



## PERMANENCY

### A STATEWIDE APPROACH TO SUSTAINABILITY

During early 2008, based on Advisory Committee recommendations, the California Child Welfare Co-Investment Partnership identified youth permanency as a priority focus area. The Permanency Sustainability Workgroup was formed in June 2008 and 40 stakeholders combined their systems and practice expertise to develop a plan for sustaining youth permanency training in California. Over a six month period of time the group developed permanency values, assumptions, definitions, and practice principles (see Attachment #1); seven priority training areas for curriculum development (see Attachment #2); six fiscal strategies to support sustainability (see Attachment #3) and a comprehensive approach to sustainability that recognizes the need to support program development, organizational change, and coordinated training and transfer of learning opportunities statewide. Fundamental to this statewide approach are the values and beliefs listed below:

- Emotional/relational permanency is achievable for all children and youth in foster care – it should be at the heart of our statewide permanency framework and practices;
- Trained staff and partners should provide coordinated permanency efforts to all children and youth at the beginning of and throughout the life of a case;
- Courts, child welfare agencies and their partners should operate from a common understanding, training and practice framework;
- An integrated statewide training and transfer of learning system will support cross-discipline sharing of knowledge, skills development, resources and opportunities across public, non-profits and private agencies serving foster youth;
- A statewide permanency framework must address concurrent planning practice, which is a key issue in California’s recent CFSR review and Program Improvement Plan (PIP);
- Cross-system child welfare leadership and performance accountability, as described in AB 2216, is essential to improving outcomes for current and former foster youth;
- Related California initiatives and system improvement efforts should align with and champion this approach, sharing their resources and expertise generously in support of *statewide* spread and sustainability of effective permanency practice;
- The permanency recommendations and strategies of California’s PIP, Child Welfare Council, and Blue Ribbon Commission on foster care should be integrated and leveraged to most effectively support improvements in the following federal outcomes:

- Timeliness and Permanency of Reunification
- Timeliness of Adoptions
- Permanency for Children in Foster Care for Extended Time Periods
- Placement Stability

Collectively, the California Child Welfare Co-Investment Partnership and its Committees do not have the resources and/or authority to move the approach outlined below forward. However each individual and/or member organization can find ways to invest their influence, positioning and partnerships in guiding and encouraging the organizations and forums they are involved with to align with, support and/or implement this approach. It is only through working together collaboratively that our permanency goals and outcomes for foster youth can be achieved; through these efforts California leaders can role model how to leverage resources and work collectively to sustain valued practices and priceless investments in the safety, permanency and well-being of our state’s foster children and youth.

#### I. ESSENTIAL STRATEGIES FOR PERMANENCY SUSTAINABILITY

##### A. STATEWIDE LEADERSHIP

Goal: Coordinated cross-system state leadership and accountability supports local implementation of a framework of core cross-system permanency training and practices.

- ◆ Establish statewide cross-system permanency leadership – link to Child Welfare Council;
- ◆ Promote a statewide permanency framework (values, definitions and cross-system practice competencies aligned with PIP, BRC Recommendations, CWC, etc.)
- ◆ Identify plan for statewide implementation – link to local level implementing BRC’s;
- ◆ Provide leadership for start-up and coordinated implementation/accountability across systems;
- ◆ Increase visibility statewide - establish permanency as an essential practice and priority across systems;
- ◆ Provide information regarding the potential for cost avoidance and positive impact on budget - promote state fiscal strategies;

##### B. STATE FISCAL STRATEGIES

Goal: County/state cost allocation and claiming maximize IVE funding to support implementation of state permanency framework; savings/expense reductions are reinvested in improving permanency outcomes.

- ◆ A model re-investment protocol is developed based on state/county (and possibly federal) sharing of a certain percentage of savings for reinvestment in permanency priorities;
- ◆ California’s Cost Allocation Plan (CAP) and IVB Plan are amended to maximize state and local claiming of Federal IVE funds (see Attachment #3).

C. PERMANENCY FRAMEWORK

Goal: A statewide framework for permanency is developed and guides statewide cross-system training, technical assistance and implementation by local jurisdictions.

- ◆ Stakeholders are engaged in development of statewide framework (values, definitions, cross-system practice competencies);
- ◆ Framework informs development of training curricula, comprehensive technical assistance strategy, and transfer of learning tools;
- ◆ Statewide framework is moved forward by leadership once resources, capacity and supports are in place - framework guides local implementation;
- ◆ Leadership ensures on-going evaluation of the framework by stakeholders with modifications made as needed.

D. TRAINING AND TRANSFER OF LEARNING

Goal: Curricula and tools developed for statewide permanency framework; all system partners are being co-trained on relevant curricula; technical assistance including related organizational training and transfer of learning supports are routinely available and utilized.

