



New Jersey Department of Children and Families Policy Manual

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Click here to view or print the [CP&P Form 12-2](#), Caseload Assignment Readiness Assessment Tool (CARAT).

PURPOSE AND USE

The Caseload Assignment Readiness Assessment Tool (CARAT) is a process that is used by a Field Unit Training (FTU) Supervisor to assess and evaluate the new Worker's readiness to assume a full caseload.

The CARAT is first introduced to the new Worker within the first two weeks of employment and assignment to the Field Training Unit (FTU). The CARAT is first administered to assess the new Worker's capacity for gradual caseload assignment. The CARAT is used at this point to begin assessing the new Worker's capacity to receive **1-2 cases after successfully completing the entire training requirement for the *Child Development: Identifying Child Abuse & Neglect Pre-Service training module.***

The first CARAT must be administered at the end of the **second month** of employment; and must coincide when the first probationary "Working Test" period report. The CARAT is next used to assess the new Worker's caseload readiness at the end of the **fourth month** of employment when the second probationary "Working Test" period report is required.

The CARAT is administered again at end of **six months** of employment to further enhance the new Worker's capacity to assume a full case load. The final CARAT must be administered **before the new Worker is assigned** to a permanent work unit.

[See Policy IX-C-4-100, Field Training Unit \(Local Office\)](#)

Exceptions to the CARAT

- A. If the new Worker/Trainee, for whatever reason, is going to be transferred out of the Field Training Unit (FTU) before the 6 month time-frame is over, a formal assessment must be made using the CARAT.
- B. If the new Worker/Trainee is assigned to a regular unit rather than the FTU, the permanent (regular) unit **Supervisor must conduct the assessment with the Trainee prior to assigning the Trainee a full caseload.**

Minimum Passing Score

All new Worker Trainees must pass the CARAT with a minimum total score of 70 percent (N=50) of the 72 standards before being assigned a full caseload. This requirement pertains to all newly appointed caseload carrying staff regardless of whether they are assigned to a FTU or a regular unit, or whether they were hired as a FSS2, or are being “fast-tracked” to a FSS2 title because they were BSW interns in DCP&P through the BCWEP program.

Assessment Notification

Supervisors must inform their assigned new Worker/Trainees about the CARAT process within the first two weeks of the new Worker’s/Trainee’s appointment dates.

Supervisor’s Observations

Supervisors must make routine observations of new Worker’s/Trainees’ on-the-job training performance (attitude, behaviors, & skills) factors identified on the CARAT throughout the Pre-Service training process.

Supervisors must also use their observations to coach and provide related office and field experiences for the Trainees that will build the identified skills by the specified full caseload assignment timeframe.

Note: This will include observing the Trainee in the field. The CARAT documentation process must commence as soon as possible in order for the Worker to acquire the desired full caseload carrying capacity within the six month timeframe; or in accordance with the exceptions noted above. On-going CARAT assessment can continue well after the Trainee has transferred into a regular unit.

New Workers/Trainees must be formally assessed with the CARAT to determine if their skills meet the standards at the end of 6 months of employment, or before being transferred to a permanent work unit.

How to Score the CARAT:

The CARAT contains 72 standards with 9, high-level **outcome areas**.

Outcome Areas: The 9 outcome areas are: *Engagement, Assessment, Planning, Cultural Competence, Communication, Documentation, Time Management, and Professionalism.*

Indicators: Various **practice indicators** are assigned to each of the 9 outcome areas. Each practice indicator has an assigned value (N=#). The N=# is determined by how many **standards** are assigned to the outcome areas' indicator.

Standards: A total of 72 standards are assigned. Various **standards** are assigned to each Outcome Area/Practice Indicator. Trainees are to be rated on each standard. Each standard has a value of 1 point (Value=1).

- Trainees are given 1 point for each standard they meet, and 0 points for each standard they do not meet.

