

DCFS COMPTON PROJECT: POINT OF ENGAGEMENT (POE)

- POE was designed to achieve the Department's mission of ensuring safety, permanency, and well being for each child and, specifically to:
 - Reduce the number of children in out of home care
 - Increase permanency
 - Increase child safety
- POE is a collaborative public and private initiative that provides a community safety net for our children and families in Los Angeles County, with a faster response for services. This is accomplished through the use of teams, an emphasis on shared decision-making, comprehensive case evaluations and investigations. POE utilizes a multi-disciplinary approach that includes the family in the process of selecting and planning for needed services.
- POE utilizes resources within the Department and other County Departments including the Department of Mental Health, the Department of Health Services, the Probation Department, the Department of Public Social Services and the Sheriff's Department. Community-based agencies partner with DCFS to provide treatment for domestic violence, substance abuse, mental health and health issues. The faith-based community is integral in providing support services to our families.

Specifically, POE utilizes:

- Well-trained emergency response child abuse investigators and Intensive Services Workers to facilitate timely provision of services.
- Use of other professionals within and outside of the Department to conduct upfront assessments for medical, mental health, substance abuse, domestic violence and other issues that place children at risk.
- A team decision making approach to eliminate bias, promote cultural sensitivity and to encourage collaboration between social workers, families and the community to develop appropriate service plans that allow children to remain safely at home and in their own communities.

- Inclusion of families, relatives, and community providers in the decision-making process in developing the family's service plan and to identify relative resources for respite or temporary placement.
- Incorporates early planning in situations where children are separated from their parent(s)/guardian(s) to ensure that each child is provided with timely reunification, and when reunification is not possible, legal guardianship or adoption is explored as permanency options.
- Timely collaboration and communication among social workers investigating referrals and those providing services to ensure a smooth transition from front- end investigations to services.
- Community outreach to identify collaborative community partners.
- Cultivation of change in established ways of thinking and providing services among all levels of staff from administration to clerical.

Critical Components of POE Facilitating Timely Reunification:

- **Upfront Assessments:** Emergency response investigators utilize community experts to assess mental health, domestic violence and substance abuse. These assessments will guide the CSW in making a final disposition on the referral and determine what services can be provided.
- **Team Decision Making/Child Safety Conferences:** provides a forum for the family, relatives, friends, social workers and community partners to share information, observations and concerns. TDM identifies family strengths and resources to assist in the development of an appropriate service plan for the family.
- **Intensive Services Workers (ISWs):** ISWs provide immediate linkage to services for families when court detention is necessary. ISWs participate in child safety conferences shortly after detention to review for the possible return of children and or to connect children and families to services immediately following detention.

- **Multi-Disciplinary Assessment Teams (MAT):** Multidisciplinary assessments are conducted on detained children to identify areas of health, mental health, education, and psycho-social development that need to be addressed. This will assist in placement stability and provide caregivers with needed information for a successful placement. MAT information is also obtained from parents and current caregivers to assess their ability to provide care for the child.

SUMMARY

Point of Engagement offers a service delivery system that focuses on the family's needs, immediate provision of services and engaging the community to assist the family in developing their own strengths to maintain a safe home for their children. The partnership between the family, child protective services and community providers builds a strong community safety net that ensures the safety and well being of our children and families.