

SUPERVISOR TRAINING PROJECT

California

Interview with Christine Mattos, Training Support Manager, California Department of Social Services

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California's county-administered child welfare system utilizes a State-coordinated regional approach to training. The California Department of Social Services (CDSS) contracts with four university-based Regional Training Academies (RTAs) across the State ([Northern](#), [Central](#), [Southern](#), and [Bay Area](#)). Los Angeles County contracts with the [Inter-University Consortium](#) (IUC) within Los Angeles to provide training for child welfare staff and managers.

Supervisor Requirements

Requirements for education and experience are determined by the counties. State regulations require that 100% of supervisors in Emergency Response and Family Maintenance programs possess an MSW or equivalent degree, and that other staff in those program areas possess a BSW or equivalent degree. Supervisors' education level varies from region to region, with rural regions experiencing more difficulty in recruiting MSW-educated staff.

There are no licensure requirements for child welfare supervisors. State training regulations require that all supervisors complete the Supervisor Core within the first 12 months of assuming their supervisory position, and 40 training hours every two years following that 12 month period.

Pre-service Training

All supervisors must complete the Supervisor Core Curriculum within 12 months of assuming a supervisory position. This training is child welfare specific; though some counties now request that supervisors in other program areas also attend the training (e.g. eligibility staff, other human services staff). The statewide [Supervisor Core content](#) is systematically updated and publicly available. Each Regional Training Academy and the Inter-University Consortium provide this training, tailoring and supplementing it to meet their regional needs. Information and topics from the regions are available here:

- [Northern RTA](#)
- [Bay Area RTA](#)
- [Central RTA](#)
- [Southern RTA](#)

The written curriculum for Los Angeles/IUC is available by request: <http://iuc.sppsr.ucla.edu/iucmain/>. This 15-day Supervisor Core training program meets the requirements of the California Supervisor Core. Curriculum modules include:

- Managing within a Child and Family Service System: Leadership, Administration and Performance Improvement and Fiscal Essentials (2 days)
- Child Welfare Policy and Practice for Supervisors and Applying Evidence Based Practice in the Unit (1 day)
- Managing Work through Other People: Educational and Supportive Supervision (3 days)
- Developing Teams and Managing Performance (2 days)
- Structured Decision Making (SDM) Implementation in the Unit to Achieve Outcome Measures and Outcome-Based Management (1 day)
- Casework Supervision (2 days)
- SDM Case Review Tool Training for supervisors: Monitoring SDM in the Unit (1 day)
- Personnel Issues and Performance Evaluations (2 days)
- Transfer of Learning: The Supervisor's Role in Developing Staff (1 day)

The various RTA/IUC curricula provide information on administrative and managerial skills, including progressive discipline and how to work with your own manager, stakeholders and employees. Counties may provide training specific to these topics as well. The Supervisor Core and various RTA/IUC curricula also cover clinical and casework supervision skills, including a process by which supervisors identify what should be monitored and how to monitor worker performance and outcomes. All curricula have learning objectives and are linked to competencies.

The number of hours and days of training varies by region. Generally, the training is offered in the classroom, though some regions provide virtual content and support as well. Trainings are available at multiple locations around the State and within each region. Each region determines the best site for delivery of training based on their counties' needs. A combination of university staff and contracted trainers are used to train Supervisor Core.

Ongoing Training

Each region offers a comprehensive array of ongoing and advanced training for supervisors. Generally, specific ongoing training topics for supervisors are not required, although counties may require specific trainings as needed. Needs assessments are conducted regionally, and RTAs/IUC use these to meet their unique needs. RTAs/IUC and counties also add trainings for supervisors as needed to reflect new legislation or other changes in practice. Below are examples of ongoing and advanced trainings.

Central RTA:

The Central California Training Academy (Academy) offers the Advanced Leadership Development for Supervisors (ALDS) Program providing a comprehensive leadership program utilizing training and a skill-building coaching model to increase and apply advanced supervisory leadership skills in the organization to improve child and family outcomes.

This training series is grounded in the belief that good leadership is built on positive, strong and cooperative relationships with the team to maximize performance in the workplace. Leaders who engage their team members utilizing a variety of in-person training and follow-up coaching skills are more successful in building commitment to the organization's goals. The overarching goal of ALDS is to

enhance the leadership skills of supervisors throughout public child welfare services to advance leadership attitudes, knowledge and skills.

