



National Council of Juvenile and Family Court Judges
Family Violence Department

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A Review of States' Program Improvement Plans (PIP)

What State's First-Round PIP's Reveal about how Child Welfare
Agencies are Addressing Domestic Violence

Introduction

This report is a review of the incidence of domestic violence considerations in the Program Improvement Plans (PIPs) nationwide. The goal of this review is to identify the ways in which state child welfare agencies addressed the co-incidence of domestic violence and child maltreatment in the first round PIPs and, where possible, to highlight trends that emerged across states.

States develop PIPs in response to a Child and Family Services Review (CFSR). These reviews are conducted through the Children's Bureau of the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. The reviews ultimately result in a CFSR for the state, which are an assessment tool states can use to determine, according to the Children's Bureau website, "(1) if a state child welfare agency's practice is in conformity with Title IV-B (Promoting Safe and Stable Families and Child Welfare Services programs) and Title IV-E (Foster Care and Adoption Assistance) requirements; (2) if children and families are achieving desirable outcomes; and (3) if a state needs assistance with its efforts to help children and families achieve positive outcomes."¹ The Children's Bureau conducted their first round of reviews nationwide between 2001 and 2004. A second round is scheduled for 2007 -2010.

Background and Purpose of Research

On December 15th and 16th, the Family Violence Department (FVD) of the National Council of Juvenile and Family Court Judges (NCJFCJ) hosted a CFSR Strategy Development Meeting in Washington D.C. To inform this process, staff at the FVD examined PIPs from each state to determine if domestic violence was addressed in the first- round PIPs and if so, what actions the state developed. The results from each state were compared to determine if there were trends that emerged across states. This review is intended to guide participants of the CFSR Strategy Development Meeting as they:

- Identify elements of sound domestic violence policy;
- Develop strategies to inform the three Priority Areas of the Child and Family Service Reviews (Statewide Assessment Plan, On-site reviews, and PIPs);
- Develop strategies to engage state domestic violence coalitions, child welfare systems and other key stakeholders to achieve child safety well being and permanency in cases that involve domestic violence; and
- Coordinate efforts to promote policy that will help children and their mothers experiencing domestic violence

Trends that emerged from the PIP review include: 1) several states (19) did not address domestic violence in their PIP and 2) states that included domestic violence in their PIP did so in a number of ways, but the general pattern showed that most attention was focused in training, collaboration

¹ Frequently Asked Questions: The Child and Family Service Reviews by The National Resource Center for CBCAP (available at http://www.friendsnrc.org/download/cfsr_faq.pdf)

or assessment areas. A total of 20 states will come up for review in 2009 and 2010. This report focuses on these trends and the limitations of the research used in identifying them.

Research Objectives

The Family Violence Department reviewed the PIPs in order to determine which states identified domestic violence in their PIP, how child welfare agencies address domestic violence concerns in their PIP's, and what the agencies are doing to address the co-occurrence of child abuse and neglect and domestic violence.

Research Methodology

Limitations of the Research

An important research limitation to address from the outset is the PIP itself. A PIP is an improvement plan based on certain criteria established for children's welfare agencies by the Children's Bureau. States generate PIPs if the CFSR assessment finds that states are not conforming to some of the seven outcomes or seven systemic factors subject to review.² Thus, PIPs are responsive documents that do not necessarily reflect the totality of how state agencies want to improve, but how these agencies will improve to comply with the requirements of the Children's Bureau. FVD staff did not evaluate the Bureau's CFSR assessment tools. This report does not reflect the context in which the PIPs were generated or the areas of non-conformity a specific state was attempting to address.

Also, this review does not evaluate the larger social and legal context of state responses to issues of co-occurrence. PIPs are improvement plans and therefore do not address areas of success within the child welfare field. Nor do PIPs include a review of existing programs outside of the CFSR review. Any state discussed in this report may have laws or programs addressing domestic violence that were not the subject of the CFSR review process. The scope of the report is limited to the language in each state's PIP and only reflects of the degree to which PIPs discuss domestic violence. The information provide by the PIP review has limited use and should be understood in context. This report should not be read broadly as a review of any state's domestic violence practices.

