

The Linkages Project

Statewide Evaluation

Final Survey Overview

In spring 2011, the Linkages Statewide Evaluation team conducted a final online survey with Linkages counties that concludes a series of three surveys. Specifically, the Final Survey was a combination of questions from previous Implementation and Organizational Change surveys, and was aimed at further understanding the approaches to Linkages taken by different counties in California, examining the extent of Linkages integration in county systems, and factors necessary for making Linkages a success. The Implementation Survey had been conducted twice before in previous years, and the Organization Change Survey had also been conducted twice before. To reduce the data collection burden on respondents and allow for county Linkages coordinators to provide a strategic perspective at the culmination of the statewide project, the Final Survey combined key follow-up questions from these earlier surveys and solicited insights on sustainability and lessons learned. The results presented here draw upon the previous surveys for comparison when those comparisons reveal trends over time. Time points of the various surveys are shown below.

FY 2008-2009	FY 2009-2010	FY 2010-2011
Implementation Fall 2008	Implementation Fall 2009	Final Survey Spring 2011
Organizational Change Summer 2009	Organizational Change Summer 2010	

Spring 2011 Final Survey Results

A total of 26 Linkages Counties were active as of spring 2011. Responses were received from 23 of those counties (88 percent), as shown in the table below.

County Information

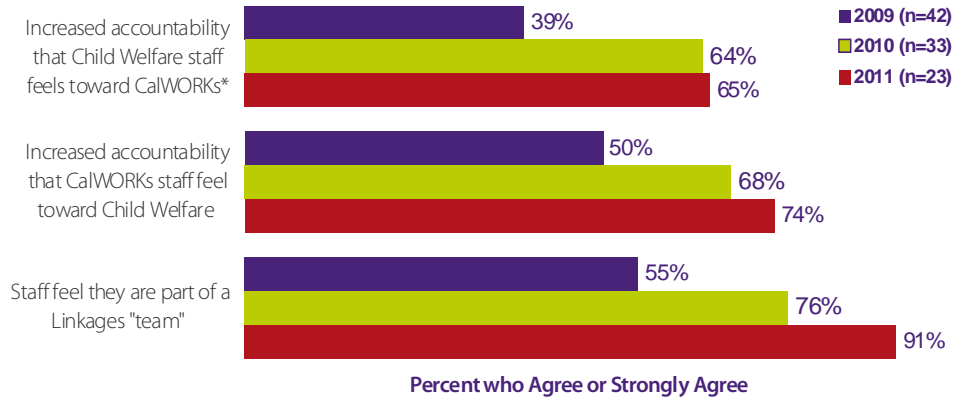
Linkages Counties that Provided Final Survey Data			
Alameda	Calaveras	Del Norte	El Dorado
Humboldt	Imperial	Kern	Los Angeles
Madera	Merced	San Francisco	San Luis Obispo
Santa Barbara	Santa Clara	Shasta	Siskiyou
Sonoma	Stanislaus	Sutter	Tehama
Trinity	Tulare	Yolo	

Only one survey was requested from each county, regardless of the number of Linkages coordinators. Counties with multiple Linkages coordinators were asked to reach agreement on the responses before submitting the survey.

