"DCF(S) STANDS FOR *DIVIDING* AND *CONQUERING FAMILIES*": HOW THE FAMILY POLICING SYSTEM CONTRIBUTES TO THE STALKER STATE

2023

UNDERSTANDING HARM, SURVEILLANCE,& INFORMATION SHARING IN THE DEPARTMENT OF CHILDREN AND FAMILY SERVICES IN LOS ANGELES COUNTY: PART II

In October 2020 the Stop LAPD Spying Coalition began mapping out the landscape of artificial intelligence and predictive analytic tools used by the child welfare system, also known as the **family policing system**.[1] The family policing system is a nexus of institutions, organizations, and individuals that form mutualistic symbiotic relationships for the purpose of surveilling and policing families. In the report the coalition called for a deeper dive into the role of criminalization and surveillance in the Los Angeles County Department of Children and Family Services, showing that the system is one part of a larger stalker state. This report is part of the coalition's ongoing research into the insidious nature of surveillance, and a continuation of the Downtown Women's Action Coalition's efforts to raise awareness around the debilitating impact of DCFS on children and families.[2]

[1] We began using the term Family Policing System in 2020 to reflect the ways that the "child welfare" system has policed families through violent tactics of punishment, regulation, and criminalization. Thank you to friend and colleague Brianna Harvey for helping to theorize and widely use this term, and for refusing to use neutral language that does not fully portray the violence of the system.

[2] The research for this report was part of a larger project that included communitty conversations with Black and Latinx mothers who were currently living in or formerly lived in Skid Row and have had their children taken away by DCF(S). The project also included interviews with individuals who worked within the LA County child welfare system and one focus group with child welfaure system abolition activists/organizers. The research project was a collaboration between DWAC, SLSC, & Victoria Copeland, Ph.D, MSW. See https://escholarship.org/uc/item/3rc7z257.
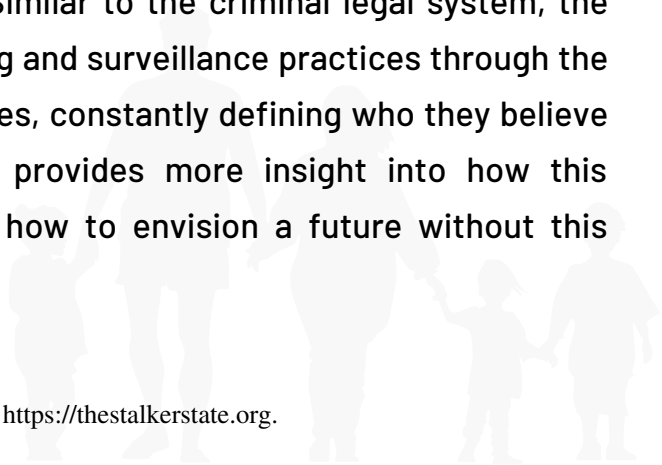
Contents

Introduction

> The **stalker state** is "*a sprawling web of entities committed to data-collection, with the intent to police us and cause harm*".

The stalker state is a metaphor and embodiment of real experiences that communities have had to endure generationally. The web of entities that make up the stalker state inflicts persistent violence which stems largely from law enforcement agencies whose primary role has been to control and monitor communities. However law enforcement, like the police, is only one moving piece within the stalker state continuum. The stalker state also includes constantly changing data-sharing environments and new reciprocal relationships between agencies that aim to confine and commodify communities.[3] One system deeply implicated in this web is the family policing system, a system that has become increasingly enmeshed with law enforcement and other "social services" that polices and surveils families. **Just like the criminal legal system, the family policing system is built within and from a long legacy of colonialism, anti-Blackness, and genocide in this country.**

The funneling of families into the family policing system has been used to displace community members from their homes and has diminished opportunities for individuals to create and sustain community and familial bonds. Further, the system has deprived communities of the ability to move freely and autonomously in society by using expansive surveillance tactics that follow them into various other systems. For many DWAC mothers, this surveillance is like being under the eyes of "big brother", and means more than just an invasion of privacy. Being constantly surveilled and policed often means that families are constantly vulnerable to having their housing, employment, and children taken away. Similar to the criminal legal system, the family policing system continues to justify these policing and surveillance practices through the criminalization and categorization of certain communities, constantly defining who they believe should be considered a "safety" threat. This report provides more insight into how this surveillance manifests for mothers in Skid Row, and how to envision a future without this violence.

[3] Stop LAPD Spying Coalition. "The Stalker State." Accessed September 2, 2022. https://thestalkerstate.org.

Part 1

Broken Windows Policing & the Criminalization of Mothers

Similar to the criminal legal system, the family policing system has used Broken Windows as a theoretical frame, tactic, and practice to justify the policing of communities. **Broken Windows** theorists believed that "dilapidated" or "run-down" areas with abandoned buildings, broken windows, and a lack of shops were indicative of crime.[4] They stated, "... disorder and crime are usually inextricably linked, in a kind of developmental sequence". Although this may sound innocuous, Broken Windows as a practice has always been rooted in the criminalization and pathologization of Black, Brown, and poor communities and intentionally fails to name organized abandonment as the reason for poverty.[5] Rather than looking at communities as a group of people that deserve housing and economic stability, Broken Windows instead became a way to legitimize increased funding for police within certain communities. This criminalization of community is intentional; rather than pouring money directly into communities to improve their living conditions, it has been easier for the state to criminalize people that the state has looted from by marking them as predatory and neglectful.[6] Although much of the past research focuses on how Broken Windows policing has since exacerbated the funneling of individuals into the criminal injustice system, much of the research fails to address how this same harmful logic, and other carceral logics and practices, also funnels people into the family policing system.

[4] George L. Kelling. & James Q. Wilson, "Broken windows", Atlantic Monthly (1982).

[5] For more information on organized abandonment see Ruth Wilson Gilmore, "Part One: Where Life is Precious, Life is Precious", The Intercept, 2020, https://theintercept.com/2020/06/10/ruth-wilson-gilmore-makes-the-case-for-abolition. See also, Ruth Wilson Gilmore, "Abolition on Stolen Land" (video, UCLA Luskin School of Public Affairs: Institute for Inequality and Democracy. Lecture, Virtual, Oct 9, 2020) and Rinaldo Walcott, "Nothing New Here to See: How COVID-19 and State Violence Converge on Black Life". TOPIA: Canadian Journal of Cultural Studies, no. 41 (2020): 158-163 https://muse.jhu.edu/article/776400/pdf. Ruth Wilson Gilmore uses "organized abandonment" to think through how the advent and proliferation of imprisonment removed people from their communities while subsequently removing earning power and "household and community camaraderie". This resulted in the reconfiguring of capacities to build up and staff the carceral institutions. Organized abandonment is arguably a reason for mass incarceration, austerity, outsourcing, underemployment, and capture by the state and has resulted in people losing the ability to keep their selves, households, and communities together, It has laid the foundations for the withdrawal of social and public services, characterizing how Black people and poor people's lives have been shaped for the last 40 to 50 years.

[6] We use looting to refer to the conquest of land through colonization, slavery, imminent domain, urban renewal, public education disinvestment, taxation without programs, and more.

Using the same Broken Windows logic that attempts to connect "visible signs of crime" and "civil disorder" with "future crime", researchers have tried to connect child maltreatment rates to what they consider as "disorderly" neighborhoods. For example, one study examined whether "higher social and physical disorder" in Chicago neighborhoods would be associated with higher proportions of child maltreatment. To determine the level of "physical and social disorder" they looked at a range of variables including the presence of litter, graffiti, deserted houses, public drinking, and the selling or use of drugs. Further, the researchers stated that examples of social disorder include: verbal harassment in the street, open solicitation "for prostitution", and "rowdy groups of young males in public".[7]

In the criminal legal system the use of these logics have resulted in zero-tolerance and stop-and-frisk policies. In the family policing system the use of these logics, though not obvious to many, has also led to zero-tolerance policies. Unlike the criminal legal system, the family policing system has been able to insidiously hide its **policing tactics** under facades of "child protection", recruiting social workers to act as both "help" and deputies of the state.
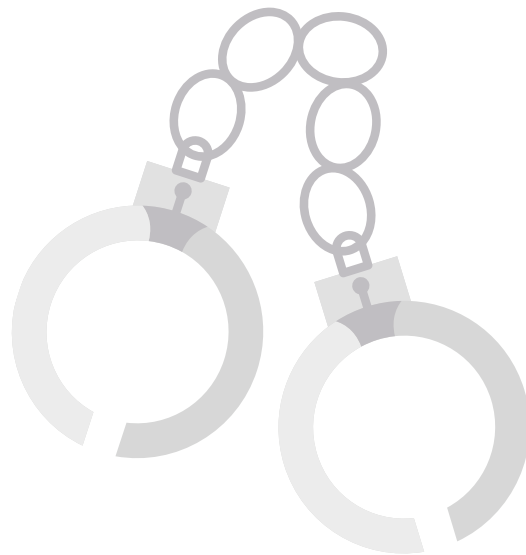
[7] Beth E. Molnar, Robert M. George, Paola Gilsanz, Andrea Hill, S V Subramanian, John K Holton, Dustin T. Duncan, Elizabeth D Beatriz, & William R Beardslee, "Neighborhood-level social processes and substantiated cases of child maltreatment". Child Abuse & Neglect 51, (2015): 41-53

The System Creates False Narratives About Mothers

To maintain its false claim of "child protection", the family policing system has found ways to convince society, including the families of those impacted by the system, that they are saving children from something harmful. Said differently, the existence of the family policing system requires the marking of certain people and behaviors as harmful. This "harm" is often associated with Black mothers and mothers of color who are labeled, demonized, and criminalized by the system based on made-up narratives and assumptions that were created by those working in the system itself. The criminalization of mothers is often associated with assumptions about their disabilities, mental health, economic status, employment, and assumed substance use and has served as the system's justification to abuse, police, and surveil them and their families.

During our community conversations, one mother shared :

> "
>
> I remember when I went to court with my kids and they told me that if I didn't have a mailing address that I wouldn't be able to meet in the court to get my children. So they took my children that same day because I didn't have a mailing address.
>
> "

Another added,

> "
>
> My daughter is diagnosed um, um, schizoaffective. So because she's diagnosed schizoaffective they already judged her. They say she was retarded she can't handle nothing. So they literally put in a report that my daughter was hallucinating. And they went after my granddaughter tooth and nail, the whole three years. [...] And my daughter didn't have any teeth, stereotyping her, 'oh you've been on drugs all your life you don't have no teeth'. No, my daughter have no teeth because she had gingivitis, she has a gum disease, that's why she has no teeth. Not that that has anything to do with my granddaughter...
>
> "

Caseworkers acknowledge that their subjective observations can be used to police and criminalize mothers and their circumstances, even though they are largely not grounded in immediate or causal safety concerns. Many of the descriptions and subsequent categorizations used by workers to describe families stem from their subjective viewpoints of what "adequate parenting" looks like. As a result, the parenting practices of families who are not middle-class and white are often abnormalized, and as such the inability to afford a crib or having a "dirty" house gets marked as "unsafe". These subjective processes have contributed to the funneling of many Black families and families of color into the system.

Mothers say that the system is always *"building up this monster of you"* to other people, similar to the logic used to justify Broken Windows policing. The systems workers use these harmful carceral logics and tactics to criminalize and abnormalize where and how mothers live, making general assumptions about their ability to parent. Workers justify their violent practices by using claims that the system is "saving children", and in their claimed efforts to "save" children, they often place young Black, Indigenous, and Latinx children in homes outside of their communities or under state custody. The system does this while failing to address the underlying needs of the family and the harm inflicted as a result of state-sanctioned violence. Their efforts to "protect" and save children end in generational cycles of violence, including family separation.

**GENERATIONAL
CYCLE OF HARM**

[8] Children's Bureau: An Office of the Administration for Children and Families, "The Child Abuse Prevention and Treatment Act (CAPTA)," last modified June 24, 2020, https://www.acf.hhs.gov/cb/law-regulation/child-abuse-prevention-and-treatment-act-capta

Certain Laws Increase Family Policing & Surveillance

The family policing system has also been able to sustain its false claim of "child protection" through various laws that both mandate and increase the surveillance of families. These laws were founded on the same carceral logic that created Broken Windows policing. One of the most significant and damaging laws within the system is the **Child Abuse Prevention and Treatment Act or "CAPTA"** which not only set a standard discretionary definition of "child abuse" and "child neglect", it also required certain workers and individuals in close proximity to children to report any reasonable suspicion of child maltreatment.[8] Based on the discretionary definitions included in CAPTA, mandatory reporters and any other anonymous party can report things such as a child "appearing dirty" or not having clean clothes, a homeless child, or a child who presents with any bodily injury. If mandatory reporters do not report their reasonable suspicions, they can face incarceration or fines. Over the past five years, the use of mandatory reporting has increased in several states across the U.S. A recent piece of legislation introduced by AG Racine in DC aimed to broaden the circumstances where reporters would have to contact authorities and added several professionals to the list of mandatory reporters.

Caption: A list of mandatory reporters as listed by the California Department of Social Services. Includes child care providers, medical professionals, school personnel, law enforcement, mental health and social workers, and clergy.

