Region 9

Biennial Regional Services Strategic Plan
Child Protection Plan and Service Array Plan

Section 1 - Overview

SFY 2013-2014

February 2, 2012
Biennial Regional Services Strategic Plan
Overview

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Biennial Regional Strategic Service Plan
2012

Region 9
Regional Coordinator:
Date submitted to Regional Manager: January 6, 2012

Approved by:

[Signatures]
Regional Manager: Char Burkett-Sims
Date: 1/24/2012

Regional Finance Manager: Lolita Campbell
Date: 1/24/2012

Regional Service Council:
Date: 1/24/2012

Director: James W. Payne
Date: 3/8/12

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James W. Payne, Director
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## Regional Services Council Membership

### Region 9

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Member's Name</th>
<th>Title/Agency</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>J. Jeffrey Edens</td>
<td>Judge</td>
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<tr>
<td>Sally Berish</td>
<td>Commissioner</td>
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<tr>
<td>Jeffrey Boles</td>
<td>Judge</td>
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<tr>
<td>Harry Siamas</td>
<td>Judge</td>
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<tr>
<td>Chris Burnham</td>
<td>Judge</td>
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<tr>
<td>Matthew Hanson</td>
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<tr>
<td>Matt Headley</td>
<td>Judge</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pat Baldwin</td>
<td>Prosecutor</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jane Christophersen</td>
<td>Court Appointed Child Advocate (CASA)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stephanie Kerner</td>
<td>Foster Parent</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cheryl Bramblett</td>
<td>Foster Parent</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Joanie Crum</td>
<td>DCS Local Office Director</td>
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<tr>
<td>Taren Duncan</td>
<td>DCS Local Office Director</td>
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<tr>
<td>Shelly Chadd</td>
<td>DCS Local Office Director</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Courtney Crowe</td>
<td>DCS FCM Supervisor</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Waylon James</td>
<td>DCS FCM Supervisor</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Amber Overbey</td>
<td>DCS Family Case Manager</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tim Haltom</td>
<td>DCS Family Case Manager</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kelly Smith Perry (non-voting member)</td>
<td>Parent</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
In 2008 State legislation was passed that added the requirement for a Biennial Regional Services Strategic Plan that would be tailored toward the provision of services for children in need of services or delinquent children. The "Biennial Plan" incorporates the "Early Intervention Plan" and the "Child Protection Plan" as well as new requirements under the Biennial Plan. The Early Intervention Plan was a focus on programs and service to prevent child abuse and neglect or to intervene early to prevent families from entering the child welfare or delinquency system. The Child Protection Plan describes the implementation of the plan for the protective services of children. It included the following information: Organization; Staffing; Mode of operations; Financing of the child protection services; and the provisions made for the purchase of services and interagency relations.

The Regional Services Council is the structure responsible for this Biennial plan. The original purpose of the Regional Services Council was to: Evaluate and address Regional service needs; Manage Regional Expenditures; and to Serve as a liaison to the community leaders, providers and residents of the Region.

The Regional Services Council was to include in the Biennial plan an evaluation of local child welfare service needs and a determination of appropriate delivery mechanisms. Local services providers were represented in the evaluation of local child welfare service needs. A survey was sent to local providers as well as interested community partners. In addition, the regional services council conducted a meeting to take public testimony regarding local service needs and system changes.

Indiana's practice improvement efforts began in 2005 when Governor Mitch Daniels established the Department of Child Services (DCS) as a cabinet-level, independent agency. Governor Daniels sought to create a child welfare agency that could better serve and protect the children and families of Indiana. DCS's new leadership sought to ground their improvement efforts in strong principles and values and to translate these into caseworker's every day actions and decisions.

For more in depth information on: Statutory Requirements of the plan; the DCS Vision, Mission and Values; the DCS Practice Model; the Practice Indicators and the Regional Service Council Protocol see the following attachments. For your convenience maps with Regional staff (Manager, Coordinator and Finance) have also been attached.
Appendix A

Statutory Requirements

Information Maintained by the Office of Code Revision Indiana Legislative Services Agency

August 8, 2011

http://www.in.gov/legislative/ic/code/
IC 31-33-4
Chapter 4. Local Plan for Provision of Child Protection Services

IC 31-33-4-1
Preparation and submission of local plan
Sec. 1. Before February 2 of each even-numbered year, each regional services council, after a public hearing, shall:
(1) prepare a local plan for the provision of child protection services; and
(2) submit the plan to:
(A) the director;
(B) each juvenile court within the region;
(C) the community child protection team as provided for in IC 31-33-3-1; and
(D) appropriate public or voluntary agencies, including organizations for the prevention of child abuse or neglect.

IC 31-33-4-2
Description of implementation
Sec. 2. The local plan must describe the implementation of this article in the region by the department, including the following:
(1) Organization.
(2) Staffing.
(3) Mode of operations.
(4) Financing of the child protection services.
(5) The provisions made for the purchase of service and interagency relations.

IC 31-33-4-3
Certification
Sec. 3. (a) Not later than sixty (60) days after receiving the plan, the director shall certify whether the local plan fulfills the purposes and meets the requirements of this article.
(b) If the director certifies that the local plan does not fulfill the purposes and meet the requirements of this article, the director shall:
(1) state the reasons for the decision;
(2) make revisions to the plan that the director determines are necessary to meet the requirements and fulfill the purposes of this article; and
(3) approve and certify the revised plan as the local plan required by this chapter.

IC 31-33-4-4
Repealed
(Repealed by P.L.146-2008, SEC.806.)
IC 31-26-6
Chapter 6. Regional Service Strategic Plans

IC 31-26-6-1
"Plan"
Sec. 1. As used in this chapter, "plan" includes a regional services strategic plan to achieve the purposes described in section 5 of this chapter and any implementation strategy, revision, addition, or update of the plan, as described in section 12(a) of this chapter.
As added by P.L.146-2008, SEC.571.

IC 31-26-6-2
"Regional services council"
Sec. 2. As used in this chapter, "regional services council" means a council appointed as provided in section 7 of this chapter.
As added by P.L.146-2008, SEC.571.

IC 31-26-6-3
"Service region"
Sec. 3. As used in this chapter, "service region" means an area of Indiana consisting of one (1) or more counties.
As added by P.L.146-2008, SEC.571.

IC 31-26-6-4
County participation in regional services council
Sec. 4. (a) Each county shall participate in a regional services council established under this chapter for the service region in which the county is located.
(b) The department shall determine the county or counties that comprise each service region. A county may not be divided when establishing a service region.
As added by P.L.146-2008, SEC.571.

IC 31-26-6-5
Biennial regional services strategic plan required
Sec. 5. Each regional services council shall develop a biennial regional services strategic plan that is tailored to provide services targeted to the individual needs of children who:
(1) have been either:
(A) adjudicated as, or alleged in a proceeding initiated under IC 31-34 or IC 31-37 to be, children in need of services or delinquent children; or
(B) identified by the department, based on information received from:
(i) a school;
(ii) a social service agency;
(iii) a court;
(iv) a probation department;
(v) the child's parent or guardian; or
(vi) an interested person in the community having
knowledge of the child's environment and family circumstances;
and after an informal investigation, as substantially at risk of becoming children in need of services or delinquent children; and
(2) have been referred to the department by, or with the consent of, the child's parent, guardian, or custodian for services to be provided through the plan based on an individual case plan for the child.

