

National Child Welfare Resource Center for Organizational Improvement



Teleconference June 3, 2010

National Child Welfare Resource Center on
Legal & Judicial Issues

National Resource Center for Child
Welfare Data & Technology

Courts and Child Welfare Agencies Are Necessary to Improve the Lives of Children & Families



- Both are involved in child abuse and neglect cases
- Both are responsible for the achievement of permanent homes for children
- Both have the data necessary to create performance measures necessary to monitor progress toward achieving timely permanency

Safety, Permanency, and Well-Being



Performance Measures are necessary to monitor achievement of shared goals—better outcomes for children

Outcome measures are a good indicator of success because they force an objective appraisal: did we make a difference?

Court-Agency Collaboration



CFSRs reveal that collaboration between courts and child welfare agencies improves outcomes for children

Court Performance Measures



Published in April 2009:

Court Performance Measures in Child Abuse and Neglect Cases (a five-volume “Toolkit”)

<http://ojjdp.ncjrs.gov/publications/courttoolkit.html>


Four Basic Child Welfare Goals



The 30 dependency court performance measures, compatible with CFSR measures, address four basic child welfare goals:

- Safety
- Permanency
- Due Process
- Timeliness

Long Term Performance Measurements for Courts



Identify examples of excellent performance which encourages replication

Identify good practices that lead to acceptance and widespread use

Increase both court and child welfare agency accountability, which leads to continuing performance improvement

Identify weaker elements of court performance which encourages improvement

Identify 'reforms' that do not work well or have limited benefits, leading to redesign or elimination

Court/Child Welfare NET Task Force



In October of 2007, the NCSC convened a working group of experts to provide advice on policies, procedures, and priorities regarding data exchange

The Task Force concluded that data exchange standards are necessary

Need for Data Exchange



- Most states can not generate these performance measures without a time-consuming and labor-intensive case file review
- Unless the performance measures can be produced efficiently and cost effectively, they will not be used to promote best practices or to affect policy change

Court/Child Welfare NET Task Force

State Representatives

- Arkansas
- California
- Colorado
- Oklahoma
- Nevada
- Texas

National Organizations

- Children's Bureau and two of its resource centers:
- National Child Welfare Resource Center on Legal and Judicial Issues
 - National Resource Center for Child Welfare Data and Technology

Vision of Data Exchange



Exchanges of accurate and complete information between courts and child welfare agencies in a timely fashion promote child safety, permanency, and well-being

Benefits of Data Exchange



Electronic data exchange benefits courts and child welfare agencies by:

- Allowing each to obtain data elements for which they are responsible and to use them to construct performance measures and management reports
- Providing each with timely, complete and accurate information upon which to make decisions promoting child safety, permanency and well-being
- Reducing the burden of data entry for each, and more importantly, reducing errors inevitable in redundant data entry

Other Benefits to Courts



Child welfare case data can help courts:

- Make timely and informed decisions, including whether removal is warranted, placements are appropriate, permanency goals are suitable, and service plans are adequate
- Reduce continuances
- Reduce the number of telephone calls court clerks receive about scheduled hearing times
- Save the time court staff spends researching the relationships between individuals and collateral parties

Other Benefits to Child Welfare Agencies



Court data can help child welfare agencies:

- Receive court notices and court orders quickly so they can take immediate action and better schedule staff time
- Determine when court hearings are scheduled and therefore to plan their own schedules

Myths and Misconceptions



Most common:

