STATE OF CALIFORNIA—HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES AGENCY
DEPARTMENT OF SOCIAL SERVICES
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ALL COUNTY INFORMATION NO. I-15-13

REASON FOR THIS TRANSMITTAL

[ ] State Law Change
[ ] Federal Law or Regulation Change
[ ] Court Order
[X] Clarification Requested by One or More Counties
[X] Initiated by CDSS

TO: ALL COUNTY WELFARE DIRECTORS
ALL CHILD WELFARE SERVICES PROGRAM MANAGERS
ALL CHIEF PROBATION OFFICERS
ALL TRIBES WITH TRIBAL/STATE TITLE IV-E AGREEMENTS

SUBJECT: RESOURCES AVAILABLE TO COUNTY AND TRIBAL CHILD WELFARE AGENCIES AT NO COST

REFERENCE: ALL COUNTY INFORMATION NO. 1-05-11

The purpose of this All County Information Notice (ACIN) is to notify counties and tribes about no cost resources available to county and tribal child welfare agencies that are funded by the California Department of Social Services (CDSS), and primarily overseen by the Office of Child Abuse Prevention (OCAP). Many of the projects and activities described serve to meet federal requirements which enable California to receive various federal funds.

The California Evidence-Based Clearinghouse (CEBC) for Child Welfare

The California Evidence-Based Clearinghouse for Child Welfare is an internationally recognized website that provides easy access to information about child welfare related programs and reduces the user's need to conduct extensive literature reviews and searches or evaluate research methodology. The CEBC provides guidance on Evidence-Based Practices (EBPs) and programs being used or promoted in California to statewide agencies, counties, tribes, public and private organizations, and individuals. The CEBC also lists programs and practices that may be less known in California but were recommended by a CEBC topic expert for a specific topic area. The CEBC is a critical tool for identifying, selecting, and implementing evidence-based child welfare practices and programs that will improve child safety, increase permanency, increase family and community stability, and promote child and family well-being.

As of July 2012, the CEBC listed programs and practices in over 30 topic areas. These include topics such as anger management (for adults), interventions for neglect, treatment for depression (separated by those specifically for children, adolescent and adults), parent training, resource parent recruitment and training, behavioral management for adolescents in the child welfare system, home visiting for the prevention of child abuse and neglect, motivation and engagement, domestic/intimate partner violence (batterer intervention programs), and many others. Each year the CEBC adds new topic areas, each with approximately five-ten (5-10) programs or practices.

The website features summaries that provide key information on each reviewed program or practice. Descriptions include scientific and child welfare relevance ratings, target population, essential components, problems/symptoms addressed by the program, training information, child welfare outcomes potentially impacted by the program, resources needed to implement the program, and other pertinent information.

In preparing County Self-Assessments (CSAs) and System Improvement Plans (SIPs), counties can use the CEBC to consider a practice or program prior to deciding to implement it. The CEBC can also be used to determine if existing programs in the county meet the criteria for an evidence-based practice or if research has been performed on a program affecting progress toward meeting the criteria.

Use of evidence-based practices or programs:

- Ensures that families are referred to the most effective programs that the community provides;
- Reduces liability risks for child welfare agencies, when child welfare workers are providing and referring families to services based on proven models of practice;
- Allows child welfare workers to refer families to services that have been scientifically researched and proven effective, which may cause the families to make a greater commitment to participation;
- Assists with resource development (e.g., grant writing), as well as program development in diverse agencies and systems;
- Provides instructors and trainers with the assurance that what they are teaching is supported by research; and,
- Provides the ability to evaluate practices to ensure they meet the federal and state targets for the outcomes of safety, permanency and child/family well-being.

The Chadwick Center for Children, Rady Children's Hospital, San Diego administers the CEBC. For more information, or to have a program considered by the CEBC, visit their website at www.cebc4cw.org.

Early Start and Child Welfare Services (CWS) Integrated Training

The earlier children with developmental delays receive services, the more effective the services can be. Child welfare agencies often have an opportunity to identify children who have disabilities or who are at risk, and facilitate the provision of appropriate early intervention services. This opportunity depends on the knowledge and skills of CWS social workers to screen, refer, and link families with services.

