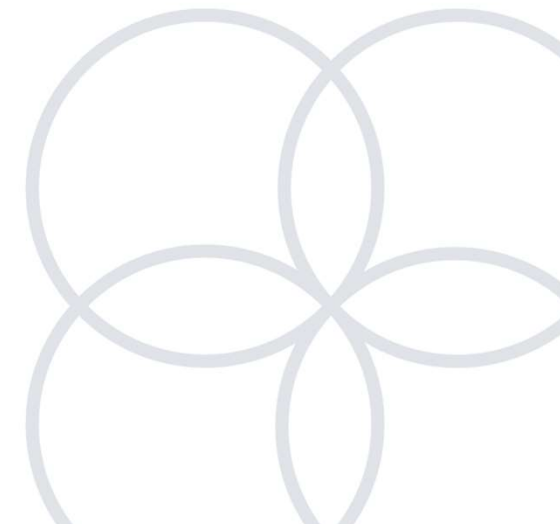


Implementing the CalWORKs Family Reunification (AB135) Policy Change

Presented by CDSS & CFPIC
October 22, 2024



Housekeeping

1. Please use the EasyRetro Board to submit questions – access it via the QR Code on the screen or the link in the chat.
2. We will have a brief pause for one or two questions after each section and there will be a Q & A at the end. We will pull questions from the EasyRetro Board.



Introductions: Presenters



Julia Perez, Manager,
Early Engagement &
Eligibility Bureau



Terra Red, Analyst,
Early Engagement &
Eligibility Bureau



Carolyn Spain, Analyst
Engagement Bureau



Celeste Hinojos, Analyst,
Child and Family Services
Division



Danna Fabella,
Linkages Program Director,
CFPIC



Andrea Lewis
Linkages Program Associate,
CFPIC

Agenda

1. Linkages Overview
2. CalWORKs Family Reunification
3. CalWORKs FR Services
4. CWS Services
5. Questions from the EasyRetro Board
6. Closing

What Counties participate in the Linkages Collaborative?





Northern Region / Mountain Valley Region

- Amador
- Butte
- Calaveras
- Glenn
- Humboldt
- Imperial
- Lake
- Mendocino
- Nevada
- Placer
- Shasta
- Siskiyou
- Tehama
- Trinity
- Tuolumne
- Yolo



Bay Region

- Alameda
- Contra Costa
- Marin
- Napa
- San Francisco
- San Mateo
- Santa Clara
- Sonoma



Central Region

- Fresno
- Kern
- Kings
- Madera
- Mariposa
- Merced
- San Joaquin
- San Luis Obispo
- Santa Barbara
- Stanislaus
- Tulare
- Ventura

What is Linkages?



Linkages teams are comprised of Child Welfare and Self-Sufficiency staff. They work with families who are served by CalWORKs/WTW and involved with Child Welfare or at risk of Child Welfare involvement.

They provide services and service coordination in these areas:

- Prevention
- Hotline and Emergency Response Referrals
- Family Maintenance (voluntary / non-court & court-supervised)
- Family Reunification
- Aftercare



Linkages teams work together to

- Collaborate across programs
- Coordinate and align case plans (WTW 2 Plan Activity)
- Engage with the family
- Share resources
- Address needs
- Build on the family's strengths and natural supports





**Linkages
1.0**

Linkages 2.0

A new and expanded approach
to CalWORKs and Child
Welfare collaboration for
serving vulnerable families

HISTORICAL JOURNEY FOR LINKAGES

PREVENTION FRAMEWORK & LINKAGES

Primary / Universal

Programs targeted at entire population to provide support and education before problems occur

- Family support info and resources for CalWORKs families

Secondary

Programs targeted at families in need to alleviate identified problems and prevent escalation

- CW - Family Stabilization & Home Visiting
- CWS - Differential Response
- ER/CalWORKs service coordination

