

# Training **MATTERS**



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

Volume 7, Number 3 • June 2006

*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:

- N.C. Division of Social Services
- N.C. Association of County Directors of Social Services
- Appalachian Family Innovations at Appalachian State University
- Independent Living Resources, Inc.
- N.C. Child Welfare Education Collaborative
- N.C. State University Department of 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-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 Teresa Turner, Program Administrator, Family Support and Child Welfare 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: [Teresa.Turner@ncmail.net](mailto:Teresa.Turner@ncmail.net), Tel: 919/733-7672.

#### **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)

## **ncswLearn.org: A New Tool for Child Welfare Training in NC**

In an ideal world, every child welfare supervisor would meet regularly with workers to assess their strengths and needs. Together they would review the courses the worker needs to fulfill training requirements. Then, taking the agency's needs into consideration, they would evaluate the available training and register the worker for courses that meet his or her needs.

Of course, we don't live in an ideal world. Often training isn't approached this way. As a result, workers sometimes show up for class with no idea what they need to learn, or they select courses not because of their content but because they are offered at convenient times and locations.

To get the most out of training, supervisors and workers must make a strong connection between the courses they take and their professional development, their practice skills, and the needs of the families they serve. When they fail to make this connection, they risk losing out on the many benefits training has to offer.



#### **ncswLearn.org**

The NC Division of Social Services and its training partners have developed a training web site to make it easier to get the most out of training. Through this site, [ncswLearn.org](http://ncswLearn.org), you can create a personalized learning portfolio that enables you to:

**Find training at a glance.** See all the training courses offered during a month. Or, search the site to find the times a specific training is being offered.

**Apply to register for training online.** It's simple!

**Track your training attendance history.** Whenever you take a course you add to your own personal training history, which makes it easy to assess which courses you need to take. *continued* ➔

#### **Coming Soon: The Individualized Training Assessment**

After July 1, 2006, [ncswlearn.org](http://ncswlearn.org) will feature an **Individualized Training Assessment (ITA)** that will make it easy for county DSS child welfare workers and supervisors to assess their training requirements based on their job responsibilities. The ITA will provide a personalized list of required, recommended, and elective courses offered by the Division. It will also give you a chance to let the Division know what topics you would like training to address in the future.

# ncswLearn.org: A New Tool for Child Welfare Training in North Carolina

from p. 1

**Update your personal information.** Has your job title changed? Gotten married and changed your name? You can update your information in the training system to ensure it is current and accurate.

**Take an online course.** ncsWLearn.org is a portal through which you will be able to take the Division's online courses. *Child Development* is the only online course available right now, but others are coming soon, including a portion of the Preservice Training.

**Save trees.** Because so many of its features are web-based, ncsWLearn.org uses less paper for mailings and calendars, saving thousands of trees a year.

## Who Can Use ncsWLearn.org?

Staff members from North Carolina county DSS's, state agencies, and private child-placing agencies are eligible to attend training events sponsored by the NC Division of Social Services.

## Is There a Catch?

You're thinking this sounds too good to be true, right? That there must be some catch? If you want to look at it that way, there are three:

**You must apply for registration yourself.** Online applications to attend a training event can be made only by the person who will be attending the course.

**You need a personal e-mail.** To use ncsWLearn.org, each person must have a unique, personal e-mail address. Ideally this address will be a work-related one, such as those available through nemail.net.

**It is different the first time.** If you have never attended Division-sponsored training before, you

need to go to a different web site, <[www.ncswTrain.org](http://www.ncswTrain.org)>. Register for training at this site once and in the future you can use ncsWLearn.org.

## Other Key Points

**When will confirmation letters be sent?** Effective immediately, confirmation letters will not be sent until a course's closing date for registration. An exception to this is the preservice, *Child Welfare in North Carolina*. Confirmation letters for Preservice Training will still be sent out as soon as registrations are confirmed.

**Who will receive confirmation letters?** Effective immediately, confirmation letters will be sent only to the person enrolled for the course, not the person's supervisor or the agency's training administrator. Preservice Training is an exception: confirmation letters for this course will be sent to the supervisors of preservice participants.

**How will confirmation letters be sent?** Confirmation letters as well as any other communication (e.g., waiting list letters, "event full" letters) will be sent as an attachment to e-mail or via U.S. mail.

**What if I am techno phobic or simply hate change?** You can still do things the old way by using the printed version of the Division's training calendar and faxing or mailing in your registration application form to the registrar for the course you want to attend.

### Give Us Feedback!

Tell us how you like ncsWLearn.org by completing the survey you'll find on the site.

## Important Changes to Cornerstone III

To improve its support of county departments of social services, the Division has made some important changes to *Cornerstone III: Partners In Change*.

As you know, *Cornerstone III* is a foundational training on the principles, knowledge, and skills related to family-centered practice, the "cornerstone" of MRS. In the past, *Cornerstone III* has been offered in two different versions: *Cornerstone III-A* for workers doing family assessments and *Cornerstone III-B* for all other child welfare and Work First staff.

However, effective April 15, 2006, the Division began offering a single version of *Cornerstone III* that will meet the training requirements of all child welfare and Work First staff.

In addition, if you or your staff have previously taken *Cornerstone III-B* and now find yourself conducting family assessments, we have developed a comprehensive **self-study guide** that will help you gain the skills and knowledge you need to conduct family assessments without having to repeat

*Cornerstone III*. This self-study guide is designed to be completed under the guidance of the social worker's supervisor or an agency child welfare trainer, who would be available to answer questions, review assignments, and discuss lessons learned through the self-study process. This guide can be found at <[www.dhhs.state.nc.us/dss/mrs](http://www.dhhs.state.nc.us/dss/mrs)>. The Division strongly urges you to use the self-study guide to ensure your staff are adequately trained in the family assessment approach.

If you have comments or suggestions about the Division's Multiple Response System training please contact Teresa Turner, Manager for Staff Development (919/733-7672, [teresa.turner@ncmail.net](mailto:teresa.turner@ncmail.net)). If you have questions about specific courses or registration, please contact the registrar of the course in question.

