

Matthew C. Claps
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Career Summary:

Experienced senior leader and consultant for youth and family services with a proven history of advancing client outcomes working in philanthropic, government, not-for-profit and private consulting organizations. Background includes working across human services systems: child welfare, developmental disabilities, and behavioral health. Demonstrated success at designing and implementing effective programs and bringing them to scale. Skilled facilitator, collaborator, and consensus builder. An engaging communicator and presenter. Able to effectively navigate complex environments. Critical thinker with experiences in policy analysis & program evaluation and expertise in organizational development, implementation science, change management, adult learning, and continuous quality improvement.

Employment History:

Principal Consultant / Independent Consulting, Bainbridge Island, WA / Tallahassee, FL

Matthew Claps Consulting, LLC

January 2006 – present (note: my LLC was formed in January 2025, although I've done free-lance consulting throughout my career)

Providing consulting services focusing on the implementation of best practices, policies and other program infrastructure in child welfare and behavioral health settings to advance the quality of practice to improve youth, family and community outcomes.

- Developed, implemented, and evaluated training curriculums and professional development initiatives.
- Policy and data analysis and strategic workplan development to advance system improvement efforts.
- Coaching senior leadership on organizational culture and implementation efforts.
- Stakeholder engagement, meeting planning and facilitation.
- Conducted site reviews: Led, or was a member of, external program evaluation teams, including development of evaluation methods and both quantitative and qualitative data collection instruments. Nationally recognized expert and one of the early contributors in developing the Quality Services Review (QSR).
- Provide implementation, continuous quality improvement (CQI) and data analysis coaching.
- Presentations to key stakeholders, diverse audiences, and author of summary reports.
- Provide expert witness services offering objective, evidence-based testimony in matters involving child welfare policy, practice, and systems performance for litigation-driven reform, individual case defense, and plaintiffs seeking damages.

Affiliations include: Child Welfare Policy and Practice Group – Affiliated Consultant, New Mexico State University's Center of Innovation - Contractor, University of Connecticut School of Social Work's Innovations Institute – CQI Subject Matter Expert, Adaptive Together – Affiliated Consultant, Public Knowledge – Affiliated Consultant.

Principal Technical Assistance Consultant, American Institutes for Research (AIR). *August 2023 – January 2025.*

A Principal Technical Assistance Consultant in the Youth, Family and Community Development program in the Human Services Division at American Institutes for Research (AIR). Child welfare subject matter expert for the organization. Lead for child welfare business development.

- Serve as subject matter expert (SME) in child welfare systems, offering insights into state and national policies and best practices. Served as lead SME for pursuit of a large (~ \$100 million), federal technical assistance (TA) contract for child welfare systems improvement.
- Deliver TA to drive implementation of evidence-based programs and practices to enhance family well-being through the use of continuous quality improvement and change management methodologies.
- Lead business development efforts. Secure new contracts, including over \$1 million in new awards during 2024. Craft project strategies and ensuring alignment with client goals. Co-author proposals.

- Develop, monitor, and improve organizational process initiatives, focusing on long-term program sustainability and achievement of equitable outcomes.

Senior Director of Practice, Child and Family Services (CFS), Casey Family Programs. Seattle, WA.

August 2011 – March 2023

Responsible for all program infrastructure for the direction and oversight of CFS's 180+ staff who deliver child welfare services to a diverse population of 1,200+ youth and families annually in five states (WA, CA, ID, TX, AZ). Directly supervised a team of four professional staff.

- Planned, developed and implemented strategic initiatives to meet organizational objectives via CFS's Practice Model and all related policies, practice tools, including functional assessment(s), and procedures.
- Provided strategic consulting and technical assistance to state, county, tribes, and private provider child welfare agencies in support of agency initiatives.
- Co-led five-year strategic planning processes (2019-2024 plan). Identified key steps and measures.
- Strategic leader for CFS's Continuous Quality Improvement (CQI) framework including all related data & analytic reporting infrastructure. Responsible for measurement and evaluation of programs' effectiveness.
- Co-lead for building CFS's electronic health record system: Exponent Case Management (ECM). Lead for ECM's initial installation in 2013, and later system-wide upgrades (2015 & 2020). Lead for system implementation and change management.
- Ensured all staff have the needed knowledge and skills by implementing clinical training and professional development strategies. Led the quick pivot to remote and hybrid-training during COVID-19.
- Ensured compliance with organization's policies. Led three successful Council on Accreditation reviews.
- Co-lead for advancing equity-initiatives and for trauma-informed care across the organization.
- Managed CFS's special projects budget (\$3.6 million) and multiple provider contracts for deliverables.
- Developed and maintained effective relationships with internal and external stakeholders.

