

UAA UNIVERSITY of ALASKA ANCHORAGE.

Child Welfare Academy

Annual Report

July 2019 – June 2020



ACADEMY OVERVIEW

The Child Welfare Academy (CWA) provides training and technical assistance to the State of Alaska, Office of Children's Services (OCS). CWA also contracts with other organizations, as requested, to provide a variety of training and facilitation needs in the area of child welfare.

MISSION

The Child Welfare Academy trains, develops and supports Alaskans to assure children are safe, youth thrive, and families are strong. We work to develop professionals so that they may be competent and compassionate.

CORE VALUES

Respect: We respect and honor all peoples' dignity with compassion.

Trauma Informed: Our curricula and training is trauma informed.

Excellence: Through research, collaboration, adaptability and creativity.

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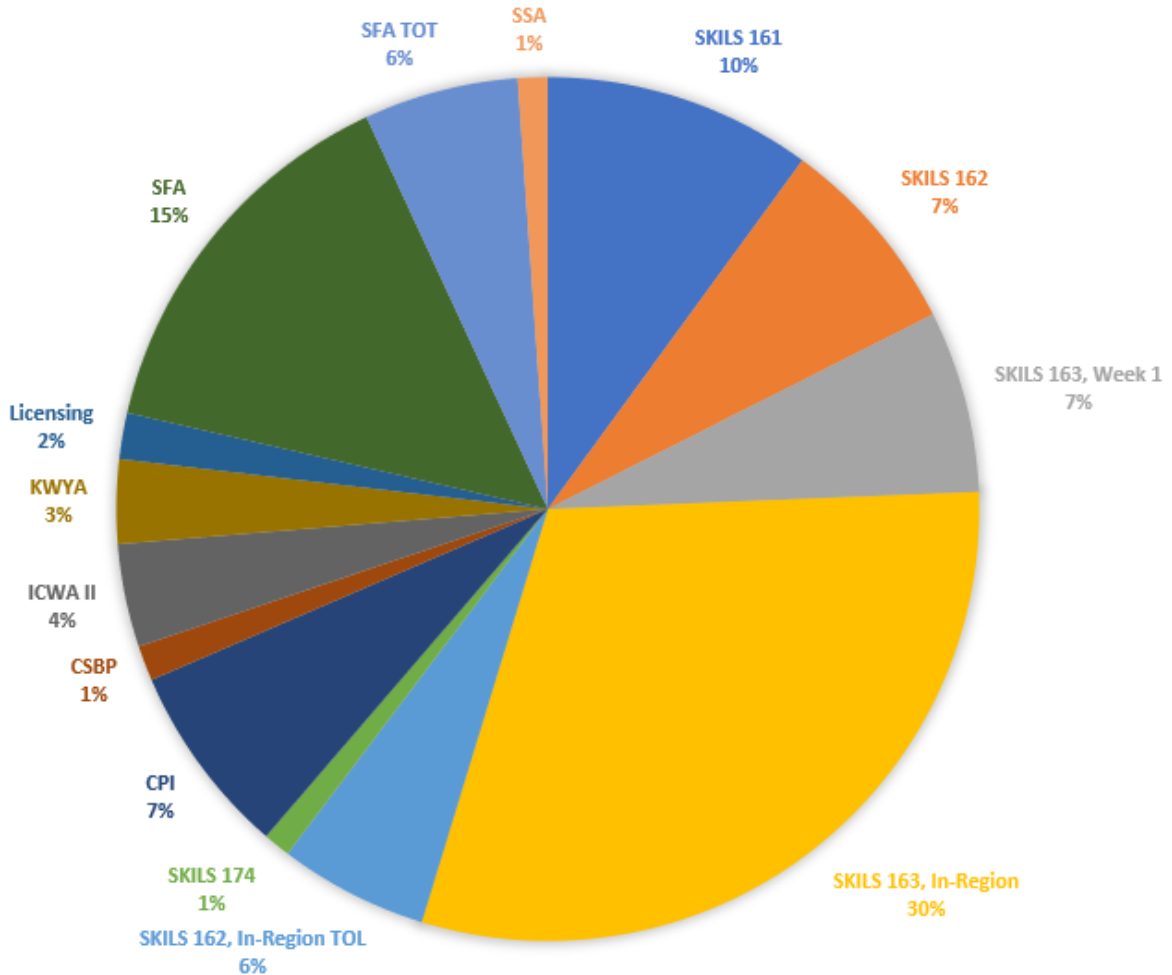
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243 training days delivered

From July 2019 to June 2020, the Child Welfare Academy delivered 243 training days to child welfare professionals, parents, and foster parents throughout Alaska. Here are charts that show number of participants by training events.



OCS Participants, SKILS 161 for New Workers	92
OCS Participants, SKILS 162 for New Workers	73
OCS Participants, SKILS 163, Week 1, for New Workers	67
OCS Participants, SKILS 163, In-Region, for Caseworkers	299
OCS Participants, SKILS 163, In-Region TOL, for Caseworkers	55
OCS Participants, SKILS 174 Family Service SKILS for Caseworkers	5
OCS Participants, Other Training	211
Tribal & Community Partners, SKILS for New Workers	13
Tribal & Community Partners, Other Training	170
Total Completed Training Days	243
Total Contact Hours	21,858

Training Calendar: July 2019 – June 2020

NO	EVENT	DATES	LOCATION
1	161 SKILS	July 8-19	ANC
2	161 SKILS	August 5-16	ANC
3	162 SKILS	August 12-23	ANC
4	285 CPI Training	August 15	ANC
5	Strengthening Families™ AK	August 27-28	ANC
6	229 ICWA II	August 28-29	ANC
7	CSBP, Cohort 10	September- January	ANC
8	161 SKILS	September 9-20	ANC
9	Strengthening Families™ AK	September 19-20	ANC
10	163 SKILS	September 23-27	ANC
11	237 ChildFirst	September 30-October 4	ANC
12	161 SKILS	October 7-18	ANC
13	Strengthening Families™ AK, Training of Trainers	October 8-9	FBX
14	162 SKILS	October 14-24	ANC
15	Strengthening Families™ AK, Training of Trainers	October 15-16	JNU
16	285 CPI Training	October 17	ANC
17	Strengthening Families™ AK, Training of Trainers	October 22-23	ANC
18	Understanding the Forensic Interview	October 30-November 1	NOME
19	Response to Child Abuse for First Responders	October 29	NOME
20	161 SKILS	November 4-15	ANC
21	229 ICWA II	November 18-19	ANC
22	114 Licensing	November 19-22	ANC
23	285 CPI Training	November 22	ANC
24	Strengthening Families™ AK, Training of Trainers	December 2-3	ANC
25	140 SSA Training	December 2-6	ANC
26	285 CPI Training	December 6	ANC
27	235 KWYA	January 9-10	ANC
28	161 SKILS	January 13-24	ANC
29	163 SKILS	January 27-31	ANC
30	235 KWYA	February 5-6	ANC

NO	EVENT	DATES	LOCATION
31	161 SKILS	February 10-21	ANC
32	Strengthening Families™ AK	February 11-12	ANC
33	162 SKILS	February 17-28	ANC
34	285 CPI Training	February 20	ANC
35	NRO In-Region Training	Mar 2-3	FBX
36	NRO In-Region Training	Mar 5-6	FBX
37	NRO In-Region Training for Supervisors	Mar 4	FBX
38	161 SKILS	April 6-17	Zoom
39	162 SKILS	April 13-24	Zoom
40	161 SKILS	May 4-15	Zoom
41	229 ICWA II	May 18-19	Zoom
42	SCRO In-Region Training	May 18-19	Zoom
43	SCRO In-Region Training for Supervisors	May 20	Zoom
44	SCRO In-Region Training	May 21-22	Zoom
45	163 SKILS	May 18-22	Zoom
46	Strengthening Families™ AK	June 2-3	Zoom
47	SERO In-Region Training	June 8-9	Zoom
48	SERO In-Region Training for Supervisors	June 10	Zoom
49	SERO In-Region Training	June 11-12	Zoom
50	Strengthening Families™ AK	June 16-17	Zoom
51	WRO In-Region Training	June 22-23	Zoom
52	Strengthening Families™ AK	June 25-26	Zoom
53	WRO In-Region Training	June 29-30	Zoom

NO	WEBINAR TOPICS	DATES
1	Untangling the Mystery of Case Plan Goal Writing	October 29, 31, & November 26
2	Centralized Intake 2020 Update	February 25
3	How to Use Personal Protective Equipment	March 26, 27, & 30
4	Engaging Fathers in Alaska Child Welfare	June 17 & 25

Standards, Knowledge, and Insight Leading to Success (SKILS)

SKILS 161. The first two weeks of training focuses on practice model basics. The first week covers Investigation and Assessment (I & A) and the second week moves into Family Services (FS) essentials. ORCA training is incorporated throughout the training to connect to the online ORCA Help Desk training participants receive prior to SKILS 161. Trainers demonstrate the steps in ORCA utilizing a mock case in Narcissus throughout SKILS 161 and participants practice documentation skills in the classroom. Trainers then provide feedback on the documentation. Training on individual and family culture, ICWA, trauma informed care, active and reasonable efforts, agency protocol, and the practice model is emphasized throughout the training.

