Summary of Findings from the OCS Statewide Training System Assessment

June 19, 2009

Changing
Learning
Leading

Louisiana Child Welfare
Comprehensive Workforce Project

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An Executive Summary

With groundwork set by OCS staff member Marty Gibson, MSW, LCSW-BACS Director of the Division of Workforce Development & Clinical Services a comprehensive plan was discussed to examine the OCS training system in order to determine whether it meets the needs of the agency, staff, and those they serve. The focus of the assessment was to obtain the perspectives of frontline child welfare workers, supervisors and state office personnel on how they could perform their job more effectively. Once the Louisiana Child Welfare Comprehensive Workforce Project (LCWCWP) was funded, the staff of this federally funded program assisted in coordinating all aspects of the assessment process.

The approach to defining the training system and collecting quantitative and qualitative data was planned in a workgroup coordinated by OCS and LCWCWP and facilitated by Susan Kanak and Linda Kean from the National Child Welfare Resource Center for Organizational Improvement. Representatives from multiple programs and positions within OCS, community stakeholders, and LCWCWP staff were members of the workgroup. The result of the two day workgroup produced an assessment tool, core critical questions for the focus groups, and a basic format for the focus groups, customized for Louisiana.

Focus groups for both front line workers and supervisors/managers were conducted in every OCS Region facilitated by an OCS consultant and observed by LCWCWP staff. Additional focus groups were held after the regional groups were conducted which included OCS Training Staff, a sample of State Office Section Administrators, and a sample of State Office Program Managers. A total of 197 employees participated in the assessment.

Key findings from this process are summarized within three categories, *new worker training (NWT), professional development, and general training system.*

New Worker Training (NWT) –
- NWT is too short, too overwhelming, lacking specialization/integration to employment programs, and lacking realistic scenarios for application purposes.
  Suggestions:
    o Expand NWT for a longer duration, perhaps over a year.
    o Integrate job shadowing/mentoring including purposeful observations linked to training modules for skill integration.
    o Provide supervisors with the information presented in NWT and plan for how they could facilitate continuity of training in the field.

Professional Development –
- Trainings related to supervision, leadership/management development, sensitivity (especially in terms of state administration and field office personnel engagement), and general professional growth were highly requested across groups.

Suggestions:
- o Increase trainings in specialization areas such as domestic violence, substance abuse, poverty, cultural responsiveness, engaging the legal and court systems, disabilities, and identification of community resources.
- o Provide equal opportunities and equitable access to trainings across all levels, programs, and regions of the agency.
- o Offer workers case coverage while they attend trainings.

General Training System – Participants across all levels of the OCS system provided feedback on the on-going training system as a whole that tended to cluster around four areas: *methods, tools, communication, and philosophy/practice:*

Suggestions for Methods –
- Increase hands-on experiences, mentoring, job shadowing, and year round training.
- Provide all OCS staff with equal access to all trainings, including external conferences and ethics training regardless of credentials.
- Offer supervisors training on new initiatives first, after a true pilot run has been completed and all "kinks" are resolved before rolling out to front-line workers.
- Make trainings for newly promoted supervisors available at the time of promotion.
- Offer systematic planning of training to provide increased skill development and leadership development within OCS workforce.

Suggestions for Tools -
- Supply all materials and equipment related to new forms in the trainings. Every effort should be made to ensure the tools are in their final state before mandating their implementation in the field. If a tool is computer-based, then the training MUST use a computer to do the actual training.
- Consider need, input (from internal and external stakeholders), relevance, impact to workload, and utility into the decision making process before changing or adding a form/initiative.
- Include direct level staff and other relevant parties are part of the decision making process for adopting new tools/methods of practice.

Suggestions for Communication –
- Increase the clarity, consistency and tenor of communication across all levels of the agency. (There is a perceived communication gap and disconnect between state office and the field)
- Increase efforts to treat all staff with respect, acknowledge the positive work completed by staff, increase attention to the reality of the traumatic toll inherent to the field of child welfare on staff. Specific recommendations from front line workers and supervisors included requests for positive emails, increased public relations identifying the value of child welfare workers in the community, increased accuracy in personnel evaluations, and proactive supports to staff during times of trauma/disasters.

- Increase communication with external partners.

Suggestions for Philosophy/practice –
- Reduce compliance focus at state level and increase efforts to provide quality care and services to children and families.
- Give workers effective tools to help meet all state/federal regulations while providing quality services to clients/supervisees.
- Hire/train clerical staff for routine, non-clinical paperwork, which is overwhelming.
- Provide dedicated, reduced caseload staff for supervision/mentoring support.

Summary and Recommendations for Next Steps

Overall, feedback from the workers, supervisors, and state level personnel emphasized similar areas in need of attention. Although the participants varied in years of experience with DSS, program of employment, and position level, their responses were more similar than different. Their most urgent requests from the training system and the agency as a whole were to show more respect for all agency staff, develop more consistency across all programs and regions, prioritize skill development and critical thinking throughout the life of a case and the career of a worker, enhance the connection between state office and the field, demonstrate more of a commitment to a child welfare/social work focus rather than a case work/paperwork focus, provide clinical supervision, provide hands-on training through job shadowing and/or mentoring, and finally to reduce the rate at which changes are made to the training system.

Recommendations:

Immediate recommendations: (0-6 months)
1. Provide more access to Marsha Salus supervision, coaching, mentoring training
2. Hire/Stipend retired supervisors to provide hands-on coaching, training/mentoring for newly promoted supervisors
3. Encourage state office staff to visit regional offices to provide direct communication regarding the agency's commitment to child welfare focus, policy/program updates
4. At all levels within the agency, all staff in management positions should provide some form of praise/acknowledgment to their workers through email, voicemail or hand written notes.

Short term recommendations: (6 months-2 years)
1. Develop a web-based training systems platform similar to what the State of Idaho (although Kentucky has been utilized, that training system is a very well developed and mature model which Louisiana should aspire to emulate, but, at this point in time, the model posited by Idaho is a much more practical system to emulate) has launched, linking universities and OCS as training partners. This system should develop core child welfare training modules for all OCS staff and electives for specializations.   The entire curriculum, with weekly updates should be based on-line with specifically developed on-

line tools for workers and supervisors to access via the website. For example a sample court report and an outline identifying the essential, elements of a comprehensive court report could be posted there, workers who were trained in court engagement strategies could after the training refer to these on-line samples as they are putting their reports together for court. There is a great need to customize existing child welfare curriculum in other states for use in the Louisiana OCS system.

2. The State needs to invest financial resources to hire Don Schmidt as a consultant for two or there days, to assist them in evaluating and maximizing their Title IV-E draw down of funds for training, as well as assisting universities in examining how they may claim their IV-E match to maximize the draw down capacity.
3. Restructure the role of clerical staff to include assisting with paperwork (opening cases, completing FAST forms, requesting birth certificates, etc…)
4. Develop leadership training (perhaps a leadership academy) for skilled/motivated workers and supervisors in a structured meaningful way with equal access and opportunities for all staff around the state
5. Reduce the caseload of senior skilled/motivated workers to allow them to provide mentoring to younger staff
6. Train supervisors on new pilot projects/forms well before workers are trained so they can offer support to the newly trained worker
7. Provide more communication/training to partners/stakeholders on the mission/vision of OCS, resources that are available, and limitations of agency involvement
8. Completely redesign the New Worker Orientation (NWO):
    a. Provide a more systematic/organized training with modules focusing on specific content areas
    b. Expand NWO to a period of up to a year
    c. Include basic components of child/adolescent development and how it is impacted by agency involvement
    d. Encourage critical thinking skills and an underlying philosophy of family centered practice allied with the OCS Practice Model
    e. Focus less on forms and more on safety and family engagement
    f. Provide enhanced court training (several modules of training, which is primarily based on a social worker's role in understanding and negotiating the legal and court systems, with some legal staff collaboration in the training, NOT a training dominated by legal personnel telling social workers what they are doing wrong) including mock trials, how to prepare written reports, the nature of the court/DSS relationship, the nature of cross examination
    g. Include job shadowing/mentoring with seasoned workers
    h. Provide supervisors with an overview of material to be covered and their role in the transfer of knowledge
    i. Provide supervisors with feedback on their workers' performance in NWO
    j. Develop specialized training modules by program area in consultation with key program staff and regional offices
    k.

    l. Improve access to NWO training by offering modules across all regions of the state

    m. When training on forms is necessary, create more interactive training on forms (that are fully functional) using computers when forms are computerized

Long term recommendations: (2-5 years)

1. Provide joint training with agency staff, universities and partners/stakeholders
2. Develop leadership academy for senior workers/supervisors online
3. Expand the use of technology in the web-based training system platform to include training via webinars, webcasts, teleconferences, and podcasts.

Methodology

Two 2.5 hour focus groups which included approximately 8-10 frontline child welfare specialists (workers) and 8-10 supervisors were conducted in each region/district in Louisiana.   The week of February 2-6, 2009 focus groups were conducted in Monroe, Shreveport, Alexandria, Lake Charles, and Lafayette.   The week of March 2-6, 2009 the remaining worker/supervisor focus groups were conducted in Jefferson, Orleans, Covington, Thibodaux, and Baton Rouge.   On March 30, 2009 an OCS training department focus group was conducted and on May 22, 2009 a state office staff focus group (program specialists and section administrators) was conducted.

The contracted focus group facilitator and one LCWCWP staff member participated in each focus group. The agenda of the focus groups was consistent across the focus groups with welcome/introductions, review of purpose and ground rules, definition of "training system", review and completion of the Training System Assessment Tool, group discussion to include pre-defined questions, and closing remarks.   During the group discussion, participants were provided with time to openly discuss anything they wished regarding the training system and were requested answer a set of pre-defined questions that were taken from the Training System Assessment Tool. The pre-defined questions are listed below with two (2) questions from the Frontline Child Welfare Specialist section and two (2) questions from the Supervisor section.

Pre-defined Questions to cover in both Focus Groups

Frontline Child Welfare Specialist section

3.   The training system builds skills in conducting, integrating and updating throughout the life of the case:

- safety assessments
- risk assessments
- assessment of family functioning
- worker visits and other contacts with children/youth and families.

4.   The training system builds skills in engaging and collaborating with families, partners, and agency staff at all levels and others involved with serving families.

From Supervisor section

3.   The training system provides supervisors with defined methods and opportunities to transfer learning and thereby apply skills and knowledge learned to their day-to-day work.

- for supervisors themselves
- for their supervisees

6. The training system provides knowledge and skills to supervisors in retaining and promoting workers through the means of:

- developing leadership
- mitigating secondary trauma
- encouraging self-care
- rewarding quality performance

FOCUS GROUP PARTICIPANTS

Of the 20 worker and supervisor focus groups conducted across the state, 95 were workers and 75 were supervisors. There was an additional worker that completed the assessment tool, since he was standing in for his co-worker until she arrived. Once his co-worker arrived, he left and did not participate in the focus group discussion. Participants in the focus groups represented a diverse cross section of workers and supervisors programmatically, racially, and tenure with the organization/role. On average there were 9.5 participants in the worker focus groups ranging from 9-11 workers; and 7.5 participants in the supervisor focus groups ranging from 5-12 supervisors. In an attempt to foster a more open environment to freely express ideas and concerns, the latter 8 supervisor focus groups were limited to frontline supervisors only.

The focus groups conducted at the state office included one focus group of 9 staff from the training department, one focus group of 5 staff that self identified as Section Administrators and one focus group of 11 staff that self identified as Program Managers. Participants represented a diverse cross section of staff programmatically, racially and in regard to tenure with the agency.

A Summary of the Quantitative Data

As indicated previously in this report, a customized training system assessment tool tailored to Louisiana's OCS training system was created in a workgroup coordinated by OCS and LCWCWP and facilitated by Susan Kanak and Linda Kean from the National Child Welfare Resource Center for Organizational Improvement. Representatives from multiple programs and positions within OCS, community stakeholders, and LCWCWP staff were members of the workgroup.

The customized assessment tool was then completed by front line staff and supervisors who participated in focus groups in all ten regions around state as well as a sample of section administrators and program managers at the state office. These focus groups were facilitated by an OCS consultant and observed by LCWCWP staff. A total of 196 employees completed an assessment tool. There were a total of 195 instruments that were analyzed. One instrument was not included in the analysis because it was incomplete.

Of the 195 employees who completed the tool, 50% had a master's degree and 48% had only a bachelor's degree. The remaining 2% did not identify their educational level. In addition, 50% of the employees were African American, 43% were Caucasian and 3% categorized themselves as another race. The remaining 4% did not identify their race. The employees in this sample averaged 14.5 years of service to DSS.

The assessment tool was made up of four specific sections that all employees were asked to fill out regardless of their position within the agency. The four sections include 1) Front Line Child Welfare Specialists; 2) Supervisors; 3) External Partners & Stakeholders; and 4) Managers and Administrators.

Highlights from the quantitative data are described below and include the top four **positive responses** (*responses that were identified as agree and strongly agree*) from each section as well as any other remarkable data.

Section 1: Front Line Child Welfare Specialists:

Top 4 Responses:

64% positive: Question 1.a. The training system provides <u>new hires</u> training in the skills and knowledge needed to understand and implement the agency's mission and vision in accordance with its core values and desired outcomes.

64% positive: Question 1.b. The training system provides <u>ongoing</u> training in the skills and knowledge needed to understand and implement the agency's mission and vision in accordance with its core values and desired outcomes

62% positive: Question 3.b. The training system builds skills in conducting, integrating and updating risk assessments throughout the life of the case.

60% positive: Question 2. The training system provides workers an understanding of their critical role to manage cases and case plans.

Remarkable Responses—(*Higher negative responses than positive*)

46% Negative: Question 1.c. The training system provides specialized training in the skills and knowledge needed to understand and implement the agency's mission and vision in accordance with its core values and desired outcomes.   There were 45% positive responses, 27% of the response neither agreed nor disagreed and 6% reported that they did not know.

37% Negative: Question 5.d. The training system builds skills and knowledge to meet the needs of children/youth within the context of father and parental resources. There were 32% positive responses, 27% did not agree or disagree and 4% did not know.

Section 2: Supervisors

Top 4 Responses—(O*f the 12 possible responses for this cluster of questions, only 4 were above 50%.*)

59% Positive: Question 1. The training system enhances supervisor's ability to communicate to staff the agency's mission, core values and desired outcomes.

58% Positive: Question 2. The training system provides supervisors with initial training on supervisory roles, duties, expectations and skills.

52% Positive: Question 3.a. The training system provides supervisors with defined methods and opportunities to transfer learning and thereby apply skills and knowledge learned to their day-to-day work for supervisors themselves.

51% Positive: Question 3.b. The training system provides supervisors with defined methods and opportunities to transfer learning and thereby apply skills and knowledge learned to their day-to-day work for supervisees.

Remarkable Responses—(*Higher negative responses and also low responses for both agree and disagree*)

33% Negative: Question 6.b. The training system provides knowledge and skills to supervisors in retaining and promoting workers through the means of mitigating secondary

trauma.   20% of the responses were positive, 36% neither agreed nor disagreed, and 11% did not know.

Marginal Difference: Question 6.a. The training system provides knowledge and skills to supervisors in retaining and promoting workers through the means of developing leadership. 37% of the responses were positive, 32% of the responses were negative, 24% neither agreed nor disagreed and 7% did not know.

Marginal Difference: Question 6.c. The training system provides knowledge and skills to supervisors in retaining and promoting workers through the means of encouraging self care.   37% of the responses were positive, 33% were negative, 25% neither agreed nor disagreed and 5% did not know.

Section 3: External Partners & Stakeholders

Top 4 Responses—(O*f the 13 possible questions in this cluster, only 4 responses were above 50%)*

79% Positive: Question 2.a. The training system provides foster/adoptive parents the initial skills and knowledge needed to understand and implement the agency's mission and vision in accordance with its core values and desired outcomes.

69% Positive: Question 6. The training system creates and sustains opportunities for managers and staff to participate in cross-training in specialty areas such as domestic violence, substance abuse, mental health and education.

56% Positive: Question 2.b. The training system provides foster/adoptive parents the ongoing skills and knowledge needed to understand and implement the agency's mission and vision in accordance with its core values and desired outcomes.

53% Positive: Question 1.d. The training system provides an orientation to the agency's vision, mission, core values and desired outcomes to judicial systems.

Remarkable Responses—(Negative response, high DK response, and low responses for both agree and disagree)

29% Negative
AND 30% DK (don't know): Question 1.f. The training system provides an orientation to the agency's vision, mission, core values and desired outcomes to tribes.   Only 17% of the responses were positive and 24% neither agreed nor disagreed.

Marginal Difference: Question 5. The training system encourages courts and other state agencies to participate in agency training needs assessment, development, delivery and evaluation. 31% of the responses were positive, 30% of the responses were negative, 26% neither agreed nor disagreed and 13% did not know.

Section 4: Managers and Administrators

Top 7 priorities for the training system's focus on the agency's managers (current and upcoming).

78%   15. Providing managers with defined methods and opportunities to assist their supervisors/selves to transfer learning and thereby apply skills and knowledge learned to their day-to-day work.

64%   8. Building appreciation for and skills in soliciting and considering input from staff at all levels.

57%   3. Managing scarce resources to maximum effect.

52%   12. Creating opportunities for managers to give input and receive feedback on curriculum design and the effectiveness of training

51%   11. Providing managers with knowledge about the content of the training provided to front line staff and supervisors.

51%   1. Orientation to the agency's mission, vision, core values and desired outcomes.

