

TRI-COUNTY MEETING

July 25, 2006

Location: Kern County

Attendance: San Luis Obispo; Summer Frappier, Katie McCain, and Patrick Considine Kern; Tom Baca, Sandy Turner, Matthew Bohn, Darryn Green and Curt Williams Fresno; Lisa Nichols, Jessica Corrillo, Veronica Salmeron, and Jennifer Rowan
CPYP-Cheryl Jacobson (chair)

FRESNO UPDATES:

Fresno has just completed their handbook and copies were passed out. It is written with the goal that anyone from professionals, youth, citizens etc., can pick it up and understand permanency and their role in regard to permanency. They plan to only distribute it when they are making a presentation regarding permanency so that it will be a tool that is used and not put on shelves.

Fresno is beginning Family Connections Conferences. They are developing the curriculum as they are revising the TDM process to better fit this type of conference.

The CPYP Task Force continues to meet twice a month. The next steps of their plan are to focus on ER. They are exploring utilizing interns to create a genogram for each family being seen at ER.

ILP workshops are now in the second cycle. Fresno believes that there must be constant training in order to keep the issue of permanency utmost in the minds of their staff. They believe this has been successful as it is frequently that permanency is brought up by staff in TDMs and in emancipation conferences.

They continue to celebrate successes. They purchase a tree from a teacher's supply store and have it on the wall in the ER Department. Lots of questions are being asked about it so it is generating lots of interest.

Fresno would like to plan a forum involving stars who were in foster care or who were adopted. They recently had an opportunity to interview Keyshia Cole, a hip hop artist who was in foster care and adopted.

What is going well-Administrative Support is strong. Also, the work with the twelve targeted youth is well coordinated with a large group of collaborators assisting in the process. Each youth has a family finding three ring binders in which all search information, genograms, and notes by anyone who does anything on the case regarding family finding are kept. A day long working barbeque was held to begin the working process that helped develop team cohesiveness and commitment. There are three

coordinators who are responsible for coordinating and tracking the process for four of the youth.

What is not going well-case reporting. It has been difficult to get caseworkers to complete the information. They have talked with Administration who is taking a role now in resolving this issue.

Cheryl pointed out that one of the areas that is going well in Fresno is the great attendance at TA sessions and the number of collaborators at the table (up to 26 plus who are actually working on cases for family finding). A discussion was held on how to get collaborators involved. Two strategies pointed out were to actually invite the specific people who are assigned to cases, for example the assigned CASA for a case or the group home staff person assigned to a case and a second strategy of providing a social incentive such as the work day barbeque. Because of the number of people working on cases, organization is critical and thus the importance of the binders and contact forms. A draw back is that some the social workers on the cases are not in the sessions and aren't up to date on their cases. It was suggested that we brain storm in the next meeting how to involve caseworkers more and to have this as an area included in next year's plans.

KERN COUNTY UPDATES:

Tom Baca reported that it was mid May before the CPYP project was fully staffed. They have targeted 18 group home youth and their siblings (36). They have one pending placement that has resulted from family finding. Their Kick-Off was held in June with over 200 people attending a dinner and presentation. Some collaborators were in attendance, including Wrap and CASA. Both the county Family to Family initiative and Family to Family non-county mentoring are on board and attended.

One of Kern's challenges has been that because the CPYP project is located under the ILP unit, it is being seen as an ILP project not affecting all. This issue is addressed often to lessen this myth.

Cheryl pointed out that strength of Kern's project is the amount of work being done on cases between TA sessions. Kern is setting up half day blocks of time in between TA sessions to work on the family finding plan.

Darren passed out a youth survey that is under way to learn what their youth understand and believe about permanency. This survey is being tabulated on line, a very effective way to save time in tabulation. As soon as the survey is tabulated, Darren plans on getting the youth group going.

San Luis Obispo County Updates:

Patrick Considine reported that their committee continues to meet monthly with good attendance by some collaborators, which helps to stay focused on permanency issues. The educational sub group has successfully developed an agreement with the schools to provide educational information timely including number of credits the student has earned etc. Cheryl pointed out that a strength is that CASA is the entity that is responsible for gathering this information. Patrick pointed out other related initiatives they are involved in such as New Ways to Work and currently their exploration of connected by 25.

A major change for San Luis is that permanency cases are now spread out across all units in the department and this becomes the challenge as more workers are involved and need trained on permanency.

A success has been the permanency planning case staffing which happen twice monthly. In the staffing, action plans are reviewed and this has resulted in moving cases along. Regional meetings can be scheduled when caseworkers call the meeting because of issues in cases.

San Luis is beginning Youth Inclusion Meetings, which historically has not been one of their counties strengths. The meetings include family members if TPR has not occurred. They are triggered by data automation 6-8 weeks prior to a court review being due.