- ◆ Consortium of public/private permanency practice experts/trainers is developed;
- ◆ Cross-system training curricula, technical assistance supports, and transfer of learning tools developed for statewide framework;
- ◆ Plan, resources and capacity developed for:
  - ◇ Local or regional co-training of courts, public/private providers, probation departments, and other permanency partners;
  - ◇ Statewide provision of technical assistance including organizational training and transfer of learning supports by trainers with practice expertise;
- ◆ Training, technical assistance and transfer of learning provided locally or regionally through coordinated efforts of CalSWEC, RTA's, AOC and public/private consortium of practice experts/trainers.

SUMMARY

It is recommended that the California Child Welfare Co-Investment Partnership support the goals, direction and strategies of this approach, which emphasizes coordinated cross-system leadership and accountability, fiscal strategies, and moving beyond traditional training to ensure technical assistance and transfer of learning supports are available to local jurisdictions statewide. This approach is designed to bring public, private and cross-system partners together around a consistent permanency framework, and ensure statewide resources and capacity are developed to support local cross-system implementation.



## ATTACHMENT #1

### Permanency Sustainability Workgroup Values and Assumptions

All children, youth and adults, regardless of age, race, culture, ethnicity, sexual orientation, or gender identity, deserve permanency. Permanency provides love, meaning, purpose and continuity in our lives, and supports our continuous development, from childhood through adulthood. Planning for and supporting a youth's permanency begins with the first child welfare or probation contact. It includes strengthening and supporting families to care for children and youth in their own homes. Permanency planning efforts intensify at the point at which children and youth enter the foster care system. Through collaboration and teamwork by youth, agency, caregivers, mental health providers, placement homes, and others:

- (1) Emotional/relational permanency is achievable for all children and youth in care, regardless of individual, family or legal circumstances.
- (2) Legal permanency in the form of reunification, adoption or guardianship is achievable for most children and youth in care.

### Permanency Definitions

Emotional/Relational Permanency is defined as:

A safe and secure reciprocal relationship that provides love and unconditional commitment over one's lifetime (similar to a parent or extended family member), and is in the context of a broad network of developmentally-sensitive connections able to support physical, emotional, social, cognitive and spiritual development and well-being. Emotional/relational permanency supports the entire person, including heart, mind, body and soul, and ensures opportunities to:

- ◆ Maintain contact with birth and extended family, including siblings;
- ◆ Understand personal/family history and traditions;
- ◆ Maintain connection to racial and ethnic heritage, culture, religion and language.

Legal permanency options include:

Reunification: Return to the biological or legal parent and termination of dependency court jurisdiction.

Adoption: Lifelong belonging and support in the context of a legal relationship that imparts the legal rights and social status of full family membership;

Guardianship with a specific goal of dismissal of dependency or adoption: A legally designated adult/child relationship that imparts parent-like rights and responsibilities to a legal guardian until the child or youth reaches the age of majority;

Permanent Placement with a Fit and Willing Relative with a specific goal of adoption, guardianship, transition to independent living with identification of a caring adult to serve as a lifelong connection (PPFWR);

Another Planned Permanency Living Arrangement which is ordered as placement with a specific goal of return home, adoption, legal guardianship, placement with a relative, less restrictive foster setting, or independent living with identification of a caring adult to serve as a lifelong connection (APPLA).

*Note: Of these legal permanency options, reunification and adoption orders are intended to last a lifetime. Guardianship, PPFWR and APPLA orders are based on court jurisdiction that can be terminated at any time and generally end no later than the youth's 18<sup>th</sup> birthday or date of emancipation or court dismissal. Emotionally permanent relationships under any legal option can last a lifetime.*

### **Permanency Practice Principles**

- ◇ Children, youth and families have input into permanency decisions that affect their lives;
- ◇ Permanency outcomes are individualized and span a wide range of relationships in the child's, youth's and family's life;
- ◇ Permanency is pursued at the outset of case planning and continually reassessed and supported throughout the case;
- ◇ Sustain the child's or youth's family connections regardless of whether the youth will live with them, unless there is a compelling reason not to;
- ◇ Youth are actively and continuously engaged as participants and leaders in their own concurrent/permanency planning;
- ◇ Children and youth are supported to connect/reconnect to their racial and ethnic heritage, culture, religion and language;
- ◇ From the beginning of the case, children and youth are provided with developmentally appropriate opportunities, experiences and supports to address issues related to trauma, separation, loss, grief, and identity formation;
- ◇ From the beginning of the case, children, youth, caregivers, extended family and others partners are engaged in identifying, finding and supporting a wide network of family and significant connections for youth;
- ◇ The race, culture, ethnicity, sexual orientation, and gender identity of the child or youth, their family, caregivers and significant connections are respected in the pursuit, development and support of permanency;
- ◇ Case managers, caregivers, mental health clinicians, and others work together to provide the needed supports to achieve permanency;
- ◇ Ensure each child or youth has at least one central adult demonstrating lifelong commitment and playing a parent-like role for the child or youth;

- ◇ The differing needs of birth families, kinship families, resource families, and other permanency connections are recognized, understood, and effectively addressed;
- ◇ Mental Health, placement agencies, caregivers, and other partners are consistently included and encouraged to share leadership, responsibility, and accountability;
- ◇ Youth are consistently provided with information, support and opportunities regarding how to be “in relationship” with others, and how to be part of a family;
- ◇ Permanency supports and services are identified, available and accessible to families prior to, during and after permanency is achieved.



