

CHILD WELFARE AND CALWORKS CROSSOVER SERVICES IN SANTA CRUZ COUNTY

Marion Deeds*

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

GENERAL

Generally, the Santa Cruz Human Resources Agency (HRA) has an egalitarian and entrepreneurial culture, with collaboration happening in many different areas. The agency has two district offices; a north county office in Santa Cruz and a south county office in Watsonville. The Juvenile Court and other county services are located only in Santa Cruz.

CALWORKS AND CPS CROSSOVER

The goal of the program is a coordinated case plan and better sharing of information about the needs and strengths of families receiving assistance. The crossover model contains the following elements:

- The county identifies CalWORKS cases and child welfare services (CWS) cases at the time of referral for CWS, and at the time of intake for CalWORKS.
- Minimum contacts between the case managers are mandated by written policy and procedure.
- Information sharing is addressed in the policy, and workers get a signed Release of Information from clients, so that, if needed, information can also be shared with the Families in Transition program and the Answers Benefiting Children resource center. A standing order from the county's juvenile court permits the sharing of information at the Multi-disciplinary Team (MDT) case conferences.

- MDT case conferences are available for cases where coordination of the case plans is difficult or the family has many needs.
- Senior social workers are assigned to the Intensive Services unit in CalWORKS to provide services to CalWORKS families who face barriers to employment.

In Watsonville, the CWS ER supervisor has added an intermediate crossover step that gets staff discussing the case at the point of referral. This "informal" crossover meeting includes EW's from Food Stamps and Medi-Cal as well as CalWORKS.

Santa Cruz County has a close relationship with a community-based organization called Families in Transition (FIT). This agency often participates in the MDT. An EW is sited at their office, and carries the cases of families who use FIT services.

Program managers receive a quarterly report of cases receiving services from both programs, and supervisors review this report with staff and monitor that mandated contacts between case managers have been made and documented. Since May 1999, about forty cases have been reviewed at the MDTs. The county is exploring the possibility of specializing the crossover cases, in order to insure uniform use of the services, but this is only in the discussion phases. The county does plan to expand crossover to its non-welfare (former JTPA) cases, and is planning to locate an Employment and Training

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Specialist, the equivalent of our SonomaWORKS case manager, with CWS in the Santa Cruz office.

Santa Cruz struggles with the poor coordination of information between CWS/CMS and CDS. An interim solution has been provided by the state. The county hopes that the SMART system will alleviate this problem.

FUNDING

Currently the county is able to pay for some services that are identified by the CWS worker through CalWORKS funding. They do not have CPS social workers time-studying to CalWORKS.

RECOMMENDATION

Santa Cruz's crossover policy and procedure could be adapted to Sonoma County with very little trouble. The "informal" crossover meeting, developed in the Watsonville office by the ER supervisor, is an exciting program which would be more challenging to implement in our county, but is closer to a truly "integrated service" model, since it extends beyond CalWORKS. It is recommended that that Santa Cruz model be reviewed by the Department's Integrated Service Team, and that the Department continue with plans to identify dual clients and exchange case plan information between SonomaWORKS and child welfare services staff. Issues to be explored include: identification of cases, confidentiality, co-location, specialization, and the use of pilot projects. Because child welfare and SonomaWORKS staff are not located close to one another, components of crossover such as the Watsonville information sharing meeting and MDT case conference will be more challenging. An incremental approach is recommended. During the remainder of the calendar year, the Integrated Service team could begin the following activities:

- Cross communication between the E&T and FY&C Division has already begun with presentations to each division from the other in April, 2000.
- Presentation from county BASSC participants on crossover
- Discussion of confidentiality and release of information. Review the possibility of a standing court order with the Juvenile Court and County Counsel. County Counsel already has copies of Santa Cruz's court order and releases of information.
- Convene a work group of line staff from SonomaWORKS and CPS to develop processes and procedures for information sharing. Staff for this work group have already been identified in the Employment and Training Division (E&T) and are in the process of being identified in FY&C. The group could report to the Integrated Service Team as a sub-committee.
- Discussion of a "kick off" event, and development of one if needed.

By the end of the calendar year Sonoma County should be able to have consistent information sharing in place between these two divisions. This would include contacts between E&T and FY&C staff and the sharing of key elements of case plans. Development of a functional MDT conference may not be able to be developed until early 2001 because of the logistics involved. Review of the possible placement of a child welfare social worker at E&T, even if only one or two days a week, is also recommended.

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“A perhaps long-term, lofty goal would be to plan for the day when there is support, structure and policy allowing a CPS worker, a CalWORKS worker and a client to all sit down at the same time and draft a service plan together.”

Trevor Davis, CPS Supervisor
Watsonville Office,
Santa Cruz County HRA

For many people, the name Santa Cruz conjures up images of redwood trees, rolling surf and a “laid back” attitude. After my visit to study crossover services for CalWORKS and child welfare clients, the impression I carry of the Santa Cruz Human Resources Agency (HRA) is of an egalitarian and entrepreneurial culture with collaboration and innovation happening in many areas. Crossover is only one element of the county’s commitment to high-quality family-centered services.

