



2020-2021 Annual Report California Child Welfare Council

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Letter from the Chair



Mark Ghaly, Secretary of the Health and Human Services Agency

Dear Friends of the Child Welfare Council,

We are pleased to submit the 2020-2021 Annual Report of the California Child Welfare Council (Council) pursuant to Welfare and Institutions Code Section 16540. Over the course of 2020-2021, the Council built on the work begun in prior years to improve services to children and families in the child welfare system, and those at risk of entering the system.

This report provides an overview of the Council's work during 2020-2021. The Council, in partnership with its Committees and Task Forces, adopted principles for enhanced data sharing; developed a framework for prevention practice; drafted recommendations for priority employment for foster youth and former foster youth; and issued a report on a pilot to prioritize access to behavioral health services and supports. The reports and recommendations related to these topics, in addition to others addressed by the Council, may be found on the Council's website at <http://www.chhs.ca.gov/>.

We are grateful to the members of the Council, and the wide- range of organizations and individuals who have so generously given their time and talent to further the work of the Council. We are grateful for their commitment and leadership as we work toward improving the child welfare system in California.

Sincerely,

Mark Ghaly

Council Purpose and Structure

The California Child Welfare Council was established by the Child Welfare Leadership and Accountability Act of 2006 (Chapter 384, Statutes of 2006). The Council serves as an advisory body that is charged with developing recommendations to improve outcomes for children and youth in the child welfare system through increased collaboration and coordination among the programs, services, and processes administered by the multiple agencies and courts that serve children and youth in California's child welfare system.

Our Vision

Every California child lives in a safe, stable, permanent home, nurtured by healthy families with the capacity to meet the child's needs and support the child's well-being, and is prepared for the transition into adulthood and becoming a contributing member of society.

Our Mission

We provide an effective, collaborative forum for the three branches of government, foster youth and their families, and key stakeholders to advocate for effective and promising strategies and adequate resources to improve outcomes for children, youth and families involved with or at risk of involvement with the child welfare system.

Guiding Principles

- 1) Collaboration is essential among the three branches of government, foster youth and their families and key stakeholders to achieving improved outcomes for children, youth and families.
- 2) Accountability for child, youth and family outcomes is shared between federal, state, and local governments and among multiple agencies, the courts, community partners, families, and youth.
- 3) Engaging families and youth in the development, implementation and evaluation of services, programs, and policies is essential to achieving improved system outcomes.
- 4) Sharing data and information across governmental jurisdictions, agencies and the courts promotes more informed program planning, development and evaluation. At the local level, it enables the linkage of children, youth and families to appropriate community services and supports.
- 5) Best and promising practices should be replicated statewide where appropriate and possible.
- 6) Maximizing and using multiple funding sources flexibly across systems provides resources needed to meet the comprehensive and complex needs of children, youth and their families.
- 7) Recommendations will be culturally appropriate, strength-based, evidence-informed, and outcomes-driven to ensure that all children, youth and their families are treated fairly and equally without regard to age, race, gender, sexual orientation, and ethnicity.

The Council meets quarterly under the leadership of its Chair: Mark Ghaly, Secretary of the California Health and Human Services Agency. Additionally, the Council is comprised of members representing a broad spectrum of agencies, advocates, and consumers involved in the child welfare system. The Council's structure encourages participation by Council members and other stakeholders, both during these quarterly meetings and in between through the standing committees and task forces.

California's Child Welfare System: Overview

California counties are the primary governmental bodies that directly interact with children and families to address child abuse and neglect. The county social services department through or the probation department (the Agency), through its child welfare division, administers and provides child welfare and foster care services under Sections 300 et seq., 727 et seq. (in probation placed child welfare cases) and 16500 of the California Welfare and Institutions Code. The county child welfare division investigates reports of child abuse and provides case management and other services to help families stay together whenever possible. Each county maintains a hotline to receive reports of suspected child abuse and/or neglect. Once a call or report is received, a child welfare social worker will evaluate the referral and find that either more information is needed or that it does not rise to the level of abuse and will be evaluated out. In some counties, the family will be connected to differential response/alternative response services because the information does not raise to the level of a safety threat, but the family could benefit from additional services and build protective factors that could prevent entry into the system at a later time. If more information is needed, a child welfare social worker will go out to the child's home and assess for risk and safety factors.

When possible, the agency worker engages with the family to find the least intrusive approach to keep the child safe while supporting the parents in ameliorating the issues that brought them to the attention of the agency. This could be connecting them to support services instead of court intervention. If the agency's assessment of the problem indicates that formal court intervention is needed, the child may either be removed from or remain in the home while court oversight is requested through the juvenile court system. Services are provided using a family-centered, trauma informed, strengths-based approach.

