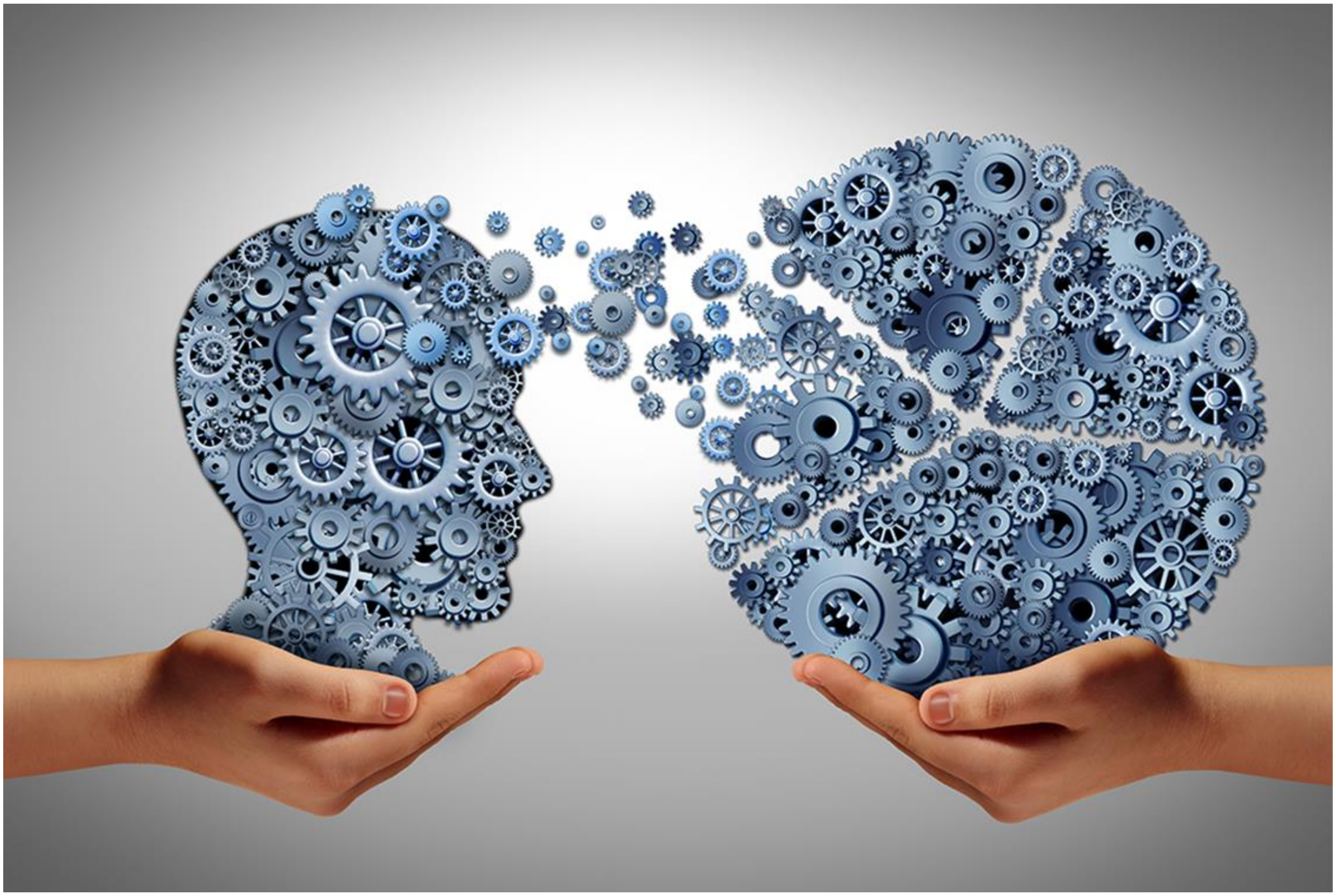

Pre-Service Certification Manual

Tennessee Department of Children's Services| Office of Training and Professional Development | March 2024

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Introduction and Overview

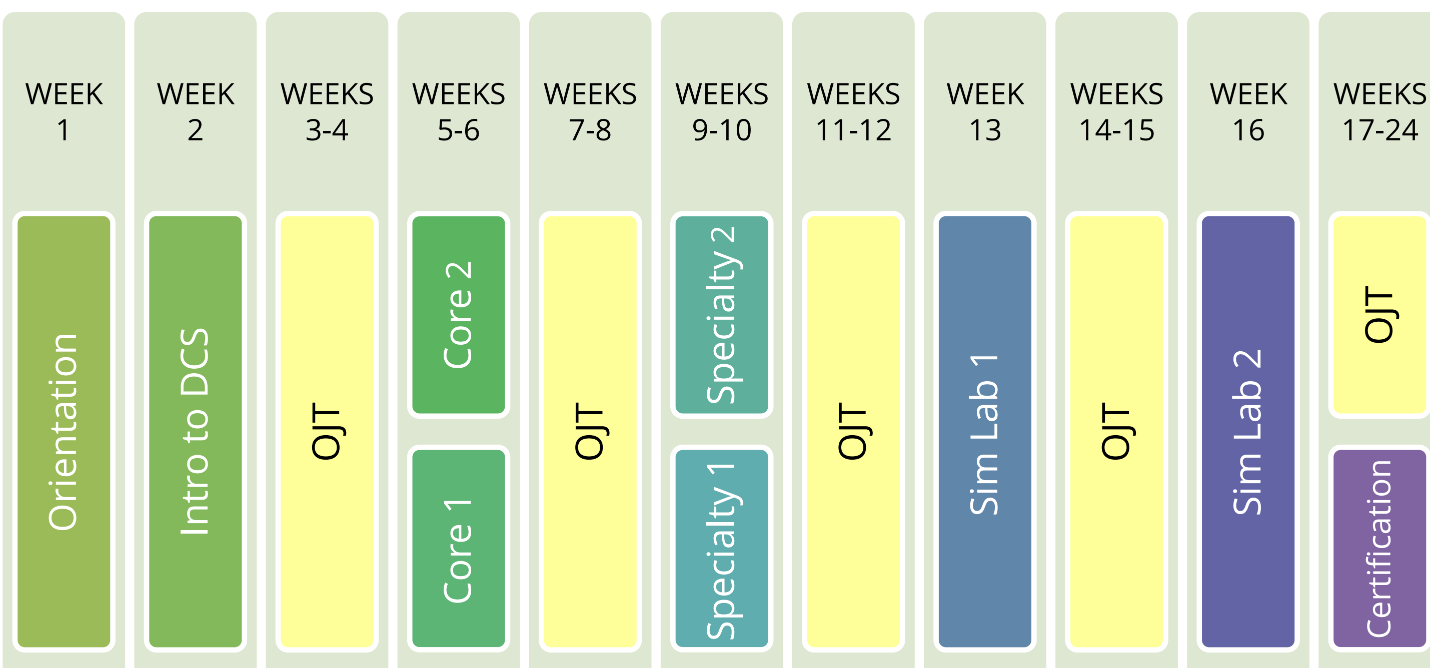
Introduction

The Pre-Service certification process for newly hired Case Managers consists of six months of intensive training, support, and assessment. Through course work and other structured learning experiences, New Hires achieve competency in child welfare casework skills and are introduced to crucial concepts and information. This knowledge will then serve as a foundation and framework for practical application and skill demonstration when working with children and families during On-the-Job Training (OJT).

