

Keeping Linked



Take A Moment Videos Series Launch

We're excited to launch a new video series designed to support Linkages teams and deepen understanding between CalWORKs and child welfare systems.

Overview of Child Welfare Part 1

click the titles to view the videos!

Explore how families enter the system, key decision-making tools, investigation timelines, and the role of ICWA and Tribal engagement. Learn how early support can reduce system involvement and promote stability.

CalWORKs Overview

Get a clear picture of CalWORKs eligibility, services, and how it supports families during child welfare involvement—including housing aid, employment support, and Family Reunification Cash Aid.

Watch, Learn, Share

These videos, along with their corresponding overviews (Child Welfare, CalWORKs) promote shared understanding, improve coordination, and help teams deliver better outcomes for families. Watch, share, and use them in your trainings and team discussions. Stay tuned for the next 2 videos in our series: Overview of Child Welfare Part 2, which will focus on placement, permanency, and long-term planning as well as Welfare to Work Overview.



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A Father's Road from Addiction to Redemption: A Linkages Success Story in Riverside County

In a powerful testament to the effectiveness of Riverside County's collaborative approach to social services, one Linkages participant has emerged from the depths of crisis to achieve lasting stability—thanks to a network of support and his own commitment to change.

A Critical Turning Point

Referred by the Children's Services Division (CSD) following an investigation, this father faced a daunting array of challenges: mental health concerns, substance abuse, domestic violence, lack of childcare, and homelessness. Initially resistant to outreach efforts, he chose to comply only after persistent, compassionate contact from CSD staff—triggering the submission of a Family Reunification (FR) case. What followed was a journey marked by resilience and transformation.

The Power of Partnership

Once enrolled in services, the father received targeted support through Riverside County's unique partnership between the CSD and Self-Sufficiency Division (SSD). He began engaging in life-changing activities, including:

- Substance abuse treatment
- Random drug testing
- Pursuit of employment

This holistic support paved the way to reunification and personal renewal.

Compassionate Staff, Meaningful Change

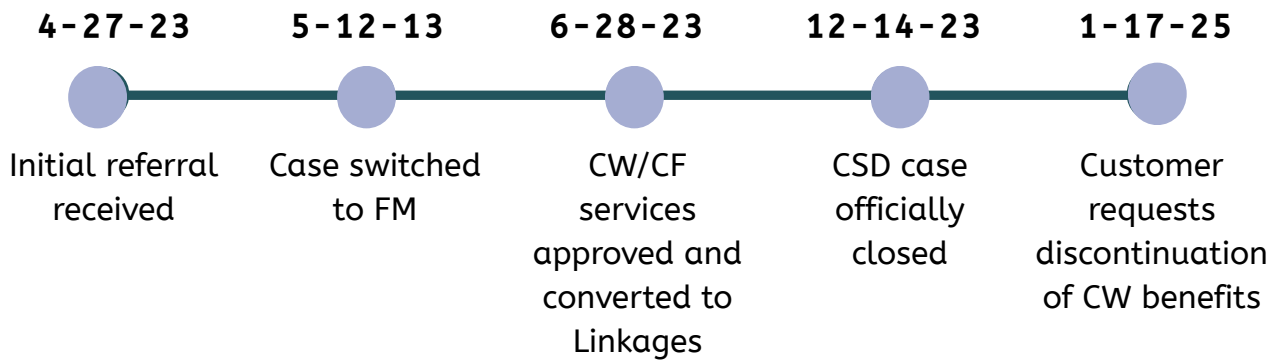
This father's success is a direct reflection of the dedication and empathy shown by Riverside County staff. One pivotal moment came when the father openly admitted his addiction and probable failure of a drug test. Instead of responding with judgment, the CSD supervisor assured him, "I can work with you." This honest exchange became a cornerstone of trust.

Crucially, the father wasn't alone in wanting change—staff wanted it for him. They rallied together to provide access to Child Welfare/CalWORKs (CW/CF) services and supportive programs through Welfare-to-Work (WTW), aligning resources to meet every requirement of his case plan, and seeing him as a whole person in need.

Stability Achieved

Once employed and stable, the father received further assistance through Family Stabilization Services (FSS), including housing and temporary rental subsidies. His timeline toward transformation unfolded as follows:





After nearly 21 months, this father stepped forward and declared he no longer needed public assistance - a powerful indicator of his newfound self-sufficiency.

The Bigger Picture

The Linkages program thrives when the right people are in the right roles, and Riverside County's teams exemplify this. Through patience, empathy, and consistent collaboration, they helped restore dignity, stability, and hope for a father who simply wanted to be part of his child's life. His story stands as a reminder: when determination meets support, success is possible.

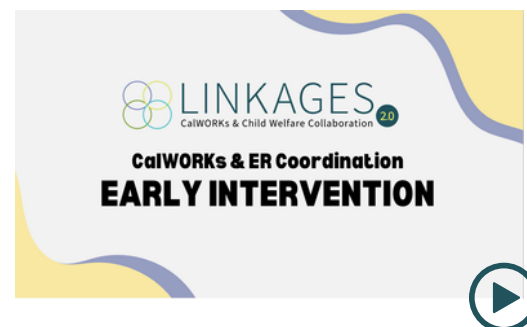
“
Not only am I physically present in my son's life now, I'm mentally present. I get to be a dad today...it's not something I have to do.
”

“
Based on the feedback I received from the participant, his success can be attributed to the empathy and understanding that he received by our department. I'm pleased to say that the sincere care and concern we showed helped him transform his perception of DPSS in a positive way. Ultimately, his willingness to change, combined with the services provided by Linkages, contributed to the success of the entire family.
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P A S T E V E N T S

CalWORKs and ER webinar

On August 20, 2025, 136 participants joined a statewide webinar focused on strengthening coordination between CalWORKs and Child Welfare Emergency Response (ER). The session provided a foundational overview of both systems, exploring how they intersect and why the Linkages framework is essential for supporting families at critical moments.



