2024

CPPC Coordinator

Practice Guide

IOWA | **Health and Human Services**

Community Partnerships for Protecting Children

Introduction

Dear Reader,

I would like to welcome you to the wonderful world of Community Partnership for Protecting Children (CPPC).

Giving Thanks! Over the years, Decat and CPPC Coordinators, HHS staff and community partners worked to identify, develop, and implement activities for each of the CPPC strategies. In addition, Decat and CPPC Coordinators have provided feedback on the benefits and approaches for each component within each strategy. These individuals have provided valuable first-hand knowledge that has been capture and organized in this manual to be utilized by new and experienced members of CPPC.
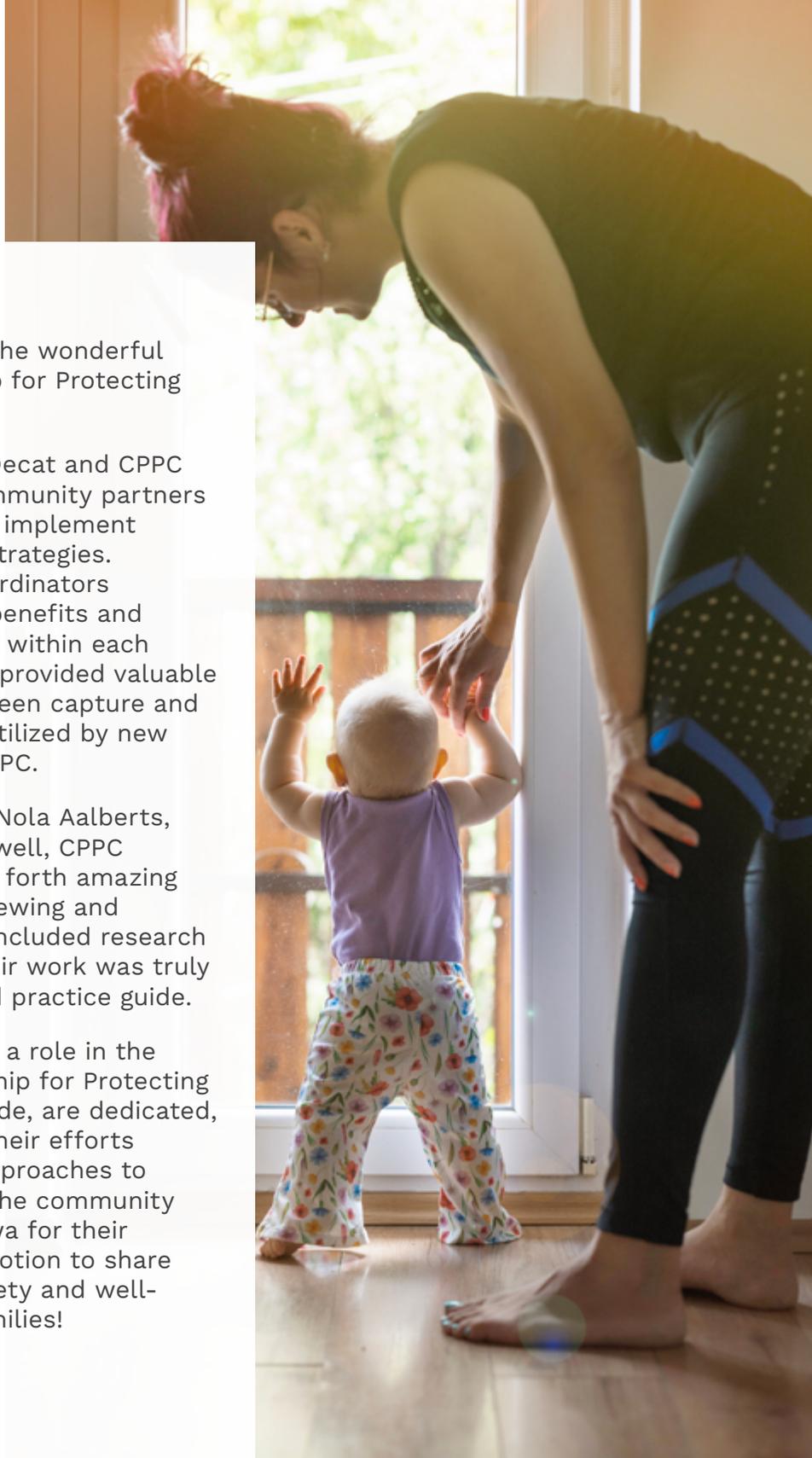
I want to give special thanks to Nola Aalberts, CPPC Specialist, and Morgan Newell, CPPC Statewide Coordinator. They put forth amazing effort and hard work and in reviewing and revising this CPPC Guide which included research and edits to multiple drafts. Their work was truly an asset to creating the updated practice guide.
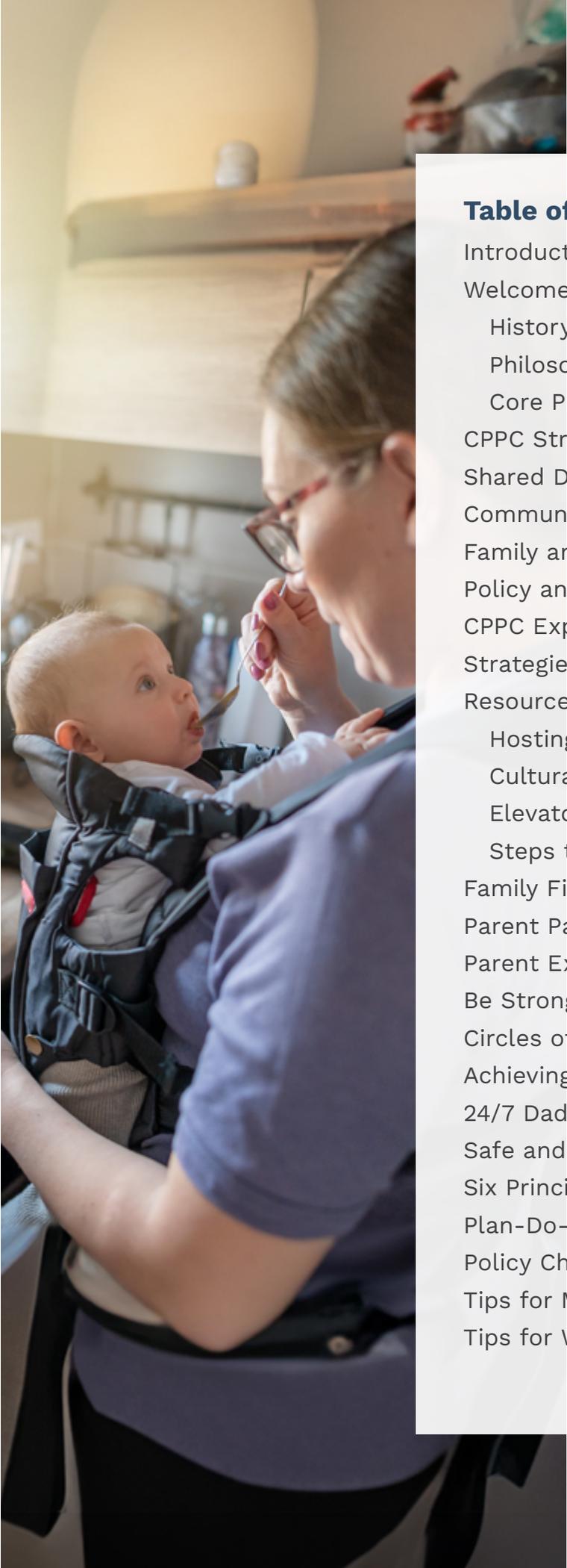
The individuals who have played a role in the success of Community Partnership for Protecting Children, and in creating this guide, are dedicated, diligent, and compassionate in their efforts to support community-based approaches to child protection! Thank you to the community partnership networks across Iowa for their continued contributions and devotion to share responsibility for the overall safety and well-being of children, youth, and families!

Sincerely,

Julie Clark-Albrecht

HHS Community Partnership Program Manager

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Welcome

You may have heard of **Community Partnerships for Protecting Children (CPPC)**, or Community Partnerships; this practice guide strives to increase your understanding of Community Partnerships as well as the levels within the four CPPC strategies to grow this initiative in your community.

