

## Beginning Choice Point Promising Practices

Practice	Description	Rationale	Study Components
Team decision-making, case conferencing, family group decision-making	Meetings that include family members, child welfare staff, and other community representatives involved with the case. The goal is to develop a plan for the child’s well-being, to identify family strengths and to foster cooperation, collaboration and communication between families and professionals.	Involving multiple people in child welfare decision-making may reduce bias. Involving parents and other family members in decision-making may increase family involvement in services.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Main County focus groups</li> <li>• South County focus groups</li> <li>• Statewide survey</li> </ul>
Orientation for parents on child welfare and court processes	Orientation that helps parents to understand the child welfare system and policies related to timelines for reunification. Orientation is offered in Spanish and English and provides 6 hours of information over 3 sessions.	Families of color, particularly immigrants may feel confused or intimidated by the child welfare system and providing a structured orientation may help these families navigate the system.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Main County focus groups</li> <li>• South County focus groups</li> </ul>
Voluntary Family Maintenance/Family Preservation Services	Providing intensive services to families at risk of child placement. Services generally include some form of home-based services that are aimed at family skill-building and linkage to concrete services (e.g., public assistance, child care, employment training etc.).	Goal is to keep children and families of color out of the child welfare system—thereby reducing disproportionality.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Statewide survey</li> </ul>
Child care	Access to affordable quality child care for working parents.	Adequate child care may increase parents’ use of services and their success in completing services.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Main County focus groups</li> </ul>
Home visitation services	Services aimed at improving health behaviors of pregnant or parenting women, facilitating parenting skills, increasing support systems and encouraging healthy parent child attachments.	Providing intensive services before the need for child welfare system involvement may help prevent children of color from entering the child welfare system.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Main County focus groups</li> </ul>
Risk assessment tools	Structured risk assessment tools that are used to determine risk to child and possible need for out-of-home placement	Using a structured tool may help reduce biased decision-making.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Statewide survey</li> </ul>

## Continuing Care/Ending Choice Point Promising Practices

Practice	Description	Rationale	Study Components
Parenting education involving both parent and child	In comparison to traditional parent education services, parenting education involving both child and parent provides opportunities for education around parent-child interactions.	Involving both parents and children in parenting education may increase the effectiveness of these services, thereby improving parenting skills.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Main County focus groups</li> </ul>
Cultural matching for children in foster care	Workers attempt to place children with foster parents of a similar background.	Ensuring that foster parents share the same primary language and cultural background as the child may increase placement stability and assist in concurrent planning.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Main County focus groups</li> </ul>
Recruitment, training and coaching for foster parents	Training for foster families in how to care for children placed in their home—especially a peer system in which current foster parents assist new foster parents. Recruitment of diverse foster parents includes increased outreach.	Improving foster parent preparedness and diversity may help improve outcomes for children of color placed out of the home.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Main County focus groups</li> </ul>
Placement-related practices	Various practices aimed at improving placement stability including placing children with relatives and practices aimed at preventing children from moving into a higher level of care.	Improving placement stability may help improve the well-being of children of color.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Statewide survey</li> </ul>
Family-to-Family Initiative	Various services aimed at engaging and involving communities in preventing out-of-home placements, reunification and providing resource homes within children’s neighborhoods. Also has overarching goal of improving the child welfare system.	May be effective for children and families of color because it involves community and family support and is aimed at reducing disparities associated with gender and ethnicity and increasing the number of children placed in their own communities.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Statewide survey</li> </ul>

### Continuing Care/Ending Choice Point Promising Practices Continued

Practice	Description	Rationale	Study Components
Intensive and collaborative interventions for high-risk children	Collaborations between a variety of systems including public health, community-based organizations, probation, behavioral health and faith-based organizations. Services are aimed at preventing the need for a more restrictive placement for high-risk children.	May improve placement stability for at-risk children.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Statewide survey</li> </ul>
Community-based services	Services located in the communities in which clients reside and include a broad range of services such as health substance abuse, public assistance, domestic violence and home parenting services. Services are collaborative in nature.	Considered effective with children and families of color because they are “user-friendly”—families have easy access to many services that are housed in one location, and because they are located in the communities in which clients reside, they are considered less intrusive than traditional services.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Statewide survey</li> </ul>

## Organizational Promising Practices

Practice	Description	Rationale	Study Components
Cultural matching between staff and clients and cultural consultation	Matching clients with workers of similar cultural background and language. In cases where cultural matching is not possible, seeking cultural consultation from other child welfare professionals.	Cultural matching may facilitate rapport and cultural consultation may minimize the potential for cultural biases in assessments.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Main County focus groups</li> </ul>
Supportive supervision of staff	Supervisor coaching for working with diverse families.	Meeting the needs of diverse children and families may require extra supervision and guidance.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Main County focus groups</li> <li>• South County focus groups</li> </ul>
Collaboration with other agencies or systems	Developing interagency formal agreements and connections with liaisons in other agencies facilitates collaboration and minimizes the potential for agencies to give conflicting messages to clients.	Children and families of color may be involved with multiple social service systems; collaboration between systems may improve outcomes.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Main County focus groups.</li> </ul>
Strength-based approach to services	Assessing the unique characteristics of each family, working with families to identify solutions, facilitating client understanding of the child welfare system, using an empowerment approach to working with diverse families.	Considered particularly beneficial with diverse clients who may feel disempowered by their experiences with the child welfare system	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Main County focus groups</li> </ul>
Organizational culture that prioritizes maintaining and reunifying families	Shared organizational philosophy that the vast majority of children referred to the child welfare system can and should be with their birth parents. Shared philosophy is sustained through consistent messages, policies and direction from program managers and supervisors.	Maintaining or reunifying families of color will help reduce the number of children who remain in the child welfare system for lengthy periods of time.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• South County focus groups.</li> </ul>
Vertical case management	Social workers assigned to a case work with the family throughout their case rather than transferring cases to a different unit.	Helps to build strong working relationships between workers and clients and increases accountability.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• South County focus groups</li> <li>• Statewide survey</li> </ul>

### Organizational Promising Practices Continued

Practice	Description	Rationale	Study Components
Cultural competence of staff	Involves the use of bicultural and bilingual staff as well as providing ongoing cultural competence trainings to staff	Culturally competent staff may provide better services to culturally diverse clients	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Statewide survey</li> </ul>
Collaboration with American Indian tribes	Targeted to Native American children and families and include multidisciplinary teams involving tribal representatives, legal professionals and child welfare staff who come together to better serve Native American children and ensure the proper implementation of the Indian Child Welfare Act.	Considered respectful of cultural heritage, encourages cultural awareness for Native American children; may result in more complete assessments, better service planning and fewer contested hearings.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Statewide survey</li> </ul>