Focus

2B-TODAY

2C-Jeff

3E & 3A-Royce

3G-Royce

3C-Phil SWS

California's Child and Family Services Review County Self-Assessment	
County:	**Madera**
Responsible County Child Welfare Agency:	**Madera County Department of Social Services**
Period of Assessment:	July 2005 - June 2006
Period of Outcomes Data:	2004-2006 (Based on Availability)
Date Submitted:	January 12, 2007
County Contact Person for County Self-Assessment	
Name:	Susan Arteaga Kelly Woodard
Title:	Deputy Director
Address:	700 Yosemite Avenue Madera, CA 93639
Phone:	559-675-7841
Submitted by each agency for children under its care	
Submitted By:	**County Child Welfare Agency Director (Lead Agency)**
Name:	Hubert (Hub) Walsh, Agency Director
Signature:	
Submitted by:	**County Chief Probation Officer**
Name:	Rick DuPree, Chief Probation Officer
Signature:	

In Collaboration With:			
County & Community Partners	Name(s)	County & Community Partners	
Madera County Office of Education	Sally Frazier, Ph.D.	Madera Unified School District	Galen Wright
Madera County Department of Behavioral Health Services	Janice Melton, LCSW	Court Appointed Special Advocates	Karin Chao-Bushoven
Madera County Department of Public Health	Carol Barney, MPH	Linkages	DSS
Law Enforcement	Lt. Steve Smith Madera County	Housing Authority	Maria L. Salas

SIP update 4/10/08

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	Sheriff Sgt. Dave Noblett & Detective John Hall Chowchilla P.D.		
Juvenile Court Bench Officer	Judge Nancy Staggs	ICWA Task Force	Josie Rodriguez
Foster Parents' Association	Stacy Scott	Ready Set Go	Eugene Bell, MFT
County Counsel	Miranda Neal	Child Abuse Prevention Council	Da Sharoi Crocker
Adoption Agency	Rosalie Gutierrez, MSW	Community Action Partnership	MJ Nabors
Children & Families Commission	Chinayera Black, MPA	Workforce Investment Board	Elaine M. Craig
CWS Managers	Fern Mills Donna M. Lutz		
Healthy Beginnings Program	Cheryl Edgar, P.H.N Director Public Health Nursing	FFA Interagency	Various Agencies

LL. SOCIAL SERVICES DEPARTMENT. Consideration of entering into Agreement with University of California, Davis (UCD), to provide formal training to designated Child Welfare Services Staff, for Fiscal Year 2007-2008. (07035)

ADOPT MCC NO. 8354-C-2007

BOARD LETTER

MCC NO. 8354-C-2007

MM. SOCIAL SERVICES DEPARTMENT. Consideration of entering into Agreement with University of California, Davis (UCD), to provide formal training to designated Eligibility, Employment Services, and Support Staff for Fiscal Year 2007-2008. (07035)

ADOPT MCC NO. 8355-C-2007

BOARD LETTER

MCC NO. 8355-C-2007

NN. SOCIAL SERVICES DEPARTMENT. Consideration of entering into a Memorandum of Understandinç (MOU) between First 5 Madera County and Madera County Department of Social Services (DSS) to provide Early Intervention Services through a S.H. Cowell Foundation Grant. (07035)

ADOPT MOU NO. 8356-C-2007

BOARD LETTER

MOU 8356-C-2007

OO. SOCIAL SERVICES DEPARTMENT. Consideration of entering into Agreement with State Center Community College District (SCCCD) for the provision of Vocational Education Services for CalWORKs Participants for Fiscal Year 2007-2008. (07035)

ADOPT MCC NO. 8357-C-2007

BOARD LETTER

MCC NO. 8357-C-2007

EXHIBIT - A

EXHIBIT - B

PP. SOCIAL SERVICES DEPARTMENT. Consideration of approval of Out of County Trip Request No. 07-699, for Director Hub Walsh, to attend the National Association of Counties (NACo) Annual Conference and Exposition in Richmond, Virginia. (07107)

APPROVE

BOARD LETTER AND ATTACHMENTS

OUT OF COUNTY TRIP REQUEST

QQ. SOCIAL SERVICES DEPARTMENT. Consideration of entering into Amendment to Agreement No. 7924-C-2005 between the Madera County Children and Families Commission and the Department of Social Services (DSS) for the Continuation of the Incredible Years Parenting Program for Fiscal Years 2007-2009. (07035)

