

Child Welfare Practice Approaches

The National Council on Crime and Delinquency (NCCD) is a nonprofit research organization that works to improve social service systems through research, public policy, and practice. Using this research, the NCCD Children's Research Center creates data systems that help child welfare agencies improve outcomes for the children and families they serve. One of these data systems is SafeMeasures®, which is mission driven and operates under the following guiding principles.



Ensure All Children Are Accounted For

SafeMeasures analyses are guided by the principle that no child should fall through the cracks. Each analysis looks at every applicable child. There is no sampling or random selection. The numbers represent the actual count of each applicable child for each report.



Increase Data Quality

SafeMeasures helps clean existing data. Data entry is often delayed since supervisors, managers, and caseworkers are busy providing services to children and families. SafeMeasures helps with more timely data entry and allows workers to verify correct data. This helps increase the quality of the data by displaying it in a dashboard that offers staff throughout the agency a way to see what work to do and what work was done.



Increase Policy Knowledge

SafeMeasures helps clarify practice. Every report is designed specifically for each jurisdiction with a help view that provides detailed information about the analytical procedures. Additionally, each report is created in consultation with agency personnel to target issues that are important to staff. Field staff, supervisors, and managers are involved in the design, specification, and vetting of every report before it is released to the field. This helps ensure every report for accuracy and usefulness and informs field staff of policy changes and updates as soon as they are effective.





What Gets Monitored Gets Managed

SafeMeasures helps monitor practice and outcomes to provide accountability at all levels of the agency. Unlike other traditional reporting services that only provide aggregate numbers, SafeMeasures allows you to drill down into the data to see which cases make up each category. This allows users to check the accuracy of each analysis long before the opportunity to correct the problem has passed. SafeMeasures encourages users to let us know when they disagree with our categorization of a case; we will investigate to see if the analysis needs updating, or we will direct the user to detailed information about the analytical procedures and the source of the underlying data.



Management Leads to Outcomes

Timely reviews and ongoing goalsetting paired with SafeMeasures form the cornerstone of a comprehensive, agency-wide program to monitor and improve practice and outcomes. SafeMeasures provides transparency for staff at all levels of the agency. Clear policies and guidelines are critical for entering data, best practice, and identifying areas for improvement. Clear policy leads to improved data quality, which then results in better reporting. Better reporting results in workers trusting data. From there, the agency can identify areas for improvement and make changes. Improved performance on an agency level leads to improved outcomes for clients receiving services.



Staff Have Five Minutes

SafeMeasures is designed with the idea that workers do not have a lot of time to spend in the application. The easy-to-use interface means that this information is never more than a few clicks away. The reorganization of the information paired with near-instant feedback allow each report to provide the most up-to-date and accurate picture of the status of every case. Finally, each report has the same basic format to keep the focus on the data within SafeMeasures—not on the navigation of SafeMeasures.



Reports Are Child Focused

Although SafeMeasures is a tool that can help everyone in an agency, each report is designed with the focus on the child receiving the services. To do this, we report the data from your case management system, accurately using agency policy. It is never our intent to make staff look or feel bad, which is why we emphasize placing the focus on the child who needs the service regardless of how the case came to the worker. SafeMeasures exists to put the information necessary to improve practice into the hands of the people in the best position to make those improvements.

Learn More

To learn more about SafeMeasures for your agency, contact Stephanie Butler, Client Relations Associate, at (800) 306-6223 or sbutler@nccdglobal.org.