



Literature Review

September, 2009

This brief literature synthesis was conducted with the intention of identifying supervision models specific to child welfare, to provide examples of available child welfare supervisory models, to review available literature on child welfare agencies who currently include outcome data as a focus of supervisory practice, and a to provide a list of curricula addressing the use of data in supervision.

I. Developing a Model of Supervision

Social Work Supervision Models

While there is little information available specifically on child welfare models of supervision, models of social work supervision have been commonly accepted for use by the field. In *Child Welfare Supervision* (2009), Brittain summarizes the two models most frequently used in child welfare:

1. Functional Approach

First described by Kadushin in 1976, this model forms the basis for many later adaptations. Focusing on the functional roles that are central to social work supervision, Kadushin and Harkness (2002) identify the three functional roles a supervisor must play:

- *Administrative supervision* focuses on the efficient and effective delivery of services to achieve organizational goals.
- *Educational supervision* is concerned with educating the worker for a more knowledgeable and skilled performance of tasks.
- *Supportive supervision* provides support, sustenance, and motivation to the worker to improve performance" (Brittain, 2009).

Each of the three roles is critical and dependent on one another; it is necessary to address all three to ensure effective supervision, worker retention and improved outcomes for children and families.

2. Interactive Process Models

This model focuses on the relationship between the supervisor and supervisee and can be categorized into three types:

- *Developmental supervision* focuses on worker's stage of employment and assumes the level of autonomy will change as the worker becomes more experienced.
- *Interpersonal supervision* is a process-focused model emphasizing nurturing and promoting the relationship between supervisor and supervisee, connected to the psychological fields.
- *Contextual approach* consists of several models integrated by Tsui (2005) into one that considers the context of the supervisory relationship, including the agency, supervisor, supervisee, and client, and is nested within the context of the larger organization and community culture.

Selecting and adapting a model of supervision can be challenging, but critical. As Brittain (2009) states, “Models provide frameworks for understanding supervisory practice, while creativity and personal style bring together the constellation of behaviors, relationships, and interventions that lead to mastery of supervisory practice”.

Adapting a Supervisory Model for Child Welfare Practice

In 2008, the Children’s Bureau asked the National Resource Center for Family-Centered Practice and Permanency Planning and the National Child Welfare Resource Center for Organizational Improvement to examine the responsibilities and needs of supervisory staff and develop an organizational framework to support effective child welfare supervision. The resulting document, *Building a Framework and Model for Effective Child Welfare Supervision*, introduces seven elements of an emerging model of supervision in child welfare and the four components of an organizational framework to empower child welfare supervisors to carry out their responsibilities. The elements of an emerging model and organizational framework components are presented below:

Elements of an Emerging Model of Child Welfare Supervision

1. “Articulate in writing the agency’s practice philosophy and approach
2. Identify the functions and specific job responsibilities of child welfare supervisors
3. Recognize the centrality of building and maintaining relationships with supervisees and others to carrying out supervisory responsibilities effectively
4. Mandate explicit, manageable standards for caseload size and for supervisor-supervisee ratios
5. Define expectations with regard to frequency and format for supervision of frontline practitioners
6. Clarify expectations for ongoing evaluation of frontline practitioners
7. Support supervisors in their roles as unit leaders and change agents” (Hess, Kanak & Atkins, 2009)

Components of an Organizational Framework

1. “An organizational culture that values and demonstrates support for the vital role supervisors play in ensuring positive outcomes for children, youth, and families.
2. A model of supervisory practice that reflects how the organization views the roles, responsibilities and expectations of supervisors and includes up-to-date, written job descriptions.
3. Recruitment and retention of individuals who are a “good fit” as front line practitioners and supervisors.
4. A continuum of professional development opportunities for new and experienced supervisors that includes initial and ongoing training, peer support, mentors and clinical consultation” (Hess, Kanak & Atkins, 2009).

In addition to these elements of an emerging model and components of an organizational framework, Wilson (2009), provides insight into the process of developing and implementing a child welfare management model through an action research project in Queensland, Australia. The author cites the fact that proposed interventions should be clearly linked to outcomes and that the management model should be outcome focused and grounded in the literature. She came up with three key points in developing a model:

1. Developing a logic model of effective child welfare supervision helps to establish a logical link between client outcomes, service activities and management activities.
2. Attention to implementation issues is vital to overcoming established bureaucracy – important to identify inhibitors and facilitators associated with the introduction of the model.
3. The development of the model needs to be a process that occurs over time, is informed by child welfare personnel and is modified in light of implementation trials.

