

Training **MATTERS**



A PUBLICATION OF THE NC DSS CHILDREN'S SERVICES STATEWIDE TRAINING PARTNERSHIP

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Training Matters is produced by the North Carolina Division of Social Services Children's Services Statewide Training Partnership, an organization dedicated to developing and delivering competency-based, job-relevant, accessible child welfare training. Partners include:

- N.C. Division of Social Services
- N.C. Association of County Directors of Social Services
- BIABH Study Center at Appalachian State University
- Children and Family Services Association-NC
- ECU School of Social Work
- Independent Living Resources, Inc.
- N.C. State University Department of Sociology/Social Work
- N.C. A & T State University Social Work Program
- Resources for Change, Inc.
- UNC-Chapel Hill School of Social Work (Jordan Institute for Families)
- UNC-Chapel Hill School of Medicine
- UNC-Charlotte Dept. of Sociology, Anthropology, and Social Work
- UNC-Greensboro Department of Social Work

We Want To Hear from You!

If you have questions or would like to comment about something that appears in *Training Matters*, please contact Rebecca Brigham, Program Administrator, Children's Services Staff Development, N.C. Division of Social Services, 2412 Mail Service Center, 325 N. Salisbury Street, Suite 735, Raleigh, NC 27699-2412, State Courier: 56-20-25, E-mail: Rebecca.Brigham@ncmail.net, Tel: 919/733-7672.

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To read this or past issues online, go to <http://www.sowo.unc.edu/ferp/tm/tm_mainpage.htm>.

Training Matters is written and designed by John McMahon, Jordan Institute for Families, UNC-CH School of Social Work.

Getting the Most Out of the 300 Series (And All Training)

Every good carpenter knows that to get the job done right you need the right tool, and you need to know how to use that tool. If you don't follow this rule, the end result is usually frustration, mistakes, and wasted time.

The same holds true when it comes to using North Carolina's new child welfare training system. This system is a tool designed to help social workers gain the knowledge and skills they need to support families and children. Used correctly, it is capable of meeting the learning needs of everyone in child welfare, from new workers to seasoned veterans and supervisors.

A Swiss-Army Knife

When you look at it closely, our training system seems a bit like a Swiss army knife or another multiple use tool—it has component parts designed to perform different functions.

The 100 series, which for most people means the preservice curriculum, *Child Welfare in North Carolina*, is a foundation training for new workers. The 200 series, as explained in *Training Matters 1(2)*, is designed to meet more specialized (but still basic) needs of new workers.

The final component of the training system, the 300 series,

is for workers who possess more than one year's child welfare experience.

The 300 Series

It is a common misconception that all the courses offered in the 300 series cover advanced topics or can only benefit very experienced workers. The truth is, some courses in this series are advanced and some aren't.

For example, *Financial and Legal Aspects of Adoption* is for social workers with more experience, while courses such as *Substance Abuse in Child Welfare Services* and *Introduction to Child Sexual Abuse* are more introductory in nature. It would be fair to say, however, that many of the courses in this series require (and build upon) a high degree of skill among the participants.

To understand why there is such a mix of difficulty within the 300 series, it helps to remember that our training system is competency-based. What determines whether a course is part of the 300 series is whether it addresses competencies that haven't already been addressed in 100 and 200 series courses.

How to Choose a Course

All together, child welfare workers in North Carolina now have more than 40 profes-

The 300 Series *from page 1*

sional development courses to choose from. New workers are generally clear about which courses to take and when (pre-service, 200 series tier 1 courses, and relevant 200 series tier 2 courses).

Following these courses, unless they are changing job functions to a new area, there is a simple requirement that child welfare workers attend 24 hours (4 days) of training.

How should you decide what to take? It is not hard if you follow the following steps:

Consult your supervisor. Your supervisor will be aware of your strengths and needs as a practitioner. Even if they cannot refer you to a specific course, supervisors should be able to identify areas in which you need to improve. Supervisors may also suggest you take a course based on the needs of your agency.

Assess your own needs. Reflect on your work. Is there a particular skill you would like to enhance? Is there a particular knowledge area that, if you knew more, would help you better address the needs of the families with whom you work?

Gather information. To find out about the courses offered through the training system you can look over your agency's copy of the current training calendar, or read profiles of the courses on-line at <http://childrensservices.dhhs.state.nc.us/staff.htm>. Once you have a course in mind that you think will meet your needs, ask your supervisor and co-workers to see if they have taken

this course and would recommend it.

There is a real risk to skipping the above steps. If you choose a course at random because you think of training as simply time away from the office or you are "just getting your hours in," you may make yourself a prisoner in the classroom, someone whose apathy and resentment interferes with other people's ability to learn.

Make the most your time! Of the 40 plus courses available, there must be something out there that is either new to you or that you could benefit from re-viewing.

Under Development

The Division and its university and private partners are working on a number of new curricula to add to the 300 series. In the spring of 2001 there will be new courses offered on planning and supervising visits, common mental health issues affecting families and children, and terminating parental rights. Course times and locations will be published in the Division's spring 2001 training calendar.

Seeking Your Input

Do you have suggestions for topics for 300 series courses you'd like to see developed? Contact Connie Polk (919/733-7672; connie.polk@ncmail.net). She'd love to hear your ideas. She'd also like to hear from you if you have questions or comments about training issues.

COURSES IN THE 300 SERIES

- Adoption Supports: The Path to Permanence
- Case Building Toward Permanence
- Deciding Together: A Program to Prepare Families for Fostering or Adoption on an Individual Basis
- Domestic Violence and Child Maltreatment
- Financial and Legal Aspects of Adoption
- Fostering and Adopting the Child Who Has Been Sexually Abused
- Introduction to Child Sexual Abuse
- Introduction to Supervision for Child Welfare Services
- Measure Twice, Cut Once: Using MEPA/IEP to Develop Foster Family Recruitment and Retention Strategies
- Model Approach to Partnerships in Parenting: Group Preparation and Selection (MAPP/GPS)
- Money Matters: Foster Care Funding Basics
- My Life's Book: A Therapeutic Tool in Helping the Child in Foster and Adoptive Care
- Preparing Children for Adoption
- Risk Assessment: The Connector to Family Services Case Plans
- Substance Abuse in Child Welfare Services
- Supervisor As Teacher
- Team-Building for Supervisors
- True Colors