

# ***PENNSYLVANIA STANDARDS FOR CHILD WELFARE PRACTICE***

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**COMMONWEALTH OF PENNSYLVANIA**  
**DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC WELFARE**

Deputy Secretary  
Office of Children, Youth, and Families

Dear Colleague:

The children and families served by Pennsylvania's child welfare system need and deserve the highest quality, most effective services we can provide. Over the past several years, we have all worked to create new tools and techniques to assist us in improving both the quality of our service delivery and the results that are achieved for children and families. The Pennsylvania Child Welfare Practice Standards are a critically important addition to this effort.

These Practice Standards clearly define the standards we will work to achieve at the direct service level and at the agency administration level. The Standards are based on research findings and represent a consensus among families, county children and youth agency staff at many levels, private agency staff, social work educators and trainers, and Office of Children, Youth, and Families staff.

In addition to the Practice Standards, the Office of Children, Youth, and Families and the county children and youth agencies are implementing the Pennsylvania Child Welfare Information System (PACWIS) that will provide both an automated case management system and data that will assist counties in measuring their service delivery results. These two systems provide a strong foundation for the future. A strong training program and high quality supervision are also essential to assuring that Pennsylvania continues to achieve increasingly positive results for families and children in the areas of safety, permanence, and well being.

I am grateful to those who invested their time, energy, and expertise to assist us in this process. I acknowledge the significant contribution made by our consultants, the Child Welfare League of America, whose assistance provided both a national perspective and ongoing support. I am extremely proud of the ground breaking work that these Standards represent and I look forward to the many challenges and rewards ahead as we continuously strive to achieve the results of safety, permanence, and well being for all of the Pennsylvania children and families we all serve. We are truly "Moving practice towards excellence."

Jo Ann R. Lawer, Esq.

## ***STEERING COMMITTEE CO-CHAIRS AND SUBCOMMITTEE CO-CHAIRS***

### **Steering Committee Co-chairs:**

**Anne L. Shenberger**, Director, Southeast Region, Office of Children, Youth, and Families, Department of Public Welfare

**Maxine Tucker**, Deputy Commissioner, Philadelphia Department of Human Services

### **Assessment Subcommittee Co-chairs:**

**Robert J. Stefan**, Director, Western Region, Office of Children, Youth, and Families, Department of Public Welfare

**Maxine Tucker**, Deputy Commissioner, Philadelphia Department of Human Services

### **Monitoring, Evaluation, and Agency Management Subcommittee Co-chairs:**

**Mary Germond**, Director, Delaware County Children and Youth Services

**Anne L. Shenberger**, Director, Southeast Region, Office of Children, Youth, and Families, Department of Public Welfare

### **Service Delivery Subcommittee Co-chairs:**

**Richard Houston**, Director, Central Region, Office of Children, Youth, and Families, Department of Public Welfare

**Terry Watson**, Director, Centre County Children and Youth Agency

### **Service Planning Subcommittee Co-chairs:**

**Tina Semon**, Director, Indiana County Children and Youth Agency

**Jill McVey**, Director, Lancaster County Children and Youth Agency

# ***INTRODUCTION TO THE PENNSYLVANIA STANDARDS FOR CHILD WELFARE PRACTICE***

## **I. PURPOSE OF STANDARDS**

Change in large systems is not an isolated event but a simultaneous, integrated approach in several areas. The Pennsylvania Standards for Child Welfare Practice join activities to blend targeted training with high quality supervision and timely data. The Standards represent the keystone effort to improve child welfare practice provided to children and families in all the counties in Pennsylvania.

### **History**

Convening a Steering Committee to identify the process and content for developing standards of child welfare practice in Pennsylvania was the first step in an almost two-year investment of time. The standards development process began with a clear mission, conceptual and operational definitions, and a relationship to existing initiatives like the Results Based Management and Needs Based Budget process. The Steering Committee recognized the diversity among county agencies, their mode of operating, and their current level of practice. The goal of establishing standards for the delivery of child welfare services in Pennsylvania stemmed from a genuine desire from public and private representatives to assure consistent, high-quality services for all vulnerable children and families in the state.

As adopted the **Mission** is:

To provide guidance to Pennsylvania's child welfare system in achieving the goals of safety, permanence, and well-being for the children and families being served. This guidance is intended to promote a culture of excellence in serving children and families by developing consensus among those working at all levels in the system regarding the actions necessary to promote sound outcomes for children and their families.

The **Conceptual Definition**, as prepared by the Steering Committee, recognizes the need for support and commitment among child welfare system representatives regarding the individual worker, supervisor, and manager actions and the collective agency response necessary to promote sound outcomes for children and families in the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania.

Similarly the **Operational Definition** identifies the practical uses of standards and the interrelations of the stakeholders in the child welfare system:

The Practice Standards will be a non-regulatory method of establishing benchmarks for defining optimal, but achievable, results for child welfare services in Pennsylvania. The Standards will encourage practice excellence in serving children and families by promoting culturally competent activities related to the goals of safety, permanence, well-being, and timeliness.

Focusing on a family centered, child focused, strengths based perspective, the Standards will be a practical, usable guide for child welfare staff. The resulting Standards will reflect a format and review process that allows modifications over time. They will be dynamic and able to respond to differences in counties as well as changes in the child welfare knowledge base and legal foundations. The Standards will outline the application of skills in the casework process in order to facilitate child welfare agencies in assessing their own progress against these research-based standards. Additionally the Standards will delineate the agency and administrative activities necessary to support workers.

### **Definition**

A standard can be defined as “an accepted measure of comparison for quantitative and qualitative value.”<sup>1</sup> In other words a standard constitutes a yardstick against which to evaluate progress. Standards are not arbitrary; they must be set with a clear understanding of the benchmarks used. In essence performance can be measured against one of three criteria:

- an agency can be measured against itself at a previous point in time. This strategy necessitates consistent data available for a period of time, usually several years, in order to establish trends.
- an agency can measure itself against another agency that shares certain characteristics likes size, population composition, or funding availability.
- an agency can use national or established standards against which to measure performance.

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<sup>1</sup>Webster's II University Dictionary, 1984.

## **II. USES OF STANDARDS**

### **Community/Systemic Uses**

The public child welfare agency can not accomplish its goals for children and families without the assistance of other agencies and systems. Parents may need housing and job assistance in order to support their families; children need education and may require specialized services; parents may need mental health or drug treatment to stabilize their lives. The child welfare agency does not provide these services but is responsible for helping children and families access them if needed. The Practice Standards are a written outline of the services the county agency can provide and how the agency intersects with other collaborating systems. The Standards will not assure that all services are available, but they can serve as the foundation of a discussion, at the local level, among county administrators and their colleagues in the public and private sectors.

While the Standards build on the Results Based Management blueprint and will inform the Needs Based Budgeting process, they are also a work in progress. Agencies will not be able to achieve all Standards immediately, but will be able to use them to assess their capacities and existing strengths. Developing local strategies for changing service delivery patterns and augmenting program components that work well will take time. The Standards will begin an evolutionary process that will lead agencies to review internal processes as well as inter-agency relationships.

Developing these Standards will assist Pennsylvania in responding, in a timely manner, to the federal Adoption and Safe Families Act of 1997. Designed to ensure the safety of children, to promote adoption and other permanent homes, and to support families, the Act specifically requires states to establish standards to ensure that quality services are provided to children and families. All states are directed to develop and implement standards for children in public and private foster care placements.

### **County/DPW Uses**

It is anticipated that the Standards will be useful to several key groups of child welfare stakeholders. The Steering Committee recognizes the following potential uses.

The county agencies may use these Standards to:

- assess the practice of their agency,
- establish a plan outlining incremental steps toward achieving the Standards,
- define responsible practice in relation to families' and childrens' needs,
- support supervisors' efforts to help workers improve their practice,
- identify training needs,

- determine needed programmatic or organizational changes,
- justify results based plans and fiscal requests,
- educate county commissioners and the public about the needs of child welfare services so that they can better support families and children, and
- evaluate provider agency performance.

The Department of Public Welfare may use the Standards to:

- define responsible practice in relation to families' and childrens' needs,
- guide qualitative case reviews as part of a process of identifying practice strengths and needs in county agencies,
- respond to a county's need for technical assistance,
- help counties achieve needed changes,
- guide revisions to the competency based training program,
- inform policy and regulatory development,
- justify the need for additional resources, and
- review Needs Based Plans.

### **III. VALUES AND PRINCIPLES SUPPORTING STANDARDS**

Child welfare work requires a recognition of the complexities of individuals, families, and communities and the inter-relations among them. Even as a worker assesses the safety of the child he/she must also consider the longer term potential for permanence and well-being within the family. In a similar vein the family must be viewed within a cultural context that considers the family structure, family strengths, and needs. To the extent that children and families have experienced not only child abuse and neglect, but also domestic violence and drug and alcohol abuse, the actions of the worker and the agencies serving the family will be affected. Many other issues could be added to the list: the developmental level of the parents and child, the learning capacity and style of the parents, the mental health status of the individuals, the housing and economic conditions, and others. The assessment, the service plan, the delivery of services, and the monitoring and evaluation of the service pattern must be informed by what the family has experienced and the resulting effects on the functioning of the individuals and the family unit.

The developers of the Standards acknowledged the pervasive and intertwined issues that are the reality of child welfare. How to handle these issues was the dilemma. To mention each issue in every Standard would be repetitive and

cumbersome, yet to include these important issues in only some Standards would make it seem that they were only vital in certain circumstances. Not mentioning them at all would seem incomplete to the experienced worker who knows the impact of drug abuse, for example, on the lives of children and families. The decision was to compromise by including direct mention in the most important areas, but to recognize that each issue has a relationship with every Standard.

Therefore, the principle of an integrated casework process from assessment through monitoring and evaluation is inherent in the Standards. Additionally families must be viewed as whole entities, not merely a collection of problems. Children come to the child welfare system with a collection of experiences that affect their ability to bond with new adults, to maintain connections with birth family, and to learn in formalized settings like school. These Standards recognize that child-centered, family-focused, strengths based casework is not a string of jargon, but an agency value and commitment to serve the needs of children and families beyond traditional program boundaries. The Standards encourage a holistic and informed approach to understanding the multiple effects of past and present experiences of children and families.

These Standards, reflecting Pennsylvania's values and principles, will assist the counties in meeting a high performance level on the child welfare outcomes and seven measures that the federal government have developed as a result of ASFA.<sup>2</sup> The federal outcomes mirror Pennsylvania's values of child safety, permanence, and well-being.

#### **IV. STANDARD DEVELOPMENT PROCESS**

##### **Role of the Steering Committee**

The Pennsylvania Standards for Child Welfare Practice Steering Committee not only provided guidance and direction, but also identified a strategy and process for developing standards of practice. Additionally, they established a mechanism for including the participation of individuals who had responsibility for services to families and children. Steering Committee members served as co-chairs and members of the subcommittees charged with developing and writing practice standards. The Steering Committee membership included representatives from County Children and Youth Agencies; the Pennsylvania Department of Public Welfare Bureau of County and Youth Programs; the Pennsylvania Department of Public Welfare, Office of Children, Youth, and Families; Regional Children and Youth Directors; and the Pennsylvania Children and Youth Administrators.

The Steering Committee provided oversight of the writing of the Standards, periodically reviewing them to ensure that they were general enough to be relevant to county agencies of all sizes and sufficiently specific to improve practice. One of

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<sup>2</sup> Federal Register, August 20, 1999 (Vol. 64, Number 161, Page 45552-45554.)

the early efforts of the Steering Committee involved the review of practice standards that were being used nationally. The Steering Committee decided that national standards would not be adopted as they existed, but would serve as a framework for the development of state standards that would reflect the collective thinking of child welfare practitioners in Pennsylvania.

The process of developing standards was outlined by the Steering Committee as follows:

- establishment of four work groups co-chaired by a county and Office of Children, Youth, and Families staff person from the Steering Committee with an assigned CWLA staff member,
- development and use of a standard format,
- approval of topic areas developed to guide standards writing,
- incorporation of cultural competency, family involvement, and strength-based practice concepts into all of the standards,
- involvement of interested counties throughout the state and counties that had implemented a successful model of services,
- involvement of key stakeholders in each of the four work groups.

### **Role of the Child Welfare League of America**

The Child Welfare League of America (CWLA) was requested to provide technical assistance to the Steering Committee and to the subcommittees writing the Standards. CWLA staff played a supportive role by providing national information and data, conducting literature reviews, consulting as part of the group process, developing the format for the Standards, and writing the Standards from subcommittee ideas. An additional role involved comparing the Standards to national models and Pennsylvania initiatives. CWLA will have an ongoing part in helping counties implement the casework changes required by the Standards.

### **Committee and Work Group Structure**

The Steering Committee organized four subcommittees, each to focus on an individual casework process. The casework processes included assessment, service planning, service delivery, monitoring and evaluation, plus management. As planned, a county representative and an Office of Children, Youth, and Families staff member co-chaired the subcommittees taking the lead in setting the agenda for the group. The Department of Public Welfare regional staff served as co-chairs in many instances, or were available to provide technical assistance about Pennsylvania child welfare laws and regulations.

Subcommittee members included a cross section of representatives. County and private agency directors, social workers, and supervisors, foster parents, parent advocates, and parents contributed their knowledge and experience to the content of the Standards.

The subcommittees met monthly from October 1998 through the summer of 1999. In many instances subcommittee members agreed to meet between the routine monthly meetings in order to develop further the content of the Standards.

### **Development of Lenses**

The work of the subcommittees was guided by two sets of “lenses” through which they could view child welfare and casework activities. One set of “lenses” was Guiding Principles or factors derived from the Results Based Management blueprint and the Adoption and Safe Families Act, specifically, safety, permanence, well-being, and timeliness. The other set of “lenses” was themes that emerge in many child welfare cases and must be the focus of child welfare intervention. These themes, referred to as Reference Points, included alcohol/drug use, domestic violence, the developmental level of the child and parents, and cultural competence.

As mentioned above (see Values) the lenses identify the inter-related issues that affect children and families and the workers who serve them through child welfare agencies. Safety, permanence, well-being, and timeliness must be considered together in planning services for the child. To leave a child in an unsafe environment is always unacceptable, but safety must be maximized along with enhanced permanence and well-being. Child welfare is a constant balancing act of options and choices. Similarly domestic violence and drug or alcohol abuse (as well as other crucial issues), can not be ignored by the child welfare worker. The presenting problem of child abuse or neglect may be only the latest expression of a family dynamic that affects the ability of all its members to function, to change, and to survive. The worker must incorporate an understanding and, in some instances, services to meet the core issues as well as the child welfare issues.

These Standards set expectations for delivery of services in Pennsylvania but they do not tell a worker “what” to do. Clinical judgment and supervisory consultation are critical in deciding how to use the various lenses to serve families and children.

### **Literature Review for a National Perspective**

Another tool available to the Steering Committee and subcommittees was a bibliography and abstracts on current literature related to assessment, service planning, service delivery, monitoring and evaluation, and management. CWLA conducted the literature review and used the results to reinforce the subcommittee desire to have the Standards reflect the most current thinking in the field of child welfare.

### **Review of National, State, County, and University Initiatives in Standard Setting**

Although the goal of the Steering Committee was to produce standards reflective of Pennsylvania's unique characteristics, it was considered desirable to use current initiatives as an additional tool to guide the work. CWLA conducted a survey of national, state, county, and university initiatives. This information provided a baseline against which the content of the Standards could be measured by the Steering Committee. The several initiatives identified included:

- Child Welfare League of America Standards of Excellence representing best practice in eleven child welfare program areas.
- Council on Accreditation Standards that are used to accredit social, behavioral, and health organizations.
- American Humane Association and the National Association of Public Child Welfare Administrators summary of roundtable discussions on outcomes in child welfare.
- Casey Outcomes and Decision-Making Project focusing on the development of tools that will help agencies adopt a managed care approach to child welfare service delivery.
- Child Welfare Research Center, University of California at Berkeley, data on child welfare performance indicators such as child abuse reporting and length of stay in foster care.
- Oregon Performance Measures requiring state agencies to have performance measures attached to statewide benchmarks.

### **Pennsylvania Programs Offering Promising Practices**

The Steering Committee recognized that innovative practices and approaches to service delivery were also occurring in Pennsylvania. The Office of Children, Youth, and Families offered an opportunity for counties to submit descriptions of programs and models of service delivery that were creative and successful in meeting the needs of children and families. The Steering Committee selected six of the counties for visits by CWLA consultants during February and March 1999. Written synopses of the "Promising Practices" were provided to each subcommittee member.

### **Standards Reviewed Against CWLA and COA Standards, Hierarchy, "Lenses", Results Based Management**

The completed Standards were reviewed against the CWLA and COA standards. Similarities and differences between the Pennsylvania Standards and CWLA and COA standards were identified and documented. The Steering Committee evaluated the results of the reviews and made recommendations for changes and/or additions to the Pennsylvania Standards. Overall the reviews revealed that the Pennsylvania Standards were consistent in philosophy, values, and knowledge with the CWLA and COA standards.

The Standards were reviewed a second time to ensure that the concepts expressed in the Standard statements were supported in the knowledge and value base, benchmarks, and strategies of the Standards. A third review of the

Standards was conducted to ensure that the Guiding Principles of safety, permanence, well-being, and timeliness were addressed in each set of Standards. Additionally, the Standards were reviewed to ensure that Reference Points of alcohol/drug use, domestic violence, the developmental level of children and parents, and cultural competence were noted in each Standard set.

A fourth review compared the Standards with the goals and objectives outlined in the Results Based Management blueprint and the Adoption and Safe Family Act requirements. Finally, the Standards were reviewed by a professional editor for clarity, grammar, and consistency in language.

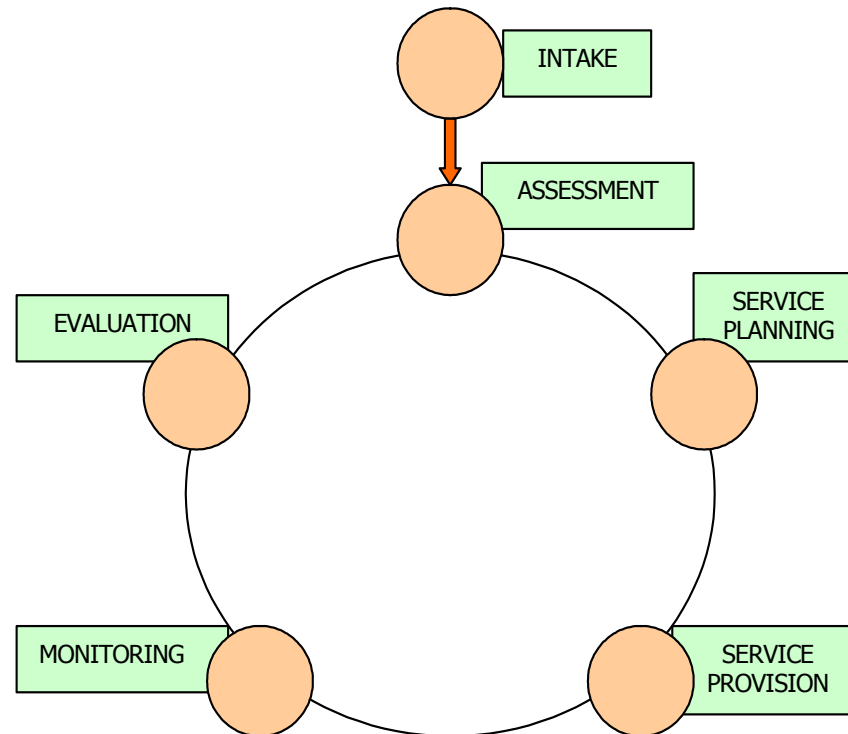
## **VI. FORMAT FOR STANDARDS**

National standards, like those of the Child Welfare League of America and the Council on Accreditation, are organized by programmatic area—adoption standards are separate from foster care and other topical divisions. In Pennsylvania the organization of service responses varies considerably depending on the county agency. Therefore, the Steering Committee decided early in the development process that programmatic interpretations might limit the implementation of the eventual standards. The decision was made to organize the Standards around the casework process—assessment, service planning, service delivery, monitoring, and evaluation. Additionally the Committee recognized that no systemic, casework changes were possible without management support so a set of Standards were outlined for administrators.

It was clear to the Steering Committee that all programs—investigation, foster care, adoption, independent living, etc.—produce a plan for the delivery of services based on an assessment of the strengths and needs of the child and family. What was common to all counties and their partner, private agencies was the casework process, and what needed to be improved in most cases was the consistency and rigor with which the casework skills were applied.

The term “casework” refers to a problem-solving process that focuses on the person-in-the-environment. This means engaging the internal psychological forces and the external social forces that impinge on the ability of the individual, family, or group to accomplish life tasks, promote well-being, and function within the environment or change the environment. The caseworker seeks to accomplish this goal by a series of activities that comprise a continuum from assessment through planning, implementation, and monitoring to evaluation.

**Figure 1**  
**CASEWORK PROCESS DIAGRAM**



Following the casework model (see Figure 1) assessment is an ongoing process that dictates the decision making at all points in the tenure of a family with the child welfare system. The planning process must involve the family and other significant parties, including the child if appropriate. A plan builds on the strengths determined in the assessment and identifies activities and services that will address the problems. Plans must include a clear definition of “who, will do what, by when.” In the monitoring phase the worker will check whether or not the services have been delivered. The evaluation component asks the worker to judge whether or not the services have achieved the goals outlined in the plan. At each

stage assessment is revisited as the worker learns more about the individual, family, or group and their abilities to use the services and supports offered.

Depending on the skills workers have to engage resistant parents in an assessment process, their ability to distinguish chronic or episodic problems, their capacity to link assessment findings to case plan goals and services, and their knowledge of the multiple steps in a referral process, the services provided may or may not address the true patterns that put the child at risk of abuse or neglect. Casework demands a high level of skill and the ability to vary the approach given the needs of the family. For example, the worker must be able to determine if this mother's resistance to drug treatment is best challenged through a supportive, encouraging approach or a clear statement of expectations and consequences.

The competent worker must also be able to distinguish between the behavior of a boy who acts "tough" as part of a defense against an environment that preys on any sign of vulnerability or a boy scared to show how much he needs the safety and consistency of a family. The caseworker, even if he or she is not delivering the direct therapeutic services, must be able to develop a relationship with the children and family that allows clear communication and informed decision making.

Standards do not make clinical decisions, do not tell workers how to do what the family needs, or when to change the service configuration. Standards support, but can not take the place of competent, consistent supervision and management oversight.

**I. ASSESSMENT 1****2 CONDUCT RISK ASSESSMENT**

<b>OUTCOME: Permanence 3</b>  <b>A. STANDARD:</b> Stated in terms of what the worker should do or what the agency should do to provide supports to the worker. 4	
<b>Staff Responsibilities 5</b>	<b>Agency Responsibilities 5</b>
<b>1. KNOWLEDGE AND VALUE BASE 6</b>  a. List of what the worker must know or know how to access in order to meet the standard b. List of what the worker must be able to do to meet the standard  <b>2. STRATEGIES 7</b>  a. List of what individual workers will do to increase progress toward the standard	<b>3. BENCHMARKS OR MEASURES 8</b>  a. List of one or two measurable indicators of progress toward meeting the standard b. Graphic or chart display of measures c. Measurements updated every quarter d. Visual comparison of performance in different offices or units within the same county or a comparison among several comparable counties  <b>4. STRATEGIES 9</b>  a. List of what the agency is or will do to increase progress toward the standard

After reviewing numerous formats of other standards the Steering Committee selected a user-friendly, boxed format that allows the reader to find information consistently and quickly. The casework section is identified by the name and the Roman numeral (see 1). A brief heading describing the topic of the Standard is listed in italics at the right (see 2). The outcome refers to the Results Based Management outcome that most closely relates to the Standard (see 3). The

Standard statement is listed with a capital letter. Standards state what the worker or agency must do by when (see [4]). Recognizing that any change must include responsibilities assigned to both the worker and the agency, two sets of columns are identified (see [5]). The knowledge needed to perform the Standard and the values workers must hold are briefly listed (see [6]). Immediately below, generally on a second page, are the worker strategies that can be amended to suit the individual needs of a worker or a particular agency (see [7]). The benchmarks or measures are numerical or quality assurance indicators of performance against a specific Standard (see [8]). Finally there are strategies for the agency to use or adapt in support of achievement of the Standard (see [9]).

The numbering system allows the reader to find any statement in the Standards. For example, II-A-1-a means the second section (Service Planning), the first Standard (A), the first area (Knowledge and Value Base), and the first statement (a).

### **Glossary and Index**

At the end of this document is a comprehensive index of topics found in the Standards. Combined with the table of contents the index will allow the user to identify specific areas in the Standards. The index is set up with multiple access points, for example, “safety assessment” can be found under “safety” as well as under “assessment.”

Also at the end is a glossary of terms used in the Standards. The definitions reflect the suggested usage of key terms to assure that all readers of the Standards have a common understanding.

**OUTCOME: Safety**

**A. STANDARD:** The child welfare worker must gather all available information from the caller/walk-in referral and from existing agency information and conduct a preliminary risk assessment to assess the validity and seriousness of that information in order to assure the safety of the child. The child welfare worker and/or child welfare supervisor must decide whether to refer the caller/walk-in referral to the appropriate community resources, to initiate a full investigation, or to gather more information. This decision must be made no later than 24 hours after receiving the report. The child welfare worker will document all appropriate information gathered during the interview and will document the decision making process in the case record. The caller/walk-in referral and the information offered must be treated with professionalism and courtesy.

**Staff Responsibilities****1. KNOWLEDGE AND VALUE BASE**

- a. The child welfare worker and child welfare supervisor must have a working knowledge of the laws and regulations related to child welfare practice including the Adoption Act, the Adoption and Safe Families Act (ASFA), the Child Protective Services Law, the Juvenile Act, and the Truancy Law.
- b. The child welfare worker and child welfare supervisor must be able to conduct telephone and in-person interviews in order to maintain control of the interview, gather required information, and maintain positive relationships with the reporter.
- c. The child welfare worker and child welfare supervisor must be able to use techniques such as de-escalation and crisis intervention to calm callers/walk-in referrals sufficiently to obtain information and reduce the immediate risk to the child.
- d. The child welfare worker must know how to complete initial risk tagging using the state-approved risk assessment process.
- e. The child welfare worker must be able to determine whether a family should be accepted for investigation or referred to community services.
- f. The child welfare worker must know the range of community resources and be able to refer callers/walk-in referrals to the appropriate resource.

**Agency Responsibilities****3. BENCHMARKS OR MEASURES**

- a. Percentage of referrals completed accurately with an appropriate decision recorded.
- b. Percentage of inquiry decisions made within 24 hours.
- c. Percentage of calls that resulted in a full investigation.
- d. Percentage of calls that resulted in referral to community resources.
- e. Percentage of calls treated with professionalism and courtesy.
- f. Percentage of families referred to the child welfare system who experienced an incident of substantiated abuse within 12 months of the referral.
- g. Percentage of calls for which a preliminary risk assessment was completed.
- h. Percentage of calls for which prior agency history was researched.

