

**SUBMITTAL TO THE BOARD OF SUPERVISORS  
COUNTY OF RIVERSIDE, STATE OF CALIFORNIA**

205



**FROM:** Department of Public Social Services

**SUBMITTAL DATE:**  
February 4, 2004

**SUBJECT:** Child Welfare Services Action Plan, Quarterly Progress Report

**RECOMMENDED MOTION:** Review and File the attached report.

**BACKGROUND:**

On July 16, 2001 Your Honorable Board heard a report by John George from the Child Welfare League of America (CWLA) regarding the status of Child Protective Services in Riverside County. The CWLA report listed ten Priority Strategies for improving the safety, permanence, and well being of children in our county. On September 11, 2001 the Board accepted the Action Plan for the implementation of the Priority Strategies submitted by the Department of Public Social Services and requested quarterly Progress Reports. Quarterly Progress Reports were submitted in January, May and August 2002 and January, May, and September 2003.

Attached please find the seventh quarterly progress report (completed February 2004) entitled: Child Welfare Services Action Plan Quarterly Progress Report.

*Dennis J. Boyle*  
Dennis J. Boyle, Director  
Department of Public Social Services

<b>FINANCIAL DATA</b>	Current F.Y. Total Cost:	\$ N/A	In Current Year Budget:	N/A
	Current F.Y. Net County Cost:	\$ N/A	Budget Adjustment:	N/A
	Annual Net County Cost:	\$ N/A	For Fiscal Year:	N/A
<b>SOURCE OF FUNDS:</b> N/A				Positions To Be Deleted Per A-30 <input type="checkbox"/>
				Requires 4/5 Vote <input type="checkbox"/>

**C.E.O. RECOMMENDATION:**

**APPROVE**

County Executive Office Signature

*Dan Marting*

Dept Recomm.:  Policy  
Per Exec. Ofc.:  Policy  
x Consent  Consent

Prev. Agn. Ref.: 10/7/03, 2.17

District: ALL

Agenda Number:

3.27

Departmental Concurrence

COUNTY OF RIVERSIDE  
3004 FEB 18 6N 15:50  
OFFICE  
EX-100

**CHILD WELFARE SERVICES ACTION PLAN  
QUARTERLY PROGRESS REPORT  
February 2004**

**(In Response to the Child Welfare League of America)**

**INTRODUCTION**

On September 11, 2001, the Department of Public social Services (DPSS) presented to the Board a preliminary action plan implementing the 10 Strategies recommended by the Child Welfare League of America (CWLA) in its presentation to the Board on July 16, 2001. This plan was accepted and the Board requested quarterly progress reports. DPSS presented its initial action plan in September 2001. Quarterly reports have been submitted in January, May, and September 2002, and in February, April, and October 2003. This document is the seventh report of our current progress toward meeting the goals identified by the CWLA.

The goals to be accomplished in Riverside County by implementing the 10 Priority Strategies recommended by CWLA are:

- Enhanced child safety
- Increase in placement permanency
- Enhanced child and family well being

**CURRENT STATUS**

Over the past two and a half years, Riverside County Children's Services Division continues to make great strides to improve its child welfare services system in order to meet the changing needs of the children and families in our community. We have implemented many of the specific recommendations made by the CWLA and developed modifications of others. Since the time of the last progress report we have continued to concentrate on accountability and practice issues ensuring safety, timely and stable permanency situations for our children who cannot be safely reunited with their original families, and work toward improved services to support child and family well being.

In keeping with the CWLA's priority strategies we have accomplished the following tasks since our October 2003 report:

**1. Developing and implementing an organizational and professional accountability system**

- Children's Services Division has responded to this strategy through continual improvement measures over the past two (2) years and has implemented improved accountability through the following actions:
  - Enforcing the use of Program Responsibility Checklists which help ensure that all levels of staff comply with state, federal, and local regulations and mandated requirements by requiring that checklists are completed and discussed at each monthly supervisory conference between social worker and supervisor; and supervisor and manager. Since the implementation of the Checklists, there has been an improvement in the consistency of service provision to families and children. For example, our quarterly compliance percentage increased in several service categories. Most notably, there has been an increased compliance with Face-to-Face Contacts with children and documentation of the Transitional Independent Living Plan for emancipating youth.

