

California Citizen Review Panels

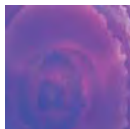
Guide and Reference Manual



Educating
CRP panel
members



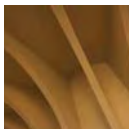
Educating the
public at large



Educating
public officials,
community
based
organizations
and non-profit
organization



Developing
CRP training
components



Developing
and organizing
CRP review
activities



California Citizen Review Panels

© 2005 *Strategies*

Introduction

This manual was written to serve as a guide to assist in:

- ◆ Educating CRP panel members
- ◆ Educating the public at large
- ◆ Educating public officials, community based organizations and non-profit organizations
- ◆ Developing CRP training components
- ◆ Developing and organizing CRP review activities

The information in this manual covers CRP activities from the beginning of the CRP development (including sample forms that may be used as guidelines) through the CRP review process.

Resources have been included that may be utilized to train the CRP members as well as assist the CRP in connecting to various resource avenues that may be useful during the course of their work.

These resources cover the nature and function of the child welfare system in California, its data collection mechanisms, current system improvement processes and the laws and regulations pertaining to child welfare as well as, the relationship of the child welfare system to other state and county systems such as those that address substance abuse, mental health, employment development, and panel operations and organization.

This manual was developed in partnership between Strategies, a statewide consortium of technical assistance and training programs working to strengthen the field of family support, Interface Children Family Services, and the Office of Child Abuse Prevention (OCAP) of the California Department of Social Services.

Any questions, comments or feedback regarding this manual, should be directed to Annette Marcus, Regional Director, Strategies, Region II at 805-485-6114 extension 659 or amarcus@icfs.org; or Jacquelyn Sneed of the California Department of Social Services at 916-651-6711.

Table of Contents

1	<i>Background and History of the CRP</i>	1
2	<i>Understanding the Child Welfare System in California</i>	3
3	<i>CRP Organizations and Operations</i>	9
4	<i>CRP Review Process</i>	13
5	<i>Current, Promising and Best Practices</i>	19
6	<i>CRP Resources</i>	23
	Current Practices	23
	Promising Practices and Best Practices	24
	Statistical Support Data	26
7	<i>Sample Forms</i>	27
	CRP Organization and Operation	27
	Sample CRP Objectives	28
	Sample CRP Operating Procedures	28
	Sample By-Laws of the ABC County Citizen Review Board	30
	Sample Citizen Review Panel First Meeting “Working” Agenda	34
	Citizen Review Panel Survey	37
	Citizen Review Panel Member Feedback Survey	38
8	<i>Technical Assistance and Contact Information</i>	43
	Index	45

1 Background and History of the Citizen Review Panel

The Federal Child Abuse Prevention and Treatment Act (CAPTA) is the enabling legislation for Citizen Review Panels (CRPs). CAPTA allows the Federal government to provide leadership and assist communities in their child and family protection efforts by:

- promoting coordinated planning among all levels of government;
- generating and sharing knowledge relevant to child and family protection, including the development of models for service delivery
- strengthening the capacity of States to assist communities
- allocating financial resources to assist States in implementing community plans
- helping communities to carry out their child and family protection plans by promoting the competence of professional, paraprofessional, and volunteer resources; and
- providing leadership to end the abuse and neglect of the nation's children and youth.

CAPTA

The CAPTA was first passed into law in 1974—Public Law 93-247, and re-authorized in 1978, 1984, 1988, 1992, 1996, and most recently in 2003 as Keeping Children and Families Safe Act of 2003 (P.L. 108-36). Amendments have been made to expand and refine the law with each re-

authorization. This most recent CAPTA legislation can be found at [//www.acf.hhs.gov/programs/cb/laws/capta03/capta_manual.pdf](http://www.acf.hhs.gov/programs/cb/laws/capta03/capta_manual.pdf).

When the Act was amended in 1996, each state, in order to receive funding under the Child Abuse and Neglect Prevention and Treatment State Grants Program, was required to establish at least three citizen review panels by July of 1999. Federal law authorizes these panels to evaluate the policies, procedures, and practices of State and local child welfare agencies.

The panels evaluate the extent to which these agencies are effectively discharging their child protection responsibilities in accordance with the State's child protective services system plan, which is required for funding under the CAPTA, and the specific child protection standards that are contained in the CAPTA. Panels may review any other criteria that they consider important to ensure the protection of children including the extent to which the State child protective services system is coordinated with the title IV-E foster care and adoption assistance programs of the Social Security Act, and the child fatalities and near fatalities in the State.

Federal Requirements

In California, meeting these federal requirements means that the State's local CRPs will evaluate the activities of the child protective services system in their respective counties in light of:

- The State's CAPTA Plan (Child Abuse Prevention)
- The State's Child and Family Services IV-B and IV-E Plans (Child Welfare Services, Foster Care and Adoptions) and
- Local goals and objectives for county child protection, foster care and adoption systems

The panels may also review the system's coordination with Child Death Review Teams, review child fatalities and near fatalities and evaluate other areas they deem relevant.

Since 1999, there have been panels in at least three counties at all times. Counties that have operated CRPs are Alameda, Kern, Napa, Placer, and San Mateo.

The Child Welfare Services Stakeholders which were convened in 1999 to review the existing CWS system and make recommendations for its improvement fulfilled the function of a Statewide CRP from May of 1999 to fall of 2003. This group has been succeeded by a Statewide Citizen Review Panel which is formerly named as such.

Citizen Review Panels provide an opportunity for community members to play an integral role in insuring that their counties and the State are meeting the goal of protecting children from abuse and neglect. When established, panels have the capacity to promote creative problem solving with the involvement of community members who represent a variety of disciplines and perspectives. In addition, panels have the potential to bring about system change as they recommend needed changes, high-

light successes and encourage creative collaborations among child welfare systems, other service delivery systems and community members.

2 Understanding the Child Welfare Services System in California

Given the responsibility that panels have to evaluate the child welfare services system and to make recommendations for its improvement, it is essential that panel members become familiar with county child welfare systems in general, their specific county system and the State's child welfare system.

It is recommended by OCAP that the counties utilize the publication "Understanding the Child Welfare System in California: A Primer for Service Providers and Policymakers," as a training tool. This primer was developed by the California Center for Research on Women and Families, as part of the CalWORKs/Child Welfare Partnership Project,

and was funded by the Zellerbach Foundation. The primer is divided into the eight chapters listed in the table below. These chapters can be grouped into modules for training purposes.

It is recommended that people who are knowledgeable in the policies, practices, and procedures of the child welfare services agency, the courts, and programs such as mental health, substance abuse, CalWORKs, etc. be present at relevant training sessions to give short talks that can enhance the material in the Primer and to answer questions.

The Child Welfare System Federal, State and County Government	Out of Home Providers Kinship Care & Foster Care Placements
Components of the County Child Welfare Agency Emergency Response Family Maintenance, Family Reunification Permanent Placement	Funding the Child Welfare System Title IV-E, Title IV-B, Title XIX Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) Funding Streams
Juvenile Dependency Court	Need for Coordination CalWORKs Substance Abuse Health Care Domestic Violence Mental Health Education
Children in the Child Welfare System Reasons for Child Welfare System Involvement Children Receiving Services Children in Foster Care	Key Issues: 2002 and beyond Administration and Practice Staffing issues Reporting and Information Systems Promising Practices Adoption Over-representation of African-Americans in the Child Welfare System Accountability Transracial Adoption Flexible Funding/Foster Family Shortage Service System Coordination Transition age Youth Prevention Programs

Laws and Regulations Pertaining to the Child Welfare Services System

The laws and regulations listed in the table below can be used to support the training and development of the panel as it begins the review of a specific program, function, or issue.

When reviewing the policies, practices, and procedures of the local CWS agency, panels will need to know which of these is prescribed by law or regulation and as a result must be implemented by the County. It is important to note that the laws and regulations establish the framework for child welfare services in the State since they require the Counties to ensure that they deliver certain services.

Welfare and Institutions Code

Division 1 Chapter 1

Addresses Court Appointed Special Advocates

Division 2 Wards of the Juvenile Court and Juvenile Court Law includes laws that pertain to

- ◆ dependency hearings,
- ◆ transfer of cases between counties,
- ◆ modification of Juvenile Court judgments and orders,
- ◆ appeals by minors,
- ◆ records pertaining to wards of the court and dependent children,
- ◆ home supervision,
- ◆ wards and dependent children and juvenile halls, and
- ◆ the support of wards and dependent children

Division 9, Parts 2 and 3 address:

- ◆ The Administration of Public Social Services,
- ◆ The confidentiality of public records, and
- ◆ Aid to Families with Dependent Children Foster Care

Division 9 Part 4 Chapters 1-3 Address services for children and includes Chapters on:

- ◆ Foster Care Placement,
- ◆ County Adoption Agencies,
- ◆ Aid for Adoption of Children,
- ◆ State Adoption Services,
- ◆ Adoption of Alcohol and Drug-Exposed and HIV Positive Children,
- ◆ Maternity Care for Minors,
- ◆ The Foster Care Ombudsman Program,
- ◆ Interstate Adoption Assistance Agreements,
- ◆ The Child Welfare Training Program and Advisory Board, and
- ◆ Funding for the Child Welfare Training Program.

