California
Child and Family Services Review
2006 Modified County Self-Assessment
County of San Diego

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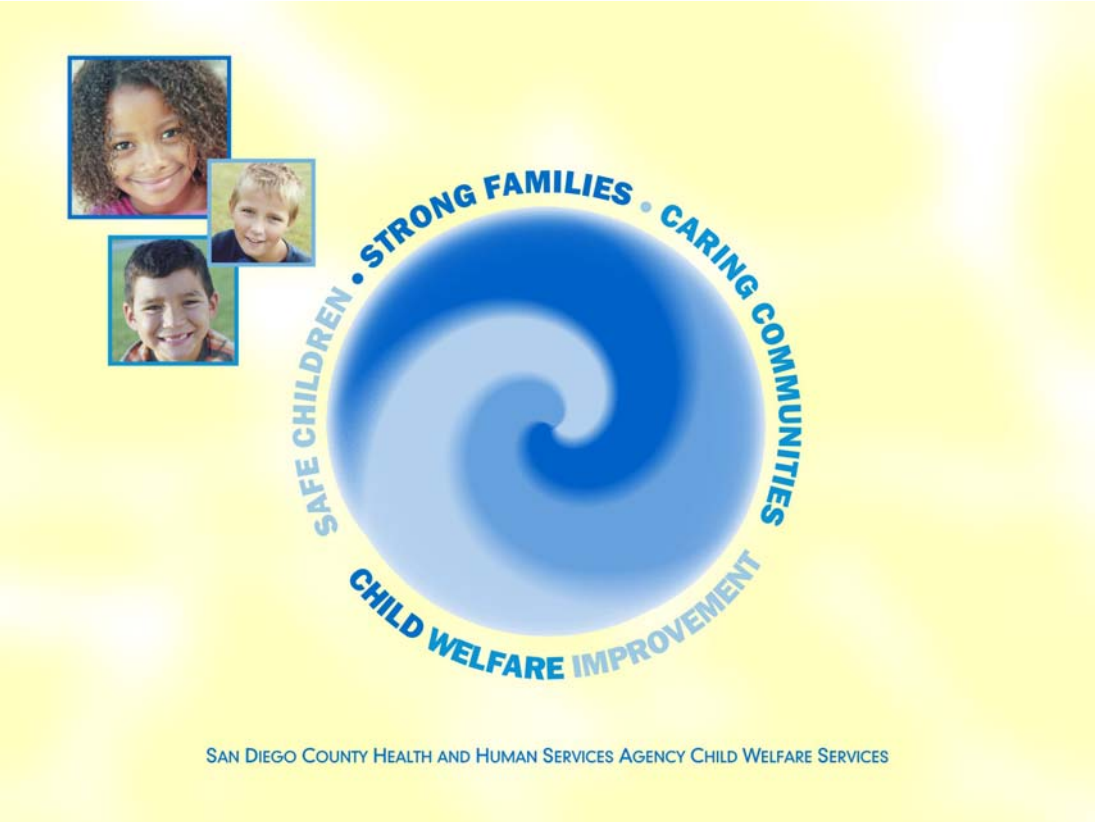

California's Child and Family Services Review
County Self-Assessment

County:	San Diego
Responsible County Child Welfare Agency:	Health and Human Services Agency (HHSA) Child Welfare Services (CWS)
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Period of Outcomes Data:	January 1998 through December 2004 via UC Berkley Child Welfare Research Center
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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

About the Federal and California Child and Family Services Reviews
In 1995, the federal Department of Health and Human Services Administration for Children and Families (ACF) began a comprehensive review of all state child welfare programs known as the Child and Family Services Review (CFSR). The federal review measured each state's performance against a set of desired outcomes for children and families that receive child welfare services. California failed to pass the federal review, along with the other 27 states examined, despite federal recognition for its success in placing children in permanent homes.

After completion of the federal review, California created its own Child and Family Services Review (C-CFSR) aimed to improve California's child welfare system administered by counties. The C-CFSR created a new outcome-based accountability system to measure county performance in providing child welfare services. The C-CFSR adopted many of the outcomes used in the federal review and added several state measures.

Main Components of the C-CFSR
County Self-Assessment (CSA)
Every three years, each county is required to assess how it performed on each of the outcomes. The CSA is a report signed by the directors of the Child Welfare Services and Probation agencies. The Child Welfare Services agency is the lead. The purpose of the self-assessment is to involve the entire community in assessing the county child welfare system's strengths and areas needing improvement; and to focus county efforts on those areas of need. The first CSA was submitted to the California Department of Social Services (CDSS) on June 30, 2004. In August 2005, the State proposed a C-CFSR Triennial cycle so they could stagger the reports due to them for all 58 counties. San Diego timelines were modified. The modified CSA is due to the California Department of Social Services (CDSS) on March 31, 2006. Subsequently, the next CSA will be expected on March 31, 2009.

County System Improvement Plan (SIP)
The SIP is an operational agreement between each county and the state that outlines how the county plans to improve its system of child welfare services. Each county is required to update the state annually on its progress accomplishing the objectives of the SIP and to request changes. The first SIP required Board of Supervisors' approval and was submitted to the CDSS on September 30, 2004. The new three-year SIP will require Board approval as well, and will be due to CDSS on June 30, 2006. The new SIP will cover the period of July 1, 2006 through June 30, 2009.

Executive Summary

Peer Quality Case Review (PQCR)

Building on the County Self-Assessment, outside experts (including peers from other counties) evaluated the County's child welfare practices and service delivery system through intensive case review to further identify strengths and areas needing improvement. The first PQCR was completed in April 2005. The PQCR was designed to review a specific area of focus of the County's social work and probation practice. The area of focus for CWS was length of time to exit foster care to reunification. The area of focus for Juvenile Probation was Probation Officer visits with children in foster care and their parents. The finding of the review were reported to CDSS via the PQCR Report which was submitted to on June 30, 2005. The County of San Diego is scheduled to undergo another PQCR in April 2008.

About the San Diego County's Modified Self-Assessment Process

Child Welfare Services (CWS), within the County's Health and Human Services Agency, facilitated the second self-assessment process in January 2006. To ensure the County obtained input from all participants in the child welfare system, CWS invited representatives from all aspects of the system to participate on a County Self-Assessment (CSA) Committee. These representatives represented multiple public and private agencies including Child Welfare Services, Juvenile Probation, Juvenile Court, and community partners.

The CSA committee held 3 productive meetings in January 2006. The committees gathered and analyzed a wide variety of data to identify the County's strengths and needed improvements. Committee members evaluated trend analysis data on the County's performance. This information is incorporated into this modified CSA report.

Areas of Further Exploration through the Peer Quality Case Review

Since the County's next PQCR will occur in 2008, the County will analyze its data in 2007 to determine the area of focus.

Plan for County's System Improvement Plan (SIP)

The CSA Committee began work on the new SIP while completing the Modified County Self-Assessment. The SIP committee will continue to meet and discuss how the County could improve its performance in the identified areas of need under each outcome.

Those indicators include:

- Length of time to exit foster care to reunification,
- Siblings placed together in foster care,
- Recurrence of Maltreatment, and
- Length of time to exit foster care to adoptions.

2006 COUNTY SELF-ASSESSMENT

County Data Report

The following measures serve as the basis for the County's Self-Assessment and will be used to track the County's performance over time. The source of the data in this report is provided by UC Berkeley and is extracted from the Child Welfare Services/Case Management System (CWS/CMS). Counties are responsible for inputting data into CWS/CMS as part of the process to manage the caseloads of children and families who receive child welfare services. The data is grouped into five general categories: Child Welfare Services Participation Rates; Safety Outcomes; Permanency and Stability Outcomes; Family Relationships and Community Connection Outcomes; and, Well-being Outcomes. In addition to the measures and indicators, the pertinent C-CFSR outcomes are listed under each category.

