

State of Colorado



Child Abuse Prevention and Treatment Act Plan June 30, 2011

Submitted to:

Administration for Children and Families

U.S. Department of Health and Human Services



I. INTRODUCTION

This CAPTA Plan has been developed based on reviews of the 2010 CAPTA Plan and Annual Report. It reflects the State's current initiatives and collaborations in differential response and domestic violence and recommendations of the Citizen Advisory Panels. It is anticipated that the CAPTA Plan will serve as a guide for structuring Colorado's use of CAPTA funding, and that it will be integrated with current child welfare initiatives, collaborations and the Child and Family Services Review (CFSR) Program Improvement Plan (PIP). Priorities include increasing and strengthening:

- Differential response practices.
- Child Protection practices in cases that involve domestic violence that do not re-victimize the victim(s) and hold the perpetrator responsible.
- Prevention of child abuse and neglect.
- Prevention of child abuse and neglect, and appropriate intervention when child abuse or neglect occurs, among children who qualify for Part C or are under the age of five, to mitigate the effects of developmental and other disabilities with these populations.
- Family and youth representation in program and policy development for children, youth and families in the Child Welfare system.
- Family engagement and fatherhood involvement.
- Evaluation of the effectiveness of the Citizen Review Panels.
- The development and implementation of a definition and protocols for handling "near death" cases.

Administration of the CAPTA Plan

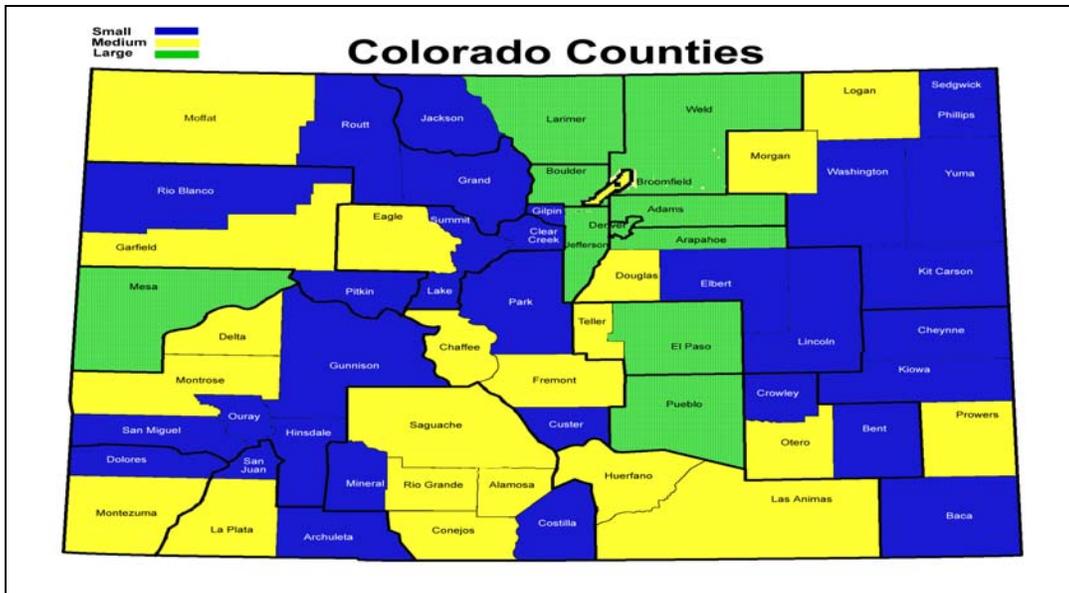
The Colorado Department of Human Services (CDHS) administers a broad range of child serving programs including: the Division for Developmental Disabilities; the Division of Youth Corrections; and, the Division of Behavioral Health. These entities deliver services in a regionalized model, which impact Colorado's community resources for families served by the child welfare system.

Administration

CDHS through the Division of Child Welfare Services (DCWS) is designated to administer the Title IV-B and CAPTA Programs for Colorado. DCWS consists of a group of services intended to protect children from harm and to assist families in caring for and protecting their children. These services are provided directly by CDHS, county departments of human/social services or by direct contract programs.

Colorado operates a state-supervised, county-administered social services system, with 64 county departments of social/human services administering all protective services. CDHS engages county departments through a continuum of progressive supervision to improve outcomes for children and families as identified in county-specific program improvement plans.

State supervision is management as exercised through program development, practice and workload standards development, rule promulgation, technical assistance, monitoring, program evaluation, and performance improvement plans. The 64 counties are classified as large, mid-sized, or small (please refer to the county map):



The ten largest counties manage 85% of the Child Welfare workload. There are 23 mid-sized counties and 31 small counties. Two counties, Denver and Broomfield, have consolidated city-county governments. A Board of County Commissioners (BOCC) that also serves as the Human Services Board for the county departments administers the remaining counties. The funding for county departments is typically 80% federal and state funds and 20% county funds. There are 22 judicial districts in Colorado.

CDHS engages in policy development and communication with county departments through a formalized system. This system, complete with by-laws, is the CDHS Policy Advisory Committee (PAC), comprised of county directors from each region and Deputy Executive Directors representing all Offices of CDHS. Four Sub-PACs serve the PAC to address policy and rules and are comprised of a cross disciplinary group including county directors and administrators and state staff from the appropriate divisions. It is through this system of collaboration, cooperation and effective communication on a statewide basis that improves the process of service delivery for children, families and adults across the state. Final authority to approve recommendations for policy from the PAC rests with the Executive Director of CDHS.

