

DEPARTMENT OF SOCIAL SERVICES

February 2, 2000

All-County Information Notice No. I-04-00

TO: All County Welfare Directors
CDSS Adoptions District Offices
All Public Adoption Agencies
All Private Adoption Agencies

REASON FOR THIS TRANSMITTAL

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

SUBJECT: PERMANENCY PLANNING MEDIATION

The California Department of Social Services (CDSS) is pleased to announce that it has contracted with the Consortium for Children (CFC), a non-profit organization headquartered in San Rafael, California, to develop and implement a two-year, statewide start-up program of Permanency Planning Mediation (PPM).

PPM is an alternative dispute resolution tool intended to complement existing mediation and family conferencing programs. The purpose of this program is to offer a non-adversarial option to allow parents in the dependency system an opportunity to plan cooperatively for their child's permanent placement. Providing this service to parents will reduce the financial and emotional costs associated with contested hearings and increase and expedite adoption opportunities for children in the public foster care system.

The most frequent outcome of the PPM process is a voluntary adoption in which the adoptive and birth parents evidence their cooperation through an agreement for ongoing contact. The agreement allows the child the benefits of maintaining safe, limited contact with the birth parents, receiving the permanency and security of adoption, and witnessing cooperation by the most important people in his or her life.

The CFC contract runs from October 1, 1999, to September 30, 2001. Initial services for counties in each phase will be funded by CDSS. Rollout will occur in two phases.

- On March 1, 2000, CFC will begin accepting referrals for service from the following Phase I counties: **Alameda, Butte, Calaveras, El Dorado, Marin, Monterey, Sacramento, San Francisco, San Joaquin, San Luis Obispo, San Mateo, Santa Clara, and Santa Cruz.**
- On March 1, 2001, CFC will begin accepting referrals for service from the following Phase II counties: **Orange, Imperial, and San Bernardino.**

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Interim development activities during both phases include meeting with stakeholders in each county, developing individual service protocols with each county department, and providing county staff with both relinquishment and open adoption training.

We encourage you to take advantage of this opportunity for proactive, non-adversarial permanency planning. If you are interested in joining the PPM program and/or would like more information about CFC services, please contact Kate Cleary, Executive Director, at (415) 458-1759.

WESLEY A. BEERS
Acting Deputy Director
Children & Family Services

c: CWDA
Adoption Policy Advisory Council Members