 1
S1.1: No Recurrence of Maltreatment

Data in this outcome section was gathered from the October 2012 data report (Quarter 2, 2012), which can be accessed at http://www.childsworld.ca.gov/PG1358.htm.

This safety outcome is the measurement, of all children who were victims of a substantiated maltreatment allegation during the 6-month period, what percent were not victims of another substantiated maltreatment allegation within the next 6 months?

County	Percentage
National Standard	94.6 %
Madera	91.4 %

DATA ANALYSIS

Madera County has diligently utilized the Structured Decision Making tool, which has allowed for sound assessments of risk and safety, and guided objective decisions for children and families served, resulting in good outcomes for child maltreatment. The County will continue to utilize SDM to guide its decision making process.

The County's performance above is the highest it has been since January 1, 2009, according to SafeMeasure. Prior to returning children home, the Department has a staffing and invites all service providers to participate (including the family). The decision to return home is based upon the parent's compliance with their case plan and the assessments from all service providers. The SDM Reunification Reassessment is completed and well as the Safety Assessment.

B. Federal Safety Measure I
S2.1: No Maltreatment in Foster Care

Data in this outcome section was gathered from the October 2012 data report (Quarter 2, 2012), which can be accessed at http://www.childsworld.ca.gov/PG1358.htm.

This safety outcome measures all of the children that are in foster care during the 12-month period and do not have a substantiated allegation of abuse or neglect by a foster parent or substitute care provider/residential facility staff member.

County	Percentage
National Standard	99.68 %
Madera	98.98 %

DATA ANALYSIS FOR S2.1:

For Safety Outcome S2.1, the County's rate of maltreatment in foster care is 98.98%, which is only slightly under that of the State's average of 99.64%. Madera County staff consistently assesses children on a monthly basis. Madera County's efforts to effect these outcomes include the requirement of having Child Welfare staff check the child's placement binder in the placement home to ensure that child's CHDP, dental, physical,

and vision exams are done timely. Prior to returning children home, the Child Welfare staff complete the SDM Safety and Risk Assessments. In addition, Child Welfare staff collaborate with the child's counselor, doctor, and other professional service providers who are involved in minor's life so further assessments of the child's safety and needs can be addressed on an ongoing basis with all partners involved.

Measure 2B - 10 Day Time to Investigation

10 Day-Time to Investigation (04/2012 – 06/2012)	Count	Percentage
Compliant	279	96.9%
Not Compliant	9	3.1%
Total	**288**	**100.0%**

Measure 2B - Timely Response to Immediate Referrals

Timely Response to Immediate Referrals (04/2012 – 06/2012)	Count	Percentage
Compliant	93	100%
Not Compliant	0	0.0%
Total	**93**	**100.0%**

Measure 2C - Timely Social Worker Contacts

Timely Social Worker Contacts (June 2012)	Count	Percentage
Compliant	302	95%
Not Compliant	16	5%
Total	**322**	**100.0%**

The County has assessed its compliance with timely contacts, which have shown a noticeable improvement. Child Welfare is at 100% compliance with *Immediate* referral investigations, 96.9% compliance with *10-Day* referral investigations and 95% compliance with the required monthly face to face contacts. The referrals are date stamped and logged and the supervisor provides a control to ensure timely response.

Madera County DSS developed a Child Welfare Services program integrity model. This model includes weekly Program Integrity meetings where Social Work Supervisors report out data on compliance mandates including those above. These efforts have shown positive results as noted in the outcomes.

DATA ANALYSIS OF SAFETY COMPOSITE:

Strengths identified in the Safety outcomes include the fact that Madera is a smaller county, which allows for engagement in collaborative discussions and participation in activities is less cumbersome. Some of these collaborative efforts include tandem home visits with clients, such as with the public health nurse, making personal connections with other county department staff and administration, utilization of multi-disciplinary team meetings, and the development of a knowledge base for all of the resources that are available to children and families in our community.

The County's 0-5 year old population is being well served by the Healthy Beginnings Program (HBP), providing coordinated care through prevention and early intervention, as well as the Lake Street Center, which provides mental health assessments and services for children and parents involved with Child Welfare.

As noted previously, Madera County has demonstrated consistent performance in the area of "No Maltreatment in Foster Care." For the outcome of "No Recurrence of Maltreatment," Madera County continues to show peaks and valleys, but overall, the data from Safe Measures demonstrates a continued trend upward, toward the National standard goal. Furthermore, Madera County continues to maintain a strong focus on timely contacts.

Challenges identified in the Safety Outcomes include the need to increase the practice of unannounced home visits, which can impact and reduce maltreatment in foster care, as safety concerns can be immediately addressed with the care provider. In addition, further action needs to be taken toward involving foster youth in staffings as it pertains to the development or changes in their case plan. Lastly, Madera County serves families with large sibling sets and there is a need to affect the intensity of services, so as to impact recurrence of maltreatment. Addressing these areas may produce a positive impact on the safety outcomes.

Probation:

1 Safety Outcomes

S 2.1: Safety Outcome Measure- No Maltreatment in Foster Care

County's Current Performance: Juvenile Probation

Most Recent Start date	Most Recent End date	Most Recent Numerator	Most Recent Denominator	Most Recent Performance	Direction?	Percent Change
7/1/11	6/30/12	19	19	100%	Yes	0.00%

From July 1, 2011 to June 30, 2012, the percentage of children who were in out of home care that were not victims of substantiated maltreatment remained steady at 100%. Current performance is above the federal goal of 99.68%.

PERMANENCY OUTCOMES

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

C1. CHILD WELFARE REUNIFICATION COMPOSITE

Measure C1.1 Reunification within 12 months (exit cohort)

Of all children discharged from foster care to reunification during the year that had been in foster care for 8 days or longer, what percent were reunified in less than 12 months from the date of the latest removal from home?

C.D.S.S./U.C. Berkeley Center for Social Services Research: CWS/CMS Dynamic Report System. CWS outcomes System Summary for Madera County 09/27/2012 Report publication: Oct 2012 Data extract Q2: Agency: Child Welfare C1.1 National Standard or Goal is 75.2% and Madera performance is 65.5%

C1.1 National Standard or Goal is 75.2%

Center for Social Services Research University of California at Berkeley

County	JAN2010-DEC2010	APR2010-MAR2011	JUL2010-JUN2011	OCT2010-SEP2011	JAN2011-DEC2011	APR2011-MAR2012	JUL2011-JUN2012
	%	%	%	%	%	%	%
California	64.6	64.7	64.4	64.4	64.7	64	63.4
Madera	74.4	68.7	63	56.1	54.8	60.6	65.5

Data Source: CWS/CMS 2012 Quarter 2 Extract.
Program version: 1.10 Database version: 62F4E437

Madera County performance was highest from January to December 2010, then declined, and is now beginning to improve again. The County is below the National Standard or Goal. While there are many theories contributing to this low rate, timeliness of treatment remains a major barrier towards reunification efforts particularly for substance abuse and mental health services. Also, if the family reunifies too early, the County sees a corresponding rise in reentry rates. This becomes a delicate balancing act between reunification and reentry.

Delay in reunification largely occurs due to chronic substance use along with a dual mental health diagnosis. As a small county, the Department can work more closely with our partners to coordinate services. However, resources, especially community based organizations, are extremely limited in our County and cannot address the needs of our clients.

In 2010, Madera County DSS partnered with Madera County Behavioral Health to co-locate an Alcohol and Drug Counselor at our child welfare building in the hopes that immediate access to services would increase our parent's success at reunification within 12 months. However, as time went on, it became increasingly clear that the services we expected to receive from the counselor were not readily available. Instead of providing immediate intervention in the form of an assessment (ASI) and therapy, the AOD counselor, while able to encourage participation in services, could not provide those services. The AOD counselor performed the following duties:

A. Screened clients for services
B. Referred clients to Behavioral Health for an assessment
C. Followed up on client and reported back information to the social worker
D. Made home visits to encourage client participation in services
E. Attended staffings when requested by the social worker

The following information is in regards to those clients served during the fiscal year 2011-2012.

61 Clients were opened up to BHS-AOD-Perinatal Services

27 Clients at end of fiscal year remained open to BHS-AOD-Perinatal Services

11 Clients were placed in a Residential AOD Treatment Center

Madera County is dedicated to the engagement of families and the safety of their children through a "Safety Organized Practice Model" (SOP) including Signs of Safety and Structured Decision Making (SDM) tools. This is the use of a solution focused practice. Safety Organized Practice provides skills, techniques and a practice methodology for child welfare work. It offers strategies for creating opportunity to work

with community partners, as well as to provide a common language for "safety mapping" for enhanced critical thinking and judgment on the part of all involved with a family. This is an opportunity for Madera County to improve in the use of the Structured Decision Making tool, the Family Strengths and Needs Assessments which has allowed for sound assessments of risk and safety, and guided objective decisions for children and families served, resulting in good outcomes for child maltreatment. This practice will continue to provide positive outcomes to guide decisions being made.

There are several areas of engagement with families where the Department has improved which will continue to contribute to increasing the Department's outcomes. The Department has increased the number of meetings it has with families, and are systematically scheduling Safety Organized Practice Family Networking meetings ten to fifteen days after the initial detention staffing with a family. The Department is implementing the Safety Organized Practice tools which include use of the Safety House, 3 Houses, Safety Mapping and scaling questions. Staff is also using Motivational Interviewing techniques to increase the likelihood of applying skills that will work for clients in the long term.

Agency staff has also been trained in the use of the Accucare, Addiction Severity Index (ASI), to determine what level of treatment they may need to address their substance abuse issues. There are also additional tools in the ASI program to assess for Mental Health needs and Domestic Violence indicators. These are assisting the Department in getting the right type and level of treatment for clients we serve.

Measure C1.2 Median time to reunification (exit cohort)

Of all children discharged from foster care to reunification during the year who had been in foster care for 8 days or longer, what was the median length of stay (in months) from the date of latest removal from home until the date of discharge to reunification?

C.D.S.S./U.C. Berkeley Center for Social Services Research: CWS/CMS Dynamic Report System. CWS outcomes System Summary for Madera County 09/27/2012 Report publication: Oct 2012 Data extract Q2: Agency: Child Welfare C1.2 the National Standard or Goal is 5.4 and Madera performance is 6.7.

Agency: Child Welfare C1.2 the National Standard or Goal is 5.4 months.

Center for Social Services Research University of California at Berkeley

County	JAN2010-DEC2010	APR2010-MAR2011	JUL2010-JUN2011	OCT2010-SEP2011	JAN2011-DEC2011	APR2011-MAR2012	JUL2011-JUN2012
	Months in care	Months in care	Months in care	Months in care	Months in care	Months in care	Months in care
	Median	Median	Median	Median	Median	Median	Median
California	8.5	8.6	8.6	8.7	8.6	8.8	8.8
Madera	4.4	4.4	7.7	10.7	10.8	9.7	6.7

Data Source: CWS/CMS 2012 Quarter 2 Extract.
Program version: 1.10 Database version: 62F4E437

The median time to reunification may be improved with all the efforts as described in C1.1 above.

Another strategy Madera County will use is in reunification through implementation of the Safety Organized Practice (SOP) Safety Mapping tool. This is comprehensive work with a family that is solution focused interviewing, a questioning approach or interviewing practice that highlights the need for child welfare professionals to ask families about Safety Organized Practice (SOP) and identify together "signs of danger" and provide activities and strategies to assist in this process. This process allows for and provides tools the social worker can use to give the child a voice, and through the "safety mapping" process organize information about a family, allowing increased clarity about the purpose for any particular child welfare intervention.

Networking meetings with family members is an SOP tool Madera County is trying to put into place with families to build the clients' contacts and supports with their immediate family, extended family and then the community, through a series of meetings. The first is to initiate who knows about the family's issues and to establish how the knowledge can be expanded to increasing numbers of potential supports. While this can often be difficult, as these parents are often reluctant to share their problems with other family members, the focus is on the larger family's responsibilities for the safety and protection of the children and for the children and family to have a network of supportive adults.

Measure C1.3 Reunification within 12 months (entry cohort)

Of all children entering foster care for the first time in the 6-month period who remained in foster care for 8 days or longer, what percent were discharged from foster care to reunification in less than 12 months from the date of latest removal from home?

C.D.S.S./U.C. Berkeley Center for Social Services Research: CWS/CMS Dynamic Report System. CWS outcomes System Summary for Madera County 09/27/2012 Report publication: Oct 2012 Data extract Q2: Agency: Child Welfare C1.3 the National Standard or Goal is 48.4% and Madera performance is 31.7%.

C1.3 the National Standard or Goal is 48.4%

Center for Social Services Research University of California at Berkeley

County	JAN2010-JUN2010	APR2010-SEP2010	JUL2010-DEC2010	OCT2010-MAR2011	JAN2011-JUN2011	APR2011-SEP2011	JUL2011-DEC2011	OCT2011-MAR2012
	24 months	18 months	18 months	12 months	12 months	6 months	6 months	3 months
	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%
California	59.4	54.2	53.7	43.5	42.2	24.5	22.7	15.7
Madera	76.9	64.5	55.8	38.9	43.6	29	33.3	31.7

Data Source: CWS/CMS 2012 Quarter 2 Extract.
Program version: 1.10 Database version: 62F8DF34

Reunification within 12 months will be improved with all the efforts as described in C1.1 and C1.2 above.

Measure C1.4 Reentry following reunification (exit cohort)

Of all children discharged from foster care to reunification during the year, what percent reentered foster care in less than 12 months from the date of the earliest discharge to reunification during the year?

C.D.S.S./U.C. Berkeley Center for Social Services Research: CWS/CMS Dynamic Report System. CWS outcomes System Summary for Madera County 09/27/2012 Report publication: Oct 2012 Data extract Q2: Agency: Child Welfare C1.4 the National Standard or Goal is 9.9% and Madera performance is 20.4%.

Agency: Child Welfare C1.4 the National Standard or Goal is 9.9%

Center for Social Services Research University of California at Berkeley

County	JAN2010-DEC2010	APR2010-MAR2011	JUL2010-JUN2011
	%	%	%
California	11.9	11.8	12.2
Madera	10	11.2	20.4

Data Source: CWS/CMS 2012 Quarter 2 Extract.
Program version: 1.10 Database version: 62F8E167

During the last quarter of the reporting period above, Madera County had a total of 20 cases re-entering the foster care system. However, 7 of those cases were children in one family, thus skewing the data. Since that time the number of children re-entering has improved, although this County does have a number of families in our system with large sibling sets, which may be an issue to address when making decisions regarding returning children home too soon.

The majority of these cases involve clients with either a long standing history of substance use or serious on-going mental health needs. There are also many cases where there is a dual diagnosis, further complicating service provision. Madera County has limited resources in this area. Madera County does not have any in-patient facilities in this County therefore parents' must access facilities in our neighboring counties in Fresno and Merced. Use of facilities outside of Madera County also affects the continuity of care the client receives, particularly when transitioning back into our County for aftercare services. In addition, services for our foster youth ages 6 and above have typically been served by the Lake Street Center who is currently under staffed with only one clinician. However, our Behavioral Health Services have been coordinating

with their staff to serve our clients in their main clinic when services are not available through Lake Street. In addition, if a child is in need of specialized services, we do refer them to alternative sites to meet their needs.

One practice that our partners have recently initiated to address some of our dual diagnosed clients is to refer alcohol and drug (AOD) clients to a Trauma Group. The curriculum is based on Stephanie Covington's work in *Beyond Trauma: A Healing Journey for Women* which is an integrated curriculum for women's services based on theory, research, and clinical experience. While the materials are designed for trauma treatment, the connection between trauma and substance abuse in women's lives is a theme throughout. The program has been developed for use in residential and outpatient treatment settings, domestic violence programs, mental health clinics, and criminal justice settings. *Beyond Trauma* has a psychoeducational component that teaches women what trauma is, its process, and its impact on both the inner self (thoughts, feelings, beliefs, values) and the outer self (behavior and relationships, including parenting). The major emphasis is on coping skills with specific exercises for developing emotional wellness.

While it is too early to see any clear outcome data, the plan is to continue and expand this service to our parents in the coming year. In addition, our Department has begun looking at Trauma Informed Practice as a means of assessing trauma to our children, as well as the trauma experienced by their parents, in an effort to provide services that address some of the barriers our parents have to making the behavioral changes needed to assure the safety and well-being of their children. Training on these tools and techniques is beginning with our supervisory staff, and will soon be included for line staff as well.

Another area we are improving in is to have more consistency in social work case management. Cases moving from Family Reunification to Family Maintenance will continue with their same worker. This will provide continuity in the case, in the provision of services, and in the consistency of outcomes and behavior changes.

Probation:

C1.1 Permanency Measure: Reunification within 12 months (Exit Cohort)

County's Current Performance: Juvenile Probation

From July 1, 2011 to June 30, 2012, 33.3% of probation children discharged from foster care to reunification during the year and were discharged within 12 months from the date of the latest removal from the home.