Tertiary

Provide interventions for children experiencing maltreatment

- Child Welfare /CalWORKs service & case planning coordination for FM and FR

Linkages Key Ingredients

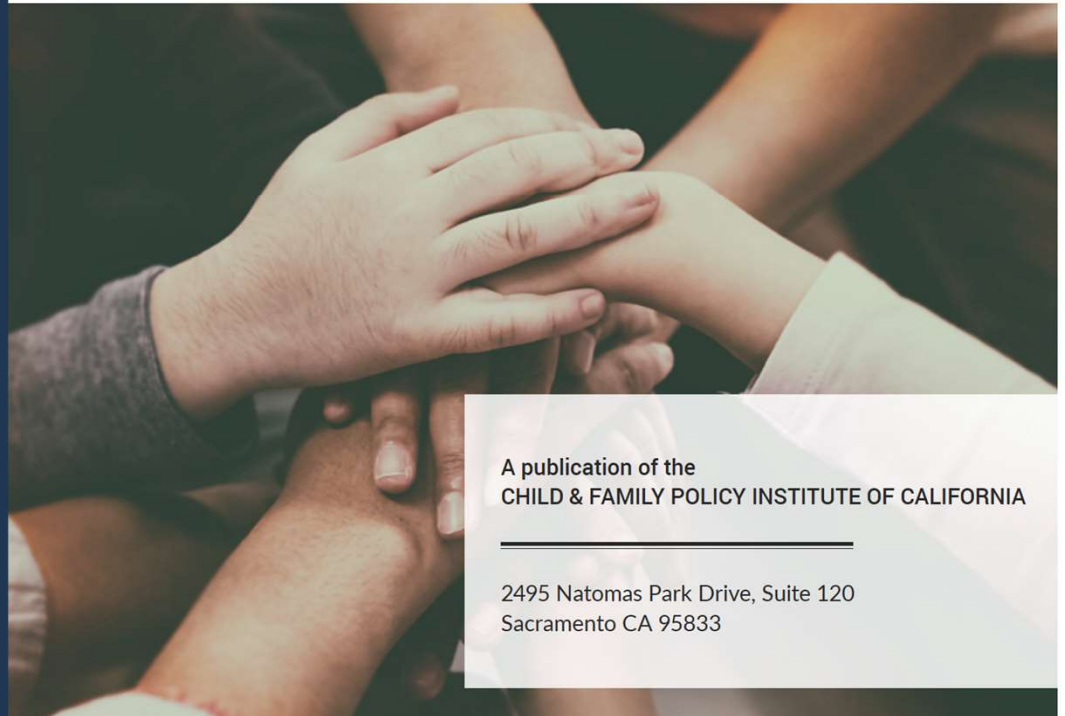
- Shared vision
- Consistent communication
- Accurate identification of mutual families
- Deliberate service coordination
- Joint trainings
- Leveraged resources
- Shared accountability



Linkages Resources to Support Family Reunification (AB135) Implementation

Linkages Guidelines for Enhancing Family Engagement

through the CalWORKs & Child Welfare Partnership



A publication of the
CHILD & FAMILY POLICY INSTITUTE OF CALIFORNIA

2495 Natomas Park Drive, Suite 120
Sacramento CA 95833

CalWORKs Family Reunification (CWFR)

*Early Engagement
and Eligibility Bureau*



CWFR: Existing Policy

Assembly Bill (AB) 429:

- CalWORKs services are available to the parent(s) of a child(ren) removed from the home and temporarily placed in out-of-home care if the county has determined those services necessary for reunification.
- Available for up to 180 consecutive days - could be extended due to good cause.
- Includes Welfare to Work (WTW) services such as mental health and substance abuse services, but not cash aid or child care.
- Temporary Homeless Assistance for FR families (AB 236)

Assembly Bill 135 & CWFR Policy Changes

AB 135 (Chapter 85, Statutes of 2021):



Amended Welfare and Institutions Code (WIC) Section 11203



Allows reunification parents who were receiving aid when the child was removed to also be eligible **to receive cash aid and child care services** if the county has determined that they are necessary for reunification



Increases the temporary absence period from up to 180 consecutive days to up to 6 months.

Eligibility for CWFR

- All CalWORKs-eligible children were removed from the home and temporarily placed in out-of-home care.
- The family was receiving CalWORKs cash aid when the child(ren) was removed.
- CWS or a court has determined that the provision of cash aid, child care, and/or reunification services is necessary for reunification, and a reunification plan is in development and/or in effect.

