

What is the PURPOSE of an Active Community Team?

The Active Community Team (ACT) **brings community partners together¹ to improve equitable access** to comprehensive prevention, early intervention, and therapeutic services and supports for families with very young children. This work can be thought of as building a strong **early childhood system** that aims to reach all children and families with needed services and supports.



An **early childhood system** brings together health (holistically defined and for all members of the family), child welfare including the dependency court, early care and education, other human services, and family support program partners - as well as community leaders, families, and other partners - to achieve agreed-upon goals for thriving children and families.

What DOES IT LOOK LIKE when an ACT is implemented successfully?

- All ACT participants feel a sense of **collective leadership and inclusion**.
- All participants feel a climate of **trust, compassion, and transparency** necessary for collaborative solution-finding and alignment of shared resources.
- Shared early childhood systems-building **priorities are identified, monitored, and achieved**.
- Policies, funding, and other infrastructure **changes are made to support Safe Babies approach practices**.
- Strategies to **counteract or change disparities, racist policies, and discriminatory practices** are implemented.

Who PARTICIPATES in ACT?

- Participants represent the broad and diverse sectors serving families with very young children who are involved in the child welfare system or are at risk of child welfare involvement. **The exact makeup of the group will depend on the unique community** and its priorities. The partners involved in the ACT may evolve over time as priorities shift. However, it is critical to include:
 - Families with lived experience in the child welfare system
 - Resource families (foster parents, foster-to-adopt families, and kinship caregivers); foster care organizations
 - Direct service providers
 - Professionals with decision-making authority to implement change in their respective organizations
- The team is **collaboratively led** by the Judge, Child Welfare Leadership, and Community Coordinator.

¹In communities where an existing early childhood coalition is engaged in similar efforts, it may be preferable to integrate the work of an ACT into the already active coalition; the intention is to align early childhood system-building efforts in the community and reduce duplication and overlap.

Essential Functions and Activities

The list of essential functions and activities below describes the key functions and specific activities that fall under the purview of the ACT. These functions incorporate key strategies from the field of collective impact, with a central focus on health equity for infants, toddlers, and their families.

Essential Functions	Activities
Fostering a supportive environment for the Safe Babies approach and related programs, practices, and policies	Meeting regularly and frequently to build expansive community support and champions for the Safe Babies approach and broader prevention efforts
	Creating space for cross-system networking that increases communication and reduces silos
	Promoting new policies and procedures that support, sustain, and spread Safe Babies approach practice changes addressing the need of infants, toddlers, and their families
	Advocating for, facilitating access to, and participating in cross-system trainings and technical assistance to increase workforce skills and competencies in core areas related to the Safe Babies approach, such as applying the science of early childhood development
	Exploring/identifying funding opportunities to sustain the Safe Babies approach and expand reach to more children/families, including funding Community Coordinator positions
	Exploring/identifying in-kind opportunities to support children and families such as providing space for family time and concrete resources for families (e.g., diapers, cribs, self-care products for new mothers, etc.)
	Exploring/identifying funding opportunities to build/expand programs and supports for infants, toddlers, and their families such as parent partner programs, evidence-based interventions that strengthen the parent-child relationship, and effective services to address perinatal substance dependence
Reflection and solution finding	Sharing timely information about available community services, resources, and supports for very young children and their families in the child welfare system or at increased risk of child welfare involvement
	Identifying temporary solutions to address barriers and gaps for children and families supported by the Safe Babies approach while simultaneously working to build long-term systems change/improvements

Functions	Activities
<p>Advancing equity across the early childhood system</p>	<p>Actively engaging and supporting parents/individuals with lived experience in the child welfare system in decision-making and leadership roles</p>
	<p>Serving as a platform for open conversations about personal biases, community discrimination, and institutional barriers</p>
	<p>Advancing a common vision for a more equitable early childhood systems for families with very young children in the community</p>
	<p>Using data separated out by race and ethnicity to recognize barriers to equity, such as discriminatory practices and policies</p>
	<p>Developing, implementing, and monitoring the effectiveness of strategies to counteract or change the disparities, racist policies, and discriminatory practices impacting infants, toddlers, and their families</p>
<p>Promoting continuous quality improvement across the early childhood system</p>	<p>Sharing data trends from Safe Babies sites and community sectors to examine availability, accessibility, and alignment of comprehensive services and supports</p>
	<p>Engaging in the development of a shared set of priorities, measurement, and outcomes among the ACT's community partners</p>
	<p>Creating a plan to address shared priorities, monitor effectiveness of the plan, and adjust as needed</p>

