



County of Santa Cruz

HUMAN SERVICES DEPARTMENT Family and Children's Services

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July 30, 2014

Children and Family Services Division
Attn: Dave McDowell, Bureau Chief
Outcomes and Accountability Bureau
744 P Street, MS 8-12-91
Sacramento, CA 95814

Dear Mr. McDowell,

Enclosed you will find 2 final copies of the SIP Progress Report for Santa Cruz County, for the period of July 2013 to June 2014. A copy has also been e-mailed to chldserv@dss.ca.gov.

Sincerely,

Judy Yokel, Ph.D.
Director



California – Child and Family Services Review Signature Sheet

For submittal of: CSA SIP Progress Report

| | |
|---------------------|-------------------------------|
| County | SANTA CRUZ |
| SIP Period Dates | JULY 1, 2013 to JUNE 30, 2014 |
| Outcome Data Period | QUARTER 4, 2013 |

County Child Welfare Agency Director

| | |
|-----------------|---------------------------------------|
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Public Agency Designated to Administer CAPIT and CBCAP

| | |
|-----------------|---------------------------------------|
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Board of Supervisors (BOS) Signature

| | |
|-------------------|--|
| BOS Approval Date | |
| Name | |
| Signature* | |

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Mail the original Signature Sheet to:

Children's Services Outcomes and Accountability Bureau
Attention: Bureau Chief
Children and Family Services Division
California Department of Social Services
744 P Street, MS 5 12-91
Sacramento, CA 95814

*Signatures must be in blue ink

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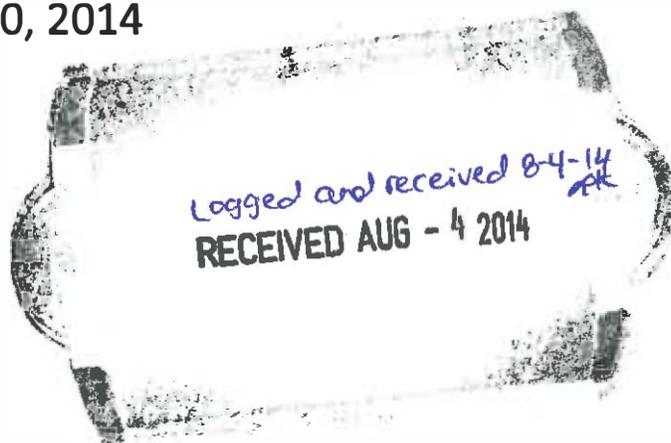
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Family & Children's Services Division

Human Services Department

County of Santa Cruz

June 30, 2014



**SANTA CRUZ COUNTY
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1. Stakeholder Participation

Since 2006, Santa Cruz County has maintained a System Improvement Plan Steering Committee that is charged with oversight and monitoring of the County's SIP strategies and action steps. In the past year, this committee, chaired by County Supervisor Bruce McPherson, has continued to meet quarterly to monitor the SIP. The members of the committee are listed below.

Kristine Adams, Relative Caregiver Representative
Dane Cervine, Health Services Agency, Children's Mental Health
Valerie Thompson, Juvenile Probation Department
Celia Goeckermann, Parents Center
Michael Groves, Foster Parents Association and Foster Parent Representative
Denine Guy, County of Santa Cruz Superior Court Judge, Juvenile Division
Deborah Helms, Foster and Kinship Care Education Program, Cabrillo College
Deutron Kebebew, Santa Cruz County Community Counseling Center, PAPAS and Child Abuse Prevention Council (CAPC) Representative
Cynthia Druley, Court Appointed Special Advocates of Santa Cruz County
Bill Manov, Health Services Agency, Alcohol and Drug Programs
Dana McRae, County Counsel
Brian Murtha, Human Services Commission
Janet Parske, New Families FFA
Robert Patterson, Minors Counsel
Michael Paynter, County Office of Education
Jenny Sarmiento, Pajaro Valley Prevention and Student Assistance
Suzanne Stone, Above the Line
David Brody, First 5 Santa Cruz County
Michael Watkins, Santa Cruz County Office of Education
Cynthia Sloane, Santa Cruz Community Counseling Center

II. Outcome Measures, Goals, Strategies, Action Steps

A. County's current performance

Santa Cruz County continues to perform above or near the national standards on 4 of the 6 priority outcomes. Overall Santa Cruz County ensures that children are safe, achieve permanency, and have stable placements while in care.

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A key outcome is that children are safe. Safety is measured by determining the percent of children that had one substantiated allegation of abuse and who did not have a subsequent allegation of abuse within six months. In the most recent time period measured, 89.8% of children who had a substantiated allegation of abuse did not have a subsequent allegation within six months. This is below the national standard and the State's current performance. Santa Cruz plans to continue to implement additional strategies to engage families in the development of case plans that focus on the safety of children, including adoption of a Safety Organized Practice model of assessment.

In the past, Santa Cruz had, on average, brought families to reunification relatively quickly. More recently, the County has implemented practice changes regarding reunification. The County has added a Team Decision Making component to reunifications which has increased the median time to reunification in order to ensure the reunification is appropriate and permanent. The median time to reunification in the most recent time period measured was 9.7 months, and 58.5% of the children who reunified did so within one year. These outcomes do not meet the federal standards and the county is considering strategies to speed the process without sacrificing child safety. Santa Cruz will continue to use Team Decision Making prior to reunification in order to ensure the safety of children who are reunifying, but we will work to identify new strategies to shorten time in care. This area is will be the focus of our 2014 Peer Review, and will be addressed more fully in our next CSA and SIP.