Community Partnerships for Protecting Children is a community-based approach to child protection. Partnerships work to prevent child abuse, neglect, and re-abuse, safely decrease the number of out-of-home placements, and promote timely reunification when children are placed in foster care. The long-term focus of Community Partnerships is to protect children by changing the culture to improve child welfare processes, practices and policies.

A whole host of factors contribute to child well-being, permanence and safety. Community Partnerships for Protecting Children are positioned to play an important role in continuing to improve these outcomes through the enhancement of community resources and implementation of the four strategies: Neighborhood and Community Networking, Shared Decision-Making, Family and Youth Centered Engagement, and Policy and Practice Change. These strategies are focused on changing child welfare cultural response by engaging communities, families, youth and agencies to work as partners.

This guide is intended for Community Partnership Coordinators as well as key Shared Decision-Making Team members to further their understanding and efforts in Community Partnerships.

History

Iowa's Community Partnership approach grew from initial work in Cedar Rapids in 1995 and now encompasses the entire state. Several new policy and practice changes in Iowa have been promoted, piloted, and implemented through Community Partnership efforts. Family Team Decision-Making, Parent Partners and Youth Transition Decision-Making (Iowa Dream Teams) are examples of these efforts. Training, professional development opportunities and train-the-trainer programs have been developed and implemented to support improved practices and ensure quality and consistency across the state. State and regional networking opportunities, workshops and forums create an ongoing learning community of stakeholders.

Philosophy

Vision

The safety and well-being of children in every Iowa community are priorities. Communities develop partnerships across collaborative networks to implement prevention strategies, provide early interventions, and share responsibility for the well-being and success of all children and families.

Values

▸ Community Partnerships for Protecting Children (CPPC) is an approach that sees the overall well-being and safety of children as everyone's responsibility.

▸ CPPC is an approach that neighborhoods, communities, and states can adopt to improve child and family well-being, including safety, social, emotional, educational, behavioral, mental, and physical health, economic stability and community well-being factors.

▸ CPPC utilizes collaborative networks to develop community resources and supports to be more inviting, accessible, and responsive to youth and families.

▸ The CPPC approach advances prevention and intervention strategies to strengthen protective factors of families to ensure child safety from maltreatment.

▸ CPPC works to prevent child abuse and neglect, safely decrease the number of out-of-home placements, and promote timely reunification when children are placed in foster care.

▸ Engagement of diverse professionals, parents, youth and community members is key in shaping supports and services needed for children and families in communities.

▸ Encompasses how children can thrive with their families and communities.

Core Principles

We Believe...

Families and youth are the experts in what they need to be successful.

Shared decision-making among parents, youth and professionals best informs improvement to services, programs, and supports in local communities.

Supports and services are available and accessible in the communities in which families live.

Parent and youth voices and their lived experiences are valued, respected and instrumental to local and statewide policy and practice system changes.

Local communities benefit from shaping their own strategies in response to community needs.

Integrating culturally responsive approaches to engage diverse families and communities in shaping resources, programs and supports is essential.

Community engagement with youth and families to identify resources and supports available to them will improve outcomes and build natural supportive relationships
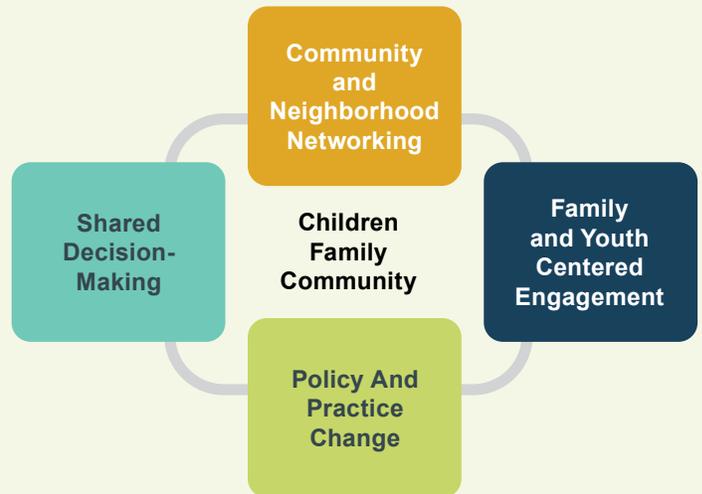
CPPC Strategies

Community Partnerships is guided by four key strategies:

Shared Decision-Making

Family and Youth Centered Engagement

Neighborhood and Community Networking

Policy and Practice Change

Community and Neighborhood Networking

Shared Decision-Making

Children Family Community

Family and Youth Centered Engagement

Policy And Practice Change

All four strategies must be implemented simultaneously to achieve desired results. Through a community shared decision-making process, partners work together to develop policy and practice that promotes family and youth-centered engagement that meet specific needs of vulnerable families and work to increase the community network of both informal and formal supports.

All sites need to meet specific criteria in each of the four strategies to be considered a community partnership site.

This includes the following requirements:

▶ CPPC (Community Partnership for Protecting Children) Coordinator or SDM (Shared Decision-Making) member must attend 100% of the regional and statewide meetings

▶ Coordinator must complete and submit Community Partnership Reporting and Evaluation and Budget Forms by the specified dates

▶ Coordinator must agree to site visit with the Community Partnership Statewide Coordinator when requested

Shared Decision-Making

Community Partnerships are founded on the principle of shared responsibility for the safety of children. Partnerships are guided by organized shared decision-making committees that include a wide range of community members.

Purpose

Provide leadership for collaborative efforts that promote community responsibility for the safety and well-being of children.

The partnership establishes a local decision-making body to review the effectiveness of community child protection and engages community members to participate and support the initiative. Each site forms a decision-making group/team to create the structure of the local partnership. This group is responsible for setting the ongoing direction of the partnership and leads efforts in reaching out to neighborhood residents, parents, faith institutions, agencies and providers, and schools to inform the public about the purposes and benefits of community child protection approach. In addition, this group takes responsibility for self-evaluation.

Goals

1 Recruit diverse membership to set the direction and oversee implementation of local efforts

2 Identify and assess community strengths and identify gaps in services and supports

3 Develop plans and leverage resources to fill priority gaps and meet unmet needs within the community

4 Agree on measures, evaluate outcomes and share accountability for outcomes

Shared Decision-Making Team (SDMT) Representation

Membership must include representation from HHS, Decat, local community and professional members. Robust representation may include individuals from:

Domestic Violence	Providers Parents or Youth-Lived Experiences
Substance Use	Foster Parents
Mental Health	Relative or Kinship Caregivers
Health Care	
Education	Parent Partners
Business	Parents, Guardians or Grandparents
Legal System	
Law Enforcement	Youth
Economic Support Providers	Child Abuse Prevention Council
Family & Child Providers	Volunteer or Unpaid Members
Home Visitation	

SDMT Growth and Development

▸ Develop and implement an orientation plan for new members
  ▪ Parent Partner orientation annually
  ▪ Ongoing comprehensive understanding of the four strategies
  ▪ Develop an avenue for youth and parent voice.
▸ Develop recruitment plans for increasing involvement on SDM from missing stakeholders
▸ Apply a DEI lens to recruitment and retention of SDM members Leverage local level data to aid planning and address local gaps and needs

Required Activities

▸ Host a CPPC Immersion 101 event at least once every three years
▸ Annually complete the Shared Decision-Making Survey as a guide for quality improvement of the strategy.

CPPC/DECAT Relationships

CPPC funding is allocated through DECAT, and it is important that a partnership/structure is established. The following are examples of what this relationship has looked like. In any of these examples, subcommittees could be created to focus on each of the four strategies.

