

# San Bernardino County's California Permanency for Youth Project Evaluation

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## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

### Overview

A pilot program for the California Permanency for Youth Project (CPYP) was implemented by Children and Family Services in early 2008. The pilot program ended and was evaluated in December 2009. The evaluation, conducted by the Legislation and Research Unit (LRU) and Quality Support Services (QSS), utilized case reviews and administrative data from CWS/CMS. In addition, social workers were interviewed when necessary. The evaluation compared 48 high-need youth (11 to 18 years of age) in the CPYP pilot with 48 similar youth who did not receive CPYP services (the comparison group).

### Summary of Findings

- Youth in CPYP received more services than youth in the comparison group. For instance, CPYP youth were more likely to have:
  - A CASA
  - Wraparound services
  - Family Search and Engagement
  - A Lifebook
  - A family tree/genogram
  - Grief and Loss counseling
- The majority of social workers who conducted Family Search and Engagement did not do it on their own. Most received help from others, including:
  - Relatives
  - Foster parents
  - CASA
  - Wraparound staff
  - Youth
  - Group home staff
  - Therapists
  - Other county staff
  - Former foster parents
  - Friends and mentors
- Social workers who were part of the pilot received more training on Family Search and Engagement and on Grief and Loss.
- Youth in CPYP were more likely to increase their contact with siblings and parents.

- The largest difference found between the CPYP group and the comparison group was on the number of youth who had friends and family located and contacted and the number of connections made because of these family finding efforts.
  - Approximately 85% of CPYP youth, but 13% of comparison youth, had family and friends found and contacted.
  - Nearly 73% of CPYP youth had *potential* permanent connections at the end of the pilot, compared to only 4% of comparison youth.
  - Seventy-five percent of CPYP youth had an *established* permanent connection by the end of the pilot, compare to only 4% of the comparison youth.
- CPYP youth had 417 people found and 367 contacted. Over 200 became potential connections and 166 became established connections. For the comparison youth, a total of 11 people were found and contacted. Five potential and six established connections were formed.
- Slightly more CPYP youth reunified with parents, were adopted, or were moving toward some type of legal permanency. However, the majority of CPYP youth, as well as comparison youth, remained in the same level of placement at the end of the study period. While there was a 24% decrease in group home placements for CPYP youth, group homes continued to be the most common placement for this group (31.3%).
- Stories shared by social workers demonstrated that reconnecting with family and friends, who then become a support system for the youth, led to youth's happiness, improvement of behavioral problems, a more positive attitude, and better school performance.

## Conclusion

Overall, youth in CPYP received more services and had better outcomes at the end of the 16-month study period compared to similar youth in foster care. CPYP was found to be an effective program in helping youth develop important and meaningful relationships with family and other caring adults. In turn, these relationships can lead to legal permanency, such as adoption or reunification with parents, and can provide a support system after the child leaves foster care. Given that 4,000 children in California leave foster care each year without legal permanency, and an unknown but surely large number exit without emotional permanency<sup>1</sup>, the need for CPYP is obvious. Therefore, a county-wide expansion of this program would be beneficial to youth in San Bernardino County's foster care system. Future evaluations will examine long-term outcomes for CPYP and will include a cost-saving analysis.

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<sup>1</sup> Barbara Needell et al., *Child Welfare Services Reports for California* (2008), University of California at Berkeley Center for Social Services Research website, [http://cssr.berkeley.edu/ucb\\_childwelfare](http://cssr.berkeley.edu/ucb_childwelfare) (accessed March 25, 2008).

## INTRODUCTION

### Background

Since 2003 the California Permanency for Youth Project (CPYP), through grants from the Stuart Foundation and Casey Family Programs, has provided technical assistance to California counties to help implement youth permanency practices. CPYP attempts to build permanent caring relationships for youth who otherwise would not have a permanent family by helping adults make realistic decisions on how to be involved in a youth's life.

In early 2008 San Bernardino County's Children and Family Services (CFS) joined CPYP. CFS invited community partners, current and former foster youth, and other Human Services departments to join in the planning and implementation of the CPYP pilot. The pilot ran from August 2008 to December 2009.

### Pilot Objectives

The CPYP pilot had the following objectives:

- Develop increased connectedness and contact between youth and siblings, parents, relatives and non-related extended family members (NREFM)
- Develop permanent connections between youth and adults who state and demonstrate that they will have an unconditional life-long, parent-like relationship with youth
- Return youth to parent if possible
- Move youth to a lower level of care
- Move case toward adoption or guardianship
- Develop permanency plan and connections for transitional aged youth

### Target Population

High-need youth were identified to participate in the CPYP pilot. High-need youth were characterized as those who:

- Have been in placement for more than two years
- Have a history of multiple placements
- Have no consistent and meaningful relationship with an adult
- Are receiving Permanency Planning services
- Are in higher levels of care, mostly group homes
- Are 11 ½ or older
- Youths with conservatorships

Forty-eight youth from five CFS offices were identified to participate in the pilot.

## METHODOLOGY

An evaluation of the County's CPYP pilot was conducted in December 2009. The goal of the evaluation was twofold:

1. To learn about the work done in CPYP (e.g., Were Grief and Loss activities conducted with the youth?), and
2. To determine if the pilot project has achieved its objectives (e.g., Were permanent connections formed?).

