

February 15, 2023 DFCS Continuum of Learning Questions & Answers



All DFCS Continuum of Learning presentations are available at <https://socialservices.sccgov.org/about-us/department-family-and-childrens-services/caregiver-supports-and-community-information>.

- Click on Community Forums

VISION

1. What do you think are the major factors and causes of the disproportionality/disparity problem?
 - What is your perspective of the trauma and suffering upon the Latino children and families caused by Disproportionality/Disparity in the system: fear, mistrust, abandonment, injustice?
 - What is your new direction and training to your supervisors, leaders and all staff about the severity and scope of the Disproportionality/Disparity Problem with Latino families?
 - How do you bring awareness about their decision-making patterns regarding this problem?
 - What is your overall action plan to reduce and eliminate the Disproportionality/Disparity or entries to Latino children and achieve fairness in response to allegations and realize evidence-based equity and justice for all the Latino Families in DFCS?
 - Using Indian Child Welfare Act (ICWA) principles (in terms of how we value their culture, how we value them as people, and how we value opportunities they have to support their own families and allow for children not to come into care) as the gold standard, not just for ICWA families but also for Latino/Latinx/Black/African American families or any family that comes into contact with the agency
 - Having conversations with communities and the children and families that we serve by asking them how we can do our work better
 - Having conversations with all staff about race and equity and ensuring that family healing and family engagement is non-negotiable
 - Launched a mandatory all-staff training (from front-desk clerical staff to executive staff) around race and equity with Dr. Kenneth Hardy, to ensure everyone has access to the information and implications
 - Ensuring consistency in how we are using assessment tools that are available to us to take a look at safety and risk
 - Factoring in changes/shifts in laws (e.g. failure to protect which tells us that we should not be intervening with families just due to a failure to protect, we have to ensure there is access to resources and that staff are partnering with others to address those gaps in resources)
 - Though disproportionality and disparity is still present, our numbers have decreased
 - Case examples in the presentation will hopefully lift up some of the work the agency is doing
2. Is the Racial & Equity training mandatory for all staff?
 - Yes race and equity training is a required training for our entire Department.

2022 ANNUAL REPORT

3. Cultural Brokers were mentioned in the Annual Report as an integral part of the family engagement process. Is it important for them to be included in the race and equity trainings?
 - This current series of trainings is with DFCS staff. We acknowledge the need for training and partnership with our partner agencies and community based agencies.
4. Is DFCS engaging Community Health Workers (CHW) to support families? CHWs can also fulfill the role of cultural brokers.
 - Thank you for lifting that up for follow up to know more about partnering with Community Health workers!

CASE STUDIES

5. What Evidenced-Based Models (EBM) around engagement do you use? Do you use Motivational Interviewing or Stages of Change?
 - We use Structured Decision Making (SDM) as an assessment tool and Safety Organized Practice (SOP) as engagement tools. Probation uses Motivational Interviewing.
6. Considering the Child and Family Practice Model (CFPM), what kind of efforts did you put into absorbing the practice model and what kind of efforts/process did you use into an engaging stance to be able to engage with the family in this way?
 - It was important during inquiry, to gather a sense of where family is at now, despite historical information.
 - Discussing their current circumstance and allowing them the opportunity to advocate for themselves really helped with teaming/partnering
 - Beneficial to put the focus back on the child- It is very unlikely that we will disagree on that the child needs to be safe and that the child's life matters, so it is helpful to keep the focus on the child.
7. What are the checks and balances in place when these best practices aren't adhered to when engaging with families? Does Santa Clara County DFCS have the capacity to allow workers to go the extra mile with families and what will be restructured with the existing service model? We need more workers like Caroline and Daniel who meet the families where there're at.
 - Absolutely, we are setting up checks and balances to ensure that we can support workers around this-Some of this has been some restructuring in moving team members where the work is occurring.

- In this last year we have moved many of our team members to the front end in emergency response so that there is the staffing level to be responsive to those referrals and to be able to connect with community. As fewer children come into care, reasonable caseloads would allow someone like Caroline and Daniel to have the time with those families to be able to support them
- We are also setting up efforts to be able to do Continuous Quality Improvement (CQI), and ensuring when we are doing training in offering coaching and support.
- Add Child Family Team (CFT) meeting facilitators, which allows more flexibility in terms of getting CFT's done and supporting families.
- Identified more supportive services and additional staff who will be able to provide support to Social Workers looking at higher acuity youth and crisis support plans.
- We are looking to internal resources and external partnerships.
- Transparency in process: CFTs, circles of support, and families are bringing in faith based organizations/community based organizations so there is more transparency in process.
- We are seeing a lot of DFCS management support and oversight, ensuring and emphasizing fidelity to family engagement, and making resources available where there are barriers. We are seeing so many social workers step up and go that extra mile. It has been really inspiring.

8. Any tips on how you managed this family along with the rest of your caseload?

- Having more workers in the front end in Emergency Response helps in evening out the caseloads/referrals
- Try to prioritize families that need immediate attention
- Use supervision
- Self-care