Division of Youth Corrections

Colorado's Youth Corrections system is within CDHS. The Division of Youth Corrections (DYC) uses the Statewide Automated Child Welfare Information System, Trails, and has a regionalized administrative structure comprised of four management regions: Central Colorado; Denver; Northeast Colorado; and, Southern and Western Colorado. County departments work directly with staff in the regions on local policy issues, procedural matters, and specific child and family cases. Policy and procedural coordination between the child welfare system and the youth corrections system is achieved within CDHS at the state level. District Court judges make determinations whether youth will be served in the Child Welfare or the Youth Corrections systems. Studies have shown that with the exception of extremely violent crimes such as murder, there is no real difference between the severity of offenses committed by youth who are served in the child welfare

system and those served in the youth corrections system. The main differentiating factor appears to be the level of parental involvement. There are approximately twice as many delinquent youth in the Child Welfare system as in youth corrections at any point in time. Given the high volume of youth in juvenile detention facilities, more delinquent youth will be served in the Division of Youth Corrections over the course of a year.

Division of Behavioral Health

Colorado's mental health, substance abuse treatment services, and supportive housing and homeless programs are delivered through the Office of Behavioral Health and Housing, a subdivision of CDHS. Community mental health services are delivered through contracts with seven specialty clinics and 17 not-for-profit community mental health centers. The roles and functions of both community mental health centers and clinics are statutorily defined in Colorado Revised Statutes (C.R.S.) 27-1-201 et seq. There are five Behavioral Health Organizations responsible for implementing the Medicaid Mental Health Capitation Program through contracts with the Colorado Department of Health Care Policy and Financing (HCPF). They operate managed care programs serving all of Colorado's 64 counties. Each Behavioral Health Organization is responsible for managing the delivery of mental health services to Medicaid-eligible individuals in its assigned geographic service area. Each regional area has unique community resources.

Division of Child Welfare Services

The Child Welfare Appropriation was established as a separate line item in FY 2000-01 in response to footnote 78 to SB 99-215 and funds the following:

- Positions responsible to provide the continuum of county supervision to the county departments of human/social services in the provision of all child welfare services as defined in 26-5-101(3), C.R.S., including monitoring of county programs
- Response to legislation defining policy and fiscal issues.
- Coordination and collaboration with other divisions including the Office of Economic Security, Office of Informational Technology Services, Child Care, Behavioral Health, Division of Youth Corrections, Division of Developmental Disabilities, and Departments including Health Care and Policy Financing, Public Health and Environment, Judicial, and Education. The purpose of this activity is to eliminate service duplication and assure service integration.
- Policy development and subsequent program development and implementation.
- Response to consumers for information as well as follow-up on complaints.

Division for Developmental Disabilities

Within CDHS, services for children with developmental disabilities (birth through age 17) and for adults with developmental disabilities (age 18 and older) are administered by the Division for Developmental Disabilities (DDD). Three service areas, Children's Extensive Support, Early Intervention and Family Support assist families with enhanced in-home supports for those children considered to be most in need, provide early intervention to infants and toddlers, and assist with costs beyond those normally experienced by other families. Services are administered through Community Centered Boards.

Administrative Review Division

The Administrative Review Division (ARD) provides the valuable service to county departments and DCWS of monitoring county practice through a well-refined quality assurance methodology. ARD provides valuable information regarding the state of practice related to child safety, permanency and well-being.

CHILD WELFARE PRACTICE INITIATIVES

DCWS is well positioned for change, with having had eight comprehensive evaluations completed, containing 139 specific recommendations, in addition to the 2009 CFSR Final Report. The State is accessing the sustained resources, through national initiatives, to effect child welfare systems change. Improved outcomes for children, youth and families require the alignment and coordination of the initiatives that include:

- The Colorado Practice Initiative
- Casey Foundation
- Colorado Disparities Resource Center
- Colorado Consortium on Differential Response

COLORADO PRACTICE INITIATIVE

Colorado's designation as a U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Administration for Children and Families, Children's Bureau (ACF-CB) Mountains and Plains Child Welfare Implementation Center (MPCWIC) implementation site in November 2009 provides the foundation for the State's child welfare reform, known as the Colorado Practice Initiative (CPI). The initial step in the CPI work plan resulted in a synthesis of the recommendations of the eight comprehensive evaluations completed previously into 11 over-arching themes, providing focus and prioritization of all future activity. There were differences and diversity in suggested direction across the reports. However, the consensus and agreement was of the need to improve the child welfare system and outcomes for Colorado's children, youth and families. There were recommendations for improvements across common focus areas, including systems, structures, processes, data and measurement, resources, and relationships. Since its March 2010 official launch, CPI has engaged over 2000 child welfare practitioners in defining a basic statewide practice model, referred to as the Base Practice Model. CPI's focus on the model development melded the themes into a singular plan of action, with a complex structure that engages the State and counties in improved outcomes.

