

Intensive Services Component – Family Conferencing Sub-study Progress to date

This *Semi-Annual Progress Report* describes implementation progress for the period from April 1, 2002 to September 30, 2002 on the evaluation of the Intensive Services Component – Family Conferencing Sub-study (ISFC) of the California Title IV-E Child Welfare Waiver Demonstration Project.

Enrollment Progress

Summary enrollment tables for Fresno and Riverside counties, covering the period from April 1, 2002 through August 31, 2002, are included in **Attachment 1**.

Thirty-two additional children (study children and siblings) were enrolled in Fresno County during the 4/1/02-8/31/02 enrollment period. At present, a total of 145 children are enrolled (including federally and non-federally eligible study children and siblings). The size of sibling groups continues to have a substantial impact on enrollment in that only ten additional study children (5 experimental; 5 control) were enrolled during this report period; the remaining 22 children are siblings. The county has enrolled 33 study children in the experimental group to date (8/31/02). Fifty-eight siblings of experimental group study children are also enrolled. Enrolled in the control group are 19 study children and an additional 35 control group siblings. The majority of enrolled children are Title IV-E eligible: 134 federally eligible vs. 11 non-federally eligible. The 11 non-federally eligible children are currently being served via the parallel State waiver and will be included in the final analysis. Fresno County's program serves children maintained in-home who are assessed as being at high risk for removal from their families. The goal of the program is to prevent out-of-home placement via provision of a family conference and voluntary services. A shorter service period is a defining characteristic of Fresno County's program design. For this reason, 31 study children have had their child welfare cases closed since initial implementation. 21 study children (14 experimental; 7 control) and 36 siblings of these children remain active in Fresno County's program at this time (8/31/02). Reasons for case closure in Fresno County include the stabilization of the family situation (19) or family refusal to comply with services (11). In one instance, the child's case was closed when the child was placed out of home with a relative.

During the enrollment period covered by this report (4/1/02-8/31/02), 18 additional children (study children and siblings) were enrolled in Riverside County. Seven of these children are study children; the remaining 11 children are siblings. A total of 117 children are enrolled to date (federally and non-federally eligible study children and siblings). There are currently 31 study children enrolled in the experimental group. An additional 44 siblings of experimental group children are also enrolled. Eighteen study children are enrolled in Riverside County's control group, along with 24 siblings of those children. A small number of Riverside County's enrolled children are being followed under the State waiver for non-federally eligible children: 14 non-federally eligible children vs. 103 federally eligible. The focus of Riverside County's program is on enhancing the placement stability and timely permanence (by reunification, adoption and guardianship) of children placed in relative and non-relative care. Due to the longer time frames associated with achieving permanency for children in care, the majority of Riverside County's cases remain open at this time. 16 study cases have been closed since initial implementation. 13 case closures were the result of a successful reunification with the biological

parent. One case was closed less than a month after enrollment when the court dismissed the allegations. One case was “closed” to the experimental program when the court terminated reunification services to the parents prior to provision of a family conference and the case was transferred to the agency’s adoptions program. The remaining case was closed for reasons that the evaluation team is currently clarifying.

Monthly enrollment rates during this report period remained modest for both counties. Fresno County enrolled an average of 2 new study children and 4-5 siblings per month while Riverside enrolled 1-2 study children and 2 siblings per month, on average.

Impact Study

The following report section describes progress by the evaluation team on primary *Impact Study* evaluation activities.

Technical Assistance to Counties and CDSS

Technical assistance provided to counties and CDSS during this report period focused on CDSS efforts to clarify county interest in pursuing an extension of the Waiver demonstration from US DHHS and criteria to be used by US DHHS in evaluating extension requests from Waiver states. A series of meetings and phone conferences was convened by CDSS during this report period to address these issues. Evaluation team members attended these meetings in order to clarify research issues that would likely have an influence on county engagement in pursuing the extension process and the outcome of a CDSS request to extend the Waiver, if one were put forward. A central concern for the Family Conferencing Sub-study has been that enrollment of study children in both counties remains quite low and compromises the ability of the evaluation to detect between-group differences, if they exist. In order to address questions from county staff regarding the level of enrollment that might be needed to detect differences between the experimental and control groups, the evaluation team prepared a “power analysis” that estimates the sample size needed to detect the effect sizes expected by county staff and shown by prior child welfare research. This information (summarized in **Attachment 2**) was presented to CDSS and county staff during a meeting held in conjunction with the California Wraparound Institute in Anaheim on May 8, 2002.

In addition, evaluation team members provided periodic assistance to county staff by phone regarding enrollment and evaluation issues. In Fresno County, for example, staff expressed interest in exploring whether there might be a difference between the experimental and control groups on client family compliance with services offered and overall service usage. This question was motivated, in part, by county and evaluation team expectations that the evaluation was unlikely to indicate that there were significant differences between study groups on foster care entries or repeat abuse and neglect referrals, since few study children were experiencing these outcomes, and that alternative measures might better demonstrate the effects of Fresno County’s experimental intervention. Following a series of phone conferences to explore this question, county staff and the evaluation team concluded, however, that it was problematic to measure family compliance with services due to irregularities in the available data. In addition, while data being collected by Fresno County staff for the *Cost-Effectiveness Study* permits the evaluation team to analyze service usage patterns among experimental and control families for certain types of services, the meaning of service usage patterns may be difficult to interpret in

the absence of other outcome results. For example, high rates of service usage could reflect high levels of client engagement in services or higher client need for such services. Service usage data alone cannot determine which explanation is the most likely if a difference between study groups is found.

