



Institute for Human Services 1706 E. Broad Street, Columbus, OH 43203 614-251-6000

CORE COMPETENCIES For Child Welfare Caseworkers

TOPIC 111

FAMILY-CENTERED CHILD PROTECTIVE SERVICES

Skill Set 111-01 Ability to conduct child welfare practice in a manner consistent with fundamental child welfare values and philosophy

111-01-001

Knows the dilemmas inherent in child welfare practice and the need for informed professional judgment when making child protection decisions

111-01-002

Knows the core values that underlie child welfare's mission of protecting children from maltreatment and ensuring their safety in stable, permanent families

111-01-003

Knows the defining characteristics of a family-centered approach to child welfare and child protection

111-01-004

Knows the professional values and ethics that support a family-centered approach to child welfare services

111-01-005

Knows the historical and philosophical evolution of child welfare practice and how this has influenced current practice

111-01-006

Understands the potential tensions between the rights and interests of parents and the rights and interests of children in child protective services

111-01-007

Understands child welfare's responsibility to make reasonable efforts to prevent placement, to reunify children with their families, and to find permanent families for children who cannot go home.

111-01-008

Understands how a family-centered approach to child protection must consider and balance the rights of maltreated children and of their families.

111-01-009

Understands how engaging, empowering, and strengthening immediate and extended families can help prevent removal and placement of children.

111-01-010

Understands the commonalities, differences, and most appropriate uses of family centered services, family preservation, and intensive home based service programs.

111-01-011

Knows how family-centered concepts are implemented in family-centered, neighborhood-based (FCNB) services at the local community level

111-01-012

Knows how a family-centered approach to services is implemented with foster, kinship, and adoptive families

111-01-013

Can use a family centered approach to engage and involve birth families, relatives, and foster / adoptive families in assuring safety and permanence for children.

Skill Set 111-02 Ability to identify children who have been physically abused, neglected, sexually abused, or emotionally maltreated

111-02-001

Knows the importance of screening and intake as the first steps in identifying children at high risk of maltreatment

111-02-002

Knows the importance of information collected at screening to make decisions about case opening, priority assignment, investigation, and case transfer

111-02-003

Knows the types of referrals and reports that should be transferred to community providers rather than opened by the child welfare agency

111-02-004

Knows the philosophical and practical issues that complicate identification of parental behaviors as child maltreatment

111-02-005

Knows the legal and operational definitions of physical abuse, sexual abuse, neglect, dependency, endangerment, emotional maltreatment, CHINS, and child abuse/neglect in out-of-home care

111-02-006

Knows the provisions of federal laws governing child welfare practice including Adoption and Safe Families Act (ASFA), Indian Child Welfare Act (ICWA), Adoption Assistance and Child Welfare Act of 1980 (96-272), Multi Ethnic Placement Act (MEPA), Child Abuse Prevention and Treatment Act (CAPTA), and the state laws that implement their provisions

111-02-007

Knows the physical, emotional, and behavioral indicators of physical abuse, sexual abuse, neglect, and emotional maltreatment

111-02-008

Knows interpersonal and family dynamics commonly associated with physical abuse, sexual abuse, neglect, and emotional maltreatment.

111-02-009

Knows the effects of environmental conditions and social factors that contribute to physical abuse, sexual abuse, neglect, and emotional maltreatment

111-02-010

Knows behavioral and emotional indicators of parental mental illness, emotional problems, family violence, substance abuse, and developmental disabilities, and how these can contribute to child maltreatment

111-02-011

Knows criteria to determine when a family's poverty or homelessness may increase risk or contribute to neglect

111-02-012

Knows criteria to differentiate accidental from inflicted injury to children

111-02-013

Understands how unsafe home and community environments may affect a family's ability to provide safe care for their children

111-02-014

Understands types of parenting practices that can contribute to child maltreatment and increase risk of harm to children

111-02-015

Knows strategies to observe, interview, and assess children to gather information about their health and well-being

111-02-016

Can recognize the physical, behavioral, and emotional indicators of physical abuse, sexual abuse, neglect, and emotional maltreatment in children

111-02-017

Can gather, analyze, and compile information from different sources to determine whether a child has been maltreated, the type and scope of maltreatment, and the most likely contributing factors.

Skill Set 111-03 Ability to approach and relate to families in a culturally respectful and sensitive manner

111-03-001

Knows definitions and fundamental concepts of culture, diversity, and culturally responsive practice

111-03-002

Knows the common elements, institutions, and dynamics that form the foundation of all cultures

111-03-003

Understands the contribution of personal and organizational bias, poverty, and other social factors on the over-representation of minority children and families in the child welfare system (disproportionality)

111-03-004

Understands the importance of locating reliable sources of information regarding individual cultural groups

111-03-005

Understands how ethnocentrism, lack of knowledge, and reliance on stereotypes can contribute to intercultural conflicts and miscommunication

111-03-006

Understands how peoples' cultural background affects their values, identity, behaviors, perceptions and assessments of others, and communication styles

111-03-007

Understands how cultural differences in parenting and childcare practices can complicate the assessment of child maltreatment

111-03-008

Understands how different overt behaviors and cultural practices can be expressions of common fundamental values

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111-03-009

Understands how some culturally approved parenting practices may be harmful to children.

