IN THE U.S., there are 4 million reports of child abuse and neglect every year. Every day, five children die under those conditions. In the face of that reality, we must push ourselves to think differently about how we approach child welfare. It’s time to be bold and challenge the status quo: What would better outcomes look like? What role can technology play in achieving them? How might technology provide insights that keep more children safely at home with their families? In cases where children need to go into foster care, how can we make sure they find permanency sooner?

At the heart of those answers is human-centered, outcome-based service delivery that weaves together technology and casework. It isn’t about simply deploying better or faster technology for caseworkers; it’s about placing families and their children at the center of every investment and interaction.

A human-centric approach engages families and empowers them to succeed. It also provides caseworkers with deep — and timely — insights and information on the children they serve.

From reactive to proactive intervention
The more information we can gather on families, the more effectively we can help them. Yet existing child welfare systems are often siloed and support reactionary, compliance-based workflows. In other words, they are not designed for human-centered, proactive intervention in a child’s life.

Information often sits in different systems and is often spread across multiple agencies, denying caseworkers ready access to data. In fact, far too often caseworkers must comb through reams of paper documents or multiple computer screens for pertinent case and family information.

At Accenture, we realized that if we were serious about changing the outcomes for families and their children, simply adding new technology to today’s systems would not be enough. Instead, we brought together representatives from across the child welfare ecosystem — judges, caseworkers, supervisors, providers, educators and young people who had been in foster care — and worked with them to identify what a new child welfare solution should look like. The result, the Accenture Case Insight Solution (ACIS), was designed and built...
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from the ground up to drive engagement and outcomes on the back end.

A bold approach to shaping children’s future
ACIS puts crucial information at the fingertips of frontline staff and is engineered to promote positive outcomes for children and families. It is designed to give caseworkers a holistic view of a child and family. For example, perhaps there has been an allegation of neglect, but it turns out that working multiple jobs has forced the parents to leave the child at home unattended. The caseworker could help the parents obtain access to childcare services that would keep the family intact.

That’s just one example of the many ways technology can help us gain powerful insights into how to help families and ensure the safety and happiness of our country’s most vulnerable children. Focusing on that outcome requires us to think and act in bold new ways — including creating solutions that drive us closer to dramatically better results.

Valerie Armbrust is managing director of North America Child Services at Accenture.

Accenture is committed to using innovation to improve the way the world works and lives by driving better outcomes for children and families. Learn more at accenture.com/ACIS