



# Newsflash #11



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## CCR Messaging

This is the eleventh edition of the CCR Newsflash brought to you by the Continuum of Care Reform Branch. This newsletter provides up-to-date information about CCR implementation, promising innovations, and opportunities. We welcome your suggestions and questions, which may be sent by email to the CCR inbox at [ccr@dss.ca.gov](mailto:ccr@dss.ca.gov). We welcome your contributions and would like to hear how you are implementing the CCR.

Please help us ensure that this information is passed on to stakeholders at the local level by widely forwarding this communication to staff, colleagues, care providers, social workers, probation officers, youth and any other interested stakeholders. Consider providing a copy of the newsletter at any meetings that include child welfare stakeholders. In addition, if you were forwarded this newsletter, you may have your name added to the distribution list by emailing the CCR inbox.



Daniella Arroyo and Claudia Cortez,  
Youth Engagement Program Ambassadors  
Ventura County

“Coming into foster care makes youth feel like they don’t have a choice, they don’t matter, they’re unloved, and have no voice. I think CCR is a really good thing for foster youth because making sure they live in a family setting and maintain permanent connections will help youth feel that what they think and how they feel is important: CCR gives youth a voice.”

# CCR Agent for Change Mia Williams

*“We do not give up on our kids!”*



*“The passage of Assembly Bill (AB) 403 (CCR) is an opportunity to revitalize residential care in a transformative way. I believe that this revitalization can promote a pathway to permanency and long term stability that supports and meets the needs of each child in foster care. With reduced lengths of stay in placement, my hope is that the community component of care can provide youth and families the support they need where they feel most comfortable. I am committed to increasing community partnerships that will strengthen the outcomes of youth and families working through challenges and barriers to enable them to become self-sufficient.”*

Mia L. Williams  
Director of Residential Programs  
Hathaway-Sycamores Child and Family Services  
Master of Arts in Psychology from Phillips Graduate Institute

Mia L. Williams has worked with at risk youth and families in the Child Welfare System for over 30 years. Her career began as a Child Care Counselor in a Group Home setting for girls ages 13-18 in Chicago, Illinois. She moved to California in 1993, serving as a Child Care Worker at Human Services Network and later took a similar position at Five Acres providing services to boys. There, she was promoted to Supervisor of the Crisis Management Department, providing crisis stabilization to ensure the safety for all youth in the residential setting.

In 1998, Mia accepted a position with Hathaway-Sycamores, serving as a Residential Child Care Worker, Therapeutic Behavioral Services Specialist, and Wraparound Facilitator. She was promoted to Lead Facilitator, supervising community based programs that supported safety, empowered families and promoted the well-being of children. In this position, Mia partnered with County agencies to prevent youth from being placed in out of home care or assisted them in transitioning to less restrictive environments with permanency and stability as the ultimate goal.

In 2012, Mia accepted a position as Assistant Director of the Residentially Based Services Program, which led to her current role as the Director of Residential programs where she provides oversight to an advanced residential intervention model that serves the full continuum of care working to develop permanency for youth and families in their communities.

Mia has always believed that children belong at home with strong family connections.

*“Mia Williams is committed to ensuring that Hathaway-Sycamores Child and Family Services only use our residential as a short-term intervention and not a placement, knowing that services are best delivered in the home and community of origin. Whether it is driving a youth 25 miles to their community center in their community of origin, ensuring families spend the night at our family cottage or having a youth’s favorite meal prepared on intake day, going the extra mile to achieve permanency is the norm.”*

*...Joe Ford, Senior Vice President, Hathaway-Sycamores Child and Family Services*

*“Mia is always extremely pleasant, knowledgeable and collaborative. In speaking personally with Mia, her dedication to the youth always shines through, as well as her strength-based perspective, and I know how much she values the relationships that she and her staff build with the clients. Mia is a truly caring person, and Hathaway-Sycamores is lucky to have her. It is such a pleasure to work with her.”*

*...Pamela Pettit, LMFT, Children’s System of Care, LA County Department of Mental Health*

*Mia Williams is the teaming role model and teacher for all other residential treatment programs and staff. She does not see barriers as problems but as a map to the solution. She is the epitome of teaming with the child’s best interest always in the forefront. Her commitment and dedication to help children and families is demonstrated in her mantra, when she says confidently, “We do not give up on our kids”. Mia talks the talk, walks the walk and believes in it to her core. She has taken the Wraparound model, injected it into all levels of staff and management to produce a team that is unwavering in their care and commitment to children and their families. For Mia, failure is not an option.*