The PIP review process

The PIP review process also had some limitations. Staff did not read reports in their entirety; many documents exceeded 200 pages and time considerations made a complete reading unmanageable. Instead, staff reviewed the PIPs by searching for ten key terms. Because staff recognized that different systems use different vocabulary, the terms were designed to be as inclusive as possible without admitting too much tangential information. The terms used were: "domestic violence," family violence," "domestic abuse," "intimate partner violence," "high

² CFSRs evaluate the state's outcomes in 1) protecting children from abuse and neglect, 2) safely maintaining children in their homes whenever possible, 3) providing children with permanency and stability in their living situations, 4) ensuring continuity of family relationships and connections 5) providing families enhanced capacity to meet their children's needs, 6) meeting children educational needs, and 7) supplying adequate services to meet children's' physical and mental health needs.

conflict,” “abused mother,” “abused parent,” “adult victim,” “non-violent parent,” and “co-occurrence”.

Based on these searches, staff developed a list of how many states used the search terms and in what context. The information was the product of a two-step process. Staff did a search for raw occurrences of key terms and then compiled a list of which states used any of the ten terms and how many times. This step yielded a list with three categories.³ States that did not use any of the terms in their PIP (19 states), states with PIPs that used any search term between one and five times (21 states), and states that used any search term more than five times (12 states).⁴ Based on these findings, staff did a more in-depth review of states with one or more occurrence of a search term. This second review was designed to identify the context and action steps related to each occurrence of a key term.

The goal of the second review was to categorize the occurrences of key terms. No categories were established before the review; instead each staff member was left to independently characterize the nature of the PIP response. Staff then met to compare results and the types of categorization each staff person had made. In this meeting, five primary trends emerged. These trends were: (1) an absence of search terms, (2) a “clustering” of domestic violence with other issues often confronted by families in crisis, (3) plans or actions forwarding collaboration, (4) an increased emphasis on training and (5) the development of both agency and family assessment tools.

The remainder of this report provides a discussion of these trends.

Trends

- Absence of search terms
 - “Absence of search terms” means that the search language could not be found anywhere in the state’s PIP. It should be noted that a PIP may have used more agency-specific terms to discuss domestic violence issues, and if so, staff would not have detected that occurrence.
 - More than 1/3 of states (19 states) did not mention any of the searched domestic violence terms in their PIPs.
 - The nineteen states that did not include a search term in their PIP are: Alaska, Arizona, Colorado, Connecticut, Indiana, Iowa, Michigan, Minnesota, Montana, Nebraska, New York, North Dakota, Oklahoma, Oregon, Pennsylvania, Tennessee, Vermont, Virginia, and Washington.
 - An additional 5 states (Arkansas, Idaho, Kentucky, Maine, and Nevada) and Puerto Rico only contain one reference to any search term.

³ The distinction between states with 5 or fewer key terms and state with 5 or more was made based on research needs, however, the distinction developed naturally from the data and indicates that some PIPs merely mention domestic violence as an issue while a minority of states attempt a more comprehensive response. A list of the states that includes the number of appearances of a key term in that state’s PIP can be found in Attachment A.

⁴ In addition to all 50 states, PIPs were available for the District of Columbia and Puerto Rico.

