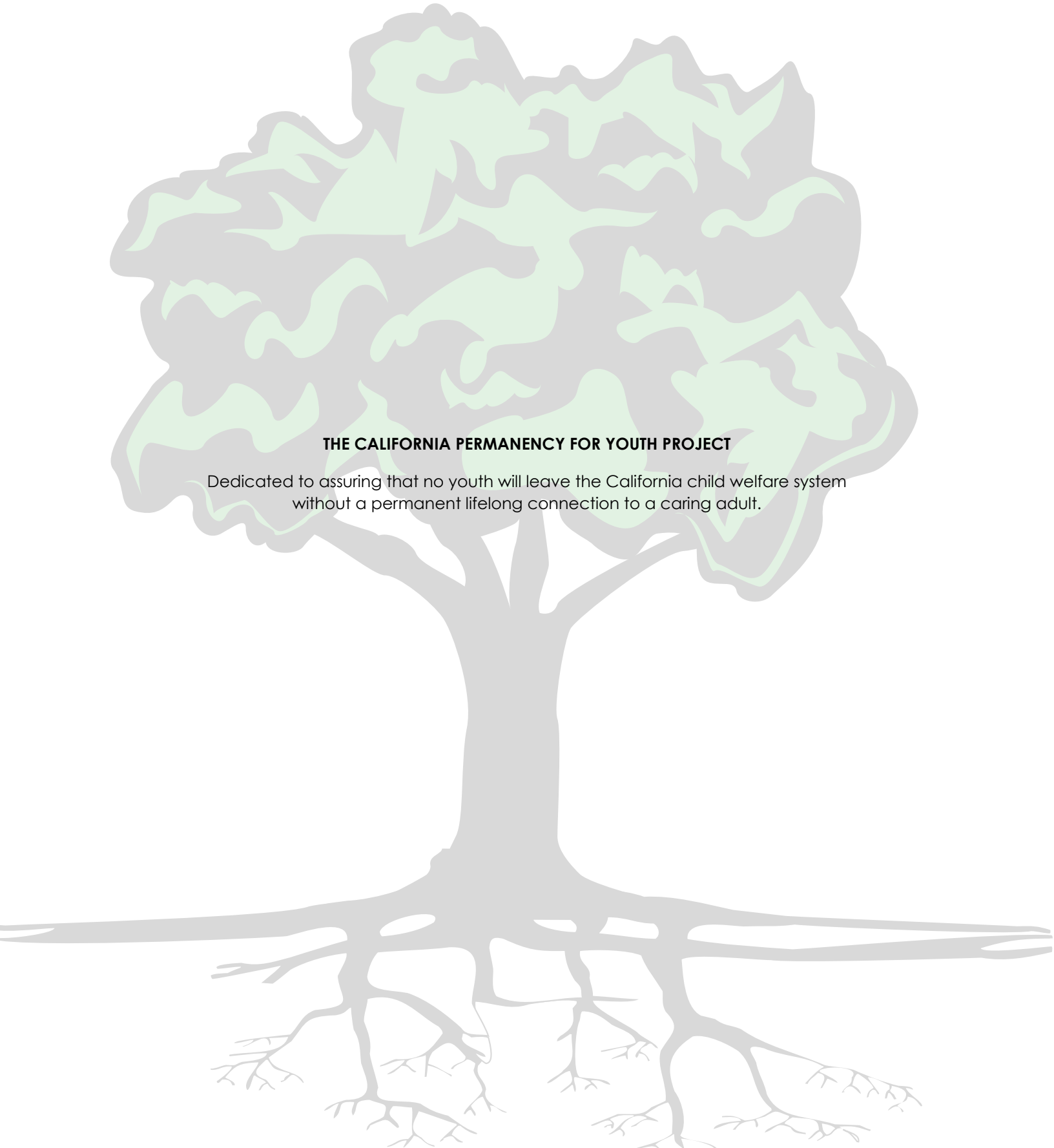
CPYP Organizational Development Guide *for* **Youth Permanency**



THE CALIFORNIA PERMANENCY FOR YOUTH PROJECT

Dedicated to assuring that no youth will leave the California child welfare system without a permanent lifelong connection to a caring adult.

CPYP Organizational Development Guide *for* **Youth Permanency**

THE CALIFORNIA PERMANENCY FOR YOUTH PROJECT

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KEY VALUES FOR YOUTH PERMANENCY PRACTICE

- Finding a family is a youth-driven process.
- Each and every youth, regardless of individual circumstances, deserves, and can have, a permanent family.
- Youth have the right to know about their family members; family members have the right to know about their youth.
- A youth should have connections with her/his biological family, regardless of whether the youth will live with them, unless, in rare cases, there is a compelling reason not to.
- With support, most youth can live in a home rather than in foster care or institutions.
- Family and fictive kin help develop, plan, and achieve the youth's permanence.
- Long-term foster care does not achieve youth permanency.
- Best practice independent living services include finding permanent connections as well as teaching practical emancipation skills.
- Planning for a youth's permanence starts on the day that the child or youth is referred.
- Disproportionality increases by not attending to youth permanency.

INTRODUCTION

Since 2003, the California Permanency for Youth Project (CPYP) has provided technical assistance to fourteen California counties to help them implement youth permanency practice and the policy and procedure changes necessary to support this practice. This guide details what we have found to be successful in working with public child welfare agencies on youth permanency practice.

Why Permanency Now?

Until recently, the issue of permanence for youth has lacked attention and misconceptions about the issue abound, including: (a) people don't want to adopt teens, (b) teens do not want to be adopted, and (c) placements of teens are unsuccessful.

As of 2004, federal data of youth in care showed that nearly 50% were age 11 or older, 20% were not living with families, and 58% were minorities (African Americans, 34%; Hispanics, 18%; Native Americans, 2%; and Asians, 1%). Service plans for many of these youth called for long-term foster care and emancipation, rather than reunification, guardianship placements, or adoption. More than 20,000 will be left on their own with no meaningful connection to a family member or caring adult when they reach the age of majority.[1]

Between 1998 and 2004, the number of children nine or older waiting for adoption rose from 39% to 49%. African American children remain in care longer and are less likely to receive mental health services, more likely to be freed for adoption but less likely to be adopted.[2] What social workers believe about youth is also important: Avery[3] found that

[1]"Fact Sheet Two: Why Family Permenance is Critical for Older Children and Youth in Foster Care," 2006 National Convening on Youth Permanence, www.youthpermanence.org/_pdf/news/why_permanence.pdf

[2]Ruth McRoy, "The Color of Child Welfare Policy," in *The Color of Social Policy*, ed. King E. Davis and Tricia B. Bently (Alexandria, VA: Council on Social Work Education, 2004), 37-64, and Robert Hill, "Disproportionality of Minorities in Child Welfare: Synthesis of Research Findings," Race Matters Consortium, http://www.racemattersconsortium.org/docs/whopaper4.pdf, 2004.

[3]Rosemary J. Avery, "Perceptions and practice: Agency efforts for the hardest-to-place children," *Children and Youth Services Review* 22, no. 6 (2000): 399-420; and Rosemary J. Avery, "Identifying obstacles to adoption in the New York State's out-of-home care system," Child Welfare LXXVII, no. 5 (1999), 653-671.

worker perception of the adoptability of children influenced recruitment efforts negatively.

It is essential to hold the same high hopes for youth in foster care as we do for our own in terms of connections, living situations, and hopes for their future. Teens need not age out of the system. Recent technological improvements have made it easier to locate missing family and important adults presumed lost. They may, in fact, be available to the youth, which means that many youth living in long-term group or foster care with no family support may have persons who want to, and are able to, raise and/or support them throughout their lives.

What Is Permanency?

Permanency is both a process and a result that includes involvement of the youth as a participant or leader in finding a permanent connection with at least one committed adult who provides:

- A safe, stable, and secure parenting relationship
- Love
- Unconditional commitment
- Lifelong support in the context of reunification, a legal adoption, or guardianship, where possible, offering the legal rights and social status of full family membership, in which the youth has the opportunity to maintain contacts with important persons including brothers and sisters

A broad array of individualized permanency options exist; reunification and adoption are an important two among many that may be appropriate.

What Are the Challenges?

The challenges in implementing youth permanency practice tend to be similar: no face sheets available for youth connections and contact information; potential resources buried in the file or absent; strong biases against a youth's biological family; social workers' worries that searching for a permanent home for a teenager will retraumatize the youth; congregate care rules that insist a youth completely heal before the youth leaves; changes in social workers; a plethora of competing initiatives; and normal mistakes that meant balls were dropped at critical junctures, for instance, between locating an aunt who wanted to be a permanent connection and completing her home study.

Additional challenges include:

- Lack of attention to what the reality of the youth's circumstances will be after leaving foster care
- Staff concentrating on the immediate future, rather than the long-term outcomes
- Reluctance to consider non-traditional connections for youth, especially current or former staff workers
- Congregate care facilities that use visits with potential relationships as a consequence of behavior
- Labeling and pathologizing of teen behavior
- Lack of follow-through with searching for family on the father's side
- Difficulty in maintaining excitement for youth permanency over the long term
- High caseload
- Belief systems that don't understand what permanency is and that youth are adoptable
- Conflict between different county child welfare systems and silos that separate functions
- Failure to track siblings' whereabouts

ORGANIZATIONAL DEVELOPMENT GUIDE TO YOUTH PERMANENCY

This guide is directed at persons who wish to implement youth permanency practice in a public child welfare agency, whether as an external consultant or as someone within the public child welfare system. Obviously there will be differences between the two positions.

Implementing new practice in a large system is like trying to change the direction of an ocean liner. It takes time, concerted effort, and planning. It helps to have timelines, goals, etc., so the agency has some way of measuring success, but not too many and not too soon. Of course, some activities will move quickly, some not. Some agencies will move quickly, some not.

It is our experience that implementation of youth permanency works best, as do many initiatives, with an outside consultant. When we surveyed counties, they repeatedly said that having someone external to their agency gave the initiative credibility. One key factor is the consultant's neutrality: while s/he advocates for public/private partnerships, the consultant doesn't have an allegiance to one partner or the other. The counties felt that the consultant provided a perspective showing that it wasn't just the project manager or "our county" implementing youth permanency – it was a national initiative. In fact, counties wanted CPYP to emphasize the national perspective more than we did.

However, if a person within the agency has enough knowledge or authority and is a champion of youth permanency, it is possible to implement from within. It helps to have outside supports since there are many ups and downs. We recommend that any champion have a support group with project administrators from other counties or states to discuss the strategies, barriers, and solutions to those barriers.

The consultant guides the county through its anxiety in the beginning stages when things are not clear and also provides county staff with basic guidelines on how they might begin the process. The consultant or internal champion works on establishing and maintaining a relationship with the key staff in the agency, and balances the tension between providing support to staff and pushing the agency to take further steps to implement youth permanency.

The consultant must be a cheerleader. At some time, every lead on a project hits the doldrums and the consultant cheers them on during the down time. "You being so positive," more than one county said, "cheering me on, made such a difference." The consultant also helps the counties find peer support both within and outside the agency. For instance, a consultant sets up inter-county meetings to discuss practice issues and asks one county to help another on a specific practice.

The two greatest challenges for CPYP have been (a) turning the focus of caseworkers and supervisors away from *placement* and toward *connections*, and (b) the difficulty of the county agency in forming active and involved partnerships with external agencies such as FFAs (foster family agencies), group homes, mental health, and CASAs (Court Appointed Special Advocates) to help do the youth permanency work. Regarding partners, the reader will note an emphasis on involving partners in the work from the beginning, starting with *Step 2, Agency forms a youth permanency committee,* straight through *Step 19, Review successes and changes for sustainability.*

Connections and Placement

Because social worker practice has had to focus on placement (after all, it's an emergency when a youth doesn't have a place), it's hard for social workers and supervisors not to think of placement first. But, in fact, the first goal is to get information and find connections for a youth, not placement. If we think "placement," not "connections," it's all too easy to dismiss people who may be connections, reconnections, or sources of information. Thinking "information" and "connections" requires a different thought process, which takes time to develop. A youth needs, at the minimum, people to call and people who call the youth regularly and provide a place for holidays, help with education, and security deposits for apartments. If placement happens to occur, that's great, but we stop there. Even if the youth finds a permanent home, the youth still needs connections for support. One person is not enough to provide everything a young person needs.

Ultimately we *do* want permanency for the youth, which usually includes a home, but not always – for instance, a youth might need to remain in an RTC (residential treatment center). In that situation, a youth would still need emotional permanence and, in fact, could be adopted while remaining in a treatment center, just as one of our own children might need to be in a center. If so, we would still consider ourselves parents and function as such. We want youth to have supportive relationships so they can be successful wherever they're living. And whether we achieve a placement or not, we have achieved a great deal if we find a youth's history and create connections.

However, we have not completed our work if a fifteen-year old in group or foster care has found one connection willing to call the youth twice a week but unwilling or unable to act as a permanent parent. In that case, we continue looking for permanence, while helping that connection flourish.

Finally:

- An agency starts with a limited target youth population – not with the whole agency. As the agency goes through the process, it begins to expand its target.
- Don't spend time trying to convince the doubters. Work with those who get excited. As time passes, the others will either come along or not.
- Start with a target sufficiently large so that it can have an impact but not so large that it doesn't have a good chance of succeeding.

CPYP recommends that the following strategies take place and in the following order. However, the process of implementation is not a strictly linear project, but we recommend following these steps in a general way to assure success.

ORGANIZATIONAL DEVELOPMENT STEPS

Step 1. Buy-In: CPYP contacts agency administrators to explore their interest in working with CPYP on youth permanency, assesses the county's readiness to implement youth permanency practice, and obtains visible and tangible buy-in from administrators.

Rationale

Buy-in from the director and key stakeholders is critical so that (1) staff understand the importance of youth permanency in the agency, (2) resources in staff, time, and money are allocated, (3) when implementation encounters difficulty or other agency initiatives begin to take precedence – and every project experiences this – the consultant or internal champion has access to an administrator who can intervene, and (4) outcomes and measurements for success are established at the start of the project so that success can be demonstrated to the board and others.

