

# **California Permanency for Youth Project**

## ***Project Evaluation***

***June 1, 2006***

This evaluation report describes the California Permanency for Youth Project's efforts to assure that no youth leaves the California child welfare system without a permanent connection to a caring adult. The report should be considered a "final report" on the four "pilot counties" (Alameda, Monterey, San Mateo and Stanislaus) and a "progress report" on the ten counties that commenced the implementation of the project within the last several months (Contra Costa, Fresno, Humboldt, Kern, Los Angeles, Orange, Sacramento, San Francisco, San Luis Obispo and Sonoma). Specifically, Section One of this report provides demographic information and describes the final outcomes for all target youth in the four pilot counties. Also included is a description of the extent to which CPYP-inspired efforts have expanded in each county beyond the impact on the target youth and the section concludes with a list of lessons learned from the pilot counties. Section Two describes the status of the project (and evaluation) in the ten new counties. Section Three describes how the evaluation plan is being modified to incorporate lessons learned during the implementation of the project in the pilot counties.

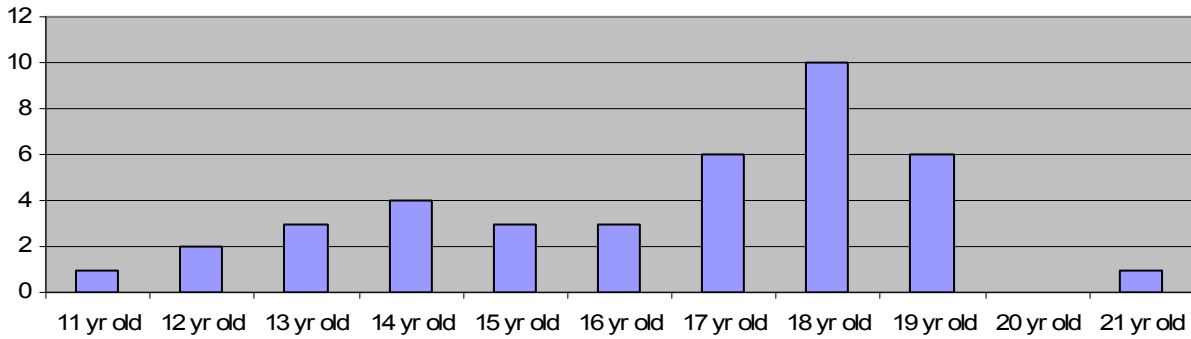
The small number of cases and the lack of an experimental design (with a control group) predetermined that this evaluation would be unable to statistically prove an impact for the project. This study can, however: (1) provide evidence that finding lifelong connections for older foster youth is possible, (2) contribute to the development of best practices and highlight potential barriers in this work, and (3) help shape future evaluative efforts of projects addressing this issue.

### **SECTION ONE: FINAL REPORT ON PIONEER COUNTIES**

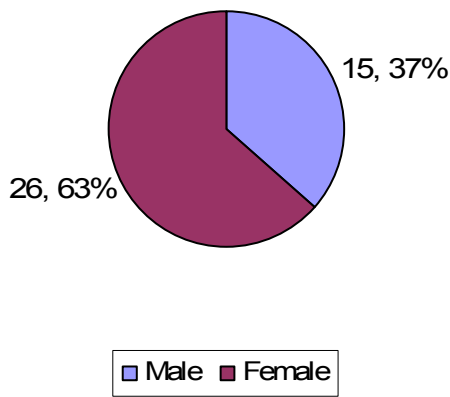
The pilot counties were given significant latitude in deciding how to implement the project and how many target youth to include in the pilot phase. In the four counties forty-six youth received permanency services in the pilot phase including eighteen in San Mateo, thirteen in Monterey, nine in Alameda and six in Stanislaus. The number of youth in the pilot group in no way reflects the total number of older youth in each county that received CPYP-related services, rather these were the youth who were closely monitored through the collection of quarterly progress reports. Following is a demographic breakdown of the pilot youth and summary data describing the extent to which the youth formed a permanent connection to a caring adult.

**Demographics of Pilot Youth**

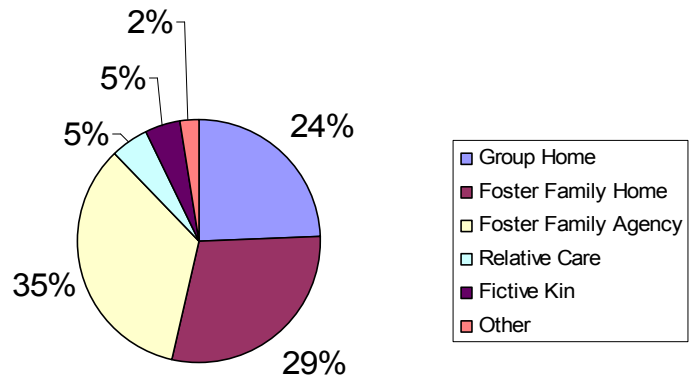
*Current Age of Pilot Youth*



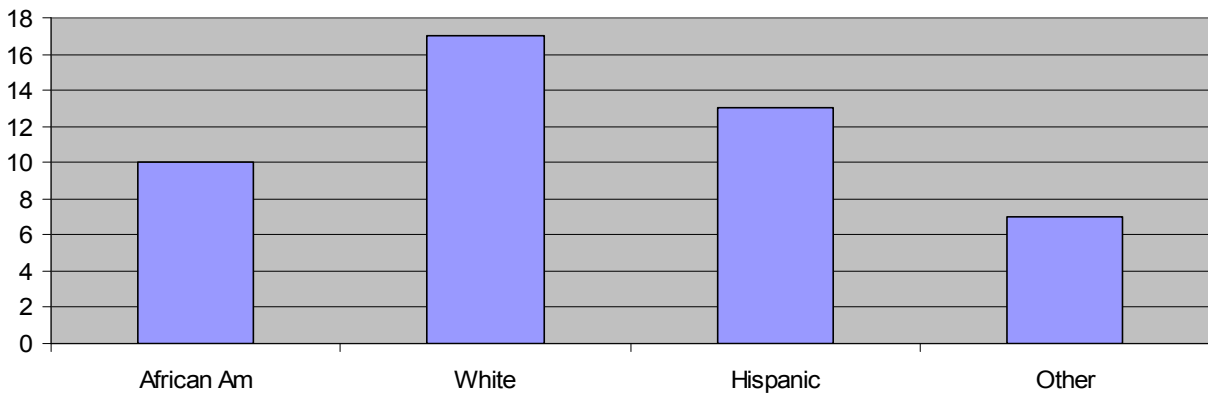
*Gender of Pilot Youth*



*Placement at Outset of Project*



*Ethnicity of Pilot Youth*



*Several of the youth have mixed ethnicities and fall under more than one category. The aggregate of this data therefore exceeds the number of participants.*