Most Recent	Most Recent	Most Recent	Most Recent Denominator	Most Recent Performance	Direction?	Percent Change

Start date	End date	Numerator				
7/1/11	6/30/12	1	3	33.3%	No	26.7%
There was a decrease in this outcome from the baseline of April 1, 2008 to March 21, 2009 of 45						

C1.2 Permanency Measure: Median Time to Reunification (Exit Cohort)

County's Current Performance: Juvenile Probation

From July 1, 2011 to June 30, 2012, 16.6 months was the median length of stay of children discharged from foster care to reunification during the year.

Most Recent Start date	Most Recent End date	Most Recent Numerator	Most Recent Denominator	Most Recent Performance	Direction?	Percent Change
7/1/11	6/30/12	N/A	3	16.6 months	No	38.3%

From the baseline of April 1, 2008 to March 31, 2009, the median time to reunification of children who discharged from foster care to reunification has increased from 12.0 months to 16.6 months. Current performance does not meet the federal goal of 5.4 months.

C1.3 Permanency Measure: Reunification within 12 months (Entry Cohort)

County's Current Performance: Juvenile Probation

From January 1, 2011 to June 30, 2011, of all children who were in foster care for the first time in the 6-month period who remained for 8 days or longer, 0% exited to reunification within 12 months from the first date of removal.

Most Recent Start date	Most Recent End date	Most Recent Numerator	Most Recent Denominator	Most Recent Performance	Direction?	Percent Change

1/1/11	6/30/11	0	6	0.0%	No	100.0%

From the baseline of October 1, 2007 to March 31, 2008, there was a decrease of reunification of 50.0% as there were 1 out of 2 reunifications in the baseline period. Current performance is below the federal standard of 48.4%.

C1.4 Permanency Measure: Reentry Following Reunification (Exit Cohort)

County's Current Performance: Juvenile Probation

From July 1, 2010 to June 30, 2011, 16.7% of all children who exited to reunification within the year re-entered foster care within the following 12 month period.

Most Recent Start date	Most Recent End date	Most Recent Numerator	Most Recent Denominator	Most Recent Performance	Direction?	Percent Change
7/1/10	6/30/11	1	6	16.7%	N/A	N/A

16.7% of children who exited to reunification within the year re-entered foster care within the following 12 month period. This performance exceeds the federal goal of 9.9%.

DATA ANALYSIS FOR C1.1-C1.4:

The Probation Department provides support to the minors and their families in order to establish reunification. Services provided to the minor and their families include but are not limited to phone calls, on ground visits (at the current placement facility), off ground visits (in the minor's home) and family involvement in therapy through the placement facilities. The Probation Department has also begun to refer families to the Strengthening Families Program and Triple P (Positive Parenting Program) provided through the Community Action Partnership of Madera County. These programs provide the minor and/or their families with the skills to improve family communication and bonding, increase parent knowledge, confidence and efficacy of parenting, increase parent understanding and empathy of the minor, improve the minor's behavior, increase minor's social competencies, reduce and prevent child abuse, increase parents skills in promoting social, emotional and behavioral competencies, reduce parents use of

coercive and punitive methods of discipline, and increase self-management, self-efficacy and problem solving skills.

In sexual offender cases, the minor is placed in a sexual offender group home where reunification within 12 months is more difficult due to sexual offender group home programs length commonly averaging 18-24 months. The sexual offender group home placements length varies depending on the need of the minor. The minor and their family are referred to the same services as indicated above.

C2 ADOPTION COMPOSITE

The Budget Act of 2011 set in motion realignment of funding for Child Welfare Services. With the passage of AB 118, allocations for Adoptions were realigned to California Counties. Madera County was 1of 28 counties that did not administer an Adoptions program as Madera County had a Memorandum of Understanding for these services with CDSS Adoptions. Madera County Department of Social Services (MCDSS) shared the responsibility for adoption services with the California Department of Social Services, Fresno District Adoption's Office.

During fiscal year 2011/2012, MCDSS engaged in planning activities with the intent to assume full responsibility for an Adoptions Program in fiscal year 2012/13. During this planning period, Madera County partnered with a number of other Counties in the Central Valley region in development of Madera Adoption Plan for submission to CDSS for review and to the County Board of Supervisor for approval. On May 1, 2012 the Madera County Board of Supervisors approved the Department's recommendation for MCDSS to administer the Adoption Program effective July1, 2012.

Throughout the planning period, communication with the Fresno District Office continued with the expectation by both parties that services to our children and families would not be adversely impacted by the transition to a County administered Adoption program. Madera County has benefited from the technical support and case management of cases (children/families) from the Fresno District office.

Although Madera County has assumed administration of the Adoptions Program, the partnership with CDSS Adoption Fresno District Office continues under a new Memorandum of Understanding which defines each agency's roles and responsibilities for a subset of cases for whom continuity of case management is integral to adoption finalization.

C2 Adoption Composite

Data extracted from Needell, B., Webster, D., Armijo, M., Lee, S., Dawson, W., Magruder, J., Exel, M., Glasser, T., Williams, D., Zimmerman, K., Simon, V., Putnam-Hornstein, E., Frerer, K., Cuccaro-Alamin, S., Winn, A., Lou, C., & Peng, C. (2009).

Child Welfare Services Reports for California. Retrieved Q2, from University of California at Berkeley Center for Social Services Research website. URL: http://cssr.berkeley.edu/ucb_childwelfare

C2 Adoption Composite (TOTAL)	07/01/2011 – 06/30/2012
Federal	106.4 %
Madera	92.4 %

cssr.berkeley.edu/cwscmsreports

Measure C2.1 Adoption within 24 months (exit cohort)

Of all children discharged from foster care to a finalized adoption during the year, what percent were discharged in less than 24 months from the date of the latest removal from home?

C2.1 Adoption within 24 months (exit cohort)	07/01/2011 – 06/30/2012
Federal	36.6 %
Madera	33.3 %

cssr.berkeley.edu/cwscmsreports

Measure C2.2 Median time to adoption (exit cohort)

Of all children discharged from foster care to a finalized adoption during the year, what was the median length of stay (in months) from the date of latest removal from home until the date of discharge to adoption?

C2.2. Median time to adoption (exit cohort)	07/01/2011 – 06/30/2012
Federal	27.3
Madera	25.5

cssr.berkeley.edu/cwscmsreports

Measure C2.3 Adoption within 12 months (17 months in care)

Of all children in foster care for 17 continuous months or longer on the first day of the year, what percent were discharged to a finalized adoption by the last day of the year?

C2.3 Adoption within 12 months (17 months in care)	07/01/2011 – 06/30/2012
Federal	22.7%
Madera	11.1%

cssr.berkeley.edu/cwscmsreports

Measure C2.4 Legally free within 6 months (17 months in care)

Of all children in foster care for 17 continuous months or longer and not legally free for adoption on the first day of the year, what percent became legally free within the next 6 months?

C2.4 Legally free within 6 months (17 months in care)	**07/01/2011 – 06/30/2012**
Federal	10.9%
Madera	11.8%

cssr.berkeley.edu/cwscmsreports

Measure C2.5 Adoption within 12 months (legally free)

Of all children in foster care that became legally free for adoption during the year, what percent were then discharged to a finalized adoption in less than 12 months?

C2.5 Adoption within 12 months (legally free)	**07/01/2011 – 06/30/2012**
Federal	53.7%
Madera	38.5%

cssr.berkeley.edu/cwscmsreports

DATA ANALYSIS FOR C2.1-C2.5:

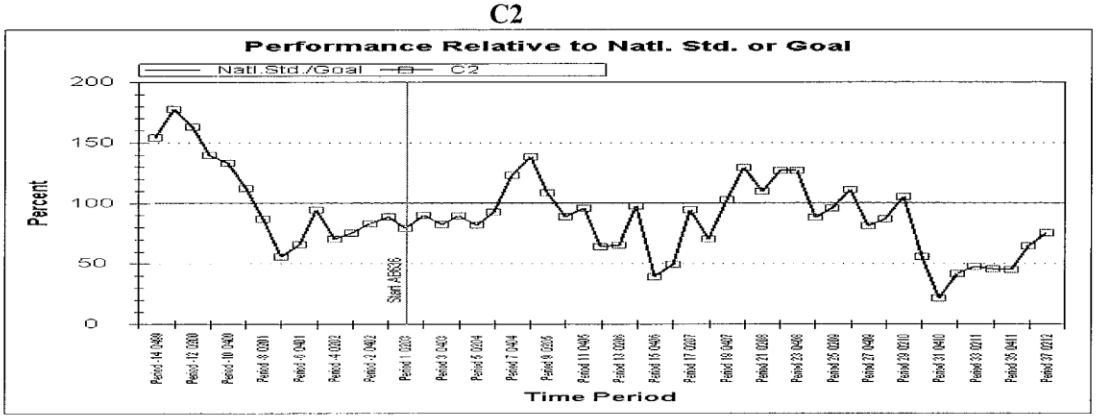
As stated earlier, Madera County has a positive relationship with the Department of Social Services Adoption's Office. Meetings are held at least once a month for case consultation and any concerns are easily discussed quickly via email and telephone. The data above is reflective of efforts by the State Adoption's Office in Fresno and Madera DSS.

County processes and procedures previously utilized for clear identification of role and responsibilities between CDSS Fresno and Madera County have been revised for use internally. An internal adoption policy and procedure that delineates a precise step by step process for making adoption referrals to the County Adoptions program has been developed and is monitored for compliance during our weekly Program Integrity meetings. Madera County is committed to ensuring that adoptions are finalized within the required timeframes.

The graph below depicts Madera County's longitudinal progress in meeting the C2 Adoption composite. Although the last reporting period is not at or above the National

Standard Goal, Madera County's performance continues to see a steady increase which shows some improved outcomes over time.

Adoption Composite
C2



http://cssr.berkeley.edu/cwscmsreports/compositeViewer

SafeMeaures Data (10/01/2011 – 09/30/2012) indicates that we now meet or exceed Federal Measures C2.1 = 41.7 %, C2.2 = 24.4 %, and C2.4 = 18.9 %.

In regards to challenges and barriers, areas Madera County identified that impacted the County's performance in this composite, included:

1) Late referrals to the Adoptions Unit. Late referrals continue even after bringing Adoptions in-house.
2) Incomplete referrals that do not have all the needed information and/or documents. Internally, this continues to be problematic.
3) Inconsistent adherence to Concurrent Planning procedures. Case plans were found not to have documented concurrent plan goals.

A comparison of cases in Measures C2.2 and C2.3 reflected the following with regard to placement stability. According to SafeMeasurers, one hundred percent (100%) of children ages 1-2 in *both* Measures had two or fewer placements. One hundred percent (100%) children ages 3-5 in Measure C2.2 had 2 or fewer placements while 33% of the

children ages 3-5 in Measure C2.3 had 2 or fewer placements and 67% had 3 or more placements. All children in both Measures were ages 5 or under.

Madera County is excited about administration of the Adoption Program and is committed to developing and revising our program activities toward improving outcome performances at or above the National Standard Goal. Madera County utilizes PSSF dollars to provide direct services for pre and post counseling, transition, and stabilization of adoptive families.

Probation: C2

The probation department does not have any data information for adoptions as due to the number of juveniles in placement, the ages of the juveniles in placement and the termination of parental rights, not generally recommended, adoption is not commonly considered. If a minor was eligible or appropriate for adoption the matter would be referred to the 241.1 WI process to proceed with Permanent Placement services which would include an Adoption Assessment. If it was determined the minor's needs would better be served by the Social Services department the case would be dismissed in delinquency court and the adoption process would be addressed through Social Services. If the matter was to remain under delinquency court the Probation Department would address the matter according to California Rule of Court 5.825.

C3 LONG TERM CARE COMPOSITE

Measure C3.1 Exits to permanency (24 months in care)

Of all children in foster care for 24 months or longer on the first day of the year, what percent were discharged to a permanent home by the end of the year and prior to turning 18?

Q2: Agency: Child Welfare C3.1 National Standard or Goal is 29.1%

Center for Social Services Research University of California at Berkeley

County	APR2010-MAR2011	JUL2010-JUN2011	OCT2010-SEP2011	JAN2011-DEC2011	APR2011-MAR2012	JUL2011-JUN2012
	%	%	%	%	%	%
California	23.5	23.1	23.4	23.6	24.1	24.2
Madera	41.3	47.9	41	35.3	31.9	13.9

Data Source: CWS/CMS 2012 Quarter 2 Extract.
Program version: 1.10 Database version: 62F91C33

Measure C3.2 Exits to permanency (legally free at exit)

Of all children discharged from foster care during the year who were legally free for adoption, what percent were discharged to a permanent home prior to turning 18?

Q2: Agency: Child Welfare C3.2 National Standard or Goal is 98.0%

Center for Social Services Research University of California at Berkeley

County	APR2010-MAR2011	JUL2010-JUN2011	OCT2010-SEP2011	JAN2011-DEC2011	APR2011-MAR2012	JUL2011-JUN2012
	%	%	%	%	%	%
California	96.5	96.1	96.3	96.7	96.7	97.3
Madera	100	100	92.3	93.8	92.9	90

Data Source: CWS/CMS 2012 Quarter 2 Extract.
Program version: 1.10 Database version: 62F91B4C

Measure C3.3 in care 3 years or longer (emancipated or age 18 in care)

Of all children in foster care during the year who were either discharged to emancipation or turned 18 while still in care, what percent had been in foster care for 3 years or longer?
Q2: Agency: Child Welfare C3.3 National Standard or Goal is 37.5%

Center for Social Services Research University of California at Berkeley

County	APR2010-MAR2011	JUL2010-JUN2011	OCT2010-SEP2011	JAN2011-DEC2011	APR2011-MAR2012	JUL2011-JUN2012
	%	%	%	%	%	%
California	59.6	59.2	59.7	59.2	58	56.3
Madera	50	47.1	47.4	40	36.8	31.3

Data Source: CWS/CMS 2012 Quarter 2 Extract.
Program version: 1.10 Database version: 62FA0C32

DATA ANALYSIS FOR C3 COMPOSITE:

In reference to permanency outcome C3.1 Exits to permanency (24months in care), Madera County scored 13.9%, which is below the National Standard/Goal of 29.1%, and the State average of 23.0%. For outcome C3.2 Exits to permanency (legally free at exit), Madera County scored 90%, which is below than the National Standard/Goal of

98.0%, as well as the State average of 97.3%. For outcome C3.3, in care 3 years or longer (emancipated or age 18 in care), Madera County scored 31.3%, which is better than the National Standard/Goal of 37.5%, as well as the State average of 56.3%.

To improve these outcomes, Madera County has been working on permanency efforts include searching and, as appropriate, re-engaging families for those identified youth whose permanency efforts are other than adoptions or guardianship. Through these efforts, the County expects to see an increase in the rate of those youth exiting out of the foster care system into a permanent plan of adoption, guardianship, or in some cases, a return to their parents.

The County has adopted the philosophy that all youth should have a permanent connection prior to leaving foster care. With the adoption of this philosophy, this has prompted a changed in how our division from Emergency Response to Permanency Planning utilizes tools to identify connection throughout the system when youth are placed into foster care. The Social Worker is required to gather detailed information on relatives and any other persons who are important to any child who is detained and must be placed out of home. This information is then used for placement consideration and permanency planning. Furthermore, this information will be maintained and updated so that the child's family and permanent connections can be maintained.

In regards to Madera County's performance measure on C3.3, the County is performing above the National Standard goal, as well as above the State level. It is the efforts in the identification of permanent connections to the youth that has assisted us in having youth exit care with identified lifelong connections. Our supervisors and Administration researched very closely the closing procedures and identified an area to which our supervisors were closing the youth incorrectly thus our not extrapolating the correct data. With the onset of AB12/After 18 the current youth identified in this percentage 2 of 5 the youth represented are youth who have elected to remain in care as a non minor dependent. The other 3 youth were AWOL at the time of emancipation and this county was unable to obtain or assist in connecting these youth with permanent connects

C4 PLACEMENT STABILITY COMPOSITE

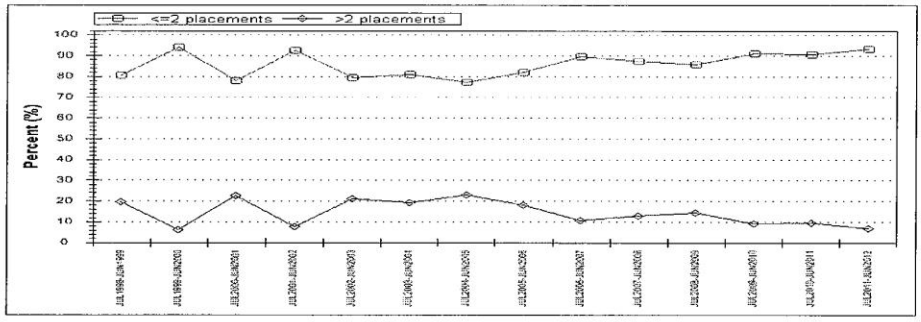
Measure C4.1, Placement Stability

Of all children served in foster care during a year that were in foster care for at least 8 days but less than 12 months **(Measure C4.1)** what percent had two or fewer placement settings?