Fresno County staff also, for a period of time, considered revising the program enrollment criteria to include children who did not have a protective hold placed on them at time of enrollment, in order to increase the pool of eligible children. Discussions between evaluation team members and county staff regarding the proposed change suggested that such children were likely at lower risk for abuse and neglect than children who had been accepted into the study thus far and that the proposed change might therefore compromise the evaluation. For these reasons, the proposed change was not implemented by county staff.

Aside from the assistance provided to county staff regarding the Waiver extension process, technical assistance to Riverside County staff has also consisted of clarifying project timelines for the evaluation and their impact, or lack thereof, on county enrollment timelines.

Baseline Assessment

Riverside County began utilizing electronic methods arranged by the evaluation team to submit the California Structured Decision Making Family Risk Assessment and Family Strengths and Needs Assessment (child portion only) data during this report period. Both counties currently submit these data electronically, which greatly increases their availability for analysis. Completed records have currently been submitted by both counties for all requested children (Fresno: 51; Riverside: 21).

Model Fidelity Assessment

Model fidelity assessment instruments include, (1) the Conference Characteristics Survey, completed by the conference coordinator and facilitator immediately following the family conference; (2) the Conference Participant Questionnaire, completed by all other conference participants immediately following the family conference; (3) the Family Plan Effectiveness Survey, completed by the supervising child welfare worker at six and 12 months post-conference; and (4) the Framework for Observing a Family Conference form used in recording direct observations of family conferences. Current versions of these instruments developed by the evaluation team were included as attachments in the *March 2002 Semi-Annual Progress Report*.

Surveys completed by conference participants and the conference coordinator and facilitator continue to be collected following all initial family conferences in both counties. To date, surveys regarding 22 initial conferences have been collected in Fresno County and surveys regarding 16 initial conferences have been submitted by Riverside County.

Despite modifications to the surveys made during the pilot-testing phase of implementation, county staff feedback and reviews of completed surveys indicate that questions directing participants to complete one set of questions if the conference included "Private Family Time" and a second set of questions if it did not continue to be problematic. This structure was designed to verify the consistency with which counties implemented the indicated family

conferencing models and explore the extent to which participants confirmed that the intended model was the one they received. Difficulties with these questions include that county staff indicate that participants frequently have questions about which questions they are required to fill out. Returned surveys also show that participants sometimes complete both sets of questions or parts of both sections, regardless of the type of conference they received. Conference observations conducted by the evaluation team suggest that participants (including county staff) may not take the time to carefully read the survey directions, perhaps because the survey administration immediately follows the conclusion of the conference and, by this time, participants are often tired. In order to attempt to address these concerns without making more substantive changes to the survey instruments (which is not advisable at this stage of implementation) the evaluation team has distributed copies of the survey instruments in which the “Private Family Time” and non- “Private Family Time” sections are color-coded. Evaluation team members currently await feedback from county staff regarding the extent to which these adjustments assist participants with completing the relevant sections of the survey.

The Conference Participant Questionnaires are entered manually on an ongoing basis in a Microsoft Access database by evaluation team staff. Data entered in Access is easily uploaded to SAS statistical software, which will be used for future data analyses. Final adjustments to the Access database for the Conference Characteristics Survey, completed by conference coordinators and facilitators, are currently being made. Entry of the data into the database will commence as soon as the database is finished.

Early results from the Conference Participant Questionnaire were compiled by the evaluation team and presented at the American Humane Association Family Group Decision Making Roundtable (AHA FGDM Roundtable) in Monterey on June 4, 2002. Copies of handouts provided to the presentation attendees are included in **Attachment 3**.

The Family Plan Effectiveness Survey completed by the supervising child welfare worker regarding plan implementation also continues to be submitted by social workers in both counties. Because the time frame for delivery of experimental services in Fresno County is approximately six months, this survey will only be administered at six months in Fresno County. Riverside County’s service period is substantially longer and for this reason, the survey will be administered twice: once at 6 months and again at 12 months following the conference. At this time, 15 six-month surveys have been completed by Fresno County social workers. Due to delays on the part of Riverside County staff in scheduling initial conferences (see the *March 2002 Annual Process Study Report* for further information), only 7 six-month surveys have recently come due in Riverside County. Three of these surveys have been completed by Riverside County staff. Manual entry of the Family Plan Effectiveness Surveys into an Access database will also commence as soon as final modifications to the database are completed by technical support staff on the evaluation team.

Intermittent conference observations continue to be conducted in both counties. Model fidelity data regarding the conference is collected by conference observers on the Framework for Observing a Conference form. Observations also allow staff to gather data regarding the implementation of conferences in each county for the *Process Study*. Observations completed during this report period were conducted on 4/20/02, 4/27/02 and 7/25/02 in Fresno County and on 5/8/02 and 8/9/02 in Riverside County.

