



QUARTER 3
PIP 2.1.1
(continued)

As Rogers (1995) and Salveron (2006) have pointed out, implementing innovative family meetings includes barriers and challenges for child welfare agencies. Research suggests that child welfare agency implementation of different family team meeting practices may not be adopted or if adopted may become marginally used because of challenges in organization culture, administrative practices, and personal factors such as caseworkers experience and bias. (Rauktis, et al. 2010). Crea, Crampton, Abrahamson-Madden, & Usher (2008) found that child welfare agencies typically need more time to complete a transition to TDM, and typically lack resources for facilitating TDM. They identified 3 key aspects of implementing TDM: a strong vision and training from administration, "firewalls" to prevent decisions from going forward without team support; and incentives for child welfare to use TDM consistently.

In Pennsylvania, child welfare agencies are county administered with state oversight. The adoption of FGDM in Pennsylvania began in 2002. All 67 counties were invited to obtain pilot grants of \$25,000 from the Annie E. Casey Foundation for the adoption and implementation of FGDM. Most of the counties who received the grants used them for training and to support start-up costs. Additional funds from other sources were needed in order to continue the transition. The University of Pittsburgh monitored the implementation of FDGM and conducted a study gathering data from child welfare agency employees, private providers and juvenile probation officers regarding their perceptions of FDGM for the years 2008-2009 (Rauktis, et al. 2010). The study yielded several clear findings. Following are factors that were found to increase the likelihood of FDGM being successfully adopted into practice:

- 1) Counties that are located near another county that is using FDGM were statistically more likely to successfully adopt FDGM;
- 2) obtaining a grant to assist with implementation;
- 3) having a larger number of caseworkers to provide coverage for workers when they are facilitating family group meetings ; and
- 4) counties with a systems of care orientation were more likely to adopt FDGM.

The study found that the most significant barrier to implementing FDGM was finding additional money and resources.

Following is an example of a court based initiative in Minnesota that has been identified by the Child Welfare Information Gateway.

Olmsted County, Minnesota: Court-Initiated Family Case Planning Conferences

Family engagement is a key feature of Olmsted County's Parallel Protection Process (P3). Begun in 2002 as part of a Children's Justice Initiative, P3 offers an alternative justice intervention for juvenile court cases involving children at high risk of child maltreatment. P3 has been highlighted as a promising approach on the Children's Bureau website (www.acf.hhs.gov/programs/cb/cwmonitoring/promise/states.htm#MN). For up to four cases a month in which a petition is contested, the court can order a family case planning conference (FCPC). The FCPC has two primary goals:

- Negotiate a settlement on the admission or denial of the Child in Need of Protective Services petition; and
- Develop the immediate next steps in the child protection or agency case plan.

Judges order all parties to the case planning conference, which is a facilitated process that includes the family, extended family, community supports, social workers, supervisors, court attorneys, family attorneys, guardians ad litem, and other relevant parties. The conference begins with introductions and the family's presentation of their family system. Next, everyone participates in information sharing on the incidents that brought the family to the attention of social services, risk to the child or children, complicating factors (i.e., conditions or behaviors that contribute to difficulty for the family), family strengths and protective factors, and ideas to build safety. Efforts are made to develop a balanced view.

The next step is a deliberate match between the legal language in the filed petition and the information shared at the meeting. Negotiations aim to determine one or more areas of agreement among the family with their attorneys, social services, and the county attorney. Once a settlement agreement is reached, the full group then discusses the immediate next steps (i.e., case plan) to address the family's needs in the context of the identified risk.