50%   6. Managing personnel

Highlights of the Quantitative Data Analysis

Slides 1-15 are from the Managers and Administrators section of the Training System Assessment Tool. The instructions were to review the entire list of topics and circle the top 7 priorities for the training system's focus on the agency's managers (current and upcoming).
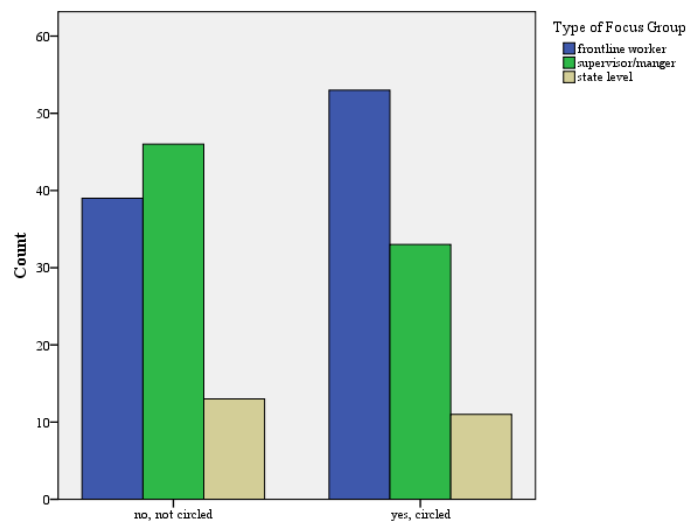
1. Orientation to the agency's mission, vision, core values
& desired outcomes
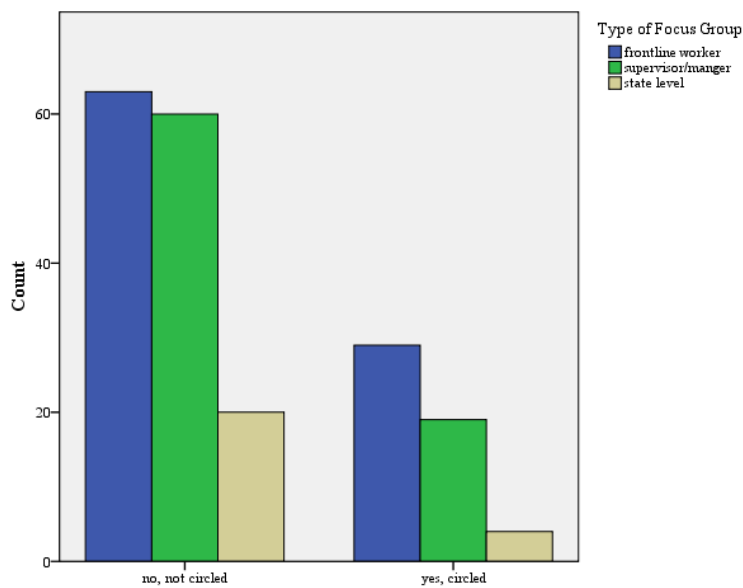
2. Developing & implementing a strategic plan
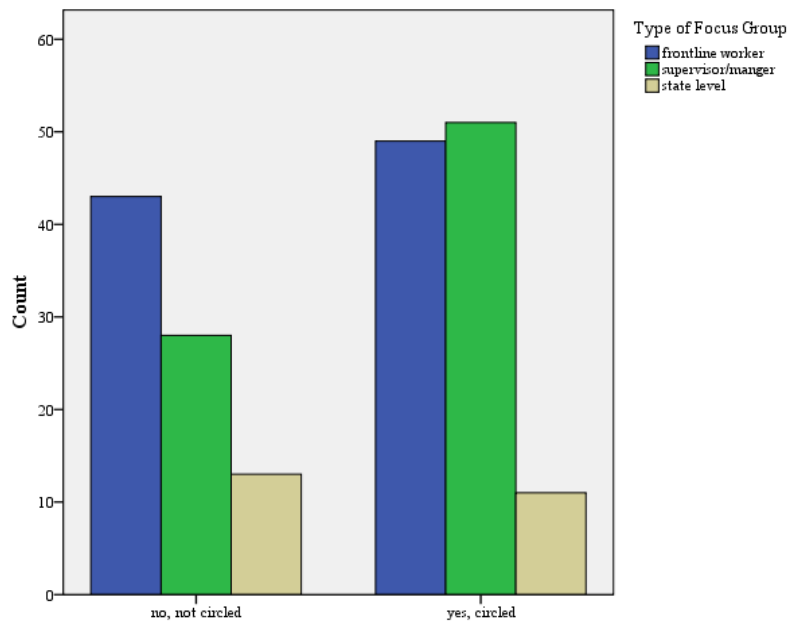
3. Managing scarce resources to maximum effect
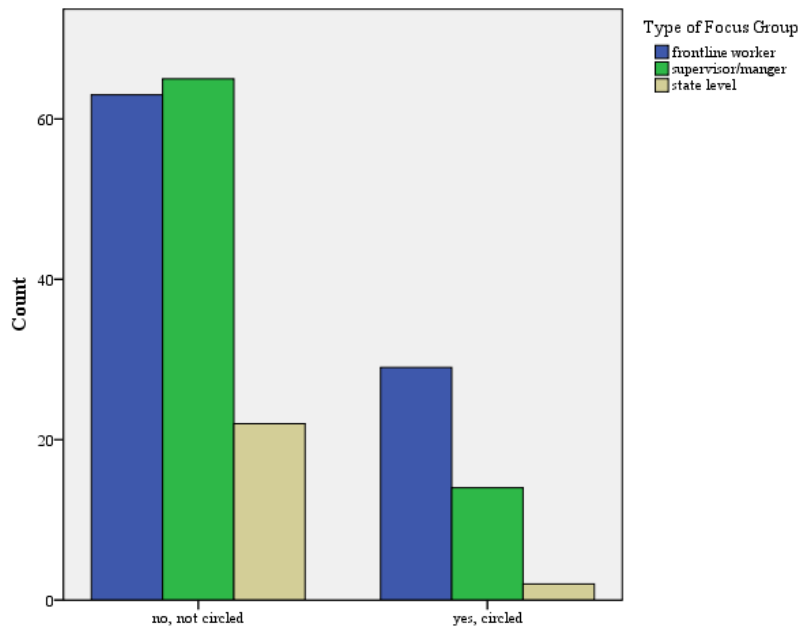
4. Developing & managing contracts with service providers
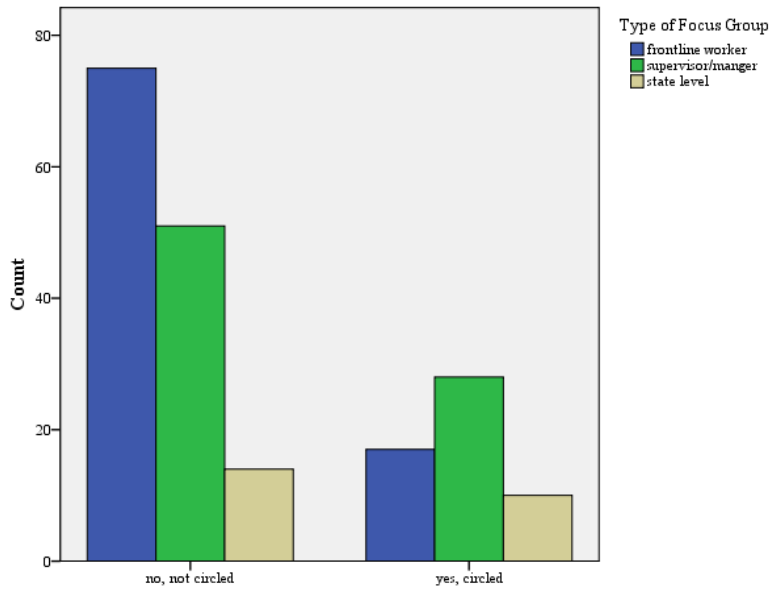
5. Using quantitative & qualitative data to examine & improve efficiency, quality & outcomes
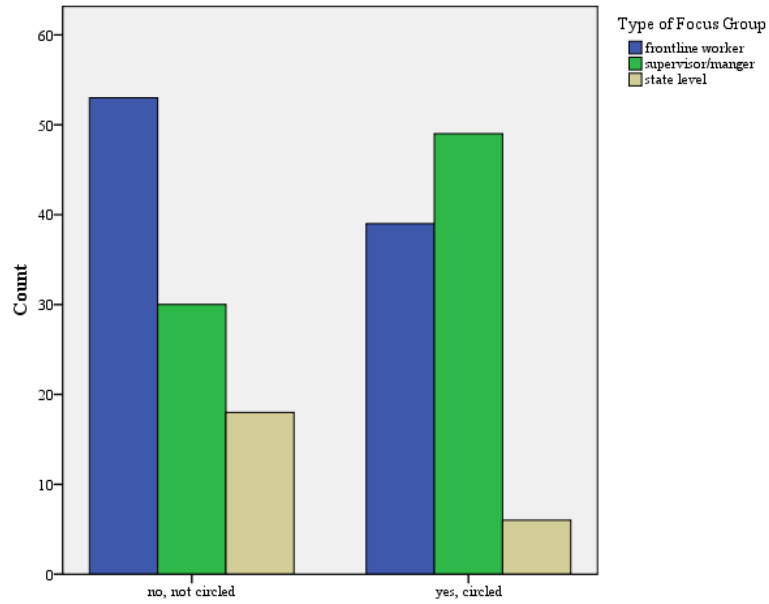
6. Managing personnel
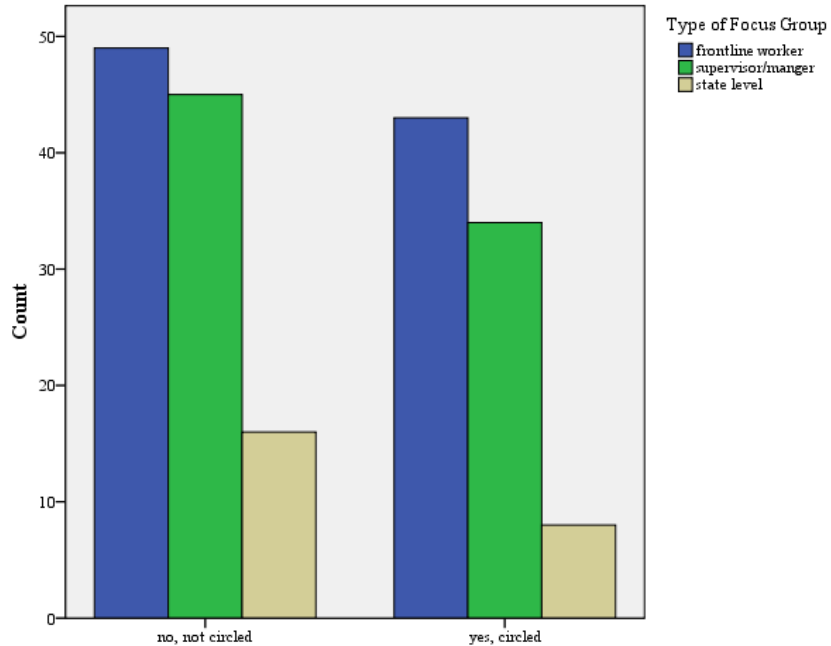
7. **Engaging community & public relations**
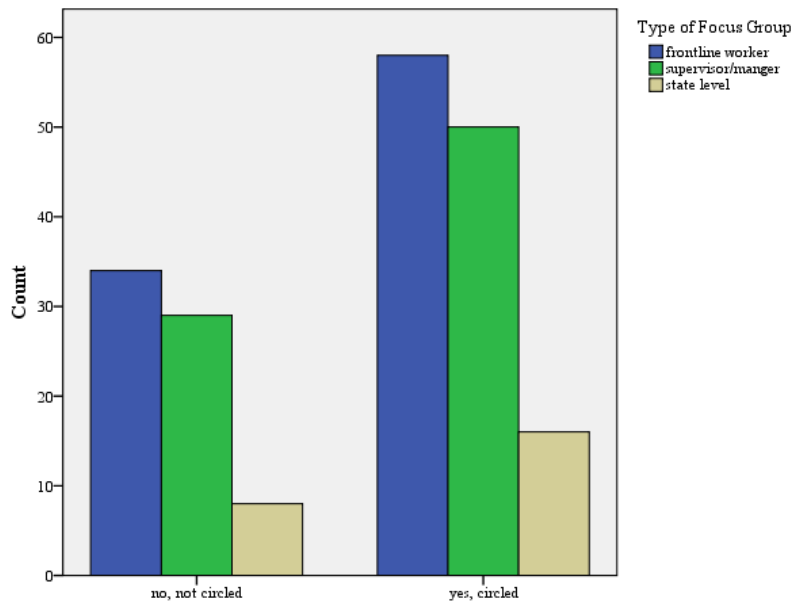
8. **Building appreciation for & skills in soliciting & considering input from staff at all levels**
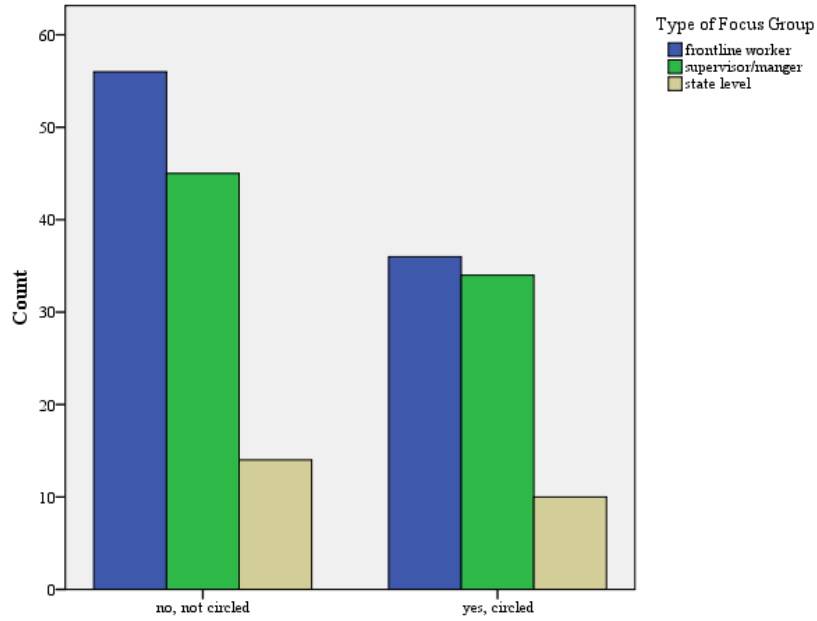
9. Demonstrating skills in modeling CQI, teambuilding & shared decision making
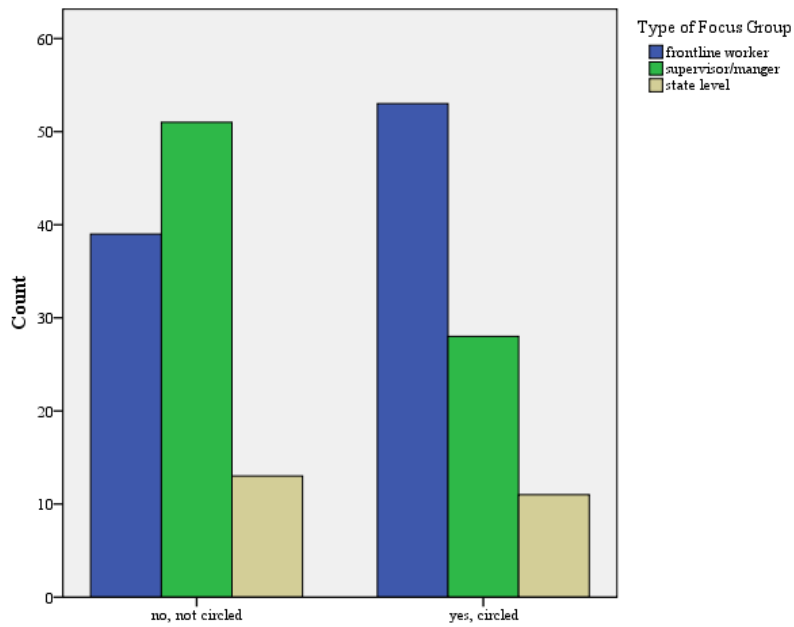
10. Understanding skills & methods in succession planning
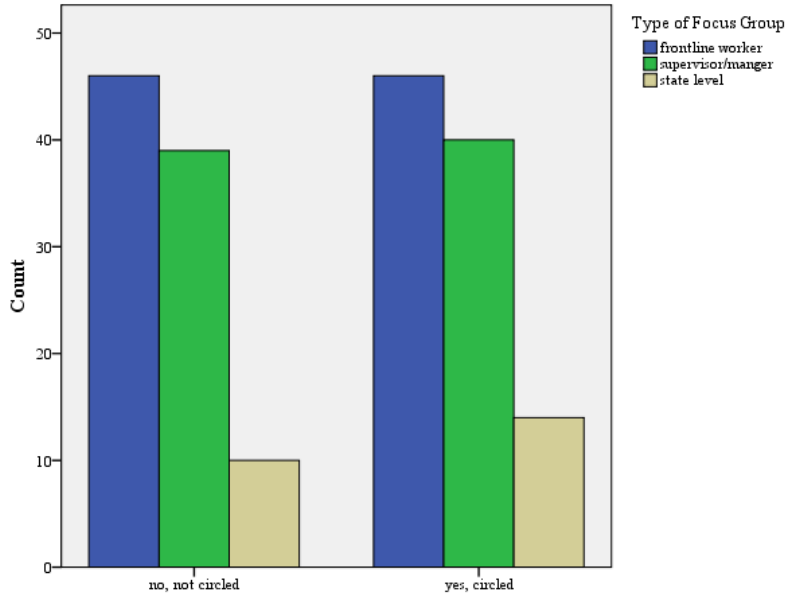
11. Providing managers with knowledge about the content of the training ptovided to frontline staff & supervisors
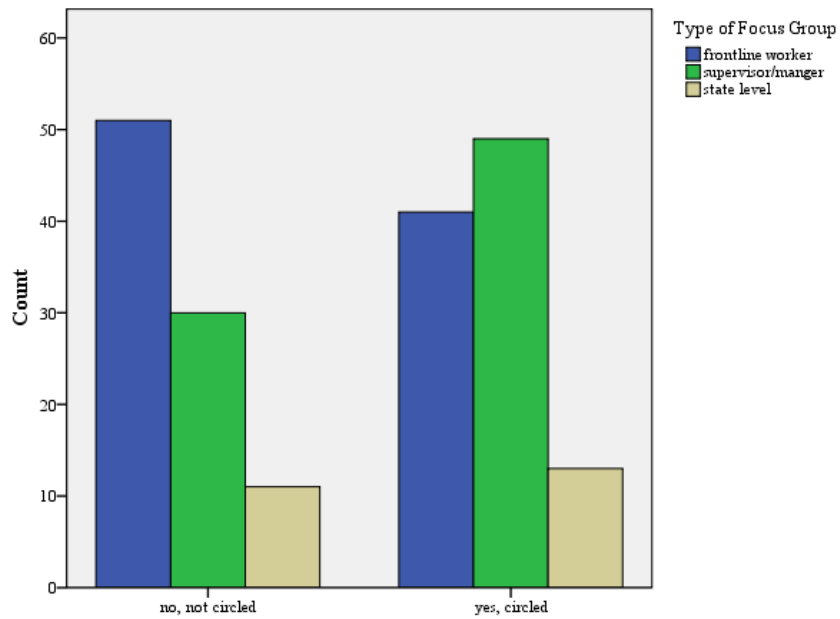
12. Creating opportunities for managers to give input & receive feedback on curriculum design & effectiveness of training
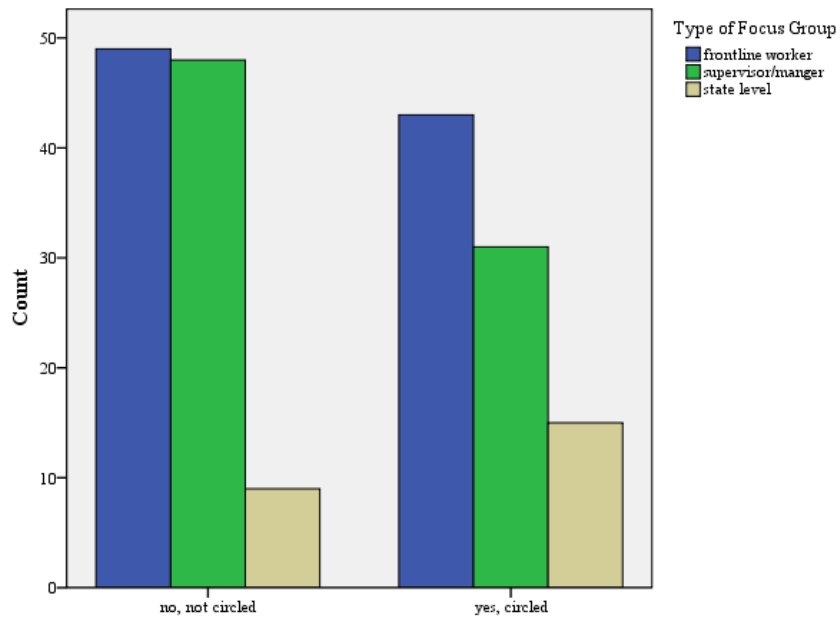
13. Engaging managers in training where appropriate &
creates opportunities for them to share expertise &
experiences with staff
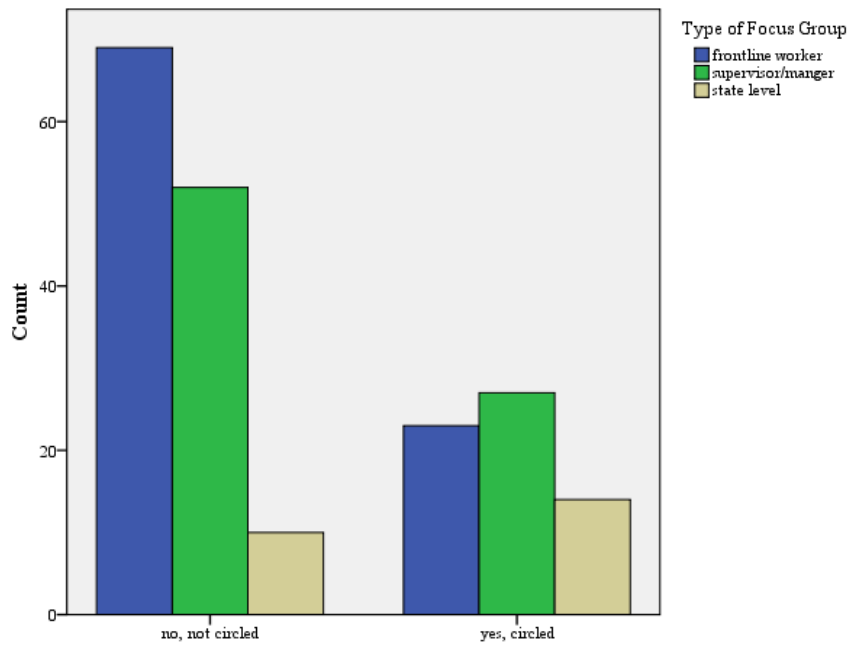
14. Creating opportunities to stay abreast of research &
emerging practice enhancements
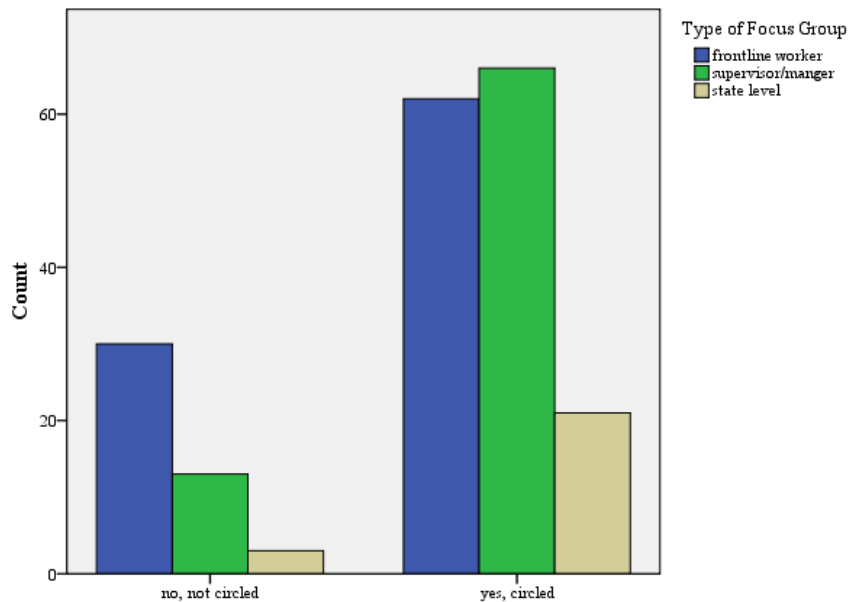
15. Providing managers with defined methods &
opportunities to assist their supervisors/selves to transfer
learning & thereby apply skills & knowledge learned to
their day-to-day work

