



# Child Welfare Annual Report

Calendar Year 2022

Submitted January 25, 2023

Maine Department of Health and Human Services  
Office of Child and Family Services

## Introduction

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Since 2019, the Office of Child and Family Services (OCFS) has been engaged in system improvement efforts guided by strategic priorities and initiatives resulting from a comprehensive evaluation of Maine’s child welfare system completed that year. Several of those initiatives were implemented prior to 2022, although changes have been made to ensure OCFS is addressing new issues that have arisen, particularly during and throughout the COVID-19 pandemic.

During 2022, OCFS made a number of improvements to Maine’s child welfare system, including the January launch of Katahdin, Maine’s replacement for its child welfare information system. Since that time, OCFS has made ongoing progress on the 2019 priorities to train and support staff, gather feedback from stakeholders, and continue to refine and improve the Katahdin system.

In addition to the 2019 priorities, OCFS has planned and implemented changes based on the work done in the fall of 2021 to analyze and learn from child fatalities using the Safety Science model of case review, supported by Casey Family Programs and Collaborative Safety. This case review approach involves a system-level review of the interactions between a family and the child welfare system. Collaborative Safety made seven recommendations to improve the child welfare system. Throughout 2022, OCFS worked to address each of these recommendations with guidance, feedback, and support from staff, stakeholders, and national experts. By the end of 2022, OCFS had completed the initial action items identified to address these recommendations. Appendix A of this report provides summary level information on each recommendation and the work done since the recommendations were received.

The completion of several of the strategic priorities that have guided OCFS’ child welfare division for the past three years has given OCFS greater opportunity to look ahead to the goals and priorities for focus in the coming months and years. Included in this report is information about the current challenges and opportunities facing Maine’s child welfare system in ensuring that all children can grow up in a safe, stable, happy, and healthy environment. As part of this work, OCFS has developed a new set of strategic priorities that will guide ongoing system improvement efforts in 2023 and beyond.

## 2019 Strategic Priorities

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The 2019 strategic priorities have been the underpinning of much of the work over the last three years as demonstrated by the table below.

### OCFS 2019 Child Welfare Strategic Priorities

#### Safety

- Address Intake Processes and Improve Staffing
- Re-assess the Alternative Response Program (ARP)
- Enhance Assessment Processes

#### Permanency

- Develop a Permanency Review Process
- Monitor the Family Visit Coaching Pilot to Develop Best Practices
- Improve Structured Decision Making (SDM) Tool Consistency

#### Well-Being

- Develop Family Engagement Tools and Training
- Improve Resource Parent Outreach and Support

#### Staff Training and Support

- Develop a Policy and Training Plan for New Processes and Tools
- Establish Workforce Wellness Teams and Education
- Update Caseload Size, Standards, and Ratios
- Procure a Replacement for the Maine Automated Child Welfare Information System (MACWIS)

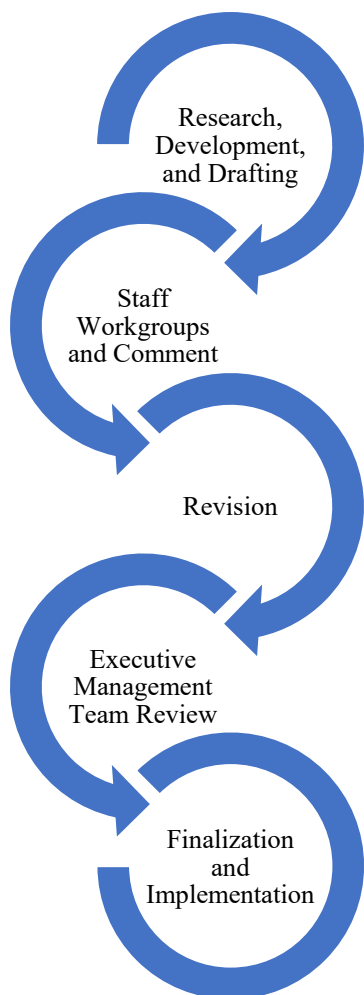
Priority	Year Completed	Description of Completion Efforts
Address Intake Processes and Improve Staffing	2019-2022	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Modernized the CPS Intake phone system</li> <li>Hired additional staff for the CPS Intake program</li> <li>Reviewed and updated the SDM Intake Screening Tool and provided implementation training, coaching, and support to Intake staff</li> <li>Introduced the online reporting portal for school personnel, medical staff, and law enforcement</li> </ul>
Re-Assess the Alternative Response Program (ARP)	2019-2021	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Evaluated the ARP, including data outcomes</li> <li>Decision not to renew ARP contracts</li> <li>Sought and received additional caseworker staff to handle the work previously completed by ARP</li> </ul>
Enhance Assessment Processes	2019-2022	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Developed and implemented SDM tools for Investigation</li> <li>Provided training, coaching, and support to staff on the SDM tools</li> <li>Completed a major update to Investigation Policy</li> <li>Developed and supported a staff workgroup to review Investigation requirements and national best practice regarding requirements and timeframes</li> <li>Completed additional updates to the Investigation Policy to implement recommendations of the staff workgroup</li> </ul>
Develop a Permanency Review Process	2019-2021	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Developed and implemented a Permanency Review Team (PRT) process focused on safe and timely permanency for children</li> <li>Developed and implemented SDM tools in permanency</li> <li>Provided training, coaching, and support to staff on the SDM tools</li> </ul>
Monitor the Family Visit Coaching Pilot to Develop Best Practices	2019-2022	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Completed initial pilot including data collection</li> <li>Sought and received funding to support expansion of the pilot to additional sites</li> <li>Continued data collection and analysis</li> </ul>
Improve Structured Decision Making (SDM) Tool Consistency	2019-2022	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Ongoing training and support for staff in use of the SDM tools</li> <li>Ongoing efforts by OCFS' Quality Assurance staff to conduct reviews related to tool fidelity and provide feedback to field staff</li> </ul>
Develop Family Engagement Tools and Training	2019-2022	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Expanded the Cooperative Agreement with USM to include funding for two parents with lived experience who assist with policy development, staff training, and ongoing work to implement an evidence-based parent mentor program</li> <li>Ongoing partnership with the Maine Child Welfare Advisory Panel's Family Engagement sub-committee to conduct listening sessions with fathers who have been involved with the child welfare system</li> <li>Participation in the New England Association of Child Welfare Commissioners and Directors Pathways to Partnership efforts focused on understanding the "front door" experience for families</li> <li>Ongoing support of youth engagement efforts for those youth currently and formerly in care</li> <li>Updated the Family Team Meeting (FTM) policy and provided training to staff</li> <li>Developed a webinar for families, providers and other community partners to increase understanding of the FTM process</li> </ul>
Improve Resource Parent Outreach and Support	2019-2022	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>In partnership with USM and Adoptive and Foster Families of Maine (AFFM), completed an overhaul of the Resource Parent training curriculum</li> <li>Sought and received additional funding for Adoptive and Foster Families of Maine to support Kinship Navigator services</li> </ul>
Develop a Policy and Training Plan for New Processes and Tools	2019-2021	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Developed and implemented a process to prioritize and revise all current child welfare policies; 12 policies finalized to date</li> <li>Developed a process through which policies are reviewed through a diversity, equity and inclusion lens</li> </ul>
Establish Workforce Wellness Teams	2019	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Developed and implemented Workforce Wellness Teams. Support of these teams is ongoing and staff continue to benefit from the services offered</li> </ul>

Update Caseload Size, Standards, and Ratios	2019-2022	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Developed a Workload Analytic Tool, reported on annually</li> <li>Sought and advocated for additional staff positions (total staff positions has increased by 95, or 27% since 2018)</li> </ul>
Procure a Replacement for the Maine Automated Child Welfare Information System (MACWIS)	2019-2022	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Procured a replacement and worked with the developer, staff, and stakeholders to customize the system for Maine</li> <li>New system, known as Katahdin, went live in early 2022</li> <li>Work is ongoing to continue to refine and improve the system based on feedback from staff, stakeholders and other sources</li> </ul>

For many of these strategies, the work has been evolving over the last few years, reflecting the OCFS’ focus on ongoing quality assurance and improvement. For example, OCFS’ strategic priority regarding the Family Visit Coaching Pilot involved ongoing monitoring and development of best practices. OCFS completed the initial pilot and noted that families who participated typically had stronger success in reunification. This finding drove the expansion of the pilot in order to determine whether the benefits of this visitation structure remain consistent across different geographical areas. In 2022, the Legislature funded the expanded pilot.

OCFS’ Quality Assurance Team has been a key part of ongoing efforts to monitor implementation of these strategies in the field, including use of SDM tools, adherence to policy, and the success of the Permanency Review Process. Quality Assurance staff review a random sample of cases to evaluate the completion of key child welfare practices. Feedback impacts individual cases where follow-up is needed but also informs child welfare leadership regarding ongoing training and support needed for staff.

**Process for Policy Revision and Review**



OCFS conducted significant work around policy, training, and support for field staff as part of OCFS’ implementation of the 2019 strategic priorities. In 2019, OCFS reinstated its Cooperative Agreement with the University of Southern Maine (USM) with the goals of utilizing their research in child welfare policy to update existing policies and trainings and utilize technology to modernize the delivery of policies and training for staff. In collaboration with USM, OCFS updated its procedures for drafting, revising, and approving new and revised policies. The new process, implemented in 2020, includes staff as part of the policy development process, both through workgroups and solicitation of comments and input on draft policies.

Since this work began, revisions have been completed and implemented on the following policies:

- Background Checks
- Collaboration
- Family Team Meetings
- Human Trafficking and Commercial Sexual Exploitation
- Immunization
- Interstate Compact on the Placement of Children
- Permanency
- Placement with DHHS Employees
- Safe Haven
- Safety Planning

- Staff Safety and Critical Safety Cases
- Substance Exposed Infants

Several policies are in the process of review and revision, including:

- Adoption
- Child Protective Investigation
- Disclosure
- Domestic Violence
- Entry into Care
- Family Standards for Foster and Adoptive Care
- Indian Child Welfare (ICW)
- Intake
- LGBTQIA+
- Psychotropic Medication
- Supervision
- Youth Transition

OCFS has also utilized the knowledge and experience of stakeholders who are subject matter experts for some policies. Examples include the LGBTQIA+ policy (where field experts in Maine were part of the workgroup that drafted the policy) and the Domestic Violence policy where staff from The Maine Coalition to End Domestic Violence (MCEDV) were involved.

In 2022, OCFS sought and received funding to allow for a modification to the Cooperative Agreement to hire two parents with lived experience in the child welfare system. These individuals have been a valuable resource in the policy development and revision process as they have brought perspective from their experience to the discussion to ensure that policies reflect the needs of families.

USM has also worked under the Cooperative Agreement to redesign the Foundations Training provided to new child welfare caseworkers. The redesign expanded the training from five to seven weeks, tailored content for each of the two major categories of caseworkers (investigation and permanency), incorporated the latest in adult learning theory, expanded the use of both classroom and e-learning training content, and enhanced the opportunities for staff to develop skills and knowledge first-hand through increased job shadowing experiences. Since the new Foundations Training was implemented in early 2022, OCFS has also collaborated with USM to seek feedback from staff on the training that has informed ongoing efforts to continually improve the training offered to new caseworkers. A complete summary of the new Foundations Training is attached as Appendix B.

## Safety Science

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Over the last year, Safety Science has been a significant focus of OCFS' child welfare division. This includes focus on implementing the recommendations that resulted from Collaborative Safety's Safety Science review of child fatalities that occurred in 2021. During 2022, OCFS incorporated the Safety Science recommendations into its ongoing system improvement efforts and completed work to address each of the seven recommendations. Some strategies overlapped with the 2019 Strategic Priorities, such as parent/family engagement and improvements to the Family Team Meeting process (which plays a major role in both investigations and permanency).

One significant outcome of the work to implement the Collaborative Safety recommendations was the establishment of a staff workgroup to address investigation timeframes and assessment tasks. This workgroup included staff from OCFS' Policy and Training Team, child welfare leadership, and field staff representation

from each of OCFS' district offices. The group partnered with Casey Family Programs and the Capacity Building Center for States to conduct a scan of national best practices regarding timeframes and required investigation activities. Information was also gathered from the Administration for Child and Families via their Information gateway. Through this work it was established that there are no widely accepted national best practices based in evidence and/or research for investigation timeframes and assessment tasks.

