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Volume II

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Information Management:  
A Critical Component of Good Practice in Child  
Abuse and Neglect Cases

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PERMANENCY PLANNING FOR CHILDREN DEPARTMENT

NATIONAL COUNCIL OF JUVENILE  
AND FAMILY COURT JUDGES

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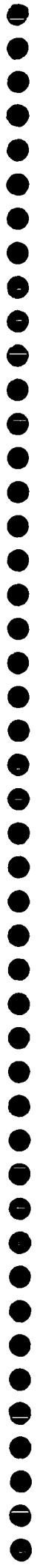
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Information Management:  
A Critical Component of Good Practice in Child  
Abuse and Neglect Cases

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## Table of Contents

Introduction	3
Key components for system change	5
What is information management?	7
The National Picture: Lessons from the Field	11
Information as a general strength of child abuse and neglect practice	12
Information as a general weakness of child abuse and neglect practice	13
Is there a case manager or court administrator responsible for tracking case progress?	17
Is there a computerized data system for spotting cases that have been seriously delayed?	19
How effective are current management information systems?	23
Information Management in the Model Courts	29
Individual dependency cases	30
Overall dependency caseload	31
Improving court practice	32
A CIPP Approach to Information Management	35
CIPP revisited	35
Context: Evaluating information needs	37
Input: Evaluating information management tools	44
Process: Facilitating change	45
Product: Evaluating utility and quality of information produced	49
Conclusion	51





## Introduction

Information management plays an essential role in improving child abuse and neglect case practice. Indeed, the ongoing process of systematically gathering and analyzing information that is accurate and meaningful to the court is a critical component of good practice and an absolute necessity for system change.

The phrase "information management" conjures up an image of large amounts of data being faithfully entered into a computer, then being analyzed, organized and reproduced as statistical reports that are disseminated to those who should read them, but do not always do so. This image, common though it may be, comes nowhere close to capturing the meaning or significance of "information management."

However critical, information management only finds its place within a context of overall good practice in terms of system capacity, process, and results. It is, as it were, the "plumbing" for the institutions in which child abuse and neglect practice reside. These institutions are driven by leadership, collaborative efforts, openness to learning and change, and a focus on good outcomes. Information management provides options for performance of critical system functions.

## Introduction

Good practice and systems improvement require leadership, commitment, vision, determination, and hard work. Although some inherent ability for change is found in all effective organizations, those organizations that have explicitly recognized system change as a necessity, both as a goal within itself and as part of a larger effort to achieve better outcomes, must actively work to maximize their capacity for change and their ability to deal with it appropriately. Child Victims Project Model Courts<sup>1</sup> around the country and, to a greater or lesser degree, state-based Court Improvement Projects, have identified key components for increasing their capacity and ability to improve the handling of child abuse and neglect cases. The effective management of information supports each of

### Key Components for Change

- ◆ Judicial Leadership
- ◆ Team as Leadership Core
- ◆ Embrace "Hard" Learning
- ◆ Accept Change as Inevitable in Learning
- ◆ Direct Improvement Activities Toward Better Outcomes for Children and Families

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1

In 1992, the National Council of Juvenile and Family Court Judges (NCJFCJ) established a national project to improve the processing of child abuse and neglect cases. As part of this project, a hands-on bench book, entitled: *RESOURCE GUIDELINES: Improving Court Practice in Child Abuse and Neglect Cases*, was developed and a limited number of model courts were identified. These model courts are committed to instituting best practice guidelines and, under the leadership of Model Court Lead Judges, each court is focusing on overcoming barriers to permanency, developing plans for court improvement, and working collaboratively toward systems change. For more information on the Child Victims Model Court contact the Permanency Planning for Children Department of the NCJFCJ, at (775) 784-6012; Fax (775) 784-327-5306; email: [ppp@ppp.ncjfcj.org](mailto:ppp@ppp.ncjfcj.org).

these key components. Access to relevant and reliable information provides both an impetus for change and a means for achieving change.

➔ ***Key components for system change***

◆ **Judicial leadership**

Effective courts which influence the agencies and communities around them have strong judicial leadership. Effective leadership requires vision; clear goals; a willingness to work with peers, superiors, and constituents; a good sense of the overall situation and context; the ability to adapt; good communication skills; and a commitment to action. Leadership empowers, motivates, and organizes people to achieve a common objective, and provides moral guidance.<sup>2</sup>

Effective leaders are informed. For example, effective leaders, involved in system change, need to know the scope and nature of the problem to be addressed, or at least recognize that the scope of the problem is unknowable (e.g., if no data has been previously collected). Effective leaders need to know if and how the court process is improving and whether or not benchmarks are being achieved. Effective leaders who are committed to good practice also need to know case-specific information, docket-specific information and system-wide information.

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For a more thorough discussion of the components of effective judicial leadership, and the link between effective leadership and effective practice, see *Judicial Leadership and Judicial Practice in Child Abuse and Neglect Cases*, NCJFCJ, July 1998, Vol. II, No. 5.

## **Introduction**

### **◆ Team as leadership core**

Beginning from the point of a committed judge, an effective court quickly assembles key system and community members into a team with capacity to implement improvements. These additional participants form a core of expertise and authority with a system-wide perspective that is essential for translating the vision for improved practice into a unified mission with measurable goals. The identification, implementation and realization of system-wide improvements necessitate an understanding of how information flows through the system, and how information is utilized at each point in the system, what the system-wide demands for information are, and how information can be translated and coordinated among the various components of the system.

### **◆ Embracing the "hard" learning**

The judge and leadership core in successful improvement efforts understand the importance of learning from experiences and sources which might not have been given full attention in the past. Court users and communities served by the system are invited to join with system insiders as partners for effective change in positive, meaningful ways. "Learning" becomes a primary, ongoing task within the improvement agenda, calling for increased information capacities and greater circles of involvement. The effective management of information within an organization facilitates organizational learning and promotes better decision-making and outcomes.

◆ **Directing improvement activities toward better outcomes for children and families**

Ultimately, the vision, learning and changes must result in definable improvements for children and families. Successful courts recognize that improvement must be measured in terms of system capacity to meet needs, processes that are responsible and respectful, case results that meet standards of good practice, and long-term benefit to children and families who come in contact with the child protection system. These improvements can be neither defined nor measured without good, reliable information. The vision and mission of the court drives information management practices — what information is collected, how it is collected, what purpose it will serve, and to whom it will be disseminated.

➔ ***What is information management?***

Information management is the *process by which information is managed*. It is the *process* by which discrete bits of information are made meaningful, relevant, and useful to the court — it is much more than mere data; it involves much more than computers.

*"How do you make data good? You make it useful. The information system is a tool to do that."*

Dr. Carol Burgess, Director (Retired) of Research and Planning, Maricopa County Juvenile Court (Phoenix, AZ)

## Introduction

It is important to distinguish the phrase "information management" from an "information management system." As noted, *information management is a process* by which pieces of information are made meaningful, relevant, and useful to the court. Information management is the storage and communication of information with the goal of maintaining and enhancing good practice. A management information *system* (e.g., a computer-based system) is a *tool* that helps to facilitate the overall process of managing information. This distinction is a critically important one, but because it is often misunderstood it bears repeating — information management is a process; a management information system is a tool. Failure to recognize and understand this distinction results in a technological trap of over-relying on computer-based systems. While a useful tool, a computer system alone will never fully accomplish effective information management.

### *Effective information management ...*

- ◆ facilitates better decision-making;
- ◆ facilitates organizational learning;
- ◆ facilitates internal capacity building;
- ◆ facilitates goal attainment; and
- ◆ facilitates systems change.