Wilson identifies several inhibitors to implementation and suggestions to overcome them:

- Various strengths of relationship among stakeholders and among different teams – six linkages were found to be important to the implementation process: service team and management team, linkages between different service teams in office, linkages with other departmental offices and programs, linkages with children and families, and linkages with foster care community.
- Time lags between the implementation of a management strategy and direct service staff experiencing a positive impact. Choosing some strategies with a more immediate impact may help gain buy-in early on.
- New policies and procedures need to be integrated within existing office systems and processes.
- Management teams may be faced by inherent constraints such as resource constraints, physical environment and safety issues, workload issues, staff turnover and absences, critical cases and external public inquiries and media coverage. Many of these were successfully mitigated by including them in implementation plans.

The author also identified several facilitators to implementation:

- Management teams enjoyed a high level of autonomy in implementing the model, enhancing their capacity to introduce management strategies and make timely changes to the implementation plan.
- Soliciting input from direct service staff in relation to office priorities, management teams were able to confirm which issues were important to tackle.
- Mentoring of management team members to increase insight into their roles increased confidence, motivation to make changes and proactivity.
- Strong feedback loops are critical.

II. Supervisory Models from other States

In order to provide examples, articulated supervisory models were collected from other states and countries. These examples are attached in Appendix A and vary in type. The model from Maine is detailed and linked directly to their practice model. It groups the supervisor's various responsibilities under Kadushin's three functional roles of administrative, educational and supportive supervision and includes a description and expectations under each responsibility.

The California model is shorter and included within their Standards and Values in Public Child Welfare document. Its seven points address basic job responsibilities and expectations and also includes the use of performance data in management.

The model from Queensland, Australia was recently developed through a research project and consists of a visual demonstrating the inter-related nature of outcome-focused management. The full model does include a brief explanation of the visual.

III. Managing with Data in Child Welfare

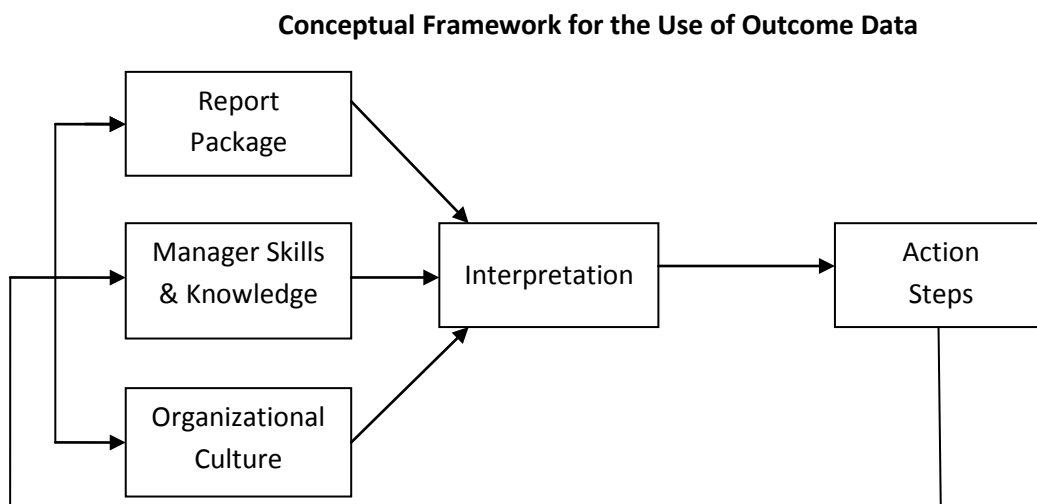
The articles summarized below highlight findings from other states and another country in their attempts to include outcome data as a focus of child welfare supervision.

Kansas: Developing the Capacity of Child Welfare Managers to Use Client Outcome Data

The Kansas Social and Rehabilitation Services, Division of Children and Family Policy undertook a three-year project to develop the capacity of child welfare managers to use client outcome data to improve agency performance. In their evaluation of this project, Moore, Rapp and Roberts (2000) present the elements necessary to create a “learning organization”. The authors quote Senge, in the Fifth Discipline (1990) as describing a learning organization as a place “where people continually expand their capacity to create the results they truly desire, where new and expansive patterns of thinking are nurtured, where collective aspiration is set free and where people are continually learning how to learn together.” Three factors of the learning organization framework facilitate the use of outcome data and promote subsequent management action:

- **Performance reports** using well constructed measures, presented in an accessible format, and structured to provide summary and case-level data.
- **Skills, knowledge and attributes of managers** who understand the measures and can read and interpret reports, are systems thinkers, facilitate others’ learning, and can work with others to take action in response to information such as goal setting, providing rewards, and making or recommending policy and program changes.
- **Organizational cultures** that support and celebrate learning, where everyone is focused on achieving a shared vision as articulated in outcome measures.

The figure below is used by the authors to depict the interrelationship of these three factors and their impact on data interpretation and management action.