The Early Start and CWS Integrated Training Program exists to increase the knowledge and skills of, and collaboration among, CWS social workers, Early Start service coordinators, early prevention service providers, family resource centers/family support agencies, and other professionals who may assist children and their families. The training helps promote statewide efforts which comply with the federal Child Abuse Prevention and Treatment Act (CAPTA) and the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA).

The training provides an overview of systems and requirements for early intervention services, identifies successful coordinated models of service delivery, identifies ways for counties to sustain the collaboration and apply the training, and trains on specific, validated developmental screening tools, such as the Ages and Stages Questionnaire, Parent's Evaluation of Development Status, etc.

Technical assistance is also provided to identify or enhance current systems within counties to ensure policies and procedures are in place for referral to early intervention services. Through summits, working sessions, the Center website and webinars, essential information and best practices are distributed.

For more information on receiving services, please contact the Resource Center for Family-Focused Practice at (530) 752-9726, or you may visit their website at: http://humanservices.ucdavis.edu/Resource/index.aspx.

Strategies: Technical Assistance and Training

Strategies is a nationally recognized collaboration of three California non-profit agencies. They provide technical assistance, dissemination of information, training, coaching, facilitation, and curriculum development on the application of research and best practices to family and community strengthening programs, government agencies, organizations, and networks throughout the state. Recipients of technical assistance and training include community-based organizations, County Child Welfare Agencies, County Departments of Public Health, County Departments of Mental Health, therapists, Child Abuse Prevention Councils, County First 5 Agencies, local community colleges, tribal organizations, County Offices of Education, District Attorney's offices, and health care systems.

Strategies provides technical assistance on a wide variety of topics including, but not limited to:

- Effective private-public partnerships that enhance Differential Response and positively affect CWS outcomes and interaction with community-based partners;
- Implementing CWS reform activities;
- Developing culturally proficient and emotionally intelligent divisions and organizations;
- Strategic planning;
- Agency and service integration;
- Assessing and implementing father-friendly practices;
- Facilitating complex collaboration and issues; and,
- Program implementation.

Strategies has a great deal of experience in working with county child welfare agencies and can design and customize technical assistance in a variety of areas. The technical assistance uses guidelines that assess organizational readiness, conducts research in support of individual projects, assists with organizational preparation, individualizes project design, integrates transfer of learning and evaluation, supports technical assistance post training, and provides follow-up to ensure continued success of each project.

Capacity Building Efforts

One of the goals of the OCAP is to build capacity in family strengthening organizations to ensure high quality, integrated, non-duplicative, and evidence-based services are available at the local level. To better serve children, families, and public and private partnerships, Strategies helps develop family resources centers (FRCs) and networks. As a result of this help, FRCs are better equipped to meet the needs of children and families, enabling them from being brought to the attention of a county child welfare agency again. Family strengthening agencies also provide services to families and children who have open cases in the CWS, thus assisting families to meet case goals for Family Maintenance and Family Reunification.

For information about scheduled trainings or for technical assistance, please see the Strategies' web site at www.familyresourcecenters.net/. Each of the three non-profit agencies that comprise Strategies is assigned a specific region of the state: Northern, Central and Southern. Listings for counties falling within each regional service area can also be found on the web site.

Online Training for Mandated Reporters

This online training resource offers mandated reporters the appropriate knowledge and understanding of their responsibilities under the Child Abuse and Neglect Reporting Act (CANRA), Penal Code sections 11164-11174.3.

The training is free and offers child welfare agencies, school districts, nonprofits, and other interested organizations the opportunity to meet staff training obligations without incurring travel and trainer costs. It is always available, self-paced, and can be started and stopped to be completed at different times. A certificate of completion is available and can be printed, as many employers require documentation of completion for their personnel files.

A general training module is available in English and Spanish. After completing the general training, profession-specific modules are also available for more in-depth information. These include:

Social Workers and Mental Health Professionals;
Law Enforcement;
Medical Personnel;
Child Care Providers;
Educators; and,
Clergy.