When children are removed from the care of their parents by the juvenile court, the agency provides family reunification services based on individualized case plans that will support safe return of children to their parents, with specified exceptions in situations involving severe abuse of children under age three. The agency is responsible for reporting on the progress of the family to the court six and 12 months after a child's removal from the parents, with the court authorizing reunification when the parents have demonstrated the ability to safely care for their children. After 12 months, the court may hold a permanency planning hearing to determine an alternate permanent family for the child through adoption or guardianship. Children who remain in foster care after they turn 18 years of age, may be eligible for extended foster care services up to age 21 as well as transitional housing and other services up to age 24, and retain eligibility for Medi-Cal until they reach age 26.

The California Child Welfare Council has been monitoring and providing guidance on statewide implementation of changes in child welfare policy; specifically, Continuum of Care Reform, Family First Prevention Services Act, and Systems of Care (Assembly Bill 2083).

- Continuum of Care Reform was implemented in California through Assembly Bill 403 (Stone; Stats. 2015, Ch. 773) and Senate Bill 794 (Comm. on Hum. Svcs; Stats. 2015, Ch. 425). The goal of continuum of care reform is to reduce the use of congregate care settings and increase permanent placement with relatives. To achieve that goal, legal requirements mandate the continuous assessment of relatives, the agency's responsibility to arrange and participate in Child and Family team meetings, and the elimination of long-term foster care as a permanent plan for children.

- The Family First Prevention Services Act (FFPSA) (Public Law 115-123) was passed in February 2018. This act changes how title IV-E dollars are spent. FFPSA places restrictions on using federal funds on congregate care placements. FFPSA also allows title IV-E dollars to be used in prevention services in limited circumstances specifically evidence-based practices for mental health, substance use treatment, and in-home parenting support. The federal government has given states until October 2021 to implement the changes. California is in the process of working with stakeholders to develop an implementation plan for California.
- Assembly Bill 2083 was enacted by the legislature in 2018. This legislation requires state agencies work together to implement a memorandum of understanding and provide technical assistance to counties on providing trauma informed services for children and families in the foster care system.

Standing Committees

Behavioral Health

Identifies and develops best practice recommendations to guide policy and inform statewide efforts to more effectively address the behavioral health needs of children involved in the child welfare system.

Child Development and Successful Youth Transitions Committee

Identifies and advocates for services to ensure that the health, mental health, educational and social development needs of foster children can be met, and that older foster youth can be prepared for successful transition to adulthood.

Data Linkage and Information Sharing Committee

Identifies and shares ways that data can be accessed across major child-serving agencies to provide essential information to those involved in the care of foster children and to measure foster children's outcomes from the services they receive.

Permanency Committee

Identifies and recommends strategies to remove barriers that keep children in foster care so that they do not grow up in temporary homes but rather have permanent, nurturing families.

Prevention and Early Intervention Committee

Identifies and promotes services and support systems that prevent the need for families to enter the child welfare system.

Steering Committee

The Steering Committee provides Council staff with ongoing assessment of the work of the Council and its Committees and Task Forces, gives guidance to Council staff regarding Council agendas prior to approval by Council Co-Chairs, and advises Council staff regarding Council membership to promote active participation.

