

California Child and Family Services Review System Improvement Plan County of San Diego



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"True measurement of success will be when California's communities see and treat foster children as if they were their own. The day we prevail in our mission will be the day that we monitor the health, education, well-being and overall success of foster children the same way that we do for our own children."

-Vision for California's Child Welfare System

SIP Cover Sheet

**California's Child and Family Services Review
System Improvement Plan**

County:	San Diego
Responsible County Child Welfare Agency:	Health and Human Services Agency – Child Welfare Services
Period of Plan:	10/01/04 – 09/30/05
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Introduction

In January 2004, the State began the California-Child and Family Services Review (C-CFSR). The State identified four child welfare outcomes and seven systemic factors for each county to use to assess the effectiveness of its child welfare system. These outcomes are: safety, permanency and stability, family relationships and connections, and well-being. Associated with each of these outcomes are indicators to measure the County's performance. The systemic factors are: Relevant Management Information System, Case Review System, Foster/Adoptive Parent Licensing, Recruitment and Retention, Quality Assurance System, Service Array, Staff/Provider training, and Agency Collaborations.

The first step in the C-CFSR process was for each county to conduct a self-assessment of its child welfare system strengths and areas of need. See attachment A for a summary of the County's Self-Assessment (CSA) which summarizes the strengths and areas of need for each outcome and systemic factor listed above.

The second step in the C-CFSR process was for each county to develop a System Improvement Plan (SIP). The State directed each County to develop strategies for improvement on a few selected outcomes and systemic factors identified as needing improvement in the CSA.

The CSA and SIP process indicated that for the first SIP the County needed to focus on the following outcome indicators and systemic factors:

Outcomes Indicators

- Safety: Rate of child abuse and/or neglect in foster care;
- Permanency and Stability: The length of time to exit foster care to reunification; and,
- Family Relationships and Community Connections: The number of siblings placed together in foster care.

Systemic Factors

- Fairness and Equity: Understand and develop strategies that address overrepresentation of certain ethnic and cultural groups in the child welfare system, a nationwide problem, and,
- Quality Assurance System: Evaluate current social work practices and provide technical assistance to social work staff that will improve accountability and promote continuous improvement.

The first section of this report describes the collaborative process used to develop the County's first SIP and summarizes data that supports the focus areas for the County's first SIP. By focusing the County's first SIP on efforts to enhance understanding of the child welfare data and processes, the County will enhance its ability to continue to improve the effectiveness of the child welfare system serving San Diego County.

I. SIP NARRATIVE

1. Local Planning Bodies

Child Welfare Services (CWS), within the County's Health and Human Services Agency, facilitated the self-assessment process and the development of the system improvement plan. 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 in the County Self-Assessment/System Improvement Plan (CSA/SIP) Committee. These 68 representatives are listed in the Acknowledgements Section of this report. They represent multiple public and private agencies including San Diego County Health and Human Services Agency's Child Welfare Services division, Local Education Agency, Juvenile Probation, Juvenile Court, Community Partners, Law Enforcement, and the Commission on Children Youth and Families' CWS Redesign Steering Committee.

The CSA/SIP Committee was divided into five subcommittees based on the members' area of expertise and experiences. Committee members provided input on focus areas and strategies for improvement of child welfare outcomes and systemic factors, which were incorporated in the CSA and the County's first SIP.

2. Findings that Support Qualitative Change

The full CSA/SIP Committee and the five subcommittees gathered and analyzed a wide variety of information to complete the CSA and develop the SIP. They reviewed the County's Data Report, historical data gathered on the outcomes, and held 30 meetings between January 2004 and August 2004 to discuss the topics of the CSA and the SIP. In addition, the following information gathering activities occurred:

- The CSA/SIP Committee reviewed customer satisfaction survey results from foster parents, countywide, from 1999, 2000, 2002 and 2003, which highlighted support services are essential to successful foster parenting. Below is a summary of the total responses received during these years. This information was incorporated as a milestone for the SIP on safety outcome 1C, child abuse and/or neglect in foster care, (see Appendix B).

Summaries	1999	2000	2002	2003
Number of surveys distributed	1,390	1,400	1,500	1,612
Number of foster parents who responded	405	365	427	434
Response rate	29%	26%	28%	27%

- CSA/SIP Committee members, Program Integrity members (who are CWS Program Managers and Assistant Deputy Directors), and Commission on Children, Youth and Families' CWS Steering Committee members, reviewed local data as well as academic research and articles related to the over-

representation of certain race/ethnic groups, and recognized this issue as both a national trend and a local concern.

In San Diego County, for example, African American and Native American children are involved in the child welfare system at a rate two to four times that of their representation in the general population. Therefore, the systemic factor Fairness and Equity was selected as a SIP item.

- CSA/SIP Committee members reviewed the San Diego County Commission on Children, Youth and Families' 2003 survey results of 107 respondents. The respondents were comprised of CWS staff, community based organizations; community members and others. The survey asked respondents to estimate the size of the gap between "where we are now" and "where we need to be" on the California-Child and Family Services Review (C-CFSR) outcomes. Overall, survey results revealed the gap size was predominantly medium to large, (see Appendix A).

This information was part of discussions for assessing the systemic factor service array and for obtaining an overall sense of how consumers view child welfare services. The results showed a medium to large gap size in services for children and families receiving equal support to achieve positive outcomes regardless of demographic characteristics. This affirmed the need to include Fairness and Equity in the County's SIP.

- The CSA/SIP Committee members reviewed feedback from individual CWS staff and community members who participated in CWS-sponsored trainings on the C-CFSR. These trainings asked the trainees to identify the County's strengths and areas of need in addressing the C-CFSR outcomes, excellence in the workplace, fairness and equity. This information was incorporated into the final CSA report when identifying areas of need. This also led to strategies for improvement of the Quality Assurance and Fairness and Equity systemic factors.

