

Linkages Overview

Empowering Families through Partnership



Agenda

- Introductions/Group Agreements
- Materials/Resources Overview
- Program Overview
- Collaborative Partnerships
- Services and Eligibility
- Case Management and Coordination
- Family Engagement Guidelines
- Questions and Discussion



Welcome!

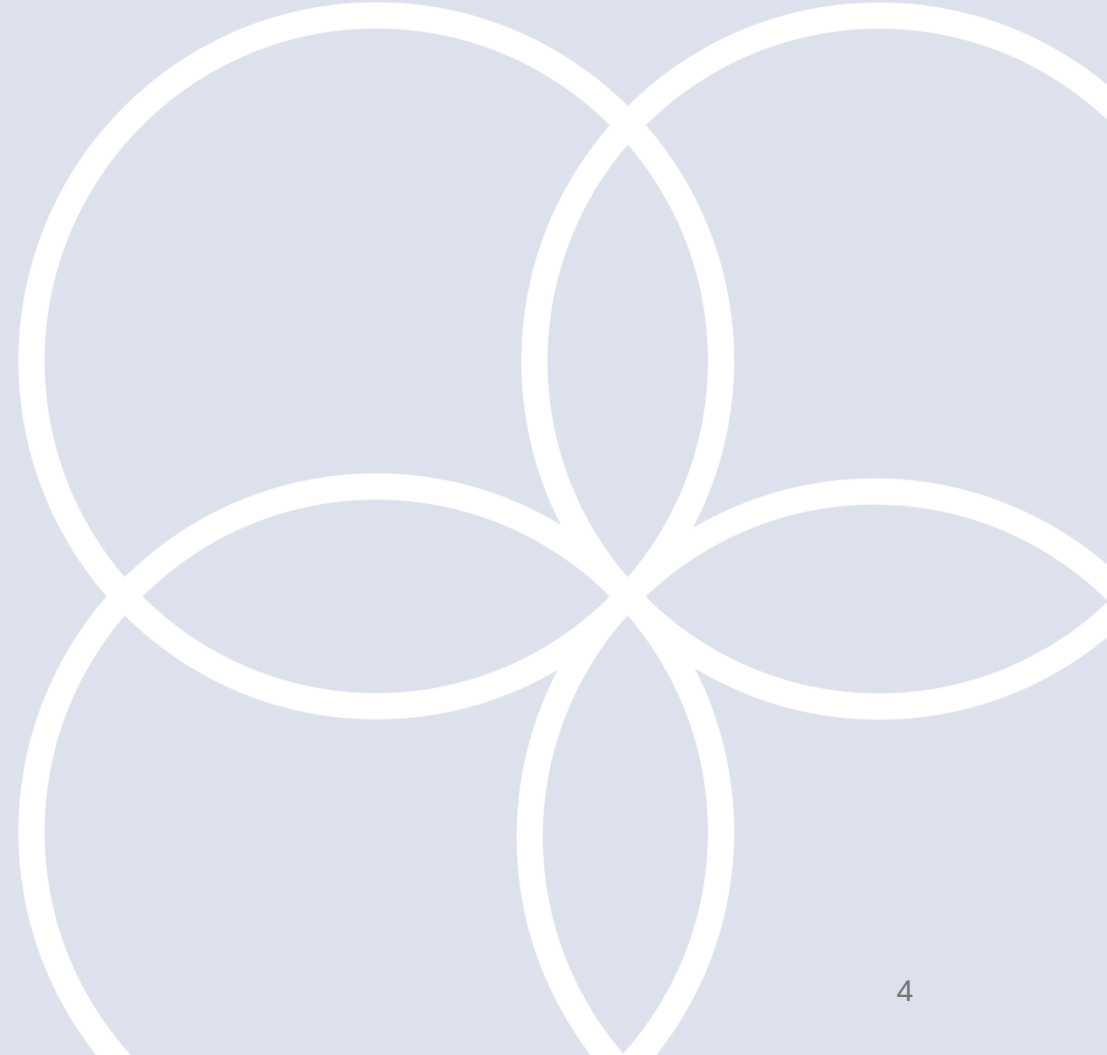
Getting Started
and Introductions



linkages.cfpic.org

Let's Get to Know Each Other

- Introduce yourself
 - Name
 - Role, County
- Why Linkages?
- What do you bring with you, what do you hope to take away from our day?