In conducting the evaluation, the Legislation and Research Unit (LRU) and Quality Support Services (QSS) reviewed the case files of the 48 youth in the pilot. The tool utilized for the case review is presented in Appendix A. Data from CWS/CMS were also used in the evaluation. In cases where data were not found in case files or CWS/CMS, social workers were contacted for the information.

In addition, we wanted to know if youth in CPYP had better outcomes than youth who were not in CPYP. Therefore, case reads were also conducted on 48 youth who were *not* part of the pilot (i.e., the comparison group). The comparison group was randomly selected from a list of high-need youth who met the following criteria:

- Have been in placement for more than two years
- Had an open placement at start of study period (August 15, 2008)
- Were 11 ½ and older
- Case ended after 1/1/2009
- Excluded
  - Non-dependent Guardians
  - Youth in Janice Truss's and Sheila Muir's Units
  - Youth assigned to a CPYP social worker

Table 1 on the following page compares youth in the CPYP pilot to youth in the comparison group on characteristics such as gender, age, ethnicity, placement history, and type of case. While both groups were similar on most characteristics, CPYP youth appeared to have higher needs than the comparison youth. The CPYP youth were placed in higher levels of care and had a history of more placement moves. In addition, nearly 15% (7) of CPYP youth had conservatorships and required intensive mental health treatment. Five of the seven conservatorship youth were placed in out-of-state residential facilities.

**Table 1: Characteristics of CPYP and Comparison Youth**

Characteristics	CPYP Pilot Youth (n=48)		Comparison Group Youth (n=48)	
	#	%	#	%
<b>Gender</b>				
Male	25	52.1%	28	58.3%
Female	23	47.9%	20	41.7%
<b>Age at start of study</b>				
11-14	14	29.2%	20	41.7%
15+	34	70.8%	25	52.1%
<b>Ethnicity</b>				
American Indian	1	2.1%	1	2.1%
Black	14	29.2%	14	29.2%
Hispanic	12	25.0%	17	35.4%
White	21	43.8%	16	33.3%
<b>Placement history prior to study</b>				
Average time in care (years)	5.3	---	5.6	---
Average number of moves	11.4	---	8.3	---
<b>Placement facility at start of study</b>				
Relative/NREFM	4	8.3%	4	8.3%
Guardian home	1	2.1%	0	0.0%
FFH	4	8.3%	6	12.5%
FFA	15	31.3%	17	35.4%
Small family home	3	6.3%	2	4.2%
Group home/residential facilities*	21	43.8%	18	37.5%
Hospitalized (5150 hold)	0	0.0%	1	2.1%
<b>Service component at start of study</b>				
Family Maintenance	0	0.0%	0	0.0%
Family Reunification	0	0.0%	3	6.3%
Permanency Planning	48	100.0%	45	93.8%
<b>Conservatorship case</b>				
Yes	7	14.6%	0	0.0%
No	41	85.4%	48	100.0%

\*Nine of these placements were in out-of-state, high level residential facilities.

Overall, the distribution of youth across CFS offices was also similar for both groups (see Table 2). Most youth from both groups came from the Gifford office (44% of CPYP group and 54% of the comparison group). Approximately 30% of both groups came from the Rialto office, and 10% came from Carousel. While there were no CPYP youth in the Rancho Cucamonga (RC) office, two comparison youth were from RC. Conversely, five CPYP youth were from Yucca Valley while no comparison youth were from this office.

**Table 2: CFS Offices of CPYP and Comparison Youth**

CFS Office	CPYP Pilot Youth (n=48)		Comparison Group Youth (n=48)	
	#	%	#	%
Carousel	5	10.4%	5	10.4%
Gifford	21	43.8%	26	54.2%
Rancho Cucamonga	0	0.0%	2	4.2%
Rialto	15	31.3%	14	29.2%
Victorville	2	4.2%	1	2.1%
Yucca Valley	5	10.4%	0	0.0%

## RESULTS

### Work Accomplished

#### *CFS Staff Training*

The first CPYP training was Family Finding Search and Engagement (FSE)<sup>2</sup> in October 2008. Three CPYP Technical Assistance (TA) sessions were held between December 2008 and April 2009. In addition, two Grief and Loss<sup>3</sup> trainings were held in January 2009. The Grief and Loss and the Family Finding Search and Engagement training were offered to *all* CSF social workers, supervisors and managers as well as to members from outside agencies (e.g., CASA, Wraparound providers, and other community partners).

Table 3 below shows CPYP training attended by social workers in the pilot program and social workers in the comparison group. There were nine CPYP social workers and 30 comparison social workers. Eight of the nine CPYP social worker attended Grief and Loss training; these eight social workers had 43 CPYP youth. Surprisingly, the majority (57%) of the comparison social workers also had Grief and Loss training. These social workers had 26 youth. All CPYP social workers attended Family Search and Engagement and TA sessions, compared to zero workers from the comparison group.

