

Summary of Santa Clara County's Child Welfare Services Quarterly Data Report January 2005

Background

This report summarizes Santa Clara County's (SCC) progress toward achieving outcomes identified in the California Child and Family Services Review (C-CSFR), reflecting data from July 2000 to July 2004, as reported by the California Department of Social Services (CDSS) Quarterly Data Report.¹

The C-CSFR monitors a series of measures that provide indicators of key program outcomes, processes, and receipt of critical services. The outcome measures are consistent with the outcomes for the Federal Child and Family Services Review, in that the federal indicators are a subset of the State's indicators under the new Outcomes and Accountability system established by Assembly Bill (AB) 636. It is expected that the state and county will not only improve performance on the federal indicators, but, on a broader set of state-enriched indicators as well, which is why this report includes both federal and state measures.

The data source for this report is the Child Welfare Services/Case Management System (CWS/CMS). Counties are responsible for entering data on CWS/CMS as part of the process used to manage caseloads of children and families who receive child welfare services. The accuracy of the information derived from CWS/CMS is continuously improving. As with any large automation system, CWS/CMS provides a broad range of challenges and benefits as it continues to undergo improvements to reflect the changing child welfare system. Distribution of the January 2005 summary report was delayed due to CDSS' effort to improve and refine data.

SCC child welfare reform planning for the C-CSFR began with an extensive self-assessment of outcome measures, which included data analysis from the CDSS January 2004 Quarterly Report for the baseline measurement period of July 1, 2002 to June 30, 2003, and represents the starting point to measure improvement over time. Santa Clara County Social Services Agency (SSA) organized community dialogues and workgroups to review and analyze data, including trends, comparisons to similar counties, ethnic and age breakdowns, and identified factors affecting performance, as well as strengths and areas for improvement. The County Self-Assessment was completed and submitted to CDSS in June 2004. The self-assessment process provided an opportunity to examine data for the current level of performance and to develop specific strategies for achieving measurable improvement.

SSA utilized a similar process in partnership with public and private agencies and community members to develop the System Improvement Plan (SIP). The community dialogues and workgroups were comprised of youth, birth and foster parents, placement agencies, community-based organizations, Department of Family and Children's Services (DFCS) staff, Mental Health, Alcohol and Drug Services, Juvenile Probation, law enforcement, advocates, and attorneys. Additional focus groups were convened with specific target groups: educators, judges, the California Youth Connection, birth parents, and Child Advocates.

In July 2004, work groups were established to review Self-Assessment findings, develop goals, strategies, milestones, and timeframe to achieve improvement. Based on trend data, analysis, and extensive stakeholder input, five measures were identified and included in the SIP. Priorities for SIP

¹ Measurement periods vary for outcome measures based on methodology. Data sources are California Child Welfare Services Outcome and Accountability Data Reports for Santa Clara County and California, January 2005.

included Federal measures, safety measures, measures indicating a need for improvement and measures consistent with child welfare redesign. The following measures were selected for SIP inclusion:

- Overrepresentation of Children of Color upon 1st Entry into Foster Care
- Referrals with a Timely Response
- Timely Social Worker visits
- Multiple Foster Care Placements
- Foster Care Re-Entries

The workgroup and stakeholders findings were incorporated into the SIP, which was adopted by the Board of Supervisors and subsequently submitted to CDSS for approval on September 30, 2004. The SIP is an operational agreement between the Santa Clara County (SCC) and the State, outlining how SCC will improve its system of care for children and families. SCC and the State will rely on Quarterly Data Reports to track progress in meeting the SIP goals, which includes milestones, time frames, and improvement targets.

As noted earlier, this summary report provides an overview of SCC's Quarterly Data Report dated January 2005 with data to July 2004. (To learn more about California performance data, visit <http://cssr.berkeley.edu/CWSCMSreports>.)

Summary of Outcome Measure Performance

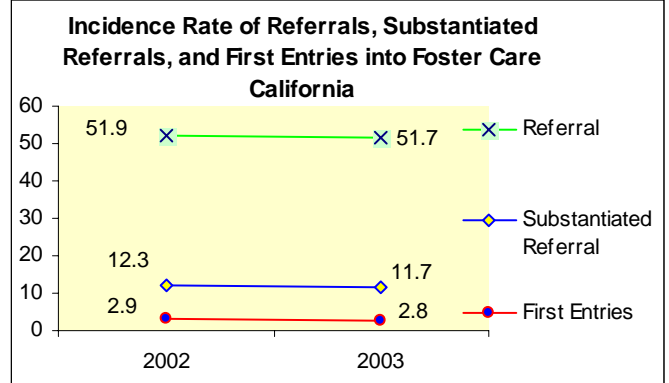
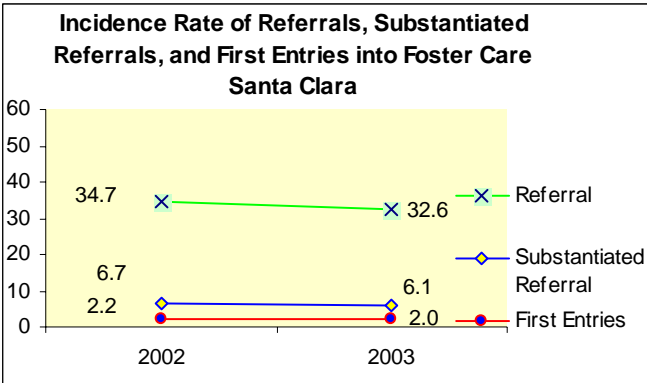
SCC is utilizing the State measures to track progress pertaining to the five SIP target areas. For outcomes that have Federal and State measures, both measures will be cited in this report.

