

LEAN IN, LIFT UP and CONNECT to CULTURE

CHILD and FAMILY PRACTICE MODEL

EXPLORATION & ENGAGEMENT

CORE PRACTICE ELEMENTS

INQUIRY – Uses inquiry and mutual exploration with the family to find, locate and learn about other family members and supportive relationships of children, youth and families within their communities and tribes.

ENGAGEMENT – Seeks out, invites in, values and makes central the power, perspectives, abilities and solutions of families and their supportive communities and tribes in all teaming and casework practice.

▶ LEAN IN

COMPLETE PRACTICE BEHAVIORS

Listens with Openness

Approaches all interactions with families, communities and tribes with openness. Listens without making assumptions and communicates a genuine desire to learn about the family and their culture, community and tribes by consistently asking global questions followed by more descriptive questions that encourage exchange and learning about family strengths, beliefs, traditions, life situation and who/what is important to family members. Uses language that everyone can understand and frequently checks in on communication styles and terms to ensure understanding.

Explores Relationships

Uses tools such as mapping to explore family relationships, natural circles of support and to identify safety issues and how they can be addressed. Explores with children how, when and with whom they feel safe, what is good in their lives, where they want to live, what worries them and what they wish for. Continuously encourages the family to identify natural supports to be included on their team.

Actively Finds Connections

Seeks information from children, youth, mothers and fathers about non-custodial parents, maternal and paternal grandparents, aunts and uncles, brothers and sisters, Godparents, tribal members, and other significant relationships. Asks early and ongoing, “Who is in your family? Who are you connected with in your community? Who are the keepers of family history? Who in the family do you turn to for reunions, gatherings, ceremonies and at other times of celebration, loss and grief?” Gives reasons why their answers are helpful. Explains the agency’s desire to tap into the family’s natural support system so that their “team” can support family and child safety, healing, reconciliation, and permanency. Finds family members, tribal connections and other significant relationships through inquiry and early and ongoing Internet search and review of medical and educational records, case records and birth records.

Nurtures Honest Dialogue

Consistently models honest and respectful communication by introducing self, communicating a sincere desire to be respectful (“I would like to be respectful, how should I address you?”) and by addressing individuals by the name or title they request. Is open and honest about the situation, explains relevant facts and information, is clear about information or action being requested, and facilitates dialogue regarding how the requested information and actions will affect the situation and support the child and family.

Insures Connection & Support

Follows up inquiry and search activities by: (1) working quickly and leaving no stone unturned to establish paternity and facilitate the child’s connection with paternal relationships and resources, and (2) contacting family, cultural, community and tribal connections not just as placement options, but as important team members and sources of support for the child and family.



The Child and Family Practice Model

The Child and Family Practice Model was developed as part of a five-year federally funded project to reduce long-term foster care. To learn more, visit www.reducefostercarenow.org or contact CFPMinfo@cfpic.org. The contents of this document are solely the responsibility of the authors and do not necessarily represent the official views of the Children’s Bureau, who funded the CAPP/CFPM Project under Cooperative Agreement 90CT0153.



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POWER of FAMILY

CORE PRACTICE ELEMENTS

SELF-ADVOCACY – Recognizes and supports the power of individuals and families to speak about their own well-being and self in finding solutions and continuing to grow.

ADVOCACY – Speaks out for children, youth and families based on their strengths, resources and cultural perspectives in order to support them in strengthening their family, meeting their needs, finding their voice and developing the ability to advocate for themselves (includes caseworkers, attorneys, tribal and community representatives, CASA's, service providers, etc.).

▶ LIFT UP

COMPLETE PRACTICE BEHAVIORS

Links Family

Asks initially and throughout the family's involvement if they would like a youth, parent, cultural, community or tribal support person or peer advocate on their team to provide advocacy. Links families with advocates when requested and includes the family's support persons and advocates on the team. Continually coordinates with the family's formal and informal advocates to assist the family to find their own solutions and provide on-going support and linkages to culturally competent and effective services to meet their needs.

Interactions are Affirming

In all interactions affirms the unique strengths, life experience and self-identified goals of each child and family, honors the role of important cultural, community and tribal leaders the child and family have identified, and encourages mutual exploration of issues, options and solutions with children, parents, family members and cultural, community and tribal leaders in assessment, planning and decisions about children and their families. Assures the family receives needed information, preparation, guidance and support during their involvement with the child welfare system.

Facilitates Sharing

Early and continuously facilitates sharing of information and coordination between parents and caregivers regarding the child's daily care, favorite meals, medical or health conditions, medications, appointments, everyday family activities, and other relevant family, religious, cultural and tribal traditions and practices. Continually explores, nurtures, and facilitates the development of a mentoring relationship between the parents and the caregivers within the context of the child and family team and their supportive communities and tribes.

Team Solutions

Facilitates family/team outreach to learn about practices, traditions, services and supports from leaders in the culture, community and tribe. Also shares information about agency programs, providers, resources and supports that could strengthen the family and meet their underlying needs, providing information about any evidence-base and/or relevant cultural adaptations. Facilitates the family and their team to develop solutions that are individualized to the family and their culture, community and tribes.

Uses Cultural Lens

Gathers assessments and other information relevant to the child and family's safety and well-being and works with the family and their team to understand the family's underlying needs and apply the information to casework and decision-making processes using the family's cultural lens; this includes using tools and approaches that help children's voices be heard, that assist everyone to understand who/what is important to the child, and that continually engages family and team members around who/how the relationships, goals and wishes the child has shared are being supported.

