

# ***Transfer of Learning Guide*** ***Pre-Service Institute***



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\*This manual will serve as a guide for the new hire, supervisor, and mentor during the PSI.

# Transfer of Learning Guide

## Introduction

Outstanding child welfare workers possess a combination of skills and positive attributes. They are organized, motivated, excellent managers of their time, as well as able to work both independently and in teams. They are adept at handling the pressure of multiple tasks with multiple families while complying with law, policy, and organizational change. They are able to deal effectively with people of diverse cultures and backgrounds. They are able to juggle multiple activities, priorities, and meet required deadlines. Training is just one piece of the puzzle in preparing new caseworkers for their very important work. In OWDT, new hires will learn practical skills to make them more productive, more valuable, and more effective in dealing with the complex needs of families and children served by our child welfare system.

OWDT recognizes that training new staff is a step-by-step process that takes many months and requires the help of many people. Training staff and field supervisors and mentors share the major responsibility for this task. Training new hires is a partnership which requires frequent communication between the new hire, trainer and supervisor. OWDT training staff will arrange for multiple meeting opportunities to discuss the new hire's progress.

The Pre-Service Institute (PSI) training is a nine-week training that includes classroom instruction, online learning and on the job training (OJT). Completion of this training is required for all newly hired caseworkers within 16 weeks of hire or promotion. It is imperative that caseworkers complete all required hours and receive all PSI instruction to prepare them for working with children and families. Do not approve time off during PSI training. Throughout training, caseworkers will build knowledge and skill in the MiTEAM practice model, program specific policies and procedures, as well as other competencies vital to their success.

PSI includes four weeks in the classroom and five weeks on the job training (OJT). The first week takes place in the field and is an opportunity to assure the new hire becomes acquainted with local office policy, procedure and time and travel requirements. The OJT component will occur during Weeks 1, 3, 5, 7 and 9 of the PSI. Child Welfare Certificate<sup>1</sup> holders will start training in week 5. OJT does not replace classroom or online training, but supplements and enhances it with activities. It is critical that during the OJT portion of PSI, the new hire receives close oversight by the supervisor, support from the mentor, and shadows experienced workers.

The OJT component of the PSI is vital to new hires' success as they begin their career in child welfare. The new hire will be assigned a mentor to support them through the first several months on the job. The supervisor will arrange for the new hire to observe a variety of experienced caseworkers in various activities related to her or his specific job requirements. The new hire is expected to gain knowledge and experience that increasingly prepares them for a caseload that progresses in size and complexity over time.

### **Understanding the OJT Experience**

The new hire OJT experience begins on day one of PSI training and continues for the duration of training. OJT weeks are designed to assist the supervisor in assessing the new hire's ability to critically think through best practices of a case. The new hire will ideally progress through the OJT experience by shadowing, co-partnering, and then leading casework practice activities in the field.

Once cases have been assigned in accordance with the Implementation Sustainability and Exit Plan (ISEP), the new hire may be the lead in working with children and families and should be shadowed by the supervisor, mentor and experienced workers to receive real-time feedback. This is a critical time to identify where the new hire is meeting expectations, needs improvement or is unable to meet the expectations of the job.

### **Field Activities Documentation**

OWDT provides a list of OJT activities that are important for a new hire to complete. Each week activities are assigned that provide real life exposure to elements of the job and may correlate with content being taught during classroom training.

On the first day of the PSI, the new hire should print the Field Activities Log for week one, as well as for their specific program. The new hire's weekly OJT activities should be documented on this log. During each OJT week, a new log needs to be completed.

The supervisor will meet weekly with the new hire to discuss his or her progress during OJT weeks and relate the experiences back to the PSI training. It is vital for supervisors to be very supportive and connected to the new hire during OJT. The caseworker and supervisor must sign each field activity log and the new hire must bring the updated log to class every week they return from OJT. The final field activities log for week 9 must be scanned and emailed or mailed to the trainer in order to document the completion of all required field activities. If required field activities are not completed, the caseworker may not be able to successfully complete training.

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### Child Welfare Mentoring Plan for New Hires

The supervisor must designate an experienced caseworker as a mentor for each new hire. The mentor will assist new hires in progressively building case practice knowledge and is expected to shadow the new hire as they complete key activities in a case.

