LINKAGES: CALWORKs and ER

Strengthening Families Through Collaboration During ER

LINKAGES 2.0
CalWORKs & Child Welfare Collaboration

Agenda

- Introductions/Group Agreements

- Review of Materials

- CalWORKs and Child Welfare Services (CWS)

- Linking CalWORKs and Child Welfare during Emergency Response (ER)

- Strategies for Collaboration

- Supporting Families in Crisis

- Evaluation and Continuous Improvement
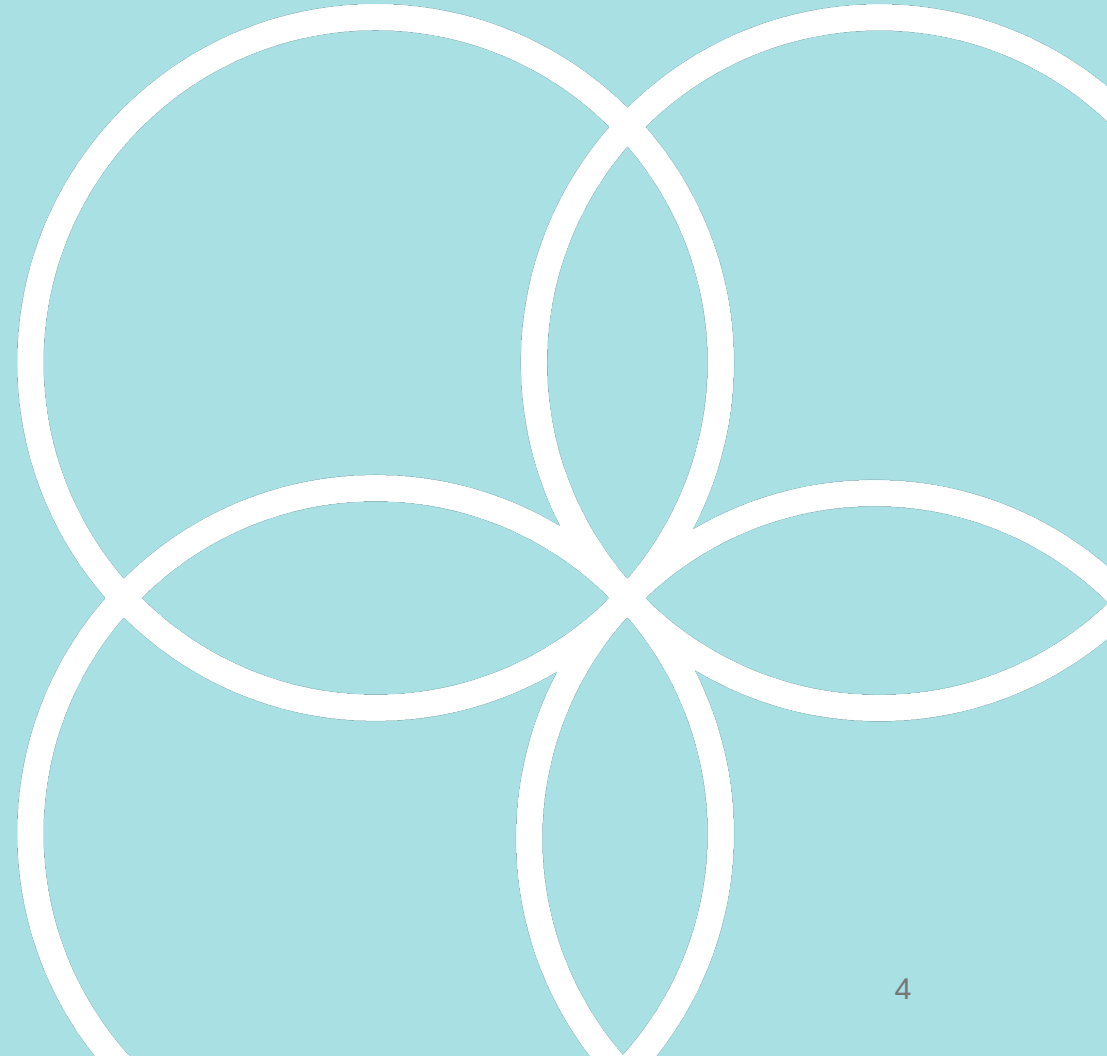
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Welcome!

