

ALLIED FOR BETTER OUTCOMES

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| PRINCIPLES | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Families, as first teachers and primary protectors, are fundamental to children’s optimal development. ■ Building Protective Factors <i>as well as</i> reducing risk factors strengthens a family’s ability to promote optimal development for their children ■ Relationships—within families and communities, between parents and providers, and across systems—are essential as vehicles for change ■ Systematic and intentional coordination promotes healthy cross-system relationships and maximized the ability of systems to support families and children ■ Shared accountability for optimal development and strengthened family functioning across broad networks of services is essential at all levels |
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| GOALS | STRATEGIES |
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| 1 Build a focus on optimal development and family strengthening into child welfare practice with young children. | Ensure all child welfare systems, agencies, administrators, supervisors, and caseworkers understand early child development, including developmental milestones, indicators of developmental delays, and requirements for optimal child development. |
| | Ensure Early Period Screening, Diagnosis, and Treatment (EPSDT) to assess and respond to any developmental concerns takes place for all children in the child welfare system. |
| 2 Ensure that families reported to the child welfare system are appropriately assessed and receive services tailored to their needs. | Consider risk <i>and</i> Protective Factors in all aspects of work with families of young children in the child welfare system. |
| | Train child welfare workers to make appropriate referrals to any of the many systems serving young children and their families, and ensure mechanisms for following up with families on whether or not referrals were pursued. |
| | Create pathways for families who may benefit from non-child welfare services to receive support without opening a child welfare case. |
| | Shift the paradigm around child abuse and neglect reporting to allow and encourage reporters to connect parents experiencing stress to the supports and services they need before incidents occur. |
| | Utilize community-based services and formal and informal community networks to support families confronting challenges before they rise to the level of requiring child welfare involvement. |
| 3 Link the various systems that serve young children and their families, including child welfare, in order to enhance supportive services to families within any of these systems. | Ensure an understanding between and appreciation among early childhood and child welfare systems as partners in prevention of maltreatment and promotion of optimal development. |
| | When a child under the age of six is involved in a child welfare case, include an early care and education professional in Family Group Conferencing, even if the child is not involved in an early care and education program. |
| | Engage nontraditional partners in collaborative efforts to support optimal development of the most vulnerable children. |
| 4 Ensure that young children in child welfare have access to high quality ECE programs and other early childhood services | Ensure child welfare caseworkers and supervisors are knowledgeable about the benefits of quality early care and education programs for young children and what constitutes quality in early care and education. |
| | Mandate that young children in state custody are enrolled in quality early care and education programs. |
| | When a child is reunified with his or her birth family after a stay in foster care, ensure continuity of early care and education. |
| | Include early care and education providers from a child’s program on Child and Family Service Teams or Multidisciplinary Teams. |
| | Ensure that early care and education professionals understand the unique needs of children who have experienced trauma or are involved with the child welfare system. |
| 5 Include specific strategies and benchmarks aimed at improving developmental outcomes for children, such as enhanced school readiness, into QSRs, CFSRs, PIPs, and other quality improvement efforts. | Include screens that are directly related to practice with young children in Quality Service Reviews – statewide child welfare service reviews conducted internally in preparation for the Child and Family Services Review. |
| | Include explicit goals and strategies to improve developmental outcomes for young children in state child welfare system Program Improvement Plans. |