

NEW JERSEY DEPARTMENT OF CHILDREN AND FAMILIES
TRAINING PLAN
2020-2024
Updated June 2023

2020-2024 Training Plan

The New Jersey Department of Children and Families (DCF) Office of Training and Professional Development (OTPD) provides training that enhances the child protective service skills of New Jersey's child welfare workforce. OTPD facilitators have degrees in education, social work and other human services related disciplines and are training approximately 6,300 DCF personnel statewide at any given time. In addition, OTPD provides a three-day onboarding orientation for all new and reassigned employees. Due to the COVID-19 emergency, OTPD continued to offer training for DCF personnel via online tools. Orientation for all DCF staff is provided by the OTPD training facilitators and professional staff from other DCF Divisions.

Input and feedback from relevant stakeholders and partners, including university partners, Division of Child Protection and Permanency (CP&P) staff at all levels, DCF executive staff, trainers and training participants, are collected in several ways to enhance the development and implementation of training and support, ensuring that New Jersey continues to maintain substantial conformity with the Child and Family Services Review (CFSR) systemic factor, "staff and provider training." For example, pre/posttests are utilized for essential pre-service and mandatory ongoing training to measure knowledge gain while also helping to identify areas of curriculum and training that may need clarification. Between July 2021 and June-2022, the overall average pretest score was 61%, and the average posttest score was 85%. On average, there was a 24-point increase from pretest to posttest.

In addition, training participants are asked to complete a course evaluation survey at the completion of training to assess their satisfaction with the learning experience as well as to solicit feedback on the training, materials, and instructor(s). There were 4,358 participant responses from satisfaction surveys representing 58 unique course titles included in this one-year reporting period.

Prior to any curriculum development, consultation with stakeholders is completed to develop the purpose, goal, audience and support for participants once training is complete. Furthermore, focus groups are held to gain the voice of people that will be receiving the training and carrying out the work/skills learned. Moving forward, additional feedback will be sought through experience surveys at least annually.

University Partnerships

OTPD works in partnership with some of New Jersey's most esteemed colleges and universities. These institutions of higher learning offer degrees in social work with a specific focus on child welfare. Rutgers University, the State University of New Jersey (Rutgers), leads the New Jersey Child Welfare Training Partnership (NJCWTP), along

with Stockton University. The NJCWTP provides enhanced educational support to ensure a more qualified child protective services workforce.

New Worker Orientation

This three-day orientation and training program is for all new DCF employees. It is offered by OTPD and subject matter experts from the offices of Human Resources, Employee Relations (OER), Equal Employment Opportunity/Affirmative Action, Diversity, Equity and Belonging, and Legal Affairs. An overview of the mission and work of DCF is presented with additional modules covering confidentiality of records, prevention of workplace violence, ethics, racial bias and non-discrimination in the workplace. This orientation is delivered by full-time DCF professional staff, as required within job responsibilities and salary. As indicated above, the orientation had been moved to an online format during the pandemic, however OTPD returned to an in-person format in early March 2023.

CP&P has approximately 4,880 staff, making it the largest division within DCF. All new CP&P staff attend extensive new worker training to prepare them for their work with children and families. This training occurs over 18 months and is broken down into Pre-service and Foundational Courses. The training is complemented with days in the field shadowing seasoned workers, with support from the trainee's supervisor. Since July 2021, hiring resumed and online pre-service training cohorts commenced for new staff. In Fall 2022, pre-service training began transitioning back to an in-person format and, in Spring 2023, some foundation courses transitioned back to an in-person format.

Course Descriptions:

Pre-Service Training

Currently, Pre-service is a 13-week program, with approximately 163 hours of training (evolving due to changes related to shifting the training modality from virtual to in-person). This is an adjusted training program that was adapted for virtual learning during the pandemic. Pre-service training is currently designed to strike a balance between online training and field practicum. Field practicum activities are guided by a Field Training Unit Supervisor.

Competency examinations are administered after most modules of Pre-service training. Workers are expected to score a minimum of 70% to successfully advance to subsequent modules and complete the course.

The allowable Title IV-E administrative functions for the Pre-service training series are: *Referral to services; Preparation for and participation in judicial determinations; Placement of the child; Development of the case plan; Case reviews; Case management and supervision.*

The pre-service program also includes the following topics.

- Car Seat Safety

- Safety Awareness
- Pre-service Orientation
- Understanding Child Welfare in NJ
- Computer Applications (NJ SPIRIT/SDM)
- Cultivating Awareness: Promoting Safety, Well-Being & Success
- Focusing on Families: From Screening to Closing
- Child Development: Identifying Abuse and Neglect
- Structured Decision Making and Critical Thinking
- Making Visits Matter
- Solution Based Casework – Initial
- Simulation

Course descriptions are included below.

During 2021, the NJCWTP led the redesign of the CP&P pre-service/new worker training. These curriculum updates are underway and will be completed in 2022 along with evaluation tools, simulation and practice application activities, and coaching and reflection resources for new worker (Family Support Service Trainee) supervisors.

Car Seat Safety: This mandatory occupant protection course was developed in partnership with the New Jersey Division of Highway Traffic Safety. Upon completion, participants shall demonstrate competencies related to DCF policy and New Jersey statutes for transporting children and proper restraint selection. Students will be able to identify the correct type(s) of restraint for a vehicle occupant depending on the age and size of the child, demonstrate the ability to adjust restraints for correct use with a specific child, identify a locking system for securing a child restraint (latch plate, retractor, or LATCH), and secure child restraints to a vehicle using a seat belt or LATCH system. This training involves classroom and outdoor, hands-on practice installing child restraints.

Safety Awareness: This two-day course presents information about worker safety awareness, assessment, and actions workers can take if, and when, they encounter unsafe situations. The training also provides participants with ways in which they can apply preparation strategies that promote safety in child welfare practice. At the end of this training, participants will be able to describe the signs that a person's behavior is escalating, recognize indicators that signal an interaction is becoming unsafe, and use techniques that promote safety during interaction with others at different stages of escalation.