[9] Office of the Attorney General for the District of Columbia. "AG Racine Teintroduced Legislation to Strengthen Child Abuse and Elder Abuse Reporting Law". May 21, 2021, https://oag.dc.gov/release/ag-racine-reintroduces-legislation-strengthen

Further, two years ago in Los Angeles County, **AB 1929** was signed into law which gave child welfare agencies across California the option to receive online reports from mandatory reporters anywhere in California.[10] The Department of Children and Family Services (DCFS) explained that its internet-based child abuse and neglect reporting system or "CARES" went from 1838 to 5900 online reports of child maltreatment allegations from the year 2018 to 2019. They proclaimed that this was a means for celebration, exclaiming that *"in a county of 10 million inhabitants, DCFS relies on community members to be attentive and watchful to ensure children remain safe at home".* The increasing call for surveillance has occurred in part due to the fear of teachers being unable to see children every day in class during the COVID pandemic. Workers believed that because of this invisibility, there could be a staggering amount of abuse happening in the home, even though there was no evidence of this at the time.

Even though laws that enact surveillance continue to expand across the country, the family policing system has claimed that it is trying to move away from the harmful tactics of family separation. They state that with the passing of the **Family First Prevention Services Act "FFPSA"**, they are making a clear effort to keep families together. Yet, the FFPSA not only fails to protect families in the ways that the system claims, but it also adds new layers of surveillance, expanding the stalker state to community prevention services and other non-county agencies throughout Los Angeles County. The FFPSA relies on the categorization of "evidence-based" services, mandates the continued use of risk assessments, advocates for the creation of new and shared databases, and creates a "prevented population" as described by Abdurahman which largely consists of Black and Latinx communities that are pushed into community surveillance programs.[11] Despite the system's attempts to hide these current and past abuses under false narratives and laws that focus on"family preservation"— there is well-documented proof of the continuation of violence told best by those impacted by the system.

[10] Los Angeles County DCFS, "Success of Los Angeles Countys Online Child Abuse Reporting System Leads to Changes Statewide", Oct 7, 2020, https://dcfs.lacounty.gov/success-of-los-angeles-countys-online-child-abuse-reporting-system-leads-to-changes-statewide.
[11] For more on the FFPSA see Victoria Copeland & Maya Pendleton, "Surveillance of Black Families in the Family Policing System", The UpEND Movement, June 2020 and J. Khadijah Abdurahman, "Calculating the Souls of Black folk: Predictive Analytics in New York City Administration for Children's Services", Columbia Journal of Race and Law 11 (2021): 75-110.

"Human Trafficking" & "Legal Kidnapping" by DCF(S)

Across the country, there remains a multitude of stories that describe the harm caused by the family policing system, several of which come from Los Angeles— one of the self-proclaimed "largest county-governed child protective services agencies" in the US.[12] **In Los Angeles County the child protection service agency is called the Department of Child and Family Services or "DCFS" but was renamed by DWAC as the Dividing and Conquering Families System or "DCF(S)".** DWAC, as well as a few workers within the family policing system who we interviewed, believe that DCF(S) is undergird by ideologies of heteropatriarchy, colonialism, anti-Blackness, and misogynoir. This is similar to what is shown in the Stop LAPD Spying & Free Radicals Algorithmic Ecology.[13] They also believe that the system's processes of tracking and its subsequent efforts to separate families mirrors the violent tactics of separation used during slavery in which children were deemed "object" or "commodity" and were sold to white individuals. One caseworker at DCF(S) says that in his thirty years working, wealthy white families have consistently wanted to own Black babies. He recalls them saying:

"We just want black babies. We don't- if they're older than five, we don't want 'em." They want black babies. [...] I mean you know, you- your preferences, okay. But the just a specifically- not a baby... just always just want Black babies. "We want the Black babies".

[12] Los Angeles County Department of Children and Family Services, "Who We Are", Accessed September 2, 2022, https://dcfs.lacounty.gov/about/who-we-are/.

[13] The Stop LAPD Spying Coalition, "The Algorithmic Ecology: An Abolitionist Tool for Organizing Against Algorithms," last modified March 2, 2020, https://stoplapdspying.medium.com/the-algorithmic-ecology-an-abolitionist-tool-for-organizing-against-algorithms-14fcbd0e64d0

Mothers vividly remember these experiences of having their children separated for the purpose of supplying children to wealthy and predominately white families. One mother shared that when she was in a foster home, one of her foster "parents" would not only take pictures of the children while they were sleeping, but they also attempted to claim the unborn children of one of the foster youth in the home. The fostering mother would say that the child was hers and that if she complained, no one would believe her.

Despite the system's ongoing narrative that they are "protecting children" many mothers in our community conversations recollected traumatic and violent experiences, and many of them stated that the plantation has not gone away. Said differently, **many mothers believe that the plantation has simply transformed into the network of carceral institutions within society today.**

The family policing system's claim to "protection" is therefore considered a **facade** due to the ways the system has blatantly harmed families. Although DCF(S) and the county continue to try and erase its past, mothers' memories and experiences act as a counternarrative that pushes against this persistent erasure.

"Keeping children visible":
MacLaren Hall & the Children's Welcome Center

Part of the counternarratives shared by mothers and caseworkers included memories of children being abused by child protective institutions in Los Angeles. These counternarratives show a different side of history that has not been fully acknowledged by the current family policing system. In community conversations with mothers in Skid Row as well as in interviews with system workers, two child protective institutions were mentioned where children were abused by the system itself. These centers, **The Children's Welcome Center and MacLaren Hall** were either fully closed down or had DCFS contracts terminated due to lawsuits regarding the abuse caused to children. One DWAC member calls the Children's Welcome Center a "house of horror", a place she will never forget.

"

HOUSE
OF
HORROR

"

MACLAREN HALL

was a probation facility in El Monte that was transformed into a shelter in the 60's for children who couldn't be placed into homes or foster care. Mothers in our community conversations, as well as newspaper articles from the time, state that the Hall forced children to live in poor living conditions and would restrain and over-medicate the children.

The treatment of children within the centers remains hard to "prove" because the county claims that the juvenile records describing the abuse have been destroyed, however, survivors and researchers have still found and shared stories. [14]

Descriptions of the Hall depict the institution as jail-like, with "perimeter security measures, which included flood lights and a 14-foot chain link fence, topped by five feet of wire mesh".

During its time as a shelter, it was reported that MacLaren Hall made $270,000 per child per year even though it was actively harming children who should have been with their families or communities.[15] This money could have been used to help families and communities in need of housing, yet it was used to perpetuate the abuse of children.

[14] Julia Walrath, "MacLaren Hall Children's Center: Los Angeles' Dirty Little Secret", last modified May 20, 2022, https://soapboxie.com/social-issues/MacLaren-Hall-Childrens-Center-Los-Angeles-Dirty-Secret. See also, Kirsten Anderberg, Kirsten Anderberg's MacLaren Hall History Page, last accessed January 25, 2023. https://web.resist.ca/~kirstena/machallindex.html
[15] Sue Fox, "County Closes Center for Troubled Children," Los Angeles Times (Los Angeles, CA), March 11, 2003.

One caseworker we interviewed shared that after MacLaren shut down, LA County created a 23-hour holding facility called the Children's Welcome Center. The center opened in 2012 as a partnership with USC, and was said to be created with the instrumental help of Astrid Heger, a clinical pediatrician who also created the existing HUB clinics that are still being used by DCF(S) today.[16] Heger's VIP Clinic down the hall from the Center was responsible for providing mental health screenings and physical assessments for children coming through the welcome center. HUB clinics today continue to be where youth receive exams and care when they are being investigated for abuse or neglect.

Caption: A copy of a daily journal news article with a sticky note saying "May 29, 2001, Cheryl Romo reporter L.A. Daily Journal Series". Underneath the sticky is an image that shows the exterior of MacLaren Hall which is a series of large fencing/walls. The lettering on the building or wall reads "Mac Laren Children's Center". The accompanying news story is below the image, but is largley illegible through the image. The title reads "Walls of Silence" subtitle "MacLaren Children's Center Has Become Hard-Edged Lumboland for Kids No One Else Wants". Within the content of the article is a "letter from the editor" which is placed in the middle of two columns of writing.[17]

[16] Daniel Heimpel, "Los Angeles to Shutter Celebrated Center for Abused Children," The Imprint Youth & Family News (Los Angeles, CA), Feb 11, 2016, https://imprintnews.org/featured/los-angles-to-shutter-celebrated-center-for-abused-children/15655.

[17] Cheryl Romo, "Walls of Silence: MacLaren Children's Center Has Become Hard-Edged Limboland for Children No One Else Wants," Los Angeles Daily Journal (Los Angeles, CA), 2001, http://www.caichildlaw.org/Misc/Foster%20Care%20Compilation.pdf

Children/Youth Welcome Center

Similar to MacLaren Hall, the conditions of the **Children's Welcome Centers "CWC"** were bleak. Children slept on cots and were not allowed to stay at the facility for longer than 24 hours.

One caseworker interviewed for our project says that caseworkers would drive children off the lot and come back to restart the clock just so that they wouldn't be fined. Every time a child was at the center for more than 24 hours, the facility had to log it as a violation of state regulations. Articles from the time state that there were over 800 violations within one year. [18]

Articles describe the center as jail-like, just like MacLaren Hall. The facility was enclosed by gates and inside were employed social workers and guards.

Caseworkers would demand teenagers to empty their bags and relinquish their contraband, which included glass and nail polish.[19] After youth tried to rush out of the center and wrestle a gun away from the guards, DCFS began working intimately with law enforcement, locating a sheriff's deputy within the waiting rooms.[20] **Mothers who experienced time in the Center said that workers would abuse children, pull babies and yank them, slap children, and force-feed them.**

 The center was finally closed after lawsuits, and instead transitional shelter care programs were created.[21] However, just as MacLaren Facility is a relic of the past, the memories and experiences from the CWC continue to haunt families.

[18] Garrett Therolf, "Inside the Foster Care System; A Bleak Last Stop for Lost Youths". Los Angeles Times (Los Angeles, CA), March 1, 2015, https://www.latimes.com/local/california/la-me-adv-foster-overflow-20150301-story.html.
[19] Therolf, "Shutter Celebrated Center."
[20] Ibid.
[21] Los Angeles County Department of Child and Family Services Child Welfare Policy Manual. "Transitional Shelter Care (TSC) Program", 2017, http://policy.dcfs.lacounty.gov/

Many powerful individuals and organizations have yearned for children to become more visible so that they can be saved and protected from the "ills" of their parents. This yearning for visibility through and for "child protection" has continued to rationalize the use of racializing surveillance within the system. Conversely, many Black mothers have tried to evade this surveillance because of the constant fear and reality that their child will be ripped away from them and placed with strangers or in an institution like the Children's Welcome Center or MacLaren Hall. **Today, many families are still unable to evade this surveillance due to their economic status or geographic location.**

Caption: A smaller white or light colored building next to a taller one on the left that has several windows with lights on. There is a fence in front of the camera, looking as though it surrounds the lot. The photograph is presumably the Los Angeles County Youth Welcome Center where they held children.[22]

[22] Garrett Therolf, "Report faults youth foster center; L.A. Count should immediately close its 'unacceptable teen facility a special committee advises", Los Angeles Times, (Los Angeles, CA), June 22, 2015.

Caption: A DCFS worker with another two adults surrounds a youth who has their hands covering their face. They are outside and the youth is standing against a wall. The DCFS worker has "D.C.F.S." printed on the back of their jacket and is wearing a hat. They are standing to the left. The other adult has on a 3/4 shirt with pants and is directly in front of the youth. There is a third adult holding a paper or bag behind this second adult that is directly in front of the youth. The third adult is mostly out of the image but is also facing the youth. The youth is wearing a dress and sneakers.[23]

[23] Therolf, "Shuttering Celebrated Center."

Family Dismemberment & Displacement by CPS in Skid Row

As DWAC explains, DCF(S) has not only pushed families into homelessness, it has also used mothers' economic status to justify ongoing surveillance and violence which has led to the inability to access future housing, to make any decisions on their child's well-being, or to communicate with their children altogether.

These experiences with DCF(S) are part of a long violent history of surveillance and policing within Skid Row specifically, as the system has continued to make efforts to displace Skid Row residents from their community under the guise of "help".

Caption: An image to the right on the newspaper shows Afrofuturist and activist Ted Hayes who has just been arrested by two white police officers. The officers are holding Hayes between themselves, Hayes' mouth open and feet spread apart. The accompanying article for the image is entitled "The Politics of Homelessness", the body writing is not legible via the image. The bottom of the paper has a secondary non-affiliated article entitled "Many Academic Changes Planned", which is nested under the section "back-to-school report.

Von Jones, "The Politics of Homelessness", Los Angeles Sentinel (Los Angeles, CA), September 5, 1985.

2005

In 2005 Los Angeles County initiated the Skid Row Homeless Families Diversion plan with the Los Angeles Housing Services Authority, Department of Public Social Services "DPSS", DCFS, Department of Mental Health "DMH", Department of Health Services "DHS", First 5 LA, the Union Rescue Mission, and the Midnight Mission.

