

B. Job Responsibilities

1. Description of Data Collection and Analysis Strategies

As part of the statewide developmental needs assessment, the OCWTP wanted to identify the current job responsibilities and work activities of public child welfare staff in Ohio, and to determine how these have changed in recent years. The purpose was to provide critical information to the OCWTP in its initiatives to revise and update the Universe of Competencies and training curricula.

As described in Section II, *Methodology*, data was gathered on the current state of child welfare practice and associated job activities of child welfare caseworkers, supervisors, case aides, and child care workers using the following methods:

- National and state literature was reviewed to identify recent changes in the child welfare field, current practice trends, and associated changes in staffing patterns.
- Focus groups were conducted individually with groups of supervisors, caseworkers, case aides, and child care workers. Focus group participants were each given a list of job activities that were potentially important for their own job category. Participants completed Likert scales indicating whether each activity was of major, moderate, minor, or no importance to their jobs. Focus group participants also discussed recent changes in child welfare practice, and identified additional activities that were important to their jobs, but that were not included in the provided activity lists.
- Telephone interviews were held with executive directors or their designees to collect information on changes in casework practice, and resulting changes in staffing patterns in their agencies.

This data provides the OCWTP with comprehensive information about the current job activities of child welfare practitioners, as well as trends and changes in broader job responsibilities. Information from this report will be of particular value to the OCWTP's Competency and the Skill Building and Transfer Work Teams in completing their 2002-2003 contract year deliverables.

2. General Changes in the Delivery and Management of Child Welfare Services in Ohio

National literature was reviewed to ascertain how changes in child welfare practice have impacted the job responsibilities and activities of caseworkers and supervisors. The recent child welfare literature described significant changes in some job responsibilities, largely the result of changing trends in child welfare practice. While traditional casework and supervisory skills still form the core of best practice, these skills must be applied in new and increasingly complex ways, and the emphasis on using certain types of skills has increased.

The following changes and trends in the delivery of child welfare services were identified in the literature. Unless otherwise specified, this information was drawn from Malm, Bess, Green, et al. (2001), and Ladner (2000.) (Also see Section III, *Trends in Child Welfare*, for a more complete discussion of these trends.)

- Child welfare agencies increasingly rely on specific risk assessment instruments to identify risk to children of future abuse or neglect.
- There is an increased commitment to timely permanence for children. National legislation and initiatives, such as the Adoption and Safe Families Act (ASFA,) and the Annie E. Casey Family to Family Initiative, have had a major impact on child welfare. Practice changes include: increased private-public partnerships to find permanent homes for children; shortened time frames for case planning and case decision making; and an increased intensity and frequency of work with the juvenile court system. Concurrently, there are rapidly growing numbers of children who need foster, kinship, and adoptive homes.
- Substance abuse and domestic violence have become more common in child protective services cases. Child welfare professionals are more aware of how these problems contribute to child maltreatment, and many agencies contract with other community service agencies to provide treatment services to these families. Furthermore, the literature suggests that more rigorous and highly monitored case plans be developed with families who abuse substances to ensure protection and timely permanence for their children (Arnold-Williams et al., 2001).
- The child welfare system has become more active in reaching out to and collaborating with other child-serving systems to promote coordination of services (Malm et al., 2001). The Annie E. Casey Family-to-Family Initiative encourages increased collaboration and communication among a variety of community agencies (Pascual, 1998). ASFA requires that state departments of child protection and substance abuse collaborate to

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prioritize and coordinate substance abuse treatment for families receiving child protective services.

- State and local departments of children services are “experimenting” with implementing new approaches and practice methods for child welfare work. Malm et al., (2001) report such reforms occur in intake, investigation, and ongoing case planning, and in expanding permanency options for children.

- Agencies are responsible for rising levels of monitoring and oversight as a result of federal initiatives such as the Adoption and Safe Families Act, the federal Child and Family Services Reviews, and State Automated Child Welfare Information Systems (Arnold-Williams et al. 2001; Malm et al., 2001). State legislatures are also requiring increased accountability from county and state child welfare agencies. Many local child welfare agencies have implemented foster care review boards and child fatality review boards, and these boards have been assigned increased responsibility. ASFA has also increased supervisors’ responsibility for case review and monitoring.

