

## **FAMILY TO FAMILY IN MONTEREY COUNTY: “EVERYONE’S CHANCE TO CARE”**

**Agustin Gomez\***

**Bob Harper\*\***

### **EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

#### **BACKGROUND**

In May 2001, Monterey County’s Department of Social and Employment Services -Family and Children’s Services (DSES-FCS) was authorized by the Board of Supervisors to participate in the Family to Family initiative. Family to Family represents a radical philosophical shift in child welfare practice. Monterey County has enacted all four core strategies of Family to Family: recruitment, training, and support of resource families (foster and relative); building community partnerships; family team decision-making; and self-evaluation.

For nearly one year, Monterey County DSES – FCS and its community partners have worked with full implementation of Family to Family. To date, the initiative has proved to be a success in that Monterey County DSES – FCS, as an agency, has embraced Family to Family and, as a result, they are poised to complete a thorough systems change in provision of services to the division’s clientele.

Additionally, the adoption of the initiative allowed the achievement of one very important goal: development of a 23-hour receiving center. Lastly, this initiative coincided with Monterey County’s Self-Assessment and Self-Improvement Plan, the data from which is being used to improve delivery of services.

Family to Family is alive and well in Monterey County due to the committed, hardworking, and passionate staff of both the county Department of Social and Employment Services and its partners.

Overall, we expect Family to Family to result in improved services to children and families in Monterey County.

#### **LESSONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

This project resulted in several lessons learned regarding present and future implementation of Family to Family in the writers’ respective counties:

- That system change can be made with willingness, commitment, and a plan
- The significance of top-down agency support to achieve overall agency buy-in
- The paramount importance of community collaborations and partnerships
- The importance of designating key personnel to fulfill vital roles
- The value of a comprehensive database to monitor performance standards

The primary recommendation to Sonoma County is that it initiate exploration into whether or not the Casey Foundation might consider supporting the county in a Family to Family endeavor. Genuine consideration of alternative uses of its children’s shelter will likely be necessary and pivotal to any

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*BASSC Executive Development Training Program*

real exploration and dialogue with Casey. It is the writer's opinion that adoption and adaptation of Family to Family would be a proactive move in the right direction of modifying Sonoma County's practice to coincide with its stated principles and philosophies.

Secondary to initial exploration with the Casey Foundation, if support is granted it is recommended that pursuit of funding, informational convenings, and training be swift, focused, proactive, and comprehensive.

Finally, it is recommended, should official support and funding be acquired, that Sonoma County follow the well developed, and at least preliminarily,

effective plan of Monterey County. There is no need to reinvent the wheel when such a thorough and comprehensive plan could easily be modeled.

It is recommended that Santa Clara County, although it has effectively ended its relationship with the Casey Foundation and is utilizing only parts of the overall initiative, train its child welfare staff on what Family to Family means in that county.

Additionally, it is recommended that the Department of Aging and Adult Services consider adaptation of some of the Family to Family principles for delivery of services to its population.

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### **INTRODUCTION**

In February, March, and April 2005, BASSC interns from Santa Clara and Sonoma Counties conducted a review of Family to Family in Monterey County. In May 2004, Family to Family was launched in Monterey County, after four years of planning and preparation. It is, therefore, relatively new. For this case study, we chose to examine its key aspects.

We will describe the history and philosophy of Family to Family on the global and local levels, the planning and preparation for institution, the rollout phase, current implementation practices, and performance outcomes.

The goal of the case study is to analyze the initiative, summarize its efficacy and lessons learned, and determine implications for application in both Santa Clara and Sonoma Counties.