- The terms “intimate partner violence”, “high conflict”, “abused mother”, “abused parent”, and “non-violent parent” were not found in any PIP.
- Clustering
 - In this report, the term “clustering” refers to the grouping of domestic violence with other problems facing families, like substance abuse or mental health.
 - This trend concerned staff because of the way “clustering” deemphasizes the unique approach required to effectively deal with each particular issue. Thus, discussions which consistently join domestic violence and, for example, mental health limit the range of responses an organization may consider by fastening the response to domestic violence with the response to mental health. This seems to lead to a significant constraint on the ways organizations can help adult victims and children.
 - Secondly, clustering implies a relationship, possible causal, between the terms. Although substance abuse, mental illness and domestic violence may, in some situation, operate co-dependently that is not the case in every situation and it is insupportable to imply a causal relationship.
 - The majority of states (22 states and the District of Columbia) mentioning domestic violence in their PIPs made at least one clustered reference to domestic violence.
 - Clustering occurred in: Alabama, California, District of Columbia, Florida, Georgia, Illinois, Kentucky, Louisiana, Maryland, Massachusetts, Mississippi, Nevada, New Hampshire, New Jersey, New Mexico, North Carolina, Ohio, Rhode Island, South Carolina, South Dakota, West Virginia, Wisconsin, and Wyoming.
 - Most “clusters” included grouped domestic violence with substance abuse and mental health. Some “clusters” included poverty or other language.
 - Sample language includes:
 - Illinois’ PIP noted, “the CFSR identified service gaps related to placement resources for adolescents, children’s mental health, culturally responsive services, and services to address family issues of substance abuse, mental health, and domestic violence.”
 - One of South Carolina’s goals “is to include mental health services, physical health services, family violence, substance abuse, intensive in - home services, and out-of-home services.”
 - New Hampshire established that, “CPRs [Case Practice Reviews] post 7/1/04 will look for successful case practice and outcomes in cases where substance abuse, mental health, domestic violence, or sexual abuses were factors.”
- Collaboration
 - In this report, the term collaboration refers to the actions, taken or planned, to encourage united efforts between the domestic violence community and child welfare agencies.
 - Collaborative efforts were the most prevalent action used by states to address the co-occurrence of domestic violence and child welfare.
 - Collaboration occurred or was planned in 16 states: Arkansas, California, Delaware, Florida, Hawaii, Idaho, Kansas, Massachusetts, New

- Hampshire, New Jersey, New Mexico, North Carolina, South Carolina, South Dakota, Utah, and Wisconsin.
 - In some states collaboration was coupled with training on domestic violence issues for child welfare staff. In other states, the goal was into incorporate both assessments and collaboration into the child welfare agencies. A few PIPs relied on collaboration exclusively to address co-occurrence.
 - New Hampshire specifically referred to “Greenbook Domestic Violence Collaboration.”
 - Sample collaborative efforts include:
 - Florida, Idaho, New Hampshire and Wyoming all had domestic violence community members on their PIP team.
 - Hawaii, Kansas, Massachusetts, New Mexico, North Carolina, South Dakota, and Rhode Island had action steps that included developing relationships and links to domestic violence programs or the domestic violence community.
 - Arkansas, Delaware, New Jersey and Wisconsin PIPs specified particular projects, like research-based projects and inter-agency memoranda of understanding, to encourage work with the domestic violence community.
 - Sample language includes:
 - Florida planned to “request funding and resources to establish domestic violence advocate/teams in each county to work with all children and victims when domestic violence is a maltreatment issue in abuse/neglect reports ... [or] is an identified issue in the family assessment.”
 - Kansas included an action step to mandate staff: “developing relationships with domestic violence advocates.”
 - Massachusetts’ PIP stated that: “Offices would like to “steal shamelessly” from other offices and programs ... bring domestic violence expertise to the areas, and create some sort of tracking system for these issues.”
 - New Jersey planned actions relating to both children and women:
 - “Expansion of the “Peace: A Learned Solution (PALS)” project, a program for children impacted by domestic violence.
 - “Provide housing assistance to women transitioning from domestic violence shelters to safer and more stable living arrangements, long-term and short-term.” and resources in their communities.
 - Puerto Rico’s PIP included a plan to “expand collaborative agreements with higher education institutions and schools of social work in Puerto Rico to provide a formal course on safety and risk evaluation...domestic violence and children’s safety”.
 - Illinois planned to get DCFS staff involved in the Illinois Children’s Mental Health Partnership so that “intact families will have better access to community-based services, which can include substance abuse, mental health, and domestic violence treatment.”
- Training
 - In this report, the term training refers to the educational opportunities for child welfare staff on the subject of domestic violence.

