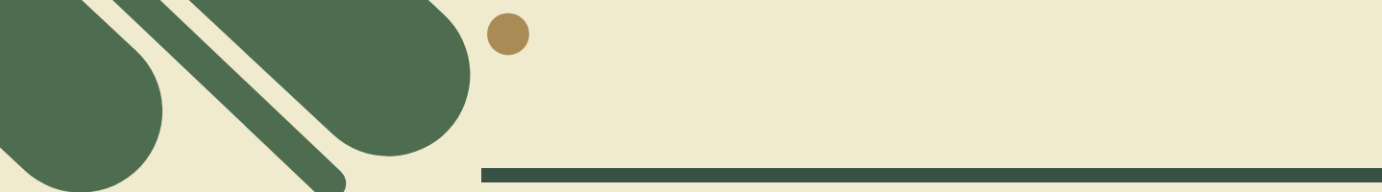




Annual Report

2023-2024





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

“Empowering communities to promote child well-being.”

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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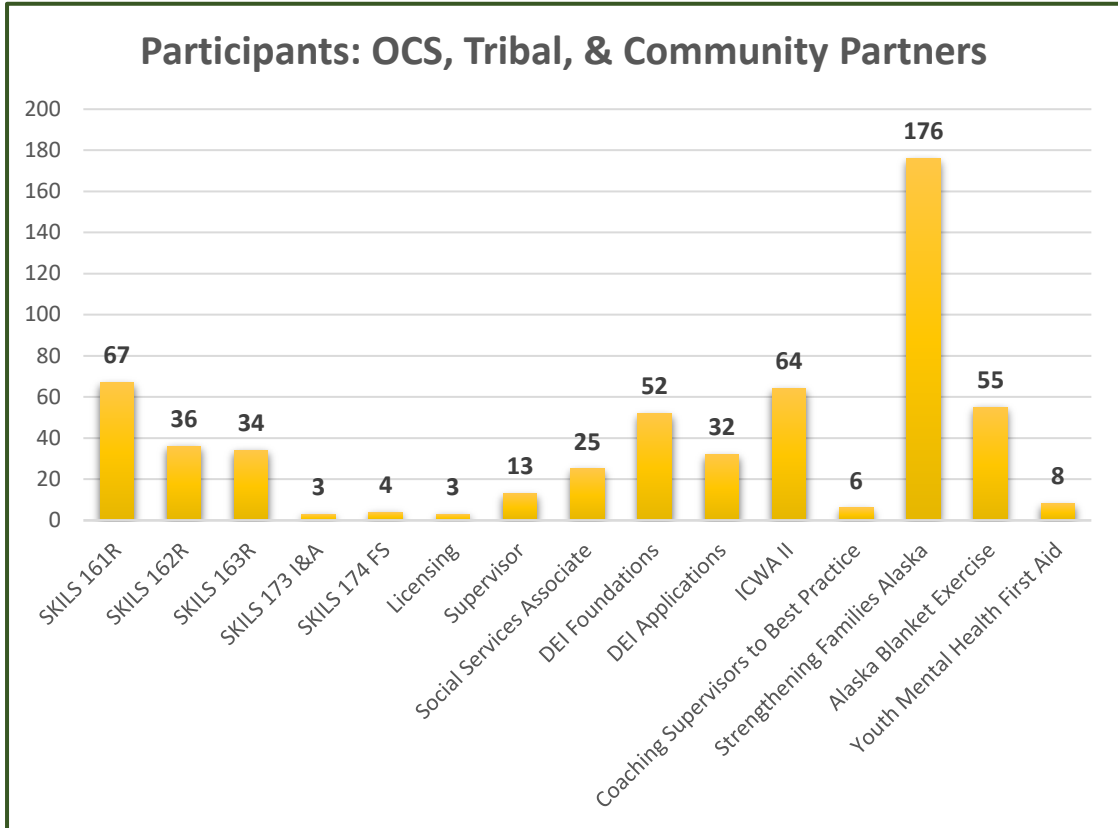
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Between July 2023 and June 2024, Child Welfare Academy delivered 268 training days for child welfare professionals, parents, and resource parents across Alaska. The following charts depict the participant count for each training event.

268
training days



OCS Participants, SKILS 161R	58
OCS Participants, SKILS 162R	36
OCS Participants, SKILS 163R	34
OCS Participants, SKILS 173 I&A	3
OCS Participants, SKILS 174 FS	4
OCS Participants, Other Training	206
Tribal & Community Partners, SKILS 161R	9
Tribal & Community Partners, Other Training	228
Total Completed Training Days	268

Training Calendar

NO.	EVENT	DATES
1	161R SKILLS	July 10-24, 2023
2	140 SSA Training	July 25-28, 2023
3	280 Strengthening Families AK	July 27-29, 2023
4	161R SKILLS	July 31-August 14, 2023
5	580 CSBP #15	August - November 2023
6	162R SKILLS	August 14-24, 2023
7	229 ICWA II	August 15-17, 2023
8	225 DEI Foundations	August 17, 2023
9	225 DEI Foundations, Standalone	August 17, 2023
10	222 Youth Mental Health First Aid	August 21, 2023
11	228 Alaska Blanket Exercise	August 24, 2023
12	161R SKILLS	September 11-25, 2023
13	237 ChildFirst™	September 25-29, 2023
14	161R SKILLS	October 2-16, 2023
15	162R SKILLS	October 16-27, 2023
16	225 DEI Foundations	October 19, 2023
17	222 Youth Mental Health First Aid	October 23, 2023
18	228 Alaska Blanket Exercise	October 26, 2023
19	161R SKILLS	October 30-November 13, 2023
20	280 Strengthening Families AK	October 31-November 1, 2023
21	225 DEI Foundations, Standalone	October 19, 2023

NO.	EVENT	DATES
22	Suicide Prevention	November 28, 2023
23	114 Licensing	December 4-8, 2023
24	229 ICWA II	December 5-7, 2023
25	280 Strengthening Families AK	December 11-12, 2023
26	161R SKILLS	January 8-22, 2024
27	280 Strengthening Families AK	January 9-10, 2024
28	Safety in Placement (for Licensing)	January 17, 2024
29	Safety in Placement (for other OCS Staff)	January 17, 2024
30	163R SKILLS	January 22-26, 2024
31	226 DEI Applications	January 25, 2024
32	280 Strengthening Families AK	January 30-31, 2024
33	161R SKILLS	February 5-19, 2024
34	162R SKILLS	February 19-March 1, 2024
35	225 DEI Foundations	February 22, 2024
36	222 Youth Mental Health First Aid	February 26, 2024
37	229 ICWA II	February 27-29, 2024
38	222 Youth Mental Health First Aid	February 28, 2024
39	228 Alaska Blanket Exercise	February 29, 2024
40	161R SKILLS	March 4-18, 2024
41	228 Alaska Blanket Exercise, Standalone	March 21, 2024

NO.	EVENT	DATES
42	554 Supervisor	March 26-28, 2024
43	280 Strengthening Families AK	March 28-29, 2024
44	161R SKILS	April 1-15, 2024
45	Purple Guide Training-WRO	April 3, 2024
46	280 Strengthening Families AK	April 10-11, 2024
47	162R SKILS	April 15-26, 2024
48	225 DEI Foundations	April 18, 2024
49	225 DEI Foundations, Standalone	April 18, 2024
50	237 ChildFirst™	April 22-26, 2024
51	222 Youth Mental Health First Aid	April 24, 2024
52	228 Alaska Blanket Exercise	April 25, 2024
53	Purple Guide Training-ARO	April 25, 2024
54	Purple Guide Training-SCRO	May 1, 2024
55	High-Quality Documentation in Case Planning & Caseworker Vists	May 3, 2024
56	163R SKILS	May 20-24, 2024
57	FAN for Practitioners	May 21-22, 2024
58	229 ICWA II	May 21-23, 2024
59	226 DEI Applications	May 23, 2024
60	280 Strengthening Families AK	May 29-30, 2024
61	161R SKILS	June 3-17, 2024
62	280 Strengthening Families AK	June 5-6, 2024

Standards, Knowledge, & Insight Leading to Success ⁹

PreSKILLS is a prerequisite for SKILLS 161R and includes online learning modules outlined in the Office of Children's Services Staff Development Plan (SDP). These modules must be completed prior to attending SKILLS 161R.

