

Glossary

ADVOCACY RESEARCH A type of descriptive policy research done with the purpose of heightening public awareness of social problems so that action can be taken to ameliorate the problems.

AGGRAVATED CIRCUMSTANCES A phrase used in the Adoption and Safe Families Act to refer to conditions that will make the termination of parental rights automatic. The law provides examples of such circumstances as killing a child or severely and permanently physically harming a child; however, states must operationally define how the term will be applied or under what circumstances.

APPROPRIATION A separate piece of legislation required, once a law has been authorized and signed into law, by the budget process to designate the spending level for the law.

ASSESSMENT “The collection of information to inform decision-making about a child, youth, or family. It is always conducted as a means to an end—to identify issues the family is facing, design a plan, and provide services that will assist in resolving the issues identified” (Child Welfare Information Gateway, *Addressing Racial Disproportionality in Child Welfare* [Washington, D.C.: U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Children’s Bureau, 2011], 1).

ATTACHMENT A bond, connection, or emotional identification with a familiar caregiver that begins at birth. Broadly there are four categories of attachment: secure, avoidant, anxious, and disorganized.

ATTENTION DEFICIT AND HYPERACTIVITY DISORDER Considered “one of the most common mental disorders in children and adolescents. Symptoms include difficulty staying focused and paying attention, difficulty controlling behavior, and very high levels of activity” (National Institute of Mental Health, *Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder in Children and Adolescents [Fact Sheet]* [2011], 1; <http://www.nimh.nih.gov/health/publications/attention-deficit-hyperactivity-disorder-in-children-and-adolescents/index.shtml>).

AUTHORIZATION Specific language that identifies special conditions or circumstances associated with a law passed by Congress, including the period of time the law will be in effect and the initial recommended funding.

- BEST PRACTICES** Approaches, programs or interventions that work, with varying levels of evidence, and are typically categorized along a continuum: promising practice, evidence-based practice, and science-based practice.
- CARVE-OUT** A type of medical services financing involving differentiating certain covered services and benefits and paying them under alternative arrangements and payment structures.
- CATEGORIES OF CHILD MALTREATMENT** A phrase that includes physical abuse, child neglect, sexual abuse, emotional abuse, and abandonment.
- CHILD ABUSE AND NEGLECT** “Any recent act or failure to act on the part of a parent or caretaker which results in death, serious physical or emotional harm, sexual abuse or exploitation; or an act or failure to act which presents an imminent risk of serious harm” (Child Welfare Information Gateway, *What Is Child Abuse and Neglect?* Fact Sheet [2008], 2; http://www.childwelfare.gov/pubs/can_info_packet.pdf).
- CHILD PROTECTION** A government-mandated action of safeguarding (i.e., protecting from or preventing harm) children who may be currently experiencing or are at risk of experiencing the effects of harmful conditions.
- CHILD WELFARE HEARINGS** Most states have some form of legal proceedings typically managed through a family, juvenile, or tribal court that involves seven types of hearings: (1) a protective hearing is where a determination is made about child removal and placement into an emergency shelter or temporary setting; (2) an adjudicatory hearing is a hearing to review factual data to make a determination or substantiation of child maltreatment; (3) a dispositional hearing (sometimes referred to as a placement hearing) is intended to legally determine who will care for the child and where the child will live; (4) periodic review hearings are six-month incremental hearings held so that the court can determine the progress that is being made on the case; (5) a permanency hearing solidifies the permanency plan; (6) termination of parental rights (TPR) hearings that are held to legally terminate a parent’s rights; under the original Adoption and Safe Families Act of 1997, such hearings must take place for children who have been in care for fifteen of the past twenty-two months; and (7) an adoption and guardianship hearing, which is held to legally bind a child to another family by court approval of an adoption or guardianship (portions of these definitions from S. Badeau, *Child Welfare and the Courts* [Washington, D.C.: Pew Charitable Trusts, 2004]; [http://www.pewtrusts.org/uploadedFiles/wwwpewtrustsorg/Reports/Foster_care_reform/BadeauPaper\[1\].pdf](http://www.pewtrusts.org/uploadedFiles/wwwpewtrustsorg/Reports/Foster_care_reform/BadeauPaper[1].pdf)).
- CHILD WELFARE OUTCOMES REPORT DATA** A system that provides a custom report builder containing the most up-to-date data about child welfare outcomes. The annual data-reporting system provides state performance data in seven categories: (1) reduce recurrence of child abuse and/or neglect; (2) reduce the incidence of child abuse and/or neglect in foster care; (3) increase permanency for children in foster care; (4) reduce time in foster care to reunification without increasing reentry; (5) reduce time in foster care to adoption;

