



## Greater Bay Area Child Abuse Prevention Council Coalition

### 2023 STATEWIDE CAPC CONVENING SUMMARY

The Greater Bay Area Child Abuse Prevention Council Coalition hosted an online convening on February 2, 2023 as an opportunity for Child Abuse Prevention Councils (CAPCs) across California to network and learn together. The day was structured around a brief entitled [Creating a Child & Family Well-Being System: A Paradigm Shift from Mandated Reporter to Community Supporting](#) produced by Safe & Sound (which is the CAPC for San Francisco and Co-Chair for Marin). CAPCs from thirty-nine (39) out of the fifty-eight (58) counties were represented.

## KEY TAKEAWAYS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The day provided an opportunity for CAPCs to share their thoughts through Q&A sessions, small breakout room discussions and other methods such as the chat box.

Among the key takeaways were:

- In response to the shift from mandated reporting to community supporting, CAPCs expressed both excitement and concern.
- California CAPCs are leaders in prevention efforts across the state, with each functioning differently based on its organizational structure and the conditions in its county. CAPCs are key stakeholders who can partner with government agencies and provide input when those agencies are making decisions about how to address prevention.
- CAPCs need direct funding, because funding that is offered through technical assistance providers or through county agencies is not always accessible and does not always meet CAPC needs.
- Regional coalitions of CAPCs are important sources of peer support and collaboration. The return of previous funding that supported the CAPC coalitions across the state would provide a wonderful opportunity for CAPCs to support each other and collaborate to improve prevention outcomes.



## THE STATE OF PREVENTION • HILLARY KONRAD, OCAP

Ms. Konrad reviewed data showing neglect as the primary reason for removal of children from their homes over a ten-year time frame. She explained that if we start focusing on issues related to neglect, we might be able to reduce the number of entries into foster care. The data shows a greater likelihood that Black and Native American families will be investigated.

She suggested that outreach and public awareness are gaps that the CAPCs can step into to engage with families and connect them to services sooner. In their roles as catalysts, coordinators, and conveners, CAPCs can be a connection with the community, bringing equity into the conversation and helping to create a feedback loop. CAPCs will play a role in the shift to community support and OCAP will support CAPCs.

## INTRODUCTION TO “CREATING A CHILD & FAMILY WELL-BEING SYSTEM” • JENNY PEARLMAN, SAFE & SOUND

Ms. Pearlman explained that the shift from a mandated reporting frame to a community support frame is about helping families before they get to child welfare, to support and strengthen families before a crisis occurs. The majority of the reports and the majority of substantiations is correlated with neglect, which in turn is correlated with poverty. We need to address the biases that exist at the beginning and result in the racial disparity. She stressed that this is just the beginning of the conversation.

## PANEL DISCUSSION: CAN WE EMBRACE THIS NEW FRAME?



Katie Albright from Safe & Sound and the Greater Bay Area CAPC Coalition moderated a discussion by four panelists on the issue of community support. Ms. Albright asked panelists to consider what the system would be like if it was built to be supportive from the beginning. Selections from the panel discussion are presented below.

**Hillary Konrad, OCAP:** “One of the reforms that we know needs to change is how we are training our child welfare workforce. Supporting the family should govern all interactions for everyone... I know for me if I have a friend giving me advice, I will listen more than I would with a stranger.”

**Steve Baron, Santa Clara County CAPC:** “I’m concerned with the well-meaning but unintended consequences of not reporting neglect. If we are not referring, and we’re using purely voluntary services, significant percentages of people don’t successfully engage or complete services.” Regarding the potential impact of AB 2085 which dramatically reduces the requirements to report neglect: Recent Research published in *Child Maltreatment* in July, 2022, (cite available) found that common risk factors identified in neglect investigations were parental substance use (41%), domestic violence (21%), mental illness (18%), and co-reported physical or sexual abuse (29%). Discouraging the reporting of neglect also discourages identification of these co-occurring issues and forms of maltreatment which require intense, and sometimes non-voluntary, long-term intervention, and therefore serves to subject

children to ongoing maltreatment and the continuing accumulation of trauma with all of its ACE's consequences.

**Colette Katuala, Alameda County CAPC:** "Families do not engage because they feel judged... Mandated reporting shouldn't be a blind eye. It should be a call to action to help the family." It is important to note that this update [in AB 2085] in the reporting requirements regarding neglect means that families are no longer penalized by a report to CPS due to their financial circumstances only. This by no means discourages reporting neglect, it outlaws penalizing poverty. This new law is forcing mandated reporters to have more knowledge of community supportive services, like drug treatment and family violence resource centers within communities. Child Welfare is inundated with investigations of neglect that end in voluntary community referrals that require no further involvement. This new law is seeking to correct the overarching reach of child welfare with regard to poverty, and place supportive services where it belongs — in the community with families.

**Michael Williams, Strategies 2.0 and the CAP Center:** Removal from the home is not always necessary and can be a trauma in itself. Foster care or congregate care may include new risks. Family Resource Centers can help support the family and build community.

