California Child and Family Services Review
System Improvement Plan

Santa Clara County
Department of Family and Children’s Services and
Juvenile Probation Department
January 2013 to January 2018

Conducted by
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Department of Family and Children’s Services and the
Probation Department, Juvenile Probation Services

Bruce Wagstaff, Social Services Agency Director
Lori Medina, Department of Family & Children’s Services
   Director
Sheila Mitchell, Probation Department Chief Probation Officer

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Introduction - System Improvement Plan Narrative Report Section for Child Welfare and Juvenile Probation

The following report is Santa Clara County’s System Improvement Plan (SIP) for 2013-2018, aimed at planned improvement in identified child welfare outcomes for the next five years. Creation of this document involved a strong agency and community partnership to look at the work within child welfare and to ensure that the voice of the parents and youth served were included in decision making. Santa Clara County (SCC) is committed the SIP process and worked to ensure good representation from the community, partners, and stakeholders, as well as agency staff at all levels in an effort to propel us forward and harness the momentum thus far for change in child welfare in SCC for the children and families we serve.

The SIP requires specific steps toward system improvement through thoughtful evaluation and analysis. The quantitative evaluation component is a county’s Self Assessment. The purpose of the Self Assessment is to analyze a county’s performance in the eight child welfare outcomes for Child Welfare and Probation Juvenile Services Division in collaboration with consumers, key partners, and stakeholders. This analysis includes program strengths and barriers as they relate to the children, youth, and families being served.

The qualitative assessment is accomplished through a county’s Peer Quality Case Review (PQCR). The purpose of the PQCR is to supplement the quantitative information obtained through the Self Assessment with qualitative data gathered from peer social workers, probation officers, and supervisors identifying areas of strength and those areas needing improvement. The results of Santa Clara County’s Self Assessment and PQCR support the development of a System Improvement Plan (SIP) that establishes measurable goals for a county’s system improvement and the strategies for achieving those goals. Santa Clara County has used this information to ensure identification of outcomes desired and the goals and strategies necessary to achieve these goals in the five SIP years.

Santa Clara County’s Self Assessment (CSA) was a focused analysis of data, including a review of the over-representation of minority children in the Child Welfare System, particularly the disparity among children of African American and Latino descent. Special attention was noted to ensure goal setting specifically to address the concerns of the disproportionate numbers of Latino and African American/African Ancestry children and families involved in the child welfare system and to better understand the under-representation of children and families from many of the Asian American and Pacific Islander communities within Santa Clara County’s Child Welfare system.

The Self Assessment was approved by the Board of Supervisors in May 2012 and provided the written groundwork detailing the efforts from prevention through after care and set the foundation for the next steps for SCC staff, our partners, our stakeholders and the youth and parents we serve. The workgroups and intense discussion over the past several months on
the SIP goals has resulted in a comprehensive plan focused on improvements in the area of prevention, safety, disproportionality, and permanency.

Santa Clara County Department of Family and Children’s Services (DFCS)’s focus area for the Peer Quality Case Review (PQCR) for child welfare was permanency, as it related to youth in care 18 months or longer with a specific focus on a youth’s placement type. This topic was selected after a review of county data indicated that over half of youth in out-of-home placement have been in care for 18 months or longer with a disproportional over-representation of African American and Latino children and youth. Santa Clara County sought to better understand how children, youth, families and caregivers are supported in achieving permanency and what barriers and challenges exist to undermine permanency efforts.

Outcomes from the PQCR process highlighted the importance of family and family finding efforts, securing placements with or near family, and encouraging ongoing relationships between the child and his or her family members no matter the distance. Additional analysis of the PQCR process revealed the following areas to be addressed in the current SIP:

- Increased numbers of social workers for those youth not identified with a concurrent plan;
- Less mental health services and supports for those youth identified without a concurrent plan;
- Over 60% of the youth without a concurrent plan identified, had a concurrent plan at some point in time;
- Signed concurrent plans were less frequently obtained when youth resided in Foster Family Agency homes;
- Family Finding was less frequently utilized for those children and youth who did not achieve permanency.