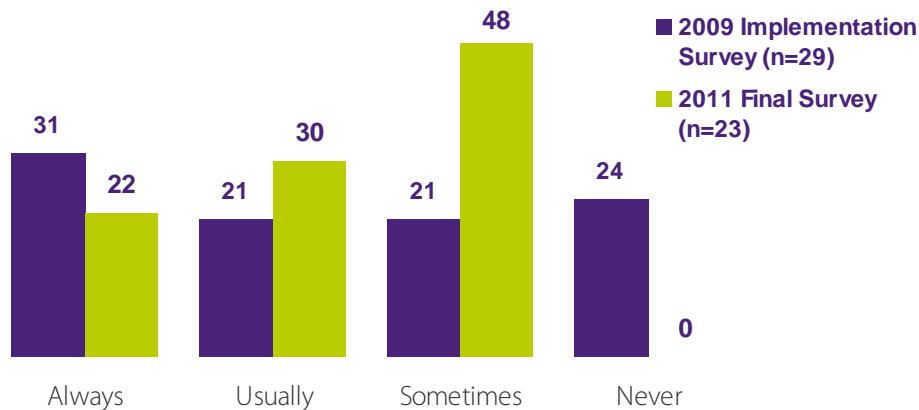
Defining Linkages

On the Final Survey (but not on previous surveys), respondents were asked to identify the key components of their Linkages initiatives.

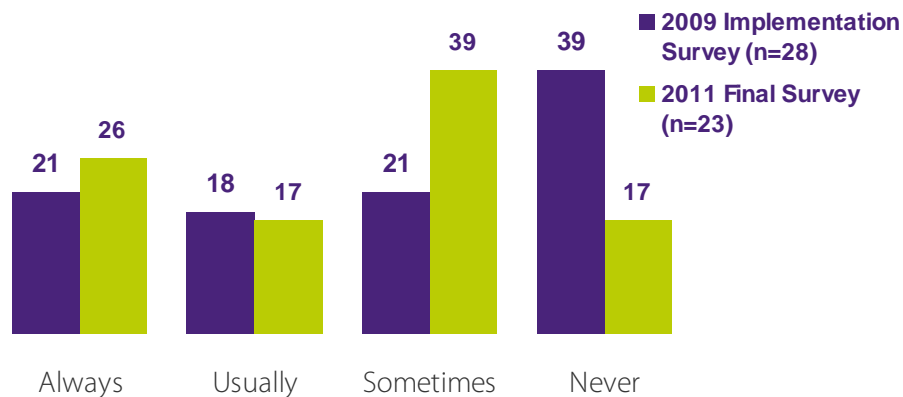
Defining components of county Linkages initiatives (Percent of counties, n=23)



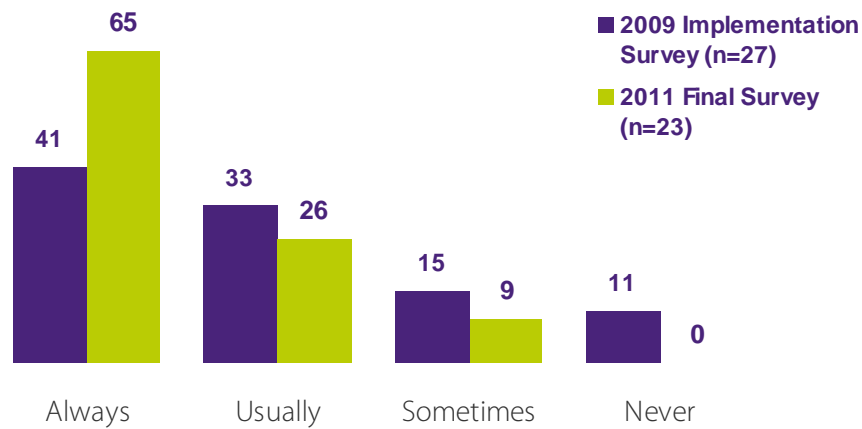
How often is Linkages used to help cure CalWORKs sanctions? (Percent of counties)



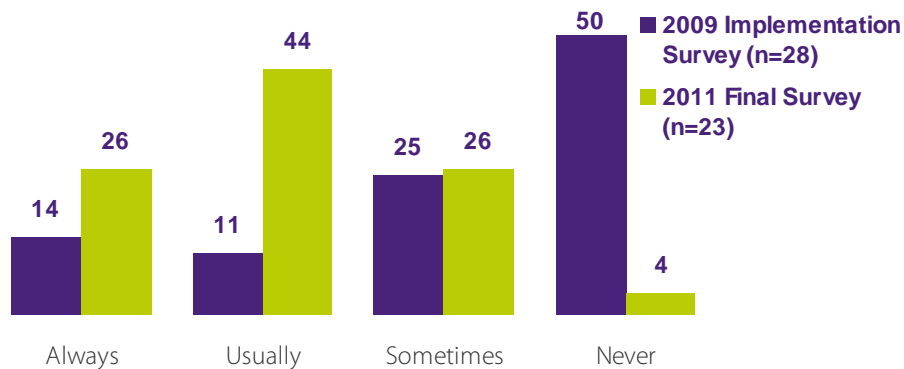
How often is Linkages used to augment services beyond those usually provided by CalWORKs or CWS? (Percent of counties)