The final graph is from the External Partners & Stakeholders section of the Training System
Assessment Tool.
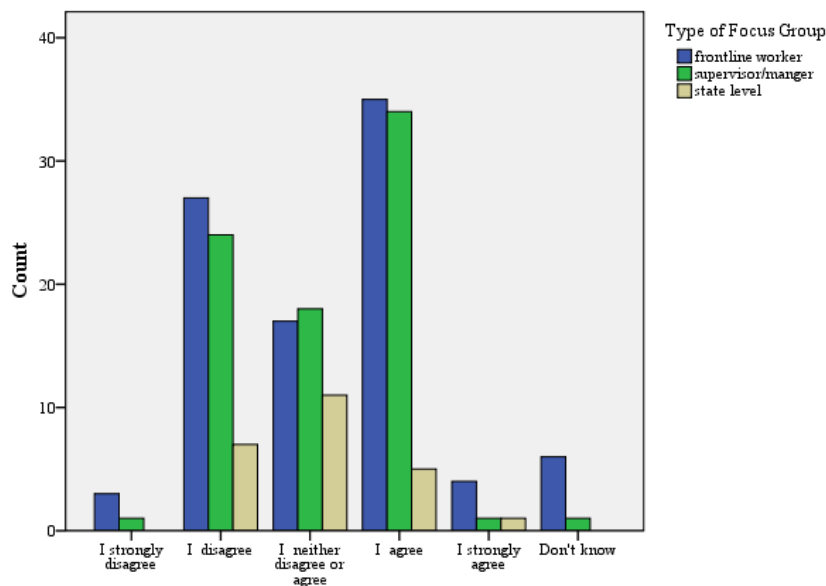
External Partners & Stakeholders Section: Question 5:
The training system encourages courts & other state
agencies to participate in agency training needs
assessment, development, delivery, & evaluation.

Responses for all Focus Group Participants

(Front line workers, supervisors, trainers and state office employees N=195)

Basic information about all agency staff that completed the Training System Assessment Tool:

Highest Degree Earned:

- 97 (50%) had a Masters degree.

- 93 (48%) had only a bachelor's degree

- 5 (2%) were missing.

Race:

- 97 (50%) were African American.

- 84 (43%) were Caucasian.

- 8 (4%) were missing.

- 6 (3%) categorized themselves as another race.

Time in the Agency:

- The workers in this sample average 14.5 years of service at DSS.

Part 1: Front Line Child Welfare Specialists Section

1. The training system provides new hire, ongoing and specialized training in the skills and knowledge needed to understand and implement the agency's mission and vision in accordance with its core values and desired outcomes.

   a. new hire

Strongly disagree	9 (5%)
Disagree	38 (19%)
Neither agree nor disagree	19 (10%)
Agree	102 (52%)
Strongly agree	23 (12%)
Don't know	4 (2%)

   b. ongoing

Strongly disagree	2 (1%)
Disagree	30 (15%)
Neither agree nor disagree	37 (19%)
Agree	104 (53%)
Strongly agree	21 (11%)
Don't know	1 (<1%)

c. specialized

Strongly disagree	6 (3%)
Disagree	37 (19%)
Neither agree nor disagree	52 (27%)
Agree	81 (41%)
Strongly agree	8 (4%)
Don't know	11 (6%)

2. The training system provides workers and understanding of their critical role to manage cases and case plans.

Strongly disagree	9 (5%)
Disagree	40 (20%)
Neither agree nor disagree	27 (14%)
Agree	101 (52%)
Strongly agree	16 (8%)
Don't know	2 (1%)

3. The training system builds skills in conducting, integrating and updating throughout the life of the case.

a. safety assessments

Strongly disagree	4 (2%)
Disagree	32 (17%)
Neither agree nor disagree	43 (22%)
Agree	92 (47%)
Strongly agree	22 (11%)
Don't know	2 (1%)

b. risk assessments

Strongly disagree	3 (1%)
Disagree	33 (17%)
Neither agree nor disagree	37 (19%)
Agree	95 (49%)
Strongly agree	26 (13%)
Don't know	1 (<1%)

c. assessment of family functioning

Strongly disagree	3 (1%)
Disagree	38 (20%)
Neither agree nor disagree	41 (21%)
Agree	91 (47%)
Strongly agree	18 (9%)
Don't know	4 (2%)

d. quality worker visits and other contact with children/youth and families

Strongly disagree	5 (3%)
Disagree	47 (24%)
Neither agree nor disagree	35 (18%)
Agree	84 (43%)
Strongly agree	21 (11%)
Don't know	3 (1%)

4. The training system builds skills in engaging and collaborating with families, partners, all levels of agency staff and others involved with servicing families.

Strongly disagree	5 (3%)
Disagree	45 (23%)
Neither agree nor disagree	56 (29%)
Agree	73 (37%)
Strongly agree	15 (8%)
Don't know	1 (<1%)

5. The training system builds skills and knowledge to meet the needs of children/youth within the context of culture, community, the entire family and the family's support network.

   a. culture

Strongly disagree	4 (2%)
Disagree	60 (31%)
Neither agree nor disagree	61 (31%)
Agree	64 (33%)
Strongly agree	5 (8%)
Don't know	1 (<1%)

   b. community

Strongly disagree	2 (1%)
Disagree	44 (23%)
Neither agree nor disagree	61 (31%)
Agree	81 (42%)
Strongly agree	6 (3%)
Don't know	1(<1%)

   c. family's support network

Strongly disagree	1 (<1%)
Disagree	37 (20%)
Neither agree nor disagree	45 (23%)
Agree	103 (52%)
Strongly agree	7 (4%)
Don't know	2 (1%)

    d. father and parental resources

Strongly disagree	5 (3%)
Disagree	66 (34%)
Neither agree nor disagree	53 (27%)
Agree	60 (31%)
Strongly agree	3 (1%)
Don't know	8 (4%)

6. The training system builds skills and knowledge to understand and identify how workers' own culture impacts their interactions and decisions as front line child welfare specialists

Strongly disagree	8 (4%)
Disagree	44 (23%)
Neither agree nor disagree	48 (25%)
Agree	79 (40%)
Strongly agree	14 (7%)
Don't know	2 (1%)

7. The training system provides front line workers with defined methods and opportunities to transfer learning and thereby apply skills and knowledge learned to their day-to-day work.

Strongly disagree	8 (4%)
Disagree	41 (21%)
Neither agree nor disagree	47 (24%)
Agree	86 (44%)
Strongly agree	12 (6%)
Don't know	1 (<1%)

Part 2: Supervisors Section

1. The training system enhances supervisors' ability to communicate to staff the agency's mission, core values and desired outcomes.

Strongly disagree	4 (2%)
Disagree	30 (15%)
Neither agree nor disagree	46 (23%)
Agree	102 (53%)
Strongly agree	11 (6%)
Don't know	2 (1%)

2. The training system provides supervisors with training on supervisory roles, duties, expectations and skills.

    a. initial

Strongly disagree	10 (5%)
Disagree	34 (17%)
Neither agree nor disagree	26 (13%)

Agree	102 (53%)
Strongly agree	9 (5%)
Don't know	14 (7%)

b. ongoing

Strongly disagree	5 (3%)
Disagree	36 (18%)
Neither agree nor disagree	50 (26%)
Agree	85 (44%)
Strongly agree	7 (4%)
Don't know	12 (5%)

3. The training system provides supervisors with defined methods and opportunities to transfer learning and thereby apply skills and knowledge learned to their day-to-day work.

a. for supervisors themselves

Strongly disagree	4 (2%)
Disagree	30 (15%)
Neither agree nor disagree	51(26%)
Agree	94 (48%)
Strongly agree	7 (4%)
Don't know	9 (5%)

b. for their supervisees

Strongly disagree	3 (1%)
Disagree	37 (19%)
Neither agree nor disagree	47 (24%)
Agree	91 (47%)
Strongly agree	7 (4%)
Don't know	10 (5%)

4. The training system builds skills in and creates opportunities to mentor, coach, and model desired case practice with workers and teams.

Strongly disagree	7 (4%)
Disagree	49 (25%)
Neither agree nor disagree	49 (25%)
Agree	77 (39%)
Strongly agree	9 (5%)
Don't know	4 (2%)

5. The training system builds skills in how to identify training needs and strengths with individual workers and how to meet those training needs in order to support continued professional development.

Strongly disagree	4 (2%)

Disagree	59 (30%)
Neither agree nor disagree	46 (24%)
Agree	73 (37%)
Strongly agree	5 (3%)
Don't know	8 (4%)

6. The training system provides knowledge and skills to supervisors in retaining and promoting workers through the means of:

a. developing leadership

Strongly disagree	9 (5%)
Disagree	53 (27%)
Neither agree nor disagree	48 (24%)
Agree	65 (33%)
Strongly agree	7 (4%)
Don't know	13 (7%)

b. mitigating secondary trauma

Strongly disagree	10 (5%)
Disagree	54 (28%)
Neither agree nor disagree	71 (36%)
Agree	36 (19%)
Strongly agree	3 (1%)
Don't know	21 (11%)

c. encouraging self-care

Strongly disagree	11 (6%)
Disagree	53 (27%)
Neither agree nor disagree	49 (25%)
Agree	61 (31%)
Strongly agree	11 (6%)
Don't know	10 (5%)

d. rewarding quality performance

Strongly disagree	15 (8%)
Disagree	46 (23%)
Neither agree nor disagree	49 (25%)
Agree	74 (38%)
Strongly agree	5 (3%)
Don't know	6 (3%)

7. The training system builds skills and knowledge to understand and identify how supervisors' own culture impacts their interactions and decisions as supervisors.

| Strongly disagree | 12 (6%) |

Disagree	36 (18%)
Neither agree nor disagree	54 (28%)
Agree	73 (37%)
Strongly agree	6 (3%)
Don't know	14 (8%)

Part 3: External Partners & Stakeholders Section

1. The training system provides an orientation to the agency's mission, vision, core values and desired outcomes to:

a. contracted providers

Strongly disagree	6 (3%)
Disagree	42 (22%)
Neither agree nor disagree	35 (18%)
Agree	69 (35%)
Strongly agree	9 (5%)
Don't know	34 (17%)

b. other state agencies

Strongly disagree	9 (5%)
Disagree	40 (20%)
Neither agree nor disagree	51 (26%)
Agree	58 (30%)
Strongly agree	6 (3%)
Don't know	31 (16%)

c. community agencies and boards

Strongly disagree	7 (4%)
Disagree	38 (19%)
Neither agree nor disagree	55 (28%)
Agree	61 (31%)
Strongly agree	7 (4%)
Don't know	27 (14%)

d. judicial systems

Strongly disagree	8 (4%)
Disagree	37 (19%)
Neither agree nor disagree	33 (17%)
Agree	92 (47%)
Strongly agree	11 (6%)
Don't know	14 (7%)

e. law enforcement

Strongly disagree	10 (5%)
Disagree	43 (22%)
Neither agree nor disagree	36 (19%)
Agree	75 (38%)
Strongly agree	9 (5%)
Don't know	22 (11%)

f. tribes

Strongly disagree	17 (9%)
Disagree	40 (20%)
Neither agree nor disagree	46 (24%)
Agree	27 (14%)
Strongly agree	6 (3%)
Don't know	59 (30%)

2. The training system provides foster/adoptive parents the skills and knowledge needed to understand and implement the agency's mission and vision in accordance with its core values and desired outcomes.

a. initial

Strongly disagree	5 (3%)
Disagree	14 (7%)
Neither agree nor disagree	17 (9%)
Agree	123 (63%)
Strongly agree	32 (16%)
Don't know	4 (2%)

b. ongoing

Strongly disagree	3 (1%)
Disagree	38 (19%)
Neither agree nor disagree	37 (19%)
Agree	94 (49%)
Strongly agree	14 (7%)
Don't know	9 (5%)

c. specialized/therapeutic

Strongly disagree	9 (5%)
Disagree	37 (19%)
Neither agree nor disagree	45 (23%)
Agree	75 (39%)
Strongly agree	10 (5%)
Don't know	18 (9%)

3. The training system builds the skills that foster and adoptive parents need to understand, effectively parent and meet the needs of children/youth in care.

Strongly disagree	2 (1%)
Disagree	44 (23%)
Neither agree nor disagree	45 (23%)
Agree	83 (43%)
Strongly agree	14 (6%)
Don't know	7 (4%)

4. The training system includes staff from stakeholder agencies in assessing common information needs and assures those needs are addressed though training or other formats.

Strongly disagree	4 (2%)
Disagree	36 (18%)
Neither agree nor disagree	60 (31%)
Agree	56 (29%)
Strongly agree	6 (3%)
Don't know	33 (17%)

5. The training system encourages courts and other state agencies to participate in agency training needs assessment, development, delivery, and evaluation.

Strongly disagree	7 (4%)
Disagree	52 (26%)
Neither agree nor disagree	50 (26%)
Agree	50 (26%)
Strongly agree	9 (5%)
Don't know	27 (13%)

6. The training system creates and sustains opportunities for managers and staff to participate in cross training in specialty areas such as domestic violence, substance abuse, mental health and education.

Strongly disagree	4 (2%)
Disagree	24 (12%)
Neither agree nor disagree	28 (14%)
Agree	112 (57%)
Strongly agree	22 (12%)
Don't know	5 (3%)

Part 4: Managers and Administrators Section

Circle the ones that you believe should be the top 7 priorities for the training system's focus on the agency's managers (current and upcoming).

1. Orientation to the agency's mission, vision, core values and desired outcomes. N=99 (51%)

2. Developing and implementing a strategic plan. N=53 (27%)
3. Managing scarce resources to maximum effect. N=111 (57%)
4. Developing and managing contracts with services providers. N=45 (23%)
5. Using quantitative and qualitative data to examine and improve efficiency, quality and outcomes. N=55 (28%)
6. Managing personnel. N=98 (50%)
7. Engaging community and public relations. N=87 (47%)
8. Building appreciation for and skills in soliciting and considering input from staff at all levels. N=125 (64%)
9. Demonstrating skills in modeling and supporting CQI, teambuilding and shared decision making. N= 79 (41%)
10. Understanding skills and methods of succession planning.   N= 96 (49%)
11. Providing managers with knowledge about the content of the training provided to front line staff and supervisors. N= 99 (51%)
12. Creating opportunities for managers to give input and receive feedback on curriculum design and the effectiveness of training. N= 101 (52%)
13. Engaging managers in training where appropriate and creates opportunities for them to share expertise and experiences with staff. N=89 (46%)
14. Creating opportunities to stay abreast of research and emerging practice enhancements. N= 66 (34%)
15. Providing managers with defined methods and opportunities to assist their supervisors/selves to transfer learning and thereby apply skills and knowledge learned to their day-to-day work. N= 153 (78%)

Front Line Child Welfare Specialists' Responses

N=93

Basic information about the front line child welfare specialists that completed the Training System Assessment Tool:

Highest Degree Earned:
- 62 had only a bachelor's degree

- 28 had a Masters degree.

- 3 were missing.

Race:
- 32 were Caucasian.

- 54 were African American.

- 4 categorized themselves as another race.

- 3 were missing.

Time in the Agency:
- The workers in this sample average 7 years of service at DSS.

Part 1: Front Line Child Welfare Specialists Section

1. The training system provides new hire, ongoing and specialized training in the skills and knowledge needed to understand and implement the agency's mission and vision in accordance with its core values and desired outcomes.
   a. new hire

Strongly Disagree	6	6%
Disagree	13	14%
Neither Agree or Disagree	8	9%
Agree	54	58%
Strongly Agree	10	11%
Don't Know	2	2%

   b. ongoing

Strongly Disagree	1	1%
Disagree	10	11%
Neither Agree or Disagree	14	15%
Agree	59	63%

Strongly Agree	9	10%
Don't Know	0	0%

c. specialized

Strongly Disagree	3	3%
Disagree	12	13%
Neither Agree or Disagree	23	25%
Agree	40	43%
Strongly Agree	7	8%
Don't Know	8	9%

2. The training system provides workers and understanding of their critical role to manage cases and case plans.

Strongly Disagree	6	6%
Disagree	14	15%
Neither Agree or Disagree	15	16%
Agree	50	54%
Strongly Agree	8	9%
Don't Know	0	0%

3. The training system builds skills in conducting, integrating and updating throughout the life of the case.

a. safety assessments

Strongly Disagree	2	2%
Disagree	13	14%
Neither Agree or Disagree	21	23%
Agree	44	47%
Strongly Agree	11	12%
Don't Know	2	2%

b. risk assessments

Strongly Disagree	2	2%
Disagree	13	14%
Neither Agree or Disagree	17	18%
Agree	47	51%
Strongly Agree	13	14%
Don't Know	1	1%

c. assessment of family functioning

Strongly Disagree	2	2%
Disagree	13	14%
Neither Agree or Disagree	18	19%
Agree	47	51%
Strongly Agree	9	10%
Don't Know	4	4%

d. quality worker visits and other contact with children/youth and families

Strongly Disagree	3	3%
Disagree	14	15%
Neither Agree or Disagree	16	17%
Agree	43	46%
Strongly Agree	14	15%
Don't Know	3	3%

4. The training system builds skills in engaging and collaborating with families, partners, all levels of agency staff and others involved with servicing families.