C4.1 Placement stability (8days to 12 months in care)	**07/01/2011 to 06/30/2012**
Federal	86.0%
Madera	93.3%

cssr.berkeley.edu/cwscmsreports

Madera County has shown a strong history of exceeding both the California average and National Goal (86%) for this measurement outcome. Per UC-Berkeley data, the average of Madera County compliance for measure C4.1 over the last 7 reporting periods is 86.8%, exceeding the National Goal.



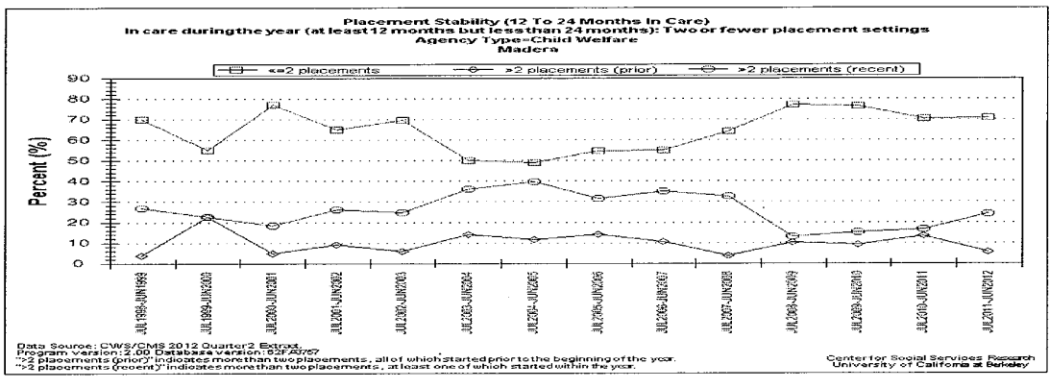
http://cssr.berkeley.edu/cwscmsreports/compositeViewer
Measure C4.2, Placement Stability

Of all children served in foster care during a year who were in foster care for at least 12 months but less than 24 months **(Measure C4.2)**, what percent had two or fewer placement settings?

C4.2 Placement stability (12 to 24 months in care)	**07/01/2011 to 06/30/2012**
Federal	65.4%
Madera	70.7%

cssr.berkeley.edu/cwscmsreports

Madera County has shown a strong history of exceeding both the California average and National Goal (65.4%) for this measurement outcome. Per UC-Berkeley data, Madera County compliance for measure C4.2 has surpassed the National goal of 65.4%, for every data period since 7/1/2007-6/31/2008.



http://cssr.berkeley.edu/cwscmsreports/compositeViewer

Measure C4.3, Placement Stability

Of all children served in foster care during a year who were in foster care for at least 24 months **(Measure C4.3)**; what percent had two or fewer placement settings?

C4.3 Placement stability (At least 24 months in care)	**07/01/2011 to 06/30/2012**
Federal	41.8%
Madera	29.3%

Placement stability (Over 24 months in care) was identified early in the process in the data analysis from SafeMeasures and UC-Berkeley as a measurement that needed improvement. This outcome measure's significance cannot be overlooked given the correlation between the youth who experience a high number of placement changes and the prevalence of having poorer well-being outcomes. Despite the positive data reflected in C4.1 and C4.2 (Placement Stability Eight days to 12 months in Care and 12 to 24 months in Care), Child Welfare Services has slipped below the Federal standard of 41.8%, with a current rate of 29.3% (17 of 58 children). Per SafeMeasures, the data reporting period of 10/01/2011 to 09/30/2012, showed Madera County with a compliance rate of 40.9%, (27 out of 66 children) only one child short of meeting the National goal for this measurement. The previous data reporting periods extracted from UC-Berkeley on measurement C4.3 represent a small portion of the overall population of youth in out of home care and the impacts of one or two large sibling sets can and has drastically skewed the data to reflect a failure to meet the National goal associated with this outcome measurement. The vast majority of our County counterparts around the State also struggle with this specific outcome measurement, making this measurement a

priority for County's to demonstrate actions to limit the number of and stabilize the placements of foster youth, hence, positively impacting these statistics.

DATA ANALYSIS FOR C4 COMPOSITE:

The County's performance toward Placement (C4) is at 104.1, which is just above the National Standard of 101.5. Madera County has made strides in the placement stability measurements by increasing efforts to make relative placements at the time of the initial placement, along with the placement staffings, participation in the Quality Parenting Initiative (QPI), and the inclusion of adoption services. The Department continues to assess and revise the policies for emergency relative placement and the relative approval/NREFM process, in efforts to provide stronger communication with family and their network of support and streamlining the relative/NREFM assessment process to work in conjunction with concurrent planning efforts for each youth that requires out of home care placements. Furthermore, despite having placement staffings with substitute care providers, service providers, parents, and staff members, the Department has begun to implement Team Decision Making (TDM), to provide a structured process towards addressing placement changes and other key decision making points in cases along the continuum of Child Welfare Services. Team Decision Making meetings focus on placement issues for children involved in or potentially involved in foster care. QPI has provided the framework for the relationship between the Department with our County Foster Parents, as well as, our other placement providers to open candid conversations about establishing a partnership that is built in the combined efforts of establishing a "brand" of providing foster services that is specific to Madera County youth. These on-going recruitment and retention efforts to attract quality homes will help with continued efforts to improve this area.

Additional efforts that could help support this area include:

- Recently revised State Licensing regulations that support Prudent Parent Standard and allow foster youth to live a more "normalized life
- Enhancing training and communication with Relative and Non-Related perspective placement providers about the mutual expectations that we will have with one another.
- Streamlining concurrent planning efforts from Emergency Response forward to expedite youth into plans of permanency prior spending 24 months in foster care.
- Extending our recruitment efforts for foster homes in the community to faith based organizations along with local community clubs.
- The use of SDM for Substitute Care Providers. SCP Safety Assessment will allow for consistency in determining if the home is in fact meeting the needs of the youth placed there.

Probation: C4

C4.1

County's Current Performance: Juvenile Probation

From July 1, 2011 to June 30, 2012, 100% of children in foster care during the year that had been in care for at least 8 days but less than 12 months had two or fewer placements.

Most Recent Start date	Most Recent End date	Most Recent Numerator	Most Recent Denominator	Most Recent Performance	Direction?	Percent Change
7/1/11	6/30/12	11	11	100.0%	Yes	21.4%

From the baseline of April 1, 2008 to March 31, 2009, the number of children who had two or fewer placement settings increased from 82.4% to 100.0%. This measure exceeds the federal standard of 86.0%.

C4.2 Permanency Measure: Placement Stability Outcome: Placement Stability (12 to 24 Months in Care)

County's Current Performance: Juvenile Probation

From July 1, 2011 to June 30, 2012, 83.3% of children in foster care during the year that had been in care for at least 12 months but less than 24 months had two or fewer placement settings.

Most Recent Start date	Most Recent End date	Most Recent Numerator	Most Recent Denominator	Most Recent Performance	Direction?	Percent Change
7/1/11	6/30/12	5	6	83.3%	Yes	0.0%

From the baseline of April 1, 2008 to March 31, 2009, the number of children who had two or fewer placement settings remained steady at 83.3%. The outcome exceeds the federal measure of 65.4%.

C4.3 Permanency Measure: Placement Stability Outcome: Placement Stability (At Least 24 Months in Care).

County's Current Performance: Juvenile Probation

From July 1, 2011, to June 30, 2012, 0% of children in foster care during the year that had been in care for at least 24 months had two or fewer placement settings.

Most Recent Start date	Most Recent End date	Most Recent Numerator	Most Recent Denominator	Most Recent Performance	Direction?	Percent Change
7/1/11	6/30/12	0	2	0.0%	No	100.0%

From the baseline of April 1, 2008 to March 31, 2009, the number of children in foster care during the year that had been in care for at least 24 months and had two or fewer placement settings decreased from 20% to 0%. This outcome is lower than the federal measure of 41.8%.

DATA ANALYSIS FOR C4.1-C4.3:

The cases for which the Probation Department faces issues with placement stability generally fall under the sexual offender cases. Sexual offender cases are higher needs cases and these placement lengths tend to range from 18-24 months. Changes in a placement can occur due to the needs of the minor, lack of progress in the program, transition to a lower level of care and/or technical violations.

8A – Children Transitioning to Self-Sufficient Adulthood

From April 2012 – June 2012 eight (8) youth graduated from high school and seven enrolled in secondary education and one became employed. All eight of them remain in extended foster care per AB 12.

Madera County offers ILP services to youth ages 14 to 21. Madera County contracts with Kingsview to administer the ILP classes; Ready, Set, Go! The Ready, Set, Go program provides life skill training and employment training/experience. Each year there are approximately seven (7) slots for employment placements. Youth are placed in local agencies including the Department of Social Services. Ready, Set, Go also provides services in the rural areas of the County, including Oakhurst and Chowchilla.

In addition to these services, the County has a dedicated ILP coordinator who provides direct services to our youth. The ILP coordinator assists the youth in completing their Life Skills Assessment on-line through the Ansell Casey Foundation which identifies the needs and strengths of our youth. Emancipation conferences are held with each youth six months and then three months prior to their eighteenth birthday. During this

conference, the youth is asked to identify at least one person who they have a permanent connection with. If the youth is unable to identify one person, the Department does a due diligence to find a relative who is willing to connect with the youth. The ILP coordinator assists the youth in obtaining all documentation per WIC 391. Social Services works collaboratively with MCOE, Probation, Madera Community College and local foster family agencies to hold an annual ILP "Partnership for Success" event. In 2011, 60 youth attended the event and in 2012, 55 youth attended the event. Youth were educated on secondary education requirements and services available in the community to provide support.

Youth are assisted with housing through various resources including THP-Plus, TLC, and Extended Foster Care. Madera County currently has seven (5) youth in THP- Plus with 5 additional spots available. With the enactment of AB 12, all of our youth have elected to stay in foster care as non-minor dependents.

Two identified barriers for Madera County youth are opportunities for employment and affordable, safe housing. Even though youth are given the opportunity for employment training, the unemployment rate in Madera County remains high at 12.5 %, making it hard for youth to secure employment once trained.

8A Children Transitioning to Self Sufficient Adulthood

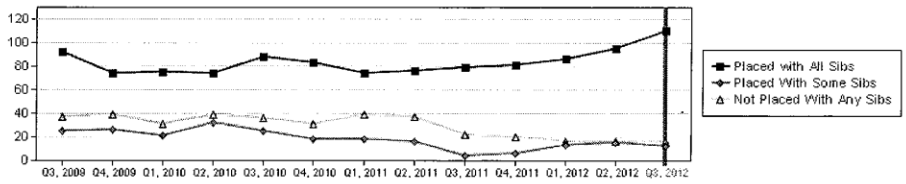
County's Current Performance: Juvenile Probation

There is no data or outcomes for Children Transitioning to Self-sufficient Adulthood for Juvenile Probation. However, the Probation Officer works individually with each youth to develop a case plan to address and identify their strengths, needs, goals, life-long connections, and expectations and provides direction and resources for the youth to enhance their ability to achieve independence and self-sufficiency. In addition, the probation officer encourages participation in the Independent Living Program, by all eligible youth. The ILP program empowers youth through life skills education, supportive services, advocacy, and community collaboration. It is their mission to provide services to young adults to aid the in developing community and lifelong connections. The ILP Employment Program strives to improve the quality of life for youth by giving them the resources and skills to gain employment that matches their talents, desires, and needs. Services offered included one-on-one assistance, resume development, interviewing skills, and on-the-job training.

Permanency 2

The continuity of family relationships and connections is preserved for children.

4A Placement with siblings



Madera County places a high emphasis on placing children with their siblings at all times. Due to the large families in this community, 6 - 9 children, it is sometimes difficult to do.

In the chart above, extracted, from Safe Measures, Children's Research Center SafeMeasures® Data. Madera, AB 636, Placement with siblings; Retrieved on July 1, 2012, from Children's Research Center website. URL: https://www.safemeasures.org/ca/. Madera County placed 79.7% of all siblings together and 88.4% of some or all siblings together. Madera has made steady progress in placing children together since April 1, 2011 when only 58.9% of siblings were placed together.

4B Placement Entries

In the chart below, extracted, from Safe Measures, Children's Research Center SafeMeasures® Data. Madera, AB 636, Placement Entries; Retrieved on July 1, 2012, from Children's Research Center website. URL: https://www.safemeasures.org/ca/.

Of all the children entering placement in a 12-month period, from 07/01/2011 – 06/30/2012, what was the first placement facility type?

Relative	34.6 %
Foster Home	7.4 %
FFA	55.9 %
Group/Shelter	.07 %

While the Madera County community is very supportive of placements with relatives, efforts to realize this goal for initial placements has not been without obstacles ranging from training, adherence to Policy and Procedure Guidelines, turnover and unintended consequences. In spite of these obstacles, Madera County is slowly increasing the percentage of initial placements with relatives /NREFM and relying less on Foster Family Agencies. Outcome data for Quarter 4 2009 (19.6%) and Quarter 1 2011 (39.3%) reflects an impressive increase in the percentage of KIN placements. At the same time our reliance on FFAs for Quarter 4 2009 (67.4%) in comparison to Quarter 1 2011 (52.3%) has been reduced to a lesser extent. Madera County use of foster homes during this commensurate period has decreased almost by half (8% to 4.7% respectively). We recognize we have much more work to do to increase our use of

Relative/NREFM placements and foster home placements and to reduce our continued reliance and overuse of Foster Family Agencies and have made active efforts to make necessary changes to improve this outcome.

Madera County has recently started participation in the Quality Parenting Initiative to improve partnerships with Foster Parents and the Kin community. In our focus groups, foster parents voiced their concerns that they were not being contacted for placement even though many had vacancies. Concurrently, our Juvenile Court was being repeatedly advised by relatives that they were being overlooked for placement in favor of children entering foster care. Integral to the forging of better relationship with our foster parents and with the Juvenile Court on this issue was the need to demonstrate good faith efforts to support the out of home placement decisions that the Social Workers were making. For the foster parents, that meant contacting them for placements before contacting FFAs. For the relatives, that meant documenting all efforts to contact relatives to complete the WIC309 process and report our efforts to the Juvenile Court.

To resolve these placement issues, Social Workers must now complete a Placement Decision Tree for all children removed from their home. This tool is used to support the placement decision made, specifically to justify why placement could not be made with Relative/NREFM, and then why not in a foster home if relative placement could not be made. The Placement Decision Tree along with the Protective Custody Worksheet is distributed to CWS Supervisors, Program Manager and Deputy Director for review and monitoring. Additionally, CWS contacts all licensed Foster Homes weekly to check on placement availability.

The Relative Approval process had not been revised since inception in 2002, yet there have been four (4) different SWs in this assignment, three (3) different SWS IIs with supervisorial responsibility, five (5) different Program Managers and three (3) different Deputy Directors with administrative oversight. As a result, this blurring of practice and philosophy impacted outcomes.

To again underscore our Department's support of Relative/NREFM placement, Madera County has re-focused efforts for placement with relatives/NREFMs. Madera County's re-focus on the Relative Approval Process has also included revision to the Policy and Procedures Guidelines –Emergency Placement Section (WIC309 Process). These revisions have included streamlining the process by affording staff detailed instruction on mandated criteria that must be met for placement, training CWS staff on the WIC 309 process, and ensuring that all mandated Relative Approval (RA) forms are available in all placement binders for ease of completion. Separation of Emergency Placement Social Worker workload has also differentiated from the RA Social Worker workload.

Probation: 4E Least Restrictive (Entries first Plc: Relative)

From July 1, 2011, to June 30, 2012, 0% out of 9 children in foster care were placed in the least restrictive placement or placed with a relative.

Most Recent Start date	Most Recent End date	Most Recent Numerator	Most Recent Denominator	Most Recent Performance	Direction?	Percent Change
7/1/11	6/30/12	0	9	0.0%	N/A	N/A

From the baseline of April 1, 2008 to March 31, 2009, 0% out of 4 children in foster care were placed in the least restrictive placement or placed with a relative. There is no federal measure for this outcome.

4B Least Restrictive (Entries first Plc: Foster Home)

County's Current Performance: Juvenile Probation

From July 1, 2011, to June 30, 2012, 0% out of 9 children in foster care were placed in the least restrictive placement or foster home.

Most Recent Start date	Most Recent End date	Most Recent Numerator	Most Recent Denominator	Most Recent Performance	Direction?	Percent Change
7/1/11	6/30/12	0	9	0.0%	N/A	N/A

From the baseline of April 1, 2008 to March 31, 2009, 0% out of 4 children in foster care were placed in the least restrictive placement or foster home. There is no federal measure for this outcome.

4B Least Restrictive (Entries first Plc: FFA)

County's Current Performance: Juvenile Probation

From July 1, 2011, to June 30, 2012, 33% of children in foster care were placed in the least restrictive FFA homes.

Most Recent Start date	Most Recent End date	Most Recent Numerator	Most Recent Denominator	Most Recent Performance	Direction?	Percent Change

7/1/11	6/30/12	3	9	33.3%	N/A	33.3%

From the baseline of April 1, 2008 to March 31, 2009, the number of children in foster care that were placed in the least restrictive FFA homes increased from 25% to 33%. There is no federal measure for this outcome.