Chief of Policy and Training, Office of Child Welfare, Department of Children and Families. Tallahassee, FL.

April 2008-July 2011

Leadership, strategic direction and implementation of all child welfare policies, procedures, and statewide training system to improve child welfare practice and outcomes across Florida. Supervised a team of ten staff.

- Provided leadership for all child welfare laws/statutes, administrative rules, operating procedures, and policies. This required significant collaboration with the Executive Office of the Governor, Florida Legislature, the provider agency community, and constituent advocates.
- Completed analysis and reports for state and federal partners, such as annual progress reports.
- Restructured statewide training system for pre-services training and certification of all child welfare staff (approximately 1,000 newly hired staff / year). Directed staff development programs. Managed the Family Safety Program's central office training budget (\$16+ million).
- Redeveloped agency Child Welfare Leadership Program, doubling enrollment while cutting costs by 50%.
- Represented the agency in different statewide taskforces and workgroups. Chairperson of Florida's Center for the Advancement of Child Welfare Practice (2008-2011).

Area Offices Liaison, Agency for Persons with Disabilities. Tallahassee, FL.

January 2006 – April 2008

As a member of the agency's executive management team, resolved management and programmatic issues relating to statewide agency initiatives, residential programs, and community operations. Supervised two professional staff.

- Through liaison role, co-leadership of the agency's 14 area offices located across Florida with over 500 staff serving 25,000 clients annually.
- Lead for all children's services. This required significant collaboration with stakeholders and advocates from child welfare, behavioral health, and special education systems.
- Implemented program auditing, evaluation, and continuous quality improvement strategies to create feedback loops to

improve programs. Led site reviews.

- Directed agency strategic and long-range program planning.

Senior Associate, Human Systems and Outcomes, Inc., Tallahassee, FL

June 2001- January 2006

Provided management consulting to state, county and community-based child welfare, behavioral health, developmental disability, and special education agencies in multiple states (FL, AL, HI, IA, DC, DE, GA, MA, TN, NJ, ME, MS, NY) to improve programs and client outcomes. Developed continuous quality improvement and evaluation processes.

- Analyzed federal, state, and local policies to support effective agency programs.
- Designed and implemented agency-wide continuous quality improvement and program evaluation methods. Authored and trained Quality Services Review (QSR) protocols and processes.
- Developed and facilitated statewide training workshops, instructional seminars, conference presentations.
- Managed the completion of deliverables across multiple simultaneously occurring projects.
- Developed responses to Requests for Proposals (RFPs) and grant applications. Recruited and supervised project teams.
- Lead Program Analyst for the Federal Court Monitor for both the R.C. Consent Decree for Alabama's child welfare system and the Dixon Consent Decree for the District of Columbia's children's and adult behavioral health system. Reported directly to the Federal Monitor with periodic updates to the federal court, executive agency staff and the executive office of the governor.

Research Associate, Tidwell and Associates, Tallahassee, FL.

January 2000- June 2001

- Facilitated and coordinated program evaluations in educational and community-based settings. Led focus groups.
- Participated as a member of research team evaluating contracts and grants.
- Analyzed policy and conducted literature reviews.

Project Manager, Graduate Instructor and Teaching Assistant, Florida State University School of Social Work, Tallahassee, FL.

August 1998- June 2001

- Responsible for managing a \$460,000 federally funded training curriculum for the Administration of Children, Youth and Families focusing on the integration of children's behavioral health practices into child welfare settings.
- Recruited, hired, trained and supervised staff.
- Completed written reports and presented findings to agency management and at professional conferences.
- Developed course curriculum and was either the Instructor, or a Teaching Assistant, for bachelors and masters level courses. Courses included: Social Work Research, Evaluation of Social Work, Theories and Models of Social Work Practice and Child Welfare Practice and Policies.