How often does Linkages enable cost sharing or maximizing of resources between CalWORKs and CWS? (Percent of counties)



How often does Linkages enable transitional support or after-care services provided by CalWORKs after permanency is established for mutual clients?



Linkages Identification and Screening Practices

	Percent of Counties ³ (n=23)			
	Always	Usually	Sometimes	Never
Identification of joint cases	87	13	0	0
Linking CWS/CMS data with CalWORKs data to identify and track mutual clients	65	17	13	4
CWS referrals are screened for economic need	57	13	26	4
CalWORKs families are screened for risk of neglect/abuse	30	26	30	13
CalWORKs and CWS use a coordinated screening tool during intake	17	9	17	57

^aPercentages may not add to 100% across each row due to rounding.

Sixteen counties (70 percent) reported being Differential Response counties.

Integration of Differential Response

	Percent of Counties ^a			
	Always	Usually	Sometimes	Never
Linkages services are provided to families being served by Differential Response. (n=14)	14	21	50	14
Families in all pathways of Differential Response are periodically reassessed for CalWORKs eligibility or involvement. (n=15)	0	27	40	33

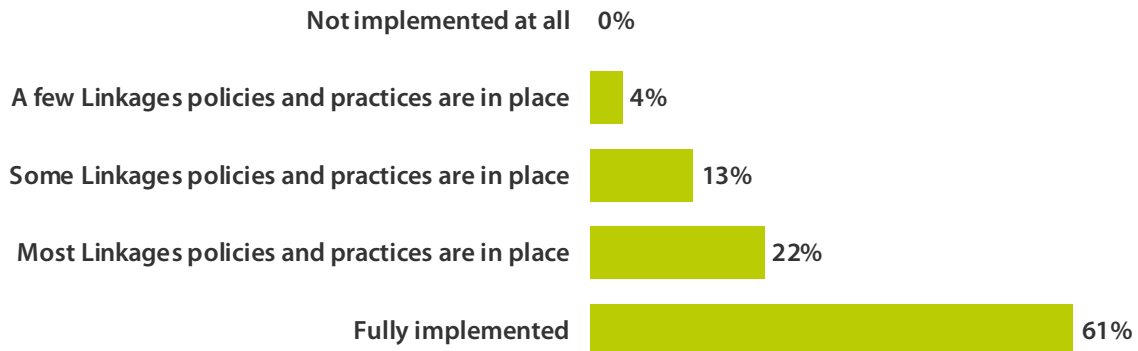
^aPercentages may not add to 100% across each row due to rounding.

- Results from all three years suggest that the integration of Differential Response and Linkages cases has been limited, though growing. Whereas in previous years, over 50% of the counties responded “Never” to the above items, the largest proportion of respondents in 2011 reported “Sometimes” integrating Differential Response.