Probation’s focus area during the PQCR was on timely reunification within 12 months of entering a foster care placement. According to the California Social Services Research Center (CSSR Q1 2012), Probation’s rate of Timely Reunification is low, with 30.8% of youth reunified within 12 months, compared to a national standard of 75.2% and a California average of 63.9%. In addition, Probation’s rate of Placement Stability is below the national standard, with 35.7% of youth who have been in foster care for 24 months or more having 2 or fewer placements, compared to a national standard of 41.8% and a California average of 46.8%.

Santa Clara County Department of Family and Children’s Services (DFCS) and Probation Juvenile Services Division participated collaboratively in the development and writing of both the county Self Assessment (CSA) and the System Improvement Plan. Santa Clara County ensured utilization of multiple collaborations and partnerships in an effort to ensure a true public-private partnership with the county, partner agencies, community stakeholders, youth, caregivers, parents and advocates. These partnerships include internal partnerships and committees within the structure of county business, as well as the development of on-going
collaborations to ensure the necessary supports in services and programs for children and families.

Santa Clara County DFCS and the Probation Juvenile Services Division began the Self Assessment and SIP process with on-going executive team meetings with administrators and managers beginning in the fall of 2011 for completion of the Self Assessment. Multiple meetings with community based organizations and staff were held in order to gain a better understanding and more information about all the services and programs that DFCS and Probation Juvenile Services Division have participated in over the past three (3) years 2009 through 2012.

DFCS and the Probation Juvenile Services Division then hosted several community forum meetings with staff, supervisors, management from both respective agencies, community based agencies, and additional stakeholders, youth, parents and stakeholders in May 2012 to review information from the Peer Quality Case Review (PQCR) and the Santa Clar a County Self Assessment (CSA). The purpose of these meetings was to share outcome information gained from both of these processes, as well as to gather agency and community insight into next steps and goals for the current SIP. Regular weekly or twice a month meetings were held with a team of between 30 to45 regularly attending members actively participating in the development of Santa Clara County’s Systems Improvement Plan from June through December 2012. This oversight committee comprised of caregivers, youth, parents, social workers, probation officers, supervisors, and community partners and stakeholders provided feedback and helped to ensure accuracy of information for the final Systems Improvement Plan. An oversight review committee will continue to be utilized for the implementation of the Systems Improvement Plan.

**Cross-County Coordination within the Office of the County Executive**

The County has had a history of significant disproportional representation of children of color within DFCS and the Probation Juvenile Services Division. Numerous attempts have been made to minimize and eliminate that disproportionality. Because of the great importance of this issue on a countywide basis, the Office of the County Executive will create a countywide monitoring, implementation structure, and process in order to coordinate the departmental efforts and to assure success in our countywide goal. That goal is to attain parity of representation within our children’s system of care when compared to ethnic communities in the County. We intend to attain that goal within five (5) years, with the understanding that child safety, child permanency, and community safety are priorities that may override parity priorities in a particular situation.

**Santa Clara County Child Welfare Strategies:**

The workgroup discussions and meetings over the past several months on the SIP goals has resulted in a comprehensive plan focused on improvements in the following outcomes areas:

1. Address and eliminate the over-representation of African Ancestry and Latino families, as defined as “Within five years African Ancestry and Latino children will be no more
likely than other children given the same risk or protective capacity factors, to enter the child welfare caseload or to exit the child welfare system”;

a. Complete a full analysis to better understand factors related to the under-representation for Asian American families by looking at each individual Asian cultural group represented in Santa Clara County and then work closely with those API groups to appropriately address those factors;

2. Address safety and ensure that children and families are assessed in a timely manner and those families are provided the necessary resources and supports so that children do not enter the children welfare system or re-enter the child welfare system;

3. Address permanency for children and families as defined by ensuring family reunification or children returning to live with one or both parents, or if this is not possible placement with relatives or non-relatives in a guardianship or adoption situation.

Santa Clara County’s goals regarding the over-representation of Latino and African American children and families are specifically aimed at action steps that ensure adequate prevention services, a clear concord including protocols that help social workers and community members understand the differences and nuances between harm and potential future risk and the difference between well-being and safety. In addition, action steps are aimed at building an understanding of the impact of poverty and helping to lead the community to identify additional prevention resources that are needed in Santa Clara County. Specific strategies have been created to accomplish these outcomes and include the following:

Strategy 1: Disproportionality Strategies
(1) Address and eliminate the over-representation of African Ancestry and Latino families, as defined as, “Within five years African Ancestry and Latino children will be no more likely than other children given the same risk or protective capacity factors, to enter the child welfare caseload or to exit the child welfare system”.

