



KEEPING LINKED

A Publication of CFPIC's Federal Linkages Project

LINKAGES - Calworks and Child Welfare Collaboration to Improve Outcomes

October 2010

Approaching the End of the Chain

This year's Linkages Convening is the last regular convening in our 5 year federal project.* We have one more statewide meeting, in July, 2011, which will be a unique opportunity to look back on a decade of Linkages work and to showcase the many successful innovations that have been implemented across the state in that span of time. With the timelines of Linkages in mind we highlighted two themes at this year's convening:

- ◇ **Poverty**, because as we look forward, it is critical for us to understand that this pernicious condition seriously impacts families' abilities to prevent child maltreatment and sustain self-sufficiency
- ◇ **Sustainability**, because we all need to commit ourselves to understanding those strategies that can help counties maintain and build on the successes that they have achieved over the past ten years

We opened the Convening by recalling that four years ago we were awaiting word from the federal government that would confirm whether we would be able to continue the Linkages work that had begun in 1999. At that time several Pioneer counties and a number of Phase II



Stuart Oppenheim, John Wagner, Greg Rose & Karen Dickerson

Washington we have been able to spread and deepen this work in thirty California counties. A representative from the Children's Bureau was here to monitor our progress during the Convening and she appeared to be very impressed with the work of the counties and will be reporting on her findings to the Bureau in the next month or so; we will be happy to share that report when it is issued



Christine Applegate

As always, our opening plenary offered perspectives from county and state leadership. **Christine Applegate**, the Director of the Stanislaus Community Services Agency, offered her observations as the Director of two Linkages counties---her former county, Tehama, and her current county, Stanislaus. She provided a warm and thoughtful welcome to the Convening and reminded us of what a great champion she has been for our Linkages. The state panel representatives this year were **John Wagner, Greg Rose, and Karen Dickerson**. Director Wagner provided some great examples of the excellent work of several Linkages counties and enthusiastic support for continuing to carry the work forward. Greg Rose recalled his efforts to help bring the federal funding to Linkages and spoke further of how Linkages has been a prominent component of the state's federal Program

Con't on Pg. 2

Approaching the End of the Chain

con't from Pg. 1

Improvement Plan (PIP) during its current Child and Family Services Review (CFSR). Karen brought regrets from **Char Lee Metsker** that she could not attend this year's convening---it is the first statewide convening that she has been unable to attend—but Karen herself provided a great welcome on behalf of the Welfare-to-Work Division and offered some thoughtful comments on the progress of Linkages and how it supports the efforts of that Division.

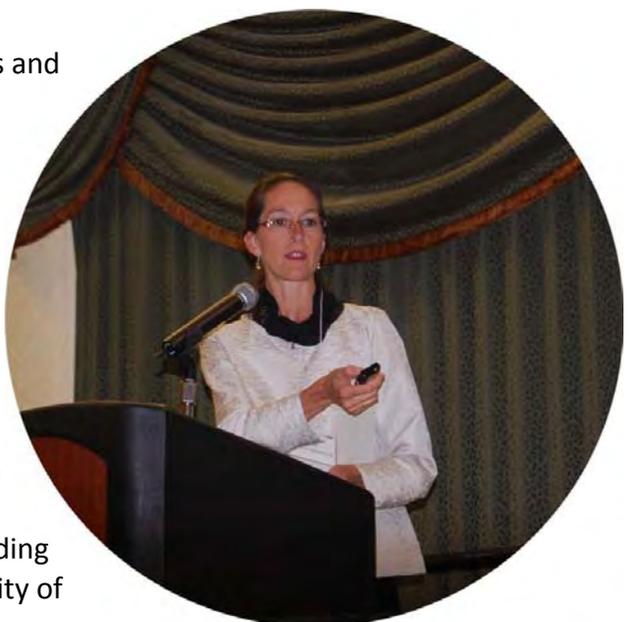
Our opening plenary on the first day brought us back to the theme of poverty. **Dr. Hillary Hoynes-Davis**, an economic professor at U.C. Davis, delivered a very informative talk on this theme, focusing on the following:

- ◇ How do we define poverty?
- ◇ Facts: Poverty in the U.S. and in California
- ◇ Impacts of poverty on children and families
- ◇ Causes and how government programs can help

From Dr. Hoynes we learned that in the U.S. we define poverty as only cash income, thereby not including other forms of non-cash assistance. The convening preceded the issuance of this year's poverty statistics but Dr. Hoynes anticipated (and the news bore out) that more people are moving into poverty than at any time since the War on Poverty in the 1970's. She cited some sobering statistics about poverty in our country and noted that in California the problem is worse---in both cases poverty has a strong relationship with unemployment and in California unemployment has lasted longer and has been more problematic than in the country as a whole. In addition to what we know about relationship of poverty and maltreatment, we also learned that there is a wide range of negative impacts for children and families. Dr. Hoynes concluded her remarks by telling us what we can do, as government employees, to address poverty. The specific reminders/ recommendations for our policy makers, which we can support through our Linkages work, are:

- ◇ Reducing poverty takes a commitment of resources
- ◇ Improve opportunities
 - Invest in education from early childhood through access to college
- ◇ Encourage work and supplement income:
 - Further expansions of the EITC
 - Provide the necessary supports for the mothers and families (child care)

This year we had a second plenary presentation—opening the second day of the convening—and welcomed back a longstanding friend of Linkages, **Dr. Jill Duerr-Berrick**, who provided an excellent follow-up to Dr. Hoynes's presentation. The second plenary helped us make a number of connections between poverty and threats to child and family well-being. Dr. Duerr-Berrick put all of this in the context of what she referred to as “the Great Recession.” She began by talking about parenting in hard times and transitioned a conversation about changes in the American family that are related to economic vulnerability. She cited a number of statistics regarding the make-up of today's family and informed us that the majority of American children will spend some time living in families with one biological parent. This fact is important since the



Dr. Jill Duerr-Berrick

Continued on Pg. 4

Communication Materials: Effective, Efficient, and Essential

You might have noticed the new look to *Keeping Linked*. It's consistent with the other Communication Material that was given to attendees at last month's Fall Convening in Sacramento. The Packet with our new Logo included;

- ◇ Tips For Using Communication Materials,
- ◇ Linkages Brochure,
- ◇ Linkages Key Messages,
- ◇ What You Can Do To Collaborate In Your County,
- ◇ A matrix outlining benefits and barriers to collaboration,
- ◇ Linkages Overview,
- ◇ A template for collecting Linkages Success Stories
- ◇ And the *Meeting The Linkages Challenge* DVD featuring Los Angeles and Stanislaus counties' staff and families involved in Linkages.

We launched this effort over a year ago when Linkages Coordinators at one of our Mini-Convenings when asked at the ending feedback, "What could the project do to help you move Linkages forward in the county?" The response was the need for material to explain its importance and to help "train" staff and provide information to Leadership. The Communication Workshop at the 2009 Fall Convening helped us understand more clearly the barriers facing the counties and what was behind the successes. The themes were further explored by our Communication Consultant, Renee Wessels with the Ad Hoc Communication committee. From that the material was developed with the goal of helping counties sustain and expand their Linkages practice at the local level.

You can find these materials (except the Barriers and Success Matrix) on the Child and Family Public website, **cfpic.org**. Also on that website is a PowerPoint that you can adapt for presenting at the local level. In fact, the written materials, including the brochure, were designed so that your county can adapt it and personalize it for your own county. Please contact us at Danna.Fabella@cfpic.org if you have any questions. And don't forget to go on line to download and personalize the materials. Go to cfpic.org today.



Contra Costa & Alameda Counties at the Linkages Convening

Approaching the End of the Chain

con't from Pg. 2

presence of two working parents means that family income has a much greater chance of addressing economic hardship. Another sobering statistic was that 7% of all families with children are headed by a grandparent and that the average annual income of a grandparent-headed household is \$19,750.

These situations are exacerbated by the economic downturn, and as we learned from Dr. Hoynes, there are a number of dramatic effects on child and family well-being during bad economic times. As Dr. Duerr-Berrick states, "tough economic times are tough on families." She reminded us that poverty is the single most powerful predictor of child maltreatment and she explained why this is the case. Dr. Duerr-Berrick concluded that:

- ◇ Social workers must attend to family material well-being if they hope to witness significant changes in parenting practices.
- ◇ Thoughtful practice that recognizes the challenges associated with parenting in poverty can reduce stress, hassles, and other associated difficulties that elevate risk.
- ◇ Collaboration, Communication, and Cooperation between CalWORKs and Child Welfare can Improve Opportunities to Benefit Children and Families

After a day and a half of informative plenaries, peer mentoring workshops, topical discussion groups, a networking reception, and a challenging crossword puzzle, the convening concluded with a final plenary devoted to unveiling a number of communications

tools that have been produced in order to help counties with their sustainability strategies. These products came out of work that was begun at last year's convening and continued throughout the year in consultation with **Renee Wessels**, a very skilled communications consultant. Renee reviewed the various documents that have been developed to support county efforts—a Linkages Overview, Key Messages, Collaboration Checklist, Promotional Card, Brochure and Video (in two formats—a shorter one for a quick overview and a longer one that tells the full story of Linkages through the experiences of a family in L.A. and a family in Stanislaus). Renee explained why communications is important and how these tools can be used to help counties sustain and expand their work. Her talk concluded with showing the videos, which have been extremely well received. Our final regular---and next to last overall---convening brought together colleagues from around the state who have committed themselves to ensuring that the Linkages approach to serving families will continue beyond the end of the current statewide project. We hope that from our Leadership panel through our closing plenary on communications, we inspired the continuation of this commitment and provided some tools that will help sustain and deepen that commitment. Thanks to everyone who helped make this year's convening the best ever!