As added by P.L.146-2008, SEC.571.

IC 31-26-6-6
Evaluation of needs; determination of appropriate delivery mechanisms; recommendation regarding allocation and distribution of funds
Sec. 6. (a) Each regional services council shall, according to guidelines and policies established by the department, include in its plan an evaluation of local child welfare service needs and a determination of appropriate delivery mechanisms. The policies shall provide an opportunity for local services providers to be represented in the evaluation of local child welfare service needs. In addition, the regional services council shall take public testimony regarding local service needs and system changes.
(b) The council shall also recommend in the plan, or any revision, addition, or update relating to implementation of a plan under section 12(a) of this chapter, the allocation and distribution among service providers of funds that:
(1) the department allocates to the service region; and
(2) are used to pay for the expenses of child welfare programs and child services administered by the department within the region.

As added by P.L.146-2008, SEC.571.

IC 31-26-6-7
Members of regional services council
Sec. 7. (a) If the service region consists of at least three (3) counties, the regional services council is composed of the following members appointed from the service region:
(1) The regional manager, who must be an employee of the department.
(2) Three (3) members who are juvenile court judges or their designees.
(3) Three (3) local office directors.
(4) Two (2) family case manager supervisors.
(5) Two (2) family case managers.
(6) Two (2) licensed foster parents.
(7) One (1) guardian ad litem or court appointed special advocate.
(8) One (1) member who is a prosecuting attorney or the prosecuting attorney's designee.

Dated 08/08/2011
(9) One (1) individual who:
   (A) is at least sixteen (16) and less than twenty-five (25) years of age;
   (B) is a resident of the service region;
   (C) has received or is receiving services through funds provided, directly or indirectly, through the department; and
   (D) will serve in a nonvoting capacity.

(b) If the service region consists of one (1) or two (2) counties, the regional services council must include at least the following members from the service region:
   (1) Three (3) employees of the department, including the regional manager.
   (2) One (1) juvenile court judge or judicial hearing officer.
   (3) Two (2) members who are designees of a juvenile court judge.
   (4) Two (2) family case manager supervisors.
   (5) Two (2) family case managers.
   (6) One (1) licensed foster parent.
   (7) One (1) person from each category described in subsection (a)(7), (a)(8), and (a)(9).

(c) The director shall appoint the members of the regional services council with the exception of judges or judicial hearing officers and prosecuting attorneys or their respective designees.
   (d) The members of the regional services council described in subsections (a)(2), (b)(2), and (b)(3) shall be selected by the juvenile court judge or judges in the service region.
   (e) The member of the regional services council described in subsection (a)(8) shall be selected by the prosecuting attorneys in the counties comprising the service region.
   (f) Each member of the regional services council shall serve at the pleasure of the member's appointing authority.

As added by P.L.146-2008, SEC.571.

IC 31-26-6-8
Organizational meeting; chairperson of regional services council

Sec. 8. (a) The regional manager shall convene an organizational meeting of the members of a regional services council appointed under section 7 of this chapter.
   (b) The regional manager shall serve as the chairperson of the council. The council shall select one (1) of its members as vice chairperson.

As added by P.L.146-2008, SEC.571.

IC 31-26-6-9
Review and consideration of certain programs

Sec. 9. In preparing the plan under section 5 of this chapter, a regional services council shall review and consider existing publicly and privately funded programs that are available or that could be made available in the regional services council's service region to provide supportive services to or for the benefit of children described
in section 5 of this chapter without removing the child from the family home, including programs funded through the following:

1. Title IV-B of the Social Security Act (42 U.S.C. 620 et seq.).
2. Title IV-E of the Social Security Act (42 U.S.C. 670 et seq.).
3. Title XX of the Social Security Act (42 U.S.C. 1397 et seq.).
5. Special education programs under IC 20-35-6-2.
6. All programs designed to prevent child abuse, neglect, or delinquency, or to enhance child welfare and family preservation administered by, or through funding provided by, the department, county offices, prosecuting attorneys, or juvenile courts, including programs funded under IC 31-26-3.5 and IC 31-40.
7. A child advocacy fund under IC 12-17-17.

As added by P.L.146-2008, SEC.571.

IC 31-26-6-10
Family preservation services
Sec. 10. A regional services council may include in its plan a program for provision of family preservation services that:

1. is or will be in effect in the regional services council's service region;
2. includes services for a child less than eighteen (18) years of age who reasonably may be expected to be considered for out-of-home placement under IC 31-34 or IC 31-37 as a result of:
   A. abuse or neglect;
   B. emotional disturbance; or
   C. delinquency adjudication; and
3. addresses all the objectives of family preservation services.

As added by P.L.146-2008, SEC.571.

IC 31-26-6-11
Transmission of plan by regional services council; action on plan by director of department
Sec. 11. (a) Each regional services council shall transmit to the director each plan it develops and approves. The council shall transmit its biennial plan described in section 5 of this chapter to the director not later than February 2 of each even-numbered year.

(b) Not later than sixty (60) days after receiving the plan, the director of the department or the director's designee shall do one (1) of the following:

1. Approve the plan as submitted by the council.
2. Approve the plan with amendments, modifications, or revisions.
3. Return the plan to the council with directions concerning:
(A) subjects for further study and reconsideration; and
(B) resubmission of a revised plan.

As added by P.L.146-2008, SEC.571.

IC 31-26-6-12
Quarterly meetings; additional meetings; quorum; designation of representative or proxy; application of public meetings law

Sec. 12. (a) A regional services council shall meet at least quarterly to do the following:

(1) Develop, review, or revise a strategy for implementation of an approved plan that identifies:
   (A) the manner in which prevention and early intervention services will be provided or improved;
   (B) how local collaboration will improve children's services; and
   (C) how different funds can be used to serve children and families more effectively.

(2) Reorganize as needed and select its vice chairperson for the ensuing year.

(3) Review the implementation of the plan and prepare revisions, additions, or updates of the plan that the regional services council considers necessary or appropriate to improve the quality and efficiency of early intervention child welfare services provided in accordance with the plan.

(b) The chairperson or vice chairperson of a regional services council may convene any additional meetings of the regional services council that are, in the chairperson's or vice chairperson's opinion, necessary or appropriate.

(c) A majority of the voting members of the regional services council appointed under section 7 of this chapter constitutes a quorum for the transaction of official business that includes taking final action (as defined in IC 5-14-1.5-2(g)). The regional services council may hold a meeting in the absence of a quorum to discuss any items of public business related to its responsibilities and functions as described in this chapter, without taking final action.

(d) A judicial officer or prosecuting attorney who is a member of the regional services council under section 7 of this chapter may designate in writing a person as the member's representative or proxy to attend any meeting of the council specified in the designation. Any designee under this subsection shall be a voting member of the council and be included for purposes of a quorum under subsection (c).