(2) Complete a full analysis to better understand factors related to the under-representation for Asian American families by looking at each individual Asian cultural group represented in Santa Clara County and then work closely with those API groups to appropriately address those factors.

(3) Continue to actively monitor representation for all children within the Child Welfare System in an effort to track disproportionality at all times.

These goals will be accomplished through the following:

- Analyze data to continue to better understand risk factors and protective capacity factors;
- Engage with representatives of the cultural groups affected to increase community awareness of child abuse prevention and intervention and the resources needed;
Develop innovative prevention strategies through increased availability for the Differential Response Program to (1) support both children and families at risk of abuse and neglect before entering the child welfare system and (2) those families leaving the child welfare system;

Work with an oversight committee comprised of key community persons representative of the Latino, African American/African Ancestry and several of the Asian American community groups that will meet with Santa Clara County SSA and DFCS Executive Management and SIP oversight members, as well as employee groups and designated community based organizations to discuss current trends and progress on SIP goals to address disproportionality;

Revise the design, content and delivery of mandated reporter training in the following ways: Enhance curriculum to include education about: (1) disproportionality in Santa Clara County; (2) bias in work with children and families and (3) exploring the impact of poverty, cultural values and barriers to services;

Complete a community assessment to better understand community needs and enhance community resources that better meet the evolving needs of families, specifically to address issues of disproportionality for the over-representation of Latino and African American/African Ancestry families and the under-representation of Asian American and Caucasian families;

Ensure social workers provide consistent assessment for referrals for General Neglect, as it relates to a families culture, race or ethnicity;

DFCS to conduct priority hiring of staff for all positions that are culturally and linguistically proficient to serve Latino, African American/African Ancestry, and Asian American children and families;

Increase communication between caregivers and parents to identify best placements and to secure the necessary supports and improve family engagement;

Enhance parenting education to improve participation and learning and natural support networks for parents. Improved educational support to include consideration of culture and language for all classes, regardless of the size of the class;

DFCS to continue participation in the California Partners for Permanency Project (CAPP) and ensure all staff have the basic framework and understanding of the CAPP philosophies and underlying principles;

Increase parent voice in decision making that is reflective of the diverse cultures represented in SCC. Support the Parent Advisory Board- Parents Encouraging Parents and begin a drop-in support group for birth parents;
• Determine how to increase the utilization of the DFCS Family Resource Centers for prevention services. Consider the classes and programs offered at the Family Resource Centers that could be offered to the community;

• As contracts with SSA and DFCS are created or renewed ensure that contract providers have staff at all levels that are representative of the cultures of the families being served and have the capacity and skills sets to serve Latino, African American/African Ancestry and Asian Pacific Islander children and families;

• Develop strategies to ensure a diverse workforce at all levels;

• Promote targeted recruitment and hiring of staff at all levels, who are reflective of the children and families being served and have the cultural proficiency and linguistically are able to serve the population;

• Explore possibilities of additional linguistic and culturally specific units and services can be provided throughout the continuum of child welfare;

• Cal WORKS/Linkages- SSA Agency will ensure improved linkage for Cal WORKS and other public benefits that families need to be connected to address factors that impact the economic vulnerabilities and to address the over-representation for Latino and African American families.

**Strategy 2: Prevention and Safety Strategies**

(1) **Increase the opportunities to support children and families at risk of abuse and neglect before entering the child welfare system and to support those families leaving the child welfare system from returning and to improve family sustainability.**

This will be accomplished through the following:

• Increasing the availability of Differential Response, a program aimed at addressing the stressors and risk factors for families and children to help stabilize families and ensure children are safe and avoid these families entering the child welfare system.

• Improving training and support for immigration issues, ensuring adequate staffing in DFCS and through those agencies that contract with the Department representative of ethnicities and languages of the families being served.

• Including a commitment that families will be linked to the public benefits they qualify for and that all families are screened for economic vulnerabilities and connected to resources for stability.
Strategy 3: Safety Strategies

Address and eliminate the over-representation of African American/African Ancestry and Latino families and to analyze the under-representation for Asian American families for referrals received in DFCS for suspected child abuse and neglect.

