What Works: Bridging the Gap from Science to Service
Workforce Selection & Child Welfare Outcomes: Handout

2010 Florida Coalition for Children Annual Conference (October 18-20, 2010)

Workforce and Child Welfare Outcomes: A Snapshot of some of the literature

Child Welfare – HHS Could Play a Greater Role in Helping Child Welfare Agencies Recruit and Retain Staff

Methodology
• Conducted between March 2002 and January 2003
• 600 Exit Interview Documents completed by staff who left employment in 17 state, 40 county, and 19 private child welfare agencies and categorized reasons for leaving
• Examined 27 CFSRs and child welfare workforce studies to determine “severity and scope of recruitment and retention challenges”
• Interviews with child welfare experts and officials site visits to public and private child welfare agencies in California, Illinois, Kentucky, and Texas.
• Contacts with Regional and Central HHS staff

Key Findings Linking CW Staff to Child and Family Outcomes
Analysis of federal CFSRs and interviews with caseworkers in four states:
• Large caseloads and worker turnover:
  o Delay timeliness of investigations
  o Limit frequency of worker visits with children, thereby hampering agencies’ attainment of some key federal safety and permanency goals.

Review of Turnover in Milwaukee County Private Agency Child Welfare Ongoing Case Management Staff, January, 2005
Connie Flower, Jess McDonald, Michael Sumski

Methodology
• Interviews with Private agency CEOs and management staff, state leadership of the Bureau of Milwaukee Child Welfare, BMCW program evaluation managers, Judges and Juvenile Court Staff, U of Milwaukee training partners,
• Meetings with Workforce and Recruitment Workgroups
• Eight Focus Groups with private agency ongoing case managers and supervisors
• Administration and compilation of Employee Environment Surveys
• Agency Management Surveys
• BMCW data and reports
Key Findings Linking CW Staff to Child and Family Outcomes
Does turnover of ongoing case managers impact permanency for children?

- Increases in the number of worker changes were correlated to lessening the chance of permanency achievement.
  - 679 children who entered care in calendar year 2003 through September 2004 and exited within same time period.
  - Children entering care during the time period who had only one worker achieved permanency in 74.5% of the cases. As the # of case managers increased, the % of children achieving permanency substantially dropped. 2 workers, 17.5% 3 workers 5.2%, 6 or 7 workers, .1%

_CalSWEC Presentation, NCWWI Webinar October 7, 2010_  
*Chris Mathias Director of CalSWEC Title IV-E program and Sherrill Clark, California Social Work Education Center (CalSWEC) U of Californian Berkeley, School of Social Work*

**Methodology**
- Online survey completed each year as MSW classes graduate and at 6 months and 1.5 years post graduation evaluation AND
- Training evaluation of IV-E and non IV-E of classes conducted between January 2008 and December 2008 (calendar year 2008), N=743 complete pairs of pre-and post-tests.

**Findings**
Knowledge gains on pre-post CW core academy/core curriculum
- Gains from pre-to post-test are statistically significant for both Title IV-E and non IV-E participants
- IV-E participants scored higher at pre-test and post-test than non-IV-E

**Other Findings for IV-E staff:**
- Having access to training more than twice a year is associated with longer retention
- Getting agency support for licensure is associated with longer retention

_Recruiting and Retaining Child Welfare Workers: Is Preparing Social Work Students Enough for Sustained Commitment to the Field?_  
*Anita Barbee, Becky Antle, Dana Sullivan, Ruth Huebner, Steve Fox, John Christopher Hall. Child Welfare 2009*

Public Child Welfare Certification Program (PCWCP) developed in the Commonwealth of Kentucky as collaborative effort between 11 Universities and Cabinet for Health and Family Services, Dept of Community-Based Services, Protection and Permanency Division.

**Study Methodology**
Retention Study:
- Retention rate drops to about 61% at 4-year mark (After 2 years it is 86% - much higher than for those who enter workforce through normal channels)
Reasons for turnover – the following were mediators of commitment to agency:
  o Supervisor support
  o Coworker support
  o Personal and Professional stress

Two additional studies to examine impact of the PCWCP program on daily practice and additional 20% leave the agency four years after program. Linked to list of PCWCP and non-PCWCP graduates hired in a four-month period.

