

Child Signature Program *Principles on Equity*

On October 18, 2001, the First 5 California Children and Families Commission adopted the *Principles on Equity*. These principles serve to ensure that California's children from diverse populations and those with special needs are integrated into the planning and implementation of programs supported by Proposition 10. A respected group of leaders in early childhood development, health, and special needs served to outline the parameters and craft the *Principles on Equity*. The *Principles on Equity* address four major areas:

- Inclusive Governance and Participation
- Access to Services
- Legislative and Regulatory Mandates
- Results-based Accountability

Inclusive Governance and Participation

Children develop within the context of their families and communities. Proposition 10 programs shall secure meaningful participation and input of those families by governance and participation:

- Use culturally and linguistically appropriate outreach strategies, as well as approaches effective in reaching parents of children with disabilities and other special needs.
- Assure that all diverse groups, particularly those who have been traditionally underrepresented and underserved, are actively engaged and involved and have an equal voice in defining needs and providing solutions.
- Use community organizations, formal and informal networks, and other communication vehicles to reach out and serve diverse groups.
- Promote and support the development of emerging parent and community leaders.
- Assure that families representing diverse groups participate equitably in the planning, delivery, and evaluation of initiatives.

Access to Services

To assure that children from diverse backgrounds and diverse abilities have access to high quality, culturally competent, and developmentally appropriate opportunities, Proposition 10 programs shall:

- Set measurable goals and objectives for increasing access and achieving equity.

- Use culturally and linguistically relevant methods of communication and community outreach.
- Assure that programs provide access to information, resources, and support regarding a child's development.
- Conduct assessments that include assets, challenges, gaps in communities, systems, and disaggregated data (ethnicity, disabilities, language, age, socio-economic status, preschool enrollment). These assessment data will aid in program design and in setting benchmarks and goals.
- Provide information and support through culturally and linguistically responsive service providers who are knowledgeable about children with disabilities and other special needs.
- Promote collaboration across disciplines, service delivery systems, and communities.
- Develop print, audio-visual, and electronic materials that are culturally and linguistically relevant for all communities served, are written at appropriate literacy levels, and are available for specialized populations.
- Schedule services in accordance with family needs and situations.
- Support programs that are individualized to address the cultural and linguistic diversity, ability levels, and behavioral and learning styles representative of California's children and families;
- Ensure availability of adapted and specialized services and supports as needed to assure full participation for all children and their families.
- Demonstrate awareness of, and referrals to, services, resources, and other supports available for children with disabilities and other special needs and their families.
- Promote policies to assure training and technical assistance to improve knowledge, skills, and attitudes and build capacity to work better within culturally and linguistically diverse communities.

Legislative and Regulatory Mandates

Agencies must adhere to all legislative, regulatory, and accreditation mandates pertinent to the provision of services to children from diverse backgrounds and with diverse abilities. Proposition 10 programs shall:

- Demonstrate leadership in assuring that staff members receive training, are knowledgeable about legislative or regulatory mandates, and have the skills and resources necessary to implement programs.
- Inform parents of their rights and responsibilities as well as those of their children.
- Offer services to all children and their families regardless of immigration status (California Children and Families Resolution – June 24, 1999).
- Be accountable for compliance with key laws and other related mandates (e.g., Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, Americans with Disabilities Act 1990, Individuals with Disabilities Education Act, Dymally-Alatorre Bilingual Services Act, Executive Order 13166, August 11, 2000).

Results-based Accountability

Programs shall have well-defined and meaningful outcomes that benefit children from diverse backgrounds and with diverse abilities. Proposition 10 programs shall:

- Commit to attaining their stated program outcomes realizing that their results are crucial to ongoing sustainability and advocacy.
- Allocate sufficient resources to support accountability and evaluation activities.
- Use program planners, evaluators, and other experts culturally competent and knowledgeable about children's differing abilities to develop effective assessment methods and evaluation tools.
- Regularly assess the governance process and provide updates on the extent of family involvement and engagement throughout all phases of program development.
- Use culturally and linguistically appropriate questions, instruments, and other research methods to collect relevant data from the populations and communities served including questions on disabilities and special needs.
- Collect and report disaggregated data (e.g., ethnicity, disabilities, language, age, socio-economic status, etc.) that describes children and families served and the achievement of access, equity, and desired results.
- Assess and disseminate best and promising practices for the benefit of all children and their service providers.