

# Building Capacity to Manage Change and Improve Child Welfare Practice

Brief #2

The Child Welfare Capacity Building Collaborative partners with State child welfare agencies, Tribes, and courts to assess and enhance child welfare capacity. The Collaborative's three centers—Center for States, Center for Tribes, and Center for Courts—help child welfare and legal professionals and organizations build the capacity necessary to strengthen, implement, and sustain effective child welfare practice and improve outcomes for children, youth, and families.

## Evidence-Informed Approach

There is a growing body of knowledge—across many human service sectors—about factors and processes that can impact an organization's ability to change and improve. Increasingly, child welfare leaders use implementation frameworks and apply lessons from related research when designing, implementing, and improving policies and services.

The Collaborative's work with States, Tribes, and courts is grounded in this knowledge and experience. The Collaborative's approach to facilitating change and improvement is strategic and informed by evidence. It reflects current literature, including implementation frameworks, continuous quality improvement cycles, and approaches for bridging research and practice. This includes but is not limited to: *A Guide for Implementing Improvement Through the CFSP and CFRS* (Children's Bureau, 2014); *A Framework to Design, Test, Spread, and Sustain Effective Child Welfare Practice* (Framework Workgroup, 2014); the *Active Implementation Frameworks* (Metz and Bartley, 2012); the *Permanency Innovations Initiative Approach* (PII-TTP and PII-ET, 2013); and the *Evidence-Based System for Innovation Support* (Wandersman et al., 2012).

## The Change and Implementation Process

Successful change and implementation occur through a series of phases, each with distinct and sequential activities. As the following figure illustrates, these phases progress from problem identification through sustainable implementation.

## Successful Change

States, Tribes, and courts are more likely to improve outcomes when solutions are chosen only after needs are well understood. And changes in practice are more likely to spread when there is evidence that the changes are working.



Child Welfare  
Capacity Building  
Collaborative

BETTER OUTCOMES, BRIGHTER FUTURES

# Change and Implementation Process



The sequencing of the phases is intentional, with the change process always beginning with the identification and assessment of needs. At the same time, it may be necessary during the implementation process to complete and revisit some activities more than once.

The Collaborative offers services that help child welfare systems move through one or more of these phases while also supporting them to build the capacity necessary to navigate this process in the future.

For more information about the Child Welfare Capacity Building Collaborative or to obtain resources, call 844-222-0272, email [capacityinfo@icfi.com](mailto:capacityinfo@icfi.com), or visit <https://capacity.childwelfare.gov>.

## References:

Children's Bureau, 2014. *A Guide for Implementing Improvement Through the CFSP and CFSR*. Children's Bureau, Administration for Children and Families, U.S. Department of Health and Human Services.

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