



# United Advocates for Children and Families

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MEMORANDUM TO: MHSOAC

FROM: Sandra Duval  
Chief Officer of Policy and Research

RE: MHSA Issues

United Advocates for Children and Families is a statewide organization comprised of parents, family members, caregivers, parent partners, youth and other advocates for children's mental health. Our mission is to promote the emotional, behavioral and social well-being of children, youth and families through transformational leadership.

In assessing whether a project, event or activity is family centered UACF applies the following seven principles.

1. Family Driven, Hope Centered and Youth Guided
2. Full Domain and Environment of the Child
3. Community Based Support Services
4. Culturally and Linguistically Competent
5. Prevention and Early Intervention
6. Strength Based Intervention
7. Interagency Collaboration

For the purposes of Prevention and Early Intervention, "Family Driven, Hope Centered and Youth Guided" means that the child's family should be the main resource for information on the child and support for the child. The family should be strengthened to help the child. Programs for the child should take the child's input into consideration. Children and young adults should have a say in the services and programs they are involved in. Above all, hope for the future of the child should be at the center of any plan for children and their families.

"Full Domain and Environment of the Child" means that all of the places that a child spends time should be taken into consideration when working with the child. The home, school, day care, church, etc. need to work together toward helping the child. All environments need to be used as resources in any plan for the child.

"Community Based Support Services" means that services should be available in the child's community. Children are best served in their community where they can stay with their families.

“Culturally and Linguistically Competent” means that programs and services for the child are based on the child’s cultural upbringing and provided in a language understood by the child and his or her family.

Children who are provided with services for themselves and their families to promote healthy families and resilient children have a much better chance of avoiding a severe emotional disturbance or mental illness. This is the key to “Prevention and Early Intervention”.

“Strength Based Intervention” means focusing on what is “right” with a child and his or her family instead of what is “wrong”. This more positive approach builds on what the child and family already have.

“Interagency Collaboration” mental and physical health agencies, school districts, child welfare agencies, and juvenile justice departments must all work in collaboration with one another to assess and address the needs of the child and family.