What Enhanced Care Programs Are Not

ECPs differ from other programs and placements available to youth in the existing continuum of care. ECPs are intended to give youth the individualized services they need to address immediate issues preventing safe and successful family and community-based living, including those issues impacting the efficacy of placements in the existing continuum of care. Providing individualized services and placement for youth does not in and of itself make a program an ECP, which must align with the core principles of the model (discussed in the next section).

A broad range of placement and program options within the existing continuum of care may be beneficial for youth and support their goals related to safety, well-being, and permanency. However, not all of these placements are able to effectively support and treat youth's unmet complex needs. These placements may include congregate care settings, placement with individuals, including family or kin, who are not uniquely trained to support the needs and address the unique needs and risk factors, and placements that require youth to move if they engage in high-risk behaviors.

ECPs operate with the overarching goal of promoting legal and/or emotional/relational permanency for the youth and the belief that youth should not be denied access to thrive in family settings due to their unmet complex needs necessitating this level of treatment. ECP providers and partners simultaneously recognize that legal permanency may not be a realistic short-term goal for the youth in these placements, but the goal of youth being connected to family is consistently embedded in their treatment and long-term plans. ECPs support skill development for youth and families, and relationships that can eventually lead to permanency and connection to extended family.