Learning complex skills is best achieved using a layered approach. Initial classroom and OJT experiences are designed to introduce Case Manager Candidates, also referred to as New Hires, to basic practice concepts and are revisited during subsequent weeks to deepen understanding and increase skill mastery.

The work we do at DCS is complex and the stakes are high. It is natural for New Hires to feel overwhelmed by how much there is to learn and the amount of responsibility involved when working with families. Perhaps the best way to think of training for child welfare casework is parallel to the process used when training doctors. They begin as medical students, then progress to interns for one year where they shadow and assist experienced, qualified doctors. Next, they become residents and slowly begin to take on leading roles in patient care until they have gained enough skills to work more and more independently. Even after completing their training, doctors - like child welfare caseworkers – must be lifelong learners. The job is complex and we are continuously striving to achieve best practice.

Pre-Service Overview



Case Manager Competencies

Over time, all DCS case managers must master the ability to effectively work with children, families, and teams from a trauma-informed perspective. DCS practice has its core in the Practice Wheel which includes Engagement, Teaming, Assessment, Planning, Implementation, and Tracking and Adjusting to define, guide and measure the effectiveness of our work with families.

Each competency below includes skills to be developed by the New Hire as well as questions to assist the Supervisor and Mentor in assessing progress and mastery of each domain.

Engagement

Engagement is the development of trusting relationships with families and children and other team members. These trusting relationships nurture the ability to work collaboratively towards mutual goals.

Skills to Build:

- Ability to effectively work through ambivalence and resistance
- Ability to use appropriate and effective personal disclosure
- Ability to gather information in a strengths-based, culturally responsive, and family-centered manner
- Effective use of attentive/reflective listening skills
- Effective use of Motivational Interviewing skills
- Ability to document one's efforts to engage the family as well as the family's level of engagement

How to Assess:

- How does the New Hire communicate with children and families, peers, and agency partners? Do they convey respect, genuineness, and empathy? How effective is the New Hire at being able to view things from the perspective of others?
- How effectively does the New Hire demonstrate active listening skills (verbal, non-verbal cues, and reflections)?
- Does the New Hire use self-disclosure in an appropriate manner? Generally, self-disclosure should be minimal if present at all. It should be geared toward helping motivate or support the client, should not be excessively personal, and should not minimize the client or make them feel uncomfortable.
- How well does the New Hire communicate full disclosure (such as discussing non-negotiable tasks, court orders, etc.) while maintaining the child and family's involvement in case planning?
- Does the New Hire effectively identify strengths and encourage the family to make positive changes?

Teaming

The process of assisting the family with identifying, recruiting, and maintaining the formal and informal supports needed to help them achieve their goals. All team members play a role in and contribute to the family's successes.

Skills to Build:

- Ability to assist families in building and maintaining a Child and Family Team
- Ability to use conflict resolution skills both individually and in a group setting
- Ability to help motivate and encourage ongoing participation by various formal and informal family supports
- Ability to recognize and encourage the leadership capabilities of the family, as appropriate, in the Child and Family Team Meeting (CFTM)
- Ability to document effective teaming in the context of CFTMs as well as other interactions

How to Assess:

- How well does the New Hire articulate the advantages of working with a team? How effectively do they convey those advantages to the Child and Family Team?
- Did the New Hire assist the family in building and maintaining the CFT? Is there balance between the New Hire's assistance to and expectations of the family?
- Does the New Hire use strategies to manage and/or prevent conflict?
- Does the worker understand and adhere to CFTM requirements and policy?

Assessment

Assessment involves the ability to recognize both issues of concern and areas of strength. Strong assessment skills result in safety for children and positive outcomes for families.

Skills to Build:

- Ability to prioritize interviews and knowledge of how to approach information gathering
- Ability to assess for safety, permanence, and well-being utilizing various methods
- Ability to evaluate the pertinence of gathered information
- Assessment results should be integrated into every aspect of case work and contribute to the development of logical next steps that enhance the family's functioning
- Ability to identify functional strengths and assist the family in utilizing them to address existing concerns/risks
- Communication of pertinent information to Supervisor; the ability to clearly convey situational information that is often complicated in a concise and factual way
- Ability to adequately and accurately document both formal and informal assessments

How to Assess:

- Does the New Hire understand the significance of risk factors and protective factors? Are they able to prioritize risk factors?

- Does the New Hire understand how to gather information using formal and informal assessments? Is the New Hire able to integrate this information in planning and next steps?
- Is the New Hire focusing on safety, permanency, and well-being?
- Did the New Hire assess the family's underlying needs and identify functional strengths? How effectively do they convey these factors to the family?

Planning

Strong planning combines all previous competencies. Proper engagement, a supportive team, and global assessment all contribute to the process of developing a plan that helps the family progress.

Skills to Build:

- Ability to involve and motivate the family to participate in case planning
- Integration of assessment results to identify strengths and needs, convey them to the family, and utilization of those results in the development of strong action steps
- Ability to create SMART (Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Relevant, and Timely) goals
- Ability to adequately document a formal plan developed in joint decision-making with the family and team

How to Assess:

- How effectively does the New Hire involve the family in the planning process?
- To what extent does planning focus on the family's functional strengths?
- Did the New Hire assist the family in developing next steps in order to reach desired outcomes?
- Was the New Hire able to actively involve additional members of the Child and Family Team (grandparents, attorneys, medical staff, etc.)?
- Were formal and/or informal assessments used to guide the development of goals and action steps?

Implementation

Implementation is the process of working with Child and Family Team members to follow through on their identified responsibilities in order to complete the action steps of the Permanency Plan.

