

PRACTICE NOTES

For North Carolina's Child Welfare Workers

From the NC Division of Social Services and the Family and Children's Resource Program

Volume 14, Number 2
May 2009

This publication for child welfare professionals is produced by the North Carolina Division of Social Services and the Family and Children's Resource Program, part of the Jordan Institute for Families within the School of Social Work at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill.

In summarizing research, we try to give you new ideas for refining your practice. However, this publication is not intended to replace child welfare training, regular supervision, or peer consultation—only to enhance them.

Let us hear from you!

To comment about something that appears in *Practice Notes*, please contact:

John McMahon
Jordan Institute for Families
School of Social Work
UNC-Chapel Hill
Chapel Hill, NC 27599-3550
johncmahon@mindspring.com

Newsletter Staff

Mellicent Blythe
Lane Cooke
John McMahon

Visit Our Website

www.practicenotes.org

References for the articles in this issue can be found at www.practicenotes.org

CHILD WELFARE PRACTICE AND DATA: MAKING THE CONNECTION

In North Carolina, public child welfare professionals now have at their disposal valuable longitudinal data produced at UNC-Chapel Hill, detailed MRS Evaluation Fact Sheets for every county from Duke University, and a wealth of reports and statistics from state and federal sources.

It's wonderful to be so rich in data because data is an essential part of doing good: if we regularly access and analyze it, data can help guide our interventions to ensure we make a real, positive difference for families and children.

But data itself is a tool, not a solution. To get any benefit from it, agencies, supervisors, and practitioners need to know what information is out there, where to find it, and how to use it. That's what this issue of *Practice Notes* is all about. ♦



We can't afford to leave any resource untapped—especially one with so much potential to help us improve the lives of families and children.

CHILD MALTREATMENT IN NC: WHAT THE DATA TELL US

North Carolina DSS agencies seeking to understand and improve their performance have tremendous resources available to them. Consider Figures A and B, for example.

These data show us that although the number of maltreatment reports have been increasing, the percentage of children in the overall population reported for maltreatment has not. A likely explanation for the difference between the two figures is the increase in the state's overall population: the number of children under 18 has increased 17% since 1998.

It's a good thing that the *rate* of reported maltreatment has remained fairly constant as our state's population has changed. Yet the data confirm that over the past ten years the number of maltreatment reports received by child welfare agencies has steadily increased. This raises challenges and opportunities for agencies as they consider staffing needs and strategies for outreach, education, and prevention in response to changing demographics and community needs.

What does your county's data show? And how might your agency create new partnerships to address the changing face of child welfare?

To learn more, click on "State Level Data" and then visit the "Abuse and Neglect" section of North Carolina's Child Welfare website at <http://sww.unc.edu/cw>.

Figure A

Number of Reports of Abuse and Neglect in NC

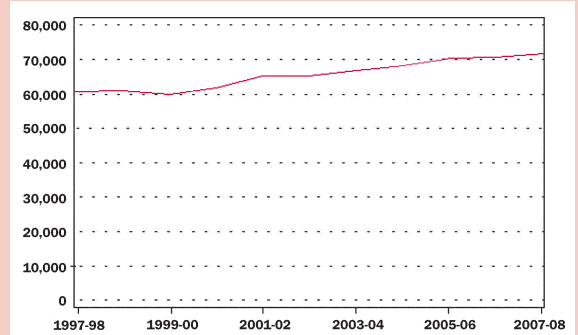
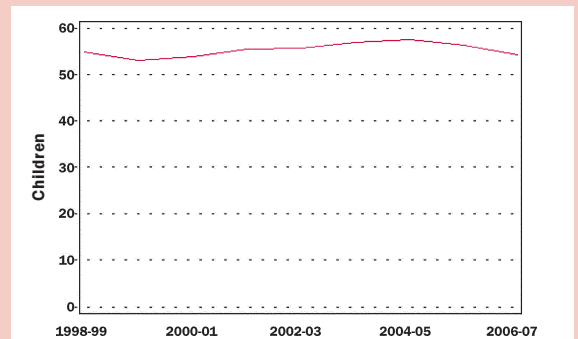


Figure B

Rate of Maltreatment in NC: Number of Children Per 1000



Source: Duncan, et al., 2009

USING DATA TO ENHANCE CHILD WELFARE PRACTICE

Everyone who works in child welfare in North Carolina knows that there are people in Raleigh and Washington, D.C. who are paid to evaluate the effectiveness of our child welfare system and make decisions about policy and funding. We know these professionals base their evaluations and decisions on



Self-evaluation benefits agencies and the families they serve.

data, which Webster's defines as "information, especially information organized for analysis or used as the basis for decision-making."