Group Agreements

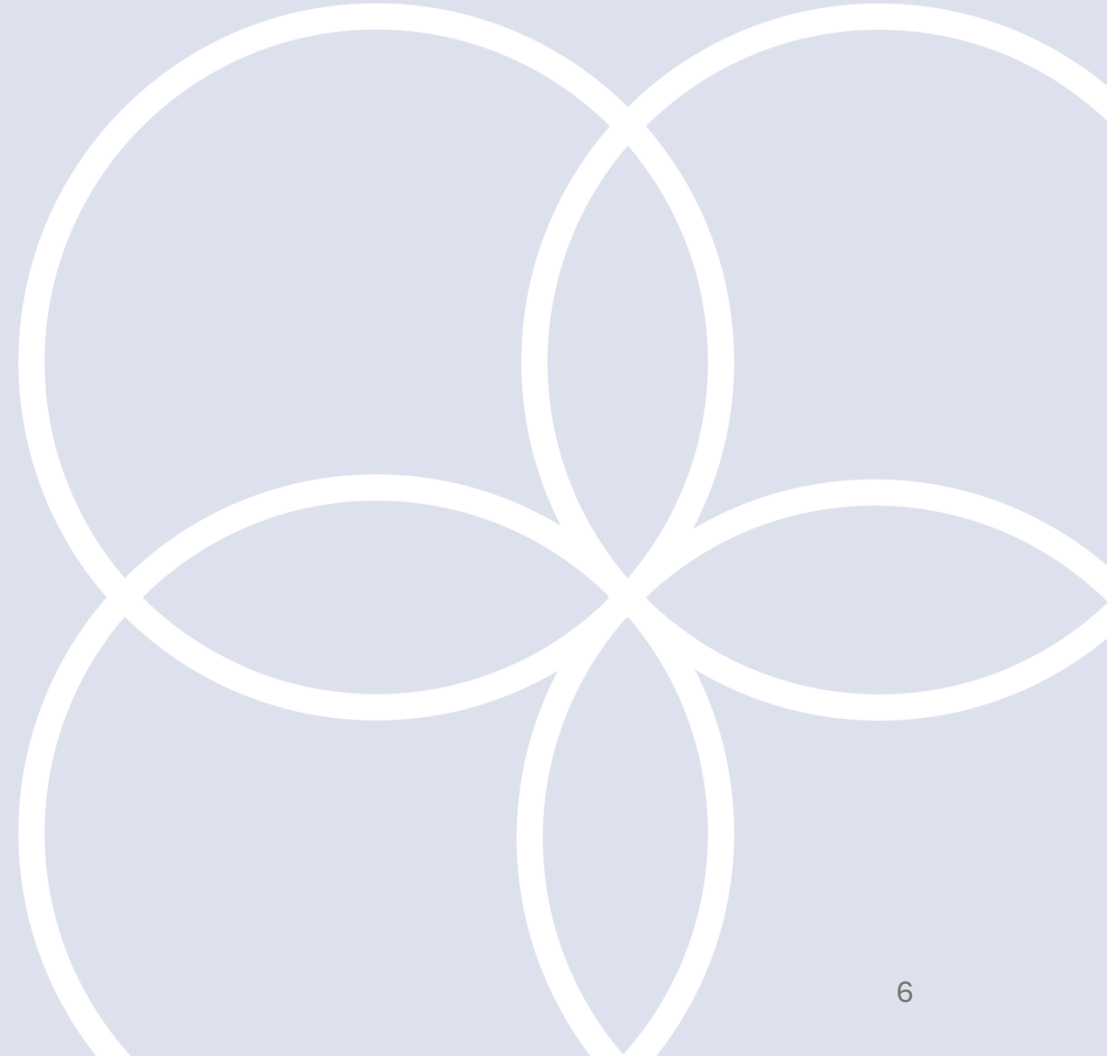
*Speak from your own experience
(use “I” statements):*



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



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.

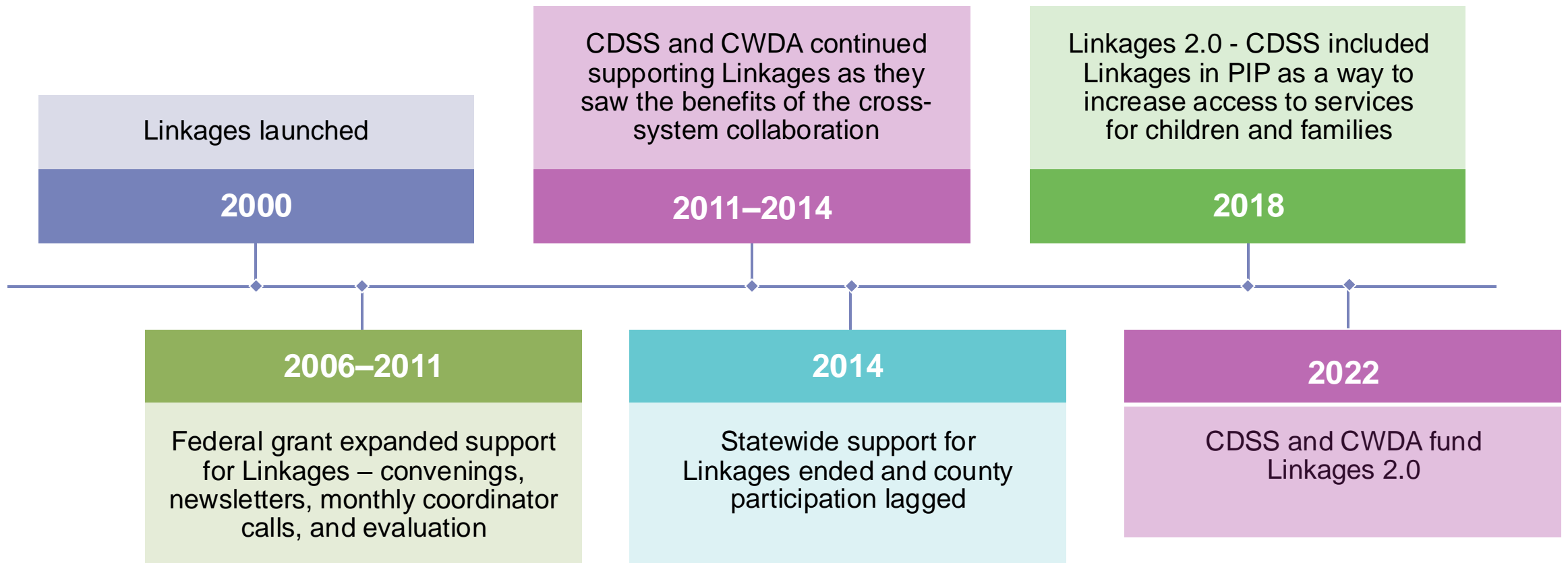
Linkages Overview

Approach
Practice
Strategies for
collaborative work



linkages.cfpic.org

Linkages Timeline



Why Linkages?



