

**California Permanency for Youth Task Force
Practice and Policy Joint Committee Meeting**

April 30, 2009

10:00 am to 2:00 pm

Elihu M. Harris State Building, Oakland, CA

Next Meeting: August 6, 2009, Elihu M. Harris State Building, Oakland, 10:00 a.m. – 2:00 p.m.

Present

James Anderson, California Connected by 25 Initiative
Bob Bentley, Fresno County
Nenita Dean, Stanislaus County
Robert Friend, California Permanency for Youth Project
Rosalio Garcia, Fresno County
Heather Genito, EMQ Families First
Denise Gil-Perez, California Youth Connection
Jill Jacobs, Family Builders
Chantel Johnson, California Youth Connection
Eileen Johnson, California Permanency for Youth Project
Gail Johnson Vaughan, Mission Focused Solutions
Jude Koski, California Youth Connection
Jean Little, Stanislaus County
Mardi Louisell, California Permanency for Youth Project
Crystal Luffberry, California Co-Investment Partnership
Jon Pettigrew, Alameda County
Ginger Pierce, Monterey County
Cheryle Roberts, Lilliput Children's Services
Jennifer Rodriguez, Youth Law Center
Emily Nicole Villas, California Youth Connection
Julia Waters, California Youth Connection

Absent (those who RSVPed only)

Robin Allen, California CASA Association
Carol Biddle, Kinship Center
Cyndee Borges-O'Dell, California Co-Investment Partnership
Melissa Driscoll, Rebekah Children's Services
Kristie Esquivel, Kern County
Rick Fowler, Community College Foundation
Karen Gunderson, California Dept. of Social Services
Joanna Hunt, Kern County
Yvette Jamison, Fresno County
Fredi Juni, Alameda County
Susanna Kniffen, Casey Family Programs
Angela Look, Kern County

Jessica Macias, Kern County
Bob Malmberg, Orange County
Nancy McDonald, Family Builders
Shalinda Roan, San Mateo County
Veronica Salmeron, Fresno County
Carroll Schroeder, California Alliance of Child & Family Services
Diane Wagner, Los Angeles County

Agenda

9:30 am Continental Breakfast

10:00 am Joint Committee Meeting

- Welcome and check-in
- Review of minutes and action items
- Legislative update
- Strategies to track success and re-investment
- Exercise to focus on what Task Force recommendations are and to define what the “ask” is of the legislature and the state
- Plan development as to how this group will support itself post CPYP

12:00 pm Lunch

12:30 pm Continue with agenda

2:00 pm Adjourn

Minutes

Introduction, Review of Minutes and Action Items

Bob Friend welcomed the group and attendees introduced themselves.

Task Force Policy Committee Recommendations: Importance of having permanency included in all BSW and MSW curriculums (01-15-09 minutes, p. 7)

- Correction to first bullet: **Virignia Pierce** should be **Virginia Pierce**
- Ginger (Virginia) Pierce gave an update regarding the new MSW program at California State University Monterey Bay (CSUMB). She reported that CSUMB is planning on rolling classes out this fall, and is in their accreditation process, so it is too late to have any curriculum change implemented for 2009-2010. However, Ginger did have a conversation with them about the role of permanency in their curriculum and will continue to dialog with them this summer.
- Crystal Luffberry reported that the Stuart and Walter S. Johnson (WSJ) Foundations have been working on curriculum development. The foundations are in conversation with CalSWEC (California Social Work Education Center) and CDSS (California Dept. of Social Services) and have invited them to make a proposal to WSJ for curriculum development which would also pull in Title IV-E match dollars. The overall focus is “well-being.” CalSWEC is looking at what will be included in their core curriculum; how permanency and THP (Transitional Housing Program) will be included has not been decided.
- Luffberry also reported that the California Statewide Training and Education Committee (STEC) is addressing the importance of permanency in curricula. To avoid duplication of efforts, the Task Force will not proceed any further on their curriculum recommendation at this time, but will monitor the work of STEC. Crystal Luffberry will keep the Task Force apprised when action may be needed.