This conceptual framework was the basis for the development of a training curriculum titled “Outcome Oriented Management” for administrators, managers, and line supervisors. It provides an outcome report model using actual agency data, begins to shape a learning organizational culture, and develops managers’ skills to interpret and take action in response to outcome data.

What Managers Want: Outcome Report Packages

- **Aggregates Data for Unit** – state-level data receives little interest compared with data from manager’s unit
- **Uses a Limited Number of Measures** – 10 or fewer outcome measures and summarizing compliance measures into one overall rating
- **Easy to Read** – information summarized, use graphs, clear labels, etc.
- **Uses Standards** – standards of expected performance (goals) give supervisors a benchmark to judge how well they are doing and can be developed on historical agency performance, practice wisdom, contract specifications, or data from similar programs
- **Provides Trends** – Unit level numbers can be small and sometimes misleading – including a six-month trend line allows a supervisor to note variations
- **Uses Rates as Measures** – Rates as percentages of outcomes being achieved (e.g., percent of children achieving permanency in six months) allows the comparison across organizational boundaries and time
- **Provides Up-to-Date and Accurate Data** – Data must be accurate and current – with increased usage comes motivation to keep records current
- **Conducive to Further Analysis** – Report should be designed to allow supervisor the ability to look deeper into adequate or inadequate performance – should allow sorting by many variables such as worker, age of child, court, abuse/neglect type, provider, etc.

The report package included three types of information:

- **Descriptive** – Basic numbers on children entering and exiting the system, number of open cases, percent of children in care for 12 or more months, and distribution of length of time in care. Two pages were devoted to this information.
- **Outcomes** – Data on outcomes and key service response measures. Made up about 70% of the report and limited data to one or two outcome measures per page. Included timely permanency (using entry cohorts), safety (no abuse/neglect during placement), and recidivism (safety and permanency 12 months after closure). Child well-being indicators included placement proximity, number of placement settings, level of care (nongroup/institutional). Two process measures were included due to high correlation to outcome attainment: parent-child visitation and worker-parent contact.
- **Compliance** – Six to eight compliance measures on one page according to laws and agency regulations (percent of case plan reviews conducted on time, percent of current health screenings.)

Organizational Culture

The authors state that “Organizations communicate their culture to their members in subtle but powerful ways. Culture is communicated through what is measured in management reports (e.g. outcomes or finances), the content of meetings (e.g. rules and regulations or client needs), physical surroundings, and who is rewarded for what. Cultures define what is important.” Outcome measures express an agency’s values and their introduction can have a significant impact on an organizations’ culture. “The use of outcome data in creating a learning organizational culture requires a safe, non-

blaming, and supportive environment....Blaming anyone or anything for inadequate performance commonly ends learning and stops positive action.”

Learning organizations display a passion for learning and look at multiple ways to learn to improve outcomes –

- Top performers are asked how they do it and to consult, mentor or train other staff.
- Key partners (e.g., judges, CASAs, mental health centers) are engaged in problem solving.
- Experts are consulted on specific challenges.
- Training is provided to improve skills linked to performance issues.
- Clients are consulted on improving services.

Manager’s Skills and Knowledge

The managers themselves who read, interpret, and take action based on outcome data, and shape the culture help to facilitate the use of data toward the achievement of client outcomes. To do this effectively requires substantial skills and knowledge and resulted the development of Kansas’ training curricula. The training is targeted toward the line supervisor but is attended by mid-level managers as well. Upper-level managers are welcomed but often don’t attend, but are consulted initially in the development of reports and training content. Line supervisors are the focus because of their increased impact: not only are there more of them but they have a more direct impact on daily operations and more real-time information (not in computers) that is important to problem solving. (The authors cite in a lesson learned that the involvement of upper-level managers is necessary to alter the organizational culture and found this to be a shortcoming of the project.)

The Training Project Design

“This training project used the agency’s actual outcome data and the new report package to increase the relevance of the training. The use of their reports in training allowed supervisors to accomplish work.” This applied learning format was delivered over 4-6 months, providing opportunity for practice in using the data and perfecting the reports. Training sessions ranged from two hours to a full day in length.

Initial modules focused on establishing the power of numbers to influence behavior and emotions, both personally (temperature, check book, clock, speedometer) and professionally. Exercises allowed trainees to identify emotional reactions to numbers and to discuss relevance to agency.

Several hours were devoted to reading reports (graphs, tables) and understand how measures are calculated.

The majority of the training, however, dealt with interpreting data and taking action both on one’s own and using group processes – involving others in the interpretation and action planning and implementation is a critical skill in the training.

The authors cite a lesson learned as the need for increased training on the computer software application used for analysis – it was underestimated and diminished the advantages of an electronic report package.