Actions

Consultant

Consultant contacts the county to set up a meeting to explore CPYP involvement.
At the meeting:

- Consultant asks what efforts the county has pursued in youth permanency and what results the county would like from increasing their youth permanency efforts
- Consultant clarifies what youth permanency encompasses (definition, etc.), what youth permanency practice entails, and what is necessary for implementation to succeed, that is, what the agency and CPYP would expect the county to achieve by the end of the first year
- County and consultant determine whether there is sufficient mutual interest to pursue CPYP involvement

Administrator

Year One
Administrator is visible as a supporter and an advocate for youth permanency. This involves such actions as introducing kick-offs and follow-up training for youth permanency and remaining in the room for part of the training; welcoming the first meeting of the youth permanency committee and explaining its purpose; communicating project successes by email to all staff; and providing updates to the board. Specifically, the administrator:

- Requires attendance at trainings on youth permanency
- Assigns a project coordinator for day-to-day implementation and details
- Develops or assigns responsibility for identifying children who have no one
- Maintains continued visibility throughout the project
- Provides authorization for the youth permanency committee
- Authorizes funds and contract for an Internet search engine
- Discusses additional job requirements with the union, if necessary
- Assigns a project manger with authority over the supervisors and social workers who will do the youth permanency work
- Begins outreach with key partners by making visits to partners, inviting them to trainings and meetings, and reviewing MOUs (memorandums of understanding) or requirements for county contracts
- Meets quarterly with project manager and consultant to discuss progress, needs, and outcomes
- With the consultant, identifies specific areas the agency wants to address
- Actively supports partnerships with external agencies; for example, approves a site for co-location of partners at agency

Lessons Learned

In one county, the pilot was implemented in one site only. This could have worked if the county had conveyed project successes to the rest of the agency so that when it was time for the rest of the agency to implement youth permanency, they were aware of the project. As it was, the rest of the agency didn't understand youth permanency, so the agency had to begin again. This is especially important when retention of administrators and staff is a struggle. Even when staff remain at an agency, they frequently change positions within the agency.

Success measured by:

- Meeting held between key administrators, staff, and CPYP to explore mutual interest in working on permanency in the agency
- Agreement for implementing youth permanency signed by child welfare director and project manager; agreement identifies areas for which CPYP and the county are each responsible

Examples

Buy-In

- In one county, the child welfare assistant director introduced every trainer, remained for the training, and participated in case and supervisory consultation sessions. As a result, agency social workers embraced the concept and became champions and experts in the practice. (However, supervisor expertise and buy-in took longer, perhaps because supervisors did not see themselves as essential to the process and feared they would be interfering with the director.)
- In another county, a program manager took charge, even completing searches for youth. The program made great progress but, according to the project manager, "management has not bought in yet – it's essential to have management buy-in with so many competing initiatives. You have to get it on the radar screen with them."

Measurements

Providing data helps get management on board. Alameda County's StepUp Project tracked all connections and provided periodic progress reports to senior management. They also tracked costs, savings, and projected net savings and showed that projected long-term savings far outweighed short-term costs.

Strategic Plan

What is measured gets attention. According to a scale that Five Acres developed, a low percentage of its children had a realistic permanency plan for discharge within 12 months of entry. The agency set an outcome objective to raise the percentage to 50 percent by October 2006. This has been incorporated into the strategic plan, is reviewed three times a year by the research department, and reported to the board. (To obtain the scale, contact Five Acres, see **Resources**.)

Administrator's Role

- At first Project UPLIFT (State of Colorado) had to beg social workers to refer cases to them. However, the project manager contacted the director, whom she knew, and because of the relationship, the director promised to send cases to the project. Once the director asked them to refer, they did.
- A Washington State project with the University of Washington also experienced difficulty with case access and social worker resistance. To support the project, the regional administrator sent a letter to all regional social workers introducing the project and project facilitator and encouraging staff to refer cases. He then sent a second letter, again saying that he supported this effort. Both efforts helped the success of the project.

Resources

Alameda County, "Group Home StepUp Project: Moving Up and Out of Congregate Care, Final Report"

California Permanency for Youth Project, "Definition of Permanency"

Five Acres, www.fiveacres.org

Mardith J. Louisell, "Connected and Cared For, Northwest Institute for Children and Families (NWICF), University of Washington School of Social Work with Children's Administration, State of Washington" in *Model Programs for Youth Permanency*, 10-15

State of Colorado, *Project UPLIFT Report*

Step 2. Agency forms a youth permanency committee.

Rationale

- Buy-in at all staff and partner levels is critical.
- The committee includes those who can function as leaders in the youth permanency effort, regardless of their job function or agency affiliation. Permanency is too large a job to do without help, so bring all partners, including external partners, to the table immediately.
- Committee members include agency staff from various levels and non-agency partners (schools, courts and court-related personnel, WRAP (wrap-around services) providers, group homes, adoption agencies, etc.). The committee will want input from foster youth and former foster youth (see below, **Examples of Youth Involvement**). Key internal members are adoption, IL (Independent Living) services, long-term placement, and staff development. Select the professional partners most likely to work well on youth permanency and gradually include others.

Purpose

This group will make decisions about the initiative, develop a plan, and spread the word about the project's purpose, philosophy, and successes. As committee members take action steps (see below), they become believers in and champions of the work.

Activities for Youth Permanency Committee

Director

Welcome committee and clarify what s/he expects the county to achieve by the end of Year One and Year Two

Committee

- Develop an agency definition of youth permanency
- Complete the agency self-assessment
- Determine additional stakeholders and how to involve them
- Determine how foster youth and former foster youth will be involved in assisting the county in implementing permanency services, policy, and planning (see below, **Examples of Youth Involvement**)
- Develop a plan on how to achieve the project goals, including time lines, accountability, and responsibilities
- Hold the agency accountable for achieving results
- Assess systems issues and develop solutions
- Publicize the youth permanency project (newsletters, visits to units and partners, etc.)
- Develop procedures and forms to track family searches
- Determine how each member can contribute his or her skills
- Determine how each might further youth permanency in their own unit or agency
- Obtain publicity for the project and its successes
- Celebrate successes
- Participate in regional youth permanency meetings
- Visit other counties to observe their youth permanency efforts
- Assist the project coordinator

Actions

- Establish a committee and invite potential stakeholders. Determine goals and assign responsibility for achieving them.
- Consider all organizations and entities as potential partners, even though they may be found in unconventional places and may in fact have been in conflict with the agency in the past.

Lessons Learned

Inviting outsiders to a meeting on an agency initiative can be difficult. Agencies are understandably hesitant to open up their practice to outsiders and may believe that others don't understand the responsibility they have for child welfare cases. Turf issues are always present. However, inviting outsiders to join the process mirrors what a county asks of the social worker and family when it forms a youth permanency team for each youth. An outside agency that believes in youth permanency provides impetus for the county agency to keep moving when the agency gets bogged down in other initiatives and work overload.

Some agencies have added youth permanency to an already existing committee, such as the IL committee. One lesson CPYP has learned is that addressing other issues on the committee inevitably shortchanges the youth permanency effort. It seems like a good idea to merge committees, but in every instance where a CPYP county did so, youth permanency was the loser. Focusing on many different initiatives at one time is too hard.

Success measured by:

Committee established and meeting on a regular basis with achievable goals.

Examples

- **Publicize the youth permanency project (newsletters, visits to units and partners, etc.)**
  Kern County wanted to create suspense and interest in the project prior to the kick-off, which would introduce the youth permanency project to the agency as a whole. Two weeks prior to the kick-off, the committee created and posted signs saying, "It's coming." People wondered, "What's coming? What is *It*?" The kick-off was the payoff.

- **Determine how each member can contribute his or her skills**
  Fresno County involved staff from every level with a range of skills. The committee asked each person what s/he enjoyed and was comfortable doing. Involving staff at a variety of levels helps spread the word. One secretary wanted to work on Internet searching because she loved that. Another person liked planning meetings, so she sent out the reminders of the meetings. There were jobs for everyone at every skill level.

- **Task force composition**
  In the second year of the project, Los Angeles County, Metro North had a large task force of those interested or involved in permanency. This group continued to grow as the initiative developed, until the size became unwieldy and limited accomplishments. The project leader decided that it was more effective to develop a smaller group of decision makers and implementers. This group became the Permanency Leadership Team, which is now active and energized. Members have greater responsibility for the decisions and actions of the team and the initiative, thereby broadening and deepening permanency throughout the service area.

- **Determine what's needed in the agency**
  San Luis Obispo County surveyed its staff about their attitudes toward permanency. When they looked at the results, they could see where they needed to target training. At the beginning and throughout the project, it's important to monitor where staff attitudes are changing and where staff attitudes remain a barrier.

- **Partners**
  One county was reluctant to invite partners, but when the consultant invited partners to join the committee, the partners' willingness to brainstorm on achieving permanency impressed the county champions. Staff had not yet been converted to youth permanency, but partners continued to meet with county administrators to work on achieving permanency for youth in their facilities. Because of the partners, youth permanency kept its impetus in that county.

Examples of Youth Involvement

- Incorporate youth input into developing the training, thus helping staff achieve "youth cultural competence."
- Develop a vision statement emphasizing youth permanency. Involve all stakeholders, especially youth, in the process of developing and implementing the vision.
- Institute a process of youth evaluation of group homes that includes permanency-related issues.
- Stanislaus County created a youth advisory panel that makes recommendations to child welfare on youth permanency and other issues. Stanislaus County found that youth groups have better representation if caregivers support the youth's participation.
- Foster and recent former foster youth often give input best through meeting with their peers and developing answers to specific questions of the committee. Youth may not want to meet with an agency committee for various reasons; however, they may be willing to meet with each other and come up with solutions to specific problems. If the agency asks foster youth for suggestions, as a courtesy, it must explain that it may or may not follow the suggestions. After suggestions are received, it must clarify its response to the suggestions and, if they were not taken, explain to the foster youth why.
- Foster youth who provide suggestions and input for agency implementation of youth permanency should be compensated for their time and effort. Others on the committee are being paid for their time – so too should foster youth.
- Kern County hired a former foster youth, who is a college student, to establish a youth advisory group. That group then included all the youth who were receiving services. The purpose was not only to get input but to educate youth on what permanency is.

Resources

Persons who were exceptionally helpful on how to involve youth include Bob Ketch, Executive Director, Five Acres, and Cheryl Jacobson, CPYP consultant.

Step 3. Self-Assessment: complete an agency self-assessment on youth permanency.

> *"You must have a starting point to identify what's already in place, what's working and not. As you begin that struggle with starting to think, your mind changes."*
>
> *—Los Angeles County*

Rationale

Just as one does an assessment first when doing casework, so too an agency completes a self-assessment before beginning a new project. This is the first opportunity for the group to examine what they think about youth permanency and how that affects finding permanency for youth.

The self-assessment:

- Identifies gaps in youth permanency practice.
- Enlarges understanding of how to infuse youth permanency into the practice of the agency and its partners. For instance, an agency may not have considered how IL and mental health services can be involved. It may not have considered whether their MOUs with group homes could stipulate youth permanency work.
- Determines the agency's population of youth without permanence. Who are the loneliest youth living in the least homelike environment? Who are the longest in care?
- Determines where it will be most effective to implement youth permanency strategies such as family search and engagement, working on grief issues with adolescents, Internet search engines, and pilot projects.
- Determines where the potential supports and champions are and where a natural partnership can be formed, for instance, by pairing social workers with IL staff or with a permanency-minded group home.

Actions

- Complete the youth permanency assessment with the newly established youth permanency committee.
- If that isn't possible, complete it with the project manager, key supervisors, program managers, and staff from various units. More than one person should complete the assessment if it is to have an impact.
- Take time to delve into the following issues as they arise: definition of youth permanency, the role of partners, the role of specific units, and attitudes of staff and administrators.
- Sometimes an organizational change model that analyses vision, incentives, skills, action plan, and resources helps an agency determine from what position it is beginning the project.

Lessons Learned

- Alameda County: "The self-assessment was useful because it helped us sort out where we were in our culture and belief system and where our programs were. It helped us work with upper management and the director to see where they might want to invest. I didn't necessarily think it was a good idea at the time, but I see now that it was helpful. You can't start if you don't know where you are."
- Fresno County: "It was very useful in opening the eyes of administration, because for a long time we thought we were doing things correctly, but as we looked at the assessment, we found, oh my gosh, we're not and that led to many changes."

Success measured by:

- Agency self-assessment completed.
- Clarity achieved on definitions, current efforts, and challenges.

Examples

As a result of the agency self-assessment process, an agency might decide to analyze placements at all group homes, or might decide on its key partners, or might decide to locate the project in the adoption unit.

Resources

California Permanency for Youth Project,
"Agency Self-Assessment Tool on Youth Permanency"

Step 4. Agency develops an agency youth permanency plan.

Rationale

In developing the agency's youth permanency plan, refer to the self-assessment and to the original discussion with the administrators about changes desired.

CPYP recommends that, over a two-year period, the following seven areas are addressed in the plan: (1) policy, (2) practice, including (3) involvement of youth in planning their own permanence, (4) training, (5) data tracking and outcome measures, (6) active partnerships with external agencies, and (7) integration with other initiatives. Using the agency's plan for implementing youth permanency corresponds to using the family's case plan in social work efforts with the family.

CPYP recommends that counties use a project planning tool (such as a Gantt chart) to assure an even flow in the work (see **Resources**).

Actions

Youth permanency committee develops an implementation plan.

Lessons Learned

Alameda County: "It's important to discuss pitfalls and barriers so that you can prepare to deal with them. Then you can provide alternatives to upper management so that they can provide resources for the effort, such as data and money."

Success measured by:

Plan developed.

Examples

As a result of the agency self-assessment process, an agency might develop a plan to analyze placements at all group homes. How that might lead to a reduction in group home stays is shown by Marion County, Indiana (see "Marion County Juvenile Court, Indianapolis" in *Model Programs for Youth Permanency*). Once the county determined how many youth were in group homes and where, two program managers visited all facilities in the state used by Marion County and asked each what would make it possible for each youth to return home. Based on that analysis, they began to take steps to increase bed space capacity within Marion County so that a local RTC could work with the family. Second, in the contracts with RTC programs, the county required that the family be involved in the treatment process. Third, the RTCs had been two-year programs. Now the county insisted on a six month stay and that discharge planning begin the day a child entered a facility. County division managers visit each facility every three months. If the youth has been in care more than one month, they ask specific questions about the steps necessary for the child to achieve permanence. If any system barriers are identified, specific action is taken to address those barriers.