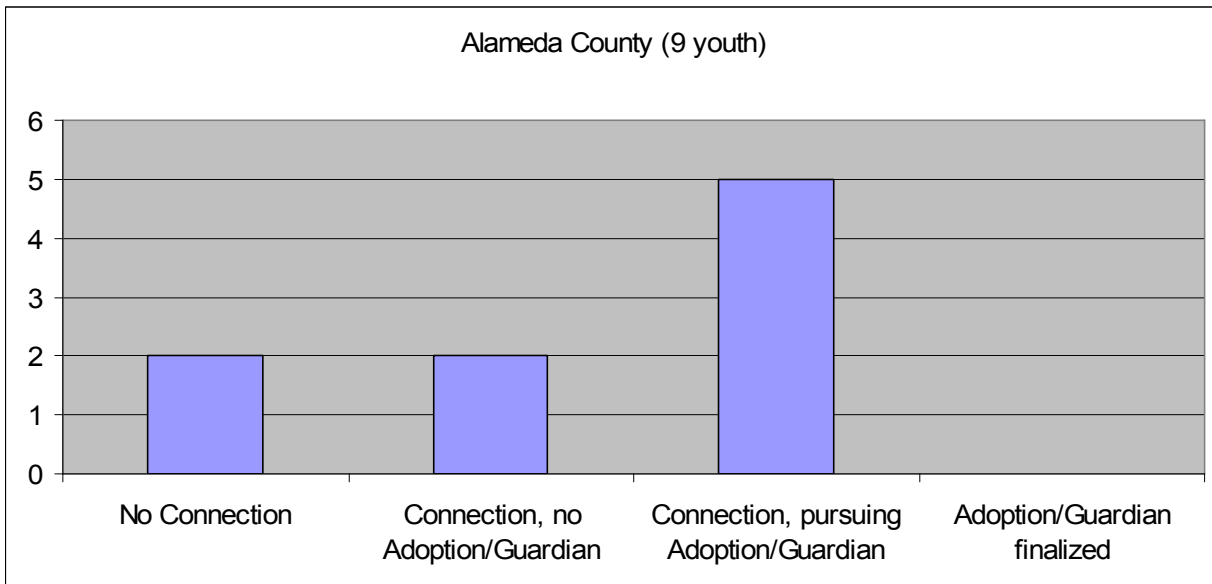
## Outcomes for Pilot Youth

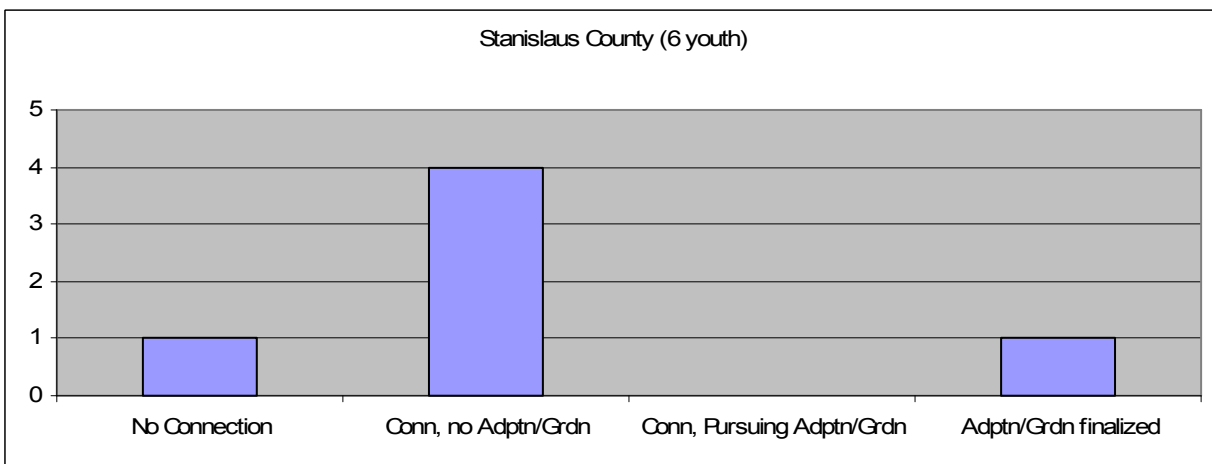
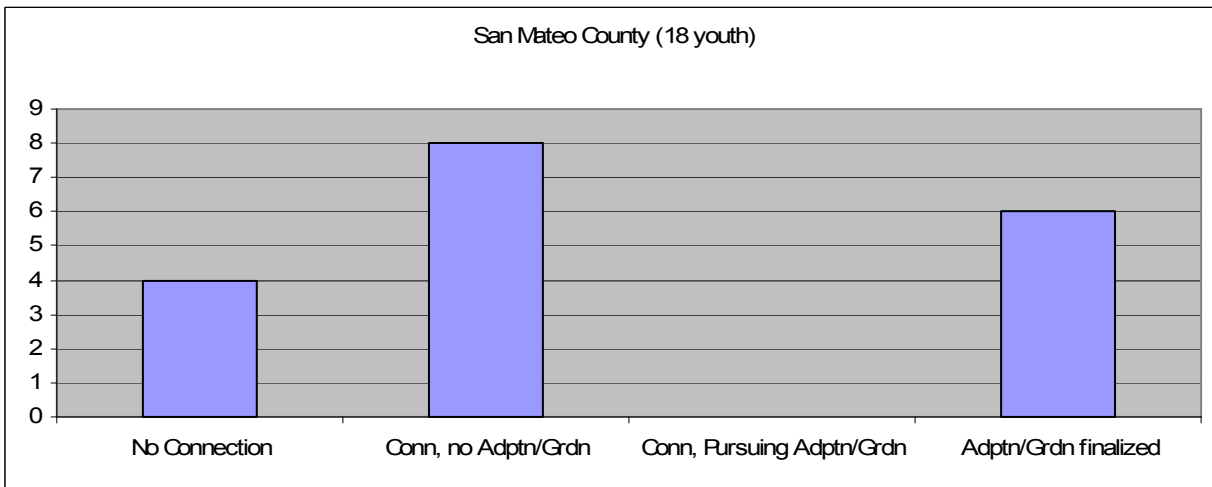
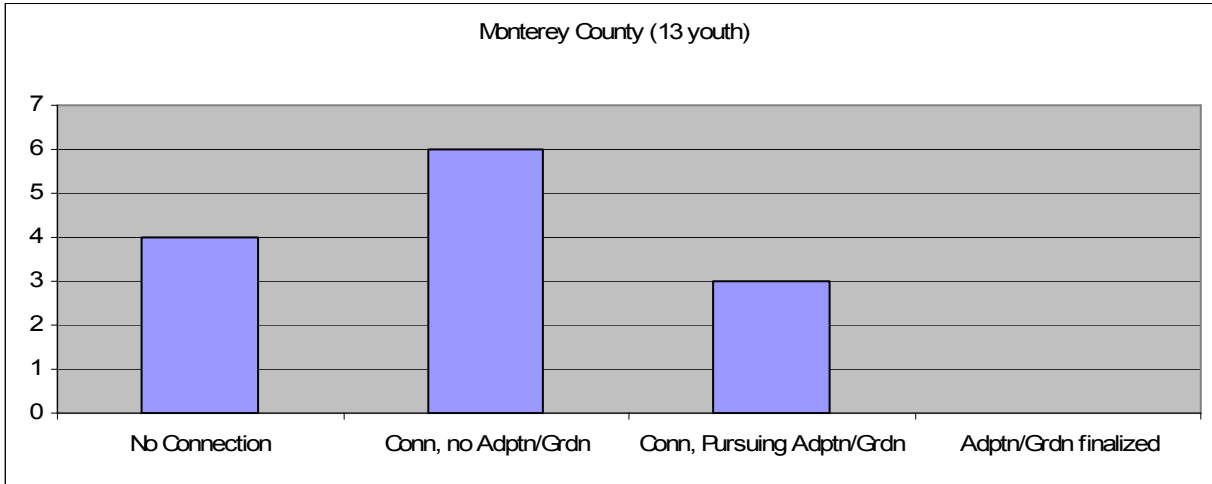
Using the “Final Survey” form (Exhibit A) caseworkers described each youth’s outcome at the time of the conclusion of this project and described the permanency efforts they made and the challenges they faced on behalf of the youth. A Permanency Scale was developed in an attempt to quantify these results. Caseworkers indicated each youth’s final outcome by placing the youth on the scale below.

