

CHILDREN AND FAMILY SERVICES TRAINING STANDARD:
CASELOAD RESPONSIBILITY AND LEVEL OF
SUPERVISION CONTINUUM FOR NEW CHILD
WELFARE SOCIAL WORKERS

PURPOSE

The purpose of this standard is to provide direction and guidance to the Children and Family Services (CFS) program regarding what amount of classroom and field training a new CFS employee must have in order to carry an independent caseload. This standard also includes supervisor training requirements and responsibilities. These program standards are intended to achieve statewide consistency in the development and application of CFS core services and shall be implemented in the context of all-applicable laws, rules and policies. The standards will also provide a measurement for program accountability.

INTRODUCTION

The five (5) goals of Child Welfare Academy are:

1. Improve Child Welfare Practice – impart practice standards;
2. Improve retention of new staff – desired outcomes;
3. Orient new employees to practice and methods;
4. Impart program values and promote self-reflection about alignment of personal values with program values;
5. Connect new employees with their supervisors regarding performance expectations and staff development.

This standard is based on the following assumptions:

New Worker

- Assuming an independent caseload involves the new worker moving along a continuum from no caseload to a fully independent caseload. Each new employee has different learning needs, and moves through the caseload continuum at their own pace. Efforts must be made in both the classroom setting and the field to individualize the learning to the particular learning needs and skill level of the employee;
- New workers will take responsibility for learning the fundamentals of the job. This includes demonstrating active learning in both the classroom and field assignments;
- The goal for new child welfare workers is to manage a full caseload with regular supervision by the end of their probationary period (**the probationary period for Social Worker 1 is 9 months and for Social Worker 2 is 6 months – see Exhibit 6**);

Supervisor

- The supervisor recognizes that New Worker Academy entails both classroom and field training occurring during the entire probationary period. It is the supervisors' role to engage the new employee in structured staff development, and performance management activities, as defined in the Academy's Competency Based Learning Contract (CBLC);
- Prior to attending classroom training the Supervisor will engage the new learner in readiness to learn activities including discussion of learning and performance expectations. This activity entails the new employee, supervisor and Regional Chief of Social Work signing a New Worker Learning Agreement;
- In order to support readiness to learn, the supervisor needs to assess the new employee's financial ability to attend Academy, particularly if the new employee has not received their first paycheck. In the event of financial need, the supervisor will notify the Program Manager about the need to request a Rotary Advance or to negotiate with BSU an expedited reimbursement;
- Training is provided in stages and with different levels of supervision;
- While some content is more appropriately completed at different stages of the continuum, resources prevent students from entering Academy as a cohort and progressing sequentially through the classroom content. Thus, new employee learning is highly dependent upon the Supervisor to orient the new learner to the agency, the office and the new work assignment, as well as to provide an applied learning context. These activities contribute to the new learner's readiness to learn.
- Supervisors are required to complete the following training: Academy, Family Centered Practice for Supervisors, CQI training, CBLC for Supervisors, the Applied Supervision Series, Crucial Conversations, and other supervisor training required by the Division of Human Resources;
- Employees taking on new supervisory assignments are welcome to attend any Academy sessions that will enhance their knowledge and skill for the area they will be supervising;
- Seasoned employees may attend Academy if space is available and preapproval for attendance has been received based on a specific learning need. Content of Academy has been previously provided to the entire workforce, and is considered redundant and too basic for the seasoned employee;
- Along with periods of increased supervision with new workers, it is assumed that supervisors will incorporate discussion of this continuum into their own supervision with their managers. This is a Family Centered Practice model of clinical supervision where both the supervisee and the supervisor/mentor are supervised utilizing a parallel process.
- Program Managers and/or Chiefs of Social Work will participate in the supervisor training that addresses this continuum of supervision that will promote Child Welfare Academy transfer of learning in the region.

STANDARD

Definitions

Coach: A staff development role of a supervisor which is fulfilled by training, directing, monitoring, evaluating and shaping progress.

Competency: The knowledge, skills and abilities demonstrated by an organization's members which are critical to the effective and efficient functioning of the organization. These competencies are evaluated by supervisors on an ongoing basis and re-assessed during performance evaluation.

Individual Supervision: Individual supervision on an as needed basis, but not less than monthly, plus a minimum of 1 hour weekly of team supervision.

Intensive Supervision: All child welfare practicum students and new employees will receive intensive supervision. Intensive supervision is defined as a minimum of weekly individual supervision, plus a minimum of 1 hour weekly team supervision. The negotiation of Transfer of Learning tasks occurs during this supervision. Ongoing monitoring and evaluation of competencies associated with each task is completed by the supervisor/mentor. Supervisors will define caseload responsibilities by worker's individual ability and demonstrated competency.

Job Tasks: Discipline-specific activities required of a particular job classification.

