CHILD WELFARE ACADEMY Annual Report

JULY 2021 – JUNE 2022

ACADEMY OVERVIEW

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

MISSION

CWA trains and supports Alaskans by developing competent and compassionate professionals to assure children are safe, youth thrive, and families are strong.

CORE VALUES

Respect: Honor all peoples' dignity with compassion.
Trauma Informed: Curricula and training is trauma informed.
Excellence: Through research, collaboration, adaptability and creativity.

child welfare ACADEMY

Table of Contents

CWA Staff & Location 4

Training Summary 5

Training Calendar 6

Standards, Knowledge, & Insight Leading to Success (SKILS) . 8

Licensing Training 17

Supervisor Training 18

Social Services Associate (SSA) 19

Coaching Supervisors to Best Practice (CSBP) . . . 20

Diversity, Equity, & Inclusion 21

Strengthening Families™ Alaska (SFA) 23

Strong Parents Alaska (SPA) 24

Service Array 25

National Criminal Justice Training Center . . . 26

CWA Highlights 27

Office of Youth Empowerment (OYE) 31

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Staff & Contact

Training Staff

Amanda Metivier, Director, almetivier@alaska.edu
Tracey Eason, Core Training Coordinator, tpeason@alaska.edu
Valerie Dudley, Trainer, vjdudley@alaska.edu
Elsie Boudreau, Trainer, eboudre1@alaska.edu
Kimberly Mouriquand, Trainer, ksmouriquand@alaska.edu

Administrative Staff

Marianne Mahon, Associate Director of Finance & Operations, mmahon@alaska.edu
Lisa Tanga, Training Coordinator, lktanga@alaska.edu
Christine Mojica, Instructional Designer, ckmojica@alaska.edu

Office of Youth Empowerment (OYE) Staff

Marissa Sweet, Education & Training Voucher Coordinator, mmsweetlindholm@alaska.edu
Sarah Redmon, Project Coordinator, sredmon@alaska.edu

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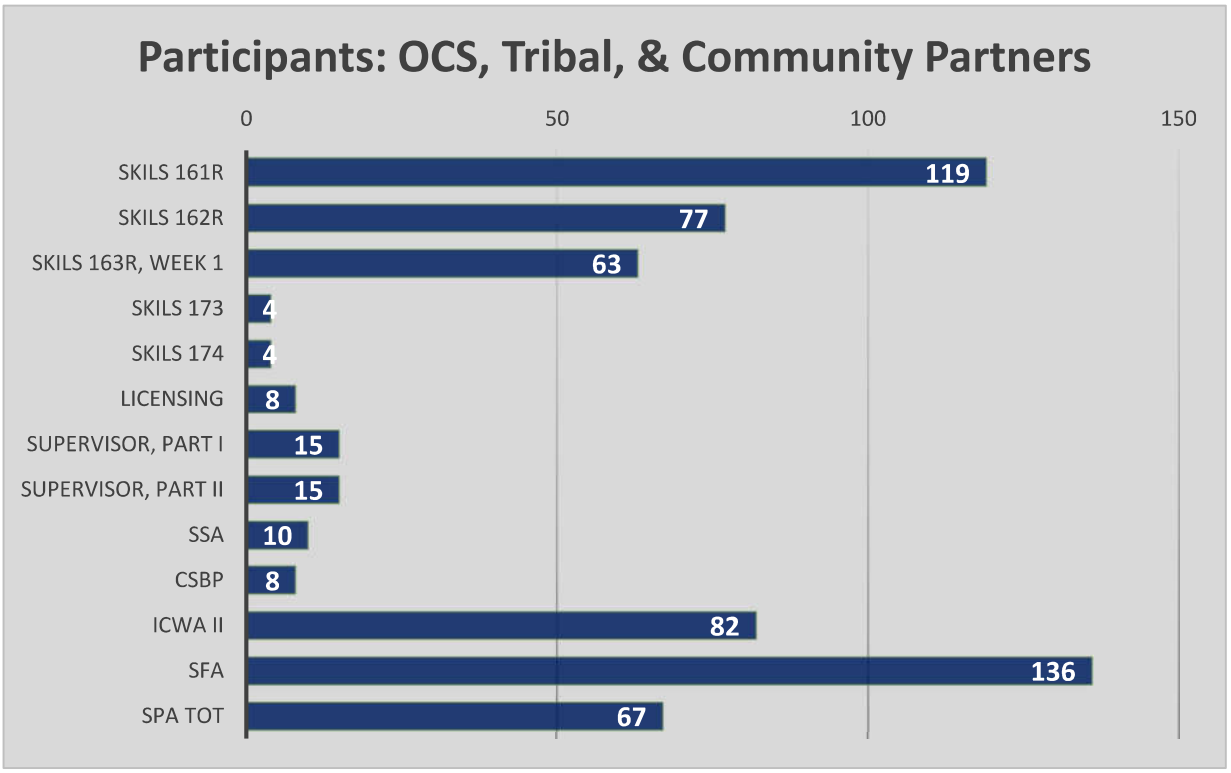
1901 Bragaw Street, Suite 105, Anchorage, AK 99508
www.uaa.alaska.edu/cwa
PH: 907.786.6720 | FX: 907.786.6735
Email: uaa.cwa@alaska.edu

Training Summary

From July 2021 to June 2022, the Child Welfare Academy delivered 265 training days to child welfare professionals, parents, caregivers, and foster parents throughout Alaska. Here are charts that show the number of participants by training events.

265
training days



OCS Participants, SKILS 161R for New Workers	98
OCS Participants, SKILS 162R for New Workers	77
OCS Participants, SKILS 163R, Week 1, for New Workers	63
OCS Participants, SKILS 173	4
OCS Participants, SKILS 174 Family Service SKILS for Caseworkers	4
OCS Participants, Other Training	123
Tribal & Community Partners, SKILS for New Workers	21
Tribal & Community Partners, Other Training	218
Total Completed Training Days	265
Total Course Hours	15,077

Training Calendar

July 2021 - 2022

NO.	EVENT	DATES
1	161 SKILS	July 12-26
2	140 SSA Training	August 2-6
3	229 ICWA II	August 2-5
4	161 SKILS	August 9-23
5	162 SKILS	August 16-27
6	580 CSBP #13	September 1 - January 14
7	Strengthening Families™ AK	September 8-9
8	161 SKILS	September 13 - 27
9	163 SKILS	September 27 - October 1
10	Strengthening Families™ AK	October 7-8
11	162 SKILS	October 18-29
12	237 ChildFirst™	October 25-29
13	161 SKILS	November 1-15
14	Involuntary Clients	November 16
15	229 ICWA II	November 16-18
16	Involuntary Clients	November 19
17	Strengthening Families™ AK	November 20
18	Strong Parents AK, Training of Trainers	November 22
19	Strong Parents AK, Training of Trainers	November 29
20	161 SKILS	November 29 - December 13
21	162 SKILS	November 29 - December 13
22	Strong Parents AK, Training of Trainers	December 8
23	Strong Parents AK, Training of Trainers	December 15
24	161 SKILS	January 10-24
25	163 SKILS	January 17-21

NO.	EVENT	DATES
26	114 Licensing	January 24-28
27	161 SKILS	January 31 - February 14
28	162 SKILS	February 14-25
29	229 ICWA II	February 15-17
30	161 SKILS	March 7-21
31	163 SKILS	March 21-25
32	554 Supervisor Training	March 29-31
33	161 SKILS	April 4-18
34	162 SKILS	April 18-29
35	Diversity, Equality, and Inclusion	April 21
36	Strengthening Families™ AK	April 27-28
37	161 SKILS	May 2-16
38	229 ICWA II	May 3-5
39	163 SKILS	May 16-20
40	Strengthening Families™ AK	May 18-19
41	555 Supervisor Training	May 24-25
42	Diversity, Equality, and Inclusion	May 26
43	Diversity, Equality, and Inclusion	June 14
44	Strengthening Families™ AK	June 15-16

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

SKILS 161R, first week covered Investigation and Assessment (I & A) and the second week was on Family Services (FS) essentials. Participants received the ORCA Help Desk training prior to SKILS 161R which allowed the trainers to refer to this and discussed documentation examples throughout the course. Training on individual and family culture, ICWA, trauma-informed care, active and reasonable efforts, agency protocol, and the practice model were emphasized throughout out the training. Participants received training materials in the mail and electronically, engaged in live classroom work through Zoom in the mornings, and completed asynchronous work in the afternoons using CWA's learning management system (LMS) as well as field shadowing as coordinated by their supervisor. Furthermore, participants followed a mock training case throughout SKILS 161R to increase critical thinking around the practice model and the steps workers must take during the life of a case. Trainers engaged participants in an afternoon daily check in to ensure participants' understanding of the independent work.

