Assessor Refresher: Day 2

Note Taking Guide

At the end of today’s training, you will be able to gain knowledge and practice in the following areas:

1. Diversity Competence in Permanency Planning
2. Openness in Adoption
3. Achieving Permanency Through Interagency Collaboration
4. Gathering and Documenting Background Information

Diversity Competence in Permanency Planning

- We can’t become an “expert” in all things that make someone diverse, but we can develop the ability to interact with, learn from, and understand the “larger picture” from another’s point of view.

**Elements of Diversity Competence**

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2.
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- **Disproportionality**: “The underrepresentation or overrepresentation of a racial or ethnic group compared to its percentage in the total population” (Child Welfare Information Gateway, 2016)
- **Disparity**: “The unequal outcomes of one racial or ethnic group as compared to outcomes for another racial/ethnic group” (Child Welfare Information Gateway, 2016)
- Assessors must be diversity competent to conduct an effective homestudy. It can help to remember the acronym DARE:
  - Describe rather than interpret
  - Ask questions and listen
  - Remember the influence of your diversity
  - Evaluate your conclusions and look for any implicit bias

- Assessors must follow MEPA guidelines. Families cannot be required to do any additional assessment based on RCNO. Assessors can talk to families about their values, codes of conduct, traditions, religion, and community resources.
  - Assessors can support identity development by:
    - Assessing where the family is in developing diversity competence and providing support appropriately
• Encouraging the family to:
  ▪ Make the home safe for all
  ▪ Allow the youth the freedom to express themselves
  ▪ Allow the youth to explore their past and stay connected to their cultural heritage
  ▪ Address issues of racism and discrimination

• Generate a list of questions to ask a child or activities you could do with a youth to capture their diversity. Discuss why this information is significant to collect. Record your ideas below.

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Openness in Adoption

• The central focus of successful adoption relationships is always to meet the needs of the child.
• While an open adoption is not legally enforceable, the quality of the adoption will depend on the integrity the participants bring to their commitments.
• Openness in adoption exists along a continuum between totally open and totally closed. Most adoptions exist somewhere between these two extremes.
• The potential ethical issues and principles in openness are:
  o Principle 1: Responsibility to clients and self-determination
  o Principle 2: Integrity
  o Principle 3: Care and protection of the most vulnerable
  o Principle 4: Communication, honesty and truthfulness
• For over five decades, the Interstate Compact on Placement of Children has existed to regulate foster care and adoptive placements across state lines. The ICPC process is detailed and requires collaboration among state partners to ensure the safety, well-being, and permanency of children needing this service.

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Achieving Permanency Through Interagency Collaboration

- Permanency planning reflects a fundamental child welfare value regarding the right of children to grow and develop in permanent, stable family environments.
- Agency to agency collaboration must exist for us to meet the needs of children awaiting permanency, to comply with the requirements of federal legislation and to be responsive to agencies and families using new technology in finding placements for children.
- A shared vision and complimentary missions demand that collaborating partners overcome disagreements and work together professionally to help children find appropriate permanent homes.
- When adoption agencies are insensitive or judgmental about the cultures that have developed in other organizations, barriers to communication and collaboration can severely hamper the ability of individuals within those agencies to work together effectively.

Activity: Factors in Disruption
Child:
Gathering and Documenting Background Information

Adopted children should be provided with complete and accurate information about their past in a developmentally appropriate manner.

- Adoptive parents need complete and accurate information to answer a child’s questions truthfully, to understand the impact of a child’s trauma, and to fill in the child’s memory gaps.
- Adopted children need complete and accurate information to address issues of guilt, fantasies, loyalties, identity, genetics, medical history and self-esteem.
- Gathering and documenting complete background information is a comprehensive task involving all agency staff, past or present, with contact with the child or the birth family.
- Early disclosure of information to the child promotes a healthy parent/child relationship, creates awareness of adoption within the context of love and commitment, avoids having to “undo” incorrect information and removes the fear of accidental revelation.
Summary and Action Planning

What were your “aha moments?”

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What information will you most likely use after today?

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Resources

Ohio Child Welfare Training Program
Training handouts and supplemental resources
http://www.ocwtp.net/Trainee%20Resources.htm#A

Family Interview Guide
http://www.ocwtp.net/PDFs/Trainee%20Resources/Assessor%20Resources/FAMILY%20INTERVIEW%20GUIDE.pdf

SACWIS Knowledge Base
Resources and training materials on utilizing SACWIS
http://jfskb.com/sacwis/

Culturally Responsive Child Welfare Practice

Identity and Diversity

LGBTQ Resources for Child Welfare Professionals
https://www.hrc.org/resources/all-children-all-families-additional-resources

Children and Youth with Disabilities in the Child Welfare System

Implicit Bias Test
https://implicit.harvard.edu/implicit/takeatest.html

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