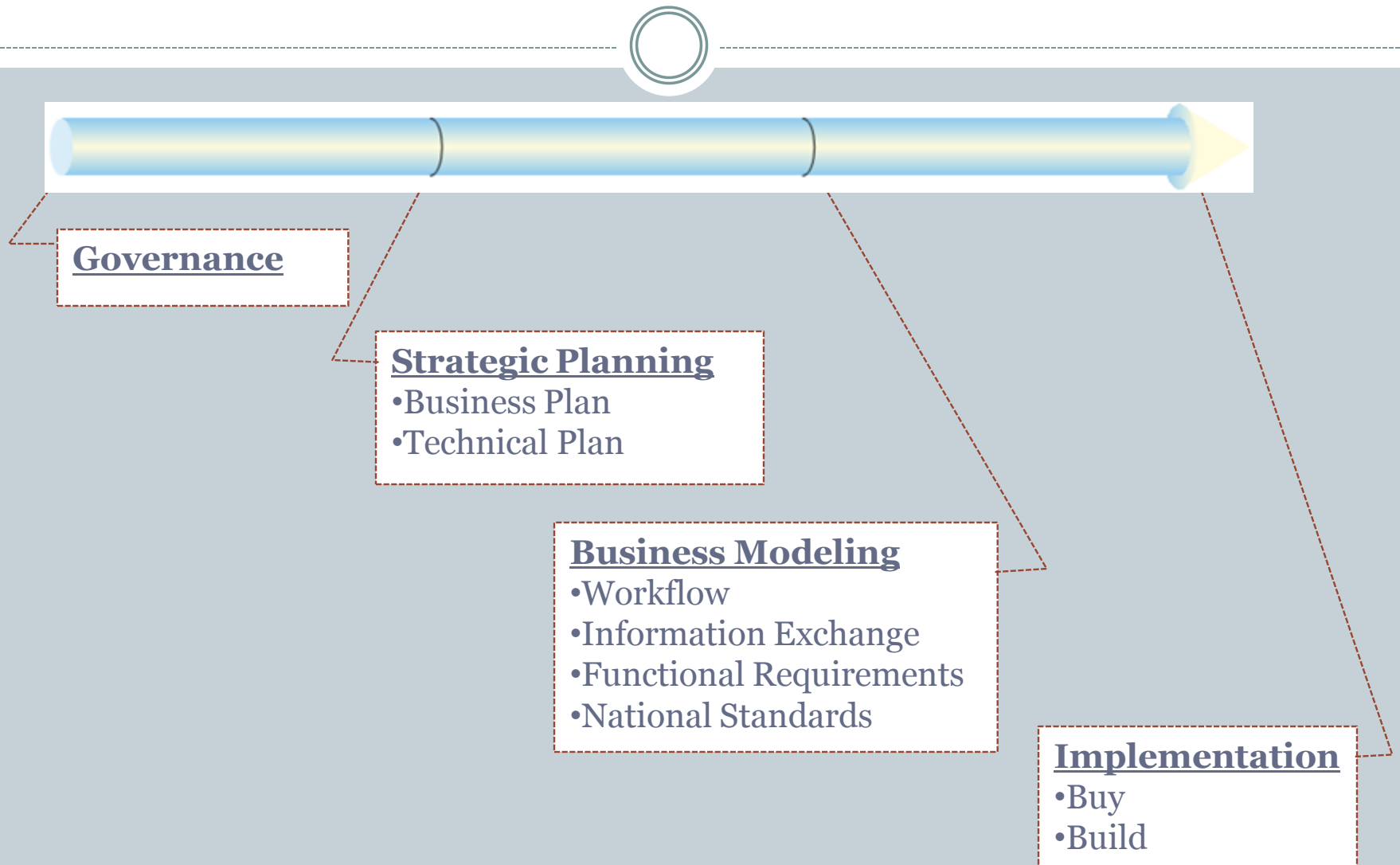
- We must implement a new system before we can exchange data with other agencies
- Data exchange is technology so the IT shops should handle it
- Information sharing is an enormous, expensive, multi-year project that we can not possibly undertake in this fiscal environment

Data Exchange Standards Necessary



- To provide a template to use, rather than developing a system from scratch
- To generate exchange data elements required to produce performance measures for child abuse and neglect cases
- To make it easier for private vendors to produce or modify case management software containing the data elements necessary to calculate performance measures
- To enable states to work cooperatively and simultaneously on different data exchanges to encourage quicker progress

