

Child Welfare Continuum of Care Reform in Ventura County

Spring 2016 Update

California legislation (AB 403) signed into law in October 2015 mandates Continuum of Care Reform (CCR) for the child welfare system.

CCR calls for improvements to ensure that more children who have been abused or neglected receive care in family settings, rather than shelter or group settings, until they can reunite with their parents.

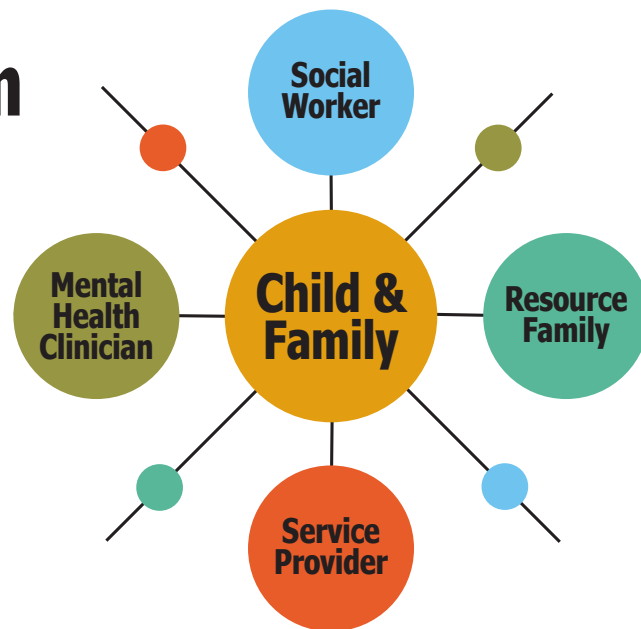
Ventura County views CCR as more than an effort to implement state mandates. Ventura County envisions CCR as an opportunity to assess, transform, and integrate multiple public and private systems into a comprehensive, agile, and responsive continuum that is designed at each step to help children and their families achieve their maximum potential.

Major tenets of CCR include:

- Prioritizing home-based delivery of services
- Redefining the purpose of group care to short-term residential treatment
- Teaming service providers with children and families in a manner that ensures that families' voices are heard
- Ensuring children's early access to specialized mental health services irrespective of their placement setting

CCR anticipates that child welfare systems will:

- Decrease the number of children in care, particularly in congregate care
- Decrease children's length of stay in care
- Increase placements of children among relatives and family friends
- Increase timely reunification of children with their biological parents



Ventura County will team service providers with children and families in a manner that ensures that families' voices are heard.

Ventura County is well positioned to build upon existing strengths – including strong commitment among staff and providers – and to explore new opportunities, such as maximizing federal and state funding streams. Doing so and managing the risks associated with large-scale system change, requires formal oversight of CCR implementation.

To this end, Ventura County has established a CCR governance structure to facilitate intra-agency policy setting, decision making, and collaboration, and to ensure effectiveness and efficiency in transforming cross-cutting systems and services.

CCR Executive and/or Steering Committees include representation from:

- County Executive Office
- County Office of Education
- Human Services Agency
- Public Health
- Behavioral Health
- Parent Partner/Consumer
- Probation
- Former Foster Youth
- County Counsel
- Courts



We'll know we're successful when . . .

Foster children are cared for in family settings whenever possible; reunify with their parents as soon as it is safe to do so; and experience long-term stability, safety and well-being.

**March
2016**

Developed a framework for cross-agency teaming to serve children and families

Developed a Family Preservation model that uses child and family team meetings to develop and monitor plans for keeping children safe with their families instead of entering foster care when possible

Implemented Resource Family Approval (RFA), which provides a streamlined, user-friendly process for licensing foster parents and approving relative, adoptive, and guardian caregivers

**April-
June**

Provide CCR update to Board of Supervisors and present information regarding resource implications

Discuss CCR impacts with service providers and other partners

Develop CCR service design models and develop contracting plans



Continuum of Care Reform Key Milestones

Full CCR implementation will take place in January 2017; however, a number of milestones must be met during 2016 to ensure that Ventura County is prepared to serve children and their families in new ways, including:

- Child and family team structures must be implemented and resourced appropriately
- Service strategies must be transformed to include the provision of mental health services to children early on
- Foster Family Agencies, group homes, and shelter care must be redesigned to ensure shorter durations of stay and availability of intensive services
- More relatives and foster families must be engaged in helping children and their parents, and these partners must receive the additional training and support necessary to succeed in their roles
- Child-specific plans must be developed to transition children currently residing in congregate care to family settings whenever possible
- Federal, state, and local funding streams and resources must be assessed and maximized

Our Values:

Safe at Home: *We believe families can keep their children safe with support.*

Caregiving: *We believe children should be cared for in a familiar, nurturing, and safe environment.*

Child's Experience: *We believe every child is entitled to thrive through stability, family connections, quality treatment, and a voice in planning.*

Parental Support for Reunification: *We believe, through partnership and support, parents can grow and change in order to safely parent their children.*

Permanency: *We believe all children deserve a sense of belonging, and permanent and unconditional commitment in a lifelong family.*

We're transforming our services by . . .

Establishing common principles and objectives across all county and community systems that touch foster children, and aligning systems and resources to help children and families succeed.

Please stay tuned for the **CCR Summer 2016 Update**, and contact Leticia Morales, HSA Manager, at (805) 477-5349 for additional information.