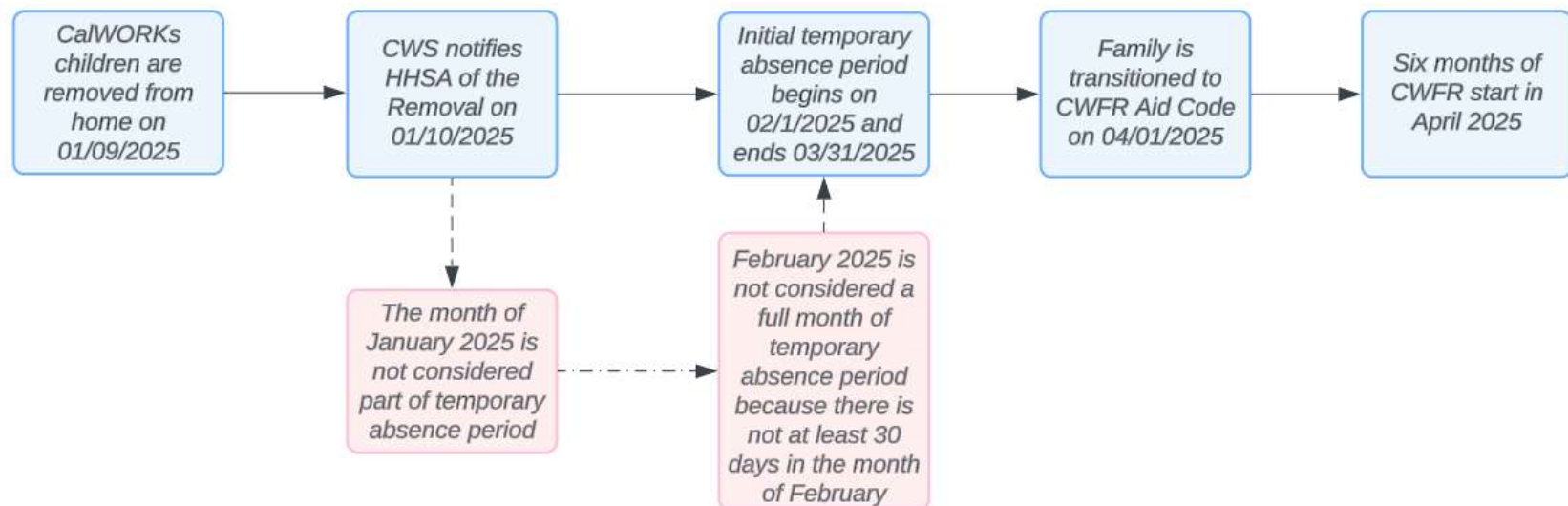


Initial Temporary Absence Period

When all CalWORKs eligible children are removed from the home by the CWS agency:

1. The children will be considered temporary absent for one full month. The family will not be discontinued.
2. The CWS agency should provide a notification to the HHSA on whether CWFR will be recommended before the end of the initial temporary absence period.
3. If the family is recommended for CWFR, the HHSA will transition the family to CWFR after temporary absence period has ended.
4. If HHSA receives notification that there will not be a recommendation for CWFR or does not receive a notification, then the family is discontinued from CalWORKs.