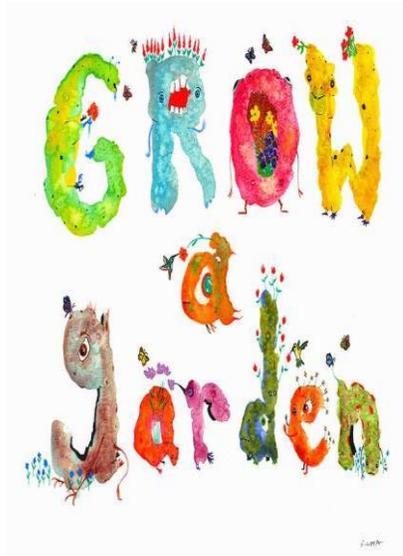
*...Alycia Keyes, Children Services Administrator, High Risk Division, LA County*

# Youth Engagement in CCR

Ebony Porter, Youth Advocate  
Hathaway-Sycamores Child and Family Services

There is no greater reward than being able to help youth through adversity that you have first-handly survived yourself. Having lived experience in the foster care and Probation system has allowed us the opportunity to change the lives of youth and stand as proof of better days existing ahead. As Youth Advocates, we are the bridge of communication between youth and their support network dedicated to ensuring successful engagement between them and others in their lives. Sharing similar experiences with many of the youth we work with, we can relate and validate feelings that lead towards certain behaviors and we are better able to identify the underlining needs youth are challenged with communicating themselves.

We have developed a Youth Council on our residential site which ensures youth voice and choice regarding any changes made on campus. This is a safe place where youth can freely address any issues and concerns and most importantly brainstorm different ways of improving their residential experience. It is a youth-led collective effort towards exercising agency over one's life, while adopting leadership skills. Here in Youth Council, we were able to inform our youth about Continuum of Care Reform (CCR) and other reforms regarding their rights during care. Establishing Youth Council was important to ensure youth are aware of their rights and understand changes in policy and laws within in our Child Welfare system. Youth Council has revealed the strengths and innovative ability within each youth given a platform to do so. Without Youth Council many talents and skills would go overlooked. Metaphorically speaking, Youth Council is the garden in our youth's lives where they can confidently lay their seeds in the soil and we Youth Advocates, also known as the gardeners, devote time to nurturing each seed so that it fully blossoms.



Hi, I am Jerry Salazar, Youth Advocate for the El Nido Campus of Hathaway-Sycamores.

I have been using my peer to peer skills to engage with youth that come in. We provide a welcome bag with hygiene essentials. I introduce myself as a former foster youth with previous history of being in a residential facility, to help have the youth's attention about how they feel with their current situation and ease their stay as they get used to knowing the campus. I talk about my experience being in a residential facility, and how to voice their concerns, be heard and help fulfil their needs. We hold a youth council meeting every two weeks to address any concerns the youth have as well as to come up with ideas that the youth want to participate in and help create events on campus, such as an open mic event, talent show, and team basketball tournaments. We will be holding a Youth Panel with the directors of the campus attending, to have the concerns the youth want be directly brought up to management. We also talk about the new changes that are happening with CCR.



Alexis Barries (Youth Engagement Project) and Kista Holani (Central Voices Together) on July 18, 2017, at the CCR Stakeholder Implementation Advisory Committee Meeting giving input to the CCR Youth Satisfaction Survey.

# The Key to Collaboration: CCR Workgroups

Committed stakeholders from across California join state staff to develop the essential elements of CCR.

Here are the highlights of our work:

## **Continuum of Care Reform (CCR) State/County Implementation Team**

The CCR State/County Team meets monthly to collaboratively identify emerging challenges and possible barriers to the implementation of CCR. Examples of solutions may include the development of tools, changes in legislation, or technical assistance. The next meeting is scheduled for August 17, 2017, and will continue the discussion on placement strategies for youth with complex needs. Attendance is by invitation only. Past meeting agendas and minutes can be found on the website at [Continuum of Care Reform](#). Questions can be directed to [Tracy.Urban@dss.ca.gov](mailto:Tracy.Urban@dss.ca.gov).

## **CCR Education Workgroup**

A sub-workgroup of the CCR State/County Implementation Team, this workgroup has been working on multiple deliverables and some are in the final stage of completion such as the inclusion of staff from public schools participation in Child Welfare and Probation Child and Family Team (CFT) Meetings, CCR Education Toolkit and the Individualized Education Program (IEP) Child and family Team (CFT) requirements and process. The next meeting is scheduled for Tuesday, September 12, 2017. Items on the agenda include a report out on the development of a CCR Education Toolkit, report out on the education participation in the CFT meetings and an update on the out of home care funding formula proposal. This sub-workgroup is open for advocates and providers to attend. For more information, contact [Ahmed.Nemr@dss.ca.gov](mailto:Ahmed.Nemr@dss.ca.gov). Please note that all of the previous meetings' agendas and notes are posted on the [Continuum of Care website](#).