PreSKILLS is designed to offer participants a foundational understanding of OCS (Office of Children's Services) and an introductory overview of Child Welfare. The goal is to prepare participants for SKILLS.

Modules focus on the following topics:

1. Welcome Message from CWA and participant introductions.
2. Introduction to the Practice Model: Participants learn the five components of the Office of Children's Services' (OCS) Practice Model.
3. Mandatory Reporter Training: This training is for professionals who are legally required to report child abuse in Alaska. Participants learn the importance of reporting suspected abuse, who must legally report suspected abuse, the signs of abuse and neglect, the reporting process and follow up.
4. Cultural Humility and Historical Trauma: Participants engage in understanding cultural humility and the impact of historical trauma in Alaska.
5. Introduction to ICWA: This begins with a brief introduction to the Indian Child Welfare Act and is followed by a one-on-one meeting with each participant's OCS Regional ICWA Specialist to discuss the importance of ICWA.
6. Substance Use/Abuse Training: Participants access the National Center on Substance Abuse and Child Welfare Tutorial for Child Welfare Professionals that provides participants with knowledge of alcohol and drug addiction and its impact on parenting; engagement strategies and the treatment and recovery process for families affected by substance use disorders; services needed by children whose parents have substance use disorders; and methods of improving collaboration among substance abuse treatment, child welfare and court systems.
7. Interviewing Basics: Provides participants with an understanding of the core conditions of a protective services interview, provides common interviewing techniques used to engage clients, learn the five stages of a protective services interview, and identify their purposes, and identify ways to collaborate with clients who are displaying challenging behaviors.
8. Introduction to the National Association of Social Workers (NASW) Code of Ethics (COE): Participants receive an introduction to the COE and learn more about topics that may be relevant for workers new to the field of child welfare.

9. **Child Functioning Guide:** Participants learn to utilize this tool when working with children and families. This guide provides information on children from infancy to adolescence to help participants interview, screen for maltreatment, and recognize developmental milestones.
10. **Multi-Ethnic Placement Act (MEPA):** Participants are introduced to MEPA and learn how this act works to decrease the length of time children wait to be adopted, facilitate identification and recruitment of families that can meet the child's needs, and prevent discrimination based on race, color, or national origin.
11. **Car Seat Training:** Participants engage in local car seat training and submit their certificates. Those without access to local training can complete it online.
12. **Prepare for SKILS Classroom at CWA:** Participants meet with their supervisors to discuss expectations for training and to ask any questions they may have.

Orientation

Participants are required to attend an orientation session prior to SKILS 161R. This session ensures that their technology is functioning correctly and that they understand how to navigate the Zoom platform during the virtual training. The orientation will cover the following:

- **Format Overview:** An explanation of the SKILS 161R course structure and delivery methods.
- **Expectations:** A discussion of the training objectives and participant expectations.
- **Support Resources:** Information on how to access technical support and other resources during the training.

SKILS 161R is a three-week training program. The first week focuses on Investigation and Assessment (I&A), while the second week covers Family Services (FS) essentials. The third week focuses on legal aspects and the transfer of learning. The training has been adapted for smaller cohorts to continue delivering high-quality instruction based on best practices and adult learning theory, and to engage participants in critical thinking.

The training emphasizes diverse topics, including individual and family culture, ICWA, trauma-informed care, active and reasonable efforts, agency protocol, and the practice model. In the mornings, live classroom work is conducted through Zoom, while asynchronous work is completed in the afternoons using CWA's learning management system (LMS). Field shadowing is then coordinated by supervisors to provide practical experience.

Throughout SKILS 161R, participants follow a mock training case to enhance critical thinking and understanding of the practice model. Trainers hold daily check-ins to ensure participants' comprehension of independent work.

Week One of the training focuses on the following key topics:

1. **OCS Mission, Vision, and Values:** Participants receive an introduction to the Mission, Vision, and Values to align their understanding with the organization's core principles.
2. **Bias Management:** Extensive training is provided on how personal bias can impact decision-making and techniques to effectively manage bias.
3. **Evidence-Based Child Interviewing:** Participants learn evidence-based child interviewing techniques to ensure accurate and reliable information gathering.
4. **Environmental Awareness and Worker Safety:** Trainers emphasize the importance of environmental awareness and safety for workers. OCS safety officers deliver a presentation on worker safety, ensuring participants understand the measures to be taken during investigations.
5. **Information Gathering and Simulated Child Interview:** Participants review agency protocol for information gathering and engage in a simulated child interview using the training case. They receive feedback during and after the interview to enhance their child interviewing skills.
6. **Analysis of the Training Case:** The training case is analyzed further to identify present danger, develop realistic safety plans, and assess the potential for an alternate caregiver to protect the children. This exercise aimed to strengthen participants' ability to make accurate assessments.
7. **Protective Factors in Investigation and Assessment (I&A):** CWA incorporates an emphasis on Protective Factors in I&A, highlighting how this information can assist participants in conducting accurate safety assessments.


In addition to these activities, participants engage with the Maltreatment Assessment Protocol (MAP) and explore the concept of future risk of abuse and neglect (FRAN). They also learn to use the Present Danger Guide and the Impending Danger Safety Threats Guide. These activities help participants identify unsafe behaviors and articulate how safety threats meet the criteria for impending danger. Participants learn to use agency tools to assess the occurrence of maltreatment and its impact on the child. The importance of recognizing safety threats during case transfer and its implications for timely and accurate decision-making by the agency is also emphasized.

Week Two of the training program is dedicated to learning the fundamentals of Family Services and the following key areas:

1. Family Services (FS) Assessment Model and Family Engagement: Emphasis is placed on the FS Assessment model and techniques for effective family engagement. Participants learn about alternate planning, interviewing for change, stages of change, and how to utilize motivational.
2. interviewing to support parents through the stages of change. Participants learn the concepts of Safety, Permanency, and Well-being.
3. Protective Factors: Participants utilize the Protective Factors brochure to learn the protective factors and how these are utilized to build on strengths in case planning.
4. Creating Case Plan Goals: Building upon the understanding of unsafe behaviors from Week One, participants apply this knowledge to create case plan goals that directly address and impact those unsafe behaviors. They practice goal-writing and analyze the goals with the assistance of trainers.
5. Simulated Case Planning Interview and Feedback: Participants conduct a simulated case planning interview based on the training case and collaborate with the parent to create a case plan. Trainers provide feedback during and after the interview to enhance participants' interviewing and critical thinking skills.
6. Trauma-Informed Case Plans: Participants learn about trauma-informed case plans for parents and children and how to individualize the case plans to meet the needs of each family.
7. Caseworker Visits: Participants learn to screen for safety, permanency, and well-being at each caseworker visit.
8. Monitoring Behavior Change: Participants gain skills in assessing and documenting behavior change during caseworker visits and completing case plan evaluations.
9. Trial Home Visit: Participants analyze behavior changes and monitor a trial home visit.

Week Three of the training program focuses on the transfer of learning. It begins with an intensive full-day legal training session, which covered the fundamentals of Child in Need of Aid (CINA) and the preparation of court reports. For the remainder of the week, participants divide into two specialized groups: Investigation and Assessment (I&A) and Family Services (FS). Generalist participants coordinate with their supervisors to select the appropriate group and are subsequently assigned a case aligned with their chosen focus area.

After receiving their first case, participants walk through the protocol with the support of supervisors and mentors. Mentors connect participants' field experiences with classroom training, solidifying learning and critical thinking. Participants can gain experience from one another's cases and share insights on next steps.



SKILS 162R is comprised of a two-week core training program covering these topics:

1. Advanced Safety Assessment
2. Screening for All Types of Abuse
3. Trauma-Informed Care
4. Substance Use Disorders
5. Mental Health
6. Indian Child Welfare Act (ICWA) I
7. Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Foundations
8. Youth Mental Health First Aid Certification
9. Permanency
10. Advanced Information Collection in Investigation and Assessment
11. Parent Engagement Strategies
12. Worker Safety
13. Resiliency
14. Identification of Child Abuse and Neglect
15. Testifying in Court and Report Writing
16. Youth Perspectives
17. Domestic Violence

Prerequisites for SKILS 162R include the completion of SKILS 161R, the learning modules in the Learning Management System (LMS) titled "Intersession A," and field experience as a case-carrying worker with support from supervisory coaching and mentorship.