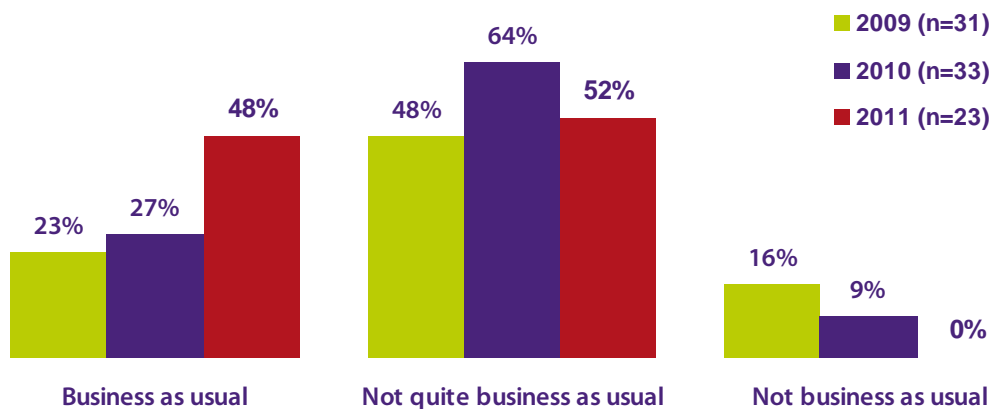
Level of Linkages Implementation

On the Final Survey, respondents were asked the extent to which Linkages had been implemented in their county.

Extent of Linkages Implementation (Percent of counties, n=23)



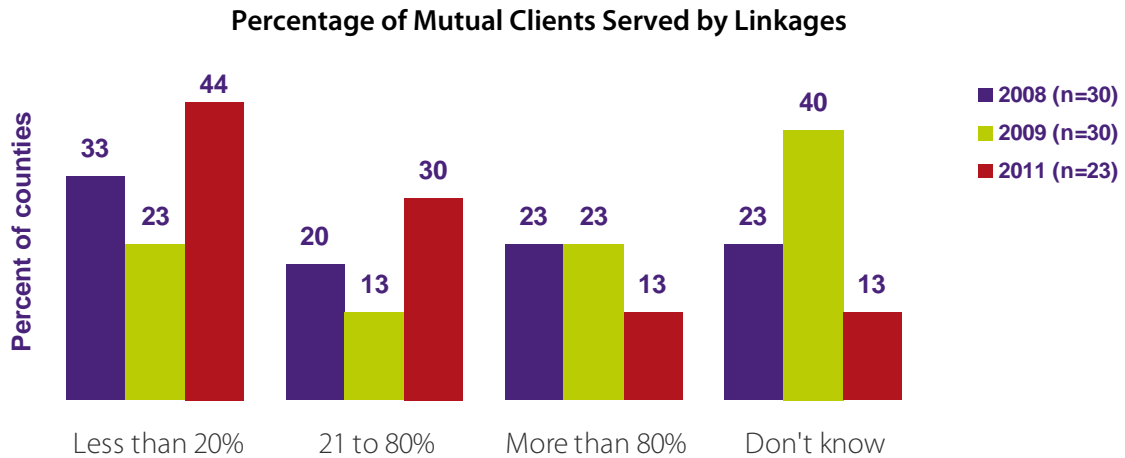
Integration of Linkages



Co-location of CalWORKS and Child Welfare Agency Offices & Personnel

	Percent of Counties ^a		
	All	Some	None
Co-location of CalWORKs and CWS agency offices (n=22)	27	55	18
Co-location of CalWORKs and CWS personnel (n=23)	30	48	22

^aPercentages may not add to 100% across each row due to rounding.



- Just 8 counties were able to provide estimates of how many people in their counties were simultaneously involved in Child Welfare and eligible for CalWORKs during the six-month period from January 1 through June 30, 2010. Their estimates ranged from 9 to 601 people.
- A full 18 counties were able to provide at least approximate counts of how many Linkages clients they had served during the same period. These counts ranged from 9 to over 7,000.

Identifying Linkages Cases

Time Stage at which Mutually-Served Clients Are Identified

	Percent of Counties ^a			
	Always	Usually	Sometimes	Never
Through the hotline (n=22)	41	9	23	27
During emergency response (n=22)	46	36	14	5
When family applies for CalWORKs benefits (n=22)	23	14	36	27
During Child Welfare case management (n=22)	36	23	36	5
During CalWORKs case management (n=22)	27	18	50	5
Upon closure of Child Welfare case (n=21)	14	10	24	52
Upon closure of CalWORKs case (n=21)	10	10	19	62

^aPercentages may not add to 100% across each row due to rounding.