Joint Relationship

Community Partnerships and DECAT work jointly together as one.
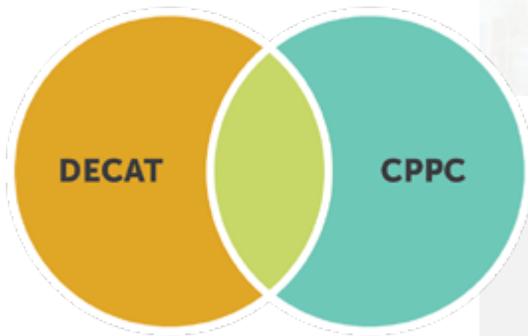
Subcommittee

Community Partnerships becomes a subcommittee of the local DECAT

Separate Entities

Community Partnerships operate more independently from DECAT

Community Neighborhood Networking

Community Neighborhood Networking (CNN) focuses on engaging and educating partners and promoting community involvement to strengthen families and create safety nets for children. In addition, Partnerships build linkages and relationships among professionals and informal support systems. As Partnerships build, and as additional resources become available, Community Partnerships initiate more structured responses to address community-identified needs.

Purpose

Promote alliances to provide accessible and relevant supports, services and resources for families whose children are at risk of abuse and neglect.

We know children do well when their families are strong, and families are strong when they live in supportive neighborhoods. Connections open doors, guide our futures and give us emotional strength and security. When we focus our energy on improving how the system serves the people, we empower families to identify their own needs.

Goals

1 Increase community awareness regarding resources and initiatives

2 Marketing materials, newsletters, presentations, discussions, and community events

3 Establish and maintain multiple linkages and relationships among supports and resources

4 On-going opportunities for peer learning, information-sharing and networking

Community Networking Actions

▸ Develop CNN plan that includes goals for engagement strategies and planned activities and that identifies potential network members to whom strategies will be directed

▸ Cultivate activities that include network and community members involved in planning

▸ Create plan to increase collaboration between informal supports, professional supports, and resources

▸ Define performance and outcome measures to evaluate activities

▸ Engage the community and build awareness about CPPC's four strategies through community forums, events, and activities

▸ Develop hubbing resources and activities that enhance the accessibility of services and supports for families and youth

▸ Implement programs and activities to consistently address Diversity and Disparity issues

▸ Develop a cadre of spokespersons who can deliver CPPC information

▸ Establish performance and outcome measures and evaluate these to ensure the goals are obtained

CNN Education and Awareness

Plan to offer training and education in the community around the following topic areas:

▸ Family Centered Programming

▸ Family and Youth Engagement

▸ ACE's/Trauma Informed

▸ Child & Family Well-Being

▸ Understanding and Analyzing Data

▸ Child Abuse Prevention Diversity, Equity and Inclusion

▸ Disparities and Disproportionality

▸ Child Welfare and Family First Legislation

▸ Protective Factors

Ways to Engage the Community

CPPC Promotion

Pens	Flyers
Buttons	T-shirts
Magnets	

CPPC Information

CPPC Brochure	Community Newsletter
Fact Sheets	
Presentations	PSA's

Engage the Community

- Community Meetings
- Surveys
- Customer Response Forms
- Roundtable Discussions
- Suggestion Box
- Recruit for Steering Committee

CPPC Spokespersons

Send stakeholders to CPPC Immersion 101

Track groups to whom presentations are given, including

- Who presented
- Number of participants
- General overview of results

Ways to Strengthen Collaborations

Promote linkages between informal and professional supports and resources

- Include professionals in planning and implementing community events
- Develop and disseminate directory of community services

Engage other organizations, agencies and professionals to partner, support and promote the CPPC approach

- 1:1 relationship building
- Lunches or coffee talks
- Orientations for different organizations, agencies, and professional groups
- Create newsletter or place information in existing newsletter
- Partner, support, promote other related programs
- Informational mailings

Ways to Organize Networks

Programs that promote and facilitate informal networks providing supports for families in need

- Neighborhood Partners
- Circles of Support
- Recovery Communities

Programs that promote and facilitate informal networks providing supports for families currently involved in CPS services

- Parent Partners
- AMP
- 24/7 Dads
- Fatherhood Initiative
- Parent Cafes
- Caring Dads Program
- Kinship Navigator Program

Increase professional collaboration through

- Systems and Group cross-trainings
- Ongoing consultation with DV experts
- Increased access to low-income housing programs
- Increased access to substance use experts
- Involvement in activities addressing cultural disproportionality and disparity

Hubbing resources and activities

- Resource Center
- Co-location of staff
- Ongoing activities that enhance access to services and supports
- Organized referral network that provides readily available supports and resources

Family and Youth Centered Engagement

Family and Youth Centered Engagement (FYCE) focuses on genuine engagement of families and youth to identify strengths, resources and supports that best meet needs for youth and families and their communities.

Purpose

Genuinely engage families and youth to identify strengths, resources, and supports to reduce barriers and help families and youth succeed.

Meaningful engagement centers family and youth in decision-making and involves a strengths-based approach to establishing and maintaining relationships and accomplishing change together. Engaging parents, caregivers and youth as key partners leads to effective solutions for both families and youth and for the community. Opportunities for co-creation and leadership of activities builds community connections, resilience, and healing for families and youth with lived experience in systems.

Goals

1 Families and youth are involved in planning and decision making

2 Strengthened family and youth protective factors

3 Families and youth experience increased connections to their peers and within the community

4 Family and youth relationships are strengthened

5 Families and youth are advocates and leaders in the community

6 Improved programming to better meet needs of youth and families.

7 Community activities are co-designed and led with family and youth input.

FYCE Actions

▸ Promote equitable child and family well-being and protective factors

▸ Facilitate family and youth engagement by:
  - Developing youth-adult partnerships
  - Parent or Youth led committees
  - Intentionally share power and decision-making
  - Co-design community activities

▸ Develop and implement community resource coordination activities to meet family and youth needs

FYCE Activities

Plan to implement one or more of the following activities:

▸ Community-Based Youth Transition Decision-Making

▸ Circles of Support

▸ Parent Cafes

▸ Youth and parent centered or led and co-designed meetings, planning and activities

▸ Activities directed to build trust and connection with youth and families within marginalizes, over-represented or under-served communities

Policy and Practice Change

Ongoing evaluation of how well families and children are being served is important to achieving desired results. communities must routinely assess their efforts, identifying gaps and barriers and chart courses to improve policy practices. Partnerships test innovative approaches, promote best practices and influence system changes to better serve families and protect children.

Purpose

Improve policies and practices to reduce barriers and increase accessibility and relevance of services that lead to positive family and youth outcomes.

Parents and youth with real-life experiences within the child welfare system are key contributors to policy and practice change development. Involved community members, as well as families and youth directly impacted by the child welfare system, significantly changes the conversation about policies and practices related to child protection.

Goals

1 Gather and utilize data and community insights to identify and assess needs for policy and practice change

2 Explore opportunities to implement best practices

3 Facilitate parent and youth input

4 Implement and evaluate change within the context of the community

Identify Policy and Practice Change Areas of Need

▸ Building Community and informal supports to prevent abuse or re-abuse

▸ Promoting authentic family and youth engagement

▸ Strengthening communication between HHS and the community

▸ Process for evaluation and feedback of current practices among child welfare and partner agencies

▸ Ensure frontline child welfare staff and partner agencies are included in development and implementation of practice changes

▸ Reducing racial disproportionality and disparity in the child welfare system

▸ Improving cultural competency and responsiveness in the community

▸ Establishing partnerships with intersecting local systems to influence practice changes

▸ Plan to increase access to services to meet needs for community members regarding mental health, substance use and domestic violence

▸ Plan to address concrete support needs and barriers

Policy and Practice Change Priorities

▸ Parent Partners Program provides input to gaps and needs for parents involved in child welfare in the community

▸ Identify key agencies and community members for input in what works or needs improvement

▸ Ensure the SDM, agency administrators and service recipients evaluate service delivery on a regular base

▸ SDM solicits ongoing feedback from families and community members and makes changes in response to feedback

▸ Community agencies and SDM routinely work together to develop and review policies and practices

Examples of Policy and Practice Change

Policy and Practice Change does not always have to come from a formal assessment or evaluation of current policies and practices. Policy and Practice Change is seen as changing legislation, but there are many ways to modify policy an practice to demonstrate the use of this strategy.

Domestic Violence (DV) advocates as well as police officers were present at the conference where a standard practice and procedure about providing safety for DV victims was discussed. In this practice, DV victims were to meet DV advocates outside of the police station. This was perceived by law enforcement as a secure approach for both the victim and the advocate. However, if the perpetrator were to witness this meeting, it could escalate and endanger the lives of both.