Typical System Development Lifecycle

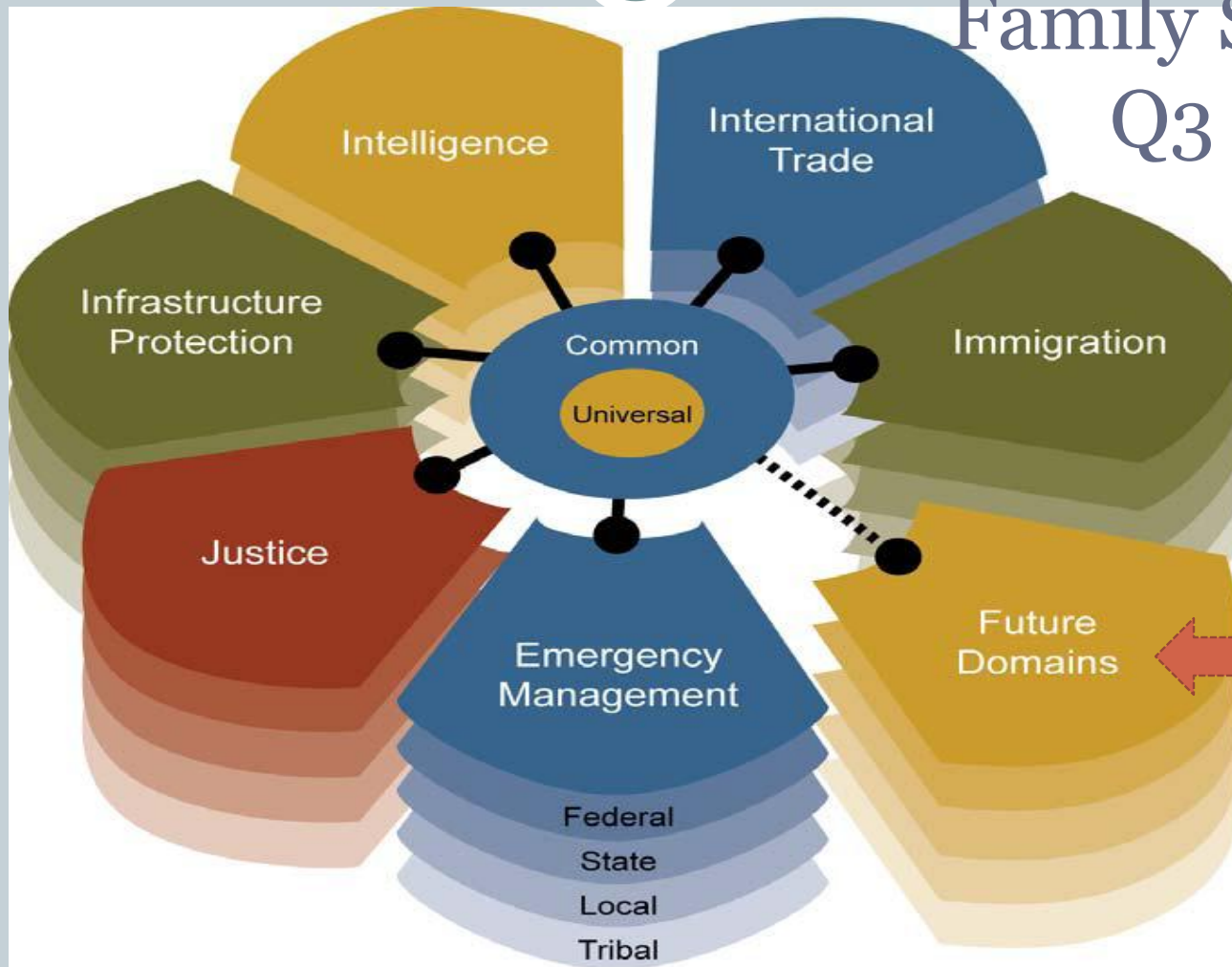


Challenges in Court-Agency Data Exchange



- **Security/Privacy Issues**
- **Governance issues**
 - Executive/Staff turnover
- **Technological issues**
 - Common Identifiers: Associating court and agency case, different perspective
 - Data Quality Issues
 - Data Exchange Timing: Strive for real-time data exchange
 - Data Transformation