*"The old notion that knowledge is power is not lost on judges and court administrators who possess credible information. They understand that the person who manages the numbers possesses a lot of power. When the court is the organization holding reliable numbers, other agencies and the public come to the court for information. Reliable information also allows the court to hold the child welfare agency and other entities more accountable."*

Gene Siegel, Research Associate, National Center for Juvenile Justice

The goal of this *Technical Assistance Bulletin* is to illustrate a process by which courts and agencies can improve their information management capabilities. This goal is accomplished through an examination of the challenges faced and lessons learned from jurisdictions and Model Courts around the country and through the presentation of a model for evaluating and enhancing information management capabilities. Throughout the *Bulletin* quotes are provided by specialists who have worked hard to improve information management within their jurisdictions. The authors would like to extend their thanks to these information management specialists and to Gene Siegel, Research Associate, National Center for Juvenile Justice, for soliciting their quotes.





## **The National Picture: Lessons from the Field**

In November 1996, the Permanency Planning for Children Department of the National Council of Juvenile and Family Court Judges (NCJFCJ) began a research effort designed to identify existing statutes and actual court practice in the processing of child abuse and neglect cases. The research used three methodologies: (i) an analysis of all statutes concerning dependency proceedings; (ii) a mail-out questionnaire asking respondents specific questions about their state's statutes; and (iii) a lengthy telephone interview designed to elicit information on actual practice in a variety of areas related to court practice in each state. The results of the first two components of the research have been published by the NCJFCJ in prior *Technical Assistance Bulletins*. *TA Bulletins* addressing judicial leadership and representation as a key practice issue presented results of the telephone interviews.<sup>3</sup> This *Bulletin* on management information systems also presents data gathered during the telephone interview component of this research.

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For more information on these and other publications, please contact the Permanency Planning for Children Department, NCJFCJ, at (775) 784-6012; Fax (775) 327-5306; email: [ppp@ppncjfcj.org](mailto:ppp@ppncjfcj.org).

## The National Picture: Lessons from the Field

Court improvement specialists in 49 states<sup>4</sup> and the District of Columbia participated in the research. It is clear from the telephone interviews that these specialists view improving information management practice as a critical component of state court improvement efforts.

### ➔ *Information as a general strength of child abuse and neglect practice*

During the telephone interviews, court improvement specialists were given an opportunity to identify what they saw as the strengths of the overall system for processing child abuse and neglect cases in their states. Only three specialists chose to highlight how their state managed information as an overall strength. Each of these three specialists noted that the management information system in his or her state could track individual case progress as well as provide system-wide data. These specialists further reported that their case management information systems are in place on a state-wide basis.

**Lesson Learned:** Information can and should be managed on both an individual case level and a system-wide level.

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<sup>4</sup>

Wyoming was excluded from phases two and three of the research because it did not participate in a federally funded court improvement project to examine child abuse and neglect case processing.

➡ ***Information as a general weakness of child abuse and neglect practice***

Court improvement specialists were also asked a general question about the most problematic areas in child abuse and neglect practice in their state. While very few specialists identified how their state managed information as a strength, more than half (32 or 64%) mentioned that it was an area in need of improvement.

Table 1: General Weaknesses of Management Information Systems		
Problem Areas	#	Sample Comments
<b>Current Information Management System is Inadequate</b>	18	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• the current automation system is poor</li> <li>• our management information system is a real problem</li> <li>• our information tracking system only specifies the total number of cases and doesn't distinguish child abuse and neglect cases from delinquency cases</li> <li>• our case management system really needs work and people need training on how to use it efficiently</li> <li>• the system lacks the ability to track foster care drift and it is difficult to even identify problems</li> <li>• with the current system we are not able to detect where the barriers are to timely case processing</li> <li>• the system collects only limited information and nothing on an individual case basis, just information on the total number of cases in the system</li> <li>• the management information system is not available to individual judges</li> </ul>

**The National Picture: Lessons from the Field**

Problem Areas	#	Sample Comments
<b>No Automated System</b>	8	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• we need to implement a computerized data system to track cases</li> <li>• because we don't have an automated system in place for data collection we can't track docketing, upcoming reviews, or the overall status of children</li> <li>• automation is a critical need in this state</li> <li>• case management would be much more efficient if an automated system was in place</li> </ul>
<b>Lack of Uniform State-Wide System to Track Cases</b>	6	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• we do not have a state-wide picture as the automated system is only operable in limited jurisdictions</li> <li>• there is nothing state-wide for gathering and sharing information</li> <li>• each county is doing something different and there is a real lack of standardization; we need a uniform state-wide system</li> </ul>

***64% of court improvement specialists identified the management of information as one of the most critical areas in need of improvement in their state***

When reading the comments made by court improvement specialists around the country, it is important to note that the comments made by specialists in jurisdictions without an automated system and those made by specialists in jurisdictions with an automated system are very similar. Regardless of the level of automation, specialists are concerned about the lack of ability to collect, store, and communicate information in a way that is meaningful to the court and supportive of best practice. This is such a pervasive concern that it demonstrates an

important point: automation (computers) are not the critical component of effective information management.

**Lesson Learned:** The effective management of information is not a computer problem, it is a process problem.

**Lesson Learned:** Effective information management, and the utility and meaningfulness of the information produced, is dependent upon what information is collected and how it is collected.

**Lesson Learned:** The capability of a computer program is limited by its design — what information is entered, how it is entered, how it is organized, and so forth. Proper planning and assessment by the court and other users is essential.

**Lesson Learned:** The process for effectively managing information must produce information that is useful, relevant, and meaningful for those who rely upon it; as such, it facilitates informed decision-making and supports good practice.

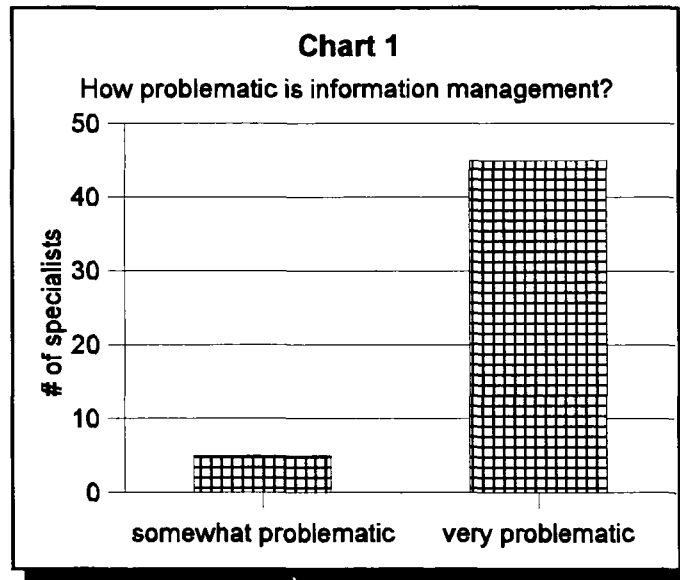
All of the specialists were also asked specifically to rate how problematic information management was in their state. Specialists were asked to rate information management on a scale from 0 (“not at all problematic”) to 10 (“extremely problematic”). Chart 1 (pg. 16) presents their ratings. For ease of presentation, the rating categories have been collapsed into three groups: relatively “non-problematic” (ratings of 0-2); “somewhat problematic” (ratings of 3-6); and “very problematic” (ratings of 7-10).

The vast majority of court improvement specialists consider the management information system to be *very* problematic in their states. The most common

## The National Picture: Lessons from the Field

rating given was a “9” (15 or 30% of specialists), closely followed by an “8” (12 or 24% of specialists). The average rating was “7,” at the low end of “very problematic.” It is worth noting that none of the specialists rated their management information system within the “not at

all problematic” range. Relatedly, all court improvement specialists were asked for their impressions of the timeliness of case processing in their states and to identify the primary reasons for delays. A few specialists (4 or 8%) specifically associated untimely court processing with poor information management.



