

California's Linkages:

A service partnership between Child Welfare and CalWORKs

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What is Linkages?

LINKAGES is a service coordination partnership between Child Welfare Services and CalWORKs to address the common barriers that limit parents' ability to work and keep their children safely at home.



Benefits of Linkages

- ▶ CalWORKs can provide services to help prevent families from entering or re-entering the child welfare system.
- ▶ Approaching families as a team provides stronger intervention to help families with complex needs.
- ▶ Tighter service coordination helps maximize services for families while preventing duplication of services &/or payments.
- ▶ Joint outreach to sanctioned families involved with child welfare helps address barriers to safety and self-sufficiency.

Benefits of Linkages (cont.)

- ▶ CalWORKs families working to reunify can receive non-cash services to promote returning home safely and quickly.
- ▶ Family Maintenance mutual clients can access additional supports (e.g., cash assistance, employment services, MH, DV, SA, Medi-Cal or diversion services).
- ▶ CalWORKs can provide post-reunification services, including child care & other safety plan services to reduce likelihood of recurrence.
- ▶ Transition-age youth who are parents can routinely be assessed for and linked to CalWORKs supportive services to encourage self-sufficiency.

Statewide & County Level View



33 of 58 California counties have put Linkages into practice...

Share experience from California's largest county to see how Linkages works.

Los Angeles County

Shared Vision



- ▶ Child Welfare Services can serve as an anti-poverty program by helping families gain access to an economic safety net while building employment skills.
- ▶ Temporary Assistance to Needy Families can serve as a child abuse prevention program by providing families the resources they need to promote safety and well-being for their children.

Foundation for Linkages Vision

*Poverty is a risk factor for child abuse
& neglect*

- ▶ Families with annual incomes below \$15,000, compared to families with annual incomes above \$30,000, are over 22 times more likely to experience some form of maltreatment.

[U.S. Dept of Health & Human Services, 2003]



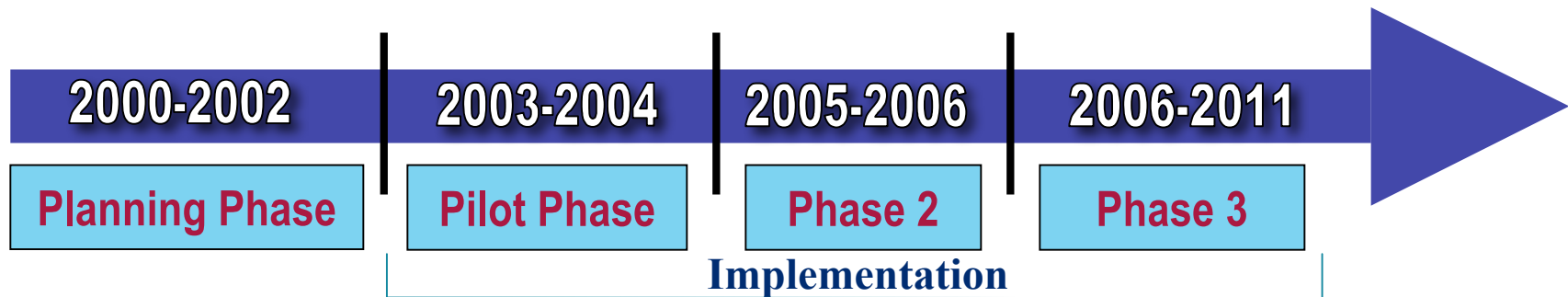
Foundation for Linkages Vision

Overlap of clients in Temporary Assistance to Needy Families (TANF) and Child Welfare Services (CWS):

- ▶ Statewide, 60% children in CWS have a history of AFDC or TANF aid
- ▶ Varies by county: from 44% - 87%
- ▶ CWS use predicted by: AFDC/TANF use, rates of unemployment, and family poverty rates

