

Child Welfare Academy

Annual Report

July 2020 – June 2021



UAA UNIVERSITY of ALASKA ANCHORAGE.



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.**

Table of Contents

CWA Staff & Location	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	4
Training Summary	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	5
Training Calendar	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	6
Standards, Knowledge, & Insight Leading to Success (SKILS)	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	8
Licensing Training	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	15
Supervisor Training	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	16
Social Services Associate (SSA)	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	17
Coaching Supervisors to Best Practice (CSBP)	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	18
Diversity, Equity, & Inclusion Workgroup	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	19
Strengthening Families™ Alaska (SFA)	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	20
Strengthening Families™ Alaska (SFA) Training of Trainers	21
CWA Highlights	22
Office of Youth Empowerment (OYE)	23

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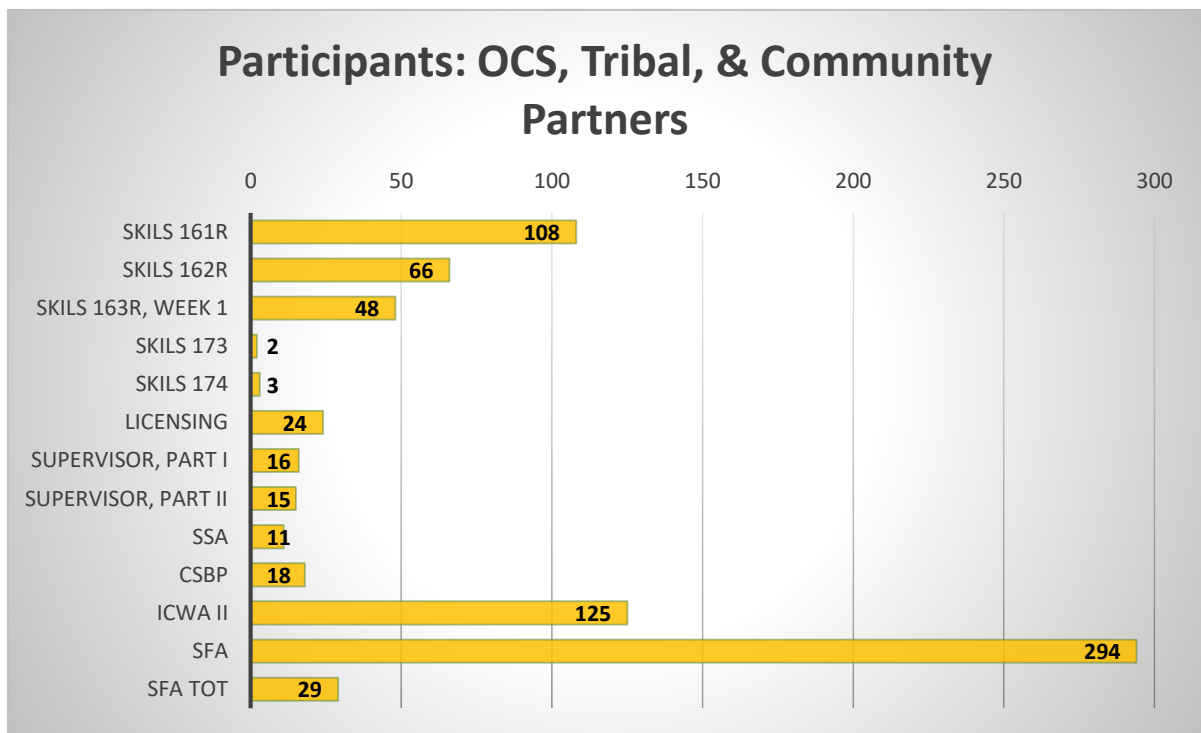
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Training Summary

From July 2020 to June 2021, the Child Welfare Academy delivered 277 training days to child welfare professionals, parents, and foster parents throughout Alaska. Here are charts that show number of participants by training events.

277
training days



OCS Participants, SKILLS 161R for New Workers	94
OCS Participants, SKILLS 162R for New Workers	65
OCS Participants, SKILLS 163R, Week 1, for New Workers	48
OCS Participants, SKILLS 173	2
OCS Participants, SKILLS 174 Family Service SKILLS for Caseworkers	3
OCS Participants, Other Training	217
Tribal & Community Partners, SKILLS for New Workers	15
Tribal & Community Partners, Other Training	315
Total Completed Training Days	277
Total Course Hours	18,942

Training Calendar: July 2020 – June 2021

NO	EVENT	DATES
1	580 CSBP	May - September
2	Strengthening Families™ AK	July 1-2
3	554 Supervisor Training: Part 1	July 7-10
4	161 SKILS	July 13-24
5	161 SKILS	August 3-14
6	114 Licensing	August 31 - September 3
7	Strengthening Families™ AK	August 4-5
8	162 SKILS	August 10-21
9	555 Supervisor Training: Part 2	September 1-3
10	161 SKILS	September 14-25
11	163 SKILS	September 28 - October 2
12	161 SKILS	October 12-23
13	Strengthening Families™ AK	October 14-15
14	162 SKILS	October 19-30
15	Strengthening Families™ AK	October 15-16
16	Strengthening Families™ AK	October 26 & 28
17	161 SKILS	November 2-20
18	Strengthening Families™ AK	November 17-18
19	Strengthening Families™ AK	December 1-2
20	554 Supervisor Training: Part 1	December 1-4
21	140 SSA Training	December 14-18
22	580 CSBP	January - June
23	Strengthening Families™ AK	January 6-7
24	161 SKILS	January 11-29
25	163 SKILS	January 25-29

NO	EVENT	DATES
26	Strengthening Families™ AK	February 2-3
27	161 SKILS	February 8-26
28	Strengthening Families™ AK	February 9-10
29	162 SKILS	February 15-26
30	Strengthening Families™ AK	February 23-24
31	Strengthening Families™ AK	March 4-5
32	161 SKILS	March 8-26
33	Strengthening Families™ AK Training of Trainers	March 16 & 18
34	555 Supervisor Training: Part 2	March 30 - April 1
35	161 SKILS	April 5-23
36	162 SKILS	April 12-23
37	Strengthening Families™ AK Training of Trainers	April 20 & 22
38	Strengthening Families™ AK	May 12-13
39	161 SKILS	May 3-21
40	163 SKILS	May 17-22
41	114 Licensing	June 14-17
42	Strengthening Families™ AK	June 21-22

Note: Due to the coronavirus, all training was delivered virtually.

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

Due to COVID-19, SKILS took on several iterations and became SKILS 161R, 162R and 163R, in which R stands for revised. SKILS converted completely to virtual training using the Zoom platform.