3. Summary of County Self-Assessment – See Attachment A.

II. SIP Plan

In developing the SIP, the County recognized that the first CSA provides a baseline for future benchmarking. The County used the CSA to prioritize the items to be addressed in the County's first SIP. Thus, the County's first SIP seeks to promote safety in foster care placements, reunification with families, preservation of sibling relationships, effective quality assurance and fairness and equity. These goals will be accomplished by working jointly with the community to improve outcomes for children.

The SIP goals align with the County's Strategic Plan and Initiatives for 2004-2009. The goals support the County's commitment to provide quality care and supportive services for at risk youth and children in the dependency system to create a nurturing environment that enables and encourages them to succeed. The goals will be achieved by working with stakeholders, to address strengths and needs in key areas of the child welfare system.

An outline of the County's SIP is provided on the next page.

Overview of the County of San Diego System Improvement Plan

Outcomes

Safety Outcome – Abuse and/or Neglect in Foster Care

The improvement goals:

- Improve the accuracy and consistency of the reporting and investigating of child abuse and/or neglect allegations in foster care.
- Enhance access to support services for caregivers.

Permanency Outcome – Length of Time to Exit Foster Care to Reunification

The improvement goal:

- Strengthen social work practice to ensure reunification occurs with family readiness.

Family Relationships and Community Connections Outcome – Siblings Placed Together

The improvement goal:

- Increase placement resources for sibling groups.

Systemic Factors

Fairness and Equity

The improvement goals:

- Increase CWS Program Managers' and Protective Services Supervisors' awareness and knowledge of the race/ethnic composition of the CWS population highlighting African and Native American groups.
- Improve social work practice that may lead to over-representation of African American and Native American children in the County's child welfare system.

Quality Assurance System

The improvement goals:

- Enhance CWS' capacity to analyze data including the identification of trends, to improve the implementation of policies and procedures.
- Expand communication of County data to community stakeholders, CWS Region Operations and CWS social work staff regarding CWS data information.
- Improve data purification and validation.

II. SIP PLAN

Safety Outcome: Child Abuse and/or Neglect in Foster Care

County's Current Performance:

- The Quarterly Data Reports for 2004 show the County's rate to be as follows: January 2004: 1.18%; April 2004: 1.52%; and July 2004: 1.54%.
- The County's Self-Assessment (CSA) indicated that although the County's rate of substantiated abuse and/or neglect referrals in foster care is low, less than two percent, this rate has increased over time.
- A primary area of need identified in the CSA was the improvement of social work practice related to accurate and consistent data entry. Other areas of need include, evaluating how the County's Foster Home Licensing program records licensing issues that arise in foster homes; assessing how mismatched placements contribute to the County's performance; and, assessing how systemic factors, Foster/Adoptive Parent Licensing, Recruitment, Retention and Provider Training contribute to this outcome.

Note: It is anticipated that through improved reporting of child abuse and/or neglect allegations in foster care, data analysis and improved data entry, the County's performance rate on this outcome may be negatively impacted.

Improvement Goal 1.0. Improve the accuracy and consistency of the reporting and investigating of child abuse and/or neglect allegations in foster care.						
Strategy 1.1 Assess social work practice in Regions regarding reporting and investigating child abuse and/or neglect allegations in foster care.			Strategy Rationale This will identify deficiencies in staff reporting and investigating child abuse/and or neglect allegations in foster care.			
Milestone	1.1.1	Convene Regional focus groups to gather information about how social work staff report child abuse and/or neglect allegations in foster care to the Child Abuse Hotline.	Timeframe	04/30/05	Assigned to	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lead – CWS – Policy and Program Support • Regions
	1.1.2	Convene Regional focus groups to gather information about how social work staff conduct investigations of child abuse and/or neglect allegations involving foster care providers.		04/30/05		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lead – CWS – Policy and Program Support • Regions
Strategy 1.2 Assess current CWS policies and procedures for reporting and investigating child abuse and/or neglect allegations in foster care.			Strategy Rationale This will identify if it is necessary to update the current CWS policies and procedures on reporting and investigating child abuse and/or neglect allegations in foster care.			
Milestone	1.2.1	Review current policies and procedures for reporting and investigating child abuse and/or neglect allegations in foster care.	Timeframe	04/30/05	Assigned to	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lead – CWS – Policy and Program Support
	1.2.2	Identify and complete any necessary updates to current policies and procedures based on Milestone 1.2.1 and the results of Strategy 1.1.		04/30/05		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lead – CWS – Policy and Program Support

Strategy 1.3 Provide training for social work staff on reporting and investigating child abuse and/or neglect allegations.		Strategy Rationale This will promote consistency in the reporting and investigation of child abuse and/or neglect allegations.			
Milestone	1.3.1 Evaluate social work training curriculum to determine how the reporting and investigation of child abuse and/or neglect allegations is integrated.	Timeframe	04/30/05	Assigned to	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Lead – CWS – Policy and Program Support
	1.3.2 Update the social work training curriculum, as needed based on Milestone 1.3.1.		08/31/05		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Lead – CWS – Policy and Program Support Training and Development
	1.3.3 Provide updated training to social work staff.		08/31/05		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Lead – CWS – Policy and Program Support Training and Development

Improvement Goal 2.0 Enhance access to support services for caregivers.						
Strategy 2.1 Expand the provision of support services to caregivers through Family-to-Family.			Strategy Rationale This will ensure caregivers have needed support services, which promotes a safer environment for children.			
Milestone	2.1.1	Regions identify Family-to-Family activities that provide support services to caregivers.	Timeframe	04/30/05	Assigned to	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lead – CWS – Policy and Program Support • Family-to-Family Region Coordinators • Regions
	2.1.2	Develop action plan to expand the provision of support services through Family-to-Family.		04/30/05		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lead – CWS – Policy and Program Support • Family-to-Family Region Coordinators • Regions
	2.1.3	Regional staff meet with foster parents and gather specific information on the type of supportive services they need.		04/30/05		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lead – CWS – Policy and Program Support • Regions

Strategy 2.2 Expand the support services provided to caregivers through the Community Services for Families (CSF) ¹ contract.		Strategy Rationale This will ensure caregivers have needed support services, which promotes a safer environment for children.			
Milestone	2.2.1 Identify the support services provided through the CSF contract.	Timeframe	04/30/05	Assigned to	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Policy and Program Support – C-CFSR • Policy and Program Support – Contract Services Unit
	2.2.2 Develop a letter for foster parents, specific to each region, to inform them of the CSF contract services available to them.		04/30/05		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Policy and Program Support – C-CFSR • Regions
	2.2.3 Publish an article in "Our Child" newsletter to foster parents that informs foster parents of the CSF services available to them.		04/30/05		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Policy and Program Support – C-CFSR • Regions

¹ See page 37 for details on the CSF contract.