Skills to Build:

- Ability to match identified needs with appropriate services
- Knowledge of service providers
- Ensure any worker responsibilities outlined in the Permanency Plan are performed
- Ensure identified supports and services are implemented in a timely manner
- Ensure services are provided consistently and at an appropriate level of intensity required to achieve the desired results

- Ensure services and supports are strengths-based, family centered, and culturally competent
- Ensure required documents are disseminated

How to Assess:

- Was the New Hire able to effectively assist families in scheduling appointments with providers?
- Is the New Hire familiar with community resources in your area?
- Does the New Hire understand the scope of services offered by identified providers?

Tracking and Adjusting

Tracking and Adjusting involves monitoring the CFT's progress in completing the action steps of the Permanency Plan as well as revising action steps and goals as needed.

Skills to Build:

- Maintaining contact with the Child and Family Team to assess progress
- Monitor the effectiveness of provider services
- Ensure transitions are well planned and implemented

How to Assess:

- Is the New Hire able to identify the purpose and effectiveness of the supports and resources provided to the family?
- Can the New Hire identify the barriers to progress along with steps to overcome them?
- Is the New Hire able to identify next steps after receiving provider reports?

Trauma Informed Practice

Trauma informed practice is the ability to recognize and respond effectively to the impact of traumatic stress on those who have contact with DCS including children, parents, caregivers, and service providers.

Skills to Build:

- Collaborate with the Child and Family Team to facilitate and support recovery and increase resilience of the child and family
- Recognizing behaviors associated with trauma responses and the ability to effectively provide services to meet the family's needs

How to Assess:

- Is the New Hire able to identify signs of trauma in the behavior of children and families?
- Is the New Hire able to talk to the family about past traumatic experiences in a supportive manner?

Motivational Interviewing

Motivational Interviewing (MI) is a communication method to get a person engaged in a collaborative conversation to strengthen their own motivation and commitment to change. MI has been rated as the number one scientific best practice by the California Evidence Based Clearinghouse for Child Welfare, meaning it has been shown to be a well-supported, effective practice for reducing parental substance abuse, improving parenting and increasing successful completion of reunification plans.

Skills to Build:

- Recognize the role of ambivalence in the change process.
- Avoid giving advice and eliciting power struggles when faced with resistance.
- Understand the role a case manager's intervention can play in affecting a client's readiness to change.
- Listen and identify the language of change- change talk.
- Practice and incorporate the skills and spirit of MI into their practice.

How to Assess:

- Does the New Hire understand the change process and recognize resistance and ambivalence as parts of that process?
- Does the New Hire utilize Motivational Interviewing skills and techniques to engage families and to help them visualize positive outcomes?
- Is the New Hire able to identify change talk?

Roles and Responsibilities

The Support Team

A Support Team is developed for each New Hire to provide guidance and assistance for the duration of the Pre-Service certification process. This Team includes the Professional Development Coach (PDC), DCS Trainer, the New Hire's Supervisor, and a Certified Peer Mentor. In addition to the individual roles listed below, the shared responsibilities of the Team include:

- Attend Support Team Meetings with New Hire
- Participate in the planning process for OJT activities
- Ask questions and encourage critical thinking
- Build confidence, inspire, and offer encouragement
- Provide feedback regarding progress and performance

Professional Development Coach

During the Pre-Service process, the PDC is the main conduit of communication for the Support Team. The PDC's responsibilities include:

- Notify the Office of Training and Professional Development (OTPD) of new nominations and any subsequent changes (including separation) regarding New Hires through the designated link in SharePoint.
- Welcome regional New Hires and exchange contact information immediately upon notification of the hire date but no more than two (2) business days after their hire date.
- Schedule and facilitate Pre-Service Orientation for New Hires within the Region.
- Schedule and facilitate the Initial Support Team Meeting (ISTM) which should cover the following:
    - Confirmation of New Hire's EI number and DCS work email address in Edison prior to start of Core training.
    - Review of the Pre-Service training schedule and all required Pre-Service course information (calendar with dates, times, locations, virtual training links, etc.)
    - Introduce the Pre-Service Competency Rubric to the Support Team and review content
    - Discussion of expectations around training attendance, OJT participation, professionalism, and confidentiality
    - Instruction on creating accounts and accessing content in Google Classroom and Edison for completion of mandatory virtual trainings
    - Discussion and initiation of OJT plan using the OJT Checklist for the New Hire's designated program area
    - Need for and status of receiving State-issued electronics (tablet, cell phone, etc.)
- Schedule and facilitate at least four (4) additional Support Team Meetings (STMs) during OJT intervals and document meeting content in the Individual Learning Plan (ILP) Participation by the PDC is required for all STMs.
- Create and maintain an ILP for each candidate which includes documentation of OJT performance, coaching sessions, assessments, Support Team Meeting content, and Case Presentation. ILPs are stored electronically in SharePoint.
- Complete all Pre-Service forms for certification and submit at the link found in SharePoint no later than three (3) business days after the Case Presentation.
- Provide New Hire with current Training Checklist
- Check in regularly with the Support Team to assess training progress and identify any needs or concerns to be addressed
- Conduct three (3) individual coaching sessions, two of which are required to be observation of New Hire in the field (client visits, CFTM, Court, etc.) and provide coaching and feedback around observations. As with STMs, coaching session content should be captured in the ILP.

- Be available to support the New Hire during the first year of employment
- Demonstrate best practice and model professionalism
- Use the OJT Checklist to ensure meaningful activities are planned for OJT days with the Mentor

Trainer

Trainers facilitate the classroom learning experience and provide support to the New Hire and Supervisor. The Trainer's responsibilities include:

- Introduction and welcome of New Hires via email prior to each training week for each assigned Pre-Service groups
- Delivery of assigned Pre-Service training
- Monitor New Hires' progress on Google Classroom assignments
- Document New Hire's training progress in the ILP. Updated documentation for each training course is expected to be uploaded no later than 10:00 a.m. on the Monday after the course completion except in cases of Monday being a holiday. The Logistics Office in the Office of Training and Professional Development will verify the New Hire's employee ID and record it in the Pre-Service certification database and maintain all records for Pre-Service certification.
- Provide additional professional development and coaching if requested by the Support Team
- Demonstrate best practice and model professionalism

Supervisor

The New Hire's Supervisor ensures the time and resources are available to aid in a positive learning and skill development experience. The Supervisor's responsibilities include:

- **Training and Professional Development:**
  - Formally train the New Hire
  - Demonstrate best practice and model professionalism
  - Assign a Mentor prior to New Hire Orientation
  - Use the OJT Checklist to ensure meaningful activities are planned for each OJT week
  - Identify specific duties and OJT activities for the New Hire
  - Supplement and maximize the training experience by assisting to transfer what is learned during classroom training to the job tasks
  - Participate in Support Team Meetings and lead in the development of the Professional Development Plan
  - Shadow New Hire in the field to observe practice and progress

- **Performance and Case Supervision**
  - Set expectations for the New Hire and hold them accountable
  - Guide, support, review, and approve all independent work by the New Hire
  - Attend CFTMs and other meetings with the New Hire
  - Provide case direction and assist in decision making
  - Schedule weekly individual conferences with the New Hire (during OJT weeks) to assess progress and provide support as outlined in Policy *4.4 – Performance and Case Supervision Practice Guidelines and Criteria*.
  - Retain full responsibility for the service and outcome of assigned training cases
  - Meet with HR and discuss next steps
- **Administrative**
  - Initiate disciplinary action and address concerns
  - Approve time, schedule, mileage etc.