### **MONTEREY COUNTY DEMOGRAPHICS**

Monterey County is a large county on the central coast between San Francisco and Los Angeles. It has an estimated population of 415,000<sup>1</sup> residents. Monterey County has a diverse population in terms of industry and ethnic make-up. It is known worldwide as a tourist mecca for the beautiful Monterey Peninsula. It is also known as an agricultural wonderland for the fertile Salinas Valley. Its population (2000 data) is 46.8% Latino, 40.3% White/Non-Latino; 6% Asian, 3.7% African American, and 1% American Indian or Alaska Native.<sup>2</sup>

Monterey County Department of Social and Employment Services (DSES) includes CalWORKs Benefits and Employment Services, Aging and Adult Services, Public Authority for In-Home Supportive Services, Family and Children’s Services, multiple commissions and boards, and the Charitable Council of Monterey County (CCMC), a nonprofit arm of the department. It administers over 70 programs and employs over 675 social service professionals. Its mission statement reads:

Our Mission is to promote the social and economic self-reliance of each individual and family we serve through employment services, temporary financial assistance, social support services, protective services for children and adults at risk, and partnership with the community to develop and support social change, highlighting personal responsibility and self-sufficiency.

The Department has an annual operating budget of approximately \$95 million and provides services to over 61,000 “customers.”<sup>3</sup>

### **FAMILY TO FAMILY**

#### **Background**

Family to Family is an initiative of the Annie E. Casey Foundation. The foundation’s main goal is to “foster public policies, human service reforms, and

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1 [www.co.monterey.ca.us](http://www.co.monterey.ca.us)

2 California QuickFacts.census.gov

3 [www.co.monterey.ca.us/dss](http://www.co.monterey.ca.us/dss)

community supports that more effectively meet the needs of today's vulnerable children and families."<sup>4</sup> In 1948, Jim Casey, a founder of United Parcel Service, along with his siblings, established the Annie E. Casey Foundation in honor of their mother.

From its inception, the Annie E. Casey Foundation was guided by two fundamental principles: first and foremost, the belief that there is no substitute for strong families, in which, children can grow up to be strong, capable adults. Secondly, a supportive community is essential to raising children. Clearly, the condition of the community plays a direct and vital part in the ability of families to raise their children. Moreover, it is extremely difficult for any family to raise children when they are struggling to exist. All energy is put into providing food, clothing, and shelter for the family. In our high-cost and fast-paced society, there is little energy left to care for and nurture children.

Over the years, Casey observed the challenges of public child welfare, specifically, that the number of children in out-of-home care increased from 260,000 in the 1980s to more than 550,000 in 2000; a greater than 50% increase in less than 20 years. Child welfare systems became overloaded, a smaller percentage of children were being returned to safe families, and fewer children were being placed in homes that offered them permanence. At the same time, the number of foster families dropped nationwide, so that fewer than 50% of the children needing temporary care were now being placed with foster families.

Currently, this means that large numbers of children are placed in group care or with relatives who have great difficulty in providing them care.

Additionally, children of color are vastly over-represented in this group of children.

The basic premise of the Casey Foundation's interest in helping state and local child welfare systems confront the growing challenges is a fundamental belief that

"...smarter and more effective responses are available to prevent child maltreatment and to respond more effectively when there is abuse or neglect. Often families can be helped to safely care for their children in their own communities and in their own homes – if appropriate support, guidance, and help is provided to them early enough."<sup>5</sup>

They recognize there are emergency situations that require more radical action such as removal of a child from parental care, but firmly believe that the child can, most times, live with caring and capable relatives or with another family within the child's community.

The Family to Family Initiative was designed in 1992 and is in practice in many state and local systems throughout the country. In 1992, the belief to which most professionals in child welfare systems acquiesced was that

"...a continuing decline in the numbers of foster families was inevitable; that large, centralized public agencies could not effectively partner with neighborhoods; that disadvantaged communities could not produce good foster families in any number; and that substantial increases in congregate care were inevitable."<sup>6</sup>

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4 [www.aecf.org/initiatives/familytofamily/overview](http://www.aecf.org/initiatives/familytofamily/overview)

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5 [www.aecf.org/initiatives/familytofamily/overview/](http://www.aecf.org/initiatives/familytofamily/overview/)  
6 [www.aecf.org/initiatives/familytofamily/overview/](http://www.aecf.org/initiatives/familytofamily/overview/)

Family to Family efforts are proving those beliefs to be wrong. Many counties in California are currently working under a Family to Family umbrella. Family to Family is not a program, a model, a pilot, or a protocol. It is an initiative, an umbrella set of principles and values that drives all practices. It is an opportunity for child welfare systems to redesign themselves and better serve their communities.