Strategy 2.3 Provide caregivers with training that addresses stressors that lead to child abuse and/or neglect in foster care.		Strategy Rationale This will promote appropriate parenting and stress management skills that prevent child abuse and/or neglect in foster care for caregivers.			
Milestone	2.3.1 Evaluate the foster parent training curriculum to determine how positive discipline, managing difficult children and stress management are integrated in the training curriculum.	Timeframe	04/30/05	Assigned to	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lead – CWS – Policy and Program Support • Training and Development
	2.3.2 Update the foster parent training curriculum as needed based on Milestone 2.3.1.		08/31/05		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lead – CWS – Policy and Program Support • Training and Development
	2.3.3 Provide updated training to caregivers as needed.		08/31/05		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lead – CWS – Policy and Program Support • Training and Development
Describe systemic changes needed to further support the improvement goal. Enhance systemic factors, Foster/Adoptive Parent Licensing, Recruitment and Retention and Provider Training, to expand the pool of foster parents that is supported and not likely to abuse children in foster care.					
Describe educational/training needs (including technical assistance) to achieve the improvement goals. Training needs have been identified in Strategies 1.3 and 2.3.					
Identify roles of the other partners in achieving the improvement goals. To achieve the improvement goals, the role of the following partners would be important: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Grossmont College Foster, Adoption and Kinship Care Education (FAKCE) program to provide needed training for foster parents. ➤ Foster Family Agencies' (FFAs) to understand their role in the licensing, recruitment and retention of foster parents and how abuse and neglect referrals are investigated and resolved for children placed in FFAs. ➤ Probation to understand their roles and responsibilities regarding abuse of wards in foster care. ➤ Public Child Welfare Academy to provide any identified training needed for social workers. 					
Identify any regulatory or statutory changes needed to support the accomplishment of the improvement goals. No regulatory or statutory changes have been identified to support the accomplishment of the improvement goals.					

Permanency Outcome: Length of Time to Exit Foster Care to Reunification**County's Current Performance:**

- The Quarterly Data Reports for 2004 show the County's rate for 3E² to be as follows: January 2004: 65.5%; April 2004: 65.8% and July 2004: 66.0%. The Quarterly Data Reports for 2004 show the County's rate for 3A³ to be as follows: January 2004: 35.1%; April 2004: 36.0% and July 2004: 33.7%.
- In regards to 3E, the CSA indicated that over the last six years, the County has experienced an overall decrease in the rate of children that had been in care for less than 12 months when reunified. Further, the CSA revealed noteworthy patterns based on race and age.
 - Race patterns showed Native American children had an increase in reunification when in care for less than 12 months. Race patterns for Hispanic and African American children showed they had the lowest percentage of reunification when in care for less than 12 months.
 - Age patterns showed children 3 to 10 years had a higher percentage of reunification when in care for less than 12 months and children 11 to 15 years had the lowest percentage of reunification when in care for less than 12 months.
- In regards to 3A, the CSA revealed that African American children are less likely to be reunified within 12 months compared to other race groups, regardless of whether they are placed with relatives or non-relatives.
- A primary area of need identified in the CSA was the improvement of social work practice related to accurate and consistent data entry. Other areas of need include evaluating how risk assessments interplay with the recommendation of reunification; assessing how the use of continuances affects timely reunification; and determining how the implementation of unsupervised visitations and trial home visits, when the parent and child are ready versus waiting until a regularly scheduled court hearing, impacts reunification.

² 3E refers to the federal definition, which is for 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?

³ 3A refers to the state definition, which is for all children who entered supervised 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?

Improvement Goal 1.0 Strengthen social worker practices to ensure reunification occurs with family readiness.						
Strategy 1.1 Identify social work practices that facilitate graduated visitation plans and trial home visits when families are ready.			Strategy Rationale Research indicates that families who participate in regular and consistent visitations and trial home visits reunify at higher rates.			
Milestone	1.1.1	Convene Regional focus groups to gather information about when social work staff recommend a family participate in graduated visitations plans or trial home visits.	Timeframe	04/30/05	Assigned to	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lead – CWS – Policy and Program Support • Regions
	1.1.2	Select random reunification cases and review the case plans for the disposition hearing, the six-month review hearing, and the 12-month review hearing, and the contacts, to assess if visitation plans were amended or trial visits instituted based on the family's progress.		08/31/05		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lead – CWS – Policy and Program Support • Regions
	1.1.3	Update the Case Consultation form to include questions about graduated visitation plans and update the policies and procedures addressing case plans.		08/31/05		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lead – CWS – Policy and Program Support
	1.1.4	Review policies and procedures, and develop/enhance, as needed, policies and procedures for social work staff on when to recommend unsupervised visitations and trial home visits.		08/31/05		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lead – CWS – Policy and Program Support

Strategy 1.1 CONT'D. Identify social work practices that facilitate graduated visitation plans and trial home visits when families are ready.		Strategy Rationale Research indicates that families who participate in regular and consistent visitations and trial home visits reunify at higher rates.		
Milestone	1.1.5 Provide social work staff training based on Milestone 1.1.4.	Timeframe	08/31/05	Assigned to
				<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lead – CWS – Policy and Program Support • Training and Development
Strategy 1.2 Promote family engagement in the case planning process.		Strategy Rationale This will ensure case plans are specific to the family's needs and encourage the family to comply with the case plan activities and goals.		
Milestone	1.2.1 Convene Regional focus groups to gather information about how families are involved in the development of the case plan.	Timeframe	04/30/05	Assigned to
	1.2.2 Review current policies and procedures on family engagement in the case planning process and Family Unity ⁴ meetings.		04/30/05	
	1.2.3 Identify and complete any necessary updates to current policies and procedures based on Milestone 1.2.2.		08/31/05	
				<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lead – CWS – Policy and Program Support • Lead – CWS – Policy and Program Support • Lead – CWS – Policy and Program Support

⁴ Family Unity Meeting is a type of family case conferencing where the goal is to increase the involvement of extended family members to assist families and to maintain the safety of their children.