Safety Data Set (211 cases)
  • PCWCP more likely than other to continue a case
  • Less likely to find that services are not needed
  • More likely to substantiate abuse
  • PCWCP group unsubstantiated more low-risk cases, substantiated more moderate-risk cases, and continued care for more high-risk cases

Permanency Data Set (300 unduplicated cases of children in care)
  • PCWCP group 2x more likely to place children with relatives
  • Less likely to place in residential settings
  • 2x as likely to place children in adoptive homes
  • Less likely to place children in emergency shelter placements.
  • More likely to have established permanency goal
  • For children in care for 13 or more months more likely to have goal as adoption a far fewer return to parent goals

Well-being Data Set (linked back to 98 children in OOHC who were included in foster care census)
Children with non-PCWCP case manager tended to be older, with longer stay in care overall and in current foster home and with more moves in care

Casework quality
  • No different in number of referrals that were not “past due”
  • Difference in number of days a case was “past due”

NEVERTHELESS:
What causes them to leave four years into their jobs?

Telephone interviews with 15 PCWCP graduates who left the child welfare agency after two-year period were completed.
Reasons for Leaving:
  • Inadequate supervision
  • Unsupportive coworkers
  • Stressful work environment (bureaucracy, inadequate resources, and insufficient time to fulfill the policy requirements for caseloads assigned to them)
Relationship between Title IV-E Child Protection Workers and Case Outcomes
Presentation from NCWWI Webinar October 7, 2010
Patrick Leung, University of Houston Graduate College of Social Work

Methodology:
Part A: State Case Outcomes – Examine existing administrative data to determine how case outcomes are affected by Title IV-E training as defined by the CFSR Review:
- Recurrence of child maltreatment
- Foster are re-entries
- Stability of Foster care placement
- Length of time to achieve reunification
- Length of time to achieve adoption

Part A: Merging of lists to create a primary file contained about 1.8 million unduplicated interventions.

Part B: CPS Worker Survey – Investigate characteristics of individual CPS workers
- Expanded evaluation survey conducted by the Texas Title IV-E evaluation Committee in 2003 for all state CPS workers
- 4078 current employees were identified and of those 2,303 employees matched with the primary file
- Response rate of 1,187 CPS employees (53.9%)
- 1,043 were usable
- Compared Title IV-E with Non-Title IV-E Employee

Findings
Recurrence of child maltreatment [Not supported but direction in favor of Title IV-E]
Hypothesis 1
The number of children that were victims of substantiated or indicated maltreatment that had another incident within six months was significantly lower for Title IV-E workers than non-Title IV-E workers (Hypothesis 1 was not supported but the direction was in favor of Title IV-E workers).
- Data indicated that 93.6% of the children from Title IV-E workers were not maltreated as opposed to 92.9% from Non-Title IV-E workers.
- The percentage (6.4%) of children that were victims of substantiated or indicated maltreatment that had another incident within six months was lower for Title IV-E workers than for Non-Title IV-E workers (7.1%).
- However, worker and recurrence of maltreatment were found to be not significantly related, Pearson $\chi^2 (1, N = 10035) = .925, p = .168$; one-tailed).

Foster care re-entries [Not supported but the direction was in favor of non-Title IV-E workers]
Hypothesis 2
The number of children that re-entered foster care within 12 months of their previous episode was higher for IV-E workers than non-IV-E workers (Hypothesis 2 was not supported but the direction was in favor of non-Title IV-E workers).
Data indicated that 70.6% of the children from Title IV-E workers did not re-enter foster care in 12 months or less of their previous episode as opposed to 79.8% from Non-Title IV-E workers.

The percentage of children that re-entered foster care in 12 months or less of their previous episode was slightly higher for Title IV-E workers (29.4%) than for Non-Title IV-E workers (20.2%).

However, worker and foster care re-entries were found to be not significantly related, Pearson $\chi^2 (1, N = 212) = 1.418, p = .117$ (one-tailed).

**Stability of Foster care placement [Not supported, but the direction was in favor of non-Title IV-E workers]**

Hypothesis 3:

The number of children with two or fewer placements during a 12-month period was significantly higher for Title IV-E workers than for non-Title IV-E workers (Hypothesis 3 was not supported, but the direction was in favor of non-Title IV-E workers).

