

Sixth Edition of

# Leadership Dialogues

**Innovate. Collaborate. Strengthen.**  
*Towards a Safer Future for Our Children.*

## Frequently Asked and Most Important Questions

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## Inter-sectoral Coordination & Role of Panchayats

**How can inter-sectoral coordination among government schemes, grassroots NGOs, and Panchayati Raj Institutions (PRIs) be strengthened to ensure child protection and welfare?**

Mission Vatsalya emphasises convergence at every level—from State to Panchayat—bringing together all relevant line departments. Within this framework, NGOs act as extended hands of the government, reaching the last mile where government outreach may be limited. They play a vital role in identifying at-risk families, facilitating timely referrals, and maintaining close coordination with departments. Strengthening this coordination calls for implementing the Child-Friendly Panchayat model in every panchayat, with active engagement at the ward level. Regular and consistent convergence meetings are essential, and any lapses should be promptly escalated to higher authorities. Special attention must also be given to families migrating from rural to urban areas to ensure uninterrupted support and protection services.

Zero Poverty—UP Campaign is a commitment of the Government of Uttar Pradesh towards promoting inclusive development. The Government is open to partnerships across the spectrum—including the private sector, corporate social responsibility, financial institutions and banks, and civil society organizations—to contribute to the spirit of the campaign in whatever feasible way possible.

### Additional Resource.

#### **Recommended Action Points:**

- Develop a district-level action plan for child protection.
- Map available schemes and resources for convergence.
- Hold quarterly meetings of the District Child Welfare & Protection Committee.
- Involve local self-governance bodies in planning and monitoring.
- Use a single referral form and a unified tracking register.
- Track Gram Panchayat Development Plan (GPDP) budget lines to specific child protection outcomes.
- Conduct regular social audits and Jan Sunwai to review progress and accountability.

**What support can panchayats provide for the welfare of children? Are existing schemes and committees truly functional, or do they remain only on paper?**

Panchayats can play a transformative role in children's welfare by adopting the Child-Friendly Village approach, supported by the Panchayat Advancement Index (PAI) [dashboard](#) to track and monitor progress. This approach covers key areas such as preventing child marriage, ending child labour, improving nutrition, ensuring education, and strengthening protection services. Having a dedicated child protection plan at the panchayat level is crucial. While such initiatives exist in some urban areas, much less work has been done there compared to rural settings.

With at least 5% of the panchayat budget earmarked for child-related priorities, a well-thought-out plan can unlock greater resources. By leveraging 26 different government schemes, panchayats can address the needs of the most vulnerable

children—such as those with disabilities or those living with parents affected by HIV—through proper prioritisation and linking them with the right entitlements. For this, the effective functioning of Village Child Protection Committees (VCPCs) and regular monitoring are essential.

### Three key strategic actions:

1. Prioritisation – Identify urgent child welfare needs at the local level.
2. Capacity Building – Equip PRI members and VCPCs with skills to plan, implement, and monitor initiatives.
3. Linkages with Schemes – Ensure children and families are connected to relevant schemes and benefits to address their needs comprehensively.

This focused approach will require time but will create sustainable, systemic improvements in child welfare.

### **Can you share best practice examples from panchayats in your regions that others can replicate?**

ARUNA (Association for Rural Uplift & National Allegiance), with support from Catholic Relief Services (CRS), has been implementing the Changing The Way We Care (CTWWC) project on alternative care models in Odisha. The aim is to develop successful models that enhance children's well-being by promoting long-term family or family-like care and protection.

ARUNA works with District Child Protection Units (DCPUs) in 10 districts, guided by the Department of Women and Child Development (DWCD), Government of Odisha, and UNICEF. Under the Localization of Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) (Theme 3: Child-Friendly Village) and Mission Vatsalya, the CTWWC initiative has successfully engaged Gram Panchayats on child protection issues, securing the allocation of 5% untied funding in approximately 200 Gram Panchayats.

For more details, please contact Mr. Lokanath Misra at [arunaorissa@gmail.com](mailto:arunaorissa@gmail.com).

Additionally, several good practices, on child-friendly local governance have been documented in the resource *Child-Friendly Good Practices in India*, which is recommended for reference ([irdpr.org.in/nird\\_docs/manuals/Child-Friendly-Local-Governance280621.pdf](http://irdpr.org.in/nird_docs/manuals/Child-Friendly-Local-Governance280621.pdf)).