Fresno County conference observations are conducted by field staff hired specifically for this purpose, while Riverside County observations have been completed by members of the UCB evaluation team. Field observers were hired in Fresno County in order to increase the frequency with which observations could be conducted and to minimize the travel time required by UCB team staff to complete these activities. Hired observers were selected with the assistance of staff in the social work program at California State University at Fresno and Fresno County Waiver program staff. The current observation staff were selected based on their understanding of the research objectives, exposure to the experimental intervention, professional experience with child welfare services clients, professional demeanor and Spanish language abilities.

Prior to the conference start, informed consent is obtained from parents by county staff. UCB team observers typically observe all phases of the conference except the “Private Family Time” portion. On one occasion, with consent from family members, the observer remained for the “Private Family Time” phase of the conference. During most conferences, participants are reported to invite the observer to take notes during the entire conference and express no concerns regarding the observer’s presence. However, there have been some concerns expressed by Fresno County administrative staff that family members may nonetheless experience some discomfort with the observer’s presence. These concerns were expressed by Fresno County staff during a visit to the county on July 30, 2002, and were addressed by generating a list of suggestions for minimizing observer intrusiveness while optimizing data collection. The guidelines generated will be used to develop a conference observation protocol which will be distributed to Fresno County observers prior to the next conference observation. Evaluation team staff will continue to dialogue with Fresno County administrative staff regarding the effectiveness of these modifications and make adjustments to the protocol as needed. Riverside County staff have not expressed any concerns regarding observer intrusiveness as of this reporting period.

Family Conference and Case Plans

Both counties continue to submit copies of plans created during the family conference to the evaluation team. As discussed in the last *Semi-Annual Progress Report*, Fresno County also submits copies of the child welfare case plan for all experimental and control group children. Collection of both the conference and case plans for Fresno County will allow the evaluation team to assess whether the family conference facilitates the identification of service needs that are not already addressed in the case plan and whether planned services for the experimental and control groups in any way differ. This question is of particular concern in Fresno County, where staff provide services to both experimental and control group cases and the potential for control group contamination is therefore heightened. Riverside County staff only provide services to the experimental group. For this reason, the comparison of case plans with family conference plans is only being conducted with data from Fresno County.

In order to facilitate data entry and analysis of the case and conference plans, the evaluation team had requested that county staff explore the feasibility of submitting the plans electronically, in lieu of hard copy. Both counties indicated that it would be fairly simple to provide the plans in electronic form. To ensure the confidentiality of the data during electronic submission, the evaluation team provided technical assistance to county staff regarding the use of a password-protected electronic archive. Fresno County has implemented the electronic methods already. Riverside county staff currently submit hard copies only. Evaluation team staff continue to

provide Riverside with technical assistance and support as they work towards the goal of submitting these records electronically.

Between both counties, a total of 42 family conference plans have been collected. In addition, 47 Fresno case plans for both control and experimental children had been collected by the close of August 2002. Fresno County has been able to provide copies of case plans for all enrolled cases, while conference plans have only been available since the evaluation team requested them in April 2001. For this reason, the number of Fresno case plans currently exceeds the number of conference plans collected in both counties at this time. Efforts to develop the analysis approach for case and conference plans commenced during this reporting period. Evaluation team members are utilizing a grounded theory approach, aided by Atlas qualitative analysis software. A similar approach will be used to analyze both types of plans, in order to facilitate comparisons across plan types in Fresno County. Preliminary codes have been applied to plans that have been received thus far. The coding scheme will be further refined and applied to incoming data as themes that are relevant to the evaluation begin to emerge from the data. At this time, theoretical exploration of the data is still in process.

In-depth Interview Implementation

Implementation of the in-depth interviews with child and adult study participants continues in both counties. As of the end of this report period, 14 baseline interviews with caregivers and 4 baseline interviews with youth have been completed in Fresno County. Similar numbers of baseline interviews have also been completed with Riverside County caregivers (14) and youth (5). Several follow-up six-month telephone interviews and 12-month face interviews were also scheduled and completed during this report period. Eleven 6-month telephone interviews were successfully completed with Riverside County caregivers and three youth and their caregivers also participated in 12-month face interviews in this county. Six Fresno County caregivers completed 6-month telephone interviews, but none of the 12-month face interviews that came due during this report period (4 caregiver, 2 youth) were successfully completed.

Completion of the face and telephone interviews with study participants has proved to be quite challenging. Out of a combined total of 36 interviews attempted with Riverside County caregivers since implementation began (including baseline, 6-month and 12-month interviews), only 28 (77%) have been completed. Out of a total of 10 Riverside County youth interviews that have been attempted since implementation began, eight have been completed (80%). Response rates in Fresno County have been lower. Forty-one Fresno County caregiver interviews were attempted and 20 were completed (49%). Twelve youth interviews were attempted with Fresno County youth participants but only 5 were completed (42%).