### Family to Family System-Wide Goals

The Family to Family initiative has the following goals:

- To develop a network of family foster care that is more neighborhood-based, culturally sensitive, and located primarily in the communities in which the children live.
- To assure that scarce family foster home resources are provided to all those children (but to only those children) who in fact must be removed from their homes.
- To reduce reliance on institutional or congregate care (in shelters, hospitals, psychiatric centers, correctional facilities, residential treatment programs, and group homes) by meeting the needs of children currently in those settings through relative or family foster care.
- To increase the number and quality of foster families to meet projected needs.
- To reunify children with their families as soon as that can safely be accomplished, based on the family's and children's needs – not simply the system's time frames.
- To reduce the lengths of stay of children in out-of-home care.
- To better screen children being considered for removal from home, and to determine what services might be provided to safely preserve the family.

- To decrease the overall number of children entering out-of-home care.
- To involve foster families as team members in family reunification efforts.
- To become a neighborhood resource for children and families and invest in the capacity of communities from which the foster care population comes.

### Key Strategies of Family to Family

Four core strategies are at the heart of Family to Family:

- *Recruitment, Training, and Support of Resource Families (foster and relative):* Finding and maintaining local resources who can support children and families in their own neighborhoods by recruiting, training, and supporting foster parents and relative caregivers.
- *Building Community Partnerships:* Partnering with a wide range of community organizations – beyond public and private agencies – in neighborhoods which are the source of high referral rates, to work together toward creating an environment that supports families involved in the child welfare system and thereby helps to build stronger neighborhoods and stronger families.
- *Family Team Decision-Making:* Involving not just foster parents and caseworkers, but also birth families and community members in all placement decisions to ensure a network of support for the child and the adults who care for them.
- *Self-Evaluation:* Using hard data linked to child and family outcomes to drive program decision-making, and to show where change is needed and where progress has been made.

## **The Tools of Family to Family**

Early in the practice of Family to Family it was evident that new ideas, new values, new principles, and new organizational structuring and procedures were not going to, in and of themselves, make and sustain the changes needed in public child welfare services. New practices, new ways of doing business, new approaches were necessary on the front lines of child protection. These tools have been designed:

- Successful strategies to recruit, train, and retain foster families.
- A decision-making model for placement in child protection.
- New approaches to tracking and analyzing outcome data.
- A self-evaluation tool.
- Tools to engage large organizations in change efforts.
- Tools to build partnerships with neighborhoods and local communities.
- New approaches to engaging and serving drug-affected families.
- Tools to promote resilience among front line workers and to promote worker safety.
- Proven models which move children home or to other permanent families in a timely manner.
- Communications planning in a public child protection environment.
- A model for building partnerships between public and private child welfare agencies.

## **The Outcomes of Family to Family**

Agencies participating in the Family to Family initiative are asked to commit to achieving these outcomes:

- A reduction in the number of children served in institutional and congregate care.

- A shift of resources from congregate and institutional care to family foster care and family-centered services across all child and family-serving systems.
- A decrease in the lengths of stay in out-of-home placement.
- An increase in the number of planned reunifications.
- A decrease in the number of entries or re-entries into care.
- A reduction in the number of placement moves experienced by children in care.
- An increase in the number of siblings placed together.
- A reduction in the total number of children served away from their own families.

## **FAMILY TO FAMILY IN MONTEREY COUNTY**

Prior to 1998, Monterey County operated on traditional child welfare principles in which a child welfare social worker investigated all child abuse allegations and determined the placement of children without stopping to evaluate the failures or successes of those principles or to include family and community in the process.