The first two weeks of training focused on practice model basics where the first week covered Investigation and Assessment (I & A) and the second week moved into Family Services (FS) essentials. Participants received ORCA Help Desk training prior to SKILS 161. This allowed the trainers to refer to this training and discuss documentation examples throughout the training. Training on individual and family culture, ICWA, trauma informed care, active and reasonable efforts, agency protocol, and the practice model was emphasized throughout out the training. Participants received training materials in the mail and electronically as there was no face-to-face classroom training. Activities and training to include asynchronous training were used to engage participants while maintaining integrity to the practice model training. Trainers utilized a variety of techniques to engage participants including live meetings, breakout rooms, polls, and other activities. All documentation was submitted electronically, and trainers provided feedback to participants on their assigned documentation. Participants engaged in live classroom work through Zoom in the mornings and completed asynchronous work in the afternoons to include learning and assignments in the blended learning community (BLC) as well as field shadowing as coordinated by their supervisor. A new mock family case was developed and implemented in an effort to enhance critical thinking around the practice model and steps workers must take in the life of a case.



As was true for the entire country, COVID-19 turned SKILS upside down. However, CWA sought out and attended virtual trainings to gain insight into flipping the classroom from in-person to virtual training. There was some reluctance in the effectiveness of virtual training, but the trainers worked hard to overcome the barriers and engage participants in meaningful ways. The OCS Mentor Program and CWA came together to review SKILS content worked as a team to make adjustments as needed to hone a learner's critical thinking skills.

Sampling of SKILS 161R participant feedback:

- *It was really good, the instructors were awesome. They really tried to make it feel like it was not virtual and kept us entertained. They facilitated lots of great conversation and dialogue in the group.*
- *The experience felt real. The scenarios were real and I appreciate the effort to let workers understand and letting the interviews as real as can be.*
- *It took a little time to get used to using ZOOM, but I think it worked out well. The instructors are still working on fine tuning the program.*
- *The foundation would be stronger if there was a chance to participate in field work while doing SKILS so we could learn to apply the concepts in real life.*
- *It was helpful to go through a case from start to finish, it helped me understand the process of how a case will transfer here in the office.*



Sampling of SKILS 162R participant feedback:

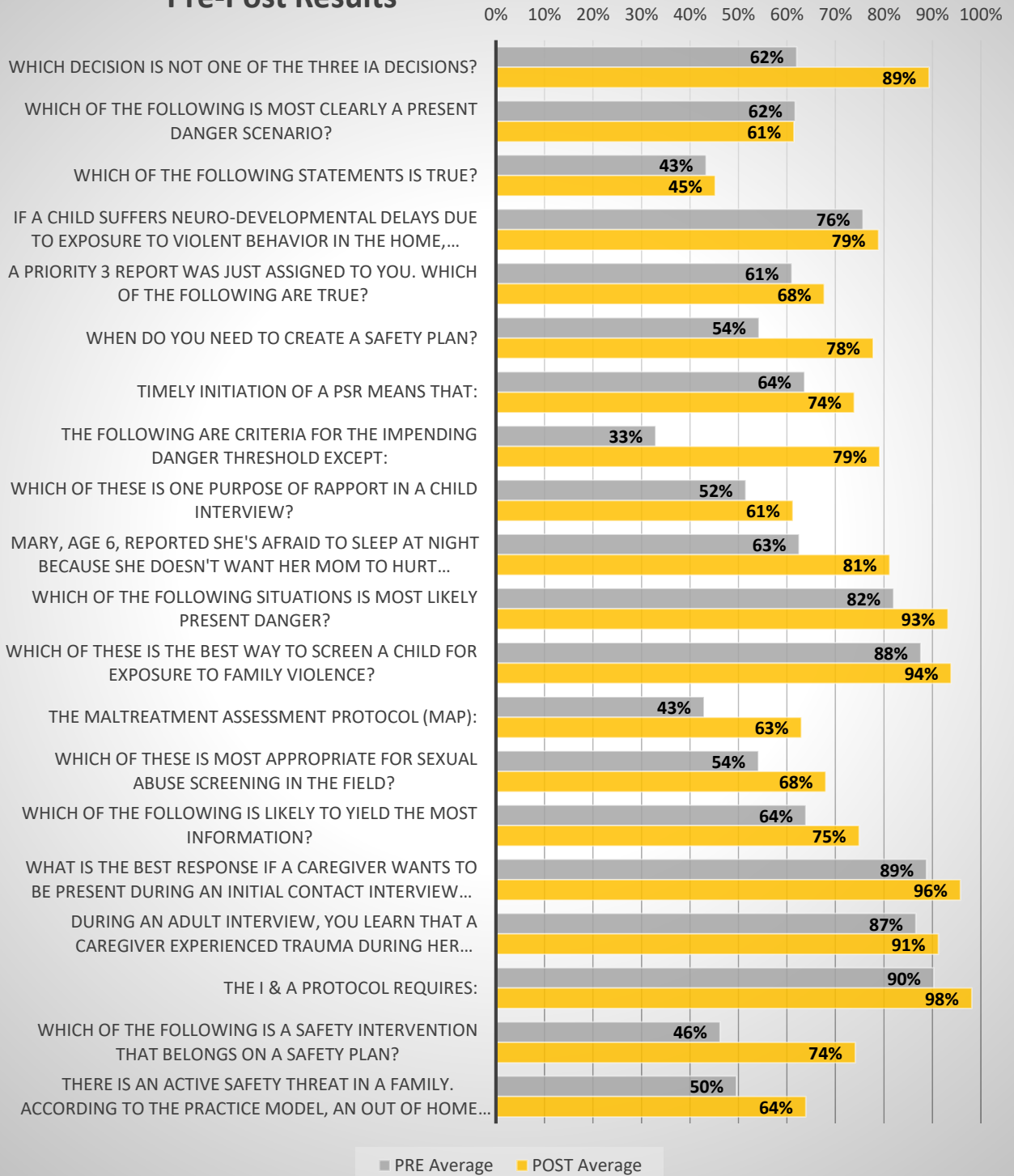
- *The virtual classroom works fine for me. No issues.*
- *I struggle with staying engaged in virtual learning.*
- *The training was still interactive, which is the best way to work through the concepts. The breakout rooms were a great way to increase participation and, subsequently, learning.*
- *Asynchronous work is difficult for me to maintain focus. I would benefit from more breakout rooms. I really enjoyed 162, and appreciate the staff for how hard they worked to engage us over an online platform.*
- *The training was very in-depth and beneficial. I think it was ultra-thorough and for the most part served its intended purpose.*

Sampling of SKILS 163R participant feedback:

- *Half days would be recommended. At this point in our training we have full case loads and a week off greatly impacts our work.*
- *It added to my foundation and knowledge base.*
- *I wished these could have happened in the first three months in my job.*
- *The legal piece was essential. That training should be much earlier.*
- *Virtual training may be less ideal and less collaborative overall but I think we are all professionals and adapt to these challenges just fine.*