A variety of factors account for the current response rates and differences in response rates between the two counties. In Riverside County, interviews are chiefly scheduled with youth placed out-of-home and their foster and kinship caregivers while Fresno County interviews are primarily conducted with parents who are the direct recipients of child welfare services and their biological children, who remain in-home. Factors related to family referral to the protective services agency may also inhibit the participation of Fresno County study families in the in-depth interviews. Such factors may include distrust of the protective services agency and its associates, despite confidentiality assurances, and difficulties with more basic life functions, such as employment, household maintenance and child care. While out-of-home foster and

kinship care providers in Riverside County are not immune to the same types of issues, one would expect them to be affected by such issues to a lesser degree. Financial incentives are currently provided to all youth and adult participants in the in-depth interviews. However, such incentives have been insufficient to ensure the cooperation of study participants in the in-depth interviews.

Staffing issues on the evaluation team have also affected the interview response rates. Within this reporting period, the evaluation team experienced significant turnover among staff hired to conduct the in-depth interviews as well as among staff responsible for coordinating the interview scheduling from Berkeley. In Fresno County, both interviewers left the project during this report period. One replacement staff member who received on-the-job training was hired and is currently conducting interviews in this county. This individual and two additional interviewers will receive formal training to conduct interviews by the beginning of October 2002. One of the two additional interviewers currently conducts conference observations for the evaluation while the other is a new hire. Two of the three staff speak Spanish. In Riverside, one of two staff hired to conduct interviews also left the project during this period. UC Berkeley staff are in process of hiring his replacement, who also will be trained and ready to be assigned interviews by the beginning of October 2002. Regretfully, neither this candidate nor the remaining interviewer in Riverside County speak Spanish. Although the evaluation team had hoped to identify a replacement interviewer who spoke Spanish, none of the position applicants met this qualification.

Recruitment for the open interviewing positions was conducted by posting a position announcement through the social work programs at California State University at San Bernardino and California State University at Fresno. In addition, evaluation team staff contacted the Title IV-E program coordinators in the social work programs at both universities for specific recommendations regarding qualified students who might be interested in the open positions. Few applications were submitted by students at either university. The fact that the positions needed to be filled during the summer, when the social work program is not in session, likely reduced the number of applications submitted by qualified candidates. Only three applications were submitted by San Bernardino State students, none of whom spoke Spanish. One of the three candidates was selected and is in process of being hired and trained, as discussed above.

Because neither of the two Riverside County interviewing staff speak Spanish, Spanish language interviews, when they arise in this county, will be conducted by UC Berkeley evaluation team staff by telephone. Although the baseline and 12-month interviews were not designed to be conducted by phone, these methods will ensure that Spanish-speaking study participants have the opportunity to participate in the in-depth interviews. To date, the need for a Spanish-speaking interviewer in Riverside County has only arisen on rare occasions. Should the need for a Spanish-speaking interviewer increase, the evaluation team will broaden recruitment efforts to identify such candidates.

As mentioned above, turnover among staff assigned to coordinate the in-depth interviews from Berkeley has also had an impact on the response rate, in that no consistent staff member was assigned for the duration of this report period to ensure timely interview assignment and problem resolution. The project director, whose role it was to supervise the interview scheduling staff, left the project in June 2002. During the months surrounding the project director's departure

approximately four different staff members were responsible for coordinating the interview scheduling with in-county interviewing staff. A fifth staff person has recently been assigned to these duties, who is expected to be able to consistently fulfill these duties for a period of time. Overall interview management is currently supervised by the Family Conferencing Sub-study coordinator.

Consent Revisions

Adjustments to the wording of initial consent forms suggested by the UC Berkeley Human Subjects Review Committee and evaluation team staffing changes necessitated minor revisions to several consent forms during this reporting period. Language that further directs study participants to the appropriate UC Berkeley entities for questions or complaints related to the Title IV-E Waiver Demonstration Project was inserted into initial study consent forms. Due to staffing changes for the Principal Investigator role, forms indicating the names and contact information for the current co-investigators were also updated on forms where this information appears. Current versions of the updated consent forms can be found in **Attachment 4**. These forms were recently distributed to counties for immediate use.

Technical Activities

Technical staff on the evaluation team have been involved in a number of activities during this report period that facilitate the timely and complete collection and accurate entry of all study data. Technical team activities have focused on the following five areas during this report period: (1) providing ongoing technical support and training to evaluation team members regarding data collection and management efforts; (2) initiating construction of an analysis dataset integrating data from enrollment spreadsheets and supplementary databases with data from the California Children's Service Archive (CWS/CMS data); (3) modifying, maintaining, and supporting use of the FC contact database designed to facilitate scheduling and tracking the outcome of in-depth interview attempts; (4) modifying, maintaining and supporting use of the FC Conference Instruments database for data entry of the model fidelity instruments; and (5) maintaining the network installation of Cardiff Teleform for processing of in-depth interviews. A more complete summary of technical staff activities is presented in **Attachment 5**.