Division 9, Part 4, Chapter 5 State Child Welfare Services System includes the following topics:

- ◆ Family reunification, maintenance, long-term placement,
- ◆ Foster placement, permanent placement,
- ◆ Case plans,
- ◆ Foster care public health nurses,
- ◆ The Child Welfare Services Case Management System,
- ◆ Administrative review of foster care placements,
- ◆ The initial intake and assessment of risk,
- ◆ Certification by the County of child welfare services plans,
- ◆ Placement options,
- ◆ Criminal history information,
- ◆ Therapeutic Day Services,
- ◆ Cultural and Religious Practices and Beliefs,
- ◆ Motions to remove social workers from dependency hearings,
- ◆ Treatment of children by spiritual means,
- ◆ Social worker probation officer visits,
- ◆ Criteria for foster care home studies,
- ◆ Long-term foster care for adolescents, and
- ◆ Pregnancy prevention information

Division 9, Part 6, Chapter 11

Contains State law that pertains to citizen review panels

Health and Safety Code

Division 2 Chapter 3 contains provisions for:

- ◆ The Foster Home and Small Family Home Insurance Fund
- ◆ Foster Parent Training
- ◆ Authority for foster parents to give same legal consent as parents and exceptions to this

Penal Code

Part 4, Title 1, Chapter 2 contains the:

- ◆ Child Abuse and Neglect Reporting Act

For more laws that govern the systems that address California's juveniles, panels should have access to "California Juvenile Laws and Rules," a publication from West Law (www.westlaw.com or 1-800-733-2889.) Panels may want to check with county legal offices; county counsel, the district attorney, etc. or with legal staff of the CWS agency to see if this publication is available before purchasing it from West Law.

Child Welfare Services Manual

Division 31

The manual is made available by the California Department of Social Services (CDSS) and contains policies and procedures for employees and staff who work in the child welfare system. The manual consists of comprehensive and detailed guidelines for the child protective services system.

The manual describes the State of California's

general county requirements in the administration of child welfare services. It describes its intake procedures, assessment and case planning process, how services are delivered, and frequency of contact by the social worker with children, parents, care providers, and other service providers, as well as contact by the parents and grandparents with the child. The manual also explains its requirements for placement of children as well as other special requirements regarding reporting of child abuse, out-of-county placement, the Interstate Compact on the Placement of Children (ICPC), the Indian Child Welfare Act (ICWA) provisions, Independent Living Programs (ILP), and Minor Parent Services (MPS).

The entire manual can be reviewed by using the following link, http://www.dss.cahwnet.gov/ord/CDSSManual_240.htm, then scroll down to the Child Welfare Services Manual, Division 31 section.

The table below lists the chapter headings in the manual.

The Child Welfare Services System in Transition

Within the past decade the focus of the Child Welfare Services system has expanded from a system concerned largely with child safety to one that encompasses other positive outcomes for children and their families. These outcomes are reflected in a vision statement developed by California’s Child Welfare Services Stakeholder’s Group: “Every Child in California lives in a safe, stable, permanent home nurtured by healthy families in strong communities.”

Beginning in 1999, California’s Child Welfare Services System has been the focus of three initiatives which are designed to increase its effectiveness and to transform it from a system driven by processes to one driven by outcomes. These three processes are:

General Requirements	Chapter 31-001
This section covers Definitions, Support Activities, Family Maintenance, Reunification, and Permanent Placement Services, Reviews, and Grievance Procedures	
Intake	Chapter 31-100
This section covers Emergency Response Protocol, Investigations, Law Enforcement Assistance, and Removal of Children	
Assessment and Case Plan	Chapter 31-200
This section covers the planning process, case time frames, and Independent Living Plans	
Service Delivery	Chapter 31-300
Use of volunteers, Social Worker (SW) responsibility, Service Funded Activities, SW contacts with children, parent/guardians, Out-of-Home Care providers, other service providers, and parent/guardian and grandparent contact with children.	
Placement	Chapter 31-400
This section covers SW responsibility for temporary, emergency, foster care, permanent, and other placements.	
Special Requirements	Chapter 31-500
This section covers abuse and neglect reporting, out of County placement, Interstate Compact on the Placement of Children (ICPC), Indian Child Welfare Act (ICWA), Independent Living Program (ILP), and Minor Parent Services (MPS).	

◆ **The Child Welfare Services Stakeholders Group**

The Child Welfare Services Stakeholders Group consists of 60 diverse stakeholders who represented all levels of government, child welfare nonprofits, foundations, and child welfare employee associations. For three years, the Stakeholders examined the child welfare system in California and made recommendations for the improvement of that system in a series of reports and in a final report.

◆ **The Federal Child and Family Services Review**

The 1994 amendments to the Social Security Act authorized the Department of Health and Human Services to review the child and family services programs of the States in order to ensure compliance with State plan requirements that are contained in titles IV-B (Child Welfare Services) and IV-E (Foster Care and Adoption). These reviews cover child protective services, foster care, adoption, family preservation, family support and independent living. They focus upon the quality of the services delivered to children and families at risk and the outcomes associated with the services that are provided. Program strengths are identified as are the areas that can be improved. The states are required to submit plans to the federal government that outline the measures to be taken in terms of program improvement. These are referred to as Program Improvement Plans (PIPs).

◆ **The AB 636 Outcomes and Accountability System**

The recommendations and outcomes of these processes were integrated into the States' Title IV-B Child and Family Services Plan for 2005-

2009 and into the State's Program Improvement Plan which is required by the Federal Review.

The Program Improvement Plan outlines the steps that the State and the counties will take to achieve certain numerical goals. These numerical goals are designed to bring the State in line with national standards and the Counties in line with both national and State standards. See http://www.dss.cahwnet.gov/cfsr/california_1435.htm.

It is important to introduce panel members to the IV-B plan. Since it is a large comprehensive document, panels may want to focus upon the first twenty-eight pages of this document as these pages contain the Vision Statement, the Executive Summary, and the Title IV-B Plan goals and objectives.

For the link to the Title IV-B plan go to: <http://www.childsworld.ca.gov>

Both the IV-B Plan and the PIP address outcomes which would enhance the quality of life for families in the child welfare services system. The California Department of Social Services encourages panels for focus upon these outcomes in their review processes.

3 CRP Organizations and Operations

Development of the Citizen Review Panel regarding membership and operational structure is an integral component of the CRP. Members recruited should be made aware that as a CRP member they will be engaging in a variety of review activities that will provide the entire panel with a framework with which to make recommendations at the State and County levels regarding CWS system improvements.

Although the CRP as a whole is required to meet at least 10 times per year, current CRP panels report that members spend between 10 and 20 hours per month engaging in review activities. This translates to a time commitment that new panel members must be willing to make.

The development of the panel should take no more than 4 weeks. Remember, within the first year of funding, it is required that the panel engage in review activities and be prepared to make recommendations to the State and County at the end of the first year, therefore, engaging in cumbersome committee operational development is counterproductive to being able to engage in the core work activities of the panel.

The following operational structures below are provided ONLY as a guide or template to the formation of a new CRP. It is not necessary that a panel have by-laws etc, however, we recognize that each County is unique and some may want to include a more formal type of governance.

Citizen Review Panel Development-Organization and Operations

◆ **Composition of the panel**

Recruitment/selection of panel members
OCAP recommends a panel of 15 members. This allows for the ability to break out in smaller workgroups that will engage in review activities.

◆ **Who should be on a Citizen Review Panel?**

The CAPTA states that each panel is to be composed of “volunteer members who are broadly representative of the community, in which the panel is established, including members who have expertise in the prevention and treatment of child abuse and neglect.” Panel membership may include but is not limited to:

- Former consumers of services
- Foster parents
- Community residents and leaders
- Court Appointed Special Advocates (CASA)
- Officers of the court (children’s attorneys, guardian ad-litem, judges)
- Law enforcement personnel

- Health and mental health professionals
- Substance abuse prevention and treatment professionals
- Elementary and secondary education representatives
- Higher education representatives
- Local child welfare agency professionals
- Community based organization personnel
- Mandated reporters
- Tribal government representatives
- Other persons with an interest in Child Welfare Services

The composition of the Citizen Review Panel needs to reflect the community at large regarding ethnicity and geographic distribution as well members of the Community that are involved with services: parents, foster parents, public partners and private partners.

When determining the operational structure of the panel, the following outline may be used to develop the process.

◆ Formalizing the panel structure:

Developing By-laws: Formal by-laws are optional. Many panels are operating within an informal structure that outlines how decisions are made, attendance requirements, terms of panel members etc.

Decision making process: The development of the decision making process is an important underpinning for the panels. Decision by consensus or by formal vote, etc are methods by which your panel may determine how decisions will be made.

Term of Office and Attendance requirements: It is important that you establish terms of office for panel members: they may serve a year or two or

perhaps three or five year terms. Members may participate in a CRP workgroup as well as attend general meetings. New panel members must be informed of and “sign off” on general meeting and workgroup attendance requirements. Attendance at meetings should be monitored and a follow up system must be in place.