This will be accomplished through enhanced collaboration, training, education and accountability between DFCS and its community partners. Curriculum will be enhanced to include education about: (1) disproportionality in Santa Clara County; (2) bias in work with children and families and (3) exploring the impact of poverty, cultural values and barriers to services. In addition, DFCS will be committed to partnership with the community, ensuring key leaders in the Latino, African American, and Asian Pacific Islander community are engaged and consumers are involved to work together to enhance community resources that better meet the evolving needs of families.

Strategy 4: Family Reunification and Permanency Strategies

(1) Better utilize formal and informal supports, such as extended family and the faith based community to increase placement with relatives and Non-Relative Extended Family Members (NREFM), safely support parents and children in family reunification.

- Re-establish formal family finding activities to ensure relatives are located and engaged in the process for placement or support.
- Ensure up-front meetings with the family members before children are removed to look at supports and placement before removal.

Strategy 5: Family Reunification and Strategy 6: Permanency Strategies

(1) DFCS will increase the number of children who are safely reunified with one or both parents.

(2) Increase the number of youth in guardianships and the children and youth who are adopted and eliminate the barriers to support stable placement for children and youth.

These strategies will involve the following:
- Mobilize family finding efforts to ensure that maternal and paternal family members are identified and engaged to consider placement and/or support for parents to successfully reunify;
- Ensure that meetings involving family members are occurring in the community on days and times most convenient for parents;
• Ensure visitation is in the least restrictive setting in the community with regular frequency;

• Continue to strategically increase engagement with fathers ensuring they are a equal part of the case;

• Provide changes in parenting classes so that classes are more individualized, meet language and cultural needs, and provide an in-home parenting option;

• Continue involvement in CAPP- California Partners for Permanency to ensure consistency in work with families;

• Ensure that orientations and support groups are available for post adoption and guardianship families, as well as relatives;

• Improve timeliness of guardianships and adoptions;

• And include additional trauma focused work with families.

Strategy 7: Permanency and Family Reunification Strategies

(1) **Increase efforts to support children’s well-being in order to stabilize and support children/youth in placement and support parents’ reunifying with their children.**

These strategies include the following:

• Make education a priority through an increase in resources such as tutoring and support for social workers to assess educational needs and locate the necessary resources;

• Partner with schools and Mental Health through School Linked Services to increase supports and resources, as well as leverage available funding;

• Partner with First 5 for better utilization of the Family Resource Centers and for assessments through the visiting Public Health Nurses Program for children birth through age 5;

• Establish a workgroup with mental health to identify the gaps, strengths and barriers to consider creative alternatives to increase mental health services for children and parents. Creation of a plan to blend funding with mental health to ensure access for all children and youth both voluntary and court ordered to receive mental health screening and assessments and treatment;
• Build programs and services for older and transitioned aged youth (TAY) to increase access;

• Increase foster parent, group home staff, relative caregiver and possibly Child Advocate involvement with supporting transitioned aged youth learn the necessary skills for a successful transition to adulthood;

• Increase the number of youth to have paid or unpaid work experience;

• Identify Housing support for those youth not reunified and entering extended foster care by ensuring that non-minor dependent youth find stable and affordable housing in the community.

**Santa Clara County Juvenile Probation Strategies:**

Santa Clara County Probation focus area during the PQCR was on timely reunification within 12 months of entering a foster care placement. According to the California Social Services Research Center (CSSR Q1 2012), Probation’s rate of Timely Reunification is low, with 30.8% of youth reunified within 12 months, compared to a national standard of 75.2% and a California average of 63.9%. In addition, Probation’s rate of Placement Stability is below the national standard, with 35.7% of youth who have been in foster care for 24 months or more having 2 or fewer placements, compared to a national standard of 41.8% and a California average of 46.8%. Lastly, Santa Clara County Probation has an over-representation of African American and Latino youth in the Juvenile Justice foster care system. African American children represent 2% of the child population of Santa Clara County (2010 US Bureau of the Census) and 10% of the probation foster care population for the county. Latino children represent 39% of the child population of the county and 76% of the probation foster care population.

