

KEEPING LINKED



New Era, New Logo: Linkages 2.0!

For over 20 years, county CalWORKs and Child Welfare teams have worked together (with support from CDSS and CFPIC for 9 of those years) to develop, test, implement, and share best practices for collaborating with mutually served families. Starting in January 2022, in conjunction with the Office of Child Abuse Prevention's Framework for Preventing Child Abuse by the Promotion of Healthy Families and Communities, counties kicked off a new Linkages era with Linkages 2.0.

Linkages 2.0 focuses on a continuum of approaches to coordination embraced by counties across California including primary, secondary, and tertiary prevention as well as early intervention to help families build financial self-sufficiency and economic mobility while promoting child safety, permanency, and well-being.

With Linkages 2.0, our goals are:

- Build on the past successes of Linkages counties by spreading best practices for coordination to more counties within California,
- Identify ways to provide primary and secondary prevention services through the Linkages partnership,
- Evaluate Linkages to build a body of evidence in support of the great work happening in counties.

Our vision for the future of Linkages is that every family applying for CalWORKs will have access to services to meet their needs, that Child Welfare agencies and other family serving partners will know how to help families with resources to help prevent Child Welfare intervention when possible, and families will receive coordinated case management and services from CalWORKs and Child Welfare when mutually served.

What's in this Issue:

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In recognition of Linkages 2.0, we have given our Linkages logo an update:



Click the logo for downloadable versions that you can add to your Linkages documents.

California Selected for the *Families Are Stronger Together: TANF & Child Welfare Partnering for Prevention Learning Community (FAST-LC!)*

The CDSS Family Engagement and Empowerment Division (FEED), Children and Family Services Division (CFSD), Tribal TANF Program, Office of Equity, and CFPIC are one of 10 state teams selected to participate in a learning collaborative sponsored by the Office of Family Assistance and the Children's Bureau. The FAST-LC is a 12-month learning community of state and Tribal TANF agencies coming together with Child Welfare to develop innovative approaches and strategies which promote family well-being and prevent family involvement with the child welfare system through strong TANF and Child Welfare collaboration. As FAST-LC participants, we will have access to a diverse and robust portfolio of training and technical assistance services which we can then bring back and share with our partners in California.

We believe our participation in this learning collaborative will contribute to achieving our shared goals related to:

- Developing and expanding Linkages partnerships focused on prevention so we can reach families sooner and increase the number of families who receive responsive and culturally appropriate community-based services at the time of need through an integrated statewide social safety net system for child and family well-being.
- Identifying innovative family stabilization and coordination models that allow us to better serve families outside the child welfare system, including strategies to support "child only" CalWORKs families.
- Building capacity for cross-program data and information sharing to adapt our strategies to reduce racial disproportionalities and disparities, coordinate CalWORKs and Child Welfare service provision, and improve outcomes.

The LC will take place over the next 12 months and we will coordinate and share updates with the Linkages Oversight Committee. Stay tuned!

Moving Linkages Forward

A Message from Danna Fabella

Over August and September, we have had the pleasure of meeting with 25 Linkages teams across California to learn about the innovative Linkages work under-

way. From Humboldt and Trinity to Orange and LA (and many places in between), we have seen amazing, resilient Linkages teams working together in support of families despite the challenges they are facing: staffing turnover (including leadership), implementing CalSAWS, developing Comprehensive Prevention Plans, and finding placements for youth with complex needs, to name just a few.

The commitment to serving families even when workers, supervisors and managers are stretched in so many ways is, indeed, inspirational. I have never been so proud of our social services work whether it be in child welfare, welfare to work, or eligibility as I have been hearing about how teams are focusing on the family and serving them with supports and resources to strengthen their ability to be self-sufficient and provide a stable, nurturing home for their children.

As I listen to your great work, I know others would also love to hear about your experiences and knowledge. We have developed an online tool to help you share your successes so we can spread the word. Please use this link to give us a few details so we can share your story: [Linkages Success Story Collection Tool](#) and carry the inspiration across the state.

Success Story Collection Tool

Success stories can help educate others about Linkages. Submit this form to Linkages staff for help developing your experiences into sharable success stories.