Strongly Disagree	1	1%
Disagree	16	17%
Neither Agree or Disagree	27	29%
Agree	40	43%
Strongly Agree	8	9%
Don't Know	1	1%

5. The training system builds skills and knowledge to meet the needs of children/youth within the context of culture, community, the entire family and the family's support network.
   a. culture

Strongly Disagree	2	2%
Disagree	28	30%
Neither Agree or Disagree	24	26%
Agree	35	38%
Strongly Agree	4	4%
Don't Know	0	0%

b. community

Strongly Disagree	1	1%
Disagree	22	24%
Neither Agree or Disagree	29	31%
Agree	36	39%
Strongly Agree	5	5%
Don't Know	0	0%

c. family's support network

Strongly Disagree	0	0%
Disagree	16	17%
Neither Agree or Disagree	20	22%
Agree	52	56%
Strongly Agree	4	4%
Don't Know	1	1%

d. father and parental resources

Strongly Disagree	3	3%
Disagree	24	26%
Neither Agree or Disagree	25	27%
Agree	34	37%
Strongly Agree	2	2%
Don't Know	5	5%

6. The training system builds skills and knowledge to understand and identify how workers' own culture impacts their interactions and decisions as front line child welfare specialists

Strongly Disagree	6	6%
Disagree	18	19%
Neither Agree or Disagree	22	24%
Agree	38	41%
Strongly Agree	8	9%
Don't Know	1	1%

7. The training system provides front line workers with defined methods and opportunities to transfer learning and thereby apply skills and knowledge learned to their day-to-day work.

Strongly Disagree	4	4%
Disagree	15	16%
Neither Agree or Disagree	19	20%
Agree	48	52%
Strongly Agree	6	6%
Don't Know	1	1%

Part 2: Supervisors Section

1. The training system enhances supervisors' ability to communicate to staff the agency's mission, core values and desired outcomes.

Strongly Disagree	2	2%
Disagree	15	16%
Neither Agree or Disagree	19	20%
Agree	50	54%
Strongly Agree	5	5%
Don't Know	2	2%

2. The training system provides supervisors with training on supervisory roles, duties, expectations and skills.

a. initial

Strongly Disagree	3	3%
Disagree	9	10%
Neither Agree or Disagree	15	16%
Agree	49	53%
Strongly Agree	3	3%
Don't Know	14	15%

b. ongoing

Strongly Disagree	3	3%
Disagree	7	8%
Neither Agree or Disagree	25	27%
Agree	45	48%
Strongly Agree	1	1%
Don't Know	12	13%

3. The training system provides supervisors with defined methods and opportunities to transfer learning and thereby apply skills and knowledge learned to their day-to-day work.

a. for supervisors themselves

Strongly Disagree	3	3%
Disagree	9	10%
Neither Agree or Disagree	24	26%
Agree	45	48%
Strongly Agree	3	3%
Don't Know	9	10%

b. for their supervisees

Strongly Disagree	2	2%
Disagree	12	13%
Neither Agree or Disagree	22	24%
Agree	44	47%
Strongly Agree	3	3%
Don't Know	10	11%

4. The training system builds skills in and creates opportunities to mentor, coach, and model desired case practice with workers and teams.

Strongly Disagree	2	2%
Disagree	23	25%
Neither Agree or Disagree	18	19%
Agree	39	42%
Strongly Agree	7	8%
Don't Know	4	4%

5. The training system builds skills in how to identify training needs and strengths with individual workers and how to meet those training needs in order to support continued professional development.

Strongly Disagree	3	3%
Disagree	28	30%
Neither Agree or Disagree	16	17%
Agree	37	40%
Strongly Agree	3	3%
Don't Know	6	6%

6. The training system provides knowledge and skills to supervisors in retaining and promoting workers through the means of:

a. developing leadership

Strongly Disagree	4	4%
Disagree	18	19%
Neither Agree or Disagree	23	25%
Agree	34	37%
Strongly Agree	3	3%
Don't Know	11	12%

b. mitigating secondary trauma

Strongly Disagree	3	3%
Disagree	22	24%
Neither Agree or Disagree	29	31%
Agree	20	22%
Strongly Agree	2	2%
Don't Know	17	18%

c. encouraging self-care

Strongly Disagree	5	5%
Disagree	21	23%
Neither Agree or Disagree	18	19%
Agree	34	37%
Strongly Agree	7	8%
Don't Know	8	9%

d. rewarding quality performance

Strongly Disagree	7	8%
Disagree	20	22%
Neither Agree or Disagree	22	24%
Agree	36	39%
Strongly Agree	3	3%
Don't Know	5	5%

7. The training system builds skills and knowledge to understand and identify how supervisors' own culture impacts their interactions and decisions as supervisors.

Strongly Disagree	5	5%
Disagree	15	16%
Neither Agree or Disagree	26	28%
Agree	32	34%
Strongly Agree	4	4%
Don't Know	11	12%

Part 3: External Partners & Stakeholders Section

1. The training system provides an orientation to the agency's mission, vision, core values and desired outcomes to:

a. contracted providers

Strongly Disagree	1	1%
Disagree	18	19%
Neither Agree or Disagree	14	15%
Agree	40	43%
Strongly Agree	3	3%
Don't Know	17	18%

b. other state agencies

Strongly Disagree	1	1%
Disagree	16	17%
Neither Agree or Disagree	25	27%
Agree	33	35%
Strongly Agree	3	3%
Don't Know	15	16%

c. community agencies and boards

Strongly Disagree	1	1%
Disagree	17	18%
Neither Agree or Disagree	25	27%
Agree	34	37%
Strongly Agree	3	3%
Don't Know	13	14%

d. judicial systems

Strongly Disagree	3	3%
Disagree	13	14%
Neither Agree or Disagree	15	16%
Agree	49	53%
Strongly Agree	6	6%
Don't Know	7	8%

e. law enforcement

Strongly Disagree	2	2%
Disagree	16	17%
Neither Agree or Disagree	17	18%
Agree	44	47%
Strongly Agree	5	5%
Don't Know	9	10%

f. tribes

Strongly Disagree	6	6%
Disagree	20	22%
Neither Agree or Disagree	19	20%
Agree	14	15%
Strongly Agree	3	3%
Don't Know	31	33%

2. The training system provides foster/adoptive parents the skills and knowledge needed to understand and implement the agency's mission and vision in accordance with its core values and desired outcomes.

a. initial

Strongly Disagree	3	3%
Disagree	7	8%
Neither Agree or Disagree	5	5%
Agree	62	67%
Strongly Agree	15	16%
Don't Know	1	1%

b. ongoing

Strongly Disagree	2	2%

Disagree	17	18%
Neither Agree or Disagree	10	11%
Agree	53	57%
Strongly Agree	8	9%
Don't Know	3	3%

c. specialized/therapeutic

Strongly Disagree	5	5%
Disagree	15	16%
Neither Agree or Disagree	20	22%
Agree	39	42%
Strongly Agree	6	6%
Don't Know	8	9%

3. The training system builds the skills that foster and adoptive parents need to understand, effectively parent and meet the needs of children/youth in care.

Strongly Disagree	1	1%
Disagree	20	22%
Neither Agree or Disagree	19	20%
Agree	40	43%
Strongly Agree	9	10%
Don't Know	4	4%

4. The training system includes staff from stakeholder agencies in assessing common information needs and assures those needs are addressed though training or other formats.

Strongly Disagree	2	2%
Disagree	14	15%
Neither Agree or Disagree	24	26%
Agree	29	31%
Strongly Agree	3	3%
Don't Know	21	23%

5. The training system encourages courts and other state agencies to participate in agency training needs assessment, development, delivery, and evaluation.

Strongly Disagree	4	4%
Disagree	21	23%
Neither Agree or Disagree	22	24%

Agree	27	29%
Strongly Agree	3	3%
Don't Know	16	17%

6. The training system creates and sustains opportunities for managers and staff to participate in cross training in specialty areas such as domestic violence, substance abuse, mental health and education.

Strongly Disagree	1	1%
Disagree	10	11%
Neither Agree or Disagree	11	12%
Agree	57	61%
Strongly Agree	11	12%
Don't Know	3	3%

Part 4: Mangers and Administrators Section

Circle the ones that you believe should be the top 7 priorities for the training system's focus on the agency's managers (current and upcoming).

1. Orientation to the agency's mission, vision, core values and desired outcomes. N=54 (58%)
2. Developing and implementing a strategic plan. N=29 (31%)
3. Managing scarce resources to maximum effect. N=50 (54%)
4. Developing and managing contracts with services providers. N=30 (33%)
5. Using quantitative and qualitative data to examine and improve efficiency, quality and outcomes. N=19 (20%)
6. Managing personnel. N=40 (43%)
7. Engaging community and public relations. N=46 (50%)
8. Building appreciation for and skills in soliciting and considering input from staff at all levels. N=59 (63%)
9. Demonstrating skills in modeling and supporting CQI, teambuilding and shared decision making. N=36 (39%)
10. Understanding skills and methods of succession planning. N=54 (58%)
11. Providing managers with knowledge about the content of the training provided to front line staff and supervisors. N=48 (52%)
12. Creating opportunities for managers to give input and receive feedback on curriculum design and the effectiveness of training. N=41 (44%)
13. Engaging managers in training where appropriate and creates opportunities for them to share expertise and experiences with staff. N=45 (48%)
14. Creating opportunities to stay abreast of research and emerging practice enhancements. N=22 (24%)
15. Providing managers with defined methods and opportunities to assist their supervisors/selves to transfer learning and thereby apply skills and knowledge learned to their day-to-day work. N=65 (70%)

# Supervisors' Responses
N=78

Basic information about the supervisors that completed the Training System Assessment Tool:

Highest Degree Earned:
- 46 had a Masters degree.

- 30 had only a bachelor's degree

- 2 were missing.

Race:
- 41 were Caucasian.

- 33 were African American.

- 4 were missing.

Time in the Agency:
- The supervisors in this sample average 21 years of service at DSS.

Part 1: Front Line Child Welfare Specialists Section

1. The training system provides new hire, ongoing and specialized training in the skills and knowledge needed to understand and implement the agency's mission and vision in accordance with its core values and desired outcomes.
   a. new hire

Strongly Disagree	2	3%
Disagree	24	31%
Neither Agree or Disagree	8	10%
Agree	31	40%
Strongly Agree	11	14%
Don't Know	2	3%

   b. ongoing

Strongly Disagree	0	0%
Disagree	16	21%
Neither Agree or Disagree	19	24%

Agree	35	45%
Strongly Agree	8	10%
Don't Know	0	0%

c. specialized

Strongly Disagree	2	3%
Disagree	20	26%
Neither Agree or Disagree	21	27%
Agree	33	42%
Strongly Agree	0	0%
Don't Know	2	3%

2. The training system provides workers and understanding of their critical role to manage cases and case plans.

Strongly Disagree	2	3%
Disagree	22	28%
Neither Agree or Disagree	9	12%
Agree	38	49%
Strongly Agree	5	6%
Don't Know	1	1%

3. The training system builds skills in conducting, integrating and updating throughout the life of the case.

a. safety assessments

Strongly Disagree	1	1%
Disagree	16	21%
Neither Agree or Disagree	20	26%
Agree	36	46%
Strongly Agree	5	6%
Don't Know	0	0%

b. risk assessments

Strongly Disagree	0	0%
Disagree	17	22%
Neither Agree or Disagree	17	22%
Agree	37	47%
Strongly Agree	7	9%
Don't Know	0	0%

c. assessment of family functioning

Strongly Disagree	0	0%
Disagree	21	27%
Neither Agree or Disagree	21	27%
Agree	31	40%
Strongly Agree	5	6%
Don't Know	0	0%

d. quality worker visits and other contact with children/youth and families

Strongly Disagree	1	1%
Disagree	28	36%
Neither Agree or Disagree	13	17%
Agree	32	41%
Strongly Agree	4	5%
Don't Know	0	0%

4. The training system builds skills in engaging and collaborating with families, partners, all levels of agency staff and others involved with servicing families.

Strongly Disagree	3	4%
Disagree	26	33%
Neither Agree or Disagree	20	26%
Agree	26	33%
Strongly Agree	3	4%
Don't Know	0	0%

5. The training system builds skills and knowledge to meet the needs of children/youth within the context of culture, community, the entire family and the family's support network.

a. culture

Strongly Disagree	1	1%
Disagree	29	37%
Neither Agree or Disagree	28	36%
Agree	19	24%
Strongly Agree	0	0%
Don't Know	1	1%

b. community

Strongly Disagree	1	1%
Disagree	21	27%
Neither Agree or Disagree	22	28%
Agree	32	41%
Strongly Agree	1	1%
Don't Know	1	1%

c. family's support network

Strongly Disagree	1	1%
Disagree	18	23%
Neither Agree or Disagree	18	23%
Agree	37	47%
Strongly Agree	3	4%
Don't Know	1	1%

d. father and parental resources

Strongly Disagree	1	1%
Disagree	34	44%
Neither Agree or Disagree	18	23%
Agree	21	27%
Strongly Agree	1	1%
Don't Know	3	4%

6. The training system builds skills and knowledge to understand and identify how workers' own culture impacts their interactions and decisions as front line child welfare specialists

Strongly Disagree	1	1%
Disagree	24	31%
Neither Agree or Disagree	19	24%
Agree	30	38%
Strongly Agree	3	4%
Don't Know	1	1%

7. The training system provides front line workers with defined methods and opportunities to transfer learning and thereby apply skills and knowledge learned to their day-to-day work.

Strongly Disagree	4	5%
Disagree	21	27%
Neither Agree or Disagree	22	28%
Agree	29	37%
Strongly Agree	2	3%
Don't Know	0	0%

Part 2: Supervisors Section

1. The training system enhances supervisors' ability to communicate to staff the agency's mission, core values and desired outcomes.

Strongly Disagree	1	1%
Disagree	11	14%
Neither Agree or Disagree	20	26%
Agree	42	54%
Strongly Agree	4	5%
Don't Know	0	0%

2. The training system provides supervisors with training on supervisory roles, duties, expectations and skills.

a. initial

Strongly Disagree	7	9%
Disagree	20	26%
Neither Agree or Disagree	8	10%
Agree	40	51%
Strongly Agree	3	4%
Don't Know	0	0%

b. ongoing

Strongly Disagree	2	3%
Disagree	24	31%
Neither Agree or Disagree	16	21%
Agree	33	42%
Strongly Agree	3	4%
Don't Know	0	0%

3. The training system provides supervisors with defined methods and opportunities to transfer learning and thereby apply skills and knowledge learned to their day-to-day work.

a. for supervisors themselves

Strongly Disagree	1	1%
Disagree	19	24%
Neither Agree or Disagree	17	22%
Agree	40	51%
Strongly Agree	1	1%
Don't Know	0	0%

b. for their supervisees

Strongly Disagree	1	1%
Disagree	20	26%
Neither Agree or Disagree	17	22%
Agree	39	50%
Strongly Agree	1	1%
Don't Know	0	0%

4. The training system builds skills in and creates opportunities to mentor, coach, and model desired case practice with workers and teams.

Strongly Disagree	5	6%
Disagree	19	24%
Neither Agree or Disagree	21	27%
Agree	33	42%
Strongly Agree	0	0%
Don't Know	0	0%

5. The training system builds skills in how to identify training needs and strengths with individual workers and how to meet those training needs in order to support continued professional development.

Strongly Disagree	1	1%
Disagree	24	31%
Neither Agree or Disagree	19	24%
Agree	31	40%
Strongly Agree	1	1%
Don't Know	2	3%

6. The training system provides knowledge and skills to supervisors in retaining and promoting workers through the means of:

a. developing leadership

Strongly Disagree	4	5%
Disagree	25	32%
Neither Agree or Disagree	19	24%
Agree	25	32%
Strongly Agree	3	4%
Don't Know	2	3%

b. mitigating secondary trauma

Strongly Disagree	6	8%
Disagree	25	32%
Neither Agree or Disagree	31	40%
Agree	13	17%
Strongly Agree	0	0%
Don't Know	3	4%

c. encouraging self-care

Strongly Disagree	5	6%
Disagree	25	32%
Neither Agree or Disagree	22	28%
Agree	22	28%
Strongly Agree	2	3%
Don't Know	2	3%

d. rewarding quality performance

Strongly Disagree	6	8%
Disagree	19	24%
Neither Agree or Disagree	19	24%
Agree	32	41%
Strongly Agree	1	1%
Don't Know	1	1%

7. The training system builds skills and knowledge to understand and identify how supervisors' own culture impacts their interactions and decisions as supervisors.

Strongly Disagree	5	6%
Disagree	17	22%
Neither Agree or Disagree	20	26%
Agree	31	40%
Strongly Agree	2	3%
Don't Know	3	4%

Part 3: External Partners & Stakeholders

1. The training system provides an orientation to the agency's mission, vision, core values and desired outcomes to:

a. contracted providers

Strongly Disagree	2	3%
Disagree	17	22%
Neither Agree or Disagree	17	22%
Agree	24	31%
Strongly Agree	4	5%
Don't Know	14	18%

b. other state agencies

Strongly Disagree	5	6%
Disagree	18	23%
Neither Agree or Disagree	19	24%
Agree	21	27%
Strongly Agree	1	1%
Don't Know	14	18%

c. community agencies and boards

Strongly Disagree	3	4%
Disagree	15	19%
Neither Agree or Disagree	22	28%
Agree	23	29%
Strongly Agree	3	4%
Don't Know	12	15%

d. judicial systems

Strongly Disagree	3	4%
Disagree	17	22%
Neither Agree or Disagree	15	19%
Agree	33	42%
Strongly Agree	4	5%
Don't Know	6	8%

e. law enforcement

Strongly Disagree	5	6%
Disagree	19	24%
Neither Agree or Disagree	15	19%
Agree	24	31%
Strongly Agree	3	4%
Don't Know	12	15%

f. tribes

Strongly Disagree	7	9%
Disagree	16	21%
Neither Agree or Disagree	20	26%
Agree	7	9%
Strongly Agree	2	3%
Don't Know	26	33%

2. The training system provides foster/adoptive parents the skills and knowledge needed to understand and implement the agency's mission and vision in accordance with its core values and desired outcomes.

   a. initial

Strongly Disagree	0	0%
Disagree	7	9%
Neither Agree or Disagree	7	9%
Agree	51	65%
Strongly Agree	10	13%
Don't Know	3	4%

b. ongoing

Strongly Disagree	0	0%
Disagree	16	21%
Neither Agree or Disagree	18	23%
Agree	33	42%
Strongly Agree	5	6%
Don't Know	6	8%

c. specialized/therapeutic

Strongly Disagree	2	3%
Disagree	16	21%
Neither Agree or Disagree	17	22%
Agree	30	38%
Strongly Agree	3	4%
Don't Know	10	13%

3. The training system builds the skills that foster and adoptive parents need to understand, effectively parent and meet the needs of children/youth in care.

Strongly Disagree	1	1%
Disagree	21	27%
Neither Agree or Disagree	16	21%
Agree	33	42%
Strongly Agree	4	5%
Don't Know	3	4%

4. The training system includes staff from stakeholder agencies in assessing common information needs and assures those needs are addressed though training or other formats.

Strongly Disagree	2	3%
Disagree	16	21%
Neither Agree or Disagree	25	32%
Agree	22	28%
Strongly Agree	1	1%
Don't Know	12	15%

5. The training system encourages courts and other state agencies to participate in agency training needs assessment, development, delivery, and evaluation.

Strongly Disagree	3	4%
Disagree	23	29%
Neither Agree or Disagree	19	24%
Agree	18	23%
Strongly Agree	4	5%
Don't Know	11	14%

6. The training system creates and sustains opportunities for managers and staff to participate in cross training in specialty areas such as domestic violence, substance abuse, mental health and education.

Strongly Disagree	2	3%
Disagree	9	12%
Neither Agree or Disagree	10	13%
Agree	46	59%
Strongly Agree	9	12%
Don't Know	2	3%

Part 4: Managers and Administrators

Circle the ones that you believe should be the top 7 priorities for the training system's focus on the agency's managers (current and upcoming).