Pre-Service Orientation: The purpose of this one-day module is to introduce new hires to the computer applications used by CP&P workers to fulfill daily job responsibilities. Instructor-led demonstrations and hands-on practice focus on the Learning Management System, Outlook Web Applications, DCF websites, online manuals, and an overview of the New Jersey Statewide Protective Investigation, Reporting and Information Tool (NJ SPIRIT), the state's comprehensive child welfare information system (CCWIS). This module familiarizes participants with the content and layout of the Online Classrooms. Instructor-led demonstrations navigate through eBooks, activities, and resources.

Understanding Child Welfare in New Jersey: The purpose of this three-day classroom module is to reinforce and build upon the learning from the Module One Online pre-classroom work, helping the new worker to build a foundation for becoming a family-centered advocate for children and families. Topics covered in this module include state and federal legislation, services and supports for children and families, and an introduction to New Jersey's Case Practice Model. Focusing on best practices for engaging children, families, and stakeholders, and building trust-based relationships, this training utilizes lecture, small and large group discussion and activities, as well as skills practice opportunities.

Computer Applications (NJ SPIRIT/SDM): The purpose of this asynchronous module is to introduce new caseworkers to the function of the NJ SPIRIT web-based applications. Trainees use case scenarios to document and monitor progress made during the life of a CP&P case.

Cultivating Awareness: Promoting Worker Safety, Well-being & Success: This two-day classroom experience is designed to help the new worker build upon and increase the learning that they complete in the Module Two Online pre-classroom work. Participants reflect upon the importance of environmental and personal awareness that contributes to personal safety, well-being, and success. Environmental awareness focuses on how workers can keep themselves safe in the field. Personal awareness examines individual beliefs and biases, as well as highlights personal strengths and opportunities for growth. This module concludes with the development of a Self-Directed Learning Plan to both aid participants in their own professional development and prepare them to assist families in creating strong and purposeful case plans using the SMART goal setting process.

Focusing on Families: From Screening to Closing: This one-day training provides an overview of working with families and the key decisions that must be made once a family becomes involved with CP&P. Participants are introduced to the CP&P case management process: Screening, Investigation, Permanency, and Case Closure. Classroom discussions and activities are designed to help new caseworkers understand the CP&P case flow and the relationships between and among various functions. Participants begin to understand the variety of roles and numerous job functions that a caseworker performs as a Family Service Specialist.

Child Development: Identifying Abuse and Neglect: Child welfare caseworkers need extensive knowledge regarding how children develop at various stages in their lives to properly assess families for potential abuse and neglect. Caseworkers also need to recognize the contributing risk factors and medical indicators of child abuse and neglect. This three and a half-day module is designed to provide a basic guide for caseworkers in identifying situations and signs that a child has been harmed or is at risk of being harmed. Cultural competence is again an important component in the approach to risk assessment. Caseworkers become aware of cultural practices and methods that may mimic child abuse.

Structured Decision Making (SDM) and Critical Thinking: The SDM System is a comprehensive case management framework for child protection that uses a series of assessments to help child protection workers assess families and make critical decisions throughout the life of a permanency case. The SDM system combines research with practice strategies, offering child protection workers a framework for consistent decision making, and agencies a way to direct in-demand resources toward families that can benefit most. The assessments themselves are just one component of the SDM system. By integrating engagement strategies, research, SDM assessments, and professional judgment, the SDM system takes a full-system approach to helping child protection workers best service their clients.

Making Visits Matter: This three-day module continues to explore New Jersey's Case Practice Model by focusing on the importance of visits with children and families. The work done by child welfare professionals is primarily accomplished through the relationships among the worker, the child and family, and the informal and formal support systems. Visits with children, parents, and substitute caregivers are a focal point of child-welfare practice. Making contact and building connections with the family and their supports is the cornerstone of best practice. A quality visiting practice is a purposeful strategy that involves working to find ways to best partner with families, teams, and community supports. The common objectives are to assure safety, permanency, well-being, and stability for both the short and long-term. This scenario-based module introduces planning tools and strategies that are modeled for participants before offering them the opportunity to practice the planning and interviewing skills in small groups.

Solution Based Casework – Initial Course: This course is a blend of online, asynchronous modules that are completed independently interspersed with five facilitator-led webinars to provide workers with a framework to collaborate, assess, and plan with the family. Strategies are based on three key elements:

1. to create a partnership based on problem consensus in language the family understands,
2. to focus that partnership on the patterns of everyday family life that directly relate to threats to safety, and
3. to target solutions specific to the prevention skills needed to create safety and reduce risk in those family situations.

Simulation: Engaging a family in crisis or in need of services that the family is unable to acquire without intervention from a child welfare system is daunting, even for the seasoned child welfare practitioner. Using case simulation, new caseworkers are provided an opportunity to practice and to expand their engagement and interpersonal skills, allowing them to make decisions and mistakes in a coaching and protective setting. During simulation, workers are presented with a real-world Child Protective Service (CPS) scenario and are expected to use the family engagement and assessment skills learned during pre-service training while conducting a CPS investigation. Simulation training is a video recorded event. Workers are debriefed following simulation training, and casework documentation is conducted using SDM tools. Simulation is five to seven days.

Foundational Courses

Foundational courses are provided to all new workers upon completion of the Pre-service program. Some of the foundational courses are on-line, monitored by OTPD, and some courses are conducted by DCF's university partners (Rutgers and Stockton) and the New Jersey Coalition to End Domestic Violence.

Why Kinship Care Matters: Engaging and Empowering Kinship Caregivers: This course reinforces the importance of kinship care and provides strategies and practice tools for engaging kinship families. This training affirms the resilience of the communities that families come from and provides tools for honoring those communities by working with families to develop solutions to support the healing of their children. This training is informed by research findings and best practice that demonstrate that maintaining family and community bonds contributes to youth's success.

Concurrent Planning: Permanency and Concurrent Permanency Planning lays out the concepts and practice of permanency beginning with an historical perspective of relevant legislation, the modified settlement agreement, and exploration of children's developmental needs. The specific permanency practice of concurrent permanency planning is then explored, including the concepts of prognostic assessment, diligent search, full disclosure, and the emerging practices of birth parent/resource parent relationships and post permanency communication. The training culminates with a module concentrating on permanency for youth beyond concurrent planning timelines. The Title IV-E administrative functions that the "Concurrent Planning" training activity addresses are: preparation for and participation in judicial determinations; placement of the child; development of the case plan; case reviews; case management and supervision; and recruitment and licensing of foster homes and institutions.