4B Least Restrictive (Entries first Plc: Group/Shelter)

County's Current Performance: Juvenile Probation

From July 1, 2011, to June 30, 2012, 66.7% of children in foster care were placed in the least restrictive Group/Shelter homes.

Most Recent Start date	Most Recent End date	Most Recent Numerator	Most Recent Denominator	Most Recent Performance	Direction?	Percent Change
7/1/11	6/30/12	6	9	66.7%	N/A	11.1%

From the baseline of April 1, 2008 to March 31, 2009, the number of children in foster care that were placed in the least restrictive Group/Shelter homes decreased from 75.0% to 66.7%. There is no federal measure for this outcome.

4B Least Restrictive (Entries first Plc: Other)

County's Current Performance: Juvenile Probation

From July 1, 2011, to June 30, 2012, 0.0% of children in foster care were placed in the least restrictive/other homes.

Most Recent Start date	Most Recent End date	Most Recent Numerator	Most Recent Denominator	Most Recent Performance	Direction?	Percent Change
7/1/11	6/30/12	0	9	0.0%	N/A	N/A

4E ICWA Eligible Placement Status

Q4 2012	25.1 %
Q4 2011	62.5 %

Q4 2010	40 %

Madera County has two federal tribes located within the County; the North Fork Rancheria Mono Tribe and the Picayune Rancheria Chuckchansi Tribe. County social workers work closely with tribal representatives to place Indian children with an appropriate Indian relative or custodian. Tribal ICWA representatives are contacted immediately upon pick up and are encouraged to attend all staffings related to the placement of the child. The Department has two dedicated ICWA representative who regularly attend monthly meeting with tribal representatives.

WELL BEING OUTCOMES

The following measures are designed to ensure Child Welfare's provision of services necessary for families, to better care for their children and provide for their health and education.

WELL BEING 1: Families have enhanced capacity to provide for their children's needs.

Madera County uses the SDM tools for both Safety and Risk Assessment, as well as the Family's Strengths and Needs Assessments to ensure that accurate and thorough assessments of the families' needs are completed.

Families are engaged at the onset of the case through Family Finding Efforts and staffings. Every effort is used to locate a family member with whom the child can be placed. This is done through interviews with the parents, the child, and a search engine called Accurint.

Cases are staffed at the onset of a case in order to develop the initial service plan and again at a minimum of 6 months thereafter until the close of the case. Families are invited for a Family Case Conferencing and additionally are invited to participate in Healthy Beginnings (for families with children ages 0-5) and Cal Works (Linkages) meetings. Meeting participants include, but are not limited to: community partners, service providers, family, family supports (i.e. church members or neighbors), along with parents, and when appropriate, children.

WELL BEING 2: Children receive services appropriate to their educational needs.

Madera County DSS sponsors an Out of Home Youth Advisory Board, made up of representatives from the following organizations: Behavioral Health Services, Public Health, Probation, and Madera County Office of Education (MCOE), Madera Unified

School District (MUSD), Workforce Development, AspiraNet FFA, Y.E.S. (Fresno City College and the Madera Center), Housing Authority, Job Corps/AmeriCorps, and Foster Kinship Care Education. This group meets quarterly to address a wide range of issues that affect youth in foster care.

AB 490 mandates that children remain in their school of origin if at all possible. With the addition of the Educational Transportation Reimbursement, families are more willing to transport to their school of origin if the Department is unable to place within the school's vicinity.

Madera County has been working closely with MCOE and MUSD to discuss ongoing educational issues of foster children and develop mechanisms to address problems and allow for more seamless service delivery for these disadvantaged youth. On August 7, 2012, a Memorandum of Understanding between MCOE, MCDSS, and Madera Probation was approved by the Madera County Board of Supervisors. This MOU is intended to allow the participation in certain pre-placement preventative activities for children who are candidates for foster care; children who are at serious risk of removal from their homes. It is further intended to ensure that foster youth receive support for educational opportunities.

WELL BEING 3: Children receive services adequate to their physical, emotional and mental health needs.

These measures look at whether children in care have documentation of enrollment in school and other medical care, needed to maintain their physical, emotional and mental health.

Percent of children in care more than 30 days with a Health and Education Passport	
Q3 2012	Madera
5A	81.8 %

Percent of children in care with CHDP Physical exam that comply with periodicity table.	
Q3 2012	Madera
5B	92.7 %

Percent of children in care with a CHDP Dental exam that comply with periodicity table.

Q3 2012	Madera
5B	77.7 %

Percent of children in care Authorized for Psychotropic Meds.	
Q3 2012	Madera
5F	6.0 %

While there is no Standard or Goal set for these measures, there is always a need to improve in this area to assure that foster children receive health care when needed and that there is no duplication of services to them. Madera County aspires to be 100 % compliant with CHDP physical and dental exams. Each week, Supervisors meet to discuss progress of cases. SafeMeasure's data is presented and reviewed. In addition, the Department has developed alerts to assure that Authorizations for Psychotropic Meds are re-evaluated and authorized by the Juvenile Dependency Court to prevent any lapse of needed medications.

Not unlike all other counties, Madera County struggles with some factors which may affect whether children get the services needed timely. Those include: availability of proper medical personnel, availability of specialized care, child's physical or mental disability, making it difficult to get a child to services, or a child being on runaway status/whereabouts unknown.

As to a child's emotional health, the Department strives to place children in the home of a relative or NREFM at initial placement. MCDSS developed a form to track placement decisions. Social workers must follow the chain of placement (Relative/FHA/FFA/GH) and discuss any reason for deviating. Children are also referred to the Lake Street Center during the first 30 days of placement. Lake Street Center provides mental health counseling services to children in the foster care system. Clinicians are trained to deal with child trauma.

Strengths identified in this area are the County's utilization of the Public Health Nurse, the use of the child's placement binder, and the County's participation in committees and other agency boards that creates a forum to address these needs, such as the Out of Home Youth Advisory Board. The Department also works closely with Madera County Office of Education and Madera Unified School District to discuss ongoing educational issues of foster children and develop mechanisms to address problems and allow for more seamless service delivery for these disadvantaged youth. In addition, AB490 assures that children's educational rights are met, especially older youth, who are moved between schools, will not lose necessary credits towards graduation.

The barriers identified that impact the child's Well Being outcomes include:

1) Limited Medi-Cal and Dental providers in the area.
2) Youth have difficulty accessing medical care once they reach 18 yrs. of age.

5. Systemic Factors

Madera County is affected by high risk factors such as unemployment, substance abuse, lack of affordable housing, and limited financial resources. These factors impact the County's capacity to respond effectively to the needs of its citizens. Furthermore, Madera County is challenged in not having a robust array of Community Based Organizations, and therefore relies heavily on the available County systems that can serve this at-risk population, such as Behavioral Health, Public Health and Social Services. Fortunately, County service providers have taken the lead in expanding the County's capabilities through building partnerships toward service provision and financial leveraging. However, the continuing reduction in State budget allocations to these Departments has a negative impact on their ability to meet the service needs of our children families.

A. Relevant Management Information System (MIS)

Madera County switched from being a "dedicated" CWS/CMS user county to a "co-existent" county several years ago. Madera County fully utilizes the CWS/CMS system to track and document all case management services information gathered and delivered to children and families. Each worker has their own desk top pc to access the system to complete their case management work. In addition, there are laptop computers available for staff for after hour standby use. These laptops allow access to the CWS/CMS system so workers can assess safety and risk factors of incoming reports. In addition, Madera County is able to run management reports to track and monitor caseload details and service delivery, as well as reports on caseloads demographics and compliance mandates. A Child Welfare Service analyst also compiles system reports on service delivery and effectiveness. For example, reports are generated that track the children who are in out-of-home placement and placement episodes.

In addition, Madera County utilizes Safe Measures and compiles daily, weekly and monthly data reports to monitor service delivery and target any areas that are at risk of not meeting compliance mandates, such as contacts, case plans, and compliance with Medical and dental exams. Madera County utilizes Safe Measures e-mail alerts to notify management when there are compliance issues, including developing compliance tools currently being used on SafeMeasures. Furthermore, the CWS/CMS system data, as well as AD Hoc compilations developed by the analyst are able to identify more detailed data information thus increasing Madera County's capacity to create a viable Self-Improvement Plan with identified trends, training needs, system strengths and barriers, as well as realistic goals to improve outcomes. These reports provide the necessary data needed for CAPIT/CBCAP/PSSF programs. The Liaison conducts annual site visits to each program funded by CAPIT/CBCAP/PSSF and reports out on any findings. The

liaison also monitors the contract and handles all processing of budget requests and payment requests. The Liaison has access to all DSS databases to confer with CWS participation and case information if relevant (i.e. PSSF programs). The department also holds weekly Program Integrity/Quality Assurance meetings with CWS staff, Supervisors, Managers and Administration to ensure programs are in compliance including those funded by CAPIT/CBCAP/PSSF. The local Interagency also requires the groups to report out throughout the year on programs funded by CAPIT/CBCAP/PSSF.

The quality of the data from CWS/CMS, Business Objects and Safe Measures is only as accurate as the information input into the CWS/CMS system by staff. There have been several data reports that have allowed management and staff to analyze the data and track information back to erroneous entries. An example of such errors are the entries of social worker contacts, whereas, the Social Worker reports that his/her contacts are completed and the report does not show this data. When this information is missing from the report, this allows for a targeted review with the Social Worker and Supervisor so they can determine if there is an error in selecting the required elements in the database fields (yellow fields) that would ultimately satisfy the generated report for a qualified contact. In addition, the review of these reports allows the County to look at trends and determine the need for targeted training for staff.

Probation:
The Madera County Probation Department utilizes a centralized management information software system, Caseload Explorer. This system allows the probation officer to adequately track cases, case plans, assessments, and all court related documentation. The Deputy Probation officer also has a lap top to access this system while away from the office.

The Madera County Probation Department has recently begun using the CWS/CMS system to track and document case management services information gathered and delivered to the minors in placement. The Deputy Probation Officer has a desk top PC to access the system to complete and enter all case management work. The Probation Programs Assistant also has a desk top PC with access to the system and assists with the entry of monthly contacts into the system.

The Deputy Probation Officer Supervisor reviews placement cases regularly to determine the status of compliance with laws, regulations, and department policies. Monthly contacts are mandated and the Safe Measures system and the CE system are utilized to ensure contacts are made. In the case reviews the Deputy Probation Officer Supervisor ensures contacts are in compliance, court mandates are followed, and chronological entries of those contacts and services provided are documented.

B. Case Review System

Currently, Madera County Child Welfare conducts case reviews through supervisory case reviews for status hearings/transfer/closure. In addition, the County has been working diligently on the development of a 4 tier quality assurance system that will

allow for periodic case review, case closure/transfer review, peer case review and targeted quality assurance case review. The causal factors have been identified, which list all the compliance variables. The county hopes to implement these efforts by the next review period. Furthermore, those cases before the Juvenile Dependency Court are subjected to further review by the attorneys and the assigned Judge.

i. Court Structure/Relationship

The Madera County Superior Court has a dedicated court in which all juvenile matters are heard. The facility is currently located inside of the Juvenile Detention facility.

Child Welfare Services:

The department and the court participants have a good working relationship and meet on a regular basis to discuss process and any identified system issues. This group has met on issues such as service referrals to Mental health, the Public Health Nurse's role in Child Welfare, Educational Rights of foster youth, and substance abuse treatment facilities, to name a few. Madera County continues to enhance its ability to place children in the least restrictive placement as possible and more important with a relative/NREFM when it can be done safely. By doing so it is felt that the trauma a child/youth experiences when removed from their parent(s) is minimized.

Currently, the court is lenient in allowing the department requests for continuances of the juvenile dependent case. The department has been working with county counsel on this aspect, as each continuance is evaluated for the validity of such continuance request.

The Court and Child Welfare are working well in addressing termination of parental rights as the issues have been raised in the regular meetings with the Judge and regulations are reviewed regularly. Madera County does not utilize an alternative dispute resolution process.

The Department and the court participants recently met with the Administrative Office of the Courts, 5th District Office of Appeals and were advised that Madera County has made remarkable improvements. There were very few appellate over turns during the last review period, which a significant improvement from the previous review.

Probation:

The Madera County Probation Department has a positive relationship with the Juvenile Court Judge and court staff. The staff is very flexible and approachable with a history of working very well together. The Juvenile Court Judge is very open to the input and recommendations put forth by the Probation Department.

The Court Staff keeps Probation informed of any changes in the procedures and/or laws.

ii. Process for Timely Notification of Hearings

Child Welfare Services:

A designated clerk assigned to Child Welfare Services prepares notices for hearings, with the exception of the notice for detention hearings. The clerk maintains a master list of all hearings to assure timely notices. Two additional staff members are trained to perform this same function in the absence of the primary clerk. Notices for detention hearings, date, time and location are provided verbally by the assigned Social Worker at the detention staffing, which is held at 1:30 p.m. the day following the inception of protective custody. The Department notifies the parent and/or legal guardians, the tribe, if applicable, and all minors over 10 years of age. In cases where an in-person contact is not possible, telephone contact is made and a verbal notification given. If the Department does not know the whereabouts of a parent, a due diligent search is conducted by a designated clerk using a search engine and the results are provided to the Court and assigned counsel.

At the detention staffing held the following business day from the protective custody, an inquiry is made of the parents on the possibility of Indian Heritage. They are asked to complete the corresponding Juvenile Court Indian Status documents with any identifiable information. Should the parents claim possible Indian heritage, the designated clerk prepares notices to all the potential tribes for ICWA eligibility including the Bureau of Indian Affairs and the Secretary of State. All efforts are made by the Social worker to contact the parents and potential family members for possible placement of the children. The parents are the primary source of this information, but cyber information is sought as well. The parents are encouraged to participate as well as any identified family members, so as to develop a safety plan for the child(ren).

The Department submits recommended findings and orders to the Court for each hearing. When submitting the six-month review findings and orders, the Social Worker calculates the date of the twelve month hearing and submits that date to the Court who in turn sets the twelve month hearing date at the conclusion of the six-month hearing.

Probation:

In all in-custody matters, a detention report is prepared for the court. The Probation Officer assigned to prepare the detention report for the court advises the parent(s) or legal guardians of the minor's court date and hearing time for

minors that are in-custody. The Probation Officer documents the information in the detention report prepared for the court including the person notified, the date and time the parent(s)/guardian(s) were notified and also includes whether or not the parent(s)/guardian(s) indicated they would be present in court for the detention hearing. The notification is generally done 2 days prior to the hearing in in-custody matters.

In cases where a minor is out of custody, a citation petition is prepared by the probation department intake officers. The citation petition is filed with the Juvenile Court Clerk and the Juvenile Court Clerk sends out a notice to the last known address 10 days prior to the Detention Hearing.

Each Detention or Dispositional Report contains a section in which inquiries into the minor's Indian Heritage are made, and input from the parent or guardian is documented. At the Detention Hearing, the Court makes a finding if the minor or his/her parents are registered members of a federally recognized tribe. If it is determined the minor or his/her parents have possible Indian Heritage, ICWA applies and the appropriate documents are completed. An Indian Child Inquiry Attachment for is also being provided with detention hearing reports to the court. The Probation Department immediately notifies the tribe, Bureau of Indian Affairs by certified mail and if it is a local tribe also by telephone notification.

iii. Process for Parent-Child-Youth Participation in Case Planning

Child Welfare Services:

Madera County strives to provide a forum for family engagement in the case planning process. Upon initial contact with the family, they are provided with a rights and responsibilities pamphlet. In addition, families and their support systems are included in case staffings to discuss the family's strengths, concerns, and possible safety plans for the child(ren). This process follows the Family Group Decision Making process. The child is included as age appropriate. The tribe is included when it is determined that ICWA may apply. The parents' willingness and ability to participate in services to address any identified concerns or risk factors are discussed.

The social worker engages the parent through the A.S.I. (Addiction Severity Index). The A.S.I. gathers information in seven unique life areas: medical, employment, drug/alcohol, legal, family history, family/social relationships and psychiatric. This assessment is used to guide the service needs of the parent.

Families are further engaged through the linkages program. The social worker and the welfare to work case manager invite the parent to a linkages staffing to discuss service needs and identify service providers. Families are engaged in addressing the goals and objectives of the case plan and those services that would most likely assist the parent in reaching those identified goals. The

Department recognizes that this blending of services minimizes the parents feeling of being overwhelmed and enhances their chances of success.

Madera County has pursued several different arenas that provide youth engagement for those youth who are receiving permanency planning services. The following are some of those efforts:

- Independent Living Skills Program
  Diligent efforts are made to engage and increase the involvement of ILP youth, including sending out announcement flyers to both the youth and foster parents, training with social workers on available services and linkage, as well as presentations to the foster parent association informing them of the services provided for ILP youth and the need for the foster parents' assistance in promoting and encouraging youth's attendance. In addition, Madera County is utilizing the Ansell Casey Life Skills Assessment as the National recognized assessment tool. The ILP Coordinator, along with the assigned Social Worker are meeting with each eligible youth and assisting them in completing the tool on-line. To help engage youth, an incentive is provided for each participating youth.

