



Los Angeles County, California

OVERVIEW

Family to Family initially began in Los Angeles in 1996; however, implementation was somewhat sporadic for several years as the agency underwent transitions in the Director position. In 2003, the California Family to Family Leader, Bill Bettencourt, was successful in re-engaging with the Department of Children and Family Services (DCFS) and its then Director, Dr. David Sanders. Through this partnership, and the establishment of a California-based technical assistance team that could be more responsive to site needs, DCFS began to expand Family to Family across the entire Department. Through their System Improvement Process directed by state law, their IV-E Waiver and their participation in Family to Family the site worked towards a unified vision of child welfare outcomes in the largest child welfare department in the country.

Leadership changes and the size of the agency present numerous challenges to implementing Family to Family. While the county plans to eventually implement Family to Family county-wide, the initiative was rolled out in selected offices with varying levels of success from office to office and strategy to strategy. There were seven “anchor site” offices with focused implementation during the study period (Lakewood, Lancaster, Metro North, Palmdale, Pomona, Santa Clarita, Torrance) and twelve non-anchor site offices which had some Family to Family activity. The Anchor offices comprise about 36% of all entries to care, and about 35% of children in the foster care caseload¹. It was not feasible to stratify the Los Angeles placement data by office to enable selection of only children in the seven offices for the site-level indicators contained in this profile. As such, the county-wide trends in outcomes discussed below may not necessarily be reflective of the trends occurring in the anchor offices.

Summarizing Los Angeles implementation of Family to Family is difficult without specifying which office is being described, nevertheless, this summary attempts to provide an overview of the entire county and provide some examples of specific office activities. Overall, the Family to Family Coordinator thinks that strengthened and expanded community partnerships have greatly enhanced the county’s progress. Partnerships with faith based organizations have enabled them to expand the four core workgroups into new and successful directions. Educating staff and community members about Family to Family has also significantly helped in its acceptability. For example, data reflecting the decrease in out of home placement, due to the use of TDMs, has dramatically increased its desirability by the community. Technical Assistance has been helpful in moving the work forward.

¹ Department of Children and Family Services. (2008). Family to Family status report—DCFS (and 7 Anchor Offices): First 6 months of FY 2007-2008—July 1, 2007-December 31, 2007. Los Angeles, CA: Author.

SITE-LEVEL PLACEMENT EXPERIENCE INDICATORS

Exhibit B.3.1 shows that initial entries to out-of-home care in Los Angeles County declined from 8,214 in 2005 to 8,096 in 2006 before rising to 8,284 in 2007 and declining again, but more substantially to 7,442 in 2008. During this period, the number of initial entries to out-of-home care (who stayed in care at least eight days) in California declined from 26,781 in 2005 to 22,655 entrants in 2008.² During the anchor-site period, birth to one year olds accounted for between 29.7% and 31.8% of first entries. Among initial entrants in 2008 in Los Angeles County, 53.9% were five or younger, slightly lower than the statewide rate of 56% for this group in fiscal year 2008. Across the anchor-site phase, the percentage of children and youth entering care without a sibling in care represented just over one-third of entries and in 2008 only 8.2% of entries involved children from large sibling groups (five or more children).

Exhibit B.3.1: Demographic Characteristics of Children Initially Entering Out-of-Home Care —Los Angeles, CA

