

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

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Courier # 56-20-25

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February 9, 2004

### **DEAR COUNTY DIRECTOR OF SOCIAL SERVICES**

Attention: Child Welfare Program Administrators and Child Welfare Supervisors

**Subject: Knowledge Assessment Tool for *Child Welfare in North Carolina* Participants**

It is with pleasure that the Family Support and Child Welfare Services, Staff Development Team announces the implementation of a third tool to assist in the creation of a developmental plan with new child welfare social workers'. As you may recall, in statewide meetings with Child Welfare Supervisors in September 2002 this additional tool is a Knowledge Assessment that will be administered to all *Child Welfare in North Carolina* participants. The purpose of the Knowledge Assessment is to provide social work staff and their supervisors with feedback regarding knowledge that participants possess for entry-level child welfare practice in North Carolina. The Knowledge Assessment consists of questions related to seven domains of child welfare policy and practice: Theories and Principles, Interviewing, Assessment, Protection of Children, Placement of Children, Structured Decision-Making and Family-Centered Practice. Definitions of each of these domains are on the attached sample of the "*Child Welfare in North Carolina, Knowledge Assessment Report*".

Approximately four weeks following pre-service training, supervisors will receive the attached report indicating the percentage of correct answers the employee received, a comparison to others in the class and the cumulative results for all participants in the state. We will provide this information for each of the seven domain areas. **The Knowledge Assessment does not have a Pass/Fail score and is not intended for adverse or corrective disciplinary action.** In consultation with the Office of State Personnel, they concur that this feedback is to be used for purposes of creating a professional development plan with new child welfare social workers. It is the employee's participation in the development plan that becomes the performance indicator. The Knowledge Assessment will become a required component of pre-service for all participants attending *Child Welfare in North Carolina* training effective March 9, 2004. Those who are absent

and must makeup training days, the Knowledge Assessment must be completed within two business days following the completion of pre-service training.

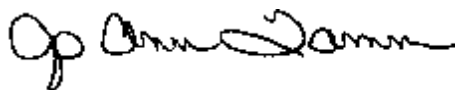
The Knowledge Assessment is the result of a three-year collaboration between researchers at UNC-G, NC A&T and the Evaluation Sub-Committee, comprised of county, state and university personnel. This process has involved the development of questions for the Knowledge Assessment instrument and piloting the questions with *Child Welfare in North Carolina* pre-service groups for the purpose of establishing the validity and reliability of each question.

The incorporation of the Knowledge Assessment tool with the two previously implemented tools is a result of information obtained from four supervisory focus groups conducted by UNC-G approximately two years ago. During these groups, supervisors shared their challenges in assessing new employees who are involved with *Child Welfare in North Carolina* training during their first month of employment. As a result of this feedback, the Staff Development Team in conjunction with its training partners, developed a number of different instruments to aid supervisors in assessing new child welfare workers' readiness to assume case responsibility. In 2001, the Participant Feedback Form was implemented, and in 2002 we began the use of the Transfer of Learning packet. Each of these tools provides social work staff and their supervisors with a way to identify the employees' strengths and needs for the purpose of further on-the-job and classroom training. The attached "Assessment Tools for *Child Welfare in North Carolina* Participants" handout will provide you with further information about the tools and how you can incorporate each of them into supervision with your new employees.

The Staff Development Team is pleased with the partnership and level of feedback that has been established between the participants, supervisors and trainers as we all work toward a common goal of cultivating a well-trained social work staff. We encourage supervisors to consult with the trainers in the regional training centers to discuss a professional development plan that will best meet the needs of each employee based upon the feedback provided in the assessment packet.

We would like to thank counties for their on-going feedback, collaboration and active role with the training system. We continue to welcome your comments and suggestions as we continue to jointly build a competent and effective child welfare workforce. Please feel free to address any questions, comments or suggestions to Ruth Harrison, Program Manager for Staff Development at (919) 733-7672 or via email at [Ruth.Harrison@ncmail.net](mailto:Ruth.Harrison@ncmail.net).