When this was called to the attention of law enforcement, they recognized that their perception of safety had unintended consequences. To resolve the issue, these two groups met over coffee to discuss possible practice/policy changes. They identified locations that had 24-hour security where DV advocates and victims could meet to lower the risk for all involved. Changing this simple practice/policy, opened the door for collaborative work between these two agencies.

Parent Partners is an approach that is an example of Policy and Practice Change within the Community Partnership initiative. The Parent Partners program celebrates individuals who have overcome obstacles through change, recovery, and accountability, and uses their skills to mentor families who are currently navigating through the child welfare system as their children are in foster or kinship care. Parent Partners demonstrate advocacy and effective communication while holding families accountable.

Other examples of developing and implementing plans to address barriers to and gaps in services and to incorporate best practice approaches in the delivery of services are listed below:

▶ Promoting authentic family and youth engagement

▶ Reducing minority disproportionality and disparity in the child welfare system

▶ Improving culturally responsive services and supports in the community, such as by increasing access to linguistic resources.

▶ Establishing partnerships within intersecting systems to influence practice changes

▶ Developing a process for evaluation and feedback of current practices among partner agencies.

CPPC Expectations

CPPC Statewide Convening

CPPC Coordinators are required to attend the annual Statewide Convening. If a Coordinator cannot attend, a representative from their SDM must be sent in their place.

Each Statewide Convening is an opportunity for learning and collaboration to increase CPPC's capacity to apply learning, leverage resources and assess gaps in developing plans to meet the needs of children and families in their respective communities

CPPC Regional Meetings

CPPC Coordinators are required to attend one of the annual CPPC Regional Meetings. If a Coordinator cannot attend one of the three scheduled meetings, a representative from their SDM team must be sent in their place.

Regional Meetings are an opportunity to dive into the application of the CPPC Approach, trends in child welfare, local and statewide resources and programs, strategies for engaging communities, and ideas/action planning for application of information across CPPC local sites. CPPC Coordinators and SDMT members can learn from one another through sharing updates about their local activities.

CPPC Annual Plan, Report and Budget

CPPC Coordinators are required to submit their plan, report, and budget by the deadlines provided each year. Please contact the Statewide Coordinator and CPPC Program Manager if there are concerns or questions related to the plan, report or budget.
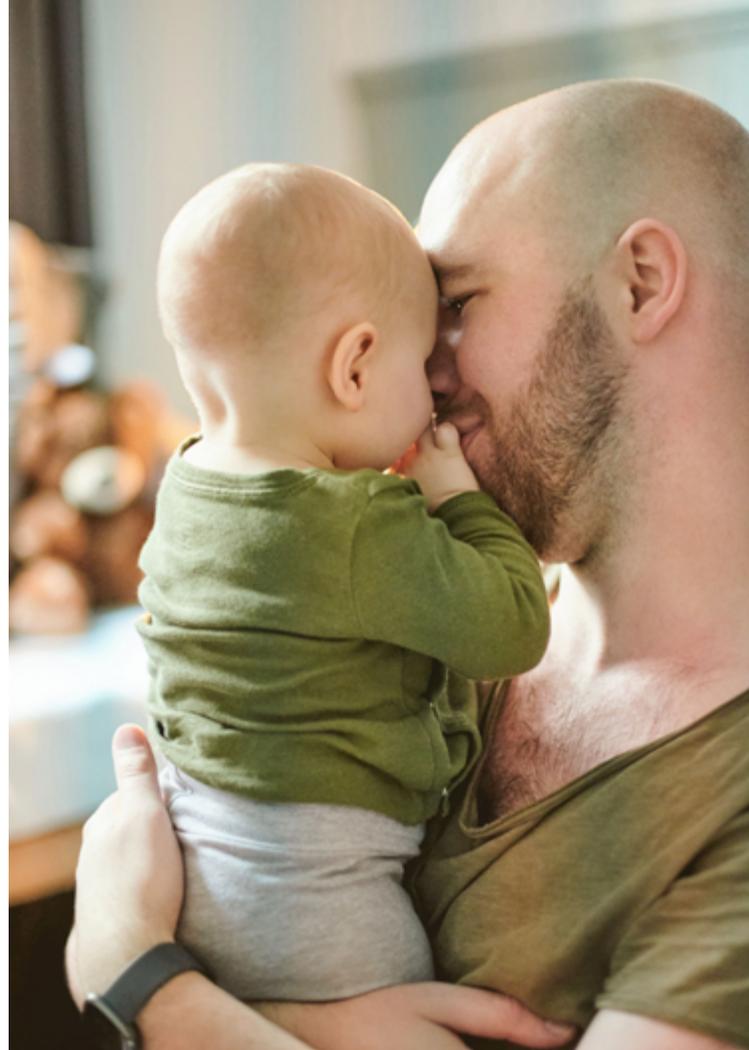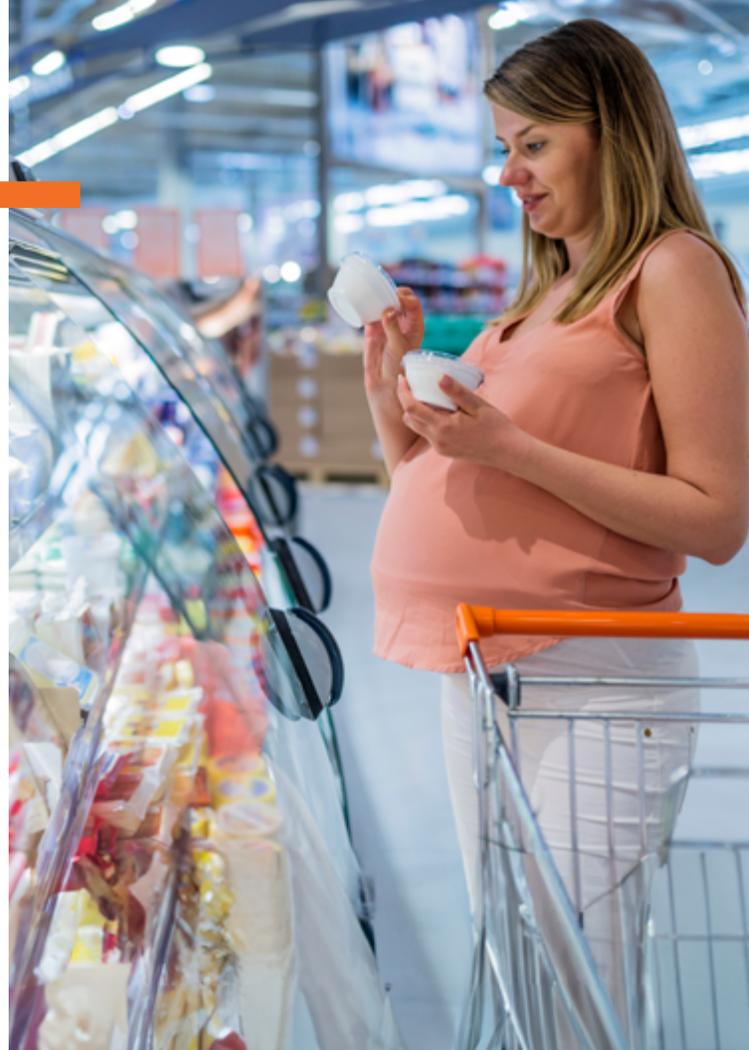
Strategies in Action

This section provides feedback and guidance from experienced Community Partnership coordinators who graciously agreed to share information and answer questions as if they were giving advice to a new coordinator (or sharing information they wished they'd had as a new coordinator).

How do you keep your team members committed and involved in the shared decision-making team?

" *We've **combined Neighborhood Networking with Community Networking meetings with Planning Council meeting**s. This primarily keeps partners and providers engaged.*"

" ***Consistent monthly meetings** are a great place to share resources and upcoming events* "

" ***Update them on community events** at the community planning committee meeting and throughout the months (events, emails).* "

" ***Sharing data, events, and information with them.** Inviting them to share and talk about issues they are seeing. Also sharing info from annual and quarterly reports.*"

" ***Engaging community members has been a struggle.** Leadership and positions have changed so much recently.*"

How did you overcome struggles growing membership of your SDM?