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**“The primary reason for untimely outcomes is bad data — we can’t spot check to identify problems and we don’t know how many cases are out of time frames — we can’t troubleshoot.”**

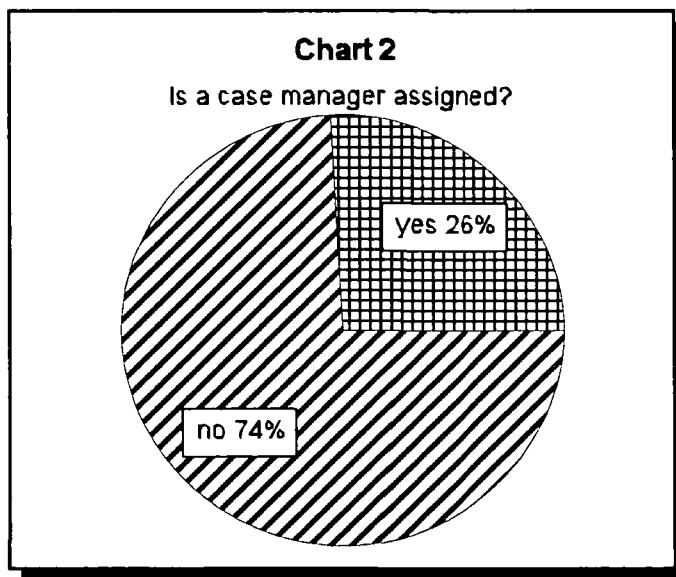
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**Lesson Learned:** Given the problematic nature of current management information strategies around the country, changes in the way information is managed are absolutely essential if child abuse and neglect case processing is to be improved and best practices enhanced.

➡ ***Is there a case manager or court administrator responsible for tracking case progress?***

Court improvement specialists were asked if there is a case manager or court administrator who is specifically responsible for keeping track of case processing at the various stages.

The majority of specialists (37 or 74%) reported that in their states no one was specifically assigned this duty. However, the majority of these 37 specialists (29 or 78%) did indicate that their state was in the process of creating such a position. Fourteen of the 37 specialists (38%)



mentioned that the lack of such a position was one of the primary problems associated with their management information system.

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**“Part of the problem is that no one is responsible for monitoring the system.”**

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## The National Picture: Lessons from the Field

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**“If a case manager was responsible for keeping track of case processing at all stages it would greatly improve the efficiency of the overall system, not to mention accountability.”**

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***Lesson Learned:*** Managing information effectively is as much a human process as a technological one, if not more so. Effective information management is people-driven, not computer-driven.

Thirteen (26%) specialists reported there was someone specifically assigned the responsibility of tracking case progress at the various stages of the process. This position was variously described as a “case coordinator,” a “case manager,” or a “courtroom coordinator.” Specific duties associated with this role included:

- “keeping track of temporary custody orders, case plans, out of home placements, and reviews, and then notifying the court;”
- “monitoring cases and flagging delays;” and
- “keeping track of various case processing related items as selected by the judge.”

However, of the 13 states assigning a specific person to monitor case progress, in most of these states (10 or 77%) this position was functional in limited jurisdictions only (e.g., rural or urban counties only, pilot courts, certain circuits).



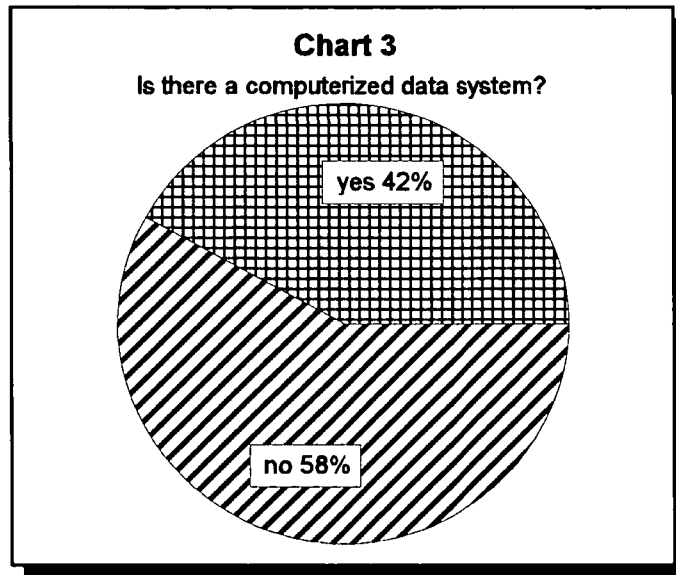
**Lesson Learned:** The assignment of responsibility to an individual for case coordination and information management is a critical component of effective information management.

**Lesson Learned:** Effective case coordinators are familiar with the court process and informed about the context and culture of the court.

**Lesson Learned:** The effective management of information focuses on the process, not just the numbers.

➔ ***Is there a computerized data system for spotting cases that have been seriously delayed?***

Just over half of state court improvement specialists interviewed (29 or 58%) reported there is no computerized data system for spotting seriously delayed cases in place in their state. However, some of these specialists (7 or 24%) indicated an automated system was in the planning or piloting stage in some jurisdictions.



## The National Picture: Lessons from the Field

When asked to describe how case delays are spotted if an automated system is not used, the majority of the 29 specialists (20 or 69%) reported that they relied on individuals such as court clerks or representatives (e.g., attorneys, guardians *ad litem*) to flag delayed cases and bring them to the attention of the court.

Comments describing some of the practices include:

- “we rely on someone knowing there is a delay, such as a clerk who is doing the scheduling or a GAL, and that they will notify the court;”
- “the circuit court clerk identifies problems and notifies the court, but there is nothing systematic or consistent in place;” and
- “clerks, attorneys, and guardians talk to the judge when problems associated with case progress arise.”

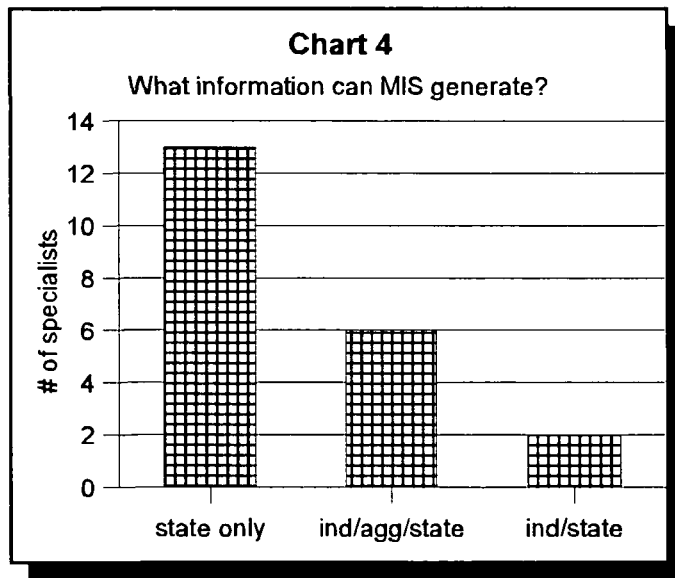
Almost half of the specialists interviewed (21 or 42%) reported that there is an automated case management information system operating in their state. However, in nine of these 21 states (9 or 43%) a computerized system is only operational in limited jurisdictions and does not function on a state-wide basis.

