

Transitioned Aged Youth and ILP Youth Symposium
*Serving Expectant and Parenting Youth (EPY) through
 Strategies of
 Home Visitation and EPY Conferences*

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February 27, 2017

Collaboration Is Key

- Foundation is work of the DCFS EPY Workgroup established over 10 years ago through a partnership between DCFS and local child advocate organizations
- Key focus of the collaboration and the two strategies is to assist in breaking the intergenerational cycles of children being brought into the child protection system

Collaboration Strengthened

- Prior Director, Philip L. Browning, had a keen interest for strong service delivery system to support pregnant and parenting youth; and equally, for strong pregnancy prevention efforts
- Support of DCFS' existing collaboration efforts on key outcomes
- In regards to use of Home Visitation, met with leadership from county partner at Department of Public Health (DPH) to identify further potential collaborations. Included formal working relationship with the NFP Program through a MOU in 2012

Pregnant and Parenting Youth

- ▶ 33 newly identified pregnant youth as of October 31, 2016. Average of 50 pregnant youth at any given time under supervision
- ▶ 392 parenting youth as of December 31, 2016 including 364 females and 28 males
- ▶ 435 children of these parenting youth

Use of Home Visitation as a Strategy

- Impact of Dr. Putman-Hornstein's research study, *California's Most Vulnerable Parents: When Maltreated Children Have Children*
 - Teen pregnancy in general population decreasing but not for youth in foster care
 - Children born to youth in foster care are 2.5 times more likely to have involvement with child welfare system
- Definition of Home Visitation
 - Voluntary program that pairs pregnant and newly parenting women with a nurse or trained professional who makes regular visits in the participant's home to provide guidance, coaching and access to health and social services

Use of Home Visitation as a Strategy (continued)

- ▶ Benefits of Home Visitation
 - ▶ Improved pregnancy outcomes for both mother and baby
 - ▶ Decreased rates of child abuse and neglect
 - ▶ Increased breastfeeding rates
 - ▶ Improved parenting skills and home environment
 - ▶ Stronger parent-child bonding
 - ▶ Reduced childhood accidents and hazards in the home, and less emergency room visits
 - ▶ Improved maternal life course
 - ▶ Better detection and management of post-partum depression.
- ▶ Recognition that Home Visitation is aligned with DCFS' Vision and Goals

Key Home Visitation Programs Utilized

- ▶ Nurse Family Partnership Program
- ▶ Welcome Baby
- ▶ Early Head Start
- ▶ Healthy Families America
- ▶ Shields for Families' Healthy Start Program
- ▶ Parents as Teachers

MOU between DCFS and DPH's NFP Program

- ▶ Overriding Purpose:
 - ▶ Enhance collaboration and increase utilization for at-risk pregnant youth under DCFS care and supervision
 - ▶ Tighten both DCFS internal and external (DCFS/DPH NFP) processes for referral and joint management

Implementation of Home Visitation Strategy and Components

- ▶ Formally addressed in DCFS policy
- ▶ Quarterly DCFS Pregnant Youth Questionnaire
- ▶ EPY Conferences
- ▶ Outreach efforts in DCFS regional offices
- ▶ Special Projects Page on CWS/CMS to track referrals
- ▶ Mass e-mail communications to CSWs and SCSWs
- ▶ DCFS EPY Website

Successes Achieved

- ▶ More pregnant youth are being linked to the NFP Program
- ▶ Home Visitation programs have become a regular component of case management

Programmatic Challenges and Lessons Learned

- Challenges
 - Limitations of the NFP Program enrollment criteria
 - Welcome Baby Program is not available County-wide
 - DCFS staff members less knowledgeable about other home visitation programs beyond the NFP Program
- Lessons Learned
 - Continue to strengthen efforts so youth proactively share pregnancy information
 - Remain knowledgeable of available home visitation programs;
- Participation in the Los Angeles County Perinatal and Early Childhood Home Visitation Consortium

Participation of Youth

- Challenges
 - Home visitation is voluntary
 - Lack of follow through may exist after referral
 - Fear of close involvement with professionals
 - Not possible to refer all DCFS pregnant and parenting youth
- Lessons Learned
 - Continuous outreach to DCFS staff needed to educate
 - Need for ongoing involvement of PHNs in joint visits

