Unprecedented Federal Initiative to Reduce Long Term Foster Care

Federal Intent:

- Build the evidence base for innovative permanency interventions
- Improve permanency outcomes and enhance well-being for particular groups of children and youth experiencing the most serious barriers to permanency

PII: Permanency Innovations Initiative

- Presidential Initiative
- 6 Grantees Nationwide (2 in California!)
  - CDSS & 4 Counties - CAPP
  - LA Gay and Lesbian Center - RISE
- Desired Outcomes:
  - Reduce long-term foster care
  - Improve child wellbeing
The Need

- Over 60,000 children in CA foster care
- African American children in foster care at more than 4 times their rate in the child population
- American Indian children in foster care at nearly 3 times their rate in the child population
- Foster care outcomes are worse for African American and American Indian youth:
  - They remain in foster care longer
  - They are less likely to be reunified with their families

What’s the project doing?

Developing and testing a *Practice Model* for child welfare agencies and their partners to use in working with children, youth and families to improve outcomes and address disparities.

The Practice Model includes:
- Theoretical framework
- Values and principles
- Essential front-line practices
- Organizational and system capacity
CAPP Theoretical Framework

• Broad Social, Racial and Historical factors have impacted the lives of African American and American Indian families
• The history of racism and discrimination in our communities has impacted our institutions and contributed to disparities in outcomes
• Partnerships with supportive communities and tribes are essential to understand and meet the needs of their children and families

Child and Family Practice Model

Values & Principles

• Power of Family
• Healing
• Community & Collaboration
• Honesty, Transparency & Trust
• Safety
• Fairness & Equity
• Empowerment
• Accountability and Results

Child and Family Practice Model

Front Line Practice Approach

Includes 4 interdependent Front Line Practices:
  ◦ Exploration and Engagement
  ◦ Power of Family
  ◦ Circle of Support
  ◦ Healing Trauma
**Child and Family Practice Model**

**Front Line Practice Approach**

Includes 8 Core Elements that are essential in interactions with children and families:

- Inquiry
- Engagement
- Self-advocacy
- Advocacy
- Well-being Partnerships
- Recovery, Safety and Wellbeing
- Teaming
- Shared Commitment and Accountability

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**Child and Family Practice Model**

**Front Line Practice Approach**

Includes 23 Practice Behaviors:

Behaviorally specific actions for agency staff and partners to consistently and effectively use in their interactions with children and families.
The Practice Model
(Cliff Notes Version)

System Review and Analysis

Commitment to Local Improvement

System Reviews (Institutional Analyses):

- Conducted in partnership with local communities and Tribes
- Develop relationships first and forge common agreements about how to be together
- Identify system barriers to improved outcomes for children and families
- Result in local action plans to address the system barriers identified

Key findings have informed the development of the CAPP Child and Family Practice Model.

Our Children, Our Future
Partnership
Courts, Child Welfare, Communities and Tribes

Partnership
Relationships

- Commitment
- Accessibility, Reaching Out
- Open & Honest Conversations
- Acknowledgement
- Seeing Results
- Giving Validity to Barriers & Challenges

Partnership
Courts, Child Welfare, Communities and Tribes

How Did You Get Started?

- Find Space and Time to Come Together and Build Relationships
- Understand and Interpret Local Data Together
- Establish Shared Goals and Outcomes
- Explore System Barriers to Improved Outcomes for Local Children and Families
- Craft Solutions and Strategies Together
It takes time, patience, dedication and
determination to realize lasting benefits.

Partnership
Courts, Child Welfare, Communities and Tribes

How did you stay in the work together when things got tough?

• Deepen focus on partner relationships; slow down and reflect
together; recognize it may get worse before it gets better.
• Take time to acknowledge and work through historical issues of
anger and mistrust and consider how current system interactions
may be contributing.
• Recognize that problems are complex, the process is messy and you
don’t have all the answers – be humble, learn from others and craft
solutions together.
• Reaffirm the purpose of the partnership and what each partner can
and is doing to reach shared goals and outcomes.

Partnership
Courts, Child Welfare, Communities and Tribes

What are important lessons learned in
partnering with communities and Tribes and
incorporating their unique contributions in
active system change efforts to improve child
and family outcomes?
Partnership
Courts, Child Welfare, Communities and Tribes

Sunni’s Story

QUESTIONS?

CAPP Partnership Approach
Community and Tribal Partnerships are Central
• Listening sessions to learn about and begin to address historical trauma and mistrust of systems
• Respecting and incorporating the unique contributions of communities and Tribes
• Collaborative efforts to establish culturally relevant supports and services to meet the needs of children and families
In Summary

• Partner with families, communities and tribes
• Local review to identify system barriers
• Action planning to address system barriers
• Culturally relevant supports and services
• Implementation of a practice model that is culturally responsive and sensitive to trauma
• System alignment to support full and effective use of the practice by all partners

Lasting Change for Children and Families

“Coming together is a beginning. Keeping together is progress. Working together is success.”
- Henry Ford

California Partners for Permanency
Reducing Long-Term Foster Care

CAPP is a five-year federally funded project to reduce long-term foster care. To learn more, visit www.reducefostercarenow.org or contact Karen Gunderson, CAPP Project Director at the California Department of Social Services, (916) 651-7395 or karen.gunderson@dss.ca.gov.