

## COUNTY PLACEMENT PRACTICES

In order to collect data on county practices for placing children in Foster Family Agency certified family homes (FFA-CFH) and non-relative Foster Family Homes (FFH), the California Department of Social Services (CDSS) conducted a survey of county child welfare services (CWS) agencies and probation departments (PDs).

### Scope and Methodology

Each county CWS agency and probation department was sent the survey. The survey consisted of nine questions on the use of FFAs and eight questions on the use of FFHs. All of the questions provided a list of possible responses from which the respondent selected an answer. One question required each answer be ranked in order of importance. The survey was completed via receipt of a fax or a telephone call from each county department. All 58 county CWS agencies and PDs responded.

The survey contained questions regarding:

- The number of available FFAs and non-relative FFHs in the county;
- The number of children placed with FFAs or non-relative FFHs;
- The reasons for selecting FFAs or non-relative FFHs;
- Who provides supervision of the placements;
- How often supervision visits are made;
- Where supervision visits are conducted;
- Where children are placed immediately prior to placement with FFAs or non-relative FFHs;
- Whether children placed with FFAs have more prior placements than children placed in other out-of-home settings;
- The major reason for placements with FFAs rather than non-relative FFHs; and
- Whether the counties license non-relative FFHs, and recruit and train foster parents.

The survey instrument and a tally of all responses are contained in Appendix E.

The data presented in Figures 41 through 53 represent a point-in-time snapshot of county placement practices as of April 2000.

## Summary of Survey Responses

Following is a summary of the responses to the survey questions regarding FFAs and FFHs.

*SURVEY QUESTION: How many FFAs are located in your county? How many non-relative FFHs are located in your county?*

Figure 41

### NUMBER OF FFA-CFHs AND FFHs IN COUNTY

<b>C W S</b>	<b>FFA</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>35 CWS agencies reported a total of 9,389 FFA homes</li> </ul>
	<b>FFH</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>54 CWS agencies reported a total of 11,951 non-relative FFHs</li> </ul>
<b>P D</b>	<b>FFA</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>38 PDs reported a total of 2,083 FFA homes</li> </ul>
	<b>FFH</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>23 PDs reported a total of 968 non-relative FFHs</li> </ul>

*SURVEY QUESTION: How many children do you have placed in FFAs located in your county? How many children do you have placed in non-relative FFHs in your county?*

Figure 42

NUMBER OF CHILDREN IN FFA-CFHs AND FFHs IN COUNTY

<b>C W S</b>	<b>FFA</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>56 CWS agencies reported 13,514 children placed with FFAs within their county</li> </ul>
	<b>FFH</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>53 CWS agencies reported 15,805 children placed in non-relative FFHs within their county</li> </ul>
<b>P D</b>	<b>FFA</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>54 PDs reported 192 children placed with FFA-CFHs within their county</li> </ul>
	<b>FFH</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>32 PDs reported 115 children placed with FFHs within their county</li> </ul>

*SURVEY QUESTION: How many children do you have placed in FFAs located out of your county? How many children do you have placed in non-relative FFHs located out of your county?*

Figure 43

NUMBER OF CHILDREN IN FFA-CFHs AND FFHs OUT OF COUNTY

<b>C W S</b>	<b>FFA</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>55 CWS agencies reported 4,168 children placed with FFAs outside their county</li> </ul>
	<b>FFH</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>47 CWS agencies reported 2,251 children placed in non-relative FFHs outside their county</li> </ul>
<b>P D</b>	<b>FFA</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>54 PDs reported 202 children placed with FFA-CFHs outside their county</li> </ul>
	<b>FFH</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>32 PDs reported 31 children placed with FFHs outside their county</li> </ul>

**SURVEY QUESTION: What are the reasons you select placement in FFAs? What are the reasons you select placement in non-relative FFHs?**

(Note: This question is a "forced choice" question, providing a list of possible responses from which the respondent selected an answer.)

Figure 44

REASON FOR PLACEMENT IN FFA-CHF AND FFH (Facility Issues)

CWS			PROBATION		
	FFA	FFH		FFA	FFH
#1	No appropriate home that would accept placement	No appropriate relative placement	#1	No appropriate relative placement	No appropriate relative placement
#2	Lack of appropriate placement resources other than FFA	Lack of appropriate placement resources other than non-relative FFH	#2	FFA has been used previously with success	Non-relative FFH has been used previously with success
#3	No appropriate relative placement	Placement with sibling	#3	Lack of appropriate placement resources other than FFA	Lack of appropriate placement resources other than non-relative FFH

It is interesting to note with regard to the responses in Figure 44 that although CWS and Probation responded with similar reasons for selecting a placement type, they ranked them at different levels of importance. PDs' number one response in choosing either placement was that there was no appropriate relative placement, whereas this response was ranked third by CWS agencies for the reason in selecting a FFA.

Figure 45

REASON FOR PLACEMENT IN FFA-CFH AND FFH (Treatment Issues)

CWS			PROBATION		
	FFA	FFH		FFA	FFH
#1	Severe acting out behavior	Reunification services available	#1	Reunification services available	Reunification services available
#2	Program for children who are diagnosed as SED	Severe acting out behavior	#2	Emancipation/vocation training available	Emancipation/vocation training available
#3	Reunification services available	Program for children who are diagnosed as SED	#3	Minor/parent program	Severe acting out behavior

The data presented in Figure 45 above indicates that the focus of both CWS agencies and PDs is reunification of children with their families. For CWS-supervised children with additional needs in addition to reunification, such as severe acting out behavior or who are diagnosed as SED, a FFA is more often considered first when selecting placement type.