" *It comes and goes with turnover, life events and most recently the pandemic. I think **continuing to reach out to people, build relationships and network** in your communities helps a lot.*"

" *I am constantly **adding new people to my distribution list**.*"

How have you involved community members?

" ***Community events.***"

" *Allowing them to **share and utilize our meeting space** for ideas planning networking etc. Mini grants. Having shared goals, events, causes.*"

" ***Asking them where they "fit" and trying to put them into those positions** where they're comfortable.*"

" *Connections within your communities helps to identify and engage community members. **We have been able to involve individuals from churches, civic groups and retirees** this way.*"

" ***They are in the planning and implementation stages** of all events.*

What is one piece of information you wish you received when you started your position?

❝ *Allow everyone to share something that they want to see* grow in our community."

❝ *Networking and building relationships are key.* Sometimes you must allow/participate in other goals/projects alongside your own."

❝ *It's a slow grow.* Work on getting the right people around the table and don't worry about how many people are there. Change can happen with just a few. *Once the momentum gets rolling people will come.*"

❝ *Be authentic, be consistent* and learn all you can about the counties you are representing."

❝ *Make sure you have a list of committee members,* know the organizations that the SDM was co-partnered within the past, and then get together with these partners. It is easier to come up with initiatives from what has been done, what needs to be done in the community now, and then pull together partners from all areas to help in these efforts for the future."

How do members of your SDM team participate in yearly planning?

❝ *By showing their agency representation.*"

❝ I would say it happens throughout the year by *discussions that naturally occur* during the meetings. We also review data, annual reports, and surveys."

❝ Typically, *I write the "bones" of the yearly plan* and then present it to them for feedback."

❝ *Google documents* work well for my group-emails and remainder emails - give deadlines."

❝ We do the yearly planning at the CPPC *community meetings.*"

Please share a success story from your SDM strategy.

❝ I think one way our site works well is the *needs/gaps discussions happen at the* *local planning council meeting*, mini-grant applications can then be submitted for a program to fill that gap, application is then reviewed by the local planning council, then they are taken to the board for review, discussion (awareness) and final approval."

❝ *Our SDMT has been highly respected by our Board* and thus has had great success funding local projects to benefit families."

❝ *It is about bringing together the Shared Decision-Making teams'* values, goals, and resources together to reach the most appropriate decisions for the families we work with."

❝ *Free movie night* for CPPC/CAP Month was a great success. *Through the partnering* with the local Child Abuse Prevention Council, Charles City Care organization and the local theatre, we were able to give 84 families--52 children--*free kiddie combo meals.* A great community event."

What is one successful way your site promotes cooperation in your CPPC area?

❝ *Highlighting good work* being done by others in a public forum."

❝ *We have a really respectful, helpful group* that works to help each other succeed. Continuing to work together and rely on each other when needed has promoted cooperation. I think knowing that we can count on each other is key."

❝ *Coming together on a monthly basis* we are promoting cooperation. By helping provide the same message and getting resources out to those that need them most."

❝ *With our local agencies* (CAP Councils) in each county."

❝ When agencies and HHS staff can get together to complete a project, they *benefit from working alongside one another.* All while learning what other programs do and we see future partnerships formed through these experiences."

What is one barrier that you have found with community engagement?

❝ Meeting attendance of **non-service agencies.**"

❝ **People in the area are stretched thin.** Those already helping others are at capacity and often doing 2 or 3 jobs- doing other collaborative projects or meetings are not a priority for them right now."

❝ **Youth and parent partnerships.**"

What is one communication tool your site implemented?

❝ **Constant Contact**, website, Facebook, text messaging service."

❝ **Continued contact** with community partners."

What advice would you give a new or existing CPPC coordinator about Neighborhood Networking?

❝ It takes **communication and relationship building.**"

❝ **Have an elevator speech.** Show your face and explain what you do over and over a lot. It may seem redundant, but people will remember that when they need it."

❝ **Volunteer-** get to know people in the area."

How has your site promoted the linkage between informal and formal supports?

❝ **Piloting and promoting programs** that support informal efforts. Supporting activities, events and programming that helps neighbors, parents, and/or children to meet one another and connect."

❝ **Provider meetings have both formal and informal supports.** Now we encourage families and professionals to think about who the family might have in their life that could serve a need that they might not have thought about."

❝ Informal supports have **knowledge about resources from a community-based perspective.** Formal supports have access to

the resources that the system they represent holds in its services and structures."

❝ By using **virtual and in-person platforms.**"

How do you find and recruit volunteers?

❝ Utilizing our APPC member and also **through email, social media and relationships built.**"

❝ Our CPPC doesn't utilize volunteers often but **organizations we help support or work with do**. We utilize our website and mailing list to request volunteers."

❝ **Partnering agencies.**"

❝ **I ask-** there are several 'go to' folks in my CPPC."

Please share a success story your sites have experienced with the Community and Neighborhood Network Strategy.

❝ **We use the Google drive** and Facebook as information sharing spaces."

❝ **Our site has a community storage unit** with household items for families in need that was born from neighborhood networking."

❝ **Resources from the pandemic** and community partners share with the families they work with."

Family and Youth Centered Engagement

How do you involve your SDM in FYCE activities you implement in your area?

❝ **Ask them to actively promote** to families and to show up. Monthly updates."

❝ **1-1 discussion and distribution list** for email correspondence. In the planning, implementation, and events stages."

❝ **I report on the activities** at each SDM meeting. When we initially started Parent Cafes in our area, the SDM was the decision-making body for that."

What are the difficulties you have encountered in developing Family and Youth Centered Engagement activities?

" *Funding.*

" *Finding the people to help coordinate, volunteer, show up. Promoting events and activities to families and children- getting the word out.*"

" *Community involvement, due to busy schedules and making time for cafes.*"

" *A bigger voice for events from the family/ youth are needed.*"

How do you promote Family and Youth Centered Engagement?

" *Sharing the importance of it using date, reports etc. Provider meetings, our website, mailing list, word of mouth.*"

" *Be involved in an Open House before school begins for students and families.*"

" *Family night out, free movie, through school, community events.*"

Please share a success story your sites have experienced with the Family and Youth Centered Engagement strategy.

" *We started our first Parent Cafe in a school district this year!*"

" *In the past there has been graduation parties for the youth that cannot afford or are coming from the alternative schools. This gives the youth recognition and helps aid the parents in recognizing their children's successes.*"

Policy, Practice and Change

What is the biggest struggle with Policy and Practice Change in your site?

" *There's so few people working in these counties. Most feel like pushing their own agenda, rather than a shared message.*"

" *It's hard to find the time to even take on this strategy. Additionally, many of our partners are not comfortable in this area.*"

" *Time! With all the other activities going on, dedicating time for larger policy and practice changes is very difficult. We have been able to do a lot of smaller things, though.*"

" *Getting your voice heard.*"

What is one policy and practice change that made your site work better?

" *Building and launching our website.*"

" *Coordination with other community meetings in the area.*"

How do the other three strategies link to your policy and practice change strategy?

" *Feedback on what needs to change comes from our SDMT and NN. Some of our changes, such as Parent Cafes, directly impact FYCE.*"

How do you initiate Policy and Practice Change in your CPPC?

" *I listen to some of the conversations that just happen organically at our SDMT or provider meeting and then start asking questions like "if this problem were to be solved, what would that look like? How would we get there?*"

What advice would you give to a new or existing CPPC coordinator about PPC?

" *It's okay to advocate for children & families; it is our responsibility. Every effort to communicate needs/problems, no matter how small, gets noticed by those who make the policies.*"

" *It doesn't have to be big and complex to have impact. Stick with it.*"

" *Work with community partners to make a change.*"

Please share a success story from your Policy and Practice Change strategy.

" *Implementing funding to start Parent Cafes, the community storage unity, ensuring school based mental health is in all districts in our counties.*"

Resources

Hosting Immersion 101

CPPC Immersion 101 is designed to give those involved with Community Partnerships for Protecting Children (or those interested in being involved) a better understanding of the four strategies of Community Partnerships. Participants will learn more about each of CPPC's strategies. All four strategies must be implemented simultaneously to achieve desired results.

