California's Child Welfare

Continuum of Care Reform (CCR) Overview

September 12, 2016

What is the Continuum of Care Reform?

A comprehensive framework that supports children, youth and families across placement settings in achieving permanency.

CCR includes:

- Increased engagement with children, youth and families
- Increased capacity for home-based family care
- Limited use of group home care
- Changes in rates, training, accreditation, mental health services and accountability & performance

BACKGROUND

- Legislatively mandated by AB 403
  - Builds on previous reform efforts
  - Provides the statutory and policy framework to promote services and supports provided to the child or youth

Vision

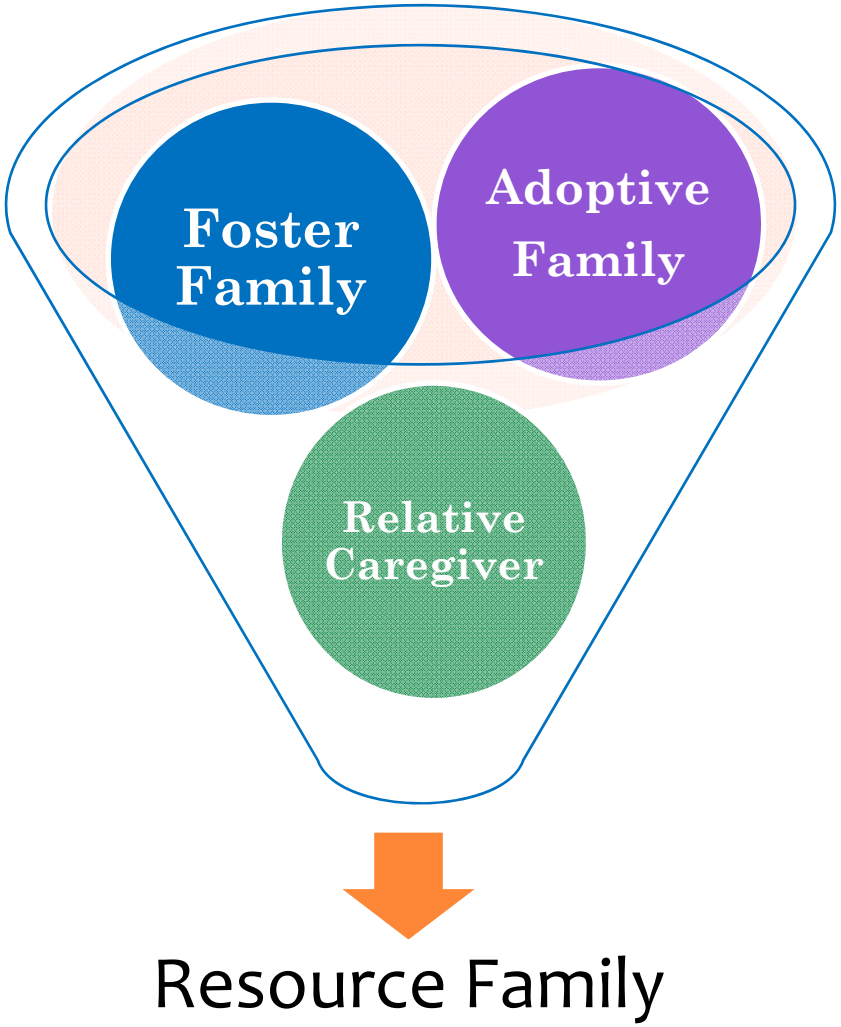
- All children live with a committed, permanent and nurturing family
- Individualized and coordinated services and supports
- Focus on permanent family and preparation for successful adulthood
- Group Home care, when needed, is a short-term, high quality, intensive intervention that is just one part of a continuum of care available for children, youth and young adults

The Paradigm Shift

Group Home → *Short Term Residential Treatment Program (STRTP)*

Children who cannot be safely placed in a family can receive short-term, residential care with specific care plans and intensive therapeutic interventions and services to support their transition to a family.