Most child welfare workers also know that they themselves are the source of much of this data, and that they add to it every time they enter information such as a child's name, age, or grade in school on forms like the NCDSS's 5104, "Report to the Central Registry/CPS Application."

Though child welfare workers and their agencies put a lot of effort into collecting, entering, and passing on information, their role relative to data and evaluation has traditionally been a passive one: once data are collected, the people on the front lines have tended to wait for outside experts to tell them what the data means, how they are doing on performance measures, and what they should do to improve. Historically, child welfare agencies have been data generators, not data consumers.

SELF-EVALUATION

In the eyes of some administrators and evaluation experts, this represents a missed opportunity. They argue that rather than relying solely on outside evaluators, child welfare agencies should engage in **self-evaluation**.

When an agency practices self-evaluation, it develops the capacity to use the information it has collected

about itself and its community to enhance its work with families. The advantages of this approach include improvements in:

Timely, Targeted Interventions. Working with their data and outcomes enables agencies to identify gaps in their performance and develop specific interventions for

closing those gaps. And, because they are less dependent on others for data and assistance, agencies can do this in a more timely way.

Agency Cohesion. Self-evaluation can promote a sense of unity and purpose as every employee understands what the agency is working towards, how it will be measured, and how they play a part. Whether processing paperwork, responding to phone calls, or collaborating with colleagues, workers can connect their day-to-day duties with achieving key outcome measures, such as placement stability.

External Communication. Agencies that are confident they understand their strengths and weaknesses—and have the data to back up their claims—can deal more effectively with the media, DSS boards, county commissioners, and other community stakeholders.

Documentation. When they feel ownership of outcomes, staff see how the data they collect affects the agency's performance. In turn, they may take greater care to ensure documentation and data entry are accurate and comprehensive.

NC'S EXPERIENCES DATA

The NC Division of Social Services and its partners have been working to promote self-evaluation in North Carolina's child welfare agencies for more than ten years. When Families

for Kids came to the state in the early 1990's, the counties and the Division began to see the importance of ensuring that agencies had access to data, especially **longitudinal data**.

Longitudinal data allows practitioners, evaluators, and administrators to look at complete and accurate information about the experiences of all children in the child welfare system. Today, county DSS agencies are most familiar with the longitudinal data that the Division makes available on the Internet. This provides counties with information that reflects their performance on a wide variety of child welfare indicators:

- Pattern of initial placements
- Length of time in custody
- Experiences of children placed in non-family settings
- Placement stability, and
- Re-entry into DSS custody.

Experiences data enable counties to compare their performance on these indicators over time to the state as a whole, to counties of similar size, and to their own past performance. County-specific and statewide experiences data can be found at <http://ssw.unc.edu/cw>.

LINKING DATA AND PRACTICE

Outcome data can tell us really useful things about child welfare practice, as the following illustrates.

In many places, African American children are present in foster care at higher rates than they are in the general population. This is called racial disproportionality. One reason for disproportionality is that, in general, African American children spend more time in foster care than White children (Goerge, Wulczyn, & Harden, 1994; Wulczyn, 2004).

But this isn't true everywhere. For example, in the last decade *cont. p. 3*

continued from page 2

or so one particular large (level III) North Carolina county significantly reduced the median number of days African American children spent in foster care, from 424 days in State Fiscal Year (SFY) 1997-98 to 366 days in SFY 2005-06. For the whole state during the same period, the median number of days African American children spent in foster care actually increased, going from 434 days in SFY 1997-98 to 468 days in SFY 2005-06 (Duncan et al., 2009).