Attendees learn through a community-shared decision-making process, and partners work together to develop policy and practice that promotes individualized planning to meet specific needs of vulnerable families and work to increase community networks of both informal and formal supports. Participants will learn about implementing these strategies to meet local community needs

CPPC Site Hosting Immersion 101

We want to make the process as easy for you as possible. We will provide the facilitators, participant handouts, and attendance certificates. Immersion 101 is free to you/your agency. If possible, it is suggested you provide lunch to the participants.

As the hosting site, your primary responsibilities are to provide the following: (1) The hosting site coordinator, (2) the training room space and (3) the audience.

Requesting Immersion 101

1 **Contact CPPC Program Manager** to request hosting an Immersion 101.

2 **Schedule a virtual meeting** to discuss the preferred event date, location, and other logistical details.

3 **Immersion 101 is scheduled** from 9am-3pm with a break for lunch

2-6 Months Prior to Immersion 101

1 **Secure a space** to accommodate participants. Determine if lunch or snacks will be provided for participants and make necessary arrangements.

2 **Recruit participants.** For the training to occur, a minimum of 12 individuals must be registered 2 weeks before.

Hosting sites decide a community guest list.

Hosting sites are encouraged to request attendance from community partners interested in learning about CPPC.

Day of Immersion 101

Host will set up the training room 45-60 minutes prior to the start of training and provide necessary A/V equipment.

Attendance forms, agendas, participant handouts, certificates of attendance, and evaluations will be sent to the hosting site by in advance for printing to be provided to attendees. The hosting site needs to ensure there is a screen or blank wall to project the PowerPoint.

Cultural Equity Learning Exchanges

Race: The Power of An Illusion (RPI)

RPI builds the capacity to reduce disparities in the Iowa child welfare system by providing participants with an environment in which to explore and challenge their own beliefs and attitudes about race, practice better ways of talking to one another about sensitive topics and begin having courageous conversations with one another about how the notion of race affects our attitudes, beliefs, and behaviors.

Understanding Implicit Racial Bias (UIRB)

UIRB introduces concepts to recognize and reduce implicit racial bias. Participants are provided with the opportunity to explore and challenge their own beliefs and attitudes about bias, practice better ways of talking to one another about microaggressions and stereotypes and begin having conversations with one another about how implicit racial bias affects our decision-making.

For more information about hosting a cultural equity learning exchange in your community, contact:

Samantha Magpie

ICWA and Cultural Equity Program Manager

smagpie@dhs.state.ia.us

Elevator Speeches

An "elevator speech" is a way to share information quickly in about the time you'd share an elevator with someone. The goal is to spark curiosity so they want to learn more.

Former DECAT Coordinator, Joe Burke, created this activity to help anyone create an elevator speech to encourage coordinators to develop their own elevator speech about local CPPC work

Steps to Creation of an Elevator Speech

1. **Write** two short paragraphs describing what you'd like to share.
2. **Read** these paragraphs aloud to a group of peers for feedback.
3. **Ask peers** to identify keywords in the paragraphs.
4. **Rewrite** the two paragraphs into 2 sentences, using the keywords identified.
5. **Read** the 2 sentences aloud again, and again ask for keyword feedback.
6. **Rewrite** the 2 sentences into one sentence.

This is your elevator speech!

Joe's Tips!

What you are trying to do is make a short sentence that gives some information but that will illicit further questions. The less information you give the better. I use the elevator speech about 90% of the time and I almost always get follow up questions. If the elevator speech gives too much info in one sentence you will not get follow up questions because you could intimidate the individual asking.

Family First

Blueprint for Iowa's Future Child Welfare System

Family Voice and Choice.
Family and child perspectives are prioritized intentionally during all phases of involvement. Nothing *about* the family *without* the family.

Team Based.
The team consists of individuals agreed upon by the family and are committed to them. The team is family inclusive, but not family exclusive.

Natural Supports.
The team actively seeks full participation for team members drawn from family members' networks of natural support. This is particularly true when child is being placed out of home

Collaboration.
Team members work cooperatively and share responsibility for developing, implementing, monitoring and evaluating the family's case plan. The plan reflects a blending of team member perspectives, mandates and resources.

Community-Based.
The team implements service and support strategies that take place in accessible and least restrictive settings possible; and that safely promote child and family integration into home and community life

Culturally Responsive.
The team demonstrates respect for, and builds on the values, preferences, beliefs, culture, and identity of, the child/youth and family and their community.

Strengths Based.
The case plan must identify, build on, and enhance the capabilities, knowledge, skills, and assets of the child and family by utilizing their community and other team members.

Persistence and Creativity.
Despite challenges, the team persists in strengthening and preserving family connections by considering possibilities outside the status quo.

Outcome Based.
Goals and strategies of the system and case planning are observable, have measurable indicators of success, monitor progress in terms of these indicators, and are revised accordingly.

Universal.
Practice commitments are relevant, true, and applicable for micro and macro interactions.

Parent Partners

The Parent Partner Approach celebrates individuals who have overcome obstacles through change, recovery, and accountability by using their skills to mentor families who are currently navigating through HHS as their children are in foster or kinship care. Parent Partners demonstrate advocacy and effective communication, while holding families accountable in meeting their case plan goals. Parent Partners also provide support to parents during family preservation services to support parents to safely remain together with their children through the Child Safety Conference process.

History

This first wave of the parent partners began within Community Partnerships in 2007 in 11 Iowa counties. In 2008 the first Parent Partner Summit was held and is held every annually in Des Moines. In 2011 there was an outcome database developed and implemented for the Parent Partners. In 2015 a statewide contract was developed and now is implemented in all 99 counties in Iowa.

Parent Experience

Many Parent Partners have had personal experience with domestic violence, substance abuse, and/or mental health issues. It is these experiences that make Parent Partners so beneficial to families who are currently receiving HHS services due to child protection issues.

The Parent Partners mentorship is a key strategy to improving practice with families, but it cannot stand alone. Parent Partners network within communities and partner directly with HHS, child welfare staff, systems, and agencies. Parent Partners collaborate with social workers and providers to meet the needs of families, assist in policy and program development, change perceptions in communities, and facilitate trainings and learning opportunities.

The Parent Partners approach includes validating parent's experiences to make changes in family protection services that will assist families in reunification and keeping children safe. Parent Partners meet with social workers, counselors, attorneys, and others regularly to assess progress, and can help professionals empathetically and productively interpret the patterns, behaviors, and needs of families. Parent Partners are role models, mentors, resources, and supports. They are not there to fix another parent but to provide that extra support that some families may need.

Parent Partner Eligibility

Parent Partners must have prior child protection involvement and have experienced successful reunification or resolution around termination of their parental rights for at least one year. Some eligibility requirements for prospective Parent Partners are:

▶ Have been reunited with children for at least one year. Training may be started after six months of reunification.

▶ Have a healthy and stable family situation with no current child welfare involvement.

▶ Have some flexibility to attend meetings and co-facilitate groups.

▶ Have been substance free (including alcohol) for one year if substance abuse was a protective concern.

Be Strong: Parent Cafe Model

The Be Strong Parent Café model allows participants "individual deep self-reflection and peer-to-peer learning, the opportunity for participants to explore their strengths, learn about the Protective Factors and create strategies from their own experiences to help strengthen their families."

CPPCs engage with parents, caregivers, and youth to be a part of the Parent Café through planning and hosting local cafes and gather in "safe spaces where people talk and listen to each other on topics that matter to them, such as the challenges and victories of raising a family, navigating landscapes of inequality, enhancing well-being, or being involved in the recovery process of someone they love.

Parent Cafes are available in Spanish and have been adapted and translated into Chinese, Swahili, French, and Arabic. Parent Cafes can also be utilized in refugee and immigrant communities, with fathers, young parents, and other groups in the community who may benefit from the experience of a Parent Café. Kinship and relative caregivers may also benefit from participating in Parent Cafes. Parents and youth can participate in planning and training around the Parent Café model. They can become hosts, provide support roles at Cafes, and provide input and direction on topics of focus for the Café

More information at

https://www.bestrongfamilies.org/

Circles of Support

Relationship-building is at the core of this program. If people in poverty are to achieve full integration and participation in the community, they need to be surrounded and embraced by people from all walks of life and sectors of the community. Interaction with others in the community removes the isolation that is often experienced by people living in poverty and brings them into the mainstream of community life.

