

Family Centered Systems of Care *Talking Point Material*

The child welfare system is ever growing and changing. Today, a new era of increased interagency collaboration and family involvement begins with you. We are all here today to collaborate with one another in an effort to strengthen the supports and services that families receive in Kansas.

Family Centered Systems of Care

Social and Rehabilitation Service (SRS) and the Children and Family Services (CFS) division began a statewide initiative in the fall of 2001, with the goal of moving toward a more family centered philosophy of practice.

Family Centered Systems of Care is a framework based on the belief that the best way to protect children in the long run is to strengthen and support their families. It requires specialized knowledge and skill to build on family strengths, resources, and family capacity.

Specifically, a family centered systems of care is a coordinated network of agencies and providers that make a full range of supports and services available as needed by children and their families. The values and principles of systems of care are: Interagency collaboration, Individualized Strength-based Care, Cultural Competence, Child and Family Involvement, Community-based Services, and Accountability.

A true family centered system *that* cares is about partnership—a partnership made up of families, service providers, and others who share visions for children and their families. Together, a community team develops an individualized service plan that builds on the unique strengths of each child and each family. Moreover, this customized plan should always be implemented in a way that is consistent with the family's culture and language. No one agency can respond to the multiple needs of families. Our resources and efforts are best put to use if we collaborate.

This requires that families be more involved in policy development, care coordination, evaluation, strategic planning, service provision, social marketing, and individual and systems advocacy. This results in a full partnership with the systems that serve Kansas families.

In the fall of 2003, Kansas was one of nine states awarded a five-year federal demonstration grant to see if successes achieved using systems of care principles in mental health could be realized in child welfare. To this end, significant changes were made to the Child Welfare Community Based Service Contracts that went into effect July 1, 2005.

We are all here today to celebrate improvements in child welfare service delivery, as well as, collaborate with one another in an effort to continue to improve child welfare in Kansas. We plan to use the principles of the family centered systems of care initiative to promote family centered practice throughout the state of Kansas and to identify the needs of the community and redirect/create new resources to those identified areas of need.

Family Centered Systems of Care is not the final answer; it is the next step in the evolution of child welfare's continuous effort to improve the child welfare system and its outcomes.

Additional Background Information

Six Principles of Systems of Care

Interagency collaboration recognizes that it takes several partners to bring together the resources to assist children and families to be successful. The collaboration is based on the community's ownership and commitment to support children and families.

Individualized Strengths-based Care helps families and communities build on their capabilities. Each family and the community is unique. This holistic approach takes into account the whole person and allows each family and community to capitalize on its strengths.

Cultural Competence conveys respect, preserves dignity, creates communication, and enhances self-determination. A culturally competent system increases the likelihood of success. A Culturally competent system consists of local steering committee and stakeholder groups that are representative of their cultural constituents, as well as, policies and procedures that are sensitive to varying cultural practices and beliefs.

Youth & Family Involvement occurs at all levels: planning, policy developments, social marketing, care coordination, evaluation and advocacy. Systems actively support and engage families, recognizing and drawing on their knowledge and skills. Moreover, family involvement and investment increases the likelihood of successful outcomes. The importance of this principle cannot be overstated. If there were one principle that is more important than the others, this would be it.

Community-based Services planning and service delivery maintains families in a familiar, less threatening context. The critical bonds between the family, friends, school, and natural supports are retained. Communities retain control and ownership of the system, reflecting community strengths, needs, values, and day-to-day realities.

Accountability means that partners commit to results in their service, process, and financial outcomes. Responsibility for meeting or not meeting outcomes is shared between service providers for positive outcomes, regardless of where the child and family enter the system.