## **CCR Stakeholder Implementation Advisory Committee**

The next quarterly meeting of the CCR Stakeholder Implementation Advisory Committee will be held on November 29, 2017, from 10:00-3:00. All Stakeholders are welcome to attend these meetings in person or via a webinar. Participants can expect:

- Updates regarding CCR implementation
- Educational/informational sessions
- Networking possibilities
- Opportunities to provide recommendations on policy, best practices, and other aspects of CCR

For more information or to reserve a seat, please contact [Tracy.Urban@dss.ca.gov](mailto:Tracy.Urban@dss.ca.gov).

## **Resource Family Approval (RFA)**

Annual reviews for early implementing counties will be finished by the end of August 2017. The current review tool is being revised and will be shared with counties for feedback later this year for use in 2018. The RFA forms continue to be finalized and are available on: <http://www.cdss.ca.gov/inforesources/Forms-Brochures/Forms-Alphabetic-List/Q-T>. Draft forms are still located on the RFA webpage. The Out-of-County Approval protocol is posted on the RFA webpage and an ACIN is in development regarding the protocol and its usage with an anticipated release at the end of August. The Out of County Referral form has been posted on the CDSS RFA webpage under the Out of County Protocol. This form is to be used when making a referral to a host county for RFA approval of a relative or NREFM. The CDSS continues to host a biweekly RFA technical assistance call on Wednesdays from 1:30 p.m.–2:30 p.m. August calls will be held on 8/2, 8/16, 8/30. The meeting minutes from these calls are located on the CDSS RFA webpage under RFA Resources. CDSS is hosting regional trainings on Due Process and the Background Assessment Guide (BAG). If your RFA Point of Contact for CDSS has changed, please notify us to ensure your county continues to receive important RFA related information. If you would like additional information or have any questions, please contact [rfa@dss.ca.gov](mailto:rfa@dss.ca.gov).

## **Program Statement reviews for STRTPs and FFAs**

The CCR Policy Unit is working closely with Community Care Licensing Division (CCL), Regional Offices and Providers regarding the Program Statement review process for both FFAs and STRTPs. Currently all FFA program statements have been reviewed by CCR staff and follow-ups are being made with CCL to complete the approval process. The STRTP program statements continue to be received for review. Meetings continue to be held discuss STRTP program reviews, to solicit feedback, and to provide TA to providers. To date, three providers have been licensed as a STRTP. Please visit <http://www.cdss.ca.gov/inforesources/Continuum-of-Care-Reform> for more information. Please direct all FFA/RFA program statement review process questions or comments to the [ccr@dss.ca.gov](mailto:ccr@dss.ca.gov) and any FFA/RFA licensing questions, to the CCL Manager [Marisa.Sanchez@dss.ca.gov](mailto:Marisa.Sanchez@dss.ca.gov).

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# CCR Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs)

## Short-Term Residential Therapeutic Program (STRTP), Specialty Mental Health Service (SMHS) Question

Q: What is the next step process after your program statement and program services are reviewed by CCL to become a STRTP. Approximately how long does it take to receive your STRTP license?

A: The length of time to receive a license depends on many factors, so one timeframe will not work for every situation. After a program statement is reviewed by CCL and the CCR Branch, revisions or clarifications may be necessary. Once the program statement is approved by CCL, the LPA will contact the facility to discuss a prospective licensure date. The facility will need to be operating in full compliance with the STRTP standards and the facility program statement on that agreed upon date.

## Resource Family Approval (RFA) Question

Q: For people living in the home who are not the applicants - do they get the full Resource Family live scan clearances done, or just strictly foster care clearances?

A: All adults residing or regularly present in the home of an applicant or Resource Family are required to be fingerprinted under the RFA applicant type.

## Los Angeles County Family Finding Pilot

On May 31, 2016, the Los Angeles County Board of Supervisors instructed the Los Angeles County Departments of Children and Family Services (L.A. DCFS) and Probation to submit a report on a countywide Upfront Family Finding protocol. The report was provided to the board on September 30, 2016, and includes a plan to increase relative placements, and an Upfront Family Finding program that is coordinated with existing programs and considers best practice and partnership with community based organizations. The report highlights the county's progress in the development and planned implementation of the family finding and engagement pilot. The report also contains six months of data from two county offices, Glendora and Santa Fe, for intensive relative family finding efforts including recommendations and challenges encountered in recruitment and continued support of relatives. The following is a link to the report: [http://file.lacounty.gov/SDSInter/bos/bc/1025741\\_FamilyFindingReport.pdf](http://file.lacounty.gov/SDSInter/bos/bc/1025741_FamilyFindingReport.pdf)

## Level of Care Rates Protocol

The CDSS in collaboration with the UC Davis Resource Center for Family-Focused Practice recently completed the Levels of Care (LOC) Rates Protocol pilots. The pilots were conducted in two phases: 1- Rater Reliability and 2- Usability in order to obtain information on the degree of agreement or disagreement among raters while rating the same case and to determine how well the LOC tool differentiates the care and supervision needs of children/youth. In addition, the pilot is to learn if social workers and probation officers find the tool easy to complete and helpful in understanding the level of care needed for the children/youth. The next steps include focusing on lessons learned and making adjustments to the tool and/or process based on the pilots' outcomes as we move to scheduling Regional LOC trainings for trainers.

