

Department of Services for Children, Youth and Their Families 2010–2014 Child and Family Services Plan

Introduction

Program Administration: The Department of Services for Children, Youth and Their Families is responsible for administering the Stephanie Tubbs Jones Child Welfare Services Program (Title IV-B-, subpart I), Promoting Safe and Stable Families Program (Title IV-B, subpart II), Child Abuse Prevention and Treatment Act (CAPTA), Chafee Foster Care Independence Program (CFCIP) and Education and Training Vouchers (ETV).

The Department of Services for Children, Youth and Their Families (DSCYF) was created 25 years ago to combine within one agency child protective and mental health services that had been located in the Department of Health and Social Services, juvenile probation services that had been located in Family Court, and juvenile detention centers and the Ferris School for Boys that had been located in the Department of Correction.

These services were combined in a single agency to:

- Avoid fragmentation and duplication of services, while increasing accountability for delivery and administration of these services
- Plan, develop and administer a comprehensive and unified service delivery system to abused, neglected, dependent, delinquent and mentally ill or emotionally disturbed children and youth within a continuum of care, which shall include the involvement of their family, within the least restrictive environment possible
- Emphasize preventive services to children, youth and their families in order to avoid costs to the State of individual instability

Mission Statement

Our mission is to provide leadership and advocacy for Delaware's children. The Department's primary responsibility is to provide and manage a range of services for children who have experienced abandonment, abuse, adjudication, mental illness, neglect, or substance abuse. We endorse a holistic approach to enable children to reach their fullest potential.

Vision Statement

Think of the Child First!

Our vision is ***THINK OF THE CHILD FIRST!*** We want every child to be safe and have stability, self-esteem, and a sense of hope. The Delaware Children's Department will lead a system of care (both community-based and residential) that is child centered and assures effective, timely, and appropriate support for Delaware's children. We will achieve our mission

when families, staff, community partners, and other stakeholders think of the child first. Our activities include prevention, early intervention, assessment, treatment, permanency, and aftercare. The Department will offer desirable career opportunities, attracting and retaining proud and talented employees who are motivated to think of the child first in all that they do.

DSCYF's Core Services

The Department's five core services are:

Core Service #1: Child Protective Services (Delaware Code: Title 29, Chapter 90)

Child protective services include: investigation of alleged abuse, neglect, or dependency; out-of-home placement as necessary; in-home treatment; and adoption. The desired outcomes are a reduction of reabuse, timely reunification with family when appropriate, timely achievement of permanency either through adoption, guardianship, or long-term foster care, and child and family well-being.

Core Service #2: Juvenile Justice Services (Delaware Code: Title 29, Chapter 90)

Juvenile justice services include: detention, institutional care, probation, and aftercare services consistent with adjudication. The desired outcome is the reduction of subsequent rearrests/offenses (recidivism rates).

Core Service #3: Child Mental Health Services (Delaware Code: Title 29, Chapter 90)

Child mental health services include: crisis services; outpatient treatment; day treatment; residential mental health and drug and alcohol treatment. The desired outcomes are to assist children, youth, and caregivers address or overcome presenting issues and/or stabilization and maintenance in the least restrictive appropriate environment.

Core Service #4: Prevention and Early Intervention Services (Delaware Code: Title 29, Chapter 90)

Prevention and early intervention services include: training, public education, and contracted services aimed at preventing child abuse, neglect, dependency, juvenile delinquency, mental health disorders, and drug and alcohol abuse among children and youth. The desired outcomes include prevention of service entry or service reentry in one or more of the above three core services.

Core Service #5: Child Care Licensing (Delaware Code: Title 31, Chapter 3 and Title 11, Chapter 85)

Child care licensing services include: licensing of all child care facilities where regular child care services are provided by adults unrelated to the child and for which the adults are compensated and criminal history and/or Child Protection Registry checks for all DSCYF employees, foster care parents, adoptive parents, employees of DSCYF contracted client services, licensed child care providers, licensed child care provider employees, licensed child care provider household members, and health care and public school employees with direct access to children or vulnerable adults. The desired outcomes are quality child care, child care facilities that meet Delacare Standards, and the protection of children in child care, residential, health care, or educational facilities from harmful acts of adults with criminal and/or child abuse histories.