SKILS 161R - Week 1

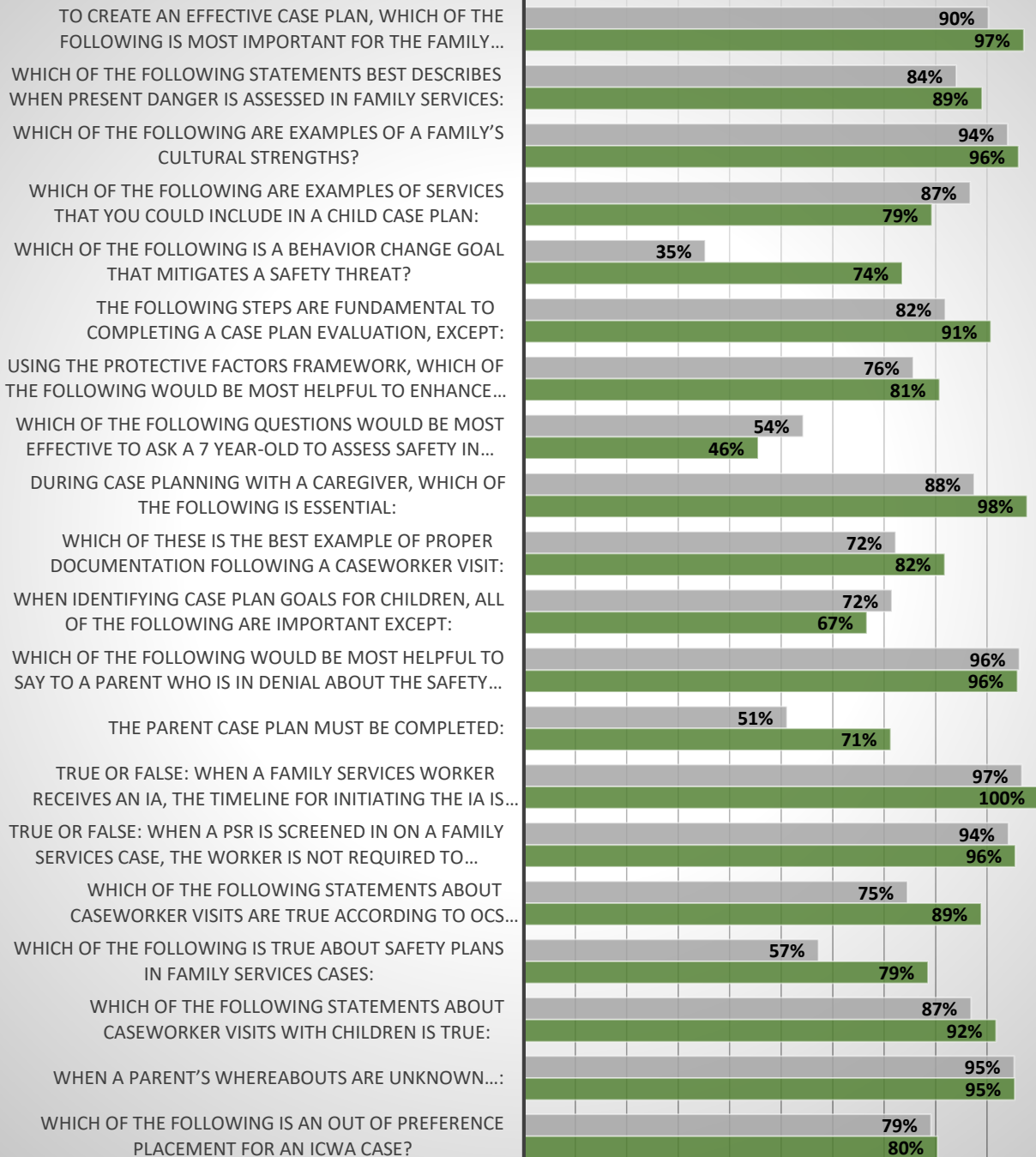
Pre-Post Results



SKILS 161R - Week 2

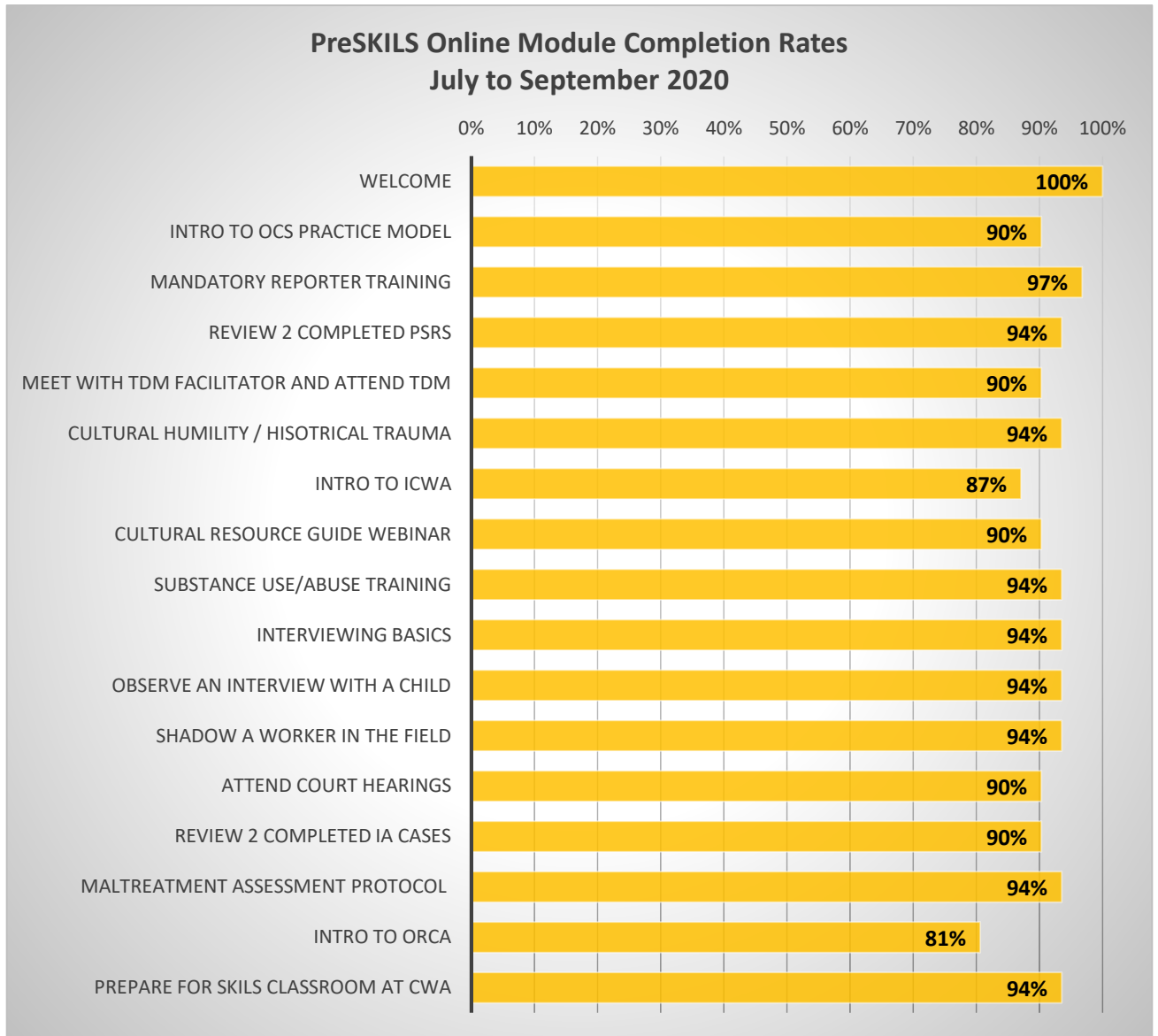