CPI implementation is building the momentum for child welfare systems reform by uniting the State and counties in development of Colorado's Practice Model, creating dialogue about practice, sharing of business county business practices and planning for the future. During the implementation, CPI:

- Engages the counties and state in developing a practice model that will align vision, mission and practice principles.
- Engages counties in the use of data to analyze child and family outcomes.
- Facilitates discussion about outcomes for children and families.
- Identifies promising practices and areas needing improvement.
- Develops a peer-supported culture among counties.
- Provides a foundation for all future work in child welfare.

- Prioritizes Colorado's priorities and needs through strategic planning.

The Colorado Practice Initiative may be accessed at:

<http://www.colorado.gov/cs/Satellite/CDHS-ChildYouthFam/CBON/1251588065877>

Casey Foundation

Casey Family Program is providing resources from which the State will benefit in addressing systemic issues of improving child and family outcomes, in the face of declining IV-E revenues. The new partnership agreement builds on the \$2.3 million Casey invested the State in 2009 in their support of Denver Indian Family Resource Center and county-based initiatives to:

- Support kinship care families and birth parents;
- Reduce the number of youth in group homes; and,
- Reduce racial disproportionality and disparate outcomes for youth of different cultures.
- County specific initiatives include:
 - Parent Partners in Boulder, Denver, Jefferson and Larimer Counties;
 - Child Welfare Assessments in Boulder, Teller, Pitkin, Eagle, Chaffee, and Prowers Counties;
 - HB 1451 Collaboration in Eagle and Pitkin Counties; Training of Trainers for Permanency Roundtables for Pueblo, Jefferson, El Paso, Douglas, Adams, Arapahoe, Weld, Boulder and Denver Counties;
 - Training in strength-based parents rights training for Guardians ad Litem with the Office of the Child's Representative; and
 - Permanency Initiatives in Broomfield, Boulder and Denver, expanding in 2011 to Mesa, Larimer and Weld Counties.

Casey Family's new agreement pending with the State builds on and expands initiatives that were introduced in 2010 and includes a data sharing agreement. The agreement is based on Casey goals of safely reducing the number of children in foster care by 2020 by providing durable permanency options that are formed with the input of youth and families. Financing options that support an up-front prevention and early intervention community-based system of care during the time of declining IV-E revenues, due to foster care placement reductions, will be explored. The length of time for the initiative is based on closely monitored outcomes and performance data, as reviewed annually.

Casey literature indicates that Colorado's FY 2009 rate of children in foster care (per 1,000 children under the age of 18) is 6.6, which is above the national rate of 5.6. The State's entries of children into foster care exceeded exits in FY 2009. The partnership facilitates concentrated efforts to safely reduce the number of children and youth in foster care and to improve their family connections. As the initiative proceeds, the over representation of children of color in the foster care system must be examined as an additional strategy in the long-term effort to reduce foster care entries.

Work with the Annie E. Casey Foundation is newly underway and has not yet been defined. An assessment is planned for the next several months to define the focus of activities that will occur.

The Colorado Consortium on Differential Response

The Colorado Consortium on Differential Response was awarded by The National Quality Improvement Center on Differential Response in Child Protective Services, ACF-CB. It is operated by the American Humane Association and its partners Walter R. McDonald & Associates, Inc. and the Institute of Applied Research. The \$1.8 million award is a research and development grant that funds a pilot project examining the effects of a differential response practice model on outcomes for children and families. The Consortium partners are CDHS-DCWS, Colorado State University and the counties of Arapahoe, Fremont, Garfield, Jefferson and Larimer. The pilot project will evaluate the model from February 1, 2010 to June 30, 2013. The project facilitates Colorado's ability to work intensively on development of a services model with multiple stakeholder systems—such as the courts, the community and providers.

The Differential Response (DR) track was operationalized on December 1, 2010. The program uses a randomizer for case selection, and between December 1, 2010 and March 1, 2011, over 900 families were offered a Family Assessment Response. As the project has evolved, participating counties have shared information about processes, such as RED (Read, Evaluate and Determine) Teams and Signs of Safety Assessment, demonstrating the ability of the counties to share learning and resources with each other. By statute, C.R.S. 19-3-308 establishes a Differential response pilot program for child abuse or neglect cases of low or moderate risk, with a limit of five participating counties permitted to maintain a dual track for decision-making for child abuse and neglect. Although many counties are interested in implementing Family Assessment Response, at this time, due to project design, their involvement is limited to participation in training and learning from the pilot counties about improvements for their own referral systems and ongoing services. This serves as yet another example of county commitment to improvement of child and family outcomes, and vital steps in the State's child welfare reform. The pilot program facilitates a methodical process for decisions and adjustments. A final project evaluation will determine the impact of practice, including information about changes to work load that will be informative for the entire state. The Colorado Consortium on Differential Response will continue to be updated in future APSRs. Information may be accessed at:

<http://www.colorado.gov/cs/Satellite/CDHS-ChildYouthFam/CBON/1251593257417>

Additional detail about Colorado's child welfare initiatives is located in the 2011 Annual Progress and Services Report. It will be made available on the CDHS website upon ACF approval.

II. CHILD PROTECTION SERVICES WORKFORCE

Colorado has professional child protection services workforce statewide. The workforce is hired and maintained through the county human resources systems. All staff must meet the following state requirements:

Educational Requirements

1. Professional Entry (Training) Level Position
 - a) Bachelor's degree with a major in a human behavioral sciences field.
2. Professional Journey Level Position

This position has obtained the skills, knowledge, and abilities to perform duties at the full independent working level through experience and education.