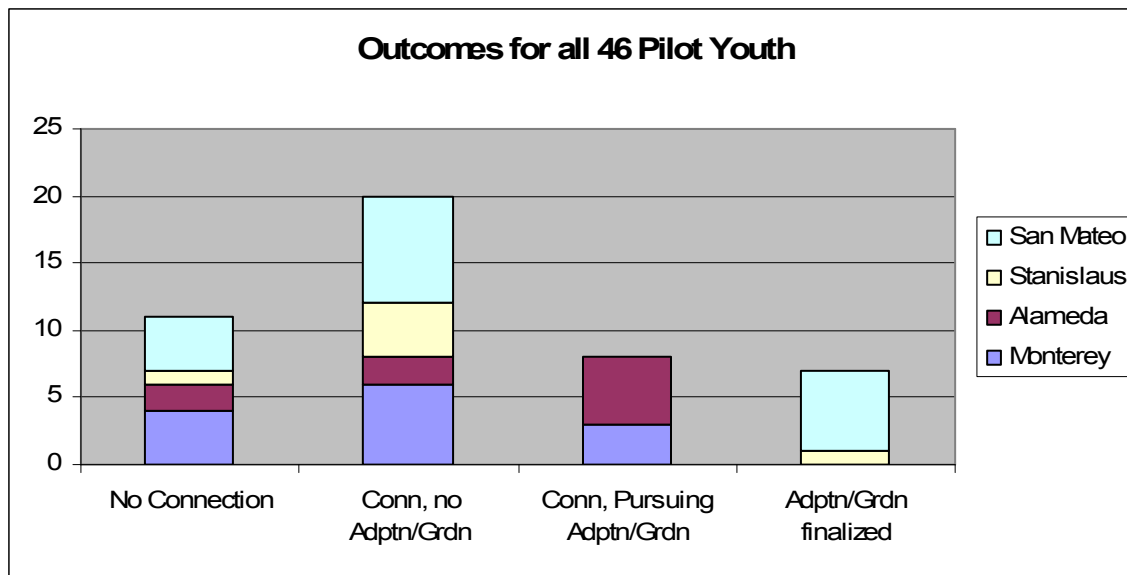
Permanency Scale:

1. This youth has not yet formed a lifelong connection to a caring adult or emancipated prior to a connection being formed.
2. This youth DID form a lifelong connection to a caring adult however adoption/guardianship is not being (or was not) sought.
3. This youth DID form a lifelong connection to a caring adult and is pursuing either adoption or a guardianship.
4. Adoption/guardianship/reunification has been finalized.

Following are the results for the forty-six pilot youth in the four pilot counties:







As shown above, the pilot counties were successful in forming lifelong connections for thirty-five of the forty-six youth, a seventy-six percent success rate. Fifteen youth (22%) have either finalized a “legal” connection or are in the process of adoption, guardianship or reunification. The most common outcome (twenty youth) were instances when both the youth and the adult are committed to a lifelong connection however the parties have decided not to pursue a more formal, legal relationship.

Though it is impossible to definitively say what the outcomes for these youth would have been without CPYP’s involvement, it is clear that in a number of instances successful connections resulted from skills learned through the project and/or because of the renewed emphasis the project placed on permanency for older youth.

*Two sisters spent most of their early childhood with their homeless mother and entered care after she died. At the time of entering the project the teenage girls were diagnosed as mentally retarded with borderline intellectual functioning (IQ in the 50-70 range), were not socialized at all, and had little interest in adoption or guardianship. The worker was told that the girls were incapable of forming any attachments. Over time, with counseling from the worker, the girls came to realize that a permanent home was in their best interest and they became their own best advocates. In 2004 they identified several potential connections, all of whom weren’t able to offer the sisters permanence. Undeterred, in late 2004 they approached a faculty member at their school and asked her and her husband to be their guardians. The couple agreed to explore the idea and, according to the worker, “once the frequency of the visits increased, the girls made dramatic progress.” They are now described as “talented, outgoing, and even gregarious.” They graduated from middle school on the honor roll and are getting straight “A’s” in high school. The*

*adoption is scheduled to be finalized June 30<sup>th</sup> of this year [2006]. The worker stated that CPYP's role was "critical" in making this connection possible.*

*A teenage girl who had already experienced a disrupted guardianship and multiple placements was doing well in a receiving home when she was selected for CPYP. Since the girl and the family were committed to each other the worker obtained an exception to convert one of the receiving beds to a long-term placement thereby allowing the youth to stay in the home. Legal Guardianship without dependency was established with the couple running the receiving home on March 5, 2005. According to the worker "top level support for the CPYP project goals made the difference between licensing allowing the exception or not. Having a management team aware of CPYP as a result of the CPYP training was integral."*

*The CPYP- assisted Internet relative search for two pilot youth (a brother and sister) resulted in locating several (much older) adult siblings living in Texas and southern California. Neither the pilot youth nor the siblings knew of the other's existence prior to the relative search. An adult sister in southern California, who was already a licensed foster parent, expressed an interest in providing a home for the teenagers. The teenage girl has been living with her adult sister since mid-2005. Her brother, now eighteen, decided not to move to southern California, however because of the project he is now aware that he has a home available to him should he want it in the future. (It should be noted that neither case resulted in an adoption or guardianship however both pilot youth now have lifelong connections due to the project.)*

For the pilot youth that DID NOT form a connection (i.e. outcome #1 on the Permanency Scale), caseworkers were asked to identify factors that contributed to their lack of success on behalf of these youth. Caseworkers identified the following reasons to explain their lack of success from the choices offered on the Final Survey form. Some of these issues will be discussed in "Challenges/Lessons Learned" at the conclusion of this section. (Caseworkers were free to choose multiple factors.)

<u>Contributing Factors Offered on Final Survey Forms</u>	<u>No. of Responses</u>
<i>The youth was/is unwilling to pursue a permanent connection .....</i>	2 Caseworkers
<i>There was a lack of resources to support a permanent connection .....</i>	1 Caseworker
<i>I encountered other barriers to the permanency efforts I was pursuing .....</i>	1 Caseworker
<i>I was not able to spend sufficient time on permanency work due to..... my high workload and other responsibilities</i>	2 Caseworkers
<i>The youth was willing, and I did the work, however we were not able to .....</i> <i>find a connection for this youth</i>	3 Caseworkers

## **Information on Additional Youth Impacted by CPYP**

Please note that the scope of the evaluation assignment did not include tracking any youth beyond the pilot group described above. Estimates of the number of youth who received CPYP permanency services (in addition to the pilot group) are based mostly upon conversations with county leadership personnel.