Getting Started

and Introductions

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Introduce Yourself

- Name

- County

- Role

- What's one thing that inspires you to make a difference for families in crisis every day?

Group Agreements

Speak from your own experience (use "I" statements):

1. Listen for understanding.

2. Make space, take space.

3. Stories stay, learnings leave – mind confidentiality.

4. We are here, we are human – bring your full presence.

5. Be willing to experience discomfort individually and together.

6. Expect and accept non-closure – multiple realities and experiences can exist and are valid.

7. What else?

Review of Trainee Materials

Trainee Workbook

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Learning Objectives

Knowledge

- K1 – Acquire a comprehensive understanding of the CalWORKs program and Child Welfare services applicable to ER.

- K2 – Explain how collaboration through Linkages supports families by preventing child abuse and neglect.

Skills

- S1– Evaluate family strengths and needs and agency resources to provide timely and coordinated assistance during crises.

- S2– Develop strategies for monitoring outcomes and improving collaboration efforts.

Values

- V1 – Internalize the values of empathy, cultural competence, and family-centered practice, recognizing the importance of respecting the autonomy and dignity of families while prioritizing the safety and well-being of children.
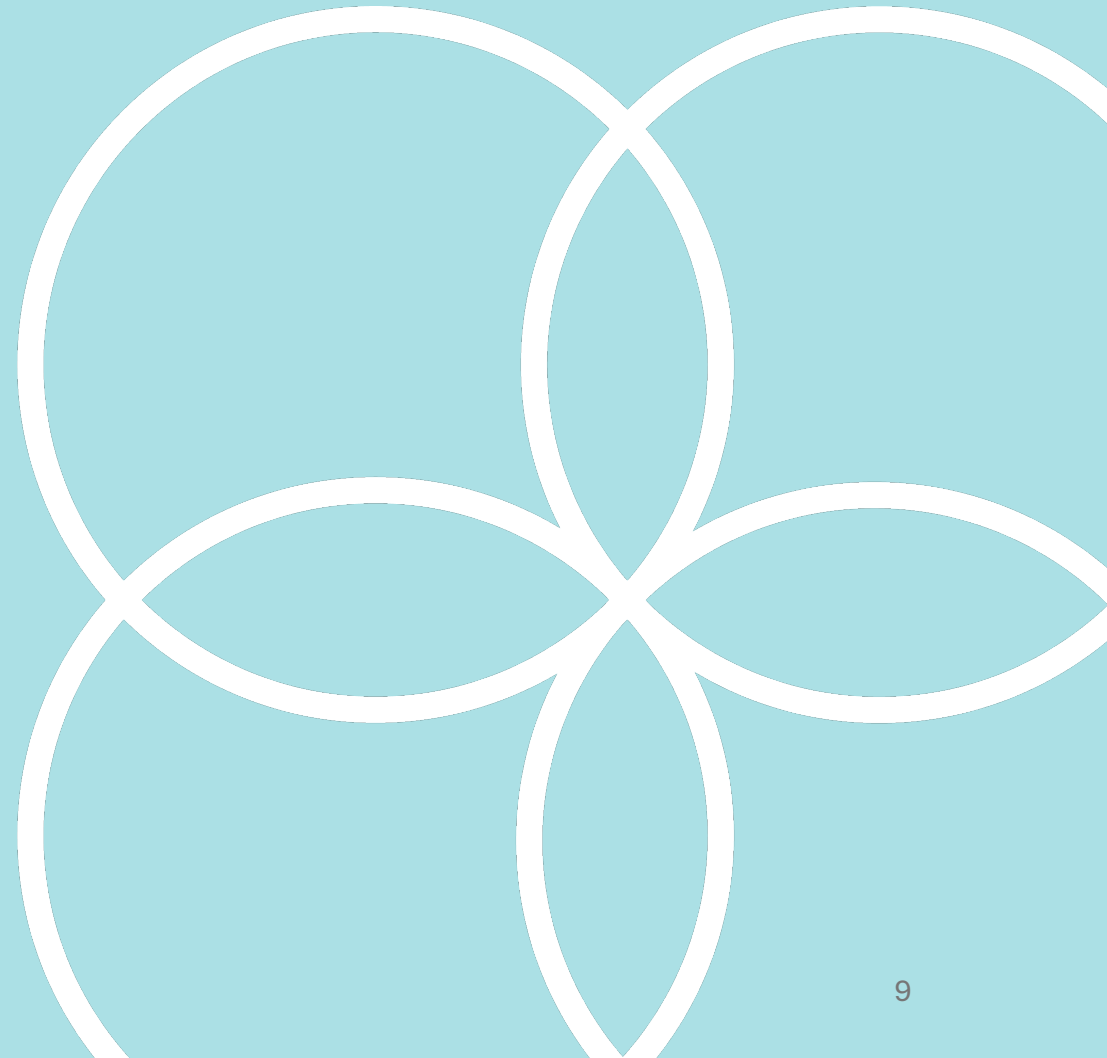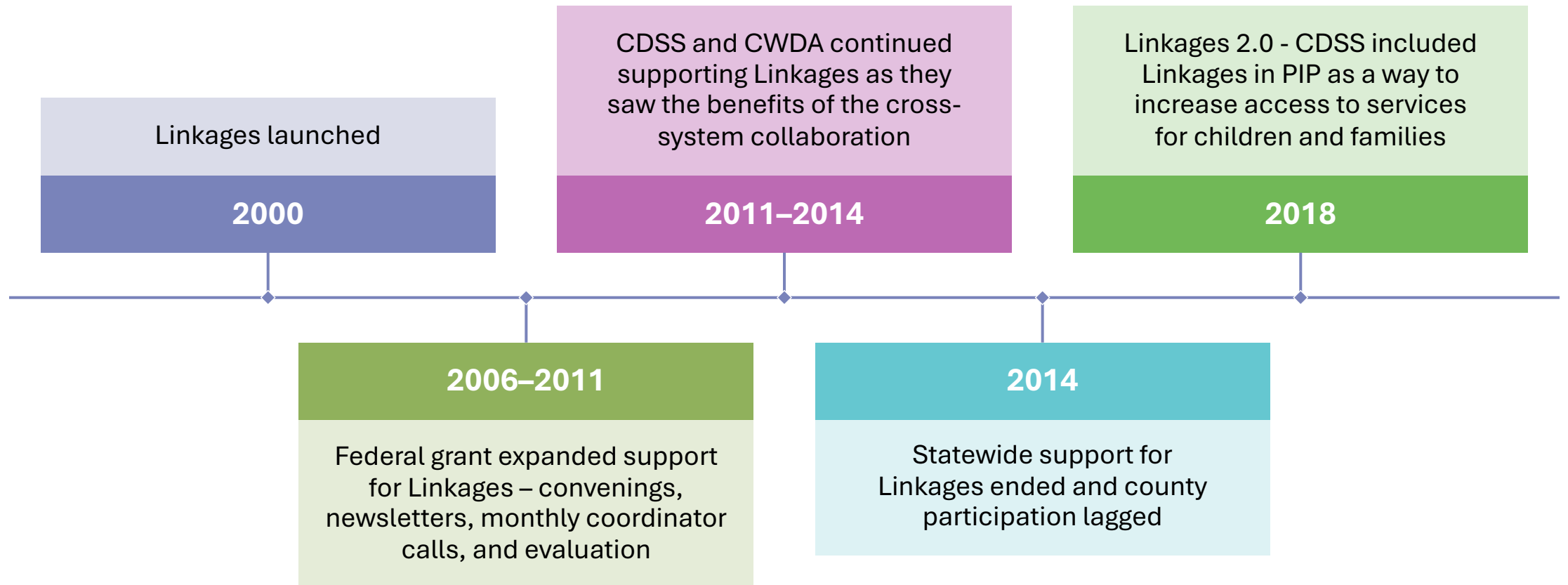
What is Linkages?

