

Douglas County Position Paper on
The Governor's Child Welfare Action Committee Recommendations

- Douglas County welcomes the opportunity to work with state and county partners and local residents to provide the best possible services to our youngest and most vulnerable citizens.
- The County supports its residents by funding human services and other community programs to provide a safety net and improve the quality of life for county residents. There is a great connection between mandated human services in Douglas County and local safety net services.
- For example, Douglas County Human Services has joined with 15 other local organizations to become a HB 1451 Collaborative Management Site.
- We are also co-locating a domestic violence advocate in our department; using digital pens for all child welfare staff to increase family contact time; have increased qualifications for child abuse hotline staff; are collaborating on an early care and education mental health grant; have developed alternatives for residential treatment to keep youth in our own community and have partnered with the Parker Task Force to make applying for economic and medical assistance more convenient for Parker area residents.
- In addition, we have expanded training for staff; developed a Quality Assurance Program and have increased community partnerships in order to better serve Douglas County residents.
- The essence of the current human services structure; a state supervised/county administered system incorporates oversight and accountability with a commitment to, understanding of and responsiveness to local needs. Colorado has a long tradition of empowering local governments to provide key services, because they are most responsive to local citizens and have a better understanding of local needs. Douglas County supports this tradition.
- There is also no evidence that the structure of human services in a state, in and of itself, leads to better outcomes or child safety. As a county administered human services system, Colorado ranks in the top ten of 43 states that report re-abuse rates following human services contact. Of the ten worst states for this measure, nine of them are state run systems.

- Douglas County supports recognizing the many successes for families and children that have been achieved at the county level while working to continuously improve our system through a collaborative state/county partnership.
- Douglas County has embraced many of the good practice and accountability recommendations that have come from the Child Welfare Action Committee since its inception in 2008 and as a county, has been continuously improving its human services programs over the past several years in response to a growing community.
- There is no new money and no reliable information about how much it would cost to convert to a different organizational structure of human services. In-depth fiscal analysis is needed to determine the cost to both the state and counties.