Strategy 1.2 CONT'D Promote family engagement in the case planning process.		Strategy Rationale This will ensure case plans are specific to the family's needs and encourage the family to comply with the case plan activities and goals.			
Milestone	1.2.4 Provide social work staff training based on Milestone 1.2.3.	Timeframe	08/31/05	Assigned to	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lead – CWS – Policy and Program Support • Training and Development
Strategy 1.3 Assess reunification services provided through the Community Services for Families (CSF) ⁵ contract and Juvenile Court.		Strategy Rationale This will ensure families are receiving adequate services that promote timely reunification.			
Milestone	1.3.1 Identify reunification services provided through the CSF contract.	Timeframe	04/30/05	Assigned to	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lead – CWS – Policy and Program Support
	1.3.2 Identify and complete any necessary updates to current policies and procedures.		08/31/05		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lead – CWS – Policy and Program Support
	1.3.3 Survey families receiving reunification services through the CSF contract.		08/31/05		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lead – CWS – Policy and Program Support

⁵ See page 37 for details on the CSF contract.

Strategy 1.3 CONT'D Assess reunification services provided through the Community Services for Families contract and Juvenile Court.		Strategy Rationale This will ensure families are receiving adequate services that promote timely reunification.			
Milestone	1.3.4 Provide social work staff training based on Milestone 1.3.2.	Timeframe	08/31/05	Assigned to	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lead – CWS – Policy and Program Support • Training and Development
	1.3.5 Collaborate with Juvenile Court to expand the dependency drug court program to provide more services that will aid in timely reunification. ⁶		08/31/05		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lead – CWS – Policy and Program Support
Strategy 1.4 Assess the impact of Intensive Family Preservation Program (IFPP) services on timely reunification.		Strategy Rationale This will ensure families are receiving optimal services for timely reunification.			
Milestone	1.4.1 Meet with IFPP supervisors and gathered information about how many families served by IFPP reunified and how many families did not reunify.	Timeframe	04/30/05	Assigned to	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lead – CWS – Policy and Program Support • Regions • IFPP Supervisors
	1.4.2 Review current policies and procedures for IFPP.		04/30/05		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lead – CWS – Policy and Program Support

⁶ This will be possible only if grant money is awarded.

Strategy 1.4 CONT'D. Assess the impact of Intensive Family Preservation Program (IFPP) services on timely reunification.		Strategy Rationale This will ensure families are receiving optimal services for timely reunification.			
Milestone	1.4.3 Update and complete any necessary updates to current policies and procedures based on Milestone 1.4.2.	Timeframe	08/31/05	Assigned to	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lead – CWS – Policy and Program Support
	1.4.4 Provide updated training to social work staff based on Milestone 1.4.3.		08/31/05		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lead – CWS – Policy and Program Support • Training and Development
Strategy 1.5 Review continuances in dependency-family reunification cases.		Strategy Rationale This will help understand the circumstances that lead to the use of continuances and how these impact timely reunification.			
Milestone	1.5.1 Gather information on the use of continuances to assess the most frequent reasons for the continuances.	Timeframe	04/30/05	Assigned to	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lead – CWS – Policy and Program Support • CWS Court Unit • Regions • Probation
	1.5.2 Identify social work, probation, juvenile court and lawyer practices that necessitate the use of continuances and make recommendations for improvement.		04/30/05		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lead – CWS – Policy and Program Support • Regions • Probation

Strategy 1.5 CONT'D. Review continuances in dependency-family reunification cases.		Strategy Rationale This will help understand the circumstances that lead to the use of continuances and how these impact timely reunification.			
Milestone	1.5.3 Develop strategies to address the reasons for continuances.	Timeframe	08/31/05	Assigned to	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lead – CWS – Policy and Program Support • Probation
	1.5.4 Implement recommendations, as appropriate, to decrease the use of continuances in dependency-family reunification cases and delinquency cases.		08/31/05		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lead – CWS – Policy and Program Support • CWS Court Unit • Regions • Probation
	1.5.5 Assess the use of mediation to determine if resource is being used sufficiently.		04/30/05		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lead – CWS – Policy and Program Support • CWS Court Unit • Regions • Probation
Describe systemic changes needed to further support the improvement goal. Through systemic factors, Case Review System and Service Array, ensure families are engaged in the case planning process and participating in services.					
Describe educational/training needs (including technical assistance) to achieve the improvement goals. Training needs have been identified in Milestones 1.1.5, 1.2.4, 1.3.4, and 1.4.4.					

Identify roles of the other partners in achieving the improvement goals.

To achieve the improvement goals, it is important the following partners to continue to collaborate to better understand each other's roles and responsibilities.

- Juvenile Court.
- Dependency and Delinquency attorneys.
- Probation.

Identify any regulatory or statutory changes needed to support the accomplishment of the improvement goals.

No regulatory or statutory changes have been identified to support the accomplishment of the improvement goals.

Family Relationships and Community Connections Outcome: Siblings Placed Together in Foster Care

County's Current Performance:

- The Quarterly Data Reports for 2004 show the County's rate for children placed with all siblings is as follows: January 2004: 42.8%; April 2004: 43.0% and July 2004: 42.6%. The Quarterly Data Reports for 2004 show the County's rate for children placed with some siblings is as follows: January 2004: 65.0%; April 2004: 65.4% and July 2004: 65.0%.
- The CSA indicated that the rate of children placed with all or some siblings has decreased. Noteworthy patterns were observed based on race and type of placement. In regards to race, more Asian American children are placed with all siblings and fewer Native American children are placed with all or some siblings. In regards to type of placement, more children are placed with all or some siblings when placed with relatives compared to non-relative placements.
- A primary area of need identified in the CSA was social work practice related to accurate and consistent data entry. Another area included assessing the guidelines used by social work staff to facilitate sibling placements.