Pre-Post Results

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

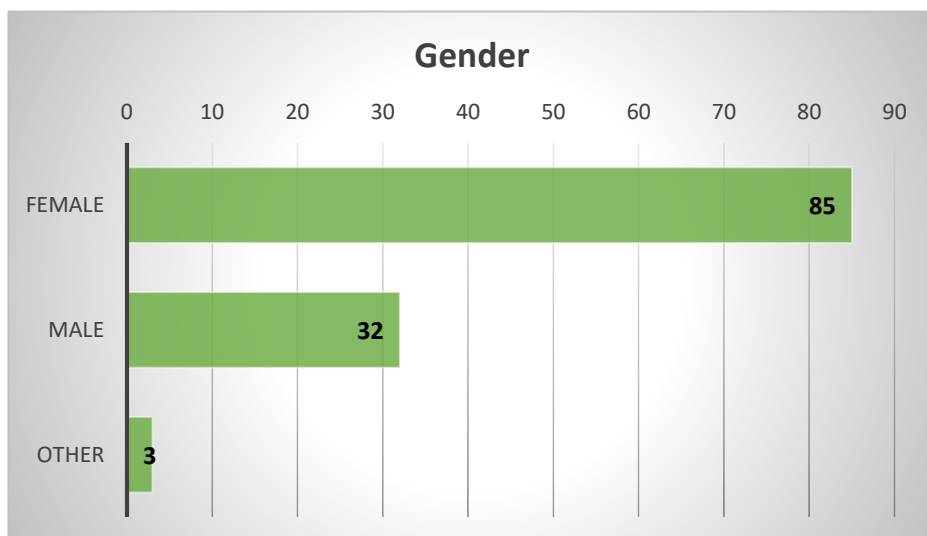
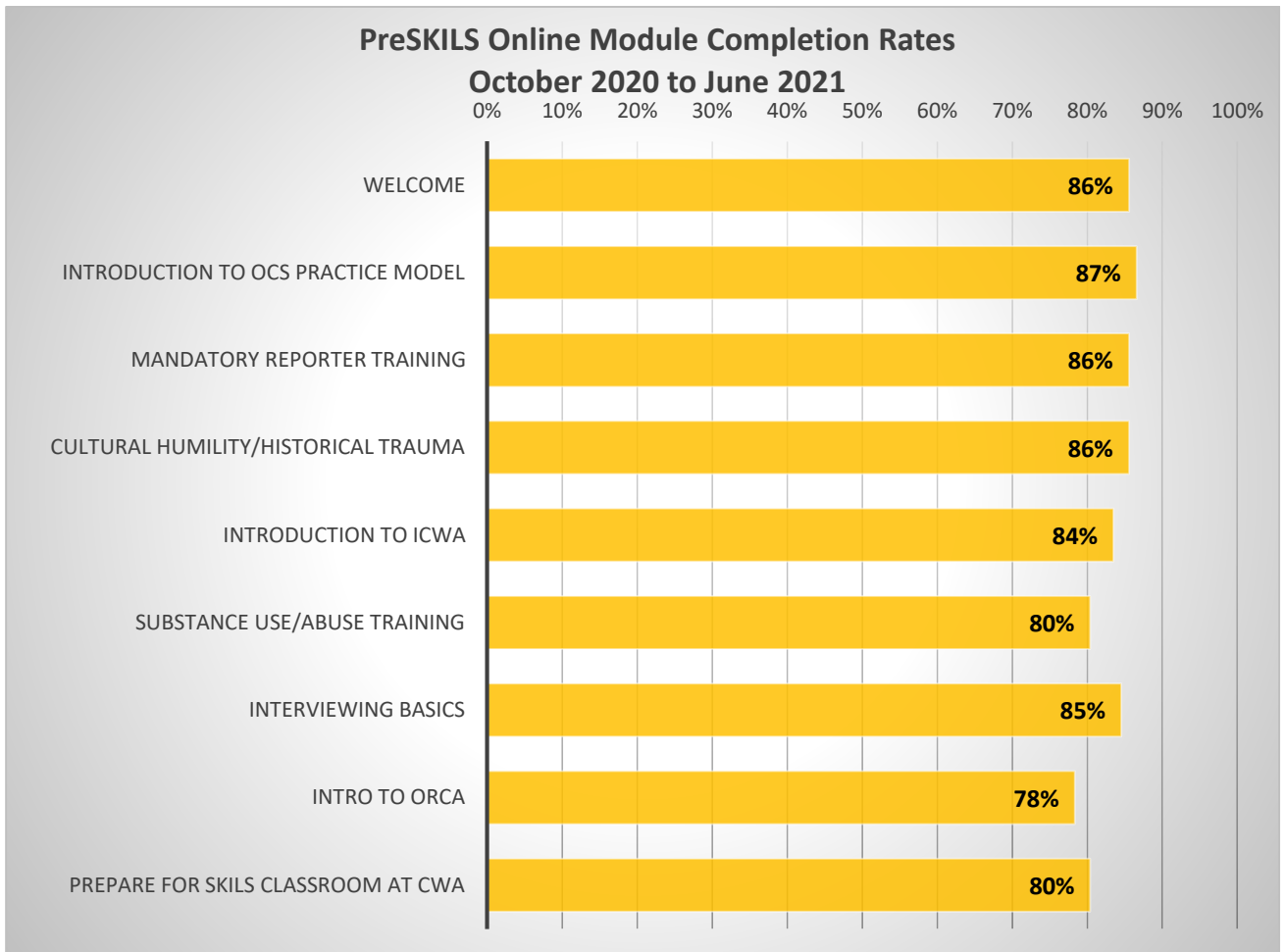