(e) Any department employee who is a member of the regional services council under section 7 of this chapter may designate in writing a person as the member's representative or proxy to attend any meeting of the council specified in the designation. Any designee under this subsection shall be a voting member of the council and be included for purposes of a quorum under subsection (c).

(f) All meetings of a regional services council under this chapter are subject to applicable provisions of IC 5-14-1.5.
IC 31-26-6-13
Participation in meeting by certain means of communication; memoranda of meeting
Sec. 13. (a) This section applies to a meeting of a regional services council at which at least four (4) voting members of the council are physically present at the place where the meeting is conducted.
(b) A member of the regional services council may participate in a meeting of the council by using a means of communication that allows:
(1) all other members participating in the meeting; and
(2) all members of the public physically present at the place where the meeting is conducted;
to communicate simultaneously with each other during the meeting.
(c) A member who participates in a meeting under subsection (b) is considered to be present at the meeting.
(d) The memoranda of the meeting prepared under IC 5-14-1.5-4 must state the name of each member who:
(1) was physically present at the place where the meeting was conducted;
(2) participated in the meeting by using a means of communication described in subsection (b); or
(3) was absent.
As added by P.L.146-2008, SEC.571.

IC 31-26-6-14
Transmission of plan, annual report, and other documents
Sec. 14. (a) A regional services council or the regional manager shall transmit copies of the plan, each annual report, each revised plan, and any other report or document described by rule adopted under section 16 of this chapter, to the following:
(1) The director.
(2) Each department office in the service region.
(3) Each juvenile court in the service region.
(b) A regional services council shall provide to the department a copy of each plan, annual report, or revised plan transmitted under subsection (a) to be posted to the department's Internet web site.
As added by P.L.146-2008, SEC.571.

IC 31-26-6-15
Publicizing of plan
Sec. 15. A regional services council shall publicize to residents of each county in the service region the existence and availability of the plan, including information concerning access to the plan on the department web site.
As added by P.L.146-2008, SEC.571.

IC 31-26-6-16

Dated 08/08/2011
Rules

Sec. 16. The department may adopt rules under IC 4-22-2 to administer this chapter.

As added by P.L.146-2008, SEC.571.
Appendix B

Publication: How are the Children in Indiana: A New Practice Model in Indiana
How Are the Children in Indiana?

A New Practice Model for Indiana
A New Practice Model for Indiana

an overview
From the Director

It has been my privilege to serve in the capacity of Director for the Indiana Department of Child Services (DCS) since 2005. DCS has managed to accomplish several milestones over the past few years; the greatest one has been recognizing change was needed in order to effectively make a difference in the lives of families and children. Thus, the Indiana Practice Reform movement began.

As the organizational structure took shape throughout 2005, it became apparent that child protection services lacked a specific focus in its approach to, and work with, families. The 92 local offices were all conducting assessments, working with families, and establishing permanency plans; however, the processing a case throughout its life varied, sometimes due to local practice, sometimes due to court practices, and many times due to overburdened workers with caseloads too high to focus attention on the family’s underlying needs. Many contracts were in place with private providers, but coordination was lacking. We asked, “How Are The Children?”, and it was not clear that we were doing all that we could to have the answer be “All Of The Children Are Well.”

After establishing the Vision, Mission and Values of the agency, it seemed prudent to seek out the best possible model of practice that was known in child welfare and develop a plan for training it, supporting it, and ultimately implementing it in a uniform manner across the state. A model was developed and between 2006 and 2009, all 1,600 case manager staff as well as managers received training in the five core competency areas that are the foundation of the Indiana Practice Model including Teaming, Engaging, Assessing, Planning and Intervening (TEAPI). All of the staff were also prepared to effectively facilitate “Child and Family Team Meetings”, a cornerstone of the Indiana Practice Model.

This brochure more fully explains that process. Our work is certainly not done. But this current approach of engaging with families, teaming and planning with them, and supporting them when possible, while still holding parents accountable for their children will bring Indiana to the goal of being able to say that “all of Indiana’s children are well”.

Sincerely,

James W. Payne, Director
Indiana’s practice improvement efforts began in 2005 when Governor Mitch Daniels established the Department of Child Service (DCS) as a cabinet-level, independent agency. Governor Daniels sought to create a child welfare agency that could better serve and protect the children and families of Indiana. In order to start to carry out this mission, the Indiana legislature provided DCS the staff resources to cut caseloads to 12 new cases or 17 ongoing cases per worker, or under half of their previous average.

DCS’s new leadership sought to ground their improvement efforts in strong principles and values and to translate these into caseworkers’ every day actions and decisions. The mandate to double agency staff provided an opportunity to embed these principles and values and to improve practice. Leadership also understood that lower caseloads allowed caseworkers greater time to invest in family engagement.

DCS Practice changes included Child and Family Team Meetings; Clinical Supervision and five new essential practice skills. In addition, supports for the practice change were implemented. These supports included:

- Introduction of Practice Model and reform vision to staff in local offices and service providers
- Training for all staff on the 5 core skills: Engaging, Teaming, Assessing Planning and Intervening
- Training and support for supervisors
- Coaching for all staff on child & family teaming (skills and process)
- Quality Service Reviews to provide regular practice improvement feedback
- Creation of flexible services for families
- Policy changes which support and promote the team meeting process
- Outcomes-focused strategic planning by regional managers
- Improvements to the state’s information system, including opportunity to note team meeting occurrence
- Updated position profiles and staff performance measures
- Regional Service Councils for community involvement
Indiana Practice Model

Indiana is engaged in a transformation of its child welfare system. This practice model is based on the DCS Vision, Mission and Values. Core Practice Values and Principles guide staff on interacting with children, families, the community and each other.

To implement this model, DCS will build trust-based relationships with families and partners by exhibiting empathy, professionalism, genuineness and respect. DCS staff uses the skills of engaging, teaming, assessing, planning and intervening to partner with families and the community to achieve better outcomes for children.

DCS Values

- We believe every child has the right to be free from abuse and neglect.
- We believe every child has the right to appropriate care and a permanent home.
- We believe parents have the primary responsibility for the care and safety of their children.
- We believe the most desirable place for children to grow up is with their own families, when these families are able to provide safe, nurturing, and stable homes.
- We believe in personal accountability for outcomes, including one’s growth and development.
- We believe every person has value, worth and dignity.

Vision and Mission

**Vision:** Children thrive in safe, caring, and supportive families and communities.

**Mission:** The Indiana Department of Child Services protects children from abuse and neglect. DCS does this by partnering with families and communities to provide safe, nurturing, and stable homes.
Indiana Practice Model—TEAPI

DCS’s desired case practice was captured in a “practice model”, or the description of the practice principles and essential skills to effectively implement its vision, mission and values. These principles and skills are built upon case practice reform efforts that have significantly improved child safety and family reunification in other states. After researching other States’ best practices, Indiana identified five essential practice skills. These skills are:

Teaming The skill of assembling a group to work with children and families, becoming a member of an established group, or leading a group to bring needed resources to the critical issues of children and families. Child welfare is a community effort and requires a team.