Human Trafficking: Survivor Identification and Engagement: Survivor Identification and Engagement encompasses all forms of human trafficking in the United States with a focus on sex trafficking and labor trafficking. This training is focused on identifying at-risk children and youth within the DCF service populations including boys, girls, and transgendered youth. Additionally, this course equips CP&P staff with guidance on how to work with survivors of trafficking who are parents or caregivers of CP&P involved youth. Recommendations for creating safe, empowering environments for engagement are discussed along with strategies for safety planning and relationship building.

Understanding Substance Use and Child Welfare: This module offers participants a contextual knowledge of the effects of substance use and/or abuse that may be experienced by parents involved in the child welfare system. It discusses the prevalence of substance use (alcohol and other drugs), mental health disorders, as well as co-occurring disorders, and addresses other co-occurring issues that families may be facing including family violence, trauma, physical health, poverty, and crime.

Substance Use: Disorders, Treatment and Recovery: This module informs child welfare professionals about substance use disorders, treatment and recovery needs of

families. Information is presented so that it can be used in the context of home visitation and case management for family members who are involved in the child welfare system. The training provides an understanding of the treatment and recovery processes and discusses the specifics on how substance use disorders can affect the interpersonal relationships and family dynamics of the family involved with the child welfare system. The allowable Title IV-E administrative functions that the “Substance Use: Disorders, Treatment and Recovery” training activity addresses are: referral to services; development of the case plan; and case reviews.

Domestic Violence and the DCP&P Policy: This course provides information on domestic violence and co-occurring child abuse and neglect using applicable New Jersey law, CP&P’s Domestic Violence Policy, and up-to-date information as its framework to assess the risk and protective factors in families. Participants learn about prevalence, correlates, dynamics, recent research and common manifestations of domestic violence as well as the cycle of violence and the typical progression of an abusive relationship. Course objectives include learning how to engage and plan with families experiencing domestic violence from a trauma-informed perspective. Highlights of the workshop also include a discussion of the impact of culture on the experience of domestic violence, including culturally accepted behaviors and community responses. The allowable Title IV-E administrative functions the “Domestic Violence and CP&P” training activity addresses include: referral to services; preparation for and participation in judicial determinations; placement of the child; case reviews; and case management and supervision.

Engaging Families with Mental Health Conditions: This course is designed for caseworkers to learn and develop basic competencies for working with children and families who are diagnosed with mental illness. This training will explore the worker’s personal knowledge and attitude about mental health and illnesses and how their knowledge and attitude impact the families they serve. Course objectives include defining mental illness, discussing values and beliefs related to mental health and illness, adult mental health disorders as described in the DSM-5, understanding the impact of mental health disorders on team formation and case planning, and identifying strategies for engaging families where mental illness is present.

What Every Caseworker Needs to Know About Education and Special Education: This course offers vital information about various aspects of the educational system so that caseworkers may better advocate on behalf of the children on their caseloads. Participants will discuss the common roadblocks to school access faced by children in the welfare system and how to surmount them. Basic laws governing school district responsibilities, confidentiality, information sharing, and disclosure will be examined. The nuances of the special education system will be illustrated. Participants will learn about eligibility for special education and what questions to ask to get the necessary assessments and services for children. Possible reasons for student misbehavior and adverse effects of inappropriate discipline will be discussed. Participants will analyze school district dos and don’ts in the area of discipline so that children in their care receive the rights and protections to which they are entitled by law.

First Responders; Including Four Tiers and Structured Decision Making (SDM): This course is designed for CP&P staff who are about to be assigned to an intake function for which they conduct child abuse and neglect investigations. This version also includes the SDM tools of Safety Assessment, Risk Assessment, Caregiver's and Children's Strengths and Needs Assessment as well as an exercise on developing safety plans that consider the parents' protective capacities and the family's access to protective factors. A full day is focused on interviewing children while other sessions highlights include the role of the first responder, statutes and policies that define child abuse and neglect, crisis theory in the context of understanding abusive and neglectful families, planning an investigation (including considerations when domestic violence is co-occurring), searching the CP&P policy portal for investigative policies and protocols, cultural awareness and curiosity, looking at substance abuse and mental health issues in families, exploring time management and stress management, and addressing barriers and the strategies to overcome them. The allowable Title IV-E administrative functions of the "First Responders; Including Four Tiers and Structured Decision Making" training activity are: referral to services; preparation for and participation in judicial determinations; and case management and supervision.

Youth Thrive: Based on the Center for the Study of Social Policy's Youth Thrive Framework, this training highlights how Promotive and Protective Factors are important for adolescents, as they increase the likelihood that youth develop characteristics associated with healthy adolescent development and well-being. Workers will be given opportunities for self-reflection in order to develop a practice that utilizes the Youth Thrive framework in their daily work. Participants will identify how the Youth Thrive framework is especially important for youth in vulnerable situations, in care and not in care, and how it is ultimately applicable to ALL youth.

Child Sexual Abuse Issues for Child Welfare Professions, Module 1: This course training introduces workers to several topics related to working with child sexual abuse victims and their families. In this module, participants will examine how one's own personal values, beliefs, and emotional responses can impact case practice; describe how personal reactions to sexual abuse must be recognized and managed appropriately to work effectively with sexually abused children and their families; identify various facts and myths that are prevalent in our society and explore how assumptions may interfere with developing a positive working relationship with the family. Participants will also be able to discuss the historical context of child sexual abuse and how this impacts present day beliefs; identify the role of the systems involved in child sexual abuse cases including the legal system, Child Advocacy Centers, Multi- Disciplinary Teams, sexual assault nurse examiner , Victims of Crime Compensation Organization, and Regional Diagnostic and Treatment Centers; discuss the indicators of child sexual abuse, normal and problematic sexual behaviors, the influence of culture, physical indicators, and dynamics of child sexual abuse; discuss the effects of child sexual abuse and the need for specialized treatment and the various types of therapy for sexually abused children. Participants will examine feelings and beliefs about the non-offending parent, which refers to any parent who is not the abuser; discuss the crisis of the disclosure and the impact

on the family; recognize the role of denial, the process of believing, and the role of the child welfare worker in this process.