- a) A Bachelor's degree with a major in a human behavioral science field and one year of professional caseworker experience acquired after the degree in a public or private social services agency; or,
- b) A Bachelor's of Social Work degree with a major in public child welfare and successful completion of an approved field placement in a county department of social services; or,
- c) A Master's degree in social work or human behavioral sciences field.

3. Casework Supervisor Position

- a) A Bachelor's degree with a major in a human behavioral sciences field (no substitution) and three years professional casework experience at the journey level obtained after the degree; or
- b) A Master's degree or higher in social work or human behavioral sciences field and two years professional casework experience at the journey level obtained before or after the advanced degree.

4. Education Requirements

In order to meet the minimum educational requirements of a human behavioral science degree, the applicant must have a degree with major course work (equivalent to 30 semester hours or 45 quarter hours) in either development of human behavior, child development, family intervention techniques, diagnostic measures or therapeutic techniques such as social work, psychology, sociology, guidance and counseling, and child development.

Training Requirements

Newly hired social caseworkers and newly hired or promoted social services supervisors are required to successfully complete the Child Welfare Academy, which consists of approximately thirty (30) hours of Computer-based training and seven (7) weeks of classroom instruction interspersed with structured on-the-job learning activities. In addition, all experienced child welfare caseworkers and supervisors are required to complete at least forty (40) hours of ongoing in-service training per year. The in-service training is to be focused in content areas such as, but not limited to:

- Assessment
- Interviewing
- Family engagement
- Legal issues
- Foster care and adoption
- Effects of child abuse/neglect on development
- Principles of strength-based family centered culturally relevant case planning and case management
- Sexual abuse issues
- Behavioral health issues
- Domestic violence issues
- Cultural disparity

At a minimum, sixteen (16) of the in-service training hours are to be focused in the area of the caseworker's primary job responsibilities. Additional topics for supervisors are worker safety, and leadership and management.

Current Workforce Demographics

Counties maintain information about their protective services workforce. When the Training Academy completes recertification of ongoing child protection staff, additional State data will be available after August 2011. The demographics for the Child Welfare Training Academy Trainees for 2010-2011 are representative of the current workforce:

Educational Level	
Masters	43.20%
Bachelors	47.60%
Associate's	2.20%
High School or GED	4.40%
Other	2.60%

Educational Degree	
Social Work	40.90%
Related Degree (psychology, counseling)	43.0%
Other	16.0%

Racial/Ethnic Background	
African American	6.60%
Asian/Pacific Islander	2.20%
Hispanic/Latino	14.40%
Native American	0.70%
Caucasian	71.70%
Other	4.40%

Gender	
Male	15.90%
Female	84.10%

Colorado does not have a caseload standard.

III. JUVENILE JUSTICE TRANSFERS

Colorado had 231 children under the child protection systems that were transferred into the custody of the State juvenile justice system. This information is drawn from Trails, which is used by both the child protection and juvenile justice systems.

IV. PROPOSED USE OF STATE GRANT FUNDS

Colorado has selected the following seven program areas from CAPTA (42 U.S.C. 5101 et seq.), section 106 (a) (1) through (14), for improvement.

- (1) The intake, assessment, screening, and investigation of reports of child abuse or neglect;

(2)(A) Creating and improving the use of multidisciplinary teams and interagency, intra-agency, interstate, and intrastate protocols to enhance investigations;

(3) Case management, including ongoing case monitoring, and delivery of services and treatment provided to children and their families;

(4) Enhancing the general child protective system by developing, improving, and implementing risk and safety assessment tools and protocols including the use of differential response;

(6) Developing, strengthening, and facilitating training including:

(A) Training regarding research-based strategies, including the use of differential response, to promote collaboration with the families;

(B) Training regarding the legal duties of such individuals;

(C) Personal safety training for case workers; and

(D) Training in early childhood, child, and adolescent development;

(7) Improving the skills, qualifications, and availability of individuals providing services to children and families, and the supervisors of such individuals, through the child protection system, including improvements in the recruitment and retention of caseworkers;

(14) Developing and implementing procedures for collaboration among child protective services, domestic violence services, and other agencies in investigations, interventions, and the delivery of services and treatment provided to children and families, including the use of differential response, where appropriate.

To improve these areas, the State intends to carry out the following eight activities based on the above selected seven program areas:

Activity 1

(1) The Intake, assessment, screening and investigation of reports of child abuse or neglect: CAPTA funds have had and will continue to have a vital role in the State's regeneration of its Child Protection Team functions, starting with the Child Protection Team Conference.

- Embedding Lessons Learned from the Child Protection Team Conference: Several multidisciplinary committees with statewide representation developed from the Child Protection Team Conference. State CAPTA funds will be used to support their activities, including publishing and distributing a guidebook, strengthening the network of Child Protection Teams, offering trainings on recommended topics, and supporting the attendance of committee members in rural counties.
- Screening Guide: DCWSS Child Protection Team, the Child Welfare Sub-PAC Child Protection Task Group and the Domestic Violence/Child Protective Services Coordinating Council are coordinating and facilitating the creation and implementation of a referral screening tool based on the Screening Guide created by the Colorado Consortium Differential Response workgroups. This tool is designed to provide guidance on the questions that should be asked at the time of referral to screen for domestic violence.

