

# Training **MATTERS**



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

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*Training Matters* is produced by the North Carolina Division of Social Services Child Welfare Services Statewide Training Partnership, which is 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 Barium Springs Home for Children
- Center for Family and Community Engagement at NC State University
- Independent Living Resources, Inc.
- NC Child Welfare Education Collaborative
- UNC-Chapel Hill School of Social Work (Jordan Institute for Families)
- UNC-Chapel Hill School of Medicine

## We Want to Hear from You!

If you have questions or would like to comment about something that appears in *Training Matters*, please contact Kathy Dobbs, Child Welfare Services, NC Division of Social Services, 2412 Mail Service Center, 325 N. Salisbury St., Raleigh, NC 27699-2412, Courier: 56-20-25, Tel: 919/334-1176, [Kathy.Dobbs@dhhs.nc.gov](mailto:Kathy.Dobbs@dhhs.nc.gov).

## 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.

## Using Webinars to Support Child Welfare Practice in NC

Since it began building North Carolina's child welfare training system in the 1990s, the Division of Social Services has worked hard to offer county departments of social services training that is accessible, responsive to their needs, and effective. The webinars the Division has sponsored over the past several years have been part of this effort.

### Webinars

A webinar is a seminar conducted over the Internet, allowing presenters and participants to interact with one another in real time (OED, 2011). Although some webinars available today offer little more than static, one-way communication, the Division and its partners strive to offer highly collaborative, interactive events featuring polls, question and answer sessions, and other strategies to encourage full participation and engagement of learners.

### CFT Facilitator Forums

The Center for Family and Community Engagement (CFFACE) at NC State University offers training and technical assistance to support county DSS agencies around child and family team meetings (CFTs). In addition to its formal curricula, CFFACE offers free regional in-person and statewide online facilitator forums for staff members who facilitate CFTs or are a part of CFT program management. These interactive forums are open to all DSS and agency partners seeking to improve CFT facilitation.

CFFACE builds forums in response to participant requests, practice trends, new policies, and statewide, national, and international practice guidance. These forums provide a combination of information, skill development, and a supportive place for discussing CFT

**In 2010-11, CFFACE held 15 forums, reaching CFT facilitators in 38 counties.**

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## NC Child Welfare Webinars, 2008-Present

Click on a webinar below to access slides and handouts

Revitalizing Your Resource Family Recruitment & Retention Efforts	Nov. 2008
Finding Families for Teens	March 2009
Working with American Indian Families and Tribes	Oct. 2009
Working with Families Who Are "Stuck"	Dec. 2009
Forum for Supervisors: Working with Substance Abusing Families	Jan. 2010
Special Topics in Foster Care: Relative Search and APPLA	Feb. 2010
Using Medical Homes to Meet the Needs of Children	Apr. 2010
Successful Foster Home Licensing	June 2010
Strengthening Parent-Child Visits	Sept. 2010
Working with Sexually Aggressive Youth	Dec. 2010
Foster Care Licensing: What You Need to Know	Jan. 2011
Fostering Connections: Identifying and Notifying Relatives	March 2011
Child Welfare and Prescription Drug Abuse	Apr. 2011
Adoption: Clearing the Path to Permanency	June 2011

# Using Webinars to Support Child Welfare Practice in NC

from page 1

practice. Recent well-attended online forums included *The Changing Landscape of Facilitation*, where facilitators discussed practice trends and their effect on CFTs and *Back to Basics: Building Successful CFT Facilitation*.

CFFACE also offers online CFT policy events open to all county DSS social workers, not just facilitators. Recent events included a session on the CFT documentation form and working with American Indian tribes.

If you'd like to be notified about future CFT facilitator forums or policy events either in person or online, contact Marianne Latz (mlatz2@ncsu.edu; 919/513-3828).

## Series to Enhance Practice

North Carolina is using webinars to strengthen practice in other areas of child welfare as well. In partnership with the Division, since 2008 the Jordan Institute for Families at the UNC-CH School of Social Work has offered a series of practice-enhancing webinars for child welfare professionals from county DSS agencies.