Permanency Crosswalk

- Action Item from January 2009 meeting: Bob Friend will share with Crystal Luffberry (Co-Investment Partnership) the list of items not included in the Permanency Crosswalk, as well as recommendations from the Policy Committee. Friend envisions seeing both pieces (Task Force Policy Recommendations and Crosswalk) in one packet.
COMPLETED
- Crystal Luffberry explained that the crosswalk was meant to be a tool for use within the Co-Investment Partnership, not a “public” document. She and Bob will continue conversation around the crosswalk.
- The Task Force recommendations/items for inclusion will be added as a new column to the crosswalk.

Narrative History of Permanency

- Action Item from January 2009 meeting: There was discussion regarding the development of a narrative history of permanency work already done, especially lessons learned. One suggestion was to have an intern do this project. There is already a good amount of information available on the CPYP website. No other specific decisions were made as to who might do this job.

UPDATE: Bob Friend reported that the Stuart Foundation has requested that CPYP include at least some of this information in its final report. Specifically, Stuart would like a history of CPYP, and what were the key items that helped spark permanency as a national movement. A brief discussion followed.

- CPYP helped provide part of the “cauldron”
- Key items in developing the movement were joint accountability and having a unified statewide strategy
- CPYP was able to bring people together and communicate things in a non-threatening way so that everyone was able to recognize they were parts of a whole.
- The California Youth Connection (CYC) and youth voice were a key piece. Youth helped broaden the perspective.
- The Family Builders Network was another important group, especially in the role of the national network. Most of the key leaders from other states are part of this network.
- Bob Friend will organize one or more conference calls with key people to further discuss the history of permanency.

Other Action Items from January 2009 Meeting

- Jill Jacobs offered to be an advocate for recruitment/retention – how to connect the dots? Karen Gunderson mentioned that she is going to put together a state Recruitment Steering Committee. IN PROCESS. Jill Jacobs reported that she has met with Amy Freeman (Stuart Foundation), and she was planning on talking with other people at the Task Force meeting today. There was no update available on the status of the Recruitment Steering Committee.
- A sub-committee, comprised of Gail Johnson Vaughan, Bob Friend, Diane Wagner, and Ginger Pierce, will develop a “talking points” document regarding the Policy Committee recommendations. COMPLETED.
- Gail Johnson Vaughan will approach state legislature with Carroll Schroeder. COMPLETED. See below under **Legislative Update, AB 665**

Agency Updates

Updates to *A Guide to Permanency Options for Youth, Alameda County* – Jon Pettigrew

Fredi Juni, Alameda County, has been working on updating the information in the Permanency Guide published by Alameda County in 2005. Jon Pettigrew shared a draft version of the updates with attendees. The material includes documents to replace information in the original guide, and three supplemental handouts which are new.

- The updates are meant to be a tool for *both* workers and caregivers.
- All rates are specific for Alameda County

- The distribution method will be fairly informal, but probably there will be formal presentations in Alameda County for workers. CPYP will help with electronic distribution (see action item, below).
- Alameda has the goal of establishing a regular orientation for relatives; the updated guide will be part of that.
- At present, Pettigrew didn't know of any plans to have the Guide available in other languages. However, Jill Jacobs is working with San Francisco County on a similar document, and they may be able to have translations done.

Updated information:

- Funding Sources (updated 04/09, replaces page 24)
- Chart 1: A Comparison of Financial Benefits-Adoption, Legal Guardianship, and Foster Care (updated 04/09, replaces pages 17-23)
- Legal Citations Chart 1: A Comparison of Financial Benefits-Adoption, Legal Guardianship, and Foster Care (updated 2009, replaces pages 31-21)

Supplemental Handouts:

- Considering Adoption or Legal Guardianship?/Financial Issues Relating to Adoption and Legal Guardianship (04/09)
- Understanding Access to College Financial Aid for Former Foster Youth/FAQ: Financial Aid and Permanency Options for youth (04/09)
- Eligibility Grid for Current and Former Alameda County Foster Youth (04/09)

Action Items:

- Fredi Juni will send Eileen Johnson (CPYP) an electronic version of the updates presented at the meeting. Johnson will then distribute to Task Force, other CPYP constituents, and post on CPYP website. Juni anticipates the final version will be ready in a couple of weeks.
- CYC representatives at the meeting requested a chance to give feedback on the revisions before they are finalized. They will coordinate with Jon Pettigrew.

