

# Child Welfare System Report recommendation



July 2017



**Establish a formal, system-wide oversight entity with authority to ensure ongoing accountability, visibility, and accessibility for all child welfare partners and stakeholders.**

## Why is it important that the entity is . . . ?

**Formal** Formality brings with it a sense of stability, commitment, and authority. Many of the problems within the child welfare system are long standing and dynamic.

**System-wide** Child welfare is a complex arrangement of systems, agencies, community partners, and stakeholders. Individual accountability is inadequate when system-level outcomes require system-level cooperation, coordination, and collaboration.

## Why isn't our current structure providing adequate . . . ?

**Accountability** Although multiple working groups, committees, and review processes exist, Idaho's child welfare system lacks system-wide accountability and oversight. The lack of system-wide accountability has resulted in unclear, isolated, and fragmented responsibility for outcomes and improvements. Most of the existing forms of accountability generally focus on the performance of Child and Family Services.

**Visibility** Lack of visibility prevents stakeholders and the public from knowing whether collaborative groups are addressing system problems or giving fair consideration to stakeholder concerns.

**Accessibility** The current system lacks consistent accessibility. Although there are several working groups producing recommendations, there is not a consistent forum for foster parents, CASA volunteers, or other concerned members of the public to provide input. This inaccessibility can contribute to a feeling that stakeholders are being excluded from the system or the belief that the child welfare system is not transparent or that it deliberately excludes input.

**Authority** No agency or stakeholder group has sufficient authority to guide system-level policy, budget, and programmatic decisions. Such authority is important in a system that can only perform well with consistent interdisciplinary and cross jurisdictional collaboration.

An oversight entity should also have sufficient authority to receive confidential information as necessary for providing policy oversight and ensuring that all stakeholders in the system are being held to an appropriate level of accountability.



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