Characteristic	2005 (N=8214)	2006 (N=8096)	2007 (N=8284)	2008 (N=7442)
Gender				
Male	3930 (47.9%)	4029 (49.8%)	4070 (49.1%)	3592 (48.3%)
Female	4282 (52.1%)	4066 (50.2%)	4211 (50.9%)	3850 (51.7%)
Race				
Black	1893 (23.1%)	1885 (23.3%)	1794(21.7%)	1866 (25.1%)
White	1083 (13.2%)	1039 (12.8%)	1010 (12.2%)	915 (12.3%)
Hispanic	4990 (60.8%)	4928 (60.9%)	5225 (63.1%)	4431 (59.6%)
Asian American/Pacific Islanders	208 (2.5%)	212(2.6%)	223 (2.7%)	189 (2.5%)
Native American/Alaska Native	34 (0.4%)	28 (0.3%)	28 (0.3%)	30 (0.4%)
Age				
0-1 year	2439 (29.7%)	2571 (31.8%)	2504(30.2%)	2269 (30.5%)
2-5 years	1968 (24.0%)	1900(23.5%)	1969 (23.7%)	1738 (23.4%)
6-11 years	2098 (25.5%)	2006 (24.8%)	2084 (25.2%)	1822 (24.5%)
12-14 years	950 (11.6%)	880 (10.9%)	958 (11.6%)	883 (11.9%)
15-17 years	759 (9.2%)	739 (9.1%)	769 (9.3%)	730 (9.8%)
Siblings entering care at same time				
1	3120 (37.9%)	3170 (39.2%)	3093 (37.3%)	2888 (38.8%)
2	1907 (23.2%)	1997 (24.7%)	1978 (23.9%)	1742 (23.4%)
3	1445 (17.6%)	1387 (17.1%)	1441 (17.4%)	1389 (18.7%)
4	899 (10.9%)	867 (10.7%)	1018 (12.3%)	811 (10.9%)
5	464 (5.7%)	390 (4.8%)	474 (5.7%)	335 (4.5%)
6 or more	379 (4.6%)	285 (3.5%)	280 (3.4%)	277 (3.7%)

*Children in care less than 8 days excluded.

² Remaining data in this profile obtained from Needell, B., Webster, D., Armijo, M., Lee, S., Dawson, W., Magruder, J., Exel, M., Glasser, T., Williams, D., Zimmerman, K., Simon, V., Putnam-Hornstein, E., Frerer, K., Cuccaro-Alamin, S., Winn, A., Lou, C., Peng, C. & Holmes, A. (2009). *Child Welfare Services Reports for California*. Retrieved 7/29/2009, from University of California at Berkeley Center for Social Services Research website. URL: http://cssr.berkeley.edu/ucb_childwelfare

The percentage of the children and youth entering care for the first time in Los Angeles County who were Hispanic appeared to decline slightly to 59.6% in 2008, down from 63.1% of entrants in 2007. The most recent rate of admissions among Hispanic children and youth was below the rate of 62% for Hispanic persons in the general child population of the county. During the anchor-site phase, the percent of children initially entering out-of-home care who were black ranged from 21.7% of entries in 2007 to 25.1% in 2008. This contrasts with the county's general child population in 2008 in which about 8% were black. Only 12.3% of the children and youth who entered care for the first time in 2008 were white, compared to about 18% of the county's general child population.

Exhibit B.3.2 illustrates that initial placements with relatives in Los Angeles declined substantially from 2,965 in 2007 to 1,940 in 2008, so that as of 2008 placements with relatives represented only 26.1% of initial placements. Concomitant with this shift was a substantial increase in initial placements with Family Foster Agency (FFA) homes, growing from 48.6% of initial entries in 2005 to nearly two-thirds (64.0%) in 2008. The number and rate of initial placements into regular foster homes declined steadily from 952 in 2005 (11.6% of first entries) to 516 in 2008 (6.9%).

Exhibit B.3.2: Characteristics of Placement—Los Angeles County, CA				
Characteristic of Initial Placement	2005	2006	2007	2008
Initial Placement				
Relative Home	2870 (34.9%)	2896 (35.8%)	2965 (35.7%)	1940 (26.1%)
Foster Home	952 (11.6%)	887 (11.0%)	702 (8.5%)	516 (6.9%)
Foster Family Agency Home	3988 (48.6%)	3940 (48.7%)	4345 (52.5%)	4761 (64.0%)
Group/Shelter	188 (2.3%)	164 (2%)	142 (1.7%)	135 (1.8%)
Guardian	209 (2.5%)	196 (2.4%)	129 (1.6%)	84 (1.1%)
Other*	7 (0.1%)	13 (0.2%)	1 (0.0%)	6 (0.1%)
Sibling Placement Status				
No Siblings Entered Placement	3120	3170	3093	2888
Placed with All Siblings	2022 (39.7%)	2072 (42.1%)	2229 (42.9%)	2233 (49.0%)
Placed with Some Siblings	1404 (27.6%)	1317 (26.7%)	1399 (27.0%)	1199 (26.3%)
Placed with no Siblings	1668 (32.7%)	1537 (31.2%)	1563 (30.1%)	1122 (24.6%)
Recurrence of Maltreatment w.in 6 mo.^				
No	20033 (92.5%)	18621 (93.4%)	18111 (93.9%)	9780 (93.3%)
Yes	1632 (7.5%)	1315 (6.6%)	1180 (6.1%)	706 (6.7%)
Pct Placed initially < 1 mile from home **				
Relative Home	41.4	42.8	39.6	43.2
Non Relative Home	3.2	3.4	2.8	2.8
Total	17.4	18.8	16.7	14.2
Family Connection?***				
No	3129 (38.1%)	2987 (36.9%)	3049 (36.8%)	2870 (38.6%)
Yes	5085 (61.9%)	5109 (63.1%)	5235 (63.2%)	4572 (61.4%)