Confidentiality agreements are a requirement of CRP operations. Each County has the ability to draft a confidentiality statement that is agreed upon by the CWS representatives and County Counsel. Each CRP member is required to sign a Confidentiality Statement, and these must be kept on file. A sample Confidentiality Statement can be found in the Sample Form Chapter of this manual.

Formalizing participant’s roles within the CRP structure is important for the smooth facilitation of the process. Roles within the committee may include:

- Facilitator (CRP Chair)
- Minute taker: Responsible for minute taking and distribution
- Membership Coordinator: Responsible for attendance monitoring and follow up

Developing of lines of responsibility and communication within the CRP structure to outside entities such as the OCAP State Contact and/or Technical Assistant Consultant should be included in the operational agreements of the committee.

Familiarizing the panel with and incorporating local CWS vision, mission and values into work plan must be discussed.

Identifying training needs of panel members as related to the work plan objectives is also important. This may be the role of the facilitator, or if the panel has been divided into workgroups, the

workgroup chair.

Given the specific questions the panel is attempting to answer regarding CWS systems, evaluation tools may need to be developed to support the activity. These tools may include:

- Case file reading tool
- Focus group questions
- Interview questions
- Data highlights and comparisons

NOTE: For all of the tasks above, it is important for the panel to establish action steps, assign specific tasks to specific members, and plan for regular updates.

4 CRP Review Process

Once the composition and operational structure of the panel has been determined... it's time to get to work!!!

Development of a time frame of activities can be a useful tool in keeping the panel and/or workgroups on task. The time frame can be built around the OCAP reporting structure. This will ensure that CRP activities are in alignment with the OCAP time frames and reporting structures.

In order to facilitate the review process, the panel must agree upon the question or questions they are trying to answer regarding the CWS System and services provided. Once the panel has decided upon their objectives, a variety of review strategies may be used, depending upon the question(s).

It is recommended that given the span of activities, the CRP divide into workgroups that meet as often as needed to facilitate the determined review activities.

We have included the "CRP Quick Start Process" in this section. In addition below is an outline of the various review activities that may be utilized by the panel.

Core Components of the Review Process:

Follow the identified work plan objectives, set priorities: as a committee, it is important that all members of the CRP are familiar with the work plan objectives (question(s) you want answered)

before engaging in determining the review activities. The objectives must be in line with the Counties Mission, Vision and Values.

Develop review activities: Components of reviews may include:

Current work practices: This process reviews the current practices that a Social Worker or Case Manager engages in on a daily basis in the provision of specific services. These activities are often outlined in policy and procedure. Current work practices may be observed by a CRP member then compared to written policy/protocol. In addition, the observation of work practices allows the CRP member to understand the service and work involved.

Case File Reviews: Roughly 10 percent of the cases that are impacted by the specific outcomes are to be reviewed. The case file review looks at specific information within the file. It is strongly recommended that "reading tools" are utilized when reviewing case files. The specificity of the tools allows the CRP member to focus on exactly what they need to, and not get distracted with the enormity of the case file.

Focus groups: Focus groups are a powerful means of evaluating services, however, they can be highly time consuming. Basically focus groups are group interviews regarding an identified issue with 6-10 people within the same group.

Selected interviews: Once the CRP has determined the systems question(s) to be answered, interview activities may be engaged in to capture information necessary to answer the question. Interviewees may include service providers, consumers, Social Workers etc. Specific interview questions must be utilized for consistency of process.

Data review: Reviewing the data specific to the objective and/or outcomes can be an important part of the review process. Trend data as well as actual time data may be utilized. Data review should include data within the CRP County as compared to data from other counties.

Policy and Procedure Review: When making recommendations for change, engaging in a Policy and Procedure review can be one of the most effective activities. When reviewing the Policies and Procedures that govern service delivery, a CRP member will gain a better understanding of the CWS system. In addition, in order to facilitate change at the State level, we must understand the governing regulations as they are applied.

Current Promising Practice and Best Practice Review: An understanding of current promising practices can help reviewers to contextualize their evaluations and inform their recommendations. See Chapter 5.

Consumer/Provider Input Surveys: Surveys are often a valuable tool in determining actual service delivery practice in comparison with Policy and Protocol. Surveys may include, but are not limited to:

- CWS provider surveys
- CWS consumer surveys

Soliciting feedback from the public sector can be facilitated by either:

Soliciting feedback prior to the publication of the CRP’s outcomes and recommendations- by doing

this public input may be used in determining outcome decisions

Or

Soliciting feedback after the publication of outcomes and recommendations- this feedback then can be utilized in determining next years work plan.

Report Dissemination: The CRP must distribute its findings and recommendations to the local CWS agency and to the State Department of Social Services. It should consider sending a copy of these findings and recommendations to the Board of Supervisors. When sent to the State Department of Social Services, findings and recommendations should be included as part of the panel’s annual report. The panel should determine how the report will be distributed to others. There may be a direct mailing or e-mail list of interested organizations and individuals. It is strongly suggested that the panel post the report on the county’s web page.

NOTE: For all the tasks above, it is important for the panel to establish activity assignments and timeline for completion that coincides with the OCAP CRP reporting process.

As part of the review process panels will evaluate the policies, practices, and procedures of the CWS agency. It is important for panel members to become familiar with the current practice that informs their county CWS system.

Current practices are designed to ensure that children are safe, that they are returned to their parents within a certain time frame, if the parent(s) completes a court approved plan, or arrangements are made for adoption or permanency if this is not possible.

CRP Quick Start Process

_____ County
Citizen Review Panel
Quick Start Process

Based upon a 10-meeting-a-year calendar of each County's full CRP panel, with 2 months being dark for holidays, vacations etc. the following activities must be completed. It is strongly suggested, that once Steps 1-3A are completed, that each of the review committees determine the necessary meeting schedule to accomplish their work.

Newly funded panels only
Panel Organization Activities

** If panel is on-going skip to Step 1 of Review Activities*

Review Activities

Step 1:

Counties will define the issue that the panel will examine in terms of a question(s). Examples of such questions are:

- ◆ What factors prevent all foster children who are eligible for Independent Living Services from receiving them? What changes can be made to increase the number of children who receive independent living services?
- ◆ What factors contribute to multiple placements in foster care? What can be done to decrease the number of multiple placements?
- ◆ What factors contribute to the lack of foster homes? What are the policies, practices and procedures that contribute to the lack of foster homes? What are the best practices with regard to the recruitment and retention of foster homes?

To define the issue, the county liaison and the panel chairperson should review the issues that are contained in the panel's scope of work and/or SIP and then develop the relevant questions. The panel members should be contacted by e-mail or phone (if no e-mail is available) and asked to rank each question. The question with the highest rank will be one with which the panel will proceed. If there are major objections to the selection of this question, then proceed to the next question. This process should take place between August 1st and August 12.

Step 2:

Schedule a “Kick Off” Meeting. Panel members can be informed before a “kick-off” meeting of the question that will be addressed.

Determine the programs, the policies, the practices and the procedures that will need to be addressed in order to answer your question. Utilizing independent living programs as an example, your planning matrix could look like this:

Independent Living	Federal Policies	State Policies	County (CWS, other agencies) and CBO Policies	County (CWS, other agencies) and CBO Practices	County (CWS and other agencies) CBO Procedures
Eligibility					
Recruitment					
Acceptance					
Retention					

The panel could choose to focus solely upon eligibility, recruitment, acceptance or retention or it could choose to look at all five or these factors for one or more of its independent living programs.

Panel liaison and other county staff can spend approximately 2-3 weeks developing the approach to be taken. At the kick-off meeting, they can handout a table or a matrix that outlines what will be reviewed.

Step 3:

- A. Determine how you will organize your panel to conduct the review. We suggest that you utilize a committee approach since this would permit your panel to conduct activities simultaneously and utilize the expertise of panel members in a more effective manner. We suggest that the panel have three to four committees that would focus on review strategies selected, i.e.:
 - ◆ Examine any existing policies, practices, and procedures of the federal, state, county, and non-profit entities that impact the question. (This committee would address program structure and implementation)
 - ◆ Examine the best practices that pertain to the area of CWS policies, practices, procedures, and programs that are under scrutiny (This committee would address program structure and implementation)

- ◆ Do file reviews to determine how these policies, practices and procedures are implemented and how they impact clients (This committee would address the impact of policies, practices, procedures, and programs on clients)
- ◆ Interview CWS workers, nonprofit staff and the staff of other agencies involved in the implementation of the policies, practices, and procedures (This committee would address the impact of policies, practices, procedures, and programs on clients)
- ◆ These committees will not operate in total independence of each other. It should be noted that the committees will need to share information and get feedback from one another while they are in the data gathering phase.

B. Commence review process

Step 4:

Develop findings. When the committees end their initial work, they should meet to review their findings and to develop a joint statement of findings. Facilitate acquiring public input per written work plan.

The committees should be formed at the “kick-off” meeting. Committee members should be given all relevant materials to review prior to their first meeting.

