

# Safe Babies Court Team™ Approach

## Designing an Implementation Plan for Washington State

In 2018, **children under the age of three made up 42% (1,829)** of child abuse and neglect cases in Washington State. Early childhood experiences shape children's brain development and have life-long impacts on their social, emotional and physical well-being. Timely and appropriate interventions help maltreated babies and families heal.

The Safe Babies Court Team™ (SBCT) approach is a **community engagement and systems-change initiative** focused on reducing trauma and improving how courts, child welfare and child-serving organizations work together to support young children in, or at-risk of entering, the child welfare system. **Pierce County** has led the way in Washington with the [Best for Babies Program](#), and now we have the opportunity to bring the SBCT approach to communities across Washington State.

We have a **HIGH IMPACT OPPORTUNITY** to change the landscape of our child welfare system and

- **REDUCE** the number of babies, toddlers and families entering the dependency court
- **IMPROVE** the well-being and cognitive development of babies and toddlers
- **PREVENT** trauma and family separation in a safe, equitable and effective manner

**Core Components** of the SBCT approach include:

- Judicial and Child Welfare Leadership
- Dedicated staff driving the team approach at the family and community level
- Pre-/Post-Removal Conferences and monthly Family Team Meetings
- Frequent family time, parent empowerment, and access to treatment that supports parent-child relationships
- Technical assistance, training and evaluation enable teams to assess effectiveness and improve outcomes

For more information on the Core Components, visit: <https://www.zerotothree.org/resources/services/the-safe-babies-court-team-approach>

### Evidence of SBCT Effectiveness

	<u>SBCT</u>	<u>National</u>
Reduction in recurrence of maltreatment	0.7%	9.1%
More babies reunified with parents or placed with relatives	87.8%	66%

Children **of all races and ethnicities were served equally well** with regard to both placement **stability** and **length of stay** in foster care.

For more information, visit: <https://www.zerotothree.org/resources/2181-safe-babies-court-trauma-informed-care-that-s-changing-lives>

### Washington State Safe Babies Implementation Plan

CCYJ has partnered with the Administrative Office of the Courts (AOC) to support the implementation process, and our agencies are currently working with key stakeholders from across the state in order to implement this approach in Washington. This includes partners from the judiciary, legislative leadership, child welfare, and community service providers. Three sites have already been established--**Kitsap, Thurston, and Spokane** counties. These sites are currently being funded through the US Health Resources and Services Administration (HRSA), through funding obtained by CCYJ in a competitive grant process.

**For more information, please contact:**

Michelle Williams, Program Coordinator  
[mwilliams@ccyj.org](mailto:mwilliams@ccyj.org)

