

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.

Training and Turnover in Child Welfare in North Carolina

According to a recent survey by the N.C. Association of County Directors of Social Services, almost half North Carolina's child-protection workers quit their jobs in the past year. Once vacant, jobs in protective services stayed unfilled, on average, for three months.

The 59 DSS directors who responded to the association's survey also reported that 54 percent of the people they hired last year were more than two years short of the experience needed to meet minimum job requirements. Once in their new positions, it took most workers more than four months to assume and manage their full monthly caseload.

Though the reason for this situation may be obvious to those in the field, the *Wilmington Morning Star* gives a concise explanation of why counties are having a hard time hiring and keeping qualified child-protection workers: "The work is of priceless importance, but it's hard and stressful and often doesn't pay as much as other jobs that require similar qualifications."

The *Morning Star* then calls on local and state governments, for the sake of the children and families involved, to take steps to make careers in child welfare in North Carolina more attractive and rewarding.

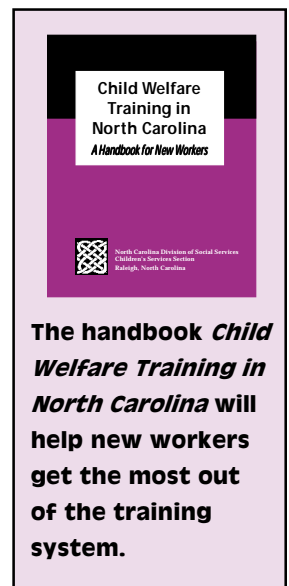
The Partnership's Response

Although it can't change the compensation child welfare workers receive, the NCDSS Children's Services Statewide Training Partnership is working hard to ensure that the many new child welfare workers coming into our system are properly trained to support families and protect children.

In addition to the usual efforts it makes to guarantee the training it delivers is job-relevant and competency-based, it is adding a fifth regional training center, developing a handbook about training for new workers, and offering workers a chance to earn training credits through its annual children's services conference.

New Training Center

Located at the Cumberland County DSS, the new regional training center will increase the partnership's ability to provide the child welfare training North Carolina urgently needs. Because its location is more *continued*➔



Training and Turnover

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convenient to some counties than its current training centers in Asheville, Charlotte, Greensboro, and Kinston, this Fayetteville site will save agencies some of the costs associated with sending people to training. In addition, this site will enable the partnership to increase the number of times the Preservice and other core courses are offered.

This new site is set to open in April 2001. For more information about this new training center contact Connie Polk (t: 919/733-7662).

New Training Handbook

The N.C. Division of Social Services will also soon publish *Child Welfare Training in North Carolina: A Handbook for New Workers*.

Designed to help them understand and get the most out of North Carolina's child welfare training system, this handbook will provide new workers with registration guidelines, recommend training sequences, and an exploration of supervisors' role in the development of new workers.

Developed by the NCDSS in collaboration with the Jordan Institute for Families at the UNC-Chapel Hill School of Social Work and other partnership members, this handbook will be available in April 2001.

March 2001 Conference

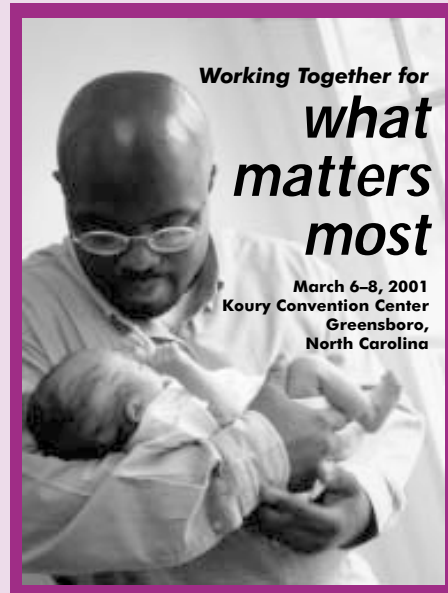
The partnership will sponsor a conference in Greensboro in March 2001 (see box at right). The conference will give workers an opportunity to receive credit toward in-service training requirements.

Attend the 2001 N.C. Children's Services Conference

Set March 6–8, 2001 aside to attend *Working Together for What Matters Most*, a conference for those involved with family preservation, family support, and child welfare services, and for North Carolina's families. Sponsored by the N.C. Division of Social Services Children's Services Section, the N.C. Foster Parent Association, and the N.C. Association of County Directors of Social Services, this event will be held at the Koury Convention Center in Greensboro, North Carolina.

The conference will offer exciting keynote presentations and six concurrent workshop sessions featuring more than 50 workshops. Workshops will address topics such as:

- Building resiliency in families in crisis
- Working with families who are chemically dependent
- Spirituality and social work practice
- Supporting families through community collaboration
- Common mental health problems
- Emotional aspects of termination of parental rights



The conference will also celebrate the success North Carolina has had in 1999–2000 in supporting families and achieving permanency for children.

A conference registration brochure was mailed out to North Carolina county departments of social services in January 2001. Although the stated deadline for registering for the conference was February 5, registrations will be accepted until the conference is full.

To access a copy of the registration materials, go to http://ssw.unc.edu/ferp/conference_reginfo.htm or contact the NCDSS's Gail McClain (T: 919/733-7672; E: gail.mcclain@ncmail.net).