

Learning, Leading, Changing

Beyond Child Welfare Education & Training: Pennsylvania's Dynamic University-Agency Partnership for Transfer of Learning, Quality Improvement & Organizational Effectiveness
(Webinar, September 2013)

What are these resources?

- Pennsylvania Child Welfare Resource Center: centralized program with regional training centers; six departments with more than 80 staff: Administrative, Fiscal/HR, Technology Development, Curriculum and Trainer Development, Organizational Effectiveness, Statewide Quality Improvement.
- Funding: Title IV-E; Title IV-B; Child Abuse Prevention & Treatment Act; Children's Justice Act; Chafee Foster Care Independence Funds; Caseworker Visitation Funds; State of Pennsylvania; Casey Family Programs.
- Core Activities: *Organizational Change* (consultation and technical assistance); *Training Development & Delivery* (competency-based); *Transfer of Learning (TOL)* (guides, needs assessments, coaching and mentoring; before, during and after training); *Statewide Quality Improvement Projects* (Continuous Quality Improvement through Quality Service Reviews, Citizen Review Panels, CFSR, etc.); *Education, Evaluation & Research* (undergraduate/graduate education; research/evaluation projects).
- Center for Excellence: create and build expertise by drawing on faculty research to provide training/professional development support for child welfare professionals' skill development, TOL, CQI and organizational effectiveness.
- Meet regularly with state, steering committee, Pennsylvania Children & Youth Administrators and network of 16 university partners (Schools of Social Work) throughout the state.

What are the critical findings?

- State/county benefits: efficiency, consistency (in expectations and support), development of the workforce, individualized support when necessary, practice improvement ensuring alignment with vision, increased ability to address statewide themes, practice improvement.
- Partner activities result in increased community understanding and support of child welfare work
- When more TOL activities occur before, during and after training, workers report feeling significantly more knowledgeable about training content, better able to apply content on the job, have improved perceptions of peer and supervisor support and show positive trends in items related to content knowledge, ability to use training content, and opportunities to use training content six months post training.
- Need all 3 - Training, Transfer of Learning and Organizational Effectiveness activities - to support change.
- Must engage staff at all levels and empower them to be part of the solution.

What are the implications for our work?

- Changing culture to one that is collaborative and quality-focused with commitment to internal CQI.
- QSR data provides a common framework, allowing for: a real-time view of practice; identifying strengths and needs; garnering commitment for change; allocating resources to address areas of need.
- Need strong leadership at all levels; active, meaningful involvement of key stakeholders; shared vision (practice model); open and honest communication at all levels; flexibility; and commitment to funding "the vision."
- Maintain high energy level and commitment through the implementation process, and understand change takes time. Change is slowed by varied abilities to implement change, competing demands and funding challenges.
- Align everything we do with the practice model - values, principles and skills.
- Use child welfare professionals as trainers and focus on building internal capacity.
- Success comes with an organizational approach that holistically addresses issues and a commitment to structured, comprehensive implementation over time.
- Build evaluation into projects from the beginning and promote the use of data-driven decision making.