Child Sexual Abuse Issues for Child Welfare Professions, Module 2: This course guides the child welfare professional: to explore how personal values, culture, and gender impact issues surrounding child sexual abuse; to recognize implications within the context of domestic violence, language barriers, and immigration status; to review the immediate and long-term impact of sexual abuse on children; to identify effective treatment options and remediate treatment barriers; to explore the impact of sexual abuse on the non-offending parent and family members; to help the worker understand common characteristics and types of offenders; and to explore Megan's Law and other components of the legal system. Participants also discuss specific investigative processes and interview procedures to be utilized with the child and different family members while also learning about the effects of vicarious trauma.

Cultural Competency (LGBTQIA+): Cultural Competency LGBTQIA+ examines distinctions between sexual orientation, gender identity, and gender expression. Participants will have the opportunity to explore their own values, biases, and beliefs about sexuality and gender. Additionally, participants will identify indicators that a youth might be struggling with issues of sexual orientation or gender identity and develop strategies for effective engagement while creating a safe and inclusive environment for staff, service providers, families, and youth.

Transitional Planning for Youth Success: This training focuses on the importance of comprehensive assessment, effective planning and youth-involvement in assisting adolescents with their transition into adulthood. The content will include the identification and exploration of assets and opportunities, long and short-term goal setting and application of the Casey Life Skills Assessment (CLSA) in the development of a Transitional Plan for Youth Success (TPYS). The training will also explore resources available to youth and staff during the transitional process, as well as required DCF procedures and associated timeframes. In March 2022 the TPYS/CLSA trainings were canceled due to the changes with the transitional plan and the independent living assessment DCF will be using the Youth Thrive survey moving forward. The Office of Adolescent Services (OAS) and the Office of Training and Professional Development (OTPD) are working together to update the training to include information about the Youth Thrive survey, the Solutions Based Casework (SBC) Case Plan adolescent transition section as well as utilizing the Casey life skills toolkit for providers. In Spring 2023, this updated training fully re-launched under the new name, Youth and Young Adult Assessment and Transition Planning.

Secondary Traumatic Stress (previously known as Coping with Vicarious Trauma): This training–raises awareness around vicarious traumatization which can arise from interactions with supervisors, the legal system or other child-serving systems, and their families. The chronic, constant, and tense engagement with traumatized families can disrupt child welfare workers' perceived meaning of professional encounters and their own physical and emotional well-being. Child welfare workers' personal history of trauma,

familial relationships and support networks, and coping strategies may contribute to their response to vicarious traumatization and how they cope with it. The signs and symptoms of vicarious traumatization are similar to those of direct trauma. This training will help child welfare professionals to identify and combat the warning signs within themselves and others so as to continue having meaningful, strengths-based interactions with families and their colleagues.

LIFEBOOK Work for Child Welfare Professionals: Participants in this course will strengthen the professional practice of creating and utilizing a Lifebook as a tool that can have a positive impact on child welfare work. Participants will explore children's stages of development, grief/loss, and trauma's impact on identity formation; reinforce the importance of preparing a Lifebook as a support to resource parents, children, and the professionals working with them; and practice strategies for doing Lifebook work with children.

Normalcy: In October 2019, a two-hour online Normalcy and Reasonable Prudent Parenting Training was developed for all DCF child welfare staff to complete. DCF assisted Embracing and Empowering Families (Embella) in developing a similar training for resource and adoptive caregivers and for non-family based out of home providers.

In-Service and Elective Courses

In-Service courses are provided to all case-carrying staff who have been in service for at least a year. Approximately 3,000 caseload carrying staff are required to have annual in-service training. The courses outlined below are currently offered as OTPD's continuous in-service program. New courses are developed and delivered every year by OTPD and in cooperation with DCF's university partners. Courses are guided by the needs of families served and the practice needs of CP&P staff. There are additional elective course offerings that are approved on a case-by-case basis through DCF's Children's System of Care, Rutgers University School of Social Work Continuing Education Program, and other statewide and national trainings that are offered by various institutions and that are allowable title IV-E training topics.

Documentation Skills for Child Welfare Workers: Case documentation is an important aspect of a child welfare professional's job and may become a key factor in the life of a child. During the first day of this two-day introductory course, participants review basic writing skills, grammar and punctuation. Through class discussion, video, and group exercises, participants learn to identify and record data for inclusion in case records, and document information clearly, concisely, and efficiently. The allowable Title IV-E administrative functions the "Documentation Skills for Child Welfare Workers" training activity addresses are: preparation for and participation in judicial determinations; development of the case plan; case reviews; and case management and supervision.

Special Response Unit (SPRU): This workshop is for new SPRU Workers to examine and discuss the realities of the After-Hours Special Response System. Participants learn how CP&P policies guide their work in the field. Through interactive lectures, scenarios, skill practice, and group activities, critical casework situations that SPRU workers may

encounter are examined. The needed resources and how to access them is also be explored, including law enforcement assistance. Prerequisite: Appropriate recommendations of Local Office Management, successful completion of First Responders in Child Welfare.

Supervisory Practices in Child Welfare

Module 1: Self-Management: This first of three modules in the supervisory training series focuses on learning about the shift from worker to supervisor and the responsibilities of supervision. Supervisors develop skills in fostering trust, creating a motivating environment where communication is open, conflict is effectively managed, and worker performance is assessed for continued development. Other topics discussed include effective communication, managing across differences and managing conflict. Participants examine how to coach employees, how to build the capacity of the workers, and creating partnerships and effective teams. Additionally, approaches to performance evaluations and managing performance problems (OER) is presented and illustrated.

Module 2: People Management: Various learning activities in this module focus on self-assessment, reflection on personal viewpoints and capabilities, and getting work done through others. Topics highlighted include cultural competence, the various supervisory roles, time management and personal learning style. Participants discuss the importance of the supervisor's commitment to DCF's vision and values.