Certified Peer Mentor

The Certified Peer Mentor is an experienced DCS case manager with at least one year of experience in the program area who has completed the Mentor Certification process. The Mentor's responsibilities include:

- Demonstrate best practice and model professionalism
- Help orient the New Hire to casework, the team, and DCS
- Collaborate with the Supervisor and PDC
- Participate in Support Team Meetings
- Use the OJT Checklist to ensure quality of OJT experience
- Share knowledge and expertise
- Demonstrate how to perform key casework tasks by providing shadowing opportunities and explaining processes
- Support the New Hire co-leading and leading by providing direction, feedback, and opportunities to debrief experiences
- Assist New Hire with organization and timelines upon assignment of Training Cases
- Listen to the New Hire's problems and concerns
- Review, provide feedback, and teach New Hire in specific areas as directed and approved by the Supervisor
- Notify Supervisor of all concerns and situations in which additional support may be needed

New Hire

Roles and responsibilities as a New Hire:

- Demonstrate professionalism at all times
- Adhere to all DCS policies and procedures
- Maintain confidentiality with all case and family information
- Actively participate in learning during Pre-Service including:
    - Being prepared and on time for all planned learning opportunities
    - Fully engaging in Classroom training
    - Completing all independent learning assignments within designated timeframes
    - Being present and focused during OJT
- Seek clarification and guidance when needed, beginning with the Supervisor
- Maintain contact and share any issues of concern with the Support Team (Supervisor, Mentor, PDC, and Trainer)
- Request Support Team Meetings or other support through the Mentor, Supervisor or by following the chain of command as needed
- Continue learning and growth post-certification by following the Professional Development Plan

Pre-Service Course Work

Through course work and other structured learning experiences-Case Manager candidates achieve competency in child welfare casework skills and are introduced to crucial concepts and information. This knowledge serves as a foundation and framework for practical application and skill demonstration when working with children and families during OJT experiences.

Classroom Training

Intro to DCS *(all Program Areas)*
Executive Team Meet & Greet
Professional Learner Expectations
Pre-Service Calendar & Activities
Poverty Simulation
DCS Case Work **Overview**

Core 1 *(all Program Areas)*	
DCS Practice Model	Case Practice (intro)
DCS Core Objectives	Motivational Interviewing (intro)
Mandated Reporting	Reaction Awareness

Bias (intro)	Safety-Risk Continuum
Trauma (intro)	Allegations (intro)
Documentation (intro)	Secondary Traumatic Stress
Safe Sleep/Car Seat Safety	CFTM Process
Child Care Basics	Bias (community settings)
Conflict Resolution/De-escalation	Case Practice (planning)
Time Management	Minimal Facts Interviews

CPS Specialty	
Case Assignment	Case Transfer
Allegations of Harm	Case Closure
FAST/Assessment Integration	TFACTS
Case Planning	Case Service Requests
IPA	CFTM Skills
Removals	Motivational Interviewing
Documentation	FSS Case Transfer Process

FSS Specialty	
Case Assignment	TFACTS
Joint Home Visits	Documentation
FAST/Assessment Integration	IPA
Scaling	Removals
Case Planning	CFTM Skills
Case Service Requests	Motivational Interviewing
Case Closure	

JJ Specialty	
Case Assignment	Case Closure
Educational Needs/Requirements	Independent Living
EPSD&T/Medical Needs	TFACTS
Records Requests	Motivational Interviewing
CANS/Assessment Integration	CFTM Process
Court Procedures	Documentation
Case Planning & Services	Life Books

Foster Care Specialty	
Case Assignment	Case Closure
Custodial Educational Needs	TFACTS
EPSD&T/Medical Needs	Documentation
CANS/Assessment Integration	Independent Living
Case Planning & Services	CFTM Process
Court Procedures	Motivational Interviewing
Family Visitation	Life Books

Google Classroom Assignments

Google Classroom provides an opportunity for New Hires to work at their own pace. This virtual format allows New Hires to review written materials and resources which they will be able to reference and utilize as a resource even after they are certified.

CANS and FAST

The Child and Adolescent Needs and Strengths (CANS) is a multi-purpose tool developed to support care planning and level of care decision-making. It also facilitates quality improvement initiatives and the monitoring of outcomes of services. The CANS was developed from a communication perspective to facilitate the linkage between the assessment process and the design of individualized service plans including the application of evidence-based practices.

The Family Advocacy and Support Tool (FAST) is the family version of the planning and outcome management tools. The purpose of the FAST is to support effective interventions when the focus of those efforts is on entire families rather than single individuals. The most common use of the FAST is in efforts to address the needs of families who are at risk of child welfare involvement.

CANS/FAST New User Certification is conducted by a Vanderbilt COE (Center of Excellence) Assessment Consultant and is valid for the remainder of the training calendar year. Certified employees are required to complete the three-hour re-certification each subsequent year if they remain in a Case Management position.

TFACTS

TFACTS (Tennessee Family and Child Tracking System) training begins during Orientation week with a brief introductory session. More in-depth training occurs over two full days; one during each Specialty week and tailored for each program area.

One-on-one review sessions, make-up sessions, and additional TFACTS support for New Hires is available by contacting the TFACTS Trainer assigned to the Region. This includes New Hires in Court Liaison, Placement Specialist, and Adoptions positions as their work on TFACTS is so specialized.

TFACTS training for stipend and certification students is required and will be coordinated by the regional Professional Development Coach.

Child Passenger Safety

Child Passenger Safety provides instruction on the proper use and installation of car seats for children and consists of two components: the 2.5-hour classroom instruction and a one-hour installation portion. It is provided in conjunction with Safe Sleep during Core weeks.

Both portions of Child Passenger Safety training must be successfully completed by a New Hires before they transport any children in a professional capacity.

Safe Sleep

Safe Sleep is a one-hour course that outlines the importance of Safe Sleep practices for infants, the ABCs of Safe Sleep, Safe Sleep positions and environments. It is comprised of a classroom instruction portion and a skills portion of assembling a Pack ‘n’ Play. It is provided in conjunction with Child Passenger Safety.