The workgroup met monthly from May to October and developed 11 recommendations which were provided to OCFS leadership. OCFS leadership supported implementation of 10 of the 11 recommendations. The most significant of the recommendations is an increase in the investigation timeframe from 35 to 45 days. The one recommendation not directly implemented is instead being addressed through updates to the Child Protection Intake policy.

In November of 2022, OCFS messaged both the recommendations and leadership's response to staff and developed a workplan to implement the recommendations. Updates to policy and practice expectations are underway with ongoing messaging to staff. As part of implementation, staff will receive updated training and support on the items incorporated into the CPS Investigation policy with the goal of disseminating the policy by February 28, 2023. Other changes involve updates to the Katahdin system and will require more time to implement.

Another significant change to result from the Collaborative Safety recommendations was the establishment of OCFS' Children's Emergency Services (CES) Unit which provides afterhours coverage, alleviating some of the burden on field staff to provide 24/7, 365 coverage for emergency reports of suspected abuse and/or neglect. The demands on field staff to provide standby and afterhours coverage was a concern that child welfare leadership heard consistently when engaging with field staff and seeking feedback through exit interviews, town halls, etc. OCFS convened a workgroup of staff to explore these concerns and develop recommendations and solutions. In 2022, OCFS sought and received funding in the budget to create the CES Unit and began hiring when the funding went into effect in July of 2022. Implementation began in the fall of 2022 and full implementation is expected by late winter.

### Safety Science Implementation



Through its work with Collaborative Safety on the 2021 case reviews, OCFS recognized the value of the structure Safety Science provides for the process of conducting critical incident reviews in a manner that avoids hindsight bias and instead thoughtfully informs system improvement efforts. This drove OCFS' decision to fully implement Safety Science into the work of the child welfare division. Notably, implementation of Safety Science was also a recommendation of the Maine Child Welfare Ombudsman in her 2021 and 2022 annual reports.

Safety Science was integrated in February of 2022, including hiring of staff, work with Collaborative Safety to develop the critical incident case review system, and establishment of Maine's multi-disciplinary team (MDT). The team conducts monthly confidential reviews. The OCFS staff working on Safety Science implementation have



completed 171 technical reviews and presented 36 cases to the MDT. The MDT has selected 20 of the 36 cases for full review and as of 1/19/23 has completed 13 full process reviews (which includes mapping of the case).

## **Legislative Changes**

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The child welfare system benefitted from strong legislative and budgetary support during 2022. This included the funding of 30 additional positions, including five Secretary Associate Legal positions; five additional caseworker positions to complete work previously handled by the Alternative Response Program; a new Regional Associate Director position focused on policy, training, and contracted services; and 16 additional positions (including caseworkers and supervisors) to staff the new CES/after-hours unit.

The Legislature also allocated \$420,000 to OCFS to expand Kinship Navigator Services, further expand Parents As Teachers and Homebuilders under the Family First Prevention Services Act, expand the Family Visit Coaching Pilot, implement a specialized Homebuilders program for families involved in reunification, and increase funding for Homeless Youth Services.

Public Law 2021, Ch. 714, introduced as An Act to Improve the Long-term Outcomes for Youth Transitioning from State Care by Raising the Upper Age Limit for Voluntary Support Eligibility was signed into law in May of 2022 and expanded the upper age limit for voluntary extended care from 21 to 23, allowing youth who have “aged out” of care when they turn 18 to continue to receive support from the Department until their 23<sup>rd</sup> birthday. Youth report these services and the support of OCFS staff are an invaluable resource and OCFS was pleased to implement this expansion.

In 2022, updates were also made to the Maine Child Welfare Ombudsman program, including the allocation of additional funding from the Governor’s Office and the codification of several programmatic changes OCFS had implemented with the Ombudsman. This included giving the Ombudsman the opportunity to review and provide input on draft policies and a system for notification of the Ombudsman when a child fatality occurs.

## **Federal Evaluation Efforts**

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As Maine’s child welfare agency, OCFS is subject to comprehensive federal oversight by the Administration for Children and Families (ACF). ACF’s oversight takes the form of two separate processes, the Child and Family Services Review (CFSR) (and, where determined necessary by ACF, a Program Improvement Plan (PIP)) as well as the five-year Child and Family Services Plan (CSFP) and Annual Progress and Services Report (APSR) on the CSFP. The CFSR can involve financial penalties for non-compliance as determined by ACF.

ACF completes the CFSR periodically and the process includes case reviews, stakeholder interviews, and a statewide assessment of performance based on data when compared to federal benchmarks. At the conclusion of the CFSR evaluation a final report is issued which documents whether the state is in conformity with ACF’s standards. If ACF determines that the state is not in substantial conformity for each outcome and systemic factor established under its standards, then the State must collaborate with ACF to develop a Program Improvement Plan (PIP) to address areas of non-conformity. No state has ever, in the history of the CFSR, met substantial conformity on all items.

Maine, like all states, is currently in the process of completing the PIP developed in 2017. In 2022, OCFS was notified by ACF that it had successfully completed goals identified in several PIP areas (permanency and well-being, case reviews, staff and provider training, and service array and resource development). This put Maine in compliance with two-thirds of the areas identified in its 2017 PIP and ensured Maine avoided a financial

penalty of over \$1 million in child welfare funding. With this notification Maine entered a period of PIP evaluation, including ongoing monitoring related to the remaining PIP measures, which will end in 2024.

## Child and Family Outcomes

Safety	
Children are, first and foremost, protected from abuse and neglect.	Met
Children are safely maintained in their homes whenever possible	
Permanency	
Children have permanency and stability in their living situations	
The continuity of family relationships and connects is preserved for children	Met
Well-being	
Families have enhanced capacity to provide for their children’s needs	
Children receive appropriate services to meet their educational needs	Met
Children receive adequate services to meet their physical and mental health needs	Met

## Conformity with Systemic Factors

Statewide information system	Met
Case review system	Met
Quality assurance system	Met
Staff and provider training	Met
Service array and resource development	Met
Agency responsiveness to the community	Met
Foster and adoptive parent licensing, recruitment, and retention	Met

OCFS’s new strategic priorities have been informed both by the areas where PIP goals have been met, as well as those where work remains in order to meet the goal.

## Prevention and Family First

Much of OCFS’ work around child abuse and neglect prevention continues to be informed by the ongoing efforts to implement and refine Maine’s Family First State Prevention Plan. In child welfare, the primary goal of Family First is to improve child safety to prevent the need to remove children from the care and custody of their parents. This goal reflects both ACF’s clear preference for avoiding removal whenever possible and the growing understanding in child welfare that children experience significant trauma when removed from their parents.

OCFS continues to work with Maine’s home visiting program as eligibility for Parents as Teachers (PAT) has been expanded to serve children up until the age of 5 for families where the children are at imminent risk of removal. OCFS has also established the Homebuilders program in Maine which provides families with children at imminent risk of removal with intensive family preservation services to mitigate this risk and allow the parents the opportunity to learn new and improved ways to safely care for their children. In 2022, OCFS received additional funding through the state budget to expand Homebuilders beyond Family First. Specifically, OCFS is in the process of implementing Homebuilders’ services to support families where removal has occurred, and the family is working toward reunification.

OCFS is also working in collaboration with the Maine Children’s Trust (MCT) on efforts to prevent child abuse and neglect. Over the last year OCFS and MCT have hosted a series of webinars and created resources focused on education related to protective factors and the shared responsibility of the community to ensure children are safe. The recorded webinar series can be found [here](#).

Another focus of OCFS’ Family First work has been expanding staff and community awareness around existing resources geared towards helping families to safely raise their children. In 2022, OCFS staff received training



on services in their region, the availability of those services, and the referral process. OCFS leads the State Agency Partnership for Prevention (SAPP), a convening of all state agencies focused on primary, secondary, and tertiary prevention. A subcommittee of the SAPP collaborated with OCFS on the development of an online Family Resource Guide known as [Access Maine](#) which went live in April 2022. Access Maine is a guide of state level programs meant to complement 211 Maine's online directory of community-level programs.

Stakeholder engagement has been key throughout OCFS' work to develop and implement Maine's Family First State Prevention Plan. OCFS wants to extend its sincere appreciation to the stakeholders who have engaged with OCFS on this work. Many of these stakeholders have many years of experience working on community initiatives related to the continuum of prevention and their knowledge has been invaluable to OCFS' work.

## Staff Recruitment and Retention

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OCFS' child welfare workforce has not been immune to the hiring challenges experienced throughout the state and nation during 2022. Within child welfare, most jurisdictions across the country are reporting an increase in their vacancy rate. The vacancy rate among Maine's child welfare staff in December 2022 was 14.5 percent, with some jurisdictions are reporting vacancy rates as high as 35-40% of their child welfare workforce. In 2022, OCFS provided a one-time, \$1,000 retention and recruitment incentive for current child welfare supervisors, caseworkers, and case aides hired as of September 1, 2022, and remaining on staff as of November 19, 2022. In addition, all new child welfare supervisors, caseworkers, and case aides hired from September 1, 2022, through November 19, 2022 (and remaining on staff as of November 19) received a \$1,000 incentive payment.

## Katahdin

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Among the most significant updates from 2022 was the implementation of Maine's new Comprehensive Child Welfare Information System (CCWIS), known as Katahdin. Katahdin replaced the Maine Automated Child Welfare Information System (MACWIS) which was over 20 years old. Katahdin's implementation in January of 2022 occurred on time and the project remained on budget and included extensive training and support for staff.

In the months following implementation, OCFS has engaged heavily with staff and stakeholders to provide additional training and support to meet user needs, as well as continuing to modify and refine the system based on stakeholder feedback. At the same time, OCFS was also developing and implementing additional modules which expand the functionality of the system, including the Resource Parent Portal and Mandated Reporter Portal:

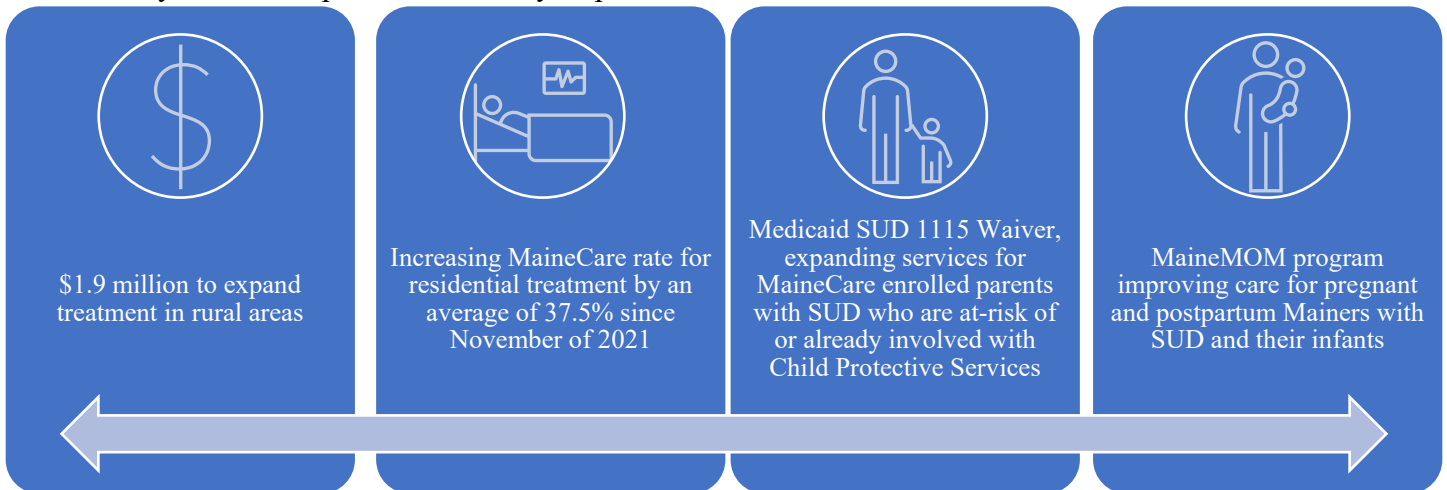
- **Resource Parent Portal**
  - Allows resource parents to apply for and renew a foster care license
  - Resource parents can download and upload forms and information
  - Provides access to important information about children placed in their home, including educational records, upcoming court dates, visitation schedules, and medical information
- **Mandated Reporter Portal**
  - Allows for mandated reporters to make reports of suspected abuse and/or neglect in non-emergent cases
  - Pursuant to statute, personnel from schools, law enforcement, medical providers are permitted to use the online portal
  - Streamlines the reporting process for mandated reporters

## Service Availability

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One of the primary challenges for child welfare in 2022 was ensuring that parents and children involved with the child welfare system have access to the supportive services they need in order to be safe, stable, happy, and healthy. The current economic landscape, including record low unemployment, has had a substantial impact on the ability of providers to hire and retain qualified staff. At the same time, the COVID-19 pandemic and high inflation have also created challenges for providers. In order to address these challenges, the State has allocated \$230 million in SFY 2022 and 2023 to support and provide long-term stability for the behavioral health system. In addition, MaineCare has been working to conduct comprehensive rate studies and establish a system for periodic rate reviews to ensure that in the future, rates reflect the changing economic landscape. On January 11, 2023, Governor Mills released her proposed budget which included historic initiatives targeted at reforming payments across the system and targeting specific needs in children's behavioral health and opioid response.

