

# Linkages: Where do I start?



A Basic Overview of the Linkages  
Project

July 2011

# Learning Objectives

- ▶ Define the purpose of Linkages
- ▶ Recognize the need for collaboration on shared families
- ▶ Identify historic barriers to working together
- ▶ Identify benefits to clients of Linkages
- ▶ List the opportunities between child welfare and CalWORKs for collaboration when working with shared families
- ▶ Identify the intersections of requirements between CalWORKs and Child Welfare in order to assist the family more efficiently and more effectively



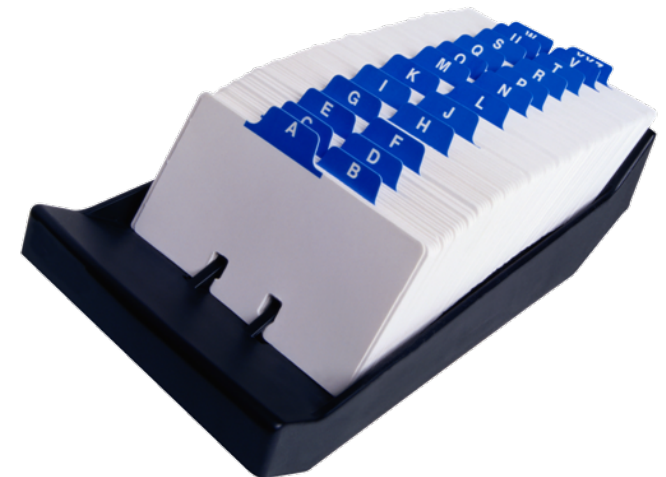
# Agenda



- ▶ Introductions
- ▶ What is Linkages? What is the vision in your county?
- ▶ Establishing the Link between Poverty and Child Maltreatment
- ▶ CalWORKs as prevention of risk of child maltreatment; and Child Welfare as anti-poverty, self-sufficiency
- ▶ Comparing CalWORKs and Child Welfare relationships with families
- ▶ Different perspectives and different mandates
- ▶ How can we help each other help shared families?
- ▶ Mandates of the programs
- ▶ Applied practice and transfer of learning tool

# Meet and Greet

- ▶ On a 3x5 card
- ▶ Write on one side, one thing you know about Linkages
- ▶ Write on the other side, one reason you think Linkages could be an important collaboration



# What is Linkages?

- ▶ A CalWORKs and Child Welfare collaboration to improve outcomes for families
- ▶ The goal is to improve outcomes for children and families by providing needed services and supports through improved collaboration.



*“Linkages* is designed to assist families in crisis, particularly those dealing with the stresses and strains of poverty. It helps counties create partnerships across child welfare and CalWorks to reduce bureaucracy, coordinate services for families, and promote better outcomes. *Linkages* puts parenting first.”

Jill Berrick, Ph.D.  
Center for Child and Youth Policy  
University of California Berkeley, School of Social  
Welfare

# County Vision

- » Insert vision, values, goals of the county

# Why are they Linked?

- ▶ Child Welfare Services is charged with keeping children safe from maltreatment and abuse.
- ▶ CalWORKs is responsible for providing income assistance and employment preparation services to help unemployed parents achieve self-sufficiency.
- ▶ Overlap of children and families who are clients of both systems



*Families with annual incomes below \$15,000, compared to families with annual incomes above \$30,000, are over 22 times more likely to experience some form of maltreatment.*

# VIDEO



15 MINUTES

# The Link



- ▶ Child Welfare serves as an anti-poverty program
- ▶ CalWorks assists in preventing and/or mitigating child abuse and neglect
- ▶ Not a project or another way to coordinate or restructure, but a way of doing business that fights both poverty and abuse
- ▶ Built on an understanding of the interaction between child maltreatment and poverty

# The Need

- ▶ Complexity of negotiating two bureaucracies with often conflicting requirements, goals and timeframes
- ▶ Offices are typically in different locations, adding scheduling and transportation challenges
- ▶ Separate workers for each system
- ▶ Workers who typically do not communicate with each other
- ▶ Workers who may actually be working to achieve incompatible goals



# The Link Between Poverty And Child Maltreatment

# Facts and Stats



- ▶ Look on your tables
- ▶ There are mini posters facedown on your tables
- ▶ Pick them up so that someone has each one in his/her hand
- ▶ When I call your number, please stand and read the poster aloud
- ▶ Bring it over and hang it on the wall



# Reactions?

- ▶ Stats and data are interesting, but what do they mean to you?
- ▶ On page 8, answer the questions on the worksheet individually
- ▶ When everyone has finished at your table, compare answers and discuss your thoughts.