*Includes pre-adopt, and court-specified home

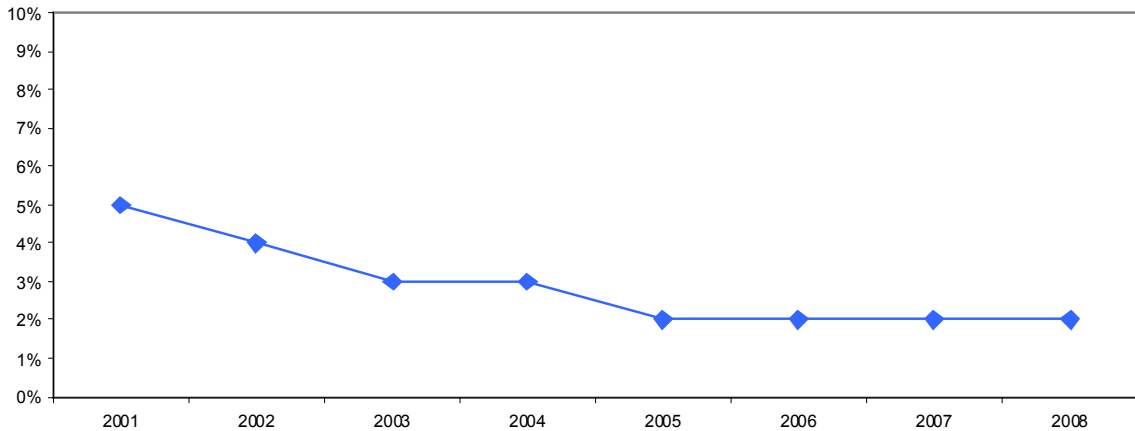
**Calculation of percent of entries placed initially within 1 mile was based only on instances which had both a geocodable removal and placement address.

***Family connection refers to initial placement with a relative or guardian, or at least one sibling, or within one mile of removal address.

^Base period for 2008 is Jan. 1 to Jun. 30 due to data cut-off of 12/31/08

Less than 3% of children in Los Angeles County are initially placed in congregate care. As **Exhibit B.3.3** illustrates, this percentage declined since 2001 and remained relatively stable during the anchor site period.

Exhibit B.3.3: Percentage of Children Initially Placed in Congregate Care – Los Angeles County, CA



Family and community connections also can be maintained through the use of kinship care. In spite of the decline in use of kinship care in Los Angeles County for initial placements in 2008, the data in **Exhibit B.3.2** suggest that a consequence of placement with relatives is to help children remain close to their home neighborhoods. Compared to non-relative foster homes, a much higher proportion of these placements are within one mile of the child’s original home and appears to have increased slightly from 2005 to 2008. In contrast, no more than 3.4% of placements with unrelated caregivers were this close.

From 2005 through 2008, the proportion of children first entering care with siblings and who were placed with all of their siblings rose from 39.7% in 2005 to 49.0% in 2008. As a result, the percentage of sibling entries who were not placed with at least one sibling declined from 32.7% of entrants with siblings in care in 2005 to 24.6% of such children in 2008.

The percentage of children who maintained a family connection when placed in out-of-home care has remained in the range of about 61% to 63% of initial placements in Los Angeles. Given the recent decline in use of kinship care, and the tendency for placements with non-relative foster homes not to be close to the child’s original home, this is probably attributable to the likelihood that at least some siblings will be placed together.

Recurrence of maltreatment within 6 months declined slightly from 7.5% in 2005 to 6.7% in 2008. This decrease was similar to a trend observed at the state level, though the Los Angeles rates were consistently lower over this period of time.