Resources

Kern County, "KeYPOINT Implementation Schedule" (Gantt chart)

Los Angeles County, "Metro North Permanency Project Plan: Executive Summary," May 2007

Mardith J. Louisell, "Intensive Family Reunification (IFR), Child and Adolescent Placement Project (CAPP), Marion County Juvenile Court, Indianapolis" in *Model Programs for Youth Permanency*, 39-43

Sacramento County, "Sacramento County Family Permanence for Youth Project Plan," February 2006

San Luis Obispo County, "California Permanency for Youth Project Plan," April 2007

Step 5. Shift staff and partner cultures regarding youth permanency.

> *"The first barrier we encountered was convincing social worker supervisors of the urgency. We had to overcome the focus on emancipation and IL skills and the myths that older youth don't want to be adopted or are un-adoptable."*
>
> *— Monterey County*

Rationale

Youth permanency implementation events, such as kick-offs, explain the concept, demonstrate that it's achievable, and build enthusiasm. By having a speaker from outside the agency, the agency conveys that youth permanency practice is not just a new fad of the director or project manger, but a national initiative. Other effective presentations at kick-offs have included former foster youth and digital stories of youth speaking about permanency.

Kick-offs give a clear message that the agency is embarking on new practice so that when staff hear about successes and are asked to change practice, they have a context. The kick-off is the first event to demonstrate the importance of youth permanency as part of the agency's direction to involved professionals and partners.

Other events to help shift the culture include brown bag lunches for partners and staff on specific topics of youth permanency and the showing of youth permanency DVDs, such as digital stories (CPYP) and *Finding Forever Families* (Dave Thomas Foundation).

CPYP sponsors conferences at which participating counties share ideas to further the participants' understanding of what youth permanency is and the tools needed to be successful. When the county invites its partners to attend these gatherings, the work proceeds faster.

Actions

Introduce the youth permanency project with a kick-off event with a motivational speaker from outside the agency. By introducing the kick-off, the director and project manager show staff they are the key implementers. They then explain what steps they will take to begin the project. Such steps include assigning social work and support staff, allocating resources, and designating a process for monitoring and reviewing progress. A wide representation of staff and partners clarifies that finding permanence requires a team approach with staff, collaterals, and family sharing the work.

Invite partners through personal contact, as well as e-mail invitations. This conveys the importance of the project.

Lessons Learned

- Without a kick-off event, it's difficult to generate enthusiasm for the project in a large group, to convey a consistent message, to demonstrate that partners and agency staff will work together on youth permanency, and to gain visibility for the project and its importance.
- Conveying a clear definition of youth permanency becomes especially important when it comes to Step 6, identifying the youth who don't have permanence with whom the project will work. The definition should be disseminated in different forums over time so that social workers understand it. Without a clear understanding of what permanency is, they will not be able to identify those who don't have it, and when they begin working with youth, they won't be able to explain permanency to youth.
- Often partner agencies worry what youth permanency will mean for their future. Some group homes worry that their referrals will decrease, while others have embraced youth permanency and allied their mission, vision, and goals with youth permanency. Involve the partners by explaining the project at the beginning and ask for their participation in developing it.

Success measured by:

County Agency

All staff have been exposed to a initial presentation on youth permanency that includes the definition, an understanding of its importance and achievability, the variety of youth attitudes toward youth permanency, and tools and techniques to achieve permanency. Staff understand that youth permanency practice is now an agency priority in their casework.

Partner

A significant portion of a county's key partners have attended the youth permanency kick-off. The director and project manager have indicated that the county is going to begin working with youth permanency in a formal way and have asked for the partners' assistance in determining how the new practice will be implemented.

Examples

- Fresno and Alameda Counties enlisted group homes by meeting with managers of group homes to explain the project and ask for their help.
- "The key to successful partnering is for the county to provide an atmosphere where the group home agencies feel safe" (Alameda County program manager). Alameda County social workers asked group home staff what the county could do to help them support the youth: what services did the group home need?
- As a start to a partnership with its group home, Fresno County hosted a barbecue at the group home. At the barbecue, the county group home supervisor and caseworkers worked with the group home staff and therapist on mining the youths' cases for potential connections. After the meeting, Fresno County made it a goal to keep the group home staff actively involved.
- Stanislaus took their fledgling youth permanency initiative on the road, asking group homes, adoption agencies, foster parents, and others: What is your idea of permanence? What is your commitment to permanency next year?
- Offering CEUs to staff and partner agency staff for the kick-off and other trainings helps attendance.

Resources

California Permanency for Youth Project, *Telling It Like It Is*, DVD

Dave Thomas Foundation for Adoption, *Finding Forever Families*, DVD

Step 6. Identify youth who need permanency. Develop a system to maintain data and track outcome measures.

Rationale

An agency must understand what permanency is and know who comprises its population of unconnected youth in order to determine success in its youth permanency efforts.

Often agencies have no way to find out which youth lack a connection other than by going to social workers and counting manually. Youth with relatives who have made a permanent commitment show up on the computer system as not having a permanent connection. In other cases, a social worker might never have discussed permanent commitments with the relative, but has assumed it's a permanent connection. These situations show the importance of knowing exactly which youth have and do not have permanency.

To find out if a youth has permanency, staff must speak with the youth. It's key again that staff understand the definition so they can explain "permanency" to youth, who don't know what social workers mean by the word.

Once the agency identifies the youth without permanency, it can analyze where these youth reside (group homes? foster home? with relatives? on the run?) and decide where to concentrate its initial efforts.

Having data helps administrators understand the enormity of the problem. Data can also show increased youth well-being and cost savings as the agency achieves permanency. It helps staff see the extent of the issue: how many youth does the county have who don't have permanency? Knowing the concrete number accelerates their understanding of the work's urgency.

Actions

- Determine which youth do not have a permanent connection. How large a group is it? What are the characteristics of the agency's youth in foster care? Are most in group homes? Foster homes? Where do the youth with the greatest need live? Those who have been waiting the longest? Legal orphans?
- Determine which youth the agency will initially work with.
- Decide what outcome measures the county will track, and how, in order to measure success. An agency need not implement tracking outcome measures yet, but starting the process of identifying meaningful outcomes moves the process along.

Examples of outcome measures:

a) number of connections before and after the search for relatives

b) measurement on a youth permanency scale

c) cost of new practice in resources and time

d) youth improvement per se; for example, Orange County, California, measured youth improvement on the "Brief Impairment Scale (BIS): A Multidimensional Scale of Functional Impairment for Children and Adolescents"

e) reduced level of care

f) number of incident reports

Lessons Learned

After working for two years on youth permanency, managers in one county wanted data to prove to the board and director that the project had been successful but, because they hadn't decided on measures to track, they had to begin in Year Three to track and prove effectiveness.

Success measured by:

Ongoing tracking system discussed with date set for implementation in Year Two

Examples

- Alameda County found that of the children who remain in foster care, 54% of 4-11 year olds and 30% of 12-18 year olds in foster care in Alameda County came into care when they were 3 years old or under. A statistic such as this has a huge impact on staff and helps them understand what happens to youth in care.
- To get staff thinking about who did and didn't have permanency, San Luis Obispo County revised the Got Milk? commercial and created posters that said, "Got Permanency?" On the poster was the story of a youth who had a permanent connection. Agency staff also did posters with their own stories about permanency connections when they were teens.

- Track data: When Monterey County started the project in 2003, it had 165 dependents in LTFC (long-term foster care). In the fall of 2005, Monterey County had 142 youth in LTFC. "Although our caseloads of total children in foster care have risen 20% since then, we have been able to reduce the number of children needing permanent homes. We can confidently say that the reduction of children without a plan of family reunification, adoptions, or guardianship has dropped as a result of our involvement with CPYP."

Resources

Alameda County, "Group Home StepUp Project: Moving Up and Out of Congregate Care, Final Report"

Héctor R. Bird, "The Brief Impairment Scale (BIS)"

California Permanency for Youth Project, "CPYP Permanency Scale"

Los Angeles County, "21st Annual Productivity and Quality Awards Program, DCFS Metro North Permanency Unit"; this report shows cost savings achieved by a youth permanency initiative in Los Angeles County.

Step 7. Identify units, supervisors, social workers, and partners who will initially work on cases. (N.B. Some agencies may do Step 7 before Step 6.)

Rationale

It's critical to have a group composed of supervisors, social workers, and partners to work on youth permanency. It's too much for child welfare to shoulder the entire workload and it's important to have enough people to keep each other motivated while they are doing the hard work. For example, if the agency decides to concentrate on group homes, child welfare needs the assistance of the group home administrators, social workers, and staff on the team.

Partners will join the youth's permanence team, which is composed of the youth, family, professionals, and important others. (Siblings' social workers should also join the team.) The team explores options and takes responsibility for finding permanency for the youth. Because of the team, the social worker is not the only person responsible for decision-making about the youth's permanence.

Actions

As a team:

- Examine the agency for the area where the process will work most effectively. Where are the potential supports and champions? Is there a place for a natural pairing with a partner, such as CASA, a group home, the mental health department, WRAP services? Review the agency's self-assessment for answers.
- Assign supervisor(s) and caseworkers to the specific cases.
- Select an organization with which the agency will partner in the casework and discuss the nature of the work.
- Work to have the partner located on-site at the agency.

Lessons Learned

- Assign supervisors who understand the practice and philosophy of youth permanency and posses youth permanency skills. One county assigned a supervisor without the assertiveness and fortitude to counter her staff's resistance. When enthusiasm flagged, social workers didn't make the work a priority because the supervisor didn't insist on it.
- Assign social workers who have tenacity, which was found to be the most important characteristic of a family finding caseworker in Project UPLIFT (State of Colorado), and who are flexible – the work will require caseworkers to take home some tasks, such as making calls, because some connections will be available only at night.

Success measured by:

Units, supervisors, social workers, and partners who will be trained and will do the work have been identified and briefed on what the project entails.

Examples

- **Location**: Kern County located the project in its IL units. Agency staff tended to see the project as applying only to the IL unit and peripheral to the rest of the agency. Kern is now developing strategies to counter that perception.
- **Location**: When Orange County implemented this initiative, they identified two senior social workers with the matching attitude and skill set needed for quality permanency work. These social workers were assigned 10 cases to allow for maximum concentration on the needs of the youth identified, who had few or no connections and many placements, including group care. A supervisor who also fit the criteria was assigned to oversee the work. Support was also provided by the CPYP Workgroup Committee. Orange County benefited from co-located mental health staff who provided support and services to the social workers, youth, and families in the project.
- **Tenaciousness**: One social worker found a family in Texas, but if the social worker had stopped there, siblings previously unknown wouldn't have been found.

Resources

Mardith J. Louisell, *Recommendations for Effective Partnerships on Youth Permanency between Adoption and Foster Family Agencies and Child Welfare*

Mardith J. Louisell, *Recommendations for Effective Partnerships on Youth Permanency between Group Homes and Child Welfare*

Mardith J. Louisell, *Recommendations for Effective Partnerships on Youth Permanency between the Juvenile Courts and Child Welfare*

Step 8. Obtain an Internet contract for searching for connections and designate a procedure for using it. Develop a tracking system for information gleaned from family searches on individual youth.

Rationale

Internet search engine

Although the most effective way to find family and fictive kin is to talk with the youth and family, Internet search engines, both free and fee-based, can help with hard to locate persons. It's estimated a search is essential in 5 to 10 percent of the cases; however, for that percent, it's key. As staff become proficient in using the tools and if the agency has the money, it can be used in a larger percentage of the cases to save staff time. However, Internet searching doesn't replace talking with the youth and family.

Tracking system

Once staff begin family finding work, it's critical not to lose the information. With caseworker turnover, multiple staff doing the searches, and youth moving from one unit to another, it's all too easy to misplace the information. Documenting and tracking potential connections is critical–information is frequently mislaid, then lost. Staff must know how to pass on information to new social workers, collaterals, and the youth.

Actions

Internet search engine

- Contract with a fee-based Internet search provider
- Assure that the staff who do the searches have access to the Internet

Tracking system

Select a form on which the youth's permanence team will enter all contacts. Decide if staff will enter it into a data system or keep a hard copy that will move with the file. Determine who will enter the information and how it will be conveyed to all stakeholders. If the agency works with a partner or has a shelter where information is taken, develop a way to transfer that information to a designated place.

Lessons Learned

- In one county, numerous Internet searches and case mining were conducted, but when the youth's case was discussed three months later, no one knew where the information was. Finding permanency is not a linear process – the caseworkers had been working on other permanency tasks. Now they needed information, but where was it? One person had searched for the potential connections, one person had the case, one person helped on the case, one person changed positions, and no one knew where the information was. Because no one knew, permanency was delayed for a teenager in ongoing crisis.
- Also tragic was a situation when a contact had been made with a potential connection and other case issues intervened. When the social worker returned to do follow-up, the information had been mislaid.
- The consultant helps a county speak with another county about its experience with Internet search engines and tracking forms. Hearing from a county which has already finished this step provides information and credibility that can't be found elsewhere.
- Internet searching and data mining: "The good news is that it works. But the reality is it takes a huge amount of time to do this and follow up the contacts. For every relative you call, there are more names to follow up on. Then, you start playing phone tag, there are time zone changes, you're out of the office, everybody gets frustrated. My unit has asked for dedicated staff, even clerical support, to focus on the data mining through the volumes of cases, follow-up phone calls, and correspondence," Monterey County.
- The Internet can generate many potential connections. To keep things manageable, caseworkers must "work smart" by identifying key sources of information and key persons: Who would have the information on reunions? Who does or did an effective job of raising children? Zero in – call those people.

Success measured by:

- Contract obtained for Internet search engine
- Procedure for use of search engine determined and conveyed to key staff
- Form adopted for entering contacts

Examples

Internet searches

- Stanislaus County has a part-time IT person conduct a search on every young person who enters the system and believes it's been helpful for many casework practices, including permanence. The county also uses the search to find persons for TDMs (team decision-making meetings). Any social worker who wants a search on a youth who entered the system before searching was automatically conducted can request one. It is then completed as a high priority. Part of the genesis of this practice was one IT person, interested in youth permanency and in technology, who became a champion of how the technology could be useful to the agency.
- Data from Project UPLIFT, State of Colorado, showed the most successful social worker spent her time talking to the youth and connections, rather than combing the file or using the Internet. Most of the best information will come from person-to-person contacts.

Tracking system

- San Luis Obispo had placed a youth with a family member but the permanency plan disrupted, partly because a sufficient support plan had not been created. When the youth returned to the county for placement, the county was able to pull out their search information, look at all the family members they had found and start right away to find someone else.
- Kern County didn't have notebooks when it began the project but quickly became frustrated with not being able to find the information easily and started using a family finding notebook. As a county starts with a small group of youth, a family finding notebook on each case can assure that information is not lost; use a sign-out log so people can check the notebook out. As the county expands the number of its youth permanency cases, it will need a database.