Week One begins with an introduction to the agency and its Mission, Vision, and Values. Participants discuss how their bias can impact decision making and how to manage that. They also learn evidence-based child interviewing techniques and put that into practice in a simulated child interview. Trainers provide feedback for the participants in order to strengthen their critical thinking and interviewing skills. Trainers discuss environmental awareness and the importance of preparation for an investigation and interviews. Participants spend time reviewing initial contact and agency protocol for information gathering. Participants analyze the mock case to assess for present danger and how to create a realistic safety plan. Emphasis is placed on determining if an alternate caregiver can and will protect the children. Participants then practice interviewing the parents in a simulated interview in the next step of their investigation and assessment. Trainers provide feedback for this interview as well with the focus being on information gathering. CWA incorporated an emphasis on Protective Factors in I & A and how that information helps participants conduct accurate safety assessments. Additional activities were added to support participants in understanding and articulating unsafe behaviors for impending danger and to articulate how a safety threat crosses the threshold for impending danger. Participants learn to utilize agency tools along with their assessments and investigations to determine if maltreatment has occurred and the impact on the child. Participants complete activities to help them understand the Maltreatment Assessment Protocol and the Future Risk of Abuse and Neglect, then they complete the I & A documentation for ORCA and trainers provide feedback on the documentation. Trainers provide instruction on the importance of understanding the safety threats during case transfer and how that information impacts the agency's ability to move forward with a family in a timely and accurate manner.

Week Two begins with a focus on the FS Assessment model and family engagement. Participants learn about alternate planning, interviewing for change, stages of change, and how to utilize motivational interviewing to help a parent move through the stages of change. The previous focus in week one on understanding and articulating unsafe behaviors is then used to train participants to create case plan goals with parents that directly impact the unsafe behaviors. Participants practice writing goals based on the unsafe behaviors and then with the trainer's assistance, they critically analyze their goals.

Participants then learn how the activities on the case plan increase a parent's protective factors to mitigate the safety threat. Afterwards, they conduct a simulated case planning interview with a parent and create a case plan with the parent. Trainers provide feedback during and after the interview to assist in developing the interviewing and critical thinking skills for participants. The actors also provide feedback to the participant about how it felt to be the parent during the interview. This helps participants understand the impact of their interviewing style and skills. Participants receive feedback on their completed case plans. Participants then learn about trauma informed case plans for parents and children. Participants practice creating children's case plans. Participants learn how to conduct case worker visits with parents, children, and placement providers as well as how to objectively document those visits. Trainers provide feedback on the documentation and provide examples of documentation for participants. Participants then learn how to complete a case plan evaluation and practice this for the mock family. Trainers provide instruction on evaluating when to start a trial home visit and participants learn how to analyze for a trial home visit and how to monitor a trial home visit. Participants receive one full day of legal training for new caseworkers that encompasses I & A as well as FS.

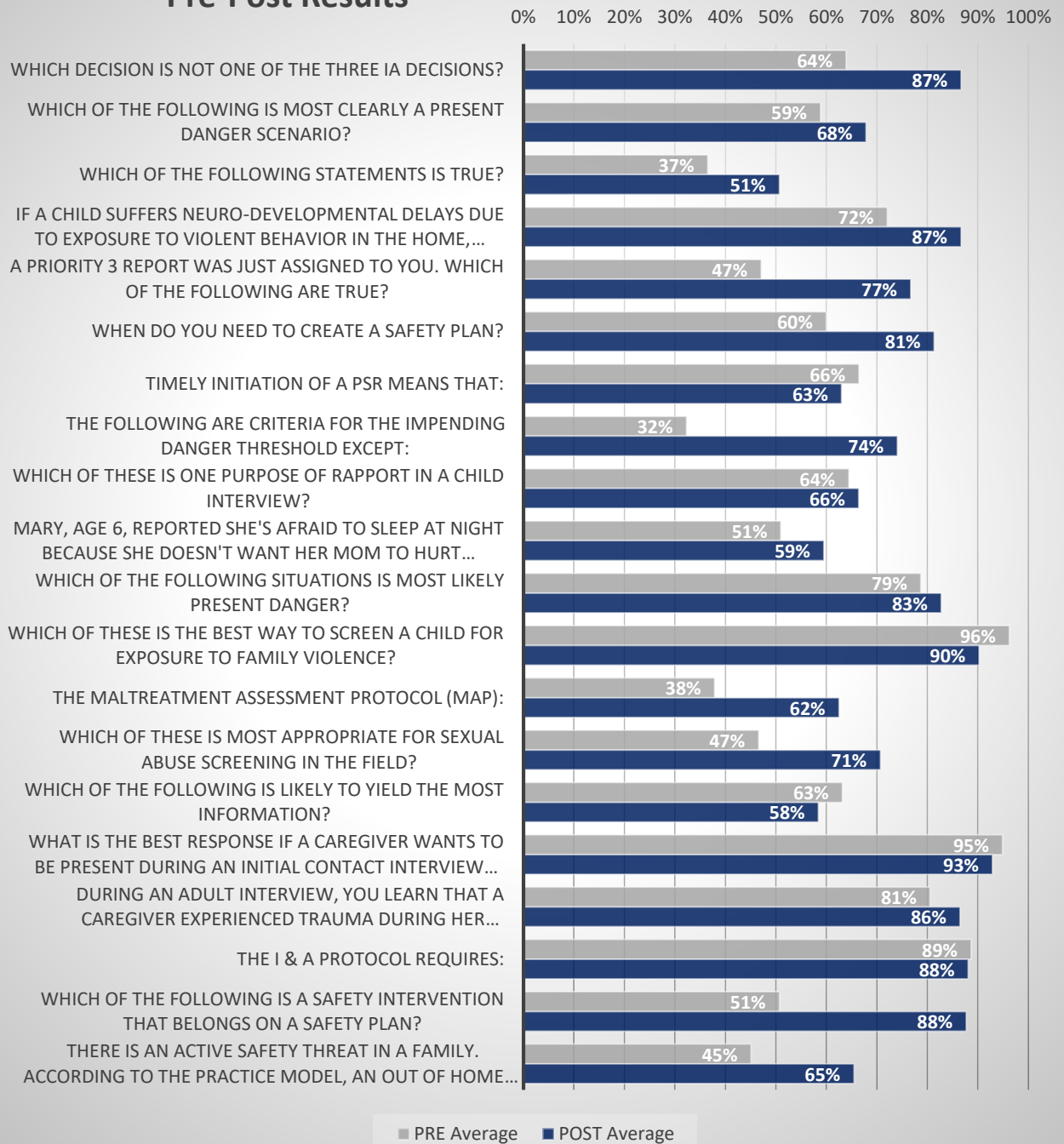
In March 2020, SKILS training was transformed to online learning through Zoom due to COVID-19. Participants received training materials in the mail and electronically. Activities and training were modified to include asynchronous training to engage participants while maintaining integrity to the practice model training. Trainers utilized a variety of techniques to train and engage participants including live meetings, break out rooms, polls, and other activities. All documentation was submitted electronically, and trainers provided feedback to participants on their documentation.

