

CONTINUUM OF CARE REFORM (CCR)

**Los Angeles County Dependency Court Training
September 20, 2016**



Myth Busting

All group homes are closing!

All kids have to be out of group homes by January 1st!

Many relatives will not be able to meet new approval standards!

Congregate care placement is strictly capped at 6 months!



There will be no longer be emergency placements with relatives!

Nothing will actually change!

Roadmap of Today's Presentation

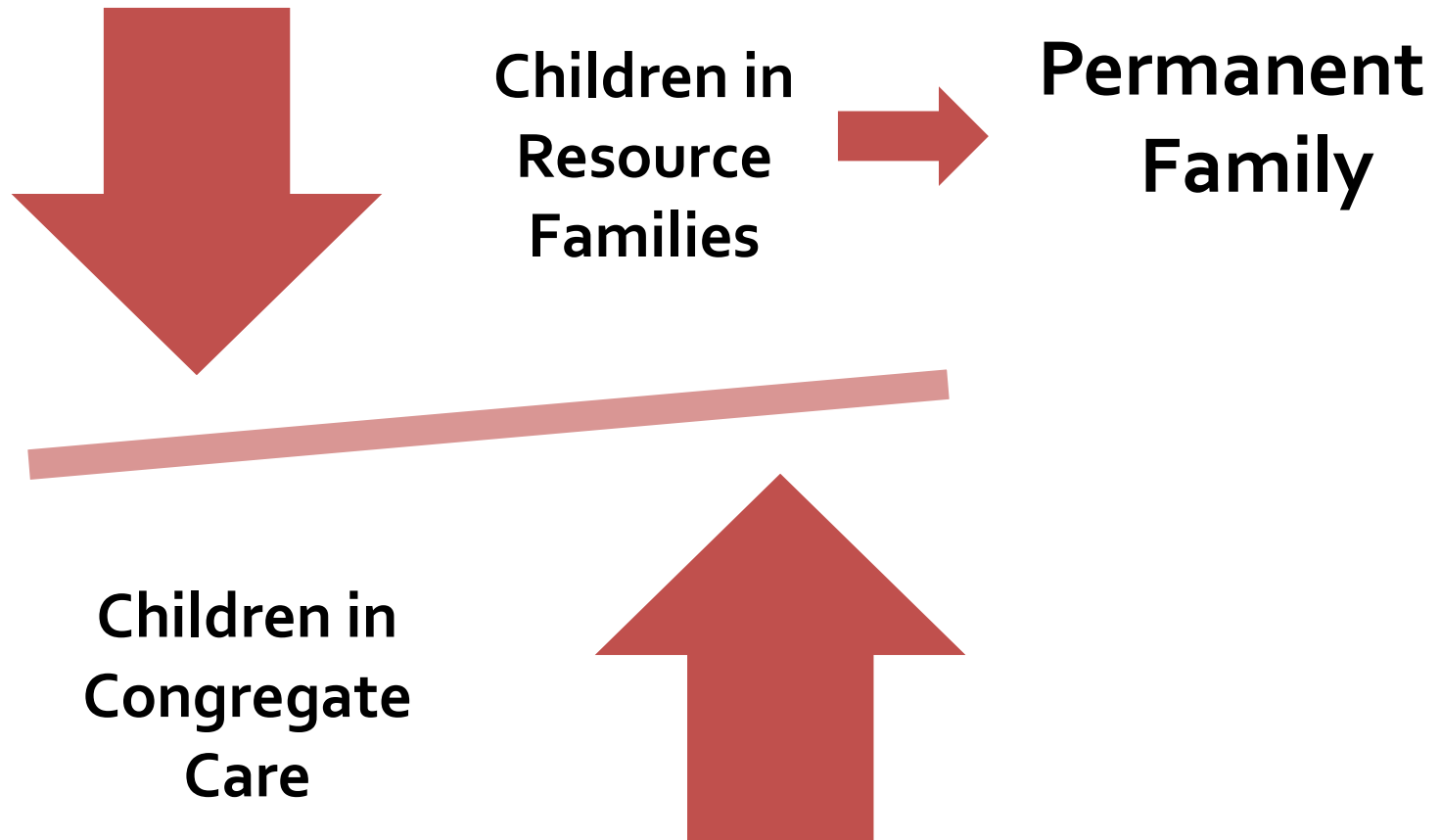


- 1. Overview & Background**
- 2. STRTPs**
- 3. Increasing Capacity for Home-Based Care**
 - a) Child & Family Teams**
 - b) Core Services & New Rates**
 - c) Resource Family Approval**
- 4. How is DCFS Preparing for CCR?**
- 5. Educational Needs of Youth in Residential Settings**



OVERVIEW & BACKGROUND

CCR: THE GOAL



CCR BACKGROUND



Context for Change:

- ▣ Proportion of children in Group Homes has remained fairly constant despite efforts to reduce it.
- ▣ Poor outcomes for children placed in group homes for long periods of time.

