

**State of Washington**  
**Blue Ribbon Commission on Children and Families**  
**Optimization Workgroup Status Report 2**

The workgroup has completed our initial assessment of the conditions needed to optimize the likelihood of realizing the mission for the new agency proposed by the BRC. The target population includes children and youth ages 0 – 21\* and their families who are at highest risk of adverse child and family experiences that could require involvement of the child welfare system. Based on data presented to the BRC it has been determined that six risk factors *mental health, substance abuse, criminal justice involvement, domestic violence, chronic illness and homelessness* are the best predictors of future involvement with the child welfare system and therefore services to mitigate these issues would be a high priority for the new agency.

The workgroup has utilized a framework that includes elements that need to be considered to promote conditions for optimization that include structure/capacity, program management/ continuous quality improvement, service array/service delivery, families/youth/child needs, workforce, special populations, interagency and stakeholder relationships.

Several core themes have emerged in the discussions that will serve as a foundation for the workgroup's final recommendations on agency optimization.

- ❖ A unified, holistic approach to promoting the wellbeing of children, youth and families that honors tribal sovereignty and the unique needs of all communities.
- ❖ A cohesive continuum of care that leverages the strengths of a combined DEL, Prevention and CA to provide
- ❖ A comprehensive data informed approach to organizational readiness, planning and implementation of the new agency that examines baseline agency performance (CA and DEL) and encompasses input from families/youth, community stakeholders/providers, family/child serving agencies and the workforce.
- ❖ Infrastructure capacity for effective planning, management, oversight and evaluation
- ❖ A well-resourced, supported and highly developed workforce.
- ❖ A data and evidenced informed approach to development of culturally relevant services that address the needs of children, youth and families across a continuum of care.

The work group is in the process of finalizing a specific set of recommendations across each of these foundational elements. We will have a final draft set of recommendations for the Commission to review in advance of the November meeting.

\*CA will continue to provide extended foster care services to 18-21 year old population.