Counselor II / Day Treatment Counselor / Case Manager, Gateway Community Services, Jacksonville, Florida

August 1996- June 1998

- Provided individual, group and family counseling for adolescents enrolled for services.
- Case management services to a diverse population of adolescents involved with the state juvenile justice system.
- Completed mental health screenings and assessments at agency intake and enrollment.

Internship Experience

2000	Therapist, Wakulla Corrections Institute (State Maximum Security Prison). Wakulla County, Florida
2000	Child Abuse Investigator, Department of Children and Families. Tallahassee, Florida
1999	School Guidance Counselor, Fairview Middle School. Tallahassee, Florida

Education:

Doctoral Studies (ABD), Florida State University. 3-years of post-graduate studies in policy analysis and program evaluation with an emphasis on systems theory in child welfare and behavioral health settings (2000-2002).

Masters of Social Work, Florida State University (2000).

Bachelors of Science, Psychology. Minor in Religion. University of Florida (1996).

Trainings and Certifications:

- Child and Adolescent Needs and Strengths (CANS) – **Certified Trainer**. PRAED Foundation
- Healing Centered Engagement – **Certified Practitioner**. Flourish Agenda
- Collaborative Problem Solving – Completed Tiers 1 & 2 of training and related coaching. Think:Kids
- Personal Approach to Change and Equity (PACE) – Completed Levels 1 & 2 and coaching. VISIONS
- Neurosequential Model of Therapeutics (NMT) – Neurosequential Model Network. Child Trauma Academy.
- Implementation Science, both training and coaching. National Implementation Research Network (NIRN).
- Design Thinking: Foundations and Facilitation of Human Centered Design – IDEO

Community Leadership and Involvement

2020-2023	Member, Exponent Partners Advisory Council
2020-2021	21st Century National Research Agenda in Child Welfare; Workgroup Member
2019-2021	Transformative Collaborative Outcome Management (TCOM) conference planning committee; Annual CANS/FAST conference
2021	Invited peer-reviewer; Global Implementation Science, bi-annual international convening
2018-2022	Global Implementation Science society member
2015-2024	Bainbridge Island Football Club – volunteer for local youth soccer club
2009- 2011	Florida's Trauma Informed Care Taskforce
2008- 2011	Florida's Interagency Coordination of Services Committee (author for aid agreement)
2008- 2011	Chairperson, Florida Center for the Advancement of Child Welfare Practice
2007- 2011	Appointed to the Executive Office of the Governor's Child Abuse Prevention and Permanency Advisory Council; Staff lead: Law Enforcement & Training Sub-Committee

Select Publications:

Ports, K., Rostad, W., Scardaville, M., Troy, A., Harmon, F., Claps, M. (2024). Reimagining Child Welfare: Paradigms that Support a System of Child and Family Well-Being. Child Welfare. Vol. 101, No. 6

Zimmerman, A., Rostad, W., Pecora, P., O'Brien, K., Claps, M. (2020). What We Currently Know: Achieving Permanency and Supporting Transitions to Adulthood. Center for Advanced Studies in Child Welfare. CW360 (Fall 2020), pp. 4-5/ Retrieved from:

<https://casw.umn.edu/portfolio-items/permanency-transitions-to-adulthood-fall-2020-cw360/>

Cabrera, J., Claps, M., O'Brien, K., Roberts, Y., Rostad, W., Shimshock, S., Zimmerman, A. (2020). From Data to Practice: The Impact of Placement with Family on Permanency and Well-Being. Child Welfare. Vol. 97, No. 5

From Data to Practice: Moving Youth to Family – Level of Need and the Impact on Legal and Relational Permanency. (2020). Casey Family Programs. Co-author.

<https://www.casey.org/resources/research-reports/>

From Data to Practice: The Impact of Placement with Family on Permanency and Well-being (2018). Casey Family Programs. Co-author.

<https://www.casey.org/resources/research-reports/>

From Data to Practice: Out-of-Home Care Analysis. Key Findings for Service Delivery. (2017). Casey Family Programs. Co-author.