Through this initiative the agencies were able to create a Skid Row Outreach Team "SROT" that enacted "zero tolerance" policies in the Skid Row area, claiming to do so out of a need to prioritize "child safety".[26] The Skid Row Outreach team would rove the streets from 8:30AM to 10:00PM and assess all families they would encounter on Skid Row, aiming to enact their zero-tolerance policies.[24] During this time the Los Angeles Homeless Services Authority estimated that there were almost 600 homeless women living in Skid Row with a disproportionate amount of individuals being Black, and yet Supervisor Molina stated that "the environment has nothing positive about it" and "I think those parents not willing to work with us may be subject to neglect laws. We need our lawyers to challenge whatever law it is to make those children safe".[25]

The following is a second monthly update on the status of the coordinated service enhancements made in order to assure child safety, provide ongoing case management and enforce the Board's zero tolerance policy for families on Skid Row and the related outreach activities.

[24] County of Los Angeles Department of Child and Family Services, "December 20, 2005 Amendment to Board Agenda Item #44: Skid Row Outreach Strategies," March 8, 2006, http://file.lacounty.gov/SDSInter/bos/bc/043186_060308_Amendment_to_Board_yAgenda_Item_%2344_Skid_Row_Outreach_Strategies.PDF. See also, Skid Row Outreach Strategies - First 5 LA.

[25] Los Angeles Homeless Services Authority, "2005 Greater Los Angeles Homeless Count," January 12, 2006. See also, Daily News, "Families on Skid Row to be targeted for services", October 26, 2005. https://www.dailynews.com/2005/10/26/families-on-skid-row-to-be-targeted-for-services/

2006

In 2006 DCF(S) underwent a process to finalize an MOU with LAPD and the city attorney to outstation a caseworker at the central police station between 4:00 PM and 2:30 AM, increasing the time that families were under surveillance. Further, in 2006 DCF(S) ended up leading these efforts, prioritizing "safety" assessments of all Skid Row families in attempts to discern if the families deserved to be together. This initiative and its surveillance mechanisms impacted the well-being of Black and Latinx communities in Skid Row. In one presentation the SROT also stated that undocumented families who were ineligible for DPSS housing assistance also "needed to be removed from Skid Row". According to an LA Times article, the skid row team was subsequently overhauled in 2007 due to a child death, and social workers were required to do intensive assessments on all cases. Non-profit agency Beyond Shelter was contracted to keep monitoring families once they left Skid Row, adding to the nonstop surveillance of poor families.[26]

SKID ROW OUTREACH TEAM

[26] Jack Leonared, "Walking a thin line for skid row kids", Los Angeles Times, April 16, 2007. https://www.latimes.com/archives/la-xpm-2007-apr-16-me-foster16-story.htmlt

During the time DCF(S) led the SROT efforts, agencies created a new risk protocol that would specifically assess Skid Row community members for various "safety risks". The protocol included information such as the location of the family, voucher status, and any previous referrals to the child abuse hotline or involvement with the child welfare system that could be verified with the CWS/CMS case management database.[27] Further, other forms of data regarding the family were evaluated including **history of service refusal, family's inability to follow through on referrals to services, domestic violence history, mental health history, and other histories of service use.**

These variables were highly discretionary and included caseworkers' perceptions about the families' **"inability to provide minimum sufficient level of parenting" such as "client history of keeping children in shelter", clients failure to protect children, client explaining lack of adequate shelter inconsistently, and inability for families to access services.**

Although service agencies explained that the risk protocol was used to "help" families get housing, children in Skid Row were removed from their families at twice the rate of the LA county rates of removal.[28] Specifically, children were removed at high rates from the zip code 90013 which was labeled as a zone to be "flagged" based on a directive by the City Administrative Officer, DPSS, DCFS, and DMH.[29] According to Supervisor Molina, Skid Row was too dangerous for children and DCF(S) should remove them from their parents if they refused services[30].

[27] See the SROT Assessment in Appendix A.

[28] Troy Anderson, "Advocates decry lack of action to assist families on Skid Row," Los Angeles Daily News, Dec 16, 2006, https://www.dailynews.com/2006/12/16/advocates-decry-lack-of-action-to-assist-families-on- skid-row/

[29] Department of Child and Family Services, Skid Row Outreach Strategies

[30] Troy Anderson, "Lack of Action to Assist Families."

The data collected from and on family members in Skid Row had ethical loopholes, especially regarding families' ability to consent to the county's use of their data. For example at the time of the Homeless Family initiative, families were only asked to sign Consent to Share Information forms if there was a need to facilitate sharing of information beyond county teams. Otherwise, the SROT claimed that the Welfare and Institutions Code gave county agencies the ability to share data through their own discretion with multi-disciplinary teams so long that they were engaged in "prevention, identification and treatment of child abuse".

Mothers who were interviewed in Skid Row during this time said that they had to hide their children for fear of getting them taken away by child protective services. These surveillance processes, family separation tactics, policing, and ethical loopholes have continued throughout the years, changing form and function and expanding its reach to other agencies.

.

Part 5

Prevention through Prediction

Identifying DCF(S) Data Sharing & Collection Processes

"Data and predictive risk modeling is not something that exists outside obscene forms of analog violence; it is an inextricable part of it".[31]

Over the years DCF(S) has continued to increase its use of data collection and data sharing processes within Los Angeles County under the guise of child protection. These new technological tools include the use of risk assessment tools and machine learning algorithms that attempt to prevent harm that has not yet happened. DWAC says that these forms of technologies have created processes that "**mark**" mothers, labeling them as "**red flags**" even if they have an "empty file". In other words, having any sort of information available to the system has impacted mothers in the future by allowing the system to monitor or "keep tabs" on them throughout time.

Shakeer from the Stop LAPD Spying Coalition calls this a "pre-crime approach" in which the system is able to warehouse and mark human beings at their own will. The use of these technologies has impacted mothers' ability to care for their children and their family's children because they have "documented" histories in the system, even if these histories are incorrect or paint a false picture of mothers' current situations. The technologies have therefore dictated mothers' past history, their current situations, and their ability to create and sustain family ties in the future.
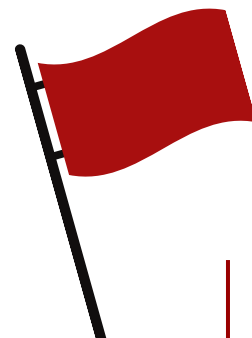
[31] J. Khadijah Abdurahman, "Birthing Predictions of Premature Death," *Logic Magazine* 6, Dec 16 2006, https://logicmag.io/home/birthing-predictions-of-premature-death/

Data has been collected, shared, and used in various ways by the department, as seen in the previous Stop LAPD Spying report. One specific way the data is used is in various technological web-based applications. For example, according to a 2018 report the **Los Angeles County DCFS Mobile Client Portal or "MCP"** web application has allowed children's social workers to access children's records in addition to being able to: upload client photos to a "KidPix" photo collection, upload photos of the home and living conditions, get criminal background checks through the **Law Enforcement Telecommunications System (CLETS)**, capture interview notes using Siri, provide GPS navigation to clients homes, create and submit Drug and Alcohol referrals, access the **Electronic Suspected Child Abuse Report System (ESCARS)**, view court hearings, alert workers if medical/dental exams are past due, and allows access for Human Services Aids, Public Health Nurses, and Children Services Administrators.[32] Although this is an overlooked technology, the use of this portal shows that caseworkers have been able to document and monitor families in their most intimate spaces, their own homes. Further, the portal application shows that DCF(S) is never acting on its own accord but is constantly using other agencies and database partnerships with law enforcement, drug testing centers, and the medical system.
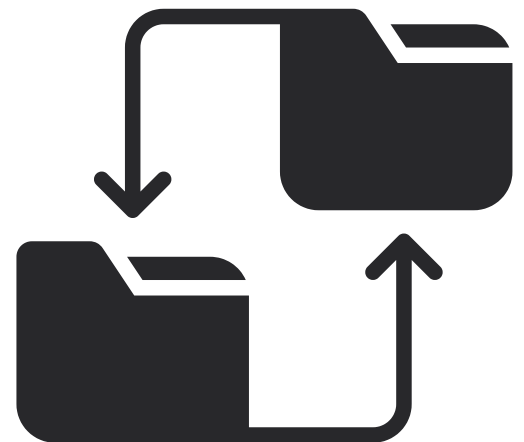
[32] Karissa Hughes, "SACHS Research Summary: Innovative Technologies in Child Welfare Services," The Academy for Professional Excellence, May 2018

LA County's New Risk Stratification Model

Data collected on families and children is also being used by DCF(S) in various risk assessment tools. This is part of a call by philanthropists and researchers to push "child protection" into a 21st Century model that uses and relies on data and technology to make critical decisions.[33] In Los Angeles County DCF(S) has primarily used the **Structured Decision-Making Tool or "SDM"** to aid in caseworker decision-making processes, especially decisions that concern whether or not children can stay in their homes or if they can be reunified with their families after separation. The SDM uses the same discretionary definitions of child abuse and neglect that are set by CAPTA and the county, which means the tool remains subjective despite claims that the SDM is not subject to human bias or stereotypes.[34]

Currently, caseworkers use the SDM alongside newer county algorithmic tools like the **Risk Stratification Model (RSM)** which has been deployed in the Lancaster, Belvedere, and Santa Fe Springs offices.[35]

> "They do it the way they want to, long as they type the stuff in the computer and that's what they know about you, if you come in there a certain day, you say certain words, they type it. If you're aggressive that day they type it. And they not gonna say the day you came in nice, the aggressive part is going to be all over, and that's the way they're gonna treat you."
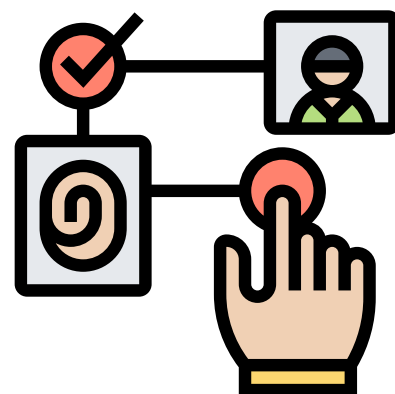
[33] Casey Family Programs, "21st Century Child Welfare System Draft Framework", 2019: 3.

[34] County of Los Angeles Office of Child Protection, "Examination of Using Structured Decision Making and Predictive Analytics in Assessing Safety and Risk in Child Welfare (Item No.49-A, Agenda of September 20, 2016)", May 4, 2017. For more info on the SDM see, Evident Change, "Structured Decision Making (SDM) Model", last accessed September 2, 20222, https://www.evidentchange.org/assessment/sdm-structured-decision- making-systems/child-welfare

[35] For more see Emily Putnam-Hornstein, Remea Vaithianathan, Jacquelyn McCroskey, "The Los Angeles County Risk Stratification Pilot: An Overview and One Year Update," August 29, 2022, https://t.co/5qDCfXa9j3. The tool was created by one of the developers who created the Allegheny Family Screening Tool. For more on the ASFT see, Virginia Eubanks, *Automating Inequality: How High-Tech Tools Profile, Police, and Punish the Poor*. (New York: St. Martins Press, 2018). The information in this report regarding the RSM was last updated in 2022.

According to a presentation created by developers in 2021, the RSM was created to help address the "inaccuracies" of the department's current safety and risk assessments, as well as social workers' failure to "consider important risk factors such as past domestic violence in the homes or results of previous department investigations".[36] Further, the developers aimed to "better align supervision and management resources to ensure children are safe and families receive services", "increase the use of information and data by supervisor to support quality and consistent casework that will reduce practice errors during investigations", and "improve the use of data to identify screening practices and community reporting patterns that may result in unnecessary investigations". Whereas the SDM has been used to help caseworkers discern immediate safety risks and concerns, the RSM was created to predict the risk by "proactively addressing conditions that may lead to future system involvement".[37] The placement of the RSM tool can be seen below, between the investigation decision and the safety decision.
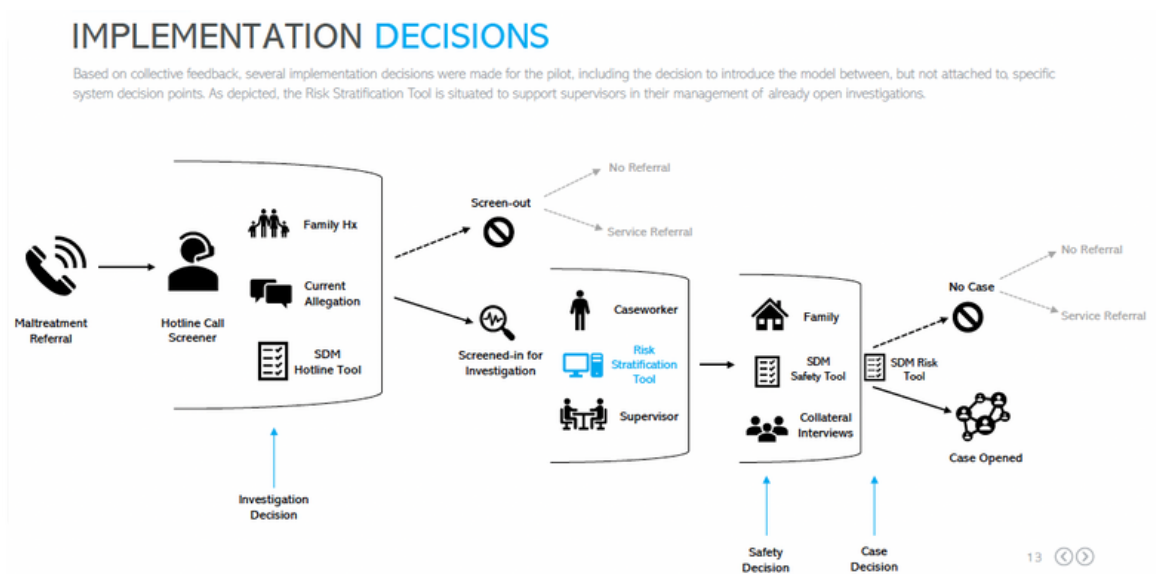
Caption: A model used by the developers of the RSM. The image shows the different parties involved in screening decisions, initial safety decisions, and case decisions. The blue text with the computer icon is where the current model is used, which is after a referral and investigation decision is made and before a safety decision and case decision are made. It's used for further screening in conjunction with a caseworker and supervisor's personal decision-making as depicted in the image. [38]

[36] In 2021 we sent a CPRA request to DCF(S) regarding algorithmic tools being used on the child protection hotline, however they have continuously failed to provide information.

