

BEST PRACTICES Working Definitions:

BEST PRACTICE: FAMILY-CENTERED

- Families are encouraged to identify family members, community members and service providers who will support them as a family team
- Decisions are based on the families' preferences, choices and values, not on administrative expediencies
- Families and their support teams are full and active partners in case reassessment and service evaluation
- Safety, permanence, child well-being and family satisfaction with planning, implementation and outcomes are employed as benchmark in service evaluation
- Child welfare workers and service providers continually seek families' input and feedback on the suitability and effectiveness of services in achieving identified outcomes
- Child Welfare agencies identify and use placement resources that support family centered planning practices in addressing child and family needs.
- Placement resources provide individualized services and resources that are responsive to family culture, values, choices and preferences

BEST PRACTICE: NEEDS DRIVEN

- Child Welfare workers and service providers engage families in ways relevant to the situation and sensitive to the values of their culture
- Families and support teams identify child and family's concerns in all areas of life and prioritize the most critical needs to be addressed.
- Ongoing assessments that build on the strength of the child and family unit, and that identify desired outcomes are critical in the development of effective case plans for children.
- System resources are re-tooled when evaluation indicates that adjustments or enhancements are needed to achieve desired outcomes
- Placement selection is individualized, focusing on and building on strengths and needs of the children & family.
- Opportunities are created among agencies to enable child welfare staff, families, and placement providers to work collaboratively in identifying strengths, needs, and individualized plans for children & families.

BEST PRACTICE: SOLUTION-ORIENTED

- Child Welfare workers and service providers use approaches of involvement that invite people to pull together instead of working against each other
- Child Welfare workers and service providers respect differing points of view and recognize that healthy conflict can enhance problem solving
- Families identify their own outcomes/goals based on information and support from team members
- Children, parents, relatives, family friends, and involved professionals share information that supports the development of individualized child and family plans
- Plans are changed and new resources are incorporated to address challenges that arise
- Families and their support teams decide before placement on the goals and outcomes of that placement
- Child Welfare and adoption workers openly and respectfully share concerns with families related to reunification

BEST PRACTICE: COMMUNITY-BASED

- Programs designed to foster commitment and shared accountability among families, community members, and service providers
- Case planning is a team process involving the family, the child, natural supports, agencies, and community services
- Services geographically located and able to meet families' diverse needs
- Families, community members, and service providers work together in identifying safety plans to assure that children and families are protected and have immediate access to crisis intervention resources
- Placements demonstrate an awareness of families' memberships in communities by drawing upon extended families, by being culturally relevant, and by maintaining close proximity to the families of origin
- Program procedures support the involvement of child welfare workers and community service providers across placements to provide consistency and continuity

BEST PRACTICE: STRENGTH-BASED

- Families are viewed as operating from capabilities
- Strengths and resources of children and families are continuously identified and discussed, and serve as the basis for relationship-building and strategy development
- Child welfare workers and service providers look for the families' capabilities and help the family enhance its competencies
- Programs are designed to engage families in collaborative relationships at the outset to maximize information gathering and assessment of strengths and needs
- Child welfare staff and administrators are trained in strength-base, family centered practices and families are encouraged to participate in the design and delivery of training
- Families, together with their team, identify their own strengths and those of the individual members
- Child Welfare workers and service providers practice the art of suggesting strength-based ways of looking at situations, relationships, or behaviors
- The families' strengths, including social networks and informal supports already available to and within the families, are foundation upon which new supports are designed or provided.