

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

October 30, 2008

10:00 am to 2:00 pm

Elihu M. Harris State Building, Oakland, CA

Next Meeting: January 15, 2009, Elihu Harris State Building, Oakland, 10:00 a.m. – 2:00 p.m.

Practice Committee

Present

James Anderson, California Connected by 25 Initiative
Mary Bedford-Carter, Edgewood Center
Cyndee Borges-O'Dell, California Co-Investment Partnership
Melissa Driscoll, Rebekah Children's Services
Kristie Esquivel, Kern County
Robert Friend, California Permanency for Youth Project
Denise Gil-Perez, California Youth Connection
Joanna Hunt, Kern County
Jean Little, Stanislaus County
Angela Look, Kern County
Jessica Macias, Kern County
Nancy McDonald, Family Builders
Shalinda Roan, San Mateo County
Cheryle Roberts, Lilliput Children's Services

Absent (those who RSVPed only)

Rosalio Garcia, Fresno County
Crystal Luffberry, California Co-Investment Partnership
Bob Malmberg, Orange County
Veronica Salmeron, Fresno County

Policy Committee

Present

Nenita Dean, Stanislaus County
Sophia Isom, San Francisco County
Jill Jacobs, Family Builders
Gail Johnson Vaughan, Mission Focused Solutions
Susanna Kniffen, Casey Family Programs
Jude Koski, California Youth Connection
Jon Pettigrew, Alameda County
Ginger Pierce, Monterey County

Emily Nicole Villas, California Youth Connection
Diane Wagner, Los Angeles County
Julia Waters, California Youth Connection

Absent (those who RSVPed only)

Carol Biddle, Kinship Center
Craig Harris, California Department of Mental Health
Chantel Johnson, California Youth Connection
Robin Lockett, Alameda County

CPYP Staff
Eileen Johnson

Agenda

9:30 am Continental Breakfast

10:00 am Joint Committee meeting

- Review agenda and minutes
- Follow-up discussions of savings tracking and advocacy—share local developments
- Legislative update
- CPYP update
- Fostering Connections Act of 2008

12:00 pm Lunch

12:30 pm Committees meet separately

2:00 pm Adjourn

Minutes

Introduction, review of agenda and previous minutes

Bob Friend welcomed the group and attendees introduced themselves.

The minutes from the previous meeting were reviewed. Two corrections were made (new text bolded and underlined):

- Page 4 - **Cost Savings**, second-to-last bullet
Savings included court costs, worker savings, ~~potential avoidance of probation, juvenile justice,~~ and placement cost.
- Page 5, **Cost Savings**, first bullet on the page
Kern County – Kristie Esquivel estimated placement costs savings. She looked at the starting and ending placement. However, she didn't figure in the county's share. Angela Look has tracked ~~WRAP~~ placement savings **related to the 3-5-7 pilot project**.

Follow-up Discussions of Savings Tracking and Advocacy

At the July 31, 2008 Task Force meeting, there was group discussion about strategies and ideas about tracking cost savings, and how to use this data for advocacy. Bob Friend invited attendees to share any updates or "conversations at home" that people had on this topic. He also encouraged them to share cost savings information with their bosses.

- Stanislaus County – Nenita Dean has talked with county administrators, but she realized she needed to present her data more clearly and further discussion was needed.
- Sacramento, Placer & Nevada Counties – they chose to use an average age range, rather than showing savings for each age. Gail Johnson Vaughan recently showed savings by year over the five years of the county's federal grant: \$913,000 for 43 youth. She included any form of permanency that saved money, including kin care, legal guardianship, and adoption. The savings was projected out to the youth reaching age 18.
- Monterey did a point in time study. They selected 20 youth in group homes (GH) in 2002, before permanency work was begun, and 20 youth in 2006, after permanency work was started. These 20 youth are ¼ of the total population in group care. Youth in GH tend to be the most needy and most costly children. In 2002, secondary placement from a GH tended to be another GH. In 2006, secondary placement was with kin or relatives.
- Los Angeles has not yet calculated later savings, but this information would be very helpful.
- Mark E. Courtney, formerly of Chapin Hall Center for Children at the University of Chicago, is doing a prospective study of the youth in foster care; the study is following a sample of young people in Iowa, Wisconsin, and Illinois as they make the transition from foster care to early adulthood. It provides a comprehensive picture of how foster youth are faring during this transition since the Foster Care Independence Act of 1999 became law. See Mark E. Courtney, Amy Dworsky, Sherri Terao, Noel Bost, Gretchen Ruth Cusick, Thomas Keller, Judy Havlicek, *Midwest Evaluation of the Adult Functioning of Former Foster Youth*, 2005, available at www.chapinhall.org/article_abstract.aspx?ar=1355