- First Responders: CAPTA and Children’s Justice Act grant funds will be collaboratively used to support joint training for county child protection hotline screeners and first responders, such as law enforcement.

Activity 2

(2) Enhancement and collaboration of multidisciplinary teams: CAPTA funds will continue to be used to support and enhance the collaboration of multidisciplinary teams in order to improve the system’s response to cases of child abuse and neglect. These activities include:

- Courts: Ongoing and meaningful collaboration between the DCWS and the courts through participation in the Court Improvement Program. Current collaboration consists of the DCWS Director serving on the Court Improvement Program Steering Committee and State Child Protection Program Staff serving on the Colorado Dependency and Neglect Judicial Institute. State Child Protection Staff also participate in the planning committee for the Judicial Institute, which familiarizes judges who are new to Dependency and Neglect cases, with best practice from both legal and child welfare perspectives. The Court Improvement Program Chairpersons also serve on the Executive Oversight Committee, established in 2008 to provide oversight for Colorado’s Child and Family Services Review (CFSR).
- Youth and Parent Participation: DCWS continues increasing both parent and youth representation on multidisciplinary teams to develop more opportunities for parent leadership in policy making around the State. This includes working closely with the State’s Parent Leadership Council, a county Parents as Partners program, and with Families First, a non-profit organization. The Youth Empowerment Support (YES!) Academy and Colorado Coalition for the Homeless are regularly engaged to provide homeless and runaway foster youth voice on multidisciplinary teams.
- Citizen Review Panels: The three teams comprising the State’s Citizen Review Panels are: Institutional Abuse/Neglect Review Team, Children’s Justice Task Force, and Pueblo County Child Protection Team) continue to be CFSR stakeholders for CDHS by:
 - Examining the practices, policies and procedures of the State and local agencies.
 - Providing public outreach and comment.
 - Making recommendations to the State and public on improving the child protective services system at the State and local level.
 - Reviewing cases; the Institutional Abuse Review Team reviews more than 55 cases per month and the Pueblo Child Protection Team reviews 15-20 cases weekly.
 - Systemic review by the Children’s Justice Task Force of involved partnerships and agencies, pending legislation, state child death reviews findings, and issues that relate to the goals of the Children’s Justice Act, and the CFSR.
 - Reports from the three groups are provided for annual CAPTA reports.

Activity 3

(3) Case management, monitoring, and service delivery:

- Domestic Violence: CAPTA will continue to support the “Safe and Together” model for collaborative work between child protection and domestic violence response systems to

embed domestic violence protocols into child protection practice throughout the life of child protection cases.

- Drug Endangered Children: CAPTA will support the Third Annual DEC Conference to enhance multidisciplinary service delivery. This includes substance abuse assessment and treatment, and their interface with children's protective services assessment and treatment protocols and practices.

Activity 4

(4) Enhancing the general child protective system through differential response:

- Child Protection and Differential Response: CAPTA will continue to work closely to support the work of child protection staff during the implementation and evaluation of differential response in the five pilot counties. This includes developing three training DVDs describing the practice of differential response in Colorado for the participating counties. The focus is on the agency, worker, and family experiences. Family visits will be highlighted. The DVDs will be used to share "lessons learned" concerning the implementation of the differential response model and will be available for statewide distribution.
- Resources for Families: The Differential Response Leadership Team is considering approval of small CAPTA-funded discretionary stipends to families being served through the differential response pilot. The stipend's purpose would be the resolution of the issues that brought the family to the attention of the county department.

Activity 5

(4) Enhancing the general child protection system: through the Expert Child Protection Consultants Project, DCWS uses contractors to provide consultation and training to intake and ongoing CPS workers and supervisors on assessing safety and developing safety plans. Child protection consultants are available to assist with case management, monitoring, and delivery of service and treatment provided to children and their families.

- State and Regional Team: Additionally, a contract with the Kempe Center State and Regional Team (START) provides for the services of a pediatric radiologist, a forensic child psychiatrist, a forensic odontologist, other medical specialists, four social workers with specific expertise in child development, attachment and bonding, sexual abuse, domestic violence and substance abuse, and a legal expert on criminal and civil (Dependency and Neglect) issues.

Activity 6

(6) Developing, strengthening, and facilitating training on research-based strategies: through continued support of the Applied Research in Child Welfare Project, the university/child welfare partnership that examines the outcomes of child welfare practice in the 10 large counties.

- Strengthening Families: State grant funds will support "Strengthening Families and Communities", a new evidence-based joint initiative between CDHS Divisions of Behavioral Health, Child Welfare, Child Care, and Colorado WORKS (TANF); and the Colorado Department of Public Health and Environment. This child abuse prevention framework integrates evidence-based prevention strategies into existing systems to shift from a risks/deficits-based practice to one based on strengths and resiliency.

