

## The Journey to Outcomes: *Why Fidelity Matters*

The goal of the California Child Welfare Core Practice Model is to improve outcomes for children and families in the child welfare system. The principles of Implementation Science tell us:

$$\begin{array}{c} \text{Effective } \mathbf{INTERVENTION} \text{ Practices} \\ \mathbf{X} \\ \text{Effective } \mathbf{IMPLEMENTATION} \text{ Practices} \\ \textit{Equals} \\ \mathbf{GOOD OUTCOMES} \end{array}$$

In order to know if families and children are actually benefiting from the Practice Model (our intervention), we need to understand if:

- The behaviors in the Practice Model are being practiced as intended.
- Outcomes are improving for the children and families being served.

As an indicator of effective implementation, Fidelity Assessment provides the critical link between implementation and outcomes.

- The Fidelity Assessment process helps us determine the degree to which the Practice Model is being consistently used in diverse family cultures, contexts and situations.
- The Fidelity Assessment process strengthens our ability to detect challenges and improve training, coaching, and organizational and system supports for the Practice Model.

California Child Welfare Core PRACTICE MODEL  
DIRECTORS INSTITUTE  
*Building Capacity, Leading Implementation*



The chart below illustrates the relationship between fidelity and outcomes.

		IMPLEMENTATION	
		EFFECTIVE	NOT EFFECTIVE
INTERVENTION	EFFECTIVE	<p><b>ACTUAL BENEFITS</b></p> <p><b>High Fidelity Positive Outcomes</b></p> <p>When the Practice Model is effective AND implemented with fidelity, outcomes are positively impacted.</p>	<p><b>Low Fidelity Poor Outcomes</b></p> <p>When the Practice Model is effective yet not implemented well, it will not reach families and outcomes will not improve.</p>
	NOT EFFECTIVE	<p><b>High Fidelity Poor Outcomes</b></p> <p>When the Practice Model is not effective, it doesn't matter if it is implemented well. Outcomes will not improve as a result of the Practice Model.</p>	<p><b>Low Fidelity Poor Outcomes</b></p> <p>When the Practice Model is not effective and not implemented well, outcomes will not improve.</p>

**If we want to know whether our Practice Model is effective, or which practices in the model are most closely associated with improved outcomes – Fidelity Matters!**

\*Chart adapted with permission from Dean L. Fixsen and Karen A. Blase, National Implementation Research Network (NIRN) and their reference to: Lipsey, M. W. (2009). The primary factors that characterize effective interventions with juvenile offenders: A meta analytic overview. Victims and Offenders, 4, 124-147. doi: 10.1080/15564880802612573