*SURVEY QUESTION: Who provides supervision for FFA/non-relative FFH placements?*

Figure 46

PLACEMENT SUPERVISION

C W S	FFA	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>49 CWS agencies reported supervision was provided by county placement workers; 49 CWS agencies also reported supervision was provided by FFA social workers</li> </ul>
	FFH	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>53 CWS agencies reported supervision was provided by county placement workers</li> </ul>

Figure 46 (continued)

PLACEMENT SUPERVISION

<b>P D</b>	<b>FFA</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ 41 PDs reported supervision was provided by county placement workers; 12 PDs reported supervision was provided by FFA social workers</li> </ul>
	<b>FFH</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ 32 PDs reported supervision was provided by county placement workers</li> </ul>

*SURVEY QUESTION: How often are supervision visits made to children placed with FFAs/non-relative FFHs by county placement workers?*

Figure 47

FREQUENCY OF SUPERVISION VISITS

<b>C W S</b>	<b>FFA</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ 53 CWS agencies reported county placement workers conduct monthly supervision visits</li> </ul>
	<b>FFH</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ 50 CWS agencies reported monthly visits are conducted by county placement workers</li> </ul>
<b>P D</b>	<b>FFA</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ 49 PDs reported monthly visits are conducted by county placement workers</li> </ul>
	<b>FFH</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ 29 PDs reported county placement workers conduct monthly supervision visits</li> </ul>

*SURVEY QUESTION: Where do these visits take place?*

Figure 48

LOCATION OF SUPERVISION VISITS

CWS			PROBATION		
	FFA	FFH		FFA	FFH
<b>#1</b>	At the FFA-CFH	At the FFH-CFH	<b>#1</b>	At the FFA-CFH	At the FFH-CFH
<b>#2</b>	Child's School	Child's School	<b>#2</b>	Child's School	Child's School
<b>#3</b>	During a home visit	At County Office	<b>#3</b>	At the FFA Administrative Office	At the County Office

*SURVEY QUESTION: How often are supervision visits made to children placed with FFAs by FFA social workers?*

Figure 49

FREQUENCY OF SUPERVISION VISITS BY FFA SOCIAL WORKERS

<b>F F A / C F H</b>	<b>CWS</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ 49 CWS agencies reported supervision was provided by FFA social workers on a weekly basis</li> </ul>
	<b>PROB</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ 32 PDs reported weekly supervision visits were made by FFA social workers</li> </ul>

*SURVEY QUESTION: Where do these visits take place?*

Figure 50

LOCATION OF SUPERVISION VISITS BY FFA SOCIAL WORKERS

<b>CWS</b>		<b>PROBATION</b>	
<b>#1</b>	At the FFA-CFH	<b>#1</b>	At the FFA-CFH
<b>#2</b>	At the FFA Administrative Office	<b>#2</b>	Child's School
<b>#3</b>	Child's School	<b>#3</b>	At the FFA Administrative Office

*SURVEY QUESTION: Where are children placed immediately prior to placement with FFA/non-relative FFH?*

Figure 51

PRIOR PLACEMENT

<b>CWS</b>			<b>PROBATION</b>		
	<b>FFA</b>	<b>FFH</b>		<b>FFA</b>	<b>FFH</b>
<b>#1</b>	FFH	Parent(s)	<b>#1</b>	Juvenile Hall	Juvenile Hall
<b>#2</b>	Other Relative	Other Relative	<b>#2</b>	Group Home	Parent(s)
<b>#3</b>	Emergency Shelter	Emergency Shelter	<b>#3</b>	Other Relative	Group Home

Figure 51 indicates that a CWS-supervised child coming from an immediate prior out-of-home placement will be placed in a FFA, whereas a child coming directly from the parents' home or the home of a relative will be placed with a FFH.

*SURVEY QUESTION: What is the major reason for choosing placement with a FFA rather than a non-relative FFH?*

Figure 52

MAJOR REASON FOR CHOOSING FFA

CWS		PROBATION	
#1	Lack of non-relative FFH available	#1	Lack of availability of FFH
#2	More services and supervision available from FFA	#2	More services and supervision available from FFA
#3	Ability to keep sibling groups together	#3	Minor's offense or behavior precludes placement in a FFH
#4	Inability/unwillingness of non-relative FFH to accept children with severe behaviors		

*SURVEY QUESTION: Do you license non-relative FFHs/foster parents in your county? If yes, do you recruit and train foster parents? If not, who does the recruiting and training?*

Figure 53

COUNTY LICENSURE OF FFH AND FOSTER PARENT RECRUITMENT AND TRAINING

<b>C</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ 41 CWS agencies reported they do license non-relative FFHs</li> <li>▪ 15 CWS agencies do not and 2 CWS agencies do not utilize this placement type</li> </ul>
<b>W</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ For those agencies that do license, 41 of them recruit and train foster parents</li> </ul>
<b>S</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ For those agencies that do not license, training and recruitment is done by foster parent associations, community colleges or county staff (other than placement staff)</li> </ul>

Figure 53 (continued)

COUNTY LICENSURE OF FFH AND  
FOSTER PARENT RECRUITMENT AND TRAINING

<b>P</b> <b>D</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>▪ 7 PDs reported they do license non-relative FFHs</li><li>▪ 25 PDs reported they do not license this placement type</li><li>▪ For those PDs that do license, 4 of them recruit and train foster parents</li><li>▪ For those PDs that do not license, training and recruitment is done by social services staff, county licensing staff, or mental health staff</li></ul>
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