[CLICK FOR MATERIALS](#) →

[RIVERSIDE SAMPLE ROI](#) →

[CLICK HERE TO SUBMIT A STORY](#) →

Bridging the Link in San Joaquin County

In a new and growing collaboration, San Joaquin County Intensive Family Preservation (IFP) Social Workers are teaming up with Linkages Case Workers to make joint home visits and they are seeing positive results. With joint visits now taking place, Linkages Case Workers report they are making stronger connections with families. They are also better able to provide immediate solutions to help families meet concrete needs and address complicating factors by providing things like appliances, furniture, and educational reimbursements.

Earlier this Spring and Summer at their regular collaborative partner meeting, the team discussed how IFP Social Workers could support Linkages Case



Workers in making in-person home visits. The team did some brainstorming around the idea of joint home visits and a plan of action was finalized in July. By September, they were on the road together with the IFP Social Workers providing transportation and support for the initial in-person meet and greet, and continued bi-weekly commute support.

The two Linkages Case Workers and IFP Social Workers involved collectively shared that visiting the families together helps them develop a shared perspective about the issues facing the families and the supports or services they need. They also felt that seeing the families' body language together helps them have a clearer assessment of how the families are doing. Both Linkages Case Workers also shared that it is nice to have the personal touch of a home visit versus a phone call.



What's next for joint home visits in San Joaquin? Look for some future evaluation of outcomes as San Joaquin will be tracking the impact of this work on their shared goals of engagement, positive behavioral change, follow-through, and effective cross-communication.

Many thanks to Robert Pimentel, Intensive Family Preservation Supervisor and the San Joaquin County Human Services Agency for sharing this story with us!

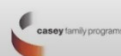
Funding Primary and Secondary Prevention Strategies

Breaking cycles related to poverty and child maltreatment requires prevention and early intervention. When we work upstream to support prevention, families receive timely concrete supports and intensive, evidence-based, tailored services within their communities before they experience the trauma of maltreatment. Linkages 2.0 is focused on building connections among CalWORKs, Child Welfare and the community to find innovative ways to deliver prevention services and many county Linkages teams have questions about how to fund these efforts.

A recent California Training Institute (CalTrin) webinar (available here -[Funding Primary and Secondary Prevention Strategies: Part 1 \(August 2, 2023\)](#)) provides an overview of the many ways Medi-Cal funding can be leveraged to support prevention services for families. While not all children are eligible to the CalWORKs Cash Benefit Program, Medi-Cal serves roughly half the children in California and recent budget increases and service delivery changes in Medi-Cal provide an opportunity for counties to identify and use untapped Medi-Cal funding. Check out the



THE CHILD, FAMILY, AND COMMUNITY WELL-BEING LEARNING SERIES



webinar and learn more about how you can take action to maximize Medi-Cal services for eligible families:

- Deepen your AB 2083 MOUs by adding Managed Care Plans (MCPs) and Schools, bringing them into the collaborations that you have already built through your System of Care networks.
- Learn how MCP partnerships with CalAIM can support transportation to medical, dental, behavioral health, and therapy appointments, along with streamlining the BH/MH referral processes when requested directly through health care pathways.
- Learn about new provider types funded by Medi-Cal - Doulas, Community Health Workers, Peer Specialists, and Behavioral Health Coaches have all been added by DHCS as new provider types with the all-payor fee schedule update in 1/2024.
- Medi-Cal funded services can also fill in the gaps in your Comprehensive Prevention Plan - learn more about how to identify partners, build relationships, align the goals, and build in supportive services.

We hope you enjoy this webinar and identify resources to make sure you never spend a non-federal dollar without matching it!!

Committee Updates

Prevention & Early Intervention: Using the Power of Collaboration to Support Prevention

The Linkages Prevention and Early Intervention (PEI) Committee has continued to refine the products that the Committee has previously reported on, specifically the Protective Factors Brochure and accompanying All County Information Notice draft, in addition to its work in proposing the development of a secondary prevention screening tool for CalWORKs applicants and recipients.

The Linkages team has noted in its targeted calls with individual counties that there is a significant interest in exploring the PEI strategies being developed in Linkages 2.0. As county Child Welfare programs complete their Family First Prevention Services plans and submit them to CDSS, there are growing opportunities to engage CalWORKs families in services to strengthen families through community supports. Vulnerable children and their families who are able to receive such supports are often able to avoid referrals to the Child Welfare system.

