# What is a Trauma-Informed Child and Family Service System?

*A trauma-informed child and family service system is one in which all parties involved recognize and respond to the impact of traumatic stress on those who have contact with the system including children, caregivers, and service providers. Programs and agencies within such a system infuse and sustain trauma awareness, knowledge, and skills into their organizational cultures, practices, and policies. They act in collaboration with all those who are involved with the child, using the best available science, to maximize physical and psychological safety, facilitate the recovery of the child and family, and support their ability to thrive.*

**A service system with a trauma-informed perspective is one in which agencies, programs and service providers:**

**1** Routinely screen for trauma exposure and related symptoms;

**2** Use evidence-based, culturally responsive assessment and treatment for traumatic stress and associated mental health symptoms;

**3** Make resources available to children, families, and providers on trauma exposure, its impact, and treatment;

**4** Engage in efforts to strengthen the resilience and protective factors of children and families impacted by and vulnerable to trauma;

**5** Address parent and caregiver trauma and its impact on the family system;

**6** Emphasize continuity of care and collaboration across child-service systems; and

**7** Maintain an environment of care for staff that addresses, minimizes, and treats secondary traumatic stress, and that increases staff wellness.

**These activities are rooted in an understanding that trauma-informed agencies, programs and service providers:**

**8** Build meaningful partnerships that create mutuality among children, families, caregivers and professionals at an individual and organizational level; and

**9** Address the intersections of trauma with culture, history, race, gender, location and language, acknowledge the compounding impact of structural inequity, and are responsive to the unique needs of diverse communities.