In 2000, Monterey County Family and Children's Services was experiencing what child welfare agencies across most of the country were - a drastic decline in the number of available foster families and a 50% increase in the number of children in the child welfare system. Like most of the country, Monterey County's emergency foster care system had eroded into a state of critical need. That year the last official emergency foster home in the county closed.

Family and Children's Services convened a voluntary committee of concerned staff for intermittent meetings during the year to consider solutions to the problem. The committee, however, was shackled by lack of staff resources. In January 2001, the Department of Social and Employment Services allocated increased resources to the project and a staff person was hired to focus on emergency foster care issues. At that same time, a new partnership between Family and Children's Services, the Charitable Council (a local nonprofit), and the Social Services Commission, called CHERISH, was formed.

CHERISH is an acronym of the partnership which is formally dubbed CHildren's EmeRgency Intake and SHelter project. A Steering Committee was formed and realized that planning and implementation of a new emergency foster care system for the county needed to be accelerated.

With the Charitable Council as its lead agency, the partnership was awarded \$63,000 in grants, and was able to launch a research effort including data collection, focus groups, nationwide research on best practices and models, and local research reviewing two existing local programs. It is noteworthy that the CHERISH Steering Committee was initially moving toward establishing a children's shelter in Monterey County as a temporary holding station for its dependent children. That was not their ultimate recommendation.

With the foresight of Margaret Huffman, a management analyst in Monterey County's Family and Children's Services, and the department's executive team, Monterey County took a giant step towards a radical systems change. Margaret was part of the initial stakeholders convening in Sacramento to look at California's child welfare system. At that

meeting she was provided the first glimpse of Family to Family when two Casey Foundation staff and a foster parent from Cleveland, Ohio presented the efforts and outcomes of the design in that large urban city. It is told that Cleveland, at one time, operated a 500 bed children's shelter for its dependent children, and that every night the facility was full and children were sleeping in hallways and offices. A new director of the city's child welfare agency saw the problem and decided to rectify it. That director and his agency are said to have partnered with the Annie E. Casey Foundation to overhaul Cleveland's foster care system and the foundational principles and values of Family to Family were born.

Following Ms. Huffman's introduction to Family to Family and the CHERISH Steering Committee's response from focus groups (that the communities did not want a shelter), she presented the Family to Family idea to Monterey County's Family and Children's Services (FCS) Deputy Director and the Department of Social and Employment Services (DSES) Director. The Department and the County Board of Supervisors were interested, and they actively solicited the guidance and support of the Annie E. Casey Foundation and Stuart Foundation to bring Family to Family to Monterey County.

FCS sent a staff team to a Family to Family convening in Santa Barbara County. Initially, the Stuart Foundation declined to fund Monterey County for Family to Family implementation. Ms. Huffman, however, was tenacious and continued to call the foundation until funding was available and was granted to the county.

With the initial funds awarded to the CHERISH partnership, Monterey DSES – FCS funded, planned and held a convening at their agency - a

“What is Family to Family Day.” It was exploratory and included Annie E. Casey Foundation staff and a foster parent from Cleveland, Ohio. County government officials, partner government agencies, community-based organizations, and department staff were invited. The community grabbed it. Department staff were energized. But, as always, the ever-present concerns of staffing and workload threatened to dissipate that energy.

In January 2001, the Family to Family Steering Committee, comprised of department and community stakeholders, was convened and held a planning retreat. With the data from its own child welfare cases and referrals, the committee decided to “roll out” its Family to Family Initiative in areas of the county from which the greatest number of child protective services referrals were made and from where the greatest number of children in out-of-home placement lived. Following significant planning and preparation, they rolled out in Marina, a coastal area, in 2003, in Seaside, also a coastal area, and East Salinas in January 2004. King City was activated in Fall 2004 and the rest of Salinas is coming on board soon.

Staff allocation has been a must in Monterey’s plan. They initially assigned a Family to Family Coordinator (line social worker position) who had the personality and energy to engage the community as well as department staff. That person was trained intensively by Casey Foundation staff on Family to Family, its principles and implementation. That role is now filled by a manager who has other responsibilities as well. A full-time Team Decision-Making Facilitator and a Family to Family social worker are on board.