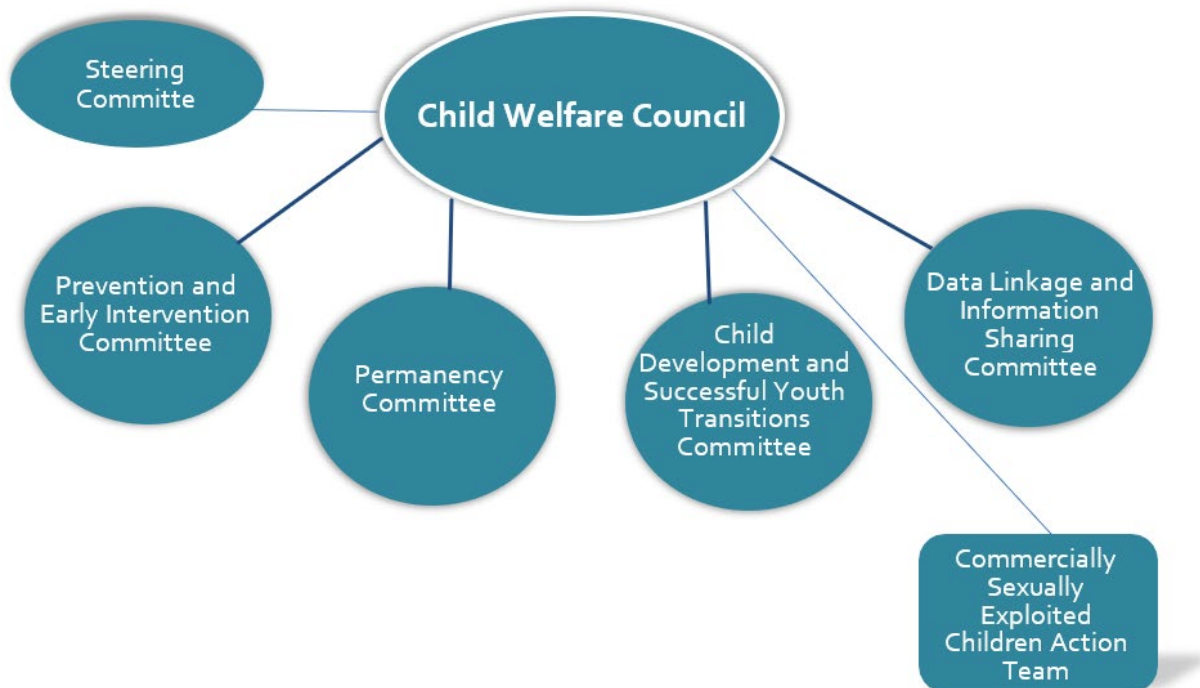
Council Partners

- Former foster youth
- Parents
- Service providers
- Educators
- Advocates
- Researchers
- Leaders from all three branches of government at the state and local level
- Other stakeholders

Task Force

Commercially Sexually Exploited Children (CSEC) Action Team

Is engaged with system partners in developing an infrastructure for serving children who are victims or at-risk of becoming victims of commercial sexual exploitation, focusing on children in foster care.



2020-21 Committee & Task Force Reports

Behavioral Health

The Behavioral Health Committee was formed out of a clear consensus of the Child Welfare Council that despite statewide efforts to improve access to behavioral health services for child welfare-involved youth and those at imminent risk of involvement, there are still significant challenges preventing youth and families from receiving comprehensive and integrated behavioral health services and supports. Committee members include state agency leadership, representatives from the office of the Governor and the state legislature, children's behavioral health providers, county representatives, caregivers and advocates.

The Committee is tasked with developing best practice recommendations to guide policy and inform statewide efforts to more effectively address the behavioral health needs of children involved in the child welfare system.

2019-2021 Activities and Accomplishments

The Behavioral Health Committee had robust meeting participation across the quarterly convenings from 2019-present. The committee operates via consensus-based decision making and drafting, and produced comprehensive policy recommendations, adopted by the full Council in December 2020, surrounding the following themes:

- 1) improving access to behavioral health services;
- 2) defining and establishing the continuum / universal array of behavioral health services and supportive placements that should be provided for child welfare-/probation-involved youth and youth at risk of involvement;
- 3) implementing outcomes-based accountability and performance improvement measures to track outcomes across the continuum; and
- 4) developing strategies to support effective implementation of the behavioral health continuum/universal array.

The 17-page Policy Recommendations brief was distributed to key stakeholders and policy makers, and Committee co-chairs Ken Berrick and Karen Larsen presented the document to multiple advisory groups including California Behavioral Health Directors Association, County Welfare Directors Association, Foster Care Model of Care Workgroup (FCMCWG), and Statewide Health Task Force.

The Committee then drafted a follow-up white paper exploring theme two. The document, "The Universal Array of Services and Supports for Child Welfare Impacted Youth", seeks to outline every needed behavioral health service and support for child welfare involved youth and provide guidance on available funding to furnish these supports.

The Universal Array document will be presented for approval to the full Council at the December 2021 meeting. Many of the ideas from this document, especially related to the highest-acuity services in this articulated continuum, were reflected in the Governor's 2021 Budget (Children's Crisis Continuum Pilot; AB 153 (Approved by the Governor July 16, 2021, Chap. 86))

Finally, the Committee has hosted two meetings to seek out input from small and rural county leaders to address the challenges inherent to building robust service arrays for children and families in small and rural counties.

Concerns or Challenges

Meeting participation during the COVID emergency (and resulting switch to Zoom) has ebbed and flowed; overwhelmingly, the greatest challenge is engaging attendees consistently in the consensus-based work of the committee.

2021-2022 Goals and Objectives

For the 2021-2022 year, the Behavioral Health Committee will focus on the following goals:

- Providing strategic guidance on the Governor's Children and Youth Behavioral Health Initiative and driving the use of funds to meet the needs of child welfare involved youth.
- Driving a child welfare frame around the many state-level initiatives moving to impact the behavioral health of children and adolescents, with a focus on addressing gaps in the continuum of services; including but not limited to California Advancing Innovative Medi-Cal and AB 2083.
- Utilizing the expertise of committee members, provide guidance to the field to ensure timely access to services for children at risk of, and involved in child welfare.

