

 VERMONT DEPARTMENT FOR CHILDREN AND FAMILIES Family Services Policy Manual		<h1>203</h1>
Chapter:	Supervision and Training	
Subject:	Professional Development for Division Staff	Page 1 of 5
Approved:	Christine Johnson, Deputy Commissioner	Effective: 3/11/2020
Supersedes:	Family Services Policy 203	Dated: 2/18/2015

Purpose

To:

- Articulate the division’s commitment to providing competency-based, culturally responsive learning opportunities in accordance with the national standards for public child welfare and youth justice practice and in compliance with state law; and
- Outline the division’s responsibility for the ongoing professional development of its workforce to ensure that staff develop the knowledge and skills necessary to carry out the work of the division.

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Introduction

The Family Services Division values a strong culture of safety. Safety culture is one in which organizational values, attitudes, and behaviors support a safe, engaged workforce and reliable service delivery. Organizations with a safety culture utilize safety organizing strategies and value open communication, transparency, and continuous learning and improvement in service to an environment conducive to strong decision-making.

The division's professional development program provides staff with opportunities to achieve competent job performance and enhance career growth, focusing on foundational and advanced knowledge and skills relative to job expectations. Training is only 5% effective unless there is further support through coaching and supervision. An employee's training requirements will be appropriate to their individual needs, as determined through regular supervision, role within the system, and education and experience in their field of practice.

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Definitions

Coaching: Coaching is a transfer of learning activity. Coaching is a process by which the coach creates structured, focused interaction with learners, and uses appropriate strategies, tools, and techniques to promote desirable and sustainable change for the benefit of the learner, making a positive impact on the organization. (Adapted from Mink, Owen, & Mink, 1993; Cox, Bachkirova, & Clutterbuck, 2010)

Collaborative Learning Agreements: Written agreements that identify and align district goals, outcome data, training needs, and division priorities with the strategies and activities conducted by the Vermont Child Welfare Training Partnership with division staff and leaders.

Policy

Roles & Responsibilities of Staff

Division staff are expected to proactively take responsibility for their learning and are responsible for completing the trainings mandated for their role. Staff are encouraged to actively grow the learning culture both as a learner and as a teacher/mentor to colleagues, share knowledge and expertise, and ask questions to grow their skills within their role

The Agency of Human Services (AHS) utilizes the learning management system [LINC](#) for staff to view and enroll in available trainings. Through [LINC](#), staff should check their training transcript to verify it accurately reflects completed trainings. Although AHS has a tracking system through [LINC](#), employees are responsible for maintaining their own records with documentation of trainings.

Roles & Responsibilities of Supervisors

Supervisors are responsible for ensuring their supervisees develop skills and knowledge related to their role and responsibilities and complete required trainings. An employee’s professional development plan for the year will be discussed, determined, and reviewed as a part of their annual performance review. Supervisors have access to and should review their supervisees’ training transcript in [LINC](#) throughout the year.

Requests for Waivers for AHS or DCF Mandatory Trainings

State, agency, and department level trainings designated as ‘mandatory’ are required within specified timeframes. Depending on the training, waivers may be granted for mandatory trainings when it is determined that an employee possesses the knowledge and skills provided within a specific training and that attendance at the training would

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not increase job readiness, competence in the defined area, or confidence in performing required job activities.

Requests for Waivers for Family Services Division Mandatory Trainings

A new employee required to complete the *Family Services New Employee Training Program* may apply for a waiver for certain classroom or online sessions. Some examples include:

1. Successful completion of an academic course work with similar course competencies; or
2. Successful completion of formal training activity with similar course objectives; or
3. Previous work experience where job duties match the job duties being trained within a given training (i.e., a contracted family time coach moves into a family services worker position and may be exempt from the family time coaching content).

Waiver requests must be submitted in writing using the *Application for Waiver of Foundations for Family-Center Practice Training*. This form should be completed by the employee and employee's supervisor, submitted to the employee's district director and approved by the district's assigned operations manager. Waiver requests should be infrequent in order to ensure that all new employees achieve a foundations level competence in their role prior to completion of probation. For consideration of waiver requests and information related to training specific learning objectives, please contact the Vermont Child Welfare Training Partnership.

Training Requirements & Other Available Professional Development Opportunities

Role	Mandatory Requirements	Timeframe
All Family Services Division Staff	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • AHS New Employee Orientation • DCF Orientation • Domestic Violence Online • Mandatory Reporting Online • HIPAA • Staff Safety (FSD staff who complete the <i>Foundations – Staff Safety</i> session are waived from the AHS requirement) • FSD Online Orientation 	Within 1 month of hire
All Family Services Division Staff	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Family Services Division Conference (Bi-Annually) 	When the conference is held

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<p>Family Services Workers (FSWs), Resource Coordinators (RCs), and Managers & Supervisors new to the Family Services Division</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Family Services New Employee Training Program, including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Foundations for Child Protection & Youth Justice Practice Online Required Courses ○ Foundations for Child Protection & Youth Justice Classroom Required ○ Foundations Field Practice 	<p style="text-align: center;"><u>Onboarding Caseload Requirements for FSWs:</u></p> <p>Within 4 months of hire FSWs will complete foundations training with a graduated caseload of:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 0 cases in months 1 -2 • 2-3 cases in months 3-4 • <6 cases in months 4-6 as determined by the supervisor <p>Within 4 months of hire all online, classroom, and checklist components will be completed by the FSW.</p> <p>Completion is indicated through operations manager sign-off and submitted to LINC for the individuals training record.</p>
<p>Managers, Directors, & Supervisor</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Supervising in State Government 	<p>Within 3 months of hire</p>
<p>Resource Coordinators</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • New hires are assigned an experienced RC as a mentor to meet monthly for guidance and review the RC manual on the following areas: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ General overview of the division and role of RC ○ Recruitment ○ Screening and selection ○ Retention ○ Caregiver training 	<p>The RC manual outlines tasks to be completed within the first 6 months of hire</p>
Role	Other Professional Development Opportunities	
<p>All Family Services Division Staff</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Vermont Foster & Adoptive Families Conference • Vermont Case Reviewer Training • FSD Advanced Practicum* • UVM MSW IV-E Traineeship** 	

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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Vermont Certified Public Managers Program** • Other Vermont agency conferences with permission from their district director • National conferences with permission from district director and operations manager • District initiated trainings by local agencies • Collaborative Learning Agreements • Coaching <p>* CEU's may be available for advanced course work and conferences **Application process required</p>
Division Managers, Directors, & Supervisor	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • FSD Leadership Academy for Supervisors • Child Welfare Coaching Institute • Coaching Clinics • Structured Decision Making Case Reading Training & Coaching
Administrative Staff	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Individual Foundations Modules • KnowledgeWave online training • Applicable trainings through Center for Achievement in Public Service (CAPS) - sign up through LINC

Resources

Staff training resources and links can be found on the Family Services Division SharePoint site under Workforce Development > [Training and Development](#).