Opioid response is an area with significant implications for child welfare. Maine continues to see substance use as a risk factor in over 50% of all removals. OCFS' staff frequently witness the impact of parental substance use disorder on children and families and OCFS is working with partners at MaineCare and the MaineCDC to expand the opportunities for parents to engage in substance use treatment. While only one of these initiatives is directly targeted towards families that are involved with the child welfare system, all of these initiatives will undoubtedly have an impact on the ability of parents to access substance use treatment.



The work of 2022 related to expanding substance use treatment is continued in the Governor's proposed budget for the next biennium, including \$7 million towards overdose prevention, recovery support, and substance use treatment.

## Substance Exposed Infants

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The Child Welfare Well-being Team is working to ensure that children in state care are connected to services recommended and required to help them grow and thrive. The Plan of Safe Care nurse position was filled in August 2020, and work has continued with birthing hospitals, OB clinics and Public Health Nursing to ensure that every infant affected by prenatal substance exposure has a Plan of Safe Care, including referrals to services aimed to help maximize the infant's development and health, and to connect caregivers and other family members to needed community resources.

The Child Well-being Team has been working with district staff, community medical providers, resource parents and youth in care to improve access to recommended medical services, including initial medical visits, comprehensive health assessments and ongoing care with a primary care provider and to ensure that the health care needs of youth in care are being addressed. A Child Welfare Nurse Consultant has been added to the team as a resource to district staff and resource parent to meet these goals.

## Resource Parents

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Dedicated resource parents provide supportive and loving environments for children in state custody. Since 2019, Maine has increased the number of licensed resource homes (which currently stands at 1,770) by 33%. Over 40% of children in state custody are placed with relatives. In recognition of the critical role that resource parents play in the child welfare system, OCFS successfully advocated for an initiative in the Governor's budget proposal to increase the resource parent reimbursement rates by 5%. These rates were last updated in September of 2018 and this increase will help address economic changes and allow OCFS to continue to recruit and retain resource parents by ensuring that the reimbursement reflects the cost of caring for children in state custody.

During 2022 OCFS also continued its strong partnership with Adoptive and Foster Families of Maine (AFFM), including implementing \$200,000 in additional funding for AFFM's kinship services and working together with the University of Maine to develop and study a framework of kinship support for submission to the Title IV-E Prevention Services Clearinghouse. OCFS is also working in collaboration with AFFM on the Kinship Navigator Cross-site Evaluation project. Through this project OCFS and AFFM are working in partnership with national experts including Casey Family Programs, Generations United and the University of Washington, as well as five other states to test a model of case management-based kinship navigator services with the goal of developing an evidence-based model eligible for federal funding under Family First.

## Future System Improvement

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OCFS is continuing to advance work related to the Collaborative Safety report recommendations, including introducing a bill during the legislative session to improve information sharing, collaboration, and coordination among child welfare staff, law enforcement, and medical personnel when there is suspected abuse and neglect. This bill is the product of a working group of stakeholders including representatives from the Department of Public Safety, Maine Hospital Association, the Office of the Attorney General, and child welfare leadership.

Also included in the Governor's budget is an initiative to provide increased funding and oversight for the Court Ordered Diagnostic Evaluations (CODEs) of parents in child welfare cases. CODEs play an important role in the assessment of parental capacity as the Department and the Courts consider the best interests of the children and the ability of the parents to safely reunify with their children. The Governor's budget proposes to move the CODE program under the oversight of the State Forensic Service (SFS), aligning the rate for these reviews with that of other SFS evaluations and providing funding for a psychologist to oversee the program and provide training for new evaluators and quality assurance of the review process. OCFS believes that this initiative will help bolster the information available to staff and the courts as they make decisions regarding reunification and child permanency.

With the completion of the work identified in the 2019 Strategic Priorities comes the opportunity to consider and develop new strategies to continue to evolve and improve the child welfare system in Maine. To that end, OCFS has developed a new set of strategic priorities. These priorities start with three foundational principles that underly each goal and the strategies identified to meet it: Family, Youth, and Resource Parent Engagement; Race, Equity, Diversity, and Accessibility; and Collaboration with Internal and External Partners to Identify and Address Systemic Barriers. The priorities are grouped into three categories: Safety, Permanency and Well-being, and Consistency. Each group then has two identified goals and strategies developed to move OCFS towards those goals.

# Safety

- **Improve the Consistency and Quality of CPS Intake Screening Decisions**
  - QA/QI reviews of SDM screening decisions
  - Case consultation and supervisor coaching
- **Improve the Consistency and Quality of CPS Investigations**
  - Ongoing implementation of Family First
  - Review and revision of Safety Planning policy and practice
  - QA/QI reviews of investigations

# Permanency and Well-being

- **Improve the Consistency, Quality, and Timeliness of Permanency for Children in Care**
  - Permanency Review Process
  - Family connection activities
  - QA/QI reviews
- **Improve the Quality of the Health and Well-being of Children in Care**
  - Ensure all youth in care have recommended and required health visits and immunizations
  - Ongoing implementation of the Plan of Safe Care
  - Psychotropic medication management
  - Ensure all youth in care age 14 and older have their strengths and needs assessment completed and results are incorporated into their child plan

# Consistency

- **Achieve Goals Outlined in the CFSR/PIP Measurement Plan by January 2024**
  - Develop and implement District PIPs to align practice with policy and meet agreed upon PIP goals
- **Strengthen the Child Welfare Workforce Through Efforts to Improve Recruitment, Retention, and Support**
  - Katahdin implementation and system refinement
  - Update child welfare policies in collaboration with USM
  - Provide quality training opportunities
  - Implement the Maine Safety Science Model
  - Engage staff at all levels of the organization in system change processes

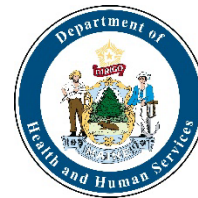
## Conclusion

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OCFS recognizes the ongoing dedication and commitment of child welfare field staff. They are the front lines of Maine's efforts to ensure children and families throughout the state are safe, stable, happy, and healthy. Their efforts have endured through the challenges presented by the opioid epidemic, the COVID-19 pandemic, and the current economic conditions.

OCFS also thanks the stakeholders that have contributed and continue to contribute to OCFS' work over the last year as Maine looks ahead to ongoing system evolution and improvement. These include youth and families with lived experience, educators, law enforcement, medical professionals, behavioral health providers and many others, as well as the Child Welfare Ombudsman and her staff and the Maine Citizen Review Panels. OCFS looks forward to continuing these partnerships in the coming year as the entire child welfare system comes together to ensure the safety and well-being of Maine children.

# Collaborative Safety Recommendations Implementation Update



Recommendation - 2021	Update - 2022
Work with a collation of providers to support effective coordination with child welfare staff (e.g., supporting families, court and Family Team Meeting participation, sharing information, etc.) and address any identified barriers	On March 6, 2022, OCFS issued guidance to behavioral health providers regarding working together to ensure open communication, support, and positive outcomes for children and families. OCFS continues to work with OBH to inform and educate providers to enhance effective coordination.
Establish joint protocol agreements between Law Enforcement, Hospitals, and Child Welfare staff to support communication and coordination when there is suspected abuse or neglect	The work of a group of stakeholders is ongoing, the group includes representatives from Hospitals, Law Enforcement, and Child Welfare who are coming together to identify and minimize barriers to information sharing and effective partnership. The Department will submit a bill informed by stakeholders in 2023 to address identified statutory challenges.
Explore ways to support consistent practices, including role clarity and ongoing support for Family Team Meetings	OCFS has updated the Family Team Meeting (FTM) policy and training for staff and has created a webinar for providers, parents, and other stakeholders that is available on the OCFS website.
Explore ways to support engagement between parents and the child welfare system, such as parent partner and parent mentor programs	OCFS funded an amendment to the Cooperative Agreement with USM, which has allowed USM to hire two parents with lived experience in the child welfare system who will advise on policy development, training efforts, and implementation of an evidence-based parent mentorship program.
Continue to examine national best practices regarding standby and after-hours practices	OCFS has created an after-hours/standby unit (known as CES) specifically dedicated to providing staffing during off-hours in order to minimize the impact of CES on the child welfare workforce.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Examine national best practices for assessment timeframes and ensure that whatever timeframe is selected, it is compatible with the expected workload</li> <li>➤ Conduct an analysis of current work tasks required in an assessment and remove any unnecessary and/or redundant tasks</li> </ul>	OCFS formed a staff workgroup and consulted with national experts to determine if any evidence-based practices regarding timeframes exist nationally. The workgroup developed 11 recommendations, 10 of which are being incorporated into OCFS policy and practice and one of which will be addressed through changes at Intake. The most significant change will increase the investigation timeframe by 10 days (to 45 days).



# MAINE CHILD WELFARE CASEWORKER FOUNDATIONS TRAINING

A DETAILED SUMMARY OF THE REDESIGNED CURRICULUM



PREPARED BY THE  
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April 11, 2022





# FOUNDATIONS TRAINING

The Maine Department of Health & Human Services Office of Child and Family Services (OCFS) and the University of Southern Maine Cutler Institute (Cutler) entered into a Cooperative Agreement with one component of the Agreement being the redesign and delivery of the Child Welfare Caseworker Foundations Training (Foundations). Foundations training is the initial training that all caseworkers receive upon being hired at the Office of Child and Family Services.

This report provides a description of each day of this seven-week training program with a description of content, learning objectives, competencies addressed, and assignments outside of the classroom. This is laid out based on the calendar for this current round. The training is set up in a module format that is sequential with enough flexibility that allows the sequence of content delivery to vary slightly from round to round based on scheduling of guest speakers, the scheduling of field days, and needs of the participants.



## NEW TRAINING CONTENT & DESIGN

The redesign expanded the Foundations training from five to seven weeks. During the training there are joint training days in which core material is delivered to all caseworkers together. Additionally, there are program specific days in which content related to each role is delivered separately to Investigations Caseworkers and Permanency Caseworkers. Using adult learning theory, the classroom and e-learning training content provides knowledge, awareness, and beginning skill-building with opportunities for application/practice and simulated practice experience. Skill acquisition is enhanced through learning that happens inside as well as outside the classroom such as through job shadowing experiences.

The training provides fundamental knowledge of the dynamics that are impacting families who are reported to the OCFS as well as competency-based skills in relation to OCFS policy, procedures, and Maine specific practices and tools, such as Structured Decision Making (SDM).

New content has been incorporated into the training. Foundations staff developed legal training content with the review and approval of the CPS Division Chief in the Office of the Attorney General. The content includes Legal Basics; Legal Basis for Investigation; Legal Basis for Family Services Work; Legal: The Investigator in Court; Legal Testimony; Legal Writing: Assignment for Mock Court Documents; Legal: The Permanency Worker in Court; Legal: Closing Cases for Each Permanency Outcome; Prep for Mock Trial; Mock Trial.