Overview and History

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Linkages Background

- 2000 – Started collaboration between Child Welfare and CalWORKs

- Service coordination for families with open Family Maintenance or Family Reunification cases

- How did it work?
  - Development of a process for early identification of mutual families
  - Active collaboration between CW and CalWORKs staff
    - Co-location
    - Attendance at CFTs
    - Mutual trainings

Linkages Timeline

Linkages launched

2000

2006–2011

Federal grant expanded support for Linkages – convenings, newsletters, monthly coordinator calls, and evaluation

CDSS and CWDA continued supporting Linkages as they saw the benefits of the cross-system collaboration

2011–2014

2014

Statewide support for Linkages ended and county participation lagged

Linkages 2.0 - CDSS included Linkages in PIP as a way to increase access to services for children and families

2018

Legislation Supporting Collaboration

- **AB 429** – Allows continuation of CalWORKs services for the parent or parents of children who have been removed from the home. If the county determines that services are necessary for Family Reunification (FR), AB 429 provisions allow the parent(s) to receive CalWORKs Welfare-to-Work (WTW) Supportive Services (i.e., WTW plan), substance abuse, and mental health services, if it is determined that such services are necessary for family reunification.

- **AB 135** – Authorizes the provision of cash aid and childcare services to families participating in CalWORKs Family Reunification (FR) as part of their reunification plan for up to six months.

- CalWORKs families receiving FR services now eligible for continued cash aid and childcare services for up to six months (ACL 23-94)

- Improved collaborative technology – increased efficiency and improved information sharing

Intersection of Economic Hardship and Child Maltreatment

- Families facing poverty, unemployment, or housing instability are more likely to experience stressors that can lead to child maltreatment (CDSS 2019-2020)

- Economic hardship can contribute to parental stress, mental health issues, substance misuse, and inadequate access to healthcare, all of which are risk factors for child maltreatment (CDPH "Adverse Childhood Experiences and Health Outcomes in California")