Poverty and economic stressors create conditions where child maltreatment is more likely to occur.

Linkages 2.0: 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.



Key Changes: What's different now?

- Equity and Inclusion
- Family First Prevention Services Act (FFPSA)
- AB 2085 & WIC 300(b)
- Primary/secondary/tertiary interventions
- Incorporation of Core Practice Model and CalWORKs 2.0
- Strengthening Families – Protective Factors

Latest developments...

- Improved collaborative technology – increased efficiency and improved information sharing
- CalWORKs staff are conducting joint home visits with Child Welfare staff
- The Linkages Transition Age Youth and Non-Minor Dependent Young Adult Subcommittee is working to enhance Linkages support for 16- to 26-year-olds.

Linkages Framework

Primary/Prevention

At risk, no CWS case open

- Target Population: Applicants for and recipients of CalWORKs who are not involved in CWS to provide support and education before problems occur.
- Linkages Activity: Provide information & materials to promote child and family well-being.

Secondary/Early Intervention

Hotline/ER/CalWORKs service coordination
Family Stabilization & Home Visiting
Differential Response

- Target population: Applicants for and recipients of CalWORKs with identified risk factors/ service needs who may or may not have been referred to CWS; but if so, a CWS case has not been opened. Families in need of support to alleviate identified problems and prevent escalation.
- Linkages Activity: Align & coordinate early intervention services and supports.

Tertiary/Mutual Client Coordination

Family Maintenance
Family Reunification

- Target Population: Families who are on CalWORKs and have an open CWS case.
- Linkages Activity: Provide interventions for children experiencing maltreatment. Coordinate joint services, supports & resources to prevent re-entry to CWS & alleviate economic stressors.

Linkages Theory of Change – Primary Prevention



Primary prevention:

IF CalWORKs staff provide Child Abuse Prevention information to CalWORKs recipients and families receive services to address potential barriers...

Linkages Theory of Change – Primary Prevention

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 referrals of CalWORKs families to Child Welfare.

Linkages Theory of Change – Secondary Prevention



Secondary prevention:

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

Linkages Theory of Change – Secondary Prevention

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.

Linkages Theory of Change – Tertiary Prevention



Tertiary prevention:

IF there is continued support to CalWORKs recipients and families with CWS involvement and increased collaboration and coordination between CalWORKs and CWS...

Linkages Theory of Change – Tertiary Prevention

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 focus efforts on mitigating the trauma of child maltreatment, reduce its negative consequences and prevent its recurrence.

Small Group Activity

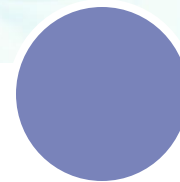
Speaking the same
language: Get to know
your teammates and
your acronyms!



linkages.cfpic.org

Statistics

What we have learned...



linkages.cfpic.org

Economic Hardship and Child Maltreatment

- Families below the poverty line are three times more likely to be substantiated for child maltreatment (Drake & Jonson-Reid, 2014).
- Nearly 85% of families investigated by child protective services earn below 200% of the federal poverty line
- Economic disparities and historical systemic disadvantages have fueled disproportionate child welfare system involvement among families of color; Black, Latino, and American Indian/Alaska Native (AI/AN) families are disproportionately more likely to be poor due to longstanding systemic conditions (Semega et al., 2020).

Poverty and Neglect

In 2023, California passed AB 2085:

- A child must be “at substantial risk of suffering serious physical harm or illness” to fall within the definition of ‘general neglect’.
- ‘General neglect’ does not include a parent’s economic disadvantage.

Welfare and Institutions Code 300(b) was also modified to:

Prohibit a child from being subject to the jurisdiction of the juvenile court solely due to indigence or other conditions of financial difficulty, including, but not limited to, poverty and the inability to provide or obtain clothing, home or property repair, or childcare.

Concrete Support in Times of Need

- Provision of economic and concrete supports is associated with decreases in both neglect and physical abuse.
- There is a relationship between increased state spending on public benefit programs and decreased child maltreatment.

Income Disparities: Families of Color Earn Less



For every \$1 that white families earn, Black families earn \$0.60 and Latino families earn \$0.52. Many factors drive these trends, ranging from disparities in education, local job opportunities, and incarceration, to discrimination in the labor market.

