



## CAPP THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

The conceptual framework applied in child welfare work has changed considerably over time. Child welfare has its roots in the child rescue movement. Children needed to be saved from undeserving parents. Many of these beliefs were embedded in paradigms of patriarchy, whiteness, privilege, positivism and ethnocentrism.<sup>1</sup> This resulted in system interactions and practice approaches that were particularly problematic for African-American and American Indian populations.

More recently, the child welfare system has focused on helping families with a complex set of needs through professional diagnosis and treatment of dysfunction. The theory is: if the problem is properly diagnosed, then prescribed treatment will provide the expected outcome. Families are the recipients of assessment and need to be compliant in following the course of treatment prescribed by the social work expert or the courts. Compliance with the case plan rather than measurable change in behavior and skills is defined as success.<sup>2</sup> CAPP believes this conceptual framework has contributed to the substantial gap in understanding and responsiveness to the needs of African-American and American Indian families in current child welfare practice.

The CAPP theoretical framework is a departure from the more traditional frame and builds on broader cultural experiences and beliefs about family, community and Tribes. While consistent with theories of Family-Centered Practice and Solution-Based Casework, our theoretical framework acknowledges the impact of broad social, racial and historical factors in the lives of African-American and American Indian families and the need for partnerships with supportive communities and Tribes to understand and meet the needs of their children. CAPP believes we can most effectively address disparities in outcomes and thereby achieve positive permanency outcomes for *all* children when we:

- Acknowledge the history of racism and discrimination in our community; recognize its impact on institutions, communities, Tribes, families and children; and actively address one's own biased or inaccurate assumptions about race, class, or sexual orientation to create visible change in our behaviors and interactions;
- Move from a medical/professionally-driven model of helping, to one that recognizes the parents, child, youth, family, Tribes and community as true partners in developing solutions;
- Recognize issues of social justice and the unequal distribution of power and resources as service delivery is planned;
- Consistently and repeatedly partner with the child or youth, birth parents, and entire extended maternal and paternal family and support community and Tribes in solution- and outcome-focused planning and decision making; and
- Engage the broader community and Tribes in problem posing and solving rather than attempting to fix all problems alone.

The values and practice principles in the CAPP Child and Family Practice Model flow from this theoretical foundation for how change will occur. They provide administrators and practitioners with a firm foundation for making decisions and guide their interactions with children, families, and Tribal and community members. Each value is exemplified by practice principles that demonstrate the value in action.



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<sup>1</sup> *Building Community: A Conceptual Framework for Child Protection*, Ken Barter (2001).

<sup>2</sup> *Engaging Child Welfare Families: A Solution-Based Approach to Child Welfare Practice*, Dana N. Christensen, PhD and Becky Antle, PhD (2000).

## CAPP VALUES and PRACTICE PRINCIPLES

VALUES WE BELIEVE IN...	PRACTICE PRINCIPLES OUR VALUES IN ACTION...
The Power of Family <sup>3</sup>	We demonstrate this by ensuring that every child and youth has a lifelong, loving, legal family and by partnering with all family members and caregivers in planning and decision-making, including working together early and continuously to develop and support safe family relationships and multiple paths to permanency.
Healing	We demonstrate this by making all of our interactions and interventions with children, families and communities sensitive and responsive to the trauma and loss they may have experienced.
Community and Collaboration	We demonstrate this by building partnerships with community and Tribes to ensure that services and interventions reflect the diverse needs of the families and children we serve. This includes partnering with natural neighborhood supports, schools, tribal supports, faith-based and other cultural community supports identified by families.
Honesty, Transparency and Trust	We demonstrate this by being authentic and truthful in every interaction we have with children, youth, families, partners and one another, by showing respect and regard for each person's unique lived experience, strengths and beliefs, and by being transparent about our decision making and our outcomes.
Safety	We demonstrate this by creating an environment where power is shared and trust is created to enable a child, youth, birth parent, extended family, community and Tribe to actively work together toward change that will result in safety for the child or youth.
Fairness and Equity	We demonstrate this by expanding our awareness and understanding of institutional and personal bias; increasing our knowledge, respect and regard for all ethnicities, cultures, gender, sexual identity, socio-economic backgrounds and perspectives; and asking the groups that are most affected by our policies, services, and interventions to guide their development.
Empowerment	We demonstrate this by affirming the unique strengths and needs of each child, youth and family and by encouraging their voice and choice in decisions about their lives.
Accountability and Results	We demonstrate this by employing services and interventions that are backed by evidence of their effectiveness and by continuing to track and analyze data to improve all of our practices and policies.

<sup>3</sup> The terms **family and families** are used broadly throughout the Practice Model. CAPP's definition of family and families includes blood and adoptive relatives, step-families and unrelated persons that have an emotionally significant relationship. *For American Indian youth and families this term includes their Tribe and Tribal relations as understood under the Tribes' customs and traditions.* Youth, family and for American Indian youth, Tribes are best and uniquely qualified to identify who fits this description.