



A PATHWAY TO STATE & NATIONAL REFORM TO IMPROVE CHILD WELFARE OUTCOMES



Summer 2016 Issue

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This issue of the newsletter includes news from across the state on the progress being made in implementing and evaluating the California Well-Being Project intervention strategies: Safety Organized Practice (SOP) and Wraparound. This issue of the newsletter includes highlights from the Wraparound Collaborative held in June, a summary of the discussion on Core Practice Model (CPM) implementation science and a fascinating look inside Lake County's Family Engagement Series where SOP has empowered both families and the child welfare department staff to work together in building safe, healthy families.

HIGHLIGHTS

Wraparound Collaborative

How should counties use flexible funds? Flexible funds are a funding tool used by counties to financially assist families that have a need that exceeds the family budget or can't be met by natural community supports. Flexible funds require conversations about money, but how do conversations about money affect the county's ability to build trust with families?



Probation staff discussed these and other questions during the June 24 Wraparound Collaborative. Presenters Michael Rauso, Division Chief of Children and Family Services in Los Angeles County, and Ebony Chambers, Director of Family and Youth Partnership at Stanford Youth Solutions, led the group through a conversation on how one's personal and professional experiences with money can affect working with families.

The group agreed that if basic needs are not being met, families cannot be focused on community safety, but using flexible funds to alleviate stressors should not distort the overall goals of achieving sustainable stability for the family.

In this session Michael Rauso and Tina Chang, Director of Family Preservation at Olive Crest, also discussed the unique challenges their respective counties face in providing Wraparound services to families. Michael and Tina described how they explain Wraparound to probation families, how they engage resistant families and what success looks like in their organizations.

"It is a difficult conversation because asking about money can make someone feel they are being judged. Having money conversations early in the Wraparound process can help establish clear expectations about the use of flexible funds."

Michael Rauso, Los Angeles County, Division Chief, Children and Family Services

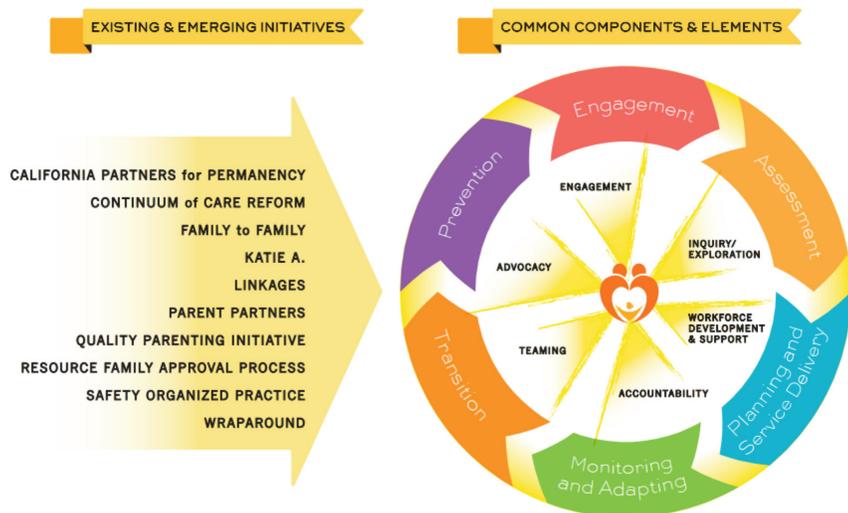
"Success is defined by the family. They have a culture, and a way of living and being in the world that is specific to their family."

Tina Chang, Director, Family Preservation Services, Olive Crest

CORE PRACTICE MODEL IMPLEMENTATION SYMPOSIUM

On June 23 and 24, child welfare management and leadership staff convened in Sacramento to discuss the active implementation and scaling of the Core Practice Model (CPM). The goals of the convening were to provide leadership with a foundation of what research and experience have to say about what it takes to implement the model, build readiness and capacity to integrate the local practice priorities in each county with CPM under a single cohesive approach, and explore the roles and functions of leadership and management in the model's implementation and system change.

Model Components



"We know that we've defined the Core Practice Model, and we're ready to move towards implementation but there's a great leap between making the concept a reality. That great leap is bridged by understanding the roles of leadership and management in helping to implement a major initiative like the CPM."

Stuart Oppenheim, Child and Family Institute of California

Symposium Highlights

The symposium included several group discussions, and opportunities for attendees to learn from – and network with – other counties and colleagues. Attendees also received tools, case study materials and fact sheets that provided examples of how the CPM's values could apply to different management scenarios in the workplace.

On the second day of the symposium, staff from counties participating in the Title IV-E California Well-Being Project met to discuss CPM implementation science and strategies as they relate to SOP implementation as the intervention selected for the Title IV-E California Well-Being Project demonstration. Dr. Boothroyd and Dr. Aldridge, faculty from the Frank Porter Graham Child Development Institute at the University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill, led discussions on alignment, leadership and management, and staff support and development data.