1. Orientation to the agency's mission, vision, core values and desired outcomes. N=34 (44%)
2. Developing and implementing a strategic plan. N=20 (26%)
3. Managing scarce resources to maximum effect. N=50 (64%)
4. Developing and managing contracts with services providers. N=13 (17%)
5. Using quantitative and qualitative data to examine and improve efficiency, quality and outcomes. N=27 (35%)
6. Managing personnel. N=49 (63%)
7. Engaging community and public relations. N=34 (44%)
8. Building appreciation for and skills in soliciting and considering input from staff at all levels. N=50 (64%)
9. Demonstrating skills in modeling and supporting CQI, teambuilding and shared decision making. N=33 (42%)
10. Understanding skills and methods of succession planning. N=31 (40%)
11. Providing managers with knowledge about the content of the training provided to front line staff and supervisors. N=37 (47%)

12. Creating opportunities for managers to give input and receive feedback on curriculum design and the effectiveness of training. N=47 (60%)
13. Engaging managers in training where appropriate and creates opportunities for them to share expertise and experiences with staff.   N=29 (37%)
14. Creating opportunities to stay abreast of research and emerging practice enhancements. N=30 (39%)
15. Providing managers with defined methods and opportunities to assist their supervisors/selves to transfer learning and thereby apply skills and knowledge learned to their day-to-day work. N=67 (86%)

# State Office Employees' Responses
N=24

Basic information about the supervisors that completed the Training System Assessment Tool:

Highest Degree Earned:
- 0 had only a bachelor's degree

- 23 had a Masters degree.

- 1 was missing.

Race:
- 11 were Caucasian.

- 10 were African American.

- 2 categorized themselves as another race.

- 1 was missing.

Time in the Agency:
- The state office employees in this sample averaged 21 years of service at DSS.

Part 1: Front Line Child Welfare Specialists Section

1. The training system provides new hire, ongoing and specialized training in the skills and knowledge needed to understand and implement the agency's mission and vision in accordance with its core values and desired outcomes.
   a. new hire

Strongly Disagree	1	4%
Disagree	1	4%
Neither Agree or Disagree	3	13%
Agree	17	71%
Strongly Agree	2	8%
Don't Know	0	0%

   b. ongoing

Strongly Disagree	1	4%
Disagree	4	17%
Neither Agree or Disagree	4	17%

Agree	10	42%
Strongly Agree	4	17%
Don't Know	1	4%

c. specialized

Strongly Disagree	1	4%
Disagree	5	21%
Neither Agree or Disagree	8	33%
Agree	8	33%
Strongly Agree	1	4%
Don't Know	1	4%

2. The training system provides workers and understanding of their critical role to manage cases and case plans.

Strongly Disagree	1	4%
Disagree	4	17%
Neither Agree or Disagree	3	13%
Agree	13	54%
Strongly Agree	3	13%
Don't Know	0	0%

3. The training system builds skills in conducting, integrating and updating throughout the life of the case.

a. safety assessments

Strongly Disagree	1	4%
Disagree	3	13%
Neither Agree or Disagree	2	8%
Agree	12	50%
Strongly Agree	6	25%
Don't Know	0	0%

b. risk assessments

Strongly Disagree	1	4%
Disagree	3	13%
Neither Agree or Disagree	3	13%
Agree	11	46%
Strongly Agree	6	25%
Don't Know	0	0%

c. assessment of family functioning

Strongly Disagree	1	4%
Disagree	4	17%
Neither Agree or Disagree	2	8%
Agree	13	54%
Strongly Agree	4	17%
Don't Know	0	0%

d. quality worker visits and other contact with children/youth and families

Strongly Disagree	1	4%
Disagree	5	21%
Neither Agree or Disagree	6	25%
Agree	9	38%
Strongly Agree	3	13%
Don't Know	0	0%

4. The training system builds skills in engaging and collaborating with families, partners, all levels of agency staff and others involved with servicing families.

Strongly Disagree	1	4%
Disagree	3	13%
Neither Agree or Disagree	9	38%
Agree	7	29%
Strongly Agree	4	17%
Don't Know	0	0%

5. The training system builds skills and knowledge to meet the needs of children/youth within the context of culture, community, the entire family and the family's support network.
   a. culture

Strongly Disagree	1	4%
Disagree	3	13%
Neither Agree or Disagree	9	38%
Agree	10	42%
Strongly Agree	1	4%
Don't Know	0	0%

b. community

Strongly Disagree	0	0%
Disagree	1	4%
Neither Agree or Disagree	10	42%
Agree	13	54%
Strongly Agree	0	0%
Don't Know	0	0%

c. family's support network

Strongly Disagree	0	0%
Disagree	3	13%
Neither Agree or Disagree	7	29%
Agree	14	58%
Strongly Agree	0	0%
Don't Know	0	0%

d. father and parental resources

Strongly Disagree	1	4%
Disagree	8	33%
Neither Agree or Disagree	10	42%
Agree	5	21%
Strongly Agree	0	0%
Don't Know	0	0%

6. The training system builds skills and knowledge to understand and identify how workers' own culture impacts their interactions and decisions as front line child welfare specialists

Strongly Disagree	1	4%
Disagree	2	8%
Neither Agree or Disagree	7	29%
Agree	11	46%
Strongly Agree	3	13%
Don't Know	0	0%

7. The training system provides front line workers with defined methods and opportunities to transfer learning and thereby apply skills and knowledge learned to their day-to-day work.

Strongly Disagree	0	0%
Disagree	5	21%
Neither Agree or Disagree	6	25%
Agree	9	38%
Strongly Agree	4	17%
Don't Know	0	0%

Part 2: Supervisors Section

1. The training system enhances supervisors' ability to communicate to staff the agency's mission, core values and desired outcomes.

Strongly Disagree	1	4%
Disagree	4	17%
Neither Agree or Disagree	7	29%
Agree	10	42%
Strongly Agree	2	8%
Don't Know	0	0%

2. The training system provides supervisors with training on supervisory roles, duties, expectations and skills.

a. initial

Strongly Disagree	0	0%
Disagree	5	21%
Neither Agree or Disagree	3	13%
Agree	13	54%
Strongly Agree	3	13%
Don't Know	0	0%

b. ongoing

Strongly Disagree	0	0%
Disagree	5	21%
Neither Agree or Disagree	9	38%
Agree	7	29%
Strongly Agree	3	13%
Don't Know	0	0%

3. The training system provides supervisors with defined methods and opportunities to transfer learning and thereby apply skills and knowledge learned to their day-to-day work.

   a. for supervisors themselves

Strongly Disagree	0	0%
Disagree	2	8%
Neither Agree or Disagree	10	42%
Agree	9	38%
Strongly Agree	3	13%
Don't Know	0	0%

   b. for their supervisees

Strongly Disagree	0	0%
Disagree	5	21%
Neither Agree or Disagree	8	33%
Agree	8	33%
Strongly Agree	3	13%
Don't Know	0	0%

4. The training system builds skills in and creates opportunities to mentor, coach, and model desired case practice with workers and teams.

Strongly Disagree	0	0%
Disagree	7	29%
Neither Agree or Disagree	10	42%
Agree	5	21%
Strongly Agree	2	8%
Don't Know	0	0%

5. The training system builds skills in how to identify training needs and strengths with individual workers and how to meet those training needs in order to support continued professional development.

Strongly Disagree	0	0%
Disagree	7	29%
Neither Agree or Disagree	11	46%
Agree	5	21%
Strongly Agree	1	4%
Don't Know	0	0%

6. The training system provides knowledge and skills to supervisors in retaining and promoting workers through the means of:

a. developing leadership

Strongly Disagree	1	4%
Disagree	10	42%
Neither Agree or Disagree	6	25%
Agree	6	25%
Strongly Agree	1	4%
Don't Know	0	0%

b. mitigating secondary trauma

Strongly Disagree	1	4%
Disagree	7	29%
Neither Agree or Disagree	11	46%
Agree	3	13%
Strongly Agree	1	4%
Don't Know	1	4%

c. encouraging self-care

Strongly Disagree	1	4%
Disagree	7	29%
Neither Agree or Disagree	9	38%
Agree	5	21%
Strongly Agree	2	8%
Don't Know	0	0%

d. rewarding quality performance

Strongly Disagree	2	8%
Disagree	7	29%
Neither Agree or Disagree	8	33%
Agree	6	25%
Strongly Agree	1	4%
Don't Know	0	0%

7. The training system builds skills and knowledge to understand and identify how supervisors' own culture impacts their interactions and decisions as supervisors.

Strongly Disagree	2	8%
Disagree	4	17%
Neither Agree or Disagree	8	33%
Agree	10	42%
Strongly Agree	0	0%
Don't Know	0	0%

Part 3: External Partners & Stakeholders Section

1. The training system provides an orientation to the agency's mission, vision, core values and desired outcomes to:

a. contracted providers

Strongly Disagree	3	13%
Disagree	7	29%
Neither Agree or Disagree	4	17%
Agree	5	21%
Strongly Agree	2	8%
Don't Know	3	13%

b. other state agencies

Strongly Disagree	3	13%
Disagree	6	25%
Neither Agree or Disagree	7	29%
Agree	4	17%
Strongly Agree	2	8%
Don't Know	2	8%

c. community agencies and boards

Strongly Disagree	3	13%
Disagree	6	25%
Neither Agree or Disagree	8	33%
Agree	4	17%
Strongly Agree	1	4%
Don't Know	2	8%

d. judicial systems

Strongly Disagree	2	8%
Disagree	7	29%
Neither Agree or Disagree	3	13%
Agree	10	42%
Strongly Agree	1	4%
Don't Know	1	4%

e. law enforcement

Strongly Disagree	3	13%
Disagree	8	33%
Neither Agree or Disagree	4	17%
Agree	7	29%
Strongly Agree	1	4%
Don't Know	1	4%

f. tribes

Strongly Disagree	4	17%
Disagree	4	17%
Neither Agree or Disagree	7	29%
Agree	6	25%
Strongly Agree	1	4%
Don't Know	2	8%

2. The training system provides foster/adoptive parents the skills and knowledge needed to understand and implement the agency's mission and vision in accordance with its core values and desired outcomes.

a. initial

Strongly Disagree	2	8%
Disagree	0	0%
Neither Agree or Disagree	5	21%
Agree	10	42%
Strongly Agree	7	29%
Don't Know	0	0%

b. ongoing

Strongly Disagree	1	4%
Disagree	5	21%
Neither Agree or Disagree	9	38%
Agree	8	33%
Strongly Agree	1	4%
Don't Know	0	0%

c. specialized/therapeutic

Strongly Disagree	2	8%
Disagree	6	25%
Neither Agree or Disagree	8	33%
Agree	6	25%
Strongly Agree	1	4%
Don't Know	0	0%

3. The training system builds the skills that foster and adoptive parents need to understand, effectively parent and meet the needs of children/youth in care.

Strongly Disagree	0	0%
Disagree	3	13%
Neither Agree or Disagree	10	42%
Agree	10	42%
Strongly Agree	1	4%
Don't Know	0	0%

4. The training system includes staff from stakeholder agencies in assessing common information needs and assures those needs are addressed though training or other formats.

Strongly Disagree	0	0%
Disagree	6	25%
Neither Agree or Disagree	11	46%
Agree	5	21%
Strongly Agree	2	8%
Don't Know	0	0%

5. The training system encourages courts and other state agencies to participate in agency training needs assessment, development, delivery, and evaluation.

Strongly Disagree	0	0%
Disagree	8	33%
Neither Agree or Disagree	9	38%
Agree	5	21%
Strongly Agree	2	8%
Don't Know	0	0%

6. The training system creates and sustains opportunities for managers and staff to participate in cross training in specialty areas such as domestic violence, substance abuse, mental health and education.

Strongly Disagree	1	4%
Disagree	5	21%
Neither Agree or Disagree	7	29%
Agree	9	38%
Strongly Agree	2	8%
Don't Know	0	0%

Part 4: Managers and Administrators Section

Circle the ones that you believe should be the top 7 priorities for the training system's focus on the agency's managers (current and upcoming).

1. Orientation to the agency's mission, vision, core values and desired outcomes. N=11 (46%)
2. Developing and implementing a strategic plan. N=4 (17%)
3. Managing scarce resources to maximum effect. N=11 (46%)
4. Developing and managing contracts with services providers. N=2 (8%)
5. Using quantitative and qualitative data to examine and improve efficiency, quality and outcomes. N=9 (38%)
6. Managing personnel. N=9 (38%)
7. Engaging community and public relations. N=7 (29%)
8. Building appreciation for and skills in soliciting and considering input from staff at all levels. N=16 (67%)
9. Demonstrating skills in modeling and supporting CQI, teambuilding and shared decision making. N=10 (42%)
10. Understanding skills and methods of succession planning. N=11 (46%)
11. Providing managers with knowledge about the content of the training provided to front line staff and supervisors. N=14 (58%)

12. Creating opportunities for managers to give input and receive feedback on curriculum design and the effectiveness of training. N=13 (54%)
13. Engaging managers in training where appropriate and creates opportunities for them to share expertise and experiences with staff. N=15 (63%)
14. Creating opportunities to stay abreast of research and emerging practice enhancements. N=14 (58%)
15. Providing managers with defined methods and opportunities to assist their supervisors/selves to transfer learning and thereby apply skills and knowledge learned to their day-to-day work. N=21 (88%)

Summary of Qualitative Data from Focus Groups
(Summary of comments written on the Training System Assessment Tool
by focus group participants)

Qualitative data was collected in two primary forms from the regional focus groups. The first form consisted of narrative comments made by each participant on their Training System Assessment Tool. The second form is from the discussions that occurred during the actual focus groups after the participants completed the Training System Assessment Tool. There was one facilitator as well as two independent observer/recorders (OR) for the focus groups.

This summary report provides the overall emerging patterns from both forms of qualitative data. Additionally, some unique, critical outliers are included to keep the richness and integrity of the data by representing not only the majority voice, but those unique voices that contributed to the process as well. Because the participants were not randomly selected, there is no way to determine how accurately the representativeness of the participants' perspectives reflects the Louisiana OCS employee population. Further, *qualitative analysis is not for generalization purposes.*

The information shared in the written narratives and the focus groups was mostly congruent. There was a slight increase in need for culturally related/responsive training in the written comments as compared to the verbal discussions. In addition, more positive comments about the trainers themselves were noted on the written narratives. Very little discussion occurred about the trainers themselves during the open group discussions. Otherwise, the written and verbal comments were very similar.

Perspectives between workers and supervisors were also very similar, both in written and in verbal comments. The more global the discussion, in terms of the training system (TS), the more similar the perspectives were across groups. As the discussions became more specific, then differences became apparent. The most marked area of difference in comments was in how the workers and supervisors view themselves and each other. While the supervisors seem to believe that the workers are primarily motivated by money, the workers consistently requested more positive acknowledgement and support from their supervisors. The supervisors seemed to view themselves as the primary trainers in the workers' lives and that the TS was not giving them anything meaningful. The workers' tended to report the opposite.

In reviewing all of the data, both written and verbal, the themes tended to cluster across three primary domains: actors, events, and processes. The remainder of this report will describe the results by groups using these domains to keep the information organized. A brief description of the domains will precede the presentation of the actual data summaries.

Domain Descriptions

Actors – Several key actors were repeatedly referenced in the written and verbal comments of the participants. The most frequent group mentioned was "state office". State office was also commonly referred to as upper management, them, higher management, and administration. Other actors referenced were supervisors, district managers (DMs), regional managers (RMs), workers (CWs), community partners (partners), families and children, and foster parents. These latter groups, with the exception of supervisors and foster parents were less frequently discussed than state office.

Events – The actual training occurrences were often discussed in the open discussions. Issues related to timing, location, frequency and attendance limits are items that pertain to this domain. Some written comments were made pertaining to this domain also, but less so than in the verbal discussions.

Processes - This was the second most dominant domain next to Actors in both the written and verbal comments. Within this domain, there are three subcategories: topics/content, resources, and methods. Both written and verbal comments addressed training needs related to topics the TS is lacking/should address – topics/content. However, this area was a small component compared to resources and methods. These latter two subcategories, along with actors dominated the comments for both workers and supervisors.

Workers' Perspectives

Actors
In the written comments, the majority of statements made referenced the strengths of the TS as "the trainers have field experience". Other written comments included the receptiveness and/or availability of the trainers to answer questions that the workers may have after training was concluded. The only positive verbal comments made pertaining to any actors within the OCS system were random individual experiences of workers who had "good supervisors". These workers would state that they "realize I'm one of the lucky ones to have gotten a good supervisor".

There were very few written comments that pertained to actors by workers on the assessment tool. The few that were made related to supervisors needing supervisory training, upper management needing sensitivity training, everyone needing cultural sensitivity training, state office is disconnected from the field, and the feeling that administration does not really value those at the direct level.

In the group discussions, there was a lot of consistency across regions of a feeling of disconnect between state office and direct level. The perception that administration does not care about its workers' is very strong. The workers seem to value the training itself, but report there is no real support to actually implement what they are taught. Workers report feeling "thrown to wolves",

"devalued", and "disrespected" by their supervisors and the agency. Many workers stated they see the problem as systemic and not as individual supervisor personality issues, although many thought there are contributing factors along those lines as well, because frontline supervisors are not well supported and are overworked, in their opinion. Workers added they are unable to receive true supervision because caseloads are too high, too many changes are made at once, and there is too much paperwork and not enough real work with the families and children.

Events

The workers reported being grateful that OCS training is free. Recently there has been an increase in training options within their regional areas. This is reported as a benefit. Written and verbal comments were made regarding the desire to attend conferences outside of the OCS system. Inquiry as to why only those in state office and/or at some of the highest salaries get to attend NASW and other conferences year after year, and direct level staff never get to attend such conferences. One group also questioned why only those with credential requirements to meet get to go to ethics training, when that is a critical topic for all child welfare workers.

Verbal comments tended to focus on perceived inequities in training offerings across the state. Reports included that Baton Rouge area tended to have more trainings than other areas of the state. Training session capacities were often kept small, thus only a select few get to attend and then the session is never offered again. In addition, comments were made that announcements of trainings are not done in an organized and timely fashion. Workers are not all notified at same time and/or with enough planning notice. Further, trainings are often cancelled at the last minute. Workers state creates many problems with caseload planning. Workers are left on their own to struggle to find the trainings they need. Report more consideration for year round training that will work within the flow of cases needs to be done, instead of heavy loading trainings all at one or two times of the year.

Processes

Topics/Content. Workers reported there is a need for more specialized training in substance abuse, mental health, educational needs/resources, dealing with poverty, domestic violence, culturally related issues, and children with special needs. Both written and verbal comments tended to indentify the TS having as its strength that it provides a strong beginning foundation and orientation to basic child welfare. However, it does not provide ongoing skill development. One worker commented – "It gives you the why you do it, and some of the what to do, but not the how to do it". There was one worker's written comment that stated the TS gives "cultural awareness and sensitivity training and helps you see yourself".

Resources. Many of the verbal comments focused on the lack of resources to conduct quality child welfare services. Workers reported beliefs that this lack of resources and support affect TS as well. Issues related to time management, computer training and access, budget cuts, and lack of priority to state office as contributing factors to the resource deficits. Workers reported that FATS training should have included hands on access to the computer. Further, any methods that are going to require computer use should include the use of the computer when introducing the

new method in the training. Travel funds were another resource commonly reported in group discussions that were desirous as a form of reward/support to worker professionalism/development.

Streamlining paperwork and increasing consistency of forms across regions was commonly verbalized in many of the worker groups. Several group discussions reported perceptions that OCS is moving away from social work/child welfare practice and moving towards paperwork and general case management practice. Workers expressed concern that the overall priority of well-being for children and families is not being preserved. Conversely, there were a couple of written comments on the assessment tool noting the strength of the TS was the care/concern of children and families.

Overall, the majority of comments reported concern that workers do not have resources to perform their duties. The methods suggested in trainings are not realistic to the available resources in the regions and the trainers do not provide alternatives to meet the resource gaps – was the overriding theme by the majority of workers across regional groups.

Methods. The majority of written and verbal comments that related to methods of training tended to focus on issues pertaining to the FATS training and scenarios used in training sessions. Workers reported that during the FATS training they did not have access to actual computers or the full assessment. This was considered a deficit. When they returned to the field, and when the actual assessment was made available, they reported a difficult time transferring what was covered in training to actual practice. They added that their supervisors were "just as lost and confused". Workers suggested that computer labs be available in NWO and in any roll out initiatives that involve computers. They report hands-on experience is the best way that they learn. Further, they added that all the kinks should be worked out, before mandating workers to use the new method.