In the first 2 years, more than 90 percent of the P3 conferences resulted in settlement agreements that were accepted by the court. Initial findings from participant surveys reported positive responses among families, social workers, and attorneys involved in the process. Early indicators suggest that the program:

- Encourages less adversarial and more meaningful involvement of families in a court-ordered process
- Reduces court processing time and hastens family access to supports through "front loading" of services
- Leads to individualized case plans for children based on family needs and risks
- Safeguards children from repeated maltreatment
- Contributes to child permanency

Nevada Statewide Case Planning Policy calls for the construction of a Child and Family team (CFT) which consists of individuals identified by the family and agency personnel, who are familiar with the family's strengths and needs, including threats of harm, protective capacity and child vulnerability. The CFT process is driven by a collaborative partnership between the family, the family's supports and agency personnel. Families should be encouraged to include natural, informal supports such as extended family, fictive kin, close friends, members from their faith community, teachers, etc. The intent is to have CFT members who are committed to providing long-term support of the child and family. Foster parents, mental health professionals, CASA and other interested stakeholders would usually be included (Nevada Statewide Case Planning Policy, 2010). Per policy, that case plan must be developed involving the CFT within 45 days

of removal, and the plan must be reviewed with the CFT at least every 6 months. During these meetings, typically the case manager or the supervisor coordinate and facilitate the CFT process. Washoe County Department of Social Services (WCDSS) recently began utilizing a different type of family team meetings called Family Solution Teams (FST). The FST typically occurs within 72 hours of the time a child was placed in protective custody. The meeting is facilitated by a multi-partial facilitator who is trained in FGDM facilitation and employed by WCDSS. Caseworkers attend these meetings but do not bear the responsibility of facilitating the FST. The focus of the FST is to engage the family in generating a plan to provide safe care for the child(ren) without having the child continue to be placed in foster care. Currently Dr. Svare and Dr. Manit of University Nevada, Reno with Theresa Anderson of WCDSS are conducting a study on the outcomes of this FST process. Preliminary results suggest that since Washoe County implemented the FST the amount of children placed into foster care in Washoe County has decreased by 20 percent (Svare, Manit, & Anderson 2011, Evaluation of a Team Decision Making Model: A Focus on Engagement as the Outcome).

Engaging Fathers

In 1960 less than 10 million children in the United States lived without their fathers; in 2001 there were more than 25 million children living without their father with estimates that up to 60% of children born in the 1990s spent a significant amount of their childhood without a father (White House, 2001). Child welfare agencies have recently increased their interest and reasonable efforts in the tasks of locating biological fathers and involving them in case planning. Many, if not most, of the children served by child welfare agencies have nonresident fathers. Adoption and Foster Care Analysis and Reporting System (AFCARS) 2002 data on foster children reveal that a majority—between 50 percent and 80 percent—of the foster children in each state were removed from single-mother or unmarried couple families (Malm, Murray, & Geen, 2006). Federal statistics on child abuse indicate that 55% of all substantiated cases of maltreatment are related to single parent coping/resource issues (Administration for Children and Families, 1997). However, the child welfare field lacks policies and procedures for expectations to identify, locate, and engage fathers. In non-legal or voluntary cases where children are not placed in foster care, child welfare caseworkers are often confused about how to involve non-custodial fathers. Caseworkers often might not be clear what case practices are considered confidential and what information a non-custodial parent is privy to regarding assessment of maltreatment.

The Adoption and Safe Families Act of 1997 (ASFA) significantly reduced permanency timeframes from 18 months to 12 months which affects how agencies identify, locate, and involve the biological fathers of foster children. For example, ASFA encourages child welfare agencies to use the Federal Parent Locator Service employed by child support enforcement programs to help locate fathers and other relatives. Concurrent planning, also encouraged under ASFA, also prompts efforts to locate fathers. While judicial guidelines have long sought early identification of fathers, the implementation of ASFA may increase the likelihood that this is occurring more consistently (Malm, Murray, & Geen, 2006).

Historically, there have been a number of issues identified in regards to father involvement in the child welfare system. Studies have shown that fathers are less involved in child welfare cases than mothers, and that case managers direct their attention to the mother as the primary parent and don't identify the absence of father involvement as an issue (Franck, 2001; O'Donnell, 1999). Risley-Curtis and Heffernan (2003) assert that the gaze of the child welfare system remains firmly fixed on mothers while fathers are virtually ignored. It should be noted that the Nevada SACWIS system (UNITY) organizes child welfare cases under the mother's name rather than the father's name. O' Donnell's study (1999) of two kinship foster care programs in Illinois found that more than 75% of all fathers had never participated in services or in planning for their children. Studies have also shown that fathers are treated more harshly than mothers in child protective services (O'Donnell, et al., 2005). Another study by