Week One began with introduction to the OCS Mission, Vision, and Values. Participants extensively learned about how their bias could impact decision making, how to manage their bias, and evidence-based child interviewing techniques. Trainers also discussed environmental awareness, importance of preparing for investigations and interviews, and worker safety that included a presentation from OCS safety officers.

In addition, participants spent time reviewing initial contact, agency protocol for information gathering, and engaging in a simulated child interview utilizing the training case. They were provided feedback during and after the interview to help develop their child-interviewing skills. Further analysis of the training case was done to determine present danger, create a realistic safety plan, and determine if an alternate caregiver could protect the children. CWA incorporated an emphasis on Protective Factors in I & A and how that information could help participants conduct accurate safety assessments.

Other activities, such as the Maltreatment Assessment Protocol and the Future Risk of Abuse and Neglect, were added to help participants understand unsafe behaviors and articulate how a safety threat crosses the threshold for impending danger. Participants also learned to utilize agency tools to determine if maltreatment has occurred and the impact on the child. They were able to practice these skills to recognize the importance of 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 emphasized on the FS Assessment model and family engagement. Participants learned 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. They also were able to take what they learned in week one on understanding and articulating unsafe behaviors to create case plan goals with parents that directly impacted the unsafe behaviors.

Participants practiced writing goals based on the unsafe behaviors and later analyzed them with the trainer's assistance. They conducted a simulated case planning interview from the training case and created a case plan with the parent. Trainers provided feedback during and after the interview to assist in developing interviewing and critical thinking skills. Participants then learned about trauma-informed case plans for parents and children, how to assess and document for behavior change during caseworker visits, and complete a case plan evaluation. They also analyzed and monitored a trial home visit.

Week Three focused on the transfer of learning. Day one was a full day of legal training that included Child in Need of Aid basics and court reports. Then, for the remainder of the week, the participants were split into groups, I & A and FS. Generalist participants coordinated with their supervisor for which group they would join and were assigned a case accordingly. After participants received their first case, they walked through the protocol with the support of supervisors and mentors. Mentors were able to connect the participants' field experiences with the classroom training to solidify learning and critical thinking. Participants also increased their learning by hearing from one another's cases and next steps.

SKILS 162R was two weeks of virtual core training on Trauma-Informed Care, Substance Use Disorders, Mental Health, ICWA I, Permanency, Parent Engagement Strategies, Worker Safety, Resiliency, Identification of Child Abuse and Neglect, Evidence Collection and Corroboration, and Domestic Violence. Prerequisites for 162R were completion of SKILS 161R, learning modules in the LMS titled "Intersession A," and time in the field as a case-carrying worker supported by supervisory coaching and mentorship. Intersession A included modules to prepare participants for engagement in the Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI) workshop, an Opioid webinar, Prudent Parent Standards, Child Welfare Ethics and Advocacy, Tribal Identification Guide, and to complete a reflection on a cultural practice reading.

Substance Use Disorders, Mental Health, and Domestic Violence training culminated in an afternoon breakout session that focused on I & A or FS where participants incorporated the information learned and applied it to a training case to enhance their critical thinking skills. FS caseworkers also received Permanency and Alternate Planning training. The I & A workers received Advanced Information Collection and Evaluation training.

In addition, participants benefited from the recordings of parents who have successfully navigated the child protection system and reunified with their children in Parent Engagement Strategies, took part in the DEI Foundations workshop, attended safety training provided by CWA and OCS, and listened to panel discussions involving ICWA, foster parent, and youth. Hearing from the panel members helped participants reflect on how their own practice relates to the lives of children, families, and Tribes.

SKILS 163R, the fifth week of training, was completed virtually as a group and asynchronous work in the LMS. Prerequisites for SKILS 163R included completion of 161R and 162R, learning modules in the LMS titled "Intersession B," and time in the field as a case-carrying worker supported by supervisory coaching and mentorship. Intersession B work included modules on Youth Mental Health First Aid, Human Trafficking, and Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorders.

Other topics covered in SKILS 163R included reflections from the field where participants considered their practice, learned how to develop their own critical thinking skills, and continued to develop professionally. Participants also revisited Resilience to improve their adaptabilities due to exposures of secondary trauma, increasing caseloads, and caseworker turnover. Cultural humility and historical trauma were explored, how the two are related to each other, and their impact on the families.

Additionally, participants spent time learning and practicing ethics, advocacy, and working with vulnerable populations. They reviewed and applied the National Association of Social Workers (NASW) ethical practices, discussed their role as child welfare professionals, and facilitated communication with vulnerable populations during safety assessments and case planning. Moreover, participants spent one day in a Youth Mental Health First Aid workshop and upon completion would be certified Youth Mental Health First Aiders. They learned how to intervene before a child is in crisis and when a child is in crisis. The final day was on legal training which included how to testify, the levels of evidence, and court report writing.

The hope for this course 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.

Sampling of SKILS 161R participant feedback:

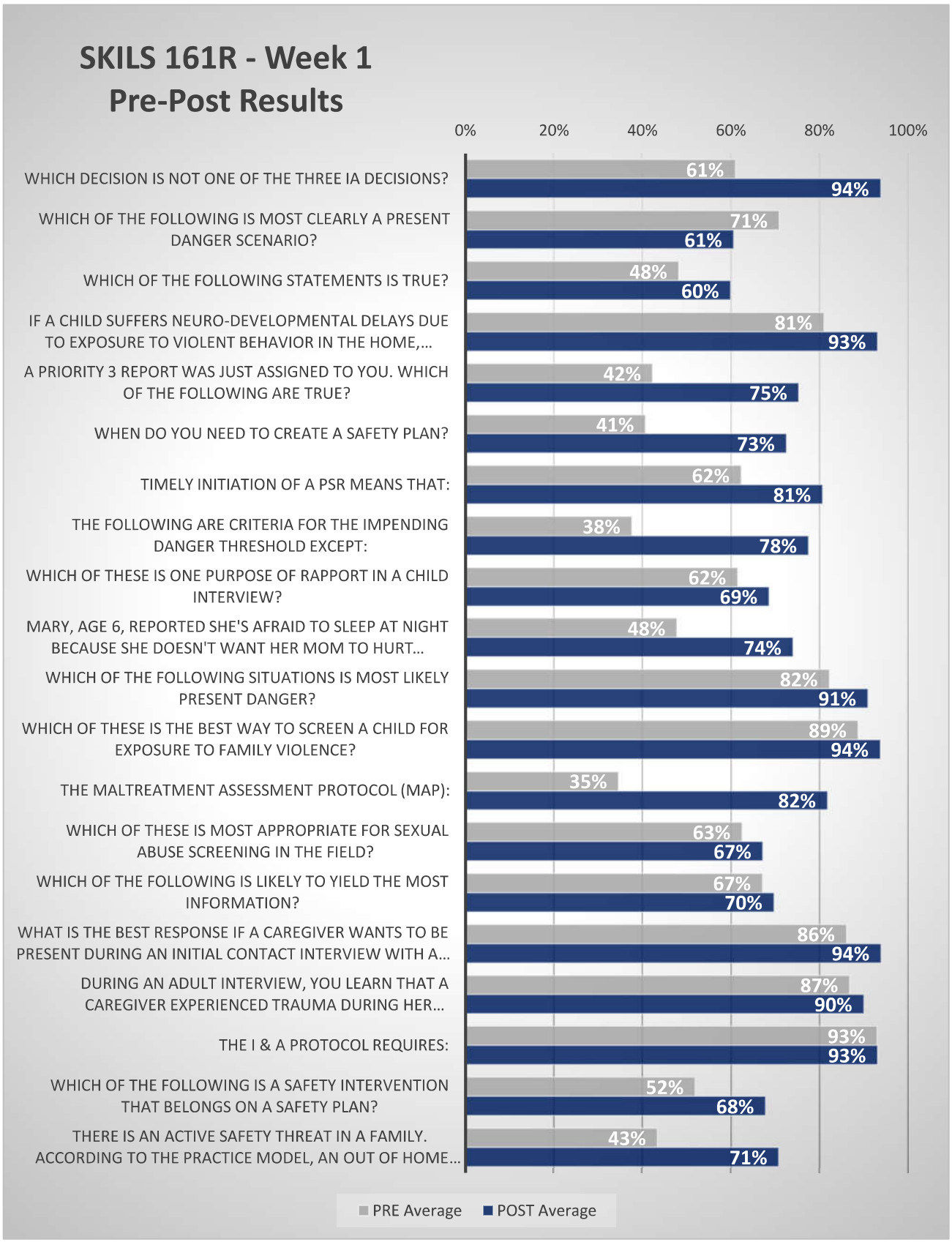
- *The training did provide a foundation to beginning my work with children and families. It helped me map out how to conduct I & A from start to finish. It helped me to apply information to the purple, yellow, and FRAN guides. It helped me to develop child interviewing skills. It helped me to apply a trauma informed approach to I & A. It also helped me with contact information should the case be an ICWA case.*
- *The training did provide a solid foundation to work with families the trainers did an excellent job of keeping the class included.*
- *I would like the AS work to be more interactive.*
- *I would suggest dividing legal day into a two-day training.*
- *There are so many scenarios that one can never be truly prepared for the work done here. But I feel that the exposure to the language and concepts used, practice opportunities, and introduction to the general timelines will provide a framework that will set me up for success.*