- Analyzing data, including outcome measurements, to improve practice. The Children's Services management team continues to review management reports together on a quarterly basis for the purpose of analyzing trends and sharing strategies. This has resulted in the implementation of several practice changes to improve outcomes for children and families. An example is the review of data that reflects the number of placement moves a child experiences in foster care. A recent practice change includes a social worker shall not remove a child from a relative or adoptive home without alerting upper management and conducting a staffing to ensure a consistent process is used to determine whether a placement move is necessary and in the best interest of the child.
- Implementing the California Child Welfare Outcomes and Accountability System mandated by AB 636 which passed the legislature and was signed into law 2001. This is being accomplished by
  - County Self-Assessment which is focused on our performance relative to the Federal Children and Family Services Review indicators and must include population-based consideration of how Riverside County resources contribute to the prevention of child maltreatment. Beginning in February 2004,
    - all levels of staff will participate in the review and analysis of outcomes data provided by the University of California Berkeley and the California Department of Social Services, and
    - a variety of local child advocates, DPSS partners and community stakeholders will be invited to participate in workgroups to review the results of the preliminary data analysis and provide input based on their expertise to add further insight and interpretation to the analysis of Riverside County data.
  - Preparing for our Peer Quality Case Review (PQCR) beginning in April 2004. Designated internal staff along with neighboring county peers will review randomly selected cases to identify strengths and areas needing improvement in the county child welfare services delivery system and social work practices. The PQCR, along with the Self-Assessment, will direct the development of the County System Improvement Plan which will be submitted for Board of Supervisors' approval prior to submission to the State by September 30, 2004.
  - A newly formed "Outcomes and Accountability" Unit has been developed in the Children's Services Division and will focus on analyzing data and evaluating practice on an on-going basis.

## **2. Improving the Emergency Response System**

- The Emergency Response (ER) program continues to be the first priority for program and practice improvements through advanced training. The mandatory advanced ER training referenced in the previous quarterly update will be delivered in February 2004 to all line staff in the Emergency Response, Central Intake and Court programs as well as to all new social workers as they are hired. The training will address many of the practices identified as needing improvement and/ or consistent application. Additionally, a new Social Worker Mentor program, targeting new social workers assigned to the ER program, is under development and is anticipated to be implemented in March 2004.
- The Multi-disciplinary Team (MDT) meetings at Riverside County Regional Medical Center (RCRMC) for the Child Abuse (CAN) Team were recently reinstated and are chaired by the forensic physician for the CAN Team. Plans are being developed to assign one ER supervisor per region to serve as the liaison for CPS to the MDT to ensure thorough review and follow-up of all

CPS cases which received CAN assessments. The liaison will coordinate with other MDT members that include: law enforcement, district attorney and hospital staff.

### **3. Improving and Enhancing the Out-of-Home Care System**

- The implementation of the Inland Empire Health Plan (IEHP) foster child program began July, 2003, and provides health care services to Riverside County foster children. We continue to make progress towards our goal of enrolling all out-of-home placements in this program. Over 2000 children (about 50% of our out-of-home placements) are now enrolled. IEHP provides case management services in collaboration with the Public Health Nurses out-stationed in DPSS offices to ensure chronic and special medical needs of foster children are quickly identified and treated.
- The Out-of Home Investigation (OHI) process has recently been streamlined resulting in a decrease in the time a foster home is on Hold (no placements) due to unsubstantiated allegations of abuse or neglect. The data base tracks homes on Hold status and is updated daily resulting in a more accurate account of foster homes that are/ are not available for placement.
- A consistent practice regarding the availability of childcare has been established for children 12 ½ years or younger per State guidelines and is now in effect. Additionally, respite care is now available for caregivers, with exception to FFA caregivers, for up to eight hours each month.
- The Department is currently utilizing components of the Parent Resources for Information, Development and Education (PRIDE) model in caregiver training and is currently exploring full implementation of the new PRIDE model which is consistent with the Family to Family program principles outlined later in this report. PRIDE is a comprehensive program that encompasses a shift in thinking that embraces foster parents as partners in the process of serving at-risk children and families, resulting in better prepared caregivers.
- The Department has recruited social workers and will soon be training them to create a new unit to assume centralized responsibility for most of the activities required for "approving" relative and non-related extended family member homes for placement. These activities are currently being performed by every placing social worker. The centralized unit will result in a more efficient and consistent approach to conducting relative approvals.

