

CHILD WELFARE

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Child welfare practices are intended to achieve outcomes and demonstrate the values and core competencies listed below:

- Engage families
- Engage youth and provide normative experiences
- Strengthen caregiver capacity to protect and provide for children
- Facilitate safe out-of-home placements and rapid permanency
- Develop a trauma-informed system
- Support a racially equitable and culturally competent system

ROLE OF LOCAL DEPARTMENTS OF SOCIAL SERVICES (LDSS)

Most of the functions and responsibilities outlined in this practice guide are carried out at the LDSS level. Some of the responsibilities related to Child Welfare include:

- Investigating complaints of child abuse and maltreatment
- Removing a child from his/her home if it is deemed necessary to maintain the safety of that child
- Bringing cases of alleged child abuse and neglect before Family Court for adjudication, when necessary, and instituting proceedings against a parent or adult, when necessary
- Offering preventive services to potentially avoid the placement of a child into foster care
- Petitioning the Family Court for custody of the child, if he/she cannot be safely cared for in the family home
- Placing a child in a foster care setting, based on the needs of the child and the least restrictive, most homelike setting that is appropriate for the child
- Returning a child to his/her family when they can provide a safe and stable home environment
- Discharging a child to other permanency resources, such as adoption, when a safe return home is not possible.