- The California Child Welfare Co-Investment Partnership is working on sustaining permanency efforts statewide. A protocol for reinvestment strategies that counties could use will come out of this group.
- Re-investment of savings should be considered up front at the beginning of a project, to maximize the likelihood that reinvestment will happen, but better later than never..

Federal training match dollars for new workers

- CDSS is looking at how to maximize federal dollars for youth permanence including modifying their cost allocation plan to allow for allowable use of Title IV-E training dollars for new workers and workers changing assignments. The State can qualify for the IV-E training 75% match for an agreed upon period of time. Some states have negotiated six months for new workers, and three months for assignment changes.
- Conditions for the match include reduced caseload and increased supervision. The match requires the state to change its cost allocation plan
- This information will be coming to the counties through CWDA (County Welfare Directors Association of California)

Action Item:

Eileen Johnson will get Gail Johnson Vaughan’s spreadsheet on the CPYP website.

Legislative Update – Bob Friend, CPYP; Jude Koski, CYC

A summary of 2008 foster-care related legislative efforts, prepared by Jennifer Troia, was distributed to attendees (see attached).

The following bills, all supported by CYC, were highlighted in the meeting:

AB 1405 (Maze) Juveniles: joint assessment of status: confidential information

This bill would prohibit statements or confessions made by, or incriminating information obtained from, a minor as part of screening or assessment to determine whether minor's case should be handled by delinquency or dependency court, from being admitted into evidence or used against minor in juvenile, criminal, or civil proceedings, except as specified. It was vetoed by the governor on September 28, 2008

Deleted: .

AB 2070 (Bass): Foster care: incarcerated parents

This bill increases the time reunification services may be available to parents whose children are dependents of the court-- in consideration of barriers to services faced by parents who are incarcerated, institutionalized, or in residential substance abuse treatment. It was approved by the governor September 28, 2008 and is effective January 1, 2009.

Comments: Passage of this bill was due in part to the work of the Blue Ribbon Commission. Koski noted that sometimes parents are incarcerated for a minor offense.

AB 2096 (Bass) Foster children: extracurricular activities

This bill allows group home providers to use the standard of what a "prudent parent" would do when deciding to give permission to a child in their care to participate in extracurricular,

enrichment or social activities. It was approved by the governor September 28, 2008 and is effective January 1, 2009,

Comments: Jude Koski stated that passage of this bill is “HUGE.” It is hoped that this bill will allow foster children to have a more normalized experience while in care. Some CYC local chapters may work on the ground with local group homes to make sure the bill is implemented. Most of the problem agencies are not members of the California Alliance of Child and Family Services. Title IV-E for probation youth may be handled differently; the question of crossover youth in care is a CCL (Community Care Licensing Division) issue.

AB 2783 (Plescia) Special education: foster children: assessment and individualized education program

This bill would shorten, from 60 to 30 days, the timeline by which schools must conduct an assessment and develop an individualized education program for students residing in high-level group homes or community treatment facilities. It failed passage on the Senate floor August 29, 2008.

CYC Day at the Capitol

The California Youth Connection (CYC) Legislative Committee is currently preparing for their Day at the Capitol, January 26, 2009. On the day, they will hold a rally on the Capitol steps and meet with local representatives. For the next legislative session, CYC is focusing on issues relating to education, access to medical care, and emancipation services and resources. Jude Koski suggested having members of the Legislative Committee meet with the Task Force to discuss their approach, ways to cooperate, and a strategic plan. Bob Friend wants to hear what the CYC interests are for 2009.