The Intersession A modules focus on preparing participants for the Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI) workshop, preparing for the Youth Mental Health First Aid Certification, an Opioid webinar, Prudent Parent Standards, Child Welfare Ethics and Advocacy, Tribal Identification Guide, and completing a reflection on a cultural practice reading.

The training on Substance Use Disorders, Mental Health, and Domestic Violence training culminates in a specialized afternoon breakout session by I&A or FS, Generalist caseworkers join the group designated by their supervisor. During SKILS 162R participants incorporate the knowledge they acquire and apply it to a training case to enhance their critical thinking skills. Family Services (FS) caseworkers also received Permanency and Alternate Planning training, while Investigation and Assessment (I&A) workers received Advanced Information Collection and Evaluation training.

Participants can benefit from recordings of parents who successfully navigated the child protection system and reunified with their children, as part of the Parent Engagement Strategies training. They also take part in the DEI Foundations workshop, and engage in panel discussions involving ICWA, foster parents, and youth. Hearing from panel members allows participants to reflect on how their own practice relates to the lives of children, families, and Tribes.

The comprehensive training program of SKILS 162R aims to equip participants with the necessary knowledge, skills, and perspectives to address complex issues in the field of child welfare. By covering a diverse range of topics and incorporating real-life experiences, the training fosters a deeper understanding and enhances the participants' ability to support children, families, and communities effectively.

SKILS 163R is comprised of a one-week core training program covering these topics:

1. **Reflections from the Field:** Participants review the practice model and reflect on their experiences thus far in the field identifying their strengths and growth areas. Participants practice difficult conversations with caregivers and children.
2. **Resilience II:** Participants revisit Resilience to enhance adaptability in the face of secondary trauma, increased caseloads, and turnover.
3. **Trauma-Informed Care:** Participants learn how trauma affects families, how to apply trauma-informed care to practice, and engage in trauma-informed practices.
4. **I&A Advanced Interviewing:** Building on existing child interview skills and using the Child Interviewing Guide, participants identify and problem solve blocks, barriers, and challenges in adult interviews.
5. **FS Motivational Interviewing:** FS participants learn how motivational interviewing is applied in the behavioral change process and then apply motivational interviewing in simulated scenarios.
6. **Casework with Children and Youth from Vulnerable Populations:** Participants learn to facilitate communication during safety assessment and case planning specific to children and youth experiencing physical, mental, or emotional disabilities. Participants also learn best practices for working with LGBTQ+ youth. Participants receive resources and information about Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities and Medicaid waivers as well as other resources in the State of Alaska.
7. **Application:** Participants apply the information learned in Casework with Children and Youth from Vulnerable Populations in I&A for assessing maltreatment and safety or in FS for case planning and caseworker visits.
8. **Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Applications:** Participants demonstrate concrete skills for inclusive practice, learn to cultivate curiosity, practice compassion for self and others. Participants learn to promote local practices in their regions, utilize culturally adapted interventions, and partner with Tribes and other agencies.
9. **Advanced Legal:** Participants build on their legal knowledge by engaging with the Assistant Attorney General (AAG) and learn more about testifying, levels of evidence, and documenting evidence.

Completion of 161R and 162R are prerequisites, along with modules in Intersession B and field experience as a case-carrying worker with supervisory support. Intersession B covers Title IV-E Overview and Understanding Quality Assurance (QA) and the Child and Family Services Review (CFSR).

The objective of SKILS is to equip frontline staff with comprehensive knowledge of various aspects of child protection, enhancing their expertise as they gain practical experience in the field.

Sampling of SKILS 161R Participant Feedback:

- *It gave me a solid grasp on each topic, timelines, policies, and missions.*
- *I thought this gave a great base of knowledge for me to build off.*
- *I think the training provided a great outline for the job I will be performing. The case works steps were covered in detail by the instructors.*
- *The training had some excellent content, I feel like we could easily spend more time on IA.*
- *It gave a great foundation for beginning my work. All of the topics were covered in detail.*
- *I feel like I learned some solid core concepts that will help me start work with children and families.*
- *Training provided a clear foundational understanding of the role that I will be stepping into.*
- *All the tools and guides were not only explained but we also got the opportunity to practice. I appreciated how the instructors were challenging our answers so we could use our critical thinking and reasoning skills while learning.*

Sampling of SKILS 162R Participant Feedback:

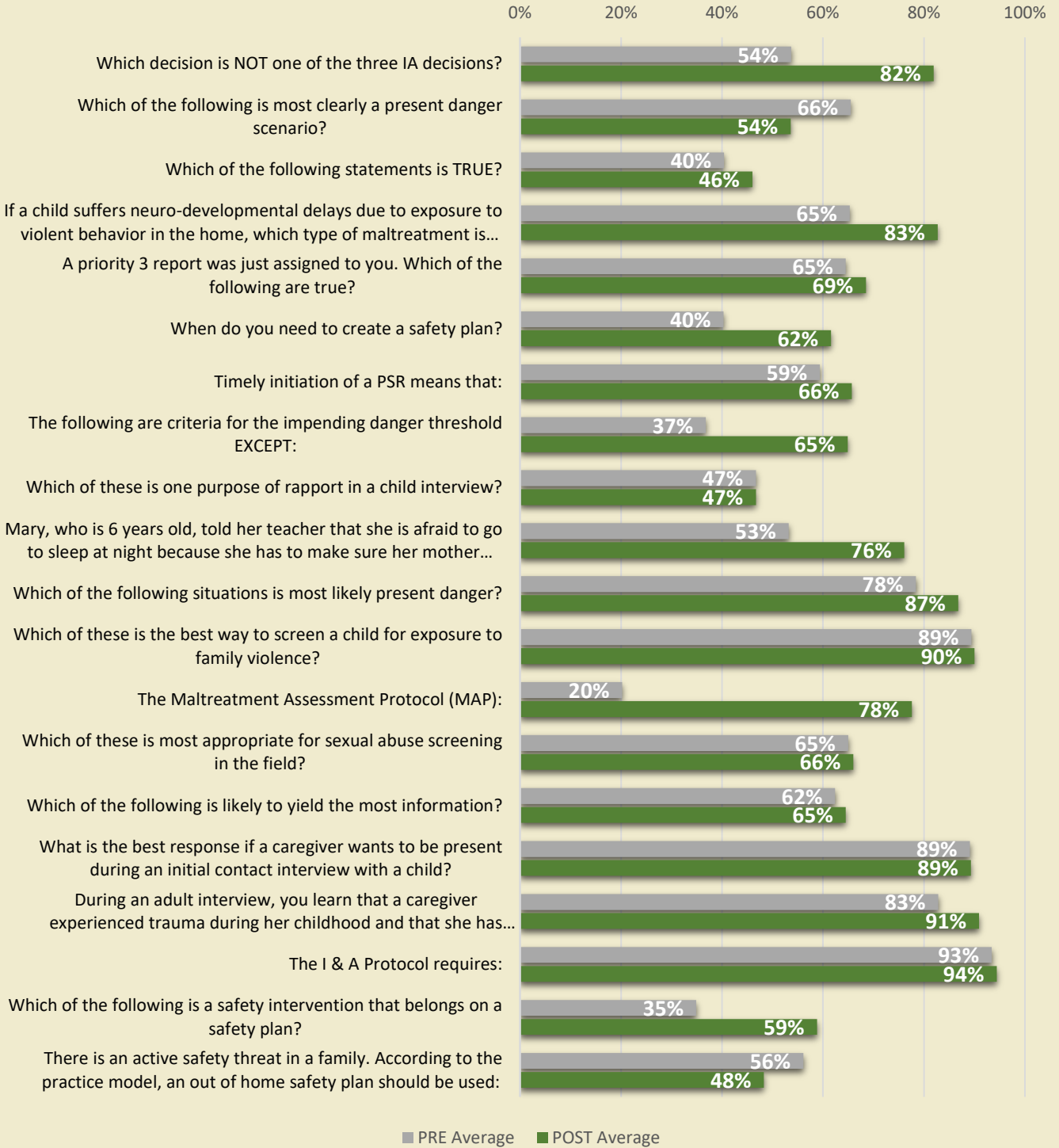
- *It helped me better understand the perspectives of foster placements and foster youths as well as parents who have been involved in the system.*
- *It gave me other worker's perspectives when working with children.*
- *I am 5 months into my new job at OCS with a case load of 10 FS cases and have had 10 IA completed. I really could have used this training in the beginning of my time before I had all these cases. Now I felt like it was time I did not have.*
- *It was good foundational information. I think everyone gets out of it what they put into it.*
- *I would have preferred it earlier in my career with the state before I worked cases.*
- *I do think it was helpful to have some cases under our belts so we could use experience in our learning.*

