



Practice Model Survey Results Report: Executive Summary

As part of the Colorado Practice Initiative (CPI) the practice model survey was developed by the CPI Evaluation Workgroup for the purpose of gathering information from county child welfare staff about the most important components of their practice with children and families. The practice model survey results were intended to be used by the CPI Practice Model Workgroup (PMW) as they begin their work in developing a framework for Colorado's practice model.

- The survey is only one of many ways in which input from child welfare staff across the state will be gathered.
- Because of time limitations and the method of survey distribution, random sampling of child welfare staff from across the state was not possible therefore we cannot conclude that the survey results are representative of all child welfare staff in the state of Colorado.

Respondents:

- 604 staff from at least 39 counties completed the survey.
- County Size: The majority of respondents were from large counties (59%), followed by medium counties (27%), and then small counties (13%).
- Staff Position: The majority of respondents were supervisors and caseworkers (77% of total).
- Experience: The majority of respondents had substantial child welfare experience:
 - 44% had greater than 10 years experience.
 - 24% had from 5 to 10 years experience.

Ratings of Practice Model Elements:

Respondents first **rated their own counties** on a list of 7 practice model elements according to whether the PM element was a strength, adequate or needed improvement (see page 3, Table 1).

- The highest rating was for "core principles, agency values and standards of professional practice" which was rated as adequate or as a strength for one's own county.
- "Strategies and functions" to achieve those core principles, values, and practice standards were rated by the majority of respondents as adequate (42%), or as a strength (31%) for their own county.
- Four of seven practice model elements were seen as adequate or needing improvement by the majority of respondents for their own county.

Respondents next **rated the State (DCWS)** on the same list of 7 practice model elements on the same scale (see page 4, Table 2).

- Generally, respondents rated practice model elements *lower* for the state of Colorado than for their own counties.
- The majority of respondents rated 4 of the 7 elements as needing improvement for the state.
- The highest rating was for the state’s “core principles, agency values and standards of professional practice.”

Practice Model Principles Rankings:

Respondents selected the top 3 practice principles from a list of 6 practice principles according to their importance in defining Colorado’s practice model (see page 4, Table 3). The top 3 ranked principles were:

- Protection (90%)
- Permanence (72%)
- Professional competence (49%)

Practice Skills Rankings:

Respondents selected the top 3 practice skills from a list of 9 skills according to their importance in doing their job (see page 5, Table 4). The top 3 ranked skills were:

- Engaging (60%)
- Assessing (57%)
- Coordinating (35%)

Evaluation Outcomes Rankings:

Respondents selected the top 5 outcomes from a list of 10 outcomes in terms of their importance to evaluating a practice model (see page 5, Table 5). The top 5 ranked outcomes were:

- Child Safety (96%)
- Child Permanency (84%)
- Child Well-Being (77%)
- Consistency in practice (56%)
- Competence (54%)

Open Ended Question Responses:

Respondents were asked to answer the 3 questions below:

- In your opinion what are the strengths of your county’s current practice?
- What are some of the challenges that your county faces in conducting your current practice?
- What else would you like the Practice Model Workgroup to remember as they start to develop Colorado’s practice model?

Each respondent’s individual response to each question was coded into categories according its content. An individual response could contain more than one sentence, statement and/or topic, and therefore could be coded into multiple coding categories depending on the content. Rankings were determined by calculating the highest frequency of coded comments in each category. Tables 6, 7, and 8 summarize the top rankings for strengths, challenges and “things to remember”

Strengths Statewide and by County Size: (see page 7, Table 6)

- Partnerships were ranked as a top strength for all county sizes and statewide.
- Maintaining safety and providing individualized care were ranked in the top 5 strengths for medium and large counties, as well as statewide.
- Team cohesion and consistency was ranked in the top 5 strengths for small and medium counties.
- Family engagement and innovation (county specific services or programs) were ranked as top strengths for large counties and statewide.

Challenges Statewide and by County Size: (see page 7, Table 7)

- Workload was ranked as the 1st and 2nd top challenge by all size counties and statewide.
- Consistency was ranked as the 3rd and 4th top challenge by all size counties and statewide.
- Resources and budget/fiscal concerns were ranked in the top 5 challenges by all size counties and statewide.
- Staffing was ranked in the top 5 challenges for medium and large counties and statewide.

Things to Remember Statewide and by County Size: (see page 8, Table 8)

- Workload and consistency were ranked in the top 5 as issues to remember by all size counties and statewide.
- Individualized care and resources were ranked in the top 5 as issues to remember by small and medium size counties and statewide.
- State-County relationships were ranked as a top issue to remember by medium and large counties and statewide.

Strengths by Staff Position: (see page 9, Table 9)

- Partnerships and family engagement were ranked in the top 5 as strengths across all staff positions.
- Safety, innovation, and individualized care were ranked in the top 5 as strengths by sups, caseworkers and other staff.

Challenges by Staff Position: (see page 10, Table 10)

- Workload, resources, budget/fiscal concerns and staffing were ranked in the top 5 as challenges across all staff positions.

Things to Remember by Staff Position: (see page 11, Table 11)

- Workload and consistency were ranked in the top 3 as issues to remember by all staff positions.

APPENDICES

Appendix A: The Practice Model Survey (see page 12)

Appendix B: Category Definitions & Example Quotes (see page 16)

Appendix C: Statewide & County Frequencies (see page 21)