SOP Communications

Child Welfare departments involved in the Project have been working with *i.e.* communications to develop communications tools and templates that would better inform audiences about SOP and its relation to the Title IV-E California Well-Being Project as an intervention strategy.

During a webinar on June 1, 2016 and a subsequent online survey, counties shared with *i.e.* communications their interest in messages that connect with their overall approach towards achieving stable, permanent families, which in some cases includes the implementation of the CPM along with SOP tools as the main intervention strategy.

COUNTY CORNER: LAKE COUNTY

For Melinda Lahr and Holly Goetz, both social workers in Lake County, the Parent Engagement Series is a prime example of how SOP tools strengthen social work.

The Series is a three-phase program aiming to engage parents involved in the child welfare system and build positive relationships that result in an ability to connect families with resources and information. Each phase focuses on different aspects of parenting and varies in length.

The first phase is called “Parent Engagement.” During this 8-12 week course, parents discuss the trauma or grief experienced after their child was removed from their home and care, and complete assignments and exercises that help them understand their role in their involvement with child welfare.

During the weekly **Parent Engagement** phase, meetings are a neutral space for parents to voice their perspectives and opinions about their current situation. The meetings are facilitated by child welfare staff, but not their individual case managers or social workers, allowing parents to come as they are and voice how they feel.

Parents then advance to the **Nurturing Parenting** phase, where they focus on parenting techniques and identifying their parenting values. This phase can last 20 weeks and involves assignments that include weekly family journals and building and expanding the network of support around the family.

Finally, parents advance to the **Empowerment Group** phase where parents identify goals they have for their family; empower themselves and others and to maintain their community support networks.



“Through the Parent Engagement Series, we have something to offer parents immediately after they learn about the results of a court-ordered removal. Even as they manage their anger and grief, the series is a proactive first step we can offer parents on the path to reunification.”

“SOP tools are the common language throughout the series, allowing families, service providers and social workers to speak in common terms, and SOP forms the basis of most of the assignments that parents complete, including Family Team Meetings and the Three Houses exercise.”

*Holly Goetz, Social Worker Supervisor II,
Lake County Department of Social Services*

Parent Engagement	Nurturing Parenting	Empowerment Group
8-12 weeks	20 weeks	8 weeks or until case closes

COUNTY CORNER: LAKE COUNTY

One particular case stood out to the Lake County staff. One of the recent graduates of the series was a single mother involved in an unhealthy relationship. In the final phase of the series, the Empowerment Group, she read from a letter she had written to herself during the Parent Engagement phase. She shared that when she first came to the series she felt angry and believed that the child welfare department was only there to take children away. After having gone through the program, it became clear to her what kind of a role she had in putting her child at risk. By the time she was in Empowerment Group, her case had progressed and she had been reunited. This mother had also left her unhealthy relationship and had begun receiving services to treat her substance abuse issues. She had learned the power of being clear minded and using her voice and experiences to advocate for herself.

She encouraged parents that were in the first phase of the program to not give up because the outcome would be worth it. The group felt empowered to say "If she can do it, I can do it."

"The transformation that some parents undergo can be quite powerful. The confidence they gain in their parenting, enough to share their lessons and growth with parents beginning the Series is encouraging and very heartening."

Kathy Maes, Interim Social Services Director, Lake County Department of Social Services

UPDATE ON FEDERAL FINANCE REFORM

Family First Prevention Services Act is a bipartisan approach to national child welfare finance reform. The legislation was introduced in the House of Representatives on June 13 and in the Senate on June 16. This legislation would allow for federal child welfare dollars to be used on prevention services and encourages the least restrictive placement of children in foster care according to their special needs. The bill has spurred a robust debate among national and state organizations. The bill has moved quickly through Congress, with different voices of support and apprehension speaking up along the way. It passed in the House of Representatives on June 21. It is currently on hold in the Senate and will be revisited when Congress returns in September. You can contact state senators Senator Barbara Boxer and Dianne Feinstein by visiting their website [here](#) and [here](#), respectively. You may view the full text of the bill by clicking on [this link](#).

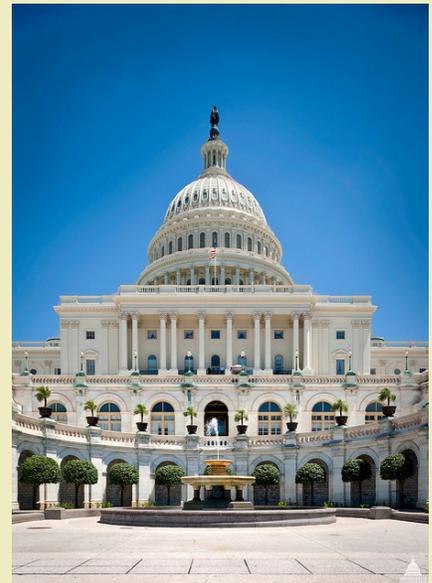


Photo credit: Architect of the Capitol

PROJECT SUPPORT ACTIVITIES

State Implementation

- The CDSS formally requested from the Administration for Children and Families (ACF), a renegotiation of the fiscal terms of the Project's federal capped allocation due to unanticipated Title IV-E maintenance and administrative costs resulting from new legislative mandated activities.
- The CDSS Project Team began to engage partners in planning and coordinating the 2nd Title IV-E Waiver Demonstration, California Well-Being Project Annual Meeting scheduled **November 9 – 10, 2016**.
- The CDSS, along with representatives from the San Francisco County Human Services Agency, the Alameda County Probation Department and the NCCD, attended the 18th Annual Child Welfare Waiver Demonstration Projects Meeting on August 29–30, 2016.

