



CDSS

WILL LIGHTBOURNE  
DIRECTOR

STATE OF CALIFORNIA—HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES AGENCY  
**DEPARTMENT OF SOCIAL SERVICES**  
744 P Street • Sacramento, CA 95814 • [www.cdss.ca.gov](http://www.cdss.ca.gov)



EDMUND G. BROWN JR.  
GOVERNOR

July 27, 2015

Dr. Kathryn Icenhower, Chair  
Child Welfare Council Prevention and Early  
Intervention-Statewide Citizen Review Panel  
SHIELDS for Families, Inc.  
11601 S. Western  
Los Angeles, CA 90047

Dear Dr. Icenhower:

*Kathy*

The Child Welfare Council subcommittee on Prevention and Early Intervention-Statewide Citizen Review Panel (PEI-CRP) report for federal fiscal year 2014 has been received and accepted by the California Department of Social Services (CDSS).

The CDSS would like to take this opportunity to express our sincere gratitude to the PEI-CRP for the time and energy dedicated to improving policies and systems for children and families. The annual report demonstrates a thoughtful attempt to meet the challenges of reviewing policy and practice through multiple lenses to ensure the well-being, safety, and permanence of children and families in California.

The CDSS acknowledges the following PEI-CRP recommendations, and provides responses:

*Federal Child Welfare Finance Reform*

1. Identify key California leaders to actively participate in and help shape the ongoing national conversation regarding federal child welfare finance reform.

**CDSS Response:** *We agree, and this is ongoing.*

2. Consider federal child welfare finance reform opportunities and challenges in planning for the next round of Child and Family Service Review (CFSR) outcomes, particularly with respect to evidence-based practice and associated costs.

**CDSS Response:** *We agree, and this is underway.*

3. Consider federal child welfare finance reform opportunities and challenges in planning for the current round of Title IV-E waivers, particularly with respect to the role of waivers in a federal child welfare finance reform scenario.

**CDSS Response:** *We agree, and this is underway.*

4. Promote awareness of federal child welfare finance reform issues by: (1) posting the Federal Child Welfare Finance Reform Toolkit on the CDSS website; (2) dissemination to key partners; and (3) through incorporation into training provided through the California Social Work Education Center (CalSWEC).

**CDSS Response:** *Both Greg Rose and I have been, and continue, to be actively engaged in discussions at the federal level related to finance reform. We are part of coalitions and professional associations which meet regularly in person in Washington, D.C., and by telephone to shape this policy agenda. As such we will continue to advocate for sensible policy reform that is advantageous to California's child welfare services system and the children and families in our State, and we invite input from the PEI-CRP.*

#### *Taking Promising Prevention Practices to Scale*

5. Work with public and private prevention partners (including the County Welfare Directors Association) to conduct a broad environmental scan of statewide implementation of prevention programs and practices.

**CDSS Response:** *The CDSS is committed to conducting an environmental scan. The CDSS will work with PEI-CRP to gather its input on scan variables related to CRP inquiries and on potential collaboration partners, as noted in the report. The CDSS will present the scan results to the CRP when complete.*

6. The PEI-CRP will contribute to the data gathering/environmental scan by convening key prevention partners to help map the intersection of key prevention programs and practices, including Differential Response; Strengthening Families; and Safe, Stable, Nurturing Relationships and Environments.

**CDSS Response:** *The CDSS will contribute representatives to the PEI-CRP to participate in the primary crosswalk of prevention initiatives.*

7. Given the sizable investment in Strengthening Families, Differential Response, and other prevention programs by the State, compile and analyze information on their efficacy as an evidence-based prevention practice in California and as defined in other jurisdictions.

**CDSS Response:** *The CDSS has invested in Strengthening Families, which is a framework and not a prescribed practice. The research for the framework and its use in child welfare is well established and reported by the Center for the Study of Social Policy. The CDSS suggests that the PEI-CRP incorporate the Strengthening Families inquiry as a prevention initiative and include representatives in its inquiries under #6 above.*

*The CDSS also convenes systems-levels entities to talk about the use of the Strengthening Families framework as part of the Strengthening Families Leaders Alliance. The CDSS suggests that information about the Differential Response Framework be gathered from work already conducted in this area, and the CDSS may conduct a survey or other assessment to determine the alternative systems of response in use by California counties.*

8. Based on environmental scan, mapping of key prevention practices, and information on their efficacy of prevention programs and practices, OCAP should partner with the PEI-CRP to help define criteria for a cohesive statewide Prevention Network

**CDSS Response:** *The CDSS is in the process of identifying practices and effective programs and services currently provided to children and families before they reach the child welfare system. The CDSS will present the results of this "mapping" to the PEI-CRP to gain its input.*

We are excited at the prospect of working with the PEI-CRP on these important issues and are happy to further discuss our responses. Should you have any questions or comments, please contact me at (916) 657-2598, or your staff may contact Tracy Urban, OCAP CRP Coordinator, at (916) 651-6796 or [Tracy.Urban@dss.ca.gov](mailto:Tracy.Urban@dss.ca.gov).

Sincerely,



WILL LIGHTBOURNE  
Director

*Pete Cenicka, Per*