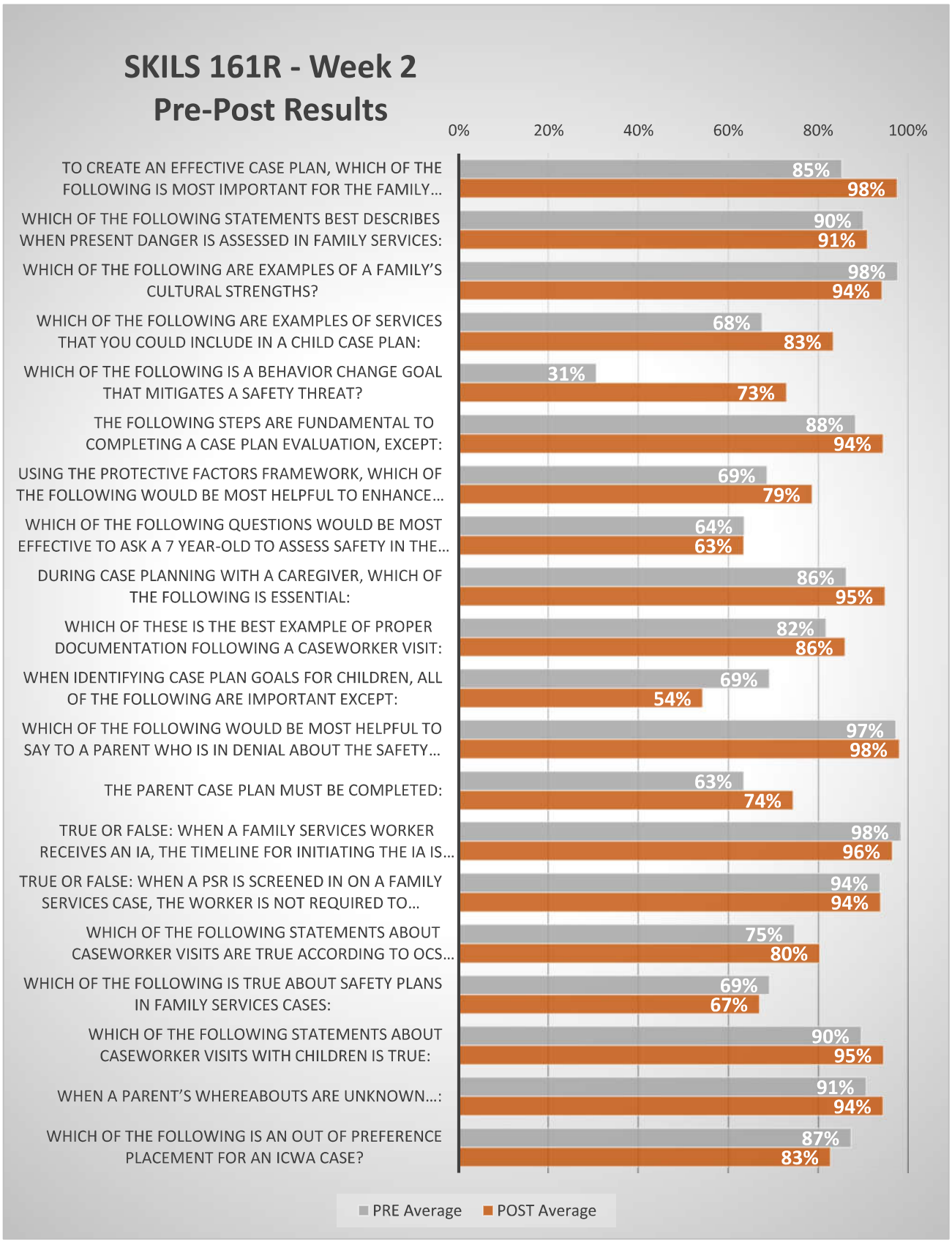
Sampling of SKILS 162R participant feedback:

- *This was a really good training. I enjoyed sharing work experiences.*
- *I love the breakout rooms and overall discussions. I went to SKILS 11 years ago and it was in person. I miss the people contact, but did enjoy 162 very much.*
- *The virtual classroom can be distracting, but I enjoy how easy it is to access, share files, etc.*
- *I enjoyed the de-escalation techniques and child abuse training. I feel that it would have been much more helpful in 161.*
- *The training provided as much of a foundation as I could need for working with families because it helps me practice Department language and concepts/philosophy. The ICWA training was extremely helpful. Need more training in safety and legal concepts because I still have no idea what to do in most of these types of scenarios.*

Sampling of SKILS 163R participant feedback:

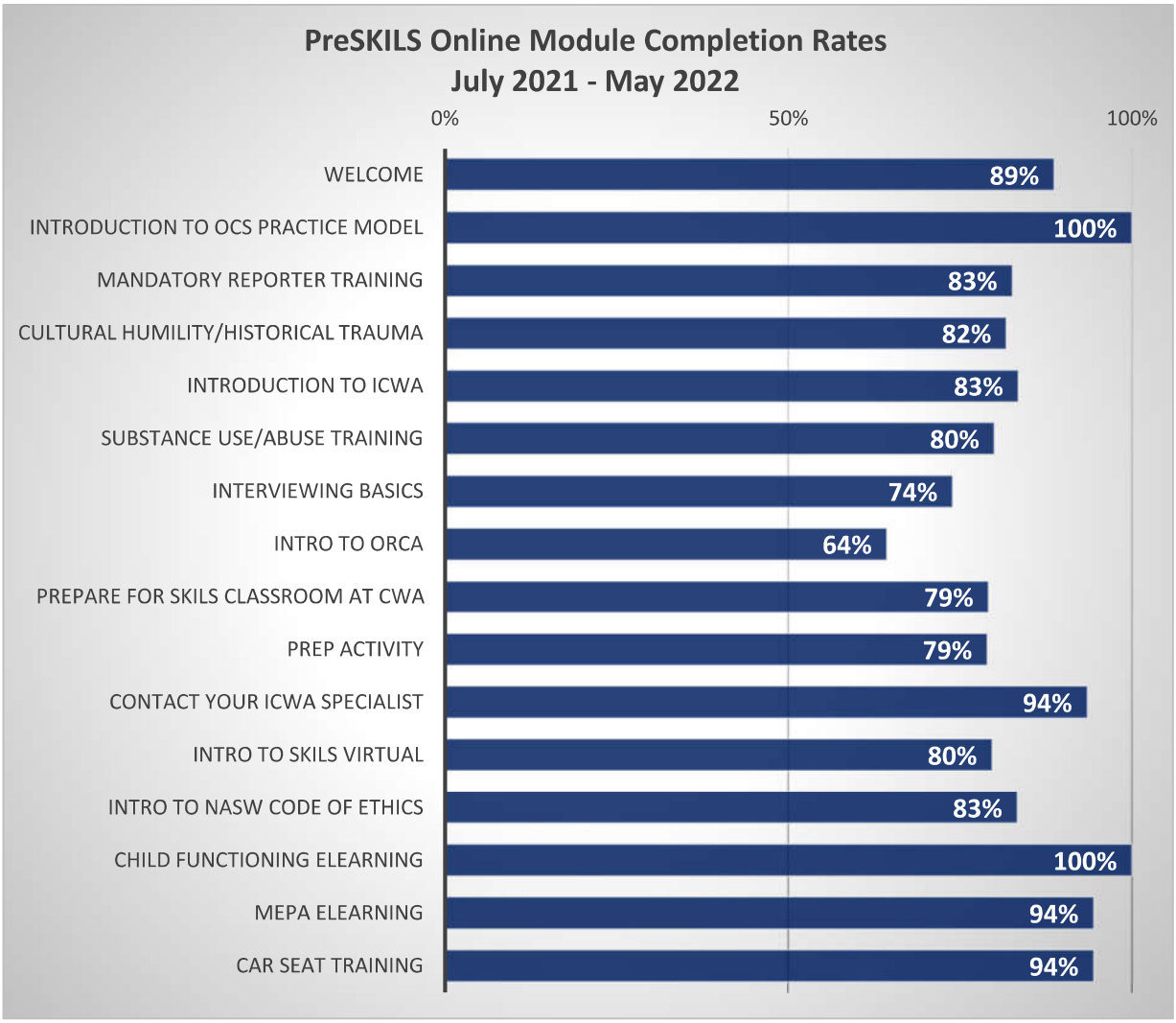
- *It enhanced the foundation I already have for work with children and families. There were some insights that I didn't know that will greatly help me in the process.*
- *I think the training did a very good job in adding to the foundation on how to work with children and families. The training touches on many different subjects and the interaction with other class members go a long way to help because we all have different experiences.*
- *The presenters were clear and concise in how they presented materials and explained concepts. They made it easy to follow the source material in the book.*
- *Split it up over time. i.e. morning skills and afternoon free time for casework.*
- *It is nice to not have to travel for SKILs as afterwards I can still do casework.*