Management Action

“Management action is the bridge between numbers and outcome attainment for children and families.” Discussing the data with others is a critical step to moving forward and improving performance, it allows the opportunity to:

- Focus staff on agency goals and shared vision
- Generate creative approaches to performance improvement
- Develop new skills or knowledge through the exchange of ideas
- Develop sense of ownership and investment in agency performance
- Reward staff for accomplishments

Because there are always more pressing matters that take precedence, the idea of throwing “data parties” developed. The name suggests its different than a regular meeting and an activity that encourages fun and creativity. Data parties are regularly scheduled (once a month) as protected time where the only agenda item is client outcome performance and engaging in action planning. They are often held in different locations from staff meetings and managers are encouraged to create a fun and safe atmosphere to discuss mistakes and problems.

Management action also includes rewarding good behavior, providing constructive negative feedback, advocating for change, securing staff training, redistributing resources or caseloads, conducting in-depth case reviews, etc.

Mississippi: Quality Improvement Center Learning Labs

Mississippi’s Southern Regional Quality Improvement Center incorporated Moore, Rapp and Roberts’ (2000) three conditions described above (useful reporting package, supportive organizational culture, and management knowledge and skill) to design a series of learning labs for child welfare supervisors (Shakelford, et al., 2007). These labs use regional case review data summaries to promote changes in supervisory practices that have the potential for improving client outcomes.

Area Social Work Supervisors from two regions of 10 counties each participate in the Learning Labs and, a unique element of the model, help to determine the topics to be discussed. As topics arise in the lab, research and planning is done for future labs. This helps increase buy-in from the supervisors and allow for relevant topics. The topics focus on improvement of clinical casework supervision and are a mixture of information from research, skill development, and discussion of ethics and values. Supervisors offer true case scenarios from their units. The labs have resulted in supervisory tools that can be shared with other child welfare supervisors.

Data use to improve practice is also a key element of the project, using both MACWIS and Case Review System reports. Supervisors and middle managers examine data from a strengths-based perspective, examining data from counties doing well on particular outcomes and discuss what that region is doing that allows for the improvement.

“The child welfare supervisors, as participants in the learning labs, have discussed a progression of use of data within the child welfare agency. The discussion has revealed a change from looking at “is work being done?” to looking at “what are we doing?” They are moving beyond compliance to look for best practice.

North Carolina: Reviewing Data and Engaging New Partners

North Carolina’s Children’s Services Practice Notes Newsletter (May 2009) describes a recent initiative in Pitt County’s Department of Social Services to assess the agency’s foster parent recruitment and retention and engage community partners in achieving desired outcomes. DSS invited a broad array of potential partners with an interest in the safety, well-being and permanence of children to a community meeting in February 2009. Over 20 participants attended, including leadership from local law enforcement, juvenile justice, the faith community, mental health, schools and others. Foster parents and a youth in care also attended to share their stories.

Now that partners with interest have been identified, Pitt County DSS is planning a day-long event to share data they are proud of and those that show where they need the community's help. Participants will work in small groups to develop specific, concrete strategies to achieve outcomes and a small group will continue working with the agency on carrying out recommended strategies.

In addition, Pitt County DSS recognizes the need for qualitative data to complement and enrich the quantitative data and is reaching out to foster parents and youth to share their stories. Instead of a complicated system for this, staff are simply asking for specific feedback during routine visits.

Queensland, Australia: Mentoring in Outcome-based Supervision

In her report on a 10-month mentoring program as part of a larger project on outcome-focused management in child welfare, Wilson (2006) describes "mentoring as a useful strategy in supporting those involved in frontline child protection management toward more proactive approaches to achieving child welfare outcomes". "Child protection managers need an appropriate balance of reactive and proactive problem solving to meet this leadership and management challenge and move beyond the struggle for survival into proactive management for quality client outcomes....mentoring [is] a strategy for facilitating this".

Fourteen management team members in three offices were involved in twice monthly (fortnightly) mentoring. Over the 10-months, 127 mentoring sessions of 1-1.5 hours each were provided. The cancellation rate was very low. Participants were asked before and after the conclusion of the 10-month period what was most useful, least useful, what could be done differently, and what changes may have resulted from the sessions.

Participants found increased insight and knowledge about their management role as most useful, increasing their confidence and motivation. They felt a greater ability to manage under pressure and in a complex context. The mentor having direct experience was important, as was a focus on strengths, constructive feedback and providing practical ideas and tools. Most participants were unable to identify anything that was "least useful" about mentoring or anything that could be done differently.

Participants found that their management practice changed in several ways. Some were implementing more structure and a proactive approach. Managers were now addressing performance issues as they arose, engaging the support of others in developing team members, establishing more efficient processes, and instituting regular supervision and team meetings. "I have a stronger focus on outcomes. I had to tackle some hard stuff and am now more able to do this. More confident".

"Mentoring can play an important role in supporting managers to integrate outcome-focused management models, knowledge and skills into everyday practice".