**Table 3: Training of CPYP and Comparison Social Workers**

CPYP Staff Trainings	CPYP Social Workers (n=9)		Comparison Social Workers (n=30)	
	#	%	#	%
Family Search & Engagement/TA	9	100.0%	0	0.0%
Grief & Loss	8	88.9%	17	56.7%

<sup>2</sup> FSE is a structured model that uses people-finding strategies to locate potential connections for the child and then works on developing and maintaining relationships between child and connections.

<sup>3</sup> Grief and Loss is a service model used to help the child in grieving losses, formulating self-identity, establishing trust and security through attachments, and building relationships and openness to join families on a permanent basis.

## Services and Programs Provided to Youth

Table 4 lists programs or services that were available to youth in CPYP and the comparison group. More than twice as many CPYP youth (23%) than comparison youth (10%) enrolled in Wraparound during the 16-month study period. There was also a large difference between groups in the number of youth who had a Court Appointed Special Advocate (CASA). One-third of CPYP youth had a CASA, compared to 15% of comparison youth.

**Table 4: Services and Programs Provided to Youth**

Programs/Services	CPYP Pilot (n=48)		Comparison Group (n=48)	
	#	%	#	%
CASA	16	33.3%	7	14.6%
FGDM	2	2.1%	0	0.0%
Wraparound	11	22.9%	5	10.4%

It should be noted that all youth in the Adolescent Specialized Unit (ASU) were assigned to the CPYP pilot. For this reason, 73% of CPYP youth were also part of ASU, compared to no youth from the comparison group. In addition, Families for Life (FFL) was implemented only in the ASU unit. As a result, three of the CPYP youth were also part of FFL.

Table 5 on the following page shows activities that are more specific to CPYP. For this reason, we expected less participation in these activities from the comparison group. Not surprisingly, FSE was conducted for the vast majority (90%) of youth in the CPYP pilot<sup>4</sup>, compared to 13% of comparison youth. Five youth in CPYP did not get FSE for the following reasons:

- Youth was in process of being adopted
- Youth was 18 and moving to THPP
- Social worker could not get help or support to conduct FSE
- Youth became AWOL or ward of the court shortly after pilot began

A third of CPYP youth had a life book started compared to only 4% of youth in the comparison group, and 35% of CPYP youth had a family tree or genogram compared to only 4% of comparison youth. The majority (77%) of CPYP youth participated in Grief and Loss counseling. While 54% of comparison youth had a social worker who was trained on Grief and Loss, just 21% received some type of Grief and Loss counseling. The majority of CPYP (92%) and comparison youth (69%) were assessed by their social workers for permanency needs and desires.

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<sup>4</sup> Two CPYP social workers reported they only worked on the *engagement* process between the youth and known family and friends; these two cases were included in the FSE count.



According to Permanency Team Meeting (PTM) forms sent to LRU, nearly a third (31%) of CPYP youth had *at least one* meeting to discuss emotional and legal permanency, of which most were Children and Family Team Meetings for Wraparound. PTM data were not collected for the comparison group.

**Table 5: CPYP-related Services and Activities Provided to Youth**

CPYP Related Activities	CPYP Pilot Youth (n=48)		Comparison Group Youth (n=48)	
	#	%	#	%
Family Search and Engagement	43	89.6%	6	12.5%
Assessment of permanency needs and desires	44	91.7%	33	68.8%
Life Book	16	33.3%	2	4.2%
Family Tree/Genogram	17	35.4%	2	4.2%
Grief and Loss	37	77.1%	10	20.8%
Permanency team meetings	15	31.3%	NA	0.0%

CPYP social workers had help conducting FSE on the majority (77%; 33) of cases. Comparison social workers had help on 2 (33%) out of the 6 cases that had FSE. Table 6 below lists the people who helped social workers with FSE.

**Table 6: Family Search and Engagement Resources used by CPYP and Comparison Groups**

Resources	CPYP Pilot Group	Comparison Group
	#	#
Relatives	16	1
Current foster parents	10	0
CASA	8	0
Wraparound staff	8	0
Youth	7	1
Group Home Staff	6	0
Therapist	6	0
County Staff*	5	0
CFS Supervisor	4	0
Former foster parents	3	0
Friend of youth	2	0
Other**	4	0

\*ILP staff, county volunteer, DBH social worker.

\*\*Family consultant, American Eagle, mentor, FFA SW.

## *Transitional Aged Youth Services/Activities*

To learn whether or not CPYP youth who were close to aging out of foster care participated in or received more services than other youth, participation in Transitioning-Out Conferences and THPP was examined. In addition, case files were read to learn whether or not youth had an ILP Emancipation Checklist, were aware of housing options after foster care, or had a permanency plan in place.

Transitioning-Out Conferences began in the Western region in May 2009. Eleven CPYP youth and eight comparison youth were 16 or older and in the Western region at the time these conferences began and were eligible for the conferences. No CPYP youth and two comparison youth had a Transitioning-Out Conference.

The Transitional Housing Placement Program (THPP) is available to youth 16 to 19 years old and in foster care. Of the 32 CPYP youth eligible for THPP, six (18.8%) participated. Of the 26 eligible comparison youth, two (7.7%) participated.

