BEST PRACTICE IDEA: Youthville Mentoring Program

WORKFORCE CHALLENGE: The timely development and retention of newly hired staff that work with children and families to provide permanency.

WORKFORCE STRENGTHS: There is an abundance of expertise and experience within the staff that work directly with children and families. These workers have the necessary skills and experience to assist new workers to work successfully with children and families.

WORKFORCE STRATEGIES: Provide all newly hired permanency specialists and support workers working with children and families with a mentor to assist them in working with children and families during their first 90 days of employment.

DESCRIPTION OF BEST PRACTICE IDEA: Each newly hired staff is provided a mentor to provide them with assistance in working with their assigned families. The mentors work directly with the newly hired staff to train them in the necessary skills in working with children and families to provide permanency through reunification, adoption, or other planned permanency arrangements. The training of staff is provided through direct observation and working with the staff. Through this process they are able to observe critical processes in the newly hired staff’s work with children and families.

WORKFORCE BENEFITS: Mentors benefit newly hired staff in acquiring critical skills in working with child and families, to acclimate them more quickly to their work with children and families. New staff are able to achieve successful outcomes more quickly and feel more successful in their positions, which results in higher retention for staff. Additionally, mentoring is very important to those staff that step up and volunteer to be a mentor. They acknowledge the important role that their mentor played with them and want to give back.

WORKFORCE IMPLICATIONS: Budgeting for mentor compensation and benefits; additional planning for mentor’s case responsibilities; training for mentors

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“My mentor was great, she showed me around, answered all my questions and let me shadow her almost everyday for weeks. She showed me tons of forms, how to do court reports, case plans etc. Even now she is always very willing to show me how to do something or answer any questions I have. I was very grateful to have her as a mentor.”

Bridgette Carpenter, Permanency Specialist