- Emancipation Conferences
  Youth in Permanency Planning are required to have emancipation conferences prior to dependency termination. Madera County is scheduling these conferences on a regular basis and prior to their emancipation. The youth, foster parent, child welfare staff, and any other persons determined to be a support to the youth are present. At the conference, the youth's needs, goals and plans for emancipation are reviewed, including housing, education employment, and health coverage. An action plan is created and timeframes for completion are established.

  The county is in the process of creating a court termination summary that confirms all WIC 391 requirements as well as noted efforts for permanent connections, Medi Cal and Food stamp efforts.

- California Permanency for Youth Project
  The county has participated in the California Permanency for Youth Project (CPYP) over the last 2 years. Staff has attended trainings and meetings on CPYP and has also attended sessions held by regional counties in order to observe how different county systems operate and process. CPYP focuses on working with youth and establishing a lifelong connection to a caring adult so youth do not exit out of foster care without a permanent connection. The county maintains regular case consultation meetings for identified youth to discuss the permanent connection efforts and is inclusive of the youth and his/her support systems.

- Older Youth Adoption Project
  Madera County was collaborating with California State Adoptions in working with our older youth in foster care to establish permanent homes for them, including the possibility of re-connecting them with family, finding a home for older youth who will provide permanence, and matching them with unmatched homes. This projected ended on June 30, 2012.

One area for opportunity is the inclusion of the substitute care provider in staffings regarding the service needs of the youth. This has been an area of recent development in the County and the Department is in the process of solidifying a Rapid Response policy where by the substitute care provider is included in identifying needs and development of service provision that is child centered.

Probation:

The Probation Officer reviews the minor's case, reports and assessments then schedules an appointment with the minor and the parent/guardian to discuss the case plan and strategies and services needed to successfully assist the minor/family for a safe return home. The minor and parent provide input and discuss strengths and support systems in the development of a case plan that best suits the needs of the minor and will assist with the rehabilitative goals of the minor and services needed for the family.

iv. General Case Planning and Review

Child Welfare Services:

The Social Workers review the case plan with the parents, the child, and the substitute care provider on a monthly basis during mandated contacts to determine if any updates are needed and if the parent or child has been successful in obtaining identified services. The parent's case plan progress is discussed and any potential barriers to success are identified. The Social Worker completes the Structured Decision Making Reunification Re-Assessment to guide further case planning services at least once every 6 months.

A case plan is maintained for each juvenile dependent child and is updated prior to the six-month court hearing. The Court also reviews, approves and orders the case plan. The Department finds this to be an area of strength as there are very few case plans out of compliance.

Probation:

The Probation Officers complete a risk and needs assessment and case plan on each initial case to determine if a child is at imminent risk of removal from their

home. The probation officer incorporates the case plan and outlines the preventative measures with the minor and family to eliminate the need for removal.

A case plan is developed and maintained for each minor for six months. Prior to the six months the minor is re-assessed and the case plan is updated and provided to the court for the six-month review hearing. The Court reviews, and approves and orders the case plan.

For those youth who are at risk of removal, the Probation Department has recently begun to refer families to the Strengthening Families program and the Triple P program through The Community Action Partnership of Madera County. Services are provided to the minor and the family to assist with parenting skills, children's life skills, problem solving, family skills training, communication skills, resilience skills, stress and anger management and behavior management. The department continues to utilize services through Behavioral Health Services, mentoring Programs and Parenting Classes to support at risk youth and their families.

C. Foster/Adoptive Parent Licensing, Recruitment and Retention

i. General licensing, recruitment, retention

The Madera County Department of Social Services is not a licensing agent; the State Department of Social Services Community Care Licensing Unit in Fresno, until November 2012, conducted one Orientation per month for licensing, recruitment and retention purposes. These orientations were held in Madera on the third (3) Monday of every month. The orientation includes:

- Mission, role and services of Child Welfare Services
- Purpose of the training session
- Expectation as care providers that they adhere to the case plan
- Presentation of the required paperwork

Since September 2012, thirty-three (33) potential foster parents attended the scheduled orientation meeting. It has been the past pattern in Madera County that the majority of the applicants who apply end up withdrawing their applications or fail to ever complete the licensing requirements. Madera County has a Foster Parent Liaison who attends the orientation sessions and follows up with new applicants on the necessary paperwork, offering assistance and guidance. Phone calls are also made to encourage completion of the application process.

Starting in 2013, CCL will only be conducting quarterly orientations in Fresno. This will significantly affect our ability to place children in our community and close to their school of origin. The Department will be working with the State on this issue.

In addition, Relative/NREFM orientation is held every Tuesday in Madera. These orientations are alternately done by a representative from Department of Social Services and the Kinship Program through Fresno City College. The County has a relative approval worker who assists with these processes.

Madera has chosen the federal guidelines for the requirements of the Relative Placement standards, which include:

- 12 hours of parent training
- CPR First Aid
- TB Tests
- Live Scan – fingerprinting
- Water Well – test level of carcinogens
- Home Inspection

(The water well and CPR training fees are reimbursed.)

Efforts are made to recruit and support both county and relative resource families. An increased effort is being made to include resource parents at a case staffing when a 7 day notice for removal is made so as to get pertinent information that will assist in stabilizing the youth either in the current home or through a purposeful placement move. In addition, the department is in the process of establishing an icebreaker meeting, which will occur 30 days from initial detention, prior to the dispositional hearing. This meeting will bring together the parent and substitute care provider, as well as department staff, and will allow for any exchange of information needed to provide for the care and needs of the children while developing a comprehensive case plan.
In January 2012, Madera County began participating in the Quality Parenting Initiative. The purpose of the initiative is to strengthen foster care through recruitment and retention of highly qualified foster caregivers. Foster parents and relative caregivers were invited to participate in meetings. One outcome was the development of Madera's brand of foster parent:

Become a Madera County Foster Parent Partner

Be a valued member of your child serving community that advocates for a child's best interest, individuality and connections to family and other important people.

Embrace and value our children, by opening your home; so that they feel loved and respected. Be a supporter of their background and uniqueness through safety, security and lifelong commitment.

Join us in shaping the future of our community by raising every child to be a healthy and successful adult.

The Rewards are Endless

In addition to these efforts, in March 2013, the County will have ETO (Efforts to Outcomes) for data evaluation and tracking for recruitment and retention of foster parents. The Kinship program at Fresno City College will begin offering PRIDE classes in Madera.

ii. Placement resources

Madera County has the following placement resources

- 53 approved relative placements
- 16 Madera County Licensed Foster Homes (December 2012)
- Various Foster Family Agencies
- 2 Local Group Homes

Madera County has on occasion taken into custody large sibling groups, making it difficult to place in one home together. In addition, the department had several youth enter foster care with a myriad of service needs, from special education testing to in depth developmental and psychological assessments. Madera County has an average of 10 to 12 youth who are in group home placements, of which 6 are in RCL 12 or higher, and require collaboration between probation, Child Welfare, Behavioral Health, and Education. With youth exhibiting higher levels of care in order to meet their needs, there is a strong need to collaborate with service agencies to coordinate those efforts. Fortunately, Madera County maintains a strong network with these entities and the Interagency Placement Committee serves to effectively address and allocate service needs for those identified youth.

Madera County is in the planning stages of wraparound services. Social Services is working closely with Probation and Behavioral Health Departments with the goal of implementation in 2013.

Madera County has partnered with AspiraNet and Golden State Family Services to provide Intensive Therapeutic Foster Care (ITFC) services to youth with a myriad of special needs.

D. Quality Assurance

i. CAPIT/CBCAP/PSSF

The Child Abuse Prevention Intervention and Treatment Program (CAPIT), Community Based Child Abuse Prevention (CBCAP) and Promoting Safe and Stable Families (PSSF) are three non-entitlement funds that the department

receives. Counties voluntarily apply for these funds to assist with the prevention, intervention and treatment of child abuse and neglect. CAPIT funds are used to fund the local Child Abuse Prevention Council operations as well as the Parent Support and Advocacy Center. CBCAP funds are used to fund the Parent Support and Advocacy Center.

PSSF dollars which includes Family Preservation, Family Support, Adoption Promotion and Support and Time Limited Family Reunification are used to fund various programs. PSSF Family Preservation, Family Support, and Time Limited Family Reunification (TLFR) are used to fund direct services Healthy Beginnings. Time Limited Family Reunification is also used to fund In-Patient substance abuse treatment – Spirit of Women. Adoption Promotion and Support and Time Limited Family Reunification funds are used to support counseling. All four components of PSSF are used to fund Child Welfare Services.

Due to the regulations set forth by both the Federal and State governments, each fund is assigned to a particular program or service and requires counties to report out statistical information as it pertains to these programs or services. As part of these regulations, counties must monitor and track progress of the funded programs.

In Madera County, the Children's Trust Fund (CTF) and CAPIT/CBCAP/PSSF funds are overseen by the Interagency Children and Youth Service Council (ICYSC) under the direction of the Board of Supervisors per Resolution No. 2006-049. The ICYSC including the local CAPC and DSS act as the local PSSF collaborative. The ICYSC has both an Executive Committee and General Member Committee that includes the local Child Abuse Prevention Council, various City and County departments, the Schools and much more.

The County also assigns a liaison to monitor the contracts, process budget requests by contractors and access CWS databases to confirm if the disseminated information from the programs is correct.

Madera County currently monitors its contracts with Community Action Partnership of Madera County for the Parent Support and Advocacy Center and the local CAPC for operations. Quarterly fiscal reports, end of the fiscal year program activity/performance outcome reports and annual compliance reviews are required for each program.

The liaison is also tasked with performing annual on-site reviews with each contractor that uses these funds for their programs or to provide services. Every contractor is given both a written survey and is asked a series of questions pertaining to the program in question. The liaison meets quarterly with each provider to discuss outcomes, needs and areas of concern, if appropriate. The liaison reviews the contract to ensure the provider is making progress as required

within their scope of work. The provider is required to provide quarterly statistical data regarding their program.

All are given a written confirmation of their visit with the liaison and an explanation of any items requiring corrective action. If findings are included, DSS will request the agency fix them if they have the ability to do so in a timely manner. If the contractor is unable to comply, DSS would offer their assistance to complete the task. To date, we have found very few items needing corrective action. The liaison is available throughout the process for both technical and non-technical assistance.

In addition to annual on-site reviews, CAPIT/CBCAP/PSSF information is collected from each contractor and disseminated to the liaison throughout the fiscal year. The liaison keeps hard copies of all data collected by contractors for each program. As a CBCAP and Children's Trust funded program, Parent Support and Advocacy Center uses pre and post tests as well as conducts satisfaction surveys throughout the year and sends that data on a quarterly basis to the liaison. The County also receives data from the local CAPC to include in its annual report. This data includes number of families served, ethnicity of parents and children served, types of activities performed, number of disabled persons served and number of outreach materials distributed. PSSF information is collected internally by DSS and is kept on file for an annual count. All information collected is transferred by the liaison to OCAP through the annual CAPIT/CBCAP/PSSF report. Information such as participation rates, demographics, CWS participation, client satisfaction and service delivery type is kept by both DSS and the contractors.

The local CAPC is a non-profit organization that is made up of a sub contracted Executive Director and a voting membership. Various community members, parents, City and County agencies and non- governmental organization are members of the local CAPC. CAPC is supported by both CAPIT and CCTF dollars. CAPC is also part of the ICYSC which as stated earlier has oversight of the Children's Trust Fund and CAPIT/CBCAP/PSSF funds. DSS staff attends CAPC's monthly meetings and several events throughout the year to ensure compliance. The website provided by both contractors is viewed often by staff. (http://mccapc.com/ and www.maderacoe.k12.ca.us/resources/)

PSSF dollars are used for direct services as well as to fund our local Healthy Beginnings Program (HBP). This is meant to be a one stop shop for those Child Welfare Cases that require a multi-disciplinary approach to child abuse prevention, intervention and treatment. Referrals are generated to various programs including HBP as part of the case management. The Child Welfare Services families are referred and served within the program have moderate to high service needs and receive services through multiple agencies such as the Department of Social Services, Public Health Department and Behavioral Health Services. PSSF dollars are also used to provide Child Welfare families with

direct services through referrals to substance abuse counseling and treatment, family counseling, youth counseling, transportation to and from services, temporary housing/needs, domestic violence counseling/classes, parenting classes, other mental health services and other services that assist with families in crisis or to assist in the adoption process.

ii. Child Welfare

Madera County Child Welfare has diligently worked on a robust quality assurance system by using a program integrity model. The model currently being used includes a dedicated weekly meeting including the Director, Deputy Directors, Program Manager, administrative staff, and child welfare supervisors. The meeting covers a review of compliance mandates, targeted reviews, creation and development of a Quality Assurance review system. This team further is able to redirect resources in order to target areas needing support in order to meet compliance mandates.

Child Welfare has continued to review 100% of the Emergency Response investigations for compliance with Division 31 regulations as each referral is reviewed by the supervisor prior to transfer or closure. Ongoing cases are reviewed at the time of the status review hearing or at six-month intervals. Additionally, ongoing cases are staffed 45 days prior to the six-month review hearing in order to review the recommendations of service providers and determine the appropriateness of services provided to the family.

Madera County is reviewing performance outcomes measures which are reported out at the weekly Program Integrity meeting, as described above. Supervisors utilize Safe Measures to review and determine caseload compliance, which allows for quick reporting out. In addition, staff has been given access and trained on Safe Measures so that they are able to address any areas of deficit. This empowers line staff to be proactive in completing their case management duties and mandates. If they see their compliance standards are falling short, resources are redirected to attack these opportunities.

In 2009, Madera County Child Welfare Supervisors and Analyst began working on a computer data based review program called "Rushmore". This review system was designed for the CalWORKs program. Madera County decided that the system would benefit child welfare and developed the first Child Welfare Review program within Rushmore.

Rushmore is an effective method for monitoring quality assurance because it analyzes existing practices used to provide the service to customers and it identifies casual factors not captured in SafeMeasures or other exiting programs. Child Welfare supervisors review 5 cases per worker per month. Rushmore is designed to capture the quality of the information entered into CWS/CMS.

The County is able to monitor ICWA compliance through court reports and the court orders, as well as through Cal Berkeley Dynamic Reporting System. In addition, Madera County consistently complies with MEPA, and enforces permanency efforts, including placement decisions. As noted previously, these practices are implemented at case staffings, consultations and through the County's Rapid Response process when addressing purposeful placement for youth.

Madera County Child Welfare completes a Mental Health Screening Tool (MHST) to refer children for a mental health assessment as appropriate. Behavioral Health communicates the outcomes of the assessment and recommendation for treatment, while providing written documentation for the court review. Furthermore, cases are staffed with Behavioral Health services to determine further services efforts.

Madera County's access to services for children with special needs is limited. However, the county does utilize the resources and expertise of the CHDP Public Health Nurse, Behavioral Health services, and Madera County Office of Education Foster Care Liaison, to name a few. The partnership with the Public Health Nurse has been extremely beneficial as she is on-site and is able to coordinate services for the children and families, as well as the social work staff. Should areas of concern arise, each partnering agency is able to pull a team together so additional steps or measures can be taken in order to provide the necessary services for the child.

Madera County has pursued family participation and involvement in the case planning process. From the initial contact with the family, the social Worker engages the family and further invites their participation at a case staffing. These efforts are monitored and documented initially through the first staffing held with the family. Staffing sheets have been developed to capture the participation and then logged by Office Assistant staff for tracking and supervisor monitoring.

Concurrent Planning:

(a) A concurrent plan is established for each child entering foster care. At the time of removal and at the detention hearing, the parents are provided with a packet that includes a questionnaire in order to obtain information regarding possible relatives available for placement of the child/children. Relatives who are interested in placement of the children are assessed for placement appropriateness. There is a discussion with the relatives or other potential care providers, as well as the parents regarding permanency for the child, which begins upon a child's entrance into foster care. A prognosis for reunification is completed by the social worker prior to the dispositional hearing. In those cases where the prognosis for reunification is low, the child is referred to the Adoptions unit for an evaluation of the child and a preliminary assessment of

identified prospective adoptive relatives or substitute care providers. If the child is not placed in a home where the care provider is willing to adopt, a search for an adoptive family will be initiated. Adoptions and CWS conduct monthly staffings of joint cases to evaluate the child's permanency.

The Social Workers review the case plan with the parent, child and substitute care provider on a monthly basis during mandated contacts to determine if any updates are needed and if the parent has been successful in obtaining identified services. The parent's case plan progress is discussed and any potential barriers to success are identified. The Social Worker completes the Structured Decision Making Reunification Re-Assessment to guide further case planning services as frequently as necessary, but at least once every 6 months.

(b) Services timeframes are tracked by the court unit clerical staff, as well as all court orders and proceedings. The master tracking list notes the dates of initial entry into foster care and calculates the date of service completion. In order to comply with the timeframes allotted the master list is utilized by the supervisors. In addition, monthly staffings are held between the Adoption unit and CWS staff to identify service timeframes to ensure permanency efforts for the children.