### Promising practices/models to replicate:

- (a) Gram Panchayat (GP) "Child Index" dashboard with red-flag home visits
- (b) GP Helpdesk for documentation (Aadhaar, birth certificate, disability ID)
- (c) Convergence day
- (d) Parenting circles via Angandwadis (AWW) /Self-Help Groups (SHGs)
- (e) Community foster care//kinship care supporting screening & monitoring.

Kindly refer to the Guidebook for Panchayat Child Welfare & Protection Committee

- <https://iacn.in/wp-content/uploads/2025/07/Guidebook-PLCPP-ARUNA.pdf>
- [Mahila Sabha & Bal Sabha Best Practices](#)

# Integration of child protection issues in GPDP & Local Mechanisms

## How can Family Strengthening (FS) and Family-Based Alternative Care (F-BAC) be included in the GPDPs?

- State & District Convergence – Coordinate Women and Child Development & PRI departments; issue District Magistrate orders for 5% untied grant.
  - Capacity & Structures – Strengthen and train Panchayati Level Child Welfare & Protection Committee, conduct Child Vulnerability Assessments, and strengthen Bal Sabha.
  - Planning & Integration – Develop Panchayat Child Protection Plans with FS & F-BAC actions; integrate into GPDP with tagged budget lines.
  - Implementation & Monitoring – Use the 5% grant, monitor via the PAI dashboard, and review through social audits.
  - Scale & Share – Document best practices and share with partners for wider adoption.
1. Please refer to the [letter](#) issued by the Ministry of Women and Child Development to Chief Secretaries dated September 21, 2023, to assign the functions of child welfare and protection to existing committees of PRIs and Urban Local Bodies/Gram Panchayat, which deal with issues of social justice and welfare of women and children.
  2. Please refer to the [Letter](#) to Chief Secretaries by all Key Ministries on Theme 3: Child-Friendly Village.

## What child protection activities can be integrated into GPDPs?

### Suggestive Activities - Child, Family and Community

#### Community Strengthening

- Sensitization programs for stakeholders at the Panchayat and Village levels on prevention of local child protection issues, such as child marriage, child labour, child trafficking, and protection of children from sexual abuse.
- Public/community awareness programs on child protection issues like child marriage, child labour, child trafficking, and child sexual abuse through IEC materials (e.g., banners, hoardings, wall paintings).
- Training and strengthening Village Child Welfare and Protection Committees (VCWPC).
- Training and strengthening the Panchayat Child Welfare and Protection Committee.
- Organise 'Bal Sabha/Sishu Sabha' and facilitate participation of children at risk/vulnerable situations.

- Conducting vulnerability mapping/survey – to identify children in need of special care and protection and prepare intervention plans.
- Organise meeting/interface among children from vulnerable communities and child protection stakeholders and service providers - for linkage, convergence and referrals.
- Support the establishment and functioning of child-friendly spaces, community tutorials, etc., to facilitate children in remote villages in improving their education, life skills, and participation.

### Family Strengthening

- Identification of vulnerable/at-risk families and linkage with existing schemes and services.
- Provide short-term and critical cash, material, and counselling support to parents/caregivers in distress.
- Support poor parents/caregivers to increase their household income
- Organize meetings, awareness, and sensitization programs on child protection schemes and services, child protection risks, and positive parenting.
- Support Block and District level child protection systems and stakeholders in the identification of vulnerable families and children.
- Monitor and follow up with families and children receiving financial assistance, sponsorship, or any form of critical protection assistance.

### Support for Vulnerable Children

- Identification of vulnerable children/children in need of care and protection, including orphans, abandoned, surrendered, disabled, infected/affected with HIV, single-parent families, parents unable to care due to illness/imprisonment/migration/poverty, disaster-affected, school dropouts, child labourers, children at risk of child marriage, and others.
- Link vulnerable children with existing child protection services—such as Sponsorship, Foster care, Ashirwad, PM Cares, Green Passage, etc.
- Provide need-based financial, material, and counselling support for dropout children to continue education.
- Sponsorship/financial support for children in need of special care and protection, including orphaned, disabled, infected/affected with HIV, abandoned, surrendered, school dropouts, child labourers, children at risk of child marriage, institutionalized children, and others, for their survival, development, and social reintegration.
- Educational assistance/training support to students belonging to weaker sections of society.
- Career counselling for 10th pass children for technical education and skill development training.
- Provide need-based financial, material, and counselling support for rescued labour/trafficking children for their rehabilitation and social reintegration.
- Provide need-based aftercare support for children and young adults with care experience for their social reintegration.