Monterey County’s approach to the four core strategies are:

*Recruitment, Training, and Support of Resource Families (foster and relative):*

Monterey County, through various funding sources, has been able to provide, as employees of designated community-based agencies, community liaisons in each community in which Family to Family has been rolled out. These are paid positions and the liaisons serve as adjuncts to FCS. One of their responsibilities is to recruit and support foster and respite families.

Additionally, via a contract with the local community college and with various funding sources, experienced, qualified foster parents have been hired, as employees of the junior college, as peer-recruiters. They reach out in their neighborhoods and social circles, attend fairs, expos, etc. to recruit foster parents.

*Building Community Partnerships:*

Monterey County, from the beginning of the CHERISH Project, has partnered with and invited community agencies and other public agencies to the table. Representatives of various community-based organizations, offices of education, juvenile probation, children’s mental health services, local foster family agencies, and FCS staff sit on the Family to Family Steering Committee and its subcommittees. Those committees meet monthly.

In each of the designated areas of the county in which Family to Family has rolled out, one community-based agency is the contract agency with the county and leads the coalition of other community-based agencies in that area. As mentioned previously, each of those contract agencies has hired a community liaison to work in the designated communities and neighborhoods. They are caseworkers who meet with parents whose children might be in placement, or who have an open emergency



response referral or a voluntary family maintenance case with the department. Services are offered and provided, support is consistent, and a community face is now placed on "CPS." The community liaisons maintain constant and frequent contact with social workers who are also working with the families.

In addition, community liaisons move about in the communities, making presentations at churches, philanthropic and fraternal organizations, schools, PTAs, etc. to get the news of this new approach to child welfare out into the communities.

The community liaisons participate in, and are expected to complete, the child welfare core courses and obtain certificates. They stated, in interviews with us, that they feel totally a part of, and respected, by the public child welfare agency.

Monterey County had a pre-existing relationship with local network television affiliates and has been able to transition that relationship into a highly visible and effective marketing and publicity campaign. "Eye Opener" video clips of 5 minutes or less are regularly run on television. A very visible and respected member of the community has moderated the spots. They actually run in primetime and daytime slots.

Monterey County is continuing its efforts to share the role of child and family protection with its community partners. The Steering Committee continues to meet monthly and does not have plans to permanently adjourn. The subcommittees meet monthly as well and are continuously seeking to engage other partners including foster youth and the business community. The community liaisons meet as a group each month to discuss their experiences, high

and low, in their individual communities and to support one-another in their mutual endeavor.

Family to Family is a community-based system and, although it is the primary legal responsibility of the Department of Social and Employment Services, the community has taken it to heart and owns it.

*Team Decision-Making (TDM):*

Monterey County began using TDMs in May 2004. For those referrals and cases in the designated areas of the county, a TDM is held on every case in which a child has been taken into protective custody and on every case or referral in which a social worker is considering taking a child into protective custody, but only if the cases involve families in one of the four geographical areas where TDM's are implemented. When this occurs, the social worker gives the parent(s) a pre-printed Team Decision-Making pamphlet with the date, time and location of the TDM written on it. The social worker will call the FCS office and arrange the date and time. The pamphlet (Attachment A) explains to the parent(s) what a TDM is, when a TDM occurs, who attends a TDM, what happens at a TDM, why TDMs are held, and the goals of a TDM. It also invites the parent(s) to bring whomever he/she likes to the TDM.

As stated previously, Monterey County has a full-time TDM facilitator. That person is intensively trained in conducting TDMs, the purpose of TDMs, the establishing of goals for TDMs, and how to successfully and productively facilitate a meeting of a group of people who are not necessarily in agreement. The case-carrying social worker completes a TDM Meeting Referral with all the information available about the family and the situation and provides that to the TDM facilitator.

