

# PENNSYLVANIA'S CHILD WELFARE PRACTICE MODEL

February 2013

**Outcomes:** Children, youth, families, child welfare representatives and other child and family service partners participate as team members with shared community responsibility to achieve and maintain the following:

- Safety from abuse and neglect.
- Enduring and certain permanence and timely achievement of stability, supports and lifelong connections.
- Enhancement of the family's ability to meet their child/youth's wellbeing, including physical, emotional, behavioral and educational needs.
- Support families within their own homes and communities through comprehensive and accessible services that build on strengths and address individual trauma, needs and concerns.
- Strengthened families that successfully sustain positive changes that lead to safe, nurturing and healthy environments.
- Skilled and responsive child welfare professionals, who perform with a shared sense of accountability for assuring child-centered, family-focused policy, best practice and positive outcomes.

**Values and Principles:** Our values and principles will be consistently modeled at every level and across partnerships. We believe in...

- **Children, Youth and Families**
  - Children and youth have the right to live in a safe, nurturing and stable family.
  - Families are the best place for children and youth to grow up.
  - Family connections are maintained whenever possible.
  - All families have strengths.
  - Families come in all shapes and sizes and family defines family.
  - Families are experts on themselves, are involved in decision making, and are willing to drive change.
- **Community**
  - Community is broadly defined. This includes, but is not limited to, families, neighbors, volunteers, spiritual, educational, medical, behavioral health and legal partners.
  - Natural partnerships must exist within a community to promote prevention, protection, well-being and lifelong connections.
- **Honesty**
  - Honesty serves as the basis for building trusting relationships.
  - Honesty is not only telling the truth, but also sharing information, clarifying roles and responsibilities and transparent decision making.
  - Honesty is an open and consistent exchange of communication in a way that everyone can understand.
- **Cultural awareness and responsiveness**
  - Culture is respected, valued and celebrated.
  - Culture is broadly defined. This includes but is not limited to families' beliefs, values, race, gender, socio-economic status, ethnicity, history, tribe, religion/spirituality/affiliations, sexual orientation and language.
  - Cultural identity is explored with the family. Each child, youth and family is served with sensitivity within their unique context.

# PENNSYLVANIA'S CHILD WELFARE PRACTICE MODEL

February 2013

- **Respect**
  - Everyone has their own unique perspective, the right to be heard and contribute to their success.
  - Every individual is treated with dignity and consideration.
- **Teaming**
  - Children, youth and families are best served through a team approach with shared responsibilities. All team members have a role and voice. Involving the child, youth, family and extended support networks as active members of the team empowers the family.
  - Teams are strength-based and collaborate toward common goals.
  - Teams change as needed to include all formal and informal supports and resources.
  - Team members are accountable for their actions, keeping commitments and following through with agreed upon responsibilities.
- **Organizational excellence:**
  - Engaging children, youth and families, as an involved part of an accepting and empathetic team who can confront difficult issues, will effectively assist in the process toward positive change.
  - Advocating for and empowering children, youth, families and communities strengthen the organization.
  - Building, supporting and retaining a qualified, skilled and committed workforce whose own well being and safety are valued is essential.
  - Responsible allocation and management of resources demonstrates accountability.
  - Quality practice is assured by consistently monitoring and improving performance through critical self reflection and accountability.

**Skills:** To achieve our desired outcomes and commitment to these values and principles, demonstration of the following skills is essential across all aspects of the child welfare system.

- **Engaging:** Effectively establishing and maintaining a relationship with children, youth, families and all other team members by encouraging their active role and voice and successfully accomplishing sustainable shared goals.
- **Teaming:** Engaging and assembling the members of the team, including the family, throughout all phases of the change process and based on current needs and goals. Teaming is defining and demonstrating a unified effort, common purpose and clear roles and responsibilities that support positive change.
- **Assessing and Understanding:** Gathering and sharing information so the team has a common big picture of the strengths, challenges, needs and underlying issues. Assessing includes thinking critically and using information to keep the team's understanding current and comprehensive.
- **Planning:** Applying information gathered through assessment and monitoring to develop an individualized well reasoned sequence of strategies and supports to achieve the agreed upon goals.
- **Implementing:** Actively performing roles to ensure the formal and informal resources, supports and services, identified in the plan, occur in a timely manner and with sufficient intensity, frequency and sequence to produce sustainable and beneficial results.
- **Monitoring and Adjusting:** Continuously analyzing and evaluating the impact and effectiveness of the plan implementation and modifying accordingly in response to the changing successes and needs until goals are achieved.