Note: It is anticipated that the County's performance rate on this outcome may be negatively impacted by best practice. However, the best interest of the child may require siblings not be placed together (e.g., placing half-siblings with their respective paternal grandparents or relatives, with whom they have a relationship).

Improvement Goal 1.0 Increase placement resources for sibling groups.						
Strategy 1.1 Identify the barriers for placing siblings together.			Strategy Rationale This will help identify needed changes in policies and social work practices that affect placing siblings together.			
Milestone	1.1.1	Review out-of-home placement characteristics to determine barriers to placing siblings together.	Timeframe	08/31/05	Assigned to	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lead – CWS – Policy and Program Support • Foster Home Licensing
	1.1.2	Assess policies and procedures used by social workers for sibling placements.		04/30/05		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lead – CWS – Policy and Program Support
	1.1.3	Convene a workgroup to develop a recruitment and support program targeted at caregivers for siblings groups.		04/30/05		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lead – CWS – Policy and Program Support • Foster Home Licensing • Family-to-Family Regional Staff • Regional Placement Staff
	1.1.4	Convene a workgroup to develop a recruitment program specifically targeted at recruiting out-of-home placements for Native American children.		04/30/05		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lead – CWS – Policy and Program Support • Family-to-Family Regional Staff • Foster Home Licensing • Adoptions Program • Regional Placement Staff
	1.1.5	Identify and complete any necessary updates to current policies and procedures based on Milestones 1.1.2, 1.1.3 and 1.1.4.		08/31/05		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lead – CWS – Policy and Program Support

Strategy 1.1 CONT'D. Identify the barriers for placing siblings together.		Strategy Rationale This will help identify needed changes in policies and social work practices that affect placing siblings together.		
Milestone	1.1.6 Provide social work training as needed based on Milestone 1.1.5.	Timeframe	08/31/05	Assigned to
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lead – CWS – Policy and Program Support • Training and Development 				
Describe systemic changes needed to further support the improvement goal. Expand systemic factor, Foster/Adoptive Parent Licensing, Recruitment and Retention, to target sibling groups, especially Native American children.				
Describe educational/training needs (including technical assistance) to achieve the improvement goals. Training needs have been identified in Milestone 1.1.6.				
Identify roles of the other partners in achieving the improvement goals. To achieve the improvement goals, the role of the following partners would be important for collaboration: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Foster parents. ➤ Native American Community. ➤ Contractors through Community Services for Families. 				
Identify any regulatory or statutory changes needed to support the accomplishment of the improvement goals. No regulatory or statutory changes have been identified to support the accomplishment of the improvement goals.				

Systemic Factor: Fairness and Equity

County’s Current Performance:

- The table below shows that African American and Native American children are involved in the County's child welfare system at a rate two to four times that of their representation in the general population. The rate varies for the number of referrals, the number of substantiated referrals, open dependency cases, and out-of-home placements.
- A primary need identified in the CSA was to determine and evaluate cultural factors impacting social work practice.

Type of Referral/Case	Race/Ethnicity (%)					
	Hispanic	Caucasian	African American	Native American	Asian	Other
San Diego County Population under Age 18	38.5	40.5	6.4	0.5	8.0	6.2
Referrals	39.4	34.6	15.0	0.9	4.1	5.9
Substantiated Referrals	44.8	31.8	15.2	0.9	3.9	3.3
Open Dependency Cases	42.6	33.4	18.0	1.2	4.5	0.3
Out of Home Placements	37.7	32.1	25.3	2.0	2.7	0.1

Improvement Goal 1.0 Increase CWS Program Managers' and Protective Services Supervisors' awareness and knowledge of the race/ethnic composition of the CWS population highlighting African and Native American groups.

<p>Strategy 1.1 Generate data report(s) that include the racial composition for each Region.</p>	<p>Strategy Rationale This will be the primary communication tool to help CWS Program Managers and Protective Services Supervisors monitor and follow-up with social work staff on over-representation in their Regions.</p>
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Milestone	<p>1.1.1 Identify the racial composition for each C-CFSR outcome, removals, out-of-home placements, and dependency cases for each Region.</p>	Timeframe	04/30/05	Assigned to	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lead – CWS – Policy and Program Support
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Strategy 1.1 CONT"D Generate data report(s) that include the racial composition for each Region.		Strategy Rationale This will be the primary communication tool to help CWS Program Managers and Protective Services Supervisors monitor and follow-up with social work staff on over-representation in their Regions.	
Milestone	1.1.2 Brief all CWS Program Managers and Protective Services Supervisors, during regularly scheduled meetings.	Timeframe	04/30/05
		Assigned to	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Lead – CWS – Policy and Program Support
Improvement Goal 2.0 Improve social work practice that may impact over-representation of African American and Native American children in the County's child welfare system.			
Strategy 2.1 Review and assess the factors that may contribute to over-representation of African American and Native American children in the child welfare system.		Strategy Rationale This will enable the County to evaluate how these factors impact social work practice.	
Milestone	2.1.1 Review policies and procedures to identify how fairness and equity is addressed.	Timeframe	04/30/05
	2.1.2 Update policies and procedures as necessary based on Milestone 2.1.1 and 2.1.3.		08/31/05
	2.1.3 Conduct a small pilot project to assess the use of the concepts of the CWS Redesign Fairness and Equity Matrix in social work practice.		08/31/05
	2.1.4 Evaluate the social work training curriculum to determine how Fairness and Equity is integrated.		04/30/05
		Assigned to	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Lead – CWS – Policy and Program Support Lead – CWS – Policy and Program Support Lead – CWS – Policy and Program Support Lead – CWS – Policy and Program Support Training and Development