- Addressing economic inequality and providing targeted support to families in need are essential strategies for preventing child maltreatment and promoting child well-being in California (Public Policy Institute of California)
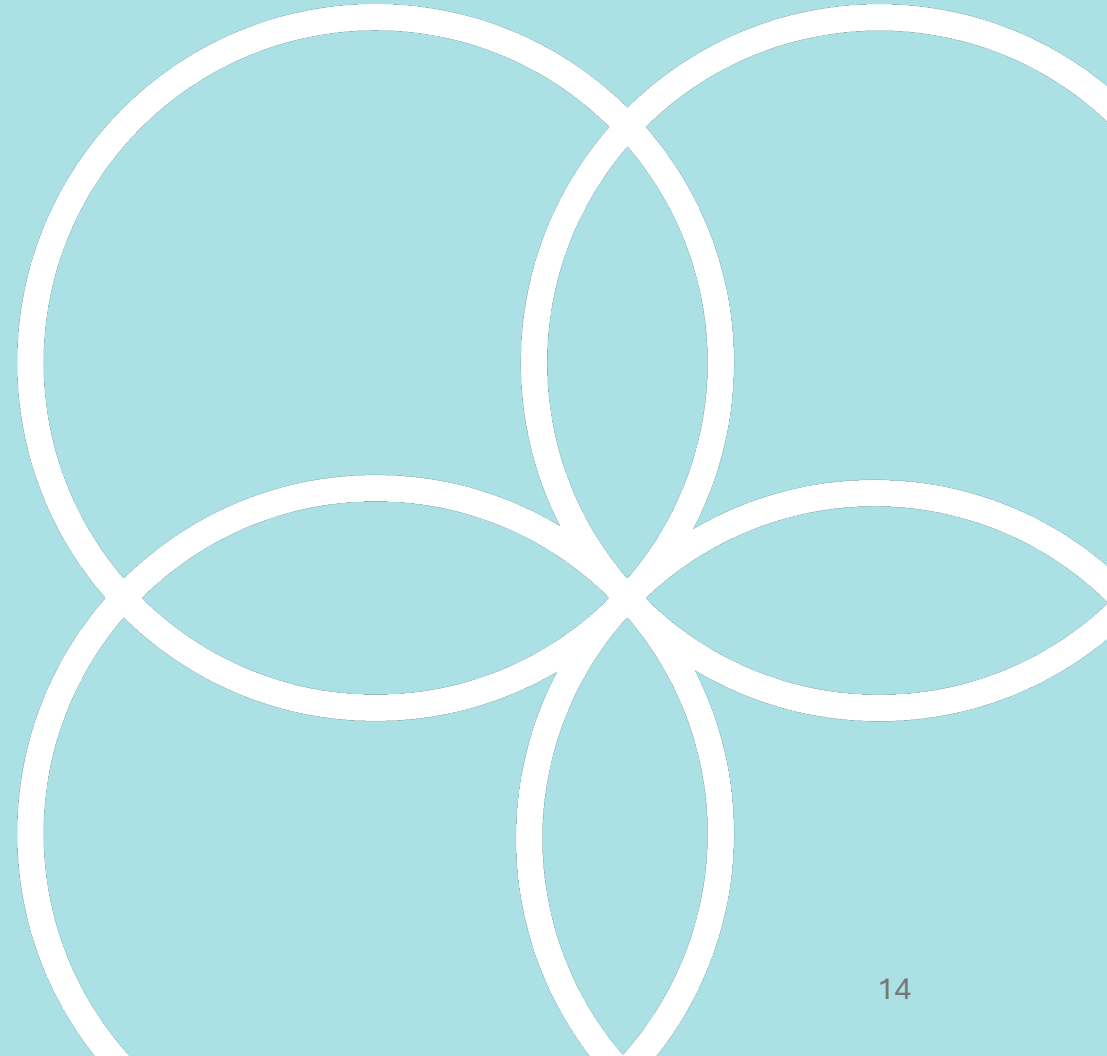
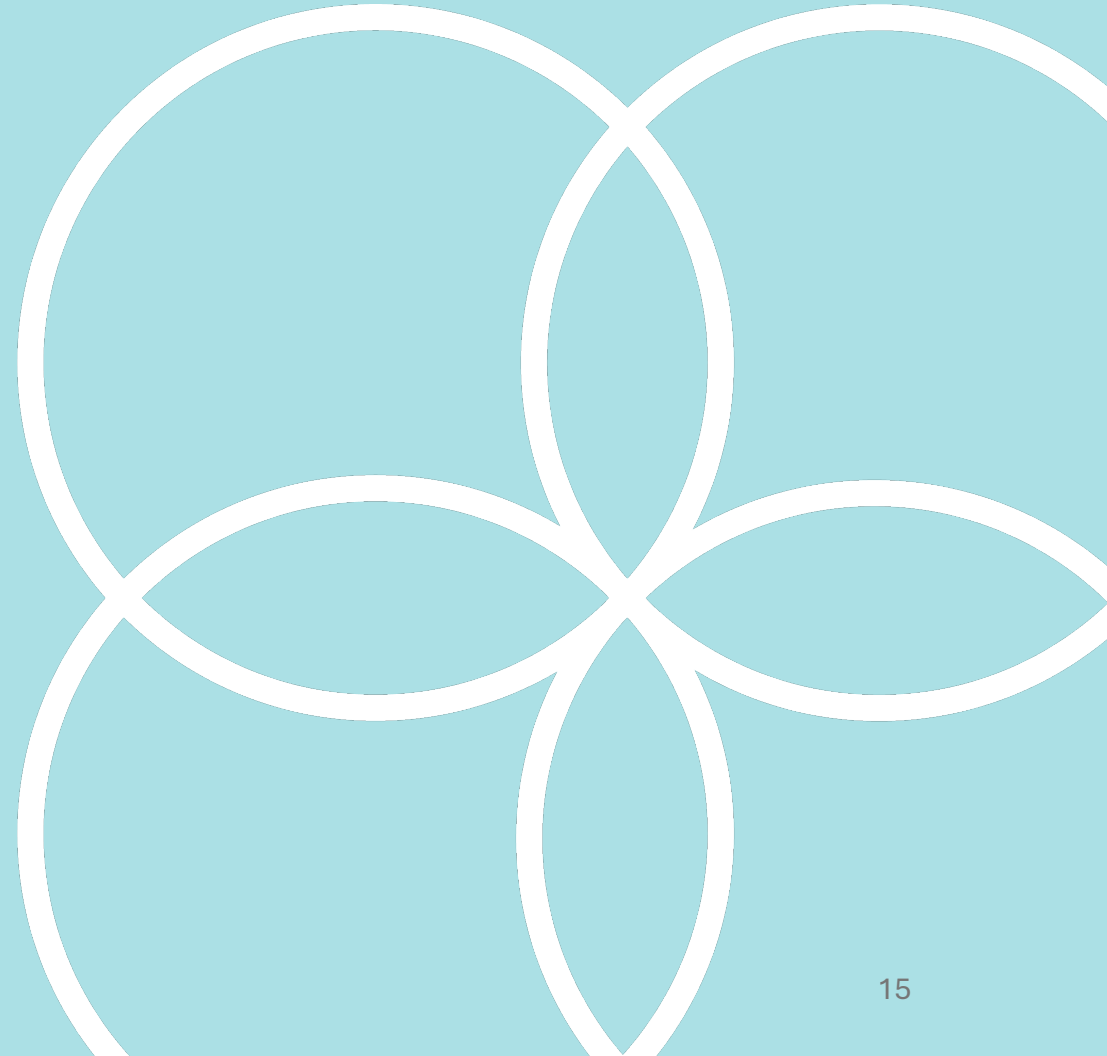# Key Components

