



NC DEPARTMENT OF
**HEALTH AND
HUMAN SERVICES**

Division of Social Services

North Carolina Department of Health and Human Services Pre-Service Training: Child Welfare in North Carolina

Supporting New Workers During Pre-Service Training: Guide for Supervisors

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Pre-Service Training: Supervisory Guide

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Purpose of this Guide

The *Supporting New Workers During Pre-Service Training: Guide for Supervisors* is designed as a companion document to the Pre-Service Training: Child Welfare in North Carolina. Supervisors are the gateway to child welfare practice in local DSS agencies, playing a pivotal role in translating and fulfilling their agencies' missions and values. Supervisors affect the quality and effectiveness of casework practice, influence agency culture, and can positively impact staff retention, all of which lead to improved outcomes for children and families. The purpose of this guide is to provide supervisors with the tools and resources they need to both support their new child welfare staff as they begin their child welfare journey and to enhance supervisor support for existing staff.

A supervisor's role in pre-service training is to promote the transfer of learning from the training classroom to the work with children and families. Transfer of learning means that learners apply the knowledge and skills they learned during their training back to their daily work in the child welfare field. New workers must practice their newly acquired skills on the job and receive feedback on their performance. Research shows that trainees only retain and apply 10 to 20 percent of what they obtain in knowledge-based training. Without application and transfer of learning on the job, trainees will forget 75 percent of what they learned in less than a week.¹

Supervisors of new workers have an opportunity to mold the behaviors and skills of workers throughout their careers in child welfare through coaching, modeling, and reinforcing the information learned in training. Supervisory support is critical to development. Research has found that it takes at least 1 to 2 years before a new employee is "fully productive" in their role.² Further, research shows that having a good relationship with one's supervisor is one of the most important factors in retention. Over half of turnover occurs in a staff person's first year on the job, and what a staff person first experiences, especially with their supervisor, will determine whether they will stay with the agency and ultimately build a career in child welfare.³ Quality supervision in child welfare is associated with the following caseworker outcomes⁴:

- reduced burnout and stress
- increased job satisfaction
- increased retention
- improved perceptions of the organizational culture and climate

Using the Guide

This guide is designed as a companion to the pre-service training in that it will follow the topics in the order that the pre-service training modules are provided. In this guide, supervisors are provided with a brief overview of the training topics and tips and tools on how to support their new workers attending training. As a supervisor, you can use this guide to identify areas of strength and opportunities for further worker development. In the appendix of this guide, you will find additional tools, tips, and resources related to supervision in child welfare and specific topic areas. As stated in the "Purpose of

¹ Capsim. (2022). *Transfer of Training: 4 Secrets to Making Employee Learning Stick*. <https://www.capsim.com/blog/transfer-of-training>.

² Oakes, K. (2012). Identifying Roadblocks to Productivity Adds Value to Business: How Long Does It Take to Get Fully Productive? *Training Industry Quarterly*. https://www.nxtbook.com/nxtbooks/trainingindustry/tiq_2012winter/index.php?startid=40#/p/40

³ Jackson, R., McKenzie, J. & McKenzie, J. (2007). *Michigan State University School of Social Work, Staff Retention in Child and Family Services: Working with Differences Workbook 3*. McKenzie Consulting, Inc, Lansing, MI.

⁴ Harbert, A. & Tucker-Tatlow, J. (2015). *Literature Review: Recruitment and Retention in Health and Human Service*. Southern Area Consortium of Human Services, San Diego State University School of Social Work. <https://theacademy.sdsu.edu/wp-content/uploads/2015/06/lit-review-recruitment-retention.pdf>

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this Guide”, this guide is a tool to be used not only with new social workers but with existing social workers as well. While the primary intent of the guide is for its tools, tips, and guidance to be used when meeting one-on-one with a social worker, supervisors may find that the information provided is also useful during case staffing and unit meetings.

Using the Guide to Support New Social Workers

Each Core training week consists of three training days in the classroom and two days in the local DSS office. This guide is intended to be used during the two days the new worker is in the office. During these days, you should meet with your worker to reinforce what was learned during the previous days in training. This guide shows supervisors how to support the transfer of learning from the classroom to practice.

Using the Guide to Support Existing Workers

This guide can be used by supervisors to promote continuous professional development and best practice with existing workers. Supervisors can use the guide to identify, in collaboration with the worker, areas for further professional development. Paralleling family-centered processes with families, you can engage existing workers in conversations about practice and utilize their voice to craft a professional development plan. You can tailor the plan to the worker’s specific needs using topics and practice standards highlighted in this guide.

Learning Labs

Learning labs are incorporated throughout the pre-service training to provide an opportunity for new workers to practice and demonstrate skills and behaviors related to the topics that were discussed in class. They are intended to teach workers new skills and how to put policy into practice. Learning labs may include role-playing, partner work, small and large group discussions, and self-reflections. Classroom learning labs provide an opportunity to get real-time feedback from peers and trainers.

Some of the learning labs require new workers to complete homework assignments, which might include light reading and reflection, watching a video and completing corresponding worksheets, or shadowing supervisors or lead workers in the field in various case practice processes, such as intake, assessments, and permanency-related work. Shadowing provides the new worker the opportunity to get real-time feedback from supervisors and lead workers.

Skill Development Observation Tool

The Skill Development Observation Tool (*Appendix A*) outlines the observable skills that workers should begin demonstrating on the job following completion of the Pre-Service Training: Child Welfare in North Carolina. As a supervisor, you can use this tool to identify areas of strength and opportunities for further worker development by rating the worker’s ability to demonstrate each skill. Skills outlined in the tool are generally organized in the order they are presented in the pre-service training curriculum. This design allows supervisors to use the tool to support the transfer of learning for their workers along the way; helping workers to develop the skills associated with training when they return to their local office after each section of training.

While the pre-service training provides workers with information and practice regarding these skills, very few will be an expert in each skill immediately following training. To understand their level of skill, supervisors will rate their worker as “learner”, “competent”, or “expert” for each skill. Ratings of “learner” indicate that the worker needs continued support in this area; they inconsistently, inaccurately, and/or rarely demonstrate this skill. Rating the worker as “competent” indicates that the worker is proficient in demonstrating this skill; they consistently and accurately demonstrate the skill

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but are still developing comfort and intuition with it. And ratings of “expert” identify the skill as a central strength for the worker; they consistently and accurately demonstrate this skill without effort.

In addition to the supervisory ratings, workers should complete the performance ratings as a self-assessment to identify their own strengths and priorities for development. Following completion, you and your worker will work together to identify five top strengths and five priorities for development and to create three action steps to begin addressing the development priorities. This tool should be used to guide ongoing dialogue about the worker’s performance and to prioritize action steps for worker development. In an ongoing dialogue with the worker, you should be sure to highlight successes and review progress. Make note of changes in performance, not only to continually reassess priorities for development but also to celebrate individual growth as your worker develops their skills as a child welfare worker.

Although developed as a companion tool for pre-service training, the Skill Development Observation Guide is also a useful tool to monitor skill development for existing staff. Following the same performance rating and action-step development process, you can work with seasoned workers to celebrate strengths and find areas for development. After completion of the tool, supervisors can refer back to the topic sections in this guide to identify ways to support skill development with their workers.

Transfer of Learning Tool

The Pre-Service Transfer of Learning (ToL) tool is a comprehensive and collaborative activity for workers and supervisors to work together in identifying worker goals, knowledge gain, and priorities for further development throughout the pre-service training process. In four distinct steps, the worker and supervisor will highlight their goals and action plan related to participating in training, reflect on lessons and outstanding questions, and create an action plan to support worker growth. The tool should be started prior to beginning pre-service training and re-visited on an ongoing basis to assess growth and re-prioritize actions for development.

- Part A: Training Preparation: Prior to completing any e-Learning and in-person Foundation Training sessions, the worker and supervisor should meet to complete Part A: Training Preparation. The worker and supervisor will discuss their goals for participation in training and develop a plan to meet those goals through pre-work, other opportunities for learning, and support for addressing anticipated barriers.
- Part B: Worker Reflections During Training: The worker will document their thoughts, top takeaways, and outstanding questions regarding each section throughout the training.
- Part C: Planning for Post-Training Debrief with Supervisor: The worker considers the takeaways and questions they identified in each section and creates a framework to transfer those takeaways and questions into an action plan.
- Part D: Post-Training Debrief with Supervisor: Provides an opportunity for the supervisor and worker to determine a specific plan of action to answer outstanding questions and to further support worker training.

Overview of Pre-Service Training: Child Welfare in North Carolina

The Pre-Service Training: Child Welfare in North Carolina training for new social workers consists of online pre-work modules, and instructor-led, classroom-based modules. The instructor-led, classroom-based modules consist of two curricula:

- Foundation Training
- Core Training

Pre-Work Online e-Learning Modules

There is required pre-work for the Pre-Service Training: Child Welfare in North Carolina in the form of online e-Learning modules. Completion of the e-Learning modules is required prior to attendance in the classroom-based training. There are 23 online e-Learning modules:

1. Introduction to North Carolina Child Welfare Script
2. Child Welfare Process Overview
3. Introduction to Human Development
4. Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs
5. History of Social Work and Child Welfare Legislation
6. NC Practice Standards for Workers (18 modules)

Foundation Training

Foundation training is a week-long, instructor-led training for child welfare new hires that do not have a social work degree (BSW or MSW). Staff with prior experience in child welfare or a social work degree are exempt from Foundation Training. The purpose of this training is to provide a foundation and introduction to social work and child welfare. After completing Foundation training, these new hires will continue their training and job preparation with Core Training. Foundation Training includes 28 hours (4 days) of classroom-based training completed in one week.

Core Training

Core training is required for all new child welfare staff, regardless of degree or experience. This course will provide an overview of the roles and responsibilities of a child welfare social worker in North Carolina working with families throughout their involvement with the child welfare system. The course provides opportunities for skills-based learning labs. Core training includes 126 hours (18 days) of classroom-based training, completed over six consecutive weeks.

Throughout the pre-service training, learners will have required homework assignments to be completed within prescribed timeframes.

In addition to classroom-based learning, new workers will be provided with on-the-job training at their DSS agencies. During on-the-job training, supervisors will provide support to new hires through the completion of an observation tool, coaching, and during supervisory consultation.

Recommended Training Workload

North Carolina law requires that new social workers receive 72 hours of pre-service training before they have direct caseload responsibilities. However, best practice recommends that new workers complete all their pre-service training prior to being assigned a caseload. When new workers are deemed ready to receive case assignments, it is highly recommended that they be given a gradual caseload, or a training workload, as they continue to learn and adjust to working in child welfare. A gradual caseload means that cases are assigned slowly and thoughtfully to new workers and the number of case assignments increases only as the new worker becomes more skilled and confident in their role. It is recommended that new workers not receive a full caseload during their training period nor right after completing training. Cases should be assigned slowly so supervisors can monitor the new worker's skills and abilities as they adjust to the demands of child welfare. High-profile, high-risk cases should not be assigned to new workers. Cases that involve criminal prosecution are extremely complex and require more experienced social workers who have highly developed skills.

In addition to a gradual caseload, new workers should observe more senior-level workers in their work with children and families. Observing peers in their work helps new workers in the transfer of learning process. During their training period, new workers may assist their peers with things like documentation, making referrals to services, transportation services, and observing family visits. The more opportunities and exposure to the "real work," the better equipped new workers will become to take on a caseload of their own.

A key part of a supervisor's job is to retain their staff and guide new workers to feel confident in the tasks they have been assigned. Supervisors need to balance the high workload demands with the readiness of new social workers.

A Model for Supervision

Supervisors play a vital role in the support and retention of staff, the achievement of organizational mission and goals, and the efficient operation of programs and services. The Child Welfare Information Gateway recommends a structured, evidenced-based, and integrated model designed to increase supervision competence⁵. The model compares supervision to a three-legged stool with each leg referring to a supervisory function that is essential to effective supervision. Supervisors should master skills, knowledge, and capacity in three areas:⁶

1. Administrative Supervision: Helping workers know how to do their job by referring to policy, protocol, and best practices, and providing feedback on their performance.
2. Supportive Supervision: Developing workers' knowledge and skills by being available to provide on-the-job training and support and encouraging other professional development.
3. Educational Supervision: Building and maintaining a positive climate and trusting relationships through listening and supportive actions so your workers feel valued.

⁵ Child Welfare Information Gateway. (2020). *Supervising for Quality Child Welfare Practice*. United States Department of Health and Human Services, Administration for Children and Families, Children's Bureau.
https://www.childwelfare.gov/pubPDFs/effective_supervision.pdf

⁶ Kadushin, A., & Harkness, D. (2014). *Supervision in social work* (5th ed.). Columbia University Press.

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Together, the three components provide a unifying framework for supervision; each 'leg,' or supervisory function, is distinct and necessary and complements the other legs. But what do these three "legs" look like?

Administrative

- Clearly and openly communicate to workers regarding their job responsibilities and expectations through honest and direct discussions.
- Provide regular and ongoing feedback regarding individual performance, and tailor feedback to the experience level of the worker.
- Focus on identifying your workers' skills that contribute to successful outcomes as a learning opportunity and chance for repeatable behaviors.
- Describe and explain to workers the 'why' behind requirements and directives, such as policy or statute.
- Help workers develop their professional skills so that they understand how to differentiate between factual information and opinion in assessments.

Educational

- Allow time to enhance two-way communication during case staffing and unit meetings by pausing for questions and answers to ensure each worker's understanding.
- Help workers identify and understand their own biases and techniques to mitigate their impact on the families with whom they work.
- Actively listen to workers and ask insightful, open-ended questions to encourage workers to understand the situation from the family's point of view.
- Consistently provide feedback to workers on child welfare skills, including using clear language, and making sure feedback is individualized based on the worker's needs.
- Monitor how workers are processing information and forming conclusions by asking open-ended questions, such as "How does the family's history impact their functioning now?"

Supportive

- Demonstrate interest, respect, and empathy by speaking to workers in a non-judgmental, respectful manner in all interactions.
- Demonstrate empathy to workers' perspectives in all situations by listening, reflecting, and acknowledging their perspectives, even when you may disagree.
- Consistently demonstrate transparency, authenticity, and genuineness during difficult conversations with workers in a way that promotes dialogue and the professional development of staff.
- Model for workers the skills necessary to conduct courageous conversations. Discuss the skills you have modeled to create an environment where workers learn from their experiences
- Encourage workers to identify family strengths and successes and draw on these strengths in their assessments and planning

Create a Learning Culture

Creating a learning culture involves operationalizing this guide in a way that nurtures your entire team's development.

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Five Supervisory Steps to Developing a Learning Culture:

- **Emphasize the importance of continuous learning.** Create an expectation for your team that emphasizes the importance of continuous learning. In addition, explain that we all learn from each other no matter what roles we serve, including learning from our families and community partners.
- **Make it safe to learn.** Create an understanding that we learn most from our mistakes. Our hardest lessons often become our expertise. Model humility and take accountability for mistakes. Institute rules that judgment and gossiping will not be acceptable behaviors. Encourage questions and asking for support.
- **Provide Support.** Utilize office hours and field observation to model and coach staff on an on-going basis. Observe workers as they work with families regularly. Provide feedback on strengths and guidance for growth opportunities. Develop, with the worker, the next steps to support the elevation of behavioral performance expectations required to support best practice. In addition, have them identify their short-term learning goals and long-term aspirations. Provide developmental support and opportunities.
- **Promote teamwork and peer-to-peer learning.** Set the expectation that if someone on the team needs support, others on the team will assist. Create peer-to-peer learning opportunities through staff meetings, utilization of lead workers, and partnering staff with each other. Encourage providing feedback and asking for feedback.
- **Conduct regular check-ins.** Check-in regularly individually and with the entire team to see how they are developing. Inquire about what additional support is needed. Track and adjust support as needed.

Pre-Work e-Learning Modules

Overview

As stated earlier, there are 23 e-Learning modules that all new workers are required to complete prior to beginning their pre-service training.

1. Introduction to North Carolina Child Welfare Script
2. Child Welfare Process Overview
3. Introduction to Human Development
4. Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs
5. History of Social Work and Child Welfare Legislation
6. North Carolina Worker Practice Standards (18 modules)

Supporting Workers

- Complete the e-Learning modules prior to your worker.
- Make sure workers have set aside sufficient time in their schedule to complete the e-Learning modules.
- Suggest they complete the e-Learning modules over several days, so they have time to process the information.
- Arrange a time to meet with your worker to review the e-Learning modules. Ask if they have any questions or reflections and provide feedback.

Foundation Training

Overview

Foundation training is a week-long, instructor-led training for child welfare new hires that do not have a social work degree (BSW or MSW). Staff with prior experience in child welfare are exempt from Foundation Training. The purpose of this training is to provide a foundation and introduction to social work and child welfare. After completing Foundation training, these new hires will continue their training and job preparation with Core training.

Day One:

1. Introduction to the Child Welfare System
 - a. Goals of the Child Welfare System
 - b. Who Makes up the Child Welfare System?
2. Identification of Child Abuse and Neglect
 - a. What is Child Maltreatment?
 - b. What is Neglect?