#### Expectations of the mentoring/new hire/supervisor relationship

- The mentor should have strong policy knowledge, superior coaching skills, solid decision-making skills, demonstrated efficiency in managing a caseload, and an overall positive perception of MDHHS' mission. **The designated mentor must not have a caseload exceeding current caseload standards.**
- The supervisor should meet with the new hire and mentor to discuss expectations while in classroom training and when back in the office for OJT.
- The supervisor should review OJT field activities with the new hire and mentor and discuss a plan for completing them over the course of the training.
- The mentor should take new hires with them on field calls to learn essential casework activities. The new hire should take notes during interviews and visits, shadow court activities, enter social work contacts into MiSACWIS, make referrals to service providers, co-supervise visits, partner on investigations, etc.
- The mentor should utilize MiSACWIS job aides to ensure that new hires receive detailed instruction on the proper use of the case management system.
- Supervisors, experienced workers, mentors, and OWDT training staff should communicate concerns about a new hire as soon as they are identified. Supervisors are responsible to work with their new hire to resolve concerns regarding behavior, performance, time and attendance issues, etc. that may occur during the PSI.
- The new hire should communicate their understanding of the topics discussed during OJT with the mentor who will provide a weekly verbal analysis to the supervisor.
- Supervisors will meet with the new hire and mentor frequently to discuss progress towards meeting expected outcomes.

Key areas to be discussed include but are not limited to the following:

- Importance of policy and how it relates to child safety and permanency
- Steps to a thorough CPS Investigation
- Importance of making and documenting contacts
- Properly servicing ongoing CPS/FC/Adoption cases
- Report writing
- Work rules
- Office specific petition filing procedures

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## Roles and Responsibilities

### Supervisor

Evidence indicates that the supervisor has a tremendous responsibility in the professional development of new employees. The role of the supervisor is essential because the supervisor has the opportunity to mold the attitudes and skills of their workers. Supervisors should:

- ✓ Take the time to carefully read this guide.
- ✓ Encourage other team members to make the new hire feel welcome and a part of the group.
- ✓ Assign a mentor to provide meaningful shadowing experiences.
- ✓ Assist the new hire with planning his or her OJT activities and with the transfer of knowledge from the classroom to the OJT activities to working with children and families.
- ✓ Provide opportunities for skill *demonstration* in OJT weeks.
- ✓ Meet at least weekly with the new hire to assess her or his progress.
- ✓ Model appropriate attitudes and demonstrate best practice.
- ✓ Give practical, consistent feedback.
- ✓ Monitor the number and types of cases being assigned.
- ✓ Complete the New Hire Evaluation Summary in week 9 of the PSI.

### Mentor

Supervisors are not the only ones responsible for coaching new hires; experienced workers are another essential resource for new hires to learn their jobs. The mentor should:

- ✓ Take the time to carefully read this guide.
- ✓ Complete the *Mentoring PSI New Hires* eLearning found on the LMS Plus (aka LMS) learning management system.
- ✓ Communicate regularly with the supervisor regarding the new hire's OJT experiences.
- ✓ Be available to discuss issues and barriers related to successful child welfare practice with the new hire.
- ✓ Offer shadowing opportunities whenever possible.

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New hires must take responsibility for their learning; they should pursue new experiences.

The new hire should:

- ✓ Take the time to carefully read this guide.
- ✓ Fully engage in the OJT experience and document activities on the Field Activities Log.
- ✓ Complete all activities/assignments as directed by supervisor.
- ✓ Initiate shadowing opportunities to further enhance learning.
- ✓ Review assignments with supervisor and mentor.
- ✓ Remain professional at all times.

Trainer

The trainer will:

- ✓ Provide skill-based training and answer questions specific to statewide policy and procedure.
- ✓ Communicate concerns timely with the new hire and supervisor.
- ✓ Provide written feedback via the New Hire Evaluation Summary.

**If everyone fulfills their responsibilities, we can provide the best possible circumstances for a new hire to succeed.**

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**No case may be assigned to the new hire prior to the first day of the PSI training.** New hires may be assigned a limited number of cases at different intervals during training. Supervisor discretion must be used when determining the number and type of cases assigned.

**Information regarding caseload progression and training requirements can be located in SRM 103.** <https://policymanuals.michigan.gov/OLM/SR/Current/SRM/103.docx?web=1>

### CPS Progression

**No cases** shall be assigned until the PSI new hire has:

Completed 4 weeks of pre-service training + passed competency exam 1

= Up to 5 cases may be assigned

Completed 9 weeks of pre-service training + passed competency exam 2 + satisfactory review by trainer and supervisor (New Hire Evaluation Summary)

= Up to full caseload may be assigned

Child Welfare Certificate holders may be assigned up to 5 cases on the first day after completion of Forensic Interviewing training, and up to a full caseload upon successful completion of training, satisfactory review by trainer and supervisor, and passing competency exam 2.