- About 76.2% of children who had two or more placements during a 12-month period were from Title IV-E workers as opposed to 73.7% from Non-Title IV-E workers.
- The percentage of children (26.3%) that had no more than two placements during a 12-month period was significantly higher for Non-Title IV-E workers than for Title IV-E workers (23.8%).
- Worker and stability were found to be significantly related, Pearson $\chi^2 (1, N = 7182) = 3.138, p = .038$ (one-tailed).

**Length of time to achieve reunification [Supported in favor of IV-E]**

Hypothesis 4:

The number of children reunified within 12 months of entering foster care was significantly higher for Title IV-E workers than for non-Title IV-E workers (Hypothesis 4 was supported).

- About 31.8% of the children from Title IV-E workers were not reunited within 12 months as opposed to 38.2% of the children from Non-Title IV-E workers.
- The percentage of children (68.2%) from Title IV-E workers had more family reunifications within 12 months than Non-Title IV-E workers (61.8%).
- Worker and reunification within 12 months were found to be significantly related, Pearson $\chi^2 (1, N = 1377) = 3.253, p = .036$ (one-tailed).

**Length of time to achieve adoption [Supported in favor of IV-E]**

Hypothesis 5:

The number of children, for whom reunification was not an option, that exited foster care to a finalized adoption in less than 24 months of entering foster care, was significantly higher for Title IV-E workers than for non-Title IV-E workers (Hypothesis 5 was supported).

- Title IV-E workers (70.6%) had more finalized adoptions within 24 months than Non-Title IV-E workers (46.9%).
- About 53.1% of the children from Non-Title IV-E workers were without finalized adoptions within 24 months as opposed to only 29.4% for Title IV-E workers.
Worker and adoption were found to be significantly related. Pearson $\chi^2 (1, N = 1427) = 14.592, p = .000$ (one-tailed).

**IV-E Partnership in Pennsylvania: Outcome Research and Program Evaluation**

*Presentation from NCWWI Webinar October 7, 2010*

Helen Cahalane, Clinical Associate Professor and Principal Investigator of the Child Welfare Education and Research Programs at the University of Pittsburgh, School of Social Work

A study of Organizational Climate and the Retention of Title IV-E Graduates

**Methodology**

- Trend Study of MSW graduates and agency climate at 3 years post graduation
- 381 graduates eligible. 305 responses (81% response rate)
- 245 (80%) remained in public child welfare agency and 60 (20%) had left public child welfare agency
- Self administered mail survey using the Children’s Organizational Climate Survey (Glisson & Hemmelgarn, 1998)

**Findings**

- Factors Explaining Retention
  - Job Satisfaction
  - Organizational Commitment
  - Cooperation
- Factors Explaining Departure
  - Emotional Exhaustion
  - Job Satisfaction
  - Personal Accomplishment
- Using Skills/abilities, exercising independent judgment and being recognized are critical to job satisfaction
- Promotion not as important as using skills

**Commitment to child welfare work: What predicts leaving and staying?**

*Kathleen Coulborn Faller, Marguerite Grabarek, Robert M. Ortega*

*Children and Youth Services Review 2010*

Build on work of Landsman, Ellet and colleagues and explore commitment to professional field of child welfare as well as commitment to a specific agency.

**Methodology**

Longitudinal study of child welfare employees in mid-western state.
- Gathered data at baseline (end of eight week new worker training), 6-months, 12-months and 18 months.
- Public agency workers are hired through a multi-stage, central hiring process.
Private agency workers are recruited by the individual agencies, often posted on private agency federation website. The screening and selection process for private agencies varied by agency.

All workers, both public and private, are required to attend new worker training sponsored by the public child welfare agency.

460 workers who were new to their child welfare agencies between Nov 2004 and April 2007 were included. 327 public agency workers and 134 private agency workers (agencies under contract to public child welfare agencies. Only public agency applicants, hired after July, 2005 saw the RJP.

Findings

- Commitment to the agency, commitment to child welfare, good supervision, and job satisfaction are factors in preventing turnover.
- Public agency workers tended to be more committed to their jobs and to child welfare than private agency workers.
- Reasons for taking the job were important
  - Private agency workers more likely to have taken job because it was the only job available
  - Public agency workers were more likely to have taken job because of pay, benefits, job security, opportunities and variety.
  - Higher proportion of private agency endorsed “a good first job to take.”
  - More than 80% of both public and private agency workers selected as a reason to work in child welfare “to help children and families.”
- Having viewed the State’s RJP (public agency) was associated with still being on the job.