To facilitate comparisons across cohorts, **Exhibit B.3.4** describes the number of placement moves for children and youth who initially entered care each year and were still in care 12 months later. Similar to, but corrective of the first placement stability measure in the federal Child and Family Service Review (CFSR) process, the longitudinal indicators in this table measure the percentage of children in their first or second, or third or greater placement.

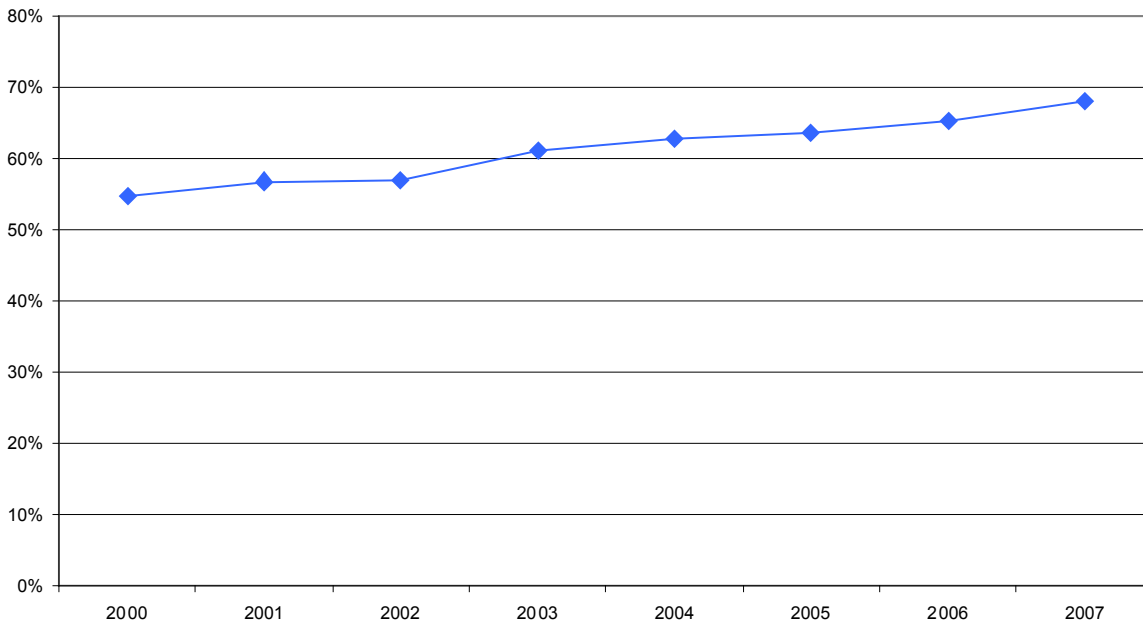
Exhibit B.3.4: Placement Stability at 12 months by Year of Initial Entry—Los Angeles County, CA

	2005	2006	2007
No. of Placements in 1st Spell*			
1 or 2 placements	3027 (63.7%)	2967 (66.1%)	2963 (70.0%)
3 or more placements	1726 (36.3%)	1523 (33.9%)	1269 (30.0%)

*For children still in care at 12 months

The results for children who initially entered care in 2007 point to steady improvement in placement stability. The percentage of children who had only 1 or 2 placements rose from 63.7% of the 2005 cohort to 66.1% of the 2006 cohort, and finally, to 70.0% of the 2007. **Exhibit B.3.5** illustrates that these improvements occurred concurrently with the implementation of F2F in the county.

Exhibit B.3.5: Percentage of Children with 1 or 2 Placements in Initial Spell—Los Angeles County, CA



Though perhaps not dramatic, the proportions of reunification exits from care within six months, one year, and two years shown in **Exhibit B.3.6** suggest improvement for each successive cohort for each follow-up time period. These trends are encouraging and will hopefully increase since Los Angeles has focused on reunification at 12 months as one of its current System Improvement Plan (SIP) goals. Proportions exiting to adoption within six, 12, and 24 months were largely unchanged for the different cohorts. This permanency outcome at two years is another of the county’s SIP goals.

Among children with very short first spells (seven days or less), the proportions reentering out-of-home care remained the same across the anchor-site phase, with about 11% recidivism for children who reunified following such a short spell. Among children with longer first spells, the proportions reentering care appear to have increased. This growth is likely an unintended consequence of the larger proportions of children reunified within one year (in recent years, as more children go home, more are at risk of returning to care). The county is aware of this trend and has made reentry within one year another SIP target measure.