Day Two:

1. Identification of Child Abuse and Neglect (continued)
 - a. What is Neglect? (continued)
 - b. Introduction to Safety and Risk
2. Historical and Legal Basis for Child Welfare Services
 - a. National Child Abuse and Neglect Data (NCANDS)
 - b. History of Institutional Racism in Child Welfare
 - c. Court Overview
3. Ethics and Equity in Child Welfare
 - a. Introduction to Family-Centered Practice
 - b. Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, and Belonging

Day Three:

1. Ethics and Equity in Child Welfare (continued)
 - a. Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, and Belonging (continued)
 - b. NASW Code of Ethics
 - c. Treating Families with Dignity and Respect
 - d. Professional Boundaries
 - e. Confidentiality
2. Key Issues in Child Welfare: Substance Use, Family Violence, and Mental Health
 - a. Overview of Substance Use
 - b. Overview of Domestic and Family Violence
 - c. Mental Health in Child Welfare: Needs and Diagnoses

Day Four:

1. Key Issues in Child Welfare: Substance Use, Family Violence, and Mental Health (continued)
 - a. Mental Health in Child Welfare: Needs and Diagnoses (continued)
 - b. Overview of Trauma-Informed Practice
2. Overview of Trauma and Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs)
 - a. How Trauma Impacts Families and Child Development

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b. Trauma-Informed Child Welfare Systems

Supporting Workers

When new workers return to their local DSS agency after completing Foundation Training, meet with them to discuss the topics covered in Foundation training.

- Ask workers to demonstrate their understanding of the topics by explaining the topics to you in their own words. Practice and model active listening skills by providing non-verbal and verbal cues; using head nods, reflection statements, open-ended questions, and summarizing.
- Assist workers with any misunderstandings, confusion, or challenges they may have had with the material.
- Explore if they found any of the material difficult to understand and provide them with resources and guidance to clarify any misunderstanding.
- Seek ways to help them identify any biases or emotional triggers that they may have. If anything is identified, make plans to work with them to help them address these areas.
- To increase their understanding of the child welfare system as a whole, arrange meetings for them with the following individuals:
 - Child Protective Services (CPS) worker (investigative and family assessments)
 - CPS In-Home Services worker
 - Permanency Planning Services worker
 - Adoption Services worker
 - Food and Nutrition Services Supervisor (i.e., Food Stamps)
 - Work First Supervisor
 - Child Support Supervisor
 - Local Mental Health Agency
 - Juvenile Probation Officer
 - Foster Parent Association representative
 - Other Community Service Providers
- Help prepare workers for meeting with these individuals by working together to identify questions they want to ask or information they should request.

Core Training

Overview

Core training is required for all new child welfare staff, regardless of degree or experience. This course provides an overview of the roles and responsibilities of a child welfare social worker in North Carolina working with families throughout their involvement with the child welfare system. The course will provide opportunities for skills-based learning labs.

Each training week consists of three training days in the classroom and two days in the local DSS office. This guide is intended to be used after each week of training during the two days the new worker is back in the local DSS office. During these two days, supervisors should meet with their new workers using this guide to discuss what was learned during the three days of classroom training to support the transfer of learning.

Below is a quick reference for what topics will be covered during each week of classroom instruction. The following section of this guide provides supervisors with an overview of the topic, strategies for how supervisors can support their workers, and observable behaviors and skills that supervisors can use to monitor a worker's progress in transferring learned material into practice.

Week One:

1. Child Welfare Overview, Roles, and Responsibilities
 - a. What is Our WHY?
 - b. Roles and Responsibilities
 - c. Identification of Child Abuse and Neglect
 - d. Mandated Reporting
2. Interviewing Skills Learning Lab
 - a. The Social Work Interview
3. Assessing Skills Learning Lab
 - a. Assessing in Child Welfare
4. Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, and Bias
 - a. Self-Assessment of Bias
 - b. Cultural Humility and Considerations for Family Engagement
 - c. Inclusion
 - d. Institutional Racism in Child Welfare
 - e. Disproportionality in Child Welfare
 - f. Implicit Bias in Child Welfare
 - g. Equity and Equality
 - h. Culturally Diverse Services

Week Two:

1. Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, and Bias (continued)
 - a. Considerations for LBTQIA+ Youth
2. Indian Child Welfare Act (ICWA)
 - a. Placement Preferences
 - b. Cultural Considerations
 - c. Family and Tribal Engagement
 - d. Notice to Tribes
3. Engaging Families through Family-Centered Practice
 - a. Using Family-Centered Practice to Engage Families

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- b. Using Family-Centered Practice to Engage Families Learning Lab
- c. Using a Strengths-Based Perspective
- d. Using a Strengths-Based Perspective Learning Lab
- e. Courageous Conversations
- f. Courageous Conversations Learning Lab
- g. Conflict Resolution
- h. Involving Fathers, Non-Resident Parents, and Relatives
- i. Engaging Fathers Learning Lab
- j. Engaging Incarcerated Parents Learning Lab
- k. Child and Family Team (CFT) Meetings
- l. Child and Family Team (CFT) Meetings Learning Lab

Week Three:

1. Engaging through Family-Centered Practice (continued)
 - a. Developing Goals with the Family
 - b. Family Services Agreements
 - c. Developing Goals with the Family Learning Lab
 - d. Preparing the Child and Family for Court
 - e. Family-Centered Practice Learning Lab
2. Quality Contacts
 - a. Why Quality is Important?
 - b. Preparation for Quality Contacts
 - c. Quality Contacts
 - d. Quality Contacts Learning Lab
3. Overview of Child Welfare Process: Part 1 Intake and CPS Assessments
 - a. Intake Process and Strategies
 - b. Intake Learning Lab
 - c. Overview of CPS Assessments
 - d. Safety vs. Risk
 - e. Caregiver Protective Capacities
 - f. Tools for Assessments
 - g. Safety Assessment
 - h. CPS Assessment Learning Lab

Week Four:

1. Overview of Child Welfare Process: Part 1 Intake and CPS Assessments (continued)
 - a. Safety Assessment (continued)
 - b. Safety Planning and Temporary Parental Safety Agreements
 - c. Additional Information to Support Assessment
 - d. Risk Assessment
 - e. Family Assessment of Strengths and Needs
 - f. Assessment Decisions
 - g. CPS Assessment Learning Lab
2. Overview of Child Welfare Processes, Part 2: In-Home Services
 - a. Engaging Families: In-Home Services
 - b. Engaging Families in In-Home Services Learning Lab
 - c. Developing and Monitoring In-Home Family Services Agreements (IH-FSA)
 - d. Interviewing for Strengths and Needs Learning Lab
 - e. In-Home Services: Safe Case Closure

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- f. Safe Case Closure Learning Lab

Week Five:

1. Overview of Child Welfare Process, Part 3: Permanency Planning Services
 - a. Placement
 - b. Preparing for Placement Learning Lab
 - c. Placement Learning Lab
 - d. Working with Relatives
 - e. Diligent Search Learning Lab
 - f. Caseworker Contacts
 - g. Family Time
 - h. Family Time Learning Lab
 - i. Shared Parenting
 - j. Shared Parenting Learning Lab
 - k. Permanency Planning Family Services Agreement
 - l. Permanency and Permanency Planning
 - m. Reunification Learning Lab
 - n. Adoption Learning Lab

Week Six:

1. Overview of Child Welfare Process, Part 3: Permanency Planning Services (continued)
 - a. Permanency and Permanency Planning (continued)
 - b. Monitoring and Reassessment: Permanency Planning Family Services Agreement
 - c. Achieving Permanency and Safe Case Closure
 - d. Preparing Children for Permanency Learning Lab
2. Key Factors Impacting Families and Engaging Communities
 - a. Partnering with Community Services to Support Families
 - b. Addressing Biases and Assumptions Related to Domestic Violence, Substance Use, Child Sexual Abuse, and Human Trafficking
 - c. Engagement and Service Matching for Families Impacted by Substance Use Disorder
 - d. Engagement and Service Matching for Families Impacted by Domestic Violence
 - e. Engagement and Service Matching for Families Impacted by Mental Health Concerns
 - f. Engagement and Service Matching for Families Impacted by Sexual Abuse
 - g. Engagement and Service Matching for Families Impacted by Child Human Trafficking
3. Documentation
 - a. Quality Documentation
 - b. Confidentiality
 - c. Documentation Learning Lab
4. Self-Care and Worker Safety
 - a. Secondary Traumatic Stress and Vicarious Trauma
 - b. Worker Safety
 - c. Planning for Self-Care and Idea-Sharing

Core Training Topics and Supervisory Support

Child Welfare Overview, Roles, and Responsibilities

Overview

While the outcomes of cases vary based on many factors, the goal of child welfare is to promote the safety, permanency, and well-being of children and families by helping families care for their children successfully or, when that is not possible, helping children find permanency with relatives or adoptive families. Safety, permanency, and well-being are outcomes that local DSS agencies, the state, and federal government measure to ensure our work is effective in supporting families. While agencies measure these outcomes in formal ways, engaging children and families is key to understanding how we can best help them achieve safety, permanency, and well-being in a way that is meaningful to them. Local DSS agencies have significant responsibility in ensuring these outcomes, but DSS does not work alone. The child welfare system involves a much broader network of stakeholders, including other state and local government agencies, service providers, and communities. These systems must work together to provide support, services, and resources to ensure positive outcomes for children and families.

There are four topics in this section:

- Engaging workers in connecting purpose with job responsibilities and safety, permanency, and well-being outcomes for children and families.
- Understanding job-specific roles and responsibilities for various child welfare case manager positions.
- Understanding the definitions of child abuse and neglect.
- Understanding mandated reporting laws, when workers are required to report child abuse and neglect, and processes for reports.

Supporting Workers

Supervisors must support workers and provide guidance to them as they work with families to achieve safety, permanency, and well-being outcomes. Additionally, workers must have a clear picture of their roles and responsibilities and strategies to work effectively with children and families. It is the responsibility of supervisors to review their worker's cases regularly to ensure child welfare policy is adhered to, the family's needs are addressed, and safety, risk, and family progress are continually monitored. Supervisors are also involved in major case decisions, like approval of CPS Assessments and the goals identified in the Family Services Agreement. This work can be accomplished in many ways, including case consultations, group supervision, coaching and modeling, and field observation.

Here are some ways supervisors can model and coach workers:

- Discuss with workers how their role relates to the safety, permanency, and well-being of children and families.
- Model a family-centered, child-focused, trauma-informed approach during supervisory consultation.
- Inquire about the worker's understanding of their roles and responsibilities, the definition of child abuse and neglect, and mandated reporter requirements. Provide clarity where needed.

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- Ask open-ended questions using genuine curiosity to ascertain why they decided to work in child welfare. Address any concerns or challenges they identify or that you may have.
- Have them identify their short-term learning goals and long-term aspirations. Provide developmental support and opportunities.

Observable Skills and Behaviors

Following completion of this topic in training, the worker will be able to:

- Identify their purpose, roles, and responsibilities in child welfare.
- Articulate the mandatory reporting requirements and procedures.
- Identify the North Carolina Child Welfare Practice Standards.
- Demonstrate openness and honesty with families, treating them with respect, and acknowledging the worker's authority and the disproportionate amount of power in the relationship.
- Identify risk factors, signs of child abuse, and the developmental impact of child neglect.
- Clear their mind of distractions to be fully present with the family.
- Reduce the power differential and engage families through the use of the behaviors and skills of the North Carolina Child Welfare Practice Standards.
- Show compassion and validate the feelings of children and families.

Interviewing Skills Learning Lab

Overview

This skills-based learning lab will introduce different interviewing techniques and strategies for interviewing children and adults. The learning objectives for this lab are:

- Describe different interviewing techniques.
- Formulate appropriate interview questions based on scenarios.
- Demonstrate interviewing skills.
- Reflect on ways new workers can incorporate the skills and behaviors into their own child welfare practice.

This learning lab begins with the “social work interview” as the foundation of engagement with families. An interview is more formal, purposeful, and structured than a conversation. The interview allows workers to get to know a family and understand their circumstances, strengths, needs, and perspectives. It is how workers will gather information to assess safety and risk, make plans, identify interventions and services, and make decisions with the family. Interviewing skills are required in all program areas. This learning lab continues to look at what biases the worker may bring into the interview process as well as what biases families may have about the worker and/or the agency. It is important for the worker to understand their own biases and how others may perceive them in their role as “social worker.” The goal of this learning lab is to give workers a foundational understanding of interviewing.

Supporting Workers

Supervisors have an active role in supporting newly hired child welfare professionals in this learning lab. As part of this learning lab, workers are instructed to spend one hour with their supervisor discussing interviewing skills and behaviors. During this hour, supervisors should focus on the behaviors and skills needed to effectively interview children and families. Ask the worker if they have questions, based on the information they learned in this learning lab, about the various techniques used to interview children and families. Provide an opportunity for skills practice, such as role-play, of interviewing techniques with the worker and provide feedback for areas for growth, as well as the worker's strengths. Here are some ways supervisors can model and coach newly hired and existing workers:

- Pair the worker with a more seasoned worker for shadowing interviewing techniques in the field. Be thoughtful in selecting the seasoned worker and the family that is selected for field observation.
- After the worker observes the interview, debrief with the new worker on the following items:
 - How did the seasoned worker prepare for the interview?
 - What did the seasoned worker do to engage the family?
 - Ask the new worker to identify the type of questions that were asked during the interview.
 - What nonverbal cues did the worker observe from both the seasoned worker and the person being interviewed?
 - Ask the new worker, what was the purpose of the interview.
 - Do they believe the purpose was achieved?
 - Were there any challenges or barriers that the new worker can identify?
 - Would the new worker do anything differently? If so, what?
- Educate, model, and coach workers on how and when to use open-ended, solution-focused questions. The supervisor should provide constructive feedback regarding the type and wording of questions posed.
- Demonstrate how you are present when meeting with them by being focused on the issues at hand, minimizing distractions, maintaining eye contact, using open body language, and actively listening. Doing so will model the skills workers should be using in interviewing when meeting with families.
- Model by asking open-ended questions, using paraphrasing, and reflections to gain clarity.
- Be punctual and well-prepared when meeting with staff.
- Treat staff with dignity and respect and
- communicate openly and honestly.
- Model interviewing behaviors during all interactions with the worker, families, and others by asking open-ended and strengths-based questions, having conversations about what is being learned through the process of interviewing and using a narrative approach.
- Educate, model, and coach workers on how and when to use open-ended, solution-focused questions. Provide feedback for development regarding the type and wording of questions posed.

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Observable Skills and Behaviors

Following completion of this topic in training, the worker will be able to:

- Ask open-ended questions to understand the child and family's perspectives regarding the situation.
- Demonstrate a strategy for information gathering, knowing what information to collect, who to collect it from, and the reason information is needed.
- Format information gathering as a conversation, rather than question/answer.
- Consider their perceptions and bias and those the family may have and articulate how this preparation impacts their utilization of a strengths-based and solution-focused approach.
- Treat individuals with respect.
- Treat individuals with empathy.
- Use verbal responses that are consistent with body language.
- Listen and let the family tell their own story in their voice.
- Recognize children and parents as the expert on their history, needs, and strengths.
- Listen to what families are saying and reflect on their understanding in an empathic manner.

Assessing Skills Learning Lab

Overview

Assessing is a key skill in child welfare practice. North Carolina's definition of Assessing is: Gathering and synthesizing information from children, families, support systems, agency records, and persons with knowledge to determine the need for child protective services and to inform planning for safety, permanency, and well-being. Assessing occurs throughout child welfare services and includes learning from families about their strengths and preferences. Good social work practice cannot occur without effective assessment of the child, family, and their circumstances. When we talk about assessing and assessments, this includes the full process of assessing families to identify their needs, strengths, and progress toward achieving their goals. Assessing helps identify services, resources, and supports that families may need to achieve their goals. Assessing in child welfare supports sound decision-making in child safety, permanency, and well-being for children and families, including those who want to strengthen their capacity to successfully care for their children as well as those at risk or who have already experienced abuse or neglect. The goal of comprehensive family assessments is to identify the strengths, needs, resources, and challenges of children and families.

During this learning lab workers will:

- Describe the process of assessing.
- Identify information needed to comprehensively assess situations in child welfare cases.
- Demonstrate critical thinking skills and professional judgment.
- Reflect on ways they can incorporate the skills and behaviors into their own child welfare practice.

Workers are given a homework assignment to identify one goal for improving their assessing skills. As part of this assignment, the worker was instructed to identify one goal for improving their assessing skills, including the steps they will take to achieve this goal and the resources they will

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need to achieve the goal. They were instructed to review this goal and action plan during supervisory consultation.

Supporting Workers

Supervisors should focus on the worker's understanding of assessing, gathering information that informs the Family Services Agreement, using the information gathered in assessing to plan with the family and informing case decisions. Here are some ways supervisors can model and coach newly hired and existing workers:

- Follow-up on the worker's pre-service training homework assignment. As part of this assignment, the worker was instructed to identify one goal for improving their assessing skills, including the steps they will take to achieve this goal and the resources they will need to achieve the goal. Review the worker's goal with them. Ask what resources they need to achieve this goal and what their next steps are, and how you can support them to achieve their goal. Follow-up with the worker on their progress to achieve their goal and continue to provide support as needed.
- Discuss with the worker their biases and judgments related to the families in which they encounter.
- Review assessments and other case documentation ahead of supervisory meetings with the worker. During the meeting, ask the worker to share their perspectives and provide additional information.
- Model the three-step process by asking workers "what's going well, what are you worried about, and what needs to happen next?" and then ask your workers to use these same questions in their interactions with families.
- Ask the worker questions about the family highlighting information they should be gathering when assessing case progress or decisions to be made. For example, ask about the allegation, the child's developmental needs, or challenges engaging the school. If your worker responds that they are unsure, provide guidance about the importance of gathering the information when assessing and how they may use the information to inform planning. If these types of questions are commonplace in each supervisory meeting, the worker will begin to implement them in their practice.
- During supervisory meetings, ask the worker questions to understand what information was gathered and to be sure all relevant information has been gathered. If not all the relevant information has been gathered to inform decisions or make sound conclusions, provide guidance to the worker about obtaining the missing information, such as why the information is needed, why it's important, and how to gather it.
- During unit meetings, ask workers to share what they do during their assessing process. This provides an opportunity for new workers to hear what more seasoned workers are doing, and new workers can share new, innovative ideas about what they are doing.