ADOPT MCC NO. 7924A-C-2007

BOARD LETTER

MCC NO. 7924A-C-2007

RR. SOCIAL SERVICES DEPARTMENT. Consideration of Submission of System Improvement Plan for Madera County Child Welfare Services and the Probation Department and Authorize the Departments of Social Services and Probation to submit the System Improvement Plan to the State Department of Social Services. (07035)

APPROVE

BOARD LETTER

SIP REPORT

SS. SPECIAL DISTRICTS BOARD OF DIRECTORS/MAINTENANCE DISTRICT 22A, OAKHURST/RESOURCE MANAGEMENT AGENCY/ENGINEERING DEPARTMENT. Consideration of approval of Resolution Appropriating Unanticipated Revenue, in the amount of $50,000.00, derived from

Previously Unappropriated Cash Balance to Fixed Assets for Fiscal Year 2006 (07042)

ADOPT RESOLUTION NO. 2007-167

BOARD LETTER

RESOLUTION NO. 2007-167

ATTEST:

Tanna G. Boyd, Chief Clerk

Vern Moss, Chairman

OO. **SOCIAL SERVICES DEPARTMENT.** Consideration of entering into Agreement with State Center Community College District (SCCCD) for the provision of Vocational Education Services for CalWORKs Participants for Fiscal Year 2007-2008.

PP. **SOCIAL SERVICES DEPARTMENT.** Consideration of approval of Out of County Trip Request No. 07-699, for Director Hub Walsh, to attend the National Association of Counties (NACo) Annual Conference and Exposition in Richmond, Virginia.

QQ. **SOCIAL SERVICES DEPARTMENT.** Consideration of entering into Amendment to Agreement No. 7924-C-2005 between the Madera County Children and Families Commission and the Department of Social Services (DSS) for the Continuation of the Incredible Years Parenting Program for Fiscal Years 2007-2009.

RR. **SOCIAL SERVICES DEPARTMENT.** Consideration of Submission of System Improvement Plan for Madera County Child Welfare Services and the Probation Department and Authorize the Departments of Social Services and Probation to submit the System Improvement Plant to the State Department of Social Services.

SS. **SPECIAL DISTRICTS BOARD OF DIRECTORS/MAINTENANCE DISTRICT 22A, OAKHURST/RESOURCE MANAGEMENT AGENCY/ENGINEERING DEPARTMENT.** Consideration of approval of Resolution Appropriating Unanticipated Revenue, in the amount of $50,000.00, derived from Previously Unappropriated Cash Balance to Fixed Assets for Fiscal Year 2006-2007. **4 Votes Required.**

NEXT MEETINGS: **June 29, 2007, 11:30 a.m., SPECIAL MEETING**
Cornerstone Dedication Ceremony
July 3, 2007, NO BOARD MEETING
July 10, 2007, REGULAR MEETING
July 17, 2007, NO BOARD MEETING
July 24, 2007, REGULAR MEETING
August 7, 2007, REGULAR MEETING
August 14, 2007, REGULAR MEETING
August 21, 2007, REGULAR MEETING
August 21-24, 2007, BUDGET HEARINGS
August 27, 2007, SPECIAL DISTRICT BUDGET HEARING
August 28, 2007 NO BOARD

I. SIP Narrative

1. Local Planning Bodies

In 2004, Madera County completed its first, countywide Self- Assessment, followed by the County's System Improvement Plan. In 2006, Madera County again conducted a countywide self assessment. Over the last year, Madera County has met with community stakeholders to continue its efforts toward improving outcomes for children and families in Madera County. Representatives from the community, foster parents, foster children, child-care providers, education, law enforcement, probation, behavioral health, public health, community based organizations, parents, and Child Welfare Staff were included in those discussions. Participants have also included representatives from the Madera County Child Abuse Prevention Council and the Madera County Interagency Children and Youth Services Council. These meetings have provided the continued foundation for the activities put forth in Madera County's Self Assessment Plan and System Improvement Plan, as required by AB 636. These discussions have provided an arena for stakeholders and internal CWS staff to engage in dialogue, while exploring approaches for system improvement and developing community approaches to improve children and family outcomes.

