

**State of Florida
Department of Children and Families**

Charlie Crist
Governor

Robert A. Butterworth
Secretary

DATE: February 21, 2008

TO: Regional Directors

THROUGH: David Fairbanks, Assistant Secretary for Programs
George Sheldon, Assistant Secretary for Operations *David L. Fairbanks*
George Sheldon

FROM: Patricia Badland, Director, Office of Family Safety *Patricia Badland*

SUBJECT: Child Welfare Professional Certification and Request for Training Program Plans

Purpose: The purpose of this memorandum is to review pre-service certification and in-service training requirements and to request information from local agencies on various components of your locally managed training programs.

Action Required: The Office of Family Safety is requesting a Training Program Plan from each department Region Office, CBC Lead Agency and Sheriff Office receiving child welfare training funds by March 10, 2008. Plans should be submitted to Taffy Compain at Taffy_B_Compain@dcf.state.fl.us.

Background: Certification of Child Welfare Professionals. Certification of Child Welfare Professionals refers to a process where individuals hired to provide direct child welfare services, supervisors and trainers demonstrate the knowledge, skills and abilities necessary to competently discharge their duties, as per s. 402.40, F.S.

Certification activities include classroom training, on-line learning and field activities. Participants must successfully pass the Phase I post-test and the Phase II field-based performance assessment. In addition, Certified Child Welfare Professionals must maintain their certification by obtaining forty-eight hours of in-service training every three years. Attached please find several memos that provide a background of our training realignment efforts.

Training Program Plans. Local agencies must maintain a comprehensive, structured training program that addresses pre-service and in-service needs to support and enhance the competence of the local child welfare workforce. The following information is required in the Training Program Plans:

1. Name and contact information of the individual responsible for training activities.

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2. Phase I Structured Field Activities Plan. This includes all activities and opportunities offered to trainees to assist in the transfer of learning from the classroom and on-line training to on-the-job skills and abilities during Phase I (for example, shadowing and mentorship programs).
3. Phase II Field Based Performance Assessment Plan. This is an update to the same plans submitted to this office as part of the Certification Transition Plans in 2005.
4. Summary of local certification protocol. Include: length and frequency of classes; trainee caseloads; average time from post test to certification; and certification process for employees who qualified for and passed the waiver test.
5. Summary of in-service training program. Include: employee needs assessment process, training development process; delivery process; employee notification process; employee satisfaction and professional growth survey process; and tracking methodology.

Contact Information: If you have questions, please contact Taffy Compain at Taffy_B_Compain@dcf.state.fl.us or (850) 921-2765.

Attachments



**State of Florida
Department of Children and Families**

Jeb Bush
Governor

Lucy D. Hadi
Secretary

DATE: June 24, 2005

TO: District Administrators
Community-Based Care Lead Agency CEOs
Sheriff's Offices Performing Protective Investigations

THROUGH: Don Winstead, Deputy Secretary *for*
Beth Englander, Director *Beth Englander*
Child Welfare and Community Based Care Program Office

FROM: Lucy D. Hadi, Secretary *Lucy D. Hadi*

SUBJECT: Child Welfare Certification Program Realignment

A Child Welfare Training Excellence Task Force has been established, with the express charge of redesigning the training process for Florida's unique community based care system. The mission of the Task Force is to develop the best-trained child welfare service and protective investigation caseworkers in the nation. To that end, the Task Force is establishing a training service delivery model that is localized, allowing flexibility for each provider in implementing training.

The program office will be working through the Task Force to establish and implement the new training system over the 05-06 Fiscal Year. During this transition, testing and training requirements will be suspended, retired and/or revised as necessary and appropriate. Immediately, the following requirements are suspended/retired:

1. Supervisor and Specialist Certification: This program is being suspended while the Task Force addresses on-going supervisory training and moves supervisory training toward a clinically based approach. Until further notice, supervisor and specialist certification is not a condition of employment.
2. Recertification: This program is being suspended while the Task Force establishes guidelines for on-going training. Until further notice, recertification is not a condition of employment.
3. Phase II of Pre-service: Phase II of pre-service is being retired and will no longer be a part of Child Protection Professional Certification. Specifically, the *Casework Practice* curricula, one-on-one trainer/trainee contacts, and the Field Based Performance Assessment will not be offered by Florida International

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The mission of the department is to protect the vulnerable, strengthen families and promote individual and family economic self-sufficiency.