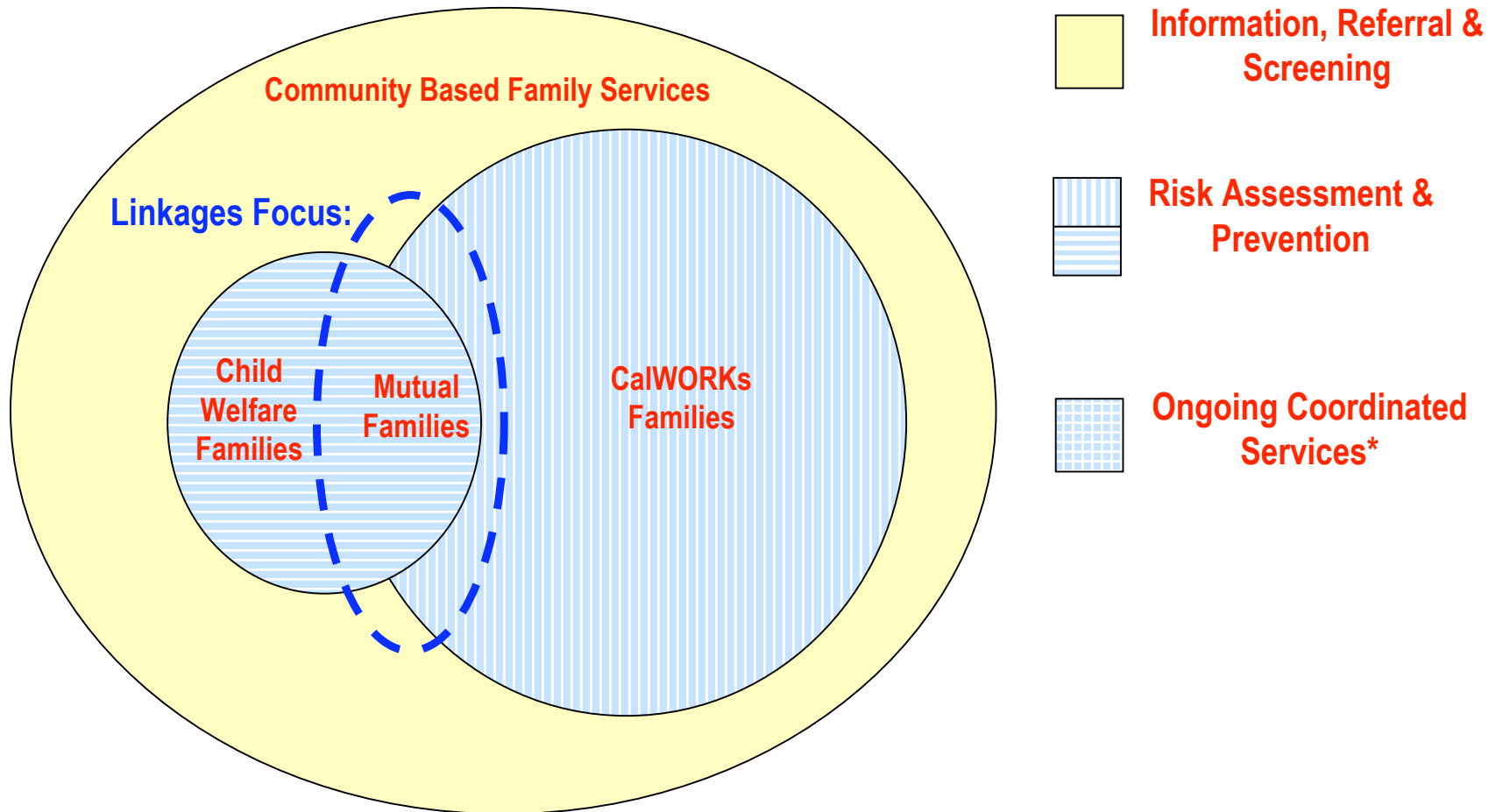
[California Dept of Social Services, 2002]

Evolution of Linkages reform



- ▶ Engaged key stakeholders at all stages of effort
- ▶ Created shared vision for serving families in a more integrated manner prior to planning
- ▶ 3 phases of implementation
- ▶ Steady expansion to include majority of CA's 58 counties, representing over $\frac{3}{4}$ of state's population

Who does Linkages serve?