The 21 specialists who reported that there is a computerized data system for spotting delayed cases in their state were asked to describe that system. Specifically, specialists were asked whether the computerized data system was capable of collecting and analyzing information for individual cases, for aggregate caseloads by judge, and for the system-wide caseload (See Chart 4, pg. 21). Most of these specialists (13 or 62%) reported that the automated system in their state

The National Picture: Lessons from the Field

was capable of measuring case flow and generating general reports for the system-wide caseload only. Just six of these specialists (29%) indicated that the automated system in their state was capable of providing information about individual cases, aggregate caseloads by judge, and the system as a whole. Two specialists (10%) noted that the automated system in their state was capable of collecting and analyzing information for both individual cases and for the system-wide caseload, but not for aggregate judicial caseloads.

*Of the 21 states that have an automated management information system, the majority of states can only collect and analyze information at a general state-wide level.*



## The National Picture: Lessons from the Field

It is important to note that the reports generated and the information communicated differs depending upon whether the focus is on the individual case, aggregate judicial caseloads, or system-wide. The further the focus moves from the specific case, the more general the information becomes. Both case specific and more general information is meaningful and relevant, but it is important to recognize that the nature of the information, and the conclusions that can be derived from it, differ.

Additional comments describing the computerized management information system currently in place, and the type of statistics that can be generated, include:

*case-specific information*

- “We can tell what stage an individual case is at, including the average time for processing in that jurisdiction and around the state.”

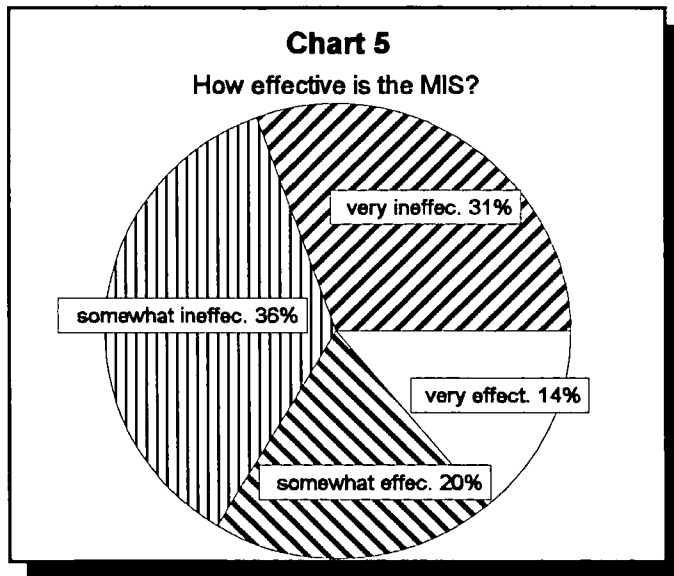
*aggregate-information (either by judicial docket or state-wide)*

- “The system can track how many abuse and neglect cases there are, as well as when periodic reviews are scheduled and when they occur.”
- “The program allows for tracking of cases against time lines, such as when cases come into the system and when orders are made.”
- “We can determine what cases are pending, what cases are disposed (and when), how many cases are scheduled for trial, as well as a list of significant dates.”

➡ ***How effective are current management information systems?***

Court improvement specialists were asked to rate the overall effectiveness of management information *systems* as “very effective,” “somewhat effective,” “somewhat ineffective,” or “very ineffective.” Eighteen specialists (36%) believe their state's management information system is “somewhat ineffective,” 15 (31%) believe that it is “very ineffective,” 10 (20%) believe it is “somewhat effective,” and only 7 (14%) specialists believe their management information system is “very effective.” (See Chart 5).

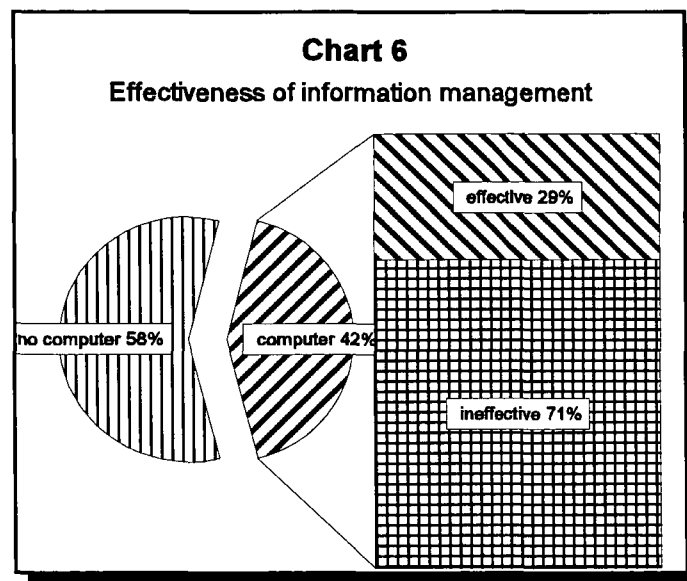
***Two-thirds of court improvement specialists rate their management information system as ineffective.***



## The National Picture: Lessons from the Field

Specialists' ratings of effectiveness were also examined in light of whether they reported that their state has a computerized information system or whether other procedures are in place. Of the 21 specialists (42%) reporting that their state has a computerized management information system, the majority (15 or 71%) rated the system as ineffective (9 specialists rating it as "somewhat ineffective" and 6 rating it as "very ineffective"). Only six of the 21 specialists (29%) believe their state's computerized management information system is effective (2 rating it as "somewhat effective" and 4 rating it as "very effective"). (See Chart 6).

**Lesson Learned:** Technology alone will not facilitate effective information management.



## The National Picture: Lessons from the Field

Responses of specialists who rated their computerized management information system as effective were also examined to determine if there were some features common to these systems. All six of the specialists who believed their state's computerized management information system is effective, also reported that the system is capable of providing information about individual cases, aggregate caseload by judge, and the system-wide caseload. Moreover, five of the six specialists rating their state's computerized management information system as effective, also reported that an individual (e.g., case manager, case coordinator) is assigned the responsibility of monitoring case progress.

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**“Our case tracking system is tremendous — it can track cases on an individual basis as well as cases by judge and for the system as a whole.”**

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***Effective management information systems:***

- *have standardized procedures for collecting data;*
- *collect data about individual cases, aggregate caseload by judge, and the system-wide caseload;*
- *assign an individual the responsibility of monitoring case progress; and*
- *are user-friendly.*

**The National Picture: Lessons from the Field**

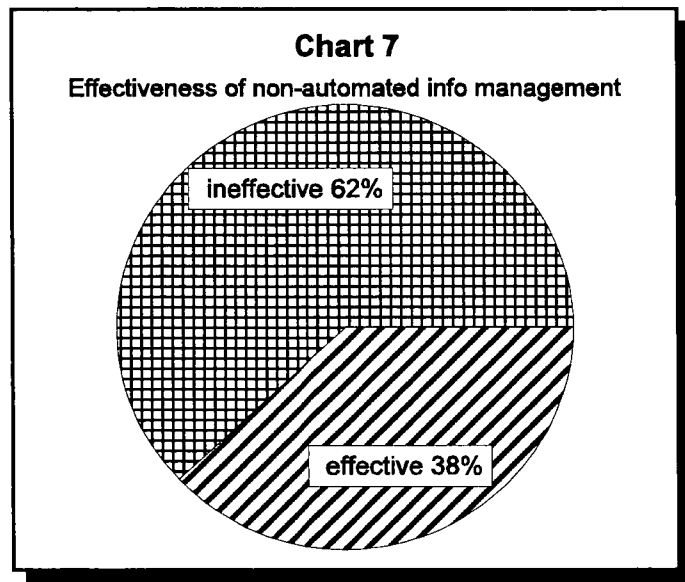
Ineffective computer management information systems were described as “lacking uniformity,” “unable to red flag delayed cases,” and “unable to collect information on individual cases or cases by judge.”