O'Donnell (2001) found that few workers attempted to involve fathers or document their lack of participation in the case records, supervisory meetings, or discussions with fathers' families. Similarly, in a child welfare study conducted by the National Child Welfare Resource Center for Family-Centered Practice (2002) little information on fathers in case records, likely reflecting a failure to include fathers in service provision. Franck (2001) found that fathers' involvement in services was significantly lower than mothers and that the caseworkers directed more outreach efforts toward mothers. The researcher concluded that caseworkers did not totally ignore fathers but expected them to be harder to engage. They "anticipated that their 'investment' in working with birthmothers would yield a better 'return' than working with fathers" (p. 393). Past studies have also shown that caseworkers often perceive that fathers are poorly skilled in parenting (Lagnese & Green, 1976), and more likely than mothers to be abusive or criminal (O'Donnell, et al., 2005). However statistics contradict these presumptions. Mothers are the perpetrators of child abuse and neglect in 57.8% of cases compared to 42.2% of cases with the father as the perpetrator (Child Maltreatment, 2004).

Challenges of Engaging Fathers

O'Donnell, et al. (2005) conducted a study involving focus groups with child welfare caseworkers in Illinois in an effort to evaluate caseworkers' perspectives of fathers in child welfare. Following are the themes that emerged from the caseworker's perspectives.

1. Fathers Are Peripheral to the Child Welfare System

Participants reported that in most cases, the fathers did not participate in child welfare services. Caseworkers also noted that almost all of the fathers on their caseloads were noncustodial. One participant actually stated that "fathers are generally an afterthought." Although agencies require the conducting of diligent searches for fathers in all placement cases, participants noted that those fathers who are located or come forward to assert their right to custody are often treated with considerable suspicion. Courts, for example, may impose conditions for custody that were not applied to other potential custodians, even when the father had no criminal history and was not involved in abusing or neglecting the child: The court automatically assumes the father, because he had a relationship with the mother, is a bad guy. Caseworkers further explained that it was often more common to place with a maternal grandmother than a father. Participants also elaborated that the conditions of service provision can discourage paternal involvement because they are insensitive to fathers' culture. Some caseworkers attributed a gender bias in social service systems that impede paternal participation especially considering fathers typically have little familiarity with social service systems.

2. The System Treats Fathers More Severely than Mothers

The majority of participants suggested that juvenile courts and child welfare agencies treat fathers with suspicion and greater severity. Participants noted that men who have any criminal history may be especially vulnerable to even harsher treatment. Participants asserted that the courts are particularly hard on African American fathers.

3. Fathers Mistrust and Avoid the Child Welfare System

One of the most salient themes emerging from these discussions was fathers' avoidance of juvenile courts, caseworkers, and other child welfare service providers. Participants noted that in some instances, fathers evidenced a general fear that involvement with the child welfare system was somehow going to be detrimental to them. Many fathers perceive that involvement in the child welfare system may place them at greater risk of incarceration or may result in them being ordered to make child support payments.

4. Mothers Obstruct Fathers' Involvement in Child Welfare Interventions

Participants pointed out that the mothers may play a key role in determining whether Non-custodial fathers even have an opportunity to participate in planning and services. Participants explained that many mothers provide a false name or withhold information that would enable the caseworker to locate the father. Citing individual cases, participants provided an assortment of reasons for mothers choosing not to provide information about fathers including:

- mother's general reluctance to provide any information to the caseworker about her history or circumstances;
- anger at the father because he is involved in a new relationship;
- fear that the father will be able to get custody of the child;
- fear of the father's reaction to being identified, especially in situations in which the mother was a victim of domestic violence; and
- an unwillingness to let the father know that she and their children are involved with the child welfare system.

Some participants said that they often had to develop a relationship of trust with a mother before she would disclose information about a father's whereabouts and circumstances.

5. Many Fathers Have Little or No Commitment to Their Children

Participants identified a lack of paternal commitment as a major explanation for low paternal involvement. Many participants described fathers who had no relationship with the mother or the child. Some participants said they had known fathers who had no interest in their children but wanted to use the system for financial gain.