*Assessment, Case Planning, Case Management, Direct/ Contracted Services

Linkages Program Goals

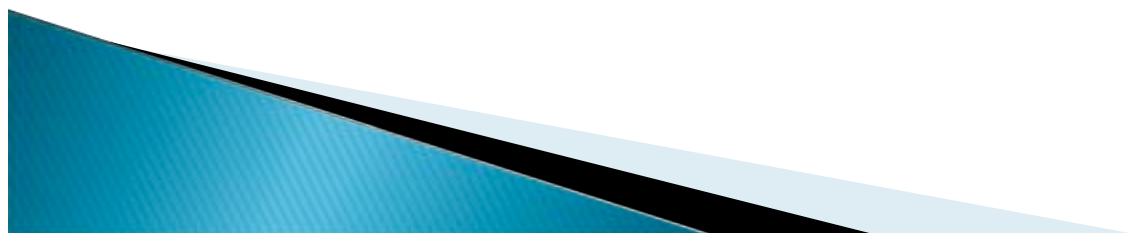
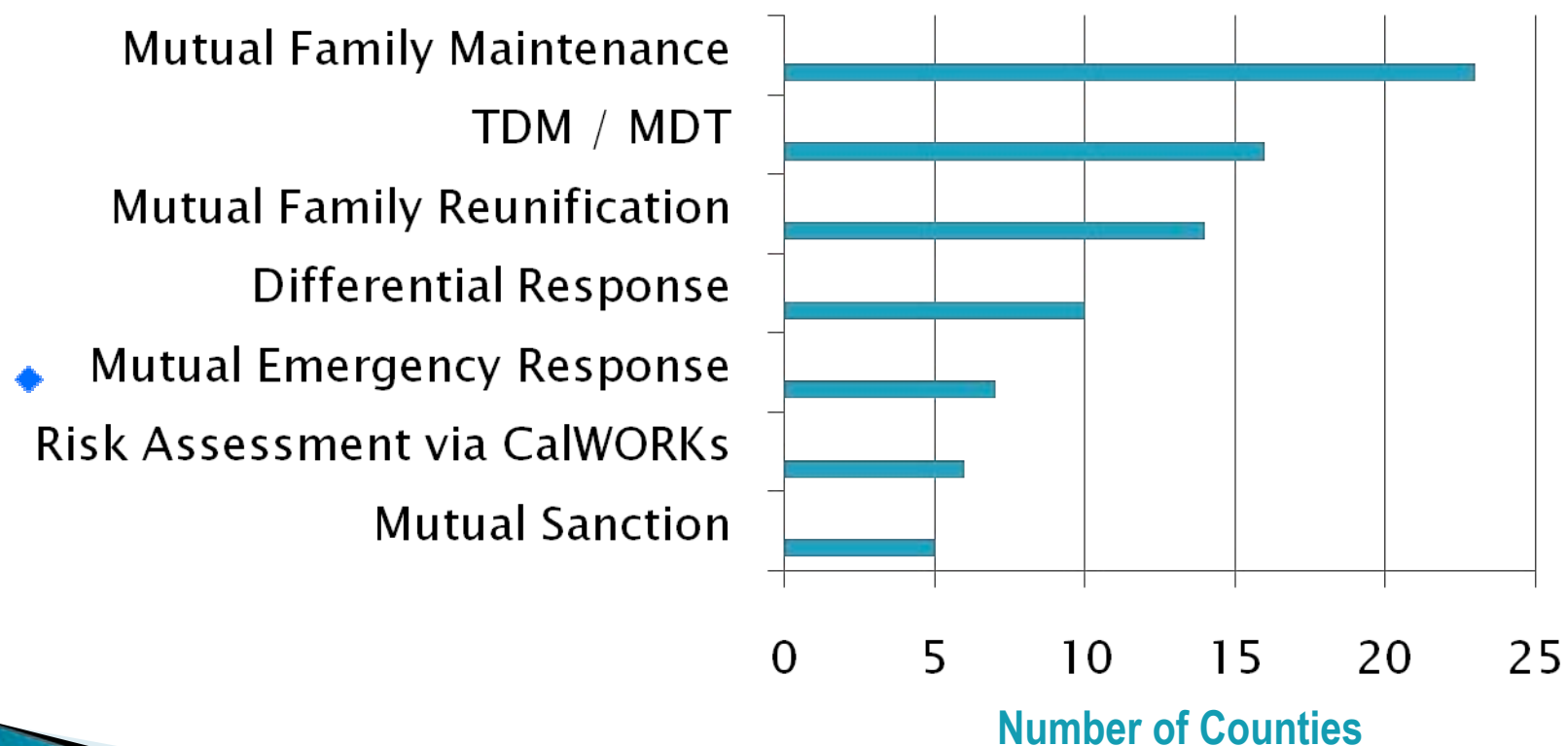
- ▶ Coordinate Case Planning on mutual families being served by child welfare and CalWORKs.
- ▶ Share resources.
- ▶ Create agency environments that integrate resources to better serve vulnerable families.
- ▶ Support mutual program goals.



Target populations & key strategies

2008 Survey of Linkages Counties in California

(29 of 33 counties reporting)