The TDM meeting may include the parent(s) and whomever the parent has invited (family members, neighbors, friends, pastors, teachers, doctors, etc.), the child(ren), the social worker, the social worker's supervisor, the community liaison from the contract agency in the community where the family lives, and the TDM facilitator. During the TDM, all persons who wish to have the opportunity to speak without interruption. The issues concerning the family which brought them to the department's attention are addressed, and the children, the parents, relatives and friends, community members, and community liaison are able to speak to the concerns, strengths, and supports in the big picture.

Since May 2004, when the first TDM was held, through February 2005, 97 children were the subjects of 59 TDMs. Of those 97 children, 52 were able to remain in their homes with community and/or departmental support. Twenty-three children were able to be placed with relatives instead of being taken to a stranger's home, and only 22 of those children needed to be placed in foster homes or non-relative care ( see Attachment B).

Although it is unknown, because Family to Family is relatively new in Monterey County, whether that is a change, radical or slight, from the number of children placed in non-relative care prior to the inception of TDMs, the numbers engender hope and a positive glimpse into the future.

Once a child is the subject of a TDM, he or she is always, thereafter, a TDM child. Whenever a change in placement (including the potential return home) is considered, a TDM must be convened and the parties brought to the table to make a team decision about the child's placement.

*Self-Evaluation:*

Family to Family is still new to Monterey County. Many of the focus points of Family to Family dovetail nicely into California's Child Welfare Redesign and the county's Self-Assessment and Self-Improvement Plan. The data are now being gathered, as was not the case before, so that outcome data can be used to develop practice policies in the future.

**IMPLICATIONS FOR OUR COUNTIES**

**Sonoma County**

Sonoma County and Monterey County are comparable in population and number of children in protective custody. However, the ethnic composition of the counties is different. The following table compares demographic information for the two counties:

County	County Pop.	% Latino	% White/ Non-Latino	% African American
<b>Monterey</b> <sup>7</sup>	415,000	46.8%	40.3%	3.7%
<b>Sonoma</b> <sup>8</sup>	466,725	17.3%	81.6%	1.4%

Like Monterey County, and the rest of the nation, Sonoma County has experienced an increase in numbers of children in protective custody and a decline in the number of foster homes available to care for those children. Unlike Monterey County, and most California counties, Sonoma County operates an emergency children's shelter.

<sup>7</sup> www.Monterey.ca.us  
<sup>8</sup> www.quickfacts.census.gov/

Drawing from what this writer knows of Sonoma County's practice, the potential political hot potato of the newly constructed children's emergency shelter, and what has been learned about Family to Family and Monterey County's implementation and practice thereof, the following recommendations are made:

- That alternative uses for Valley of the Moon Children's Home (emergency children's shelter) be studied.

*Ideas:* a) that it be used only to house those children whose placements have been disrupted; that children who are initially taken into protective custody would not be housed there; and b) that one or more of the wings of the new facility be contracted to a residential treatment program for use as a time-limited assessment facility.

- That the prior emergency shelter be utilized as a 23-hour receiving and assessment center for those children who are initially taken into protective custody.
- That the Annie E. Casey Foundation be contacted for inquiry into the possibility that, if alternative uses for the emergency children's shelter are effectuated, the foundation might sponsor Sonoma County in a Family to Family endeavor.
- That a team of managers, supervisors, and social workers from Sonoma County travel to California counties wherein Family to Family is implemented to observe and research.
- That Sonoma County begin collaboration and partnering with community-based organizations and entities, at least to a greater degree than is currently practiced, regardless of whether Family to Family is adopted.
- That Team Decision-Making be studied for possible implementation on referrals in which emergency response social workers are contem-

plating removal of the child(ren) and in those cases in which the child(ren) have been taken into protective custody on an emergency basis.

It is suggested that the study recommendations be implemented within the next 6 to 12 months, that initial contact with the Casey Foundation be made immediately, and that community collaboration begin (on some level) immediately.