### **Alameda County**

#### ***Impact on Additional Older Foster Youth (Beyond the Pilot Group)***

- Family Builders by Adoption contracted with Alameda County to locate and strengthen lifelong connections for the original nine pilot youth. Family Builders' Dumisha Jamaa Project is modeled after the CPYP project. Closely aligned with CPYP's mission, the vision for the Dumisha Jamaa Project is that "no child will leave foster care in Alameda County without a permanent family connection that is as legally secure as possible." Carol Brown (caseworker at Family Builders) indicated that CPYP was "both directly and indirectly instrumental in getting the grant" to expand the project to work with thirty additional 11-18 year old youth in Alameda County. According to Ms. Brown "the pilot project showed foundations that we could do the work effectively." This year Family Builders has entered a five-year agreement to further expand the Dumisha Jamaa Project and provide permanency services to at least two hundred additional older foster youth.
- Another project that was influenced significantly by CPYP was Alameda's "StepUp" Project (now known as the "Gateways to Permanence" program). The program was begun in early 2005 to address the fact that a large number of older foster youth in Alameda County reside in group homes. One hundred youth were referred to the program and to date sixty-seven have stepped down to a lower level of care. Though the goal of this effort puts a greater emphasis on the youth's "placement" than does CPYP, some of the strategies used (Internet searches for family members, etc.) can be directly attributed to CPYP. According to Robin Lockett (Program Manager) in the next two years they hope to further reduce their congregate care population by another two hundred youth "by either renewing connections or discovering connections."

#### ***Other Indications of an Increased Emphasis on Permanence for Older Youth***

- According to Ms. Lockett, "our permanency efforts have increased because our philosophy has changed and we are now very vocal about the dire need for permanence for youth . . . there has been a huge philosophical and psychological belief about the need for permanence among managers, staff and I believe, caregivers."
- In late 2004 Alameda County used the project's mini-grant to develop "A Guide to Permanency Options" which has been widely distributed and utilized by other counties.

- According to Ms. Lockett caseworkers now routinely ask youth to name the “important people” in their lives and this information is included in court reports.
- Staff for the Independent Living Skills Program (ILSP) Unit has increased from four to eight workers and the unit now works on strengthening permanent connections along with teaching independent living skills.

## **Monterey County**

### ***Impact on Additional Older Foster Youth (Beyond the Pilot Group)***

- Monterey County provided information on fifty-eight additional older foster youth (beyond the pilot group of thirteen) to demonstrate their youth permanency efforts. Seven of these youth were added to the CPYP program subsequent to the commencement of the pilot phase and five of these seven youth formed a permanent connection to a caring adult. Out of the remaining fifty-one older youth, sixteen reunified, nine were adopted, one guardianship was established, twenty-one emancipated with a connection to a caring adult and seven have formed a connection while still in out-of-home care. It’s unclear the extent to which CPYP influenced these outcomes.
- Christine Lerable (Program Manager) attributed a decrease in the number of long-term-foster-care cases (from 201 in January 2004 to 160 in January 2006) in part to the influence of CPYP. She indicated that the youth in long-term foster care (LTFC) were the focus of the project.

### ***Other indications of an increased emphasis on permanence for older youth***

- According to Ms. Lerable Independent Living Program (ILP) workers (for youth sixteen and older) previously focused on emancipation and they now focus upon permanence. Also permanent placement/planning (PP) workers are assigned at the beginning of a case, rather than becoming involved much later, in an effort to keep youth out of LTFC placement.
- In mid-2005 the county began updating their court reporting template to prompt the worker to include information pertaining to potential permanent connections for the youth. If no connections exist, the worker is asked to describe the steps being taken to locate a connection.



## **San Mateo County**

### ***Impact on Additional Older Foster Youth (Beyond the Pilot Group)***

- Prior to October 2003 services for older foster youth in San Mateo County were broken up into the different regions served by the county. The emphasis on permanency for older youth (influenced both by CPYP and San Mateo County's System Improvement Plan (SIP)) significantly changed the way that the county works with older foster youth. An Adolescent Services Unit was created to centralize and coordinate the county's adolescent services including: mental health, housing, an internal foster family home program, and the more traditional independent living skills services. The unit was provided two additional workers (one who specialized in family searches) and caseload sizes were reduced from forty to less than thirty per worker. The Unit, which includes over 100 youth ages sixteen and older, places an emphasis on permanency. Every youth in the unit has a permanence review every six months. According to Beverly Dekker-Davidson (Adolescent Services Manager) all of the youth in the unit are provided the same services as the eighteen youth in the pilot program. Outcome data for this larger group of youth was not available.

### ***Other indications of an increased emphasis on permanence for older youth***

- Team Decision-Making (TDM) meetings and Emancipation Case Conferences both now include discussions about permanence.
- Court Appointed Special Advocates have been used extensively to assist with case mining, searches, follow-up with potential connections, etc.

## **Stanislaus County**

### ***Impact on Additional Older Foster Youth (Beyond the Pilot Group)***

- According to Crystal Luffberry (former Program Manager III) in mid-2005 there were approximately 110 youth ages fourteen and older in LTFC in Stanislaus County. Ms. Luffberry stated that these older foster youth receive the same permanency services as the pilot group.
- Stanislaus County in 2005 modified the Child Welfare Services/Case Management System (CWS/CMS) database so that they could track life-long connections for their foster youth. In October 2005 of the 321 youth aged eleven through eighteen, 102 had one or more "connection for life" according to their database. In April 2006 their database indicated that of the 335 youth in the same age range, 282 had at least one "connection for life." A person familiar with the database explained that an unknown amount of this increase should be attributed to "cleaning up" the database. The significant thing to take from this information therefore is not the increase in the numbers as much as *the fact that this information is now being tracked in Stanislaus County.*

- Between February 2005 and April 2006 Internet searches on approximately 259 families were performed (representing 469 foster youth). Over 5,000 potential family connections were identified. As these numbers indicate, Stanislaus workers are identifying approximately twenty potential connections per search. One permanency worker indicated that about half of these leads (i.e. ten per family) result in a family member that has some type of interest in contact with the youth.

***Other indications of an increased emphasis on permanence for older youth***

- In Stanislaus County the project from its inception was organized as a collaboration between Child Welfare Services and Children’s System of Care (mental health). Social workers in this unit have specialized caseloads of youth ages fourteen and older, and are supported by mental health clinicians, a Permanency Specialist (a new position without a caseload), ILP, aftercare workers and a data specialist. The team focuses on both permanence and lifelong connections for the youth.
- The Permanency Specialist participated regularly in decision-making meetings that involved placement and concurrent planning and supported connection efforts directly through mining files, conducting relative searches, interviewing youth, etc.
- Annual adoption assessment reviews (on each LTFC youth) were modified to include discussions of potential lifelong connections along with adoption efforts.
- The creation of “Connected for Life” meetings focusing on permanency and transition planning came directly from CPYP planning.

**Challenges Faced and Lessons Learned (All Pilot Counties)**

The following comments are compiled from county leadership and caseworkers from each county.