Newly Developed/Newly Available

Race Equity Trainings: Race Equity is a core approach DCF is working to embed across the Department. To attend to race equity in all areas of the Department, with the ultimate goal of promoting equitable treatment for all NJ constituents, and equitable outcomes for DCF, the Office of Training and Professional Development made trainings available to all DCF staff.

The first online training entitled “*Implicit Racial Bias 101: Exploring Implicit Bias in Child Welfare*” introduced to participants insights about how their minds operate and helped them understand the origins of implicit associations. Participants uncovered some of their own biases and learned strategies for addressing them. The online course contains four modules for which 1.5 credits can be earned with completion. Each module is divided into a short series of videos, many taking less than ten minutes to complete.

This online training was followed by a training series entitled “*Transforming Child Welfare Through Anti-Racism.*” From mid-March through June 2021, Dr. Jessica Pryce delivered four sessions as part of her series:

- Session 1: History, Policy, Data, Evolutionary Change vs. Revolutionary Change
- Session 2: Power and Privilege and Protective Factors in Child Welfare
- Session 3: Mindset Shifting/Courageous Leadership/Systemic Change
- Session 4: Anti-Racism Community Framework for Child and Family Wellbeing

All DCF staff met once a month with a designated cohort of approximately 660 participants to participate in an immersive, interactive instruction regarding the presence of racism in child welfare. Staff had an opportunity to send questions to Dr. Pryce in advance of and during her live sessions. Dr. Jessica Pryce is a dynamic and informative speaker with great insight and expertise in the area of child welfare and child protection. She has presented before the NJ Children in Court Improvement Committee and most recently at the annual conference of the NJ Task Force on Child Abuse and Neglect. Upon successful completion of all four sessions, staff received six training credits.

Solution-Based Casework Training: DCF has integrated SBC, a behavior-based case planning model, within CP&P's case practice model.¹ To support the integration, implementation, and sustainability of SBC, and in collaboration with the model developer, CP&P local office staff and OTPD trainers were identified as SBC Champions. Champions participated in an intensive train-the-trainer model beginning in February 2021 and concluded with successfully certifying all Champions as expert SBC trainers/coaches. The SBC Champions were responsible for facilitating the statewide roll-out to the CP&P offices. Beginning in late June of 2021, all CP&P case workers and supervisors received comprehensive training and coaching to effectively apply SBC values and skills, ensuring SBC core competencies are achieved.

Healing Centered Engagement Certificate: In the fall of 2021, DCF piloted three cohorts of staff and stakeholders to complete the Healing Centered Engagement Certificate through Flourish Agenda. The Certificate program is a hybrid course that includes self-paced and live virtual learning over a three-month timeframe. All participants have one year to complete the self-paced portion of the program. The learning objectives of this course include:

1. a description of the distinctions between healing centered engagement and trauma informed approaches
2. assessing the impact of social toxins to the well-being of individuals, relationships, and institutions
3. identifying the five principles of Healing Centered Engagement
4. critiquing and analyzing activities that promote development of Healing Centered Engagement principles necessary for holistic healing.

All cohorts recently finished their live sessions and OTPD will be obtaining high level evaluation data from Flourish Agenda and coordination time to meet with participants to identify next steps and recommendations regarding this certificate training program.

Center for Learning and Improving Performance (CLIP) All Access Pass: In June 2021, all DCF staff received an all-access pass to the New Jersey Civil Service Commission's CLIP eLearning catalog. The catalog gives staff access to over 600 courses (and growing) from topic areas that include management and supervision; process and resource management; professional development; technology at work; government and compliance; health and safety and learning paths.

¹ Additional information about SBC can be found online at: <https://www.solutionbasedcasework.com/>.

Staff Resource Family Training

New Jersey ensures that all resource and adoption staff are provided the knowledge and skills through training to execute their work responsibilities effectively. Trainings are held throughout the year to support opportunities for ongoing learning for existing resource and adoption staff as well as newly identified staff assuming resource and adoptive parenting work within the department. This includes extensive training for the resource and adoption home study process. DCF uses Structured Analysis Family Evaluation (SAFE), a standardized home study model delivered to staff through the Consortium for Children. It provides for a structured and uniform evaluation of families who apply to foster or adopt. Components of SAFE include a two-day training for staff new to resource work, a one-day refresher training to enhance the skills of experienced staff, and a supervisory component to provide guidance to those who oversee resource and adoptive work. Most recently, a one-day training for Administrators was added to support a higher-level understanding of the home study process.

DCF is committed to developing the knowledge of all DCF staff around the role of resource, adoption and licensing staff. Currently, curriculum is being developed for delivery for staff new to DCF, as well as experienced staff, around the role resource, adoption and licensing work plays in ensuring successful outcomes for children.

Lastly, DCF is committed to creating an organization that continuously seeks to improve service provision with an emphasis on providing beneficial outcomes for children and families. Towards this end, DCF is committed to examining all aspects of training for resource, adoption and licensing staff to ensure that all are provided with training and education that is evidence-based and supports best practices in child welfare.

Foster and Adoptive Family Services Training

Currently, DCF uses two pre-service training models for prospective resource and adoptive families. Specifically, the Parent Resources for Information, Development and Education (PRIDE) for unrelated families and Traditions of Care designed for kin and fictive kin. The PRIDE model provides for nine, three-hour, in-person sessions while the Traditions of Care offers six, three-hour sessions. Currently both training models have been modified to support learning on a virtual platform. Content was reduced to include the relevant components of both while supporting the inclusion of the Nurtured Heart Approach, a supportive behavior management model that provides caregivers with strategies to assist children with self-regulation and transforming the way they perceive themselves, their caregivers and the world around them. The modified pre-service training also includes strategies outlined in the Birth and Foster Parent Partnership: a Relationship Building Guide² that promotes and supports birth parent/foster parent collaboration. DCF is committed to the ongoing assessment of current pre-service training curriculum to provide a more uniform approach to this supportive training. Considerations include a model that provides pre-licensing education, emphasizes ongoing support and education that is circumstance and child specific. DCF recognizes this model must include education and practice strategies of trauma-informed care.

DCF is committed to supporting the pre-service training with the continued inclusion of trainers with lived experience. DCF will continue to utilize current resource parents, kin and non-kin, as well as youth formerly in care to support and partner with DCF staff in training delivery. This provides participants with invaluable knowledge and a unique understanding of the experience of foster and adoptive parenting that traditional training does not provide.