University (FIU) or University of South Florida (USF). **Note:** A replacement for the current Phase II is being addressed by the Task Force, with a target implementation date of January 2006.

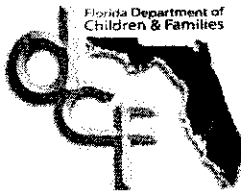
4. July 1, 2005 – December 31, 2005 Pre-Service Training: The current training delivery contracts the department holds with FIU and USF are being amended to reflect the changes to the current certification program. FIU and USF will provide the following services, which must be successfully completed by each new hire to earn conditional certification. **Note:** all field training and on-line training are the responsibility of the individual employer. Post-tests will be administered without the vendor ensuring that field and on-line training are complete.

1. Pre-test
2. Classroom training
3. HomeSafenet training
4. Post-test

Certification Transition Plan:

- a) All staff members who possess current Child Protection Professional Certification will be grandfathered into the new program and there are no requirements that must be met.
- b) All staff members who have completed classroom training and passed the written test, but have not completed Phase II and passed the FBPA prior to June 20, 2005, will be awarded conditional certification. These staff members will have to meet the requirements and timeframes for full certification as established by the Child Welfare Training Excellence Task Force.
- c) All staff members who have been awarded Child Protection Professional Certification and have expired due to not earning recertification prior to June 20, 2005, will be awarded conditional certification and will have to meet the requirements and timeframes for full certification as established by the Child Welfare Training Excellence Task Force.
- d) All new hires must complete Phase I training to earn conditional certification. These new employees will be required to meet the requirements and timeframes for full certification as established by the Child Welfare Training Excellence Task Force.

Please share this information with all affected staff. If you have any questions, please contact Beth Englander, Child Welfare and Community-Based Care Program Director, at (850) 487-2213 or via e-mail at Beth_Englander@dcf.state.fl.us.



State of Florida
Department of Children and Families

Jeb Bush
Governor

Lucy D. Hadi
Secretary

DATE: December 29, 2006

TO: District/Region Administrators, Community-Based Care CEOS,
Sheriff's Offices

THROUGH: Greg Keller, Assistant Secretary of Operations
David Fairbanks, Director of Provider Relations

FROM: Lucy D. Hadi, Secretary

SUBJECT: Reinstatement of Child Welfare Inservice and Supervisory
Certification Requirements - Effective January 1, 2007

Purpose: The purpose of this memorandum is to provide information about the reinstatement of child welfare inservice training and supervisory certification requirements. In addition, this memo provides information about on-going improvements to the child welfare certification and training system. Thanks to you and your staff for taking the time to provide input and for making recommendations for implementing a quality child welfare training/certification program that meets the needs of your local systems of care. This feedback is also included with this memorandum.

Action Required: Please disseminate this memorandum to all family services counselors and child protective investigators, their supervisors and managers, training providers and other interested parties. The effective date for the reinstatement is **January 1, 2007**. No response is required.

Planning for the following training related activities is underway. We will provide more information in the next few days or weeks:

- 1) A one day meeting in Orlando to prioritize tasks addressed in the preservice curriculum,
- 2) A statewide workgroup to develop an administrative rule regarding training and certification as specified in Section 402.40, F.S., and
- 3) Dates and locations for Florida Safe Families Network (FSFN) Release 1 Train the Trainer sessions.

Summary of Your Feedback Regarding Child Welfare Training/Certification:

The decision to reinstate inservice training requirements and supervisory certification requirements is based on the recommendations of the Child Welfare Training

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Excellence Workgroup and your feedback. Attached to this memorandum is a table which provides summaries of your input to the previously disseminated proposals:

- October 4, 2006, Request for Input - Child Welfare Certification Program Realignment and
- November 9, 2006, Performance Assessment Standards and Local Plan.

