

CONFERENCE OF CHIEF JUSTICES

Resolution 6

To Support Outcome-Oriented Child Protection Courts in Order to Achieve Measureable Improvements in Child and Family Matters

WHEREAS, judicial leadership and collaboration has led to dramatic improvements in the way courts address child protection matters; and

WHEREAS, collaboration between state courts and agencies responsible for child protection has contributed to the improvement of process and outcomes in child protection cases around the country; and

WHEREAS, pervasive systemic challenges still remain requiring critical analysis of performance data to determine whether court processes and interventions are making a positive impact on outcomes for children and families; and

WHEREAS, if states are to make measureable improvements in achieving improved permanency and other outcomes for children in foster care and to evaluate the success of the systemic changes in their programs needed to improve overall outcomes, courts must embrace meaningful performance measurement that answers questions about the success courts are having in overseeing child protection cases;

WHEREAS, in 2012, the National Center for State Courts, in partnership with Casey Family Programs, assembled a National Impact Outcome Advisory Committee, which included representation of the Conference of Chief Justices, to learn and document how courts partner to improve outcomes for children and families; and

WHEREAS, the National Impact Outcomes Committee made the following recommendations:

- (1) Establish a shared vision with child welfare partners for improved outcomes relying on a holistic approach (including permanency, safety and well-being outcomes) in efforts to improve the legal and social service delivery system; and
- (2) View improvement efforts through the eyes of a child or family in order to refine the quality of existing processes and service delivery; and
- (3) Emphasize collegial discussion with tribes, child welfare agencies, attorneys and other partners to seek a common understanding of performance data and shared solutions; and
- (4) Acknowledge judicial discretion by ensuring all parties follow the course of action for system improvement; and
- (5) Routinely review performance metrics with court stakeholders to foster a sense of ownership over outcomes and establish a well-rounded view of performance; and

- (6) Share performance results with partners in order to engage partners and communities in improved understanding of practices and outcomes; and
- (7) Use the strategies above to establish an environment of continuous quality improvement which routinely identifies, describes, and analyzes system strengths and problems and then tests, implements and revises solutions;

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Conference of Chief Justices encourages judicial leaders of child protection courts to adopt the change management strategies recommended by the National Impact Outcomes Committee.

Adopted as proposed by the CCJ Courts, Children, and Families Committee at the Conference of Chief Justices 2013 Midyear Meeting on January 30, 2013.