Additional new content incorporated since the commencement of the Cooperative Agreement and the curriculum redesign includes:

- How to Read and Understand Policy
- Incorporation of all Permanency Structured Decision-Making Tools (SDM) and Case Planning Tools
- E-learnings on Substance Use Disorder, Introduction to Human Trafficking, and Commercial Sexual Exploitation
- Additional simulated practice experiences - Fact Finding Child Interview, Caseworker Monthly Contact at a Trial Home Placement, Mock Trial
- Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion
- Preparation and reflections for supervision
- Family First Prevention Services Act

# MAINE CHILD WELFARE CASEWORKER COMPETENCIES

The Child Welfare Caseworker Competencies are the knowledge, skills, and attitudes that the Office of Child and Family Services has determined are core for all child welfare workers to have to work here in Maine. Throughout Foundations Training and the first 6-months on the job, it is anticipated that caseworkers will demonstrate emerging competence and continue to grow their skills towards proficiency. The Cutler Team redesigned the Maine caseworker competencies based on research of all of the states' competency models, review of the Maine model and current practice, review by and feedback from the Caseworker and Supervisor Advisory Groups, the District Management Team, and the Regional Associate Directors. These competencies were redesigned in collaboration with the OCFS Policy and Training Team as they revised the Supervisor Competencies so that the two competency models would be aligned.

# OCFS LEARNING PORTAL - LEARNING MANAGEMENT SYSTEM

The OCFS Policy and Training and Cutler Teams selected and co-administer a new Learning Management System (LMS) that was launched in the summer of 2021. This LMS, named the OCFS Learning Portal (the Portal), houses course material for Foundations training, ongoing training for OCFS staff, and the Resource Family Introductory Training (RFIT). It includes a repository of OCFS policies with an online Policy Manual in development. Courses and quizzes are posted by OCFS with the rollout of each new policy. E-learning courses are housed there for staff and resource parents. The OCFS and Cutler Teams are working on expanding the menu of e-learning courses available.

# STRUCTURED JOB SHADOW TOOLKIT

A Structured Job Shadow Toolkit supports the new caseworker and supervisor with bringing guidance tools to job shadowing before and during Foundations training.

During the March-May Training Round, we are piloting activities developed for the Structured Job Shadow Toolkit, which will be completed this year. This pilot will help us refine the structured job shadow process and tools. Each activity guide provides an overview of the practice, guidance that will help workers and supervisors prepare, conduct, and debrief from job shadow experiences, and gives new caseworkers a tool for reflecting on their experience. The initial pilot includes these three key practices:

1. Monthly Caseworker Contacts (with parents, children, youth, and placement providers)
2. Family Team Meetings
3. Court

In April, we are holding meetings with the OCFS District Leadership Team to discuss how each District will support effective worker development through structured job shadow activities. In May, we will hold training in each District for current casework staff, Worker Development Through Structured Job Shadow Activities with Caseworkers. This two-hour session will focus on the role the experienced caseworker plays in the development of new caseworkers through structured job shadow activities and observations.

# PRE/MID/POST-TRAINING MEETINGS

These meetings are an opportunity for supervisors and trainers to work together to support caseworkers in their development. Integral to these meetings are OCFS Training Liaisons who provide continuity through Foundations training and support the ongoing professional development of each new caseworker.

Pre-training meetings are an opportunity to orient caseworkers and their supervisors to the expectations, content and materials that support caseworkers to learn the background knowledge and information pertinent to their role and provide them with information they need to be successful in Foundations. Core components of pre-meetings include:

- Materials and resources, including how to navigate the learning management system, calendar, and other activities throughout training.
- Communication and collaboration between caseworkers, supervisors, Cutler Institute trainers, OCFS training liaisons and other OCFS staff.
- How job shadow days and classroom learning build upon each other to support learners to be ready for the job.

Mid-training meetings are held on an as needed basis to respond to challenges or needs that may arise for the new caseworker.

Post-training meetings are convened with caseworkers, supervisors, Cutler Institute trainers, and OCFS training liaisons to provide professional development feedback as caseworkers transition from training to their position.

# COLLABORATION

The Cutler Institute had redesigned and is implementing the Foundations training in collaboration with the OCFS Leadership, OCFS Policy & Training Team, OCFS District Office Staff, Maine Coalition to End Domestic Violence (MCEDV), Maine Coalition Against Sexual Assault (MECASA), Youth Leadership Advisory Team, Parents with lived experience, the Maine Office of the Attorney General, retired District Court Judges, and Maine Law School.



# CLASSROOM WEEK 1

The first week of training is focused on the Fundamentals of Child Welfare in Maine for both OCFS Child Protective Investigations Caseworkers and Permanency (or Family Services) Caseworkers. This week begins with introductions and group-building activities, draws on key frameworks that provide the foundation for child welfare in Maine and caseworker role clarity, includes perspectives on family dynamics and contributing factors that impact the occurrence of child abuse and neglect, and includes guest speakers who build a vision for understanding successful child welfare practice.

## DAY 1 – FIELD DAY

Participants job shadow experienced caseworkers in their respective districts.

## DAY 2 – THE ROLE OF THE CHILD WELFARE CASEWORKER IN MAINE

During this session, participants introduce themselves to one another. Trainers provide an overview of the training and the different learning methodologies in Foundations that respond to adult learning and individual learning styles. Participants are encouraged to recognize that personal thoughts, beliefs, and experiences influence our personal opinions about parenting and that law, policy, and Structured Decision Making (SDM) tools assist the agency and worker to make consistent, fair, and accurate decisions regarding child safety (limiting the impact of personal opinions). To gain understanding of the caseworker role, participants are introduced to the Maine Child Welfare Competencies, Title 22, and the Maine Child Welfare Practice Model as the foundation for the Maine approach to child welfare.

### Learning Objectives

- Increase understanding of the history of Child Welfare in Maine by learning law, policy, and procedures
- Describe the role of the caseworker
- Identify core competencies of a child welfare caseworker, including those competencies they bring to the role and those they would like to develop
- Develop an awareness of the documents, laws, and policies that guide child welfare casework including law, policy, and structured decision making

**Maine Child Welfare Competencies:** Law & Policy, Professionalism & Ethics

### Assignments

- Activities & Assignments: Kolb's Learning Style Test
- Reading: Child Welfare Practice Model
- Reading: Family First Prevention Services Act Fact Sheet
- Reading: Caseworker Competencies
- Reading: Family First Prevention Services: Qualified Residential Treatment Program Standards Fact Sheet



- Tests & Quizzes: Complete the Foundations Training Pre-Quiz

## DAY 3 – ROLE CLARITY & CHILD WELFARE IN THE STATE OF MAINE

This session covers information about the federal standards for child welfare practice in the form of the Child & Family Services Review and how the Maine Quality Assurance Unit works in each OCFS District to assess what is working and what is not working in child welfare practice, identifying what changes may be needed to meet the child welfare standards, collaborating with District staff to select strategies to implement needed changes, and then assessing whether changes have the intended impact. Participants are introduced to the OCFS Strategic Plan. Director Todd Landry presents the agency’s mission, vision, and practice in the context of the larger system. The Director reviews the importance of the transparency of data to measure how the agency is performing its role in relation to child safety, permanency, and well-being. Through presentation, participants learn how confidentiality laws, policies, and structures protect individuals and families, caregivers, and children. They learn about exceptions to confidentiality and professional standards in communicating respectfully. Child welfare caseworkers' respectful and effective communication develops through practicing skills with family responses, self-understanding, and developing a trauma-informed approach.

### Learning Objectives

- Identify the role of the caseworker in engaging families
- Identify the laws and structures that guide confidentiality standards for caseworkers
- Identify best practices in confidentiality with regards to physical safeguards, technical safeguards, communications, portable devices, and working from home
- Describe reasons that conversations may be difficult in child welfare work
- Identify ways to minimize the triangulation of perpetrator/victim/rescuer

**Maine Child Welfare Competencies:** Law & Policy, Professionalism & Ethics, Engagement

### Assignments

- Child and Family Service Reviews website
- Reading: ACF Children's Bureau CFSR Fact Sheet
- Reading: OCFS Strategic Outcomes and Child Welfare Practice Model
- Identify one question for Director Todd Landry
- Videos: Confidentiality Introduction
- Review the Child Welfare Data Dashboard website
- Videos: Confidentiality Best Practices
- Reading: Personal Use of Social Media
- Activities & Assignments: Scavenger Hunt

## DAY 4 – CHILD WELFARE CASEWORK WITH FAMILIES AND CONTRIBUTING FACTORS THAT IMPACT FAMILY FUNCTIONING

This session teaches how early experiences and family functioning can shape our behavior, perceptions, and relationships through adulthood. These experiences are both environmental and biological (i.e., brain chemistry, involuntary trauma response). We acknowledge systemic barriers

that impact family functioning. Although the caseworker may not be able to remedy larger systemic issues, being aware of them may guide the worker to support family strategies to respond to barriers. Contributing factors such as mental illness and trauma may increase the likelihood of child maltreatment and the severity of child maltreatment. These contributing factors need to be addressed to improve safety in the family and home environment. Parents, with lived experience with child welfare and contributing factors that impact child safety, permanency, and well-being, attend as guest speakers to discuss their unique perspective on the child welfare system, services, approaches, and how to engage families in this context. This session is concluded with a discussion of understanding secondary trauma or compassion fatigue, as well as ways to address or prevent secondary trauma.

### **Learning Objectives**

- Identify the major factors that may impact family functioning and contribute to child maltreatment
- Identify how families are interdependent
- Define different ways power impacts families and can impact the role of the caseworker in working with families
- Identify how families are impacted by mental illness
- Identify signs of and strategies for preventing/minimizing secondary trauma

**Maine Child Welfare Competencies:** Engagement; Diversity, Equity & Inclusion

### **Assignments**

- Tests & Quizzes: Substance Use Disorder - Pre-Quiz
- Binder Handouts: Read the CPS 101 Information Flyer
- Videos: Family Dynamics
- Activities & Assignments: Substance Use Disorders: A Key Issue in Child Welfare E-learning
- Tests & Quizzes: Substance Use Disorder – Post-Quiz

## DAY 5 – TOPIC 1: CONTRIBUTING FACTORS: WORKING WITH FAMILIES WITH SUBSTANCE USE DISORDER

Participants learn about addiction and how it is a contributing factor to child abuse and neglect. Children residing in homes with substance use disorder occurring are three times as likely to be abused and four times more likely to be neglected.

### **Learning Objectives**

- Identify the resources and supports available to families navigating substance use disorder
- Recognize when substance use disorder is a factor impacting family functioning and contributing to child maltreatment

**Maine Child Welfare Competencies:** Engagement, Analyze

## DAY 3: TOPIC 2: HOW TO UNDERSTAND AND USE POLICY

In Maine, child welfare policies guide most aspects of our work. Policy operationalizes law to guide and direct practice and decision making. This presentation teaches the components of policies, the relationship between policies, how to access current child welfare policies, and how to navigate to find the information that the caseworker needs.

### **Learning Objectives**

- Identify where to find policy and the purpose of policies within child welfare

### **Maine Child Welfare Competencies: Law & Policy**

#### Topic 3: Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion

This session defines basic terminology and explores their relevance to child welfare in Maine, both historically and in the present, for how these have contributed to disproportionality and to identify strategies for promoting equity and inclusion. Introductory information is provided about the Indian Child Welfare Act (ICWA). Caseworkers identify strategies for promoting equity and inclusion when working with families to address disproportionality rates.

### **Learning Objectives**

- Reflect on the historical experiences of tribal communities in Maine with the Child Welfare system
- Define terms related to diversity, equity, inclusion, and culture
- Explore visible and invisible aspects of culture
- Identify the responsibilities of caseworkers to work with tribal communities
- Identify the ways Diversity, Equity and Inclusion is a core component of the role of the caseworker
- Describe strategies to create inclusive environments across differences

### **Maine Child Welfare Competencies: Engagement; Diversity, Equity & Inclusion**

#### **Assignments:**

- Policy: 2.11 Assessment in Substance Abusing Families
- Policy: 10.01 Staff Safety and High-Risk Situations
- Reading: NASW Code of Ethics
- Videos: Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion
- Tests & Quizzes: Week 1 Survey
- Reflections: Week 1 Reflections
- Policy: 7.01 Indian Child Welfare (ICWA)
- Reading: Maine Office of Child and Family Services ICWA Compliance Flow Chart
- Reading: Tribal Contacts for Tribes Located in Maine
- Reading: ICWA Placement Preferences



# CLASSROOM WEEK 2: MAINE CHILD PROTECTIVE INVESTIGATIONS PROCEDURES, TOOLS, AND PRACTICE

During Week 2 of the Foundations Training, both OCFS Child Protective Investigations Caseworkers and Permanency Caseworkers begin to learn the specific practices, procedures, and tools utilized in Maine Child Protective Investigations. This week continues with content on contributing factors impacting families who become involved with child welfare, begins the introduction of the legal foundations to child welfare, begins linking the knowledge and awareness of Foundations content to the application and skill building acquired through simulated learning, job shadowing, beginning practice, and supervisory guidance and direction.