Reference: Changing the Way We Care/CRS

## **How can we prioritise the child-friendly theme in the E-Gram Swaraj portal? How many Gram Panchayats in Balangir have done this, and what are the benefits?**

Step 1: The Gram Panchayat Standing Committee identifies and prioritizes child welfare and protection activities, integrating them into the Annual GPDP.

Step 2: These activities are uploaded on the e-GramSwaraj Portal under Theme–3: Child-Friendly Gram Panchayat.

In Balangir district, 200 Gram Panchayats uploaded activities focused on preventing child labour, preventing child marriage, and career counselling for children. The Women & Child Development, Health, and Education Departments coordinate to ensure implementation, leveraging resources from various schemes. (Note: Activities were implemented only for this year.)

## **Please explain the mechanism for forming Bal Sabha.**

To activate a Bal Sabha, a structured platform must be created for children to voice opinions, discuss issues, and contribute to their community—often through regular meetings in schools or villages. This enables them to plan activities, address concerns, and showcase talents. For more details: refer to <https://gdpd.nic.in/downloadNew.html>

Additional [resource](#).

## **Please share a sample plan for GPDP**

Please refer to: [Book for the theme-based GPDP Preparation Process Document](#).

## Models, Evidence & Best Practices

### **What different models of family strengthening are being implemented across regions, and what lessons can be drawn from them?**

Miracle Foundation India's family strengthening model is a systemic, community-driven approach that ensures children grow up in safe and nurturing families. Anchored in the five Well-Being Domains, the model combines family vulnerability assessments, individualized planning and interventions, and case management with strong community gatekeeping and workforce capacity building. By converging with government systems across WCD, Education, Health, and local self-governance, the model prevents unnecessary separation, enables safe reintegration, supports kinship and foster care when required, and uses digital tools like the Thrive Well App to monitor progress. The goal is to build a sustainable ecosystem where families are strengthened and family-based care is the norm.

At the first National Family Summit, states and Civil Society Organizations (CSOs) presented diverse models of family strengthening. The FiT (Families Together) Project by Udayan Care addresses systemic challenges in family-based care post-COVID-19 and creates a supportive environment for vulnerable families. Recently, India Alternative Care Network (IACN) and CIWWC, implemented by CRS, have developed a Family Strengthening Framework and Guidance aligned with the National Policy for Children, the Juvenile Justice (Care and Protection of Children) Act, 2015 (JJ.Act), and Mission Vatsalya, which might be helpful. This framework outlines structured approaches for identifying, prioritizing, and intervening with vulnerable families, strengthening collaboration with local governance, and linking families to schemes and services—ensuring institutionalization remains a last resort.

#### **Lessons from Family Strengthening Models:**

1. Prevention is key – Early identification of family vulnerabilities and timely support prevents separation more effectively than reactive reintegration.
2. Holistic support works best – Addressing education, health, livelihoods, and social protection together is more sustainable than sector-specific interventions.
3. Children's voices matter – Active participation of children in planning and decision-making ensures solutions are relevant, respectful, and uphold their rights.
4. Safety is paramount – Any FS intervention must place the child's safety and well-being at the centre, ensuring that reintegration or family care does not compromise protection.
5. Building resilience in families – Strengthening coping mechanisms, economic stability, and social support networks enables families to withstand crises without separation.
6. Community and governance convergence – Gatekeeping by local governance bodies and convergence with government schemes ensures scale and sustainability.
7. Case management is non-negotiable – Individualised family plans and consistent follow-up create accountability and measurable progress.

8. Institutionalisation as a last resort – All models reaffirm that children thrive best in families; institutions should only be temporary and a last-resort option.
9. Digital tools strengthen monitoring – Technology like the Thrive Well App helps track well-being and improve decision-making at scale.
10. Capacity building sustains the system – Strengthening the child protection workforce and community volunteers ensures continuity beyond project cycles.

