

# KEEPING LINKED

## Linkages 2.0: History & Evolution to a Prevention Framework

At our August webinar we provided an outline of the history of Linkages and the evolution to its current work using a Prevention Framework: Primary - Secondary - Tertiary. For those who could not attend we encourage you to [click on this link](#) to go to the Webinar; however, we will provide some highlights in this newsletter since we believe it is important to understand how CalWORKs and Child Welfare can not only coordinate their worker practices but also align their systems to create a continuum across the agency, promoting family and child well-being and preventing child maltreatment.

### History

**2000 -2004:** Linkages began under the California Center for Research on Women & Children – and was called the Partnership Project. The focus of the Project was the coordination of TANF and Child Welfare mutual clients in order to maximize services that could be developed using the existing TANF Incentive grants. Policies and planning documents were developed, many of which are still used today by the participants in the Linkages Project. The original phase started with 13 “Pioneer” counties that worked on developing these policies and procedures.

**2004 – 2006:** the program transferred to CFPIC for the implementation of the policies and procedures that had been developed and was supported with private foundation funding.

**2007 – 2012/13:** After the private funding was ended, CFPIC and the Office of Child Abuse Prevention (OCAP), CDSS, successfully applied for a Federal Grant and became one of 5 grantees in the country

### What’s in This Issue:

Linkages History & Evolution to Prevention Framework

Comprehensive Prevention Planning

Linkages PEI Workgroup





charged with demonstrating the effectiveness of Child Welfare and TANF collaboration. . The California version of the Federal Grant was known as , “Linkages: CalWORKs and Child Welfare Collaboration to Improve Outcomes for Children & Families.” The federal funding eventually enabled the project to expand to include 30 counties, and the funding was used to support county implementation through sponsoring peer sharing, regional meetings, annual meetings and the development of a Toolkit.

**2013- 2016:** Recognizing the success of Linkages, OCAP and the County Welfare Directors Associations (CWDA) Self-Sufficiency committee funded CFPIC to support Linkages for another three years. When funding ended, CFPIC could no longer provide statewide support but did leave the Linkages Toolkit on their website and prior to ending support developed material such as a Sustainability Tool to provide some support to the counties.

**2019 – 2021:** CDSS re-established its commitment to Linkages through establishment of a statewide planning committee which met virtually during the COVID years and endorsed the Prevention Framework. The following Workgroups were established to reinvigorate the Linkages approach to Child Welfare and CalWORKs collaboration:

- Prevention (includes Primary and Secondary strategies)
- FM/FR – (focus on Coordinated Case Planning)
- Evaluation/Data

**2022:** CDSS funded CFPIC to support Linkages implementation through the lens of the new prevention framework. There are 30 counties that have joined the new Linkages collaborative.

The evolution of Linkages from the tertiary model to the inclusion of primary and secondary prevention reflects the separate evolution of both the CalWORKs and Child Welfare programs. CalWORKs has developed a focus on family engagement and breaking down barriers that prevent employment and Child Welfare is actively exploring how the provision of services and supports before removal is necessary in order to keep families out of the formal system. These approaches are embodied in the new emphasis on promoting prevention and early intervention in the Linkages collaborative work.