Mark Holguin, Child Welfare Program Manager, was my facilitator in Santa Cruz. When I was at the Watsonville office I spent a great deal of time with Trevor Davis, supervisor of the bilingual ER/FM unit. My focus was primarily on the child welfare side of crossover even though I did meet with CalWORKS staff.

With an estimated population of 245,600, Santa Cruz is roughly one half the size of Sonoma County. Caseload sizes are about two-thirds the size of Sonoma County’s. The Human Resource Agency has two district offices; one in Santa Cruz, serving the northern end of the county, and one in Watsonville serving the southern. Organizationally, the HRA is set up much like Sonoma County’s

Human Services Department, but Sonoma does not have district offices. It was interesting for me to see the crossover procedures applied in two different office environments.

BACKGROUND

Santa Cruz began working on the idea of crossover in 1998. The objectives of crossover services in Santa Cruz were to develop an agency culture that looks at and serves the whole family, with a focus on family centered practice, and to coordinate a flexible case planning process that promotes strong, healthy, economically self-sufficient families. In September 1998 the Agency estimated that 23% of the children receiving child welfare services had a parent or caretaker relative receiving TANF, and would meet the definition of a crossover family.

Barriers to self-sufficiency and barriers to providing a safe, stable home for children are often the same; alcohol and substance abuse, unemployment, illiteracy and homelessness. Welfare Reform, with the “ticking clocks” of timeframes and deadlines, brought urgency to the project, but it also brought money. CalWORKS funding could be used to pay for services that would not only lead the family toward self-sufficiency but would also enable them to better protect their children from abuse or neglect.

HRA staff trainers provided information to CalWORKS and CPS staff on the time frames, requirements and services of each program. The Agency developed a crossover steering committee comprised of managers from CPS, CalWORKS and

JTPA, who began researching and developing procedures. The agency studied the San Mateo Success plan as one model of crossover services, with an emphasis on its MDT.

The procedures were fully implemented in 1999. Crossover procedures are well established in both offices. From the point of intake until a family leaves an aid program, the county expects communication between case managers, and, where possible, coordinated services. The procedures address identification of clients, confidentiality and the release of information, communications between staff, and use of the multi-disciplinary case conference. Staff development includes training on crossover services as part of the regular curriculum to new hires.

The steering committee is exploring possible co-location of child welfare and employment and training staff in the Santa Cruz office, and the possibility of using crossover procedures with juvenile probation cases.

FEATURES OF CROSS-OVER SERVICES

Crossover services in Santa Cruz contains the following components:

- Inter-program communication
- Social Workers co-located with Employment and Training services
- Multi-disciplinary Team case conference

As part of the Emergency Response assessment, the ER field worker is expected to include information from the CalWORKS Eligibility Worker or Employment and Training Specialist (ETS) on active aid cases. For on-going cases in both CalWORKS and CPS, the two workers must discuss the case when any of the following incidents occur:

- when a CWS case plan is updated
- the return or identification of a non-custodial parent
- a change in the child welfare service plan
- when a child currently receiving Family Maintenance services in his or her home is going to be removed from the home
- when a child receiving Family Reunification services is about to be returned home.

Workers are encouraged to discuss crossover cases at any point it is necessary to better coordinate services for the family.

Each month, program managers in both programs get a list of crossover cases. They pass this list on to the supervisors, who review the cases to see if crossover contacts have been documented in the case record.

The placement of senior social workers, the equivalent of Sonoma County's Social Worker IV's, in the CalWORKS division is a cornerstone of Santa Cruz's program. One crucial factor in developing crossover services is the ability to answer staff's question, "How is this useful?" or even more directly, "What's in this for me?" With social workers stationed in the CalWORKS division, the ETS's can refer families with problems directly to staff who will help them. Location of social work staff with eligibility staff also facilitates communication and breaks down some of the stereotypes each group has of the other.

CLIENT IDENTIFICATION

Cases are identified at intake. In child welfare, the Emergency Response telephone screeners search each referral on the Case Data System (CDS) as well as the Child Welfare Services/Case Manage-

ment System (CWS/CMS), to identify any active aid cases, or aid cases that have been closed within the last year. If the case is active, they note the worker's name and number on the referral, which is sent on to the ER field worker. The field worker's supervisor is also notified that this is a crossover case. As part of the ER worker's assessment of the allegation, he or she must document contact with the other case manager, and include their information in the assessment. Paper referrals are also searched in this manner.

