

Training **MATTERS**



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

Volume 8, Number 4 • August 2007

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
- Independent Living Resources, Inc.
- NC Child Welfare Education Collaborative
- NC State University Department of Social Work
- NC 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, NC Division of Social Services, 2412 Mail Service Center, 325 N. Salisbury Street, Suite 531, Raleigh, NC 27699-2412, State Courier: 56-20-25, E-mail: Teresa.Turner@ncmail.net, Tel: 919/733-7672.

Visit Our Website

Go to <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>

Court-Related Training Resources

It would be hard to overstate the impact that interactions between the court and child welfare systems have on the safety, permanence, and well-being of children.

Given this, it should come as no surprise that during their first year of employment every public child welfare professional in our state is required to attend a two-day course called *Legal Aspects of Child Welfare in North Carolina*.

Legal Aspects

This course provides legal information to help staff understand the role of the juvenile court in protecting

abused, neglected, and dependent children. *Legal Aspects* also emphasizes the need to respect parents' rights through use of family-centered practice techniques.

This training is updated annually by the NC Division of Social Services and offered every month at locations across the state. For training dates or to register go to <www.ncswlearn.org>, a learning site for NC's human services professionals.

NC's Judicial College

Although they can't participate in it directly, North Carolina's new judicial college is another **cont. p. 2**

National Child Welfare Resource Center on Legal and Judicial Issues

Child welfare agencies in North Carolina and across the country should know about the National Child Welfare Resource Center on Legal and Judicial Issues, which is dedicated to achieving safety, permanence, and well-being for children through improved laws and judicial decision-making.

Funded by the Children's Bureau, this center is a part of the American Bar Association Center on Children and the Law. It provides training, technical assistance, and consultation to agencies and courts on all legal and judicial aspects of the child welfare system, including:

- Court improvement
- Agency and court collaboration
- Court processes
- Reasonable efforts requirements
- Representation of children and families, and
- Other child welfare issues.

The center organizes and helps with training, produces publications on law-related child



welfare topics, develops training materials, and helps others to improve laws, regulations, court rules, and policies.

On the center's web site you can find a variety of resources, such as:

- *Improving Outcomes for Older Youth: What Judges and Attorneys Need to Know*
- *Standards of Practice for Lawyers Representing Child Welfare Agencies*
- *Improving Outcomes Together: Court and Child Welfare Collaboration*

To access the center's web site go to <www.abanet.org/child/rciji>

Court from page 1

learning resource child welfare agencies should know about.

Created by the NC General Assembly during 2006 and housed at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill School of Government, the college will offer judges, clerks, magistrates, and others who support judicial officials with intensive training on a wide range of topics.

The General Assembly's 2006 appropriation has allowed for the hiring of core personnel and start-up activities. James C. Drennan, the director of the college, anticipates that the first new programs will focus on managing civil trials, trying capital cases, and court management for senior court executives.

Some courses will be done in collaboration with the NC Administrative Office of the Courts and other organizations with expertise in social work, science, business, technology, and other complex topics that come before the courts.

When it is up and running, the judicial college will also offer online and digital learning tools that will be accessible at any time.

"We are very excited about getting the judicial college started," Drennan says. "The willingness of the members of the General Assembly to commit this funding says a lot about how important the courts are to the state, and we are appreciative of the support they have offered."

Current judicial training offerings available through the School of Government include the following:

- A conference for judicial support staff
- Training for juvenile defenders and misdemeanor defenders
- A conference for parent attorneys
- A special topic seminar for district court judges, and
- Training for Family Court judges and staff

For a full listing go to www.ioj.unc.edu/calendar/bysubject/judicial.html.

The Vision for NC's Child Welfare Learning System

The NC Division of Social Services' Family Support and Child Welfare Services Statewide Training Partnership is a group of individuals representing the different levels and systems involved in the state's child welfare training efforts. In April 2004 a special working group from the Partnership was charged with setting a course for training and development within the child welfare system between 2005 and 2010. The following is an excerpt from the strategic plan they developed.

Strategic Planning for the Next Five Years

Given the evolving nature of the demands on the state's training system, in 2004 the Partnership engaged in a strategic—rather than goal-setting—planning process that produced the following strategic directions and objectives for child welfare training in North Carolina from 2005–2010.

Strategic Directions for the Learning System. Based on extensive interviews, a review of the training system's history, and a visioning process, the Partnership developed four strategic directions linked directly to the values and mission of the NC Division of Social Services:

1. **Continual Improvement:** Examine and improve our practice by supporting and developing trainers in the system and by integrating evaluation to inform policy and practice
2. **Collaboration:** Invite others in by supporting and promoting collaboration and inclusion at all levels and by effectively managing public relations
3. **Integration:** Connect elements of the system by integrating training, practice, policy, and evaluation and by promoting leaders as teachers within the system
4. **Experimentation:** Experiment with new approaches by exploring small scale innovations and new uses for technology

Objectives

Though the Partnership acknowledged its approaches would need to be adapted over time, it identified the following working objectives to guide the efforts of staff development personnel over the coming years:

1. Engage families and youth in the learning system
2. Enhance professional development of social workers
3. Enhance professional development of supervisors
4. Support leadership development among administration and management staff
5. Expand training and support to enhance skills of foster parents
6. Enhance professional development of trainers
7. Promote the professional development of Work First staff
8. Incorporate technology and e-learning into the learning system
9. Insure evaluation is an integral component of the learning system
10. Integrate training, practice, and policy
11. Increase understanding of and expand access to the learning system

For copy of the full report, *A Strategic Plan for the Next Five Years (2005 – 2010)*, go to www.trainingmatters-nc.org/tm_v8n4/plan05-10.pdf.