

**Join Hands for Children**  
**Advisory Committee on Legal and Practice Issues**  
*Principles and Values used to Determine Core Services*

The Advisory Committee on Legal and Practice Issues believes that state agencies and contracted service providers should, in addition to providing legally mandated child welfare services, strive to form a coordinated, comprehensive, and collaborative system to address any and all barriers to the safety, permanency and well-being of children and families in the child welfare system.

The core values that should drive the addition of any services beyond those that are legally mandated include\*:

- All services will be available and accessible statewide;
- State agencies and contracted service providers should address the reality that families who lack basic needs – including housing, food or employment – face more barriers to successful reunification;
- Services will be provided in a culturally competent manner that includes the use of bilingual and interpretive services;
- Services will be targeted to reduce racial disproportionality;
- Services must be provided in a timely manner;
- Foster youth will be included as much as possible in decisions that impact their experiences while in care, as well as in their transition out of care;
- The foster care system will engage mothers, fathers, legal guardians and custodians as much as possible and value their input;
- When the foster care system assumes the care of the child, the system will provide the child the same level of care that a parent would provide;
- Whenever available, the use of evidence-based and promising practices is preferred;
- Whenever possible, agents of the child welfare system will act to promote normative childhood experiences while paying attention to the ability to maintain offering with as little service disruption as possible (i.e. music lessons, sports);
- State agencies and contractors will provide domestic violence, sexual assault, mental health and/or substance abuse treatment for issues related to child abuse and neglect; and
- Services will be collaborative, strength-based and family-focused.