These suggestions being made, the writer must express the sincere opinion that attempts to implement only parts of Family to Family appear ill-advised. Since Family to Family is not a model or program, but a new way of doing business and permeates every action and practice of public child welfare, taking only parts of it and seeking to enact them would most likely be ineffective and cost-prohibitive.

### **Santa Clara County**

Santa Clara County has been a Family to Family county since January 2001. Santa Clara County's impetus into Family to Family was as an effort to reduce the children's shelter population. Santa Clara County as part of the Annie E. Casey Foundation grant was given the following:

- A three year grant of one million dollars.
- A three year access to subject matter experts from Family to Family.
- The condition that Santa Clara County would work with law enforcement on child removals/placements.

After three years, Santa Clara County recently ended its three year grant agreement with the Annie E. Casey Foundation and deemed Family to Family a success in Santa Clara County as they were able to integrate Family to Family principles into its

business practices and complete the above mentioned goals.

It is recommended that Santa Clara County train and familiarize its staff with its version of Family to Family. When asked, staff in Santa Clara County respond on the continuum of having never heard of Family to Family to knowing that it is a “program” the county has in practice.

Additionally, it is recommended that Santa Clara County Department of Aging and Adult Services review the core strategies of Family to Family for possible adaptation to provision of services to that department’s clientele.

#### **ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS**

Primary acknowledgement and a great big THANK YOU is extended to Anne Herendeen, our host and coordinator in Monterey County.

We wish to acknowledge the hospitality, time, and information graciously extended to us by the following staff in Monterey County: Elliot Robinson, Robert Tanaguchi, Margaret Huffman, Eileen Esplin, Jennifer Eads, Alice Talavera, Valencia Thomas, Alicia Fregoso, and the Family and Children’s Services receptionist.

We thank Monterey County’s Family to Family Community Liaisons: Arlesha Freeman, Becky Botello, Diane Anderson, and Liz Serrano; as well as the staff and director at the CHERISH Children’s Center.

We further wish to acknowledge and thank our county administration for its encouragement and support in participating in the BASSC Executive Development Training and this project.

ATTACHMENT A (Page 1)

Your Team Decisionmaking Meeting:

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Time: \_\_\_\_\_

Location: \_\_\_\_\_

Social Worker: \_\_\_\_\_

Social Worker's Telephone #: \_\_\_\_\_

If you need help with:

- Transportation
- Child Care
- Translation

Or for other special needs or additional information, please notify your social worker or call the Main Office at (831) 755-4475 and ask for the TDM Facilitator.

*What Makes an Effective Meeting?*

- Each participant having the opportunity to be heard
- Each participant contributing to the process in an honest and respectful manner
- Each participant expressing a willingness and a commitment to providing the best placement for the child

*What are the Goals of a TDM?*

*Whenever it is possible and safe, it is our hope to:*

- Keep children within their homes & families
- Keep children in their schools and communities
- If placement is necessary, place children with extended family and friends
- Keep siblings together



*Team Decisionmaking Meeting*



*"Everyone's Chance to Care"*



Monterey County Department of Social & Family Services  
Employment Services  
Family & Children's Services Division  
1000 South Main St, Suite 112  
Salinas, CA 93901

Phone: 831.755.4475

Fax: 831.755-4438

Website: [www.montereycowaithingchild.org](http://www.montereycowaithingchild.org)

*"Community Involvement in Strengthening Families"*

Monterey County DSES  
Family & Children's Services Division

ATTACHMENT A (Page 2)

**What Is a TDM?**

- A Team Decisionmaking Meeting (TDM) brings people who are involved with the family together
- The meeting is held to ensure the best decision is made about the care and placement of the child
- The focus is on the safety and needs of the child and family

**When does a TDM occur?**

- When a child's safety or well-being in the home is of concern
- When a child has been removed from his or her home
- When a child who is detained by the Court and a change in placement is required, requested, or being considered
- When a child is soon to be reunified with his or her family/guardian

**Who Attends a TDM?**

- Parents/guardians/family members
- Child (as appropriate)
- Family's support system
- Social Worker
- Social Work Supervisor
- Community Liaison or other community members as identified by the family or social worker
- Resource (Foster) parents as appropriate
- TDM Facilitator

