

HOW TO PROMOTE SYSTEMS FOCUS

Systems thinking helps shift teams from linear problem solving to a more holistic approach. The PIER process and tools can support a systems focus. Here are other key strategies to foster this mindset.

1. Understanding the Bigger Picture and Root Causes

- What patterns or trends are emerging across multiple deaths in the reviews?
- How do social determinants (e.g., poverty, housing, education, employment, health care access) contribute to child deaths in our community?
- What are the cumulative impacts of social determinants that contributed to child deaths over time?
- What upstream factors (e.g., policies, services, family support systems) could have prevented this death?
- How do various systems (health care, child welfare, criminal justice, education) interact in ways that impact child safety and well-being?
- Review population-level data. Are there specific populations disproportionately affected? If so, what systemic factors might be contributing?
- What barriers exist that prevent families from accessing needed support before a crisis occurs? What might minimize these barriers?

2. Examining Existing Programming, Policy, Service Gaps and Unintended Consequences

- Are current interventions, policies, and protocols sufficient to prevent similar deaths in the future?
- Are there missed opportunities for early intervention that could have changed the outcome?
- Are there policies or practices that may unintentionally increase risks for children?
- What are the different effects of the current interventions among various populations across different social and economic contexts?
- Are there groups or settings that may be negatively impacted by current programs or policies? Are there policies or practices that worsen inequities?
- Are the current policies and programs addressing the priority of the underserved population?
- Have past interventions led to improvements, or have they created new challenges?

3. Improving Data Sharing and Collaboration

- What data do we have, and what additional data could help us better understand systemic risk factors?
 - How can we improve cross-sector collaboration to share insights and develop coordinated prevention strategies?
 - What mechanisms are in place for accountability and follow-up after identifying system-level issues?
 - How well do agencies collaborate to ensure child safety and well-being? Where are the gaps?
 - How can we incorporate diverse perspectives, such as health care, social services, education, urban planning, and policymaking, to identify root causes and share solutions?
 - How can we engage community voices (parents, caregivers, youth, advocacy groups) to help identify root causes and shape solutions?
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