Workers also made comments, both in writing and verbally, that many of the scenarios used in training are "too idealistic and not relevant to the cases in the field". Suggestions were made that scenarios should reflect actual cases that workers will likely see in their employment setting. Workers also reported that the NWO tended to be too heavily focused on CI and very little information/connection to the other OCS programs is given. Suggestions were given that workers should have to be able to see how a case goes through every program of OCS so that they can see the connection between one program to the next.

Workers also reported that job shadowing, mentoring and/or coaching are elements of training, especially for new workers that are missing from OCS' TS. Workers' added that there is a lot of inconsistency of what is available from one region to the next. For example, one region has a court liaison while others do not. This position is reportedly highly valued and desired across many other regions.

Other General Comments from Workers' Perspectives

Workers verbalized a need for more outreach training to community partners, especially courts, CASA, and schools. They stated they are often treated with disrespect and chastised for "not doing their jobs" when the expectations by some of the representatives of these systems appear to not have a clear understanding of the child welfare worker's roles and limitations. Also, when OCS makes major changes, such as with the FATS, workers report state office should inform community partners so that workers are not put on the spot and challenged.

Workers also requested more training for themselves in terms of preparing for court and testifying in court. They report that very little of this information is covered in the TS.

Supervisors' Perspectives

Actors
Supervisors tended to have more written and verbal comments regarding workers than workers had of supervisors. Both written and verbal comments, supervisors expressed concerns regarding impact of "generation gap" and "new work ethic" on supervisory relationship and work practices. Supervisors reported that they did not see current workers as committed and loyal to child welfare field as prior cohorts. Supervisors also perceived that current workforce needs more "hand holding" than prior generations and are less able to integrate and apply what they are taught from one case to other cases. Many supervisors also reported concern regarding the lack of writing skills that many of the new hires possess. This was identified as a training need that has not previously been an issue for them.

Supervisors also reported, in writing and verbally, comments related to perceptions of disconnect between state office and the field. Supervisors reported that their feedback is often solicited but ignored, which causes increased frustration. Comments across regions were commonly made that those in administration are out of touch with the needs and realities of those at the direct level and with the families and children the agency serves.

Some written comments identified as strengths that the TS was willing to examine itself, consider making changes, and willing to "bring in experts from the outside". The Marsha Salus training was mentioned, in writing and verbally, numerous times as strength to the TS. Supervisors stated it, or its equivalency, needs to be available to all supervisors rather than a select few.

Supervisors also commented, written and verbally, that upper management needed to be required to return to the field periodically in order to remain in touch with the realities of the people the agency serves and the day-to-day work involved in the agency. Supervisors reported this as a training need for upper management.

Events

Supervisors reported that the supervisory training needs to be offered to all supervisors immediately upon promotion. Many supervisors reported never having had supervisory training or having it years after their promotion. Some stated CPTP training as helpful and others reported it as a waste of time. This same mixed report was given in writing as well.

Many supervisors reported that the variety of trainings offered is strength of the TS. This mostly occurred as written comments on the assessment tool. Additionally, providing the training to the staff without charge is valued. Some supervisors reported that trainings were too long and believed that they could be condensed. For example, one written comment was to take a training that is typically 1 ½ days and shorten it to a day. One-day training sessions seemed to be the most popular format across supervisor groups. Supervisors also reported a desire for trainings to be offered more in their own regions to keep travel to a minimum.

Processes

Topics/Content. The majority of supervisors made comments similar to the workers. Topics related to substance abuse, domestic violence, mental health, and culture were all mentioned across supervisory groups. Many of the supervisors' groups also requested topics on time management and supervising current generation of workers. One written comment requested training on current evidence based practice in child welfare.

Resources. Also similar to the workers' perspective, supervisors reported the deficit of resources as a strong contributing factor to the dilemmas and challenges faced in OCS. Many of the supervisors who stated they attended the Marsha Salus training, stated that although they thought the training was excellent and agreed with the ideas, they do not have the time or resources to actually implement what she suggested. Further, the agency does not give them the budget to even get stickers or anything to follow through with any of the ideas. "Anything that is done, has to be done out of your own pocket" said one supervisor.

Methods. Majority of supervisors reported a need to increase opportunities for new hires to job shadow experienced workers as part of the NWO before assigning them a caseload. Supervisors also reported that there should be some supervisors for each unit that do nothing but provide "real supervision". Supervisors report that they are too busy to really supervise because they have to correct so many grammatical errors on reports and carry their own caseloads. Many supervisors reported that they believe there is a limited value to classroom style training and that the majority of training comes from time and experience in the field.

Many supervisor groups seemed to have difficulty separating skill development from task performance. When discussions about transfer of learning and/or training needs occurred, it often required a lot of rephrasing and offering of scenarios to get supervisors to see the difference between workers completing agency tasks independently and workers' building professional skills. Exploring how training and/or supervision plays a role in those areas continued to remain uncertain to many of them per self-reports. Many stated that the TS does

not address that type of differentiation and some verbally questioned if it is even relevant to child welfare. The majority theme for method of learning is through trial and error over time. Many supervisors reported, "you just learn as you go and in time you know what to do".

Other General Comments from Supervisors' Perspective.

Many supervisors reported concern that state office selected models from other states and just try to make them work in Louisiana when they might not even be right for here. They verbalized concern for the lack of input from the field, and that when input is solicited it is ignored. Supervisors also reported there is a communication problem within the TS. They are not informed about what is included in the NWO or what is expected of them as supervisors when their new hire returns from NWO. There is a lack of continuity in training per supervisors' report. Orientation starts out strong, covers many things in a short amount of time with the new hire generally having no context/frame of reference to absorb the material, then training basically falls off, and is random and intermittent. Supervisors report there needs to be more follow up as to how employees are doing in applying the skills/information learned. Training needs to be more spread out across the year and needs to build more on itself instead of being random.

State Office Representatives' Perspectives
Actors

Comments from the state level groups pertaining to actual employees of OCS tended to focus in two main areas. Acknowledgements of the diversity, past field experience, and child welfare practice knowledge of the current trainers of the TS system were frequently noted as strengths to the system. University partners were identified as other contributors that strengthen the TS.

Participants also identified that they believe new workers are often given high caseloads as soon as they return to their units from NWO. They noted that they realize this is due to budget deficits and staff shortages; however, they believe this contributes to new workers becoming overwhelmed, blocking what was learned in new orientation and then ultimately quitting. The prevalence of staff shortage further impedes supervisors and managers from adequately supporting and guiding new workers to through this transition period.

Events
These groups had the most written comments regarding the provision of increasing the frequency and specialization of trainings as compared to any other groups. There were numerous written comments on the tool as to the specific types of specialized trainings that are needed with an emphasis that they should be offered year round to **all** OCS employees. These comments were frequently made in verbal discussions across all groups in this assessment process. This level had the most participants to document these needs on an individual basis before any group discussions began. Some of the suggested types of training included management skills, adoption certification, working with foster parents, clinical skills development, domestic

violence, substance abuse, mental health, and education. Participants stated trainings should be offered around the regions to minimize staff travel for in-house sponsored trainings.

Processes
Topics/Content*.* As mentioned previously, these groups had the highest frequency of documenting need for specific specialized trainings on the assessment tool. In addition to the topics mentioned above. Participants noted that the trainings need to delve beyond the orientation or introductory level and provide more depth and knowledge as to how to integrate the concepts into everyday child welfare practice and decision-making. A common noted strength of the TS' NWO is that it clearly links the mission statement of OCS to the worker role.

Resources. The need for a "universal training data system" was documented by one participant as a lacking resource for the TS. This resource need was further supported in several of the group discussions throughout the assessment process. Materials that are reflective of current society was noted as a resource need for the TS. The use of teleconferences was noted as a strength by another participant. However, in group discussions, this had mixed responses in terms of its perceived value as a mechanism for learning and training.

Methods. Participants identified a need for mentoring, job shadowing or coaching as an additional component to the TS for all regions. This comment was frequently noted on several assessment tools as a method to strengthen the TS for new workers and for new supervisors. Participants recorded that there is a need for increased coordination and time for new workers and supervisors to absorb and integrate the new knowledge they learn to their new roles. Participants added that there is a high need for all supervisors to receive training at time of promotion and that it needs to be "more hand on". Numerous comments were made that there is too much inconsistency in who receives supervisory training and in the timing in which it is received, "if at all".

Participants reported that clarity and linkage to policy and procedures needs to be improved in trainings. This improvement should include increased consistency across all regions of the state. This latter comment was frequently made in the verbal discussions of the focus groups.

General Comments
Documentation for increased sensitivity and support from management was noted on several assessment forms. Requests for the allowance of more time to be released to supervisors for the purpose of supervision and transfer of learning were frequently noted. The most frequently cited comment was the need for ongoing, diverse training for all OCS staff that is relevant to the current population of children and families served.

A Summary of Major Qualitative Themes from the Focus Groups

Part 1: Summary of Workers' Focus Group Discussions

A. *Workers' Impressions of Other Workers*
- Some staff expressed concern about pay discrepancies. New workers receive retention raises along with a new minimum base pay and make more than a worker with 2 years experience.

- Some new workers lack understanding/knowledge regarding cultural/class issues relevant to the families/communities in which the majority of child welfare services are provided. Also, many "more senior staff" (i.e., those workers having worked many years at OCS) seem not to care about children/families to new/incoming workers and appear judgmental about current pop culture trends of today's youth.

- There is a "different breed of worker coming into DSS, now and they want instant gratification versus those from a different generation that will hang in there until retirement". The agency needs to be able to relate better to the new generation of workers being hired.

- Some workers leave service because they are expected to do so much without the tools to accomplish the tasks.

- Workers are seeing themselves as dominated by paperwork or acting as case managers. They report concerns that agency is losing the "social work, child welfare professionalism" in the work that is being done. They attribute the loss to the organizational culture of the agency. The agency was defined as OCS & state office personnel. The organizational culture was identified as punitive, disconnected from the field, and compliance oriented rather than quality care oriented.

B. *Workers' Impressions of Supervisors*
- Supervisors need to identify the strengths and weaknesses of staff and facilitate the coordination of linking staff to appropriate trainings for their professional development.

- Supervisors need to receive training on policies, programs, and pilots (after kinks are worked out) prior to other staff. Thus, they would be available to help staff during learning process.

- "We don't know what information supervisors take in and we don't know how they apply it". This was a very common statement made in the workers' groups and an additional caveat that there is a very broad range of supervisory styles and practices across supervisors within the OCS agency.

- "Supervisors overwork good workers because they know the work will get done".

- Supervisors need training on building sensitivity; some supervisors are harsh on workers and appear insensitive to the toll and demands that child welfare practice takes on field workers' emotional and physical lives. Supervisors are not placed in supervisory positions based on any clear, leadership skills, abilities or other performance based rationale. There is a popular perception that supervisory promotions are more commonly based on "who you know and the interpersonal relationships you have" than on actual employment merit.

- Supervisors, as a general group, do not support change or encourage self-care or professional development of themselves or their supervisees.

- Determination of worker having a quality supervisor is very random. Workers' perceive the quality supervisors as the luck of the draw, based on individual characteristics of people. Reports across groups were consistent that a few workers reported having "great supervisory" experiences and the majority had ineffective or "horrible" supervisory experiences. The vast majority of workers agreed that those with "good/great supervisors" had them because those individuals had skills and knowledge that were either innate or learned outside of the OCS system.

C. Responses to Critical Questions

Critical Question # 1. *Does the training system build skills in conducting and quality integrating and updating throughout the life of the case:*
   a. *safety assessments*
   b. *risk assessments*
   c. *assessment of family functioning*
   d. *worker visits and other contacts with children/youth and families?*

Safety and risk assessments. Workers report the training system provides a lot of information upon hire that is almost too overwhelming, with little frame of reference for new employees to digest. There is a heavy emphasis and relevance to the child protection investigation (CPI) division in the new worker orientation (NOW). Training falls short in terms of ongoing assessments for the life of the case and in terms of application to programs beyond CPI. Suggestions for improvement included having more application across all OCS programs, with more realistic scenarios. New workers should have opportunities to apply safety & risk assessment processes across the life of the case using cases transitioning across programs in OCS for learning purposes. Also, more training for workers at all levels, including upper management with more attention to scenarios that are culturally, economically, geographically, and temporally relevant, needs to be offered throughout the year.

Assessment of family functioning. The FATS rollout was introduced at NWO as well as across the regions, but without computers or the full form. Training on this new method was too quick. "It was forced on us". It would be more helpful if it "was broken down into a weeklong training,

using computers, including the full form, offered in a hands-on format." Workers who had training on FATS during roll out period, stated "the timing was off". Many had the training several months before the equipment or forms were accessible to their units. Some workers still have not received the FATS training. Other workers stated they were sent from programs that are not yet (or perhaps never will) using FATS.

A large proportion of the worker groups reported not liking the new system and that their community partners are equally dissatisfied. They added that the preference is to the previous psychosocial assessment (PSA) model. Complaints include the system takes a lot longer, is more cumbersome, is less fluid to the interview process, lacks appropriate sections pertinent to family/child intervention areas in need of attention, and due to time constraints, workers are cutting corners and not using all components of all the various assessment to meet regulatory compliances.

Specific community partners that have verbalized complaints to workers included judges, psychologists, and attorneys. Their reported complaints included that the information is harder to find on the new FATS form because it is less concise than the PSA and that information previously included on the PSA is often missing from the FATS.

Workers verbalized frustrations that this is another example of State Office "fixing something that was not broken and how removed State Office is from what front line workers do." "They made this decision without any input from the people actually doing the work and without thinking of the realities of the field in context of the actual children, families and all the requirements in which the workers must operate within to meet mandates to remain in compliance for the agency to remain free of legal and financial sanctions." This was an overwhelming sentiment across worker groups.

Critical Question # 2. *Does the TS builds skills in engaging and collaborating with families, partners, and agency staff at all levels and others involved with serving families?*

Training on collaborating with families. Some workers stated that if the worker does not come from a social work program, then they would be lost in this area. Workers stated training on collaborating with families is not addressed at OCS. Many workers reported, "training tells you it's a policy but not how to do it". "You just learn through practice and experience" was another common response by workers regarding this area. A few workers suggested that if this area were to be added to training to consider "hiring retired staff as facilitators".

Collaborate with agency staff. Most workers report autonomous learning about other agency staff and manners in which to deal with them. They state that this is not taught in the TS. Some workers identified fear of "stepping on others toes" and that inter-collaboration was perceived as something to avoid. Additionally, workers report that even within the same unit, each supervisor can have his/her own way of performing routine tasks; therefore, the idea of collaborating across units is not highly sought out; creates too much confusion. When the topic of handling inter-

parish cases was introduced, participants would unanimously groan and verbalize constant difficulty in handling such cases because of lack of uniformity from one office to another and one court to another in how cases are handled. Workers reported these situations create a lot of angst for all parties involved due to the lack of consistency. "It's like we're not all from the same agency, operating under the same rules or the same laws" was a frequent comment heard.

Collaborate with partners. Most workers reported they learn by their own experiences. Several participants required clarification on what "engaging and collaborating with partners" meant. The majority of workers stated this aspect is not formally addressed in the TS. A few reported gaining guidance from co-workers or their supervisors. Several participants stated, "It's something you just learn as you go." The legal and court systems and CASA volunteers were consistently reported as the most tenuous partnerships with which to work. A few groups also mentioned a need for assistance in increased training pertaining to partnerships, relationships, and roles with schools.

Critical Question # 3. *Does the TS provide supervisors with defined methods and opportunities to transfer learning and thereby apply skills and knowledge learned to their day-to-day work?*
   a.   *for supervisors themselves*
   b.   *for their supervisees?*

Transfer of learning for supervisors. Maybe supervisors could be taught how to transfer learning to staff. Can the supervisor give the information to a CW3 to train staff? Majority of workers expressed uncertainty in how to respond to this question. Workers consistently reported, "There is not enough time in a day to get work done". Some workers stated they need time management training. They believe this would help make sure everyone had the tools to do their job effectively and efficiently.

Workers also reported that time management training could also help identify people's workloads so those with low workload could assist workers with higher workloads. Other workers reported that the system/agency has unrealistic expectations and demands on them and they (upper managers) keep making changes without any real appreciation or knowledge for the realities of what occurs in the field. "State office is removed from what we do". Further, workers add that training that is provided for the updates/changes often does not match the realities of the cases/situations typical of a caseworker or with the expectations/demands of the community partners, especially the courts.

Transfer of learning for supervisees. Workers report that once they are trained in something, after a short period, changes are made to the information that was just shared with them. Workers report that State Office needs to work out the kinks in training before they roll out training statewide so the number of revisions made to policies and practices is minimized. Workers also reported that TS should improve on informing community partners of changes that are made and of the child welfare worker specialists' roles and responsibilities, as well as their (i.e., the community partners) roles & responsibilities in terms of mandatory reporting, state &

federal regulations related to child well-being factors, and all other relevant laws and agency policy changes. Workers believe this information should be clearly communicated in a timely fashion. Workers also believe they should be more adequately supported by administration, including the Governor's Office, instead, the perception is that they many reported feeling scapegoated to the public and by the judges.

Critical Question # 4. *Does the TS provides knowledge and skills to supervisors in retaining and promoting workers through: 1) developing leadership; 2) mitigating secondary trauma; 3) encouraging self-care; 4) rewarding quality performance and 5) other?*

General comments. The majority of workers reported uncertainty of knowledge as to whether the TS actually address these areas with supervisors. An overwhelming majority of responses perceived the application of these skills and knowledge as individual traits of a supervisor and not as specific skill sets that had been taught through training and then applied in the work environment. Very few of the workers were familiar with the term "mitigating secondary trauma". The majority of workers perceived notions of self-care as antithetical to the work environment, with increased intensity as movement occurs up the organizational system. That is, the workers stated a belief that the higher levels of OCS have even less concern or regard for their well-being than their immediate supervisors.

Developing leadership. The vast majority of workers did not see this as an area that is addressed by the TS. Advancements and promotions are viewed as occurrences based more on the political and social climate of the agency or unit than the skills and abilities of the individual workers.

Mitigating secondary trauma. Once the meaning of the concept was clarified, the majority of workers stated they had heard of the service called CISM; however, few had ever participated in a CISM session. The majority of workers reported that if any support is received, it is based on the individual merits of the supervisor and not due to the formal structure of the agency or its TS.

Encouraging self-care. There were more variations in responses for this area. Again, the constant theme emerged that the degree and quality of encouragement of self-care was dependent upon the specific individual characteristics of a supervisor and could not be predicted by agency program, geographic region or training experience. The workers provided greater varieties of examples of ways in which supervisors specifically demonstrate the encouragement of self-care and detract from self-care in the work setting.

Rewarding quality performance. There were variations of responses within and across groups pertaining to rewards of workers. A few participants acknowledged that supervisors had received information on rewarding workers in Salus' training, reporting their supervisors shared information with them about the Salus training and initially followed through on the recommendations made in training. However, they did not "stick with it" over time. Workers reported they believed the supervisors stopped the rewards due to budget cuts and lack of support from higher administration within the agency. The majority of workers agreed that this area is in

great need of attention. Workers reported more emphasis is placed on acknowledging your mistakes and rarely, if ever, acknowledging your successes. Almost every worker requested the need to feel validated by supervisors.