Observable Skills and Behaviors

Following completion of this topic in training, the worker will be able to:

- Describe the assessment process and purpose of CPS involvement in an understandable manner (without jargon, acronyms, or complicated phrases).

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- Consider family strengths in addition to family needs during assessment.
- Collect sufficient information to make an informed assessment of child safety and family needs and strengths.
- Identify the least intrusive action to support child safety and family needs.
- Understand how their own bias may impact the information-gathering process.
- Use engaging strategies to build family participation in the assessing process.
- Consider the family's own culture when gathering information.
- Continuously gather and pursue new information.

Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, and Belonging

Overview

Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, and Belonging, also referred to as DEIB, are the four pillars that drive real impact in creating a society where everyone is invited, has access and resources, feels welcomed, and feels valued. Developing a shared language for thoughtful discussion about equity is critical for all our work in child welfare. Just as the field of child welfare has evolved, so too does language and thinking on race, equity, and justice evolve. These terms and their definitions will continue to change and evolve, and it is important that as child welfare professionals, we are flexible to those changes.

- **Diversity:** In its most basic form, diversity is the presence of a variety of differences, experiences, and identities. This can refer to people of various races, genders, socioeconomic status, sexual orientation, religions, ethnicity, national origins, and mental or physical abilities.
- **Equity:** Equity is the norms, fundamentals, and policies in place to ensure everyone has access to the same opportunities. Equity requires preliminary work to identify imbalances, loopholes, or unequal starting places.
- **Inclusion:** Inclusion is the practice of welcoming a variety of people into a group and giving everyone the opportunity to participate fully. An inclusive group (such as a company, university, or society) promotes and sustains a sense of welcomed engagement, and its values and practices respect for the talents, beliefs, backgrounds, and ways of living of all its members.
- **Belonging:** Belonging is a sense of acceptance within a group. It centers around the experience of feeling accepted and creating a culture where people can be their true selves, have psychological safety, appreciate each other, and feel part of something bigger.

This section focuses on providing an opportunity for workers to learn about their own biases before they begin working with families. This section begins with a self-assessment, the Race Implicit Association Test, where new workers will examine their own biases by completing a bias inventory. Workers will not be asked to share this inventory with anyone but will use it for their own personal and professional development. Using the information learned in their self-assessment, workers will learn how to identify, recognize, and begin addressing their biases. During this module workers will:

- Build knowledge and skill around the importance of cultural humility when engaging children and families during child welfare interviews.
- Recognize the value of inclusion for families in the child welfare system and will understand that many families served by child welfare have been marginalized and under-served.

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- Trace the history of child welfare in America and will learn about the origin of child welfare services, boarding schools, disproportionality, and how outcomes differ for children across the system.
- Examine data showing that children of color are overrepresented in the system and ultimately have fewer positive outcomes than White children.
- Discuss ways in which to offer culturally responsive services to children and families and understand how the current service array may not be culturally diverse.
- Discuss how to provide services to children and youth who identify in the LGBTQIA+ community, and special considerations for providing appropriate services with a focus on supporting and serving children and youth in a marginalized population with specific needs.

Supporting Workers

DEIB is a new concept for some, and it will take time and resources to successfully achieve in organizations, institutions, and society. The pervasive issue of racial disparity in child welfare has long presented troubling implications for children and families of color. The concept of DEIB is essential in developing inclusive practices that work to dismantle historical and systemic racial biases in the field of child welfare. Biases can impact our work with families in the child welfare system. Bias that goes unchecked can impact the trajectory of a child welfare case for many families. While implicit bias is not always negative, it can lead to discriminatory actions.

With disparities occurring at every major decision-making point along the child welfare continuum, bias impacts families of diverse racial and ethnic backgrounds during reporting, investigation, substantiation, and out-of-home placement. Human decision-making by mandated reporters, workers, and other personnel may play a role in perpetuating poorer outcomes for families of diverse racial and ethnic backgrounds who come into contact with the child welfare system.

Bias can influence the initiation of legal proceedings, length of stay in foster care, consideration of kinship placements, and other inequitable expectations for families. Child welfare professionals must be aware of and evaluate their personal biases, as well as systemic biases, that negatively impact the children and families they work with. Child welfare workers must have the skills to identify their own biases and the impact they may have on the children and families they work with.

Below are specific strategies to support workers:

- Complete the Race Implicit Association Test to identify your own beliefs, attitudes, and opinions. You do not need to share your results, nor should you ask staff for theirs, but you can support them by talking about the process and how to use the information to address their own bias and how they impact the work with children and families.
- Evaluate the worker's awareness of cultural issues that may be present for families.
- Discuss examples of demonstrated cultural sensitivity and awareness and their impact on engagement efforts.
- Model behavior of dependability, availability, and consistency.
- Educate, model, and coach the worker in identifying bias, judgment, and thinking errors that may impact engagement, assessment, and interventions.
- Educate, model, and coach the worker to use age and culturally-appropriate engagement techniques and tools and create opportunities for developing emotional safety and mutual honesty.

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- Talk with the worker about how to build relationships with families from other cultural groups in an appropriate and effective manner and how culture may play a significant role in body language. Provide the worker with examples of what this looks like, such as leaning in versus leaning out or arms folded versus arms down.
- Model and promote the importance of honoring preferred pronouns for children, families, and internal and external partners.
- Coach the worker on the importance of apologizing and correcting yourself if the wrong pronoun is used.
- Guide and support the worker in efforts to ensure placements are culturally and LGBTQIA+ appropriate.
- Provide the worker with opportunities to further their professional development related to diversity, equity, inclusion, and bias (DEIB). Make sure the worker completes all DEIB courses offered. Lead your worker and team in a discussion about what they have learned in DEIB courses.
- Create a safe place for discussions. Read the ‘Listen’ poem before group discussions (*Appendix C: Listen Poem*).
- Each month, allow one worker to lead the team in a DEIB activity by following. Do so by utilizing a diversity calendar and picking a topic for that month. Encourage creativity, educational materials, and activities that promote cultural competence and inclusion (*Appendix A: Resources*).
- Evaluate the worker’s awareness of cultural factors that may be present and the worker’s efforts to identify cultural, racial, ethnic, generational, educational, and any other needs that may have affected or may affect the worker’s approach to engagement and the family’s response to the worker’s engagement efforts.

Observable Skills and Behaviors

Following completion of this topic in training, the worker will be able to:

- Articulate a historical perspective of child welfare that adequately represents the realities of the ongoing systemic racism in child welfare.
- Use cultural sensitivity, allowing families to define their culture, norms, values, and strengths.
- Use pronouns identified by the individual, apologize, and correct themselves if they make a mistake.
- Identify the three tenets of cultural humility (lifelong learning and self-reflection, recognizing power imbalances, and institutional accountability).
- Speak to families and youth in a non-judgmental, respectful manner.
- Address the power and privilege granted inherent to their own identities in their approach to their work.
- Understand the effects of intersectionality and sociocultural identity on the behaviors, feelings, and social situations of children and families.
- Approach families as a learner, acknowledging that children and families are the experts on their own identities.
- Uses critical self-reflection to manage implicit and explicit biases regarding the children and families they support.

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- Support culturally appropriate placements by providing information regarding cultural needs at placement, providing ongoing education, and matching children to families that can meet their needs.

Indian Child Welfare Act (ICWA)

Overview

This section focuses on foster care and adoption placement preferences for American Indian/Alaskan Native children under the Indian Child Welfare Act (ICWA). The implementation and interpretation of ICWA have been inconsistent across jurisdictions in the United States. This means that American Indian/Alaskan Native children and their families may receive different rights, protections, and services from state-to-state, and this inconsistency dilutes the intent of the original legislation. American Indian/Alaskan Native children are disproportionately represented in child welfare. Further, in some states, the court's interpretations of ICWA have voided the federal protections for children covered by ICWA. During this module workers will:

- Discuss foster care and adoption placement preferences for American Indian/Alaskan Native children under ICWA.
- Explore the rationale for placement preferences, as well as the order of preferences for determining foster care and adoptive placements.
- Discuss the importance of respecting Native American culture and the cultural differences between different tribes.
- Discuss strategies for including and engaging Native American families and tribal representatives, and ensure they are included in case decisions.
- Discuss the requirement to provide notice to tribes when children may be placed into foster care and when parental rights may be terminated.

Supporting Workers

Child welfare agencies and workers are required to adhere to all the requirements set forth in ICWA. In addition, workers must be culturally responsive when working with American Indian/Alaskan Native families. Supervisors must support workers to ensure their full understanding of the requirements of ICWA and the worker's application of ICWA in applicable cases they are assigned. Below are specific strategies to support workers:

- Share any experiences you may have working with ICWA cases or with tribes in general.
- Educate workers on tribal representation and contact information, both state and federally-recognized.
- Emphasize the importance of tribal representatives being included in all case decisions and Child and Family Team (CFT) Meetings.
- Explore the worker's findings regarding tribal affiliations and Indian heritage. Model the behavior of dependability, availability, and consistency.
- Reflect with the worker on what they learned about intergenerational trauma and how it impacts families.
- Evaluate the worker's awareness of tribal affiliations and Native American culture. Explore the worker's efforts to identify cultural, racial, ethnic, generational, educational, and any other needs

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that may have affected or may affect the worker's approach to engagement and the family's response to the worker's engagement efforts.

Observable Skills and Behaviors

Following completion of this topic in training, the worker will be able to:

- Inquire with families to assess American Indian/Alaskan Native heritage.
- Express respect for American Indian/Alaskan Native heritage.
- Collaborate with tribal partners, prioritizing tribal perspectives regarding child and family needs.
- Provide Active Efforts to preserve and reunify American Indian/Alaskan Native families.
- Ask for information and education on what traditions are most important to members of each family, community, and tribe.
- Understand that there are eight tribes, 7 state-recognized and 1 federally recognized, in North Carolina with different customs and demonstrate knowledge of these tribes.

Engaging Families through Family-Centered Practice

Overview

Family-centered practice is an approach that views family members as the experts on their family's needs and encourages their active participation in services and decision-making. Our services and interventions strengthen and enable families to find solutions to their needs and to provide safe care for their children, in their own homes and communities, and in ways that are consistent with their cultures. Family-centered practice means that you respect diversity, are strengths-based, and support the family while focusing on the safety of all family members.

During this topic workers will:

- Focus on how to define family-centered practice, the impact engaging families has on safety, permanency, and well-being outcomes, strategies to engage families, and the importance of recognizing families as the experts in their lives and situations to empower them in the change process.
- Focus on defining courageous conversations, providing guidance on the skills and behaviors necessary to have courageous conversations, and preparing for and debriefing after courageous conversations.
- Focus on defining conflict and identifying skills for effective conflict resolution.
- Build knowledge and skills around the importance of understanding and managing one's own emotions, as well as strategies to effectively manage and resolve conflicts with children and families.
- Focus on defining the importance of and what it means to use a strengths-based perspective when working with children and families.
- Be provided with tools and resources to engage and collaborate with fathers, non-resident parents, and relatives.
- Explore the importance of child and family voice before, during, and after CFT meetings, and how CFT meetings are used to achieve safety, permanency, and well-being outcomes.

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- Learn the importance of including non-resident parents in the development of the agreements and will make the connection between the Family Services Agreement and safety, permanency, and well-being outcomes.
- Focus on goal-writing, including the importance of developing goals with the family that indicate the specific behavioral changes that are needed to accomplish safety, permanency, and well-being outcomes.
- Learn about their role in preparing the child and family for court and will be provided with strategies on how to prepare the child and family for court.

Supporting Workers

Support workers by modeling your own practice using a parallel process based on family-centered practice principles. Applying the family-centered approach to child welfare supervision does not change the basic facts of the job. Supervisors are still bound by legal and policy mandates. They are still responsible for ensuring the safety, permanency, and well-being of children. They must still play the role of coach and mentor, evaluator and advocate, trainer, and manager. What's different about family-centered supervisors is the way they go about these tasks:

- Lead. Family-centered supervisors focus on families and seek to find realistic solutions that result in good outcomes. They emphasize the importance of partnering with families and affirm progress and success. They embrace family-centered principles and strategies and articulate to others how applying them benefits everyone.
- Model. Family-centered supervisors possess and demonstrate the specialized knowledge and skills practitioners need to engage families, assess their strengths, and needs, and include them (through the use of Child and Family Team meetings) in the planning process. Supervisors with poor engagement, assessment, and case-planning skills cannot promote family-centered practice in the workers they supervise.
- Communicate. Because listening is the key to effective communication, family-centered supervisors spend a great deal of time listening to others. Even when workers or others have input about items that cannot be changed (due to laws, standards, and policies), supervisors acknowledge that input and seek solutions whenever possible. They communicate their priorities and expectations clearly and respectfully.
- Advise. Family-centered supervisors continuously seek opportunities to explain, demonstrate, and support workers as they develop new skills. They encourage workers to attend training. They also urge workers to apply what they learn in training to their work with families.
- Teach, Coach, and Mentor. Supervisors guide workers on cases, encouraging them to look to each family's experience as a source of knowledge. Regular, scheduled case consultation is used to enhance worker skills. They also look for peer learning opportunities for their staff.
- Collaborate. Interaction is team-focused and collaborative, providing opportunities for workers to take lead roles in peer learning, developing unique expertise, and becoming "model" practitioners.
- Evaluate. Evaluation is ongoing, constant, and mutual. The supervisor is a discoverer of individual competencies and strengths in workers. The worker and supervisor jointly plan how to build worker strengths.

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- **Learn.** Family-centered supervisors make time to attend training to keep up with best practices and ensure they have the skills and knowledge to successfully mentor staff. They are open to learning from families, other professionals, and the people they supervise.⁷

Using Family-Centered Practice to Engage Families

Below are specific strategies to support workers in family-centered practice:

- Have regular and structured supervisory consultation with each worker that focuses on case-specific situations regarding individualization of engagement techniques with families and the quality of interaction between the worker and the family. Use words and phrases that show empathy, genuineness, respect, and competency in your interactions with the child and family.
- Observe the worker/parent interactions to assure they demonstrate the core conditions of helping in their efforts to engage the family in a working relationship.
- Shadow newer staff in critical case activities, such as home visits, case planning conferences, and interviews, and provide modeling and coaching on correct engagement approaches as needed.
- Educate the worker about the family as being experts on their situation, emphasizing their expertise regarding their own needs and strengths. Educate the worker through the use of training, targeted discussion, modeling, and coaching.
- Educate, model, and coach workers to use culturally appropriate engagement techniques and tools to create opportunities for developing emotional safety and mutual honesty.

Courageous Conversations and Conflict Resolution

Below are specific strategies to support workers in courageous conversations and conflict resolution:

- Model the use of courageous conversations throughout your engagement with the worker by demonstrating honesty, open-mindedness, and vulnerability, as well as how to listen deeply to better understand each other's perspectives and how to keep the conversation going when it gets uncomfortable or diverted.
- Coach the worker regarding the practice of full disclosure. This coaching may involve training, modeling, and/or shadowing. Questions to examine include, but are not limited to: What information was shared? What information was not shared? What were the barriers to full disclosure?
- Teach the worker how to avoid discounting or invalidating the experiences and feelings of others through each interaction with the worker.
- Reinforce, during case staffing, the four agreements of courageous conversations – stay engaged, experience discomfort, speak your truth, and expect and accept non-closure.
- Teach the worker to plan for difficult conversations by thinking through the conversation in advance, including but not limited to, role-playing possible conversations, encouraging the worker to be rested and focused, and assuring the worker that they do not have to go have all the answers.

⁷ North Carolina Division of Social Services, Family and Children's Resource Program. (2003). Supervision in Child Welfare. *Children's Services Practice Notes: For North Carolina's Child Welfare Social Workers*, 9(1). https://practicenotes.org/vol9_no1.htm

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- Teach the worker management of conflict through scenario planning and modeling in case staffing through the reinforcement of strategies to resolve and manage conflict, including but not limited to, focusing on the problem, listening and reflecting, expressing thoughts and emotions, and creating solutions.

Involving Fathers, Non-Resident Parents, and Relatives

Below are specific strategies to support workers in involving fathers, non-resident parents, and relatives:

- Set clear expectations for how to identify family team members from both maternal and paternal relatives, friends, teachers, and community supports, and provide tools, support, and guidance necessary for their success.
- Educate, model, and coach the worker on how to approach potential family team members, discuss the role and benefits of their inclusion on the team, identify possible additional team members, and explore how they could support the family and child safety.
- Observe and provide feedback to the worker on how well they identify and resolve reluctance on the part of families to identify familial and community resources that could potentially support family reunification.
- Review case notes and provide feedback to workers on the success of their efforts to identify all possible family team members.
- Educate, model, and coach the worker on strategies to successfully obtain commitments from family and community resources to support parents and children.
- Encourage the identification and addition of members to the family team throughout the life of a case.

