

KEEPING LINKED

Linkages Reboot Convening

It was a grand few days seeing all the Linkages Coordinators from more than 32 Linkages counties and 4 additional counties at the *Linkages 2.0: Strengthening Families Through Enhanced Collaboration* ([click here to get presentation material](#)) convening held at the Hyatt Regency in Sacramento between November 30 and December 2. Clare Anderson, Senior Policy Fellow, Chapin Hall, University of Chicago, provided an amazing keynote address, emphasizing the impact of poverty on vulnerable families. She told us that:

- 85% of families investigated by Child Protective Services are at 200% of the Federal Poverty line
- If low income families experience one type of material hardship they have a 3X higher likelihood of CPS investigation for neglect and 4X higher likelihood for physical abuse

Providing income and concrete supports helped reduce racial disproportionality as follows:

- 19% to 29% reduction in investigations for Black children
- 13% to 24% reduction in investigations for Latinx children
- 7% to 13% reduction in investigations for White children

Clare's presentation underscored the importance of Linkages 2.0, which is adding a focus on prevention and early intervention, especially for CalWORKs applicants and recipients.

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This new focus is in addition to continuing to explore supports for mutual families in the Welfare to Work and Child Welfare program, with an emphasis on collaboration between workers to provide economic and concrete supports for those families.

Clare's presentation was followed by a Parent Panel that included our longtime partner, Paula McDowell, who provided us with an update that included a video from her son (who was featured in one of our previous videos); Paula was joined by a parent from Los Angeles and a Riverside parent who attended via video.

But that isn't all! Cheryl Treadwell, Branch Chief, Safety, Permanency, & Early Intervention Branch and Damien Ladd, Bureau Chief, CalWORKs, Family Empowerment and Engagement with the California Department of Social Services (CDSS) provided a great keynote on Day 2, presenting CalWORKs & CWS 101, which counties can adapt for their own cross training efforts. Cheryl and Damien offered basic information about the Child Welfare and CalWORKs programs, as well as, how each program has evolved over the years to focus on family engagement and putting families in the center of their work.

The Convening also included workshops on many topics to support Linkages implementation: Evaluation, Communicating Linkages -What's in it for Me?, CDSS Data Match, Family Engagement Guidelines, Prevention & Early Intervention, Transitional Age Youth, Work Plan Development, Linkages 2.0 as a Prevention Strategy, Family Stabilization to Promote Well-being and Prevent Child Maltreatment. Additionally, we were fortunate to have our Child Welfare Regional Training Academies hold Regional Breakout meetings to hear from the counties about strategies that would benefit from additional support for the counties' implementation efforts. We will build on these ideas as we roll out "Conversation Peer support" Sessions in 2023. We heard very clearly that Linkages Coordinators would like to have time to talk and share ideas and questions with one another. *Look for the Registration Flyer for a March "Peer Sharing Conversation" session.*



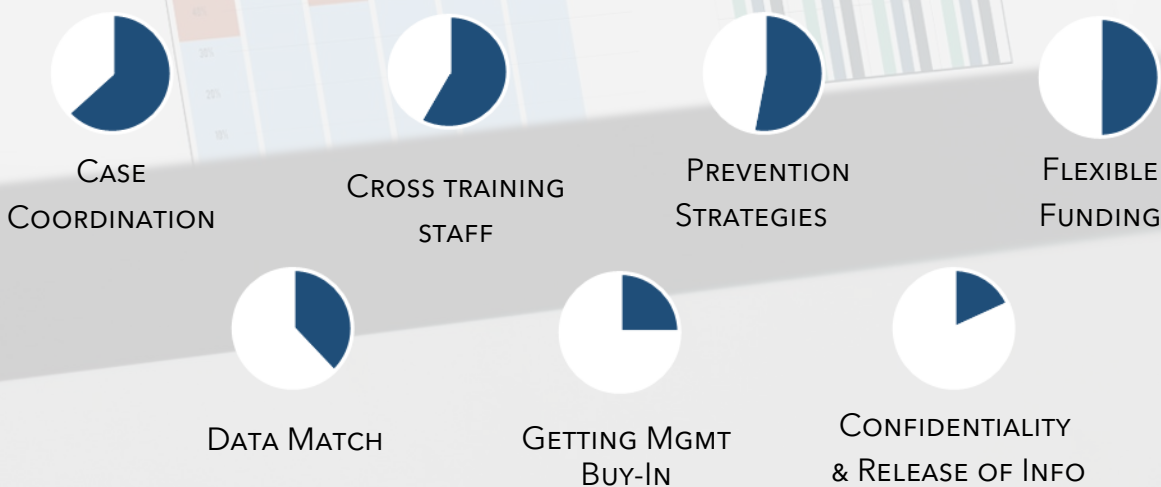
Survey Says...

