

## Caseload/Workload

- Child Welfare Information Gateway (2010). Caseload and workload management. *State Managers Series - Issue Brief*, April 2010.
- Children's Research Center (2009). Agency workforce estimation: Simple steps for improving child safety and permanency. *FOCUS: News from the Children's Research Center*, April 2009.
- Social Work Policy Institute (2010). High caseloads: How do they impact delivery of health and human services? *Research to Practice Brief*, January.

### WHAT ARE THESE RESOURCES?

These three research briefs provide information summarizing recent studies and reports that underscore the importance of manageable caseloads and workloads for child welfare professionals.

### WHAT ARE THE CRITICAL FINDINGS?

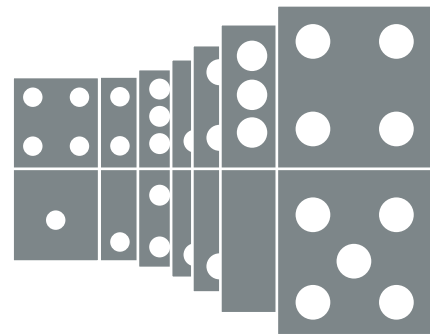
High caseloads and workloads negatively impact a number of important child welfare indicators, including:

- Worker retention;
- Timeliness, continuity and quality of service delivery;
- Family engagement and relationship-building; and
- Safety and permanency outcomes for vulnerable children, youth, and families.

High caseloads and workloads can have a domino effect, taking a toll on children, youth, families, communities, child welfare systems, and state/county/tribal budgets.

#### HIGH CASELOADS AND WORKLOADS:

- Staff burnout / turnover
- Decreased worker-family contact
- Failure to meet professional standards for:
  - Investigation response & completion
  - Case plan completion
  - Case plan updates
  - Service provision
- Increased time to permanency
- Increased rates of maltreatment recurrence
- Increased number of foster care placements



HIGHER COSTS FOR STATES, COUNTIES, TRIBES, CHILD WELFARE SYSTEMS, & COMMUNITIES

### WHAT ARE THE IMPLICATIONS FOR OUR WORK?

Caseworkers must have manageable caseloads and workloads in order to effectively engage vulnerable children, youth and families, meet professional standards, and implement evidence-informed services. As agencies increasingly focus on addressing issues of practice quality, they must, along with their partnering state, county, and tribal governments, also attend to issues of quantity and capacity. These findings make clear that child welfare agencies should take steps to **accurately estimate how much caseworker time and how many caseworker positions are required to meet the best practice standards** they adopt for the children, youth, and families they serve.