## ATTACHMENT #2

### Permanency Sustainability Workgroup Training Priorities

- FAMILY FINDING AND ENGAGEMENT [FIELD TRAINING NEEDED FOR ANYONE DOING THE WORK]
- SUPPORTING AND SUSTAINING FAMILY CONNECTIONS ENGAGEMENT [FIELD TRAINING NEEDED FOR ANYONE DOING THE WORK]
- UNDERSTANDING GRIEF AND LOSS RELATING TO FOSTER CARE [NOTE SECONDARY TRAUMA ISSUES HERE FOR CASE WORKERS, FAMILIES AND OTHERS]
- CONCURRENT PLANNING [VERY BROAD AND COMPLEX TRAINING AREA – NEEDS TO ADDRESS KNOWLEDGE DEVELOPMENT, LOGISTICS AND PROGRAM DEVELOPMENT ISSUES. TRAINING SHOULD ADDRESS THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN STABILITY AND PERMANENCE AND SHOULD LINK TO FAMILY FINDING. INCLUDE TRAINING ON DIFFERENCES FOR KIN/EXTENDED FAMILY. NOTE THE SECONDARY TRAUMA ISSUES HERE FOR CASE WORKERS, CAREGIVERS AND OTHERS]
- HOW TO TALK ABOUT PERMANENCY [BUILD AS A SKILL IN EARLY CONCURRENT PLANNING PROCESSES AND LATER PERMANENCY PROCESSES. PROMOTE SHIFT AWAY FROM “LONG TERM FOSTER CARE” TO PERMANENCY; SKILL DEVELOPMENT TO UTILIZE THIS CONVERSATION AS AN INTERVENTION WHEN NEEDED; TRAIN ON HOW KIN ARE ENGAGED DIFFERENTLY FROM FOSTER PARENTS; PROVIDE FIELD TRAINING DURING PERMANENCY MEETINGS AND EVERYDAY WORK WITH YOUTH]
- ENGAGEMENT WITH YOUTH IN PERMANENCY PROCESS [INCLUDE FIELD TRAINING, SUCH AS DURING PERMANENCY MEETINGS AND EVERYDAY WORK WITH YOUTH; DEVELOP TRANSFER OF LEARNING TOOLS SUCH AS WALLET CARDS FOR WORKERS TO KEEP WITH THEM]
- YOUTH TRAINING/TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE TO UNDERSTAND HEART/MIND AND CONNECTEDNESS, HOW TO BE AN ADVOCATE, HOW TO BE IN A FAMILY, CONFLICT RESOLUTION AND COMMUNICATION SKILLS



### ATTACHMENT #3

#### Permanency Sustainability Workgroup Fiscal Strategies

1. Initiate a workgroup involving CDSS, CWDA, and others to develop a model re-investment protocol based on state/county sharing of a certain percentage of savings for reinvestment in permanency priorities;
2. Amend California's Cost Allocation Plan (CAP) and IVB Plan to allow claiming of IVE at enhanced rate for salary/benefits of newly hired workers and for workers transferred to new programs based on "reduced caseload and increased supervision" for 6 months for newly hired workers and 3 months for workers transferred to new programs (Note: Maine currently has 3 month training period for New Hires; Idaho is negotiating a 6 month training period). Ensure initial training period includes training on statewide permanency framework and related curricula/transfer of learning.
3. Amend CAP and IVB Plan to allow for use of a blended foster care/adoption discount rate for Fost-Adopt Training (Utah CAP has this), and possibly also for recruitment and other fost-adopt activities.
4. Revise time study codes in CAP if they do not clearly include post-adopt case-management; informing counties through CFL, ACIN, CWDA, etc. that with appropriate wording in the adoption assistance agreement IVE admin may be claimed for post-adopt case management using the designated time study code.
5. Review time study codes in CAP and revising if necessary to allow county staff engaged in training of IVE allowable curriculum to claim staff's salary/fringe at enhanced IVE rate.
6. Review claiming related to purchase of service contracts and ensuring CAP, time study and claiming processes are in place for adoption contracts to be billed against the adoption penetration rate rather than the foster care penetration rate.