- g. The child welfare worker must have a working knowledge of how to access names in agency files and/or computer databases to determine whether or not there is a current or previous history of the children or the family.
- h. The child welfare worker must demonstrate an ability to record all referrals, decisions, and rationale for decisions in an accurate and timely manner.

**2. STRATEGIES**

- a. The child welfare supervisor will review all reports/referrals completed by staff for completeness, timeliness, and accuracy.
- b. The child welfare supervisor will assure that the appropriate response time is determined based upon the preliminary risk factors when cases are accepted for investigation.
- c. The child welfare worker will attend training related to the Adoption Act, the Adoption and Safe Families Act (ASFA), the Child Protective Services Law, the Juvenile Act, the state-approved risk assessment, and the Truancy Act.
- d. The child welfare worker will document all information and rationale for decision making.

**4. STRATEGIES**

- a. The agency will develop and implement a community education plan to assist all mandated reporters in learning about the types of circumstances which require a referral, how to make a referral, and the type of information needed to determine the appropriateness of a referral.
- b. The agency will implement a quality assurance or supervisory review to determine the quality of preliminary and referral decision making.
- c. The agency will ensure that staff receive all necessary training related to the Adoption Act, the Adoption and Safe Families Act (ASFA), the Child Protective Services Law, the Juvenile Act, the state approved risk assessment, and the Truancy Law.
- d. The agency will maintain information regarding community resources and assure staff's access to the information.
- e. The agency will develop mechanisms to monitor the professionalism and courtesy of child welfare workers receiving calls.
- f. The agency must maintain a system that supports assessing prior reports/investigations filed on a child or his or her family and facilitates the acquisition of previous knowledge regarding the alleged perpetrator.
- g. The agency will develop or modify a tool that allows child welfare workers to gather all available information, indicate the decision and rationale for the decision, and note the decision time frame.

**OUTCOME: Safety**

**B. STANDARD:** The child welfare worker must gather and analyze information pertinent to the risk assessment process through interviews, direct observation of the children and family, and through contact with individuals involved with the children and family. Risk must be assessed at the time of the referral, at the end of the investigation, at six-month intervals in conjunction with the service plan or judicial review, within 14 calendar days following the unplanned reunification of the children and family, within 30 calendar days prior to the planned reunification of the children and family, within 30 calendar days following the planned reunification of the children and family, within 30 calendar days prior to case closing, and as needed due to the changing circumstances of the family.

Staff Responsibilities	Agency Responsibilities
<p><b>1. KNOWLEDGE AND VALUE BASE</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. The child welfare worker must be able to complete the state-approved risk assessment tool.</li> <li>b. The child welfare worker must be able to identify triggers associated with the family's changing circumstances that will initiate the completion of the state-approved risk assessment.</li> <li>c. The child welfare worker must understand how to assess risk to children and what information to collect at each risk assessment.</li> <li>d. The child welfare worker must understand how to initiate contact with collateral sources and individuals in the community involved with the children and the family in order to gain information concerning the risk to the children.</li> <li>e. The child welfare worker must have the ability to conduct interviews and observe families in an ongoing effort to assess the risk to the children.</li> </ul>	<p><b>3. BENCHMARKS OR MEASURES</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. Percentage of risk assessments completed at the end of the investigation and approved by the child welfare supervisor.</li> <li>b. Percentage of risk assessments completed at six-month intervals and approved by the child welfare supervisor.</li> <li>c. Percentage of risk assessments completed within 14 calendar days following the unplanned reunification of the children and family and approved by the child welfare supervisor.</li> <li>d. Percentage of risk assessments completed within 30 calendar days prior to the planned reunification of the children and family and approved by the child welfare supervisor.</li> <li>e. Percentage of risk assessments completed within 30 calendar days following the planned reunification of the children and family and approved by the child welfare supervisor.</li> <li>f. Percentage of risk assessments completed 30 calendar days prior to case closing and approved by the child welfare supervisor.</li> <li>g. Percentage of risk assessments completed due to the changing circumstances of the family and approved by the child welfare supervisor at all required intervals.</li> <li>h. Percentage of cases with assigned risk which accurately reflect the family situation.</li> </ul>

**2. STRATEGIES**

- a. The child welfare worker and child welfare supervisor will complete training on the state-approved risk assessment model.
- b. The child welfare supervisor will review all state-approved risk assessment forms completed by the child welfare worker to ensure completeness, accuracy, and compliance with case interval policy, as specified in the state-approved risk assessment model.

**4. STRATEGIES**

- a. The agency will coordinate and ensure the attendance of all agency staff at training on the state-approved risk assessment tool.
- b. The agency will ensure that workers and supervisors receive training on how and what information to gather to assess risk.
- c. The agency will ensure that child welfare workers and child welfare supervisors are aware of the risk assessment case interval policy.

**OUTCOME: Safety**

**C. STANDARD:** At the end of the initial assessment/investigation, the child welfare worker must review the level of risk to the children, decide whether the abuse or neglect is substantiated, and determine the need for child welfare involvement. The child welfare worker must decide whether the family should be accepted for service or referred for community services based on the children's safety, level of risk to the children, substantiation of abuse and neglect, and any other appropriate assessment of the family's strengths or needs. The decision-making process, including the factors considered, must be documented in all case records and completed within the required time frame but not more than 60 calendar days after the receipt of the initial referral.

<b>Staff Responsibilities</b>	<b>Agency Responsibilities</b>
<p><b>1. KNOWLEDGE AND VALUE BASE</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>a. The child welfare worker must be able to make a determination regarding substantiation of abuse or neglect based on the Child Protection Services Law, the Juvenile Act, and other pertinent regulations.</li><li>b. The child welfare worker must be able to assess the level of risk to the children and the family's strengths and needs using the state-approved risk assessment model.</li><li>c. The child welfare worker must be able to assess the safety of each child in the family and to develop individualized safety plans using agency policy and procedure.</li><li>d. The child welfare worker must be able to document the factors that led to decisions concerning level of risk, assessment of safety, substantiation of abuse or neglect, and need for child welfare involvement or referrals for community services.</li><li>e. The child welfare worker and child welfare supervisor must know the appropriate steps in the referral process.</li><li>f. The child welfare worker and child welfare supervisor must know available community resources and services.</li><li>g. The child welfare worker and child welfare supervisor must be able to recognize developmental levels of children and adults, domestic violence, substance abuse, emotional stress, and mental health issues.</li></ul>	<p><b>3. BENCHMARKS OR MEASURES</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>a. Percentage of assessments/investigations that were completed within 60 days.</li><li>b. Percentage of assessments/investigations that were completed within 30 days.</li><li>c. Percentage of case records that contained clear documentation of the decisions made, the level of risk, and the assessment of children's safety.</li><li>d. Percentage of cases that were not accepted for services but were referred to community services.</li><li>e. Percentage of cases in which appropriate decisions regarding a substantiation was made.</li><li>f. Percentage of families or cases with substantiated/valid investigations that were determined to be in need of child welfare involvement.</li><li>g. Percentage of families or cases with unsubstantiated or invalid investigations that were determined to be in need of child welfare involvement.</li></ul>

**2. STRATEGIES**

- a. The child welfare worker will attend training related to the Adoption Act, the Adoption and Safe Families Act (ASFA), the Child Protective Services Law, the Juvenile Act, the state approved risk assessment, and the Truancy Law.
- b. The child welfare worker will present the progress made during the investigation/assessment in weekly supervision with the child welfare supervisor, including presentation of factors involved in decision making concerning level of risk, assessment of children's safety, substantiation of abuse or neglect, and determination of the need for child welfare involvement or referrals for community services.
- c. The child welfare worker will record the information and decision-making process used in the investigation/assessment, substantiation of abuse and neglect, and decision to open the case.

**4. STRATEGIES**

- a. The agency will ensure that staff receive all of the necessary training related to the Adoption Act, the Adoption and Safe Families Act (ASFA), the Child Protective Services Law, the Juvenile Act, the state-approved risk assessment, and the Truancy Act.
- b. The agency will ensure that child welfare supervisors meet weekly with child welfare workers to review all recommended decisions concerning level of risk, assessment of children's safety, substantiation of abuse or neglect, and determination of the need for child welfare involvement or referrals for community services.
- c. The agency will maintain information regarding resources in the community and assure staff's access to the information.
- d. The agency will work with the community to develop and cultivate community resources to better serve families within their own communities.
- e. The agency will develop a monitoring mechanism to ensure that all cases have a state-approved risk assessment completed within 60 days of the referral.
- f. The agency will provide training and/or tools to help child welfare workers screen developmental levels of children and adults, domestic violence, substance abuse, emotional stress, and mental health issues.
- g. The agency will provide a format to record the investigation, decisions concerning substantiating abuse and neglect, and case opening.
- h. The agency will develop a quality assurance or supervisory review process to determine the appropriateness of decisions made during the investigation process.

**OUTCOME: Safety**

**D. STANDARD:** The safety of all children must be assessed at every contact with the children and family, whether the children are living in their own home or living in an out-of-home placement setting. If a child is determined to be unsafe, the child welfare worker must develop a safety plan which will ensure the child's immediate safety. This assessment of safety and development of a safety plan, if necessary, must be documented in the case record.

**Staff Responsibilities****1. KNOWLEDGE AND VALUE BASE**

- a. The child welfare worker and child welfare supervisor must understand that a safety assessment is focused on the present and determines whether the children are safe in their immediate situation, while a state-approved risk assessment determines risk to the children in the near future.
- b. The child welfare worker and child welfare supervisor must have a working knowledge of the agency's protocol on safety assessment.
- c. The child welfare worker must be able to assess potentially harmful factors in all aspects of the child's life in order to ensure safety.
- d. The child welfare worker must be able to develop and implement a safety plan.
- e. The child welfare worker and child welfare supervisor must have a clear understanding of their responsibility in the safety assessment process and when to use legal intervention if safety cannot be assured.

**Agency Responsibilities****3. BENCHMARKS OR MEASURES**

- a. Number of contacts between the child welfare worker and the child per quarter.
- b. Percentage of purchase-of-service contracts that required safety assessments at every contact.
- c. Percentage of contacts for which a completed safety assessment was documented.
- d. Percentage of cases in which safety plans were developed when indicated.

**2. STRATEGIES**

- a. The child welfare worker will attend training on assessing safety including the development and implementation of a safety plan.
- b. The child welfare supervisor will review the child welfare worker's current safety assessment of the children and the safety plan for all of the cases discussed at the weekly supervisory conference.
- c. The child welfare worker will document the results of safety assessments and safety plans in the case record based on agency documentation guidelines.

**4. STRATEGIES**

- a. The agency will develop safety assessment policy, protocol, and documentation guidelines. This protocol should include:
  - 1. a definition of a safety assessment.
  - 2. a process of conducting safety assessments in all settings.
  - 3. documentation of safety assessments.
  - 4. a requirement that safety be assessed at every contact.
- b. The agency will adopt a safety assessment tool as a mechanism to monitor compliance.
- c. The agency will assure that all staff receive training on safety assessment protocol and documentation guidelines.
- d. The agency will assure that the assessment and documentation of safety is required of all contract agency providers.

**OUTCOME: Permanence**

**E. STANDARD:** The child welfare worker must work directly with and involve all family members, as well as others involved with the family, in a comprehensive family-focused assessment to determine the strengths and needs of the family. The initial family-focused assessment must be completed within 60 calendar days of the referral and must include an assessment of the family's living conditions, the family's financial situation, available family and community supports, parent/child interactions, parenting skills, substance abuse, functioning and behaviors of the children, parent's history and personal characteristics, parent's developmental levels, and interactions between the parents and/or among the household members.

<b>Staff Responsibilities</b>	<b>Agency Responsibilities</b>
<p><b>1. KNOWLEDGE AND VALUE BASE</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>a. The child welfare worker must know how to engage a family to participate meaningfully in sharing information through the assessment process.</li><li>b. The child welfare worker must have a range of interviewing skills in order to elicit information from a variety of sources to complete the family-focused assessment.</li><li>c. The child welfare worker must know how to identify the relevant individuals who are needed to provide information for completion of the family-focused assessment.</li><li>d. The child welfare worker must recognize that the individuals being served are the primary source of information about their history, need for services, and service options.</li><li>e. The child welfare worker must have a working knowledge of the developmental levels, education, emotional needs, functioning, physical needs, and psychological needs of the children and adult household members.</li><li>f. The child welfare worker must be able to complete an individualized family-focused assessment with the family that documents family functioning, strengths, and needs.</li></ul>	<p><b>3. BENCHMARKS OR MEASURES</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>a. Percentage of cases with family-focused assessments completed within 60 calendar days.</li><li>b. Percentage of cases which contained all of the necessary elements of a family-focused assessment.</li><li>c. Percentage of cases with a family-focused assessment completed within 60 days of the referral.</li><li>d. Percentage of cases which involved family members in completing the family-focused assessment.</li><li>e. Percentage of cases in which others involved with the family were included in the family-focused assessment.</li></ul>

**2. STRATEGIES**

- a. The child welfare worker will remain aware that the family-focused assessment is an ongoing process and, with the family's involvement, will continually reflect the changing family situation.
- b. The child welfare worker must attend training on family-focused assessment which will include conducting an assessment involving family members and others, interviewing skills, elements which should be assessed, and using information gathered to determine the family's strengths and needs.
- c. The child welfare worker will use supervisory conferences, training, individual study, and "shadowing" of experienced workers to learn how to conduct family assessments.

**4. STRATEGIES**

- a. The agency will develop a family-focused assessment policy and process and provide training to staff, including conducting an assessment involving family members and others, interviewing skills, elements which should be assessed, and using information gathered to determine family strengths and needs.
- b. The agency will assure that the child welfare worker completes the initial family-focused assessment within 60 calendar days.
- c. The agency will develop a mechanism for tracking completion of the family-focused assessment.

**OUTCOME: Well-being**

**F. STANDARD:** The child welfare worker must, on an ongoing basis, identify, assess, and document the impact and interrelationships of critical issues including, but not limited to, cognitive abilities; delinquency and/or criminal justice; domestic violence; drug and alcohol abuse; economic issues; emotional capacities; physical health, housing, and mental health issues; and parent/child developmental levels.

<b>Staff Responsibilities</b>	<b>Agency Responsibilities</b>
<p><b>1. KNOWLEDGE AND VALUE BASE</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>a. The child welfare worker and child welfare supervisor must have a basic understanding of the symptoms of each critical issue including, but not limited to: cognitive abilities, delinquency and/or criminal justice, domestic violence, drug and alcohol abuse, economic issues, emotional capacities, health, housing, and mental health issues.</li><li>b. The child welfare worker and child welfare supervisor must be able to identify and assess the interrelationships of the critical issues such as cognitive abilities, delinquency and/or criminal justice, domestic violence, drug and alcohol abuse, economic issues, emotional capacities, health, housing, and mental health issues.</li><li>c. The child welfare worker and child welfare supervisor must understand that there are connections among the various critical issues.</li><li>d. The child welfare worker and child welfare supervisor must understand that the identification and assessment of critical issues will inform accept-for-service decisions, the service plan, referrals to community agencies, state-approved risk assessment, and the types and levels of services to be provided.</li><li>e. The child welfare worker must know the process for acquiring assessments on critical issues.</li><li>f. The child welfare worker must have a working knowledge of the developmental levels, education, emotional needs, functioning, physical needs, and psychological needs of the children and adult household members.</li></ul>	<p><b>3. BENCHMARKS OR MEASURES</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>a. Percentage of cases with identification and assessment of critical issues documented in the case record on an ongoing basis.</li><li>b. Percentage of service plans that included critical issues.</li><li>c. Percentage of risk assessments that included critical issues.</li><li>d. Percentage of safety assessments that included critical issues.</li><li>e. Percentage of cases in which family-focused assessments included critical issues.</li><li>f. Percentage of service plans, family-focused assessments, risk assessments, and safety assessments that identified and addressed the interrelationships of two or more critical issues.</li><li>g. Percentage of referrals made that included one or more of the identified critical issues.</li><li>h. Percentage of referrals for services related to a critical issue where the referral source was unable to provide service.</li></ul>

**2. STRATEGIES**

- a. The child welfare worker and child welfare supervisor will attend training on identifying and assessing the seriousness and interrelationships of critical issues on an ongoing basis.
- b. Staff will present in supervisory conferences and meetings their assessment of the identified critical issues that affect the child and family.
- c. The child welfare supervisor will assess and facilitate the child welfare worker's skills of identifying and assessing the impact of a range of critical issues and will provide opportunities for learning.

**4. STRATEGIES**

- a. The agency will ensure that workers and supervisors know how to access services related to critical issues.
- b. The agency will assure that staff training needs related to critical issues will be assessed and met.
- c. The agency will ensure that staff receive training on the range of critical issues and identifying and assessing the seriousness and interrelationships of critical issues.
- d. The agency will include the assessment, impact, and inter-relationships of these critical issues in safety assessment and family-focused assessment policies.

**OUTCOME: Safety**

**G. STANDARD:** The child welfare worker, in conjunction with the family, must utilize the information in the completed family, risk, and safety assessments and the analysis of critical issues in order to determine service needs, goals, objectives, and priorities to be used in the development of the service plan. The level of service must be consistent with strengths and needs of the family and the level of risk to the children.

**Staff Responsibilities****1. KNOWLEDGE AND VALUE BASE**

- a. The child welfare worker must know how to use the state-approved risk assessment model.
- b. The child welfare worker must know how to complete safety assessments in accordance with agency policy and the requirements of the Adoption and Safe Families Act (ASFA).
- c. The child welfare worker must know how to identify the strengths and needs of the family through the appropriate use of family, risk, and safety assessments, and analysis of critical issues affecting the family.
- d. The child welfare worker must be able to determine the level of service according to the family's strengths, needs, the safety of the children, the level of risk, and analysis of critical issues.
- e. The child welfare worker must know how to share the results of the assessment process with the family in order to develop a service plan with them.

**Agency Responsibilities****3. BENCHMARKS OR MEASURES**

- a. Percentage of cases in which strengths and needs identified in the state-approved risk assessment, safety assessment, family-focused assessment, and analysis of critical issues were reflected in the service plan.
- b. Percentage of cases in which the family was involved in assessing and identifying services.

**2. STRATEGIES**

- a. The child welfare worker will complete training related to the Adoption and Safe Families Act (ASFA), diversity, family-focused assessment, state-approved risk assessment, safety assessment, and analysis of critical issues.
- b. The child welfare worker will demonstrate knowledge of the Adoption and Safe Families Act (ASFA), diversity, state approved risk assessment, safety assessment, and analysis of critical issues by reflecting in the service plan the information concerning the family's strengths and needs as gathered in these assessments.
- c. The child welfare supervisor will assist the worker in using the assessment of the family's strengths and need in developing the service plan.
- d. The child welfare worker will work collaboratively with the family by discussing the results of the assessment and jointly identifying services to meet their needs.

**4. STRATEGIES**

- a. The agency will establish an internal quality assurance review system to determine whether the strengths and needs identified in the family, risk, and safety assessments are consistent with the goals and tasks identified in the service plan.
- b. The agency will provide or arrange for training related to the use of assessment information in service planning.
- c. The agency will develop a protocol and policy to ensure that workers involve the family in the assessment and service planning process.

**OUTCOME: Well-being**

**H. STANDARD:** The child welfare worker must be culturally competent and culturally sensitive. When conducting assessments, the worker must consider cultural issues including, but not limited to, the family's primary language, strengths, social networks, parenting style, and beliefs. These factors must be utilized in the analysis of the assessment.

Staff Responsibilities	Agency Responsibilities
<p><b>1. KNOWLEDGE AND VALUE BASE</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. The child welfare worker must be aware of his or her own cultural makeup including values, attitudes, ideas, behaviors, habits, beliefs, customs, traditions, ceremonies, and practices.</li> <li>b. The child welfare worker must respect and understand how cultural similarities and cultural differences might affect the assessment process and service delivery.</li> <li>c. The child welfare worker must have the ability to perform his or her professional functions in the context of cultural differences.</li> <li>d. The child welfare worker must know how to access translators and language facilitators.</li> <li>e. The child welfare worker must know how to assess and interpret the family's parenting style within the context of the family's culture.</li> <li>f. The child welfare worker must know how to identify cultural factors during the assessment process that should be used in developing and delivering services.</li> </ul>	<p><b>3. BENCHMARKS OR MEASURES</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. Percentage of cases in which an accommodation was made to meet the cultural needs, language, and/or religious preferences of the family.</li> <li>b. Percentage of cases, based on a quality assurance review, in which the family was served in a culturally competent manner.</li> <li>c. Percentage of families satisfied with the manner in which they were treated by the agency.</li> </ul>

**2. STRATEGIES**

- a. The child welfare worker will work with the child welfare supervisor to examine his or her own culture and prejudices.
- b. The child welfare worker will establish a plan to acquire knowledge relevant to all cultural groups existing in the community served by the agency.
- c. The child welfare worker will develop skills that facilitate working effectively with all individuals and groups served by the agency.
- d. The child welfare worker will attend the training on valuing diversity.
- e. The child welfare worker will use relevant elements of the family's culture, identified during the assessment, in planning and delivering services.

**4. STRATEGIES**

- a. The agency will coordinate and ensure the attendance of all agency staff at a course on valuing diversity.
- b. The agency will provide training opportunities on cultural issues each year for all staff.
- c. The agency will document ongoing dialogue and input from cultural groups at all levels of the agency and will network with formal and informal supports within the community.
- d. The agency will document the incorporation of culturally competent goals and principles within the structure, policies, and practices of the organization.
- e. The agency will survey families regarding the level of sensitivity they experienced through the agency.
- f. The agency will produce a roster of appropriate bilingual specialists.

**OUTCOME: Safety**

**I. STANDARD:** The child welfare worker must use agency-established protocols and timelines to accurately and objectively document interviews, contacts, and any relevant observations conducted during the assessment process. The agency will ensure that reports from providers are obtained in a timely manner and reflect an ongoing assessment of safety and child and family functioning.

**Staff Responsibilities****1. KNOWLEDGE AND VALUE BASE**

- a. The child welfare worker must have a working knowledge of the agency case record organization protocol.
- b. The child welfare worker must complete case recording through the use of statewide and agency-specific formats.
- c. The child welfare worker must know how to document factual information accurately and concisely.
- d. The child welfare worker must know how to document the provision of community and/or contracted provider agency services.
- e. The child welfare worker must have adequate networking skills and knowledge of methods used to collaborate effectively with other professionals.
- f. The child welfare worker must know the agency's established protocols and timelines for documenting assessment interviews and collateral contacts.
- g. The child welfare worker must know how to use information gathered from interviews, collateral contacts, service providers, and reports to evaluate and assess the child's safety, and child and family functioning.

**Agency Responsibilities****3. BENCHMARKS OR MEASURES**

- a. Percentage of cases in which documentation occurred within agency protocols.
- b. Percentage of collateral contacts documented in the case record.
- c. Percentage of case records that clearly documented the agency decision-making process and that contained supporting information.
- d. Percentage of cases with timely reports from appropriate providers.

**2. STRATEGIES**

- a. The child welfare worker will attend case record documentation training.
- b. The child welfare worker will meet with agency service providers to become familiar with the services offered by the agency.
- c. The child welfare worker will address the family's progress and participation in the assessment during weekly supervision.
- d. The child welfare supervisor will review case records to ensure appropriate case documentation of the assessment process.
- e. The child welfare worker will use the results of case assessment activity in making and documenting decisions.

**4. STRATEGIES**

- a. The agency will establish case record organization protocols and time frames.
- b. The agency will establish expectations that all record entries include a signature and date by the person who provided the service.
- c. The agency will establish recording formats to assure the concise recording of information.
- d. The agency will train staff on how to identify and document key elements of the assessment process.
- e. The agency will develop tools for conducting safety assessments and family-focused assessments.
- f. The agency will develop guidelines on how to record information that supports decision making.

**OUTCOME: Permanence**

**J. STANDARD:** The child welfare worker must complete a full reassessment of the family, including family-focused assessment, risk assessment, and safety assessment. The information gathered during the reassessment must be documented in the case record and used to revise the service and permanency planning processes. The reassessment must be completed every six months from the date the family was accepted for services, at the time of all critical events, and/or at the discretion of the child welfare supervisor.

**Staff Responsibilities****1. KNOWLEDGE AND VALUE BASE**

- a. The child welfare worker and child welfare supervisor must have knowledge of the service and permanency planning process.
- b. The child welfare worker and child welfare supervisor must have knowledge about events defined as “critical events,” including but not limited to the birth of a new child, a change in the household composition, the eviction of the family, a loss of income, new referral information or allegations, parental hospitalization, parental incarceration, and/or other events at the discretion of the child welfare supervisor.
- c. The child welfare worker and child welfare supervisor must have knowledge of the state-approved risk assessment and case interval policies, as specified in the state-approved risk assessment model.
- d. The child welfare worker must know how to conduct and interpret family, risk, and safety assessments.
- e. The child welfare worker must know how to use the family assessment to revise and make changes in the service or permanency plan as needed.
- f. The child welfare worker must understand the importance of documenting key elements of the reassessment process.

**Agency Responsibilities****3. BENCHMARKS OR MEASURES**

- a. Percentage of full reassessments completed at six-month intervals.
- b. Percentage of full reassessments completed when a critical event occurred.
- c. Percentage of cases that contain completed reassessments.
- d. Percentage of service plans revised based on a change in the family circumstances.
- e. Percentage of cases in which a service plan was revised as a result of a reassessment process.

**2. STRATEGIES**

- a. The child welfare worker will attend state-approved risk assessment training to ensure knowledge of critical events and the case interval policy, as specified in the state-approved risk assessment model.
- b. The child welfare supervisor will ensure that the child welfare worker applies the acquired knowledge to all aspects of his or her duties.
- c. The child welfare supervisor will meet with the child welfare worker weekly to ensure that reassessments are completed within the established time frames.
- d. The child welfare supervisor will review cases with the child welfare worker to determine appropriate times for family reassessment during the service delivery process.
- e. The child welfare worker will include the family in the reassessment process.
- f. The child welfare worker will document the date, key issues, and participants in the reassessment.

**4. STRATEGIES**

- a. The agency will establish a mechanism for tracking the quantity and quality of reassessments.
- b. The agency will provide training for staff on conducting family-focused, risk, and safety reassessments.
- c. The agency will establish guidelines concerning what constitutes critical events and will train staff to recognize and react to critical events.
- d. The agency will develop a mechanism to track six-month reassessments of the family.

**OUTCOME: Safety and Permanence**

**K. STANDARD:** The child welfare worker must assure that assessment-related contractual requirements are met. Public and private child welfare workers must maintain at least monthly contact and must work collaboratively to review assessment findings. Public and private child welfare workers must seek to resolve any differences of opinion regarding all assessment findings and resulting decisions.

**Staff Responsibilities****1. KNOWLEDGE AND VALUE BASE**

- a. The public agency child welfare worker and child welfare supervisor must know the contractual requirements placed on service providers regarding assessment.
- b. The child welfare worker will be able to use conflict resolution skills as necessary.
- c. The child welfare worker must understand the importance of regular communication between the public child welfare worker and the private child welfare worker during the assessment phase.