Resources

California Permanency for Youth Project, "Current Relationships/Past Connections of Affection," tracking form developed by CPYP counties

California Permanency for Youth Project, "Intensive Relative Search Contact Information," tracking form developed by CPYP counties

Family Builders by Adoption, Dumisha Project database (Microsoft Access), used for tracking information, available on the CPYP website

List of free and fee-based Internet search engine sites, available on request from CPYP

Stanislaus County, Youth Connections database (Microsoft Access), used for tracking connection information, available on the CPYP website

Step 9. Provide training to staff and partners on how to discuss permanency with youth, conduct family search and engagement, and prepare the youth and the potential family for joining a family successfully. Begin work on cases.

Rationale

Knowing how to talk with youth about finding permanency (including what permanency means to the agency and the youth), how to do family search and engagement (FSE) work, and what grief and loss issues exist for adolescents – all are necessary to do the work.

People from different units must be trained so that if one person leaves agency there isn't a gap in the work.

Training should be targeted to staff as well as agency partners because the agency needs partners as part of the youth's team. Sometimes a partner may have the best relationship with the youth for talking about permanency. Sometimes a permanency specialist at a partner agency may be able to do family search and engagement work. Staff will be able to work on some parts of the grief and loss process but for many youth, partners such as therapists, foster parents, and group home staff will be the designated persons to work on grief and loss with the youth.

Training on family search and engagement includes:

- How to set the stage with the youth's team before conducting a search for families
- How to talk with youth about the search process, and how to obtain information that youth feel is critical to the search process, including whom they want to find
- How to talk with families during the search process
- How to prepare the youth and families for initial in-person meetings and phone contact
- How to develop plans with the youth's team to achieve emotional, and legal, permanency for youth, as well as how to develop backup plans
- How to develop plans to support and sustain relationships
- How to supervise permanency cases

Grief and loss training encompassing the "3-5-7 Model," developed by Darla Henry, which includes:

- Facilitating understanding as to where youth are in the process of loss clarification, integration, and actualization
- Assisting social workers to create youth permanency teams and determine who is the best person to conduct the grief work with the youth
- How best to utilize tools available to assist youth to grieve their losses (timelines, life maps, life books, etc.)
- Integrating loss and grief work with existing support and with the family search and engagement process

Actions

- Provide training to staff on talking with youth about permanency and focusing on the youth's goals (see **Youth**, below)
- Provide training for staff on FSE. See Mardith J. Louisell, *Six Steps to Find a Family: A Practice Guide to Family Search and Engagement*
- Begin work on cases by Month Three of the project
- Provide training for staff and partners on grief and loss issues for youth and how to support the permanent families
- Set up a monthly meeting for ongoing case consultation
- Set up supervisors' meetings for ongoing supervisory consultation

For Supervisors

Monitor progress: monthly supervision must center on case planning for permanency by determining clear steps to achieve permanency. The supervisor monitors with the caseworkers their progress on implementing those steps and revising them, if necessary. Unless this happens, a case can go for months and years without any work on permanency.

For Social Workers

At every placement change, the social worker makes a serious effort to see if the biological family can now care for the youth.

Lessons Learned

- Training isn't effective unless actual cases are used.
- Without monthly meetings to discuss cases, the process quickly becomes overwhelming to staff and supervisors and cases begin slipping through the cracks. Both supervisors and social workers need ongoing motivation, support, and celebrations of success to accomplish this difficult and intense work.
- Cuyahoga County, OH found that finding permanency is not fast or linear and it's easy for staff to feel unsuccessful. The county's partner, Adoption Network, provides training, support, discussion, and case consultations, as well as an appreciation lunch every year.

Success measured by:

- Training completed on (1) how to discuss permanency with youth, (2) family search and engagement, and (3) grief and loss
- Monthly case consultation in place and attended by staff and supervisors

Examples

- It's important to engage the youth in the process. On many cases in Project UPLIFT (State of Colorado), youth weren't making progress on treatment plans in their residential treatment facility. But when family members were found and began coming to the center to participate in planning, the youth began to work on their treatment plans and began to have hope they weren't always going to be identified as perpetrators, for instance, and be confined to a residential center for what felt like forever to them.
- Fresno identified its Family to Family neighborhoods. Once a month, social workers attend neighborhood meetings to update them on what is happening with the county's permanency efforts and ask them to help on tasks. When the county asked for help with transportation and getting tickets for events for a family visiting a local youth, a neighborhood church responded.

Youth

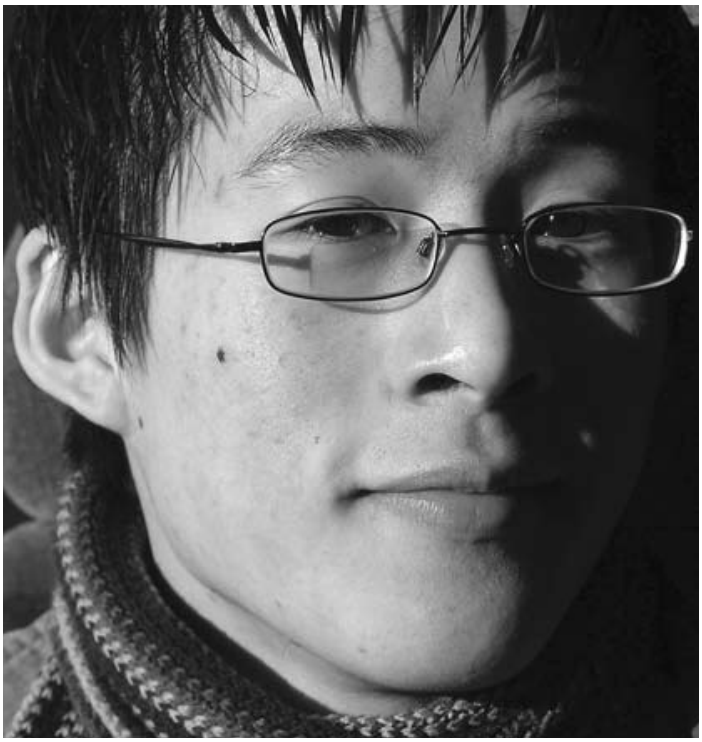
- Make the meetings youth-centered and prepare the youth for each meeting. Consult the youth to identify potential permanent connections.
- One agency helped a youth create a team for himself, which helped the youth write a permanency plan and monitor progress.
- "Because meetings can be intimidating to youth, time must be taken to bring the youth on board and help them understand the process and players." (Youth spokesperson)

Resources

Darla Henry, "The 3-5-7 model: preparing children for permanency"

Bob Lewis and Sue Badeau, adapted by the Bay Area Academy, *Preparing Youth for Permanency Family Connections: Preparing Everyone for Permanent Family Connections*, curriculum

Mardith J. Louisell, *Six Steps to Find a Family: A Practice Guide to Family Search and Engagement*



Step 10. Recruit adoptive/permanent families. Use concurrent planning.

Rationale

There will be a few youth who, despite the family search and engagement process, have no known relative, friend, or professional to serve as a permanent connection. The agency must have a backup plan so that such youth do not remain in care. All youth in care have the right to know that a social worker is working on finding permanency for them. An agency must have many ways to find permanency for youth.

Actions

- Provide education and training for recruitment staff on the philosophy of youth permanency
- Develop an outreach plan to find potential adoptive parents of youth
- Develop one page FAQs that can be distributed to potential adoptive families

Lessons Learned

- Adoption Network, Cleveland, hired adoption navigators to help potential adoptive families through the agency adoption process. Research nationally shows that 1 in 28 people follow through after expressing interest in adoption. In Cleveland, the work of the navigators produced 1 in 10 persons who adopted.
- You Gotta Believe!, New York City, has found that child-specific recruitment works best when the potential adoptive parents are in the same room with the youth. You Gotta Believe! hosts a television show at which youth talk about the need for permanency. The connections established between potential adoptive families and youth are done at the recording of the program, not through call-ins, indicating there is something crucial that happens when people are in the same room with a youth.

Success measured by:

- Recruitment staff are able to explain the purpose of youth permanency to other staff and develop a child-specific plan for each youth referred
- Increase in number of youth adopted by strangers

Examples

- Many agencies have begun using Heart Galleries as a tool to find adoptive families.
- San Francisco County's adoption contract works with a marketing agency. The advertising campaign focuses exclusively on older youth and also targets gay and lesbian families as potential adoptive parents.
- Sacramento and Fresno Counties uses Wednesday's Child, a television spot once a week, in which a waiting youth who needs a permanent family is profiled.

Resources

AdoptUsKids, www.adoptuskids.org
California Kids Connection is the online, searchable database listing children in California who are available for adoption, www.cakidsconnection.com

Step 11. Develop a publicity plan for agency's youth permanency efforts.

Rationale

Publicizing success stories and recognizing staff who achieved permanency for youth in newsletters and at agency meetings generates enthusiasm for the work and creates the impetus for increased success. It also keeps the goal in the forefront when a project hits the doldrums, as every project does. Between Month 9 and Month 12, the agency should host a major training to recreate momentum. Also, different people have different learning styles. What they didn't learn from one presenter they could learn from another.

Actions

- Highlight successes:
  - Supervisor and caseworkers identify successes and communicate them to the appropriate persons who can publicize them. (This could be a committee task.)
  - Start a permanency newsletter for success stories.
  - Include successes in all newsletters: the director's, the newsletter for foster parents, etc.
  - Use the agency's internal website (or create one) to show successes.
  - Include reports on permanency in board updates.
  - Make five- to ten-minute presentations at staff meetings about success stories.
  - Involve public relations staff in publicizing the project and its successes.
- Provide additional training to regenerate enthusiasm.

Lessons Learned

- The consultant/champion should acknowledge the risks that the agency has taken by starting the project. Basically, the agency is beginning the project on faith.
- If the group in charge of the project is external to the public child welfare agency, give credit at every available point to the county. This goes a long way toward creating an atmosphere of trust and helps the county in its dealings with its board and directors. See Mardith J. Louisell, *Recommendations for Effective Partnerships on Youth Permanency*.
- Success must be communicated in different ways: in print, in person (unit meetings, etc.), in posters, etc.

Success measured by:

- Number of different ways success is conveyed
- Number of printed articles on the project
- Number of different venues in which project successes are conveyed
- Visual public demonstration of success, such as permanency trees or posters

Examples

- To demonstrate progress, create a visual symbol, such as a tree, that shows the increase in a youth's connections since permanency work started. Place it in a public place where it will generate questions. Besides giving the social workers a sense of progress, it shows that the agency is committed to youth permanency practice.
- To achieve buy-in from staff, use brown bag lunches and invite staff, CASAs, foster parents, foster family agency providers, families and relative caregivers, and court staff.
- The agency may ask staff to write up individual outcomes to show success and bolster future funding efforts.
- As more initiatives begin, each county must keep interest in permanency vital. The program director at Kern County sends out successes stories to all staff via email.
- To keep the issue at the forefront, San Luis Obispo county revised the *Got Milk?* commercial, making posters that said, "Got Permanency?" On the poster was the story of a youth who had a permanent connection. They even used stories of staff talking about their permanency connections when they were teens.
- Fresno identified Family to Family neighborhoods. Once a month, social workers attend neighborhood meetings to update them on what is happening with the county's permanency efforts.

Resources

Mardith J. Louisell, *Recommendations for Effective Partnerships on Youth Permanency between Adoption and Foster Family Agencies and Child Welfare*

Mardith J. Louisell, *Recommendations for Effective Partnerships on Youth Permanency between Group Homes and Child Welfare*

Mardith J. Louisell, *Recommendations for Effective Partnerships on Youth Permanency between the Juvenile Courts and Child Welfare*

Step 12. Monitor agency progress. Determine Year Two targets.

Rationale

It's important for the consultant or internal champion to monitor progress on a regular basis and to know exactly what is being monitored.

The youth permanency committee will have developed a plan to complete Steps 1 – 8, including timelines, responsibilities, and accountability for each step. The consultant meets with the project manager and committee monthly to review progress, barriers, and successes, and to help analyze whether the plan should be changed. If no one person is responsible for overseeing progress, implementation of the plan becomes an urban sprawl – you can't put your hands on what has been done, what remains, and how the pieces fit together. Also, one can get bogged down in the tasks and not notice how much progress the agency has made because successes haven't been highlighted. When staff know that a consultant is coming to check on things, they feel accountable and supported as the consultant cheers them on during the down time.

Actions

- Consultant sets up monthly meetings with the project manager and/or committee to review specific sections of the plan
- Consultant sets up quarterly meetings with the director and project manager to address challenges and successes
- Consultant provides end-of-year evaluation on project and goals
- Youth permanency committee uses Gantt chart or other project planning tool to assure an even flow to the work
- If the agency has used a tool to assess readiness for organizational change, review the tool every six months to determine what areas might prevent change
- Agency determines Year Two targets

Lessons Learned

The plan must be in a format compatible with the agency's style.

Success measured by:

- Meetings scheduled six months at a time with committee/project manager and with the director/project managers
- Meetings take place five out of the six months
- End-of-year progress assessed
- Year Two targets determined

Examples

- In Sacramento County, each month the committee examined the tasks scheduled for that month, reviewing if the item had been accomplished, examining barriers if it hadn't, and making revisions.
- One considers all issues the entire time but some counties prefer to tackle one discrete area of the plan each month: for instance, scheduling and organizing training one month; performing an agency self-assessment one month; and deciding which unit will pilot the project another month. For these counties, setting aside one month to make a decision on a specific issue keeps the project manager and committee from becoming paralyzed with having to tackle everything.

Resources

Kern County, "KeYPOINT Implementation Schedule" (Gantt chart)

Sacramento County, "Sacramento County Project Plan for Year 2," May 2007

San Luis Obispo County, "California Permanency for Youth Project Plan," April 2007

Step 13. Create agency policy, structures, and procedures that make it possible to achieve permanency.

Rationale

Every area in the agency impacts permanency. The agency's policies and procedures must reflect this so staff know how permanency fits in to their work. Once the agency has spent time developing the project and has worked through some of the challenges, the agency has a sense of what policy and procedural changes should be made. Formalizing the permanency policy gives the practice importance: the practice will not be treated as the latest flavor of the month.