1. Child Welfare Services Participation Rates

San Diego County is comprised of a general population of 2.9 million. It is the third largest County in the State.	**San Diego 2002**	Rate per 1000	**San Diego 2004**	Rate per 1000
Number of children under 18 in population Definition: Population projections from the California Department of Finance (based on the 2000 U.S. Census)	727,503	N/A	**716,805**	N/A
Number and rate of children with referrals Definition: Unduplicated count of child clients under age 18, per 1,000 children under age 18 in population	51,876	71.3	**49,317**	68.8
Number and rate of children with substantiated referrals Definition: Unduplicated count of child clients under age 18 in referrals that had substantiated allegations, per 1,000 children under age 18 in population.	11,086	15.2	**9,889**	13.8
Number and rate of first entries Definition: Unduplicated count of children under age 18 entering child welfare supervised placement episode of at least five days duration for the first time, per 1,000 children under age 18 in population.	2,062	2.8	**1,798**	2.5

Measure	**San Diego July 1, 2003**	Rate per 1000	**San Diego July 1, 2005**	Rate per 1000
Number and rate of children in care Definition: Number of children under age 19 in child welfare supervised foster care, per 1,000 children under age 19 in population.	6,210	8.1	**5,965**	7.9

2. Safety Outcomes

Children are First & Foremost Protected from Abuse & Neglect

Outcome	San Diego Baseline [1]	San Diego Current [2]	State Goal [3]	National Standard for Federal Measure [4]
1A. Recurrence of maltreatment. (**Federal Measure**; Data set: 01/01/1998 to 06/30/2005) Definition: Of all children with a substantiated allegation within the first six months of the study year, what percent had another substantiated allegation within six months?	12.2%	**8.4%**	To Decrease	6.1%
1B. Recurrence of maltreatment within 12 months. (**State Measure**; Data set: 01/01/1998 to 06/30/2004) Definition: Of all children with a substantiated referral during the 12-month study period, what percent had a subsequent referral within 12 months?	17.5%	**11.7%**	To Decrease	N/A
1B. Recurrence of maltreatment within 12 months after first substantiated referral. (**State Measure**; Data set: 01/01/1998 to 06/30/2004) Definition: Of all children with a first substantiated referral during the 12-month study period, what percent had a subsequent referral within 12 months?	17.5%	**10.5%**	To Decrease	N/A

[1] San Diego Baselines dates range from January 1998 to June 2005 based on availability of data. Each measure reflects the data set period used for the analysis.
[2] Based on the latest available data.
[3] State goal is to make continual improvement by either increasing or decreasing depending on specific outcome. The intent is that counties not draw comparisons to performance in other counties due to differences in demographics, resources and practice.
[4] Child and Family Services Reviews National Standards were set forth by regulations 45 CFR 1355.31-37. The Federal Child and Family Service Reviews established the national standards for certain statewide data indicators used to determine a State's conformity under Titles IV-B and IV-E of the Social Security Act. For states that had data on the measure in 1997-1998 the standard is roughly the 75th percentile. The national standards are based on information that is reported by States to the Detailed Case Data Component of the National Child Abuse and Neglect Data System (NCANDS) and the Adoption and Foster Care Analysis and Reporting System (AFCARS).

2006 County Self-Assessment

Outcome	San Diego Baseline[1]	San Diego Current[2]	State Goal[3]	National Standard for Federal Measure[4]
1C. Rate of child abuse/neglect in foster care. (**Federal Measure**; Data set:01/01/1998 to 06/30/2005) Definition: For all children in county supervised or Foster Family Agency child welfare supervised foster care during the nine-month review period (timeframe established according to federal guidelines), what percent had a substantiated allegation by a foster parent during that time?	.30%	**0.47%**	To Decrease	0.57%
2A. Rate of recurrence of abuse/neglect in homes where children were not removed (12 Months) (**State Measure**: Data set: 07/01/2001 to 06/30/2004) Definition: Of all the children with an allegation (inconclusive or substantiated) during the 12-month study period who were not removed, what percent had subsequent substantiated allegation within 12 months?	8.6%	**7.1%**	Decrease	N/A

Timely Response to Child Abuse and Neglect Referrals

Process Measure (State Measure)	San Diego Baseline Q2 2003	San Diego Current[5] Q2 2005	State Goal[6]
2B. Immediate Response Compliance Definition: Percent of child abuse and neglect referrals that have resulted in an in-person investigation stratified by immediate response for both planned and actual visits.	97.3%	**98.2%**	To Increase
2B. 10 Day Response Compliance Definition: Percent of child abuse and neglect referrals that have resulted in an in-person investigation stratified by ten-day referrals, for both planned and actual visits.	95.8%	**97.6%**	To Increase

[5] Based on the latest available data.
[6] State's goals are to either increase or decrease.

Timely Social Worker Visits with Child

Process Measure (State Measure)	San Diego Baseline Q2 2003	San Diego Current Q2 2005	State Goal
2C. Percent of Children who received a required monthly social worker visit. Definition: Of all children who required a monthly social worker visit, how many received a monthly visit? (FM/FR PP Cases)	91.0%	**93.3%**	To Increase

Probation

Timely Probation Officer visits with Wards and their parents

Process Measure (State Measure)	San Diego Baseline[7] 2002	San Diego Current[8] 2005	State Goal[9]
2C. Percent of Wards who received a required monthly probation officer visit. Definition: Of all Wards who required a monthly Probation officer visit, how many received a monthly visit?	100.0%	**100.0%**	To Increase
2C. Percent of Parents who received a required monthly probation officer visit. Definition: Of all Parents who required a monthly probation officer visit, how many received a monthly visit?	13.0%	**28.0%**	To Increase

3. Permanency & Stability Outcomes

Children have Permanency and Stability in their Living Situations

Outcome	San Diego Baseline	San Diego Current[10]	State Goal	National Standard
3E. Percent reunified within 12 months from latest removal from home. (**Federal Measure**; Data set: 07/01/1998 to 06/30/2005) Definition: Of all children who were reunified from child welfare supervised foster care during the 12-month study period, what percent had been in care for less than 12 months?	65.5%	**67.9%**	To Increase	76.2%

[7] Data source – Probation Officer's Monthly Statistical Report
[8] Based on the latest available data.
[9] State's goals are either increase or decrease.
[10] Based on latest available data.

2006 County Self-Assessment

Outcome	San Diego Baseline	San Diego Current[10]	State Goal	National Standard
3A. Percent reunified within 12 months for first entries. (**State Measure**; Data set: 07/01/1998 to 06/30/2004) Definition: For all children who entered foster care for the first time (and stayed at least five days) during the 12-month study period, what percent were reunified within 12 months?	38.9%	**35.3%**	To Increase	N/A
3D. Percent adopted within 24 months of from latest removal from home. (**Federal Measure**: Data set: 07/01/1998 to 06/30/2005) Definition: Of all children who were adopted from child welfare supervised foster care during the 12-month study period, what percent had been in care for less than 24 months?	16.0%	**24.2%**	To Increase	32.0%
3A. Percent adopted within 24 months. (**State Measure**; Data set: 07/1/1998 to 06/30/2003) Definition: For all children who entered child welfare supervised foster care for the first time (and stayed at least five days) during the 12-month study period, what percent were adopted within 24 months?	3.9%	**5.0%**	To Increase	N/A
3B. Percent with no more than 2 placement settings within 12 months. (**Federal Measure;** Data set: 07/01/1998 to 06/30/2005) Definition: For all children in child welfare supervised foster care for less than 12 months during the 12-month study period, what percent had no more than two placements?	80.9%	**81.2%**	To Increase	86.7%
3C. Percent with 1-2 placements - if still in care at 12 months (**State Measure;** Data set: 07/01/1998 to 06/30/2004) first entries Definition: For all children who entered child welfare supervised foster care for the first time (and stayed at least five days) during the 12-month study period, and were in care for 12 months, what percent had no more than two placements?	52.5%	**55.7%**	To Increase	N/A
3F. Percent re-entered foster care within 12 months of a prior foster cares episode. (**Federal Measure**; Data set: 07/01/1998 to 06/30/2005) Definition: For all children who entered child welfare supervised foster care during the 12-month study period, what percent were subsequent entries within 12 months of a prior exit?	12.9%	**8.7%**	To Decrease	8.6%

Outcome	San Diego Baseline	San Diego Current[10]	State Goal	National Standard
3G. Percent who re-entered within 12 months of reunification for first entries. (**State Measure**; Data set: 07/01/2002 to 06/30/2003) Definition: For all children who entered child welfare supervised foster care for the first time (and stayed at least five days) during the 12-month study period and were reunified within 12 months of entry, what percent re-entered foster care within 12 months of reunification?	15.4%	**10.7%**	To Decrease	N/A

4. Family Relationships and Connections Outcomes

Children Retain Close Connections to Family and Community

Sibling Placements (State Measure)	San Diego July 1, 2003	San Diego July 1, 2005	State Goal
4A. Percent of siblings in out-of-home placement that are placed with **ALL** siblings Definition: For all children in child welfare supervised foster care on the point-in-time, of those with siblings in care, what percent were placed with all of their siblings?	40.9%	**42.5%**	To Increase
4A. Percent of siblings in out-of-home placement that are placed with **SOME or ALL** siblings Definition: For all children in child welfare supervised foster care on the point-in-time, of those with siblings in care, what percent were placed with some of their siblings?	63.4%	**63.3%**	To Increase

Foster Care Placement in Least Restrictive Setting (State Measure)

	Initial (First) Placement			Primary (Most Time In) Placement			Point-In-Time Placement		
Placement in Least Restrictive Care Settings	San Diego 6/30/98	San Diego 6/30/05	State Goal	San Diego 6/30/98	San Diego 6/30/05	State Goal	San Diego 07/01/03	San Diego 07/01/05	State Goal
4B. Relative	13.5%	**10.3%**	To Increase	41.0%	**40.7%**	To Increase	35.3%	**36.6%**	To Increase
4B. Foster home	18.7%	**42.5%**	To Increase	31.0%	**39.4%**	To Increase	27.0%	**26.3%**	To Increase
4B.Foster family agency certified home (FFA)	.2%	**5.6%**	To Decrease	1.2%	**4.0%**	To Decrease	5.5%	**5.2%**	To Decrease
4B. Group home / Shelter	65.0%	**40.8%**	To Decrease	19.3%	**13.3%**	To Decrease	12.7%	**14.4%**	To Decrease
4B. Other	2.7%	**0.7%**	To Decrease	2.7%	**2.6%**	To Decrease	19.6%	**17.5%**	To Decrease

