



## Transfer of Learning

 Antle, B.F., Barbee, A.P., Sullivan, D.J., & Christensen, D.J. (2009). The effects of training reinforcement on training transfer in child welfare. *Child Welfare*, 88(3), 5-26.

### WHAT IS THIS RESOURCE?

This journal article highlights the impact of different training methods on training transfer, including the benefits of post-training interventions. This study used an experimental-control group post-only design, with 3 groups: classroom training only, classroom training with reinforcement, and the control group, which received no training. The effect of these different training approaches on the transfer of assessment and case planning skills was examined through a review of 120 child welfare case records.

### WHAT ARE THE CRITICAL FINDINGS?

*Training transfer* refers to the degree to which training participants use skills from the training curriculum in their daily work. Existing research literature highlights that immediately following regular, classroom-only training, trainees are generally able to recall and use only 40% of the material, and that learning/training transfer diminishes to 25% at six months and 15% at one year.

#### Literature Review: 4 Key Elements To Effective Training Transfer

ENGAGEMENT IN TRAINING PLANNING & DEVELOPMENT	Transfer of training material is most likely to occur when specific plans are made to implement training content on the job Involving caseworkers in the development of training, and using training action plans, are also important
FOCUS ON SKILLS & BEHAVIORS	A behavioral training program provides workers with education in the practice skills (behaviors) necessary for effective casework practice Supplement didactic learning with experiential activities: caseworkers are asked to try new material in the field and then return to the classroom to discuss their experiences
GROUP TRAINING (SUPERVISORS & CASEWORKERS)	The traditional, individual participant group suggests that this is a less effective method to teach casework skills than training supervisors and their caseworkers together
REINFORCEMENT	A key component of successful child welfare practice is the involvement of supervisors for the reinforcement of new knowledge and skills Supervisory mentoring promotes caseworker skill acquisition, as supervisors teach new skills, demonstrate or model their use, observe caseworkers practicing skills, and provide feedback on ways to improve these skills Training should include components of self-evaluation and ongoing evaluation by the supervisor

The key finding from this research was a significantly higher rate of training transfer when training plus reinforcement was provided compared with classroom training only. Participants in the training-plus-reinforcement group used correct assessment and case planning skills at a significantly higher level. There was no difference in the skill level of participants between the classroom training only and the control group.

### WHAT ARE THE IMPLICATIONS FOR OUR WORK?

-  In order to maximize the resources devoted to child welfare training, some form of training reinforcement should be provided.
-  Child welfare administrators and policy makers must attend to these outcomes for a number of reasons, including federal accountability for training dollars spent and training services provided as well as the need to promote competent practice and child outcomes through training interventions.