Data Analysis Preparation

As evaluation team activities have shifted from initial implementation to ongoing data collection and management, the evaluation team has also initiated work to begin preparing for the eventual analysis of study data. Evaluation team members developed a preliminary data analysis plan for the Intensive Services Component-Family Conferencing Sub-study that is currently undergoing refinement. The data analysis plan will be used to direct the data analysis for this portion of the study. The intent of the analysis plan is to outline the research questions and their relevance to the study, identify specific items for analysis, and outline the statistical approaches that will be used for the analysis. The scope of this data analysis plan focuses on the outcomes for families and children participating in this intervention and the understanding of the model being implemented. This plan will be used by the evaluation team to direct analysis for the *Preliminary Analysis Report*, to be submitted to CDSS on June 30, 2003. This preparation and planning will hasten the ability of research staff to conduct data analyses as data is received. This plan will continue to be revised and improved throughout the data analysis portion of the study.

Planning for production of the *Preliminary Analysis Report* has also involved identifying the content areas to be covered in this report, addressing outstanding data entry needs and specifying timeframes for the report production. Analyses tentatively identified for inclusion in this report include: (1) county SDM Family Risk Assessment descriptive data regarding family risk of abuse and neglect and intervention reasons; (2) county SDM Strengths and Needs assessment summary scores and distributions of children assessed as high vs. low functioning; (3) summary scores for child well-being and family functioning scales from baseline in-depth interviews; (4) correlations between Family Risk Assessment scores and selected child well-being scores; (5) an expansion of the analyses conducted for the June 2002 AHA FGDM Roundtable regarding the model fidelity of county family conferencing programs; (6) frequency distributions of services satisfaction survey responses, including several family conference-specific items; (7) comparisons of case and conference plans.

Ongoing Impact Study Activities

All of the data collection and monitoring activities described above will continue. Evaluation team members will continue to focus on efforts to maximize successful data collection during the next report period. Preparation for the preliminary and final data analyses also will continue.

Process Study

Process Study activities during this period consisted of a focus group with Fresno County administrative staff and a set of telephone interviews with Riverside County administrative staff. These activities are discussed in further detail below. Observations of individual family conferences also inform the *Process Study*. These activities were previously discussed under the *Impact Study* section of this report.

Focus Groups with Administrative Staff

A focus group with administrative staff was conducted in Fresno on July 30, 2002. A series of phone interviews were conducted with Riverside County administrative staff, in lieu of a focus group, on August 19, 2002 and September 20, 2002 due to scheduling challenges on the part of county staff participants. The purpose of the focus group and the series of phone conferences was to collect Process Study data on the implementation of ISFC programs, their organizational structure, service aspects and contextual factors affecting ongoing program implementation. Administrative staff participating in the focus group and phone conferences included: family conference coordinators, program coordinators, program managers, a departmental supervisor and a conference coordinator assistant

Focus group questions, provided in **Attachment 6** of this report, were developed by evaluation team staff in accordance with federal Title IV-E Child Welfare Waiver Demonstration Project evaluation guidelines. Once informed consent was obtained from all participants, each interview was recorded on an audiocassette tape, and notes were taken by all evaluation team staff in attendance. Evaluation team notes are currently being compiled and key themes will be extracted and summarized. Once completed, interview summaries will be distributed to interview participants in both counties for their review and input. Any feedback provided by the

participants will then be incorporated into the final draft of each summary. The resulting summaries are subsequently synthesized for *Annual Process Study Reports*.

Ongoing Process Study Activities

Future conference observations will continue to inform both the *Process* and *Impact Studies*. Conference observations are expected to continue in both counties. In addition, Process Study activities during the next report period will include focus groups with line staff in the Winter of 2002.

Cost-Effectiveness Study

During this period, the *Cost-Effectiveness Study* has focused on monitoring data collection and transmission and incorporating some of the data into the Fresno Central Cost database for Fresno County which is being maintained by the evaluation team. This has necessitated modifications to the database to accommodate the data received. Additionally, the data relating to worker contacts with study participants which was drawn by Fresno County IS personnel from CWS/CMS has required significant cleaning to put data into a uniform format for inclusion in the central database. To date, the evaluation team has received data on more than 22,000 worker contacts.

In addition, a Preliminary Analysis Plan **Attachment 7** was created for the *Cost-Effectiveness Study* to provide early results by June 30, 2003. The cases included in the Preliminary Analysis will be all those for which six months have passed since enrollment by the data cut-off on March 31, 2003. For the *Cost-Effectiveness Study*, five questions will be addressed in this preliminary analysis:

- 1) What percentage of families refused services, what percentage used some services but for less than one month, and what percentage used services for more than one month? How do these percentages compare between the experimental and control groups? (All families eligible for inclusion in the preliminary analysis will have completed six weeks in the program well before December 31, 2002. Consequently, analysis for this question will begin in January, 2003.)
- 2) What was the average cost of a family conference in this experiment? (All families receive their family conferences very early in the intervention, generally within the first two weeks. Consequently, analysis for this question will also begin in January, 2003.)
- 3) Do the quantity of worker contacts vary between the groups? Do the quantity of worker visits vary between the groups?
- 4) How do the groups compare in their usage/attendance of/at select services (parenting classes, anger management classes, domestic violence classes, mental health counseling/therapy for parents and children)?
- 5) How do the costs of the above services received compare between groups?