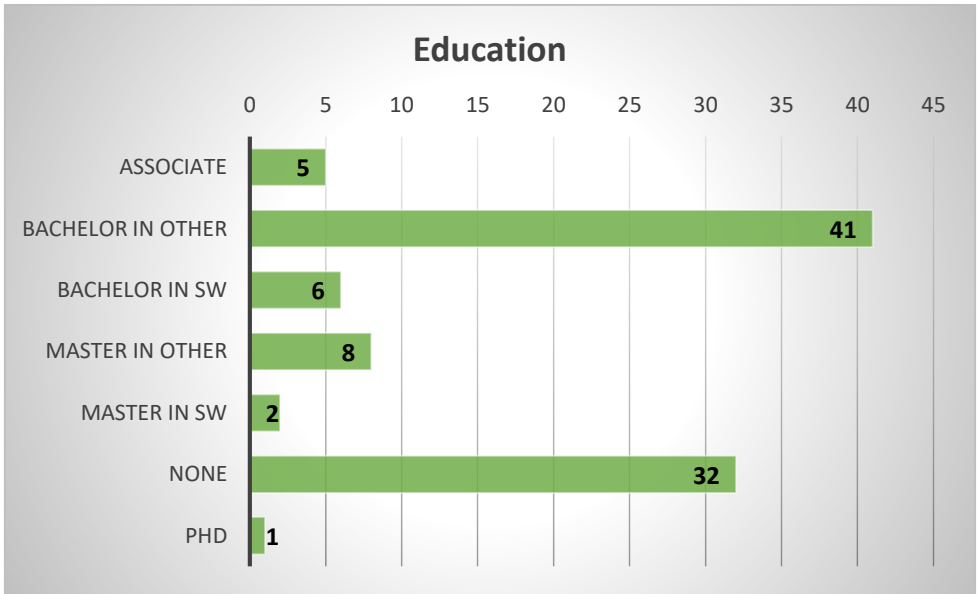
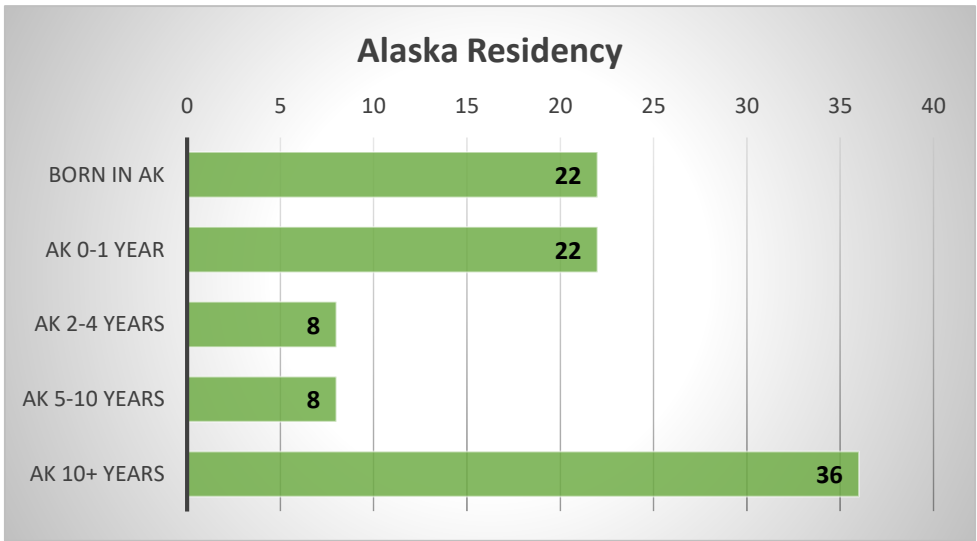
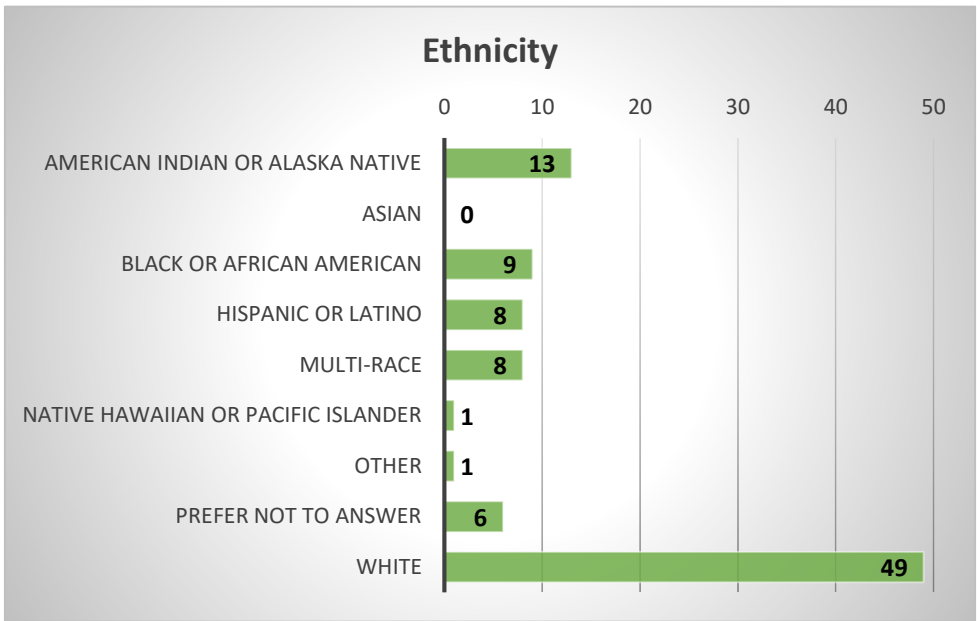
■ PRE Average ■ POST Average

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



Note: Other modules not listed below that were included in the previous chart where moved to SKILS 161R as asynchronous work in order for those topics to be processed as a group to increase critical thinking skills.





In this fiscal year, CWA provided two training events for community care licensing specialists (CCLS) that were delivered in August 2020 and June 2021. August's training focused on how to best support protective services specialists in the work they do on child protection cases. With the new year, the training material was updated to provide education and application for new CCLS specific to their role as licensing specialists. The revised material included OCS's mission, vision, and values along with how CCLS can utilize the Strengthening Families Protective Factors in supporting Resource Families. CWA also focused on honing in on CCLS' skills in interviewing parents and children, how to build and maintain resource family engagement, and understanding their role in supporting permanency for youth in custody. This was supported by the Alaska Center for Resource Families facilitating a resource family panel and collaboration with OCS Licensing to facilitate training around licensing investigations for the new CCLS. Below are average ratings and feedback from participants who submitted evaluations.

Please rate the Training in the following areas:	Very Low	Low	Medium	High	Very High
	1	2	3	4	5
The virtual classroom was sufficient for me to learn what I needed to learn to get started in the field.	0%	0%	11%	67%	22%
The instructional materials (i.e. PowerPoints, handouts, participant manuals) were helpful in building knowledge and skills on the topics covered.	0%	0%	11%	67%	22%
The activities were meaningful in facilitating my learning.	0%	0%	11%	67%	22%

Sampling of participant feedback:

- *I learned a lot about permanency, resource families' rights, and investigations.*
- *The facilitators were engaging and supported learning.*
- *The experience was very comprehensive with great trainers.*
- *It would have been more helpful in the first month on the job*
- *I appreciated having Barbara Coselito on and our expert panel. Working and learning with experts is very beneficial.*



Supervisor Training

After postponing Supervisor (Sups) training due to COVID-19 travel restrictions, CWA restructured the two-part training to solely online with an asynchronous work component. It included more information on Emotional Intelligence, which is an important topic for supervisors. Sups Part 1 was held in early December, 2020, and the participants concluded the training with Part 2 at the end of March 2021. Below are average ratings and feedback from participants who submitted evaluations.