The LOC Rate Protocol Overview Webinar is available on the Continuum of Care Reform (CCR) website. For more information or questions, please contact [CCR@dss.ca.gov](mailto:CCR@dss.ca.gov).

# Marin Youth (MY) Home

Kevin Lynch, Director Juvenile Division  
Marin County Probation Department  
[klynch@marincounty.org](mailto:klynch@marincounty.org)



MY Home is a residential program that offers intensive services foster care (ISFC) to probation youth who do not require the supervision, structure and services of a group home, but still are not able to return to their family residence. At present, MY Home consists of two homes, each with two beds, and four “resource parents” available to youth selected to take part. When the idea for this program was first raised in 2015, MY Home was envisioned as simply providing a local alternative to traditional group homes for youth stepping down from congregate care after completing the program. Soon after its opening, however, it became clear that this was also an answer for Continuum of Care Reform (CCR), which requires the increased utilization of home-based foster care placements, and reduced reliance on congregate care options. MY Home operates with rules that are far closer to a family than the tight controls and regulations associated with a group home program. Youth have access not only to the resource parents in the home, but also a case manager, a Probation Officer, and connections to any necessary treatment service. In addition, the close proximity to family members ensures a continued connection to them, and an ability to easily address any ongoing need for family therapy. Eligibility for MY Home participants is intended for either 602 Wards, or non-minor dependents under AB12, as it is designed to address the gap of home-based foster care for this population.

The MY Home concept is the product of a collaborative effort between the Marin County Probation Department and our local wrap service provider, Seneca Family of Agencies. While the strong history of close collaboration between our agencies is a key to the success of the program, the resources necessary to establish MY Home are available in all jurisdictions of California. MY Home is operated by Seneca, which draws down funds from both the Early and Periodic Screening, Diagnostic, and Treatment (EPSDT) program and the foster care system to support the resource parents, staff to support the family, and also provides an added rent subsidy to offset the high cost of living in Marin County. The program opened approximately two years ago, and has served eight youth since that time. The circumstances of each of those young people are fairly unique, and the benefit of having a program such as MY Home as an option to address those issues has been incalculable.

The CCR has created a tall order for probation departments to come up with creative solutions to developing home-based foster care options for a challenging population.

While MY Home is not the best answer for all youth, and maybe not all jurisdictions, it is at least something to consider as you look for ways to meet the need of finding foster care alternatives. We strongly encourage other jurisdictions to consider this as an option, and we welcome any questions on our experiences in developing and implementing it.

## Tips for Resource Family Approval (RFA) Conversion

- Regular communication with families so they are aware of what to expect when converting.
- Use data to help determine workload impact and strategize timeframes for conversions.
- Prioritize families for conversion based on their dates for annual re-assessments of their license or relative approval, children placed in their care moving towards a plan of permanency, etc.
- Use returned mail from inaccurate caregiver addresses (due to caregivers’ not notifying agency of a move) as a means to update existing licenses that would be forfeited by operation of law.
- Create a brochure to explain the process with caregiver friendly language to circulate among families.
- Be supportive and work with the family to help them understand why conversion is beneficial.



# Santa Barbara County's Implementation of CCR

By Sheryl Fitt, Department Business Specialist  
Santa Barbara

Santa Barbara County created an internal Continuum of Care Reform (CCR) Implementation Team, which is responsible for coordinating implementation issues within the broad organization, as well as monitoring outcomes. This includes:

- Assessing the impact of CCR and making needed changes in policy and social work procedures.
- Supporting the integration of CCR reform efforts by improving internal placement review efforts and by creating a new external collaborative method of reviewing placement decisions.
- Engaging social workers and supervisors through communication and training efforts.
- Engaging and educating stakeholders, including Courts, caregivers, youth, and service providers.
- Creating a method to monitor, assess, and evaluate implementation efforts and outcomes.
- Convening monthly to assess and adjust the plan as necessary.
- Improving and increasing the capacity of families/caregivers to provide home-based care.