In early January CFPIC sent a survey to all Coordinators asking for their input on several questions. The questions built on the responses from participants at the recent Convening. Since not all Coordinators were able to attend we wanted to hear from all counties about future support activities through the survey.

Twenty-nine (29) counties responded to the survey and the results are as follows:

- 45% of respondents were CWS Coordinators
- 47% were CalWORKs Coordinators
- 95% either agree or strongly agree that quarterly meetings would be beneficial to support peer sharing, problem solving & networking
- 49% indicated these meeting should be in person
 - 74% either agree or strongly agree they should be held via Zoom
 - 74% either agree or strongly agree that it should be either in person or Zoom depending on the Coordinator
- 66% either agree or strongly agree the bi-monthly Coordinator calls would be helpful
- 43% felt they should be organized around topics, 31% felt they should be organized by region, and 15% felt they should be organized by county size

The Survey sent in late January asked Coordinators what topic would be important for our first Peer Sharing Call. Respondents were asked to select their top three from the topics that surfaced at the Convening.



We will focus on the first three topics in our first Peer Sharing Conversations scheduled for March 7th which we will hold via Zoom, using breakout rooms for the topics.

Linkages Oversight Committee

The Linkages Oversight Committee meets every other month and its members are leadership from California Department of Social Services (CDSS) and county CalWORKs and Child Welfare programs.

- Lisa Witchey, CalWORKs, CDSS
- Damien Ladd, CalWORKs, CDSS
- Cheryl Treadwell, CFSD, CDSS
- Linda Belch, San Luis Obispo
- Sandra Bowlan, Riverside
- Robin Carter, Calaveras
- Sharon Diaz, Madera
- Loan English, Orange
- Mayle Johnson, Calaveras
- Michele Wohl, Riverside

The following is from the Committee's draft Charter:

VISION:

"Vulnerable children, youth & families in California receive all eligible social services supports to promote strong, healthy and safe environments for family and child/youth well-being."

MISSION OF LINKAGES:

"Through collaboration between the CalWORKs and Child Welfare programs, families in CalWORKs receive information, services and supports to prevent the occurrence and recurrence of child maltreatment, and families in Child Welfare receive information, services and supports to help them achieve child and family well-being, and to achieve and sustain financial self-sufficiency."

OVERSIGHT COMMITTEE GOAL:

"Provide guidance and support to the implementation of Linkages 2.0 across the state of California."

OVERSIGHT COMMITTEE OBJECTIVES:

- Review the implementation of Linkages 2.0
- Act as a think tank for broadening the Linkages' strategies.
- Identify potential fiscal strategies that support Linkages
- Identify potential program integration opportunities
- Promote evaluation activities at the county and state level
- Promote system integration and become barrier busters when county/state identify challenges that interfere with collaboration

We are pleased to have such talented and dedicated leaders supporting Linkages 2.0 implementation and who see the importance of integrating the work of both programs to ensure maximum support for vulnerable families and the prevention child maltreatment. For those families already involved in the Child Welfare system Linkages' coordinated case planning leverages the strength of both programs with the goal of returning children home and keeping children safe with their family.

Linkages Subcommittee Updates

Four Linkages sub-committees comprised of county and state staff have been meeting to advance Linkages 2.0; Prevention & Early Intervention, Tertiary - Coordinated Case Planning Guidelines and Transitional Age Youth (TAY) and Linkages; and Data & Evaluations. Below are updates from each sub-committee.