111-03-010

Knows how to locate reliable informants and other resources to gather accurate information about a culture or a group

111-03-011

Can recognize one's own areas of potential bias and knows how to prevent this from affecting judgments about and relationships with families

111-03-012

Can establish rapport and relationships with individuals and families from diverse cultural backgrounds

111-03-013

Can conduct accurate assessments of risk, family strengths and family needs in diverse families, and provide services in a culturally responsive manner.

Skill Set 111-01 Ability to work within a community-based system of child protection and family support

111-04-001

Knows the roles and responsibilities of the child welfare agency in a community-based approach to child protection and family support

111-04-002

Knows the roles and responsibilities of other community agencies, professionals, and service providers involved in child protection and family support

111-04-003

Understands the necessity of involving community leaders and community members in protecting children and supporting families

111-04-004

Knows how to collaborate with community agencies and service providers to plan and coordinate services to families and children

111-04-005

Can advocate on behalf of families and children to help them gain access to and sustain services from neighborhood and community resources

111-04-006

Can collaborate with Community Action Centers, law enforcement, hospitals, and other community professionals in implementing interdisciplinary responses to child maltreatment

TOPIC 112

ENGAGING FAMILIES

Skill Set 112-01 Ability to integrate casework methods with the exercise of protective authority to ensure children's safety

112-01-001

Knows the characteristics, benefits, and limitations of a collaborative casework approach and a protective authority approach to child protection

112-01-002

Understands dilemmas posed by a caseworker's dual responsibilities as an empowering child and family advocate (enabler) and a strong protective authority (enforcer)

112-01-003

Understands the importance and benefits of using the least intrusive level of authority needed to protect children

112-01-004

Knows strategies to engage and empower families while retaining necessary levels of protective authority to ensure child safety

112-01-005

Can communicate the agency's mandate to ensure children's safety, and outline the agency's expectations for parents in a respectful and supportive manner

112-01-006

Can flexibly integrate and balance engagement and enforcement strategies and can determine how to most appropriately approach each family.

Skill Set 112-02: Ability to use a casework relationship to engage and empower families to collaborate with the agency.

112-02-001

Knows how social work values and principles apply to casework relationships, including respecting each family's dignity, culture, individuality, and right to self-determination

112-02-002

Knows the role and characteristics of a casework relationship in family-centered child protection

112-02-003

Knows caseworker attitudes and behaviors that can help family members develop trust and confidence in the caseworker

112-02-004

Knows barriers in child welfare settings that can interfere with developing relationships with family members

112-02-005

Understands the concept of family empowerment and how a trusting and collaborative casework relationship can often motivate and sustain productive change in a family

112-02-006

Understands how fear, uncertainty, and other feelings may be expressed behaviorally as hostility, aggressive behavior, withdrawal, denial of problems, and resistance

112-02-007

Can assess and determine the sources of hostility and resistance in individual families

112-02-008

Can use casework and interviewing strategies to promote development of a collaborative family/caseworker relationship

112-02-009

Can use casework strategies to help families deal with their anger and fear and become invested in change activities.

Skill Set 112-03 Ability to engage and communicate with families within their own cultural context

112-03-001

Understands how cultural factors, including verbal and non-verbal communication styles, can create misunderstandings and misjudgments by family members and caseworkers

112-03-002

Knows the difficulties in establishing open communication with families whose knowledge of English is limited, and knows how and when to involve interpreters

112-03-003

Knows how cultural rules regarding male/female relationships or relationships with outsiders may affect family members' relationship with the caseworker

112-03-004

Knows how to identify barriers to relationship development in each family and can apply culturally appropriate strategies to overcome them

112-03-005

Can establish rapport and relationships with families from a variety of diverse cultures and backgrounds

Skill Set 112-04 Ability to conduct individual and family group interviews

112-04-001

Recognizes interviews as the principal means of implementing the helping process

112-04-002

Knows the importance of establishing a purpose for each interview, of communicating this purpose to family members, and of selecting the best interview strategies to achieve it

112-04-003

Knows the definitions and characteristics of "content" and "process" in casework, and the importance of eliciting and discussing process-level issues to assure a thorough and accurate assessment

112-04-004

Knows the appropriate standards and limits for disclosing personal information to family members during an interview

112-04-005

Understands how a collaborative casework relationship can enhance the effectiveness of an interview and increase the accuracy of communications

112-04-006

Knows interviewing strategies to help family members comfortably express and discuss their feelings, concerns, and opinions

112-04-007

Knows interviewing strategies to deal with conflict, respond to hostile or accusatory statements, or confront family members who are reluctant to deal with critical issues

112-04-008

Knows how to observe, explore, and interpret nonverbal communications, including tone of voice, facial expressions, body language, and choice of words

112-04-008

Can empower family members to discuss and agree upon objectives for each interview

112-04-009

Can develop interview questions and responses to guide the direction of an interview to achieve its stated purpose

112-04-010

Can flexibly select or modify interviewing strategies in response to family members' reactions and contributions

112-04-011

Can summarize discussion to restate or reaffirm conclusions and decisions made during an interview

TOPIC 113

LEGAL ASPECTS OF CHILD PROTECTIVE SERVICES

Skill Set 113-01 Ability to use the juvenile court to protect children from maltreatment and to assure permanence within legally established time frames

113-01-001

Knows the importance of adhering to provisions of federal and state statutes and rules in child welfare casework

113-01-002

Knows legal protections afforded to families and children by juvenile court intervention, and the potential detrimental consequences if legal procedures are not followed

113-01-003

Knows Ohio Revised Code and Ohio Administrative Code definitions for various forms of child maltreatment