Sampling of SKILS 161 participant feedback:

- *The training was very good. Specific and orderly, open questions. Lots of examples.*
- *The content gave detailed information and scenarios that helped with real world applications; being able to practice these techniques helped with learning.*
- *It put into perspective job duties and how to prepare for cases as well as what information is needed.*
- *I liked that we are following a case from IA to FS. Showing the steps & working a case is very helpful.*
- *It specifically laid out and walked us through the entire process. We were educated on where to go to find information/protocol. It brought forth critical thinking, questioning & discussion, providing deeper understanding.*
- *I think the role playing is great; I got to learn what to expect. This Zoom class is different for everyone and I think our instructors had a great voice on explaining each subject.*

Here are pre- and post-test results for SKILS 161 to measure caseworkers' knowledge before SKILS. The data is useful for evaluating curriculum and identifying areas for monitoring and reinforcement by the mentors as they begin their work with each cohort. Recently, this evaluation tool was updated at the request of OCS and following I & A and FS assessment charts show the results.

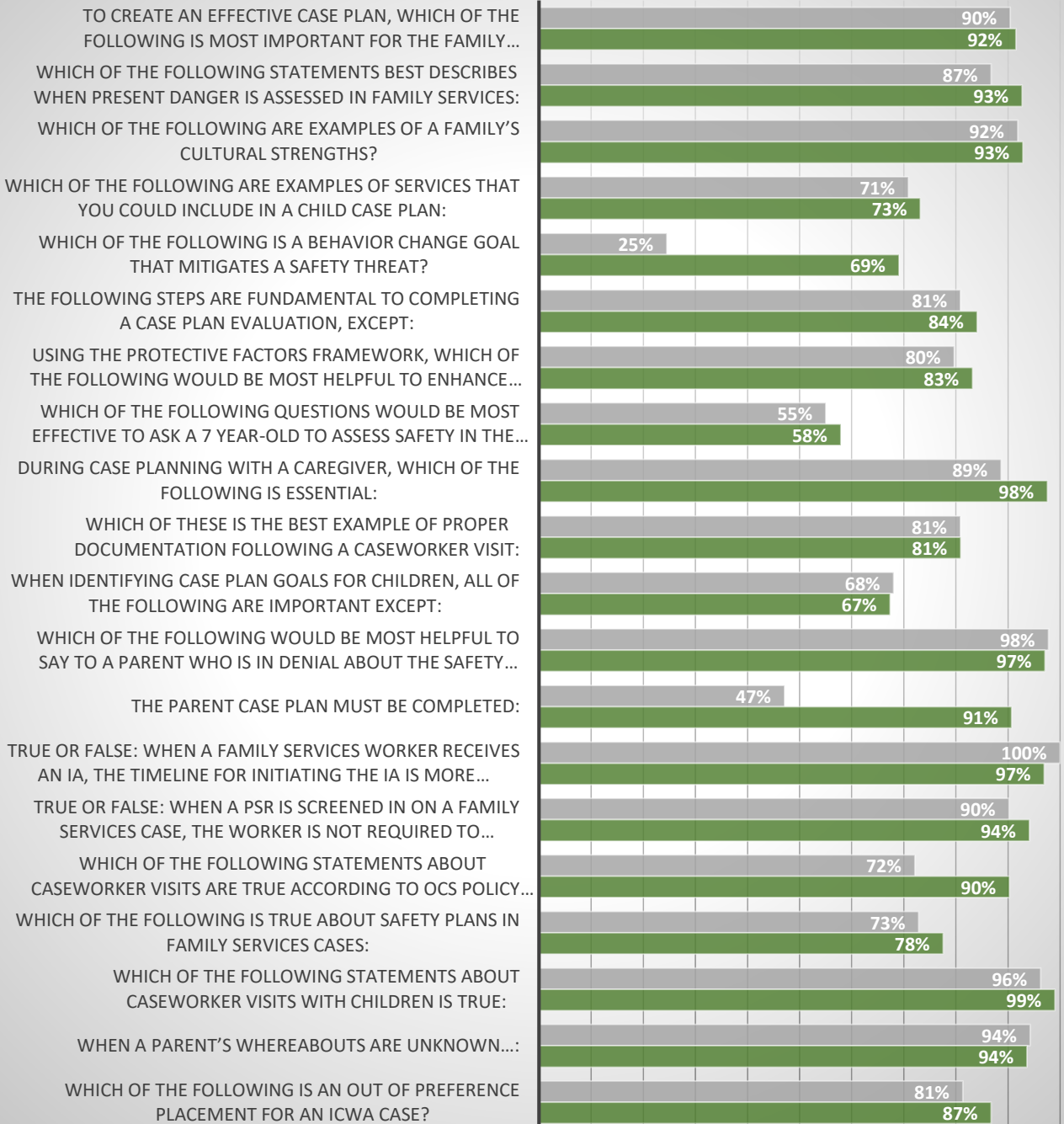
SKILS 161 - Week 1 Pre-Post Results



SKILS 161 - Week 2

Pre-Post Results

0% 10% 20% 30% 40% 50% 60% 70% 80% 90% 100%



■ PRE Average ■ POST Average

SKILS 162 is two weeks of core training for front line caseworkers within their first year of hire with OCS. This training takes place four times per year. For this reporting period, the April 2020 was held online via Zoom due to the Coronavirus outbreak. Prerequisites for both in-person and online 162 were completion of SKILS 161, learning modules in the Blended Learning Community (BLC) titled “Intersession A” and time in the field as a case-carrying worker supported by supervisory coaching and mentorship. The time in the field is an important foundation upon which SKILS 162 builds, with specialized topics such as Trauma Informed Care, Substance Use Disorders, Mental Health, ICWA I, Permanency, Worker Safety, Resiliency, and Domestic Violence. Beginning in February 2020, caseworkers also received training on the Identification of Child Abuse and Neglect and Evidence Collection and Corroboration. Additionally, in separate workshops, Family Service Workers focused on Alternate Planning and Investigation & Assessment focused on the Maltreatment Assessment Protocol (MAP). Beginning in April 2020, caseworkers had a day to review the Practice Model which seeks to strengthen practice through application with increasingly advanced scenarios. During this training, CWA hosted a Foster Parent Panel, Youth Panel, and ICWA Panel. This provided participants with the opportunity to learn about the experiences of panel members and to reflect on the implications of their practice in the lives of children, families, and Tribes.

Sampling of SKILS 162 participant feedback:

- *It made me more aware of my own biases, it taught me how to correctly pair trauma victims with the right type of people to help. It taught me to be more of an advocate for my families, especially my AN & AI families.*
- *The content is really informative and class discussion helps get questions answered*
- *In this training we learned about really heavy topics. I think receiving this training via ZOOM felt difficult in some ways. I do feel that it would have been helpful to have the interpersonal learning experience with our peers and trainers in person.*
- *I was able to learn more about family services and my role as a FS worker.*
- *The breakout rooms were helpful. It made it more personalized. It broke up the lectures. Helped keep my attention.*
- *It was helpful information. Built on what we learned at 161.*

SKILS 163 is a fifth week of training provided in January 2020 in-person, and then online in May 2020. Some of the topics that were covered in this training included reflections and critical thinking in the field, cultural humility, ethics and advocacy, working with LGBTQ youth, continuous quality improvement, resilience and additional legal training. In addition, protective services specialists completed training on Blackboard that covered topics on FASD and human trafficking. The hope for this aspect of training was for frontline staff to receive more in-depth knowledge on various aspects of child protection as they gain more work experience in the field.