Activity 7

(7) Improving the skills, qualifications, and availability of individuals providing services to children and families, and the supervisors of such individuals, through the child protection system, including:

- Recommendations: Improvements in the recruitment and retention of caseworkers through training activities recommended by bodies such as the Colorado Justice Act Task Force, Child Protection Teams, Child Fatality Review Teams, the Child Welfare Action Committee, the CFSR, and the PIP.
- Multidisciplinary Opportunities: Support of cross-disciplinary conferences such as the Drug Endangered Children and Substance Exposed Newborns Joint Conference and embedding the Safe and Together model of cross systems work with child protection and domestic violence response and intervention.
- Expert Consultation & Training: Use of Child Protection Expert Consultants by county department staff.

Activity 8

(14) Strengthening the collaboration among child protective services and domestic violence services: CAPTA grant funds will continue to be used to strengthen collaboration among Child Protective Services and Domestic Violence advocates, by:

- Screening Tools: Collaborating to complete the development or selection of a screening tool for referrals that includes indicators of co-occurring domestic violence, and providing training to intake workers on available assessment tools.
- Training: Using the "Safe and Together" model, with representatives from the continuum of child welfare and domestic violence services.
- Follow-up: Offering follow-up expert consultation for county departments to develop county-specific tools and responses to cases of co-occurring child abuse/neglect and domestic violence.
- Fatality Review: Continuing to contract with the Department of Public Health and Environment to:
 - Review all unexpected and unexplained deaths of Colorado children 0-18 years of age.
 - Identify services provided by public agencies to children and their families that are effective in the prevention of child abuse and neglect.
- Representation: Supporting the newly created seat on the Child Protection Task Group for a domestic violence advocate, and creating child protective services representation on the Domestic Violence Coordinating Council, the Domestic Violence Advisory Team, and the Domestic Violence and Child Protection Services Coordinating Council.

DCWS continues to actively participate on the Lieutenant Governor's Office's Early Childhood Councils Advisory Team and Early Childhood State Partner Coalition.

CAPTA CITIZEN REVIEW PANELS

The Colorado CAPTA Citizen Review Panels are:

- Colorado's Children's Justice Task Force
- Institutional Abuse Review Team
- Pueblo County Child Protection Team

CDHS has designated these teams as the State's three Citizen Review Panels in order to meet the CAPTA requirement of June 20, 1999. Federal Statute authorizes the Children's Justice Task Force. Colorado State Statute and rule authorize the Institutional Abuse Review Team and the Pueblo County Child Protection Review Team.

Annual reports, including Children's Justice Act, CAPTA, CFSR, PIP, CDHS Policy Advisory Committee and Child Welfare Action Committee recommendations are provided to the panels for their review and comments. Members of the panels often attend or participate in trainings funded through CAPTA and Children's Justice Act funds, and/or participate on the workgroups initiated in part to address the panels' areas of concern.

Colorado's Children's Justice Task Force

The Colorado Children's Justice Task Force is a designated citizen review panel, comprised of volunteers representing agencies and professionals involved in children's justice issues. The Task Force is a requirement of the Children's Justice Act, which provides grants to States to improve the investigations, prosecutions and judicial handling of cases of child abuse and neglect, particularly child sexual abuse and exploitation, in a manner that limits additional trauma to the child victim and his/her family. This also includes child fatality cases in which child abuse or neglect is suspected and specific cases of children with disabilities and serious health problems who are victims of abuse and neglect.

In the past year, CDHS has worked to revitalize and focus the efforts of Colorado's Task Force. To this end, meetings have increased from quarterly to bimonthly, membership has been expanded, and purpose documents have been crafted align Colorado's context with federal guidelines. In addition to this work, the Children's Justice Task Force panel provides ongoing input and oversight to Colorado's progress on the CFSR, Child Welfare Action Committee recommendations, PIP progress, interagency collaboration, the child fatality review process, abuse and neglect outcomes, domestic violence and substance abuse issues, and the coordination and collaboration with agencies and professionals involved with child protection services investigations.

This Task Force has continued to actively review the current practices and statutes regarding the judicial and administrative handling of the investigation of child abuse and child fatalities, as well as proposed legislative changes and model programs. Aligned with the Task Force recommendations, the Children's Justice Act Grant funded, in whole or in part (often collaboratively with the CAPTA basic state grant), many of the activities described above, including the "Safe and Together" Training, the Child Protection Team Conference, the review of criminal cases for the START Contract, the Expert Consultation in Child Protection Project, the Secondary Trauma Project, Training supporting Engagement in Child Protection and Systems of Kinship Care, and Children's Justice Task Force representation at meetings involving CPI implementation.

The Children's Justice Task Force's recommendations for 2011-2012 are summarized below.

Recommendation 1: Build capacity in rural areas. The challenging geography of Colorado counties and jurisdictions is a constraining factor in statewide resource development and strategy implementation. Rural and frontier communities have particularly scarce resources, and great

distances between community service options. The Task Force recommends ensuring that all Children's Justice Act programming has a statewide focus, and consideration of creative ways to develop new resources in rural areas.

Activities include:

- Continue the Expert Consultants in Child Protection Project, which provides critical resources to rural areas.
- Ensure that all available resources are utilized for cases that need more specialized interviews and evaluations, including using consultants to assist with the investigation.
- Contract with a pediatrician to provide assistance and training to physicians and caseworkers, to assist with evaluating and determining abuse and neglect and to provide expert medical testimony to the court on difficult cases when necessary.
- Explore the potential of mobile pilot programs that can have an expanded reach in rural areas.
- Develop a needs-assessment tool for rural areas.