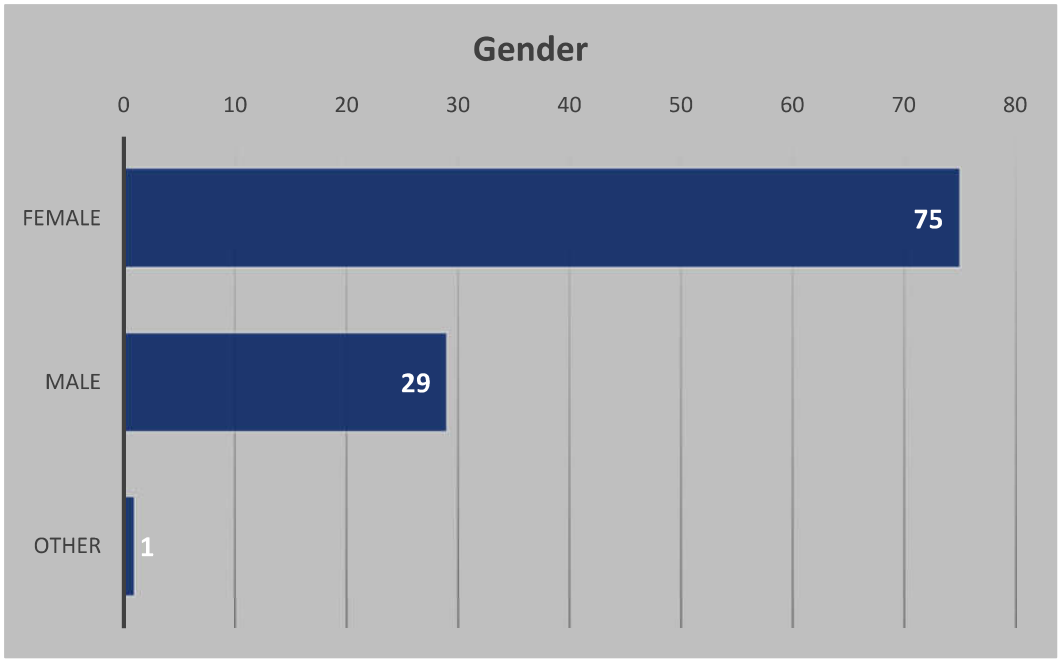

SKILS 161R - Week 1
Pre-Post Results
0%
20%
40%
60%
80%
100%
WHICH DECISION IS NOT ONE OF THE THREE IA DECISIONS?
61%
94%
WHICH OF THE FOLLOWING IS MOST CLEARLY A PRESENT DANGER SCENARIO?
71%
61%
WHICH OF THE FOLLOWING STATEMENTS IS TRUE?
48%
60%
IF A CHILD SUFFERS NEURO-DEVELOPMENTAL DELAYS DUE TO EXPOSURE TO VIOLENT BEHAVIOR IN THE HOME,...
81%
93%
A PRIORITY 3 REPORT WAS JUST ASSIGNED TO YOU. WHICH OF THE FOLLOWING ARE TRUE?
42%
75%
WHEN DO YOU NEED TO CREATE A SAFETY PLAN?
41%
73%
TIMELY INITIATION OF A PSR MEANS THAT:
62%
81%
THE FOLLOWING ARE CRITERIA FOR THE IMPENDING DANGER THRESHOLD EXCEPT:
38%
78%
WHICH OF THESE IS ONE PURPOSE OF RAPPORT IN A CHILD INTERVIEW?
62%
69%
MARY, AGE 6, REPORTED SHE'S AFRAID TO SLEEP AT NIGHT BECAUSE SHE DOESN'T WANT HER MOM TO HURT...
48%
74%
WHICH OF THE FOLLOWING SITUATIONS IS MOST LIKELY PRESENT DANGER?
82%
91%
WHICH OF THESE IS THE BEST WAY TO SCREEN A CHILD FOR EXPOSURE TO FAMILY VIOLENCE?
89%
94%
THE MALTREATMENT ASSESSMENT PROTOCOL (MAP):
35%
82%
WHICH OF THESE IS MOST APPROPRIATE FOR SEXUAL ABUSE SCREENING IN THE FIELD?
63%
67%
WHICH OF THE FOLLOWING IS LIKELY TO YIELD THE MOST INFORMATION?
67%
70%
WHAT IS THE BEST RESPONSE IF A CAREGIVER WANTS TO BE PRESENT DURING AN INITIAL CONTACT INTERVIEW WITH A...
86%
94%
DURING AN ADULT INTERVIEW, YOU LEARN THAT A CAREGIVER EXPERIENCED TRAUMA DURING HER...
87%
90%
THE I & A PROTOCOL REQUIRES:
93%
93%
WHICH OF THE FOLLOWING IS A SAFETY INTERVENTION THAT BELONGS ON A SAFETY PLAN?
52%
68%
THERE IS AN ACTIVE SAFETY THREAT IN A FAMILY. ACCORDING TO THE PRACTICE MODEL, AN OUT OF HOME...
43%
71%
PRE Average
POST Average

