

Our Mission:

is to train and provide technical support to those working in the Child Welfare system and to support those working with us to help families and communities to safely parent children and youth.

Our Vision:

is safety, permanence and well being for children and youth, families and communities, supported by the work of competent, committed and confident professionals.

Our Values:

Communication; Trust and Respect; Embracing Collaboration; Diversity; Professionalism; Customer Service

...serving through Partnerships and Regional Teams

Our Partnerships...

The Pennsylvania Child Welfare Training Program, University of Pittsburgh, provides County Children and Youth Agencies with individualized training and technical assistance services. These services are provided through ongoing collaborative partnerships with County Children and Youth Agencies, the Department of Public Welfare, Pennsylvania Children and Youth Administrators, private provider agencies, children, youth, families, community members, and other system partners.

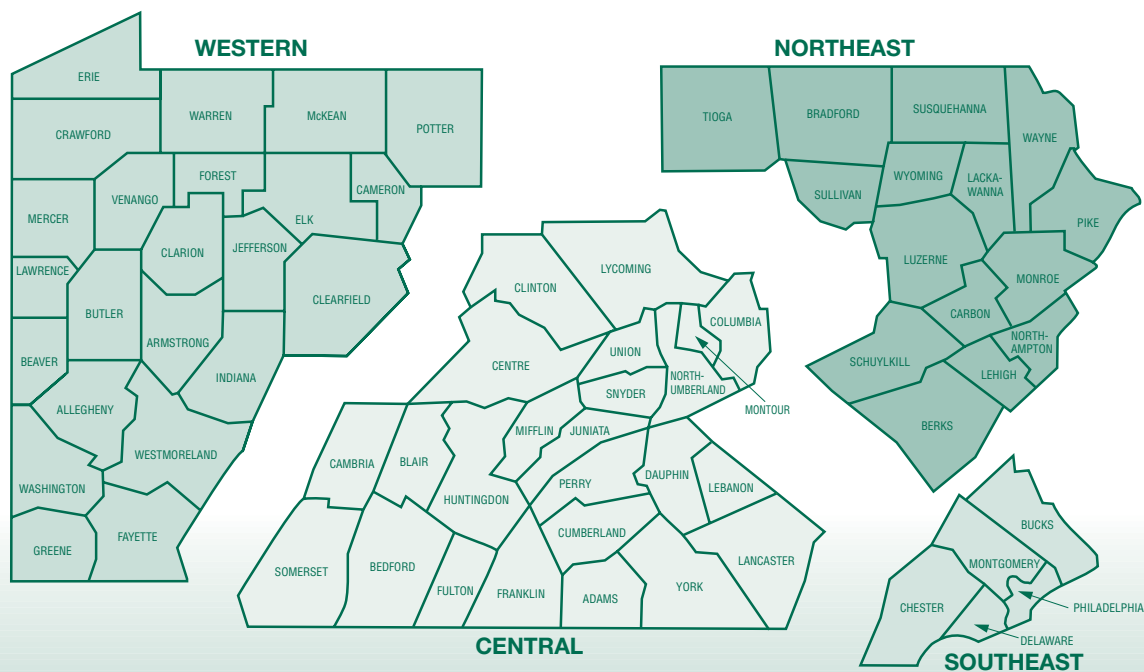
Our Regional Teams...

The Regional Teams are assigned to work with County Children and Youth Agencies to assess the training and technical assistance needs, and to coordinate a seamless delivery of the Training Program's products and services. The members of each Regional Team include:

- Practice Improvement Specialist
- Curriculum and Instructional Specialist
- Training Specialist
- Transfer of Learning Specialist
- Administrative Assistant

Through cross-system collaboration the Training Program facilitates county specific assessment, planning, implementation, evaluation and monitoring that leads to improved knowledge, skills and practices. This method helps ensure that the training and technical assistance needs of Child Welfare professionals are met across the state and better prepares our system to facilitate the outcomes of safety, permanence and well-being for the children, youth and families we serve.

Regions of Pennsylvania



For information concerning Training or Technical Assistance in your region/county please contact the Training Program at 717-795-9048.