6. Caseworkers Treat Mothers and Fathers the Same

In all the focus groups, participants emphasized that although fathers may be different than mothers as clients and may be treated differently by the courts, they as caseworkers were willing to work with both parents equally. When both parents wanted custody, however, participants described the case planning process as a race in which the parent who most quickly achieved his or her case plan goals won custody. Several participants further explained that in custody disputes, fathers were often at a disadvantage to mothers. For example, unlike mothers, some fathers had had little contact with their child and were trying to develop a relationship with the child during limited visitation time. Many fathers also had less time because they had not been contacted by the agency regarding child's placement until several months after the event.

What about the Dads

The Urban Institute, with the National Opinion Research Center (NORC) at the University of Chicago, conducted the *Study of Fathers' Involvement in Permanency Planning and Child Welfare Casework* to provide the Administration for Children and Families with a description of the extent to which child welfare agencies identify, locate, and involve nonresident fathers in case decision making and permanency planning. The study was conducted from 2004-2005 in Arizona, Massachusetts, Minnesota, and Tennessee, using three methods of data collection—interviews with child welfare administrators, case-level data collection through interviews with caseworkers, and data linkage between child welfare and child support systems. Below are findings from both the administrator and caseworker interviews (Malm, Murray, & Geen R, 2006):

- **Most nonresident fathers are identified early in a case.** Caseworkers indicate that over two-thirds of nonresident fathers (68%) are identified at case opening. Many administrators reported that caseworkers begin trying to identify a child's father during the child protection investigation. Many administrators thought efforts were stronger and more successful early in a case but after the investigation had ended. Case-level findings suggest that nonresident fathers not identified early on are less likely to have contact with the agency.
- **Caseworkers ask a number of individuals for help in identifying the father but many do not provide information.** For cases with fathers not identified at the time of case opening, the caseworker typically reported asking a number of different individuals—the child's mother, mother's relatives, other workers—for assistance in identifying the father. Only one-third of the mothers who were asked to provide information on an unidentified father did so, and other sources were not very successful.

Workers also reported on how they located nonresident fathers who had been identified and circumstances that may make contacting the father difficult. Findings include the following:

- **Caseworkers ask a number of individuals for help in locating nonresident fathers.** Caseworkers reported asking for help from the mother, the mother's relatives, the child, siblings, and other workers as well as the father's relatives to help locate the nonresident father. Workers also consulted a number of other sources including law enforcement, public assistance and department of motor vehicles records, and telephone books.
- **Few caseworkers sought the assistance of the state's child support agency in locating the nonresident father.** While over 60 percent of workers noted that their agency encouraged referrals to child support for help locating the father, in only 20 percent of the cases in which the father had not been located did the worker make such a referral. In 33 percent of the cases workers noted the state parent locator service was used.
- **In slightly over half of all cases (55%), the nonresident father had been contacted by the agency or worker.** Contact was broadly defined to include in-person contact, telephone calls, or through written or voicemail communication.
- **Several circumstances make it hard to contact fathers.** The most frequently reported circumstance that affected contact with the father was the father being unreachable by phone (60%); 31 percent of fathers were reported to have been incarcerated at some point in the case, although it was noted as causing difficulty with contact in only about half of these cases; and other circumstances—such as unreliable transportation, homelessness or unstable housing, and being out of the country—while cited less frequently caused greater difficulty with agency-father contact.

Findings on Father Involvement

When local child welfare administrators were asked about potential benefits and drawbacks to father involvement in child welfare cases they reported that involving fathers may benefit both the child and the father. However, administrators were quick to caution that this was true only when such involvement poses no safety risk to the child or mother. Almost three-quarters (72%) of caseworkers noted that father involvement enhances child well-being and in over 90 percent of cases in which the father was contacted the caseworkers reported sharing the case plan with the father and telling him about his child's out-of-home placement. However, only a little over half of caseworkers of children in the study sample (53%) believed nonresident fathers want to be a part of the decision-making process about their children and most reported that nonresident fathers need help with their parenting skills. Other findings include the following:

- **Half of the contacted nonresident fathers expressed interest in having their children live with them (50% of contacted fathers or 28% of the entire sample.) While 45 percent of the contacted fathers were considered as a placement resource, this represents only a quarter of all sampled cases.**

Caseworkers report a wide range of circumstances and problems that are likely to complicate any efforts to place the child in the home of his or her father, and some administrators seemed to favor paternal kin as a placement resource. However, administrators mentioned that even if a father cannot be a placement resource they could offer tangible benefits such as financial support or critical knowledge of the birth family's medical history.

