



# PATHWAY FORWARD

DFCS Child Welfare Procedures and Protocols  
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**Daniel Little, SSA Director**  
**Damion Wright, DFCS Director**  
**Kasey Halcón, Deputy County Executive**

The mission of Santa Clara County Department  
of Family and Children's Services is to keep  
children safe and families strong by partnering  
with their communities.



**MISSION**

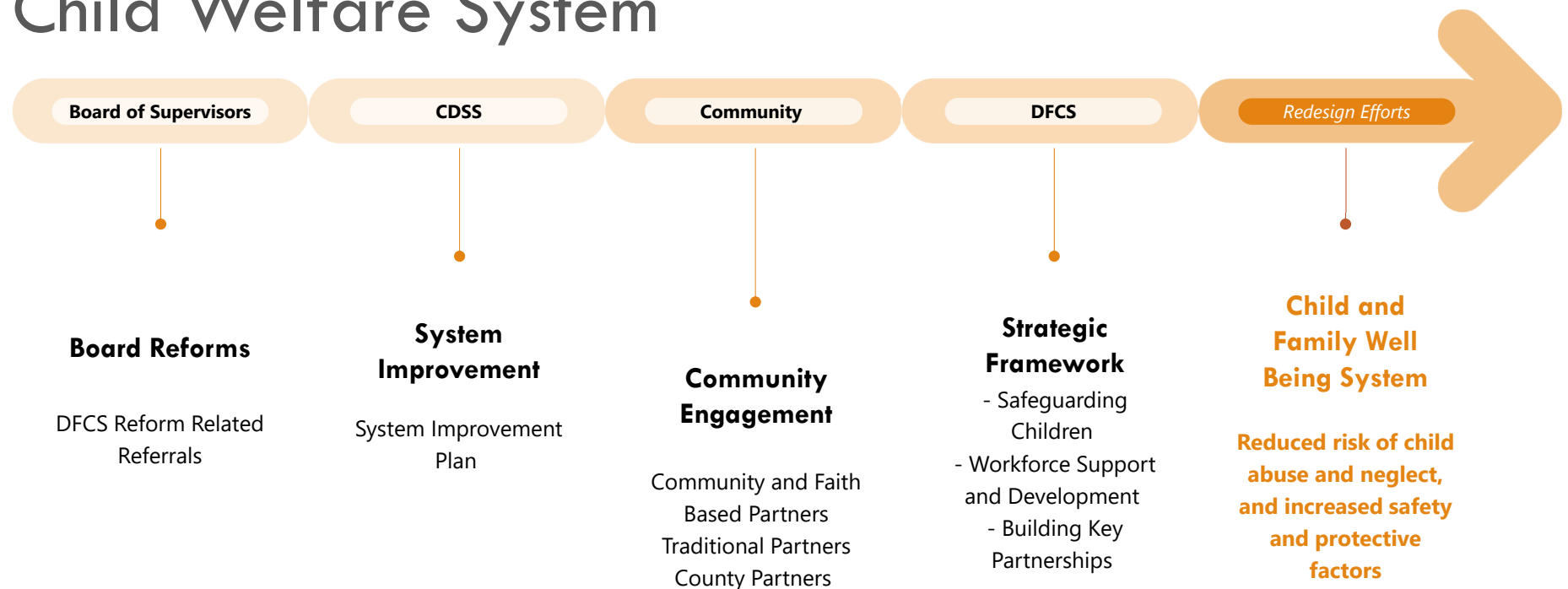


Protecting Children...  
Strengthening Families...  
Building Safe Communities.



PATHWAY FORWARD

# Redesign of SCC's Child Welfare System





PATHWAY FORWARD

# Redesign of SCC's Child Welfare System (cont...)

## Holistic Assessment

*Where can we improve our policies and practices as an agency to keep children safe, families strong, in partnership with communities?*

## Risk Assessments

*Who are the children and families that need the most support? What level of support do they need?*

## Data Driven Decisions

*What is the data telling us about our effectiveness and areas for improvement?*

## SDM

*How do we ensure a more effective and consistent approach?*

## Internal Processes

*How can we make our processes easier for staff to follow and better support complex work with families?*

## Partnerships

*How can we work more closely with communities to ensure safe children and stronger families?*

**SAFEGUARDING CHILDREN**

**WORKFORCE SUPPORT PARTNERSHIPS**



PATHWAY FORWARD: SAFEGUARDING CHILDREN

# Holistic Review of DFCS Policies and Procedures Supported by External Experts

*A holistic policy and practice review consistent with the direction from the Board of Supervisors, and reflecting state and national best practices identified by experts in the field of child welfare.*

## Further Refining Risk Assessments

*DFCS will be partnering with national experts to further refine our initial risk assessment approach, maximizing the accuracy of that particularly critical assessment to support child safety. This will include looking at County-specific risk and outcome data to improve our ability to identify the right intervention for each family from the beginning.*



PATHWAY FORWARD: SAFEGUARDING CHILDREN

# Federal Measures, Interim Direction and System Improvement

*In collaboration with CDSS, DFCS is updating its System Improvement Plan, which all counties update every 5 years. As part of this process, DFCS has been closely examining the County's outcomes under the federal child welfare measure "S2 – Recurrence of Maltreatment" and has made practice changes based on that assessment, which were reflected in the November 2023 Interim Direction.*

[Department of Family and Children's Services](#)





PATHWAY FORWARD: SAFEGUARDING CHILDREN

## Structured Decision Making

*DFCS is providing additional support, coaching, and training for staff regarding use of the state-mandated SDM tool, and has identified specific opportunities for standardizing policies and practices in a manner that is consistent with evidence-based best practices.*

Protecting Children...  
Strengthening Families...  
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PATHWAY FORWARD: WORKFORCE SUPPORT

# Improved Communication and Documentation

*DFCS is making important internal operational improvements, including:*

- 1. Communicating more effectively with DFCS staff, especially about our ongoing reform efforts,*
- 2. Revising the legal consultation workflow in partnership with our labor organizations, and*
- 3. Ensuring more thorough documentation in the state's child welfare database (CWS/CMS).*





PATHWAY FORWARD: BUILDING KEY PARTNERSHIPS

## County and Community Partnerships

*DFCS continues to build, grow, and sustain relationships with internal and external stakeholders to help shape child welfare strategies, increase partnerships on identifying areas of improvement, and help directly support vulnerable children and families.*



PATHWAY FORWARD

# Continuous Quality Improvement and Race Equity

- *Across all areas of our work, DFCS will be leveraging a Continuous Quality Improvement (CQI) framework – continuously assessing our practices to identify areas of improvement.*
- *This includes review of outcomes data to assess how our practice and approach is impacting disproportionality and advancing race equity.*

If you suspect child abuse...

**833-SCC-KIDS**



QUESTIONS?