

Outcomes and Evaluation Issues Advisory Committee to the Child Welfare Transformation Design Committee

November 17, 2009
9:00am - 12:00pm

Members Present: Peg Mason on behalf of Sharon Osborne, Jeanine Livingston, Gwendolyn Townsend; Gwen Gua for Carleen Anderson; Mark Courtney; Roy Hogan; Mary Meinig; Darcy Hancock; Kelly Bohne for Maureen McGrath

Staff Present: Julie Dunnington; Jennifer Strus

Others: Marna Miller (WSIPP); Dana Phelps (CA); Analese Stuard; Jann Hoppler; Stephanie Lee (WSIPP); Janis Luvas; Alexia Everett; Laurie Lippold; Makeba Greene; Rebecca Cliner; Karen Brady; Benjamin Berres;

Julie Dunnington passed out a sheet with the members' contact information.

Mark Courtney went through his draft outcome sheet. He indicated that the outcomes listed are big picture outcomes. In the category marked "Safety" Mark made some changes based upon the comments made at the previous committee meeting. What the committee is tasked with doing is to come forward with recommendations regarding the high-level domains to recommend to the TDC.

Aside from Placement of Family Setting and Sibling placement, there is little baseline information. Mark proceeded to go through each section in the draft set of outcomes.

Maltreatment - Use the term founded and unfounded rather than substantiated. Maltreatment while in care - The number of substantiated child abuse reports while in care

Safety -

- Exits/Permanency
 - + What are the percentages of kids that are subject to additional reports of maltreatment/abuse
 - + We should be careful about what are considered actual good exits, rather than runaways, etc.
 - + Just want to make sure the other non-permanent outcomes are not un-balancing outcomes.

Julie pointed out that these high level outcomes are for both Phase 1 (PBC conversion) and Phase 2 (demo site implementation) implementation.

Marna asked whether an unsubstantiated CPS referral would ever be

transferred to a contractor. Mark responded that a fair number of children are placed in out of home care without a substantiated CPS referral.

Discussion of Permanency and Stability Outcomes (see Handout)

Bullet 1 - depending on how the incentives are set up, there could be a big shift to permanency that does not include reunification. In Illinois there was a big drop in reunification and this outcome let's us look at this.

Bullet 2 - looks at cases that have been around for awhile - uses the AFSA time line of 15 months in out of home care as the benchmark. Gwen commented that the 15 month time line might be too short for Indian children because it may take a long time to establish tribal affiliation.

Gwendolyn asked whether the use of the term "guardianship" meant "dependency guardianship." Mark indicated he used the term to mean a permanent exit from care. CA needs to let the committee know what the permanent exits from care are in this state so that the outcomes can be appropriately worded.

Mark indicated that this bullet allows us to look at groups of children who stay in foster care too long. Mark also indicated that the ICWA outcome listed in the "Well-being" section should be moved up so that it is also included in the "Permanency" section as well. Need to look at permanent exit by type of permanent exit. Runaways are the 2nd most common exit from out of home care. Maybe we should differentiate between "permanent exits" and "permanency exits."

Bullets 3 & 4 - These outcomes deal with non-permanent exits and need to look at each of them. They show us things we want to monitor.

Bullet 6 - the focus in this outcome is on both parents having had their parental rights terminated.

Bullet 7 - This bullet should be removed because the content has been captured in other bullets. Need to look at the number of moves a child has experienced in foster care; some moves are good.

There was a discussion about the 6 month standard - lots of children move out of out of home care within 6 months. Generally, if a child stays more than 6 months the chances increase for him or her having a long term stay in foster care. Jeanine pointed out that there is some concern that by using a 6-month criterion, some caseworkers will attempt to move a child before and after that value to achieve a certain statistical end. Might want to say "long term stay" and "short term stay" and let CA decide what these time limits should be.

Mark indicated that need to set time limits because if you do not then will have the issues we have with the current measures. At this point, he would recommend 6 months as short term and after that being long term and

looking at the nature of the move.

How are children entering out-of-home care defined? Are we including those children in voluntary placement agreements? We might want to differentiate the outcomes between dependencies and voluntary?

Public Comment on Permanency and Stability Outcomes

When does the clock start on an out of home care placement predicated on a voluntary placement agreement? At the start of the VPA or if converted to a dependency, at the start of the dependency? Will add clarification to the bullet that it starts at the beginning of the VPA.

Discussion of Well-Being Outcomes (see Handout)

Bullet 1 - references preferences in Washington law. Term "suitable person" should also say "as defined by law."

Bullet 3 - This outcome looks at success in keeping siblings together. Do we want to go beyond whether they are living together? Should we ask whether if they are seeing each other as well for the sibling groups that are visiting each other? This gets very hard when it comes to data measurement. If we want to go further to talk about sibling visitation, then we need to propose those measures. Should add to the outcome that the agency adhered to sibling visitation standards in current CA policy.

Bullet 4 - There is lots of data on this. The question is whether this outcome should be included at all. The committee determined that it should be.

Bullet 5 - There are standards for this outcomes even though it's not really an outcome. This assessment really doesn't get you there - are the issues identified by the assessment being handled? That's the outcome to be measured. On the practice side, we want to know if practice standards are being followed. But the outcome information is down the road. This is something to gather information about so that the practice model in this area could be developed. This issue is one that would probably interest the Legal and Practice Advisory Committee but need to work on it in collaboration with that committee to develop appropriate outcomes.

Bullet 6 - these outcomes are collected now because they are required by the feds.

Bullet 7 - ICWA - may want to go broader than this - need to be open to other outcomes.

Gwendolyn asked how we ensure that children are being serviced by social workers with cultural competencies? How do we define cultural competency? What are culturally competent outcomes? Do they differ from positive outcomes in general? At some other point, can we hammer out what this actually means. Not sure that this has to be in the measures now. Jeanine

suggested that at another meeting, we should identify outcomes that address this issue more explicitly.

Mark indicated that racial disproportionality will be measured in all outcomes - it is implicit in all the measures.

Jeanine asked that the committee spend time at another meeting looking at all the outcomes especially culturally competent services - incentivize the development of culturally competent services. This is another issue to be discussed with the Legal and Practice Committee at some point.

Julie stated that the recommendation to the TDC for the December meeting would be the Safety and Permanency Outcomes, with changes made after today's meeting, but that the committee needs to further refine the Well-being Outcomes.

Took public comment on the Well-being outcomes.

Julie will send out the next draft of the Outcomes with the changes made at this meeting. Committee members will vote on-line whether they are OK with going forward with the document to the TDC with the caveat that the Well-being Outcomes need more work.

Future directions/question:

- Is there anything in the current legislation that the committee would recommend be changed?
- CA needs high level outcomes by end of April 2010 to describe in a solicitation. CA will develop the next level down of outcomes and bring back to the advisory committee for discussion.
- Where does foster parent recruitment lie in all of this?