Strategy 2.1 CONT'D. Review and assess the factors that may contribute to over-representation of African American and Native American children in the child welfare system.		Strategy Rationale This will enable the County to evaluate how these factors impact social work practice.	
Milestone	2.1.5 Provide social work staff training based on Milestone 2.1.4.	Timeframe	08/31/05
		Assigned to	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lead – CWS – Policy and Program Support • Training and Development
Strategy 2.2 Develop strategies for the implementation of a standardized risk assessment.		Strategy Rationale This will promote safety and risk assessment processes that are consistent and race-neutral.	
Milestone	2.2.1 Create a taskforce to evaluate different standardized risk assessment models.	Timeframe	04/30/05
	2.2.2. Schedule presentations of standardized risk assessment models to supervisors and management staff.		04/30/05
	2.2.3 Consult with other counties regarding their use of a standardized risk-assessment.		04/30/05
	2.2.4 Develop a written report with recommendations for the CWS Director.		04/30/05
		Assigned to	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lead – CWS – Policy and Program Support • Lead – CWS – Policy and Program Support • Lead – CWS – Policy and Program Support • Lead – CWS – Policy and Program Support

Strategy 2.3 Provide social work staff with training specifically addressing fairness and equity.		Strategy Rationale This will ensure social work staff is aware of how fairness and equity interplays with social work practice.			
Milestone	2.3.1 Evaluate the social work training curriculum to determine how fairness and equity is integrated into the training.	Timeframe	04/30/05	Assigned to	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lead – CWS – Policy and Program Support • Training and Development
	2.3.2 Update the social work training curriculum, as needed based on Milestone 2.3.1.		08/31/05		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lead – CWS – Policy and Program Support • Training and Development
	2.3.3 Provide updated training to social work staff based on Milestone 2.3.1.		08/31/05		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lead – CWS – Policy and Program Support • Training and Development
Discuss changes in identified systemic factors needed to further support the improvement goals. Not applicable because Fairness and Equity is a systemic factor.					
Describe educational/training needs (including technical assistance) to achieve the improvement goals. Training needs have been identified in Milestones 2.1.5 and 2.3.3.					
Identify roles of the other partners in achieving the improvement goals. To achieve the improvement goals, the role of the following partners would be important: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Public Child Welfare Academy to provide any identified training for social workers. ➤ Consumers to gain their perspective on CWS and Fairness & Equity. ➤ Casey Family Programs to obtain their assistance and expertise on fairness and equity. 					
Identify any regulatory or statutory changes needed to support the accomplishment of the improvement goals. No regulatory or statutory changes have been identified to support the accomplishment of the improvement goals.					

Systemic Factor: Quality Assurance System

County's Current Performance:

- In February 2004, CWS created a Quality Assurance Unit to provide evaluation and technical assistance to social work staff accountable for ensuring children in foster care placements are provided quality services in order to protect their safety and health. The intent of the Quality Assurance Unit is to:
 - Include a representative from each region;
 - Facilitate the identification of the special needs of each region;
 - Focus on improving data entry, data analysis, and identifying practices that positively impact service delivery; *and*,
 - Develop and strengthen relationships with universities' and their research programs.
- The primary need identified in the CSA is to continue the development of the Quality Assurance Unit.

Improvement Goal 1.0 Improve data analysis and the identification of trends to assist with implementation of policies and procedures.						
Strategy 1.1 Determine the type of Quality Assurance System needed for CWS.			Strategy Rationale This will ensure the Quality Assurance System functions at an optimal level to facilitate improvement in data entry and data analysis to support regional data needs.			
Milestone	1.1.1	Convene a workgroup that assesses the present CWS Quality Assurance System, and determine and/or clarify the Quality Assurance System's purpose, goals, roles, and staffing qualifications and staffing levels.	Timeframe	04/30/05	Assigned to	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lead – CWS – Policy and Program Support • HHSA Strategy and Planning • Regions
	1.1.2	Develop a written report with recommendations for the CWS Director.		04/30/05		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lead – CWS – Policy and Program Support • HHSA Strategy and Planning
	1.1.3	Present the report and recommendations to the Regional General Managers and Executive Team, as appropriate.		04/30/05		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lead – CWS – Policy and Program Support

Improvement Goal 2.0 Expand communication and coordination with community stakeholders, CWS Region Operations and CWS social work staff regarding CWS data information.						
Strategy 2.1 Evaluate current communication tools for CWS data information, and enhance and/or develop communication tools, as necessary.			Strategy Rationale This will create a consistent mechanism for sharing relevant CWS data information in appropriate formats to target audiences.			
Milestone	2.1.1	Convene Regional focus groups to identify needs regarding data.	Timeframe	04/30/05	Assigned to	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lead – CWS – Policy and Program Support • Regions
	2.1.2	Convene focus groups with community stakeholders to identify needs regarding CWS data.		04/30/05		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lead – CWS – Policy and Program Support
	2.1.3	Create data communication packets for Regions and community.		08/31/05		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lead – CWS – Policy and Program Support

Improvement Goal 3.0. Improve data purification and validation.					
Note: It is anticipated that through efforts to improve data integrity, the County's performance on outcomes may be impacted.					
Strategy 3.1 Run and review data reports containing CWS/CMS data.			Strategy Rationale This will help assess the areas of CWS/CMS that need improved data entry.		
Milestone	3.1.1 Identify deficiencies in data entry.	Timeframe	04/30/05	Assigned to	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lead – CWS – Policy and Program Support
	3.1.2 Identify social work practice that impacts data entry.		04/30/05		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lead – CWS – Policy and Program Support • Regions
	3.1.3 Develop regional action plan to improve data entry.		04/30/05		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lead – CWS – Policy and Program Support • Regions
Describe systemic changes needed to further support the improvement goal. Not applicable because Quality Assurance System is a systemic factor.					
Describe educational/training needs (including technical assistance) to achieve the improvement goals. To achieve the improvement goals, the Quality Assurance staff needs training on data analysis, Advanced Business Objects and other software that will assist in data analysis.					
Identify roles of the other partners in achieving the improvement goals. Improvement Goal 1.0 is an internal agency matter and no involvement of other partners is necessary to achieve this improvement goal. To achieve Improvement Goal 2.0, partnerships with the following, but not limited to, is important to develop an effective communication packet. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Community stakeholders ➤ Commission on Children, Youth and Families' CWS Redesign Steering Committee ➤ Juvenile Justice Coordinating Council ➤ Foster Parent Associations ➤ Health and Human Services Agency – Strategy and Planning Division 					
Identify any regulatory or statutory changes needed to support the accomplishment of the improvement goals. No regulatory or statutory changes have been identified to support the accomplishment of the improvement goals.					