As with every county, Santa Cruz receives allegations of child abuse that are not appropriate for investigation. Some of these are custody disputes or issues of parenting style, and some do indicate a potential problem, but not one severe enough to place a child at risk. Before making the determination to "assess out" these calls, the Santa Cruz screeners search the case and contact any worker assigned to an active case to get their impressions of the family and the situation. Responses may range from, "I've never met them, but they get their paperwork in on time," to detailed information which may change the screener's original assessment, and have the referral assigned to a field worker.

In CalWORKS, the case is first searched on CDS. Because the interface between CWS/CMS and CDS is not 100% accurate, the county has placed a CMS computer in the CalWORKS office. Staff search CMS to identify any active child welfare cases. The same procedure to notify worker and supervisor is followed.

CONFIDENTIALITY

In each program, workers get a release of information from the identified crossover clients, authoriz-

ing the sharing of information between programs and other agencies. The worker and client specify which agencies are included on the release. These might include Families in Transition, a community-based organization with close ties to the HRA which specializes in housing problems, or the Answers Benefiting Children Family Resource Center in Watsonville. The release is good for twelve calendar months.

In child welfare cases where the child is a dependent of the Santa Cruz Juvenile Court, the court issues a standard order permitting the release of information to the multi-disciplinary team for the purposes of a case conference.

When I found out that Santa Cruz gets a release of information from clients even though the information will be shared within the agency for the purpose of managing a public service program, I thought it was nice but unnecessary. Then I returned to my home county and reviewed W&I code section 18986.46, which specifies that MDT's must have a release from the client in order to share records, and I decided that they shown brilliant foresight in developing their procedure. With a release on file, workers can refer their cases to the MDT at any time within the year without having to get a release from the client at the last minute.

At the MDT meetings, each participant signs a sign-in sheet that also contains a confidentiality agreement.

MULTI-DISCIPLINARY TEAM

Any staff member responsible for case management of a family's case may recommend the family for review at the multi-disciplinary case conference. Two conferences are held per month; one in north

county and one in south. Usually three cases are reviewed. A Child Welfare Program Manager, currently Mark Holguin, schedules the meetings and the cases. At minimum, the child welfare worker and the CalWORKS case manager attend, although either case manager may invite other staff if they have knowledge of the case.

I was able to attend the MDT meeting in Watsonville during my visit. At this meeting, four cases were reviewed. Two cases represented one multi-generational family.

Participants at the MDT included CalWORKS ETS's and managers, a CalWORKS social worker, Mark Holguin, child welfare manager, CPS workers, the CalWORKS drug and alcohol counselor, and a staff person from Families in Transition. The CPS social worker for one case did not show up until the meeting was over because she had been assigned an Immediate Response referral requiring investigation. One other CPS worker did not attend. In spite of these absences, the information shared about the families was compelling and useful. In one case, a counselor from a private counseling agency attended because she was working with the mother. She mentioned that the mother had Attention Deficit Disorder. This was a revelation to both the CalWORKS social worker and the CPS worker, who said that the information explained some behavior she had observed while working with the family.

In the case of the two-generation family, it became clear that the grandmother was going to lose custody, at least temporarily, of her children. This would end her eligibility for CalWORKS cash and linked Medi-Cal services effective the end of the month. The staff person from FIT and the CalWORKS counselor both used this information to

schedule her for services before the end of the month, while she was still eligible. The image of two service providers pulling out day planners may not seem like a compelling one, but too often in a "traditional" system families fall through the cracks precisely because benefits end in one program and other programs are not even aware of it, and therefore cannot coordinate their services.

Mark Holguin says that there are some workers in both programs who have never recommended a case for an MDT, and perhaps never will. Despite Santa Cruz's concerted and consistent effort to implement crossover services, some people still do not see the benefits or feel that they do not have the time. It is also possible that people could go their whole careers without having a case that required an MDT case conference.

One reason for referring a case to the MDT is that the family cannot meet program deadlines. As the clocks in CalWORKS continue to tick and Santa Cruz reaches its "hard to serve" population, more cases may be referred.

CROSSOVER; MORE THAN A PROGRAM, A STATE OF MIND

In Watsonville, there is another aspect to crossover. In the Watsonville office, the child welfare workers are housed next door to the CalWORKS one-stop shop. They share a floor with Children's Mental Health and California Children's Services. A block west is the Job Opportunity and Benefits Division (JOBOD) where the TANF, Medi-Cal and Food Stamp eligibility workers work. The Answers Benefiting Children Family Resource Center and WIC sit one block north. All services are convenient for families, especially families who may not have vehicles.

The CalWORKS and ER supervisors in Watsonville have developed a weekly meeting where they review child abuse referrals on families receiving aid. Trevor Davis, the ER supervisor, has each referral searched again to identify any case receiving TANF, Medi-Cal or Food Stamps. The list of those referrals forms the agenda for the meeting. He sends the list to the CalWORKS supervisors before the meeting so that they can review the case with their workers. The EW's may join the meeting, or they may merely pass on information for the supervisors to bring to the meeting.