Engaging The skill of effectively establishing a relationship with children, parents, and essential individuals for the purpose of sustaining the work that is to be accomplished together.

Assessing The skill of obtaining information about the salient events that brought the children and families into our services and the underlying causes bringing about their situations. This discovery process looks for the issues to be addressed and the strengths within the children and families to address these issues. Here we are determining the capability, willingness, and availability of resources for achieving safety, permanence, and well-being for children.

Planning The skill necessary to tailor the planning process uniquely to each child and family is crucial. Assessment will overlap into this area. This includes the design of incremental steps that move children and families from where they are to a better level of functioning. Service planning requires the planning cycle of assessing circumstances and resources, making decisions on directions to take, evaluating the effectiveness of the plan, reworking the plan as needed, celebrating successes, and facing consequences in response to lack of improvement.

Intervening The skill to intercede with actions that will decrease risk, provide for safety, promote permanence, and establish well-being. These skills continue to be gathered throughout the life of the professional child welfare worker and may range from finding housing to changing a parent’s pattern of thinking about their child.
Child and Family Team Meetings are coordinated and facilitated by the Family Case Manager. The purpose of these meetings is to hear the family’s voice, expedite permanency, ensure safety and support the child’s well-being. Results of the meetings include more effective plans and interventions because of a greater richness of family support and more inclusive decision-making. Families are empowered to lead the meetings by selecting team members, location and time, and goals to work on at the meeting.

Child and Family Team Meetings (CFTM) are held at all key decision-points in both assessment and on-going case management phases. The following are triggers to prompt a CFTM to occur in the assessment phase:

- Safety Planning (identifying family strengths, needs so that risks can be mitigated or removed)
- Prevention of Removal (child remains safely in the home)
- Placement (exploring relatives, non-custodial parents, local placement, placement with siblings)
- Visitation Planning (parents, siblings, relatives, essential connections)
- Case/Service Planning (“Informal Adjustment” development, recommendations for disposition, case plan, education needs, medical needs, etc)
- Reunification Planning

The following are triggers to prompt a CFTM to occur during the case management phase:

- Case/Service Planning (implementation, tracking and adjusting)
- Prevention of Removal (child remains safely in the home)
- Placement (exploring relatives, non-custodial parents, local placement, placement with siblings, ensuring the stability of placement to avoid disruption)
- Visitation Planning (parents, siblings, relatives, essential connections)
- Permanency Planning
- Reunification Planning
- Case Closure
The Quality Service Review (QSR) is a snapshot view of how the practice model is assisting children and families to reach permanency. Cases are pulled within each region of Indiana based on age, length of time in care, placement type and case type. This process also includes the review of assessment cases. QSR reviewers spend two days conducting in-depth interviews with key case contributors to determine how well the elements of the practice model are working towards sustainable safe case closure. This review was implemented in 2007 and is conducted throughout the state on a monthly basis.

The QSR evaluates Child Status, Parent/Caregiver Status and System Performance.

The Child Status indicators evaluate child Safety, Permanency and Well-Being. The Parent/Caregiver Status evaluates Parenting Capacities as well as Informal Supports. The TEAPI skills are evaluated in the System Performance section of the QSR review.

Following the QSR, each region develops a practice improvement plan that is tracked through the Continuous Quality Improvement (CQI) process. Regions have the opportunity to request support services to help move practice forward in their region. The CQI process allows a statewide systematic response to needs from each level of management.

What we’ve learned from the QSR

Indiana achieved the following as a result of less than three years of practice improvement:

- More children are now remaining in their birth homes or are placed with relatives.
- Field staff are recognizing the importance of teaming with each family.
- Assessment of underlying needs have improved through utilizing practice model skills.
- There remains an opportunity to engage fathers to have a more meaningful role in the lives of their children.
- Indiana is also tracking whether the parents who are currently involved are previous wards. This information is important when program planning for Independent Living skills with a goal of providing youth with the skills needed to be successful in life.
Practice Indicators

**Reduced substitute care:** *(increased children placed in their own home)*

The safety of a child is non-negotiable. As appropriate services are available, we can provide services for the family with the child in the home and maintain child safety as our primary focus.

**Increased use of relative care:**

Relatives should be given a higher priority in consideration for the placement of children.

**Increased placement in own community:**

When a child must be removed from the home, out-of-home placement should occur in the same neighborhood and School Corporation, if at all possible. It is imperative that children experience the least disruption in their education.

**Reduced use of residential placement:** *(increased use of least restrictive placement)*

When services are provided to a child and family at the earliest intervention, the need for residential placement will be decreased significantly over time.

**Reduced number of placement moves:** *(increased placement stability)*

At the first placement, children should be placed to fit the needs of the child. The child and family should be provided support to maintain the initial placement, as every placement change is a disruption in the child’s life and causes trauma to the child.

**Increased sibling placements:**

If siblings are removed, they should be placed together as a sibling group. Essential connections are critical to the healthy development of siblings.

**Reduced length of stay:**

When a child is placed in substitute care, early permanency is critical for the child. Permanent families should be identified early for those children who are unable to return to their families of origin.

**Increased permanency:**

Permanency for a child means a safe, stable, and secure home with a family that provides love, unconditional commitment, and lifelong support in the context of reunification, adoption, or legal guardianship where possible. No child should linger in foster care or leave the system at age 18 without a permanent family of their own.

**Increased child & family visits:**

Based on national reviews, positive outcomes for children and families are significantly influenced by the quality and quantity of Case Manager contacts with the child and family (i.e., original caretakers) and family visitation.

**Reduced incidence of repeat maltreatment:**

Thorough assessments and appropriate and timely services are a vital tool for ensuring that children are not subject to subsequent abuse or neglect.
Practice Model Testimonials

**John Ryan**  
*Chief of Staff*

The Department of Child Services has made a commitment to children and families by adopting a standard, consistent model of practice, proven to achieve results that are directly tied to the agency’s vision, mission and values. Recent data obtained indicates clearly that the course of action is an appropriate one and that the established model, together with appropriate resources and support, is working.

**MB Lippold**  
*Deputy Director of Staff Development*

Partnering with families to develop their roadmap based on their unique needs was a concept that made a lot of practice sense when our new department started in 2005 and this still holds true today. It has been an enormous training challenge, but through effective partnerships, that challenge has been met.

**Dave Judkins**  
*Deputy Director of Field Operations*

By successfully ingraining the TEAPI practice skills into our partnership with families, DCS fulfills an expectation that families rightfully have a say in their future and that children indeed thrive in safe, caring, supportive families and communities.

**Lisa Rich**  
*Deputy Director of Programs and Services*

The DCS practice model has empowered families to have a voice in decision making about the services they need to best meet the needs of their family. The model allows for service provision to be individualized, addressing the core issues surrounding the family.