Caring members of the community are matched to the unique needs of each program participant to act as mentors and friends. The objective is to assist participants in their efforts to overcome poverty.

The Circles program seeks participation across economic, cultural and social lines. We operate on the principles of inclusion, equality and respect.

Our goals include breaking down misconceptions, fears, biases and prejudice; fostering compassion; and creating true "community" where everyone feels safe and valued; and acknowledging that every life has meaning.

Achieving Maximum Potential (AMP)

AMP is a youth-driven, statewide group that seeks to unleash the full potential for personal growth among foster, adoptive and kinship children in Iowa. AMP offers leadership opportunities, service learning projects, speaking opportunities, and educational/vocational assistance. AMP also provides the life skills youth need to become self-sufficient, independent adults.

What Do AMP Youth Do?

► **Train to become advocates for themselves and others.**

► **Participate in valuable leadership opportunities.**

► **Develop their voices by telling their own stories.**

► **Educate legislators, foster parents, the public, child welfare professionals and juvenile court representatives about foster care and adoption from the youth perspective.**

► **Build youth and adult partnerships in the community that create opportunities for service learning.**

► **Encourage others to open their homes to teens in foster care or those available for adoption.**

► **Provide understanding, support and encouragement to one another.**

► **Gain the life skills necessary to become healthy, independent adults.**

► **Explore educational and vocational options to chart their path to become successful productive adults.**

www.weareampiowa.com

24/7 Dads Program

Children & Families of Iowa (CFI) is restoring hope, building futures and changing lives. CFI has been providing services and programming to Iowa's most vulnerable families for over 126 years, growing from a small agency helping abused and neglected children to a statewide organization with programs serving tens of thousands of individuals annually.

CFI's 24/7 Dads Program is an evidence-based, free, voluntary program that groups participants in eight-week sessions. It is a comprehensive fatherhood program with innovative tools, strategies, and exercises for fathers of all races, religions, cultures, and backgrounds.

The curriculum is designed to equip fathers with the self-awareness, compassion, and sense of responsibility needed to positively engage with their children, exploring topics such as discipline, communication, co-parenting, as well as showing and handling their emotions. The target population is fathers with children age 18 or younger who may have become disengaged due to incarceration or other issues.

The program is designed for custodial, non-custodial as well as unemployed and underemployed fathers. Referrals are made by a number of community partners including Family Treatment Court, substance abuse agencies, the Parent Partner program (delivered by CFI), other provider agencies and community members.

Safe and Together Model™

The Safe and Together Model™ is specifically designed to focus on promoting the best interest of children including safety, permanency and well-being.

The model uses a perpetrator pattern v. an adult relationship-based definition of domestic violence, which strengthens the ability to understand how the perpetrator is creating harm or the risk of harm to children. This perpetrator pattern-based aspect of the model is strongly reinforced by the gender responsive aspect of the model ensures that fathers who are perpetrators will be held to the same standard of parenting expectations as mothers.

Setting high standards for fathers helps children because it guarantees a more comprehensive assessment of risk, safety and protective factors and increases the effectiveness of the system in engaging men to become better fathers.

As it relates to domestic violence survivors, the model links assessment and partnership specifically to the safety and well-being of children. Versus generic strengths, the model looks for specific actions the adult survivor has taken to promote the safety and well-being of the children.

Gender Responsive

Based on the research and field experience, the model incorporates differences in gender related to patterns of coercive control and parenting roles, expectations, and services. The model also assumes that fathers matter. Their presence or absence, positive or negative behaviors impact the family and that families benefit when systems improve their capacity to assess and engage fathers to support their positive involvement in families

Fact Based

The Safe and Together Model's™ fact-based approach has a number of benefits in policy and practice:

Behavioral focus: The model uses behaviors as the focal point for assessment and intervention. By mapping the behaviors of both the perpetrator and the survivor, practitioners have starting point for all their work with the family. Working in parallel

process, we also focus on the behavior of the practitioner and the system by asking focus on the "how" not just the "what."

Gender/sexual orientation neutral: With its clear focus on patterns of coercive control and actions taken to harm the children, the model offers a clear methodology that focuses on behaviors--not gender--that harms children. This fact-based pattern approach helps workers sort risk and safety issues when more than one caregiver is violent.

Case plans with measurable goals: From clear behavioral assessment of the perpetrators' pattern and the adult survivors' protective capacities, the model encourages case planning that focuses on what each parent has responsibility for and can change to determine a behaviorally defined case plan. Services, when necessary, are then identified to support the achievement of those behavior change goals.

Strengths Based

The Safe and Together Model™ uses the strengths of the practitioner (usually a child welfare worker) and of the domestic violence survivor as key to successful interventions and outcomes.

Integrative and Interdisciplinary

Integrates safety and trauma issues: Systems need to be both trauma- and domestic violence-informed. Using domestic violence perpetrator behavior as the organizing framework, our model is inclusive of safety and trauma issues for the practitioner and family members.

Promotes systems change and cross systems dialog: The model's assumptions, principles and critical components provide a framework for working in multi-disciplinary settings and information sharing.

Multi-disciplinary: the model integrates multi-fields including domestic violence, criminal justice, trauma and mental health, substance abuse and cultural competency.

"Beyond Services"

In the child welfare system, services have become the "sine qua non" of the child welfare intervention. Driven by the common interpretation that "reasonable efforts" means offering the family services to address its issues, child welfare equates interventions with a referral to and completion of services. With the advancement of differential response in many jurisdictions, child welfare is recognizing that one type of intervention does not work for every family. The model approaches adult survivors, children, and perpetrators from a "beyond services" perspective.

"Removal is an Option of Last Resort" Approach

The model respects that there are situation where the domestic violence perpetrator is so dangerous or has done so much harm to children, the adult survivor has done everything a "reasonable person" can do promote their safety and well-being and outside systems have made their best effort to intervene with the perpetrator that removal might be the decision that's in the child's best interest, at least in the short term.

For more information:

www.safeandtogetherinstitute.com

or scan here to see the full training course catalog:

Domestic Violence Resources

Iowa Coalition Against Domestic Violence

Resources, hotline numbers, upcoming training information, and a link to locate local programming

http://www.icadv.org

A.A.R.D.V.A.R.C

An Abuse, Rape, and Domestic Violence Aid and Resource Collection. Statistics and research, victim assistance resources, and information on sexual assault, stalking and legal processes. It also contains links to locate local programming.

http://www.aardvarc.org

Iowa Domestic Violence Helpline

Hotline numbers, recognizing abuse, resources and a link to safely exit the site without it registering in a search history.

http://www.survivorshelpline.org

Iowa International Center

Information on state hotlines and local programming, and translation to over 90 languages.

http://www.welcometoiowa.org/emergency-services/domestic-violence

Six Principles of Partnership

Everyone Deserves Respect.

We all want to be respected. We want respect for who we are and for our uniqueness in the world. We want respect for our experience and perspective. We want respect for how we've become who we are and how we've developed our way of seeing things. We want respect for what we do, for doing the very best we can in the situations in which we find ourselves.

The most effective way for us to get respect from others is to offer it to them. As workers and professionals, you are models for families, and for all others involved in the case. If you embody respect in all of your interactions with others, you set a respectful tone that will find its way into all parts of the system.

Respect does not mean agreement nor does respect look the same to everyone. We can disagree in respectful ways. It's important to explore with families what feels respectful to them and try to operate in ways that they feel valued.

Everyone Needs To Be Heard.

Everyone's voice is important. By inviting partners to freely share their ideas and concerns, we bring those resources out of hiding and into the open. We create more options for families when we seek a diversity of opinions. We (workers) want to be heard too. Sometimes we want to be heard so badly that we put our ideas out first. We try to help families and stakeholders understand our viewpoint. We listen to what they say with half attention, as inside our heads we prepare our response. Families/partners feel heard when we listen with full attention when we try to understand them before we attempt to be understood ourselves.