IV. Supervisory Curricula

Curricula focused on child welfare supervision and data/outcomes developed within the last ten years were collected and each is described briefly below, beginning with the most recent:

- ***Data Informed Decision Making***

Developed by Charmaine Brittain of the Butler Institute for Families, Denver University
June, 2009

Participants will become competent in the appropriate use of data for decision-making and planning to ensure a focus on outcomes. Topics include: Data, Outcomes and the CFSR, Using Data to Inform Decisions, Mining Data for Information, Coaching with Data. One-day training.

- ***Supervising Through Mentoring and Coaching Curriculum***

Developed by Charmaine Brittain of the Butler Institute for Families, Denver University
April, 2009

Participants will know the components of effective mentoring programs and how to use coaching techniques to improve their workers' quality of casework. Topics include: Mentoring, Coaching, Coaching Practice, Learning Circles. One-day training.

- ***Performance Management: Linking Individual Performance to Agency Outcomes Training Curriculum***

Developed by University of Southern Maine Muskie School of Public Service
2008

Supervisor curriculum focused on Performance Management and the connection between individual performance and agency outcomes. The goal of the training is for supervisors to learn to promote the use of consistent performance management, evaluation and professional development to achieve agency goals related to safety, permanency and well-being. The Curriculum teaches supervisors about performance management as a balance between encouraging professional growth and holding workers accountable for achieving agency outcomes. Supervisors learn about performance management as an ongoing process, and learn sources and assessment tools to use for analyzing worker strengths and weaknesses. The training also emphasizes ways to provide ongoing feedback, and conduct effective performance evaluation reviews. One-day training.

- ***Supervision for Success: An Evidence Based Practice Model for Employee (Not Case) Success Focused Supervision***

Developed by Child Welfare League of America, Jeff Bormaster
2008

This 3-day workshop series. presented by CWLA is for you and your staff, if your agency wants to have

- Improved staff retention and lower turnover
- More positive staff morale
- Higher productivity
- Increased staff willingness to change

Evidence and workforce studies clearly show how organizations can "hire right" and provide supervisors with a supervisory practice model that results in increased staff retention, higher productivity, more willingness to change, and improved staff morale. This workshop series will provide managers and supervisors from the CEO/Executive

Director to front-line supervisors with the knowledge and skills they need to produce these outcomes. Participants are expected to attend all three sessions. Space is limited.

- ***Supervisory Practices in Child Welfare: Unit Management***

New Jersey Department of Children and Families
2008

This training for newly promoted supervisors consists of four modules: Casework Management, People Management, Self Management, and Unit Management. The Unit Management module includes a section on Managing by Data.

- ***Data 101: Using Data to Improve Agency Performance***

Developed By Edward Cohen, M.S.W., Ph.D., for the Northern California Children & Family Services Training Academy
November, 2003

This course provides child welfare supervisors and managers with an understanding of data analysis for improving agency performance with the implementation of AB 636, the Program Improvement Plan (PIP), and the Stakeholders Redesign. Topics include: Using data to improve outcomes, mechanics of data analysis, and how to monitor and manage quality. The course meets qualifications for 6 hours of continuing education.

- ***Results Oriented Management in Child Welfare***

Developed by The University of Kansas School of Social Welfare, Office of Child Welfare and Children's Mental Health for the Children's Bureau.
2002

This web-based training site offers 21 interactive training modules in 3 major content areas, located at <http://www.rom.ku.edu/index.asp>. Modules include: Policy Context for Child Welfare Practice, Overview of Managing for Results, and Evidence-Based Practice for Achieving Outcomes.

- ***Using Information Management to Support the Goals of Safety, Permanency and Well Being Trainer's Guide***

Developed by University of Southern Maine Muskie School of Public Service for the Children's Bureau
September, 2000

Introduces child welfare supervisors to the concept of using data and information to improve child welfare practice. Topics include: Impact of Technology in the Workplace, Supervising for Results, Using Information Management to Support Casework Supervision, Data Analysis. Two-day training.

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Appendix A

Supervisory Model Examples

1. Maine Supervision Model

From <http://www.maine.gov/dhhs/ocfs/cw/policy/index.html> [August 6, 2009]

The key role of the supervisor is to assure that the agency's policies and practices are implemented. For Maine Child Welfare services, supervisors must implement, teach and support the Child Welfare Practice Model, joining with families and the community to promote long-term safety, well-being and permanent families for children. Effective supervision supports a collaborative team approach that builds on clients' strengths that meet their needs, resulting in better outcomes for children and families. Effective supervision is based on a supervisor / caseworker relationship that promotes continuous learning and facilitates professional growth and development through self-reflection and identification of strengths and challenges. Supervisors are responsible for creating and maintaining a supportive working and learning environment through open communication, teaming and accountability at all levels - both internally and externally. These standards represent the Office of Child and Family Services' expectations of casework supervision. All levels of supervision must reflect the spirit of these standards.