*Need for Data:* All counties to some extent emphasized the importance of data collection. Ms. Luckett in Alameda stated, “one of our greatest lessons learned was that we failed to create a database so that we could pull data at the push of a button that would reflect numbers with a direct link to our CPYP efforts.” Ms. Lerable in Monterey was interested in getting information about how CPYP would be tracking youth in the ten new counties. Stanislaus was ahead of the other three counties in this area – in fact, they were the only pilot county that demonstrated a method to track the establishment of connections for their youth. Ms. Luffberry stated that “the data part is key to institutionalizing (project) goals.” There also was interest from county leadership for incorporating “connections” data into the CWS/CMS database (as is being done in Stanislaus County).

*Mental Health Component:* At least one worker in each county mentioned the need for a close collaboration with mental health professionals for successful permanency work for older foster youth. Workers both mentioned the need for therapists to help the youth deal with abandonment, grief, and loss and thereby prepare themselves for permanence and the need to maintain the mental

health services after the connection has been made. Ms. Luffberry indicated that having mental health clinicians work with youth on permanency issues was critical to project success.

*Time/Staffing:* The supervisor of a new unit working to find permanence for Alameda's group home population stated "by far, the greatest barrier to effective kinship practice identified by our social workers is the sheer amount of time it takes to find family and establish a real connection." In Stanislaus a plan to add staff and reduce caseloads to twenty youth per worker in their adolescent unit was thwarted due to lack of funding. In Monterey, in addition to a worker who indicated she wasn't able to spend sufficient time on permanency work for a youth who *didn't* form a connection, one worker who had a successful outcome stated that workers "need additional help to conduct and follow through on searches."

*Youth Involvement:* Several workers mentioned that it was important that the permanency process be youth driven. Older teenagers can and will make their own decisions about with whom they wish to connect, in what way and how quickly they would like a potential connection to proceed, and with whom they would like to live. (This does not reduce the impact a worker or therapist can have on helping the youth work through these issues.)

*Financial Impact of Adoption & Guardianship:* Many workers cited the financial disincentive to adoption/guardianship as a barrier to permanence and/or indicated that post-adoption support and services are key elements to successful permanency outcomes.

*Technology/Search Capabilities:* It was unclear the extent to which the counties were ready and able to perform family searches after cessation of CPYP assistance; however, at least one county office is apparently still struggling with Internet access. Alameda County has a contract with US Search to perform family searches. (The contract is supported by one of their partners, Casey Family Programs.)

*Collaborations/Other Initiatives:* Integrating permanency work with other initiatives can help the message permeate throughout the agency. A couple counties mentioned how the permanency philosophy is being incorporated into Family to Family's Team Decision Meetings. County's SIP plans were in some cases shaped by CPYP. Several San Mateo workers mentioned the assistance which CASA provided.

*Staff Turnover Inside and Outside the County Agency:* During the project one county experienced a fifty percent turnover in their family reunification workers and their juvenile court judge changed twice. In another county, between the first and last of the six trainings done by CPYP consultant Kevin Campbell, two-thirds of the project caseworkers had changed.

## **SECTION TWO: PROGRESS REPORT ON TEN NEW COUNTIES**

Within the last several months CPYP-related activities have commenced in all ten of the “new” counties (Contra Costa, Fresno, Humboldt, Kern, Los Angeles (Metro North Region), Orange, Sacramento, San Francisco, San Luis Obispo, and Sonoma). Each county has been asked to identify the youth for whom they will be seeking a connection, describe how the youth were selected, and identify twelve of these youth on whom they will provide quarterly progress reports. The caseworkers for each of the closely tracked youth were asked to complete an “Intake Form” (Exhibit B) on the youth that provides us with demographic data and other descriptive information pertaining to the youth.

### **Description of Each County’s Selection Criteria**

Each county was asked to explain how youth were selected to receive CPYP services. Thus far, Contra Costa, Fresno, Humboldt, Kern, Los Angeles, Orange and Sacramento have responded. Following are their verbatim responses from their intake information:

#### *Contra Costa*

“We have chosen youth ages twelve to seventeen that have been in at least two or more placements in the last six months, or who are currently facing a placement disruption. The youth are all residents of West Contra Costa County, and have permanent plans of long-term foster care. We also focused on youth who have few connections with adults that could be maintained past their exit from the system. The youth we selected are also eligible for our System of Care (SOC) program, which will provide extra support services and we will use the TDM process in placement decisions and for exit/emancipation planning”.

#### *Fresno*

“The unit met as a team and listed all children for whom there was not a permanent connection. The team decided that the selection would be based on age (those ready to emancipate would be given priority). There were several sibling groups that were chosen and counted as "one" selection”.

#### *Humboldt*

“1. We ran a CWS/CMS Business Objects report for youth age thirteen to eighteen years, who were mostly receiving permanent planning services in foster family homes or group homes.  
2. We talked with Independent Living Services (ILS) and placement social workers to identify thirteen of these seventeen youths who were most in need of finding a permanent relationship/forever family”.

#### *Kern*

“(We) selected fourteen- and fifteen-year-old court dependents, who are placed in local (Bakersfield area) group homes. Additionally, we only selected youth who are in a Planned Living Arrangement (Long Term Foster Care)”.

### *Los Angeles*

“In partnership with CPYP, Los Angeles County has implemented a Permanency Unit at the Metro North Office. For the Permanency Unit, we have selected a broad population of youth as a starting point although we may redefine it once the unit is up and running. The population includes children age twelve to eighteen in the LTFC program living with relatives or non-relatives and their siblings. The primary defining factor for determining the appropriateness of a case for the Permanency Unit will be the absence in the child’s life of a permanent connection with at least one committed adult willing to provide a lifelong, safe, stable and secure parenting relationship”.

### *Orange*

“CFC [Creating Family Connections] referral for youth include:

- Youth has expressed interest in knowing about or having contact with family members.
- Youth is preparing to emancipate with no known family connection.
- Youth is at risk of entering LTFC with minimal or no appropriate family connection.
- Youth is a dependent placed in out-of-home care who needs family connection in order to foster stability and avoid “aging out” of system care.
- CFC referred youth are not limited by age or legal status to be included in the project.

The criteria for the youth in the Permanency Social Worker (PSW) caseloads include:

- Youth must be in Long Term Foster Care.
- No relative placements or courtesy supervision.
- Youth who are at risk of being placed at a higher level of care, and/or who are already receiving specialized foster care placement rates (due to their higher services needs).
- Youth ages eleven and over, with priority to those closest to emancipation.
- Youth who have little or no connections to important adults in their lives”.