Through the SIP process themes were identified which led to strategies for improvement recommended by the SIP Planning Committee. Santa Clara County Probation outcomes selected for improvement in this cycle include the following outcome measures: C1.1 Timely Reunification, C4.3 Placement Stability (At least 24 Months in Care) and 4B Least Restrictive Placement, and address and eliminate the over-representation of African Ancestry and Latino families in probation foster care placement. These outcomes were selected as a means to improve targeted areas highlighted by data analysis incorporated in the Peer Quality Case Review (PQCR) and the County Self-Assessment (CSA).

**Probation Key Initiatives**

Santa Clara County Probation has been addressing the disproportionate representation of youth of color in the juvenile justice system since 2004. Recently, the Department has actively engaged in interest-based, consensus building with participating stakeholder group leaders, effecting the Department’s interests in the resolution of this decades long community conflict.
and the promotion of equitable and fair delivery of services to the Latino community. This engagement occurred as a result of the Harvard Study Consensus Process convened by La Raza Roundtable de California. This was a facilitated process to create transformative multisystem change aimed at eliminating the disproportionate representation of Latinos in local juvenile justice, juvenile dependency, and criminal justice systems.

The Disproportional Minority Confinement (DMC) Support Project is a 3 year project for addressing the disproportionate representation of youth of color in the juvenile justice system. As part of the DMC Support Project, Probation has contracted with several providers, including: The National Compadres Network, W. Hayward Burns Institute, Friends of Human Relations Commission, the NAACP and Ujima Adult and Family Services. The first year focus was on training. Probation staff, court system partners, community and county system partners, and law enforcement agencies participated in both Unconscious Bias Training and DMC training.

The arrest data demonstrates significant changes. Arrests of Latino youth were reduced by 16% between FY10 (7,529) and FY11 (6356) while arrests of African American youth decreased by 12% FY10 (927) and FY11 (818). Institutional commitments showed a downward trend as well, with Latino youth commitments decreasing 37%, from 596 to 374 and African American youth 28%, from 53 to 38. The second year of participation included the creation and implementation of a response grid for probation violations and the Direct Referral Program (DRP). In the first five months of the DRP, of the 253 youth referred, 80% are either Latino or African American youth who were connected with community based services in lieu of receiving an arrest on their record. In year three of the DMC Project, Santa Clara County will continue efforts to enhance the knowledge of DMC issues of staff and stakeholders by providing DMC training for over 200 Probation staff and various stakeholders.

Ujima Adult and Family Services will conduct a qualitative analysis to understand the paths that bring African American youths into the juvenile justice system. The National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP) convened community groups to provide input and guidance about the formal juvenile justice system and to seek suggestions to reduce the disproportionate representation of youth color in the system. The National Compadres Network conducted a “scan” and analysis of community based providers on their efficacy in addressing the issues of Latino youth and their families. The W. Hayward Burns Institute provided assistance in creating the response grid for probation violations, training and on-going technical support in the DMC workgroup process. The Friends of Human Relations Commission provided training and curriculum on conflict resolution and gathered information on the faith-based needs from youth in Juvenile Hall and the Ranch program.

**Juvenile Probation Strategies**

Probation has chosen C1.1 Family Reunification within 12 months (exit cohort). In the next five years, Probation will improve performance on this measure from 30.8% to 58.8%. Reunification of youth with their family is best done with the involvement of youth’s parents and other family members. Upon analysis, there were a number of critical barriers that impact
family reunification. Despite a comprehensive array of services available to support families, issues such as parents’ lack of commitment to engaging in services, underutilization of formal and informal supports, practices that focuses on court and/or program timelines rather than the readiness of families to reunify, and a lack of treatment services for the parents or caregivers all contribute to a slower rate of reunification. Probation has also chosen C4.3 Placement Stability (At least 24 Months in Care) and 4B Least Restrictive Placement. In the next five years, Probation will improve performance on this measure from 35.7% to 47.6%. The least restrictive environment is closely linked to placement stability and permanency. As children disrupt from their placements, they tend to move into more restrictive and more expensive placements, away from homes that could create permanency. Lastly, Probation will address and eliminate the over-representation of African Ancestry and Latino families, as defined as “Within five years African Ancestry and Latino youth will be no more likely than other youth given the same risk or protective capacity factors, to enter probation foster care placement.”

