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Children & Family Services Division Office of Child Abuse Prevention

FAMILY DEVELOPMENT MATRIX Project

A project supporting family strengthening organizations

The Family Development Matrix (FDM) project is funded by the California Department of Social Services' Office of Child Abuse Prevention (OCAP). It provides an integrated family assessment tool to help agency staff identify which services families need. FDM brings case management and outcomes evaluation into 13 county-based service networks and various tribal communities in California. Family support staff in 70 agencies and tribal organizations have the ability to implement FDM, analyze the outcome data to assist the families in setting goals, then record agency intervention and family participation activities.

Trained staff can assess the family's current situation and identify family strengths, which are then used to develop a case plan. Agencies and their collaborative networks utilize FDM to leverage communication, collaboration, program planning, and coordination, particularly with local child welfare agencies. The tool enables consistency in analyses and serves as a process for standardizing outcome indicators, allowing for cross agency comparison and data analysis. FDM has been used to assess more than 3,000 families, and used by a number of agencies providing services as part of county Differential Response systems.

Additionally, as part of its first phase development, FDM interfaces with The Pathway to the Prevention of Child Abuse and Neglect manual to assist participating agencies and counties in further developing integrated intervention strategies. The Pathway assembles a wealth of findings from research, practice, theory, and policy on what it takes to improve the lives of children and families. It is a comprehensive online resource made available in 2007 at www.cdss.ca.gov/cdssweb/entres/pdf/Pathway.pdf in collaboration with OCAP, Harvard University and California State University Monterey Bay.

A goal of the current phase is focused on strengthening the validity of the FDM model by using a panel of experts to provide input regarding the correlation of key child abuse and neglect prevention measures and to test FDM as an agency information system.

The overall project goals are to support, broaden, and extend existing public/private partnerships in the FDM collaborative to include family strengthening agencies, county welfare representatives, tribal communities, and local agency partners emphasizing the use of a prevention planning process to prevent child abuse and neglect. For further information, please visit the FDM Web site at hhspp.csumb.edu/community/