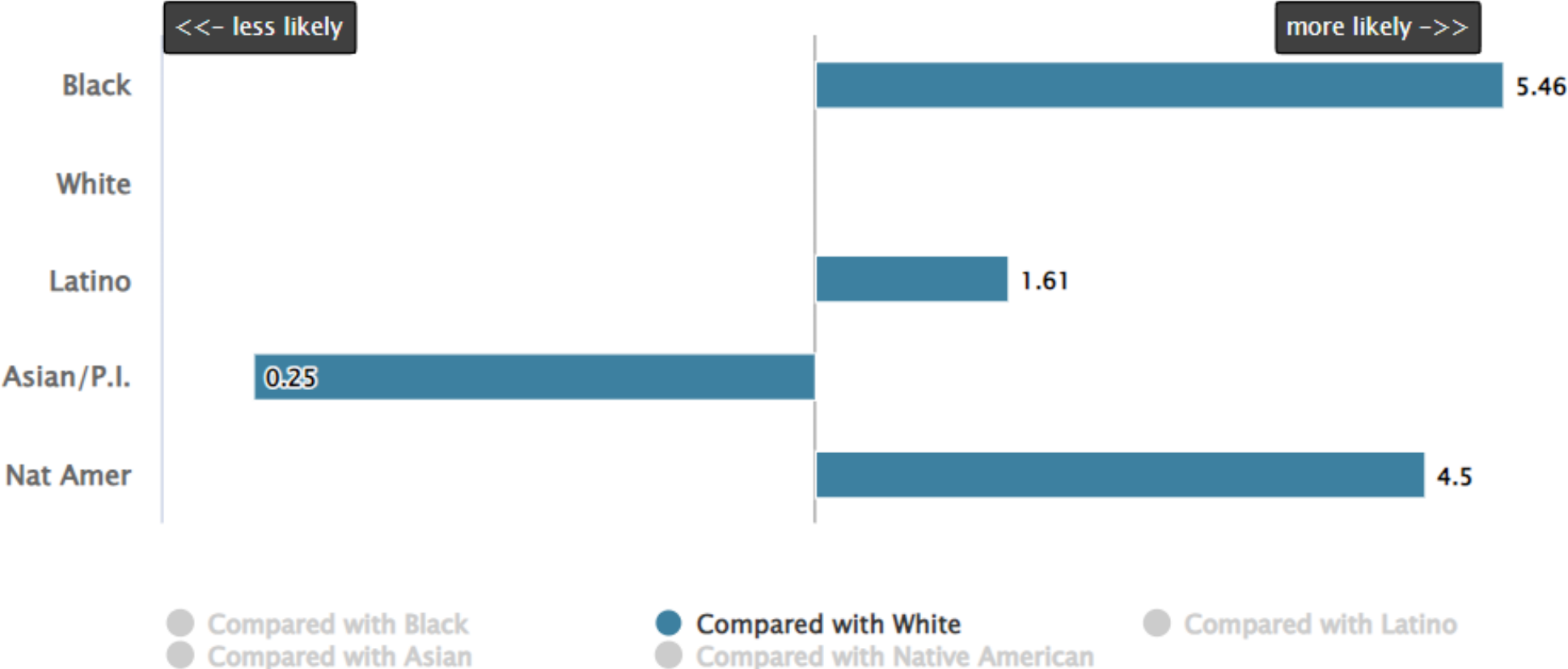
Disproportionality

- The proportions of Black and Native American youth in foster care are around four times larger than the proportions of Black and Native American youth in California overall.
- Recent research on cumulative child welfare involvement of California's 1999 birth cohort found nearly one in two Black and Native American children experienced some level of child welfare involvement by the time they turned 18 (compared to around 29 percent of Hispanic/Latino children, 22 percent of white children, and 13 percent of Asian/Pacific Islander children).

Disproportionality at All Stages

- Referrals – Black and Native American families are overreported for allegations of abuse and neglect, but this is significantly impacted by poverty.*
- Substantiation – Caseworkers are more likely to substantiate allegations of abuse and neglect for Black and Native American families.
- Removal – Black and Latino children are more likely than White children to be removed and placed into out-of-home care and less likely to receive treatment services.
- Access to Services – Black families are less likely to receive services that support reunification or placement stability.
- Permanency – Due to inequitable access and provision of services, Black children are less likely to reunify or be provided with a legally permanent caregiver.

California “In Care” Disparity Index 2023



Disproportionality: Why?

- Disproportionate and disparate needs of children of diverse racial and ethnic backgrounds, particularly due to higher rates of poverty
- Lack of cultural competency
- Child welfare system factors (e.g., lack of resources for families of diverse racial and ethnic backgrounds, caseworker characteristics)
- Geographic context, such as the region, state, or neighborhood
- Policy and legislation (e.g., lack of measures targeting the needs of children of diverse racial and ethnic backgrounds)
- Structural racism (e.g., historical policies and cultural dynamics)