The second problematic outcome is the re-entry rate, which has generally not met the national standard. However, it is important to note that the County has determined that voluntary cases are impacting this rate. The County has a practice of providing voluntary Family Reunification services for youth who need residential substance abuse treatment in a group home, despite a stable family situation with no abuse or neglect concerns. It is not unusual for these youth to leave and then re-enter the treatment program, which counts against the County as a re-entry, in spite of the fact that there are no abuse or neglect issues. Analysis of the specific cases that re-entered foster care from 2009 through 2012 indicates that these voluntary cases make up 20% of our re-entry data. If the Re-entry outcome measure is adjusted to remove voluntary placements, Santa Cruz County's re-entry rate for the most current data report period would fall to 7%, below the current State performance of 12% and the federal standard of 9.9%.

The County continues to finalize adoptions in a timely manner as demonstrated by performing above the national standard. In FY 12-13, 43% of children who were adopted were adopted within two years. In addition to maintaining a high timeliness rate the County has increased its number of adoptions significantly in the past few years. We believe this is specifically due to the implementation of a strategy to target recruitment of specific homes for children who have

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been in care for 18 months or longer. This strategy was originally implemented through a Federal grant, and has now been assimilated into our ongoing practice.

Santa Cruz also worked to ensure that children who have been in care for longer than two years were able to achieve a permanent home. In FY 2012-13, 32.8% of children who had been in care two years or longer achieved a permanent home through adoption or guardianship, which is above the national standard of 29%. Of those children who achieved permanency, 78% of them were adopted and 18% exited to legal guardianship.

Children continue to have stable placements in the County. Santa Cruz exceeded the federal goal for placement stability for all three child populations measured. Although strong in this area, the County continues to work on improving placement stability by placing as many children with relatives and non-relative extended family caregivers as possible and recruiting concurrent foster homes.

B. Strategies and action steps

As we are currently under the SIP that was submitted in February 2011, most of our strategies and action steps were started and/or completed prior to the past 12 months. In this section, a brief status update for each SIP strategy is provided.

Improvement Goal: Engage mothers and fathers more in their case plan in order to promote safety, permanency and well-being.

Strategy 1: Implement best practices to better engage mothers and fathers in case planning.

Status: SIP action steps completed, practice is now ongoing.

Comments: Action steps for this strategy included a staff assessment and specialized training in father engagement strategies, as well as general engagement training geared towards helping families participate in case plan development and in services. These engagement concepts are now included in Induction training for new staff.

Strategy 2: In January 2014, Santa Cruz County initiated Safety Organized Practice training for our child welfare staff as a continuation of our efforts to improve family engagement practice.

Status: Orientation for management team completed, and training for social work staff is ongoing.

Comments: Initial training for the first cohort of social workers took place in February 2014. Training consisted of a 3-day training module, followed by monthly ½ -day training modules for 12 months. Training for the second cohort is tentatively scheduled to begin June 2014. In

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addition to training, Bay Area Academy has been contracted to provide coaching and mentoring on the SOP model for social workers and supervisors starting in February 2014. This strategy will be included in our next SIP.

Improvement Goal: Increase the number of children who exit CWS with a permanent home or who reunify and do not return to out-of-home care.

Strategy 3: Develop and support concurrent plans for children.

Status: SIP action steps completed, practice is now ongoing.

Comments: A screening tool to determine if a child has a likelihood of staying in care more than 6 months was developed and implemented. The “Concurrent Planning Resource Allocation Assessment” was validated by the Children’s Research Center during its development. Children identified by the assessment as not likely to return home within 6 months are referred to an adoptions worker. Plans are developed to support all parties in understanding the child’s alternative plan if reunification is not successful.

The tool has been very effective in identifying children who are not likely to reunify with their parents within six months. We don’t yet have direct data about the effectiveness of the tool on specific permanency measures. However, we believe that timely assessment of children with a low likelihood of early reunification and rapid referral to an adoptions social worker for concurrent planning has contributed to the increase of finalized adoptions in Santa Cruz County. We plan to work with our Planning and Evaluation Unit in the future to develop a strategy to evaluate specific permanency outcomes for these children.

Strategy 4: Hold a team decision making meeting at reunification and (after redistribution of tasks) at removal.

Status: 100% completed.

Comments: TDM meetings are held for all children at consideration of reunification. TDM’s at time of removal will begin in June 2014. Our new TDM facilitator has completed TDM training, and a set of procedures for TDMs at removal has been developed. We anticipate that the front-end TDM’s may enable us to reduce the number of children who become court dependents and are removed from their parents’ care.

Strategy 5: Provide safety plans and assistance for families prior to case closure.

Status: SIP action steps completed, practice is now ongoing.

Comments: This strategy was incorporated into a broader “Linking Services” effort within the Human Services Department, under which staff were trained and given tools to work with families more holistically, in particular ensuring that families receive any benefits and services for which they are eligible. Going forward, we will implement Safety Organized Practice, which we expect to significantly strengthen our practice in this area.

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Strategy 6: Provide child-specific recruitment for children who cannot return home and have been in care at least 18 months.

Status: SIP action steps completed, practice is now ongoing.

Comments: Children who are 11 or older and in care for 18 months or longer are identified in CWS/CMS. The County uses family data mining, child photo listing, and/or family support to establish a permanent option for these children.

Improvement Goal: Increase the provision of screening, assessments, referrals and support of the development and education of children.

Strategy 7: Provide developmental screening, assessment and support for young children impacted by substance abuse in order to promote well-being and increase safety and permanency.

Status: SIP action steps completed, practice is now ongoing.

Comments: Through a four-year federal grant project, Leaps & Bounds, developmental screening and assessment for children of parents involved in Dependency Drug Court has been implemented. Through this project, children are linked with appropriate supports to promote positive development and in-home visits are provided to educate caregivers on supporting the development of young children. Through a contract with Parents Center, Parent Child Interaction Therapy (PCIT) is also provided to these families. The grant will expire on 9/30/14, and we hope to be able to sustain the key elements of the project through CWS realignment funds after the grant ends.

