

CHILD PROTECTION SERVICES  
STANDARDS FOR EFFECTIVE PRACTICE  
**STANDARDS FOR HUMAN RESOURCES**

**11.5 STAFF ORIENTATION AND TRAINING**

**Council on Accreditation Standards**

The Council on Accreditation Standards G4.1 (Human Resources Planning, Organization and Deployment); G4.2 (Personnel Policies and Procedures); G7.1 (Orientation of New Personnel); G7.2 (Personnel Development and Training Program); G7.5 (Supervision); and G7.6 (Additional Requirements of Supervisors) link to and support Standard 11.5 *Staff Orientation and Training*.

**Administrative Code**

There are no Ohio Administrative Code Rules that directly address Standard 11.5 *Staff Orientation and Training*. See Chapter 4000 of the Administrative Procedures Manual (APM).

**I. Philosophy**

Highly functioning organizations require, at all levels a knowledgeable, confident, and competent work force. Demands placed on staff require that they be prepared and skilled. Staff preparation and readiness to competently carry-out job duties are demonstrated through organizational supports. PCSAs provide staff with new job orientation, training opportunities, and support in their preparation of, participation in, and practice of newly acquired knowledge and skills.

New staff orientation is a critical opportunity to introduce the new employee to the value rich importance of child safety and family stability and to the neighborhoods in which services are provided. Most agencies will report that the importance of the orientation to the employee "getting off to a solid start" and in which the agency can "put its best foot forward" is important and valuable.

Staff retention research suggests that orienting staff is necessary to build a solid foundation on which staff attitudes and experience develop. Without a formal orientation program, staff is left to their own devices to figure out what and how the agency functions and can linger in a state of disorientation for weeks and months. This confusion does little toward the retention of staff. It can contribute to an ongoing feeling that the agency does not support staff, communicate important information, or support their knowledge and awareness of program services, agency functioning or the roles and responsibilities of staff.

PCSAs provide all staff with in-service training opportunities to introduce specific knowledge needed to perform job duties within the agency and county jurisdiction. Additional training is offered to augment and enhance staff's knowledge and skills. PCSAs support the use of the Ohio Child Welfare Training Program (OCWTP) in training professionals who work in the field. The OCWTP provides content and skill building opportunities to support the development of a competent and confident staff. Inter-agency cross-training is an additional preparatory and ongoing skill development vehicle that directly addresses the need for inter-system collaboration critical to serving the community's children and families. Whatever the orientation or training vehicle used, PCSAs believe that the protection of children and stabilization of families necessitates a knowledgeable and skilled staff.

**II. Outcome**

Children and families are served by knowledgeable, skilled and prepared employees of the child protection system.

### III. Evaluation

FACSIS events, CPOE and the Federal Health and Human Services outcomes may be considered when evaluating this standard. In addition, the CFSA may consider the following:

- number of staff hired versus the number of staff completing New Staff Orientation;
- whether a formal process for orientation and ongoing training of new policies and procedures exists;
- extent to/percentage of supervisors using process for educating staff on new, revised agency policies and procedures;
- percentage of staff completing required training hours per year, meeting time frame mandates;
- percentage of staff attending graduate school towards a MSW or related degree;
- percentage of staff completing ITNA annually and percentage of staff attending training as identified in their ITNA;
- number of cross-training sessions held with other local agencies on an annual basis.

### IV. Standards for Implementation

#### A. Staff Orientation for All New Employees

PCSAs provide formal and uniform orientation activities for new employees. The purpose of providing new staff with formal orientation is: to create a favorable impression of the agency, to reduce new job anxiety, and to provide technical information regarding the agency, job expectations and performance. The structured orientation program is time-limited and is provided by designated staff. Consistency and accuracy of information provided during staff orientation should be assured. PCSAs provide on-the-job orientation activities through the employee's supervisor and direct program staff.

- 1) The PCSA should have a policy, process and procedures for orienting all new employees to the organization.
- 2) A general orientation program should be provided to all new employees within their first five working days. The general orientation program includes, but is not limited to, the following elements.
  - a. PCSA Overview
    - i. mission, philosophy, values;
    - ii. annual goals and objectives;
    - iii. organizational structure, including key administrators;
    - iv. program areas and functions;
    - v. agency tour;
    - vi. list/location of relevant PCSA materials and manuals;
    - vii. employee safety; and
    - viii. funding sources.
  - b. Personnel
    - i. time sheets;
    - ii. benefits;

- iii. professional expectations;
- iv. required annual training;
- iv. job description, performance expectations, probation, annual evaluation;
- vi. confidentiality policy with employee sign-off;
- vii. reimbursement procedures, when applicable; and
- viii. personnel handbook that contains policies and procedures.

**B. Staff Orientation for Direct and Non-Direct Service Staff**

- 1) The PCSA should have job-specific orientation activities for direct and non-direct service staff designed to orient new employees to their particular job functions and responsibilities. Job-specific orientation activities should be provided to the new employee within the first three months on the job by the training unit or program area to which they are assigned. Orientation activities may be individualized or group (see Addendum D, *Staff Orientation Checklist*).

Job-specific orientation activities should include, but not be limited to, the following:

- a. child protection services history and mission;
- b. forms completion, time restrictions;
- c. job responsibilities including detailed information regarding activities;
- d. intra-agency information including purpose, functions, contacts, on-site visits;
- e. policies, procedures;
- f. inter-agency specialized services which interact with specific job function and responsibilities; and
- g. confidentiality.