- Supervisory activities to orient, train, coach, and support staff are critically important in preparing workers for the field and in promoting retention (National Association of Public Child Welfare Administrators, 1999; Landsman, 2001). The national literature also reports that supervisors receive little, if any, formal training on these supervisory activities (Landsman, 2001).

The national literature also indicates that the following job activities are associated with these practice changes:

- conducting risk assessments, completing risk assessment matrices, integrating risk assessment information into case plans, and developing case plan interventions that reduce risk;

- recruiting, training, and supporting kinship and foster parents who can support reunification efforts, while concurrently making the commitment to adopt the child if reunification fails;

- providing essential preparation, training, and support to foster, kinship, and adoptive families;

- conducting concurrent case planning with families, including implementing full disclosure interviews with parents;

- providing outreach and leadership within local communities to coordinate and monitor services to families and children;
- attending more court hearings; preparing testimony and working with prosecutors to gather data necessary for each type of court hearing; and preparing for appeals; and,
- working intensively with substance abuse treatment centers, and in Ohio, with county drug courts.

FINDINGS:

Focus groups with caseworkers and supervisors, and telephone interviews with executive directors indicate that Ohio's experience is consistent with national trends. Ohio's public children services agencies (PCSAs) have developed a variety of methods of managing and delivering services that reflect current changes in child welfare practice. These are described below.

Working with Families Who Have Pervasive and Intractable Problems:

All focus groups consistently reported increased numbers of clients with serious mental health, substance abuse, and domestic violence problems. (See Section V, *Client Characteristics*, for further information.) Workers must recognize and assess these problems; when needed, confront families about them; work collaboratively with community service providers; advocate for appropriate services; and provide ongoing monitoring. Workers often must develop and implement concurrent permanency plans for these families, and regularly participate in case planning and decision making meetings to determine the appropriate course of action. Management staff are increasingly responsible for developing and monitoring contracts with community service providers, and for educating providers regarding child welfare philosophy, policy, and procedures.

Following are some specific examples provided by focus group respondents that reflect these changes:

- In a medium sized central county, a treatment coordinator and a team of caseworkers were appointed to coordinate treatment plans between the child protection agency and community service providers.
- A domestic violence program was established in Montgomery County and was operated in collaboration with the local mental health board and the

Metropolitan Housing Authority. This was an intensive domestic violence program where mothers got support 24 hours/day. Mothers were then offered transitional housing.

- A casework unit at Lucas County CSB was recently established to provide services to youth involved with the Lucas County Drug Court. Similarly, a drug and alcohol counselor worked two days a week in a large sized northeast county child welfare agency.

- A specialized concurrent planning unit was established in Montgomery County.

Increased Reliance on and Support for Kinship Care Providers:

Ohio's public child welfare agencies have increased their reliance on kinship caregivers to provide both temporary and permanent placement for children removed from their homes. Some caseworkers reported that the number of foster family applicants had decreased as the need for TANF daycare providers had increased. Many counties had recently initiated training and support systems for these kinship care families. One small sized southwest county developed a support program for kinship providers, and a federally funded Kinship Navigator program was established in a medium sized western county to provide supportive services to kinship caregivers.

Family-Centered, Neighborhood-Based Services:

Ohio's implementation of the Annie E. Casey Family-Centered, Neighborhood-Based (FCNB) Services Initiative focused on placing children as close to home as possible, to minimize the trauma and loss they experience as a result of placement. FCNB programs included facilitation of family group conferencing sessions, the development of agency self-evaluation teams, community evaluation teams, and close collaboration with neighborhood groups and community agencies. In telephone interviews, 10 of the 23 county executives or their designees reported they had developed FCNB programs at their agencies, while three other agencies intended to implement FCNB programs in the near future. Three counties had discontinued formal FCNB programs.

Formal and Informal Collaborations for the Delivery of Casework Services:

Ohio's counties used a variety of methods to collaborate with community and neighborhood groups and with service providers. Benefits included coordinating

services to families, avoiding duplication of effort; and preventing gaps in the provision of services. Workers were increasingly responsible for leading or participating in a variety of collaboration meetings, facilitating these meetings, and coordinating the delivery of services among a range of service providers. However, caseworkers in the focus groups reported a variety of organizational barriers to such collaboration. For instance, a large sized western county reported it did not receive needed reports from service providers, and a worker from a large sized northeast county reported receiving poor quality services from the local mental health agency.