**Angela Green**  
*Deputy Director of Practice Support*

Indiana has taken a multifaceted strategic approach that has transformed every structural component of child welfare. By centrally focusing on our TEAPI practice model as the impetus of our change process, we are witnessing improved practice and positive results in the lives of children and their families.

**Katie Rounds**  
*Deputy Chief of Staff*

By identifying and building on the strengths of the family, the DCS Practice Model and the use of Child and Family Team Meetings allow DCS to partner with and support families involved with our system.

**Lisa Rich**  
*Deputy Director of Programs and Services*

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**Katie Rounds**  
*Deputy Chief of Staff*

By identifying and building on the strengths of the family, the DCS Practice Model and the use of Child and Family Team Meetings allow DCS to partner with and support families involved with our system.
Practice Model Testimonials

Jeff Lozer  
*General Counsel*

Child and family team meetings and the TEAPI model are ways in which DCS can address child abuse and neglect while affirming and protecting the constitutional rights of parents to raise their children.

Ann Houseworth  
*Director of Communications*

The Practice Model provides an opportunity to truly engage the children and families we serve. During Child and Family Team Meetings we bring together family members and key friends to discuss the needs of the family. This open dialogue allows the team to evolve into a support network on which the family can rely to help provide a safe, nurturing and stable home for their children.

Tatiana Alvarez  
*Hispanic Initiative Manager*

The implementation of the Practice Model has impacted the way our immigrant families’ cultural behaviors and traditions are better understood and respected. This model also serves as a bridge which allows them to cross over and learn the acceptable American ways without having to renounce everything they know.
**Practice Positions and Expectations**

**Practice Model Director**

The Practice Model Director monitors all aspects of the Indiana Practice Model statewide and collaborates with internal and external partners to ensure model fidelity in daily operations.

**Regional Practice Consultants**

There are eighteen Regional Practice Consultants who serve as liaisons for the practice between Central Office, field, the community and stakeholders. In addition, the Practice Consultants lead the practice within their region and support peer coaches.

**Peer Coach Consultants**

There are six Peer Coach Consultants. These positions serve as the experts in the Indiana Practice Model. They assist with bridging gaps between field, policy, Quality Service Reviews, training, legal, fiscal, or other areas that have an impact on the practice. Peer Coach Consultants train all Peer Coaches.

**Peer Coaches**

Peer Coaches train all Family Case Managers to become facilitators of Child and Family Team Meetings. The number of Peer Coaches per region is dependant upon the volume of Family Case Managers in the region. Peer Coaches are Family Case Managers that are considered to be champions within their current position and receive additional training and support to serve in this role. There are a few regions where supervisors serve as Peer Coaches.

**P-FACT (Practice, Field and Clinical Team)**

P-FACT is a team of individuals from Staff Development and Field Operations that come together to brainstorm critical issues identified within regions which impact the practice.

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*All DCS positions and responsibilities have changed dramatically to reflect the Indiana Practice Model. While there are some positions that are allocated solely to the Practice Model, all positions have the expectation to fulfill the mission of the Practice Model.*
Moving Forward in The Practice

**Maria Wilson**
*Indiana Practice Model Director*

The Indiana Department of Child Services Practice Model has grown tremendously since its inception in 2006. Moving forward, the State of Indiana is encouraged that we can share our successes and lessons learned with other governments and public child welfare agencies undergoing reform.

The Indiana Practice Model continues to work on initiatives such as Engaging Fathers; Addressing Language Barriers with Hispanic Families; Services for Independent Living; Domestic Violence within CFTMs; Substance Abuse; and Mental Illness. In addition, DCS is committed to being transparent and open to any refinement needed in order to achieve our ultimate vision that our children thrive in safe, caring, supportive families and communities. One way of achieving this goal is to maintain strong partnerships with our stakeholders, including communities, service providers, courts, schools and families.

DCS would like to give special thanks to the Casey Strategic Consulting Group, the Child Welfare Policy and Practice Group; the State of Utah and the Indiana University School of Social Work for assisting with our reform efforts. Also, we would like to acknowledge our wonderful staff that dared to shift from the “old way of doing business” to embracing a new practice model simply because it was the right thing to do. Because of all this, we can say that the children are well in the State of Indiana.

For more information, please contact:

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How Are the Children in Indiana?

They are well.
Appendix C

Regional Services
The State of Indiana is responsible to provide programs, services and placement for Indiana’s most vulnerable and needy children and families. On January 1, 2009, the State will pay for those programs, services and placements, and recognizes that local involvement in the evaluations, contracting and implementation of the service delivery systems is critical.

Because of the importance for service capacity delivery to children and families in neighborhoods, communities, counties and state, the coordination of service availability and delivery is critical to protecting children and families. This process of service availability and delivery is best done at the local level. For example, experience and statistics show that rural communities often do not have the demand for, or the capacity to, deliver a wide variety of services. This is made more complicated since each individual case may present difficult and expensive needs or a changing variety of issues. Finally, this is even true with medium to large population counties.

In order to address these issues, including the need for coordination in wider geographic and geopolitical boundaries, the Regional Services Councils were created. This Protocol will assist in the process of determining service availability, delivery and effectiveness. It is intended to be a guideline protocol for each region to use as a basis for making services available.

**Membership**

The make-up of the Regional Services Council will depend on the number of counties in the Region. If the Region consists of at least 3 counties, the Regional Services Council is made up of the following voting members.

1) The Regional Manager, who shall serve as chair of the committee.
2) Three Judges having juvenile jurisdiction in the Region, or their designees
3) Three Local Directors in the Region
4) Two Family Case Manager Supervisors from the Region
5) Two Family Case Managers from the Region
6) Two licensed Foster Parents from the Region
7) One Guardian ad Litem/CASA from the Region
8) One Prosecuting Attorney in the Region or designee from the Region
9) One resident of the Region who is at least 16 years old and less than 25 years of age and who has received or is receiving services through funds provided, directly or indirectly, through the Department. This person will serve in a non-voting capacity.
If the service region consists of one or two counties, the Regional Services Council must include at least the following members from the region:

1) Three employees from the Region, including the Regional Manager
2) One juvenile court judge having jurisdiction in the Region or judicial hearing officer from the Region
3) Two members who are designees of a juvenile court judge having juvenile jurisdiction in the Region
4) Two Family Case Manager Supervisors from the Region
5) Two Family Case Managers from the Region
6) One licensed Foster Parent from the Region
7) One Guardian ad Litem/CASA from the Region
8) One member who is a prosecuting attorney in the Region or the prosecuting attorney’s designee from the Region
9) One resident of the Region who is at least 16 years old and less than 25 years of age and who has received or is receiving services through funds provided, directly or indirectly, through the Department. This person will serve in a non-voting capacity.
10) The parent of a child who has received or is receiving services through funds provided, directly or indirectly, through the Department. Parent must be a resident of the Region and will serve in a non-voting capacity. This is an optional member, not a statutory one.