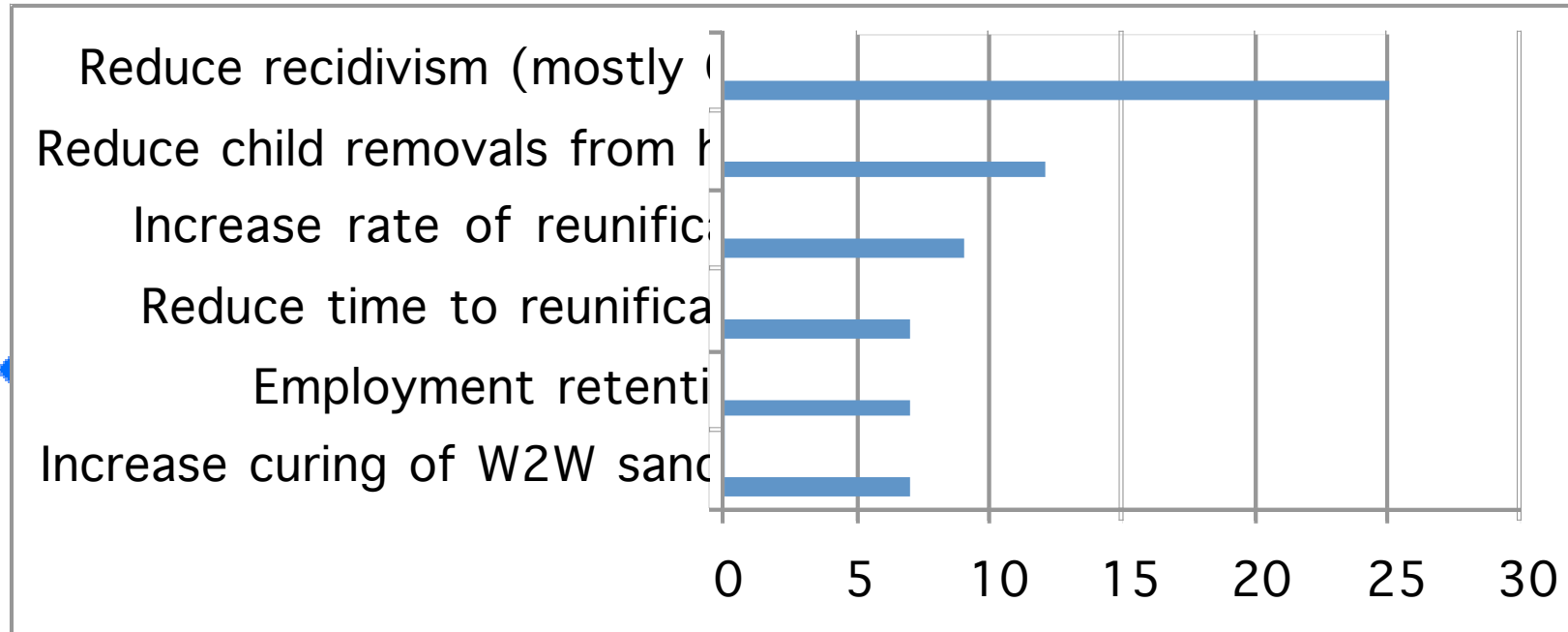
Statewide Evaluation Plan

- ▶ Client level impacts
 - State-wide outcomes for CWS and CalWORKs
 - Organizational change
 - Process evaluation
- ▶ Integration and coordination across partner systems
 - Linkages Integration Assessment Tool
 - Interviews Across Systems
 - Focus Groups
- ▶ Case studies – county level analysis
 - Staff interviews
 - Service delivery observations
 - Client focus groups

Most common outcomes

2008 Survey of Linkages Counties in California

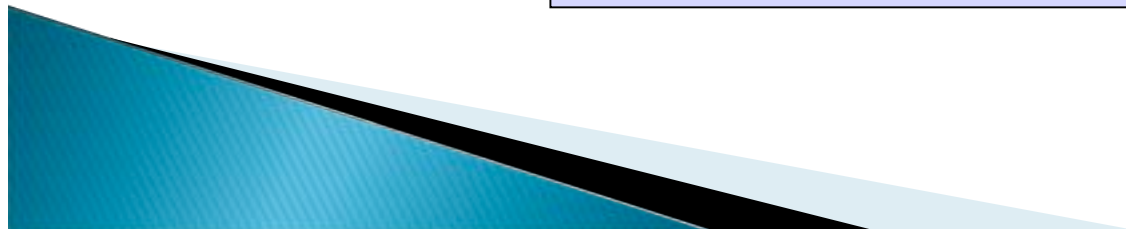
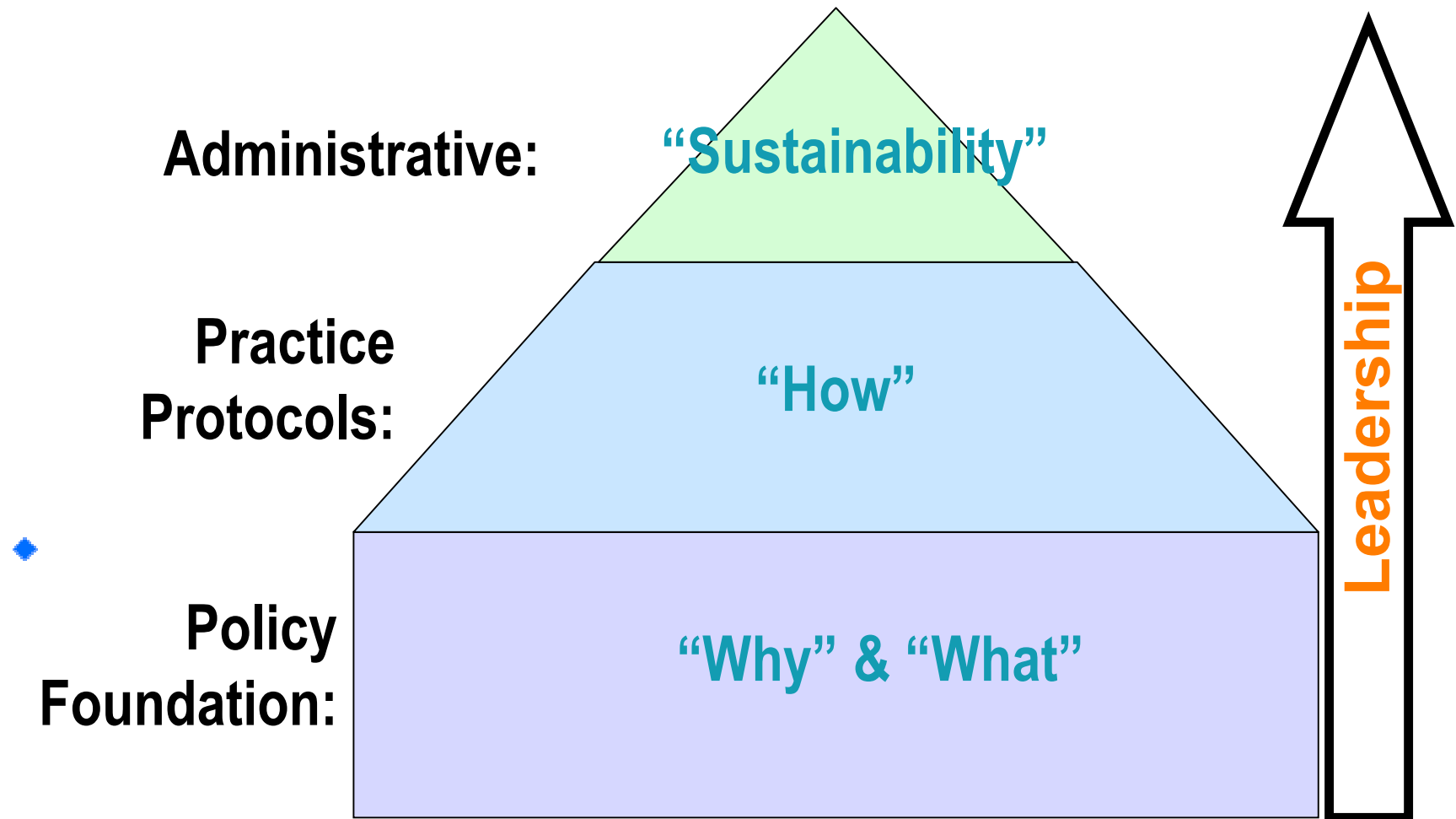
(29 of 33 counties reporting)



