

KEEPING LINKED



Linkages 2.0: Back and Better!

As many of you know, CFPIC facilitated the implementation of the original Linkages collaboration from 2004 to 2016 with funding from philanthropy, a Federal Demonstration grant, the CDSS Office of Child Abuse Prevention and finally through the CWDA Self-Sufficiency Committee, using CalWORKs single-allocation funds. Through those years CFPIC supported a CalWORKs & Child Welfare Collaboration with the goal of improving outcomes for children and families with a specific emphasis on mutual families in the Welfare-to-Work and Child Welfare Family Maintenance (FM) or Family Reunification (FR) programs. After the support ended in 2012, many counties were able to sustain their collaboration, although others stalled and without assistance were unable to sustain or expand Linkages.

Fortunately, the California Department of Social Services (CDSS), with support from the Capacity Building Center for States, CFPIC and many counties, launched a Committee in 2019 to explore the feasibility of re-launching this collaborative effort in order to increase access to supports and services for vulnerable families. Through this work, a new framework was developed that reflects where both Child Welfare and CalWORKs programs have evolved since 2012. Child Welfare has embraced prevention and early intervention and is implementing the

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Family First Prevention Services Act (FFPSA), which allows the use of Title IV-E funds for prevention. CalWORKs program has evolved to include a strong emphasis on Family Engagement and Family Stabilization, resulting in programs to support and engage families. With these trends in the forefront, the committee developed a Primary, Secondary and Tertiary framework for the relaunch of Linkages. We plan to use the next couple of years developing the Linkages Primary and Secondary strategies, while we continue to strengthen CalWORKs collaboration with FM and FR, which is enhanced by the passage of AB 135 that allows for the continuation of the CalWORKs funding when child(ren) are removed.

Beginning in January we launched the new Linkages Toolkit with a focus on Assessment and Work Planning. While we did migrate some of the Tools from the previous Linkages Toolkit we are updating material and will continue this work as we move forward. Additionally, we have held three Webinars: two in March with a focus on using the Assessment tools for existing Linkages Counties and for new Counties, as well as one in April with a focus on Work planning. On May 31st we convened coordinators for a TA session, and our next Webinar is planned for June with a focus on Client Identification and Data.

We are excited to have the opportunity to support implementation and expansion of counties' CalWORKs & Child Welfare collaborations. We are back, and we believe with a better strategic approach mirroring the prevention and family engagement focus to support vulnerable families.

Why Linkages Matters: Data to Consider

A [recent publication](#) by the Center on Budget and Policy Priorities found that in 2019/2020 for every 100 families living in poverty in California, only 71 received TANF cash assistance. They went on to say that the "TANF-to-poverty ratio" has fallen 30 points since 1995-96. If TANF reached the same share of families in poverty as it did in 1996, 152,900 California families would be helped by TANF.

Families with Children:	1995/1996	2019/2020
Receiving AFDC/TANF	899,719	362,898
In poverty	893,400	512,176
In deep poverty	276,017	240,519

A 2021 PowerPoint published by Chapin Hall and presented at a Child Welfare Council meeting by Emily Putnam-Hornstein, *Family & Child Wellbeing System: Economic and Concrete Supports as a Core Component*, outlines the intersection of income insecurity and Child Welfare involvement. The most reliable predictors of Child Welfare involvement are:

- Income loss
- Cumulative material hardship
- Housing hardship

Economically insecure children experience **3–9 times** more maltreatment than economically secure children. Children in families of low socioeconomic status are:

- **7 times** more likely to experience neglect
- **5 times** more likely to experience maltreatment

Addressing economic and concrete supports is an essential part of Linkages and is in sync with the Theory of Change offered in the Chapin Hall PowerPoint:

Services, supports and collaboration among human services providers + responsive delivery of these services and supports to families in need →

Improves access, builds awareness among families of available economic supports →

Outcomes →

reduce family stress and increase protective factors →

- reduce child maltreatment;
- reduce unnecessary calls to the hotline and
- enhance child & family well-being.

Linkages is an important strategy for providing economic and concrete supports to vulnerable families and reducing Child Welfare intervention and disparities for children and families of color.

The data also show 73% of children living in poverty are children of color. While Black children make up 14% of the child population they make up 27% of children living below the poverty level. 53% of Black children experience a CPS investigation by the age of 18.

Black and Native American children experienced CPS involvement at more than twice the rate of white children.

Approximately half of all Black (46.8%) and Native American children (50.2%) were investigated at least once by CPS during their childhood.

Black and Native American children were placed into foster care at more than three times the rate of white children.

Communication, Communication, Communication!

Just as Location, location, location is the mantra for real estate agents – communication is the mantra for keeping staff and others informed about Linkages. We migrated from our former Linkages Toolkit the communication material we used and can be found at CFPIC. One Tool provides a guide for collecting information that can be shared with CFPIC Project staff for the Keeping Linked Newsletter and will be distributed statewide.

Go to the linked image to the right and you will find the tool called A Success Story Collection Tool for Counties.

Why do you want Success Stories?

- It serves as a vehicle for engaging potential participants, partners and funders.
- It can become a powerful instrument to spread the word about your program.
- It can be used to educate decision makers.
- It can be used to engage the target population.
- It can be used to mobilize resources.
- It can be used to demonstrate progress in your programs.
- It can tell others who are not as aware of your program, what it is.

Please share successes you have had even while planning. You might have some great insights from your Linkages Implementation Team that can be shared as inspiration to other counties as they start or continue this important collaborative.

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 →](#)

Upcoming Events

Data is Your Friend: Data Matching Webinar for Linkages Teams

June 23, 2022 from 9:00 AM - 11:00 AM

[Register here!](#)