To increase the number of youth reunifying within 12 months, support placement stability and reduce disproportionality for African American and Latino youth in foster care the following are selected strategies designed to improve on these outcome measures:

(S1) Develop coordinated and integrated child welfare and juvenile justice system that enhances services and outcomes for dually involved youth. For a period of 12 months, the Juvenile Justice and Child Welfare System Integration Initiative will work to implement system and practice reforms that will positively impact outcomes for crossover or dually involved youth. The Juvenile Court system, JPD and DFCS are collaborating with leadership at the Mental Health Department, Department of Drug and Alcohol Services, and Education Department. Additionally, we are working with the District Attorney, Public Defender, Legal Advocates for Children & Youth, community based organizations, and community representatives. Given the high level, multi-system commitment to this work, we are confident that we can improve outcomes for dually involved youth. Using evidence based research and best practices to inform changes in both systems we can provide dually-involved youth with intensive case management to improve youth outcomes, therefore, we are investigating how to amend our current practices in order to provide intensive case management to these vulnerable youth. Furthermore, restructuring our systems programmatically and culturally will allow us to better at meeting the distinctive needs of dually-involved youth.

(S2) Improve family supports through linkages to family-based alternative services and alternative placements to group homes for probation youth in placement. The Santa Clara County Social Services Agency’s (SSA) Department of Family and Children’s Services (DFCS), in collaboration with the Probation Department (PD) and the Mental Health Department (MHD), provide “Intensive Targeted Wraparound" services within and for the County of Santa Clara. The Intensive Targeted Wraparound Program is designed to meet the unique individual needs of youth and their families through the syntheses of Wraparound, Family Finding, Intensive Therapeutic Foster Homes and evidenced based mental health services. The Intensive Targeted Wraparound program will utilize the Intensive Therapeutic
Foster Parent model of foster care. These are intensely trained, highly committed, mission driven licensed foster parents who are dedicated to the “no-reject, no-eject” policy, making their home available to our youth for six months. Within these six months the team and Intensive Therapeutic Foster Parent work with the youth identifying interventions and stabilize the youth. The team also works to identify family/kin and other natural team members who will be available for long-term permanency for the youth. After the six month stay, the youth shall step down to the least restrictive placement appropriately for the youth.

(S3) Probation will increase the number of youth who are safely reunified in a timely manner with their families through increased support and engagement with parent(s). Parent(s) will take part in an orientation session, meeting with a Probation Officer to map out his or her child’s program. This will educate parents on the placement process and resources available to support parent(s). In addition, the Probation will clarify the role of the foster caregiver, share information on the child’s needs, plan for visitation and other ways to involve the parent(s) while their child is in foster care. Further, a Joint Decision Making (JDM) practice will be implemented in the Placement Unit. The addition of JDM meetings for youth who are removed from their homes will be implemented in order to engage parent(s) to make the best decisions possible for the youth and ensure the parents’ voice is heard prior to any placement, re-placement, or reunification with the family. Having this structure will create and support consistent attention to engaged case planning within the team including the Probation Officer. The team approach also ensures that there is a broad based perspective that includes that of the parent(s), care providers and youth.

(S4) Increase placement with relatives and Non-Relative Extended Family Member (NREFM) placements, and safely support probation youth and the parent(s) in family reunification. Every youth needs and deserves the most normative, safe and healing environment possible. Youth in foster care need consistent connectedness to family during their stay in care. Entry, lengths of stay and placement changes in foster care can be significantly reduced by a network of family inclusive of a primary parenting relationship. Thus, developing family finding skills to provide a family network for every youth in the foster care system is critical.

(S5) Address and eliminate the over-representation of African Ancestry and Latino families, as defined as “Within five years African Ancestry and Latino youth will be no more likely than other youth given the same risk or protective capacity factors, to enter probation foster care placement,” and continue to actively monitor representation for all children within the Juvenile Justice System in an effort to track disproportionality at all times. An analysis of African American and Latino probation youth in foster care placement is to be conducted, analyzing the paths that bring African American and Latino youth into the juvenile justice foster care system. Further, there is a need for an improved screening and assessment tool for youth being considered for foster care placement. The research and development of a structured decision making assessment instruments in aspects of foster care placement operations is to be developed by Juvenile Justice Systems Collaborative Case Systems and Processes workgroup. Tools such as the Juvenile
Assessment and Intervention System (JAIS) and the placement assessment instrument will be employed to guide activities during entry into placement of JPD foster youth. The members are to include Justice System partners, community stakeholders, and members from the African American and Latino communities with cultural expertise.

