2026 Data Notebook

Behavioral Health Services for Foster Youth

The California Behavioral Health Planning Council (CBHPC) provides an annual Data Notebook to support Local Behavioral Health Boards and Commissions in meeting their state-required reporting responsibilities. This mandate directs boards to review county behavioral health performance data and communicate their findings to the CBHPC.

Each year highlights a different area of service delivery. For 2026, the focus is **Behavioral Health Services for Foster Youth,** supporting the Council's broader responsibility to review statewide behavioral health systems and advise policymakers on emerging needs and priorities.

Data Notebook Overview

The Data Notebook provides counties with a structured approach to reviewing behavioral health services, documenting observations, and sharing information that supports ongoing system improvement. It helps boards identify key challenges, note progress, and contribute insights used to inform statewide planning and policy development.

Key Functions of the Data Notebook:

- Supports required reporting and standardized data review
- Gathers local insights to inform county and state decision-making
- Helps shape statewide priorities and contributes to federal program planning

2026 Focus: Behavioral Health Services for Foster Youth

California has the largest foster youth population in the nation. Foster youth frequently experience trauma, placement instability, and complex behavioral health needs. The 2026 Data Notebook assesses how counties address these needs through service delivery and coordination with Child Welfare Services and partner agencies.

Areas of Focus:

- Delivery and monitoring of behavioral health services
- Coordination across child-serving systems
- Implementation of new state and federal requirements

This year's focus aligns with major statewide initiatives, including the Continuum of Care Reform, Family First Prevention Services Act, SB 163, the Tiered Rate Structure, and statewide implementation of the High-Fidelity Wraparound model, which took effect statewide on July 1, 2026.

Key Reporting Areas

The 2026 Data Notebook asks counties to provide information across several core areas related to service delivery for foster youth. These reporting areas help the state understand how counties monitor services, coordinate across systems, and address the behavioral health needs of this population.

Service Tracking and Coordination

- Tracking of Medi-Cal & non-Medi-Cal services
- Providers of the Child and Adolescent Needs and Strengths assessment
- Frequency of meetings between Behavioral Health and Child Welfare
- Collaboration with schools supporting youth with serious emotional disturbances or mental illness

Behavioral Health and Substance Use Services

- Number of foster youth receiving mental health and substance use services
- Percentage of services delivered by county vs. contracted providers
- Crisis response and follow-up care after psychiatric hospitalization
- Full-Service Partnership engagement

Wraparound Services

- Number of foster youth receiving wraparound services
- Number "graduating" from wraparound programs
- Planned implementation of High-Fidelity Wraparound
- Distribution of SB 163 Wraparound services

Governance and Oversight

- Board agenda items related to foster youth
- Recommendations local boards wish to communicate with the CBHPC
- Description of the board's process for completing the Data Notebook
- Contact information for designated staff and board leadership

How the Data Notebook Project Helps You

Understanding data empowers individuals and groups in their advocacy. The Planning Council encourages all members of local boards to participate in developing the responses for the Data Notebook.

This is an opportunity for local boards and their county behavioral health departments to work together to identify critical issues in their community. This work informs county and state leadership about behavioral health programs, needs, and services. Some local boards use their Data Notebook in their annual report to the County Board of Supervisors.

In addition, the Planning Council provides the annual 'Overview Report, which is a compilation of information from all the local boards and commissions who completed their Data Notebooks. These reports feature prominently on the website of the California Association of Local Mental Health Boards and Commissions (CALBHBC). The Planning Council uses this information in their advocacy to the legislature, and to provide input to the state mental health block grant application to the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA).

In collaboration, these reporting areas enhance statewide awareness of foster youth behavioral health needs, promote alignment across county and state systems, and help inform strategies aimed at strengthening care, coordination, and long-term outcomes. The 2026 Data Notebook will be submitted online by October 12, 2026 as part of the state's annual reporting process.