In general, SCC has experienced consistent and improved performance across most measures. In the incidence rate in first entries into care, there is greater decrease than the State. Substantial improvements are evident in timely investigations and social worker visits; however, the latter is below the State average. Performance in reunifying children and finalizing adoptions is above federal standard and state average. Also SCC has a higher ratio than the State in placing children with relatives and keeping siblings together.

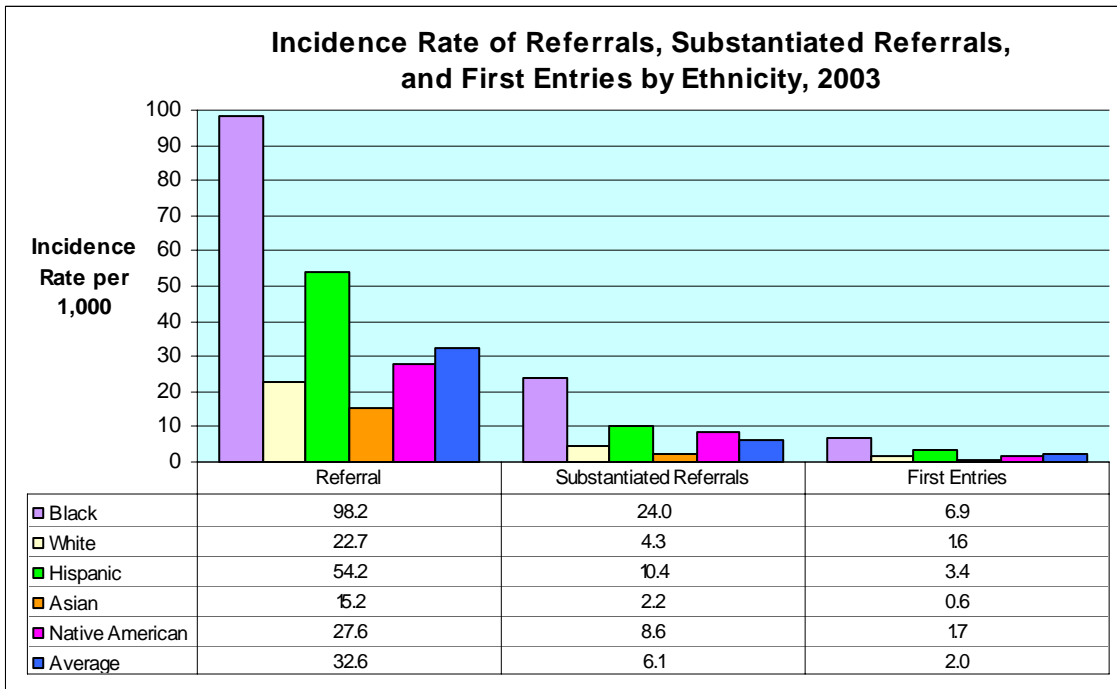
Although, SCC has made improvements to the proportion of abuse reports of Black and Hispanic children and first entries remain disproportional to their county population, however, effort is being made to analyze abuse reports data and train mandated reporters to begin to tackle the overrepresentation of reports for Black and Hispanic children. There is no significant improvement in decreasing the recurrence of maltreatment. Children reentering care continues to increase. Furthermore, the rate of multiple placements falls below the federal and state standards.

Rate of Referrals, Substantiated Referrals and First Entries into Foster Care

- The incidence rate of referrals decreased from 34.7 per 1000 in 2002, to 32.6 in 2003.
- The incidence rate of substantiated referrals decreased from 6.7 per 1000 in 2002, to 6.1 in 2003.
- The incidence rate of first entries into care decreased from 2.2 per 1000 in 2002, to 2.0 in 2003.



- Although there is improvement in rate of referrals, substantiated referrals and first entries into care, there is significant overrepresentation of Blacks and Hispanic children. In 2003, the incidence rate of first entries into care for Black children is 6.9 per 1000 and for Hispanic children are 3.4, compared to the County's average rate of 2.0 per 1000.²



SAFETY OUTCOMES

These measures are designed to reflect the effectiveness of efforts to protect children from abuse/neglect by reporting instances of abuse and neglect at various stages of child welfare services, which reflect the frequency of social worker contact with children and the speed of face-to-face investigation of abuse/neglect allegations.

