

**225C.52 Mental health services system for children and youth — purpose.**

1. Establishing a comprehensive community-based mental health services system for children and youth is part of fulfilling the requirements of the division and the commission to facilitate a comprehensive, continuous, and integrated state mental health and disability services plan in accordance with sections 225C.4, 225C.6, and 225C.6A, and other provisions of this chapter. The purpose of establishing the children's system is to improve access for children and youth with serious emotional disturbances and youth with other qualifying mental health disorders to mental health treatment, services, and other support in the least restrictive setting possible so the children and youth can live with their families and remain in their communities. The children's system is also intended to meet the needs of children and youth who have mental health disorders that co-occur with substance abuse, intellectual disability, developmental disabilities, or other disabilities. The children's system shall emphasize community-level collaborative efforts between children and youth and the families and the state's systems of education, child welfare, juvenile justice, health care, substance abuse, and mental health.

2. The goals and outcomes desired for the children's system shall include but are not limited to all of the following:

- a. Identifying the mental health needs of children and youth.
- b. Performing comprehensive assessments of children and youth that are designed to identify functional skills, strengths, and services needed.
- c. Providing timely access to available treatment, services, and other support.
- d. Offering information and referral services to families to address service needs other than mental health.
- e. Improving access to needed mental health services by allowing children and youth to be served with their families in the community.
- f. Preventing or reducing utilization of more costly, restrictive care by reducing the unnecessary involvement of children and youth who have mental health needs and their families with law enforcement, the corrections system, and detention, juvenile justice, and other legal proceedings; reducing the involvement of children and youth with child welfare services or state custody; and reducing the placement of children and youth in the state juvenile institutions, state mental health institutes, or other public or private residential psychiatric facilities.
- g. Increasing the number of children and youth assessed for functional skill levels.
- h. Increasing the capacity to develop individualized, strengths-based, and integrated treatment plans for children, youth, and families.
- i. Promoting communications with caregivers and others about the needs of children, youth, and families engaged in the children's system.
- j. Developing the ability to aggregate data and information, and to evaluate program, service, and system efficacy for children, youth, and families being served on a local and statewide basis.
- k. Implementing and utilizing outcome measures that are consistent with but not limited to the national outcomes measures identified by the substance abuse and mental health services administration of the United States department of health and human services.
- l. Identifying children and youth whose mental health or emotional condition, whether chronic or acute, represents a danger to themselves, their families, school students or staff, or the community.

2008 Acts, ch 1187, §54; 2010 Acts, ch 1031, §380; 2012 Acts, ch 1019, §74