Discussion

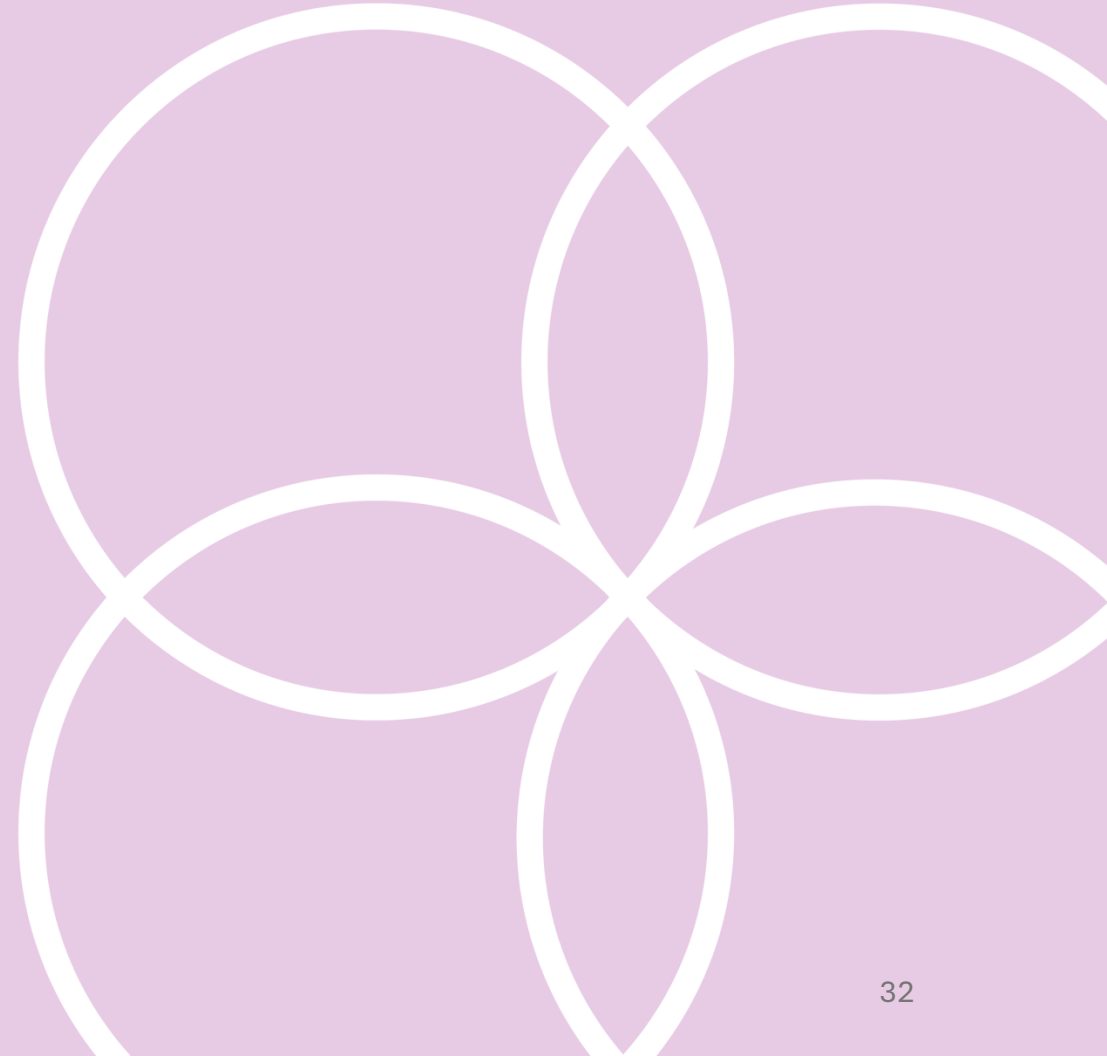
In what ways can agencies incorporate culturally responsive practices to better support children and families from diverse racial and ethnic backgrounds?



linkages.cfpic.org

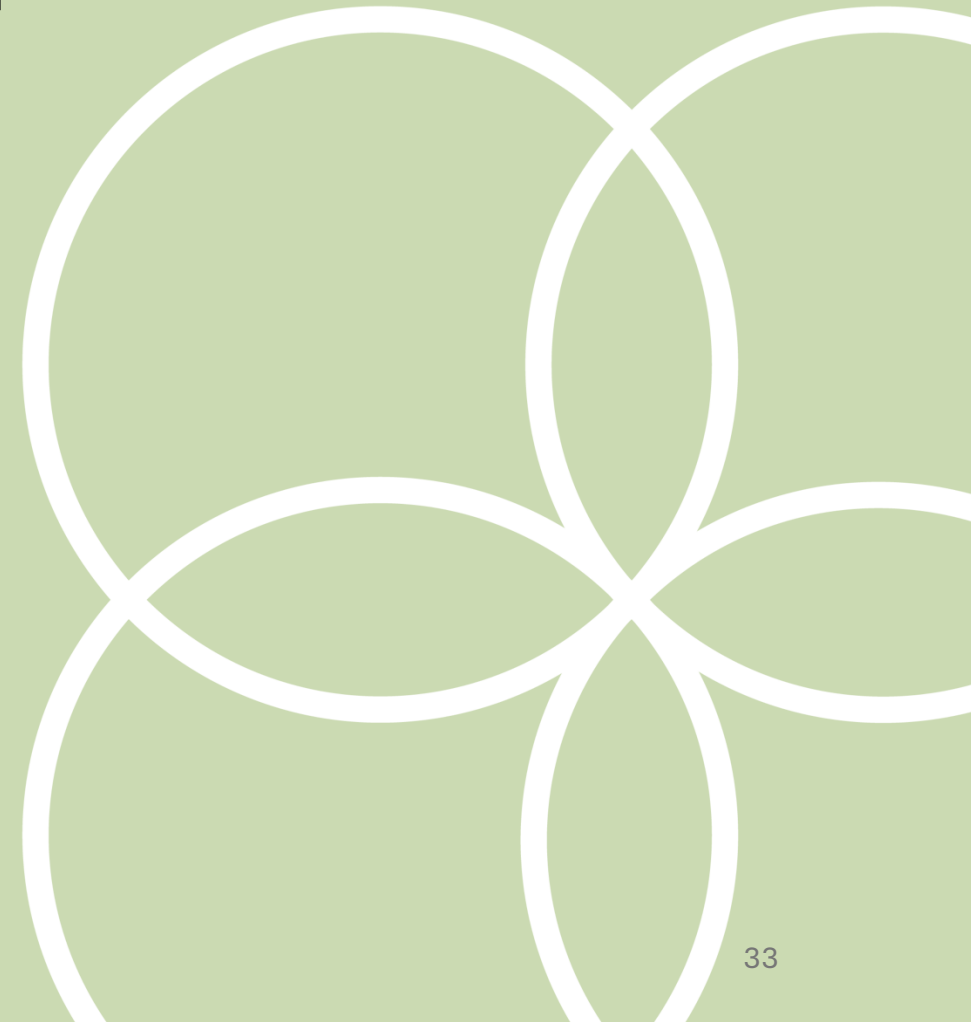
Linkages: What does it look like?