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Child Welfare Services: Emergency Response

- Investigate allegations of abuse and neglect

- Assess for safety and risk

- Identify family strengths and needs

- Provide interventions to enhance safety and mitigate risk

CalWORKs Key Components

- Cash Assistance

  o Eligibility Criteria

- Welfare to Work (WTW)

- Family Stabilization (FS)

Integration with Core Practice Model (CPM)

CALIFORNIA CHILD WELFARE

CORE PRACTICE MODEL

A Guiding Framework for Child Welfare Practice

- CPM Overview and Core Principles

- Integration of CalWORKs and CWS within CPM

- Key Components of CPM
  - Prevention
  - Engagement
  - Assessment
  - Planning and Service Delivery
  - Monitoring and Adapting
  - Transition

Strengthening Families/Protective Factors

- Parental resilience

- Social Connections

- Knowledge of parenting and child development

- Concrete support in times of need

- Social and emotional competence of children

CalWORKs 2.0

- Family-Centered Services

- Child Well-Being

- Supportive Services

- Case Management and Coaching

Equity and Inclusion

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19

Equity and Inclusion

- Address the systemic disparities Black and Native American families face in Child Welfare programs.

- Cultivate and maintain meaningful relationships with tribes.

- Empower families, tribes and community networks.

- Ensure access to, and support use of, well-being and healing practices that are relevant and meaningful to the family and its culture.

Equality

The assumption is that **everyone benefits from the same supports**. This is equal treatment.

Equity

Everyone gets the supports they need (this is the concept of "affirmative action"), thus producing equity.

Justice

All 3 can see the game without supports or accommodations because **the cause(s) of the inequity was addressed**. The systemic barrier has been removed.