Santa Clara County Probation is making a concerted effort to maintain youth safely in their homes whenever possible and appropriate. The increase use of Wraparound services is a strength identified by the PQCR and it has improved Probation’s ability to serve youth and families in their homes and reduce the number of youth in foster care placement. In addition, Probation and a local community based organization have collaborated to increase professional parenting homes for intervention and placement options for probation youth. In reunification there will be a strengthening of participatory case planning with youth and families. Also, the family engagement process will be implanted much earlier in the process. Reunification needs to be more frequent and occur in a more timely fashion. Youth are in foster care placement too long which decreases their opportunity to reunify, which means youth are at risk of being failed and placed in secured detention. Collaboration and support between the Juvenile Court, Probation, SSA/DFCS and CBOs is needed to face the challenges and barriers that have been identified over the past couple of years, and Santa Clara County will continue to focus on these areas for improvements through the implementation of the targeted strategies listed in the SIP Goals.

**Santa Clara County - County Executive Strategies:**

The Office of the County Executive, as a policy representative of the Board of Supervisors, recognizes that an important driver of the condition of disparate representation of children of color within children’s services in the County is poverty and the resultant lack of opportunity that occurs within the social milieu of Santa Clara County. We also recognize, as is noted elsewhere in the SIP, that the disparity affects a large number of Latino children, and a statistically high percentage of African American children.

We believe that the solution to this problem is beyond the efforts of any one or two County departments. A central, cross department, effort will be required in order to hope for any success as we approach this challenge.

We also recognize that the aforementioned ethnic communities are not themselves homogeneous. Thus, many potential disparate groups within the community may respond more effectively to alternative approaches. Thus, the County Executive will adopt the following strategy:
**Strategy 1:**
**Create an Office of Cultural Competency for Children’s Services**

This new Office will reside within the Office of the County Executive and will be directed by a leader that reports directly to the County Executive. The Director of the Office will be responsible for the county wide implementation of policies and programs that address that racial and ethnic disparity that currently exists within our County services. The Director will assure that the issues of equity are dealt with in a manner that adheres to programmatic requirements and addresses equity as a critical priority countywide.

The Office will include, as a minimum, a Latino Planning Council and an African American Social Planning Council in order to assure appropriate community input and monitoring of progress. As appropriate and requested, other racial and ethnic group councils will be created to address their specific issues. It is envisioned that the Social Planning Councils will be initiated and maintained by community members. The Councils will be supported by the Office and the Office will coordinate and facilitate County programs and processes in order to attain the goals stated in the SIP.

The Office will work to eliminate disparity not only as it relates directly to client populations, but also disparity within both internal and external service providers. The Office Director will work closely with the County Executive, the Board of Supervisors, and appropriate community members in the effort. This Office will be operational within 6 months.

**Additional Information:**
Also attached to this SIP document is information received from the La Raza Roundtable, a civil rights organization based in Santa Clara County which has committed its organization and membership to helping to resolve the issue of the multi-system overrepresentation of Latinos through alternative dispute resolution efforts. This information was provided outside of the community SIP process. Please see Attachment J.

**Section I**
**Section A- Child Welfare/Probation Additional Narrative**
DFCS and JPD will collectively and individually work with the community and partner agencies over the next five years to accomplish the goals outlined for child welfare and juvenile probation in an effort to ensure that services in support for children, youth and families are improved. Regular monitoring of SIP goals will occur on a quarterly basis through an oversight committee as well as regular reporting in additional community forums and meetings.

**Section B – Child Welfare/Probation Matrix- SIP Goals**
Please see Attachment G for the Santa Clara County System Improvement Matrix strategies and goals for 2013 through 2018.
Section C - Child Welfare Service Outcome Improvement Project (CWSOIP) Narrative

Probation used the CWSOIP funds to send placement Probation Officers to Placement Core training. In addition, Probation purchased laptops for placement probation officers, so they can enter notes when visiting placements and so they can set up video visit (via Skype) between the parents and youth in the group homes which are located out of county. This allows youth and families to stay connected and involved in the youth treatment plan.

