

**California Permanency for Youth Task Force  
Practice and Policy Joint Committee Meeting**

January 15, 2009

10:00 am to 2:00 pm

Elihu M. Harris State Building, Oakland, CA

Next Meeting: April 30, 2009, Elihu Harris State Building, Oakland, 10:00 a.m. – 2:00 p.m.

**Present**

**Nenita Dean**, Stanislaus County

**Amy Freeman**, Stuart Foundation

**Robert Friend**, California Permanency for Youth Project; Acting Practice Committee Chair

**Rosalio Garcia**, Fresno County

**Danielle Gonzalez**, Fresno County

**Karen Gunderson**, California Dept. of Social Services

**Jill Jacobs**, Family Builders

**Eileen Johnson**, California Permanency for Youth Project

**Gail Johnson Vaughan**, Mission Focused Solutions; Policy Committee Chair

**Fredi Juni**, Alameda County

**Jacque Lindeman**, California Youth Connection

**Jean Little**, Stanislaus County

**Nancy McDonald**, Family Builders

**Debi Moss**, Stuart Foundation

**Jon Pettigrew**, Alameda County

**Ginger Pierce**, Monterey County

**Shalinda Roan**, San Mateo County

**Cheryle Roberts**, Lilliput Children's Services

**Veronica Salmeron**, Fresno County

**Carroll Schroeder**, California Alliance of Child & Family Services

**Diane Wagner**, Los Angeles County

**Helga Zimmerer**, San Francisco County

**Absent (those who RSVPed only)**

**Carol Biddle**, Kinship Center

**Cyndee Borges-O'Dell**, California Co-Investment Partnership

**Melissa Driscoll**, Rebekah Children's Services

**Kristie Esquivel**, Kern County

**Rick Fowler**, Community College Foundation

**Craig Harris**, California Department of Mental Health

**Joanna Hunt**, Kern County

**Sophia Isom**, San Francisco County

**Chantel Johnson**, California Youth Connection

**Susanna Kniffen**, Casey Family Programs

**Jude Koski**, California Youth Connection

**Angela Look**, Kern County  
**Robin Luckett**, Alameda County  
**Crystal Luffberry**, California Co-Investment Partnership  
**Jessica Macias**, Kern County  
**Bob Malmberg**, Orange County

### **Agenda**

9:30 am Continental Breakfast

10:00 am Committees meet separately to develop policy and practice priorities

11:30am Committees join for brief legislative and CPYP updates

12:00 pm Lunch

12:30 pm Joint Committees meet to share priorities and develop shared agreement for 2009

2:00 pm Adjourn

## Minutes

### Introduction, review of agenda and previous minutes

Bob Friend welcomed the group and attendees introduced themselves. Because this meeting was designed to set an advocacy agenda Friend proposed revising the agenda and keeping the Task Force together for the entire meeting. Gail Johnson Vaughan commented that it was good to have both committees come together; it was an opportunity for cross-fertilization.

### **Revised agenda items:**

- Introduction/minutes review
- Review of the crosswalk document
- “Climate” at the state Capitol

### **Minutes review**

- There is a need for action steps to help items that come up in the meeting get done. Eileen Johnson mentioned that she sends out the new action items within a week after the Task Force meeting.
- The minutes from the previous meeting were approved.

### Capitol Climate

#### **State Budget**

- The state budget is the primary issue. The state legislature is trying to get something in place for next fifteen or sixteen months. The “Big Five” are also meeting again.
- The latest version of the budget does not include cuts for foster care, in part because of the current focus on foster care by state leadership: Assembly Speaker Karen Bass, State Senator Darrell Steinberg, John Wagner, Director, Department of Social Services, and Kim Belshé, Secretary, California Health and Human Services Agency, all serve on the California Child Welfare Council.
- Post-meeting Update: the state spending plan signed on February 20, 2009 includes no decreases to payment rates for foster care, KinGAP, AAP (Adoption Assistance Program), PAARP (Private Adoption Agency Reimbursement Program), KSSP (Kinship Supportive Services Program), THP (Transitional Housing Program), THP-Plus, or wraparound. Similarly, the compromise plan made no cuts to the state maximum allowances (SMA) for Medi-Cal funded mental health services, although cost of living increases to SMAs were suspended.