**Selection of Judges having Juvenile Jurisdiction**

The Judges should meet in the manner best selected by them – in person, telephonic, e-mail, etc. – and choose those who will serve as the voting members of the Regional Services Council. Once selected, the names should be submitted to the Regional Manager and the Director of the Indiana Department of Child Services. The designated Judge(s) may designate in writing a Probation Officer or Magistrate who will be a proxy, using the DCS Proxy Form, to serve as a voting member of the Council if he or she is unavailable for a Council meeting.

**Selection of Prosecuting Attorney**

The Prosecuting Attorneys should meet in the manner best selected by them – in person, telephonic, e-mail, etc. and select one individual to serve as the voting member of the Regional Services Council. Once selected, the name should be submitted to the Regional Manager and the Director of the Indiana Department of Child Services. The
designated Prosecuting Attorney may designate in writing a proxy, using the DCS Proxy Form, to serve as a voting member of the Council if he or she is unavailable for a Council meeting.

Selection of Other Membership

The Director of the Department shall appoint the remaining membership of the Regional Services Council based on recommendations from the Regional Manager determined as follows:

Selection of Local Directors

It has been suggested that it would be inappropriate for the Local Directors to represent the same counties represented by the Judges having Juvenile Jurisdiction. However, it remains with the Local Directors to discuss among themselves their representatives on the Regional Services Council with the Regional Manager making the final determination.

Selection of the Supervisors

The Supervisors will be selected by the Regional Manager after consideration of recommendations made by the Local Directors. In no event should the Supervisors represent the same county as the Local Directors, unless otherwise agreed upon by all of the Local Directors and the Regional Manager.

Selection of the Family Case Managers

The Family Case Managers will be selected by the Regional Manager after consideration of recommendations made by the Local Directors. In no event should the Family Case Managers represent the same county as Local Directors, unless otherwise agreed by all Local Directors and the Regional Manager.

Selection of Foster Parent

If there is a foster parent association or membership, formal or informal, in the region where the selection is to be made, the choice of the foster parent representative should be made by that association. If there is not an association, formal or informal, then the foster parent representative may be chosen in a manner determined by the above-mentioned members of the Regional Services Council. One method, only as a suggestion, is to have each Local Director nominate a foster parent as they may determine, and then ask those foster parents to meet and choose among them, a representative. The goal is to make the selection of this position as meaningful and as open as possible, so that a broad base of representation is available.
Selection of Guardian ad Litem/CASA

If there is a GAL/CASA certified program in the Region where the appointment is to be made, the choice of GAL/CASA representation should be made by those certified programs. If there is not an association then the GAL/CASA representative may be chosen in a manner determined by the above-mentioned members of the Regional Services Council providing that the GAL/CASA is a representative of a “certified” program. One method, only as a suggestion, is to have each Local Director nominate a GAL/CASA as they may determine, and then ask those GAL/CASA to meet and choose from among them, a representative.

Selection of Youth

The individual should be a resident of the service region. The individual must have received or be receiving services through funds provided, directly or indirectly through the Department. This individual will serve in a non-voting capacity. Nominations should be made by Region Managers with input from DCS staff, Probation Officers, Judges, Prosecutors and providers in the Region. This selection should be reviewed with the member(s) of the judiciary serving on the Council to ensure there will be no conflict of interest.

Selection of Parent

The individual should be a resident of the service region. The individual must be the parent of a child(ren) who has/have received or be receiving services through funds provided, directly or indirectly through the Department. This individual will serve in a non-voting capacity. Nominations should be made by Region Managers with input from DCS staff and providers in the region. This selection should be reviewed with the member(s) of the judiciary serving on the Council to ensure there will be no conflict of interest.

Membership on the Council

Each member of the Regional Services Council shall serve at the pleasure of the member’s appointing authority.

Ethics

As provided in 42 IAC 1-4-1, most members of the Regional Services Council, and all those serving as Proxy for a voting member of the Regional Services Council, must complete an on-line Ethics Training provided through the Office of the Inspector General. This requirement must be completed prior to the member or proxy member’s attendance in a voting role for the Regional Services Council.
The only members of the Regional Services Council who are exempt from completing the on-line training are members of the judiciary and prosecuting attorneys.

It is also important to remind all members of the Regional Services Council that confidentiality laws apply to the conversations held during the meetings, as often they may be exposed to privileged information. Non-case specific information should be utilized as often as possible.

**Use of Proxy**

Members of the judiciary, prosecuting attorneys, and department employees are provided proxy privileges. The Regional Manager will approve all proxy requests. Proxy requests will utilize the official state form, and approval of the proxy will be included in the minutes of the appropriate meeting. Any person serving as a proxy to a member of the Regional Services Council must complete the state-mandated ethics training as provided on-line by the Office of the Inspector General.

**Selection of a Vice Chairperson**

The membership of the Regional Services Council shall, at the first official meeting after July 1, 2008, elect one member to serve as Vice Chairperson.

**Meetings**

The meetings shall be chaired by the Regional Manager or Vice Chairperson who shall provide sufficient notice of meetings taking into account the schedules of all members. While coordinating the Regional Services Council will be a very difficult task, the importance of the Regional Services Council cannot be understated.

**Notice**

The Department of Child Services shall serve as the notifying Agency for all public meetings. Notice should be given in a manner best agreed upon by all of the parties and it is suggested that the first meeting be held at a time convenient to all members of the Council so that organizational issues may be addressed and agreed upon. Thereafter, it is entirely possible that not all members of the Council can meet at the stated or agreed upon date, time and place at all times. Therefore, for the first meeting, telephonic or other arrangements should be made to coordinate the date, time, place, and length of the organizational meeting. Thereafter, all members of the Council should agree on the date, time, place and length of the meeting and the manner in which the meeting shall be held. It is recommended that the meetings be scheduled at a regular time so that all members can plan and attend subsequent meetings.
Notice for the meetings, whether previously scheduled or scheduled individually, must contain the date, time and place of the meeting, the agenda and the items requiring action at that meeting.

**Open Door Policy**

Regional Service Council meetings fall under the Open Door Law as specified in IC 5-14-1.5-5. In compliance with these requirements, all Regional Service Council meetings will:

1. Post the date, time and location of monthly meetings at least 48 hours before the meeting. Once meeting schedules are established, annual posting of the regularly scheduled meetings will be placed on the Department of Child Services Web-Site. Updates regarding scheduling changes will be made as necessary.
2. Deliver a notice by regular mail, electronic mail or fax to all news media that request written notice.
3. Post the Agenda no less than 48 (forty eight) hours prior to the start of the meeting at the entrance of the meeting location.

**Quorum**

A majority of the voting members appointed to serve on the Council constitutes a quorum for the transaction of official business. At least **four** voting members of the Council must be physically present to conduct business. The remaining membership may join telephonically or via videoconferencing. While electronic attendance is acceptable, no e-mail voting is permissible. As long as a majority of the voting membership is present (either physically or telephonically) the Council can convene to conduct business. The Council can discuss the items on the agenda, but would be unable to vote on action items unless a majority of the membership is physically or telephonically present.

For those members who can appoint a proxy to represent them for voting purposes, a RSC Proxy Form must be utilized prior to the meeting. The form will allow the member to indicate the name of the proxy and the time frame during which the proxy will serve as a representative to the Council.