Child Development and Successful Youth Transitions

The Child Development and Successful Youth Transitions Committee (CDSYT) is a committee comprised of state staff, advocates and local stakeholders who are committed to identifying gaps or challenges to child development or successful transition to adulthood. They identify issues, develop intervention strategies and ensure statewide implementation of child welfare programming for foster and transitioning youth.

Due to a transition in leadership within the council and committee, CDSYT does not have any substantive updates within this year's report.

Below is a list of accomplishments from previous reports.

Summary of Accomplishments:

- Developing a training curriculum, per the requirements of Senate Bill 238 (Chapter 534, Statutes of 2015), regarding foster children and psychotropic medications, trauma, substance use disorder, and mental health treatments. This curriculum is now available as a 1-day in person training or a 90- minute eLearning. The materials included in the training can be viewed at the CalSWEC Toolkit, here: <http://calswec.berkeley.edu/toolkits>.
- Developing a methodology for selecting group homes requiring additional review, as per Senate Bill 484 (Chapter 540, Statutes of 2015), in partnership with The California Department of Social Service's (CDSS) Child Welfare Data Analysis Bureau.
- Identifying that required additional review, based on the previously mentioned new methodology. The Community Care Licensing Division at the CDSS completed inspections between November 2016 and January 2017. Statewide inspections included staff interviews, child interviews, and file reviews for 206 group homes identified to be within the 75th percentile relative to the home's Rate Classification Level for their utilization of psychotropic medication usage.
- Supporting implementation of the CDSS and the Department of Health Care Services data match, which combines foster youth data with paid claims on psychotropic medications. Counties have the option to opt into one of two different data sharing agreements so that they may receive non-aggregate data about their youth prescribed medications. At this time, 47 counties have signed on to one of the agreements.

Data Linkages and Information Sharing

The Data Linkages and Information Sharing (DLIS) Committee supports the integration of information across child-serving agencies (e.g., child welfare, health care services, education, vital statistics, substance use, etc.) to inform policy and practice at the individual and systems levels. Linked data provide staff, caregivers, and courts with crucial means to ensure continuity of care for the child welfare population. The Committee also aims to assist in development of tools that measure outcomes across systems at the state and local levels. This information is critical for continuous quality improvements in child welfare services that adapt to the changing needs of children, families and caregivers.

2019-2021 Activities and Accomplishments

In 2019-2021 DLIS continued collaborative efforts to increase data linkage across major child serving agencies.

DLIS Committee members developed and partnered with members of CDSS and the Prevention and Early Intervention Committee in presenting to the main Council on key child welfare outcome trends during the COVID pandemic.

The DLIS Committee chair developed and delivered a presentation on racial disparities in child welfare outcomes to the Prevention and Early Intervention Committee.

The DLIS Committee continued its collaboration with state agencies, the courts, counties, philanthropy, and academia to promote data linkages that further knowledge about California's children and families.

Committee members contributed toward ongoing reporting of outcome measurement across systems and within child welfare at the state and local levels (e.g., use of psychotropic medications, youth parents in foster care), as this supports efforts to improve the quality of and access to services for children, youth, and families at risk of or involved with the child welfare system.

DLIS members worked with the CSEC Action Team, CDSS, and other stakeholders to develop recommendations for data collection, and outcome tracking of the commercially sexually exploited population of children in the child welfare system; this information helped inform the proposal to evaluate CSEC legislation that will be carried out by California Child Welfare Indicators Project (CCWIP), the Urban Institute, and CDSS.

The committee continued to provide updates on national, state and local data sharing initiatives as well as significant news related to the development and planned deployment of the new statewide child welfare administrative data collection system; and acted as a forum for successful data linkages and information sharing efforts to be presented, discussed, and disseminated.

DLIS members participated in the National Data Leaders Group conversations and meetings convened by Casey Family Programs to discuss vital issues related to linkages and application of administrative data (e.g., federal registers and final rules on Child Family Services Review (CFSR) outcomes and Comprehensive Child Welfare Information Systems, data tracking and reporting under the Family First Prevention Services Act).

Key topics that were discussed by the Committee during the past year included:

- Work by the Office of Systems Integration (OSI) on the California Automated Response and Engagement System (CWS-CARES) Resource Family Approval (RFA) Greenfield Module; DLIS priorities for fiscal year 2021-22 that would align with the drafted Child Welfare Council Priorities DLIS Committee members developed and partnered with members of CDSS and the Prevention and Early Intervention Committee in presenting to the main Council on key child welfare outcome trends during the COVID pandemic.
- The DLIS Committee chair developed and delivered a presentation on racial disparities in child welfare outcomes to the Prevention and Early Intervention Committee.
- The DLIS Committee continued its collaboration with state agencies, the courts, counties, philanthropy, and academia to promote data linkages that further knowledge about California's children and families.
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Key topics that were discussed by the Committee during the past year included:

- Work by the Office of Systems Integration on the California Automated Response and Engagement System Resource Family Approval Greenfield Module; DLIS priorities for fiscal year 2021-22 that would align with the drafted Child Welfare Council Priorities (FFPSA and CCR as well as integrating with and supporting the work of other subcommittees were proposed); and, two presentations and discussion with Professor Mark Courtney of the University of Chicago on data collected and outcomes tracked for the CalYOUTH study of children in extended foster care.