Please rate the Training in the following areas:	AVERAGE FOR COHORT 1				
	Very Low 1	Low 2	Medium 3	High 4	Very High 5
The instructional materials (i.e. PowerPoints, handouts, participant manuals) were helpful in building knowledge and skills on the topics covered.	0%	0%	0%	89%	11%
The activities were meaningful in facilitating my learning.	0%	11%	11%	56%	22%
Your initial ability to apply what you learned to your job.	0%	0%	44%	33%	22%

Please rate the Training in the following areas:	AVERAGE FOR COHORT 2				
	Very Low 1	Low 2	Medium 3	High 4	Very High 5
The instructional materials (i.e. PowerPoints, handouts, participant manuals) were helpful in building knowledge and skills on the topics covered.	0%	0%	25%	38%	38%
The activities were meaningful in facilitating my learning.	0%	0%	25%	38%	38%
Your initial ability to apply what you learned to your job.	0%	0%	13%	50%	38%



Sampling of participant feedback:

- *The presenters are wonderful! I especially appreciated that Travis Erickson took time to speak with us. I felt that his thoughts were meaningful and supportive.*
- *Thank you so much for this training. I got a lot out of this and know that I can use this in my work.*
- *I really liked the ACOMS training and being able to speak with more experienced workers.*

Social Services Associate (SSA)



CWA delivered SSA training in December 2020. This curriculum was adapted from in-person delivery to a virtual learning space to accommodate travel and social distancing restrictions related to COVID-19. Participants were able to attend training while ensuring their own safety and health.

Trainers facilitated online activities and discussions through the online Zoom platform to promote positive engagement and interaction with the training group. Topics explored included OCS Practice Model, Protective Factors, Partnerships with Families and Resource Parents, Cultural Humility, ICWA & Historical Trauma, Resiliency, and Self Care. Participants were also able to engage in independent learning through asynchronous assignments and received individualized feedback from trainers. Through these virtual classes and independent learning modules, learners were able to develop skills necessary within their role as an SSA to support children and families in their journey to safety, permanency, and wellbeing. Below are average ratings and feedback from participants who completed evaluations.

Please rate the Training in the following areas:	Very Low	Low	Medium	High	Very High
	1	2	3	4	5
The virtual classroom was sufficient for me to learn what I needed to learn to get started in the field.	0%	0	20%	40%	40%
The instructional materials (i.e. PowerPoints, handouts, participant manuals) were helpful in building knowledge and skills on the topics covered.	10%	0%	0%	40%	50%
Asynchronous time was conducive to my learning.	0%	0%	0%	50%	50%
The activities were meaningful in facilitating my learning.	10%	0%	0%	60%	30%

Sampling of participant feedback:

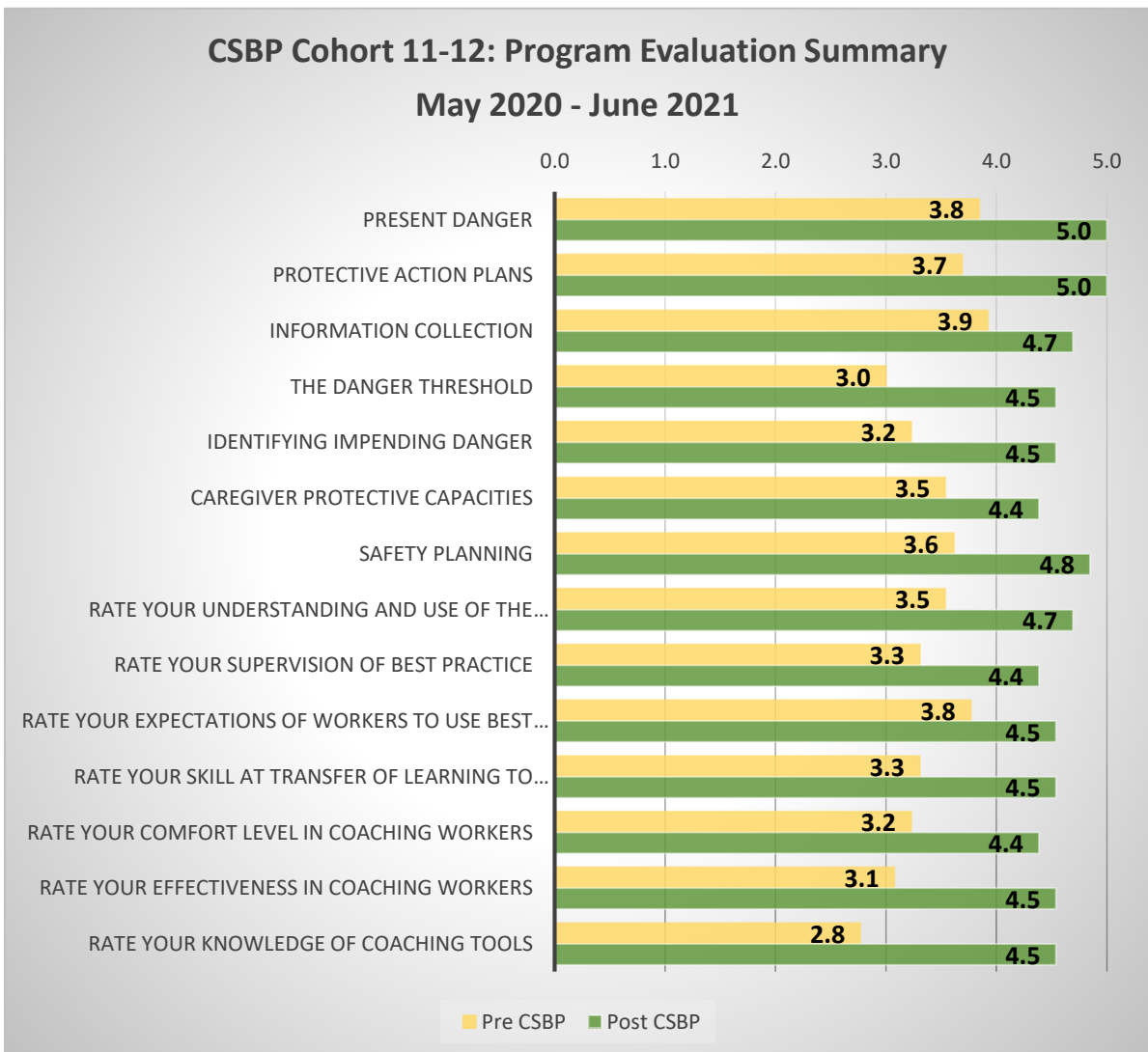
- *Honestly kind of thankful for the virtual classroom. The trainers were wonderful.*
- *This training made me learn a lot of different things, very excellent learning opportunities on different subjects.*
- *I wish I had been able to take the training sooner.*
- *I grasped all concepts.*
- *I thought it gave me a lot of information to use as an SSA very helpful.*

Coaching Supervisors to Best Practice (CSBP)

CSBP is a comprehensive 18-week 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.