**Meeting Location**

Meeting location should be a place centrally located so that all parties have the same or equal opportunity to attend based on travel distance. Mileage reimbursement is available to non-state employees. Arrangements should be made ahead of time to ensure that not only “Council Members”, but all interested parties, agencies or groups have the opportunity to attend, witness, and participate. The location must be handicapped-accessible.
Agenda

The agenda should be prepared at least one week before a scheduled meeting and sent to all members of the Regional Services Council for consideration of additional agenda items or comment on those listed. Any changes/modifications should be sent to the Regional Manager at least three (3) days prior to the meeting. The finalized agenda must be sent to all members of the Regional Services Council and posted to the DCS website and at the location where the meeting will be held, pursuant to Indiana’s Open Door Law.

Frequency of Meetings

Since the new statutes modifying the Regional Services Council take effect July 1, 2008, the first organizational meeting of the Council should be scheduled sometime in July, 2008. Because of the increased importance and responsibility of the Regional Services Council, meetings should be held monthly, but may be scheduled less frequently, if the Regional Services Council agrees. Meetings must continue at least quarterly, with sufficient notice to the parties to make arrangements for the members to participate. If a meeting must be cancelled for any reason (i.e. severe weather) another meeting must be called within the quarter.

If the Regional Manager or the Vice Chairman of a Regional Services Council determines that there are sufficient agenda items to convene an additional meeting for a particular quarter, prompt notice will be provided to all attendees and other parties who wish to be notified, and a notice will be posted at the meeting site and on the website.

Minutes

Keeping accurate minutes is an important requirement of the Regional Services Council. Because of the significance of the Regional Services Councils, the minutes will document the participation, topic and conclusion. At the beginning of each meeting, the Regional Manager or the Vice Chair shall appoint a designee to maintain the minutes in as accurate detail as possible. All minutes shall be recorded on the standardized RSC Minute Template in order to track similar information from all Regions.

In addition to the meeting minutes, the memoranda must also state the name of each member who was physically present at the place where the meeting took place, the names of those who participated in the meeting by using an approved means of communication, and any absent members.

The minutes should be sent by email to all members of the Regional Services Council, parties who are in attendance and request the minutes, parties who may have requested the minutes whether they were present or not, to the Director of the Department of Child Services, the Chief of Staff, the Chief Financial Officer and the
Deputy Director of Programs and Services. The minutes will also be posted on the Department of Child Services website.

Conduct of Meeting

The conduct of the meeting should be one of an open format and follow all guidelines of the “Open Door” law. The agenda should be followed to ensure that the time set for the meeting is respectful of the importance of the Regional Services Council and the time of the members of the Council. In all respects, open communication and dialogue is important. Roberts Rules of Order shall be followed at all times during the meeting.

Regional Service Council Duties

Biennial Regional Services Strategic Plan

Each Regional Services Council shall develop a biennial Regional Services Strategic Plan (Plan) that is tailored to provide services targeted to the individual needs of children who:

(1) have been either:
   (A) adjudicated as, or alleged in a proceeding initiated under IC 31-34 or IC 31-37 to be, children in need of services or delinquent children; or
   (B) identified by the Department, based on information received from:
      (i) a school;
      (ii) a social service agency;
      (iii) a court;
      (iv) a probation department;
      (v) the child’s parent or guardian; or
      (vi) an interested person in the community having knowledge of the child’s environment and family circumstances;

   and after an informal investigation, as substantially at risk of becoming children in need of services or delinquent children; and

(2) have been referred to the Department by, or with the consent of, the child’s parent, guardian, or custodian for services to be provided through the plan based on an individual case plan for the child.

The Council shall include in its plan an evaluation of local child welfare service needs and a determination of appropriate delivery mechanisms. The Council shall provide an opportunity for service providers in the Region to be represented in the evaluation of local child welfare service needs, including the taking of public testimony regarding local service needs and system changes.

Regional Managers shall work with local providers to ensure all providers in the Region are included in this process. This should include contacting the state provider associations and advocacy organizations to develop the most complete list possible.
The Council shall also recommend in the Plan, or any revision, addition or update relating to the implementation of the Plan, the allocation and distribution among service providers of funds that:

1. the Department allocates to the service region, and
2. are used to pay for the expenses of child welfare programs and child services administered by the Department within the Region.

The Council, in developing the Plan, shall review and consider existing publicly and privately funded programs that are available or that could be made available in the Region’s service delivery area to provide supportive services to or for the benefit of children described previously without removing the child from the family home, including programs funded through the following:

1. Title IV-B of the Social Security Act (42 U.S.C. 620 et seq.)
2. Title IV-E of the Social Security Act (42 U.S.C. 670 et seq.)
3. Title XX of the Social Security Act (42 U.S.C. 1397 et seq.)
5. Special education programs under IC 20-35-6-2
6. All programs designed to prevent child abuse, neglect, or delinquency, or to enhance child welfare and family preservation administered by, or through funding provided by, the Department, local offices, prosecuting attorneys, or juvenile courts, including programs funded under IC 31-26-3.5 and IC 31-40
7. A child advocacy fund under IC 12-17-17

The Council may include in its Plan, a program for provision of family preservation services that:

1. is or will be in effect in the Region’s service delivery area
2. includes services for a child less than 18 years of age who reasonably may be expected to be considered for out-of-home placement under IC 31-34 or IC 31-37 as a result of:
   A. abuse or neglect
   B. emotional disturbance; or
   C. delinquency adjudication; and
3. addresses all objectives of family preservation services.

The Plan shall include a detailed listing of the projected costs of the services recommended by the Regional Services Council.

Each Regional Services Council shall transmit its completed Plan to the Director of the Department of Child Services not later than February 2 of each even-numbered year. Within 60 days after receiving the Plan, the Program and Services Division will do one of the following:

1. Approve the Plan as submitted by the Council
2. Approve the Plan with amendments, modifications, or revisions
3. Return the Plan to the Council with directions concerning:
   A. subjects for further study and reconsideration; and
   B. re-submission of a revised Plan.
Child Protection Plan

A community child protection team is established in each county. The community child protection team is a countywide, multidisciplinary child protection team. The team must include the following thirteen (13) members who reside in, or provide services to residents of, the county in which the team is to be formed:

1. The director of the local office that provides child welfare services in the county or the local office director's designee.
2. Two (2) designees of the juvenile court judge.
3. The county prosecuting attorney or the prosecuting attorney's designee.
4. The county sheriff or the sheriff's designee.
5. Either:
   A. The president of the county executive in a county not containing a consolidated city or the president's designee; or
   B. The executive of a consolidated city in a county containing a consolidated city or the executive's designee.
6. A director of a court appointed special advocate or guardian ad litem program or the director's designee in the county in which the team is to be formed.
7. Either:
   A. A public school superintendent or the superintendent's designee; or
   B. A director of a local special education cooperative or the director's designee.
8. Two (2) persons, each of whom is a physician or nurse, with experience in pediatrics or family practice.
9. Two (2) residents of the county.
10. The chief law enforcement officer of the largest law enforcement agency in the county (other than the county sheriff) or the chief law enforcement officer's designee.