The CCR Implementation Team has been working on the following goals:

- Increasing the agency's preventative and early intervention efforts using the Safety Organized Practice (SOP) strategy, Team Decision Making (TDM)/Child and Family Team (CFT) facilitation, Voluntary Family Maintenance (VFM), and Wrap services to reduce the likelihood that a child is removed from their home and to ensure timely and successful reunification for children who are removed.
- Establishing and implementing new placement review processes, in conjunction with existing placement practices, to achieve the following goals:
  - 1) Make better informed placement matches in the beginning to prevent further placement disruptions,
  - 2) Move children out of shelter beds and into placements which match their individual needs,
  - 3) Prevent the need for group home placements by using Wrap, Intensive Treatment Foster Care (ITFC), or other services.
- Facilitating placement of foster youth with relatives and Non Related Extended Family Members (NREFM) using emergency relative placement practices and by exploring relatives discovered through the Home Connection Finder process.
- Supporting the recruitment and retention of resource families by providing them with the training and support necessary to facilitate and preserve placements.
- Giving social workers and supervisors the training and support necessary to create positive relationships with resource families in an effort to support recruitment and retention.
- Significantly reducing the current number of children in group home care through all of the methods listed above, as well as other alternative placement ideas (ITFC, Home Connection Finder – relative searches, transitional housing options – existing and newly developed).
- Placing children/youth in group homes when necessary keeping the care short-term with specialized intervention designed to help children/youth transition to a family-like setting.
- Continuing to develop supports and services for Transitional Age Youth (TAY) to support the transition into a self-sufficient adulthood (Independent Living Program (ILP) incentives, TAY-Financial Assistance Program (FAP) funding, collaboration with community education supports).
- Creating policy and procedural guides which align with the CCR goals.
- Utilizing assessment and evaluation tools to track outcomes and improve practices as needed.

In addition to our internal Implementation Team, we have formed a joint Pathways to Well-Being (Katie A)/CCR team with Probation and Behavioral Wellness. This team also meets once per month to work on emerging issues to ensure timely access to services, to address difficult cases that have come to our attention and to discuss CCR implementation and how we can collaborate and access training for staff.



*Santa Barbara Department of Social Services launched the **Our County. Our Kids.** Program in May 2016. It includes a strategic communication and outreach campaign, a website and Facebook page, and television, radio and print outreach. The design and ongoing evolution of **Our County. Our Kids.** is guided by the **Quality Parenting Initiative (QPI)**. Efforts began with the development of a program logo and an initial call to action to recruit and retain quality resource families in Santa Barbara County.*

By Gustavo Pravo, Department Business Specialist  
Santa Barbara

The overall goal of **Our County. Our Kids.** is two-fold: `

1. Generate community awareness surrounding the needs of foster children and youth.
2. Advance the development of community partnerships and programs that support recruitment and development of quality resource families.

While recruitment is a main focus for **Our County. Our Kids.** also important is the development of a supportive community for resource families and the children/youth they care for. To make this a reality, **Our County. Our Kids.** relies on the Safety Organized Practice (SOP) principles; recognizing that children/youth served by Child Welfare Services belong to the community of Santa Barbara County requiring the community's combined efforts to support them. Or, in SOP terms, "it takes a community to create a network of caring people to create safety and permanency for a child." It is anticipated that by building partnerships in Santa Barbara and across the Central Coast, the community's ability to meet the needs of children/youth in foster care will improve and they and their resource families will have better experiences.

**Our County. Our Kids.** efforts to support recruitment of quality homes and development of a community structure include the following initiatives:

- **Change Lives** – An **Our County. Our Kids.** school initiative, which focuses on recruitment of quality resource families within a school's community, as well as outreach to support the school's cultural readiness to meet the needs of students in foster care.
- 1.1.1. – The **Our County. Our Kids.** faith initiative, which focuses on developing:
  - 1. church community, so that
  - 1. resource family is embraced by the church community, so that the needs of
  - 1. child/sibling group are met.
- **Inspire** – The **Our County. Our Kids.** business initiative which focuses on providing free or discounted goods and services to resource families and Non-Minor Dependents. Additionally, Inspire will become the umbrella initiative for the Wish List and Apprentice Programs. The goal of Wish List is to tap into the charitable nature of Santa Barbara County and make it easier for local businesses or philanthropic groups to make in-kind donations to children/youth in foster care. The Apprentice Program will focus on providing youth job related skills and connections they will rely upon later in life.

Currently these efforts are having positive results. For example, **Our County. Our Kids.** news coverage and a Facebook presence are cited as reasons people inquire about becoming a resource family through the County and/or Foster Family Agencies. **Our County. Our Kids.** is actively building partnerships in Santa Barbara County with foster family agencies and the nonprofit community. **Our County. Our Kids.** is also joining with San Luis Obispo and Ventura Counties to support one another's outreach and recruitment and the development of an inter-county component supporting each county's business initiatives. It is anticipated and hoped that **Our County. Our Kids.** community based initiatives will lead to a supportive community structure for resource families and the children/vouth in care.

