

November 2009



The CPS Connection

News from Sacramento County Child Protective Services

System Improvement Plan sets direction till 2012

By Laura Coulthard

*Deputy Director, Department of Health & Human Services/
Child Protective Services Division*

Even in the midst of budget cuts, CPS continues to focus on improving the quality of services we provide to children and families.

You can see what we are attempting to do in the coming years in the System Improvement Plan (SIP) that Sacramento recently filed with the state for fiscal years 2009-2010 through 2011-2012.

The SIP is an annual operational agreement between Sacramento and the state, outlining county plans to improve child welfare services and to identify areas for improvement.

It's a part of the California Child and Family Services Review, which requires counties to measure child welfare outcomes using data that documents results related to safety, permanency, and well-being.

The current plan includes recommendations from the Sacramento County Grand Jury and a review of Child Protective Services by an independent auditing company performed in 2008.

SIP Priorities

Sacramento County is emphasizing these priorities in the next three years:

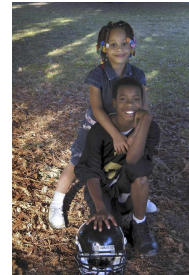
- **Strengthening the CPS infrastructure.** Strategies include developing a performance evaluation system, increasing worker retention, consolidating policies and procedures, implementing an automated service referral system, more use of data analysis in management decisions and ensuring that safety assessments are done promptly and correctly.
- **Improving timely response** to 10-day referrals and timely social worker visits with children.
- **Improving placement stability** for children who are in foster care 12 months or less.



In this issue

- SIP sets direction till 2012
- CPS assists truancy sweep
- Heart Gallery exhibit
- Third quarter performance stats
- Message to hotline callers

Heart Gallery exhibit is Nov. 7

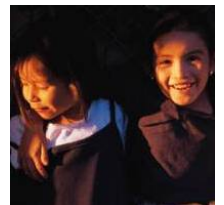


The 5th annual Heart Gallery of Sacramento exhibit takes place at 6 p. m. Saturday, Nov. 7, at the Casa Garden Restaurant, 2760 Sutterville Road in Sacramento. Read

more [here](#).

CPS performance stats available

Read how Sacramento County performed in key indicators for the third quarter of 2009 [here](#).



Message to hotline callers: Hang on!

- **Reducing the rate of children re-entering foster care** after reunifying with families.
- **Improving placement stability of children** under Probation Department-supervised foster care.

In addition, the SIP identifies the following Sacramento County strengths:

- **No recurrence of maltreatment.** This measures the percentage of children who were victims of a substantiated abuse/neglect report and did not have another substantiated allegation within the next 6 months. Sacramento has been consistently improving on this measure since 2004, even exceeding the state and national benchmarks in 2007.
- **No maltreatment in foster care.** This measures the percentage of children in foster care who had no substantiated allegations of abuse while in placement. Sacramento County has had an improving trend since 2005, exceeding both the state and national goals in 2008.
- **Reunification within 12 months and median months to adoption.** County data on adoption within 12 months exceeded the state average and almost reached the national goal.

Continuous quality improvement will be a challenge, as this agency continues to adjust to diminishing resources and staff reductions. Since June 2009 Sacramento County Child Protective Services has eliminated about 250 positions, close to 30 percent of the workforce.

If you'd like an in-depth look at our SIP, you can read the SIP priorities matrix [here](#) and the SIP narrative [here](#).

Because of budget cuts, CPS has fewer Emergency Response workers to answer calls to the 24-hour Child Abuse Hotline. This means people calling (916) 875-KIDS could be on hold longer than usual. We are working to alleviate this potential problem. In the meantime, we ask for your patience. Every call is important, and we rely on callers to be our eyes and ears in the community.



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Produced by Sacramento County Child Protective Services
 PO Box 269057
 Sacramento, CA 95826-9057
www.sacdhhs.com/cps

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Social workers assist police, DA in truancy sweep

Child Protective Services joined representatives from 11 agencies on Sept. 29 in an annual truancy sweep aimed at letting parents know it's against the law for children not to go to [school](#).



We invite your input. What information are you interested in reading in this newsletter? Make your thoughts known by writing the [editor](#).

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