

Guiding Principles for an UnSystem approach

The following is a list of guiding principles for an UnSystem approach, an idea born at the 10 of 10 for Kids national convening in May 2017 that brought together 100 innovative thinkers from around the country and IDEO to redesign child welfare. When the four-day event ended, we had not identified a new design for child welfare, rather we had thirty prototypes for programs, services, and apps; thousands of post-it notes; hundreds of evaluations; and many new partners and friends. As we continued to analyze all the information before us, some clear themes began to emerge around locally delivered, family-driven, culturally specific community supports focused on building wellbeing and resilience.

Continued conversations and information gathering, including an additional listening session with the 10 of 10 designers, resulted in identifying the following guiding principles. Those who are committed to a new way of supporting children and families are challenged to uphold these Guiding Principles.

- **Protect relational connections as sacred**

We regard trusting relationships and secure attachments to specific people (biological family members and self identified "family") as the foundation of lifelong wellbeing. Connections to communities (geographic, faith, cultural, and other) and attachments to traditions should also be treated as necessary for survival.

- **Trust the wisdom of children and families to design their own futures**

We view families as their own experts, whole, undamaged, and capable. We defer to families (to the extent safe and possible) to decide what they need, what services they receive, and who is involved - to be architects of their care. We support the personal journey of every individual and family to becoming as capable as possible in determining their futures.

- **Commit to intergenerational wellbeing**

We know trauma that occurs in families must be healed within families. Targeting one young person or family member within the family unit is insufficient for long-term family and community wellbeing and resilience.

- **Insist on equity and radical inclusion**

We challenge the individual bias and structural oppression present in the child welfare system as evidenced by the overrepresentation of people of color.

- **Dare to share power**

We recognize that by working together we can come up with better solutions than we can alone. Agency leaders with agency workers, workers with families, workers with other workers, and agencies with other agencies: seeking other perspectives and employing shared decision-making will lead us more quickly to solutions that work.

- **Nurture the capacity for joy**

We see the ability to experience and express joy as a measure of wellbeing, an expression of every person's birthright, and only accessible when other foundational safety needs are met. We vow to create space to nurture widespread wholeheartedness where young people, families, workers, and leaders are safe enough to express vulnerability, hope, bravery, and joy.

And when in doubt, DO WHAT LOVE WOULD DO.



Guiding principles compiled by the team at:  Alia