ICPC (Interstate Compact on the Placement of Children) Issues – Jill Jacobs, Family Builders

Jill Jacobs reported that Family Builders has been very successful in identifying family who live outside of California. The families themselves are a very great resource. However, Family Builders has been running into problems with ICPC; sometimes there are delays of over one year. In the meantime, she has kids waiting to be placed with extended families. Sometimes the emotional difficulties of the wait result in the child being moved into a higher level of care, which makes ICPC even less willing to approve the placement. Jacobs asked for feedback/suggestions from the group. Specifically, is there a state person for ICPC she can go to for help? Discussion followed.

- The group agreed that ICPC is a universal problem which needs to be addressed, although some states are more of a problem than others.
- Three key problems with ICPC: (1) inefficiency in the system, (2) lack of recognition of the importance of permanency, and 3) fear on the part of the receiving state that the adoption will fail and they will have to take dependency of a troubled youth.

- Although ICPC is federally mandated, it is implemented by individual states and counties, so there is no consistency in terms of forms and procedures used.
- CDSS no longer plays a role in ICPC in California. All ICPC work is done by the counties
- ICPC and the Interstate Compact on Adoptions and Medical Assistance (ICAMA) both feed into a larger group, but it is in the process of restructuring.
- The typical flow pattern in many counties was described as:



- We need more information about the way ICPC works. Specifically:
 - What is the role of the state?
 - To whom are ICPC people accountable?

Action Items:

- Jennifer Rodriguez will put together a survey to counties, asking them for information about their experience/practice with ICPC, and their success rate.
- Find out about the role of the state in ICPC. Gail Johnson Vaughan will talk to Karen Gunderson regarding ICPC roles.
- Jill Jacobs will contact the National Resource Center for Family-Centered Practice and Permanency Planning.
- Ginger Pierce will talk to her ICPC contact in Monterey County.

Youth Law Center Project: Recruiting and Retaining Quality Foster Parents – Jennifer Rodriguez

The Youth Law Center (YLC), in partnership with the CA Dept. of Social Services and the County Welfare Directors Association of California (CWDA), is starting a project to improve the way California is recruiting and retaining quality foster parents. Dr. Jill Duerr Berrick, UC Berkeley, is their researcher.

- In the first phase, they will hold focus groups in counties to ask foster parents and foster children, “Who are excellent foster parents?” Based on their findings, they will come up with a definition of a quality foster parent.
- In Phase Two of the project, the YLC will work with pro bono marketing professionals to develop recruitment **and** retention material for quality foster parents.
- The YLC has already held focus groups in Florida. According to the foster parents and youth they spoke with:
 - Quality foster parents want the kids to have a continuing relationship with their birth families.
 - All foster parents want a lifelong emotional connection to a child.

There was brief discussion about the tension between foster parents being trained to view themselves as a potential lifelong connection and concurrent planning/reunification. Some expressed concern about the difficulty for foster parents to both form a connection with a youth with a life-long commitment and at the same time prepare the youth for a return to family.

- Having a concurrent plan doesn't necessarily negate the relationship between the foster parent and child. It is common for families to make arrangements for their children in the event something happens to them. In order for foster parents to be successful, they need to feel they are key people in the team to reunify the child.
- Attendees acknowledged that foster parents have a difficult task in balancing their own emotional connection to a child with the possibility the child may return to birth family.

CYC Summer Leadership & Policy Conference – Jude Koski

This summer, the California Youth Connection (CYC) Summer Leadership & Policy Conference will be held July 24-27, 2009 in Chico, CA. On the last day of the conference, Monday July 27, special guests are invited to attend. Jude Koski gave a verbal invitation to Task Force members and will send out a formal invitation later.