**Agency Responsibilities****3. BENCHMARKS OR MEASURES**

- a. Percentage of cases documenting at least monthly or contractually required contact between the public and private agencies.
- b. Percentage of cases in which the public and private child welfare workers agreed on the results of the assessment and/or reassessment process.

**2. STRATEGIES**

- a. The child welfare worker will attend training to acquire conflict resolution skills.
- b. The child welfare worker will have regular contact with service providers to determine family participation in the assessment process and the findings of the assessment.
- c. During weekly supervision, the child welfare supervisor will ensure that monthly contact is maintained between the child welfare worker and service providers.

**4. STRATEGIES**

- a. The agency will ensure that the child welfare worker receives training on working with contracted providers to assess and reassess children and families.
- b. The agency will provide staff with adequate information on contractual requirements regarding assessment and contact with the child welfare worker.

**OUTCOME: Safety and Permanence**

**A. STANDARD:** The child welfare worker must engage in a mutual, ongoing service planning process with parents, children, extended family, and substitute caregivers, which builds on strengths and addresses identified needs outlined in the assessment. The full service planning process must occur a minimum of every six months, but should also occur as family circumstances change. The actions or tasks stated should be negotiated on an incremental basis, cover a short period of time, and recognize the family's ability to comply with a specific task. The child welfare worker must complete the plan with oversight from the child welfare supervisor.

**Staff Responsibilities****1. KNOWLEDGE AND VALUE BASE**

- a. The child welfare worker must know how to identify stakeholders specific to the case and the planning process.
- b. The child welfare worker must know how to engage the family and others in the planning process, including the ability to solicit the family's needs and plans.
- c. The child welfare worker must have the ability to empower persons essential to implementing the service plan objectives.
- d. The child welfare worker must know how to use the service plan as a viable tool in each visit with the family.
- e. The child welfare worker must understand the dynamics of resistance and effective intervention techniques to deal with resistance.
- f. The child welfare worker must know how to identify and address environmental barriers that may impede the completion of the planning process or achievement of the plan.
- g. The child welfare worker must understand how to incorporate the results of a comprehensive, strengths-based, family-focused assessment into the planning process.
- h. The child welfare worker must know the process of incremental planning and how to negotiate short-term actions and tasks.
- i. The child welfare worker must know how to develop clear and measurable objectives and goals.
- j. The child welfare worker must know legal, regulatory, and policy requirements that must be met by the plan.

**Agency Responsibilities****3. BENCHMARKS OR MEASURES**

- a. Number and types of people who participated in the planning process (including the child welfare supervisor) and how often they participated.
- b. Rate of initial plan development and six month review completion.
- c. Number of plans that included short-term, incremental tasks (less than six months).
- d. Percentage of plans that indicated supervisory oversight.
- e. Percentage of plans revised based on a change in family circumstances.

- k. The child welfare worker must understand cultural strengths and barriers and how they might impact the service planning process.
- l. The child welfare worker must know when and how to use supervision effectively.

**2. STRATEGIES**

- a. The child welfare worker will ensure that the planning process is ongoing and revised as family dynamics change by discussing the service plan at each face-to-face contact.
- b. The child welfare worker will include the child welfare supervisor in the planning process.
- c. The child welfare worker will help parents develop family and parenting goals for themselves and their children.
- d. The child welfare worker will use supervision, training, or independent learning activities to learn how to convene and facilitate the planning process.
- e. The child welfare supervisor will oversee the entire service planning process, providing direction, training, and intervention when necessary.
- f. The child welfare supervisor will help the child welfare worker move from a risk assessment, safety assessment, and a comprehensive assessment to the service planning process.
- g. The child welfare worker will complete the plan with oversight from the child welfare supervisor.
- h. The child welfare worker will identify six-month intervals to ensure the full planning process is reviewed a minimum of every six months.

**4. STRATEGIES**

- a. The agency will provide training in strengths-based intervention.
- b. The agency will provide training in service plan development and implementation.
- c. The agency will provide training in methods of dealing with resistance.
- d. The agency will review its planning tool and revise it as necessary to ensure that it draws from and builds upon the assessment process, is client- and child-welfare-worker friendly, and supports an incrementally based format.
- e. The agency will provide training on legal, policy, and regulatory guidelines and principles.
- f. The agency will provide training in use of the management information system, as it becomes available, to allow child welfare workers to track planning timelines and due dates.

### OUTCOME: Permanence

**B. STANDARD:** The child welfare worker, in conjunction with parents, children, extended family, and substitute caregivers, must set goals and objectives which will meet the child's and family's needs (including emotional, psychological, physical, and educational) and draw upon their capabilities. The service plan must reflect goals that clearly recognize the child's need for safety and permanence. The service plan and placement amendment must establish goals that can be achieved within state and federally mandated time frames.

#### Staff Responsibilities

##### 1. KNOWLEDGE AND VALUE BASE

- a. The child welfare worker must have the ability to set, review, and share clear timelines for achieving and maintaining goals.
- b. The child welfare worker must understand the concepts and principles of family preservation.
- c. The child welfare worker must understand all concepts of permanency planning, including the decision-making process of concurrent planning, and the following:
  1. the concepts of concurrent planning, how to operationalize the concepts, and how and when to move to the alternate plan.
  2. the role of kinship care in the continuum of child welfare services as both a temporary placement option and a permanent placement goal.
  3. the values underlying adoption practice including permanence; cultural continuity; preservation of identity; minimizing placement disruption; developing, strengthening, and supporting families for all children in need of homes; and the adoptability of all children.
- d. The child welfare worker must be able to communicate clearly the ultimate goal of permanence, the time frames, and the consequences for non-participation.
- e. The child welfare worker must be aware of agency expectations for documenting reasonable efforts.
- f. The child welfare worker must understand federal and state laws in achieving time frames.

#### Agency Responsibilities

##### 3. BENCHMARKS OR MEASURES

- a. Percentage of family members and stakeholders invited to service planning meetings.
- b. Assessment of the level of family and stakeholder participation in writing the service plan.
- c. Percentage of children entering foster care who were returned home within 12 months of removal or for whom an alternative permanent plan is implemented within 15 months.
- d. Number of cases that met the filing requirement deadline for termination of parental rights.
- e. Number of children residing in foster care for more than 22 consecutive months.
- f. Rate of achievement of each case goal.
- g. Number of cases in which goal changes were made in a timely manner to reflect the case situation.

- g. The child welfare worker must know the difference between risk assessment as an indicator of future well-being and safety assessment as an ongoing indicator of harm. The child welfare worker must have the ability to evaluate the child's immediate safety.
- h. The child welfare worker must be able to clarify the presenting problem or issue and provide evidence of progress (or lack of it) toward achieving relevant goals assigned in the service plan.

**2. STRATEGIES**

- a. The child welfare worker will use supervision, training, or independent learning activities to learn how to work with key stakeholders in developing the concurrent plan and objectives for the child and the family.
- b. The child welfare worker will discuss and review the case goal and progress or lack of progress toward meeting the goal at all regularly scheduled contacts with the family.
- c. The child welfare supervisor will lead the decision-making process and facilitate permanency planning for children.
- d. The child welfare worker will ensure that the family is aware of the objectives that must be met, and the time frames within which they must be met, in order to move forward with a plan for reunification.
- e. The child welfare worker will document the reason(s) why the objective was not met and the corrective action that was agreed upon by the family in order to meet the objective, including specified time frames.
- f. When reunification is determined not to be a viable goal, the child welfare worker will initiate the process to implement the alternate goal that achieves permanence for the child.
- g. The child welfare worker will formulate, develop, and evaluate goals, objectives, and tasks with the biological family that reflect concurrent planning.
- h. The child welfare worker will use supervision, training, or independent learning activities to develop skills to perform a risk assessment and child safety assessment.

**4. STRATEGIES**

- a. The agency will examine annually the types of needs families have who come into contact with the child welfare system, and will work to identify the changes in agency services needed to meet those needs.
- b. The agency will establish guidelines that outline who should be involved in determining the contents of a service plan.
- c. The agency will provide training to child welfare supervisors on how to assist child welfare workers in increasing participation from the necessary parties, and to ensure that all necessary parties are given the opportunity to participate.
- d. The agency will sponsor training for its child welfare workers in order to build skills in the areas of concurrent planning, permanency planning, and case documentation.
- e. The agency will define a process for reviewing the quality and consistency of concurrent planning.
- f. The agency will define a process for reviewing cases when they approach certain time frames to determine whether or not the alternate goal in the concurrent plan should be implemented.
- g. In order to meet termination of parental rights (TPR) deadlines, the agency will develop a "tickler" system by which cases reaching the TPR phase can be brought to the attention of the administration.
- h. The agency will negotiate with service providers the formal agreements essential to meeting service plan goals.

### OUTCOME: Safety, Permanence, and Timeliness

**C. STANDARD:** The child welfare worker will write a service plan with the family, substitute caregivers, and other parties essential to the case, using clear language that addresses safety, risk, timeliness, and permanence. The plan will be family-specific and strengths-based with measurable objectives that are time-limited. Tasks should specify who will do what, by when, and how.

Staff Responsibilities	Agency Responsibilities
<p><b>1. KNOWLEDGE AND VALUE BASE</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. The child welfare worker must be able to engage the family in identifying family strengths, needs, and resources.</li> <li>b. The child welfare worker must be able to write the service plan in a language the family understands.</li> <li>c. The child welfare worker must write the plan in a manner sensitive to the family's educational level.</li> <li>d. The child welfare worker must involve the family and stakeholders in developing and writing the service plan.</li> <li>e. The child welfare worker must be able to make clear to the family the consequences of not participating in the activities outlined or meeting the goals outlined in the service plan.</li> <li>f. The child welfare worker must know how to incorporate in the service plan information collected in the comprehensive assessment.</li> <li>g. The child welfare worker must know legal, regulatory, and policy requirements for child welfare that must be met by the service plan.</li> <li>h. The child welfare worker must know how to record in the service plan all activities performed on behalf of the child and family.</li> <li>i. The child welfare worker must be able to regularly update the incremental tasks on the plan to reflect progress, and update revisions to address barriers.</li> <li>j. The worker must know the difference between risk assessment as an indicator of future well-being and safety assessment as an ongoing indicator of harm. The worker must have the ability to evaluate the child's immediate safety.</li> </ul>	<p><b>3. BENCHMARKS OR MEASURES</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. Percentage of family members and stakeholders invited to service planning meetings.</li> <li>b. Assessment of the level of family and stakeholder participation in writing the service plan.</li> <li>c. Rate of compliance with requirements for completion of the initial service plan within 60 days of acceptance for service or the completion of the placement plan within 30 days of placement.</li> <li>d. Documentation of the prescribed service plan format including signatures, time frames for meeting objectives, designation of individuals responsible for taking action to meet objectives, and other components listed in the standard.</li> <li>e. Percentage of plans that used clear language.</li> <li>f. Percentage of plans that were determined to address risk, safety, and permanence.</li> <li>g. Percentage of plans that were determined to reflect specific family strengths and needs.</li> </ul>

- k. The child welfare worker must know how to write a concise, summarized service plan which:
1. is time-limited and goal-oriented.
  2. prioritizes needs as identified by the family, stakeholders, and the child welfare worker.
  3. includes reasonable, measurable, and observable objectives.
  4. Includes realistic expectations of the family with consideration of the availability of resources, the level of family functioning, and legal mandates.
  5. Clearly identifies and establishes responsibilities of all stakeholders.

**2. STRATEGIES**

- a. The child welfare worker will meet with all family members and stakeholders to develop the written plan.
- b. The child welfare worker will identify all stakeholders on the service plan.
- c. The child welfare worker will revise the plan whenever necessary so that newly negotiated tasks can be added.
- d. The child welfare worker will incorporate, in the written plan, the uniqueness and differences of the family with whom the plan is being written.
- e. The child welfare worker will adhere to the time frames mandated for writing and implementing the service plan.
- f. The child welfare supervisor will review and oversee the development and writing process, including guidance on collaboration and the development of specific goals, objectives, and time-oriented tasks.
- g. The child welfare supervisor will review the service plan to ensure the language used is clear, appropriate, and precise.
- h. The child welfare supervisor will ensure that the child welfare worker has received training related to writing service plans.
- i. The child welfare worker will use supervision, training, or independent learning activities to develop skills to perform a risk assessment and child safety assessment.
- j. The child welfare worker will develop a collaborative relationship with the family using culturally sensitive strategies to promote trust and confidence that supports the family in service plan development.

**4. STRATEGIES**

- a. The agency philosophy and administration will clearly require and value family and stakeholder involvement in the development and writing of the service plan.
- b. The agency will develop a monitoring system to measure the quality and individualization of service plans.
- c. The agency will monitor and measure quality and individualization in the development and completion of service plans.
- d. The agency will develop tracking systems to ensure that written plans comply with mandated timelines.
- e. The agency will provide necessary supports and materials to child welfare workers, including training, supervision, reference manuals, and current listings of community resources, to support the writing of the plan.
- f. The agency will ensure that a child welfare supervisor reviews plans for clarity, completeness, and appropriateness of objectives, and signs the plan to indicate his or her approval.
- g. The agency will ensure that there is a format for documenting participation in the service planning process.
- h. The agency will sponsor training for its child welfare workers in order to build skills in risk assessment and child safety assessment.

### OUTCOME: Safety and Well-being

**D. STANDARD:** The child welfare worker will incorporate ongoing assessment information into the service planning process to ensure that service delivery reflects changes in family circumstances. Service plan objectives and actions must relate to identified risks, safety, and strengths within the family system.

Staff Responsibilities	Agency Responsibilities
<p><b>1. KNOWLEDGE AND VALUE BASE</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. The child welfare worker must be aware of factors that identify family strengths and risks to children and must possess the ability to analyze that data.</li> <li>b. The child welfare worker must maintain a collaborative relationship with the family and other stakeholders in order to gather data pertinent to the service plan.</li> <li>c. The child welfare worker must understand the interrelationship between reassessment and revisions to the service plan.</li> <li>d. The child welfare worker must be able to recognize and incorporate into the plan strengths within a family and community (formal and informal).</li> <li>e. The child welfare worker must know the difference between risk assessment as an indicator of future well-being and safety assessment as an ongoing indicator of harm. The worker must have the ability to evaluate the child's immediate safety.</li> <li>f. The child welfare worker must develop a service plan that is built upon initial and ongoing assessments.</li> </ul>	<p><b>3. BENCHMARKS OR MEASURES</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. Number of cases in which the connection between assessment and planning was evident.</li> <li>b. Rate at which child welfare workers had contact with the family and service providers as stipulated by the service plan.</li> <li>c. Rate at which child welfare workers completed a risk assessment in conjunction with the six-month service plan review process.</li> <li>d. Rate at which child welfare workers completed a reassessment and revised the service plan upon receiving new allegations regarding the child's safety.</li> <li>e. Frequency at which strengths were built into planned activities.</li> </ul>

**2. STRATEGIES**

- a. The child welfare worker will attend and successfully complete training related to the interrelationship between assessment and service plans.
- b. The child welfare worker will use supervision and other joint decision making processes to develop interventions and evaluate success.
- c. The child welfare worker will review each component of the plan to determine its current relevancy and ensure consistency within the plan.
- d. The child welfare worker will develop a service plan with measurable outcomes to promote safety, well-being, and permanence.
- e. The child welfare worker will follow appropriate federal and state regulations and policies in establishing goals related to safety.
- f. The child welfare worker will use supervision, training, or independent learning activities to develop skills to perform a risk assessment and child safety assessment.

**4. STRATEGIES**

- a. The agency will provide training related to the connection between assessment and service planning.
- b. The agency will establish a formal case review process to assure the connection between assessment and planning.
- c. The agency will establish expectations and guidelines for the type and level of contact with the family.
- d. The agency will include requirements for the child welfare supervisor and the child welfare worker to review service plans at least bimonthly in its policy and procedures manual.
- e. The agency will establish a process of coordinating and scheduling family meetings.
- f. The agency will assist the child welfare worker in accessing formal and informal community supports, as the family's needs change.
- g. The agency will construct and adopt tools to help child welfare workers assess child safety and family strengths.
- h. The agency will sponsor training for its child welfare workers in order to build skills in risk assessment and child safety assessment.

### OUTCOME: Permanence

**E. STANDARD:** The child welfare worker will discuss with the family the implications of the concurrent planning process in concrete, factual terms; in a culturally sensitive manner; and in a language the family understands, including specific time frames and alternate goals that maximize child safety and permanence.

Staff Responsibilities	Agency Responsibilities
<p><b>1. KNOWLEDGE AND VALUE BASE</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. The child welfare worker must know federal and state laws and regulations and agency policies and procedures on implementing effective concurrent case planning.</li> <li>b. The child welfare worker must know how to engage families in the concurrent planning process and explain the possible consequences for the family.</li> <li>c. The child welfare worker must know the time frames of concurrent planning and how to work within them.</li> <li>d. The child welfare worker must identify and be able to discuss with the family the specific criteria that will be used to define "success" in the service plan (for each action step: who will do what by when).</li> <li>e. The child welfare worker must know how to engage the family in discussions regarding how the service plan objectives are or are not being met.</li> <li>f. The child welfare worker must be able to establish appropriate action steps for the agency and the family based on the level of success the family is achieving.</li> <li>g. The child welfare worker must know the basic sequential steps involved in concurrent case planning and how to engage those steps when necessary.</li> <li>h. The child welfare worker must develop and maintain strategies to locate kin or community resources for the child in the event that reunification is no longer an option for permanence.</li> <li>i. The child welfare worker must know how to involve and engage the family in developing alternate permanency resources for the child.</li> </ul>	<p><b>3. BENCHMARKS OR MEASURES</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. Number of children for whom permanent living options were identified at the time a TPR petition was filed.</li> <li>b. Percentage of children entering foster care who were returned home within 12 months of removal or for whom an alternate permanent plan was implemented within 15 months.</li> <li>c. Rate of reunification.</li> <li>d. Length of time from date of placement to date of return home.</li> <li>e. Number of times an alternate plan was used.</li> <li>f. Length of time from placement to the implementation of an alternate plan.</li> <li>g. Number of times special language adaptations were needed and used to ensure family understanding of the concurrent planning process.</li> </ul>

- j. The child welfare worker must recognize when a language specialist is needed to ensure the family thoroughly understands the plan and the consequences for non-compliance.
- k. The child welfare worker must know how to prepare and counsel the child and the family about issues of separation, loss, and other permanency alternatives.
- l. The child welfare worker must know how to explain that the agency will be pursuing more than one permanent goal at the same time.
- m. The child welfare worker must be sensitive to cultural diversity and know how cultural and ethnic differences and personal biases may affect service planning.

**2. STRATEGIES**

- a. The child welfare worker will participate in training on the principles of concurrent case planning.
- b. The child welfare supervisor will guide the child welfare worker in identifying alternate plans at the time of placement.
- c. The child welfare supervisor will assist the child welfare worker in discussing the service plan with the family when a child is in out-of-home placement, including alternate permanency options if the child cannot be reunified with his or her parents.
- d. The child welfare worker will include discussion of the alternate plan in all appropriate contacts with the biological family to identify alternate resources for the child and the family.
- e. The child welfare worker will use supervision, training, and independent learning activities to develop concurrent case planning knowledge, skills, and practice strategies that support child safety, well-being, timeliness, and permanence.
- f. The child welfare worker will develop practice skills in preparing and counseling the child and the biological/legal family about separation, loss, and adoption.

**4. STRATEGIES**

- a. The agency will develop and implement a specific process for concurrent planning.
- b. The agency will provide training to child welfare workers on what the agency's concurrent planning process is and how it should be carried out, including how to discuss it with families.
- c. The agency will provide information to all staff on laws and regulations regarding termination of parental rights time frames and requirements.
- d. The agency will develop guidelines for child welfare workers to use in discussing the implications of concurrent planning.
- e. The agency will recruit and maintain language specialists who match community needs.
- f. The agency will train all child welfare workers and child welfare supervisors in establishing, discussing, and implementing concurrent plans.

### OUTCOME: Well-being

**F. STANDARD:** The child welfare worker will share and review the collaboratively developed service plan with the family and other involved parties, both verbally and in writing.

Staff Responsibilities	Agency Responsibilities
<p><b>1. KNOWLEDGE AND VALUE BASE</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. The child welfare worker must know how to engage the relevant parties in a collaborative process of service planning, while employing the strengths perspective.</li> <li>b. The child welfare worker must value, understand, and know the process of negotiating a collaborative service plan.</li> <li>c. The child welfare worker must value, understand, and know how to explain the purpose and importance of information sharing.</li> <li>d. The child welfare worker must value and know how to share the plan in a manner that is sensitive to and respectful of cultural, racial, and gender differences.</li> <li>e. The child welfare worker must have the ability to set, observe, and share clear timelines for achieving and maintaining goals.</li> <li>f. The child welfare worker must know techniques of motivation, partnership, and teamwork to encourage the family and others to meet service plan objectives and goals in a way that affirms the collaborative nature of service planning.</li> <li>g. The child welfare worker and child welfare supervisor must know and be able to clearly explain, in a language the family understands, the agency's policy on confidentiality issues.</li> <li>h. The child welfare worker must know the consequences set by agency policy if a client refuses to grant a release of information.</li> <li>i. The child welfare worker must be able to clarify the presenting problem or issue and provide evidence of progress (or lack of it) toward achieving relevant objectives and goals assigned in the service plan.</li> </ul>	<p><b>3. BENCHMARKS OR MEASURES</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. Type and number of people who participated in the planning process and how often they participated.</li> <li>b. Number of times a meeting was held with the family in order to negotiate a service plan.</li> <li>c. Documentation indicating with whom and how often service plans were shared.</li> <li>d. Level of client satisfaction with the planning process and the information shared with them.</li> </ul>

**2. STRATEGIES**

- a. The child welfare worker will ensure that progress toward goals, objectives, and time frames are reviewed in concrete, factual terms and in language the family and relevant parties understand.
- b. The child welfare worker will use supervision, training, and independent learning to develop collaborative service planning knowledge, skills, and practice strategies.
- c. The child welfare worker will serve as a team leader in order to develop plans collaboratively with families, caregivers, and other essential parties.
- d. The child welfare worker will document when a family refuses to grant a release of information and abide by the relevant consequences set by the agency.
- e. The child welfare worker will document all contacts with the family and service providers that involve sharing and discussing the service plan.
- f. The child welfare supervisor will assist the child welfare worker in the process of how best to review the plan with all relevant parties.

**4. STRATEGIES**

- a. The agency will review its confidentiality policies and procedures and revise them as necessary to ensure that the family's right to privacy is maintained and respected.
- b. The agency will use child welfare supervision and training to assist staff in developing knowledge and skills regarding compliance with the agency's confidentiality policies and procedures.
- c. The agency will develop a policy to be used when the family refuses to sign a release of information.
- d. The agency will provide training on the use of authority and professional boundaries.
- e. The agency will use supervision and training to assist staff in developing collaborative service planning knowledge, skills, and practice strategies.
- f. The agency will provide training on conflict resolution, mediation, and cultural diversity.
- g. The agency will inform other agencies with which it works of its confidentiality policies and procedures and privacy rights of clients.

**OUTCOME: Well-being and Safety**

**G. STANDARD:** The child welfare worker must include formal and informal resources in the written plan that will contribute to the child's well-being and safety and improve family functioning. The child welfare worker will assure that formal and informal resources are being accessed in a timely manner and amended as family circumstances change.

**Staff Responsibilities****1. KNOWLEDGE AND VALUE BASE**

- a. The child welfare worker must know what community resources exist, where they are located, the criteria for eligibility, and the type of service they offer.
- b. The child welfare worker must know how to coordinate services offered by community resources.
- c. The child welfare worker must understand confidentiality and how it relates to sharing information with formal and informal resources.
- d. The child welfare worker must know how to advocate for children and families.
- e. The child welfare worker must know how to identify the needs of children and families and how to connect them with service resources to meet those needs.
- f. The child welfare worker must know how to assess the effectiveness of formal and informal resources already active with the family to support the service plan.
- g. The child welfare worker must know when to amend or change the formal and informal resources referenced in the service plan as family circumstances change.

**Agency Responsibilities****3. BENCHMARKS OR MEASURES**

- a. Number of agreements and contracts entered into with formal and informal resources.
- b. Number of child welfare worker contacts with formal and informal resources.
- c. Number of written plans that specified the responsibilities of both formal and informal resources.
- d. Number of children or families utilizing a specific formal or informal community resource.
- e. List of needed community resources that had waiting lists or were unable to serve agency families.
- f. Number of revisions to the service plan as a result of a change in family circumstances.

**2. STRATEGIES**

- a. The child welfare worker will access all agency or community lists of available resources.
- b. The child welfare worker will familiarize himself or herself with the referral process and eligibility requirements for each community resource.
- c. The child welfare supervisor will provide information regarding community resources and guide the child welfare worker in determining the best resource to meet the family's needs.
- d. The child welfare worker will engage the family in discussion to determine areas where services are needed.
- e. The child welfare worker will take advantage of available training in regard to collaboration and advocacy.
- f. The child welfare worker will be active in intra-agency, interagency, and team meetings to ensure services are coordinated and being provided to the family.
- g. The worker will amend or change the service plan as family circumstances change.

**4. STRATEGIES**

- a. The agency will negotiate agreements or contracts with formal and informal resources.
- b. The agency will track the formal and informal resources in the community and promote a working relationship among resources.
- c. The agency will review the written plans to assure inclusion of formal and informal resources.
- d. The agency will develop a tracking system to identify the length of time required to complete the referral process and to begin using community resources.
- e. The agency will provide training to teach child welfare workers skills for collaborating with external systems.

### OUTCOME: Permanence

**H. STANDARD:** The child welfare worker will identify and involve extended family members or other significant individuals who can support the child during and after agency involvement and/or may be a possible placement resource. The child welfare worker will develop a plan that specifies the type and level of involvement of the identified individuals who will be resources for the child and family.

Staff Responsibilities	Agency Responsibilities
<p><b>1. KNOWLEDGE AND VALUE BASE</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. The child welfare worker must know how to access resources within the civil and criminal systems and the federal parent locator service in order to facilitate the location of extended family and ensure child safety.</li> <li>b. The child welfare worker must know how to facilitate and support the child's and family's connections with significant others.</li> <li>c. The child welfare worker must know how to use interview techniques to ascertain the history of child/family relationships.</li> <li>d. The child welfare worker must know how to use negotiation and conflict resolution skills.</li> <li>e. The child welfare worker must understand cultural competence and recognize a culturally based perspective of the family system.</li> <li>f. The child welfare worker must understand and respect the bio-psycho-social dynamics of family systems.</li> <li>g. The child welfare worker must understand how to identify resources within the child's and family's neighborhood and community.</li> <li>h. The child welfare worker must be knowledgeable in issues of separation and placement.</li> </ul>	<p><b>3. BENCHMARKS OR MEASURES</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. Percentage of children entering new placement settings who were placed in kinship homes and other informal arrangements.</li> <li>b. Number of children in care having visitation with extended family members.</li> <li>c. Number of children placed with extended family members from existing foster care settings.</li> <li>d. Rate of visitation by parents, siblings, and kin for children in placement without incidents of harm or risk of harm.</li> <li>e. Number of times out-of-state child welfare agency contacts were made to locate family.</li> <li>f. Rate of requests for information from the federal parent locator service and domestic relations offices.</li> </ul>

**2. STRATEGIES**

- a. The child welfare worker will develop an understanding of relevant content areas including casework process and planning, family systems theory, separation and placement, valuing diversity, and engaging children and families.
- b. The child welfare worker will promote connections between the child and extended family members or other significant individuals by specifying in the service plan visitation, the sharing of information, and scheduled contacts.
- c. The child welfare worker will obtain criminal and Childline clearances on family members and significant others interested in being a resource for the child.
- d. The child welfare worker will use assessments and other case record documentation to locate family members and significant others.
- e. The child welfare worker will identify possible placement resources for the child as part of an alternate concurrent plan.
- f. The child welfare worker and child welfare supervisor will evaluate the potential of placement resources within the child's neighborhood and community.