DCF provides ongoing, in-service training opportunities to all resource families through a formal partnership with Embracing and Empowering Families (Embrella), a statewide advocacy agency for foster, adoptive and kinship parents in New Jersey. Embrella provides training through a variety of modalities including community-based training, online courses, webinars, and home correspondence courses. Courses through the Embrella training catalog are available to support ongoing training mandates for DCF resource parents and can be viewed online here: <https://www.embrella.org/pdf/training/catalog.pdf>.

Throughout the COVID-19 emergency, DCF continues to explore virtual options for Resource and Adoptive training classes.

DCF also partners with New Jersey Adoption Resource Clearing House (NJARCH) to provide ongoing support to families touched by Adoption and Kinship Care. NJARCH provides the following training, which is available on an ongoing basis:

Training for Adoption and Kinship Care families:

Training	Hours
Overview of NJ Arch	1.5
Adoption & Foster Care in the Schools	1.5
Adoption: A Lifelong Loss: How Adoption Issues Impact Life Transitions	1.5
From Termination of Parental Rights to Adoption	1.5
Helping Foster Parents Deal with Difficult Behaviors	1.5
Leaving Homes is Hard to Do	1.5
Talking to Your Kids About Difficult History	1.5
The Basics of Special Education in New Jersey	2.0
Trans Racial Adoption and Foster Care	2.0
The Adopted Child’s Journey: Questions Along the Way	1.5

DCF is committed to enhanced support of children who are placed in the care of kin and fictive kin. DCF acknowledges the unique needs and challenges of this population and intends to focus on increased support and training to provide better outcomes for children and families.

In partnership with ChildFocus, a national child welfare consulting firm, DCF created a kinship values training for staff titled *Why Kinship Care Matters: Engaging and Empowering Kinship Caregivers*. This training reinforces the importance of kinship care

and provides strategies and practice tools to engage kinship families for staff. The roll out for this training began in Fall 2021 and will continue to through 2022.

Chafee Specific Training

DCF has a vast training menu supporting various areas of child welfare practice. Within this training menu are several Chafee specific training opportunities available to child welfare staff, service providers, and other stakeholders. These training opportunities aim to assist participants to effectively implement policy, practice, and programming to ensure high quality and comprehensive services to Chafee eligible youth. The training programs are highlighted below.

Youth Thrive: The Youth Thrive protective and promotive factors framework training was co-designed by the Center for the Study of Social Policy, OAS, and OTPD to help NJ's young people reach their full potential. This training is co-led by a seasoned trainer and a trainer with lived experience. Youth Thrive is based on emerging research in neuroscience and brain development as well as established research on the promotion of positive youth development. This training emphasizes the importance of supporting healthy development and wellbeing of youth to assist in promoting positive outcomes. This three-day training is offered to child welfare staff and service provider staff. In addition, a Youth Thrive home correspondence course has been developed and is offered to resource and adoptive parents.

Got Adolescents? Got Adolescents? is a one-day training for child welfare staff primarily serving adolescents and young adults. The training provides the "101" regarding youth specific policy, practice, and programming to prepare child welfare staff to best engage and team with youth.

Transitional Plan for YOUth Success (TPYS)/Casey Life Skills Assessment (CLSA): TPYS/CLSA is a one-day training that is designed to provide child welfare staff and service providers an opportunity to develop a basic competency and understanding of assessment and planning practices with youth in foster care. The content includes the identification and exploration of assets and opportunities, long and short-term goal setting and application of the CLSA in the development of a TPYS. The training focuses on the importance of comprehensive assessment, effective planning and youth-involvement in assisting youth with their transition into adulthood. In March of 2020 the TPYS/CLSA trainings were canceled due to the COVID-19 emergency. This was extended through the remainder of 2020. During this time the TPYS/CLSA training transitioned from in person to online training. DCF plans to offer four trainings through the end of the state fiscal year. The training will be provided in two half-day sessions.

In March 2022 the TPYS/CLSA trainings were canceled due to the changes with the transitional plan and the independent living assessment. DCF will be using the Youth Thrive survey moving forward. OAS and OTPD are working together to update the training to include information about the Youth Thrive survey, SBC Case Plan adolescent transition section as well as utilizing the Casey life skills toolkit for providers. In Spring

2023, this updated training will fully re-launch, under the new name, *Youth and Young Adult Assessment and Transition Planning*.

Adolescent Practice Forums: OAS recognizes that inter-departmental practice conversations are an important tool to provide quality and consistent services to adolescents. OAS began the Adolescent Practice Forums to establish a forum where professionals across DCF can discuss common practice concerns and receive updates on adolescent-related policy, practice and workgroup/task force activities. These forums are offered in regional offices across the state. They are designed to facilitate dialogue between adolescent-serving staff within CP&P, the Office of Education (OOE) and the Case Management Organizations (CMO) serving Children’s System of Care (CSOC) youth. Forums include an overview of adolescent-specific resource materials, trainings on requested topics, and services offered by OAS.

Safe Space Program and Training: The Safe Space Program encourages and promotes DCF to create welcoming and inclusive environments for Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Questioning, Intersex, Asexual and more (LGBTQIA+) youth, families, and staff. This strategy provides an atmosphere whereby the LGBTQIA+ population can feel safe and supported and can access resources specific to their needs. Sexual and gender minority youth are an at-risk population that is faced with many challenges regarding accessing services, placement and interactions with other professionals. DCF continues to educate its workforce on providing proficient and comprehensive services to LGBTQIA+ individuals. In order to ensure that DCF remains responsive to this population, Safe Space Liaisons participate in Safe Space in-service trainings held throughout the State. Each in-service training features a guest speaker, cutting-edge resources and specific LGBTQIA+ education. In addition, a statewide Safe Space Networking conference is held annually.

Cultural Competency LGBTQIA+ Training: This recently launched two-day training for child welfare staff develops a basic understanding of the needs, challenges, issues, and resources pertinent to LGBTQIA+ youth, adults, and families served by the child welfare system as well as the skills to recognize and meet these needs. Through discussions and activities around terminology, values and attitudes, the coming out process, safety, and legal issues, participants will learn how to best provide services that promote the psychological, social, emotional, and physical health and welfare for all, regardless of sexual orientation, gender identity, or gender expression.

