The Sauer Collaborative for
Child Well-being

Child Welfare Data and Data System Needs

One of the major levers that the child well-being collaborative's work identified and prioritized is data and data systems. In addition to having the key role of data and data systems being identified by the mapping work conducted at the beginning of the Sauer Family Foundation's initiative, the importance of having reliable data and a well-functioning data system was also noted in an assessment conducted by Casey Family Programs.

According to Casey Family Programs' 2015 assessment of Hennepin County's Child Protective Services (CFS), there were a large number of cases screened out. "Minnesota has one of the highest screen-out rates in the country at 71% of total reports and Hennepin County CFS screens out almost two-thirds of reports (63%)."[1] When the reviewers asked for a custom data pull, the data regarding CPS screened out reports was extremely limited and did not show re-report rates for screened-out cases which is an important indicator of child safety. The data received was…"in a complex structure, including 28 different worksheets with tens of thousands of records that all needed to be joined together in order to identify patterns."[2]

In addition, several advocates and researchers gave the opinion that the SSIS, the state's case record system, is less useful for tracking relevant indicators at a systems level. When asked about the Child Welfare Data Dashboard, they had a similar response. It is meant to be a public-information tool that tracks the 12 key federal indicators for safety and permanency. It gives ratings of Met or Not Met for each county and other high-level data on a quarterly basis.[3] The SSIS system and the Data Dashboard is not configured to measure child well-being or detect risks of maltreatment.

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[1] Ibid. Note that this data is from February 2015.
[2] Ibid.
[3] Note: The Child Protection Strategy work group report of 2015 lists updates to be made to SSIS and Child Data Dashboard (include well-being).

Developing a dedicated data unit or center that had the ability and nimbleness to capture complex data from diverse sources would be ideal for the entire State. This would allow CFS managers to understand system functioning and detect trends from various perspectives and detect risks to children and families before they enter the system.

Envisioning a Robust Data System that Supports Good Child Welfare System Outcomes

The table below provides an overview of a vision for functionality of a robust child welfare data system that would support good practice—including effective supervision, management, data-driving planning, and evaluation and monitoring—to promote child and family well-being. This vision was developed in the context of Minnesota's county-administered, state-supervised child welfare system. Recognizing the differing needs of various users of a data system, the table outlines functionality for front-line workers, supervisors and managers, and other key stakeholders such as the state agency (Department of Human Services), researchers, and others who partner with the child welfare system.

	Users of the System		
Functionality	**Front-line workers**	**Supervisors/Managers**	**Other stakeholders (e.g., DHS, researchers, etc.)**
Input	**Data to Include/Access** • Demographics – more granular for race & ethnicity (especially for Latino/Hispanic, include African nationals, country of origin when applicable) • Photos of client, evidence, etc. • Way to note interpreter needed • Data on socio-economic status of both families (biological family and foster family) • Data on biological family's housing situation (e.g., housing stability/instability) • Family finding searches/info (automated with prompts to keep checking with relatives) • Social history prompts throughout life of the case (reminders to gather/update information) • Genograms (ability to generate on laptop)	• Case assignment • Only have to put data in once and it doesn't have to be re-entered (more of a front line worker need) – holding data such as for life/social history for children • Better discharge codes/options (more/more detailed), being more explicit and specific about the circumstances at the time of case closing • Better options for work group closures • Budget tracking dashboard (e.g., showing how much money is left	

Functionality	Front-line workers	Supervisors/Managers	Other stakeholders (e.g., DHS, researchers, etc.)
	- Paternity info (child support) – access to paternity orders/info – prompts: are 2 parents identified in systems? - Info on foster parent and adoption recruitment and retention (inquiry to licensure and beyond); develop a spreadsheet of required activities so it would be easier to track where applicants are in the licensing process - Tracking information on child-specific adoption recruitment efforts - ICWA – ticklers (reminders to check status) – permanent "stamp" in record that shows tribe's determination once made - Ability to access info from other systems (e.g., education, health, corrections, etc.) - Connect with/pull in info from courts - Robust section on educational information (e.g., clearly identifying 504, IEP testing and results, IEP details, major testing results such as 3rd grade/8th grade proficiency scores, IQ testing, attendance, behavioral issues, interventions being used, etc.) **Tools and Prompts** - Robust autofill system - Ability to dictate (talk-to-text) into system (e.g., Dragon-type software) - Email signatures - Automated tools to support info gathering and assessments (practice prompts) – help build social history - See caseload at a glance and metrics - caseload dashboard	in specific accounts such as day care funds) •	