In the next five years, Probation plans to continue paying for Probation Officer training and video visits (via) Skype. Probation will also continue to help parents with travel cost, so they might see their children more frequently enabling continuity of contact. Probation intends to focus on parents/guardians of youth that are in placement. To this end, Probation will use the money to provide support to parents and youth by offering support groups. Probation would like to use the money to contract with a community based organization to facilitate the meetings. Further, if parents need parenting classes, Probation will fund it. Probation will also explore the possibility of contracting with a community based organization to conduct family finding efforts.

DFCS used CWSOIP funding to support efforts for those children and families struggling with immigration issues, as well as those families in which relatives need support in obtaining legal guardianships. Support groups and legal advice and support are offered in both of these instances. In addition, funds are used to support counseling and case management support for those families that are facing stressors and in need of resources. This funding supplements funding for Differential Response.

Section II

A. CAPIT/CBCAP/PSSF Narrative

Santa Clara County included an evaluation and analysis of efforts toward Child Abuse Prevention Intervention and Treatment (CAPIT), Community Based Child Abuse Prevention (CBCAP), and Promoting Safe and Stable Families (PSSF) and is recommending oversight committee changes to provide this review. DFCS will need to work to ensure all prevention services are linked to a specific need for these services and to ensure that the services and programs that are put in place are evaluated and really do meet these needs. In addition, DFCS will need to work to make sure that there is consistency across the various contracts in what outcomes are evaluated and tracked for consistency of services amongst different service providers. One such example is Differential Response. DFCS will be working with the Child Abuse Council and Social Services Advisory Commission for monitoring of these services and using the newly created advisory committee to track progress and ensure accountability.
**CAPIT**
Child Abuse Prevention and Treatment (CAPIT) funding in the current contracted services include: primary, secondary and early intervention programs and services. The majority of the services are direct services in the areas of parenting, support groups, childcare and connection to resources. Services are aimed at geographical locations were resources are lacking and involve outreach in serving the Latino and Asian Pacific Islander communities with staff that have the cultural and language capabilities.

**CBCAP**
Community Based Child Abuse Prevention (CBCAP) funding is planned for the upcoming FY 2013-2014. Services will be aimed at expanding Differential Response with a specific focus on Latino, African American and API communities, ensuring contracted providers have the necessary linguistic and cultural expertise in current staffing. In addition, funding will provide the launch of support groups for families who have completed or are in the process of completing adoption or guardianship, relatives and non-relative extended family members who are providing placement and parent support groups. In addition, funding will help with in-home parenting classes and ensuring individualized parenting programs for those families in need.

**PSSF**
Promoting Safe and Stable Families (PSSF) must provide services in the area of prevention, reunification and adoption. Prevention funding will be leveraged with the CBCAP funding to expand Differential Response services, specifically to Latino and African American children and families. The Family Reunification funding will be used to continue Parent Advocates for those families in Family Reunification and the Adoption funding will be used to offer support groups and to modify the adoption camp and other support activities to ensure that those families who are adopting and encountering struggles are supported.

**Section III - Attachments**

**Attachment A - Notice of Intent for SIP**
Required attachment for the SIP

**Attachment B - Tables with Additional Santa Clara County Data**
Additional statistical data regarding Santa Clara County

**Attachment C - OCAP Oversight Committee for Child Abuse Prevention**
Recommended oversight committee structure to assure expenditures for prevention funding received

**Attachment D – Executive Summary of the Santa Clara County Self Assessment**

**Attachment E - Executive Summary Section of the Santa Clara County PQCR**
Attachment F - SIP Strategy Matrix
Detailed information regarding the recommended System Improvement Strategies and Action Plans needed to reach outcomes for Santa Clara County during the five (5) year SIP cycle.

Attachment G - Santa Clara County Child Welfare SIP Summary Sheets
Summaries of the SIP strategies and action plans in a power point presentation version

Attachment H – CAPIT/CBCAP/PSSF Funding Worksheet for Prevention
Required SIP attachment with planned expenditures for prevention funding for CAPIT/CBCAP/PSSF

Attachment I – Program Descriptions for Prevention Services

Attachment J – SIP Input from the Harvard Consensus Project and LaRaza Roundtable
SIP recommendations received from the La Raza Roundtable civil rights organization and the Harvard Consensus Project

Attachment K – Santa Clara County Signature Cover Sheet for SIP

Attachment L – Santa Clara County Signature Cover Sheet for Prevention

Attachment M – Power Point Presentation for SIP