Environmental Scan

Internal Scan (Strengths and Weaknesses)

- DSCYF's core service strengths include:
 - Committed and caring staff
 - Key stakeholder support and trust in our management of the core services and resources
 - Information technology support of our service operations
 - Participatory management philosophy

- DSCYF's core service weaknesses include:
 - Minimal holistic integration across core services
 - Need for continuing staff training in system of care principles and practices
 - Barriers to client accessibility to services across core services
 - Too much categorical funding and lack of more blended funding mechanisms
 - Need to re-engineer/upgrade the current Family and Child Tracking System (FACTS) to support better operations and management of integrated services and improved tracking of individual, programmatic, and Department outcomes

External Scan (Opportunities and Threats)

- DSCYF's opportunities to improve core services include:
 - Administration focus on children

- Administration and legislative support for filling core service gaps, particularly the availability of in-state residential treatment for small populations with multiple and complex issues
- Need to increase community-based resources to support the maintenance of children and youth in the community who are returning from foster care or residential treatment
- DSCYF's threats to core services include:
 - Resource limitations associated with the present economic and revenue environment
 - Negative factors in the economic environment that may increase family dysfunction
 - Unexpected epidemiological trends among children and youth could stress our capacity to provide appropriate services

DSCYF Goals

The primary goals of the Department of Services for Children, Youth and Their Families (DSCYF) are:

- The safety of children and youth
- Positive outcomes for children in our services

DSCYF Objectives

The following are the Department strategic objectives that encompass our core services. The Department-level measures for these objectives can be disaggregated for the child protective, juvenile justice, and child mental health core services.

- Increase the percent of contracted juvenile justice and child mental health community-based service expenditures of total contracted juvenile justice and child mental health community-based and residential service expenditures from 45.2% in FY-08 to 52% by FY-14
- Reduce the percent of children and youth who return to service within 12 months of case closure from 29% in FY-08 to 26% by FY-14
- Reduce the percent of children and youth in out-of-home care from 17.3% in FY-08 to 12% by FY-14
- Reduce the percent of children in community-based services for 6 consecutive months who are in out-of-home care for more than five consecutive days during the following 12 months from 11% in FY-08 to 9% by FY-14

Implementing the System of Care Practice Model

Delaware's System of Care practice model has been active since 2004 and implemented in phases for all levels of personnel within the Department of Services for Children, Youth and Their Families (DSCYF). This practice model is based on seven core principles:

- Practice is individualized

- Services are appropriate in type and duration
- Child centered and family focused intervention
- Community-based care
- Cultural competency
- Seamless care, within and across systems
- Team planning and management

System of Care (SOC) reference guides and competencies were developed to operationalize the principles by putting them in behavioral terms. Both are designed to be incorporated into supervision, coaching opportunities and employee performance planning. These tools were distributed and trained on with both DSCYF staff and our providers. These tools are on both the DSCYF intranet and internet under SOC in ‘Action Reference Guide’. The Office of Case Management is conducting Quality Assurance SOC reviews which provide feedback to the case manager and supervisor regarding areas of strength and areas for improvement. Supervisors build on the strengths identified in the review through employee coaching, mentoring and shadowing.

Strategic Initiatives

The Department’s primary goals, core services, and objectives are supported by five organization-wide strategic sets of activities that are represented by DSCYF’s “Child” acronym:

- C** - Child Focused System
- H** - Holistic Service
- I** - Inspired Workforce
- L** - Leading Edge Management
- D** - Dedicated Partnerships

2010 – 2014 CFSP development methodology: This five year plan was coordinated by an interdivisional steering committee composed of program, operations, training and quality assurance representatives. Stakeholders participated in three working sessions to develop the structure and content of activities and measurements of progress. A draft of the planned activities was shared with stakeholders, including child welfare advocacy groups, the Nanticoke Tribe Council, ACF Region III, the Youth Advisory Council and internal stakeholders in all divisions of the Department. Comments were incorporated into the final product.

The design is formatted to group child welfare activities into outcomes and system factors, aligned with the federal Child and Family Services Review. Broad strategies are presented to capture many federally required and state identified initiatives to improve outcomes for Delaware’s children and families supported by the continuum of child welfare services. This array of services covers prevention of abuse and neglect, reduction and treatment of risk, permanency for foster children and support for young adults aging out of foster care.

The Department has a Planning, Monitoring and Evaluation (PM&E) Unit to provide a focal point for strategic planning, program evaluation, and measurement of progress toward performance goals. This unit has been instrumental in the Department’s receipt of the three Delaware Quality Awards for Commitment (2001), Merit (2002) and Merit (2002). DSCYF is

the first state agency to receive a Quality Award given to organizations that manage key internal processes to produce positive outcomes for children.

Description of the services and expected expenditures funded through Child Welfare Services, CAPTA and CFCIP/ETV federal assistance are detailed in the corresponding spending plans. Delaware will fund adoption activities if Adoption Incentives are received in the future. Delaware demonstrates partnerships with community-based organizations and other state agencies through a broad array of contracted child welfare services awarded through Request for Proposals processes and Memoranda of Understanding. These processes ensure coordination of available services and a shared commitment to quality service delivery statewide.

Kinship care programming is administered by the Department of Health and Social Services, Division of State Service Centers and provides supports to extended family to prevent children from entering the child welfare system.