Trainees must meet the standards on the CARAT by an overall total score of 50 out of 72 points (70%) before being assigned a full caseload.

- Seventy percent (N=70%) must be achieved before (within) the end of the 6 month of employment timeframe
- All standards must be completed by the end of the Trainee's first year of employment.

Supervisors must discuss the Trainee's CARAT results with their Casework Supervisor. **When Trainees do not meet the minimum 50-point standard, the Trainee, Supervisor, and Casework Supervisor must collaborate on a plan of action to achieve full caseload assignment readiness.**

Trainees who do not meet the 50-point standard may not take on a full caseload. These Trainees may have their time in the FTU (or training process) extended on a month by month basis. During this time, these Trainees must have a written Action Plan in place for enhancing and increasing full caseload carrying capacity.

Decisions about extending the length of the training period for Trainees who do not meet the 50-point standard are to be handled on a local level, on a case by case basis, by the Supervisor and Casework Supervisor with involvement of the Local Office Manager (LOM) as necessary.

While the standards on the CARAT may relate to some PES/PAR elements, it is not a substitute for the PES/PAR process, and must not be construed to be equivalent to this formal performance agreement and evaluation tool. Results of the CARAT, however,

may become part of the performance data collected by the Supervisor in order to render a rating on the PES/PAR.

Additionally, Supervisors may informally use relevant standards on the CARAT as a guide for assessment of the Trainee during the **working test period**.

Working Test Period: Supervisors who have concerns about a Trainee's ability to demonstrate or acquire those standards during the working test period must collaborate with their Casework Supervisor to determine if the working test period must be extended.

Completed CARAT must be signed and dated by the Trainee, his/her Supervisor and the Casework Supervisor, and kept on file at the Local Office (LO). The Casework Supervisor is responsible for maintaining and monitoring the CARAT and kept informed by the Trainee's assigned Supervisor regarding the Trainee's progress toward achieving the capacity to be assigned a full caseload within the specified timeframes.

Timeframes for Gradual Case Assignment

A New Worker is assigned one or two cases incrementally after completing **Child Development: Identifying Abuse and Neglect**, of the Pre-Service Training module. The New Worker completes this module approximately 8 to 9 weeks after the Pre-Service Training program begins.

For the purpose of this policy, the gradual case assignment is based on the guidelines for assigning cases to an ongoing permanency Worker. A case is defined as a family. The following is the time table for assigning cases to a New Worker:

Timeframes for Gradual Case Assignment:

8 Weeks to 3 Months - Cases are assigned gradually to promote learning. Cases are **not** assigned for mere coverage or other operational reasons. The Supervisor begins to assign one to two cases to the New Worker only after he or she has successfully completed the child development module of the pre-service training program.

The Supervisor gradually assigns additional cases as appropriate. By the end of the third month of employment, the New Worker may have a total of seven cases, with no more than five children in placement and no more than 12 children in total. A new Worker is assigned 1 or 2 cases incrementally after completing "Child Development – Identifying Child Abuse and Neglect" Module. The new Worker completes this module approximately 8 to 9 weeks after the pre-service training program begins.

Four Months to Six months - Beginning the first week of the fourth month, the Supervisor gradually assigns one case per week until the New Worker receives up to eight additional cases.

As these new cases are assigned, the New Worker must have no more than 10 children in placement. The gradual assignment is limited to no more than one case per week. Additional cases are assigned to the Trainee, on a gradual basis, until the Trainee has a full case load of 15 cases.

Six Months and Beyond - After the sixth month, the Trainee must have a full caseload as follows:

- **15 families per Worker** with no more than **ten** children in placement.

Case coverage during New Worker's classroom training – If any cases assigned to the New Worker during his or her Pre-Service Training Period or foundation courses, the Supervisor must provide back-up coverage for those cases while the new Worker Trainee attends class. The new Worker Trainee must not be taken away from his or her classroom to perform case management duties.

Distribution:

Original - Local Office

Copy - Worker