The training is available at www.mandatedreporterca.com. Professionals employed by Rady Children's Hospital, San Diego are also available for questions around the more complex issues of identifying possible child abuse and neglect.

Father Engagement

An ACIN, Number 1-05-11, was issued on January 11, 2011 to inform counties, tribes and others of efforts being made at the state level to promote the development and implementation of strategies, policies, and protocols to improve the engagement of fathers who have children involved in the CWS. A copy of the notice may be accessed on the CDSS web site at:
http://www.dss.cahwnet.gov/lettersnotices/entres/getinfo/acin/2011/I-05_11.pdf.

Father engagement, specifically within the CWS, is the systemic inclusion of fathers, from prevention and early intervention, through assessment and planning, in the provision of services. Research shows that children who have a father involved in their lives have better outcomes. Supporting Father Involvement (SFI), an OCAP funded activity, is a research-based intervention designed to improve the quality and level of

father involvement in the lives of at-risk children and families. The OCAP is also funding a statewide dissemination of SFI results and a plan to assist public child welfare agencies with enhancement of their efforts to engage and involve fathers.

To replicate the success of the SFI Project's approach to engaging fathers, the OCAP engaged Strategies for statewide dissemination of the SFI Intervention, as well as father engagement strategies.

Strategies' SFI Dissemination activities include:

- Workshops to present the research results that support the SFI project as an evidence-based intervention;
- Training staff to implement the SFI Intervention (conducting the fathers' and couples' groups);
- Engaging organizations in using the organizational self assessment (OSA) tool to assess their levels of father involvement;
- Providing technical assistance in the revision of policies, procedures and practices to reflect father involvement; and,
- Assisting agencies to successfully initiate/enhance outreach to fathers.

Depending on agency readiness, capacity and goals, Strategies can customize an agency's implementation of some or all of the father engagement strategies. More information is available through the Strategies web site at: http://www.familyresourcecenters.net/supportingfatherinvolvement/.

In addition to the efforts being undertaken by Strategies, the CDSS Resources Development and Training Support Bureau engaged the California Social Work Education Center (CalSWEC) to offer county child welfare agencies additional support through the Regional Training Academies (RTAs). The CalSWEC and RTA activities in this area include:

- Design and distribution of an instrument for evaluating father friendliness, the Father Friendliness Organizational Self Assessment (OSA) for Child Welfare Agencies;
- Development of a new social worker training module for father involvement in child welfare decision processes; and,
- Development of an Implementation Toolkit (including communication tools, policy tools, evaluation tools and training tools) to facilitate the successful implementation of effective father engagement strategies statewide.

For additional information on the CalSWEC activities supporting father involvement, please refer to their website at http://calswec.berkeley.edu/.

The Linkages Project

The Linkages Project (Linkages) is a coordinated services approach between CalWORKs (California's version of the Temporary Assistance for Needy Families) and CWS programs. The coordination of these programs helps California's children and families access to better services, thus causing improved outcomes.

Linkages is important because most California counties include a large contingent of children and families involved in both CalWORKs and CWS. Parents or caretakers must navigate between two different systems, which often reflect conflicting requirements and timeframes. Linkages improves service coordination and case planning, prevents duplication of efforts, and maximizes funding and resources to better serve clients accessing both systems. For example, the Linkages collaborative helps engage CalWORKs families faced with multiple barriers meet their work participation requirements while it also assists the same families with a child welfare case in meeting their case plan goals in order to keep children safely in their homes, thereby preventing the need for placement or re-entry into foster care.

In addition to coordinated services, Linkages also offers an online toolkit and technical assistance. The toolkit serves as a main sustainability tool for expanding the Linkages practice, policies, and procedures in participating counties and other states. Some of the technical assistance provided to Linkages counties involved looking at families referred to CWS, but the referral is assessed at the Child Welfare Hotline so that a face-to-face response by an emergency response child welfare worker is not required. If families in those situations are continuing to have referrals at a later date, the agency can review the data to determine if there is a pattern. If so, the agency can consider how they might engage these families in other ways. For example, those counties with a Differential Response (DR) system might set up protocols with their Path 1 community agencies to create a Linkages DR protocol so that community-based agency social workers can coordinate with the families' CalWORKs/Welfare to Work case managers. Often a community-based organization doesn't know how to reach the CalWORKs staff, and lacks understanding of CalWORKs requirements. Through a small expansion of an existing DR system, families are better served and agencies see better outcomes.

