

# COLLABORATIVE INVESTMENT STRATEGY FOR PENNSYLVANIA

## Overview

Committed to improving child, family and community well-being, the Commonwealth's former Collaborative Board (SWCB) designed a collaborative investment partnership strategy for Pennsylvania that strives to achieve the following vision for Pennsylvania's families:

*All Pennsylvania children and their families will be healthy, educated, self-sufficient and will be living in a safe home and community.*

To achieve this vision, there is recognition that as county/community partnerships demonstrate success with improving outcomes for children and their families, community success will be achieved. This level of local success will then enable the Commonwealth to demonstrate improved child and family well-being statewide. To strengthen these essential local/state partnerships, changes in both local and state roles are required.

As the "investor," the State values and supports a continuous learning and improvement environment that uses collaborative partnerships, research in strategic development, and an outcomes focus for defining and measuring progress.

As "implementers," counties/communities must recognize that children and families receiving services are their primary customers; and as families meet with success, overall community improvement will be shown. To meet with success, local collaborative partnerships must set their goals for achieving the vision based upon the outcomes framework for defining and measuring progress, and should draw upon best practices, research-based programs, principles and processes for their change activities.

In addition to the development of the state and local partnerships, the Collaborative Investment Strategy establishes a framework for improving the well-being of children and families. This proposal provides the opportunity for counties to identify their priority outcome areas and implement research strategies to address their needs.

Counties/communities responding to this proposal must identify the improvements in one or more of the six broad outcome areas of child, family and community well-being related to achieving the vision. These outcome areas are:

- Prenatal and Infant Health
- Healthy Child and Healthy Youth Development
- Children Ready for School
- Children Succeeding in School
- Stable and Self-Sufficient Families
- Safe Families and Communities

Achieving success within these outcomes areas is important to all Pennsylvanians. Evaluating this success requires developing appropriate systems for holding programs and systems improvement efforts accountable, while connecting these activities to community outcomes. This requires developing measurement and accountability at three levels – the community level, the systems level, and the program level.

The Collaborative Investment Strategy contains givens, assumptions, and core principles that are key to the FSSR Initiative. These include the following:

### **Givens and Assumptions**

- Achieving the vision statement may require significant changes in the way services are provided to families.
- Collaboration by system leaders is essential to achieve the vision.
- Partnership between state and county/community is essential.
- Citizen engagement is essential to achieving the vision.
- Change efforts must be outcome and learning focused.
- Change and sustainability efforts must build on community strengths.
- Risk focused prevention is based on identification of risk and protective factors.
- Change efforts must include both public and private partners, and formal and informal systems.
- Change efforts can be enhanced by research based best practice models and strategies.
- Change efforts do not need to tackle everything at once. Progress can be made on a step-by-step basis, based on an overall plan.

### **Core Principles**

The core family and service principles associated with this system change initiative include:

#### Families

- The family is the center of a child's life and parents know their children best.
- Families are unique. Therefore, the supports provided must be flexible, based on common sense and facilitate positive family decision-making.

#### Services

- Services must be community-based, flexible and family focused.
- Programs and services must have clearly defined and measurable outcomes.
- The needs of children and families must be addressed sooner rather than later, with an emphasis on outreach and prevention.
- Services and supports must be culturally relevant, encourage self-sufficiency, and address issues of poverty as well as ethnic and cultural diversity.
- Services and supports for children and families must be inclusive.
- Service systems must be simple to understand and access.