Eight CPYP youth and six comparison youth aged out of foster care during the study period. Of these youth the vast majority had a completed ILP emancipation checklist, were aware of housing options after foster care, and had a permanency plan in place. The one CPYP youth who did not have an emancipation checklist, was not aware of housing options and did not have a permanency plan in place was AWOL most of the study period.

**Table 7: Preparation of Youth who Aged of Out of Care**

	CPYP Pilot Youth (n=8)		Comparison Group Youth (n=6)	
	#	%	#	%
Had ILP Emancipation Checklist	7	87.5%	5	83.3%
Was aware of housing options after foster care	7	87.5%	6	100.0%
Had a permanency plan in place	7	87.5%	6	100.0%

## **Outcomes**

### *Contact with Siblings*

Forty-five CPYP youth and 44 comparison youth have at least one sibling. The extent of youth's contact with sibling at start of study period was compared to contact at end of study period. Face-to-face visits as well as correspondence via telephone and e-mail were counted as contacts.

As shown in Table 8 below, nearly 38% of CPYP youth had increased contact with siblings during the pilot period. In fact, seven of the CPYP youth had *no* contact with siblings at the beginning of study period, but had regular contact by the end of study period, either by phone or in person. In addition, one was living with siblings by the end of study period. Of the youth in the comparison group, 18% had increased contact with siblings. Two of these youth went from having no contact to some contact, either by phone or in person.

Conversely, contact with siblings decreased for about 21% of youth in the comparison group, compared to 16% of youth in CPYP. Reasons CPYP youth had less contact with siblings included:

- Youth frequently AWOL
- Youth not stable
- Youth had behavioral problems
- Youth In juvenile hall
- Siblings moved out of state

Reasons for less contact between comparison group and siblings were similar to those for CPYP youth. Contact between siblings remained the same for the remainder of youth.

**Table 8: Change of Contact with Siblings during Study Period**

Contact with Siblings	CPYP Pilot Youth with Siblings (n=45)		Comparison Group Youth with Siblings (n=44)	
	#	%	#	%
Increased	17	37.8%	8	18.2%
Remained the same	21	46.7%	27	61.4%
Decreased	7	15.6%	9	20.5%

*Contact with Parents*

Contact with youth’s mother and father were examined separately. Again, face-to-face visits as well as telephone calls and e-mails were counted as contact between youth and parents.

First, mothers’ parental rights were examined. Over half of mothers in both CPYP and the comparison group had parental rights. However, more CPYP mothers (25%) than comparison mothers (10%) had their parental rights terminated and more comparison mothers (25%) than CPYP mothers (13%) had unknown whereabouts (see Table 9 on the following page).

**Table 9: Parental Status of Mothers**

Parental Status of Mother	CPYP Pilot Youth (n=48)		Comparison Group Youth (n=48)	
	#	%	#	%
Has parental rights	25	52.1%	26	54.2%
Parental rights terminated	12	25.0%	5	10.4%
Whereabouts unknown	6	12.5%	12	25.0%
Deceased	4	8.3%	5	10.4%
Other* (no contact order)	1	2.1%	0	0.0%

\*Mother had a “no contact” order because of threats to runaway with children.

Of mothers with parental rights, 60% in CPYP had increased contact with their son or daughter, compared to 19% of mothers in the comparison group. In addition, six CPYP mothers whose parental rights had been terminated continued to have contact with the youth, of which three had increased contact during study period. In comparison, one comparison mother whose rights had been terminated had increased contact. One CPYP youth was AWOL or in juvenile hall during most of the study period and had decreased contact with the mother. Twenty percent of CPYP mothers and 23% of comparison mothers had no contact with youth during entire study period.

**Table 10: Change of Contact with Mother during Study Period**

Contact with Mother	CPYP Pilot Youth (n=25)		Comparison Group Youth (n=26)	
	#	%	#	%
Increased	15	60.0%	5	19.2%
Remained the same	3	12.0%	10	38.5%
Decreased	2	8.0%	5	19.2%
No contact during study period	5	20.0%	6	23.1%

Contrary to mothers, less than half of fathers have parental rights. In fact, only 29% of CPYP fathers and 38% of comparison fathers have parental rights. Also, the whereabouts of 33% of CPYP fathers and 29% of comparison fathers are unknown (see Table 11 on the following page).

**Table 11: Parental Status of Father**

Parental Status of Father	CPYP Pilot Youth (n=48)		Comparison Group Youth (n=48)	
	#	%	#	%
Has parental rights	14	29.2%	18	37.5%
Parental rights terminated	11	22.9%	4	8.3%
Whereabouts unknown	16	33.3%	14	29.2%
Deceased	3	6.3%	10	20.8%
Other*	4	8.3%	2	4.2%

\*CPYP—A father had a “no contact” order because of threats to runaway with children and 3 youth had no father on record; Comparison Group—Two youth had no father on record.

Of fathers with parental rights, 43% in CPYP had increased contact with youth during the study period, compared to 22% of fathers in the comparison group. One youth from each group did not have any contact with father during study period and no youth had decreased contact.

