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	<b>Contact:</b> Dale Freeman; FreemanD@michigan.gov	
	<b>Originating Office:</b> Child Welfare Field Operations	
	<b>Subject/Title:</b> Child Welfare Mentors (Experienced Workers)	
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Child Welfare Field Operations (CWFO) and the Child Welfare Training Institute (CWTI) have worked in partnership with local DHS county offices and private agency providers (PAFC) to develop guidelines and tools related to the requirement for mentoring new hires. The previously released **CSA Communication Issuance, Log 11-004** provided several documents and tools which were developed to offer clarification on the roles of mentors and supervisor in the new hire PSI training process. These have been attached to this Communication Issuance for your reference.

Local offices must designate an experienced caseworker (mentor) for each new hire. This person should have strong policy knowledge, superior coaching and decision making skills, demonstrated efficiency in managing a caseload, and an overall positive perception of the DHS mission. If there are no experienced and qualified caseworkers within your office to mentor a newly hired worker, options such as borrowing a mentor from a neighboring county office/agency, or utilizing a child welfare supervisor other than the worker's direct supervisor should be considered. Regardless of who is determined to be the worker's mentor, it is best practice that this relationship is maintained for at least 6 months to allow for adequate time for the worker to learn essential casework activities.

**Required Documentation of Mentor Assignment**

The mentor's name for every new hire in PSI training must be documented on the New Hire Evaluation Summary in OmniTrack Plus (aka JJOLT). Additionally, please ensure that all new hires that are currently attending PSI have an assigned mentor identified. Begin typing the first several letters of the mentor's name and select enter. Choose the person's name from the drop down menu. The mentor must have a user ID and be assigned to your agency. If you cannot find the mentor name, have your training facility coordinator check the employee directory of the mentor and make any necessary corrections. If the problem persists, contact the CWTI help desk at DHS-CWTIOTP@michigan.gov or 313-456-2603.

CWTI will run reports from OmniTrack Plus in order to verify that a mentor has been identified for each new hire. These reports will be distributed to Business Service Center Directors and CWFOA for follow-up with local offices and private agencies when necessary.

## **Benefits of Being a Mentor**

Mentoring takes additional time and effort and therefore, no mentor assigned to a new hire shall have a caseload exceeding current caseload standards. There are potential benefits and incentives for a worker to be a mentor, such as:

- Formal experience in coaching and other skills related to supervision
- Additional in-service training opportunities
- Reduced caseload (if available and appropriate in county/agency)
- Special recognition within the county office

If there are any additional questions or concerns regarding the mentoring process, please contact Dale Freeman at [FreemanD@Michigan.gov](mailto:FreemanD@Michigan.gov) or your CWTI trainer.

### **Attachments:**

- ***Child Welfare Mentor Plan for New Hires/Mentoring PSI New Hires*** (slideshow)
- ***Mentor Quick Reference Guide***
- ***Supervisor Guide to Mentoring***

## Mentor Quick Reference Guide

### Role and Responsibility:

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. **The designated mentor must not have a caseload exceeding current caseload standards.**

- Take the time to carefully read the Transfer of Learning Guide.  
<http://www.michiganchildwelfaretraining.com/Training/PreServiceInstitute.aspx>  
\*All link material can be found on the right hand side of the page
- Review the Experienced Worker (Mentor) PowerPoint presentation.
- Initial meeting with Supervisor and New Hirer to create/discuss the On the Job Training (OJT) plan.
- 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. (Refer to the Field Activity Guide for task to complete during shadowing).

### JJOLT (steps for locating E-learning courses within JJOLT):

- From JJOLT Home page, go to Training TAB, then to
- Course Folder, then to
- In-Service, then to
- E-Learning Courses, scroll to desired course. **(Remember to take the Exam after you have completed the E-Learning.)**

## **Supervisor Guide to Mentoring**

How to approach your staff and encourage mentoring:

- Local offices must designate an experienced caseworker (mentor) for each new hire. This person should have strong policy knowledge, superior coaching skills, solid decision making skills, demonstrated efficiency in managing a caseload, and an overall positive perception of the DHS' mission.
- Mentors must have paperwork and people skills
- If there are no appropriate experienced caseworkers located within your office to mentor a newly hired worker, then neighboring offices should be contacted in regards to borrowing a mentor for the worker. If a mentor is still unavailable, local offices should utilize a supervisor other than the worker's direct supervisor, within their office to function in the experienced worker role.
- Best practice would be that a mentor should be able to work with a new employee or a struggling employee for a 6 month minimum.
- Determine how long a person should be mentored and at what point a mentor should be assigned to assist a struggling worker.
- Send out a survey or information gathering e-mail to all new workers with 6 months or less to see what would be helpful and what would have been helpful in the first 3 months.
- Assessment tool to have workers rate themselves on where they struggle once they have been on the job for 1 month.
- Refer to the Transfer of Learning Guide  
<http://www.michiganchildwelfaretraining.com/Training/PreServiceInstitute.aspx>