Actions

- Review policy manual and state, federal, and court requirements for inconsistencies or omissions regarding permanency.
- Review MOUs with partner agencies to include permanency for youth in the requirements.
- Review the System Improvement Plan (SIP) to assure that youth permanency is addressed routinely in every forum.
- Analyze agency structures to see where internal silos or procedures create bottlenecks that delay permanency.
- Create a youth permanency case protocol that details who is expected to do what actions in what time frame. (See Fresno County, "Future Steps to Permanency.")

Lessons Learned

Internal silos: In one county, the adoption unit had the cases which had been freed for permanency, but the resource unit did the home studies. Very little conversation had occurred between the two groups. Outside staff who had a contract with the county noticed the gap and stepped in to build relations between the two units, in some cases, even walking the home studies from one unit to the other, running match reports, etc.

Success measured by:

Policies and procedures reviewed and permanency addressed in all relevant policies and procedures

Examples

- Sacramento County
  - The county began reviewing policy by looking at language. Anywhere they found the word "unadoptable," for instance, they made revisions.
  - Procedure: After a TPR (termination of parental rights), Sacramento has an agency review system that examines every case for the permanency plan and determines what caseworkers must do to achieve it.
- Monterey County
  Monterey found a workload priority protocol written in 1998 that stated that children over 10 would routinely not be assigned a secondary adoption worker. Now that Monterey has reviewed its policies for permanency, all children are assigned secondary adoption workers as part of every child's team. No recommendation for long-term foster care is made without an internal staffing and review. Every staffing, court report, discussion, decision, and TDM now addresses permanency.
- Specific policies to consider
  Counties should explore writing a policy and procedure for involved professionals (group homes staff, county/agency social workers, CASAs, etc.) who want to adopt or become a permanent family to a youth with whom they work.
- System bottlenecks
  In one county, it was discovered that 200 children were caught in the transition between the foster care and adoption units for various reasons – a social worker was attached to the kids and thought no one else could serve them, a file was missing the birth certificate, the social worker didn't want to send an incomplete file, etc. That is, the children were in permanent custody but the files hadn't been transferred to the adoption unit. By setting timelines and a review panel, the county developed a system for getting the cases transferred within 40 days once the youth was in permanent custody. Once those 200 cases were transferred, the county found that many youth had foster parents who wanted to adopt, but because the case hadn't been located in the adoption unit, the system didn't know. A panel of reviewers was formed who looked at each case with the social worker and supervisor. A plan was made for how the case would be transferred and the review panel followed up on the transfer.

Resources

Alameda County, "Placement Protocol on County Staff Fostering and Adopting Alameda County Dependent Children"

Fresno County, "Future Steps to Permanency"

Step 14. Expand participation in youth permanency to additional units, supervisors, staff, and partners. Identify additional cases.

Rationale

The county has started in a target unit. Now the county takes what it learned with the target youth and expands to another area.

Actions

- Identify additional supervisor(s), staff, and resources to work on youth permanency cases.
- Determine how the staff will be trained, and how the pilot unit and additional units will interact, learn from each other, and support each other.
- Begin work.

Lessons Learned

Co-train people because staff leave or get sick. One permanency specialist was responsible for all the organizing and much of the practice. She didn't want to burden caseworkers and had a hard time delegating, so did the bulk of the work. When resources in the county became scarce and planning was needed, she unfortunately had to have surgery, and there was no one in place to take over for her.

Success measured by:

- Additional supervisor(s), staff, and youth identified for youth permanency practice
- Process in place for coordination between pilot and additional units

Examples

Initially, IL was the designated unit for youth permanency in Kern County. The adoption unit wasn't involved, but when the adoption unit was awarded a federal grant on older youth adoption, Kern decided on a coordinated permanency process as part of its expansion. They trained the older youth adoption project staff on family finding and engagement and the staff began attending the youth permanency committee meeting. The committee decided to change its name from CPYP to Permanency Committee for more visibility. Kern is now clarifying roles so that adoption staff and IL staff don't duplicate work.

Resources

Not applicable

Step 15. Create/clarify youth permanency practice expectations for all levels of agency staff. Include the best practice of engaging youth in the process.

Rationale

As one gains clarity on youth permanency practice, implementation proceeds more swiftly and thoroughly when one communicates this practice in a variety of ways. Adding permanency to policy and procedures is one way, training is another, and clarification of expectations for staff is another. This assures that when a case arises, each staff person is clear that permanency will be addressed according to agency guidelines.

At present, in most agencies there are no written expectations of staff regarding finding permanency for youth. In California, even the court reports have a check box for long-term placement. The agency must (a) work with the courts on this language, and (b) clarify with staff that, regardless of the court terminology, the agency doesn't countenance long-term placement as a permanent option.

Ultimately, success occurs when a standard of permanency practice is established across the agency that includes accountability for all levels. In one county, it's expected that supervisors address the issues of permanency with caseworkers when they haven't completed the agreed-upon steps. Regional managers are expected to speak to supervisors who are barriers to following up on the work accomplished by permanency specialists.

Actions

- Managers develop and convey expectations regarding permanency
- Managers communicate mission to supervisors in:
  - supervisors' meetings
  - individual conferences with unit supervisors
- Supervisors communicate mission to staff in:
  - unit meetings
  - individual conferences
  - case staffings
  - training on permanency for staff and partners
- Managers and supervisors provide and enforce guidelines on how social workers will engage and partner with youth in the process of achieving their own permanency

Lessons Learned

Without clear expectations of all staff, those who don't understand the importance of permanency, or who are afraid of conflict in discussions about permanency, can, without knowing it, avoid permanency discussions and therefore not achieve permanency for youth.

Success measured by:

- Expectations written with timelines stated
- Expectations clarified for each staff level by appropriate supervisor
- Expectations rewarded

Examples

- Monterey County: "Every staffing, court report, discussion, decision, and TDM will address permanency. While a TDM may have been set up for placement decision-making, our agency will include permanency in this discussion."
- At each supervision session in one county, the supervisor asks about the plan for a child's permanence and discusses how to obtain permanency.
- The agency staff training unit integrates permanency practice into all training. For example, if there is a training session on mental health, training will include assessment of mental health issues for permanency and how these can be addressed to move forward with achieving permanency.
- In another county, permanency specialists found families, began engagements, and referred to the caseworker with steps outlined for permanency follow-up. When a caseworker didn't follow-up with the family, the family became angry and disengaged.

- In New York City in 2003, continuous training and case consultation had been provided on youth permanency for two years, but case management staff, who oversaw the work of the city's foster care agencies, were frustrated that there were no written guidelines for best practices requirements for contracted caseworkers and their supervisors. Without these guidelines, some staff saw the project as one person's baby and were not aware how committed the city was to the issue. In response, New York City formalized its "Families for Teens" policy in a set of ASFA (Adoption and Safe Families Act) implementation guidelines issued by the Administration for Children's Services commissioner. NYC administrator: "To make a substantial change in an agency, provide training – but understand that training alone is not sufficient to change practice. Training must be (a) supplemented by technical assistance and (b) reinforced by clear, enforceable policy guidelines."

Resources

Not applicable

Step 16. Formalize agreements with partners on youth permanency.

Rationale

Partners (i.e., foster parents, group homes, adoption agencies, foster care agencies, court associated personnel, probation, therapists, educational personnel, etc. Include the siblings' social workers on the youth's permanency team) play a critical role in the youth's life and it's vital to involve them as allies in the search for permanency. Partners may know what the youth wants, with whom the youth is in contact, and have a relationship that enables them to learn from the youth about key important people. If partners do not understand what the agency expects of them regarding permanency, the efforts towards permanency can stall. If, for instance, group home personnel believe that permanency is important and doable, their attitudes, beliefs, and values are transmitted to youth as well as to other stakeholders.

It's important for the agency and partners to develop a shared mission, vision, and values regarding youth permanency; this is best done by the leadership. Often, partners have different ideas about what permanency means. Developing the shared vision, mission, and values together is an opportunity to dialogue about permanency.

Actions

To improve child welfare's and partners' joint ownership of youth permanency outcomes:

- Meet with partners to explain the agency's new direction and discuss what role partners will play in achieving permanency; discuss vision, mission, and values
- Invite partners to permanency training with agency staff
- Inform partners of the agency's expectations regarding youth permanency
- Include permanency expectations in provider contracts and MOUs
- Hold regularly scheduled meetings with partners to discuss progress, barriers, and role clarification

Lessons Learned

- Sometimes a professional believes that s/he is the most important, consistent person in the youth's life, or feels the youth should remain in therapy rather than move to a permanent home if it means relocating, or thinks the youth is not adoptable. In all those cases, the social worker and supervisor educate the professional and explore when the professional thinks the youth would be ready and how the social worker and professional together can make that happen.
- Group homes unfamiliar with this definition of permanency sometimes don't understand the long-term nature of permanency. Again, ongoing education is important.
- Alameda County's StepUp Project found that, when it altered its placement philosophy, it was crucial to discuss the departmental direction with group home providers to help them understand the change in attitudes and practices. Cottage supervisors and managers were key because they influence and create program design.

Success measured by:

- All MOUs with vendors include clear expectations that the vendor will address permanency
- Partners meet on a quarterly basis with agency to discuss progress towards permanency
- Partners have a plan on how to integrate permanency into their agencies
- Partners participate in youth permanency committee and in the permanency team of individual youths

Examples of county and partner work

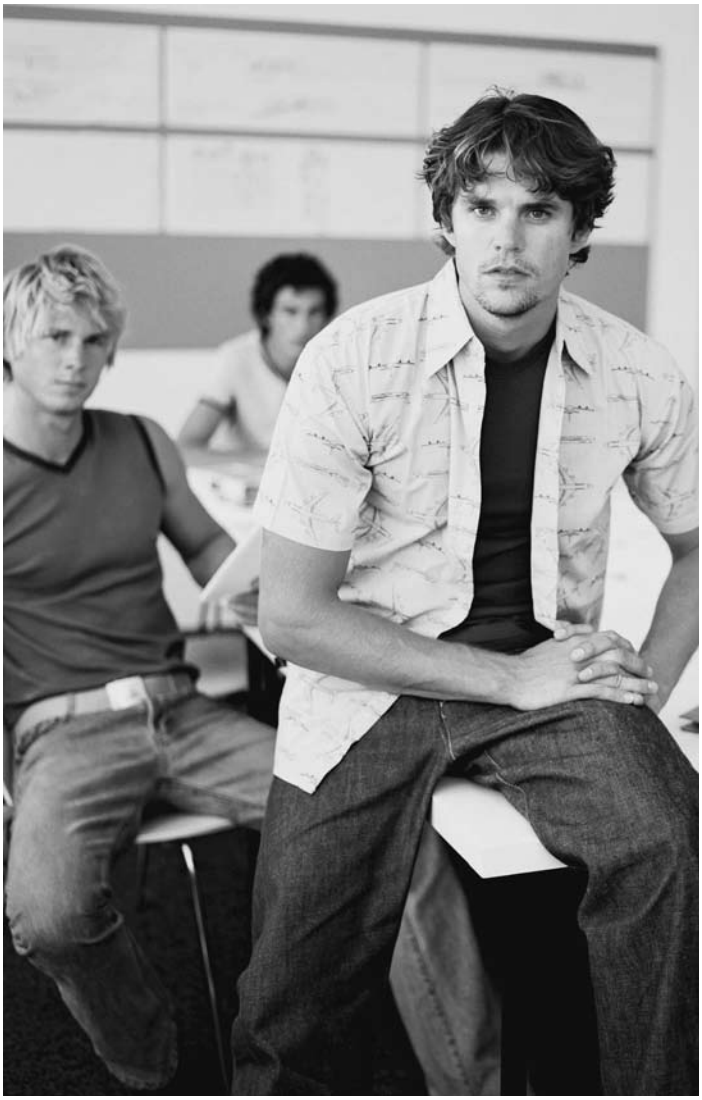
See example of a partnership in "EMQ Children and Family Services Wrap Around with Sacramento County Department of Health and Human Services," in Mardith J. Louisell, *Model Programs for Youth Permanency,* CPYP, 2004, 19-23.

Agency/Partner Actions

- Jointly target a particular youth population, such as youth who move frequently, and determine together how to address permanency with these youth.
- Develop a roster of clinicians who have expertise in youth permanency. Refer youth and their connections to them for help in building and sustaining permanency.
- Examine language used to describe youth and eliminate negative words, such as "unadoptable."
- Enable youth to maintain the same therapist after permanence is achieved.
- Establish best practice expectations and outcomes for group homes relative to youth permanency.
- Develop a vision statement emphasizing youth permanency. Involve all stakeholders, especially youth, in the process of developing and implementing the vision.
- Jointly develop a binding agreement of intent that holds group homes, county child welfare agencies, and other identified agencies to a partnership focused on achieving youth permanency.
- Jointly develop a plan for funding the financial resources necessary to accomplish youth permanency work in group homes and child welfare, including advocating for additional resources for group homes to do family finding, assessment, and engaging of families.
- Use performance-based contracting with external agencies to provide incentives for permanency.

Partner Actions

- Integrate youth permanency into the organization's strategic plan, program design, internal accountability, and budgeting process.
- Develop a procedure for keeping track in hard copy of persons important to a youth.
- Include permanency in orientation training for staff.
- Expand congregate care house rules to support youth permanency; for example, don't prohibit visits with connections as a consequence of a youth's bad behavior.
- Hold a permanency team meeting prior to, or immediately after, group home admission and thereafter quarterly. Include the youth, family, group home and county staff, potential connections, and other parties.
- In 2004, Five Acres, a multipurpose agency, established a vision that "within two years, we will have a permanent and involved family member for all children we serve." One step was adding the task of helping children develop and maintain permanent connections to the primary duties of the rehabilitation specialist's job description at Five Acres.
- Five Acres developed a scale that showed that a low percentage of its children had a realistic permanency plan for discharge within twelve months of entry. The agency set an outcome objective to raise the percentage to 50 percent by October 2006. This has been incorporated into the strategic plan, is reviewed three times a year by the research department, and reported to the board. (To obtain the scale, contact Five Acres, see **Resources**.)



Training

- Through state, county, and group home training resources, provide training to social and group home workers on how to talk with youth about permanency, how to reassess attitudes to maternal and paternal families, how to make contact with out-of-touch families, how to begin a process that challenges the status quo for a youth, how to assess a youth's safety in a potential connection, and how to address staff fears about disappointing youth if permanency isn't successful.
- Include group home staff in all Title IV-E and child welfare social worker core training.
- Invite child welfare staff to group home staff training.