## DAY 1 – INTRODUCTION TO CHILD PROTECTIVE INVESTIGATIONS IN MAINE

This session introduces the role and function of Child Protective Intake, as well as timeframes, activities, tools, and considerations of Maine’s child protection investigation, in which caseworkers seek to determine whether a child has been abused or neglected, who is responsible, how severely the child is impacted, and what interventions may result in child safety. Participants learn the specific initial steps that are part of each investigation. Participants learn of the troublesome influence of confirmation bias and how considering alternative hypotheses is an effective strategy for counteracting confirmation bias during an investigation. Participants learn about and apply parental notification requirements. This session introduces Structured Decision Making (SDM) at each decision point in the case flow and how these tools provide a consistent structure to promote safety, identify needs, reduce subsequent harm to children, and achieve permanency.

### Learning Objectives

- Determine the tasks associated with the completion of an investigation
- Identify the various tools and documents that provide guidance for decision making in an investigation
- Describe the various people/roles involved in the decision-making process

**Maine Child Welfare Competencies:** Analyze, Engagement

### Assignments

- Simmons Case: Read the #1 Simmons Initial Intake Report
- Policy: 2.01 Intake Screening and Assignment
- Policy: Finish reading 7.01 Indian Child Welfare (ICWA)
- Policy: 2.02 Child Protection Investigation
- Simmons Case: Read #1a Police Report
- Activities & Assignments: Complete Assignment Activities regarding the Simmons family
- Reading: A Guide to Child Protective Services
- Reading: Fact-Finding Child Interview Protocol

## DAY 2 - INTERVIEWING CHILDREN

Trauma impacts developing brains and caseworkers seeking to interview children will need to have different strategies as they interview each child, particularly when special considerations such as developmental disabilities, cultural differences, or a child's primary language being other than English are factors. Caseworkers learn and apply strategies that can be effective even in light of developmental differences. The bulk of this session focuses on introducing and teaching the specific steps in the Fact Finding Child Interview Protocol (FFCIP), a research-based approach to interviewing. Participants learn the question types and credibility that is associated with the responses to each question type. Participants are instructed on legal requirements related to audio recording interviews and reminded of earlier lessons on confidentiality. Each participant has a practice opportunity walking through the interview protocol in a role play. Their supervisors identify and assign actual child interview recordings to listen to.

### Learning Objectives

- Recognize when to use/apply the Fact Finding Child Interview Protocol (FFCIP)
- Describe the different question types and when to use them
- Understand and begin to demonstrate the ability to move through the 7 steps of the FFCIP

**Maine Child Welfare Competencies:** Engagement, Analyze

### Assignments

- Reading: Finish reading the Fact-Finding Child Interview Protocol
- Reading: Child Development Stages Matrix
- Policy: 2.07 Audio Recording Interviews
- Simmons Case: Read the Justin Simmons Script for Child Interview
- Reading: Read first 20 pages of Maine Coalition to End Domestic Violence (MCEDV) Handbook

## DAY 3 - TOPIC 1: CONTRIBUTING FACTORS: DOMESTIC ABUSE AND VIOLENCE

Staff from the Maine Coalition to End Domestic Violence present information on the dynamics of domestic abuse and violence (isolation, secrecy, power, and control). They introduce the role of the Domestic Violence Advocate in each OCFS District and discuss the collaborative approach to engaging families when domestic abuse and violence is a contributing factor to child abuse and neglect. Participants learn questions to explore for domestic abuse and violence and important challenges/considerations in the interview process.

### Learning Objectives

- Identify dynamics present in family impacted by domestic abuse and violence
- Identify responsibilities of the District-based Domestic Violence Advocates
- Identify ways that caseworker asks questions and makes observations to explore for the presence or absences of domestic abuse and violence and whether (or not) it is impacting child safety

**Maine Child Welfare Competencies:** Engagement, Analyze, Teamwork

## DAY 3 - TOPIC 2: LEGAL FOUNDATIONS FOR CHILD WELFARE

This session provides an overview of the request for a preliminary protection order (PPO) and/or transfer custody of the child to the Department by filing a jeopardy petition (straight petition) asking for a final protection order. Participants will learn the basics of the court system, definitions in Title 22, and an overview of the court process.

### Learning Objectives

- Define critical terms in child welfare
- Identify the role of the court in Child Welfare

**Maine Child Welfare Competencies:** Law & Policy

## DAY 3 - TOPIC 3: APPLYING KNOWLEDGE TO THE DEVELOPMENT OF PRACTICE SKILLS

Participants explore the three primary functions of child welfare supervision and how those support learning the casework position, specifically through the use of the Supervisory Agreement. Immediately, participants are encouraged to identify how to prepare for supervision, clarify expectations regarding contact and/or supervision during training, and actively seek out learning experiences during field days in the form of job shadows, reading case documents related to job shadow, and listening to interviews using the FFCIP. Participants prepare for their Fact Finding Child Interview simulated practice experience.

### Learning Objectives

- Identify the 3 key functions of supervisors
- Identify immediate goals for engaging with their supervisor to prepare for and debrief from job shadowing

**Maine Child Welfare Competencies:** Teamwork, Professionalism & Ethics

### Assignments

- Policy: 7.03 Domestic Violence and Child Abuse and Neglect
- Activities & Assignments: Title 22 Legal Definitions
- Reading: Review the Supervision Agreement
- Prepare for Simulation 1: Child Interviews and Debrief
- Activities & Assignments: Review Child Interview Observation Form

## DAY 4 - SIMULATED PRACTICE ACTIVITY: PERMANENCY CASEWORKER CHILD INTERVIEWS

Permanency Caseworkers are scheduled to conduct a simulated child interview during which they will practice use of the Fact-Finding Child Interview Protocol. Participants take notes so they can provide a sample documentation of their interview. Their interview subject will be one of the three children in the mock case that is used throughout the training. Caseworkers are provided



with the observation form with which they receive feedback on strengths and worries from their sample interview and steps for preparing for the interview.

NOTE: Investigations Caseworkers have a field day to shadow experienced caseworkers.

### **Learning Objectives**

- Demonstrate how to do a Child Interview using the 7 steps of the Fact-Finding Child Interview Protocol

**Maine Child Welfare Competencies:** Engagement, Analyze

### **Assignments**

- Complete Child Interview Simulation at assigned time
- Activities & Assignments: Document Child Interview
- Videos: Introduction to Child Advocacy Centers
- Reflections: Week 2 Reflection
- Tests & Quizzes: Feedback Survey-Week 2
- Reading: Katahdin Training Instructions - practice signing in to training Katahdin
- Complete MCEDV evaluation

## DAY 5 - SIMULATED PRACTICE ACTIVITY: CHILD PROTECTIVE INVESTIGATIONS CASEWORKER CHILD INTERVIEWS

Investigations Caseworkers are scheduled to conduct a simulated child interview during which they will practice use of the Fact-Finding Child Interview Protocol. Participants take notes so they can provide a sample documentation of their interview. Their interview subject will be one of the three children in the mock case that is used throughout the training. Caseworkers are provided with the observation form with which they are provided feedback on strengths and worries from their sample interview and steps for preparing for the interview.

NOTE: Permanency Caseworkers have a field day to shadow experienced caseworkers.

### **Learning Objectives**

- Demonstrate how to do a Child Interview using the 7 steps of the Fact-Finding Child Interview Protocol

**Maine Child Welfare Competencies:** Engagement, Analyze

### **Assignments**

- Complete your Child Interview Simulation
- Activities & Assignments: Document Child Interview
- Videos: Introduction to Child Advocacy Centers
- Reflections: Week 2 Reflection
- Tests & Quizzes: Feedback Survey-Week 2
- Reading: Katahdin Training Instructions
- Complete MCEDV evaluation



## FIELD WEEK: JOB SHADOWING EXPERIENCE IN THE DISTRICT OFFICE, INTRODUCTION TO KATAHDIN (CHILD WELFARE INFORMATION SYSTEM)

During this week, all caseworkers will spend four of the five workdays participating in job shadowing of experienced caseworkers in their District Office.

Training participants have their first full day training on the new information system, Katahdin.

### DAYS 1,2,3,5 - FIELD DAYS (JOB SHADOWING EXPERIENCED CASEWORKERS IN THEIR RESPECTIVE DISTRICTS)

#### **Assignments**

- Complete field log experience

### DAY 4 - INTRODUCTION TO KATAHDIN

Caseworkers will have a foundational understanding of Katahdin through a hands-on opportunity to navigate the system and integrate information.

#### **Learning Objectives**

- Learn new terminology
- Understand how to login to the system
- Learn how to navigate in Katahdin
- Understand the new Katahdin Case Structure

**Maine Child Welfare Competencies:** Analyze, Professionalism & Ethics

#### **Assignments**

- Practice signing into Training Katahdin in advance of Katahdin Training



## CLASSROOM WEEK 3: MAINE CHILD PROTECTIVE INVESTIGATIONS PROCEDURES, TOOLS, AND PRACTICE

Participants bring their questions and reflections from their week of job shadowing in the field and use this experience to incorporate further knowledge related to law, tools, specific procedures, and factors that contribute to the likelihood of child abuse and neglect and how to apply these to child protection investigations. This week also includes continued learning and practice with Katahdin, the child welfare information system.

### DAY 1 - HOLIDAY (DURING THE CURRENT TRAINING ROUND)

### DAY 2 - TOPIC 1: REFLECTING ON JOB SHADOWS WITH EXPERIENCED CASEWORKER

After a week of job shadowing experience, participants discuss what they observed, what helped them in their planning to transition into the role, what questions or reflections arise, and what connections they established with their supervisor.

#### **Learning Objectives**

- Reflect on connections between what they are seeing in the field and in the classroom
- Identify questions that arise from their experience in the field

**Maine Child Welfare Competencies:** Teamwork, Professionalism & Ethics

### DAY 2 - TOPIC 2: LEGAL FOUNDATIONS FOR CHILD WELFARE

Trainees review the case flow of a child protection case and apply the legal timeline and process to the mock case that they work with throughout the training. They learn who from the family needs to be involved in the legal process, as well as who the other parties are that are involved. They are provided with information about discovery of information that all parties are entitled to, what elements of discovery that are admissible as evidence, and are introduced to the discovery protocol.

#### **Learning Objectives**

- Identify how and where the court becomes involved in Child Welfare cases

**Maine Child Welfare Competencies:** Law & Policy, Engagement, Planning

### DAY 2 - TOPIC 3: INTERVIEWING ADULTS AND HOME VISITS

Participants are introduced to how interviewing adults in an investigation is different from interviewing children. The adult interview seeks to gain information about the parents' history; their understanding, involvement, and response to the current allegations, the possibility of future abuse, and what support could decrease the potential of future abuse (the presence of safety factors). In addition to understanding the purpose of the interview, participants learn what verbal and nonverbal skills make for a good interviewer and what progression of an interview is effective. Trainers review question types and issues of confidentiality as they pertain to interviewing adults.

Trainers discuss the ways and times that caseworkers will be conducting home visits. It is important to enter homes with a sense of consideration and clarity of your role and purpose. A caseworker's observational skills are vital to learning about the home environment and understanding family dynamics. Participants review the Safe Sleep Protocol and identify how this is part of home visits. Trainers reinforce learning on the Period of PURPLE Crying program.

### **Learning Objectives**

- Define the stages of interviewing
- Define and apply question types for adults
- Describe and document contents of interviews for investigation and legal purposes
- Describe the requirement and explain the need to complete a home visit in an investigation
- Understand the purpose of Safe Sleep Protocol and identify an unsafe sleep environment
- Identify the importance of reviewing Safe Sleep and the Period of PURPLE Crying with families

## **DAY 2 - TOPIC 4: CONTRIBUTING FACTORS: SUBSTANCE USE DISORDER, MENTAL ILLNESS**

In this session, caseworkers learn questions to explore for substance use disorder and mental illness. The focus is on how substance use and/or mental illness and how it may impact the child(ren). Participants discuss how substance use disorder and mental illness may impact interviews with adults and then consider the various ways that they can gather and analyze information regarding substance use and mental illness directly from the parent and other sources. They are introduced to the UNCOPE Tool and a series of questions/observations they can draw on when exploring the role of Substance Use.