Learner: New employee who is participating in classroom-based Academy sessions and is engaged in an individualized Competency Based Learning Contract.

Learner Caseload: During the new employee's probationary period, it is not expected that he or she will be able to carry a full caseload and complete classroom training and related field education activities. Efforts must be made in both the classroom setting and the field to individualize the learning to the particular new employee's needs and skill level. In the first 2 months of employment it is recommended that a new employee be assigned no more than 8 cases. From this point to the end of the probation period the supervisor is responsible for assigning an increasingly complex caseload, commensurate with the knowledge, skills and abilities of the individual employee.

Mentor: A trusted staff person (peer) who works closely with the supervisor to provide modeling of best practice and support to a new employee (Social Worker 3).

Model: An individual serving as an example to be imitated or compared. New employees may be assigned to shadow a variety of workers who model various styles of practice. Those serving as a model for practice must have completed the child welfare academy, passed their employment probation period, and be chosen by the supervisor/mentor for this role.

Readiness to Learn: The new worker understands their learning needs and organizational expectations, has a context for learning and is adequately supported, so that he or she can concentrate on their own learning process.

Rotary Advances: Rotary advances to travelers for reimbursable expenditures are only considered in extreme emergencies when a new worker that has to travel to Academy but has not received a paycheck. They must be requested in writing by the traveler's Division Administrator and approved by the Administrator of the Division of Management Services (Rotary Fund Payment Request Form HWJ-0161).

Team Supervision: Weekly supervision in a group setting which includes activities such as case assignments, case staffing, team decision-making, in-service training, sharing resources and information, addressing alerts, team building and supervisor and peer support, etc.

Transfer of Learning: Relevant job tasks assigned by the supervisor or mentor following a worker's completion of a training module which provides skill practice and an opportunity to demonstrate application of the learning.

TRAINING SCHEDULE

- The training schedule has been developed to accommodate new workers statewide. It includes six sessions in which multiple topics are addressed. Training opportunities are not sequential but established so a new worker can begin at any of the sessions. New workers are to receive an orientation in their workplace prior to attendance at Academy.
- The training schedule is posted on the Idaho Child Welfare Partnership website at <http://www.icwpartnership.org/>. It includes Sessions/Topics, Length of Topic, Lead and Backup Trainers. It is periodically updated to allow for new training, and any significant changes in training or trainers. Training is scheduled in advance over a 12 month period. Weekly sessions will be scheduled so that weekend travel is limited and are no longer than 4.5 days.

ACADEMY STRUCTURE

All new CFS social workers are required to attend Academy. The Division of Family and Community Services has established new Academy training competencies, developed additional curriculum, and expanded Academy from four and a half days to twenty-four days.

- Each new worker is required to complete the CBLC training and attend all six Academy sessions during their first 6 months. They are to begin the Orientations with their supervisor prior to attending Academy.
- The CBLC will serve as a transfer of learning tool during the new worker training and as documentation for the supervisor using the Comprehension Sheets. It includes competencies addressed in the performance review, orientation and session information. At each session, topics will address DHW competencies, learning objectives, and suggested activities to demonstrate competency in a specific area. Family Centered Practice, Ethics, Cultural Competency and other issues will be emphasized at each session of Academy. The new worker is required to complete field activities between sessions

(that have been negotiated with the supervisor) and return the Comprehension Sheet to the BSU CW Center. New Employee comprehension regarding each topic must be rated by the supervisor on the Comprehension Sheets, and these must then be signed and dated by the supervisor prior to submission.

- The CBLC includes a New Worker Learning Agreement. The Agreement addresses the required level of professional conduct at training. It is to be signed by the new worker, supervisor and chief. The completed form is to be returned to the BSU Child Welfare Center prior to the new worker attending their first session of Academy. It is a recommendation that a copy be retained in the employee personnel file also.
- New worker positive and negative behavior during Academy will be reported to appropriate supervisors or Chiefs and/or Program Managers.
- New workers will be required to:
 - Sign the attendance sheet at each topic they attend. These signature sheets of attendance will be used to provide Partnership CEU's.
 - Complete required E-learning modules prior to completion of specific sessions of Academy (and return certificate of completion to the BSU Child Welfare Center).
- New workers are required to attend the entire topic in order to receive credit and CEU's. Participants that miss more than 15 minutes in a half-day session or more than 30 minutes in a full day session will be asked to return to complete the session. New workers that have obligations that cause them to miss parts of a session are encouraged to reschedule for the next session.
 - Makeup sessions must be negotiated between the supervisor and BSU.