Rate of Indian Child Welfare Act (ICWA) Placement Preferences (State Measure)

Placement Type	San Diego Q2 2003	San Diego Q2 2005	State
4E. Percent in relative home	55.8%	**31.5%**	To Increase
4E. Percent w/ non-relative Indian Family	.8%	**1.9%**	To Increase
4E. Percent w/ non-relative non-Indian Family	18.3%	**50.9%**	To Decrease

1. Well Being Outcomes

Number of Youth Transitioning to Self-Sufficient Adulthood (State Measure)

Youth Milestone	San Diego 10/01/01 to 9/30/02	San Diego 10/01/03 to 9/30/04[11]
8A. High School Diploma /GED	90	**158**
8A. Enrolled in College/Higher Education	118	**98**
8A. Received ILP Services	1,468	**1,427**
8A. Completed Vocational Training	19	**19**
8A. Employed or other means of support	307	**195**

[11] Latest available data.

ANALYSIS OF OUTCOMES

Demographics of the General Population

The County of San Diego (County) is comprised of a general population of 2.9 million people, the third largest county in the state, with approximately 716,805 children under age 18.[12]

In order to better provide services to its customers, the Health and Human Services Agency divided the County into six geographic service regions, examines the needs in each region, and strives to provide services that meet those needs. The six geographic service regions are: Central, North Central, South, East, North Inland and North Coastal.

[12] Population projections are from the California Department of Finance based on the 2000 Census.

Analysis of Outcomes

The general population of the County is composed of several races and ethnicities, which include Caucasian, Hispanic, African-American, Native American, Asian, Pacific Islander and others.

Education System Profile

The County's public education system is comprised of 43 school districts and enrolled 499,355 children for the 2003/2004 academic year.[13]

The following is information on educational achievement in San Diego County for the 2002/2003 academic year: [14]

89.5% of students enrolled in grade 12 graduated
439 students dropped out of grades 7-8
The annual drop out rate for grades 9-12 was a 2.7% or 3,940 students

The County offers Alternative Education through various programs: (a) continuation; (b) community/experience based; (c) opportunity; (d) magnet; (e) pregnant/parenting; (f) independent study; and, (g) other programs. For the 2003/2004 academic year, the total number of students enrolled in Alternative Education is 1,466. Each child may be enrolled in more than one Alternative Education program. The County also offers a Gifted and Talented Education program, in which 60,826 children are enrolled.

CWS Outcomes and C-CFSR Data Indicators

This section analyzes historical data obtained from the University of California at Berkeley's Center Social Service Research (CSSR) website to determine trends in the County's performance on the measures identified in the County Data Report. This historical data is in addition to the data presented in the County Data Reports.

The analysis and conclusions presented below are preliminary. To confirm the analysis and conclusions about the County's performance, there is a need to continue efforts on "data clean-up" (data accuracy and validity), data validation through in-depth statistical analysis, and additional training on data entry. Additionally, more analysis is needed to assess how fairness and equity issues influence County performance.

NOTE: The County Data Report did not include data on children supervised by Probation. This report's analysis and conclusions are relevant to CWS only unless otherwise noted.

[13] Source: California Department of Education.
[14] Graduation and dropout rates are not yet available for the 2004-2005 academic year.

Analysis of Outcomes

Outcome 1: Children are, first and foremost, protected from abuse and neglect.

Recurrence of Maltreatment Outcome Measures:

Federal Indicator (1A)
Overall, San Diego CWS clients have experienced a steady, yearly decline in maltreatment recurrence rates from January 1998 (12.2%) to June 2005 (8.4%). Federal Goal (6.1%) has not been met.

The analysis of the latest available data (2004) based on race, age and gender revealed the following.

Race: There was no statistically significant difference among the ethnic groups (African-American, Caucasian, Hispanic, & Native American) on recurrence of maltreatment within 6 months. However, over time, the Asian/Other group had the greatest decrease in maltreatment recurrence than the other ethnic groups. Native Americans' recurrence maltreatment rate decreased less significantly over time than the other groups.

Age: There was no statistically significant difference among the age groups. Children age six to 10 years old continue to have the largest decrease in the rate of recurrence of maltreatment. Children in the 16-17 year age group continue to have substantially lower levels of abuse than all groups combined.

Gender There was no statistically significant difference between males and females on the occurrence of maltreatment within 6 months.

State Indicator (1B)
Overall, San Diego CWS clients have experienced a steady, yearly decline in maltreatment recurrence rates within 12 months of a **first** substantiated referral from January 1998 (17.5%) to June 2004 (10.5%). State Goal (To Decrease) has been met.

The analysis of the latest available data (2003) based on race, age and gender revealed the following:

Race Asian children were least likely to experience a maltreatment recurrence (5.5% recurrence rate). All of the other ethnic groups (African-American, Caucasian, Hispanic, and Native American) were 2-3 times more likely to suffer a recurrence in maltreatment than Asian children. Caucasian children experienced the highest recurrence rate (14.5%) of maltreatment.

Age 16-17 year olds were the least likely group to experience a recurrence in maltreatment (4.9%). All of the other age groups were 2-2.6 times more likely than 16-17 yr. olds to suffer a recurrence of maltreatment. In

addition, 12.6% of 1-2 yr. olds were the most likely group to experience a maltreatment recurrence. Over time, all of the age groups experienced roughly equivalent decreasing trends in maltreatment recurrence within 12 months of a first substantiated referral.

Gender In the analysis of the latest available data (2003), there was no statistically significant difference between males and females on recurrence of maltreatment within 12 months of a first substantiated referrals.

Areas of Need

To improve the accuracy and validity of the data, there is a need to:

- Evaluate the consistency of social workers' decision-making process regarding the disposition of a referral
- Examine why duplicate referrals occur and how these impact the County's performance on these indicators
- Assess the relationship, if any, between the recurrence of maltreatment and the length of time to exit Foster Care to Reunification (indicators 3A and 3E)

To determine what factors influence the County's performance on these measures, there is need to:

- Conduct an in-depth analysis to determine the effects of age, ethnicity; and population characteristics (e.g., military, refugees and cross-border) on these indicators
- Identify social work practice improvement areas (e.g., types of services offered, use of a standardized assessment tool to identify safety issues, reasons for subsequent referrals) that might affect the County's performance
- Ascertain how the County's policy of leaving children in the least restrictive setting (e.g., in their homes when safe and appropriate) and providing in-home services impacts the County's performance
- Identify common community and family factors that lead to a subsequent referral
- Assess how the systemic factor, service array, may influence the County's performance on this indicator.

Rate of Child Abuse and/or Neglect in Foster Care Measures:

Federal Indicator (1C)

Overall, San Diego CWS children have experienced a steady, yearly increase in substantiated referral rates while in foster care from 1998 (0.30%) to 2003 (.92%), followed by a significant decline in 2005 (0.47%). San Diego has met the Federal Goal (.57%) since 2004.

Analysis of Outcomes

The analysis of the data based on race, age and gender revealed the following.

Race — In the analysis of the latest available data (2005), there was no statistically significant difference among the ethnic groups (African-American, Caucasian, Hispanic, Asian/other, & Native American) on substantiated referral rates while in foster care. Over time, substantiated abuse referral rates increased more sharply for Hispanics than the overall rates, less sharply for Caucasians than the overall rates, and actually have decreased in recent years for African-Americans. Native Americans had no substantiated abuse referrals while in foster care from CY 1998 to 2003 and a 2.5% rate in 2004.

Age — In 2004, there was not a statistically significant difference among the age groups on rates of substantiated referrals while in foster care. Over time however, substantiated abuse referral rates increased substantially for children 3 to 10, and most sharply for those 16-17. For children less than 2 years old and children 11-15 years old, the rate increase was less pronounced than for all the age groups combined.

Gender — In 2004, there was not a statistically significant difference between males and females on substantiated referral rates while in foster care. Over time, males and females both experienced worsening rates based on increasing trends on this measure.