This is a new process which Trevor initiated and the CalWORKS supervisors helped him refine. They have already identified one "glitch;" his clerical person identified the Edwards versus Meyers Medi-Cal worker on her search. This worker often has had no contact with the family. In the meeting I attended, three CalWORKS supervisors, one CPS supervisor (Trevor), two ETS's and two EW's participated. Once again, information flowed both ways. In one case, the EW had seen the client the day before, and the client had not mentioned that her children had been removed from her home over the weekend. In another, the EW was able to give Trevor information about relatives in the area. Without divulging unnecessary details about the allegations, Trevor was able to discuss what his worker's process would be, and inform the EW's better about the child welfare process.

At the end of the meeting, the EW's took advantage of the opportunity to ask Trevor some questions about CPS referrals in general. One worker stated that she had referred two cases with similar allegations; one had been treated as an Immediate Response and one had not. She was curious about the difference. She mentioned that with the Immediate Response case the child had bruises,

but the reason given by the parent seemed plausible. Trevor replied, "Bruises fade. With something like bruises, which could be evidence if we have to go to court, it is important to see the child quickly so we can decide if we need to have pictures." This was clearly a learning moment for the EW, who now understood something about the evidentiary requirements of child protective services in a new and immediate way. These are the kinds of insights we try to create in formal training and information sharing meetings, with far less success.

WHAT THE FUTURE HOLDS

The HRA's future plans include involving non-welfare or JTPA cases in the crossover process, the collocation of a Cal WORKS ETS with CPS workers, and exploration of specialized "crossover" case-loads. A specialized unit would create more uniform use of the MDT.

Mark plans to bring the Watsonville early information-sharing model to the Santa Cruz office as well.

FUNDING

The HRA uses crossover as a way to draw down CalWORKS funding for services for clients who also receive child welfare services. The county does not, at this time, have CPS staff time-studying to CalWORKS time study categories.

Counties are allocated a certain number of CPS positions by the state through the Preliminary County Allocation Budget (PCAB) process. If a county chooses to fund positions over and above the state allocation, the county assumes the cost of the state share for those extra positions. This is known as "overmatching." Santa Cruz does not overmatch its child welfare allocation, so there would be no

immediate fiscal benefit to the county to shift staff costs to CalWORKS. The agency, in fact, has concerns that shifting costs could have a negative impact on the CWS allocation.

LESSONS LEARNED

I asked Mark Holguin what he felt he had learned managing crossover, and what he would do differently if he were doing it again.

Mark said that he felt the steering committee lost its focus for a while, especially during the implementation of welfare reform. The HRA began working on crossover before welfare reform, but welfare reform was an all-consuming program. Many of the managers assigned to crossover were also assigned to welfare reform, and crossover took a back seat temporarily.

Coordination of diverse computer systems was a substantial factor in the implementation of crossover. Sue Clements, the Systems Analyst who supports CWS/CMS, must still rely on a quarterly report from the state Health and Welfare Data Center (HWDC) for a list of current crossover cases. Sue must use a seven-step process to compare HWDC's list to an ad hoc report generated in CDS. The agreement Sue has with HWDC about the generation of this report is informal, and the person who generated the report for her has now moved on to another assignment. It remains to be seen whether the HRA will be able to depend upon HWDC's help in the future.

As with any program in any human service agency, there are pockets of resistance and staff who will only do the stated minimum to support an agency initiative. Santa Cruz is no different. When it comes to continuing and strengthening crossover services,

the agency has three strong factors in its favor. The first is the fact that managers, from the Executive down to Program Managers, not only support crossover but are enthusiastic about it. Secondly, at least in the Watsonville office, supervisors and line staff have bought in to the concept and support it as well. Last but certainly not least, there is a feeling of mutual trust and respect among managers and supervisors in the HRA. In this environment, crossover feels more like a natural extension of work practice than a program artificially "grafted" onto a traditional work model.

IMPLICATIONS FOR SONOMA COUNTY

Sonoma County is currently identifying dual clients. We encourage child welfare staff and SonomaWORKS (CalWORKS) to contact each other and review joint cases. Two child welfare supervisors made a presentation to SonomaWORKS staff about child welfare programs, and two Employment and Training case managers discussed their programs at a child welfare services staff meeting. Child Welfare services staff were surprised and pleased at the kinds of services Employment and Training can offer, and interested in pursuing the idea of better coordination of services.

Planner Analysts from both divisions are currently formalizing the identification and communication procedures.