Expectant and Parenting Youth (EPY) Conferences

- ▶ Again, created by, and lobbied for, through strong partnership between DCFS and local child advocates
- ▶ Identified as a Promising Practice by the California Foster Youth Pregnancy Prevention Institute

Description of the EPY Conferences

- ▶ Purpose is to proactively identify and address the needs of any EPY under supervision of DCFS, including teen fathers, on planning for healthy parenting, identifying appropriate resources and services, and preparing for successful transition to independence
- ▶ Based on the Family Group Decision Making Model
- ▶ Conferences are voluntary
- ▶ Core are a DCFS Conference Facilitator, and a Resource Specialist who is represented by a local child advocate

Referral Sources

- ▶ Children's Social Workers serving pregnant and parenting youth
- ▶ Youth's Attorney
- ▶ Child Advocate
- ▶ Juvenile Dependency Court

Components of EPY Conferences - Participation

- ▶ Participants include:
 - ▶ Youth Mother
 - ▶ Youth Father
 - ▶ EPY Conference Facilitator
 - ▶ Resource Specialist
 - ▶ CSW
 - ▶ SCSW
 - ▶ Investigator from Children's Law Center, when available
 - ▶ Members of the youth's support system identified by the EPY and invited only with youth's approval, such as family members, caregiver/legal guardian, non-related extended family members, and significant friend(s)

Components of EPY Conferences - Participation (continued)

- ▶ With the youth's approval, other participants may include DCFS and Community Supports as follows:
 - ▶ Educational Consultant
 - ▶ ILP Coordinator
 - ▶ Public Health Nurse
 - ▶ Wraparound Liaison
 - ▶ Department of Social Services' Linkages representative
 - ▶ Mental Health Provider

Components of EPY Conferences - Areas of Focus

- Prenatal Care
- Reproductive Health
- Referral to Home Visitation
- Housing and Placement Stability
- Education
- Subsidized Child Care to address EPY continuing in school
- Parenting Classes
- Early Intervention for the youth's baby
- Funding
- Mental health counseling
- Legal Issues such as Family Law, tickets and immigration
- Public Benefits
- Transition Issues and Services such as ILP and AB 12

Components of EPY Conferences - Process and Tools

- Preparation with the EPY prior to the Conference- important opportunity to engage with EPY to promote participation
- Participants sign statement acknowledging the meeting is private and respect is given to the privacy of the family
- Strong array of government and community resources have been compiled for use at the Conferences
- Written Summary and Plan, developed by the Conference participants, and distributed by the DCFS Conference Facilitator to Conference participants
- Occurrence of the Conference entered into CWS/CMS by CSW
- Follow up on Plan's action items may be implemented by DCFS Conference Facilitator
- Follow up Conference is available and encouraged to ensure needs of EPY are fully met

What Can EPY Conferences Achieve?

- Positive Birth Experience
- Successful Parenting
- Resolution of barriers to achieving independence

Challenges and Lessons Learned

- Challenges
- Participation of the EPY and, as well, individuals identified by the EPY
- Timely coordination and implementation of the Conference Plan
- Availability of resources, both services, and human capital, to serve the Conferences

Challenges and Lessons Learned (continued)

► Lessons Learned

- Commitment to communicate with the EPY on the purpose and benefits of the Conference prior to the Conference
- Commitment to ensuring that the EPY contribute to identifying individuals in their support system to participate in the Conference
- Follow up required by Conference Facilitators and Resource Specialists
- Commitment to continually identify new services and garner interest, and monitor existing ones to ensure availability and accessibility
- Identify creative ways to meet the demand while identifying opportunities to bring on additional person power

For more Information

- Research Study on California's Most Vulnerable Parents: When Maltreated Children Have Children:
<http://www.datanetwork.org/research/1005>
- LACO DCFS Policies:
<http://policy.dcfslacounty.gov/Default.htm>
- LACO Perinatal and Early Childhood Consortium:
<http://homevisitingla.org>
- Contact information for Donna:
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