The evaluation team is currently considering whether an earlier data cut-off (currently scheduled for March 31, 2003) may be needed in order to allow sufficient time for completion of data entry, transmission, cleaning, analysis and data reporting by June 30, 2003. While the questions proposed for the Preliminary Analysis Report do not provide a comprehensive picture of program costs, some significant cost issues will be examined, as well as some issues of interest regarding families' participation in selected services and the level of contact they have received from workers.

Next steps for the *Cost-Effectiveness Study* include continuing to monitor data being collected through study specific databases maintained by Fresno County and continued work to incorporate data from additional sources to the Fresno Central Cost database. By the end of October, the evaluation team will pull complete data for at least one experimental and one control case and confer with caseworkers and other county personnel as needed to determine if current data collection methods are capturing all cost events. Strategies will be developed to ease cleaning of the worker contact data. By the beginning of 2003, work will begin to address questions (1) and (2) above, which should be answerable after December 31, 2002. By this time, all cases selected for the preliminary analysis will have completed sufficient time in the study to allow analysis of an initial 6-week service period. This time frame also allows sufficient time for the family conference to occur, as conferences typically are scheduled within the first 2 weeks following study enrollment. Some pre-programming for manipulating the data for question (3) will also be completed by March 31, 2003 to allow maximum time for the more complicated analysis work which will be required in late April 2003 and very early May 2003.

Semi-annual Progress Report-Intensive Services Component Wraparound Sub-Study

This report covers implementation progress for the period from April 1, 2002 to September 30, 2002.

Impact Study

During this project period, five counties were implementing the Wraparound IS sub-study: Alameda County, Humboldt County, Los Angeles County, Sacramento County, and San Luis Obispo County. Enrollment totals and enrollment patterns during this project period are shown in **Attachment 8**.

Sacramento County began implementing their Wraparound program in June 1999. At the end of this project period (August 31, 2002 for enrollment reporting purposes), 106 children are actively enrolled in the treatment group and 71 children are enrolled in the comparison group, with 31 closed cases in the treatment group and 10 closed cases in the comparison group. One hundred twenty children in the treatment group and 77 children in the comparison group are considered study children for the purpose of analysis (study children totals include closed cases). During this project period, 31 children enrolled in the study in Sacramento County, averaging approximately 6 enrollments per month. Foster care placement and child safety data, services data, and baseline behavioral data continued to be collected during this project period.

Alameda County also began implementing their Wraparound program in June 1999. At the end of this project period, 152 children are actively enrolled in the treatment group and 76 children are enrolled in the comparison group, with 19 closed cases in the treatment group and 9 closed cases in the comparison group. One hundred twenty-six children in the treatment group and 78 children in the comparison group are considered study children for the purpose of analysis. During this project period, 26 children enrolled in the study in Alameda County, averaging approximately 5 enrollments per month. Foster care placement and child safety data, services data, baseline behavioral data, child well-being data, and Wraparound model fidelity data continued to be collected during this project period.

Humboldt County began implementing their Wraparound program in June 2000. At the end of this project period, 9 children are actively enrolled in the treatment group and 2 children are enrolled in the comparison group, with 2 closed cases in the treatment group and 2 closed cases in the comparison group. Ten children in the treatment group and four children in the comparison group are considered study children for the purpose of analysis. During this project period, 3 children enrolled in the study in Humboldt County. Foster care placement and child safety data, services data, and baseline behavioral data continued to be collected during this project period.

San Luis Obispo County began implementing their Wraparound program in September 2000. At the end of this project period, 3 children are actively enrolled in the treatment group and 1 child is enrolled in the comparison group, with 4 closed cases in the treatment group and 2 closed cases in the comparison group. Seven children in the treatment group and 3 children in the comparison group are considered study children for the purpose of analysis. During this project period, 1 child enrolled in the study in San Luis Obispo County. Foster care placement and child

safety data, services data, and baseline behavioral data continued to be collected during this project period.

Los Angeles County began implementing their Wraparound program in December 2000. At the end of this project period, 60 children are actively enrolled in the treatment group and 33 children are enrolled in the comparison group, with 8 closed cases in the treatment group and 2 closed cases in the comparison group. Sixty-three children in the treatment group and 34 children in the comparison group are considered study children for the purpose of analysis. During this project period, 47 children enrolled in the study in Los Angeles County, averaging approximately 9 enrollments per month. Foster care placement and child safety data, services data, and baseline behavioral data continued to be collected during this project period.

A variety of activities were conducted during this project activity period to maintain the implementation of the evaluation and address issues affecting the Impact Study. These activities included (1) the continued implementation of data collection efforts; (2) preliminary planning and data preparation for data analyses activities; (3) the continued development and maintenance of a management information system; and (4) the provision of trainings and technical assistance to counties through on-site trainings, presentations, documents, phone calls, and email.

Data Collection

Wraparound data collection is comprised of six activities: Client Eligibility/Enrollment, Baseline Data, Services Tracking, In-depth Interviews, Wraparound Fidelity, and Administrative-level Data. A summary overview of each activity, including data collection responsibilities and start-date, by county is provided in **Attachment 9**. The activity for each data collection activity during this project period is discussed below.