**PowerPoints for the Plenary and the Workshops will be posted within the next month on the cfpic.org website.*

San Bernardino County Linkage Convening Attendees



More Counties Enjoying the Linkages Convening



Sutter County Attendees



Tehama County enjoying lunch

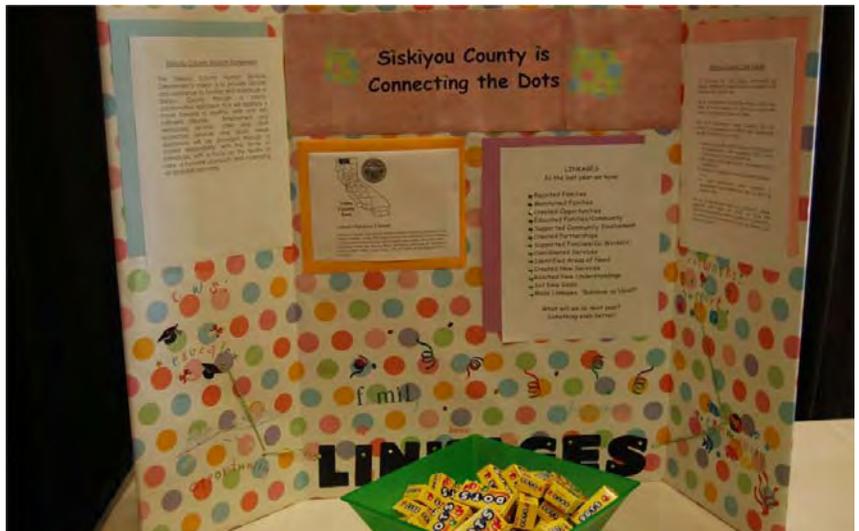


Having a laugh at the Siskiyou County table

Poster Boards Tell the Story

Thanks to the counties that took time to tell their Linkages story through a Poster Board for display during the Reception at the Fall Convening. The great eight counties were; **Alameda, Fresno, Los Angeles, Orange, Santa Clara, Siskiyou, Stanislaus, and Tulare.** We encouraged everyone to view County Poster Boards and then we put more pressure on everyone by asking them to vote for their favorite Poster Board. This was very difficult since they were all so informative and showed a lot of creativity. Our guest, **Elizabeth Mertinko**, representing the Children’s Bureau in Washington D.C., thoroughly enjoyed reading about what was going on in the counties. During a follow-up call with the State and Project staff after the Convening, she wanted us to let you know how much she thoroughly enjoyed seeing the Poster Boards as they “provided a lot of information” and helped her really understand what we are doing in

Con’t on Pg. 7



Poster Boards Tell the Story

con't from pg. 6

California. And by the way, she also thanked everyone for making her feel so at home and for talking to her about what was going on in their county. We didn't ask Elizabeth what Poster she used her voting dot on, however, this year's winner selected by their Peers at the Convening was **Los Angeles County**. If you had a chance to take a look at their Poster Board, you saw the roll-out of their first Linkages protocols across the county by cohorts. You also saw some great pictures of their county's Linkages conference where they celebrated their accomplishments and engaged Leadership and staff in the future of Linkages in LA. And very importantly, they highlighted their Leadership and their Champions. One of the things that we know from our four years of experience with Linkages is that Leadership is key to the success of Linkages. Good job, LA!

And close second and third places were **Alameda County** and **Fresno County**. I have to admit that I hung out at the Siskiyou Poster Board display (they had Dot candy in a bowl that matched their background), but all kidding aside, it was great to have our Phase III counties, **Siskiyou, Tulare, and Santa Clara** having so much to share. But all of the counties were so creative and if you did take the time to read them you would have learned a lot about what is happening in your neighboring counties. We hoped that the Poster Boards, county policies and procedures, Regional Training Academy training flyers provided opportunities for attendees to learn what others are doing.

Save the Date



Final Convening



July 6-8, 2011

Hyatt Regency, Monterey

UPDATES...UPDATES...UPDATES...UPDATES

| | | |
|--|------------------|---------------------------|
| AB 429 Peer Cluster Call | October 26, 2010 | 3:00 p.m. |
| Data/Evaluation Peer Cluster Call | November 4, 2010 | 10:30 a.m. |
| Coordinated Case Planning Peer Cluster Call | | November to be determined |

All calls will be held on the Linkages conference line: 1-866-210-1669 Code: 5088172#

Stuart Oppenheim

Executive Director

415-317-4568

Stuart.Oppenheim@cfpic.org

Danna Fabella

Linkages Project Director

925-324-5258

Danna.Fabella@cfpic.org

Leslie Ann Hay

Project Associate

Leslieann.Hay@cfpic.org

Sacramento Office

925 L Street, Suite 350

Sacramento, CA 95814

Phone: 916-443-1749

Fax: 916-443-3202



Child & Family Policy Institute of California

The Child and Family Policy Institute of California (CFPIC) is a private non-profit organization incorporated in 2004 as a 501 (c) 3 entity under the auspices of the County Welfare Directors Association (CWDA). The purpose of the CFPIC is to “advance the development of sound public policy and promote program excellence in county Human Services Agencies through research, education, training and technical assistance.”

Linkages is a strategic effort by thirty-two California’s counties to improve coordination between CalWORKS and Child Welfare through development of county specific work plans and leadership. The initiative is supported by CFPIC through trainings, convenings, peer support and technical assistance. These supports initially received private foundation funding and are currently funded through a Federal Grant and the California Department of Social Services.