**4. STRATEGIES**

- a. The agency will provide opportunities for training on how to engage family members as resources for children.
- b. The agency will budget and provide subsidies for extended family placements.
- c. The agency will establish policy related to the use of kin as a resource.
- d. The agency will establish visitation policies which include time with kin and significant others.
- e. The agency will raise staff awareness of family and community sociocultural dynamics through staff meetings and appropriate literature.
- f. The agency will provide training in methods of accessing potential neighborhood and community placement resources.
- g. The agency will negotiate a formal agreement with the state police for procedures around conducting criminal and Childline clearances.
- h. The agency will provide resources to facilitate visitation by parents, siblings, kin, and significant individuals (e.g., pastors, neighbors, and others important to the child but not related).
- i. The agency will ensure that the case record documentation requires the identification of family members and significant individuals.
- j. The agency will define the method and process by which alternate permanent living situations are identified.

### OUTCOME: Safety and Well-being

**I. STANDARD:** Based on a comprehensive assessment, the child welfare worker and the family must determine together whether or not the family's circumstances are adequate to meet basic life necessities such as food, clothing, shelter, and medical care. A mutually developed plan must include specific goals, objectives, and tasks that meet identified concrete needs while promoting self-reliance, to ensure child safety and well-being.

Staff Responsibilities	Agency Responsibilities
<p><b>1. KNOWLEDGE AND VALUE BASE</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. The child welfare worker must know local community standards concerning the provision of basic life necessities.</li> <li>b. The child welfare worker must know how to access information on local housing codes and standards.</li> <li>c. The child welfare worker must know how to access, negotiate with, and monitor external systems and resources within the community, including but not limited to transportation services, housing services, food and nutrition programs, medical services, and utility providers.</li> <li>d. The child welfare worker must know the schedule for routine medical and dental care.</li> <li>e. The child welfare worker must know how to interview the child and the family in order to make direct observations about the family's strengths and needs.</li> <li>f. The child welfare worker must know how to help families budget money.</li> <li>g. The child welfare worker must model for the family ways of accessing formal, informal, and concrete resources.</li> <li>h. The child welfare worker must know how to connect the provision of concrete resources with goals identified in the plan.</li> <li>i. The child welfare worker must know the difference between the risk assessment as an indicator of future well-being and child safety assessment as an ongoing indicator of harm.</li> <li>j. The child welfare worker must have the ability to evaluate the child's immediate safety.</li> </ul>	<p><b>3. BENCHMARKS OR MEASURES</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. Number of families who received financial assistance (public and vouchers).</li> <li>b. Length of time it took to meet a specific need (e.g., obtain safe and adequate housing).</li> <li>c. Number of negotiated agreements with providers of concrete services (e.g., housing and utilities) to serve agency families.</li> </ul>

**2. STRATEGIES**

- a. The child welfare worker will make home visits to determine the family's ability to meet basic needs.
- b. The child welfare worker will follow the steps of the referral process in order to allow the family to access services.
- c. The child welfare worker will review budgeting and finances with the family and assess how family income is being spent in order to ensure that basic life necessities are being provided.
- d. The child welfare worker will use supervision, training, or independent learning activities to develop skills to perform a risk assessment and child safety assessment.

**4. STRATEGIES**

- a. The agency will determine local community standards concerning the provision of basic life necessities.
- b. The agency will provide training, as necessary, to teach child welfare workers planning skills in order to address the family's needs and promote autonomy.
- c. The agency will maintain and update, either electronically or manually, a list of available and appropriate community resource and service providers.
- d. The agency will budget sufficient rehabilitation funds to help families obtain needed services and concrete items such as furniture, rent deposits, and fuel assistance.
- e. The agency will help families to access needed services, including transportation.
- f. The agency must negotiate agreements with external systems so that families and children can receive prompt and ongoing access to services.
- g. The agency will sponsor training for its child welfare workers in order to build skills in risk assessment and child safety assessment.

### OUTCOME: Safety

**J. STANDARD:** The child welfare worker will ensure that the service plan is a working document used as the focus of activity among the child welfare worker, the family, child, substitute caregiver, and service providers. The service plan is also the focus of conferences between the child welfare worker and the child welfare supervisor and will be used to monitor case progress.

Staff Responsibilities	Agency Responsibilities
<p><b>1. KNOWLEDGE AND VALUE BASE</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. The child welfare worker must use the plan to increase clarity for the family around roles, responsibilities, and consequences involving the family, the child welfare agency, and other service providers.</li> <li>b. The child welfare worker must keep every contact with and on behalf of the family focused on the goals and content of the plan.</li> <li>c. The child welfare worker must share and review the plan with service providers.</li> <li>d. The child welfare worker must share and review plan progress at each contact with family members and service providers.</li> <li>e. The child welfare worker must ensure that services and tasks recorded in the plan are linked to goal achievement.</li> <li>f. The child welfare worker must share appropriate elements of the plan with caregivers (foster parents, kin) to support their caregiving responsibilities.</li> <li>g. The child welfare worker must ensure that the plan reflects services that can be provided and tasks that can be achieved.</li> <li>h. The child welfare worker must facilitate coordination with other systems' service plans, such as drug and alcohol treatment plans, Individual Education Plans, and Agreements of Mutual Responsibility.</li> <li>i. The child welfare worker must know what triggers a plan revision.</li> <li>j. The child welfare worker must know when and how to use the plan in supervisory sessions.</li> </ul>	<p><b>3. BENCHMARKS OR MEASURES</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. Number of times the service plan was the focus of any case-related contact.</li> <li>b. Number of conferences within a six-month period between the child welfare supervisor and the child welfare worker that were related to the plan.</li> <li>c. Rate at which the child welfare worker documented how the plan was used.</li> </ul>

**2. STRATEGIES**

- a. The child welfare worker and child welfare supervisor will engage in ongoing supervision to review how the plan is being used and will use the plan as the basis of supervision.
- b. The child welfare worker will use training and consultation to support interviewing skills and service planning.
- c. The child welfare worker will review the service plan and service summaries prior to each contact with the family.
- d. The child welfare worker will regularly review and discuss plan progress with service providers and involved parties participating in the plan.
- e. The child welfare worker will utilize the plan as a benchmark to judge progress.
- f. The child welfare worker will distribute the plan, or appropriate elements of the plan including revisions, to involved parties.
- g. The child welfare worker will document all revisions to the service plan.
- h. The child welfare worker will revise the plan as changes occur in family functioning, goal achievement, and family circumstances.

**4. STRATEGIES**

- a. The agency will provide access to training on interviewing skills.
- b. The agency will provide training and ongoing case consultation regarding service planning.
- c. The agency will ensure that documentation reflects the plan's focus.
- d. The agency will negotiate agreements with external systems so that the plan is used as the basis of activity among the child welfare worker, the family, and the service provider.
- e. The agency will provide training on the coordination of plans with various service providers (e.g., public assistance child welfare workers).
- f. The agency will revise its planning form to accommodate recording ongoing reviews and activity changes.

**OUTCOME: Safety, Permanence, Timeliness, and Well-being**

**A. STANDARD:** The child welfare worker will monitor service plans and delivery for achievable goals for the child and family through case reviews; regular contact with the child, family, and service providers; and the use of supervision and case conferences. The child welfare worker will coordinate, implement, monitor, and assess the delivery of services identified in the service plan on an ongoing basis.

Staff Responsibilities	Agency Responsibilities
<p><b>1. KNOWLEDGE AND VALUE BASE</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. The child welfare worker must understand the concept of cultural competence, must know how one's own culture and that of service providers affects behavior and values, and must know how culture and ethnic differences may affect the delivery and availability of services.</li> <li>b. The child welfare worker must know how to conduct child abuse and neglect evaluations, and strengths-based individual and family assessments.</li> <li>c. The child welfare worker must know how to engage and support families in developing, writing, and implementing service plans.</li> <li>d. The child welfare worker must know how to use in-home counseling, parent education services, and out-of-home services to meet specific needs.</li> <li>e. The child welfare worker must know how to establish and maintain therapeutic relationships with families.</li> <li>f. The child welfare worker must be knowledgeable about formal and informal support services and resources available in the community that are relevant to the needs of families and their specific culture.</li> <li>g. The child welfare worker must know how to initiate referrals, advocate for clients, and access and collaborate with community resources.</li> <li>h. The child welfare worker must know how to achieve and maintain a level of agency involvement commensurate with case need.</li> </ul>	<p><b>3. BENCHMARKS OR MEASURES</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. Number of cases in which the services delivered matched needs identified in the service plan.</li> <li>b. Number of cases in which services identified in the service plan were actually delivered or provided.</li> <li>c. Percentage of families for which drug and alcohol treatment was identified as a service need.</li> <li>d. Percentage of families who responded to an opportunity to provide the agency with feedback about services.</li> <li>e. Percentage of cases that showed evidence of required supervisory and case conferences.</li> </ul>

- i. The child welfare worker must know applicable state regulations, agency policy, and federal mandates.
- j. The child welfare worker must know the signs and symptoms of substance abuse, domestic violence, and mental health issues, and their impact on family functioning.
- k. The child welfare worker must know how to keep the child's and family's needs as the central focus for services.
- l. The child welfare worker must know when and how to withdraw services in a timely manner and assist the family in the transition.

**2. STRATEGIES**

- a. The child welfare worker will use supervisors, peers, co-workers and services directories to develop knowledge about community resources.
- b. The child welfare worker will become familiar with the location, range of services, referral policies, and procedures of community agencies.
- c. The child welfare worker will initiate and develop working relationships with community agencies.
- d. The child welfare worker will use supervisory conferences to review and discuss selected service plans.
- e. The child welfare worker will respect family strengths and the family's right to self-determination (the right to participate in and make decisions for oneself).
- f. The child welfare worker will include the family in all service planning activities and decision making.
- g. The child welfare worker will maintain monthly contact with service providers and review service plan goals.
- h. The child welfare worker will engage in a process of self-assessment regarding cultural sensitivity issues.

**4. STRATEGIES**

- a. The agency will develop formal agreements with provider agencies regarding processes for referral, collaboration and information sharing, conflict resolution, and cross training.
- b. The agency will establish a system for monitoring rates of re-abuse, case re-openings, and length of service.
- c. The agency will provide training on agency policy, procedures, provider agreements, and collaboration with families and providers.
- d. The agency will develop and maintain community agency directories.
- e. The agency will provide structured opportunities for staff to increase their cultural awareness.
- f. The agency will provide a planned and structured opportunity, at the point of discharge, for families to give feedback about services received.
- g. The agency will use feedback from families concerning services provided to inform policy, practice, and protocols related to service delivery.

**OUTCOME: Well-being**

**B. STANDARD:** The child welfare worker will establish ongoing service linkages between public and private agencies to assure that the family receives planned services that are culturally responsive, timely, and connected through a referral process that includes assessment of resource availability and child/family readiness for service. Service provision should be assessed on at least a monthly basis.

Staff Responsibilities	Agency Responsibilities
<p><b>1. KNOWLEDGE AND VALUE BASE</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. The child welfare worker must know the roles and responsibilities of other community agencies in the child protective service process.</li> <li>b. The child welfare worker must be able to collaborate with other community agencies and practitioners to develop service plans and provide services.</li> <li>c. The child welfare worker must understand the concept of cultural competence, know how one's own culture and that of service providers affect behavior and values, and know how culture and ethnic differences may affect the delivery and availability of services.</li> <li>d. The child welfare worker must know how to coordinate, modify, and change service delivery to meet identified needs through ongoing assessment and service planning, referrals to community resources, and advocacy for formal and informal supports.</li> <li>e. The child welfare worker must know the roles and responsibilities of public and private agencies and understand the interrelationship between them.</li> <li>f. The child welfare worker must understand how to work with the family on confidentiality issues and respond appropriately when disagreement occurs by using mediation, mutual decision making, and conflict resolution.</li> <li>g. The child welfare worker must know what public and private agencies are available in the community to establish appropriate linkages.</li> </ul>	<p><b>3. BENCHMARKS OR MEASURES</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. Number of cases in which child welfare workers contacted the service provider and assessed the progress of completed service plan goals.</li> <li>b. Number of cases in which child welfare workers had documented monthly contact with the family.</li> <li>c. Number of families whose primary language is not English and who received services from a provider fluent in their language.</li> <li>d. Number of cases in which the provider agency made special accommodations to meet specific special needs (e.g., hearing, visual, and physical).</li> <li>e. Number of cases in which the service needs were met in the family's community.</li> </ul>

- h. The child welfare worker must know how to negotiate with and access external systems and resources within the community in order to achieve client goals.
- i. The child welfare worker must know how to evaluate why a specific service is not working, including consideration of institutional barriers, client resistance, inappropriate service designation, and client readiness.

**2. STRATEGIES**

- a. The child welfare worker and child welfare supervisor will use state regulations, program descriptions, and agency policy to learn about public and private agency roles and responsibilities.
- b. The child welfare worker will use supervision, training, or independent learning activities to learn how to establish service linkages.
- c. The child welfare worker will provide culturally appropriate services and linkages determined by the ongoing assessment of family needs.
- d. The child welfare worker will monitor and follow established protocol and process in the delivery of collaborative services between public and private agencies.
- e. The child welfare worker will evaluate why services are or are not working and make adaptations as necessary through assessment.
- f. The child welfare worker will assess service provision on a monthly basis.

**4. STRATEGIES**

- a. The agency will develop a mechanism to evaluate the availability, accessibility, and cultural relevance of community resources.
- b. The agency will establish, publish, and maintain community resource guides for staff use.
- c. The agency will set aside resources for identifying community resources and will develop a plan for routine updates.
- d. The agency will negotiate contracts and develop protocols and processes for working collaboratively with public and private agencies on issues including confidentiality and the appropriate response when disagreement occurs.
- e. The agency will provide training to improve child welfare workers' skills in planning with external systems and monitoring the services of the systems.
- f. The agency will establish and publish referral and service protocols used with agencies and other family service systems.
- g. The agency will train staff on existing referral and service protocols.

**OUTCOME: Safety, Permanence, Timeliness, and Well-being**

**C. STANDARD:** The child welfare worker will document factually all key issues and family and collateral contacts related to safety, well-being, permanence, and timeliness in service delivery evaluation, assessment, and decision making. Case notes should be written immediately, and formal case documentation should occur within three to five working days following the case activity. The child welfare worker must record all decisions, the basis for the decisions, and the objectives.

**Staff Responsibilities**
**1. KNOWLEDGE AND VALUE BASE**

- a. The child welfare worker must understand the importance and necessity of service plan and service delivery documentation.
- b. The child welfare worker must be able to write concise case assessments, service plans, and other supporting documentation into the family case record in a timely manner.
- c. The child welfare worker must be able to list the date of contact, the participants, the content of the discussion, and the result of each contact as it relates to the service plan.
- d. The child welfare worker must understand the importance of conducting and documenting routine and timely case reviews, and of reassessing the results of service plans and service interventions.
- e. The child welfare worker must know how to make appropriate modifications in the service plan, include the family in decision making, and interpret for the family the basis for the decision.
- f. The child welfare worker must know how to document parent and child success for direction in future planning.
- g. The child welfare worker must understand that the quality and quantity of documentation can influence permanence for children.

**Agency Responsibilities**
**3. BENCHMARKS OR MEASURES**

- a. Percentage of cases in which key case issues were identified.
- b. Percentage of cases in which the process for decision making, including the justification, was documented.
- c. Percentage of supervisory reviews of timely case documentation.
- d. Number and type of family and collateral contacts.

**2. STRATEGIES**

- a. The child welfare worker will identify key issues through risk, safety, and family assessments.
- b. The child welfare worker will develop, through training and supervisor feedback, his/her skills to identify and document key issues.
- c. The child welfare worker will use supervisor feedback, training, and independent study to enhance writing skills.
- d. The child welfare worker will record the purpose of collateral contacts, with whom the contacts were made, and the main points resulting from the contact.
- e. The child welfare worker will record how safety, risk, and family assessments are related to decisions made concerning permanence.
- f. The child welfare worker will maintain notes to be used in formal case documentation.

**4. STRATEGIES**

- a. The agency will provide training to enhance child welfare workers' writing skills.
- b. The child welfare supervisor will provide feedback through case reviews necessary to develop quality case recording.
- c. The agency will establish a mechanism for conducting routine case reviews.
- d. The agency will establish an optimal caseload level given recording expectations.
- e. The agency will develop a format for documenting key issues and collateral and family contacts.

**OUTCOME: Safety, Permanence, and Well-being**

**D. STANDARD:** The child welfare worker will coordinate the delivery of services to meet identified needs and achieve permanence through ongoing case and family assessment, case management, referral to community resources, advocacy, and the provision of supportive and rehabilitative services.

<b>Staff Responsibilities</b>	<b>Agency Responsibilities</b>
<p><b>1. KNOWLEDGE AND VALUE BASE</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. The child welfare worker must know how to clearly define service needs and match them with the appropriate service resources.</li> <li>b. The child welfare worker must know how to identify appropriate service interventions that are needs-based driven, with achievable and measurable objectives.</li> <li>c. The child welfare worker must know how to work with families, children, and service providers to determine appropriate services, including the level of out-of-home care.</li> <li>d. The child welfare worker must know to base service delivery implementation on the service plan, and the stated goals and objectives.</li> <li>e. The child welfare worker must know how to prioritize identified needs and locate the services to meet individual child and family needs in a timely manner.</li> <li>f. The child welfare worker must have knowledge of resources available in the community and how to access them.</li> <li>g. The child welfare worker must have a working knowledge of the Juvenile Act, Child Protective Services Law, and the Adoption and Safe Families Act as it relates to the safety, protection, and well-being of children.</li> <li>h. The child welfare worker must know how to develop strategies to assist families in using services and achieving goals in the service plan.</li> </ul>	<p><b>3. BENCHMARKS OR MEASURES</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. Number of cases in which families received the appropriate services to meet their needs.</li> <li>b. Percentage of cases closed by the agency without a reopening and/or substantiated report of abuse and neglect within 12 months of closure.</li> <li>c. Number of cases that achieved identified permanency outcomes by type and the length of time to achieve them.</li> <li>d. Number of cases referred to community resources.</li> </ul>

**2. STRATEGIES**

- a. The child welfare worker will make regular contact by telephone, in person, and in writing with the child, the family, and service providers to ensure that a continuum of care is maintained.
- b. The child welfare worker will monitor for accessibility of services in the community.
- c. The child welfare worker will use interactional skills to assist the family in making changes.
- d. The child welfare worker will conduct timely reviews of family progress in all areas defined in the service plan throughout the duration of the case.
- e. The child welfare worker will monitor adherence to the service plan.
- f. The child welfare worker will communicate to service providers expectations necessary to achieve identified goals.
- g. The child welfare worker will meet regularly with the child welfare supervisor and service provider to discuss key issues in service delivery and will utilize the Child and Adolescent Service System Program (CASSP) system in monitoring community ability to meet the child's and family's needs.

**4. STRATEGIES**

- a. The agency will identify and advocate for the optimal caseload size to facilitate quality service delivery.
- b. The agency will establish a mechanism to identify service gaps and barriers to service provision.
- c. The agency will use the Needs Based Budget process to create services to fill service gaps in critical areas.
- d. The agency will use community initiatives to create and coordinate needed services.
- e. The agency will use the Pennsylvania Child Welfare Information System (PACWIS) to monitor utilization of services, outcomes, and service delivery success (correct services reaching families).

**OUTCOME: Safety, Permanence, Timeliness, and Well-being**

**E. STANDARD:** The child welfare worker will operationalize the service plan by coordinating, implementing, and monitoring service delivery on an ongoing basis to assure the safety, well-being, and permanence of the children. The child welfare worker will coordinate service delivery that is timely, culturally sensitive, and assessed for appropriateness.

<b>Staff Responsibilities</b>	<b>Agency Responsibilities</b>
<p><b>1. KNOWLEDGE AND VALUE BASE</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. The child welfare worker must have awareness and knowledge of available services and the eligibility requirements.</li> <li>b. The child welfare worker must know about, and be able to access, community resources that will meet service plan goals.</li> <li>c. The child welfare worker must know how to coordinate service delivery with the identified needs of the family.</li> <li>d. The child welfare worker must know how to use ongoing assessments to coordinate, modify, and change the delivery of services to meet identified needs.</li> <li>e. The child welfare worker must understand the dual role of child safety and family preservation and be able to balance the two in service delivery.</li> <li>f. The child welfare worker must understand the roles of other service delivery team members and know how to communicate those roles to the family.</li> <li>g. The child welfare worker must know how to facilitate team decision making and understand conflict resolution strategies.</li> <li>h. The child welfare worker must know how to conduct safety, risk, and comprehensive family assessments at appropriate times throughout the service delivery process.</li> <li>i. The child welfare worker must understand family dynamics and be able to identify barriers to implementing services.</li> <li>j. The child welfare worker must understand the concept of cultural competence, know how one's own culture affects behavior and values, and know how culture and ethnic differences may affect the delivery of services.</li> </ul>	<p><b>3. BENCHMARKS OR MEASURES</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. Number of cases in which the services provided matched the specific needs identified in the service plan.</li> <li>b. Number of cases in which special service delivery accommodations were made (e.g., language, culture, disability needs).</li> <li>c. Percentage of cases in which specific resources were not available to address needs identified in the service plan.</li> <li>d. Percentage of cases in which goal change recommendations were rejected by the court due to unavailable resources to implement service delivery.</li> </ul>

- k. The child welfare worker must understand how to utilize the service plan as a tool in working with the family.

**2. STRATEGIES**

- a. The child welfare worker will use the service plan to develop service delivery alternatives.
- b. The child welfare worker will use referrals to community resources, advocacy for informal and formal supports, and direct provision of supportive and rehabilitative services to implement service delivery.
- c. The child welfare worker will consistently seek to engage the family to participate in services identified in the service plan.
- d. The child welfare worker will meet regularly with the family to review utilization of services based on service needs.
- e. The child welfare worker will facilitate a process of problem solving and clarification when obstacles to service utilization are identified.
- f. The child welfare worker will use supervision, peer consultation, resource manuals, and independent learning to identify community resources.
- g. The child welfare supervisor will guide and assist the child welfare worker in utilizing the service plan as a working document.

**4. STRATEGIES**

- a. The agency will maintain and update, as needed, a current community resource directory.
- b. The agency will train staff to use community resource directories.
- c. The agency will establish a process for updating and revising resource directories on an ongoing basis.
- d. The agency will train staff to understand family systems and their effect on a family's use of services.
- e. The agency will collect data on service needs and service resource availability.
- f. The agency will document unmet needs that impact well-being, delay permanence, or risk safety.
- g. The agency will develop a plan to meet documented unmet needs.
- h. The agency will train staff on collaborative team facilitation, problem solving, and conflict resolution.

**OUTCOME: Safety and Well-being**

**F. STANDARD:** The child welfare worker's contact with the family will be goal-oriented and foster a therapeutic and helping relationship to assist families in identifying means of resolving problems in a timely manner. The frequency of contact will be based on risk and safety assessments, and the unique needs of the family. The child welfare worker will establish and maintain regular contact with the family.

Staff Responsibilities	Agency Responsibilities
<p><b>1. KNOWLEDGE AND VALUE BASE</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. The child welfare worker must know how to engage families in the casework process.</li> <li>b. The child welfare worker must understand his or her role in the service delivery process.</li> <li>c. The child welfare worker must understand the dynamics of human behavior and how to motivate and support commitment and participation in the problem-solving process.</li> <li>d. The child welfare worker must know how to conduct and interpret risk assessments and safety assessments.</li> <li>e. The child welfare worker must be knowledgeable about the theory, methods, and application of negotiation, mediation, and conflict resolution strategies.</li> <li>f. The child welfare worker must know how to establish and modify the frequency and type of family contact commensurate with family need and goal attainment.</li> <li>g. The child welfare worker must know state regulations and agency policy regarding frequency of family contact.</li> <li>h. The child welfare worker must know how to use task and goal-oriented strategies in problem solving and treatment intervention.</li> <li>i. The child welfare worker must understand how he or she may be perceived as an authority figure and how this perception can influence worker-client relationships.</li> <li>j. The child welfare worker must be knowledgeable about cultural issues and how they influence the formation of the worker-family relationship.</li> </ul>	<p><b>3. BENCHMARKS OR MEASURES</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. Number of in-person contacts with the family by case on a quarterly basis.</li> <li>b. Number of telephone contacts with the family by case on a quarterly basis.</li> <li>c. Level of contact for high, medium, and low risk cases throughout the service delivery process.</li> <li>d. Number of cases that were reviewed by the child welfare supervisor as part of a clinical case conference.</li> </ul>

**2. STRATEGIES**

- a. The child welfare worker will utilize ongoing risk assessments and safety assessments to determine the frequency of contact.
- b. The child welfare worker will facilitate family participation in reviewing the progress of the case, assessing and adjusting goals, and determining objectives and time frames.
- c. The child welfare worker will maintain contact with the family based on agency policy, the family's needs, and the service plan.
- d. The child welfare worker will document all contact with the family in a format developed by the agency.

**4. STRATEGIES**

- a. The agency will provide training on risk assessments and safety assessments.
- b. The child welfare supervisor will conduct random reviews of service plans and provide feedback to the child welfare worker on quality, completeness, and relationship to the assessment findings.
- c. The agency will provide training on developing goal-oriented family contact.
- d. The agency will provide structured opportunities for staff to increase cultural awareness.
- e. The agency will make resources and time available to staff to participate in training activities.
- f. The agency will conduct random reviews of active and closed cases to assess patterns of worker-family contact, achievement of goals, level of risk, and length of service.
- g. The agency will develop a structured recording format for documenting contacts by all staff.
- h. The agency will develop a policy for the frequency of worker-family contact.
- i. The agency will establish an optimal caseload size given the expectations for child welfare worker-family contact.

**OUTCOME: Timeliness**

**G. STANDARD:** The child welfare worker will review the length of service based on the assessed needs of the family and the service plan to assure that needed services are delivered, culturally responsive, timely, and reflect family strengths. The length of service will match the assessed needs of the family, and take into account past and current services offered to the family, and the family's ability and motivation to use those services.