County Implementation

- The CDSS Project Team facilitated the Project Quarterly Update Call with project county representatives and stakeholders on April 28, 2016 and held the quarterly, individual county calls and the Quarterly Fiscal Conference Call in May.
- The CDSS Project Team representatives visited the Los Angeles and Alameda County Department of Children and Family Services (DCFS) and the Probation Department on April 11 – 12, and June 27 – 28, 2016 respectively.

Evaluation

- The ACF approved the National Council on Crime and Delinquency (NCCD) evaluation plan on May 20, 2016.

- The CDSS received Institutional Review Board approval for Phase I and Phase II of the county data collection processes on June 1, 2016.
- The Evaluation Team, NCCD and Westat reviewed process-data collection sources with the evaluation steering committee. One-page briefs were developed and disseminated to counties that summarize the purpose of the process evaluation and what data will be collected for leadership, integral staff and providers, and community stakeholders.
- The Evaluation Team also began the internal examination of child welfare data and definition of descriptive outcomes to be measured and reported as well as variables to include in outcome modeling.
- The Evaluation Team conducted site visits in Lake, San Francisco, and Los Angeles Counties. Site visits included focus groups agency leadership interviews and discussions regarding data needs. The Evaluation Team also addressed questions and concerns with agency fiscal and data analyses staff.

Next Steps

- The NCCD will obtain data share agreements from remaining county agencies and will set up a data transfer process to obtain fidelity and fiscal data (and case management data from probation agencies) on a quarterly basis.
- The NCCD will identify more precise potential timelines for conducting each sub-study and establish a schedule for monitoring progress toward sub study completion for each interested agency.
- The NCCD will begin administering a staff, web-based survey to supplement the information gathered during the site visits in the fall.

PARTNERSHIPS FOR WELL-BEING INSTITUTE

The UC Davis Extensions' Center for Human Services hosted the ninth Partnerships for Well-being Institute on June 15-17. This Institute's theme: "Nurturing Connections, Sustaining Change," highlighted the importance of collaborative relationships to enhance well-being for children, youth, families communities and tribes. The institute offered 100 workshops covering a broad range of topics that included Wraparound and Intensive Care Coordination, child and family teams, and many more. The CDSS partnered with Butte, Sacramento, and Santa Clara Counties to create a lesson plan for a workshop that would offer attendees an overview of the Title IV-E California Well-Being project, the state's Wraparound intervention and the intersecting project outcome changes with Wraparound.

COMING UP FOR THE WELL-BEING PROJECT

Program

- The CDSS will hold the Quarterly CDSS/Casey Family Programs collaboration call on **September 13, 2016**.
- The CDSS and the Regional Training Academy are planning the SOP Collaborative scheduled **September 21, 2016**.
- The next Wraparound Collaborative will be held **October 7, 2016**.
- Save the date for the 2nd Title IV-E Waiver Demonstration, California Well-Being Project Annual Meeting scheduled **November 9 – 10, 2016**.

Fiscal

- The onsite fiscal technical assistance monitoring reviews for Child Welfare and Probation are ongoing
- The fiscal team is conducting a quarterly fiscal conference call on **October 8, 2016**. Discussion topics are forthcoming, based on county needs.

September

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October

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November

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27	28	29	30			

Evaluation

- The Evaluation Team began visiting Project counties. After each visit, NCCD will submit a memo to each county and CDSS, summarizing findings from the site visit and desired next steps mentioned by agency staff.
- The NCCD will obtain data share agreements from six remaining county agencies and set up a process for obtaining county and state fiscal information and case management data from probation agencies.
- The NCCD will transcribe, code and analyze data obtained during site visits or from agencies. They plan to conduct descriptive analyses of child welfare outcomes by county by the end of the year. When data are received, the NCCD will also conduct descriptive analyses of probation outcomes by county.
- The NCCD will continue holding onsite meetings with fiscal staff for the remaining county agencies to better understand the availability and coding of fiscal data.
- For planning purposes, the NCCD will identify more precise timelines for conducting each sub study and establish schedule for monitoring progress toward sub study completion for each interested agency.
- The NCCD will identify the agencies and interventions selected for a sub-study and will obtain approval from the ACF and the CDSS.
- The NCCD will submit a memo to ACF summarizing the sub study candidates and how these studies will contribute to the field's knowledge.

FOR MORE INFORMATION ON PROJECT SUPPORT ACTIVITIES, PLEASE CONTACT:

[California Well-Being Project Website](#)

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