

# Principles for the Delivery of Children's Mental Health Services

A set of 12 principles will govern implementation of *J.K. v. Eden*, a class action on behalf of children in Arizona who rely on Medicaid for mental health services. The principles are part of the groundbreaking settlement announced in March 20, 2001, reforming the state's behavioral health care system for children. When incorporated in all aspects of the system's operations, they will significantly change the culture of Arizona's behavioral healthcare system.

As identified in the settlement, the principles are defined in the context of service goals.

- **Collaboration with the child and family:** Respect for and active collaboration with the child and parents is the cornerstone to achieving positive behavioral health outcomes. Parents and children are treated as partners in the assessment process, and the planning, delivery and evaluation of behavioral health services, and their preferences are taken seriously.
- **Functional outcomes:** Behavioral health services are designed and implemented to aid children to achieve success in school, live with their families, avoid delinquency and become stable and productive adults. Implementation of the behavioral health services plan stabilizes the child's condition and minimizes safety risks.
- **Collaboration with others:** When children have multi-agency, multi-system involvement, a joint assessment is developed and a jointly established behavioral health services plan is collaboratively implemented. Client-centered teams plan and deliver services. Each child's team includes the child and parents and any foster parents, and any individual important in the child's life who is invited to participate by the child or parents. The team also includes all other persons needed to develop an effective plan, including, as appropriate, the child's teacher, the child's Child Protective Service and/or Division of Developmental Disabilities case worker, and the child's probation officer. The team (a) develops a common assessment of the child's and family's strengths and needs, (b) develops an individualized service plan, (c) monitors implementation of the plan and (d) makes adjustments in the plan if it is not succeeding.
- **Accessible services:** Children have access to a comprehensive array of behavioral health services, sufficient to ensure that they receive the treatment they need. Case management is provided as needed. Behavioral health service plans identify transportation the parents and child need to access behavioral health services and how transportation assistance will be provided. Behavioral health services are adapted or created when they are needed but not available.
- **Best practices:** Behavioral health services are provided by competent individuals who are adequately trained and supervised. Behavioral health services are delivered in accordance with guidelines adopted by ADHS that incorporate evidence-based "best practice." Behavioral health service plans identify and appropriately address behavioral symptoms that are reactions to death of a family member, abuse or neglect, learning disorders and other similar traumatic or frightening circumstances, substance abuse problems, the specialized behavioral health needs of children who are developmentally disabled, maladaptive sexual behavior, including abusive conduct and risky behavior, and the need for stability and the need to promote permanency in class members' lives, especially class members in foster care. Behavioral health services are continuously evaluated and modified if ineffective in achieving desired

outcomes.

- **Most appropriate setting:** Children are provided behavioral health services in their home and community to the extent possible. Behavioral health services are provided in the most integrated setting appropriate to the child's needs. When provided in a residential setting, the setting is the most integrated and most home-like setting that is appropriate to the child's needs.

- **Timeliness:** Children identified as needing behavioral health services are assessed and served promptly.

- **Services tailored to the child and family:** The unique strengths and needs of children and their families dictate the type, mix, and intensity of behavioral health services provided. Parents and children are encouraged and assisted to articulate their own strengths and needs, the goals they are seeking and what services they think are required to meet these goals.

- **Stability:** Behavioral health service plans strive to minimize multiple placements. Service plans identify whether a class member is at risk of experiencing a placement disruption and, if so, identify the steps to be taken to minimize or eliminate the risk. Behavioral health service plans anticipate crises that might develop and include specific strategies and services that will be employed if a crisis develops. In responding to crises, the behavioral health system uses all appropriate behavioral health services to help the child remain at home, minimize placement disruptions and avoid the inappropriate use of the police and the criminal justice system. Behavioral health service plans anticipate and appropriately plan for transitions in children's lives, including transitions to new schools and new placements, and transitions to adult services.

- **Respect for the child and family's unique cultural heritage:** Behavioral health services are provided in a manner that respects the cultural tradition and heritage of the child and family. Services are provided in Spanish to children and parents whose primary language is Spanish.

- **Independence:** Behavioral health services include support and training for parents in meeting their child's behavioral health needs and support and training for children in self-management. Behavioral health service plans identify parents' and children's need for training and support to participate as partners in the assessment process, and in the planning, delivery and evaluation of services, and provide that such training and support, including transportation assistance, advance discussions and help with understanding written materials, will be made available.

- **Connection to natural supports:** The behavioral health system identifies and appropriately utilizes natural supports available from the child and parents' own network of associates, including friends and neighbors, and from community organizations, including service and religious organizations.