This report represents the stakeholders of Madera County and includes Behavioral Health Services, Public Health, California Work Opportunity and Responsibility to Kids (CALWORKS), Temporary Assistance to needy Families, First 5 Madera County Children and Families Commission, Madera County Office of Education, California Department of Social Services Adoptions, Madera County Community Action Agency, Madera Work Force Investment Board and Youth Council, the housing Authority of the City of Madera, Madera County Local Planning Council, CASA, and the Interagency Children and Youth Services Council. Through focused discussions Madera County has successfully assessed the county's performance while integrating recommendations of the community members. These efforts further allowed a forum to present the county's strengths and areas requiring modifications to improve

outcomes. Both Child Welfare Services and Probation have collaborated in developing protocols for provision of services for youth and their families. Included in this document are areas in which data was available as reported in the County's Self Assessment.

This document will be presented to the Madera County Board of Supervisors and Interagency service partners, in May 2007.

2. Share findings that support the qualitative change

Focus groups were facilitated in an effort to allow Community Partners a forum to provide structured feedback on their experiences with Madera Child Welfare/Probation. The following questions were presented:

1. In regards to CWS/Probation families that you serve, what strategies are most effective?
2. What CWS/Probation practices increase the effectiveness of collaboration?
3. What challenges are there in service delivery?
4. What CWS/Probation practices impede collaborative efforts?
5. Could you share thoughts of how CWS/Probation might improve services to families, especially through collaborative efforts?
6. How do CWS/Probation outcomes interrelate with your organization?

There continues to be openness between partnering agencies, as well as the ability to provide constructive feedback on system strengths, and areas identified as needing improvements. A common theme from these forums was the increased willingness to continue the dialogue and activities that would resolve and increase service provisions through out the county.

From these meetings and through the assessment of the outcomes, the agency continues to concentrate its efforts on organizational shifts and social work practice. Improvements will be realized through training, supervisor monitoring, compliance review process and formalized policy and procedures.

3. Summary assessment from the Self Assessment

Attached Section (V) of County Self Assessment Plan.

II. SIP Plan Components

Madera County has made great strides in establishing relations and collaborative efforts with other service organizations and agencies. As outlined in this report, these local initiatives will provide comprehensive services to children and families of Madera County. The following outlines the outcomes assessed and the continued areas of focus.

INDICATORS	INCLUDED IN THE COUNTY SELF IMPROVEMENT PLAN	INDICATORS NOT INCLUDED IN THE COUNTY SELF IMPROVEMENT PLAN
Indicators 1A and 1B: Recurrence of Maltreatment Madera County was committed to reducing the rate of recurrence of maltreatment by 1.8% The data reflects that the County has succeeded in this goal, reducing the rate by 4.2%. The County implemented the use of Structured Decision Making (SDM) to help guide decision making; assessing risk and safety in a structured manner. In addition, Family Group Decision making strategies were implemented to allow participation of the family and their support systems. This shift has required multiple levels of training and supervision. Supervisors and social workers will continue to integrate the use of SDM and Safe measures to improve outcomes in this category.		X
Indicator 1C: Rate of Abuse and/or Neglect in Foster Care Madera County Child Welfare Services continues to work collaboratively with foster parents and Foster Family Agencies to		X

address resource and training needs. To this end, a foster parent liaison position was created in 2006 to bridge gaps and provide a communication link for foster parents.		
.		
Indicator 2A: Recurrence of abuse/neglect in homes where children were not removed. Specific to abuse and neglect referrals determined inconclusive or substantiated, but not rising to the level of involuntary intervention, it is the county's practice to offer referrals to community services and/or Voluntary Family Maintenance. Madera County was committed to reducing the rate of abuse/neglect in homes where children were not removed by .9%. The county was successful with their efforts as the rate of abuse was reduced by 4.4 % and falls below the rate of the state average. Concentration on training and partial implementation of SDM, as well as greater utilization of various case staffing techniques, including interaction with multi-disciplinary teams, was necessary to positively impact this outcome.		X
Indicator 2B: Timely Response Madera County is doing well in the area of immediate response. Social workers are trained to be aware of the critical nature of these referrals, as well as the necessity to respond in a timely manner. However, there is improvement needed in the area of 10-day response.	X	
Indicator 2C: Timely Social Work Visits Although contact compliance is above the state average, Madera County will continue to focus on improvements and monitor compliance in this area. Social Work Supervisors will continue to use reports from Safe Measures to assist in monitoring compliance and identifying area of training.		X

