



A PATHWAY TO STATE & NATIONAL REFORM TO IMPROVE CHILD WELFARE OUTCOMES



Spring 2016 Issue

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The Title IV-E California Well-Being Project (Project) continues to support both the implementation and evaluation of Child Welfare and Probation intervention services. This issue of the newsletter includes highlights from the Safety Organized Practice (SOP) and Wraparound collaborative working groups held in March, a focus on Sacramento County, where the Project demonstration has already produced positive results for children and families, and an update on federal child welfare financing reform. Looking forward, please check out the “save-the-date” list for upcoming meetings and events this year.

JANUARY - MARCH HIGHLIGHTS

Wraparound Collaborative – March 11, 2016

CALIFORNIA WRAPAROUND



Probation staff from the Project counties came together to learn more about implementing Wraparound in the context of the Project.

Ebony Chambers and Michael J. Rauso, with the Resource Center for Family-Focused Practice, facilitated the session which included a rich discussion on a range of topics, from how to create working agreements with providers, to the critical elements of Wraparound such as family engagement and strengths-and-need based plan development.

Probation staff shared their unique approaches to implementing Wraparound and their experiences with issues ranging from data collection to strategies that create genuine interactions with families in order to avoid a cookie cutter approach.

Deborah Lowery, trainer with the Resource Center for Family-Focused Practice, facilitated an expert panel on implementing Wraparound that included success stories, challenges and lessons learned. The panelists, Miguel Loeza (Seneca Family of Agencies), Jennifer Shebasta (Stanford Youth Solutions) and Brett Moranda (Humboldt County) each work in different counties with wide variations in caseloads, from as many as 260 children to as few as ten children participating in Wraparound probation services.

Panel Lessons

- **Describing and explaining Wraparound to families depends on the individual needs of the families and their unique strengths.**
- **Wraparound is a process, not a quick fix.**
- **Reaching youth requires an authentic voice and approaching the youth as an equal member of the team.**
- **Earning the family’s trust is challenging. Through conversations and partnership, families may come to understand that Wraparound is supportive and not punitive.**

Communicating Wraparound Implementation

Probation staff also participated in a presentation by i.e. communications on leveraging communication strategies and methods to achieve the goals of the Project. Laurie Kappe, President of i.e. communications, led the group through a discussion on Wraparound's key audiences, main messages and the most effective communication methods to share data, stories and resources. Building on the feedback from this session, i.e. communications will be providing tools and templates to support Probation efforts.

Safety Organized Practice (SOP) Collaborative – March 17, 2016

Child Welfare workers focused on implementing SOP met for a collaborative in San Diego, where attendees engaged in discussions highlighting the core elements of SOP. The session included panels providing practitioner, supervisor and county-wide perspectives. The practitioner panel featured Aaron Meng and Krystal Glowack, from San Diego County, and Minerva Beltran Gonzalez from Santa Clara County. The supervisors panel featured Jessica Recinos, San Francisco County; Belinda Benassi, San Luis Obispo County; Tara Motley-Ladman, San Diego County. The county-wide perspectives were provided by Lora Larson and Krystall Moore from San Joaquin County who discussed the depth and rigor of practice enabled by SO, and Kim Giardina shared San Diego's story and described their progress in demonstrating the effects of SOP in child welfare practice.

The session ended with "Learning Circles" where participants examined implementation challenges and the best strategies to advance SOP.

"The SOP collaborative highlighted how this practice provides useful tools to social workers to better support children and youth. It builds upon best practices already in the field, while offering more creative solutions that will positively impact the families we serve."

Mary Sheppard, Chief Resources Development and Training Support Bureau, California Department of Social Services (CDSS)

Comments about the Collaborative session

"I loved hearing how other counties are implementing SOP and seeing our common experiences and shared enthusiasm"

"It was very powerful to hear the common language and experiences of different counties. County size doesn't matter in enjoying the positives of SOP implementation and use."

COUNTY CORNER: SACRAMENTO

Sacramento Child Welfare and Probation departments shared the most rewarding aspects of the Project, including flexible funding options for preventative service and the opportunity to collaborate.

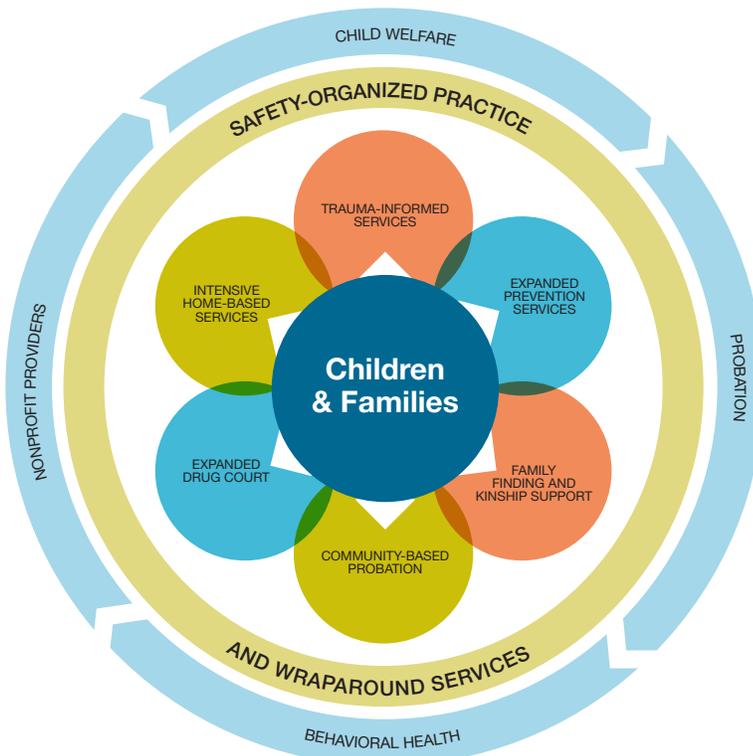
Mike Shores - Sacramento Assistant Chief Probation Officer