Step 5:

Develop and disseminate the final findings and the recommendations to the Board of Supervisors, and/or the local CWS agency. This should be a process for the entire panel as the findings from all review committees will be combined to develop a final set of findings. Once this is completed recommendations can be developed for both county and state government.

Step 6:

Incorporate findings and recommendations into annual report and submit it to the State Dept. of Social Services

Next steps:

How will your panel proceed? Will it continue to do more research on the question that has been selected or will it work on another issue? Develop your next work plan.

5 Current, Promising and Best Practices

Although there are outcomes associated with current practices, measuring the effectiveness of existing systems is based largely upon a process approach; i.e., certain activities are carried out within certain time frame and evaluation processes focus upon whether the county complies with the laws and regulations. For example children must be reunified or prepared for permanency within a certain time frames and the social worker must make a certain number of visits within a certain time frame. If these and similar measures are met then the CWS agency is deemed to be in compliance with the laws and regulations that govern it.

In recent years, the emphasis in child welfare services has shifted to one of positive outcomes for children and families. In the broadest sense positive outcomes has meant that when possible children:

- ◆ Remain with their parents, when it is safe to do so and both the parents and children receive services that permit them to heal and allow the parents to develop positive skills and behaviors,
- ◆ Are reunited with their families when the circumstances dictate that separation is necessary. Reunification can happen after the families have been provided with the services necessary to strengthen family bonds and break the cycle of abuse and neglect. It should be noted that certain types of abuse and neglect preclude parents from being reunited with their children.
- ◆ Are adopted in instances where parental rights

are terminated and long-term stable placement with kin is not possible

- ◆ Children are placed with kin or in foster or group homes on permanent basis when reunification with the parents is not possible and adoption is not an option. They are not moved from home to home or from institution to institution; their kinship, foster, or group placement is long-term and stable.
- ◆ Children age out of group homes and foster care with the skills necessary to become productive citizens.

Focusing upon these outcomes has led to the implementation of interventions that are designed to achieve them.

Best practices are those that have undergone research and evaluation and have been shown to produce the intended results.

Promising practices have not undergone a rigorous research and evaluation; however they do show promise and are candidates for further research.

Current practices may include best practices. For example, any county policy that encourages sibling groups to be placed together, so as to spare the children the loss of sibling contact is implementing a best practice. Some of the newer best practices may not have made their way into the State and local CWS systems due to their newness and due to resource limitations. Also, policy makers may need

time to gauge the impact of a given practice upon the system as a whole.

When evaluating the current practices of the CWS agency to determine if a CRP recommendation should be incorporated as a current Best Practice, it is important to consider the resource and fiscal implications of the recommendation.

Current Practices

To become better acquainted with current social work practice in child welfare services, panel members can review the training curriculum for California Social Workers that is offered through the California Social Work Education Center (CalSWEC) which is located at the University of California at Berkeley. This training is referred to as the “Standardized Core Training”. The topics covered by the “Core Training” are located in the Resource Chapter.

Facts about the Standardized Core Training:

History

AB 2779, Aroner (1998) appropriated general fund dollars to develop a standardized training curriculum for Child Welfare Workers. AB 2779 required the curriculum to build upon current works and be a collaborative effort between the County Welfare Directors Association (CWDA), California Social Work Education Center (CalSWEC), the Regional Training Academies, and the California Department of Social Services (CDSS).

Advisory Committee

CalSWEC convened an advisory committee beginning in August 1999. The committee consists of representatives from CDSS, CalSWEC, CWDA, the Regional Training Academies, county child welfare training management, child welfare super-

visory and line staff, child welfare consumers, foster parents, and labor unions.

Goal

The goal of the Standardized Core Curriculum Project is to ensure that each child welfare worker in California is provided with a competency-based, comprehensive training before he or she assumes an independent case load.

Benefits

The Standardized Core Curriculum will:

- ◆ Provide more comprehensive, coordinated training throughout California.
- ◆ Provide more assurance of the skill levels of incoming workers.
- ◆ Assist in recruitment and retention of new workers.
- ◆ Improve current region-specific training.
- ◆ Provide more forums for collaboration between regions and counties.
- ◆ Provide an opportunity for reduced training for cross-county transfers, thus reducing costs.
- ◆ Enhance evaluation of training to determine what works best for social workers and clients.

Curriculum Product

The standardized curriculum, which is based upon the CalSWEC competencies for public child welfare workers, consists of eight major content areas:

- ◆ Primary Child Welfare Skills
- ◆ Social Work Skills
- ◆ Human Behavior
- ◆ Workplace Management
- ◆ Legal Processes
- ◆ Cultural Competence*
- ◆ Social Work Values and Ethics*
- ◆ Interdisciplinary Practice*

*These content areas are thematic and covered throughout the curriculum.

Promising Practices

Through research, program evaluation, and consensus building, child welfare leaders continue to identify and test innovative and effective practices that best serve their clients. Some of these practices are discussed below.

Differential Response

This is a new Emergency Response (ER) method of responding to reports made to county child abuse Hotlines. It is a safety, fact-finding, and family assessment approach that seeks to engage families in a less adversarial process, eliminating current practice that requires a substantiation of allegation in order to qualify for services that could help to stabilize the family and promote safety, permanence, and well-being for children. As the name implies, there can be a range of options available based on a family's unique situation, ranging from referrals to community services to voluntary Family Maintenance to court-ordered services.

Structured Decision Making and the Comprehensive Assessment Tool

This model provides social workers with a research-based, standardized risk assessment tool to increase reliability and accountability during the intake and investigation process. Structured Decision Making (SDM) uses clearly defined standards and instruments for immediate, reliable, and long-term safety decisions. In California, CDSS pilot tested SDM in 15 counties and it is now ready for use by all counties. Currently, there is a pilot project involving the Comprehensive Assessment Tool (CAT), which is another research-based, standardized risk assessment tool. If the pilot is successful, counties will have the option of choosing either SDM or CAT as their risk assessment tool.

Cultural Competence

California's County child welfare agencies are required by CDSS to provide cultural awareness

training for all employees who have contact with the public. Given the steadily expanding diversity in our state, such training is intended to promote the growth and support of healthy cultural identity in families, increase intercultural respect and rapport, and support the services for children and families of diverse backgrounds in a fair and culturally relevant manner. Foster families caring for a child from a different ethnic or cultural group also benefit from having skills to appreciate and respond to diversity in their foster children; deal with racist attitudes, judgments and cultural stereotypes from others; and help their children deal with discrimination.

Family Group Decision Making

This approach to case planning is intended to strengthen the potential of the family to function effectively and responsibly. Families participate as experts and partners in designing their own individualized, culturally responsive, and relevant services, with links to diverse, comprehensive, and community-based networks of resources and support.

Family to Family

This Annie E. Casey Foundation initiative is being tested in many communities across the U.S., including a number of counties in California. This approach works to better screen children being considered for removal from home; bring children in congregate or institutional care back to their neighborhoods by investing in the capacity of their communities; and involve foster families as team members in efforts to reunify families.

Permanency Planning Mediation

This mediation approach can be offered to a birth family when services to reunify the family are terminated and before any court action to terminate parental rights begins. The birth family is involved in creating a permanency plan for their child.

6 CRP Resources

Current Practices

Standardized Core Training

The “Standardized Core Training,” which is used to train social workers in existing child welfare social work practice, is on-line and it can be accessed at: <http://calswec.berkeley.edu/CalSWEC/Standard-CoreProjectHome.html>

Topics Covered by the Standardized Core Training

- ◆ Fundamental Issues in Public Child Welfare
- ◆ Child Welfare Practice in a Multi-Cultural Environment
- ◆ Identifying Issues in Child Maltreatment: Physical Abuse, Neglect, and Emotional Abuse
- ◆ Child Sexual Abuse
- ◆ Domestic Violence and CWS
- ◆ Special Issues for Families in Need of Child Welfare Services: Substance Abuse
- ◆ Special Issues for Families in Need of Child Welfare Services: Mental Health and Mental Illness
- ◆ Human Development: Children, Youth, and Adult Development and the Effects of Child Maltreatment on Human Development
- ◆ Conducting Interviews
- ◆ Crisis Intervention
- ◆ Working Effectively with Families

- ◆ Risk and Safety Assessments
- ◆ Family Needs Assessment
- ◆ Case Planning and Case Management
- ◆ Court Procedures
- ◆ Additional Court Procedures
- ◆ Documentation and Writing Skills for Legal Reports
- ◆ Time Management
- ◆ Worker Safety
- ◆ Stress Management
- ◆ The Issues of Placement in Child Welfare

California Social Work Education Center
(CalSWEC)
120 Haviland Hall
School of Social Welfare
University of California, Berkeley
Berkeley, CA 94720-7400
Phone: 510-642-9272
Fax: 510-642-8573
<http://calswec.berkeley.edu>

Promising Practices and Best Practices

The report “Promising Bay Area Practices for the Redesign of Child Welfare Services” has been developed by the Bay Area Social Services Consortium and it catalogues all the promising practices that are being implemented in the Bay Area Counties of Alameda, Contra Costa, Marin, Monterey, Napa, San Francisco, San Mateo, Santa Clara, Santa Cruz, Solano, and Sonoma. The promising practices addressed in this report are shown in the table below.