**C. PCSA Policies/Standards, State and Federal Mandates**

PCSA's expect staff to be informed and knowledgeable regarding organizational policies, procedures and standards of effective child welfare practice. To assure staff are well informed, PCSA's have the responsibility to provide regular, uniform, and consistent education and training regarding the organization's policies, procedures and standards, and state and federal mandates. This is critical if staff is to be held accountable for knowing and using these tools in carrying out their job responsibilities on a daily basis.

- 1) Staff should be provided training that addresses federal and state laws and rules applicable to their job duties, and should be instructed regarding how these relate to their individual daily activities.
- 2) The PCSA should have a method for assuring that all new employees are introduced to, and trained on, the use of the agency's policy manuals and handbooks. This should be documented by the PCSA for each employee.
- 3) The PCSA should have a structured format for introducing new and revised policies, procedures, and standards for effective practice with staff as is appropriate to the employee's job classification. Completion of this review should be documented by the PCSA for each employee.

**D. Intra-Agency Training**

Developing a confident, knowledgeable work force requires that staff have an understanding of program services and activities within the organization. Staff should be informed of, and know, all of the functions, services and programs of the agency. Knowing the agency functions, and how to access services and programs, allows staff to serve children and families with greater efficiency. The PCSA has a responsibility to educate and cross-train staff regarding all program activities and services of the agency.

The PCSA should provide, at least biannually, a structured and documented process for informing and/or training staff on newly developed and existing services and program activities.

**E. Ohio Child Welfare Training Program**

PCSAs rely on knowledgeable and competent staff who are well versed in Ohio child protection standards and practice. PCSAs make a commitment to implement activities that support and compliment comprehensive competency-based training. This includes a commitment that social service staff receive the mandated Ohio Child Welfare Training Program (OCWTP) training, utilization of the Individual Training Needs Assessment (ITNA), and regular communication with the Regional Training Center.

- 1) The PCSA should have a policy regarding the need for all social service staff to complete the recommended CORE within the first 12 months of employment. Staff who were hired prior to the availability of CORE should be required to participate in the series.
- 2) The PCSA should have a policy regarding annual completion of the appropriate OCWTP Individual Training Needs Assessment Tool by caseworkers and supervisors to be done at least every two years and reviewed on an annual basis.

**F. Transfer of Learning**

The PCSA's responsibility to prepare staff to carry out their job functions with confidence and competence does not end at the close of a training session. Staff training and skill building is an ongoing responsibility of PCSAs. Transfer of Learning (TOL) begins prior to the training session, follows through the event and continues after the participant returns to the job. PCSAs are responsible for assuring TOL activities are actively pursued and are implemented agency-wide. TOL activities are the responsibility of management, line supervisors, workers, and the trainers who provide the training. Because resources are limited, as is staff time, TOL activities are critical to the effective development of staff and make best use of limited resources.

- 1) The PCSA should have a policy regarding agency TOL activities. TOL activities should include, but are not limited to, the following:
  - a. Management
 

Management should demonstrate the value it places on training by:

    - i. allowing the trainee to attend scheduled training events;
    - ii. providing back-up staff support for individuals in training so that the trainee is undisturbed during the training session.
  - b. Supervisors should support the professional development of their staff by:

- i. reviewing the annual Individual Training Needs Assessment (ITNA) finding and/or annual performance objectives to assure the requested training meets a training need as discussed with the individual;
    - ii. having a discussion with the individual regarding what s/he hopes to learn from the session;
    - iii. holding follow-up discussions regarding newly acquired knowledge and understanding based on the training content;
    - iv. requesting the individual share the materials with staff at staff meetings.
  - c. **Training Participant**  
Staff who participate in training events should take the responsibility of transferring the content of the training session back on the job. Staff may accomplish this by:
    - i. assuring their work is covered for the day;
    - ii. giving full attention to the trainer;
    - iii. developing and implementing an action plan which identifies how s/he plans to use the information;
    - iv. sharing the training content with staff.
- 2) Following a training event, the staff member should meet with the supervisor to discuss the training and review the action plan. The supervisor should provide the support needed for staff to implement the action plan and document having done so.
- 3) The supervisor and staff should discuss implementation of the plan. At subsequent meetings, the supervisor should address the action plan and document progress made in implementing the action plan activities. Documentation of the staff member's progress in meeting learning objectives should be part of the annual performance evaluation.

#### **G. Inter-Agency Training**

Cross training of staff with other community service providers, both private and public, strengthens the community's ability to effectively and efficiently serve children and families. It is the responsibility of these system administrators to jointly develop and implement a plan for orientation, training and sharing information among staff across systems

- 1) The PCSA should agree to participate in the development and implementation of inter-agency cross training.
- 2) The PCSA should provide information and resources regarding agency philosophy, policies, consumer population, services, and program activities to community service providers upon request.
- 3) The PCSA should provide updated and ongoing information regarding its services, program activities, and program partnerships to the wider community.

#### **H. Suggested Key Components in Orientation and Training Programs**

Orientation and Training Programs should be designed to support and promote best practice strategies for employees.

Innovative curriculum designed to cover the diverse needs of the Net Generation, Generation X, and Baby Boomer Generation should be utilized.

Opportunities for mentoring and shadowing with experienced child welfare professionals should be provided.

Interactive curriculum with assignments, Internet linkage, and transfer of learning components should be made available.

Resources:

Field Guide to Child Welfare, by Judy Rycus and Ron Hughes  
Training, Orientation and Optimal Learning (TOOL) Manual - Ohio Child Welfare Training Program

These resources can be obtained by calling the Institute for Human Services at (614) 251-6000.

*\*Standard adapted from the Franklin and Marion County Children Services Boards.*