

Northern California CPYP Counties Meeting

March 19, 2008

10:00 a.m. to 2:00 pm

Lucas Valley Community Church, 2000 Las Gallinas, San Rafael, CA

Minutes

Next Meeting: July 9, 2008, hosted by Solano County

Attendees

Anthony Barrows, Family Builders by Adoption
Autumn Blueford, Contra Costa County
April Bolin, Contra Costa County
Christopher Cassels, Solano County
Terry Clauser, Sacramento County
Lori Cohee, Foster A Dream (Solano County)
Cyndy Doherty, Marin Advocates for Children (CASA)
Maggie Donahue, San Francisco
Shari Hawkins, Sonoma County
Maggie Hickey, California CASA Association
Eileen Johnson, California Permanency for Youth Project
Frederick Jones, Sonoma County
Sandra Little, Sacramento County
Jean Little, Stanislaus County
Mardi Louisell, California Permanency for Youth Project
Karen McClure, Sonoma County
Katharine Odle, San Mateo County
Jeanne Oliver, Sonoma County
Jim Paulsen, Contra Costa County
Karl Porter, Solano County
Heather Ravani, Marin County
Paula Robertson, Marin County
Ellen Scharffenberg, Contra Costa County
Ken Smith, California Department of Social Services Adoptions
Sandra Subelsky, Contra Costa County
Lisa Tangalos, Marin County
Stephanie Thomas, Contra Costa County
David Turk, San Francisco County

Absent

Gail Johnson Vaughan, Mission Focused Solutions
Ducle McAllister, Marin County
Jinny Meyers, Monterey County
Laurie Sands, Family Builders by Adoption
Tammy Whitham, Monterey County

Agenda

- 10:00 Welcome, brief overview of attendees
Review of agenda. Additions?
- 10:15 Brief CPYP update
- 10:30 County updates
A. Update on key action step each county has completed
B. What is the most significant challenge that remains?
C. Update on any materials a county is developing
- 11:30 Discussion
- Templates that clarify social worker and permanency specialist roles
 - Integrating county permanency efforts with partners, including Mental Health and therapists
 - How to sustain the permanency work after CPYP leaves
 - Experience in going through the steps for Finding and Engaging Families
 - How do we assure that the permanency plan for the youth works?
 - How do we know when we are finished with the work?
 - What else is needed regarding the part of the work?
 - What issues are especially difficult?
 - Tracking results; showing administrators that the work is valuable
- Noon Lunch
- 12:30 Resume meeting
- 1:45 Date for next meeting and suggested topics
- 2:00 Adjourn

Minutes

Introductions and Welcome

Mardi Louisell, CPYP, chaired the meeting. Cyndy Doherty, Marin Advocates for Children (CASA), hosted for the meeting.

CPYP Update – Mardi Louisell

CPYP staff doing permanency work “on the ground,” (Anthony Barrows, Family Builders, Karen McClure, Sonoma, County, Ariyele Ressler, Seneca Center, etc.) have a phone consultation once a month for 1.5 ours and meet face-to-face every three months. Any person who is doing the work or who wants to learn may join.

Most counties part of CPYP are working with or about to work with Darla Henry’s 3-5-7 model. After the training, a county must to decide who will and how to implement the work among the various partners.

CPYP is wrapping up its intensive work with Pioneer II counties (SF, Sonoma, Humboldt, and Contra Costa) and will begin with Solano and Glenn. At some point, CPYP wants the Pioneer I and II counties to take over leadership of the Northern California Multi-county Meeting. It’s possible the group may grow large tough to split into two eventually.

County Updates

Key Action Step

- Humboldt: had Darla Henry with 3-5-7- model. Humboldt also figuring out how to begin family finding at initial intake (ER).
- Sacramento: Next Steps to Permanency – How to keep Destination Family project going (since the funding is ending). Geri Wilson, CPYP primary liaison retiring.
- San Mateo: Much staff turnover, lead liaison with CPYP is retiring.
- San Francisco: Contract with Family Builders now includes six workers and a supervisor, out stationed in the county offices.
- Sonoma: Working with Darla and will have 4th and final session in April. Many community partners attended, are figuring out who will do the work and how.
- Sonoma hosts a monthly meeting for partners and staff as well as a separate permanency policy meeting for county supervisors and managers.
- Contra Costa County
- Darla Henry is scheduled to come. Manager holds once a month meeting with supervisors to discuss cases and barriers structural barriers to permanency.
- Marin: Very small number of youth in LTFC (10); are beginning to review placements with staff. Training is set up. CA Young lawyers Bar Association want to volunteer to do family finding.
- Solano: Completing initial plan, obtaining community ownership of plan and seeking partners beyond CW, CASA, etc. Will talk with counterparts in other counties to find out how other counties have done it.