San Luis has a successful CYC with 20-25 youth coming to meetings. Permanency issues are being “brought to the table” and the youth are also assisting in other county training, such as foster parent training.

What is going well-Youth Involvement and the Youth Advisory Group talking about permanency. Not going well-The shift to lots of workers and need to train them about permanency. All the workers were invited to the supervisor’s meeting where permanency issues were on the agenda, which was a good start. Also, not going well is the search engine they are using. They are exploring Accurint, which is providing more relatives and also the results are in an easy to read diagram of the family constellation. This cost \$125.00 per month per user with unlimited access.

San Luis’s Heart Gallery will have its opening night on Sept 1. Some of the CPYP targeted youth are in the gallery.

CPYP UPDATES:

Time frames: Cheryl reported that the first year grant will run through March 31, 2007. In January planning and writing of the new grant that begin April 1, 2007 and runs through March 31, 2008 will be done. As discussed earlier one area to consider is how to expand and involve more caseworkers.

Modification of Six Steps: An opening paragraph has been added. It reads: **During each of the following steps, unless there is a compelling mental health reason, the youth is consulted and involved. For instance, in the “Discovery” step, the youth is asked to help make a family tree and talk about what family and fictive kin and friends he knows.**

Consult Form: The TA consult form has been revised and copies were provided. It now includes a place to designate if the youth is GLBTQ.

Evaluation/Significant Events Interviews/Quarterly Reports: Significant Events Interviews are taking place with at least one per county. Quarterly Reports are now beginning on each case.

Preparing Youth for Permanent Family Connections: CPYP paid Bob Lewis to provide California with a shorten version of his curriculum. Because counties still consider it too long, The Bay Area Academy was asked to again shorten it to a one day training. After they ran the curriculum several times in the Bay area, it has now been picked up by another area and has been given in Sacramento. Sacramento reported that most of the people in attendance felt it was a very good training. Fresno indicated that they will follow-up to get it scheduled for their county.

County Case Report utilizing the Six Steps:

Each county was asked to share about one successful family finding case with emphasis on giving details about each of the six steps that were utilized in the process.

Kern County reported on “Jimmy”. In the Discovery Step over 40 relatives were discovered, several who were close by to him. In doing case mining they discovered that most all of the old phone numbers were still good and that there were a number of “stable” relatives most of them who lived locally. Jimmy was interviewed and when asked what he needs only indicated comic books and a power cord for his computer. With help, he expanded it to a job and then indicated that he wants a “home”. In the Engagement Step relatives indicated a desire to be involved in planning and a brother volunteered to have the meeting at his home. He also stated that he would be interested in having Jimmy living with him but had concerns that related to his wife being pregnant. To prepare for Step three “Planning”, Wrap was engaged to join the meeting that took place in the brother’s home. The case continues in the Planning Step as the number of relatives who attended was small. More relatives will be engaged and another meeting held. The brother is pursuing placement so the next meeting that will take place will involve more relative involved in step four “Decision Making” to support the placement, to commit to Jimmy, and to develop Plan B, C, and D. Having Wrap involved has been critical to the success of the process.

San Luis Obispo reported on Bryce. In the “Discovery Step” the Permanency Case manager met with him and identified family and others important to him. He identifies his three siblings, one that is older that when called in the “Engagement Step” immediately indicated a willingness to have Bryce live with him. In this case, San Luis went to Planning and Decision Steps and put service resources in place to support a placement with his brother. Now they have returned to the “Engagement Step” and are looking for family members to bring into Bryce’s life to be his connections. He recently went to visit grandparents out of state. Many of his paternal relatives are now deceased. They have located some paternal cousins.

Fresno reported on Louie. In the Discovery Stage they located Mom who is living with an Aunt in Fresno. During the Discovery and Engagement Stage they did not learn that Mom is terminally ill. It has been a learning process and they now know how to ask questions in this stage that will reveal more information. In the Discovery Stage they learned of a sister in a nearby town, and other relatives through out California. Another error was made in that someone provided Louie with his Aunt’s phone number. Perhaps Louie was “too informed of each effort of the family finding process, he kept asking for the phone number and someone provided it to him. As a result, he started making multiple calls to the home and learned about his Mom’s illness and that his grandparent had committed suicide. He became very distraught and even lost his placement. The plan is to expedite the Engagement and Planning Step so that a meeting can be held soon. The unmet needs that will be addressed will be to build the family network around Louie and his siblings to take on the role of how to tell the kids and how to help them in their grief work. It is important in the Engagement Process to meet with the people who will attend the meeting in advance to prepare them for the meeting.

Next Meeting: The next meeting is October 17, 2006 in San Luis Obispo

Cheryl thanked every one for coming and for sharing all that they are learning. Because of this sharing, she stated that she believed this meeting was the most successful one held to date. She noted that many people were taking notes as one another spoke as particular things interested them and related to their county also.