Adolescent Networking Conference: OAS partners with Rutgers University to hold a one-day biennial conference for youth, staff, service providers, and other interested stakeholders. The conference topic seeks to identify untapped areas of training regarding youth work, or topics which may be relevant to improving services and supports provided to youth. In 2021 there was a focus on a broad range of topics to promote positive youth development including physical health, mental health, and social justice. The next conference is being planned for 2023. The 2023 Adolescent Networking Conference, entitled “A Journey Toward the Future,” took place in May 2023. The conference offered a broad range of topics to promote positive youth development including financial literacy,

suicide prevention, wellness/selfcare, relationship norms in social media, and imposter syndrome. The conference provided information, skills and training on tools and resources to support youth and youth serving professionals.

What Every Caseworker Needs to Know about Education and Special Education: This two-day training focuses on federal and state education laws, including education stability and special education. In 2020, the training was enhanced to include addressing school discipline.

Along with the training opportunities described above, DCF will continue implementing or pursue the following trainings:

- *Normalcy Training:* A two-hour online Normalcy and Reasonable Prudent Parenting Training was developed and created during the summer 2019 and launched in October 2019 for all child welfare staff to complete. A subsequent in-person training was initially planned for child welfare staff; however, it has been delayed due to the pandemic and will be reevaluated in the fall of 2023. Similarly, an online normalcy training was created for resource and adoptive caregivers. Additional resources need to be developed for non-family based out-of-home providers. This will also be revisited in the fall of 2023.
- *Expectant and Parenting Youth Training:* DCF seeks to develop training for child welfare staff and providers regarding the unique needs of expectant and parenting youth (including young fathers).
- *Chafee-related training for resource and adoptive parents:* DCF has several trainings for child welfare staff and service providers, however, needs to focus on strategies to ensure that similar Chafee related training is available to resource and adoptive parents through in-person and/or online based modalities.

DCF continues to explore a training titled *Shared Leadership* that aligns other related initiatives, such as Powerful Families, Powerful Communities and the work of DCF's Office of Family Voice. This training will be organized dependent on how individuals with lived experience are informing the work of the Department. It will include strategic sharing, as well as methods on how to work with individuals with lived experience. The goal of this training is to improve staff capacity to ensure that individuals with lived experience can craft a message that educates the audience, tell their stories in a way in which their voices can be heard, ensure their message accomplishes its goal, and ensure their well-being is protected.

Child and Family Service Review

DCF's most recent CFSR, completed in 2017, identified challenges related to ongoing risk and safety assessment, which led to inadequate service provision. DCF analysis identified several barriers preventing the completion of ongoing SDM tools and that the language in the tools was not well aligned with best practice. A staff survey showed that 60% found it difficult to complete the tool.; Only 20% consistently used them as a supervisory conferencing tool to aid with case planning and decision making and only 70% used SDM findings to help inform assessment consultations. As part of

our statewide Program Improvement Plan (PIP) a curriculum was implemented to improve the usage and quality of structured decision making to assess safety and risk throughout the life of the case. The curriculum “*Assessing and Managing Safety and Risk Throughout the Life of a Case*” was designed and implemented to enhance the family agreement, practice expectations on safety and risk assessment throughout the life of a case, and appropriate use and duration of safety protection plans.

Executive level training information was delivered to Area Directors, Assistant Area Directors, and Local Office Managers regarding the enhanced SDM tools and the new training, “*Assessing and Managing Safety and Risk Throughout the Life of the Case*”. OTPD managed the rollout of training in collaboration with CP&P and Evident Change. The training was required for casework supervisors, supervisors, and all field staff in New Jersey. Statewide rollout began prior to the release of the revised SDM tools in NJ SPIRIT. Casework supervisors and supervisors participated first, followed by intake and ongoing workers. Specific components include use of SDM tools, use of enhanced family agreement, practice expectations on safety and risk assessment and intervention throughout the life of the case, and appropriate use and duration of Safety Protection Plans. Training for supervisors and casework supervisors included information on managing this work throughout the life of the case.

The CFSR and Qualitative Review (QR) identified challenges related to the frequency and quality of caseworker visits with parents. Analysis of findings identified that discussions during visits with parents did not explore or were not comprehensive in identifying or addressing needs. Additionally, supervision needs to consistently model and support best practice, and it is necessary for supervisors to address engagement and assessment in supervisory conferences.

To promote a culture and practice that prioritizes father engagement and assessment, the curriculum, “*Fathers are Important: A caseworker’s guide to working with fathers,*” was developed and a statewide rollout of this training is complete. This training is required for all field staff. Support and accountability packages to facilitate transfer of learning to practice have been developed and were provided to all Area/Local Office leadership during this review period.

Further, analysis of the CFSR and QR results, as well as other Continuous Quality Improvement (CQI) system strategies, revealed challenges as it relates to working with mothers versus fathers. Staff’s personal biases and fear impacted engagement of fathers, limited efforts and understanding of diligent search for fathers and lack of strategies to engage fathers living outside of the home. A description of this essential training component is below.

Fathers are Important: A Caseworker’s Guide to Working with Fathers

This one-day training is designed to help DCF staff understand the importance of fathers, whether they live in or out of the home, and help staff see that the efforts to engage fathers are valuable to children in the long term. The training helps participants recognize their own biases and perceptions of fathers and discuss its possible impact on father

engagement. It also looks at systemic barriers to engaging fathers and reviews strategies for engagement.

Following the one-day training, local office staff participate in a series of on-site activities to increase conversations through all members of the department about how to engage and partner with fathers in our work. The activities specifically focus on workers contemplating their current practices with fathers and how they define fathers within their work. The activities were developed in part with the Father's Tool Kit from the Children's Bureau website.

In order to further support and improve staff's engagement and assessment of parents, DCF's Office of Training and Professional Development designed an on-line webinar, "*Talking with Families about Concurrent Planning*". This webinar was designed to develop staff skills in holding straightforward conversations for concurrent planning. The online webinar was released through the existing staff meeting structure and remains available and is sustained by CP&P Case Practice Specialists and Concurrent Planners in the local offices.

