TRACKING AND USING IMPLEMENTATION
AND OUTCOME DATA (w/Tip Sheet)

Another important area of capacity building is gathering, using, and sharing data for decision making to improve implementation and system supports for the Practice Model and to better understand and interpret Practice Model outcomes. While every child welfare system has its technical data and information system, the focus here is not on the data system itself, but on the ongoing availability, integration, and use of live, timely, actionable information to support and improve implementation. This flips the focus from the data themselves to identifying the key questions that need to be answered: What do we want to know? How are we going to know it?

Where there is capacity to collect and analyze quantitative and qualitative data focused on key questions to inform local decision making about CFPM implementation and system change, child welfare agencies are better able to co-create system processes and solutions with community partners to meet the needs of those being served and to improve the supports and services provided to children and families. Thoughtful decision support data and CQI processes are core to effective practice model implementation and system change to achieve the shared goals and outcomes that agency and community partners have developed.

This was a challenging area for implementing jurisdictions because county child welfare agency data collection and capacity was centered on the state's SACWIS system, which did not include relevant data related to implementation or short-term outcomes of the Practice Model. Given the staffing challenges, workload, legal mandates, and critical responsibilities of child welfare agencies, most implementing jurisdictions had limited ability to prioritize the strengthening of local and state infrastructure to support data-based child welfare agency decision making that was not already supported by SACWIS. However policy changes that brought requirements to develop CQI processes did strengthen the data focus and work of several jurisdictions.

One implementing jurisdiction identified support from a CQI technical assistant and developed a work plan for creating a CQI system that:

- Included important areas of tracking and using CFPM implementation and outcome data for decision making (e.g., implementation and fidelity data, parent survey data regarding short-term outcomes, and SACWIS and Child and Family Services Review measures for long-term outcomes); and,

- Actively engaged staff and community partners in assessing organizational strengths and needs, testing new ideas, learning from quantitative and qualitative data, and implementing solutions to improve child safety, permanency, and well-being.

Another implementing jurisdiction, which had social service agency (SSA) leadership in addition to child welfare agency leadership highly involved in supporting local practice model implementation, was eventually able to mobilize a decision support data system design team to work with technical assistants. Over several work sessions, the team identified priority questions about implementation and outcomes that would be helpful to answer for ongoing quality improvement and decision making. The team then identified measures that could be used to regularly answer identified questions. Examples of questions that a jurisdiction might want to have data available to answer in key areas of implementation support are included in the textbox below.

EXAMPLES OF DATA QUESTIONS IN KEY AREAS OF PRACTICE MODEL IMPLEMENTATION

Recruitment and Selection
- Is retention improving?
- How does our vacancy rate affect our hiring process?
- Are we using interview questions that adequately assess the candidates' ability to absorb training and coaching (adaptive learning)?
- Do the candidates think that the interview process was fair and reflective of their knowledge, skills, and abilities?

Training
- Does training provide sufficient skills to begin delivery of CFPM with families?
- Is the training delivered or experienced at all levels of the agency?
- What percentage of staff at each level of the agency is trained in the CFPM?

Coaching
- What percentage of staff at each level of the agency is receiving coaching?
- Are managers and supervisors coaching to the eight core elements of the CFPM?
- Do social workers take what is learned in coaching and apply it to work with children and families?
- What impact is coaching having on staff (e.g., engagement, morale, retention, organizational culture, etc.)?
- Are managers and supervisors following the coaching expectations outlined in the Coaching Service Delivery Plan?

Fidelity Assessment
- What percentage of trained staff is up to date on its fidelity assessments?
- In what languages are fidelity assessments being conducted? Does the language of the fidelity assessment match the languages of the families participating?
- Are practitioners delivering the CFPM with competence?

Receipt of CFPM
- How many children are being served by the Practice Model?

Short-term Outcomes
- How many families served by the Practice Model report a positive and productive relationship with their social worker?
- How many families served by the CFPM have engaged their natural community for support?
- How many family reunification parents served by the Practice Model have demonstrated greater safety and protective capacity as evidenced by increased visitation in less restrictive settings (e.g., move from supervised to unsupervised visitation, from daytime visits to overnight visits, etc.)?

Long-term Outcomes
- Have reunifications increased for children and families served by the CFPM?
- Have lengths of stay in foster care for children served by the Practice Model decreased?
- Has recurrence of maltreatment decreased for children and families served by the CFPM?
- Have disparities in safety and/or permanency outcomes been reduced for children and families served by the Practice Model?