New Question: *How would you (Staff) like to be rewarded? (was posed by the OCS consultant in some of the focus groups – but not all)*
- My supervisor could verbally acknowledge me in a positive, professional manner
- If my supervisor would support me when I worked late
- If my supervisors asked if/how they could help me
- My supervisor took the Marsha Salus training and offered coupons for a job well done. Coupons were for doing a transportation request you did not want, taking half of your on-call duty, etc. Resuming these types of perks would be great
- Go out to lunch
- Do movie and popcorn as a unit
- Have breakfast in the office
- Cards from supervisor
- Emails from supervisor
- Work from home when needed
- What about the old four 10-hour days with Fridays off?
- Supervisor to encourage you to come in a little late when you worked on call until 4:00 am the day before, or leave early because you have had a lot of late nights due to on call. This should be done **without** using your leave time.
- Have your PPR accurately reflect your performance and effort. Many workers expressed a firm belief that supervisors are told by State Office not to make high marks for any employee on the PPR, but to circle average responses.
- Provide support for professional development, including allowances for out of town conferences with financial assistance
- Require all workers to attend at least the mini-MAPP training

Top priorities of what workers want: *(also, a question posed by the facilitator in some of the focus groups, but not all)*
A.   <u>For themselves</u>*:*
- Less overloading at NWO and more incremental training across lifespan of hire
- More hands-on training, especially if training topic involves input into computer and forms. The form and computers should be available at the training for workers to practice along with facilitator rather than providing a form on a screen
- NWO needs to include more information about all OCS programs and how they link together
- Offer training related to testifying in court and other legal system issues
- Offer training or the provision of information on resources and services available within their communities that are able to meet the needs of the children and families they serve

B.   <u>For Related Others</u>
- Offer supervisors training in new policies/initiatives before workers so that they are prepared and informed of changes and are able to support/assist workers in new expectations.
- Community partners, especially courts, schools, and CASA, need to receive ongoing training in the purpose, roles, responsibilities and limitations of OCS workers
- Train judges on how court orders and judgments must be worded to protect the agency and maintain efficiency
- Management and policy makers need to have direct field experience and then ongoing exposure at least once per year
- Supervisors are trained in a program **<u>BEFORE</u>** they begin to supervise others in that program

C.   <u>For All OCS Staff</u>
- Cultural competence training that is ongoing for all staff levels across the agency
- Ethics training regardless of employee's degree or credential/ license
- Develop mechanism to improve OCS cohesiveness to make the agency more uniform and consistent across the state. Currently there are too many inconsistencies from one unit to another in how things are interpreted.
- Provide ongoing interagency updates – develop a mechanism for staff to remain aware of all of OCS' programs and how they relate to each other

Part 2: Summary of Supervisors' Focus Group Discussions

A. Supervisors' Impressions of Workers
- "Generation gap" **-** Many supervisors gave statements relating to the sentiment that new workers are from "a different generation" "have a different or no work ethic". They believe workers lack motivation, the ability to generalize skills from one situation to another, are more interested in meeting their own needs than the needs of the children/families, are only interested in more money, and have "attitudes." Supervisors reported difficulties in knowing how to manage workers of this incoming workforce.

- Supervisors frequently reported that workers have poor writing skills, especially grammar. They need better interpersonal skills, and have little knowledge about how to present themselves professionally, especially in court, were additional common impressions made by supervisors across groups.

- Supervisors found that workers have difficulty discerning important information from extraneous details. They believe that workers are overwhelmed, inadequately supported, ill prepared for the realities of the situations and circumstances present in the child welfare field. Supervisors believe workers lack cultural knowledge, knowledge on substance use and abuse, domestic violence, and critical thinking skills.

- Supervisors report observations that workers lack concrete knowledge of how to perform their jobs when they return from NWO and that there is no familiarity with agency forms. Supervisors recommended new workers be matched with learning partners to help transfer of learning from orientation and to have a model of good interviewing skills.

B. *Supervisors' Impressions of Supervisors*
- Supervisors frequently reported that they "Don't know how they are supposed to get it all done." There are many conflicting priorities and they do not have the clear understanding, tools, or supports in managing the conflicting priorities. "The people making policies are not taking into account the realities of how this job is done." For example, cases of abuse and neglect are reported from a wide geographic area and can all be assigned to workers in one office. Caseloads for one worker can spread out as far as Luling to Grammercy. Workers have to drive long distances and are not being reimbursed for mileage. Workers are supposed to get a state vehicle but they often are not available. Workers are not supposed to work overtime, but the demands of removals, emergencies, and placements all require the worker to work overtime and on holidays. "Workers are required to give foster parents their cell phone numbers but they are not reimbursed for using their personal cell phone to make work related calls".

- Many reported that supervisors are overworked, under-supported, and under-trained. Only some supervisors were "invited" to attend the Marsha Salus training. The timing of the invitation to attend training was irrelevant to the assignment to position of supervisor (ranged from a few months in supervisory position to over 10 years in position). Those who went to her training reported it to be very helpful, but they returned to a unit understaffed and in crisis mode. These attendees report having a difficult time trying to implement the strategies they learned. Many supervisors reported never receiving any supervisory specific training.

- Supervisors made numerous reports of inconsistencies across styles of supervisors and district managers as movement advances in the organizational structure. Supervisors reported that roles and expectations of supervisors are not clearly defined by TS or OCS.

- Some supervisors suggested having all new supervisors work with a veteran supervisor for training, otherwise there is no training for supervisors. They also expressed an interest in seeing some pre-supervisor training. For example, a CWSIII can be trained early and not "thrown to the wolves".

- Supervisors shared that they used to have a clerical aid who helped with judgments, requested birth certificates, opened cases, did FATS forms, archiving, TIPS, etc. The aide's position was a worker position that was filled with a clerical person. The aide typically helped foster care make quality visits and improve working with families.

- Supervisors shared that they cannot learn while putting fires out. They need a training with another supervisor acting as backup on the unit (so the supervisor can actually sit

through the training and not worry about emergencies). (Note: Many supervisors were leaving the focus groups to attend to phone calls throughout the state.)

C. *Supervisors Impressions of the Training System*

General Comments

- Supervisors reported an entrenched disconnect between State Office and the local offices. Their perception is that those who make the policies, design, and implement the trainings are completely out of touch with the realities of the work done on a day-to-day basis in the field. Further, the supervisors report that they have tried to use their voices repeatedly and are never listened to by State Office. Instead, "Those in power go to outside sources, who know nothing about our families, for the answers we have here".

- Supervisors frequently recommended that they receive interpersonal training so they can understand how to identify different learning styles of their supervisees and how to deal with difficult people.

- Many supervisors believe the NWO is too broad. Supervisors consistently found that workers returning from NWO could not jump right into cases. NWO does not include any training on completing forms. Supervisors shared that they are unaware of the material that is presented in this training. Many suggested that they should receive a condensed version of the training so that they can know what their new workers are learning. Others stated that at a minimum, supervisors should be informed by the Training Division as to the needs that are remaining to be addressed once new workers complete NWO. Some supervisors also suggested that feedback from Training Division regarding new workers' performances in NWO would be helpful. Such feedback would provide supervisors with a context or frame of reference regarding the new workers' strengths, weaknesses, and immediate learning needs and capabilities.

D. *Responses to Critical Questions*

Critical Question # 1. *Does the training system build skills in conducting and quality integrating and updating throughout the life of the case:*
   a.   *safety assessments*
   b.   *risk assessments*
   c.   *assessment of family functioning*
   d.   *worker visits and other contacts with children/youth and families?*

Safety Assessments. Some supervisors report that training leaves workers confused. Many reported workers are flooded with information at NWO but nothing is emphasized about assessments being an ongoing process nor is training covered on an ongoing basis. Responses were varied across groups regarding which component of TS provides training on safety assessments and the quality to which training in this area is provided. Many reported that any meaningful training that was provided was done by the supervisors. Additional needs for more

training of safety assessments across programs was frequently expressed in supervisors' groups. The general perception is that the current training is predominantly limited to a focus on CI & Foster Care. A few supervisors commented that they received more training on how to keep themselves safe than on how to assess safety for the betterment of a child.

Risk Assessments. The majority of supervisors stated that risk assessments are not addressed much differently than safety assessments in NWO. A few reported the SDM in theory is good, but often is not understood or implemented correctly. Another limitation is that SDM is only used by Foster Care. Many supervisors reported the need for training to address this area in a manner that applies across all programs and throughout the life of a case. Supervisors would like to see more of their workers using critical thinking skills in order to incorporate what they hear, observe and read in reports from partners.

Training to improve employees' understanding of and ability to assess the difference between safety and risk was reported as a high need across the state. It was added, that this need is applicable to all levels of OCS staff, not just new workers.

Assessment of Family Functioning. Supervisors have observed that when workers are trained on FATS (Assessment of Family Functioning), they are provided with very valuable information, which helps them complete both safety and risk assessments. The training should be more interactive and should include the use of a computer.

Supervisors consistently reported that systems are not integrated. FATS, ACCESS, SDM are all separate systems. They believe that they could learn more about a case across programs if they had access to all systems. They also believe their workers could write reports and complete assessments more efficiently if they also had access to all systems.

Supervisors concluded that during NWO, there is not enough information (or any) on working with difficult families and not enough on cultural competence.

Supervisors requested that they be allowed to meet periodically to be informed of policy changes and updates. They shared that aside from the focus groups, they do not meet with other supervisors much. (Note: Supervisors did spend a considerable amount of time sharing information across programs as well as clarifying a variety of policies and procedures.)

Supervisors requested specialized training for foster parents, staff and themselves on runaways, drug use, sexual perpetrators, youth who are suicidal, aggressive youth, homicidal youth and cultural issues. They shared that many of their children are stepped down from residential facilities where they have received around the clock care and put into someone's home. The foster family requires more preparation in order to deal with some of these complex cases. Supervisors believe that their workers need to be able to educate the foster parents as to what to expect.

Many supervisors reported that the previous assessment tool as more useful and relevant to the work performed. They also stated it was more efficient and community partners prefer previous tool to current tool. Court representatives are reportedly frustrated with the length of the new assessments. Contract providers (e.g., outside therapists, psychologists, etc.) report having greater difficulty finding all the information on children relevant to their treatment because of the numerous sections, "the information is spread out in too many different places". Supervisors added that workers are having greater difficulty with the transition to a pure behavioral focus as many of the problems or areas in need of attention may relate to accessing resources or other issues that are not limited to an individual behavior change focus.

Supervisors shared that the timing of training with FATS was poorly coordinated and disjointed across the state. Many report a multitude of interpretations and lack of consistency across units and regions regarding how the tool is being utilized. Training did not include hands on use of computers or the full working instrument. "Everything was mock and only pieces of the form were presented." Many supervisors reported that regions and units are continuing to struggle with using the system.

Worker visits. The majority of supervisors reported that the TS provides an overview of worker visits (i.e., that "they are required") and perhaps a brief review of basic rapport building tips. Supervisors reported a need for training to address facilitating purposeful, quality visits. Supervisors would like workers to learn how to ask tough questions of a family, how to engage a family, and how to get responses to their questions. Supervisors want the workers to learn to be professional in their interviews and how to collect valuable information from various family members.

Supervisors believe that the agency is increasingly fostering a climate of prioritizing paperwork. More impetus is placed on tracking the occurrence of an action without any concern as to the quality of that action. They also reported that some of the requirements of visits based on instruments, especially the SDM, are unrealistic. SDM may require four visits per month for a high-risk case. The client is the child and the worker does not get "credit" for family visits, especially with multiple parents. Supervisors report that this is probably the weakest or most neglected area of the items in this category.

Critical Question # 2. *Does the TS builds skills in engaging and collaborating with families, partners, and agency staff at all levels and others involved with serving families?*

Collaborating with families. Supervisors reported seeing more and more families in crisis and under stress. They believe all workers need more training on how to deal with families in these situations. Supervisors also reported that workers need more training on how to deal with different personalities and families impacted by substance abuse, domestic violence, poverty, etc. Supervisors believe that any training in this area (if provided) comes from modeling from supervisors. "It is not something that is talked about but workers who pay attention catch on. Some just come with it naturally; it's not even something you have to teach." Some supervisors

believe that support, engagement and collaboration with foster parents are declining. Some supervisors reported that the foster families are not getting the support they used to. A supervisor recounted how a foster parent told her that a front line worker told her, "Don't love these kids too much, they are not yours".

Collaborating with partners. Supervisors do not believe workers are trained on how to go to court. They reported that workers fear court, do not know how to prepare them and do not know how to testify. Workers also fear CASA, because in their view, judges value CASA advocates and their reports more than OCS staff.

Supervisors reported that working with partners is done more on the job than through the TS. Supervisors consistently found that community partners need to be educated on the role of OCS, reporting requirements, and other resources for families. They would like to see workers attend orientations in schools at the beginning of the year to talk to school staff about reporting requirements, the role of OCS, as well as resources for families.

Collaborating with agency staff. Supervisors believe their workers know how to collaborate with other workers in their region through experiences on the job. Supervisors do not believe workers know how to collaborate with other agency staff outside their region. Some supervisors believe workers do not understand how all the programs (e.g., CI, HD, FS, FC, etc.) work together throughout the life of a case.

Critical Question # 3. *Does the TS provide supervisors with defined methods and opportunities to transfer learning and thereby apply skills and knowledge learned to their day-to-day work?*
  a. *for supervisors themselves*
  b. *for their supervisees?*

Transfer of learning for supervisors. Many supervisors reported that it is assumed that they know how to transfer learning since they know how to do their jobs. No one tells them how to do it (except Marsha Salus), they just say, "get it done." Many supervisors reported being in the supervisory position before they were trained.

Transfer of learning for supervisees. Overall supervisors think Marsha Salus and CPTP training are helpful. They report that they get the training, but they do not have time to implement what they learn due to their unit being understaffed and in a crisis mode. They would like to see more structured training (e.g., Marsha Salus type training) provided as well as more follow-ups provided on CPTP training. Supervisors reported that in order to pass information along to their workers, they need help learning how to deal with different learning styles (of the workers) and adapt the transfer of learning in a meaningful way. Many supervisors reported that, "There is no time to transfer learning to staff." Supervisors also suggested that training for new supervisors should occur within the first month of starting the supervisory position. New supervisory

training needs to include specific information on all OCS programs as supervisors have to either supervise across programs and/or provide on call support for programs in which they have never worked. Ongoing, current policy and procedure information on all programs needs to be readily available as well.

Critical Question # 4. *Does the TS provides knowledge and skills to supervisors in retaining and promoting workers through: 1) developing leadership; 2) mitigating secondary trauma; 3) encouraging self-care; 4) rewarding quality performance; 5) other?*

The responses for the areas below were divided between supervisors who attended Marsha Salus training and those who did not. The majority of supervisors who did not attend the Marsha Salus training reported that they have not received training in any of these areas and do not believe the agency as a whole supports supervisors or workers in any of the areas. They also reported that if any of these areas are provided or addressed in a unit, it is because of the individual skills that the supervisor brings to that particular unit.

Responses by Supervisors who did not receive Marsha Salus Training
- *Leadership.* The TS does not provide any leadership development.
- *Mitigating secondary trauma.* Supervisors reported that they have CISM, but do not do enough for workers dealing with difficult situations. They shared that they believe the agency instills in all staff that they have to move on, the job must be done. Supervisors think that their workers get saturated and shut down.
- *Self-care*. Most supervisors shared that the TS does not provide training on self-care. A minority of supervisors reported that LIFTS helps somewhat.
- *Reward quality performance.* Mixed responses were obtained for this area. Some said supervisors know how to effectively administer PPRs and can reward their workers and acknowledge their performance. Other said no, supervisors do things depending on their own likes and dislikes.

New question. *Top priorities of what supervisors want: (question posed by Tara A. in some, but not all focus groups)*
- Training with community partners on what OCS does including regional training in schools, court, hospitals, police, DA and CASA.
- Staff development
- Work with judges. Need quarterly meeting or two times per year with Judges.
- Forensic interviewing skills are needed for new workers.
- Time management training
- Self-care training for supervisors and staff
- Workers need training on working with difficult clients and in specialization topics, such as, substance abuse, DV, etc
- Mock trials would be helpful at NWO

- More training by legal staff on court, court orders, reports, expectations, what to say to a defense attorney
- If supervisors receive training, it would be helpful to have regional training for ½ day.
- Management meetings quarterly to include supervisors
- Cross training on all OCS programs

New question. *How Supervisors want to be rewarded: (question posed by Tara A. in some, but not all, focus groups)*
- Verbal praise from anyone
- Don't blame supervisors for a lot of things, take time to share how DM and RA's hands are tied too
- More causal dress days
- Employee of the month newsletter
- Being able to attend a conference

Part 3: Summary of State Office Staff Focus Group Discussions

A. General Comments
- Many comments were made concerning the lack of ongoing cohesiveness and organization to the TS beyond the initial orientation training. The participants seemed to unanimously agree that the TS provides a lot of training opportunities; however, the sessions seem to be randomly offered, "without rhyme or reason" (was one participant's statement).
- OCS has the shortest new worker orientation across the nation. There is not enough depth to the training. There is no ongoing training once new worker orientation is completed. There is a lack of reinforcement of what workers learn in NWO. They come back from orientation and get cases right away. They cannot fit the concepts they learn with the experience of managing cases. The training does not help teach critical thinking.
- NWO needs to include developmental stages and workers need to know how separation issues impact children and their behavior. It can help add substance to their decision making. "Back to basics" is needed. Workers are not getting the "why" behind the material they learn.
- OCS is so compliance based; the quality of the content is suffering.
- New workers need to learn to treat every case like it will be under the microscope so they document properly, they are thorough in their decision-making, and they understand how important everything they do is to the case.
- The speed at which "we" roll out tools baffled workers (e.g., FATS, SDM, etc.). Staff are not mastering tools before others come out. The transfer of learning is impacted by speed of continuous changes and revisions.
- Training staff often do not come to meetings during the development of tools so they do not understand the "why" behind the changes in instruments and policies. Therefore,

when they go to present the tool to frontline staff, the training is superficial.

- There is no plan for disseminating information when field staff are involved in the development of the tool.
- Trainings should incorporate community partners and foster parents. E could be learning together. Trainings should be integrated. The language we use would have to be clarified for community partners.
- The inconsistencies with practice across the state is a sign of how weak the TS is. Regions develop their own forms at the RA and supervisory levels.
- There is a disconnect between the TS and program departments regarding updating on policy and practice. The TS does not instruct workers on how to find policy updates and practice guidelines. A lot of discussion was spent in this area, especially related to the apparent gaps between state office and the field.
- Numerous comments were made that related back to perceptions of state office showing disregard, disrespect, and discontinuity for those at the field level. Participants stated they believed state office management needs sensitivity training.
- They also added that the mechanism by which changes are made needs to be re-evaluated. Operational issues of the organization seem to be intertwined with training issues.
- Participants discussed frustrations with communication barriers, multiple changes, lack of true piloting for new initiatives, lack of adequate resources, and lack of specialized trainings as some of the most pressing issues to address in the training system currently.
- There is a lack of clinical or specialized training. We are now practicing social work more like case management and less like clinical or professional social work.
- Another frequent complaint related to the reported inequity in determination of approval for attendance to trainings. Participants reported that once a worker/supervisor discovers training is available, and then a request to attend the training must be submitted. Reportedly these requests are not uniformly or equitably approved within a unit or across the state.
- Further concerns were raised regarding the practice of "only those with higher salaries getting to attend NASW and other professional conferences outside the agency, while those of us with lower salaries are limited to just the ones the agency puts on".
- The use of trainers who have been in the field was mentioned as strength of the training system.

B. *Responses to Critical Questions*

Critical Question # 1. *Does the training system build skills in conducting and quality integrating and updating throughout the life of the case:*

         a. *safety assessments*
         b. *risk assessments*
         c. *assessment of family functioning*
         d. *worker visits and other contacts with children/youth and families?*

Safety assessments. The TS does give knowledge and a foundation for conducting safety assessments, but it does not help in the transfer of learning. There is a need for mentoring to walk staff through the process. It is trusted that workers will "pick it up as they go". A consensus was that the training system does a good job at providing an initial orientation of introducing these concepts related to safety assessments to new workers. The group agreed that the shortcomings are in the lack of providing any training beyond the initial introductory level. They stated there is nothing in the TS that builds skills throughout the life of the case or the "career of the worker".

Risk assessments. There is a lot of confusion between the safety and risk. This area is considered weaker than safety assessments due to this confusion.

Assessment of family functioning. Again, many stated this is done well at an introductory level at orientation but nothing beyond that. Some concerns were discussed regarding FATS, some thought the tool generates plans that are not realistic to the resources available in the community; it sets families (and workers) up to fail. There is nothing in TS for how to address these resource gaps. Others expressed concerns that workers do not know how to engage families, talk to clients, ask "tough questions", or elicit honest feedback.