- Collaboration between staff
- Coordinating and aligning case plans (WTW 2 Plan Activity)
- Collaborative family engagement
- Sharing of resources
- Addressing needs
- Building on the family's strengths and natural supports



Who is being served?

- Families served by CalWORKs/WTW and involved with or at risk of Child Welfare involvement.
- Categories of services:
 - Prevention /Primary Tier
 - Hotline and Emergency Response Referrals
 - Family Maintenance (voluntary & court-supervised)
 - Family Reunification
 - After-Care



Discussion

In your county, at what point does Linkages coordination typically begin for mutual families, and what does this initial involvement look like?

If you have not started providing Linkages services, at what point could collaboration begin and what could that look like?



linkages.cfpic.org

Strengthening Families / Protective Factors



1. Parental resilience
2. Social Connections
3. Knowledge of parenting and child development
4. Concrete support in times of need
5. Social and emotional competence of children

Let's Reflect!

Consider how the services offered to families by CWS and CalWORKs/WTW can work together more effectively.

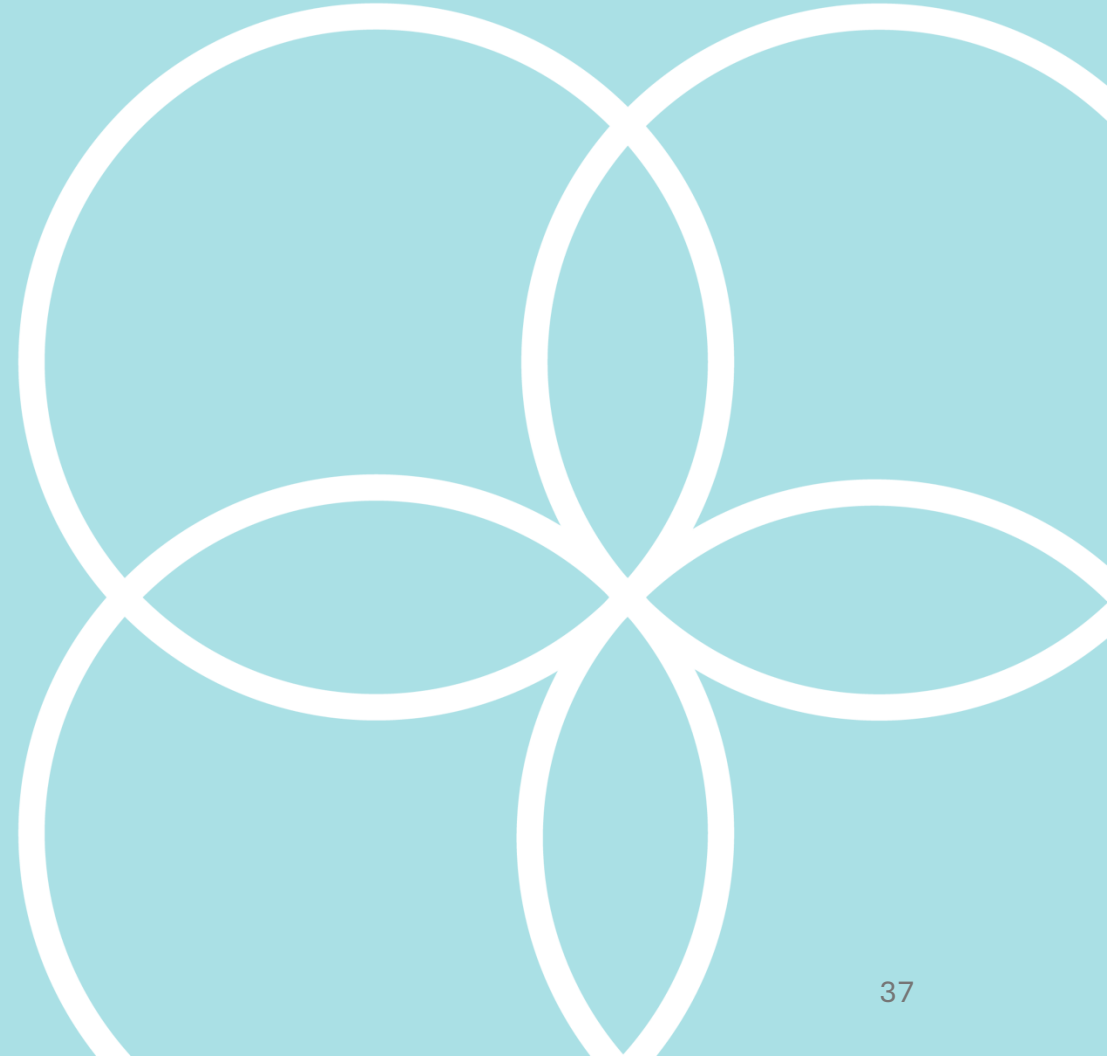
How can we ensure that families receive consistent and well-coordinated support?



linkages.cfpic.org

Key Collaboration Points and Activities

- Hotline and Emergency Response
- Family Reunification
- Family Maintenance
- Aftercare
- Family Engagement
- Collaboration