Several counties also used a variety of collaborative teams, including multi-disciplinary community teams for the coordination of child abuse investigations. County agencies also had developed internal teams for placement planning and decision making, and family group conferencing.

The Family and Children First initiative also stimulated a team approach to working with community agencies, increasing face-to-face team meetings with community service providers and establishing collaborative relationships with area schools.

Decentralized Service Delivery:

In some agencies, entire casework units had been assigned to work in decentralized offices, which were located in the neighborhoods of the families they served. Ten of the 23 executive directors interviewed reported they had housed agency staff in other community organizations, such as HUD offices and “one-stop” centers. These employees identified families who needed services, made referrals to appropriate community agencies, and, if needed, made referrals to the PCSA. One agency reported assigning a caseworker to work at the county Child Abuse Investigation Center to conduct joint child abuse investigations with law enforcement officers. Other staff worked in the juvenile courts and the public schools. Some child welfare staff also provided prevention services, parenting classes, and programs such as homework assistance. A medium sized central county and a medium sized southeast county both had prevention specialists on their staffs. Both prevention workers and out-posted caseworkers operated as liaisons with their host community agencies to promote increased understanding of each other's roles and responsibilities, and to coordinate services with the local PCSA.

A medium sized central county, in collaboration with the city's public schools, operated three alternative schools. These schools were located on the grounds of the PCSA. One school served children who had been temporarily suspended from public school; one served ninth and tenth graders who had been formally

expelled; and one school served children who had serious behavior problems. The public school system provided teachers and teaching materials, and the child welfare agency provided the buildings and a teachers' aide.

Case Management Responsibilities:

Caseworkers were increasingly providing case management rather than direct casework services. Workers from Cuyahoga County reported they provided very few direct services to families. Many other counties conducted at least some case management activities, since many agencies purchased direct services from community providers and relied on agency caseworkers to coordinate those services.

Strategic Planning:

Several county public child welfare agencies completed strategic planning processes in which local community members, social service providers, and the child welfare agency collaborated to identify critical child welfare issues. The group then developed action plans to address those issues. Increased collaboration was a common strategic initiative in many of these plans.

Specialized Positions:

Several agencies implemented specialized caseworker positions to provide services to specific populations. Examples include:

- Independent living coordinators (one medium sized east central county, and one large sized southeast county)
- Caseworkers who provided services to dependent or unruly adolescents (one medium sized east central county, one large sized southeast county)
- Agency attorney in one large sized east central county
- On-site psychologist in one large sized southeast county
- Policy development staff at Lucas County
- Staff assigned to caseload analysis in Hamilton County

- Workers assigned to liaison with schools in one small sized east central county, one medium sized central county, and one large sized western county.

Specialized Units or Programs:

Focus groups reported that some counties implemented units or programs that provided specialized services to particular client groups. The implementation of specialized units or programs was more prevalent in large and metro counties. Examples included the following:

- A family stability program in a large sized east central county and a large sized northeast county
- A combined foster/adoptive/kinship care unit in one small sized southwest county
- Several specialized units, including an intake unit that conducted forensic interviewing; a Family to Family service unit; and a Dependent/Neglected family services unit in a medium sized central county
- A medical investigations, out-of-home care investigation, and sexual abuse investigations unit in Cuyahoga County
- A unit working with residential care facilities in Hamilton County
- Investigation facilities were shared with law enforcement, allowing video and audio taping of both child victims and perpetrators in a small sized southwestern county.
- A parenting unit was established in Lucas County to conduct parenting classes at community centers, with weekly home visits to offer transfer-of-learning and skill-building opportunities to parents who attended the classes.
- Pre- and post -adoption programs for children who had been in custody for a long time; and a post emancipation unit for 18-21 year olds who were living independently.
- A quality improvement division to monitor records, in Lucas County.