MOVING FROM INFORMATION, TO UNDERSTANDING, TO ACTION

This is the kind of thing data can tell us—that a percentage, or number, or rate went up or down. What data can't tell us is what this change means and what to do in response.

In self-evaluating agencies, this is where supervisors and frontline staff come in. They know where policy and practice meet. They see with their own eyes when interventions work.

So we invite you and your agency to look at the data for your county and consider what it tells you about your practice. The key is to review the data as a team and then think about the story behind the numbers.

For example, with regard to the experiences of minority children, questions you might ask about your agency include:

- How do the outcomes we achieve for minority children compare to those we achieve for White children?
- How do our outcomes compare to the state and to other counties of our size?
- What gaps might exist in our agency or community that prevent us from achieving better outcomes for minority children?
- Where would we like to be on these outcomes in one year?

To find data about your county's performance, go to North Carolina's Child Welfare website (<http://ssw.unc.edu/cw>), select your county, then select "Race." ♦

USING DATA IN SUPERVISION

Frontline supervisors rarely think of themselves as "users" of data. But keeping track of key data can help a supervisor, over time, gauge the strengths of individual workers—as well as identify areas needing improvement.



For child welfare workers who primarily do child protective services (CPS) assessments following an allegation of child maltreatment, supervisors can track, by worker, the number of:

- Families where children are able to remain safely at home following a finding that requires involuntary services
- Children placed in foster care
- Children placed with relatives
- Families agreeing to participate in voluntary services
- Families who actively participate in Child and Family Team meetings
- Families re-reported to CPS

For workers who do ongoing work with families, supervisors can track, by worker, the number of:

- Children returning home from foster care
- Families where children are able to remain safely at home following return from foster care (or from kin placements)
- Children placed in adoptive settings
- Children whose placements disrupt
- Children who have frequent contact with birth families and siblings
- Families who actively participate in Child and Family Team meetings

This data, updated monthly and kept over a six-month period, can help a supervisor assess and compare casework practice among his or her unit's workers. For example, do some workers seem to rely heavily on removal and foster care placement? Do others actively seek family participation in planning? Are some workers successfully engaging families so that they accept services on a voluntary basis? Do some workers consistently have fewer placement disruptions? Are families allowed greater access to their children if they are served by a particular worker?

In most states, the child welfare system tracks much of the data on a county, regional, and statewide basis. By keeping track of how individual workers are succeeding, supervisors and workers are better able to "keep their eyes on the prize" — that is, the outcomes that are most desirable for children and families.

Follow this link <http://ssw.unc.edu/fcrp/Cspn/vol9_no1/tools.htm> to download tools for tracking the data described in this article.

Reprinted with permission from *SafeKeeping: Frontline Supervision - Where The Action Is*. (Winter 2003) Center for Community Partnerships in Child Welfare of the Center for the Study of Social Policy. <http://www.cssp.org/uploadFiles/safekeeping_winter03New.pdf>

AGENCY CULTURE HAS A BIG INFLUENCE ON THE USE OF OUTCOME DATA

Why do some agencies make active use of outcome information in their decision making, while others do not? Most of us would probably say it has something to do with resources. Especially in North Carolina, where many of the child welfare agencies that seem furthest along in this area are in larger, wealthier counties, this seems like a reasonable answer.

Reasonable, perhaps, but not altogether correct, according to a 1999 study. Although technical, financial, and personnel resources are required to use outcome information in decision making, the single most important ingredient may not be money, but agency culture.

THE STUDY

In 1999 researchers Hodges and Hernandez explored the relationship between organizational culture and the use of outcome information in four child-serving mental health agencies in Texas. All four received training in the analysis and use of outcome information, periodic outcome information reports, and support from a state agency. However, according to researchers two agencies were “high” users of outcome information and two were “low” users of outcome information.

When they looked at the culture in **high-use** agencies, researchers found:

- Long-standing partnerships with state-level staff and local child-serving agencies.
- Problem-solving focused on processes, not individuals. Data was seen as feedback that enabled staff to see what worked and when to make corrections.
- Appreciation of data. Staff could give examples of how outcome data had improved their responsiveness to families.
- Communication that was bottom-up and top-down, and that supported teamwork and shared responsibility for outcomes.
- Broad sharing of outcomes information throughout the agency.
- A willingness to take calculated risks based on outcome data. This allowed agencies to pursue innovative approaches for reaching performance goals.