(6) increase placement stability; and (7) reduce placement of young children in group homes or institutions.

COMPLEX TRAUMA (ALSO REFERRED TO AS COMPLEX PTSD) “How children’s exposure to multiple or prolonged traumatic events impacts their ongoing development. Typically, complex trauma exposure involves the simultaneous or sequential occurrence of child maltreatment and may include psychological maltreatment, neglect, physical and sexual abuse, and witnessing domestic violence” (Center for Early Childhood Mental Health Consultation, *Recognizing and Addressing Trauma in Infants, Young Children, and Their Families* [2011], 6; http://www.ecmhc.org/tutorials/trauma/mod1_2.html).

CONCURRENT PLANNING A practice model introduced in the Adoption and Safe Families Act and referring to the expectation that child welfare workers develop and follow a work plan that aims to preserve or reunify a family while simultaneously putting into place a plan for adoption or guardianship should reunification not work.

COURT IMPROVEMENT PROGRAMS A program that permits local courts to apply for federal grants to improve their court system.

DATA CONVENING An element of advocacy research when the efforts of various child welfare stakeholders (professionals and those indigenous to the problem) are organized into a coalition that aims to organize in a systematic manner a research agenda that brings about awareness and becomes a catalyst for change.

DATA DIFFUSION The dissemination of research results.

DATA GATHERING A process of collecting, organizing, and preparing information or data points.

DIFFERENTIAL RESPONSE “A CPS practice that allows for more than one method of initial response to reports of child abuse and neglect. Also called ‘dual track,’ ‘multiple track,’ or ‘alternative response,’ this approach recognizes variation in the nature of reports and the value of responding differently to different types of case” (Child Welfare Information Gateway, *Differential Response to Reports of Child Abuse and Neglect* [Washington, D.C.: U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, 2008], 3; http://www.childwelfare.gov/pubs/issue_briefs/differential_response/).

EVIDENCE-BASED PRACTICES A practice that meets the following criteria: (1) has data demonstrating positive outcomes; and (2) includes a review conducted by experts who have concluded that there is sufficient evidence of the interventions, program, or practice approach’s effectiveness.

FAMILY FOSTER CARE A service provided by child welfare agencies whereby children under their care live with nonrelatives who have been specifically trained, certified, and monitored to provide such care.

FAMILY PRESERVATION SERVICES Services directed to families already in crisis or families deemed at risk for child maltreatment and subsequent family disruption. Once a case is established for an “intact family,” services deemed appropriate to support the family unit are referred to as family preservation services.