Concerns or Challenges

The successful implementation of programmatic efforts resulting from emerging policy such as the Family First Prevention Services Act, and ongoing legislation such as the Continuum of Care Reform (Assembly Bill 403) require strong data support.

To help meet this challenge, the DLIS Committee will assist efforts by public child welfare staff at the state, counties, and in the provider community as thought partners in linking and applying data to monitor implementation, assess practice fidelity, and evaluate performance outcomes. Routinely tracking populations who are ‘candidates at risk of foster care entry,’ monitoring their access to needed services, as well as their success in achieving key child welfare outcomes (such as reduced recurrence of maltreatment or entry to care) are examples of these important areas.

Members of the DLIS committee will also seek to assist improved data collection, reporting, analysis and interpretation of key topics and target populations (e.g., CSEC youth, cross-system outcomes for Transition Aged Youth (TAY) and other foster children), as well as to provide input to the Child Welfare Services – California Automated Response and Engagement System in its ongoing development and ultimate deployment.

2021-2022 Goals and Objectives

For the 2021-2022 year, the Data Linkage and Information Sharing Committee will focus on the following goals:

- The DLIS Committee plans to work with a coalition of county and state child welfare staff to map out existing data resources, as well as additional data collection needs and routine tracking of information related to substance use in child welfare services. This ‘substance use in child welfare data workgroup’ aims to develop a set of action steps to be endorsed by the full Council.
- Committee members will collaborate with members of the Prevention and Early Intervention Committee on drafting recommendations for action steps to be endorsed by the full Council to support successful implementation, monitoring, and evaluation of programmatic activities under FFPSA.
- The committee will also support other Council subcommittees regarding questions and needs they may have for data that would inform and enhance their respective goals and objectives by providing consultation, data analysis, and technical assistance.
- The committee will continue to network with experts from multiple service systems, learn from their efforts, and provide a forum to discuss opportunities, challenges, and successful examples of data linkage projects, data integration, and information sharing.

Permanency

The Permanency Committee identifies and removes barriers and recommends best practices to achieve speedy permanency for all children in foster care. Robert Friend, Director of the National Institute for Permanent Family Connectedness with Seneca Family of Agencies, and Carrol Schroeder, Executive Director at California Alliance, co-chair the Permanency Committee.

2019-2021 Activities and Accomplishments

Len Edwards, retired judge testified to support development of legislation sponsored by Representative Cortese to require due diligence findings for family finding efforts: SB 384 Juveniles: relative placement: family finding. SB 384 is a 2- year bill which remains unopposed.

Len Edwards has authored 3 publications on family finding and relative placement during this period:

- 1) Reasonable Efforts: A Judicial Perspective, 2nd Edition.
- 2) "Judicial Issues in Child Maltreatment" with Christopher Wu. A chapter in the Kempe Center publication.
- 3) "The Urgency of Placing Children with Relatives," The Guardian, Vol. 42., No. 04, Winter 2020.

Len Edwards has provided multiple presentations on reasonable efforts to juvenile judges and attorneys in Los Angeles.

The Permanency Committee has met with Orange and Los Angeles Counties on their protocols for upfront family finding and the successes that they have attained.

For specialized permanency services Pub 511 was created and can be reached with link [PUB 511: Finding a Competent Therapist \(ca.gov\)](#) (8/2019).

Brought presentations to full Child Welfare Council on Permanency Bench Cards, family finding in Los Angeles, Specialized Permanency Services. Gail Johnson Vaughan trained Court Appointed Special Advocates (CASA) executive directors on permanency bench cards.

The Judicial Council of California awarded two grants to the National Institute for Permanent Family Connectedness (NIPFC) to provide statewide permanency training.

Project 1 requires 6 regionalized presentations over a 3-year period to support counties to create aligned plans that address legal and relational permanency; Project 2 requires 10 county-based presentations on family finding from 7/21-6/24.

Provided input and supported the CDSS regarding improving participation rates among families to all meetings and decision making about their kin.

Permanency Committee has provided Dr. Mark Courtney with two opportunities to provide deeper dives on permanency finding through the CalYouth Study.