113-01-004

Knows the unique role and responsibility of the juvenile court system in the child protection system

113-01-005

Knows the legal rights of children, parents, and caregivers in child welfare court actions, including parents' rights to due process, freedom from search and seizure without a warrant, and equal protection under the law

113-01-006

Knows the roles and responsibilities of all parties in child protection proceedings in juvenile court

113-01-007

Understands the purpose and processes of different types of juvenile court hearings and their associated casework responsibilities

113-01-008

Understands the types and purpose of juvenile court dispositions for abused, neglected, and dependent children and the caseworker's responsibilities in each

113-01-009

Understands the criteria to determine when and what kind of court action to file in a case, and the joint role of caseworkers and prosecutors in making this decision

113-01-010

Understands how insufficient or inaccurate knowledge about a family's needs and strengths can influence recommendations to the court and contribute to disproportionality in the child welfare system

113-01-011

Understands the circumstances under which a case disposition of Permanent Planned Living Arrangement (PPLA) may be considered

113-01-012

Understands the provisions of federal and state laws regarding reasonable efforts to prevent out-of-home placement of children

113-01-013

Understands family and case circumstances in which a waiver of reasonable efforts may be considered, and the necessary juvenile court processes to obtain a waiver

113-01-014

Knows how to collaborate with Court Appointed Special Advocates (CASAs) and Guardians-ad-Litem (GALs) to serve the best interests of children in the court system

113-01-015

Can use Ohio Revised Code definitions to determine the type of child maltreatment in a family and when to involve juvenile court

113-01-016

Can initiate and follow through with the appropriate juvenile court actions to assure children's safety

113-01-017

Can collaborate with juvenile court personnel and the prosecuting or agency attorney in court actions on behalf of children.

Skill Set 113-02: Ability to gather, prepare, and document case information for court

113-02-001

Knows the liabilities for children and families of poorly organized, incomplete or inaccurate case documentation

113-02-002

Knows the penalties and liabilities for agencies and workers of submitting falsified documents, case notes, or case plans to the court

113-02-003

Knows the applicable juvenile court rules of evidence for child protection cases

113-02-004

Knows the caseworker's responsibilities in locating and contacting absent biological parents and putative fathers for court actions

113-02-005

Knows what types of evidence must be gathered, documented and maintained in family case records to support court proceedings

113-02-006

Understands the importance of documenting casework efforts to reunify families while concurrently developing and filing a concurrent case plan for permanency

113-02-007

Understands the importance of documenting efforts to protect parents' constitutional rights during casework activities

113-02-008

Understands how case documentation is used in legal proceedings, including custody hearings

113-02-009

Knows how to use data gathering strategies that protect evidence during investigations

113-02-010

Knows how to follow procedures required by statute and policy so that evidence will be admissible to the court

113-02-011

Knows how to collaborate with prosecuting attorneys to prepare case documentation for filing and presentation to the court

113-02-012

Can write case notes and documentation that will be admissible and effective in court actions

113-02-013

Can apply rules of evidence in gathering information and preparing documentation to submit to the juvenile court

Skill Set 113-02 Ability to testify in juvenile court hearings

113-03-001

Knows the importance of a calm and confident demeanor, professional physical appearance, and appropriate use of language when testifying in juvenile court hearings

113-03-002

Knows the fundamental rules of evidence, including hearsay, exceptions to hearsay and proper use of case notes

113-03-003

Knows how to apply rules of evidence to testimony in individual cases, and how to choose information that will support the case filing

113-03-004

Knows strategies to present concise descriptions of facts and avoid presenting more detailed information than is warranted

113-03-005

Knows strategies to respond to direct questioning and to cross-examination

113-03-006

Can present well-organized, relevant information during court testimony and cross-examination

TOPIC 114

SAFETY, RISK, AND FAMILY ASSESSMENT

Skill Set 114-01: Ability to determine the level of immediate and future risk of abuse or neglect to children

114-01-001

Knows the purpose of risk assessment in assessing child maltreatment allegations and determining children's safety

114-01-002

Understands the importance of using formal risk assessment technologies to increase the validity of conclusions about risk

114-01-003

Understands the components, strengths and limitations of risk assessment instruments and technologies

114-01-004

Understands how safety assessment fits within the continuum of risk assessment strategies

114-01-005

Understands the individual, family and environmental factors often associated with increased risk of maltreatment to children

114-01-006

Understands individual, family, and environmental strengths that can often mitigate risk and protect children from maltreatment

114-01-007

Understands the complex interactions of risk contributors and protective factors in creating an overall estimate of risk

114-01-008

Knows what information must be gathered when screening an initial referral to identify children who may be at imminent risk of serious harm

114-01-009

Knows strategies to gather information from immediate and extended family members about contributors to risk and protective factors in the family

114-01-010

Knows how to elicit information from key informants, case records, community professionals and other sources to expand and verify information collected from family members

114-01-011

Can conduct individual and family interviews to gather and verify information about risk factors present in the family and their environment

114-01-012

Can use standardized risk assessment tools to accurately estimate and document the risk of future harm for a child

114-01-013

Can identify strengths and resources in the immediate and extended family, neighborhood, and community that can mitigate risk

114-01-014

Can use information about present risk factors to establish an appropriate level of priority and urgency for an intake or initial family assessment

Skill Set 114-02 Ability to conduct comprehensive family assessments for purposes of case planning and service delivery