Alaska Blanket Exercise (ABE) was included as part of SKILS 163 to increase awareness of historical events as well as the strengths of Alaska Native people to recognize and reconcile the impacts of historical trauma. ABE was adapted from the KAIROS Blanket Exercise created in Canada in 1997 after the Canadian government recognized the severity of social issues that indigenous people were facing as a result of the broken trust and relationship. The ABE is a participatory history lesson – developed in collaboration with Alaska Native Elders, knowledge keepers and educators – that fosters truth, understanding, respect, and reconciliation among Indigenous and non-indigenous peoples. Through an experiential learning activity, participants walk on blankets representing the land and into the role of Alaska Native people by reading scrolls and carrying cards that determine their outcome as they literally “walk” through situations that include pre-contact, colonization and resistance. As part of the exercise, caseworkers participate in a Talking Circle to share their experience of the ABE and discuss hopes moving forward working with Alaska Native children and families. Due to the necessity of training going virtual, the ABE was not offered during 163 in May.

House Bill 151 made it possible to create additional training opportunities that took place in the form of online webinars and in-region training. The In-Region training was developed with OCS managers and supervisors to meet the specific needs of staff. One topic requested by all was on signs of child neglect, drug endangerment, physical abuse, and sexual abuse, which was delivered by Alaska’s medical expert, Dr. Cathy Baldwin-Johnson. In coordination with this training, Carla Erickson with the Attorney General’s Office provided legal training that discussed the importance of investigative evidence collection, corroboration and what is defensible in court. This training was provided 11 times to not just educate new workers, but to deliver this to all PSS staff. Additional In-Region training provided, depending on the request, were: safety assessments with non-verbal children, child development, thorough safety assessments, identification of safety threats, critical thinking, articulating parent’s unsafe behaviors, incorporating protective factors in case plans and safety plans, behavior-based goal writing, and effective safety planning. There were 11 days of training delivered with these topics. To assist PSS’s with transferring this new knowledge to the field, CWA worked with supervisors in the regions specific to their staff. CWA received positive feedback for making the training specific to regional needs.

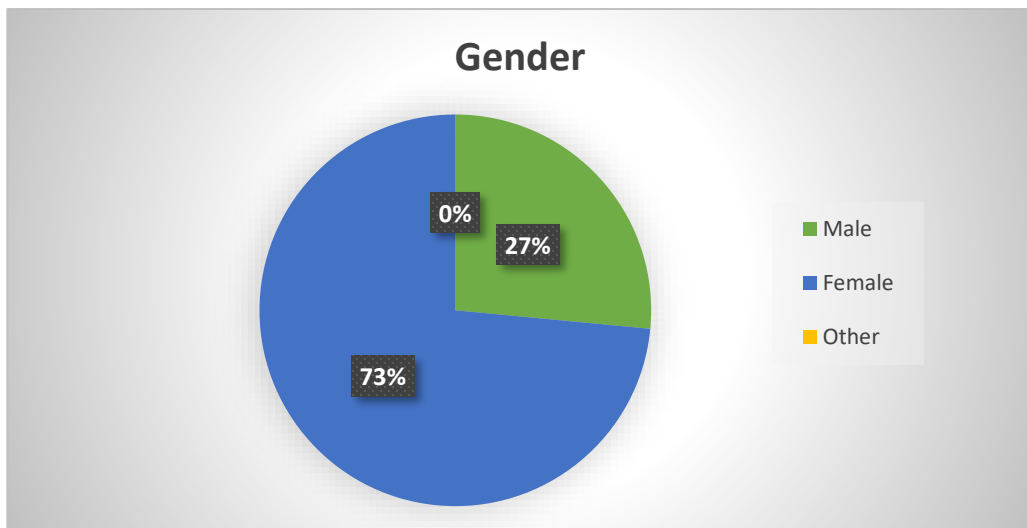
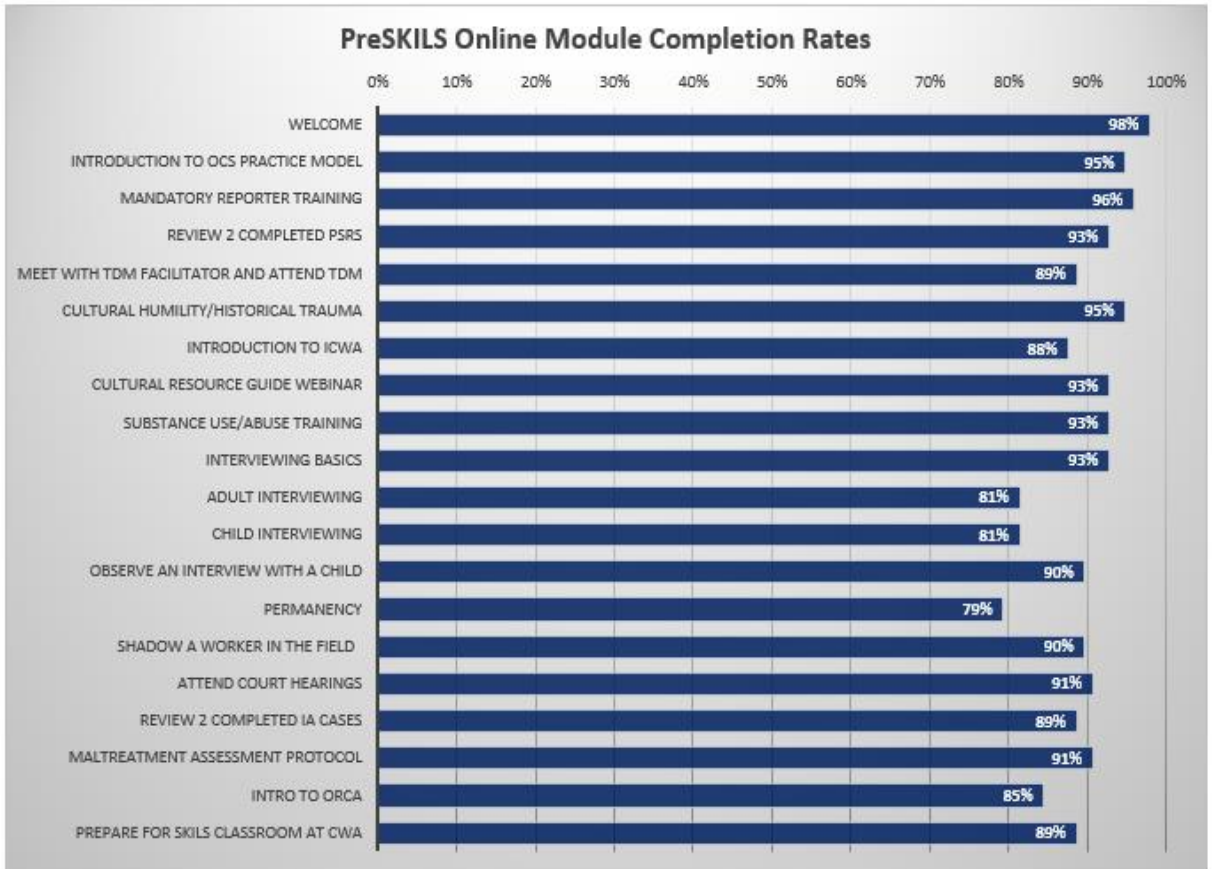
Although all this training was scheduled to be in person in the regions, the Northern Region was the only region delivered in person due to the pandemic. The other regions received their training via distance delivery on the Zoom platform.

Additional online shorter training were developed and will continue to be implemented, covering topics on case planning, father engagement, screening for all types of abuse, utilizing protective factors in investigations, working with incarcerated parents, and working with involuntary clients.