Examples of Training Partnerships

- The Intensive Relative Search Project, a private-public partnership among Sacramento County, EMQ Children and Family Services, River Oaks Center for Children, Stanford Home, and the Sacramento Children's Home, searches intensively for extended family or friends for youth. The training for staff from all partner agencies was sponsored by Sacramento County and paid from a negotiated reinvestment of achieved savings from pooled funding in the region (after the close of the prior fiscal year).
- CASA volunteers at Orange and San Mateo Counties were trained with county staff in family search and engagement. In both counties, CASA did the primary family searching for youth connections. As potential connections were found, social workers reengaged in youth permanency team meetings.

Examples of County Action

- Fully include group home staff in development of the permanency plan. Develop partnerships with group home staff, attorneys, and CASA volunteers to plan and carry out the permanency plan.
- Alameda County made a concerted effort to move youth out of congregate care to family settings. The county met several times with group home providers to discuss permanency efforts and to outline expectations for how group homes will work with Alameda to meet these goals. As a policy stance, Alameda put a hold on providing support letters for opening new group homes, the only exception being if a provider addressed a specialized and unmet need, such as serving minors engaged in prostitution. Partially in response to these permanency efforts, there is a decreased need for lower level group home placements and a number of lower level group homes have closed in Alameda County in the past few years. Concurrently, Alameda County created an atmosphere in which county social workers asked group home staff what the county could do to help them support the youth. What services did the group home need?
- The director of Fresno County contacted the group home staff and the county group home social workers and asked what she could do to make it easier for them to attend the case consultations on their youth in care. Now they attend consistently.
- Include a plan for post-permanency services as a category in Requests for Proposals (RFPs) from group homes.

Resources

Alameda County, "Group Home StepUp Project: Moving Up and Out of Congregate Care, Final Report"

California CASA Association, www.californiacasa.org

Five Acres, www.fiveacres.org

Mardith J. Louisell, *Model Programs for Youth Permanency*

Mardith J. Louisell, *Recommendations for Effective Partnerships on Youth Permanency between Adoption and Foster Family Agencies and Child Welfare*

Mardith J. Louisell, *Recommendations for Effective Partnerships on Youth Permanency between Group Homes and Child Welfare*

Mardith J. Louisell, *Recommendations for Effective Partnerships on Youth Permanency between the Juvenile Courts and Child Welfare*

Step 17. Provide additional training for county and partner agency staff.

Rationale

After the initial kickoff to explain permanency and generate enthusiasm, and after the initial unit has been trained, begin the process of spreading practice throughout the agency. The entire agency has probably not been involved in initial permanency efforts and staff have not been required to implement youth permanency practice. Unless another major effort (with visible input from the director and project manager) is undertaken, the progress that has been initially made will be hard to maintain. This is basically a jump start by training to the knowledge, skills, and values of youth permanency. At this point, the staff development unit is an active participant in organizing the training and supporting the manager and supervisors in the youth permanency work.

Actions

- Determine what training is most needed to spread and sustain the youth permanency practice.
- Schedule training for all concerned stakeholders with follow-up expectations from supervisors on implementing practice in their units.
- Create a document on the differences, economically, emotionally, and legally, among various forms of permanency and Independent Living services. (See Alameda County, *A Guide to Permanency Options for Youth*.)
- Obtain CEUs for staff and partners to encourage participation.

Lessons Learned

- Having a good relationship with staff development personnel and having them participate in the youth permanency committee aids the training effort by helping staff development understand youth permanency and by helping the committee understand what training would be most effective. Staff development can also process CEUs.
- Because staff turnover is usually high, an agency needs a way to train new people, as well as include youth permanency in related offerings, such as training on attachment issues, youth violence, case plans, etc.

Success measured by:

- Training held
- Number of attendees
- Follow-up transfer of learning by supervisors who clarify expectations post-training

Examples

At San Francisco County, the initial kick-off on youth permanency was attended by many staff uninvolved in the initial project. The county then trained one unit in youth permanency practice. The second year, San Francisco held another half-day all-staff training to rekindle interest, show how staff previously uninvolved would be involved in the future, and tout successes.

Examples of training at this step:

- Training on AAP (Adoption Assistance Program), IL services, and the differences between various forms of permanency and non-permanency
- Training on preparing the youth and family on creating a new family
- Training of supervisors on supervising permanency practice

Resources

Alameda County, *A Guide to Permanency Options for Youth*
Fresno County, *Finding Permanency for Youth Resource Handbook*

Step 18. Create agency post-permanency supports for families.

Rationale

Without supports for the family and youth, the normal challenges of life and adolescence make permanency difficult to maintain. Also, grief and loss issues may arise once the youth has a secure setting and feels safe enough to process those issues. It's important to plan for this from the start by involving WRAP representatives on the youth permanency committee and on the youth's individual permanency team. The first CPYP counties found that some connections they had thought would be permanent didn't make it and believed the reason was a lack of post-permanency supports.

Actions

- Become familiar with research showing what adoptive families and relatives most want in follow up supports (see Madelyn Freundlich and Lois Wright, *Post-Permanency Services*, available from Casey Family Programs).
- Advocate for resources to ensure post-permanency services to youth and their connections. Create effective post-permanency services as indicated by research on what families want.
- Partner with mental health agencies.
- Provide training to therapists on permanency issues.
- Enable youth to maintain the same therapist after permanency is achieved.
- Develop practice expectations for staff that include plans for needed supports for adoptive/permanent families: Does the family need help addressing health issues? Transportation issues? Will the family need formal support in the future – when the youth, family, and long-term supports are in crisis? What is the agency procedure for such support?

Lessons Learned

Getting a sense of what post-permanency supports an agency should provide includes talking with the families in the youth's individual permanency team meeting to find out what they need.

Success measured by:

- Increase in available resources for adoptive and permanent families
- Collaboration with the Department of Mental Health on EPSDT (Early and Periodic Screening Diagnosis and Treatment) for aftercare for adoptive youth and families
- Therapists skilled in permanency identified for referrals

Examples

- Try to connect WRAP to each of the cases. After having trouble with some of the connections they made, Kern County saw how WRAP could help. Now WRAP is at the table as an active partner and relationships for the youth are improving.
- Counties can request that a plan for post-permanency services be included in RFPs from group homes. The California Alliance of Child and Family Services recommends that each residential-based service (RBS) offers or contracts for continuing services to support and maintain post-discharge care arrangements for the youth and family for at least six months after the youth has been discharged.
- Aftercare services for children and youth can be funded through mental health and EPSDT, a combination of home-based and therapeutic behavioral services (TBS). County EPSDT cost is 5 percent. Moving youth from residential treatment to family can justify TBS for 20 to 30 hours per week for several months if needed. TBS/mental health services can continue as long as the case is open and the child is Medi-Cal eligible. Five Acres supports post-permanency through TBS. As a Medi-Cal provider, Five Acres provides services as long as the youth is on Medi-Cal.

Resources

Five Acres, www.fiveacres.org
Madelyn Freundlich and Lois Wright, *Post-Permanency Services*

Step 19. Review successes and changes for sustainability.

Rationale

The goal of the project is the spread of youth permanency practice through the agency and its partners in a depth and breadth that will sustain itself as part of normal agency best practice. Youth permanency practice should not be person-dependent and must sustain changes in personnel and financial resources.

Actions

- Review implementation strategies
- Review agency successes
- Determine what will make those successes permanent
- Analyze areas where the practice has not yet taken hold and develop an implementation plan for those areas
- Determine if other partners should join the effort
- If the agency has used an organizational change analysis tool, review the model for potential problem areas
- Provide a forum for peer support from peers both within and outside the county (partner agencies, other counties)

Lessons Learned

Every agency has had the experience of a worthy practice fading because of lack of post-project planning.

Success measured by:

- Plan developed on how to sustain success, including timelines and responsibilities
- Implementation plan developed for agency areas and partners as yet uninvolved in youth permanency practice

Examples

- Multi-county meetings to share successes, lessons learned, and challenges faced occur in three California regions. In a survey completed with project managers, these meetings were rated as "very important" for learning how other counties are proceeding, for assessing a county's own progress, and for keeping counties motivated.
- Peer support: Madera County wanted to implement youth permanency practice and decided to work with neighboring Fresno County. Madera asked if they could participate in training and call on Fresno's experts for help. Fresno agreed and Madera has now embarked on its own youth permanency initiative.

Resources

Not applicable

THE PROCESS OF CHANGE

Strategies

CPYP Strategies

Monthly visits

Los Angeles County: "It's the relationship – that's the most important. Who is going to provide what my consultants provide when we expand to other offices? If I didn't have that, no way I would be able to keep going. It keeps me on track and helps me. I use my consultant as a sounding board for little things and big things. There are so many barriers in the work and it's too much if you don't know that someone is going to be there."

Increase urgency

Monitor case plans and progress

Orange County: "It keeps us moving along when a consultant comes down here to work, keeps us and our community partners enthusiastic, keeps us marching towards our goals."

Obtain the data

Get the vision right

Host youth permanency conferences

- Fresno County: "The convening gave me useful information about what other counties were doing – if I couldn't do it immediately I thought, 'That's where I want to be.'"
- Orange County: "We used it to bring in behavioral health people, who had been putting up barriers before. At the conference a Mental Health person was 'converted' and now he's influencing all the people they treat. The conference also helped the line staff see the broader picture and how to do things differently."
- Contra Costa County: Decision-making people must attend so they walk out of the conference with actions plans that will affect administrative practices.

Build the leadership committee

Create short-term wins

Also, publicize successes when you reach them by creating wall trees and writing newsletters about the goals achieved.

Hold regional county meetings

- Alameda County: "I found this helpful because it let me know how far our county had come in reference to the whole picture and what others were doing."
- Fresno County: "We used the time to compare notes, to borrow and steal shamelessly from each other. I found that other people were struggling and I wasn't alone, so it gave a sense of partnership."

Involve funders

Host quarterly conference calls

Los Angeles County: "It eliminates all the issues of 'I can't go,' and makes it easier. In the beginning, I thought, 'What is this? Something else to do?' but it kept me moving and gave me camaraderie–hearing other people and being exposed to what everyone else is struggling through."

Hold separate meetings for project managers

One project manager said, "Usually I'm forced to take someone with me, so I have to present in a way that's not going to be offensive to anyone and at times I have to shy away from the actual problems, which might be a person in the room. If I can meet with my peers at the same level, it's helpful."

Provide workshops and training

Examples are training on: how to discuss permanency with a youth and his or her caregiver, family search and engagement, grief and loss, and Internet searching.

Train several persons; develop multiple champions

Because of retention issues and movement within the agency, one must assure enough people are trained so that if someone leaves or is sick, the project doesn't run aground.

Involve partners in training

Provide case consultation

Monterey County: "Some youth have had four or five potential connections, visits, transitions and placements, rejections, adoption disruptions, disappointments, or mental breakdowns. This is devastating to the youth and the social workers, emotionally and physically draining. The social worker, and sometimes therapists, will back down on efforts, waiting for the youth to stabilize, which may never happen, concerned about what another failure might mean. One of our challenges has been to support the social worker through these setbacks and to be able to provide the social worker and the child's team with some kind of consultation, guidance, insight, expertise. . . "

Provide written materials

- Alameda County: "Written materials are only good if it's on one piece of paper that you can plaster on your wall or on your computer. Take a specific page that's relevant and blow it up–one page is better than a book."
- Contra Costa County: "Give supervisors a one-pager on Here's what you can do to manage up and manage down on youth permanency."

Provide videos and DVDs

Fresno County: "That's how we conveyed the message, with all the materials that were supplied. We used the videos over and over. People want to know where you're getting this youth permanency stuff from – is this a theory or did you actually research it. Who dreamed it up?"

Organize visits to other CPYP counties

Provide a website

Orange County: "It's helpful to see that it's not just an Orange County program manger production – it's 14 counties, a serious initiative with a website where you can see that other counties are doing parallel work."

County Strategies

Implementing the new initiative

- Use workers returning from leave for youth permanency.
- Implement youth permanency as part of general agency shift.
- Assign supervisors who understand the practice and philosophy of youth permanency and posses youth permanency skills.
- Rotate supervisors. In Monterey County, a court intake supervisor served for five months as a temporary supervisor of a permanency unit because the supervisor was on leave. That experience gave her a new perspective on permanency, which she now uses in her work with children and youth when they first enter the child welfare system.

Logistical strategies

- Change foster parent curriculum from MAPP (Model Approach to Partnerships in Parenting) to PRIDE (Parent Resources for Information, Development, and Education, available from the Child Welfare League of America).
- Use a database for tracking the results of family searches.
- Integrate family searches into TDMs (Stanislaus County).
- Assign support staff to schedule family meetings and complete data searches.
- Use family group meeting/TDM experts to facilitate the meetings.

Public Relations

- Provide regular updates for the county Board of Supervisors.
- Rename the county's long-term placement area, for instance, to "Transitions to Permanency" or "Life-Long Connections."
- Develop demonstrable milestones to show that progress is being made. Publicize these.
- Give public awards and recognition.
- Host a Heart Gallery.

Common Challenges

Staff resistance

- If staff accept youth permanency as a new practice, they may feel guilty for not having done it in the past.
- It requires extra work.
- Staff believe they are already doing good permanency work.
- Staff are afraid that talking about permanency with a youth might upset a placement.
- Staff don't understand how critical permanency is to the youth's present and future.
- Frequent objections: "The youth is stable," "The youth is too unstable," "The youth is gay or lesbian or transgender," "The youth has been disappointed too much," "It will take too much time," and "The youth isn't ready for permanency or adoption."
- Younger social workers have just completed emancipating from their own families and don't understand why a teenager would want to connect with a family.
- Social workers, supervisors, and administrators don't believe a child is adoptable. (See Rosemary Avery's research on how attitudes of social workers towards the adopability of a child affect whether social workers recruit an adoptive home for the child.)

Incomplete understanding of what youth permanency means

Several project managers said that, until they did the work, they didn't understand what permanency meant: "We needed to reexamine our mindset and see successes. We thought we *had* been doing it!" According to the project managers, it took about a year to integrate the concept themselves.

Lack of data clarity and definition

Counties generally don't have clear data on who has a permanent connection. One reason for this is they may not understand what permanency is. To get accurate data, the agency must (1) communicate a definition of permanency and (2) find out who has permanency according to that definition. The only way to know is to have the discussion with the parent/caregiver and youth. To do this, social workers must be comfortable and skilled in having those conversations. (See Mardith J. Louisell, *Six Steps to Find a Family: A Practice Guide to Family Search and Engagement*, National Resource Center for Family-Centered Practice and Permanency Planning at the Hunter College School of Social Work and CPYP, for details on having conversations about permanency.)