AB 2488 (Leno) Adoption and Siblings

AB 2488 permits an adopted person greater opportunities to initiate and make contact with siblings. It also permits siblings of an adopted person more opportunity to make contact with the adopted person with whom they have lost contact. The bill was passed into law in September 2006, but there has been no funding to implement it. The legislature considered whether to revoke or suspend the law; they agreed to suspend it. However, some counties are choosing to act on it anyway, and others not.

Fostering Connections Act – Bob Friend, CPYP

H.R. 6893, the Fostering Connections to Success and Increasing Adoptions Act of 2008, amends parts of the Foster Care and Adoption Assistance Program of the Social Security Act. Specifically, this new legislation amends parts B and E of Title IV of the Social Security Act to connect and support relative caregivers, improve outcomes for children in foster care, provide for tribal foster care and adoption access, improve incentives for adoption, and for other purposes.

Key points:

- Fact sheets and summaries are available from several groups; Friend encouraged attendees to get summaries from several organizations, because they all have different perspectives. Ginger Pierce noted that summaries may have inaccurate or misleading information.

- When child welfare supervisors/administrators talk about the bill, they also need to present information accurately to subordinates.
- This legislation is not going to be a priority for the first six months of the new presidential administration, regardless of who is elected.
- Decisions still need to be made around how bill actually gets defined. Ideas on implementation may be welcomed by people new in their positions. Start making suggestions now – do not wait.
- Gail Johnson Vaughan noted that adoption incentive dollars are a major item. The Policy Committee will discuss whether they want to weigh in.
- For more information, including the full text of the bill, go to: www.govtrack.us/congress/bill.xpd?bill=h110-6893

CPYP Update – Bob Friend, CPYP

Funding for the project ends December 31, 2009. Foundations want the state to “step up to the plate” for funding permanency work. There is no funding on the horizon for CPYP at the moment. Bob Friend is a member of both the Co-Investment Partnership and the Child Welfare Council; these groups are strategizing about ways to sustain permanency work in California. There has been a great deal of momentum created in the state around this work; we need to find a way to keep it going, and make sure we don’t lose any ground.

California Child Welfare Co-Investment Partnership

- This group consists of CDSS, the Foundations, the Administrative Office of the Courts and CWDA. Sustaining youth permanency work is their #1 partnership priority for this year.
- The Permanency Sustainability Workgroup (part of the Partnership) is working both on a practice and funding plan; they project that a plan will be developed in middle/late January 2009.
- Leadership for the future is still unclear. Among the undecided questions are where will the leadership that CPYP presents come from once the project ends? What happens to CPYP website?

Child Welfare Council Permanency Sub-Committee

- This group is working to ensure that family finding and engagement occurs consistently across the state
- Gail Johnson Vaughan asked about counties being able to use the federal parent locator services.

Continuation of the Task Force

- Currently, the Task Force has very good value because CPYP is seen as neutral party with no agenda other than permanency. We need to sustain this group because of its influence. For example, arguments developed by the Task Force helped advocacy efforts; we gave Assemblypersons Bass and Steinberg something they could work with.
- The ILP Breakthrough Series Collaborative and the Co-Investment Partnership are possible places to raise the question of the future of the Task Force.

Action Item:

- Encourage thinking on these issues. Individuals are encouraged to ask the question, “How is permanency work going to be sustained in the state?” within their respective organizations.

Next Steps

For the next meeting, we will spend more time together working on areas of work for next year, including the future of Task Force.

Attachments

2008 Foster Care Legislation.doc

HR 6893 Fact Sheet.doc

Practice Committee Minutes

Robert Friend, California Permanency for Youth Project, Acting Chair

James Anderson, California Connected by 25 Initiative

Mary Bedford-Carter, Edgewood Center

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Melissa Driscoll, Rebekah Children's Services

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Purpose/Function of the Committee

The purpose of the Committee is to identify and elevate core permanency practices to get them to a statewide level. If we want upper level practice, applicable for statewide implementation, how do we go about doing it? How does the group elevate the work statewide and locally, with cross matching/cross referencing?

Discussion points:

- Committee meetings provide a way to share practice perspective. It is helpful hearing the struggles/success of different counties.
- Many practice items are discussed at the CYP regional county meetings. How can key issues be brought to the Task Force, and how can Friend bring them in turn to the statewide PIP, Co-Investment Partnership, and Child Welfare Committee?

