

## **Child Welfare Services Outcome and Accountability System**

Pursuant to State Law (Assembly Bill 636), effective January 2004, a new Child Welfare Services Outcome and Accountability System began operation in California. The new system, referred to as the California-Child and Family Services Review (C-CFSR), focuses primarily on measuring outcomes in safety, permanence and child and family well-being. The new system replaces the former Child Welfare Services Oversight System which focused exclusively on regulatory compliance and brings California's oversight into alignment with the Federal Child and Family Services Review oversight system of the states.

The new system operates on a philosophy of continuous quality improvement, interagency partnerships, community involvement and public reporting of program outcomes. The principle components of the system include the following:

- **Quarterly Outcome and Accountability County Data Reports:** in early 2004, CDSS began issuing quarterly reports with key safety, permanence and well-being indicators for each county. The quarterly reports provide summary level federal and State program measures that serve as the basis for the county self-assessment reviews and are used to track State and county performance over time.
- **County Peer Quality Case Review (PQCR):** guided by questions raised by the analysis of outcome data and systemic factors. The goal of the PQCR is to analyze specific practice areas and to identify key patterns of agency strengths and concerns for the host county. The PQCR process uses peers from other counties to promote the exchange of best practice ideas. Peer reviewers provide objectivity to the process and serve as an immediate onsite training resource to the host county.
- **County Self-Assessment:** a focused analysis of performance by each county of its own child welfare services program including services provided to probation youth. The county child welfare agency in partnership with the county probation agency work together with public and private organizations, courts, tribes, and the community to complete the assessment. The assessment takes into account things learned in the PQCR process.
- **County System Improvement Plan (SIP):** developed by the child welfare service agency in collaboration with their local partners; a SIP must be approved by the County Board of Supervisors and CDSS. The focus of the plan is a commitment to specific measurable improvements in performance outcomes that the county will achieve within a defined timeframe. The plan establishes program priorities, defines the actions steps and specific percentage increases in performance improvement. The county system improvement plan is based on the previous two components.
- **State Technical Assistance and Monitoring:** provided by CDSS to monitor the completion of these activities under the C-CFSR for each county, including: ongoing tracking of county performance measures, reviewing county self-assessments for completeness, participation in peer quality case reviews, and review and approval of the county system improvement plans. The CDSS provides guidance and technical assistance to counties during each phase of C-CFSR process.