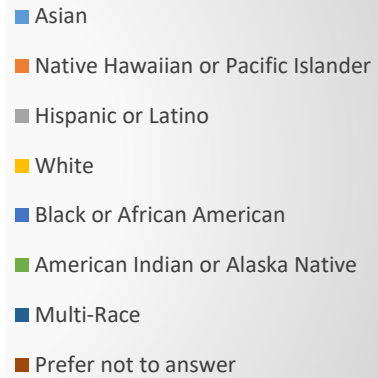
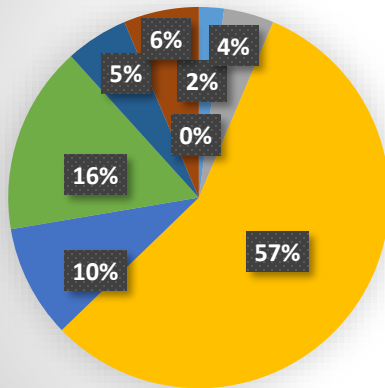
Sampling of SKILS 163 participant feedback:

- *I feel like I have more knowledge than I did when I started. There is a steep learning curve to this job. It's difficult and everyone knows that.*
- *It will help me do better quality work knowing what quality assurance is looking for.*
- *Going over the review, all the discussion on how we can go about things was interesting and helpful.*
- *CQI & QA-reasoning behind it and solutions for problems were helpful to understand.*
- *I was more comfortable and better able to focus without the distraction of other people in the room. I popped in the headphones and was able to really concentrate on the material.*
- *It was very hard for me to concentrate on doing E Learning. After being at skills in person and then doing a round of distance learning, I definitely like the in person skills. It's hard to sit in front of the computer all day. I miss the camaraderie of my peers and talking to them outside of class as well.*

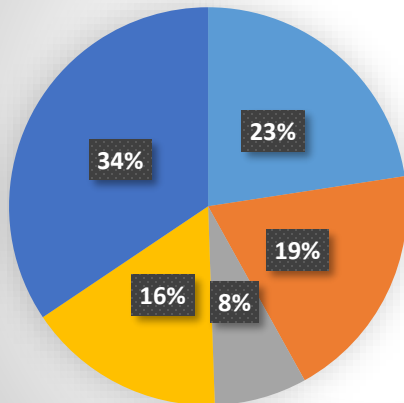
Online Module & Demographic Information. New workers are required to come to SKILS having taken 20 online modules in the BLC. In April, total modules were revised to 17. The following charts indicate each module's completion rate along with workers' demographic information. Demographic percentages are based on attendees who completed the survey.



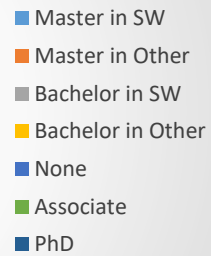
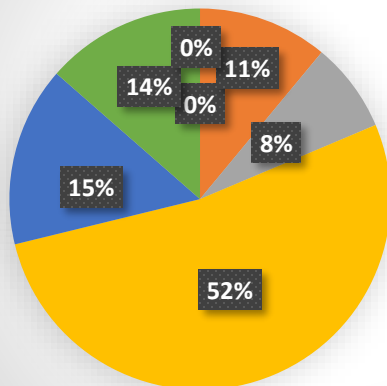
Ethnicity



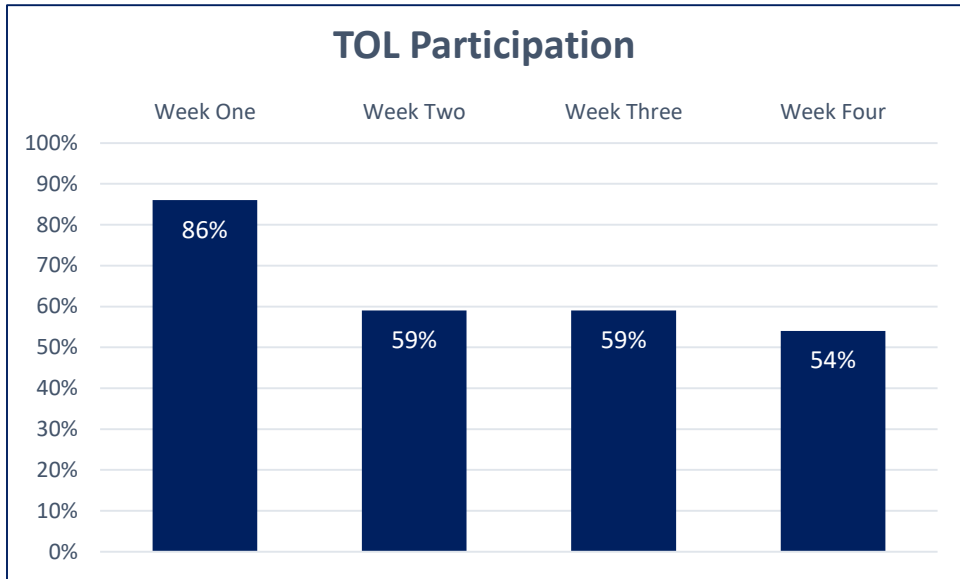
Alaska Residency



Education



SKILS Transfer of Learning Calls (TOL). In partnership with CWA, the OCS mentors provided weekly TOL calls the month after new workers completed SKILS from July 2019 to February 2020. These calls supported the transfer of knowledge gained in the classroom to practical application in the field.



Crisis Prevention Intervention (CPI). This module is part of the worker safety taught in SKILS. Below are the workers' responses using the program-specific evaluation and feedback.

Please rate the following areas:	Strongly Disagree ← → Strongly Agree					Total
	1	2	3	4	5	
Use nonverbal techniques to prevent acting-out behavior	0%	0%	5%	31%	64%	100%
Implement verbal de-escalation strategies, such as limit setting	0%	0%	1%	36%	63%	100%
Make use of CPI's Principles of Personal Safety to avoid injury to all involved in a crisis situation	0%	0%	8%	29%	63%	100%
Use safe physical intervention procedures as a last resort when a person is a danger to self or others	0%	0%	3%	33%	64%	100%
Build Therapeutic Rapport with acting-out individuals after a crisis is over	0%	0%	8%	32%	59%	100%
Applied the course content to a variety of examples	0%	0%	3%	21%	76%	100%
Stimulated interest in the subject matter	0%	0%	1%	31%	68%	100%
Created an enjoyable learning atmosphere	0%	0%	3%	27%	71%	100%
Emphasized the philosophy of Care, Welfare, Safety, and Security SM	0%	0%	1%	24%	75%	100%
The program content was relevant to my needs	0%	0%	8%	36%	56%	100%
Rate the overall program	0%	0%	3%	34%	64%	100%

- See how this material applies to what OCS does
- Feel safer & more prepared to respond in crisis situations
- Learned methods of crisis interventions; this will help me in my current position dealing with parents and children in a high stress environment
- Learned a lot better ways of handling different situations with all parents
- Have tools I can use in the field; work & real life
- Can deescalate an agitated person in the hopes of avoiding physical confrontation
- Can be more aware of possible threats
- Could have been longer
- Great job, thank you for instructing class in a comfortable way
- More of the hands on portion if anything, thanks
- Would like more examples that have direct relation to our work as an SSA during family contact
- Regular refresher may be helpful rather than waiting 5 years for new classes
- This was a very quick version, lots of info in a short time; good overall

While this fiscal year has presented its share of challenges, doors to new opportunities opened and were in fact strengthened. Early in the fiscal year, CWA continued to find ways to develop and offer eLearning training. CWA has been working to replace older versions of online training using their new authoring tool Storyline. Several of the modules used in worker training have been converted over to this newer format which allows interactive elements such as drag and drops activities and knowledge checks which offer immediate feedback to the learner.

With the transition in the last quarter of FY20 from in-person training to virtual training due to the effects of COVID, the opportunity to develop and offer training in an e-Learning format have never been more evident. CWA continues to develop and offer effective virtual training to meet the diverse needs of the child welfare workforce.



Licensing

This fiscal year brought Licensing workers to CWA for training specific to their needs for the first time. CWA trainers developed a four-day training about the OCS practice model and what Licensing workers need to know about working with and supporting Protective Services Specialists (PSSs) on child protection cases. Topics on the first day included an overview of the OCS Practice model and content on information collection, identifying present and impending danger, safety planning and permanency planning. Day two included skills-based training on child interviewing and facilitating communication during safety assessment and quality contacts. The first half of day three focused on supporting resource families and identifying protective factors and recognizing cultural beliefs and practices; the second half focused on the importance of family engagement and customer service skills in their roles. The final half day of the training covered worker safety and the Non-violent Crisis Intervention model- CPI.



During this reporting period, Supervisor Training was scheduled for December 2019 and May 2020. There was a decision to postpone the December training until March as there were only two new supervisors.

