The Child Welfare Team
Syllabus

Introduction

Expert – Betsy Keefer Smalley, LSW, Director of Foster Care and Adoption Training at the Institute for Human Services (IHS) in Columbus, Ohio.

This course covers how the child welfare system works, who is involved and their roles and responsibilities, key terms, and goals of the system.

Purpose and Goals of the Child Welfare System

There are six main goals of the child welfare system:

- To investigate allegations and determine risk to children
- To pinpoint family strengths and resources that can help remove or reduce risk
- To provide protective services to children and families
- When necessary, to provide temporary out-of-home care for children
- To work towards permanence and safety for children
- To secure permanent alternative homes for children who cannot return to their parents

An Overview of the Child Welfare System

The child welfare system provides a broad range of services, including:

- In-home family support
- Respite care
- Foster or kinship care
- Adoption

Protective Custody

Introduces a case study in which the children were removed from their parents and put in temporary care while child protective services researches alternatives for the children.
Overview of the System Stages

Stages:

- Intake
- Screening
- Investigation and assessment
- Decision and disposition
- Treatment and case management
- Closing the case

System Stages

An interactive exercise to reinforce understanding of the stages of the system.

Codes, Laws and History Parts 1 & 2

Traces the history of child welfare over the past 4,000 years.

Six Terms

Defines 6 key phrases used in child protective services:

- Abuse
- Adoption
- Emergency detention hearing
- Home study
- Neglect
- Pre-placement visits

Meeting the Team

Key members of a child’s team, their roles and responsibilities:

- Birth parent
- Agency caseworker
- Intake caseworker
- Foster parent
Caseworker Workday Introduction

Caseworkers interact with all members of a child’s care team and play a pivotal role in the outcome for the child.

Caseworker Workday Log 1 & 2

Narrative of two typical days in a caseworker’s week.

Team Communication

Tips for communicating efficiently.

Role of a Foster Parent and Foster Caregiver

- Responsibility to birth parents
- Responsibility to the child
- Mandated reporters

The Case Study of Alice Turner

Examines what happens when a single mother of 6 loses custody of her kids:

- Where the kids go
- Services they are offered
- Permanency plan

Kinship Support System

Children’s relatives can sometimes be valuable members of their team.

Case Planning

Different members of a child’s team may have different views of what is the best interest of the child. In Alice’s case, her children’s CASA disagrees with the plan for reunification.

Includes an interactive on identifying members of a child’s team.

Wrap-Up

Summary of the role of the members of the team.