**Table 12: Change of Contact with Father during Study Period**

Contact with Father	CPYP Pilot Youth (n=14)		Comparison Group Youth (n=18)	
	#	%	#	%
Increased	6	42.9%	4	22.2%
Remained the same	7	50.0%	13	72.2%
Decreased	0	0.0%	0	0.0%
No contact during study period	1	7.1%	1	5.6%

### *Placement Stability*

Prior to the pilot project, both groups had been in care for an average of about 5 years and had a history of multiple placement moves. The CPYP group had an average of 11.4 placement moves before the pilot, while the comparison group had an average of 8.3 moves. Placement stability for this evaluation was measured by looking at the number of placement moves for cases open at least 12 months during the study period. Placement moves included hospitalizations, incarcerations, and AWOLs.

Forty CPYP cases and 42 comparison cases were open for 12 or more months during the study period. Youth in CPYP appeared to be slightly more stable with nearly 38% remaining in the same placement during the entire study period, compared to 26% of the comparison youth. However, of those who moved, CPYP youth moved more often

(77 total moves) than the comparison group (62 total moves). *It should be noted that some of these moves could have been to lower levels of care.* Youth in both groups had the same number of AWOLS, with approximately 25% from each group having runaway at least once during the 16-month period.

**Table 13: Placement Moves during Study Period**

Number of Placement Moves	CPYP Pilot Youth (n=40)		Comparison Group Youth (n=42)	
	#	%	#	%
0	15	37.5%	11	26.2%
1	7	17.5%	15	35.7%
2	6	15.0%	10	23.8%
3	5	12.5%	2	4.8%
4	4	10.0%	1	2.4%
5	0	0.0%	1	2.4%
6	1	2.5%	2	4.8%
10	1	2.5%	0	0.0%
11	1	2.5%	0	0.0%

*Movement to Legal Permanency or Lower Levels of Care*

Of the 48 youth in the CPYP pilot, six (13%) established legal permanency during the study period: five reunified with their parents and one was adopted. Half as many youth from the comparison group established permanency.

**Table 14: Legal Permanency Established**

Established permanency	CPYP Pilot Youth (n=48)		Comparison Group Youth (n=48)	
	#	%	#	%
Reunification	5	10.4%	3	6.3%
Adoption	1	2.1%	0	0.0%
Guardianship	0	0.0%	0	0.0%

Movement *toward* permanency was also examined. Five (10%) CPYP cases were moving toward reunification or adoption. While two (4%) comparison cases were moving toward some type of permanency (reunification and guardianship).

**Table 15: Movement toward Legal Permanency**

Case Moving Toward Permanency	CPYP Pilot Youth (n=48)		Comparison Group Youth (n=48)	
	#	%	#	%
Reunification	2	4.2%	1	2.1%
Adoption	3	6.3%	0	0.0%
Guardianship	0	0.0%	1	2.1%

Placements at the start and end of the study period (or case closure) were compared. Table 16 below shows the number of youth who moved to a lower less restrictive placement, remained in the same level of placement, or moved to a higher more restrictive placement. The following is a hierarchy of placement settings from least to most restrictive:

1. Reunification with parent/Adoption/Guardianship
2. Relative/NREFM Home
3. Foster Family Home
4. Foster Family Agency Certified Home
5. Small Family Home
6. Group Home or other type of residential facility
7. Juvenile Hall

The majority (58%) of youth in both groups remained in the same level of care. Slightly more youth in CPYP moved to a less restrictive setting, including reunification and adoption. Slightly more youth in CPYP also moved to a higher level of care, while more comparison youth went AWOL.

**Table 16: Change in Level of Care from Start to End of Study Period or Case Closure**

Change in Level of Care	CPYP Pilot Youth (n=48)		Comparison Group Youth (n=48)	
	#	%	#	%
Moved to lower level	12	25.0%	10	20.8%
Remained in same level	28	58.3%	28	58.3%
Moved to higher level	7	14.6%	5	10.4%
Went AWOL	1	2.1%	5	10.4%

Table 17 on the following page shows placements at the end of the study period. While there was a 24% decrease in group home/residential facility placements for CPYP youth, group homes remained the most common type of placement for this group (five

were conservatorship cases). There was a 33% drop in group home/residential facility placements for the comparison youth, whose most common type of placement was an FFA. However, as illustrated in the previous tables, the CPYP group had more moves to legal permanency.

**Table 17: Placement at End of Study Period or at Case Closure**

Placement	CPYP Pilot Youth (n=48)		Comparison Group Youth (n=48)	
	#	%	#	%
Reunification	5	10.4%	3	6.3%
Adoption	1	2.1%	0	0.0%
Guardianship	0	0.0%	0	0.0%
Relative/NREFM	5	10.4%	8	16.7%
FFH	3	6.3%	1	2.1%
THPP FFA	1	2.1%	0	0.0%
FFA	14	29.2%	15	31.3%
Small Family Home	1	2.1%	3	6.3%
Group Home/Residential Facility	15	31.3%	12	25.0%
Juvenile Hall	2	4.2%	1	2.1%
AWOL	1	2.1%	5	10.4%

### *Permanent Connections*

Through Family Search and Engagement, the majority of CPYP youth (85%) and nearly 13% of comparison youth had people found and contacted. The number of people found for each youth ranged from 0 to 41 for CPYP youth and 0 to 5 for the comparison group. In addition, the majority of CPYP youth had potential or established permanent connections, compared to 4% of comparison group<sup>5</sup>.