#### **AB 12 (Beall) California Fostering Connections to Success Act**

This legislation will implement the federal Fostering Connections to Success and Increasing Adoptions Act (2008). There are some mandates:

- There is additional focus on family finding and engagement (FFE). There is a proposal to focus on both the front end and youth; money will go to counties for the work.
- Money proposed in governor’s budget but not tied to legislation for FFE [not sure what this means]
- Additional funds are proposed for participatory meetings, TDMs (team decision-making meetings), etc.

- This legislation is helped by hits from the federal government for non-compliance.
- Someone asked about PQCR (peer quality case review) – no one had any information.
- On a state level, there is a move to change from outsourcing work to bringing it back in-house, even if the state/county agency can't do the task as well. It is important not to over-generalize; a "one size fits all" approach may not work for all cost saving models/plans. For example, the host families plan may not work as well in large counties as in small counties.
- People who seem to take ownership in permanency are in state leadership roles, which is good for our work.

### **California Child Welfare Co-Investment Partnership Permanency Crosswalk**

The Permanency Crosswalk document summarizes permanency recommendations from the California Child Welfare Co-Investment Partnership, the California Blue Ribbon Commission on Children in Foster Care, and National Governors Association Policy Academy on Youth Transitioning Out of Foster Care, as well as proposed PIP (Program Improvement Plan) Action Steps and the California Child Welfare Council Permanency Committee Work Plan. The recommendations are grouped into five areas:

- Resource Family Recruitment, Development and Support
- Permanency Services and Support
- Program Development and Organizational Change
- Training and Transfer of Learning
- Fiscal and Policy

The Crosswalk was prepared by Cyndee Borges-O'Dell, California Child Welfare Co-Investment Partnership.

Bob Friend distributed copies of the Crosswalk to attendees and asked for feedback. Discussion centered around issues currently not in the document which Task Force members felt should be included, as well as issues included in the document which Task Force members felt were particularly important.

### **Questions/Issues**

- "Competitive" versus "consolidated" recruitment - statewide, we need to make sure that families who are recruited get to the best resources they need. Make recruitment contribute to placement.
- Federal legislative option to extend the age of emancipation to 21
- How can THP+ be incorporated into state legislation?
- Are the recommendations only for youth permanency, or permanency on a broader scale?
- Where are court improvements in alignment with PIP? – local Blue Ribbon Commissions, and Child Welfare Council.
- Local CA County Blue Ribbon Commissions:
  - Los Angeles – Judge Michael Nash and Trish Ploehn are co-chairing
  - Nevada – they have been doing the work since 2002; they are becoming their own BRC. All stakeholders are at the table
  - Fresno – there is one but no one had any more details

- LTFC (long-term foster care) – federal law requires that children be in permanent placement: adoption, guardianship, or OPP (another planned permanent living arrangement). However, in California, LTFC can be in compliance with federal law (ex. placement with relatives) or it may not (group homes, etc.).
  - Are group homes considered APPLA (another planned permanent living arrangement)? California has no statutory base for APPLA.

### **What Is Missing**

- Issues brought up by the Task Force Policy Committee. Gail Johnson Vaughan, Committee Chair, would like to publish their policy recommendations (see below).
- Amy Freeman, Stuart Foundation, suggested adding a column for “Opportunities” regarding the new Fostering Connections Act.
- Support services to sustain permanency, such as AVID (Advancement Via Individual Determination), a program to help kids who are in the middle academically to prepare for college. (Friend noted that not all post-placement strategies from the Co-Investment Partnership are listed)
- Pre-placement preventative services
- Youth voice, youth centered
- The accountability piece is missing for evidence-based practice. However, we are where we are now because we have been able to demonstrate that what we are doing works, show promising outcomes, also and also show fiscal savings.
- Integration with federal recruitment
- Retention needs to be integrated with recruitment
- Social worker caseload – however, in the BSC (Breakthrough Series Collaborative) meeting, senior leaders are saying that caseloads are down. However, maybe the issue is that there is more work involved with each caseload. There is also a difference between caseloads for FFA (private foster family and adoption agency) social workers and county social workers.
- Accessible narrative history of permanency work – what has worked, what hasn’t worked
- Savings
  - reinvesting savings
  - potential savings
  - leveraging existing money. Need to look at how we can reinvest across the state.
  - Karen Gunderson noted that there is a portion of state child welfare allocation dollars which are saved/reinvested.
  - OYA (Older Youth Adoptions Project) counties are doing some cost documentation; they will have good, comprehensive figures.
  - We need to factor in the piece of how to include the costs that it takes to get you there. For example, the \$4,000,000 pilot project needs to be included.
- Title IV-E MSW preparation should include permanency in the curriculum. Community partners and Mental Health should also be included.

