

BASW Curriculum Competencies

*for Public Child Welfare
in California*



Published by
California Social Work Education Center (CalSWEC)
University of California, Berkeley
School of Social Welfare
Marchant Building, Suite 420
6701 San Pablo
Berkeley, CA 94720-7420
<http://calswec.berkeley.edu>

*Copyright 2009 by
the Regents of the University of California*

Introduction

As part of a career ladder for the public child welfare workforce, the California Social Work Education Center (CalSWEC) has developed a Title IV-E BASW program in six of its member universities. Similar to the larger Title IV-E MSW program, this federally funded initiative provides support for undergraduate social work education. Consistent with the accreditation standards of the Council on Social Work Education, the program includes at least 400 hours of field placement, spread over two consecutive semesters or three school quarters. The program has been rolled out slowly, with the intent to implement an accessible, high-quality Title IV-E BASW program designed to meet regional and student requirements.

This project evolved in response to expressed county need. In a number of regions in the state, particularly in rural areas, social services and child welfare staff may lack college degrees and/or specialized social work education. By making Title IV-E support available at the undergraduate level, CalSWEC seeks to expand educational opportunities for county employees and others planning to enter the field of public child welfare.

In 2003, a taskforce composed of social work faculty, state agency leaders, and CalSWEC Title IV-E project coordinators began meeting to shape the program, devise curriculum competencies, and make recommendations to the CalSWEC Board of Directors. Working from the existing MSW curriculum competencies, a subcommittee drafted Foundation-level BASW Competencies, which were then accepted by the taskforce as a whole and approved by the CalSWEC Board. The BASW program began its Phase I in fiscal year 2004–05, with the intent of complementing, not replacing, the

existing Title IV-E MSW program. The competencies were revised in 2008–09 to reflect evolving practice needs, resulting in the version that follows.

The newly adopted BASW competencies were approved by the CalSWEC Board in May 2009. As part of an emerging continuum of competencies and knowledge related both to in-service training and to social work education, future revisions of the BASW competencies will be linked to a common core of knowledge, values, and skills shared by public child welfare professionals throughout California.

California Child Welfare Curriculum Principles

1. *The goal of child welfare is to promote the health and safety of children and their development toward a positive, productive adulthood..*
2. *Every child has a right to a permanent home for his or her care and upbringing.*
3. *A caring family is the best and least restrictive environment for raising children.*
4. *A wide range of parenting practices, varying as a result of ethnic, cultural, community, and familial differences, can provide adequate care for children.*
5. *In the circumstances of danger to a child, the state has a right to intervene in family affairs to protect the child. In such circumstances the safety of the child takes precedence over the rights of the parents.*
6. *Every reasonable effort should be made to preserve and strengthen a child's existing family before an alternative placement is considered.*
7. *Services must be available, accessible, timely, and effective.*

Foundation Competencies

I. Ethnic Sensitive and Multicultural Practice

A working knowledge of and sensitivity to ethnic and cultural differences are at the core of child welfare services. Culturally competent practice acknowledges the individual's culture as an integral part of development and selfhood and strives to use cultural concepts in a manner that enhances individual and family functioning. Given California's increasingly diverse service population, cultural understanding of the state's major ethnic groups is critical to competence throughout the curriculum. This section includes foundation knowledge, values, and skills for culturally competent child welfare practice.

Assessment and referral

- 1.1 Student demonstrates respect, fairness, and cultural sensitivity in assessing, working with, and making service decisions involving clients with diverse experiences.
- 1.2 Student demonstrates self-awareness and the ability to address and overcome personal bias and values in assessing and working with diverse clients.
- 1.3 Student demonstrates the ability to conduct a culturally sensitive assessment of a child and family and to develop and implement an effective intervention plan.

- 1.4 Student recognizes and manages limitations in personal knowledge of specific diverse groups and seeks consultation and expertise as needed to perform assessments and practice effectively.

Family engagement and case plan development

- 1.5 Student understands the importance of a client's primary language and supports use of a first language in providing child welfare assessment and intervention services.
- 1.6 Student understands the influence and value of traditional and culturally appropriate parenting practices and uses this knowledge in working with families.

Policy and participation in judicial process

- 1.7 Student demonstrates the ability to collaborate with individuals, groups, community-based organizations, and government agencies to advocate for equitable access to culturally responsive resources and services.

II. Core Child Welfare Skills

This category includes skills and knowledge basic to social work practice, with emphasis on child welfare. Content in this foundation category includes interviewing, assessment, and intervention, with attention to child protection and family preservation. Students learn to apply a strengths perspective and to work collaboratively. At this level, students are able to evaluate child and family information and to take appropriate steps toward permanency planning. In addition, students

demonstrate the professional use of self within the values and ethics of social work practice.