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**“Our system can’t define delay and it really lacks structure for information monitoring up until 18 months.”**

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Of the 29 specialists reporting that their state did not have a computerized management information system, most believed that their state’s system for tracking case progress was ineffective. Eighteen of the 29 specialists (62%) rated their state’s system as ineffective (9 rating it as “somewhat ineffective” and 9 rating it as “very ineffective”). Eleven specialists (38%) believe their state’s non-computerized management information system is effective (8 rating it as “somewhat effective” and 3 rating it as “very effective”). (See Chart 7).





Effective non-computer management information systems are described as “including individuals whose responsibility it is to track cases,” and “involving a rigorous manual review of cases.”

**Lesson Learned:** Whether computer-based or not, effective management of information involves individuals who are informed about system processing and who are responsible for tracking and reviewing cases.

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**“While our state doesn’t have an automated system, we have another safety net — ‘data auditors’ audit files in every court and make reports about case progress or lack thereof.”**

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Ineffective non-computer management information systems are described by these specialists as “relying on someone making a complaint about case delay to spot problems,” “non-systematic,” and “unable to provide specific information about aggregate caseloads or individual cases.”

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**“Unless a complaint is made no one would know of a problem.”**

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**“Although the circuit clerk officer identifies problems and notifies the court, there is nothing systematic and information obtained about case progress is inconsistent.”**

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***The National Picture: Lessons from the Field***

- ◆ The effective management of information is a critical component of good practice;
- ◆ Managing information effectively is as much a human process as a technological one — if not more so;
- ◆ The effective management of information is not a computer problem, it is a process problem;
- ◆ Technology alone will not facilitate effective information management;
- ◆ The effective management of information focuses on the process, not just the numbers;
- ◆ Determining what information is needed, and what information is missing, is critical;
- ◆ Effective information management, and the utility and meaningfulness of the information produced, is dependent upon what information is collected and how it is collected;
- ◆ The capability of a computer program is limited by its design — what information is entered, how it is entered, how it is organized, and so forth. Proper planning and assessment by the court and other users is critical;
- ◆ The process for effectively managing information must produce information that is useful, relevant, and meaningful for those who rely upon it; as such, it facilitates informed decision-making and supports good practice;
- ◆ Information can, and should, be managed on both an individual case level and a system-wide level; and
- ◆ Whether computer-based or not, effective management of information involves individuals who are informed about system processing and who are responsible for tracking and rigorously reviewing cases.

***Information management is the process by which information is managed. It is the process by which discrete bits of information are made meaningful, relevant, and useful to the court — it is much more than mere data.***

## Information Management in the Model Courts

As part of its *Child Victims Model Court Project*, NCJFCJ has designated model jurisdictions for observation of improvement efforts in handling child abuse and neglect cases. These model courts are actively implementing various measures aimed at improving court practice in child abuse and neglect cases and achieving safe homes for children and families.

Judges in the model courts were recently asked to complete a short questionnaire that asked questions pertaining to information used in decision-making.

Specifically, they were asked:

- In looking at *a particular case*, what information do you consider to determine whether you are satisfactorily or unsatisfactorily handling/moving the case?
- In looking at your *overall dependency caseload*, what information do you consider to determine whether you are satisfactorily or unsatisfactorily handling/moving cases?
- In looking at *improving court practice*, what information do you consider to determine what areas need improvement?

The information the judges consider in each of these areas is listed in the following sections.

➔ *Individual dependency cases*

**Individual dependency cases**

*Timing of Case Process:*

- Date of first appearance
- Dates of court petitions or motions (filing of original petition, petition for termination of parental rights (TPR), petition for adoption)
- Dates of service or notice to parties (mother, father, others)
- Dates of court hearings (by type of hearing)
- Dates of key court orders (adjudication, disposition, dismissal, TPR, adoption)
- Time to adjudicatory hearing
- Time to disposition
- Time to permanency plan hearing
- Number of court reviews
- Number and length of continuances
- Whether motions to modify original disposition are heard promptly
- Overall movement of case in accordance with statutory time frames
- Overall age of case

*Information on Related Court Proceedings:*

- Date of child's removal from the home
- Date of child's return home, or other permanency option
- Prior abuse and neglect proceedings involving the same child
- Other delinquency or status offense proceedings involving the same child
- Prior child abuse and neglect proceedings involving same parent or care giver
- Court proceedings involving a sibling or another child in the household
- Criminal proceedings involving parent or care giver
- Related civil matters (e.g., divorce, guardianship, domestic protection orders)
- Services provided to family
- Compliance with case plan/task completion
- Functioning of child (academically, physically, emotionally, socially)

*Information related to case plan and services:*

- Listing of services provided for family
- Compliance with case plan/detailed information on task completion
- School records, case reports

**Individual dependency cases (continued)**

*Legal and Factual Information:*

- Reasonable efforts/diligent efforts
- Number of placements child experienced in foster care
- Whether father located
- Kinship opportunities
- Whether child in permanency placement
- Requirements of case plan
- Compliance with case plan/task completion
- Date of each placement
- Permanency goal(s)

➔ ***Overall dependency caseload***

**Overall dependency caseload**

- Length of time to permanency/length of time in foster care
- Number of placements children experience in agency care
- Compliance with case plan and task completion
- Time frame from filing of petition to termination of parental rights
- Overall movement of cases in accordance with statutory time frames
- Number of judicial reviews prior to date of hearing
- Number and length of continuances
- Average overall age of cases
- Number of siblings added to active cases
- Whether there are more closures than openings
- The reasons for closure
- Number of open cases compared to new filings
- Increases or decreases in the number of children involved in court's docket
- Overall increase in number of adoptions heard and granted
- Overall reduction of the number of children in foster care
- Number of transfers from county to state
- Availability of services

## Information Management in the Model Courts

### ➔ *Improving court practice*

#### Improving court practice

- Movement of cases in accordance with statutory time frames
- Types of permanency offered children
- Number of prior reports to abuse hotline when case opened or reopened
- Ambiance of court (e.g., child friendly, respectful of parties)
- Simplification and unification of court documents and proceedings
- Competency of court staff and service providers
- Identification of permanency barriers
- Minimization of number of transfers of responsibility
- Increase/decrease in number of cases
- Number of children further harmed while under court's jurisdiction
- Increase/decrease in number of adoptions
- Timeliness and quality of guardian *ad litem* and department reports
- Number of cases on daily calendar
- The rate at which children in temporary custody achieve permanency
- The time in which the initial disposition of the case is reached and the time in which motions to modify initial dispositions are heard
- The length of time children remain in permanent custody before final adoptions are achieved
- Number of terminations
- Waiting time outside each courtroom
- Number of scheduled hearings not completed for specific reasons
- Number of continuances and length of continuances
- Comfort level of judges
- Available wrap-around services
- The rate at which children enter the non-permanent legal status of long-term foster care
- Attitude of line staff incorporating change
- Comments from all interested parties (agency concerns, public defender concerns, bar committee concerns, etc.)

## Information Management in the Model Courts

It is important to note that the Model Court Lead Judges do not rely solely on discrete data points to inform their decision-making. Rather, the judges base their decision-making on a wide range of data elements that have been combined to provide meaningful information. It is this process of collecting, organizing, and combining data in a way that the information produced is meaningful and relevant to the court, that underscores the importance of an effective information management *process*.

It is also important to note that meaningful information facilitates decision-making at multiple levels — from specific cases, to dependency dockets, to overall court improvements efforts. Information can also be quantitative (e.g., numbers and statistics) or qualitative (e.g., social functioning of the child).

**Lesson Learned:** Information management procedures should reflect the values and mission of the court (e.g., timely permanency).

**Lesson Learned:** It is important to be able to answer the “big questions.” This requires knowing what the “big questions” are, being able to break them down into smaller questions, and being able to identify the information necessary to provide answers.

**Lesson Learned:** It is how information is made meaningful to the court, the agency, the community, and, most importantly, to the children and families, that is critical.