### **What Is There**

- Early permanency through concurrent planning (critical area)
  - Make sure you’ve found family, determine whether that family can work, then move in or move on depending on your findings

- This area may bring lots of people together: youth permanency people, reunification, birth family advocates
- We need to help people understand what “concurrent planning resource family” means. In Monterey County, the families don’t like the term “resource,” so the county went back to using “foster family.”
- PCP (person-centered planning)
- Dissemination/utilization of evidence-based practice
  - We can’t have double-blind results but we do have evidence; we can see that what we’ve done in the past won’t work.
  - Evidence-informed practice may be a better term. We can show that there is a demonstrable effect
  - A core item is to look at data up front and get a baseline; then we are able to compare. Test and measure.
- Court training – in the local Blue Ribbon Commissions being created, there is opportunity to include permanency in their training

### **Task Force Policy Committee Recommendations**

The group discussed/tweaked recommendations for permanency work from the last Task Force Policy Committee meeting (see minutes for October 30, 2008), and how these might be integrated with the Crosswalk. Revisions, notes, and comments from the meeting are in italics; the regular text is taken from the October 30, 2008 minutes.

### **Recommendations on how Federal Adoption Incentives earned by California should be used**

*Federal Adoption Incentive funds were used initially in California for post-adoption service. The money was allocated to counties. In 2002 the money was diverted to adoption services, supplanting existing efforts. HR 9863 reauthorizes incentives, changes the baseline year and increases incentives. It seems likely that California will again begin receiving incentives. Federal law requires that the funds be used for child welfare programs. Our task force will recommend the following:*

- Allocate incentives based on counties’ performance on achieving permanence for children age 9 and over and *siblings*. (Federal age designation as “older child”) *Moving kids to permanency is already incentivized; however, this would be an extra incentive for older children. The new federal law also gives an award if the rate goes up.*
- Distribute to counties based on documented numbers of youth age 9 and above who have achieved legal permanence through:
  - Adoption
  - Legal guardianship
  - Reunification after reunification services have been terminated
  - *Current federal law uses only adoption as a criterion. Instead, criteria should be based on all forms of legal permanence not limited to adoption; it is too easy to get money using “soft” relationships.*
  - *This step can dovetail with early permanency/concurrent planning – it could eliminate complaints that the state is “ripping kids away from family.” Or, it could apply to situations when reunification fails initially, but kids are later able to go back to their birth family.*

- *The way we count reunification needs to be limited to make the numbers meaningful. It was suggested that reunification is counted when it occurs after previous reunification services have been terminated.*
- Mandate that incentive funds be used by counties for activities that improve permanency outcomes
  - Could include all permanency focused activities including but not limited to:
    - Youth permanency service provision
    - Family finding and engagement at the front end
    - Post permanency services and support
    - Use as match for county EPSDT contracts to permanency-competent contractors. *How are permanency-competent providers identified?*
- Request that savings generated be documented and reinvested to continue and expand services

**Importance of having Permanency included in all BSW and MSW curriculums.**

- *Virignia Pierce reported that California State University Monterey Bay is developing a new MSW program*
- *CalSWEC (California Social Work Education Center) is the lynchpin and key target for changes in curriculum*

Far easier to have effective permanency practice if it is included in the foundation of child welfare training received in undergraduate and graduate education. It is not just Title IV-E graduates that the counties are hiring.