Legislative mandate*:

- ▣ Reform Group Homes & FFAs with stakeholder input
- ▣ Legislative report with recommendations
- ▣ Builds on previous reform efforts: SB 933, RBS Reform

* *Senate Bill 1013 (Chapter 35, Statutes of 2012)*

CCR LEGISLATION

AB 403 (2015) & AB 1997 (2016)



GOALS:

- ❑ Comprehensive child assessments
- ❑ Increased use of, and supports for, home-based family care
- ❑ Reduced use of congregate care
- ❑ Core services available regardless of placement setting – child should not have to move to get services
- ❑ Faster paths to permanency

CCR ROLLOUT

2012 Legislature passes SB 1013 requiring CCR Workgroup & Recommendations

January 2015 DSS Submits Report & Recommendations to the Legislature

October 2015 AB 403 Signed into Law

January 1, 2017 CCR Requirements Take Effect

2017 - 2019 Extensions available to FFAs and STRTCs

2019 + Additional extensions available for providers serving probation youth



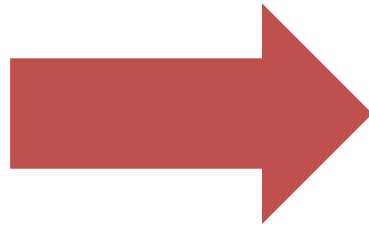
STRTPs



CCR: THE PARDIGM SHIFT



**Discontinue
Group Homes**



**Short-Term
Residential
Therapeutic
Placements
(STRTP)**

Children who cannot be safely placed in a family can receive short-term residential care with intensive therapeutic interventions that support transition to a family.

STRTPs & REDUCING CONGREGATE CARE

- STRTPs **only used** when child needs intensive 24-hr care for therapeutic or safety reasons that cannot be provided in a family setting.
- STRTPs must start **planning for transition to a home setting** at time of intake.
- STRTPs must provide “**core services**” to help transition.
- Providers must have capacity to **approve resource families** and to **continue supportive services** after children move to family setting (either directly, or through relationships with other providers).
- New **safeguards** to enforce limitations.

WHO CAN BE PLACED IN AN STRTP?

STRTP may accept for placement a child who:

- 1) Does not require inpatient care at a licensed health facility,
- 2) Has been assessed as requiring level of services provided in an STRTP, and
- 3) Child meets at least one of the following:
 - Assessed as meeting medical necessity criteria for medical specialty mental health services,
 - Assessed as seriously emotionally disturbed,
 - Requires emergency placement, or
 - Child has been assessed as requiring level of services provided by the STRTP

WIC § 11462.01

WHO COMPLETES THE ASSESSMENT?

- Like current Level 14 screenings, an Interagency Placement Committee must establish procedures regarding the assessment to be placed in an STRTP.
- Assessment can be made by:
 1. Interagency Placement Committee (considering the recommendations of the Child & Family Team),
 2. Licensed mental health professional, or
 3. An IEP determination that assesses child as seriously emotionally disturbed
- Assessment must ensure commonality of needs with other children in facility.

WIC § 4096, 11462.01

SAFEGUARDS: ADDITIONAL NEW REQUIREMENTS

- For child of **any age** (current law requires this for children under 12), case plan must document:
 1. Needs necessitating STRTP placement
 2. Plan for transitioning to a less restrictive environment, and
 3. The projected timeline by which the child will be transitioned.