NIEM 2.1: Domains



Family Services
Q3 '09



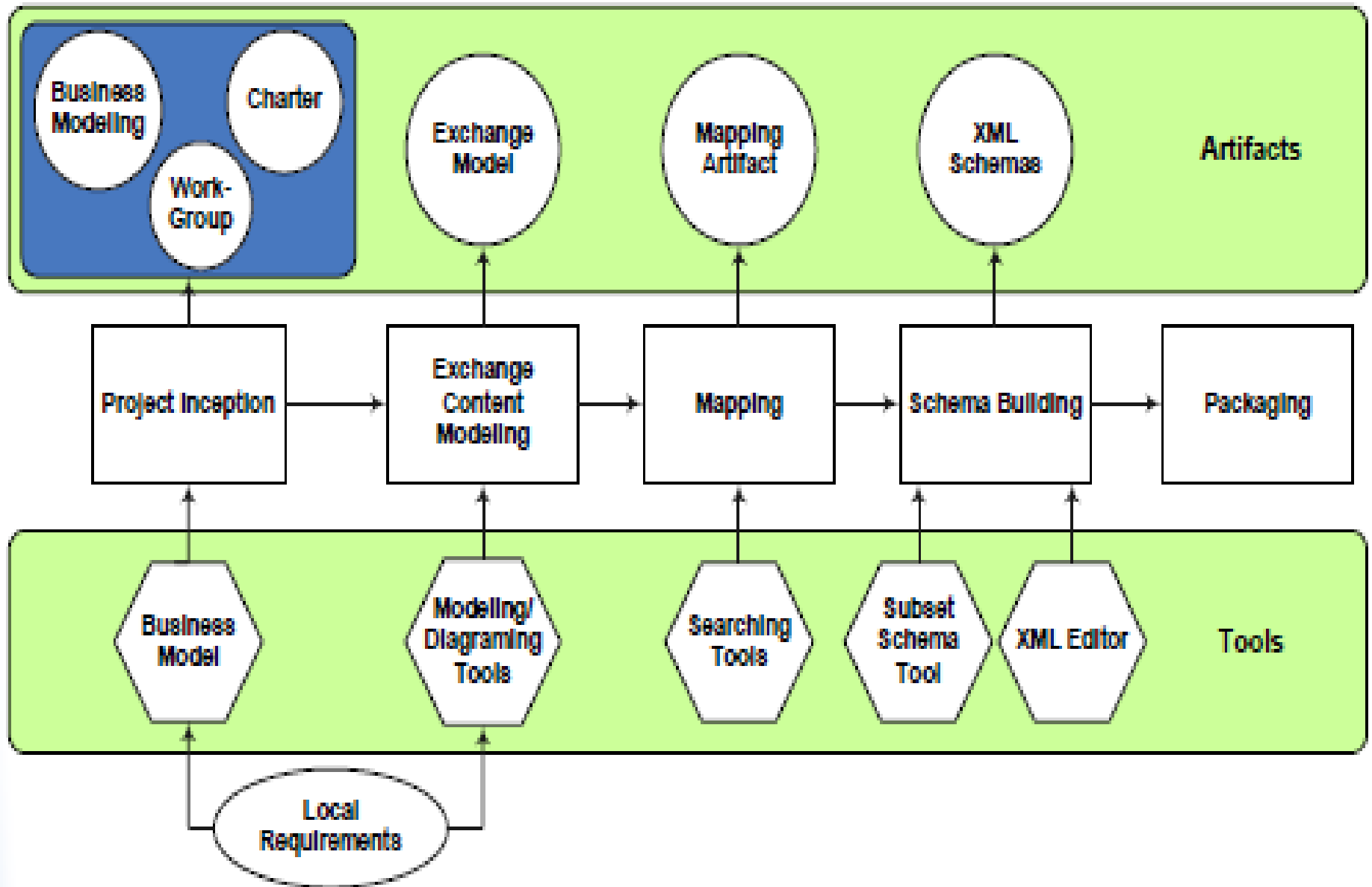
Technical Specifications



- National Information Exchange Model (NIEM)
- Information Exchange Package Documentation (IEPD)



Proven Process for Data-Exchange Projects



Resources on Child Welfare Wiki



<http://www.ncsconline.org/childwelfarewiki>

- Memoranda of Understanding
- Strategic Plans
- Business Process Models
- Data Models
- XML Schema and Instance Documents

Seven Child Welfare Exchanges



NET's accomplishments, to date:

1. Dependency Petition (agency → court, case initiation)
2. Hearing Notification (court → agency, future event)
3. Court Findings (court → agency, judgment/order)
4. Case Plan (agency → court, permanency goal and services)
5. Placement Change Notification (agency → court)
6. Court Report (agency → court, participants' progress)
7. Representation Notification (agency ↔ court, participants' attorneys, CASA)



Kathy Chase: Colorado's Court Information Data Exchange

**COLORADO DEPARTMENT OF HUMAN
SERVICES – COLORADO TRAILS**

AND

**COLORADO JUDICIAL DEPARTMENT –
ECLIPSE**

Benefits of Colorado's Child Welfare/Court Data Exchange



- Integrity/Completeness/Accuracy of Data
- Potential for electronic filing of cases and court documents in common formats
- Timely availability of data – Upcoming Hearing information for case workers
- Ability to connect clients and collaterals to court cases
- Workload reduction for the caseworkers
- Data provided to the courts can offer a wealth of information that will hopefully drive judicial decisions about families

Benefits Continued



- Sets the stage for future data exchanges e.g. Juvenile Delinquency and Adoption Case information
- Continued Collaborative relationship with Judicial partners



Pat Brooks: Missouri's Experience with NIEM