**Lesson Learned:** Information that supports good practice and good outcomes is meaningful to children and families.

## Information Management in the Model Courts

### *Lessons from the Model Courts*

- ◆ Informed judicial decision-making is based upon a wide range of data elements that have been combined to provide meaningful and relevant information;
- ◆ Meaningful information informs decision-making at multiple levels - from specific cases to dependency dockets, to overall court improvement efforts;
- ◆ Meaningful information management provides both quantitative and qualitative information;
- ◆ Information management procedures should reflect the values and mission of the court;
- ◆ It is important to be able to answer the “big questions.” This requires knowing what the “big questions are,” the ability to break them down into smaller questions, and the ability to identify the information necessary to provide answers;
- ◆ It is how information is made meaningful to the court, the agency, the community, and, most importantly, the children and families, that is critical;
- ◆ Information that supports good practice and best outcomes is meaningful to children and families.



## The CIPP Approach to Information Management

The lessons learned from the national picture and the Model Court Lead Judges must be kept in mind when developing or improving an information management system. These lessons underscore the importance of a careful process of planning, implementation, evaluation, and modification.

In the *Technical Assistance Bulletin* entitled “*Program Evaluation: What Is It and Why Should You Do It?*,”<sup>5</sup> readers were introduced to the “CIPP” model of program evaluation. This model also proves useful for evaluating and improving current information management processes and for developing new information management processes.

### ➔ *CIPP revisited*

The CIPP model is based upon the view that *the most important purpose of evaluation is to improve the functioning of a program*. This purpose is shared with information management, too. The CIPP model is intended to help program leadership and personnel to systematically collect information about their program

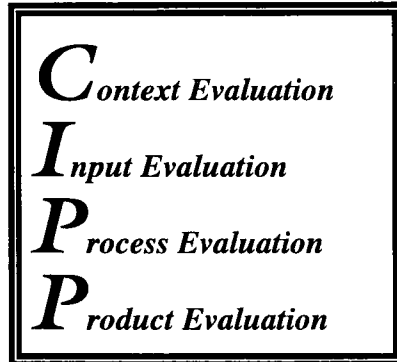
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*Program Evaluation: What Is It and Why Should You Do It?*, National Council of Juvenile and Family Court Judges, April 1998, Vol. II, No. 4.

## The CIPP Approach to Information Management

and to use that information as programs are implemented and carried out. "CIPP" refers to the four phases of information appraisal: (1) **C**ontext evaluation; (2) **I**nput evaluation; (3) **P**rocess evaluation; and (4) **P**roduct evaluation.<sup>6</sup>



### CIPP and Information Management

**Context Evaluation:** What information is currently being collected? What information should be collected but is not? What is the goal for good child abuse and neglect practice? Does the way in which information is currently managed reflect the vision and goals of the court?

**Input Evaluation:** Are the tools, strategies, and practices currently being utilized to manage information adequately addressing the information needs of the court? Why or why not? What modifications need to be made?

**Process Evaluation:** How should new procedures and processes be introduced into the court and how is buy-in encouraged of all stakeholders? How can the change process be facilitated?

**Product Evaluation:** Are reports providing useful and meaningful information for the court? Will management information processes be able to meet changing needs of the court?

<sup>6</sup>

Stufflebeam, Daniel L. (1987). "The CIPP Model for Program Evaluation." In G.F. Madus et al., (Eds). *Evaluation Models: Viewpoints on Educational and Human Services Evaluation*. Boston: Kluwer: Nijhoff Publishing.

➡ ***Context: Evaluating information needs***

When conducting an overall program evaluation, the context evaluation is equated with a needs assessment — What is the identified need? Does the identified need accurately capture the scope of the problem being addressed? Are the goals, objectives, and priorities of the court improvement effort adequately attuned to identified needs?

When referring to the management of information, a context evaluation is more a specialized type of needs assessment — in this case, *information needs*.

Conducting a careful and thorough review of what information is currently needed, what information is collected, and what information is needed but not collected, is critical. It is also important to consider how information flows through the court and related organizations. In order to conduct such a context evaluation it is, therefore, necessary to clearly identify the current practices and processes in the court.

*"It is critical to know the process in your court before you determine what you should collect and how that information should flow."*

Dr. Carol Burgess, Director  
(Retired) of Research and  
Planning, Maricopa County  
Juvenile Court (Phoenix,  
AZ)

## The CIPP Approach to Information Management

The goal of an evaluation of information needs is to determine what information is available, what information is not available, what information is currently collected, what information is not currently collected, and what information should be collected. Informational needs will be driven by: the values and mission of the court; the decision-making and policy needs of the court and related agencies; and reporting needs.

### Context Evaluation

- ◆ Identify current practices and processes;
- ◆ Consider how information flows through the court and related agencies;
- ◆ Evaluate current data collection tools and procedures;
- ◆ Evaluate the meaningfulness and utility of reports currently generated;
- ◆ Evaluate what information is needed, but currently not collected;
- ◆ Identify the goals for child abuse and neglect practice; and
- ◆ Evaluate whether current information management procedures reflect and support the values and mission of the court.

## The CIPP Approach to Information Management

*Assessments should be made as to what is known, what is not known, and what should be known.*

*"You have to know what you are collecting now, how it is being collected, and how it flows through your organization and other organizations. If you don't do this your organization cannot keep pace with change. You need to look at every process under a microscope and do a detailed system analysis ... it all comes to light."*

Lisa Portune, Supervisor, Dependency Dept., Hamilton County Juvenile Court (Cincinnati, OH)

However, it is not enough to just evaluate current data collection, analysis, and reporting practices. It is also important to identify and acknowledge the underlying values and mission of the court — the values and mission of

*"Sometimes the data tell you that your assumptions are wrong, and that's not bad. It is a simple matter of acknowledging that, recognizing what the data say, and then making an honest commitment to do something about it."*

Ernie Garcia, Director of Juvenile Court Services (Retired), Maricopa County Juvenile Court (Phoenix, AZ)

the court should drive decisions made about what data is collected, how it is collected, what purpose it will serve, and to whom it will be disseminated. Also consider the goals for child abuse and neglect practice — what court purpose will be served by access to timely, relevant, and reliable information? There may be multiple goals aimed at different levels of the system — from case-specific, to docket-specific, to system-wide. Recognizing and acknowledging these goals up front will facilitate the development of more effective and meaningful information management procedures and processes.

## The CIPP Approach to Information Management

### ◆ Sources of information for establishing court information needs

If information is to be meaningful and useful to those who use it, then it is important to find out what information various stakeholders collect, what information they need, how that information is and will be used, and how it fits into the overall flow of information through the court and related organizations.

It is not necessary that stakeholders be

technologically sophisticated. It is necessary, however, that they be informed about the court process, be aware of information needs, understand how the information will be used, and be able to make the process meaningful.