Areas of Need

To improve the accuracy and validity of this data, there is a need to:

- Determine what data entry errors affect the County's performance on this indicator (e.g., Child Abuse Hotline may not be properly coding abuse and neglect in foster homes)
- Identify the demographic factors that impact the County's performance
- Determine any relationships between this indicator and the other C-CFSR indicators

To determine what factors influence the County's performance on this measure, there is a need to:

- Explore how the Foster Home Licensing (FHL) Unit documents licensing issues that arise in foster homes, but do not involve abuse and neglect
- Identify mismatched placements that might occur due to a lack of an intensive and thorough assessment of a child’s needs and what the foster home offers. The research generally indicates that mismatched placements contribute to the rate of abuse and neglect in foster care
- Determine how the County's policy to place children in family homes rather than at the County's shelter reduces the amount of time a social worker has to assess whether the foster home can meet the child's needs

Analysis of Outcomes

- Assess how, if at all, the systemic factor, Foster/Adoptive Parent Licensing, Recruitment, Retention, and Provider Training, influences the County's performance on this indicator
- Determine how the high cost of living and housing in the County affects the County's ability to recruit foster parents who would be an appropriate fit for children in foster care
- Assess how training and supportive services provided to foster families impacts the County's performance on this indicator

Rate of Abuse and/or Neglect Following Permanency:

Indicator (1E)
The CDSS materials indicate this indicator is currently under development and no data was provided in the County data report.

Outcome 2: Children are safely maintained in their homes whenever possible and appropriate.

Rate of Recurrence of Abuse/Neglect in Homes Where Children Were Not Removed

State Indicator (2A)
Overall, San Diego children have experienced a steady, modest improvement on this measure based on a decreasing trend from July 1, 2002 (8.6%) to June 30, 2004, to 2003 (7.1%). State Goal (To Decrease) has been met.

The analysis of the latest available data (July 1, 2003 through June 30, 2004) based on race, age and gender revealed the following.

Race — Over time, all ethnic groups experienced decreasing trends on this measure. However, children in the Asian/other and Native American groups experienced sharper improving trends and Caucasians a less pronounced improvement on this measure than the other age groups. In the latest study period, July 1, 2003 through June 30, 2004, children in the Asian/other category had significantly lower rates on this measure than all of the other age groups, which were 1.3 to 2.0 times more likely to experience a recurrence of abuse/neglect within 12 months.

Age — Over time, all age groups experienced a decreasing trend on this measure. 16-17 year olds experienced substantially better (lower) rates than all of the other age groups in all of the time periods examined. In the latest study period, July 1, 03-June 30, 04, 16-17 year olds had significantly lower rates on this measure than all of the other age groups, which were 1.5 to 2.5 times more likely to experience a recurrence of abuse/neglect within 12 months.

Analysis of Outcomes

Gender An analysis of the latest available data (July 1, 2003-June 30, 2004) shows there was not a statistically significant difference in the proportions of males and females who experienced a recurrence of abuse/neglect within 12 months of a first allegation.

Areas of Need

- To improve the accuracy and validity of this data, there is a need to:
- Collect more data on this indicator
- Conduct an in-depth analysis of factors that may influence this indicator
- Evaluate the social worker's decision-making process regarding the disposition of a referral
- Assess the occurrence of duplicate referrals. (The County has developed quick guides to assist social workers in handling duplicate referrals.)

To determine what factors influence the County's performance on this indicator, there is a need to:

- Ascertain how the County's policy of leaving children when appropriate in the least restrictive setting (e.g., in their homes when safe and appropriate) and providing in-home services impacts the County's performance. This policy may create a situation where children are more susceptible to subsequent referrals when not removed from their home
- Evaluate social workers' ability to assess risk, in particular how a social worker's skills influence the risk assessment (e.g., a social worker's ability to engage the parents in addressing the protective issues)
- Evaluate the frequency and quality of home visits to ensure a child's safety and families' participation in services
- Assess if the systemic factor, service array, may influence the County's performance on this measure. For example, are services meeting the family's needs, and are they of sufficient quantity, flexibility and accessibility

Percent of Child Abuse/Neglect Referrals with a Timely Response:

State Indicator (2B)
Overall, San Diego has demonstrated a modest but consistent increase on this measure from Q2 2003 to Q2 2005. The County is presently at a 98.2% compliance rate for a 24-hour response and at a 97.6 compliance rate for a 10-day response. San Diego has consistently met the State Goal (90%).

Analysis of the data based on race, age and gender could not be completed, as no demographic breakdown data is available at this time.

Analysis of Outcomes

Areas of Need

To improve the accuracy and validity of this data, there is a need to:

- Ensure the Child Abuse Hotline properly codes referral response times
- Address data entry errors (improperly coded response times on referrals)
- Determine any relationships between this indicator and the other C-CFSR indicators

To determine what factors influence the County's performance on this indicator, there is a need to:

- Determine if the distance a social worker must travel to Native American reservations to respond to a referral adversely affects the response time. The County has 18 Native American reservations spread over approximately 3 million acres, and Native American cases are managed in a centralized specialty unit
- Assess if social workers' unfamiliarity with emergency response services prevents a timely response
- Evaluate how the availability of standby social workers on the weekends for immediate response referrals affects the response time

Timely Social Worker Visits With Child:

State Indicator (2C):
Overall, San Diego has experienced a slight, yearly increase on this measure from 2003 (91.0%) to 2005 (93.3%). San Diego has consistently met the State Goal (90%).

Disclaimer: Measure 2C methodology and code are currently under revision by CDSS. The methodology is being refined to more accurately count the Timely Social Worker Visits With Child measure. As a result, new 2C reports based on the required updates are not yet available. However, the changes being made are expected to have a significant impact on reducing San Diego County's rates on this measure and the rates presented here should be interpreted with caution.

Analysis of the data based on race, age and gender revealed the following.

Race — Over time, all ethnic groups experienced roughly equivalent improvements on this measure based on increasing trends. The exception was Native Americans, whose rates actually increased more substantially than the other ethnic groups.

Age — Over time, all age groups experienced continually improving rates on this measure, except for those children less than 1 year old, whose rates actually worsened mildly over time. In addition, children under 1 experienced a higher rate on this measure than the other age groups.

Analysis of Outcomes

Gender Over time, both males' and females' rates have improved based on increasing trends on this measure from 2003 to 2005. In 2005, no significant difference was found between males' and females' rates on this measure.

Areas of Need

To improve the accuracy and validity of this data, there is a need to:

- Identify the data entry issues influencing the County's performance on this indicator
- Determine any relationships between this indicator and the other C-CFSR indicators

To determine what factors influence the County's performance on this indicator, there is a need to:

- Assess how entry of the case plan with appropriate exceptions into CWS/CMS affects the County's performance
- Continue to provide social workers with training on how to document contacts for children placed out of the state and out of the country
- Evaluate how the current policy for coding of service components impacts the County's performance
- Determine how the County's policy of visiting a child once a month in the Family Maintenance and Family Reunification programs and visiting a child every other month in the Permanency Placement program (when the exception criteria outlined in CDSS Division 31 regulations is met) affects the County's performance
- Determine if the distance to Native American reservations that social workers must travel to visit a child adversely affects the response time. The County has 18 Native American reservations spread over approximately three million acres, and Native American families are handled in a centralized specialty unit

Probation

Probation Officer visits with children in foster care and their parents

The area of focus for Juvenile Probation is the outcome indicator, Probation Officer visits with children in foster care and their parents. The area of focus was chosen because of the connection between continued contact with children and their parents, and the effect it has on the child's success in treatment and family reunification. This area of focus was chosen to review Juvenile Probation's policies or practices that create challenges or barriers to meeting the State's mandate on Probation Officer visits with children and their parents.

Probation placements in foster care differ from those in Child Welfare Services in that some of the placements are offense specific vs. a dependency issue. However, a number of placements represent minors that are in need of serious mental health

treatment that could not otherwise be dealt with effectively through placement at home with outpatient therapeutic services. The data collected shows that Probation has been meeting the mandate of monthly Probation Officer visits with minors. The data represents that in some instances, minors were seen more than one time per month, representing the over 100% statistics for the month. This number has remained consistent.

The number of Probation Officer visits with parents has not been consistent. We have seen an increase month to month, but not a steady increase. As strategies are developed to facilitate these visits, the data should represent an increase in the numbers of parents visited monthly. However, there are several issues involved in this area. First, many of our parents are involved in the criminal justice system themselves and are often incarcerated or do not have a steady address. Second, there have been uncovered caseloads that have affected the number of visits possible, as coverage by other officers permits. Lastly, many of the parents of minors on Probation are not cooperative with the system, and avoid contact with Probation as much as possible.

Data will continue to be collected to show what is hoped to be a steady increase in the number of parents seen, and a consistent number of visits with minors.

Outcome 3: Children have permanency and stability in their living situations without increasing re-entry to foster care.

Length of Time to Exit Foster Care to Reunification:

Federal Indicator (3E)

Overall, San Diego has experienced a steady, yearly decreasing trend on this measure from October 1997 (78.8%) to June 2005 (67.9%). Federal Goal (76.2%) has not been met.

The analysis of the data based on race, age and gender revealed the following.

Race — In the analysis of the latest available data (03-04), there was no statistically significant difference among the ethnic groups (African-American, Caucasian, Hispanic, Asian/other, Native American) on reunification within 12 months in care. However over time, reunification rates decreased roughly equivalently for all of the ethnic groups except for Native Americans. Native Americans actually experienced an overall increase in their rate of reunification within 12 months.