Sincerely,



Jo Ann Lamm, Program Administrator  
Family Support and Child Welfare

Services Section

JAL/rh

**FSCWS-05-04**

Attachments

cc: Pheon Beal  
Sherry Bradsher  
Local Business Liaisons  
Children's and Work First Program Representatives  
Family Support and Child Welfare Services Team Leaders

## **Assessment Tools for Child Welfare in North Carolina Participants**

*Child Welfare in North Carolina*, pre-service training for new child welfare social workers, now includes the implementation of three participant assessment instruments. These instruments provide social work staff and supervisors with the opportunity to assess their professional behavior while attending pre-service training, apply knowledge learned in the classroom to on-the-job responsibilities and to assess entry level child welfare knowledge the employee possesses. While all three instruments provide participants with the opportunity to engage in varying levels of self-assessment, the information and feedback obtained from these assessments primarily serve as supervisory tools to assist with the initial work and professional development plan with the new employee.

Approximately four weeks following the completion of "*Child Welfare in North Carolina*", supervisors will receive, via mail, a packet of information from the regional training center where the employee attended pre-service training. This packet will contain a copy of the Participant Feedback Form, Transfer of Learning Packet, the reporting sheet for the Knowledge Assessment and a Certificate of Completion (if all the instruments were turned into the trainer). Each assessment tool serves a particular purpose, and the entire package, provides information to assist with an initial assessment of the employees' strengths and needs. This package will contain:

- **Knowledge Assessment Report:** The Knowledge Assessment is completed on the final day of "*Child Welfare in North Carolina*". The purpose of the Knowledge Assessment is to provide participants and their supervisors with feedback regarding child welfare knowledge possessed by the employee. The assessment consists of matching and multiple choice questions pertaining to entry level child welfare practice in North Carolina. Questions are designed to assess knowledge in seven areas of child welfare:

- ❖ Theories and Principles
- ❖ Interviewing
- ❖ Assessment
- ❖ Protection of Children
- ❖ Placement of Children
- ❖ Structured Decision-Making
- ❖ Family-Centered Practice

Supervisors will be provided with a report that identifies the percentage of correct answers for each of the seven domains listed above. Copies of the instrument itself will not be available. The information contained within the "Knowledge Assessment Report" is a tool to assist supervisors in determining, along with their employees, additional training and/or reinforcement needed in identified domains. **The information obtained from the Knowledge Assessment is confidential and is intended to assist the supervisor with an initial assessment and development plan with their new employee. Its intended purpose is for further development of employees and**

**not for adverse or corrective disciplinary action. The Knowledge Assessment does not have a Pass/Fail grade.**

- **Participant Feedback Form:** Feedback is given to counties regarding the professional behavior of new employees while attending pre-service training. Attending the pre-service training allows participants the opportunity to learn and demonstrate the type of work habits and behaviors that are expected by agencies. Both the employee and the trainer assess the employees' behavior in six areas:
  - ❖ Attentiveness in Class
  - ❖ Timeliness in Class
  - ❖ Actively Participated in Learning Experiences and Class Activities in a Positive Manner
  - ❖ Shared Criticism, Objections and Challenges in a Positive Manner
  - ❖ Supported Other Participants in their Learning and Development and/or did not Interfere with the Learning Of Others
  - ❖ Other

When this information is returned by the regional training center, the form will have a numerical ranking by the employee and the trainer ranging from 1(exceeds expectations) to 4 (not applicable). Both the employee and the trainer may provide written comments regarding the professional behaviors observed during the four weeks of training. This form can assist the supervisor in assessing the new employee's professional behavior as well as establishing agency behavioral norms. (Attached)

- **Transfer of Learning Packet:** The Transfer of Learning packet is a required component to the successful completion of the 72-hour pre-service training. Completion of these activities allows the new employee to transfer the knowledge learned in the classroom to on-the-job tasks during week three and week four. At the conclusion of pre-service training, each participant turns in the completed Transfer of Learning packet to the regional trainer where pre-service training was completed. The trainer reviews each packet, providing written feedback regarding the employee's strengths and needs related to the completion of this packet. This packet of information can provide the supervisor with an assessment of the employee's initial abilities to transfer child welfare knowledge to on-the-job tasks. The feedback that is provided to supervisors should assist in determining where the employee needs additional mentoring and coaching.

If supervisors should have any questions regarding their employee's performance during pre-service training, or would like to consult with one of the regional trainers regarding a professional development plan for their employee, please feel

free to contact the trainer(s) listed in the letter accompanying the self-assessment package.