[37] Putnam-Hornstein, Vaithianathan, & McCroskey, "Risk Stratification Pilot". For examples of cases recommended for enhanced support see Appendix D.

[38] Putnam-Hornstein, Vaithianathan, & McCroskey, "Risk Stratification Pilot", 13

Compared to other tools being used by DCF(S), the RSM adds new fully automated features and integration processes. As shown in the figure below, the tool is used to assess future risk of harm by using hundreds of fields simultaneously. Many of the proxies used to determine risk, most prominently those labeled as "neglect", often indicate factors and conditions that were created by the state. This includes definitions of general neglect that are highly subjective and often conflated with the conditions of poverty such as lack of housing and lack of child care. Some mothers and organizers say that these **"racialized meanings of neglect"** were created by white individuals and institutions. History shows that the lineage of organized abandonment is deeply rooted in histories of looting and stealing land from the same communities that continue to be marked as "high risk", "neglectful", and "unfit" to raise their children. Despite this, several databases and tools continue to use these categorizations of "neglect" in their efforts to predict and prevent people from causing future harm.

How does this fit with existing tools?

It is all about having different resources that support different aspects of practice at the front-end of the system...

	Risk Stratification Model	SDM Hotline Tool	SDM Safety Tool	SDM Risk Tool
Fully automated (no human data entry required)	✓	✗	✗	✗
Integrates information from hundreds of fields simultaneously	✓	✗	✗	✗
Information available at outset of all non-immediate investigations	✓	✓	✗	✗
Fields chosen and validations based on local LA data and practices	✓	✗	✗	✗
Used to make hotline screening decisions (attached to policy)	✗	✓	✗	✗
Used to assess immediate safety concerns	✗	✓	✓	✗
Used to assess future risk of harm (attached to policy)	✓	✗	✗	✓
Directly or indirectly attached to case opening decisions	✗	✗	✓	✓
Required by the state / CDSS	✗	✓	✓	✓

Invest LA
Department of Children and Family Services

9

Caption: A 9x4 table that compares the RSM, SDM Hotline Tool, SDM Safety Tool, and SDM Risk tool. The red x's indicate what the tool does not do, while a blue check indicates what the tool can do. The blue column is the current RSM model which is not used to make hotline screening decisions or access immediate safety concerns and is not directly attached to case opening decisions or required by the state/CDSS. Unlike other tools it is fully automated, integrates hundreds of fields, provides information at the outset of non-immediate investigations, and assesses future risk of harm. Further, the fields of the RSM are chosen and validations are based on local LA data and practices unlike any other tool used by DCF(S). [39]

[39] Invest LA, "Risk Stratification Pilot Cluster Presentation", July 14, 2021.

The RSM Flags Cases as "Enhanced Support"

To help DCF(S) "target responses and prevention services" more efficiently, the RSM developers use hundreds of data elements from the Child Welfare Services Case Management System (CWS/CMS) in their algorithm.[40] As of 2021 the model's "coded features" or predictors from the CWS/CMS included: referral information (day, time, reporting source), demographics (age, gender), prior referrals/allegations (current type, disposition, time), cases, placements, and "other" (age at first removal, positive toxicity, special education referral, developmental referral).[41] Using these "coded features" the RSM algorithm generates a risk level, and subsequently flags certain cases as "complex risk". Emergency Response supervisors are then alerted about the flagged "complex risk" cases.
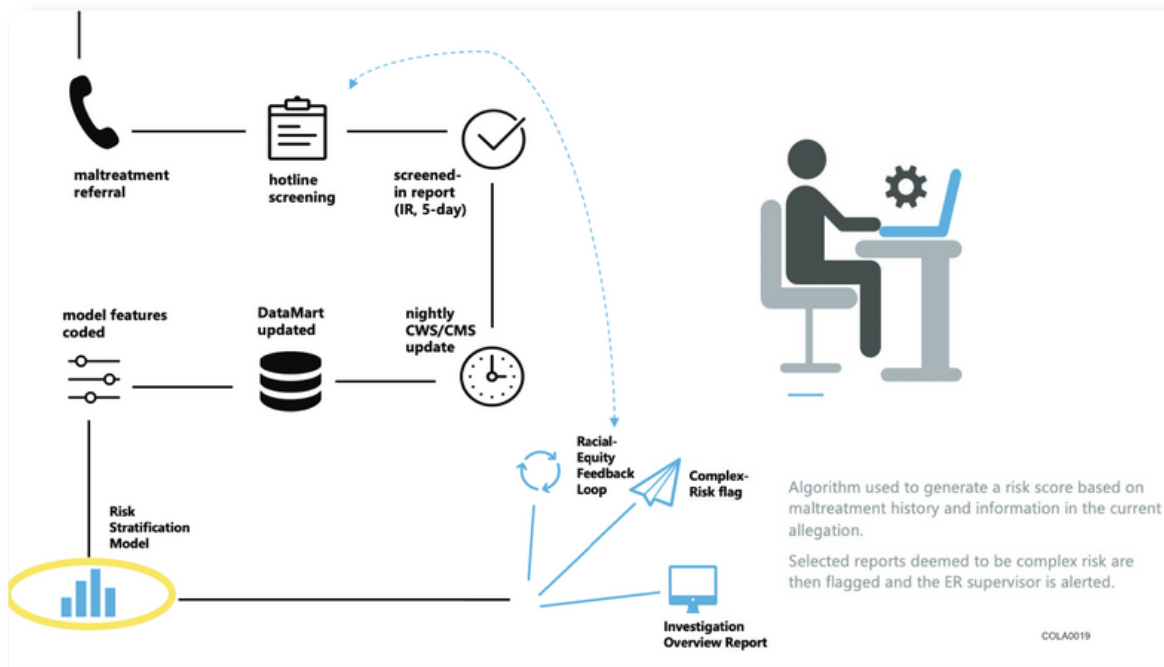
Caption: A model of the RSM including various icons and arrows that indicate the process of how data is collected by a worker as follows: starting with maltreatment referral, hotline screening, screened-in report, nightly CWS/CMS update, DataMart update, model features captured, RSM, ending with racial-equity feedback loop/complex-risk flag/investigation overview report. The RSM is indicated by blue bars within a yellow circle. To the right is an image of a person sitting at a computer, presumably using this process shown on the left.

---

[40] Invest LA, "Risk Stratification Pilot Cluster Presentation", July 14, 2021.
[41] CWS//CMS is hosted in the LA County Datamart. For more information on CWS/CMS see Appendix B.

Interestingly, a new 2022 report from the developers shows that the tool no longer flags "**complex risks**" cases.[42] Instead, the report claims that cases are flagged as needing "**enhanced support**".[43] This change was presumably spurred by feedback from the Eliminating Racial Disparity and Disproportionality "ERDD" Advisory Workgroup who suggested that the label be changed because they "preferred something less negatively implicative for families".[44] Rather than changing the model substantially, or choosing not to use the model in its entirety, the ERDD and developers decided to simply rename the "risk" as "support", which they say represents situations "where history indicates a family's service needs are likely more significant". Images on the next page show the similar interfaces, with the slight change in label name.[45]

[42] Invest LA, "Risk Stratification Pilot Cluster Presentation", July 14, 2021.

[43] Putnam-Hornstein, Vaithianathan, & McCroskey, "Risk Stratification Pilot," 18

[44] Allon Kalisher & Eliza Abdendroth, "Los Angeles County Department of Children and Family Services Risk Stratification Pilot: Implementation Monitoring: Feedback and Results," March 17, 2022, https://dcfs.lacounty.gov/resources/reports/.

[45] Putnam-Hornstein, Vaithianathan, & McCroskey, "Risk Stratification Pilot," 69.
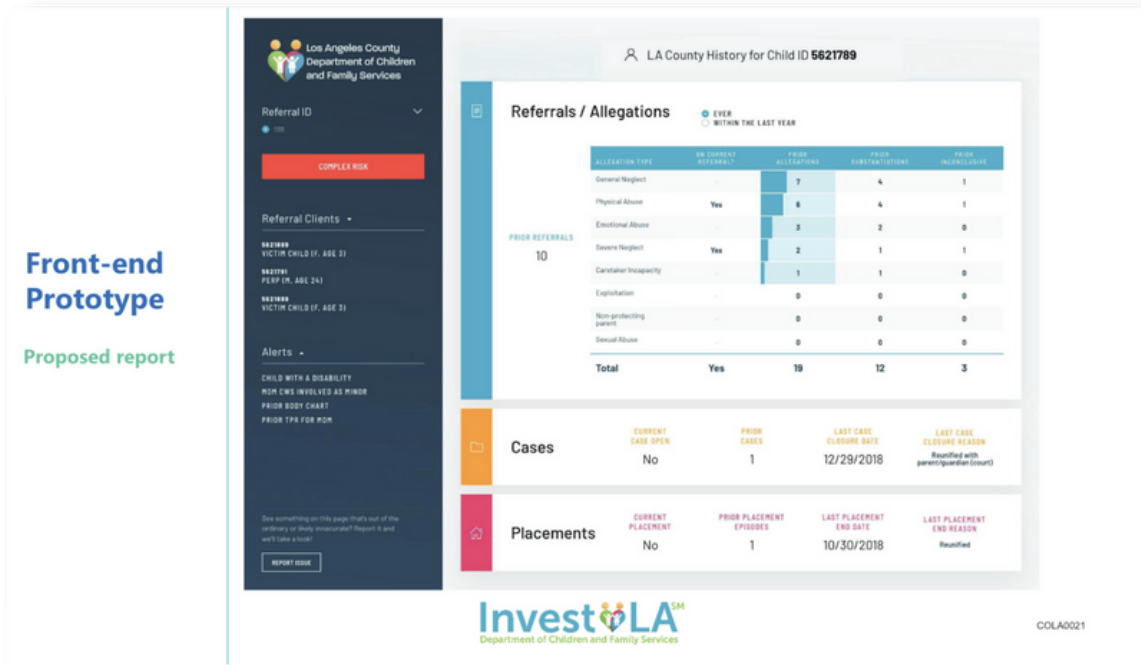
Caption: The original prototype of a screen that caseworkers would see when investigating a report of child maltreatment. The screen shows to the right prior referrals in blue, cases in orange, and placements in pink. The left bar shows a "complex risk" signal with referral clients and "alerts" such as the child having disabilities or prior termination of parental rights.
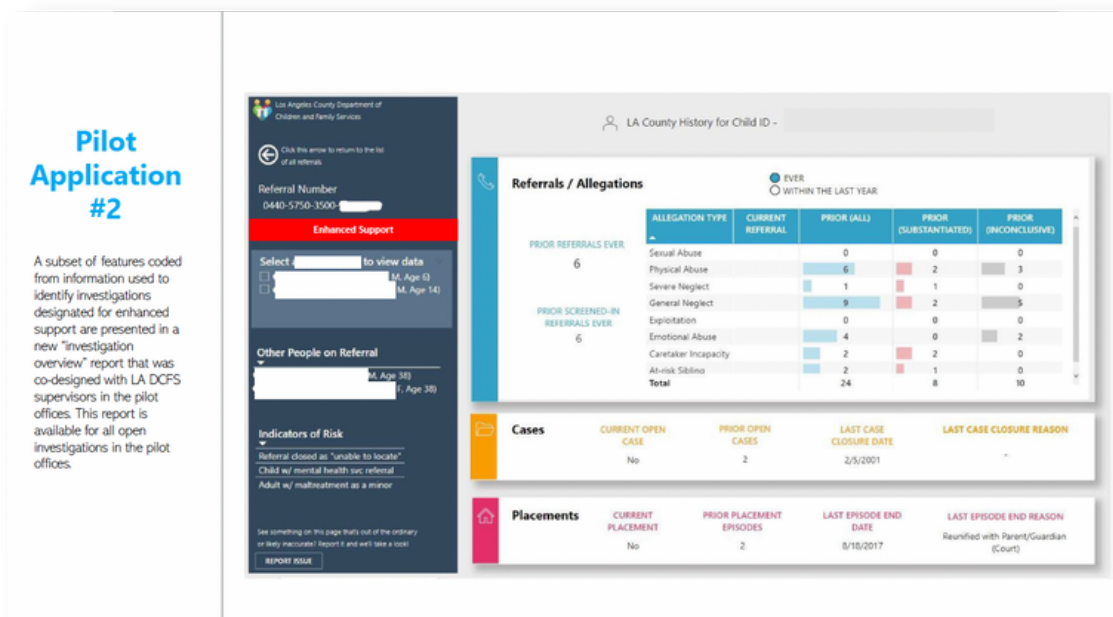
Caption: A prototype similar to the original above. Shows a screen that caseworkers would see when investigating a report of child maltreatment. The screen shows prior referrals in blue, cases in orange, and placements in pink. The left bar shows "enhanced support" instead of "risk" and also shows "other people on referral" and "indicators of risk" such as mental health referral or adult with prior child welfare involvement.