# Supporting Recruitment and Retention of Resource Families in California – Training Update

Marjana Jackson, CCR Analyst, CDSS



Left to right: Melony Burns and Alyssa Sinnott from Lilliput Children's Services with Kathleen Belanger, MSW, Ph.D., Consultant, National Resource Center for Diligent Recruitment at AdoptUSKids

## The National Resource Center for Diligent Recruitment (NRCDR)

Partnering with the CDSS and the Northern Regional Training Academy (RTA), the NRCDR conducted two 2-day technical assistance sessions in Eureka, CA on July 11-12 and in Davis, CA on July 18 and 19. The sessions focused on recruitment and retention of resource families for rural counties and tribal communities in Northern California. Additionally, the sessions provided targeted technical assistance for recruiting and retaining families in rural counties and tribal communities, collaborative and peer to peer learning opportunities, and development of recruitment strategies and plans for implementation. During the training, counties were given an opportunity to discuss some of their recruitment and retention challenges. With peer-to-peer engagement, the NRCDR facilitated a discussion on solutions for those challenges and efforts that align with the goal of increasing capacity of resource families. In addition, staff from the Child Welfare Capacity Building Center for States provided an overview on how they assist states, counties and tribes receiving Title IV-E funding build capacity to improve child welfare practices and achieve better outcomes for children, youth, and families. Through collective planning sessions and discussions during the sessions, counties and tribes walked away with a preliminary recruitment and/or retention plan to implement. The CDSS will be partnering with the Northern RTA to provide continued technical assistance to the counties who attended the sessions.

## Denise Goodman Training

Dr. Denise Goodman and her team of consultants, Stacey Gerber and Meha Desai partnered with the CDSS, Chief Probation Officers of California (CPOC) and the Central Regional Training Academy (RTA) to complete the first regional convening for training of targeted recruitment, retention and support strategies of resource families for the Central Region in Clovis, CA on June 27-28, 2017. Each county who attended was encouraged to bring a team consisting of child welfare and probation staff, providers and other community partners to be able to collaborate and create a strategic plan for the children and youth they serve. During the convening, county teams began prioritizing needs using county data of the number of kids they have in foster care, identifying strategies and building their recruitment plans. The convening concluded with county teams reporting out on the strategies they plan to implement and build upon in their county. Additional regional convening's with Dr. Goodman and her team will be held around the state beginning in fall of 2017.

### ***Recruiting, Developing, and Supporting Treatment and/or Therapeutic Resource Families On Line Meeting*** *Tuesday, August 15, 2017, 3:00-4:30 pm eastern*

This online meeting on diligent recruitment of treatment and therapeutic foster families will include a panel of experts from both public and private provider agencies who will share their knowledge and experience. The meeting will provide states/counties, tribes, territories, and their private child welfare agency partners with information and considerations related to the recruitment, development, and support of treatment and therapeutic foster families. The meeting will include time for questions and answers and peer-to-peer discussion. Presenters: Dr. Laura Boyd, Director of Public Policy, [Family Focused Treatment Association](#); Amelia Franck-Meyer, CEO, [Alia](#); Chuck Price, Director, Health and Human Services, Waupaca County, Wisconsin; Laura Currey, COO, [Pressley Ridge](#); Laura Barno, Director, Division of Children and Adult Services, West Virginia Department of Health and Human Services Register:

<https://cc.readytalk.com/r/kvamsz5ggg3&eom>



# Trauma Informed Care

Richard Knecht, CDSS Transformation Manager

While much energy and time over the last two years has appropriately been spent focusing on the programmatic, fiscal and policy elements of CCR, now that implementation is occurring in many counties, it might be a good opportunity to ponder again on one of the core assumptions which underscores the reform—delivery of **Trauma Informed Care**. The rationale for an emphasis on trauma awareness is self-evident, and underscores cross system work. If we're asking ourselves and our partners to care for and to support healing our young people in Foster Care, in non-congregate settings, those service settings and ecologies must be prepared to manage and respond to a full set of youth and family needs. This is true for all system partners and particularly invites reflection on the degree of readiness of our Resource Families and the mental health systems that support them. This is not to say that the burden of becoming Trauma Informed as a System of Care falls uniquely on Mental Health partners, however.

The National Children's Traumatic Stress Network (NCTSN) defines a Trauma Informed System as,

*"...one in which all parties involved recognize and respond to the impact of traumatic stress on those who have contact with the system including children, caregivers, and service providers. Programs and agencies within such a system infuse and sustain trauma awareness, knowledge, and skills into their organizational cultures, practices, and policies."*

The NCTSN further suggests seven needed elements of a fully ready system, including:

1. Routine, **timely screening** for trauma exposure and related symptoms
2. Use of **evidence-based, culturally responsive** assessment and treatment for traumatic stress and associated mental health symptoms
3. Availability of resources for children, families, and providers on trauma exposure, its impact, and treatment
4. Evidence of efforts to **strengthen resilience and protective factors** of children and families impacted by and vulnerable to trauma
5. **Addressing parent and caregiver trauma** and its impact on the family system
6. **An emphasis on continuity of care and collaboration across child-service systems;** and
7. An environment of care for staff that addresses, minimizes, and treats secondary traumatic stress, and **increases staff wellness.**