Age — In the analysis of the latest available data (03-04), children under 1 were the age group most likely to be reunified within 12 months (100%). The other age groups were all only 60 to 70% percent as likely to be reunified within 12 months, with 1-2 yr. olds experiencing the lowest reunification rates (59.8%).

Analysis of Outcomes

Gender In the analysis of the latest available data (03-04), there was no statistically significant difference between males and females on reunification during 12 months of the study for those in care for less than 12 months.

State Indicator (3A1)

Overall, San Diego CWS clients have experienced a modest decline on this measure from 1998 (38.9%) to June 2004 (35.3%). State Goal (To Increase) has not been met.

Race In the analysis of the latest available data (2003), over time, children in the Asian/other and Native American groups actually experienced a rate improvement on this measure, while Caucasians, Hispanics, and African-Americans experienced worsening rates based on decreasing trends over time.

Age In the analysis of the latest available data (2003), 16-17 year olds were reunified at a higher rate than the other age groups (47.6% vs. 34.8% overall). All of the other age groups individually were only 60 to 80% as likely to reunify within 12 months if in care for the first time.

Gender In the analysis of the latest available data (2003), there was no statistically significant difference in the proportions of males and females in care for the first time that reunified within 12 months.

Areas of Need

To improve the accuracy and validity of this data, there is a need to:

- Identify data entry issues that may affect the County's performance; for example, whether social workers use the correct placement change reason in CWS/CMS when children are reunified
- Determine any relationships between this indicator and the other C-CFSR indicators

To determine the factors that influence the County's performance on this indicator, there is a need to:

- Evaluate the training curriculum to determine how to provide more hands-on training for social work staff on how to help parents overcome resistance, lack of motivation, and non-compliance with the case plan activities
- Explore the implementation of a procedure where a mandatory meeting with the family, social work staff and other pertinent persons occurs between the Detention Hearing and the Jurisdictional Hearing to help parents overcome resistance, identify potential placements and family support systems
- Explore how to increase timely and consistent feedback from and follow-up by service providers (e.g. therapists, domestic violence provider) to social work staff

Analysis of Outcomes

- Evaluate how the County's practice of using Family Team Meetings helps involve and inform parents about the reunification process
- Extract the record of services provided to families from CWS/CMS and evaluate the effectiveness of the services provided in the first 12 months of foster care
- Determine how cultural factors are considered in the development of the case plan
- Assess how familial factors (e.g., housing, limited financial resources) affect the time to reunification
- Evaluate how risk assessments interplay with the recommendation of reunification (e.g., focusing on risk of harm versus focusing on the family's ability and strengths to address the protective issue)
- Assess how a supervisor's and social worker's knowledge and expertise influences the decision to reunify
- Determine the effect on reunification of implementing unsupervised visitations when the parent and child are ready versus waiting until a regularly scheduled court hearing to request an order to authorize unsupervised visitations
- Assess how the systemic factor, service array, may influence the County's performance on this indicator by focusing on services available to the family post-reunification

Length of Time to Exit Foster Care to Adoption:

Federal Indicator (3D)
Overall, San Diego has experienced a steady, yearly increasing trend on this measure from October 1997 (16%) to June 2005 (24.2%). Federal Goal (32%) has not been met.

The analysis of the latest available data (03-04, based on race, age and gender revealed the following.

Race — In the analysis of the latest available data there was no statistically significant difference among the ethnic groups (African-American, Caucasian, Hispanic, Asian/other, & Native American) on exiting care for adoption for those in care for less than 24 months. Over time, all of the ethnic groups experienced increases in adoptions within 24 months over time, except for the Asian/Other group, which actually experienced a substantial decrease over time.

Age — Children less than 1 yr. old were most likely to be adopted within 24 months (100% rate). The other age groups were only 3 to 50% percent as likely to be adopted within 24 months, with 11-15 year olds experiencing the lowest rate (2.6%).

Gender — There was no statistically significant difference between males and females on exiting care for adoption for those in care for less than 24

months. Over time, male and female children, which started off at fairly different rates in 97-98 (12.8% for females vs. 18.8% for males), both experienced increasing trends that converged by 03-04.

State Indicator (3A2):
Overall, San Diego has experienced an overall moderate increasing trend on this measure from 1998 (3.9%) to June 2003 (5%). State Goal (To Increase) has been met.

Race — In the analysis of the latest available data (2002), there was no statistically significant difference among the age groups (African-American, Caucasian, Hispanic, Asian/other, & Native American) on adoption rates within 24 months while in care for the first time. Over time, all of the ethnic groups except for the Asians/other group experienced an increasing trend in their adoption rates on this measure. The Asians/other group actually experienced a decreasing trend over time on their adoption rates. Alternately, Caucasians experienced higher adoption rates than the other ethnic groups.

Age — In the analysis of the latest available data (2002), children under 1 year old were adopted within 24 months at a higher rate than the other age groups combined (16.9% vs. 5.3% overall). All of the other age groups individually were only 10 to 20% as likely to be adopted.

Gender — In the analysis of the latest available data (2002) there was no statistically significant difference in the proportions of males and females in care for the first time and adopted within 24 months. Over time, adoption within 24 months rates increased more sharply for males than females, even though the rates for both genders started at the roughly same point in 1998

Areas of Need

To determine the accuracy and validity of this data, there is a need to:

- Assess data entry issues and conduct data clean up
- Determine any relationships between this indicator and the other C-CFSR indicators

To determine the factors that influence the County's performance on this indicator, there is a need to:

- Evaluate the frequency that Family Team Meetings and Family Unity Meetings are used at critical stages of the case to address adoption
- Assess how often concurrent planning is used at the onset of a case
- Evaluate whether increased in referrals to the CWS Pre-Placement Assessment Unit (PPAU), which determines the child's suitability for adoption through psycho-medico-social studies of the child and the biological family, would reduce the time to adoption

Analysis of Outcomes

- Evaluate how the time to complete an adoptive assessment home study process affects the time to exit to adoption. For example, the process might take six months or longer for applicants who already have children placed in their homes who they plan to adopt
- Determine how a parental contest or appeal of the termination of parental rights delays the exit to adoption
- Assess the effectiveness of expanding current recruitment efforts for homes that can adopt within 24 months for all children, in particular those children with special needs (e.g., emotional, behavioral; medical), older children and sibling groups
- Identify the factors that limit the ability of families to adopt (e.g., the high cost of living in San Diego County)

Stability of Foster Care Placement:

Federal Indicator (3B)
Overall, San Diego CWS clients have experienced a slight, yearly increase on this measure from October 1997 (80.9%) to June 2005 (81.2%). Federal Goal (86.7%) has not been met.

The analysis of the data based on race, age and gender revealed the following.

Race — In the analysis of the latest available data (03-04), children in the Asian/other group were the most likely ones to be placed less than 3 times (1-2 placements) in the 12-month study period (89.5% rate). The other age groups were all only 69 to 91% percent as likely to be placed only 1-2 times during a 12-month study period, with Native Americans experiencing the lowest 1-2 placements rate (61.5%).

Age — Children in the 16-17 year old age group were most likely to be placed less than 3 times (1-2 placements) in the 12-month study period (89.1% rate). The other age groups were all only 85 to 95% percent as likely to be placed only 1-2 times during a 12-month period, with 11-15 yr. olds experiencing the lowest 1-2 placements rate (75.9%).

Gender — In the analysis of the latest available data (03-04), there was no statistically significant difference in the proportions of males and females with 1-2 placements during the study period.

Analysis of Outcomes

State Indicator (3C)
Overall, San Diego children have experienced a modest, increasing trend on this measure from 1998 (52.5%) to June 2004 (55.7%). State Goal (To Increase) has been met.

The analysis of the latest available data (2003) based on race, age and gender revealed the following.

Race — there was no statistically significant difference among the ethnic groups (African-American, Caucasian, Hispanic, Asian/other, & Native American) on being placed less than 3 times out of those in care for the first time and for at least 5 days.

Age — In 2003, children under 1 year old were most likely to be placed 1-2 times according to this measure, while all of the other age groups were only 58% to 68% as likely to be placed only 1-2 times.

Gender — In the analysis of the latest available data (2003), there was no statistically significant difference between males and females on being placed less than 3 times for those in care for the first time and for at least 5 days.

Areas of Need

To improve the accuracy and validity of this data, there is a need to:

- Collect more data on this indicator
- Determine any relationships between this indicator and the other C-CFSR indicators

To determine the factors that influence the County's performance on these indicators, there is a need to:

- Evaluate how the use of Polinsky Children's Center (PCC) and emergency shelter care homes affects the number of placements children experience in foster care
- Evaluate support services to caregivers
- Assess the factors that impact the recruitment of foster families (e.g., high cost of living; high housing prices)

Rate of Foster Care Re-Entry

Federal Indicator (3F):
Overall, San Diego has experienced a steady, yearly decrease on this measure from October 1997 (12.9%) to June 2005 (8.7%). Federal Goal (8.6%) has not been met.

The analysis of the latest available data (03-04) based on race, age and gender revealed the following.

