

## The Journey to Outcomes: CAPP VISION AND GOALS

*“The journey of a thousand miles begins with one step.” – Lao Tzu*

The California Partners for Permanency (CAPP) took its first step over 6 years ago. California Department of Social Services (CDSS) was awarded a grant as part of the federal Permanency Innovations Initiative (PII) to “improve permanency outcomes for children in foster care with the most serious barriers to permanency.” Four counties – Fresno, Humboldt, Los Angeles, and Santa Clara – agreed to partner with CDSS on this exciting and nationally significant project.

In addition to funding innovative interventions, PII funded federal Training and Technical Assistance and Evaluation Teams to support grantees throughout implementation and study of child and family outcomes. Those teams, along with CAPP staff, participating counties, and community and Tribal partners identified the target population and defined measurable outcomes. Statewide and local data were analyzed to identify the barriers to permanency for those children most at risk of long-term foster care. For children with longer stays in foster care the analysis revealed a disproportionate impact on African American and American Indian children.

### CAPP TARGET POPULATION:

- All children in foster care, with a targeted effort to help children who are in care the longest and experience the worst outcomes, particularly African American and American Indian children.

### CAPP GOALS:

- Develop and implement a Child and Family Practice Model that includes culturally sensitive engagement; empowerment of family, Tribal, and community networks; and use of culturally based healing practices and practice adaptations.
- Improve permanency outcomes for all children in foster care.
- Reduce disparities in outcomes for African American and American Indian children in or entering foster care at elevated risk of a non-permanent exit (e.g., aging out) or remaining in long-term foster care.

### CAPP VISION

CAPP envisioned a rigorous multi-pronged approach to systems change that:

- Centered on community engagement and partnership at all levels, building relationships with community and Tribal partners.
- Sought to understand and address organizational and structural contributors to poor outcomes for children and families involved in the child welfare system.
- Brought together community and Tribal perspectives and formal system reviews for local analysis and action planning.
- Co-created with partners a Child and Family Practice Model that is based on the fundamental belief that broad social, racial, cultural, and historical factors have contributed to the disparate outcomes for African American and American Indian children and families.
- Employed implementation science, maintaining that outcomes improve when proven interventions are consistently and systemically implemented as intended.

*CAPP boldly and ambitiously chose to focus its efforts on institutional bias in child welfare, an under-recognized social problem that negatively affects the lives of countless children and often results in unnecessarily long foster care stays for children in California and across the nation.*

### PROGRAM EVALUATION AND EXPECTED RESULTS

In the effort to decrease long-term foster care for the target population, CAPP developed short-term and long-term expected outcomes.

Short term (proximal) outcomes included positive changes in the following areas:

- Positive and productive relationship between the social worker and parents, guardians, and caregivers involved in a child’s case.
- Increasing involvement of parents and guardians in identifying problems, progress, and solutions.
- Engaging natural family, community, and Tribal supports.
- Fostering a sense of hopefulness that the family can be successful.
- Increasing receipt of culturally responsive services and support by parents and children.

Long term (distal) outcomes included changes in the following areas:

- Reduced number of children in long-term foster care.
- Increased number and timeliness of permanent exits.
- Decreased re-entry into foster care.
- Decreased non-permanent exits.
- Reduced disparity in permanency outcomes for African American and American Indian children.

Over the course of the 6 years the CAPP counties and their community and Tribal partners have seen their vision become reality. By learning together in the doing, they have achieved many of their goals and promising results for children and families.