



Government Agency Coordination for Children & Youth

Improved coordination and collaboration among government agencies and departments that promote the well being of vulnerable children, youth and families is one of the top priorities for California. These efforts recognize that the needs of children, youth and families are not compartmentalized, but span the breadth of services, supports and opportunities provided by government agencies.

State Interagency Team for Children and Youth

Founded in 2003, the State Interagency Team for Children and Youth (SIT) is leading the effort to better coordinate policy, services and strategies for children, youth and families in California. Comprised of deputy directors from 10 state agencies and departments, this group provides innovative leadership and guidance to facilitate local implementation of system improvements. Areas of focus include:

- Escalating policy and programmatic issues to senior leadership levels so that services can be better coordinated and obstacles removed
- Maximizing funding for services that support children, youth and families
- Removing systemic and regulatory barriers
- Ensuring that policies, accountability systems and planning are outcome based
- Sharing information and data

State agencies and departments represented on the State Interagency Team for Children and Youth include the Departments of Social Services, Education, Health Services, Mental Health, Alcohol and Drug Programs, Developmental Services and Employment Development, as well as the Attorney General's Office, the California Children & Families Commission and the California Workforce Investment Board.

Special Focus on Fiscal Strategies

A key undertaking of the State Interagency Team for Children and Youth is the creation of Regional Program and Fiscal Academies to provide information and training to county fiscal and program leaders from throughout California. Launched in March 2005, the purpose of the trainings is to improve local officials' understanding of how numerous funding streams work so that they are better able to use all available avenues to meet the needs of California's vulnerable children, youth and families, especially those involved with the child welfare system. Related strategies for accomplishing and sustaining the training work undertaken through the Academies include ongoing development of training curriculum and implementation of a Web-based reference guide.

The State Interagency Team for Children and Youth also created a technical advisory group of local and state representatives in 2004 to explore funding opportunities and fiscal strategies that could be maximized across government agencies. With an enterprising zeal, this group of 25 representatives works as a team to identify and address procedural, regulatory and other barriers. This "Barrier Busters Team" acts also as a "rapid response team" regarding the impact of federal initiatives and legislation that affect the funding of services to vulnerable children, youth and families.