Staff Responsibilities	Agency Responsibilities
<p><b>1. KNOWLEDGE AND VALUE BASE</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. The child welfare worker must know how to conduct risk assessments, safety assessments, and strengths-based family assessments, and use them as tools in determining the length of service needed.</li> <li>b. The child welfare worker must know how to determine when the purpose of child protective service intervention has been accomplished and is no longer needed.</li> <li>c. The child welfare worker must know how to collaborate with community agencies and practitioners to develop short-term or long-term service plans and related timelines based on family needs and strengths.</li> <li>d. The child welfare worker must know and be able to apply the legal mandates, timelines, and agency policy that affect the length of service to families.</li> <li>e. The child welfare worker must understand the various treatment modalities for families within the child welfare system and how those modalities will affect the length and intensity of service.</li> <li>f. The child welfare worker must understand the concept of cultural competence; know how one's own culture and that of service providers affects behavior and values; and know how cultural and ethnic differences may affect the length of service.</li> <li>g. The child welfare worker must understand the timelines of the Adoption and Safe Families Act.</li> </ul>	<p><b>3. BENCHMARKS OR MEASURES</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. Number of cases with clearly established time frames for services.</li> <li>b. Number of cases with services that were delivered within established time frames.</li> <li>c. Frequency of referral reason for families and the length of time that they remained involved with the agency, charted annually by category.</li> <li>d. Average length of service delivery for high, medium, and low risk in services to children in their own home.</li> <li>e. Average length of service delivery by permanency goal for placement cases.</li> </ul>

**2. STRATEGIES**

- a. The child welfare worker and child welfare supervisor will use regulations, program descriptions, and agency policies as tools in determining the length of service, and incorporate the family's perspective.
- b. The child welfare worker will use supervision, training, and independent learning activities to learn how to establish timelines in service delivery that are based on agency, state, and federal policy and regulations.
- c. The child welfare worker will assess family strengths and incorporate them in establishing time frames for service delivery.
- d. The child welfare worker will incorporate the characteristics of the family's culture in determining the of length of service.
- e. The child welfare worker will use the process of assessment to evaluate how services are working within the established time frames and to make necessary adjustments.
- f. The child welfare supervisor will assist the child welfare worker in evaluating and determining the length of service involvement.
- g. The child welfare worker will consider the nature of the child's needs, the parent's ability to use services provided, and the progress made in correcting the situation that necessitated child protective services intervention.

**4. STRATEGIES**

- a. The agency will create a database that can tabulate the type of case, type of service required, expected length of service, actual length of service, outcome, and recidivism.
- b. The agency will develop a mechanism to evaluate the database on an ongoing basis.
- c. The agency will provide training to teach child welfare supervisors and workers skills in establishing service time frames.
- d. The agency will establish, publish, and maintain community resource guides that outline service time frames and expected outcomes.
- e. The agency will develop program descriptions and program policies governing the length of service.
- f. The agency will develop specific criteria for terminating protective service involvement with families.

**OUTCOME: Safety, Permanence, and Well-being**

**H. STANDARD:** The child welfare worker will include both concrete and therapeutic services in service delivery in order to assist the family in meeting their daily basic needs (i.e., food, clothing, shelter, and medical care), the emotional and developmental needs of their children, and to support the resolution of problems. Service delivery will be culturally sensitive and timely.

<b>Staff Responsibilities</b>	<b>Agency Responsibilities</b>
<p><b>1. KNOWLEDGE AND VALUE BASE</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>a. The child welfare worker must have knowledge of formal and informal community services and resource networks that provide concrete services.</li><li>b. The child welfare worker must understand the importance of concrete services to families.</li><li>c. The child welfare worker must understand the potential difference between his or her view of problems and the family's view, which may focus on concrete needs before therapeutic needs.</li><li>d. The child welfare worker must know how to assist families without fostering dependence by establishing and building partnerships with families.</li><li>e. The child welfare worker must know how to assist families in assessing their needs and using community resources.</li><li>f. The child welfare worker must understand the role of denial, resistance, and anger in therapeutic services and how to use those feelings in the helping process.</li><li>g. The child welfare worker must know how to use advocacy and negotiation techniques with community resources on behalf of families.</li><li>h. The child welfare worker must know how to coordinate the acquisition of concrete services with therapeutic processes.</li><li>i. The child welfare worker must understand basic child development and developmental needs of children.</li><li>j. The child welfare worker must understand how culture may influence coping mechanisms of the family.</li></ul>	<p><b>3. BENCHMARKS OR MEASURES</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>a. Type and frequency of concrete services used by families.</li><li>b. Number of cases in which needed concrete services were not available to families.</li><li>c. Number of cases in which both concrete and therapeutic services were used in service delivery.</li><li>d. Type and frequency of therapeutic services used by families.</li></ul>

**2. STRATEGIES**

- a. The child welfare worker will use supervision, training, and independent learning activities to develop knowledge of community resources that provide concrete and therapeutic services.
- b. The child welfare worker will use training and supervision to learn the dynamics and stages of partnership building.
- c. The child welfare worker will use supervision, peer support and the technique of role-play and other learning techniques to practice separating personal values from professional practice.
- d. The child welfare worker will mix the use of concrete and therapeutic services based on the service needs outlined through the assessment and planning process and the developmental needs of the children.
- e. The child welfare worker will meet the concrete needs of the family as appropriate within the context of the service plan.

**4. STRATEGIES**

- a. The agency will include information in directories about available community resources offering concrete and therapeutic services.
- b. The agency will establish a budget for the purchase of concrete and therapeutic services.
- c. The agency will provide training on how to use a mixture of concrete and therapeutic services to implement service delivery.
- d. The agency will provide training pertinent to the stages and development of partnerships and the effective use of professional self.
- e. The agency will develop a mechanism to identify and address gaps in resources.

**OUTCOME: Safety, Permanence, Timeliness, and Well-being**

**I. STANDARD:** The child welfare worker will engage the family to develop an appropriate plan of in-home services to prevent placement or sustain reunification. The child welfare worker will deliver or ensure delivery of service interventions that are based on strengths and needs, are well defined, and that have measurable and achievable objectives to address issues of safety, well-being, and permanence.

Staff Responsibilities	Agency Responsibilities
<p><b>1. KNOWLEDGE AND VALUE BASE</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. The child welfare worker must be familiar with community resources and services and how to access them.</li> <li>b. The child welfare worker must understand family systems.</li> <li>c. The child welfare worker must understand how to identify cultural issues and how they impact on the family unit.</li> <li>d. The child welfare worker must know how to assess child safety and conduct risk, safety, and comprehensive family assessments.</li> <li>e. The child welfare worker must know how to use a comprehensive family assessment tool.</li> <li>f. The child welfare worker must know the difference between discipline and punishment and the effect of both on children's growth and development.</li> <li>g. The child welfare worker must know how to help parents use appropriate methods of discipline.</li> <li>h. The child welfare worker must know how to assist families in developing a childcare plan using formal and informal resources to support and manage daily parental responsibilities.</li> <li>i. The child welfare worker must be able to identify community supports for families.</li> <li>j. The child welfare worker must be able to assist families in reviewing their source of income and establishing budgets to meet family needs.</li> <li>k. The child welfare worker must be able to help families secure, maintain, or improve housing to meet the basic needs of the children and family.</li> </ul>	<p><b>3. BENCHMARKS OR MEASURES</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. Number of families that received in-home services to prevent placement and to sustain reunification.</li> <li>b. Percentage of adjudicated dependent and abused children who remained in their own homes without becoming victims of substantiated abuse or neglect.</li> <li>c. Length of time services were provided to families to prevent placement and to sustain reunification.</li> <li>d. Number of additional reports received while the family was receiving in-home services.</li> </ul>

- l. The child welfare worker must be able to help families assess the educational and health needs of their children and develop strategies to meet those needs.
- m. The child welfare worker must know how to assist families in using concrete services as part of the service plan.
- n. The child welfare worker must understand how to engage families and intervene with them in order to prevent placement or achieve reunification.

**2. STRATEGIES**

- a. The child welfare worker will ensure that children and families are able to access identified community services.
- b. The child welfare worker will make regular contact with the family by telephone, in person, and in writing.
- c. The child welfare worker will conduct regular reviews with the family of its progress in all areas defined in the service plan.
- d. The child welfare worker will use intervention skills to assist the family in making changes.
- e. The child welfare worker will monitor adherence to the service plan.
- f. The child welfare worker will communicate to other service providers expectations necessary to achieve identified goals.
- g. The child welfare worker will meet regularly with the child welfare supervisor and any other service provider to discuss key issues in service delivery, and will utilize the CASSP system in monitoring community ability to meet the child's and family's needs.
- h. The child welfare worker will use the risk assessment tool to assess the level of risk of abuse and neglect.
- i. The child welfare supervisor will guide, mentor, and oversee the provision of in-home services in order to ensure safety and permanence.
- j. The worker will use a comprehensive family assessment tool.

**4. STRATEGIES**

- a. The agency will establish a mechanism to identify service gaps and barriers to service provision.
- b. The agency will use the needs-based budget process to create services to fill gaps.
- c. The agency will identify and use community initiatives to create and coordinate needed services.
- d. The agency will use PACWIS to monitor the utilization of services and outcomes.
- e. The agency will provide supervision, support, and training on cultural competence, policy, and procedures related to in-home services, provider agreements, and collaboration with families and providers.
- f. The agency will provide training on how to conduct and use risk, safety, and family assessments in service delivery.
- g. The agency will adopt a comprehensive family assessment tool for in-home services.
- h. The agency will institute a process to review all in-home service cases open more than one year to determine need for continued service.
- i. The agency will identify a model (short-term intensive or long-term supportive services) that best meets the needs of the families served by the agency.
- j. The agency will provide training specific to in-home services.

**OUTCOME: Safety and Well-being**

**J. STANDARD:** The child welfare worker will conduct and document the decision-making process of removing a child from his or her home when there is concern for the child's safety and health, and when measures to alleviate risk have failed or will not provide sufficient protection. The decision-making process will incorporate the results of safety, risk, and comprehensive family-focused assessments as available, and information from collateral contacts in order to assure the protection of the child. The child welfare worker must make the decision to place a child in consultation with the child welfare supervisor. The child welfare worker will also discuss with the parents the basis for the decision.

Staff Responsibilities	Agency Responsibilities
<p><b>1. KNOWLEDGE AND VALUE BASE</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. The child welfare worker must know how to conduct safety, risk, and family assessments.</li> <li>b. The child welfare worker must be able to engage the family in an analysis of the safety, risk, and family-focused assessments, and interpret, in language that the family understands, the relationship of the results to the decision to place the child.</li> <li>c. The child welfare worker must understand how safety, risk, and family assessments are used in decision making.</li> <li>d. The child welfare worker must understand how the separation of children from their families affects their lives.</li> <li>e. The child welfare worker must be able to determine imminent risk.</li> <li>f. The child welfare worker must know the indicators of abuse and neglect, and the laws that govern the investigation of such allegations and reports.</li> <li>g. The child welfare worker must know how to identify essential and relevant collateral contacts that will support the decision making process.</li> <li>h. The child welfare worker must be able to assess the parent's capacity to protect the children.</li> <li>i. The child welfare worker must know how to prepare a case for supervisory conference as part of the decision-making process.</li> <li>j. The child welfare worker must understand when it is appropriate to offer parents the option to voluntarily place their children.</li> </ul>	<p><b>3. BENCHMARKS OR MEASURES</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. Number of cases in which the basis for the decision to remove a child from home was clearly documented.</li> <li>b. Percentage of cases in which the parent's willingness and ability to protect the child was part of the decision-making process.</li> <li>c. Percentage of cases in which the child welfare supervisor reviewed the case with the child welfare worker prior to the decision to place the child.</li> <li>d. Percentage of cases in which reasonable efforts were not required due to aggravated circumstances as defined in the Adoption and Safe Families Act of 1997.</li> <li>e. Percentage of cases in which safety, risk, and family-focused assessment were used as part of the decision-making process.</li> </ul>

- k. The child welfare worker must understand the concepts of reasonable efforts, aggravated circumstances, and compelling reasons as outlined in the Adoption and Safe Families Act, and the actions that must be taken consistent with the requirements of the Act.

**2. STRATEGIES**

- a. The child welfare worker will use safety, risk, and family assessment tools and integrate the results with information from collateral contacts.
- b. The child welfare worker will consider, in the decision-making process, the parents' understanding of the dynamics of the situation, and their ability and willingness to accept and use services.
- c. The child welfare worker will explain related laws, regulations, and court procedures to parents who voluntarily agree to place their children.
- d. The child welfare worker will assess the educational, emotional, and health needs of the children.
- e. The child welfare worker will document the factors that support the decision to remove the children from their home.
- f. The child welfare worker will assist the parents in identifying family and community members who may be a resource for the children.
- g. The child welfare supervisor will assist the child welfare worker in an analysis of case dynamics related to the need for placement.
- h. The child welfare worker and child welfare supervisor will assess and document whether reasonable efforts were made to prevent placement or whether reasonable efforts were not required due to aggravated circumstances.

**4. STRATEGIES**

- a. The agency will develop its own or select an existing model of safety and family assessment tools.
- b. The agency will train staff on conducting safety, risk, and family assessments.
- c. The agency will establish a written decision-making protocol and process for the removal of children from their home.
- d. The agency will develop a guide for documenting the case factors that support the removal of children from their home.
- e. The agency will establish protocols for which individuals other than the child welfare worker and child welfare supervisor should be included in the decision to place children.
- f. The agency will clearly define the role and responsibility of the supervisor in the decision-making process.
- g. The agency will train staff on how to engage parents in decision making.
- h. The agency will establish policy and procedures for documenting how reasonable efforts were made to preserve the family and prevent placement.
- i. The agency will provide training for all staff on the five aggravated circumstances contained in Pennsylvania law and the related actions and tasks that must be carried out.

**OUTCOME: Safety, Permanence, and Well-being**

**K. STANDARD:** The child welfare worker will place the child in the least restrictive setting that can meet his/her needs. The child welfare worker will deliver out-of-home care services that are geographically close to the family or otherwise accessible to the child's family and community affiliations, and that are culturally relevant, to assure timely permanence and well-being. Siblings should be placed together.

Staff Responsibilities	Agency Responsibilities
<p><b>1. KNOWLEDGE AND VALUE BASE</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. The child welfare worker must know how to assess the family's and child's needs throughout the period of out-of-home care.</li> <li>b. The child welfare worker must know the different available types of out-of-home care (kinship, foster, group, and residential).</li> <li>c. The child welfare worker must be aware of regulations and policies related to the use of the least restrictive placement that will meet the child's needs.</li> <li>d. The child welfare worker must understand the relevance of the Indian Child Welfare Act of 1978 as it relates to the placement and adoption of Native American or Alaska Native children.</li> <li>e. The child welfare worker must be able to match the level of care and type of placement with the child's assessed needs to reduce the risk of multiple placements.</li> <li>f. The child welfare worker must be able to determine when a step-down placement is appropriate.</li> <li>g. The child welfare worker must be able to use knowledge of the family's cultural background in providing and selecting services for the child and family.</li> <li>h. The child welfare worker must understand that placement should be facilitated in the child's home community when possible and appropriate.</li> <li>i. The child welfare worker must understand that placing siblings together lessens separation trauma, eases the stress on parents, reinforces the importance of family relationships, and facilitates visits and communication between parents and children.</li> </ul>	<p><b>3. BENCHMARKS OR MEASURES</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. Number of cases in which reunification and other specific permanency goals have been identified.</li> <li>b. Length of stay in out-of-home care.</li> <li>c. Number of cases in which a cultural match was made between the out-of-home care provider and the child.</li> <li>d. Number of cases in which permanence occurred within the time frame specified in the service plan.</li> <li>e. Percentage of children entering new placement settings who remained within the same school boundaries, within the same zip code, and/or within the same county.</li> <li>f. Number of cases in which placement resources were not available in the family's community of origin to meet the child's identified needs.</li> <li>g. Percentage of children entering placement who were returned home within 12 months of removal or for whom an alternate permanent plan was implemented within 18 months.</li> <li>h. Percentage of cases in which siblings were placed together.</li> </ul>

- j. The child welfare worker must be familiar with the laws and regulations that govern out-of-home care services to children and families.
- k. The child welfare worker must know methods of engaging and keeping families involved in the out-of-home care process to work toward permanence.
- l. The child welfare worker must understand the concept of cultural competence, how one's own culture affects behavior and values, and how cultural and ethnic differences affect service delivery.

**2. STRATEGIES**

- a. The child welfare worker will identify and coordinate a placement in the child's community that best meets the needs of the child and is in the least restrictive setting.
- b. The child welfare worker will arrange regular contact and family visitation in order to maintain family and other significant relationships.
- c. The child welfare worker will facilitate and maintain dialogue between the child's caregiver and family.
- d. The child welfare worker will continue to reevaluate the service plan to ensure that services are being delivered and continue to meet identified needs.
- e. The child welfare worker will facilitate the child's continued link with his or her community affiliations.
- f. The child welfare worker will comply with the Indian Child Welfare Act of 1978 when Native American or Alaska Native children are placed with an adoptive family.
- g. The child welfare worker will facilitate and coordinate communications and transfer of information with local resources and service providers to maintain continuity of care during the out-of-home care process and the child's return to the community.
- h. The child welfare worker will seek placement resources where siblings can be together unless placement together would be contrary to their developmental, treatment, and safety needs.

**4. STRATEGIES**

- a. The agency will provide training and supervision on cultural competence.
- b. The agency will provide training and supervision on the use of least restrictive placement options.
- c. The agency will provide training on policy, procedures, and the laws and regulations governing out-of-home care.
- d. The agency will monitor provider agreements and the level of provider contact with families.
- e. The worker will inform and educate service providers and the community on the laws and regulations governing out-of-home care and related agency goals and responsibilities.
- f. The agency will use an information system to monitor service utilization, outcomes, length of care, and rate of reunification.
- g. The agency will provide training on the regulations, laws, and practice standards governing placement and family/child contact.
- h. The agency will provide training for all levels of staff on the requirements of the Indian Child Welfare Act of 1978.
- i. The agency will establish policy that requires the placement of siblings together, or the documentation of why such an arrangement was not in the best interest of the children.

**OUTCOME: Permanence and Well-being**

**L. STANDARD:** The child welfare worker will promote out-of-home care that designates kin as the first option for out-of-home care, and as a resource to preserve family ties and culture. The child welfare worker will actively seek out appropriate kin as possible placement and permanency options at the point of intake and throughout the service delivery process. Kin placements must be safe, nurturing resources for the child.

Staff Responsibilities	Agency Responsibilities
<p><b>1. KNOWLEDGE AND VALUE BASE</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. The child welfare worker must understand the importance of family ties and culture in making placement decisions.</li> <li>b. The child welfare worker must know how to elicit information about resources available within the family.</li> <li>c. The child welfare worker must know how to develop and use a social history to determine family supports and potential placement options.</li> <li>d. The child welfare worker must know how to assess the appropriateness of a kinship caregiver as a placement resource.</li> <li>e. The child welfare worker must understand how one's own culture and values can influence the decision to use kin as a resource.</li> <li>f. The child welfare worker must be able to acknowledge the difference in kinship care placements and placements in the homes of unrelated caregivers.</li> <li>g. The child welfare worker must know how to assess safety in a kinship placement.</li> <li>h. The child welfare worker must know how to plan, implement, and support family visitation in kinship placements.</li> <li>i. The child welfare worker must know how to apply permanency-planning principles of practice in kinship placements.</li> <li>j. The child welfare worker must know how to assess the appropriateness of a kinship family as a permanency option for children.</li> </ul>	<p><b>3. BENCHMARKS OR MEASURES</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. Number of children placed with kinship caregivers.</li> <li>b. Number of children in kinship placements with the goal of reunification.</li> <li>c. Number of kinship adoptions.</li> <li>d. Number of cases in which kin obtained legal custody.</li> </ul>

**2. STRATEGIES**

- a. The child welfare worker will discuss with the family the availability of kin as a placement resource when out-of-home care is needed.
- b. The child welfare worker will assess the appropriateness of kin as a placement resource within the context of the child's needs.
- c. The child welfare worker will include risk and safety assessments in the evaluation of kinship homes.
- d. The child welfare worker will match the needs of the child with the kinship caregiver's willingness and capability to meet those needs.
- e. The child welfare worker will assess the kinship caregiver's appropriateness as a permanency option for the child.
- f. The child welfare worker will assess and implement support services that the kinship caregiver will need to maintain the child in his or her home.
- g. The child welfare worker will include family members in planning visitation.
- h. The child welfare worker will assist the kinship caregiver in understanding legal custody and adoption as permanency options for children.

**4. STRATEGIES**

- a. The agency will establish policy requiring kin to be considered as the first option for out-of-home care.
- b. The agency will develop guidelines and train staff on conducting kinship home evaluations and assessments.
- c. The agency will provide training related to cultural competence and kinship care.
- d. The agency will establish guidelines and train staff on permanency planning for children in kinship care.

**OUTCOME: Permanence and Well-being**

**M. STANDARD:** The child welfare worker will provide, coordinate, and monitor targeted services offered to kinship caregivers, children placed with kinship caregivers, and parents with children in kinship care to assure safety, permanence, and well-being for the child. The child welfare worker should be in contact with children in kinship placements and kinship caregivers at least once each month.

Staff Responsibilities	Agency Responsibilities
<p><b>1. KNOWLEDGE AND VALUE BASE</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. The child welfare worker must understand that children living in kinship care homes and their kinship caregivers should receive at least monthly contact from the child welfare worker.</li> <li>b. The child welfare worker must understand that parents of children living in kinship care need help enhancing their parenting skills; dealing with feelings of loss, anger, and separation; and achieving the goals listed in the service plan.</li> <li>c. The child welfare worker must know how to identify supports and services designed to assist the caregiver in understanding and coping with the multiple roles inherent in kinship care.</li> <li>d. The child welfare worker must have a working knowledge of the benefits for which kinship caregivers are eligible under state and federally supported programs.</li> <li>e. The child welfare worker must value and understand the importance of the parent/child bond to normal child growth and development.</li> <li>f. The child welfare worker must know how to assist kinship caregivers in assessing their willingness, capability, and commitment to provide permanence for a child.</li> <li>g. The child welfare worker must be familiar with community resources and how to access them for children, kinship caregivers, and parents.</li> <li>h. The child welfare worker must understand that permanence for children in kinship care includes the options of reunification with parents, legal guardianship, adoption by kin or non-relatives, or other long-term arrangements with kin.</li> </ul>	<p><b>3. BENCHMARKS OR MEASURES</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. Percentage of cases in which the child welfare worker contacted the kinship caregiver at least monthly.</li> <li>b. Percentage of cases in which the child welfare worker contacted the child at least monthly.</li> <li>c. Percentage of cases in which kinship caregivers were referred to supportive services.</li> <li>d. Percentage of cases in which kinship caregivers were referred to benefits.</li> <li>e. Percentage of cases in which kinship caregivers received responses to their requests for services.</li> <li>f. Percentage of cases in which children remained safe as measured by a risk and safety tool.</li> </ul>

**2. STRATEGIES**

- a. The child welfare worker will establish and maintain a minimum of monthly contact with the kinship caregivers and the children in their care.
- b. The child welfare worker will assess the needs of the parents, kinship caregivers, and children; make appropriate referrals for service; and monitor the use of services, making adjustments as needed.
- c. The child welfare worker will facilitate the kinship caregiver's access to benefits such as TANF, Medicaid, Supplemental Security Income, child support, and foster care board payments.
- d. The child welfare worker will provide the kinship family with information and referral and help access needed services or offer direct assistance.
- e. The child welfare worker will engage the kinship caregiver in an assessment and review of the child's progress to assure that services delivered support the child's safety and the permanency goal, and match the child's level of development.
- f. The child welfare worker will assist the kinship caregivers in determining their willingness, capability, and level of commitment to provide a permanent home.

**4. STRATEGIES**

- a. The agency will clearly define the roles, rights, and responsibilities of kinship caregivers and parents regarding receipt of services and assurance of safety, permanence, and well-being to children.
- b. The agency will develop policy that includes reunification with parents, legal guardianship with kin with or without subsidy, adoption by kin or non-relatives, or other sanctioned long-term arrangements with kin as viable permanency options for children in kinship care.
- c. The agency will establish policy requiring regular monthly contact by the child welfare worker with the kinship caregivers and the children when the county has custody of the children.
- d. The agency will publish and maintain a directory of support services and benefits that are available to kinship caregivers.
- e. The agency will develop procedures and protocols for how information about benefits will be made available to kinship caregivers.
- f. The agency will develop protocols for the child welfare worker's response to requests from kinship families in order to assist them in providing care and protection to the children.

**OUTCOME: Permanence and Timeliness**

**N. STANDARD:** The child welfare worker will make outreach efforts to the custodial and non-custodial parent from the point of intake and throughout the out-of-home care process to facilitate timely achievement of permanence for children. Outreach activities will be goal directed, based on a comprehensive family assessment, culturally relevant, and will include the parents in all aspects of service planning, service delivery, and case reviews (court and administrative).

Staff Responsibilities	Agency Responsibilities
<p><b>1. KNOWLEDGE AND VALUE BASE</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. The child welfare worker must know how to seek out and engage families in the casework and service delivery process in a timely and goal-directed manner.</li> <li>b. The child welfare worker must know how to conduct and document comprehensive family assessments, safety, and risk assessments at appropriate times throughout the length of out-of-home care.</li> <li>c. The child welfare worker must know how to facilitate an inclusive service planning process in working with the family.</li> <li>d. The child welfare worker must understand the concept of cultural competence, how one's own culture affects behavior and values, and how cultural and ethnic differences affect the delivery of services.</li> <li>e. The child welfare worker must know how to establish and modify the frequency and type of family contact commensurate with family needs and goals.</li> <li>f. The child welfare worker must know how to use tools (e.g., parent locator services, extended family and community contacts) to include parents in the out-of-home care process.</li> <li>g. The child welfare worker must know how to partner with families in assessing their needs, developing service plans, and using community resources without fostering dependence.</li> <li>h. The child welfare worker must know techniques for putting families at ease in service planning and other service related group meetings, including court and administrative reviews.</li> </ul>	<p><b>3. BENCHMARKS OR MEASURES</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. Number of placement cases in which parent participation in service planning was documented in the record.</li> <li>b. Number of cases in which non-custodial parents were located.</li> <li>c. Number of cases in which service plans were signed by both parents, custodial and non-custodial.</li> <li>d. Number of cases in which parents participated in administrative or court case reviews.</li> </ul>

- i. The child welfare worker must understand the role of denial, resistance, and anger and how these feelings impact the out-of-home care process.
- j. The child welfare worker must know how to use mutual decision making and conflict resolution.
- k. The child welfare worker must be able to help families make decisions and understand the consequences of decisions.
- l. The child welfare worker must know how to provide an opportunity for parents to make voluntary placement plans and agreements.
- m. The child welfare worker must be able to identify and incorporate family strengths in a family-focused approach to out-of-home care.

**2. STRATEGIES**

- a. The child welfare worker will maintain regular contact with the family by telephone, in person, and/or in writing.
- b. The child welfare worker will conduct regular reviews with the family of progress in all areas defined in the service plan.
- c. The child welfare worker will communicate to the family and the out-of-home caregiver the agency's expectations for achieving identified goals.
- d. The child welfare worker will meet regularly with the supervisor to discuss key issues related to the family's use of out-of-home care services.
- e. The child welfare worker will conduct comprehensive risk, safety, and family assessments at critical points in the out-of-home care process (i.e., beginning extended home visits, planning for return home).
- f. The child welfare worker will assist parents in establishing individual goals that will facilitate permanence for their child.
- g. The child welfare worker will advise families of voluntary placement options and court hearing procedures, and will encourage their participation.
- h. The child welfare worker will assist and support families in having legal representation.
- i. The child welfare worker's contact with families will focus on the service plan goals, an assessment of progress and key issues, and the content of the previous contact.