In the latest 2022 report, the RSM developers also provide a more in-depth explanation of their chosen "coded elements" from the CWS/CMS, stating that they picked their "coded elements" or (predictors) by looking at: which ones appeared in the peer-reviewed literature, which ones were implemented in the Allegheny or Douglas RSM tools, which ones emerged as "clinically relevant " through conversations with child protection workers, and which ones were suggested by community members.[46] These different sources of knowledge each come with their own subjective biases and ideas about what indicates harm, and who is harmful. This raises concerns about how definitions of maltreatment, like neglect or lack of parental supervision, are being encoded into the algorithms and impacting outcomes for families.

Preliminary results from the 2022 report show that the majority of the children flagged for enhanced support had a history of "inconclusive allegation", meaning maltreatment was not substantiated or had at least three or more prior allegations for "general neglect".[47] Further the developers' report shows that "Black children are consistently overrepresented among children in investigations designated as having a heightened likelihood of future foster care placement and with unmet service needs".[48]

[46] Ibid.
[47] Putnam-Hornstein, Vaithianathan, & McCroskey, "Risk Stratification Pilot," 34
[48] Putnam-Hornstein, Vaithianathan, & McCroskey, "Risk Stratification Pilot," 49.

As Khadijah Abdurahman points out in *Birthing Predictions of Premature Death & Calculating the Souls of Black Folk*, the harm caused by child protection agencies is persistent and expansive. Harm not only includes family separations, but it also includes the ways that new technological tools create **"prevented populations"**.[49] Further, harm includes the ways that the system exacerbates and contributes to the stalker state through "prevention" efforts that bolster the relationships between community agencies and the family policing system, which "claims to prevent the violence they enact through new services only they can provide" or provide access to.[50] Thus, the developers' decision to change the language from "complex risk" to "enhanced support" does not fundamentally change the functionality of the algorithm, the impetus behind it, or the genealogies of harm caused by the system and its co-conspirators. The change in language as suggested by the ERDD does little to actually "eliminate" racial disparity, and instead bolsters a network of surveillance within the carceral ecosystem that depends on data extracted from families.
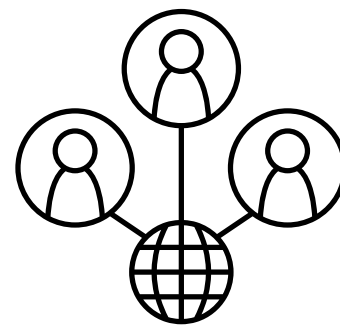
[49] See Abdurahman, "Birthing Predictions of Premature Death," 7, Abdurahman, "Calculating the Souls of Black Folks", and Eubanks, Automating Inequality.

Multi-Agency Partnerships & Consent Loopholes
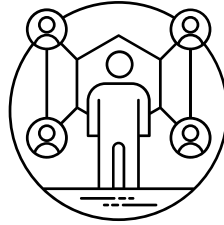
Instead of acknowledging that state violence has occurred in communities and attempting to rectify it, developers of these surveillance systems continue to expand their reach across multiple agencies and organizations to bolster their tracking capabilities. We see this in different Memorandums of Understanding (MOU) created especially between academic and government partners, like the Children's Data Network that helped create the RSM. A Delegated Authority Agreement For Research and Evaluation Services between the LA County CEO, Board of Supervisors, County Counsel, and USC CDN states that consulting services for research and evaluation will likely utilize data sources from the Chief Executive Office, Child Support Services, DCFS, Health Services, Medical Examiner-Coroner, Mental Health, Public Social Services, Probation, Sheriff, Department of Justice, Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation, Office of Statewide Health Planning and Development, Department Of Education, US Department of Housing and Urban Development, and "quasi-county" agencies such as the Community Development Commission/Housing Authority, and Los Angeles Homeless Authority.[51] Here, USC was tasked with maintaining a secure, university-based infrastructure for the processing, linkage, and analysis of administrative data.

---

[51] County of Los Angeles, "Delegated Authority Agreement for Research and Evaluation Services between The County of Los Angeles and University of Southern California on Behalf of its School of Social Work's Children's Data Network. Delegated Authority Agreement counteract Number AO-17-037", February 21, 2017. *See also*, Memorandum of Understanding between the California Department of Social Services and the University of Southern California, Children's Data Network. Agreement 16-MOU-00945.

The agreement also created MOU'S between the USC Children's Data Network (CDN) and the California Department of Social Services (CDSS) which is the "single state agency" under the Title IV Social Security Act that is responsible for the "oversight of county and community agencies in the implementation of the child welfare services programs" and services provided behalf of children who are alleged victims of child maltreatment or in foster care. The CDN links records across public sector data systems to follow cohorts over time to study the "timing nature and outcomes" related to various public system service interactions.
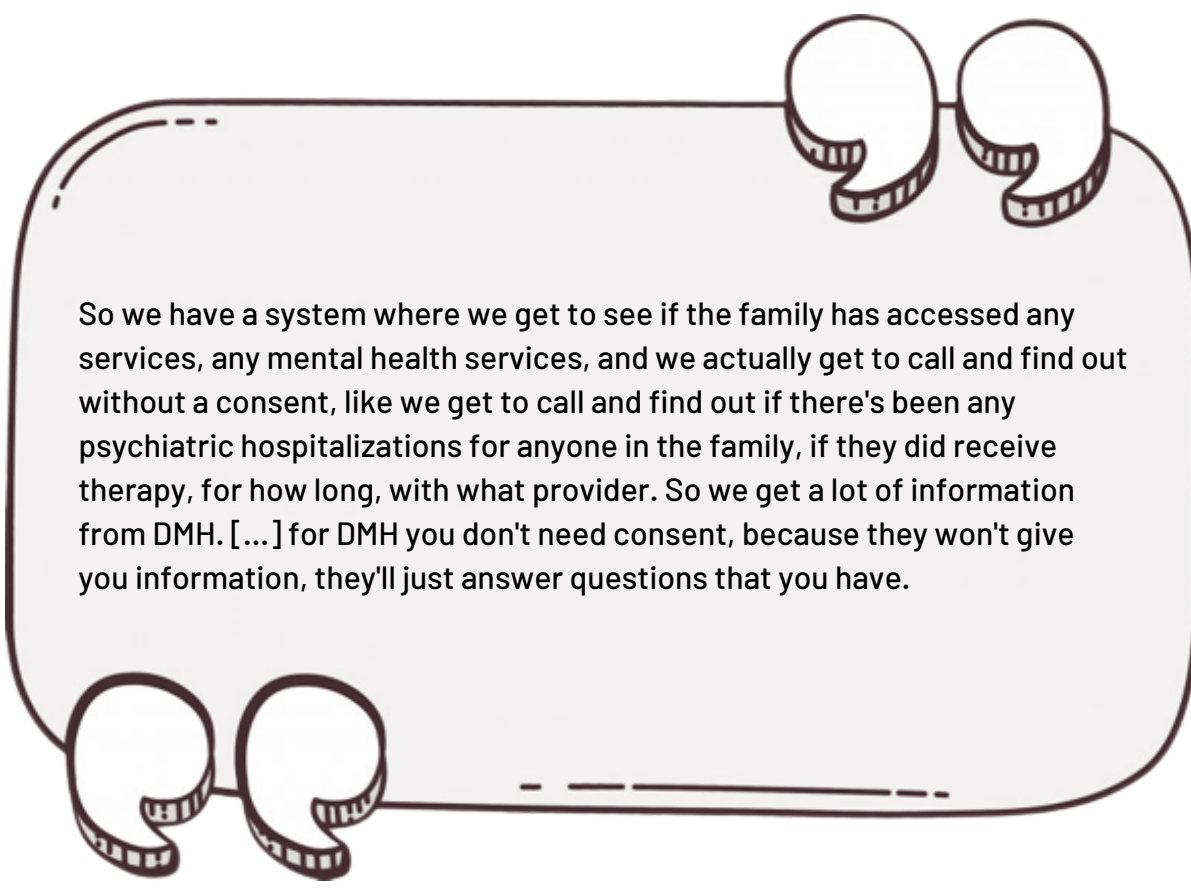
The MOU specifically states that the agreement is meant to "connect the collaborative data, research, and evaluation activities of CDSS and CDN, in part, by allowing for the use of confidential, personally identifiable, and non-confidential service-related information falling under the authority of CDSS by CDN at USC." The MOU states that the CDN will use the information to link records to the "Child Welfare Services/Case Management System (CWS/CMS) to other administrative records and population-based data sources such as birth records, death records, developmental service data, and incarceration data/arrest/conviction data." CDN says they will use "research questions as the basis for ongoing population-level surveillance" that will inform policies and programs.

Be that as it may, families impacted by DCF(S) are unaware of just how many systems their data touches and what type of data is shared, though they are aware that it impacts their entire lives from housing to social services to employment. Moreover, many families are unaware that data collected about them is being placed into models to flag other families as high risk.
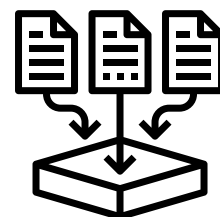
Not only are many families unaware of the uses of their data, but there are also several consent loopholes that are used by DCF(S) that enable the continuation of data collection. DCF(S) and its partners continue to use what might be seen as ethical loopholes, similar to the ones used in the Skid Row Homeless Family Initiative.

One caseworker says that a partnership with DCFS and DMH continues to uphold a consent loophole stating:

So we have a system where we get to see if the family has accessed any services, any mental health services, and we actually get to call and find out without a consent, like we get to call and find out if there's been any psychiatric hospitalizations for anyone in the family, if they did receive therapy, for how long, with what provider. So we get a lot of information from DMH. [...] for DMH you don't need consent, because they won't give you information, they'll just answer questions that you have.

Documents also show that oftentimes these ethical loopholes are baked into consent forms themselves. For example, the DCFS 179-MH form states that if parents don't give consent for their children to get services workers will get consent from the court instead, similar to caseworkers who refer families to the medical hubs through eHub for medical assessment of their child.[52]

Language that has been used on consent forms includes:

"I understand that I am not required to sign this consent form, and that if I do not agree to sign it, it will not be held against me. I do understand, however, that if you do not agree to sign the form, the Department will attempt to obtain consent for my child mental health assessment and treatment through the court or from my child, if my child is 12 year of age or older."[53]

In other words, parents have not truly had the ability to <u>deny</u> consent for the assessment of their children. Moreover, if the court or state is seen as the supervisor/guardian of the child, these parties do not have to get consent from parents for the assessment of children:

If a child is under court ordered DCFS supervision, a health care provider is allowed by law to disclose protected medical or mental health information without the child's or parent/guardian's authorization to DCFS in order to coordinate the health and mental health treatment of the child. The Department of Mental Health (DMH) Specialized Foster Care (SFC) staff may share (PHI) consistent with DMH policy and the requirements of the federal Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act (HIPAA) and Confidentiality of Medical Record Act (CMRA)".[54]

[52] County of Los Angeles Department of Children and Family Services, "Procedural Guide 0600-501.09 CONSENT FOR MENTAL HEALTH AND/OR DEVELOPMENTAL ASSESSMENT AND SERVICES", n.d. *See also*, County of Los Angeles Department of Children and Family Services, "Medical Hub Notice to Caregivers", September, 2006. Https://docs.google.com/document/u/2/d/1lP5IIhwNocW2t2OzsFDTY_GAlAZOveST/edit?usp=drive_web&ouid=116691473198547042027&rtpof=true

[53] Association of Community Human Service Agencies, "Mental Health Assessment and Treatment Consent", accessed July 15, 2021, http://www.achsa.net/upload/File/Newsletters/2009/02_February/Links/CW/01-09_Mental_Health_Assessement_and_Treatment_Consent.pdf. See also, County of Los Angeles Department of Children and Family Services, "Family Centered Referral Form", accessed September 2, 2022, https://docs.google.com/document/d/14HI4McILhoscQ-WMc3wSd_-hGy3rH4Nt/edit?rtpof=true..

[54] Welfare Policy Website, "Screening and Assessing Children for Mental Health Services and Referring to the Coordinated Services Action Team (CSAT)", last modified December, 11, 2020, http://policy.dcfs.lacounty.gov/content/Assessments_of_Mental_He.htm

In the case of youth who are younger than 12, either parents are consenting for them or the state (state as legal guardian) is. In the cases of medical and psychological assessments of children "in care", the courts will bypass parental consent if they refuse to sign. It is clear that consent processes in child welfare often undermine self-determination and autonomy. They are coercive by nature due to not only the loopholes of the courts, but because of the negative implications that are subsequent to refusal, such as the subsequent removal of the child from the home or the documentation of refusal in different risk protocols as outlined in the SROT assessment.