...our approach to serving you

Assessment

The Training Program is prepared to work with County Children and Youth Agencies and identified partners on completing a thorough, individualized, solution-focused organizational needs assessment. Through the use of comprehensive individual staff and organizational needs assessment tools the Training Program can assist the County Children and Youth Agencies in assessing current practice outcomes, desired outcomes, and identify the gaps that create challenges in reaching agency goals.

The first step toward improved services is completing the assessment process and identifying the training and technical assistance needs that will support agency goals and ultimately improve outcomes for children and families.

Planning

Subsequent to the assessment process, the Training Program can assist and facilitate strategic planning for the County Children and Youth Agency. The Training Program along with County Children and Youth staff will work collaboratively to identify and plan for training and technical assistance services designed to achieve agency outcomes.

Implementation

Once successful assessment and planning have been completed, the Training Program will be available to work with, and support County Children and Youth staff and their partners throughout the course of implementation. To support the process of implementation, the Training Program can provide services such as county specific training, technical assistance, transfer of learning support, meeting facilitation, and product development. As implementation occurs, the Training Program will continue to communicate and work with the County Children and Youth staff and key stakeholders to reinforce successes and assist in overcoming barriers from unexpected challenges.

Evaluation

As implementation is achieved, evaluation serves to make organizational practice changes stronger. The Training Program can assist County Children and Youth Agencies in completing evaluations of training and technical assistance efforts and discuss with agency staff and key stakeholders how to achieve ongoing success using information gained in the evaluation process.

Monitoring

The Training Program is committed to the success of Child Welfare practice throughout Pennsylvania. Once a project is complete, the Training Program strives to remain as a supportive role with County Children and Youth Agencies. Follow up services and communication will be provided to ensure that the County Children and Youth Agencies training and technical assistance needs are continually identified and addressed.

...our products and services

Curriculum Development

The Training Program develops, revises, and evaluates curriculum according to guidelines consistent with Social Work Licensure. Through the implementation of a quality assurance process, the curricula content is consistent with current research and relevant to practice. Curricula content, which is based on current research, promotes the implementation of the Pennsylvania Standards for Child Welfare Practice, focuses on skill development, and supports casework practice that promotes the safety, permanence, and well-being for children and their families.

Curricula developed by the Training Program promotes a framework for practice that promotes strength focused casework practice through the use of the interactional helping skills and solution focused interviewing.

All curricula are developed with input from Quality Assurance Committees with membership consisting of Child Welfare and Human Service practitioners, family members, and key stakeholders.

Training Delivery, Transfer of Learning and Technical Assistance

The Training Program develops training courses, transfer of learning tools, and technical assistance products, according to needs identified in the Individual Training Needs Assessment (ITNA) as well as the Organizational Needs Assessment (ONA). Courses, transfer of learning tools, and technical assistance products are developed, revised, and evaluated according to guidelines consistent with Social Work Licensure. Our products reflect Pennsylvania specific material. The goals of these products are to promote the implementation of the Pennsylvania Standards for Child Welfare Practice, which focus on skill development, and support casework practice which promotes safety, permanence, and well-being for children and their families.

Training, transfer of learning, and technical assistance are delivered using Child Welfare and Human Service practitioners as trainers and consultants. Trainers and consultants have thorough knowledge of Pennsylvania Child Welfare Practice, the Pennsylvania Standards for Child Welfare Practice, and the outcome measures from the Child and Family Services Review in the areas of safety, permanence, and well-being. Trainers and consultants are familiar with the philosophical framework of Family and Youth Engagement, Integrated Children's Services Plan, and Systems of Care. Trainers and consultants embrace these values and philosophies when working with County Children and Youth Agencies promoting evidence-based practices at the county level.

Training events, transfer of learning, and technical assistance support offered by the Training Program are designed to provide County Children and Youth Agency administrators, managers, supervisors, caseworkers, fiscal officers, and foster parents with the attitude, knowledge, and skills necessary to provide quality services related to the protection of abused and neglected children and to stabilize families.

Family and Youth Engagement

Independent Living

Integrated Children's Services Plan

Organizational Effectiveness

Quality Service Review

Risk and Safety Assessment

Systems of Care

Family engagement practices empower families to make well-informed decisions and plans to keep their children safe and to ensure the formation of life-long relationships with their families, in whatever way they define family, and their communities. Family engagement practices are underscored by the basic principle that the inherent strengths of families and their resources can be engaged to respond to the safety, permanency, and well-being needs of children. Effective family engagement begins with the formation of a collaborative partnership with families, communities, and all helping agencies within each community. Once formed, the collaborative partnership guides the development of a vision and mission, assessment of involved organizations, and strategic planning for change and implementation.