*It is important to talk with judges, administrators, court and agency personnel, and workers to discover what the information needs are.*

*"All staff from top to bottom have to be involved in the process."*

Bill McCarthy, Past Director of Research and Planning, Maricopa County Juvenile Court (Phoenix, AZ)

*"We were smarter than most when we started getting into this. We called other courts and organizations to see what they had tried and what had failed. We asked basic questions: What did you do that was really good? What did you do that was really bad? And, what would you do differently if you had to do it over again?"*

Ernie Garcia, Director of Juvenile Court Services (Retired), Maricopa County Juvenile Court (Phoenix, AZ)

*"You describe real life situations to workers, judges, and others, and ask what they would like to happen or see. Instead of deciding on a report or data file format, you engage in a real life conversation."*

John Barrett, Director of Research and Planning, Maricopa County Juvenile Court (Phoenix, AZ)

## The CIPP Approach to Information Management

### ◆ An assessment of what information is currently available

A great deal of information may be already available in court records, agency reports, assessment reports, and the like. For example:<sup>7</sup>

#### *Child: Identifying Information*

- Child's name
- Child's case number
- Ethnicity of child
- Child's date of birth
- Names of mother, father, and foster parent
- Presenting problem (e.g., physical abuse, sexual abuse)

#### *Court: Identifying Information*

- Judicial district
- Name(s) of judge(s) hearing case
- Judicial identification numbers
- Names of representatives and dates of first appearance
- Representative identification numbers

#### *Dates of Key Events*

- Date of first appearance
- Dates of court petitions or motions (filing of original petition, petition for TPR, petition for adoption)
- Dates of service or notice to parties (mother, father, others)
- Dates of court hearings (by type of hearing)
- Dates of key court orders (adjudication, disposition, dismissal, TPR, adoption)
- Date of child's removal from the home
- Date of child's return home, or other permanency option

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7

Adapted from Hardin, M. (1997). "Creating Straightforward Automated Support for Child Abuse and Neglect Cases in the State Courts." *American Bar Association*

## The CIPP Approach to Information Management

### *Other Related Court Proceedings*

- Prior abuse and neglect proceedings involving the same child
- Other delinquency or status offense proceedings involving the same child
- Prior child abuse and neglect proceedings involving same parent or care giver
- Court proceedings involving a sibling or another child in the household
- Criminal proceedings involving parent or care giver
- Related civil matters (e.g., divorce, guardianship, domestic protection orders)

### *Final Disposition of Case*

- Disposition (returned to the home, TPR/adoption, permanent placement with guardian, child reaches age of majority)

### *Service Provisions*

- Requirements of case plan
- Compliance with case plan/task completion
- Reasonable Efforts

Recall that the goal of an evaluation of information needs is to determine what information is available, what information is not available, what information is currently collected, what information is not currently collected, and what information should be collected. Informational needs will be driven by:

- the values and mission of the court;
- the decision-making and policy needs of the court and related agencies; and
- reporting needs.



## The CIPP Approach to Information Management

It is also important to consider how information available from disparate sources can be translated, coordinated, and accessed by multiple system players. Recall that the information relied upon by Model Court Lead Judges to evaluate case processing on individual dependency cases and overall dependency dockets, and to assess court improvement efforts, typically involved multiple sources of data combined in a meaningful way. Ultimately, the goal of a context evaluation is to determine what information is meaningful, useful, and relevant to the court.

### ***Considering Context***

1. Identify the values and mission of the court;
2. Identify the court process generally, as well as how information currently flows through the court and related organizations;
3. Identify at which points in the court process information is already being collected;
4. Identify statistics and reports already being generated;
5. Evaluate information that is already being collected; and
6. Evaluate statistics and reports that are already being generated.

#### ***Then ask yourself ...***

- ◆ ***What information is missing?***
- ◆ ***What should be known, but currently is not known?***
- ◆ ***How can it be ensured that the values and mission of the court are reflected in information management practices?***

➡ ***Input: Evaluating information management tools***

Within a general program evaluation, the input evaluation is designed to assess the extent to which program strategies, procedures, and activities support the goals and objectives identified in the needs assessment and context evaluation. The overall purpose of an input evaluation is to help program administrators consider alternative strategies and procedures and to ensure that strategies chosen properly address the assessed needs, as well as the goals and objectives of the program or court.

When discussing an input evaluation of information management in the child abuse and neglect court, the goal is much the same. That is, are the tools and strategies currently being used to identify, collect, analyze, and organize information adequately addressing the information needs of the court? If the information needs of the court are not being met, then a new plan of action needs to be developed — new or additional processes of managing information need to be considered.

It is important to review current information management practices — whether they be based on paper documents, computerized data systems, some informal practice, or some combination of the three. Each information management tool (e.g., forms, data entries, reports) currently in use needs to be assessed to determine how it is currently utilized and by whom, what function it serves and whether it is serving that function appropriately, how it is processed through the dependency system, and how it can be modified and improved upon. If particular information management practices seem to be working well, then they should be

## The CIPP Approach to Information Management

incorporated or updated into a new management process. If some management tools are not working well, it is important to discover why so that pitfalls and problems associated with that particular process or tool can be minimized and not duplicated.

If the court utilizes a centralized department for managing information, it is also important to consider where the information management unit will be physically located.

*"Where the research and planning unit was located organizationally and physically were important considerations. Where you actually put the unit in the building and where you put it on the organizational chart shows what the court thinks of information and research. Our unit was located right next to the court director's office. That spoke volumes."*

Dr. Carol Burgess, Director (Retired) of  
Research and Planning, Maricopa  
County Juvenile Court (Phoenix, AZ)

The location and staffing of the unit with primary responsibility for managing information may influence what information is collected, how adequately information needs are addressed, the extent to which the vision of the court is reflected in management practices, and the extent to which the information is available to those who utilize it.

### **Process: Facilitating change**

An assessment of process is a critical aspect of program implementation. General process evaluation is the continual assessment of the implementation of the action plan developed; it is an ongoing and systematic monitoring of the program. A

## The CIPP Approach to Information Management

process evaluation provides information that can be used to guide the implementation of program strategies, procedures, and activities, as well as a means to identify successes and failures. Ultimately, a process evaluation will help refine program activities and ensure that activities are tied to both the needs of the court and the relevant community, as well as to the desired outcome of the program.

For information management, process evaluation entails ongoing and systematic monitoring of the procedures by which new management information strategies and tools are introduced into the court, how well they work, how buy-in is facilitated, and how the change process is supported.

Not surprisingly, the steps necessary to facilitate change in information management practices and buy-in on the part of stakeholders, incorporate the same key elements as those necessary for systems change.

### ◆ **Judicial leadership**

A court cannot build the internal capacity to produce and use meaningful information without support from the lead or presiding judge. Simple recognition of the need for reliable data is not enough. The lead judge must make the production

*“How do you overcome staff opposition or the bunker mentality? Start with the presiding judge. Once the presiding judge becomes positive and supports research and management information, the staff will get there.”*

Ernie Garcia, Director of  
Juvenile Court Services  
(Retired), Maricopa County  
Juvenile Court (Phoenix, AZ)

## The CIPP Approach to Information Management

and use of good information top priorities for the court. The presiding or administrative judge sets the tone for the court. This should be clearly communicated through all levels of court personnel. Moreover, if the judge actually uses the management information procedures, then his or her commitment to good, reliable information is clearly demonstrated and an example is set for all system professionals. The lead judge should also regularly attend core group meetings to reinforce the importance of the process and its goals.

### ◆ Team approach

Once court leadership has confirmed the need for better information and made it a top priority, a core group of stakeholders should be formed to develop alternative management strategies and implementation plans. Ideally,

collaborative teams should include active consumers and producers of information. After commitments are obtained from key decision-makers (including judges), group membership should be heavily weighted toward line staff, including court intake workers, court clerks, case managers, bailiffs, data entry personnel, judicial assistants or secretaries, and others who handle and use information.

*"We had and still have a tremendous amount of collaboration. A subcommittee of our executive coordinating council made up of people from the court, the agency, service providers, and others is an ongoing group that really gets things going."*

Ron Apol, Division Director,  
Permanency Planning Division, Kent  
County Juvenile Court (Grand Rapids,  
MI)

## The CIPP Approach to Information Management

### ◆ Accommodating change

The culture of the court, leadership, and collaborative efforts must accommodate change, recognize the importance of change, and embrace learning from change by all system professionals.