**Table 18: Youth with People Found, Contacted, Connected during Study Period**

Youth	CPYP Pilot Youth (n=48)		Comparison Group Youth (n=48)	
	#	%	#	%
Had people found	41	85.4%	6	12.5%
Had people contacted	40	83.3%	6	12.5%
Have potential permanent connections	35	72.9%	2	4.2%
Have established permanent connections*	36	75.0%	2	4.2%

\*Of the 36 CPYP youth, nine had a connection at start of pilot. Thus, 27 or 56% of CPYP youth found a permanent connection during the pilot program.

<sup>5</sup> A permanent connection is defined as “an adult who consistently states and demonstrates that s/he has entered an unconditional life-long parent-like relationship with the youth. The youth agrees that the adult will play this role in his/her life.”



Table 19 below shows the number of people found and contacted for each group and the number of potential and established permanent connections. Over 30 times more people were found and contacted for the CPYP group than were found for the comparison group. Moreover, there were significantly more potential and permanent connections for the CPYP youth than for the comparison youth.

**Table 19: Number of People Found, Contacted, and Connected during Study Period**

People produced by Family Search and Engagement	CPYP Pilot Group	Comparison Group
	#	#
People found	417	11
People contacted	367	11
People became potential permanent connections	218	5
People became established permanent connections	166	6

Table 20 lists the relationship of the permanent connections to the youth. The majority of permanent connections established were with relatives.

**Table 20: Established Permanent Connections**

Established Permanent Connections	CPYP Pilot Group	Comparison Group
	#	#
Other relative (e.g., aunts, uncles, adult cousins)	59	0
Adult siblings	26	3
Biological mother	14	1
Foster parent	14	1
Friends/Non-related extended family members	14	0
Paternal grandparent	13	0
Maternal grandparent	12	1
Biological father	6	0
CASA or other mentor	4	0
Social Worker	2	0

## *Success Stories*

**MD is a 17-year-old male with a brain injury.** He was under conservatorship and was placed in a residential facility out of state at the beginning of the pilot. MD's family had stopped calling him, and he lost contact with his parents whose parental rights had been terminated. The family was afraid of MD and would not allow face-to-face visitation. MD became very depressed about the loss of contact with his family. MD's therapist and CFS social worker conducted grief and loss counseling to help him deal with his issues.

With help from the search unit, the social worker found the address of MD's parents. In May 2009, the social worker took MD to the area where his parents lived. However, it turned out to be a wrong address. As they drove around, MD started to remember landmarks and eventually found the grandparents' home. They made contact with grandparents, who then called the father to meet with them. The father met them at a coffee shop and visited with MD for a while. The family had been reluctant to have contact with MD since he got physical with his younger brother several years ago. The father was surprised by MD's new positive behavior and psychiatric changes.

Since that first visit, the father and grandmother have continued to call MD and coordinated a Family Reunion where MD was able to meet other family members. MD's mother, sister, cousin, uncle, brother and grandfather have traveled out of state to visit him. In addition, MD was able to spend the holidays with his grandparents and parents in California. It went well, and MD is happy and looking forward to the next visit. While MD remains in a treatment facility out of state, he now has contact and the support of his family. At the end of the pilot project MD had four committed permanent connections: his grandparents and biological parents.

**DH is an 18-year-old male with emotional problems and has had several placement moves while in care.** At the beginning of the pilot he was living in an out-of-state treatment facility. The CFS social worker found and contacted a former family friend who at one time had planned to adopt DH. This friend had moved to a state next to where DH was placed. The social worker visited the friend and arranged for the friend to visit DH. As DH's behavior and mental health issues stabilized he was able to spend weekends and holidays with the friend's family. The friend also provided the social worker with contact information for DH's biological mother.

The social worker contacted DH's biological mother who was very interested in reengaging with her son. Initially, DH and his mother communicated through phone and letters. As they rebuilt their relationship, DH learned his mother had a large extended support network of family and friends. Soon thereafter, DH started visiting his mother. DH graduated from high school and went to live with his mother and the extended family. His CWS case is now closed. The family friend continues to maintain contact with DH as well and has stated that DH is welcome to live with them should his circumstances change. The social worker believes DH's success story is an example of

a combination of appropriate treatment, which assisted in stabilizing the child's behavior and mental health issues, and the support of biological family and friends.

**TS is a 17-year-old female with numerous placements, including hospitalizations, and a history of prostitution.** TS went AWOL during the pilot in early 2009. The CFS social worker got TS's mother involved in the search. TS came back in March 09. Upon her return, the social worker and the mother made arrangements for TS to have a 29-day trial visit with her grandmother in West Virginia.

Aunts, uncles and cousins also live in West Virginia. These relatives were professionals and business owners who presented a very different lifestyle to TS. This extended family became connected with TS and made demands for higher standards of living. Some adjustments had to be made, but the family and TS stuck to the plan.

In the meantime, the mother's significant other left, which was good because this person was the main source of conflict. In addition, the mother lost her job. TS used her SSI money to get an apartment and transport her mother and siblings to West Virginia. TS has a job and is going to school. Her CWS case is now closed as she is reunified with her mom. She also has the support of 12 committed permanent connections that include aunts, uncles and cousins.