Legislative Update

Bob Friend asked attendees to report on any pending legislation that was "near and dear" to them and that specifically pertained to youth permanency

AB 12 (Beall) California Fostering Connections to Success Act

This legislation will implement the federal Fostering Connections to Success and Increasing Adoptions Act (2008). There is a need to draft an amendment to get permanency language back into the bill. The mindset needs to be overcome that if 18-21 year olds remain in foster care, their primary need is support for transition into adulthood, not permanency. Jennifer Rodriguez is working on an amendment; Crystal Luffberry, Jill Jacobs, and Ginger Pierce will be available to offer feedback.

AB 295 (Ammiano) Children: wrap-around and adoption services

This bill would provide a no cost extension of funds for the Older Youth Adoption Project to June 30, 2010. There has been no opposition

AB 665 (Torrico) State adoption services: Federal Adoption Incentives

The bill allocates federal adoption incentive funds to counties based on documented increases in legal permanency outcomes (adoption, guardianship and reunification for children for whom reunification services had been terminated) for older children achieved by each county, as determined by the department, in consultation with counties. The adoption incentive payment funds are to be used to improve or sustain legal permanency outcomes for older children. The bill would also require the counties to reinvest savings that result from successful legal permanency outcome efforts for older children into activities that improve legal permanency outcomes for older children. The legislation comes from the Task Force Policy Committee recommendation about reinvestment (see January 15, 2009 meeting minutes).

Gail Johnson Vaughan brought some issues before the group.

- The amount of the incentive payment is “based on documented legal permanency outcomes for older children in each county” (Section b). However, it is not clear from this language whether counties that have better outcomes are rewarded, or whether counties that have poor outcomes will get additional help. Johnson Vaughan was thinking that the incentive was related to percentage outcomes. The original intent of the bill was to create an incentive for successful counties. One suggestion was to have the money allocated based on the same criteria as distribution of federal dollars to the state based on the number of adoptions above the baseline.
- It is difficult to incorporate the role of relational permanency, due to the lack of “hard data” for non-legal permanency outcomes. However, relational permanency is the foundation for legal permanency.
- The bill needs to specify post-permanency support.

The bill has been amended to address these issues. A portion of the current version of the bill now reads:

16131.5. (a) The state shall reinvest *adoption* incentive payments received through the implementation of the federal Fostering Connections to Success and Increasing Adoptions Act of 2008 (Public Law 110-351) for placement of older children, as defined in that act, into the child welfare system, in order to provide legal permanency outcomes for *older* children, including, but not limited to, adoption, guardianship, and reunification of children whose reunification services were previously terminated.

(b) Notwithstanding Section 13340 of the Government Code, the amount of *adoption* incentive payments received pursuant to subdivision (a) are hereby continuously appropriated without regard to the fiscal year to the State Department of Social Services for allocation to the counties, and the department for a county in which the department serves as an adoption agency, based on documented *increases in* legal permanency outcomes for older children in *achieved by* each county, *as determined by the department, in consultation with counties*, for the purposes specified in this section.

(c) A county, or the department when it acts as the adoption agency for a county, shall use *adoption* incentive payment funds to improve *or sustain* legal permanency outcomes for older children. A county shall reinvest savings that result from successful legal permanency outcome efforts for older children into activities that improve legal permanency outcomes for older children.

(d) Nothing in this section shall be construed to supplant funds currently being spent on programs to provide legal permanency outcomes.

Source: California State Legislature, “AB 665,” http://www.leginfo.ca.gov/pub/09-10/bill/asm/ab_0651-0700/ab_665_bill_20090331_amended_asm_v98.html (accessed May 13, 2009).

The bill has passed out of committee. It will automatically go on suspense even though it is a pass through of federal funds. Appropriations committee will meet to release bills from suspense on May 27-28, 2009.

