

**Children's Bureau
Child and Family Services Reviews
Promising Approaches**

I. Identifying Information

Promising Approach:	Florida's Child Welfare Performance-Based Training Program
Agency Sponsor:	Florida Department of Children & Families
State:	Florida
Target Population:	Child welfare caseworkers and caseworker supervisors, foster parents, and relative caregivers
Resources Required/Funding Source:	The current budget is \$13 million. Revenue sources for the training program include the State's Child Welfare Training Trust Fund (legislatively established in 1987, this fund receives resources from traffic fines and birth certificate and marriage license fees); State general revenue; and Federal funding authorized through the 1994 amendments to title IV-E of the Social Security Act.
Length of Operation:	1997 to present

II. Description of Promising Approach:

The Florida Department of Children & Families has provided comprehensive training for child welfare staff through 21 Professional Development Centers (PDCs) since 1987; the department moved to a performance-based preservice and inservice training in 1997. The original training program, launched by legislation creating the Child Welfare Training Trust Fund, also was adapted to make it more experiential in 1999 and more skill-based in 2001. The department currently is expanding its use of technology for training staff, including offering online training (Skillnet: An Online Learning Center), and further expanding the field work component of the training.

The PDCs are operated by contract and staffed by instructional designers who develop new trainings through the following process: conducting a job analysis; setting performance objectives; designing training activities, and establishing training levels. They use a four-level evaluation system to track participant progress; the department has implemented Levels 1 through 3, as outlined below; they are exploring options for implementing Level 4:

- Level 1 collects data on trainee assessments of the training courses.

- Level 2 collects test result data to evaluate participant proficiency.
- Level 3 assesses the degree to which caseworkers apply training concepts in their work with children and families.
- Level 4 assesses the impact of the trainings on outcomes for children and families.

Today, staff participate in self-instructional and classroom training, and structured field activities. The training is offered in several tracks, including a core track for all trainees and tracks for caseworkers and caseworker supervisors. Once caseworkers successfully complete these training components, they then undergo a Field-Based Performance Assessment under the supervision of their immediate supervisor and a PDC evaluator.

The assessment measures caseworker proficiency in the areas of safety assessment, planning activities, documentation, and interpersonal skills. Successful caseworker trainees receive certification as Child Protection Professionals.

The department also recently began requiring all supervisors to attend a new training on quality case management, which provides a system for reviewing the cases managed by their staff. Quality case management training is designed to ensure that a consistent standard for case review is applied statewide.

Staff who complete the trainings and are certified need to be re-certified every 3 years; they also must be re-certified if they change jobs (and therefore have different job functions). Staff must be certified to continue in their jobs; they are able to take the certification tests a second time if they achieve a specific score, but do not pass, on the first attempt.

III. Contact for More Information:

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