### *Sacramento*

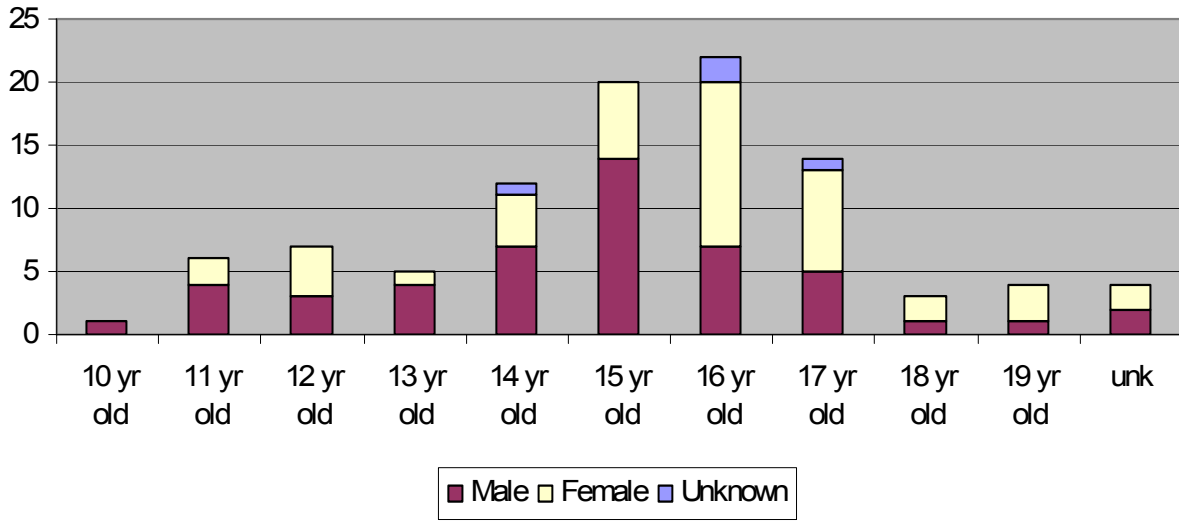
“Any youth twelve and older that is not currently on track for return home, adoption or guardianship”.

## **Description of Target Youth**

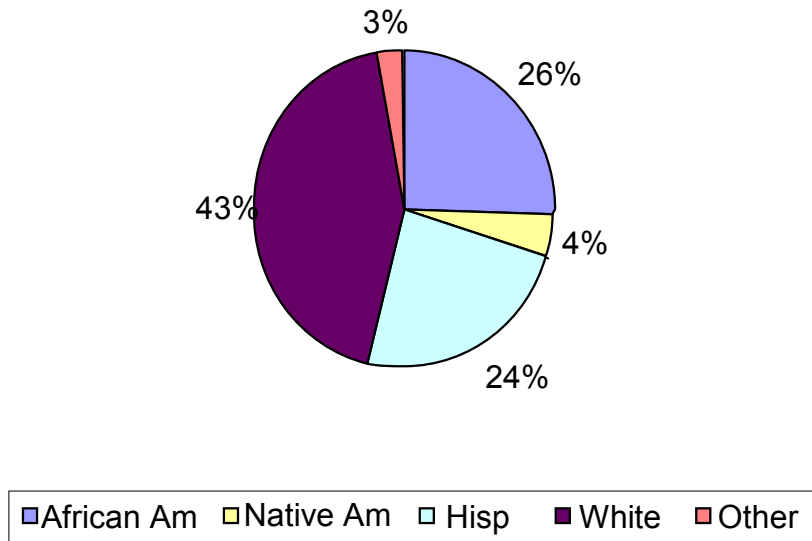
All counties but one have provided lists of their CPYP youth. The other nine counties have provided intake information on ninety-eight youth, out of the one-hundred and twenty that we will eventually track. Please note that some items on some intake forms were either left blank or indecipherable and the numbers below therefore sometimes don’t add up to the total number of youth (or “unknown” is indicated for a few youth). This data will be “cleaned up” as the project proceeds. Out of the ninety-eight intake forms, ninety-one included the youth’s age, ninety-four the youth’s gender, and ninety-seven identified ethnicity and placement type.

The following demographic and placement information pertains to the ninety-eight target youth for whom we’ve received intake data.

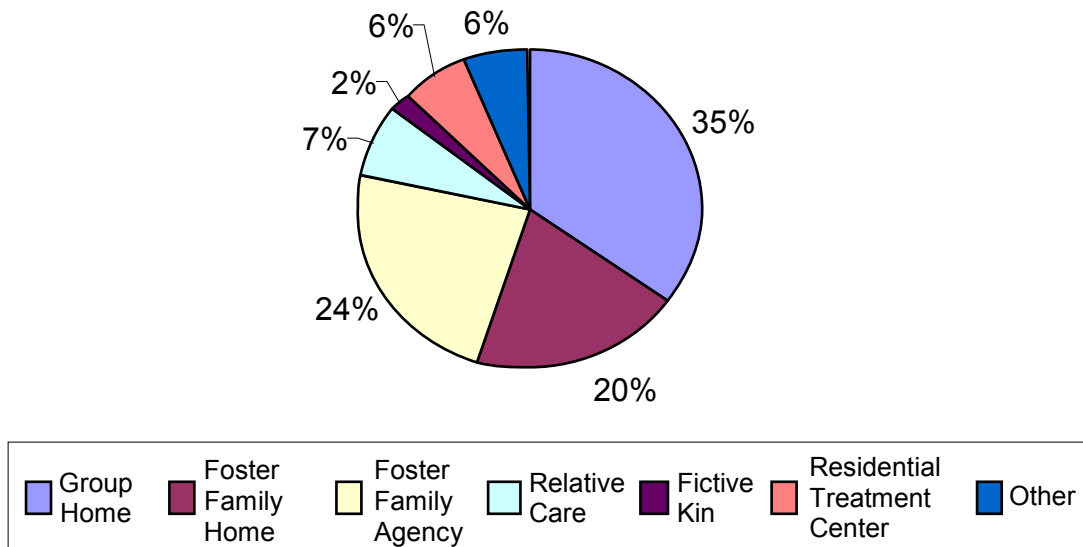
### Age and Gender of Target Youth



### Ethnicity

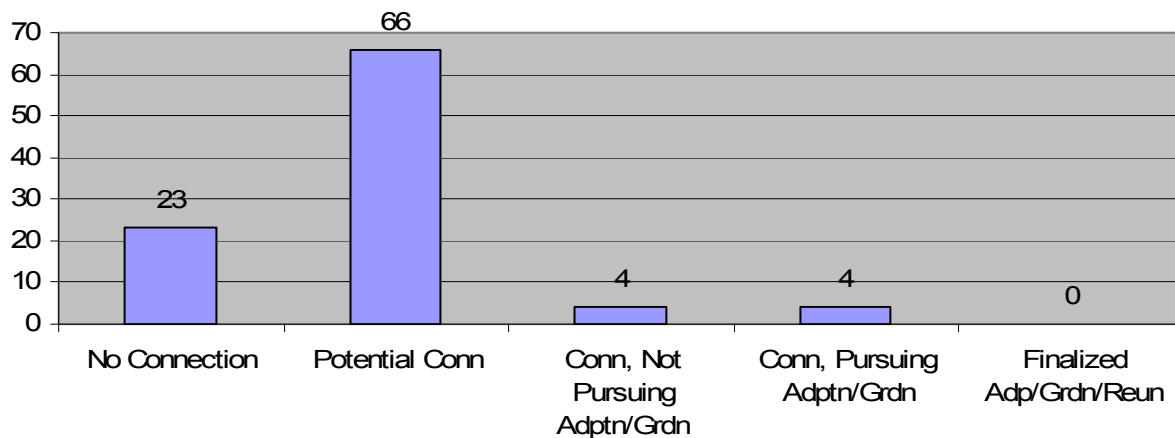


### Placement



Caseworkers were asked to provide information about any existing or potential adult connections for the target youth. In an effort to quantify this data and to give the project a “baseline” from which future progress can be measured, caseworkers were asked to place the youth on the “Permanency Scale” described above. The scale that was used with the pilot counties to measure youth outcomes was revised slightly to allow for the caseworker to indicate that the youth has a “potential connection” which the youth may wish to establish or strengthen. As you can see in the chart below, most of the youth (89) are currently without a connection. Note however, that caseworkers indicated that eight youth already have connections and four youth are in the process of adoption or guardianship. These cases have been reviewed individually by CPYP staff and a determination was made that they are appropriate candidates for the project. They represent situations in which the caseworker either wants to utilize CPYP to strengthen the connection or to develop a backup plan.