- FAMILY REUNIFICATION SERVICES** Should an open case result in the temporary removal of a child from their home, services intended to strengthen the family unit so the family may be unified again are referred to as reunification services.
- FOSTER CARE** A temporary structured living arrangement or service that is planned and goal directed for children who cannot live with their birth family.
- FOSTER CARE DRIFT** The movement of children in and out of foster care placements without the benefit of a plan to ensure permanence for the child.
- INFANT MENTAL HEALTH** An infant's intellectual, physical, and emotional growth and development (for more details, see Center for Early Education and Development. <http://www.cehd.umn.edu/ceed/publications/questionsaboutkids/imhenglish.pdf>).
- KINSHIP FOSTER CARE** A formal arrangement whereby a relative (usually a grandparent, aunt, or uncle) provides day-to-day care for a relative's child who is under the supervision of the child welfare system.
- LEAST RESTRICTIVE ENVIRONMENT** A term associated with passage of the Adoption Assistance and Child Welfare Act. Borrowed from special needs education reform and suggests that, when possible, children should be cared for in their home or in a homelike environment that is least destructive to the life of the family unit.
- MANAGED CARE** A type of medical services financing used to reduce cost; improve quality of care; share the cost of care between the beneficiary and the insurance company; manage the necessity, frequency, and type of care received; and define a pool of healthcare providers via contract.
- MEDICAL HOME** A regular source of medical care meeting the criteria of accessibility, continuity, comprehensiveness, coordination, compassion, and cultural sensitivity.
- MODEL COURTS** "Model Courts serve as models of systems change identifying impediments to the timeliness of court events and delivery of services for children in care, and then design and implement court- and agency-based changes to address these barriers" (National Council on Juvenile and Family Court Judges, *Model Courts* [2008], 1; <http://www.ncjfcj.org/images/stories/dept/ppcd/newmodel%20court%20brochurefinal.pdf>).
- NATIONAL CHILD ABUSE AND NEGLECT DATA SYSTEM (NCANDS)** A national database created through federal legislation that provides child abuse statistics composed of case-level data for all children who are involved in the child protection system.
- NATIONAL INCIDENCE STUDIES OF CHILD ABUSE AND NEGLECT (NIS)** A data-reporting system that is congressionally mandated and provides abuse and neglect estimates and also measures change in incidences from the earlier time waves.
- NATIONAL SURVEY OF CHILD AND ADOLESCENT WELL-BEING (NSCAW)** A survey administratively coordinated by the Administration for Children and Families and developed through a research collaboration as a response to a

congressional mandate that arose from the Personal Responsibility and Work Opportunities Reconciliation Act of 1996. The NSCAW is a national, longitudinal database spanning 1997 to 2010 and containing firsthand reports from children, parents, and caseworkers about child abuse and neglect and child and family well-being.

ORPHAN TRAINS A transportation network introduced by Reverend Charles Loring Brace and the New York Children's Aid Society that transported over 200,000 children from their families—primarily from the East Coast—to communities in the Midwest and Great Plains regions.

PARENS PATRIAE A term established through English common law and borrowed by colonists that refers to the role of government in assuming responsibility for the care of dependent children when parents do not or cannot assume such responsibility; it refers to the sovereign right of government to protect children.

PERFORMANCE-BASED CHILD WELFARE SERVICE AUTHORITY MODELS In using performance-based authority models, public and private child welfare service authorities would be monitored and their outcomes would be tracked at regular intervals. Those entities not adhering to community-defined benchmarks would surrender service authority to those agencies and organizations whose performance produces the best outcomes for children and families.

PERMANENCE A goal in child welfare that refers to the expectation that every minor child should have the opportunity to be nurtured in a safe and caring environment with a biological parent or parents, a relative, guardian or adoptive parents. Permanence may be achieved with a series of options on a continuum that begins with in-home support and ends with the permanent removal of a child from their home with adoption as the goal.

PERMANENCY PLANNING A term associated with passage of the Adoption Assistance and Child Welfare Act. Requires informed decision making relative to the needs of a child and his or her family that should be outlined in a plan that, when followed, will result in a permanent home for the child.

PLACING OUT Also referred to as binding out, a practice started during the early nineteenth century that involved removing children from their homes—particularly in urban, crime-ridden areas—and placing them in new homes in the frontier states of the Midwest and Great Plains regions.

