

WA Blue Ribbon Commission on the Delivery of Services to Children and Families

Guiding Principles for the New Department

1. **Focus on prevention**
Services will be targeted to help support and strengthen families before crises occur and children become system-involved. For those already involved with any State system, every contact is leveraged as an opportunity for prevention strategies with connection to other needed services that will help to minimize further or additional system-involvement or harm.
2. **Focus on promoting child and family well-being**
Services will be centered on the “whole person” social determinants approach of health and well-being, including the social, emotional, cognitive, physical health, and socio-economic aspects of children and families, with an emphasis on both the impact of poverty and factors contributing to poverty.
3. **Focus on an optimal developmental pathway**
Services will be centered on children meeting key milestones in their early development through adulthood, with an emphasis on early brain development and kindergarten readiness.
4. **Prioritize children and families furthest from opportunity and those at greatest risk for negative outcomes**
Services will be prioritized for those children research has shown to be at highest risk of negative outcomes based on income, geography, social or demographic factors or other risk factors.
5. **Ensure services are science based, outcome-driven, data-informed and collaborative**
Data, science and evidence will be used to evaluate and re-design services regardless of which agency has the budget authority to provide them or the reason for the initial referral. Services will be optimal and evidence-informed, focused on well-being and other priority outcomes and aligned and integrated, with collaboration across all State-run and State-funded programs serving children and families. Results will be tracked to ensure they are achieving measurable improvements in the lives of children and families.
6. **Improve the connections among children, families and communities**
Well-being of children and families will be improved through stronger connection with communities, with particular focus on addressing multi-generational challenges.
7. **Address racial and ethnic disproportionality and disparities**
Children and families of all races, ethnicities, and cultures will have equitable access, supports, and outcomes. Outcome measures will always be transparent regarding any disparities.
8. **Programs and services should be effective and accountable**
Programs and services will be cost-effective and accountable. Partnerships with non-profits, institutions of higher education and foundations will be leveraged as opportunities for enhanced research, training and funding capacity.
9. **The workforce should be skilled and supported**
Staff at all levels will receive the training, resources, tools, appropriate compensation and other support needed to meet the agency’s goals in an environment driven by innovation, replication of success, use of best practices, educational partnerships, with requisite expertise and sufficient capacity to serve the public well in all parts of the state.
10. **Leadership and funding must be provided to achieve the mission & vision**
Preserve and continue what is working, make sure there is sufficient funding for the array of needed services and that there is leadership and staff in the department who are not doing the day-to-day service delivery but are directing the innovation, outcome, alignment, integration, collaboration, transition and re-design work.