Functionality	Users of the System		
	Front-line workers	**Supervisors/Managers**	**Other stakeholders (e.g., DHS, researchers, etc.)**
	• Ability to copy or access case plans and other info within system <u>& sign</u> o Ability to send to clients, others – idea of SWIPPA (a social work portability act concept) • Devices for use in field – portable, light, good battery life • Automatic internal consistency checks/logic • All forms (state and local, especially Interstate Compact on the Placement of Children) electronic and available for electronic signature • Automated court filing/pre-hearing reports, etc. (appropriate content automatically generated with needed redactions; not having to manually redact) • Turbo taxify the data system—automated functionality, strong internal logic and prompts • Option for system being scalable (adjustable for complexity of each county's process, such as allowing more/fewer screens, adjustments based on work being spread across units or not, etc.) • Option for notification system to send automatic notice to other identified workers, including in other counties, to notify them when relevant information has been updated (e.g., Johnny's placement has changed, etc.)		
Output	**Data to Include/Access** • Ability to access info from other systems/share data easily across systems (specifically but not limited to: data contained MAXIS, adult and juvenile corrections, educational data, paternity/custody orders throughout the state)	• In-home cases – all listed below also for in-home • Ability to track outcomes at case closing (e.g. TPR, etc.) • Case tracking to make it easy to determine when cases were assigned	• Info on staff in counties (number of staff, roles, unit, etc.) • Ability to export all of it to Excel

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Functionality	**Front-line workers**	**Supervisors/Managers**	**Other stakeholders (e.g., DHS, researchers, etc.)**
	• Caseload dashboard (look at Safe Measures that Hennepin used to use) • Financial 　○ Reports showing value/$ generated by face-to-face visits, children's mental health tool 　○ Exporting all needed info/documentation for eligibility (e.g., for IV-E), for youth & parents, food stamps • Automated interaction with courts 　○ Thinking big for this functionality – interface with data for all types of court cases • Definition links and action links • Exporting case/social history to adoptive and kinship families • Overview of commonly used drugs prescribed for youth and adults 　○ Aggregated data on drug use trends in communities – align with public health • Embedded harm and danger statements as part of the transfer process from child protection investigations/assessment to case management to ensure the focus is continually on the same issues. • Info on child development stages (normal behavior, signs of trauma, etc.) 　○ Prompts on assessments to consider services, etc. • Definitions links – both good on SDM tools and on allegations part (would first have to sync the statutory language); understanding from what it says would be universal;	• Need access to a report to real time data to cross reference worker visits with risk level – by worker, unit, etc. • Ticklers to alert the supervisor that a case is open and hasn't had case notes in "X" days or case has been open for "X" in advance of permanency timelines. • Economic info/status on child/family, race/ethnicity, gender, age info included to help with looking at disparities; in all reports 　○ Language (noting interpreter needed) 　○ Tribal enrollment or eligible • Info on caseloads (by worker, point in time and trends, etc.) – can we weight cases for workload? (What info can we look at to discern workload so we can try to balance workload?) 　○ Ability to look back in cases for SDM level for a case over time (not just current risk level). May also want to have this information in a graph format for easier review.	or other external software • Info on household income of family • More detail on reasons for closure/discharge • Options for reports that aggregate granular data (e.g., have data elements on specific tribal membership but also have all cases aggregate "up" for data on total number of Native American children)

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	• Re-entry data: Want to know and get more clear so we know why we're getting the child back into care (much more detail for the re-entry report); easily identified total days in out-of-home placement (informing permanency timeline as part of an overall dashboard)
	• Health records – kept in separate data system currently; not easy for staff to check on health history of children – if moving to a child well-being model this is integral
	• ECFE data
	• Contact information for referring CPSW when CPSW makes an ECFE referral through SSIS (so the referral doesn't get lost when families move/schools don't have way to get the new address)
	
