Georgia Division of Family and Children Services Concurrent Planning Training

Achieving Permanence Through Concurrent Planning

The ADDIE model of instructional design provided the framework for the development of this curriculum.

**Analysis.** Several activities contributed to the analysis of the training needs for this curriculum. These included: statewide focus groups (November 2008), stakeholder meeting (March 2009), training needs analysis focus groups with Innovation Zones (June/July 2009), implementation meetings with Innovation Zones (July 2009), coordination with various policy and practice consultants within DFCS, and review of best practice research from various sources, including the National Resource Center for Permanency and Family Connections (NRCPFC).

**Design.** The course design seeks to address the training needs identified during the analysis phase. Recognizing that not all training needs can be addressed by this one curriculum, the overall training plan for concurrent planning also includes recommendations for additional learning opportunities to reinforce and support the needed change in practice. Feedback on the design was gathered from key groups, including: the Concurrent Planning Initiative Workgroup, Innovation Zones Concurrent Planning Testing Groups, Education and Training Services, and the Professional Excellence subcommittee of the Social Work Education Consortium and the Social Services Advisory Group.

**Development.** Content for this curriculum was gathered from several sources including: NRCPFC curriculum - Concurrent Planning for Timely Permanence, and NRCPFC practice consultant, Janyce Fenton.

In addition, the content builds upon and reinforces knowledge and skills included in Georgia's new worker training curriculum. The development process included several opportunities for review and feedback from key groups prior to training implementation.

**Implementation.** The testing and initial implementation of this curriculum occurred in the DFCS Innovation Zones. The course will only be open to staff from these areas initially. Eventually, this training will be offered statewide as a part of the statewide implementation of concurrent planning practice.

**Evaluation:** The Professional Excellence Program has an established evaluation system that consists of pre-post self-assessment, end of course evaluation, and 6-week follow up evaluations. Evaluation results are shared with Education and Training Services via an agreed upon reporting system. Additional evaluation needs may be negotiated.
Course Description:

This curriculum provides a comprehensive overview of concurrent planning, the use of concurrent planning as a casework practice to achieve permanence, and the key knowledge, skills, and values that are needed to successfully practice concurrent planning.

An additional goal of this session is to bring together the different players that have key roles in making concurrent planning practice successful. Therefore, this session intentionally targets a multi-function/multi-level group of participants.

Target Audience:

Case Managers and Supervisors (all social service programs), Administrators (all social service program areas), Field Program Specialists; External Stakeholders: CASA, Child Placement Agencies/Child Caring Institutions

Length of Course: 2 days, 9 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. (12 instructional hours)

Training Goals

- To increase understanding of the goals and definition of concurrent planning
- To begin the development of the key knowledge, skills, and attitudes necessary for effective concurrent planning practice
- To increase understanding of the role that different stakeholders play in successful concurrent planning practice
- To connect concurrent planning to the overall goals of permanency and family centered practice

Learning Objectives (listed by module):

As a result of participation in this training, participants will be able to:

Module 1 The Nuts and Bolts of Concurrent Planning

- Define concurrent planning
- State the current federal and state mandates that impact concurrent permanency planning
- Explain the goals of concurrent planning and the connection to permanency outcomes
- Explain the components or principles of concurrent planning
- State key benchmarks for concurrent planning activities based on case process
- Value concurrent planning as a viable case management method for achieving permanency
Module 2 Prognostic Assessment

- Identify the various assessments and sources of information that should be considered when assessing reunification potential and determining which children may need a concurrent plan.
- Explain how Georgia’s concurrent planning assessment guide can be used to help make the decision about the appropriateness of a concurrent plan.
- Use the concurrent planning assessment guide to support a decision about the need for a concurrent plan.

Module 3 Full Disclosure

- Explain the importance of full disclosure with birth parents, resource parents, and children.
- Articulate the connection between family centered practice and full disclosure when working with children and families.
- Identify key skills and strategies for conducting full disclosure interviews.
- Value full disclosure as an essential component of family centered practice and concurrent planning.