Recommendation 2: Develop resources that ensure procedural fairness in the investigative, administrative, and judicial handling of cases of child abuse and neglect.

Activities include:

- Examine the role of respondent parent counsel in child abuse and neglect cases.
- Explore linkages and training opportunities with interpreters who work with monolingual clients in child welfare cases.
- Work with the Office of the Child's Representative to develop a Colorado Dependency Quick Guide for Attorneys.

Recommendation 3: Training Opportunities: Continue to develop and support training opportunities for child protection caseworkers, domestic violence advocates, law enforcement officers, Guardians Ad Litem, and judges to improve the investigative, administrative, and judicial handling of cases of child abuse and neglect, as referenced in CAPTA, Sec. 107(e)(1)(A).

Activities include:

- Multidisciplinary professional development opportunities that bring together disparate parts of the system, including topics such as substance abuse, domestic violence, and initial assessment.
- Strengthen connections to the Chiefs' and Sheriffs' Associations.
- Explore options for building the capacity of county workers who conduct supervised visitation, which may be a key indicator of the effectiveness of judicial and administrative action in child abuse and neglect cases.
- Provide support in order to improve child welfare staff performance, and prevent staff turnover by offering training and debriefing for staff involved in child abuse and child fatality investigations.

Recommendation 4: Support the activities of the State Fatality Review Team in disseminating information statewide. The Colorado Child Fatality Review process is comprised

of Child Fatality Review Teams, with counties and multidisciplinary professional representation, from both CDHS and Colorado Department of Public Health and Environment. Regular team reviews and on-site reviews, conducted by State program staff under authority granted by CRS Section 25-20.5-407, operate from CDHS. Cases are reviewed in which the county department had prior or current involvement within five years preceding a suspicious child death. The Colorado Department of Health and Environment Child Fatality Review Team reviews all known Colorado child deaths resulting from accidental and non-accidental trauma or causes. Both review processes have the purposes of providing a broad, comprehensive quality assurance review and an opportunity to learn from risk indicators and case decisions made prior to fatal child maltreatment. The reviews help focus identification of opportunities for meaningful systemic change. The goals of the Task Force related to this topic include: Describing patterns of child death in Colorado; Identifying the prevalence of risk factors for child death; Characterizing high risk groups in terms compatible with the development of public policy; Evaluating system responses to children and families who are at high risk; Offering recommendations for improvement in those responses; and Improving the quality of data necessary for child death investigation and review.

Activities include:

- Continued use of the Children's Justice Act grant to help maintain the Colorado Department of Health and Environment Child Fatality Review Team.
- Collaborative efforts to distribute new information related to the standardization of Fatality Investigations.
- Continued dissemination of the information learned through the review process. This includes a better understanding of how child abuse and neglect fatalities in Colorado, greater accountability among professionals, participation in the development of prevention strategies, statewide child death investigation training, stimulation of policy assessment, and improvement in dialogue with the media. CAPTA/Children's Justice Act funding remains a shared funding that supports this endeavor.

Recommendation 5: Coordinate efforts with other recommending bodies to identify areas that support systems responses to child abuse and neglect.

Activities include:

- Review data sources, including the Children's Bureau Outcomes Portal, CFSR reports, and other available reports to identify priority areas for Children's Justice Act funding.
- Continue to review CFSR, PIP, and Child Welfare Action Committee recommendations that affect the investigative, administrative, and judicial handling of cases of child abuse and neglect.
- Review Institutional Abuse Review Team and Child Fatality Review reports for child protection recommendations.

Recommendation 6: Collaborate with interagency and intra-agency efforts to improve the coordination of systems involved in child protection cases.

Activities include:

- Increase the presence of the Children's Justice Act issues at multidisciplinary events by supporting guest speakers and lectures. Events may include Judicial Conferences, Mental Health Coalition Meetings, trainings put together by the Sex Offender Management Board, and others.
- Support the involvement of Children's Justice Act representatives in CPI.
- Explore the benefits of contracting with an organization to provide 'Life of a Case' system mapping to gain insights on improvement of the system's response to cases of child abuse and neglect.

Institutional Abuse Review Team

The Institutional Abuse Review Team meets monthly to review reports of investigations of abuse and neglect in 24-hour Out-of-Home (OOH) placement. The referrals/assessments are completed by the counties and submitted for review. The Team reviews cases of alleged incidents of abuse and neglect, including child fatalities and near-fatalities. Investigations are completed on children in CDHS licensed and certified OOH placements such as county certified foster care and kinship foster homes, Residential Child Care Facilities, Secure Residential Treatment Facilities, Child Placement Agency Foster or Group Homes, as well as the Division of Youth Corrections. The Team is comprised of volunteers who are representative of the community-at-large as well as those who possess expertise in the prevention and treatment of child abuse and neglect. The Team reviews an average of 50-55 cases per month. The Team reviewed 781 reports from April 2010 to March 2011. The Institutional Abuse Review Team met twice a month for two months due to an exceptionally high volume of institutional abuse assessments and now are current on required reviews.

