

NJCWTP TRAINING EVALUATION

PARTNERSHIP OVERVIEW



Established in 2007, the New Jersey Child Welfare Training Partnership is a collaborative effort between the NJ Department of Children and Families (DCF) Office of Training and Professional Development (OTPD) and a DCF-funded University Partnership headed by Rutgers School of Social Work, Institute for Families, Office of Child Welfare Workforce Advancement. The Partnership provides ongoing professional development to the state's child welfare workforce, most often Division of Child Protection and Permanency (CP&P) caseworkers.



Rutgers collaborates with Montclair State University's Robert D. McCormick Center for Child Advocacy and Policy in the northern part of the state and Stockton University's Child Welfare Education Institute in the southern portion of the state to develop and deliver effective, relevant training courses designed to assist CP&P workers in ensuring the safety, permanency, and well-being of children and families.



Following a 2005 Children's Rights lawsuit, New Jersey entered into a Modified Settlement Agreement that established an annual training requirement of 40 hours for NJ's child welfare workers. This 40-hour threshold is intended to increase knowledge and skills related to the workforce's interaction with children and families. The Partnership was initially charged with implementing change in the state's culture of child welfare practice, supporting movement from a *case management* service delivery model to the state's current *strengths-based, family-centered, and child-focused model* of supporting families.



Today, the Partnership exists as a workforce development approach, building the skills and knowledge of more than 5,000 professionals dedicated to the safety, permanency, and well-being of children and families across the state. The Partnership provides professional development training to DCF staff on a variety of topics designed to enhance practice with children and families.

EVALUATION METHODS

There are two methods used to evaluate the delivery and knowledge retention of training course content: knowledge-based pre/posttests and satisfaction surveys.

PRE/POSTTESTS

Pre/Posttests are created by the course writer, instructor, and/or Rutgers' evaluation team in order to assess participants' knowledge of course content before and after the training. Participants are asked to complete a multiple choice test before participating in the training. After training is completed, the same multiple choice test is re-administered. Pre/posttests are administered in paper format, and each course contains a unique test. Passing scores are set by OTPD and depend on the type of course. Pre-Service, Mandatory, and Foundation courses require a score of 80% or higher, while Elective courses require 70% or higher on the posttest to pass the course. Rutgers' evaluation staff scans the data from paper surveys into an electronic spreadsheet. Remark, Excel, and SPSS are used to store, clean, and analyze the data.

PRE/POSTTEST COMMITTEE

Rutgers strives to have fair tests that accurately reflect the material being taught. In January of 2015, the Rutgers evaluation team began reviewing each test question for mandatory trainings to determine its effectiveness based on data from past trainings. When poor performing questions were identified, Rutgers began revising these tests through a newly implemented pre/posttest revision committee. The committee meets regularly to discuss improvements to pre/posttest questions, share feedback from trainers regarding problematic test questions, and ensure best practices are maintained in terms of question structure and test format. All test revisions are sent to content area specialists for final review and approval. Further revisions are made as needed. The goal of these revisions is to strengthen tests and have them be an accurate assessment of knowledge gained from the training.



PRE/POSTTEST DEVELOPMENT

Training is provided to course writers to support the development of effective pre/posttest instruments. Rutgers offers half-day pre/posttest writing trainings, entitled *Developing Multiple-Choice Questions to Assess Knowledge Gain in Training Programs*, which stresses the importance of having strong tests and reviews best practices in writing and developing tests. Additionally, Rutgers developed a pre/posttest template that aids curriculum writers in developing test questions, guiding them through the process of making strong test questions and linking them back to the training's learning objectives.

COURSE EVALUATION SURVEYS

All trainees who participate in a course are asked to complete an evaluation at the end of the workshop; the same evaluation survey is used for each course. The survey focuses on assessing satisfaction with the training experience and soliciting feedback on the workshop, materials, and instructor. Survey forms are distributed by instructors to participants after completion of the training session. Satisfaction with the workshop is rated on a four-point, Likert-type scale with responses ranging from one (strongly disagree) to four (strongly agree). The survey includes ten questions:

1. The trainer was able to engage participants.
2. The trainer demonstrated expertise related to the training topic through her/his knowledge, skills, and practice experience.
3. The trainer's presentation was clear, concise, and organized, resulting in an effective training.
4. The trainer was able to answer participants' questions.
5. The content of the curriculum/training materials provided me with knowledge and skills I will need to meet my responsibilities in this area of work.
6. The instructional materials (PowerPoint slides, handouts, and participant manual) were helpful to building participants' knowledge and skills in this topic.
7. The activities (role plays, small group exercises, lectures, and discussions) were helpful to building participants' knowledge and skills in this topic.
8. The training curriculum provided different instructional activities in a way that will enable participants to use the information with children and families.
9. Children and families will benefit from knowledge and skills participants gained during this training.
10. Overall, the training was a useful experience.

Surveys also include two open-ended questions that are analyzed using standard content analysis procedures:

1. Please provide any additional comments on your training experience.
2. What training topics would you find helpful in order to benefit the families you serve?

Overall, evaluation instruments have shown that trainees are satisfied with trainings and increase their knowledge of the content area. We also use these tools to understand the classroom. In particular, open-ended comments on the satisfaction survey allow trainees to voice concerns and areas for improvement. Policy changes and new training content have resulted from feedback on satisfaction surveys. For example, we learned from *Child Sexual Abuse Trainings for Child Welfare Professionals* that supervisors needed more training on content and supervision techniques related to this area. In 2015, we piloted *Child Sexual Abuse for Supervisors* to fill this need. Responses from *Safety Awareness for Child Welfare Professionals* indicated that a dress code prohibiting sneakers caused a safety issue for many CP&P staff. This information aided in a change to the sneaker policy. In summary, training evaluation methods are a useful and necessary part of our ongoing commitment to self-assessment and improvement to effectively meet the needs of CP&P staff.

REPORTING

Rutgers, The State University of New Jersey prepares a biannual report on behalf of the Training Partnership. This report provides both qualitative and quantitative data—including satisfaction surveys and pre/posttest results—on all courses delivered. This data informs DCF of the training results and helps to inform future plans and initiatives.