Action Item:

We need to improve efforts of collecting information at regional meetings, and then share it at Task Force meetings.

Sustainability

The Committee wants permanency efforts and the Task Force to continue even after CPYP ends. There was discussion about counties sharing or hosting the meeting; this will be an agenda item at the next meeting.

Ways to continue networking:

- Conference calls or emails
- Training opportunities
- Yahoo group to share concerns and ideas; a Yahoo group can have different topic areas, such as training, practice, etc., However, this may not be accessible to all due to county restrictions on Internet access. A possible way to get around the restriction - merge California Kids Connection website.

Inter-Agency Standardized Practice

Standardized practice between county and care providers would be helpful. Each county does things differently; there are huge barriers based on different practices. Many local barriers are not in accordance with law, but the county's interpretation. Harmful decisions get made regarding restrictions of confidentiality. Not sure if the Committee can take care of this issue, but Friend is happy to share issues. There is potential to align practice more along the state system improvement plan; however, this is unlikely to be completely achieved within a county-based system; there may be middle ground somewhere.

Discussion:

- FY Connected for life meetings – Stanislaus County presentation about agency. What are they doing in regards to permanency? With foster family agencies (FFA) does state have any criteria for permanency? Oversight of county or aging – does it exist? Very undefined
- We need to keep the awareness of permanency out there, and help people understand what permanency is about. For example, if Los Angeles sent the message that they were not doing permanency, no children would be placed. The county needs to get on same page with care providers, FFAs, etc.
- Kern County – Aspira has standard practice that no child will leave care without two permanent connections.
- Lack of follow-up by the case-carrying social worker is a problem. Sometimes this is due to too much work. Family information/connections are found and passed on to the social workers, there is minimal follow-up. Monthly FSTs information shared – concerned that social workers do not follow up. Dr. left message, never calls back. Seen in majority of cases when mining the file. Social workers difficult to keep up. Standardize every county permanency social worker.
- San Mateo County collaborates with Edgewood on mining the files. When meetings occur the supervisor has to be present. They have the supervisor and managers on board and more social workers present for meeting.
- Education and work with middle management still needs to occur. We are fighting against culture. Have meetings between social workers to start, then encourage energy from management.
- Children have said that family finding has been done, and doesn't need to be done again. However, never stop mining the files.
- Family Builders (FB) has one permanency worker co-located with Alameda County with access to records and CWS/CMS. RB gets referrals from the county to their project (Dumisha Jamaa). FB stays on the case until a connection is found; they work closely with the county workers. All work is given to county worker; FB is not allowed to input into CWS/CMS. One person does Internet searches and family finding. Alameda then does background checks to insure safety of relationships found. Fingerprints are not required until placement. Placement with a family is better than with an FFA.
- MHSA – can dollars be wrapped into programs that can staff a permanency project? Can the Family Builders project be duplicated? There is possible new legislation to pull different funds.
- ILP Breakthrough Series Collaborative –permanency is becoming an area of focus. The communication structure will be integrated in regards to practice and actions.

- Use creativity in looking for resources already available. Example: Family connecting grants will be available in October 2009; 30 available nationwide - \$500,000.
- Frustration around exclusion of private agencies - feels like outsider because the agency pushed selves into meeting. Can this be improved? Hinders private agency – project wants to be kept internally not partner with agencies in community.

Supporting out-of-state connections and ICPC

This issue of creating and sustaining connections with relatives/family who are out of state was discussed at the last Northern CA regional county meeting on October 22, 2008.

Specific problems:

- What can be done when the state refuses an ICPC request?
- Failure of family to follow through
- Time consuming

Discussion:

- Utilize possible relationships with partner agencies in the other state.
- Some states work faster than others – is there a way to motivate staff?
- There are federal agreements surrounding ICPC. We need to find ways to alert individuals about barriers to permanency work created by ICPC.
- There were two failed ICPCs in Kern County last month. Because there was lack of communication, family members changed their minds. There was no support for the family in the other state to support the new connection. Connecting with a wrap agency is helpful; wrap services are necessary before the permanent connection is in place.
- Is there anything in writing about when a “child is freed”? When parental rights have been severed, the family relationship is severed. However, there is no reason why you can’t pursue family finding/engagement. How does one do it? Suggestion: Read the legal code.