<https://www.casey.org/resources/research-reports/>

Casey Family Programs Child and Family Services Practice Model (2013 & 2018). Co-author.

[Child and Family Services Practice Model - Casey Family Programs](#)

Florida's Family Centered Practice Model (2010). Florida Department of Children and Families. Co-author.

Cash, S., Sellars, S., Claps, M. (2005) Money Equals Time: Influence of Poverty Status on Hours Spent Doing Housework. Journal on Poverty. Vol. 9

Listing of Recent National and International Conference Presentations

(Note: presenters are listed in alphabetical order)

Claps, M., Gibbons, K. (2025). How Qualitative Case Reviews Build a Culture of Best Practitioners. UConn's Innovations Institute., Washington, D.C.

Ahluwalia, U., Cagle, B., Claps, M., Farar, B. Tappan, C. (2024). Child Welfare Systems Transformation: A discussion with Systems Leaders. American Institutes for Research (held virtually).

Claps, M., Gibbons, K., Racine, F., Russel, T. (2024). Ally or Archnemesis? Dueling Case Review Methods: Compare, Contrast and Collaboration of the CFSR and QSR. Children's Legal Institute Conference. Albuquerque, NM.

Claps, M., Parks, H., Wells, S., Zimmermann, A. (2022). *Family Matters! How a focus on family can expedite permanency and improve well-being – and – how to engage staff through CQI to create a culture of best practitioners.* 5th Annual CQI Statewide Conference for Child Welfare and Probation. UC Davis. Conference held virtually.

Claps, M., Zimmerman, A. (2021). *Using precision analytics with the CANS to advance practice and outcomes.* 17th Annual Transformative Collaborative Outcomes Management (TCOM) Conference, Conference held virtually.

Claps, M., Francis, M., Nord, T., Parks, H., Wells, S. Zimmerman, A. (2021). *Moving Youth to Family: Level of Need and the Impact on Legal and Relational Permanency.* 35th Annual Foster Family Treatment Association (FFTA) Conference. Conference held virtually.

Claps, M., Martinez, M., Miller, S., Zimmerman, A. (2020). *Improving Client Outcomes through Enhancing our Assessment Practices, Tools and Continuous Quality Improvement.* 16th Annual Transformative Collaborative Outcomes Management (TCOM) Conference, Conference held virtually.

Claps, M., Jones, F., Parks, H., Pecora, P., Rostad, W., Zimmerman, A. (2020). *Supporting Legal and Relational Permanency for Youth in Care: Practice Strategies and New Research Findings.* Center for Advanced Studies in Child Welfare. Child Welfare 360, Fall Conference webinar series.

Claps, M., Martinez, M., Miller S., Wells, S., Zimmerman, A. (2019). *What's the deal with all the data?!? An overview on Child and Family Services CQI framework, use of precision analytics and collaborative inquiry and integration with TCOM principles.* 15th Annual Transformative Collaborative Outcome Management (TCOM) Conference. Palm Springs, CA.

Claps, M., Martinez, M., Miller S., Wells, S., Zimmerman, A. (2019). *Engaging staff in improving and advancing our CANS practice: Implementing a staff-directed critical review of our CANS and FAST.* 15th Annual Transformative Collaborative Outcome Management (TCOM) Conference. Palm Springs, CA.

Aijaz, M., Carter, K., Claps, M., Morris, H. (2019) *The Development of Implementation of Practice Standards to Improve Outcomes.* Global Implementation Society Bi-Annual Conference. Glasgow, Scotland.

Claps M., O'Brian, K., Rostad, W., Zimmerman, A. (2019). *From Data to Practice: The Impact of Placement with Family on Outcomes and Engaging Staff in Evaluation and CQI.* National Child Welfare Evaluation Summit. Poster Presentation. Washington, D.C.

Claps, M., Freeman, K., Martinez M., Shimshock, S., (2017). *Collaborative CQI: Unleashing the Power of Highly Engaged Staff.* 32nd Annual Family Foster Treatment Association. Chicago, IL

Claps, M., Contreras, J. (2016). *Key Elements of Practice Models and Implementation Considerations.* Illinois Success! Academy. Springfield, IL.

