



CDSS

JOHN A. WAGNER
DIRECTOR

STATE OF CALIFORNIA—HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES AGENCY
DEPARTMENT OF SOCIAL SERVICES

744 P Street • Sacramento, CA 95814 • www.cdss.ca.gov



ARNOLD SCHWARZENEGGER
GOVERNOR

September 29, 2009

ALL COUNTY INFORMATION NOTICE NO. I-67-09

REASON FOR THIS TRANSMITTAL

- State Law Change
- Federal Law or Regulation Change
- Court Order
- Clarification Requested by One or More Counties
- Initiated by CDSS

TO: ALL COUNTY WELFARE DIRECTORS
ALL CWS PROGRAM MANAGERS

SUBJECT: FAMILY ENGAGEMENT EFFORTS (FEE)

California utilizes its Child Welfare Services Case Management System (CWS/CMS) as the primary electronic data source for production of aggregate reports required by the Federal Administration for Children and Families (ACF). This All County Information Notice (ACIN) is intended to assist counties in meeting critical CWS program documentation, data reporting, and program performance measurement requirements. This and future ACINs will provide information to assist counties in uniformly following program policy and data entry protocols to continuously improve data in CWS/CMS.

Introduction of New Measure:

The Program Improvement Plan (PIP) Item 18: Child and Family Involvement in Case Planning is a new measure. Item 18 will measure the percentage of all child welfare supervised cases, open for at least eight days during the reporting quarter with a delivered family engagement effort within the report period.

California's PIP Item 18 measure is a modified version of ACF's Child and Family Services Review (CFSR) Item 18. In addition to mother, father and child involvement in case planning, California's measure allows for the inclusion of other case significant individuals.

Background:

The CFSR is the federal government's program for assessing the performance of state child welfare agencies with regard to achieving positive outcomes for children and families. Titles IV-B and IV-E of the Social Security Act authorize ACF's Children's

Bureau within the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services to conduct the CFSR assessment. ACF assigned California an overall rating of “*area needing improvement*” (ANI) for Item 18. This measure is California’s method of demonstrating improvement in child and family involvement in case planning. ACF’s complete final CFSR performance report for California can be found at the following web address:
<http://www.childsworld.ca.gov/res/pdf/CFSRFinalReport2008.pdf>.

The CDSS remains steadfast in working with counties to increase family engagement through the participatory case planning practice. Specifically, Item 18 promotes greater collaborative involvement of the child, family, caregiver and caseworker to make better decisions in the best interest of the child. The Northern California Training Academy’s guide, *Participatory Case Planning in Child Welfare Research* (2008), explains that family engagement has led to some positive outcomes for children and youth in the child welfare system. The Children’s Bureau 2001-2002 review (US DHHS, 2003), found that states that included parents in case planning had a significantly higher percentage of cases rated as “substantially achieved” (at least 90%) for stabilizing children’s living arrangements and meeting positive child outcomes. Research indicates that individuals who are included and asked to participate in making decisions that affect them are more likely to follow through in completing plans and carrying out decisions.¹

California has taken several measures to make improvements in this ANI since 2002. As part of the first PIP, legislation was passed in 2004 increasing the timeframe to complete a case plan from 30 to 60 days. The extended timeframe allows caseworkers the opportunity to actively engage families and integrate input from child(ren), parent(s), relatives, and other interested parties in the case plan (AB 2795, c. 232, Statutes of 2004). Additional legislation was passed requiring children, who have been removed from their families, be given a meaningful opportunity to participate in the development of the case plan (AB 1412, c. 640, Statutes of 2005).

To evaluate the efficacy of some family engagement strategies, a 3-year, 11-county pilot was initiated in 2004. The pilot project tested such family engagement strategies as Team Decision Making (TDM) and Family Group Conferencing (FGC). Results were promising in reunification (30 percent improvement in pilot counties vs. three percent for non-pilot counties). Based on the measurable success of counties using these strategies, California will continue its determined effort to improve family and child engagement in case planning.

CWS/CMS and Target Improvement:

Evaluation of existing data in CWS/CMS indicates that existing family engagement effort fields are underutilized. CDSS is aware that family engagement efforts are occurring at

¹ Maddux, J. E. (2002). Self-efficacy. In C. R. Snyder & S. J. Lopez (Eds.), *Handbook of positive psychology* (pp. 277-287). New York: Oxford University Press.

much higher rates than are captured in CWS/CMS. This ACIN provides CWS agencies instructions on how to accurately capture engagement efforts in CWS/CMS so that this activity is correctly reflected in data reports.

Family engagement effort fields consist of eight values, however, for the purposes of showing improvement for the PIP only four of the values will be counted. The four values are marked by an asterisk in Attachment I. Baseline for this measure will be determined utilizing the four values during the fourth quarter of the PIP using the Children's Bureau method for establishing targets (Federal Multiplier: Baseline + Std. Error). This method of calculating improvement is used when a measure is based on something other than a case-file quality assurance review. A minimum two quarters of data will be collected prior to establishing baseline.

If you have questions or need further information, please contact your California Child and Family Services Review Consultant at 916-651-8100, or send an email to: chldserv@dss.ca.gov.

Sincerely,

Original Document Signed By:

RICHARD SMITH, Acting Chief
Children's Services Operations
and Evaluation Branch

Attachments:

Attachment I. is a table of family engagement efforts and activity definitions.

Attachment II. is a user tool for data entry.

Attachment III. provides the PIP Item18 Measure methodology.