**CJ is a 16-year-old male whose adoptive mother died five years ago.** CJ was adopted when he was two years. According to family members, life was fairly normal while the children grew up until the father began leaving home due to substance abuse. After the mother died in 2005, an adult sister (P J) obtained guardianship of CJ. Unfortunately, PJ physically abused CJ then kicked him out of the house. At that time, Children and Family Services became involved and placed CJ with N, a non-related extended family member, who was his mother's best friend. N helped the social worker coordinate and encourage CJ to have visits with his adult brother, LJ.

A year later, N's situation changed and was no longer able to care for CJ. CJ was then placed in an FFA. N continued to keep in touch with CJ. At that time, CJ was upset at his siblings and other family members and refused to have anything to do with them. The social worker encouraged CJ to continue to visit with his brother LJ. The visits with LJ were going well. During this time, the father resurfaced. Unfortunately he had continued a transient drug life style and was ill. LJ helped CJ reconnect with his father and would take CJ to visit the father at the hospital. For a while, the father was better and was released from the hospital and came to live with LJ. CJ continued to visit his brother LJ and also reconciled with his father and would look forward to visiting him as well. Shortly after this, the father passed away.

CJ attended his father's funeral and was grateful that he had the opportunity to make peace and reconnect with him before he died. While at his father's funeral, C J reconnected with two of his sisters, including PJ, and one of his other brothers. He also

reconnected with aunts, uncles, cousins, and long time friends of the family. The social worker had C J introduce him to various family members. The social worker made it a point to write down family members' names and contact numbers to help CJ stay connected with them. LJ has continued to be a great support for CJ and has helped in keeping him connected with immediate family members as well as distant family members and close friends of the family. With the support of his family, CJ's negative behaviors have diminished and his grades have risen from D's and F's to all passing grades. By the end of the pilot, CJ had two established permanent connections (LJ and N) and five potential permanent connections.

## CONCLUSION

Overall, CPYP appears to have benefited youth. First, youth in the pilot received more services compared to other youth in foster care. CPYP youth were more likely to have Wraparound, a CASA, a Lifebook, a Family Tree, Grief and Loss counseling, and Family Search and Engagement (FSE). In addition, the youth's CPYP social workers were more likely to be trained on FSE and Grief and Loss and had more technical support for family finding.

Youth in CPYP also had better outcomes at the end of the 16-month study period. Youth in the pilot program had more contact with siblings and parents, more movement toward legal permanency, and more potential and established permanent connections. Although we did not see significant movement to lower levels of care for CPYP youth, the relationships that CPYP developed during the pilot serve as building blocks for establishing legal permanency or movement out of restrictive settings to lower levels of care. The four success stories presented in this report serve as examples of how a social worker's efforts to find family and facilitate relationships can lead to positive outcomes.

Anecdotal data and observations during the study period and evaluation also revealed the following about the program:

- CPYP adds a significant amount of work to a social worker's caseload.
- CPYP work was not consistently documented, probably due to time constraints.
- Most social workers need help with FSE.
- Some social workers *not* in CPYP are already doing related work such as searching for family and developing relationships between youth and significant others.
- More youth need CPYP services.

There were also suggestions for help with Family Search and Engagement:

- Subscribe to a People Finder web site (most are not free).
- Hire retired social workers to help with Family Finding.
- Use community volunteers to help with Family Finding.

- Have one person in each unit dedicated to Family Finding.

## **LIMITATIONS AND FUTURE RESEARCH DIRECTIONS**

This evaluation demonstrates that CPYP can be an effective program in building and strengthening relationships between youth and caring adults who can become life-long permanent connections. Nevertheless, the evaluation had some limitations.

First, most youth in CPYP were also in the Adolescent Specialized Unit (ASU). Youth in ASU receive more intensive case management than youth in a regular unit. For this reason, ASU services could have led to some of the results found in this evaluation. Second, the study period was only 16 months, which may not have been enough time to conduct all of the Family Search and Engagement work needed. Moreover, the first Family Finding training was not provided until 3 months into the pilot, and Wraparound and CASA did not have the court's permission to help with family finding until mid 2009. Stronger results may have been found if the pilot ran for a longer period of time. In addition, 16 months is not enough time to see long-term outcomes.

For this reason, we will be conducting a follow-up evaluation to look at long-term outcomes. A cost-benefit analysis is also planned as part of a future evaluation.