ATTACHMENT A

Summary of the County's Self Assessment

Section I. Demographic Profile and Outcomes Data

Demographic Profile

Population: San Diego County is the third largest county in the state with approximately 2.9 million people, including 742,584 children under the age of 18. In order to provide better services to its customers, the Health and Human Services Agency (HHSA) has divided the County into six distinct geographic service delivery regions: Central, North Central, South, East, North Inland and North Coastal. The full report provides information on the percentage of children under the age of 18 in each region and the racial and ethnic composition of each region.

Education System: San Diego County has 43 public school districts that enrolled 499,355 children in the 2003/2004 academic year. During this same year, 89.5% of grade 12 students graduated high school; the annual drop out rate for grades 9-12 was 2.7%; and 439 students dropped out of grades 7-8.

Child Welfare Participation Rates: Of the estimated 740,944 children under age 18 that lived in San Diego County in 2002,

- 59,108 of these children were referred to CWS;
- 11,090 of those children had substantiated referrals; *and*
- 2,066 of those children with substantiated referrals entered placement.

Outcomes Data

The County Data Report

The County Data Report serves as the basis of the self-assessment and will be used to track County performance over time. The County Data Report contains child welfare services participation rates, and outcomes grouped into four categories: safety outcomes, permanency and stability outcomes, family relationships and community connection outcomes, and well-being outcomes. On a quarterly basis, the State provides the County updated information for each outcome. The County received its first report in January 2004 and another in April 2004. The full report presents all of the data from the January 2004 and April 2004 reports.

Analysis and Conclusions

Below is a summary of the County's assessment of its performance by outcome. The analysis is based on information from the County Data Report and historical data obtained from the University of California at Berkeley's Center for Social Service Research (CSSR)

website. This historical data was obtained to determine trends in the County's performance from 1998 to 2002. The analysis in the full report also notes patterns in the data resulting from comparisons by race, age and gender. Also noted are issues related to the accuracy and validity of data and the influence of current social work practices on the County's performance. Data is not available for children supervised by Probation.

The analysis and conclusions presented are preliminary. To confirm the analysis and conclusions, there is a need for further data "clean up", in-depth statistical analysis and training for social workers on proper data entry.

SAFETY OUTCOMES

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

Indicators

- *Recurrence of Maltreatment*: The County has experienced a steady decrease in the rate of recurrence of maltreatment regardless of whether there was a subsequent referral within 12 months of a substantiated referral, or within 12 months of the first substantiated referral.
- *Rate of Child Abuse and/or Neglect in Foster Care*: Although the rate of abuse and/or neglect substantiated referrals for children in foster care is low, less than two percent, this rate has increased over time. This outcome will be included in the County's SIP.
- *Rate of Abuse and/or Neglect Following Permanency*: The CDSS materials indicate this indicator is currently under development and no data was provided in the County's data report.

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

Indicators

- *Rate of Recurrence of Abuse/Neglect in Homes Where Children Were Not Removed*: Although the County Data Report contains information on this indicator, historical data is not available, thereby limiting further analysis.
- *Percent of Child Abuse/Neglect Referrals with a Timely Response*: The County has improved its timely response to child abuse/neglect referrals since 1998 and is presently over a 97% compliance rate. Improvement is attributed to the County's commitment to providing quicker response and increased accountability.
- *Timely Social Worker Visits With Child*: The County is presently at a 90% compliance rate. Improvement is attributed to the County's commitment to provide timely social worker visits and increased accountability.

PERMANENCY AND STABILITY OUTCOME

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

Indicators

- *Length of Time to Exit Foster Care to Reunification:* Over the last six years, the County has experienced an overall decrease in the number of children that had been in care for less than 12 months when reunified. African American children are less likely to be reunified regardless of whether they are placed with relatives or non-relatives. This outcome will be included in the County's SIP.
- *Length of Time to Exit Foster Care to Adoption:* The County continues to increase the number of adoptions for children in care less than 24 months.
- *Stability of Foster Care Placement:* Although the County Data Report contains information on this indicator, historical data is not available, thereby limiting further analysis.
- *Rate of Foster Care Re-Entry:* Since 1998, fewer children are re-entering foster care within 12 months of a prior exit from foster care or reunification.

FAMILY RELATIONSHIPS AND COMMUNITY CONNECTION OUTCOME

Family Relationships and Community Connection Outcome: The family relationships and connections of children serviced by CWS will be preserved, as appropriate.

Indicators

- *Siblings Placed Together in Foster Care:* Since 1998, fewer children are being placed with some or all of their siblings. This outcome will be included in the County's SIP.
- *Foster Care Placement in Least Restrictive Settings:* Although the County Data Report contains information on this indicator, historical data is not available, thereby limiting further analysis.
- *Rate of ICWA Placement Preferences:* Although the County Data Report contains information on this indicator, historical data is not available, thereby limiting further analysis.

WELL-BEING OUTCOME

Well-Being Outcome: Youth emancipating from foster care are prepared to transition to adulthood.

Indicator

- *Children Transitioning to Self-Sufficient Adulthood:* Although the County Data Report contains information on this indicator, historical data is not available, thereby limiting further analysis.

Section II. Public Agency Characteristics

This section describes the characteristics (e.g., size and structure) of Child Welfare Services (CWS) and the Juvenile Probation Department that affect the provision of child welfare services.

