

Africentric Service Delivery: Family-Centered Practice Through a Different Lens



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Family-Centered Practice

- A framework based on the belief that the best way to protect children in the long run is to strengthen and support their families, whether it be nuclear, extended, foster care, or adoptive.
- Often , although erroneously, seen as the opposite pole of “child-centered” practice.
- Contrast to perception of children as victims of bad or incompetent parents and the solution to the maltreatment problem is separation from their parents



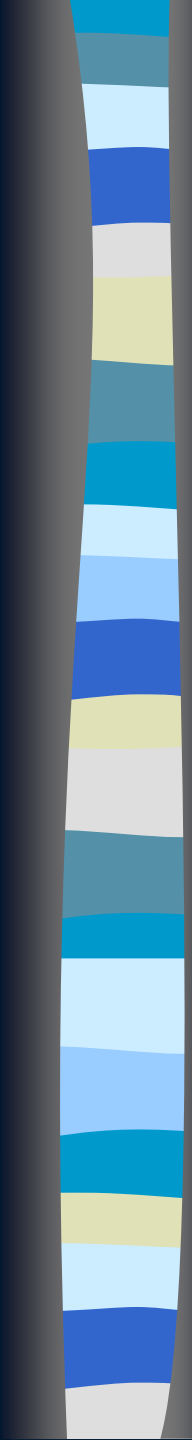
Components of Family-Centered Practice in Child Welfare

- Family unit is the focus of attention.
- Strengthening the capacity of families to function effectively is emphasized.
- Families are engaged in designing all aspects of the policies, services, and program evaluation.
- Families are linked with more comprehensive, diverse, and community-based networks of supports and services.



Family Centered Child Welfare Services

- Engagement - relevant to the situation and sensitive to the values of their culture
- Assessment - looks at strengths, capabilities, resources
- Safety planning - family involved in the development of the safety plan
- Out-of-home placement - partnership between families and foster/adoptive families, no blame



Family Centered Child Welfare Services (Cont'd)

- Implementation of service plan - access to flexible, affordable, individualized, culturally appropriate
- Permanency planning - family and others work together on plan
- Re-evaluation of service plan - information is continuously shared with family and others



Child Welfare and Culture:

How does one define the problem?

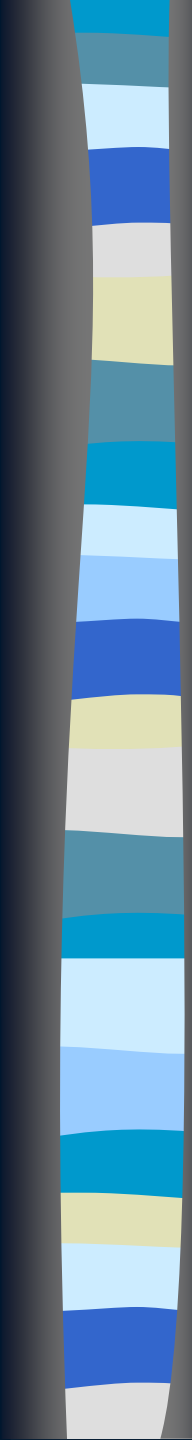
- Definition of Abuse and Neglect
 - Have the child basic needs been neglected?
 - Whose standards have been used?
 - has a cultural conflict occurred?
 - If yes what type of cultural difference?
 - cultural difference in child-rearing practices and beliefs
 - cultural practices with potential form harm
 - Cultural practices in the context of change
 - misunderstandings of intra-cultural variability
- » (Jill Korbin, 1999)



Child Welfare and Culture:

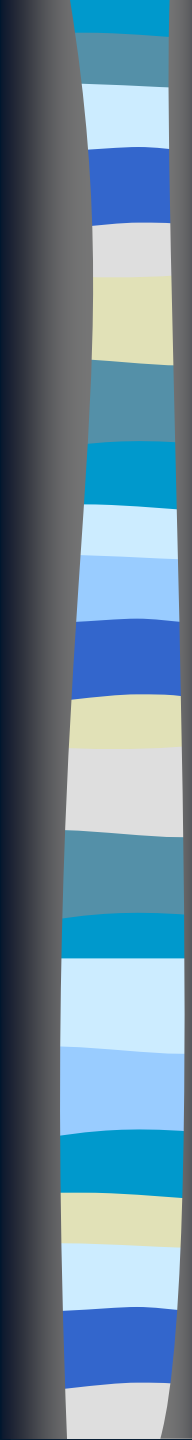
Are there differences in services?

- Disproportionate presence of children of color, especially African American children
- higher rates of foster care
- fewer services for families or children
- higher use of kinship care
- longer stay in foster care
- longer wait for adoption
- lower rate of reunification
- longer time period for reunification
- lower use of family preservation



Child Welfare and Culture: Or is it more about Race?

- Relationship between institutional racism and intersection with child welfare
 - Societal level
 - Child welfare system level
- generalized distrust of potential consumer of “the system”, especially child welfare system



Theory of change based on traditional or alternative perceptions?

- what does a functional family look like ?
- what does it take for people to change?
- who is responsible for the change?
- what are the incentives for change?