Promotes Speaking Out

Promotes self-advocacy by encouraging, supporting and providing opportunities for youth and families to actively share their voice, offer solutions, act as leaders and be central in assessment, planning and decisions about their lives, including when worker, agency or system are the focus of the advocacy needs.



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CIRCLE of SUPPORT

CORE PRACTICE ELEMENTS

TEAMING – Recognizes and appreciates the strength and support that a family’s community, cultural, tribal and other natural relationships can provide, which inspires and insists that not only the family is engaged, but the family’s entire system of support so that the family’s underlying needs can be met.

SHARED COMMITMENT AND ACCOUNTABILITY – Every assessment and decision is the product of the work of both the social worker and the family, and in many cases inclusive of the collaborative work within the child and family team.

▶ CONNECT

COMPLETE PRACTICE BEHAVIORS

Caregiver Respect & Resources

Demonstrates respect to caregivers by having candid discussions and developing shared understanding with caregivers about their rights, role and expectations in being/becoming the child’s caregiver, including caregiver participation on the child and family support team, responsibilities to support the child’s health, education, spiritual and other needs, and responsibilities to support the child’s family relationships and cultural, community and tribal connections. Provides information about resources available based on their role as a family member, non-relative extended family member (NREFM) or other care provider before the child/family needs to access/utilize them.

Optimal Team Environment

Creates an environment for open and honest communication with the family and the family team about child safety, permanency and court timeframes so that the team’s planning and decision-making is informed, relevant, and timely. Models accountability and trust by following through with representations and agreements. Admits and takes responsibility for one’s own biases, missteps and mistakes.

Natural Supports

Establishes, continuously brings together and supports the child and family’s team, which includes natural family, cultural, community and tribal supports and others providing services to the family such as social workers, attorneys and services providers.

Normalizing Needs

Understands normal is different for everyone and checks on what is “normal” for the family and their culture, community and tribes. Facilitates critical thinking and discussion with the family and their team about the family’s underlying needs, how they define the problem and what success looks like. Listens attentively, uses language and concepts that the family has used, and incorporates the family’s strengths, resources, cultural perspective and solutions in all casework, decision-making, case plans, court reports, meeting notes and other documentation.

Explores Team Roles

Explores with team members what roles they can play over time to strengthen child safety and support the family, and then continually engages and reinforces the team in those roles. Facilitates the team to discuss, understand and adapt to changing team member roles – for instance, when reunification efforts stop, helps the team explore, identify and honor a new role for the parent.

Continuous Dialogue & Adjustment

Facilitates continuous dialogue with the family and their team regarding whether/how the agreed-upon practices, services, supports and visitation plans are working and facilitates adjustments/follow-through based on family and support team discussions, assessments, and decisions.

Teams Post-Permanency

Emphasizes the importance of the family’s support team even beyond the time of child welfare agency involvement. Before the case ends, facilitates shared understanding and agreement of team member roles and commitments in maintaining a post-permanency circle of support for the child and family, including identifying a system navigator who is aware of agency supports and services (including mental health and substance abuse) and will act as an ongoing liaison and advocate for the family team when contacted about system supports and services the child and family may need



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HEALING TRAUMA

CORE PRACTICE ELEMENTS

WELL-BEING PARTNERSHIPS – *Understands and addresses health, education, spiritual and other family needs through on-going partnerships with families and their supportive communities and tribes, including exploring and responding sensitively to the current and historical trauma and loss family members and caregivers may have experienced.*

RECOVERY, SAFETY AND WELL-BEING – *Based on the strengths, resources and perspectives of families and their supportive communities and tribes, identifies, locates, advocates for and supports use of culturally sensitive services, supports, healing practices and traditions to address trauma, loss, behavioral health, recovery, child safety and other child and family needs.*

▶ CULTURE

COMPLETE PRACTICE BEHAVIORS

Customized Visitation

With the family, caregiver and team continually assesses, arranges and structures culturally appropriate visitation activities in the most natural environment possible that supports the child and the parent/child relationship.

Using Experiential Coaching

Assesses with the family and their team the need for interactive, experiential coaching during visitation and at other times of natural parent/child interaction to improve parenting skills; follows through with identifying, arranging or advocating for this when needed.

Listening for Loss

Regularly listens to the family's story, acknowledges and validates feelings of grief and loss they share by reflecting and reaffirming what was heard. Supports family members to explore their history and experiences, and how this may be impacting their current life situation and underlying needs. Includes naming and acknowledging the many types and layers of trauma the family may have experienced (historically what happened to their community and culture; past experiences of violence, loss, abuse, removal, etc.; recent trauma/loss experiences of child). Encourages family members to address their history with extended family, cultural, community and tribal leaders, therapists, drug treatment providers, and others identified by the family as important to them.

Tailoring Supports to Underlying Needs

Explores, values, connects the family to and advocates for a broad array of services, supports, cultural practices and traditions that can assist the child and family with loss, grief, hurt, pain, healing and recovery (e.g. "Who and what is helping – and/or in the future could help – with child and family's physical, mental and emotional health, substance abuse issues, education, spiritual and other needs? Are there cultural or community practices and traditions that you think could support family members' healing, health, wholeness and well-being?")

REcovery and Well-Being

Through teaming processes creates shared agreement on the safety issues to be addressed and the culturally sensitive services, supports, practices, traditions and visitation plan that will address child safety and support family and cultural relationships and address trauma, loss, behavioral health, drug/alcohol recovery, child safety, child and family well-being and other underlying needs identified by the family and their team. Works continuously to identify, locate, develop, fund, advocate for, link the family to and support the use of the agreed-upon practices, services and supports.



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