For instance, a youth may be with a relative who is a permanent connection and has made the commitment. Or a youth may be in such a placement, but the relative has no intention of maintaining that youth once the teenager turns 18.

It is important that the agency have a way to instantly know how many youth it has in care without permanency. This requires a data system that clearly identifies these youth, how long they've been in care and where they are. When Alameda County investigated its data, it found that 54% of 4 to 11 year olds in foster care, and 30% of 12 to 18 year olds came into care when they were 3 years old or under.

Data is important when addressing the disproportionality of African American youth and others in care. Unless one knows exactly who has a committed connection, one can't analyze disproportionality. Through achieving youth permanency, one may affect the disproportionality of African American males in care, but only if one knows how many do not have connections in the first place. (See Rosemary Avery's research.)

Data lessons learned

- Alameda County Program Manager: "Determine what you want to track for outcome measures and do it from the beginning."
- Present the data clearly, e.g.:
  - "Out of 120 youth, 20 were adopted, 10 found guardianship, 5 found committed relatives, and 5 found nothing."
  - "Out of 120 youth, x increased the number of supportive connections."
  - "Out of 120 youth, x moved to a lower level of care. Each youth who did saved the county x dollars."

Lack of a tracking tool for information found through family searches

Counties are not used to tracking information found about a youth's contacts. Staff change frequently and, even when they don't, the case has several social workers from start to finish due to agency structure. Counties must decide where the information from all sources (social workers, CASAs , group homes, therapists) will be kept so that it is accessible when needed.

Lack of Internet search engine

Some counties have had difficulty knowing how to access money for a fee-based Internet search engine. Others simply have no line item available for such a service. Some sites didn't have Internet access. To help get the service installed, it is useful to have or develop a connection with the agency contracts and fiscal departments and to keep them updated on the project and its success stories.

County insularity

Many counties have difficulty inviting partners to share the responsibility and workload. If a county can allow a partner to work on-site, the staff and supervisors begin to understand how much the partner can offer. However this is not a fast process and many misunderstandings occur. It is important that administrators of both agencies meet regularly (quarterly, at the least) to discuss problems and resolutions. It is important to have clear procedures and avenues where staff can go to raise an issue when a partnership is not working on a particular case.

Time

The extra time required for family search and engagement and grief and loss work with youth and family competes with court, federal, and state requirements. Caseload size is an issue. To help remove these barriers, an agency can use its partners. In some counties, CASAs do the family search and engagement, working closely with the social workers.

Relationship with the union

To make any changes in practice expectations, many agencies must work in concert with the union. Be prepared and start discussions at the beginning of the project.

Lack of authority over staff and supervisors

When a project manager for youth permanency in one county did not have authority over the supervisor and staff who were doing the work, the agency was not able to implement permanency except in isolated cases.

Changing personnel

Public social service agencies have difficulty with retention. This has an adverse effect on any practice that requires sustained and continuing effort and is dependent on work done before. This means that the practice must be integrated throughout the agency and that tracking mechanisms must be in place. It also means that training must be done regularly so that many staff are skilled in youth permanency, rather than only one or two.

No involvement of Independent Living staff, WRAP, TDM facilitators, and mental health

The staff who have an intense relationship with the youth must be involved so as to support permanency, discuss its implications for the youth, and help prepare the youth for possible outcomes. Many of these staff are key in introducing the concept of permanency to youth. For example, mental health is the gatekeeper for group home and RTC admission and, in many cases, grants permission for the youth to leave group care. The adoption and IL units have skills, knowledge, and resources, as well as influence over youth in the permanency area.

Implementing in only one unit or region

When an agency has implemented in only one area and not conveyed practice and successes to the rest of the agency, they have made an effective beginning. The challenge then is to spread the practice throughout the agency, rather than allowing the work to remain isolated.

Funding

When there is no additional funding, an agency must work out how to incorporate funding needs into existing line items. In most cases, this is possible, at least to some degree, if one is prepared to think creatively about youth permanency and its importance. For instance, EPSDT funds can be used for post-permanency supports.

Competing initiatives

With several initiatives starting and continuing at the same time, an agency must spend time on integrating youth permanency into these initiatives. Sometimes there are so many competing initiatives and staff have already participated in so many past initiatives that a new initiative is a challenge for staff morale.

Lack of support staff

Making appointments for youth permanency team meetings with collaterals and non-professionals is a challenge. It is useful if support staff can assist in this effort–social workers are already responsible for preparing each participant for the meeting. When they must do scheduling as well, it is a disincentive to do the work.

Perception of financial disincentives to permanency

Although staff are aware of money for IL services, they are often unaware of the financial incentives for permanency. Develop a booklet that explains clearly the advantages and disadvantages of permanency, guardianship, and non-legal permanency. See Alameda County, *A Guide to Permanency Options for Youth* and Fresno County, *Finding Permanency for Youth Resource Handbook.*

Overdependence on IL services

IL services have grown in the past 10 years and many counties have been successful at creating wonderful programs for emancipating youth, believing this is the best route for youth. It's hard for them to understand the importance of permanency. In general, counties with the best IL programs have had the most difficulty understanding the importance of permanency.

Undocumented families

Because undocumented families show up less frequently in databases, it is difficult to find them. It's also difficult to convince them to share information with public agencies.

Lack of skill in working with relatives to adopt or become a guardian

Often relatives have cultural or financial issues about changing the legal status of the youth. Sometimes they are concerned about their ability to care for the child permanently or to care for the child without the safety net of a social worker.

Post-permanency resources

Many agencies have not been able to tackle the needs of families once they provide permanency for or adopt a youth. Sometimes families need financial and concrete supports, such as medical care. Others need support for the process they will go through with a youth who has been severely harmed by neglectful or abusive parents and years in foster care.

Geographical distance between social worker and group home placement

Many agencies have no group homes within the county borders and therefore must send youth hundreds of miles away. This ensures that visits are sporadic and permanency work will lack continuity. This is a good reason for a county to develop MOUs on permanency with foster homes and congregate care facilities.

Lessons Learned

Need for champions

One person cannot achieve a change in agency culture. Champions must be cultivated at various levels among both agency staff and partners.

Social workers need help

Case mining, Internet searching, phone calls to relatives, and arranging meetings are all time-consuming. Support staff, facilitators, and partners are key in youth permanency work.

Talking with youth and family versus case mining and Internet searches

Project UPLIFT (State of Colorado) measured time and methods spent in establishing connections. Outcome measures showed that the most effective method was to spend time talking with the youth. The second most effective was to talk with family members. The least effective method was mining the files.

Training

Three areas are key: (1) how to talk to youth and relatives about permanency, (2) how to search for families and engage them in the process, and (3) how to prepare youth and families for permanency by working through the youth's grief and loss issues. Originally CPYP provided training on family search and engagement and later found the other two areas were also critical.

Importance of supervisors

In some counties, the onus for the work was put on staff and partners. CPYP found that supervisors must be involved from the beginning and that administrators must clarify their expectation that supervisors will be involved. It is supervisors, more than anyone, who have the authority to transform a project into normal agency practice.

Set clear expectations

All levels of the agency and partners must have defined expectations so all staff are clear on what is expected and when it is expected.

Public relations

A sustained campaign to bring permanency and its successes to the forefront helps staff, partners, and the public understand what the need is and that youth permanency is doable.

Leadership

The value of leadership being involved in any new initiatives in a visible way has been proven time and again.

Money

The project manager must advocate and negotiate for funds for Internet search engines, phone cards for relatives and youth, and transportation for relatives and youth to visit each other. If the project manager is not comfortable interfacing with other parts of the agency to do this, permanency is delayed.

Availability of Title IV-E funds for training

Negotiate with colleges and others to use these funds for training. Educate training partners on the need to include youth permanency in core and supervisory training.

OUTCOMES

Placement stability studies have demonstrated that care in relative placement is almost twice as stable as care with non-relatives. The cost (including relative and adoption subsidies) of searching for and finding families for youth has been shown to be a county cost saving compared to the cost of raising a youth in the child welfare system. See outcomes and cost breakdowns below for the State of Colorado, 2003, and Alameda County, Oakland, California, 2005.

Alameda County, Oakland, California, StepUp Project

Alameda County in Oakland, California, worked with 72 children in group homes during a six-month project that began in January 2005. At its close, the county documented the following data:

- **Youth**:
  - 19* youth left group home care and were placed with relatives or fictive kin
  - 6* had pending placements
  - 3* ICPC (Interstate Compact on the Placement of Children) applications were awaiting approval for out of state placement
  - 8* youth were connected to families with placement possible in the next quarter
  - 4 older youth were placed in transitional housing programs, with concerted efforts to have family involved in the decision and supporting the placement
  - 12 youth intentionally remained in congregate care for treatment plan completion; however, family were visiting as part of the treatment program and many will become permanent connections for the youth in the years ahead.
  - The remaining youth not represented above included those where more extensive family finding efforts continue or relationships with family were being built.
- **Homes found**: Homes found included 5 parents, 24 relatives, 5 fictive kin and 2 foster families. Ten of these placements were supported by a foster family agency.
- **How homes were found**: Only two placements were accomplished by utilizing foster family caregivers previously unknown to the child. All other successes were obtained by finding family and solidifying fictive kin relationships. Extensive efforts were made to create financial incentives through special rates for county foster parents and licensing staff were asked to discuss this prospect with all those potentially interested. Despite this, no placements were made with county foster parents.
- **Therapeutic needs**: An important outcome of this project was the reminder that no magic bullet eliminates the need for congregate care. Even the dramatic success of this project saw some youth, who, though happier with their connections with family, remained in need of treatment. In time, we assume these family connections will lead to other better outcomes, including decreased placement disruptions, progress in treatment, success in school placements, and measures taken after emancipation.

StepUp Cost Analysis

The following monthly rates were used to calculate total and average cost estimates for current and anticipated placements of the 36 youth noted above (see asterisks):

Group Home	$5,000
Foster Family Agency	$2,000
Relative/Fictive Kin	$1,000
Family Maintenance	$0

A minor in the StepUp program is about 14.5 years old and expected to remain in the system for four years before aging out. The average StepUp new family placement cost is about $1,167 per month. Over a four-year period, StepUp placement cost averages $57,000 whereas group home placement averages $243,000. Thus, a StepUp youth generates about $186,000 of savings over time, or about $46,500 per year. Total StepUp savings are estimated to be about $6,672,000 over time, with respective savings of $3.42 million and $3.25 million associated with current and anticipated placements.

The county assigned six staff at an initial financial outlay of approximately $570,000 (salary and overhead costs for six months). Taking the initial outlay into account, StepUp's success in achieving lower placement costs was captured in the first six months of the program, but the savings over time far exceeds the investment. Over the four-year time frame, the StepUp program is projected to achieve a net savings of $6,102,000. The county share of this savings–after investing $171,000 (the county share of the cost for staffing) – would be approximately $2,270,952.[1]

[1]Please note confounding variables: On the one hand, should a youth placed with a relative now or be adopted prior to the four years projected above, the foster care costs reduce even more over time. On the other hand, should a placement disrupt and a youth need to reenter congregate care, costs would increase.

California

In the CPYP permanency project, four pilot counties were successful in forming lifelong connections for 35 of the 46 youth that were tracked, a 76 percent success rate. As of 2007, 15 youth (22 percent) either finalized a "legal" connection or were in the process of adoption, guardianship, or reunification. The most common outcome (20 youth) were instances when, according to the caseworker, both the youth and the adult were committed to a lifelong connection, but the parties decided not to pursue a more formal, legal relationship.

In the ten subsequent counties that implemented the project, based on 106 youth tracked, the workers reported that the number of connections increased for 76 of the 106 youth. Looking at the entire group of 106, at the outset of the project the youth had an average of 3.2 connections and at the time of measurement, they had an average of 7.7 connections.

Colorado

The State of Colorado worked with a group of 56 multicultural youth with multiple barriers to permanency, including criminal charges, felony convictions, developmental and mental health barriers, and failed adoptions. Over a nine month period in 2003, 122 connections were made for project youth; eight youth found no connections, including two youth who did not wish any. Results as of the end of the project follow:

High Level Connection Results:

- 2 youth reunified with family
- 2 youth had an adoption in progress
- 7 youth had families who intended to adopt and had signed a contract
- 3 youth have families who intend to adopt with no contract

Cost of Project

$80,000 (remainder of Adoption Opportunities Grant)

Spent on four part-time contracted permanency social workers

Cost Analysis

Level of Care of youth at time of pilot project intake:

- 4 youth in residential treatment center at $3,900 per month
- 4 youth in foster home or group home at $1,423 per month
- 6 youth in county foster home at $1,022 per month

Projected savings:

- For 4 youth placed permanently, 2 of whom require adoption subsidies: $507,600
- Projected savings for all 14 youth achieving high level connections, assuming that those individuals who stated a willingness to adopt will do so and a successful placement will be made: $1,776,000

Orange County, California

Each youth had an average of 0.58 family connections at intake.

Each youth had an average of 6.8 established family connections six months later.

92%	Percentage of youth for which possible family connections were identified during the project
70%	Percentage of youth for which new family connections were achieved during the project
88%	Percentage of new family connections that have remained since the project ended
63%	Percentage of youth showing a positive difference in the youth's functioning on the Brief Impairment Scale (BIS) with more family connections
63%	Percentage of youth that have transitioned (or are being considered for a transition) to a lower level of care or to family as a result of the project

Example of one youth on BIS scale

At Intake:

- History of stable group home placement
- Limited social skills
- Problem with stealing and property destruction
- **No family** involvement

At January 2007:

- Remains at group home placement
- Now participates in sports
- No stealing or property destruction
- Several visits with family in Virginia
- Plan to **place with family** in Virginia

RESEARCH RELATED TO YOUTH PERMANENCY

Mark Courtney, Chapin Hall, University of Chicago, has been conducting two studies of youth who leave the foster care system due to reaching the age of majority. The first of these, in Illinois, Iowa, and Wisconsin, follows 732 youth who have "aged out" of foster care, following them through their 21st birthday. The second study, a federally-funded experimental evaluation, examines the effectiveness of programs intended to prepare foster youth for adulthood.