#### ***Theory of Change:***

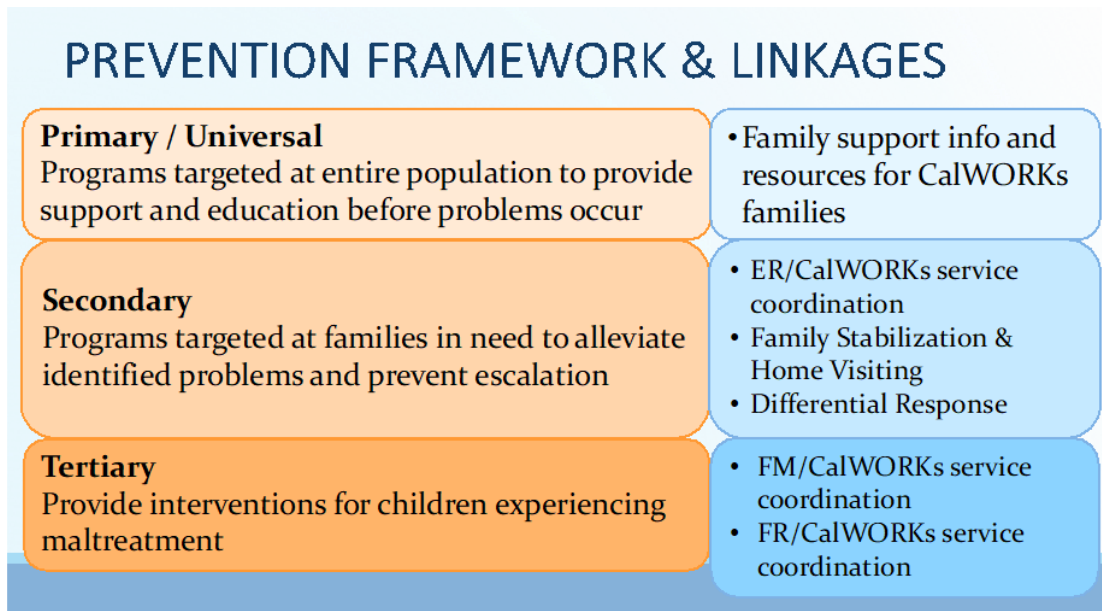
***Through collaboration between the CalWORKs and Child Welfare programs, families in CalWORKs receive information, services and supports to prevent the occurrence and recurrence of child maltreatment, and families in Child Welfare receive information, services and supports to help them achieve child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

## Prevention Framework

The Vision of OCAP: To develop an integrated state-wide system that supports families to provide safe, stable, nurturing relationships and environments for their children. The three levels of prevention are Primary – Secondary – Tertiary.

PRIMARY	SECONDARY	TERTIARY
Activities directed towards the general population to strengthen communities and improve child well-being	Activities offered to populations that have one or more risk factors associated with compromised well-being or child maltreatment, such as poverty, parental substance abuse, and parental mental health	Activities focus on families where child maltreatment has occurred, seeking to mitigate its trauma and reduce the negative consequences of the maltreatment and to prevent recurrence

For Linkages we adapted the Prevention Framework: Primary (Universal) is information and resources for the entire CalWORKs population; Secondary are those services for families either identified in the CalWORKs program and receiving services such as Family Stabilization, Home Visiting, DV or BH services or families who are referred to Child Welfare but for whom a child welfare case is not opened but services are put in place to support the family and child in the home; Tertiary is for families where child maltreatment has been substantiated and services are being provided in both Child Welfare and CalWORKs (See chart).



## Linkages & Comprehensive Prevention Planning

As part of the August Webinar featuring Linkages and Prevention we were pleased that Hillary Konrad, Bureau Chief, Office of Child Abuse Prevention (OCAP) was able to provide information about a topic that is compelling for Child Welfare Services Directors and their staff. Child Welfare professionals across the country, and here in California, understand that it is essential that they work with local communities to provide resources and supports that promote family well-being and prevent child maltreatment. This focus represents a shift from a reactive to a proactive

proactive approach to serving families.

Hillary provided clarification of the

distinction between the term,

“Comprehensive Prevention Planning (CPP)” and the more well-known

“Family First Prevention Services Act (FFPSA) Part I.” FFPSA Part I allows for the use of Title IV-E funds (the Federal funds that support Child Welfare Services) but it has some limitations; primary among these is that it is focused on Tertiary strategies – child maltreatment has occurred and the county is selecting an Evidence Based Program (EBP) to intervene and provide services to keep the child from entering out of home care. CPP, on the other hand, expands beyond FFPSA Part I in providing funding for primary and secondary services that meet local needs and are locally determined through collaborative planning and implementation.

**To achieve the vision silos must be broken and partnerships across multi-disciplinary sectors must be built.**

**How might CalWORKs/Linkages be involved in the CPP cross-sector collaborative?**

- Inclusion of Data - CalWORKs/CWS - to determine Target Population and Services
- Inclusion of CalWORKs/Linkages strategies within the CPP – (Welfare to Work, Family Stabilization, Home Visiting, etc.)
- Policies and procedures that promote collaboration – Coordinated case planning, leveraging of existing MOU’s
- Leveraging funds to sustain and expand programs and services.

