



Regional Training Academy (RTA) Coordination Project

The Regional Training Academy Coordination Project is a statewide collaborative for in-service training and continuing professional education of public child welfare staff. Six coordinating partners—the four regional training academies, the Inter-University Consortium/Los Angeles County Training Division, and the Resource Center for Family-Focused Practice—provide a continuum of training and professional education to county staff across the state. This coordinated delivery model reduces duplication of training, increases consistency, promotes professionalism and competency, and supports child welfare staff retention in California's 58 counties.

Q: What is the Regional Training Academy Coordination Project?

A: The Regional Training Academy Coordination Project is a statewide collaborative vehicle for in-service training and continuing professional education of public child welfare agency staff. Six coordinating partners—the four regional training academies, the Inter-University Consortium/Los Angeles County Training Division, and the Resource Center for

Family-Focused Practice—provide a continuum of training and professional education to county staff across the state. This coordinated delivery model reduces duplication of training, increases consistency, promotes professionalism and competency, and supports child welfare staff retention in California's 58 counties.

Q: What is the role of the California Social Work Education Center (CalSWEC) in the Regional Training Academy Coordination Project?

A: CalSWEC initiated the Regional Training Academy Coordination Project in 1997 through a contract with the California Department of Social Services (CDSS). CalSWEC was created in 1990 to assure effective, culturally competent service delivery and leadership to alleviate negative human conditions, such as racism and poverty, for the people of California, by:

- Promoting the preparation of social workers for employment in public child welfare systems;
- Upgrading the professional background of some already-employed public welfare workers interested in gaining additional skills in child welfare;

- Increasing the numbers of ethnic minorities in professional social welfare positions to reflect the populations served; and
 - Opening the doors to innovation by integrating university research with county services and graduate social work curriculum development.
- The Regional Training Academy Coordination Project focuses on the development of the public social services workforce by (1) facilitating collaboration between the regional training academies (2) and providing technical assistance to improve training outcomes for public social services employees.

Q: Who staffs the Regional Training Academy Coordination Project?

A: As the director of the Child Welfare In-Service Training Project, Barrett Johnson provides leadership for the project. Sevaughn Banks is the training and evidence-based practice specialist, Phyllis Jeroslow and Melissa Connelly are the training and curriculum specialists, Sokhom Mao is the data specialist, and Leslie Zeitler is the training and evaluation specialist. Project staff are responsible for conducting statewide training needs assess-

ments and curriculum development. They are also responsible for promoting statewide collaboration among all the regional training academies and coordinating partners, county staff development departments, and the County Welfare Directors Association (CWDA).

The Regional Training Academy Coordination Project is located at CalSWEC's office at the University of California, Berkeley.

Q: What are the Regional Training Academies and Coordinating Partners?

A: They are:

- the Bay Area Academy;
- the Central California Child Welfare Training Academy at CSU, Fresno;
- the Public Child Welfare Training Academy/Academy for Professional Excellence;
- the Northern California Training Academy at UC Davis Extension;
- the Inter-University Consortium at four universities throughout Los Angeles County;
- Los Angeles County Department of Children & Family Services Training Division; and
- The Resource Center for Family-Focused Practice, also at UC Davis Extension.

Q: What counties does each academy and coordinating partner serve?

A: A list of the counties served and academy partners follows.