Strategy 8: Ensure that school age children in out of home care are appropriately assessed for educational needs and linked with supports.

Status: SIP action steps completed, practice is now ongoing.

Comments: *FosterEd Santa Cruz County* is a collaboration between Santa Cruz County's child welfare agency, Juvenile Court, County Office of Education, CASA, Parents Center, and school districts, under the leadership of the National Center for Youth Law. The project employs three full-time educational liaisons who assess and set up service plans for school-age children in foster care. They also recruit and train adults who can serve as "educational champions" for each child. In addition, they bring together teams of key players in the child's education to identify needs and develop a plan to address those needs. School districts have agreed to participate in this program as a way to meet the new State requirement linking State funding to addressing the needs of foster children.

Improvement Goal: Increase supports for children who emancipate from child welfare without a permanent home.

Strategy 9: Create formalized written procedures for supporting youth through the transition to adulthood.

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Status: SIP action steps completed, practice is now ongoing.

Comments: Santa Cruz County AB12 services are in place and written procedures are in place. Santa Cruz County's THP+ Foster Care program was initiated in July 2013. AB12 instruction guides for social workers and youth have been developed and deployed, outlining the steps and requirements for transitioning to Non-Minor Dependent status. Various needed procedures have been written and implemented, including a written procedure for eligible young adults to re-enter foster care, Court report templates for NMD cases, foster care eligibility procedures, and a draft procedure for transitioning 602 Probation youth to NMD status. Beginning January 1 2014, the Affordable Care Act will provide health insurance to emancipated foster youth until age 26.

Strategy 10: Facilitate housing options for emancipated youth.

Status: SIP action steps completed, practice is now ongoing.

Comments: Santa Cruz County provides housing and support options for non-minor foster youth who now may remain in care until age 21. Through a contract with Santa Cruz Community Counseling Center, Santa Cruz County youth have access to THP Plus as well as THP Plus foster care services. Our THP+FC program is primarily a "host family" model, but is actively developing other housing options for AB12 youth. Many of our AB12 youth reside in traditional foster placements (licensed or relative/NREFM homes) and some in Supervised Independent Living Placements. In addition to these existing options, the Human Services Department continues to seek opportunities to partner with nonprofit housing developers to create new housing options for emancipated youth.

Improvement Goal: Increase the efficiency and effectiveness of the Division's unit structure and casework flow while enhancing up-front family engagement and safely preventing child removals where possible.

Strategy 11: Redistribute social worker tasks and redesign casework flow in order to more efficiently perform casework with reduced staffing, and in order to better serve children and families.

Status: SIP action steps completed, practice is now ongoing.

Comments: On September 1, 2012, Family & Children's Services implemented a new model in which Emergency Response and Dependency Investigations were combined into a single "Investigations" program. A single social worker now carries the case from the initial face-to-face contact through the Juris/Dispo hearing. After 15 months of the new model, we can say that it has been an unqualified success. Families now experience fewer changes of social worker, and we have successfully eliminated a large backlog of investigate-and-close referrals. Under the new model, front-end workload has become more manageable and staff are able to conduct thorough investigations and close them within the mandated 30-day period.

Improvement Goal: Increase collaboration with Adult Probation on families concurrently open to services in Adult Probation and Child Welfare.

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Strategy 12: Share information on families concurrently open to services in Adult Probation and Child Welfare.

Status: SIP action steps revised and completed, practice is now ongoing.

Comments: The original intent of this strategy was to accomplish a standing order by the Juvenile Court to allow the sharing of information between Family & Children's Services and Adult Probation about cases open to both systems. We were unable to accomplish this due to confidentiality concerns that remained for the Court. Ultimately, the Court, CWS and Probation agreed that the appropriate mechanism is for Probation to file an 827 petition so that they can access specific CWS information.

Improvement Goal: Increase department and community dialogue on values and principles in child welfare.

Strategy 13: Continue to provide information to both staff and stakeholders on the local CWS values outlined in the Santa Cruz County CWS Foundational Assumptions, developed as through a SIP strategy in 2007.

Status: SIP action steps completed, practice is now ongoing.

Comments: Values have been integrated into practice at Family and Children's Services through use as a primary reference in trainings, practice guides, and policies and procedures. The Foundational Assumptions are now a key element of new social worker training and are woven into all of our in-service trainings. Trainings with staff and community partners on the value and importance of permanency practices were also conducted and are ongoing.

Improvement Goal: Increase supports for resource parents.

Strategy 14: Provide in-home support to resource families.

Status: SIP action steps completed, practice is now ongoing.

Comments: Through the Human Services Department's Roots & Wings program, two family resource centers (Live Oak and La Manzana) provide community-based support to local resource families. Each center employs a full-time resource family liaison; between the two liaisons, every resource family with a child in placement receives a supportive phone check-in each month, followed by the liaison's assistance in accessing needed resources or information. The Roots & Wings program was initially supported by a five-year federal grant; when the grant expired in October 2013, the key elements of the program were sustained through the use of CWS Realignment funds.

Strategy 15: Provide adoption support to pre- and post-adoptive families.

Status: SIP action steps completed, practice is now ongoing.

Comments: Family & Children's Services continues to contract with Meridian Counseling Group to provide counseling to pre- and post-adoptive families.

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Improvement Goal: Improve monitoring of key procedures in child welfare to ensure compliance with standards.

Strategy 16: Conduct streamlined compliance reviews.

Status: SIP action steps completed, practice is now ongoing.

Comments: The Human Services Department has implemented a monthly dashboard of caseload counts and compliance data that is reviewed monthly at the department's Leadership Team Meeting. In addition, internal review of social worker compliance with referral data entry and closure, SDM tools, case plans, and visits is ongoing.

Strategy 17: Monitor trends for disproportional ethnic representation at all points in the child welfare system.

Status: SIP action steps completed, practice is now ongoing.