Workforce Development & Continuing Education Programs

Baccalaureate Child Welfare Education Program, Stockton College as lead: The Baccalaureate Child Welfare Education Program (BCWEP) is a consortium of seven New Jersey based colleges and universities with undergraduate programs in social work that enable students to earn their Bachelor of Social Work degree. Students apply in their junior year of college to participate in the program, which includes taking child welfare specific classes in their senior year, completing an internship of more than 400 hours in local CP&P offices and agreeing to work in the field of public child welfare at a local CP&P office for a period of two years, post-graduation. The BCWEP program provides students with access to field instructors that offer competency-based field instruction in child welfare practice. These interns are provided a 12-day work readiness training program that is intended to expedite their ability to carry cases.

Cost allocation methodology for Workforce Development and Continuing Education

- Contract Training - costs identified to the NJ Child Welfare Training Partnership are as follows:
 - The number of DCF staff attending the training during the current quarter is identified.
 - The costs of the NJ Partnership for Child Welfare are allocated based on the number of trainees paid by the Division attending specific Partnership-sponsored training programs during the current quarter, to the functions to which the trainees are assigned.
 - If local office Permanency workers, Resource Family workers, Adoption workers, and/or child placement review workers are among those trained, the allocation procedure are the same as for items (3), (4), and (5) under Training Programs.

- Contract Training - costs identified to the BCWEP are as follows:
 - The individuals attending this program are not yet CP&P employees; the costs of the program are allocated to all CP&P functions based upon Division staff counts for the quarter.
 - Costs assigned to the specific types of workers mentioned under Training Programs in items (3), (4), and (5) will be allocated to Title IV-E training based upon the methodologies identified in those items.

Professional Development Budget Planning	
Note* This budget sheet takes into consideration all the cost through the life of a professional development learning experience when executed with best practice	
Considerations & Variables	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Modality (traditional, flipped classroom, eLearning, on the job, simulations) • Group size to be developed • Complexity of the professional development • Days of Training • Skill level of group being trained • Productivity loss (Internal Capacity) • Coaching structure in place (sustainability resources) • Consultation & Instructional Design Process Meetings • External Experts if Needed • Seat time for participants 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Equipment and Material Cost • Instructional Designers on Project • Project Manager • Scope of Project • Implementation • Evaluations (data collections, analysis, reports, tool design) • Maintain the of professional development (revisions, policy updates, practice changes) • Communication Plans (writing plans, marketing, coaching tip sheets/tools) • Supporting Technology for Learning (Survey Monkey, Zoom Accounts, Webinar, poll anywhere).
Average Cost Per Service	
Traditional Approaches (In person, Self-Directed, Flip Classroom, Simulation)	Per 1 Hour completed product = 38 hours @ \$55.00-\$125.00
eLearning Level 1 (defined Passive Interactivity Level. Content based, connects to recordings, podcasts, basic pictures, illustrations, test questions).	Per 1 Hour completed product =42 hours @ \$45.00
eLearning Level 2 (defined Limited Interactivity Level. Limited participation, interactive problem areas, movements, interactive activities with sights and sounds).	Per 1 Hour completed product =71 hours @ \$45.00
eLearning Level 3 (defined Moderate Interactivity Levels. Moderate interactions, more modern experience, energized video, altered sound, reenactments, multimedia, stories).	Per 1 Hour completed product =130 hours @ \$65.00
eLearning Level 4 (defined Full Interactivity Level. Students have full control over their learning condition. They are required to collaborate with the screen and information.	Per 1 Hour completed product =143 hours @ \$65.00

This is the most recommended for enhanced learning. Stories and situations, symbols, recordings, recreated work executions).	
Video (Depending on concept, location and special effects).	Per finished Minutes = \$1,000.00-\$3,000.00
Audio Tape	Per finished minutes = \$25.00-\$125.00 an hour
Pages of finished written script (of a participants' guide, facilitators guide, simulation script, scenarios)	8 Hours Per 2 Pages @ \$55.00-\$75.00 an hour
Facilitator Cost per Day	\$1,500.00-2,000.00 (per day) Traditional Learning 6 hours or 8 hours.
Facilitator Prep (defined 3 hours of prep for every 1 hour of training)	6 Hour Learning Experience 6x3=18 hours of prep 8 Hour Learning Experience 8x3=24 hours of prep Example: Facilitator cost \$1500 per day. (1500 per day/training hours 6) = 250 an hour Prep Hours 3x6=18x250 = \$4,500.00 (Prep Pay)
Instructional Designer	Per Hour \$55-\$125.00
Project Manager	\$35.00-\$125.00
Productivity Loss Internal Capacity	Salary Per Hour x Project Hours =Project Cost Sole Project Hours X Salary = Productivity Loss EX: \$55.00 (salary per hour) x 150 Project Hours = \$8,250 costs for Internal Capacity. Sole Project Hours 150 x \$55.00 = \$8,250 (Approx.) = Productivity Loss. Internal Capacity Cost = \$16,500.00
6 Hours Consultation Internal per product:	\$ 65.00 (8 hours x 65.00 = \$520.00)
6 Hours Consultation External per product:	\$125.00 (8 hours x 125.00 =\$1,000.00)
Technology:	Standard 1 Hour Webinar = \$1,350 (approx.) Polling Options = \$100.00 a month (approx.) + (\$9.99 per student when using) Surveying Options = \$100.00 a month (approx.)
Instructional Design Process per product	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Planning Meeting • Goal Sheet Review • Functional Outline • Learning Plan Approval

<p><i>NOTE: length will vary depending on the product) Approx. 24 Hours per 1 day/Product</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Final Reviews/Approval
<p>Implementation</p> <p><i>NOTE: length will vary depending on the product) Approx. 18 Hours per 1 day/Product</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Marketing • Logistics Plan • Communication Plan • Coaching Supports & Technical Assistance
<p>Evaluation 12 Month Duration</p> <p><i>NOTE: length will vary depending on the product) Approx. 18 Hours Per 1 day/Product</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Data Collection • Data Analysis • Reports