CASE PLANNING AND FAMILY-CENTERED CASEWORK

COMPETENCIES

The "Universe of Competencies" is Ohio's comprehensive listing of all the knowledge and skills required for child welfare staff to do their jobs. This "Universe" is the essential driving force behind the OCWTP's comprehensive, competency-based in-service training (CCBIT) system.

"What knowledge and skills do I need to proficiently perform my job?" and "In which of these do I need further development?"

At this time, you are not expected to have all the knowledge and skills needed to be "competent" in case planning and casework implementation. You are beginning the journey and will continue to build your level of learning in the foundational Caseworker Core series. You will find Caseworker Core Module VI, "Case Planning and Family-Centered Casework" helpful. The following is to help you get ready by identifying what you will eventually know, understand, apply, and accomplish on the job.

Skill Set #1: Ability to develop case plans that include objectives and service activities to address high priority needs and problems, and build on family resources and strengths

1. Aware of the potentially destructive impact on children and families of poorly constructed, incomplete or non-individualized family case plans

2. Knows the importance of involving family members in case plan development to assure their investment and motivation to work toward change

3. Knows the proper sequence of steps in the case planning process

4. Knows the difference between case goals, objectives and activities

5. Knows the criteria with which to prioritize family needs and case objectives

6. Knows the benefits of formally documenting the case plan in the case record

7. Understands the use of the case plan as the agency's formal negotiated contract with families to guide, monitor and evaluate the change process

8. Understands the need to formulate case objectives that reflect desired changes in the underlying conditions directly contributing to maltreatment in the family
9. Understands how case objectives are derived from information gathered during the family assessment

10. Understands the importance of identifying culturally relevant service providers and engaging families to help choose their own service resources

11. Understands how formal case plan documents are used in legal and court processes, and the importance of well-formulated case plan documents in supporting the agency's legal position

12. Understands how ineffective case planning contributes to premature closing of cases or keeping cases open for unnecessarily extended periods of time

13. Understands the necessity of periodic case reassessment with the family to document changes and assure the continued relevance of services and activities

14. Knows strategies to promote and support the involvement of immediate and extended family members in case plan development

15. Knows the utility of a variety of service delivery strategies to protect children and meet families’ needs including direct provision of services, using agency-based services, case management, referral to community providers, non-traditional and neighborhood-based resources, accessing or developing community support networks

16. Knows how to engage the family in writing case plans in language that can be easily understood by family members

18. Knows how to select and use specific interviewing strategies during case plan development

19. Knows interview specific strategies to help parents remain motivated to safely parent their children

20. Knows strategies to involve family members and service providers in periodically reviewing and revising case plans

21. Knows factors to determine when a case should be closed

22. Knows strategies that can be used at case closure to reduce recidivism or reopening of the case
23. Can partner with family members to develop an individualized case plan that accurately reflects the family's unique needs, strengths and problems, and directly addresses contributors to maltreatment

24. Can formulate observable, behavioral and measurable case goals and objectives

25. Can identify, with family members, the most appropriate services and activities to achieve case plan objectives and address their individual needs

**Skill Set #2: Ability to work collaboratively with the family, including extended family members and service providers, to plan and coordinate services**

1. Aware of the caseworker's role and responsibility as a case manager

2. Knows the types of formal and informal neighborhood and community resources that can be engaged to support families

3. Knows the liabilities of referring families to service providers without also assuring coordination of these services

4. Knows the intra- and inter-agency, environmental, cultural and community barriers that prevent access by families to needed services and resources

5. Knows strategies to ensure the caseworker's safety during on-going family services work with families

6. Understands the value of home visits in learning about available services and resources in the family's neighborhood and home community

7. Understands the importance of identifying naturally occurring support systems within the extended family, neighborhood and community

8. Understands the importance of gathering family members’ recommendations of culturally responsive service providers in their communities

9. Understands the caseworker's role as an advocate to assure that families receive high quality and timely services

10. Understands the importance of coordinating services delivered by multiple community-based service providers and the difficulties experienced by families when they are not well coordinated

11. Understands the caseworker's responsibility to monitor and evaluate the effectiveness of services provided by other agencies or providers
12. Can intervene with immediate, extended and care giving families to support, empower and strengthen them to care for children at risk of harm and to concurrently ensure the children's protection and permanence.

17. Can recognize when cultural differences impact and the family assessment.

18. Can facilitate coordination of services to families being served by multiple service providers.

19. Can collaborate with staff in other agency units to integrate and coordinate service planning and delivery.

Skill Set #3: Ability to initiate permanency planning activities, including supplemental case planning, to assure children's safety and stability.

1. Knows the role and purpose of supplemental case planning in assuring timely permanence for children.

2. Knows the importance of beginning permanency planning at the time of first contact with a family.

3. Knows the circumstances when a formal supplemental case plan should be developed.

4. Knows the necessary elements that should be included in a supplemental case plan.

5. Understands the dynamics of family members' discomfort when discussing alternative permanent placements for the children.

6. Knows strategies to introduce the discussion of permanency issues during the family assessment and to engage and empower immediate and extended family members to focus on permanence for the children throughout the life of the case.

7. Can discuss permanency issues and alternative permanent placement options without communicating a lack of commitment to reunification.

8. Can determine when the supplemental case plan should become the focus of casework activities.

Skill Set #4: Ability to complete case documentation and organize and maintain family case records.
1. Knows the importance of timely, accurate case documentation for agency accountability

2. Knows the multiple types, purposes and uses of case documentation

3. Knows the scope and type of information that should be gathered from community service providers for inclusion in the case record

4. Understands how inaccurate or insufficient case documentation contributes to service ineffectiveness

5. Knows what information can be provided to other service providers to promote open communication and collaboration in planning and service delivery

6. Knows how to use summarized case documentation, including risk assessments, safety assessments and case plans, to guide supervisory case reviews and periodic formal case review conferences (Semiannual Administrative Reviews)