Comments: Monitoring trends in child welfare populations is part of routine practice. The latest data show that Latinos are not overrepresented in child welfare, but African Americans continue to be. However, in the past five years, the decline in the substantiation rate and foster care entry rate for African Americans shows significant improvement.

Strategy 18: Identify trends among children returning to out of home care after reunification.

Status: 50% completed.

Comments: Family & Children's Services developed a checklist to gather preliminary data to identify demographic and case factors for children returning to foster care after reunification. A literature review of published re-entry studies has also been conducted by the division's Re-entry Workgroup. An evaluation of the specific cases that re-entered during the past 5 years was conducted. The results indicated that 20% of Santa Cruz County's re-entry cases are voluntary placements that are opened in order to provide residential substance abuse treatment to youth who have no allegation of abuse or neglect made against their parents. Further, in 11 out of 12 cases, the re-entry was not due to a subsequent abuse or neglect allegation. The youth either left and then re-entered the substance abuse treatment program, or left the program and entered a Probation placement due to a law violation.

C. Obstacles and barriers

Santa Cruz County has encountered a few obstacles and barriers to achieving some of our SIP goals. A primary barrier has been the lack of sufficient funding for new programs and services; however Santa Cruz County has done a good job of making the most of the resources we have, and is utilizing CWS Realignment funds to sustain services that were previously grant-funded, and to enhance services wherever possible. Regarding Strategy 9, Facilitate housing options for

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emancipated youth, a barrier is has been a lack of affordable housing in the County and the fact that Redevelopment funds, which we have used in the past, are no longer available as a resource for this purpose. Strategy 4, which calls for holding TDM meetings at reunification and (after redistribution of social worker tasks) at removal, has been delayed due to the lack of available TDM training in northern California in recent months. Fortunately, training was held in late February, so our staff have now been trained and are currently conducting TDMs.

IV. Other outcome measures not meeting standards

All outcome measures that are not meeting standards were discussed in Section IIA. There are no additional outcome measures that are not meeting standards.

V. Link to the Program Improvement Plan

Santa Cruz County's SIP improvement goals and strategies are closely linked to goals and strategies contained in California's approved Performance Improvement Plan. The following is a list of the PIP goals, with related Santa Cruz County SIP strategies listed under each PIP goal.

PIP goal I, Expand use of participatory case planning strategies

Strategy 1: Implement best practices to better engage mothers and fathers in case planning.

Strategy 4: Hold a team decision making meeting at reunification and (after redistribution of social worker tasks) at removal.

PIP goal II, Sustain and enhance permanency efforts across the life of the case.

Strategy 3: Develop and support concurrent plans for children.

Strategy 6: Provide child-specific recruitment for children who cannot return home and have been in care at least 18 months.

Strategy 15: Provide adoption support to pre- and post-adoptive families.

PIP goal III, Enhance and expand caregiver recruitment, training and support efforts.

Strategy 6: Provide child-specific recruitment for children who cannot return home and have been in care at least 18 months.

Strategy 14: Provide in-home support to resource families.

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Strategy 15: Provide adoption support to pre- and post-adoptive families.

PIP goal IV, Expand options and create flexibility for services and supports to meet the needs of children and families.

Strategy 5: Provide safety plans and assistance for families prior to case closure.

Strategy 4: Hold a team decision making meeting at reunification and (after redistribution of social worker tasks) at removal.

Strategy 7: Provide developmental screening, assessment and support for young children impacted by substance abuse in order to promote well-being and permanency.

Strategy 8: Ensure that school age children in out-of-home care are appropriately assessed for educational needs and linked with supports.

Strategy 9: Create formalized written procedures for supporting youth through the transition to adulthood.

Strategy 10: Facilitate housing options for emancipated youth.

Strategy 12: Share information on families concurrently open to services in Adult Probation and Child Welfare.

Strategy 14: Provide in-home support to resource families.

Strategy 15: Provide adoption support to pre- and post-adoptive families.

PIP goal V, Sustain and expand staff/supervisor training.

Strategy 1: Implement best practices to better engage mothers and fathers in case planning.

PIP goal VI, Strengthen implementation of the statewide safety, risk and needs assessment system.

Although not specifically addressed in our SIP strategies, Santa Cruz County has utilized the Structured Decision Making assessment system for many years, and continues to do so.

VI. SIP Chart

1. Outcome Area: Safety

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| <p>Outcome Measure: Of all children who had a substantiated maltreatment allegation during the selected six-month period, what percent did not have another substantiated allegation within the following six months?</p> |
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National Standard: 94.6%

Current Performance: A small percentage of children, who had a substantiated referral, had a subsequent substantiation within six months. For the most recent six month period measured, January to June of 2013, 89.8% of children did not have a subsequent substantiated allegation within six months. A total of 20 children out of 196 had a re-substantiation of abuse or neglect within the following six months. This performance is below the federal standard of 94.6%.

Target Improvement Goal: 94.6%

NO RECURRENCE OF MALTREATMENT WITHIN SIX MONTHS

| | Jan – June 2009 | Jan – June 2010 | Jan – June 2011 | Jan – June 2012 | Jan – June 2013 |
|-------------------|--------------------|--------------------|--------------------|--------------------|--------------------|
| Santa Cruz | 95.3 | 96.8 | 89.8 | 92.4 | 89.8 |
| California | 93.1 | 92.9 | 93.1 | 93.1 | 93.1 |

2. Outcome Area: Reunification

Outcome Measures: The percent of Children in Care 8 Days or More Who Reunify Within One Year and Median Time to Reunification

National Standard: The standard is 75% of Children in Care 8 Days or More will reunify within one year, and the standard for Median Time to Reunification is 5.4 months

Current Performance: The median number of months to reunification in FY 12/13 was 9.7 and 58.5% of the children who were reunified, did so within one year. Santa Cruz performance in the median months to reunification is considerably longer than the standard and below the 75% within one year.