Emergency Response Referral Coordination



Defining
emergency
response

Connecting
Families with
referrals to
CalWORKs-
funded
supportive
services

Effective service
coordination

Family Reunification & Family Maintenance

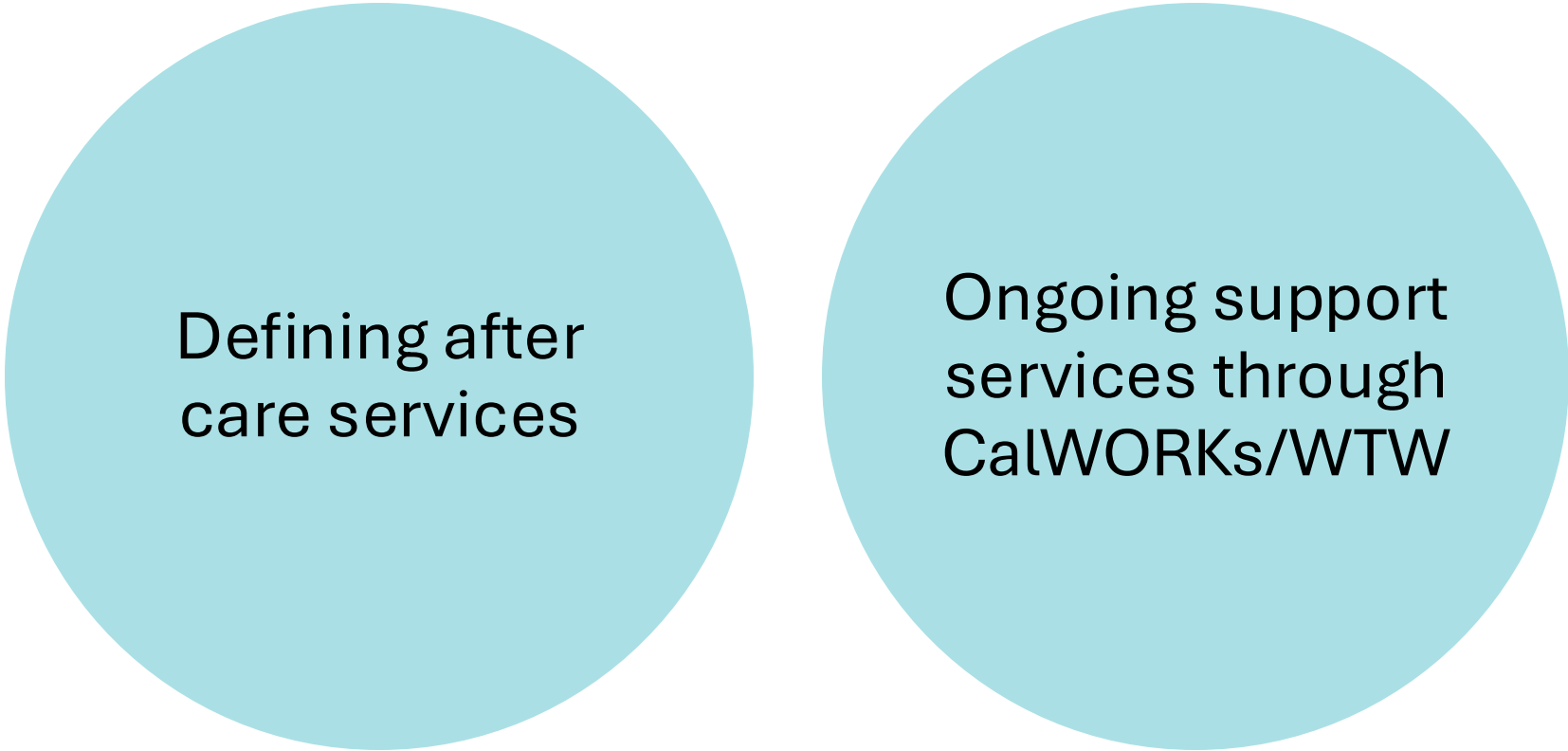
- Defining family reunification
- CalWORKs-funded FR activities/services
- Condition for an extension of CalWORKs FR services
- Improving outcomes
- Reducing duplication and streamlining services
- ACL 23-94 flexibilities
- Linkages supports to promote Family Maintenance following successful reunification

AB 429

CalWORKs
services
continue when
the child(ren) has
been removed

CalWORKs
services have
been deemed
necessary
to support
reunification

After-Care Coordination



Defining after
care services

Ongoing support
services through
CalWORKs/WTW

What Might After Care Look Like?



Integrated
services

Collaborative
approach

Support for
a period of
time after
CWS case has
been closed

Family Engagement Guidelines

Significance
of active
family
engagement

Leads to
improved
outcomes

Not just a
guideline;
a key to
success in
Linkages

Vignette Activity: The Miller Family

- Read Miller Family Vignette in Trainee Workbook.
- Consider discussion questions for small group discussion.

Small Group Activity: The Miller Family

1. How do you see CWS and CalWORKs connecting to provide a Linkages approach to supporting this family?
2. How might disproportionality factors play into their situation?
3. What are the benefits of teaming?
4. Identify potential challenges in teaming efforts. For instance, communication gaps, differing priorities, or resource limitations. How might these challenges impact the Miller family's case? Brainstorm strategies to overcome these obstacles, such as regular cross-agency meetings, shared training, and joint case reviews.

