



Office of Family Voice Guiding Principles

The Office of Family Voice (OFV) embodies the Department of Children and Families (DCF) values of **collaboration, equity, evidence, family, and integrity**. Our guiding principles describe how we work and partner with youth, parents, families, caregivers, staff, and community stakeholders to achieve these values.

Collaboration

- We use practices that prioritize family and youth voice to facilitate shared decision-making and co-design.
- Our teamwork fosters inclusivity, psychological safety and embraces diversity of experiences and perspectives.

Equity

- We start with equity as a goal and expectation. We work proactively to “level the playing field” between staff and community members by offering tailored supports and skill development, with attention to historically excluded communities.
- We practice an anti-racist, intersectional approach throughout our work and advance recommendations for system change to target structural inequities.

Evidence

- We value the lived expertise and perspectives of youth, parents, families, and communities as credible evidence.
- We use research-informed strategies for meaningful partnership that have been vetted by people with personal experience with child and family-serving systems.

Family

- We believe that families know best what they need to thrive, and that DCF’s role is to help them meet their needs in the least intrusive manner in their local communities.
- Our approach is trauma-informed and healing-centered. We embrace multiple, individualized definitions of family and diverse family structures.

Integrity

- We work to eliminate tokenism of youth and families by prioritizing authentic engagement grounded in mutual respect and using thoughtful practices that facilitate meaningful partnership.
- We demonstrate accountability to youth and families through transparent bi-directional communication, advocacy for their recommendations, and supporting their overall well-being.