- **Over half of the contacted fathers (56%) had visited their child while he or she was in foster care.** However, this represents less than one third (30%) of all fathers in the sample.

Issues Preventing Placement with Nonresident Fathers

For cases involving fathers with whom the agency had made contact, workers were asked to identify problems or issues that prevented the child from being placed with his or her father. Findings include the following:

- **Many fathers are either substance abusers or involved in the criminal justice system.** In over half the contacted cases (58%), workers noted fathers with drug or alcohol abuse problems and half of the fathers were involved with the criminal justice system in some way (i.e., incarcerated, on parole, or awaiting trial).
- **Fathers are often non-compliant with services.** Caseworkers reported offering services to fathers in over half of the cases (59%) but reported only 23 percent of the fathers had complied with the services offered.
- **Many nonresident fathers have multiple problems.** Workers reported that over forty percent of the contacted fathers (42%) had 4 or more of the 8 problems listed in the survey. However, it should be noted that these are the same kinds of problems and issues that face mothers of children in foster care.

Caseworker Training on Father Involvement

While previous studies have noted a lack of training on father involvement, a significant portion of the study's caseworker respondents (70%) reported having received training on engaging fathers. At least for the four states studied here, training on fathers appears to be fairly widespread. And while few significant differences were found between male and female caseworkers or among groups of workers with differing opinions on working with fathers, several differences were found between trained and untrained caseworkers. Findings include the following:

• **Caseworkers who received training were more likely than workers who did not receive training to report having located fathers of children in the study's sample. Significant differences were found in some of the methods used to locate fathers.** Workers who received training were more likely to seek help from the father's relatives, another worker, search public aid records, and phone books.

• **Significant differences were also found between the two groups of workers with regard to a number of father engagement type activities.** Workers reporting training were more likely than other workers to report sharing the case plan with the father and seeking financial assistance from him as part of the case plan. These workers were also more likely to report the agency considered placement with the father and that the father had expressed interest in the child living with him.

While the study's findings cannot define best practices, they can inform practice. In particular, findings indicate a need to:

- **Search for fathers early in the case.** Most successful information gathering about a nonresident father's identity and location occurs very early in the case either as case investigation or other assessment activities. If a nonresident father's identity and location are not determined early on, there is less of a chance he will have contact with the agency.
- **Provide guidance and training to caseworkers on identifying, locating, and involving fathers.** Casework practice related to identifying, locating and involving fathers appears case specific and variable. Agencies and courts should make clear what steps caseworkers should consider when mothers do not know or share information about the child's father. Even when mothers do provide information on the child's father, workers may want to reach out to other individuals (e.g., relatives, former caseworkers) in order to confirm and expand upon the information provided. Significant differences were found between workers who reported being training on fathers and those who did not receive such training in terms of father location and involvement. For example, the agency was more likely to have considered placing the child with father in cases involving trained workers. Overall though, the percentage of involved fathers was low.
- **Agencies may need to examine whether services offered to fathers are designed to engage fathers.** The study found a small percent of nonresident fathers, when offered services, complied with all the services offered. Further attention may need to be focused on how caseworkers present service options to nonresident fathers and how societal expectations play a role in these interactions.
- **Address domestic violence and worker safety concerns.** Caseworkers and administrators expressed a reluctance to involve some fathers because doing so

might reintroduce potential abusers into volatile family situations. Administrators also raised concerns regarding worker safety when contacting the fathers of children on the caseload. Unless safety concerns are effectively addressed, both those related to worker safety as well as those related to the safety of the child and mother, efforts to involve fathers are likely to stall. Safety concerns need to be acknowledged and assessed at a case level and, as previously noted, through training. However, that nearly half of the fathers were never contacted by the agency suggests that little assessment of the actual risk presented is occurring.