Indicators 3E and 3A: Children in Foster Care who are reunified in 12 months A significant number of children remain in out-of-home placement for longer periods and/or are not reunified with parents. The risk factors for families that are referred impact a family's successful participation in involuntary services ordered through Juvenile Court. The major reason for removal of children from their home of origin is substance abuse, primarily methamphetamine, which is over 80%. A lack of local drug treatment programs that are specifically indicated for methamphetamine addiction continues to be a significant resource barrier to reunification of children. Issues are being addressed in different community venues that may increase outcomes including changes in treatment modalities for substance abusing parents.		X
Indicators: 3D and 3A: Length of Time to Exit Foster Care to Adoption The Department is diligent in adhering to time limits in its ongoing commitment to swift permanence for children. The county exceeds the State's average rate of children adopted. There is an ongoing focus on both the reunification plan and the concurrent plan as soon as a child enters foster care. The speed at which adoption occurs is hampered by a number of elements, some specific to Madera County, others more general to child welfare as a whole. Madera County is committed to the provision of voluntary services. Therefore, families who receive Family Reunification Services often have had services or opportunities for service, prior to the children's entrance into foster care. In the majority of the cases there are chronic substance abuse issues that were not ameliorated with the provision of in home services. Said substance abuse often has exposed infants prenatally to drugs and or		X

alcohol. Therefore, the Department finds that many children enter long term foster care versus adoption as a result of their emotional, educational and health limitations that are the result of chronic neglect. Adoption is often postponed in an attempt for a child to obtain emotional and behavioral stability that will allow for their eventual placement in a permanent home. Familial culture often sways prospective adoptive relatives to choose guardianship or long-term foster care instead of adoption. The current philosophy of California Indian Tribes is that they do not prescribe to adoption of their eligible children as a permanent plan. However, they do support guardianship as the permanent plan.		
Indicators: 3B and 3C: Multiple Foster Care Placements Madera County has not experienced dramatic changes since the last assessment, but has improved in the Federal Standard. Contributing factors to the challenge of placement stability include placement of relatives required to go through the Relative Approval Process before children can be placed in their home. There have not been any notable changes in length of stay for hard to place children. Children, many of whom have prenatal drug and alcohol exposure have a variety of behaviors. The extra challenges contribute to the instability in placements, coupled with the lack of system resources in place to meet those needs. The Department continues to collaborate with its interagency partners to seek strategies for improving outcomes in these areas.	X	
Indicator 3F and 3G: Rate of Foster Care Re-entry As indicated in the most recent Self Assessment, the Department is refining the provision of it's traditional staffing process to include: Staffing at critical points – crisis, placement moves and potential placement moves; and full implementation of Family Team Decision Making. In addition, utilization of the SDM Re-	X	

Assessment tool has been implemented to help guide decision making. This cohort reflects data gathered prior to the implementation of Structured Decision Making and other systemic changes such as regular case conferencing/staffing and the inclusion of community partners such as the Healthy Beginnings Program and Lake Street Center. The County has improved in the Federal outcomes during this review period; however, the state outcomes reflect a decrease.		
Indicators 4A and 4B: Siblings placed together and children placed in least restrictive settings. Many families in the Madera County CWS System are larger sibling groups. While active efforts are made to place siblings together, considerations are given for language needs, food preferences, educational and medical needs oftentimes making it impossible to place all sibling groups in the same home. Madera County has made improvement in these outcomes and remains above the state average.		X
Indicator 4E: ICWA Placement Preferences Madera County actively engages the ICWA representatives as early as possible to request placement assistance. The Department's outcomes currently reflect a higher rate than the state average.		X
Indicator 8A: Children Transitioning to Self-Sufficient Adulthood Madera County Department of Social Services provides an array of services and activities for youth transitioning from foster care. These services are designed for eligible youth between the ages of 15 ½ and 21 in order to assist and prepare them in their		X

transition from foster care to adulthood. Services are provided based on the needs and goals identified in the Transitional Independent Living Plan.		

Through the efforts and outcomes revealed in the County's second Self Assessment, Child Welfare Services will be focusing their attention on creating a cultural shift within the agency in order to improve social work practices. As discussed earlier, improvement efforts will be fostered through training, supervisor guidance and monitoring, compliance review process, and formalized policy and procedures.