Challenges

- Humboldt: How to implement across the whole system; how to increase input from family members.
- Sacramento – Family finding. Staff know how to do it, but people not using it (currently have US Search, looking at Accurint). Case load high 65-70 for permanency workers
- San Mateo – Lack of buy-in, agency in state of flux
- San Francisco: Huge administrative change, county is eliminating middle management tier beginning July 1st. SF experiences differences of opinion between case carrying worker and permanency worker about how case should proceed, also see opposition from youth's attorneys who don't want to upset the status quo.
- Sonoma: Family Finding referrals have dropped off. Also have group home resistance – the group homes tie access to relatives and fictive kin to the youth's behavior
- Contra Costa: In the past permanency had been compartmentalized as a “project” and not part of front end at the same time that CCC has multiple projects. County has “project structure” – need to move to becoming formalized policy. CCC offices are independent” from each other due to geography. One office completely on board, another one probably thinks, “What is that?”
- Solano: County is trying to assemble a teams, to with all partners at the start, before doing the plan. Wants to know if any agency has written permanency language into their MOUs?
- Stanislaus: Completes a search on every child when the child enters the system. County has 2 permanent placement units that collaborate as one unit in terms of permanency. Workload is a challenge that translates into problems with follow through once family found; county is trying to implement into ILSP programs without alienating kids without any connections; co-located with MH – Have not yet embraced 3-5-7 in practice although agree philosophically. “Adoptions that don't work” have greatest impact on workers. A discussions about expectations may help.

Resources

- *Family Bound* curriculum by Bob Lewis – how to help youth adjust to family life after being in congregate care. Family Builders is adopting this curriculum to monthly groups to prepare kids for permanency
- Roles: Guideline – between permanency specialist and social worker have been drafted by Family Builders in San Francisco, by Sonoma, and by Fresno
- Humboldt – Began a list of expectations for different positions
- San Francisco - Family Builders has developed a referral interview form to make sure that specific info is captured

General Challenges

- No good *statistics* for % of permanent connections. Also, no longitudinal data available – where will the kid be four years from now?
- Counties need to have a *policy in place* rather than tie permanency work to a particular staff person or else when they leave the work stops. Getting policy in place has been the hardest thing for all 14 counties.
- How do individual supervisors and managers know who needs permanency and what’s being done on each case?
 - Marin has a placement review form for all long-term foster care (LTFC) youth completed before court hearing.
 - Stanislaus does business objects to track searches. The county does two printouts, one of which has non-confidential info that kids can keep
 - CPYP hopes that eventually each county supervisor will get a report listing kids without a plan
 - Los Angeles has ability to query CWS/CMS data through front-end

Integrating County Permanency Efforts with Partners

Mental Health (MH) and Therapists

- Therapist often has very different ideas about permanency, for example, the “youth isn’t ready.”
- Having agencies come to 3-5-7 was very helpful especially if MH came also.
- A.C.T. training (Kinship Center, Salinas) is another resource: San Francisco was given the opportunity to send three people to A.C.T.
- In Stanislaus, MH co-located with Child Welfare (CW) and MH is required to go to CW’s TDMs. Stanislaus has “My Home Program,” in which youth work with therapist as moving toward permanency. Treatment objectives are clear from the start and social worker and therapist are in constant communication.
- It’s useful to get MH champions—Greg Manning in Orange was part of WRAP services and once he was on board, it was enormously helpful to the county and to Los Angeles MH staff.
- In Contra Costa MH is the wrap provider, need to make sure permanency is integrated.
- Santa Clara has a good program with MH
- Could use Youthful Intelligence Training (Y.O.U.T.H. training for supervisors) to help get people on board.

CASA

- Sonoma: good relationship with CASA director who is a champion for permanency. and a critical partner
- Marin: small county able to offer lots of help, CASA director attends monthly business meeting on permanence, may attend team meetings.
- Sacramento has invited CASAs to participate but they haven’t as yet. It may be a time/resource issue.
- Solano – CASA very much a partner

- San Francisco: CASAs sometimes come to case staffing, do attend monthly permanency work group meetings
- CPYP strongly recommends that CASA be invited to participate in permanency meetings and committees.

Sustaining Permanency Work

- San Francisco: Permanency Work Group, co-chaired by Anthony Barrows and Penny Kumta, is engaged in the Strategic Planning Process. Work group will move from Planning Group to Implementation Group, developing policies and procedures, completed a permanency handbook, helping permanency to permeate Independent Living Skills Program (ILSP or ILS), which is contracted out.
- Permanency will be key part of Stanislaus ILS. Efforts to Outcome database is helping to keep them on track. Have actual written policies in handbook
- Sacramento has no written policies yet but hopes to integrate throughout the county. As staff turns over, existing staff must serve as champions, help new staff have “conversion.” Hope is that 3-5-7 training will help sustainability
- Humboldt working on permanency guidelines for upper level administration. Sometimes there is a knowledge gap between upper level admin and front line worker. Reaching out to (private) community may provide “outside” accountability for permanency to the public agency. Need data to support request for funding
- Data available to help sustain includes: Los Angeles, Orange, Project UPLIFT (Colorado), Alameda StepUp Project. Alameda Dumisha and San Francisco Family Builders are collecting data now.
- Supervisors are key player in sustainability efforts and need to be on board instead of falling back on, “This is the way we used to do it.”
- Build in idea that not everything is going to work. Difficult to overcome existing mind-sets. Can be slow process.
- Resistance from child attorney’s and courts toward reunification when parents improve so that they are now able to take child back.
- In counties where no permanency worker available, it’s important to approach permanency by taking small steps, focus on a few kids at a time.