### Permanency Scale at Outset of Project



The above data pertains to the youth in each county that we will be tracking closely during the evaluation. Several counties have indicated that they will be seeking connections for more than twelve youth. The first column of the chart below indicates how many older youth each county will be working with at the outset of the project. (Please note that the remainder of the chart provides a county-by-county breakdown of the ninety-eight target youth.) In most cases we have been informed that the “twelve” are representative of the larger group, however we will not be collecting detailed progress reports on the larger group, but will only track them as described in Section Three below. According to the nine counties that have provided us with data, a total of two hundred and seventy-three youth will be served by the project at the outset. Also, please note that there is a significant degree of variability among the counties in the age, gender, ethnicity and placement type of the ninety-eight target youth.

	CPYP Youth	Ave Age	Gender		Ethnicity <sup>a</sup>				Placement Type <sup>b</sup>						
			M	F	AfAm	Hsp	Wh	Other	GH	FFH	FFA	Rel	FKn	RTC	Other
<i>CCC</i>	13	15	5	7	9	1	2	0	6	0	1	2	0	3	0
<i>Fresno</i>	12	16	5	4	2	5	2	0	7	1	1	0	0	0	0
<i>Hmbltd</i>	16	16	4	8	0	1	9	4	2	1	3	2	0	1	3
<i>Kern</i>	18	16	4	1	2	1	2	0	4	0	0	0	0	0	1
<i>LA</i>	82	15	7	5	3	8	0	0	3	8	1	0	0	0	0
<i>Orange</i>	52	17	8	4	3	2	6	1	4	1	4	1	2	0	0
<i>Sacto</i>	51	14	5	6	6	0	4	2	3	2	7	0	0	0	0
<i>SF</i>	unk														
<i>SLO</i>	12	15	4	5	0	3	7	0	1	2	5	2	0	0	1
<i>Sonoma</i>	17	16	7	5	0	2	10	0	4	4	1	0	0	2	1
<b>Total/Average</b>	<b>273</b>	<b>16</b>	<b>49</b>	<b>45</b>	<b>25</b>	<b>23</b>	<b>42</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>34</b>	<b>19</b>	<b>23</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>6</b>

<sup>a</sup> AfAm – African American, Hsp – Hispanic, Wh - White

<sup>b</sup> GH – Group Home, FFH – Foster Family Home, Rel –Relative Care, FKn – Fictive Kin, Residential Treatment Center



### SECTION THREE: MODIFICATIONS TO EVALUATION PLAN

Though the evaluation of the pilot counties has been useful, there are a number of areas that could be improved. Following are some challenges that were confronted during the evaluation of the pilot counties and changes that are being made to the evaluation plan to improve the process for the ten new counties.

**Intent to Maintain Contact Form (Exhibit C):** One of the most challenging aspects of this evaluation is that the primary outcome that we are attempting to measure, a “connection,” is extremely hard if not impossible to define and is something that prior to the project was not tracked or even thought about by most caseworkers. For the new counties we are asking for the caseworkers to have the (connecting) adult complete and sign a one page form which acknowledges their commitment to the youth and describes what the connection means to them. (This form was developed and successfully used by Cheryl Jacobson in her Uplift Project.) The non-binding agreement will be used for the youth that are either not ready or unwilling to change the legal status of the relationship. From an evaluation perspective, the form enables us to definitively say that a “connection” has been made (and to clarify what a “connection” means to the adult).

**Tracking Outcomes of All Youth Receiving CPYP Services:** With the pilot counties we had no way to track the outcomes of any youth not included in the closely monitored target population. To address this issue we are working with each county to add a “permanent connection” special project field to the CWS/CMS database. UC Berkeley has agreed to help us aggregate the data. Outcomes for the twelve closely monitored youth will be tracked both with the Permanency Scale and the modified database, however the “additional youth” will only be tracked through CWS/CMS. Level 3 of the Permanency Scale equates to a positive response on CWS/CMS and the Intent to Maintain Contact forms must be obtained to qualify as Level 3. To date eight of the ten counties have made the requested modification to CWS/CMS.

**Caseworker Incentive Program:** To help with the response rate on the quarterly progress reports (Exhibit D), we will provide caseworkers with a ten dollar gift certificate to either Macys.com or Amazon.com for each progress report they turn in by the scheduled due date.

**Interviewing Supervisors:** With the pilot counties we collected data from both the caseworkers and the Project Managers. For the new counties we will also interview the CPYP caseworker supervisors to get their perspectives on the implementation of the project.

**Standardized Target Groups:** The four pilot counties were free to choose the number of youth for whom they would provide detailed progress reports. This meant that when the numbers were aggregated the counties with more youth had a disproportionate impact on the totals. The ten new counties will provide progress reports on twelve youth each.

California Permanency for Youth Project

“Dedicated to assuring that no youth will leave the California child welfare system without a permanent lifelong connection to a caring adult”

Final Survey

Youth:

Caseworker Name:

Please select the choice below that best represents the status of this youth with regards to forming a lifelong connection to a caring adult and then, based upon this response, please proceed to the indicated section. After completing the indicated section, **all respondents should complete Section Four.**

\_\_\_ This youth has not yet formed a lifelong connection to a caring adult or emancipated prior to a connection being formed (please proceed to Section One)

\_\_\_ This youth formed a lifelong connection to a caring adult however adoption/ guardianship is not being (or was not) sought (please proceed to Section Two)

\_\_\_ This youth DID form a lifelong connection to a caring adult and is pursuing either adoption or a guardianship (please proceed to Section Three)

\_\_\_ Adoption/guardianship has been finalized (please proceed to Section Three)

**SECTION ONE:** *Youth Did Not Form a Connection*

Please choose the response below that best describes why a connection was not (or has not yet) been formed for this youth:

\_\_\_ The youth was/is unwilling to pursue a permanent connection

\_\_\_ There was a lack of resources to support a permanent connection (please describe what resources could help permanency efforts for this youth in Section Four below)

\_\_\_ I encountered other barriers to the permanency efforts I was pursuing. (please describe these barriers to permanency efforts in Section Four below)

\_\_\_ I was not able to spend sufficient time on permanency work due to my high workload and other responsibilities

\_\_\_ The youth was willing, and I did the work, however we were not able to find a connection for this youth.

**SECTION TWO:** *Connection Formed, though no adoption/guardianship sought*

Since a connection can range from “living with the caring adult as part of the family” to a much less formal relationship, it would help us to understand what a “connection” means for this youth. Please describe and define what this connection means:

Please provide any statements made (or actions taken) by the youth or adult that confirms to you that this connection exists:

Please describe how the connection was found for this youth. Were there any unusual, special or unique methods employed?

Please describe if and how CPYP training and/or assistance helped you with your permanency efforts for this youth:

Other than the caseworker, did any other staff person or external agency or community resource helped with the permanency effort? What did they contribute?

Please describe any financial, medical, educational, therapeutic, social or other resources that have been or are important for the support of this relationship.

Please explain why an adoption/guardianship is not being sought in this case?