New Hires must successfully complete Safe Sleep training prior to carrying cases independently.

Legal Training

Pre-Service Legal Training is delivered by a DCS Central Office Attorney and covers general legal topics. These include the relationship between DCS legal and program staff, completing emergency removals, Immediate Protection Agreements and other court pleadings, filing and adjudicating Dependency/Neglect and Severe Child Abuse cases, dispositional outcomes for cases, Permanency Hearings, Terminations of Parental Rights, and general court decorum.

Bridge

The Bridge sessions are designed to transition learning from Core Foundations and Specialty training to applied practice. Content is delivered over 3 three-hour sessions and includes preparation for the Sim Lab experience. Bridge training includes understanding and learning to act in accordance with 4th Amendment requirements, competencies around engagement and building trust, developing assessment skills to help inform staff at critical junctures and throughout the life of a case, how to conduct family interviews, diligent search, and confidentiality.

Simulation Labs

A Simulation Lab is an immersive training experience where New Hires have the opportunity to pratice various aspects of case work in a safe, controlled environment. By providing a simulated home environment with various realistic scenarios that Case Managers encounter in the field, the Sim Lab enables participants to gain experience in preparation for real-world interactions in family homes, court hearrings, and CFTMs. Benefits of simulation include increased transfer of learning, access to practice opportunities in a safe environment, improved skill retention, and a chance for New Hires to make mistakes and adjust approaches before interacting with real client families.

Sim Lab training is separated into two (2) weeks. Sim Lab 1 occurs during the 13th week of Pre-Service and includes the Bridge training sessions, Walk-Through of a simulated home environment, and interviewing a simulated client family in their home.

Sim Lab 2 occurs during the 16th week of Pre-Service and marks the last training segment before New Hires begin full-time OJT. This week is an opportunity to practice different aspects of case work before being assigned cases on Week 17. Practice opportunities include a simulated Child and Family Team Meeting (CFTM), case staffing with Supervisor, completing an intake, and mock court testimony.

Sim Lab attendance is required for all staff attending Specialty Training unless waiver has been approved by OTPD.

Rape Aggression Defense (RAD)

The Rape Aggression Defense (RAD) System is a program of realistic self-defense tactics and techniques. It is comprised of a classroom portion (3 hours) and skills lab which occur in the same day.

CPR/First Aid

This is a full day course and upon successful completion, New Hires receive certification in child and adult CPR/First Aid.

Pre-Service Waivers

The Pre-Service Certification process is designed to meet the needs of newly hired staff with little to no experience in child welfare casework. Often, Case Managers have prior experience or specialized degrees, and recognition of these strengths is important to our workforce and retention of highly qualified staff. Pre-Service Certification requirements can be waived to reflect prior certification and education. In these cases, the PDC, in consultation with Regional Program leadership, may submit a Pre-Service Waiver request to the Office of Professional Development. Guidelines for Waiver qualification are detailed below and can also be found in Section H of Policy *5.3, Case Manager Certification*.

Standard Waivers

Pre-Service waivers do not include waivers for training required by policy unless the applicant can provide proof of equivalent training. For example, all Case Managers must complete Child Passenger Safety training prior to transporting children and youth. A Pre-Service waiver does not exempt the Case Manager from this requirement.

- Stipend / Certification Students: Stipend students complete all Pre-Service requirements while in college and intern with the Department. They are considered Certified Case Managers when they are hired and are waived from most Pre-Service activity, except:
    - CANS/FAST Training

- Child Passenger Safety
- TFACTS
- Sim Labs

- Returning Case Managers with less than a 12-month service gap: DCS Certified Case Managers who leave and return to the Department within one year retain their certification and are waived from all Pre-Service activity, except:
    - CANS/FAST certification if it has been more than 1 year since certification/ recertification
    - TFACTS if there is more than a 6-month gap in service
        - *TFACTS trainers will offer individualized training to address recent changes in TFACTS*
- Current Case Manager transferring to a new Specialty: Certified Case Managers transferring to a new specialty are exempt from all Pre-Service activity except:
    - Specialty training in new specialty area
        - *The region may waive this requirement and take responsibility for ensuring the transferring case manager is trained in the new specialty*
    - TFACTS Specialty in the new specialty area
        - *A TFACTS trainer will offer individualized training for transferring Case Managers*
    - Sim Labs unless previously completed
    - CANS/FAST unless already certified

Modified Track

The Modified Track consists of the first 16 weeks of Pre-Service training, which includes Introduction to DCS, Core, Specialty training, TFACTS, Simulation Labs, and eight (8) weeks of OJT. Regions may request that a waiver be considered in the following circumstances.

- **Returning Case Manager with 13–36-month service gap:** Former DCS Certified Case Managers who leave and return within 3 years may be eligible for a modified Pre-Service schedule. The Case Manager must have had at least 12 months post Pre-Service case management experience for consideration.
- **Case Managers with Child Welfare experience in another state**: Case Managers with child welfare experience in another state may be considered for a modified Pre-Service track. The Case Manager must have had at least 12 months post Pre-Service case management experience for consideration.
- **Private Provider Case Managers trained in DCS Pre-Service:** Case Managers working for private provider agencies that use DCS standards to train and certify case management staff may be considered for a modified Pre-Service track.

If a Modified Track waiver is approved, the following requirements must be met:

- During OJT, the candidate's Supervisor must observe the Case Manager in the field to assess their skills based on the Competency Rubric.

        - Training Case Assignment readiness will be determined by the Support Team with no more than 1-2 cases assigned within a two-week period and no more than a total of five (5) active cases assigned prior to certification. Case assignment may begin at the conclusion of Specialty training (Pre-Service week 11).
        - The candidate will complete the Case Presentation Assessment during week 17 of Pre-service, following the completion of classroom training. If the candidate is unable to achieve a passing score, they will complete the remaining weeks of OJT and may attempt a Case Presentation Assessment in the 24th week.

- Additional information regarding waived requirements:
    - Newly hired Supervisors (Case Manager 4) from outside the agency are not required to attend Pre-Service
    - Pre-Service must be requested by the Region and approved prior to the beginning of the Pre-Service cycle
    - Returning or transferring Case Managers with sufficient knowledge and experience in TFACTS may consult with the Regional TFACTS Trainer for individualized training recommendations and accommodation if appropriate.

Key Features of OJT

OJT Structure

On-the-Job Training (OJT) is a practical approach to acquiring new competencies and skills. Empowered by the knowledge they have gained through coursework; CM candidates can begin to learn about the job by doing it. This form of training happens under the guidance of the Peer Mentor, Supervisor, or other designated experienced staff, and gives the New Hire an opportunity to observe and practice casework tasks.