Incentives:

- Added experience in developing skills for possible future management role
- Reduce caseload (if available and appropriate in county/agency)
- Special recognition within the county office (party/luncheon, gift cards, mass e-mail)

Create and utilize a Resource Book containing the following information for mentors to use with new workers (county/agency specific):

- Samples of well written reports, service plans, petitions
- List of frequently used service providers, provider identification numbers, along with the referral process
- Most frequently referenced CPL's and MCL's
- A list of How to's/short cuts including what to do if you have a removal, service agreements, navigating through policy, On-Call Help, after hours removal, FTM's and type
- Frequently used Phone Numbers

## New Caseworkers (MSA VI, A- pp 11-12)

- Each trainee shall shadow an experienced child welfare caseworker and progressively build case practice knowledge through intensive classroom and field training. An experienced caseworker (mentor) shall also shadow each trainee as they complete key activities in a case. No mentor assigned to shadow a trainee shall have a caseload exceeding current caseload standards.
- A trainee may be assigned specific tasks or activities in connection with a case that is the primary responsibility of an experienced caseworker and may under appropriate supervision, be assigned responsibility for a “training caseload” with progressively responsible caseload assignments as possible:
  - *Caseload progression for CPS:*
    - No cases shall be assigned until the completion of the first four weeks of pre-service training.
    - Upon completion of week four of pre-service training and successful completion of Competency Test One ([hyperlink to the test here-test is done in CWTI](#)), up to five total cases may be assigned with supervisory approval using the CWTI case assignment guidelines ([hyperlink here](#)). The first five cases shall not include an investigation involving children under 8 years of age or children who are unable to communicate.
    - Final caseload may be assigned after 9 weeks of pre-service training, successful completion of Competency Test Two ([hyperlink here](#)), and satisfactory review by the trainer and supervisor.
  - *Caseload progression for FC and Adoption:*
    - Three training cases may be assigned on or after day one of pre-service training at the supervisor’s discretion using CWTI case assignment guidelines.
    - Upon completion of week three of pre-service training and successful completion of Competency Test One ([hyperlink here](#)), up to five total cases may be assigned with supervisory approval using CWTI case assignment guidelines ([hyperlink here](#))
    - Final caseload may be assigned after nine weeks of pre-service training, successful completion of Competency Test Two ([hyperlink here](#)), and satisfactory review by the trainer and the supervisor.

# **CHILD WELFARE MENTOR PLAN FOR NEW HIRES**

The redesigned Pre-Service Institute (PSI) will be piloted in October 2011. As part of the redesign, and as required under the Modified Settlement Agreement, Child Welfare Field Operations and the Child Welfare Training Institute are instituting a formal practice wherein field offices must designate an experienced caseworker as a mentor for each new hire. Many counties have already established something similar, so the biggest change will be in the formalization and documentation of this practice.

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. **The designated mentor must not have a caseload exceeding current caseload standards.**

## **Before PSI**

- Local offices must designate an experienced caseworker (mentor) for each new hire. This person should have strong policy knowledge, superior coaching skills, solid decision making skills, demonstrated efficiency in managing a caseload, and an overall positive perception of DHS' mission.
- The supervisor should meet with their new hire to discuss expectations while in classroom training and when back in the office for on the job training (OJT).
- The supervisor should review OJT field activities with the worker and mentor, and discuss a plan for completing them over the course of the training.
- The mentor should view the PowerPoint (below) presentation describing their responsibilities as well as the benefits of being a mentor.

## **During PSI**

- 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 SWSS, make referrals to service providers, co-supervise visits, partner on investigations, etc.
- The mentor should utilize the SWSS local office expert to ensure that new hires receive supplemental instruction on the proper use of the SWSS system.
- Supervisors will meet with new hires 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
  - Steps to a thorough CPS Investigation
  - Importance of making contacts
  - Properly servicing of Ongoing CPS/FC/Adoption Cases
  - Report Writing
  - Work Rules
  - County specific petition filing procedures
- Supervisors, mentors and 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 mentor/trainee training weeks. The mentor should provide at least a weekly verbal analysis to the supervisor.

