

Training **MATTERS**



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- 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. 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 Ruth Harrison, 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: Ruth.Harrison@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.

Using Data in Child Welfare: Learning Resources

As this issue of *Children's Services Practice Notes* demonstrates, actively using outcome information in their decision making offers significant benefits to child welfare agencies and the families they serve.

Yet it is also true that to work successfully with outcomes data, agencies must learn new skills, strategies, and ways of thinking. For some, the learning curve is steep.

Fortunately, there are resources out there to help agencies make this shift. Here is a description of some of the courses, newsletters, and web sites we think you will find most useful.

North Carolina Resources

“Working with Outcomes.” In support of North Carolina’s Mul-

tipple Response System (MRS), the NC Division of Social Services will soon offer a data-related training course for child welfare supervisors. The

course, “Working with Outcomes,” will be designed to support counties in their efforts to use data to guide practice and enhance agency performance.

The Jordan Institute for Families at the UNC-CH School of Social Work, which is developing this course, invites North Carolina county DSS supervisors, directors, and administrators to help shape the training by telling them about their learning needs with regard to the use of outcomes data. Since they *continued* →

Build the knowledge and skills you need to work effectively with outcomes data.

Featured Resource

Looking for a good basic introduction to outcome-oriented services in child welfare? Then we recommend the University of Michigan’s *Training Program for Child Welfare Supervisors*. This free online course offers a 23-minute module, taught by Drs. Kathleen Faller and Bill Meezan, that will help supervisors and frontline workers deepen their understanding of federal mandates regarding outcomes in child welfare and raise their awareness of the Child and Family Services Reviews, the Chafee Foster Care Independence Program, and the role of national data bases such as AFCARS & NCANDS.



Faller and Meezan

This site is worth visiting not only for its content, but because it really does deliver satisfying online learning. We think you will be surprised to find that this module gives you an experience that is remarkably close to the one you might have if you attended a class taught by these insightful, respected scholars.

Access this module at www.ssw.umich.edu/tpcws/outcomeOrientedServices/.

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are considering developing an online component to this course, they would also like to hear about your willingness to engage in online learning. Please e-mail your comments to johnmcmahon@mindspring.com.

Data Warehouse Training. The NC Division of Social Services offers training that addresses the basic elements of the State's data warehouse data set, which draws from information entered on the NCDHHS form 5104. The training also explains how to make basic queries, such as how to learn how many cases were substantiated in your county last year. For a listing of courses and course times, go to <https://www.dw.dhhs.state.nc.us/training/>.

Self-Evaluation

Interested in learning more about self-evaluation or what you can do to build your capacity to use data to enhance your performance? A good first step would be to visit the self-evaluation resource page developed by Dr. Lynn Usher, a professor at the UNC-Chapel Hill School of Social Work. Location: www.unc.edu/~lynnu/setool.htm

Of particular interest on this page is the link to *Measuring Outcomes in Child Welfare*, a self-evaluation how-to manual for agencies that Usher and others from UNC created in connection with a series of "data camps" they conducted for members of Family to Family self-evaluation teams.

Data Basics

Want to know more about interpreting outcomes data and working with statistical information?

A good place to turn is the "pointers" section of Prevent Child Abuse North Carolina's data page, at www.preventchildabusenc.org/neglectdata.htm.

Here you will find basic definitions of and formulas for calculating averages, ratios, percentages, etc. Much of this information is based on Simmons and Jablonski's 1990 book, *An Advocate's Guide to Using Data*.

A Curriculum from Maine

The University of Southern Maine has developed *Using Information Management to Support the Goals of Safety, Permanency, and Well Being*, a course that teaches child welfare supervisors to use State Automated Child Information System (SACWIS) data to improve casework supervision.

Although North Carolina does not have a SACWIS, agencies will still find this curriculum useful for the way it teaches supervisors data analysis techniques and skills that enable them to use data

Do you have questions about child welfare data, data entry, or evaluation? Contact the Division's Adolph Simmons, Jr. (919/733-3801; Adolph.Simmons@ncmail.net).

to improve child welfare services. The entire curriculum can be downloaded free from: www.muskie.usm.maine.edu/sacwis

Technology Resource

National Resource Center for Information Technology in Child Welfare assists State, local, and tribal child welfare agencies and the courts in improving outcomes for children and families through the use of information technology www.nrcitew.org

Further Information

Additional information, including an annotated list of data sources, can be found in the online version of *Children's Services Practice Notes*, vol. 9, no. 4 www.practicenotes.org

Online: Newsletters on Child Welfare Outcomes

Want to learn more about child welfare outcomes and how to use them? Then consult the National Child Welfare Resource Center for Organizational Improvement muskie.usm.maine.edu/helpkids. This federally-funded project strengthens and supports organizations committed to the welfare of children, youth, and families through research, training, technical assistance, and evaluation. It strives to improve outcomes for families and children by enhancing management and operations, bolstering organizational capacity, and promoting service integration.

Readers particularly interested in child welfare outcomes data should consult the following issues of this resource center's newsletter, "Managing Care."

- **Supervisors as Managers: Understanding and Using Outcome Data**
Volume III, Number 3 muskie.usm.maine.edu/helpkids/mcIII_3.html
- **Using Data for Decision Making**
Vol. III, No. 1 (Summer 2000) muskie.usm.maine.edu/helpkids/mcIII_1.html
- **Quality Assurance in Child Welfare**
Vol. II, No. 1 (Winter 1999) muskie.usm.maine.edu/helpkids/mcII_1.html
- **Outcome-based Management and Measurement in Child Welfare**
Vol. I, No. 3 (Spring 1998) muskie.usm.maine.edu/helpkids/mcI_3.html