All institutional abuse intakes are completed on a standardized computer-generated referral/assessment (intake) report, which when completed and approved by the supervisor is sent automatically and electronically from the counties to the state. The purpose of this process, put in to place in 2006, ensures statewide consistency in institutional referral/assessments and assures that the Team reviews OOH investigations. Trails enhancements ensure that all institutional referral/assessments are being sent for state review. The Team completes a specific set of questions related to the review and makes findings and recommendations. The Institutional Abuse Review Team report on each referral/assessment is sent via Trails to the investigating county intake supervisor who approved the closure. When the Team does not support the assessment findings, the county supervisor who approved the assessment closure must respond with additional clarifying information within 30 days.

Institutional Abuse Review Team Recommendations

- Provide ongoing training to county staff, Institutional Abuse Review Team representatives, and OOH providers regarding Volume 7 Institutional Abuse investigation policies and procedures.
- Provide training to county Institutional Abuse intake supervisors and workers regarding assignment of the third report of suspected child abuse or neglect within a two year period where the two previous reports were not accepted for investigation, and the current referral meets specific conditions as outlined in Colorado's Volume 7.202.4 Referral Procedures.

- Consult with the Colorado Attorney General about the feasibility of the county intake workers reporting to the Department of Regulatory Agencies when there is founded abuse/neglect by medical staff who are employed by placement facilities.
- Expand the reach of Institutional Abuse Review Team through continued extension of the invitation to state and county staff, and by encouraging county staff attendance.

Pueblo County Child Protection Team

The Pueblo County Child Protection Team (Citizen Review Panel) meets weekly to review all referrals of child abuse (physical and sexual), fatal child abuse, emotional abuse, neglect, domestic violence and institutional abuse/neglect incidents received by the Pueblo County Department of Social Services that were assigned to a caseworker for further assessment. Recommendations are made addressing the assessment and the proposed disposition of the assessment. The Pueblo County Child Protection Team evaluates, as per statute, the timeliness and appropriate response of the Department. It functions as both a review and resource panel. Guidance and suggestions are provided to the reporting intake or ongoing child welfare caseworker by the members of the team made up of medical, mental health, educational, law enforcement and legal experts. The Pueblo County Child Protection Team reviews approximately 20-30 assessments per week.

The Panel's membership is diverse in the disciplines represented, ethnicity, socioeconomic status, and personal views. It is made up of professional and non-professionals, but all are dutiful individuals who take their roles on the panel very seriously. Members consist of representatives from: Pueblo City Schools, Foster parents, a judicial liaison, Pueblo County Health Department, El Pueblo...an Adolescent Treatment Community, Spanish Peaks Mental Health Center, Pueblo Child Advocacy Center, a representative of the largest minority population within the community, Pueblo Police Department, Pueblo Sheriffs Department, and the Pueblo County Department of Social Services.

The assigned caseworker or the supervisor presents the assessments investigated. The team reviews all the information available in regards to the outcomes of the assessments. From the synopsis, the team makes recommendations to include, but not limited to, filing a Dependency and Neglect Petition with the court, seeking additional medical or mental health information, whether to confirm an individual as responsible for abuse/neglect in Trails, or if the assigned caseworker needs to provide additional information. They will also make recommendations for referrals to obtain needed services. The Team may request the ongoing caseworker and supervisor attend the review so they are available for questions or recommendations.

Because the Child Protection Team reviews a large number of assessments they have become aware of the strengths and deficits in the system.

The Child Protection Team has seen various trends in the community that have had a major impact on the Pueblo County Department of Social Services Child Welfare Division:

- Unresolved custody disputes generate many reports of child abuse and neglect. Parents seem to use reports to Department of Social Services as a weapon against each other, putting their children in the middle. The courts are also ordering more Department assessments through Domestic Relations cases regarding allegations made in custody cases.

- The lack of services to parents who are developmentally delayed.
- Children, 12 years old and younger, being out of the caregiver's control continues to be a community issue.
- The continuation of infants born with narcotics in their systems.
- The continuation of the abuse, selling and availability of prescription narcotic medications for youth and adults.

Pueblo County Child Protection Team Recommendations

The Pueblo Child Protection Team recommends that the above trends continue to be assessed as the team conducts regular reviews of child protection cases. In addition, the team members continue to discuss how their participation on the Pueblo County Department of Social Services Child Protection Team has increased their knowledge of the Child Welfare Division's practice and their understanding about how and why decisions are made. Members also believe they continue assisting in educating others in their community agencies and the public about child safety and processes of child protection.

CAPTA Summary

In summary, CAPTA/Children's Justice Act funds will continue to be used to provide ongoing training as requested and/or needed in the following areas:

- | | |
|---|--|
| - Intake Screening | - Intake Consistency Training |
| - Referral Stages | - Child Protection Team Performance |
| - Safety Assessment & Safety Planning | - Institutional Abuse Investigation Training |
| - Child Fatality Investigations | - Legal/Court Testimony |
| - Co-occurring Issues of Child Protection and Domestic Violence | - Mandatory reporter training |

The PIP strategies and action steps will be integrated with the CAPTA Plan and updated in the Annual CAPTA Report. There have been no changes in state law that could affect the Colorado's eligibility for the CAPTA State grant.

There have been no changes to the State's provisions and procedures for criminal background checks identified in the State's CFSP for prospective foster and adoptive parents and other adult relatives and non-relatives residing in the household.

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