Some key leadership questions that might be useful in evaluating whether or not your county youth serving collaborative is Trauma Informed and ready to support the community based delivery of services to young people with significant and persistent challenges might include:

- ✓ Do [new employee and new Resource Family orientation and training](#) include the core principles of trauma informed care and affirms the agency's commitment to ongoing trauma awareness and education for staff?
- ✓ Does staff [supervision](#) include discussion of personal care and wellness?
- ✓ Do Supervisors have training/consultation on supervising for trauma awareness?
- ✓ Does Trauma Informed Care appear as a core principle in [agency policies](#), mission statement, and written program/service information?
- ✓ Is our agency or system of care working with community partners and/or other systems to develop common trauma informed protocols and procedures?

Finally, while the state's Core Practice Models have Trauma Informed guidance, here are some other ready resources for further exploration of your trauma readiness.

<https://traumainformedoregon.org/standards-practice-trauma-informed-care/>

<https://www.samhsa.gov/nctic/trauma-interventions;>

<http://www.nctsn.org;>

<http://www.chadwickcenter.org>

**The CDSS is in the process of developing an ACIN that will incorporate a variety of best practices and resources on Trauma Informed Care.**

## California is a Welcoming and Affirming State



*Jill Jacobs, Executive Director, Family Builders by Adoption*  
*Shannan Wilber, Youth Policy Director, National Center for Lesbian Rights*

For many years, the state of California has welcomed lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender (LGBT) individuals and families as prospective foster and adoptive parents. As the state implements the Continuum of Care Reform, LGBT families are also welcomed as resource families.

In 2003, California passed the first law in the nation to protect LGBT children and adults in the foster care system from discrimination based on actual or perceived sexual orientation or gender identity. Known as the Foster Care Non-Discrimination Act, the law gives LGBT children and adults in the foster care system fair and equal access to all services, treatment, care, placements, and benefits.

You may be aware that other states have introduced or passed legislation that permits foster care and adoption agencies to deny licenses or services to LGBT people on religious grounds. There are no such religious exemptions in California, which continues to prohibit discrimination against LGBT children and adults in the foster care system. There is no threat to existing adoptions or foster parenting, or even prospective foster care or adoptions, in California. Even the broad Executive Order briefly considered by the federal government would not have affected our state's nondiscrimination laws. Furthermore, the U.S. Supreme Court recently issued a unanimous opinion reiterating the well-established rule that states must give full faith and credit to adoption judgments from other states. This means that an adoption finalized in California must be recognized— given full faith and crediting other states, regardless of that states laws and policies.

Apart from understanding their legal rights, families need reassurance. The national discourse pitting religious liberty against civil rights can cause families and children to feel insecure and vulnerable. Reassure your families, and help them reassure their children. LGBT parents need to know that the state cannot and will not use religion to disrupt their families. The children of LGBT parents need to know that their families are secure. LGBT children need to know that they are entitled to a family, just like all children, and that our agencies will do everything possible to make sure they have one.

## **Communications from the Integrated Services Unit**

Integrated Services Unit: The California Department of Social Services (CDSS) has written an All County Letter (ACL) that provides formal step-by-step instructions on how to record Child and Family Teams (CFT) in the Child Welfare Services/Case Management System, and will be presented in the context of the policy outlined in All County Letter (ACL) 16-84. The ACL is currently in the stakeholder review process, and its anticipated release is summer 2017. For more information, please contact Caroline Caton in the Integrated Services Unit at [Caroline.Caton@dss.ca.gov](mailto:Caroline.Caton@dss.ca.gov).

The CDSS has written a second CFT Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs) letter, which provides answers to FAQs submitted by counties since the release of ACL 16-84 (October 2016). Questions and answers cover a range of CFT topics, including but not limited to, meeting timing and frequency, team roles, team-based case planning, and information sharing and confidentiality. The ACL has incorporated stakeholder feedback and is in final review. Anticipated release is summer 2017. For more information, please contact Lupe Grimaldi at [Lupe.Grimaldi@dss.ca.gov](mailto:Lupe.Grimaldi@dss.ca.gov).

Three different brochures have been developed within CDSS to inform youth, parents, and professionals about the CFT process. All three brochures align with CFT requirements and guidelines and provide guidance specific to the needs of each group. These brochures will be posted to the department's web site and will also be published and disseminated statewide. The CDSS has worked closely with youth partners at the Youth Engagement Project and California Youth Connection, Parent Partners, and other stakeholders throughout this process. An All County Information Notice (ACIN) will accompany all three CFT brochures. These are in final review, and their anticipated release is summer 2017. For more information, please contact Catalina Hillestad at [Catalina.Hillestad@dss.ca.gov](mailto:Catalina.Hillestad@dss.ca.gov).