# Factors Contributing to Family Economic Vulnerability

- ▶ Number of adults available to support children
- ▶ Number of children in a family to support
- ▶ Parent's Work and Wages



*Do poor parents make  
abusive parents?*



*NO!*

76 million children in the  
U.S

About 1.5 million are from  
low-income families



About 900,000 children are victims of child maltreatment every year – a fraction of all children, and only a small percent of all low-income children.

# Why is it so hard to Parent in Poverty?

- ▶ Look at page 12
- ▶ Review the list of factors there
- ▶ As a small group, think of examples of each
- ▶ Answer the question, how could these lead to child maltreatment?



# Characteristics Associated with Increased Odds of Child Welfare Events

- ▶ Young children
- ▶ Single parent family
- ▶ Larger families
- ▶ Born with low birth weight
- ▶ Late or no prenatal care
- ▶ Increased time on aid
- ▶ Breaks in aid receipt
- ▶ More hardships
- ▶ Deeper poverty
- ▶ Homelessness
- ▶ Substance abuse
- ▶ Parental stress
- ▶ Prior child welfare contact





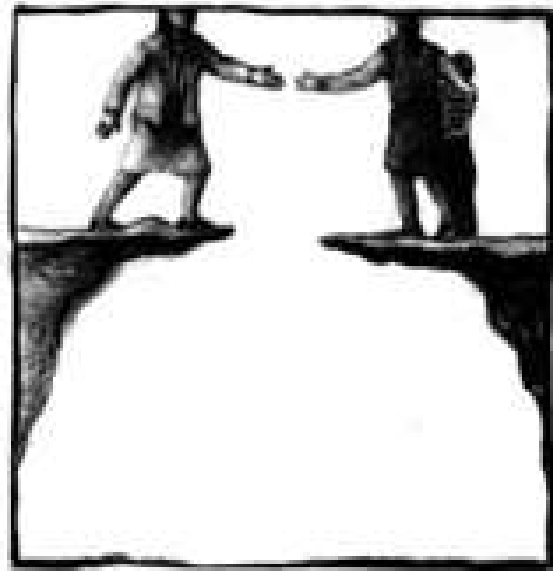
# Practice Implications

- ▶ Must attend to family material well-being
- ▶ Recognize the challenges associated with parenting in poverty



# Benefits Brainstorm

- ▶ On a flip chart, brainstorm the benefits of collaboration between CalWORKs and Child Welfare
- ▶ Hang on the wall when you are finished

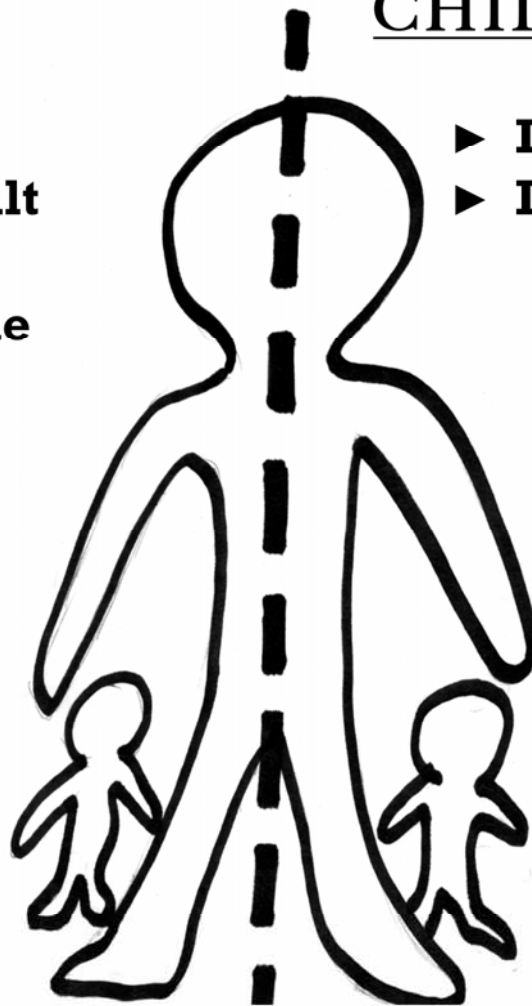


## CalWORKS

- ▶ **Voluntary Entry**
- ▶ **Identified client = adult**
- ▶ **Basic needs-driven**
- ▶ **Requires child in home**
- ▶ **Rules-based**
- ▶ **Little knowledge of Child Welfare**
- ▶ **CalWIN cannot “talk” to CWS/CMS**
- ▶ **Work plan**