² Child Welfare Reports for California, retrieved on 3/1/2005 from the University of California at Berkeley Center for Social Services Research website: <URL://http://cssr.berkeley.edu/CWSCMSreports>

Recurrence of Maltreatment

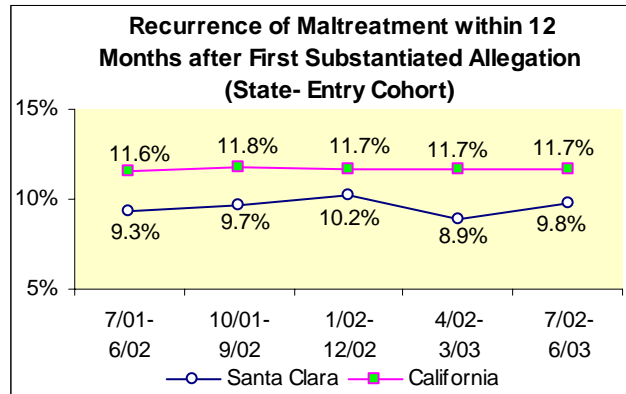
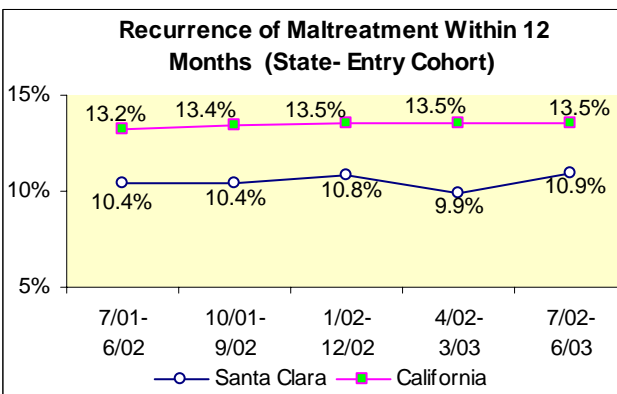
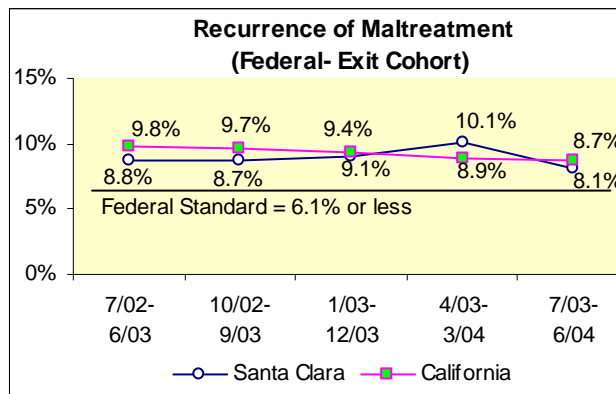
(This measure reflects the percent of children who were victims of child abuse/neglect with a subsequent substantiated report of abuse/neglect within specific time periods. It is both a state and federal outcome measure.)

Federal Measure Indicates:

- 8.1% of all children, who had a substantiated allegation during the first six months during the period of 7/2003-6/2004, had another substantiated allegation within six months, compared to 10.1% in 4/2003-3/2004. (Limited to dispositions, according to federal guidelines). (Federal standard = 6.1% or less) URL: http://cssr.berkeley.edu/CWSCMSreports/cfsrdata/standards/cfsr_recurrence.asp

State Enriched Measures Indicates:

- 10.9% of all children with a substantiated allegation in 7/2002-6/2003, had another substantiated allegation within 12 months, compared to 9.9% in 4/2002-3/2003. URL: <http://cssr.berkeley.edu/CWSCMSreports/Referrals/recurrence.asp>
- 9.8 % of all children with a first substantiated allegation in 7/2002-6/2003, had a subsequent substantiated allegation within 12 months, compared to 8.9% in 4/2002-3/2003. URL: <http://cssr.berkeley.edu/CWSCMSreports/Referrals/recurrence.asp>



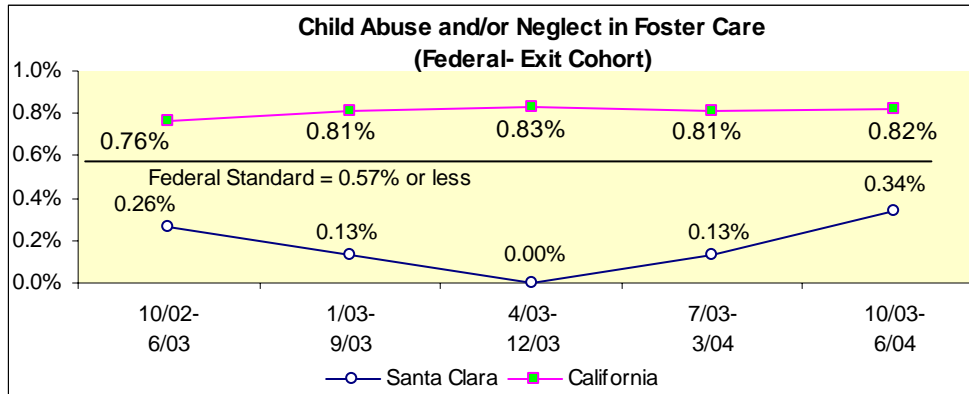
Rate of Child Abuse and/or Neglect in Foster Care

(This measure reflects the percent of children in foster care who are abused or neglected while in foster care placement (limited to children in foster or FFA homes)).