<p>Early Intervention and Prevention</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Neighborhood/School-linked Services Early Intervention Specialist Family Services Coordinator Family Strength-Based Services Outstationed Social Worker CalWORKs Access Team Early Intervention &Week-end Diversion Program Family Resource Center Living Without Violence Maternal-Child Health Napa’s Future Peninsula Partnership Program Promoting Safe & Stable Families (PSSF) Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) I Services to Enhance Early Development Preventive Funds Therapeutic Child Care Welcome Baby Home 	<p>Court Services</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Juvenile Court Task Force Juvenile Mediation Program Beyond the Bench System of Care Concurrent Planning-Review, Assess, Plan Meeting Peninsula Conflict Resolution Center Comprehensive Initial 	<p>Family Reunification Services</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Options for Recovery System of Care Assessments Child Health and Disability Prevention (CHDP) Substance Abuse Recovery Management System Family-to-Family Visitation Center Concurrent Planning Resource & Intensive Services Committee Substance Abuse Specialist 	<p>Permanency (Long-term Placement)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Placement Assistance Team Project Destiny Long-term Care Program Annual Adoption Day Group Home Placements Foster Parent Liaison Concurrent Support Group Post-Adoption Education Liaison Group Home Liaison Worker Interagency Placement and Permanency Reviews Gang Diversion Youth Group Families Mentoring Families
<p>Emergency Response</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Assessment Center Children’s Interview Center Receiving Centers Crisis Nurseries The Southeast Program Child Protection Center Multi-disciplinary Teams (MDTs) Motel Voucher Program Transitional Housing Education Rights Program Forum Redwood Children’s Center 	<p>Placement (Kinship)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Kinship Support Services Program Kinship Care Program KSSP Family Ties Relative & Identified Placement Emergency Fund Napa Valley College Kinship Care Education Kinship Support Network Relative Assessment Team Grandparents Resource Center Relative Placement Sibling Support Program 	<p>Family Maintenance</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Another Road to Safety Shared Family Care Family Preservation Family Conference Family Network Parents as Teacher Matrix Napa Valley CalWORKs Children’s Faith Initiative Incarcerated Parent-Child Welfare Integrated Family Support Initiative (IFSI) Family Service Agency Collaboration IFSI Program 	<p>Self-Sufficiency Services for Youth</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Independent Living Skills Program Transitional Housing Building Foundations 4 Success Supportive Living Model Passages Program

System-Wide and Other Services

Interagency Services Unit; Child Abuse Prevention Council; Quality Assurance; Death Review; District Dispo Review Team; Best Friends Fund; Citizen Review Panels; Continuous Quality Improvement Plan; Ombudsperson Services; Ruth E. Smith Demonstration Project; Family & Community Advisory Committee Report; Complaint Resolution Process; Community Liaison; Family Conference Institute; Family, Youth and Children's Partnership; Case Management Council

- ◆ The National Clearinghouse on Child Abuse and Neglect Information of the Administration for Children and Families of the US Department of Health and Human Services has several web sites devoted to best and promising practices. There is the Promising Practices Quicklinks at <http://nccanch.acf.hhs.gov/profess/promising/morepromise.cfm> which directs readers to articles on best and promising practices that are on the web sites of the Administration for Children and other organizations.
- ◆ The Clearinghouse has a web site of publications on promising practices. The publications on the web site can be viewed, printed and ordered. Some of the publications address practices that can be adopted by Child Welfare Services Agencies while others address evaluative studies. This web site can be accessed at <http://nccanch.acf.hhs.gov/profess/promising/index.cfm>
- ◆ Another web site that can be accessed through the National Clearinghouse on Child Abuse and Neglect Information is devoted to "Emerging Practices in Prevention". The articles on this web site can be viewed, downloaded and duplicated. This web site can be accessed at <http://nccanch.acf.hhs.gov/topics/prevention/emerging/emerging.cfm>
- ◆ The Child Welfare League of America is another source of information on best practices. Under the Child Welfare Section of the web site: <http://www.cwla.org/childwelfare/default.htm> reviews the material in the "publications" and "hot topics" sections of the web pages for child welfare standards, adoption, behavior support and intervention etc.
- ◆ Family Group Decision Making aka Family Group Conferences, Family Unity Meetings Foundation's Team Decision-making model www.aecf.org/initiatives/familytofamily/tools.htm
Team decision making permits families, friends, and others who have an interest in the welfare of a child to participate in decision making and in the development of a support network for a child who is in the Child Welfare Services System.
- ◆ North Carolina State University's Family Centered Meetings Project
<http://social.chass.ncsu.edu/jpennell/fgdm/bibliog.htm>
More on the ways to work with the process and the participants in team decision making processes.
- ◆ Family group decision-making bibliography <http://social.chass.ncsu.edu/jpennell/fgdm/bibliog.htm> - A bibliography on team decision making
- ◆ Family To Family (from the Annie E. Casey Foundation)
<http://www.aecf.org/initiatives/familytofamily/>
Team Decision making is one of the cornerstones of the Family to Family Initiative.

Statistical Data Support

Child Welfare Services (CWS/CMS) Reports

<http://cssr.berkeley.edu/CWSCMSReports/>

On this web site are:

- ◆ An index of all reports relevant to the California Child and Family Services Review (C-CFSR) and the Family to Family Initiative
- ◆ Links also indicate outcome measures for your reference.
- ◆ Reports by county including:

Cohorts - These entry cohort reports are longitudinal analyses of children entering child welfare supervised foster care for the first time.

Cohort dynamics - These reports include entry and/or exit cohorts as well as other data beyond the first entry cohorts.

Point-in-time - These reports are point-in-time counts of total child welfare case loads, child welfare and probation supervised foster care. They cover children who are in foster care, or open cases.

Referrals - These reports describe unduplicated counts of children per year who have been identified as a victim in a child abuse referral. Children who have more than one referral are categorized according to the most severe disposition during the year.

7 Sample Forms

CRP Organization and Operations

ABC County Department of Human Services

As an employee or volunteer in a Human Services Agency it is important to foster confidence in all clients regarding the security and privacy of all information obtained in the course of providing services.

The basic guideline of confidentiality is that all information and records obtained in the course of providing services to any client is confidential. Obviously, such information is not “gossip” material, and must not be shared with family, friends, or acquaintances. Clients must not be addressed in public as applicants or recipients of services. Case files must be handled discreetly and paperwork should be kept out of view of the public. Avoid all conversations about clients and visitors and refrain from any discussion of clients’ cases in off-duty hours. In addition, discretion must be used when discussing individual Citizen Review Panel members and their views.

Each program in the agency has specific guidelines concerning confidentiality. Never give out confidential information unless you are authorized to do so.

Confidential information includes, but is not limited to, names, photographs, written records, tape recording of clients’ voices, or any other means of identifying the client.

I understand that all information I receive about clients in this agency is confidential. I will not discuss any information or release documents about clients without first checking with my superior or advisor.

I understand that I may not release specific client information to anyone without authorization. This includes, but is not limited to the press, clergy, law enforcement, family, friends, and other agency personnel unless they serve on the panel.

I understand that any violation of the above rules shall result in immediate disciplinary action up to and including dismissal of my volunteer status and possible legal action.

Print Name	Signature
Training Date	Signature Date
Witness Signature	

Sample Confidentiality Form

Sample CRP Objectives

“The safety and well-being of all children will never be achieved without everyday citizens integrating themselves into the loop of community service and protection.”

Jennifer Fitchett, M.S.W.

Citizen Review Panel:

The Citizen Review Panel provides opportunities for members of the community to play an integral role in ensuring that the Child Protection Service System is protecting children from abuse and neglect and is meeting the permanency needs of children.

Objectives:

- ◆ To assist the Child Protection Service Agency to evaluate the extent to which the agency is fulfilling its child protection responsibilities in accordance with the state Child Abuse Prevention and Treatment Act (CAPTA) plan.
- ◆ In consultation with the Child Protection Service Agency review other criteria considered important to ensure the protection of children.
- ◆ To prepare and make available to the public an annual report containing a summary of the activities of the panel.
- ◆ To review the consistency of practice and compliance with stated policies.
- ◆ To analyze trends, provide valuable insights that those working within the system may miss and provide feedback on what is or isn't working.
- ◆ To make recommendations for policy changes.
- ◆ To provide outside validation of the achievements of the system and the efforts of the staff.
- ◆ To increase community understanding, ownership and investment in child protection.

- ◆ To promote cooperation among community resources and child protection services.
- ◆ To advocate for needed resources to achieve the protection of children from abuse and neglect and ensure permanent homes for children in a timely manner.

Sample CRP Operating Procedures

Appointment

Members are appointed by the Commissioner of the Department of Human Services and the county board when appropriate.

Terms

Citizen volunteers will serve a term of three calendar years beginning July 1.

Initially, terms will be staggered to ensure continuity of membership.