Sampling of SKILS 163R Participant Feedback:

- *We covered everything that is essential to our work.*
- *It provided some foundation.*
- *It's a great curriculum taught by individuals who have been in your shoes.*

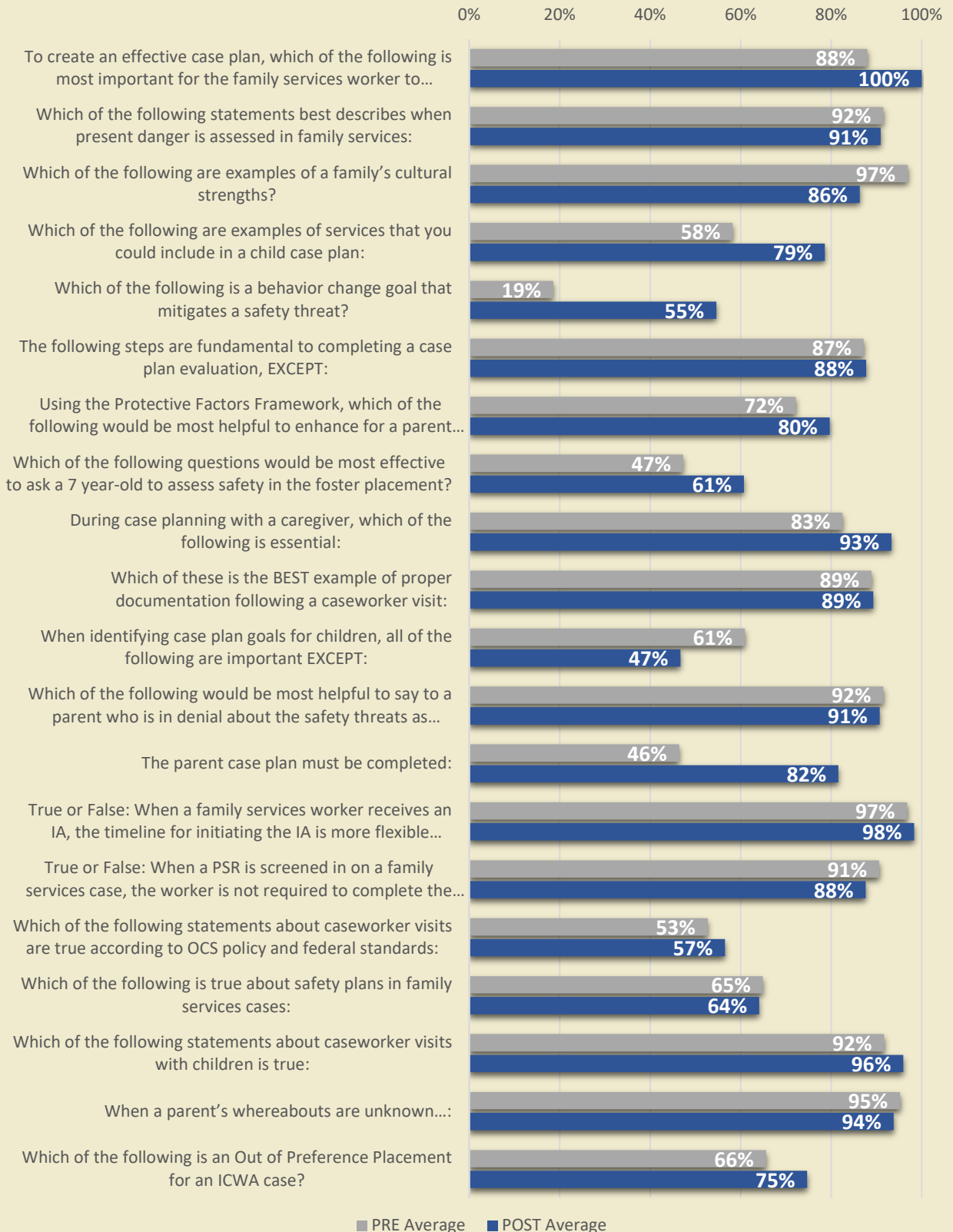
SKILS 161R - Week 1

Pre-Post Results