Federal Measure Indicates:

- 0.34% of children had a substantiated allegation by a foster parent in 10/2003-6/2004, compared to 0.13% in 7/2003-3/2004. (Federal standard = 0.57% or less)

URL: http://cssr.berkeley.edu/CWSCMSreports/cfsrdata/standards/cfsr_abuse.asp

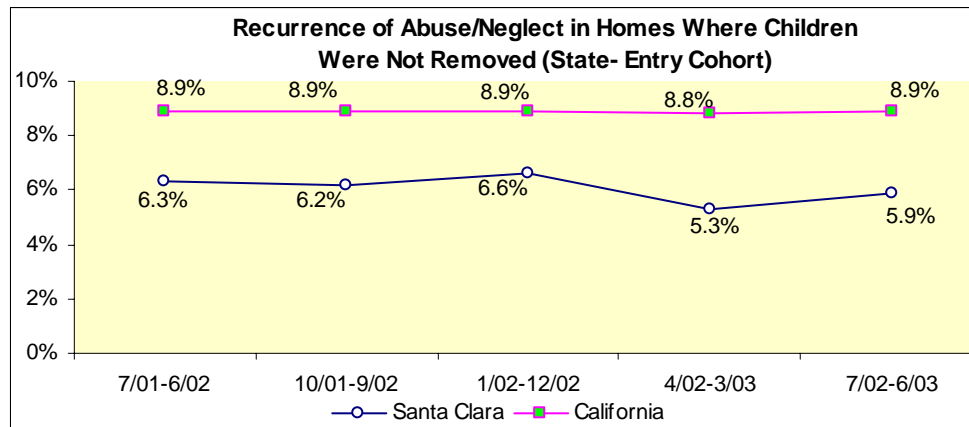


Rate of Recurrence of Abuse and/or Neglect in Homes Where Children Were Not Removed

(This measure reflects the recurrence of abuse and/or neglect of children who remain in their own homes.)

State Enriched Measure Indicates:

- 5.9% of children, who had an inconclusive or substantiated allegation in 7/2002-6/2003 and were not removed, had a subsequent substantiated allegation within 12 months, compared to 5.3% in 4/2002-3/2003. URL: <http://cssr.berkeley.edu/CWSCMSreports/Ccfsr.asp#2A>

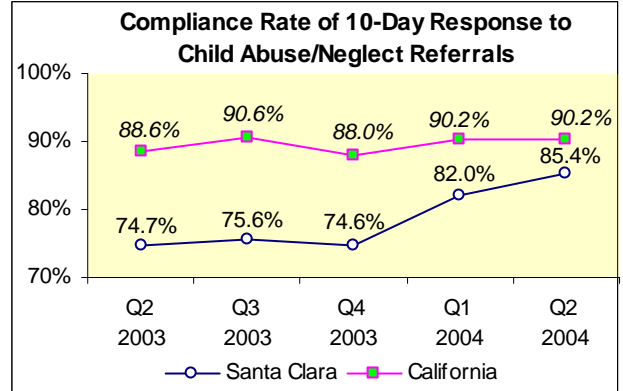
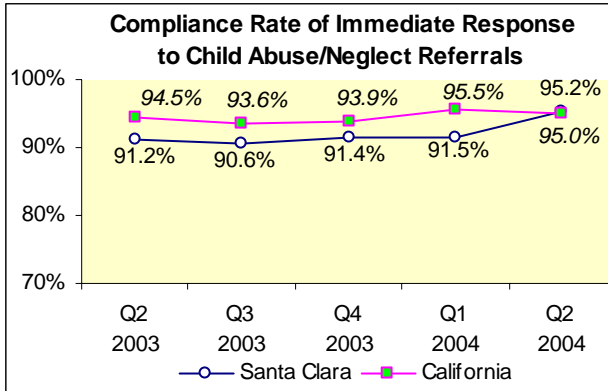


Referrals with a Timely Response

(This measure determines the percent of referrals that resulted in a face-to-face investigation with a child that occurs, or is attempted, within required time-frames in situations in which allegations indicate significant danger to the child, stratified by immediate response and ten-day referrals, for both planned and actual visits.)

State Enriched Measure Indicates:

- In Q2 2004, 95.2% of Immediate Response referrals received a timely response, compared to 91.5% in Q1 2004. Also in Q2 2004, 85.4% of ten-day referrals received a timely response, compared to 82.0% in Q1 2004. URL: <http://cssr.berkeley.edu/CWSCMSreports/Ccfsr.asp#2B>

