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| LOCAL COMMISSIONERS MEMORANDUM |  
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Transmittal No: 97 LCM-15

Date: February 21, 1997

Division: Services & Community  
Development  
and  
Management Support &  
Quality Improvement

TO: Local District Commissioners  
and  
Staff Development Coordinators

SUBJECT: CPS Training Update

ATTACHMENTS: None.

In 96 LCM-106, and in a series of regional forums being held throughout the State, we updated you on the Department's plan to restructure its child welfare training to be outcome-focused and skills based. The purpose of this LCM is to update you on the proposed content, structure, and sequencing of the new outcome-based Child Welfare Core Training. We will also update you on the availability of current CPS Core and Permanency Planning Core training. This information will enable you to make appropriate training choices for your CPS staff during this period of transition.

The new Child Welfare Core Training process includes the Common Core and program-specific core modules. The Common Core focuses on the basic skills needed by child welfare caseworkers, regardless of their specific job assignments, and will be provided to all child welfare caseworkers. The program-specific core modules will build the skills needed in particular areas of assignment. For example, there will be separate program-specific modules that address CPS investigation and intervention, the prevention of the occurrence of out-of-home care, reunification of children in out-of-home care, working with adolescents who must be able to function independently at the age of majority, and working to place children in adoptive homes.

The new training process - from Common Core to advanced training - will be delivered through a variety of formats. These formats will include classroom sessions, self instructional material, and on the job components.

In the area of Child Protective Services, we have been working with representatives from State DSS and local districts, and with the Child Welfare Institute and Cornell's Child Protective Services Training Institute to design and develop the new program-specific Child Protective Services Investigation module (CPI) of the Child Welfare Core Training process. This module will be provided after the Common Core to caseworkers for whom CPS investigation is a primary or full-time responsibility. It will expand on the Common Core's basic skills training and will build the specific skills and abilities that make up the CPS response: safety assessment and intervention; report investigation and determination, and risk assessment and risk reduction intervention.

CPI will be designed to train new CPS caseworkers as well as experienced caseworkers who have been assigned protective/investigative responsibilities. Our goal is to develop CPI and the Common Core simultaneously and to make them available within the same timeframe. Once the new Core program is in place, we expect to have sufficient Common Core and CPI components available to meet the needs of new CPS staff and of experienced, trained child welfare staff who have recently been assigned CPS responsibilities.

While the Child Welfare Core Training process is being developed, we have asked Cornell to continue to deliver offerings of the current two-week CPS Core. These resources are limited, however, so we must restrict current Core attendance to the trainees for whom it is intended, full-time CPS staff. Several of the recent CPS Core offerings have been oversubscribed due to the participation of staff who have been assigned limited protective responsibilities. This reduces the availability of training for staff who need it the most.

We currently offer another training option to prepare experienced foster care, adoption or preventive workers to assume a limited set of CPS responsibilities. In response to local districts' requests, and under the guidance of the Department, Cornell has developed an abbreviated version of the current CPS Core known as a "mini Core" to address the needs of these cross-over staff.

The "mini Core" provides staff who have previously attended the Permanency Planning Core training with an overview and basic understanding of the essential elements of the CPS response and of CPS administrative and legal procedures. We recommend that districts utilize this training rather than the two week Core for the staff just described. If you anticipate the need for a "mini Core" session, or you have any questions about which training options will best meet your needs, please contact Paula Hennessy of the Office of Human Resource Development at (518) 474-3353.

Date February 21, 1997

Trans. No. 97 LCM-15

Page No. 3

Additionally, we have asked Buffalo State College to continue to offer the Permanency Planning Core for foster care, adoption, and preventive caseworkers until such time as the Common Core is available.

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Rose M. Pandozy  
Deputy Commissioner  
Division of Services  
and Community Development

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David P. Avenius  
Deputy Commissioner  
Division of Management Support  
and Quality Improvement