Kindly refer to the following links:

- <https://miraclefoundationindia.in/regular-progress-monitoring-of-the-families-by-the-volunteers-and-cpcs/>
- [https://miraclefoundationindia.in/wp-content/uploads/2025/06/National-Summit-Report\\_2nd-April.pdf](https://miraclefoundationindia.in/wp-content/uploads/2025/06/National-Summit-Report_2nd-April.pdf)
- <https://miraclefoundationindia.in/enabling-families-to-stop-preventable-child-separation/>
- <https://udayancare.org/child-and-youth-care/family-strengthening-program>
- [https://iacn.in/wp-content/uploads/2025/08/IACN-Report\\_Final.pdf](https://iacn.in/wp-content/uploads/2025/08/IACN-Report_Final.pdf)
- <https://leher.org/>

## How do we prove prevention works at the 'last mile' beyond simply counting interventions?

Prevention is best demonstrated through outcomes rather than only activity counts. This means tracking whether families remain intact, children are safe, and vulnerabilities are reduced over time. Proof comes from:

1. Child and family well-being outcomes – improvements across health, education, safety, emotional well-being, and economic stability.
2. Sustained family care – number of children prevented from entering institutions and successfully reintegrated, with evidence that they continue to thrive at home.
3. Voices of children and families – participatory assessments capturing their own experience of safety, dignity, and support.
4. Resilience indicators – families' ability to cope with shocks (illness, loss of income, migration, disasters) without resorting to separation.
5. Systemic convergence – extent to which families are linked to and continue to access government schemes, local governance support, and community networks.
6. Longitudinal tracking – digital tools like the Thrive Well app enable ongoing monitoring beyond the project cycle, showing prevention impact at the last mile.

## What is the current research discourse in Family Strengthening?

The research discourse on family strengthening has shifted from viewing it as a set of welfare services to recognizing it as a systemic, rights-based, and prevention-focused strategy. Globally and in India, current debates and evidence emphasize:



1. From Institutional Care to Family-Based Care – strong consensus that institutionalization should be the last resort, with policy, practice, and research aligned towards prevention and reintegration.
2. Holistic well-being Frameworks – not only material support but also child safety, participation, emotional bonds, and nurturing caregiving are seen as essential outcomes.
3. Gatekeeping and Prevention – increasing focus on strengthening local governance systems and community-led gatekeeping to prevent unnecessary separation.
4. Child Participation – research underscores the value of children's voices in designing, monitoring, and evaluating FS programs.
5. Resilience and Sustainability – studies highlight the importance of building resilience in families so they can withstand economic, social, or health shocks without child separation.
6. Cross-sectoral Convergence – the discourse is moving towards integrating child protection with education, health, social protection, and livelihood programs.
7. Measurement and Evidence – researchers are exploring indicators beyond service delivery, focusing on outcomes such as reduced institutionalization, family stability, and child well-being over time. Digital tools and longitudinal tracking are seen as game changers.
8. Contextual Models – there is growing recognition that FS models must be adapted to cultural, socio-economic, and policy contexts, rather than adopting a one-size-fits-all approach.

In short, research is converging on family strengthening as the cornerstone of child protection and care reform, with safety, participation, and resilience of children and families at the center.

### Current Research Discourse in Family Strengthening

- <https://iacn.in/wp-content/uploads/2024/10/Recruiting-Foster-Families-Nina-P-Nayak-30-July.pdf>
- <https://miraclefoundationindia.in/wp-content/uploads/2025/01/Ambivalent-Purview-of-Kinship-Care-Insights-from-Stakeholders.pdf>
- [https://miraclefoundationindia.in/wp-content/uploads/2023/12/children\\_first\\_journal\\_fourth\\_issue\\_dcpcr-31-40\\_.pdf](https://miraclefoundationindia.in/wp-content/uploads/2023/12/children_first_journal_fourth_issue_dcpcr-31-40_.pdf)
- <https://journals.sagepub.com/home/ICB>
- <https://udayancare.org/research-and-publication/research-studies-and-papers>
- <https://leher.org/campaigns/large-campaigns/stories-from-the-field/reports/together-children-communitys-journey/>
- <https://iacn.in/images/resources/f4b715ae1eae1e2134555e1677ab9150.pdf>
- <https://www.fighttrafficking.org/anita-and-abhisheks-journey-of-resilience-and-building-a-home-an-emphasis-on-family-strengthening-efforts-community-based-child-care-services-and-consistent-follow-ups/>
- <https://www.changingthewaywecare.org/resources/>
- <https://bettercarenetwork.org/library/strengthening-family-care>