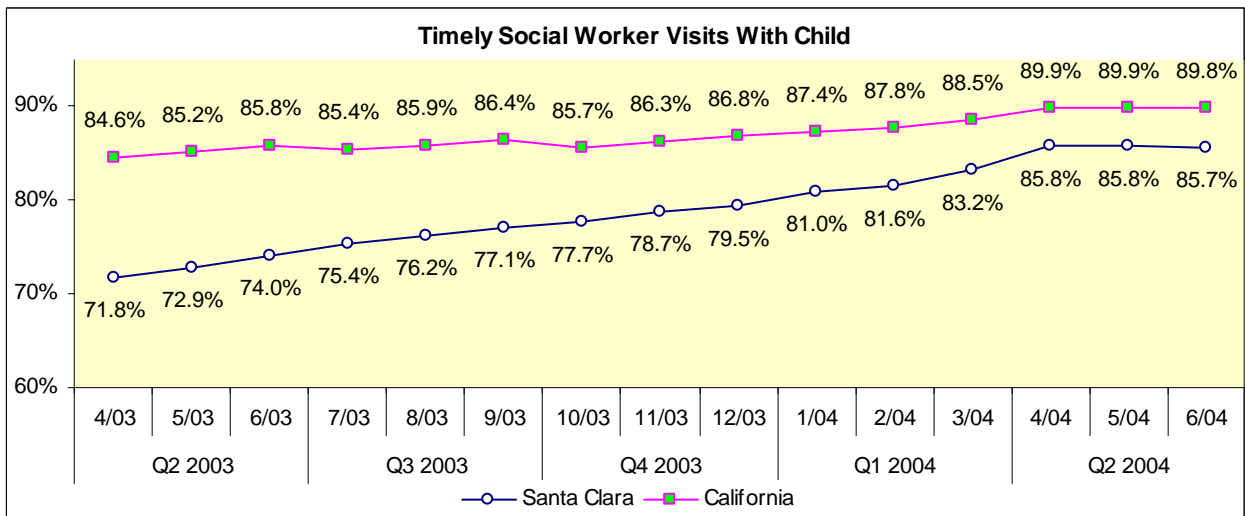


Timely Social Worker Visits with Child

(This measure determines if social workers are visiting children on a monthly basis when that is required. Children for whom a determination is made that monthly visits are not necessary (e.g. valid visits exception) are not included in this measure.)

State Enriched Measure Indicates:

- In Q2, 2004, on average, 85.8% of all children who required a monthly visit, received a visit, compared to 82.0% in Q1, 2004. (Averages cited here are calculated based on quarterly percentages.) URL: <http://cssr.berkeley.edu/CWSCMSreports/Ccfsr.asp#2C>



PERMANENCY OUTCOMES

These measures are designed to reflect the number of foster care placements for each child, the length of time a child is in foster care, and the rate that children re-enter foster care after they have returned home or other permanent care arrangements have been made.

Length of Time to Exit Foster Care to Reunification

(This outcome measure reflects the percentage of children reunified within 12 months of removal from the home.)

Federal Measure Indicates:

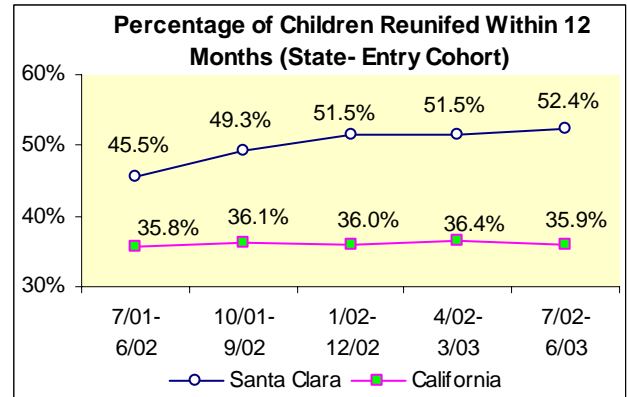
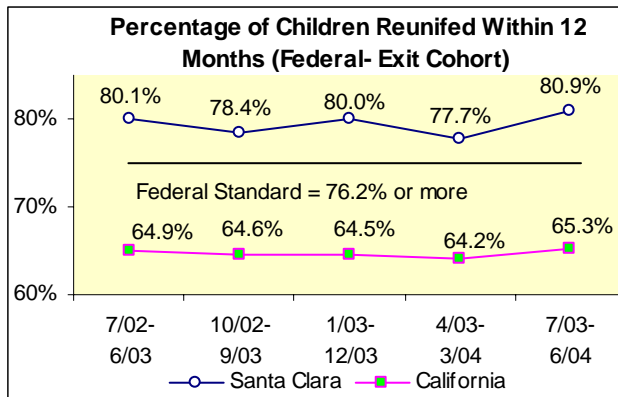
- 80.9 % of all children during 7/2003-6/2004 were reunified within 12 months, compared to 77.7% in 4/2003-3/2004. **(Federal standard = 76.2% or more)**

URL: http://cssr.berkeley.edu/CWSCMSreports/cfsrdata/standards/cfsr_standardsForm.asp

State Enriched Measure Indicates:

- 52.4% of all children who entered care for the first time (and stayed at least five days) during 7/2002 -6/2003 were reunified within 12 months, compared to 51.5% in 4/2002 -3/2003.

URL: <http://cssr.berkeley.edu/CWSCMSreports/Cohorts/exits/>



Length of Time to Exit Foster Care to Adoption

(This outcome measure reflects the percentage of children adopted within 24 months of removal from the home.)