Prevention & Early Intervention : Facilitated by Stuart Oppenheim & Juliet Cox

The PEI subcommittee continues to explore primary and secondary prevention strategies to inform and assist families early and thus prevent child welfare services system involvement. After attending the PEI presentation at the December Linkages conference, four counties volunteered to pilot the primary-prevention focused Protective Factors resources brochure with their CalWORKs families. These counties will be adding local resources information to the brochure and testing ways of using this informative tool with families who seek or receive CalWORKs benefits. The pilot will provide valuable insight that will inform a statewide rollout plan for the brochure later this year.

Additionally, the PEI subcommittee is exploring potential next steps in developing a screening tool to help identify additional needs of families applying for benefits. This secondary-prevention-focused tool could help identify community-based services and supports that families needing benefits could also access to further strengthen their families. With the expansion of access to community-based services envisioned by comprehensive prevention planning efforts underway in California, exploring a tool that would identify these needs for a wider pool of families seems timely and beneficial.

Tertiary - Coordinated Case Planning: Facilitated by Leslie Ann Hay

The Family Engagement Guidelines Sub-Committee is excited to report that its task is nearly complete. Following several months of discussing, reviewing and updating the previous Guidelines issued in 2009, a new and improved version is nearly ready for publication. Key improvements include:

- Broadening the target population for Linkages beyond mutual cases to prevention and early intervention clients;
- Incorporating a prevention focus throughout all levels of CalWORKs/ Child Welfare collaboration; and
- Revising terminology to match evolving practices such as Child and Family Teams, CalWORKs 2.0 and the Integrated Core Practice Model.

Tertiary TAY – Transitional Age Youth (TAY) : Facilitated by Roxanne Stephens

In preparation for the TAY/Linkages Subcommittee a connection was made with the CWDA TAY Subcommittee to request representatives, receive input, and to share the goals of the Linkages TAY Subcommittee. The goals are:

- To explore how CalWORKs and Child Welfare collaboration for transitioning age youth can be improved to support TAY and Non-Minor Dependent (NMD) population in California. This sub-committee will develop guidance so that youth and young adults transitioning from foster care have access to needed benefits and resources eligible to them from the CWS, CalWORKs/Eligibility, Medi-Cal, and all Social Services programs.
- To build upon and leverage existing supports
- To ensure that CWS case managers know how to provide information to TAY/NMD for accessing/applying for benefits, such as SNAP, Medi-Cal, etc.
- To identify best practices – such as specialty case managers, CalWORKs/Eligibility staff at CFTs and including TAY/NMD on Linkages Implementation Teams.

The TAY Sub-Committee includes representatives from CWDA TAY Committee and County staff with expertise in working with Transitional Age Youth and Non-Minor Dependents.

Data & Evaluation : Facilitated Danna Fabella

CDSS Research and Data Division (RADD) staff have joined the sub-committee after a pause since the last representative moved to a new assignment. They have produced county Child Welfare and CalWORKs match data and while this data is from a previous quarter the data is helpful to look at where there is overlap and what target population a county might focus on. CalWORKs state staff on the committee have been working on a safe portal site for counties to receive their own data and have the opportunity to drill down to case specific information.

The Subcommittee has also developed a Logic Model which is still in draft form and can [click here](#) to review it and feel free to send Danna any input.

Additionally, CFPIC has contracted with Resource Development Associates (RDA) to conduct an evaluation to include three counties. CFPIC has sent email letters to Deputies of both CalWORKs and Child Welfare as well as to Coordinators in the counties asking whether they are interested, and if so, they have been asked to do a Readiness Self-Assessment.



Upcoming Events

PEER SHARING CONVERSATIONS: COORDINATED CASE PLANNING, PREVENTION STRATEGIES
& LINKAGES CROSS TRAINING

March 7 from 3:30–5:00 PM

Save the Date! Registration link to follow.

PEER SHARING CONVERSATIONS: TOPICS TBD

May 18 from 10 - 11:30 AM

Save the Date! Registration link to follow

ANNUAL PLANNING COMMITTEE: 1ST MEETING

May 24 from 10:30 AM - 12:00 PM

Save the Date!

COORDINATOR ONLY CALL

June 7

Save the Date!

*Mark Your
Calendars!*



If you have any suggestions or contributions for the next newsletter, let us know! Email Danna Fabella at danna.fabella@cfpic.org.