

Practice Spotlights- Removal & Placements

The 4 video links in this Practice Spotlight series can be found below. In addition, the original Weekly News/Weekly Partner News releases are also included below.

Video 1: ReMoved [video](#)

Video 2: Mecosta/Osceola DHS [Trauma Informed Removal Training](#)

Video 3: Newaygo County DHS Case Review [video](#)

Video 4: Dr. Henry's Strategies to Reducing Trauma [video](#)

12/15/2014

Coming soon...Strengthening Our Focus will spotlight best practices for child removal, placement

In coming days, DHS will begin a series of presentations designed to bring all counties into Strengthening Our Focus, part of a renewed effort to highlight practices that best protect vulnerable children. The goal is to improve such efforts throughout DHS and its partner agencies.

The initial presentations will focus on best practices for removing at-risk children from a home and placing them in a safe environment. Please watch for them on DHS-Net and Weekly Staff News.

In the meantime, please watch this [video](#), which highlights the emotional trauma suffered by a young child being removed from her home and the importance of developing practices to minimize that anguish. Please note: Because of bandwidth constraints, the individual viewing of this video can have an adverse impact on the performance of all computer systems in an office. Coordinated viewing is advised.

Strengthening Our Focus: Practice Spotlight is part of an intensified push by DHS and its partners to nurture and spotlight best practices in the field to better protect vulnerable children in Michigan.

12/29/2014 & 1/5/2015

Strengthening Our Focus: Practice Spotlight – Child Removal

Today launches a series of presentations designed to bring all counties into Strengthening Our Focus, part of a renewed effort to highlight practices that best protect vulnerable children. The goal is to improve such efforts throughout DHS and its partner agencies.

Practice Spotlights- Removal & Placements

Today's presentation focuses on best practices for removing at-risk children from a home and placing them in a safe environment.

Child welfare professionals have long recognized that removing a child from a home environment of abuse or neglect is often stressful for the child and, if done incorrectly, can exacerbate the trauma the child is already experiencing.

The Mecosta/Osceola counties DHS trauma team developed a plan to practice trauma informed removals/placements utilizing innovative training with the latest in best practice and research. Logistics included: recruiting different workers across the child welfare continuum including DHS, court, and law enforcement; asking seasoned staff to play the roles of mothers, fathers and children; locating three mock home sites (staff homes); splitting a training day - classroom /field; having staff debrief and generate practical ideas to use.

[This video](#) explores child removal in greater detail and highlights a mock removal process. The steps that Mecosta/Osceola developed to reduce trauma for children is available [here](#).

More presentations will be offered in coming weeks and months.

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2/17/2015

15-015 - Strengthening our Focus: Removal & Placement Practice Exercise

To date, our child welfare system has used primarily quantitative measures to determine how effective we are at meeting the needs of the children with whom we have contact. As our child welfare system improves, we must also look at **qualitative** aspects of the work we do. For example, a worker-child visit must not only occur; it must also be carried out in a manner that ensures the child feels comfortable sharing any questions or concerns affecting him or her.

One area of our work that substantially impacts the children we serve is the removal and placement process. As such, we must periodically assess the quality of work we complete when tasked with the challenge of: removing a child from their home or current placement, identifying the best placement for them and introducing that placement to the child. Given the complexity of this work, there are benefits to reviewing our actions and discussing strategies that will help improve our practice on this front.

The importance of understanding and assessing how we interact with children and families during the removal process has led the department to create a series of videos to be used for training and practice. The first two videos, [Trauma Informed Removal Training](#) and [Removed](#) were previously posted to DHS-Net.

Practice Spotlights- Removal & Placements

Recently, the Newaygo County DHS team completed an exercise to help review and improve their child removal and placement practices. Newaygo utilizes a great deal of relative placements while also maintaining a very low maltreatment-in-care rate. Their diligence around this topic area has yielded positive outcomes for children in regard to placement safety. Please see this [video](#) explaining their use of the exercise.

For this Spotlight activity, offices are asked to review three to five of their recent placements or re-placements and complete a qualitative assessment. See [this document](#) for more details on this activity.

3/16/2015

Strengthening Our Focus: Strategies on Removing a Child from a Home

Any child welfare worker who has assisted in removing a child from an abusive home knows how traumatic it can be for a young person.

Dr. James Henry, co-founder and project director for the Western Michigan University Children's Trauma Assessment Center, has advice for child welfare workers in handling child removals, particularly in making the transition less emotionally traumatic for children.

Henry offers six tips on dealing with removals, which are outlined below. [More detailed information is available here.](#) [He expands on the advice in this video.](#)

- Clearly communicate to the child what is happening.
- Transitional items are important. Look for an item, like a teddy bear, that the child can bring with them from the home.
- Take some time with the child and communicate what will happen next.
- Give as much information as you can to children about where they are going. Provide pictures, if you can.
- Once the child arrives at the foster or kinship home, stay with the child for a period of time and engage with the kinship/foster provider.
- Ask children what might make them feel safer within the foster or kinship home.

Henry has a professional history that includes more than 17 years as a child welfare and protective services worker. He has been a professor in WMU's School of Social Work for 15 years, with a focus on developing and providing trauma-informed instruction in the social work curriculum. He holds a doctorate in social work and developmental psychology from Michigan State University.

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