

CHILD WELFARE VALUES

Fundamental values of the social work profession:

- 1) All human beings have an intrinsic and irreducible worth.
- 2) All individuals have a right to liberty. This includes self-determination and privacy.
- 3) All individuals have a right to justice. This includes equal opportunity.
- 4) All human beings have a responsibility to help others to achieve their social rights and human potentials. (This is the most definitive value of the social work profession.)

Child welfare values:

Public child welfare agencies have evolved as agents of the state with the authority and responsibility to provide child protection services and other family and children services. Child welfare is a field of practice within the profession of social work. Its guiding value is a derivation of the fundamental values of the social work profession. This guiding child welfare value is: All children have an absolute right to a safe, permanent, stable home which provides basic levels of nurturance and care, and is free from abuse and exploitation. Toward achievement of this valued end, the child welfare field has evolved an overriding prescriptive norm: Always act in the best interests of the child. Additional, more specific professional norms have evolved to assure that child welfare efforts are in the best interests of children, and result in safe, permanent, and nurturing homes for children. These include:

- Child welfare activities must always be toward the protection of children;
- The child welfare field must provide services that are family-centered;
- Child welfare services must promote permanence for children;
- Child welfare services must be culturally competent; and
- Children who need out-of-home placement should always be placed in the least restrictive, most home-like environment, as close to their own homes as possible.

Rycus, J.S., and Hugh, R.C. (1998). Field Guide to Child Welfare: Foundations of Child Protective Services, Volume 1, pp. 40-41.