ALDS provides training and skill based coaching for child welfare services supervisors in the public child welfare services. Participants are those that have the support and commitment of organization and are recognized as future leaders within the organization, seeking the opportunity for their own professional growth and development. The secondary population for ALDS is the direct supervisor who oversees the participant, usually in a middle manager position. It is critical that the participants, alongside their direct supervisor, identify the skill development needs that will enhance their own professional development and support and advance the organization's vision, mission and goals.

The ALDS program provides opportunities for instruction, practice, transfer of learning, application, peer networking and feedback. The processes for these opportunities include the following:

- Group consultation
- Structured classroom experiences
- Facilitated discussions
- One-on-one practice opportunities
- Group and individual coaching sessions

A series of five bi-monthly classroom trainings are offered with subsequent group and individual coaching sessions. These coaching sessions are conducted between the coach and the participants to promote the transfer of learning and skill development. The intent of the coaching session is to strengthen skill development and support the work of the participant and supervisor in the application of training concepts, support the organization's mission and, ultimately, improve outcomes for children and families. The classroom training, in conjunction with the coaching sessions, assists participants to develop well-balanced work behavior that improves leadership, teamwork, communication, conflict resolution, goal setting and planning.

Examples of additional ongoing courses available include:

- Data & Outcomes
- Outcomes & Accountability
- SDM Structured Decision Making (safety and risk assessment tool)
- Supervisory Strategies to Support Workplace and Time Management Effectiveness
- Supervisory Support for Effective Case Consultation
- SafeMeasures™ (data management tool)

Southern RTA:

The Manager Core Curriculum is offered to supervisors who may be interested in a management position. Examples of additional ongoing courses available include ([website](#)):

- [Advanced Skills for Supervisors: Performance Issues](#)
- [Advanced Skills for Supervisors: The Rest of the Story \(Supervisory "Comeback" Day\)](#)
- Advanced SDM for Supervisors
- [Data 101: Measuring Outcomes in Child Welfare](#)
- Division 31 Regulations: The Reason Behind the Rules
- [Effective Project Management](#)

- Executive Child Welfare Services Management Practice
- [Facilitating Change and Overcoming Resistance Using Motivational Interviewing Techniques](#)
- [Handling Difficult Communications](#)
- [Implementing Concurrent Planning: Advanced Training for Supervisors and Managers](#)
- [Making Meetings Work for You](#)
- [Managing for Results](#)
- [Management Transition Training: Together Everyone Achieves Milestones](#)
- [Pre-Supervisory Appointment: A One-Day Training Experience for Prospective Supervisors](#)
- [Strength-Based Supervision: A Tool for Retaining Competent Staff](#)
- [Supervising, Coaching and Accountability \(County Specific\)](#)
- [Supervising a Multi-Generational Workforce](#)
- [Teaching Time Management: A Workshop for Supervisors](#)
- [The Art of Mentoring](#)
- [The Politics of Being a Manager](#)
- [The Worker-Supervisor Formula for Applying Learning in the Field \(TOL\)](#)

Northern RTA:

[New Tools for Supervisor Excellence](#) is a comprehensive professional development program designed to provide support, skill building and networking opportunities for supervisors in child welfare. This program builds on a research, development and implementation model that supports leadership development in child welfare. Central to the program are the best-practice approaches that have proven to support supervisors in their daily work. Examples of additional courses available include:

- Master Series for Supervisory Excellence
- Advanced Analytics and “Data Slams”
- So you want to be a Supervisor
- Ongoing coaching for supervisors and county leaders

LA/IUC:

This past year, mandatory ongoing supervisor training has focused on case coaching, case conferencing and enhanced skills-based training related to a recent court settlement. Modules include Strengths/Needs Practice (1-day), Engagement (1-day), and Teaming (1-day). Supervisors that have also been designated as office coaches attend Coaching for Child Welfare Professionals (3-days) and either Connecting Coaching to the Work (for continuing services supervisors) or Coaching towards ER Best Practice (for emergency response supervisors). Examples of additional courses available include:

- Domestic Violence Assessments
- Secondary Trauma, Grief and Loss
- SDM Refresher
- Supporting Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgendered and Questioning Youth

Professional Development

Numerous training and professional development opportunities are offered by the counties and RTAs/IUC of California. Generally, professional development opportunities are aimed at supporting supervisors in applying the skills they learn in Core and ongoing training. Training materials are typically available and can be shared by the regions. Following are several examples:

- Central Academy has a Field Based Trainer Program (FBT). FBTs employed by the RTA work with child welfare supervisors on an ongoing basis to provide mentoring in the day to day work of being a supervisor as well as for professional development. FBTs attend Supervisor Core training to provide support, and then facilitate mastery of the competencies taught in Core. An FBT manual has been created that describes the program, including the role of FBT in working with supervisors. FBT is also being explored by other regions.

