



Linkages Success Stories

Welcome to...

Linkages Success Stories!

An interdepartmental newsletter jointly produced by DCFS & DPSS showcasing how families in L.A. County benefit from Linkages.

Linkages Mission

Working together to strengthen families, ensure child safety, promote well-being and sustain self-sufficiency.

"I cannot envision doing this work without our partnership with DPSS."

*Denise Sherman
Children's Social Worker
San Fernando Valley
DCFS*

Linkages Leadership Team

Issue One: Winter 2009

Linkages: Helping Families in L.A. County

Los Angeles County is making history with the implementation of the Linkages initiative. This project focuses on service collaboration between the Department of Children and Family Services (DCFS) and the Department of Public Social Services (DPSS). Currently, Linkages is helping families in eight DCFS offices (and corresponding DPSS offices) across the county.

Through Linkages, a DCFS family who is also involved in CalWORKs can be connected to a host of DPSS services—housing assistance, substance abuse treatment, mental health counseling, transportation and reunification support, to name just a few. These resources help keep kids safe, families together and parents in the workforce.

As more and more offices are trained in Linkages,

the success stories are beginning to flow in. One family was able to stay together while a parent went through drug rehabilitation. Another family secured a place to live while getting job training. These and stories like them are the desired outcomes of the Linkages project.

More DCFS/DPSS offices are scheduled to join Linkages in the year to come.

Keeping the Family Together: A Pomona Success

A recent Team Decision Meeting in Pomona focused on a mother struggling with drug abuse and the care of her two young children. Already involved in CalWORKs, the mother learned about GAIN (a welfare-to-work program) through Luz Benner, Pomona's Linkages GAIN Services Worker (LGSW).

The Children's Social Worker (CSW) Jose Ramirez determined that the mother could enroll in an in-patient drug rehabilitation program and

keep her children with her.

The GAIN Services Worker (GSW) Estrella Acosta was able to set an appointment for the mother to develop a Welfare-to-Work plan.

With her sanction cleared, the mother was able to receive an increase in her cash aid. Family Preservation services have been offered as well.

Jose reported already seeing a positive difference in the mother's behavior. She's receiving mental health counseling

and stated her intention to continue with her addiction recovery.

The services coordination and communication between CSW, LGSW, GSW, Eligibility Worker (Pat Lynch) and the community-based drug treatment provider helped this mother in her recovery from drug addiction. Not only that—this family was able to stay together when separation would have complicated an already challenging time.



Service Coordination In Action... Maria Galindo, Linkages GSW and Ginnæ Madison-Tanner, TDM facilitator, discuss how best to coordinate services for a family at the Torrance DCFS office.

"It was a great feeling to see that a little teamwork and cooperation can make the difference in the lives of a family in need."

*Esaul Martinez
Linkages GSW
Wateridge*

Do you have a Linkages success story you'd like to share? We'd love to hear it—and share it.

DCFS staff: e-mail the Linkages Coordinator in your office

DPSS staff: e-mail the Linkages Liaison in your office

Homeless? Not For Long! A Wateridge Success

The combination of DCFS and DPSS staff working with a Wateridge family helped keep the family housed during a recent difficult time.

Since the family had used the Homeless Assistance Program in the past, they were unsure if more assistance was available. Esaul Martinez, the Wateridge LGSW, contacted the CalWORKs District Office directly.

With a little detective work and determination, he learned that contact with a Homeless Supervisor was in order. When the CSW Nancy Williams stopped by his desk, Esaul was able to put her directly in contact with the Homeless Supervisor, Felicia Clayton.

Soon after, the CSW brought the family to the CalWORKs District Office.

Later that afternoon, Felicia confirmed that the family was approved for the Temporary Homeless Assistance Program.

The family was referred to a Homeless Case Manager to further assist them with their situation.

Both Nancy and the family were grateful that they were able to get the help they needed to stabilize the family's housing circumstances.

Keeping the "Link" in Linkages: Spotlight on Maria Galindo, Torrance LGSW

The Linkages GAIN Services Worker (LGSW) is a new role created by Linkages. Maria Galindo is one of the first LGSWs in L.A. County.

Formerly a Supportive Services GSW in District #27, Maria began working in Torrance in February, 2007. According to staff at the office, Maria is a wonderful resource. She is able to respond to general DPSS questions

and can identify families' needs. Maria has contributed to successes at reassessment or replacement Team Decision-Making Meetings (TDMs). With her work, there's one less task to worry about in terms of having to complete the reunification process.

Maria sits close to the TDM team, which helps facilitate her interactions and teaming with the staff.

"In all my 25 years, I have never seen any one person integrate and be part of the service team as quickly as Maria," says Tessa Montoya, Torrance Assistant Regional Administrator. "Because Maria believes in what she's doing, her heart is in the right place and she is truly committed to the process."

Maria was recently promoted to GAIN Services Supervisor.

The Linkages Web Site: Tips & Tricks

Launched in February 2008, the Linkages web site is a groundbreaking accomplishment of the service partnership between DCFS and DPSS. The web site is accessible by staff from both agencies and is loaded with helpful information. You can:

- match a DCFS family with a DPSS office, by zip code (Directory Page)
- see step-by-step guidelines for the five Linkages protocols (Protocols Page)
- access Linkages forms (Forms Page)
- click on links to dozens of useful L.A. County organizations and agencies (Local Agencies Page)
- find out the answers to frequently asked questions (FAQ Page)

DCFS staff can access the website on LAKids; DPSS staff via MyDPSS.