Analysis of Outcomes

Race — Children in the Asians/other group were least likely to re-enter within 12 months (5.7%). The other ethnic groups were 1.3 to 2.6 times more likely to re-enter within 12 months, with African-Americans experiencing the highest re-entry within 12 months rate (14.9%). Over time, rates of re-entry within 12 months varied depending on the ethnic background. Overall, the rates on this measure decreased at a modest pace while the rates for children of African-American and Asian/other ethnicity actually experienced a slight increasing trend over time. Caucasian, Native American, and Hispanic children experienced modest decreases on this measure over time.

Age — In the analysis of the latest available data (03-04), children under 1 were the age group least likely to re-enter within 12 months (2.8%). The other age groups were all 3 to 9 times more likely to re-enter within 12 months, with 16-17 yr olds experiencing the highest re-entry within 12 months rates (25%) in 03-04. Over time, all age groups experienced a decreasing trend in re-entry within 12 months except for 11-15 yr olds, which experienced a flat trend. 16-17 yr olds experienced the sharpest decrease in re-entries within 12 months.

Gender — In the analysis of the latest available data (03-04), there was no statistically significant difference between males and females on re-entry within 12 months of exiting.

State Indicator (3G):
Overall, San Diego has experienced an inconsistent but overall decreasing linear trend on this measure from 1998 (15.4%) to June 30 2005 (10.7%). State Goal (To Decrease) has been met.

Analysis of the data based on race, age and gender revealed the following.

Race — In 2002, children in the Asians/other group were the least likely to re-enter within 12 months of reunification (5.4%). The other age groups were 1.5 to 3.4 times more likely to re-enter care within 12 months, with Caucasians experiencing the highest re-entry rate (18.5%). Over time, decrease rates of re-entry within 12 months of reunification were roughly consistent across all ethnic groups.

Age — In the analysis of the latest available data (2002), there was no statistically significant difference between the age groups on re-entry into care within 12 months of reunification. Over time, most age groups experienced a decrease on their rates on this measure except for children in the 1-2 and 16-17 yrs of age groups, which experienced an overall increasing linear trend on re-entry rates after reunification.

Analysis of Outcomes

Gender In the analysis of the latest available data (2002), there was no statistically significant difference between males and females on re-entry within 12 months of reunification. Over time, females experienced a greater improvement trend in re-entry rates within 12 months of reunification than males.

Areas of Need

To improve the accuracy and validity of this data, there is a need to:

- Conduct further research to determine the variables that correlate to these indicators
- Determine any relationships between this indicator and the other C-CFSR indicators

To determine the factors that influence the County's performance on these indicators, there is a need to:

- Identify the factors that prevent a successful reunification (e.g., lack of support services post-reunification; state mandates to reduce time to reunification)
- Determine the positive factors that enable a successful reunification during the Family Maintenance phase of the case
- Evaluate how post-reunification services may decrease foster care re-entry
- Assess how evidence-based decision-making tools assist social workers when deciding whether to reunify

Outcome 4: The family relationships and connections of children served by CWS will be preserved, as appropriate.

Siblings Placed Together in Foster Care:

State Indicator (4A)
Overall, in the data on Sibling Placed with Some or All Siblings, San Diego has experienced a relatively flat trend with a slight decrease on this measure from Jan. 1, 2003 (64.3%) to July. 1, 2005 (63.3%). State Goal (To Increase) has not been met.

Analysis of the data based on race, age and gender revealed the following.

Race In the analysis of the latest data (Oct. 1, 2004), children in the Asians/other category had the highest rate on this measure (74.1%). All of the other ethnic groups were only 66 to 98% as likely to be placed of some or all siblings, with Native Americans experiencing the lowest rate on this measure as of Oct. 1, 2004 (47.8%). Over time, most ethnic groups experienced flat or decreasing trends on this measure, with Asians/other experiencing the highest rates of placement with Some or All siblings

Analysis of Outcomes

Age In the analysis of the latest data (Oct. 1, 2004), children 3-5 and 6-10 years old were most likely to be placed with some or all of their siblings (73.5% and 73.4%). The other age groups were 61 to 81% as likely as 3-5 and 6-10 yr olds to be placed with some or all of their siblings, with 16-17 yr olds experiencing the lowest rate at 44.9% on Oct. 1, 2004. Over time, most age groups experienced inconsistent rates on this measure, which resulted in mostly flat trends.

Gender In the analysis of the latest data (Oct. 1, 2004), there was no statistically significant effect of gender on whether or not children in care were placed with some or all of their siblings. Over time, the rate of placement with some or all siblings for females has remained fairly flat, while males have experienced a very slight decrease.

Areas of Need

To improve the accuracy and validity of this data, there is a need to:

- Ensure that social workers properly identify siblings in CWS/CMS through the relationships page
- Conduct further research to determine the variables that correlate to this indicator
- Determine any relationships between this indicator and the other C-CFSR indicators
- Understand the family composition (number of siblings, ages, special needs, etc.)

To determine the factors that influence the County's performance on this indicator, there is a need to:

- Assess the guidelines used by social workers for sibling placement
- Assess support services required by caregivers to enable placing siblings together
- Assess recruitment strategies to license foster parents who will take large sibling groups
- Assess economic factors that impact caregivers abilities to provide care for sibling groups

Foster Care Placement in Least Restrictive Settings

State Indicator (4B):

Primary Placements:
Overall, group/shelter as primary placements demonstrated the sharpest decreasing rate trends from 1998 to June 2005, with relative placements also decreasing, though more modestly. Foster home primary placements experienced a sharp increasing trend from 1998 to June 2005. FFA placements increased slightly and all other placements combined had a flat rate trend over time.

Analysis of Outcomes

Predominant Placements

Overall, predominant placements in relative homes, group/shelter, and all other placement types combined demonstrated a modest declining trend from 1998 to 2004. Predominant placements in relative homes and FFA showed increasing rate trends, although the FFA increase was not as sharply as relative placements.

Point-In-Time (PIT) Placements

Over time, PIT (point-in-time) relative placements have shown a slight increasing trend from July 1, 2003 to July 1, 2005. Foster home and FFA placements have shown flat rate trends over the same time period. The 'all other placements' category has shown a decreasing rate trend over the time periods examined.

Race — On July 1, 2005, Hispanic children had a higher level of relative placements (39.8%) than the other ethnic groups. Children in the Asian/other category experienced the highest rate of foster home placements (32%). Children in the Asian/other group also experienced the lowest rate of FFA placement (1.5%). Children in the Asian/other group once again experienced the best rate in group/shelter home placements on July 2005 (11.6%). Native Americans were the only ethnic group to experience slightly worsening relative placement rates based on a decreasing trend over time. For foster home placements, all ethnic groups except for African-Americans experienced worsening rates over time based on decreasing trends, with Native Americans and Hispanics seeing the most dramatic PIT decreases from July 2003 to July 2005. For FFA placements, Native Americans experienced consistent but generally worsening rates based on an increasing trend over time. In addition, Native American rates were substantially higher than the average FFA rates for all of the ethnic groups. For group/shelter placements, all ethnic groups, and especially Native Americans and Hispanics, experienced worsening rates based on increasing trends over time.

Age — On July 1, 2005, 1-2 year olds and 3-5 year olds had the highest relative placement rate (48.7% and 48.3%, respectively). Children under 1 had the highest foster home placement rate (52.7%). 3-5 year olds had the lowest FFA placement rate (2.4%), with all of the age groups being 1.2 to 3.2 more likely to be placed in a FFA. Children under 1 had the lowest group/shelter home placement (1.4%), with all of the other age groups being 1.4 to 3.2 times more likely to be placed in a group/shelter home. Lastly, children under 1 had the lowest placement rate in the remaining placement types (7.3%), with all of other age groups being 1.4 to 3.4 times more likely to be placed in 'other' types of placements.

Gender — On July 1, 2005, more females were placed in foster care homes than males, who were only 89% as likely to be in the same type of placement. Females' FFA placement rate was significantly smaller than males, who

were one and a half times more likely to be placed in a FFA. Females were also significantly less likely to be placed in group/shelter homes than males, who were 1.3 times more likely to be placed in a FFA. Over time, females and males both experienced modestly increasing group/shelter placement trends. Females and males are both experiencing worsening trends on group/shelter placements, although the trend for males is worse than for females. This indicates that males are consistently placed in group/shelter homes more frequently than females.

Areas of Need

To improve the accuracy and validity of this data, there is a need to:

- Continue data clean up
- Collect more data on this indicator
- Determine any relationships between this indicator and the other C-CFSR indicators
- Continue to work with CSF contractors to implement regional action plans for building capacity to support relative caregivers

To determine the factors that influence the County's performance on this indicator, there is a need to:

- Assess how the County's practice of first placing children in PCC or an emergency shelter care home and then a long-term placement affects this indicator
- Assess the County's practice to search for relative caregivers

Rate of Indian Child Welfare Act (ICWA) Placement Preferences:

State Indicator (4E)
Overall, relative home placements for ICWA-eligible children have seen a sharp decreasing trend over time. At the same time, non-relative Indian family placements have seen a sharp increasing trend over the same study periods. Although non-relative non-Indian family placements make up a substantially smaller proportion of the placements, the rate trend for these placements have remained fairly steady and only increased very slightly over time.