DISCUSSION:

Throughout Ohio, PCSAs used a variety of methods to collaborate within their agencies and with community social service agencies and neighborhoods. Although the types of collaboration varied considerably, there were fundamental skills common to all, among them: understanding the collaborative process; knowing how each agency or community group contributed to the over-arching vision of safety and permanence for children; defining and negotiating roles and responsibilities; planning and leading productive meetings; negotiating services and payment; managing conflicts; and monitoring the provision of services.

There were also specific, more discrete knowledge and skill sets that addressed the unique job responsibilities inherent within specific venues. For example, staff who served on multi-disciplinary child abuse teams must master skills in co-leading child abuse investigation interviews. Prevention caseworkers must know how to conduct informal public relations activities, and may need skills to design and operate after-school drop-in centers. And, social workers in public schools must be knowledgeable about a variety of education-related issues and concerns.

Specialized positions and units were implemented in Ohio's county child welfare agencies to provide efficient, effective services to specific client groups. To be most effective, these workers must have access to training to develop knowledge and skill in their specific areas of expertise. Specialized positions and units are scattered across the state, making regional delivery of training impractical, because only a few staff members in any region may need training in highly specialized competency areas.

3. Caseworkers' Job Responsibilities

Data from caseworker focus groups was consistent with the findings in the national and state literature. In addition to the issues addressed in the previous section, the following themes emerged from focus group discussions:

FINDINGS:

Increased Use of Risk Assessment Methodology:

Caseworkers overwhelmingly reported they were assessing risk and completing risk assessment instruments more frequently than they did prior to the ODJFS

policy requiring risk assessment. Other Ohio counties used the Structured Decision Making (SDM) model to assess and record level of risk to children.

Concurrent Planning:

Workers from small and medium counties reported they routinely conducted concurrent planning, even though different staff performed this function in different agencies.

Family-Centered Approach:

There was considerable agreement among caseworkers that agencies were increasingly using family-centered approaches to services. Caseworkers reported that this approach was more “customer friendly”.

Adoption and Safe Family Act (ASFA):

Shortened time frames required by ASFA resulted in more timely, frequent, and intense work with families, and timelier case decision-making. Conversely, the shortened time frames and increased paper work requirements made it difficult for workers to meet with families as often as required by ODJFS rules. Some counties resolved this problem by assigning case aides to conduct some home visits.

3a Intake and Screening Activities

Twenty-nine screening and intake workers were participants in six caseworker focus groups. Nine job activities were listed for intake and screening. Participants ranked the activities using a 4-point Likert scale with criteria including: “not part of my job,” “of minor importance,” “of moderate importance,” and “of major importance.”

Following is a brief explanation of the two statistical measures used to analyze the survey data. The “mean” was computed to reflect the average rating of importance of specific activities to respondents' jobs. However, the mean score may be misleading. Respondents who rank an activity “not part of my job” will lower the mean score, even though the activity may be highly important for staff whose jobs require the activity. To address this limitation, the “mode” was also computed for all rankings. The mode represents the most frequent response. If

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four respondents rate an activity of minor importance, six rate it as moderate, and 12 rate it of major importance, the mode score would be “major importance.”

Data on both the mean and the mode are included in this section. However, the mode is more useful in answering the question of level of importance of job activities for the staff members who actually perform those activities.

A ranking of “multiple modes” indicates that equal numbers of respondents rated an activity differently – for example, 12 respondents rated an activity to be of moderate importance, and 11 respondents rated it high. In the context of this assessment, it is likely that multiple modes reflect differences in job expectations among the different respondents.

The data from intake and screening activity sheets are summarized in the table below:

**Table 3a
Intake and Screening Activities**

Activity	Not Part of My Job	Minor Importance	Moderate Importance	Major Importance	Mode	Mean
Receipt of referral/screening	9	6	2	6	Not part of my job	2.22
Assessment of priority level of investigation	8	3	5	7	Not part of my job	2.48
Check records	0	2	9	12	Major importance	3.43
Identify possible safety issues to workers	9	4	2	8	Not part of my job	2.39
Check collateral contacts	1	2	12	8	Moderate importance	3.17
Transfer case to investigator	11	3	0	9	Not part of my job	2.30
Documentation, including intake form, and FACSIS	1	2	3	17	Major importance	3.56
Provide information and referrals to callers	1	2	9	11	Major importance	3.30
Refer callers to other agency staff members for open cases	4	7	3	9	Major importance	2.74

- Five of the activities had a mode of major or moderate importance; the remaining four had a mode of “Not part of my job.”
- Overall, the mean scores ranged from a high of 3.56 (documentation) to a low of 2.22 (Receipt of referral/screening and Transfer case to investigator).

