What Influences Child Welfare Worker Retention in Kansas? *

As part of the Kansas Workforce Profile, a survey of workers was conducted to identify organizational and individual characteristics that are related to retention (measured by asking workers about their intention to quit their job). **Worker attitudes** that best predicted intention to quit (followed by sample survey items used to measure each concept) were:

1. Work/Family conflict
   - *Work demands interfere with family life*
   - *Can’t get things done at home because of the job*
2. Organizational commitment
   - *Being proud of the organization*
   - *Similar values as those of the organization*
3. Job satisfaction
   - *Being enthusiastic about the job*
   - *Find enjoyment in the job*

**Ideas for Action:** Begin conversation, listen to workers and gently ask questions related to these concepts. Share your own enthusiasm for the job and the organization’s values. Listen for clues from workers who might be struggling with balancing work and family demands.

**Organizational characteristics** that best predicted worker attitudes were:

1. Client centered supervisor
   - *Supervisor refers to children and families in a positive manner*
   - *Supervisor identifies strengths in most parents and children*
   - *Supervisor advocates for resources to meet the needs of children and families*
2. Job importance, autonomy and challenge
   - *My work is meaningful.*
   - *Freedom to complete tasks without being over supervised.*
   - *My job requires a lot of skill and effort*
3. Organization innovation, justice and support
   - *I am encouraged to develop my ideas.*
   - *Decisions about my job are made in a fair manner.*
   - *The organization really cares about my well-being.*
4. Role ambiguity, conflict and overload
   - *The goals and objectives of my team are clearly defined.*
   - *There are too many people telling me what to do.*
   - *I have more work to do than I could ever get done.*

**Ideas for Action:** Talk positively about children and families, reinforce the importance and challenge of child welfare work, help staff be clear on goals, and encourage pursuit and development of their ideas.

*This is a brief summary of the results of this study. For more information, go to the Kansas Workforce Initiative at [www.kwi.ku.edu](http://www.kwi.ku.edu) or e-mail John Poertner at [jpoertner@sunflower.com](mailto:jpoertner@sunflower.com).*