



---

**PROCESS DOCUMENT**  
**EVIDENCE-BASED PRACTICE**  
**BUILDING A CHILD WELFARE RESEARCH AGENDA FOR CALIFORNIA**

---

**Background:**

This research agenda is part of an ongoing effort to promote evidence-based practice by bringing the practice and the research communities together in California. Through a series of symposia beginning in July, 2005, practitioners and researchers learned about evidence-based practice. Activities during and between the symposia focused on how to move toward a system in which research conducted across the state reflected the priorities identified by the practice community and consumers of the child welfare system. Focus groups were convened with line staff, parents involved in the system, foster youth and foster parents to elicit the areas that they felt were important for research. The research agenda was intentionally divided into the areas of Safety, Permanence, and Well-Being, to reflect the broad federal and state outcomes for child welfare. The research and practice community then worked together to refine and prioritize these areas. The result is the research agenda.

**Steps in Building a Research Agenda (and an Organizational Culture to Support EBP)**

The process below was used in California to build the research agenda. For a broad overview of the model proposed by CalSWEC and the RTN, see *A Model for Implementing EBP* [LINK TO single slide PPT]

Key stakeholders convene to set goals and define the process. Includes researchers (e.g. CSSR, Clearinghouse); university/practice partnerships (e.g. CalSWEC and the regional consortia), and; policy and practice organizations (e.g. CFPIC, CDSS). See the description of the Research and Training Network (RTN)



Training and education begins on EBP for practitioners and university faculty with statewide symposium. *Leadership Symposium on EBP, Sacramento, 7/14/05.*



Regional work builds on statewide event



Build infrastructure to include input from parents, youth, line/supervisory staff and foster care providers. *See Focus Groups on the Research Agenda.*



Convene another statewide EBP event to build on the focus group information. The structure of the event educates university researchers and practice leaders on EBP and the data available. Focus group data is used in a structured process to identify a research agenda. *See: Evidence-Based Practice: A University/Agency Partnership for California, Los Angeles, 2/22/06.*



Refine the research agenda, and obtain endorsement of key stakeholders (e.g. CWDA, CDSS, CalSWEC, Regional Consortia)



Operationalize the research agenda, both regionally and statewide:

- ▶ Calibrate ongoing research RFPs to reflect the statewide agenda. See CalSWEC RFP.
- ▶ Regions identify parts of the statewide agenda that they will prioritize.
- ▶ Universities coordinate MSW and PhD student research in child welfare to reflect the agenda.
- ▶ Other research entities (e.g. The California Evidence-Based Clearinghouse for Child Welfare Practice) use the research agenda to guide their research priorities.



Disseminate the research that is conducted:

- ▶ Statewide and regional events to share regional and statewide findings and methods.
- ▶ Research findings are integrated into curriculum provided by universities (both MSW-level education and in-service training)



Refine the research agenda:

- ▶ Annual or semi-annual convening to revisit the agenda and plan for replication of promising studies, and inclusion of additional areas of research/removal of others.
- ▶ Focus groups or surveys of parents, foster youth, line/supervisory staff, foster parents convened as needed

### **Future Directions:**

---

This research agenda is designed as a “living document” that will be updated and revised as research is conducted and new priorities are identified. The research priorities are intended to guide child welfare research at all levels throughout the state, including graduate student research, research and curricula sponsored by CalSWEC, and other independent and university-based research. Ongoing efforts will be made to include consumers as well as practitioners, researchers and other leaders in developing and refining the research agenda.