A panel member may not serve more than two consecutive terms.

Resignation

The Commissioner of the Department of Human Services and the appointing county board will be informed of the resignation of any member.

Members who fail to attend two meetings without notice may be considered to have resigned.

Meetings

Each panel will meet at least once every three months.

Written notice of the place, date and time of the regularly scheduled meetings will be sent to the panel members prior to the meeting.

Meeting agendas will be sent with the meeting notice.

Voting

All members are voting members.

Those from an agency or with advocacy group affiliation vote as individuals and are not presumed to speak for their agencies.

A quorum will consist of a majority of member's presents and voting.

Decisions of the panels will be approved by a simple majority of members present and voting.

Chair

Each panel will elect its own chair who will preside over all meetings.

Each chair will oversee the preparation and make available, on an annual basis, a report containing a summary of the activities of the panel.

A chair will serve a one-year term beginning July 1.

A chair may not serve more than three consecutive terms as chair.

Vice Chair

Each panel will elect its own vice chair who will preside over meetings in the chair's absence.

A vice chair will serve a one year term beginning July 1.

A vice chair may not serve more than three consecutive terms as vice chair.

Steering Committee

The three chairs and three vice chairs will form a steering committee to:

Oversee the publication of the panels' findings and, when appropriate, identify trends and develop recommendations that represent a consensus of the three panels.

Jointly present the panels' reports to the Commissioner of the Department of Human Services, and to the County agencies reviewed by the panels, the County boards, the Governor, the Legislature and the State Supreme Court.

Attendance

Regular attendance at the panel meetings is expected. If a member cannot attend a meeting he or she should notify the Department of Human Services staff person or the panel chair.

Panel members will be reimbursed for expenses reasonably incurred in the performance of their duties on the panel.

Reimbursement expenses other than mileage and parking must have prior approval of the Department of Human Services panel consultant. This may include ongoing training opportunities, copies of records, postage, long distance phone calls, meals and lodging.

By-Laws

We have included a sample of by-laws for your reference. Please note that many CRPs operate without formal by-laws, instead using less formal group agreements and norms. The purpose of including these by-laws is not to be prescriptive but to encourage panels to think through their structure, process and function.

Sample By-Laws of the ABC County Citizen Review Board

Article I Name

Section 1. The name of this organization shall be the ABC County Citizen Review Panel.

Article II Purpose

Section 1. The ABC County Citizen Review Panel is a federally mandated group of professionals and private citizens who are responsible for determining whether state and local agencies are effectively discharging their child protective responsibilities; pursuant to the 1996 amendments to the Child Abuse Protection and Treatment Act and any subsequent amendments. Through a review of policies, procedures, research and case review, the purpose of the ABC County Citizen Review Panel is to promote child safety and quality services to children and families.

Article III Membership

Section 1. Membership shall consist of no less than fifteen and no more than twenty-one members. Panel membership is required to be comprised of a balance of: 1) providers of services to abused and neglected children and families; including adoption services, and: 2) local citizens; including consumers of services of the Child Protective Services system such as foster parents, former foster children, adoptive parents, and parents, as well as interested business and civic representatives and members of the community at large.

Section 2. Members shall be elected for two year terms, beginning July 1, 2000. Members beginning terms July 1, 2002 and existing members entering their second term, shall stagger election terms with no more than half of members serving a one year term and the remainder to serve a two year term. Panel Members beginning terms July 1, 2003 and thereafter will serve a two year term. Members may serve no more than two consecutive terms, except after an absence from panel membership of a minimum of one year. Former members are encouraged to serve as consultants or participants in ad-hoc committees or focus groups without voting privilege.

Section 3. Members of the ABC County Citizen Review Panel who fail to attend at least three consecutive meetings annually, without prior notice to the Secretary and good cause, will be contacted

by the membership committee for follow-up and may be requested to resign following committee agreement.

Section 4. A quorum shall consist of a majority of current panel members.

Section 5. Any vacancy on the Citizens Review Panel or in any office may be filled by a vote of simple majority of the Citizen Review Panel at any regular meeting. The Membership Committee shall review the nominee(s) for general membership and shall recommend one nominee to the Citizen Review Panel to fill each vacancy that occurs. Vacancies shall be filled in accordance with Section 1 of Article IV, maintaining a balance of provider and citizen membership. Nominees for positions filled due to attrition shall complete the term of the predecessor of the open position.

Article IV Executive Committee

Section 1. The Executive Committee shall be comprised of Officers of the Citizen Review Panel, the immediate past Chairperson (if available), and the Staff Coordinator. The Executive Committee shall meet as necessary to supervise the affairs of the Citizen Review Panel between full panel meetings, and shall take any action as appropriate as delegated by the Citizen Review Panel.

Section 2. A quorum shall consist of a majority of the Executive Committee

Article V Officers

Section 1. Officers shall be Chairperson, Vice-Chairperson, Secretary and Treasurer. Officers shall be elected by the Citizen Review Panel for a one-year term annually and may not serve more than two consecutive terms of office. Wherever possible, the Chairperson and Vice-Chairperson will have alternate representation from the provider and citizen membership.

Article VI Duties of the Officers

Section 1. The Chairperson of the Citizen Review Panel shall preside at all meetings of the Panel, establish other committees as needed, and any other duties established by membership vote. The Chairperson shall serve as a member of all committees with voting privileges.

Section 2. The Vice-Chairperson shall perform the duties of the Chairperson in the event of his/her absence, resignation, or inability to perform duties, in addition to other duties that may be delegated by the Chairperson or by membership vote. The Vice-Chairperson shall act as the Chairperson of the Program Committee.

Section 3. The Treasurer shall monitor all financial matters and report them to the Citizen Review Panel, in addition to other duties that may be delegated by the Chairperson or by membership vote. The Treasurer shall assist in the development of the budget in conjunction with any statewide budget committee and the Staff Coordinator.

Section 4. The Secretary shall keep the minutes of the meetings of the Citizen Review Panel and the

Executive Committee, in addition to other duties that may be delegated by the Chairperson or by membership vote.

**Article VII
Meetings**

Section 1. The Annual meeting shall be held at the beginning of the State Fiscal Year, at a time and place to be designated by the Executive Committee. The Citizen Review Panel shall meet at least one time every three months, upon the call of the Chairperson, or at the request of the majority of panel members.

Section 2. Panel meetings are open to the public. Upon vote of the membership, the panel may choose to go into closed session to conduct case review and pursuant to appropriate State Law.

Section 3. A quorum shall consist of a majority of panel membership.

**Article VIII
Standing and Other Committees**

Section 1. The Panel may establish Standing Committees and will include, but not be limited to, the Membership Committee and Program Committee.

Section 2. The Membership Committee's duties include contacting interested members, processing applications, making decisions regarding nominations, providing orientation to new members, and other duties that may be delegated by the Chairperson or by membership vote. The Membership Committee shall submit its report of the nominees to the Citizen Review Panel not less than ten (10) days before the date of the annual meeting by filing the same with the Secretary of the Panel. Nominees will be elected by the Panel prior to the annual meeting of the membership. The nominating committee may also be called upon to submit nominees for vacancies, which may occur throughout the year.

Section 3. The Program Committee shall be chaired by the Vice-Chairman of the Panel. The Program Committee's duties include development of a calendar and agenda for the panel, working with designated staff, making recommendations for presentations and research, and other duties that may be delegated by the Chairperson or by membership vote.

Section 4. Other standing and ad hoc committees may be appointed by the Chairperson or the Citizen Review Panel as deemed necessary.

**Article IX
Non-Discrimination**

Section 1. There shall be no discrimination on the basis of race, color, ethnicity, sex, creed, national origin, socio-economic status or sexual preference. There shall be no discrimination against an otherwise qualified individual by reason of disability or age, as defined in statute. There shall be special efforts in recruitment of persons from underutilized ethnically, economically, and racially diverse groups and disabled persons.

**Article X
Amendments**

Section 1. The by-laws of this Panel may be altered or repealed by the members by the vote of the majority present at any annual or special meeting called for that purpose.

Section 2. Amendments may be made at any meeting of the Citizen Review Panel by 2/3 of those present, after notification in writing to full membership at least two weeks in advance. The Panel will be guided by considerations raised by the membership.

**Article XI
Parliamentary Procedure**

Section 1. The Modern Rules of Order, when not in conflict with these by-laws, shall govern the proceedings of Panel meetings.

**Article XII
Confidentiality**

Section 1. The Citizen Review Panel shall safeguard and treat as confidential all information (whether acquired through verbal communication, written record or observation) pertaining to any child, relative or friend of any family under review of the ABC County Citizen Review Panel. In addition, the panel shall safeguard information pertaining to individual staff or panel members, or information believed to have a detrimental effect on families or the community at large, obtained or shared among members during full and committee meetings. This clause shall specifically exclude formal reports, media releases, and other information approved by the panel or to meet mandatory reporting guidelines.

Section 2. Members, staff and guests shall sign a confidentiality agreement at the start of all full Panel and Committee meetings.