→ This section of the case plan shall be reviewed and updated at least semiannually.” WIC § 361.2, 16501.1(d)(2)
- If child stays **longer than 6 months**, placement must be approved by DCFS director or deputy director. WIC § 361.2
- Beginning 1/1/2017, case plans must show that DCFS has considered WIC § 16010.8 (intent of legislature that no child reside in a group home **longer than one year**). WIC § 16501.1(d)(2)(A)
- County must develop process to handle what to do w/placement when Interagency Placement Committee says **child not in need of services** provided by STRTP. WIC § 11462.01(o)

IMPLEMENTATION TIMELINE

- **New group homes...**beginning 01/01/17, no new group home rate may be established
 - Exception: If there is a “material” risk to welfare of children due to inadequate supply of alternative placement options to meet children's needs

- **Current group homes...**
 - Can receive an extension for up to two years (12/31/18) if county requests it from CDSS and there is a “material” risk as described above

 - Might be extended even after that if “significant risk”

WHAT THIS MEANS FOR JUDICIAL OFFICERS

Ask why child is in, or going to, group home/STRTP.

- ❑ No child should be placed in congregate care just because “no other placement is available” – there must be a therapeutic or safety reason.
- ❑ Case plan attached to court report must show reason for STRTP placement, transition plan, and timeline, and must be updated at least every 6 months.
- ❑ If child in STRTP longer than 6 months, case plan must show DCFS director/deputy director approval.

Consider ordering ...

- ❑ DCFS to convene CFT meeting and report back on results
- ❑ DCFS to report on efforts to find family placement
- ❑ DCFS to report on services in place to support youth in transitioning to family (STRTP should continue services, not stop when child leaves facility).



INCREASING CAPACITY FOR HOME-BASED CARE

INCREASING CAPACITY: OVERVIEW

- Additional **funding for support, retention, recruitment and training** of resource families & relatives for placing agencies (\$17.2 million General Funds)
- Updated and expanded **training requirements** across provider and caregiver categories
- Use of **Child & Family Teams** for case planning
- Provision of **core services** by Foster Family Agencies & STRTPs
- Streamlined home-based family approval process (**Resource Family Approval**) and training requirements
- New caregiver **rates**





CHILD AND FAMILY TEAMS

CHILD AND FAMILY TEAM (CFT)



- **Who**: The child and family members, professionals, and other people identified by the family who are invested in the child and family's success. This may include family, friends, neighbors, CASA, school personnel, coaches, clergy, mental health staff, etc.
- **What**: The CFT's role is to help the family members define and reach their goals and develop a child and family –centered case plan.
- **Why**: CFT convened for purpose of identifying supports and services needed to achieve permanency and to enable youth to be in the least restrictive family setting that promotes normal childhood experiences

WIC § 706.6 & 16501.1

CHILD AND FAMILY TEAM (CFT)

- **How:** The placing agency typically convenes the initial CFT meeting and is responsible for coordinating.
- **Where:** The meeting can be at a location that is convenient to the family or other participants.
- **When:**
 - ▣ A CFT meeting shall be convened by the placing agency within the **first 60 days** of coming into care or upon entering the system.
 - ▣ A CFT meeting will be convened to discuss **any placement changes** for the child or youth into out of home care.
 - ▣ A CFT must be held **every 90 days** following the initial CFT meeting.

WIC § 706.6 & 16501.1



NEW RATES & SERVICES

CORE SERVICES

- FFAs and STRTCs must provide core services.
- Services shall be trauma informed and culturally relevant and include:
 - ▣ Mental health services (specialty and non-specialty)
 - ▣ Transitional support services for placement changes, permanency, aftercare
 - ▣ Education, physical, behavioral and mental health supports
 - ▣ Activities to support youth achieving a successful adulthood
 - ▣ Services to achieve permanency & maintain/establish family connections
- For Indian children, core services shall be provided with active efforts pursuant to WIC § 361.7

Pay to Resource Family for Basic Rate	LOC-1	LOC-2	LOC-3	LOC-4
Basic Rate	\$889	\$989	\$1,089	\$1,189

Pay to Foster Family Agency (FFA)	LOC-1	LOC-2	LOC-3	LOC-4
Social Worker	\$340	\$340	\$340	\$340
Social Services & Support	\$0	\$200	\$244	\$323
RFA	\$48	\$48	\$48	\$48
Admin (Rec, trng, screen, overhead)	\$672	\$672	\$672	\$672
Total	\$1,060	\$1,260	\$1,304	\$1,383

Pay to Resource Family for Treatment Foster Care (TFC)

TFC Rate \$2,259

Pay to FFA including TFC Admin

TFC Admin \$3,482

TFC Social Services & Support \$200

Total pay to FFA \$5,941

Pay to Short-Term Residential Therapeutic Program (STRTP)