In the past, Santa Cruz reunified children more quickly than the state average and the federal goal. Santa Cruz has made programmatic changes in order to increase reunification times in order to decrease re-entry and recurrence of maltreatment outcomes. The County is now considering strategies to reduce time in foster care without sacrificing safety.

Target Improvement Goal: 8 months to reunification and 70% of children reunified within one year.

| | FY 2008-09 | FY 2009-10 | FY 2010-11 | FY 2011-12 | FY 2012-13 |
|-------------------|------------|------------|------------|------------|------------|
| Santa Cruz | 5.9 | 7.3 | 7.5 | 8.1 | 9.7 |

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|---------------------------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|
| Median | | | | | |
| Santa Cruz Reunify Timely | 73.1% | 73.8% | 68.1% | 70.0% | 58.5% |
| California Reunify Timely | 62.8% | 64% | 64.5% | 63.6% | 64.2% |

3. Outcome Area: Re-entry

Outcome Measure: Re-entry to care within 12 months of reunification

National Standard: 9.9%

Current Performance:

The most recent Santa Cruz rate of re-entry within 12 months was 15.3%, which does not meet the national standard. It is important to note that this re-entry rate is based on a small number (13 children within 9 families) re-entering during the time period.

Please note that this outcome measure includes voluntary FR cases that are for substance abuse treatment rather than abuse or neglect issues. 4 of the 13 children who re-entered during this time period were placed in a group home for substance abuse treatment. Santa Cruz County is working to determine the amount of impact that these cases are having on performance.

Target Improvement Goal: 9.9%

| | FY 07-08 | FY 08-09 | FY 09-10 | FY 10-11 | FY 11-12 |
|------------|----------|----------|----------|----------|----------|
| Santa Cruz | 14.2 | 15.9 | 12.5 | 12.4 | 15.3 |
| California | 11.3 | 12.2 | 11.7 | 12.3 | 12.5 |

4. Outcome Area: Adoption Timeliness

Outcome Measures: Two indicators measure timeliness to adoption. The first indicator measures the median time to adoption for children who are adopted. The second indicator measures the percent of children who are adopted who were adopted within two years.

National Standard: The standard for median time from removal to adoption is 27.3 months and percent of children who are adopted who were adopted within two years is 36.6%.

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Current Performance: In FY 12/13, the median time to adoption was 25.2 months and 44% of children who were adopted were adopted in two years. Santa Cruz County's performance was better than the national standard on these adoption measures.

Target Goal: Continue performance above the national standard on these two adoption measures.

| | FY 08-09 | FY 09-10 | FY 10-11 | FY 11-12 | FY 12-13 |
|-------------------------|----------|----------|----------|----------|----------|
| Median time to adoption | 29.4 | 28.5 | 21.4 | 25.3 | 25.2 |
| SC Adopted w/i 24 mo | 30.6% | 36.7% | 55% | 42.9% | 43.9% |
| CA Adopted w/i 24 mo | 29.8% | 29.9% | 33.5% | 35.7% | 36.1% |

5. Outcome Area: Achieving Permanency

Outcome Measure: Percent of Children Achieving Permanency Per Year Who Had Been in Foster Care Longer than 2 Years

National Standard: 29.1%

Current Performance: Almost 1/3 or 32.8% of children achieved permanency after being in care for two years or longer. This is slightly better than the national standard and much better than the state average.

Target Performance: Continue performing above the national standard of 29.1%

Percent of Children Achieving Permanency Per Year Who Had Been in Foster Care Longer than 2 Year

| | FY 08-09 | FY 09-10 | FY 10-11 | FY 11-12 | FY 12-13 |
|------------|----------|----------|----------|----------|----------|
| Santa Cruz | 24.5% | 26.1% | 25.5% | 33.4% | 32.8% |
| California | 24.1% | 26% | 23.3% | 25.5% | 25.2% |

6. Outcome Area: Placement Stability

Outcome Measures: Percent of children with two or fewer placements for children in care, less than a year, 1 -2 years and over 2 years.

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National Standards: 86.6% for children in care 8 days to one year

65.4% for children in care 1 to 2 years

41.8% for children in care 2 years or more

Performance: Santa Cruz performed better than the national standard and the state average for all three measures of placement stability in FY 12-13:

89.7% for children in care 8 days to one year

77.3% for children in care 1 to 2 years

42.5% for children in care 2 years or more

Target Goal: Continue performance above national standards for these three measures.

| | FY 08-09 | FY 09-10 | FY 10-11 | FY 11-12 | FY 12-13 |
|-----------------------------|----------|----------|----------|----------|----------|
| Santa Cruz 8 days to 1 year | 81.5% | 85.6% | 83.9% | 91.5% | 89.7% |
| CA 8 days to 1 year | 83.6% | 83.9% | 84.7% | 85.6% | 86.9% |
| Santa Cruz 1 – 2 years | 73.8% | 66.7% | 65.4% | 70.5% | 77.3% |
| CA 1 -2 years | 63.0% | 63.5% | 65.3% | 66.3% | 67.9% |
| Santa Cruz over 2 years | 48.5% | 51.0% | 46.4% | 43.2% | 42.5% |
| CA over 2 years | 33.9% | 33.1% | 33.3% | 34.9% | 37.0% |

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| Strategy 1: Implement best practices to better engage mothers and fathers in case planning. | <input type="checkbox"/> Capit | Applicable Outcome Measure(S) And/Or Systemic Factor(S): Safety: Children are, first and foremost, protected from abuse and neglect. |
| | <input type="checkbox"/> Cbcap | |
| | <input type="checkbox"/> Pssf | |
| | <input type="checkbox"/> N/A | |
| Action Steps: | Timeframe: | Person Responsible: |
| A. Assess perceptions, practices and capacity for engaging mothers in case planning. | 3/1/11 To 9/1/11 | Assistant Division Director |
| B. Establish best practices and document practices in protocols to engage both mothers and fathers in case planning. | 10/1/11 To 1/31/12 | Assistant Division Director |
| C. Train workers on protocols and implement practices. | 1/1/12 To 1/15/14 | Assistant Division Director |