Concerns or Challenges

Gaining statewide traction among leaders of child welfare, partner agencies and the courts to consistently address the lack of meeting reasonable efforts standards and legal mandates associated with family finding to create system alignment in each county.

The continued inability and lack of commitment statewide to meet the intent of the child and family team practice, which is a collaborative family centered practice in which family members should be equal to or outnumber professionals.

The lack of in person meetings and safety issues re: COVID have limited participation in the committee.

Insufficient support for parents during and after the guardianship process, along with the lack of consistent and permanency competent services.

Lack of permanency continuing for non-minor dependents.

Capacity for substance use treatment to keep families together.

The pandemic has hit social service agencies hard. They have lost staff and the ability to have personal contact with clients. That has made family finding and relative placement more difficult in some counties.

2021-2022 Goals and Objectives

For the 2021-2022 year, Permanency Committee will further build on their committee goals through the following objectives:

- Legislation passage of SB 384.
- Continue to work with CDSS to improve participation rates for families so that Child and Family Team process is truly a collaborative family centered practice.
- Collect and disperse materials about permanency options for families.
- Advocate and support achievement of relational and legal permanency for Non-minor dependents.
- Support for statewide training funded by Judicial Council. Projects 1& 2.
- Work with Lisa Withey to identify how to better support California families during and after adoption finalization to reduce disruptions and dissolutions.

Prevention and Early Intervention (PEI)

The Prevention and Early Intervention Committee identifies and promotes services and support systems that prevent the need for families to enter the child welfare system. The Prevention and Early Intervention Committee is led by Dr. Kathryn Icenhower, Chief Executive Officer and co-founder of the SHIELDS for Families and David Swanson Hollinger, Senior Program Manager at the County of Ventura Human Services Agency.

The primary objective of the statewide PEI Committee is to advocate for needed resources, policies and practices to achieve the promotion of child, parent and family well-being and the prevention of child abuse and neglect. The [PEI Charter](#) further details the committee's Objectives and Beliefs.

2019-2021 Activities and Accomplishments

- Co-presented to Child Welfare Council (CWC) with the Office of Child Abuse Prevention on the results of the Prevention Summit.
- Presented to CWC on impact of COVID on child welfare.
- Presented to CWC on Economics of Child Abuse (with PEI committee members, Katie Albright and Lucy Roberts).
- Dana Blackwell/CWC member, representing Casey Family Program, re-joined the PEI committee and provided some resources for staff support.
- Developed a comprehensive set of [recommendations](#) for FFPSA planning which were adopted by Child Welfare Council.
- Developed a committee recruitment plan to be more reflective of key stakeholder organizations (e.g., County Probation Officers of California (CPOC), First Five, California Alliance of Children and Family Services, Safe & Sound), and those with lived expertise (Roger DeLeon and Ebony Chambers), with corresponding documents for “onboarding” new members.
- Invited presentations to inform PEI Committee strategic objectives, including Daniel Webster/CCWIP, Debi Silverman/First 5, and Katie Albright/Safe & Sound.
- Compiled [California and national prevention initiatives](#) for easy reference by the committee and broader audiences.
- Provided comments and feedback to initial draft FFPSA plan for CDSS.
- Provided comments and feedback to Trailer Bill Language re: FFPSA for CDSS.
- Developed framework for providing recommendations on FFPSA Draft Plan for PEI Committee working session.
- Followed up on full committee session with three subcommittees (with subject matter experts) who met in between CWC sessions on Data & Evaluation, Financing and Planning & Oversight to develop recommendations for FFPSA Plan implementation.

Concerns or Challenges

- The committee would like to see additional attention and action relating to diversity, equity and inclusion, as well as engagement of youth with lived expertise, across the work of the CWC.
- Ensure the work of the PEI committee is additive, collaborative and not duplicative of other committees and consistent with the overall objectives and strategies of CWS.

2021-2022 Goals and Objectives

For the 2021-2022 year, the Prevention and Early Intervention Committee will focus on the following goals:

- Continue to advocate for diversity, equity and inclusion to inform and guide prevention and early intervention policies and programs in child welfare.
- Following upon the extensive work from PEI Committee to inform FFPSA planning and implementation, we will continue to work with CDSS on the implementation of FFPSA as part of the development of a continuum of prevention and early intervention services for child welfare with an overall vision of child and family well-being.

California Commercial Sexual Exploitation of Children (CSEC) Action Team

CSEC Action Team

The CSEC Action Team addresses the issue of commercial sexual exploitation among children and youth interacting with the child welfare system by identifying and elevating promising prevention and intervention practices, providing guidance to county agencies and community partners to encourage implementation of promising practices, conducting evaluation to ensure policies improve outcomes for children, and collaborating with and centering the perspectives and leadership of survivors.