Foster Families/Relatives → Resource Families



Resource Family Approval (RFA):

- A new process for licensing foster homes and approving relatives
  - Single, unified RFA process that will be used for all caregiver families: Kin, Non Related Extended Family Members (NREFM), licensed foster families, and FFA foster families

Resource Family Approval (RFA) Process

Highlights of new RFA process effective 01/01/17:

- More comprehensive in-depth background checks and training requirements for all caregiver families, including a psychosocial assessment
- Once approved, families do not need an adoption home study to adopt a child in their care
- Existing homes to be transitioned to RFA homes over the next two years

Increased Engagement

- Child & Family Team(CFT)
  - Up-front and continuing assessment that includes youth, family and others that are deemed important to the youth and family to provide input on the supports, services, and placement needed by the youth and family

Core Services

Short Term Residential Treatment Programs (STRTP) and Foster Family Agencies (FFA) must make available core services:

- Access to specialty mental health services
- Transitional support services for placement changes, permanency, aftercare
- Education, physical, behavioral and mental health supports
- Activities to support youth achieving a successful adulthood
- Services to achieve permanency & maintain/establish family connections
- Active efforts for Indian Child Welfare Act (ICWA) -Eligible children

Oversight & Accountability

- National Accreditation of STRTPs and FFAs
- Cross Departmental Oversight Framework
- Evaluate provider performance along common domains developed by the State
- Youth, caregiver and stakeholder satisfaction surveys
- Public transparency of provider performance

New Provider Rate Structure

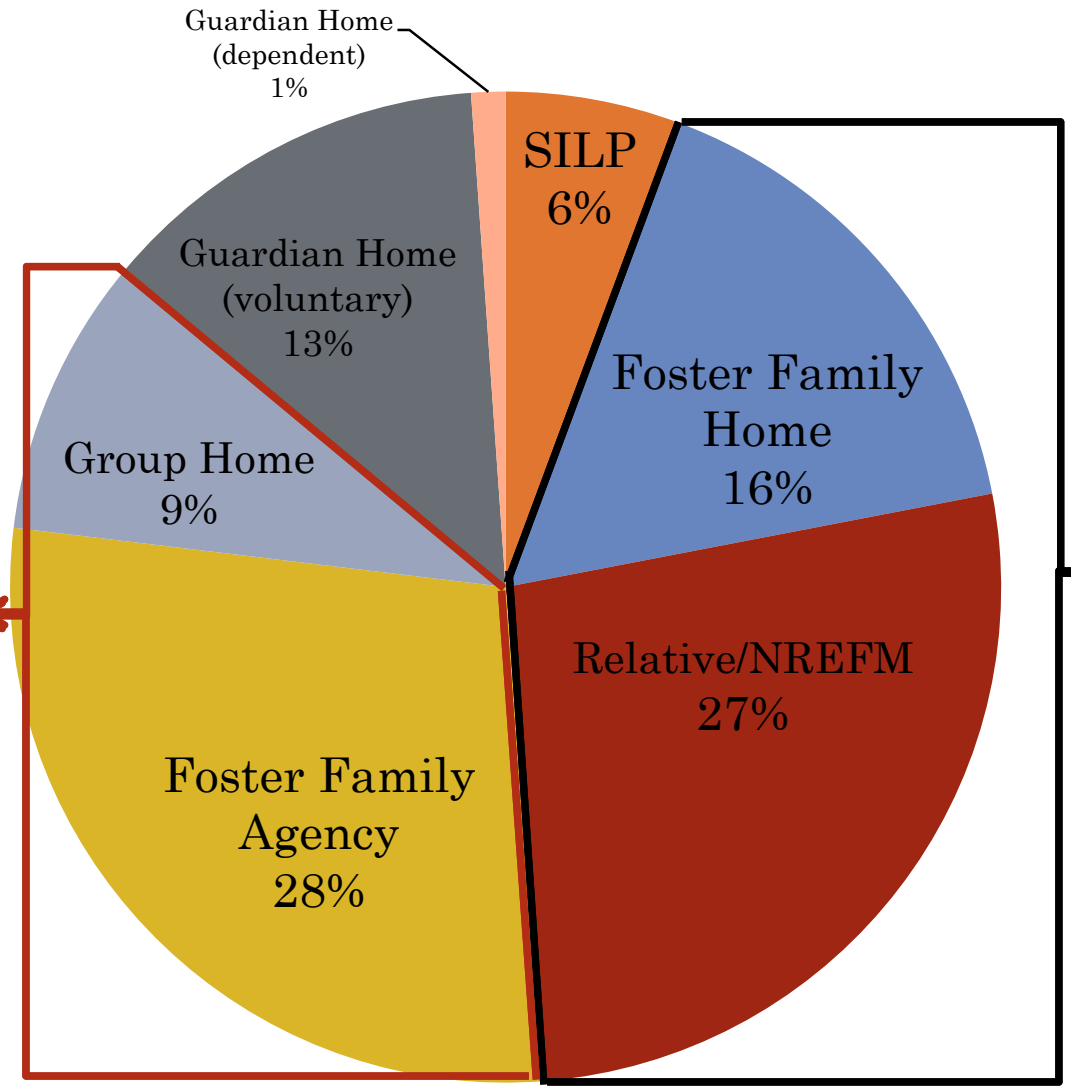
- One rate for Short-Term Residential Therapeutic Program settings
- A tiered rate structure for Home Based Family Care based on the level of care to be provided by Resource Families
- New rates begins 1/1/17