## Reaching Marginalised Communities

### How can we ensure FS programs reach rural and tribal areas beyond urban coverage?

Family Strengthening programs can reach rural and tribal areas by leveraging Local Self-Governance Structures (PRIs), as explained above:

1. Embedding FS within Gram Panchayat Development Plans.
2. Child-Friendly Village (Bal Mitra Gram) Approaches.
3. Activating Community Child Protection Systems through Child Welfare & Protection Committees as guided by Mission Vatsalya, Bal Suraksha Hub, Bal Panchayat, and Adolescent groups, ensuring last-mile monitoring.
4. Building Local Workforce Capacity: Training frontline workers (Anganwadi workers, Accredited Social Health Activists ((ASHAs), teachers) makes FS sustainable in rural/tribal blocks.
5. Hybrid Monitoring & Accountability: Use tech-enabled apps where possible, but retain community scorecards/child report cards in tribal zones with low connectivity. Track not just services but outcomes: resilience, safety, family stability, and participation.

Family Strengthening in rural/tribal areas succeeds when it is:

1. Localized to SDGs through Panchayat plans,
2. Grounded in Child-Friendly Village principles,
3. Owned by community structures (VCWPC, child groups, PRIs),
4. Driven by child participation.

Organizations like CRS/CTWWC, Miracle Foundation India, Leher, Udayan Care and CINI show scalable pathways to prevent separation at the last mile.

### How can we support children with disabilities living in remote areas with limited resources?

Supporting children with disabilities in remote, low-resource settings requires a holistic, dignity-centered, and inclusion-driven strategy:

- Dignified Family-Centered Care: Promote community-based, family-centered care as robust and dignified alternatives to institutions, even during crises, ensuring that children stay safely within their familiar environments.
- Inclusive Participation & Leadership by Persons with Disabilities: Ensure that children with disabilities and organizations representing persons with disabilities are at the forefront of program design, implementation, and monitoring—both locally and at the policy level.
- Accessible, Diverse Communication Strategies: Use inclusive communication methods—visual aids, assistive technology, local sign language, easy-read materials—to ensure every child is heard and engaged.

- Gender-Responsive Support: Tailor interventions to address the specific barriers faced by girls with disabilities, including safety, education, healthcare, and social stigma.
- Frontline Integration & Mapping Initiatives: Engage frontline workers—such as Anganwadi workers tasked with mapping persons with disabilities—to identify children early, ensure timely service referral, and monitor inclusion even in remote areas.
- Holistic Family & Community Support: Strengthen families holistically through peer networks, respite services, linkages to social protection, and accessible infrastructure promoted through local governance (e.g., Panchayats and Child-Friendly Villages).

**At the heart of effective support are:**

- Family-based care rooted in dignity, not institutionalization.
- Leadership and voice of people with disabilities.
- Communication that adapts to diverse needs.
- Gender and context-sensitive solutions for equity.
- Child-related laws must be harmonized with disability rights laws.

**Kindly refer to the following links:**

1. ["Recognizing that Children with Disabilities are Children First" A Study on the Situation of Care and Protection of Children with Disabilities in India](#)
2. [Report on Supreme Court Consultation 2024](#)

## Systems & Policy Integration

### **Please share government and private schemes available for FBAC?**

Mission Vatsalya is a centrally sponsored scheme in India focused on the well-being and protection of children, especially those in difficult circumstances. It supports preventive and rehabilitative interventions such as sponsorship, foster care, and aftercare, promoting family strengthening and family-based alternative care. Alongside, the Government runs several social protection schemes benefiting families and children, while states implement their own initiatives like Palanhaar and Bal Sangopan. Additionally, numerous NGOs and CSR initiatives (e.g., Azim Premji Foundation) contribute to education, livelihoods, and healthcare, complementing government efforts.

