BEST PRACTICE IDEA: Direct Service Training Grids

WORKFORCE CHALLENGE: Finding a way for new workers to learn the tasks essential to managing a child welfare caseload.

WORKFORCE STRENGTHS: Agency commitment to the development, education and support of new child welfare workers; supervisors interested in mentoring new staff.

WORKFORCE STRATEGIES: Develop a tool that can be utilized by new workers and supervisors to document the tasks accomplished by new workers as they achieve basic experience in child welfare case work.

TFI FAMILY SERVICES DIRECT SERVICE TRAINING GRIDS: The TFI Family Services, Inc. Foster Care/Reintegration department uses Direct Service Training Grids to guide direct service training of new case managers and family support workers in learning essential tasks prior to assigning a case load. This grid is given to the worker the first day of employment. It lists the tasks that the agency has determined are important for the worker to understand and feel comfortable with prior to taking on a case load. The general expectation is that a worker will have three experiences in completing each task prior to be given a case load. The worker will first observe/shadow another experienced worker or the supervisor completing a task (i.e. a case plan conference), then do the task with someone watching and possibly assisting, and finally do the task alone with the supervisor reviewing and discussing it afterwards. The worker and supervisor initial and date each section of the grid as they are completed. Workers can do these tasks for cases that they may be assigned to, but are not officially given a case load until completion of the grid. This grid must be submitted to the department manager prior to the worker being assigned a case load. Some exceptions may be made for completion prior to case load assignment in areas where court testimony is rare, in that specific category. In general, the expectation is that this training grid will be completed within 3-4 weeks of an employee’s start date.

WORKFORCE BENEFITS: Better prepared new staff, less stress on new staff as they transition into the job, better outcomes for families as a result of staff understanding of essential tasks required in case work.

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