STRTP Rate \$11,770

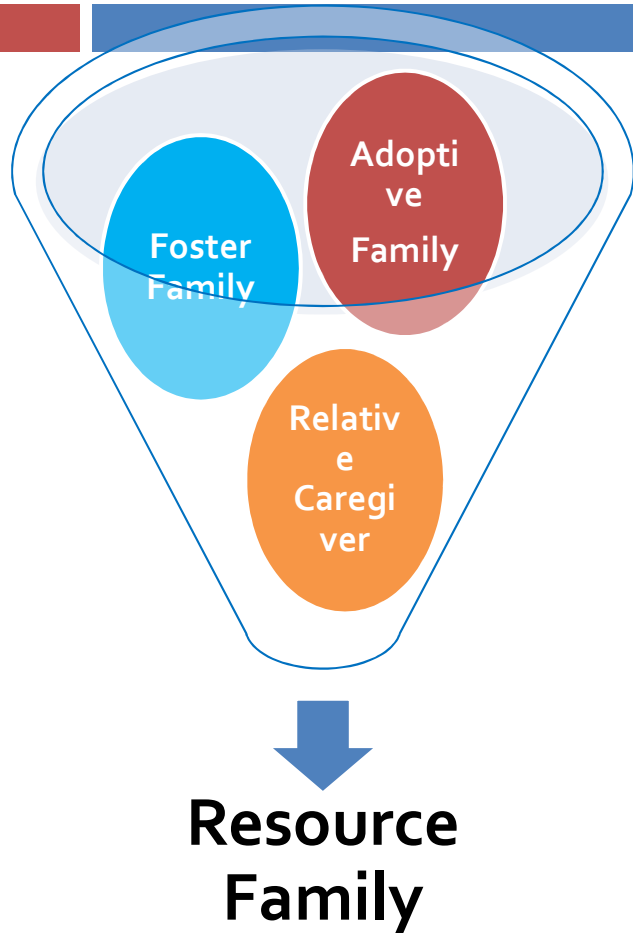
CORE SERVICES FOR COUNTY/RELATIVE HOMES? (COUNTY OPTION)

Pay to FFA For Services Only	LOC-1	LOC-2	LOC-3	LOC-4
Social Worker	\$0	\$340	\$340	\$340
Social Services & Support	\$0	\$200	\$244	\$323
Admin	\$0	\$200	\$200	\$200
Total	\$0	\$740	\$784	\$863



RESOURCE FAMILY APPROVAL

RFA LEGISLATIVE INTENT



Unified, family friendly, and child centered approval process that applies to all types of foster families:

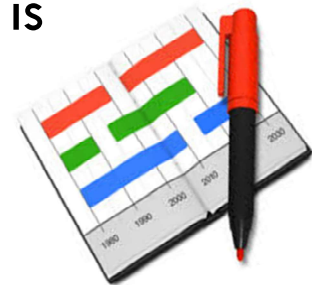
- ❑ Eliminates duplication
- ❑ Increases approval standards
- ❑ Incorporates a comprehensive psychosocial assessment of all families
- ❑ Includes approval for: foster care, adoption, guardianship

Authorized under AB 340 (2007), reauthorized under SB 1013 (2013) and modified under AB 403 (2015) & AB 1997 (2016); WIC § 16519.5

TIMELINE FOR RFA IMPLEMENTATION

- All **prospective relative, NREFM & foster families** after 1/1/2017 must go through the RFA process.
- **Current caregivers** will have until 12/31/2019 to certify under the RFA process.
 - ▣ Current caregivers with an approved adoptive home study completed before 01/01/18 are automatically deemed approved.
 - ▣ Current caregivers with kids in their home at any point in 2017 may be approved once a psychosocial assessment is completed.

WIC § 16519.5(p)



CORE ELEMENTS OF RFA

- **One standard** – relatives and recruited families treated the same
- **One process** – approved for any child in foster care, approved in any county, and approved for guardianships & adoptions
- **Comprehensive assessment** required, includes:
 - Home Environment Assessment
 - Permanency Assessment
- Pre- and post-approval **training** required for all families
- Procedures for **expedited placements**



HOME ENVIRONMENT ASSESSMENT

- Home environment assessment (similar to ASFA approval) requires:
 - 1) Criminal record clearance (and any necessary exemptions) of each applicant and all adults residing in, or regularly present in, the home
 - 2) Consideration of substantiated allegations of child abuse or neglect
 - 3) Building, grounds & storage requirements that ensure health and safety of children
 - 4) Total # of children not more than family can properly care for – shall not exceed six children.
 - **Exception:** Exceptional circumstances exist that are documented in the foster child's case file, including but not limited to the need to place children together
 - 5) Applicant must understand:
 - Rights of children and his/her responsibility to safeguard those rights
 - Responsibility to act as a reasonable and prudent parent and maintaining the least restrictive environment serving the child's needs.