Upcoming Event

Darla Henry will be doing a CPYP-sponsored training in Madera January 8-9, 2009.

Policy Committee Minutes

Gail Johnson Vaughan, Mission Focused Solutions, chair
Nenita Dean, Stanislaus County
Sophia Isom, San Francisco County
Jill Jacobs, Family Builders
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Jude Koski, California Youth Connection
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Diane Wagner, Los Angeles County
Julia Waters, California Youth Connection

Committee began by discussing forward policy movement in their counties as well as areas of continued resistance. Overall policy and practice to accomplish permanency for youth has significantly advanced over the period that CPYP has been in existence.

Key Policy Issues Discussed

Recommendations on how Federal Adoption Incentives earned by California should be used

- Focus on counties' performance on achieving permanence for children age 9 and over (Federal age designation as "older child")
- Distribute to counties based on documented numbers of youth age 9 and above who have achieved permanence through:
 - Adoption
 - Legal guardianship
 - Reunification
- Mandate that incentive funds be used by counties for activities that improve permanency outcomes
 - Could include all permanency focused activities including but not limited to:
 - Youth permanency service provision
 - Family finding and engagement at the front end
 - Post permanency services and support
 - Use as match for county EPSDT contracts to permanency-competent contractors
- Request that savings generated be documented and reinvested to continue and expand services

Importance of having Permanency included in all BSW and MSW curriculums.

Far easier to have effective permanency practice if it is included in the foundation of child welfare training received in undergraduate and graduate education. It is not just Title IV-E graduates that the counties are hiring.

- Efforts so far have not been successful
- Strategies to consider are:
 - Determine if which California schools, if any, currently have a permanency curriculum
 - Going directly to Council on Social Work Education
 - Although Title IV-E curriculum principles and competencies *do* mention permanence. The problem comes in having a mechanism for ensuring that it is adequately addressed in the curricula. Keep in mind that a part of the Title IV-E educational program involves internships, so it is easy for schools to say, 'the students are getting that in their fieldwork, while the people in the agencies in which the internships take place may be assuming, I'm sure they must get that in the classroom. That is why putting youth permanence on the agenda for the Council on Social Work Education (CSWE) would be important. CSWE's Commission on Accreditation has responsibility for developing accreditation standards defining competent preparation and ensuring that social work programs meet them.
 - Present at their annual conference?
 - Lobbying to Accreditation Advisory Boards
 - Make having a permanency curriculum an accreditation standard
 - Going to curriculum planning groups at each CSU and UC campus
 - Getting CYC youth on curriculum planning groups at each CSU and UCs
 - Involve Youth Training Project in efforts
 - Making sure that permanency remains a focus in the CORE training for new child welfare workers
 - This could be advocated for through the Y.O.U.T.H. Training Project, which already has members who attend the Statewide Training and Education Committee (STEC).
- Enlisting influential partners in the effort such as: CDSS, Child Welfare Council, Co-Investment Partnership, and Breakthrough Series Collaborative on Transformation of Independent Living Services, California Alliance, CYC.
- Legislation requiring campuses to have a permanency curriculum to qualify for IV-E funding

Design and implement a plan to assure that Youth Permanency does not lose ground with sunset of funding for CPYP and federal and state funded youth permanency demonstration projects (Destination Family – Sacramento, Placer & Nevada Counties; Dumisha Jamaa – Alameda Co; and the five Older Youth Adoption Counties)

- Gather data that demonstrate that youth permanence work is cost effective; use to educate boards of supervisors, directors of social services, county administrators etc. in the wisdom of reinvesting savings to sustain and expand youth permanence efforts. (Increases short and long term savings and drastically improves outcomes for youth in foster care.)

- Develop protocol for reinvesting savings to continue and expand youth permanency efforts
- Make documentation of savings a core part of every youth permanency effort
- Brief local, state and federal policy and legislative leaders on savings achieved through youth permanency

Closely monitor and weigh in on implementation of Federal Fostering Connections Legislation