



Nebraska Child Welfare and Juvenile Services Reform
Safety • Permanency • Well-being

November 30, 2010





Overview



- Vision
- Where we were
- Where we are
- Results we'll see
- Families Matter Action Plan
- Q&A



Vision: Nebraska will be a national leader in serving children and families in need.

- We believe that Families Matter:
 - Children grow best in their own homes.
 - Children should be reunified or moved to permanency through adoption or guardianship in a timely manner.
 - Families should get services earlier and be offered services after they leave DHHS.



Where were we?

- This multi-year effort started in 2006.
- Too many state wards. Reached all-time high of 7,803 wards in April 2006.
- Serving too many in out-of-home care.
70% in out-of-home care vs. 30% in home.
- Needing to improve performance on federal Child and Family Services Review (CFSR).



What does the Federal CFSR mean?

- Measures all states in outcomes around safety, permanency and well-being.
- Failure to meet outcomes can result in a loss of federal funds.
- 2002 – only met 2 of 6 data measures.
- 2008 – federal govt. changed method of measurement, like many other states Nebraska did worse and met only 1 of 6
- 2010 – meeting 3 of 6 data measures.



Where are we now?

- Children are safe.
- Children, youth and families are receiving services they need.
- The number of state wards is down.
- More children are served in their homes and with relatives.
- More children are served without court involvement.
- Children and families are engaged in Aftercare services.



How are we communicating?

- Employees:
 - Dedicated e-mail address for employee questions and comments
 - Weekly email to staff with Q&A on internal website
 - Meetings with staff
 - Job fair and related assistance November 17
- Joint letter to foster parents from DHHS, KVC, NFC and NFAPA.
- Contacts with judges, county attorneys, senators, advocates, Partners Council and providers.



What national perspective have we sought?

- Consultation from 8 National Resource Centers since 2006.
- Reviewed/discussed with other states: Kansas, Florida, Missouri, Tennessee, Illinois
- Casey Family Programs



What results will we see?

- Children continue to be served safely.
- Fewer children made wards of the state.
- More children served in family settings rather than out of home or institutional care.
- More children placed with relatives.
- More timely move to reunification or other permanency (adoption/guardianship).



What results will we see?

- More children served without court involvement.
- After care services that sustain positive changes.
- Elimination of duplication/confusion for biological and foster parents and others.
- More use of evidence-based and promising practices .
- Meet federal measures of safety, permanency and well-being.



What results will we see?

- Less reliance on the state by supporting parent's access to naturally occurring resources.
- DHHS can focus on front end of system.
- DHHS can enhance oversight of contractors and outcomes and increases contractor/system accountability.
- Enhanced use and reporting of data.



Action Plan 2010-2012

- Solicit broader, ongoing stakeholder input and improve communication and transparency about Families Matter.
- Prepare staff for changes in roles and responsibilities.
- Ongoing evaluation and accountability and continual analysis, adjustment and assessment.
- Increase service funding.

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