The department is looking at the issue of crossover in a larger context, one of integrated services for all clients. The Integrated Service team, comprised of managers and line staff from each division, is charged with planning a model of integrated services. This team is encouraged to look "outside of the box" for ways to serve clients and families in a streamlined and comprehensive way. Crossover

between child welfare and SonomaWORKS clients may be a good first step for this committee. Issues for the Integrated Service team to consider include:

- co-locating of staff.
- “pilot” projects versus full department implementation. One possible pilot could be placing an ER worker in SonomaWORKS, or having one on site certain days of the week.
- specialization of crossover caseloads versus general application of crossover
- steps to be taken to insure confidentiality (revised Releases of Information, requesting the juvenile court to issue a standing order, and so on)
- how automation systems can enhance or impede crossover

Geography plays a role in any crossover program Sonoma County will develop. SonomaWORKS staff and child welfare services staff are housed in offices about ten miles apart. As powerful as the Watsonville information-sharing meeting is, it works in large part because it is easy and convenient for staff to attend. We may want to explore alternatives to it, such as conference calls, or rotating the meeting site between offices. This meeting would have to have the support of the key supervisors, and staff would need to see a “payoff” quickly for it to be successful in our county. A unit to discuss this with would be the bilingual ER/FM unit. This unit serves monolingual Spanish speaking families, and a constant concern is the dearth of services. The chance to explore and perhaps develop services with SonomaWORKS might be just such a payoff.

Since Sonoma County does not overmatch its child welfare allocation, it does not seem necessary or desirable to have child welfare staff time studying to SonomaWORKS. The emergency CPS augmenta-

tion will play a larger role in funding of positions than this time-study strategy would, and it is possible that time-studying to SonomaWORKS could have a negative impact on the county if it appears that we are successfully managing more cases with fewer CPS workers. If the department chose to site Social Worker IV's in the SonomaWORKS offices, those staff would time-study to SonomaWORKS.

Sonoma County is at “Step One” of the process Santa Cruz began in 1998. Because of the similarities in organization, types of families served, and agency values, the Santa Cruz model seems like a good one for Sonoma to borrow from as we begin to build our own integrated service model.

ATTACHMENTS

- 1—Recommended Actions and Timelines
- 2—Santa Cruz Guidelines for Crossover Cases
- 3—Release of Information
- 4—MDT Participant Sheet and Confidentiality Statement

**Attachment I
Recommended Actions and Tentative Timelines:**

Roy Redlich, Planner Analyst in Employment and Training, and I will be making a joint recommendation to the Integrated Services team and Dianne M. Edwards about the direction to take with crossover. The key areas and tentative dates are listed below (actions already completed are shaded):

Action	Completion Dates
Develop procedure for case identification at intake for both child welfare and SonomaWORKS clients	2/2000
Presentation at E&T technical meeting by child welfare staff. Presentation to Child Welfare staff by E&T staff	2/2000 4/2000
Send copies of Santa Cruz standing court order for release of information, and copies of Releases, to Sonoma County Counsel	5/2000
Present information crossover programs in Santa Cruz and Contra Costa counties to Integrated Service team, and get the team's approval to continue.	Mid-June, 2000
Develop a work group of line staff from both divisions, facilitated by Planner Analysts, to address and develop processes and procedures for contact and information sharing, and development of MDT case conference. This group will act as a sub-committee to the Integrated Service Team	7/2000-12/2000
Set a meeting with the Sonoma County Juvenile Court to begin discussion of crossover process and development of standing court order	7/2000
Finalize processes and procedures for information sharing. Staff drafts of documents	8/2000
Discuss possibility of pilots; such as "The Watsonville Model" or co-locating of ER staff. Tasks include: Discussion with line staff work group and get recommendation Watsonville Model:	Begin in 7/2000 Co-located staff may be dependent upon ER emergency augmentation funds


Action	Completion Dates
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identify units to pilot Watsonville model. The supervisors of these units must support crossover. The ideal choice would be staff who have experience in both TANF and CPS. • Identify and problem-solve logistical problems. • Create clerical process, with accelerated time-frames, to identify cases. • Prepare for and set time frames for pilot, if approved. <p>Out-stationed CPS worker:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Discuss with line staff work group and get recommendation • Identify staff who would be best choice. • Identify and problem-solve infrastructure needs. • Create processes and procedures; criteria for referral, communication lines, etc. • Determine funding for positions. • Prepare for and set time frames for pilot, if approved. 	
<p>Begin discussion of integration of SMART system into case identification process</p> <p>Tasks include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Get information from systems unit, • Set up regular status review meetings with systems staff 	<p>8/2000</p> <p>ongoing</p>
<p>Implement information sharing</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Plan and coordinate "kick-off" event if needed 	10/2000
<p>Implementation of MDT case conference</p>	<p>After 9/2000, by end of year or early 2001</p>

Attachment 2

CHILD WELFARE SERVICES PROCEDURE	Section I 99-003	Effective Date: May, 1999
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DATE: 5/7/99

TO: To All CWS Procedures Manual Holder

FROM: Mark Lane, Division Director 

SUBJECT: GUIDELINES FOR "CROSS-OVER" CASES

Summary: This Procedure defines AFC policy and procedures for "Cross-over" Cases.