Federal Measure Indicates:

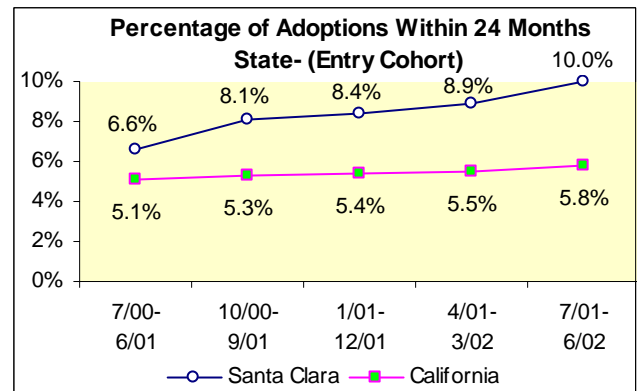
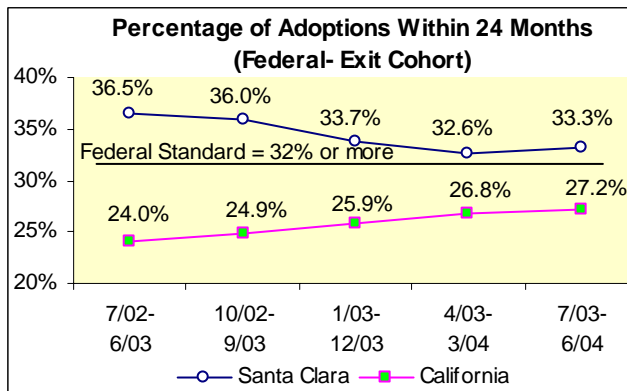
- 33.3% of all children in foster care were adopted within 24 months of being removed from their homes during 7/2003-6/2004, compared to 32.6% in 4/2003-3/2004. **(Federal standard = 32% or more)**

URL: http://cssr.berkeley.edu/CWSCMSreports/cfsrdata/standards/cfsr_standardsForm.asp

State Enriched Measure Indicates:

- 10.0% of all children who entered care for the first time (and stayed at least five days) during 7/2001-6/2002 were adopted within 24 months, compared to 8.9% in 4/2001-3/2002.

URL: <http://cssr.berkeley.edu/CWSCMSreports/Cohorts/exits/>



Multiple Foster Care Placements

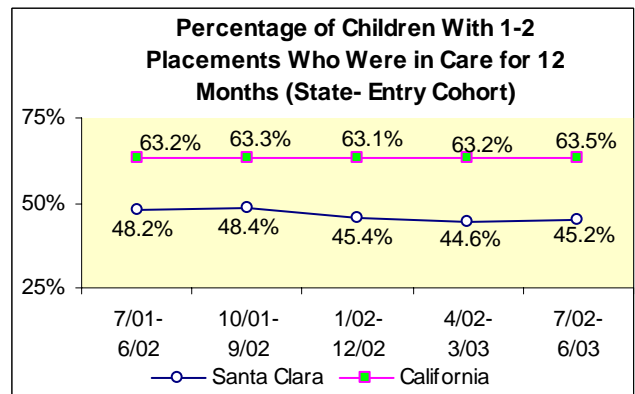
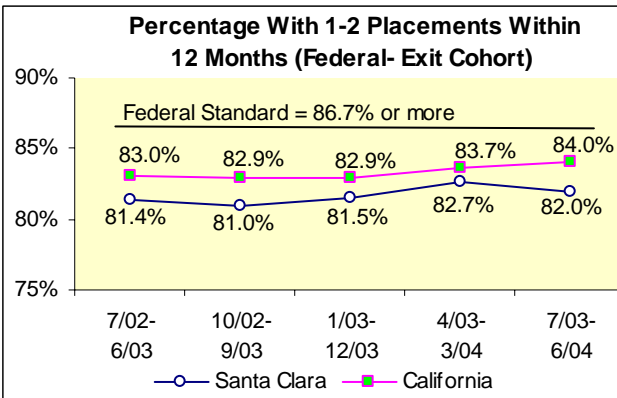
(These measures reflect the number of children with no more than two placements within 12 months of placement.)

Federal Measure Indicates:

- 82.0% of all children in supervised foster care for less than 12 months had no more than two placements during 7/2003-6/2004, compared to 82.7% in 4/2003-3/2004. **(Federal standard = 86.7% or more)** URL: http://cssr.berkeley.edu/CWSCMSreports/cfsrdata/standards/cfsr_standardsForm.asp

State Enriched Measure Indicates:

- 45.2% of all children who entered care for the first time (and stayed at least five days) during 7/2002-6/2003, and were in care for 12 months had no more than two placements, compared to 44.6% in 4/2002-3/2003. URL: <http://cssr.berkeley.edu/CWSCMSreports/cohorts/stability/>



