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Evaluation Guide: Mower County Health and Human Services Child Welfare Preventative Programs

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EVALUATION GUIDE: MOWER COUNTY HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES CHILD WELFARE PREVENTATIVE PROGRAMS

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Purpose and Literature Review

The Child Abuse Prevention and Treatment Act (CAPTA) of 2010 identifies that State child protection systems should include interventions to prevent the occurrence and reoccurrence of child maltreatment. The Juvenile Protection Provisions of the Juvenile Court Act, describes the requirement of county social service agencies to provide reasonable efforts to prevent placement prior to the removal of any child from the home.

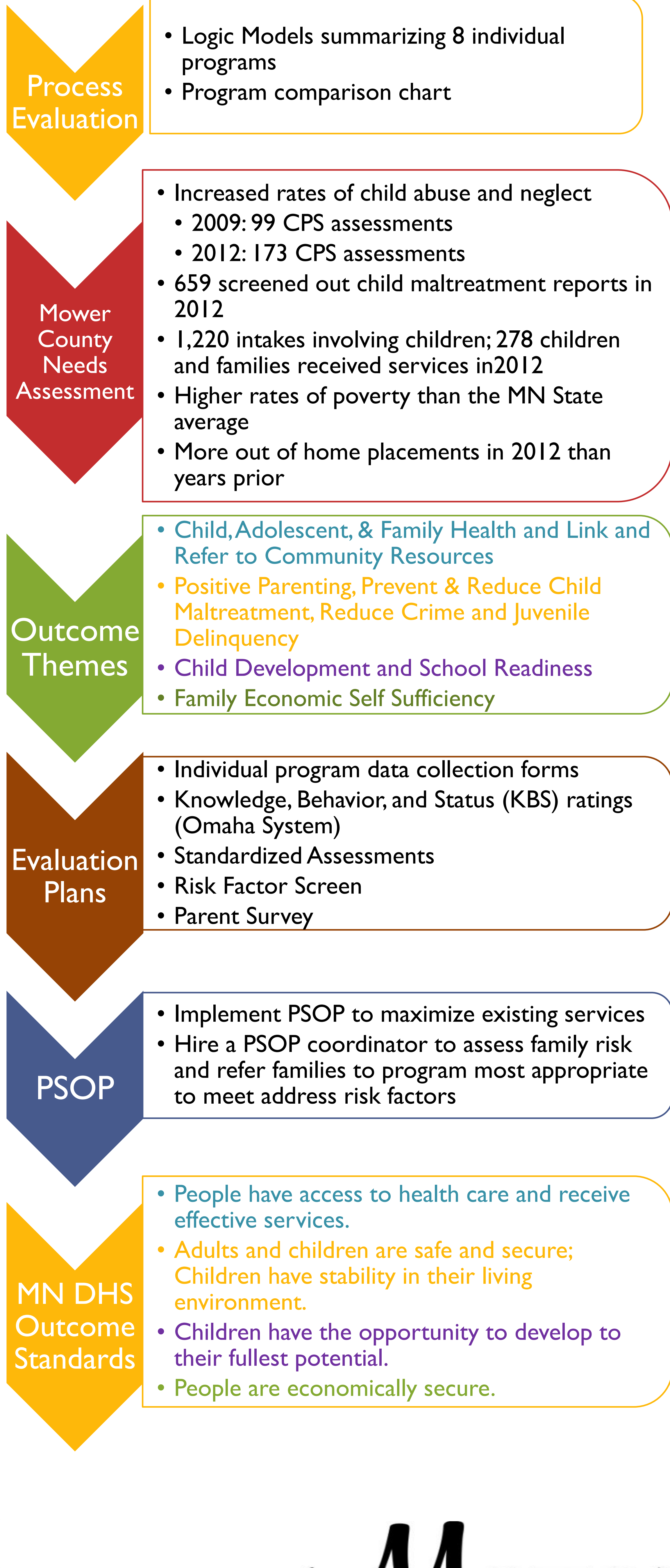
Family poverty is cited as a central risk factor for child maltreatment. Vulnerability has an exponential relationship to risk exposure, and risk should not be considered as linear. Thus, families with multiple risk factors are at increased likelihood that abuse or neglect may occur within the household.

It is necessary to maximize existing Mower County Health and Human Services (MCHHS) child welfare preventative programs. Existing programs include Healthy Families America, Healthy Beginnings, Maternal Child Health, the Family Facilitator program, Child Welfare Prenatal Exposure, Child Welfare Minor Parent, and Children's Mental Health Case Management.

Preventative services providing parenting education, addressing health related concerns (such as safety prevention, overall physical health, and reducing use of drugs/alcohol), and linking and referring families to community supports have demonstrated positive effects in research studies in reducing child maltreatment.

If child maltreatment is reduced, children are safe in their family homes and then out of home placements in response to child safety concerns will be reduced.

The State-County Results, Accountability, and Service Delivery Redesign Act identifies outcome standards. Evaluation plans are essential to measure individual program outcomes, ensuring standards are achieved.



Recommendations

The Evaluation Guide outlines the following recommendations in detail:

- Implement PSOP in Mower County
- Utilize Risk Factor Screen to assess presence of child maltreatment risk in families and measure program effects in reducing risk
- Implement use of MCHHS Parent Survey as a performance measurement tool
- Implement use of individual program data collection forms including Knowledge, Behavior, Status (KBS) ratings
- Collect data from community partners
- Develop a database capable of managing individual program data and creating aggregated reports for comparison purposes
- Present recommendations to county board for education and annual budget considerations.
- Utilize the evaluation data to do more of what is working well and make changes to what is not working
- Consider expanding the evaluation plans for use in other program areas such as Child Protection Services

Discussion and Implications

Implementing the recommendations outlined within the Evaluation Plan allows for increased access to services for families in Mower County. Implementing the program specific evaluation plans will allow for progress monitoring, increasing the overall positive outcomes families experience. Increasing positive outcomes will aid MCHHS in meeting the outcome standards outlined within the State-County Results, Accountability, and Service Delivery Redesign Act.

Additional staff including a PSOP coordinator, quality assurance professional, and support staff are necessary to carry out the evaluation plans and implementation of the PSOP program. Also, technical support and funding is essential to the development of a database to collect data, aggregate data, and create reports.

References are available upon request

Methodology