114-02-001

Knows the importance of a holistic approach to family assessment that addresses contributors to maltreatment, family strengths/protective capacities, and family needs

114-02-002

Knows the liabilities and potential dangers to children of basing case plans and services on an insufficient or inaccurate assessment

114-02-003

Knows the importance of conducting assessments in collaboration with family members to increase the depth, accuracy, and relevance of assessment findings

114-02-004

Knows the full range of individual, family, and environmental problems, strengths, and resources to be addressed in a child welfare family assessment

114-02-005

Understands how family needs, problems, and environmental conditions may interact to increase the potential for recurrences of child maltreatment

114-02-006

Understands how protective capacities, including family resilience, coping skills, and intrafamilial and community supports, can help families prevent recurrences of maltreatment

114-02-007

Understands how cultural factors and differences in parenting practices can complicate a family assessment and potentially lead to inaccurate conclusions about families

114-02-008

Understands the benefits of using open-ended interview strategies to engage families and to obtain more thorough and accurate assessment information

114-02-009

Understands how preconceived expectations, misjudgments based on insufficient information, and worker ethnocentrism may bias a worker's interpretation of individual and family behavior, attitudes, and communications

114-02-010

Understands the potential harm to families and children of drawing conclusions based on inaccurate or insufficient information

114-02-011

Understands the importance of documenting thorough, summarized case assessment information in the family's case record

114-02-012

Knows how to select and sequence activities to maximize family members' comfort and participation in the assessment

114-02-013

Can analyze, compare, and integrate assessment information from various sources, test the accuracy of information, and draw relevant conclusions upon which to base case decisions

114-02-014

Can help families identify specific risk factors that may contribute to or sustain child maltreatment in the family

114-02-016

Can help families identify personal and family strengths, extended family networks, and community/neighborhood resources to ensure children's safety and promote constructive change

114-02-017

Can document assessment findings and conclusions in a thorough, summarized assessment report

Skill Set 114-03 Ability to design and implement safety plans to protect children at immediate danger of serious harm.

114-03-001

Knows the role and importance of safety planning in child welfare practice

114-03-002

Knows the necessary components of a safety plan and how it differs from a case plan to guide service delivery

114-03-003

Understands concepts of reasonable efforts and placement prevention and how these affect safety planning

114-03-004

Knows how to engage and involve immediate and extended family members in safety planning activities

114-03-005

Knows how to build on the strengths and protective capacities of family members in safety planning

114-03-006

Knows how to access agency and community supportive services and resources to help keep children safe in their own families

114-03-007

Knows how to determine when an emergency, out-of-home placement is the only viable option to ensure children's safety

114-03-008

Knows how to determine when removal of the perpetrator from the home is the most appropriate safety plan for a child

114-03-009

Can work jointly with families to develop and implement a safety plan to protect children at high risk of immediate serious harm

114-03-010

Can plan and use in-home supportive services to prevent out-of-home care placement

TOPIC 115

CHILD PROTECTIVE SERVICES INVESTIGATION

Skill Set 115-01 Ability to screen referrals to determine the level of priority for agency response

115-01-001

Understands dynamics that may prevent reporters from providing detailed information about a family's situation

115-01-002

Knows interview strategies to encourage and assist reporters to provide detailed, accurate information about the child(ren) and family being reported

115-01-003

Knows the relevant criteria to be used when screening referrals of different types, and the appropriate priority level for different presenting needs and referral concerns

115-01-004

Can gather sufficient information about prior maltreatment, child's current condition, the family's situation, and indicators of imminent risk to establish the priority level for agency response

115-01-005

Can determine which referrals should be accepted for investigation, which should be referred for assessment or to alternative providers, and which should be closed at the screening level

Skill Set 115-02 Ability to use a family-centered approach when conducting investigations

115-02-001

Knows the importance of establishing rapport with family members from the first telephone or face-to-face contact

115-02-002

Understands how to consider cultural factors when developing a plan for an investigation

115-02-003

Understands dynamics that can reduce family members' willingness to provide information about their situation to the investigating caseworker

115-02-004

Understands issues related to parents' constitutional rights and how to respect those rights during investigations

115-02-005

Knows how to reduce resistance and engage family members during investigative interviews

115-02-006

Knows how to link families with community or agency services at the time of the investigation to assure children's safety and prevent out-of-home placement

115-02-007

Can model a casework relationship, communicate respect, and keep family members involved and invested while completing an investigation

115-02-008

Can access a range of neighborhood and community service resources to provide immediate child protection and/or support for the family.

Skill Set 115-03 Ability to plan, coordinate, and conduct investigations in collaboration with community partners

115-03-001

Knows the purpose, goals, and objectives of a child maltreatment investigation and the criteria to determine if an investigation is warranted

115-03-002

Knows the importance of using information obtained during the screening interview to plan an approach for an investigation

115-03-003

Knows the benefits of using a formal, interagency and interdisciplinary approach to child maltreatment investigations

115-03-004

Knows the child welfare agency's role and responsibilities when collaborating with child advocacy centers (CACs) and multi-disciplinary teams during child maltreatment investigations

115-03-005

Knows when to involve law enforcement and the respective roles of the police and child protection worker in an investigation

115-03-006

Knows how safety assessment, risk assessment, and safety planning are integrated into the investigation

115-03-007

Knows strategies to ensure a caseworker's safety during an investigation

115-03-008

Knows how to determine who should be interviewed and the types of information to be gathered from each informant