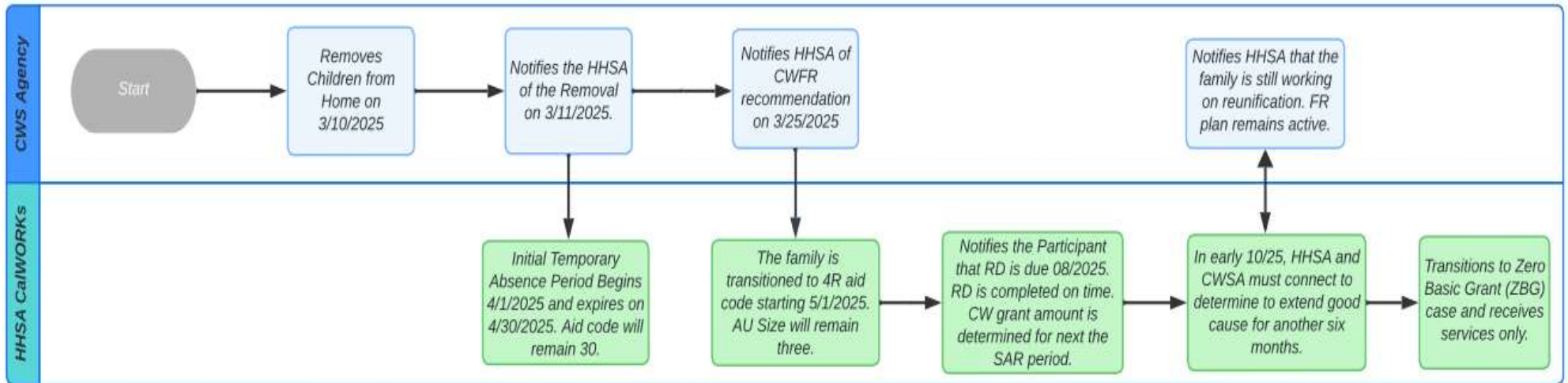
Initial Temporary Absence Period - Visual



Process Map for CWFR Cash Aid

Scenario Information

- CW Family Composition: 3 (1 Parent + 2 Children)
- Current Aid Code: 30
- RD Due: August 2025



CWFR: Prominent Q&As

1. Do the CalWORKs reporting rules apply for CWFR?

Yes. Since the CWFR family is receiving cash aid, all CalWORKs rules tied to the cash aid apply including:

- SAR 7, Redetermination, & mid-period reporting rules
- CalWORKs time-on-aid clocks will tick
- Overpayments can be established

2. Can CalWORKs cash aid be extended beyond six months for CWFR?

Not at this time. CWFR cash aid can only be provided for up to six months. CWFR services can be extended if there is good cause.

CWFR: Prominent Q&As

3. Is CalWORKs cash aid for CWFR families a once-in-a-lifetime policy?

Families can receive six months of CWFR cash aid per FR plan, and it is not limited to once-in-a-lifetime. However, a family cannot receive more than six months of cash aid in one CWFR plan.

4. Are families with CalWORKs penalties and WTW sanctions eligible for CWFR?

Yes. Families with existing penalties and sanctions are eligible for CWFR. However, the penalties and sanctions must remain on the grant until they are addressed by the family.

CWFR: Prominent Q&As

5. Can the children in the CWFR parent(s)' AU be aided in another CalWORKs case?

Not at this time. Since the needs of the child are included in the CWFR parent(s)' AU, they cannot be aided in another CalWORKs AU. If the CWFR child(ren) is placed in the care of a relative or a parent, the relative or parent can apply and, if eligible, receive aid for themselves as an AU of one.

6. Are the CWFR child(ren) eligible for Foster Care?

Yes. CWFR child(ren) will be eligible for AFDC-FC, the alternative relative caregiver (ARC) program, and family maintenance assistance payments while in their parent(s)' CalWORKs case.

**QUESTIONS
FROM THE
EASYRETRO
BOARD**



CWFR Services

WTW



CWFR Services (1)

Good Cause Extension

CWS may recommend a good cause extension to the six-month temporary absence period for continued WTW services.

When the CWS determines that additional time is needed to reunify the family, they may recommend Good Cause in up to six-month intervals.

CWDs must then determine that the family is still CalWORKs financially eligible based on information in the case file.

Good Cause determinations will no longer require a CalWORKs redetermination packet if the family ever received CWFR cash aid.

CWFR Services (2)

WTW Participation Sanctions & FR

CWDs who utilize the CWS FR case plan, rather than the WTW 2, must exempt CWFR parents from the WTW noncompliance process, *including imposing a sanction.*

CWDs who utilize the WTW 2 and later impose a sanction on CWFR parents must continue to offer WTW services included in the CWS FR case plan.

Under AB 429 and AB 135, CWFR parents who are sanctioned and not receiving cash aid, maintain eligibility to WTW services. CWDs may use the FR case plan in lieu of a WTW plan.