County Methods of Identifying Mutually-Served Clients (n=23)^a

	Percent of Counties
Each case worker is responsible for checking her/his clients.	39
Designated person(s) in the Child Welfare program checks and informs all case workers.	70
Designated person(s) in the CalWORKs program checks and informs all case workers.	65
Designated person(s) outside of the programs checks and informs all case workers.	13

^aMultiple responses accepted.

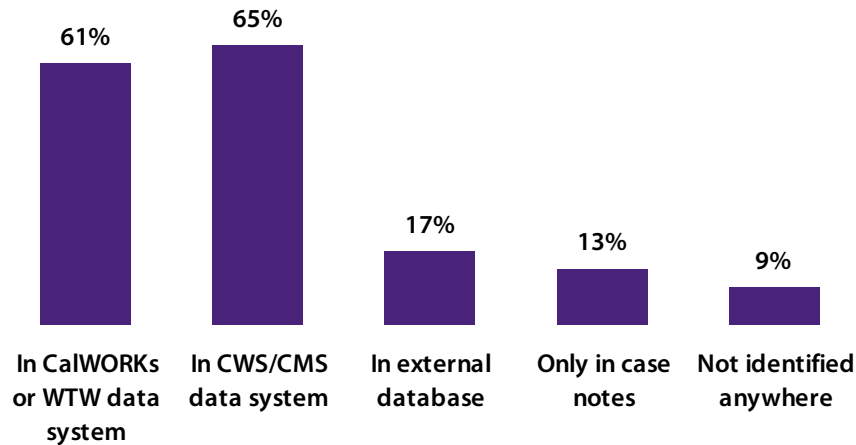
How Client Identification Checking Occurs (n=23)^a

	Percent of Counties
Automated case matching is done on a daily or weekly basis.	4
Designated staff member(s) have access to both CWS/CMS and the county CalWORKs data system and compares client records.	74
Client lists are compared in person at Linkages team meetings.	44
Case workers ask the clients.	39

^aMultiple responses accepted.

Tracking Linkages Clients

Extent of Computer Data System Tracking of Linkages Cases^a (n=23)



^aMultiple responses accepted

- The responses above are similar to those in the previous survey (2009 Implementation Survey), except that in 2009, a substantially smaller percentage (33 percent) reported identifying clients in their CalWORKs or Welfare-to-Work data system.

- Seventeen of 22 counties (77 percent) reported using special project codes or flags to track Linkages clients in their CWS/CMS data system. Nine of 22 counties (41 percent) reported flagging Linkages clients in their CalWORKs or Welfare-to-Work data system.
- When asked about major challenges with Linkages data, the overwhelmingly common response from counties was that the Child Welfare and CalWORKs data systems do not communicate with one another. This has been known to be a challenge to counties from early on in Linkages implementation. Although a few counties have set up work-around systems that designate staff and computer programming to enable data to be matched from both systems in a more automated fashion, there is no system that can be easily replicated across counties, and lack of staff time and technological resources remain barriers for most.

Managing Linkages Cases

Linkages Case Management Strategies

	Percent of Counties ^a			
	Always	Usually	Sometimes	Never
Joint home visits between CWS and CalWORKs staff (n=23)	17	13	52	17
Coordinated case planning (n=23)	65	22	13	0
Incorporating Linkages in Team Decision Making (n=23)	44	22	22	13
Incorporating Linkages in Multi-Disciplinary Teams (n=22)	27	36	14	23
Using parent engagement strategies to include parents in case plan with CWS and CalWORKs (n=22)	36	36	23	5

^aPercentages may not add to 100% across each row due to rounding.