For Mike Shores, the Project is not only a form of funding; it establishes a philosophical expectation of collaboration and specific outcomes for children and families.

Before understanding trauma and the pathways to delinquency, Probation used to take low-risk children and absorb them into delinquency services. Because of the Project, the Probation department is better equipped to partner with Child Protective Services (CPS) to prevent low-risk children and youth from entering delinquency altogether.

As a result of the Project, the Sacramento Probation department has filled its contracts to capacity, serving 15 youth with Family Functional Therapy and ten youth participating in Multi-Systemic Therapy. Eight youth have already successfully completed their treatment plan.

SACRAMENTO CHILDREN AND FAMILIES TOGETHER



“The waiver has allowed us to be more proactive. Our system was prone to respond with services focused on enforcement rather than rehabilitation.”

“It is incumbent upon the probation department to help CPS. Neither department could achieve the outcomes we are seeking if we tried to implement the work alone.”

“The waiver is allowing the Probation department to show a different face of probation to the community: an engaging, collaborative approach to empowering families.”

COUNTY CORNER: SACRAMENTO

Michelle Callejas - Deputy Director, CPS

The Project has allowed Sacramento to provide services that help families with prevention, family finding, intensive support services and to improve their approach in working with crossover youth through its partnership with Probation.

Another major success of the Project has been the effect of SOP on the department and its supervisors' involvement with social workers by using tools like [appreciative inquiry](#) to support their work.

The benefits have gone beyond organizational change. According to Michelle, "SOP has allowed Sacramento's social workers to work with the families that participate in the program in such a way that families understand why social services are involved in their life. SOP mapping lets them see ways that the system can help them and not necessarily interrupt their lives".

The flexibility of the Project has resulted in funding for nine family resource centers strategically located in high needs areas in Sacramento County. The families that have participated in the Project's home visitation program have been able to access more services readily and has led to decreased contact with the child welfare system.

"One of the aspects of the waiver I have found most rewarding has been the value of working together with the Probation department. The waiver has joined not only our budgets but also our goals. It highlights that it's in everyone's best interest, especially the families' and children's best interests, to work to ensure safe and permanent homes as early as possible in our service delivery. Due to the waiver, we have also partnered with Behavioral Health Services and have benefitted greatly from that strong partnership."

FEDERAL FINANCING REFORM

There has been an effort at the federal level to introduce legislation in Congress that would fund preventative services without the need of a waiver. The Family Stability and Kinship Care Act, drafted by Sens. Hatch (R - Utah) and Wyden (D - Oregon), would allow states to claim a limited amount of federal foster care funding for services that could be offered to families and children before a child is removed from their home and placed in foster care. The [draft bill](#) appears to have stalled with the Senate Budget Committee and House Ways and Means, and may undergo further amendments as a result of compromises prior to being introduced. There is also expectation that provisions to allow states to claim a limited amount of federal foster care funding for prevention services may be introduced this fall in the Human Resources Subcommittee of The House Ways and Means Committee as part of a larger package of child welfare legislation.

CDSS PROJECT SUPPORT ACTIVITIES 2016

- Individual, quarterly county calls (Evaluation) began **May 13**.
- Next individual county conference calls are scheduled the **week of May 23**.
- Next Evaluation Steering Committee call is **June 2**.
- Next Wraparound Collaborative will be held on **June 24**, at The Center for Human Services in Davis, California.
- Next quarterly fiscal conference call is **August 9**, at 10 a.m. to 11 a.m.

SAVE THE DATE

- Meeting with the California Committee for the Protection of Human Subjects on **June 3**, for Institutional Review Board approval of the evaluation plan and data collection processes.
- National Institute for Well-being presentation (Butte, Sacramento, Santa Clara Counties presenting with CDSS) on **June 16**, from 3:00 p.m. – 4:30 p.m.
- Evaluation Implementation Kick-off meeting in **July** to review the final evaluation plan and discuss data collection processes with counties.
- Well-Being Project Quarterly Update Call on **July 28**
- Evaluation county site visits expected to begin **May 23, and continue through August 12**. The National Council on Crime & Delinquency is currently scheduling with counties.
- National Waiver Meeting in Washington, D.C. – San Francisco County Child Welfare and Alameda County Probation were selected to attend the next Annual Waiver Meeting on **August 29th - 30th**, along with CDSS Staff and an Evaluation Representative.
- Annual CDSS Title IV-E California Well Being Project Meeting in **November**.

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FOR MORE INFORMATION ON PROJECT SUPPORT ACTIVITIES, PLEASE CONTACT:

[California Well-Being Project Website](#)
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