The CSEC Action Team is a multidisciplinary body, comprised of subject matter experts from across the state, including survivors, dedicated to researching and identifying promising prevention and intervention practices, providing guidance to county agencies and community partners, and conducting evaluation to ensure policies improve outcomes for children.

2021 Activities and Accomplishments

The CSEC Action Team continues to meet on a quarterly basis. Participants include representatives from multidisciplinary agencies (e.g. child welfare, mental health, probation, etc.), community-based organizations, and lived experience experts. The topics covered during the most recent meetings are included below.

June 2020 - This meeting focused on the services offered by the My Life My Choice prevention curriculum and mentorship program. The meeting also featured a presentation by WestCoast Children's Clinic regarding their research into how combinations of indicators cluster together in the lives of children and youth and thereby create greater vulnerability to exploitation.

September 2020 - The September meeting focused on community organizations and law enforcement partnerships to address commercial sexual exploitation. The meeting featured an update from the California Peace Officers Standards and Training Commission (POST) on their CSEC Human Trafficking Training. The meeting also featured a panel presentation from Sawan Vaden (Program Director at Community Against Sexual Harm and former Advisory Board member), Detective Jason Collins (Sacramento Police Department & FBI Child Exploitation/Human Trafficking Task Force), Dr. Stephany Powell (Director of Law Enforcement Training and Survivors Services National Center on Sexual Exploitation) and Sergeant John Sydow (North Division Critical Incident Negotiations Team (CINT) Sacramento County Sheriff's Office). The panel spoke about the importance of forming law enforcement-community partnerships and some of the critical components of forming and maintaining such partnerships.

December 2020 - This meeting focused on the services and supports available and needed during the Covid-19 pandemic, as well as a discussion about organizational and programmatic changes made to address the ongoing pandemic.

March 2021 - This meeting focused on the adultification of Black girls and what providers need to know when working with Black girls experiencing exploitation. A panel of experts in the field including Rebecca Burney (Rights4Girls), Holly Joshi (Senior Research Consultant at Bright Research Group), Djulia Sekariyongo Koita (sophomore at UC Berkeley majoring in Social Welfare with a minor in Public Policy) and Temica Wofford (Short Term Residential Therapeutic Program (STRTP) Administrator at ZOE International) spoke about how adultification manifests and impacts

Black girls in and out of systems and why it is critical to understand how individuals and system contribute to the issue.

June 2021 - As a follow up and expansion of the dialogue had during the March meeting, which was focused on the adultification of Black girls, the June meeting featured the Cultural Broker program in Sacramento and Fresno counties as a promising program that helps address this issue. The presenters: Tiffany Glass (Program Planner, Sacramento County Department of Child, Family and Adult Services Human Services) Margaret Jackson (LCSW, Executive Director Cultural Broker Inc) Ladonna Lee (Cultural Broker Supervisor, Better Life Children's Services, Sacramento County) provided powerful and pragmatic insight into how the cultural broker program helps to provide a bridge created between systems and families of color. We also introduced the third cohort of the California Advisory Board.

September 2021 - This meeting focused on the experience and needs of youth who are expecting and parenting and are also experiencing exploitation. The California Children's Law Center provided a presentation on the legal requirements for expecting and parenting youth (EPY) in California. We hosted a panel of lived experience experts who talked about their experience, what services were helpful and what providers and systems can do better to serve this population of young people. In addition, we held breakout sessions to discuss what participants learned and the barriers they've experienced locally when serving this population of youth. The meeting concluded with a presentation from the Nurses Family Partnership. As an effort to promote action, we provided a list of action items for meeting attendees to take to back to their respective counties. We will provide space to collectively share the action individuals and organizations have taken since receiving the trainings related to EPY as a means to further promote promising practices, approaches, and innovations.

December 2021 - The December meeting will focus on the experience of boys experiencing Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE). Our goal is to provide a fundamental understanding of boys and young men's experiences to bring general awareness and build a foundational understanding of the impact of CSE on boys and young men. We plan on hosting a presentation on the research and data that is available and hearing from a panel of lived experience experts, services providers, and researchers.

In addition, the CSEC Action Team continues to provide technical assistance and consultation to the Department of Social Services in a variety of different ways including:

- Assisting in the development of the Harm Reduction series, with the Law Enforcement, Caregiver, Social Worker and Probation Officer guidance which have all been released. CDSS, in partnership with the CSEC Action Team, is working on developing the Court Harm Reduction guidance.
- Assisted in the development of the critical and innovative cell phone policy guidance.
- Developed recommendations on different data needs that exist to collect accurate and timely data about the youth who experience exploitation and are system involved and at risk for experiencing CSE.

Last, the third cohort of the CSEC Action Team's Advisory Board was selected and is serving a two-year term (2021-2022).

