Caseworker Readiness Activity

Professional Standards for Child Welfare Caseworkers

In the field of child welfare, there are four organizations well regarded for their best practice standards. These are:

- The Public Children Services Agency of Ohio (PCSAO) “Standards for Effective Practice”
- The Council on Accreditation “Public Standards”

Each set of standards is designed to guide all areas of child welfare practice, including: administration, human resources, policy development, case management, and direct services from the point of entry into the child welfare system, i.e. screening, through permanency achieved by maintaining a child in the home, reunification, adoption, independent living, etc.

1. The Public Children Service Agency of Ohio “Standards for Effective Practice”

The Public Children Service Agency of Ohio “Standards for Effective Practice” (aka “PCSAO Standards”) were developed by members of the PCSAO staff, supervisors of PCSAs in Ohio, and representatives from a number of private agencies. Over a period of several months, multiple teams met on a regular basis to research and discuss best practice strategies in the following areas:

- Child Abuse and Neglect Prevention
- Intake/Assessment/Investigation
- Ongoing Protective Services
- Intensive Family-Based Services
- Kinship Services
- Out of Home Care
- Adoption Services
- Independent Living
- Caseworker Safety
- Administration
- Human Resources

For more information about PCSAO Standards, go to: http://www.pcsao.org/standards.htm
2. The Council on Accreditation (COA) Standards

The Council on Accreditation (COA) Standards is a rigorous set of nationally recognized standards of best practice. They are designed for implementation by those PCSAs seeking and/or maintaining accreditation. Compliance with the standards ensures that children and families receive the highest quality of service from the PCSA. The topic areas for child protective services include:

- Access to Service
- Community Partnership
- Service Philosophy
- Screening
- Investigation
- Safety Assessments
- Assessment
- Service Planning and Monitoring
- Child Protective Case Management Services
- Removing Children from the Home
- Child Placement
- Child and Youth Permanency
- Case Closing
- Personnel

Note: Ohio has one of the highest rates of public agency accreditation for locally administered PCSAs in the nation (only North Carolina has more) and every year more counties begin the process.

For more information on the Council on Accreditation Standards, go to [www.coastandards.org](http://www.coastandards.org).

(Click in Public Standards)

Activity:

Check with your supervisor or training department to determine the status of your agency in regards to COA accreditation.

The Child Welfare League of America (CWLA) “Standards of Excellence for Child Welfare Services” are designed to achieve a continuing improvement of services to children and families. The complete set of standards “representing practices considered most desirable in providing services” are contained in a 13 volume series. The topics include:

- Adoption Services
- Child Care, Development, and Education Services
- Family Foster Care Services
- Health Care Services for Children in Out-of-Home Care
- In-Home Aide Services for Children and Their Families
- Kinship Care Services
- Management and Governance of Child Welfare Organizations
- Residential Services
- Services for Adolescent Pregnancy Prevention, Pregnant Adolescents, and Young Parents
- Services for Abused and Neglected Children and Their Families
- Services to Strengthen and Preserve Families with Children
- Transition, Independent Living, and Self-Sufficiency Services
- Organization and Administration for All Child Welfare Services

For more information on the CWLA Standards of Excellence, go to: www.cwlao.org/programs/standards


NASW has led the social work profession in the development of standards for child welfare workers. These standards reflect and promote sound practice and can be regarded as a basic tool for social workers in the field. There are 16 standards in all and cover the following topics:

- Ethics and Values
- Educational Qualifications
- Continuing Education Requirements
- Advocacy for Resources and System Reforms
- Knowledge Requirements (Child Development, Parenting Issues, Family Dynamics, Community/Local Systems, Compliance with Child Welfare Laws, Compliance with Agency Policies and Procedures)
- Confidentiality of Client Information
- Supervision
• Cultural Competence
• Collaboration
• Focus on Prevention
• Engaging Families as Partners
• Comprehensive Service Planning
• Child Protection
• Out-of-Home Care
• Permanency
• Social Work Administrators

**Activity:**

1. Review the caseworker job description. Meet with the supervisor to discuss any questions about the job responsibilities.

2. Caseworkers should be familiar with those professional standards which address their specific job responsibilities. In each of the four organizations, locate two or three practice standards that relate to your specific job function.