

Florida Child Welfare Core Competencies

Foundations of Child Protection

1. Address values and ethics when making decisions in public child welfare practice.
2. Use child protection standards and principles as guides when interacting with children and families.
3. Implement the child protection process when working with children and families.
4. Interact with systems of care and public or local assistance programs.

Legal Foundations

5. Apply basic principles of contracting for services in public child welfare.
6. Apply the state's legal definitions of child abuse, abandonment, and neglect when working with children and families.
7. Carry out the child protection professional's role and responsibility in dependency court and provide appropriate evidence and testimony.
8. Implement the philosophy, purpose, requirements, and application of federal and state welfare policy and legislation in child welfare practice.
9. Adhere to legal obligations that dependency laws place on child protection professionals.
10. Consider exposure to liability claims when working with children and families.
11. Apply confidentiality requirements to common casework tasks.
12. Work with Child Welfare Legal Services Staff (CWLS) to prepare for legal action.
13. Prepare and participate in administrative, citizen, and judicial reviews and communicate with the court regarding case plan progress.
14. Gain court approval and abide by statutory case plan timeframes

Cultural Competence

15. Demonstrate sensitivity to cultural differences and ethnicity among clients.

16. Develop ethnically and culturally sensitive assessments and intervention plans for children and families.

Communication and Interviewing

17. Communicate with family members and collaterals by asking parents or guardians to elicit, define, and prioritize concerns and needs.
18. Interact with persons allegedly responsible for maltreatment in a way that allows information to be communicated in a non-confrontational manner.
19. Utilize interviewing techniques and strategies to prepare for and conduct age-appropriate interviews with the child, the caregiver, and the family.

Child Development: Physical, Mental and Educational

20. Consider the physical and mental development of children and youth, birth through eighteen years of age, when making practice decisions.
21. Conduct age-appropriate interactions with children and youth, birth through eighteen years of age, that is sensitive to their emotional status and that allows the worker to determine their capacity for self-protection.
22. Demonstrate sensitivity to differences in human development.
23. Consider behavioral indicators and dynamics of adolescent depression, suicide, or other emotional disturbances when working with children and families.
24. Communicate how to manage difficult stages of childhood.

Abuse: Sexual, Physical, Mental, Substance

25. Consider personal, interpersonal, family, social, and environmental factors that influence the incidence of child maltreatment when working with children and families.
26. Recognize indicators of abuse, neglect and abandonment with maltreatment as specified in the department's allegation matrix, Florida Statute, and administrative code when working with children and families.
27. Identify and document indicators of neglect and abuse, including sexual abuse, physical abuse, mental/emotional abuse and neglect, abandonment, and egregious abuse.
28. Identify and document indicators of domestic violence.
29. Identify and document indicators of substance abuse by adults and youth.

30. Identify and document indicators of mental health issues of adults and children, age birth through eighteen years of age.

Child Safety: Risk Assessment, Intake and Ongoing Assessment

31. Use the Abuse Hotline procedures and follow reporting requirements.
32. Analyze specific elements of the Hotline Abuse report.
33. Use the Allegation Matrix to define a specific allegation and treatment type.
34. Evaluate prior abuse report information and determine its relevance to the current investigation.
35. Use specialized observation, assessment and interviewing techniques to assess the risk and safety factors in a situation of suspected maltreatment and weigh their effects on the overall need for protection of the child.
36. Access intensive, family-centered, in-home supportive services when protection of a child is necessary.
37. Assess and document child safety using the HomeSafenet CSA (Child Safety Assessment) and consider the need for removal and placement and the existence of maltreatment according to Florida Statute and rules.
38. Gather appropriate information to assess or verify indicators of abuse and neglect.
39. Interpret the results of the department's child safety assessment protocol to make appropriate child safety determinations.
40. Build and maintain a physical record of the child beginning at the first interaction, including photographs and fingerprints according to Florida Statute.
41. Identify and document conditions and behaviors within the family related to the alleged maltreatment.
42. Identify situations where preventative and/or in-home services and a safety plan cannot protect the child from continued abuse, abandonment or neglect, and make an emergency removal of the child.
43. Identify, document, and conduct on-going, age-appropriate assessment activities that ascertain if a child's physical, mental, social, and educational needs are met.
44. Initiate/conduct *diligent searches* for relatives.