- When asked how frequently staff from both sides of the house typically meet to discuss a mutual client, the most common response (48 percent) was **once a month**. Another 26 percent reported that such meetings typically occur more than once a month.
- As in previous years, respondents most commonly reported (70 percent) that for Linkages clients, **two case plans** are developed (one for CalWORKs and one for Child Welfare), but case plan **goals, services, and timelines are coordinated** to meet the prioritized needs of the family.
- Also similar to previous years, most counties (74 percent) stated that there are **two different case managers** for a Linkages case, one from each program.

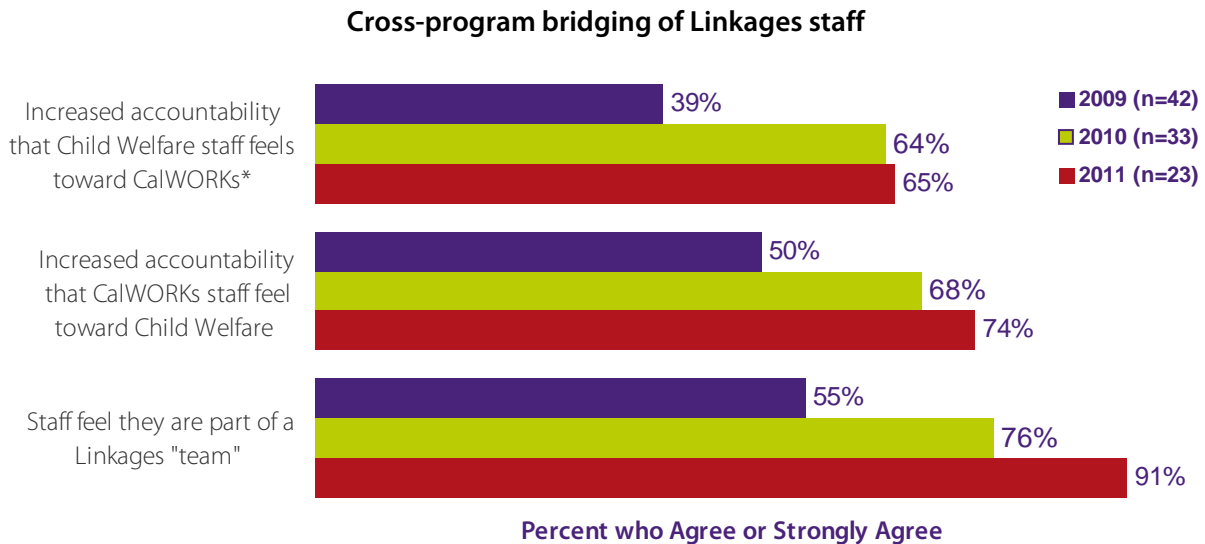
Communication Management between CalWORKs and CWS Caseworkers (n=23)

	Percent of Counties ^a
Staff are encouraged, but not required, to discuss the case with the other program worker as needed.	26
There is a required process to evaluate progress by both case workers (but regular contact is not required).	22
Staff are required to have regular contact with the other caseworkers to track the progress of the two case plans.	35
Staff are required to work in a team with the other program on all aspects of the case, from assessment to case resolution..	13

^aPercentages may not add to 100% due to rounding.

Linkages Effects on Staff

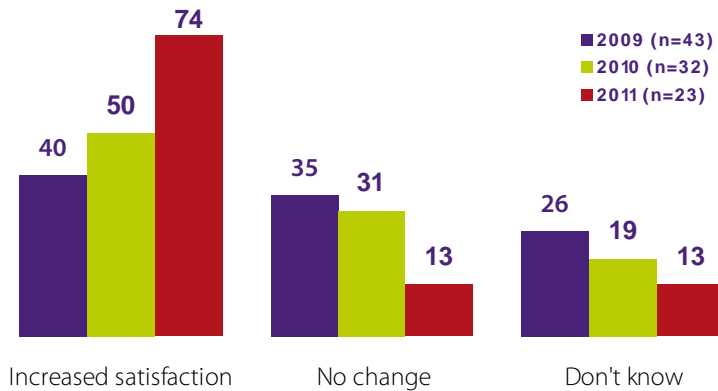
Respondents were asked about the effects that Linkages has on bridging Child Welfare and CalWORKs staff. The chart below shows respondents' level of agreement with three different statements in all three survey years. Across the three fiscal years, sense of accountability between both agencies and feeling part of a Linkages team has increased.