Section 3. Failure to uphold confidentiality will result in the member's termination from the Panel and could result in civil sanctions by the State, pursuant to section 106(c)(4)(B)(ii) of the Child Abuse Prevention and Treatment Act.

**Article XIII
Conflict of Interest**

Section 1. Panel members and nominees for membership shall disclose any personal or professional relationships that may represent a conflict of interest to the Citizen Review Panel. If a conflict of interest arises that may compromise the individual or the work of the Citizen Review Panel, the Panel may vote to revoke or deny the individual membership on the Panel.

Sample Citizen Review Panel First Meeting “Working” Agenda

The following is information for the CRP coordinator to use in planning and facilitating the first agenda. Items in *italics* can be retyped and used for the agenda presented to the panel members at the first meeting.

1. Welcome and housekeeping issues.
 - a. Thank you for your willingness to serve with other community members to improve our local child welfare system for children and families;
 - b. We value your expertise.
 - c. We want you to be comfortable during our time together:
 - i. Bathrooms are located...
 - ii. Lunch will be at ...
 - d. We’ll start promptly at ...
 - e. Stipends for transportation and child care are available. See staff person: ...
2. Introduction of panel members.
3. Review of panel member orientation packet:
 - a. Citizen Review Panel description, authorization, etc.
 - b. Panel member roles and duties
 - c. Composition of the panel:
 - i. Does it reflect the community – anyone missing that needs to be included?
 - ii. Does it reflect the ethnicity of local CWS clients?
 - d. Ensuring Confidentiality (may include Confidentiality statement that all members sign at the first meeting)
 - e. Review priority outcome(s) that panel will be addressing.
 - f. Review “Process of Review and Action Steps” *handout* quickly highlighting the general review process.
 - g. Descriptive *handouts*:
 - i. “Understanding the Child Welfare System in California”
 - ii. Descriptive information related to your specific priority outcome: e.g. Annie E. Casey Foundation info on promising practices re: foster care system or “Aging out of foster care,”

- iii. Others (articles you want to include in orientation packet, e.g. organization chart of Child Welfare Services, organization chart of agency in which Child Welfare Services is housed, etc.)
- 4. Principles of Relationship (ground rules) and norms (pass out sample and have on flip chart)
 - a. Want to ensure an inclusive and respectful environment for discussion.
 - b. Multi-vote on Principles (this will get people up and moving).
 - i. Ask if there are any other principles to include and add to list;
 - ii. Have them check which ones they support for the panel process.
- 5. List strengths and challenges to the review process.
- 6. Begin process of developing CRP vision and mission statements.
 - a. Review the following sample statements.
 - i. Vision is the ultimate goal, the ideal you are aiming for: “There is a comprehensive and integrated child protection system in ABC County that provides quality services for children at risk in order to prevent child maltreatment and protect children who have been abused so they may grow and develop in safe and healthy families that are violence free.”
 - ii. Mission is the goal of the panel that supports the vision statement: “The mission of the ABC County Citizen Review Panel is to assess the child welfare system in ABC County and make data driven recommendations for continuous improvement that will help to ensure the safety and well being of ABC County’s children and their families.”
 - b. Ask panel members to revisit the statements after reviewing the orientation packet material before the next meeting and be prepared to finalize mission and vision statements.
 - c. Include finalizing mission and vision statements as Action Step for next meeting.
- 7. Training for Citizen Review Panel members – ask them to think about what kind of training would be useful. Include item as Action Step for next meeting. You can suggest some topics for them to consider:
 - a. Review of the Child Welfare System (also refer to the “Understanding The Child Welfare System” in the orientation packet);
 - b. CWS policies related to your outcome priorities.
- 8. Set meeting schedule for the year (e.g. 1st Thursday of the month, from ___ p.m. to ___ p.m. at _____).
- 9. Action Steps for next meeting: _____.
- 10. Elect or ask volunteers for Chair, Vice Chair, Secretary, and Treasurer (this group can develop panel structure recommendations for the next meeting) and panel member term limits, etc. (see ABC CRP Guidelines, Chapter 3 for ideas).

11. Finalize vision, mission recommendations.
12. Training for panel members – discussion. (You could show a short video at the meeting on the CWS system, e.g. from Annie Casey Foundation Family to Family Program. You can assign a “buddy” to a citizen representative so they have someone to call re: questions, etc.).
13. Begin priority outcome review process.

Sample Citizen Review Panel Survey

The survey on the following pages is designed to gather your feedback about the Citizen Review Panel. The information gathered here will be used to expand citizen involvement on behalf of California's children, and to evaluate whether the structure of the current program effectively supports the panel in achieving its goals to protect children.

Please note that I am administering this survey as an outside evaluator and a citizen volunteer. Your answers will remain completely confidential, and I will report results as composites so that individual participants' responses cannot be identified. In order to gather accurate information that is reflective of panel member's thoughts, I ask that you fill out the following survey as precisely and accurately as you can. I have included space after many questions if you wish to comment or elaborate on any answers.

Space is also provided at the end of the survey for any additional comments you wish to make. Please return this survey by mail at your earliest convenience, preferably before _____. An addressed and stamped envelope has been enclosed for your convenience. If you have any questions regarding this survey, please contact me at _____. This cover page is for your information and should be removed from the survey once completed. Your participation in this survey is voluntary and anonymous, but your answers are important to the accuracy of this evaluation and the success of this program. Please do not put your name on the survey. Thank you very much for your participation.

Sample Citizen Review Panel Member Feedback Survey

I. Panel Member Background Information

1. Which County does your Citizen Review Panel represent? _____
2. How long have you served as a Citizen Review Panel Member? _____

Questions 3-7 are optional. By answering them you will help us gather information about the demographic make up of the Citizen Review Panel. You do not need to answer them to complete the remainder of the questionnaire. Be assured that only the outside evaluator will see your survey form and will only report composite numbers to ensure your confidentiality. If you do not wish to answer these questions, please skip down to question 8.

3. Gender: ___ Male ___ Female
4. Race/Ethnicity: _____
5. Profession/Occupation (former occupation if retired) _____
6. Education level completed (please check the option that fits best):
High School ___ Bachelor's Degree ___ Technical Training/Some College ___
Master's Degree ___ PhD ___ Other ___
7. What is your annual household income? (Please circle the option that fits best)

under \$25,000	\$55-64,999	\$95-104,999
\$25-34,999	\$65-74,999	\$105-114,999
\$35-44,999	\$75-84,999	\$115-124,999
\$45-54,999	\$85-94,999	over \$125,000

8. What experience have you had with child protective services prior to joining the Citizen Review Panel? (e.g. foster parent, biological parent of foster child, child protection expertise, guardian ad item, concerned citizen, health care professional, etc.)

II. Panel Member Perspectives on Child Protection System

9. What do you feel are the most important issues facing child protection services and the children in the system today? _____

10. Are these issues being adequately addressed by the child protection system? (Please circle your choice)

Yes Somewhat No

If not, what do you think are some major barriers to addressing these problems?

11. To what extent do you think Citizen Review Panels can help address these issues?

Significant effect Some effect Not much effect No effect

III. Panel Member Perspectives on the Citizen Review Process

(Please circle one answer for each question)

12. Approximately how many panel meetings have you attended? _____

13. Do you feel that there are too many, just enough or too few members on the panel?

Too many Just enough Too few

14. I feel this panel and its subgroups meet and communicate:

Too frequently Just enough Not enough

15. Enough time is given to discuss the issues at hand.

Strongly Agree Agree Disagree Strongly Disagree

16. The meetings are run efficiently.

Strongly Agree Agree Disagree Strongly Disagree

17. I feel my time spent at meetings is used wisely.

Strongly Agree Agree Disagree Strongly Disagree

18. This panel's meeting times are convenient for me.

Strongly Agree Agree Disagree Strongly Disagree

19. Everyone on the panel contributes to reach the panel's goals.

Strongly Agree Agree Disagree Strongly Disagree

20. This Citizen Review Panel is unified.

Strongly Agree Agree Disagree Strongly Disagree

21. As an individual I feel as though I have a voice in the panel's decisions and activities.

Strongly Agree Agree Disagree Strongly Disagree

22. The support that the County staff has provided to this panel has been:

Adequate Somewhat Adequate Somewhat Inadequate Inadequate

23. The support that the Department of Human Services has provided to this panel has been:

Adequate Somewhat Adequate Somewhat Inadequate Inadequate

24. This panel has sufficient autonomy from the County to act as a citizen directed group.

Strongly Agree Agree Disagree Strongly Disagree

25. This panel has sufficient autonomy from Department of Human Services (DHS) to act as a citizen directed group.

Strongly Agree Agree Disagree Strongly Disagree

26. The members on this panel are representative of the surrounding community.

Strongly Agree Agree Disagree Strongly Disagree

27. There are important perspectives not currently represented on this panel.

Strongly Agree Agree Disagree Strongly Disagree

Please list any you believe are not adequately represented: _____

28. I feel that the priorities and tasks set by this panel are the most pressing.

Strongly Agree Agree Disagree Strongly Disagree

29. I feel that the goals and objectives set by this panel can be attained by the panel's current activities.

Strongly Agree Agree Disagree Strongly Disagree

30. What might help or hinder the panel in achieving its goals to improve child protection for your County? _____

31. Are there any issues that this panel should consider that it is not currently addressing?

32. What do you think is the greatest strength of the panel's work? _____

33. Several other ABC counties will be forming Citizen Review Panels. To help make these successful, could you please identify two things that have worked well and two things that should be changed about this program? _____

34. I believe this is a worthwhile program for other counties to implement.

Strongly Agree Agree Disagree Strongly Disagree

35. How much influence do you predict this panel will have on child protection in ABC?

Significant amount Moderate amount Not much influence No influence

36. Children in California will be better protected because of the Citizen Review Panels?

Strongly Agree Agree Disagree Strongly Disagree

If there are any additional comments you would like to make, please feel free to write them on the space below. Thank you very much for your time.