Cohort 11 started in May 2020 virtually with 11 participants consisting of veteran supervisors, TDM facilitators, QA staff and Licensing supervisors. They completed the program in November 2020.

Cohort 12 started in January 2021 with 8 participants consisting of supervisors and mentors. In order to accommodate scheduling needs, half the cohort will complete the program after June 30th. Below is a summary from participants who submitted evaluations.



Diversity, Equity, & Inclusion Workgroup



In January, CWA was asked to serve on a diversity, equity, and inclusion workgroup or DEI for short to discuss training curriculum needed for not only OCS staff but many other partners on racial equity within child welfare. The desired outcome was for the group to submit a training curriculum proposal to Tribal and State leaders for discussion. There was a total of 22 Tribal and State partners selected to be on the workgroup.

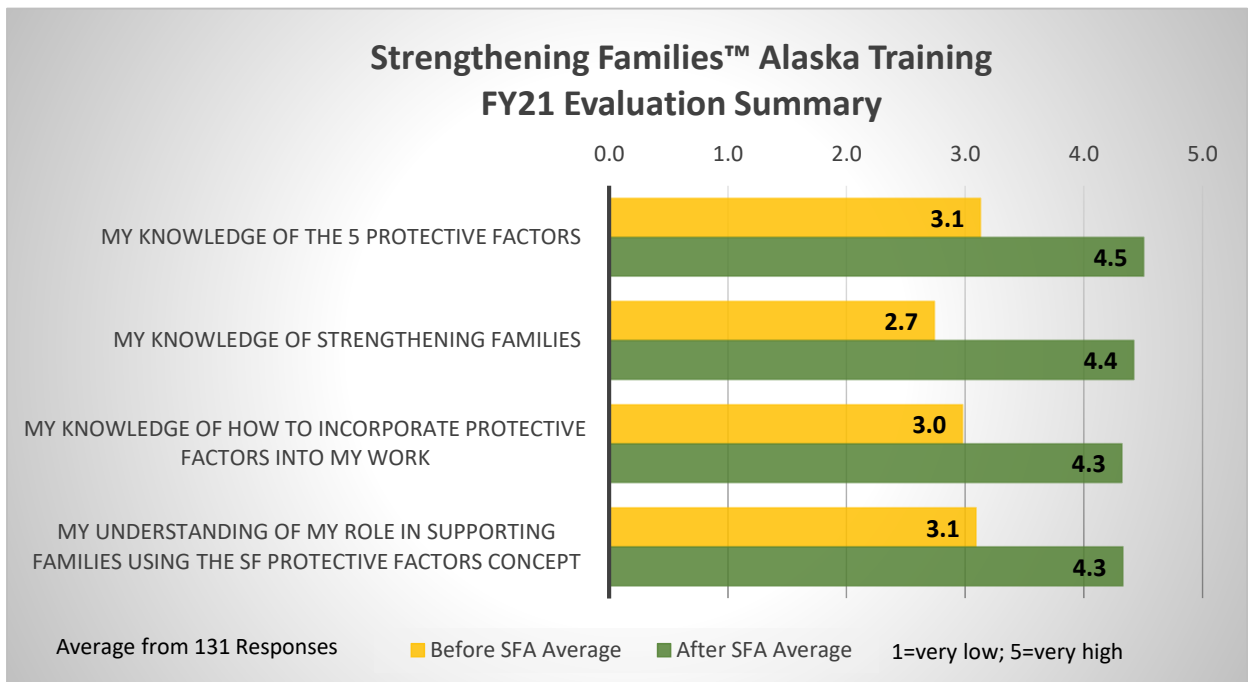
The DEI workgroup met virtually for two hours every Thursday for two months to discuss curriculum training options. For the first few meetings, the group reviewed what was already in place, what was working, what needed improvements, new training ideas, and a list of training options to consider for Alaska. The vision and objectives of the new curriculum were also discussed.

Later, the group decided to evaluate the pros and cons of four curriculums. After an in depth review, two curriculums were identified to have met the criteria: Knowing Who You Are (KWYA) and the TRIO Learning Collective. As a result, these were the two curriculums submitted to the leadership team by the DEI workgroup with a matrix on why they fit the criteria. From this, the leadership team selected the existing KWYA curriculum but with an updated look and feel.

Strengthening Families™ Alaska (SFA)

The coronavirus created a desperate need for training on how to support families and required training to be held virtually. These two reasons created a significant increase in SFA training that resulted in 295 people being trained this year. The virtual format increased access to the training and provided participants from all over the state the opportunity to attend, which added greatly to the discussions about serving families from different parts of Alaska.

Since 2015, over 1,400 people have been trained by CWA. In addition, a new collaboration with Alaska Youth and Family Network and Volunteers of America Alaska brought about the development of an SFA curriculum for parents. There are now two separate curriculums: one for providers and one for parents. While there has not yet been a training specifically for parents, an event is being planned for the fall. Below is a graph on knowledge ratings before and after training from participants who submitted evaluations.



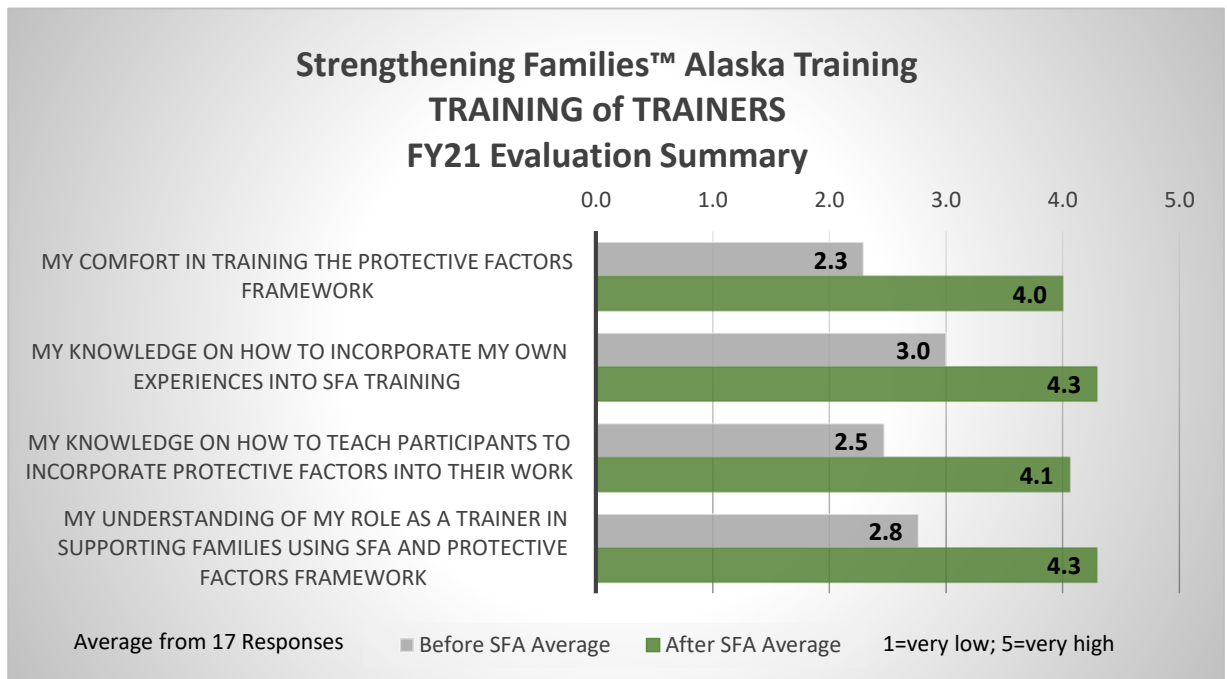
Sampling of participant feedback:

- *I feel that all workers should have this training annually, at least for a refresher course.*
- *I enjoyed this virtual training more than any other one that I took this year. It was meaningful learning.*
- *I really enjoyed it and appreciated different activities, lecture, PowerPoint, video, small group discussions. It was effective in keeping me focused and actively engaged.* 20

Strengthening Families™ Alaska (SFA) Training of Trainers

In FY20, CWA developed an Alaska Strengthening Families™ curriculum tailored to support Alaska families. One of the goals was to grow Alaskan SFA trainers to further embed the Protective Factors throughout the state. With the delivery of two training events, 29 new trainers were certified in this reporting period. This brings the total of SFA trainers to 100 from these various communities: Anchorage, Fairbanks, Juneau, Kodiak, Minto, Nome, Noorvik, Seldovia, Sitka, and Wasilla.

To support the SFA trainers, CWA maintains a private site with training and resource materials that are free to access and use for in-person and virtual training events. CWA also keeps the trainers informed of related training opportunities such as Youth Thrive™, which is a companion framework to Strengthening Families™, focusing on youth ages 9 to 26 years old. Below is a graph on knowledge ratings before and after training from participants who submitted evaluations.



Sampling of participant feedback:

- *I love that there is a site where we are able to access all the material. I look forward to see it grow.*
- *Thank you for all the work you have done for Alaska and its peoples.*
- *I really love Strengthening Families, I am thrilled to have been able to take this class and I am exciting to read through the new material for Strong Families teaching parents. I appreciate that this is available to everyone!*
- *Great trainer!! The material makes so much sense. The website is fantastica and I love the uplifting videos.*

LEARNING MANAGEMENT SYSTEM (LMS)

In the past decade, CWA has grown its training and services by 394%. To keep up with the increased training demand and data management, CWA contracted with eThink Education to create a customized learning management system that would house all the training modules and records. The LMS is a version of Moodle™ that is broadly used worldwide by K12, higher education, and workplace training.

Learners will find the newly active LMS at cwastars.org where STARS represents, “Staff Training and Resource System.” This acronym was created by Tammy Sandoval, Director of CWA, to provide a positive way to connect users to the site, a term that is fairly easy to remember and a way to honor CWA employees who she considers to be Stars.

With the new LMS rollout at the end of June, CWA went live with the core OCS courses such as SKILS, Supervisor training, SSA training, and more. Other much-anticipated features that will be added are resources and a self-paced training section that will be available to the general public. This new LMS offers an opportunity to grow training capacity and include processes from registration to evaluation in one program for any course offered by CWA.

STAFF CHANGES

Kimberly Mouriquand is the newest trainer on the CWA training team. She brings twelve years of experience working in social services. Her professional background includes four years working at Denali Family Services as a foster care licensing specialist, supervisor and quality assurance coordinator. Prior to coming to CWA, Kimberly was a family support specialist and trainer, developing curriculum to support the trauma informed education of families for Alaska Center for Resource Families.

Amanda Metivier has accepted the position of associate director of training. With over 12 years of experience working in child welfare, Amanda brings a wealth of understanding and extensive knowledge of Alaska child welfare policy and best practices. Most recently, Amanda has laid the foundation to develop and grow the Office of Youth Empowerment (OYE) to serve foster youth throughout the state and offer more opportunities for youth advocacy and mentoring that focuses on effective support, guidance and engagement.

Tracey Eason has been appointed core training coordinator. She has a bachelor’s degree in Human Services and is on track to receive her Master of Social Work degree in May of 2022. Tracey, with 10 years of child welfare experience, is adept at working with families to achieve safety, permanency, and well-being for children. She is skilled at curriculum development and works collaboratively to develop curricula to address the changing needs within Alaska. Tracey has earned her certification as a coach to better support supervisors to enhance their leadership presence and build strong relationships.



The Office of Youth Empowerment (OYE) is a collaborative effort between CWA, Facing Foster Care in Alaska, and OCS. Through OYE, hundreds of current and former foster youth have enrolled in higher education and funded by the Education and Training Voucher Program. In addition, Alaska's foster youth have participated in youth led training, engaged in leadership opportunities, education and employment training, and the development of critical life skills.

350+ foster youth and alumni participated in youth-led training and leadership activities during FY21

OYE Program Highlights

- 155 youth participated in virtual leadership retreats
- Youth and alumni facilitated 21 trainings for child welfare staff, legal parties and caregivers
- Partnered with OCS Independent Living to offer Direct to Youth Grants
- 200+ youth received financial support and assistance with COVID-19 Relief
- Partnered with the Big Brothers Big Sisters SYNC Program to train and match mentors with foster youth
- Hosted the annual Giving Tree to match foster youth attending college with gifts
- Trained 84 staff in Youth Thrive™ from across the state
- Developed 15 "right-time" videos to help youth and emerging adults with life skills



Education and Training Voucher (ETV) Program Highlights

For many foster youth, post-secondary education and training can be the ticket to their success. Despite most post-secondary education and training moving to a virtual format, foster youth and alumni continued to pursue higher education.

- 50 Education and Training Vouchers awarded to foster youth
- 51 graduates to date
- University of Alaska (UA) extended the “Exception,” allowing foster youth to remain in dorm housing during the COVID-19 Pandemic
- 43 foster youth attended UA campuses across the state
- 32 foster youth awarded UA Presidential Foster Youth Tuition Waivers
- 10 foster youth awarded OCS Tuition Scholarships
- 7 Students attended college or vocational training
 - South Puget Sound
 - Alaska Christian College
 - Universal Technical Institute
 - Sacramento City College
 - Alaska Pacific University
 - Emmaus Bible College
 - Alaska Career College
- Hosted the Annual Foster Youth Post-Secondary Education Conference virtually where the site was designed to represent the University of Alaska Anchorage campus



Virtual outdoor image of the UAA/APU Consortium Library



Virtual indoor image of the UAA/APU Consortium Library

CWA emphasizes in family-centered practice to encourage collaboration with families, tribes, communities, or any professional who share the responsibility of keeping children safe and families strong in Alaska.

