

HR Standard 1.8

COMPETENCY-BASED IN-SERVICE TRAINING (CBIT)

HISTORY / PHILOSOPHY

Since 1985 the Ohio County Public Children Services Agencies (PCSAs) have been served by the Ohio Child Welfare Training Program (OCWTP). The OCWTP is structured to be a collaborative effort of the Ohio Department of Job and Family Services (ODJFS), Public Children Services Association of Ohio (PCSAs) and a State Training Coordinator, which has been The Institute for Human Services (IHS) since the program's inception.

The OCWTP promotes the delivery of high quality, culturally responsive, family-centered services to children who have experienced or are at risk of abuse, neglect or dependency, and their families. This is provided through the delivery of competency-based training, primarily to public agency professionals, caregivers, and adoptive families. The OCWTP collaborates with other agency providers and advocates for public policy and practice standards that reflect best child welfare practice.

OUTCOME

To provide appropriate, job-related knowledge and skills for child welfare administrators, supervisors, caseworkers, foster parents and other staff that supports and promotes the PCSAs mission to increase the safety of children, the stability of families, and the support of the community.

APPLICATION

Any CBIT system must include these elements:

1. Use of a "Universe of Competencies"

The Universe of Competencies is a compilation of all the knowledge and skills needed by child protection staff and foster and adoptive parents to perform their assigned job tasks. The Universe of Competencies "drives" a competency-based inservice training system. The competencies are the criteria against which individual training needs are assessed. They also determine the content of all training curricula. Trainers in the system are certified to teach only in those competency areas in which they have a high level of expertise and proficiency.

2. All new program personnel employees will attend standardized CORE curriculum training shortly after their employment in the system.

CORE training consists of training in those competencies considered to be fundamental and essential for all trainees in a targeted trainee group. By mandating that all staff attend core training early in their employment, the training system helps assure a consistent and uniform standard of practice across all jurisdictions of the state.

3. The Utilization of an Individual Training Needs Assessment Instrument (ITNA)

The ITNA process determines the high priority training needs for every staff person in the system. Each ITNA instrument contains the standardized Universe of Competencies for that target group. The ITNA weighs the relative importance of two variables; the importance of each competency to the individual employee's job, and the current level of ability. The highest priority training need is a competency which is very important to the employee's job, and in which the employee needs considerable development.

4. The Development and Certification of Competent Trainers

Trainers in a competency-based training system must have well developed training skills for use with adult learners; a thorough knowledge and skill in the topics they are to teach; and understanding of the values, standards, and operations of family-centered, culturally competent child welfare practice.

Trainers for a competency-based system are thoroughly screened, evaluated, and ultimately certified to teach in those competency areas in which they demonstrate high levels of proficiency. They are trained in adult learning methodology and in the use of standardized curricula. They are also trained regarding their role in promoting transfer of learning from the workshop to the job setting.

5. The Development of Job-Related Training Content and Standardized Curricula

Training content relevance is assured by using our Universe of Competencies as the guide to curriculum development. Ultimately, there should be training curricula available for all competencies in the Universe of Competencies. The identification, assessment, adaptation, updating, or development of relevant training curricula is an ongoing process for the life of the program.

6. A Statewide System for the Delivery of Training

An effective training system for adult learners must involve learners in the needs assessment, training, and evaluation process. A regional delivery system assigns a training center to a group of constituent agencies within a circumscribed geographic area to facilitate the planning of training that meets identified training needs in that area. A regional delivery system saves considerable resources by eliminating the need for trainees to travel long

distances to attend training. The Ohio training delivery system is comprised of eight Regional Training Centers (RTCs) located in the following counties: Athens (Southeast), Cuyahoga (North Central), Franklin (Central), Greene (Western), Guernsey (East Central), Hamilton (Southwest), Lucas (Northwest) and Summit (Northeast).

7. A System will be Implemented for the ongoing Monitoring and Evaluation of all Training Activities and Program Components

Use of a statewide tracking data system enables the systematic input of information needed to plan, administer, and evaluate training activities and staff participation. Measures of performance for the system must be identified, and the system's output is regularly assessed.

All training activities are routinely evaluated at multiple levels to determine their quality, relevance and outcomes. Comprehensive data is maintained regarding individual staff attendance at training in order to identify compliance with training regulations.

8. An Administrative Structure will be Implemented that Promotes Ongoing and Collaborative Planning, Management, and Evaluation of All System Components.

The OCWTP is governed by a Central Steering Committee. This is the representative planning and decision making body for the training system and is a central component in assuring the ongoing effectiveness and quality of the training program. This group assures that strategic planning, operational planning, decision making and program evaluation are routinely conducted by the most knowledgeable and committed people in the system.

This group strives to be responsive to trends in the field of Child Welfare by remaining current in the development of new products and monitoring and use of new technologies.

9. The Utilization of Transfer of Learning Activities (TOL)

TOL activities refer to the utilization of knowledge and skills learned by trainees in training back on their jobs. Research suggests that without system-wide strategies that promote transfer, much of what is learned in training will never be used in the work place. Transfer of learning requires collaboration between training centers, trainers, the trainees, their immediate supervisors, and the administrators and managers in the work environment. Strategies to promote transfer are incorporated into activities that prepare the worker to attend training, that occur during the training, and that support the worker in utilizing the new skills on their jobs after the training.

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