Exhibit B.3.6: Time in Care and Reentry—Los Angeles County, CA					
		2005	2006	2007	2008
Pct Reentering Care After 1st Spell*					
	0-7 days	0.11	0.11	0.11	--
	>7 days	0.08	0.1	0.11	--
Pct Exiting Care by**:					
Exit to Reunification					
	6 months	0.23	0.25	0.28	--
	1 year	0.37	0.40	0.46	--
	2 years	0.55	0.58	--	--
Exit to Adoption					
	6 months	0.01	0.00	0.00	--
	1 year	0.01	0.01	0.00	--
	2 years	0.07	0.06	--	--

*Exit cohorts to reunification per year (same as federal measure C1.4)

**First entry cohorts, children in care 8+ days

The longer that children remain in custody, the more challenging it becomes to help them achieve a permanent placement. As **Exhibit B.3.7** shows, this is evident in the fact that no more than 20.6% of the children and youth in Los Angeles County who had been in care for two years or more on January 1 in any of the years from 2004 through 2007 achieved a permanent placement by the end of the year. The proportion of these children in long-term care who achieved permanency by the end of the year remained relatively stable over time.

Exhibit B.3.7: Achieving Permanency for Children and Youth in Care for Two Years or More—Los Angeles County, CA				
	2004	2005	2006	2007
Children and Youth in care on January 1st of year*	27,952	25,084	23,396	22,601
Number in care for two years or more	15,975	13,714	11,490	10,027
“Number who exited to reunification, adoption, guardianship by end of year and before age 18”	3204	2806	2048	2063
Percent achieving permanency	20.1	20.5	17.8	20.6

*Children in non-dependent guardianships and 18 years or older on Jan 1 excluded.

This area is another focal point of the county's recent SIP. Drawing on findings in its County Self Assessment, Los Angeles has determined that there is a need to target services and increase permanency for children who have been in care for at least two years. The county plans to increase family engagement activities, implement specialized permanency planning units, as well as expand efforts in Wraparound services, Kin-GAP, and permanency planning TDMs. Other programs in which Los Angeles participates that could also be beneficial for many of these children are--the California Permanency for Youth Project, and the Eliminating Racial Disproportionality and Disparity (ERDD) work that is underway in offices across the county. Positive results may be evidenced in continued monitoring of permanency indicators as these collective efforts expand and mature over time.

PROGRESS IN IMPLEMENTING CORE STRATEGIES

Resource Family Recruitment, Development, and Support

Recruitment and development of resource families is centralized in Los Angeles County so Family to Family staff and regional offices work with central office staff on RDS activities. RDS training is culturally and geographically accessible, but they are still working to achieve many of the other RDS key elements. One of the offices has taken the position that the recruitment and development of new placements in communities of need begins with the support and further development of current resource parents in those communities. To this end, the group developed its own training and education program for current resource families. Another office has developed support groups specifically for kinship care providers.

Los Angeles is in the planning phase for beginning use of the ETO web-based RDS tracking tool developed by UC Berkeley. Efforts to tap the full potential of this tool continue to be developed. Current use across sites ranges from selective use such as entry of prospective resource parents at the initial contact (basic demographic, name, address), and some tracking of training session attendance, or recruitment efforts, to full utilization of the program.

No specific outcome measures have been identified at present for RDS. However, UCB is soliciting site participation in workgroups whose goal will be to determine what ongoing recruitment and training data should be measured, and clarify which "supportive services" are provided to resource parents across all sites. UCB is also creating a list and description of queries built for each site—to be shared with all other sites and posted on the ETO section of F2F CA website. A bi-weekly, drop-in WebEx video conference hosted by UCB recently began to facilitate a dialogue between counties in order to connect, share ideas and discuss data and SE efforts as they pertain to RDS.

Building Community Partnerships

In general across the anchor offices, the Family to Family coordinator believes that the BCP work in Los Angeles includes staff meetings, RDS trainings and visitation occurring in community locations, although there is less consistent community participation in resource family recruitment. Within some anchor offices, BCP is the core component of the initiative. Their belief is that the task of implementing Family to Family practices depends heavily upon the relationships they have built with faith-based organizations, CBOs, local government agencies, and community leaders in their catchment area. Many of the offices have monthly meetings with

these groups. The office staff believes that the BCP efforts have made the community more receptive and open to collaborative work with DCFS, and as a result, have improved child welfare outcomes for families in the communities they serve.

