

PRINCIPLES OF CHILD WELFARE SERVICES

- 1) Safety and well-being of children and of all family members is paramount. Strengthening and preserving families is the best way to promote the healthy development of children.
- 2) All services (even individual services) are provided through the lens of child safety. As part of service provision, it is the responsibility of the service provider to understand the child safety concerns and protective factors that exist within the family. Continual assessment of child safety and communication with the Local DCS Office is required. It is the responsibility of the service provider to report any safety concerns, per state statute, IC 31-33-5-1. All service plans should include goals that address issues of child safety and the family's protective factors. The monthly reports must outline progress towards goals identified in the service plans.
- 3) Services are focused on the family as a whole; families are partners in identifying and meeting individual and family needs; and family strengths are identified, enhanced, respected, and mobilized to help families solve the problems which compromise their functioning and well-being.
- 4) Services promote the healthy development of children and youth, promote permanency for all children and help prepare youth emancipating from the foster care system for self-sufficiency and independent living.
- 5) Services focus on prevention, protection, or other short or long-term interventions to meet the needs of the family and the best interests and need of the individual(s) and are delivered in a manner that is respectful of and builds on the strengths of the community and cultural groups.
- 6) Services are organized as a continuum and are linked to a wide variety of supports and services which can be crucial to meeting families' and children's needs such as: housing, substance abuse treatment, mental health, health, education, job training, child care and informal support networks.
- 7) Child and family services are community-based, involve community organizations, parents and residents in their design and delivery, and are accountable to the community and the client's needs.
- 8) Services are intensive enough and of sufficient duration to keep children safe and meet family needs. The actual level of intensity and length of time needed to ensure safety and assist the family may vary greatly between preventive, family support, and crisis intervention services (family preservation) based on the changing needs of children and families at various times in their lives. A family or an individual does not need to be in crisis in order to receive services.