

## Using the Priority Strategies Worksheet

The purpose of implementing a strategy is to improve an identified outcome. The CJI priority strategies will improve outcomes for children.

Review your county data and discuss its implications (strengths and challenges) for good outcomes for children and how the data relates to a CJI priority strategy. The team can then consider and brainstorm related practices, procedures, training, or other step that might lead to improvement.

Identify at least one change in practice, procedure, training, or other step under each strategy that your team agrees to implement to improve an outcome for children. Finally, think about how the team will measure whether the change is working. Examples are given below.

### **STRATEGY 1. Achieving Timely Permanency For All Children in Foster Care**

- Example 1: Agency and court aggressively and routinely review all children in foster care longer than 24 months for possible safe, legally permanent alternatives to long-term foster care.
  - Why: Regular review helps focus effort on permanency and reduces foster care drift.
  - Measure: Number of children in foster care longer than 24 months is reduced.
- Example 2: Agency actively engages older children in planning for life after foster care, including education, housing, employment and career, access to health care, and ongoing support from caring adult.
  - Why: Being engaged in planning will help children develop needed skills for life after foster care and connect to safe supports outside “the system.”
  - Measure: Number of older children actively engaged in planning for life after foster care increases.
- Example 3: All children, age 14 and over, in foster care longer than 24 months appear in court.
  - Why: Children are involved and invested in plans for their future. Coming to court is an added protection that children’s voices are heard in planning.
  - Measure: Number of children, age 14 and over, appearing at every review hearing increases.

### **STRATEGY 2. Fostering Connections Requirements**

#### ✓ **Educational Stability and Planning**

- Example 1: Ensure there is one adult paying attention to the child’s educational stability and progress.
  - Why: This avoids the result of diffuse responsibility which is no one is responsible.
  - Measure: The court knows who the identified individual is and receives regular reports about the child’s education.
- Example 2: Agency and child’s guardian ad litem routinely report to the court on child’s educational stability and progress.
  - Why: Regular reporting and review help sustain efforts to maintain educational stability and achievement.
  - Measure: Agency and GAL reports always include updates regarding the child’s educational status.
- Example 3: Judge routinely enquires about child’s educational stability and progress.
  - Why: Judge’s interest helps sustain efforts to maintain the child’s educational stability and achievement.
  - Measure: Stakeholders report that judge routinely asks age-appropriate questions about the child’s educational status and progress.

✓ **Physical and Mental Health Needs of Children in Foster Care**

- **Example 1:** Ensure there is one adult paying attention to the child's health care, including communication among health care providers and those responsible for prescribing and administering medication.
  - **Why:** This avoids the result of diffuse responsibility which is no one is responsible.
  - **Measure:** The judge knows who the identified individual is and receives regular reports from this person about the child's health care.
  
- **Example 2:** Agency and child's guardian ad litem routinely report to the court on child's health care and inform the court of any medication related issues.
  - **Why:** Regular reporting and review help ensure child's physical and mental health needs are met including follow-up on all health-related recommendations.
  - **Measure:** Agency and GAL reports always include updates regarding the child's physical and mental health.
  
- **Example 3:** Judge knows about any psychotropic medications child is receiving and insists on appropriate consultation with a mental health professional.
  - **Why:** Court oversight assists with appropriate consideration by a mental health professional prior to administering psychotropic medication to any child in foster care.
  - **Measure:** Stakeholders report that judge asks about consultation with a mental health provider when children are prescribed psychotropic medication.

**STRATEGY 3: Finding Families to Reduce the Number of Children in Foster Care**

- **Example 1:** Non-custodial/non-resident parents are identified for every child.
  - **Why:** Planning for permanency must include both parents from the beginning of the child's placement.
  - **Measure:** Non-custodial/non-resident parents are personally served with a summons and petition for every CHIPS matter.
  
- **Example 2:** Relative search is begun early in the child's placement (some counties have figured out how to begin before placement).
  - **Why:** Early identification of relatives helps the agency to identify the best placement for the child, including the best legally-permanent home for the child, in the event the child cannot return home.
  - **Measure:** Judge makes reasonable efforts findings about relative search as required at three months of placement.
  
- **Example 3:** Relatives are involved in planning for the child and supporting the parent in using services, maintaining or building a quality parent-child relationship.
  - **Why:** Family involvement maximizes the parent's ability to engage in services and reunite with the child.
  - **Measure:** Agency reports routinely reflect relative involvement in supporting agency efforts at reunification.
  
- **Example 4:** Judge routinely inquires about relative search, relative placement, and plans for both reunification and a legally permanent alternative in the event the child cannot return home.
  - **Why:** Concurrent permanency planning, which is evidence-based practice, helps achieve timely permanency for children.
  - **Measure:** Number of children placed with relatives increases.

## Strategies Worksheet for Priorities for 2012-2013

**CJI Team County(s):** \_\_\_\_\_ **Date:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Name of CJI team member filling out worksheet:** \_\_\_\_\_ **Email address of team member filling out worksheet:** \_\_\_\_\_

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**STRATEGY 1. Achieving Timely Permanency For All Children in Foster Care**

*Strengths and challenges of your county's data related to this strategy:*

*Change(s) in practice, procedure, training, or other steps your team agrees to implement to improve an outcome for children:*

*How your team will measure whether the change is working:*

**STRATEGY 2. Fostering Connections Requirements**

✓ **Educational Stability and Planning**

*Strengths and challenges of your county's data related to this strategy:*

*Change(s) in practice, procedure, training, or other steps your team agrees to implement to improve an outcome for children:*

*How your team will measure whether the change is working:*

CJI Team County(s): \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Name of CJI team member filling out worksheet: \_\_\_\_\_

Email address of team member filling out worksheet: \_\_\_\_\_

✓ **Physical and Mental Health Needs of Children in Foster Care**

*Strengths and challenges of your county's data related to this strategy:*

*Change(s) in practice, procedure, training, or other steps your team agrees to implement to improve an outcome for children:*

*How your team will measure whether the change is working:*

**STRATEGY 3: Finding Families to Reduce the Number of Children in Foster Care**

*Strengths and challenges of your county's data related to this strategy:*

*Change(s) in practice, procedure, training, or other steps your team agrees to implement to improve an outcome for children:*

*How your team will measure whether the change is working:*