1. Training

Formal training will be conducted for identified staff and will include the following areas:

A. Structured Decision Making – Utilization of the Decision Tree Assessment Tool.

B. Data Entry on 10-Day Response Referrals.

C. Screening regulations and process.

D. Family Team Decision Making – facilitator training, application model and process.

E. Family-Centered, strength –based Social Worker case presentation.

2. Supervisor Guidance and Monitoring

The Supervisor plays one of the most important roles in creating a positive work environment, with an emphasis on professional growth and development of social work staff. Through clear expectations, on-going training and regular monitoring of work performance and case outcomes, the supervisor and social worker will foster positive outcomes for the children and families served.

Supervisors will ensure their staff provide appropriate services and best practice techniques that will ensure reasonable service delivery.

Supervisor expectations will include the use of Safe Measures, as well as CWS/CMS case review to ensure provision of mandated services. It will further be used to identify trends and formulate training plans for individual or groups of social workers. Through trainings provided, supervisors will assist their staff to transfer their knowledge into social work practice, while monitoring performance and application of new techniques.

3. Compliance Review Process

In Madera County's efforts to improve outcomes for our children and families, it is imperative that we track the activities that lead to improved outcomes is tracked. Madera County is establishing a compliance review process that reviews, and assesses program actitives and their relation to the identified outcomes.

4. Policy and Procedures

As identified in the System Improvement Plan, Madera County will implement training on those identified activities. These activities align with meeting our strategies and ultimately the improvement goals. Madera County will ensure that Policy and Procedures are developed and distributed to all staff that coincides with the training and expectations.

The following three strategies will have the potential to initiate exponential affects on the County's outcome improvements:

Improvement Goal 1.0: Madera County is doing well in the area of Immediate Response Referrals. Social Workers are trained to be aware of the critical nature of these referrals, as well as the necessity to respond in a timely manner. However, there is improvement needed in the area of 10 Day Response Referrals. Further clarification about the differentiation between a 10 Day Response Referral and an Immediate Response Referral is necessary. Timeframe 10/1/07 to 9/30/08.					
Strategy 1.1 Core Training on Emergency Response Timeframes and Documentation.			**Strategy Rationale**: Timely response needs to be accurately documented.		
Milestone	1.1.1 Development of internal core curriculum.	Timeframe	10/1/2007	Assigned to:	Program Manager Social Services Supervisors
	1.1.2 Training hosted quarterly to in-service staff on correct data entry on CWS/CMS		Quarterly, beginning 10/1/2007		Program Manager Social Services Supervisors
	1.1.3 Training review compliance process established.		180 days		Deputy Directors Program Manager Social Work Supervisors Social Service Analyst
Strategy 1.2 Timely Initial Referral Assignment			**Strategy Rationale:** Once referrals are assigned timely, they can be allocated to staff timely, improving response timeframes.		
	1.2.1 Staffing needs and allocation between crisis and non-crisis staff determined through review of referral volume projections and output expectations.	Timeframe	90 days	Assigned to:	Social Work Supervisors, Program Manager, Clerical Supervisor
	1.2.2 Implementation of an efficient and timely Referral Assignment policy and procedure.		120 days		Clerical Supervisor, Social Work Supervisors, Program Manager
	1.2. 3 All staff trained and knowledgeable on the screening process.		180 days		Program Manager Social Work Supervisors

Strategy 1.3 Implementation of the SDM assessment decision tree.					**Strategy Rationale**: Standardize screening process to ensure increased compliance response times.
Milestone	1.3.1 All staff trained on decision tree tool.	Timeframe	90 days	Assigned to:	Program Manager Social Services Supervisors
	1.3.2 Internal review that ensures full utilization of decision tree assessment. (Case Review)		120 days and quarterly program integrity review to ensure compliance.		Program Manager Social Services Analyst
	1.3.3 Implementation of Policy and Procedure guide in alignment with utilization of decision tree.		180 days		Program Manager Social Work Supervisors

Describe any additional systemic factors needing to be addressed that support the improvement plan. As noted in the discussion on the outcomes targeted by Madera County for its Self Improvement Plan, Child Welfare Services will concentrate on improvement of social work practices. This will occur utilizing micro and macro strategies, to include: formal training sessions, hands–on practical experience, structured supervisory intervention, and implementation of policy and procedures.
Describe educational/training needs (including technical assistance) to achieve the improvement goals. Madera County will request the assistance of CDSS to provide funding for the continued implementation of web based Structured Decision Making, specific to utilization of the Decision Tree assessment.
Identify roles of the other partners in achieving the improvement goals. Madera County will continue with the identified system improvement changes needed to improve outcomes in the areas of safety. Our partners will be included in our collaborative efforts in order to continue building our partnerships, enhancing the array of services available, and creating agency policy and procedures.
Identify any regulatory or statutory changes needed to support the accomplishment of the improvement goals. No regulatory or statutory changes are needed to support this improvement goal.
Systemic Factor: Training and internal Policy & Procedures, as well as development of a training review compliance process.

