The Future of IL DCFS:
Supporting & Strengthening Families

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Reform to Innovation in Illinois

• Build on the Strengths of Previous Administrations
  ▪ Child Welfare Advisory Council (Gordon Johnson)
  ▪ Performance contracting (Jess McDonald)
  ▪ Trauma informed practice (Bryan Samuels)

• Current Focus:
  Problem/Resolution Approach
  Strengthening Families Approach (Building Family Capacity)
System Integration in Illinois

- Strengthening Families Illinois established in 2003 with the overarching framework to build:
  1. Parental Resilience
  2. Social Connections
  3. Knowledge of Parenting and Child Development
  4. Concrete Support in Times of Need
  5. Social and Emotional Competence of Children
  6. Healthy Parent-Child Relationships

- Trauma Informed Practice Program infused throughout rules, assessments, services plans and case work practice
Strengthening Families Illinois
Convened by IDCFS Since 2003

• Early Childhood
• Child Welfare
• Cross System Change: Embedding Protective Factors
• Parent Leadership
SFI: Early Childhood

- 8 Early Childhood Learning Networks (Each DCFS Region) / Approx 107 Programs Participating Statewide
- 11,849 Children / 9536 Families Currently Served
- Learning Network Priorities:
  - Embedding practice (Self-assessment, action plan, training, monthly peer to peer support)
  - Collaboration with child welfare
  - Increase / strengthen parent engagement and leadership within programs
Early Learning and Family Support Workgroup (ELFS)

Internal DCFS Workgroup Since 2004:

- 3 to 5 Years Old – Revenue neutral policy change
- Birth to 3 - EI CAPTA Implementation
Early Childhood / Child Welfare Collaboration

- SFI Learning Networks
- Head Start Collaborative Agreements
- School Readiness Team
  - All DCFS wards 3 and above in quality early learning programs (Increased number of children of wards and intact families enrolled)
  - Liaisons with early childhood professionals in communities
Cross System Change: Contributions of Partners to Embedding Protective Factors

- ISBE includes Strengthening Families Illinois as a supplemental service in Preschool for All Prevention Initiative RFP
- DHS / All Our Kids (AOK) Early Childhood Networks add 2 new goals to their strategic plan around parent engagement
- IL Violence Prevention Authority develops new strategic plan with goal of creating peaceful families and raising children to resist violence
- IL Children’s Mental Health Partnership FACES workgroup is rolling out an ambitious plan to promote parent leadership regionally.
- Early Childhood Family Engagement Committee developed and working to link collective efforts around family engagement focused on families with young children.
- Ounce of Prevention Fund added the protective factors framework and Strengthening Families Illinois training to support their implementation of a strength-based approach with CPS Prevention Initiative grantee providers.
- Illinois Network of Child Care Resource and Referral Agencies (INCCRRA) has added family as a priority within strategic plan.
- C-4 Parenting Program has included the protective factors in its evidence-based parenting curriculum
Long Term Vision

• Child welfare – continuously define and refine child welfare so that it becomes more closely aligned to child well-being (Don’t always achieve child well-being using best child welfare tools.)

• Broad-based community impact around:
  • school performance
  • school misconduct
  • youth violence
  • community violence
  • family well-being

• Requires all of us!
Leading Change

- Establish a sense of urgency
- Form a powerful guiding coalition
- Create a vision
- Communicate the vision
- Empower others to act on the vision
- Plan for and create short-term wins
- Consolidate improvements
- Institutionalize new approaches

Kotter, Leading Change: Why Transformation Efforts Fail