Although commitment to a client's self-determination is a central part of social work ethics, upholding this tenant is difficult when it comes to the punitive and violent nature of the family policing system. For some families who are not involved in county systems, they are able to evade this expansive surveillance through the stalker state. **For other families who are funneled into state surveillance, they often feel there is no way out.**

These forms of family surveillance through various technologies and in-person caseworker visits are exacerbated by the life-long "marking" that occurs for individuals who are involved within the system. The Attorney General and Department of Justice in Los Angeles administer the **Child Abuse Central Index (CACI)** which was created in 1965 as a tool to "protect the health and safety of California's Children".[55] Reports of substantiated cases of physical abuse, sexual abuse, mental/emotional abuse, and/or severe neglect of a child in Los Angeles must be reported to CACI so that the information can be available to "aid law enforcement investigations, prosecutions, and provide notification of new child abuse investigation reports involving the same suspects/victims". The CACI is also used to screen applicants in childcare facilities, foster homes, and for child placements and adoption.
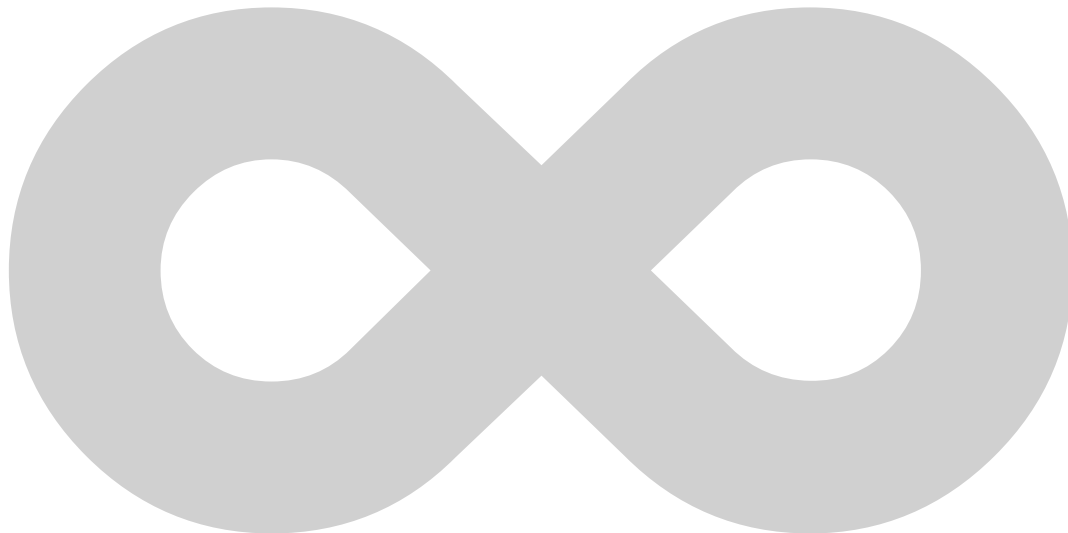
[55] California Department of Justice Division of California Justice Information Services Child Protection Program, "Title I1. Law. Division 1. Attorney General. Chapter 9, Report of Child Abuse. Article 1. Administration of the Child Abuse Central Index", https://oag.ca.gov/sites/all/files/agweb/pdfs/childabuse/OAL_approval_final_text.pdf

The OAG states that if investigative reports are inconclusive, meaning that no child maltreatment was proven to occur, the report still "must be retained for ten years unless there is an investigation of subsequent allegations of child abuse or severe neglect against the same child". Because of this tracking regardless of "evidence" or "proof" of maltreatment, many mothers have had files on them that are kept for decades.

Lynn states that as a DCF(S) caseworker, she was able to see this most prominently for Black mothers. She shared:

> I had another family and there was, had to literally been 20 referrals made on the family even they though they weren't legitimate. There was all these different random ones, but every single one was documented. And I remember the mom was a little bit more savvy, and she was actually trying to use the law and had a lawyer to try to get them removed, and she still couldn't, like basically it didn't matter like that was gonna forever follow her. So basically when her little girl grows up if she ever was to become interacted with the system, they are now going to pull up the 20 reports that were on her when she was a kid. And so it just it was crazy to me that I was like y'all are watching and documenting everything and basically keeping a database of every misstep that you believe.

This (mis)calculation of Black and Latinx families' steps and missteps is used to disrupt their families who have little opportunity to maneuver out of the system. This surveillance, specifically through data tracking continues to be used on families upon investigation and is reified even later in cps processes such as during attempts to reunify families. It follows mothers before they enter the system and tracks them for decades after through the CACI.

Both the workers that use these tools and developers of these tools acknowledge that the system and thus these new technological additions are impacted by "bias". The developers of the RSM state that they "acknowledge that there are existing biases and affirm" that they have an obligation to "reduce their impact on decision-making by using data to help surface and identify unwarranted variations in practice". Yet, this reliance on tech solutionism and the inability to address the root issues that stem back to anti-Blackness, racial capitalism, and racism fail to provide long-lasting remedies for families.

Further, the reliance on technology and data-sharing processes does not rectify the violence that has occurred on behalf of the system for generations. As such, DWAC mothers continue to refute the system's claims of "protection" saying that it is a facade that hides the system's true intention to make money from the suffering of poor Black communities and communities of color. DWAC states that not only has the system been unsympathetic and unempathetic, they often treat mothers worse than the criminal legal system, all while upholding white normative standards of parenting. The use of these technologies is an expansion of the system's efforts to capture, control, and punish families, and thus the claim that these technologies can help fix racial equity issues or biases remains insufficient and incorrect.

Family Dismemberment Impacts Communities Generationally

"Dismember:

'To cut off or disjoin the limbs, members, or parts of';

'To break up or tear into pieces'".[56]

Central to the stories of those most impacted by the system is the notion that DCF(S) has expanded the stalker state and has impacted families generationally. As of 2020, Los Angeles County consisted of only 7% of Black children, and yet, 24% of Black children in Los Angeles are removed from their families by DCFS.[57] This statistic does not include the Black children disproportionately experiencing DCFS involvement in other ways, including through family maintenance cases or documented investigations. Mothers we speak with and stand with say that the family policing system has impacted the ability of mothers to have a foundation to raise their children, to pass on generational ancestral knowledge, and to take care of one another. They say that the system intentionally separates families to keep us isolated so that they can funnel us into other carceral systems for profit. **Keeping families isolated has also meant that communities are unable to practice "creative and innovative" ways of resolving conflict and instead have been forced to rely on carceral institutions and punishment.** For many mothers, having a history in the family policing system whether they are labeled as a past "perpetrator" or past "victim" was also held against them for future punishment.

[56] Merriam-Webster, s.v. "Dismember (v.)," accessed June 4, 2022, https://www.merriam- webster.com/dictionary/dismember

[57] Jaclyn Cosgrove, "Why are black children removed from homes at high rate? LA county plans blind removal pilot", Los Angeles Times, July 15, 2021 https://www.latimes.com/california/story/2021-07-14/why-are- black-children-removed-from-homes-at-high-rate-l-a-county-plans-blind-removal-pilot

The consideration of prior history in the child welfare system limited mother's ability to be seen in light of their current situations, erasing their current predicaments for what may have unfolded in the past.

One DWAC mother says,

> To make it worse, if you are a grown adult and- and you- your mother went through the system, they're like, "Oh, shh—her?! You don't need no kids. Your mama was in the system, and now you're in the system. Give me the damn kids".

Another adds,

> It only hurts that you have a history of DCF[S]. I was in the system, so they coming after me. I understand, you know what I mean? Y'all do this to a lot of people. But I want this stuff to stop for me. Because my... I can't do it again.

This endless cycle of terror for mothers makes it nearly impossible for them to find ways to remain off the system's radar, and out of the system's future traps. Further, DWAC states that surveillance and discourses of visibility and protection turn communities against one another, creating a diversion so that the system can move in and "break the homes down and move the husbands or take the children". Mothers share that they feel constantly under surveillance as the system is always listening and watching them, and caseworkers can pop up at any time they want.

They say that the system's surveillance "**haunts you for the rest of your life**", and that "being under the eye of the Big Brother, you know it's gonna be forever. Forever." This relentless cycle feels impossible for many mothers to break through because their histories are worked into mathematical equations that the system relies on to function. Without historical tracking of mothers of color, mainly Black mothers, the system would fail to meet their standard of "child protection." Thus, the suffering of mothers through surveillance is necessary for the system to keep existing as is.
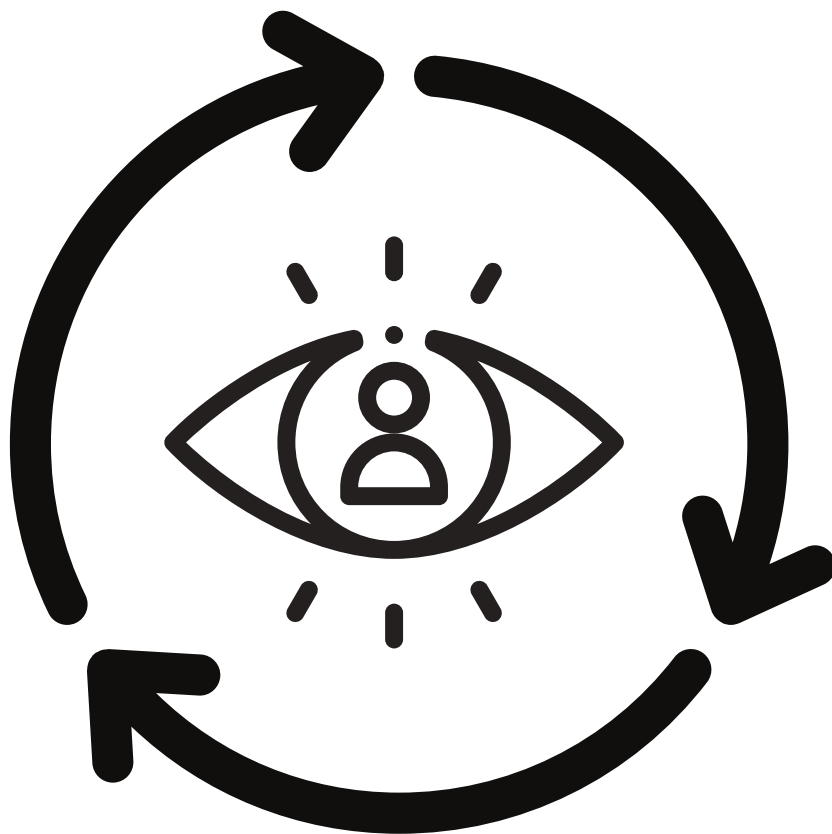
The removal of children from their homes is more than just a breaking of relational bonds, it is also a way that the system ensures communities remain in a state of need and subordination. Mothers say that the family policing system has the authority to do as they please with Black women's babies, and more than that, have the power to control the next generations of children by taking them as well. They describe this as dismembering families, which signifies a type of violence that is not seen when we use words like "remove" child from the home or "place" child in out-of-home placement. It signifies a steep departure from using words like "impact" on communities.

The use of the word "**dismember**" depicts the violence that occurs within family separation. There is a cutting off or disjoining— there is breaking and tearing. One mother defines "dismembering families" as a loss of family, the ultimate punishment for mothers in her eyes. The punishment doesn't start and end at the separation of children from their families, it extends beyond child removal making family reunification extremely difficult and contingent on "**compliance**" with the system's many expectations. For Black mothers, Indigenous mothers, Latinx mothers, and other poor mothers of color, this violence within the system is significantly impactful to their ability to build generational bonds and greatly impacts their health and mental health— just as slavery did. It takes away the autonomy of mothers and children, and often prohibits the ability to make any decisions for how people want to be cared for— an inability to request what is truly needed to make people feel safe and taken care of. Because of the coercive and predatory nature of the system, mothers have had to constantly be aware of how and when they can ensure that they have protected rights for their own children. This often includes thinking about their rights and their children's rights before they're even born.
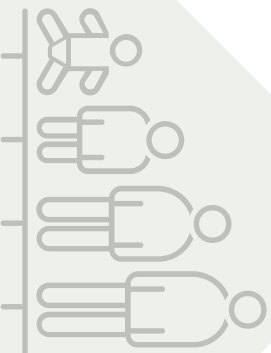
Mothers say that part of the system's punishment scheme is used to **diminish their autonomy and break their spirits down.** Several mothers shared that when you break someone's spirits, you give them a reason not to fight anymore, you give them a reason to not question the "inevitable". Several mothers also stated that it compounded their feelings of having nothing, making them feel like they're going crazy or that they're "**going through the fire**". These mothers described feeling like they were on "pins and needles" at all times and feeling a complete loss of autonomy, all while having to be prepared for the system to test if they were truly being compliant. Tests of compliance included random caseworker visits and documentation of their behaviors at any time. Several mothers described how these forms of punishment and surveillance from the system impacted their physical health, leading to miscarriages and anxiety attacks.

Moreover, this harm inflicted by the family policing system is not only felt by families or mothers themselves but also has lead to an alteration and sometimes **permanent shifting within the fabric of communities.**

Along with the effects that mothers and their children have experienced individually, the system also causes damage to future generations and more broadly communities. Maya suggests that a loss of family is a loss of community power, autonomy, and integrity. It is one of the goals of state violence. Dismembering families impacts the power of society. She states that **there is power in keeping families together**, not just because of the bonds between child and parent but because the fabric of our society is strengthened when we empower and care for each other. That is, when families are preserved.