By contrast, researchers found **low-use** agencies were characterized by:

- A lack of partnerships at the state and local levels. Agencies were concerned with their autonomy and independence.
- Disinterest in outcome information among direct service staff. Data was seen as the province and respon-

sibility of managers and administrators.

- Communication about outcomes was top-down and minimal.
- High staff turnover.
- A sense that serving children was overwhelming.

Is outcome data seen as relevant to the work of serving children in your agency?

The sidebar below highlights the cultural differences between the agencies analyzed by the study.

CONNECTION TO PRACTICE

When thinking about this study, readers should not focus on the specific traits discussed: Hodges and Hernandez did not find a cause and effect link between specific cultural characteristics and an agency’s ability to use outcome information.

Instead, focus on the central role played by organizational culture. All of the agencies in this study had access to outcome information and the training and support needed to work with it. The defining difference was that in some of the agencies the organizational culture supported self-evaluation and the use of data. In the others it did not.

Thus, if an agency is serious about using data it should look first at whether its vision, mission, and values—as well as the training its workers receive—all support the idea that outcome data can play a key role in creating better results for children and families. ♦

References can be found at <www.practicenotes.org>

A TALE OF TWO CULTURES		
	High-Use Agencies	Low-Use Agencies
Vision/mission	Strongly aligned with state’s system	State vision/mission not widely held
Interest in outcome data	Uses local database as well as state system data	Interest in data not well-developed
Interaction with key participants	Well-developed partnerships with state Strong partnerships with local child-serving agencies	Isolation from state Adversarial relationships with local child-serving agencies
Communication style	Broad and open dialogue regarding outcome results Multidirectional, multi-modal information flow	Limited discussions of outcome results Top-down information flow
Attitude towards accomplishments	Proud of local achievements and use of outcomes to make service improvements	Frustrated by service delivery requirements of state
Source: Hodges, S. P. & Hernandez, M. (1999). How organizational culture influences outcome information utilization. <i>Evaluation and Program Planning</i> , 22, 183–197.		

A CHILD WELFARE AGENCY REVIEWS ITS DATA AND ENGAGES NEW PARTNERS

North Carolina's Pitt County Department of Social Services is serious about using data. Program Manager Margaret Dixon and Social Work Supervisor Mildred M. Daniels have led an effort over the last several months to assess the agency's foster parent recruitment and retention program and to engage community partners in achieving desired outcomes.

A NEED TO UNDERSTAND

Despite a difficult budget climate and everyday demands, Dixon feels strongly about stepping back long enough to understand the big picture.

"No time is going to be the best time, that's how I look at it," she says. "I really want to understand our numbers and what they tell us. I want to know the narrative for our agency."

Dixon realizes that understanding, sharing, and monitoring the agency's data plays a key role in making sustainable improvements. "We have to have a sense of where we are, and we have to keep the community on board. If we don't ever talk to our partners about how they can be involved, how can we make changes?"

ENGAGING THE COMMUNITY

Pitt County DSS invited a broad array of potential partners with an interest in the safety, well-being, and permanence of children to a community meeting in February 2009.

A high turnout proved to Dixon's team that they do not have to work in isolation. Over 20 people came to learn how they can help with foster parent recruitment and retention. Participants included leadership from local law enforcement, juvenile justice, the faith community, mental health, the schools, and others. DSS also invited a young woman in foster care and four foster parents to share their stories with the community leaders.

SHARING DATA

Pitt County staff are now planning an even larger, day-long community event that will take place in April. At this event they will share data they are proud of, such as a decrease in children brought into foster care. (They believe this decrease is due in large part to the front-loading of services and family-centered approach of MRS.)

Pitt County DSS will also share data that shows where they need the community's help. Community participants will work in small groups to develop specific, concrete strategies to achieve their desired outcomes. DSS will then invite a small group of community partners to continue working with their agency on carrying out the recommended strategies and sharing results with the larger community.