Number of Counties



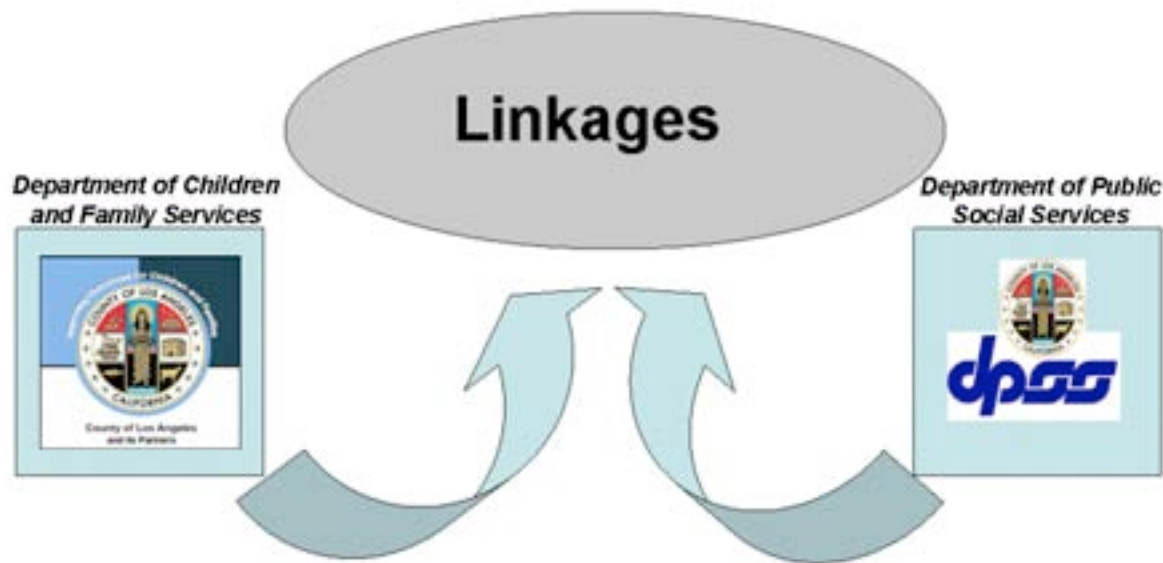
A Solid Planning Foundation



Los Angeles County Linkages

MISSION

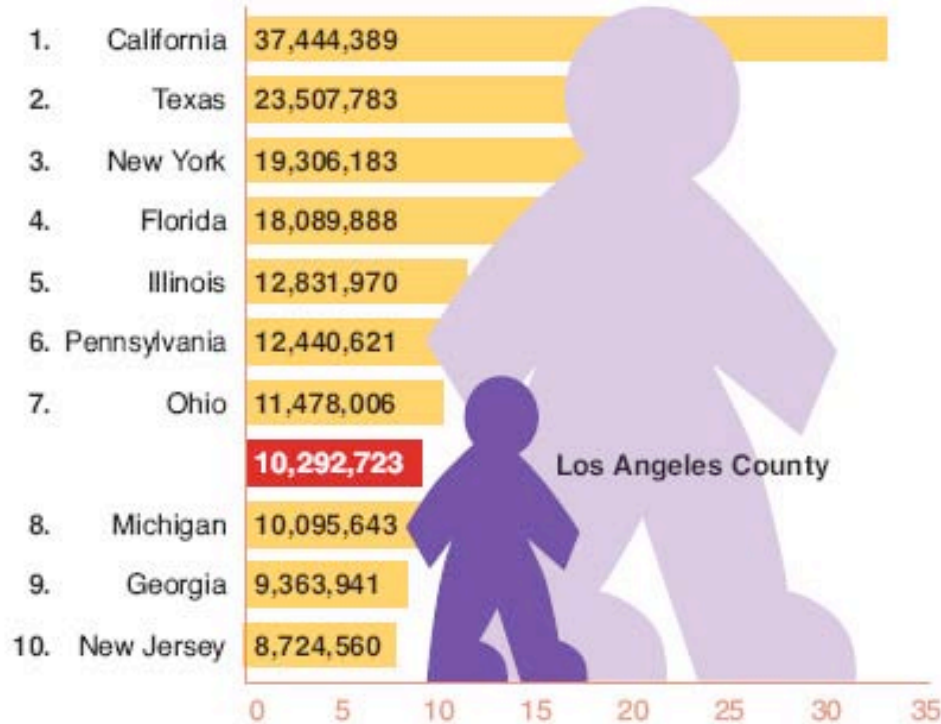
Working together to strengthen families, ensure child safety, promote well-being and sustain self-sufficiency.