Client Eligibility/Enrollment. Evaluation staff continued to work with counties as necessary (i.e., incomplete child enrollment forms) during this project period to secure the appropriate client identification numbers at the time of enrollment. Specific child identifiers are needed by the evaluation staff to access administrative-level data from the California Children's Services Data Archive, as well as to track children during the course of the study.

The evaluation staff continued to provide assistance to counties during the enrollment process regarding eligibility for the study as it pertains to the evaluation. Evaluation staff continued to request notification and data on cases counties considered closed, through the use of the Closed Case Notification form, sent weekly to the counties. An enrollment reconciliation process continued during this project period to rectify any discrepancies between UCB and county enrollments. This process is ongoing and continues into the next project period.

Baseline Data. Baseline data collection continued during this project period in all counties. Alameda, Humboldt, and San Luis Obispo Counties continued to conduct baseline data collection internally, monitored by UCB evaluators. UCB evaluators assumed responsibility for collecting baseline data for children in the comparison groups in Los Angeles and Sacramento Counties due to the difficulty in collecting the data using internal county mechanisms. The private agencies providing Wraparound in those counties collect baseline data for children in the treatment groups.

Baseline data collection has been inconsistent across all of the counties (totals are based on the number of children eligible for a baseline measure—children ages 7 and older and enrolled between the start of baseline data collection in a particular county and August 31, 2002—and the number of CAFAS received by UCB evaluation staff¹) **Attachment 10**. Alameda County has collected 43 baseline measures from a possible 109 children. Humboldt County has collected 0 baseline measures from a possible 14 children. In Los Angeles County, 27 baseline measures have been collected for a possible 92 children. In Sacramento County, 72 baseline measures have been collected for a possible 100 children. San Luis Obispo County has collected 4 baseline measures from a possible 10 children.

Services Tracking. Services tracking data collection was developed in response to concerns about contamination—a condition that arises when both the treatment and comparison groups receive the same or similar intervention. Services received by children in the treatment and comparison groups continued to be tracked for one week each of the first three months a child is participating in the study, then again for one week of the sixth month of participation, and again for one week every subsequent six months until the child exits the study. Services continued to be tracked in all five Wraparound counties.

The evaluation staff continued to use a data collection infrastructure that includes a database for maintaining contacts and other information for the comparison group, and an automated services tracking report generation program. The program, on a weekly basis, notifies counties of subsequent, current, and past tracking requirements. At the end of this project period, three UCB staff members are responsible for services tracking data collection activities.

In Alameda, Los Angeles Counties, and Sacramento counties information on services received by children in the treatment group continued to be tracked by the private agencies providing Wraparound to those children. UCB evaluation staff tracked the services received by children in the comparison group. Evaluation staff and representatives from the counties continued to operate under the following procedures: (1) UCB informs private providers on a weekly basis of which children need to be tracked, (2) UCB receives case worker information for comparison group children from the enrollment documents or by phone from county representatives, (3) county representatives notify caseworkers of comparison group children that evaluation staff will be contacting them for data collection, and (4) UCB asks the caseworkers to make initial contact with the placement agencies affiliated with comparison group children.

Services data collection continued to be handled internally in Humboldt County and San Luis Obispo County during this evaluation period, with the counties relying on UCB for scheduling notifications.

As of August 31, 2002, 1549 service weeks had been tracked and entered into the services tracking database **Attachment 11**. This is a combined total that includes the treatment and comparison groups in all counties. Children may have been tracked more than once depending on their length of time in the study. Alameda County children had 775 service weeks tracked. Humboldt County children had 63 service weeks tracked. Los Angeles County children had 171 service weeks tracked. Sacramento County children had 500 service weeks tracked. San Luis

¹ The March 31, 2002, Progress Report included in the totals CAFAS that county representatives indicated they had collected. The current report includes only CAFAS received by UCB staff from county representatives. Repeated efforts have been made by UCB staff to ensure CAFAS collection and transmission by county representatives.

Obispo children had 40 service weeks tracked. The disparity between counties in service weeks tracked is due to the number of children in the study, children's length of time in the study, and the county's start date of services tracking data collection.

In-Depth Interviews. Data collection in Alameda County during this project period has progressed smoothly. **Attachment 12** shows the cumulative interview activity. During this period, a designated staff member was hired for scheduling all in-depth interviews and one UCB staff member continues to be responsible for conducting the interviews. By the end of this reporting period, 80 caregivers and 49 children had been interviewed for baseline (first) interviews. Another 25 caregivers and 14 children had been interviewed for follow up data. Thirty more interviews are scheduled for completion by 9/30/02 (with a two month window for completion as per the study protocol).

During this reporting period, a total of eight interviews had been "missed" or not completed. Two baseline interviews were missed due to group home staff canceling scheduled appointments, and by the time the interviews could be rescheduled the baseline interviews were past due. As a result, scheduling staff were instructed to notify the Wrap Coordinator and/or Principal Investigator if this occurred in the future, so that managers could notify county coordinators. The remaining six interviews could not be scheduled due to either an inability to reach caregivers or youth, or reluctance of a caregiver to participate.

