

# Executive Summary

## **Course Title: What Works In Child Welfare: Social Worker Contact – The Heart Of The Job**

**Course Description:** What works in Child Welfare? What we have always believed has now been well researched. What really helps families succeed is social worker contact. This class will focus on social worker contacts with children, youth, and birth parents. The class will present a model for making contacts as efficient and effective as possible. With parents, the focus will be on: engagement, assessing for change, helping motivate families towards real change and documentation. With children and youth, the focus will be on engaging them while asking questions that assess their safety and well being. This section will focus on what questions to ask by developmental age. It will also include an interviewing tool to assist workers in preparing for child contacts for each age group. The class will be skills based using cases and will provide participants an opportunity to practice some of the skills.

### **Target Audience:**

This class is designed for new or experienced workers and their supervisors.

### **Outcome Objectives for Participants:**

Participants will have practiced a model for making contacts with parents and children.

Participants will learn techniques to engage parents and use case plans as a focal point for monthly contacts.

Participants will learn two ways to help motivate parents.

Participants will be able to plan a child contact, determine what information they need and what questions to ask that are fitting for developmental age of the child.

### **Ways Supervisors Can Support the Transfer of Learning from the Classroom to the Job:**

#### **Before the class:**

1. Review county policy about worker contacts with parents and children.
2. Review what a worker needs to do during a contact with a parent. Make a complete list.
3. Have the worker think back to a previous contact with a parent and/or child. What went well and what would they have liked to see go better?
4. Think about what motivates parents other than closing the case. Have a conversation with your workers that shares your experience.

5. Review the cycle of change. Pick one of the workers cases and discuss where the parents are in that cycle.
6. Think back to cases where something went wrong in foster care. What lessons could we learn? What could a worker do during a contact that might have helped? Share this case with your workers. Discuss what might someone have seen? What questions could we have asked?
7. Think of an older youth in foster care. What might a worker have done years ago during their contacts that might have helped that youth have a better outcome? Tell your workers about the case and ask them what they would do if they had the case years ago.

#### **After the training:**

1. Ask what they thought was the most interesting thing they learned.
2. Have the workers pick a case and ask them to prepare a plan for their next child contact. After the contact, ask them how it went, what worked, what do they want to do differently.
3. Ask the workers to pick a case that they are struggling with. Ask them what is working on the case? Ask them on a scale of 1 to 10 how do they think the parent feels about them? Ask what they could do to enhance the relationship just by one point? Is there anything that gets in the way? Make a plan to do one thing during the next contact.
4. Ask the worker to talk about a case where the parent does not want to partake in the service the worker has suggested. Ask the worker to list the parent's interest and their interest? Develop a plan to focus on interests at the next contact.
5. Ask the worker how they are doing using behavioral language and telling the parent what they want then to do rather than what not to do. Practice some of the hard ones.
6. Have the worker chose one thing from the training to present at a unit meeting. They could chose a short activity and have the team do it (not more than 10 minutes).
7. Ask the worker to bring in the child interviewing tool. Ask them what questions they like? Ask them to try a few of them at the next contact.
8. Have the worker show you the steps in worker contacts. Walk though a visit using the steps.

#### **Brief outline of the Training:**

The class will begin with and activity that will review what workers already know about worker contacts, what works and what are the challenges.

What we know about worker contacts and a model for worker contacts.

Parents:

Engaging and motivation parents towards real change

Techniques for motivation parents

A few negotiation skills

Heart of contacts – the case plan

Assessing progress and documentation

Children:

The rules: the where and when

Engaging children during contacts

Engaging children by developmental age

Assessing for safety

Assessing for well-being and permanence

Working on goals with children and youth

Putting it all together