LOS ANGELES COUNTY POPULATION

How does the population of Los Angeles County rank among the 50 states?

Population (2006)



SQUARE MILES	4,084
CHILD POPULATION (2004)	
3,000,000	
UNDER 5 Y.O.	27%
5 TO 9	27%
10 TO 14	30%
15 TO 17	16%

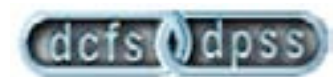
Population and gross product data from the Los Angeles County Economic Development Corporation.

DPSS/DCFS JULY 2009 DATA

	Department of Public Social Services (DPSS)	Department of Children and Family Services (DCFS)	
	Districts/Regions	REGIONAL	
NUMBER OF OFFICES	31 CalWORKs/ General Relief (GR) 11 Welfare-to-Work/GAIN	17	
MONTHLY CASELOAD	158,627*	REFERRALS	CASES
		11,843	37,793**

* CalWORKS Cases

** Includes Emergency Response (Open Services Cases), Family Maintenance, Family Reunification, Permanent Placement & Adoption Services Cases.

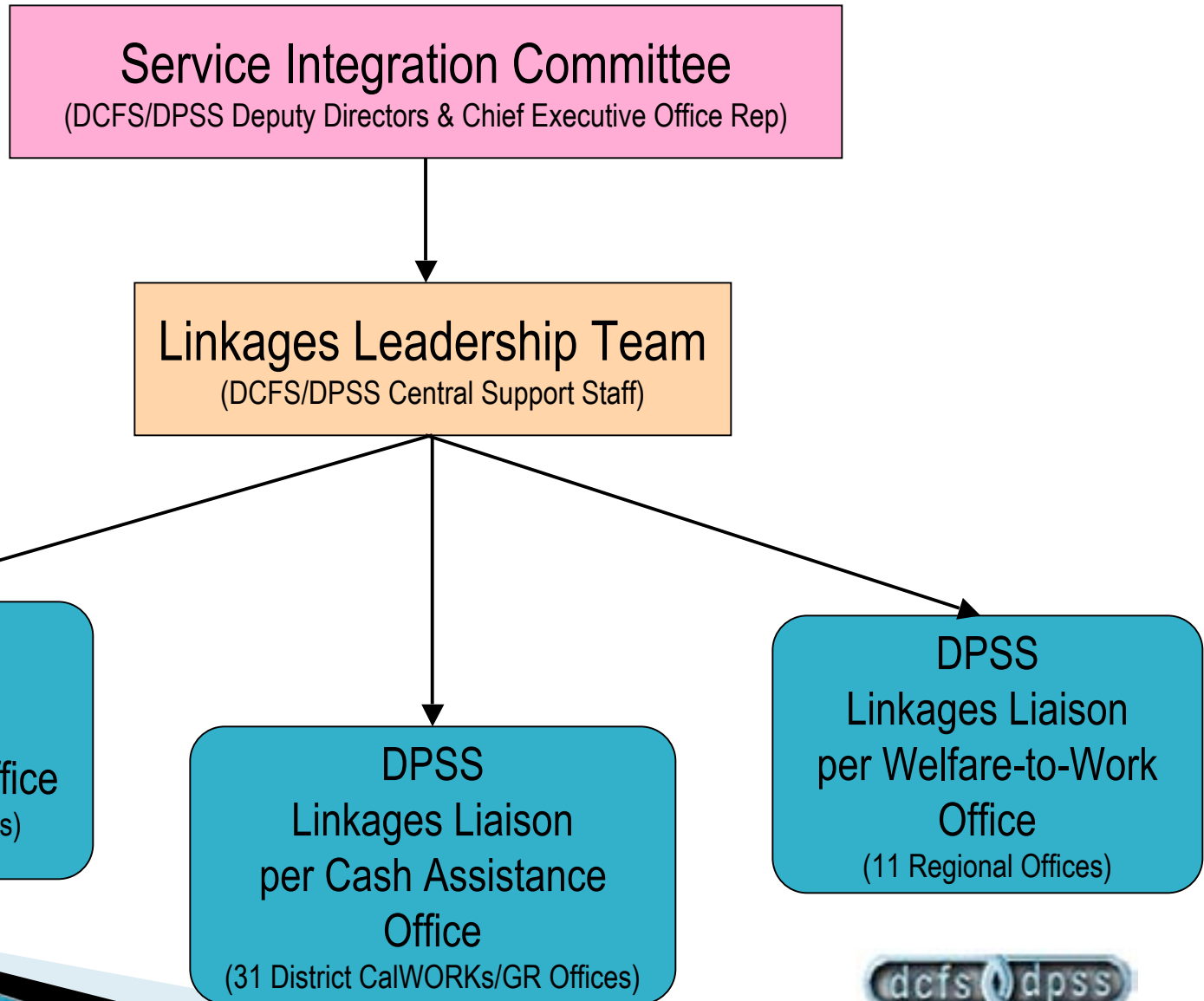


LA's Approach to Linkages

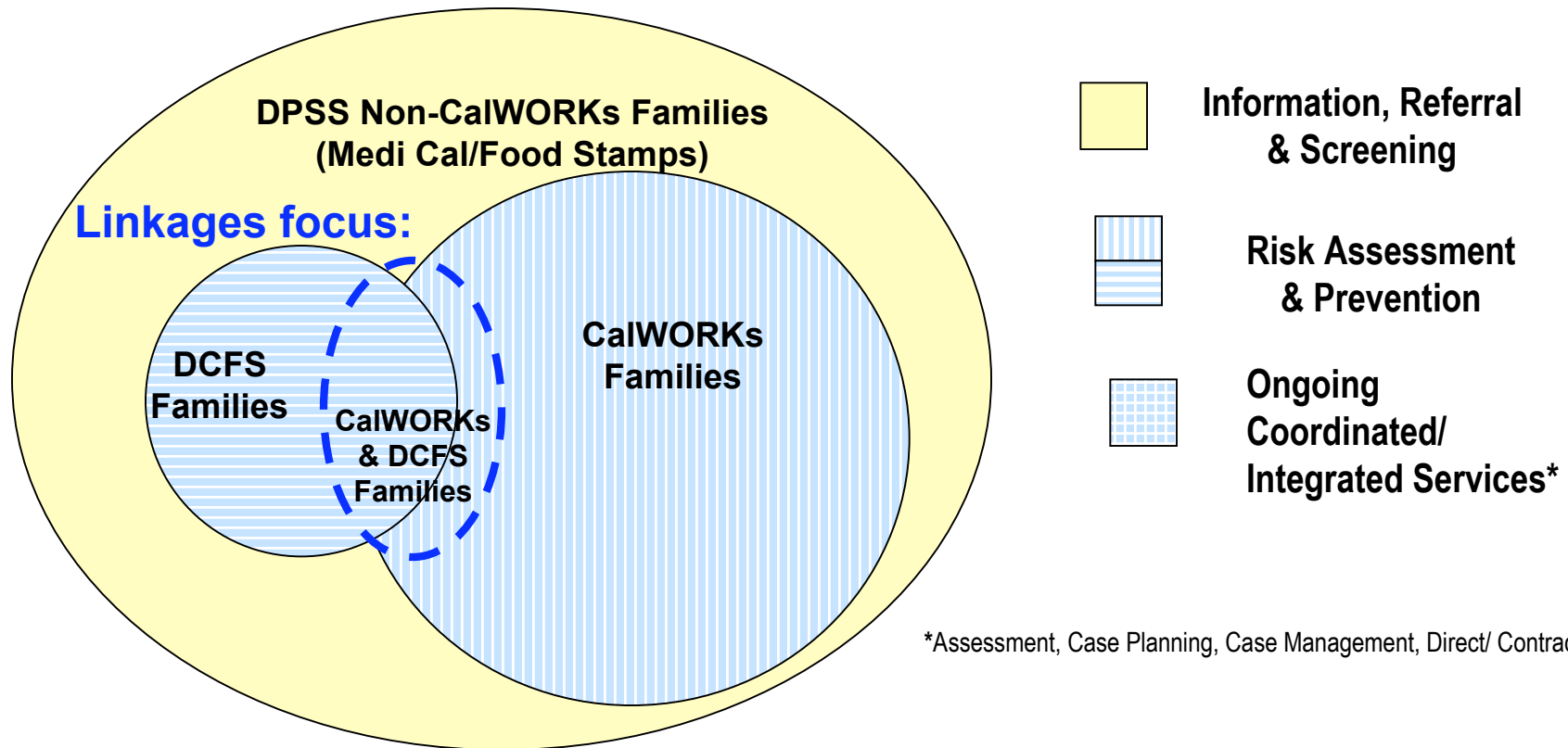
- Convened Service Integration Committee
- Convened Linkages Planning Committee & developed pilot test (3 DCFS and corresponding DPSS Offices)
- Convened Linkages Leadership Team
- Countywide implementation of Linkages through progressive rollout.
 - Cohort 1 completed November 2007
 - Cohort 2 completed May 2008
 - Cohort 3 completed March 2009
 - Cohort 4 completed June 2009
 - Cohort 5 scheduled for completion Fall 2009
- Established Linkages Coordinators in each DCFS/DPSS Office.



