

Safe Babies Design Team

Answers to Principles - Must Do and Must Not Do

The following answers were provided by Design Team Members during the first Design Team Meeting I on April 29, 2020.

What we must do in order to accomplish our purpose:

On Parents - WE MUST:

- Earn parents trust
- Create a feedback loop for data and feedback from parent participants in the program
- Include fathers, support parents through every challenge
- Keep the Parent Voice in all this work; have a support team for new sites; gain trust of parents
- Do our best to empower the parents to want to change and better themselves
- Be intentional about including fathers

On Creating an Equitable and Inclusive Strategy - WE MUST:

- Ensure equity at all decision points
- Discuss biases and bring them to the surface when we are seeing this happen
- Place equity and inclusion at the top of the conversation and the lens which everything else is filtered
- Avail ourselves of equity training
- DEI training
- Always include tribes
- Include tribes to participate (maybe even partner with a tribal court for one of the three pilot spots)
- Address disproportionality across race and socio-economic status
- Be intentional about identifying where we are not being inclusive and supporting families of color
- Include the parent voice, be inclusive (particularly) of people with lived experience
- Include the voices of families and their natural/professional advocates in the process
- Engage with trusted messengers in non-English speaking communities
- Pay attention to what's working for whom in which contexts
- Listen



On Messaging - WE MUST:

- Have strong and clear messaging
- Define the scope, identify the tasks, develop a timeline, identify people who will take on what aspects of the plan, and I'm sure many other things!
- Clearly define the families that Safe Babies Court Team expansion would serve (is this prevention work? and/or is this supporting families involved in the support system). Develop strong messaging points to convince budget writers to support program viability.
- Attention paid to letting all champions know what is going on/what we are up to early and often (strong marketing campaign to build momentum and support). Also, make sure there is easy access for potential clients--lots of "doors" they can go through to get to this service. Simplicity and clarity in messaging.
- We need to hone in, as Head Start did to establish the financial impact of investments in early childhood education, on the financial benefits and risks to the system. We will need to have a solid message about long term benefits.

On Engagement - WE MUST:

- Develop incentives to increase parent engagement
- Engage with caregivers to educate them on the value of them serving as a support to not only the child, but the child's family as well
- Engage families re: what they need to keep their children safe;
- Engage communities re: what they need to support families

On Prevention - WE MUST:

- Plan strategies and funding to strengthen families to keep children safe *in their own homes* (prevent removal)

On Services and Resources - WE MUST:

- Locate services as much as possible with community organizations; ensure rural communities are supported and services available
- Educate, expand service array, train providers, support families post reunification
- Support Universal substance use screening
- Partner with agencies providing services thru DCYF In-Home Services

- Have enough resources at the table to fulfill the needs of parents and babies

On local communities - WE MUST:



- Ensure that there is an approach developed that will allow smaller, more remote communities to access this program without re-inventing the wheel throughout the state

On Collaboration - WE MUST:

- Bring courts and communities into dialog, own our performance, commit to learning, be candid and respectful
- Strength based collaboration

On Sustainability - WE MUST:

- Keep sustainability front and center
- Must adequately support DCYF workers who are overwhelmed by their caseload so they can be effective; this should help with their high turnover rate
- Provide adequate support to the people hired; make the workload reasonable to allow for longevity of staff

What we must not do in order to accomplish our purpose:

On Creating an Equitable and Inclusive Strategy - MUST NOT:

- Take a top down approach that does not include the voices, culture, values of all impacted communities
- Think that one strategy will work for everyone
- Build system without regard for cultural differences
- Include local context, as well as state realities right now
- Be rigid in our approach to the diversity of the state

On Permanency - MUST NOT:

- Be okay with a 50% reunification rate
- Think of termination of parental rights as a goal for permanency; this is not a tribal value
- Delay permanence

On Collaboration - MUST NOT:

- Operate within silos
- Stop collaborating even when there is conflict
- Stop communicating, stop engaging, stop supporting professional norms that promote CQI



- Support building and sustaining relationships outside of dependency

On Process and Sustainability - MUST NOT:

- Duplicate other efforts
- Step on the systems that are being implemented through other strategies
- Overly complicate the scope, ignore the new reality we are in, be turf, get too bogged down in process!
- Create something that can't be sustained
- Move forward without realistic sustainability plan
- Focus only on the chosen sites and forget to concurrently plan for outreach systematically across the state
- Exclude healing centered approaches
- Hire only well-connected middle class people to do the work

On Parents, Families, and Caregivers - MUST NOT:

- Assume what works for moms will work for fathers
- Assume that families have lack of insight
- Assume that we understand a family's culture
- Assume that we know what is best for families based only on quantitative data
- Lose sight of whole families (relatives, fathers, etc.)
- Shame parents
- Exclude fathers
- Lose hope for parents when they stumble in their journey
- Negatively use language about parents i.e: at risk
- Talk around the Parent and not include the Parent; do what we've always done and not get creative; support us and them;
- Take sides between multiple caregivers

On Substance Use and Homelessness - MUST NOT:

- See substance use as a character flaw
- Be under informed about substance use and the most updated treatments
- Consider substance abuse, homeless as something that can not be overcome