45. Complete home studies.
46. Determine the appropriateness of placement in meeting the needs of the child and siblings.
47. Conduct on-going assessments of risk factors related to the child and siblings' safety.
48. Conduct visits with children and parents and/or caregivers that include on-going assessments of child safety, permanency, and well being.

Prevention

49. Consider the forms and mechanisms of oppression and discrimination pertaining to low income and single parent families and use this information in providing appropriate child welfare services.
50. Protect children and provide services that support families as caregivers.
51. Implement pre-placement preventative services when working with children and families.
52. *Plan, rather than react*, when preparing for contact with children and families.
53. Identify and involve extended family and other community resources that can strengthen a family's ability to care for their children.
54. Implement family-centered services to prevent the removal of children from their homes while fostering positive behavior change
55. Assess the dynamics of resistance and use preventative casework methods to defuse family members' hostility, fear and anger.
56. Communicate and collaborate with community prevention services agencies to meet the needs of the child and family.

Legal Requirements and Counselor Tasks for Removal and Emergency Placement

57. Comply with legal requirements and counselor tasks when removing and placing children.
58. Identify the purpose and timeframes for dependency court hearings and petitions.
59. Recognize probable cause/grounds for removal.

60. Complete all legal activities required for removal and placement, including documentation for *reasonable efforts* and *contrary to the welfare* within required timeframes.
61. Identify circumstances during the removal process that do not require *reasonable efforts*.
62. Comply with legal requirements when filing the TPR petition.
63. Participate in staffings of various types and purposes.

Family-Centered Intervention and Case Planning

64. Engage and assess families from a strengths-based *person in environment* perspective and develop and implement a case plan based on this assessment.
65. Use strength-based perspectives and empowerment approaches to influence growth, development and behavior change.
66. Identify and use the family's strengths to assure continuing safety.
67. Identify and document the parent or caregiver's parenting and disciplinary strategies and their appropriateness for the developmental and individual needs of the child.
68. Identify children and families that have physical, mental, or developmental disabilities.
69. Identify and evaluate the family's existing and accessible resources and support systems to help the family meet their own needs.
70. Work with the family to engage support systems or services to match the family's needs and to reduce risk factors.
71. Work with family members and other parties involved in the case to develop an individualized, family-centered, assessment-based, and outcome-driven case plan.
72. Develop a case plan that maintains the child in the home if possible through managing or changing behaviors or conditions in the child's environment.
73. Address legal sufficiency when developing case plans.
74. Work with the family and all parties to develop goals, tasks, and objectives to assure safety.
75. Use concurrent case planning.

76. Assure that children and family members visit as frequently as possible and according to statutory requirements
77. Consider behaviors of children and families related to separation and loss.
78. Match services with the specific, individual needs of the child, family and caregivers.
79. Ensure age-appropriate referrals for treatment strategies and services that allow the child to develop physically, mentally and socially.
80. Identify and address barriers to effective services.
81. Identify and make referrals to appropriate provider and community services.

Case Planning: On-going Assessment, Treatment Strategies, and Intervention

82. Comply with legal requirements for assessments and case planning.
83. Integrate assessment information in case planning.
84. Determine when concurrent case planning is needed.
85. Plan, prioritize, and monitor completion of case plan activities and tasks within required timelines.
86. Work with the family and all parties to the case to evaluate progress toward achieving case plan goals and assure on-going safety.
87. Review, renegotiate, and update case plans with input from the family and all parties to the case.
88. Assess the child's progress toward the goal of overcoming the effects of abuse, abandonment and/or neglect.
89. Monitor services on a regular basis to ensure that all of the child's educational, physical and mental needs, including prescribed medications and routine medical care, are being met.
90. Assess service frequency, intensity, and duration for effectiveness and appropriateness.
91. Make appropriate referrals for additional services: physical and mental health, domestic violence, substance abuse, and educational.

92. Obtain feedback from providers to incorporate into case planning and assessment processes on an on-going basis.
93. Reassess the overall effectiveness and appropriateness of the case plan.
94. Assure *substantial compliance* with the case plan by reacting appropriately to elements of compliance and non-compliance.