Buchanan, S., Claps M., (2015). *Child and Family Services Evolution of Practice: The EPIK Project – Enhancing Practice through the*

Integration of Key Strategies. Foster Family Treatment Association. Denver, CO

Claps, M. (2010). *Florida's Family Centered Practice Model.* Florida Coalition for Children Annual Conference. Orlando, FL.

Claps, M. (2010). *Florida's Family Centered Practice Model.* Florida Child Protection and Dependency Summit. Orlando, FL

Claps, M. (2009). *What's New and What's Next for Florida's Training System.* Florida Child Protection and Dependency Summit. Orlando, FL

Matthew C. Claps, MSW	
Summary of current and previous consulting engagements while working as either an Independent Consultant or as the Senior Director of Practice for Casey Family Programs.	
Independent Consultant: Expert Witness Service (cannot disclose locations as it's active litigation)	Expert Witness: Provide expert witness services and subject matter expertise on child welfare services, policies and best practices to both individual and class-action litigation.
Independent Consultant: New Mexico State University; Center for Innovation (2025)	Team Lead: Lead multidisciplinary program evaluation teams of behavioral health services providers across state. Prepare and present summary reports to senior leaders and key stakeholders. Train and coach quality reviewers in evaluation methodology, data analysis and reporting.
Independent Consultant: Child Welfare Policy and Practice Group (2025)	Business Development: Leadership and support to business pursuit efforts. Craft strategy, assemble teams and write grant / RFP proposals.
Independent Consultant: New Mexico, Children Youth and Families Division; Subcontractor to Janus Consulting (2023)	Co-Lead and Methodology Designer: As part of the Kevin S. lawsuit and settlement agreement, developed, tested and trained a suite of qualitative case review and court monitoring tools.
Independent Consultant: New Mexico State University; Center for Innovation (2023)	Data Coach and Peer-Reviewer: Joined NMSU's Quality Services Review teams as a lead reviewer, TA consultant and / or data coach. Prepared summary reports. Improved monitoring tools.
Florida, Pinellas and Pasco County (2023)*	Methodology Designer and Peer Reviewer: Systems-level analysis via case review of diversion/prevention services for lead community-based care agency.
Arkansas's Department of Children and Family Services (2022)*	Project Lead and Co-Presenter/Facilitator: Consultation and coaching with state and regional leadership on creating a culture of data-informed decision-making.
Florida House Subcommittee for Children, Youth and Families (2021/2022)*	Project Lead and Presenter: Completed a policy analysis and feedback on proposed statute changes. Provided an overview on strategies for engaging older youth in foster care to improve permanency and well-being outcomes. Presented findings to legislative staff.
Westchester County's Social Services Agencies: (2015-2021)*	Consultant and Project Team: Ongoing Peer-to-Peer learning series on practice model implementation, policy/procedure, CQI, program evaluation and training / coaching efforts to

	advance youth and family outcomes. The CFS and Westchester County team met annually for 6 years.
Seattle Public School System (2019/2020)*	Project Lead and Trainer: Delivered a training and facilitated a strategic planning session focusing on family engagement and rapport building strategies for school staff to reduce disproportionate referrals, suspension and expulsions for youth of color.
Illinois Department of Child and Family Services (2019-2020)*	Co-lead and methodology designer: System's analysis on the use of psychiatric hospital placements for youth in care and strategies to decrease congregate placements. Co-lead and presenter: Training and coaching to Illinois's child welfare leadership development program on the implementation of practice models.
Philadelphia Advocacy Child Advocacy Center (2020)*	Project lead and Presenter: Coaching and consultation on implementing Continuous Quality Improvement Frameworks. CQI TA and consulting support.
Youth Villages (2018/2019)*	Project lead and facilitator: Peer-learning site visit where CFS hosted Youth Villages senior leadership team for shared learning on practice, CQI / evaluation, including use of precision analytics, and creating data-informed decision-making culture.
Liliuokalani Trust – Hawaii (2017/2018)*	Project Co-lead and presenter/facilitator: Peer-learning site visit where CFS hosted LT's senior leadership team for shared learning on practice, CQI / evaluation. Technical and implementation support on electronic case management system development.
Hawaii's Child Welfare Services (2017-2018)*	Project Co-Lead, Facilitator and consultant: Development and implementation of a foundational trauma and healing informed care training curriculum. Implemented statewide for the entirety of Hawaii's child welfare workforce. Development and implementation of a supervisor and coaching training that incorporates concepts of trauma-informed care in clinical supervision of child welfare practices.
Washington Juvenile Dependency System (2017-2018)*	Project Lead, Consultant and Trainer: Strategic planning and statewide training series on interviewing and coaching skills for child welfare attorneys. Developed and delivered training curriculum across state.
Tennessee's Department of Children's Services (2016)*	Project Co-lead and presenter/facilitator: Peer-learning site visit where CFS hosted TN's senior leadership team for shared learning on practice, CQI / evaluation and creating a culture of best practitioners.
Confederated Salish Kootenai Tribe, Montana	Project Co-Lead (working with Casey's Indian