Much of the data the Pitt County team is studying comes from North Carolina's Child Welfare website (<http://ssw.unc.edu/cw>). Faculty from the UNC-CH School of Social Work, which maintains the website, are providing technical assistance to Pitt County to help it navigate and understand all of the data available.

PERSONAL STORIES

Understanding child welfare practice in Pitt County requires personal stories as well as numbers. To gather this

essential data, DSS staff are reaching out to ask foster parents and youth in care to share their stories.

Rather than devising a complicated system for this, Pitt County staff are simply asking for more specific feedback from families and youth as they do their routine visits and case management.

This type of qualitative data is essential. Agency and community partners have to understand the human side of what works well in an agency, and where gaps exist.

Pitt County DSS feels so strongly about sharing the human side of their work that they will feature a panel of youth in care at their community event. "Nothing can take the place of hearing directly from young people," Dixon says. "They can say things with so much more power than we ever can."

LOOKING AHEAD

Dixon hopes these efforts will lead to a long-term community partnership. "I still feel strongly that we'll end up with an ongoing Advisory Committee that will monitor how we're doing and keep us accountable," she says.

As Dixon and her team create an agency culture that actively uses data, they gain new opportunities for sharing responsibility with their community—and improving outcomes. ♦

Data alone can't engage people's attention or commitment to work together differently, even when the facts demonstrate that we are not as successful as we could be. The story behind the facts—the families and young people represented in the facts—must be in the room and at the table for their truths to come through. The following Jewish Teaching Story from Simmons (2001) captures this truth.

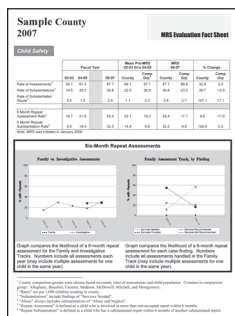
Truth and Story

Truth, naked and cold, had been turned away from every door in the village. Her nakedness frightened people.

When Parable found her, she was huddled in a corner, shivering and hungry. There, she dressed Truth in Story, warmed her, and sent her out again. Clothed in Story, Truth knocked again at the villagers' door and was readily welcomed into the people's homes. They invited her to eat at their table and to warm herself by the fire.

NORTH CAROLINA DATA RESOURCES: WHAT THEY ARE AND HOW TO FIND THEM

Public child welfare professionals in North Carolina have a wealth of outcome and performance information at their disposal. So that you benefit from this data, this article will tell you a little bit about what's out there and how to find it.



MRS EVALUATION FACT SHEETS

What: Four-page reports describing the performance of all 100 county DSS agencies in 2007

Where: <http://www.dhhs.state.nc.us/dss/mrs/index.htm>

Details: In 2007 the NC Division of Social Services asked Duke University's Center for Child and Family Policy to create county-specific fact sheets describing the performance of all 100 county DSS agencies.

Drawn from data collected in the Central Registry and on the MRS Case Tracking Form, these sheets provide snapshots of each county and how it compares to similar-sized counties in many areas, including:

- **Child Safety Measures.** Includes rate of CPS assessments, rate of substantiations, and percent of families with repeat CPS assessments.
- **Family Assessment Track.** Includes data about percentage of cases assigned to the family assessment track and a breakdown of findings from this track.
- **Primary Contributory Factors.** Describes the percentage of cases with specified factors and the number of repeat CPS assessments linked to the various factors.
- **Timeliness of Response and Time to Case Decision.**

If you have suggestions or questions regarding the MRS Evaluation Fact Sheets please contact Duke University's Nicole Lawrence at 919/668-3282.

NC DSS PROGRAM STATISTICS AND REVIEWS

What: NC Division of Social Services site

Where: <http://www.dhhs.state.nc.us/dss/stats/cw.htm>

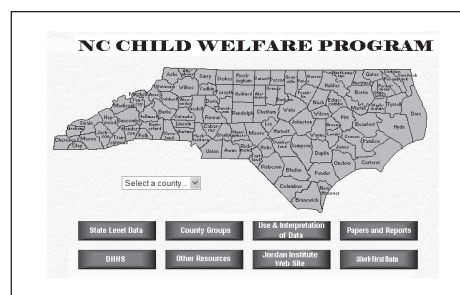
Details: Contains information about federal and county-level Child and Family Services Reviews, North Carolina's Program Improvement Plan, Child Welfare Central Registry statistics prior to 2007, and more.