Areas of Need

To improve the accuracy and validity of the data, there is a need to:

- Continue to conduct data clean up
- Collect more data on this indicator
- Identify any relationships between this indicator and the other C-CFSR indicators

Analysis of Outcomes

- Continue to work with County Counsel to ensure correct family history information regarding Native American background and ancestry is obtained, and that proper notice procedures under the Indian Child Welfare Act (ICWA) are addressed
- Continue to improve communication and linkage between CWS and Tribes

To determine the factors that influence the County's performance on this indicator, there is a need to:

- Assess how the rate of removal for Native American children influences this indicator because the rate of removal is the highest of all race/ethnic groups
- Enhance communication and collaborations between CWS and tribes
- Assess how to provide more support services for Native American relative caregivers
- Assess the County's practice to search for caregivers ensuring cultural considerations are included

Outcome 5: Well-Being

Children transitioning to self-sufficient adulthood:

State Indicator (8A)
As of September 2004, 1427 children received ILS services. Of those, 158 graduated High School, 98 enrolled in higher education, 19 completed vocational training and 195 were employed or had another means of support.

Although the County Data Reports contain information on this indicator, historical data is not available, thereby limiting further analysis.

Areas of Need

To improve the accuracy and validity of this data, there is a need to:

- Assess the quality of the database used by the Independent Living Skills (ILS) Unit to alleviate data entry issues
- Continue to collect more data on this indicator
- Determine any relationships between this indicator and the other C-CFSR indicators

To determine the factors that influence the County's performance on this indicator, there is a need to:

- Evaluate how gender affects the effective use of ILS services
- Assess the effectiveness of outreach and follow up to children that transition out of foster care, to ensure their participation in an after-care program

Analysis of Outcomes

- Assess how collaborations with other County programs outside the HHSA to maintain transitional housing programs (e.g., The Housing and Community Development department provides housing vouchers for up to 52 youth that are age 18 to 21 years, and the Trolley Trestle Program, which provides housing for former foster youth) affect the County's performance
- Determine how collaborations with community colleges can provide educational programs for foster care youth (e.g., hosting events at City College for transitioning youth; having “One Stop” centers available to assist foster care youth with employment preparation and job seeking; educational mentoring available for children and youth age 6 to 18 years) and affect the County's performance

PUBLIC AGENCY CHARACTERISTICS AND SYSTEMIC FACTORS

Public Agency Characteristics
Public Agency Characteristics were previously reported in our June 2004 County Self-Assessment Report and there have been no significant changes.

Systemic Factors
Systemic factors were previously reported in our June 2004 County Self-Assessment Report and there have been no significant changes.

COUNTYWIDE PREVENTION ACTIVITIES AND STRATEGIES

CWS monitors all CWS service contracts that provide prevention and intervention services for families at risk of child abuse and neglect.

Countywide Primary Prevention Efforts

Community Services for Families (CSF) program

The CSF program provides a continuum of support services for families from primary prevention, to secondary prevention and through intervention with families who have documented child abuse or neglect and are receiving child welfare services. Family preservation and family support services are provided, including services for children identified as having developmental delays.

- *Family Preservation Services* are designed for families whose current level of child abuse falls below the threshold for mandatory intervention, but in which there is a risk of increased abuse in the absence of help or if a current crisis is not mitigated. Participation in services is voluntary and the services provided include home visiting services, parent education, budgeting and money management and education on health related issues.
- *Family Support Services* augment the assessment and mandated case management activities performed by CWS. The services are primarily home-based and the goal is to ensure that home environments are free from child abuse and neglect. Developmental support services target children ages six and younger who have been identified as developmentally delayed for their age group. The goal of all services is to strengthen families and ensure that children are in safe, permanent families.
- *Kinship Support Services Program (KSSP)* provides support services to relative caregiver families to ensure safe and stable homes for children who can not currently live with their parents.
- *Foster Parent Support Services* are provided to prevent child abuse in out of home care through stress reduction for caregivers and training on dealing appropriately with difficult child behaviors.

Prevention Partnerships

The County has a long history of community-based prevention partners who share knowledge, resources and responsibility to protect the safety of children and preserve the viability of individual families. These include a broad range of traditional and non-traditional partners that span across multiple public and private agencies and disciplines (e.g., grass root organizations, parents, faith-based organizations, civil leaders, and business) but share a common vision for the protection and well-being of children and are willing to work in a collaborative manner. These partnerships include broad community input and participation in decision-making.

These partnerships can be viewed on two distinct levels: (1) Countywide and (2) Neighborhood. The Countywide Partnership is broader and inclusive of multiple

neighborhood perspectives, while the Neighborhood Partnership is reflective of a specific locale perspective. Please see Section III.G.1 for a discussion of the County's countywide collaborations with public and private agencies.

Each region has developed or is in the process of developing Neighborhood partnerships. For example:

North Central Region

- co-located social workers at schools that have a high rate of removals
- co-located social workers at the police department, in a military housing development and at two different community centers
- developed close working relationships with the military community and with the Bayside Community Center, which provide self-improvement, educational and health-related programs to individuals in the community
- partnered with five distinct faith-based organizations in the Region's highest at-risk child abuse areas

Central Region

- is discussing linkages with the Family Justice Center. The Family Justice Center is the most comprehensive "one stop shop" in the nation for victims of family violence and their children
- is developing a continuum of services and programs designed to reduce the rate of homeless episodes experienced by families
- has Health Link Central, a partnership between school districts and county staff designed to identify and resolve barriers to service
- has established a linkage with Mid City Child Assessment Network (CAN) to enhance staff knowledge of resources in the community

East Region

- created the Families and Seniors Together (FAST) Pilot Project, which is designed to assist parents, children and the family to maintain the progress gained during the reunification process, transition to the appropriate ways to live and continue to establish a solid family life
- established the Human Service Council (HSC) that addresses community problems, provides advocacy voice, improves communication and coordination of services, and generates projects to meet community need. HSC is composed of community providers, families, at large stakeholders, faith organizations, schools and government agencies. A subgroup of HSC is the Multi-Systems Workgroup that provides a public-private partnership platform to maximize efforts toward building neighborhood capacity to support at-risk children and families and improve child welfare services outcomes.

Countywide Prevention Activities And Strategies

North Coastal Region

- Developed the Child Assessment Network North (CANN) in partnership with CWS, New Alternatives, Green Oak Ranch, Casa de Amparo, North County Collaborative and other community partners with the goal of keeping North County children in North County communities. CANN is designed to provide prevention, assessment and intervention services for North County children age 0-17 who are in need of protective custody.
- Regularly sends a bilingual worker to the Chavez Center, an Oceanside Community Center, as a resource person and to build relationships in the community.

North Inland Region

- MOA with Escondido School District for staff placement at a high referral site
- Health Link partnership
- Partnership with Neighborhood House Association for Early Childhood Education, Head Start
- Partnership with Cal State San Marcos to develop undergraduate internship program in Child Welfare Services
- Safer Living Environments Initiative Coalition with CBO's, Schools, Faith Based Organizations, Law Enforcement Agencies; establishing 3 priorities:
  - Reduce substantiated child abuse referrals
  - Keep children placed in their own communities
  - Reduce Domestic Violence
- Developed the Escondido Eastside Community Center in partnership with CWS, City of Escondido, the North County Collaborative and the Escondido School District

South Region

- Co-located staff at a high school to provide services to at-risk children and families
- Developed partnerships with school-based collaboratives by attending Student Attendance Review Board (SARB) meetings, acting as a liaison to discuss children and families possibly at-risk, and also working to recruit foster homes
- Developed the School Cluster Model to create additional linkages to area schools and to assist in foster parent recruitment
- Established a partnership with YMCA Family Stress Center Kinship Center to serve kinship families and keep children out of the Juvenile Court dependency system
- Piloted Parent Peer Support Project. This project provides an initial three week orientation sessions for parents focusing on the following topics: Overview of the child welfare system, working collaboratively with your social worker and the

Juvenile Court, Resources available to help the parents and children. After orientation, parents are required to attend 13 weekly support meetings facilitated by parents that have successfully reunified with their children

- Developed partnership with Chula Vista and Bonita libraries to promote and increase literacy amongst foster youth by providing foster youth with library cards and library resources and tutoring including preparation classes for the GED/CHSPE
- Partnering with law enforcement by outstationing a PSW at the South San Diego Police Department to serve families related to the Drug Endangered Children (DEC) Project and to strengthen relationships with law enforcement
- Outstationed an ER unit at an Family Resource Center (FRC) to provide families in the FRC with resources and services

Community Services for Families (CSF) contracts

- The County continues its strategy to provide services through collaboration with community-based partners. The County created the Community Services for Families (CSF) contracts, which became operational in September 2004. The CSF contractors provide prevention and intervention support services through the direct provision of services and by subcontracting of services through other community partners. The County developed objectives for the contract to support several efforts currently in place for children and families. The outcomes include (1) child safety, (2) child well-being, (3) permanency, (4) stable living environments, and (5) development of community involvement. These outcomes and objectives were established to coincide with the priorities of the C-CFSR and CWS Redesign.