**APPENDIX A**

CPYP Review Tool - FINAL	Study Period	Aug 15 2008 - Dec 2009
<b>Name:</b> _____ <b>Case Number:</b> _____		
<b>Office:</b> _____ <b>SW:</b> _____		
<b>Group:</b> CPYP      Comparison <b>Age:</b> _____		
<b>1. Placement at <u>start</u> of pilot (8/15/08)</b> Was placement out of state?                      Yes              No ___ Group Home    ___ FFA                                      ___ Small Family Home ___ NF GH            ___ Relative/NREFM                      ___ Other _____ ___ FFH                ___ AWOL* Indicate # of weeks AWOL if gone for <u>more</u> than 1 wk _____ <i>*If youth AWOL less than 1 week, indicate placement when child returned.</i>		
<b>2. Placement at <u>end</u> of pilot (Nov 2009) or when case closed:</b> Was placement out of state?                      Yes              No ___ Reunified with parent(s)                      ___ Adoption home                      ___ Guardianship home ___ Group Home                                      ___ FFA                                      ___ Small Family Home ___ NF GH                                      ___ Relative/NREFM                      ___ AWOL ___ FFH                                      ___ Other _____		
<b>3. Number of placement moves during review period*</b> _____ <b># of placements closed due to AWOL?</b> _____ <i>*Include hospitalizations and stays in juvenile hall</i>		
<b>4. Did youth's CFS case close during study period?</b> Yes (answer 4a and 4b)                      No (skip to 5) 4a. Date case closed in CWS/CMS _____ 4b. If yes, what was the reason for case closure? <b>(investigate court ordered terminations)</b> ___ Adoption finalized (relative or non-relative)                      ___ Incarcerated-Adjudicated 601/602 ___ Closed ICPC/International Request                      ___ Reunified w/Parent/Guardian (court) ___ Guardianship Established/Child Placed                      ___ Reunified w/Parent/Guardian (Non-court) ___ Family Stabilized (FM)                      ___ Refused Services ___ Kin-GAP                      ___ Other _____ ___ Emancipation/Age of Majority (answer questions 4c-4e below) _____ ↓ <b>Answer 4c-4e only if youth emancipated/aged out during study period.</b> 4c. Did youth have a <u>current</u> ILP Emancipation Checklist?                      Yes              No 4d. Was youth aware of housing options after foster care?                      Yes              No              Unk 4e. Was there a permanency plan in place (e.g., to stay in contact and maintain relationships with important people in youth's life)?                      Yes              No              Unk		
<b>5. If youth between 16 and 18 years of age, did s/he participate in the Transitional Housing Placement Program (THPP) during study period?</b> Yes              No              NA--youth not 16-18 years of age during study period		
<b>6. Did youth have a Court Appointed Special Advocate (CASA) during study period?</b> Yes              No		

7. Does youth have sibling(s)?                      Yes (go to 8)                      No (skip to 9)

8. Overall, how did youth's contact with sibling(s) change during the study period?

**Contact:**                      Decreased                      Increased                      Remained the same

Explain:

9. How did frequency of contact with mom change during study period?

\_\_\_ Mom deceased                      **When did mom die?**                      \_\_\_ prior to study period                      \_\_\_ during study period  
(skip to 11)

\_\_\_ Parental rights terminated--visits decreased/ended (skip to 11)

\_\_\_ Other, explain \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_ Mom has parental rights (choose a response below and explain)

**Contact:**                      Decreased                      Increased                      Remained the same                      Reunified with mom (skip to 11)

Explain:

10. Is case moving toward reunification with mom?                      Yes                      No                      NA

11. How did frequency of contact with dad change during study period?

\_\_\_ Dad deceased                      **When did dad die?**                      \_\_\_ prior to study period                      \_\_\_ during study period  
(skip to 13)

\_\_\_ Parental rights terminated--visits decreased/ended (skip to 13)

\_\_\_ Other, explain \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_ Dad has parental rights (choose a response below and explain)

**Contact:**                      Decreased                      Increased                      Remained the same                      Reunified with mom (skip to 11)

Explain:

12. Is case moving toward reunification with dad?                      Yes                      No                      NA

13. Is case moving toward the goal of legal guardianship? Yes No NA

14. Is case moving toward adoption? Yes No NA

15. Was family search and engagement process started during study period? Yes (answer 15a-15e)  Confirmed w/SW  
No (Skip to 16--Please explain if CPYP youth)

Explain

15a. If yes, who helped social worker with family search and engagement? (Check all that apply)

Wraparound  Social Worker  
 CASA  County Volunteer, specify \_\_\_\_\_  
 Relative  Other, specify \_\_\_\_\_

15b. If yes, how many people were found through the process? \_\_\_\_\_  Confirmed w/SW

15c. Of those found, how many were contacted (either face-to-face, phone, e-mail)? \_\_\_\_\_  Confirmed w/SW

15d. How many became potential permanent connections? \_\_\_\_\_  Confirmed w/SW

15e. How many became established permanent connections? \_\_\_\_\_  Confirmed w/SW

Established permanent connections' relationship to child: (write # next to relationship type, select all that apply)

Bio Mother  Maternal grandparent  Sibling  Other \_\_\_\_\_  
 Bio Father  Paternal grandparent  Foster parent  Other \_\_\_\_\_

16. Was a life book started? Yes No  Confirmed w/SW

17. Was a genogram or family tree started? Yes No  Confirmed w/SW

18. Did social worker receive Family Search and Engagement training?  
Yes No  Confirmed w/SW

19. Did social worker receive Grief and Loss training?  
Yes No  Confirmed w/SW

19a. If yes, did social worker conduct Grief and Loss activities with youth?  
Yes No  Confirmed w/SW

20. Did social worker assess youth's needs and desires for permanency?  Confirmed w/SW  
Yes No

Comments

Reviewer

Date