Assessment and referral

- 2.1 Student understands and is able to apply beginning principles and techniques of interviewing children and families for purposes of assessment, intervention, and service planning.
- 2.2 Student demonstrates the ability to perform a preliminary safety assessment and to monitor the safety of the child through ongoing assessment of risk.
- 2.3 Student is able to identify the major family, health, and social factors contributing to child abuse and neglect, as well as positive factors that act to preserve the family and protect the child.
- 2.4 Student recognizes the physical and behavioral indicators of abuse, family violence, and neglect.
- 2.5 Student demonstrates the ability to recognize signs and symptoms of substance abuse in children and adults.
- 2.6 Student demonstrates a beginning understanding of basic child development and how developmental level affects a child's physical and psychological responses to abuse and neglect.

- 2.7 Student is able to gather, assess, and present pertinent information from interviews, case records, and collateral sources in evaluating an abuse or neglect allegation and making effective referrals for services or further evaluation.

Family engagement and case plan development

- 2.8 Student demonstrates the ability to engage and assess families from a strengths-based perspective, and to develop and implement a case plan based on this assessment.
- 2.9 Student demonstrates awareness of appropriate use of power and authority in relationships, as well as the dynamics of engaging and working with involuntary clients.
- 2.10 Student understands how attachment, separation, and placement affect a child and family and how these experiences may influence a child's physical, cognitive, social, emotional, and spiritual development.
- 2.11 Student recognizes the importance of working with biological families, foster families, and kin networks, as well as involving them in assessment and planning strategies.
- 2.12 Student demonstrates the ability and self-awareness to assess his or her own value conflicts or emotional responses and seeks consultation when needed.

Case management, placement, and supervision

- 2.13 Student understands the principles of concurrent and permanency planning.

- 2.14 Student is aware of forms and mechanisms of oppression and discrimination pertaining to low-income, non-traditional, and culturally diverse families and uses this knowledge to provide effective child welfare services and to engage in practices that advance social and economic justice.
- 2.15 Student demonstrates knowledge and understanding of the termination process, with clients and with systems.

Policy and participation in judicial process

- 2.16 Student understands the value base, ethical standards, and principles of the profession and practices accordingly.
- 2.17 Student understands the dual responsibility of the child welfare social worker to protect children and to provide services that support families.
- 2.18 Student understands state and federal policy issues that affect child welfare practice.
- 2.19 Student understands child welfare legal process and the roles of social workers and other professionals in relation to the courts.

III. Human Behavior and the Social Environment

The competencies in this section concern the stages of child and adolescent development and the multiple socio-economic factors influencing that development. The knowledge acquired regarding human developmental processes provides a foundation for assessment and intervention.

Assessment and referral, case plan development and case management

- 3.1 Student demonstrates understanding of child and youth development, including physical, cognitive, social, and emotional components, and can recognize developmental indicators of abuse or neglect.
- 3.2 Student demonstrates understanding of the primary stages and processes of adult development and family life.
- 3.3 Student demonstrates understanding of the potential effects of poverty, bias, inequity, and other forms of oppression on human behavior and social systems.
- 3.4 Student demonstrates understanding of the influence of culture on human behavior and family dynamics.
- 3.5 Student demonstrates understanding of how the strengths perspective and empowerment approaches can positively influence growth, development, and behavior change.

IV. Workplace Management

This section focuses on aspects of agency practice. In this foundation competency area, the student begins to be able to assess agency and community service capacity and begins to acquire strategies for self-care and safety while working.

Assessment

- 4.1 Student is able to identify strengths and limitations of the organization and to discern the effects these factors may have on services for children and families.
- 4.2 Student will assess agency commitment to cultural competence and human diversity and its impact upon client satisfaction and success in meeting identified goals.

Case management and supervision

- 4.3 Student demonstrates knowledge of the structure of the employer organization or agency and is able to work effectively within its policies, procedures, and legal guidelines.
- 4.4 Student is able to utilize standards and principles in the NASW Code of Ethics in working with agency staff, supervisors, and clients.
- 4.5 Student demonstrates awareness of agency and community resources available for children and families and has a working knowledge of how to utilize these resources to achieve case goals.

- 4.6 Student is able to plan, prioritize, and complete activities and tasks within appropriate time frames.
- 4.7 Student is aware of work-related stress factors and is beginning to develop appropriate self-care strategies.

Policy, data collection, and planning

- 4.8 Student is able to utilize principles of collaboration and consultation and has a beginning capacity to work productively with multi-disciplinary team members in case planning and/or implementation.
- 4.9 Student understands the purpose of outcome measurement and is able to seek client, organization, and community feedback for purposes of practice monitoring, service refinement, and outcome evaluation.
- 4.10 Student understands the importance of methodical and scientific methods of building knowledge and is able to comprehend and begin to use child welfare practice experience and research findings to improve service planning, policy, and practice.

The California Social Work Education Center (CalSWEC) is a partnership between the schools of social work, public human service agencies, and other related professional organizations that facilitates the integration of education and practice to assure effective, culturally competent service delivery to the people of California.

—CalSWEC Mission Statement 2001

Created in 1990, CalSWEC is the nation's largest state coalition of social work educators and practitioners.