115-03-009

Knows the purpose of structured protocols and forensic interviewing methods to maximize the accuracy and admissibility of evidence gathered during the investigation

115-03-010

Knows the circumstances when it is appropriate to interview children at school prior to interviewing the child's parent(s)

115-03-011

Knows how to gather, compile and record investigation data so that findings may be used as evidence in a court proceeding

115-03-012

Knows how to determine the sequence, timing, and location of investigation interviews

115-03-013

Can gather relevant information from family members, alleged child victims, extended family, and other collateral contacts during an investigation to support or refute referral allegations

115-03-014

Can coordinate the agency's investigation activities with other members of interdisciplinary child maltreatment teams

TOPIC 116

CASE PLANNING AND FAMILY-CENTERED CASEWORK

Skill Set 116-01 Ability to help families develop and implement case plans that address high priority needs, build on family strengths, and reduce recurrences of maltreatment

116-01-001

Knows the potentially destructive effects on children and families of vague, incomplete and non-individualized case plans

116-01-002

Knows the importance of involving family members in all phases of case plan development

116-01-003

Knows the proper sequence of steps in the case planning process

116-01-004

Knows the difference between case goals, objectives, and activities

116-01-005

Knows criteria upon which to prioritize family needs and case goals and objectives

116-01-006

Knows the benefits of formally documenting case plans in each family's case record

116-01-007

Understands how case plans are used as the agency's formal negotiated agreement with families to guide, monitor, and evaluate change and goal achievement

116-01-008

Understands how case objectives are derived from information gathered during the risk, safety, and family assessments

116-01-009

Understands the importance of identifying culturally relevant service providers and engaging families to help choose service providers and resources

116-01-010

Understands how case plan documents are used in legal and court processes, and their importance in supporting the agency's legal position

116-01-011

Understands how ineffective case planning can promote premature or inappropriate case closure

116-01-012

Understands how periodic case reassessment can document changes and assure the continued relevance of services and activities

116-01-013

Knows strategies that facilitate full involvement of immediate and extended family members in case plan development

116-01-014

Knows how to develop case objectives that reflect needed changes in underlying conditions that increase risk and contribute to maltreatment

116-01-015

Knows how to help families identify and access relevant services from the child welfare agency, service providers, and other entities in the family's neighborhood and community

116-01-016

Knows how to write case plans in language that can be easily understood by family members

116-01-017

Knows how to help families identify culturally responsive and knowledgeable service providers in their own community

116-01-018

Knows how to select and use specific interviewing strategies that facilitate case plan development

116-01-019

Knows engagement and supportive casework strategies to help families remain motivated over time to complete case plan activities

116-01-020

Knows strategies to involve families and service providers in ongoing case review, reassessment, and revision of case plans

116-01-021

Knows criteria to determine when objectives have been met and a case can safely be closed

116-01-022

Knows how to link families with ongoing support to help them sustain gains after case closure and prevent reopening of cases

116-01-023

Can use case planning activities as a means of involving and empowering immediate and extended families to address their children's safety and permanency needs

116-01-024

Can use case plans as a monitoring tool to chart progress and promote continued work toward jointly identified goals

116-01-025

Can use formal case plan reviews as a tool to promote family group conferencing and collaboration with service providers

116-01-026

Can use case plans as a tool to chart and monitor mandated time lines and prevent children from becoming lost in the system

116-01-027

Can use case plans as a feedback tool for families to help them recognize their successes and guide continued work toward change.

Skill Set 116-02 Ability to work collaboratively with families and service providers to plan and coordinate services

116-02-001

Knows the primary responsibilities and activities of a case manager

116-02-002

Knows the types of formal and informal neighborhood and community resources that can be accessed to support and serve families

116-02-003

Knows the liabilities of referring families for services without following up to coordinate and evaluate services

116-02-004

Knows intra- and inter-agency, community, and cultural barriers that may prevent families from accessing or benefiting from services

116-02-005

Understands the value of home visits to learn about extended family supports and available services and resources in a family's neighborhood and community

116-02-006

Understands the importance of exploring family members' recommendations of culturally responsive service providers in their communities

116-02-007

Understands the caseworker's responsibility to be an advocate for families and children to ensure access to needed services

116-02-008

Understands the importance of coordinating services delivered by multiple service providers and the difficulties experienced by families when services are not well coordinated

116-02-009

Understands the caseworker's responsibility to monitor and evaluate the effectiveness of services provided by other agencies or providers

116-02-010

Can enable families and service providers to work as a team to ensure children's safety and permanence

116-02-011

Can identify and help families access formal and informal neighborhood and community services that best meet their individual needs

116-02-012

Can empower family members to fulfill case plan objectives and reassess their accomplishments

116-02-013

Can advocate on behalf of families to eliminate barriers and to coordinate services provided by neighborhood and community-based providers

Skill Set 116-03 Ability to initiate permanency planning activities, including concurrent case planning, to assure placement stability

116-03-001

Knows the purpose of concurrent case planning in achieving timely permanence for children

116-03-002

Knows the importance of beginning permanency planning at the time of first contact with a family

116-03-003

Knows the circumstances when a formal concurrent case plan should be developed

116-03-004

Knows the necessary elements that should be included in a concurrent case plan

116-03-005

Understands the dynamics of family members' discomfort and resistance when asked to consider alternative permanent placements for their children