Under AB 135, CWFR parents must participate in WTW unless exempt.

CWS FR Case Plan vs. WTW Plan

CWS FR Case Plan

- Families will not be subject to WTW noncompliance rules and risk financial sanctions.
- Minimizes conflicting requirements between WTW, child welfare, and families.
- Recognizes balancing work, training, and responsibilities can be challenging.

WTW Plan

- Must be used when providing additional activities and services not included in the case plan (i.e., education).
- Eases transition to WTW post-reunification.

WTW Activities & Supportive Services

Not available to CWFR Families:

- Job Retention
- Post-Aid Services
- Diaper Allowance

**QUESTIONS
FROM THE
EASYRETRO
BOARD**



CWS Services

*Child and Family
Services Division*



CWS Case Plan Requirements

Welfare and Institutions Code 16501.1

Reasonable services, or active efforts, in the case of an Indian child, for family reunification must be documented unless the juvenile court determines otherwise.

CWS Case Plan Requirements

Division 31-206 to 225 Requirements

- The case plan goal
- Any changes in the case plan
 - Treatment services
 - Treatment providers
 - Changes in placement
- A description of the parent/guardian compliance with the written case plan
- Cooperation in keeping appointments



Create CWS Case Plan CWFR

Child Welfare Services/Case Management System (CWS/CMS)

1. Create a new case

	Participant	Service Objective Type	Projected Completion Date
1	Benjamin(17)	Complete homework	06/06/2025
2	Benjamin(17)	Other Service Objective	06/06/2025

2. Select "Other service Objective"

3. Enter "Child care for trial home visits" and "Cash aid for basic needs"

Ready Case [C. Benjamin] -> Case Plan [In Progress]

Update CWS Case Plan in CWS/CMS

1. Open Existing Case Plan

2. Go to Service Objectives page

ID	CP Participants	Contributing Factors	Strength	Service Objectives
1	J. Benjamin(17)			Other Service Objective

3. Add "Good cause granted to extend six-month temporary absence to meet reunification plan."

Projected Completion Date
 Check to select all participants
Date: 06/06/2025

Service Objective: Other Service Objective
Service Objective Detail: Other Service Objective (up to 5)

Additional Description for Participant:
Child care for trial home visits
Cash Aid for basic needs

Progress (for Case Plan Update):
Good cause granted to extend six-month temporary absence to meet the reunification plan.

4. Click to update the plan

OK - Go to Update
All Service Objectives Met/Progress recorded. Continue with update.

Ready | Case [C. Benjamin] -> Case Plan [In Effect]

Family Reunification Best Practices

- Share the case plan with the CalWORKs worker as soon as possible to ensure timely transition to cash aid and services.
- Assess the family strengths, needs and goals regarding services needed to begin CalWORKs FR.
- Coordinate services and resources with the CalWORKs partners to reduce stress and eliminate contradicting plans and goals.
- Team with the CalWORKs worker to monitor the case plan to achieve reunification and identify any extra barriers.
- Partner with CDSS and CFSD for technical assistance and resources.
- Partner with CFPIC For implementation resources.

Q & A SESSION

Please utilize the QR code
provided to submit your questions





ORIENTATION FOR NEW COUNTIES!

CHILD WELFARE & CALWORKS
(ELIGIBILITY & WTW) STAFF
CURRENTLY IN COUNTIES NOT
PART OF THE LINKAGES
COLLABORATIVE ARE INVITED TO
ATTEND!

GOAL: LEARN ABOUT LINKAGES
AND THE SUPPORTS YOU WILL
RECEIVE

- PEER SHARING CALLS
- REGIONAL MEETINGS
- WEBINARS
- TA/IMPLEMENTATION
GUIDANCE CALLS
- NEWSLETTERS
- SEMI-ANNUAL CONVENING



NOVEMBER 19TH
11 AM - 12 PM

CLICK HERE
TO REGISTER!

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Linkages counties receive:

- Implementation guidance
- Quick access to resources
- Peer to peer sharing of best practices

Join our New County Orientation 11/19/24 at 11:00 am



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Please complete a quick survey to help us improve future webinars!



Thank you!

