Evaluating the California Well-Being Project
California Department of Social Services and NCCD
Introduction
Overview of Evaluation Goals and Methods
Existing and New Data Sources
  Outcome Measures
  Fidelity Measures
  Cost Measures
Q&A and Next Steps
Introductions

M. Akhtar Khan, PhD
Research Services Branch, California Department of Social Services

JaRita Booker, MPH
Research Services Branch, California Department of Social Services

Kristen Johnson, PhD
National Council on Crime and Delinquency
Participating Counties

1. Alameda
2. Butte
3. Lake
4. Los Angeles
5. Sacramento
6. San Diego
7. San Francisco
8. Santa Clara
9. Sonoma
Project-Wide Interventions

**Target Population:** Title IV-E eligible and non-IV-E eligible children and youth ages 0–17, inclusive, who are currently in out-of-home placement or at risk of entering or reentering foster care.

- **Child Welfare Services**
- **Probation Departments**

  > Core Practice Model/
  > Safety-Organized Practice
  > Wraparound
Goal of This Evaluation

Examine how the waiver’s flexible funding allows for programming that can improve outcomes for children and families in the participating counties’ child welfare and juvenile justice populations.
Does Funding Flexibility …

... support counties in better targeting services that address the unique cultural and individual needs of children, youth, and families?

... so that children, youth, and families are more likely to be engaged, benefit from direct services, and experience improved functioning?

... so that children remain safely in their homes?
Developmental Features of the Evaluation

- Develop measurable and meaningful indicators of implementation milestones
- Integrate continuous feedback to CDSS and counties
- Build evaluation capacity in each county
Evaluation Components

1. Outcome study
2. Process study
3. Cost study
4. Two outcome sub-studies
5. One cost sub-study
Outcome Measures
Interrupted Time Series Analysis

Outcome:
Reduced child welfare involvement; reduced juvenile justice involvement

Slope (pre-intervention)  Intervention introduced  Change in level  Slope (post-intervention)

Time
Outcome Study Research Questions

Does the Well-Being Project decrease:
• Recurrence of maltreatment?
• Use of out-of-home care?
• Reentry into out-of-home care?
• Time to permanency?
• Re-offending of justice system-involved youth?

Does the Well-Being Project increase:
• Permanency rates?
• Use of least-restrictive placements for children placed out of home?

Does the Well-Being Project improve child and family well-being?
And turning to basketball...
The Chicago Bulls tied the Houston Rockets in last night’s playoff game. Although the score was 112-110, the difference was not statistically significant at the p > .05 level.

M.I.T. unveils its 24-hour All-Sports Network
Good work, Antworth, but I think we need a little more detail here.

Then a miracle occurs.
Process Study Research Questions

- How did counties implement the demonstration interventions?
- How did demonstration services differ from services available prior to or outside of the demonstration?
- To what extent were interventions implemented with fidelity to model programs?
- What factors influenced model fidelity?
- Did the demonstration project improve the quality and array of services and supports available to system-involved children, youth, and families?
- Does the demonstration project improve family engagement through an individualized casework approach that emphasizes family involvement?
Existing County Data Sources

- Observation checklists
- Case review tools
- FTM tracking
- Target population tracking
- Outcome questionnaires
- Other secondary data
- Program and policy materials
New County Data Sources

- FTM tracking
- Focus groups
- Web-based surveys of staff/stakeholders
- Interviews with leadership
- Parent/guardian paper survey
Cost Study Research Questions

1. What are the county-level service costs of the waiver project, as compared to costs prior to the project?

2. What are the service costs of the interventions elected by the counties?

3. What are the local, state, and federal sources of funding for the waiver project in each county?
Cost Study Data Sources

- Quarterly Fiscal Supplemental Form
- County Expense Claims
- Automated Assistance Claims (CA 800 Forms)
- County-level fiscal data (e.g., time study data)
Cost Study Methodology

- Examine aggregate costs of services longitudinally pre- and post-implementation.

- Use average costs across all counties as a benchmark to compare and contrast relative changes over the waiver period.

- Assess cost data by categories (e.g., service type, service provider, costs per family or child), if data allow.
Sub-Studies
Outcome Sub-Study Purpose

• Deepen understanding of the impact of target interventions on the safety, permanency, and well-being of children and youth, ideally through a randomized control trial.

• Implement in years 2 through 4 of the waiver evaluation (years 3 through 5 of the demonstration project) to allow time for intervention stability.
Cost Sub-Study Purpose

Measure time associated with child welfare service delivery activities to obtain an average service cost per case.
Capacity Building for County Data Systems
Increasing Capacity

- Integrating fidelity assessment
- Use of dashboards
- Measuring family engagement
Thank you!

For more info, visit http://www.childsworld.ca.gov/
http://www.childsworld.ca.gov/PG1333.htm

www.nccdglobal.org
(800) 306-6223