Attachment I: Family Engagement Efforts (FEE) and Activity Definitions

Family Engagement Efforts (FEE)	Definitions of Engagement Activities Values include caseworker engagement with the child, family, parent/caregiver. ¹
1. Case Planning with Family*	Use for any formal facilitated family meeting such as family group decision making or family group conferencing and any family meeting that involves the development of specific and measurable goals and objectives with the family's participation and agreement pertinent to the family and their situation, referrals for services needs as identified by the family, review of services with the family completed or in process (for updates and on-going case planning), discussion of services and how they pertain to the family's identified needs-either by the court or the family, discussion of timelines for completion or engagement of services.
2. Outreach with Family	Use when one of the other 7 defined values does not apply. General family and tribal outreach including family finding, family engagement efforts, and other services such as transportation to/from service providers, assistance with obtaining services as identified in the case plan, and exploring alternative services within the family's community to best meet their needs.
3. Mediation with Family	Use specifically for court mediation meetings with family members to settle jurisdictional, dispositional and permanency issues (pre-hearing settlement conferences and permanency mediation meetings).
4. Family Meeting/TDM/Family Case Conferencing*	Use specifically for family to family team decision making (TDM) meetings, facilitation of meetings, development of safety plans based on safety and risk assessments, identifying community and family supports, development of case plans including goals, and exploring placement options and alternatives.
5. Meeting w/ Community Partners and Family*	Use specifically for wraparound services, including family and child team meetings and wrap services that include facilitation of meetings, discussion of goals and measurable outcomes for family, supporting families with understanding the services provided by community partners, on-going consultation and collaboration of the family's progress in services .
6. Meeting w/ Foster Parents and Family	Use for review of child's case plan goals, individual development and/or learning plan, development of additional services needed for placement stability, support and referrals to obtain services, on-going discussion of child's progress within the placement, mentoring and coaching of parenting skills by caregiver, Icebreakers, parent-child interaction skill building during visitations, and permanency/emancipation conferences. Includes meetings with care providers (including FFA and group homes) and the birth parents extended family.
7. Meeting w/ Parent Partners and Family	Use for review of the family's case plan goals, role clarification, discussion on how parent partners can support the family, development of objectives for parent partners and family, and coaching and mentoring activities by the parent partner.
8. Meeting w/ CalWorks Staff and Family*	Use for Linkages services, including the development of the case plan to achieve goals for child welfare and CalWorks in order to maintain eligibility, on-going discussions and collaborations to identify additional needs or discuss completion of objectives and any pertinent changes that may have occurred throughout the life of the case. Assistance with transitions such as reunification to continue the child and family's eligibility for services.

*Indicates values measured to demonstrate improvement for the PIP.

¹ To be considered "delivered in person" the Family Engagement Effort must include the caseworker plus one or both of the following individuals: 1) child; 2) parent/s. The only exception to "delivered in person" is in the instance in which the caseworker makes contact with an incarcerated parent/s and "in person" is not an option. See Attachment II and III for methodology and instructions on recording caseworker contacts delivered "not in person" for incarcerated parent/s.

Steps to enter a Family Engagement Effort (FEE) contact:

1. Select the Service Management section button.
2. Open the existing Contact Notebook and go to step 4 (if the contact does not exist, follow step 3 to create a new Contact).
3. To create a New Contact, on the Contact Tab complete the Staff Person, Start Date, End Date, Contact Purpose, Method, Location, Status, Participants, On Behalf of Child, Contact Party Type, and Case Management Services/Referrals fields.
4. To count as a FEE the Method must be "In-Person"¹, the Status must be "Completed" and the Case Management Services/Referrals must be one of the eight specified FEE values (See Attachment I). To be considered delivered in person the FEE must include the caseworker plus one or both of the following individuals: 1) child; 2) parent/s.

¹ The following is an exception to number four: If a parent is currently incarcerated a caseworker/parent meeting may be by "Telephone" and count as a success in this measure. For this exception to apply 1) "In Person" contacts must be deemed unreasonable given existing circumstances and 2) A Booking/Inmate number must be entered on the incarcerated parent's Client notebook on the Address tab. All other "Telephone" contacts will be disregarded in determining a Family Engagement Effort contact.

Item 18 Methodology

This measure shows the percentage of cases, open at any time in the quarter, that have had a Family Engagement Effort (FEE) contact provided by a caseworker to a parent and/or child within the reporting quarter and/or the quarter prior to the reporting quarter.

Denominator

The denominator includes:

- All Child Welfare supervised cases open during the reporting quarter.

The denominator excludes:

- Probation cases.
- Kin Gap cases.
- Incoming and Outgoing ICPC cases.
- Non-Dependent Legal Guardian cases.
- Cases open for less than 8 days.
- Children age 19 and older on the last day of the reporting quarter.

Numerator

The numerator includes:

- The count of distinct cases, subject to the denominator, with a “Completed, In-Person” FEE contact. To be considered delivered in person, the FEE must include the caseworker plus one or both of the following individuals: 1) child; 2) parent/s. A “Completed, Telephone” contact may be acceptable for incarcerated parent/s.¹
- The FEE contact must have occurred within the reporting quarter and/or the quarter prior to the reporting quarter.
- A successful contact must be recorded in the “Case Management Services/Referrals” Dialogue Box in the Contact Notebook using one of the eight FEE values (See Attachment I). The contact must be completed and provided by a caseworker.

¹ If a parent is currently incarcerated a caseworker/parent meeting may be by “Telephone” and count as a success in this measure. For this exception to apply 1) “In Person” contacts must be deemed unreasonable given existing circumstances and 2) A Booking/Inmate number must be entered on the incarcerated parent’s Client notebook on the Address tab. All other “Telephone” contacts will be disregarded in determining a Family Engagement Effort contact.