Action Item

Jennifer Rodriguez and Gail Johnson Vaughan will talk regarding tweaking the language so that the bill really is an incentive.

AB 1402 (Bass) Family Connection Grants

This bill would require the CA Department of Social Services to apply, or to support a California-based application, for a federal matching grant, known as a family connection grant, for the purpose of helping children who are in, or at risk of entering, foster care reconnect with family members. The question was raised whether CPYP could get this grant. The topic was tabled for later discussion.

AB 938 (Committee on Judiciary) Dependent children: relative caregivers and foster parents.

This bill would that relatives (“grandparents, adult siblings, and other adult relatives”) are notified when a child is removed from the home, and are given information about various options to participate in the care and placement of the child. Which family members are included in “adult relatives” is still being defined.

AB 47 (Ma and Niello) Income taxes: credit: adoption costs.

This bill would increase the tax credit limitation of specified adoption costs from \$2,500 to a maximum of \$5,000 per minor child. Although this bill is meant as an incentive for adoption, attendees wondered whether families that adopt high-risk children will pay enough tax to begin with to qualify for the tax credit.

Post CPYP and “Ask” of the State

Bob Friend reported that the current plan is for CPYP to conclude at the end of January, 2010. He invited the group to reflect on what services CPYP currently provides, and how that work could be sustained post-CPYP. In particular, what is the ask of the state? What do we need to continue the work?

- Currently, additional money from current foundations is not an option, as these investments were intended to promote the development of new practices, not sustain them. Philanthropy has continually expressed the concern that they will not fund the development of new initiatives if the successful ones are not picked up and brought to scale by the state.
- Friend shared that the project has an annual operating budget of about \$800,000.
- The work of providing technical assistance (TA) to a subgroup of counties will conclude at the end of the project.
- Crystal Luffberry reported that the Co-Investment Partnership Permanency Sustainability Workgroup has been exploring the possibility of doing TA/field training through public/private partnerships via CalSWEC and the training academies. Could CPYP partner with community colleges or individual counties to get Title IV-E dollars?

Services Provided by CPYP (What Would Be Lost?)

Central Location/Innovator for Permanency

- Unique dialog on permanency. Credible, respected engine driver.
- Neutral convener, aligned for youth without silo self-interest: county, FFA, and group home perspectives are all heard. Relationship-based.
- Save county/agency directors work and time by having an easily identified and accessible resource
- Central clearing house for permanency – a “place to go.” Who knows if not CPYP?
- Youth involvement/youth-centered permanency practice
- Statewide overview on the reality of what is happening regarding permanency work
- Promotion/access non-traditional transition services
- Cross-pollination/integration of policy and practice
- Global/holistic integrated approach to permanency
- Statewide all-inclusive permanency leadership who is fearless
- Watchdog for permanency functions with connections to contributors from all backgrounds
- Ability to develop responses, strategies to problem
- Specific, concrete, achievable focus
- Defined framework and playing field

Services

- Technical assistance to counties, other agencies
- Ability to hold practice accountable in counties/state
- Resources for strategic injection into counties to do permanency work, including strategy, on-site planning, institutional knowledge, funding

Uncompleted Work

- Despite sharp, unrelenting, focus on youth permanency, the work has not yet reached a tipping point. Some think that we’ve done enough because the foster child population is down, and the work is hard. We need a continual voice to push. The age-out number is still high.
- Expertise to do the work successfully is still under-developed
- Loss of momentum/premature disruption on unfinished/not started work
 - Redesign of ILP has permanency as one of the pillars. To remove the “driver” at this point doesn’t make sense.
 - There is no firmly grounded practice yet – lose the “lab” to refine/adjust practice. More time is needed to establish best practice.
 - Loss of opportunity to continue permanency as priority, momentum, \$ \$ \$
- Systems don’t reflect the vision/work of CPYP
- No mandate for permanency yet in SIP (self-improvement plan) – need to make permanency required so there is accountability.
- Without a voice for relational permanency, the tendency is to default to traditional legal permanency