Probation:

The Madera County Probation Deputy Probation Officer Supervisor that oversees the Group Home/Foster Home placement caseload conducts reviews of all cases in placement on a regular basis (average of once a month). During this review the Deputy Probation Officer Supervisor checks all systems, CE, Safe Measures and CWS/CMS to ensure proper entry of information has been submitted, chronological entries of contacts and services provided are documented, case plans are updated, assessments are completed and updated, and contacts are made according to state mandates. The Deputy Probation Officer Supervisor and the Deputy Probation Officer meet regularly to discuss cases, updated information or concerns. The staff is well trained and adheres to the statutory and regulatory requirements. They are required to attend various trainings every year to keep abreast of the latest regulations, laws and legal procedures. In addition the Probation Department has an excellent working relationship with various agencies, including the Department of Social Services, Behavioral Health Services, Facility Medical Staff, Courts, Schools and other Law Enforcement Agencies. These agencies offer welcomed advice about regulatory and or statutory provisions.

E. Service Array

Madera County has little community based resources. Of the resources the County does have, the Department is able to focus on family centered and prevention focused services. The service delivery system in Madera County includes: Department of Social Services, Probation Department, Department of Public Health, Department of

Behavioral Health, and County Office of Education, Workforce Development, School Districts and the Housing Authority. Madera County's active Community Based organizations include: Community Action Partnership of Madera County, First 5 and Darin Camarena Health Center. These organizations provide extensive health and social welfare services to the Community.

Madera County continues to focus on a system of care approach to serving children and families. The collective goal of County Service providers is to meet children and family needs without overlapping/duplicating the efforts of the other organizations. Innovative projects, such as Healthy Beginnings (funded with all PSSF dollar components) have provided the foundation for moving forward with this goal.

An area of strength that continues to assist in the provision and coordination of needed services includes a consistent County management team that continues to work through the Interagency Placement Committee and informal staffings to address service needs and collaborates together in creating county/community approaches toward meeting those needs. These interpersonal professional relationships continue to surpass any difficulties that may arise because of staff turnover or fiscal restraints.

Through the county interagency structure, Madera County has made use of its small size and familiar relationships by creating a number of collaborative entities that benefit the families within the CWS service system. Services are available to ethnic and minority populations, those with disabilities, and residing in all areas of the county. The following include a variety of services offered from several service providers and collaborative efforts:

- **Adolescent Family Life Program** services include child development education, which is crucial in the prevention of child abuse and neglect for this vulnerable population. Additionally, pregnant and parenting youth in foster care are referred to AFLP.

- **Big Brother Big Sister of Fresno/Madera County** - Big Brothers Big Sisters focuses on youth who are filled with promise but whose life circumstances make it harder to achieve. Caring one-to-one relationships are professionally supported to achieve positive, measurable impact. Madera County Big Brother Big Sister also sits on the Madera County Child Abuse Prevention Council. By the power of consistent, caring attention, our mentored youth are more likely to stay in school, improve academically, avoid drug and alcohol abuse, and avoid gang participation than their peers.

- **Boys and Girls Club** - The Boys & Girls Club provides diverse activities that meet the interests of all youth. Core Programs engage young people in activities with adults, peers and family members that enable them to reach their full potential. Based on physical, emotional, cultural and social needs and interests of girls and boys, and recognizing developmental principles. Boys and Girls Club provides counseling, tutoring and mentoring services.

- **Madera County Providing Permanent Connections (Formerly known as California Permanency for Youth Project)** - In November 2006, Madera County DSS adopted the permanency philosophy and began the groundwork toward implementing best practices to secure permanent connections for foster children, including involvement of the youth as key participants in the process. Information on all relationships to the youth is gathered when a child is initially detained and efforts are made to make permanent connections between the youth and an identified person. In 2011 funding for this project ended; however, Madera County continued to work with our local partners and attends quarterly meetings with five other Counties to share ideas and strategies to continue the work started.

- **Consortium of Children** – In July 2012, with the addition of Madera County Adoption Program, Madera County began working with the Consortium of Children; specifically with the "Connections to Permanency" program. This program works with children 14 years and older who have a plan of Permanent Planned Living Arrangement (PPLA). They work with them on adoption related issues, making connections, and permanency plans which can include returning to a bio parent, relative/NREFM placements and plans of guardianship.

- **REACH (Resource, Education, Advocacy, Crisis Intervention, Hope)** – The REACH program provides pre and post adoptive services for children, adoptive parents and prospective adoptive parents at no cost for families. The program provides support groups, monthly newsletter, lending library, educational workshops/trainings, and short term case management including referrals to mental health services. This program is currently funded through CDSS Adoption Bureau.

- **California Youth Connection** – This is an organization that is guided and driven by current and former foster youth. It promotes the participation of foster youth in policy development and legislative change to improve the foster care system. In other words, its purpose is to advocate for better foster care services.

- **Community Action Partnership of Madera County (CAPMC)** – Community Action Partnership of Madera County provides several service programs, including Head Start, Emergency Shelter and Food assistance, Parent Support and Advocacy Center (funded with CBCAP, CAPIT and CCTF dollars), Victims services, Child Care resources and referrals and Healthy Families Insurance that have been tremendous resources for CWS families. CAPMC also works with youth in custody under the Probation Department. Counseling services, parenting and life skills classes are examples of some of the programs offered by MCCAA.

- **Family Resource Center (FRC) - T**he First 5 FRC provides information and referrals, co-location site for service providers, parent education, community development opportunities, multiple trainings and opportunities to act as

convener and meeting host to many county dialogues. A second Family Resource Center is in Chowchilla and a third site is in Oakhurst. The Department of Social Services provides CWS support by making an MSW staff member available to the Madera Family Resource Center staff to expedite referral or to determine assessment. Services provided in Chowchilla include the full array of services provided in Madera. The Oakhurst office provides most of the same services on a smaller scale. All services are geared to serve families with children 0 – 5. This leaves a gap in services for children 6 and older.

- **First Parent's Program -** A First 5 funded program which is designed to increase the provision of health care to infants/children 0-5. The program has expanded to the City of Chowchilla and mountain areas. This primary prevention program provides home calls for up to the first year after the birth of an infant.

- **Healthy Beginnings Program (**PSSF Family Preservation, Family Support, and Time Limited Family Reunification (TLFR) are used to fund direct services Healthy Beginnings.**) -**. The program is a partnership with the following agencies: Department of Social Serves, Department of Public Health, Department of Behavioral Health Services and Madera County Office of Education. The client families served have children 0-5 and are extremely resource-challenged, often interacting with multiple agencies with minimal coordination among service providers. The members identify families in crisis who are in need of: alcohol and drug counseling services; early mental health and intervention services; assessment and treatment of high risk medical needs and developmental delays; and intervention in the areas of domestic violence, immigration, housing, economic assistance and education.

- **Housing Authority -** Housing Authority of City of Madera (HA) renders services to CWS clients, as well as older youth who are on the verge of emancipation. The HA has set aside specific spots on the waiting list for ILP youth. Homelessness is a large problem with children who age out of the system.

- **Incredible Years -** The Incredible Years is an evidence based comprehensive set of curriculum designed to promote social competence and prevent, reduce, and treat aggression and related conduct problems in young children (ages 4 to 8 years). This program is offered by the Madera County Department of Social Services. The interventions that make up this series are guided by developmental theory concerning the role of multiple interacting risk and protective factors (child, family, and school) in the development of conduct problem.

- **Independent Living Program (ILP) -** ILP offers education and training programs to aid youth 14 to 21 years old that have been or are currently in out of home placement in Madera County. Madera County holds monthly Advisory Committee meetings with representatives from the community that serve the older youth to ensure they develop the competencies, skills and abilities to provide for foster care or kinship youth.

- **Interagency Placement Committee** provides oversight for all out of home group home placements for level 13 and above for CWS and Probation to ensure that these placements are appropriate to meet the service needs of children placed. Placements in level 12 homes are also reviewed to ensure that there is countywide compliance with Emily Q. for mental health access. Further efforts focus on plans to step children down to lower levels of care as appropriate by implementation of Wraparound and Intensive Therapeutic Foster Care.

- **Juvenile Justice Center –** The Behavioral Health Department provides services to youth referred by Madera County Probation, including individual and family counseling, parent education, anger management and case management.

- **Lake Street Center**. The Center is a collaboration of agencies, comprised of Behavioral Health Services, Public Health Department, and the Department of Social Services. Lake Street Center is a multi-disciplinary team that meets weekly with involved agencies to address children/family's needs and to communicate about the service plans of each agency so that the agencies will not be working against each other; but instead act as a unit supporting families. The Lake Street Staff consists of a Supervisor, 3 Mental Health Clinicians, 2 Case Managers and 2 Support Staff. Through the use of a mental health screening tool (MHST), the Center provides both assessment and intensive therapeutic services to all children 5 years and older in the CWS system. Lake Street Center also provides family counseling services to families involved in Permanency Planning, Court Reunification Services, Court Family Maintenance and Voluntary Family Maintenance and are including parents in the assessment for services. The focus of intervention is on the stabilization of the foster or adoptive placement, reunification and addressing the mental health/behavioral needs of the child. The mental health service plan of treatment is developed with the caregiver - whether parent, relative, foster parent or facility. The CWS social workers attend weekly meetings with the Lake Street staff to discuss common cases.

- **Local Law Enforcement Agencies** - There are three Law Enforcement agencies that MCDSS/CWS interacts with in Madera County: Madera Police Department (MPD), Sheriff's Department and Chowchilla Police Department. In the area of child welfare, law enforcement and MCDSS have similar goals. In a small town like Chowchilla, the police officers know the citizens which helps CWS deal with difficult situations. Both agencies are 24/7 operations but CWS is limited to one on-call worker a day which can extend response time after hours. Both agencies agree that they need to meet more frequently and also hold regular in service trainings to cover any new staff and a refresher for those who need it. The methamphetamine problem in Madera County has increased dramatically over the last few years causing an increase in violations. This is an extremely important subject for both agencies and they have collaborated to make sure children are not exposed to this dangerous drug.

Probation has an excellent relationship with all law enforcement agencies. They make an effort to come to the stations and reacquaint or introduce themselves to the officers.

Law enforcement sits on the local Interagency of Children and Youth Council.

- **Linkages** – Cal Works/Child Welfare Services often provide income maintenance, employment services and Child Welfare Services to the same families. The department implemented a linkages model to improve efficiencies; reduce duplication of services and ensure that families receive well-coordinated services that balance family risk when developing case plans. The Linkages Team Approach provides an opportunity for common goals and objectives to be reviewed and more realistic family case plans to be developed for mutual clients. Collaboratively, the Linkages team develops joint case plans which have many positive outcomes:

    - Improved screening and assessments
    - Coordinated services for families – less competing timelines and conflicting goals
    - Identification and alleviation of unnecessary yet significant stressors on the families
    - An opportunity for the program personnel to learn and appreciate the services each provides

  Through this program, duplication of services and work are reduced, while the process is smoother for the client. It is not the intention of MCDSS to overload clients but rather to make sure they are meeting their case plan goals.

- **Madera Access Point (MAP)**, a collaborative effort by community agencies to assist CalWORKs recipients who have self-identified as having alcohol, drug, domestic violence, and/or mental health problems that are preventing them from attaining self-sufficiency. Substance abuse, domestic violence, and mental health problems cause severe pain and suffering, as well as dramatic costs to society in terms of health care expenses and lost productivity. The collaborative MAP program attempts to reduce both the human and economic costs of these disorders. Services provided by MAP are culturally sensitive and language - appropriate. MAP services include:

    - Behavioral Health evaluation and treatment (family, group, and individual counseling)
    - Case management services to assist individuals in accessing needed support services (transportation, childcare, and housing)

- Educational workshops to increase individual functioning in identified areas (anger management, parenting, stress, goal setting, self-esteem, job retention and relationship issues)
- Job preparation and placement in a supportive employment program geared toward individuals with substance abuse and/or mental health problems (poor job history and low reading/math skills)
- Domestic Violence services to provide support and counseling to individuals disclosing domestic violence issues.

Building upon family strengths, Madera Access Point provides a supportive network for families who are returning to work as well as adjusting to children returning home from foster care. In addition to this supportive network, the Local Planning Council and Madera County Resource and Referral Agency have ensured that Memoranda of Understanding are in place regarding child care and respite care referrals.

- **Madera County Office of Education** – Through the Madera County Office of Education, Early Start is a collaborative program that provides early intervention services to infants and toddlers from birth until age three who have a disability in any of the following areas: physical, cognitive and adaptive development, communication, social and emotional. Early Intervention Teachers, Therapists, and others who have knowledge of working with very young children with disabilities and their families provide services. Children in this program are evaluated and have an Individualized Family Service Plan (IFSP) developed to address their needs and describe the services that they will receive. Services are provided in the home, at Gould Educational Center, and other environments suitable for that child and his or her family. Central Valley Regional Center (CVRC) works closely with the Madera County Superintendent of Schools Office of Education and the Madera/Mariposa SELPA to evaluate and provide a range of services to the infant/toddler and the family. The Early Start Family Resource Center works closely with the family of infants and toddlers with a disability. The goal of the Early Start Family Resource Center is to help, encourage, and provide resources, training and support to families of children with disabilities. Information is available through a resource library, parent groups, guest speakers, presentations, conferences and seminars. (www.maderacoe.k12.ca.us)

In addition, Madera County Office of Education offers the CARES Project. With First 5 dollars, the Local Planning Council has made tremendous strides in providing education and professional opportunities to the childcare providers and foster parents of Madera County. CARES is linked with the local community college and has developed a curriculum that increases knowledge of early childhood development.

- **Madera County Public Health Department (PHD):** provides integral support to the children and families served by CWS in various joint program efforts. Health advocacy, psychotropic drug protocol coordination, and tandem visits are provided to families in CWS through the Foster Care –PHN. A second FC-PHN provides services to families being served in CWS Family Maintenance program to educate and support families in accessing services for health issues.

- **Madera Unified School District** – Madera Unified School Districts collaborates with Child Welfare services and participates in the Juvenile Court collaborative meetings as well as the Out of Home Youth Advisory Board.

  The schools work with the Probation Department and supplies probation officers stations on- campus to service the juvenile probationer population.

  Madera Unified School District makes available classes in parenting education and anger management to juvenile probation youth and their families.

- **Perinatal** – Both the Behavioral Health Department and Public Health Department offer Perinatal Services. The Public Health Department offers outreach and education that promotes early and regular prenatal care.

  The First Parent Program provides case management and twice monthly home visits. This program educates first time parents about how to have a healthy pregnancy and how to be great parents. They learn about infant behavior infant development and how to build great child relationships.

  Perinatal Outreach Education Program (POE) assures early and continuous prenatal care for all pregnant women, especially low-income women. The public health nurse, through the client referral process, arranges home visitation. Case management services support the family through education, resource referral, and goal setting for optimal health and wellness.

  Perinatal Substance Abuse through Behavioral Health provides outpatient services for women and their families affected by alcohol and/or other drugs. Services include individual group, case management and intervention.

- **Ready Set Go (RSG)** is an in-school youth program that focuses on providing job skills and opportunities to foster and probation juniors and seniors in high school. RSG staff is able to work with CWS staff in particular the ILP coordinator, CWS provide partial funding and offer training on RSG's services to the Social Workers. Probation works closely with RSG to provide job and life skills to their youth. RSG is always invited to Probation's meetings at Court Day School and Boot Camp and has an assigned liaison from Probation.

- **STOP Truancy Opportunity Program** - The Stop Truancy Opportunity Program (S.T.O.P.) targets 7th and 8th graders from nine schools within the

county who have more than 3 unexcused absences. This prevention program is crucial because within the Criminal Justice system, it is known that truancy is a precursor to delinquency. The program has shown great success in reaching these children and re-connecting them with the schools. Due to budget cuts the program staff consists of three probation officers. The truancy program has a partnership with:

- Boys and Girls Club of Eastern Madera County which provides counseling, tutoring and mentoring services
- STOP, which pays for tutors for youth at Thomas Jefferson and Martin Luther King Middle Schools

- **Transitional Housing Program Plus (THP Plus)** - The Madera County Transitional Housing Program-Plus (THP Plus) provides independent living experience to eighteen to twenty-four year old young adults who have emancipated from the foster care system. Participants live with a host family and receive support and guidance from a contracted provider selected by the county. Participants acquire and practice skills which prepare them to live successfully on their own. Services are provided through both individual and group settings.

  The above services are geared toward strengthening and supporting children and their families, while reducing the risk of abuse and/or neglect. Each service entity builds off the initial assessment and a service or treatment plan is developed that best meets the child's and family's needs.

Madera County Child Welfare participated in several venues to outreach to the community. They include: County Fair booth presentation of services offered by Department of Social Services, First 5 Farmer's Market, Resource Fair for all providers to youth in out-of-home care, and most recently, participation on the Oaxacan Indigenous Communities.

