

Assessing New Worker Knowledge and Skills

Why?

The proposed training plan is designed to be a holistic approach to building the critical knowledge and skills child welfare caseworkers need to effectively work with children and families. In addition, supervisors of new workers need to be able to assess their worker's readiness to do this high stakes and complex work. The evaluation component of the new training plan is designed to provide workers and their supervisors with assessments of the worker's knowledge and skills. These assessments will be used as tools to further new employee development, demonstrate areas of strength as well as identify areas where more learning, practice, coaching, observation, and / or training may be indicated. Our proposal to evaluate new worker learning and the effectiveness of the training redesign accomplishes three things:

1. Maximizes the retention and transfer of knowledge and skills learned in training to the field.
2. Measures the extent to which Core training is effective in providing foundational knowledge and skills to new workers.
3. Provides a profile of each new worker's knowledge and skill upon exiting Core training, and provides tools to the field that support and measure growth within the first year of hire.

Highlights

- Proposed skills assessments to develop include simulations for case presentation, child interviewing, and family engagement. Written skills assessments are proposed for safety assessments, case plans, and protective capacities.
- Developed and completed a pilot of a knowledge test that primarily covers content related to the Oregon Safety Model, casework practice, and engaging families and relatives (presented in the current Life of a Case training).
- Knowledge test workgroup consisting of DHS, tribal child welfare, and CWP staff will meet with national training evaluation expert, Dr. Cindy Parry, September 22nd and 23rd, 2016 to review test items and the results from Dr. Parry's Rasch analysis of the pilot data.

- The workgroup will also participate in a standard setting process, facilitated by Dr. Parry, to identify levels of demonstrated knowledge on the test.
- A readiness matrix is proposed to help supervisors assess their new worker's readiness to engage with families. The matrix will identify the foundational skills in which workers will need to demonstrate proficiency prior to being able to independently carry cases.
- Every assessment will have tools developed to support continued growth in the field for the area assessed. For example, a rubric for supervisors / mentors to use when observing the worker conduct a child interview. Another example would be suggested activities targeted to helping increase a worker's knowledge in an area identified as needing development from the results on the test.