State Ask

- Require counties to work with CPYP in SIPs
- Fund CPYP
- Increasing state commitment by state #s – provide cost analysis
- Show state \$ savings, require counties to reinvest, use money to fund CPYP
- Evaluate PIP (Program Improvement Plan)/SIP for opportunities - how much money is there, where is it going, leverages?
- Create an incentive for counties to do the work and require return of investment

What's Next

- Meet with Dept. of Finance?
- Expand role/partners with CPYP
- Explore alternate funders
- CalSWEC curriculum on FFE
- Send recommendations to Child Welfare Council
- Prepare strong data/case for why permanency is cost-effective
- Talk with CWDA Children's Committee?
- Talk with Jennifer Troia regarding budget
- Coordinate with Ginger Pierce and Elliot to develop CWDA strategy
- Federal FFE grant?

Action Items/Next Steps

Policy Committee Recommendations/Permanency Crosswalk

- The Task Force Recommendations from the January 15, 2009 meeting will be added to the Co-Investment Permanency Crosswalk as a new column. Bob Friend, Gail Johnson Vaughan and Eileen Johnson will take the lead on this task.
- Crystal Luffberry will keep the Task Force apprised of developments from STEC (California Statewide Training and Education Committee) regarding the inclusion of permanency in core curricula.

History of Permanency Narrative

- Bob Friend will schedule a conference call (or calls) to discuss how permanency developed as a national movement and the role of CPYP in the process. Participants will include: Pat Reynolds-Harris, Gail Johnson Vaughan, Mardi Louisell, Teri Kook, Robin Allen, Jennifer Rodriguez, Jill Jacobs, Julia Waters, and possibly Judge Nash and Robin Luckett.

Updates to Alameda Guide to Permanency Options for Youth

- Fredi Juni will send Eileen Johnson (CPYP) an electronic version of the updates presented at the meeting. Johnson will then distribute to Task Force, other CPYP constituents, and post on CPYP website. Juni anticipates the final version will be ready in a couple of weeks.
- CYC representatives at the meeting requested a chance to give feedback on the revisions before they are finalized. They will coordinate with Jon Pettigrew, Alameda County.

ICPC Issues

- Jennifer Rodriguez will put together a survey to counties, asking them for information about their experience/practice with ICPC, and their success rate.
- Find out about the role of the state in ICPC. Gail Johnson Vaughan will talk to Karen Gunderson regarding ICPC roles.
- Gail Johnson Vaughan will contact Voice for Adoption and see if they can help resolve the issue.
- Jill Jacobs will contact the National Resource Center for Family-Centered Practice and Permanency Planning.
- Ginger Pierce will talk to her ICPC contact in Monterey County.

Legislative Issues

- AB 665 (Torrico) State Adoption Services: Investment - Jennifer Rodriguez and Gail Johnson Vaughan will talk regarding tweaking the language so that the bill really is an incentive to counties.
- AB 12 (Beall) California Fostering Connections to Success Act – Jennifer Rodriguez is working on amendments to get permanency language back into the bill. Crystal Luffberry, Jill Jacobs, and Ginger Pierce will be available to offer feedback.
- CYC Summer Leadership & Policy Conference, July 24-27, 2009, Chico, CA. Special guests are invited to attend the last day of the conference, Monday, July 27. Jude Koski will send an invitation to Task Force members.

CPYP Sustainability Post-Foundation Funding

- Gail Johnson Vaughan will talk to Karen Gunderson about strategies for including funding for CPYP in CDSS budget.
- Show state savings dollars resulting from permanency work. Make a case that CPYP is budget-neutral. Bob Friend will review data showing CPYP is cost-effective.
- Bob Friend will review whether federal grants for family finding and engagement work are a possibility for the project.
- Gail Johnson Vaughan will talk to Jennifer Troia regarding budget
- Ginger Pierce will ask Elliott Robinson (Monterey County) to work with CWDA to develop strategy for their involvement.
- Ask Kathy Huerta, Fresno County, for help in strategizing CWDA and Child Welfare Council involvement. (No one was designated for this task.)