Child and Family Team (CFT) Meetings

Below are specific strategies to support workers in Child and Family Team (CFT) meetings:

- Provide constructive feedback to the worker about the time, place, and location of their CFT meetings with the child and family. Are the different individuals being met with in private? Are the meetings at times and locations conducive to engagement, showing respect for work and school schedules, and demonstrating understanding of transportation limitations?
- Train and teach the worker the skills to enable them to provide the family with a general orientation to the CFT meeting process. The overview will provide the family with the information they need to know so they can prepare to take ownership of the case planning process and fully participate in the CFT.
- Educate, model, and coach the worker on how to identify and approach potential family team members, discuss the role and benefits of their inclusion on the team, identify possible additional team members, and explore how they could support the family and child safety.
- Educate, model, and coach the worker on strategies to successfully obtain commitments from family and community resources to support parents and children.
- Model how to explain the purpose of the CFT to the team.
- Teach the worker to prepare the family to tell their own story in a strengths-based manner describing their current level of functioning, interests, and activities.

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- Review with the worker how to share the needs that have been identified through the assessment process with the family.
- Review with the worker their efforts to help the family understand the importance of having motivated, qualified persons, including informal supports, on the team.
- Instruct the worker on how to prepare the family for having an open and honest discussion. Help them understand what can be held confidential and private that is shared during a CFT meeting.
- Teach the worker how to create an agenda for the meeting. Ensure that the family has been asked what the family would like to accomplish at the meeting. Review the agenda.
- Ensure the worker understands how to ask the family to suggest ground rules they feel may be necessary for the meeting. This may be instructed through role-playing, formal training, and/or modeling.
- Assist the worker with the identification of potentially sensitive issues that may arise in the CFT meeting and provide guidance to the worker on addressing the issues, including what may or may not be appropriate to discuss in the presence of the child.
- Ensure follow-up with members of the team on the commitments they have made related to the child and family and the overall process through modeling, observation, and case consultation.

Developing Goals with the Family and Family Services Agreements

Below are specific strategies to support workers in developing goals with the family and Family Services Agreements:

- Educate, model, and coach the worker to encourage family members to identify strengths, their perceptions of needs and services that can address needs, preferences for service providers, and participation in goal setting and assessment of progress.
- Educate, model, and coach the worker to prepare family members to participate in case planning, such as how to provide input and the importance of the plan.
- Educate, model, and coach the worker on how to use information from the family, the safety and risk assessments, case record information, and reports from providers to identify the family's strengths and needs to inform the case plan.
- Monitor whether the identification of needs and referrals to services are done in collaboration with the child and family that will best meet the identified needs and engage families in service participation.
- Monitor the quality and substance of the worker's activities by reviewing if and how the worker is using assessments to assess ongoing safety and risks, as well as re-evaluate strengths and needs of parents and children, based on changing circumstances, progress in achieving goals, and emerging issues.
- Monitor case planning to ensure that services have a reasonable chance of supporting the conditions for return or achieving other permanency.
- Monitor the quality and substance of the worker's practice by reviewing case plans to ensure goals, objectives, and action steps are -SMART - specific, measurable, achievable, realistic, and timely.

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- Educate, model, and coach the worker on how to discuss with families and children progress toward goals, emerging issues, changing needs in service delivery, or changes in goals or activities in case plans.
- Educate, model, and coach the worker on how to evaluate the effectiveness of services to produce desired results and changes and how to discuss these assessments with service providers to focus treatment and services.
- Monitor the quality and substance of the worker's practice by scheduling regular case consultations with each worker to review case plans to ensure their relevancy to progress and events and that case plans can reasonably be expected to achieve goals timely.
- Educate, model, and coach the worker on how to team with parents, caregivers, and service providers to evaluate responsiveness and relevancy of current services in achieving designated goals and addressing needs.
- Educate, model, and coach the worker on how to identify service providers that meet the family's needs, preferences, locations, and cultural norms, and how to team with them to support the safety, permanency, and well-being of children and families.
- Educate, model, and coach the worker on how to discuss with families and children their perception of the effectiveness of services, how services are helping them make progress toward their goals, their satisfaction with the services and service providers, emerging issues, changing needs in service delivery, or changes in goals in case plans.

Observable Skills and Behaviors

Following completion of this topic in training, the worker will be able to:

- Approach children and families with genuine empathy and respect.
- Refrain from using accusatory language, voice tone, or body language that could convey judgment.
- Focus on child and family strengths in case planning.
- Prioritize child and family voice in case planning.
- Demonstrate a desire to build an engaging working partnership with the family.
- Develop an engagement strategy based on the individual child and family needs, rather than approaching all families in the same way.
- Understand barriers to engaging with children and families and develop strategies to overcome those barriers.
- Consistently follow up on all action steps from contacts with the child and/or family.

Engaging Families through Family-Centered Practice Learning Lab

Overview

This is a skills-based learning lab consisting of role plays, partner work, and group discussions. There are seven topics covered in the Engaging Families Through Family-Centered Practice Learning Lab:

- Using family-centered practice to engage families
- Using a strengths-based perspective
- Courageous conversations

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- Engaging fathers
- Engaging incarcerated parents
- Child and Family Team (CFT) meetings
- Developing goals with the family

Using scenarios and role plays, this lab provides workers an opportunity to practice:

- Working with the family to ensure safety and well-being
- Strengthening the capacity of families by focusing on solutions
- Engaging, empowering, and partnering with families
- Developing a relationship between parents and service providers
- Providing individualized, culturally responsive, flexible, and relevant services
- Linking families with collaborative, comprehensive, culturally relevant, community-based networks of support and services
- Ongoing assessment with families
- Having honest and difficult conversations

Supporting Workers

Below are specific strategies to support workers in the family-centered practice learning labs:

- Assist the worker with identifying a peer to shadow in the field as they work with and engage children and families.
- Debrief what the worker observed in the field and the worker's own interactions with families. Discuss what was said and done, their feelings during field observation, what the other person may have been feeling, and the non-verbal cues displayed by individuals and themselves.
- Model the skills of engagement by creating a psychologically and physically safe place for the worker to share their feelings and experiences. The workers must be engaged and feel supported to be able to do the same for families.
- Build trust with the worker by being open, honest, empathetic, and genuine in your interactions.
- Redirect any responses of the worker that are not congruent with a belief in families and their capacity to change. While providing feedback, maintain the self-esteem of the worker by offering an alternative family-centered perspective.
- Check the worker's understanding of the 6 Principles of Partnership (everyone desires respect, everyone needs to be heard, everyone has strengths, judgments can wait, partners share power, and partnership is a process).
- When meeting with the worker, focus on strength-based techniques and benefits.
- Provide feedback that encourages and validates the use of strength-based language as opposed to deficit-based language.
- Consistently provide feedback to the worker on their engagement skills, such as being fully present when meeting with families, establishing rapport with families, preparing in advance for meeting with families, and keeping the family's voice at the forefront of all conversations.
- Build and maintain rapport with all your workers by creating a collaborative environment and encouraging feedback, input, and new ideas from your workers; actively listen in all

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interactions; be mindful of your body language; communicate with transparency and honesty; and motivate and empower your workers.

Quality Contacts

Overview

Good child welfare practice relies on quality contacts between workers and children, parents, and placement providers. Quality contacts ensure child safety, support permanency planning, and promote child and family well-being. Quality contacts are purposeful interactions between workers and children, parents, and placement providers that reflect engagement and contribute to assessment and case planning processes. Quality contacts incorporate the following components:⁸

- Preparation and planning tailored to the specific circumstances of the child and family.
- Assessment of safety, risk, permanency, and well-being, as well as progress toward individual case goals.
- Engagement of children, parents, and placement providers by the worker through the use of empathy, genuineness, and respect.
- Dialogue that values the child and parent's voice and promotes reflection on strengths, needs, and concerns.
- Follow-up on tasks or concerns discussed previously (this may include difficult conversations about why certain things did not happen as planned).
- Decision-making and problem-solving to address needs and move the case plan forward.
- Documentation to support monitoring and follow-up.

During this topic workers will learn about:

- The importance of quality contacts and why it matters.
- Strategies for preparing for quality contacts before, during, and after visits.
- Ways to conduct a quality contact.

Supporting Workers

Coaching is one key strategy that supervisors can use to help workers build their competence and confidence in conducting quality contacts. Coaching can be a valuable tool in a supervisor's "toolbox" for building worker competence for having quality contacts with families. By asking purposeful questions and using other strategies that promote self-reflection and learning, supervisors can help workers overcome challenges, identify solutions, strengthen thinking skills and confidence, and make progress toward goals. Coaching also can offer opportunities for a "parallel process" in which the supervisor models behaviors that workers can use in conducting quality contacts with families (setting expectations, engaging in reflective questioning, and providing constructive feedback). During coaching sessions, supervisors also can demonstrate attributes that contribute to engagement and relationship building (genuineness, empathy, and respect). As such, coaching can have an impact on

⁸ Capacity Building Center for States. (n.d.). *Quality Matters: Improving Caseworker Contacts with Children, Youth, and Families – Defining Quality Contacts*. https://capacity.childwelfare.gov/sites/default/files/media_pdf/defining-quality-contacts-cp-00078.pdf

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multiple levels that ultimately contribute to effective practices and positive outcomes for children and families.⁹

Below are specific strategies to support workers:

- Model and coach effective engagement methods, ongoing safety assessments, and skills in having challenging conversations. Explain to workers how the use of these practice standards and skills assists with having quality contacts.
- Review contacts making sure they are intentional and purposeful, goal-directed, culturally responsive, respectful, unbiased, tailored to the individual's needs, developmentally appropriate, and reflective of critical thinking. Provide feedback validating strengths and providing tips where there are growth opportunities.
- Reiterate that quality contacts have the following impacts: improved safety, permanency, and well-being outcomes; improved risk, safety, and needs assessments; joint development of case plans; shared understanding of progress; building trusting relationships; and improved engagement and empowerment.
- Check for understanding of policy requirements for contacts with children, parents or caregivers, placement providers, and collateral contacts. Clarify requirements as needed.
- Provide feedback on quality contacts and evidence of the core components and characteristics of quality contacts (*Appendix D: Core Components and Characteristics of Quality Contacts*).
- Ensure the worker is actively engaging and visiting with both parents throughout the life of the case.
- Support the worker before, during, and after each contact through case consultation and by discussing their strengths and challenges to promote critical thinking skills.
- Provide guidance on preparing for each type of contact. Encourage timing of contact that abides by policy, but also considers the individual or familial circumstances. Encourage contacts in a family-friendly location when possible.
- Model and coach the worker on developing an agenda for contacts that includes items identified by individuals and/or families.
- Coach the worker on engaging and collaborating with individuals and families during contacts, focus on the case plan, explore progress, make adjustments, and recap the plan, make sure workers recap clear next steps, deadlines, and state who is responsible for each step.
- Observe the worker during their contacts and provide feedback on assessing skills and cultural humility exhibited during the contact.
- Review the documentation of visits with the worker. Provide feedback to the worker regarding their documentation of the interaction with the child and parents.

Observable Skills and Behaviors

Following completion of this topic in training, the worker will be able to:

- Align visit frequency with state requirements, but also the needs of the family or individual.
- Consider the schedules of the parents, resource parents, and youth when choosing an appropriate contact time, length, and location of contact.

⁹ Capacity Building Center for States. (2017). *Supporting Quality Contacts through Supervisor-Worker Coaching*. <https://capacity.childwelfare.gov/states/resources/supervisor-worker-coaching>

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- Prioritize input from the individual they are meeting with regarding what will be discussed.
- Approach the client with genuine empathy and respect.
- Refrain from using accusatory language, voice tone, or body language that could convey judgment.
- Speak with adults and children or youth separately to provide privacy and to assess safety.
- Focus on child and family strengths in case planning.
- Prioritize child and family voice in case planning.
- Demonstrate a desire to build an engaging working partnership with the family.
- Develop engagement strategy based on the individual child and family needs, rather than approaching all families in the same way.
- Understand barriers to engaging with clients and develop strategies to overcome those barriers.
- Consistently follow up on all action steps from contacts with the child and/or family.

Quality Contacts Learning Lab

Overview

The Quality Contacts Learning Lab is a case scenario activity. This learning lab focuses on the importance of preparing for each contact, considering the family's specific situation (schedules, financial needs, childcare availability), gathering needed information during the contact, making observations of the family and their interactions, and practicing open communication with the family. The worker will be provided the opportunity to prepare for and have contact with a family via role plays and scenarios. This activity allows the worker the opportunity to practice skills and receive direct feedback from trainers and their peers. The primary purpose of this lab is to stress the importance of having meaningful, purposeful contacts with families, which requires preparation and forethought.

Supporting Workers

Below are specific strategies to support workers:

- Model for the worker the importance of preparing for quality contacts by:
 - Providing agendas for supervisory consultations, case staffing, and team/unit meetings.
 - Being punctual to meetings, focused, and eliminating distractions.
 - Being thoughtful and communicating in a manner that is open, honest, and clear.
 - Setting expectations clearly.
- Set and maintain regularly scheduled supervisory consultations, case staffing, and team/unit meetings.
- Follow through with tasks and items you committed to doing.
- Meet with the worker prior to their first contact with a family to ensure they have adequately prepared by reading the case information, formalizing the questions they need to ask, scheduling the visit for a time that works for the family and the agency, and identifying who they need to interview.
- Debrief with the worker to process strengths and challenges and promote critical thinking skills.
- Monitor the worker's documentation of contacts and follow up on action items.

Overview, Child Welfare Processes, Part 1, Intake and CPS Assessments

Overview

The primary goal of CPS Assessments is to protect children from further maltreatment and to support and improve parental/caregiver abilities to assure a safe and nurturing home for each child. Workers must question, observe, listen, gather data and information, and then analyze and synthesize the information to determine what the data means regarding safety and risk to the child. CPS Assessments are complex and require intentional teaching and guidance for new workers to accurately determine if children are abused, neglected, or dependent, if the family needs services, and what the appropriate level of intervention is needed to assure safety.

The topic Overview, Child Welfare Processes, Part 1, Intake and CPS Assessments focuses on:

- The intake interviewing process and strategies.
- An overview of CPS Assessments and defining the purpose and differences of the Family Assessment and the Investigative Assessment.
- Defining safety and risk, differentiating between the two, and describing how to recognize safety threats and risk factors when working with children and families.
- Introducing protective factors and understanding how they can mitigate the risk of child maltreatment.
- Skills for safety assessments and the use of the Safety Assessment tool to address safety threats and caretaker capacity to ensure safety for children, safety planning, and creating Temporary Parental Safety Agreements.
- Skills for risk assessment and the use of the Family Risk Assessment of Abuse and Neglect Tool to determine the future risk of maltreatment to children and the level of service to be provided to families.
- Assessment of family strengths and needs and using the Family Assessment of Strengths and Needs to inform case planning.
- Identifying and gathering information from additional sources to support safety and risk assessment and assessment decisions, including how to identify and engage appropriate collateral contacts.
- Criteria for safe case closure, including preparing the child, the child's family, and the placement provider for safe closure.

Supporting Workers

In CPS Assessment, supervisors can support workers by demonstrating how to gather information in the assessment process and use that information to make decisions regarding safety and risk. Workers will need guidance on how to document the information gathered in their assessment using factual language and how to identify what is still needed to understand the full picture and make informed decisions. Help workers understand that information gathering is ongoing for the entire CPS assessment period and that one new piece of information can significantly impact the appropriate next step or decision in a case.

Intake

Below are specific strategies to support workers:

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- Review the Intake policy with the worker to ensure their understanding and address any questions they may have.
- Elicit the worker's understanding of the purpose and process of intake, and how decisions are made.
- Discuss the limits to child protective services authority and the implications of intake decisions for children and families.
- Observe interviewing techniques and provide constructive feedback.
- Check the worker's understanding of the steps in the child protective services process following intake, and common child protective services terminology and clarify information as needed.
- Review the Maltreatment Screening Tools with the worker and discuss how to apply the tools to determine if allegations meet the legal definitions of abuse, neglect, and/or dependency.
- Discuss screening decisions and the support you will provide to the worker in those decisions.
- Review the requirements for response time for reports that are screened in for assessment using the Response Priority Decision Tree.
- Review the requirements for determining the appropriate Assessment Response Type (Family or Investigative) for reports screened-in for assessment.
- Provide opportunities for the worker to observe more experienced workers conducting intakes and making intake decisions.

CPS Assessments

Below are specific strategies to support workers:

- Review the CPS Assessments policy with the worker to ensure their understanding and answer any questions they may have.
- Ensure the worker has a clear understanding of the difference between Investigative Assessments and Family Assessments and the processes for both.
- Ensure the worker has a clear understanding of the differences between safety and risk and how each influences assessments and decision-making when working with children and families.
- Coach the worker on the importance of using family-centered language when engaging with children, families, and other partners.
- Model explaining child welfare terminology and acronyms that are used.
- Discuss the importance of regularly establishing contact with all identified persons in the assessment who may have information regarding the allegation, including family members, collateral sources, and the child.
- Review fact-finding processes (interviewing, observation, etc.) that are used to determine if maltreatment occurred, if children are safe in their homes, and if ongoing agency involvement is necessary.
- Provide guidance on appropriate documentation and model appropriate use of the CPS Assessment Documentation Tool.
- Review completed structured decision-making tools and engage workers in discussions about how the findings of the tool influence case work and assessment decisions.