Breakout

1. How do you approach assessing family strengths and needs in a culturally responsive manner?

2. What assessment tools or techniques have you found effective in evaluating family strengths and needs?
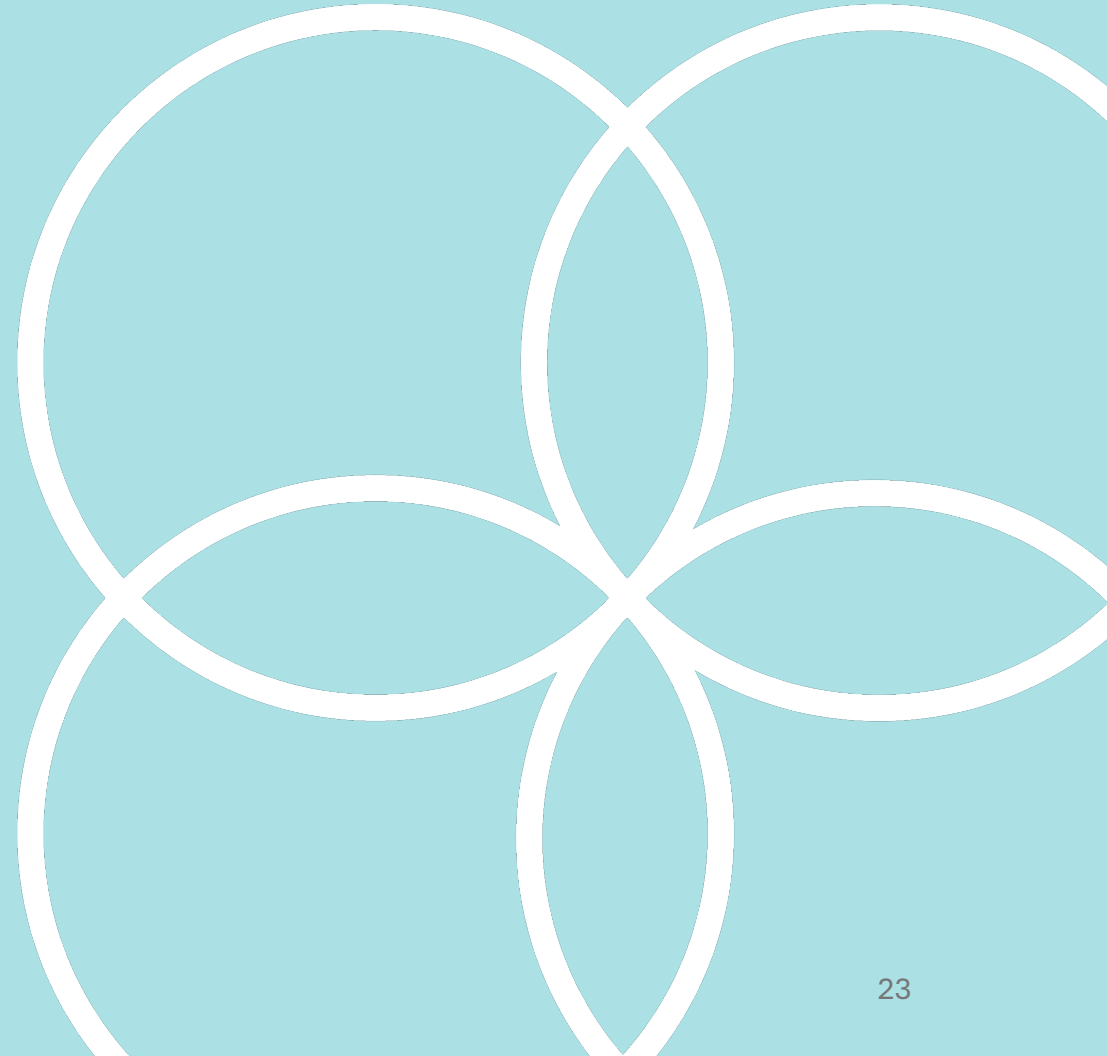
Linkages in Emergency Response

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Linking CalWORKs and CWS during ER

- Assessing for Child Safety

- Why Coordination Matters

- Benefits of Collaboration

- Challenges and Barriers

Intersection Points: Identifying Common CalWORKs and CWS Families during ER

- Cross-referencing of families

- Assessments

  - Targeted questions

- Collaborative Referral Systems

- Interdepartmental Collaboration

Breakout

1. How does your county currently identify families who may benefit from Linkages?

2. What challenges do you encounter when trying to identify common families?

3. Can you share any successful strategies or approaches your agency has used to effectively identify and refer common families?