**SECTION THREE:** *Connection formed, adoption/guardianship is either being processed or has occurred*

Please describe how the connection was found for this youth. Were there any unusual, special or unique methods employed?

Please describe if and how CPYP training and/or assistance helped you with your permanency efforts for this youth:

Other than the caseworker, did any other staff person or external agency or community resource helped with the permanency effort? What did they contribute?

Please describe any financial, medical, educational, therapeutic, social or other resources that have been or are important for the support of this relationship.

If adoption/guardianship has not been finalized, please describe current status of this process.

**SECTION FOUR:** *Final Comments (to be answered by all respondents)*

Please describe anything else that has either helped or hindered your efforts to achieve permanency for this youth.

What have you learned in this case that you wish to contribute toward practice in the future pertaining to achieving permanency for older youth?

Exhibit B

**California Permanency for Youth Project**

“Dedicated to assuring that no youth will leave the California child welfare system without a permanent lifelong connection to a caring adult”

**Youth Intake Form**

Today’s Date:                                  Social Worker:

County:  Contra Costa  Fresno  Humboldt  Kern  Los Angeles  
 Orange             Sacramento  SanFran  SLO  Sonoma

**Section A – Background Information**

Youth’s CWS/CMS Case ID# (19-digits):

Youth’s Date of Birth:                                  Gender:  M             F

Ethnicity:             African-American             American Indian/Alaskan Native  
 Asian/Pacific Islander             Hispanic/Latino             White  
 Other: \_\_\_\_\_             Unknown

Current out-of-home placement:  
 Group Home             Foster Family Home             Foster Family Agency  
 Relative             Near Kin/Fictive Kin  
 Other Placement (specify): \_\_\_\_\_  
Residential Treatment Level  (please specify, if applicable)

Date when first placed in out-of-home care:

Date at beginning of this episode in out-of-home care:

Number of placements this episode: \_\_\_\_\_

Total number of placements, all episodes: \_\_\_\_\_

Level on Permanency Scale (check one):  
 1 (Youth has no existing or potential lifelong connections)  
 2 (Youth has a potential lifelong connection but no commitment has been made)  
 3 (Youth has a lifelong connection to a caring adult AND caseworker has obtained a signed agreement acknowledging this relationship)\*  
 4 (A change in legal status: adoption, guardianship, reunification, is in process)  
 5 (Adoption, guardianship, reunification has occurred)

\*please fax agreement to Craig Evans at (650) 858-0633 (this is a private line)

**Section B – Challenges to Achieving a Permanent Placement/Connection**

Behavioral: Does this youth have behavioral issues that you think will make finding a permanent connection more challenging? \_\_ Yes \_\_ No  
If yes, please explain:

Developmental: Does this youth have developmental challenges? \_\_ Yes \_\_ No  
If yes, please explain:

Educational:  
Is this youth performing at or below grade level (gl)? \_\_ At gl \_\_ Below gl \_\_ Unknown  
Is this youth receiving special education services? \_\_ Yes \_\_ No \_\_ Unknown  
Please describe any other educational challenges for this youth:

Medical Health: Please describe any medical issues faced by this youth:

Mental Health: Please describe any mental health issues faced by this youth:

Physical/Appearance: Please describe any physical/appearance issues for this youth that could make finding a permanent connection more challenging:

Sibling Connections: Please indicate whether or not the youth has siblings and whether or not the siblings are in out-of-home care:

**Section C – Youth Strengths and Permanency Information**

Youth's Strengths: Please describe this youth's strengths (abilities, skills, behavior, maturity, appearance, etc.):

Youth's Attitude: How would you characterize this youth's current attitude about forming a permanent connection with a caring adult? (choose one)

Wants a perm connection  Is ambivalent  Does not want a perm connection

Do not yet know the youth's attitude about forming a permanent connection

Please elaborate:

Existing Connections: Please list existing permanent connections for this youth and briefly describe the type and quality of the connection (if none, please put "none"):

Potential Connections: Please list potential permanent connections for this youth and briefly describe the type and quality of the connection (if none, please put "none"):

Other Information: Please provide any other information, factors or issues that you think will either help or hinder permanency efforts for this youth:

Exhibit C

Declaration of Intent to Maintain Contact

(I, We) \_\_\_\_\_ have received notice  
that \_\_\_\_\_ is available for regular contact.

Youth's name and DOB

(I, We) do declare our intent and commitment to maintain contact

with \_\_\_\_\_.

Youth's name

This is how (and how often) I/We intend to maintain contact:

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---

---

Name, mailing address and phone number:

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---

(I/We) do understand that it is very important to have regular contact with said child. Regular contact means no less contact than every other week and during Holidays and Birthdays.

(I/We) also understand that this document is not a legal document.

Date and Signature \_\_\_\_\_

(copy to family, youth, and caseworker)

Developed by Cheryl J. Jacobson as part of Uplift/Adolescent Connections Grant



Exhibit D

**California Permanency for Youth Project**

“Dedicated to assuring that no youth will leave the California child welfare system without a permanent lifelong connection to a caring adult”

**Casework Youth Progress Report Form**

Today’s Date: Social Worker:

County:  Contra Costa  Fresno  Humboldt  Kern  Los Angeles  
 Orange  Sacramento  SanFran  SLO  Sonoma

Youth’s CWS/CMS Case ID#:

Level on Permanency Scale:

- 1 (Youth has no existing or potential lifelong connections)
- 2 (Youth has a potential lifelong connection but no commitment has been made)
- 3 (Youth has a lifelong connection to a caring adult AND caseworker has obtained a signed agreement acknowledging this relationship)\*
- 4 (A change in legal status: adoption, guardianship, reunification, is in process)
- 5 (Adoption, guardianship, reunification has occurred)

\*please fax agreement to Craig Evans at (650) 858-0633 (this is a private line)

**General Information**

Please describe any significant change in this youth’s life or case since the date of your last report (i.e. change of case worker, change in placement or in level of care, change of one or more of the “challenges” negatively affecting adoptability)?

**Permanency Efforts**

*Youth’s attitude about permanency:* How would you characterize this youth’s current attitude about forming a permanent connection with a caring adult? (choose one)

- Wants a perm connection  Is ambivalent  Does not want a perm connection
- Do not yet know the youth’s attitude about forming a permanent connection

Please elaborate:

*Success of Permanency Efforts:* Has this youth either achieved formal permanency (adoption, guardianship) or strengthened a relationship with a caring adult which has the potential to be a lifelong permanent connection? If yes, please describe.

*Seeking Connections:* How were potential permanency connections sought and found? Who did this? Were there any unusual, special or unique methods employed? Were there any especially difficult or surprising barriers?

*Decision Making:* How and by whom were decisions made regarding specific permanency options (adoption, guardianship, etc.)? From among potential permanency resources/families how and by whom were choices made?

*Support Resources:* Other than the caseworker, has any other staff person or external agency or community resource helped with the permanency effort? What did they contribute?

*Other Comments:* Please describe anything else that has either helped or hindered your efforts to achieve permanency for this youth.

***Successful Permanency Outcomes (completed only after permanency achieved)***

Please describe any financial, medical, educational, therapeutic, social or other resources that have been or are important for the support of this relationship.

What have you learned in this case that you wish to contribute toward practice in the future pertaining to achieving permanency for older youth?