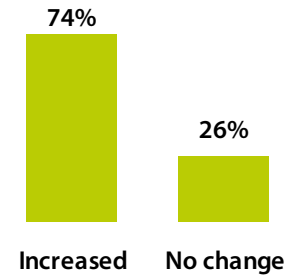
*n=41 on 2009 survey.

No respondents in any year reported decreased staff job satisfaction or staff effectiveness. On the Final Survey, respondents were asked how Linkages has changed staff tendencies to “think outside the box” in working with clients.

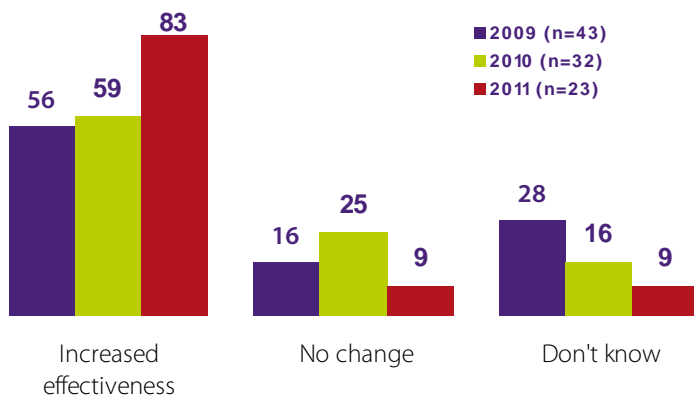
Changes in Job Satisfaction due to Linkages



Changes in staff tendency to “think outside the box” (Percent of counties, n=23)



Changes in Staff Effectiveness due to Linkages

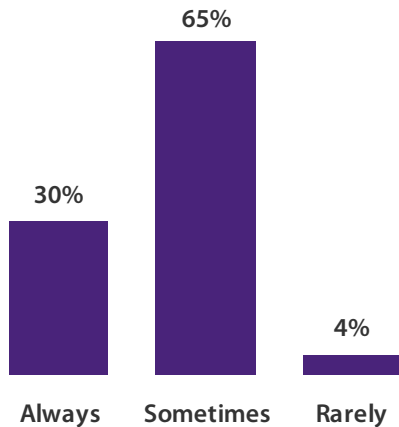


Linkages effect on county internal operations (Percent of counties, n=23)

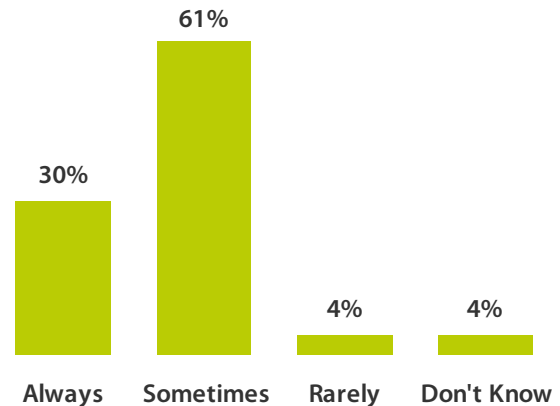


Linkages Effects on Families

Does Linkages help identify special issues for families, such as domestic violence? (Percent of counties, n=23)



Are Linkages families better able to address problems such as mental health issues and substance abuse than non-Linkages families? (n=23)



Linkages Family Outcomes Compared to How They Would Have Fared without Linkages (n=23)

	Percent of Counties ^a		
	Yes	No	Don't Know
Fewer substantiated recurrences of maltreatment occur?	61	4	35
Fewer children are removed from home when substantiated recurrence occurs?	48	13	39
More families achieve reunification?	48	4	48
Families reunify in a shorter amount of time?	26	13	61
Fewer children re-enter foster care?	26	9	65
More parents resolve their CalWORKs sanctions?	61	13	26
Monthly cash grant amounts (without sanctions) are lower?	22	26	52
Parents' monthly earnings and wages are higher?	17	30	52
Parents receive cash aid for less time?	14	18	69

^aPercentages may not add to 100% across each row due to rounding.