116-03-006

Knows strategies to introduce a discussion of permanency issues during the family assessment and to empower immediate and extended family members to consider potential permanency solutions

116-03-007

Can discuss permanency issues and alternative permanent placement options without communicating a lack of commitment to reunification

116-03-008

Can determine when a concurrent case plan should become the primary focus of casework activities

Skill Set 116-04 Ability to complete case documentation and organize and maintain family case records

116-04-001

Knows the importance of timely, accurate case documentation for agency accountability

116-04-002

Knows multiple types, purposes and uses of case documentation

116-04-003

Knows the scope and type of information that should be gathered from community service providers for inclusion in the case record

116-04-004

Understands how inaccurate or insufficient case documentation contributes to service ineffectiveness

116-04-005

Knows what information can be provided to other service providers to promote open communication and collaboration in planning and service delivery, without violating peoples' rights to privacy

116-04-006

Knows how to use summarized case documentation, including risk assessments, safety assessments, and case plans to guide supervisory case reviews and periodic formal case review conferences (Semi-Annual Administrative Reviews)

116-04-007

Can write and integrate summarized, concise, and timely assessment and case plan information, and other supporting documentation into the case record

116-04-008

Can use computerized data collection and management systems where these are available

TOPIC 117

THE EFFECTS OF ABUSE AND NEGLECT ON CHILDREN'S DEVELOPMENT

Skill Set 117-01 Ability to identify indicators of age-appropriate development in all domains for children of varying ages

117-01-001

Knows the caseworker's role as an advocate to promote healthy development of children served by the agency

117-01-002

Knows the combined effects of heredity (genetics and maturation) and environment in shaping children's development

117-01-003

Knows the essential prerequisites for healthy child development

117-01-004

Knows how "normal" development is determined and assessed

117-01-005

Knows the difference between chronological age and developmental age

117-01-006

Knows characteristics of the primary developmental domains (physical, social, emotional, cognitive) and their sub-domains

117-01-007

Knows stages, processes and milestones of normal development of infants (age birth - 1 year) in all domains

117-01-008

Knows stages, processes and milestones of normal development of toddlers (age 1-3 years) in all domains

117-01-009

Knows stages, processes and milestones of normal development of preschool children (age 3-5 years) in all domains

117-01-010

Knows stages, processes and milestones of normal development of school-age children (age 5-11 years) in all domains

117-01-011

Knows stages, processes and milestones of normal development of preadolescent children (age 11-13) in all domains

117-01-012

Knows stages, processes and milestones of normal development of adolescents (age 13-18) in all domains

117-01-013

Understands how development can be influenced by culture, and how a misinterpretation of cultural factors may reduce the accuracy of a developmental assessment

117-01-014

Understands how development in each developmental domain influences development in the other domains

117-01-015

Knows how to observe children's behavior and gather information about their developmental level from family members and other sources

117-01-016

Can determine a child's approximate developmental age in each domain

Skill Set 117-02 Ability to recognize indicators of developmental delays, disabilities, illness and other conditions that can affect children's development

117-02-001

Knows the profound negative effects of child maltreatment on children's health and development

117-02-002

Knows the worker's responsibility to screen children for untreated illnesses, developmental delays and disabilities, and how to arrange assessment, diagnosis, and remedial services

117-02-003

Knows the potential negative effects of maltreatment and separation trauma on the formation and maintenance of attachment in children

117-02-004

Knows the potential effects of maltreatment on development of children ages birth through adolescence

117-02-005

Knows physical and behavioral indicators of developmental delays and patterns of abnormal development

117-02-006

Knows indicators of behavioral and developmental conditions commonly seen in children who have been maltreated

117-02-007

Understands how children's behavior problems may be symptoms of underlying developmental delays or emotional disturbance, and also contribute to abuse or neglect

117-02-008

Knows how to observe children's behavior and ask relevant questions to identify early indicators of developmental delay or disability

117-02-009

Can assess children's behavior and development and identify inconsistencies between chronological and developmental age

117-02-010

Can recognize primary indicators of common developmental conditions and disabilities associated with child maltreatment

117-02-011

Can use assessment data to identify and prioritize children's developmental or treatment needs, and write case plan objectives that address these needs

Skill Set 117-03 Ability to help families access community resources to address children's developmental needs

117-03-001

Knows caseworker's role as case manager to help families access services to promote healthy development of children

117-03-002

Knows the range and types of services needed by children with developmental delays, disabilities and behavior disorders, and their families

117-03-003

Knows service providers, and funding options in a family's home community to deliver special services for children with developmental delays or disabilities

117-03-004

Understands the importance of interagency collaboration and eliminating inter-system and funding barriers when serving children with developmental disabilities and their families

117-03-005

Knows strategies to encourage collaboration between service providers and family members to identify children's needs, plan and deliver services, and evaluate outcomes

117-03-006

Can design and implement a developmental or remedial case plan that meets children's special developmental needs

Skill Set 117-04 Ability to help parents/caregivers identify parenting strategies that meet their children's developmental needs

117-04-001

Knows age-appropriate expectations for children's behavior at different stages of development

117-04-002

Understands how age-appropriate children's behaviors can be misinterpreted and experienced as stressful by parents

117-04-003

Understands how stresses of parenting children with developmental or behavioral problems can contribute to child maltreatment

117-04-004

Understands how parenting strategies that involve power and coercion can contribute to maltreatment and to developmental, behavioral, and emotional problems in children