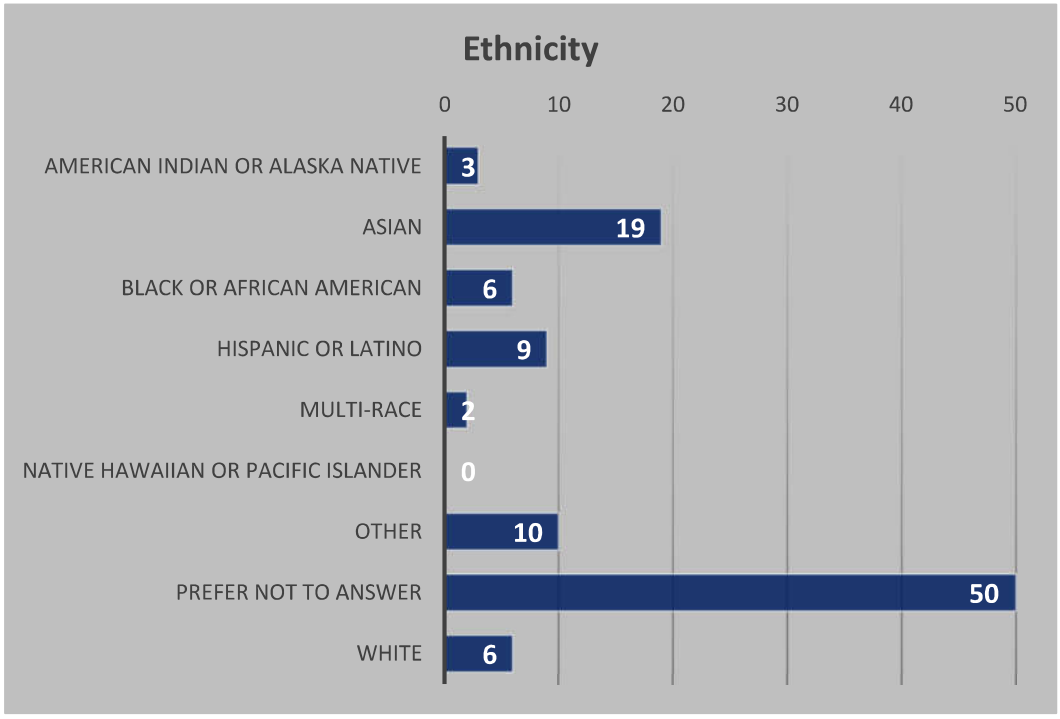

SKILS 161R - Week 2
Pre-Post Results
0%
20%
40%
60%
80%
100%
TO CREATE AN EFFECTIVE CASE PLAN, WHICH OF THE FOLLOWING IS MOST IMPORTANT FOR THE FAMILY...
85%
98%
WHICH OF THE FOLLOWING STATEMENTS BEST DESCRIBES WHEN PRESENT DANGER IS ASSESSED IN FAMILY SERVICES:
90%
91%
WHICH OF THE FOLLOWING ARE EXAMPLES OF A FAMILY'S CULTURAL STRENGTHS?
98%
94%
WHICH OF THE FOLLOWING ARE EXAMPLES OF SERVICES THAT YOU COULD INCLUDE IN A CHILD CASE PLAN:
68%
83%
WHICH OF THE FOLLOWING IS A BEHAVIOR CHANGE GOAL THAT MITIGATES A SAFETY THREAT?
31%
73%
THE FOLLOWING STEPS ARE FUNDAMENTAL TO COMPLETING A CASE PLAN EVALUATION, EXCEPT:
88%
94%
USING THE PROTECTIVE FACTORS FRAMEWORK, WHICH OF THE FOLLOWING WOULD BE MOST HELPFUL TO ENHANCE...
69%
79%
WHICH OF THE FOLLOWING QUESTIONS WOULD BE MOST EFFECTIVE TO ASK A 7 YEAR-OLD TO ASSESS SAFETY IN THE...
64%
63%
DURING CASE PLANNING WITH A CAREGIVER, WHICH OF THE FOLLOWING IS ESSENTIAL:
86%
95%
WHICH OF THESE IS THE BEST EXAMPLE OF PROPER DOCUMENTATION FOLLOWING A CASEWORKER VISIT:
82%
86%
WHEN IDENTIFYING CASE PLAN GOALS FOR CHILDREN, ALL OF THE FOLLOWING ARE IMPORTANT EXCEPT:
69%
54%
WHICH OF THE FOLLOWING WOULD BE MOST HELPFUL TO SAY TO A PARENT WHO IS IN DENIAL ABOUT THE SAFETY...
97%
98%
THE PARENT CASE PLAN MUST BE COMPLETED:
63%
74%
TRUE OR FALSE: WHEN A FAMILY SERVICES WORKER RECEIVES AN IA, THE TIMELINE FOR INITIATING THE IA IS...
98%
96%
TRUE OR FALSE: WHEN A PSR IS SCREENED IN ON A FAMILY SERVICES CASE, THE WORKER IS NOT REQUIRED TO...
94%
94%
WHICH OF THE FOLLOWING STATEMENTS ABOUT CASEWORKER VISITS ARE TRUE ACCORDING TO OCS...
75%
80%
WHICH OF THE FOLLOWING IS TRUE ABOUT SAFETY PLANS IN FAMILY SERVICES CASES:
69%
67%
WHICH OF THE FOLLOWING STATEMENTS ABOUT CASEWORKER VISITS WITH CHILDREN IS TRUE:
90%
95%
WHEN A PARENT'S WHEREABOUTS ARE UNKNOWN...:
91%
94%
WHICH OF THE FOLLOWING IS AN OUT OF PREFERENCE PLACEMENT FOR AN ICWA CASE?
87%
83%
PRE Average
POST Average

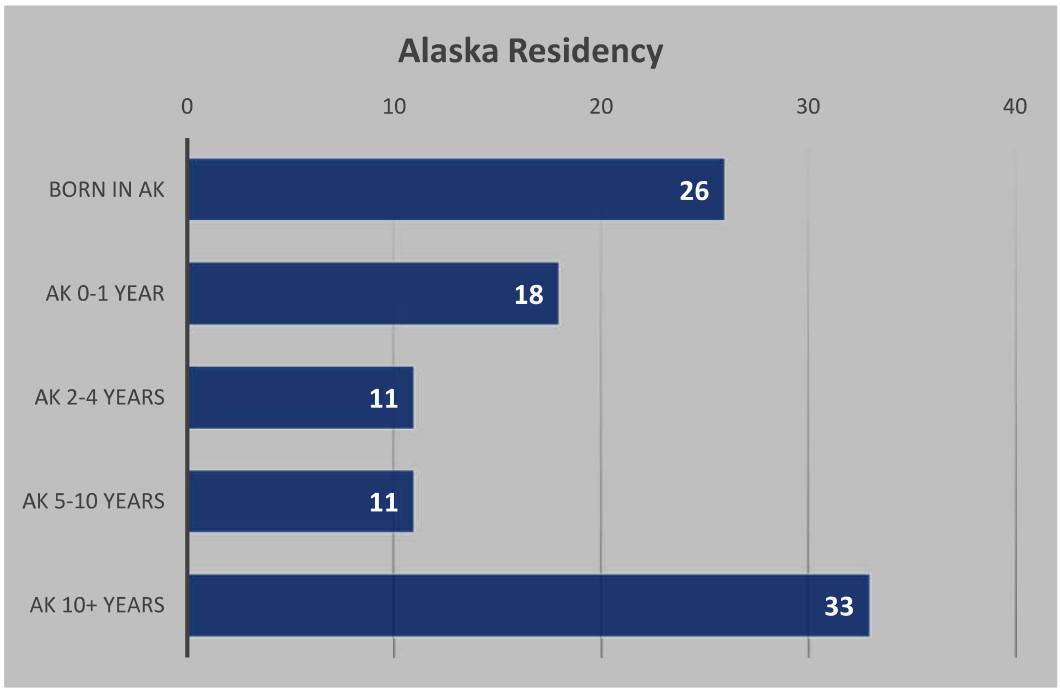
Online Module & Demographic Information

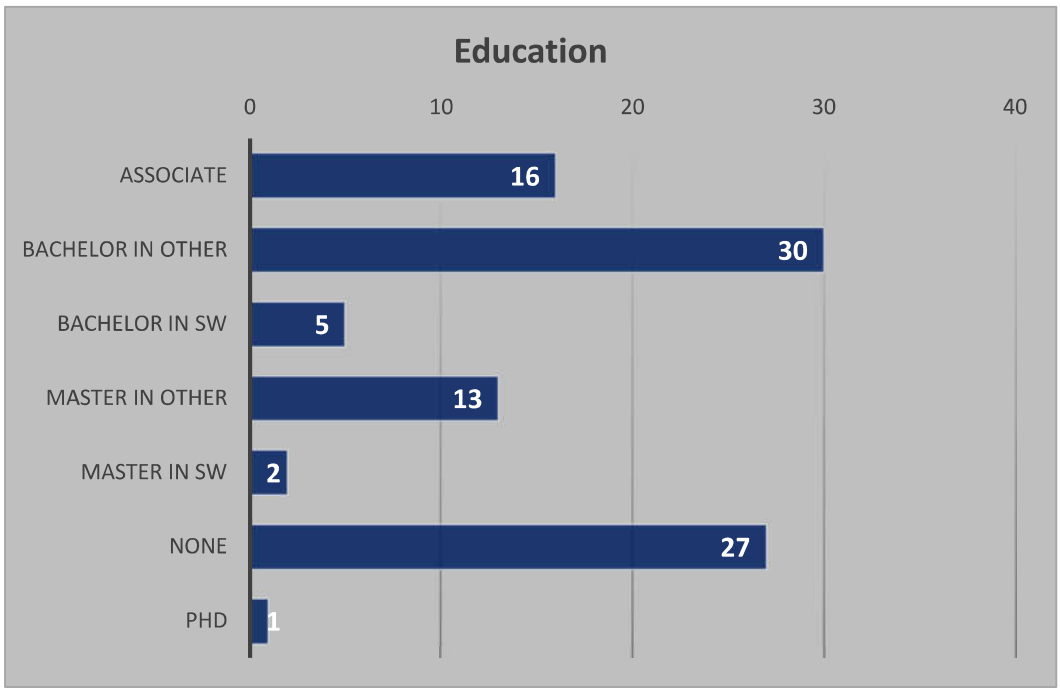
New workers are required to complete online modules before starting SKILS. The following charts indicate each module's completion rate along with workers' demographic information. Demographic percentages are based on attendees who completed the survey.