- Four activities (check records, check collateral contacts, documentation, and providing information and referrals to callers) had a mean greater than 3.00, indicating that these activities were of particular importance for the focus group participants.
- A significant proportion of focus group members indicated that four of the activities were not part of their job, including: receipt of referral, assessment of priority level of investigation, identification of possible safety issues to workers, and transfer of cases to investigators. The lower mean scores on these activities may suggest that other staff members in those agencies perform these functions, rather than an indication that these activities are of low priority in the intake and screening process.

During focus group discussions, intake workers/screeners indicated they conducted the following activities in addition to the those included on the activity list: conduct background checks, keep case logs and monthly statistics, make referrals, participate in conferences with their supervisors, and attend staff meetings.

3b Investigation Activities

Twenty investigation caseworkers participated in four of the caseworker focus groups. Investigation activities were divided into family and risk assessment, provision of casework and case management activities, juvenile court, and documentation. Summary data for all investigative activities is reported in the discussion section at the end of all the caseworker data.

3b-1 Investigation Activities: Family and Risk Assessment – Assessment of Abuse and Neglect

Nineteen investigation activities were listed that incorporated family and risk assessments. Participants ranked these activities using a four-point Likert scale that ranged from “Not part of my job,” to “Major importance.”

The data from investigation activity sheets are summarized in the table below:

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**Table 3b-1
Investigation Activities: Family and Risk Assessment – Assessment of
Abuse and Neglect**

Activity	Not Part of My Job	Minor Importance	Moderate Importance	Major Importance	Mode	Mean
Prepare for the investigation / assessment	0	1	3	16	Major importance	3.75
Coordinate the investigative process with law enforcement, when necessary	0	2	10	8	Moderate importance	3.30
Interview alleged child victim	0	0	0	20	Major importance	4.00
Interview siblings	0	6	8	6	Moderate importance	3.00
Interview non-offending parent	0	1	6	13	Major importance	3.60
Interview alleged perpetrator	0	0	1	19	Major importance	3.95
Observe family member interaction and home environment	0	1	4	15	Major importance	3.70
Gather information about child's social and medical history	0	2	11	7	Moderate importance	3.25
Provide information to family members regarding the investigative process	0	1	8	11	Major importance	3.50
Complete collateral contacts	0	1	8	11	Major importance	3.50
Engage family in assessing risk to the child	0	2	6	12	Major importance	3.50
Prepare a safety plan with the family	0	2	7	11	Major importance	3.45
Make determination about level of risk to the child remaining in the home	0	1	2	16	Major importance	3.79
Assess family's interactions with community	2	9	7	2	Minor importance	2.45
Complete the risk assessment instrument	0	1	3	16	Major importance	3.75
Conduct third party investigations / out-of-home visitations	7	4	2	6	Not part of my job	2.37
Conduct investigations on open cases at the agency	6	2	6	6	Multiple modes	2.60
Provide on-call services	7	3	6	4	Not part of my job	2.35
Work in child advocacy center to conduct joint investigations of child abuse	16	1	3	0	Not part of my job	1.35

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- Overall, the mean scores ranged from a high of 4.0 (interview alleged child victim) to a low of 1.35 (work in child advocacy center to conduct joint investigations of child abuse).
- Fourteen of the activities had a mode of moderate or major importance, with a mean greater than 3.00, indicating these activities were of primary importance for the focus group participants.
- Five activities had a mean of less than 3.00 (assess family’s interactions; family’s relationships with the community; third party investigations; investigations of open cases; providing on-call services; and work in child advocacy center to conduct joint investigations of child abuse) indicating less importance. This data could also indicate that some investigation workers do not complete these activities as part of their jobs.

3b-2 Investigation Activities: Provision of Casework and Case Management Services for the Child and Family

Fifteen specific activities were listed for the provision of casework and case management services during the investigation phase of services. The following table presents the data on provision of casework and case management services.

