

Risk Stratification Pilot BACKGROUND

1. What is the Risk Stratification (RS) Pilot?

The RS Pilot is a data-informed approach that emphasizes enhanced supervision support and oversight for investigations where the stakes are high, and the family's service needs are typically more significant. By adopting this approach, the Los Angeles County Department of Children and Family Services (DCFS) is able to provide supervisors with a method for better managing staffing resources to protect children and strengthen families.

2. Where is this pilot taking place?

Three regional offices were chosen to participate in this pilot: Belvedere, Lancaster, and Santa Fe Springs. These offices were chosen by DCFS Deputy Directors who were asked to identify one office in their region based on an assessment of office readiness and a consideration of other pilot initiatives that were taking place. The pilot started in August 2021 and has been in continuous operation since.

3. What is the RS Model?

The data model is built from Child Welfare Service/Case Management Services (CWS/CMS) records. These records include historical information about children and adults involved in the current investigation (e.g., a past allegation of sexual abuse, time since the last exit from foster care) – as well as information in the current report of maltreatment (e.g., that the call was received from a neighbor, that there is an alleged adult perpetrator who is unrelated to the child). By using a data model, information that DCFS caseworkers and supervisors are already expected to review and consider during an investigation is more systematically pulled together and summarized. The model is quite different than other tools the DCFS uses as it is automated and does not require any additional data entry on the part of staff or supervisors. It is simply integrating and synthesizing information that already exists.

4. How does the model work?

Each referral screened-in for investigation by the county's Child Protection Hotline is run through the RS Model. A supervisor is notified that they have been assigned an "enhanced support" investigation when the information associated with this investigation (both historical and current) indicates that there is an elevated likelihood of future harm to the child, leading to additional reports and significant system involvement (e.g., detention and placement in foster care). The goal is to change that trajectory through the services offered near-term by DCFS and other partners, thereby improving child safety and family stability.

More Information?

<https://dcfs.lacounty.gov/resources/reports/>