In 2016, the CSEC Action Team launched the first Advisory Board, comprised of adult lived experience experts – those with personal experience with CSE as children/youth. It was the first state-funded Board of its kind in the nation.

Now in its third two-year cohort, these lived experience experts hail from varying racial, ethnic, socioeconomic, and LGBTQI2S+ identities. The Advisory Board members hold extensive professional knowledge and are committed to serving as advocates.

Members of the Advisory Board are tasked with providing leadership and consultation to the Action Team, governmental agencies, community-based organizations, and other stakeholders regarding how to improve state and local policy for children and youth who have been impacted by CSE. Some of the consultation Board members have participated in include:

- 1) The newly released Caregiver and CSEC 102 trainings.
- 2) The initial stages of the Court Harm Reduction guidance.
- 3) The experience of youth who are Black and LGBTQA+ experiencing CSE.
- 4) Participated in the CSEC Action Team meeting as a lived experience expert on the topic of expecting and parenting and experiencing exploitation.
- 5) The development of new programing for youth experiencing exploitation in Maine.
- 6) Developing a webinar series and other projects with the CDSS Foster Caregiver Policy and Support Unit.
- 7) Taking part in the strategic planning meeting with the CSEC Action Team strategic planning committee.

Concerns or Challenges

Ongoing participation from law enforcement partners continues to be a challenge.

Another challenge is promoting sustained action from the dynamic educational opportunities provided by the Action Team at each of its quarterly meetings.

There continues to be high turnover of county CSEC specific service providers and other key stakeholders who attend the CSEC Action Team meetings. We are actively brainstorming ways to provide onboarding materials to new members of the action team so they can be active and engaged participants as we continue to move the work forward.

2021-2022 Goals and Objectives

For the 2021-2022 year, the California Commercial Sexual Exploitation of Children Action Team will focus on the following goals:

- Expanding learning and actions in support of Native American youth and boys who experience commercial sexual exploitation.
- Reexamine and improve upon how youth who are away from court-ordered placements are served and supported.

- Assist to improve information dissemination to promote practice changes.
- Direct outreach to community and grass roots organizations to be included in the CSEC Action Team.
- Grounding the CSEC Action Team meetings in the needs and voices of youth who are currently in the system.

Council Membership

Mark Ghaly, Chair	Secretary, Health and Human Services Agency
Michelle Baass.....	Director, California Department of Health Care Services
Nancy Bargmann.....	Director, California Department of Developmental Services
Dana Blackwell	Senior Director, Strategic Consulting, Casey Family Programs
Stacy Boulware Eurie.....	Judge, Superior Court of California, Sacramento County
Sheila Boxley.....	President and CEO, Prevent Child Abuse California
Isaac Bryan	Assembly member, District 54
Sanja Bugay	Director, County of Fresno Department of Social Services
Ebony Chambers	Parent Advocate
Roger DeLeon.....	Parent Advocate
Leonard Edwards (Ret).....	Retired Judge, Superior Court of California, Santa Clara County
Janay Eustace.....	Deputy Director, California Youth Connection; Former Foster Youth
Larry Fluharty.....	Ombudsperson, Foster Care
Bob Friend	Director, National Institute for Permanent Family Connectedness
Leticia Galyean.....	Chief Executive Officer, Seneca Family of Agencies
Patrick Gardner	Director, Young Minds Advocacy Project
Leslie Heimov.....	Executive Director, Children’s Law Center of California
Martin Hoshino.....	Administrative Director, Judicial Council of California
Melissa Hurtado	Member, California State Senate
Kathryn Icenhower	Executive Director, SHEILDS for Families, Inc.
Kimberly Johnson.....	Director, California Department of Social Services
Karen Larsen	Director, Yolo County Health and Human Services

Sharon Lawrence Chief Executive Office, California Court Appointed Special Advocates

Katherine Lucero Executive Director, California Health and Human Services Agency

Brian Maienschein..... Assembly Member, District 77

Michael Olenick President and CEO, Child Care Resource Center

Amy Price..... Program Executive, Zellerbach Family Foundation

Dan Prince Chief Probation Officer, Imperial County

Cheryl Rave Crave Productions; Foster-Adoptive Parent

Trent Rhorer..... Executive Director, Human Services Agency, San Francisco

Susan Rubio Member, California State Senate

Cherie Schroeder Yolo County Foster and Kinship Care Education Program; Foster Parent

Shawna Schwarz Juvenile Court Judge, Superior Court of California, Santa Clara County

Cathy Senderling..... Executive Director, County Welfare Directors' Association

Chris Stoner-Mertz..... Executive Director, California Alliance of Child and Family Services

Daniel Webster Principal Investigator, California Child Welfare Indicators Project, UC Berkeley

Jevon Wilkes Executive Director, California Coalition for Youth