Contact: Chapin Hall website, http://www.about.chapin-hall.org/research/research.lasso

Barbara Needell, University of California, Berkeley, found the following data on children in care in California in 2002:

- The majority were at least 6 years old, but younger than 6 when they first entered care. Of those age 11 and older, 40 percent had been in care more than five years.
- The older the child, the less likely he or she is to be adopted.
- The rate of adoption for African American children was considerably lower than the rate for White or Hispanic children.
- Half of placed children were eventually reunified with their families, including those who entered at age 11 or older. One third who enter at 16 or 17 will reunify.

Contact: Barbara Needell, bneedell@uclink4.berkeley.edu

Rosemary Avery, Cornell University, examined New York State data and noted the following in two articles, "Perceptions and practice: Agency efforts for the hardest-to-place children," and "Identifying obstacles to adoption in the New York State's out-of-home care system."[1]

- Mean time to adoption is 5.95 years
- 20% of cases take longer than 11 years to achieve permanency
- After eight years, the probability of adoptive placement is close to zero
- Older age of youth at entry is related to: higher number of placements, reduced probability of adoption, and increased probability of aging out the system
- Females are more likely to be placed than males
- Black infants were significantly more likely to be adopted
- Black teenagers were significantly less likely to be adopted
- Overall, white children are significantly more likely to be adopted
- Sibling groups listed together are significantly more likely to be adopted

Instability while in care:

- 66% had more than one placement
- 40% had more than seven placements
- 32% had three to five different caseworkers
- 31% had more than six caseworkers
- 60% of the children had adoptive parents interested in them at some point in time
- 70% of current caseworkers had not used any of the seven identified recruitment techniques in the last year they had supervised the case

Avery's research showed that the attitudes of caseworkers as to whether the youth was ultimately adoptable influenced outcomes. Lessons from research on best practice showed that general recruitment didn't work – individualized adoption and recruitment plans must be done for foster children.

Contact: Rosemary Avery, rja7@cornell.edu

[1] Rosemary J. Avery, "Perceptions and practice: Agency efforts for the hardest-to-place children," *Children and Youth Services Review* 22, no. 6 (2000): 399-420, and Rosemary J. Avery, "Identifying obstacles to adoption in the New York State's out-of-home care system," *Child Welfare* LXXVII, no. 5 (1999): 653-671.

PARTNERSHIP TIPS FOR YOUTH PERMANENCY

Create expectations for permanent, not temporary, homes

Alameda County made a concerted effort to move youth out of congregate care to family settings. The county met several times with group home providers to discuss permanency efforts and to outline expectations for how group homes will work with Alameda to meet these goals. As a policy stance, Alameda put a hold on providing support letters for opening new group homes, the only exception being if a provider can meet a specialized unmet need, such as serving minors engaged in prostitution. Partially in response to these permanency efforts, there is a decreased need for lower level group home placements and a number of group homes have closed in Alameda County in the past few years.

Create a positive atmosphere

"The key to successful partnering is for the county to provide an atmosphere where the group home agencies feel safe," (Alameda County program manager). Alameda County created an atmosphere in which county social workers asked group home staff what the county could do to help them support the youth. What services did the group home need?

Plan with partners

To begin a partnership with the California Department of Social Services, three nearby counties and another nonprofit, Sierra Adoption Services, invited all parties to a training by a youth permanency expert. After the training, Sierra invited a subgroup from that training to plan a project. At that meeting, participants envisioned what they wanted youth permanency to look like five years from the meeting and what it would take to get there. That vision became a project jointly developed for a federal grant.

Develop MOUs

Not all MOUs are detailed. The MOU serving the collaboration between Family Builders by Adoption and Alameda County's Dumisha Jamaa Project is broad and thereby provides an opportunity for ongoing discussion and clarification.

Track data

Data helps get management on board. Alameda County's StepUp Program tracked all connections and provided periodic progress reports to senior management. They also tracked costs, savings, and projected net savings and showed that projected long-term savings far outweighed short-term costs.

Define roles

The Dumisha Jamaa Project (Family Builders by Adoption and Alameda County) wrote down the roles of each agency's social workers.

Co-locate

As Alameda County grew accustomed to Family Builders by Adoption, space became available for co-location. As the county became more comfortable, it gave Family Builders access to reading the Child Welfare Services/Case Management System (CWS/CMS) database. To help build the relationship, Family Builders supports county staff in any way they can, for example, by providing transportation.

Provide joint training

Provide clear directives

From the start of a private/county partnership between Pierce County, Washington State, and Catholic Community Services of Western Washington (CCSWW), a message was sent to all stakeholders: "Our current approach with youth in crisis is not as effective as we need it to be, so we are trying something new. The new team from CCSWW and the family will have the responsibility and authority over intervention decisions and will involve others through family team meetings."

Included in the message to stakeholders was information pertaining to what could be expected during an intervention, as well as intended outcomes. Roles for various professional participants were initially defined and then refined as the approach evolved. The Dept. of Child and Family Services Regional Administrator directed staff to make the full case record available for CCSWW staff within 24 hours of the referral or the next business day.

RESOURCES

Agencies and Resource Persons

AdoptUsKids, www.adoptkids.org, a collaboration supported through a cooperative agreement between The Children's Bureau, Administration for Children & Families, the U.S. Department of Health & Human Services, and the Adoption Exchange Association. Contact information: Adoption Exchange Association, 8015 Corporate Drive, Suite C, Baltimore, MD 21236, tel 888.200.4005, email: info@adoptuskids.org

California CASA Association, 660 13th St., Suite 300, Oakland, CA 94612, tel 510.663.8400, fax 510.663.8441, www.californiacasa.org

California Kids Connection, www.cakidsconnection.com, an online, searchable database listing children in California who are available for adoption. California Kids Connection is coordinated by Family Builders by Adoption, Inc., which is under contract to the California Department of Social Services to provide this service. Placenet.net, LLC is the webmaster of several major adoption sites, and offers web design and maintenance for agencies across the country. Contract information: Placenet.net, LLC, tel 510.272.0204, fax 510.272.0277; Family Builders by Adoption, 401 Grand Avenue, Suite 400, Oakland, California 94610; email KidsConnection@familybuilders.org

Five Acres, The Boys' and Girls' Aid Society of Los Angeles County, 760 West Mountain View Street, Altadena, CA 91001, tel 626.798.6793, fax 626.797.7722, www.fiveacres.org; Bob Ketch, Executive Director

Cheryl Jacobson, Consultant, California Permanency for Youth Project, 663 13th St., Suite 300, Oakland, CA 94612, e-mail: jcheryljoy@aol.com

Printed Resources

Rosemary J. Avery, "Identifying obstacles to adoption in the New York State's out-of-home care system," *Child Welfare* LXXVII, no. 5 (1999), 653-671

Rosemary Avery, "Perceptions and practice: Agency efforts for the hardest-to-place children," *Children and Youth Services Review* 22, no. 6 (2000): 399-420

Child Welfare League of America, *Parent Resources for Information, Development, and Education* (PRIDE), curriculum, a model for developing and supporting foster families and adoptive families, see www.cwla.org/programs/trieschman/pride.htm for details and purchase information

Darla L. Henry, "The 3-5-7 model: preparing children for permanency," *Children and Youth Services Review* 27 (2005): 197-212

Gerald P. Mallon, *ToolBox No. 3, Facilitating Permanency for Youth*, Washington, DC: CWLA Press, 2004

Ruth McRoy, "The Color of Child Welfare Policy," in *The Color of Social Policy*, ed. King E. Davis and Tricia B. Bently, Alexandria, VA: Council on Social Work Education, 2004, 37-64

State of Colorado, Project UPLIFT Report: United States Department of Health and Human Services, Adoption Opportunity Grant #90-CO-0096/01, or e-mail Custer Enterprises, custer@wmv-co.us

Web-Based Resources

Alameda County

A Guide to Permanency Options for Youth, 2005, available from CPYP at www.cpyp.org/Files/AlamedaGuide.pdf

"Group Home StepUp Project: Moving Up and Out of Congregate Care, Final Report," available from CPYP at www.cpyp.org/Files/StepUpProjectFinalReport.doc

"Placement Protocol on County Staff Fostering and Adopting Alameda County Dependent Children," available from CPYP at www.cpyp.org/alameda_files/AlamedaConflictPolicy.pdf

Bay Area Academy

Bob Lewis and Sue Badeau, adapted by Bay Area Academy, *Preparing Youth for Permanent Family Connections: Preparing Everyone for Permanent Family Connections*, curriculum, 2005, available from CPYP at www.cpyp.org/Files/YouthPermCurriculum2.pdf

Casey Family Services

Casey Family Services Center for Effective Child Welfare Practice, *A Call to Action: an Integrated Approach to Youth Permanence and Preparation for Adulthood*, 2005, available from CPYP at www.cpyp.org/Files/CalltoActionFinal.pdf (printed version also available from CPYP)

Casey Family Services, "Fact Sheet Two: Why Family Permanence is Critical for Older Children and Youth in Foster Care," 2006 National Convening on Youth Permanence, www.youthpermanence.org/_pdf/news/why_permanence.pdf

Casey Family Programs

Madelyn Freundlich and Lois Wright, *Post-Permanency Services*, 2003, www.casey.org/Resources/Publications/PostPermanency.htm

California Permanency for Youth Project

"Agency Self-Assessment Tool on Youth Permanency," www.cpyp.org/materials.html

"CPYP Permanency Scale," www.cpyp.org/materials.html

"Current Relationships/Past Connections of Affection," tracking form developed by CPYP counties, www.cpyp.org/cnty_forms.html

"Declaration of Commitment to Permanent Lifelong Connections for Foster Youth," 2006, www.cpyp.org/Files/PermanenceDeclaration04-10-06.pdf

"Definition of Permanency," www.cpyp.org/permanency_def.html

"Intake Form" (CPYP county data collection form), www.cpyp.org/materials.html

"Intensive Relative Search Contact Information," tracking form developed by CPYP counties, www.cpyp.org/cnty_forms.html

Cheryl Jacobson, *Emancipated Youth Connections Project Report*, forthcoming spring 2008 on www.cpyp.org

List of free and fee-based Internet search engines, available from cpypmail@sbcglobal.net

Mardith J. Louisell, *Model Programs for Youth Permanency*, 2004, www.cpyp.org/Files/ModelPrograms.pdf (printed version also available)

Mardith J. Louisell, *Six Steps to Find a Family: A Practice Guide to Family Search and Engagement*, National Resource Center for Family-Centered Practice and Permanency Planning at the Hunter College School of Social Work, 2007, forthcoming at www.hunter.cuny.edu/socwork/nrcfcpp and www.cpyp.org/booklets.html

Mardith J. Louisell, *Recommendations for Effective Partnerships on Youth Permanency between Adoption and Foster Family Agencies and Child Welfare*, 2006, www.cpyp.org/Files/WSJAdoption.pdf (printed version also available)

Mardith J. Louisell, *Recommendations for Effective Partnerships on Youth Permanency between Group Homes and Child Welfare*, 2006, www.cpyp.org/Files/WSJGrpHomes.pdf (printed version also available)

Mardith J. Louisell, *Recommendations for Effective Partnerships on Youth Permanency between the Juvenile Courts and Child Welfare*, 2006, www.cpyp.org/Files/WSJCourts.pdf (printed version also available)

"Progress Report" (CPYP county data collection form), www.cpyp.org/materials.html

Reina Sanchez, *Youth Perspectives on Permanency*, 2004, www.cpyp.org/Files/YouthPerspectives.pdf (printed version also available)

"Youth Permanency Consult Sheet," http://www.cpyp.org/materials.html

Chapin Hall Center for Children at the University of Chicago

Mark E. Courtney, Amy Dworsky, Sherri Terao, Noel Bost, Gretchen Ruth Cusick, Thomas Keller, Judy Havlicek, *Midwest Evaluation of the Adult Functioning of Former Foster Youth*, 2005, http://www.chapinhall.org/article_abstract.aspx?ar=1355

Family Builders by Adoption

Family Builders by Adoption is working on the Dumisha Project, a five-year federal research project. The agency is tracking demographic data on the youth, as well as service data. A sample of their Dumisha Project database (MS Access) is available from CPYP at www.cpyp.org/data_models.html

Fresno County

Finding Permanency for Youth Resource Handbook, available from CPYP at www.cpyp.org/Files/FresnoYouthPermanencyHandbook.pdf

"Future Steps to Permanency," available from CPYP at www.cpyp.org/fresno.html

Kern County

"KeYPOINT Implementation Schedule," Gantt chart, available from CPYP at www.cpyp.org/cnty_2nd_year_plans.html

Los Angeles County

Los Angeles County, "County of Los Angeles Quality and Productivity Commission 21st Annual Productivity and Quality Awards Program, DCFS Metro North Permanency Unit;" this report shows cost savings achieved by a youth permanency initiative in Los Angeles County. Available from CPYP at www.cpyp.org/la.html

Los Angeles County Department of Children and Family Services – SPA IV/Metro North Office, "Metro North Permanency Project Plan," May 2007, available from CPYP at www.cpyp.org/ cnty_2nd_year_plans.html

Orange County

Héctor R. Bird, "Brief Impairment Scale (BIS)," available from CPYP at www.cpyp.org/orange_files/BIS-Scale.doc

Race Matters Consortium

Robert Hill, "Disproportionality of Minorities in Child Welfare: Synthesis of Research Findings," http://www.racemattersconsortium.org/docs/whopaper4.pdf, 2004

Sacramento County

Sacramento County, "Sacramento County Family Permanence for Youth Project Plan," February 2006, available from CPYP at www.cpyp.org/ http://www.cpyp.org/sacramento.html

Sacramento County, "Sacramento County Project Plan for Year 2," May 2007, available form CPYP at www.cpyp.org/sacramento_files/Sacramento-2nd YrPlan-5-18-07.pdf

San Luis Obispo County

San Luis Obispo County, "California Permanency for Youth Project Plan," April 2007, available from CPYP at www.cpyp.org/slo_files/SLO-2ndYrPlanFinal.pdf

Stanislaus County

Stanislaus County, "Survey on Adolescent Permanency," this instrument can be used as a pre- and post-permanency training tool. Available from CPYP at www.cpyp.org/cnty_forms.html

Sample Youth Connections database (Microsoft Access), used for tracking information, available from CPYP at www.cpyp.org/data_models.html

DVDs

California Permanency for Youth Project, *Telling It Like It Is: Foster Youth and Their Struggle for Permanency*, 2004, available from www.cpyp.org/digitalstories.html

Dave Thomas Foundation for Adoption, *Finding Forever Families*, available from www.davethomasfoundation.org

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