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| Strategy 2 : Implement Safety Organized Practice model and tools with social work staff. | <input type="checkbox"/> Capit | Applicable Outcome Measure(S) And/Or Systemic Factor(S): Safety: Children are, first and foremost, protected from abuse and neglect. |
|---|--------------------------------|---|
| | <input type="checkbox"/> Cbcap | |
| | <input type="checkbox"/> Pssf | |
| | <input type="checkbox"/> N/A | |
| Action Steps: | Timeframe: | Person Responsible: |
| A. Provide ½ day orientation on SOP to management team, followed by orientation to social work staff. | 11/1/13 To 1/31/14 | Assistant Division Director |
| B. Provide 3 day SOP training to first cohort of social workers, followed by coaching and mentoring on SOP practices with existing cases. | 2/1/14 To 3/31/14 | Assistant Division Director |
| C. Provide 3 day SOP training to second cohort of social workers, followed by coaching and mentoring with existing cases. | 6/1/14 To 7/30/14 | Assistant Division Director |

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| Strategy 3: Develop and support concurrent plans for children. | <input type="checkbox"/> Capit | Applicable Outcome Measure(S) And/Or Systemic Factor(S): Permanency: Children have permanency and stability in their living situations without increasing re-entry into foster care. |
| | <input type="checkbox"/> Cbcap | |
| | <input type="checkbox"/> Pssf | |
| | <input type="checkbox"/> N/A | |
| Action Steps: | Timeframe: | Person Responsible: |
| A. Utilize a screening tool to determine if a child has a likelihood of staying in care more than 6 months. | 2/1/11 To 1/15/14 | Assistant Division Director and Dependency Investigations Supervisor |
| B. Refer children who demonstrated factors that suggest a likelihood of not returning home within six months, to an adoptions worker. | 2/1/11 To 1/15/14 | Dependency Investigations Supervisor |
| C. Document a plan and support all parties in understanding the child's alternative permanent plan. | 2/1/11 To 1/15/14 | Adoptions Supervisor and FR/FM Supervisor. |

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| Strategy 4: Hold a Team Decision Making meeting at reunification and (after staff and work flow reconfiguration) at removal. | <input type="checkbox"/> Capit | Applicable Outcome Measure(S) And/Or Systemic Factor(S): Permanency: Children Have Permanency And Stability In Their Living Situation Without Increasing Re-Entry Into Foster Care. |
|---|---------------------------------------|--|
| | <input type="checkbox"/> Cbcap | |
| | <input type="checkbox"/> Pssf | |
| | <input type="checkbox"/> N/A | |
| Action Steps: | Timeframe: | Person Responsible: |
| A. At consideration of reunification for all families, facilitate Team Decision Making (TDM) meetings with family, service providers and community or family supports. | 2/1/11 To 1/15/14 | Program Managers of FR, TDM Facilitator |
| B. Identify target groups for TDM meetings prior to initial removal of child | 2/1/11 To 6/30/11 | Division Director and Assistant Director |
| C. At consideration of initial removal, conduct TDMs for children in the selected target groups. | 7/1/11 To 1/15/14 | Assistant Division Director, TDM Facilitator |

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| Strategy S: Provide safety plans and assistance for families prior to case closure. | <input type="checkbox"/> Capit | Applicable Outcome Measure(S) And/Or Systemic Factor(S): Permanency: Children have permanency and stability in their living situation without increasing re-entry into foster care. |
| | <input type="checkbox"/> Cbcap | |
| | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Pssf | |
| | <input type="checkbox"/> N/A | |
| Action Steps: | Timeframe: | Person Responsible: |
| A. Create and implement protocol for discharge and safety plans for all cases that are closing. | 2/1/11 To 1/15/14 | Assistant Division Director, FR/FM and Emergency Response Supervisors |
| B. Provide financial supports (using PSSF funds) to mitigate any financial barriers to reunification. | 2/1/11 To 1/15/14 | FR/FM and Emergency Response Supervisors |

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| Strategy 6: Provide child-specific recruitment for children who cannot return home and have been in care for at least 18 months. | <input type="checkbox"/> Capit | Applicable Outcome Measure(S) And/Or Systemic Factor(S): Permanency: Children have permanency and stability in their living situation without increasing re-entry into foster care. |
|---|---------------------------------------|--|
| | <input type="checkbox"/> Cbcap | |
| | <input type="checkbox"/> Pssf | |
| | <input type="checkbox"/> N/A | |
| Action Steps: | Timeframe: | Person Responsible: |
| A. Identify children In CWS/CMS who are not returning home and do not have a viable permanent plan. | 1/15/11 To 1/15/14 | Planning and Evaluation Analyst and Roots & Wings Permanency Partner |
| B. Establish a permanency option for these children through family data mining, child photo-listing and/or family support. | 1/15/11 To 1/15/14 | Roots & Wings Permanency Partner |
| C. Review progress of establishing homes for these youth in monthly permanency meetings and identify strategies to resolve barriers. | 1/15/11 To 1/15/14 | Program Manager |