### CPS Guidelines

**The first 5 cases assigned shall not include an investigation involving children under 8 years of age or children who are unable to communicate.**

Other suggested types of cases to avoid assigning:

- Sexual abuse cases
- Severe physical abuse
- Previous terminations
- Medical neglect cases
- Child death
- Cases that has multiple CPS substantiation
- Severe domestic violence in the home
- Any cases that would require a mandatory petition



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## **Foster Care and Adoption Progression**

On the first day of PSI Training **up to 3** cases may be assigned.

Additional cases may be assigned if:

Completed 4 weeks of pre-service training + passed competency exam 1

= Up to 5 total cases may be assigned

Completed 9 weeks of pre-service training + Passed competency exam 2 + satisfactory

review by trainer and supervisor (New Hire Evaluation Summary)

= Up to full caseload may be assigned

Child Welfare Certificate holders may be assigned up to 5 cases on their first day of training, and up to a full caseload upon successful completion of training, satisfactory review by trainer and supervisor, and passing competency exam 2.

## **Foster Care Guidelines**

Suggested types of cases to assign:

- A sibling group of 3 or less with parents free of major or long term chronic mental health or substance abuse issues
- An older youth case (permanent ward)

Suggested types of cases to avoid:

- New case (ISP due during training)
- Impending court event that will occur during PSI (i. e. permanency planning hearing, termination pre-trial or trial)
- Indian child cases, no matter the level of MDDHS involvement
- Medically fragile cases or DOC Level III cases
- Youth placed in residential or a psychiatric hospital
- Interstate Compact on the Placement of Children (ICPC) cases

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## **Adoption Guidelines**

Suggested types of cases to assign:

- Younger sib group
- Infant cases

Suggested types of cases to avoid:

- Parental appeal of termination cases
- Disputed/competing party cases
- ICPC cases
- Medically fragile or DOC Level III cases
- Recently disrupted cases

The supervisor should closely monitor the new hire's actions and decision-making when handling cases. Any concerns should be immediately addressed and if a case becomes too complex for the new hire, the supervisor may consider re-assigning the case to an experienced worker.

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## Assessing the New Hire

Skill demonstration is an important component of assessing a new hire's readiness for child welfare casework. Supervisors are responsible for ensuring that new hires have opportunities to observe, demonstrate, and receive feedback on skills. The following skill areas must be assessed for each new hire by the end of training.

### Communication

- Uses clear and respectful oral and written communication with families, colleagues and external partners, such as the court and service providers.
- Demonstrates attentive listening and recognition of non-verbal cues when others are communicating.
- Appropriate report writing, goal development and petition writing skills.

### Safety awareness

- Knows and uses safety protocols.
- Takes actions that are likely to keep self, peers, children and family members safe.

### MiTEAM

- Shows commitment to child safety, permanence, and well-being.
- Conducts home visits as required.
- Develops rapport.
- Utilizes strength-based, solution-focused interviewing techniques.
- Solicits input from children, families, relatives, and community partners.
- Understands the purpose of teaming.
- Effectively facilitates Family Team Meetings.
- Coordinates community resources to provide the best services to children and families.
- Conducts appropriate assessments.
- Models desired behaviors for parents.

### Interviewing

- Uses a strength based, motivational approach when interviewing adults.
- Consistently and correctly utilizes the Forensic Interviewing protocol when interviewing children.

### Documentation

- Appropriately documents program specific case activities on MiSACWIS.
- Writes clear, objective, behavior-based reports and assessments.

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### Testifying

- Demonstrates appropriate behaviors in court.
- Clearly conveys case facts and professional recommendations in testimony.

### Decision making and case planning

- Gathers sufficient information.
- Appropriately interprets information.
- Makes decisions based on facts and the best interest of the child.
- Develops safety and treatment plans based on assessment information.

### Self-awareness and values diversity and inclusion

- Knows own “triggers” and can manage own reactions
- Knows own strengths and limitations
- Demonstrates cultural competency
- Demonstrates an ability to remain calm in stressful situations
- Appropriate confidence in own ability

### **Trainee Progress Documentation**

Ongoing, but no later than week nine, the trainer will input their comments for each new hire related to each skill area on the New Hire Evaluation. The trainer will include comments on the new hire’s progress, and observations of his or her attendance, behaviors and participation during training.