Administrative Supervision

The activities of the supervisor are directed toward implementing the organizational objectives and helping to ensure that the quantity and quality of work achieves outcomes articulated by the agency. The administrative function involves planning, executing, monitoring, and evaluating activities to accomplish the work of the agency through the staff.

Foster ownership of agency mission, vision, goals, values, policies, procedures and the Practice Model

The Child Welfare Practice Model provides the foundation and the direction for all work accomplished by Child Welfare Services. The work of the unit must be coordinated with the Departments mission, vision, goals, values and the Child Welfare Services' Practice Model

Expectations:

- Communicate/inform staff of the agency's mission, vision and Practice Model.
- Model behaviors that are consistent with the vision, values, Practice Model and a professional code of ethics.
- Establish objectives and priorities within the unit that reflect the Strategic Plan, agency policies, and MSRA Title 22.
- Explain the rationale supporting policies and procedures and the agency's mission and Practice Model.
- Assure implementation of the policies and practices of the Agency.
- Communicate information in a respectful manner that acknowledges cultural and other differences.

Commit to recruitment, screening and selection of qualified staff

The quality of services to children and families is dependent on staff who possess the knowledge, skills and personal characteristics to work in and remain committed to this challenging field. Attracting and selecting the right person for the job is the critical first step in assuring a competent and stable workforce.

Expectations:

- Actively pursue recruitment opportunities and/or work with district administration to develop specific activities.
- Participate in agency sponsored recruitment activities.
- Maintain communication links with prospective candidates and present the agency in a positive light.
- Know and comply with law and policy related to fair hiring and selection processes.
- Develop and maintain current knowledge and skill in the screening and selection process.
- Participate in panel interviews to screen candidates.
- Conduct job specific interviews, reference and background checks to select the most suitable candidate for a vacancy.
- Identify and select people who are able to demonstrate the competencies needed and whose values and beliefs are consistent with the agency's mission, organizational beliefs, and Practice Model.
- Coordinate and support field placements and internships to attract qualified staff.
- Justify and document hiring decisions using job-related criteria.

Assure cohesion and high performance of the work unit

Each unit is responsible for achieving program goals for children and families. High productivity in the unit is based on a structure that provides support, consistent direction, recognition and connections for staff who each have independent functions.

Expectations:

- Identify and analyze the critical functions of the unit.
- Develop and implement a plan for assigning work that facilitates the goals and objectives of the unit.
- Determine if unit goals are being met.
- Develop and implement methods of assessing and tracking unit performance.
- Utilize the documentation necessary for program compliance.
- Summarize and evaluate the data to identify problems and trends for unit planning.
- Modify plans and methods to adjust to crisis and changes such as caseload, staffing, and new requirements.
- Convene meetings of the unit at a minimum of once a month.
- Formal supervision held weekly is the best practice standard. The minimal acceptable standard for formal supervision is no less than twice a month on a consistent basis. Caseworkers on probationary status must receive formal

supervision at least weekly.

Encourage maximum performance of individual staff

Improved staff performance results in better services to families and improved outcomes. For the individual, it also generates a greater sense of achievement and satisfaction. It therefore helps to increase staff motivation to perform and staff retention.

Expectations:

- Negotiate a supervision contract with supervisee and renegotiate annually.
- Be available to staff for consultation as needed and as required by policy. Formal supervision held weekly is the best practice standard. The minimal acceptable standard for formal supervision is no less than twice a month on a consistent basis. Caseworkers on probationary status must receive formal supervision at least weekly.
- Set and clearly communicate expectations for staff performance related to client outcomes and program compliance.
- Evaluate and monitor the quality, quantity, and timeliness of staff performance.
- Provide frequent, timely, and specific feedback to keep workers apprised of their performance.
- Provide a written performance plan and evaluation of staff a minimum of once per year.
- Take appropriate positive or corrective personnel actions.
- Document worker performance related to program compliance.
- Identify workers' strengths and help them develop those strengths.

Facilitate open communication between District staff and District and Central management to achieve agency and unit goals

The timely flow of information, changes, plans, and concerns between District staff and District and Central Office management staff increases ownership and commitment to the achievement of goals. Supervisors should encourage upward, downward and lateral communication

Expectations:

- Model and expect an atmosphere that promotes open communication conducted with genuineness, empathy and respect.
- Encourage staff communication with the caseworker advisory committee as the direct link to central office management.
- Work collaboratively with other units to foster communication across units. Educate other units in agency regarding unit goals, objectives and parameters.
- Develop and maintain positive relationships with the community.
- Help staff to understand roles and parameters of other units within the agency and with community agencies.
- Model cultural responsiveness in collaborative relationships.