- ***Use child support data more consistently.*** Child support information, including father location, paternity, and financial support, can be helpful in considering placements with fathers or other ways in which fathers can play a constructive role in their children's lives. The frequency with which caseworkers sought available information from child support agencies varied by state and was related to administrators' views of the relationship between the two agencies and the ease with which caseworkers (or other staff at the child welfare agency) could request locator services.
- ***Develop models for involving fathers constructively.*** Unless the child has a case plan goal of placement with his/her father or paternal kin, caseworkers are unlikely to know what, if anything, they should be doing to involve nonresident fathers. The case plan was shared with the father in almost all cases in which the father was contacted. However, we cannot determine from these data whether the case plan is mailed to the father or whether the worker meets with the father to share and explain the plan. Caseworkers may offer visitation to the father in some cases but there does not appear to be clear guidance on when, and in what instances, this should be offered. Family court decisions may also vary regarding father involvement. Less intensive forms of involvement such as obtaining the father's medical background and obtaining access to benefits are also not likely to be routine. There is considerable room for programming that engages nonresident fathers on behalf of their children in ways that could extend beyond the child's stay in foster care and supports whatever permanency goal is in the child's best interest.

Recommendations

This literature review outlines challenges and successes involving engagement in child welfare including a focus on team meetings and father engagement in order to meet the requirements of the Nevada 2009 PIP. In June, 2011, the NPT published the Nevada Statewide Needs Assessment which identified areas of training need to inform future NPT training topics. In the needs assessment survey, "family engagement" was ranked in the top quartile of training need. The themes that survey respondents noted in their specific comments were how to facilitate family engagement, strategies in dealing with hostile/angry/resistant clients, and strategies for motivating a family to change. Please refer to the Statewide Needs Assessment for a review of the participants' comments. Engagement skills were also noted as themes in participants' comments when responding to needs regarding other training topics (adult mental health, interviewing skills, investigation, case planning, etc.).

Primary Strategy 2 of the PIP is to *Preserve connections and strengthen relationships*. The goal for this strategy is *enhancing the capacity of child welfare staff to effectively engage children youth and families in case decision making*. Based upon a review of the literature, the needs of caseworkers in Nevada, and initiatives that have been successful in other child welfare agencies, the Nevada Partnership for Training is recommending three different potential content areas of trainings to be offered for the PIP Primary Strategy 2:

- 1. Training topic: Motivational Interviewing**
- 2. Training topic: Engaging Fathers**
- 3. A systematic review of existing curriculum (Nevada NWC, Nevada Intermediate Core, and Specialty Core) series be conducted and updated to incorporate and reinforce the skills identified for improving family engagement.**

Training topic: Motivational Interviewing

Motivational Interviewing is a skill that can be utilized by all child welfare caseworkers during every level of their case management. Caseworkers with good skills in motivational interviewing can increase their engagement of families at all points of contact with families in the course of their child welfare involvement. Following are recommended competencies and learning objectives for content on motivational interviewing training. These competencies and objectives are synthesized from various motivation interviewing trainings and customized for child welfare. These competencies could be utilized for any specialty core training on motivational interviewing and could also be integrated into the Nevada NWC curriculum. It is recommended that if these competencies are incorporated into Core training, then Core also incorporate the Transtheoretical Model of Change that is utilized in motivational interviewing.

Competency 1

The participant can apply the main features and the core principles of Motivational Interviewing.

Objective 1a: Participants are aware of the following principles of motivational interviewing: express empathy, develop discrepancy, avoid argumentation, roll with resistance, and support self-efficacy.

Competency 2

The participant understands how motivational interviewing compares to other approaches to interviewing individuals involved in child welfare.

Objective 2a: Participant understands how motivational interviewing compares to traditional forensic interviewing.

Objective 2b: Participant can recognize appropriate times to utilize motivational interviewing.

Competency 3

Participants can describe how MI incorporates an overall view of the behavior change process, as well as specific techniques to enhance change.