PERMANENCY ASSESSMENT

- Permanency assessment requires:
 1. Caregiver training – minimum of **12** hours pre-approval & **8** post-approval hours annually
 2. Psychosocial assessment, which shall include a risk assessment of:
 - ▣ Physical and mental health,
 - ▣ Alcohol and other substance use and abuse,
 - ▣ Family and domestic violence, and
 - ▣ Caregiver's understanding of the needs of children in care and ability to meet those needs

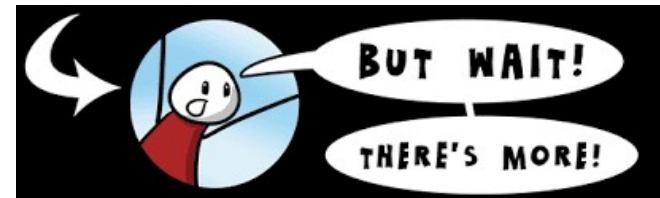
NOTE: When the applicant is a relative/NREFM, psychosocial assessment shall consider nature of relationship between the applicant and the child.

WIC § 16519.5(d)(3)

NOTE #2: The applicant's preference to provide a specific level of permanency shall not be a basis to deny an application. *WIC § (g)(5)(A)(i)(II)*

RFA WRITTEN DIRECTIVES

- Written directives provide more detailed guidance
- Have the same force and effect as regulations until regs adopted. WIC § 16519.5(f)
- Recently released Version 3 (effective date: 09/30/16):
<http://www.childsworld.ca.gov/res/RFA/pdf/WrittenDirectiveVersion3.pdf>
- Provide specific guidance for RFA implementation, processes, requirements, oversight and due process.
- Some additional assessment requirements specified in the directives:
 1. Health screening & TB Test
 2. First Aid and CPR certification
 3. 3 face-to-face interviews with applicant(s)
 4. 1 face-to-face interview with all other residents in the home, including children
 5. 3 personal references
 6. DMV check on applicant and all adults in the home



Approval Standards	Adoption (Existing)	Relative/NREF M (Existing)	Foster Home (Existing)	RFA
Criminal Records/Child Abuse Review	√	√	√	√
Standardized Criteria for Criminal Record Exemptions		√	√	√
Homes and Ground Safety Check	√	√	√	√
Training Required			√	√
Psychosocial Assessment	√			√
Applicant References	√			√
Annual Review of all families		√		√

PLACEMENT PRIOR TO RESOURCE FAMILY APPROVAL

2 scenarios when placement can happen prior to RFA:

1. Compelling Reason:

- Based on needs of the child
- After home environment approval completed
- Permanency assessment to be completed within 90 days

2. Emergency Basis:

- Must be with relative or nonrelative extended family member
- Requires WIC 309/361.45 assessment
- Home environment assessment must be initiated within 5 business days

****Note: AFDC-FC funding is not available to families until full approval has been achieved****

WIC § 16519.5(e)

WIC 309 REQUIREMENTS HAVE NOT CHANGED!

- If a child is taken into temporary custody, the social worker shall immediately release the child to the custody of the child's parent, guardian, **or responsible relative**. *WIC § 309(a)*