#### **Additional resources:**

- [https://mohfw.gov.in/sites/default/files/ComprehensiveReport%20Part%202-83145794\\_1.pdf](https://mohfw.gov.in/sites/default/files/ComprehensiveReport%20Part%202-83145794_1.pdf)
- <https://pmcaresforchildren.in/>
- [https://missionvatsalya.wcd.gov.in/public/pdf/children-related-law/scheme\\_care\\_support\\_victim.pdf](https://missionvatsalya.wcd.gov.in/public/pdf/children-related-law/scheme_care_support_victim.pdf)

### **How can agencies and NGOs work together to prevent child separation and support vulnerable families?**

Agencies and NGOs play complementary roles, and collaboration is essential to prevent child separation and support vulnerable families. No single actor can achieve this alone—coordinated action creates stronger safety nets, ensuring every child grows up in a safe and nurturing family. Key approaches include:

**Community Awareness & Advocacy:** Conduct joint campaigns on positive parenting, child rights, and available services; advocate collectively to strengthen social protection schemes and reduce reliance on institutional care.

**Early Identification & Gatekeeping:** Develop clear referral pathways so frontline workers (AWWs, ASHAs, teachers) and volunteers can link at-risk families to timely support. Strengthen collaboration among CWCs, DCPUs, and CWPCs to provide help before separation occurs.

**Monitoring & Follow-Up:** Establish joint review mechanisms (e.g., quarterly case reviews involving NGOs, CWPCs, Child Care Institutions (CCIs), and DCPUs) to track reintegrated children and ensure ongoing family stability.

**Capacity Building & Cross-Training:** Organize joint training for social workers, para-professionals, CWPCs, and volunteers on child protection laws, schemes (Mission Vatsalya, ICDS), and family-based care practices.

**Family Strengthening Programs:** Pool resources to deliver financial, psychosocial, and educational support. Coordinate referrals across sectors (health, nutrition, livelihood, legal aid) to avoid duplication and ensure holistic support.

### Additional Resources

- [Virtual Case Management Monitoring, Guidance and Tracker](#)
- [A workshop methodology for children, young people and adults](#)
- [Singing to the Lions: A facilitator's guide to overcoming fear and violence in our lives](#)

### Can CWCs direct organisations to provide family strengthening and alternative care support to families?

Yes. Under the JJ Act, 2015, CWCs are the competent authority to make decisions in the best interest of children in need of care and protection. This includes:

1. **Directing Support for Family Strengthening:** CWCs can recommend and direct DCPUs, NGOs, and CCIs to extend support to vulnerable families. This may include linking families with government schemes, providing counselling, facilitating access to health/education services, or recommending sponsorship assistance under Mission Vatsalya.
2. **Promoting Alternative Care:** Where children cannot remain safely with their biological families, CWCs can order placement in family-based alternative care options such as foster care, kinship care, or sponsorship. CWCs may also direct NGOs or registered agencies to provide follow-up, monitoring, and support to the child and family under section 37 of JJ Act.
3. **Collaboration with Organisations:** CWCs rely on a network of civil society organisations, trained social workers, and government bodies. NGOs can be asked to prepare Social Investigation Reports (SIRs), conduct home visits, provide aftercare, and deliver capacity-building support to caregivers.

## Case Management & Child-Centred Interventions

### What tools can be used to identify and map vulnerable families?

Identifying and mapping vulnerable families is the first step to preventing child separation and ensuring children grow up safely in families. This requires community-level identification, use of structured tools, and consistent follow-up. The Mission Vatsalya (MV) Guidelines 2022 mandate that Panchayats, urban local bodies, and DCPUs conduct vulnerability mapping at the village or ward level. DCPUs are also expected to carry out baseline surveys of children in difficult circumstances to build a district database. Further, the MV portal integrates Management Information Systems (MIS) to record and monitor vulnerable children (orphans, abandoned, trafficked, etc.) across districts.

#### Tools That Can Be Used:

- Miracle Foundation India's Vulnerability Mapping Tool helps frontline workers and communities systematically identify households vulnerable to separation.
- Miracle Foundation Thrive Scale™ which assesses families across domains (*Family & Social Relationships, Living condition, household Economy, Education, Health & Mental Health*) and helps identifying vulnerable families.
- Community Vulnerability Registers maintained by VCPCs or Panchayats.
- [Vulnerabilities assessment of children and families - Madhya Pradesh](#)
- [Guidebook for Panchayat Child Welfare & Protection Committee](#)

### What interventions are needed at the community level to improve child protection service design?

Strong child protection systems start in the community, where risks can be identified early and families can be supported before a crisis. Community-level interventions should combine prevention, early identification, service linkage, and child participation. When local committees, frontline workers, families, and children themselves are actively engaged, child protection services become stronger, more relevant, and sustainable. Needed interventions include:

- Awareness campaigns on child rights, positive parenting, early marriage, trafficking, and child labour. Using local platforms like schools, Bal Panchayats, SHGs, and Gram Sabhas to spread awareness.
- Activating and training Child Welfare & Protection Committees (CWPCs), School Management Committees (SMCs). Ensuring they meet regularly, record cases, and connect with DCPU/CWC.
- Training frontline workers (AWWs, ASHAs, teachers) to identify families at risk of neglect, abuse, or separation. Establishing clear referral pathways so families are supported early.
- Helping families access government schemes (ration, pensions, scholarships, health insurance, sponsorship, foster care) and also providing emergency support through community networks when required
- Involving children through Bal Panchayats, adolescent groups, and peer clubs. Encouraging them to raise issues, propose solutions, and monitor progress.

- Integrating child protection in GPDP. Encouraging health, education, Integrated Child Development Services, police, and NGOs to plan together and share data.

## **What should be done in disrupted F-BAC cases?**

Effective case management is essential to prevent placement breakdowns and ensure that families and children are adequately prepared before and after reintegration. In cases where F-BAC disrupts, immediate coordinated, and child-centered action is crucial.

1. Ensure safety first - If the child is unsafe, move them immediately to a temporary safe place (relative, foster family, or CCI as a last resort).
2. Inform the CWC - Every disrupted case must be reported to the CWC, which decides the next step in the child's best interest.
3. Review what went wrong - Social workers/DCPU should find out why the placement failed (e.g., poverty, illness, abuse, family conflict) and update the case file.
4. Support the family if possible - If the issue can be fixed (e.g., by linking to schemes, counselling, or community support), the child may return.
5. Find another option if needed - If the family cannot continue, look at other family-based care (kinship, foster, sponsorship). Use a CCI only as a temporary last resort.
6. Listen to the child - The child's opinion and feelings must be heard before deciding the next placement.
7. Stronger follow-up - After re-placement, monitoring should be more frequent to avoid another breakdown.

## **How does a bonding develop between a child and family after a stay in a CCI?**

In compliance with Section 98 of the Juvenile Justice (Care and Protection of Children) Act, 2015, efforts should be made to create a bond between the child and his/her family while the child is in a CCI. Children should be allowed to take leave of absence from the institution on special occasions to maintain and strengthen family connections. Such measures are vital to support the child's emotional well-being and smooth reintegration into the family environment.

**Rebuilding Takes Time and Care:** Children leaving institutional care don't instantly bond with caregivers at home. Institutions typically offer structured routines with limited one-on-one attention, making the transition to a family environment both confusing and emotionally complex.

**Attachment Theory Insights:** Research in developmental psychology reveals that children who formed insecure or disorganized attachment patterns in institutional settings require sensitive and consistent care to develop trusting relationships. Notably, sensitive, responsive caregiving over a sustained period can foster secure attachment even for previously institutionalized children.



**Gradual Reintegration and Preparation** : Preparing both the child and the family for reintegration is vital. Strategies like pre-reunification home visits, counseling, and short trial stays help ease the adjustment. Bonding deepens through shared routines, open conversations, simple acts of affection, and celebrating small milestones together.

**Emotional Challenges and Professional Support:** Children may exhibit anger, fear, withdrawal—or even emotional detachment—while families often feel unprepared for these reactions. Without appropriate support, emotional ruptures may undermine reintegration success. Social workers and NGOs play a pivotal role in guiding both children and caregivers through these behavioral adjustments.

### **How can we support children who lack proper documentation?**

Many children in CCI or vulnerable families do not have essential documents like birth certificates, Aadhaar, school records, or health cards. Without these, they miss out on education, health care, and government schemes. Supporting such children involves both immediate help and long-term solutions.

#### **Facilitate Access to Documents**

- Birth Certificate: Work with local municipal offices or Panchayat to register delayed births.
- Aadhaar Card: Enroll children through Aadhaar Kendras or mobile enrollment drives.
- School Records: Coordinate with schools to re-issue certificates or transfer records.
- Health Records: Link children with local ASHAs/AWWs for health cards or vaccination updates.