## CHILDWELFARE

- ▶ **Involuntary Entry (most)**
- ▶ **Identified client = child**
  - ▶ **Safety-driven**
  - ▶ **May remove child**
  - ▶ **Discretionary**
  - ▶ **Little knowledge of CalWorks!**
- ▶ **CWS/CMS cannot talk to CalWIN**
- ▶ **Case plan**



***The “SPLIT” client***

# Information from national best practice sites



North Carolina Division of Human Services  
California Dept. of Human Services (9 co's)  
El Paso County Dept. of Human Services, CO

# Why do TANF & Workforce workers overlook needs/condition of children?

- Program mandates are aimed at adults in household
- Workers feel they are not trained in the area of children's issues
- Feel they are already overburdened and do not have time to add anything to their intake or case management activities

# Why do Child Welfare workers resist considering poverty issues in their cases?

- Psychological distancing/defending
  - children are removed due to abuse and risk, not socio-economic
- Lack of education/training
  - not stressed in professional education
  - not stressed in child-welfare specific training
- Not asked about/investigated by the court, or in supervision



# Why do TANF & Workforce workers resist coordinated case management?

- **NOTE!!** Nationally, TANF & Workforce workers are more interested in and cooperative with these initiatives than their CW counterparts
- Fear that CW workers will view them and utilize them as clerks
- Fear that TANF components/requirements will be secondary to CW
- Do not make the connection between child welfare issues and barriers to self-sufficiency
- Do not realize that it will reduce the amount of work required

# Why do Child Welfare workers resist coordinated case management?

- Attitude that they are more professional and capable than their counterparts
- Afraid their autonomy on a case will be challenged
- Feel they are already overburdened and do not have time to confer and collaborate with counterparts
- Do not make the connection between poverty and child neglect/abuse
- Do not realize that it will reduce the amount of work required

# Why do families need Child Welfare and TANF/Workforce to collaborate?

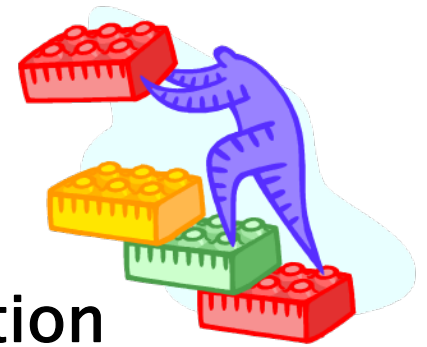
- Shared information results in more reasonable and non-conflicting plans
- Each program has resources the family needs
- So the agency has a holistic and comprehensive view of the families' needs, resources, strengths, and deficits
- In order to achieve economic self-sufficiency and family reunification in the shortest feasible time frame
- So plans & referrals do not compete or conflict

# Why do social services agencies need their TANF/Workforce and Child Welfare divisions to collaborate?

- Better use of resources: staff, time, money
- To operationalize the concepts of “client-centered”, “family-focused”, “strengths-based”, “system of care”, “competent services”, and “we care”

# Key Components for Success

- ▶ Information exchange
- ▶ Honest dialogue and open communication pathways
- ▶ Trust
- ▶ Respect
- ▶ Staff development
- ▶ Focus on clients and goals of the initiative
- ▶ Diversity of thought
- ▶ Deconstruction of silos



# Where Can We Crossover?

- ▶ Identification
- ▶ Service
- ▶ Planning
- ▶ Work with parents
- ▶ Meeting the needs of children
- ▶ Counseling
- ▶ Referrals



# County Procedures

- ▶ Let's review the county's vision for Linkages
- ▶ Procedures that are in place to identify linked families
- ▶ Tools in place to support Linkages Collaboration
- ▶ Questions?

# Action Planning

- ▶ Complete page 23
- ▶ Transfer your learning

# Thank You!