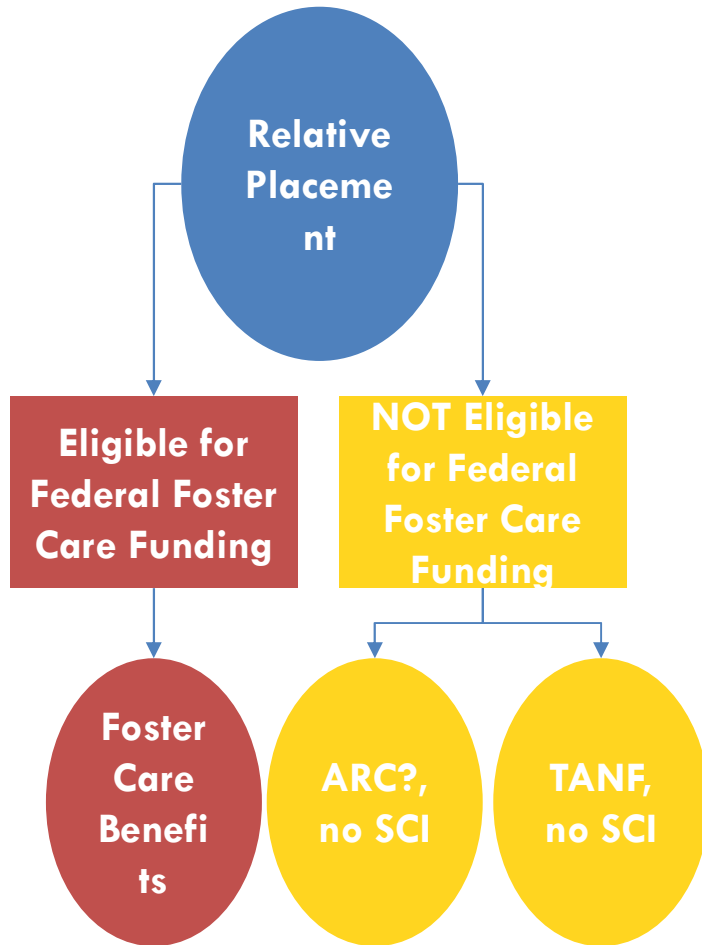
- If an able and willing relative or non relative extended family member (*WIC § 362.7*), is available and requests temporary placement, the social worker **shall initiate an assessment of the relative's suitability, which shall include:**
 1. In-home inspection to assess the safety of the home and the ability of the relative or nonrelative extended family member to care for the child's needs,
 2. Results of a criminal records check conducted pursuant to subdivision (a) of Section 16504.5 (CLETS), and
 3. Check of allegations of prior child abuse or neglect

RFA & RELATIVES: CHALLENGES & OPPORTUNITIES

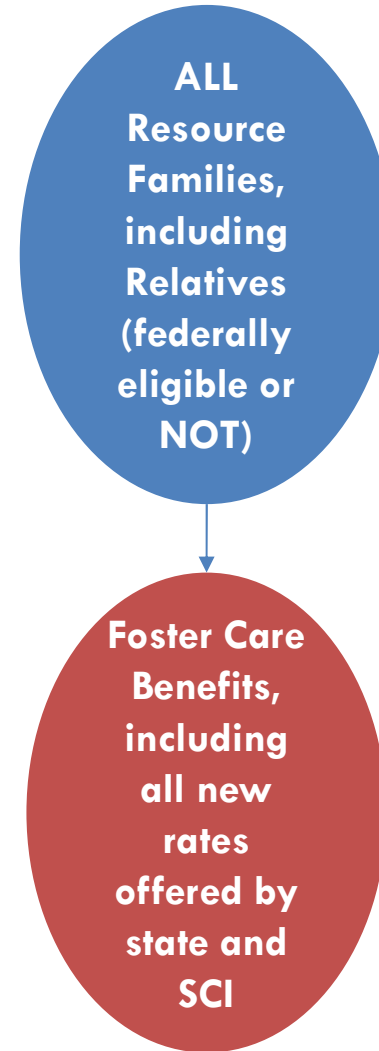
1. Rigorous new assessment process, but...
 - a) Emergency placement procedures available to avoid delays in placement
 - b) Once approved, relatives will be approved for all children and will not have to undergo subsequent assessments for guardianship or adoption
 - c) Enhanced due process available for denials
2. Obstacles to completing training, but...
 - a) Pilot counties have seen program success by offering childcare, online options and other accommodations to assist relatives
 - b) Trainings will hopefully lead to more placement stability
3. 90 days to complete the approval process = potential delays in funding, but...
 - a) Expedited CalWORKS process available
 - b) County can provide temporary funding through emergency \$ or recruitment & retention \$
 - c) Once approved, *almost* equitable funding available

EQUAL FUNDING!

Current Rate System



RFA Rate System





LOS ANGELES IMPLEMENTATION

HOW IS DCFS PREPARING FOR CCR?