Currently there are 49 Opt in Counties exploring Comprehensive Prevention Planning, are led by county Child Welfare or Probation Departments. Additionally, Karuk and Yurok have also opted into comprehensive prevention planning. If you are not already involved in your county’s CPP efforts, you can reach out to the leadership in your county or contact CDSS at [ffpsaprevention-services@dss.ca.gov](mailto:ffpsaprevention-services@dss.ca.gov).

For additional information, please access the [FFPSA website](#).

*“OCAP’s vision is an integrated state-wide system that supports families to provide safe, stable, nurturing relationships and environments for their children.”*

- Hillary Konrad  
OCAP Bureau Chief



# Linkages Prevention & Early Intervention Workgroup (PEI)

Stuart Oppenheim, CFPIC Executive Director and Juliet Cox, Deputy Executive Director co-facilitate the Linkages PEI Workgroup. As you can tell by its leadership, CFPIC is invested in promoting prevention and early intervention strategies. The committee also includes representatives from OCAP, CalWORKs, Child & Family Division of CDSS and County Linkages staff. Their focus for over a year has been on Linkages Primary and Secondary prevention strategies. Their first task was developing a Theory of Change that grounds the Linkage Prevention and Early Intervention work.

The Workgroup started by focusing on Primary Prevention and worked to develop a draft informational brochure that outlines the Five Protective Factors Brochure with Resources and Tips that counties can adapt to identify local resources. This is still in draft form but with a plan to issue to counties via an All County Information Notice (ACIN) that will provide guidance to counties on how to utilize this optional brochure in their work with families.

The workgroup is currently working on a Secondary Pathway flowchart that outlines Early Intervention opportunities. As the task group looked at where



## PEI Theory of Change :

**IF** there is coordination of early intervention services between CalWORKs and Child Welfare (e.g. Family Stabilization, Kinship Navigator and Differential Response)

**THEN**, families will have the opportunity to

- Increase parenting skills
- Increase financial stability
- Increase housing stability
- Increase resiliency, and
- Increase child and family well-being

**SO THAT**, families can provide safe, stable, nurturing relationships and environments for their children,

**AND** there will be a decrease in re-referrals to Child Welfare and decrease the likelihood of entering into foster care.

opportunities present themselves for intervening early with at-risk families, it became clear that the online Comprehensive Assessment Tool (OCAT) used for families eligible for Welfare to Work was not enough, as this is only completed on about 30% of the families receiving CalWORKs. The other 70% of CalWORKs-eligible families do not receive that assessment. The work group is exploring how another tool (optional) could be used to identify families that are in need of early intervention supports but are not eligible for Welfare to Work. Services for these vulnerable families could align well with the Comprehensive Prevention Plan – CPP effort currently underway in most California counties (see article on page 3-4 about CPP).

The workgroup will continue to explore how to align Child Welfare and CalWORKs efforts on behalf of families to support well-being and prevent child maltreatment. Part of this effort will be to learn from counties what they are currently doing, or are planning to do, to provide primary and secondary prevention approaches to the families that they have in common. Counties with existing primary and secondary prevention protocols, procedures and tools for families involved in both systems are encouraged to share these with the Workgroup, and individuals interested in joining the workgroup can reach out to [stuart.oppenheim@cfpic.org](mailto:stuart.oppenheim@cfpic.org) or [Juliet.cox@cfpic.org](mailto:Juliet.cox@cfpic.org)

# Upcoming Events & Dates to Note

Workplans due

September 26, 2022

Email them to [danna.fabella@cfpic.org](mailto:danna.fabella@cfpic.org)

Peer Sharing Session: Linkages Prevention Framework

September 29, 2022 from 1:30 - 3:00 PM

[Register here!](#)

Convening Planning Meeting

October, date TBD

For more information contact [danna.fabella@cfpic.org](mailto:danna.fabella@cfpic.org)

Linkages 2.0: Strengthening Families Through Enhanced Collaboration

November 30—December 2, 2022 at the Hyatt in Sacramento

Registration coming soon