The Training Program will assist County Children and Youth Agencies to:

- Develop and/or implement a vision and a mission for family engagement within the community system;
- Develop and/or implement a strategic plan for family engagement within the community system;
- Incorporate family engagement values and principles into everyday operations; and
- Demonstrate positive, strength-based interactions that empower change.

Youth engagement practices empower youth and young adults to reach their fullest potential, and they convey the strengths and values that all youth possess. They additionally encourage youth and young adults to be active participants in the individual and systemic level decisions that impact their lives. Engaging youth and young adults provides invaluable feedback not only for individualized planning, but for evaluating and improving the array of statewide and county independent living services and cross-systems supports that aid in their transition to adulthood. Effectively engaging youth begins with actively listening to them and in acknowledging that their perspectives are critical to the system that exists to protect and serve their best interests.

The Training Program will assist County Children and Youth Agencies to:

- Incorporate youth engagement values and principles into everyday operations;
- Demonstrate positive, strength-based interactions that empower youth;
- Further the mission of the State Youth Advisory Board;
- Aid current and former substitute care youth in engaging key agency and community stakeholders; and
- Assist in the development of the State Youth Advisory Board's website and related resources for youth and young adults.

Independent Living Programs exist in each county of Pennsylvania to prepare and support youth in foster care to successfully transition from the substitute care system and to maximize their potential as members of the community. This transition requires the active participation and involvement of youth in transition as well as a significant support network of caring adults, which can only occur through collaborative efforts across services, systems and with the involvement of key stakeholders.

The Training Program provides training, information, support and technical assistance to County Independent Living Programs and private providers that encourage further development of transitional services and supports for youth. An annual program review is conducted by the Independent Living Project in each county participating in the Title IV-E Chafee Independent Living Program to provide feedback on how such programming might be improved. Following the review process, Independent Living Specialists are available to assist county agencies with additional resources and curricula, and in addressing program recommendations, in coordinating related training, and in providing ongoing technical assistance.

The Independent Living Program staff work with the Office of Children, Youth and Families, Department of Public Welfare, and the Statewide Adoption and Permanency Network (SWAN) to coordinate training for permanency workers throughout the State at quarterly regional and statewide meetings and for youth and line-staff at the Pennsylvania Independent Living Youth Retreat.

The Training Program will assist County Children and Youth Agencies to:

- Develop and implement a Title IV-E Chafee Independent Living Program;
- Develop and implement independent living services to include life skills training, transitional housing, education, employment, prevention, and mentoring;
- Incorporate youth engagement values and principles into everyday operations; and
- Demonstrate positive, strength-based interactions that empower youth.


■ *Integrated Children's Services Plan*

*I*ntegrated Children's Services Plan is a way of providing services that are inclusive of families, county agencies, community partners, and to help agencies that work together to provide culturally competent and coordinated support and services that are child-centered and family-focused for all children, youth, and families. To build an Integrated System, collaborative partners, including families and youth, must first look to the services and functions provided within each agency and then work to build those services and functions into one comprehensive system. Supporting the integration of services which touch the lives of children and families across Pennsylvania involves organizational and systems assessment, strategic planning for integration, and communication planning. It can dovetail with Systems of Care.

The Training Program will assist County Children and Youth Agencies to:

- Develop and/or implement a vision and a mission for integrated children's services plan within the community system;
- Develop and/or implement a strategic plan for integrated children's services plan within the community system;
- Incorporate values and principles of strengths-based, individualized and culturally competent approaches into everyday operations; and
- Demonstrate positive, strength-based interactions, including partnerships with families, youth, and other community partners that empower change.

■ *Organizational Effectiveness*

rganizational Effectiveness provides a framework for a systemic and dynamic approach to improving an organization's capacity for performance. Organizational Effectiveness underscores the importance of viewing an organization through its operations, key processes, systems, and strategies. Effective change management begins with the engagement of upper and middle managers within an organization and extends to all of its members. Once on board, the team assesses the agency needs; it evaluates change, anchors new approaches within the agency culture and guides strategic planning for continued change and implementation of best practices. This approach can lead to improved outcomes for the safety, permanency, and well-being of children.