Everyone Has Strengths.

Child welfare is a complex and dynamic field. Just when we think we've got it, things change, and we have to learn new policies and practices. As employees, we have to stay on top of the changes.

The best way for everyone to adapt is to learn on top of what you already know and what you already do. Think about what strengths you have as a worker and challenge yourself with new practice ideas. The same goes for working with families and all the others involved in the case.

Start where the family or system is. Identify strengths with the family and the connected stakeholders and support and use the strengths as a foundation for new learning and new ideas. Acknowledging and building on strengths doesn't mean we ignore problems or gloss over concerns. On the contrary, the strengths-based practice sees the problems and the strengths and clearly links them together to support the family.

Judgments Can Wait.

Most child welfare systems are set up to be reactionary. Workers have to make judgments every day and most of the time is reinforced by making judgments quickly. Holding back judgment doesn't mean you are avoiding making decisions.

Rather, it means staying open to all the information, especially the information that doesn't fit our expectations and allowing that information to inform our understanding. Once we think we understand a situation, we tend to look at it as if our understanding were the truth.

It is important that as workers, we seek other ways of understanding things. This is more than simply being open to new ideas - we

(continued)

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Six Principles of Partnership

need to seek out disproving evidence to our "truths." Ask yourself, what can I discover in this scenario that would challenge my current understanding of the situation? How can I prove my initial ideas wrong? Even if your initial ideas hold, you are less likely to be surprised down the road if you've taken the time to challenge your thinking.

Partners Share Power.

When we feel powerless, we feel helpless. When we feel helpless, we feel victimized. When we feel victimized, we may resist, give up, lash out, or sink into depression.

This is not something we wish for families or to occur with our partners on the case. The most effective antidote to this syndrome is to share power: not give it up or deny we have it, but share it. Workers walk into families' lives with a lot of power.

The power (and perceived power) that child welfare workers hold makes an impact on the relationship with the family. Sharing power also means sharing responsibility. Of course, families are ultimately responsible for what happens in their homes, but when that power is shared among families, workers, and supervisors, and all the stakeholders on the case, we can help families make good decisions. When some of those decisions don't work as planned, the worker and the family system work together to move forward. When power is shared, setbacks become opportunities to learn and rethink situations rather than place blame.

Partnership is a Process.

Like any relationship, partnership is a process. It will be more successful at some times than at others. It will be more successful with some families and stakeholders than with others. You may find yourself progressing nicely, and then suddenly you seem to be back where you started. This is to be expected and anticipated. Setbacks are part of the learning process and should be treated as such. ("If at first, you don't succeed, try, try again.")

Try to learn from what doesn't work well and what does work well. Involve partners in evaluating your efforts to work well together. Be transparent with the family about what you are trying to achieve through partnership. Transparency will help the partnership process.

Overview of the Plan-Do-Study-Act (PDSA) Process

PDSA's are small tests of practice change that Teams use to impact and improve their systems' practices. PDSAs should be so small that they can be tested within one week. To complete a PDSA a Team asks themselves.

The Big Picture

▸ Looking at our priorities, what do we need to accomplish?

▸ How will we know that practices have improved?

▸ What change can we test that will result in improvement?

▸ How will this practice change impact disparities for the racial, ethnic and cultural group(s) we are focusing on?

Plan

What is the change being tested?

Who will test it?

When will it be tested?

What does our Team expect will happen?

How will we know if what we expected to happen actually happened?

Do

▸ After answering these questions, the Team carries out the test of a small practice change. Run the test, describe what happens, collect data.

Study

▸ Did what we expected to happen, actually happen?

▸ Analyze the data. What was different?

▸ What did we learn?

Act

▸ What did we learn that we can apply to a new test cycle or to a new PDSA?

What are we trying to accomplish?

How will we know that a change is an improvement?

What changes can we make that will result in improvement?

Sample PDSAs

▸ Have 1 social worker ask 1 birth parent their top three needs and together they will select1 need to address by one week from that day

▸ Have 1 social worker ask 1 family how they identify culturally; ensure correct ethnicity is recorded in agency and court systems

▸ Create and use 3 well-being related questions for the judge to ask at every hearing with a child; test with 1 judge and 1 child

▸ Have 1 social worker identify a community partner, caregiver, or relative who can assist him/her to facilitate twice the amount of visitation that is currently occurring for a family

▸ Have 1 social worker ask the following two questions at the next family visit: What is your biggest need right now? What would you like me to know about your family?

▸ Prepare a glossary of court terminology; distribute to 1 community agency to test their understanding

Policy Change on a Larger Level

CPPC is a statewide program and often this calls for action on a larger level. The information here is provided to assist you in communicating effectively with members of the Iowa legislature.

This is not a definitive guide to legislative communications. Its purpose is to provide you with support for effective grassroots advocacy, which has its greatest impact coming from local constituents

Tips for Meeting with Elected Officials

Meeting with your elected officials and their staff is the best way to assure that your voice is heard. This is an excellent opportunity for you to personally educate your elected official about how child abuse prevention programs help families and keep kids safe

The following tips will help ensure a successful visit:

1. **Call and make an appointment** – Ask for the elected official's scheduler. Introduce yourself and briefly explain why you want to meet with the official. Be sure to mention that you are a constituent. Keep in mind that elected officials' schedules can change without notice. Always call to confirm appointments.

2. **Prepare for the meeting** – Your elected officials have a limited amount of time to spend with you. Prepare yourself in advance and make the most of your time. Think carefully about issues you want to discuss and decide the best way to present them.

3. **Research your elected official's previous support for child abuse prevention** – Make sure you know who you're talking to. Think of ways to link child abuse prevention with other things the official cares about such as education or strong, healthy families.

4. **Bring materials to leave behind** – Leave your elected official with a profile of your program and any other materials that describe your program's benefits for kids and families in your community.

5. **Leave the door open for another meeting** – This lets your elected official know that you are interested in developing a relationship and gives you another chance to help him or her understand the value of child abuse prevention. Offer to provide him/her with your expertise in prevention on an ongoing basis..

6. **Send a thank you letter** – This is a great way to keep your particular prevention program on their radar screen (and gives them 'bragging rights' about what they have done for local constituencies).

Tips for Writing Effectively to Your Legislators

Personal letters.

Individually written letters make a greater impression to your legislator. Type your name, address and phone number at the top.

Contact them between sessions.

Most state legislatures are only in session part of the year. The Iowa State Legislature is in session January through April. When the legislature is out of session, it may be more effective to send your letter to your legislator's district office. Also, information provided to legislators when they are OUT of session is likely to get more of their attention

Be specific.

Your purpose for writing should be stated in the first paragraph of the letter. If your letter pertains to a specific piece of legislation, be sure to identify its full name and number, e.g., House Bill: HB _, Senate Bill: SB _. Try to send your letter while the issue is still alive.

State your position.

Explain why you support or oppose this particular issue. Keep in mind that local examples concerning the impact of this legislation are very powerful. Be courteous and to the point, keeping your letter focused on one issue.

Ask for a response.

Indicate to your legislator that you would appreciate a reply containing their position on the issue.

Follow up.

If you agree with your legislator's vote, take the time to let them know that. Similarly, if you disagree with their vote, inform your legislator.

Addressing Correspondence

To a State Senator

The Honorable (Full Name)
State Capitol
Des Moines, Iowa

To a State Representative

The Honorable (Full Name)
State Capitol
Des Moines, Iowa

Tips for Phoning Your Legislators

Upon reaching your state legislator (or staff person) on the phone, follow these steps:

1. **Identify yourself** by name, the organization you represent and the town from which you are calling.

2. **Explain** why you're calling: *"I am calling to support/oppose House Bill: HB _, Senate Bill: SB _."* Be polite and concise. Have one or two talking points as the content of your message. Too much information may confuse your message.

3. **Ask** your legislator their position on this issue. Don't assume that your legislator has prior knowledge of your issue. Be calm and respectful, and be prepared to educate, using local examples and stories to accentuate your point.

4. **Request** a written response to your phone call if you did not speak directly to the legislator. If the legislator requires further information, provide it as soon as possible.

5. **Thank** the person who took the phone call for their time and consideration.