Supporting the Sustainable Use of Research Evidence in Child Welfare Services

An Implementation Science and Service Provider-Informed Blueprint for Integration of Evidence-Based/Evidence-Informed Practices into New Jersey’s Child Welfare System

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Objectives

• Overview of DCF’s operating areas and need for a Blueprint;
• Describe the process to develop the *Blueprint for the Integration of Evidence-Based Practice Using Implementation Science*;
• Share key findings related to opportunities and needed supports at multiple levels within the system for successful integration efforts with a focus on Intervention Selection and Implementation Drivers;
• Facilitate a guided activity and discussion to consider the application of recommendations for Intervention selection and Implementation Drivers identified in the Blueprint.
How CP&P Serves Children & Families

- Internal Case Practice Model
- External Purchased Services
CP&P External Purchased Services

• 864 providers in the community that we purchase services from

• Core Services Purchased:
  – Family Preservation Services
  – Visitation Services
  – Mental Health Treatment
  – Substance Use Disorder Treatment
  – Assessment and Evaluation – psychological and psychiatric
  – ***Supportive Housing
External Purchased Services

• Field and funding is moving towards the integration of evidence-based models

• DCF Strategic Plan Priority - continue transitioning service array to research and evidence-supported service models using an implementation science framework approach

• DCF’s Office of Strategic Development is charged with modernizing the service array by applying the best available evidence and developing solutions to address the needs of children, youth and families.
Project Goals

Increase access and appropriate utilization of evidence-based programming for the purpose of improving outcomes for children and families.

Develop a blueprint for how DCF and provider partners will approach the successful integration of evidence-based practices into the service array.
**Project Overview**

Conduct a multi-level stakeholder engagement process to develop a set of recommendations for strengthening the integration of evidence-based practices into DCF’s child welfare service array.

**Blueprint**

1. Outlines research and best practices in IS frameworks
2. Provides analysis of context, current state of practice, needs, and opportunities
3. Offers recommendations for strengthening practices at both systems and service provider levels using research and best practices
Data Collection & Blueprint Framework

Effective Practices

Effective Implementation

Enabling Context

Improved Outcomes

Intervention Selection

Drivers

Stages

Teams

Data & Communication

A collaborative mixed-methods design was used to gather data from providers and participating Advisory Group members in order to customize implementation science-informed recommendations to the specific context of New Jersey’s child welfare system for the Blueprint.
Sample to Inform the Blueprint

Providers

10 providers were selected through a call for participation to include a stratified sample with representation of:

- Intervention(s) with varying levels of evidence
- Distribution across the state
- A range of organizational and programmatic capacity*

Advisory Group

16 members of the Commissioner’s Advisory Group on Integration of Evidence-Based Practices were identified and recruited by DCF, including:

- DCF leadership
- Model developers
- Systems partners
- Researchers
- Service providers

CAPACITY AND LEVEL OF EVIDENCE

*determined by proxy measures: length of time implementing and number of families served
Using service provider and debrief data from participating Advisory Group members, recommendations are made in the following areas:

- **Systems**: Enhancements to DCF and System Partners Infrastructure and Practice
- **Provider**: Enhancements to the Provider Infrastructure and Practice
Blueprint Structure

For each framework component:

1. Intervention Selection
2. Implementation Teams
3. Implementation Drivers
4. Data & Communication

Component Summary

1. Best Practices
2. Findings
3. Recommendations

Component Detail

- Best Practices Detail
- Intervention Selection SOP Findings Detail
- Recommendations Detail
Intervention Selection
Intervention Selection

Need - Data demonstrating the needs of the population and the EBP/EIP

Fit - Alignment of EBP/EIP approach with local and state priorities and initiatives

Resources - Resources & supports available for developing organizational and systems readiness, engaging key stakeholders in the system, and decision-support data systems

Evidence - Expected outcomes when EBP/EIP is implemented as intended

Usability - Extent to which EBP/EIP approach is well-defined

Capacity - Required staffing and administrative practices, and capacity for data input and analysis, and fidelity and outcome assessments
**Best Practices Detail**

### Systematically Assess Contextual Fit

Engage in a “feasibility assessment” that includes the collection, analysis, and collaborative reflection on fit and feasibility data to make an intentional decision with team members about which intervention to use.

### Need, Fit, Usability

In assessing match, consider:

- Data on the **needs** of the population, including community perception of need
- Data on **fit** of the intervention with the organizational, community, and systems context
- If the model is **defined and operationalized**

### Systems Supports

- Funders can support the selection process by structuring RFP processes around key dimensions of contextual fit and readiness
- Data on service provider capacity can be used to design the technical assistance provided at the systems level to improve contextual fit and to right-size the intensity needed.
State of Practice Findings Detail

**Opportunities**

- Providers reported that they could strengthen their EBP/EIP selection practices by more systematically collecting and analyzing data on the needs of the target population. Once needs are well understood, service providers reported the need for concrete strategies and supports for assessing contextual fit and availability of resources.