- A number of the state PIPs (7) mentioning domestic violence focused on increasing training for child welfare workers.
 - Alabama, Delaware, Hawaii, Louisiana, Mississippi, Rhode Island, and West Virginia included action steps dedicating resources to training.
- Sample training efforts include:
 - Alabama, Louisiana, Mississippi, Rhode Island allocated resources for training on the “clustered” issues.
 - Delaware and Hawaii included training requirements for both new and current employees.
 - Mississippi and West Virginia included plans to improve current curricula.
 - West Virginia and Texas established the explicit goal of having 100% of staff trained on the issues surrounding domestic violence.
 - Georgia planned to train staff and technical assistance providers on how to use ‘First Placement/Best Placement’ assessments as they relate to domestic violence and substance abuse.
 - The District of Columbia implemented a new training curriculum for all new and current social workers.
- Sample language includes:
 - In Alabama: “Ten days technical assistance has been requested and approved from the National Resource Center on Child Maltreatment to provide consultation / training regarding on-going child protective service cases, particularly substance abuse cases and domestic violence as well as child safety during visitation.”
 - In New Hampshire: “The *Reference Guide for Early Domestic Violence Identification & Referral* and accompanying *Domestic Violence Indicators* list were developed, approved and distributed to enhance staff’s ability in identifying domestic violence factors”
 - West Virginia’s action step was for “basic training for 85% domestic violence advocates and CPS workers completed; to be followed by 100% completed.”
 - Ohio set a benchmark to provide multi-disciplinary training for “a minimum of 40 caseworkers and policies officers...in Domestic Violence by 6/04 for 16 Northwestern Ohio counties.”
- Assessment
 - In this report, the term assessment refers to a review tool or process designed to draw attention to the issues of domestic violence.
 - Assessment tended to occur at one of two levels. PIPs with assessment objective referred either or both 1) agency assessments designed to highlight the child welfares agency’s practices as it regards to domestic violence and 2) family assessments performed by child welfare staff on families in crisis.
 - Agency assessments planning occurred in Kansas, Massachusetts, and New Hampshire.
 - Family assessment tools were planned in Florida, Kentucky, Maryland, Nevada, New Hampshire, North Carolina, South Dakota, and West Virginia.
 - Specific language on Internal Assessment

- Massachusetts PIP stated, “there are many plans to focus on teaming across units, developing more specialized staff, increasing the support provided to workers by supervisors and managers, using new assessment tools, increasing knowledge about domestic violence and substance abuse, and reducing workloads.”
 - Specific language on Family Assessment
 - New Hampshire “Home-Based Therapist will complete (1) a treatment plan within 15 working days that includes "an assessment of the needs of each child and parents that must include identification of alcohol or substance abuse, domestic violence, sexual abuse, or other situation that may impact the child's safety.." and (b) the treatments to be implemented to meet the needs of each child and the parents.”
 - Florida on external assessments “Incrementally increase to 68% in 2003 and to 75% in 2004, the percentage of cases in which mental health, substance abuse, and domestic violence services recommended in the assessment and in the case plan are provided.”
 - Georgia plans to “Conduct a statewide needs assessment of existing support services to determine gaps in service array and accessibility to include mental health, family violence, substance abuse treatment, and post treatment services”.

Conclusions

This review highlights how domestic violence emerged in the PIP process and what actions child welfare agencies are taking to address the co-occurrence of domestic violence and child maltreatment. This information can help the domestic violence community engage, assist and cooperate with the children’s welfare community in better addressing the needs of adult and child victims of violence.

Considerations for participants of the CFSR Strategy Development include:

- 1) Ensuring that child welfare agencies pay attention to the issue of domestic violence when looking at areas of improvement.
 - a. More than 1/3 of PIPs made no reference to domestic violence which suggest, with limitations on this inference, child welfare systems may not be considering their efforts at improving the agency functioning as linked with an effective response to domestic violence issues.
 - b. Of the 20 states up for review in the next 2 years, 5 (Colorado, Virginia, Michigan, Iowa, Washington) had PIPs with no reference to domestic violence.
- 2) Reducing “clustering” to prevent a “one-size fits all” approach to the challenges facing families in crisis.
 - a. The rate of “clustering” indicates that the domestic violence community needs to work with child welfare agencies to distinguish and differentiate between commonly associate problems threatening families in crisis.
 - b. The appropriate response to a family struggling with substance abuse or mental health issues may be similar in some ways to the appropriate response

where there is domestic violence, but the responses will not be identical. Clustering indicates that the system may respond to clustered issues in a similar way and such an approach will not provide the most effective response to each individual issue.