FEDERAL DATA

What: Information from the US Children's Bureau

Where: http://www.acf.hhs.gov/programs/cb/stats_research/index.htm

Details: State and national data on adoption and foster care, child abuse and neglect, and child welfare, including the recently-released *Child Welfare Outcomes 2002-2005: Report to Congress*.



NORTH CAROLINA'S CHILD WELFARE WEBSITE

What: Wide range of longitudinal and point-in-time data

Where: <http://sww.unc.edu/cw>

Details: The data and charts available through this website can help managers and staff in state and county departments of social services, as well as the general public, understand what happens to children and families who become involved in the child welfare system.

Its purpose is to provide easy access to detailed information about the experiences of children who receive reports of alleged child abuse and neglect and those who enter foster care. Data are available at the county, judicial district, and state level and for key demographics including age, gender, race, and ethnicity. Recent additions include:

- Foster care caseload information, including end-of-month daily caseload counts, annual caseload counts, and rate per 1,000 in the population.
- Abuse and neglect report rate per 1,000 in the population for point-in-time data.
- Exit types from foster care.
- Updated demographic data for county groups by size and judicial district.

This site was created and is maintained through a partnership between the NC Division of Social Services and the Jordan Institute for Families at the UNC-Chapel Hill School of Social Work.

OTHER NC DATA RESOURCES

Food and Nutrition Services (<http://sww.unc.edu/foodstamps>). Contains longitudinal files tracking the experiences of families involved with the Food Stamp Program. Data are available at the county and state level and for key demographics including gender, race, and household size.

Work First (<http://sww.unc.edu/workfirst>). Contains longitudinal analysis files to support the development and use of performance indicators to help counties and the state assess Work First programs. Captures the experiences of the Work First families and recipients while they are on as well as after they leave the program. ♦

FROM THE FRONT LINES TO POLICY MAKERS – AND BACK

In child welfare, change and the power to influence things often flows from above: congress makes laws, laws affect federal policy and funding, which affect the states, which affect counties, right on down to you.

Sometimes this top-down flow is so dominant we forget that influence also goes the other way: what we do has an impact not only on our corner of the world but on the child welfare system at the state and national levels.

As the following look at the federal Child and Family Services Review illustrates, this is especially true when it comes to the power and influence frontline workers and supervisors have as generators of data.

THE CFSR

In response to the 1997 Adoption and Safe Families Act, the federal government created the Child and Family Services Review (CFSR) to help it evaluate child welfare in all 50 States. Much of the CFSR looks at outcome data and other sources to assess each state's ability to achieve safety, well-being, and permanency for children.

PROGRAM IMPROVEMENT

States who do not meet the national standard in the CFSR partner with the federal government to develop a Program Improvement Plan (PIP) to address their shortcomings. The PIP allows the state to identify issues that contribute to nonconformity and plan steps to improve its performance.

North Carolina created its second PIP in 2008. Since then the NC Division of Social Services has made significant changes to child welfare policy and procedure. Changes that have directly affected county DSS agencies include:

Using Child and Family Teams (CFTs). In partnership with the Center for Family and Community Engage-

ment at NC State University, the NC Division of Social Services has increased the training available for social workers, supervisors, and facilitators, to enhance the use of CFTs. In addition, Duke University's Center for Child and Family Health is conducting an evaluation of CFTs across the state, and they have developed a tool for agencies to use as part of their self-evaluation in this area. For more information about this evaluation effort, contact Nicole Lawrence (919/668-3282).

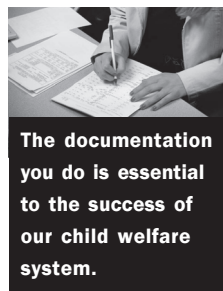
Recruitment and Retention of Resource Families. Most county DSS agencies have participated in efforts undertaken by the Division and the Jordan Institute for Families at UNC-Chapel Hill to support the recruitment and retention of families for children in foster care. These efforts have included one-day workshops, online seminars, and a new online guide (<http://www.dhhs.state.nc.us/dss/publications/index.htm>).