Objective 3a: Participant understands the Transtheoretical Model of Change

Objective 3b: Participant understands how to engage a client based on the level of change readiness they exhibit.

Competency 4

Participants can demonstrate reflective listening in the Motivational Interviewing approach.

Objective 4a: Participants understand the key role of reflection and reflective listening.

Objective 4b: Participants understand simple reflective statements, amplified reflective statements, and double-sided reflective statements.

Training topic: Engaging Fathers

The Nevada Training Partnership has been mindful of the need to engage fathers more fully in case practice. Certain hindrances to father engagement have been noted. Supervisors and child welfare caseworkers have stated that it would be a breach of confidentiality for a caseworker to initiate contact with a non-custodial or non-resident father during the course of a CPS investigation. This mentality seems to be inconsistent with NRS 432B.290 which states,

“...data or information concerning reports and investigations thereof made pursuant to this chapter may be made available only to... (m) A parent or legal guardian of the child and an attorney of a parent or guardian of the child, if the identity of the person responsible for reporting the abuse or neglect of the child to a public agency is kept confidential.”

The misconception that communicating with non-resident fathers is a breach of confidentiality seems to be negatively impacting child welfare workers efforts to engage fathers. At times workers are unclear about what information pertaining to a report of maltreatment is confidential, so sometimes they err on the side of confidentiality by not engaging or sharing information with fathers. The Child and Family Service Review (CFSR) process mandates having contact with fathers on all CPS cases. This mandate is clear under performance indicator 17 of the review instrument. It is the recommendation that NRS 432B.290 and performance indicator 17 of the CFSR be highlighted in training on Father Engagement. Further, the development of statewide policies or practice guidelines specific to engaging fathers that are consistent with the CFSR is recommended.

Following are recommended competencies and learning objectives for father engagement training taken from the American Humane Association's Engaging Non-Resident Fathers training. These competencies could be utilized for any specialty core training on father engagement and could also be integrated into the Nevada NWC curriculum.

Competency 1

The participant knows the importance and value of father involvement for social workers, children and families in case involvement.

Objective 1a: The participant can describe how the goals of child welfare case management intersect with the value of engaging non-resident fathers in their cases.

Objective 2b: The participant can identify the benefits to children when involving non-resident fathers.

Objective 3c: The participant can describe the benefits to mothers when involving non-resident fathers.

Competency 2

The participant is aware of the importance of culture in understanding male socialization, perceptions and behaviors.

Objective 2a: The participant can explain how personal experience or history may influence cultural viewpoints and the development of male stereotypes.

Objective 2b: The participant can explain how personal assumptions made by social workers may impact the reactions of men and the engagement of fathers.

Objective 2c: The participant can identify ways in which men may seek help.

Competency 3

The participant knows common challenges to engaging non-resident fathers and how to overcome these challenges with the use of specific and relevant information.

Objective 3a: The participant can identify and use specific strategies to address challenges related to expressions of anger by non-resident fathers.

Objective 3b: The participant can identify and use specific strategies to address challenges related to parental conflict that obstruct efforts to engage non-resident fathers.

Objective 3c: The participant can identify and use specific strategies to address challenges related to working with culturally different non-resident fathers and their families.

Competency 4

The participant understands the use of effective engagement strategies to involve non-resident fathers in the child protection case involving their child(ren).

Objective 4a: Participants can explain the most appropriate strategy to use given the dynamics of the case and the unique experiences of the father.

Objective 4b: Participants can craft questions or comments that demonstrate the ability to use engagement strategies, given the dynamics of each case and unique experiences of non-resident fathers.

Objective 4c: Participants can give relevant and useful feedback to other participants as they practice using engagement strategies.

Competency 5

The participant understands the mandates of father engagement and confidentiality as required by Federal and State law.

Objective 5a: Participants can explain the Child and Family Service Review (CFSR) mandate per performance indicator 17 of the review instrument, on having contact with fathers on all CPS cases.

Objective 5b: Participants can explain the difference between breach of confidentiality and contact with non-custodial or non-resident father during the course of a CPS investigation.

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