Gender
0
10
20
30
40
50
60
70
80
FEMALE
75
MALE
29
OTHER
1


Ethnicity
0
10
20
30
40
50
AMERICAN INDIAN OR ALASKA NATIVE
3
ASIAN
19
BLACK OR AFRICAN AMERICAN
6
HISPANIC OR LATINO
9
MULTI-RACE
2
NATIVE HAWAIIAN OR PACIFIC ISLANDER
0
OTHER
10
PREFER NOT TO ANSWER
50
WHITE
6


Alaska Residency
0
10
20
30
40
BORN IN AK
26
AK 0-1 YEAR
18
AK 2-4 YEARS
11
AK 5-10 YEARS
11
AK 10+ YEARS
33


Education
0
10
20
30
40
ASSOCIATE
16
BACHELOR IN OTHER
30
BACHELOR IN SW
5
MASTER IN OTHER
13
MASTER IN SW
2
NONE
27
PHD
1

Licensing

Community care licensing specialist (CCLS) training is targeted to provide opportunities for Licensing Specialists to learn material and practice in the classroom. A focus on the core role and responsibilities, child safety and how to utilize the Strengthening Families™ Protective Factors in supporting resource families are emphasized on day one. Child Welfare Academy also built-in simulated interviews with resource parents and children for CCLS' to learn and practice new skills in interviewing, 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 the Office of Children Services and Alaska Attorney General's Office to facilitate training around licensing investigations and Title IV-E. 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%	29%	14%	29%	29%
The instructional materials (i.e. PowerPoints, participant manuals) were helpful in building knowledge and skills on the topics covered.	0%	0%	29%	29%	43%
The activities were meaningful in facilitating my learning.	0%	14%	29%	29%	29%

Sampling of Licensing participant feedback:

- *The experience was very engaging.*
- *The training was very good at touching upon the whole framework of licensing.*
- *Day 1 could have been a bit more streamlined.*

Supervisor Training, Part I & II

CWA and OCS hosted a series of focus groups to enhance Supervisor Training. This resulted in a revised and more targeted curriculum with ongoing monthly training calls on Policy and Practice or Leadership and Coaching. These calls allowed for current staff to support transfer of learning to new employees. Below are average ratings and feedback from participants who submitted evaluations for Parts I and II.

PART I - Please rate the Training in the following areas:	Very Low	Low	Medium	High	Very High
	1	2	3	4	5
The instructional materials (i.e. PowerPoints, participant manuals) were helpful in building knowledge and skills on the topics covered.	0%	0%	8%	33%	58%
The activities were meaningful in facilitating my learning.	0%	0%	17%	50%	33%
Your initial ability to apply what you learned to your job.	0%	0%	25%	33%	42%

PART II - Please rate the Training in the following areas:	Very Low	Low	Medium	High	Very High
	1	2	3	4	5
The instructional materials (i.e. PowerPoints, participant manuals) were helpful in building knowledge and skills on the topics covered.	0%	0%	33%	33%	33%
The activities were meaningful in facilitating my learning.	0%	33%	0%	33%	33%
Your initial ability to apply what you learned to your job.	0%	33%	0%	67%	0%

Sampling of Supervisor Training participant feedback:

- *I appreciate the group activities. It allows for connection to learn from others.*
- *I really enjoyed the coaching section as my employees are all new and this is going to be highly relevant to my unit. I also enjoyed the communications section as this is something that will come in handy when working with different personalities.*
- *Consider half-day training throughout the entire week to support supervisors being able to focus on the training and support our teams.*

Social Services Associate (SSA)

CWA continued to build opportunities for SSA's in a virtual format to practice new skills using the Zoom platform for learning. Trainers used a blended style of learning with discussion, breakout groups, asynchronous work, and activities to address the varying topics. Topics included how to support the OCS Practice Model in everyday work, enhance Protective Factors, and build relationship and partnerships with resource parents and families.

In addition, SSA's gained an understanding of the Indian Child Welfare Act, impacts of historical trauma, and opportunities for growth in cultural humility, resiliency, and self-care. 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%	0%	50%	50%
The instructional materials (i.e. PowerPoints, participant manuals) were helpful in building knowledge and skills on the topics covered.	0%	0%	0%	50%	50%
Asynchronous time was conducive to my learning.	0%	0%	0%	0%	100%

Sampling of SSA participant feedback:

- *My experience learning the key concepts was good. It was useful to have different kinds of learning materials.*
- *It did provide a good foundation for SSAs that do family contact but not for those that serve in an SSA support role.*
- *Helped me understand what I need to do, how to be safe when going out in the field.*

Coaching Supervisors to Best Practice (CSBP)

CSBP is an 18-week training program focused on building competency and confidence in supervisors and mentors of frontline staff workers. Each supervisor is assigned a personal coach who provides professional coaching focusing on the assigned practice model topic and enhancing critical thinking skills. CSBP consists of four modules, with the last module emphasizes transfer of learning to their staff assuring best practice within their units and individual workers.

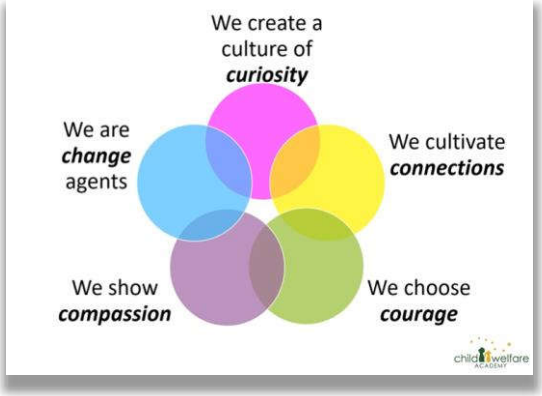
Cohort 13 began in September 2021, which included OCS Supervisors and Mentors from across the state. The training was delivered via a virtual format allowing for supervisors and mentors to attend remotely.

In the coming year, CSBP will be revamped in time for Cohort 14. CWA convened a workgroup of coaches and leadership to revise the CSBP curriculum to a shorter program with more structured one-to-one coaching, Alaska-nized materials, and a condensed program focusing on enhanced skills with regard to the OCS Practice Model.

Diversity, Equity, & Inclusion (DEI)

Following the vision of the DEI workgroup in the first half of 2020, CWA was requested to create a DEI curriculum to train OCS staff and other partners on the topics of diversity, equity, and inclusion in child welfare practice. CWA put together a comprehensive program that included eLearning modules and group sessions meant to build over the course of a OCS worker's tenure.

The eLearning modules allow work to begin with individual reflection and build into skills-based activities in a group virtual training setting. When developing the program, CWA created a framework to be carried throughout all of the training components known as the 5 C's: curiosity, connections, courage, compassion, and change.



DEI is a progressive training with three phases: Foundations, Applications, and Leadership & Coaching.

DEI Foundations aims to provide participants with foundational diversity, equity, and inclusion concepts, language, and skills to be incorporated into day to day work with families, including the introduction of the 5 C's framework. Four eLearning modules serve as a prerequisite for the half-day workshop. The modules introduce fundamental DEI concepts, explore how supporting DEI is incorporated into the OCS Mission/Vision/Values and NASW Code of Ethics, cover the importance of bias awareness in our work, and introduce the impact of microaggressions. Upon completion of their independent work in CWA's learning management system, participants are welcome to attend the three-hour trainer led group session where participants build on their learning and partake in skill building and practice activities. Participants leave DEI Foundations armed with an Action Plan for carrying their continued work of developing their 5 C's into their day to day work with families.

Foundations

Intercession A, 162 Day 4
Who: SKILS Participants + All OCS Staff

E-learning prior to Workshop
- DEI Fundamentals (the 5 C's)
- OCS Vision, Mission, Values & NASW Code of Ethics
- Bias Awareness
- Micro Aggressions
- Reflection & Eval
- Glossary-Definitions

Workshop
- Courageous Conversations
- Debrief of E-learning
- Self-Reflection/Bias Reflection
- Microaggressions & the Power of Language
- Micro-Interventions
- The OCS Connection
- Action Plan
- Evaluation

The curriculum for Foundations was piloted in December 2021, and rolled out to new caseworkers in February 2022 as a part of the SKILS 162R training. Additionally, a DEI Foundations training session was offered as a standalone training for existing OCS staff.

DEI Applications, the second component of the DEI program, builds on the foundational knowledge and offers continued skill building opportunities. CWA is currently working to create this curriculum and expects to pilot it in August 2022 with plans to roll it out this fall.