In addition, this implementing jurisdiction envisions further work to identify data, information, and questions about broad organizational functioning and support for practice model implementation (e.g., functioning of leadership and implementation teams and of communication and feedback loops, determining if policies and procedures are in place to support coaching, and assessing the collective quality of the agency's implementation drivers). Data on broad systemic areas such as these will ultimately ensure that data are available to inform improvements to system capacity and functioning, which are critical for acknowledging system-level responsibility for removing system barriers to the Practice Model, effectively supporting staff in using the Practice Model, and being accountable to the community for the outcomes of the children and families served.

CFPM Data Tracking and Use Resources

While implementing jurisdictions were unable to focus intensively in this area, they all tracked CFPM training and fidelity assessment data and some coaching data. The tip sheet on the following page brings together important best practices in building capacity to track and use data for practice model decision making. In addition, jurisdictions may want to make use of the PII TTAP Decision Support Data System information and tool (see pages 5-24 of the publication at http://www.acf.hhs.gov/sites/default/files/cb/guide_vol5_full_implementation.pdf). Identifying consultants or TA providers who can assist jurisdictions in thinking through this critical area of CFPM infrastructure and support may be needed to ensure timely and meaningful data for linked leadership and implementation teams, partners, and staff in order to improve support for and sustain the Practice Model.

Finally, two important survey resources were developed for gathering data on short-term outcomes of the Practice Model. Both surveys are posted on the Capacity-Building page of the CFPM website. The two surveys were developed by federal PII evaluation partners in coordination with implementing jurisdictions and their community partners to understand how the Practice Model is being experienced. The surveys are designed for use with parents who are receiving family reunification services and caregivers of children in Permanency Planning. Both the Parent-Legal Guardian and Caregiver Surveys include questions about the parent-legal guardian or the caregiver's relationship with their social worker; their sense of hopefulness and locus of control; family, friend, community, and Tribal member involvement in the child's case; the occurrence of casework events; and general demographics on the participant and their child. A parent/caregiver survey FAQ is also posted which provides additional information about the surveys.

Both survey instruments went through cognitive testing (to assess and improve the wording and flow of the survey) and were pilot tested in 2 sites with a small group of approximately 15 parents and 15 caregivers in each site. Unfortunately, there was insufficient time and approvals to broadly distribute the surveys across all implementing jurisdictions as part of the federal PII evaluation of the Practice Model. Further instrument testing is needed to understand whether and how survey responses are related to other outcomes of interest for children and families served through the CFPM. There are links below to these survey resources, which are provided in English and Spanish and can assist replicating jurisdictions to gather data about how the Practice Model is affecting casework and short-term outcomes for children and families being served.

Tips for Tracking and Using Data for Decision Making

In developing a plan for phased rollout of the Practice Model, it is important to establish a data support team to be responsible for ensuring that Practice Model data are collected, analyzed, and reported and to determine how the team will be connected with the local CFPM Leadership and implementation teams. The team will assist in implementation planning by coordinating with the agency's linked teaming structures to develop and implement a decision support data work plan for capacity building and installation, which outlines roles, tasks, resources, and timelines for:

- **Identifying short- and long-term child and family outcomes and service provision data** that are meaningful to agency and community partners and the identified problem you are trying to solve

- **Identifying all implementation, service provision, and outcome data to** be gathered, analyzed, and reported (*Note*: *This is done in partnership with other individuals and teams working on various aspects of local implementation planning.*)

- **Leveraging a data or information technology system** for collecting Practice Model data, i.e., what system will hold implementation, service provision, and outcome data so timely reports and analyses can be generated on an ongoing basis (*Note*: *If housed in more than one system, how can you ensure ready access to the data and develop strategies that will assist in analyzing CFPM implementation, service provision, and outcome data in an integrated way?*)

- **Identifying who needs to do what** to modify or ready the data or information technology system for local implementation, service provision, and/or outcome data

- **Developing/refining data collection processes and protocols** to ensure collection of implementation, service provision, and outcome data is practical and efficient, i.e., it is built into practice routines, workflow, and business processes and is not burdensome

- **Identifying who can provide data-related training and support** to build the capacity of staff in efficient data collection protocols for data related to implementation, service provision, and outcomes

- **Developing data entry protocols,** identifying who is responsible for entry of what data, and deciding how often data will be entered

- **Identifying who will train and support data enterers** to ensure they have the knowledge, skills, and dedicated time for this responsibility so ongoing data reports will include accurate and up-to-date data

- **Identifying who will develop data reports,** to whom they will provide them, and with what frequency

- **Developing a schedule for sharing implementation, service provision, and outcome data widely**, i.e., who will share data and how often with supervisors and staff, leadership and management, trainers and coaches, and community and Tribal partners

- **Formalizing feedback loops** that ensure the implementation team is tracking strengths and barriers to CFPM implementation and system change, receiving at least quarterly feedback from the leadership team, and working jointly to plan and communicate next steps