Identified strengths include:

- County operation of an emergency shelter, Polinsky Children's Center (PCC);
- A county-based (instead of state-based) foster home licensing program;
- A state recognized County Adoptions program for aggressive and effective recruitment activities;
- Integration of child welfare, mental health and alcohol and drug services under one agency, the Health and Human Services Agency;
- Extensive collaboration among the political jurisdictions involved in child welfare services (e.g., Juvenile Court, law enforcement, community-based organizations); *and*,
- Countywide implementation of Family-to-Family with the support of the Annie E. Casey Foundation.

Identified areas of need include:

- Enhance communication between political jurisdictions;
- Develop more placement resources for children with special needs; *and*,
- Advocate to the California Department of Social Services (CDSS) or legislature that Polinsky Children's Center (PCC) not be counted as a placement during the first seven days a child is detained at the shelter.

Section III. Systemic Factors

Systemic factors affect the operation and provision of child welfare services aimed to achieve positive outcomes. The identified strengths and areas of need for the systemic factors are as follows:

Relevant Management Information Systems

This systemic factor assesses the extent that the County uses the CWS/CMS application.

Identified strengths include:

- The availability of the application at each social worker's workstation; *and*,
- The social worker training on how to effectively use the application for case management.

Identified areas of need include:

- Improving data entry accuracy into the CWS/CMS application; *and*,
- Developing access to the application via the Internet.

Case Review System

This systemic factor assesses the County's ability to involve children and families in the case planning process and judicial proceedings.

Identified strengths include:

- Social worker use of a standard questionnaire to obtain information regarding Native American background to ensure compliance with Indian Child Welfare Act (ICWA);
- Established policies and procedures to discuss the case plan with the child and family;
- County policy that requires social workers to document concurrent planning efforts in the case plan and court reports;
- Limited use of continuances at permanency hearings; *and*,
- Timely notification of hearings to all parties.

Identified areas of need include:

- Reducing the number of continuances in general dependency cases;
- Encouraging family input in eliciting activities and services to be included in the case plan; *and*,
- Expanding the use of concurrent planning at the onset of the case planning and court process.

Foster/Adoptive Parent Licensing, Recruitment and Retention

This systemic factor assesses the County's performance in licensing, recruiting and retaining foster or adoptive homes.

Identified strengths include:

- A Memorandum of Understanding with the CDSS for the County to recruit and license foster homes;
- Partnerships with four local foster parent associations to retain foster parents;
- Development of a formal process to conduct assessments of relative and non-relative foster homes;
- A specialized unit to recruit adoptive parents and find homes for hard to place children and their siblings; *and*,
- Ongoing partnership with local television news to feature children in need of adoption and adoption success stories.

Identified areas of need include:

- Recruiting more foster and adoptive homes for Native American children and for children with special needs (developmental delays or medical needs, older children with behavioral difficulties and sibling groups).

Quality Assurance System

This systemic factor assesses whether the County has a quality assurance system to ensure that children in foster placements are provided quality services to protect their safety and health through evaluation, assessments and reports. Recently, the County created a Quality Assurance Unit designed specifically to perform these tasks.

Identified strengths include:

- The unit includes representatives from each region, which facilitates the identification of regions' individual strengths and needs;
- The unit provides training and technical assistance to region staff;
- A focus on improving data entry, data analysis and identifying practices that positively improve service delivery; *and*,
- A relationship with universities' research programs.

Service Array

This systemic factor assesses the array of accessible services that the County has in place to: assess children and families; address the needs of children and families; prevent entry into the child welfare system; and, promote permanency. This systemic factor also assesses the services provided to Native American children. The State requires additional information on services targeting Native American children.

Identified strengths include:

- The availability of a wide range of services through countywide public and private contracts that are culturally competent, family-centered and child focused;
- A strength-based model that is used to assess the needs of children and their families for these services; *and*,
- An Indian Specialty Unit that collaborates with Native American organizations and communities.

Identified areas of need include:

- Improving collaboration between providers to avoid duplication of services;
- Expanding social workers' understanding of Native American laws, culture and County policies and procedures; *and*,
- Enhancing access to services for youth and families in rural and Native American communities.

Staff/Provider Training

This systemic factor assesses how the County trains and develops the skills of its child welfare services staff and providers.

Identified strengths include:

- A six-week training for new social workers;
- The requirement for social worker staff to complete 20 hours of training each year; *and,*
- The training offered on a quarterly basis for foster and adoptive parents through the Grossmont College – Foster, Adoption, and Kinship Care Education (FAKCE) program.

Identified area of need includes:

- Introducing the Family-to-Family concepts during foster parent training.

Agency Collaboration

This systemic factor assesses how the County collaborates with public and private entities responsible for providing child welfare services and the large number and diversity of collaborations used to provide services. For example, CWS, Juvenile Court, County Alcohol and Drug Services, and Office of the Alternate Public Defender collaborate on drug/alcohol treatment services through the Substance Abuse Recovery Management System (SARMS); and Children's Mental Health Services Initiative, which is composed of CWS Mental Health Residential Services, Probation, Schools, community providers and contracted partners to provide integrated and comprehensive mental health services.

Section IV. Countywide Prevention Activities

The County's three primary prevention efforts are the Family Support Services Continuum (FSSC) program, the Family Preservation and Support program (FPSP) and the Kinship Support Services Program (KSSP). Both the FSSC and KSSP programs provide prevention and intervention services through community-based contractors for families with children at risk of abuse or neglect.

In addition to these programs, the County has a long history of community-based prevention partnerships that include traditional and non-traditional partners (e.g., grass roots and faith-based organizations, parents, civic leaders and businesses). Partnerships also exist at neighborhood levels to tailor to each region's needs.

The County's strategy for the future is to expand current efforts to provide services by implementing the Community Services for Families (CSF) contract. This contract was designed to parallel the outcomes and objectives of the C-CFSR and CWS Redesign. It will provide a continuum of services at the regional level, through collaborative entities

composed of community-based partners and County staff. The CSF contract will replace the current contracts under the FSSC program and it is anticipated to be in operation in September 2004.

Section V. Areas for Further Exploration through the Peer Quality Case Review

Because of the County's commitment to ensuring client safety, the County's performance on the rate of abuse in foster care will be an area further explored through the Peer Quality Case Review.