Permanency Planning: Reunification, Termination of Parental Rights and Adoption, Long-Term Foster Care, Emancipation

95. Assess need/readiness for permanency planning, including reunification, long-term foster care, adoption and/or emancipation.
96. Assess compliance with requirements for *diligent efforts* by a parent.
97. Assess compliance with requirements for *diligent efforts* by the state.
98. Obtain progress and/or termination summaries from providers in making determinations regarding permanency planning.
99. Prepare the family and child for reunification, including formalizing support systems to assure safety from recurring harm.
100. Develop, implement, and monitor a post-reunification plan.
101. Identify and implement independent living services and programs.
102. Identify and document a family's on-going needs and assess the appropriateness of the child and family for reunification, long-term licensed care, relative care, or independent living.
103. Prepare the family and child for long-term licensed care, relative care, or independent living, including formalizing support for systems to assure safety from recurring harm.
104. Develop and implement a post-placement plan.
105. Comply with legal requirements, including timeframes for termination of parental rights.
106. Prepare for the termination of parental rights (TPR) and work with the family and child to prepare them for the TPR process.
107. Prepare the family and child for adoption, including formalized supports to prevent adoption disruption.

108. Implement the adoption process.
109. Match the child's needs to the child-placing agency that can best meet these needs and make appropriate referrals.
110. Monitor a post-placement plan.

Case Closure

111. Comply with the legal requirements and counselor tasks for supervising and closing a case.

Documentation

112. Develop documentation that communicates the child's safety, quality case management, and information essential to court proceedings.
113. Build and maintain an up-to-date, organized, and accessible case file.
114. Document events, information/contacts, and actions related to the child and family in a method that facilitates clear communication among all parties in the case.
115. Prepare written reports in a timely manner, including those for legal and financial purposes.
116. Ensure that all documentation regarding the child's safety, risk, placement, and services is gathered and included in the case file.
117. Organize and/or prepare required documentation for staffings and assure methods for transferring case information among various individuals.
118. Report, document, and follow up on critical incidents.

Teamwork, Collaboration and Interdisciplinary Services

119. Utilize the case manager's role to create and sustain a helping system for clients, a system that includes collaborative child welfare work with members of other disciplines.
120. Use job functions and roles within the agency/unit to connect with community partners.

- 121 Collaborate with various individuals, groups, and systems within the agency and community public child welfare network.
- 122 Request advice and/or input from the supervisor.
- 123 Serve as a counselor and communicator of information between all parties in the case and identified stakeholders, including medical, educational, and mental health providers.
- 124 Work with a variety of community service agencies and in partnership with law enforcement officials for the safety of children, families and counselors.
- 125 Initiate or update the child's Health and Educational Passport.
- 126 Use a method, such as a life book, to ensure that each child has a life history traced over time in care.
127. Prepare for and participate in staff meetings.
128. Recognize the roles and responsibilities of staff who conduct licensure, placement, eligibility, and revenue maximization tasks.
129. Work collaboratively with placement and licensure staff if incidents occur or problems are identified with placements.

Data Systems and Quality Assurance

130. Provide input and use various child welfare data systems used by child welfare services staff.
- 131 Enter and retrieve data from the various child welfare systems used by child welfare staff.
- 132 Adhere to and use the Quality Assurance process and standards as determined by the agency, unit, district and/or department.
- 133 Integrate documentation, data systems and quality assurance systems.
- 134 Comply with quality assurance practices, including meeting Quality Assurance standards on all cases undergoing review and internal/external audits.

Financial Aspects of Child Welfare Services

- 135 Explain the primary funding sources for child welfare services.
- 136 Explain the purpose of primary funding sources for child welfare services.

- 137 Carry out the child welfare services investigator/counselor role in tasks that comply with federal funding requirements, including time sampling and eligibility criteria for Title IV-E out of home care reimbursement.
- 138 Recognize the child welfare worker's role to ensure funding.

Personal Development and Safety

- 139 Resolve potentially harmful situations using knowledge of organizational risk management issues.
- 140 Implement stress and time management techniques, including how to access resources and supports designed to minimize work-related stress.
- 141 Recognize situations that place the worker at risk, including escalating emotions of families.
- 142 Use techniques to ensure personal safety, including requesting assistance from colleagues and law enforcement to facilitate staff safety.