Linkages effect on mutually-served families (Percent of counties, n=23)



Sustainability

County expectations of their Linkages initiative continuing beyond this year (n=23)



Components of Success

Overall Linkages success in counties (n=23)



Shared goals across Child Welfare and CalWORKs (n=23)

	Percent of Counties ^a		
	Definitely	Probably	Probably Not
Does CalWORKs LEADERSHIP see child safety as one of their goals	83	13	4
Do CalWORKs LINE STAFF see child safety as one of their goals?	57	44	0
Does Child Welfare LEADERSHIP see family economic self-sufficiency as one of their goals?	83	17	0
Do Child Welfare LINE STAFF see family economic self-sufficiency as one of their goals?	61	35	4

^aPercentages may not add to 100% across each row due to rounding.

Success factors in Child Welfare and CalWORKs programs (n=23)

	Percent of Counties ^a				
	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
Child Welfare and CalWORKs had a history of working together in this county prior to Linkages.	9	17	26	44	4
The county division/program where I work has effective ways of communicating information of value to all staff.	30	61	9	0	0
The county division/program where I work involves staff at all levels in decisions about how to improve our Linkages initiative.	26	35	26	13	0
Recording accurate data is something that is done well in our CalWORKs program.	9	65	17	4	4
Recording accurate data is something that is done well in our Child Welfare program.	9	61	22	9	0

^aPercentages may not add to 100% across each row due to rounding.

Success factors regarding leadership (n=23)

	Percent of Counties ^a				
	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
This county's Child Welfare leadership makes Linkages practices a priority.	48	48	4	0	0
This county's CalWORKs leadership makes Linkages practices a priority.	44	52	4	0	0
Linkages leadership in this county values the use of numbers to demonstrate success.	26	44	26	4	0

^aPercentages may not add to 100% across each row due to rounding.

Success factors regarding staffing (n=23)

	Percent of Counties ^a				
	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
Linkages can be implemented with any existing line staff.	26	35	22	13	4
Linkages requires a special level of personal commitment from staff.	32	59	9	0	0
Linkages requires staff who can easily think outside the box.	26	61	13	0	0
Linkages requires extra <u>ongoing</u> support and training of staff in order to succeed.	44	44	13	0	0
Having Linkages in place requires more staff time than not having Linkages in place.	9	17	26	39	9

^aPercentages may not add to 100% across each row due to rounding.

Fiscal impact (n=23)

	Percent of Counties ^a		
	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral
It is my best guess that Linkages is currently saving our county money.	22	39	39
It is my best guess that Linkages can save our county money in the future .	35	52	13

^aPercentages may not add to 100% across each row due to rounding.

Counties rated the importance of eight factors to making Linkages a success (see table below). By spring 2011, clear communication had emerged as the most important factor for success, according to respondents. Clear communication was added as a choice on the 2010 survey based on input from counties responding to the 2009 survey.

Factors important to Linkages success

	Percent of respondents who rated Very Important		
	2009 (n=42)	2010 (n=33)	2011 (n=23)
Clear communication between Child Welfare and CalWORKs staff ^{a,b}	--	89	100
Strong leadership in favor of Linkages	95	97	96
Likelihood that families will be better off with Linkages	83	94	91
Compatible procedures between Child Welfare and CalWORKs	74	68	83
Workplace culture of willingness to try new things.	74	67	70
Likelihood of cost savings or cost sharing	55	70	57
External technical assistance	21	27	35
Pre-existing working relationship with the other program ^b	43	44	26

^aQuestion not asked in 2009.

^bn=32 for these items on the 2010 survey.