- Providers indicated an opportunity to engage and solicit input from key stakeholder groups (service beneficiaries, staff, and DCF and systems stakeholders) in the selection of potential EBPs/EIPs.

- Providers and Advisory Group members saw increasing IT capacity as a significant opportunity to gather information on needs, enhance tracking and monitoring of program fidelity, child and family outcomes, and analysis of costs and cost effectiveness to improve implementation quality and population impact.

**Supports Needed**

- Training and Support from DCF on ways to gather and analyze data about population needs and potential EBPs/EIPs
- Increased access to data sources to define need
- Information sharing between providers
- Facilitate, and incentivize through contracts, cross-agency collaboration to engage stakeholders
- Facilitate opportunities to gather information from families
- Support to build IT infrastructure and systematize data collection to support CQI and outcomes analysis
- Ongoing funding to support IT infrastructure needs and ongoing IT capacity (i.e., staffing, training, ongoing supervision, and fidelity consultation) within provider agencies
Intervention Selection Summary

Best Practices

- Systematically assess contextual fit to select an intervention
- At minimum, assess for need, fit, and usability of the intervention
- Provide supports at the systems level through infrastructure changes & TA

SOP Findings

- Providers identified opportunities to:
  - Assess and Determine Population Needs
  - Increase Stakeholder Engagement
  - Build IT Infrastructure, Data Collection, & Capacity to Use Data

Recommendations

- Use procurement processes to support contextual fit between interventions and context
- Consider internal fit and feasibility assessments using data to inform intervention selection
- Support provider selection through TA partnerships on using data to choose interventions
Recommendations Detail

**System Recommendation:** DCF can explore using procurement processes to support the improvement of contextual fit between potential interventions and the local service delivery context. For example, in cases where DCF is seeking to support the use of selected interventions based on population needs, DCF might structure requests for proposals around key dimensions of contextual fit. In cases where DCF seeks innovative solutions to identified problems, DCF can support providers in using available needs assessment data to identify potential interventions. RFPs can also be structured to provide phased funding that allows for selection and capacity-building processes.

**Provider Recommendation:** Service providers can consider strategies to conduct internal fit and feasibility assessments, using data to inform intervention selection decisions. This could include gathering population data to assess intervention fit, increasing stakeholder engagement to assess cultural fit, and/or assessing internal capacity to collect and use the data required by an intervention.

**System Recommendation:** DCF can support provider selection methods by exploring collaboration with other systems partners to provide guidance and technical assistance to service providers on how to use needs assessment data to make informed choices related to interventions.
Implementation Drivers
What does Prena need to support her practice?
- Competency Supports
- Organizational Supports
- Leadership Supports

- Fidelity Assessment
- Coaching Process
- Training Process
- Selection Process
- Facilitative Administration
- Decision Support Data Systems
- Systems Intervention
Implementation Drivers

Positive Outcomes for Children and Families

Consistent Use of EBPs/EIPs

Fidelity

Coaching

Systems Intervention

Facilitative Administration

Selection

Decision Support Data System

Training

Integrated & Compensatory

Competency Drivers

Technical

Leadership Drivers

Adaptive
## Best Practices

### COMPETENCY DRIVERS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Staff Selection</th>
<th>Selection of staff with the required skills, abilities, and other EBP-specific prerequisite characteristics</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Training</td>
<td>Training that provides knowledge related to the theory and values of the EBP, opportunities to practice new skills to meet fidelity criteria, and feedback in a safe and supportive training environment</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Coaching</td>
<td>On-the-job coaching to support staff in practicing and mastering newly learned skills</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fidelity Assessment</td>
<td>Fidelity assessments to evaluate the extent to which practices are implemented as intended.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### ORGANIZATIONAL DRIVERS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Decision-Support Data Systems</th>
<th>Data systems need to be established to support data-driven decision-making, including the collection and use of programmatic data, fidelity data, and outcome data</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Facilitative Administration</td>
<td>Leadership and administration need to develop strategies that are facilitative of the new practice.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
State of Practice Findings Detail

**COMPETENCY DRIVERS**

**Opportunities**

**Staff Selection**
Increase the development and use of job descriptions and hiring best practices that integrate EBP/EIP competencies into interview protocols.

**Training**
Increase the use of data in determining the ongoing training needs and interests of staff and to assess gains in knowledge and skills based on EBP training. Use training data to inform future training provided.

**Coaching**
Establish plans that address logistics of coaching (i.e., scheduling), identify strategies to support observation of practice (including tools, such as videotaping), and provide strategies for clarifying the coaching role within the organization, particularly if coaching is part of a supervisor’s role or performed by an alternative staff person.

**Fidelity Assessment**
Develop or use feasible processes and procedures, such as checklists and observations, to assess fidelity. Use fidelity data for feedback and improvement of practice.