The trainer will email the New Hire Evaluation to the Supervisor. Comments and observations from the supervisor and mentor should be entered by the conclusion of week 9. This performance evaluation, completed by both the supervisor and the OWDT trainer, will be used with both competency-based exams to document the new hire’s readiness for child welfare casework. The supervisor should assign progressive case responsibility based on the new hire’s readiness and in accordance with caseload progression requirements.

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### LOGS

#### **Field Activities Log**

On the first day of work, the new hire should print the applicable field activities log for their program and begin documenting their OJT activities. Each OJT week, a new field activities log should be printed, completed and signed by the caseworker and supervisor.

#### Accessing the Logs

Forms are found in the Online Student Guide.



**FOSTER CARE Program Specific Week One**

Activity	Complete Date	Comments
Policy Review Activity		
LEIN Activities (DHHS ONLY)		
LEIN e-learning		
LEIN handout		
LEIN Activity		
Educational Requirements for Foster Care Activity		
Medical/Dental Care in Foster Care Activity		
Absent Parent Protocol Activity		
Incarcerated Parents Activity		
Review James Case		

#### Updating the Forms

The supervisor, mentor, and the new hire are responsible for finding opportunities to complete activities listed on the Field Activities Form. The new hire is expected to complete every required activity. He or she may complete the optional activities and may complete activities not listed on the form. The supervisor directs which activities are to be completed, and when they are to be completed. **If required field activities are not completed, the caseworker may not be able to successfully complete training.**

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### Sharing and Finalizing the Forms

The new hire should bring the updated log with them each time they meet with their supervisor or mentor. The supervisor should review the activities completed, debrief the new hire's experiences and discuss which activities can be completed in future OJT weeks. Each classroom week following an OJT week, the caseworker must bring the completed, signed log and provide it to the OWDT trainer. These logs will be used in discussions between the trainer, supervisor and new hire about the new hire's experiences and progress. When the trainer communicates with the supervisor during week 9, this log can be used to stimulate dialogue around the skill areas on the New Hire Evaluation Summary. **Once finalized, these logs should be kept on file locally. OWDT will also keep a copy in the new hire's file for as long as the record retention schedule dictates.**

### New Hire Evaluation Summary

The New Hire Evaluation Summary is shared directly with the new hire's supervisor via email. OWDT will assess all field logs, activity logs and exam results to enter PASS or FAIL into the trainee's Learning Management System (LMS) transcript.

#### #9 New Hire Evaluation Summary Conclusion

Evaluator		Supervisor	
<input type="checkbox"/>	Competency Exam 1 Score:		
<input type="checkbox"/>	Competency Exam 2 Score:		
Evaluator Comments		Supervisor Comments	
		Observation by Mentor	
Evaluator Rating		Supervisor Rating	

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For each skill area:

- Trainer checks that weekly Field Activities were completed by the new hire and signed by supervisor.
- Supervisor uses the Evaluation Scale to assess the New Hire's performance for each skill area and overall performance.
- Both trainer and supervisor add comments for each skill area.

### EVALUATION SCALE:

**HIGH PERFORMING:** The new hire's performance during training is noteworthy as being above expectations or outstanding.

**MEETS EXPECTATIONS:** The new hire's performance during training is satisfactory and is representative of the performance expected from a new hire.

**NEEDS IMPROVEMENT:** The new hire's performance during training is below expectations, he/she will need support and opportunities for development to improve performance and gain confidence. The supervisor, after consultation with trainer, should identify the plan to meet these needs.

**DOES NOT MEET EXPECTATIONS (for overall rating only):** The new hire's performance during training is not representative of the performance expected from a new hire. Supervisor must identify the plan for the caseworker.

<sup>1</sup> The Child Welfare Certificate is a program embedded in the Michigan Schools of Social Work curriculum, and is targeted to prepare social work students to provide effective child welfare services. Universities must meet standardized criteria to be endorsed by DHS. Students in these programs will be exposed to child welfare specific coursework and experience a 400-hour field placement in a DHS office, private child placing agency or tribal child welfare agency. This structured field placement will expose students to child welfare programs to prepare them for child welfare positions within the department. Students who complete the certificate programs will be able to waive portions of the standard Child Welfare Training Institute pre-service training for new child welfare caseworkers. Please check the OWDT website for further information.