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- During case staffing with the worker, discuss strategies and immediate interventions that can be used to protect children when safety threats are present to prevent removal and placement.

Observable Skills and Behaviors

Following completion of this topic in training, the worker will be able to:

Intake

- Use a strengths-based approach to interview reporters.
- Understand and describe the level of and/or limits to child protective services authority.
- Accurately determine if reported allegations meet the legal definitions of abuse, neglect, and/or dependency using the Maltreatment Screening Tools that correspond to the allegations.
- Accurately make a screening decision, in consultation with their supervisor.
- Articulate the decision-making processes associated with intake and the impact of those decisions on children and families.
- Accurately determine residency and county responsible for completing the CPS Assessment.
- Appropriately determine response time for reports screened in for the assessment using available resources, such as the Response Priority Decision Tree.
- Accurately determine the appropriate Assessment Response Type (Family or Investigative) for reports screened-in for assessment.
- Describe the steps in the child protective services process for the following intake with ease.
- Understand common child protective services terminology.
- Clearly define terminology and acronyms for families whenever they arise in documents or conversations.

CPS Assessment

- Regularly establish contact with all identified persons who may have information regarding the allegation, including family members, collateral sources, and the child.
- Consistently approach families in a strengths-based manner, focusing on the agency's priority to protect children and strengthen families.
- Effectively establish trust and rapport with family members and other collateral sources to support the assessment process.
- Effectively utilize fact-finding processes (interviewing, observation, etc.) to determine if maltreatment occurred, if children are safe in their homes, and if ongoing agency involvement is necessary.
- Appropriately use structured decision-making tools to support the assessment process.
- Accurately consider safety and risk factors to understand the current degree of safety and future level of risk of harm for children.
- Identify strategies and immediate interventions to protect children when safety threats are present to prevent removal and placement.
- Makes appropriate case decisions based on the results of the assessment.
- Identify when ongoing services are needed to reduce the risk of maltreatment and/or when the case can be safely closed.

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- Accurately describe what families can expect from CPS involvement following assessment, appropriately preparing the family for case transfer.

CPS Assessment Learning Lab

Overview

This learning lab is a series of scenario-based activities that provide opportunities to practice safety and risk assessments, including the proper use of assessment tools, completing the tools, and making case decisions, and recommendations based on the assessments. This learning lab focuses on:

- **The Intake Process:** The worker will review and complete the Child Protective Services Structured Intake form based on a family case scenario, receiving feedback from trainers and peers.
- **Interviewing and Observations Related to Safety and Risk Assessments:** The worker will continue with the same family case scenario used for Intake. The worker will identify who in the family needs to be interviewed, what questions need to be asked of each family member, and what observations the worker should be making. In addition, the worker will observe an interview during training and note and discuss in class their observations related to the family member and the interviewer. The last activity for this section involves a simulation using pictures of real homes where the worker is tasked with documenting their observations. Pictures of the home include the living room, kitchen, bathroom, and bedroom.
- **Safety Assessments:** Using the same family case scenario, the worker will review information gathered from initial interviews and home visits, respond to safety assessment questions, and complete the North Carolina Safety Assessment.
- **Risk and Family Strengths and Needs Assessments:** Using the same family case scenario, the worker will complete the Temporary Parental Safety Agreement and the North Carolina Family Assessment of Strengths and Needs. Upon completion, the worker will make recommendations for services for the family.

Supporting Workers

Below are specific strategies to support workers:

- Ask the worker to explain their understanding of the purpose and process of Intake, limits to child protective services authority, decision-making processes with Intake, and impact associated with those decisions, and fill in any misunderstandings.
- Review with the worker the roles and responsibilities of Intake and CPS Assessment workers.
- Stress the importance of the Intake worker fully engaging reporters to gather the needed information.
- Review the worker's understanding of the child protective services process following intake, including the steps, and the timelines outlined within the policy.
- Ensure the worker has a clear understanding of the differences between Investigative Assessments and Family Assessments and the processes for both.

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- Ensure the worker has a clear understanding of the difference between safety and risk and how each influences assessments and decision-making when working with children and families.
- Assist the worker in understanding when safety plans are needed and developing appropriate strategies for TPSAs.
- Ask the worker to explain the purpose of the Family Strengths and Needs Assessment and when it is used in the case process.
- Assist workers in making the connection between information gathered during assessments, structured decision-making tools, case planning, and decision-making.

Overview, Child Welfare Processes, Part 2, In-Home Services

Overview

In-home services are provided to keep families together. Utilizing in-home services, DSS agencies respond when families are in crisis, providing information and connections to services in the community, and helping families develop the skills and tools they need to identify their needs and connect to support. The primary goal of opening an ongoing case for CPS In-Home Services is to support families to safely maintain their children in their own homes by eliminating identified safety and threat concerns and reducing the risk of future child maltreatment. This is achieved through the engagement of the family, their support system, and other service providers.

This section focuses on services to maintain children safely in their own homes and prevent removal. Topics covered include:

- The purpose and role of in-home services, including policies that guide in-home services.
- Engaging families receiving in-home services.
- Interviewing families as part of the Family Strengths and Needs Assessment.
- The purposes of the In-Home Family Services Agreement, including the importance of non-resident parents in the development of the agreements, examining the content and structure of the In-Home Family Services Agreement, and the connection between the In-Home Family Services Agreement and safety, permanency, and well-being.
- Criteria for safe case closure, including preparing the child, the child's family, and the placement provider for safe case closure.

Supporting Workers

In in-home services, workers should be supported by teaching, modeling, and coaching on the importance of family-centered engagement and ongoing assessment in the provision of in-home service delivery. In-home services will be successful when the worker has a genuine working relationship with the family members.

Below are specific strategies to support workers:

- Ensure the worker understands what in-homes services are and which families meet the criteria to receive in-home services.
- Assist the worker with fully engaging family members and identifying strategies to engage families.

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- Educate the worker on available services for families in the local communities.
- Promote resource sharing by having periodic staff meetings where workers share information about their community resources and new services.
- Discuss the importance of not using the same services for every family. Coach tailoring the services to the family's individual needs.
- Model asking questions that elicit the family's preferred services and providers. Ask questions regarding what did or did not work in the past. Ask questions about barriers, such as transportation or scheduling around other priorities.
- Provide feedback on linking services to needs. Evaluate whether services appropriately match the needs and current circumstances of the family.
- Evaluate whether the worker assesses safety, risk, and progress on an ongoing basis and with each contact. Provide feedback on the worker's ongoing assessment of safety, risk, and progress.
- Monitor whether the worker updates case plans as needed.
- Coach worker on the importance of developing an informal support network (relatives, neighbors, family friends, etc.) that can support the family during the case and long after the case is closed.
- Model asking families about informal support people in a manner that obtains those that they call in times of need.
- Provide developmental feedback on the In-Home Family Services Agreement and services identified in the plan.

Observable Skills and Behaviors

Following completion of this topic in training, the worker will be able to:

- Provide services or referral to services associated with the needs identified in the assessment.
- Recognize that safety concerns can change over time and revise their strategies to address concerns as they evolve.
- Actively monitor child safety and risk while in the home.
- Continually monitor family progress and update the case plan as necessary.
- Engage children and families in the case planning process.
- Engage the family's informal support network (relatives, neighbors, family friends, etc.) to support in-home services.
- Deliver services within the context of the family's own community culture.

In-Home Family Services Learning Lab

Overview

This learning lab consists of case scenarios, individual and partner work, as well as small group and classroom discussions. The areas covered during this learning lab are:

- Engaging Families in In-Home Services: The worker will create a list of things that must be completed during in-home services home visits, including observing conditions that have improved and identifying threats to safety and risk.

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- Interviewing for Strengths and Needs: Using a family case scenario, the worker will practice interviewing skills by asking questions and listening to responses. The worker will have the opportunity to interview a family member without a script, using various interviewing techniques.
- Safe Case Closure: In this learning lab, the worker will assess whether there is danger in closing a case that has not been assessed for safety and risk of future harm, and if there is danger in leaving a case open. The worker will participate in skills practice by using a Child and Family Team meeting to determine if the case can be closed safely.

Supporting Workers

Below are specific strategies to support workers:

- Check for understanding of the three goals for in-home services: to maintain the safety of children; to strengthen parental capacity to protect and nurture children; and to maintain children in their own homes.
- Review parental protective capacities with the worker.
- Provide feedback to the worker on integrating protective capacities into in-home family service agreements. Validate strengths and provide guidance.
- Review the in-home services policy, contact requirements, risk and safety assessments, and In-Home Family Services Agreement requirements.
- Review the purpose of the Child and Family Team (CFT) meeting in in-home services. Discuss when to convene a CFT meeting and the importance of a diverse team. Be clear about expectations.
- Discuss case transfer to out-of-home care versus safe case closure.

Overview, Child Welfare Process, Part 3, Permanency Planning Services

Overview

Permanency planning services are provided to children who must be separated from their own parents or caretakers when they are unable or unwilling to provide adequate protection and care. It is the responsibility of the county child welfare services agency to ensure the child remains in its custody for the shortest time possible. Permanency planning services require a thorough assessment of the child and family's needs and careful planning prior to and throughout a child's experience in county child welfare custody. Permanency planning services involve working diligently and urgently with the child's parents toward reunification. If this is not possible, permanency planning means working urgently and relentlessly to find and involve relatives, through ongoing diligent search and engagement, who are willing and able to provide care and other lifelong support for the child.

This section focuses on planning and decision-making with the family about placement and preparing the child, the child's family, and the out-of-home care provider for separation and placement and striving for permanency. Topics covered include:

- Choosing the most appropriate placement, preventing placement disruption, and engaging relatives in the placement process.
- Matching children and youth with caregivers who can meet their individual needs and share their cultural heritage and traditions.

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- Cultural considerations and application of that cultural knowledge to choose culturally appropriate placements and services.
- Placement considerations for special populations, including LGBTQIA+, infants exposed to substances, medically fragile children, large sibling groups, pregnant and parenting teens, and adolescents and older youth.
- Diligent search for and engagement of relatives as a support and/or placement resource for children and families involved in child welfare.
- Defining the importance of Family Time for children who are placed in foster care, supporting, and facilitating Family Time, and mitigating concerns that may arise so that children and families continue to have Family Time.
- Defining Shared Parenting, including the purpose of a Shared Parenting meeting and how shared parenting benefits the child, the child's parents, foster parents, and the agency in achieving safety, permanency, and well-being outcomes.
- Purpose of the Permanency Planning Family Services Agreement, including the importance of including non-resident parents in the development of the agreements, examining the content and structure of the Permanency Planning Family Services Agreement, and the connection between the Permanency Planning Family Services Agreement and safety, permanency, and well-being.
- Ongoing services for permanency and permanency planning requirements, including an overview of each permanency option in North Carolina, considerations to make when determining the most appropriate permanency option, preparing the child and family for permanency, and achieving permanency.
- Criteria for safe case closure, including preparing the child, the child's family, and the placement provider for permanency and safe case closure.
- Transitioning to adulthood and supporting youth as they transition to adulthood.

Supporting Workers

Parental progress toward goals that would create a safe environment for their child or enable the parent to meet the needs of the child does not solely depend upon the parent's abilities or willingness to change, but also depends on the workers' abilities to enter into a relationship and engage the parents in real change in their life. Workers must have the skills to foster the relationship between the parent and the child. Workers must also have knowledge of resources in the community and in helping the parents to set goals and determine tasks that would lead to goal achievement and permanency. Making sound decisions in cases depends upon the worker's ability to determine achievement criteria and to help the parents set goals and tasks that will alleviate the problems and needs that led to DSS involvement.

Permanency planning is a cooperative effort in which the worker, in partnership with the parents, children, and other team members, develops a roadmap for moving a child to permanence promptly while at the same time addressing the child's safety and well-being needs. Effective assessments drive the permanency planning process.

Placement

Below are specific strategies to support workers in making placement decisions:

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- Coach workers to match children and youth with caregivers who can meet their individual needs and share their cultural heritage and traditions; including properly matching LGBTQIA+, infants exposed to substances, medically fragile children, large sibling groups, pregnant and parenting teens, and adolescents and older youth to the appropriate placement.
- Provide observation opportunities where new workers observe lead workers' engagement of the family's informal support network (relatives, neighbors, family, friends, etc.) as ongoing connections for children in foster care. Debrief the observation with the worker focusing on how they plan to integrate the skills and strategies used in their own practice.
- Assess placement decisions for proper matching of children and youth with caregivers who can meet their individual needs and maintain connections. Provide feedback.
- Review placement decisions and their supporting logic and facts with workers and provide feedback on improving placement choices moving forward.
- Educate, model, and coach the worker on the need to make the first placement the right placement, recognizing that connections matter.
- Review case documentation and provide feedback on steps taken by the worker to support placements to ensure stability and achievement of permanency goals.
- Educate, model, and coach the worker on key variables to consider for matching children to placements that will best meet their needs and support permanency. Encourage them to use assessment information to support their decision.
- Encourage the worker to actively listen to parents and children and their wishes and concerns regarding placement options.
- Educate, model, and coach the worker to prioritize and conduct quality visits as a critical strategy for maintaining placement stability and productive relationships and to support the achievement of case and permanency goals.
- Educate and coach the worker on preparing the placement provider for placement by providing open and honest information about the child and their unique needs.
- Educate the worker about the importance of working closely with members of the family team to make initial placement decisions, support those placements, and plan for transitions
- Monitor initial placement decisions to ensure they are made with the child and family. Model and coach the worker on how to engage and prepare families to attend Child and Family Team (CFT) meetings.
- Model and coach the worker on the importance of and strategies to obtain each family member's voice and perspective when making placement decisions.
- Educate, model, and coach workers on how to talk with children about foster care, what to expect in care, and answering questions that children may have about placement.
- Assist the worker in providing clear, open communication to children about why they are in care and what the agency's hope is (reunification, placement with relatives, etc.).

Working with and Supporting Relatives

Below are specific strategies to support workers in working with and supporting relatives:

- Educate, model, and coach the worker on how to support family members and children in identifying and engaging relatives, friends, and others who may be supportive resources for the family.

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- Develop and implement tools to support the worker's assessment of potential relatives to safely meet the needs of children and to support the identified permanency goals.
- Observe and provide feedback to the worker on their use of diligent search tools and strategies.
- Observe and provide feedback to the worker on their engagement with both paternal and maternal relatives.
- Observe and provide feedback to the worker on how they engage and communicate with relatives regarding their ability and willingness to care for their relative's children.
- Reiterate the importance of and model prioritizing ongoing connections to relatives and other important people for children in foster care.
- Assist the worker in assessing whether potential relatives are willing and able to safely care for children.
- Assist the worker in assessing whether potential relatives are willing and able to provide ongoing support and connection for the child and family beyond placement.
- Educate the worker on how to locate non-resident parents, incarcerated parents, out-of-state parents, and both paternal and maternal family members. Provide information on contacting child support, local detention centers, and state and federal prisons to obtain contact information for relatives.
- Ensure the worker is asking each child and known family member about relatives that may exist on both paternal and maternal sides of the family.
- Develop and implement tools to support the worker's assessment of potential relatives to safely meet the needs of children and to support identified permanency options.
- Review the Initial Safety Provider Assessment and Kinship Care Comprehensive Assessment with the worker. Discuss the use of these assessments.
- Provide the worker with already completed Safety Provider Assessments and Kinship Care Comprehensive Assessments for their review. Spend time with the worker discussing any questions or observations they have after reviewing the documents.

Shared Parenting

Below are specific strategies to support workers in facilitating shared parenting:

- Educate, model, and coach the worker to identify, structure, and facilitate opportunities for parents to interact with and be actively involved in daily decisions affecting their children, when safe.
- Educate, model, and coach the worker on how to facilitate shared parenting meetings, identify barriers and challenges, and develop solutions.
- Monitor the distance of a child's placement resource to their parents' residence and discuss with the worker how they plan on supporting parent involvement.
- Educate, model, and coach the worker on how to collaborate with parents and foster parents to support shared parenting.
- Assist the worker in finding safe opportunities for parents and family members to participate in the child's daily living (bath time, reading books, attending events, and doctor appointments).

Family Time

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Below are specific strategies to support workers in facilitating Family Time:

- Educate, model, and coach the worker on how to develop a Family Time and contact plan that identifies measurable and observable goals, and outlines the type, frequency, location, and duration of Family Time and if Family Time must be supervised.
- Educate, model, and coach the worker on how to identify, structure, and facilitate opportunities for parents to interact with and be actively involved daily in decisions affecting their children.
- Educate, model, and coach the worker to support children, their parents, and foster parents before, during, and after Family Time.
- Educate, model, and coach the worker to recognize that regular, meaningful Family Time for children in out-of-home care has several positive outcomes, including enhanced parental engagement, greater likelihood of reunification, and improved emotional well-being for parents and children among other benefits.
- Educate, model, and coach the worker to observe the interaction between the child and their parents during Family Time and document what activities took place and how the time was spent.
- Assist the worker in understanding the use of visits to preserve connections, strengthen relationships, and make progress on identified goals.
- Review sibling visitation plans with the worker, ensuring appropriateness and feasibility.
- Monitor sibling visitation to ensure that it is consistently occurring as planned and discuss with the worker strategies to improve visitation plan compliance and quality.
- Educate, model, and coach the worker to use Family Time to:
 - Observe and assess the parent's relationship with their child and their ability to respond to the child's needs
 - Prepare the child and parent for reunification
 - Assist parents to understand the child's needs and behaviors
 - Observe changes in the parent's behavior over time
 - Observe the child's reactions and responses to the parents

Permanency Planning Family Services Agreement

Below are specific strategies to support workers in developing the Permanency Planning Family Services Agreement:

- Monitor the worker's ability to provide services that promote the permanency goal and expedite the timeline to permanency. Give feedback.
- Review documentation to monitor the worker's progress in the provision of services to support the timely achievement of the identified permanency goal (transportation, flexible schedule, childcare). Discuss findings and feedback in consultation with the worker.
- Educate, model, and coach the worker on how to develop plan objectives that specify the exact steps and milestones that indicate progress toward resolving the problems which led to the agency's involvement.
- Educate, model, and coach workers to match services to address strengths and needs, and the permanency goal, and to support the creation of the conditions for return and permanency that must exist in the home for the child to achieve safe permanency.