The Training Program will assist County Children and Youth Agencies to:

- Understand how Organizational Effectiveness is directly linked to outcomes for children, families, and the community;
- Demonstrate an understanding of the importance of aligning operations, key processes, systems, and strategies relative to higher level tactics to improve performance;
- Develop and/or implement a strategy to enlist the support of senior and middle management in assessments to identify needs within the organization;
- Develop and/or implement a strategic plan that supports continued improvement of services, tools, and techniques that sustain improved outcomes; and
- Incorporate Organizational Effectiveness values and principles into everyday operations.

The Quality Service Review (QSR) provides a means for assessing the quality of caseworker practice in a County Children and Youth Agency. It is a county level assessment of case practice through the use of specialized county teams that review county Child Welfare records. The review assesses a County Children and Youth Agency's performance in the areas of child protective services, foster care, and adoption while focusing on goals in the areas of safety, permanence, and well-being. The review is designed to help improve Child Welfare services by identifying strengths and needs within a county program, as well as areas where technical assistance can lead to program improvement.

The Training Program will assist County Children and Youth Agencies to:

- Identify the connection between the Federal Child and Family Services Review (CSFR), Pennsylvania's Quality Service Review and the Pennsylvania Program Improvement Plan;
- Connect the Quality Service Review results and data to local agency needs to improve safety, permanency, and well-being of children and families;
- Become familiar with the structure and steps of the review process;
- Participate as knowledgeable, contributing members of a review team;
- Identify their role in the Quality Assurance/Quality Service Review process in their county;
- Identify specific indicators that can be used to assess safety, permanency, and well-being outcomes;
- Understand and utilize the Quality Assurance case record review instrument to be used as part of a Quality Assurance process;
- Establish an internal process for Quality Assurance; and
- Incorporate feedback from consumer, and cross-system/collaborative agencies, and partners for Quality Improvement.

■ *Risk and Safety Assessment*

Risk and safety assessment is a primary responsibility of all Child Welfare staff and is a crucial skill in successfully working with children and their families. Being able to accurately assess risk to a child may save a child's life. Being able to accurately assess safety threats and indicators may allow a plan to be developed that will allow a child to safely remain in their own home.

Pennsylvania's Department of Public Welfare has created specific protocols for risk and safety assessment that, when followed correctly, will facilitate a complete, strength-based, and valuable assessment that will serve as a baseline of information for safety and service planning.

By being completely familiar with the required process for risk and safety assessment, Child Welfare staff will be equipped to perform their job fully and ultimately improve outcomes for children and families.

The Training Program will assist County Children and Youth Agencies to:

- Explain fully the purpose of risk and safety assessment for Child Welfare staff;
- Explain fully the differences between Risk Assessment and Safety Assessment;
- Successfully complete a Risk Assessment using the proper tools and protocols;
- Successfully complete a Safety Assessment using the proper tools and protocols;
- Demonstrate the ability to complete risk and safety assessments using strength-based methodology;
- Demonstrate the ability to complete safety planning with a family at the completion of the safety assessment process;
- Demonstrate the ability to complete family service planning with a family at the completion of the risk assessment process; and
- Incorporate risk and safety assessment into every contact with a family.

Systems of Care is a synchronized network of families, communities, and helping agencies working together to provide culturally competent and coordinated support and services that is child-centered and family-focused for all children, youth, and families. To build a System of Care, collaborative partners, including families and youth, must first look to the services and functions provided within each agency and then work to build those services and functions into one comprehensive system. Supporting the Systems of Care effort across Pennsylvania involves organizational and systems assessment, strategic planning for integration, and communication planning. In Pennsylvania, Systems of Care is closely tied to the Integrated Children's Services Plan.

The Training Program will assist County Children and Youth Agencies to:

- Develop and/or implement a vision and a mission for a system of care/integrated children's services plan within the community system;
- Develop and/or implement a strategic plan for a system of care/integrated children's services plan within the community system;
- Incorporate system of care/integrated children's services plan values and principles into everyday operations; and
- Demonstrate positive, strength-based interactions, including partnerships with families, youth, and other community partners that empower change.