In March, Supervisor Training was postponed due to the COVID-19 pandemic. This training was rescheduled for July and September of the next fiscal year to be delivered virtually.

CWA offers coaching to specified OCS supervisors and managers. Coaches work with individuals to help them gain self-awareness, clarify goals, achieve goals, and develop their leadership abilities.

CWA can provide a thorough assessment of leader's skills and talents through an objective 360 Leadership assessment. With the 360 Leadership assessment, a leader receives feedback from all stakeholders who work with them – supervisors, colleagues, peers - which gives an all-around perspective to assist in understanding a leader's skills based on specific areas of competency such as; strengths, areas of improvement, communication, problem solving, effectiveness in motivating others, and inclusiveness.

The coaches partner with leaders to gain benefits such as heightening their self-awareness, improving self-regulation, increasing motivation, enhancing the quality of their leadership and identifying professional and personal strengths and areas of growth.

Through this partnership coaches can collaborate with leaders to clarify and own their goals and create clarity about the goals of the organization and what success looks like for them as well as the organization. The coach challenges leaders to develop strategies to maximize their success by facilitating a learning process that focuses on direct application.

CWA has provided coaching to a group of OCS leaders and one OCS leader has participated in a 360 Leadership assessment and received individual coaching.



CWA delivered SSA training in December 2019. This training was previously extended to incorporate more in-depth training around the Protective Factor Framework, Family Engagement, Culture, and Trauma Informed Care. Participants explore their own biases and how that may impact the work they do with families and how to foster empathy for families. Participants spent time learning about topics such as the OCS Practice Model, family contact, child functioning, and worker safety. The participants incorporated information from their work experiences to enrich the learning environment especially around discussions about how trauma affects family contact and child behavior. Participants learned and practiced strategies to respond to difficult behaviors during family contact. Through hands-on activities, lecture, role-play, and group discussion, participants gained a better understanding of their role within the agency and best practices around working with children and families.

SSA Training Feedback

Please rate the Training in the following areas:					
	1	2	3	4	5
How would you rate the importance of the topics covered in class to your job?	0%	0%	0%	20%	80%
Overall, what was your level of satisfaction with the sessions?	0%	0%	0%	20%	80%
Rate your level of confidence in applying what you learned to your job.	0%	9%	0%	20%	80%

Sampling of participant feedback on aspects that were helpful in class:

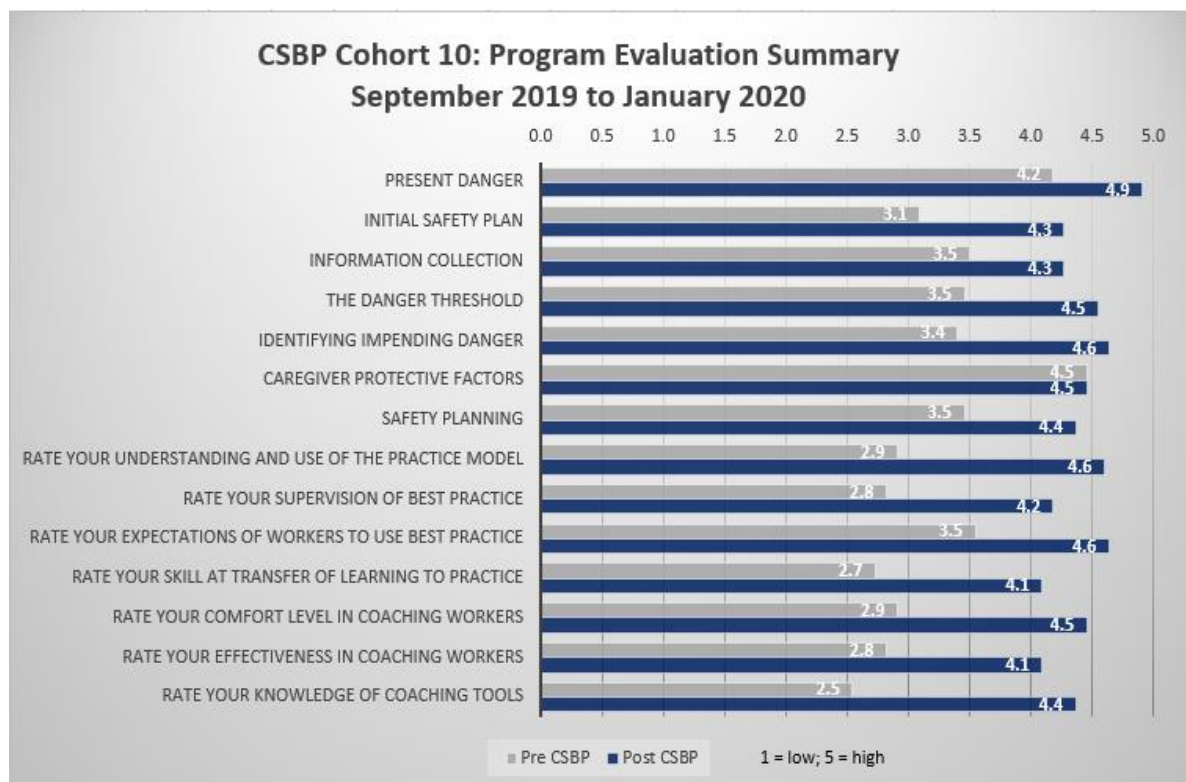
- *Great emphasis on how important it is for SSA's to be diligent in their work and their families*
- *Self-safety, take care of ourselves, breathe*
- *All of it*

Coaching Supervisors to Best Practice (CSBP)

The CSBP is a comprehensive training curriculum focused on building competency and confidence in supervisors managing front line workers in best practice with families to improve federal outcomes and emphasize on transfer of learning with their staff. It is an 18-week program that uses development methods such as classroom training, readings, assignments, webinars, and weekly one-hour coaching focused on the assigned practice model topic.

Cohort 10 was completed in this reporting period with 11 supervisors; this was the largest group for CSBP to date. In order to accommodate all the supervisors in the program, each coach was assigned two supervisors and coaching was provided every two weeks instead of one. The feedback from the coaches was meeting with their assigned supervisors every other week did not allow for the type of connection and deeper dive into topics as when weekly meetings were held.

Here is a rating chart showing significant self-reported increase in practice model knowledge.



Cohort 11 was scheduled to begin in March 2020, but was postponed until May due to the COVID 19 pandemic. The in-person modules were modified to allow participants to attend virtually from their offices/homes. Cohort 11 consists of veteran supervisors, TDM facilitators QA staff, and Licensing supervisors.

Indian Child Welfare Act (ICWA) Training

ICWA I has continued being offered during SKILS 162. The full day of training is co-taught by a CWA trainer and the OCS Statewide Coordinator, Casey Groat. With the recent transition to virtual training, we have been able to work in time for each of the five OCS Regional ICWA Specialists to call in and meet workers. In addition to learning about the ICWA and best practice, participants hear from a panel of Tribal representatives currently working in the field. The panel, ranging from 2 to 4 participants, offers new workers tips and advice in collaborating with Tribes on ICWA cases.