Your compiled feedback is being reviewed for development of a frequently asked questions document. The transition from a centralized child welfare training and certification system to a standardized but locally driven system has surfaced questions for many of you. We are hopeful that the frequently asked questions format will aid in that transition.

Conversion to the New Preservice Curriculum January 2007: A few of you have provided feedback that conversion to the revised preservice curriculum in January 2007 is posing a hardship. If you need to delay training of the new curriculum and wish to continue to use the existing curriculum for another iteration, please contact Gay Frizzell @ 850-921-3005 to discuss a plan. This is necessary to establish a conversion date and to ensure the written test(s) is matched appropriately to the curriculum delivered to your staff. For information about trainer certification, please go to the following University of South Florida Training Academy web site: <http://cwta.fmhi.usf.edu/>

Reinstatement of Inservice Training Requirements: Effective January 1, 2007, the requirement for 48 hours of inservice training every 3 years for certified Family Services Counselors and Child Protective Investigators is reinstated. This means that currently certified counselors and investigators have until January 1, 2010 to document at least 48 hours of inservice training. Training that occurs January 1, 2007 and later may count toward the 48 hour requirement. For employees certified after January 1, 2007, he/she will have 3 years from the date of certification to obtain and document the 48 hours of inservice training.

Local Management of Inservice

Funds have been provided to department, community-based care and sheriff's agencies to purchase, arrange or deliver inservice training. Management of the inservice training process is largely a local responsibility. Local agencies will be required to maintain documentation of inservice training in the Skillnet system. All certified trainers have received instruction in use of the Skillnet system. If your agency's certified trainers need assistance with use of Skillnet, please have them contact the University of South Florida Training Academy @ 813-974-4606. Additionally, the Training Academy is developing guidelines for using Skillnet to document inservice training. Expect written guidance in January 2007.

Inservice Requirements Rather than Recertification

Some of you have had questions about the previously implemented rules or practices regarding inservice training and/or recertification. It is important to note that:

- the concept of recertification no longer applies,
- there is no requirement for specific courses for the mandatory inservice training hours,

- the headquarters office will not be reviewing or approving inservice training courses, and
- the headquarters office will not be issuing certificates every 3 years as in the past.

Reinstatement of Supervisory Certification Requirements: Effective January 1, 2007, the requirement for all direct service supervisors to complete the professional certification requirements for child protection/welfare staff and a supervisory training program is reinstated. Exceptions to these requirements may be submitted to the department on a case by case basis. In order to provide agencies with time to comply, all direct service supervisors must meet the requirements above by July 1, 2007. Agencies may use the Supervising for Excellence (SFE) Training Program or they may use another model containing the same core elements. The department retains the authority to approve or deny the exception requests and the supervisory training programs. For more information, please email Amy Karimipour at Amy_Karimipour@dcf.state.fl.us or phone 850-922-7015.

Performance Assessment Standards and Local Plan Submission: Local plans for implementation of a standardized performance assessment process will NOT be due February 1, 2007. Participation in FSN train the trainer sessions and delivery of user training is anticipated to be a significant workload on training resources. In the meantime, please continue to implement your agency's locally developed plan for field based performance assessment.

The feedback we received regarding the degree of standardization of the performance assessment process was varied. Several of you commented on the need to balance the standardized elements of the child welfare training system statewide and the need for flexibility to adapt to local systems of care. We will use your comments, the consultation of our general counsel's office, and the recommendations of the Child Welfare Training Excellence Workgroup to refine the proposed standards. We plan to provide more information by February 1, 2007.

Impact of IV-E Waiver on Preservice Curriculum: There have been a few questions about the impact of the IV-E Waiver on child welfare preservice training. The course entitled, "Federal Funding Training" on Skillnet has NOT been updated. All on-line courses are being revised. For the time being, the best resource for IV-E waiver information is: <http://eww.dcf.state.fl.us/~fsp/newpages/ivewaiver.shtml>

Contact Information: For additional information, please contact Gay Frizzell at Gay_Frizzell@dcf.state.fl.us, or phone 850-921-3005. Thank you.