### ◆ Research and development

The location and staffing of information management units (whether computer-based or not) are important

considerations. Distancing and

isolating the unit from

information users operates against

communication, accountability,

and accessibility. Specialists from

around the country agree that one

individual should be appointed to

serve as the information

coordinator. One of the

coordinator's primary tasks is to translate jargon and statistics into meaningful and

relevant information for the court. It is also of critical importance that the

information coordinator be knowledgeable about the process and be aware of the

values and mission of the court.

*"It is imperative to have one person oversee the research and planning or MIS unit. Not just someone who understands statistics, but someone who can also translate them into language that means something to the community. If you have four or five people doing that it gets fragmented. If you have one spokesperson it directs accountability."*

Lisa Portune, Supervisor,  
Dependency Department,  
Hamilton County Juvenile  
Court (Cincinnati, OH)

*"You have to let management information system and research people, whether they are internal staff or outsiders, know what the philosophy of the court is, the process a child goes through, what the court does to achieve the primary objective - permanency. Any human can relate to that. Everyone can understand it and that it is what child welfare is all about."*

Ron Apol, Division Director,  
Permanency Planning Division,  
Kent County Juvenile Court (Grand  
Rapids, MI)

◆ **Facilitating buy-in**

Through the leadership of the presiding judge, collaborative team work, and the active solicitation of input from people throughout the system, buy-in is facilitated. Moreover, management information staff should be, and should be perceived to be, active participants in the process who are committed to the same values and goals as other system professionals. And, by ensuring that the information generated is timely, meaningful, relevant, and accessible to those who use it, buy-in is greatly enhanced.

*"It is so important to have staff who know and buy into the court system. When we hired a new person for our research unit we sent them out to the field and had them work throughout the system to give them contacts with line staff and to give line staff the opportunity to get to know them. This was indoctrination to get them to buy into what the court was all about. It does not take much to get staff to care about dependent children. By making this part of the staff orientation you get your researcher, the workers, the judge, and others all facing in the right direction."*

Dr. Carol Burgess, Director (Retired) of Research and Planning, Maricopa County Juvenile Court (Phoenix, AZ)

➔ ***Product: Evaluating the utility and quality of information produced***

The purpose of a product evaluation is to measure, interpret, and assess the extent to which court improvement efforts have achieved their short-term and long-term goals. A product evaluation examines both intended and unintended consequences of improvement efforts.

## **The CIPP Approach to Information Management**

A product evaluation of information management focuses on whether the reports being generated through new information management procedures adequately address the information needs of the court. It is therefore important to continually compare the information generated to the informational needs identified — Can questions be answered? Are gaps in information being filled? It is also important to institute quality assurance procedures. For example, ensuring that data is collected and recorded/entered accurately, that reports reflect accurate information, and that inconsistencies in information among and between courts and agencies are identified and resolved. Quality assurance also relates to an assessment of whether or not the management information procedures are enabling information goals to be accomplished and information capabilities to be expanded.

It is also important to ensure that the information management process is adaptable enough to accommodate changes in practice, the law, and informational needs. As discussed in the introductory chapter, in order to realize systems change an organization must be explicitly prepared to deal with and embrace operational change.

The various components of the CIPP model are not meant to be followed in a lock-step fashion from start to finish. Rather, the model is fluid and it is expected that in following such an approach, courts will move back and forth among the evaluation steps. It is only through such an ongoing process that organizational learning occurs.



## Conclusion

This *Technical Assistance Bulletin* has discussed how information management plays a critical role in improving child abuse and neglect case practice and in bringing about the realization of system change. Effective information management — that is, the effective storage and communication of information to accomplish good practice — supports and facilitates the key components to system change: judicial leadership; collaborative team efforts; an openness to learning and change; and a concentrated focus on best practice and outcomes for children and families. The need to manage information effectively provides both an impetus for change and a means for achieving change.

Remember, information management is the *process by which information is managed*. It is the process by which discrete bits of information are made meaningful, relevant, and useful to the court — it is much more than mere data; it involves much more than computers. It is important to realize that technology (especially computers) is only a tool that helps to facilitate the overall process of managing information. As the results of the national study

### ***Effective information management:***

- ◆ facilitates better decision-making;
- ◆ facilitates organizational learning;
- ◆ facilitates internal capacity building;
- ◆ facilitates goal attainment; and
- ◆ facilitates systems change.

## Conclusion

clearly illustrate, information management is a people-driven system, not a computer-driven system. Technology alone will not ensure effective information management. It is the process of collecting, organizing, and combining data in a way that produces meaningful and relevant information for the court, that underscores the importance of effective information management. The well-planned process of deciding what information to collect, how to organize it, how to combine it, and how to reproduce it in a meaningful and relevant way is essential for developing effective information management strategies. In an effective learning organization this process is cyclical and ongoing.

The CIPP model provides an approach for systematically identifying the informational needs of the court (or agency, or system) and evaluating whether those needs are being met by current information management practices. The model also provides an overall approach to implementing changes and facilitating buy-in from system professionals.

A *context* evaluation of information management practices involves a thorough review of what information is currently needed, what information is collected, and what information is needed but not collected. As part of a context evaluation, the flow of information through the dependency system must be carefully reviewed and charted, and the vision and mission of the court must be recognized. Sources of information must be identified and evaluated, and thought must be given to how information from disparate sources can be gathered, organized, and made meaningful.

An *input* evaluation focuses on the adequacy of existing information management tools and practices for meeting assessed informational needs. Both effective and ineffective tools and practices must be identified. Consideration must also be given to the organizational structure and physical location of the primary unit responsible for managing information. The unit should be staffed and located in such a way that it facilitates information sharing and buy-in.

**Context Evaluation:** What information is currently being collected? What information should be collected but is not? What is the practice goal of effective storage and communication of information? Does the way in which information is currently managed reflect the vision and goals of the court?

**Input Evaluation:** Are the tools, strategies, and practices currently being utilized to manage information adequately addressing the information needs of the court? Why or why not? What modifications need to be made?

**Process Evaluation:** How should new procedures and processes be introduced into the court and how is buy-in encouraged of all stakeholders? How can the change process be facilitated?

**Product Evaluation:** Are reports providing useful and meaningful information for the court? Will management information processes be able to meet changing needs of the court?

A *process* evaluation involves ongoing and systematic monitoring of new management practices and how they are implemented. A proper process evaluation should assess the role of judicial leadership, collaborative efforts, research and development in facilitating and accommodating change. And, finally, a *product* evaluation focuses on the utility and quality of the information produced and whether or not new information management practices are resulting in desired outcomes.

## Conclusion

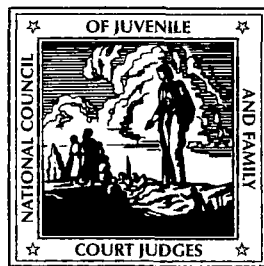
The CIPP model fosters organizational learning and internal capacity building. The model rests on the assumption that the goal is to improve what is being done to achieve best practice and better long-term outcomes. Such an approach institutionalizes change into the court improvement effort.

*"Until you get your house in order and have a way to track your own decision-making, you cannot expect respect from others. You need to open yourself up to what you are doing. It is the process to improve, having the ability and self-confidence to look at ourselves and see what we are doing and change what we need to."*

Ron Apol, Division Director, Permanency Planning Division, Kent County Juvenile Court (Grand Rapids, MI)

For additional copies of this *Technical Assistance Bulletin*, please contact the Technical Assistance Group at the Permanency Planning for Children Department, National Council of Juvenile and Family Court Judges: (775) 327-5300; FAX (775) 327-5306; [tadesk@pppncjfcj.org](mailto:tadesk@pppncjfcj.org) Overhead transparencies of the tables and charts contained in this publication are available at a nominal cost.

**NATIONAL COUNCIL OF JUVENILE AND FAMILY COURT JUDGES**



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