**What happens at a TDM?**

- Introductions are made
- Guidelines are established
- Safety concerns are presented by the social worker and other participants
- Participants identify: the child's needs; the family's strengths and needs; community resources available; a plan for the child's immediate safety needs
- A Team Decision is made regarding the placement of the child
- Meetings are 1 to 2 hours long

**Why Have a TDM?**

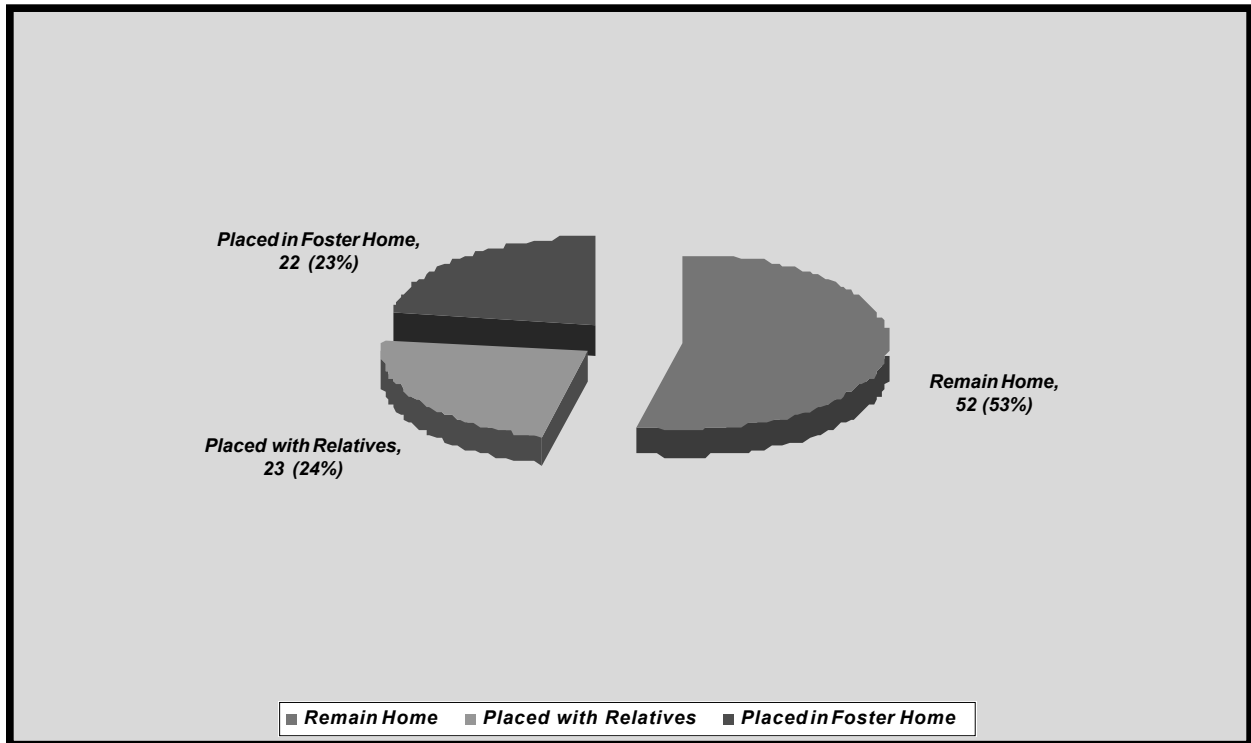
*Better placement decisions are made because:*

- Broader participation leads to creative ideas and solutions
- Parent/guardians are involved in the decision making
- Extended family and friends provide insight
- Valuable information about the child is shared
- People and places important to the child are acknowledged and respected
- Children are more likely to remain within their home community



**ATTACHMENT B**

**Monterey County's TDM Statistics  
97 Children (in 59 TDM's)**



**5/1/04-2/28/05 Census Data**

