

ANNA, AGE EIGHT: CONCEPTS
RECOMMENDATIONS FOR
A DATA-DRIVEN AND
CROSS-SECTOR STATE
STRATEGY

Goal: Safe Childhoods + Successful Students in New Mexico

Developed by Katherine Ortega Courtney, PHD and Dominic Cappello, the authors of Anna, Age Eight: The data-driven prevention of childhood trauma and maltreatment.

Goal: Safe Childhoods + Successful Students

Recommendation 1: Create a Cabinet Level “Family Success Collaborative”

This Collaborative ensures that all cabinet-level family-serving departments collaborate at the highest level of government. The Family Success Collaborative works in alignment with state and local government and communities to ensure safe childhoods, successful students and healthy families.

Recommendation 2: Upgrade CYFD to “Child Welfare—Version 2.0”

Create a New Prevention Division: The new Prevention Division goes “upstream” to prevent families from entering the child welfare system. It reduce costly maltreatment and juvenile justice involvement. It focuses on collaboration in each county with local stakeholders to promote innovation, ensuring children and families have access to ten vital services. It works closely with the Family Success Collaborative and other relevant departments.

Strengthen Family Services for Surviving

- Behavioral health care
- Medical and dental care
- Food security programs
- Secure housing programs
- Transportation

Strengthen Family Services for Thriving

- Parent supports/Home visitation
- Early childhood learning programs
- Family-centered schools
- Youth mentor programs
- Job training programs

Create an “Alternative Response” process to prevent maltreatment: This program is a middle ground between “no services” and foster care, working closely with the Prevention Division outlined above — linking at-risk families identified by the state’s abuse call-in center to comprehensive services to prevent neglect and abuse. This program uses In-Home Services (Family Preservation) workers to help families with higher needs.

Create a new Continuous Quality Improvement (CQI) Unit: This Unit reports directly to the Cabinet Secretary and focuses on: assessment, data analysis, planning, research, action, evaluation and measuring progress in each county. It ensures a results-focused process.

Upgrade data systems and technology: Ensure all data systems are user-friendly and offer real time information to support effective case management. Allow data sharing and collaboration across departments and divisions. Provide workforce with tech and Wi-Fi.

Recommendation 3: Create a “Task Force” on Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs) Policy and Student Achievement within PED

Create the capacity to provide local school districts with the technical assistance to ensure that students with ACEs are not marginalized and receive the support they need to succeed in a thriving school community. Works in alignment with Family Success Collaborative.

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