SKILS participants listen as Jackie Levi-Thompson (AVCP), Sheila Randazzo (Kawerak), and Tasha Yatchmeneff (OCS) share about working with Tribes in ICWA cases. (April 2019)

Here is an average rating chart based on 22 participants who submitted evaluations:

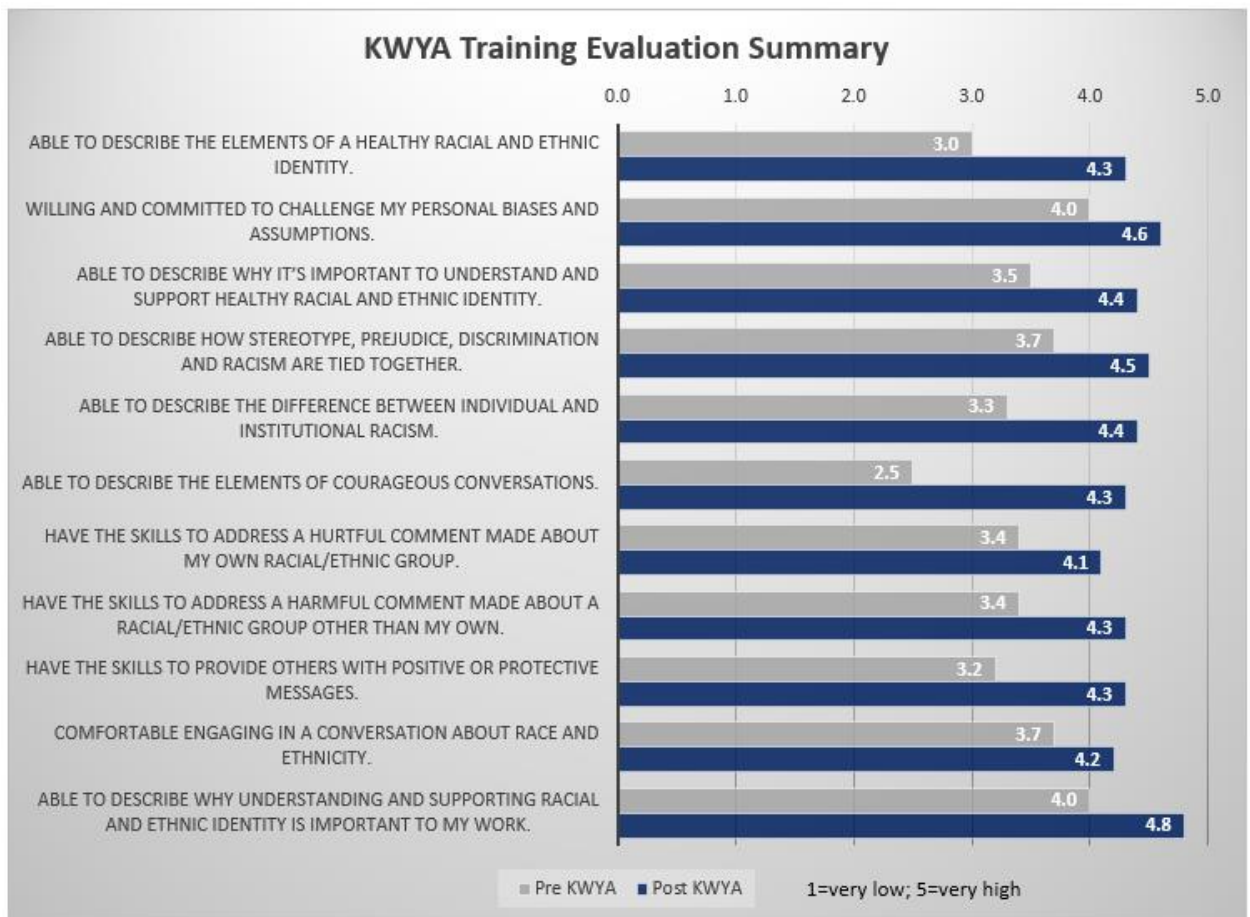
Please rate the Training in the following areas:	Low ← High				
	1	2	3	4	5
Rate your understanding of the topics covered in this two-day class.	0%	0%	5%	32%	64%
The learning activities helped prepare me to do my job.	5%	5%	18%	36%	36%
Rate your initial ability to apply what you learned in this two-day class to your job.	0%	5%	18%	41%	36%

ICWA II has continued to be offered at the regional level. This gives workers an opportunity to spend two full days in ICWA-specific training facilitated by their Regional ICWA Specialist and a Tribal partner. This dual facilitation allows workers to see the various ways the State and Tribes collaborate. With the change in our method of delivery of training, the Southeast Regional Office (SERO) has taken steps to offer this training virtually. Other regions will be doing the same in the upcoming fiscal year. CWA would like to thank Jeri Museth and wish her well in her retirement as the SERO Regional ICWA Specialist.

Knowing Who You Are (KWYA) Workshops

KWYA continues to be a pertinent training where workers from OCS, Tribes and community partners learn about the importance of promoting a healthy racial and ethnic identity amongst themselves and the children and youth they work with. This workshop allows participants to share and learn from each other about everyday experiences of bias, stereotypes, prejudice, discrimination, and racism. Participants are encouraged to develop self-awareness of their interactions and offered tools and strategies for addressing racism. Based on feedback over the years, the KWYA Steering Committee (Casey Groat, OCS; Valerie Dudley, CWA; Rachel Hanft, ACRF; Crystal Nixon-Luckhurst, BBNC; Amelia Rivera, OCS; and Frana Burtness-Adams, private) has modified the curriculum to include a definition of institutional racism. With our new reality of limited in person training, the Steering Committee is currently considering how this two-day workshop can be offered virtually in a successful and effective way.

Here is an average rating chart based on those who submitted evaluations:



Strengthening Families™ Alaska (SFA)

Strengthening Families Alaska had another great year. More and more stakeholders from all across the state requested training. Although the training had to be redesigned for virtual delivery in the spring due to COVID-19, 145 people successfully attended SFA training this fiscal year. The Office of Children’s Services staff became more interested in attending the full version of SFA even after they had attended it in SKILS, their core training upon hire. There are 51 people from many various disciplines are on a waiting list to attend beginning the new fiscal year. To date – 1,066 people have attended training since CWA started receiving specific Strengthening Families funding in FY12. Here is a graph for ratings for knowledge learned before and after SFA training in FY20.



The biggest development this fiscal year came in the request and funding from the Department of Education and Early Development to develop an Alaska version of the SFA curriculum and hold training of the trainer sessions. The new curriculum was completed in December 2019. This curriculum has replaced the universal training from the Children’s Trust Fund Alliance that had been previously used. Four sessions of the training of the trainers happened after the Alaska curriculum was completed. Two sessions in Anchorage, one session in Juneau and one session in Fairbanks for a total of 57 new SFA trainers within Alaska. The new trainers agreed the new curriculum works well in Alaska as it draws out the diverse communities within our state. The statewide trainers have not yet completed much training due to COVID-19 turning everything upside down. The bulk of the training completed this fiscal year has been delivered by the CWA.

After the number of protective service reports to OCS severely decreased given COVID-19, a community conversation began about whether children may be unsafe in their homes. CWA was a part of work group to brainstorm ideas and it was decided that CWA would help develop Public Service Announcements focused on getting the message out to parents about strengthening their protective factors. Specifically, to ask for help if needed and to maintain social connections during this very stressful and unknown days. Between the PSAs on TV and social media, thousands of people were reached. While we cannot measure what child maltreatment may have been alleviated, we can be proud of the effort and the reach.

With the support of OCS, CWA continues its work with Multidisciplinary Teams and Child Advocacy Centers across the State to provide training and technical assistance. During the past year, CWA completed following:

- Consultation to MDTs and their partner agencies on an ongoing basis. Examples of these include problem solving issues that arise within an MDT, advising CACS on program issues, reviewing forensic interviews, and advising MDT partners on credibility and testifying at Administrative hearings about substantiation of maltreatment on sexual abuse cases.
- Member on the planning committee and the forensic interviewing sub-committee for the 2020 Statewide Child Maltreatment Conference, to be held in December. Meetings are every 3-4 weeks.
- Technical assistance to develop Sitka CAC. Some of this work done via distance and a two-day, in-person training on May 5-6, partnering with an assistant district attorney. The focus was on writing protocols to assist the CAC and the Team process and procedures, ensuring the National Standards for Accreditation were considered and incorporated.
- Outreach and information were provided to Ketchikan community on how to proceed with the development of a CAC.
- Collaboration with UAA College of Health to explore the option of adding Child Advocacy Studies (CAST) to its educational offerings. Zoom meetings were held and an informational session with Victor Veith, from the Zero Abuse Project. Approximately 30 people from the University and the community attended.
- Face-to-face training with the CAC/MDT and other community members in Nome, Alaska, on historical trauma utilizing the Alaska Blanket Exercise. The Alaska Blanket Exercise is a participatory history lesson—developed in collaboration with Alaska Native Elders, knowledge keepers and educators—that fosters truth, understanding, respect, and reconciliation among Indigenous and non-indigenous peoples. Through an experiential learning activity, participants walk on blankets representing the land and into the role of Alaska Native people by reading scrolls and carrying cards that determine their outcome as they literally “walk” through situations that include pre-contact, colonization and resistance. After the exercise, Talking Circles are held to share the experience of the ABE and discuss our hopes moving forward.
- Discussions with the Federal Government representatives regarding funding being allocated to assist in responses to victimization in rural Alaska.
- Revisions of the Mandatory Reporting Training for the State of Alaska.
- Collaboration with the Children’s Justice Act Task Force to update the MDT Guidelines project. Two CWA staff members are working on this project.
- Organization and facilitation of a virtual grantee meeting in May 2020 with the Alaska Children’s Alliance using Zoom. Two CWA staff members provided training and facilitation. Topics included secondary traumatic stress and how CAC Directors can assist their MDTs and staff to address and prevent and OCS referrals discussion with Kim Guay, Deputy Director of OCS.
- Collaboration with the Alaska Children’s Alliance to provide training and technical assistance. The Coordination of the ACA and CWA are in contact regularly.