Rate of Foster Care Re-entry into Child Welfare System

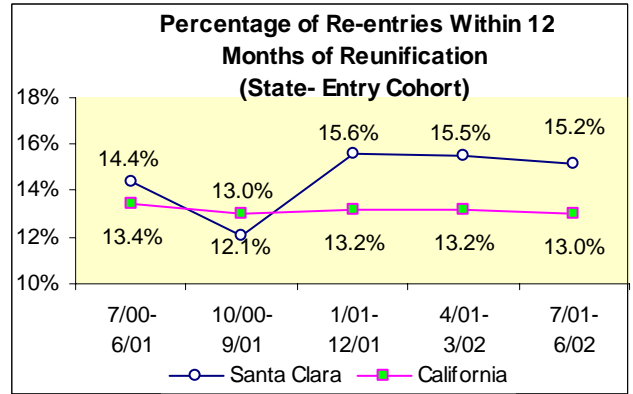
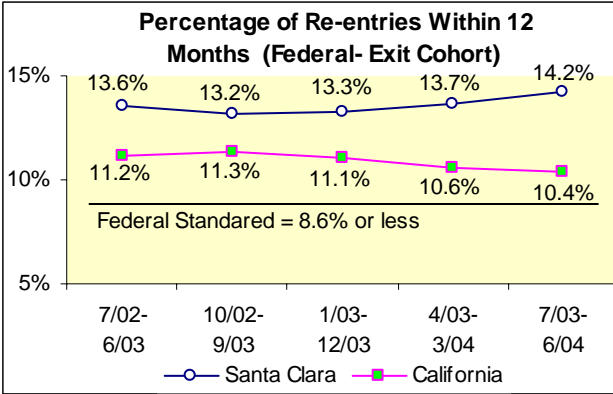
(This measure reflects the number of children who re-enter foster care subsequent to reunification or guardianship.)

Federal Measure Indicates:

- 14.2% of all children who entered supervised foster care during 7/2003-6/2004 had a prior foster care episode within 12 months, compared to 13.7% in 4/2003-3/2004. **(Federal standard = 8.6% or less)** URL: http://cssr.berkeley.edu/CWSCMSreports/cfsrdata/standards/cfsr_standardsForm.asp

State Enriched Measure Indicates:

- 15.2% of all children who entered care for the first time (and stayed at least 5 days) during 7/2001-6/2002 and were reunified within 12 months of entry, re-entered care within 12 months of reunification, compared to 15.5% in 4/2001-3/2002. URL: <http://cssr.berkeley.edu/CWSCMSreports/Cohorts/reentries/>



CHILD AND FAMILY WELL-BEING OUTCOMES

These measures reflect the degree to which children in foster care retain relationships with their family and extended communities with whom they are associated at the time of removal from their parents.

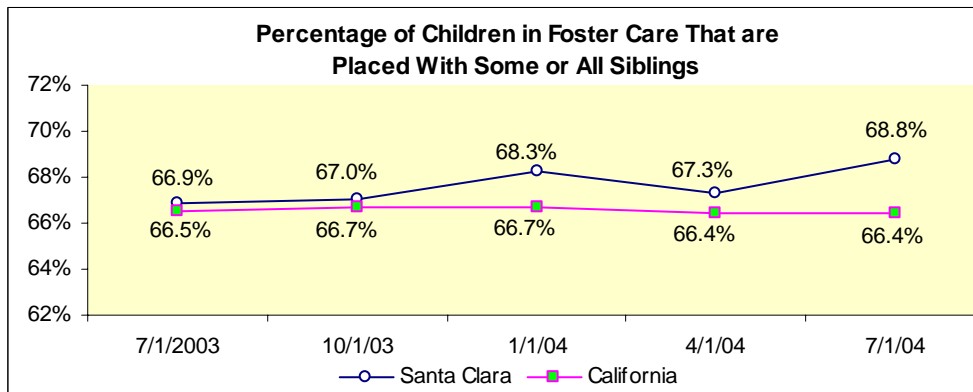
Siblings Placed Together

(These measures reflect the number of children placed with all or some of their siblings in foster care.)

State Enriched Measure Indicates:

- Of all children in care on 7/1/2004, 68.8% of siblings were placed with some or all siblings, compared to 67.3% on 4/1/2004.

URL: <http://cssr.berkeley.edu/CWSCMSreports/pointintime/fostercare/childwel/siblings.asp>



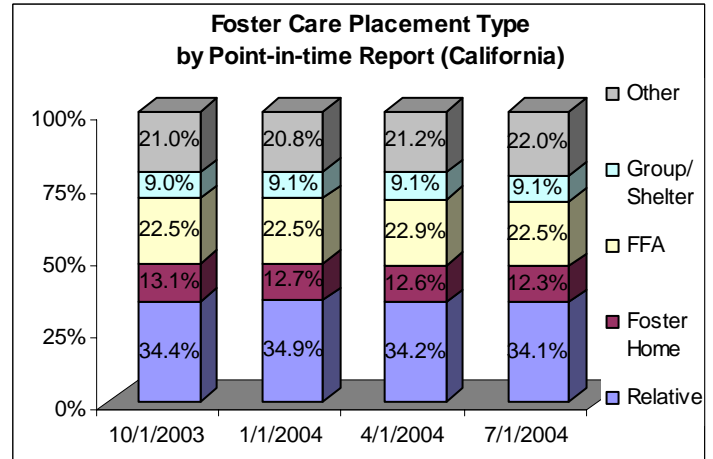
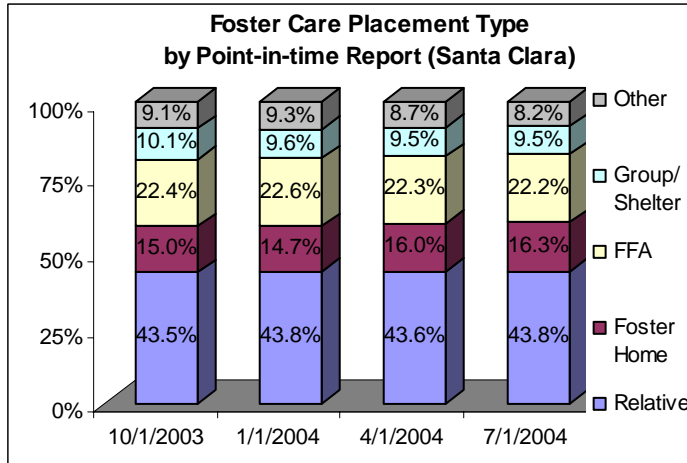
Foster Care Placement in Least Restrictive Settings