Most recently, the PEI Committee has reviewed research that was undertaken by CFPIC several years ago to understand the impact of reduced family income in CalWORKs Child-Only cases. This research [-available on the CFPIC website](#) has shown that children in these families have significantly increased risks that would benefit from access to services. The Committee will continue to investigate how Linkages may be able to target these families as part of its PEI strategy.

County staff who are interested in joining the work of this committee should contact Stuart Oppenheim at stuart.oppenheim@cfpic.org.

Transition Aged Youth: Supporting Transition to Adulthood with Linkages!

The Linkages Transition Age Youth and Non-Minor Dependent Young Adult Subcommittee is working to enhance Linkages support for 16 to 26 year olds. We are bringing county representatives together to build a toolkit of resources, information, best practices, training, webinars, and peer sharing opportunities from CalWORKs and Child Welfare in support of 3 key populations:

- Transition age youth ages 15.5 to 18
- Non-Minor dependent young adults in extended foster care
- Young adults post-dependency up to age 26

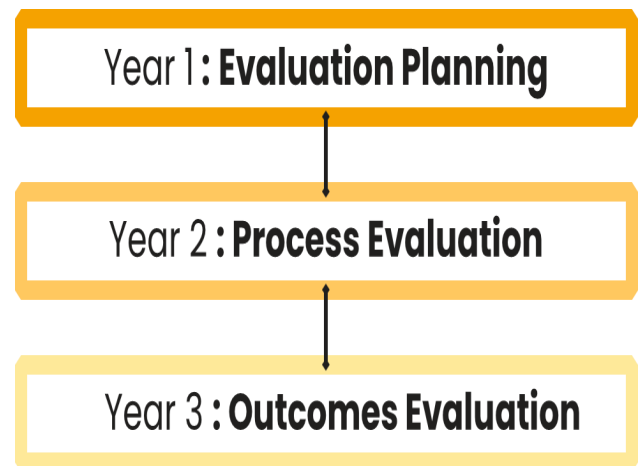
Your help is needed! If you have resources to share or are interested in helping develop new resources, please join this effort by reaching out to Melissa.Connelly@CFPIC.org



County Evaluation Committee

RDA and CFPIC staffs Aditi Das, Danna Fabella and Barry Johnson have been meeting monthly with county representatives from the three counties that volunteered to participate in the Linkages Evaluation. Thanks to county members Maithanh Nguyen and Jacqueline Jimenez from Orange; Felix Minjarez and Mary Go from Riverside; Barbara Cromwell, Melissa McKinney and Morgan Suazo from Sonoma; these meetings have been very productive. In addition, Katherine Elliot and Joaquin Carbonell from the CDSS Research, Automation, and Data Division (RADD) have participated as their time permits.

We are in the Year 1 Evaluation Planning with counties reviewing possible data sources, interview and focus group questions, case review tools and overall the data gathering methods to be used in the Process Evaluation Phase to begin this Fall. Stay tuned for future information on this exciting work.



Let's Get Together: Upcoming Events

Linkages teams have some upcoming opportunities to get together and share information. Please make note of the dates below. We look forward to seeing you and learning more about your Linkages work!

Regional Zoom Calls

Bring your team to the Regional Zoom calls for peer learning and Linkages inspiration! [Click here to register.](#)

- November 7th at 1:30 am | Northern Mountain Region
- November 8th at 10:00 am | Bay Region
- November 8th at 1:30 pm | Central Region
- November 9th at 10:00 am | Southern Region

Annual Convening

Join us for **Linkages Upstream: Applying the Prevention Framework** April 23-25, 2024 in Sacramento where we will focus on working together to break cycles related to poverty and child maltreatment through prevention and early intervention. We think an upstream approach will contribute to stronger families and communities while reducing child maltreatment, and decreasing entries into foster care. Through our time together we will find innovative ways to collaborate across systems, fund services, engage with families, and deliver services that families find relevant and helpful. If you are interested in sharing your innovative work with others, please [submit a proposal for this event](#). Deadline for submission is 10/31/23.



If you have any suggestions or contributions for the next newsletter, let us know!



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