Worker visits. Many verbalized this as the weakest area overall in training. State workers conduct "drive by visits". Participants report this as a frontline worker and supervisor issue; adding, because of staff turnover, supervisors are young and cannot learn supervisory skills and training new staff. Some participants reported they did not believe this area is addressed in training and see this as "something worker just develops on own with experience". Others commented that training is needed regarding interviewing skills and the addition of shadowing an experienced worker along with adjusting caseload sizes to more appropriate and manageable levels so that workers can dedicate real time to visits.

Critical Question # 2. *Does the TS builds skills in engaging and collaborating with families, partners, and agency staff at all levels and others involved with serving families?*

Collaborating with families. Many participants believe the concept of collaborating with families is introduced at orientation but is not built upon further. Participants verbalized concern that the agency is moving away from hiring persons with social work or related degree backgrounds. They see this as problematic because the new workers that come in without these backgrounds do not seem to engage as well with the families, and more adversarial relationships are being established by these workers with families. Staff reported that consumers still are not included in the process at OCS. Staff do not count parents as clients due to policy changes. Comment was made that OCS had piloted family group decision-making years ago. It was a great tool and created positive relationships. It was cut because OCS "ran out of money". Family team building was then put on hold. Budget issues are considered an ongoing barrier to collaboration in addition to training. There is no money to pay mileage to help bring family to the table. This same concern is true for partner collaboration.

Collaborating with partners. Some believe there is some improvement since accreditation. With regards to residential providers, they train their own staff and we do not know what is included in that training. Further, "we do not offer the residential folks training on our policies so there is lack of integration with what we want to see. The residential section and the training department should work together to integrate TA with NRC." Others questioned the appropriateness of this area as an activity/topic as part of TS. Some staff stated they believe collaboration with partners to be an area that is exclusively covered by "higher ups and those of us at the bottom don't know what's going".

Collaborating with agency staff. A large number of participants verbalized that this is a "huge problem" within the agency. They do not believe it is addressed in TS. They stated there is a lot of deviation and variety across the state in the way in which policies are interpreted and implemented. Training availability also varies widely across the state. Participants reported that workers need to see how the whole system works form prevention, CPI, foster care, adoption, etc. They need to see their role in the continuum. Many believe that CPI workers often do not realize they set the tone with working with the family and the foster care workers may have to rebuild a relationship afterwards.

Critical Question # 3. *Does the TS provide supervisors with defined methods and opportunities to transfer learning and thereby apply skills and knowledge learned to their day-to-day work?*
   a.   for supervisors themselves,
   b.   for their supervisees?

Transfer of learning for supervisors. Some commented that Marsha Salus training is good but there is no follow up. CPTP provides basic knowledge in management theory but does not have any child welfare related information. Consensus of participants is that the TS does not have anything consistently and uniformly offered at the time of promotion. This is concerning to them as "a good worker does not necessarily make a good supervisor". Supervisors are promoted and not given the tools to do their jobs. They need to be remolded from workers to supervisors. There needs to be a process to groom them for leadership like a leadership academy. It can help the worker understand the supervisor's expectations.

Many concerns in this area generated back to frustrations concerning communications between state office and the regions, along with a lack of a clear practice model. Some participants stated that state office sends out disjointed messages. We should support regional offices. Instead, regional offices think state office is a barrier. The focus at state office is just the big picture. We need to learn how to communicate down. A practice model needs to be developed and then policies and other communications and directives need to be shown how they fit into the practice model.

Transfer learning to supervisees. Some stated there is a lack of support from higher administration in providing the time and resources (i.e., adequate staffing patterns) for real supervision to occur so that transfer of learning can also occur.

Critical Question # 4. *Does the TS provides knowledge and skills to supervisors in retaining and promoting workers through: 1) developing leadership; 2) mitigating secondary trauma; 3) encouraging self-care; 4) rewarding quality performance; 5) other?*

Developing leadership. There were mixed responses to this area. Some stated that CPTP does talk about rewarding quality performance. Others commented that training is only good if there is some follow up. Many believed that this goes back to top down attitude, when you create environment to make everyone feel part of team then you get more out of everyone.

Mitigating secondary trauma. "Our staff experience trauma every day." The response of the supervisors depends on their skill set.

Encouraging self-care. We do not do well at normalizing the realities of this job. Supervisors tell the workers to move on. There is no debriefing after a significant event. Supervisors need to understand the staff's needs so they can help the staff meet the clients' needs.

Rewarding quality performance. Child welfare professionals are not respected. They get that message from the public, CASA, and especially in court. This destroys the staff. The TS does not help prepare them for court, debrief with them, or inform workers of the realities of this job.

Closing Comments

There are some differences between the quantitative and qualitative results for the focus groups. In a few cases the quantitative results show that there is up to a 64% satisfaction rate with how the training system provides training for new workers, provides ongoing training to workers and provides training to supervisors while the qualitative results consistently demonstrated negative responses in these areas. The questions relating to these issues were in the Front Line Child Welfare Specialists section of the Training System Assessment Tool. While in the focus groups, the LCWCWP observers noted that the more global the discussion, in terms of the training system, the more similar the perspectives were to the quantitative results. However, when the discussion drilled down to more specific topics/issues, there were more discrepancies in the data. Observers think this can be attributed to the focus group discussion bringing about clarification on the questions from the tool, generating discussion on more specific training issues/topics needed, and the synergy of the focus groups in sharing their experiences. It appears that conducting both quantitative and qualitative analyses provide a well-rounded view of the perspectives of focus group participants towards the training system.

Summary and Recommendations for Next Steps

Overall, feedback from the workers, supervisors, and state level personnel emphasized similar areas in need of attention. Although the participants varied in years of experience with DSS, program of employment, and position level, their responses were more similar than different. Their most urgent requests from the training system and the agency as a whole were to show more respect for all agency staff, develop more consistency across all programs and regions, prioritize skill development and critical thinking throughout the life of a case and the career of a worker, enhance the connection between state office and the field, demonstrate more of a commitment to a child welfare/social work focus rather than a case work/paperwork focus, provide clinical supervision, provide hands-on training through job shadowing and/or mentoring, and finally to reduce the rate at which changes are made to the training system.

Recommendations:

Immediate recommendations: (0-6 months)
5. Provide more access to Marsha Salus supervision, coaching, mentoring training
6. Hire/Stipend retired supervisors to provide hands-on coaching, training/mentoring for newly promoted supervisors
7. Encourage state office staff to visit regional offices to provide direct communication regarding the agency's commitment to child welfare focus, policy/program updates
8. At all levels within the agency, all staff in management positions should provide some form of praise/acknowledgment to their workers through email, voicemail or hand written notes.

Short term recommendations: (6 months-2 years)
9. Develop a web-based training systems platform similar to what the State of Idaho (although Kentucky has been utilized, that training system is a very well developed and mature model which Louisiana should aspire to emulate, but, at this point in time, the model posited by Idaho is a much more practical system to emulate) has launched, linking universities and OCS as training partners. This system should develop core child welfare training modules for all OCS staff and electives for specializations.   The entire curriculum, with weekly updates should be based on-line with specifically developed on-line tools for workers and supervisors to access via the website. For example a sample court report and an outline identifying the essential, elements of a comprehensive court report could be posted there, workers who were trained in court engagement strategies could after the training refer to these on-line samples as they are putting their reports together for court. There is a great need to customize existing child welfare curriculum in other states for use in the Louisiana OCS system.
10. The State needs to invest financial resources to hire Don Schmidt as a consultant for two or there days, to assist them in evaluating and maximizing their Title IV-E draw down of funds for training, as well as assisting universities in examining how they may claim their IV-E match to maximize the draw down capacity.

11. Restructure the role of clerical staff to include assisting with paperwork (opening cases, completing FAST forms, requesting birth certificates, etc…)
12. Develop leadership training (perhaps a leadership academy) for skilled/motivated workers and supervisors in a structured meaningful way with equal access and opportunities for all staff around the state
13. Reduce the caseload of senior skilled/motivated workers to allow them to provide mentoring to younger staff
14. Train supervisors on new pilot projects/forms well before workers are trained so they can offer support to the newly trained worker
15. Provide more communication/training to partners/stakeholders on the mission/vision of OCS, resources that are available, and limitations of agency involvement
16. Completely redesign the New Worker Orientation (NWO):
    a. Provide a more systematic/organized training with modules focusing on specific content areas
    b. Expand NWO to a period of up to a year
    c. Include basic components of child/adolescent development and how it is impacted by agency involvement
    d. Encourage critical thinking skills and an underlying philosophy of family centered practice allied with the OCS Practice Model
    e. Focus less on forms and more on safety and family engagement
    f. Provide enhanced court training (several modules of training, which is primarily based on a social worker's role in understanding and negotiating the legal and court systems, with some legal staff collaboration in the training, NOT a training dominated by legal personnel telling social workers what they are doing wrong) including mock trials, how to prepare written reports, the nature of the court/DSS relationship, the nature of cross examination
    g. Include job shadowing/mentoring with seasoned workers
    h. Provide supervisors with an overview of material to be covered and their role in the transfer of knowledge
    i. Provide supervisors with feedback on their workers' performance in NWO
    j. Develop specialized training modules by program area in consultation with key program staff and regional offices
    k. Improve access to NWO training by offering modules across all regions of the state
    l. When training on forms is necessary, create more interactive training on forms (that are fully functional) using computers when forms are computerized

Long term recommendations: (2-5 years)
4. Provide joint training with agency staff, universities and partners/stakeholders
5. Develop leadership academy for senior workers/supervisors online
6. Expand the use of technology in the web-based training system platform to include training via webinars, webcasts, teleconferences, and podcasts.

Appendix 1

LOUISIANA DEPARTMENT OF SOCIAL SERVICES
OFFICE OF COMMUNITY SERVICES
TRAINING SYSTEM ASSESSMENT TOOL

Your position (title): _____

Your time in the Agency (DSS): _____

Please refer to each section for instructions. Please complete _all_ sections regardless of your position within the Agency.

Front Line Child Welfare Specialists

Please use the rating scale below to assess the performance of your training system against each of the indicators. Rate all the components of each question by circling the number that reflects your opinion. The rating scale ranges from 1 to 5, as follows below. If you are unsure about a particular indicator, please circle "DK" for Don't Know.

        1 = I strongly disagree
        2 = I disagree
        3 = I neither disagree or agree
        4 = I agree
        5 = I strongly agree

1. The training system provides new hire, ongoing and specialized training in the skills and knowledge needed to understand and implement the agency's mission and vision in accordance with its core values and desired outcomes.

a.	new hire	1	2	3	4	5	DK
b.	ongoing	1	2	3	4	5	DK
c.	specialized	1	2	3	4	5	DK

2. The training system provides workers an understanding of their critical role to manage cases and case plans.
       1   2   3   4   5   DK

3. The training system builds skills in conducting, integrating and updating throughout the life of the case.

a.	safety assessments	1	2	3	4	5	DK
b.	risk assessments	1	2	3	4	5	DK
c.	assessment of family functioning	1	2	3	4	5	DK
d.	quality worker visits and other contacts with						

children/youth and families.	1	2	3	4	5	DK

4. The training system builds skills in engaging and collaborating with families, partners, all levels of agency staff and others involved with serving families.

1	2	3	4	5	DK

5. The training system builds skills and knowledge to meet the needs of children/youth within the context of their culture, community, the entire family and the family's support network.

	1	2	3	4	5	DK
a. culture	1	2	3	4	5	DK
b. community	1	2	3	4	5	DK
c. family's support network	1	2	3	4	5	DK
d. father and paternal resources	1	2	3	4	5	DK

6. The training system builds skills and knowledge to understand and identify how workers' own culture impacts their interactions and decisions as front line child welfare specialists.

1	2	3	4	5	DK

7. The training system provides front line workers with defined methods and opportunities to transfer learning and thereby apply skills and knowledge learned to their day-to-day work.

1	2	3	4	5	DK

Notes:

_____

_____

_____

Supervisors

Please use the rating scale below to assess the performance of your training system against each of the indicators. Rate all the components of each question by circling the number that reflects your opinion. The rating scale ranges from 1 to 5, as follows below. If you are unsure about a particular indicator, please circle "DK" for Don't Know.

        1 = I strongly disagree

        2 = I disagree

        3 = I neither disagree or agree

        4 = I agree

        5 = I strongly agree

1. The training system enhances supervisors' ability to communicate to staff the agency's mission, vision, core values and desired outcomes.

   1   2   3   4   5   DK

2. The training system provides supervisors with training on supervisory roles, duties, expectations and skills.

   a.   initial   1   2   3   4   5   DK
   b.   ongoing   1   2   3   4   5   DK

3. The training system provides supervisors with defined methods and opportunities to transfer learning and thereby apply skills and knowledge learned to their day-to-day work.

   a.   for supervisors themselves   1   2   3   4   5   DK
   b.   for their supervisees   1   2   3   4   5   DK

4. The training system builds skills in and creates opportunities to mentor, coach, and model desired case practice with workers and teams.

   1   2   3   4   5   DK

5. The training system builds skills in how to identify training needs and strengths with individual workers and how to meet those training needs in order to support continued professional development.

   1   2   3   4   5   DK

6. The training system provides knowledge and skills to supervisors in retaining and promoting workers through the means of:

   a.   developing leadership   1   2   3   4   5   DK
   b.   mitigating secondary trauma   1   2   3   4   5   DK
   c.   encouraging self-care   1   2   3   4   5   DK
   d.   rewarding quality performance 1   2   3   4   5   DK

   e.   other (please specify) _____

7. The training system builds skills and knowledge to understand and identify how supervisors' own culture impacts their interactions and decisions as supervisors.

   1   2   3   4   5   DK

Notes:

_____

_____

_____

External Partners & Stakeholders

Please use the rating scale below to assess the performance of your training system against each of the indicators. Rate all the components of each question by circling the number that reflects your opinion. The rating scale ranges from 1 to 5, as follows below. If you are unsure about a particular indicator, please circle "DK" for Don't Know.

        1 = I strongly disagree
        2 = I disagree
        3 = I neither disagree or agree
        4 = I agree
        5 = I strongly agree

1. The training system provides an orientation to the agency's mission, vision, core values and desired outcomes to:
   a. contracted providers — 1 2 3 4 5 DK
   b. other state agencies (e.g., OJJ, OAD, OMH, OCDD, DOL, DOE, etc) — 1 2 3 4 5 DK
   c. community agencies and boards (e.g., United Way agencies, school districts, children/youth planning boards) — 1 2 3 4 5 DK
   d. judicial system (e.g., courts, CASA) — 1 2 3 4 5 DK
   e. law enforcement — 1 2 3 4 5 DK
   f. tribes (i.e., American Indians) — 1 2 3 4 5 DK

2. The training system provides foster/adoptive parents the skills and knowledge needed to understand and implement the agency's mission and vision in accordance with its core values and desired outcomes.
   a. initial — 1 2 3 4 5 DK
   b. ongoing — 1 2 3 4 5 DK
   c. specialized/therapeutic — 1 2 3 4 5 DK

3. The training system builds the skills that foster and adoptive parents need to understand, effectively parent and meet the needs of children/youth in care. — 1 2 3 4 5 DK

4. The training system includes staff from stakeholder agencies in assessing common information needs and assures those needs are addressed through training or other formats. — 1 2 3 4 5 DK

5. The training system encourages courts and other state agencies   1   2   3   4   5   DK
    to participate in agency training needs assessment,
    development, delivery, and evaluation.

6. The training system creates and sustains opportunities
    for managers and staff to participate in cross training in   1   2   3   4   5   DK
    specialty areas such as domestic violence, substance abuse,
    mental health and education.

Notes:

_____

_____

_____

Managers and Administrators

Please review the <u>entire</u> list of topics below. After reviewing, circle the ones you believe should be the top **7** priorities for the training system's focus on the agency's managers (current and upcoming).

1. Orientation to the agency's mission, vision, core values and desired outcomes.

2. Developing and implementing a strategic plan

3. Managing scarce resources to maximum effect

4. Developing and managing contracts with service providers

5. Using quantitative and qualitative data to examine and improve efficiency, quality and outcomes

6. Managing personnel

7. Engaging community and public relations

8. Building appreciation for and skills in soliciting and considering input from staff at all levels.

9. Demonstrating skills in modeling and supporting CQI, teambuilding and shared decision making.

10. Understanding skills and methods of succession planning (e.g. assessing individuals with leadership potential and providing professional development opportunities.)

11. Providing managers with knowledge about the content of the training provided to front line staff and supervisors.

12. Creating opportunities for managers to give input and receive feedback on curriculum design and the effectiveness of training.

13.   Engaging managers in training where appropriate and creates opportunities for them to share expertise and experiences with staff.
14.   Creating opportunities to stay abreast of research and emerging practice enhancements

15.   Providing managers with defined methods and opportunities to assist their supervisees/selves to transfer learning and thereby apply skills and knowledge learned to their day-to-day work.

16.   Other (please specify) _____

17. Other (please specify) _____

Notes:

_____

_____

Summary

When assessing how our agency's training system supports the key organizational tiers (front line child welfare specialists, supervisors, managers, external partners/stakeholders) and consider your answers to items in this assessment.

What are the training system's strengths?

What needs improvement?

Appendix 2

List of Qualitative Codes from Atlas.ti Analysis
(Used in qualitative analysis of comments written-in by focus group members on the Training System Assessment Tool.)

Code Name	Total Occurrence Across All Groups
Accessible across regions	4
Address staff shortage	12
Adjust caseload size	6
Agency vision	1
Assessments not realistic	3
Attend external trainings	3
Better safety training	2
Boring	3
Budget deficit	3
Builds skills	2
Burnout	1
Change length of trainings (shorten)	5
Communication gaps	13
Court relations – negative	4
Court relations – positive	1
CPTP helpful	1
Culture related needed	8
Current & relevant	7
Decision making is lacking	2
Disconnect in TS	18
Documentation skills needed	6
"don't know"	6
Effort to change is noticed of TS	8
Evaluation is needed of TS	4
Exclusivity of attendance to trainings needs to be addressed	5
External collobaration needs to be addressed	8
Follow up to orientation is needed	9
Focus on individuals learning is needed	1
Frequency of trainings is strength	10
Foster parents – how to work w/	10
Free – strength	3
General knowledge is provided in NWO	10
Good general NWO	18
Good supervisors/managers	1
Improve content in trainings	2

Improve policies	8
Improve problem solving skills	1
Improve safety/risk assessment trainings	4
Inconvenient	1
Increase creativity	1
Increase cross-training	4
Increase program specific trainings	3
Increase time implementation of new initiative trainings	3
Input from direct level staff-ignored	4
Input from direct level staff-received	4
Input from outsides- ignored	1
Input from outsiders-recevied	1
Internal collaboration needs improvement	4
Job related training – strength	15
Job shadowing is needed	5
Lack of protocol	5
Lack of skill development in trainings	13
Lack of specialization in training overall	38
Lack of support – TS & state office admin	15
Lack of presentation skills	2
Lack of training on worker visits	2
Link to policy needed	7
Losing social work focus	5
MAPP good	1
Mentoring needed	5
Mission statement connection made in NWO – strength	15
Monitor contracts needed	1
Morale/motivation building training needed	4
More realistic scenarios in training needed	10
Need for increased consistency	13
Need for pilots before changes	2
Need more "hands on" trainings	10
Need trainings on new resources	3
Needs a general overhaul	1
No/little computer training	8
No written comments made on tool	13
Non-job related trainings too often occur	12
Orientation is overwhelming	5
Outdated trainings	5
Policy & procedures are helpful	1
Professional development ongoing– supervision related needed	26
Professional development ongoing– general needed	18
Quality presentations	1
Quality trainers	19

Receptivity of trainers	3
Repetitive training topics	3
Resource deficits need to be addressed	4
Streamline paperwork	4
Support is available	3
The FATS program is wonderful	1
Timing supervision training is offered is off	2
Too broad	4
Too narrow	1
Training on forms is needed	7
Trust is lacking	2
Unorganized	3
Variety	18
Worker safety training is needed	1