Strategies for the Future

- 23-Hour Assessment Center – Goal is to reduce the number of shelter care entries and to divert children that may be placed less than 24 hours in another relative or family foster home setting.
- Bench Mark Hearings – Hearings for children in placement longer than 2 years to address the efforts of permanency, transition, reunification and other issues impacting the child.
- Family Finding Strategies –
  - **Family Finding is a process of doing powerful data base searches and the use of a unique and individualized engagement strategy being used by public and private agency social workers. The ultimate goal is to engage family members in the long-term care and affection for foster care children who no longer have an immediate family.**
  - **Through Family Finding provide children placed in group home placement the opportunity to reconnect with their relatives.**
- Family to Family – The Family to Family initiative has been an opportunity for states and communities to re-conceptualize, re-design and re-construct their foster care

system. Family to Family strategies include foster family recruitment and support planning, timely decision making around placement, building community partnerships, and using data to track and improve agency performance.

- Mental Health Services – Outstation psychologist in each region to help children with mental health issues that are currently placed in foster care or at risk of being placed in foster care. The goal is to provide parents and foster parents with mental health resources in the community to keep children from coming into the foster care system or moving to a higher level of care.
- OIP Pilot Projects –
  - Project KEEP - Project KEEP is a collaborative relationship between Child and Adolescent Services Research Center, San Diego County Health and Human Services Agency and Oregon Social Learning Center. It aims to increase foster parents' parenting skills to prevent and reduce problem behaviors in their foster children, and decrease foster parent dropout, placement disruptions and abuse and neglect in foster care.
  - Expand Parent Peer Support Project to all regions – the Parent-Peer Support Group project provides education regarding the court process, encourages parents to engage in reunification services and connects them with other parents who have successfully reunited with their children.
- Quality Assurance, Regional Data – Expand the data unit to improve data analysis and the identification of trends to assist with implementation of policies and procedures to develop quality assurance reports and identify data entry practice issues.
- Rollout Structure Decision Making (SDM) – SDM is a safety and risk assessment model used to improve assessments of family situations in order to better ascertain the protection needs of children. It aims to increase consistency in case assessment and case management among CWS staff within a county and among counties.
- Strengthen Way Stations - The Way Station program establishes short-term foster homes. The program allows children to remain in a home-like environment while social work staff locates a more permanent placement in the vicinity. The goal is to place children close to familiar surroundings thereby minimizing trauma and loss associated with removal from the home environment and to maintain school continuity.

PEER QUALITY CASE REVIEW (PQCR) SUMMARY

On April 15, 2005, San Diego County completed its PQCR. On June 30, 2005, the County submitted their full PQCR report with their findings and recommendations to the State. The PQCR was an intensive examination of a selected social work/probation officer practice area aimed at improving the provision of child welfare services. Social Work/Juvenile Probation staff had an opportunity to freely and honestly provide insight and practice wisdom for improving the provision of child welfare services. Cases were selected for review, and staff were interviewed on the selected cases.

Area of Focus

The PQCR was designed to review a specific area of focus of the County's social work and probation practice. The goal was to identify strengths, areas of need and make recommendations for improvement. CWS and Juvenile Probation conducted the PQCR as a concurrent process with different areas of focus.

CWS: The area of focus for CWS was length of time to exit foster care to reunification. This area of focus was chosen because social work practice and its impact on children and families could be assessed. This area of focus parallels the County's focus in its System Improvement Plan, and thus, helps guide the County's improvement efforts.

Juvenile Probation: The area of focus for Juvenile Probation was Probation Officer visits with children in foster care and their parents. This area of focus was chosen because of the connection between continued contact with children and their parents, and the effect it has on the children's success in treatment and family reunification. This area of focus was chosen to review Juvenile Probation's policies or practices that create challenges or barriers to meeting the State's mandate on Probation Officer visits with children and their parents.

Sample Selection

The sample selection for the County's PQCR was limited to the cases that fell within the area of focus resulting in a different sample selection for CWS and Juvenile Probation.

CWS: The CWS cases selected for the PQCR were from the County's family reunification caseload in January 2004 through March 2005. There were a total of 929 cases, of which 73 cases were randomly selected. The objective was to gather information from these cases on social work practices, CWS policy and procedures, and obstacles present in family reunification cases that did and did not reunify timely.

Juvenile Probation: The Juvenile Probation cases selected for the PQCR were from the County's Juvenile Probation foster care caseload in March 2005. There were 150 cases, of which 15 cases were randomly selected for the PQCR. The objective was to gather information from these cases on probation officer policies, practices and obstacles in visiting children and parents.

Peer Quality Case Review (PQCR) Summary

Review Process

The PQCR involved conducting interviews to gather information on the areas of focus. The interviews were conducted individually or as focus groups. After the completion of the interviews and the focus groups, the information is gathered, analyzed and summarized. CWS and Juvenile Probation had concurrent but separate review processes. Neither CWS nor Juvenile Probation observed any unique county issues during the PQCR process.

CWS

PQCR Team

The PQCR Team conducted the actual interviews and focus groups. The CWS PQCR Team was composed of San Diego County staff, staff from Contra Costa, Los Angeles and Orange counties, the California Department of Social Services, and the Public Child Welfare Training Academy (PCWTA).

Interviews and Focus Groups

A total of 53 social workers, 22 supervisors and seven court officers were interviewed. Social worker interviews and supervisors' focus groups were conducted from April 12, 2005 through April 14, 2005.

Juvenile Probation:

Juvenile Probation PQCR Team

The Juvenile Probation PQCR Team was composed of San Diego County staff, staff from Contra Costa, and Imperial counties, California Department of Social Services, and the PCWTA.

Interviews

A total of seven Probation Officers and one Probation Officer Supervisor were interviewed. The interviews were conducted from April 12, 2005 through April 14, 2005.

Summary of Data

CWS

The summary of the data revealed only one clear distinction between cases that reunified timely and cases that did not reunify timely. This distinction was in the type of abuse allegation. The cases that reunified timely were more likely to have a substantial risk allegation. The cases that did not reunify timely were more likely to have an abuse allegation of emotional abuse or general neglect. With this exception, the summary of data revealed no distinctions attributable to either cases that did or did not reunify timely.

The summary of data revealed that timely family reunification was not dependent on the families' demographics, multiple placements, or sibling placements. It revealed that in both instances, timely and not timely, the social workers were assessing families' needs, identifying services, involving the families in the case planning process and facilitating visitations.

Peer Quality Case Review (PQCR) Summary

Parental involvement, family engagement and services were the key to timely family reunification. Social workers, supervisors and court officers who were interviewed overwhelmingly identified all three as key practices. In the cases that reunified timely, the parents overcame their resistance, were motivated and determined to reunify and participated in services early in the case. The social workers spent time engaging the family by developing a positive working relationship with the parents and focusing on the family's strengths and resources.

The provision of services was also essential. In the cases that reunified timely, once appropriate services were located for the family, services were more likely to be available and accessible to the family. Reports from service providers were likely to be timely and addressed the protective issue and the social workers' recommendations.

This can best be summarized in one word, "collaboration". Reunification is about parents, social workers and service providers collaborating to help families overcome their resistance, engage in services and successfully reunify with their children in a timely manner.

Juvenile Probation:

The Probation Department utilizes a collaborative screening process to adequately assess the need for out-of-home placement. The screening team includes placement, program and forensics staff. Probation Officers attempt to keep families involved in services to meet case plan goals. Challenges and Barriers included high caseloads and lack of clerical support for the Placement Unit. With the increasing demands and volume of paperwork, placement officers are finding it challenging to file paperwork and prepare cases for transfer or closing. Also, inadequate access to specialized services (e.g. translators, counseling, neuropsychological evaluations, transitional housing, etc.) and limited access to data systems from remote locations contributed the challenge of managing their cases.

Recommendations

CWS

The recommendations made by the social workers, supervisors and court officers were prioritized to parallel the key social work practices, factors and challenges/barriers that impact timely family reunification and were included in the System Improvement Plan. Areas requiring additional exploration are listed below.

- Parent Engagement
- Interaction/collaboration with Services/Service Providers
- Interaction/collaboration Juvenile Court/Attorneys
- Support from the CWS Agency

Peer Quality Case Review (PQCR) Summary

Juvenile Probation

The recommendations made by the Probation Officers and Probation Officer Supervisor are listed below. These recommendations were prioritized for integration in the County's System Improvement Plan. Areas requiring additional exploration are listed below.

- Training for placement officers
- Systemic/Policy Changes
- Interaction/collaboration Juvenile Court/Attorneys
- Interaction/collaboration with community agencies
- Support from the Juvenile Probation
- State Technical Assistance/Review of State mandates