Applications

Intercession B, 163 Day 4
Who: Frontline PSS, SSAs, & TDM Facilitators

E-learning prior to Workshop 1
- Systems of oppression, e-learning
- Power balance, e-learning

Workshop 1
- Engagement and respect
- Demonstrate concrete skills for inclusive practice
- Cultivating curiosity
- Practicing compassion for self and others
- Fostering resilience in self and others

E-learning prior to Workshop 2
- History of colonization, e-learning
- Government to government relationships between OCS and our Tribes, e-learning

Workshop 2
- Promoting Local Practices
- Utilizing culturally adapted interventions
- Partnering with other agencies and Tribes

Leadership & Coaching

Supervisor Training
Who: Managers, Supervisors, Mentors, ICWA Specialists

Workshop
- Ambassadors of diversity, equity, and inclusion
- Engage and manage resistance
- Ensure accountability
- Invite curiosity
- Embrace a diversity, equity, and inclusion mindset and culture at OCS
- Approximately 3-month follow-up workshop conversation

DEI Leadership & Coaching

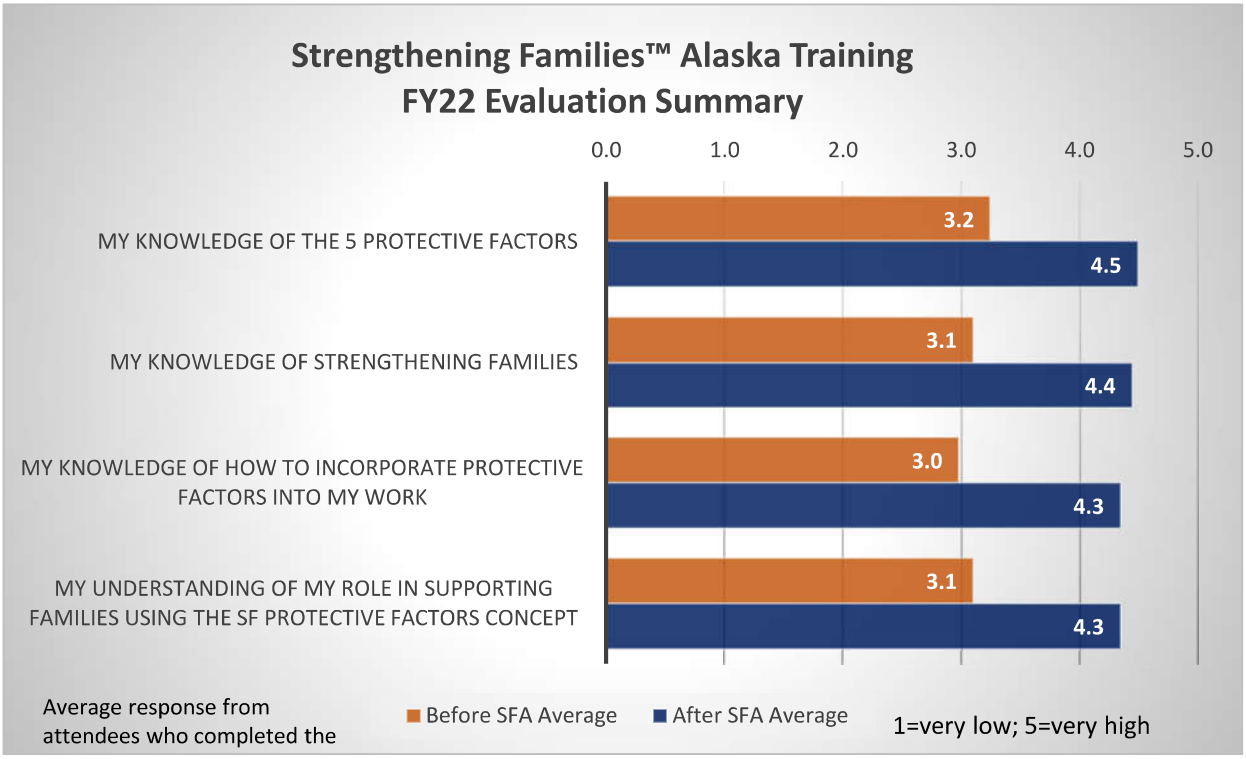
This component of DEI is being developed.

Continued Annual Training

Once DEI Applications is implemented, the next step will be to provide an annual training opportunity for agency management and staff who work directly with families. While this component has not started yet, the vision is to continue the 5 C's framework.

Strengthening Families™ Alaska (SFA)

Since 2014, CWA has trained over 1500 professionals who work with families, youth, and/or children along with foster parents in the Strengthening Families™ Alaska Protective Factors Framework. Virtual training has continued which has allowed us to reach communities beyond Anchorage and Matanuska-Susitna such as Kotzebue, Koyuk, Sand Point, Togiak, Dillingham, Kodiak, Sitka, and Ketchikan.



Sampling of SFA participant feedback:

- *I always get so much more in-person but so far this was the best virtual I attended. I liked the interaction during presentations and break-outs.*
- *I was able to take this class a few years ago but had to miss the second day. So I am happy to be able to finish it. Just the first-class alone changed how I worked with our families and how we evaluated their successes. The approach of strengths instead of punitive is positive and meaningful.*
- *This was a great training. It had a good mixture of educational materials (videos, slides and discussion).*
- *This workshop/training DID change my thinking about families. It opened my eyes a lot wider when it comes to working with families. I learned ways to deeper understand families and ways to approach and provide them with the resources they need to strengthen their bond within the family.*

Strong Parents Alaska (SPA)

Four virtual Strong Parents AK, Training of Trainers, were delivered in November and December. In attendance were OCS, Tribal, and community partners who had the goal of better supporting parents in their journey to build strong families and communities through the Strengthening Families™ Protective Factors. Participants were given free related materials to further help them to achieve this goal.

In addition, CWA started the process of creating a hybrid seven-week SPA eLearning course for adults with children on how to apply the Protective Factors in their everyday lives. Learners will use a mobile-learning tool called Arist for their asynchronous work and then come together on Zoom for the synchronous part, which will be led by an instructor. The goal is to test the pilot with community partners in Fall 2022, make adjustments, and provide this e-learning course to parents soon after.

Service Array

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

- Partnered with the Alaska Children's Alliance to provide training and technical assistance, such as a workshop titled, "Cultural Responsiveness in Addressing Implicit Bias in Service Delivery" for over 30 victim advocates. This was well received with the following feedback from a participant: "It was an eye opener and is something that will benefit my role here at our Child Advocacy Center."

- Continued collaboration with the Children's Justice Act Task Force in updating the MDT Guidelines where CWA is now a Task Force member, with the support of OCS.

- Co-sponsored the first virtual Alaska Child Welfare Conference where OCS employees, resource families, Tribal members, and child advocates came together, learned from each other, and gained tools to help keep Alaska children safe.

- Provided training and technical assistance for the Sitka Tribe of Alaska's CAC's MDT:
    - Resilience workshop for their MDT in February 2022

    - Developing a two-day event as part of their Opening Celebration that would involve the Sitka Tribe doing an opening ceremony for the community along with various presentation topics to include basic interviewing skills, covering the CAC model and the referral process, trauma informed practice, resilience, and corroborating evidence collection.

    - Workshop in April 2022 on the distinction between a first responder and when to use a CAC and when and how to make a referral where the use of scenarios was helpful in the discussion.

    - CWA is part of an advisory board to a revitalization of a project lead by the Alaska Children's Trust titled "Pathway to Hope: Preventing Child Sexual Abuse (CSA) and Healing Unresolved Trauma". This project will utilize a community-led framework to do the following within the next five years, starting with two Alaska Native communities as a pilot project:

        - Increase knowledge, skill, and awareness of CSA prevention and healing
        - Support the development and implementation of community strategies readiness level to prevent CSA and promote healing for survivors
        - Reduce the incidence of CSA

National Criminal Justice Training Center (NCJTC)

CWA is in its seventh year of providing training and technical assistance to grantees of the Office of Victims of Crime.

At the end of November and early December 2021, CWA, and the national trauma expert, Dr. Gretchen Schmelzer, delivered a day-long workshop called “Healing in Action.” This was delivered for RurAl Cap’s Hooper Bay woman’s shelter. The curriculum included an assessment of values, an exploration of emotional intelligence, and the impacts of trauma. The curriculum was adapted to incorporate culturally relevant activities and was well received by the tribe. Feedback received to date is that this workshop has laid a foundation of trust and understanding among the workers in their growth as a team.

Additionally, CWA collaborated with NCJTC to offer a two-day training for all Alaska grantees in June 2022. This training was offered once in Anchorage and Fairbanks to accommodate grantee accessibility. CWA assisted with all preparations and trainers provided presentations on the following topics:

- Victim Advocacy 101
- Data Collection
- Program Development

In June 2022, CWA, along with a national trauma expert, collaborated with NCJTC and facilitated a workshop titled “Connecting with a Growth Mindset” with Leech Lake Victim Services in Wisconsin. This was held on zoom and was well received by all parties.

CWA Highlights

Alaska Impact Alliance (AIA): CWA contracted with Beautiful Step, LLC, to lead a collaborative group of tribal, public, and private sector innovators to create a state-wide child welfare prevention system. This formal working group is called the Alaska Impact Alliance.

AIA is tasked with seeking solutions to improve child welfare outcomes in Alaska through effective prevention programs. Family resource centers are community-based or school-based, flexible, family-focused, and culturally sensitive hubs of support and resources that provide programs and targeted services based on the needs and interests of families. AIA members and subject matter experts plan to develop the Alaska Family Resource Network and implement family resource coordination services in multiple schools. In support of this effort, CWA staff recently completed the National Standards Certification Training through the Family Resource Center (FRC) Network and will take the lead on the Training of Trainers for the Alaska FRC Network.