Module 4 Developing the Concurrent Case Plan

- State the components of a concurrent case plan.
- Explain the difference between compliance with a case plan and success as measured by changes in parental behavior.
- Define the SMART model for writing case plan goals/steps.
- Explain the concept of intensive reunification services.
- Explain the connection between visitation and reunification.
- Identify well-written case plan goals/steps based on SMART model.
- Construct examples of reunification goals/steps and alternative plan goals/steps.
- Explain how to enter a concurrent plan into GA SHINES.

Module 5 Working with Resource Parents

- State the definition of a resource parent based on current Georgia policy.
- Explain the role of resource parents in concurrent planning cases.
- Identify key attributes of resource parents.
- Identify key considerations for selecting and working with relatives as resource parents.
- Identify key considerations for matching children and birth parents with prospective resource parents.
- Identify key strategies for effective practice with the triad (resource parent, birth parent, child/youth).
Module 6 Family Centered Case Practice with a Concurrent Plan

- Identify strategies for assessing parental behavior change
- Explain how to use the case review process to assess case plan progress
- Identify key considerations for making the final permanency recommendation
- Define post-permanency communication
- Explain how post-permanency communication can contribute to the well-being of children

Concurrent Planning Pre-training Activities

The pre-training activities are designed to help staff assess their current practices, behaviors, and beliefs related to concurrent planning and family centered practice. The first step in any effort to change is to create awareness of the need for change. With this activity we hope to encourage staff to rethink their behaviors and engage in self-analysis and introspection.

Why Pre-training?

The more staff bring to the training situation the more they will carry away from it. Therefore, the more participants can prepare themselves for the learning experience, the more effective the learning is likely to be.

Why Involve Supervisors?

What supervisors do and say before and after their staff attend training is the most critical factor in ensuring that training “sticks” and results in improved performance on the job. Meeting with your staff prior to them attending training helps to:

- **Increase learner readiness.** Your staff will be more receptive to training, will learn more, and will be more likely to use their new knowledge and skills back on the job if they can immediately see the value in the training they will be receiving.

- **Promote performance improvement.** Case managers should go to training with specific cases, clients, and situations in mind. As they are actively participating in training, they will begin to formulate ideas about how they can apply what they are learning to these situations.

- **Ensure understanding of training objectives and supervisory expectations.** If your staff know what the training program is supposed to accomplish, they are more likely to expend the energy to actually achieve these objectives. They also need to hear that you value training and support their efforts to learn and improve.
How Can Supervisors Benefit?

- **Improved performance** from your staff and achievement of unit/county/agency performance goals.
- **Better outcomes** for the children and families on your caseloads.
- **Professional development credit hours.** Supervisors and Case Managers can each receive two professional development credits for completing the pre-training activities.

What Supervisors Need to Do:

The pre-training activity contains two separate, but related activities. Supervisors may decide when and how they facilitate these activities as long as staff members have completed the activities prior to attending the Concurrent Planning training. Possibilities for conducting the activities:

- Conduct the activities as a part of a unit meeting
- Conduct small group meetings based on when staff are scheduled to attend the training
- Include the activities as a part of an individual supervisory conference

**Activity One – Self-Assessment**

Description: Staff will complete an assessment on practices related to concurrent planning and family centered practice. Responses to the assessment items suggest a tendency toward behaviors, practices, and beliefs that: (1) Are reflective of family centered practice and effective concurrent planning – in short the “new way” of thinking about work with families; (2) Are more reflective of traditional practice or the “old way” of thinking about work with families; or (3) Demonstrate a lower level of awareness of what it means to be family centered.

**Activity Two – Transfer of Learning Action Plan**

Description: Building on the self-assessment results, supervisors will lead participants in developing a Transfer of Learning Action Plan for the Concurrent Planning training.

Curriculum developed for the Georgia Division of Family and Children Services by the DFCS Professional Excellence Program, Georgia State University School of Social Work

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