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| Strategy 7: Provide developmental screening, assessment, and support for young children impacted by abuse in order to promote well-being and also to increase safety and permanency. | <input type="checkbox"/> Caplt | Applicable Outcome Measure(S) And/Or Systemic Factor(S): Well-Being: Children receive services appropriate to their developmental and/or educational needs. |
| | <input type="checkbox"/> Cbcap | |
| | <input type="checkbox"/> Pssf | |
| | <input type="checkbox"/> N/A | |
| Action Steps: | Timeframe: | Person Responsible: |
| A. Provide developmental screening and assessment for children of parents involved in the family preservation Court (FPC). | 1/15/11 To 1/15/14 | Program Manager Of FPC |
| B. Link children with appropriate supports to promote positive development, and provide in-home visits to engage caregivers on supporting development of young children. | 1/15/11 To 1/15/14 | Program Manager Of FPC |
| C. Provide Parent – Child interaction therapy (PC I T), an intensive evidence-based parent education model, with parents of young children in FPC. | 1/15/11 To 1/15/14 | Program Manager of FPC and Parents Center |

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| Strategy 8: Ensure that school-age children in out of home care appropriately assessed for educational needs and linked with supports. | <input type="checkbox"/> Capit | Applicable Outcome Measure(S) And/Or Systemic Factor(S): Well-Being: Children receive services appropriate to their developmental and/or educational needs. |
|--|---------------------------------------|--|
| | <input type="checkbox"/> Cbcap | |
| | <input type="checkbox"/> Pssf | |
| | <input type="checkbox"/> N/A | |
| Action Steps: | Timeframe: | Person Responsible: |
| A. Review of assessment resources within school districts and the community, and decide upon an assessment strategy that will best meet foster youth needs. | 1/15/11 To 7/30/11 | Program Manager and County Office of Education |
| B. In collaboration with school districts, develop and implement a procedure for identifying youth in need of assessment other than and IEP (examine criteria such as current grade level performance, subject matter performance, past test results, school attendance) and conduct educational assessments. | 9/1/11 To 1/15/14 | Program Manager and County Office Of Education |
| C. Educate and support caregivers to provide educational support, advocacy and guidance to the children in their care. | 9/1/12 To 1/15/14 | Program Manager and County Office Of Education |
| D. County Office of Education to provide as needed consultation with caregivers on navigating the educational system. | 9/1/12 To 1/15/14 | County Office Of Education |

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| <p>E. When authorized by the State, implement transportation stipends for caregivers to ensure that children may remain in their school of origin to promote safety and continuity.</p> | <p>When authorized by the State through 1/15/14</p> | <p>Program Manager</p> |
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| Strategy 9: Create formalized written procedures for supporting youth through the transition to adulthood. | <input type="checkbox"/> Capit | Applicable Outcome Measure(S) And/Or Systemic Factor(S): Well-Being: Children receive services appropriate to their developmental and/or educational needs. |
|---|--------------------------------|--|
| | <input type="checkbox"/> Cbcap | |
| | <input type="checkbox"/> Pssf | |
| | <input type="checkbox"/> N/A | |
| Action Steps: | Timeframe: | Person Responsible: |
| A. Assess current procedures and practices that support transition to adulthood. | 7/1/11 To 12/31/11 | Program Manager |
| B. Revise procedures as needed and train staff on any new protocols. | 1/15/12 To 6/30/12 | Program Manager and Staff Development |
| C. Implement protocols. | 6/30/12 To 1/15/14 | Permanency Planning (Teen Unit) Supervisor |

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| Strategy 10: Facilitate housing options for emancipated youth. | <input type="checkbox"/> Capit | Applicable Outcome Measure(S) And/Or Systemic Factor(S): Well-Being: Children receive services appropriate to their developmental and/or educational needs. |
| | <input type="checkbox"/> Cbcap | |
| | <input type="checkbox"/> Pssf | |
| | <input type="checkbox"/> N/A | |
| Action Steps: | Timeframe: | Person Responsible: |
| A. Identify housing options for emancipating youth in affordable developments. | 1/15/11 21/15/14 | Human Services Department Director and County Housing Manager |
| B. Facilitate dedication of housing to emancipating foster youth. | 1/15/11 21/15/14 | Human Services Department Director and County Housing Manager |
| C. Maintain dedication of funding. | 1/15/11 21/15/14 | Human Services Department Director and County Housing Manager |

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| Strategy 11: Redistribute social worker tasks and redesign case workflow in order to more efficiently perform casework with reduced staffing, and in order to better serve children and families. | <input type="checkbox"/> Capit | Applicable Outcome Measure(S) And/Or Systemic Factor(S): Case Planning |
|---|---------------------------------------|---|
| | <input type="checkbox"/> Cbcap | |
| | <input type="checkbox"/> Pssf | |
| | <input type="checkbox"/> N/A | |
| Action Steps: | Timeframe: | Person Responsible: |
| A. Research and evaluate organizational structure and workflow in other counties with similar demographics and staffing levels. | 1/15/11 To 3/31/12 | Division Director and Assistant Director |
| B. Assess other County procedures and staffing for team meetings prior to the removal of children. | 1/15/11 To 3/31/12 | Assistant Director and Emergency Response Program Manager |
| C. Develop a plan for reorganizing Santa Cruz County's Child Welfare operations, including potential changes to unit structure and/or workflow, and including as a component front-end TDM's with the goal of safely preventing child removals where possible. | 4/1/11 To 6/30/11 | Division Director and Management Team |

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| D. Launch reorganized workflow and organizational structure. | 7/1/11 To 9/30/11 | Division Director and Management Team |
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| Strategy 12: Share information on families concurrently open to services in Adult Probation And Child Welfare. | <input type="checkbox"/> Capit | Applicable Outcome Measure(S) And/Or Systemic Factor(S): Collaboration |
| | <input type="checkbox"/> Cbcap | |
| | <input type="checkbox"/> Pssf | |
| | <input type="checkbox"/> N/A | |
| Action Steps: | Timeframe: | Person Responsible: |
| A. Meet with pertinent partners, including the Juvenile Court Judge, at a Dependency Court Systems meeting to discuss the possibility of establishing a legal standing order that stipulates that CWS and Adult Probation may exchange pertinent information on dually open cases. | 9/1/11 to 12/31/11 | Program Manager and Adult Probation Director |

