

# Minnesota Child Welfare Practice Model

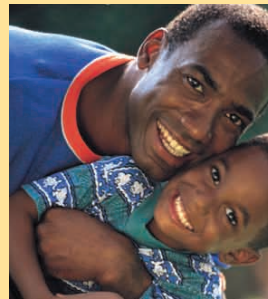
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# Minnesota Child Welfare Practice Model

## Introduction



Minnesota's public child welfare practice model identifies the outcomes, values, principles and skills necessary to assure child safety, permanency and well-being.

As Minnesota's child welfare practices evolve, there is an increasing understanding that better results are achieved when parents are engaged as partners with the child welfare system in securing the safety and well-being of their children. While it is recognized that most parents want to keep their children safe, sometimes circumstances or conditions interfere with their ability to do so. When this occurs, families are best served by interventions that:



- Engage their protective capacities
- Recognize and employ family strengths
- Maintain community and cultural connections
- Address immediate safety concerns and ongoing risks of child maltreatment.

The Minnesota Department of Human Services and its county and tribal partners will support families and communities by engaging in essential partnerships needed to secure positive outcomes for children and youth served by the child welfare system. This practice model provides a common platform to guide mutual efforts.

## Outcomes



Minnesota's public child welfare system will operate within this practice model with a goal of achieving the following outcomes for all families, children and youth who are touched by this system:

- Children are cared for in safe, permanent, and nurturing families who have the necessary skills and resources to provide for their physical and mental health, behavioral and educational needs
- Children, youth, and families who encounter Minnesota's child welfare system are supported to achieve equitable outcomes regardless of race, ethnicity, socioeconomic status or tribal status



- Children are safely maintained in their families and communities with connections, culture, and relationships preserved and established
- Minnesota's public child welfare staff is a diverse, professionally competent team that supports strength-based practice and demonstrates inclusiveness at all levels.

These outcomes are achieved through partnerships involving Minnesota's public child welfare system, the state's children, youth and families as well as the communities in which they live and work.



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## Values and Principles

To achieve the outcomes identified above, Minnesota's public child welfare system is committed to, and guided by, the following values and principles:



**Safety:** Child safety is paramount and best achieved by supporting parents within their community.

**Permanency:** Children and youth need and have the right to lifelong nurturing and secure relationships that are provided by families who can meet their specific needs. Efforts to identify and secure permanency for children are continuous and integrated into all stages of involvement with children and families.

**Fostering Connections for Youth:** As youth transition to adulthood, they benefit from services that promote healthy development, academic success and safe living conditions, as well as establish connections to caring adults who will commit to lasting supportive relationships.

**Well-being:** Children's well-being is dependent upon strong families and communities meeting their physical, mental, behavioral health, educational and cultural needs.

**Family Focus:** Families are the primary providers for children's needs. The safety and well-being of children is dependent upon the safety and well-being of all family members.

**Partnership:** Families, communities, and the child welfare system are primary and essential partners in creating and supporting meaningful connections in a safe and nurturing environment for children and youth.

**Respectful Engagement:** Children, youth and families are best served when public child welfare staff actively listen to them and invite participation in decision making. Respectful engagement includes understanding and honoring of the family's history, culture and traditions, as well as empowering them to meet their unique and individual needs through utilization of family strengths, and educating them regarding the child welfare process.



**Organizational Competence:** Minnesota's public child welfare agencies will perform as high quality organizations, guided by a clear mission, priorities and resource allocation with committed, qualified, trained and skilled staff and providers applying evidence-informed practices.

**Professional Competence:** The professional competence of Minnesota's public child welfare system will be demonstrated by a workforce that: proactively responds to the evolving needs of communities, is knowledgeable of the historical context within which the child welfare system operates, provides respectful treatment to families, and continually strives for professional excellence through critical self examination.

**Cultural Competence:** Cultural competence is achieved through understanding and serving children, youth, and families within a context of each unique family and

community. This includes, but is not limited to, families' beliefs, values, race, ethnicity, history, tribe, culture, religion and language.

**Accountability:** The child welfare system holds itself accountable to the highest standards of practice. It recognizes its responsibilities to children, youth, families and other stakeholders to assess and manage its performance, self-correct, innovate and enhance its ability to achieve positive outcomes through continuous improvement efforts. The system also recognizes the need for its practices, service delivery and performance to be easily understood, evaluated, and open to feedback from stakeholders.





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## Minnesota Practice Model Skills

The following skills are instrumental in implementation of the practice model at all levels of the child welfare system:



**Engaging:** Effectively joining with families and communities to establish common goals concerning child safety, permanency and well-being.

**Assessing:** Gathering information about reported concerns and family needs, evaluating the relevance of that information, as well as identifying family strengths and community and tribal resources that may be applied to address those concerns and needs.

**Partnering:** Working in respectful and meaningful collaboration with families and communities to achieve shared goals.

**Planning:** Setting goals, developing strategies, and outlining tasks and schedules to accomplish goals derived from the engaging, assessing and partnering process.

**Implementing:** Identifying and applying the most effective and culturally appropriate services, resources, and processes to meet goals established in the planning stage.

**Evaluating:** Monitoring outcomes of service plans and system programs to determine if the desired goals are being achieved, and if not, to use this information to reconsider goals and strategies developed in the planning phase, or services and resources identified in the implementation stage.

**Advocacy:** Recognizing individual or group needs, providing intervention on behalf of a client or client group, communicating to decision makers, and initiating actions to secure or enhance a needed service, resource or entitlement.

**Communication:** Effectively sending and receiving information within the appropriate cultural context. Methods include verbal, non-verbal, electronic and written communication.

**Cultural Competence:** Interacting with families without making assumptions, respecting and learning from the unique characteristics and strengths of families and tribes, while acknowledging and honoring the diversity within and across cultures, and applying these skills to the partnership with a family and tribe, and the options available to them.



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