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- Educate, model, and coach the worker to arrive at case planning meetings knowledgeable of assessment information, and the child and family's circumstances and needs.
- Review case documentation to determine if families are involved in decision-making. Discuss findings and strategies for improving the involvement of children and families in planning for permanency in supervision with the worker.
- Assist the worker with connecting families to services based on individual strengths and the specific needs of each family member.
- Educate, model, and coach the worker to collaborate with families to determine which services are most appropriate for their needs before considering the availability of services.
- Assist the worker in developing plans that have behaviorally specific and achievable goals and action steps.
- Coach and provide feedback on the worker's ability to give children a voice in permanency planning. Set the expectation that the worker is responsible for setting goals with children during case planning. The worker should explore the child's goals and aspirations. In addition, they should intentionally explore the relationships children already have and deliver services that allow children opportunities to further develop their existing relationships.

Permanency

Below are specific strategies to support workers in achieving timely permanency for all children and families:

- Monitor the workers' ability to determine the least restrictive, most family-like, permanency goal that meets the unique needs of the child.
- Coach, model, and provide feedback on continually assessing the identified permanency goal and revising the goal as needed.
- Review documentation to determine the consistent inclusion of youth in foster care in case planning unless documented reasons not to. Discuss findings and feedback in supervision with workers
- Educate, model, and coach the worker on how to determine a change in permanency goal is necessary and how to meet with the child and parents to discuss changes in permanency goals, case plans, or service providers.
- Educate, model, and coach the worker on how to talk openly with children and families about what they will need to ensure lasting permanency after case closure and what services, or support will best meet the family's ongoing needs.
- Educate, model, and coach the worker on how to talk with parents, children, and other family members about adding or changing a permanency goal and other sensitive issues using full disclosure.
- Review documentation to determine the consistent inclusion of children in permanency planning unless documented reasons not to. Discuss findings and feedback with the worker.
- Educate, model, and coach the worker on how to help children understand what family, belonging, and permanency mean. Convey that children who have grown up without the security of consistent family connections and positive peer support may not fully recognize the necessity of such relationships. The worker can help ensure children are aware of the benefits

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and opportunities that come from connectedness and help them recognize their existing supports to build the family-like network essential for success.

Observable Skills and Behaviors

Following completion of this topic in training, the worker will be able to:

- Approach family assessments in a strengths-based manner.
- Arrange for and continually monitor the placement based on the specific needs of the child.
- Carefully plan with the family when placement is necessary, developing a Family Time and contact agreement.
- Assess child needs on an ongoing basis to ensure continued placement and services are appropriate.
- Prioritize the kinship network when identifying placement options.
- Prioritize emotional and legal permanency for children in foster care.
- Engage children and families in the case planning process.
- Engage the family's informal support network (relatives, neighbors, family friends, etc.) as ongoing connections for children in foster care.
- Describe the importance of and prioritizes ongoing connections to relatives and other important people for children in foster care.
- Continually assess the appropriateness of the identified permanency goal and revises the goal as needed.
- Provide services that will support the permanency goal and expedite the timeline to permanence.

Permanency Planning Services Learning Lab

Overview

This skills-based learning lab uses scenarios, individual and partner work, and small and large group discussions to learn, practice, and further explore the many topics related to permanency and placement. There are 8 areas covered in the Permanency Planning Services Learning Lab as identified below:

- Preparing for placement
- Placement
- Diligent Search
- Family Time
- Shared Parenting
- Reunification
- Adoption
- Preparing children for permanency

Supporting Workers

Preparing for placement

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During this learning lab, the worker is given an assignment to consider what they should do or say to prepare either a child, the child's parents, or the placement provider for placement. Role plays and large group discussions are utilized to practice and enhance learning across groups.

Below are specific strategies to support workers in preparing children and families for placement:

- Discuss with the worker how they prepare children, parents, and placement providers for placements.
- Monitor and provide feedback on how the worker includes the child and parent's voice in placement decisions.
- In preparation for placement, determine if the worker thoroughly addressed the child's wishes and needs with parents and placement providers.
- Coach and provide feedback to the worker about open and honest conversations with parents and placement providers to prepare them for placement.
- Monitor and provide feedback on the worker's ability to be flexible and meet the needs of parents and placement providers when developing placement plans.

Placement

During this learning lab, the worker will watch the ReMoved Part 3 video: "Love is Never Wasted". While watching the video, the worker is asked to keep in mind the discussions they had in class regarding grief and loss, planning for placement with children and families, placement considerations, preparing for placement, and placement stability. The worker will record their observations in their Participant Workbook.

Below are specific strategies to support workers in planning for placement:

- Watch the Part 3 video: "Love is Never Wasted" and discuss the worker's observations they made of the video. Discuss your own observations as well.
- Monitor and provide feedback to the worker on their ability to prepare parents for placement. Evident by clearly providing the reason for removal; providing details about the placement provider; discussing the intent to reunify; reviewing the child's schedule and routine; requesting the child's special items; listening with empathy; obtaining the family's placement preferences; explaining what to expect; providing agency contact information; discussing Family Time and the next contact date with the child; and reviewing information on the legal process.
- Monitor and provide feedback to the worker on their ability to prepare children for placement. Evident by consideration of the age and development of the child when talking with the child about the placement provider; sharing the reason for removal; explaining what to expect in placement; providing agency contact information; discussing Family Time and the next contact date with parents and siblings; and answering all questions.
- Monitor and provide feedback to the worker on their ability to prepare placement providers for placement. Evident by the worker providing the following information about the child: medical information (medications, glasses, hearing aids, etc.), routine, favorite foods, schedule; upcoming appointments, educational needs, strengths and needs, behavioral information, and history of abuse and neglect. In addition, providing information about the agency's goal for permanency and agency contact information.

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- Provide feedback on how well the worker provides an opportunity for parents, children, and placement providers to ask questions and how well they honestly and openly answer questions.
- Ensure the worker is utilizing pre-placement visits and provide feedback that supports planning for pre-placement visits in Child and Family Team meetings.
- Provide feedback on the worker's ability to support the child's placement. Evident by their ability to manage conflict; engage in courageous conversations; assess and address the needs of the child and the placement provider; provide services for children, their families, and the placement provider; encourage a strong relationship between parents and the placement provider; engagement in continuous cultural humility; ongoing assessment of safety and stability; regular opportunities for respite; and utilization of Intensive Family Preservation Services.

Diligent Search

During this learning lab, the worker will review a scenario and respond to questions about the methods used to make contacts with potential connections for a child, strategies to engage the identified potential connections, anticipating and managing resistance and confidentiality, and what the worker hopes to achieve in contacting and engaging each potential connection. Workers will identify potential biases related to engaging relatives. The worker will also participate in a role-play demonstrating engaging a potential connection. The activity ends with a discussion about potential opportunities for and barriers to searching for connections.

Below are specific strategies to support workers in strategies they can use in diligent search:

- Explore the methods the worker plans to use to search for potential connections for families. Provide additional methods, if needed.
- Elicit how the worker plans to engage identified potential connections. Provide additional guidance and strategies.
- Coach and prepare the worker to anticipate and manage resistance, questions, and confidentiality.
- Explore the worker's understanding of what they can achieve in contacting and engaging with potential connections. Clarify additional benefits to engaging more relatives, friends, and others who may be a supportive resource for the family.

Family Time

Research shows that Family Time is important to achieving reunification and lessening the time in out-of-home care placement. Family Time should be designed to help families learn more about what their children need. This is a very important service in the array of services available to a family that does not require a referral to another agency or a waiting list. During this learning lab, the worker will participate in a group activity discussing and role-playing strategies to prepare for Family Time with a parent. In the role-play they will focus on one of the five fundamentals of facilitating quality Family Time:

- Reaching an agreement with the parent about the child's needs to be met in Family Time.
- Preparing parents for their child's reactions and how to give their child their full attention at each Family Time.

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- Reminding parents immediately before and during Family Time of how they plan to meet the particular needs of their child.
- Helping parents express and cope with their feelings to encourage them to visit consistently. Recognizing and celebrating the parent's strengths in responding to their child's needs during Family Time.

This learning lab concludes with a reflection, brainstorming, and discussion regarding:

- Identifying and addressing trauma and stress experienced during Family Time.
- Strategies to acknowledge biases, privilege, and the power workers hold to ensure fairness in decision-making and planning for Family Time.
- Level of understanding regarding the five protective factors, and how they relate to Family Time
- Strategies to support and facilitate Family Time to achieve positive outcomes.

Below are specific strategies to support workers in preparing and supporting Family Time:

- Elicit the worker's understanding of the Family Time policy and the benefits of Family Time and clarify anything they missed.
- Ensure the worker reaches an agreement with the parent about the child's needs to be met during Family Time.
- Discuss the worker's strategies for preparing parents for Family Time, including discussing the child's potential reactions and how to respond to the child and full attention.
- Observe the worker in the field during Family Time paying attention to the worker's skills in reminding parents immediately before and during Family Time of how they plan to meet the needs of their child, helping parents express and cope with their feelings to encourage them to visit consistently, and recognizing and celebrating the parent's strengths in responding to their child's needs during Family Time. Provide feedback.
- Review the worker's documentation of Family Time.

Shared Parenting

During this learning lab, the worker will be asked to complete a Shared Parenting Action Plan, which highlights the worker's plans to encourage and support shared parenting partnerships; helps a child's parents understand the benefits of shared parenting; supports foster parents as they learn about shared parenting; and addresses questions the worker has about shared parenting. Below are specific strategies to support the worker in planning for and supporting shared parenting:

- Review the worker's Shared Parenting Action Plan.
- Discuss the worker's commitments to support Shared Parenting and discuss any additional support they may need to achieve these commitments.
- Review the questions the worker has highlighted in the action plan and provide information as needed.
- Discuss support you can provide the worker to achieve their commitments, provide support, and check-in on the worker's progress.

Reunification

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During the reunification learning lab, the worker will partner with a peer to complete the Family Reunification Assessment and Risk Reassessment using a family scenario. Following this exercise, workers discuss the conditions that are needed to safely return a child home and the agency's reasonable efforts that are required for reunification to occur.

Below are specific strategies to support workers in planning for and supporting reunification:

- Explore the following questions with the worker when they are planning for reunification:
 - What safety decision did they make?
 - Is it safe to return the child home?
 - What would make it unsafe to return the child home?
 - What reasonable efforts are required to make this reunification happen?
- During case staffing, provide support and guidance to the worker regarding steps towards a successful reunification.
- Review a completed Family Reunification Assessment with the worker. Discuss the case and the reunification plan with the worker and the worker assigned to the case and, if possible, have the new worker participate in a Child and Family Team (CFT) meeting on that case. After the CFT meeting, meet with the worker to discuss what they observed and answer any questions they may have.

Adoption

Adoption is a social, emotional, and legal process through which children who will not be raised by their own parents become full, permanent, and legal members of another family. As such, adoption involves the rights of three distinct triad members: the child's parents, the child, and the adoptive parents. Adoption is also a lifelong process. Ethical and sensitive adoption issues change over time as children who were adopted become adults and may choose to claim their right to know their genetic and historical identity. It is imperative that workers working in adoption act ethically and are aware of their own biases to ensure the rights of all the involved parties at all points in the process.

In the adoption learning lab, the worker is asked to do the following:

- Identify and acknowledge situations and circumstances that might trigger bias.
- Identify how their own bias might impact decisions they make related to adoption, adoption matching, and adoptive placements.
- Discuss strategies that can be implemented to their bias.

Below are specific strategies to support workers in planning for and supporting adoption:

- Engage in a conversation with the worker about the importance of identifying and acknowledging situations and circumstances that might trigger their bias related to adoption, adoptive placements, and adoptive parents. Create a safe environment by refraining from judgment during the conversation.
- Encourage the worker to share how their own bias might impact decisions they make related to adoption, adoption matching, and adoptive placements. Support the worker as they share this information.
- Assist the worker in exploring strategies they can utilize to address their bias.
- Educate, model, and coach the worker on how to thoroughly assess the child's needs and strengths and potential adoptive parents to properly match children to adoptive placement.

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- Model sharing openly and honestly the needs of the child with the potential adoptive parents.
- Model and observe the worker in brainstorming support and services available to meet both the child's and adoptive parents' needs. Including needs related to trauma for both.
- Coach the worker in their development of a gradual adoption transition plan. Discuss the importance of involving children, adoptive parents, and current caregivers in planning.

Preparing the Child for Permanency

During the learning lab for preparing children for permanency, the worker will brainstorm strategies about how to prepare children for permanency. Workers will share their brainstorming as a large group so that each worker has the opportunity to add these strategies to their “toolbox.”

Below are specific strategies to support workers in preparing the child for permanency:

- Coach and provide feedback to the worker on including youth in planning for permanency; assessing their strength and needs; identifying relatives, fictive-kin, and others who they have or would like to have a connection with; developing their goals and objectives in the Family Services Agreement; discussing their education and employment opportunities and goals' planning for their successful transition to adulthood; and decisions around service delivery, case planning, and permanency.
- Encourage the use of Life Books. Life Books should capture the time before the child came into care and throughout their time in out-of-home care. Life Books are especially helpful for children who are unable to reunify with their parents and who reach permanency through adoption.
- Review the worker's Life Books for a copy of a certified birth certificate (or date and time of birth, location of birth, and weight and length at birth), schools/daycare centers the child has attended, medical information (including immunizations, diseases, and allergies), medical history of the child's family, pictures of the child at various ages, names and pictures of siblings, and pictures of the child's parents. Provide feedback on the development of Life Books and additional items to include.
- Reiterate with the worker the importance of preparing children for permanency, no matter the permanency goal or outcome. Discuss with the worker how they plan to prepare children for permanency, including specific strategies they can use. The worker should facilitate exploring the many options for legal and relational permanency with the child, as well as the feelings of fear, rejection, grief, loss, or abandonment that can create a reluctance to pursue permanency.
- Provide feedback on the worker's ability to be honest and direct with the children they serve. Stress the importance of direct and authentic communication to build trust with children and help them understand the reasons behind various permanency recommendations.
- During supervisory consultations provide clarification and guidance as needed. Make sure to include the following guidance to the worker:
 - Permanency is a process for a child, not just an outcome. It should begin before placement and extend after the placement has occurred.
 - Encourage children to express their emotions, concerns, and thoughts regarding the placement and validate their feelings.
 - Maintaining connections to the child's family and important people from a child's past may help to foster positive identity development and mitigate negative outcomes.

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- Permanency work with children requires time, consistency, honesty, and authenticity from workers.
- Work with children should not be considered only in the context of therapy. Although behavioral health services may be appropriate for any individual child, engaging the child in activities, tasks, and conversations to prepare them for permanency is the responsibility of workers, caregivers, family members, court personnel, and others. In some cases, the child's parents or other relatives may be able to help in the permanency process by giving their children "permission" to move on to a new family.
- Explain what a permanent family means in terms that are appropriate to the child's age and developmental level.
- Ask children to respond in their own words to open-ended questions about any perceived difference between foster care and adoption.

Key Factors Impacting Families and Engaging Communities

Overview

Local DSS agencies cannot meet the needs of the families they serve alone. Community partnerships are collaborative relationships between public child welfare agencies and other stakeholders to address safety, permanence, and well-being. When engaging families and communities, it is important to be aware of key factors and biases that impact families. Key factors include domestic violence, mental health, substance use, child sexual abuse, and human trafficking.

This section covers a variety of topics impacting families and engaging communities. Topics covered include:

- Defining the importance of community partnerships and what it means to partner with communities to achieve safety, permanency, and well-being for children and families.
- Biases and assumptions individuals hold related to domestic violence, mental health, substance use, child sexual abuse, and human trafficking, and how these biases and assumptions impact outcomes for children and families involved with the child welfare system.
- Strategies that workers can use to engage individuals in the change process when there are concerns regarding substance use.
- Best practices to engage families affected by domestic violence to build networks of support and create safety plans to help strengthen families and keep children safe.
- Overview of the most common mental health needs and diagnoses in child welfare.
- Creating a better understanding of child sexual abuse and its impact on the child and the family, including treatment, and identifying resources and support for children and their families impacted by sexual abuse.
- Understanding what child sex trafficking entails and the impact trafficking has on children and their families.