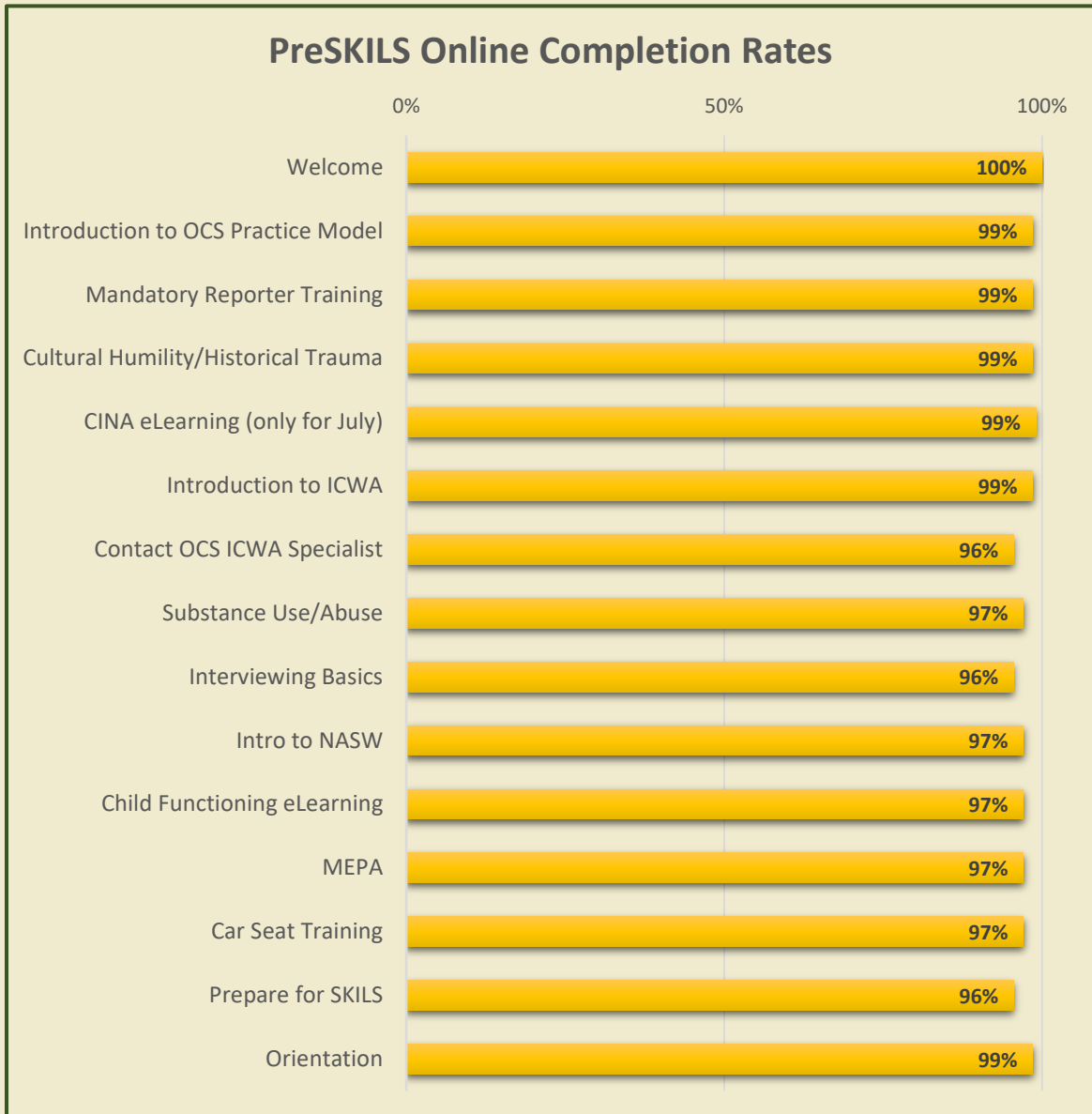
SKILS 161R - Week 2

Pre-Post Results

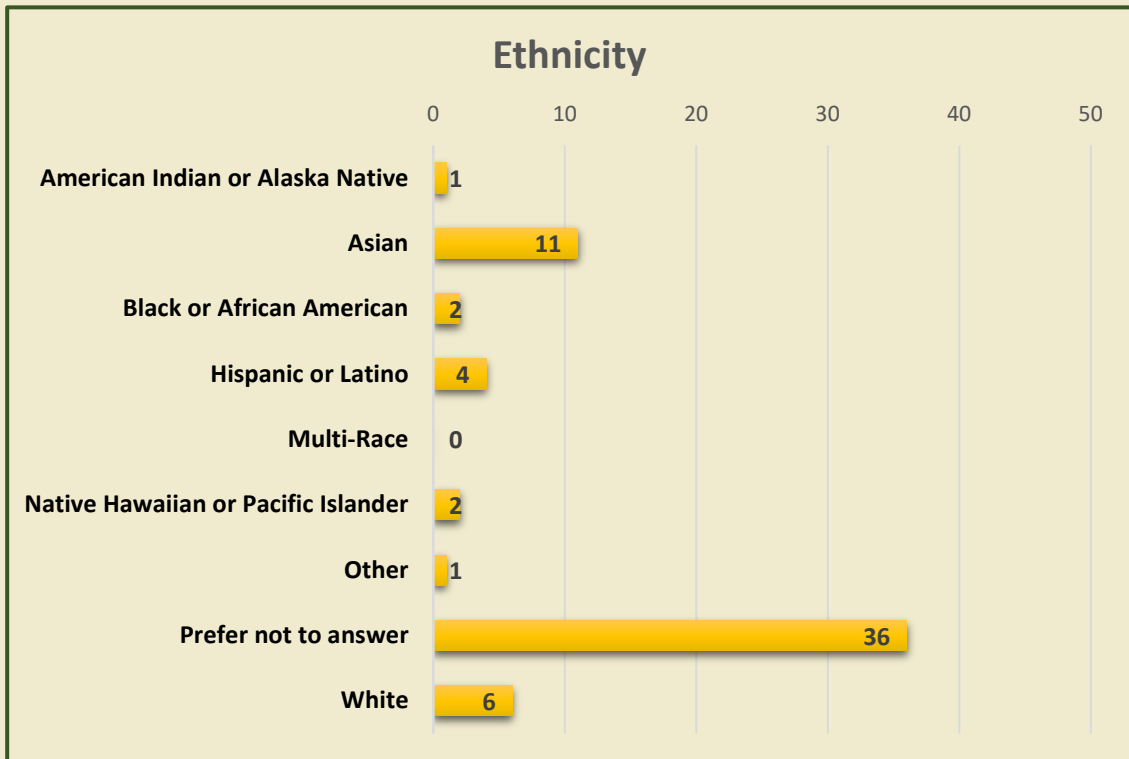
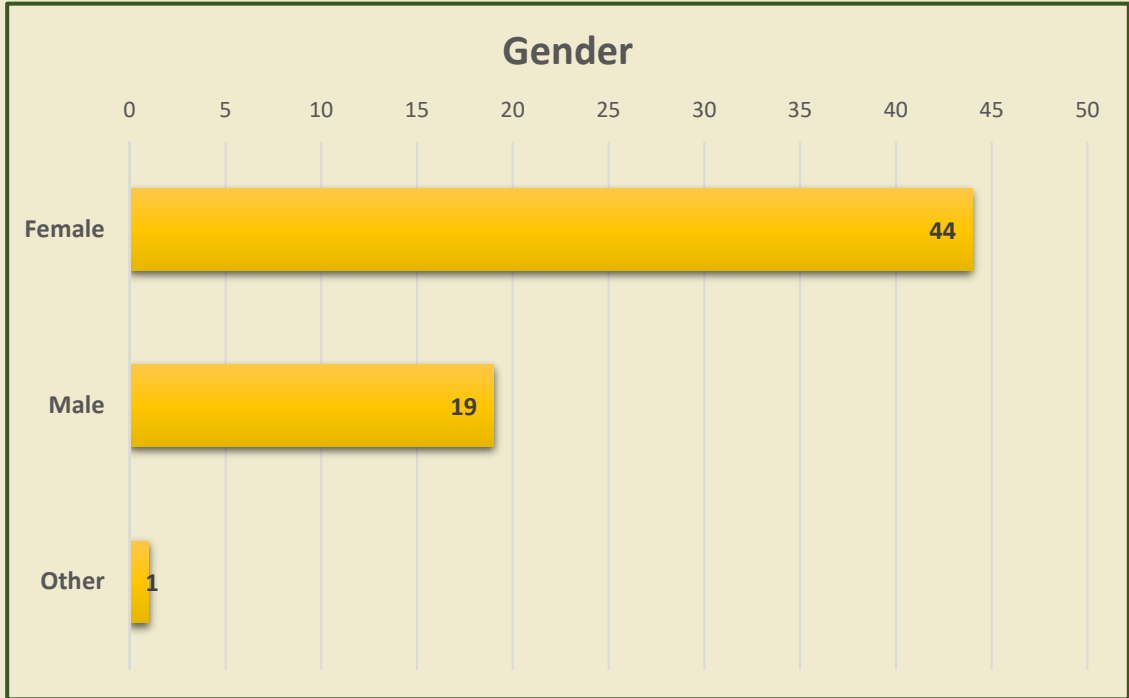


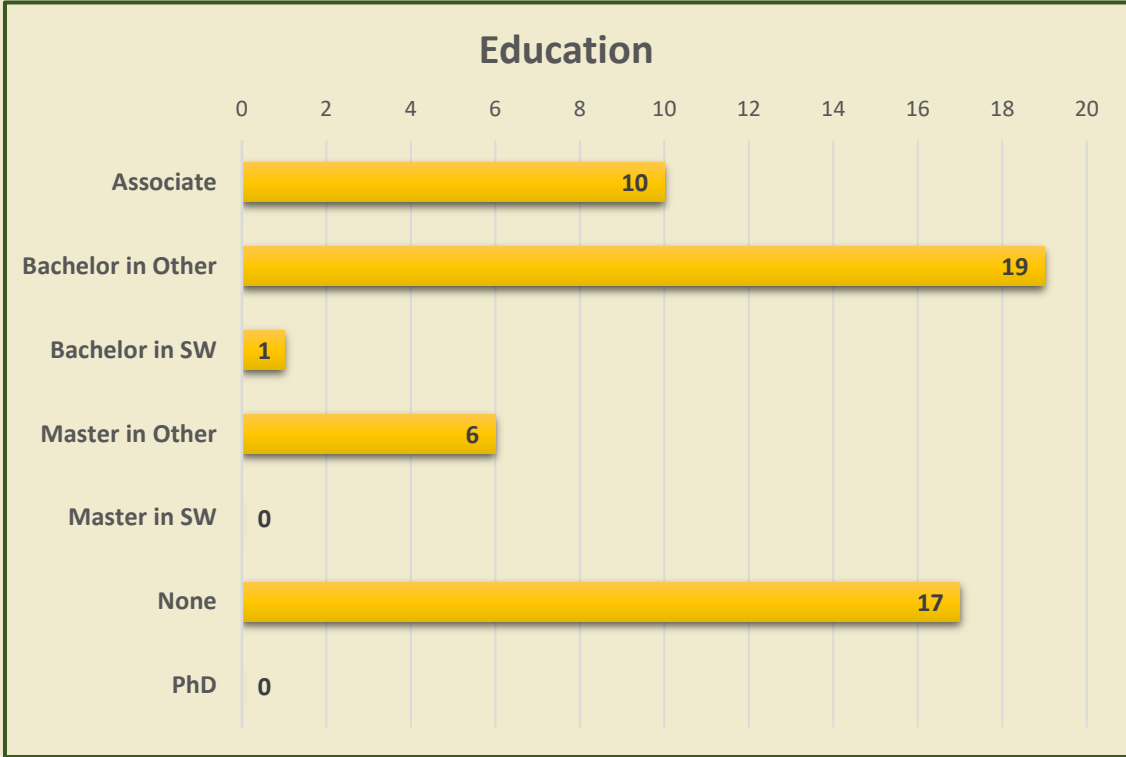
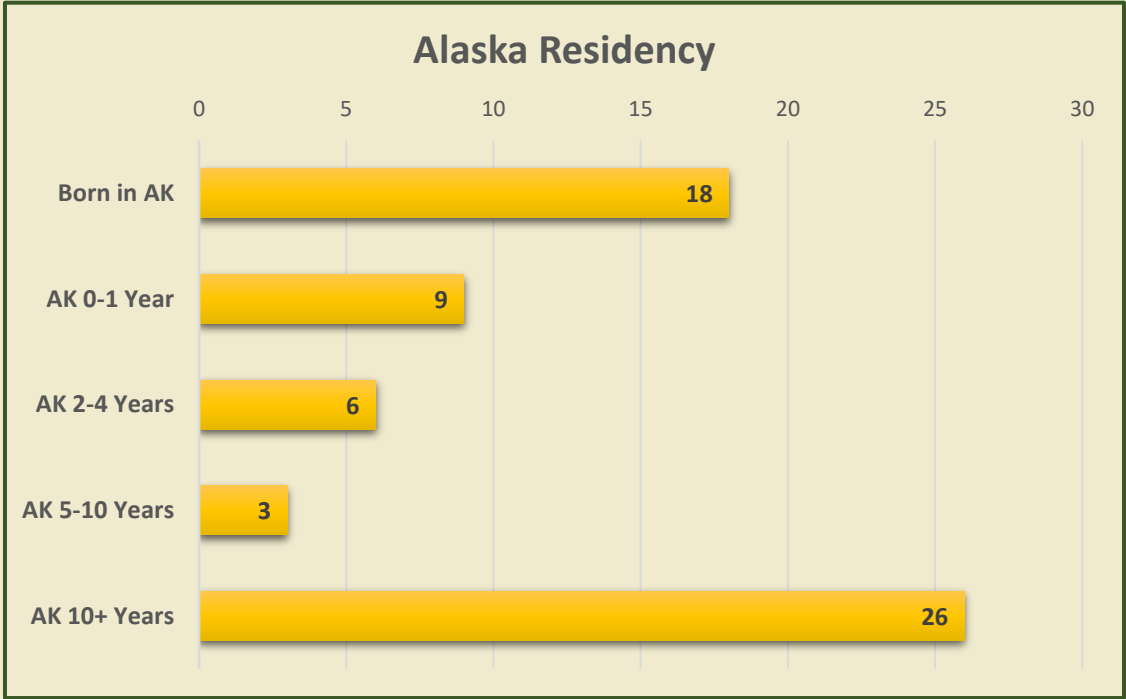
Online Module & Demographic Information

