

# Customer Service and Professional Demeanor

## Orientation Activity

### Customer Service and Child Welfare

Because many of the children and families with whom we work do not voluntarily consent to services, it is a common misconception that customer service principles do not apply to the work we do. In fact, customer service is very important to our work. Customer service helps build the foundation for developing the type of collaborative relationship necessary to child welfare practice. Customer service is the responsibility of everyone in the agency, including receptionists, caseworkers, security, and maintenance staff.

Guiding principles of customer service include:

- Providing timely services
- Providing relevant and culturally appropriate services
- Following through on commitments
- Providing explanations for case decisions and actions
- Being courteous and respectful in interactions with clients
- Involving clients as key collaborators in service planning and delivery
- Respecting client preferences whenever possible

First impressions are often lasting impressions. Therefore, professional demeanor in interactions with clients, foster parents, staff, community service providers, and court personnel is vital for every position in the agency.

#### **Activity:**

Arrange a time with your supervisor or other identified staff and discuss agency expectations regarding providing quality customer services. Make sure to ask about the following:

- Dress code
- Codes of conduct
- Information about the agencies customer grievance procedures