Supporting Workers:

Workers must be educated on the complexities of domestic violence, mental health, substance use, child sexual abuse, and human trafficking. However, the worker alone is not the sole expert on these key factors impacting families. Community and service partners have more experience addressing

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these factors with families. Community partners can assist with a deeper understanding of these factors within the context of their specific community. It is critical to support workers as they develop these partnerships to better serve families.

Below are specific strategies to support workers in engaging communities, as well as families impacted by domestic violence, mental health, substance use, child sexual abuse, and human trafficking:

- Ask the worker to reflect on community partnerships they are aware of. Explore partnerships they feel are currently helpful for the families they serve and any partnerships that need to be developed.
- Encourage the development of new community partnerships and model the process of engaging potential community partners.
- Promote an awareness that all communities are different and the need to approach new partners in a humble, flexible manner.
- Educate the worker on the communities your agency serves. Provide guidance so they can navigate developing relationships in their local assigned areas.
- Stress the importance of mutually beneficial relationships. Ask the worker to reflect on a collaborative relationship that has been difficult to develop. Coach the worker on how to develop mutual purpose and benefit with that community partner. Check-in on progress and provide feedback.
- Ask the worker to reflect on the myths and truths they learned in the pre-service training about domestic violence, mental health, substance use, child sexual abuse, and human trafficking. Explore how they will use this knowledge to help families (see Appendix E: Truths and Myths).
- Elicit the worker's understanding of the warning signs of human trafficking and how to respond. Clarify any misunderstandings.
- Observe the worker's approach in engaging families with mental health, domestic violence, and substance use concerns. Model best practices and provide feedback.

Observable Skills and Behaviors

Following completion of this topic in training, the worker will be able to:

- Identify community partners that can support their work with families.
- Use critical self-reflection to identify and manage implicit and explicit biases regarding domestic violence, substance abuse, child sexual abuse, and human trafficking.
- Understand how their biases and assumptions regarding domestic violence, substance abuse, child sexual abuse, and human trafficking affect outcomes for children and families in CPS.
- Identify the role of mental health needs in child welfare, including how assumptions related to mental health needs are reflected in how they approach families.
- Understand the warning signs of human trafficking and how to appropriately respond.
- Describe best practices for supporting families affected by domestic violence to minimize the need for CPS involvement.

Documentation

Overview

This section focuses on creating effective, timely, and court-ready case documentation that accurately reflects the worker's actions, conversations, and observations related to the safety, permanency, and well-being of children. This section also focuses on the definition of confidentiality, including guidance about the requirements for maintaining confidentiality and when information can be released. Case documentation is critical in child welfare work as it establishes the basis for all decision-making, including the critical decision to file a petition for the removal of a child from their parent's care.

Supporting Workers

Case documentation is comprised of all information in the case file. Documentation must include:

- Facts – case details of who, what, where, when, and why.
- Information obtained from professionals, such as medical, educational, and mental health information
- Family background, including CPS history, criminal history, or other service history
- Assessments
- Observations

Supervisors must support their workers to ensure their documentation is of quality and provides accountability for both what the agency does and the results of the agency's actions. Documentation facilitates a way for the worker to critically think about how to facilitate purposeful and focused interactions with children and families. The content of records should provide an accurate and complete record of all stages of the child welfare process.

Below are specific strategies to support workers in creating quality documentation:

- Review required forms and reports with the worker for their accuracy and completeness. Address whether documentation is accurate, clear, concise, relevant, timely, and complete. Provide guidance and feedback on information that is missing, incomplete, or inaccurate.
- Discuss the worker's understanding of required forms and reports throughout the child welfare process.
- Clarify the purpose of required forms and documentation and the required information as needed.
- Provide the worker with examples of forms and reports that have been completed thoroughly. Instruct the worker to review the forms and discuss any questions they have.
- Connect the worker with a lead worker who is proficient with documentation to provide mentoring.
- Recognize the worker's strengths in their documentation and provide guidance where there are growth opportunities.
- Reiterate that quality contacts and documentation from those contacts are vital to assessing safety, risk, and progress in achieving needed change. Text messages, emails, and telephone calls are not considered quality contacts. Quality contacts require meeting with family

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members face-to-face to discuss the issues that brought DSS into their lives, ensuring safety and risk factors are addressed, and observing the family's interactions with one another.

- Review the three documentation models (GIRP: Goal, Interventions, Results, Plan; PAPER: Purpose, Assessment, Plan, Encourage, Results; and SEEMAPS: Social, Economic, Environmental, Mental Health, Activities, Physical Health, and Summary of Strengths) taught in the pre-service training.

Observable Skills and Behaviors

Following completion of this topic in training, the worker will be able to:

- Document case contacts in a clear, concise, and objective manner.
- Complete forms and reports in an accurate, clear, concise, relevant, timely, and complete manner.
- Document necessary information from collateral contacts.
- Document the decision-making process, including all child and family-related factors that led to the final decision.
- Diligently respect confidentiality while sharing information when necessary and appropriate.
- Identify the purpose of each contact made with families and document the appropriate information associated with that purpose.
- Ensure that court-ready documentation does not include opinions, vague or generic descriptions, or boilerplate language.
- Ensure that court-ready documentation includes objective, descriptive language, behavior descriptions and family-specific language, and information to help the court understand case decisions and recommendations.
- Reflect a thorough understanding of and utilization of documentation models (GIRP, PAPER, SEEMAPS).

Documentation Learning Lab

Overview

This section is a skills-based learning lab with practical application of classroom learning to create documentation that accurately reflects the worker's actions, conversations, and observations related to the safety, permanency, and well-being of children. In this learning lab, the worker is assigned one documentation model (GIRP, PAPER, or SEEMAPS) and provided with a scenario. The worker then documents the Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs), underlying issues, and behaviors using the assigned documentation model. A discussion about the documentation examples follows this exercise.

Supporting Workers

Below are specific strategies to support workers in creating quality documentation:

- Review the worker's Documentation Learning Lab Skills Practice Worksheet in their Participant Workbook from the pre-service training. During this learning lab, the worker practiced taking

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typical language examples and changing them into court-ready statements. Provide feedback and tips that support the worker utilizing behavior descriptors and family-specific language.

- Provide opportunities for the worker to observe other workers that are proficient in writing court-ready documents that accurately reflect the worker's actions, conversations, and observations related to the safety, permanency, and well-being of children.
- Review the worker's documentation to make sure it is free of subjective language, is behaviorally descriptive, and is family specific. Provide feedback validating the worker's strengths and providing tips where needed.

Self-Care and Worker Safety

Overview

This section focuses on two important issues for child welfare staff, self-care and worker safety. The secondary trauma often experienced by child welfare staff does not only impact staff personally but also impacts how they work with children and families. This section defines and explores traumatic stress and how it can impact a worker's emotional well-being. Workers will be provided with information about the importance of self-care, including a discussion of various strategies that the worker can incorporate into their practice to meet their self-care needs and prevent burnout.

Worker safety and concerns around safety are one of the most common issues identified by child welfare staff. In child welfare, workers will interact with and engage families in difficult and emotional situations. Those emotions, such as anger, fear, and grief, can sometimes lead to dangerous situations that workers will need to be prepared for. For workers, there are three different types of safety: emotional, psychological, and physical. While physical safety is probably the first one that comes to mind when working in child welfare, all three are vital to keeping workers safe. This section looks at strategies workers can implement to keep themselves physically safe while working in their offices or their communities.

- Emotional safety is the ability to identify our feelings and feeling safe enough to express oneself authentically. This includes the ability to be resilient at work.
- Psychological safety is the belief that you will not be punished or humiliated for speaking up about your ideas, questions, or concerns, or when mistakes are made.
- Physical safety is being protected from physical aggression and violence and minimizing the possibility of injury.

Supporting Workers

Self-Care

Workers will experience secondary traumatic stress (STS) due to the nature of their work. Supervisors must identify and respond to STS among their workers. Discussion of self-care and stress management should be a regular part of supervisory consultations. Doing so will provide the opportunity to regularly assess for STS and burnout and to take the necessary steps to meet the needs of workers. Support self-care activities, including providing agency-level resources, which can help prevent or mitigate STS and compassion fatigue.

Below are specific strategies to support workers in creating self-care plans and assuring their self-care needs are met:

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- Monitor and support the worker in developing a self-care plan.
- Review the worker's self-care plan that they developed in the pre-service training. Discuss any needs they have for additional support to meet their self-care needs.
- Model practicing self-care in each interaction with the worker.
- Monitor the worker's caseload and exposure to vicarious and secondary trauma. If the worker has been exposed to vicarious and secondary trauma, provide them with services, resources, and support as needed. Adjust their workload as needed.
- Debrief difficult cases with the worker and provide additional support as needed.
- Encourage time off as needed.
- Explore additional support and resources after critical incidents and fatalities.

Worker Safety

Ensuring child welfare worker safety is a complex concern. Doing so encompasses not only taking measures to prevent the threat or reality of physical violence but also promoting psychological and emotional safety, as well as resilience, within the workplace. Supervisors must commit to supporting their workers' physical, psychological, and emotional safety by promoting all three elements of safety and promoting connectedness, self-efficacy, and resilience.

Below are specific strategies to support workers in ensuring their safety out in the field and the office, including their physical, emotional, and psychological safety needs:

- Provide a safe space for the worker to express their feelings of anger, frustration, disappointment, and fear.
- Provide a safe space for the worker to admit to mistakes and failures by providing constructive feedback, support, and solutions.
- Create awareness of employee assistance programs and other agency supports.
- Discuss with the worker strategies to keep themselves physically safe, such as partnering with other workers or agencies to make home visits when safety concerns are identified.
- Discuss with the worker the agency's policies related to worker safety. Ensure the worker understands what is allowable and what is not.

Observable Skills and Behaviors

Following completion of this topic in training, the worker will be able to:

Self-Care

- Understand the risks of burnout and secondary/vicarious trauma in child welfare work.
- Address symptoms of burnout and secondary/vicarious trauma by prioritizing their physical health, mental health, and wellness.
- Describe effective strategies for self-care.
- Actively prioritize and participate in an individually determined self-care strategy.

Worker Safety

- Understand the personal safety risks associated with working in the child welfare system.
- Take steps to ensure personal safety when in the field.
- Prioritize the safety of self and others in all work.

Appendix A: Supervisory Resources

Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, and Belonging

- [Diversity Calendar 2022](#)¹⁰
- [Diversity Calendar 2023](#)¹¹

Quality Contacts

- [Defining Quality Contacts](#)⁸

Engaging and Supporting Children, Families, and Relatives

- [It's All Relative: Supporting Kinship Care Discussion Guide for Supervisors](#)¹²
- [Supervisor Toolkit: Engaging Youth and Families to Achieve Timely Permanency for Children and Youth Waiting to Be Adopted](#)¹³

New Worker Supervisory Support

- [Supporting Child Welfare Staff in the First 3 Months](#)¹⁴
- [Workload Management](#)¹⁵

General Supervisory Support

- [8 Ways Supervisors Can Provide Support to Employees at Work](#)¹⁶
- [Supervision for Quality Child Welfare Practice](#)⁵
- [Using Secondary Traumatic Stress Competencies in Supervision](#)¹⁷

¹⁰ Toll, E. (2022). *Diversity Calendar 2022*. Diversity Resources: Boulder, CO. <https://www.diversityresources.com/2022-diversity-calendar/>

¹¹ Toll, E. (2022). *Diversity Calendar 2022*. Diversity Resources: Boulder, CO. <https://www.diversityresources.com/diversity-calendar-2023/>

¹² Capacity Building Center for States. (2018). *It's All Relative: Supporting Kinship Care Discussion Guide for Supervisors*. <https://capacity.childwelfare.gov/states/resources/its-all-relative-supporting-kinship-care-discussion-guide-for-supervisors>

⁵ Child Welfare Information Gateway. (2020). *Supervising for Quality Child Welfare Practice*. United States Department of Health and Human Services, Administration for Children and Families, Children's Bureau. https://www.childwelfare.gov/pubPDFs/effective_supervision.pdf

¹³ Capacity Building Center for States. (2021). *Supervisor Toolkit: Engaging Youth and Families to Achieve Timely Permanency for Children and Youth Waiting to Be Adopted*. <https://capacity.childwelfare.gov/states/resources/supervisor-toolkit>

¹⁴ Learning Coordination Center. (n.d.). *Supporting Child Welfare Staff in the First 3 Months*. Digital Dialogue, Workforce Support. United States Department of Health and Human Services, Administration for Children and Families, Children's Bureau. <https://cblcc.acf.hhs.gov/topic-areas/workforce-support/supporting-child-welfare-staff-the-critical-first-3-months/>

¹⁵ Ohio Child Welfare Training Program. (n.d.). *Workload Management*. https://ncwwi.org/files/Job_Analysis_Position_Requirements/Workload_Management.pdf

¹⁶ Indeed Editorial Team. (2021). *8 Ways Supervisors Can Provide Support to Employees at Work*. <https://www.indeed.com/career-advice/career-development/support-for-employees>

⁸ Capacity Building Center for States. (n.d.). *Quality Matters: Improving Caseworker Contacts with Children, Youth, and Families – Defining Quality Contacts*. https://capacity.childwelfare.gov/sites/default/files/media_pdf/defining-quality-contacts-cp-00078.pdf

¹⁷ National Child Traumatic Stress Network. (n.d.). *Using the Secondary Traumatic Stress Core Competencies in Trauma-Informed Supervision*. https://www.nctsn.org/sites/default/files/resources/fact-sheet/using_the_secondary_traumatic_stress_core_competencies_in_trauma-informed_supervision.pdf

Appendix B: Skill Development Observation Guide

Worker Name	
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This tool outlines the observable skills that workers should begin demonstrating on the job following completion of the Pre-Service Training: Child Welfare in North Carolina. As a supervisor, you can use this tool to identify areas of strength and opportunities for further worker development by rating the worker's ability to demonstrate each skill. The skills outlined below are generally organized in the order they are presented in the pre-service curriculum. This design allows you to use this tool to support the transfer of learning for your worker along the way; helping them to develop the skills associated with training when they return to your local office after each section of training.

While the Pre-Service Training: Child Welfare in North Carolina, provides workers with information and practice regarding these skills, very few will be an expert in each skill immediately following training. To understand their level of skill, you will rate each in the following way:

- **Learner** – Worker needs continued support in this area; they inconsistently, inaccurately, and/or rarely demonstrate this skill.
- **Competent** – Worker is proficient in demonstrating this skill; they consistently and accurately demonstrate the skill but are still developing comfort and intuition with it.
- **Expert** – This is a central strength for the worker; they consistently and accurately demonstrate this skill without effort.

The worker should also complete the performance ratings as a self-assessment to identify their own strengths and priorities for development. Following completion, you will work together to identify five top strengths and five priorities for development and to create three action steps to begin addressing the development priorities. This tool should be used to guide ongoing dialogue about the worker's performance and to prioritize action steps for worker development. In your ongoing dialogue with your worker, be sure to highlight successes and review progress. Make note of changes in their performance as you go, not only to continually reassess priorities for development but also to celebrate their individual growth as they develop their skills as child welfare workers.

Although developed as a companion tool for the Pre-Service Training: Child Welfare in North Carolina, this is also a useful guide to monitor skill development for existing staff. Following the same performance rating and action-step development process, you can work with seasoned workers to celebrate strengths and find areas for development. Following completion of the tool, you can refer back to the topic sections in the pre-service training supervisory guide to identify ways to support skill development with your worker.