OJT is divided into structured increments and should progress in phases from shadowing, to co-leading, to leading under supervision before becoming certified and working independently as a Case Manager. The duration of each phase may vary for each New Hire as it is affected by prior experience in social work, educational background, and many other factors. These OJT increments include assessment touchpoints and Training Case assignment guidelines.

Orientation	• Pre-Service Overview/OJT Orientation • HR
WEEK 3-4	• **Initial STM** • *Shadow*
WEEK 7-8	• **STM 2** • *Shadow / Co-Lead*
WEEK 11-12	• **Foundations Assessment STM** • *Shadow / Co-Lead*
WEEK 14-15	• **Coaching Session 1** • *Shadow/ Co-Lead*
WEEK 17	• **Case Assignment Assessment STM** • Assigned 1-2 cases • *Lead*
WEEK 18-19	• **Coaching Session 2** • Assigned 1-2 cases • *Lead*
WEEK 20-21	• **STM 5** • Assigned 1-2 cases (not to exceed 5 active cases) • *Lead*
WEEK 22-23	• **Coaching Session** • Assigned 1-2 cases (not to exceed 5 active cases) • *Lead*
WEEK 24	• **Case Presentation Assessment** • Certification

During Pre-Service, planning and support are vital to the success of every New Hire. When not participating in classroom training, New Hires should be involved in OJT with their Mentor or other designated team members. Below is a list of suggestions to help maximize OJT experiences:

- Use Fridays to map out the coming week; avoid leaving the planning to Mondays which tend to be very busy.

- Utilize existing tools. For example, have the Team share Outlook calendars to easily coordinate shadowing opportunities and mark the planned dates on the OJT Checklist.
- Making learning a team effort - expand shadowing opportunities by asking each work team member to take a day with the New Hire. Observing multiple work styles is highly beneficial when learning new skills.
- Supervisors are highly encouraged to be present in the field during OJT. This communicates a high level of commitment to the candidate's learning and makes them feel like a valued part of the team. It also boosts the New Hire's level and understanding and confidence.
- Take daily opportunities to debrief training experiences with the New Hire. Ask open ended questions to identify what is making an impact and which areas need more attention. Just as in casework, assessment is not an event, it's ongoing.
- Consider the New Hire's class schedule when planning field activities, especially after hours. Protocols regarding overtime vary and class time cannot be flexed. Keep in mind that most classroom training days start before 9:00 a.m. and fatigue is not conducive to learning.

STMs and Competency Assessments

Support Team Meetings are the structured teaming process of OJT and are facilitated by the Professional Development Coach. STMs include the PDC, the New Hire, their assigned Mentor, and the Supervisor. New Hires typically meet their PDC during Pre-Service Orientation during Orientation week. This meeting typically includes all regional New Hires meeting as a group with the PDC and provides an overview of Pre-Service, discussion of expectations, and provides an opportunity to discuss and address any onboarding issues that may exist. Supervisors and Mentors are welcome to participate and will be provided with the same information.

The Initial Support Team Meeting (ISTM) typically occurs during the first increment of OJT (Pre-Service weeks 3 and 4). The ISTM is usually the first individualized meeting for the New Hire and the presence of all Support Team members is required. At this time, the information presented at Orientation is reviewed and expounded. The OJT Checklist is used to begin planning shadowing experiences and the Competency Rubric is presented to all Support Team Members.

The second STM occurs during the second OJT increment (Pre-Service weeks 7 and 8) and provides an opportunity to debrief learning experiences, discuss feedback regarding the New Hire's strengths and development opportunities, assess overall progress, and plan for upcoming OJT experiences and classroom trainings.

The next STM occurs during the third OJT increment (Pre-Service weeks 11 and 12) and will include the Foundations Competency Assessment. This assessment is not scored but serves as a planning tool to identify specific areas where the New Hire excels and where additional development and learning opportunities are needed. The Foundations Rubric only includes the competency items the candidate would have had an opportunity to learn at this point such as child welfare practice theory, documentation, and communication skills. Next steps for how to utilize the identified strengths and develop the areas of need should be documented by the PDC for each domain in the Foundations Competency Rubric. This information should direct the team in planning OJT activities and the one-on-one Coaching Session in the upcoming OJT interval.

The fourth STM occurs during Pre-Service week 17 once the New Hire has completed all classroom training and Sim Labs. The primary focus of this meeting is the Training Case Assignment Competency Assessment and also includes debriefing learning experiences and progress.

The final STM typically occurs during the seventh (Pre-Service weeks 20 and 21). This meeting serves as the midpoint check-in between Training Case Assignment and the Case Presentation. The content of this meeting should include areas where the New Hire is able to lead and work independently as well as areas of practice where additional development is needed.

The standard STM structure outlined above is the guideline. Timeframes may need to be shifted due to Support Team member availability, holiday schedules, or other unusual circumstances. Additional STMs can be added to the existing format upon request by any of the Support Team Members.

The content of each STM will be documented by the PDC in the Individual Learning Plan (ILP).

Individual Coaching Sessions

Individual coaching sessions with a Professional Development Coach are highly personalized and individualized learning opportunities for New Hires. Each New Hire will participate in at least three (3) individual coaching sessions. These sessions are scheduled in advance and may include additional team members such as a Mentor being present during a home visit that is observed by the PDC.

Two (2) of the coaching sessions must include direct observation of the New Hire in the field (home visits, client interviews, court, CFTM, etc.) and meeting for immediate feedback and discussion. The third session may be used to prepare for the Case Presentation or to coach around an identified area of need. Additional coaching sessions can be requested by the Supervisor or any other Support Team member.

As with Support Team Meetings, all coaching sessions are documented on the Individual Learning Plan (ILP) by the PDC and become part of the New Hire's training record.

The Individual Learning Plan

Following classroom training weeks, the Trainer will provide written feedback regarding classroom participation in the ILP which will be reviewed during subsequent STMs. Trainers are encouraged to attend STMs and will do so as their schedule permits. The ILP should reflect completion of OJT activities and assessment of progress and development to inform the final decision regarding Pre-Service Certification. The Individual Learning Plan form can be found under *Forms & Documents* on the intranet.

OJT Checklist

The OJT Checklist is a learning tool which has been developed based on DCS Policy, CFSR, and Best Practice standards. The checklist is an excellent planning tool for Support Teams and should be utilized when mapping out "next steps" during STMs. A tailored OJT Checklist exists for each program area which contains activities crucial to case work and reinforces the learning that has occurred through course work. It includes hyperlinks to DCS Policy and forms pertaining to each task, which allows for ease of use and promotes referring to these documents for case direction.