**Supports Needed**

**Training, resources, and tools to create job descriptions and hiring protocols for staff using EBPs, including guidance or criteria from model developers on skills and characteristics.**

**Resources (time and financial support) for staff to attend ongoing trainings. Available and knowledgeable trainers who can adapt trainings for agency needs. Increase “train the trainer” opportunities. Coordinate training efforts across providers using same EBPs.**

**Resources to build the competency of coaching staff (or supervisors serving as coaches), equipment needed for direct observation, and ongoing training and support of supervisors and coaches.**

**Technical assistance and cross-agency consultation to learn how to support the collection and use of fidelity data for improvement, including how to use coaching for improvement. Resources to support data systems to capture and use fidelity data.**
State of Practice Findings Detail

ORGANIZATIONAL DRIVERS

**Decision-Support Data System**
- Increase agency capacity, understanding, and communication of how to identify, interpret and use relevant data for improvement.
- Ensure data infrastructure is in place to collect and use data.

**Facilitative Administration**
- Formalize meetings, including use of regular times, standing agendas, and processes for data use and communication.
- Strengthen bi-directional feedback loops with staff and stakeholders regarding program implementation and supports needed.

**Systems Intervention**
- Increase collaboration with other service provider agencies to cultivate relationships, strengthen referral networks, engage in case conferencing, and incorporate cross-agency learning on specific EBP/EIPs.
- Increase collaboration with the state and federal agencies to increase their understanding of the EBP/EIP, reduce systems barriers, and encourage investment in the work.

- Training and ongoing support on strategies for collecting and using data for continuous improvement, including resources and ongoing support for additional staff to perform these functions. Funding for critical IT and data infrastructure.
- Technical assistance and inter and cross-agency consultation to learn how to use data and feedback for continuous improvement. Support in ensuring functioning bi-directional communication pathways with staff and stakeholders.
- Clearly defined leadership of systems coordination efforts, coordination capacity, and regular, established meetings for systems collaboration activities, such as engaging key stakeholders. Incentivize activities that support systems changes (e.g., funding, regulatory, policy) in service to sustaining EBP/EIP implementation.
Implementation Drivers Summary

**Best Practices**
- Ensure written job descriptions and interviews assess the skills and abilities needed to select staff to implement the EBP.
- Provide skills-based training, informed by data.
- Develop a plan for, and regularly provide, observational coaching.
- Assess fidelity.
- Formalize processes and use data for CQI.
- Build feedback loops to strengthen facilitative administration.
- Connect with systems to identify and remove barriers.

**SOP Findings**
Providers identified opportunities to:
- Increase use of hiring best practices that integrate EBP competencies into protocol.
- Increase the use of data in determining the ongoing training needs.
- Establish coaching plans.
- Develop or use feasible processes and procedures, such as checklists and observations, to assess fidelity.
- Increase capacity for data use and infrastructure.
- Strengthen bi-directional feedback loops with staff and stakeholders.
- Increase collaboration with service providers and systems partners.

**Recommendations**
- Assess DCF and system infrastructure strengths and gaps and prioritize areas of infrastructure development.
- Develop and refine the infrastructure through collaborative teaming structures with DCF, service providers, and system stakeholders.
- Embed implementation best practices using tools and resources developed and supported by DCF.
Recommendations

3.1 **System and Provider Recommendation:** DCF and provider agencies can assess infrastructure strengths and gaps and prioritize areas for infrastructure development. Based on the findings from this process, DCF should work with provider agencies to prioritize opportunities for infrastructure development, and work with systems partners to coordinate infrastructure development.

3.2 **System Recommendation:** Infrastructure can be developed and refined through collaborative teaming structures with DCF, service providers, and systems stakeholders. The state implementation team could focus on sustainable infrastructure development through collaboration with partners and resource sharing. The state team could use bi-directional communication pathways to gather feedback on state and provider-level infrastructure development and identify strategies to leverage the existing capacity and interests of various stakeholder groups to develop sustainable professional development and fidelity assessments, data systems, and administrative structures needed for successful EBP integration.

3.3 **Provider Recommendation:** Once recommendation 3.1 is completed, service providers can capitalize on state-level supports for agency-level infrastructure development and embed implementation best practices into their own agency teams.
ACTIVITY

1. Review the recommendations for your assigned section (Intervention Selection or Drivers) and reflect on the two guiding questions (5 minutes)
2. Discuss your responses with a partner (10 minutes)
3. Discuss your responses to the questions with your table (15 minutes)

- What are one or two elements of the Intervention Selection or Drivers section that resonates or stands out to you?
- What do you recognize in your own work?
Report Out

Share with the larger group (15 minutes):

✓ What are one or two elements of the Intervention Selection or Drivers section that resonates or stands out to you?

✓ What do you recognize in your own work?
ACTIVITY

• What is one thing you could do right now to use or apply elements of the recommendations for your section?

• What is one thing that you need help with to implement recommendations?

1. Review the questions individually (5 minutes)
2. Discuss your responses to the questions with your table (15 minutes)
Share with the larger group (20 minutes):

- What is one thing you could do right now to use or apply elements of the recommendations for your section?
- What is one thing that you need help with to implement recommendations?
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