POSTTRAUMATIC STRESS DISORDERS IN CHILDREN Symptoms associated with a traumatic event (e.g., car accident, witnessing violence), repeated events, or sustained events. PTSD develops when a person has been exposed to death, the threat of death, or injury that results in significant psychological harm (for a more thorough review of how trauma symptoms are used to diagnose this condition in children, see *The Diagnostic Classification of Mental Health and Developmental Disorders of Infancy and Early Childhood—Revised [DC: 0–3 R]* [Washington, D.C.: Zero to Three Press, 2005]).

PREVENTION A term associated with passage of the Adoption Assistance and Child Welfare Act. In the context of child welfare, refers to the application of

a plan of the services that are available to a family to keep children from being unnecessarily removed from their homes and placed in foster care.

PROMISING PRACTICES A practice that includes the following defining criteria:

(1) includes the values and characteristics inherent in other recognized interventions, programs, and approaches; (2) possesses guidelines and protocols that lead to effective outcomes; and (3) involves continual quality improvement strategies and contains an evaluation plan.

REACTIVE ATTACHMENT DISORDERS A disorder, thought to be uncommon,

that is found in children, particularly those who have suffered abuse or neglect or a significant separation from a primary caregiver during early childhood. The condition emanates from a failure to experience an attachment to a caregiver during infancy and/or early childhood. RAD is mostly exhibited in social interactions when a child may engage others inappropriately. It typically has two forms: inhibited (inability to respond in a developmentally appropriate manner to social situations) or disinhibited (excessive regard, interaction, or displays of familiarity or affection with strangers).

REASONABLE EFFORTS A phrase included in the ACCWA to suggest the level

or degree of effort agents of the state should make to prevent the removal of a child from the home. It is a nebulous term that has been often criticized as evoking great variability among state administrators and the courts.

RESTORATIVE JUSTICE A broad term used in justice, education, and social service systems. It means that in the search for solutions, one engages those who

have been harmed. Restorative justice can be about building partnerships, collaborations, and mutual responsibility between groups, people, or communities that might have varied interests but all share a central goal.

REUNIFICATION A term associated with passage of the Adoption Assistance and

Child Welfare Act. Refers to the practice of returning a child to his or her home who had been removed temporarily; it is an option for permanence when family supports can be put in place to ensure optimal family functioning.

SCIENCE-BASED PRACTICES A practice defined by the following elements: (1) an

intervention, program, or practice has been evaluated with a theory-based research methodology; (2) there is evidence of fidelity where the intervention, program, or practice approach was implemented as intended so that there is a reasonable conclusion that, in fact, the observed outcomes are attributable to that which is under study as opposed to some other extraneous factors and include expert reviews where the research standards used are considered rigorous and adhere to the principles established by the scientific community; and (3) an assurance that outcomes are replicable and the observed results can be demonstrated in multiple settings.

SEVERE EMOTIONAL DISTURBANCES A classification typically used to describe

DSM-diagnosable mental, behavioral, or emotional disorders that children experience. Severe emotional disturbances are definable under the DSM when they are pervasive (exhibited in multiple contexts including school, home,

social, or community), persistent (occur frequently during a period of two to four weeks), and have a significant effect on the child's daily functioning or affect the child's activities of daily living.

TEMPORARY ASSISTANCE FOR NEEDY FAMILIES A federal block grant program providing cash assistance to families with young children in need of economic support. Enacted with passage of the Personal Responsibility and Work Opportunity Reconciliation Act of 1996, this program replaced AFDC and, like AFDC, requires states to operate a foster care and adoption assistance program under Title IV-E of the Social Security Act.

THERAPEUTIC/TREATMENT FOSTER CARE A form of care designed for placement of children who have specific types of medical or mental health needs. Therapeutic/treatment foster parents typically receive more training, more monitoring, and higher stipends than regular family foster care.

TRANSRACIAL PLACEMENT Placing children of one ethnic or racial background with an adoptive or a foster family of a different ethnicity or racial background.

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