Implications for Contra Costa County

- Contra Costa County has 107 dependent children in Group Home placements (approximately 10%) placed throughout 50 different group homes

- Currently there are approximately 260 licensed homes and 250 approved relative homes
  - CCC will need additional Resource Family Homes able and willing to take children stepping down from Group Homes (STRTPs)

Contra Costa County Placements



Group Homes and FFA's will require National Accreditation and Group Homes will convert to STRTPs

43% of placements will convert (over 2 years) to Resource Family Homes

Challenges ahead for CCC

- Mental Health Services Collaboration
  - Increased expectations of services with insufficient funding
- Recruiting Foster Families
  - Increase community awareness of need for caregivers and the specific needs of our youth
- Increased training needed for caregivers
  - Based on high needs youth who will be transitioning to home based care
- Payment Rates
  - Restructured rates need to sufficiently account for higher, more intensive levels of services provided by caregivers

THE WORK

EHSD has…

Submitted CCC's Resource Family Approval Implementation plan to CDSS

Begun reviewing all youth in Group Home Care to assess the service and support needs to move to a Resource Family Placement

Created a CCR Leadership Team consisting of EHSD Agency Director, Behavioral Health Director, and Chief Probation Officer and Chief Assistant CAO

Created a Steering Committee consisting of the CFS Director, Children's Behavioral Health Manager, Probation Manager, Parent Partner, and Youth Partner

Initiated Work Groups comprised of staff from CWS, BH, and Probation to focus on the implementation strategies for:

- Child & Family Teams
- Resource Family Approval
- Group Home/Foster Family Agencies/ Behavioral Health
- Training
- Communication
- Data

It's a process…

This will require:

- Cross department collaboration (CFS, Behavioral Health, Probation)
- Up front investments
- Increase communication with community members regarding needs for quality Resource Families
- Time to build capacity at the local level to support children & youth in home based care

Looking Ahead

- *"The goal for all children in foster care is normalcy in development while establishing permanent life-long family relationships. Therefore, children should not remain in a group living environment for long periods of time"*

- *"All children deserve to live with a committed, nurturing, and permanent family that prepares youth for a successful transition into adulthood."*

Questions and Answers