- c. Of the 15 states up for review in the next 2 years that had PIPs containing a reference to domestic violence, 9 (Illinois, Louisiana, Maryland, Mississippi, Nevada, New Jersey, Rhode Island, South Carolina, Wisconsin) made at least one reference to domestic violence within a cluster.
- 3) Encouraging and providing guidance to collaborations through technical assistance and exploring new collaborative approaches based on the issues identified in the PIPs.
 - a. Many states with PIPs responding to co-occurrence issues are responding through collaborative efforts. The domestic violence community may take advantage of child welfare agencies willingness to collaborate and take a leadership role in creating clear sources and goals for these collaborations.
 - b. Of the 15 states up for review in the next 2 years that had PIPs containing a reference to domestic violence, only 5 (New Jersey, Hawaii, Rhode Island, South Carolina, and Wisconsin) currently have collaborative efforts in place, according to their PIPs.
 - 4) Providing technical assistance on training and assessment tools to those states that identified the need for such support.
 - a. States that confronted co-occurrence in their PIPs largely recognized the need for more and better education on the issues and improved ways of identify the issues in families in crisis. To the extent that the domestic violence community can help create these tools, the help will serve both adult and child victims of violence.
 - b. Of the 15 states up for review in the next 2 years that had PIPs containing a reference to domestic violence, 6 (Hawaii, Louisiana, Mississippi, New Hampshire, New Jersey, and Rhode Island) included improved training in their first round PIP.
 - c. Of the 15 states up for review in the next 2 years that had PIPs containing a reference to domestic violence, 5 (Maine, Maryland, Missouri, Nevada, and New Hampshire) are already working on agency or family assessment tools according to their first round PIPs.

Although the review has garnered useful information and identified trends across states, more information and research will be needed to answer the larger question of how states are managing the issue of the overlap of domestic violence and child maltreatment.

Attachment A
National Council of Juvenile and Family Court Judges:
Program Improvement Plans Report

Key term appearance numbers

States with no mention:

- | | |
|------------------|------------------------|
| 1) Alaska | 8) Kentucky (1) |
| 2) Arizona | 9) Maine (1) |
| 3) Colorado | 10) Maryland (3) |
| 4) Connecticut | 11) Mississippi (5) |
| 5) Indiana | 12) Missouri (4) |
| 6) Iowa | 13) Nevada (1) |
| 7) Michigan | 14) North Carolina (2) |
| 8) Minnesota | 15) Puerto Rico (1) |
| 9) Montana | 16) Rhode Island (4) |
| 10) Nebraska | 17) South Dakota (2) |
| 11) New York | 18) Texas (3) |
| 12) North Dakota | 19) Utah (2) |
| 13) Oklahoma | 20) Wisconsin (3) |
| 14) Oregon | 21) Wyoming (2) |
| 15) Pennsylvania | |
| 16) Tennessee | |
| 17) Vermont | |
| 18) Virginia | |
| 19) Washington | |

States with 5 or Fewer Search Words

- 1) Alabama (3)
- 2) Arkansas (1)
- 3) California (2)
- 4) Hawaii (2)
- 5) Idaho (1)
- 6) Illinois (3)
- 7) Kansas (5)

States with 6 or More Search Words

- 1) District of Columbia (7)
- 2) Delaware (9)
- 3) Florida (39)
- 4) Georgia (17)
- 5) Louisiana (9)
- 6) Massachusetts (8)
- 7) New Hampshire (12)
- 8) New Jersey (12)
- 9) New Mexico (12)
- 10) Ohio (6)
- 11) South Carolina (6)
- 12) West Virginia (13)

Attachment B

States coming up for review in 2009 for round 2 include:

State	Review Date
Colorado	March 16-20, 2009
New Jersey	March 30-April 3, 2009
Maine	May 18-22, 2009
Hawaii	June 1-5, 2009
Maryland	June 15-19, 2009
Virginia	July 13-17, 2009
South Carolina	July 27-31, 2009
Illinois	August 10-14, 2009
Nevada	August 31-September 4, 2009
Michigan	September 21-25, 2009

States coming up for review in 2010 for round 2 include:

State	Review Date
Puerto Rico	November 2-6, 2009
Louisiana	March 8-12, 2010
Wisconsin	April 12-16, 2010
Rhode Island	April 26-30, 2010
Mississippi	May 17-21, 2010
Missouri	June 7-11, 2010
New Hampshire	August 2-6, 2010
Iowa	August 23-27, 2010
Washington	September 13-17, 2010
Utah	TBD*