The PDC will review the checklist with the New Hire prior to the Case Presentation and record its completion in the ILP. All activities included in the checklist are recommended but some are required; all required OJT activities must be completed before a candidate can be certified. The checklists can be accessed using the links below:

- CPS OJT Checklist
- FSS OJT Checklist
- JJ OJT Checklist
- Perm OJT Checklist

Assignment of Training Cases

Assignment of Training Cases is based on assessment of readiness during Pre-Service Week 17. By this time the New Hire has completed all of the classroom training and eight (8) weeks of OJT. Supervisors and Mentors are strongly encouraged to include the New Hire in activities with cases that can be easily transitioned to the candidate once they have completed the first 16 weeks of training. Training Cases should be representative of the demographics in the area served by the New Hire. These cases should not be overwhelming or too complicated and assignment is the responsibility of the Supervisor in the Region.

The Case Assignment Assessment is completed in the context of the STM using the Competency Rubric and basing scoring on the New Hire's progress and performance as a whole. A score of 20 indicates that the candidate is ready to receive training cases and may begin to co-lead and lead on casework under close supervision. One (1) or two (2) training cases may be assigned initially, and the Support Team will assess the New Hire's ability to complete casework tasks through direct field observations, case staffing, and debriefing. After two (2) weeks the Support Team will meet and decide if the New Hire is ready to receive one (1) to two (2) additional training cases. This process will be repeated in two (2) week increments, not to exceed five (5) active training cases at one time. The Supervisor, Mentor, and PDC should have regular contact regarding the training caseload, and this should be documented in the ILP. Training Case Assignment is addressed in Policy *5.3 - Case Manager Certification*.

In cases of the New Hire scoring less than twenty (20) on the Case Assignment Competency Rubric, the Support Team will develop a Structured Support Plan for the candidate. This plan should include detailed action steps and learning opportunities for bridging the practice gaps in the rubric items scored "Development Opportunity" or "Skill not Demonstrated". The Structured Support Plan should be documented in the ILP and all Support Team members receive a copy. Finally, the Team will set the timeframe for the plan and schedule the next meeting, which is not to exceed two (2) weeks, to reassess readiness for Training Case Assignment. The TC or Regional Director should be present during the second Case Assignment Competency Assessment.

Case Presentation and Certification

Case Presentation Overview

The final step before certification is the Case Presentation Competency Assessment. This Case Presentation is based on one of the New Hire's training cases and is a skills demonstration which encompasses all the concepts and techniques learned throughout the Pre-Service process. Being able to present case information in a thorough, well-organized, and professional manner is a necessary skill for caseworkers in child welfare and this is reflected by the Case Presentation being used as a final assessment.

Once all required coursework and OJT tasks have been completed, the New Hire will participate in a Case Presentation which will be assessed by a panel consisting of their PDC, Mentor, and Supervisor. Regional Leadership may designate additional staff to be members of the panel. The Case Presentation Outline gives the New Hire guidance to organize case information and prepare for the discussion during the presentation. The New Hire will bring examples of completed documentation for their case so the panel may evaluate their documentation skills. These examples can be sent in advance to the panel for review so feedback can be provided during the Case Presentation debrief.

At the conclusion of this presentation, documentation review, and a review of the Individual Learning Plan, the panel will determine the candidate's readiness to be certified as a case manager. Each panel member will rate the New Hire using the Case Presentation Competency Rubric and then the team will have to reach consensus on scoring.

Case Presentation Rubric

The Case Presentation Rubric outlines child welfare and casework competencies organized under the following domains:

- **Communication**: clarity and attentive listening
- **Engagement**: use of interpersonal skills, respect, genuineness, and empathy to build professional relationships
- **Teaming**: team building and fostering collaboration
- **Assessment**: gathering and analyzing critical information
- **Planning, Implementation, Tracking & Adjusting**: assessment integration and comprehensive permanency planning
- **Child Welfare Mission & Values**: strengths-based, family-centered practice & focus on safety, permanence, and well-being
- **Self-Management**: self-awareness and confidence
- **Documentation**: professional writing and quality contacts

Within each competency there are four possible ratings ranging from "skill not demonstrated" to "exceeds expectations" with concrete descriptors for each. This tool is used to score Case Presentations but may also serve for self-assessment and tracking progress within a competency.

The Pre-Service Competency Rubric can be accessed through the following link: ***Pre-Service Competency Rubric***.

- **Determine focus, purpose, and summary of the case**
  - Present family demographics, reason for current DCS involvement, and current status of the case
  - Length of time involved with the case and any services in place
  - Identify all family members and explain relation to each other
- **Reason for custody/classification** (include referent Information)
- **Current placement and placement status**
- **Brief history of the family unit** (parents, siblings, significant others)**:**
  - Describe the family dynamics
  - Summarize any previous CPS history
  - Summarize any legal history/criminal charges/Juvenile charges
- **Mental Health history including past treatment, history of hospitalizations, and trauma**
  - Have there been periods of stabilization of mental health issues? If so, what worked, what was successful, and who was involved during these times?
  - Have forms of treatment been attempted that were unsuccessful?
- **Pertinent medical history and information** (including medications)
- **Brief description of presenting behaviors**
  - Be very specific in the description (avoid generalizations)
  - Describe behaviors and interactions between parents and children, siblings, and children with other caregivers, etc.
- **Demonstration of Global Assessment and Assessment Integration**
  - How was assessment information used to guide case decisions?
  - Which assessment tools were most effective and why?
  - How were assessment information/results shared with the Child and Family Team and integrated into the case?
  - What additional assessment is needed in this case?
  - Did you make any referrals as a result of the assessments? If so, discuss the referral and any follow-up needed.
- **Plan for Permanency**

    - Present the identified strengths and needs of the family, current services being provided, services pending or needing to be addressed, and barriers to planning
    - Have there been periods when this family was functioning well? What did that look like and what is needed to achieve that state once more?
    - Discuss progress on Permanency Plan and parent involvement.
        - What does permanency look like for this child and family?
        - Are the right people involved with this family at this time? How do you know?
        - How are you tracking this plan?
        - What is the contingency plan?
- **Educational status including current functioning and educational goals**
- **Family members' long-term goals, social interests, recreational activities, and hobbies**
- **Independent Living Plan**
    - Independent Living strengths and needs
    - Transitional Living Plan
- **Outstanding/ongoing concerns regarding this case**
- **Next steps in case work**
    - What are your planned next steps in this case?
    - How will you integrate assessment into your next steps?