### **Learning Objectives**

- Identify ways that the caseworker asks questions and make observations to explore for the presence or absence of SUD and whether (or not) it is impacting child safety
- Identify ways that the caseworker asks questions and make observations to explore for the presence or absence of mental illness and whether (or not) it is impacting child safety

**Maine Child Welfare Competencies:** Engagement, Analyze, Planning

### **Assignments**

- Simmons: #2 Simmons Initial Interviews
- Reading: OCFS Safe Sleep Environment Checklist and Safe Sleep/Purple Crying (Binder)
- Videos: Safe Sleep & Period of Purple Crying

- Activities & Assignments: Question Types for Simmons Family
- Activities & Assignments: Scavenger Hunt (to be completed throughout training)
- Visit this resource: [www.drugs.com/imprints.php](http://www.drugs.com/imprints.php)
- Policy: 2.05 Response to Infants Affected by Illegal Substance Abuse

## DAY 3 - STRUCTURED DECISION MAKING SAFETY ASSESSMENT TOOL & SAFETY PLANNING

The Preliminary Safety Decision (PSD) provides a structure to analyze and critically think about information gathered to determine preliminary safety. The SDM Safety Assessment Tool helps to answer the question “Can the child remain safely in the home?”. This tool is completed during the PSD by the Supervisor. A review of the Structured Decision Making Tools reminds caseworkers which tool is used at critical points in the life of a case. Caseworkers are provided with guidance on the use of the tools and how they inform safety planning. Participants apply the tool to the training’s mock case. The guidelines and parameters of safety planning are discussed, and participants are provided with an example of a safety plan from a mock case.

### Learning Objectives

- Identify approaches for synthesizing information from multiple sources
- Analyze information gathered using Supervision and Structured Decision-making according to Law and Policy
- Apply SDM Safety Assessment Tool to mock case (Simmons Family)

**Maine Child Welfare Competencies:** Engagement, Planning, Analyze

### Assignments

- Simmons: #3 Creating a Plan for Safety
- SDM Safety Assessment Tool
- Activities & Assignment: Simulation Intake Form
- Simmons: #4 Plan for Safety
- Activities & Assignments: Foundations Simulation Observation Form

## DAY 4 - INTRODUCTION TO KATAHDIN, PART 2

Caseworkers will continue learning how to navigate the various components of the new child welfare information system, Katahdin.

### Learning Objectives

- Identify best practices when working in Katahdin
- Describe key functions of the new Katahdin system
- Know how to document critical components from investigations through adoption into the Katahdin system.

**Maine Child Welfare Competencies:** Analyze, Professionalism & Ethics

## DAY 5 - SIMULATED PRACTICE ACTIVITY: PERMANENCY CASEWORKER INTERVIEWING ADULTS

Permanency Caseworkers are scheduled to conduct a simulated first interview with a parent after receiving an intake report and after having completed the notification call to the parent.

Participants are provided with an outline of what observers will be looking for and are provided with feedback immediately after their simulation. Participants are provided with an outline of what they've learned about adult interviews to help them prepare.

NOTE: Investigations Caseworkers have a field day to shadow experienced caseworkers.

### **Learning Objectives**

- Demonstrate how to communicate with families about Safe Sleep and the Period of Purple Crying
- Differentiate between directive and rapport building techniques with families
- Provide and obtain information relevant to the allegations
- Apply skills related to interviewing adults, home visits and contributing factors (substance use disorder, mental illness and domestic abuse and violence)

**Maine Child Welfare Competencies:** Engagement, Analyze, Teamwork, Diversity, Equity & Inclusion

### **Assignments**

- Videos: Life Saving Injuries: Recognizing Child Abuse
- Videos: Including Fathers
- Activities & Assignments: Document Adult Interview
- Activities & Assignments: Period of PURPLE Crying
- Week 3 Reflection



# CLASSROOM WEEK 4: MAINE CHILD PROTECTIVE INVESTIGATIONS PROCEDURES, TOOLS, AND PRACTICE

Training continues with child protection investigations as the practices and skills apply to both Investigations and Permanency casework roles since both are responsible for ongoing assessment of child safety. Further, all caseworkers are required to perform emergency after hours coverage and, as a result, may need to complete a child protection investigation. This week continues to provide information and practice with investigations procedures, tools, and practices.

## DAY 1 - SIMULATED PRACTICE ACTIVITY: CHILD PROTECTIVE INVESTIGATIONS: CASEWORKER INTERVIEWING ADULTS

Investigations Caseworkers are scheduled to conduct a simulated first interview with a parent after receiving an intake report and after having completed the notification call to the parent. Participants are provided with an outline of what observers will be looking for and are provided with feedback immediately after their simulation. Participants are provided with an outline of what they've learned about adult interviews to help them prepare.

NOTE: Permanency Caseworkers have a field day to shadow experienced caseworkers.

### Learning Objectives

- Demonstrate how to communicate with families about Safe Sleep and the Period of Purple Crying
- Differentiate between directive and rapport building techniques with families
- Provide and obtain information relevant to the allegations
- Apply skills related to interviewing adults, home visits and contributing factors (substance use disorder, mental illness and domestic abuse and violence)

**Maine Child Welfare Competencies:** Engagement, Analyze, Teamwork, Diversity, Equity & Inclusion

### Assignments

- Videos: Life Saving Injuries: Recognizing Child Abuse
- Videos: Including Fathers
- Activities & Assignments: Document Adult Interview
- Activities & Assignments: Period of PURPLE Crying
- Week 3 Reflection

## DAY 2 - FIELD DAY (JOB SHADOWING EXPERIENCED CASEWORKERS IN THEIR RESPECTIVE DISTRICTS)



## DAY 3 - TOPIC 1: CHILD PROTECTION INVESTIGATIONS: COMPLETING THE INVESTIGATION

This session introduces the specific steps and procedures that must be accomplished in order to complete an investigation. Relevant policies and practice tools are reviewed as guidance resources for this process, then each necessary activity is discussed and applied to the mock case, as well as case examples from trainers and participants. Discussion of barriers to completing steps in this process as well as strategies to deal with those barriers are included in this module. Participants are guided through how to conclude an investigation, even with conflicting evidence and arrive at decisions regarding child safety. Trainers present the purpose of a Family Team Meeting (FTM) at this stage in the case. Guided by policy, trainees review the abuse categories and definitions, levels of severity, alternative hypothesis, how these determinations are made after the completion of the investigation, and notification requirements of findings. Application of the decision making process is discussed in relation to the mock case and other case examples. A guest panel composed of Investigations Supervisors and Caseworkers present and respond to questions about child protection investigations.

### Learning Objectives

- Identify activities to accomplish to complete an investigation
- Identify how to determine what type(s) of child maltreatment has occurred
- Know how to determine what type(s) of child maltreatment has occurred: physical abuse, emotional maltreatment, sexual abuse, and/or neglect
- Differentiate between substantiated and indicated abuse/neglect

**Maine Child Welfare Competencies:** Analyze, Engagement, Teamwork, Planning, Law & Policy

## DAY 3 - TOPIC 2: STRUCTURED DECISION MAKING RISK ASSESSMENT TOOL

This session introduces the SDM Risk Assessment Tool, reviews key terms and concepts and how they are defined in this process, identifies critical decision points in the investigation, then methodically reviews the tools components and its purpose in determining if a case is opened or closed. The SDM Risk Assessment Tool helps to answer the question “Should a case be opened?”. Participants apply this tool to the training mock case they are working with.

### Learning Objectives

- Define elements of the SDM Risk Assessment Tool
- Apply SDM Risk Assessment Tool to mock case

**Maine Child Welfare Competencies:** Engagement, Planning, Analyze

### Assignments

- Policy: 2.03 Child Abuse and Neglect Findings
- Reading: Appendix 13 CPS Investigation Checklist
- Reading SDM Risk Assessment Tool in full
- Simmons: Read Decision Screen for Simmons Family

- Reading: Relative Resource Example

## DAY 4 - TOPIC 1: STRUCTURED DECISION MAKING CASE PLAN TOOL

This session introduces the SDM Case Plan Tool, its components, and how to identify family strengths and needs. The SDM Case Plan Tool helps to answer the question, “What are the child and family needs that need to be addressed?”. Caseworkers revisit findings and training emphasizes how important it is that findings are clearly and thoroughly presented to and understood by the family. The SDM Case Plan Tool is applied to the training mock case.

### Learning Objectives

- Identify elements in the SDM Case Plan Tool
- Apply the SDM Case Plan Tool to training’s mock case

**Maine Child Welfare Competencies:** Engagement, Planning, Analyze

## DAY 4 - TOPIC 2: PERMANENCY: OPENING A CASE

This session reviews the child welfare case flow and the circumstances when an Investigations case may become a Prevention Service Case. The casework role in a Service Case is described for both Investigations and Permanency Caseworkers. Trainees learn the process and purpose of Case Transfer from Investigations to Permanency, including topics included in the Case Transfer staffing and participants in that meeting. Trainers present the purpose of a Transfer Family Team Meeting (FTM) at this point in the case process, including who attends, topics for discussion, and how this informs case planning. Discussion also includes challenging dynamics that can be part of case transfers. Family First guidelines are reviewed.

### Learning Objectives

- Describe the role of the Investigator and the Permanency worker in Prevention Service Cases
- Identify the requirements for transferring a case to Permanency
- Identify steps to transfer a case
- Describe worker responsibilities to prepare family and case to transfer

**Maine Child Welfare Competencies:** Teamwork, Planning, Professionalism & Ethics, Engagement

## DAY 4 - TOPIC 3: FAMILY TEAM MEETINGS (FTM)

This session introduces the purpose, approach, timeframes, and participants in FTM. Preparing for the FTM is important to the success of the process. Preparation includes clarity about findings, why the family is involved with OCFS, what must be addressed/changed for safe case closure, non-negotiable rules, and participants in the meeting. Preparation is important for the caseworker and FTM members. The session includes review of youth engagement, dynamics

when domestic abuse and violence is a factor, role of the caseworker, and confidentiality as they relate to the FTM. The FTM process and purpose is applied to the training's mock case.

### **Learning Objectives**

- Describe purpose for Family Team Meetings
- Identify components of the FTM agenda
- Define required participants in a FTM

**Maine Child Welfare Competencies:** Teamwork; Planning; Engagement; Diversity, Equity & Inclusion

### **Assignments**

- Simmons Case: #6 Simmons Additional Info for Case Plan Tool
- Assignments & Activities: Review SDM Case Plan Tool
- Binder Handouts: Review the Service Case Flow
- Binder Handouts: Review the Permanency Case Flow
- Read: Review the Case Transfer Checklist
- Policy: 7.02 Family Team Meetings
- Tests & Quizzes: Permanency Pre-Quiz
- Week 4 Reflection

DAY 5 - FIELD DAY (JOB SHADOWING EXPERIENCED CASEWORKERS IN THEIR RESPECTIVE DISTRICTS)



# CLASSROOM WEEK 5: PREVENTION SERVICE, PERMANENCY CASEWORK, PREPARING FOR COURT

This week continues the discussion of Prevention Service Cases, including referrals for services and supports focused on child safety and factors contributing to child safety. The session begins exploration of circumstances that lead to the removal of the child from their parents' care and custody, leading to child placement. This is examined from understanding the legal foundation for child removal and permanency work, use of practice tools, providing for the child's well-being in the transition to placement, and understanding the role of the placement provider. This week includes Investigations-specific and Permanency-specific classroom days.

## DAY 1 - TOPIC 1: PREVENTION SERVICES CASEWORK

The work of the family, the caseworker, and the family's team is to identify and promote positive change to support the safety of children. Plans also address permanency and well-being. This session describes the types of child welfare case plans - Safety Plans, Prevention Services Plans, Preliminary Reunification Plan, Reunification and Rehabilitation Plan, and Child Plan - and where each of these fit in the life of a case with the child and family. Trainees learn how to structure SMART goals that are intended to positively impact the identified concerns for child safety. Reasonable and active efforts are reviewed in the context of case planning. Referrals for services and identifying service providers is included in this session.