As the chart on the previous page indicates, these 90-minute events focused on many topics, including family finding, foster home licensing, and prescription drug abuse. Presenters used evidence-based information to provide participants with tools they could immediately apply in their work with families. For each event handouts and a post-event follow-up documents were provided. Click on a webinar title in the box on page 1 to access the webinar slides, handouts, and follow-up documents for that webinar.

Webinars in this series were extremely popular, with most attended by more than 300 people. In 2010-11, 2,207 individuals registered for child welfare webinars, including one or more people from 95 of our state's 100 county DSS agencies. Seventy-seven DSS agencies registered someone for four or more webinars; 29 registered someone for all six.

Webinars in this series are integrated into the Division's online learning portal, [www.ncswlearn.org](http://www.ncswlearn.org). Child welfare professionals register and at-

tend via their [ncswLearn.org](http://ncswLearn.org) account. In addition, individuals' participation is included in their [ncswLearn.org](http://ncswLearn.org) training attendance history.

## Benefits and Impact

Webinars do more than help fulfill training requirements. Webinars and other e-learning approaches can reduce classroom time, travel time, and travel costs—costs typically borne by local agencies. Savings are multiplied by the number of learners served, the extent to which learners are geographically dispersed, and the number of training events they attend (Welsh, et al. 2003).

In North Carolina, child welfare staff have praised webinars for giving them access to quality presentations. They also like the fact that webinars reach so many people at once, including many who would not be able to attend traditional classroom training due to workload, budget constraints, and agency size.

In some agencies, entire units attend webinars together, which lets everyone hear the same material at once, ask questions, and focus on transfer of learning. As one person put it, after the webinar "We are together, so . . . we are able to talk about the webinar and how we need to change, implement change, and how it can be used in our cases."

This focus on transfer of learning seems to be widespread. In 2010-11, 97% of those who completed a Jordan Institute for Families post-webinar

## Upcoming Webinars

### CFT Facilitator Forums

To receive announcements about CFT forums, contact Marianne Latz (mlatz2@ncsu.edu)

### Webinars

To receive announcements about the following webinars, go to <http://lists.ncmail.net/mailman/listinfo/cwlistserv> and join the list

- Adoption Practice and the Courts, October 2011
- Strengthening Foster Family Assessments, December 2011
- Trauma Stewardship (for Directors and Program Managers), January 2012
- Coaching (for Child Welfare Supervisors), February 2012
- Results-Driven Child Welfare Practice, March 2012
- Engaging Non-Resident Fathers, April 2012

satisfaction survey said they intended to use what they learned in the webinar in their work with families and children.

## What the Future Holds

The Division and its partners will continue exploring ways to enhance online learning and to make child welfare training accessible, relevant, and effective. For a list of upcoming webinars, see the sidebar above. For tips to help you make the most of future webinars, see the box below.

## Tips to Enhance Your Webinar Experience

- Don't forget! Use a reminder so you don't miss the event
- Download and review handouts before event
- Think about questions to ask the presenters
- Test your audio by visiting <https://jif.adobeconnect.com/mictest>; enter as "guest"
- Check your computer by visiting [http://admin.adobeconnect.com/common/help/en/support/meeting\\_test.htm](http://admin.adobeconnect.com/common/help/en/support/meeting_test.htm)
- Put a "do not disturb" sign on your door

### Computer Requirements

- E-mail address used only by the worker
- Broadband Internet
- Adobe Flash Player version 10 or higher
- Speakers and/or headset: a headset may help you avoid disturbing others



Ask your agency's IT manager if you have questions about these requirements.

**References** (*Training Matters*, vol. 13, no. 1)

Oxford English Dictionary. (2011, June). Accessed August 30, 2011 from <http://www.lib.unc.edu/>

Welsh, E. T., Wanberg, C. R., Brown, K. G., & Simmering, M. J. (2003). E-learning: emerging uses, empirical results and future directions. *International Journal of Training Development* 7:4.