Data Support. The Division provides support to DSS agencies that do not meet federal and state benchmarks to help them address coding errors and problems with data entry.

YOUR ROLE IS VITAL

North Carolina's ability to improve the performance of its child welfare system depends not only on its ability to correct the shortcomings identified in the federal review, but on its ability to document progress in these areas using valid outcome data.

That's where you come in. As frontline workers, supervisors, and data entry people, you are the ones who enter information into the county and state data systems. This information ultimately becomes part of AFCARS



(Adoption and Foster Care Analysis and Reporting System), NCANDS (National Child Abuse and Neglect Data System), and other national datasets used to determine whether a state will emerge

from program improvement or face financial sanctions. The data you generate is also used to guide other important funding and policy decisions.

The implications for practice are clear. Though the documentation connected to your work with families may sometimes feel like an unwanted and even pointless obligation, it actually gives you significant power in our child welfare system.

Thus, if you are ever filling out documentation and find yourself tempted to guess about the child's grade in school or skip a field altogether, think twice. Though they might not be felt for some time, the consequences of "fudging" paperwork could negatively affect decisions about law, policy—and funding—which in turn could have a major impact on you, your agency, and the families you serve. ♦

YOUR PART MATTERS

Providing complete, accurate, and timely case documentation:

- Helps capture family progress
- Ensures key data is available when caseworkers or supervisors change, become ill, or there is an emergency
- Provides documentation for court
- Verifies activities for which county DSS's can claim reimbursement
- Enables agencies to demonstrate their effectiveness to state and federal agencies, county and community representatives, and other stakeholders

Source: NCDSS, 2002; Muskie, 2001

PROMOTING AGENCY PERFORMANCE THROUGH EXPERIMENTATION

Reprinted from *Children's Bureau Express*, vol. 10, no. 3 (April 2009)

A recent article contrasts the increasing emphasis in child welfare on evidence-based practice with experiment-driven approaches. The authors suggest that the idea of experimentation in child welfare management has been overlooked, even though trial-and-error methods may help tailor evidence-based practice to a particular organization or program.

The article describes three models of experimentation: scientific management, continuous quality improvement, and learning organization. The models differ in the roles and responsibilities of child welfare managers and staff, but all allow managers to refine or even discontinue programs in response to client outcomes and changing conditions. For instance, experimentation may have benefits for adapting programs for different cultural groups by individualizing services for diverse clients.

The authors suggest that experimentation may help child welfare managers make reasonable adaptations to their service systems for the delivery of evidence-based programs.

"The Role of Child Welfare Managers in Promoting Agency Performance Through Experimentation," by Bowen McBeath, Harold Briggs, and Eugene Aisenberg, was published in *Children and Youth Services Review*, Volume 31(1). It can be accessed through the Elsevier website: <http://dx.doi.org/doi:10.1016/j.childyouth.2008.06.004>

UNDERSTANDING & USING DATA: AN ESSENTIAL SUPERVISORY SKILL

We work in a system where, at the national, state, and local levels, the emphasis is increasingly on accountability and outcomes. Every day, legislators, advocates, agency administrators—and yes, supervisors—rely on data to help them set priorities and guide interventions.



Like it or not, knowing how to find, understand, and use the data you need is an essential skill every supervisor must have.

Fortunately, North Carolina offers a course to help supervisors sharpen this skill: *Cornerstone IV: Supervisors Working with Others, Working with Outcomes*. During this course supervisors learn how to gather, analyze, and use agency data to measure progress in achieving successful outcomes for families. It also helps supervisors identify what has been successful and what adaptations are needed to improve their approach.

This course is designed for **all** social work supervisors, program managers, and directors (including but not limited to Child Welfare, Work First, Adult Services, Medicaid, etc.). Small county supervisor teams of 20 or less are encouraged to partner with neighboring county supervisory teams in requesting and scheduling this training. For more information about this course please contact Chris Howell (919/962-6419, chowell@email.unc.edu).