**4. STRATEGIES**

- a. The agency will establish policy related to outreach to custodial and non-custodial parents.
- b. The agency will establish guidelines for documenting outreach efforts to custodial and non-custodial parents.
- c. The agency will provide training on available tools to locate parents.
- d. The agency will develop a written guide for parents to assist them in understanding the out-of-home care process.
- e. The agency will establish policy and procedures for the use of voluntary placement agreements.
- f. The agency will establish policy related to case reviews by the child welfare supervisor with the child welfare worker.
- g. The agency will establish an administrative process to address parents' concerns and appeals related to the out-of-home care services.

**OUTCOME: Safety, Permanence, and Timeliness**

**O. STANDARD:** The child welfare worker will implement a progression of visitation plans based on an assessment of risk and safety factors; the developmental needs of the child; inclusive of siblings, extended family and foster parents; and related to service plan goals. Planned visits will be structured to provide an opportunity for parents to participate in routine child care activities and/or learn parenting skills in order to assure the safety of children and achieve timely permanence. Family visits should occur at least weekly to monitor, maintain, and improve family relationships and provide sufficient information to ensure timely permanence.

Staff Responsibilities	Agency Responsibilities
<p><b>1. KNOWLEDGE AND VALUE BASE</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. The child welfare worker must know how to conduct comprehensive safety, risk, and family assessments and incorporate them in visitation plans.</li> <li>b. The child welfare worker must know the regulations and laws related to family visiting and how to use them in establishing a visiting plan that is based on family needs and family dynamics.</li> <li>c. The child welfare worker must know how to match the frequency of visits with the needs of the child and family, and the progress of the out-of-home services.</li> <li>d. The child welfare worker must understand how visits between siblings and extended family members help maintain family ties and a sense of security and identity for the child.</li> <li>e. The child welfare worker must know how to use routine child care activities as a tool in visits to support the parent/child bond and provide opportunity for the practice of parenting skills.</li> <li>f. The child welfare worker must know how to assist parents in planning visitation activities related to the service plan goals.</li> <li>g. The child welfare worker must know how to help parents learn communication, play, and interaction techniques that are age appropriate for their child.</li> <li>h. The child welfare worker must know how to assess the progress of visits and use the assessment in planning subsequent visits.</li> </ul>	<p><b>3. BENCHMARKS OR MEASURES</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. Percentage of children in substitute care who had weekly visits with their parents without incidents causing harm or risk of harm.</li> <li>b. Number of cases in which the progress of visits was documented in the case record.</li> <li>c. Number of cases in which siblings and extended family were included in visiting plans.</li> <li>d. Number of cases in which visits were not occurring.</li> <li>e. Percentage of visits that were supervised.</li> <li>f. Analysis of the location of the visits and type of activity.</li> </ul>

- i. The child welfare worker must know how the assessment of family visits relates to permanency planning.
- j. The child welfare worker must understand the difference between discipline and punishment and be able to assist parents in developing appropriate methods.
- k. The child welfare worker must be able to assist families in developing skills related to budgeting, establishing safe child care plans, and assessing their child's educational, health, and developmental needs.
- l. The child welfare worker must know how to document the visiting plans and the progress.

**2. STRATEGIES**

- a. The child welfare worker will use risk, safety, and family assessment tools in developing visiting plans.
- b. The child welfare worker will facilitate the participation of families and caregivers in planning visits.
- c. The child welfare worker will include activities in the visiting plans that relate to specific service plan goals for families.
- d. The child welfare worker will include siblings and others significant to the child in the visiting plan.
- e. The child welfare worker will use supervisory conferences to review and assess the progress of the visits.
- f. The child welfare worker will review the progress of visits with the family and assist them in their own assessment of progress.
- g. The child welfare worker will identify community activities that families can use in visits with their children and assist them in learning how such activities relate to child growth and development.
- h. The child welfare worker will provide families with examples of appropriate discipline that they can use.
- i. The child welfare worker will use observations of the caregivers in establishing an assessment of visiting progress.

**4. STRATEGIES**

- a. The agency will provide training on the use of risk, safety, and family assessment.
- b. The agency will develop or identify tools that can be used in conducting risk, safety, and family assessments.
- c. The agency will provide staff training on how to plan, coordinate, implement, and assess visits, and incorporate these activities in service and permanency planning.
- d. The agency will establish policy that requires a review of visiting plans by child welfare supervisors with child welfare workers to determine progress and relationship to case dynamics and service plans.
- e. The agency will develop a mechanism to track agency and family compliance with regulatory and legal mandates.
- f. The agency will provide training on how to use visiting opportunities as a teaching tool for families to learn parenting skills.
- g. The agency will provide resources for safe, frequent visitation that promotes positive family interaction.

**OUTCOME: Permanence and Well-being**

**P. STANDARD:** The child welfare worker will plan and monitor service delivery that provides children and youth with age-appropriate developmental activities to assure readiness for reunification, independent living, or other permanency goal. Child development activities will include decision making and individual responsibility, holding part-time jobs, and other life skills appropriate to a child's age.

Staff Responsibilities	Agency Responsibilities
<p><b>1. KNOWLEDGE AND VALUE BASE</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. The child welfare worker must know how to coordinate and monitor service delivery</li> <li>b. The child welfare worker must have a working knowledge of the laws and regulations pertaining to children in out-of-home care.</li> <li>c. The child welfare worker must be aware of all permanency options and how to implement services that will facilitate the attainment of those options.</li> <li>d. The child welfare worker must know and understand the stages of development with regard to language and cognitive skills, attachment, and sense of identity.</li> <li>e. The child welfare worker must know how to plan activities (i.e., family visits, after school, and organizational) that relate specifically to various age groups and developmental levels.</li> <li>f. The child welfare worker must understand family dynamics as they relate to children's role development within the family.</li> <li>g. The child welfare worker must understand the concept of separation and loss and its impact on growth and development.</li> <li>h. The child welfare worker must know how to access community resources including counseling; drug and alcohol treatment; summer camps; tutorial programs; employment opportunities; day care; and educational, training, and life skills programs.</li> <li>i. The child welfare worker must know how to assist caregivers in helping children learn how to make decisions that are age appropriate, and take responsibility for the decisions.</li> <li>j. The child welfare worker must be able to identify and access supportive services for the caregiver to maintain the placement.</li> </ul>	<p><b>3. BENCHMARKS OR MEASURES</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. Percentage of age-appropriate youths in independent living skills programs.</li> <li>b. Number of cases in which the child age 14 and over signed the service plan.</li> <li>c. Number of children with drug and alcohol related issues who were involved in treatment programs.</li> <li>d. Number of children with part time/after school jobs.</li> <li>e. Percentage of children who achieve permanence within 12 months.</li> <li>f. Number of children in developmental programs such as Head Start.</li> </ul>

- k. The child welfare worker must know how to assist older youths in developing independent living skills.

**2. STRATEGIES**

- a. The child welfare worker will use supervision, training, and independent study to learn about child development, separation and loss, family dynamics, and activities that are appropriate for specific age groups.
- b. The child welfare worker will use supervision and independent study to learn the laws and regulations governing out-of-home care.
- c. The child welfare worker will assess and monitor the provision and use of services, and make appropriate changes and modifications to assure age-appropriate activities.
- d. The child welfare worker will include the child in planning service delivery when developmentally appropriate.
- e. The child welfare worker will maintain contact with service providers to review the child's progress and to assure that services delivered support the permanency goal, and match the child's level of development.
- f. The child welfare worker will become familiar with the location, range of services, and referral policies and procedures of community resources.
- g. The child welfare worker will directly provide, and assist caregivers in providing, opportunities for children to make decisions and understand the consequences of their decisions.
- h. The child welfare worker will assist caregivers in understanding and identifying the developmental needs of children.
- i. The child welfare worker will refer age-appropriate children to independent living skills programs.

**4. STRATEGIES**

- a. The agency will provide training for staff and caregivers on child development in general and specifically as it relates to separation and loss issues.
- b. The agency will establish policy related to youths' part time/after school employment, including the management of earned wages.
- c. The agency will develop and maintain current community resource directories.
- d. The agency will provide resources for youths to participate in class trips, proms, and college and vocational training school testing and application fees.
- e. The agency will initiate the scheduling of a permanency hearing to be held no later than 12 months after a child's placement.
- f. The agency will develop information systems that will track children in independent living skills programs, in drug and alcohol treatment programs, and who achieve permanence within 12 months.

**OUTCOME: Permanence and Well-being**

**Q. STANDARD:** The child welfare worker will support children's participation in family visits, their understanding of the parent/child relationship, and their feelings and behaviors associated with being in placement, as well as leaving placement to return home or obtain other permanent living arrangements.

Staff Responsibilities	Agency Responsibilities
<p><b>1. KNOWLEDGE AND VALUE BASE</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. The child welfare worker must value and understand how important the parent/child bond is to normal child growth and development.</li> <li>b. The child welfare worker must understand the concepts of separation and loss, and attachment.</li> <li>c. The child welfare worker must understand the importance of permanence for children.</li> <li>d. The child welfare worker must understand the purpose of family visitation and its relationship to family reunification and other permanence for children.</li> <li>e. The child welfare worker must value and know how to use a strengths-based approach to work with families.</li> <li>f. The child welfare worker must know how to use the dynamics of the child's culture in planning for permanence.</li> <li>g. The child welfare worker must value the worth and rights of children.</li> <li>h. The child welfare worker must know how to include children in planning when it is age appropriate.</li> <li>i. The child welfare worker must understand how parental drug and alcohol abuse affects children in the family.</li> <li>j. The child welfare worker must understand the influence that family dynamics has on children's adjustment to placement.</li> </ul>	<p><b>3. BENCHMARKS OR MEASURES</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. Number of cases in which the progress of family visitation was documented in the record.</li> <li>b. Percentage of children referred for counseling specifically to address behaviors associated with separation and loss.</li> <li>c. Number of staff and caregivers trained on the concept of separation and loss, and attachment theory.</li> <li>d. Number of children for whom the discharge plan included a strategy for maintaining significant relationships that were established while in placement.</li> </ul>

**2. STRATEGIES**

- a. The child welfare worker will help children identify and appropriately express feelings associated with placement and family visitation.
- b. The child welfare worker will help children understand the relationship between their feelings and behavior.
- c. The child welfare worker will provide services necessary to address behavioral and emotional issues associated with placement, drug and alcohol use, and domestic violence.
- d. The child welfare worker will actively engage children in the planning of services and permanence.
- e. The child welfare worker will prepare and encourage children's participation in family visitation.
- f. The child welfare worker will assist children, when they return home, in maintaining significant relationships that they developed while in placement.

**4. STRATEGIES**

- a. The agency will provide training to all staff and caregivers on child development in general and specifically as it relates to separation and loss issues.
- b. The agency will establish guidelines for supporting and maintaining children's significant relationships while in placement.
- c. The agency will establish visitation policy and protocols, and train staff.
- d. The agency will provide resources for safe, frequent visitation that promotes positive family interaction.
- e. The agency will develop policy and procedures related to preparing children for family reunification.
- f. The agency will provide training for staff and caregivers on behaviors that children may exhibit as a result of separation from their families, the meaning of the behavior, and how to assist children.

**OUTCOME: Permanence and Well-being**

**R. STANDARD:** The child welfare worker will support the service delivery of foster parents and other caregivers by routinely including them as team members in the decision-making, planning, and case review process in order to promote the well-being of children and the achievement of timely permanence.

Staff Responsibilities	Agency Responsibilities
<p><b>1. KNOWLEDGE AND VALUE BASE</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. The child welfare worker must understand the value of including foster parents and other caregivers as team members in planning, decision making, and assessment of service delivery, and in case reviews.</li> <li>b. The child welfare worker must know how to establish working relationships with foster parents and other out-of-home caregivers.</li> <li>c. The child welfare worker must know how to facilitate team building, conduct meetings, and facilitate the input of all team members.</li> <li>d. The child welfare worker must understand the role of foster parents.</li> <li>e. The child welfare worker must understand the concept of permanency planning and be able to communicate it to foster parents and other caregivers.</li> <li>f. The child welfare worker must know the laws and regulations governing time frames for service delivery and permanence for children, and be able to interpret them for foster parents and other caregivers.</li> <li>g. The child welfare worker must know how to include foster parents and other caregivers in the after-care plan as determined by the team.</li> <li>h. The child welfare worker must know how to identify the needs of foster parents and other caregivers related to the care of the child.</li> <li>i. The child welfare worker must know how to interpret the needs of the child to foster parents and other caregivers.</li> </ul>	<p><b>3. BENCHMARKS OR MEASURES</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. Number of foster parents and other caregivers who attended planning meetings and case reviews.</li> <li>b. Percentage of cases in which foster parents or other caregivers participated in the after-care plan.</li> <li>c. Number of foster parents and other caregivers trained on permanency planning concepts and the applicable laws and regulations.</li> <li>d. Percentage of cases in which foster parents or other caregivers received notice of formal case reviews.</li> </ul>

**2. STRATEGIES**

- a. The child welfare worker will coordinate team meetings and provide notice of the meetings to foster parents or other caregivers.
- b. The child welfare worker will include the foster parents or other caregivers in assessing the child's progress and developmental needs.
- c. The child welfare worker will partner with the foster parent or other caregivers in assessing their needs related to the care of the child.
- d. The child welfare worker will assist foster parents or other caregivers in making informed decisions about whether to accept a child referred to them by providing information related to the strengths, health needs, and educational needs of the child, and family strengths and relationships.
- e. The child welfare worker will meet face-to-face with foster parents at least monthly to review and assess the needs of children and the services that they are receiving.
- f. The child welfare worker will provide information to foster parents or other caregivers about resources to meet their needs related to the care of the child.
- g. The child welfare worker will provide information about service delivery related court orders to foster parents and other caregivers.
- h. The child welfare worker will provide notice of administrative and court case reviews to foster parents and other caregivers.
- i. The child welfare worker will prepare foster parents and other caregivers for their role in service-related activities such as court hearings and case reviews.
- j. The child welfare worker will facilitate an assessment of how the foster parents or other caregivers can participate in the support of an after-care plan.
- k. The child welfare worker will document the participation of foster parents and other caregivers in team meetings and case reviews.

**4. STRATEGIES**

- a. The agency will develop or amend existing foster parent/other caregiver training to address team participation, permanency planning and related laws, time frames and regulations, and court-related roles and responsibilities.
- b. The agency will provide training for staff on team-building techniques, leadership skills, agenda development, and conducting meetings.
- c. The agency will provide training for staff on the laws and regulations governing out-of-home care and permanency planning for children.
- d. The agency will establish policy and related protocols that require the inclusion of foster parents or other caregivers in service planning and delivery, case reviews, and court hearings.
- e. The agency will provide foster parents and other caregivers with 24-hour access to the agency.

**OUTCOME: Safety and Permanence**

**S. STANDARD:** The child welfare worker will coordinate pre-service and in-service training for foster families and other caregivers in order to prepare them, through information and skill development, for their role and responsibility, and to assure retention and quality care for children. Pre-service training will provide a minimum of 16 hours of instruction and information.

Staff Responsibilities	Agency Responsibilities
<p><b>1. KNOWLEDGE AND VALUE BASE</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. The child welfare worker must understand the relationship between foster parent preparation and retention, as well as the capacity to meet performance standards.</li> <li>b. The child welfare worker must value training as a form of support to foster parents.</li> <li>c. The child welfare worker must know how to use pre-service training as a tool in assessing foster parent capability and readiness to provide service to children and families.</li> <li>d. The child welfare worker must understand that pre-service training provides foster parents with a tool for self-selection to continue or drop out of the assessment and approval process.</li> <li>e. The child welfare worker must know how to match in-service training with foster parent strengths and areas for skill enhancement.</li> <li>f. The child welfare worker must know how to assess foster parent performance and use the assessment with the foster parent to identify training needs.</li> <li>g. The child welfare worker must be familiar with training resources and adult education theory.</li> <li>h. The child welfare worker must know how to assist foster parents in applying concepts learned in training to their childcare responsibilities and tasks.</li> </ul>	<p><b>3. BENCHMARKS OR MEASURES</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. Percentage of foster parents who began and completed a minimum of 16 hours of pre-service training.</li> <li>b. Percentage of foster parents who participated in required hours of in-service training annually</li> <li>c. Number of cases in which training attended matched identified needs.</li> <li>d. Percentage of foster parents that remained in service for 12 months after pre-service training and initial approval.</li> <li>e. Number of children requiring re-placement due to lack of foster parent training and skill to meet the child's needs.</li> </ul>

**2. STRATEGIES**

- a. The child welfare worker will identify pre-service and in-service training opportunities for foster parents and coordinate access.
- b. The child welfare worker will document foster parent participation in training and provide foster parents with a record of their participation.
- c. The child welfare worker will match in-service training with foster parent skill level and needs in order to retain skilled caregivers and assure quality care for children.
- d. The child welfare worker will assess foster parents' ability to demonstrate skills learned in their care for children.
- e. The child welfare worker will consider foster parents' other responsibilities, such as work hours and day care, when coordinating pre-service and in-service training.
- f. The worker will use a variety of training tools and settings based on the unique characteristics of the community, the families, and agency resources.

**4. STRATEGIES**

- a. The agency will establish a policy requiring a minimum of 16 hours of pre-service training for all foster parents.
- b. The agency will establish policy that requires the integration of pre-service training with the foster parent assessment and selection process.
- c. The agency will identify or develop a tool for conducting foster parent assessments.
- d. The agency will develop a mechanism to track foster parent participation in in-service training.
- e. The agency will make resources available to provide foster parents with a comfortable setting for learning.
- f. The agency will make resources available to purchase training materials and curriculum.
- g. The agency will train staff on adult education techniques.
- h. The agency will require pre-service and in-service training that includes family dynamics, building relationships with children's families, separation and loss, child abuse and neglect, understanding cultural differences, permanency planning, family visitation, the role of the court, and permanency planning principles.
- i. The agency will establish guidelines for matching foster parent skill level and training.

**OUTCOME: Safety, Permanence, and Well-being**

**A. STANDARD:** The monitoring of case activities by the child welfare worker is an ongoing process which involves a determination of child safety and whether specific casework activities outlined in the service plan actually occurred within the time frame listed in the plan. Monitoring should include identifying whether contacts between child, parents, and child welfare worker; contacts between child welfare workers and providers; contacts between providers and families; and provision of services to children and families have occurred within the specified time frames. Monitoring should occur at a minimum of once per month and documentation of the results of monitoring activities should occur within three to five working days.

Staff Responsibilities	Agency Responsibilities
<p><b>1. KNOWLEDGE AND VALUE BASE</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. The child welfare worker and child welfare supervisor must understand the casework process including assessment, service planning, service delivery, and monitoring and evaluation.</li> <li>b. The child welfare worker and child welfare supervisor must recognize the connection between monitoring and timelines in federal and state regulations and agency policy.</li> <li>c. The child welfare worker and child welfare supervisor must know how to monitor cases against service plan requirements on a monthly basis and include the elements of child safety, family progress, and fiscal accountability.</li> <li>d. The child welfare worker must know how to elicit and document information from service providers in order to monitor the provision and use of services.</li> <li>e. The child welfare worker and child welfare supervisor must understand the importance of maintaining information on contacts between parent, child and worker; worker and provider; and provider and family.</li> <li>f. The child welfare worker must have effective organizational and time management skills.</li> <li>g. The child welfare worker and child welfare supervisor must understand the dynamics of substance abuse and domestic violence.</li> </ul>	<p><b>3. BENCHMARKS OR MEASURES</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. Number of contacts between the family and the child welfare worker based on the service plan.</li> <li>b. Number of contacts between providers and family.</li> <li>c. Number of contacts between child welfare workers and providers.</li> <li>d. Number of contacts between children and the child welfare worker.</li> <li>e. Number of plans in which all specified services were provided to families.</li> <li>f. Percentage of cases with current documentation.</li> <li>g. Number of service plans where all child welfare worker activities listed in the plan have occurred.</li> <li>h. Percentage of cases where monitoring occurred at least once a month.</li> </ul>

**2. STRATEGIES**

- a. The child welfare worker will maintain regular contact with families (biological, kin, and foster) in order to determine child safety and whether identified services are being provided within specified time frames.
- b. The child welfare worker will collaborate with professionals from other systems in the planning, delivery, and monitoring of services for families.
- c. The child welfare worker will document activities with a family in the service plan in an organized, chronological, and timely manner as specified in agency guidelines.
- d. The child welfare worker, with the child welfare supervisor's assistance, will include in the service plan a plan for contacts with the child and family, a plan for monthly monitoring, and a plan for documentation of monitoring.

**4. STRATEGIES**

- a. The agency will develop case monitoring policy, procedure, and expectations specifying contacts between the parent, child, and child welfare worker; worker and provider; provider and family; and whether services have occurred within specified time frames outlined in the service plan.
- b. The agency will develop a process for incorporating the monitoring results with service plans to link monitoring to the services provided and the goals established.
- c. The agency will develop and implement documentation format expectations for monitoring activities.
- d. The agency will establish policy requiring case monitoring at a minimum of once per month.
- e. The agency will establish a policy requiring changes of services as a result of case monitoring and case review.
- f. The agency will develop a cross-system training program regarding substance abuse and domestic violence.

**OUTCOME: Safety, Permanence, Timeliness, and Well-being**

**B. STANDARD:** Evaluation of casework activities by the child welfare worker is an ongoing process which involves assessing whether casework activities are effectively ensuring child safety and assisting the child and the family to achieve goals identified in the service plan. Evaluation should include a review of the outcomes of services provided and an assessment of the quality of contacts between child welfare workers, children, and families; between providers and families; and between child welfare workers and providers. Evaluation should occur at a minimum of once per month, and documentation of the results of monthly evaluation activities should occur within three to five working days.

Staff Responsibilities	Agency Responsibilities
<p><b>1. KNOWLEDGE AND VALUE BASE</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. The child welfare worker and child welfare supervisor must understand that evaluation of service effectiveness is a critical component of the casework process and must occur at a minimum of once per month.</li> <li>b. The child welfare worker and child welfare supervisor must know that evaluation is an active process that identifies ineffective services and revises the service plan based on reassessment information.</li> <li>c. The child welfare worker must be able to determine whether progress toward service goals and objectives has been made in a timely and consistent manner.</li> <li>d. The child welfare worker must understand that compliance with the service plan may not lead to achievement of the established goals and objectives.</li> <li>e. The child welfare worker must understand that the results of the evaluation process must be documented within three to five working days in the case record, and the service plan must be revised per agency policy.</li> <li>f. The child welfare worker must know how to effect changes in services that are unsatisfactory.</li> </ul>	<p><b>3. BENCHMARKS OR MEASURES</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. Percentage of cases in which evaluation resulted in a service plan revision to ensure safety and assist the family in meeting goals.</li> <li>b. Percentage of cases evaluated a minimum of once per month.</li> <li>c. Percentage of cases where evaluation included:               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. assessment of the quality of contacts between children, families, and child welfare workers.</li> <li>2. assessment of the quality of contacts between providers and families.</li> <li>3. assessment of the quality of contacts between workers and providers.</li> <li>4. review of the outcomes of services provided.</li> </ul> </li> <li>d. Percentage of children in foster care who experienced more than two equal or more restrictive settings within 12 consecutive months.</li> <li>e. Percentage of youths discharged from substitute care at age 18 or above who have a high school diploma or GED.</li> <li>f. Percentage of families who re-enter services within 12 months of discharge.</li> </ul>

- g. The child welfare worker must know how to determine if factors such as domestic violence, substance abuse, or mental illness are affecting the ability of the family and service providers to achieve the goals and objectives.
- h. The child welfare worker and child welfare supervisor must understand how to effectively use the contacts between workers, children, and families; between providers and workers; and between providers and families to ensure child safety and achieve the goals identified in the service plan.

**2. STRATEGIES**

- a. The child welfare worker will participate in a continuous evaluation of casework activities and document results at least monthly.
- b. The child welfare worker will assure that evaluation includes at least child safety and effectiveness in achieving service plan goals, quality of worker contacts with all concerned parties, and a review of outcomes.

**4. STRATEGIES**

- a. The agency will develop case evaluation policy, procedure, and expectations specifying quality of contacts between parent, child, and child welfare worker; worker and provider; provider and family and effectiveness of services in achieving goals outlined in the service plan.
- b. The agency will establish a policy requiring case evaluation at least once per month.
- c. The agency will develop a standardized documentation format for recording information about direct service evaluation of casework activities and purchased services.
- d. The agency will provide training and tools for staff to assess the effectiveness of the evaluation process.
- e. The agency will provide direction and support for the evaluation process, and for decision making and actions to be taken once the process is completed.
- f. The agency will develop a cross-system training program regarding substance abuse and domestic violence.

**OUTCOME: Safety, Permanence, Timeliness, and Well-being**

**C. STANDARD:** Information obtained during monitoring and evaluation activities by the child welfare worker should be used to reassess the child's safety; the child's educational, psychological, and emotional needs; and the family's strengths and needs in order to make revisions to service plans. These revised services plans should reflect any changes, reductions, or increases in service configuration based on family progress, family strengths, barriers to service delivery, newly discovered issues, and the effectiveness of current services in achieving identified outcomes. Revisions should be made as frequently as needed but not less than every six months.

Staff Responsibilities	Agency Responsibilities
<p><b>1. KNOWLEDGE AND VALUE BASE</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. The child welfare worker must know how to revise the service plan based on the reassessment of family strengths and needs, child safety, and the evaluation of needed services.</li> <li>b. The child welfare worker must know how to engage families in determining the types of services needed to reach the desired outcome.</li> <li>c. The child welfare worker must know available service resources and how to access these services.</li> <li>d. The child welfare worker must know how to revise the plan in order to build on family capabilities and past successes.</li> <li>e. The child welfare worker must know how to respond to urgent issues in a family, determining a plan of action to resolve these problems.</li> <li>f. The child welfare worker must know the agency procedure for revising court-ordered service plan components.</li> </ul>	<p><b>3. BENCHMARKS OR MEASURES</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. Percentage of service plans that reassess child safety, family strengths, and family needs every six months.</li> <li>b. Percentage of service plans changed at six-month intervals based on reassessment.</li> <li>c. Percentage of service plans changed more frequently than every six months as a result of reassessment.</li> </ul>

**2. STRATEGIES**

- a. The child welfare worker and child welfare supervisor will propose modifications to the service plan based on a review of child safety and family functioning, including educational, psychological, and emotional needs and status of the family members as frequently as needed, but no less than every six months.
- b. The child welfare worker will discuss changes in service with identified treatment team members, including parents, to achieve optimum progress and desired outcomes.
- c. The child welfare worker will document, in the case notes and service plan, changes in service or the level of services and the reasons for the changes.
- d. The child welfare worker and child welfare supervisor will attend training on assessment skills and the connection between service planning and service delivery.