Unveiling Best Practices

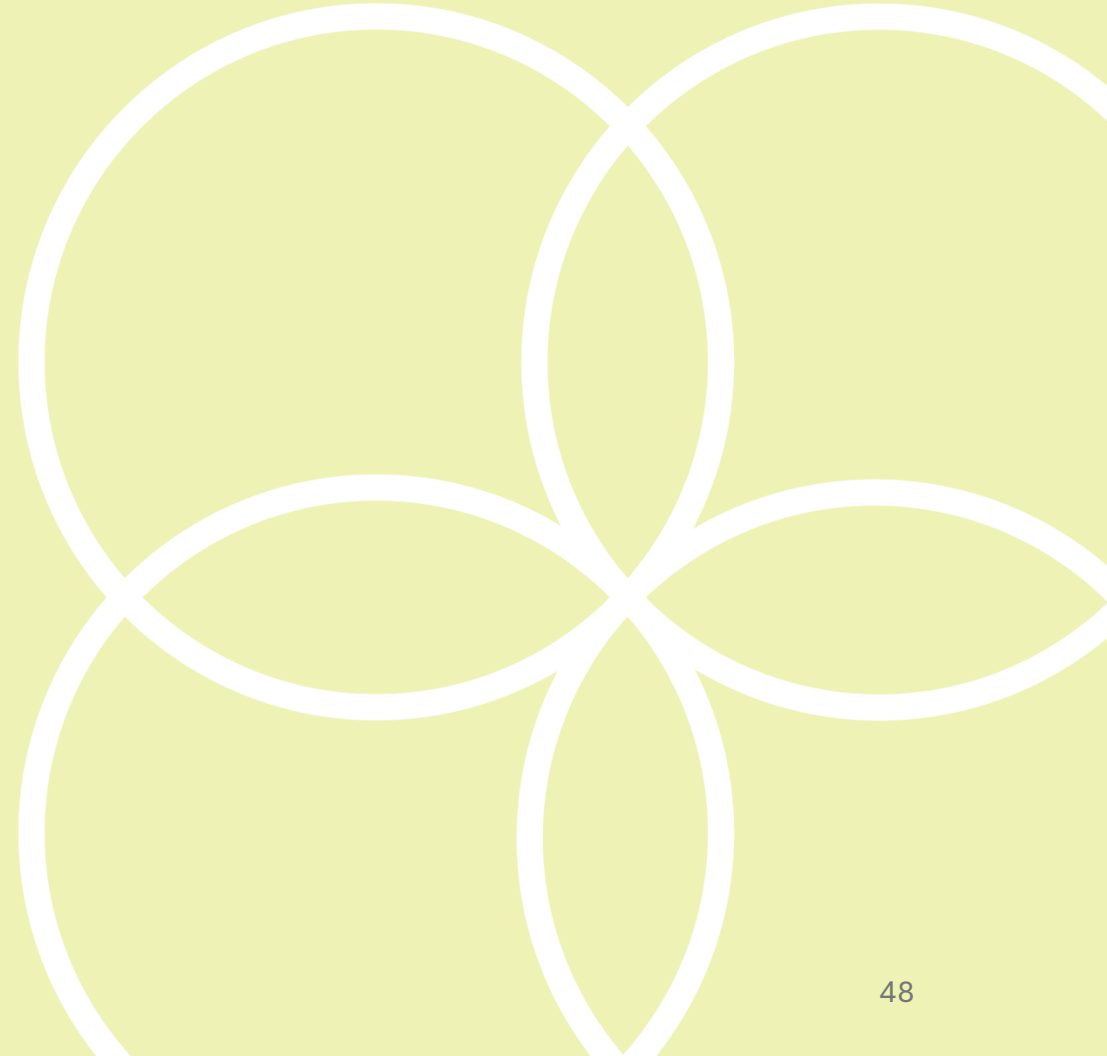
- Strong leadership buy-in from both CalWORKs and Child Welfare Services
- A culture of innovation
- Shared beliefs through CalWORKs and Child Welfare collaboration
- Clear communication
- Compatible procedures
- Trauma-informed practices

Strengthening Collaboration

- Organizational support via shared belief in the value of collaboration
- Invested and engaged leadership
- Coordinated case planning
- Cross-collaboration with other services
- Shared data and communication systems
- Co-location

Closing

Consider: How do you plan to strengthen collaboration between CWS and CalWORKs within your role, ultimately enhancing support for shared families through Linkages?



Questions & Comments



linkages.cfpic.org

Feedback



- What worked well?
- What could be changed?

References

- ACL 23-105. (n.d.-b). <https://www.cdss.ca.gov/Portals/9/Additional-Resources/Forms-and-Brochures/2020/I-L/LIC9274.pdf?ver=2022-02-22-163616-390>
- ACL 23-105. (n.d.-b). <https://www.cdss.ca.gov/Portals/9/Additional-Resources/Forms-and-Brochures/2020/I-L/LIC9274.pdf?ver=2022-02-22-163616-390>
- Detailed history of linkages in California. The Linkages Project. (2022, April 14). <https://linkages.cfpic.org/detailed-history-of-linkages-in-california/>
- Dawson, K. & Berry, M. (2002). Engaging families in child welfare services: An evidence-based approach to best practice. *Child Welfare*, 81(2), 293-317.
- Economic & Concrete supports: Prevention of child welfare ... (n.d.-c). <https://www.chhs.ca.gov/wp-content/uploads/2022/06/CA-CWC-06.01.22-Chapin-Hall-final-deck.pdf>
- Family engagement: Partnering with families to improve child welfare outcomes. Child Welfare Information Gateway. (n.d.). <https://www.childwelfare.gov/resources/family-engagement-partnering-families-improve-child-welfare-outcomes/>
- Home. The Linkages Project. (2024, January 23). <https://linkages.cfpic.org/>
- Initial analysis and key questions: Racial disproportionalities and disparities in California's child welfare system [publication details]. (2022, March 9). <https://lao.ca.gov/Publications/Detail/4571>