Foster collaborative relationships within the Agency and with community agencies

Making children and families safe is a collaborative effort. Positive outcomes are more likely when others in the agency and community understand each other's program goals, objectives and parameters, and they are heard, understood, and respected

Expectations:

- Model and expect an atmosphere that promotes open communication conducted with genuineness, empathy and respect.
- Work collaboratively with other units and partner agencies to foster communication across units and agencies.
- Educate the community regarding unit goals, objectives and parameters.
- Develop and maintain effective working relationships with the community. Help staff to understand roles and parameters of other units within the agency and with community agencies.
- Model cultural responsiveness in collaborative relationships.

Educational Supervision

The activities of the supervisor are directed toward helping staff learn what they need to know to carry out their jobs. This includes: helping new workers to understand the job and develop beginning competence; maintaining an ongoing emphasis on developing staff competence to complete the critical casework functions; and assisting senior level workers in their career planning and continued professional growth.

Provide/assure orientation for new staff

Orientation provides information about the employee's role in the agency and the agency's role in the community. This helps to reduce the anxiety new staff experience, creates a sense of belonging to the agency, and promotes the development of staff confidence and competence.

Expectations:

- Provide a welcoming environment and provide necessary support to orient new staff to the office.
- Prepare new staff for Preservice Training and provide activities to make good use of their time in during the waiting period for this training.
- Maintain a link with new staff and Preservice trainers during training to ensure the most effective training and transition back to the office.
- Assess the core knowledge of regarding Child Abuse and Neglect, skills, and learning styles of new staff.
- Develop a system for orientation of new staff that builds on the Practice Model, existing resources in the community and in the agency, and accommodates the learning style of the new staff.
- Provide the core information regarding the community; legal mandates; job responsibilities; various programs provided by the agency; policies and practices, the client population and culture(s).

Create and implement a training and/or development plan with each staff member

Supervisors play an essential role in the development of staff. The joint development of a clear, specific, and realistic plan promotes its achievement and facilitates effective performance management.

Expectations:

- Conduct initial and on-going assessments with staff to identify their strengths and needs relative to their core competencies and their use of self in practice (e.g. values, beliefs, biases).
- Examine alternatives with each staff to meet their developmental and training needs.
- Develop an individual performance plan and a written supervisory agreement with staff to meet their needs.
- Conduct periodic reviews of the plan with staff and make adjustments as appropriate.
- Provide/assure ongoing core and advanced training regarding agency, policy and procedures, and casework practice.

Encourage personal and professional growth and advancement

Personal and professional growth helps staff achieve a sense of accomplishment and esteem which positively affects performance.

Expectations:

- Assist staff in finding and utilizing educational opportunities.
- Assess, with staff, their personal and professional goals.
- Support/encourage staff to achieve their goals.
Encourage development of specialized expertise and innovation on new projects they may embrace (as related to the job and the needs of the work unit).
- Encourage staff creativity and innovation in new projects and roles.
Model/mentor continued growth and development for staff as life long learners.
- Promote independence and autonomy in casework practice within defined parameters.
Whenever feasible, encourage staff to serve on relevant committees beyond routine duties, enabling them to broaden their perspective and increase job satisfaction.
- Support staff in their efforts to obtain positions of greater responsibility and to make other needed transitions.

Provide case supervision and consultation

The supervisor plays a critical role in achieving positive, long-term safety, well-being and permanency outcomes for children and families by encouraging objectivity and promoting consistent, quality casework practice.

Expectations:

- In assigning cases, consider workers' skills, strengths, interests, areas of needed development and the client's strengths and needs.
- Discuss the worker's entire caseload with her or him at least monthly.

- Using Quality Assurance measures, complete an in-depth review of at least 1 one case per caseworker each quarter.
- Assist staff in case assessment. This includes identifying strengths, needs and safety issues, the dynamics of Child Abuse and /or Neglect evident in the needs and safety issues, and the strategies for intervention and development of the plan with the family.
- Support staff in creating family teams to develop and implement creative, individualized solutions that build on the strengths of families to meet their children’s needs for safety, permanence and well-being.
- Help staff identify problematic areas in work with the client and the anticipated course of intervention.
- Help staff identify community resources and how to access them as needed.
- Increase staff awareness of how their own attitudes and approaches, life experiences and cultural background potentially influence their relationship with the client and the outcome of intervention.
- Assist staff in assessing progress towards case goals.
- Support staff in making critical case decisions regarding safety, placement, reunification of children, termination of parental rights, and case closure.
- Encourage staff to identify cultural diversity in families and help staff develop plans respectful of cultural differences.
- Accompany each worker in the field and provide structured feedback

Supportive Supervision

The activities of the supervisor are directed toward creating a climate that enables staff to feel positive about the job and to recognize they are the Office’s most important asset - that children and families deserve trained skillful staff to engage and assist them. These activities include modeling concern and empathy toward individual workers, so that they in turn may better serve their clients.

