



## North Carolina Department of Health and Human Services Division of Social Services

325 North Salisbury Street • MSC 2412 • Raleigh, North Carolina 27699-2412  
Courier # 56-20-25

Michael F. Easley, Governor  
Carmen Hooker Odom, Secretary

Pheon E. Beal, Director  
(919) 733-3055

May 23, 2002

**Dear County Director of Social Services:**

**Attention: Child Welfare Supervisors**

**Subject: Revised Preservice Training**

We are pleased and proud to announce the completion of the revised and improved pre-service training curriculum, *“Child Welfare in North Carolina.”* Changes to the curriculum were made based on the suggestions of county DSS, Children's Services supervisors and feedback from participant evaluation forms. Also, since its last revision, many changes have taken place in Children's Services policy and practice. For the past year, we have been updating and modifying the content of the twelve-day preservice training to reflect the feedback we have received as well as changes in policy. Some of the changes include strengthening the modules on child neglect and sexual abuse, and intensifying training in the areas of interviewing, assessment, and case planning. In addition, the latest revision to the Children's Services practice standards, policy, and recent changes to state and federal laws were incorporated into the updated curriculum, including the new assessment and structured decision making tools. Attached you will find a narrative description of the content of each day of training.

The implementation of the new curriculum began in Charlotte on May 13, 2002 and will be taught in all Pre-Service courses across the state, thereafter. We are excited to offer the revised Preservice Training Curriculum as part of our commitment to provide the highest quality and most current training information available to county child welfare staff. Together, we can continue to develop a qualified and well-trained child welfare work force in North Carolina.

We welcome your comments and suggestions as we continue to build and refine our system. Please feel free to address any questions, comments or suggestions to Rebecca Brigham, Team Leader for Staff Development or Connie Polk, Regional Training Center Program Manager, (919) 733-7672, email: [Rebecca.Brigham@ncmail.net](mailto:Rebecca.Brigham@ncmail.net) OR [Connie.Polk@ncmail.net](mailto:Connie.Polk@ncmail.net).

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Charles C. Harris".

Charles C. Harris, Chief  
Children's Services Section

CCH/cp

**CS-16-2002**

Cc:

Pheon Beal

Sherry Bradsher

Paul Lesieur

Children's Services Team Leaders

Children's Services Program Representatives

## **OVERVIEW OF CHILD WELFARE IN NORTH CAROLINA**

### Purpose

*Child Welfare in North Carolina*, also known as “Pre-service Training” offers 12 days of classroom instruction designed to enhance both the knowledge and the skills that are necessary for a new worker to begin work in the field of child welfare. The competencies comprise of identified foundation-level skills needed by all child welfare workers, regardless of their job requirements or placement in the agency. The curriculum combines discussions, experiential exercises, presentations, group interaction, assignments, and introspection. In addition, transfer of learning activities have been incorporated to give learners the opportunity to practice skills and apply concepts to real case examples from their agencies. The following is an outline of the four weeks of Pre-service Training:

### Week One: Foundations of Child Welfare

#### Day 1

The first day of Pre-service Training provides an overview of the program, introduces the NCDSS mission and Children’s Services mission, vision, and values, and explains the structure of the county administered, state supervised system. Day one includes creating an open and friendly learning environment, exploring trainees’ awareness of what they bring to their new role as child welfare workers, and explaining the code of ethics and values for the social work profession.

#### Day 2

The purpose of day two is to provide a framework for the field of child welfare by presenting an overview of the history of child welfare policy, philosophy and law, as well as explaining the role and purpose of various job functions within the child welfare system in NC. Also the role of other community partners in child protection is explored. The philosophy and values of family-centered practice are also introduced.

#### Day 3

The focus of day three is on presenting the information that is needed to apply the federal and state laws, rules, policies, procedures and standards to cases of child maltreatment. In addition, trainees are given basic information regarding “normal” child development and how to recognize the physical and behavioral indicators of child maltreatment.

#### Day 4

Day four examines the causes and effects of child neglect, the family dynamics of child maltreatment, and the behavioral and emotional indicators of child sexual abuse. Participants are also introduced to the concept of cultural competency and begin to develop an awareness of the importance of identifying and working through potential barriers created by cultural differences. Through an experiential exercise, participants recognize the impact of imposing their values on families in need of services, and the importance of recognizing and respecting family’s values.

## Week II: Family Assessment

### Day 5

Day five is primarily devoted to the social work interview. Included are explanations of the nature and purpose of the social work interview, interview standards, the structure of the interview, and interview methods and strategies. A systems view of resistance is examined, and participants are given the opportunity to practice interviewing strategies and giving and receiving feedback. Lastly, interviewing techniques for use with children or persons who cannot communicate verbally are described and practiced.

### Day 6

Day six examines the family assessment and decision-making processes in child welfare. Included is a valuable discussion of the dual roles of the child welfare worker to protect children from maltreatment and provide services that preserve and empower families. Participants will learn to conduct a comprehensive functional assessment using the SEEMAP model criteria, how to apply a strengths-based approach, and the factors to consider in making decisions. Structured Decision-Making and the tools for documentation of safety, risk, and family strengths and needs are introduced.

### Day 7

Day seven is focused on assessing safety and risk to children. Participants learn the differences between safety and risk assessments and how to identify the factors that impact a child's safety and place them at risk of future harm. In addition, the roles of intake services and investigative assessment are explored in detail.

### Day 8

Day eight is a continuation of the investigative assessment process. Participants learn how to properly document safety using the NC Safety Assessment tool and how to continue the ongoing functional assessment of a family. Also addressed are the factors in an investigative assessment, including the Safety Assessment, Risk Assessment, Strengths and Needs Assessment, and the four critical questions that lead to making a case decision. Finally, participants learn and practice strategies to inform families of critical decisions throughout the case.

## Week III: Transfer of Learning Week

Participants return to their agencies and participate in activities to assist in the transfer of learning. It is suggested that participants shadow experienced staff, observe interviews in different program areas, review agency records and participate in other activities.

## Week IV: Family Change Process

### Day 9

The focus of day nine is on the case planning and case management function in child welfare services. In addition to learning the role of the case planner/case manager and the case planning/management standards, trainees will learn the steps in the planning process and the importance of planning versus reacting. Participants will also examine the family services case plan forms, learn the various permanent plan options, and understand the need for concurrent case planning. Mutual case planning with the family is stressed and several skills practice exercises are included.

### Day 10

Day ten examines the function of child placement services. Topics covered include the role of the placement worker, placement policy, standards, and law, how to form alliances with the family and other significant persons involved in obtaining permanence for a child, placement strategies that can minimize the degree of trauma experienced by the child and family during the placement process, how to document placement information on Family Services Case Plans Part B: Case Plan, and Part D: Independent Living, and visitation.

### Day 11

The topics of day eleven include the monitoring and reassessment process and the various options for permanence for children. Trainees learn how to monitor and reevaluate the Service Agreement, how to deal with relapse and motivation, practice completing the results section of the Case Plan Part A, the Service Agreement/ AA, the Plan for Permanence, the Risk Reassessment Tool, the Strengths/Needs Assessment, Part C, Case Review, and the Family Reunification Assessment Tool, as well as the steps of the reunification process, the purpose and grounds for the termination of parental rights, and begin to examine the practice of adoption in child welfare services.

### Day 12

Day twelve begins with the continuation of the topic of adoption services. Trainees also learn the purpose and importance of proper case documentation, the various types of information that should be documented, how to determine when a case should be closed and techniques for decreasing the risk of the family's recidivism. Finally, participants are taught techniques for taking care of their personal safety.