(This measure reflects the percentage of children placed in each type of foster care setting.)

State Enriched Measure Indicates:

- Of all children who entered supervised foster care for the first time (and stayed at least five days) on 7/1/2004, 43.8% were placed with kin/relatives, 16.3% were in foster home placement, 22.2% were in placement with Foster Family Agencies, 9.5% were in Group/Shelter care, and 8.2% were in other types of placements.

URL: <http://cssr.berkeley.edu/CWSCMSreports/pointintime/fostercare/childwel/ageandethnic.asp>



Milestones Achieved and Next Steps

The Department of Family and Children's Services (DFCS) has created a detailed implementation plan and improvement strategies. Seven SIP Implementation Workgroups were formed by specific function or strategy to implement a number of improvement strategies. The following are the workgroups milestones achieved by workgroup since the last report, as well as the strategies and tasks for completion by June 30, 2005:

1. Children of Color:

Milestones Achieved

- ✓ *Ten Standardized Decision-Making (SDM) tools reviewed and evaluated, and two tools piloted.*
 - ✓ *Differential Response defined.*
 - ✓ *Data by city, ethnicity and language analyzed.*
- *Select SDM tool and develop policy and procedures*
 - *Provide staff training and implement SDM tool.*
 - *Develop and provide Mandated Reporter training for staff and community, including schools.*

2. SIP Data Team:

Milestones Achieved

- ✓ *Data collection tools developed for identified outcome measures.*
 - ✓ *Other data collection tools developed and analysis is in progress.*
 - ✓ *Two research projects are currently in progress: an examination of practices and patterns relating to children experiencing multiple placements: and relating to re-entry into care within 12 months of child's return home.*
- *Review and analyze results of research projects referenced above.*

3. Joint Decision Making:

Milestone Achieved

- ✓ *Frequency and outcomes for removal and placement decisions data was gathered and analyzed.*

- From July 2003 to February 2005, 581 Team Decisions meetings occurred; 244 front-end (children entering system), 43% resulted in keeping the child at home or maintaining placement and 337 focused on stabilizing children's placements, the majority 51% resulted in either placement preservation or a move to a less restrictive placement.

4. Timely Visits and Response:

Milestones Achieved

- ✓ *Twenty barriers affecting timely responses identified, and work is underway to eliminate or mitigate barriers.*
- ✓ *Significant improvement made in this area, with nearly 96% timeliness on Emergency and Ten-Day Responses, and 86% Timely visits with children.*
- ✓ *Assessment of staffing patterns and caseload reduction plan implemented.*

- Develop standardized referral, response, and visits protocols.

5. Resource Development and Utilization:

Milestone Achieved

- ✓ *Two surveys to barriers to resource utilization conducted, which included social worker staff and Foster Family Agencies.*

- Perform staff training on utilization of available resources.

6. Quality Assurance and CWS/CMS Data Entry:

Milestones Achieved

- ✓ *Quality Assurance training implemented for all social work supervisors.*
- ✓ *Implemented utilization of Safe Measures-a case management quality control monitoring and evaluation software tool.*

- CWS/CMS data entry training for new supervisors and social workers, and refresher course for existing staff is scheduled.

7. Family Finding:

Milestones Achieved

- ✓ *Role and function of the Relative Finding Unit defined.*
- ✓ *Family finding efforts resulted in creation of connections to family for 85 of the 91 children served between November 2003 and December 2004.*

- Efforts to increase identification and placement with relatives are underway by integrating Family-to-Family principles into practice.

The SIP Data Team with the support of Information Systems is assisting workgroups with data collection to provide ample information to achieve milestones. Additionally, the SIP Implementation Team (IT) meets on a monthly basis to monitor progress, identify data needs, discuss crossover issues and address any barriers to achieve SIP goals. The IT is composed of workgroup chairs, SSA and DFCS management and staff, union representatives, Mental Health, and community stakeholders. Ongoing monitoring will take place through Quarterly County Data Reports and internal tracking and monitoring processes. Stakeholders will be convened to assure community involvement in monitoring improvements and to provide input into annual updates to the System Improvement Plan.

SSA Office of Governmental Relations and Planning will provide and distribute a summary of Santa Clara County's Data Report to stakeholders, community partners, and staff on a quarterly basis to track and monitor progress in meeting self improvement goals. If you have questions pertaining to this report, please contact Lydia Romeo, Project Manager at (408) 491-6738 or by e-mail at lydia.romeo@ssa.sccgov.org.