- Efforts so far have not been successful
- Strategies to consider are:
  - Determine if which California schools, if any, currently have a permanency curriculum
  - Going directly to Council on Social Work Education
    - Although Title IV-E curriculum principles and competencies *do* mention permanence. The problem comes in having a mechanism for ensuring that it is adequately addressed in the curricula. Keep in mind that a part of the Title IV-E educational program involves internships, so it is easy for schools to say, 'the students are getting that in their fieldwork, while the people in the agencies in which the internships take place may be assuming, I'm sure they must get that in the classroom. That is why putting youth permanence on the agenda for the Council on Social Work Education (CSWE) would be important. CSWE's Commission on Accreditation has responsibility for developing accreditation standards defining competent preparation and ensuring that social work programs meet them.
    - Present at their annual conference?
  - Lobbying to Accreditation Advisory Boards
  - Make having a permanency curriculum an accreditation standard
  - Going to curriculum planning groups at each CSU and UC campus, *and private universities.*
  - Getting CYC youth on curriculum planning groups at each CSU and UCs

- Involve Youth Training Project in efforts
- Making sure that permanency remains a focus in the CORE training for new child welfare workers
  - This could be advocated for through the Y.O.U.T.H. Training Project, which already has members who attend the Statewide Training and Education Committee (STEC).
- Enlisting influential partners in the effort such as: CDSS, Child Welfare Council, Co-Investment Partnership, and Breakthrough Series Collaborative on Transformation of Independent Living Services, California Alliance, CYC.
- Legislation requiring campuses to have a permanency curriculum to qualify for IV-E funding

**Design and implement a plan to assure that Youth Permanency does not lose ground with sunset of funding for CPYP and federal and state funded youth permanency demonstration projects (Destination Family – Sacramento, Placer & Nevada Counties; Dumisha Jamaa – Alameda Co; and the five Older Youth Adoption Counties)**

- Gather data that demonstrate that youth permanence work is cost effective; use to educate boards of supervisors, directors of social services, county administrators etc. in the wisdom of reinvesting savings to sustain and expand youth permanence efforts. (Increases short and long term savings and drastically improves outcomes for youth in foster care.)
  - Develop protocol for reinvesting savings to continue and expand youth permanency efforts. *This piece will come from the Co-Investment Partnership.*
  - Make documentation of savings a core part of every youth permanency effort
  - Brief local, state and federal policy and legislative leaders on savings achieved through youth permanency
- *The sunset of CPYP: is there value in it continuing? If so, whom does it benefit? If there is value, how do we continue funding it? One possible scenario is having some type of organization that can provide training to an allotted number of counties per year. Perhaps this organization could serve as the QA/QC group for permanency work in the counties.*
  - *The Regional Training Academies are developing TA-like work/field training. Training academies are the vehicle to accomplish the yet unsolved problem of how to move from pilots to statewide initiatives.*
  - *STAC (Statewide Training Education Committee) – this group is starting to tackle permanency in their curriculum, but permanency is not really in their core curriculum.*

**Incorporating Task Force Policy Committee Recommendations into the Crosswalk: Next Steps**

- Bob Friend will share with Crystal Luffberry (Co-Investment Partnership) the list of items not included in the Permanency Crosswalk, as well as recommendations from the Policy Committee. Friend envisions seeing both both pieces (Task Force Policy Recommendations and Crosswalk) in one packet
- A sub-committee, comprised of Gail Johnson Vaughan, Bob Friend, Diane Wagner, and Ginger Pierce, will develop a “talking points” document regarding the Policy Committee recommendations.

- There was discussion regarding the development of a narrative history of permanency work already done, especially lessons learned. One suggestion was to have an intern do this project. There is already a good amount of information available on the CPYP website. No other specific decisions were made as to who might do this job.
- Gail Johnson Vaughan will approach state legislature with Carroll Schroeder.
- Jill Jacobs offered to be an advocate for recruitment/retention – how to connect the dots? Karen Gunderson mentioned that she is going to put together a state Recruitment Steering Committee.