Prior to starting SKILS, new employees are required to finish online modules. The subsequent charts display the completion rates for each module, accompanied by demographic information of the workers. The demographic percentages are derived from the attendees who completed the survey.



Demographic charts





Licensing

Licensing training aims to prepare Community Care Licensing Specialists (CCLS) with skills, knowledge, and practical applications needed to effectively fulfill their roles. Before the week-long virtual training led by CWA trainers, participants must complete the Pre-CCLS online training. This online portion introduces participants to CWA staff, explores the OCS Vision, Mission, and Values, covers mandatory reporting, provides introduction to the Indian Child Welfare Act (ICWA), and includes an excerpt focused on investigations from the CCLS Manual.

The virtual training allows CCLS staff to learn and discuss how to support resource families, practice and observe simulated interviews with children and adults, enhance customer service skills, and understand permanency planning in their role. Additionally, the training includes a resource family panel facilitated by the Alaska Center for Resource Families and collaboration with the Office of Children’s Services and the Alaska Attorney General’s Office to provide insights into licensing investigations and Title IV-E regulations.

The final day of training is dedicated to an in-depth review of the process for completing background checks, exploring the foster care licensing standards in detail, and understanding the home inspection process. During this fiscal year, Licensing 114 covered both foster care regulations, 7 AAC 50, and 7 AAC 67. However, starting in fiscal year 2025, all licensed providers will be governed by the 7 AAC 67 regulations, and the 7 AAC 50 regulations will no longer be included in future trainings opportunities.

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%	100%	0%	0%
The instructional materials were helpful in building knowledge and skills on the topics covered.	0%	100%	0%	0%	0%
The activities were meaningful in facilitating my learning.	0%	0%	100%	0%	0%

Social Services Associate

SSA virtual training continues to focus on the development of essential knowledge and skills through the combination of synchronous and asynchronous sessions. Zoom sessions feature discussions, breakout groups, and various activities to ensure comprehensive coverage of the material. The four-day training covers topics such as applying the OCS Practice Model in daily work, enhancing Protective Factors, building relationships and partnerships with families in child welfare, and understanding the importance and function of family contact.

Additionally, SSA training emphasizes a thorough understanding of the Indian Child Welfare Act (ICWA), the effects of historical trauma on families in the child welfare system, and cultural humility. It also includes a focus on worker resilience and self-care.

Below is a summary 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.		10%	50%	20%	20%
The instructional materials (i.e. PowerPoints, participant manuals) were helpful in building knowledge and skills on the topics covered.		10%	60%	0%	30%
Asynchronous time was conducive to my learning.		0%	50%	30%	20%

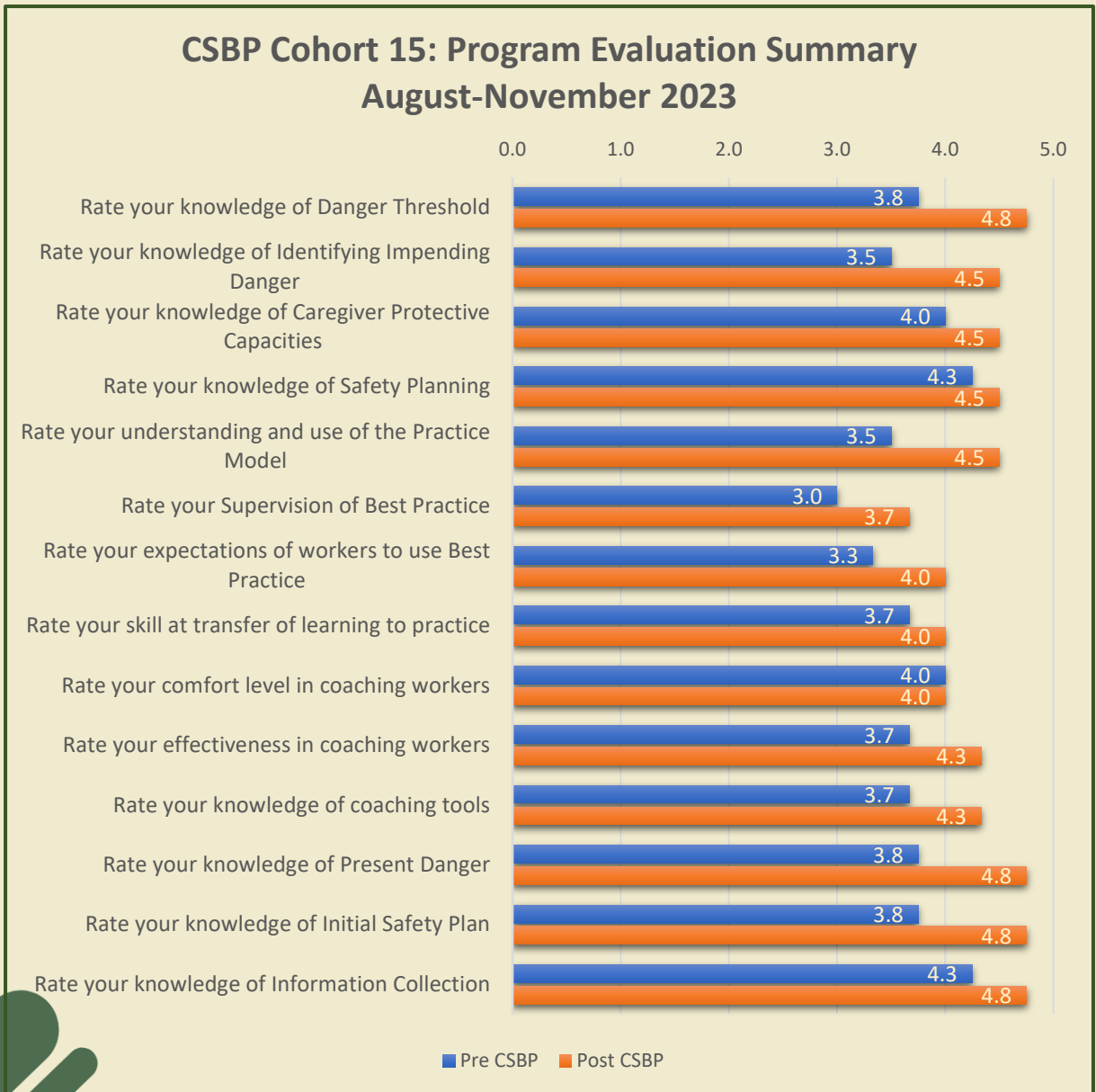
Sampling of Social Services Associate Training Participant Feedback:

- I feel like there was some great background info to help get a better understanding on the inner workings of Family services and case worker workload. I do feel like it was value added as an SSA. I have more confidence coming out of the training then I did before it.*
- I think it was well presented and explained. I like the methodology they used of asking questions, group discussions, and share experiences.*
- I have no recommendations other than, maybe having this training way before starting the job as an SSA. I noticed that there were other SSA's that's been here for 11 months almost a year, I've been here for 8 years and most of the things taught in training I've learned already, But I was happy to learn more especially knowing that I'm in the same boat as other SSA's, knowing that they're having the same issues as I am, that makes me feel confident in myself and the work I do.*



Coaching Supervisors to Best Practice

The Coaching Supervisors to Best Practice (CSBP) program is a 14-week training program tailored to empower and equip supervisors and mentors of frontline staff. CSBP has been revised in recent years to address performance coaching specific to the OCS Practice Model. Each supervisor is assigned a dedicated professional one to one coach. This tailored coaching approach focuses on the specific practice model topics relevant to each supervisor's responsibilities, while also emphasizing the development of critical thinking skills. CSBP is structured into four modules, each building upon the previous one. The final module is dedicated to fostering the transfer of acquired knowledge and skills through a case presentation by supervisors. Here is a summary from participants who submitted evaluations





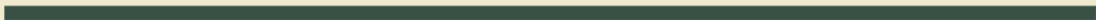
Diversity Equity and Inclusion (DEI) is a tiered training program delivered asynchronously and on Zoom to all staff at the Office of Children’s Services.

DEI Foundations is embedded in SKILS 162R. Central to the DEI framework are the 5 C’s: curiosity, connections, courage, compassion, and change. DEI Foundations offers participants a foundational understanding of DEI concepts and practical skills for applying them in their daily work with families and colleagues. E-learning modules promote and feature skill-building activities that introduce key DEI concepts and their alignment with the OCS Mission/Vision/Values and NASW Code of Ethics. These modules cover DEI terminology, bias awareness, microaggressions, and reflection.

DEI Applications, embedded in SKILS 163R, launched in September 2022, represents the second phase of the program. This phase revisits the action plans from DEI Foundations, builds on the 5 C’s, and examines systems of oppression and advantage. It includes practical exercises in applying the 5 C’s and using culturally relevant interventions.

Additional standalone sessions were provided for existing staff and those not enrolled in SKILS 162R nor 163R.

CWA provides up-to-date DEI training and actively incorporates feedback. A workgroup formed at the end of Fiscal Year 2023 has revised both DEI Foundations and Applications, with the updated versions rolling out at the beginning of 2024. The workgroup continues to refine the curriculum based on feedback from ongoing training, ensuring that the content remains relevant and impactful

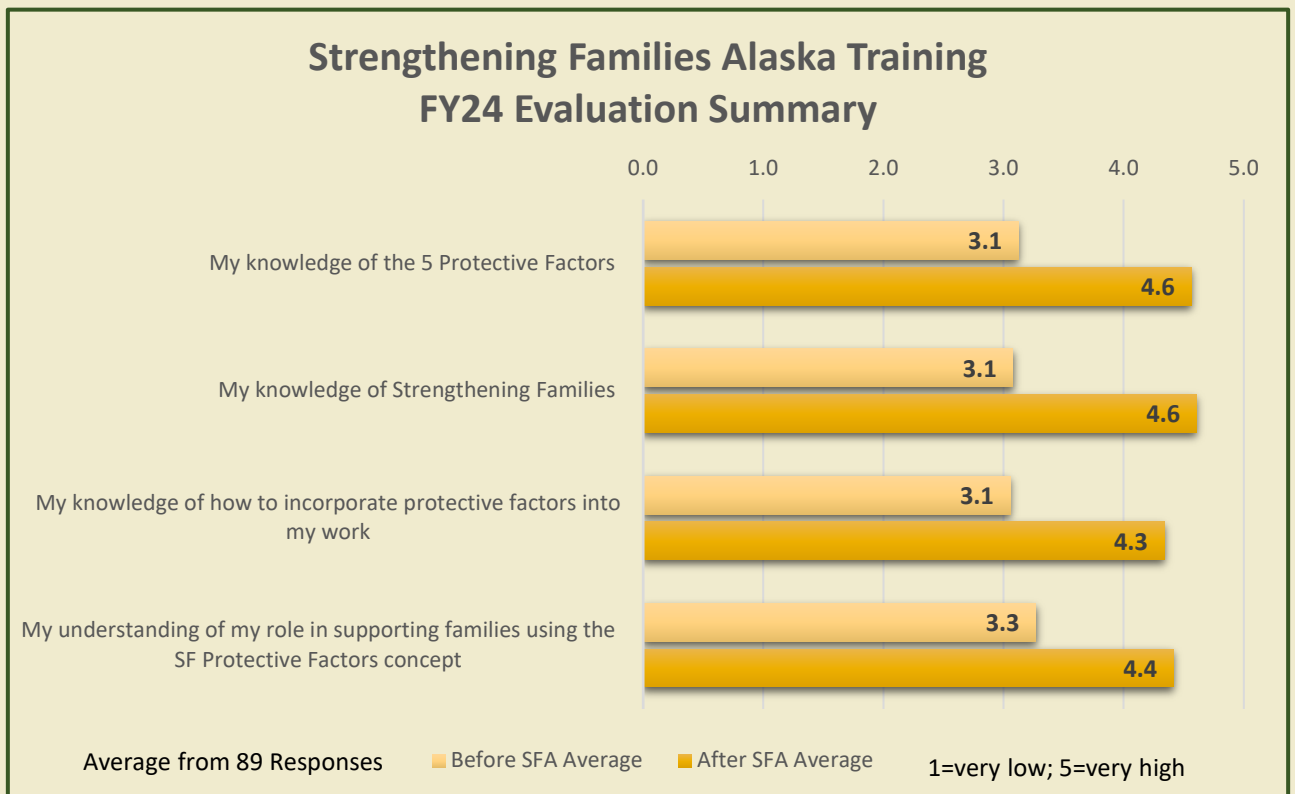


Strengthening Families ²⁵ Alaska

Child Welfare Academy has been facilitating the Strengthening Families Alaska (SFA) program since 2014. SFA emphasizes the Five Protective Factors: Parental Resilience, Social Connections, Concrete Supports in Times of Need, Knowledge of Parenting and Child Development, and the Social and Emotional Competence of Children. This program is designed for professionals working with families, youth, children, and resource families. SFA provides professionals across Alaska with opportunities to exchange ideas and strategies for partnering with families. It features a learning environment that incorporates lectures, group discussions, and interactive activities.

In the past year, CWA delivered nine SFA training events--five in person and the rest virtually. Although COVID is no longer a barrier to in-person training, virtual training remains popular due to its convenience in reaching more people across the state and the continued trend of remote work.

Here is a summary from participants who submitted evaluations.



Sampling of Strengthening Families Alaska Training Participant Feedback:

- *I realized that I could work strengthening families' information into almost any conversation with the parents I work with.*
- *I think I was overloading Families with resources and interventions. This training really highlighted for me the importance of connection and relationship building. I thought I did that before but I realize now that I was rushing through that phase.*
- *This training gave me more concrete ideas of how to empower clients in their treatment and encourage them to take charge of their lives.*
- *I loved and valued the collaborative work with people from different organizations, with all of us learning from one another about different ways we support families, sharing similar wants/needs/issues, and problem solving with one another and sharing resources.*
- *A refreshed perspective--plenty of alternative ways to approach situations within my own organization and program. Along with viewing other cultures and communities when it comes to youth development.*
- *I think the team hit the nail on the head! A two-day training feels like a great amount of time to give an overview and a dive into each component. Food and structured activities felt inclusive and well planned.*
- *I've gained some skills I could use in my everyday life as well as my work life.*
- *I enjoyed the group discussion, the breakout rooms, use of videos, and other materials. There was a nice flow between different modalities to keep me engaged.*
- *I really love how the focus is on helping families and parents with skills not just telling them or giving advice but walking it out with them.*



Service Array

Child Welfare Academy continues its work with Multidisciplinary Teams (MDT) and Child Advocacy Centers (CAC) across Alaska to provide training and technical assistance. During the past year, CWA provided coordination and logistical support along with travel support when needed in the following activities focused on child welfare and maltreatment issues:

- Mandatory Child Abuse Reporter Training held July 7, 2023
- Saliva Based Drug Test Training on November 29, 2023
- CJA Task Force planning session on December 7-8, 2023
- CAC Grantee meeting held in Juneau on February 13-14, 2024

Furthermore, CWA contracted with an Alaskan based company to develop a virtual reality (VR) application:

- 3D settings and scenarios for multi-player in VR:
 - Small aircraft transportation scenario
 - Approaching a rural Alaskan home scenario
- Student and instructor voice communications with VR

This would allow participants to experience an immersive, virtual environment simulating what they might encounter during a home visit.