Participants examined opportunities for collaboration at the Hotline and ER levels, identifying practical strategies for improving service delivery and reducing system involvement. Humboldt and Placer Counties shared real-world examples of how they've implemented Linkages to better serve families in crisis—highlighting cross-agency teamwork, trauma-informed practices, and coordinated case management.

The session concluded with an introduction to the CalWORKs and Emergency Response Curriculum, now available on the [CFPIC Linkages website](#). This resource offers training and tools to help counties build stronger, more responsive systems of care.

92% of survey respondents reported that the webinar **provided new/helpful information** about implementing CalWORKs and ER Coordination within their county.

97% stated that they were **confident that they can now apply what they learned** to better support the strategies in their county.

As always - the attendees reported that they found the peer sharing and the county presentations that they found most helpful! Check out the [Events page](#) to find the Presentation and any resources discussed or shared.

Peer Sharing Call

Following our August webinar, we hosted a dynamic Peer Sharing Call on September 25th focused on the pillars of Coordination, Collaboration, and Communication. This 75-minute session brought together professionals from across the state for meaningful breakout discussions, where attendees exchanged successes, identified barriers, asked questions, and learned from one another. These peer-to-peer conversations continue to be among the most valuable aspects of our work.

We were thrilled to see strong engagement: 115 participants registered, with 66 joining live from 28 counties, representing all four regions.

During the session, counties shared innovative coordination strategies, including:

- Using a shared referral form that follows families from Child Welfare to CalWORKs/Welfare-to-Work from initial referral through closure.
- Communicating through shared email inboxes and Teams channels to streamline updates.
- Inviting Linkages staff to Child and Family Team (CFT) meetings or co-locating staff to foster real-time collaboration.

These practices reflect the growing commitment to integrated service delivery and the power of connection across systems. **94%** of attendees stated that the webinar **provided new helpful information** related to enhancing Linkages Coordinated Case Planning within their county, and that what they learned would allow them to better support their Linkages Work as a whole. To find our Linkages Coordinated Case Planning Curriculum, please utilize our [Training Toolkit](#).

COMMITTEE UPDATES

PEI

CFPIC is excited to launch a Pilot for the Family Needs Screening Tool, a tool developed with the Linkages Prevention and Early Intervention (PEI) Committee. This tool helps self-sufficiency offices quickly identify family needs for those applying for benefits and connect them to local resources. Placer and Napa Counties will join the

pilot this Fall 2025 and we are looking for more counties to join us. After reviewing the results of the pilot, CFPIC, pilot counties, and the Linkages PEI Committee will share a findings report to guide how other counties might be able to implement the tool to support families.

Take a look at our [Pilot Implementation Plan](#) to learn more about the pilot process!

Interested in joining the Family Needs Screening Tool Pilot? Contact Stuart Oppenheim (stuart.oppenheim@cfpic.org) or Derek Slama (derek.slama@cfpic.org).

Oversight

Help strengthen Linkages - join the Oversight Committee!

The CFPIC Linkages Oversight Committee is currently seeking Linkages Coordinators from both **CalWORKs** and **Child Welfare** programs to guide statewide efforts that support families through coordinated services. We encourage interest from all counties, especially counties in the Central Region. Your voice is essential to ensuring regional equity and shaping strategies that reflect the diverse needs of families across California.

Why Join?

- Representing your program and region in statewide planning
- Share insights and help shape training and tools
- Connect with peers committed to prevention and family well-being

To get involved, contact: andrea.lewis@cfpic.org or jennifer.marcelli@cfpic.org
Let's build stronger bridges between CalWORKs and Child Welfare—together.



Honoring Your Efforts: A Message of Support for Linkages Partners

We want to take a moment to acknowledge that staffing shortages, budget constraints, and the sheer weight of daily responsibilities make it difficult to attend every session or move at the pace you wish you could. It's not a lack of commitment—it's a reality of the work. And we see that.

There is no expectation that everyone will attend everything. The Linkages Collaborative is meant to support—not overwhelm. We are here to walk alongside you, whether you're just getting started or deep in implementation.



We will continue to offer implementation support in ways that are flexible and responsive to your needs. All resources will remain available via the Linkages website and in CalPrevents so you can access tools and guidance when it works best for you and your team. Thank you for your dedication and your continued partnership. We're in this together—and we're here to support you every step of the way.

Upcoming Events

End of year survey

We still want to hear from you! Please take a few moments to fill out the **End of Year Survey!**

Due 10/22

Peer Sharing Webinar: Harvesting Wisdom: A World Cafe of Shared Insights

[Register through the flyer here](#)

10/23/25

2026 Convening: Linkages: Building Bridges for Families

4/28 - 29 / 2026

Location: Hilton Arden West



RDA Evaluation

Final tabulations are underway. Stay tuned for our Winter Newsletter where we will share the results!

Questions? Ideas for future newsletters? Contact us!



Melissa Connelly

Senior Associate Director
melissa.connelly@cfpic.org



Jennifer Marcelli

Program Director
jennifer.marcelli@cfpic.org



Andrea Lewis

Program Associate
andrea.lewis@cfpic.org



Danna Fabella

Senior Consultant
danna.fabella@cfpic.org

