



IOWA'S CHILD WELFARE SYSTEM OF CARE

Ten Guiding Principles for Iowa's child welfare system serve as a framework to guide public and private child welfare practice. The Guiding Principles reflect the core values of being child-centered, family-focused and family-driven. These principles are realized when services are community-based, culturally-competent and responsive.



Contractors are implementing specific practices and activities to closely align with the Guiding Principles. Guiding Principles #1 - 5 are exemplified by practices built into the Recruitment, Retention, Training, & Support (RRTS) contract.

#1 - FAMILIES, CHILDREN, YOUTH AND CAREGIVERS WILL BE TREATED WITH DIGNITY AND RESPECT WHILE HAVING A VOICE IN DECISIONS THAT AFFECT THEM.

Youth will have a voice in the foster home placement process by attending staffings, meeting with prospective foster families, and participating in pre-placement visits whenever possible.

#2 - THE IDEAL PLACE FOR CHILDREN IS WITH THEIR FAMILIES; THEREFORE, WE WILL ENSURE CHILDREN REMAIN IN THEIR OWN HOMES WHENEVER SAFELY POSSIBLE.

The contractor will support active engagement between foster families and birth families through coaching and mentoring for the foster family, in-service training, and support groups.

The RRTS contract requires the recruitment of foster families who are able to honor, respect, enhance, and maintain a child's connections to their parents and extended family by mentoring birth parents and supporting ongoing contact between the child and their family.

#3 - WHEN SERVICES AWAY FROM THE FAMILY ARE NECESSARY, CHILDREN WILL RECEIVE THEM IN THE MOST FAMILY-LIKE SETTING AND TOGETHER WITH SIBLINGS WHENEVER POSSIBLE.

#4 - PERMANENCY CONNECTIONS WITH SIBLINGS AND CARING AND SUPPORTIVE ADULTS WILL BE PRESERVED AND ENCOURAGED.

RRTS Caseworkers will meet with referred relative and kin caregivers to explain the foster home licensing process. Licensing provides additional financial and service supports to reinforce a child's connection with their family.

Reunification of a child with their parents and siblings is emphasized within the foster home licensing process, pre-service training, in-service training, and RRTS Caseworker support to foster families.

#5 - CHILDREN WILL BE REUNITED WITH THEIR FAMILIES AND SIBLINGS AS SOON AS SAFELY POSSIBLE.



Contractors are implementing specific practices and activities to closely align with the Guiding Principles. Guiding Principles #6 - 10 are exemplified by practices built into the Crisis Intervention, Stabilization, & Reunification (CISR) contracts.

**#6 – COMMUNITY STAKEHOLDERS AND TRIBES WILL BE ACTIVELY ENGAGED TO PROTECT CHILDREN AND SUPPORT FAMILIES.**

The CISR Caseworker and other appropriate team members will engage with the child and family immediately and maintain trust through the life of the case. A necessary part of interventions is recognition and respect for the child and family and how they identify (culture, race, ethnic background, sexual identity, faith or religion).

**#7 – SERVICES WILL BE TAILORED TO FAMILIES AND CHILDREN TO MEET THEIR UNIQUE NEEDS.**

Effective CISR contractors recognize that it's the child and family who know best what they need to improve their lives and relationships. Those who have a voice in determining their own path are more likely to follow it. For this reason, the contract requires individualized service plans for every youth. The contractor coordinates the initial Service Planning Conference immediately as an early opportunity to ask the child and family what they want to achieve with the help of CISR services, and to outline the steps and timeframes for doing so. The CISR provider team can utilize programmatic and community resources to help the child and family realize their goals (safety, better interaction, behavior, age-appropriate social interactions, etc.)

**#8 – CHILD WELFARE PROFESSIONALS WILL BE SUPPORTED THROUGH ONGOING DEVELOPMENT & MENTORING TO PROMOTE SUCCESS & RETENTION.**

The CISR contractors will develop a staff training plan to position the organization to have a solid and stable workforce for serving clients for years to come. Required or encouraged training is as follows: Child Welfare System of Care Guiding Principles, Family-Centered Model of Practice, Juvenile Court Services' and Child Welfare Models of Practice, trauma-informed care, safety training, self-care for staff, Culturally and Linguistically Appropriate Service Standards (CLASS), domestic violence prevention and support, human trafficking identification, intervention, and prevention, and transition planning including the Casey Life Skills Assessment.

**#9 – LEADERSHIP WILL BE DEMONSTRATED WITHIN ALL LEVELS OF THE CHILD WELFARE SYSTEM.**

CISR contracts are part of an integrated system of services and supports, all directed toward safety, permanency, and well-being for children and families. The complex system requires leadership on every level and communication that moves vision to reality. Agency and contractors will plan and coordinate regular statewide and local meetings to discuss services, outcomes, local and state level partners, as well as the evolution of this system of care. Service area meetings will involve CISR or RRTS contractors, as well as other partners such as aftercare, workforce, hospitals, or tribal representatives. Delivery of services, trends, milestones, challenges, and successes will be discussed collectively.

**#10 – DECISION MAKING WILL BE OUTCOME BASED, RESOURCE-DRIVEN AND CONTINUOUSLY EVALUATED FOR IMPROVEMENT.**

All CISR service contracts will have a quality assurance and improvement infrastructure for the purposes of tracking and evaluating service delivery. Data will be reviewed and discussed with the Agency and other contractors with the intent of driving fearless conversations that will result in high quality services. While evidence-based programs are encouraged, all CISR services should be verified through relevant real-world measurable outcomes.