- Holding monthly CCR Executive Team Steering Committee meetings
- Participating in the LA County CCR Steering Committee meetings
- Attending trainings put on by CDSS and participating in State CCR Committees
- Holding information meetings for FFA's, Group Homes, Caregivers, and Foster Youth
- Preparing webinars and e-learnings for DCFS staff
- Conducting on site trainings for DCFS staff

RFA IMPLEMENTATION FOR RELATIVES IN LOS ANGELES

- Step 1) Live Scan
- Step 2) Referred to a Community Based Organization (CBO) to begin the RFA process
 - ▣ The CBO will do the home assessment, assist with obtaining needed documents, link with supports and/or provide tangible goods, provide training or link the family with training resources
 - ▣ This occurs within the first 30 days of placement
 - ▣ The CBO will prepare a written report on the relatives progress
- Step 3) A RFA CSW will conduct the psychosocial assessment

RFA IMPLEMENTATION FOR RELATIVES IN LOS ANGELES (ctnd)

- Step 4) The written report prepared by the CBO and the psychosocial report prepared by the RFA CSW are reviewed by a SCSW.
- Step 5) The home is approved or denied.
 - ▣ If a denial is given the relative will receive a notice of action and have the opportunity to go through the grievance process and have a State Fair Hearing.
- Step 6) The Relative will receive on going support through DCFS and CBO's.
- Step 7) The Relative will have an annual review of their assessment and must undergo 8 hours of annual training.

RFA IMPLEMENTATION FOR RECRUITED FAMILIES IN LOS ANGELES

- The process for families in the community that wish to be Resource Families is similar to the Relative process.
- However the recruited family is not referred to a CBO. DCFS completes all of the steps.
- Community Care Licensing is no longer involved in the process. DCFS now certifies all homes.
 - ▣ This eliminates the previous duplicative process that families had to go through to be certified.



EDUCATIONAL NEEDS OF YOUTH IN RESIDENTIAL SETTINGS

LOS ANGELES RBS PILOT – PREVIEW OF CCR

- Los Angeles was one of four Residentially Based Services pilot counties.
- Statewide RBS evaluation results – and local experience – showed that RBS programs had positive outcomes in many domains – but **not** educational progress.
- Important not to repeat this mistake!



STRTPs AND SCHOOL OF ORIGIN RIGHTS



Time-limited STRTPs - will youth change schools when they enter STRTP and again when they 'step down' to a family placement?? The SOO dilemma:

- Attending SOO prevents disruption, but travel time, lack of contact between STRTP staff and distant school, and schedule conflicts may have negative impact.
- Attending local school makes coordination easier, but youth lose continuity and educational progress, and may have to change schools again when they leave the STRTP.

JUDGES CAN HELP!

- ▣ At each hearing, ensure youth have engaged and informed Education Rights Holders.
- ▣ If a youth moves, ensure that ERH makes decision whether to invoke or waive school of origin rights.
- ▣ Hold DCFS, school districts, and placement providers to joint responsibility to work out transportation issues. (Every Student Succeeds Act)



STRTPs AND ENROLLMENT/ EDUCATIONAL PLACEMENT RIGHTS

- ❑ Youth at STRTPs often have incomplete educational records – many transfers, attendance gaps
- ❑ Youth at STRTPs often have special education needs, but lack adequate/up-to-date IEP, or any IEP.

But ... they have a right to immediate enrollment in local school if not staying at School of Origin.



JUDGES CAN HELP!

- ▣ Ensure early and ongoing education assessments for all foster children
- ▣ Ensure DCFS and school districts work with ERH to get special education assessments and IEPs promptly initiated and completed – even if youth change schools while assessment is pending!
- ▣ Hold DCFS and placement providers accountable for any gaps in enrollment.



MENTAL HEALTH, TRAUMA, ATTENDANCE & DISCIPLINE

- ❑ Foster youths' mental health services are often not coordinated with school-based supports.
- ❑ Youth may need intensive support to avoid attendance problems, suspension, expulsion - especially when they change placements and/or schools.
- ❑ Attendance and discipline issues often indicate unaddressed trauma and/or learning disabilities



JUDGES CAN HELP!

- Ensure DCFS and placement provides intensive support when youth change schools mid-year – monitor attendance and behavior.
- Consider unaddressed special needs as possible cause of attendance, discipline problems – youth may need updated/revised IEP, 317e education attorney referral.



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RESOURCES



- Get to the Core - <http://gettothecore.org/other-cpm-resources/>
- CCR Homes - <http://www.cdss.ca.gov/ccr/>