

Jess McDonald & Associates
www.jessmcdonald.com

"Improving child welfare system performance is one of the most challenging tasks any manager in human services faces today."

Jess McDonald

The demands for perfect performance and lower costs force leaders to constantly seek new ideas for change strategies.

There are a few examples of child welfare systems that have made the amazing turnaround from "worst" to nearly "first." The Illinois child welfare system is such an example.

In the early 1990's the Illinois Department of Children and Family Services (DCFS) was labeled by The Chicago Tribune as the "poster child for government indifference and incompetence." A decade of reform later and it is often referred to as the "gold standard" for child welfare reform.

Every level of your organization is vital to making positive change happen. Leadership must provide the vision and strategic course for the system. Leaders must speak to the mission, the hopes and dreams of families and stakeholders, and the role of staff and communities in achieving better outcomes for children and families. Management strategies must target and allocate resources in the most effective manner, develop accountability systems and assure that there is a solid analytical capacity for timely problem identification and solving.

Most importantly, there is the critical need to develop a direct service field capacity that can make the right decisions for each child and family. Preparing and supporting the field's effort to achieve the vision leadership seeks requires attention to workforce issues including caseloads and workload, quality supervision, competency based training, adequate and appropriate resources and responses to the many other barriers to achieving the organizational mission.

The lessons of Illinois' successful venture as a leading child welfare system are useful to every jurisdiction of any size facing the enormous political, programmatic and financial pressures of today.

***Let Jess McDonald & Associates help your organization
write a success story for children and families.***

Jess McDonald & Associates, LLC brings years of direct service, management and leadership experience in the Illinois child welfare system to your table.

Our mission is to help you craft a strategy to achieve the changes you desire for your system.

We focus on the nature of the work and helping the people who do the work. Improved outcomes for children and families happen with a better supported and performing child welfare workforce.

Creating management strategies that allow the field, public and private, to achieve superior outcomes is our goal.

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