Linkages Leadership



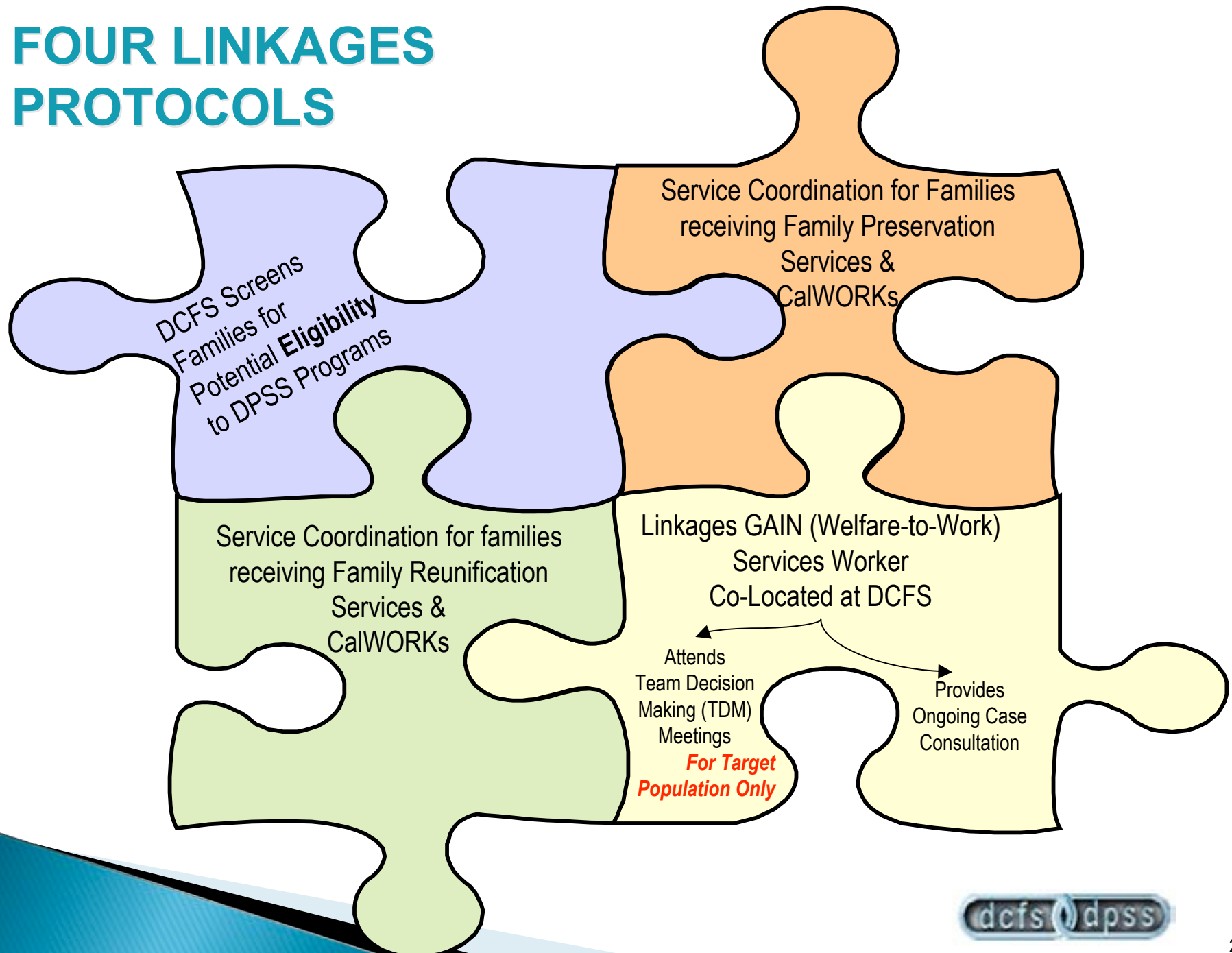
LA's Linkages target population



*Assessment, Case Planning, Case Management, Direct/ Contracted Services

- LA County joined Linkages in 2005 as a Phase 2 County
- Piloted Linkages in 2006
- Implemented Linkages countywide effective November 2007 through a progressive rollout to be complete fall 2009
- LA Linkages = Four Protocols

FOUR LINKAGES PROTOCOLS



ACCOMPLISHMENTS

- Nearly complete with roll-out across Los Angeles County:
 - Created infrastructure to transform how services are provided for mutual clients.
 - Trained > 2,800 DCFS personnel and > 800 DPSS personnel in the practices, supervision and automation necessary to coordinate services for Linkages clients.
- Stronger DCFS/DPSS Central Support = Stronger Linkages Leadership Team
- Launch of Linkages Website (accessible to both depts)
- Created automated solutions to facilitate & track service coordination between departments.



CHALLENGES

- Improve ongoing service coordination (communication) between DCFS workers and DPSS workers outside of TDMs (e.g., Family Preservation/Reunification).
- Practice consistency across vast bureaucracy.
- Separate data systems for child welfare and CalWORKs pose barriers to service coordination regarding:
 - Identification of mutual clients
 - Sharing information easily for common clients
 - Producing integrated management reports

IN PROGRESS...

- Conducting comprehensive evaluation of child and family outcomes for longest running Linkages locations.
- Adding strategies to coordinate services for homeless and sanctioned mutual cases.
- Developing automated tracking of service coordination protocol for mutual Family Preservation/CalWORKs cases.
- Increasing formal collaboration between central support and Regional and District level management to encourage practice consistency.

LINKAGES: HELPING FAMILIES IN LA COUNTY

Real results for families

LINKAGES MISSION:



Working together to strengthen families, ensure child safety, promote well-being and sustain self-sufficiency.



ANY QUESTIONS?



WHY LINKAGES?

IT JUST MAKES SENSE!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!

For more information...

- ▶ On line resources
 - www.cfpic.org
- ▶ Linkages staff
 - Danna.Fabella@cfpic.org
 - LeslieAnn@HayConsulting.org