117-04-005

Understands how inconsistent parenting interventions and failure to establish and enforce structure or limits can worsen and sustain children's behavior problems

117-04-006

Understands the value of parent education, support groups, mentors, buddy systems, and respite services to help decrease stress experienced by parents or caregivers

117-04-007

Knows strategies to help parents develop realistic and age-appropriate expectations for their children's behavior as a means of preventing future

117-04-008

Can guide parents to acquire parenting skills and behaviors that promote children's healthy development and reduce the risk of maltreatment

Skill Set 117-05 Ability to promote and sustain healthy attachments between children and their families or caregivers

117-05-001

Knows parenting practices that support the development of positive and secure attachments in children

117-05-002

Knows parenting practices that contribute to insecure or maladaptive attachment in children

117-05-003

Knows behavioral and emotional indicators of maladaptive attachment in children and their parents

117-05-004

Understands how consistency of caregivers, parenting interventions, situational stress, and children's temperaments interact over time to affect attachment

117-05-005

Understands the potential lifelong consequences of insecure or maladaptive attachment on children's development and mental health

117-05-006

Understands how child maltreatment at different ages and developmental stages can negatively affect attachment

117-05-007

Knows casework strategies to help parents and caregivers develop or strengthen attachments with children in their care

117-05-008

Can use observation and interviewing strategies to assess parent-child attachment

117-05-009

Can help educate parents to promote the development of positive parent-child attachment

117-05-010

Can identify children with very disturbed or severely maladaptive attachment who need psychological treatment

TOPIC 118

SEPARATION, PLACEMENT AND REUNIFICATION

118-01 Ability to identify children and families suffering from separation-induced trauma

118-01-001

Knows the circumstances of placement that increase stress and often create crisis for children and their families

118-01-002

Knows common behavioral indicators of separation-induced stress and crisis in placed children and their families

118-01-003

Understands the caseworker's responsibility to minimize trauma experienced by children and their families during placement

118-01-004

Understands the potential negative consequences of separation, out-of-home placement, and impermanence on attachment, child development and family and children's emotional stability

118-01-005

Understands how children's developmental level affects their experience of stress, ability to cope, perception of the placement, and susceptibility to crisis

118-01-006

Understands how traumatic effects of separation may be displayed as anxiety, depression, regression, withdrawal and oppositional/defiant or destructive behavior

118-01-007

Knows strategies to reduce stress and strengthen coping capacity in children of different ages and developmental levels

118-01-008

Can identify children or family members in crisis and can determine when separation trauma is a significant contributor

Skill Set 118-02 Ability to plan and implement placements that reduce stress, prevent trauma, and promote placement stability and permanence

118-02-001

Knows agency and community factors that create pressure to remove children from their families in situations of alleged child maltreatment

118-02-002

Knows the potential benefits and liabilities of placing children with relatives / extended family members

118-02-003

Knows the factors to be considered when selecting the most appropriate placement setting for children

118-02-004

Knows what information must be communicated to foster and kinship caregivers to help them meet children's needs

118-02-005

Understands the rationale for placing siblings together and the potential traumatic consequences of separating them

118-02-006

Understands how children of different ages experience separation and placement and the implications for placement planning

118-02-007

Understands the concept of transitioning and the importance of structuring and staging placement activities to prevent crisis

118-02-008

Understands the value of involving parents and family members in identifying placement resources, preparing children, and accompanying children on pre-placement visits

118-02-009

Understands the benefits of foster and kinship caregivers as potential permanent placement resources for children in their care

118-02-010

Understands the need for immediate and frequent post-placement contact between children and families to prevent separation trauma

118-02-011

Knows how to conduct pre-placement decision-making meetings with families and other agency staff

118-02-012

Knows the necessary steps to fully prepare children, their families and foster / relative caregivers for placement

118-02-013

Knows how to help parents identify potential placement resources within the extended family network and neighborhood

118-02-014

Knows how to use crisis intervention methods during placements to reduce stress experienced by children and families and to strengthen their coping abilities

118-02-015

Knows how to prepare kinship and foster caregivers for contact with members of a child's primary family during pre-placement visits to decrease stress for the child(ren) and family

118-02-016

Knows how to maintain children's connections to their neighborhood, school, culture, and community while in placement

118-02-017

Can weigh the potential trauma of separation and placement against the trauma of future maltreatment in their own homes when finalizing a decision to place a child

118-02-018

Can implement short-term strategies that protect children in their own immediate or extended families while more permanent placement options are identified

118-02-019

Can implement emergency out-of-home placements that minimize trauma to the child and family

118-02-020

Can identify caregivers who have the ability to meet children's health, developmental, emotional, and cultural needs

118-02-021

Can prepare children, family members, and caregivers to collaborate in transitioning children from their families into out-of-home care

118-02-022

Can adjust placement activities and timing to minimize children's emotional distress

118-02-023

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Can help children express and constructively cope with their concerns, needs, and distress

118-02-024

Can help families identify potential short-term and permanent placement options for their children.