County's Current Performance: Madera County has performed well in the area of Immediate Response Referrals, from 92.9% in Q3 2003 to 97.2% in Q2 2005, an increase of 5.3%. However, improvement is needed in the area of 10-Day Response Referrals. The data reveals that there is a decrease in the time periods assessed, with an 86.3% compliance rate. Madera County has not been as consistent in recording the contact information into CWS/CMS.

Implementation of policy and procedures, coupled with training and development of a training review compliance process will afford staff, supervisors and program managers the training and tools necessary to increase outcomes.

Improvement Goal 2.0 Decrease the number of children who have more than two placements by 3.0%.

Strategy 2.1 Conduct Family Team Decision Making staffings with all families where a child(ren) has been detained.			**Strategy Rationale:** Family involved staffings increases 'buy-in," engagement, participation, and cooperation; and provides avenues for identification of special needs of their children and increasing reunification time frames. The early identification of children's special needs increases the Social Worker's capacity to match children's needs to homes trained and prepared to partner with the county on meeting those needs, while linking to necessary services. Stability of the child's emotional and physical well-being increases the opportunity for successful permanence.		
Milestone	2.1.1 Key staff trained on facilitating Family Team Decision Making staffings.	Timeframe	90 Days	Assigned to:	Social Work Supervisor, Program Manager
	2.1.2 Social Work staff trained on the purpose, format and expected outcomes of Family Team Decision Making staffings		90 Days		Social Work Supervisor, Program Manager
	2.1.3 Policy and procedure completed on Family Team Decision Making Staffings and staff trained process.		120 days		Social Work Supervisor, Program Manager

Strategy 2.2 Conduct Family Team Decision Making staffings for all potential placement changes and 7 day notices and include resource parent.			**Strategy Rationale** – Timely staffings that address placement difficulties, as well as inclusion of the resource parent will assist in stabilizing placements and foster necessary linkage to additional services for the child as identified in the staffings. .		
Milestone	2.2.1 In-service trainings provided for all placement partners, including foster parents and foster family agencies, Behavioral Health, Healthy Beginnings, Education and Public Health.	Timeframe	90 Days	Assigned to:	Program Manager Social Work Supervisor
	2.2.2 Scheduling format implemented that accommodates multiple staffings, while reducing delays or conflicts.		90 Days		Program Manager Social Work Supervisor
	2.2.3 Master list of facilitators created who are trained in Family Group Decision Making for rotational scheduling.		90 Days		Program Manager Social Work Supervisor
Strategy 2.3 Conduct quarterly in-service meetings with placement resource providers in order to continue with collaborative decision making and address systemic issues.			**Strategy Rationale** -The Resource Families are integral partners, working towards meeting the placement needs of the children in their care. On-going collaborative efforts with staff and the resource families will create a stronger partnership between the two entities who are working toward providing for the best interest of the children.		
Milestone	2.3.1 Specific topics surrounding placement stability identified in collaboration with placement resource providers through on-going discussions.	Timeframe	90 Days	Assigned to:	Social Worker Foster Parent Liaison, Social Work Supervisor, Program Manager
	2.3.2 Meetings calendared and coordinated with the foster parent associations and Foster Family		90 Days		Social Worker Foster Parent Liaison, Social Work Supervisor, Program Manager

	Agency Interagency Committee.				
	2.3.3. Survey conducted with Resource Parents on collaborative efforts between the county and the placement community.		120 Days		Social Worker Foster Parent Liaison, Social Work Supervisor, Program Manager

Describe any additional systemic factors needing to be addressed that support the improvement plan goals. Madera County continues to address the complex needs of parents and their children involved in the child welfare system. By inviting families in a team approach, with all players having an equal voice, this will allow for more innovative placement decisions that will meet the best interest of the child, while improving family engagement. As these enhanced strategies get underway, additional support will be needed through our county Behavioral Health that supports parents, as well as joint family counseling on those cases that progress toward stability. Madera County will continue to work with its collaborative partners in this endeavor, by including Behavioral Health, Public Health and the resource placement providers as the systemic issues arise.