**4. STRATEGIES**

- a. The agency will develop a process for staff to report concerns about ineffective services so that changes can be made in program design or purchase-of-service contracts.
- b. The agency will train staff in evaluation skills and the service plan revision process specific to child safety, child development, and family functioning.
- c. The agency will train staff to use the information related to family progress, family strengths, barriers to service delivery, newly discovered issues, and the effectiveness of current services to revise the service plan.
- d. The agency will provide policy, procedure, and training regarding the court's role and the agency's obligations in implementing service plan revisions.
- e. The agency will develop monitoring and evaluation activities needed to reassess and revise the service plan.
- f. The agency will negotiate with the court regarding the need for timely revisions of service plans and will help the court understand that plan revision is part of the ongoing casework process.

**OUTCOME: Safety, Permanence, Timeliness, and Well-being**

**D. STANDARD:** The child welfare supervisor should provide oversight of the casework monitoring and evaluation processes in weekly supervision in order to support the achievement of the goals outlined in the service plan. Child welfare supervisors must assist child welfare workers in using the information gathered to assess safety and service needs, identify types and suitability of services, determine the effectiveness of services in achieving positive outcomes, and make needed changes in planned services.

Staff Responsibilities	Agency Responsibilities
<p><b>1. KNOWLEDGE AND VALUE BASE</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. The child welfare supervisor must know how to help the child welfare worker monitor and evaluate the casework process to achieve service plan goals.</li> <li>b. The child welfare supervisor must know how, during weekly supervision, to assure that child welfare workers are engaged in ongoing monitoring and evaluation.</li> <li>c. The child welfare supervisor must know and be able to train child welfare workers on applicable laws, regulations, agency policy, and associated timelines.</li> <li>d. The child welfare supervisor must know how to help child welfare workers write service plans.</li> <li>e. The child welfare supervisor must be able to help child welfare workers identify the suitability of services based on parents' developmental level and cultural identity.</li> <li>f. The child welfare supervisor must be able to help workers identify and access needed resources.</li> </ul>	<p><b>3. BENCHMARKS OR MEASURES</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. Percentage of child welfare worker supervisory sessions held on a weekly basis.</li> <li>b. Number of cases reviewed during each supervisory session.</li> <li>c. Percentage of supervisory sessions in which safety, service needs, and the family's use of services were clearly documented as part of the discussion.</li> </ul>

**2. STRATEGIES**

- a. The child welfare supervisor will regularly use weekly supervision to review cases, service plans, and written documentation, and will provide guidance to the child welfare worker in incorporating information learned into the service planning process.
- b. The child welfare supervisor will review case records on a regular basis and sign the dictation to indicate review of the material in dictation.

**4. STRATEGIES**

- a. The agency will ensure that supervisors provide weekly supervision to new child welfare workers to provide oversight for case monitoring and evaluation.
- b. The agency will establish clear expectations that supervisors will assist child welfare workers to:
  - 1. assess safety and service needs.
  - 2. identify types and suitability of services.
  - 3. determine the effectiveness of services in achieving positive outcomes.
- c. The agency will establish policy that assigns specific responsibility to staff who must make needed changes in planned services and must support the family's achievement of the goals outlined in the service plan.

**OUTCOME: Safety, Permanence, and Well-being**

**E. STANDARD:** The child welfare worker should document specific reasons and rationale for changes made in planned services as a result of the monitoring and evaluation processes. This documentation should outline the facts that inform decision making and the reasons for selecting a course of action.

**Staff Responsibilities****1. KNOWLEDGE AND VALUE BASE**

- a. The child welfare worker must understand how to collect and analyze information that leads to timely decision making.
- b. The child welfare worker must recognize that decision making plays a key role in the casework process.
- c. The child welfare worker must be able to clearly and concisely document facts and objective observations that lead to a decision to maintain or to change case direction.
- d. The child welfare worker must be able to document the decisions that are made.
- e. The child welfare worker must know how to document the use of specific facts to establish the framework for a decision and the relationship of the framework to the actions taken.

**Agency Responsibilities****3. BENCHMARKS OR MEASURES**

- a. Percentage of cases with changes documented.
- b. Percentage of cases with the rationale for the changes documented.

**2. STRATEGIES**

- a. The child welfare worker will effectively communicate in writing the specific reasons and rationale for changes recommended as a result of the monitoring and evaluation process.
- b. The child welfare supervisor will assist child welfare workers with effective written communication by reviewing their written work, modeling, and providing educational opportunities.
- c. The child welfare supervisor will develop a training plan for child welfare workers who need assistance in effective documentation.
- d. The child welfare worker will participate in training to learn the importance of written communication and to improve writing skills.

**4. STRATEGIES**

- a. The agency will establish a specific format for documenting reasons and rationale for changes.
- b. The agency will stress, through policies and recording protocols, the importance of documenting the rationale and reasons for changes.
- c. The agency will provide training on writing skills.
- d. The agency will provide training on effective decision making and how to use facts, obtained through monitoring and evaluation, which impact decision making.

**OUTCOME: Safety, Permanence, and Well-being**

**F. STANDARD:** Families should be engaged at each step of the monitoring, evaluation, and service plan review process. Service planning, changes in service planning, and casework decisions should be made in collaboration with the family consistent with assuring the child's safety and his or her educational, psychological, emotional, cultural, and physical needs.

Staff Responsibilities	Agency Responsibilities
<p><b>1. KNOWLEDGE AND VALUE BASE</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. The child welfare worker and child welfare supervisor must understand normal child development, family dynamics, and ethnic and cultural differences.</li> <li>b. The child welfare worker and child welfare supervisor must be committed to the importance of family self-determination, consistent with child safety and needs.</li> <li>c. The child welfare worker and child welfare supervisor must be committed to and understand family engagement and collaboration.</li> <li>d. The child welfare worker must understand how to communicate with families of diverse cultures.</li> <li>e. The child welfare worker must know how to interact with the family in a manner appropriate to the developmental abilities of individual family members.</li> <li>f. The child welfare worker must value family participation as necessary to promote commitment to and cooperation with the service plan.</li> </ul>	<p><b>3. BENCHMARKS OR MEASURES</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. Percentage of families that participated in service plan reviews.</li> <li>b. Percentage of cases in which documentation indicated family participation in the monitoring and evaluation process.</li> <li>c. Percentage of cases in which changes in the service plan were made in collaboration with families.</li> <li>d. Number of complaints received.</li> <li>e. Number of complaints resolved.</li> </ul>

**2. STRATEGIES**

- a. The child welfare worker will communicate in a language and style understood by families.
- b. The child welfare worker will provide practical and effective means of assuring that families can be present in every aspect of the planning and review process.
- c. The child welfare worker will assure, to the extent possible and consistent with child safety and needs, that family preferences and ideas are incorporated into the planning and review process.
- d. The child welfare worker will assure that families understand their roles and contributions and the roles and contributions of all the involved agencies and professionals.
- e. The child welfare worker will ensure, to the extent possible, that all involved service providers are respectful to families and that services are provided in a coordinated manner.

**4. STRATEGIES**

- a. The agency will provide a clear policy concerning respect for and inclusion of families.
- b. The agency will provide training and supervision to assure meaningful family participation.
- c. The agency will include family feedback in its ongoing evaluation of agency services.
- d. The agency will provide support such as transportation, child care, and flexible work schedules, to enable family participation.
- e. The agency will establish an internal process for responding to the family's complaints.
- f. The agency will establish policy regarding circumstances in which family involvement would jeopardize family or child safety.

**OUTCOME: Safety, Permanence, Well-being, and Timeliness**

**G. STANDARD:** Internal agency case reviews should evaluate child safety, the connection between assessment and service planning, and progress toward the objectives and goals outlined in the service plan. The review should generate recommendations to ensure child safety and movement toward achieving these objectives and goals. The review should be a group decision-making process conducted on all cases at least every six months, and should involve the assigned child welfare worker and supervisor, as well as management staff.

Staff Responsibilities	Agency Responsibilities
<p><b>1. KNOWLEDGE AND VALUE BASE</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. The child welfare worker must understand how to present case information to describe accurately the situation of the family and child, including an assessment of child safety.</li> <li>b. The child welfare worker must understand the role of review in the service planning and delivery process.</li> <li>c. Staff must be able to document the review process and recommendations.</li> <li>d. The child welfare worker must be able to identify progress, recognize barriers, and revise the service plan to meet goals and objectives.</li> <li>e. The child welfare supervisor must assure that the case review covers all pertinent information as required of the agency case review process, including the safety assessment and safety plan.</li> <li>f. The child welfare supervisor must assure that the case review and revised service plan adequately address service goals and objectives.</li> <li>g. The child welfare supervisor must be able to identify and access needed resources to implement recommendations.</li> <li>h. The child welfare supervisor must know how to identify and address systematic barriers/concerns which become evident in the review process.</li> <li>i. The child welfare supervisor must assure the adequacy of the documentation of the service plan review and recommendations.</li> <li>j. The child welfare worker must know how to incorporate identified risk factors into the review and service planning process.</li> </ul>	<p><b>3. BENCHMARKS OR MEASURES</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. Percentage of cases which were reviewed every six months.</li> <li>b. Percentage of second reviews in which all recommendations had been implemented.</li> <li>c. Length of time a case remained open after first review.</li> <li>d. Number of child deaths caused by child abuse or neglect in open cases or cases closed within the last 12 months.</li> <li>e. Percentage of case review conferences which included worker, supervisor, and management staff.</li> <li>f. Percentage of children who achieved permanence.</li> <li>g. Percentage of children reopened for services due to abuse and neglect within five years of closing.</li> <li>h. Percentage of case which included a safety plan, goals, and objectives.</li> </ul>

**2. STRATEGIES**

- a. The child welfare supervisor will identify and schedule cases for review on a timely basis.
- b. The child welfare worker and child welfare supervisor must participate in the six-month agency case review process as outlined in policy.
- c. The child welfare worker and child welfare supervisor will implement recommendations based on child safety and identified goals and objectives.

**4. STRATEGIES**

- a. The agency will develop protocols for a group case review process in collaboration with staff.
- b. The agency will establish review mechanisms for all service areas, i.e., in-home services, placement services, etc.
- c. The agency will track implementation of review recommendations.
- d. The agency management staff, through the review process, will identify and address systemic, service availability, and case practice issues of concern.
- e. The agency will provide the staff with access to information and results of research which would assist the review process by matching effective services with specific family situations.
- f. The agency will provide or identify training on substance abuse, domestic violence, cultural issues, and child development to enable staff to assess child safety and the family situation in order to identify effective services.
- g. The agency will support the review process by ensuring management involvement.
- h. The agency will provide the time and supports needed to implement the case review process.

**OUTCOME: Safety, Permanence, and Well-being**

**A. STANDARD:** Agency management must assure that agreements and protocols are in place with all the major service systems, including mental health, housing, employment assistance, mental retardation, law enforcement, domestic violence, education, substance abuse, county assistance office, etc. The agreements must assure that families and children can receive prompt and ongoing services within the family's cultural context throughout the casework process. Agreements must also assure that staff can receive and share information when necessary. These agreements and protocols must specify referral procedures, collaboration and communication protocols, conflict resolution strategies, financial arrangements, confidentiality, child safety issues, identified time frames, and available service units. These agreements should be reviewed annually.

Staff Responsibilities	Agency Responsibilities
<p><b>1. KNOWLEDGE AND VALUE BASE</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. Staff must understand that families are best served when all agency systems collaborate to assure integrated service plans and service delivery.</li> <li>b. Staff must be aware of the content of the agreements and protocols, know where they are physically located in the office, and whom to contact with questions.</li> <li>c. Staff must be aware of any changes as a result of the annual review.</li> <li>d. Staff must know how to apply in practice the contents of these agreements.</li> </ul>	<p><b>3. BENCHMARKS OR MEASURES</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. Percentage of staff trained on the agreements.</li> <li>b. Percentage of staff responsible for casework activities who followed the procedures of each agreement and protocol.</li> <li>c. Number of key systems which were identified as needing an agreement and had completed agreements and protocols.</li> <li>d. Percentage of agreements or protocols reviewed on an annual basis for continued need and effectiveness.</li> <li>e. Percentage of agreements or protocols that had all the elements identified in the standard.</li> <li>f. Percentage of services delivered which adhered to time frames outlined in agreements.</li> <li>g. Percentage of service units utilized as specified in agreements.</li> </ul>

**2. STRATEGIES**

- a. Staff will be trained on the effectiveness of collaboration in providing services to children and families and how to use the concept of collaboration in day to day case work activities.
- b. Staff will be trained on the content and process of these agreements and protocols and any changes made as a result of the annual review.

**4. STRATEGIES**

- a. The agency will identify key systems with which agreements and protocols are necessary and appropriate personnel with whom to develop needed agreements and protocols. Systems should include those involved in substance abuse, mental health, housing, health care, domestic violence, and the county assistance office.
- b. The agency will identify staff within the agency who are most knowledgeable in referral, fiscal, and service procedures and provisions and include them in planning and drafting these agreements and protocols.
- c. The agency will develop a centralized resource of all agreements and protocols.
- d. The agency will provide training for staff to ensure that all agency personnel are aware of the existence, content, and purpose of all agreements and protocols.
- e. The agency management will provide training on the purpose of collaboration in service delivery and cross-system training.
- f. The agency management will designate a contact person for each agreement or protocol to assist agency personnel who have questions or require assistance.
- g. The agency management will create a process for monitoring, evaluating, and revising agreements and protocols.

**OUTCOME: Safety, Permanence, and Well-being**

**B. STANDARD:** Agency management will develop policies and procedures which assure the continuing education and professional development of all staff through the process of annual, ongoing, individualized staff development plans. The individualized plans must be based on mutually assessed needs for performance improvement and must incorporate a range of ongoing educational and training activities related to practice.

Staff Responsibilities	Agency Responsibilities
<p><b>1. KNOWLEDGE AND VALUE BASE</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. Management staff must view continuing education and training as a critical component in developing and maintaining qualified staff.</li> <li>b. Staff must understand agency policies and procedures in relation to the development of individualized staff development plans, including policies regarding continuing education and training opportunities.</li> <li>c. Staff must understand the need for an individualized assessment of training needs involving the staff member and his/her supervisor.</li> <li>d. Staff must recognize that in order for training to be effective, it must be reflected in both individual practice and agency policy.</li> <li>e. Staff must understand that job performance could be improved through attendance at training and applying in practice the material learned. Staff must understand that skill development through training is a continuous process.</li> <li>f. Child welfare supervisors must understand their key role in identifying training needs and transferring the knowledge obtained in training into improvements in casework practice.</li> </ul>	<p><b>3. BENCHMARKS OR MEASURES</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. Percentage of staff who had complete and current individualized training needs assessments.</li> <li>b. Percentage of staff who attended specific training that had been identified as an individual need for that person.</li> <li>c. Percentage of performance evaluations that identified professional development plans.</li> <li>d. Percentage of performance evaluations that referenced the impact of training on the individual's performance during the year.</li> <li>e. Number of training sessions attended by child welfare workers, child welfare supervisors, and private agency staff.</li> <li>f. Percentage of child welfare supervisors that implemented transfer of learning concepts with their staff.</li> <li>g. Percentage of staff that achieved professional development goals as stated in the individualized staff development plan.</li> </ul>

**2. STRATEGIES**

- a. Staff will complete annual individualized training needs assessments, based on their knowledge, values, and skills, which will identify content areas, levels of training needed, and the completion of certification requirements.
- b. Staff will attend training as outlined in their individualized training needs assessment.
- c. The child welfare supervisor will identify training needs as part of a knowledge/values/skills assessment in order to recognize professional growth and identify areas of emphasis for further improvement.
- d. The child welfare supervisor will identify the impact of training as part of the annual performance evaluation process.
- e. The child welfare supervisor will assist staff with the integration of content from the training into actual performance of casework activities.
- f. Staff will use mentoring relationships to encourage and enhance learning.
- g. Staff will utilize opportunities to pursue advanced education to expand their knowledge base.
- h. Staff, resource parents, and private providers will attend training together to enhance their understanding of collaborative roles and to share expertise.

**4. STRATEGIES**

- a. The agency will develop and implement a protocol for completing individualized training needs assessments for staff.
- b. The agency will use the results of needs assessments to plan and schedule training.
- c. The agency will develop clear policies and procedures for continuing education and training opportunities, including expectations, reimbursement, request and approvals, documentation, time recording for training, and connection to advancement.
- d. The agency will develop a plan for assisting staff in achieving higher education goals.
- e. The agency will assure that child welfare supervisors are aware and knowledgeable about their role as educators, including the importance of transfer of learning.
- f. The agency will develop a resource library.
- g. The agency will develop a mechanism for locating suitable training opportunities for staff.

**OUTCOME: Safety, Permanence, and Well-being**

**C. STANDARD:** Agency management will assure the implementation of a management information system which collects, organizes, and reports necessary data to track outcomes for children and families. This data must be linked to Results Based Management outcomes, Standards of Practice benchmarks, and the Needs Based Budget process.

**Staff Responsibilities****1. KNOWLEDGE AND VALUE BASE**

- a. Staff must understand how the management information system works and how best to integrate its use into daily work.
- b. Staff must know how to access, analyze, and interpret data from the system in order to gather the information necessary to achieve positive outcomes for children and families.
- c. Staff must understand the importance of entering accurate and complete data into the MIS system.
- d. Management staff must understand how to use data from the management information system to develop needs based budgets that reflect the anticipated needs of families served by the agency.
- e. Staff must understand the need to use data to inform decision making and identify successful practices.

**Agency Responsibilities****3. BENCHMARKS OR MEASURES**

- a. Management information system implemented.
- b. Percentage of compliance measures that were monitored using the management information system.
- c. Percentage of data elements analyzed in the MIS which reflected information needed for the Needs Based Budget process.
- d. Percentage of data elements linked to the proposed measures in Results Based Management.
- e. Percentage of information entered into MIS that complied with AFGAR time frames.

**2. STRATEGIES**

- a. Staff will be trained to use the system and will receive ongoing technical support.
- b. Staff will integrate the MIS system into the regular flow of work.
- c. Staff will use the MIS system to measure both results and compliance.
- d. Staff will be trained in the basics of data analysis and interpretation to determine quality of casework, compliance with federal and state regulations, results-based management outcomes, Standards of Practice benchmarks, and the Needs Based Budget process.

**4. STRATEGIES**

- a. The agency will develop a uniform tracking system so that casework activities can be tracked at all levels from worker to supervisory unit to department to agency.
- b. The agency will provide an MIS system which is capable of collecting, organizing, and reporting data and has the capacity to handle the number of staff and volume of use required by the agency.
- c. The agency will ensure that the implementation plan identifies the impact of automation on the agency and develops strategies to deal with this impact.
- d. The agency will have a quality control process for the management information system.
- e. The agency will use the data from the MIS to develop budgets that reflect community needs and measure identified outcomes from Results Based Management, Standards of Practice, and Needs Based Budget.
- f. The agency will develop and implement initial training and ongoing technical support for staff, including information on data analysis and interpretation.
- g. The agency will ensure that staff have timely access to data.
- h. The agency will ensure that staff can access data to determine the agency's level of compliance with the quality of casework practice, federal and state regulations, Results Based Management outcomes, Standards of Practice benchmarks, and the Needs Based Budget process.

**OUTCOME: Safety, Permanence, and Well-being**

**D. STANDARD:** Agency management will ensure that the agency has a continuous quality improvement process designed to meet outcomes established in Results Based Management and Standards of Practice. Agency management will review outcomes annually and develop plans to improve those outcomes over the next year.

<b>Staff Responsibilities</b>	<b>Agency Responsibilities</b>
<p><b>1. KNOWLEDGE AND VALUE BASE</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. Staff must see the value in the process of continuous quality improvement and take an active role in its implementation.</li> <li>b. Staff must have a working knowledge and understanding of the Results Base Management and Standards of Practice outcomes.</li> <li>c. Child welfare supervisors and management staff must know what data to gather from the MIS system, how to analyze the data, and what to do with the information.</li> <li>d. Management staff must understand the significance and use of case record reviews, analysis of incidents, and analysis of child and family surveys in the continuous quality review process.</li> <li>e. Supervisors and management staff must understand that the results of the quality improvement process must be used to make changes in agency planning, policy, and practice.</li> </ul>	<p><b>3. BENCHMARKS OR MEASURES</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. Percentage of case records by type reviewed for quality of case practice on an annual basis.</li> <li>b. Percentage of child and family surveys distributed, received, and analyzed.</li> <li>c. Number of incident reports gathered and analyzed.</li> <li>d. Completion of annual analysis of case record reviews, client surveys, incidents, and MIS data.</li> <li>e. Development of annual plan based on the results of all benchmarks.</li> </ul>

**2. STRATEGIES**

- a. Staff will become knowledgeable about the quality improvement process and outcomes by reading and attending training.
- b. Staff will attend informational meetings related to outcomes established in Results Based Management and Standards of Practice.
- c. Staff will implement changes in practice identified by the quality improvement process.

**4. STRATEGIES**

- a. The agency will establish a quality improvement process which includes the development and implementation of tools to review aggregate data and incidents and to conduct family and child satisfaction surveys and reviews of case records.
- b. The agency will ensure that program evaluation differentiates the most effective types of interventions among populations served.
- c. The agency will annually review the outcomes defined in Results Based Management and the Standards of Practice and disseminate the findings.
- d. The agency will annually analyze results of the quality improvement process and implement changes to achieve the outcomes in Results Based Management and Standards of Practice.
- e. The agency will develop an administrative oversight mechanism to respond to issues and problems that families bring to the agency's attention.

**OUTCOME: Safety, Permanence, and Well-being**

**E. STANDARD:** Agency management will develop recruitment and retention strategies that consistently provide an adequate number of staff. Based on these strategies, management will recruit, recognize, and support staff who demonstrate professional and culturally competent service and produce positive outcomes for children and families.

**Staff Responsibilities****1. KNOWLEDGE AND VALUE BASE**

- a. Management staff must understand their role in developing and recruiting staff.
- b. Management staff must have a working knowledge of laws and regulations that govern hiring, including the civil service system.
- c. Management staff must know how to conduct applicant interviews that meet legal standards and that:
  - 1. determine the interviewee's basic understanding of the social services field and cultural differences.
  - 2. determine their potential to relate that knowledge and understanding to their assigned tasks in the child welfare profession.
  - 3. evaluate their educational history and social service experience.
- d. Management staff must have knowledge of existing contracts and collective bargaining strategies that directly impact agency staff.
- e. Management staff must be aware of retention and recognition strategies, and know how to apply these strategies within their agency.

**Agency Responsibilities****3. BENCHMARKS OR MEASURES**

- a. Percentage of direct service and supervisory staff who had bachelor's and master's degrees in social work.
- b. Percentage of direct service staff who had bachelor's and master's degrees in other human service fields.
- c. Rates of turnover by classification.
- d. Average number of years of staff experience by classification.
- e. Number of student interns trained per year.
- f. Number of staff who pursued graduate degrees in social work or a related field and graduated.
- g. Average number of days/weeks/months positions were vacant.
- h. Number of staff who could access child welfare leadership training.
- i. Percentage of workforce which mirrored client population served.

**2. STRATEGIES**

- a. Management staff will develop and implement a plan with local high schools, colleges, and universities to discuss and encourage students toward work in child welfare.
- b. Management staff will conduct standardized exit interviews with employees who retire, resign, or request reassignment. The information obtained during these interviews will be analyzed and used to develop retention strategies.
- c. Management staff will develop and implement, at a minimum of once per year, employee satisfaction surveys which address job responsibilities and organizational issues.
- d. Management staff will identify and implement other strategies to retain and recognize staff, and be able to apply those strategies in their agency. Other strategies could include:
  - 1. establishing a new worker mentoring program.
  - 2. formalizing on the job training exercises.
  - 3. developing specific strategies to support staff decision making.
  - 4. competitive salary and benefits.

**4. STRATEGIES**

- a. The agency will develop and utilize a performance evaluation system which rewards staff who produce positive outcomes for children and families.
- b. The agency will develop a plan for recruiting, teaching, supervising, and evaluating interns who are pursuing bachelor's or master's degrees in the social services.
- c. The agency will promote continuing education for all staff members by developing a protocol for selecting candidates, supporting individual efforts, and maintaining the integrity of state-sponsored educational programs directly related to the child welfare field.
- d. The agency will develop formalized orientation, training, and protocol to assure staff are trained prior to becoming responsible for managing a caseload.
- e. The agency will develop a program to provide opportunities for advancement of staff at all levels.
- f. The agency will utilize and promote state-sponsored training opportunities when available.
- g. The agency will assure that management staff and supervisors have the qualifications to supervise staff and interns (e.g., MSW).
- h. The agency will ensure that ongoing supervisory and administrative support is provided to staff.
- i. The agency will develop recruitment and hiring strategies which maximize the recruitment of master's level staff for administrative and supervisory positions and bachelor's level staff for child welfare workers.

**OUTCOME: Safety, Permanence, and Well-being**

**F. STANDARD:** Agency management will develop recruitment and retention strategies that assure an adequate number of resource families to serve the needs of all children. Recruitment and retention strategies must ensure that staff respond promptly to inquiries and requests for assistance, recognize and support resource families who mirror the cultural and racial population served, and produce positive outcomes for children and families.

Staff Responsibilities	Agency Responsibilities
<p><b>1. KNOWLEDGE AND VALUE BASE</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. Staff must know and understand recruitment procedures.</li> <li>b. Staff must know and understand orientation and training programs to prepare potential resource families.</li> <li>c. Staff must be able to assess the parental abilities and skills of individuals interested in becoming resource parents.</li> <li>d. Staff must know how to provide support to resource families as one mechanism in a retention strategy.</li> <li>e. Staff must have knowledge of open, transracial, single parent, and alternative lifestyle adoptions, and adoption assistance. Staff must be open minded in viewing all children as having the potential to be adopted.</li> <li>f. Staff must know the impact on and outcomes for children who wait for permanence while in the care of the child welfare system.</li> </ul>	<p><b>3. BENCHMARKS OR MEASURES</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. Number of new available and qualified foster homes generated in the past six months.</li> <li>b. Number of qualified adoptive homes generated in the past six months.</li> <li>c. Number of children with multiple foster home placements.</li> <li>d. Average number of placements per child.</li> <li>e. Percentage of resource families retained per year.</li> <li>f. Percentage of culturally diverse resource families.</li> <li>g. Percentage of inquiries responded to within two days.</li> </ul>

**2. STRATEGIES**

- a. Staff will respond promptly to inquiries from persons expressing an interest in resource parenting.
- b. Staff will attend training on techniques to provide intensive support services to resource families after placement.
- c. Staff will identify obstacles and suggest solutions concerning the following:
  - 1. recruitment of resource families that reflect culturally diverse populations.
  - 2. selection process for resource families.
  - 3. preparation process for resource families.
  - 4. assisting and supporting kinship families.
  - 5. process through which resource families request assistance from the agency.

