



Families define themselves and their own culture



Families require culturally competent services and supports reflecting their race, ethnicity, gender orientation, language, socio-economic background, and family structure



Families have their basic needs met



Families have access to information and training



Family identified priorities and concerns drive policy and practice



Families share power to make decisions and responsibility for outcomes



Families & their system partners know their individual strengths, limitations and fears



Families have their own independent organization to speak with a collective voice for system change



Families and their organizations get both respect and protection from their system partners

Family involvement is a collective effort requiring representation from all cultural, ethnic and racial groups in the community in sufficient numbers so each has a real voice, yet no one voice dominates the decision making. The family voice in decision making must be as strong as that of other partners. Family experiences and perspectives collectively drive policy, service planning, implementation and evaluation.

A child's family is the group of individuals who support a child - emotionally, physically, and financially. A family is defined by its members and each family defines itself. It can include individuals of various ages who are biologically related, related by marriage, or not related at all.

The job of a family is to unconditionally provide love, guidance, care, support, and otherwise nurture all of its members. They are the ultimate "zero reject, zero eject" institution. While roles in a family are often clearly defined (the bread winner, the housekeeper, the chauffeur, the nurse) individuals may take on these roles to varying degrees and this can change over time.

Each family has a culture of its own - in addition to the external cultures it and its members affiliate with. This influences how the family approaches the tasks of daily living (food, dress, work, school). This culture can also direct how a family faces the challenges of raising a challenging child. Families work in different ways and have different resources at their disposal and achieve differing degrees of success at meeting the needs of all their members.