The damaging narratives that are upheld by DCF(S) and the family policing system distract from and disrupt the healing that is necessary for families, and yet it is often overlooked due to organizations' reputation as "**helpful community resources**". The control over the narratives of mothers, children, and communities gets taken up by academia, policy, and the system creating a damaging cycle that is constantly being reinforced to rationalize the treatment of families.
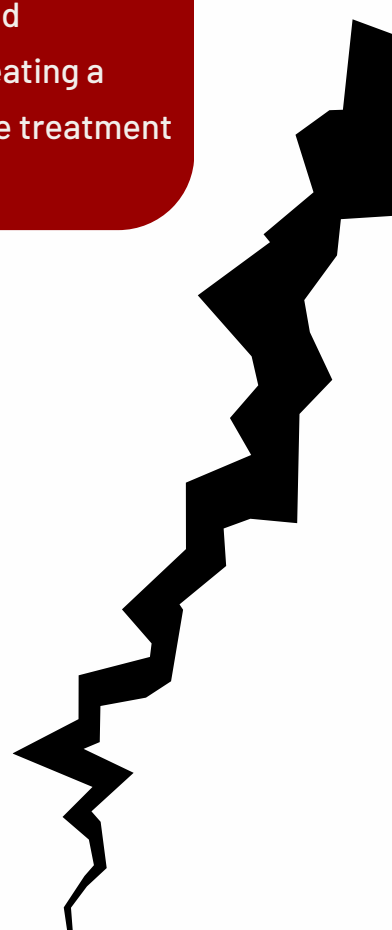
The complete erasure of mothers' existence continues to enable the system to feel justified in its decision to remove children from their homes. It is part of a long legacy of societal attempts to erase Black women and women of color. Some mothers say that this erasure is the system's end goal. Maya explains that people who lose familial bonds "don't have any possibilities, any-anything, any opportunities".

Jada shares the permanent repercussions of this saying,

> My family, we aint been the same since. We have not, we have not, been the same since. Not one family cookout together. Not one family meal together. Nothing.

When asking mothers what the role of the system is to them, they said:

> I think that they don't play a role, they kidnap [...] so this is why I say they need to be shut down.

Part 7

A "Horizon of Possibility"
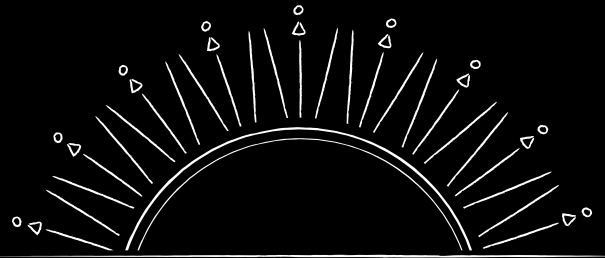
Family Support Doesn't Require Surveillance

DWAC & the Stop LAPD Spying Coalition acknowledge that harm does occur within every single community, but reiterates that **surveillance and state violence are not needed to address this harm.** Rather the violence enacted by the system and the state exacerbates interpersonal conflict, specifically for women of color. Instead, there are several ways to address the harm caused to each other and children through the creation of community networks, the building up of trusting relationships, and the further dismantling of carceral institutions that seek to control and dominate communities of color. Mothers we spoke with state that contrary to the system's views of "child protection" as protecting children from their parents, "child protection" actually means family protection, especially protection from state violence.

As suggested by DWAC and SLSC, ensuring family well-being does not require new carceral technological tools or forms of surveillance. It requires care, vulnerability, and courage to move away from the societal norms that have tricked society into believing that individual people are to be blamed for societal deficiencies and abandonment.

Family Protection means

all families are provided with the means to take care of their families in a way that does not require or force reliance on the state.

A few ways we can start to rethink "child protection":

01   Rethinking "Prevention"

We believe that the real "prevention" of harm requires reparations in the form of housing deeds, land back to indigenous people, and financial repayment to mothers impacted not only by the system but by violence within society as a result of racism.

02   Demanding Resources

Resourced communities would be able to grow their own food, educate their own children, and creatively come up with ways to address conflict without the isolation of community members. If individuals were able to create mutually accountable environments and processes, there would not be a need for carceral institutions where families "rot in jail".[58] These forms of accountability and care cannot fully come to fruition or be sustainable if our communities continue to be surveilled, policed, and separated. Mothers call for the ability to access their own housing, to have a place to create and sustain family bonds over the years— something many mothers currently do not get to experience because of the carceral ecosystem.

03   Creating or Funding Spaces to Share Stories as Healing Praxis

DWAC mothers also state that liberation looks like radical self care, the sharing of stories, experiences and tools to deal with challenges. The ability to share stories and practice self care allows for mothers to begin healing from the experiences of being in the system, and generates community with others who may have had similar experiences.

04   Prioritizing the Expertise of Impacted Communities

Further, the sharing of stories is a form of expertise and knowledge building. Those with lived experience are able to counsel and offer guidance. Those impacted by the system are experts in their own experiences, and thus academic research claiming for the expansion of policing without considering the expertise of those impacted remains extremely harmful.

[58] Mother (participant in DWAC Community Conversation) in discussion with the authors, June 2021.

Our Demands, Our Visions, Our Horizon.

DWAC and the Stop LAPD Spying Coalition call for the abolition of the family policing system. Moreover, we call for the creation of and continuation of community care that is not attached to surveillance mechanisms or state-sanctioned violence. Instead of pouring millions of dollars into abusive carceral institutions, like the $270,000 per child per year spent on holding children at MacLaren Hall, this money should be poured into the community and into programs that do not collaborate with law enforcement or cause further harm.

We call for investment into programs that will help communities thrive. This includes employment programs for youth who are continuing to "age out" of the family policing system. Housing for parents instead of shelters that are heavily surveilled and under-resourced. Debt forgiveness and tax breaks, transportation support, mental health support, rehabilitation, community spaces and activities, food assistance, and clothing assistance are all part of the missing pieces needed to ensure care.

We call for accountability in the form of reparations for those who were harmed by the system, for support systems, and funding for mental health and wellness programs that offer emotional support for those impacted by trauma and abuse. We need respite care for parents who are unable to get rest.[59] Further, we call for the protection of family rights, the end of carceral data collection and data-sharing processes, and the destruction of predictive tools that imperil our communities.
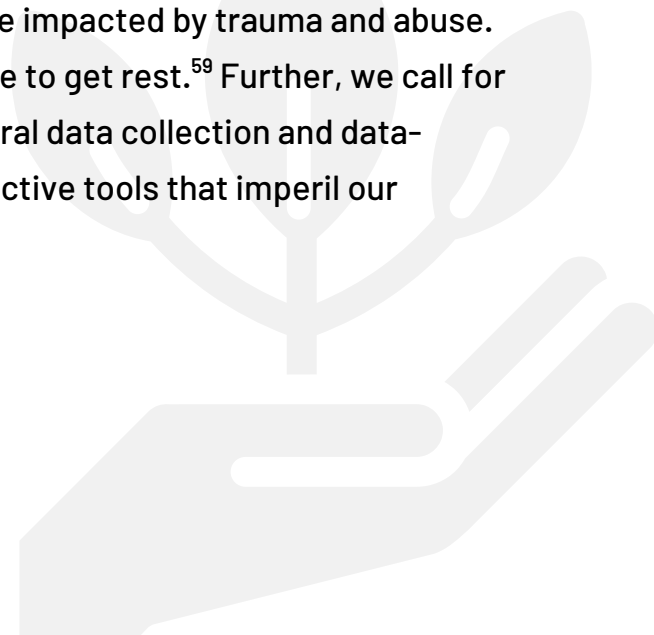
[59] For more on repairing harm see, Monique Noel & Sara Tohamy, "The Impact of Structural Racism on Women in Skid Row,", 2021, https://cangress.org/publications/

Reclaiming our Power
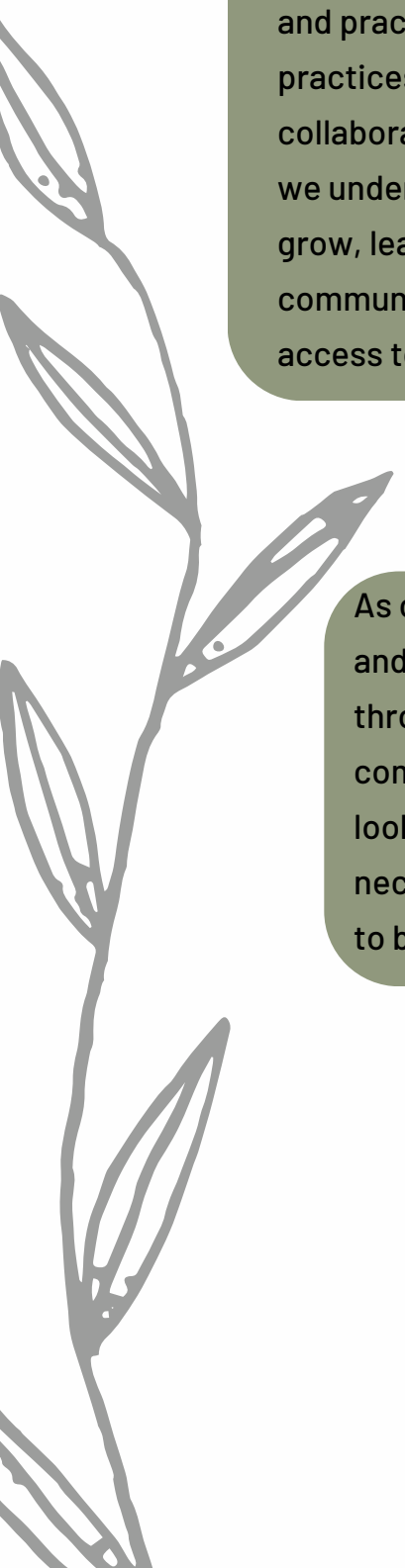
"The exciting thing about the space of abolition is it gives us a chance to rethink or re-remember how we're relating to each other when systems claim to be doing child protection work. [...] I think that abolition opens up a space for us to rethink, what does it mean to be truly in community with children? And also what does it mean to move in community with children at the center? I think that children are the collateral damage of the child welfare system. And I think abolition allows us to really center the needs of children and to rethink what it means to be in relation to them. And I think that's like a horizon of possibility".[60]
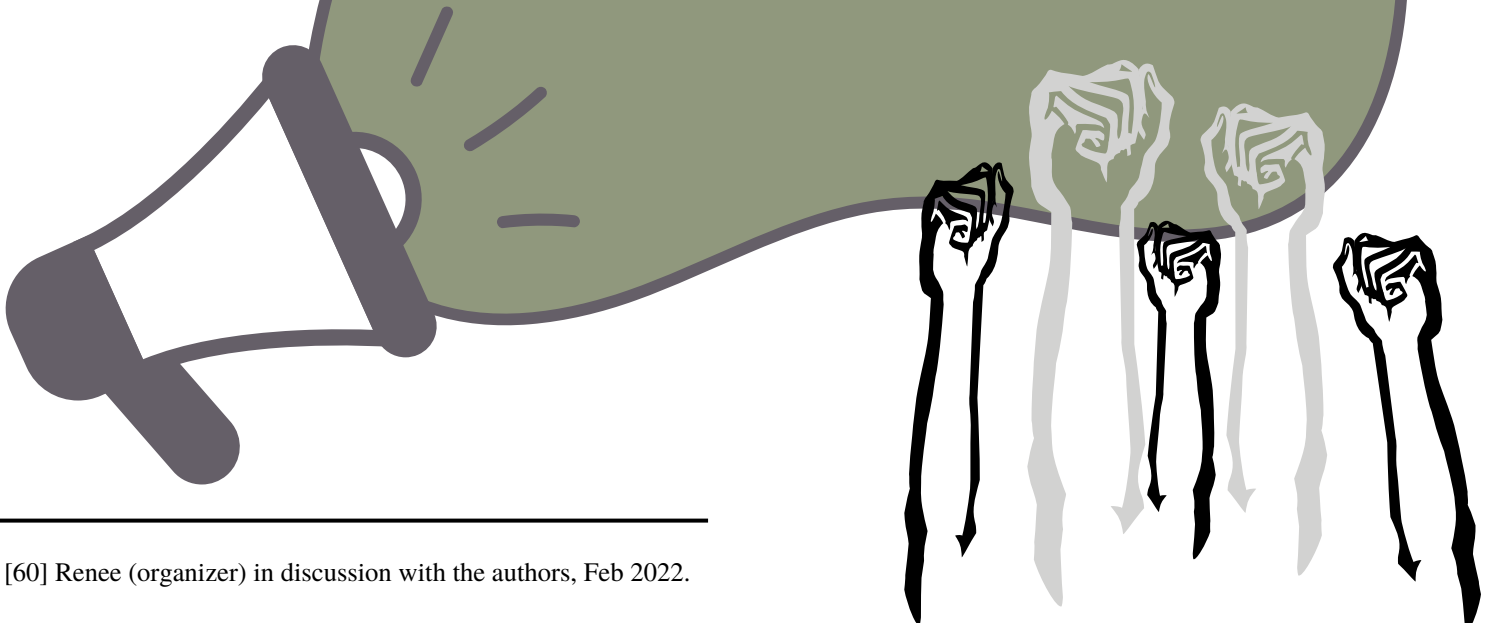
[60] Renee (organizer) in discussion with the authors, Feb 2022.