(Adapted from the State of Minnesota Department of Human Services)

8

Technical Assistance Contact Information

Office of Child Abuse Prevention (OCAP)

Panels

OCAP has the primary responsibility for the development, on-going support and evaluation of panels. OCAP staff members prepare the Citizen Review Panel Annual Report to the Federal Government, manage the CRP budgetary process and arrange training and technical assistance to County panels. OCAP keeps local panels updated on legislative changes affecting CRP's and provides information on organizational and programmatic updates within the state's child welfare system. It responds to budget and contractual questions. The OCAP contact for the panels is :

Jacquelyn Sneed, Program Consultant
California Department of Social Services
(CDSS)
744 P Street MS 11-82
Sacramento, California 95814
Phone: 916-651-6711
jacquelyn.sneed@dss.ca.gov

Strategies (CRP Training and Technical Assistance Contractor)

Strategies is a statewide training and technical assistance program for family support programs funded by the California Department of Social Services, Office of Child Abuse Prevention. Strategies has

three regional offices to serve the state. Each region is hosted by a community-based organization that serves children and families through Family Resource Centers and other family support approaches.

Region I is located in Butte County at Youth for Change; Region II is located in Ventura County at Interface Children Family Services; and Region III offices are located in Los Angeles and Orange County at the Children's Bureau.

Strategies Region II provides technical assistance and training to all California Citizen Review Panels on issues related to panel process and function. Strategies also maintains the Citizen Review Panel state web site, at www.familyresourcecenters.net. Technical assistance is available to assist panels with; their organization and/or operations; their understanding of the child welfare services system; any information and technical assistance needs that are required to further the panels' review processes. Technical Assistance is arranged through the OCAP contact. The request is then forwarded to Annette Marcus, Regional Director of Strategies Region II who in turn makes arrangements for the technical assistance.

Index

A

AB 2779 20
 AB 636 Outcomes and Accountability System 7
 Administration for Children and Families 25
 Advisory Committee 20
 Annie E. Casey Foundation 21, 25
 Appointment 28
 Attendance 29

B

Background Information 38
 Bay Area Social Services Consortium 24
 Best Friends Fund 25
 By-Laws 30

C

California Center for Research on Women and Families 3
 California Child and Family Services Review (C-CFSR) 26
 California Department of Social Services 20, 41
 California Social Work Education Center (CalSWEC) 20, 23
 CAPTA 1, 2, 9, 28
 CASA 9
 Case File Reviews 13
 Case Management 23
 Case Management Council 25
 Case Planning 23
 CDSS 20, 41
 Chair 29, 35
 Chairperson 31, 32
 Child Abuse Prevention and Treatment Act (CAPTA) 28
 Child Abuse Prevention Council 25
 Child and Family Services Plan 7

Child Maltreatment 23
 Child Protection Service System 28
 Child Protection System 38
 Children in the Child Welfare System 3
 Childrens Bureau 41
 Child Sexual Abuse 23
 Child Welfare League of America 25
 Child Welfare Section 25
 Child Welfare Services 26
 Child Welfare Services Agencies 25
 Child Welfare Services Manual 5, 6
 Child Welfare Services Stakeholders Group 7
 Child Welfare Services System in California 3
 Citizen Review Board 30
 Citizen Review Panel 1, 2, 5, 9, 10, 25, 28, 34, 37, 38, 41
 Citizen Review Panel Development 9
 Citizen Review Panel Questionnaire 37
 Citizen Review Process 39
 Cohorts 26
 Commissioner of the Department of Human Services 28
 Community Liaison 25
 Complaint Resolution Process 25
 Components of the County Child Welfare Agency 3
 Comprehensive Assessment Tool 21
 Conducting Interviews 23
 Confidentiality agreements 10
 Consumer/Provider Input Surveys 14
 Continuous Quality Improvement Plan 25
 Core Components of the Review Process 13
 County Welfare Directors Association (CWDA) 20
 Court Appointed Special Advocates

9
 Court Procedures 23
 Court Services 24
 Crisis Intervention 23
 CRP Objectives 28
 CRP Operating Procedures 28
 CRP Organization and Operations 9, 27
 CRP Resources 23
 CRP Review Process 13
 Cultural Competence 21
 Current, Promising and Best Practices 3, 13, 14, 19, 20, 21, 23, 24, 25, 34
 CWS 2, 4, 5, 9, 10, 11, 13, 14, 17, 19, 20, 23, 26, 34, 35, 36
 CWS Surveys 14

D

Data review 14
 Death Review 25
 Decision making process 10
 Department of Human Services 29
 Developing By-laws 10
 Differential Response 21
 District Dispo Review Team 25
 Domestic Violence 23

E

Early Intervention and Prevention 24
 Emergency Response 24
 Emerging Practices in Prevention 25

F

Family & Community Advisory Committee Report 25
 Family, Youth and Children's Partnership 25
 Family Centered Meetings Project 25

- Family Conference Institute 25
 Family Group Conferences 25
 Family Group Decision Making 21, 25
 Family Maintenance 24
 Family Needs Assessment 23
 Family Resource Centers 41
 Family Reunification Services 24
 Family to Family 21, 25, 26, 36
 Family to Family Initiative 25, 26
 Family Unity Meetings Foundation's Team 25
 Federal Child Abuse Prevention and Treatment Act (CAPTA) 1. *See also* CAPTA
 Federal Child and Family Services Review 7
 Focus groups 13
 Funding the Child Welfare System 3
- H**
- Health and Safety Code 5
 Housekeeping issues 34
 Human Development 23
- I**
- Independent Living Program (ILP) 6
 Indian Child Welfare Act (ICWA) 6
 Interagency Services Unit 25
 Interface Children Family Services 41
 Interstate Compact on the Placement of Children (ICPC) 6
- J**
- Juvenile Court Law 4
 Juvenile Dependency Court 3
- K**
- Keeping Children and Families Safe Act of 2003 1
 Key Issues: 2002 and beyond 3
 Kinship 24
- L**
- Laws and Regulations Pertaining to the Child Welfare Services System 4
 Legal Reports 23
 Long-term Placement 24
- M**
- Meeting Agenda 34
 Meetings 28
 Member Feedback Survey 38
 Mental Health 23
 Mental Illness 23
 Minor Parent Services (MPS) 6
- N**
- National Clearinghouse on Child Abuse and Neglect 25
 Need for Coordination 3
- O**
- OCAP ii, 3, 9, 10, 13, 14, 41
 Ombudsperson Services 25
 Out of Home Providers 3
- P**
- Penal Code 5
 Permanency 24
 Permanency Planning Mediation 21
 Perspectives 38
 Placement 24
 Point-in-time 26
 Policy and Procedure Review 14
 Program Improvement Plan 7
 Promising Practices 3, 14, 19, 21, 24, 25, 34
 Public Child Welfare 23
- Q**
- Quality Assurance 25
 Quick Start Process 13, 15
- R**
- Regional Training Academies 20
 Report Dissemination 14
 Resignation 28
 Ruth E. Smith Demonstration Project 25
- S**
- Secretary 35
 Selected interviews 14
 Self-Sufficiency Services for Youth 24
 Standardized Core Curriculum Project 20
 Standardized Core Training 20, 23
 State Child Welfare Services System 5
 Statistical Data Support 26
 Steering Committee 29
 Strategies 41
 Stress Management 23
 Structured Decision Making 21
 Substance Abuse 23
- T**
- Team Decision 25
 Technical Assistance 41
 Term of Office and Attendance requirements 10
 Terms 28
 The Child Welfare Services System in Transition 6
 The Child Welfare System 3
 Time Management 23
 Treasurer 35
- U**
- Understanding the Child Welfare System in California: A Primer for Service providers and Policymakers 3
 US Department of Health and Human Services 25

V

Vice-Chairman 32
Vice-Chairperson 31
Vice Chair 29, 35
Voting 29

W

Wards of the Juvenile Court 4
Welcome 34
Welfare and Institutions Code 4
Welfare Services 23
Worker Safety 23

Y

Youth 24
Youth for Change 41

Z

Zellerbach Foundation 3



Strategies ✦ 1305 Del Norte Road, Suite 130 ✦ Camarillo, CA 93010-8366 ✦ 805-485-6114 ✦ Fax: 805-983-0789 ✦ www.familyresourcecenters.net

