

Ohio Child Welfare Training Program

# **Supervisor Checklist**

## *Group Case Conferences*

---

June 2010

Written by the Institute for Human Services for the  
Ohio Child Welfare Training Program and  
The Ohio Department of Job and Family Services

---

## Group Case Conferences

The value of group case conferences is twofold: 1) benefit to the family when the collective knowledge of all staff can be utilized to problem-solve difficult child welfare issues in the case and 2) educational value when workers can see a connection between their own case, and an idea cited by their supervisor or colleague that applies a best practice model.

---

### Establishing a Unit Process for Group Case Conferences

For group case conferences to be of optimal benefit to the unit, the supervisor must plan a process for group case conferences, and also adequately prepare for each conference. The following are suggested activities:

- Develop criteria for cases to be reviewed
  - Determine frequency and schedule for staffing
  - Select cases to be reviewed, and assist caseworkers in preparing to present case, if needed
  - Determine review protocol and give to staff in advance of the meeting
  - In unit meetings, establish the value of utilizing the collective knowledge and experience of the group in asking logical questions and giving an objective view to the case dynamic
- 

### Presenting the Case in a Group Conference

The supervisor may need to train unit caseworkers on how to present a child welfare case effectively in a group conference. Some basic guidelines for caseworkers in preparing and presenting a case are:

- Provide a short case summary to all staff prior to the conference, i.e., the problem, strengths, concerns, etc.
  - At the beginning of the meeting, state the central issue that led to the request for the group conference. What problem or decision does the caseworker want the group to address?
-

- Colleagues are encouraged to ask questions as needed to understand the dynamics of the case, and also to surface additional issues that they feel could have a bearing on the case decisions.
- The caseworker should welcome new approaches and questions that may not have been considered in the case. The purpose of a conference is to use the group's knowledge and experience to determine the best course to follow
- At the staffing, describe the core features of the children and family's difficulties and strengths, with a few illustrative details to help the group picture the client
- Present a succinct narrative, including the most important events of the case history
- Explain why the problems may have developed that led to the child being at risk, with consideration of at least one theoretical framework relevant to the case
- Cite outcome research or, if none exists, expert opinion that points toward intervention strategies relevant for the child welfare issue raised, for which some basis of confidence exists
- Cite the clinical or practical thinking of the worker and supervisor concerning the intervention options available that seem most likely to succeed in meeting the desired case outcomes for the children and family
- Use the Field Guide to review best practice standards that apply to the case
- Restate the reason for the staffing request. Do colleagues support the worker's plan or have they suggested additional issues or questions?

Some content adapted from Kadushin (2002). *Supervision in Social Work*. Columbia University Press; and Dorman and Shapiro (2004). *Preventing Burnout in Your Staff and Yourself*. Child Welfare League of America.