Connecting with the Community. A number of community partnerships were already in place at the start of the anchor-site phase, including many faith-based and immigrant-focused collaboratives. However, many of these communities viewed DCFS negatively and expressed much distrust and resistance to partnering with DCFS. Some felt that DCHS practice was detrimental to their efforts to strengthen families through traditional self-help networks. Each anchor site within the county built upon their existing partnerships by creating community councils, holding community meetings, and inviting community members to provide input on ways that their communities could be better served by DCFS and the community network. In addition, community gatekeepers maintained high visibility in communities and made personal contacts to community members to encourage them to attend community partnership meetings.

Site Infrastructure. In line with the BCP strategy, each site created a community council whose membership is made up of agency staff, community partners, resource families, service providers, and community members. These councils meet monthly to assess the needs of each community, possible barriers to success, and strategies on how to meet the identified needs. The community council, or community partnership group, works together with the BCP core strategy workgroup to determine an Action Plan for each site. Collaborative sites practice the ongoing sharing of data, knowledge and expertise with community partners by holding trainings and presenting data at monthly meetings. These trainings include information on child and family outcomes as well as issues of racial disproportionality and disparities.

BCP Activities. Various activities related to BCP have been implemented by the Los Angeles site collaboratives. Generally, community “meet and greet” forums, community recognition and appreciation events, community health fairs, and community resource fairs have been conducted to strengthen community connections and to offer information on better supporting families. In addition, collaboratives have developed resource maps and directories for their respective communities. Linkages for TDM meetings in the community have been established, including participation in TDMs by resource families, service providers, and community members. A faith-based workgroup incorporates information forums, resource parent recruitment luncheons, and linkages with local school systems to aid in foster parent recruitment efforts. Some sites also utilize icebreaker meetings and Parents in Partnership programs to provide birth and foster parents with viable strategies for successfully navigating the DCFS case process. Youth engagement efforts at the Los Angeles site include education collaboratives with local schools to strengthen service delivery and resources for foster youth, especially youth at risk for aging out of the foster care system. Lastly, collaborative sites hold conferences focused on Eliminating Racial Disproportionality and Disparities to raise awareness and begin discussions aimed at creating plans of action to provide quality services for all children in care.

Funding. A 2009 budget plan allocated \$326,215 to support the six collaborative sites in creating or expanding BCP activities, including a Cultural Brokers program, the Parents in Partnership program, youth and parent engagement programs, education programs, and disproportionality efforts.

Exhibit B.3.8 illustrates how community partnerships are reflected in both removal and change of placement TDMs. Generally, participation rates by key partners in TDMs are lower than in other anchor sites, however, these data are consistent with the partial implementation of BCP strategies by site collaboratives in the county. In 2008, community members were present at less than 5% of both removal and COP meetings and less than 10% of these meetings were held in community locations. Los Angeles County has family member or friend participated in 43% of removal meetings and 38% of COP meetings, compared to median rates of 56% and 36% respectively for all anchor sites.

Exhibit B.3.8: Community Partnerships Reflected in TDM Meetings—Los Angeles County, CA				
	2005	2006	2007	2008
Removal TDMs				
Community representative present	3%	5%	5%	3%
Service provider present	23%	21%	21%	22%
Family member or friend present	47%	45%	43%	43%
Held in a community location	10%	4%	2%	3%
Change of Placement TDMs				
Community representative present	4%	5%	5%	4%
Service provider present	29%	34%	35%	40%
Family member or friend present	40%	46%	46%	38%
Held in a community location	13%	7%	6%	7%

Team Decisionmaking

According to the Family to Family Coordinator, TDM is an invaluable tool that is highly regarded by staff at all levels. In addition, community partners appreciate the opportunity to engage the birth family in collaboration with department. The most significant challenge is avoiding the ongoing desire to utilize TDM for non placement decisions. The support of upper management with TDMs has had a very positive effect on staff, which in turn, has generated an increase in their use. Los Angeles is preparing to use TDM countywide. The key elements are frequently in place in the anchor offices, although they do not have plans to convene TDM meetings in community locations.