(2015/2016)*	Child Welfare Programs): Systems analysis via case review on child welfare services. Develop recommendations to enhance safety, permanency and well-being for youth in care
South Carolina, DCFS (2016-2017)*	Coaching and Supervision: Project sponsor for a team of CFS staff who delivered supervision and coaching workshop for SC's administrators and supervisors.
CityLink, Cincinnati (2015)*	Project lead and co-presenter/facilitator: Technical assistance on the selection and implementation of an electronic case management system.
Central New York Regional Convening: Joint training for Law Enforcement and Child Protection Professionals. (2015)*	Presentation / Trainer: Full day training on practice considerations for assessing child protective risks related to family members who use substances.
Salt River Pima Maricopa Indian Country, Arizona (2015-2016)*	Presenter / facilitator and consultant (working with Casey's Indian Child Welfare Programs): Technical assistance on practice model and practice standards development, implementation, and evaluation.
Connecticut's Department of Children and Families (2014-2015)*	Presenter / facilitator and consultant: Technical assistance on developing CQI frameworks/systems.
Kentucky's Health and Family Services (2014-2015)*	Co-Presenter: Technical assistance and support for CANS implementation considerations.
Ohio's Office of Families and Children (2014-2015)*	Co-presenter and consulting support: Considerations and implementation strategies for integrating a functional assessment (CANS) into practice and reporting.
Vermont Department for Children and Families (2014)*	Methodology Developer: Developed qualitative case review methodology for analysis of youth with complex needs.
Catholic Charities of Washington*	Project Co-lead and presenter/facilitator: Peer-learning site visit where CFS hosted CC's senior leadership team to provide technical and implementation support on electronic case management system development.
New York City's Office of Children and Family Services*	Project team and methodology co-designer: Permanency reviews for a sample of youth with complex needs in residential care to develop practice and policy recommendations.
Virginia Department of Social Services*	Methodology Developer: Systems analysis to reduce use of residential placements.
Allegheny County, Pennsylvania, Department of Human Services*	Co-presenter: Implementation strategies for the Family Advocacy and Support Tool (FAST)
Independent Consultant: District of Columbia: Children & Families Services Administration (2006-2007)	Curriculum development and trainer: Developed, piloted and delivered a training series for Social Workers and Supervisors focusing on expediting permanency. Delivered to all frontline staff and supervisors.
Independent Consultant: Wisconsin Department of Children and Families (2006-2007)	Developer / Author: Developed a Quality Services Review protocol / methodology for

	Protective Investigations. Developed a decision-support tool to assess bias and its' impact decision-making.
Independent Consultant: Michigan: Race Equity Review (2006)	Evaluation Team Member: Completed a series of qualitative case reviews and co-facilitated thematic pattern analyses.
Independent Consultant: District of Columbia, Children and Families Services Administration and Department of Mental Health (2006-2008)	Evaluation Team Member: Completed Quality Services Reviews as part of court monitoring strategies for LaShawn (CFSA) and Dixon Consent Decrees (DMH)

* Indicates that consulting services were provided working in the capacity as the Sr. Director of Practice for Casey Family Programs supporting Systems Improvement efforts.