	Tools and Prompts
	• Positive prompts – highlighting progress toward goals, hitting high % of cases visited, etc.
	• Prompts/reports on prospective and current foster parents
	• Automated adoption paperwork (including sending to DHS)
	• ICPC – electronic file transfers
	    o Easier portability of data between counties (e.g. petitions done in other county)
	    o All critical documents included (e.g., psychological evaluations, diagnostic testing results, Rule 25 reports, etc.)
	• Appropriate levels of access to system to private agencies, as well as inclusion of their case noting into the system so when there has been a private provider who has provided
		o Span of supervision (caseload under each supervisor – both staff they are supervising and number of cases those staff have)
		• Outcome measures/reports on educational data for children (ed neglect, whether graduated, truancy, diversion, etc.) – answering questions: did attendance improve? Did they graduate? For program development/ improvement – bigger picture, not focused on individual cases
		• Have an agreed-upon child well-being tool (such as CANS) done every six months with graph tracking the child's progress towards greater well-being
		• Trend and aggregate reports on child well-bring (strengths & needs assessment)
		    o Able to split/analyze subsets to see whether children are doing better or worse over time
		• Worker dashboard – showing timeliness of data entry (case	

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	services to a client (CMH, PSOP) whatever work they have performed for the family and their documentation would be available to be viewed by county staff to ensure we're not duplicating the work already done or to see what was successful in the past
	• Trend by worker (performance by subsets of clients – getting at bias and disparities)
	• ICWA ticklers – prompting staff re: checking w/ tribes, ongoing practice/communication, placement preferences
	• Prompt: interpreter needed
	• Data integrity/quality assurance
	   o Functionality (including checking across systems)
	   o Automated file clearing across systems
	   o Automatic prompts to supervisors
	• Full auditability – see "fingerprint" tracking of everyone who viewed/modified a record
	• Tickler system for safe measures where you could have graphing and see where it is at a glance in terms of usability;
	• Tickler systems – identified them also for case plans, structured decision making tools, and also ticklers for court hearings and types of hearings; genograms and maybe have tools and mapping there that the state wants;
		notes, assessments completed, etc.)
		• Placement info (e.g. location, what is the placement, length of time, etc.)
		   o Easy accessible and up to date
		• Interface/link with shelter system to know where children are at all times
		• Tickler system/prompts for upcoming deadlines (esp. for items with financial implications)
		   o Manager/Director level
		      ▪ Looking at upcoming points AND lost $ (as way to improve claiming and reimbursements)
		• Info on all of the funding sources – how we're doing in claiming all $
		• Alert to remind staff to check/confirm ICWA eligibility	

Other Ideas	• Match/have continuity of language (across statutes/policy and the data system), specifically but not limited to: wording on allegations of child maltreatment • "Red tag" to note safety concerns (facing toward staff) • For all prompts/ticklers: have ability to distinguish "work stoppage issue" vs. less serious issues		• Have anonymous/ de-personalized records retained beyond the record retention timeline,

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	• More trauma informed lens throughout prompts/tools, etc. • Have restrictions on what kind of data can be entered into certain fields, in order to standardize data and make it easier to pull data (e.g., not allowing text in fields for numeric data, not allowing variations for writing cities (e.g., St. Paul and Saint Paul) but instead having check boxes for cities, etc.) • Child section – history of case info, workers in the youth's case, info from foster parents (photos, etc.) • Tracking of the social history—possibly a system that prevents a case moving to another area until certain areas are completed. Graphing of social history progress. • Ability to get electronic signatures on phone (provide access to a hot spot) • Soft phones aren't a great option; better to have good iPhones • Design the data system with an eye to the future (to address future needs we can't yet identify and to have flexibility to adapt what data elements we'll want and the kinds of response options we'll want, such as LGBTQ status of youth, non-binary gender options) • Ability to connect/integrate across data systems including having individuals' identifiers available across data systems and staff able to have appropriate levels of viewing access to other relevant data systems for a specific client		to have aggregate data available for longer periods