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| <p>Strategy 13: Continue to provide information to both staff and stakeholders on the local CWS values outlined in the Santa Cruz County CWS Foundational Assumptions, created in 2007.</p> | <input type="checkbox"/> Capit <input type="checkbox"/> Cbcap <input type="checkbox"/> Pssf <input type="checkbox"/> N/A | <p>Applicable Outcome Measure(S) And/Or Systemic Factor(S): Collaboration</p> |
| <p>Action Steps:</p> | <p>Timeframe:</p> | <p>Person Responsible:</p> |
| <p>A. Hold community dialogues with interested stakeholders such as parents and youth formerly in CWS and resource parents to promote a shared understanding of child welfare practice and principles.</p> | <p>6/1/11 to 1/15/14</p> | <p>Division Director and SIP Steering Committee</p> |
| <p>B. Integrate values outlined in the Santa Cruz County CWS foundational assumptions into practice by using it as a primary reference in all trainings, practice guides, and policies and procedures.</p> | <p>2/1/11 to 1/15/14</p> | <p>Division Director and SIP Steering Committee</p> |
| <p>C. Conduct annual trainings and consultations with staff and community partners on the value and importance of permanency practices.</p> | <p>2/1/11 to 1/15/14</p> | <p>Division Director and SIP Steering Committee</p> |

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| D. Share information among SIP and CAPC on integration efforts by presenting at steering meetings of these bodies. | 6/1/11 to 1/15/14 | Division Director, SIP Steering Committee, CAPC |
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| Strategy 14: Provide in-home support resource families. | <input type="checkbox"/> Capit | Applicable Outcome Measure(S) And/Or Systemic Factor(S): Recruitment and support of resource families (foster,kin, and adoptive). |
| | <input type="checkbox"/> Cbcap | |
| | <input type="checkbox"/> Pssf | |
| | <input type="checkbox"/> N/A | |
| Action Steps: | Timeframe: | Person Responsible: |
| A. Maintain contracts with Family Resource Centers to provide community-based support to local resource families. | 2/1/11 to 1/15/14 | Program Manager |
| B. Monitor FRC staff performance to ensure appropriate provision of in-home support and linkage to services for resource families. | 2/1/11 to 1/15/14 | Program Manager |
| C. Conduct and analyze resource parent survey to assess satisfaction with and efficacy of services. | One time a year in the fall. | Planning and Evaluation Analyst |

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| Strategy 15: Provide adoption support to pre-and post adoptive families. | <input type="checkbox"/> CAPIT | Applicable Outcome Measure(S) And/Or Systemic Factor(S): Recruitment and support of resource families (foster, kin, and adoptive). |
| | <input type="checkbox"/> CBCAP | |
| | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> PSSF | |
| | <input type="checkbox"/> N/A | |
| Action Steps: | Timeframe: | Person Responsible: |
| A. Maintain and monitor contract for adoption promotion and support. | 1/15/11 to 1/15/14 | Division Analyst (PSSF liaison) |
| B. Refer pre-and post adoptive families to Cabrillo Foster/Kin/Adoption program for counseling. | 1/15/11 to 1/15/14 | Adoption Supervisor |
| C. As required by OCAP, monitor the number of families receiving services. | 1/15/11 to 1/15/14 | Division Analyst (PSSF liaison) |

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| Strategy 16: Conduct streamlined compliance reviews. | <input type="checkbox"/> CAPIT | Applicable Outcome Measure(S) And/Or Systemic Factor(S): Quality Assurance |
| | <input type="checkbox"/> CBCAP | |
| | <input type="checkbox"/> PSSF | |
| | <input type="checkbox"/> N/A | |
| Action Steps: | Timeframe: | Person Responsible: |
| A. Develop and maintain a monthly dashboard of accounts and mandated processes. | 1/15/11 to 1/15/14 | Planning and Evaluation |
| B. Review social worker compliance with referral data entry and closure, SDM tools, case plans, and visits on monthly dashboard. | 2/1/11 to 1/15/14 | Division Director, Assistant Director, and Management Team |
| C. Review compliance tools that were previously developed and implemented for supervisors and managers, and streamline and re-introduce these tools to strengthen quality assurance. | 3/1/11 to 1/15/14 | Division Director, Assistant Director, and Management Team |

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| Strategy 17: Monitor trends for disproportional ethnic representation at all points in the child welfare system. | <input type="checkbox"/> Capit | Applicable Outcome Measure(S) And/Or Systemic Factor(S): Quality Assurance |
|---|---------------------------------------|---|
| | <input type="checkbox"/> Cbcap | |
| | <input type="checkbox"/> Pssf | |
| | <input type="checkbox"/> N/A | |
| Action Steps: | Timeframe: | Person Responsible: |
| A. Conduct study of trends. | 9/1/11 to 12/31/12 | Planning and Evaluation |
| B. Present information to key stakeholders. | 1/15/12 | Planning and Evaluation |
| C. Facilitate discussion on further questions or practice modifications needed. | 1/15/12 to 2/1/12 | Planning and Evaluation |

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| Strategy 18: Identify trends among children returning to out of home care after reunification. | <input type="checkbox"/> CAPIT <input type="checkbox"/> CBCAP <input type="checkbox"/> PSSF <input type="checkbox"/> N/A | Applicable Outcome Measure(S) And/Or Systemic Factor(S): Quality Assurance |
| Action Steps: | Timeframe: | Person Responsible: |
| A. Review demographics and case factors for children returning to foster care after reunification. | 3/1/11 to 7/1/11 | Planning and Evaluation |
| B. Review literature of published re-entry studies. | 3/1/11 to 7/1/11 | Planning and Evaluation |
| C. Present information to stakeholders and facilitate discussion of recommendations for practice improvements. | 8/1/11 to 10/1/11 | Planning and Evaluation |