Describe educational/training needs (including technical assistance) to achieve the improvement goals. Madera County will be requesting training through the Regional Training Academy and/or the American Humane Society in order to train key staff on Family Group Decision Making.

Identify roles of the other partners in achieving the improvement goals. CWS will continue in its collaborative partnerships with Public Health, Behavioral Health, and the Resource Providers.

Identify any regulatory or statutory changes needed to support the accomplishment of the improvement goals. No regulatory or statutory changes are needed to support this improvement goal.

Systemic Factor: Training and collaboration with placement providers.

County's Current Performance: For the Federal outcomes in the time period of 10/1/01 – 9/30/02 to 4/1/04 – 3/31/05, Madera County increased the number of children who only experienced two or more placements by .3%. For the State outcomes from the same time period, Madera County reduced the number of children who only experienced no more than two placements by 3.1%. The Department is continuing with its efforts to increase placement resources, including the recent appointment of a foster parent liaison position who assists in these efforts. Madera County conducts regular staffings with its partners, including Behavioral Health and Public Health and is now regularly including the resource placement providers.

Improvement Goal 3.0 Decrease the number of children who re-enter foster care by 2.3%.	
Strategy 3.1 Continued utilization of Structured Decision Making for	**Strategy Rationale:** Utilization of structured guidelines will lead

children in out-of-home care.			to consistent and appropriate decision making regarding safety and risk associated to children.
Milestone	**3.1.1** Key staff trained on SDM and case presentation at staffings.	**Timeframe** 90 Days	**Assigned to** Social Work Supervisor, Program Manager
	3.1.2 Case Review Form used to monitor SDM full utilization.	120 Days	Social Work Supervisor, Program Manager
	3.1.3 Implement review compliance process to ensure SDM utilization system wide.	120 Days	Social Work Supervisor, Program Manager, Social Service Analyst
Strategy 3.2 Intensify Family Maintenance services immediately following successful reunification by increase system contact..			**Strategy Rationale:** When children are returned home, new family dynamics present and there is a great need to ensure that safety is closely monitored.
Milestone	**3.2.1** Train staff on intensity and comprehensive assessment during family contacts.	**Timeframe** 90 Days	**Assigned to** Social Work Supervisor, Program Manager
	3.2.2 Increased collaborative efforts with other service entities and secured resource providers who are serving the family.	120 Days	Social Work Supervisor, Program Manager
	3.2.3 Implemented review compliance process to ensure increased services intensity.	180 Days	Social Work Supervisor, Program Manager, Social Services Analyst
Strategy 3.3 Utilization of Family Team Decision Making for reunification efforts.			**Strategy Rationale:** When parents and family are involved in the decision making process, reunification efforts are more likely to be successful, thus reducing failed compliance efforts.
Milestone	**3.3.1** Staff trained on Family Team Decision Making.	**Timeframe** 90 Days	**Assigned to** Social Work Supervisor, Program Manager
	3.3.2 Partners and collaterals are included on the Family Team Decision Making Team	90 Days	Social Work Supervisor, Program Manager

	3.3.3 Implemented review compliance process to ensure Family Team Decision Meetings have occurred.		120 Days		Social Work Supervisor, Program Manager, Social Services Analyst

Describe systemic changes needed to further support the improvement goal. Madera County will continue it's efforts toward the team collaboration approach, allowing for comprehensive decisions when returning children home, or assessments that foster children remaining at home. Continued support will be needed through our partners at Behavioral Health, Public Health, Resource Placement Providers.

Describe educational/training needs (including technical assistance) to achieve the improvement goals. Madera County will be requesting training through the Regional Training Academy and/or the American Humane Society in order to train key staff on Family Team Decision Making.

Identify roles of the other partners in achieving the improvement goals. CWS will continue in its collaborative partnerships with public Helath, Behavioral Health, and the Resource Placement Providers.

Identify any regulatory or statutory changes needed to support the accomplishment of the improvement goals. Training and collaboration with placement providers.

Outcome/Systemic Factor For the Probation Department: Training and collaborative efforts to better meet the needs of youth in Aftercare Component of placement.

County's Current Performance: The probation department tracks placement youth when they transition back into community and home environment to monitor their adjustment.

