

WHY is this team important?

Research on implementation best practices has shown that for positive program outcomes to be achieved and sustained, programs must be supported at all levels. This means that the professionals on the front line—those directly supporting children and families at the Safe Babies site—cannot do it alone. They need a coordinated group of experts with a variety of perspectives and levels of authority to ensure that the system is supporting, rather than creating challenges for, the frontline professionals implementing the Safe Babies approach and the families they serve.



Implementation is never a static activity, but is always working toward improvement, sustainability, and growth.

WHAT is the PURPOSE of this team?

A Site Implementation Team provides **leadership and oversight** for effective Safe Babies approach implementation and ongoing sustainability in the community by:

- **Serving as the site's liaison** to the Safe Babies team and the State Team (if applicable) for Safe Babies approach technical assistance and training
- **Providing operational support** for the site (e.g., determining policies, procedures, day-to-day operations, and team member roles and responsibilities)
- **Employing strategies to support and sustain Safe Babies approach practices** in the child welfare system through training, policies, and procedures
- **Using a continuous quality improvement approach**, i.e., examining data to understand if the Safe Babies approach is being implemented as intended and to identify trends and needs of families served in the site¹
- **Bringing data about child and family trends and needs**, as well as implementation and sustainability needs, to the Active Community Team (This broad group of community partners² works to improve access to comprehensive services and supports for families with very young children.)
- **Sharing information about systems barriers, gaps, and solutions** with the State Team (if applicable) to inform their collective efforts with state partners to improve child and family serving systems and support all Safe Babies approach sites in the state
- **Identifies new resources, events, and services in the community** that apply to family needs and the team members enhanced knowledge for the work

HOW does this team function?

- The Site Implementation Team functions as a working group, meeting more frequently in the planning and early stages of implementation and then continuing to provide support in an ongoing way once the program is established.
- This team involves the Judge, key child welfare professionals with decision-making authority, the Community Coordinator, and representatives of any other key sector needed to support implementation and sustainability of the Safe Babies approach.
- It is important to elevate family voices in the team's decision-making process. For this reason, finding ways to involve parents who have navigated the child welfare system and resource caregivers (foster parents, foster-to-adopt families, kinship caregivers) helps assure that decisions reflect the needs of families with very young children.

This team is instrumental in making change happen.

¹ Data is not discussed at the level of individual cases but only in aggregate form (no ex parte communications).

² Partners that will be important in successfully implementing the Safe Babies approach in your community include parent leaders and parent advocacy organizations, the public defender's office/parent counsel, guardian ad litem and/or Court Appointed Special Advocate (CASA) programs, Infant and Early Childhood Mental Health association/clinical experts, substance use disorder and adult mental health clinical experts, the health department, home visiting programs, housing advocates, and other early childhood-focused community initiatives.