Definition of Cross-Over Cases

"Cross-over" cases are defined as any client's family that receives Child Welfare Services and workforce development services from CalWORKS and/or JTPA. Most of these families also receive additional services such as Medi-Cal and FoodStamps. They may be involved with Families in Transition and other community based organizations (CBOs).

Baseline of Cross-Over Cases

The rationale for creating policy guidelines for cross-over cases is supported by the number of families involved with both child welfare and workforce development services and the desire to promote healthy, safe and self-sufficient families. As of September 30, 1998, it is our best estimate that approximately 23% of children in CWS have a parent or guardian relative involved in CalWORKS.

Guiding Principles for Best Practices

The principles that guide practice in working with families involved in the Child Welfare system and who also receiving workforce development services are:

- Promote family-centered services
- Emphasize family strengths
- Prevent the escalation of problems
- Protect the child(ren) /family from harm
- Preserve family stability
- Promote family self-sufficiency through employment
- Ensure permanency and support for children as they grow into young adults

Objectives

By establishing policy guidelines for cross-over cases we hope to accomplish the following:

- ✓ Develop an agency culture that looks at and serves the whole family with a focus on *family centered practice*.
- ✓ Coordinate a flexible case planning process to promote strong, healthy and economically self-sufficient families.
- ✓ Designate child welfare service activities as allowable work activities, as appropriate, to minimize competing demands on families

- ✓ Identify cross-over cases early to assure agency coordination and support of families at key decision points, including temporary exemptions from Welfare-to-Work activities
- ✓ Use CalWORKS/JTPA funds and child welfare funds to access to needed support services, especially in the area of drug and alcohol services

Policy Guidelines

Policy guidelines have been created for the following areas in order to support the development of coordinated family-centered case plans for families involved with both child welfare and workforce development activities. See Attached HRA Information-Sharing Policy 4/30/99)

- *Cross-Over Case Identification:* Identification of cross-over cases shall be made at intake for CPS, JTPA and CalWORKS/Welfare-to-Work participants and prior to the return of children from foster care.
- *Information Sharing:* Client confidentiality shall be maintained; however, information, which is relevant to the development of a service plan, may be shared between workers in the various HRA programs. Based on the guidelines for Multidisciplinary Teams, as set forth in the W & I Code Section 10850, information generated in this manner is not to be used to penalize or sanction families.

Each division will inform clients via a *Release of Information* form that information may be shared between specified programs in order to coordinate services and to reduce duplication of efforts.

- All HRA Clients shall be informed via a standard *Release of Information* form that information will be shared between specified programs in order to coordinate services and to reduce duplication of efforts, as a standard part of the intake process in each program. For involuntary CWS clients there is a standing order of the Juvenile Court, which also allows sharing of information.
- JOBS Division Social Workers have access to CWS/CMS information; however, this is restricted to case and referral history screens only.
- *Welfare-to-Work Activities:* Identified cross-over families, with adult recipients required to participate in Welfare-to-Work activities as a condition of receiving cash aid, will receive integrated services which include service plans coordinated with all programs. In all Child Welfare cases, the Child Welfare Social Worker will serve as the primary case manager and Child Welfare Services may be incorporated into the Welfare-to-Work Plan Activity Agreements as an allowable work activity.
- *Staff Development/Training:* Specified divisions within HRA will integrate information about the cross-over process into their induction and on-going training programs for staff. Cross-training in basic information about programs in all divisions shall be provided to all HRA staff, as appropriate.

Procedures for Cross-Over Cases

To promote communication between CalWORKS, JTPA and Child Welfare, each division will have procedures for early identification and follow-up in cases where more than one division is involved. It is expected that once a cross-over connection has been identified, the lead CWS worker will contact all other HRA case managers. An MDT (multi-disciplinary team staffing) may be initiated after consultation with each supervisor and worker.

Child Welfare Services Cross-Over Procedures

At intake/screening: The Screening Unit will check each Referral name in the CDS system for a possible link to an eligibility case. If there is a link, the EW will be identified as the primary CalWORKS contact.

- 1) Referrals Assessed Out at Intake:
 - If the case is clearly inappropriate for CPS investigation (no protective issues), the case will be closed without additional CalWORKS contact.
 - If the case is possibly appropriate for CPS investigation, the Screener will contact the EW for additional information as part of the total Screening assessment prior to making a decision. The primary goal is to solicit information the EW may have regarding child abuse/neglect. The Screener will not provide the EW any specific information about the referral at this point. The CalWORKS information will be recorded on the referral narrative.
- 2) Referrals assigned for investigation:
 - Every assigned case will be reviewed for any CalWORKS involvement during the screening process.
 - If CPS Screening identifies a cross-over case, the CPS Investigating Social Worker and respective Supervisor will be notified. The CPS Investigating Social Worker will then contact the other program case managers for additional information and include that information in their assessment of over-all risk to the children in the family.

Ongoing CWS cases: The assigned Social Worker will consult with the CalWORKS EW or ETS regarding caseplans and required activities at regular intervals.