## SMALL GROUP DISCUSSION



**What excites you about this approach?** Attendees mentioned that this approach represents a change in priorities: putting referrals first and reporting last. They appreciated that it was more trauma-informed, responsive approach/compassion and solutions-based. They thought it was a holistic approach to wellness for the family and child — and found it "interesting" and "exciting."

They remarked that the new approach calls out racial disparities and confronts bias. "The data reveals a powerful story," said one attendee. Another said, "We need to bring in positive outcomes."

Several praised the approach for its possible reduction in workload for social workers. As one wrote in the chat box, "The child welfare system is overly impacted — the community is better on an engagement level."

Many attendees said that the focus on primary prevention is long overdue and this approach represents forward progress after 20 years of work. "This is not about sexual assault," wrote one attendee, "this is about families who don't need to be in the system." "We can do better than we are doing now," said another.



**What worries you about this approach?** Attendees had questions relating to logistics and resources as well as responsibility: Do family supporters have the bandwidth and services to support families? What does this look like? How can supportive services help decrease disproportionate numbers, particularly for Black and Native American groups? Who is responsible when something goes wrong?

They wondered how to best engage partners. How do we lean on other child-facing systems like healthcare providers?

Finally, they had questions about training, remarking that “it will be challenging to reach folks who do the mandated reporting, and to educate everyone regarding resources available in each county.”



**What is the First Step? Training.** Many attendees pointed to updated training as the first step. They commented that this should include bias trainings with mandated reporters. One remarked that “mandated reporter training is great but education must go beyond the rebrand.” Mandated reporters, including law enforcement and others, must have community resources to help families have access to basic needs.

**CAPCs can be the hub.** CAPCs can host monthly meetings to start collaborations across organizations, can address gaps and ensure follow through and accountability. However, CAPC time and resources are limited, as are government agency time and resources. This will require partnerships, collaboration, and thinking outside the box. Specific needs will have to be prioritized for each community. They suggested funding and empowering child abuse prevention councils and family resource centers, and aligning comprehensive planning processes.

Attendees suggested that connections between CAPCs and county systems could be mandated from the top down. Leadership could come from the Attorney General’s office, which would elevate CAPCs as a significant contributor. They were excited at a suggestion to update the term “child abuse prevention council” to something like the Child Welfare and Safety Council.

**Family engagement.** Attendees suggested that another early step would be to develop relationships with families and child welfare: contact case worker to share concerns, bring all parties together including children/teens, bring “graduates” back to share experiences. Community supporters should be constantly working to build connections and trust with families. Uplifting Black, Native American, and Latinx community members in leadership spaces will also be important if we hope to improve outcomes for those populations.

One attendee suggested using cutting edge neurological science to make decisions on supporting families. How do we get parents into a healing space? Another stressed the importance of engaging father figures.

## CAPC SUCCESSES AND CHALLENGES

As a final activity for the day, CAPCs were invited to post their recent successes and challenges on a shared whiteboard.

### CAPC SUCCESSES

**COLLABORATIONS AND PARTNERSHIPS (20 MENTIONS)**



With government agencies, private entities, CAPC members, parents, other CAPCs regionally (and statewide at this forum), smaller communities, tribal communities

**PROGRAMS (19 MENTIONS)**



Awareness campaigns, parent cafes, prevention planning, building a shared prevention data system, youth mentor partnership, parent partner programs, fatherhood programs, teen programs, HOPE programs, R2R and economic empowerment programs

**FUNDING (1 MENTION)**



Blending funds to elevate the CAPC

### CAPC CHALLENGES

**23** **OPERATIONAL**

- Funding/staffing/resources
- Managing boards and volunteers
- Stepping into roles that had been vacant
- Data collection

**13** **COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT**

- Engaging and orienting new members
- Engaging and communicating with the public
- Engaging those with lived experience
- Engaging local government and community organizations
- Consistent parent participation
- Engaging men in the work

## EVALUATION

Following the convening, participants were invited to complete an evaluation survey. Twenty-eight surveys were completed, representing 25% of the attendees. Respondents rated the event an average of 4.71 out of 5 on "Extent to which I found the meeting helpful" and one hundred percent (100%) of the respondents indicated that they would like to attend more meetings like this one.

## FOLLOW-UP OPPORTUNITIES FOR CAPCS

Contact your OCAP consultant to learn more about grantees in your county for various OCAP programs (email [OCAP-PND@dss.ca.gov](mailto:OCAP-PND@dss.ca.gov)) • Connect with your county child welfare agency to check on unspent ARPA-CBCAP funds (contact OCAP for help with this) • Reach out to Strategies 2.0, which offers resources and support to CAPCs: <https://strategiesca.org> • Connect with your peers through regional networks of CAPCs • Join the GBA CAPC as a guest at one of our monthly meetings: email [kris.murphey@cirinc.org](mailto:kris.murphey@cirinc.org) for more information • Keep the conversation going! Email the GBA CAPC Coordinator with your thoughts on the issue of community support (and your ideas for future convenings): [kris.murphey@cirinc.org](mailto:kris.murphey@cirinc.org)