- *The Bay Area Academy* serves the social services staff of 12 counties in the San Francisco Bay Area: Alameda, Contra Costa, Marin, Monterey, Napa, San Benito, San Francisco, San Mateo, Santa Clara, Santa Cruz, Solano, and Sonoma. It operates in collaboration with the Bay Area Social Services Consortium, composed of Bay Area directors of county social services agencies, deans and directors of four graduate social work programs (UC Berkeley, San Francisco State University, San Jose State University, and CSU, Sacramento), and foundation representatives. Other academy partners include the counties' Child Welfare Services administrators and staff development directors, as well as Title IV-E project coordinators from the Master of Social Work (MSW) programs at the four schools.
- *The Central California Child Welfare Training Academy* serves the following 12 counties: Calaveras, Fresno, Kern, Kings, Madera, Mariposa, Merced, San Luis Obispo, Santa Barbara, Stanislaus, Tulare, and Ventura. It operates under the leadership of a collaborative Board of Directors composed of county welfare directors; a representative of the CDSS; the Dean of CSU, Fresno College of Health and Human Services; and the Director of the MSW Program at CSU, Stanislaus. Additionally, the County Welfare Directors Association Regional Children's Services Sub-Committee operates as an advisory body to the academy staff and board.
- *The Inter-University Consortium* serves the County of Los Angeles. It is a collaboration of four universities: UCLA; the University of Southern California; CSU, Long Beach; and CSU, Los Angeles. It works closely with the Los Angeles Department of Children & Family Services.
- *The Academy for Professional Excellence/Public Child Welfare Training Academy* is a collaborative venture of San Diego State University; CSU, San Bernardino; and Imperial, Orange, Riverside, San Bernardino, and San Diego Counties. The academy operates under a Board of Directors composed of the directors of county social services agencies, the directors of the region's three schools of social work (San Diego State University, Loma Linda University, and CSU, San Bernardino), and representatives of the academy Training Planning Committee representatives.
- *The Northern California Training Academy* serves the following 28 counties: Alpine, Amador, Butte, Colusa, Del Norte, El Dorado, Glenn, Humboldt, Inyo, Lake, Lassen, Mendocino, Modoc, Mono, Nevada, Placer, Plumas, Sacramento, San Joaquin, Shasta, Sierra, Siskiyou, Sutter, Tehama, Trinity, Tuolumne, Yolo, and Yuba. It is part of The Center for Human Services located at UC Davis Extension.
- *The Resource Center for Family-Focused Practice* serves the state of California. It is part of The Center for Human Services located at UC Davis Extension.

Q: What are the Regional Training Academy Coordination Project's major activities?

A: The project pursues a variety of activities aimed at raising the standards of training for child welfare workers in California and coordinating statewide training efforts. Current activities include the following:

- **Statewide coordination of curriculum development and standardization:** CalSWEC has coordinated the development and implementation of statewide common core training for line workers and supervisors, as mandated by the federal Child and Federal Services Review (CFSR). The Project also works to integrate best practices and research into curricula for use across the state, and to integrate pre-service BSW/MSW education with in-ser-

vice training. CalSWEC convenes strategic planning sessions for the coordinating partners and co-chairs (with CDSS) the Statewide Training and Education Committee (STEC).

- **Statewide training evaluation:** A national leader in the evaluation of human services training, CalSWEC has developed the Framework for Training Evaluation, a common approach to evaluation that can be used to evaluate child welfare training across the state. The Project also annually sponsors the National Human Services Training Evaluation Symposium, a unique forum for training evaluators from around the country to present and discuss training evaluation issues. In 2003 CalSWEC received a Special Recognition Award from the National Staff Development and Training Association for this symposium.
- **Fairness and equity in child welfare services training:** The project works to focus statewide efforts on developing and implementing effective training strategies to address inequities in the child welfare system based on race, ethnicity, or region. The annual Symposium on Fairness and Equity Issues in Child Welfare Training brings together training professionals from around the state to strategize about this vital issue. CalSWEC has also co-sponsored statewide events aimed at county leadership and provides funds for its coordinating partners to work on this issue regionally.
- **Evidence-Based Practice (EBP):** Via the Research and Training Network (RTN), the project provides leadership in building a research base for child welfare services, as well as applying and disseminating research that has already been conducted.

CalSWEC and the Child and Family Policy Institute of California (CFPIC) provide leadership for the RTN, which also includes CWDA, CDSS, the California Evidence-Based Clearinghouse for Child Welfare and the regional consortia of universities and county directors.

The RTN sponsors symposia that bring together county staff serving IV-E eligible foster children and faculty providing education to BSW and MSW students participating in the Title IV-E Stipend Program. These events have several goals: to coordinate current research activities so that they build on essential knowledge for staff; to infuse training and education with the latest research; and to systematically identify research priorities for child welfare in the state. Through the RTN, California has established a Child Welfare Research Agenda for California, which aims to promote initiation and replication of practice-oriented research. More information on CalSWEC's work on EBP can be found at: http://calswec.berkeley.edu/CalSWEC/EB_Practice.html

- **Emergent issues related to CFSR, CWS improvement activities, and other CDSS and CWDS initiatives:** The pace of change in California's child welfare system has accelerated rapidly with the advent of the CFSR process, the implementation of AB 636, and the continuing CWS improvement efforts. CalSWEC has been at the center of these changes, providing leadership and training assistance to move California toward a more outcomes-driven, child- and family-focused, equitable child welfare system.

For more information

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