Exhibit B.3.9 shows that estimates of the “penetration rate” for removal TDMs in Los Angeles have steadily improved since data began to be collected in 2005. The 2008 estimate of 55% is lower than the median rate of 67% across all anchor sites. Rates among all F2F anchor sites in 2008 range from 51% to 90%. However, the Los Angeles estimated coverage rate is artificially low since the rate was derived by comparing the county-wide number of first entries during a year to the number of those children who had a removal TDM--which had been implemented primarily in the anchor offices. Furthermore, front-end TDMs were not implemented DCFS-wide until 2008 with the completed roll-out of the Points of Engagement (POE) Initiative—which includes BCP and TDM components. Offices across the county were not expected (although some did so anyway) to do TDMs until they had implemented POE. Through their meet and confer process, the union officially sanctioned and mandated POE which included TDMs.

A similar artificial deflation must be borne in mind when examining coverage of change of placement TDMs. The union in Los Angeles has not yet officially sanctioned COP TDMs (and the same applies to permanency TDMs). Although some offices are carrying out these meetings voluntarily, the practice is still in negotiation with the union, and is therefore not yet mandated in this site. The data indicate that 13% of children who had a placement move among each annual cohort of children also had a COP TDM. This compares to a median rate of 38% across all anchor sites.

Removal TDM meetings in 2008 in Los Angeles reflected an average of about 3.3 key elements (community partnership and implementation) while change of placement (COP) TDMs average 3.4 key elements. This compares to median levels of 4.2 key elements for removal TDM meetings 3.7 for COP TDM meetings across all anchor sites. Parents were present at almost half of the COP meetings over time (45% in 2008), but the proportion appears to have declined in recent years, and is currently very similar to the median for all F2F anchor sites. In 2008, more than 80% of both types of meetings in Los Angeles were conducted by experienced facilitators at rates that are at the median level for all sites.

Exhibit B.3.9: TDM Implementation Progress—Los Angeles County, CA				
	2005	2006	2007	2008
Removal TDMs				
Percentage of children entering care for 1st time each year who had a removal TDM during this time period	12%	41%	46%	55%
# removal TDMs held	1920	6413	7254	8428
# removal recommendations made	4068	13908	15539	17597
TDM held prior to placement	16%	20%	21%	21%
Parents present	89%	89%	90%	91%
More than 1 DSS staff person present	82%	87%	90%	92%
Experienced Facilitator	17%	53%	80%	83%
Change of Placement TDMs				
Percentage of children entering care for 1st time during these years and experiencing more than 1 placement who had a change of placement TDM during these years	3%	10%	11%	13%
# change of placement TDMs held	501	1478	1766	2431
# COP recommendations made	835	2426	2899	3667
Parents present	57%	53%	49%	45%
More than 1 DSS staff person present	78%	85%	89%	89%
Caregiver present	58%	61%	60%	55%
Experienced Facilitator	12%	51%	80%	83%

Exhibit B.3.10 indicates that the pattern of recommendations produced by removal TDM meetings in Los Angeles County has been very consistent during the anchor-site phase of Family to Family. Recommendations to remove represent approximately one-third of decisions for each cohort. Conversely, approximately two-thirds of cases result in recommendations for children to remain in their homes or to be returned immediately to their homes.

**Exhibit B.3.10: Recommendation of Removal TDM Meetings by Cohort
—Los Angeles County, CA**

	2005	2006	2007	2008
Out-of-home Care	31%	33%	32%	31%
Child / Youth Home	67%	64%	66%	67%
Unable to reach Consensus /Other	2%	2%	2%	2%
Missing	0%	0%	0%	0%

As the number of change-of-placement (COP) meetings in Los Angeles County has grown from 2005 through 2008, **Exhibit B.3.11** shows that the rate of recommendations to maintain children in their current placements has declined. The rate in 2008 was 56% and was higher than the rates of other California anchor sites that are involved in the evaluation.