Under-represented group: Madera County has two federally recognized Indian tribes, as well as a minority population of Oaxacan families. Madera County has been proactive in participating with the Oaxacan indigenous Communities and addressing their unique circumstances. Madera DSS collaborated with community members to address issues unique to the Oaxacan culture. An outcome to that meeting was the development of "I Speak" cards which are placed at every reception desk within the Department and are used when a non-English speaker comes to the desk for assistance. In addition, the department staff received culture awareness training in the Oaxacan culture.

Even though the Native American population residing in Madera County is rather small, the tribal liaison has found CWS to be responsive to their needs, supporting the tribe's care and concern for their tribal children in the child welfare system. Monthly meetings with tribal representatives are held, as well as discussion to develop targeted training for

social work staff. The two tribes in Madera County are the Picayune Rancheria of the Chukchansi Tribe, and the North Fork Rancheria of the Mono Tribe.

Madera County has a large Spanish speaking population and the department is able to meet the language needs presented with employed staff, as well as other languages such as Hmong, Hungarian, Sign Language, and Punjabi, during the regular business hours. The County has language resources available 24 hours a day should a live interpreter or telephone interpreter be needed. An internal request is placed and an interpreter is provided. CAPC has requested and received interpretation services from DSS on various occasions. CAPC also has Spanish speaking members that provide them with assistance as needed.

i. Madera County has made efforts to implement more Evidenced Based and Evidence Informed Prevention Programs. Some examples include:

- Incredible Years Parenting Program to families in the community, as well as those receiving Child Welfare Services.
- For those families in Mental Health treatment, they are provided with the Love and Logic Parenting program.
- Staying Connected to Your Teen offered by CAPC.
- Strengthening Families offered by the Parent Support and Advocacy Center
- Triple P also offered by the Parent Support and Advocacy Center
- Case staffings have shifted into the family team decision making model.
- Safety Organized Practice has been adopted by Madera County Child Welfare Service.
    - Child welfare's primary mission is to ensure that children are safe, and that their family and systems of care provide a safe environment free from abuse and neglect. Safety organized practice puts this primary mission at the forefront of every decision and intervention made with a family.
    - Safety organized practices are both practice strategies and concrete tools for "on-the-ground" child welfare workers, supervisors and managers to enhance family participation and foster equitable decision making (Turnell, 2008). The main objectives consist of:
        - Strategies for the creation of effective working relationships and a shared focus to guide casework among all stakeholders (child, family, worker, supervisor, extended

community, etc.). These strategies include facilitated family meeting, the development of family safety networks, group supervision and family finding;

- Enhancing critical inquiry and minimizing the potential for bias by workers through a rigorous "mapping" of the safety, danger and risk undertaken collaboratively by all stakeholders;
- The development of a joint understanding by workers, families and extended community as to what the attendant dangers, risks, protective capacities and family strengths are, and what clear, meaningful, behavioral changes and goals are needed to create "rigorous, sustainable, on-the-ground child safety" (Turnell, 2008).

- The county utilizes Structured Decision Making to determine response, safety and risk, and reunification re-assessment.

- Addiction Severity Index to assess parents AOD use and treatment need.

- Emancipating youth are offered continued services through Transitional Housing Program Plus.

- Although Madera County does not license their own homes, the county does certify relatives and nonrelated family members.

Madera County will continue to seek further preventative programs, as well implement services that are evidenced based and/or evidenced informed.

6. Staff/Provider Training

A. Madera County Department of Social Services continues to focus on solidifying our process as it pertains to best practice by continuing to utilize those tools and training as it pertains to SDM, Linkages, Family Group Decision Making, Safe Measures and other efforts toward permanent connections. The department established a training unit in order to ensure that new workers are trained in the necessary curriculum.

The department developed a Learning Management System (LMS) that utilizes Microsoft ACCESS to keep a database of phase I, phase II and ongoing training requirements for Social Workers in Child Welfare. Training requirements are determined based on hire date, education and experience and loaded into the database. Reports are developed providing individual records of the Social Workers for the Supervisor to arrange. A summary report is generated and provided to the Child Welfare Program Manager to review to monitor progress of Social Workers needing required training.

As training from the Regional Training Academy, U.C. Davis or in house training is conducted, a sign in sheet is used to record attendance.

The County provides cultural awareness and civil rights training to all vendors/contractors annually. The liaison is available throughout the year to assist with any contractual issues that may arise. The contractors provide training for parents, staff and the local community on various subjects throughout the year. Any training provided is always included in the annual report to the State. The liaison is a county staff member that receives additional training as part of her county duties and has not identified any training needs at this time. Training is also included in the contractors' budgets annually based on their individual needs. The county has not been notified of any training needs for the contractors at this time.

B. Probation Officer Training - Probation staff is well trained and adheres to the statutory and regulatory requirements. The probation officers are required to attend various trainings every year for updates on the latest regulations, laws and legal procedures to provide adequate services to the youth and families we service. The Group Home/Foster Home Placement Officer is required to complete the Placement Officer Core training.

C. Training and technical assistance is provided to all subcontractors as a stipulation of their contracts with the County and/or the agency they work. The department training unit offers trainings such as Civil Rights and Cultural Awareness to both staff and subcontractors on an annual basis. These trainings are taught by an educational institution such as U.C. Davis, a County agency and/or Community Based Organization.

D. CAPIT/CBCAP/CTF dollars are used to provide training to the local Child Abuse Prevention Council (CAPC)/ (funded with CAPIT and CTF). Each contract paid with these dollars requests training as part of their contracts with the County. The County provides cultural awareness and civil rights training to all vendors/contractors annually. The liaison is available throughout the year to assist with any contractual issues that may arise. The contractors provide training for parents, staff and the local community on various subjects throughout the year. A parent representative is paid for and encouraged to attend the annual CAPC conference. Any training provided is always included in the annual report to the State. The liaison is a county staff member that receives additional training as part of her county duties and has not identified any training needs at this time. Training is also included in the contractors' budgets annually based on their individual needs. The county has not been notified of any training needs for the contractors at this time.

7. Agency Collaborations

A. Collaboration with agencies implementing Child Welfare Services

As noted earlier, there are a variety of service partners that coordinate and collaborate with Child Welfare in order to provide services to youth and their family.

First 5 Madera County Children and Families Commission led collaborations have provided funding opportunities to implement and/or enhance the service array for children 0-5 and their families who are served by CWS. Such programs have included funding parent education, parent leadership, child development trainings, as well as direct service delivery to newborns, special needs children, and high-risk children and families, just to name a few. Funding for the Healthy Beginnings Program discussed fully in other parts of this report originated from First 5 funding and has since been leveraged through the Maternal Child Health Program for program expansion. The development of the Family Resource Center has also provided education and advocacy opportunities for families in the City of Madera and in the City of Chowchilla. One of the Deputy Directors of MCDSS serves as a Commissioner through Board of Supervisor Resolution.

Through grants from First 5, MCDSS has been able to utilize two very effective programs that address specific risks associated with families in the child welfare system. The agencies have a growing working relationship. FRC is vital to the community because it allows for an additional resource in a community where they are scarce.

Madera County Office of Education serves 9 school districts within Madera County. MCOE participated in the assessment again this year and is an integral part in aiding with educational plans for youth in care. Both Probation and Child Welfare are involved with MCOE and have the ability to access educational staff to receive services for the youth in care. Practices that increase collaboration are the overall participation by the Social Workers and Probation Officers to attend meetings, visit classrooms and keep in touch with personnel who are involved in their client's educational plan.

Court Appointed Special Advocates (CASA), is a program that uses trained community volunteers to speak for the best interest of abused and neglected children in court. Both agencies agree that permanent placement is the ultimate goal for the children commonly served. CASA does not work with Probation.

FFA Interagency meets every two months with representatives from local Foster Family Agencies and other counterparts such as county child welfare departments. MCDSS/CWS Social Workers are very involved with their clients-making it easier on the FFA to obtain specific information about the child and their family—this is very unusual in larger counties. MCDSS processes their own placements, which is more efficient and cuts down on time and provides a clear process for the FFA to follow. This is also very unusual for other counties. Communication and response time from CWS supervisors is recognized as effective and efficient. The county recognizes the stated issues

and has invited various FFA's to attend division meetings to spark relationships with the Social Workers. The county is working on effective procedures for the Social Workers and will continue to address the transportation issues.

Child Abuse Prevention Council works collaboratively with CWS and Probation to fund and support child abuse prevention and intervention outreach and educational activities. MCDSS uses Children's Trust Fund (CTF) and CAPIT dollars to support these activities. Outreach activities include Child Abuse Prevention Month, Annual Day for Children's Conference, distribution of Blue pins, Resource materials, Mandated Reporter Training. In addition, Staying Connected to your Teens, parenting workshops are held. In 2012, Staying Connected to your Teens served 42 adults and 38 children and youth.

Community Action Partnership of Madera County supports both CWS and Probation by providing referral services such as emergency shelter, food services, victim services, Parent Support and Advocacy Center, Life Skills and New Choices curriculum for Probation youth and much more.

Foster Parent Association is involved with both CWS and Probation youth through their advocacy of local Foster Parents. CWS utilizes AB2129 funds to support the activities and outreach associated with the Foster Parent Association. CWS also has a dedicated Social Worker assigned as the Foster Parent liaison to expedite the needs of local foster parents. As of December 31, 2012, the leadership of the Madera County Foster Parent Association #25 quit. The Department is working with the community to gage what next steps will be taken.

CWS and Probation utilize various county agency services within the community as mentioned earlier in the report. There are various multi-disciplinary meetings that occur between CWS, Probation, Public Health, Behavioral Health, Department of Educational Services, State Adoptions, Workforce Development and other public agencies on a regular basis.

B. County develops annual reports

Annual reports and/or surveys are completed both internally by agency staff and in a collaborative manner through the Interagency of Children and Youth Services. The exchange of this information happens often. Every agency has their own unique reports that assist with provision of services. In order to complete reports, it is necessary to share information amongst the group. Madera County Action Agency, First 5 Report Card, and Mental Health Service Act are examples of assessments and reports that the County has participated in sharing reports and information.

C. Process used to ensure agency goals and objectives

The County includes identified stakeholders when assessing and determining the direction and effect of service delivery to meet the agency's goals and objectives. When additional program development or changes are warranted, stakeholders

and key participants are included in the planning. Information on trends to guide decision making is used in developing resources in targeted areas. For example, in planning for the County Self-Assessment, both CWS and Probation wrote letters, made phone calls and contacts with various stakeholders including parents, youth, schools and foster parents. The goals and objectives of the Self-Assessment were clearly stated to the invited participants so each member was aware and understood their purpose and role.

D. The following are the service areas that Madera County coordinates with other agencies:

- **Supportive and Therapeutic Options Program (STOP)** provides multi-agency collaboration and case management services minors to increase the success of minors returning to their families and community after being incarcerated and to decrease the number of minors that return to Juvenile Hall or other out of home placements.

- **Linkages** is a collaborative effort for those families receiving Cal Works and Child Welfare, whereby each task area works together and jointly develops a case plan with the family and provides coordinated case management services.

- **Interagency Youth and Children's Service Council** is designated by the Madera County Board of Supervisors per the California Welfare and Institutions Code Section 1898.10 to oversee issues involving families and their children in the community. Representatives from various county and city agencies, non-profits, law enforcement and the schools sit on the Council. This body is also the designees for oversight pertaining to CAPIT/CBCAP/PSSF and Children's Trust Fund dollars.

- **Madera County Child Abuse Prevention Council** is a local non-profit consisting of parents and representatives from local and public service agencies, non-profit organizations and the private sector whose primary purpose is to coordinate the community's efforts to prevent and respond to child abuse.

- **ILP** services in Madera County are provided by Kingsview's **Ready, Set, Go** Program (RSG) – RSG provides work readiness skills, life skills, leadership skills and occupational skills through a series of workshops to ILP eligible youth ages 16-21 throughout the fiscal year. This program has assisted youth with their transition into adulthood and provides a supportive atmosphere to assist with their permanency goals.

- **Older Youth Adoption Project**: Madera County is working with our older youth in foster care to establish permanent homes for them, including possibly re-connecting them with family, finding a home for older youth who will provide permanence, and matching them with unmatched homes. Efforts have included mining and reviewing those children's case files that are in need of permanent homes, while also talking to youth about permanence and their wishes.

- **The Healthy Beginnings Program** is a collaborative multi-disciplinary team that includes schools, Social Services, Behavioral Health and Public Health to serve high risk families with children ages 0-5. PSSF Family Preservation, Family Support, and Time Limited Family Reunification (TLFR) are used to fund direct services Healthy Beginnings. The families referred and served by this program have moderate to high service needs and receive services such as:

  - Alcohol and Drug Counseling
  - Early mental health and intervention services
  - Assessment and treatment of high risk medical needs and developmental delays
  - Child Welfare Services
  - Intervention services in the areas of domestic violence, immigration, housing and others.

- **First 5 Collaborative Agreement:** MCDSS and First 5 entered into an MOU for the purpose of participating in a collaborative to provide early prevention and intervention services to at risk families of Madera County. In FY 2011-2012, prevention and intervention services were provided to 126 families; 48 walk-ins and 78 DSS referred families. The total number of referrals to case managed families was 222 with an 80% success rate. Food/clothing, counseling, and family activities were the top referrals provided. MCDSS has assigned a Master's level Social Worker to work AmeriCorps students to provide families with case management services, including referrals and services for parenting, counseling, medical and housing.

- **Public Health Nurses** are assigned to both Juvenile Probation and Child Welfare Services to ensure children in placement are receiving the appropriate services identified in each child's Health and Education Passport. The partnership with the Public Health Nurse has been extremely beneficial as the nurse is on-site and is able to alert staff on any identified medical conditions that are

reviewed and coordinate medical services for the children and families, as well as the social work staff. Accesses to the nurse is very helpful to both staff and clients and provide consultation.

- **Central Valley regional Center** - The Central Valley Regional Center provides diagnosis, evaluation, and case management through its staff. It also acts as a "coordinator" of services, which are available to the developmentally disabled from other agencies in the community. Services may be purchased from specialists or agencies in the community.

- **Court Appointed Special Advocates (CASA)** is a program that uses trained community volunteers to speak for the best interest of abused and neglected children in court. Both agencies agree that permanent placement is the ultimate goal for the children commonly served. The CASA worker provides advocacy services for children who are dependents of the juvenile court, working with other providers who are also providing services to the child. CASA does not work with Probation.

- **The Community Action Partnership of Madera County (CAPMC)** is a nonprofit corporation founded and incorporated in 1965. It is guided in its efforts jointly by the Madera County Board of Supervisors and a Board of Directors representing elected officials, low-income, labor, business, education, religion, and other major private organizations. CAPMC provides several service programs, including:

  - **Head Start,**
  - **Emergency Shelter and**
  - **Food assistance,**
  - **Parents Anonymous,**
  - **Victims services,**
  - **Child Care resources and referrals**
  - **Healthy Families Insurance**

  CAPMC also works with youth in custody under the Probation Department providing Counseling services, parenting and life skills classes.

- **The Lake Street Center** is a collaborative mental health program for children/youth and their biological and/or placement families who have been identified by Child Welfare Services as needing a complete system of care. Through the use of a mental health screening tool (MHST), the Center provides both assessment

and intensive therapeutic services to all children 5 years and older in the CWS system. The Lake Street Center also provides family counseling services to families involved in Permanency Planning, Court Reunification Services, Court Family Maintenance and Voluntary Family Maintenance and are including parents in the assessment for services. The focus of intervention is on the stabilization of the foster or adoptive placement, reunification and addressing the mental health/behavioral needs of the child. The mental health service plan of treatment is developed with the caregiver - whether parent, relative, foster parent or facility. The CWS social workers attend weekly meetings with the Lake Street staff to discuss common cases.

- **California Permanency for Youth Project (CPYP) -** The County has participated in the CPYP efforts over the last 2 years and focuses on working with youth to establish a lifelong connection to a caring adult so youth do not exit out of foster care without a permanent connection. The county provides regular case consultation meetings, coordinating with Behavioral Health, State Adoptions, various Foster Family Agencies, and family members to identify, plan, and implement the permanent connection efforts for each identified youth.

- **Child Death Review Team** – is a collaborative effort with the Madera County Sherriff's Office, the Child Abuse Prevention Council, and the Department of Social Services. The team meets monthly to talk about child fatalities, reason for death, any involvement with CWS, and whether or not there was any action or inaction taken that could have prevented the death.

- **Child Advocacy Clinic -** The purpose of Child Advocacy is to provide a multidisciplinary approach to dealing with a wide range of child maltreatment issues including unexplained injuries, emotional abuse, suspected histories for sexual abuse, physical abuse, neglect and exposure to domestic violence. The Child Advocacy Clinic at Children's Hospital Central California is a full-service practice that provides expert diagnosis and management of suspected child maltreatment cases in infants, children and adolescents. The medical professionals will assist in protecting an injured child or to intervene preventatively in all cases that are identified and referred.