Skill Set 118-03 Ability to keep parents and other family members involved with their children in placement

118-03-001

Understands the importance of sustaining children's attachments to parents, siblings, and extended family members while in placement

118-03-002

Knows the caseworker's role in empowering family members to remain involved with children in care and invested in permanency planning

118-03-003

Understands how insufficient pre-placement preparation can increase family members' resistance to a placement plan

118-03-004

Understands how a caseworker's attitude about parents' involvement in placement planning can affect a family's willingness to become and stay involved

118-03-005

Understands how placement-induced separation trauma and grief in family members may manifest in angry, hostile, belligerent or withdrawn behavior

118-03-006

Understands how removal of their children can affect a family's confidence, self-worth, and commitment to reunification

118-03-007

Knows strategies to strengthen and sustain children's attachments to family members while in placement

118-03-008

Can plan and support frequent visits between children in care and their families, and can address or eliminate barriers to visitation

118-03-009

Can help families cope with problems that arise during visits, including children's emotional distress and behavior problems

118-03-010

Can use family / child visits to model, reinforce, and support constructive parenting practices

118-03-011

Can help family members express their anger and distress, and clarify and cope with their feelings

118-03-012

Can involve family members in ongoing reviews of placement plans and in making permanency decisions for their children.

Skill Set 118-04 Ability to collaborate with and support foster and relative caregivers

118-04-001

Knows the importance of supportive services to foster and kinship caregivers to strengthen and sustain placements

118-04-002

Knows the benefits of including foster and kinship caregivers as members of the case planning and service delivery team

118-04-003

Knows the role of caregivers in assessment of children's needs, in planning services, and implementing case plan activities

118-04-004

Understands how training, respite care, mentoring programs, support groups, and casework support for caregivers can strengthen and sustain placements

118-04-005

Understands the special needs of families caring for children with emotional, behavioral, medical, or substance abuse problems

118-04-006

Understands how placement can create unexpected and distressing changes in the caregiver family and potentially threaten placement stability

118-04-007

Understands the impact of grief and loss on caregiver families when children are returned home or adopted

118-04-008

Understands the challenges for relative caregivers who may need to restrict or control access by parents of the children in their care

118-04-009

Can support caregiver involvement in all aspects of placement planning and empower caregivers to help make case decisions

118-04-010

Can engage and prepare caregivers to work directly with family members of children in care to achieve case plan objectives

118-04-010

Can debrief and support foster and relative caregivers, children, and children's families after visits

118-04-011

Can help caregivers manage conflicting feelings about supporting reunification while considering adoption or legal guardianship

Skill Set 118-05 Ability to work with families to promote reunification and placement stability

118-05-001

Knows the importance of reunification planning, preparation, and ongoing supportive services to stabilize the placement and prevent children from re-entering care

118-05-002

Knows the worker's responsibilities in helping families successfully complete case plan activities toward reunification

118-05-003

Knows the importance of teamwork and collaboration among community providers to achieve successful reunification

118-05-004

Knows the characteristics and elements of a well developed reunification plan

118-05-005

Knows factors typically associated with the re-neglect or re-abuse of children and their re-entry into foster care

118-05-006

Understands the psychological, environmental and social barriers to reunification and the importance of helping family members overcome these barriers

118-05-007

Understands factors that must be assessed to determine each family member's readiness for reunification, and the dynamics associated with low likelihood of successful reunification

118-05-008

Understands typical emotional reactions of parents whose children have been placed and how these may affect parent's behavior and willingness to pursue reunification

118-05-009

Understands how family visits can create emotional distress and trauma for children and family members

118-05-010

Understands the value of strengths-based and developmental models of intervention when pursuing reunification

118-05-011

Understands why parents might choose not to be reunited with their children

118-05-012

Knows how to re-evaluate risk and child safety in preparation for and during reunification activities

118-05-012

Knows the necessary steps to prepare families for the stresses and challenges they may face during reunification activities

118-05-013

Knows how to help families link with permanent support systems in their extended families and communities to assist them before, during, and after reunification

118-05-014

Can keep families engaged and emotionally involved with their children during reunification and after children are returned home

118-05-015

Can assess family members' responses to visits and family contacts and use this information to modify reunification plans

118-05-016

Can help families anticipate areas of stress or conflict and design strategies to prevent or overcome challenges

118-05-017

Can determine when reunification is not an appropriate plan for a child or is not likely to succeed, and can communicate this to family members.

Skill Set 118-06 Ability to identify or develop alternative permanent homes for children

118-06-001

Knows the detrimental outcomes of impermanence and placement instability for children

118-06-002

Knows the range of permanency options available to children who cannot be reunited with their families

118-06-003

Knows criteria to select the most appropriate permanent placement for a child in care

118-06-004

Knows the importance of maintaining as much stability as possible in children's physical, social, cultural and psychological environments when choosing a permanent home

118-06-005

Knows the importance of asking family members to recommend potential permanent placements for their children and involving them in developing a permanency plan

118-06-006

Knows risks and disadvantages of Planned Permanency Living Arrangements (PPLA) as a permanent placement option for children in care

118-06-007

Understands the emotional and practical dilemmas faced by relative and foster caregivers in working toward reunification, when they have agreed to provide a permanent home for a child

118-06-008

Knows how to engage families to consider permanency options for their children without negating the importance of or the agency's commitment to promote reunification

118-06-009

Knows how to conduct a comprehensive assessment of children's developmental needs and use this information to select the most appropriate permanent home

118-06-010

Can openly discuss with families the agency's commitment to achieving permanence for children within the time frames established by statute

118-06-011

Can help families develop permanent plans for their children when reunification is not possible.

Competencies are also available for supervisors, foster and adoptive parents, and trainers.

Contact the Institute for Human Services, 1706 E. Broad Street, Columbus, OH, 43203: 614-251-6000 for more information about competency-based inservice training systems for child welfare organizations.

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