**4. STRATEGIES**

- a. The agency will develop a process for promptly responding to inquiries within two days.
- b. The agency will develop and implement a recruitment plan for resource families, including identifying the role of current resource families and developing a public education campaign regarding the need for additional resource families.
- c. The agency will provide training to staff on recruitment strategies outlined in the recruitment plan.
- d. The agency will adopt a thorough orientation, training, and family profile process which will prepare families to care for children needing out-of-home placement services from the agency.
- e. The agency will provide training on how to support resource families in order to retain them as resources and minimize disruptions in placements.
- f. The agency will develop recruitment strategies to identify resource families who will serve special populations.
- g. The agency will develop strategies to support resource families.
- h. The agency will establish expectations for staff in working with resource families.

**OUTCOME: Safety, Permanence, and Well-being**

**G. STANDARD:** Agency management will conduct a workload study in order to determine staff levels necessary to perform the activities outlined in the Standards of Practice. The caseload size needs to reflect the intensity, type, and duration of services outlined in the Standards of Practice and must be commensurate with Child Welfare League of America standards. The workload study should be completed at a minimum of every five years.

Staff Responsibilities	Agency Responsibilities
<p><b>1. KNOWLEDGE AND VALUE BASE</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. Management staff must know how to develop and implement a recognized model for determining optimal workload.</li> <li>b. Management staff must acknowledge that workload standards reflect a balance among resource availability, service design, staff competency, and political realities.</li> <li>c. Management staff must know the components of a workload study.</li> <li>d. Staff must understand and value the workload study process.</li> <li>e. Management must know how to evaluate the number of cases which should be assigned based on the structure of the agency.</li> <li>f. Management staff must be aware of the following Child Welfare League of America standards and be able to determine the optimal workload based on agency organization and workload study:               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. initial assessments – no more than 12 active reports.</li> <li>2. ongoing services after assessment – no more than 17 active families assuming the rate of assignment of new families is no more than one for every six open families.</li> <li>3. combined initial assessments and ongoing service – no more than 10 active ongoing families and no more than four active initial assessments.</li> <li>4. family foster care – between 12 and 15 children per worker depending on the level of service required to meet the assessed needs of the children.</li> <li>5. kinship care – 12 to 15 children.</li> <li>6. adoption – counseling for birth families; preparing, assessing, and supporting adoptive families of infants – 20-25 families.</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	<p><b>3. BENCHMARKS OR MEASURES</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. Completed workload study every five years.</li> <li>b. Percentage of cases in which services were delivered according to the functions and activities outlined in the workload study.</li> <li>c. Percentage of individual worker's activities completed within guidelines established by the workload study.</li> <li>d. Number of caseloads within 20% of target levels established by workload study.</li> <li>e. Percentage of services being delivered according to functions and activities outlined in the workload study.</li> <li>f. Percentage of caseloads which met caseload levels outlined in national standards.</li> </ul>

7. adoption (preparing older or special needs children for adoption) – 10-12 children.
8. adoption (assessing, preparing, and supporting adoptive families of older or special needs children) – 12-15 families.
9. adoption (assessing and preparing adoptive applicants for inter-country adoptions) – 30-35 families.
10. therapeutic foster care – no more than 12 children.
11. intensive family preservation – two to six families.

**2. STRATEGIES**

- a. Staff will participate in the workload study.

**4. STRATEGIES**

- a. The agency will work with state or external technical assistants to identify models for determining workload levels.
- b. The agency will determine stakeholders in the workload plan (e.g., union, board) and include them in the process.
- c. The agency will decide how the workload study results will be used.
- d. The agency will determine workload processes criteria including:
  1. education and training of staff.
  2. full listing of service activities which are part of the function.
  3. number of repetitive functions.
  4. number of non-casework activities including transportation.
  5. administrative meetings.
- e. The agency will have a strategy for increasing capacity to allow it to move closer to the workload goal level.
- f. The agency will be able to calculate the cost of each unit of service.
- g. The agency will involve the board and staff at all levels.
- h. The agency will engage a facilitator to help in the process of completing the workload study.
- i. The agency will establish a rotating plan to determine how workload plans for each service will be completed.
- j. The agency will develop a hiring plan to achieve the caseload level.

**OUTCOME: Safety, Permanence, and Well-being**

**H. STANDARD:** Agency management, in conjunction with agency staff, families served by the agency, and resource families, will develop consistent and effective written policies and procedures which reflect local, state, and federal laws and are based on the mission and values which guide agency practice. These written policies and procedures should be reviewed annually; be easily accessible, understood, and communicated to all interested parties; and lead to a more consistent level of casework practice throughout the agency.

Staff Responsibilities	Agency Responsibilities
<p><b>1. KNOWLEDGE AND VALUE BASE</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. Supervisors must know and can apply in practice the agency mission to achieve agency goals and objectives, policies and procedures, and work activities and task assignments.</li> <li>b. Staff must know and be able to apply relevant federal, state, and local statutes, regulations, policies, procedures, and good practice standards in all aspects of their work.</li> <li>c. Staff must understand that input from others involved in child welfare assists in providing better services to children and families.</li> <li>d. Staff must know that policies and procedures are reviewed annually, and know where to locate these policies and procedures.</li> </ul>	<p><b>3. BENCHMARKS OR MEASURES</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. Number of agency activities covered by written policies and procedures.</li> <li>b. Completed annual reviews of policies and procedures.</li> <li>c. Percentage of case records reviewed for policy application on a yearly basis.</li> <li>d. Number of policies and procedures developed with staff, families, and resource families.</li> <li>e. Percentage of staff and resource families who have been trained on policies and procedures.</li> <li>f. Number of policies and procedures based on agency mission and values.</li> </ul>

**2. STRATEGIES**

- a. Supervisors will negotiate policy and procedure changes necessary to make it easier for staff to perform their roles according to good practice standards.
- b. Staff will bring together and solicit input from staff, families, and resource parents in order to develop and/or change written policies and procedures.
- c. Staff will attend orientation and ongoing training focused on agency policy and procedures and based on agency mission, values, and outcomes; federal, state, and local statutes; and good practice standards.
- d. Supervisors will ensure that staff understand and follow the agency's policies and procedures in all aspects of their work.
- e. Staff will have access to policies and procedures.

**4. STRATEGIES**

- a. The agency will establish a plan to identify internal and external stakeholders to assist in developing policies and procedures.
- b. The agency will develop clear written policies and procedures for all areas of agency operation, including staff liability and worker safety.
- c. The agency will provide staff and resource parents with training focused on agency mission and values; federal, state and local statutes; and good practice standards.
- d. The agency will develop a uniform checklist of learning needed for staff and resource parents in regard to agency policies and procedures.
- e. The agency will review or conduct an annual audit of reports to assure application and implementation of the agency's policies and procedures.
- f. The agency will ensure that each supervisor and worker has a copy of agency policies and procedures that are readily available to all other staff.
- g. The agency will assure that copies of policies and procedures are kept in a central location available to internal and external stakeholders.
- h. The agency will develop a process and plan to conduct an annual review of policies and procedures.
- i. The agency will assure that translations of policies and procedures to other languages are available.

**OUTCOME: Safety, Permanence, and Well-being**

**I. STANDARD:** Agency management will develop a written plan for media and community relations in order to develop and maintain positive relationships.

**Staff Responsibilities****1. KNOWLEDGE AND VALUE BASE**

- a. Staff must recognize their role as representatives of the community.
- b. Staff must know what information and data can be provided to community members and know the procedure for media inquiries.
- c. Staff must understand and respect the value of community input.
- d. Staff must know how to conduct community education activities.

**Agency Responsibilities****3. BENCHMARKS OR MEASURES**

- a. Number of positive media items per year, such as agency initiated news articles or brochures describing agency services.
- b. Number of community presentations completed annually by staff.
- c. Number of community activities involving staff.
- d. Existence of a written plan for media and community relations.

**2. STRATEGIES**

- a. Staff will promote a positive image to the media, service providers, and the community at large through use of the media, personal contacts, and educational presentations.
- b. Staff will work with representatives of news media to inform the public regarding the mission, activities, and needs of the agency.
- c. Staff will read and understand annual agency and state child welfare reports.
- d. Staff will participate in a speaker's bureau and meet community requests for other educational activities.

**4. STRATEGIES**

- a. The agency will publish an annual report that describes agency activities and provides current, ongoing data to demonstrate agency performance.
- b. The agency will develop mechanisms to obtain and share information within the agency.
- c. The agency will keep staff at all levels informed about agency data and activities.
- d. The agency will make training and mentoring opportunities on public relations available to staff.
- e. The agency will routinely make annual child abuse report data and other appropriate data available to all supervisory staff.
- f. The agency will establish a speaker's bureau or develop a process to respond to requests for educational activities.
- g. The agency will develop a written media and community relations plan.

**OUTCOME: Safety, Permanence, Timeliness, and Well-being**

**J. STANDARD:** Agency management will assure that the Standards of Practice are reflected in all private provider agreements. Expectations and procedures must be clearly understood and adequately communicated with private providers and management in order to ensure consistent, quality service delivery to children and families. Agency contracts shall include clearly stated roles and responsibilities, defined lines of communication, and a quality improvement process designed to meet outcomes established in the Results Based Management Plan.

Staff Responsibilities	Agency Responsibilities
<p><b>1. KNOWLEDGE AND VALUE BASE</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. Staff must be aware of the contents of private provider agreements in order to understand the roles and responsibilities of all parties.</li> <li>b. Staff from both public and private agencies must understand the need to work together to achieve service outcomes.</li> <li>c. Staff must recognize the importance and value of close communication with private agency staff.</li> <li>d. Staff must have general knowledge of available services and general procedures of contracted agencies.</li> <li>e. Staff responsible for programmatic and fiscal monitoring must understand how to write contracts with measurable outcomes based on Results Based Management and Standards of Practice.</li> <li>f. Staff at all levels must know how to address problems or concerns with service delivery.</li> </ul>	<p><b>3. BENCHMARKS OR MEASURES</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. Percentage of private agency contracts that contained elements listed in the standard statements.</li> <li>b. Number of public and private agency staff who received training on the contents of private agency contracts.</li> </ul>

**2. STRATEGIES**

- a. Agency staff will communicate regularly with private provider staff, as well as with the child and family in person, in writing, and through phone calls regarding progress toward service goals.
- b. Staff of both private and public agencies will participate with the family in developing service plans and Individual Service Plans.
- c. Staff will attend training regarding contents of provider agreements, including roles, responsibilities, and expectations.

**4. STRATEGIES**

- a. The agency will develop and implement a contract monitoring and review process that includes both quantitative and qualitative contractual measures.
- b. The agency will communicate to agency staff the contents of private provider agreements, including their role in enforcing the agreement and that services delivered reflect the agreement.
- c. The agency will establish a method to monitor its responsiveness to private agency needs and private agency fulfillment of contractual specifications.
- d. The agency will ensure that contracts include:
  - 1. clearly stated roles and responsibilities.
  - 2. clearly defined lines of communication.
  - 3. quality improvement process.
- e. The agency will include fiscal and management staff in the development of contracts.
- f. The agency will identify a structure for both staff and providers in order to identify service delivery concerns.

**OUTCOME: Safety, Permanence, and Well-being**

**K. STANDARD:** Agency management will develop routine mechanisms for communication within the agency in order to ensure that staff at all levels are aware of, and operate in accordance with, the mission, standards, policies, and goals of the agency. Also, management shall create an environment that encourages honest communication among and within direct service, supervisory, and management staff and that accepts both constructive and positive feedback.

Staff Responsibilities	Agency Responsibilities
<p><b>1. KNOWLEDGE AND VALUE BASE</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. Management staff must understand the importance of open communication between and among all levels of the organization.</li> <li>b. Management staff must understand the importance of clearly communicating and articulating the agency's standards, mission, and goals.</li> <li>c. Management staff must understand the need to cultivate a work environment that values staff at all levels.</li> <li>d. Management staff must understand the importance of promoting an environment that is supportive of persons from diverse cultures.</li> <li>e. Staff at all levels must know how to provide constructive feedback to management staff.</li> <li>f. Management staff must recognize the value of training and/or informational meetings in addition to distributing new policies.</li> <li>g. Management staff must recognize the value of staff input into the development of agency mission, standards, and policies.</li> </ul>	<p><b>3. BENCHMARKS OR MEASURES</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. Percentage of new staff who received orientation materials and manual.</li> <li>b. Percentage of supervisors and workers who received all policy and procedural updates.</li> <li>c. Percentage of policies developed with staff involvement.</li> <li>d. Frequency and number of communications between management and other staff (e.g., staff meetings, training).</li> <li>e. Documentation of mechanisms developed for communication with and among agency units.</li> </ul>

**2. STRATEGIES**

- a. Staff at all levels will accept responsibility for advising management of problems and participating in problem solving.
- b. Staff will participate in child and family surveys and climate surveys.

**4. STRATEGIES**

- a. The agency will develop mechanisms to distribute agency systemwide information, including face to face meetings.
- b. The agency will develop a system to receive and respond to feedback from all staff.
- c. The agency will create opportunities for informal and formal meetings and communication between all staff and agency management staff.
- d. The agency will provide an opportunity for staff to be involved in the development of mission, goals, standards, and policies.
- e. The agency will hold regularly scheduled staff meetings.

**OUTCOME: Safety, Permanence, and Well-being**

**L. STANDARD:** Agency management will develop a multi-year plan which will establish the vision and mission for the agency. In addition, agency management will develop a yearly implementation plan which will include strategies to deal with further development and implementation of the Standards of Practice and the impact of the long-range plan. These plans will be developed with the participation of staff, resource families, and community members in order to ensure continuous quality improvement and to achieve outcomes established in the Results Based Management plan.

Staff Responsibilities	Agency Responsibilities
<p><b>1. KNOWLEDGE AND VALUE BASE</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. Staff must recognize the value of planning as a means to achieve results.</li> <li>b. Management staff must recognize the value of including staff, families, and resource parents in the strategic and implementation planning process.</li> <li>c. Staff must know what the planning process is and how to develop both a short- and long-term plan.</li> <li>d. Staff must know how to measure the implementation progress of a plan.</li> <li>e. Management staff must understand the value of educating staff about strategic planning objectives and significant issues in the field.</li> <li>f. Staff must understand larger agency and system goals and their role in achieving these goals.</li> <li>g. Management staff must understand the relationship of their strategic plan to the plans of other agencies in the community.</li> <li>h. Management must understand that defining agency mission and vision must precede effective planning.</li> </ul>	<p><b>3. BENCHMARKS OR MEASURES</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. Establishment of a vision and mission statement.</li> <li>b. Percentage of staff involved in strategic planning</li> <li>c. Completion of both plans.</li> <li>d. Percentage of staff involved in implementation planning.</li> <li>e. Percentage of plan objectives implemented.</li> <li>f. Percentage of plan objectives achieved.</li> <li>g. Number of forums established for community input.</li> </ul>

**2. STRATEGIES**

- a. Staff will participate on planning committees.
- b. Staff will identify families and resource parents to participate in the planning process.
- c. Staff will be educated about demographics and environmental changes in the community.
- d. Staff and community members will be educated about the planning process in order to facilitate their participation.
- e. Management staff will ensure that all staff are aware of the basis and content of both plans and their purposes.

**4. STRATEGIES**

- a. The agency will identify community members who should be involved in this planning process and conduct environmental scans and resource needs assessments on a regular basis in order to provide relevant information for the development and implementation of these plans.
- b. The agency will ensure an ongoing multi-year planning process which is informed with data from Results Based Management and continuous quality improvement.
- c. The agency will identify results consistent with its vision and mission.
- d. The agency will identify resources to implement the plan.
- e. The agency will ensure participation by:
  - 1. providing training in planning and implementation.
  - 2. providing staff the time to participate.
  - 3. reporting progress regularly to staff.
  - 4. discussing goals with staff and assist them in identifying their role in achieving these goals.

**OUTCOME: Safety, Permanence, and Well-being**

**M. STANDARD:** Agency management will assure that yearly performance evaluations are conducted for all staff in order to improve casework practice by identifying strengths and needs and developing strategies to maximize strengths and minimize needs. Performance evaluation tools should include an assessment of skills-based performance, compliance with regulatory and agency requirements, time management skills, and an action plan for improving performance. These performance evaluations should be the basis for the individualized performance improvement plan and staff development plan and should be conducted in collaboration with the individual being evaluated. Also, the agency must have an established discipline and appeal process.

**Staff Responsibilities****1. KNOWLEDGE AND VALUE BASE**

- a. Staff must understand the performance evaluation process, the agency's progressive discipline policy, and the requirements of union and civil service systems.
- b. Child welfare supervisors and management staff must know how to identify strengths and needs of the individual being evaluated.
- c. Child welfare supervisors and management staff must know how to structure activities (training, mentoring, reading, etc.) to build on strengths and address needs of the individual.
- d. Child welfare supervisors and management staff must know how to assess performance based social work skills, including an analysis of the child welfare worker's ability to:
  1. conduct an assessment, write service plans with families, and conduct interviews.
  2. engage families.
  3. use authority appropriately.
  4. deal with resistance.
  5. demonstrate specific skills related to work assignment.
- e. Child welfare supervisors and management staff must know how to conduct the evaluation process with the individual to develop and improve casework practice.

**Agency Responsibilities****3. BENCHMARKS OR MEASURES**

- a. Percentage of evaluations completed annually.
- b. Percentage of evaluations that reflected assessment of skills-based performance and time management skills.
- c. Percentage of evaluations that had action plans.
- d. Number of changes in training curriculum based on evaluation.
- e. Percentage of evaluations in subsequent years which reflected an improvement in practice.
- f. Percentage of evaluations done collaboratively.
- g. Existence of an appeal and disciplinary process.

- f. Child welfare supervisors and management staff must know how to develop an individualized performance improvement plan with the individual, including an individualized staff development plan.
- g. Child welfare supervisors and management staff must understand the progressive discipline process of the agency and the requirement of union and civil service systems.
- h. Child welfare supervisors and management staff must know how to evaluate the individual's ability to prioritize responsibilities and to complete required activities within the established time frames.

**2. STRATEGIES**

- a. Staff will communicate performance feedback on a continuous basis to individuals whom they supervise.
- b. Staff will initiate an evaluation process at least one month prior to the annual review.
- c. Staff will provide for full participation of individuals whom they supervise by providing evaluation criteria, assessment tools, and other pertinent materials, and by engaging them in the evaluation process.
- d. Staff will produce a written evaluation review which identifies strengths, areas for improvement, a specific performance improvement plan, and pertinent views from individuals whom they supervise.
- e. Staff will follow agency procedures in all disciplinary and appeal processes.

**4. STRATEGIES**

- a. Agency management staff will ensure that yearly evaluations occur for all staff.
- b. The agency will provide training for supervisors and managers on civil service and county labor management requirements and the process for completing effective performance evaluations.
- c. The agency will provide skill development training in the following areas:
  - 1. the interpersonal process of evaluation.
  - 2. establishing performance expectations.
  - 3. assessing achievement of performance expectations.
  - 4. different supervisory methods for assisting staff to maximize strengths and minimize needs.
- d. The agency will establish an appeal process based on civil service and labor management process.
- e. The agency will develop a format for implementing individualized performance plans and staff development plans.
- f. The agency will inform staff about the appeal process for performance evaluation.
- g. The agency will provide support and training on progressive discipline.

**OUTCOME: Safety, Permanence, Timeliness, and Well-being**

**N. STANDARD:** Agency management will ensure that staff working in administrative, supervisory positions hold master's degrees in social work or related fields. Child welfare workers must hold bachelor's degrees in social work or a related field.

**Staff Responsibilities****1. KNOWLEDGE AND VALUE BASE**

- a. Agency management must be aware that families can best be served by staff who have the following qualifications:
  - 1. administrators who have master's degrees in social work or related fields and are competent, knowledgeable, trained, and experienced in administration.
  - 2. supervisors who have master's degrees in social work or related fields and are able to provide leadership to staff and work effectively with families and peers.
  - 3. child welfare workers who have bachelor's degrees in social work or related fields and who are able to work successfully with abused and neglected children and their families.
- b. Agency management must understand the link between professional preparation, personal qualities, and training in order to maximize job effectiveness.

**Agency Responsibilities****3. BENCHMARKS OR MEASURES**

- a. Percentage of administrators who held master's degrees in social work or related fields.
- b. Percentage of supervisors who held master's degrees in social work or related fields.
- c. Percentage of child welfare workers who held bachelor's degrees in social work or related fields.

**2. STRATEGIES**

- a. Staff will utilize educational opportunities in order to provide timely, quality services, meet the needs of children and families, and attain outcomes established in federal and state law.

**4. STRATEGIES**

- a. The agency will establish a process to assist staff in becoming professionally qualified and trained in order to provide timely, quality services; meet the needs of families; and attain outcomes established in federal and state law.
- b. The agency will utilize the Child Welfare Education for Leadership program in order to assist staff in acquiring master's degrees.
- c. The agency will establish relationships with BSW and MSW programs in order to utilize internships to hire qualified staff.
- d. The agency will work with commissioners to ensure participation in educational opportunities for staff.

## ***SELECTED TERMS FROM THE PENNSYLVANIA STANDARDS FOR CHILD WELFARE PRACTICE***

### ***GLOSSARY***

**Collateral contacts:** Contacts, by telephone, in-person, or in writing, that the worker has with persons on behalf of the family. Includes professionals providing formal services (e.g., therapists, teachers) and others important to the client (e.g., neighbors, ministers).

**Concrete services:** The type of direct social services in which clients are provided with tangible resources needed to resolve specific problems or attain a normative standard of well-being, such as food, housing, transportation, clothing, or access thereto.<sup>1</sup>

**Concurrent planning:** Concurrent planning provides for reunification services while simultaneously developing an alternative plan. Depending on an accurate assessment and culturally sensitive interviewing, concurrent planning is based on setting clear goals, being honest with parents about supports and consequences, and establishing time limits for work for parents.<sup>2</sup>

**Continuous quality improvement/Quality improvement process:** An organizational emphasis on quality of services and products as the primary focus of all activities. Continuous quality improvement processes focus on prospective analyses.<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Barker, R. L. (1995). *The Social Work Dictionary (3<sup>rd</sup> Edition)*. Washington, DC: NASW Press.

<sup>2</sup> Katz, L. Spoonemore, N., and Robinson, C. (1994). *Concurrent Planning: From Permanency Planning to Permanency Action*. Lutheran Social Services of Washington and Idaho.

<sup>3</sup> Young, A. T. (1995). Quality Assurance. In Edwards, R. L. (Ed.), *The Encyclopedia of Social Work*. Washington, DC: NASW Press, 2016-2018.

**Cultural competence:** The ability of individuals and systems to respond respectfully and effectively to people of all cultures, classes, races, ethnic backgrounds, and religions in a manner that recognizes, affirms, and values the worth of individuals, families, and communities and protects and preserves the dignity of each.<sup>4</sup>

**Cultural diversity:** The rich mixture of ethnic, racial, religious, national, and individual characteristics that colors the landscape of the world in which people live.<sup>5</sup>

**Culturally sensitive:** The process of conducting social work tasks in a manner that reflects culturally competent attitudes and practices.

**Culture:** The thoughts, ideas, behavior patterns, customs, beliefs, values, skill, arts, religions, and prejudices of a particular people at a given point in time.<sup>6</sup>

**Family focused assessment:** A process of identifying family needs and strengths that supports families and keeps children with their parents whenever possible. This approach acknowledges that most children want to live with their families, and that it is healthier for them to live with their families, as long as children are safe from emotional or physical harm.<sup>7</sup>

**Formal resources:** Services that are provided by agencies or professional individuals, usually for a fee charged to the referring agency or the client. Formal services are often structured, goal-directed, and time-limited.

**Goal oriented:** Services, both formal and informal, that are provided in order to reach a specific, identified goal or end-state.

**Informal resources:** Services or supports offered through community organizations or individuals that further the family goals, for example, a call-in counseling program offered by a church, a neighbor available to baby-sit, or a ride-share program arranged through a community center.

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<sup>4</sup> Ibid.

<sup>5</sup> Ibid.

<sup>6</sup> Child Welfare League of America, "Advancing Cultural Competence in Child Welfare Initiative", September 1997.

<sup>7</sup> Liederman, D. S. (1995). Child Welfare Overview. In Edwards, R. L. (Ed.), *The Encyclopedia of Social Work*. Washington, DC: NASW Press, 2016-2018.

**Kin:** An extended family group comprising relatives of a nuclear family, such as grandparents, uncles, aunts and second cousins.<sup>8</sup> Can also refer to members of tribes or clans, godparents, stepparents, or other adults to whom a child, the child's parents, and family members ascribe a family relationship.<sup>9</sup>

**Kinship (kinship care):** The full-time nurturing and protection of children by relatives, members of their tribes or clans, godparents, stepparents, or other adults to whom a child, the child's parents, and family members ascribe a family relationship.<sup>10</sup>

**Least restrictive:** The requirement to place children in the family-like setting when they must be removed from their family.

**Measurable objectives:** An objective is a statement of behaviors that the worker or agency must perform to indicate that a desired skill, attitude, or knowledge has been achieved. Measurable refers to the ability to quantify performance or gauge performance against an established marker.

**Permanence (permanency planning):** In child welfare work, a systematic effort to provide long-term continuity in a dependent child's care, as an alternative to temporary foster placements. This might be done by facilitating adoption, by establishing clear guidelines for remaining in foster care, or by helping the child's family become capable of meeting the child's needs.<sup>11</sup>

**Resource family:** An adult or family unit recruited, trained, and supported to serve children and families involved with a child welfare agency. Resource families may be emergency placement facilities, foster families, adoptive families, kinship families, and/or respite families.

**Safety assessment:** Determining the safety of a child in his/her current living situation and in all of his/her collateral environments. For example, a safety assessment would review not only the safety of the home, but also the safety of the day care center, the walk to school, the visitation arrangements, and/or the non-custodial parent.

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<sup>8</sup> Barker, R. L. (1995).

<sup>9</sup> Liederman, D. S. (1995).

<sup>10</sup> Liederman, D. S. (1995).

<sup>11</sup> Ibid.

**Therapeutic services:** A systematic process and activity designed to remedy, cure, or abate some disease, disability, or problem. May include psychotherapy, group therapy, occupational therapy, physical therapy, recreational therapy, etc.<sup>12</sup>

**Quality assurance:** The processes an organization uses to determine that its products or services measure up to the standards established for them. This determination may be accomplished by having supervisors, peers, consumer advocates, or legally designated overseers inspect the work, review the descriptions of the work, or evaluate the system for producing the work. Quality assurance measures used for social workers include sufficient education from an accredited school of social work, entry level work under qualified supervision, licensure and certification, competency exams, and continuing education requirements. For the profession of social work, measures include codes of ethics, peer review, utilization review, program evaluation, professional sanctions, civil malpractice suites, and criminal negligence charges.<sup>13</sup>

**Quality control:** A system for verifying and maintaining a desired level of quality in a product or process by careful planning, use of proper equipment, continued inspection, and corrective action where required. Similar to QA, but quality control is primarily used in the business world to emphasize a system for assuring that the process of product is always the same.<sup>14</sup>

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<sup>12</sup> Ibid.

<sup>13</sup> Ibid.

<sup>14</sup> Webster's Encyclopedic Unabridged Dictionary of the English Language, 1989.

# ***PENNSYLVANIA STANDARDS FOR CHILD WELFARE PRACTICE***

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