Case Presentation Questions and Interview

The New Hire will prepare for the Case Presentation by reflecting on their coursework and OJT experiences, as well as going out on all activities for the case during OJT. The New Hire will bring a case overview and a sample of documentation from the presentation case for the panel to review. The New Hire will present the case in its entirety, addressing all the domains listed in the Case Presentation Outline. The panel members may then ask additional questions to clarify points regarding the presentation or the New Hire's casework. Examples of such questions are listed below:

- **Communication:**
    - Describe how you ensure good communication in your case work.
    - Describe how you use active listening to engage clients.
- **Engagement:**
    - Describe how you engaged case members in sharing information with you.
    - Tell us about all the people you have engaged in this case and those you still need to engage as part of next steps.
    - Describe how you initiate a professional helping relationship with clients.

- **Teaming**:
  - Describe how you team with the family both during and outside Child and Family Team Meetings.
  - What strategies have you already or plan to employ to ensure you have a comprehensive support system wrapped around this family?
- **Assessment**:
  - Tell us how you ensure you are conducting global assessment in case work.
- **Planning, Implementation, Tracking and Adjusting:**
  - Describe how you collaborated with the members of the Child and Family Team around planning, both in Team Meetings and during routine contacts.
  - Describe which services you have implemented or plan to implement and what outcomes you hope these services will achieve.
  - Describe the ways you have been assessing case progress (including during contacts). How did you track and adjust when things were not going well?
- **Child Welfare Mission and Values:**
  - In this case, how have you assessed and promoted safety in a family-centered, strengths-based way?
  - In this case, how have you assessed and promoted permanency in a family-centered, strengths-based way?
  - In this case, how have you assessed and promoted well-being in a family-centered, strengths-based way?
- **Self-Management:**
  - Tell us how you engage clients in a culturally competent way.
  - Describe how you manage yourself in difficult situations. Tell us about a time a client was resistant or upset and tell us how you interacted and navigated the situation.

Procedure for Debrief

Immediately following the Case Presentation, the panel will provide feedback to the New Hire to discuss strengths and opportunities for growth. At this time, the Professional Development Plan will be reviewed with the New Hire by the Supervisor and Professional Development Coach to ensure ongoing learning occurs and observed gaps are being addressed.

Case Presentation Scoring and Documentation

Case Presentation scoring and performance summary will be recorded in the New Hire's ILP. Summary should reflect and capture a New Hire's performance during the Case Presentation. The summary should include but not be limited to the strengths and areas of growth. The summary should also demonstrate the breakdown of how the final total for each competency was concluded.

- New Hires with a Case Presentation Score of 24 and above will be fully recommended for Certification. The PDC will ensure completion of all Pre-Service requirements and ILP documentation including Support Team members' signatures.
- New Hires with Case Presentation scores less than 24 will not be recommended for Certification. In these cases, the New Hire's Supervisor will work with Regional leadership and HR to determine next steps.

Professional Development Plan

The Professional Development Plan is part of the ILP and will be completed by the newly certified case manager and the Support Team upon successful completion of the Case Presentation. The Plan includes strengths, opportunities for growth, and strategies/action steps for professional development. The Plan should serve as a professional development guide for the new case manager through the first year of employment and be reviewed by the new case manager and assigned Supervisor during monthly Performance Briefings for task completion.

Supervisors are responsible for following up and documenting progress in the areas of growth during monthly performance briefings.

Pre-Service Resources for OTPD Staff

Hotel Accommodations

In partnership with the Fiscal Department, OTPD has established procedure regarding lodging and travel to improve the overall effectiveness and clarity of the New Hire's initial entry to their position. This procedure is designed to be user-friendly, accessible, cost-effective, and engaging for the New Hire and DCS staff working with them.

- All hotel accommodations for Pre-Service certification training are arranged by the OTPD logistics team based on information for hotel requirements entered by the Professional Development Coach on the New Hire Nomination Form.
- Once the Nomination Form is submitted, the PDC receives an email confirmation that the nomination has been received.
- Anyone nominated for Pre-Service certification training is assumed to have prior approval from the Region to travel. The Regional Administrator or designee makes the decision as to when the New Hire will travel and for which days to provide hotel accommodations prior to the nomination being completed.
- If a New Hire decides to not travel or utilize the pre-arranged accommodations, the PDC must notify the logistics team immediately via email.
- Hotel accommodations for the New Hire are arranged for the employee only. Overnight hotel guests are not permitted during Pre-service certification training unless the New Hire has prior written approval from the DCS Fiscal Office and the Regional Administrator.
- The itinerary provided by the OTPD logistics team must be followed as arranged. Written approval for changes in arrival or departure date must be obtained from the Region and submitted to the logistics team prior to the New Hire checking in or out.
- New Hires are requested to contact their PDC with any concerns regarding the hotel stay during Pre-Service certification training. The PDC will then relay the concerns to the OTPD logistics team.
- Any changes in hotel accommodations including reservations and/or confirmations should be reported to the logistics team immediately. The logistics team will contact the hotel vendor's contact person. New Hires should not contact the hotel directly to make any changes to the itinerary.
- All hotel accommodations are directly billed to DCS, and the logistics team has confirmation numbers for all hotel stays. Most hotels require at least 24-hour notice for cancellations; therefore, it is very important to notify the logistics team if a New Hire no longer needs a hotel reservation.
- Some hotels may require a credit card on file for incidental charges. The logistics team has been able to negotiate around this issue with some individual hotels but not all. If the hotel policy still requires it, the New Hire will need to present a personal credit card which will be charged with a provisional hold for incidental costs. If there are no incidental charges (smoking, damages, room service, movies, etc.) during the stay, the card will not be charged, and the provisional hold will be released. New Hires

should check with their hotel prior to checking in for additional information regarding their stay and policy pertaining to incidental charges.

- New Hires are personally responsible for damage or additional charges to their hotel room during Pre-Service certification training. If the hotel directly bills DCS for incidental charges or damage, DCS will recover the cost from the New Hire.
- Pets are not permitted in the classroom or hotel during Pre-Service certification training. Service animals under ADA accommodations are permissible as defined by State and federal laws. Any personal cost associated with service animals is the responsibility of the New Hire.
- New Hires should be directed to contact their PDC with any travel issues. The PDC will then contact the appropriate member of the OTPD logistics team to address the issue.

Links Referenced in Manual

- ***Pre-Service Competency Rubric***
- ***Policy 4.4 – Performance and Case Supervision Practice Guidelines and Criteria***
- ***DCS Policy 5.3: Case Manager Certification***
- OJT Checklists:
    - ***CPS OJT Checklist***
    - ***FC OJT Checklist***
    - ***FSS OJT Checklist***
    - ***JJ OJT Checklist***
- ***ILP Form***