E. County community partnerships that create comprehensive response to prevention and remove barriers:

Madera County has made active efforts to develop close working relationships with and among CWS, Probation, Public Health, Behavioral Health, Department of Educational Services, State Adoptions, Workforce Development, Community Action Partnership, Child Abuse Prevention Council, FRC/First 5 of Madera County and the Housing Authority, which has allowed for a comprehensive approach to delivering services to children and families. These agencies are committed to improving outcomes for children and families. When Child Welfare or Probation is presented with the needs of a child and his or her family, a multi-disciplinary approach can be utilized to identify a comprehensive case plan, which includes targeted actions plans that address the specialized needs of the family.

The county is funded mainly by allocated dollars through the State or by Federal funds. One program the county blends funds is the Health Beginnings Programs as mentioned earlier by utilizing First 5 dollars to draw down Child Welfare funds.

F. County consults and coordinates with tribes:
Child Welfare Services participates on the local, regional and State ICWA task force in order to address issues and create and maintain a positive working relationship with the tribal liaisons. As part of our coordination efforts, CWS involves the tribe in assisting with services for the family as soon as the child is identified as potentially eligible for ICWA. The tribe has assisted Child Welfare in their intervention efforts, multi-disciplinary staffings and linkages to services.

Probation coordinates with local tribes by setting up meetings as needed to develop the needs and services of the child and their family. The Probation officer will staff ICWA cases with the tribal representative and the tribal representative is also involved in the case planning, where specific goals are implemented for each child.

Some of the challenges in coordinating services with the tribes are the turnover rate of the liaison assigned to ICWA and the limited Native American placements that the tribes have.

G. Consultation and Coordination between CWS and Probation:
Madera County Child Welfare Services and Madera County Probation: as noted earlier in this report, are both responsible for providing child welfare services in the county. The two departments have collaborated in developing protocols for provision of services for youth and their families including, including ICWA eligible children and families. Current practice agreements include the following:

- SB 241.1 protocol for coordination of assessments and investigations for a minor who appears to qualify for proceedings under W&I Code Sections 300,601 and 602;

- Placement and Foster Care services in accordance with Section 471 of the title IV-E of the Social Security Act, W&I Code Sections 11404 (b) and 11404.1 and EAS Section 45-201.4;
- STOP (Stop Truancy Opportunity Program) administered by Probation for provision of services to youth and families who are at risk as related to truancy and who could benefit from multi-agency collaboration and case management services.

Based on the fact that both CWS and probation are meeting frequently to discuss youth who are in out of home care, each entity has a good grasp on services available, as well as those youth who are common to both agencies. This allows the team to jointly assess and make recommendations on the services available, as well as impact the youth and their outcomes. An example is the Interagency Placement Committee convening that identifies services needed to stabilize a youth who may be exhibiting high risk and high end behaviors. In addition, both entities are able to look at the area of permanency efforts for youth, such as ILP services, CYC, and THP Plus.

Child Welfare and Probation have further collaborated on other efforts, including addressing educational rights of the youth through the Juvenile Dependency Court. In addition, both agencies participate in the Out-of-Home Youth Advisory Committee discussed earlier.

8. Local Systemic Factors

All have been mentioned previously.

9. Summary Assessment

The County Self Assessment allowed both Child Welfare and Probation to thoroughly review outcome areas, while bringing Stakeholders to the table for input. The core representatives and additional identified participants were invited and engaged in working meetings. Focus groups were formed and together with the week-long peer review, both Child Welfare and Probation were able to identify the agencies strengths, needs, and strategies for the future.

SAFETY

The Safety Outcome S1.1, Madera County's rate of maltreatment recurrence is 91.4%, a rate slightly below the National goal of 94.6% and California's goal of 93.3 %. Madera County has diligently utilized the Structured Decision Making tool, which has allowed for sound assessments of risk and safety, and guided objective decisions for

children and families served, resulting in a strong outcome for preventing child maltreatment.

For Safety Outcome S2.1, the County's rate of no maltreatment in foster care is 98.98%, which is only slightly under that of the State's average of 99.64%. Madera County staff consistently assesses children on a monthly basis. Child Welfare staff are required to check the child's placement binder in the placement home to ensure that child's CHDP, dental, physical, and vision exams are done timely. Child Welfare staff are encouraged to see children in placement each month. Madera County has adopted the Orange County Method/Federal measure of in placement contact with children. Child Welfare staff collaborate with the child's counselor, doctor, and other professional service providers who are involved in the child's life so further assessments of the child's safety and needs can be addressed on an ongoing basis. In addition, there are weekly discussions at the Program Integrity meetings to ensure we are moving compliance and practice forward.

In addition, the County has assessed its compliance with timely contacts. Child Welfare is at 100% compliance with Immediate referrals, 96.9% compliance with 10-Day investigations and 95% compliance with the required monthly face to face contacts. The County has worked diligently in targeting compliance of timely contacts and the efforts have shown positive results.

Strengths identified in the Safety outcomes include the fact that Madera reviews compliance mandates on a weekly basis at the Program Integrity meeting. These efforts have shown positive results. In addition, tandem home visits with the public health nurse and the AOD counselor have been effective in assessing the safety and health needs of families.

In regards to barriers, the County has identified that the reentry rate is due enlarge to the need for dual diagnosis mental health services. This is a recurring theme throughout this assessment as dual diagnosis clients, usually substance abuse and mental illness, do not receive appropriate services to ameliorate the reason the children were removed.

PERMANENCY

The County's overall composite score for reunification efforts (C1) is at 103.2, which falls below the National Standard of 122.6. The individual composite scores vary in regards to their comparison with the State average and National Standard. For the County's reunification efforts within 12 months, Exit Cohort (C1.1), the County performs at 65.5%, which is above the State average of 63.4%, yet below the National Standard of 75.2%. The County's performance for the Median Time to Reunification (C1.2) is at 6.7, which is a better than the State's average of 8.8, yet below the National Standard of 5.4. The County's performance for Reunification within 12 months, Entry

Cohort (C1.3) reaches to 31.7%, which is better than the State average of 15.7% yet below the National Standard of 48.4%. However, for the Re-entry following Reunification, the County does not fare as well, jumping to 20.4%, which is higher than both the State average of 12.2% and National Standard of 9.9%.

Madera County continues to fall below the National Standard in this composite; but above the State average in most cohorts. Whereas three years ago the County was doing well in the area of reunification within 12 months, it is now falling below the National Standard. Madera County continues to be limited as to the number and type of services available in the community. This continues to pose challenges for our Department.

Madera County's Adoption Composite (C2) is 92.4, which is below the National Standard of 106.4. Yet the individual composite scores vary in regards to their comparison with the State average and National Standard. For children adopted in 24 months (C2.1), the County scored 33.3%, which is below the National Standard/Goal of 36.6%. For the Median time to adoption (C2.2), the County scored higher at 25.5 compared to the National Standard/Goal of 27.3. For adoption within 12 months (C2.3), the County scored at 11.1%, which is lower than the National Standard/Goal of 22.7%. For children legally free within 6 months (C2.4), the County scored 11.8%, which is just above the National Standard of 10.9%. Lastly, for Adoptions within 12 months, the County scores at 38.5%, falling below the National Standard at 53.7%.

Although Madera County has had a good working relationship with California State Adoptions Fresno District Office, children have not been moved to permanency in a timely manner due to several challenges. There continued to be either late referrals to the Adoptions District Office, and/or incomplete referrals that do not have all the needed information and/or documents. In addition, continued court hearings due to late reports and/or delays in court orders.

However, in July 2012, Madera County DSS took over responsibility of Adoptions. A Madera County Adoption Handbook was developed as well as new policy and procedures. Furthermore, Adoption Staffings are being held as soon as a case is identified as having a poor prognosis for reunification. Madera County is excited about administration of the Adoption Program and is committed to develop and revise our program activities toward improving outcome performances at or above the National Standard Goal.

Madera County's Long Term Care Composite at 112.9 is below the National Standard of 121.7, yet the county has moved in a positive direction to increase this performance area. The County's efforts in Exits to Permanency (C3.1) at 13.9%, is below the National Standard of 29.1%. The County's efforts toward Exits to Permanency - legally Free at exit (C3.2) is at 90% and is below the National Standard of 98.0%. The County's performance toward children in care 3 years or longer (C3.3) is 31.3%, better than the National Standard of 37.5% and significantly better than the State at 56.3%.

Strengths in this area include Madera County's programs that effectively assist in the permanency and transition of foster youth, which include California Permanency for Youth Project (CPYP), Independent Living Program (ILP), Ready, Set, Go! Program and the Transitional Housing Program (THP). In addition, Madera County has been working on permanency through re-engagement efforts with parents for those youth whose permanent plan is not adoption.

The barriers to permanency are working with foster families and relatives on the importance of permanency, the relatively small number of adoptive homes within Madera County, the lack of case mining or other specialized work based on generalist practice model and increasingly difficult fiscal circumstances.

The County's performance toward Placement (C4) at 104.1 is just above the National Standard of 101.5. Placement Stability 12 months in care (C4.1) Madera performs at 93.3%, which is better than the National Standard of 86%. For Placement Stability (C4.2), 12 to 24 months in care, the County score is 70.7%, exceeding the National Standard of 65.4%. Yet Placement Stability (C4.3), at least 24 months in care, the County scores at 29.3%, falling below the National Standard of 41.8%. These composites show that Madera County performs fairly well in placement stability for those children in care 24 months or less, but the outcomes decrease when a child remains in care longer than 24 months.

The strengths of this composite are that the County tries to keep youth within the same school of origin and within the county lines so that reunification efforts or connections are maintained. In addition, the Department developed a Placement Decision Tree which identifies the process the social worker completed when searching for a placement home. This form is monitored and evaluated by the Foster Parent Liaison. The inclusion of TDM trained facilitators will strengthen the Department's ability to seek out problem identification and solutions early on in placement in an effort to stabilize and maintain the placement and ensuring that the needs of the child are met and the SCP is supported in their care of the youth.

The barriers identified regarding placement stability are that maintaining siblings in the same placement are at times difficult, and not asking the age appropriate youth the type or location of placement they would prefer and assessing the compatibility with placement providers. In addition, there is a need for more County Foster Homes. Madera County currently has 16 foster homes and most of them are filled to capacity. This population of youth represent our most challenging behaviors and the lack of supportive step down planning with collaborative partners hinders the ability of youth to be supported to stabilize in placement environments.

WELL BEING

The well being measures were designed to ensure the provision of Child Welfare services necessary for children in out-of-home care while providing for their health and educational needs. Although there is no Standard or Goal set for these measures, there is always a need to improve in these areas to assure that foster children receive health care when needed, as well as meeting their educational needs. Madera County currently provides the Health and Education Passport to children in out of home care at a score of 81.8%. CHDP Physical Examinations are in compliance at 92.7% and CHDP Dental examinations at 77.7%. Of the children in out of home care, 6.0% are authorized for psychotropic medications, which is below the State average of 13.4%.

The strengths for the County include the utilization of the public health nurse for medical follow up and the placement binder which is reviewed by the social worker at every monthly contact with the care provider. In addition, the Department participates on numerous collaborating committees such as the Out of Home Youth Advisory Board, made up of representatives from the following organizations: Behavioral Health Services, Public Health, Probation, and Madera County Office of Education (MCOE), Madera Unified School District (MUSD), Workforce Development, AspiraNet FFA, Y.E.S. (Fresno City College and the Madera Center), Housing Authority, Job Corps/AmeriCorps, and Foster Kinship Care Education.

The completion of the CHDP Physical and Dental are reviewed weekly during the Program Integrity meeting.

The Department works closely with the Madera County Department of Education to ensure that foster children receive the needed services and to ensure that there are no gaps in the youth's education.

Describe overall findings

In reviewing the outcome measures, Madera County continues to maintain high standards in the area of Safety. Utilizing all Structured Decision Making's tools ensures that accurate and thorough assessments of the families are completed. In addition, Madera County utilizes the tenets of Safety Organized Practice to engage families, identify supportive persons in the family's life to ensure that children are safe, and that their family and systems of care provide a safe environment free from abuse and neglect.

Individual composite areas that present challenges for the county are the following:

1) Reunification within 12 months and Reunification efforts that occur quickly, but subsequently result in re-entry following reunification

2) Adoption and Legally Freed within 12 months (C2.3 and C2.5)

3) Exits to permanency (24 months in care)

4) Placement stability for youth in care more than 24 months.

The County has already begun to address these issues through several different venues, including the following:

- The Department began preparing for the Federal Standard of Contact compliance since January 2012, with all staff introduction to changes and inclusion of the standards in our weekly Program Integrity Meetings. Madera County is amongst the top performing counties in the state (top 5 last few months).
- The rollout of RUSHMORE this year has allowed Madera County to integrate the quality of practice being completed with children and families with the statistical analysis of compliance mandates via SafeMeasures. Although, in its infancy, RUSHMORE has shown practice trends that need to be addressed and can be praised at the same time.
- Madera County contracted with EMQ Families First to roll out Wrap services in Madera County.
- Madera DSS is working with Madera county Behavioral Health to ensure adherence to the Katie A. law suit.
- Madera DSS utilizes the following programs to sustain long term safety, permanence and well being for families in Madera County: Safety Organized Practice, Trauma Informed Practice, Integration of combined FM/FR SW's for continuity of care for families, Linkages, and SDM re-assessment.
- Madera DSS developed a model of Program Integrity to ensure compliance with mandates.
- Madera County took over responsibility for adoption services and created a Madera County Adoption Handbook and streamlined our business processes.
- Addiction Severity Index is being used by social workers to gather pertinent information on the parent's substance abuse issues and history.

Probation:

In reviewing the outcome measures, Probation continues to maintain high standards in the areas of Safety and Placement stability. There are no known instances of abuse or neglect against a minor placed in a foster care program by Probation. Group and Foster homes used by Probation are licensed by the State, or an independent Foster Family Agency. Probation maintains contact with the minor's in placement and make no less than one contact a month. Safety concerns are addressed during each visit and followed up on immediately. Probation Officers document safety concerns and report issues to Community Care Licensing when appropriate. In regard to Placement stability Probation uses the minor's assessments to find placement that meets the needs of the minor.

Probation develops a case plan with input from the minor and parents/guardians to address the needs of all parties. The Probation officer has attended necessary training for case planning and concurrent planning.

Individual Composite areas that present challenges for Probation are the following:

1) Reunification within 12 months
2) Least Restrictive placements

Probation has already begun to address these issues through different means such as:

1) Complete and thorough assessments of the minor's strengths and needs

2) Greater youth and family input and involvement in placement decisions

3) Continuous training of placement officer/s and supervisors

4) Parenting classes (Strengthening Families, and Triple P) provided through the Community Action Partnership of Madera County

5) Compliance with AB 938 family notification

The Probation Department has an excellent working relationship with various agencies, including the Department of Social Services, Mental Health department, Facility Medical Staff, Courts, Schools, and other Law Enforcement agencies. These agencies offer welcomed advice about regulatory and/or statutory provisions, which assist in providing effective services to our special needs families. For those youth who need an environment with a higher level of accountability, the Probation department recommends the Court Day School Program, which provides intense supervised services. In addition, the minor and parents are also referred to counseling services.

Strategies for the Future

Madera County continues to have areas of challenges: high unemployment rate, substance abuse, the lack of affordable housing, and insufficient financial resources. These factors have to be considered and included in the County's future strategic planning.

The County's Strategies for the future that will enhance and improve outcomes will include, but are not limited to the following:

1) Implement Solution Based Case Management

2) Fully Implement Team Decision Making model for placement needs

3) Utilize coaching strategies from Safety Organized Practice:
   a) Support ongoing transfer of learning
   b) Support unique uptake dilemmas
   c) Support an idea of appreciative inquiry, facilitation and dialogue

4) Build upon QPI
   a) Build foster parent capacity
   b) Include relative caregivers

5) Engage the churches/community in development of parent mentors

6) Ensure concurrent planning starts from ER

7) Ensure educational growth and opportunities to youth in care
   a) iFoster – a web based program that provides resources for the most at-risk children and youth; emancipating foster youth who are about to leave the child welfare system with little to no support and are expected to be independent, successful adults.

The above strategies are anticipated to show positive results toward the County's Child Welfare performance measures, while addressing the identified needs of the children and families being served. The County shall continue in its efforts toward community and agency partnerships and collaboration so as to maximize service delivery and utilize future leveraging.

Probation:

During the County Self-Assessment process the stakeholders identified and provided valuable input on Probation's strengths, barriers and potential strategies. The outcomes for the System Improvement Plan will be concentrating on those continued efforts that have already taken place.

Some of the reoccurring themes that came up were the group homes are too far away for frequent visits to occur, lack of parenting classes for parents, no placement assessments, and the lack of individual counseling for parents of probationers.

Probation's Strategies for the future that will enhance and improve outcomes will include but are not limited to the following:

1) Developing/utilizing an assessment for proper placement of the minor, (current assessment used is the risk/needs assessment)

2) Including youth and parent input in placement process

3) Reunification training for placement officer and supervisor

4) Probation Technician provided to the placement officer for assistance with placement minors

5) Continued AB 12 training

6) Parenting classes, (Strengthening Families, and Triple P) provided through the Community Action Partnership of Madera County

The above strategies are anticipated to show positive results toward Probation's performance measures, while addressing the identified needs of the children and families being served.