Establish a positive work climate in the unit

Staff work more effectively in an environment of accountability where they are valued and there is an encouragement of individuality, comfort about professional risk-taking, and personal and professional development.. The "climate" that each staff member experiences is determined primarily by the way first line supervision is conducted.

Expectations:

- Acknowledge effective performance, caseworker efforts, client progress, accomplishment, and individual contributions.
- Create/model high standards of practice and motivate staff to meet those standards.
- Acknowledge that we work with families who experience trauma and trauma-related work can have traumatic effects
- Support staff in self care.
- Treat staff with genuineness, empathy and respect.
- Support a climate of transparency and openness, which promotes personal and professional growth.

- Encourage staff to reflect on their feelings and concerns both about the work and the agency. Help them resolve concerns.
- Create an environment in which cultural and other differences are appreciated.
- Refer staff to employee assistance or other services when appropriate.
- Use mistakes and challenges as opportunities to teach and learn.
- Promote a "can do" attitude for staff.

Develop/support a team work approach

The results from working as a team are greater than simply the sum of its parts. Shared decision making frequently provides better outcomes and decreases individual liability.

Expectations:

- Involve staff in unit decision-making.
- Encourage peer consultation, collaboration, and shared decision making on cases as appropriate.
- Foster cooperative relationships.
- Assess unit strengths and needs.
- Draw upon individual strengths and expertise.
- Define roles and establish expectations for how members will work together.

Facilitate successful resolution of conflict within and outside the agency

Conflict is inherent in supervision and can be a healthy aspect of life. Successful resolution of conflict creates opportunities for growth on an individual, team and agency level. Unresolved conflict is detrimental to the functioning of the individual, team and agency as a whole.

Expectations:

- Create a safe and open environment, where staff can raise issues and concerns.
- Demonstrate respect for differences of opinion.
- Facilitate discussions that create solutions which meet the needs of those involved in the conflict.
- Manage and control interpersonal conflict when the lack of resolution affects the unit, client, or relationships in the agency.
- Assist staff in professionally managing conflict.
- In the supervisor/supervisee relationship, actively pursue the resolution of conflict/issues or other barriers.

Develop awareness of one's self and the effect on the supervisor- worker relationship

Supervision is a dynamic process where one's own competencies, experiences, needs and issues affect supervisory relationships and effectiveness.

Expectations:

- Increase awareness of how one's personality and learning style affects one's staff.

- Increase awareness of how one's life experiences and cultural background can impact on the supervisor/worker relationship.
- Seek supervision and consultation to enhance one's own effectiveness.
- Develop a system for receiving feedback from staff on supervisory practice.
- Take care of one's self.
- Exhibit flexibility and accept change in a positive manner.
- Make an effort to improve job skills as needed to accomplish assignments.
- Perform with stability even when under pressure and during emergency situations.
- Recognize and learn from one's own mistakes.

This policy is adapted by the Maine Department of Health and Human Services, Office of Child and Family Services and the Child Welfare Training Institute from A Supervisory Handbook developed by the State of Colorado Department of Human Services, Marsha Salus, and the National Child Welfare Resource Center for Management and Administration.

2. California Supervision Model

Full document *Standards and Values for Public Child Welfare Practice in California* available at http://calswec.berkeley.edu/calswec/Standards_Values_Revised_2005.pdf [August 6, 2009]

The Standards for Supervisors are included below:

Standards for Supervisors in Public Child Welfare Services

25. Provide supervision and guidance to child welfare staff: be available to staff facing crises in the field while holding staff accountable for their work.

26. Assume multiple professional roles, including teacher, manager, administrator, and service provider, and take responsibility for the authority that accompanies these roles.

27. Provide leadership through developing resources, showing willingness to respond to changing practice demands, acting as a community liaison, advocating for clients, and recruiting, selecting, and training a professional workforce that is reflective of the client service community.

28. Develop an understanding of and appreciation for the perceptions and strengths of a culturally diverse professional workforce and provide effective leadership for a multicultural workforce interacting with a diverse client community.

29. Acknowledge the validity of other professional training that applies to public child welfare and develop the capacity to supervise, collaborate, and work effectively with a multidisciplinary workforce.

30. Promote teamwork through the use of peer

supervision, consultation, interdisciplinary training, and group process.

31. Use outcome performance data effectively in management and work toward the development of resources to enhance staff practice and agency services.

3. Queensland, Australia

Queensland, Australia Child Welfare Management Model

From “Proactively Managing for Outcomes in Statutory Child Protection – The Development of a Management Model” by Sandy Wilson, 2009

PROACTIVELY MANAGING FOR OUTCOMES IN STATUTORY CHILD PROTECTION