Wraparound Fidelity. Fidelity to the Wraparound model, as defined by Goldman (1999)² and SB 163, is being assessed using the parent/caregiver questionnaire of the Wraparound Fidelity Index (WFI). The WFI is also being used to help assess the differences in service receipt between the treatment and comparison groups. The WFI questionnaire is administered by UCB staff via telephone with a parent/caregiver after the family has been enrolled in the evaluation study for approximately nine months. UCB staff began WFI data collection in July 2001, in Alameda County with a cohort of families who entered the evaluation study in September 2000. UCB evaluation staff continued to conduct interviews with caregivers of children in the treatment (caregivers participating on child and family teams) and comparison groups **Attachment 13**. As of August 31, 2002, 58 of a possible 78 interviews have been conducted. In the treatment group, 37 of a possible 49 interviews were conducted, while in the comparison group, 21 of a possible 29 interviews were conducted. Twenty interviews could not be conducted for several reasons, including prolonged difficulty in reaching respondents, or children no longer actively enrolled in the study.

Administrative-level Data. Administrative-level child welfare services data serve as the source of foster care placement and child safety outcome measures for the evaluation study. Counties continued to collect the administrative-level data that will be used in the evaluation analysis through the use of the Child Welfare Services/Case Management System (CWS/CMS). Evaluation staff continued discussions regarding data merge activities between California Children's Services Data Archive data and enrollment, baseline, and services tracking data.

² Goldman, S.K. (1999). The conceptual framework for Wraparound: Definition, values, essential elements, and requirements for practice. In B.J. Burns & S.K. Goldman (Eds.). Promising practices in Wraparound for children with serious emotional disturbance and their families. Systems of Care: Promising Practices in Children's Mental Health, 1998 Series, Volume IV. Washington, D.C.: Center for Effective Collaboration and Practice, American Institutes for Research, p. 9-16.

Data Analysis

UCB evaluation staff began preliminary preparations for analyses to be conducted as part of a provisional report scheduled for completion in June 2003, and as part of the final evaluation report due in March 2004. Activities included the development of research questions and a timeline to guide subsequent analysis activities. The Evaluation Information System staff began the construction of an analysis data set integrating data from enrollment spreadsheets and supplementary databases with data from the California Children's Services Archive.

Evaluation Information System (EIS)

EIS activities during this project period focused on four areas: (1) the continued development of an integrated data collection and management system for Wraparound, (2) supporting current data collection and data management efforts, (3) providing technical support and training, and (4) developing technical capacity.

The continued development of an integrated data collection and management system focused primarily on the development of database tracking mechanisms and financial reports to monitor the interview participation reimbursement account. EIS staff also developed the CAFAS database. EIS staff made modifications to the enrollment database to accommodate county changes, as well as modifications to the services tracking database to facilitate the analysis process. UCB evaluation staff received on-going training and technical support in the use of existing data collection and data management tools from EIS staff. Finally, EIS staff developed and maintained the technical capacity of the EIS by installing needed hardware and software and updating the existing programs.

Trainings and Technical Assistance

County Specific Trainings. Two trainings were conducted during this reporting period, both in Los Angeles County. The first training took place on June 19, 2002, and reviewed services tracking and baseline (CAFAS) data collection. The second training took place on September 10, 2002, and focused on services tracking data collecting. Both trainings were necessitated by the introduction of several new Wraparound provider agencies in Los Angeles.

Informal and Formal Technical Assistance. Technical assistance continued to be provided throughout this project period. UCB evaluation staff were contacted and subsequently responded to inquiries from participating counties, private providers, and CDSS via phone, fax, email, and meetings regarding all aspects of the evaluation.

UCB evaluation staff provided more formal technical assistance to the Title IV-E Waiver Extension Workgroup by providing information on the viability and strength of alternative evaluation research designs. Extension Workgroup meetings took place, and were attended by UCB evaluation staff, on May 8, and July 18, 2002.

Process Study

Preparations began, during this reporting period, for the final set of process study site visits. Additional questions were developed, after reviewing previous process study reports, to elicit

aspects of the counties' implementation experience that may not have been identified in previous process studies. Letters notifying county liaisons of the impending site visits were sent and followed by phone calls to begin the process of scheduling site visits to take place during the first several months of the next reporting period.

Cost-Benefit Study

During this project period, work on cost-benefit has been focused on the Family Conferencing components. A cost-benefit study will not be conducted in any of the Wraparound counties.

Evaluation Activities During the Next Period

Many of the evaluation activities that began during this project period will be continued during the next project period.

Impact Study data collection activities will continue during the next project period. Data analyses plans and activities will continue during the next project period, with a focus on analyses to be conducted for a June 2003 provisional report. The EIS will continue to evolve as data management needs dictate. UCB evaluation staff will continue to provide trainings and technical assistance to counties, private providers, and the CDSS.

The process study site visits and the data analysis will take place during the next reporting period. The completion of the final process study report will coincide with the completion of the next progress report due March 31, 2003.