At a minimum, On-going CWS Workers should discuss the case with CalWORKS regarding services and mandates and with FIT staff if they are offering services or if the family needs assistance with housing-related issues:

- When a CWS caseplan is updated.
- Prior to return of a child to parents if the child has been receiving either Family Reunification or Permanency Planning Services.
- Whenever it appears that a child receiving Family Maintenance services will be placed in out-of-home care. For clients with housing vouchers, the Social Worker should also contact FIT if there are questions regarding the client's ability to maintain eligibility for housing subsidies if the children are removed.
- When there are issues regarding identification or location of an absent parent that may affect the CWS or CalWORKS caseplans.

Case Conferences/Multi-Disciplinary Team Meetings

In addition to informal contact between workers, case-conferences (MDTs) are available to facilitate planning across the Programs.

Prior to an MDT meeting

Workers should have a phone conference to review the elements of each caseplan. If the workers are unable to develop a coordinated plan, the MDT will schedule the case for review.

To Initiate an MDT meeting

The following criteria will be used to initiate a formal conference or MDT meeting:

- All CPS Family Maintenance cases where families are using Housing Vouchers, and it has been determined that there is a risk of out-of-home placement should be reviewed in a timely manner.
- Any CWS cases where families have an active Welfare-to-Work plan may be scheduled for a review if the CWS Social Worker, Eligibility Worker or Employment Training Specialist requests a difficult case staffing, especially if conflict in timelines is identified.
- Families receiving Child Welfare Family Reunification or Permanency Planning Services may be reviewed prior to the return of a child(ren) to parents who have been or will be on aid.
- Child Welfare cases under investigation where there is a possibility of resolving the risk to children through services and monitoring incorporated into the Welfare-to-Work plan.

When it has been determined that an MDT meeting is appropriate, the CWS Supervisor or Social Worker will contact the CWS On-going Program Manager who will then set up the MDT.

The CWS primary case manager is responsible for inviting any outside parties who are relevant to the caseplan (i.e., Mental Health, Probation, CBOs, etc.). The CWS worker will prepare a Caseplan Summary (CWS 54 attached) for distribution at the MDT meeting.

At the MDT Meeting:

The CWS Worker will take the lead in presenting the case, summarizing caseplan objectives, activities and required timelines in the case presentation. Workers from each program involved with the family will also summarize the activities and timelines in their caseplans with the family. Discussion will focus on how to coordinate these plans with a primary goal of child safety, and a secondary goal of family self-sufficiency. In all cases where CWS is involved, the CWS worker will have primary responsibility for developing and implementing the coordinated caseplans. The intent of the MDT consultation on cross-over cases is to ensure full communication and coordination of services between all HRA case managers who are working with the same family and to facilitate problem-solving regarding any existing barriers within the service delivery system.

MDT meetings will be held on Fridays and alternate between North and South County. (Currently, meetings are the 2nd and 4th Friday of each month.)

CalWORKS Cross-Over Procedures

At CalWORKS intake:

All applicants for CalWORKS will be screened for Child Welfare Service Cases as follows:

1. Using the existing CDS database, CalWORKS intake workers will determine if a case has ever been open to Services. If CDS indicates that there has been a Services case, the case will be referred to the JOB Social Workers for further verification.
2. The JOB Social Workers will check CWS/CMS history screens for history only and to verify the current status of the CWS case (allegations, currently open or closed, current program and worker).
3. If there is an active CPS case or an active referral, the JOB Social Worker will contact the CPS Social Worker by phone or e-mail regarding the CalWORKS application and provide the name of the EW.
4. The JOB Social Worker will complete the return section of the Behavioral Assessment summarizing the information for the EW case files.
5. If the CWS case and referral are closed, the JOB Social Worker may contact the screening unit for additional information pertinent to JOB services and may make a CPS referral if circumstances warrant it.

JTPA/CareerWorks Procedures: (Non-CalWORKS Employment Training)

All clients who are not receiving TANF (non-CalWORKS clients) and who are enrolled in training activities through CareerWorks will be asked about CPS involvement at CareerWorks intake. A listing of on-going CareerWorks participants will also be checked for Child Welfare involvement on a regular basis.

For all open CWS cases, the CareerWorks ETS will coordinate services with the CPS Social Worker and proceed with employment services based on the recommendations of the CWS Social Worker as the primary case manager. If the CareerWorks client is not actively involved with Child Welfare Services, CWS will make a determination regarding the need for opening a CWS case based, as usual, on any reported indications of risk to children in the home.

COUNTY OF SANTA CRUZ
INTER-OFFICE CORRESPONDENCE

Date: April 30, 1999
To: All HRA Staff
From: Cecilia Espinola, HRA Administrator
Subject: INFORMATION-SHARING POLICY

During the last year we have worked diligently to coordinate and enhance services for families involved in both CalWORKs and Child Welfare Services. This effort has required our divisions and programs to learn more about one another. Some of these areas include case planning, eligibility, and available support services.