25

Strategies for Collaboration – Enhancing Coordination and Communication

- Establishing Effective Communication Channels

- Cross-Training and Professional Development

- Joint Case Staffing and Case Planning

- Examples of Effective Strategies

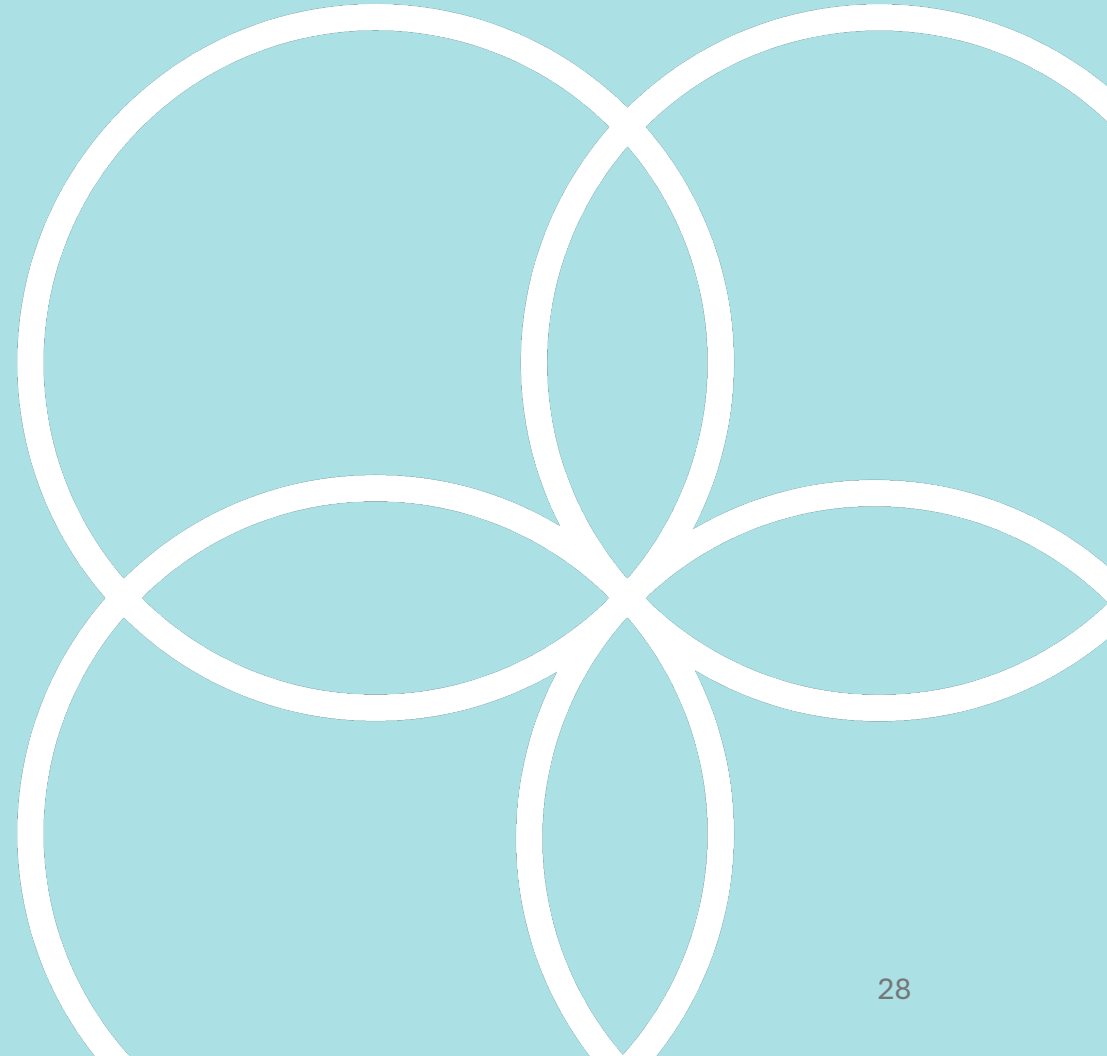 o Regular Interagency Meetings

  o Training Workshops

Supporting Families in Crisis – Evaluating Family Strengths and Needs

- Understanding Family Dynamics

- Assessment Tools

- Key Components of Family Assessment

- Collaborative Approach

- Practical Strategies

Practice: Sarah's Story

- Read the vignette
  (Trainee Workbook Page ___)

- Develop recommendations for
  Linkages collaboration

Next Steps

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Evaluation and Continuous Improvement

- Purpose of Evaluation

- Monitoring Outcomes

- Feedback Mechanisms

- Data Collection Methods

- Data Analysis

- Continuous Improvement Strategies

- Stakeholder Engagement

- Timeline for Evaluation

- Next Steps

Plan to Commit

- What steps do you commit to take to promote collaboration in Linkages in your county?

- How do you envision these efforts positively impacting families in need?

Questions & Comments

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Feedback

- What worked well?

- What should be changed?

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