# Mentoring PSI New Hires



# What do you need to know to be a mentor?

- \* Why you were chosen to participate
- \* How it will benefit you
- \* What your responsibilities will be
- \* What the New Hire's responsibilities will be
- \* How the New Hire will benefit
- \* How children and families will benefit

# Why were you chosen to participate?

- \* Because of your:
  - \* Knowledge of child welfare practice
  - \* Knowledge and application of policy and child welfare law
  - \* Demonstration of good child welfare practice
  - \* Commitment to children and families

# How will this benefit me?

- \* It will allow you to:
  - \* Share your knowledge and experience
  - \* Positively impact the work of others
  - \* Provide the opportunity to practice coaching and management skills.
  - \* Make a difference in how children and families are served

# What are the responsibilities of a mentor?

- \* Allow the New Hire to shadow and partner with you:
  - \* Making field calls
  - \* Entering social work contacts in SWSS
  - \* Making referrals to service providers
  - \* Going to court
- \* Shadow the New Hire as they begin to take the lead in child welfare activities

# What are the responsibilities of a New Hire?

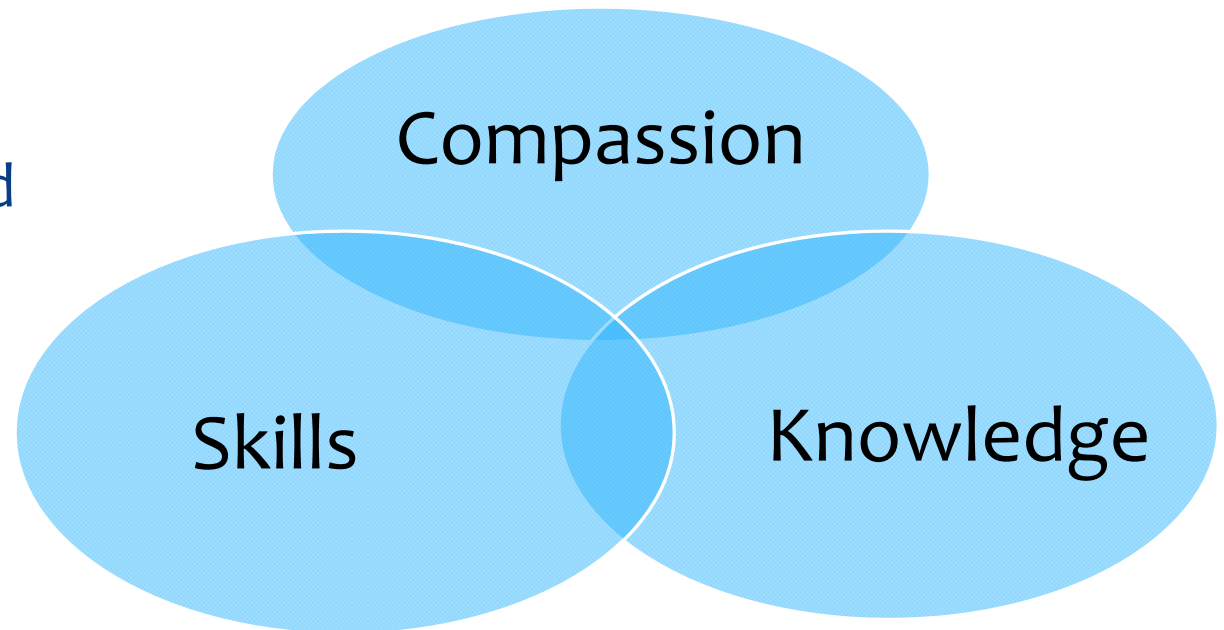
- \* Fully engage in On the Job Training (OJT)
- \* Complete all activities/assignments
- \* Initiate shadowing opportunities
- \* Review assignments with supervisor (as required)
- \* Be responsible for their own learning
- \* Seek assistance/guidance from experienced worker (mentor)

# How will the New Hire benefit?

- \* They will:
  - \* Transfer of learning from the classroom to the field
  - \* Get OJT experience that will prepare them for the job
  - \* Have an identified experienced worker (mentor) to support and guide them
  - \* Become familiar with child welfare practice before taking on a full caseload

# How will children & families benefit?

Compassionate,  
skilled,  
knowledgeable child  
welfare workers  
protect children as  
they preserve and  
support families.



# Does a mentor supervise the New Hire?

- \* A mentor does NOT evaluate/supervise the New Hire
- \* A mentor:
  - \* Demonstrates good practice
  - \* Provides context to experiences
  - \* May provide feedback to the New Hires
  - \* Listens patiently
  - \* Is positive about the job
  - \* Is hopeful about our families and children
  - \* Find reasons to smile and laugh



# What are the supervisor's duties?

- Select a mentor for the New Hire
- Meet regularly with the New Hire to discuss local office policies & procedures, child welfare policies/law and best practice
- Assist the New Hire with the transfer of learning to the OJT
- Assist the New Hire and experienced worker (mentor) with planning OJT activities
- Meet weekly with New Hire to assess progress
- Reinforce opportunities for skill demonstration during OJT
- Complete New Hire Evaluation Summary

Together we can make a  
**DIFFERENCE!**

New Hire +

Experienced Worker (Mentor) +

Supervisor +

CWTI

**= Improved Child Welfare Practice**

Welcome to the TEAM!