One question that has come up repeatedly is "What types of client information can be shared across divisions?" and "What about confidentiality?" The purpose of this memo is to remind and assure all staff that in accordance with **Division 9, Part 2, Chapter 5, Section 10850 of the Welfare and Institutions Code, information regarding clients may be shared across HRA programs/divisions to the extent necessary for either:**

- verifying eligibility; or
- for other purposes directly connected with the administration of public social services

Please note that the term "public social services" is defined as both assistance and social service programs administered or supervised by the State Department of Social Services or the State Department of Health Services.

You can and should share information **as necessary and appropriate**, whenever you are serving a client that is also being served by another agency program. I hope that this memo serves to clarify any confusion folks may have about the right to share client information with other HRA colleagues. If you still have questions or concerns, either general or regarding a specific client situation, please discuss these with your program manager or division director.

CE:pb

CROSS-OVER CASE PRESENTATIONS

*Instructions to Presenter: Complete all sections except "Recommendations"
 Include Activities and Services required or recommended in your case plan
 Bring 10 copies to Cross-over Case Conference.*

PREPARED BY: _____ DATE: _____

CASE NAME		AGE	LANGUAGE: ENG. SP. OTHER: _____	
ADDRESS:			PHONE:	
OTHER ADULTS IN HOME:	AGE	EMPLOYMENT STATUS	RELATIONSHIP TO CASE/CLIENT	IMMIGRATION STATUS:
1.		1.	1.	1.
2.		2.	2.	2.
3.		3.	3.	3.
CHILD	AGE	PARENT'S NAME(S):		SCHOOL
CHILD	AGE	PARENT'S NAME(S):		SCHOOL
CHILD	AGE	PARENT'S NAME(S):		SCHOOL
HRA PROGRAMS	SERVICE	IDENTIFIED CLIENT	WORKER	EXTENSION
CHILD WELFARE				
TANF OR GA EW				
CAL WORKS ETS				
MEDI-CAL EW				
FOODSTAMPS EW				
JTPA				
FIT				
CHILDCARE				
OTHER				
OUTSIDE AGENCIES PROGRAMS	SERVICE	IDENTIFIED CLIENT	WORKER	PHONE
OTHER				
OTHER				
OTHER				
OTHER				

CROSS-OVER CASE PRESENTATIONS

*Instructions to Presenter: Complete all sections except "Recommendations"
Include Activities and Services required or recommended in your case plan
Bring 10 copies to Cross-over Case Conference.*

Cross-Over Case Name:		Presenter:
IDENTIFIED PROBLEMS:		
FAMILY STRENGTHS		
GOALS:		
REQUIRED/RECOMMENDED ACTIVITIES <small>COMPLETE PRIOR TO CROSS-OVER STAFFING OR ATTACH COPY OF CASEPLAN OBJECTIVES AND ACTIVITIES</small>	MANDATED? BY WHOM? CONSEQUENCES OF FAILURE? <small>COMPLETE PRIOR TO CROSS-OVER STAFFING</small>	
CROSS-OVER CONFERENCE RECOMMENDATIONS: <small>To Be Completed at Cross-over Staffing</small>		
SIGNATURE:		

Attachment 3

Santa Cruz County Human Resources Agency

RELEASE OF INFORMATION
between the Job Opportunities and Benefits Division
and Other Agencies and Professionals

I, _____, hereby, authorize the release of information about myself
(Print)

and/or my child (ren): _____

Between the Job Opportunities and Benefits Division of the Human Resources Agency and
(please indicate agency):

This release is limited to information concerning: assessment\evaluation, treatment, status and
progress in treatment, supportive services, coordination of services, school attendance
verification, and immunization verification.

Restriction: Release or transfer of the specified information or agency not named herein is
prohibited unless a separate Release of Information Form is signed.

This authorization expires on: _____
(Date not to exceed 12 months)

I understand that I may revoke this consent at any time.

Signature: _____ Date: _____

Agency Representative: _____ Date: _____

Attachment 4

SANTA CRUZ COUNTY
ADULT, FAMILY AND CHILDREN'S SERVICES DIVISION

MULTI-DISCIPLINARY TEAM
SIGN-IN SHEET

DATE: _____

SUBJECT: _____

We, the undersigned, constitute a Multi-Disciplinary team of professionals trained in the prevention, identification and treatment of child abuse and neglect. I understand that all information discussed in context of a Multi-disciplinary team is confidential pursuant to PC 11167.5 Welfare & institutions Code Section 827 and 18965, and the Standing Order of the Santa Cruz County Juvenile Court regarding records coming under the purview of the Juvenile Court. I understand that failure to keep this information confidential is a misdemeanor under California law which could result in a fine or jail sentence.

Name	Agency Name, Address, Phone
1.	
2.	
3.	
4.	
5.	
6.	
7.	
8.	
9.	
10	