### Learning Objectives

- Defines the critical components of case plans and the resources and supports families need
- Knows how to engage and partner with families to create effective plans
- Identify the services appropriate and relevant to the family needs and goals
- Define and practice purposeful referrals for service
- Locate and assess the fit of services in the local area to family needs

**Maine Child Welfare Competencies:** Planning, Engagement, Teamwork

## DAY 1 - TOPIC 2: LEGAL: CHILD REMOVAL AND PERMANENCY GOALS

This session introduces the legal requirements and processes when OCFS determines that a child is not safe remaining with their family. Trainers revisit how a court case is initiated. Using Title 22, participants learn the steps of and circumstances for filing a request for a Preliminary Protection Order (PPO) or a petition for child protection. From the legal process the training shifts to recognizing the impact of removal on the child and family and the Department's responsibilities to ensure family visitation and contact. The issue of child removal is applied to the training's mock case.

## Learning Objectives

- Describe the removal process and identify the responsibilities of the worker, the supervisor, and the legal system
- Analyze information to identify what must be included in court documentation
- Name the partners beyond the agency with whom the worker must collaborate during a removal
- State core information for families, children, and resource parents to know upon removal of a child

**Maine Child Welfare Competencies:** Law & Policy, Professionalism & Ethics

## Assignments

- Policy: 2.04 Petitioning for a Protection Order
- Policy: 3.03 Selection of Substitute Care Placement
- Reading: Review the blank Prevention Services Family Plan
- Simmons Case: #10 Simmons Intake Report (ER)
- Assignment & Activities: Complete an updates SDM Safety Assessment Tool
- Simmons Case: Simmons Prevention Service Family Plan
- Activities & Assignments: Review Blank PPO
- Policy: 8.01 Documentation
- Policy: 10.02 Decision Making and Service Authorization

## DAY 2 - TOPIC 1: TRANSITION PROCESS: REMOVAL AND PLACEMENT

This session continues with discussion of the dynamics present and responsibilities during the process of the removal and placement of children into foster care. This will include determining if there are safe and appropriate relatives who are willing and able to take placement or whether placement with a resource parent is necessary. Participants will learn to assess the needs of children, biological parents/caregivers, and resource parents in order to best support them through this process.

## Learning Objectives

- Identify ways that removal and placement impacts children
- Describe strategies for minimizing the trauma of removal and placement to children and families
- Explain ways that caregivers can be prepared and supported in their role in child transition into care

**Maine Child Welfare Competencies:** Teamwork; Engagement; Analyze; Diversity, Equity & Inclusion

## DAY 2 - TOPIC 2: LEGAL: FAMILY SERVICES CASEWORK

This session introduces the activities and potential outcomes that occur when a petition for child protection order is filed. Trainers introduce visitation requirements and exceptions, plans for rehabilitation and reunification, timelines, and aggravating factors that could cease reunification.

Participants learn about the Summary Preliminary Hearing, Case Management Conference, Jeopardy Hearing, Judicial Review, and Permanency Planning Hearing, as well as the caseworker's role before, during, and after these.

### **Learning Objectives**

- Identify the purpose of the various court hearings and conferences

### **Maine Child Welfare Competencies: Law & Policy, Planning**

### **Assignments**

- Binder Handouts: Child Health Assessment Protocol
- Binder Handouts: Pediatric Symptom Checklist 17
- Policy: 3.21 Sibling Placement and Visitation
- Policy: 3.02 Relative Placement and Kinship Care Including Fictive Kin
- Policy: 7.07 Family Share
- Policy: 3.04 Placement with Department Employees and AAGs
- Policy: 3.09 Levels of Care
- SDM Tools: SDM Reunification Assessment Tool
- Read: Foster Parent's Bill of Rights
- Policy: 3.20 Visitation
- Activities and Assignments: Review the Reasonable and Prudent training slideshow
- Policy: 8.03 Health Records

## **DAY 3 - FIELD DAY (JOB SHADOWING EXPERIENCED CASEWORKERS IN THEIR RESPECTIVE DISTRICTS)**

## **DAY 4 - PERMANENCY CLASSROOM DAY (INVESTIGATIONS CASEWORKERS HAVE A FIELD DAY TO SHADOW EXPERIENCED CASEWORKERS): PERMANENCY: REUNIFICATION**

This session focuses on the role and responsibilities as a caseworker in working with families toward reunification. This process involves providing services and support to the family, in accordance with court orders and reunification plans, with the goal of alleviating jeopardy to allow children to safely return to their homes. Trainers explain the purpose of the Preliminary Reunification & Rehabilitation Plan and the Reunification & Rehabilitation Plan, discuss reasonable and active efforts, visitation, and parental responsibilities for reunification. Concurrent planning is introduced. The Child Plan, timeframes, and content is introduced. Trainees learn about the purposefulness of Caseworker Monthly Contacts over the life of the case and are introduced to Face-to-Face templates. Trainees apply these purposes to each family member in the training mock case. Trainees learn about working collaboratively with family, providers and other team members to monitor progress toward reunification goals and plans. Application to the training mock case provides hands-on experience.

## Learning Objectives

- Describe what the worker needs from and must provide for team members to collaborate successfully
- Define the child planning process
- Identify the purpose of the Caseworker Monthly Contact
- Identify two ways to monitor progress on the reunification plan

**Maine Child Welfare Competencies:** Engagement; Analyze; Teamwork; Planning; Diversity, Equity & Inclusion, Law & Policy; Professionalism & Ethics

## Assignments

- Simmons Case: read #14
- Policy: 3.19 Child Assessment and Plan
- Review from linked table of contents: Section 7: MECASA #7 Maine Screening for Human Sex Trafficking and/or Commercial Sexual
- Policy: 3.19 Child Assessment and Plan
- Policy: 3.22 Concurrent Planning
- Reading: Child Plan example (from Katahdin)
- Reading: Face-to-Face Contact with Parent
- Reading: Face-to-Face Contact with Child
- Reading: Monthly Face-to-Face Contact with Bio Parents
- Reading: Resource Parent Monthly Contact template Exploitation
- Reading: Rehabilitation and Reunification Plan

## DAY 5 - INVESTIGATIONS CLASSROOM DAY (PERMANENCY CASEWORKERS HAVE A FIELD DAY TO SHADOW EXPERIENCED CASEWORKERS) - LEGAL: INVESTIGATIONS

Investigations Caseworkers learn about appearing in court including decorum, preparing for a hearing, and understanding parental choices and judicial decision making. Trainers present the caseworker responsibilities, timeframes, and who they will work with to accomplish required tasks on the 30-Day Checklist. Trainers introduce standards and expectations for case documentation, petition writing, the legal summary, and testifying in court. Using the training mock case, participants apply what they've learned to plan for communications with the Assistant Attorney General and parents attorney. Investigations Caseworkers are prepared for their upcoming Mock Trial with the training mock case.

## Learning Objectives

- Identify basic decorum that is expected of them in court
- Identify caseworker responsibilities to prepare for court from the 30-Day Checklist
- Identify differences in direct examination and cross examination

**Maine Child Welfare Competencies:** Law & Policy, Professionalism & Ethics, Teamwork

## Assignments



- Develop a bulleted list of facts about the Simmons family, in preparation for writing an affidavit
- Activities & Assignments: Develop draft affidavit regarding the Simmons family
- Prepare for Mock Trial
- Reading: Title 22 Law - page 55 (Section 4037-A), and pages 57-66



# CLASSROOM WEEK 6: PERMANENCY CASEWORK; PREPARING FOR COURT

## DAY 1 - PERMANENCY CLASSROOM DAY (INVESTIGATIONS CASEWORKERS HAVE A FIELD DAY TO SHADOW EXPERIENCED CASEWORKERS) - TOPIC 1: PERMANENCY: SAFETY, PERMANENCY, & WELL-BEING

Permanency Caseworkers are introduced to the Youth in Care Bill of Rights created by the Youth Leadership Advisory Team (YLAT). Participants watch two videos 1) an excerpt from Removed and 2) a video created by YLAT where former youth in foster care talk about their experience and perspective on safety, family connections (permanency), and well-being. Participants reflect on what they observed in these films and heard from youth in the context of the requirements of their role.

### Learning Objectives

- Describe developmentally appropriate strategies to increase youth and child voice in practice and planning
- Identify ways that removal and placement into state custody impacts children
- Reflect on how trauma and prior experiences may impact a child's needs and behaviors while in placement

**Maine Child Welfare Competencies:** Engagement; Planning; Diversity, Equity & Inclusion; Teamwork

## DAY 1 - TOPIC 2: STRUCTURED DECISION MAKING REUNIFICATION ASSESSMENT TOOL & TRIAL HOME PLACEMENT

Permanency Caseworkers learn that the Structured Decision-Making Reunification Assessment Tool is complementary to monitoring progress on the plan in helping us gather information about family functioning today, compare today to past functioning on unsafe behaviors and patterns, and then make decisions with supervisor and, when involved, court to determine the permanency outcome that will fit each family. The SDM Reunification Assessment Tool helps to answer the question "Can the child(ren) safely return home?". This tool is applied to the training mock case. Trainers introduce and participants reflect on the benefits and challenges of the trial home placement, a specific process put in place when families have done sufficient work to mitigate the safety threat. Discussion turns to how to promote success and challenges that may arise. Participants are prepared for their Trial Home Placement Monthly Caseworker Contact simulation by focusing on the key components. The simulation uses the training's mock case.

### Learning Objectives

- Identify the timeframes and circumstances in which the SDM Reunification Assessment Tool must be completed
- Demonstrate the ability to apply this tool to a mock case
- Identify specific responsibilities of a caseworker during trial home placement

**Maine Child Welfare Competencies:** Analyze, Teamwork

### Assignments

- Simmons Case: read #14
- SDM Tools: SDM Reunification Assessment Tool
- Policy: 3.24 Trial Home Placements
- Simmons Case: read #14.5
- Activities & Assignments: Foundations Simulation Observation Form
- Prepare for Trial Home Placement Simulation

## DAY 2 - SIMULATED PRACTICE ACTIVITY: CHILD PROTECTIVE INVESTIGATIONS CASEWORKER MOCK TRIAL

Investigations Caseworkers provide testimony in a mock trial with the training mock case they have worked with throughout training. Volunteer judges, AAGs, and Maine Law students perform in most of the legal roles and provide observation and feedback to trainees. When social distancing is eased further, this will occur in an actual courtroom. Participants reflect on questions from the different roles and their performance in providing testimony.

NOTE that Permanency Caseworkers have a field day to shadow experienced caseworkers.

### Learning Objectives

- Demonstrate the ability to present factual information in a professional manner, integrating knowledge of policy, law, and the mock case
- Practice testimony skills

**Maine Child Welfare Competencies:** Law & Policy; Professionalism & Ethics; Analyze

### Assignments

- Prepare for Mock Trial
- Review documents for Mock Trial
- Testify in mock Summary Preliminary Hearing at assigned time

## DAY 3 - SIMULATED PRACTICE ACTIVITY: PERMANENCY CASEWORKER TRIAL HOME PLACEMENT

Permanency Caseworkers participate in the Trial Home Placement Monthly Caseworker Contact simulation using the training mock case. They receive feedback from observers and participate in a debrief with all Permanency Casework trainees to hear overall reflections.

NOTE that Investigation Caseworkers have a field day to shadow experienced caseworkers.

### Learning Objectives

- Demonstrate how to complete an unannounced monthly caseworker contact during a trial placement
- Apply skills around interviewing adults, trial home placement, and home visits

**Maine Child Welfare Competencies:** Engagement, Analyze, Law & Policy

### Assignments

- Activities and Assignments: Document “Adult Interview with Renee”
- Reflect: Permanency Simulation Reflection

## DAY 4 - TOPIC 1: STAFF SAFETY

This session provides information and strategies for caseworkers to assess their personal level of safety in situations they may encounter in their role as a caseworker in their day-to-day work and in after-hours coverage. Trainees learn information to develop an understanding of their own comfort with conflict and will familiarize themselves with de-escalation strategies/techniques for difficult conversations.