The director of the local office serving the county shall appoint, subject to the approval of the Director of the Department, the members of the team under subsection (a)(7), (a)(8), and (a)(9).

The community child protection team shall prepare a periodic report regarding the child abuse and neglect reports and complaints that the team reviews under this chapter. The periodic report may include the following information:

1. The number of complaints under section 6 of this chapter that the team receives and reviews each month.
2. A description of the child abuse and neglect reports that the team reviews each month, including the following information:
   A. The scope and manner of the interviewing process during the child abuse or neglect investigation.
   B. The timeliness of the investigation.
   C. The number of children removed from the home.
   D. The types of services offered.
(E) The number of child abuse and neglect cases filed with a court.
(F) The reasons that certain child abuse and neglect cases are not filed with a court.

Before February 2 of each even-numbered year, each Regional Services Council, after a public hearing, shall:

1. Prepare a local plan for the provision of child protection services; and
2. Submit the plan to:
   A. The Director; after consultation with local law enforcement agencies;
   B. Each juvenile court within the Region;
   C. The community child protection team as provided for in IC 31-33-3-1;
   and
   D. Appropriate public or voluntary agencies, including organizations for the prevention of child abuse or neglect.

The local plan must describe the implementation of this article in the Region by the department, and the county office, including the following:

1. Organization.
2. Staffing.
3. Mode of operations.
4. Financing of the child protection services.
5. The provisions made for the purchase of service and interagency relations.

Consistent with State policy, all requirements for a public hearing must be followed. This includes providing the date(s) and location(s) of the public hearings and a copy of the notice to the local newspapers in the Region 30 days prior to the hearing.

**Early Intervention Plan and Other On-Going Duties**

A Regional Services Council shall meet at least quarterly to do the following:

1. Develop, review, or revise a strategy for implementation of an approved plan that identifies:
   A. The manner in which prevention and early intervention services will be provided or improved;
   B. How local collaboration will improve children's services; and
   C. How different funds can be used to serve children and families more effectively.
2. Reorganize as needed and select its vice chairperson for the ensuing year.
3. Review the implementation of the plan and prepare revisions, additions, or updates of the plan that the Regional Services Council considers necessary or appropriate to improve the quality and efficiency of early intervention child welfare services provided in accordance with the plan.
Child Welfare Programs are defined as a program or an activity that is not a component of child services provided to or for the benefit of a particular child or family; and designed to serve groups or categories of children or families in a community by:

(a) Protecting and promoting the welfare of children in a community who are, or are likely to be, at risk of becoming homeless, neglected, or abused due to lack of adequate or appropriate parental support or supervision, in order to reduce the likelihood that the children will become wards of a juvenile court or the department.

(b) Preventing, remedying, or assisting in the solution of problems that may result in the neglect, abuse, exploitation, or delinquency of children.

(c) Preventing unnecessary separation of children from their families by identifying family problems, assisting in the resolution of family problems, and preventing the breakup of families whenever prevention of child removal is possible and desirable.

(d) Providing services targeted to the assistance of children who are developmentally or physically disabled and their families, for the purposes of prevention of potential abuse, neglect, or abandonment of those children, and enabling the children to receive adequate family support and preparation to become self-supporting to the extent feasible.

(e) Providing family preservation services or family support services (both as defined in 42 U.S.C. 629a) for families and children who are not currently receiving individually designed services provided or funded by the department through an open juvenile court child in need of services or delinquency case.

An application to establish a new child welfare program, or to continue or modify an existing child welfare program, may be submitted by a court, county executive, private nonprofit agency or organization, or an interested person based on guidelines and instructions issued by the department. An application to establish, continue, or modify a program that will operate on a statewide basis shall be submitted directly to the director of the department for review and evaluation. Applications for all new child welfare programs shall be transmitted to the Regional Services Council or Councils for the county, region, or geographic area of Indiana that the applicant proposes to serve. Each Regional Services Council must review and submit its recommendations to the director in conformity with procedures established by the department.
Any new child welfare programs approved by a Regional Services Council or Councils must be approved by the director of the department or the director's designee. The director's approval shall specify the period for which operation of the program is approved and the procedure for submission of any request for continuation, extension, or modification of the approved program. The department may not pay for the costs of any programs that have not been approved by the director.

Regional Services Councils shall also review all applications to establish a new child welfare program, or to continue or modify an existing child welfare program, that are submitted by a court, county executive, private nonprofit agency or organization, or an interested person based on guidelines and instructions issued by the Department. The application shall be transmitted to the Regional Services Council for the county, region, or geographic area of Indiana that the applicant proposes to serve. Each Regional Services Council must review and submit its recommendations to the director in conformity with procedures established by the Department.

**Participation of the Public at Meetings**

During the meeting, the Regional Manager shall conduct the meeting in such a way that all members of the public who are in attendance, particularly those who serve children and families in the Region may be heard based on scheduled agenda items and/or time available. Those who are present and wish to discuss issues should be respectful of the agenda, the time limit of the meeting and the Regional Services Council members. Therefore, the Regional Manager shall have sufficient authority to restrict or limit dialogue and discussion so that items on the agenda can be heard.

While Regional Service Council Meetings are open to the public, the public must follow the outlined steps below in order to present at these meetings. These measures are put into place so as to recognize and adhere to the Judicial Cannon of Ethics that all Judges must adhere to both in and out of the Courtroom.

1. Prior to the adjournment of each Regional Services Council meeting there will be an opportunity for questions from the community.
2. Those wishing to participate in this portion of the meeting must submit their interest in being placed on the agenda at least one (1) week in advance of the scheduled Regional Service Council meeting to the Regional Manager who is hosting the meeting. This must be in writing, either by e-mail or written correspondence.
3. The Regional Manager will notify those who requested time to speak at the Regional Service Council Meeting on the Agenda during this portion of the meeting and advise the presenters as to the length of time they have to present. This time not to exceed five (5) minutes depending on the Agenda.
4. The Regional Manager will also provide all speakers placed on the Agenda of this protocol and the guidelines they must follow.
Documents distributed during the Regional Service Council meeting shall be made available to the public by request only. At the conclusion of the meeting, if a member from the public would like to receive a copy of the documents distributed during the Regional Service Council meeting, they must request this in writing to the Regional Manager who will then forward copies of the requested documents to that individual.

At no time should this be seen as an opportunity for an agency, program or individual to present, highlight or make reference to a specific program or service provided by their agency unless the agenda specifically calls for presentations of specific programs by providers. The Regional Manager has the ability to conclude any outside presenter’s remarks if it is deemed that use of this time is inappropriate.

All Regional Services Councils are encouraged to work with all community partners and providers to create an annual “Providers’ Fair.” This would allow those organizations interested in making presentations to the local offices the chance to put together one presentation for the entire Region. Regions are encouraged to collaborate to hold joint Provider Fairs. These events will be held at the discretion of the Regional Manager and Regional Service Council members.
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