ChildFirst™ Alaska is a nationally recognized protocol supported by current research and guided by best practice in the field of forensic interviewing. The Multidisciplinary Team is key to the success of this protocol, through its role in ensuring the best interest of the child is paramount. The core purpose of ChildFirst™ Alaska is to provide training to help ensure legally defensible, non-traumatic child forensic interviews for both rural and urban Alaska. The establishment and maintenance of ChildFirst™ Alaska takes a great deal of partnership and teaming with many organizations that work towards responding and preventing child maltreatment. This starts at the community level with Multidisciplinary Teams (MDTs) and is a joint effort with OCS, CWA, Alaska Children's Alliance, the State of Alaska Department of Public Safety, the State of Alaska Department of Law, Child Advocacy Center (CAC) Staff, and Multidisciplinary Team Members. CWA is also a member of the Leadership Team and had two certified ChildFirst™ Alaska trainers although during this fiscal year, CWA lost one trainer.

During this fiscal year, CWA completed the following projects:

- Coordination and documentation of quarterly meetings for the Leadership Team.
- Quarterly calls with other ChildFirst™ states across the country to work collaboratively on integration of emerging research and needs of the field into curriculum updates. Pursuant to these meetings, CWA was responsible for making the resulting changes to the Alaskan curriculum.
- Coordination and training of one three-day training called Understanding the Forensic Interview. This training is designed specifically for MDT members who will be observing forensic interviews. The purpose is to ensure understanding of the importance, components, and "flow" of forensic interviewing. This training is also for OCS workers who work in Family Services and may benefit from familiarization with child interview theory and basic techniques, but who do not need to conduct forensic interviews in the course of their work. This training was provided in Nome Alaska and 12 people attended. One other three-day training was scheduled but cancelled due to lack of registrations.
- Curriculum was developed for a one-day training for first responders (Tribal police and other emergency responders) on how to work with child abuse victims. This training was held in Nome, Alaska, with six Village Public Safety Officers in attendance from outlying villages as well as other first responders from Nome.
- A day long in-person strategic planning meeting was held for the Leadership Team and Trainers of ChildFirst™ Alaska.
- Coordination and training of One ChildFirst™ Alaska training was held in Anchorage during the fall where 33 learners attended. A second training with 30 registrants was scheduled when the COVID-19 pandemic reached Alaska and had to be cancelled.
- Coordination with Zero Abuse Project, the National ChildFirst™ organization, to work towards holding training during the pandemic. Three Alaska forensic interviewers attended the first ChildFirst™ Virtual training facilitated by Zero Abuse Project staff.

Rock Mat-Su/OCS Building Community Connections. CWA was invited to provide an interactive presentation and discussion at the Building Community Connections Workshop for OCS Mat-Su. The focus of the half day event was on self-care and maintaining boundaries for people who work for OCS. On September 25th, two CWA trainers presented a facilitated conversation and activity on self-compassion for OCS. This presentation was delivered twice to accommodate all staff attendance. There were approximately 60 staff members who attended.

Response to COVID-19. CWA attended several national webinars and then put together two webinars for supervisors and managers. The first webinar was Supervising Remotely Amid COVID that included several strategies for how to develop and maintain teams while working from home. The second was Family Engagement that presented lots of techniques and ideas for engaging families through virtual means. Both webinars were well attended with 50+ participants.

Cassie Frost is the newest trainer on the Child Welfare Academy team. Her professional background includes five years as a Case Manager II with AK Child & Family, seven years as a Family Services Manager with Camp Fire Alaska, and a small time as an Advocate with Victims for Justice. Through these experiences she has developed a strong passion for strengths-based and trauma informed practice in youth and family work. She loves to share this passion with others through community education and outreach. Her training background includes: Strengthening Families/ Families Thrive, Youth Mental Health First Aid, Weikart Center: Youth Works Method, and AYDC: Second Order Change.

Cassie received her undergraduate degree in Psychology and is finishing the MSW program, both from UAA. Cassie enjoys spending time with her husband, daughter, and two dogs while taking walks, working in the garden, and enjoying the great Alaskan outdoors.



Education and Training Voucher



The Office of Youth Empowerment (OYE) is a partnership of the Alaska Child Welfare Academy and Facing Foster Care in Alaska to provide a continuous spectrum of educational and support services to empower current and former foster youth throughout the state. OYE focuses on youth empowerment, advocacy, college enrichment, training, and peer mentoring programs for foster youth throughout Alaska. Through OYE, hundreds of current and former foster youth have participated in youth led training, leadership opportunities, education and employment training, and the development of critical life skills.

2019-20 Program Highlights

For many foster youth, post-secondary education and training can be the ticket to their success.

- 63 awarded Education & Training Vouchers
- 30 awarded University of AK Presidential Foster Youth Tuition Waivers
- 22 awarded OCS Tuition Scholarships

52 foster youth attended University of AK campuses across the state



11 foster youth attended college or vocational training:

Alaska CNA Program
Trendsetters
Universal Technical Institute

Sacramento City College
Alaska Pacific University
Emmaus Bible College



44 graduates since 2012

35 foster youth participated in "Reaching the Peak" retreat in Anchorage focused on health and wellness



More Program Highlights

32 foster youth participated in the October Retreat Career Conference



CAREER PARTNERS:
Academy of Hair Design
Anchorage Job Center
Glenda's Training Center
Job Corps
Matsu Job Center
Northern Industrial Training



- **47** training events were held across the state led by foster youth to share personal experiences with child welfare staff, caregivers, educators, legal parties, and allies
- **28** foster youth and alumni attended the FFCA Advocacy retreat in Juneau to learn about government processes, develop their skills in advocacy, and promote the Foster Youth Bill of Rights
- **49** pregnant and parenting foster youth participated ages 14-24
- Participated in Strong Parents Alaska to develop positive parenting skills around the protective factors
- **23** Anchorage School District Staff participated in our Youth Thrive training event
- **40** laptops matched with foster youth statewide
- Foster youth and alumni met with the Associate Commissioner and Policy Advisor of the Federal Children's Bureau on lived-expertise and recommendations to improve child welfare in Alaska and across the country
- Partnered with OCS Independent Living and Covenant House to match foster youth with housing vouchers through the federal FYI Program Vouchers
- Partnered with the OCS Independent Living Program to offer life skills classes to youth ages 16-21 via Zoom
- Partnered with the Big Brothers Big Sisters SYNC Program to train and match mentors with foster youth
- Hosted a youth focus group with the National Center for Family and Juvenile Court Judges
- Hosted the annual Giving Tree to match foster youth attending college with gifts

- For the global pandemic, FFCA developed a [COVID FAQ](#) to keep foster youth informed and supported
- All **16** ETV students who lived in the UAA dorms this past spring semester were granted exceptions to stay and provided e-gift cards for food, hygiene products, school supplies, and local transportation; otherwise, they would have been homeless
- **37** foster youth received e-gift cards in response to COVID