### Learning Objectives

- Identify elements of safety
- Identify preventative ways to remain safe on the job

**Maine Child Welfare Competencies:** Analyze; Law & Policy; Professionalism & Ethics

## DAY 4 - TOPIC 2: PANEL DISCUSSION WITH YOUTH IN CARE

This session provides participants the opportunity to engage in a live discussion with youth who are currently or were formerly in foster care. The discussion brings more focus to the Youth in Care Bill of Rights and how caseworkers can use that as a tool to engage and learn about the needs of youth who they will work with.

### Learning Objectives

- Identifies ways to incorporate the Youth in Care Bill of Rights to increase youth voice
- Knows how to increase youth engagement at multiple points in a case

**Maine Child Welfare Competencies:** Diversity, Equity & Inclusion; Engagement; Teamwork; Professionalism & Ethics

## DAY 4 - TOPIC 3: CONFLICT MANAGEMENT

With discussion and a practice scenario, this session recognizes and discusses how to identify and navigate conflict while working as a team with families to alleviate concerns that warrant DHHS involvement. The training identifies concrete ways to promote clear and understandable communication and normalize the intense emotions that come from child removal. A caseworker’s understanding of their own conflict style and how they manage their own emotional regulation during conflictual interactions are important to successful family engagement and worker self-care.

## **Learning Objectives**

- Identify ways to manage conflict
- Describe how the ways of managing conflict function in relation to casework
- Reflect on their own personal conflict management style and ways that this may be beneficial or a challenge in their role as a caseworker

**Maine Child Welfare Competencies:** Engagement; Professionalism & Ethics

## **Assignments**

- Policy: Review 10.01 Staff Safety and High-Risk Situations, including Appendix A and Appendix B
- Policy: 4.03 Authorization of the Use of Antipsychotic Medication for Youth in Foster Care
- Reading: Youth in Care Bill of Rights
- Videos: Social Workers as Superheroes

DAY 5 - FIELD DAY (JOB SHADOWING  
EXPERIENCED CASEWORKERS IN THEIR  
RESPECTIVE DISTRICTS)





## CLASSROOM WEEK 7

### DAY 1 - TOPIC 1: PERMANENCY FOR INVESTIGATIONS CLASSROOM (HALF DAY)

Investigations Caseworkers may not need to know all of the steps to achieve the varied permanency outcomes but need to understand permanency and can assist with later permanency work that occurs. Through presentation of information, video excerpts, and large and small group discussion, trainees learn about various forms of permanency and how their early role with a family and child and what information gathered during the investigation will be essential to planning and achieving permanency.

#### **Learning Objectives**

- Identify the steps that happen after a case moves to Permanency
- Identify criteria and considerations for different permanency outcomes

**Maine Child Welfare Competencies:** Teamwork, Planning, Law & Policy

### DAY 1 - TOPIC 2: LEGAL: PERMANENCY CLASSROOM (HALF DAY)

Permanency Caseworkers learn about appearing in court including decorum, preparing for a hearing, and understanding parental choices and judicial decision making. Trainers present the caseworker responsibilities, timeframes, and who they will work with to accomplish required tasks on the 30-Day Checklist. Trainers introduce standards and expectations for case documentation, petition writing, the legal summary, and testifying in court. Using the training mock case, participants apply what they've learned to plan for communications with the Assistant Attorney General and parent's attorney. Permanency Caseworkers are prepared for their upcoming Mock Trial with the training mock case.

#### **Learning Objectives**

- Describe how practice in mock court helped participants apply their knowledge of law, practice and documentation
- Identify areas of strength demonstrated in mock trial
- Identify areas for improvement and learning in court related work

**Maine Child Welfare Competencies:** Law & Policy, Professionalism & Ethics, Teamwork

#### **Assignments**

- Reading: Title 22 Law - page 55 (Section 4037-A), and pages 57-66
- Review documents and prepare for Mock Trial

## DAY 2 - SIMULATED PRACTICE ACTIVITY: CHILD PROTECTIVE PERMANENCY CASEWORKER MOCK TRIAL

Permanency Caseworkers provide testimony in a mock trial with the training mock case they have worked with throughout training. Volunteer judges, AAGs, and Maine Law students perform in most of the legal roles and provide observation and feedback to trainees. When social distancing is eased further, this will occur in an actual courtroom. Participants reflect on questions from the different roles and their performance in providing testimony.

NOTE that Investigations Caseworkers have a field day to shadow experienced caseworkers.

### **Learning Objectives**

- Demonstrate the ability to present factual information in a professional manner, integrating knowledge of policy, law, and the mock case
- Practice testimony skills

**Maine Child Welfare Competencies:** Law & Policy; Professionalism & Ethics; Analyze

### **Assignments**

- Testify in mock Judicial Review at assigned time
- Attend mock trial debrief activity

## DAY 3 – TOPIC 1: PERMANENCY CLASSROOM: STRUCTURED DECISION MAKING RISK REASSESSMENT TOOL

NOTE: Investigations Caseworkers have a field day to shadow experienced caseworkers

This session introduces the SDM Risk Reassessment Tool, which is complementary to monitoring progress on the plan in helping us gather information about family functioning today, compare today to past functioning on unsafe behaviors and patterns, and then make decisions with supervisor and, when involved, court to determine the permanency outcome that will fit each family. The SDM Risk Reassessment Tool helps to answer the question, “Can this case be closed?”.

### **Learning Objectives**

- Identify the timeframes and circumstances in which the SDM Risk Reassessment Tool must be completed
- Demonstrate the ability to apply this tool to a mock case
- Apply critical thinking to analysis of critical decision points using the SDM Risk Reassessment Tool

**Maine Child Welfare Competencies:** Analyze, Planning, Teamwork

## DAY 3 – TOPIC 2: PERMANENCY: NON- REUNIFICATION

This session teaches how decisions to cease reunification and pursue other permanency options are made and the role of the caseworker, supervisor, AAG, and court play in this process. Non-reunification permanency options are discussed as are the processes for achieving them and

considerations of legal permanency with each. Lifelong family connections, good-bye visits with parents, and youth aging out of foster care without permanency are all discussed for their impact on children, youth and families.

### **Learning Objectives**

- Identify criteria and considerations for non-reunification permanency outcomes
- Describe ways that each outcome creates permanency for children and young people
- Describe the responsibilities of the caseworker related to each goal

**Maine Child Welfare Competencies:** Planning, Engagement, Teamwork, Law & Policy

### **Assignments**

- Policy: 6.02 Adoption Recruitment, Placement and Supervision
- Policy: 3.27 Permanency Guardianship
- Watch: Reunification and Lifelong Families, a Foster Care Practice Model
- Tests and Quizzes: Permanency Post Quiz
- Complete: Scavenger Hunt
- Activities & Assignments: Jamboard for Graduation

## DAY 4 - GRADUATION DAY: TRANSITIONING TO AND SUSTAINING YOUR ROLE AS A CHILD WELFARE PROFESSIONAL

This session explores self-care as essential to the caseworker who is exposed to stress and secondary trauma through presentation of information, discussion, and video excerpts. Secondary trauma is defined, its impacts explored, and strategies for responding to secondary trauma are identified. Self-care strategies during work time (setting time aside for documentation, meeting with supervisor) and outside of work time are discussed. Participants discuss ethics and ethical dilemmas in the context of child welfare work, using scenarios to consider ethical responses to complex situations. Associate Director of Child Welfare Bobbi Johnson talks with participants about their transition from training to their casework role, the value of their work, and reflecting on her broad child welfare experience. This presentation by Associate Director Johnson and a subsequent video emphasize the importance of a caring adult for people who are struggling.

### **Learning Objectives**

- Describe the impact of secondary trauma on the caseworker
- Identify three strategies for self-care as the worker takes on their job
- Identify the purposes of NASW Code of Ethics

**Maine Child Welfare Competencies:** Teamwork, Professionalism & Ethics

### **Assignments**

- Review NASW Code of Ethics
- Think about questions for Associate Director Bobbi Johnson
- Activities & Assignments: Reflections Week 7
- Course Completion & Graduation: Complete Foundations End of Training Survey

## Appendix: Child Welfare Competencies

COMPETENCY	DEFINITION
ENGAGEMENT	Initiates, interacts, and maintains relationships with children, youth, families, colleagues, and other team members to ensure participation in shaping decisions about needs, goals, supports and services in relation to child safety, permanency, and well-being.
ANALYZE	Guided by the principles of the Practice Model, gathers relevant information, engages in critical thinking, and utilizes evidence-based decision-making process leading to an ongoing, accurate, and comprehensive analysis of the impact of family functioning on child safety, permanency, and well-being.
TEAMWORK	Joins with families, agency colleagues, and community partners to identify, develop and maintain teams that promote long-term safety, well-being, and permanent families for children.
PLANNING	Engages collaboratively with family and team members to develop goals and strategies that result in sustainable child safety, well-being, and permanency.
PROFESSIONALISM & ETHICS	Works to build and demonstrates respect, confidence, and integrity when interacting with the families, supports, providers, and colleagues in accordance with the Social Work Code of Ethics.
DIVERSITY, EQUITY, INCLUSION	<p>Interacts and responds in a manner that acknowledges historical and current inequalities across societal systems, including disparities and disproportionalities, and historical trauma. Recognizes, affirms, values all people across differences that might include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• culture, race, ethnic background</li> <li>• language</li> <li>• socio-economic status</li> <li>• religion/spiritual tradition</li> <li>• immigration status</li> <li>• sexual orientation, gender identity/expression</li> <li>• other factors</li> </ul>
LAW & POLICY	Understand and apply policy and State and Federal law requirements as to child welfare practice to promote the safety, well-being and permanency of children and protect the rights of children, youth, and families.

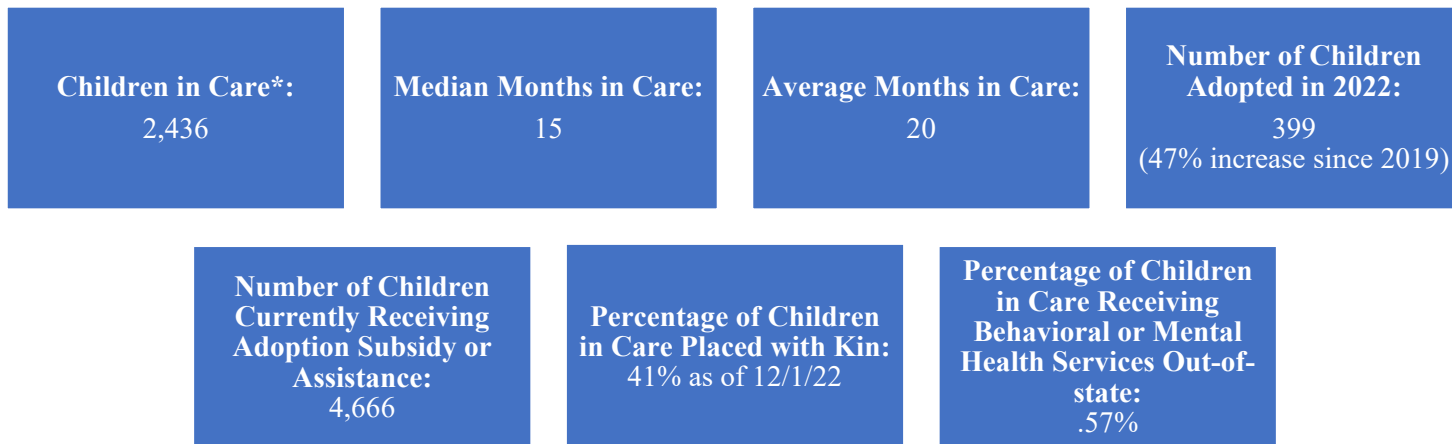
# Child Welfare Data – Calendar Year 2022

## 2022 Reports

<b>Total Reports</b>	<b>28,602</b>	← 9.6% increase in reports since 2019
Family Reports Screened In	11,262	
Family Reports Screened Out	17,340	

## Child Welfare by the Numbers

(data as of 1/18/23 unless otherwise noted)



\*Includes youth over the age of 18 who are engaged in a voluntary agreement to provide services and support beyond their 18<sup>th</sup> birthday

## Number of Children Involved in Reunification

(Based on primary case goal)

	<b>Reunification</b>	<b>Adoption</b>	<b>Permanency Guardianship</b>	<b>Other Planned Permanent Living Arrangement (OPPLA)</b>	<b>Goal Not Yet Established or In Process of Being Established</b>
Total Children	1394	531	43	66	363
Percentage by Goal	58%	22%	2%	3%	15%