ROOTS & WINGS

Give a child roots to grow
and wings to fly

May, 2010
Santa Cruz County, California
Background

- Santa Cruz County California
  - County of a quarter million people on coast of California
  - Liberal Community

- Overall Population
  - 57% White; 35% Hispanic; 5% Asian; 1% African American; 1.9% multi race

- Child Population
  - 36% White; 56% Hispanic
Goals

- Recruit concurrent and adoptive resource families who are reflective of children in foster care.
- Ensure resource families are satisfied with services and support.
- Ensure children are transitioned to permanent homes in a timely manner.
Project Structure

Core Project Team

- Manager
- Coordinator
- Analysts
- Contracted Partners
  - Resource Family Specialist (Recruiter)
  - 2 Resource Family Liaisons
  - Permanency Partner

Committees

- Operations
- Advisory
Where are we starting?

Recruit concurrent and adoptive resource families who are reflective of children in foster care.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Children in foster care (not kin)</th>
<th>Families</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The characteristics of children specifically in foster homes 2007-2009 were examined.</td>
<td>40 Active Foster Families</td>
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<td>36% were ages 0-5</td>
<td>51% were Latino and 39% white</td>
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<tr>
<td>21% were ages 6-10</td>
<td>All 40 were available for young children ages 0-5 (only need 19)</td>
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<tr>
<td>20% were ages 11-14</td>
<td>23 were available for children age 6-10 (only need 11)</td>
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<td>23% were ages 15-18</td>
<td>6 were available for children over 11 (need 22)</td>
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<td>11 were interested in being a concurrent permanent option for a child</td>
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<td>Fairly proportional over geographic area</td>
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What have we begun?

- Recruit concurrent and adoptive resource families who are reflective of children in foster care.

  - **Media**
    - Television
    - Print
    - Social Networking

  - **Collaborated with new partners**
    - Contracted with an individual to be Resource Family Specialist dedicated to recruitment
    - Orientations in the Community
    - Usage of Empty Buildings

  - **Incentive Award System**
    - Recruitment Card
Where are we starting?

Ensure resource families are satisfied with services/support

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<tr>
<th>Social Workers</th>
<th>Case Involvement</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>□ About 92% of respondents stated the child’s social worker treated them with respect, and a similar percentage stated this about the licensing worker.</td>
<td>□ Caregivers were asked whether they felt adequately involved in case planning. Only 60% indicated that they felt adequately involved in the case planning process for the child, and almost 40% did not feel adequately involved.</td>
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<td>□ About 70% of respondents agreed that the child’s social worker returned calls within two days, while over 25% disagreed. About 80% of respondents agreed that the licensing worker returned calls this quickly, and 19% disagreed.</td>
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</table>
What have we begun?

- Ensure resource families are satisfied with services and support.
  - Contracted with Family Resource Centers
  - Volunteers (Wings)
  - Coffee Connections
  - Relative/NFERM Training
Where are we starting?

- Ensure children are transitioned to permanent homes in a timely manner.

- Assessed practices
  - “This was the least resistant system that I have engaged with to date.”
  - “Strong belief in the importance of reunification by all staff. There is an overall belief that positive outcomes for children and youth are often achieved when they are able to reunify with their biological families.”

  - Bob Herne, MSW Permanency Practice Consultant
For children in care two years or more, there has been improvement in the percent of adoptions and a decrease in the percent of children emancipating from care. The percentage of children remaining in care, by the end of the year, has decreased slightly.
What have we started?

- Permanency Values Discussions/Trainings
- Created New Permanency practices
  - Permanency Systems Workgroup
  - Permanency Practice Consultation Group
- Contracted with Permanency Partner
- Social Worker Field Guide
- Child Centered Recruitment
Lessons Learned

- Staffing
- Social Workers View of Success
- Communication
- Lack of Integration of the Adoptions Unit
Next Steps

- Complete outreach and marketing materials and train partners assisting the initiative with outreach
- Host support/recruitment events at Family Resource Centers
- Monitor staff conducting revised concurrent planning procedures and revise concurrent planning policy to reflect lessons learned
- Discussions will occur among adoptions workers and family reunification workers