In partnership with the Resource Center for Family-Focused Practice at University of California, Davis (UC Davis), CDSS is delivering CFT Overview trainings to counties upon county request. These trainings are intended to reach probation, child welfare, and behavioral health staff who already have experience and knowledge of teaming processes. These trainings are county-specific and skills-based and will be scheduled throughout 2017. For more information, please contact Monica Caprio at the Resource Center at [macaprio@ucdavis.edu](mailto:macaprio@ucdavis.edu).

# CCR COMMUNICATION TOOLS

## CCR OVERVIEW:

CDSS has developed a webinar that is pre-recorded and available on the California Social Work Education Center (CalSWEC) website. The webinar provides an overview of CCR and the provisions of AB 403, and the framework for implementation.

<http://calswec.berkeley.edu/toolkits/continuum-care-reform-ccr/abcs-ccr>

## CDSS INTERNET WEBPAGE:

This web-page provides a variety of information including the CCR Fact Sheets, links to Assembly Bill 403, and calendar of meetings and presentations.

<http://www.cdss.ca.gov/inforesources/Continuum-of-Care-Reform>

## CCR TOOLKIT:

The toolkit is designed to help navigate various components of the CCR initiative and is available on the CalSWEC website.

<http://calswec.berkeley.edu/toolkits/continuum-care-reform-ccr>

## CCR EMAIL BOX:

This e-mail portal is available for stakeholders to ask questions, request information and to be connected with CCR workgroups at [ccr@dss.ca.gov](mailto:ccr@dss.ca.gov).

## CCR TOOLS FOR YOUTH:

Tools are available on the CalSWEC website to assist stakeholders with messaging to youth.

<http://calswec.berkeley.edu/toolkits/continuum-care-reform-ccr>

## CHILDREN & FAMILY SERVICES INTEGRATED PRACTICE TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE CALLS:

The CDSS and the DHCS host a monthly call that provides open and timely communication between state teams and county staff in providing updates and discussion surrounding CCR planning and implementation, continued implementation of Pathways to Well-Being (Core Practice Model, Intensive Care Coordination, and Intensive Home Based Services), and planning and implementation of Therapeutic Foster Care services. A monthly bulletin of the Integrated Practice Technical Assistance Calls, including discussion points, Q&A, and resources to support counties and their partners in these program areas, is sent out to county and partner staff each month.

Email [KatieA@dhcs.ca.gov](mailto:KatieA@dhcs.ca.gov) to subscribe to the TA Call list for alerts, materials, and bulletins.

## CCR Updates Continued

### **Temporary Shelter Care Facility Interim Licensing Standards (ILS)**

The final version of the ILS for County Emergency Shelters seeking conversion to a Temporary Shelter Care Facility (TSCF) licensure was released. County facilities had until July 14, 2017, to submit their transition plans for review to the CDSS. Next steps for CDSS are to review the plans, provide feedback to providers, and supply them with the TSCF Application and Plan of Operation Template to be licensed.

### **Therapeutic Foster Care (TFC) Committee Meetings**

The TFC Implementation Committee continues to meet to discuss the TFC service model and TFC parent qualifications. The next meetings will be held:

- September 13: 1-5 pm
- December 7: 1-4 pm

### **National Adoption Training Initiative (NTI)**

We are excited to announce that over 300 people have enrolled in and started the child welfare phase of the National Adoption Competency Mental Health Training Initiative (NTI)! This is a great start and we hope this number continues to increase this month. As a reminder, the recommendation is that users complete the training within four months of enrolling. Please remind your pilot users to get started and check in on their progression throughout the training. The pilot for the Mental Health Practitioners will begin in early 2018. At the end of the 5-year initiative, the training will be available for use by all child welfare and mental health professionals in all states, tribes and territories. For additional information visit the website <http://adoptionsupport.org/adoption-competency-initiatives/national-training-initiative-nti/about-nti/> or contact [CFSNTI@dss.ca.gov](mailto:CFSNTI@dss.ca.gov).

### **CCR Regional Ideas and Transformation Exchange (RITE):**

The CDSS, Department of Health Care Services (DHCS), County Welfare Directors Association (CWDA), County Behavioral Health Directors Association (CBHDA), Chief Probation Officers of California (CPOC), California Institute for Behavioral Health Services (CIBHS), the Regional Training Academies (RTA), and Casey Family Programs are sponsoring the second set of CCR convenings in the Northern, Bay, Central, Southern regions, as well as Los Angeles, providing robust technical assistance at the local level. The next L.A. and Bay RITEs are scheduled for the fall 2017. If you'd like more information contact [Theresa.thurmond@dss.ca.gov](mailto:Theresa.thurmond@dss.ca.gov).