Building Up Our Communities
Communal Practices Toward Liberation

There is a "horizon of possibility" that comes from dismantling harmful systems and practices, including those that fuel the stalker state. We refute DCF(S) practices under the guise of "child protection", their law enforcement collaborations, and the harmful tactics they use to separate families. Instead, we understand that to move forward we must rely on one another to co-exist, grow, learn, and heal— together. We define child protection as family and community protection from state violence and instead lift up the need to have access to quality healthcare, land, housing, and food.

As one organizer May says, "We see child protection as our children being safe and having an opportunity. I think it can look different ways having support through community support and through familial ties. Support through the larger community and through our Black identity. I think it's a more communal way of looking at parenting and parentage". Therefore, true "protection" from the state necessitates the end of policing and surveillance, and requires the tools we need to build up our own communities.

For our own communities, we envision community accountability processes for those who have caused harm to others.[61]

We envision stepping in for others when they are unable to care for their children, or caring for those who fall sick and need assistance.

We envision families having abundant resources available to them to care for themselves, such as money for children, field trips for families, grassroots unified education events, and resources for single parents.

We call for spaces that are dedicated to addressing generational trauma and are seeking out spaces that help navigate reconciliation efforts, community safety discussions, and other familial services.

We understand that building trusting and loving relationships needs to occur within our own families and beyond to our communities.

To do this, we need to unlearn societal norms that were forced upon us that prioritize individualism. This is the horizon of possibility that awaits us when we acknowledge that state violence and policing will never lead us to liberation.

---

[61] To read more on community accountability see Mariame Kaba & Shira Hassan, Fumbling Towards Repair: A Workbook for Community Accountability Facilitators. (Chicago: Project NIA/Just Practice, 2019); Aishah Shahidah Simmons, love WITH accountability: Digging Up the Roots of Child Sexual Abuse. (Chico: AK Press).

Appendices

Appendix A: *SROT Protocol*

SUPPLEMENTAL SAFETY ASSESSMENT
SRFOT PROTOCOL

The purpose of the Supplemental Safety Assessment Skid Row Family Outreach Team (SRFOT) Protocol is to structure critical decisions for children who have been encountered by the SRFOT by:

1. Routinely monitoring critical case factors obtained by an evaluator
2. Help to structure the interview with a family, and
3. Expedite a referral to the Child Abuse Hotline when appropriate.

This SRFOT Procedural is applicable to all new clients encountered by the SRFOT Children's Social Worker.

The intent of this instrument is to assist the evaluator when assessing a family that lacks adequate shelter. It is an aide to identify issues that may raise the suspicion of child abuse. It is not intended to be an in-depth assessment of the family.

Client's Name:_____   Date:_____
Children: Name_____Age____DOB_____
           Name_____Age____DOB_____
           Name_____Age____DOB_____
           Name_____Age____DOB_____
           Name_____Age____DOB_____

Location of Family:_____
Family Vouchered?_____   BY:_____
Location of Motel/Shelter:_____
Referred To Family Preservation? ____   Agency?_____Date?____
Referral to Child Abuse Hotline? No _____ Yes_____ Date:_____
Additional
Information:_____
_____
_____

1. Previous DCFS history- (Note: Prior DCFS referrals are the single most predictive indicator of future maltreatment.)
   Parent's Self Report:
      Prior death of a child as a result of maltreatment.
      Prior serious harm to child(ren)
      Termination of Parental Rights
      Prior Removal of children
      Prior or current DCFS case

   CSW's Review of CWS/CMS history:
      Prior serious harm to child(ren)
      Prior Termination of Parental Rights
      Prior Removal of children by CPS
      Prior CPS substantiation for maltreatment.
      Prior inconclusive CPS investigation factors to be considered
      Prior domestic violence which resulted in serious harm
      Prior service failure to successfully complete CPS services.
      Prior or current DCFS case

      Search Date: _____
      RESULTS:

2. History of Community Service Refusal
      Client Self Report:
      CSW research: Have they been given referrals but not followed through on them?
         By SROT:
         By Community Service Agency:

SRFOT-2/21/06

SUPPLEMENTAL SAFETY ASSESSMENT
SRFOT PROTOCOL

3. Domestic Violence History

Child(ren) exhibits anxiety (e.g., nightmares, and insomnia) related to situations associated with domestic violence.
Child(ren) cries, cowers, cringes, trembles, or otherwise exhibits fear as a result of the domestic violence.
Use of guns, knives, or other instruments in a violent, threatening, and/or intimidating manner.

Client Self Report:

DCFS record:

4. Mental Health History

Client Self Report:

DCFS record:

DMH record: (Consult with DMH SRFOT member)

5. Inability to Provide Minimum Sufficient Level of Parenting

There are a variety of issues to be considered in assessing parenting skills; drug impairment, alcoholism, developmental disabilities, mental health and lack of knowledge. Examples:

- The client has a history of keeping child(ren) in the shelter, away from school, away from childcare for extended periods of time.
- Current disability, mental illness, or substance abuse seriously impairs his/her ability to supervise, protect, or care for the child(ren).

6. Client fails to protect child(ren). This may include physical abuse, sexual abuse, or neglect.

- Client(s) fails to protect child(ren) from serious harm.
- Client(s) does not provide supervision necessary to protect child(ren) from potentially serious harm by others. Parental care and supervision is needed due to the environmental factors including, but not limited to, alcohol abuse,
  drug use, sex offenders, and/or mental illness among the person(s) a child has contact with or who may have access if proper supervision is not provided.
- Client is not considering the child(ren)'s age and/or developmental stage as a factor in parental supervision.

7. Client(s) explanation for the lack of adequate shelter is questionable or inconsistent with the explanation, and/or the immediate plan for shelter suggests that the child(ren)'s safety may be an immediate concern.

- Client(s)' explanation for their lack of adequate shelter or the cause of the lack of adequate shelter minimizes the extent of harm to the child.

- Factors to consider include age of child, location or quality of the temporary housing, exceptional needs of child(ren), or chronicity of the lack of adequate shelter.

- Client(s) intentionally coaches or coerces child(ren), in effort to hinder the assessment about the lack of adequate shelter.

8. Inability to Access Services

- The family that lacks adequate shelter is excluded from the services traditionally available through interventions, such as vouchers or shelters as they do not meet the basic requirements.
  - Ineligible as they receive SSI or other grants
  - They cannot meet technical program requirements.

SUPPLEMENTAL SAFETY ASSESSMENT
SRFOT PROTOCOL

- Parent limitation, i.e. developmental delays, mental illness, substance abuse, ET.

9. Length of time the client lacks adequate shelter
   Does this family have a chronic pattern of being without adequate shelter?

   Client Self Report:

   Community Agency Record:

10. Client(s) does not meet the child(ren)'s immediate needs for supervision, food, clothing, and/or medical or mental health care.

   - Child(ren) is without minimally warm clothing in cold months.
   - Client does not seek treatment for child(ren)'s medical condition(s)
   - Client does not follow prescribed treatment for such conditions.
   - Child(ren) appears malnourished.
   - Child(ren) has exceptional needs which client(s) does not or cannot meet.
   - Client(s) does not attend to child (ren) to the extent that need for care goes unnoticed or unmet (e.g., client is present but child(ren) can wander outdoors alone, play with dangerous objects, play on unprotected window ledge, or be exposed to other serious hazards).
   - Client leaves child(ren) alone (time period varies with age and developmental stage).
   - Client(s) makes inadequate and/or inappropriate baby-sitting or child care arrangements or demonstrates very poor planning for child(ren)'s care.

11. The physical living conditions are hazardous and immediately threatening to the health and/or safety of the child(ren). Based on the child(ren)'s age and developmental status, the child(ren)'s physical living conditions are hazardous and immediately threatening, including but not limited to:

   - Substances or objects accessible to the child(ren) that may endanger the health and/or safety of the child(ren). Lack of utilities and no alternate or safe provisions are made.
   - Excessive garbage and/or spoiled food which threatens health. Illness or injury has occurred due to living conditions .
   - Evidence of human or animal waste in living quarters.

Case
Notes:_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

SRFOT-2/21/06

Appendix B: *Risk Stratification Tool, CWS/CMS*

THE RISK STRATIFICATION TOOL

At the core of this pilot is the Risk Stratification Tool, which was trained using hundreds of coded data elements derived from hundreds of thousands of records maintained in the LA DCFS DataMart. Records contained within Data Mart are hosted on county servers maintained by the Business Information Systems (BIS) team and are updated nightly based on information from the state's Child Welfare Services Case Management System (CWS/CMS).

Child Welfare Services
Case Management
System (CWS/CMS)
(relational database)

Information for new and
open maltreatment
investigations extracted
from 27 data tables

Risk Stratification
Model run to generate
estimated likelihood of
future system
involvement

Data entry from all 58
California counties
(hotline, referrals, investigations,
cases, services, placements, etc.)

Nightly updates of
LA County's
CWS/CMS records
integrated into the
LA DCFS Datamart

300+ features coded as
inputs for the model, the
investigation overview
report, racial-equity
reviews, and outcome
monitoring

Model output used
to produce
information used in
reports for the pilot

Appendix C: *Coded Features*

CODED FEATURES

To develop a list of model features (or predictors), a planning process was undertaken by the research team to operationalize a broad inventory of potential features that met one or more of any of the following criteria: (1) appeared in the peer-reviewed literature based on an association with serious harm (as either a risk or protective factor); (2) were included in models implemented in Allegheny, PA or Douglas, CO (other jurisdictions that have implemented risk stratification models); (3) emerged as clinically relevant history through conversations with frontline child protection staff and supervisors; or (4) were suggested for possible inclusion by members of the community. Please note that race/ethnicity is not included in the model.

Approximately 300 features coded as inputs for the model, the investigation overview report, racial-equity reviews, and outcome monitoring (NOTE: race was not included, geographic information was not included)

child with allegations — 130 features

* demographic information (e.g., age, gender)
* current maltreatment allegation information (e.g., total # of allegations for child, physical abuse allegation, general neglect allegation)
* current involvement with DCFS (e.g., already open referral, already open case)
* health information (e.g., indicator of prenatal substance exposure, indicator of developmental service or mental health needs)
* abuse / safety data (e.g., injury harm details recorded, abuse frequency recorded)
* maltreatment history (e.g., age at first ever referral, total # of prior referrals, total # of prior substantiated allegations of sexual abuse)
* DCFS service and placement history (e.g., # of prior cases, age at first placement, time since last placement, prior placement with kin)

referral information — 80 features

* reporter type (e.g., law enforcement, family member)
* day and time of report (e.g., Friday, referral received at 3am, summer holiday flag, winter vacation flag)
* number of children with allegations on report (e.g., one child, five children)
* number of adults associated with allegations on report (e.g., one adult, three adults)
* referral-level information (e.g., address indicates family is homeless, non-protecting parent code, infant child named in this referral)

other children — 48 features

* demographic information for all children (e.g., age, gender)
* current maltreatment allegation information (e.g., any child with a sexual abuse allegation)
* current involvement with DCFS (e.g., any child currently in foster care)
* health information (e.g., any child w/prenatal substance exposure, any child w/ indication of psychotropic medications)
* DCFS history (e.g., any child with a termination of parental rights, any child with history of substantiated caretaker incapacity)

parents & other adults — 34 features

* maternal information (e.g., age, adult associated with substantiated allegations)
* paternal information (e.g., relationship to child with allegations, previous terminations of parental rights)
* other adult information (e.g., adult associated with inconclusive allegations, childhood history of foster care placements)

Examples of coded features

23

Appendix D: *Enhanced Support*

INVESTIGATIONS RECOMMENDED FOR ENHANCED SUPPORT

Investigations identified by the Risk Stratification Tool are unique in ways that do not lend themselves to a simple examination of any single factor. Three investigations the tool identified for enhanced supports between August 2021 – June 2022 are summarized below.

INVESTIGATION #1

- Seven children (5 boys, two girls) – ranging in age from 5 to 15
- Reported (by a family member) for general neglect, emotional abuse (which typically signifies DV), and physical abuse
- Records of developmental disabilities, special education, and psychotropic medications
- Records of previous positive toxicology at birth and prior foster care placements
- History of 10 to 20 allegations per child (combination of dispositions)
- Four children were first reported during infancy

INVESTIGATION #2

- One child (girl) age 5
- Reported for caretaker incapacity
- Hx of two previously substantiated general neglect allegations
- First reported at age 1
- Prior case opened for in-home services
- Reported by a social service provider
- Adult associated with the current allegation who has a history of substantiated allegations of physical abuse and prior foster care placements

INVESTIGATION #3

- Two children (both girls), an infant and 1 year old
- Reported for general neglect and emotional abuse (DV)
- Presence of an unrelated adult who is associated with the current allegation of maltreatment
- Prior TPR for one of the adults associated with the current allegation (numerous reports and associated placements for other children not named in this investigation)
- Missing toxicology report at birth recorded