

# Training **MATTERS**



A PUBLICATION OF THE NC DSS FAMILY SUPPORT AND CHILD WELFARE SERVICES STATEWIDE TRAINING PARTNERSHIP

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

- NC Division of Social Services
- NC Association of County Directors of Social Services
- Appalachian Family Innovations at Appalachian State University
- Center for Family and Community Engagement at NC State University
- Independent Living Resources, Inc.
- NC Child Welfare Education Collaborative
- Resources for Change, Inc.
- UNC-Chapel Hill School of Social Work (Jordan Institute for Families)
- UNC-Chapel Hill School of Medicine
- 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 Patrick Betancourt, Child Welfare Services, NC Division of Social Services, 2408 Mail Service Center, 325 N. Salisbury St., Raleigh, NC 27699-2408, Courier: 56-20-25, [patrick.betancourt@dhhs.nc.gov](mailto:patrick.betancourt@dhhs.nc.gov), 919/334-1104.

## Visit Our Website

Go to <[www.trainingmatters-nc.org](http://www.trainingmatters-nc.org)>.

This issue of *Training Matters* was produced by John McMahon of the UNC-Chapel Hill School of Social Work.

References for this issue can be found at <[www.trainingmatters-nc.org](http://www.trainingmatters-nc.org)>

## Training for North Carolina's Child Welfare Supervisors

Like all those who provide child welfare services, by law North Carolina county DSS supervisors must complete 72 hours of pre-service training before assuming their job responsibilities. In addition, within 12 months of assuming managerial duties supervisors must complete 54 hours of additional training. To fulfill these requirements, supervisors attend two courses: *Child Welfare in North Carolina* and *Introduction to Supervision for Child Welfare Services*. In addition, within their first year supervisors must attend these courses: *Legal Aspects*, *Medical Aspects*, *Child Development*, *Step by Step: An Introduction to Child and Family Teams*, and *Building Awareness and Cultural Competency*.

To learn more or to register for a Division-sponsored child welfare course, visit [www.ncswlearn.org](http://www.ncswlearn.org).

## Supervisor Interventions to Help Workers Apply What They Learn in Training

No matter how good the training, no matter how engaging and talented the trainers, if employees don't apply what they learn when they return to the agency, the agency has effectively lost any benefit it might have derived from training. Fortunately, it doesn't have to be this way. Here's what supervisors can do:

### BEFORE TRAINING

1. Conduct pre-training conference with trainee
2. Discuss workshop expectations with supervisee
3. Begin to plan for action plan
4. Convey training as a priority

### DURING TRAINING

1. Insure there are no distractions (cover for trainee, if necessary)
2. Convey training is a priority
3. Discuss training and application of what has been learned between sessions (if multi-day training)
4. Attend training

### AFTER TRAINING

1. Meet within a week to review key points in training and action plan
2. Give worker a chance to try out new skills
3. Provide reinforcement for use of new skills
4. Reduce barriers to application of new skills

Source: Curry, D.H., Caplan, P., & Knuppel, J. (1994). Transfer of training and adult learning (TOTAL). *Journal of Continuing Social Work Education*, 6(1), 8-14.

## Staying Power

After their first year, by law supervisors must receive 24 hours of continuing education annually. To help meet this obligation the Division offers *Staying Power! A Supervisor's Guide to Retaining*

### Staying Power!



A Supervisor's Guide to Retaining Child Welfare Staff

*Child Welfare Staff*, a three-day, advanced classroom-based course that introduces supervisors to concepts, tools, and practices that improve staff retention. Upcoming training dates and locations are as follows:

- **September 13-15**, 2010, Kinston, NC Regional Training Center (registration opens June 28)
- **December 8-10**, 2010, Asheville, NC Regional Training Center (registration opens September 22)

# Introducing NC's Child Welfare Workforce Collaborative

Funded for five years by the US Department of Health and Human Services, the NC Child Welfare Workforce Collaborative is designed to build on the NC Child Welfare Education Collaborative, the Recruitment and Retention Project, and the efforts of other workforce projects funded by the Children's Bureau. This project focuses on:

**A five-year effort to develop our state's child welfare workforce, with a special focus on supervisors and managers.**

**1. Increasing access to graduate-level social work education focused on leadership and management in public human service agencies.** The Workforce Collaborative will design and develop a graduate level social work course called *Leadership and Management in Public Human Service Agencies*. It will be offered to students enrolled in the MSW program, but also to child welfare employees in county department of social service (DSS) agencies who are in or plan to move into supervision and management positions. The course will be a "hybrid," with both face-to-face and online experiences. It will be offered outside of the traditional schedule, with structured times on the weekend and in the evening, and will be offered primarily online.

**2. Preparing graduate students for future leadership roles in child welfare.** Each year of the project MSW students will be invited to become Leadership Scholars—trainees who receive financial support for school in return for commitment to work in child welfare in a county DSS agency upon graduation. Scholars are actively involved in a variety of child welfare leadership activities, including development of and participation in the MSW course, serving on the project's Advisory Board, and working with their field instruction advisors to incorporate leadership skills into their field placements.

**3. Assessing child welfare workforce needs in North Carolina.** Responsibility for the child welfare workforce is shared in North Carolina. Key stakeholders include the NC Division of Social Services, the NC Association of County Directors of Social Services, and the NC Office of State Personnel. Each group is an engaged partner in the Workforce Collaborative project and is sharing data and information important to developing a comprehensive assessment of the child welfare workforce in North Carolina. Project evaluators are analyzing data from those stakeholders (the annual child welfare staffing survey and salary data) to identify workforce trends.

**4. Coordinating the design and delivery of statewide child welfare workforce planning efforts to increase the skills and retention of mid-career child welfare staff.** As with many states, in North Carolina there is a great deal of worker turnover on the "front end" of child welfare—only 27% of child welfare workers have more than 5 years tenure in their positions. There is also turnover at the management and director levels as baby boomers move into retirement. As a result, the recruitment pool for experienced supervisors and managers is limited. Data analysis completed as part of a comprehensive assessment revealed that the greatest child welfare workforce need is for supervisors,

where there is a consistent gap between recommended supervision caseloads and the number of workers supervisors actually supervise. Building on the work of North Carolina's 2003-2008 federally-funded Recruitment and Retention Project, the Workforce Collaborative is focusing workforce planning efforts on supervisors by providing them with professional development opportunities.

**5. Improving access to information about NC child welfare jobs.** The Workforce Collaborative is developing a centralized Job Registry for child welfare jobs in our state. Currently job seekers must search each county separately; centralizing job postings will make it easier for individuals to find work in child welfare.

**6. Evaluating activities and disseminating "lessons learned."** Evaluation efforts will explore the successes and challenges of providing student trainees with financial support for social work education in return for committing to work in child welfare upon graduation. The MSW course on *Leadership and Management in Public Human Service Agencies* will also be evaluated; course developers will use results to revise and strengthen the course throughout the life of the project.

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## Supervisor Resources on ncswLearn.org

The "Supervisor Resources" section of [ncswLearn.org](http://ncswLearn.org) allows county DSS supervisors to manage all aspects of training related to their employees. Through this area of the site supervisors can:



- Use "Employee Management" to add information about employees not currently in the training system and edit personnel information for employees currently in the training system
  - Register their employees for training:
    - Use the "Search for Training Events," "Training Calendar," or "Training Catalogue" options for different views of upcoming training events
    - Once they have created their employees' registration applications, supervisors can use the "Employee Registration Cart" to submit registration applications for all their employees simultaneously
  - View employees' Individualized Training Assessments (ITA), training history, and training schedules
  - Cancel employees' training registrations if needed
- Supervisors can use the options presented on the left-hand side of the [ncswLearn.org](http://ncswLearn.org) screen to perform the tasks listed above. Note that these options are very similar to those in the Personalized Learning Portfolio (PLP), but are customized specifically to your employees. Use the PLP to register yourself for training, view your training attendance history, etc.