Improvement Goal 1.0 Probation Officer assigned to placement meet with parents or willing relative and other collaborative agencies to identify needs and develop an exit plan to help the child with a smooth and successful transition and to ensure compliance with aftercare requirements.

Strategy 1.1 The departments of Probation will participate in training provided by CWS, UC Davis and various other trainings that focus on issues pertaining to Safety Outcomes, Child well-being, Permanency Outcomes, ILP, Health and Education , Educational rights for children in placement, issues and challenges of youth in aftercare.	**Strategy Rationale**** The probation staff assigned to children in out of home care have been trained in many of the important areas mention in Strategy 1.1. However additional training is needed to obtaining better outcomes and understanding of the challenges facing youth in their transition to a less restrictive/structured environment when released from of placement to live with parents or live independently.

Milestone	1.1.1 Designated Probation staff will participate in all outcome training afforded to Child Welfare Services and Behavioral Health Services.	Timeframe	Ongoing and when training is available	Assigned to:	Probation Supervisor, and or Placement Staff. Program Manager for DSS
	1.1.2 Probation will monitor/track its current performance as it relates to the number of children in aftercare and work in conjunction with Public Health, CWS , Behavioral Health and other resources to implement a transition/aftercare action plan to address the needs of children returning home or living independently.		Ongoing - when necessary		Probation Supervisor and or Placement staff.

Describe any additional systemic factors needing to be addressed that support the improvement plan goals.

The Probation Department is currently understaffed and without sufficient human resources to effect significant systemic change as result of State and County budget concerns.

Describe educational/training needs (including technical assistance) to achieve the improvement goals.

Training needs are addressed in the milestones.

Identify roles of the other partners in achieving the improvement goals.

Child Welfare Services and Public Health are partners in addressing the needs of Probation staff as it relates to training. The Department of Public Health is a partner in obtaining the need health services for children under Probation supervision.

Identify any regulatory or statutory changes needed to support the accomplishment of the improvement goals.

None are identified at this time.

1. Strategies for the Future

Madera County continues to address health access to the 0-5 population through the First 5 Child Health Initiative. The First Parent's Program continues to be available and is being provided in Chowchilla and at a mountain facility. This primary prevention program makes phone contacts to offer information, education, and referral services to first time parents throughout the county. First Parent's Program also makes monthly home visits for up to a year after the baby is born. The program links with existing providers to create a referral system that both encourages access to the First Parent's Program, as well as to a variety of community services to which the pregnant mother/first time parents may be connected depending on their needs.

First Five has received a Cowell Foundation Grant to serve families through the Family Resource Center (FRC) This funding is being utilized to leverage CWS funds in order to out-station a Social Worker at the FRC. This CWS assignment will provide capacity at the FRC to meet the information and referral needs of Madera County residents while concurrently completing risk assessments. The Child Welfare Social Worker responds to families presenting with more emergent issues. The Social Worker conducts an initial risk assessment and completes referrals to community partners to meet the needs of the family, as well as respond appropriately to families who present with issues rising to the level of CWS intervention. Further, an Ameri-Corp volunteer employed by the FRC is utilized to case manage those families who are not otherwise referred to other agencies for assistance.

The SAP revealed a lack of protocol and direction to staff in regard to the necessity of a comprehensive assessment and evaluation of the emotional and behavioral health of drug exposed children entering foster care, with periodic updates throughout a placement episode. Also, identified was a lack of resources to support substitute care providers and, too few resource families in the community. As a result, placement disruption is too frequently due to a child's emotional/developmental concerns and the related negative behaviors. These disruptions directly impact the rate at which the child becomes emotionally stable enough to return home or to be considered a suitable candidate for adoption. It is notable that Madera County experiences a large first entry rate into foster care of children who are older than six years of age, typically children who are more difficult to match to an adoptive family exacerbating

these outcomes. Additionally, after the completion of the SAP, we identified that staff was inconsistent in their application of policy relating to the early identification of relatives and concurrent home matching. These systemic factors impact outcome indicators 3 D, 3A as well as 3B and 3C. In order to address these factors, Madera County has put forth efforts in providing permanent lifelong connections for our foster youth. Through these efforts, Madera County has become involved in the California Permanency for Youth Project and anticipates receiving technical assistance in March 2008. Through these efforts, Madera County will not only be working with youth in Long Term Foster Care, but activities system wide will be put in place that helps provide early identification of relative or others connected to the child.