

Foster Care Redesign in Circuits 3 & 8

Department of Children and Families and Partnership For Strong Families
Working with Casey Family Programs and Our Community Partners

*To safely reduce the number of children in out of home care by strengthening families
To accelerate permanency through practice changes*

To address the disproportionality of African American children in foster care in Alachua County

Organizing Principles for the Changes

- ✓ On going Cross System Training, Planning, Collaboration, Coordination – at all levels
- ✓ Create Processes for Continuous Feedback and Quality Improvement, Improved Supervision
 - ✓ Data Collection to Monitor System Improvements & Outcomes for Families
 - ✓ Facilitate Community Engagement and Investment to Support Changes

Based on Family Centered Practices

1. A family centered view to build on strengths in the family
2. Innovative and strategic thinking about engaging families
3. Collaborations with community and/or faith based partners to increase resources for families
4. Culturally appropriate and respectful help as needed
5. Involve families in decision making
6. Locally based, accessible community services

Supporting Change

Communication to Facilitate Change

- Senior leaders address staff & community groups on research/data supporting the need for change
- Partnerships with other agencies
- Newsletter and website
- Community Redesign Steering Committee
- Communication Plan
- Impetus and support for change

Training

- Cross training between providers, DCF, PSF
- Extensive training on domestic violence
- Inservices for in-home visitors across providers
- Training on SDM risk assessment tools
- Technical Assistance from Casey Family Programs
- Emphasis on cultural sensitivity

Consultation, Feedback & Data

- Foster Care Redesign Team – DCF, CBC, Providers
- Written protocols for help on DV/SA & MH Issues
- Multiple staff committees – test changes, review
- Track and review data – early engagement, disproportionality, utilization of services, etc.

Meeting the Challenges to Change

- Counter perceptions “leaving children in harm’s way”
- Promote new prevention resources in community
- Make best use of scarce resources & sustainability
- Evaluate redesign practices / streamline processes
- Full implementation of Family Team Conferences to involve families in decision making and plans
- Regular/ ongoing communication between staff

Elements of Change

Improved Assessments and Decision Making

- Assessments: family strengths, needs, safety factors and level of risks to the the child
- Decision Making Teams: Involving family, staff, supervisors, consultations with experts in domestic violence, substance abuse and mental health issues.

Help Families Engage in Services Quickly

- Quicker responses to family needs, training & evaluation for family centered, strength based solutions.
- Facilitate family’s engagement with services for help.
- Family Team Conferences to involve family in plans

Increase Diversion Services

- **Mobile Crisis Response Team** – High risk, family in crisis & needs short-term stabilization
- **Voluntary Protective Services** – Needs assistance quickly, and longer term case management.
- **Diversion** – Family may need immediate or short term assistance to reduce risk of maltreatment.

Increase Use of Preventive Services

- Focus on finding families services for: *parent support/ early childhood education; healthcare; financial stability; and counseling help for domestic violence, substance abuse and mental health issues.*

Ensure Timely Permanency

- Alachua County is pilot for Concurrent Planning which will insure focus on child’s permanency. Permanency Planning Families support reunification but ready to be child’s Forever Family if reunification not possible.