Building on lessons learned throughout the course of the Linkages Project, obtaining accurate data was identified as a significant barrier to identifying mutual clients. In order to successfully implement and sustain Linkages a data system that assists in identifying mutual clients and tracks and evaluates outcomes for both programs is critical. Data matches currently can only be run by using ad hoc reports. These reports are unable to use the current, "real time" data that is desirable for day to day operation. Finding options to bridge these two data systems and identify common clients has been a long standing goal.

At the state level, work is being done to obtain aggregate data to help identify and better understand the needs of the CalWORKs and Child Welfare populations that overlap. In addition, options to help counties improve the process of obtaining county data to identify mutual clients are being explored by CDSS, the Child and Family Policy Institute and the counties.

For agencies that are interested in implementing Linkages, technical assistance can be provided to help agencies assess readiness, draft an implementation plan, and assist in implementation. For further information on Linkages, please visit the Linkages web site at: http://www.cfpic.org/linkages/linkages_001.htm.

The Family Development Matrix

The Family Development Matrix (FDM) project provides an integrated family assessment tool that helps family resource center/family support staff better engage families in services. The tool provides consistency in analyzing client's progress towards meeting their goals and serves as a process for standardizing outcome indicators, allowing for cross-agency comparison and data analysis.

Staff using the FDM tool engage families and develop a case plan based on a family's strengths and needs. Agencies and their collaborative networks utilize FDM to impact communication, collaboration, program planning, and coordination, particularly with their local child welfare agencies. The FDM has been used to assess thousands of families, and is used by a number of agencies providing services as part of county Differential Response systems.

The family support agencies that use the FDM collect information on the number of clients served, services provided, and other data that can be used to complete the annual Promoting Safe and Stable Families (PSSF), Community Based Child Abuse Prevention (CBCAP), and Child Abuse Prevention, Intervention and Treatment (CAPIT) report submitted annually to the OCAP. Some counties are also using the data collected to track some outcomes for their DR systems. The FDM would be of particular benefit to county child welfare agencies in collecting this data.

The overall project goals are to support, broaden, and extend the existing public/private partnerships in the FDM collaborative. These partnerships include family strengthening agencies, county welfare agencies, tribal agencies and communities, and local agency partners, and will emphasize the use of a prevention and early intervention planning process to prevent child abuse and neglect. Further information on the FDM may be found at the website www.matrixoutcomesmodel.com.

Parent Leadership and Engagement

The CDSS is committed to promoting parent leadership to strengthen families and communities. To that end, the OCAP, through a competitive Request for Applications (RFAs) process, has awarded a grant to the Parent Services Project of San Rafael. The purpose of this grant is to promote the general development of parent leaders in their communities, through the establishment of parent "academies" throughout California, which will teach parents to advocate for themselves and their children in a variety of systems such as child welfare, education, health, etc.

An additional component will be the dissemination of technical assistance and the creation of tools to ensure the continued development of leadership and advocacy capacity among parents the CWS and other systems. The OCAP will be working with the Parent Services Project to identify communities that have interest in participating, and are poised to successfully implement these academies. More information about Parent Services Project Incorporated may be found at http://parentservices.org/, or by telephone at (415) 454-1870.

The CDSS recently issued a RFA to establish a State Parent Leadership Team (SPLT) and awarded the grant to Parents Anonymous, Inc. The goal of the SPLT is to provide a parental voice to committees that have statewide impact. A third RFA will soon be released to provide training and technical assistance to county child welfare agencies in recruiting and training parent partners.

The OCAP section of the CDSS website provides links and general information for all the programs mentioned. If you have any questions about this notice please contact the Office of Child Abuse Prevention at (916) 651-6960, or visit the OCAP section of the CDSS website at http://www.childsworld.ca.gov/PG2289.htm.

Sincerely,

Original Document Signed By:

KEVIN GAINES, Chief
Child Protection and Family Support Branch