CFS New Worker Caseload/Supervision Continuum

Exhibit 6 CFS New Worker Caseload/Supervision Continuum

Stage A: Orientation and Pre-Caseload/Assignment of a Mentor

- Begins on first day of employment;
- Encompasses weeks prior to attending first Academy session;
- Complete Office Orientation;
- Assignment of a mentor (Social Worker 3);
- Supervisor/mentor will assign new worker to shadow co-workers for the purpose of observing agency processes and best case practice;
- Introduction to the Competency Based Learning Contract (CBLC);
- Negotiation of the Learner's Agreement;
- Begins completion process of Agency and Community Orientations;
- Introduction and orientation to the Partnership Website training calendar, on-line registration, and expectations;

- Negotiate regular pre and post Academy meetings with supervisor/mentor to discuss ongoing learning and provide Intensive Supervision;
- Negotiate individual needs that may impact Academy attendance and training that could be barriers to learning, e.g. Rotary checks, personal supports, scheduling conflicts;
- Introduction to the five (5) goals of Academy;
- Introduction to expectations related to required on-line National Indian Child Welfare Association (NICWA) course, acquire a user license and schedule time to begin the course.

Stage B: Shadowing and Co-Assigned Case Responsibilities

- Follows first Academy session New Learner attends;
- Continue with CBLC orientations;
- Meet with supervisor/mentor as soon as possible to negotiate Transfer of Learning from previous Academy session;
- Negotiate and be assigned learning tasks relevant to recent Academy content and new learner need, so supervisor/mentor can observe competency acquisition and review and evaluate progress and set additional goals with new worker;
- Continue negotiation of individual learner needs and abilities;
- Implement intensive supervision with new learner;
- New worker will continue to shadow a variety of seasoned staff who will model best practice;
- Be co-assigned case responsibilities based on demonstrated competencies;
- Continue required E-Learning completion/s;

Stage C: Assignment of a Small Caseload (8 cases) with Intensive Supervision

- Complete CBLC orientations;
- Meet with supervisor/mentor as soon as possible to negotiate Transfer of Learning from previous Academy session;
- Negotiate and be assigned learning tasks relevant to recent Academy content and new learner need, so supervisor/mentor can observe competency acquisition and review and evaluate progress and set additional goals with new worker;
- Continue negotiation of individual learner needs based on abilities;
- Continue with Intensive Supervision;
- New Worker is assigned small caseload, with a recommendation of no more than 8 cases, unless the supervisor determines worker's skill is sufficient to handle a higher number;
- New Worker will continue to shadow a variety of seasoned staff who will model best practice;
- Continue required E-Learning completion/s.

Stage D: Move to Standard Caseload with Intensive Supervision in approximately the 4th or 5th Month

- Meet with supervisor/mentor as soon as possible to negotiate Transfer of Learning from previous Academy session;
- Negotiate and be assigned learning tasks relevant to recent Academy content and new learner need, so supervisor/mentor can observe competency acquisition and review and evaluate progress and set additional goals with new worker;
- Continue negotiation of individual learner needs based on abilities;
- Continue assignment of cases with Intensive Supervision;
- By 4th or 5th month, New Worker shall be assigned a standard caseload;
- Complete required E-Learning requirements.

Stage E: Maintain Standard Caseload with Intensive Supervision in the 5th Month

- Meet with supervisor/mentor as soon as possible to negotiate Transfer of Learning from previous Academy session;
- Negotiate and be assigned learning tasks relevant to recent Academy content and new learner need, so supervisor/mentor can observe competency acquisition and review and evaluate progress and set additional goals with new worker;
- Continue negotiation of individual learner needs;
- Maintain standard caseload assignment with Intensive Supervision;
- By 5th month, retention decision for Social Worker 2 will be made;
- In the event a decision is made to not retain the Social Worker 2, Human Resources will be contacted.

Stage F: Full Independent Caseload with Standard (non-intensive) Supervision (Social Worker 2)

- Meet with supervisor/mentor as soon as possible to negotiate Transfer of Learning from previous Academy session;
- Negotiate and be assigned learning tasks relevant to recent Academy content and new learner need, so supervisor/mentor can observe competency acquisition and review and evaluate progress and set additional goals with new worker;
- Continue negotiation of individual learner needs;
- Maintain standard caseload assignment with Standard Supervision;
- During 6th, 7th, and 8th month, retention decision for Social Worker 1 will be made;
- In the event a decision is made to not retain the Social Worker 1, Human Resources will be contacted.
- By 6th month, a Social Worker 2 who meets probationary status expectations will gain permanent employment status.

Stage G: Full Independent Caseload with Standard (non-intensive) Supervision (Social Worker 1)

- Completion of Academy training rounds and field training assignments;
- During 6th, 7th, and 8th month, retention decision for Social Worker 1 will be made;
- By 9 month, a Social Worker 1 will gain permanent employment status.

REFERENCES

California CALSWEC Partnership, VISA model for transfer of learning and caseload standards

Alaska's Passport model for transfer of learning

Mentoring Program Models for Child Welfare Workers, by Jerry Sherk

Region V Mentoring Model

Proposed Academy Modules

Any variance to these standards shall be documented and approved by Division administration, unless otherwise noted.