Lastly, CWA remains committed to serving on the Alaska Child Welfare Conference Development Committee and the 2024 Child Maltreatment Conference Committee into fiscal year 2025.

ChildFirst™ Alaska

Child Welfare Academy continues its collaboration with the Alaska Children's Alliance and Zero Abuse Project to co-facilitate ChildFirst™ Alaska forensic training for law enforcement, the Office of Children's Services, advocates, and community partners. During this past year, the ChildFirst™ Alaska training was offered twice, with 37 participants successfully completing the training and receiving certification. Participants came from diverse backgrounds and shared the common objective of supporting Alaska's children. Special thanks to the training team.

Highlights

Addition to the CWA Team

Heather Foxworthy joined the CWA team in December 2023, relocating to Anchorage from Kodiak where she resided for over three decades. She holds a master's degree in Religion and Philosophy. Heather brings extensive experience as a Parents as Teachers (PAT) model certified home visitor in Alaska and as a trainer for PAT National Center in St. Louis.

She has led courses such as "What You Do Matters" and deeply understands the importance of home visiting, showing great passion for the roles home visitors play. Heather has been actively involved in organizations such as the Kodiak Early Childhood Coalition and the local chapter of Dolly Parton's Imagination Library. In January, she was appointed as the Alaska Parents as Teachers State Leader.

Safety in Placement

CWA trainers provided CCLS staff a training focused on safety in placement. This training was offered during a licensing all-staff meeting, with majority of licensing staff from all regions present. CWA staff led an interactive discussion on how CCLS staff identify child safety concerns during their home inspections. This training explored the importance of recognizing safety concerns while also assessing potential licensing violations. CWA trainers reviewed a series of scenarios which required intervention and follow up; this enabled a rich discussion around critical thinking in the role of a CCLS.

508 Compliance

Over the past year, CWA remained committed to providing ADA-compliant materials and training experience. The compliance committee made significant progress by enhancing their knowledge of ADA and Section 508 compliance. The committee assigned staff to research specific aspects of ADA and Section 508 compliance related to training materials. Based on this research, an online course was developed as a reference resource for all CWA staff. Additionally, an in-house training session was conducted for CWA trainers, covering an introduction to Section 508 compliance and a tutorial on creating 508-compliant Word documents. The committee also reviewed and updated the Farrow case study documents in SKILS 161R to ensure they met Section 508 compliance standards.

Parents as Teachers

On January 16, 2024, Child Welfare Academy became the new home of the Parents as Teachers (PAT) State Office in Alaska. PAT promotes the optimal early development, learning, and health of children by supporting and engaging their parents and caregivers.

Joining twenty-five other state and country offices as the PAT State Office, CWA offers ongoing implementation support for programs across Alaska and serves as the primary provider of resources, program information, technical assistance, and training for PAT home visitors:

- Co-hosted monthly implementation support meetings held virtually. Beginning July 2024, CWA will assume sole responsibility of these meetings for the Alaska affiliates.
- Served as a HUB member for the University of Alaska Anchorage Home Visiting ECHO series.
- Responded to inquiries from agencies considering PAT for their home visiting program's evidence-based curriculum.
- Presented to the Alaska Children's Caucus on April 11, 2024. The PAT National Center obtained a recording of the presentation and featured it in their newsletter. This recording was subsequently used by other state offices as a model of a quality presentation for legislative audiences.
- Served on the planning committee and participate in the Home Visiting Summit held virtually on April 15-18, 2024.
- Attended the PAT State and Country Leader Summit in St. Louis, MO, May 5-6, 2024.
- Conducted in-person training for home visitors on May 23, 2024, which focused on enhancing skills when supporting prenatal families.

In the coming year, the State Office will assume duties and program support previously managed by the regional office of the Parents as Teachers National Center. This transition will allow for the development of uniquely Alaskan solutions to uniquely Alaskan issues.

Monthly Calls with OCS Supervisors

CWA continued to host monthly calls in partnership with OCS for Supervisors throughout the state. The topic of each call was based on supervisor feedback about their individual needs.

Preparing for Guardianship/Adoption Referrals	July 12, 2023
What happens next/Guardianship/adoption next steps	August 9, 2023
ICWA	September 13, 2023
OCS HR, Part I	October 11, 2023
OCS HR, Part II	November 8, 2023
NASW Code of Ethics, Mission, Vision, Values	December 13, 2023
Practical Organization, Tips, & Strategies	February 14, 2024
Onboarding Checklist	March 13, 2024
Organization Time Management-Balancing Conflicting Priorities	April 10, 2024

CWA continues to partner with Facing Foster Care in Alaska and the Office of Children's Services Independent Living Program to offer an array of services to foster youth and alumni to develop life skills, engage in higher education and training, and bring lived experience to training and systems improvement efforts.

OYE Highlights:

2023 August Cultural Retreat

- 34 foster and alumni youth had the opportunity to learn about the different cultures across Alaska. Participants picked berries made Akutaq, traditional beading, and dancing and making fry bread. Youth reported feeling revived when engaging in traditional cultural activities.

2023 October Retreat

- 35 foster youth and alumni came together to celebrate the 20th year anniversary of youth voice with Facing Foster Care in Alaska. Youth learned about mentoring opportunities, engaged in sports and crafts with their peers, and focused on overall health and wellness.

2024 Career Conference

- 26 foster youth and alumni participated in the annual career conference. OYE staff Partnered with CoALaska for some hands-on learning with heavy equipment and learning about the path to getting a career in construction. Youth also had the chance to visit a hair school and speak to military recruiters and learn about various careers in the trades.

Lived Experience in Training

- Foster Youth and alumni prepare for and share at SKILS training to offer lived experience to new frontline staff throughout the year.
- OYE staff partnered with the Alaska Center for Resource Families to offer a training on the Legal Side of Foster Care highlighting the rights and responsibilities and resources of older youth in care.

Education & Training Voucher Program Highlights:

Child Welfare Academy, in partnership with the Office of Children's Services: Independent Living Program, administers the Education & Training Voucher program (ETV), supporting current and former foster youth in pursuit of post-secondary education, career training, and professional development. The program ensures that both direct services and outside resources are utilized in assisting each student secure support among a variety of needs: safe and secure housing, healthcare services, food security, transportation, financial aid, academics, and life skill development. Students in the program are also met with supportive social connections to promote identity development and a sense of belonging.

- **46** Education and Training Vouchers awarded in total to foster youth, of which **32** of those were newly awarded to first-time students
- **36** foster youth attended UA campuses across the state
- **15** foster youth were awarded new University of Alaska (UA) Presidential Foster Youth Tuition Waivers for the academic year 2023-2024 with **28** students total attending a UA campus on a tuition waiver
- **8** foster youth awarded OCS Tuition Scholarships
- **2** former youth graduated with degrees from a university campus, totaling **67** graduates to date
- Provided 17 students with on campus housing at a UA campus across the 2023-2024 academic year
- Several foster youth attended a college outside the UA system or enrolled in a vocational/career training program:
 - Alaska Pacific University
 - Alaska CNA Program
 - Academy of Hair Design
 - AK Phlebotomy Training Program
 - AVTEC
 - Northern Industrial Training
 - Trendsetters Beauty School
 - State Fair Community College
 - Western Governors University
 - Seattle Divers Institute of Tech
 - Pinnacle Drivers Training

Worked individually with over **57** former and current foster youth in preparation for post-secondary education and resources to assist in independent living



Child Welfare Academy

We emphasize 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.



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