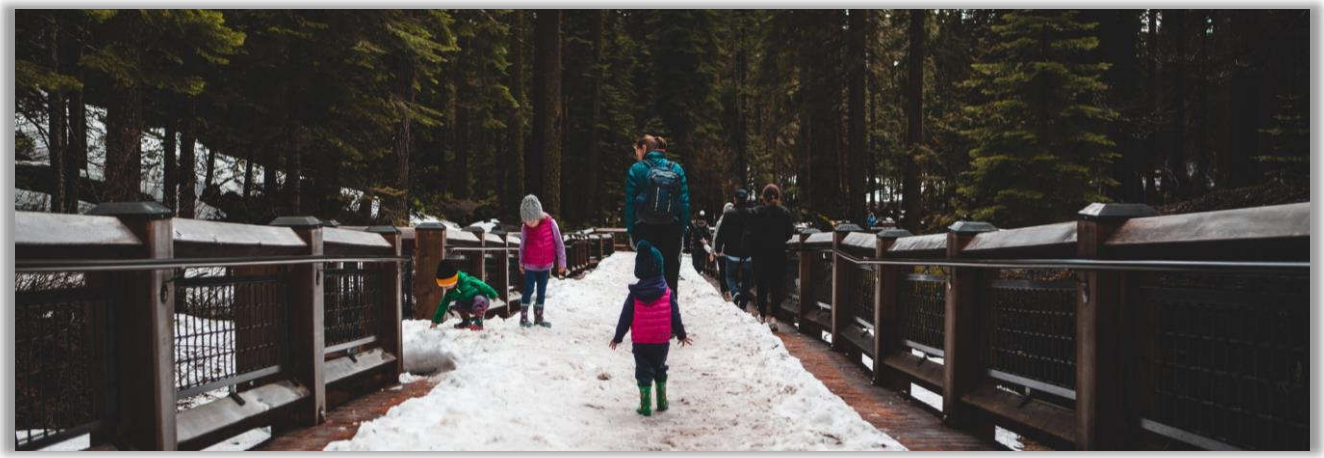
ChildFirst™ Alaska: CWA continued to partner with the Alaska Children's Alliance to offer ChildFirst™ Training virtually following the National ChildFirst™ Protocol for Forensic Child Interviewing.

Continuation of CWA Highlights

CINA 101: This year, Alaska's Court Improvement Project (CIP) Curriculum Development subcommittee rolled out a long-awaited eLearning on the Child in Need of Aid (CINA) court process in Alaska's court system. The committee guided the work of taking the in-person CINA 101 curriculum and transitioning to an eLearning platform to be made available publicly. CWA had a seat on the committee as a Trainer, along with individuals from other areas of child welfare practice, contributed input and editing of its development. This eLearning is designed to meet a variety of learning preferences including reading, watching, or listening and can be viewed HERE.

Compact Negotiations: CWA offered technical support to ongoing Compact Negotiations between the State and Tribes.

Foster Care Recruitment: Many foster families stopped taking in children and youth due to concerns of COVID-19. This resulted in the lack of stable family placement options that causing children and youth to be bounced from emergency placements to shelters creating insecurity and uncertainty due to the frequent transitions. To address this problem, CWA collaborated with foster parents and youth to develop a series of recruitment ads to meet the high demand for foster homes and foster youth adoptive homes across the state. The ads were delivered through TV, radio, streaming services and social media.



Continuation of CWA Highlights

Motivational Interviewing (MI): Research has found that caseworkers trained in MI reported improvement in assessment, interventions, and the ability to provide in-home services. MI is increasingly recognized as an effective approach to engage and motivate parents whose families enter the child welfare system and an approach that positively impacts outcomes. Child welfare workers reported they frequently used MI skills to help reach program goals of systemic change.

Due to the stress, demands, and intensity of child welfare practice, there is a high rate of attrition and compassion fatigue. Child welfare caseworkers report less stress, lower levels of confrontation with clients, and more job satisfaction after being trained in MI. Other human service professionals have reported less burnout and feelings of greater empowerment.

CWA contracted with a national expert on using MI in child welfare practice to lead two 1-day long MI trainings for OCS and Tribal partners. Each training was held virtually for optimal participation.

Staff News:

- Marissa Sweet joined CWA in August of 2021, as the Education and Training Voucher Program Coordinator, offering academic support and financial assistance to foster youth and alumni pursuing higher education. Marissa, a graduate of the ETV Program, earned a Bachelors and Masters in Social Work from UAA, and brings a wealth of experiencing serving youth in transition.

- A fond farewell to Tammy Sandoval, long-time director of CWA and forever champion of the betterment of children and family. With Sandoval's leadership, CWA further enhanced training to meet the unique needs of OCS staff from the frontline to management.

- Welcome to our new director, Amanda Metivier! She was first hired as a contractor and was then a full-time staff member in 2012 to launch the Education and Training Voucher Program. Through her advocacy, Amanda has expanded CWA training weeks for Frontline OCS staff. In her role as director, she oversees the training and technical assistance of the child welfare staff, child-serving agencies throughout the State of Alaska, and direct services to youth transitioning from foster care to higher education. "The work that we do is ultimately about families," Metivier says. "It's important to me to focus on how we can enhance child welfare workforce training and development to improve outcomes for children and families throughout Alaska." Most recently, Metivier received the 2021 Alumni Humanitarian Award during the Alumni of Distinction Banquet for her 19-year career working in various roles with child welfare. Through her advocacy with Facing Foster Care in Alaska, which she co-founded, Metivier has led efforts to expand services and support for foster youth across Alaska. Metivier received her Bachelor of Social Work and Master of Social Work from UAA in 2008 and 2012, respectively.

- Trainers Valerie Dudley, Tracey Eason, and Cassie Frost graduated in May 2022, with their Master of Social Work from the University of Alaska Anchorage.

Office of Youth Empowerment (OYE)

With the ongoing collaborative efforts of CWA, Facing Foster Care in Alaska (FFCA), and OCS, OYE has been able has continued to offer services and opportunities for foster youth and alumni to develop critical life and leadership skills. Below are some of the highlights that offered supports to over 300 current and former foster youth:

- 88 foster youth participated in virtual statewide leadership retreats focused on advocacy and life skills
- Foster youth and alumni facilitated 18 for child welfare staff, legal parties, and caregivers across the state.
- Assisted 250 youth with Direct to Youth Grants to assist with rent, transportation, food security, and other basic needs through a partnership with the OCS Independent Living Program
- Helped over 50 youth with financial support through COVID Relief offered by FFCA
- 15 “right time” Life Skills Micro-Learning videos were developed to help emerging young adults build a foundation for a successful transition to adult life, such as how to open a bank account

Education and Training Voucher (ETV) Program

Through OYE, hundreds of current and former foster youth have enrolled in higher education funded by ETV. Here are following ETV program highlights:

- 47 Education and Training Vouchers awarded to foster youth
- 8 graduates making 59 graduates to date
- 35 foster youth attended UA campuses across the state
- 22 foster youth received UA Presidential Foster Youth Tuition Waivers with 12 new awardees
- 13 foster youth awarded OCS Tuition Scholarships
- 12 foster youth attended a college outside the UA system or enrolled in a vocational training program:
    - Alaska Pacific University
    - Alaska Career College
    - Alaska Bible College
    - Herzing University
    - Haskell Indian Nations University, Kansas State
    - Ramussen College
    - Montana State University
    - University of Central Oklahoma
    - University of Arkansas

Continuation of ETV Program Highlights:

- Hosted the Annual Foster Youth Post-Secondary Education Conference virtually through a site designed to represent the UAA campus
- Continuing from December 2020, the Federal Supporting Foster Youth through the Pandemic Act enforced temporary amendments to prior existing laws and requirements increasing the ETV award from $5,000 to $12,000 per academic year, or $6,000 per semester
    - Such provisions allowed the ETV program to extend greater financial support across two more academic semesters - helping offer some monetary reprieve to students supporting themselves through higher education as the cost of living continues to rise
- Another amendment made to the Foster Youth Pandemic Act increased the age limit of youth to receive Chafee & ETV funds until the age of 27
    - Prior to the age increase ending, six former ETV students were awarded ETV funds, offering financial assistance towards their goals in higher education and independent living.
    - Over half went on to graduate within the same or following academic year
- New collaboration between ETV program and UAF admissions department, as initiated by new graduate and former ETV student recipients to create an unofficial department role within UAF specific to assisting foster youth up North, allowing for physical contact to be made on behalf of the state wide coordinator who is based in Anchorage
    - Further connection was then promoted between UAF, the state wide ETV coordinator and the Fairbanks North Star Borough School District Foster Care Liaison resulting in regular meetings now taking place virtually, conducting early outreach among current high school juniors and seniors in foster care, eligible for the ETV program post-graduation

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.