2010-2014
Child and Family Services Plan
Strategies, Measures and Activities

Outcome: Safety

Strategy: Strengthen and reinforce safety practices for Delaware's children.

Performance Measures and Goals:

1. Quality Assurance: Measurement for child safety is a composite of questions in investigation and treatment assessing safety in the child's residence. Goal is 100% will be assessed as safe.
2. National Standard: Absence of maltreatment recurrence. Goal is 94.6% or higher.
3. National Standard: Absence of maltreatment in foster care. Goal is 99.68% or higher.

Activities:

1. Provide and support training and education.
2. Support the ability of Delaware families to stabilize and remain intact.
3. Incorporate external and internal QA case reviews to strengthen child safety.
4. Research, review, improve and implement safety and risk management practices.
5. Assess, plan, monitor, analyze and enhance service array to promote positive outcomes.
6. Support out-of-home care providers to maintain safe and stable placements.

2010-2014
Child and Family Services Plan
Strategies, Measurements and Activities

Outcome: Permanency

Strategy: Strengthen and maintain efforts to preserve familial relationships and connections for children while striving to achieve permanency and stability.

Performance Measures and Goals:

1. Caseworker foster care contacts. There are two established measures for foster care contacts: percent of foster children visited each and every month; and, percent of those visits occurring in the child's residence. Goals for measure one are 75% by October 1, 2010, and 90% by October 1, 2011. Goal for measure two is 50.5%.
2. National Standard: Permanency Composite #4 with component scores.
 - Scaled state composite score. Goal is 101.5 or higher.
 - Of those children in care less than 12 months - percent with 2 placements or less. Goal is 86% or higher.
 - Of those children in care for 12 but less than 24 months - percent with 2 placements or less. Goal is 65.4% or higher.
 - Of those children in care 24 or more months - percent with 2 placements or less. Goal is 41.8% or higher.
3. National Standard: Reunification within 12 months from the most recent removal from home. Goal is 75.2% or higher.
4. National Standard: Adoption within 24 months from the most recent removal from home. Goal is 36.6% or higher.
5. Quality Assurance: Measurement is the percent of placement and permanency case reviews agreeing with APPLA (Another Planned Permanent Living Arrangement) goal selection. Goal is 95% or higher.

Activities:

1. Assess, support and enhance the ability of Delaware families to stabilize and remain intact.
2. Families will be reunited in a timely and permanent manner, through assessment and support services.
3. Provide services to maintain out-of-home care stability.
4. Collaborate with community partners to facilitate out-of-home care.
5. Strengthen adoption recruitment and support practices to promote positive outcomes for children and families.
6. Continue efforts to identify and support lasting connections for youth aging out of care to enhance stability.
7. Provide and support child welfare education and training.

2010-2014
Child and Family Services Plan
Strategies, Measurements and Activities

Outcome: Well-Being

Strategy: Continue efforts to enhance the capacity of families and children to meet their needs.
Performance Measures and Goals:

1. Quality Assurance: Measurement is a composite score of 13 questions from the QA Case Review tools for treatment and placement on identification of needs and services provided. Goal is 90% or higher of case reviews agree needs were identified and appropriate services provided.
2. Quality Assurance: Measurement is composite score of 2 questions from each QA Case Review tool for investigation, treatment and placement for identification of needs and services provided for education, physical and mental health. Goal is 95% or higher of case reviews agree educational and health needs were identified and appropriate services provided.
3. Independent Living Services Report: Measurements for young adults receiving independent living services are percent youth graduating high school or GED program, percent youth employed and percent youth enrolled in post-secondary/vocational programs. Goals are 60% will graduate high school or obtain a GED, 70% will be employed, and 35% will be enrolled in a post-secondary/vocational program.

Activity:

1. Identify and provide services to enhance DE families' capacity to provide safe, stable, healthy, and nurturing environments.
2. Collaboration with community partners to facilitate positive educational, physical, and mental health outcomes for children and youth.
3. Improve Independent Living competency skills for youth exiting out of home care through collaborative support and service provision.

2010-2014
Child and Family Services Plan
Strategies, Measurements and Activities

Systemic Factors

Strategy: Maintain and strengthen systems to support the delivery of child welfare services.

Performance Measures and Goals: Performance is measured by progress reported by each activity.

Activities:

1. Maintain and strengthen the statewide information system.
2. Maintain and strengthen a case review system to ensure timely outcomes and the involvement of caregivers.
3. Maintain and strengthen a quality assurance system that supports positive outcomes for families and children.
4. Provide training and supports to maintain a stable and competent workforce.
5. Maintain and strengthen an array of services to promote safety, permanency, and well-being.
6. Foster and adoptive parent approval, recruitment, and retention.
7. Continue collaboration among child welfare professionals, community partners, families and children.