[Field-Based Trainer Handbook](#)

[Field-Based Trainer Handbook Appendix](#)

[Field-Based Trainer Handbook Tools](#)

- Central RTA also has the [SPIN Project](#). SPIN USA is based out of Massachusetts, and has created a program to assist supervisors in skill development. Unit meetings and individual supervision sessions are videotaped, and certified SPIN instructors provide six to eight months of ongoing coaching and guidance to improve supervisory practice skills.
- Southern RTA is developing two eLearning modules for supervisors in fiscal year 11/12.
- Bay Area RTA offers quarterly transfer of learning (TOL) sessions for supervisors who have completed Supervisor Core. These sessions, facilitated by a Supervisor Core trainer, provide ongoing support for applying skills learned during the Core training.
- Northern RTA offers New Tools for Supervisor Excellence (discussed in the Ongoing Training section).

At the State level, the [California's Outcomes and Accountability System](#) systematically examines outcomes and identifies strategies (including training) to address needs. The RTAs/IUC participate in this process with the counties and the California Department of Social Services (CDSS), and regional and statewide training needs are systematically identified for supervisors as well as other staff.

At the county level, supervisors' training needs are assessed on an ongoing basis by their managers, utilizing performance evaluation processes that are unique to each county. Individual needs assessments are used to guide supervisors in choosing which training they will complete as part of their ongoing training requirements. The RTAs/IUC assist with this by teaching about the importance for ongoing training as part of supervisor and manager core. Additional supports are also provided. Central RTA's FBT program, for example, provides support for supervisors to develop action plans with their managers for training and professional development.

The use of formal professional development plans varies by county.

Supervisor Supports

Counties have various opportunities for supervisors to meet together, and these vary according to county structure and size.

- RTA Supervisor Cores have an ongoing cross-county collaboration element; since more than one county participates, this creates a peer learning environment.
- Bay Area Academy offers monthly facilitated consultation sessions for some of their counties. These allow supervisors to meet together and to share ideas and build skills. Central RTA had a similar program, but is reorganizing it to be part of the Advanced Leadership Development Program for Supervisors (ALDS).
- Los Angeles has monthly case conferencing for Emergency Response (ER) supervisors and monthly Coaching to Practice support groups for Continuing Services (CS) supervisors. For ER, these are supported and facilitated by university staff and office-based coaches. For CS, these are supported by county training section coaches, university staff and office-based coaches.

Southern RTA developed a [Transfer of Learning Tool](#) to assist supervisors in helping their new child welfare workers following completion of their Core training.

Central RTA supervisors receiving coaching through the Academy's Advanced Leadership Development for Supervisors Program. Through the ALDS Training Program these supervisors attend a bi-monthly in-person training; in between these training modules the supervisors receive formal coaching from the ALDS coaches in both group and individual coaching sessions. Informal coaching comes in when a supervisors participating in the program seeks out the coach via telephone or email requesting what we are referring to as "spot coaching".

Partnerships

As noted above, California's statewide training system consists of multiple regional and statewide university partnerships. The Resource Center for Family-Focused Practice (RCFFP) at the University of California, Davis also provides specialized training for county staff, including supervisors. California Department of Social Services (CDSS), California Social Work Education Center (CalSWEC), and the RTAs/IUC also work with several foundations on an ongoing basis.

Additional Information

The statewide training system is generally working to expand its ability to build skills of supervisors to reinforce learning for their assigned staff, via field training and casework supervision. Central RTA continues to deliver its FBT model to supervisors, and Northern RTA has expanded its ability to coach supervisors and provide ongoing support. Southern RTA is piloting methods to assess whether changes in behavior in the workplace occur as a result of Manager and Supervisor Core training. Los Angeles is also working on developing capacity for supervisory coaching in all 18 of its regional offices.