Behavioral Skills by Training Topic	Performance		
Interviewing Skills	<i>Learner</i>	<i>Competent</i>	<i>Expert</i>
Asks open-ended questions to understand the child and family's perspectives regarding the situation.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Demonstrates a strategy for information gathering, knowing what information to collect, who to collect it from, and the reason information is needed.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Formats information gathering as a conversation, rather than question/answer.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Considers their own perceptions and bias and those the family may have, and articulate how this preparation impacts their utilization of a strengths-based and solution-focused approach.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Treats individuals with respect.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Treats individuals with empathy.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Uses verbal responses that are consistent with body language.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Listens and lets the family tell their own story in their own voice.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Recognizes children and parents as the expert on their own history, needs, and strengths.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Listens to what families are saying and reflects their understanding in an empathic manner.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<i>Comments</i>			

Behavioral Skills by Training Topic	Performance		
	<i>Learner</i>	<i>Competent</i>	<i>Expert</i>
Assessing Skills			
Describes the assessment process and purpose of CPS involvement in an understandable manner (without jargon, acronyms, or complicated phrases).	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Considers family strengths in addition to family needs during assessment.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Collects sufficient information to make an informed assessment of child safety and family needs and strengths.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Identifies least intrusive action to support child safety and family needs.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Understands how their own bias may impact the information-gathering process.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Uses engaging strategies to build family participation in the assessing process.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Considers the family's own culture when gathering information.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Continuously gathers and pursues new information.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<i>Comments</i>			

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Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, and Bias	<i>Learner</i>	<i>Competent</i>	<i>Expert</i>
Articulates a historical perspective of child welfare that adequately represents the realities of the ongoing systemic racism in child welfare.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Is culturally sensitive, allowing families to define their culture, norms, values, and strengths.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Uses pronouns identified by the individual and apologizes and corrects themselves if they make a mistake.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Identifies the three tenets of cultural humility (lifelong learning and self-reflection, recognizing power imbalances, and institutional accountability).	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Speaks to families and youth in a non-judgmental, respectful manner.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Addresses the power and privilege granted inherent to their own identities in their approach to their work.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Understands the effects of intersectionality and sociocultural identity on the behaviors, feelings, and social situations of children and families.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Approaches culturally diverse families as a learner, acknowledging that children and families are the experts on their own identities.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Uses critical self-reflection to manage implicit and explicit biases regarding the children and families they support.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Supports culturally appropriate placements by providing information regarding cultural needs at placement, providing ongoing education, and matching children to families that can meet their needs.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<i>Comments</i>			

Indian Child Welfare Act	<i>Learner</i>	<i>Competent</i>	<i>Expert</i>
Inquires with the family to assess American Indian/Alaskan Native heritage.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Expresses respect for American Indian/Alaskan Native heritage.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Collaborates with tribal partners, prioritizing tribal perspectives regarding child and family needs.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Provides active efforts to preserve and reunify American Indian/Alaskan Native families.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Asks for information and education regarding the traditions that are most important to members of each family, community, and tribe.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Understands that there are eight tribes in North Carolina (7 state-recognized and 1 federally recognized) with different customs and demonstrates knowledge of these tribes.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<i>Comments</i>			

Engaging Families	<i>Learner</i>	<i>Competent</i>	<i>Expert</i>
Approaches children and families with genuine empathy and respect.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Refrains from using accusatory language, voice tone, or body language that could convey judgment.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Speaks with adults and children separately to provide privacy and assess safety.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Focuses on child and family strengths in case planning.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Prioritizes child and family voice in case planning.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Approaches clients with empathy and respect.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Demonstrates a desire to build an engaging working partnership with the family.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Develops an engagement strategy based on the individual child and family needs, rather than approaching all families in the same way.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Understands barriers to engaging with children and families and develop strategies to overcome those barriers.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Consistently follows up on all action steps from their contacts with the child and/or family.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<i>Comments</i>			

Quality Contacts	<i>Learner</i>	<i>Competent</i>	<i>Expert</i>
Aligns visit frequency with state requirements, but also the needs of the family or individual.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Considers the schedules of the parents, foster parents, and youth when choosing an appropriate contact time, length, and location of contact.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Prioritizes input from the individual they are meeting with regarding what will be discussed.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<i>Comments</i>			

Intake	<i>Learner</i>	<i>Competent</i>	<i>Expert</i>
Uses a strengths-based approach to interview reporters.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Understands and describes a level of and/or limits to child protective services legal authority.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Accurately determines if reported allegations meet the legal definitions of abuse, neglect, and/or dependency using the Maltreatment Screening Tools that correspond to the allegations.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Accurately makes a screening decision, in consultation with their supervisor.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Articulates the decision-making processes associated with intake, and the impact of those decisions on children and families.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Accurately determines residency and county responsible for completing the CPS Assessment.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Appropriately determines response time for reports screened in for assessment using available resources, such as the Response Priority Decision Tree.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Accurately determines the appropriate Assessment Response Type (Family or Investigative) for reports screened in for assessment.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Describes the steps in the child protective services process following intake with ease.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Understands common child protective services terminology.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Clearly defines terminology and acronyms for families whenever they arise.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Able to identify cases that have special policy requirements at Intake and understands how to locate and follow specific policies and procedures.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<i>Comments</i>			

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CPS Assessment	<i>Learner</i>	<i>Competent</i>	<i>Expert</i>
Regularly establishes contact with all identified persons who may have information regarding the allegation, including family members, collateral sources, and the child.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Consistently approaches families in a strengths-based manner, focusing on the agency’s priority to protect children and strengthen families.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Effectively establishes trust and rapport with family members and other collateral sources to support the assessment processes.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Effectively utilizes fact-finding processes (interviewing, observation, etc.) to determine if maltreatment occurred, if children are safe in their homes, and if ongoing agency involvement is necessary.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Appropriately uses structured decision-making tools to support the assessment process.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Accurately considers safety and risk factors to understand the current degree of safety and future level of risk of harm for children.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Identifies strategies and immediate interventions to protect children when safety threats are present to prevent removal and placement.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Makes appropriate case decisions based on the results of the assessment.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Identifies when ongoing services are needed to reduce the risk of maltreatment and/or when the case can be safely closed.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Accurately describes what families can expect from CPS involvement following assessment, appropriately preparing the family for case transfer.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<i>Comments</i>			

In-Home Services	<i>Learner</i>	<i>Competent</i>	<i>Expert</i>
Provides services or referrals to services associated with the needs identified in the assessment.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Recognizes that safety concerns can change over time and revises strategies to address concerns as they evolve.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Actively monitors child safety and risk while in the home.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Continually monitors family progress and updates the case plan as necessary.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Engages children and families in the case planning process.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Engages the family's informal support network (relatives, neighbors, family friends, etc.) to support in-home services.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Delivers services within the context of the family's own community culture.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<i>Comments</i>			

Permanency	<i>Learner</i>	<i>Competent</i>	<i>Expert</i>
Approaches family assessments in a strengths-based manner.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Arranges for and continually monitor placement, when necessary to ensure child safety, based on the specific needs of the child.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Carefully plans with the family when placement is necessary, developing a Family Time and contact agreement.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Assesses child needs on an ongoing basis to ensure continued placement and services are appropriate.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Prioritizes the kinship network when identifying placement options.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Prioritizes emotional and legal permanency for children in foster care.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Engages children and families in the case planning process.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Engages the family's informal support network (relatives, neighbors, family friends, etc.) as ongoing connections for children in foster care.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Describes the importance of and prioritizes ongoing connections to relatives and other important people for children in foster care.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Continually assesses the appropriateness of the identified permanency option and revises the option as needed.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Provides services that will support the permanency option and expedite the timeline to permanence.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

<i>Comments</i>

Adoptions	<i>Learner</i>	<i>Competent</i>	<i>Expert</i>
Understands the importance of timely permanence for children and prioritizes it when supporting families through adoption.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Prepares and assists children in their transition to an adoptive family.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Ensures that all children have the opportunity for placement in a permanent family, regardless of race, ethnicity, age, or physical or developmental condition.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Ensures continued access to important cultural connections for children during the adoption process.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Prepares and assists the adoptive family in their transition to adoption finalization.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Identifies and provides post-adoption services to the family to optimize family functioning and prevent the dissolution of adoption.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

<i>Comments</i>

Key Factors Impacting Families and Engaging Communities	<i>Learner</i>	<i>Competent</i>	<i>Expert</i>
Identifies community partners that can support their work with families.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Uses critical self-reflection to identify and manage implicit and explicit biases regarding domestic violence, substance abuse, child sexual abuse, and human trafficking.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Understands how their biases and assumptions regarding domestic violence, substance abuse, child sexual abuse, and human trafficking affect outcomes for children and families in CPS.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Identifies the role of mental health needs in child welfare, including how assumptions related to mental health needs are reflected in how they approach families.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Understands the warning signs of human trafficking and how to appropriately respond.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Describes best practices for supporting families affected by domestic violence to minimize the need for CPS involvement.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<i>Comments</i>			

Documentation	<i>Learner</i>	<i>Competent</i>	<i>Expert</i>
Documents case contacts in a clear, concise, and objective manner.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Completes forms and reports in an accurate, clear, concise, relevant, timely, and complete manner.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Documents necessary information from collateral contacts.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Documents the decision-making process, including all child and family-related factors that led to the final decision.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Diligently respects confidentiality while sharing information when necessary and appropriate.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Identifies the purpose of each contact made with families and documents the appropriate information associated with that purpose.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Maintains a detailed case record by thoroughly documenting all case activities.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Ensures that court-ready documentation does not include opinions, vague or generic descriptions, or boilerplate language.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Ensures that court-ready documentation includes objective, descriptive language, behavior descriptions and family-specific language, and information to help the court understand case decisions and recommendations.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Reflects a thorough understanding of and utilization of documentation models.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<i>Comments</i>			

Self-Care	<i>Learner</i>	<i>Competent</i>	<i>Expert</i>
Understands the risks of burnout and secondary/vicarious trauma in child welfare work.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Addresses symptoms of burnout and secondary/vicarious trauma by prioritizing their physical health, mental health, and wellness.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Describes effective strategies for self-care.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Actively prioritizes and participates in an individually determined self-care strategy.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<i>Comments</i>			

Worker Safety	<i>Learner</i>	<i>Competent</i>	<i>Expert</i>
Understands the personal safety risks associated with working in the child welfare system.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Takes steps to ensure personal safety when in the field.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Prioritizes the safety of self and others in all work.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<i>Comments</i>			

Top Areas of Worker Strength	Priorities for Worker Development
1.	1.
2.	2.
3.	3.
4.	4.
5.	5.
<i>Comments</i>	<i>Comments</i>

Worker Development Action Steps	
Action Details	Target Completion Date

Appendix C: Listen Poem¹⁸

Listen

When I ask you to listen to me and you start giving me advice,
You have not done what I asked.

When I ask you to listen to me and you begin to tell me “why I should feel that way,”
You are trampling on my feelings.

When I ask you to listen to me and you feel you have to do something to solve my problems,
You have failed me, strange as it may seem.

Listen! All I ask is that you listen;
Not talk, nor do – just hear me.

And I can do from myself – I’m not helpless, maybe discouraged and faltering, but not helpless.

When you do something for me, that I can
And need to do for myself,
You contribute to my fear and weakness

But when you accept as a simple fact that I do feel what I feel,
No matter how irrational
Then I quit trying to convince you
And can get about the business of understanding
What’s behind this irrational feeling.

When that is clear, the answers are obvious
And I don’t need advice.

Irrational feelings make sense when we
Understand what is behind them.

Perhaps that is why prayer works sometimes for
Some people;
Because God is mute, and doesn’t give
Advice to try to “fix” things,
They just listen,
And lets you work it out
for yourself.

¹⁸ Healing Racism Institute of Pioneer Valley. (n.d.) *Listen*. https://irp-cdn.multiscreensite.com/444471b0/files/uploaded/HRIPV_Listen_Poster%20%281%29.pdf

So please listen, and just hear me, and if you
Want to talk,
Wait a minute for your turn,
And I'll listen to you.

Anonymous

Appendix D: Core Components and Characteristics of Quality Contacts¹⁹

As a cornerstone of casework practice, quality contacts reflect a focused exchange of ideas and information (Atif & National Resource Center for Child Protective Services, 2010). These contacts should go beyond a “friendly visit to chat about how the kids are doing” and represent a professional consultation (National Resource Center for Family-Centered and Permanency Planning, 2008).

Quality contacts incorporate the following components:

- **Preparation and planning** tailored to the specific circumstances of the child or youth and family.
- **Assessment** of:
 - Safety, risk, permanency, and well-being.
 - Progress toward individual case goals.
- **Engagement** of children, parents, and placement providers parents by the worker through use of empathy, genuineness, and respect.
- **Dialogue** that values the child and parent's voice and promotes reflection on strengths, needs, and concerns.
- **Follow-up** on tasks or concerns discussed previously (this may include difficult conversations about why certain things did not happen as planned).
- **Decision-making and problem-solving** to address needs and move the case plan forward.
- **Documentation** to support monitoring and follow-up.

Federal, state, and local guidelines establish a foundation for a quality contact, while attributes of good casework practice are demonstrated throughout. Exhibit 1 highlights the characteristics of a quality contact.

Exhibit 1. Characteristics of Quality Contacts



¹⁹ Capacity Building Center for States. (n.d.). *Quality Matters: Improving Caseworker Contacts with Children, Youth, and Families – Defining Quality Contacts*. https://capacity.childwelfare.gov/sites/default/files/media_pdf/defining-quality-contacts-cp-00078.pdf

Appendix E: Truths and Myths

Topic	Statement	Truth	Myth	Notes
Substance Use Disorder	Addiction only happens to a certain type of person.		X	Addiction happens to all ages, races, and socioeconomic levels.
	People who misuse substances need a tough-love approach.		X	While boundaries are needed the tough love approach is not a one size fits all technique.
	Severe Substance Use Disorder is a disease.	X		Researchers have found that substance misuse changes the brain and how it functions.
	People can quit using drugs and/or alcohol any time they want.		X	Substance misuse often leads to a chemical change in the brain causing addiction
	Rehab can work the first time.	X		Rehabilitation can work for some the very first time, for others, it may require more than one time in rehabilitation.
Topic	Statement	Truth	Myth	Notes
Domestic Violence	Domestic violence is rare.		X	Domestic violence affects 1 out of 4 women at some point during their lifetime.
	Couple's counseling is part of domestic violence treatment.		X	Couples counseling is not recommended for couples trying to end the violence in their relationships due to the power and control underlying the violence. It is recommended that abusers attend a state-certified family violence intervention program and survivors seek assistance from a domestic violence advocate.
	Victims grew up in violent homes and don't know anything different.		X	Many individuals who find themselves in abusive relationships did not grow up in violent households.
	Most people who abuse their partners are not as well educated.		X	Individuals who perpetrate intimate partner violence come from all walks of life.
	Women can perpetrate intimate partner violence.	X		Researchers believe this is often under-reported in our society.

Topic	Statement	Truth	Myth	Notes
Child Sexual Abuse	Most men who commit sexual offenses do not know their victim.		X	Over 90% of child victims know their offender, with almost half of the offenders being a family member. Of sexual assaults against people aged 12 and over, approximately 80% of the victims know the offender.
	Most child sexual abusers use physical force or threats to gain compliance from their victims.		X	Abusers gain access to their victims through deception and enticement, seldom using force. Abuse typically occurs within a long-term, ongoing relationship between the offender and victim and escalates over time.
	Most child sexual abusers find their victims by frequenting places like schoolyards and playgrounds.		X	Most child sexual abusers offend against children whom they know and with whom they have established a relationship.
	Child sexual abusers are only attracted to children and are not capable of appropriate sexual relationships.		X	There is a small subset of child sexual abusers who are exclusively attracted to children, the majority of the individuals who sexually abuse children are or have previously been attracted to adults.
	False reports of rape or child molestation are common, for many reasons.		X	False reports of child molestation and rape are not the norm. National research shows that false rape reports range between 2- 8%.
Topic	Statement	Truth	Myth	Notes
Human Trafficking	Human trafficking is the result of poverty and inequality.		X	While poverty and inequality are important factors in making certain populations more vulnerable to being trafficked, they are not the primary causes of trafficking. Trafficking is a criminal industry driven by 1) the ability to make large profits due to high demand, and 2) the negligible-to-low risk of prosecution.
	Ages sixteen to eighteen are the average ages for teens to		X	The average age is 12-14 years of age.

	become involved in sex trafficking.			
	Often victims of human trafficking are kidnapped/abducted.		X	There is a surprisingly low percentage of kidnapping cases where trafficking is concerned. More often the abuse/exploitation comes from a trusted adult.
	North Carolina is ranked in the top 10 states for cases of human trafficking.	X		In 2020, 260 cases of trafficking were reported to the National Human Trafficking Hotline, ranking North Carolina 9th among the 50 states in cases reported. However, because human trafficking is a crime that hides in the shadows, the true number of cases in North Carolina is likely much higher.
	Due to North Carolina's agricultural areas, labor trafficking is the most common form of human trafficking in the state.		X	In North Carolina, hotel-based commercial sex is the most prevalent form of human trafficking.

Appendix F: Preparing for the Arrival of New Workers²⁰

Preparing the Unit

- Plan ahead with the unit. Meet with the unit to tell them the new worker is joining the team and when to expect their arrival at DSS.
- Mark in a daily calendar the training topics to be covered that week for the new worker.
- Post a calendar in common areas with the training topics and the days the new worker will be in the unit.
- Review with everyone in the unit the training topics and suggested tasks.
- Communicate early with potential existing workers who will provide observation/shadowing opportunities to the new worker so that they have planned their schedule accordingly.
- Communicate with existing workers the expectations around their role in the on-the-job training and transfer of learning.
- Communicate with the entire unit the expectation of creating a learning and welcoming environment.
- Ask for suggestions of tasks from the unit to be completed by new workers to alleviate the workload on the unit. In this way, everyone will be aware and willing to help with on-the-job training.
- Remind the unit that the better someone is trained, the faster the new worker will be able to take on more of the unit's workload.
- Keep a binder of handouts, memos, and other information which could be interesting for new workers when coming into the unit.
- Utilize a printed calendar with each hour of the day accounted for from the time the new worker enters the unit until they leave for the day.
- Utilize a sign-off sheet with tasks listed that can be initialized as completed by the worker, supervisor, and/or assigned senior/lead worker.
- Make the new worker a copy of any memos, local policy, community resources, organizational charts, unit roster, and general information they may need.
- Encourage senior/lead workers to promote independent activity with the new worker. For example, explaining the task, answering questions about the task, and then letting the new worker attempt the task with oversight and back-up from their "training buddy".

Qualities of a Strong Senior/ Lead Worker

- Represents good work ethic
- Positive attitude
- Reliable
- Low absenteeism
- Mastery over the task or topic which is the assignment for the day
- Communicates clearly

²⁰ Garrison, M. D. (2009). *On the Job Training Manual for Supervisors of New Employees*. Alameda County Social Services Agency. <https://ncwwi.org/slug/alameda-county-social-services-agencys-child-welfare-on-the-job-training-manual-for-supervisors-of-new-employees/>

- Patience to work with someone new
- Appropriate casework for observation/shadowing for the day's topic.
- Similar interests, generations, cultures, and goals as the new worker
- Feels bolstered by the supervisor's confidence in their abilities to train someone new
- Wants to live up to the above expectations
- Aspires to upward mobility
- Needs a change of pace from the normal routine of service delivery