#### **Use Legal and Administrative Support**

- Approach the CWC for certification or official letters when families lack proof.
- Seek help from the DCPU to speed up documentation processes.
- Use Mission Vatsalya provisions that emphasize supporting children in accessing entitlements.

#### **Leverage NGO & Community Networks**

- NGOs can guide families through bureaucratic processes and sometimes cover nominal costs for applications.
- Community leaders (Mukhiya, Ward Members) can endorse families' applications, adding credibility.



## Care Standards & Safeguarding

### **Why is proper care and facilities often not provided in CCIs for children with no alternative care options?**

Although CCIs are intended to provide temporary care under the The Juvenile Justice (Care and Protection of Children) Act, 2015, many fail to meet children's needs due to systemic gaps:

**Over-reliance on CCIs:** Children are often placed in institutions even when family-based options (kinship care, foster care, sponsorship) could be explored, leading to overcrowding.

**Insufficient resources and staff:** Many CCIs operate with limited funding and lack trained professionals like counsellors, social workers, and caregivers.

**Inadequate infrastructure:** Poor living conditions, lack of nutritious food, and minimal support for children with disabilities are common.

**Weak monitoring and accountability:** Inspections are irregular and often focus on paperwork rather than children's well-being.

**Lack of child participation:** Children's voices are rarely included in their own care planning, resulting in unmet needs.

**What's needed:** Strengthening families to prevent unnecessary institutionalisation, developing foster and kinship care options, and enforcing robust monitoring to ensure every child grows up safe, nurtured, and in a family environment.

### **Do foster parents or caregivers truly ensure safeguarding of children? What monitoring mechanisms are in place?**

Under Mission Vatsalya and the 2024 Foster Care Guidelines, structured safeguards and monitoring mechanisms are designed to uphold children's safety and well-being within foster care.

#### **Key Safeguarding Measures**

##### **1. Careful Selection & Preparation**

- DCPUs conduct thorough screening including application reviews, interviews, reference checks, socio-economic assessments, and home studies. They ensure foster families are mentally prepared and understand care responsibilities.
- While the 2024 Model Guidelines highlight the importance of preparing prospective foster parents, they note the need for more formal pre-placement training.

## 2. Matching & Introduction Process

- Children are matched with families based on compatibility. Introductory meetings are held to ensure the child's comfort and willingness to stay.

## 3. Approval and Oversight

- Foster care placements and sponsorships are approved by the Sponsorship and Foster Care Approval Committee (SFCAC), which is chaired by the District Magistrate and includes key stakeholders.
- DCPUs oversee case management, ensuring child well-being through regular monitoring.

## 4. Ongoing Monitoring & Review

Foster families receive quarterly home and school visits by DCPU social workers to assess child welfare and family functioning. Irregular school attendance (over 30 days) leads to immediate review.

The 2024 Model Guidelines also mandate monthly CWC inspections, though they emphasize the need for more comprehensive post-placement support.

[https://idronline.org/article/social-justice/how-can-indias-new-foster-care-guidelines-serve-children-better/?utm\\_source=chatgpt.com](https://idronline.org/article/social-justice/how-can-indias-new-foster-care-guidelines-serve-children-better/?utm_source=chatgpt.com)

## What level of engagement from state or CSOs is needed for successful reintegration?

Reintegration of children from CCIs into families or family-based care requires strong political will, clear policies, and active gatekeeping mechanisms. It is not a one-time event but a long-term process supported by both state systems and CSOs/NGOs.

**Political will and policy framework:** States must prioritize family-based care in their child protection agenda, implement Mission Vatsalya, and enforce policies and guidelines on reintegration and gatekeeping. Strong legal backing ensures accountability and adequate funding.

**Role of the state:** Provide leadership, schemes, social protection, legal oversight, and ensure that gatekeeping processes prevent unnecessary institutionalisation.

**Role of civil society:** Prepare families and children for reintegration through counselling, case management, livelihood linkages, and community sensitization.

**Shared responsibility:** Planning and preparation must be collaborative, involving CWCs, DCPUs, and NGOs, with a strong focus on the best interest of the child.

**Sustained follow-up:** Engagement for at least 12–24 months post-reintegration is essential to monitor progress, address challenges early, and prevent re-separation.

Only when the state, backed by policy and political commitment, and civil society work hand-in-hand can reintegration be safe, sustainable, and truly transformative for children

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