

Permanency Innovations Initiative: Evaluation Summary

California Partners for Permanency (CAPP) Project

PII Overview:

The federal Permanency Innovations Initiative (PII) is a 5-year, \$100 million, multi-site demonstration project designed to improve permanency outcomes among children in foster care who have the most serious barriers to permanency. The PII project aims to provide valuable information about the effectiveness of the programs, interventions, and practices designed to reduce long-term foster care.

Prior to the Evaluation:

The six PII grantees each identified the needs of their target population and selected, created or adapted an appropriate intervention. The study period for evaluation of the intervention does not begin until after usability testing is complete. Usability testing involves the plan-do-study-act cycle which is repeated until the intervention is considered stable or do-able. At the conclusion of usability testing, the components of the intervention, like the gears in a clock, are working together as intended and are ready to be evaluated.

Evaluation Overview:

The PII evaluation has two components: a cross-site study and site-specific evaluations. The site-specific evaluations include two phases of evaluation:

1. **Formative Evaluation** follows successful usability testing. Formative evaluation is an “early warning” trial of the process of monitoring the intervention and what happens for the target population as a result. This phase focuses on the achievement of selected short-term outcomes with a portion of the target population over a brief period of time.
2. **Summative Evaluation** occurs after formative evaluation. It is the process of determining if the intervention produced the desired short and long-term outcomes.

Evaluation Design:

Grantee-specific outcomes answer the summative evaluation question of what will be different after the target population receives the intervention. The evaluation compares the outcomes of children and their families who participated in the intervention to an equivalent group of those who did not. This allows the evaluators to determine if the intervention made a difference.

The cross-site evaluation is a mixed-method approach that looks at survey and administrative data from Adoption and Foster Care Analysis and Reporting System (AFCARS), National Child Abuse and Neglect Data System (NCANDS), and Statewide Automated Child Welfare Information Systems (SACWIS). A cross-site case study will examine key implementation activities and the context in which the programs operate.

CAPP Overview:

The California Partners for Permanency's (CAPP) goal is to improve permanency outcomes for African-American (AA) and American Indian (AI) children in foster care by implementing a Child and Family Practice Model that addresses systemic bias, empowers family/Tribal/community networks, and uses culturally-sensitive engagement and culturally-based healing practices and adaptations.

Prior to CAPP Evaluation:

CAPP's intervention is the Child and Family Practice Model (the Model). The intervention is intended to reduce disproportional numbers and disparities in permanency outcomes among AA and AI children and families in long-term foster care in select California counties.

Before the evaluation begins, usability testing will examine the practice behaviors designed to define what caseworkers should do and say to engage and empower families in a culturally-sensitive way. This phase includes fidelity testing which determines if the practice behaviors identified by CAPP to guide caseworkers in their interactions with families, are being implemented consistently. CAPP will conduct usability testing in Fresno County with a small number of cases to identify and resolve any problems.

CAPP Evaluation Overview:

Using a quasi-experimental method and analyzing administrative data, CAPP children and families in counties operating the Model will be compared to those who did not receive the intervention.

Formative Evaluation: The evaluation will first determine if the Model is working as intended in Fresno County by examining administrative data and surveying parents/guardians. The evaluation team will examine the:

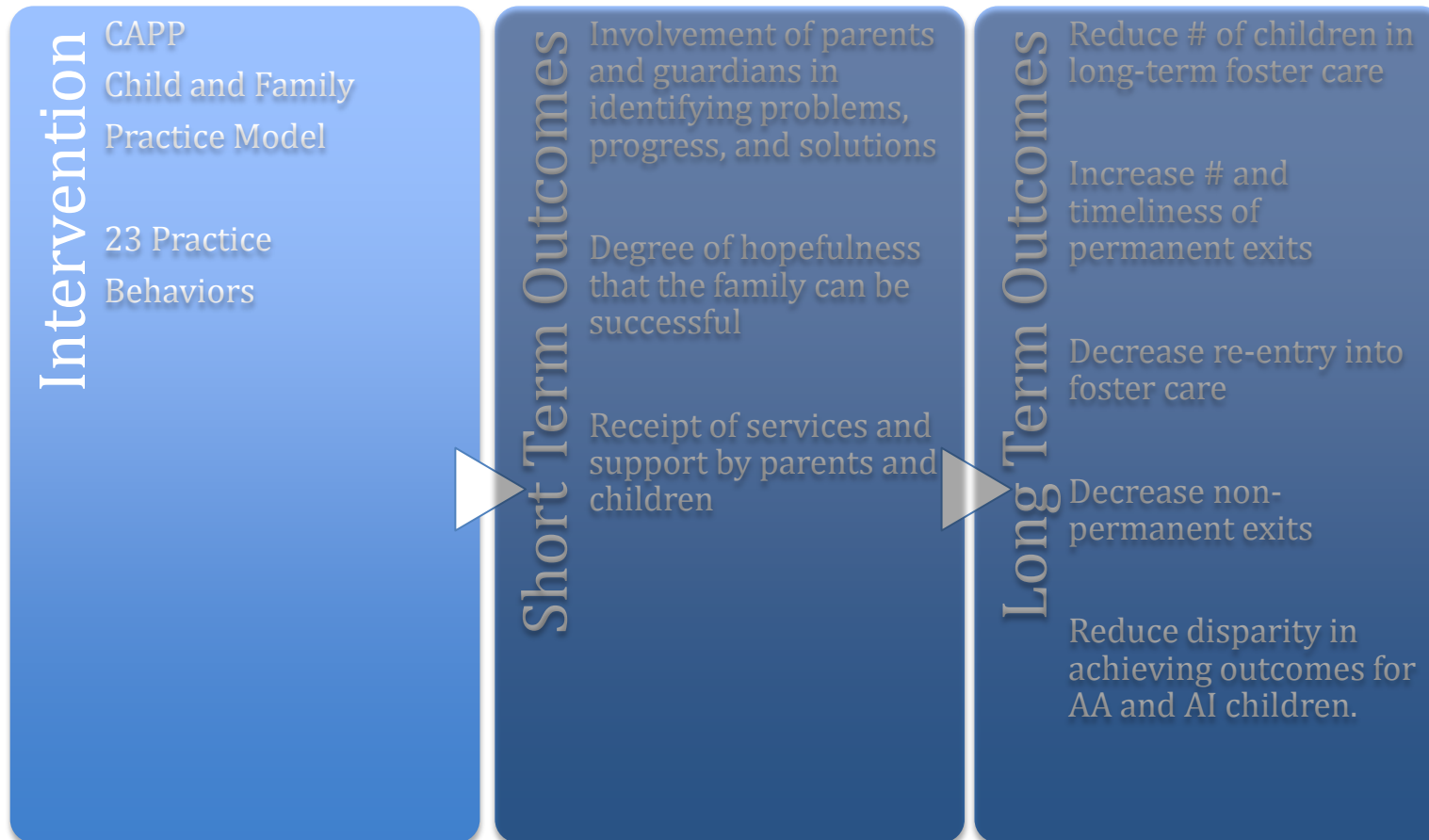
1. Involvement of parents and guardians in identifying problems, progress, and solutions, and communicating their needs to achieve safety, permanency and well-being.
2. Degree of hopefulness that the family can be successful.
3. Receipt of support by parents/child for issues such as loss, grief, and trauma.

If the model is not working as intended, CAPP will refine it and test it again before proceeding.

Summative Evaluation: Once usability testing and the formative evaluation indicate the Model is working, the PII Evaluation Team will test the impact of the Model in achieving the short and long-term permanency outcomes for AA and AI children and families. In the long-term CAPP expects to: 1) Reduce the number and percentage of children in long-term foster care; 2) Increase the number and timeliness of permanent exits, including those within Tribes; 3) Decrease re-entry into foster care; 4) Decrease non-permanent exits; and 5) Reduce disparity in achieving outcomes for AA and AI children.

For more information about this project, contact: Karen Gunderson, Project Director, at the California Department of Social Services (karen.gunderson@dss.ca.gov or 916.651.7395). CAPP is operated by the California Department of Social Services and is funded by the Children's Bureau, Administration on Children, Youth and Families, Administration for Children and Families, U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, under grant number 90-CT-01

FROM INTERVENTION TO OUTCOMES



EVALUATION PROCESS