**Exhibit B.3.11: Recommendation of Change of Placement TDM Meetings by Cohort
—Los Angeles County, CA**

	2005	2006	2007	2008
Move less restrictive	16%	14%	14%	19%
Move more restrictive	5%	8%	7%	8%
Move same level	6%	13%	15%	15%
Maintain placement	71%	62%	61%	56%
Other / Missing	1%	3%	3%	2%

Self-Evaluation

Each of the anchor offices has a Self Evaluation workgroup, though participation is low. While self evaluation reports are regularly produced, they are not frequently reviewed by agency staff or community partners in many of the anchor site offices. Nonetheless, the workgroups remain valuable to the anchor offices as they assist in determining which data are needed to support the work of other strategies. Further, SE workgroups have persisted in interjecting outcome data into the agency’s work--sharing data with community members and staff periodically and regularly at other meetings. Examples of these data include—Family to Family Quarterly Reports, TDM Database information, LA Kids, MAPP reports, executive committee reports, Structured Decision Making (SDM), Children’s Resource Center (CRC), Concurrent Planning: Permanency Planning Liaison/Adoption Assessment (CPPL), and Safe Measures. Los Angeles County benefits from a solid data

infrastructure as the strong data manager and her staff at the Bureau of Information Services (BIS) ensure that these resources and many more are available to support the work of Family to Family and other DCFS programs.

Self Evaluation activities have varied between anchor offices. In one office, each Family to Family initiative group engages in discussion regarding the key outcomes and measures. Their concerns and feedback is forwarded on to regional leadership by each group's co-chairs. These discussions typically occur quarterly. F2F data is made available to all groups. Another office recognizes that the data drives the work and impacts decision making and they routinely shares their data with staff and community. Still another office has established an overarching goal: realizing that out of home placement is a last resort; their goal is to reduce the number of children who come into DCFS care and are placed outside of their region. Therefore, their Self Evaluation Workgroup requests monthly data showing the number of children removed from the service area by zip codes, and the number of children placed outside of the service area in a non-relative placement (foster care). Lastly, one of the offices has found that the ongoing sharing of data/outcomes with community partners has made ERDD efforts a primary focus.

Finally, in terms of Eliminating Racial Disparity and Disproportionality, many of the anchor site offices have task forces that develop training, and review data and policy issues. There are also efforts to develop these activities county wide with the LA Policy Workgroup on Disproportionality and Disparities in Child Welfare, which includes the DCFS Director and Executive Team, Dependency Court Attorneys, including County Counsel, the Presiding Judge, and other key community and DCFS partners. The Policy Group is facilitated by representatives from Casey Family Programs and Annie E. Casey, and involves building awareness, and looking at policy and systemic issues through the ERDD lens. DCFS has the commitment from the DCFS Director as well as the Presiding Judge to collaborate and work towards eliminating Disproportionality and Disparities in child welfare. In addition, two of the offices were accepted to the California Disproportionality Project.

The Evaluation of the Anchor-Site Phase of Family to Family

In 1992, the Annie E. Casey Foundation embarked on an initiative entitled *Family to Family: Reconstructing Family Foster Care*. By the time it concluded in 2009, dozens of large urban areas in more than 20 states had participated in Family to Family. The final phase from 2006 through 2009 focused on a smaller set of “anchor sites” in nine states. Drawing on earlier experience with the initiative, each anchor site developed a workplan to integrate efforts across four core strategies designed to achieve the transformation of policy and practice envisioned for Family to Family. To assess the impact of resulting changes in policy and practice on outcomes for children and their families, the Foundation sponsored an evaluation by a team of researchers from the University of North Carolina, Wildfire Associates, the University of California at Berkeley, and Case Western Reserve University. The evaluation team included: Judith Wildfire of Wildfire Associates, Inc., Co-Principal Investigator; Daniel Webster of the Center for Social Services Research (CSSR) at the University of California at Berkeley, Co-Investigator; David Crampton of Case Western Reserve University, Co-Investigator; and Lynn Usher of the School of Social Work at the University of North Carolina, Principal Investigator.

Reports from the evaluation include an executive summary, a comprehensive report with technical appendices, and profiles of each anchor site. Each report is available online at:

<http://www.unc.edu/~lynnu/f2feval.htm>

The evaluation team appreciates the cooperation it received from Family to Family participants in each site and from state child welfare officials who provided the data on which this evaluation is based. We also appreciate the efforts of Regional Operations Managers and Site Team Leaders in coordinating the review of draft site profiles, including: Suzanne Barnard; Bill Bettencourt; Fred Harris; Lisa Paine-Wells; Jana Rickerson; Sheila Spydell; and Kate Welty.

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