### **4. Implementing a Family Centered approach based on utilizing the strengths and participation of the families served**

- The Children's Services management team has decided to implement the Family to Family Initiative in Riverside County and is receiving technical assistance for implementation from the Annie E. Casey Foundation. The Family to Family initiative will provide our county with an opportunity to reconceptualize, redesign and reconstruct our foster care system to achieve a more family centered, neighborhood-based approach to family foster care. Family to Family has been identified as a model in the State's recently released Child Welfare Redesign Plan.

The Family to Family initiative consists of four core strategies to achieve evidenced-based outcomes, including:

- **Recruiting, Training and Supporting Resource Families**
- **Building Community Partnerships** to increase placements within neighborhoods
- **Making Decisions as a Team** which includes family participation
- **Evaluating Results** that demonstrate progress

- All social workers and supervisors have completed training in the Structured Decision Making (SDM) approach to case management and have been applying SDM policies and tools immediately after completion of training. The last group of staff completed training in October 2003. The SDM application is now available through the Statewide Child Welfare System/ Case Management System (CWS/ CMS). An independent case review of Riverside's application of the SDM tools will be conducted by the Children's Research Center (CRC) in January 2004 and finalized results will be provided in February 2004.

**5. Initiating the framework of an Alternative Response System to maintain children safely in their homes and in their communities**

- The Differential Response Project (also known as an alternative response system) continues to grow and expand. Our community partnership with Catholic Charities ensures low-risk families receive preventative services through public and private agencies before unresolved family issues result in the abuse or neglect of children. Since this program was initiated in August 2003, 172 families have been referred to Catholic Charities for service. While these referrals come in through our Central Intake Center (CIC) initially, we have been able to refer families for community services without requiring opening a case.
- In November 2003, DPSS and the Riverside Sheriff's Office (RSO) initiated a pilot program where selected Deputies refer low-risk families for treatment services. This group of referred families do not come in through our CIC; instead, they are targeted for early intervention by RSO Deputies who identify families who could benefit from community services and do not indicate any safety or high risk issues.

**6. Pursuing accreditation through the Council on Accreditation to ensure the maintenance of high quality service provision**

- The accomplishment of the goals and activities listed in the six action plans brings DPSS closer to meeting the standards required for accreditation. Management keeps accreditation standards in mind as we move closer to attaining our goals by implementing the Priority Strategies as well as the components of AB 636, Redesign and the Performance Improvement Plan.

**7. Pursuing the acquisition of the Foster Family Home Licensing function to improve and increase homes available for children in need of Out-of-Home care by the end of 2003**

- The DPSS Children's Services Assistant Director continues to be actively involved in a statewide workgroup that is charged with developing a proposal to consolidate the relative approval process with licensing of foster homes under child welfare agencies across the state. It is expected that the consolidation of these two functions, licensing of foster homes and approval of relative homes, may result in one home study process in the future and not require the acquisition of the State licensing function. A draft proposal from this workgroup is anticipated to be available for review in April 2004.

Beginning in September 2004, these quarterly reports will transition from reporting only on the 2001 CWLA recommendations to include an annual System Improvement Plan (SIP) in accordance with the requirements of AB 636 with quarterly updates to the Board.