**Table 3b-2
Investigation Activities: Provision of Casework and Case Management Services for the Child and Family**

Activity	Not Part of My Job	Minor Importance	Moderate Importance	Major Importance	Mode	Mean
Arrange for emergency services for children and families	3	1	11	5	Moderate importance	2.90
Prepare child, foster family, and primary family for placement	5	4	6	5	Moderate importance	2.55
Conduct pre-placement activities	9	7	2	2	Not part of my job	1.85
Find / approve appropriate kinship provider	3	3	6	8	Major importance	2.95
Advocate for choice of foster home	5	4	6	5	Moderate importance	2.55
Place children in substitute care	3	4	7	6	Moderate importance	2.80

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Activity	Not Part of My Job	Minor Importance	Moderate Importance	Major Importance	Mode	Mean
Link families with services	2	2	6	10	Major importance	3.20
Work with schools, parents, foster parents on related issues	2	5	9	4	Moderate importance	2.75
Participate in consultation on cases	1	7	6	6	Minor importance	2.85
Provide casework services, until transferred	1	5	2	12	Major importance	3.25
Develop initial case plan	10	4	3	3	Not part of my job	1.95
Obtain vouchers for transportation, clothing, food, etc.	4	10	3	3	Minor importance	2.25
Enroll child in protective day care, as needed	7	9	4	0	Minor importance	1.85
Prepare case for transfer to ongoing unit	1	0	5	14	Major importance	3.60
Attend staffings to transfer case to ongoing	5	2	5	8	Major importance	2.80

- Overall, the mean scores ranged from a high of 3.60 (prepare case for transfer to ongoing unit, if necessary) to a low of 1.85 (enroll child in protective day care; conduct pre-placement activities).
- Five activities had a mean greater than 3.00 and a mode of major importance (link families with agency and community services, provide casework services until case is transferred, and prepare case for transfer), indicating a higher importance of these activities.
- The remaining nine activities were generally reported to be of moderate importance.

3b-3 Investigation Activities: Juvenile Court

Four activities were listed for the investigation activities that involved juvenile court activities. Data is summarized in the table below:

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**Table 3b-3
Investigation Activities: Juvenile Court**

Activity	Not Part of My Job	Minor Importance	Moderate Importance	Major Importance	Mode	Mean
Prepare affidavits and other records for court	8	6	1	5	Not part of my job	2.15
Attend court hearings	1	5	3	11	Major importance	3.20
Consult with prosecuting or agency attorney	0	5	6	9	Major Importance	3.20
Represent the agency on inter-agency or community committees	3	8	6	3	Minor importance	2.45

- Two of the activities (attend court hearings, consult with prosecuting attorney) had a mode of major importance, with a mean greater than 3.00, indicating these activities were of primary importance for the focus group participants.
- The remaining two activities were of lesser importance, or not part of the workers' activities.

During focus group discussions, investigation workers indicated they conducted the following activities in addition to those included in the activity list: train and mentor other staff members; conduct public relations activities with schools and law enforcement personnel; perform dictation; conduct home studies for kinship providers; and inform clients of their rights.

3b-4 Investigation Activities: Documentation

Two specific activities were listed for the investigation activities that involved documentation. Both had a mode of major importance, with a mean greater than 3.00, indicating these activities were of major importance for the focus group participants.

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**Table 3b-4
Investigation Activities: Documentation**

Activity	Not Part of My Job	Minor Importance	Moderate Importance	Major Importance	Mode	Mean
Enter risk assessment information into computerized data bases	3	2	2	13	Major importance	3.25
Complete case-related documentation	1	0	1	18	Major importance	3.80

3c Ongoing: Family Services and Placement Services

Forty-three ongoing family services and placement services workers participated in 12 focus groups.

The activities for ongoing family services and placement services were divided into 11 categories: general case planning, risk and safety assessment, services to children in substitute care, court, service coordination, intensive home based services, independent living, therapy, prevention work, work with unruly and delinquent youth, and casework in the schools. Participants ranked each activity in these categories using a four-point Likert scale that ranged from “Not part of my job,” to “Major importance.” Each category will be described separately, beginning with general case planning.

3c-1 Case Planning and Casework Process

Twenty-one specific activities were listed under the heading of general case planning and casework process. Data is summarized below.

**Table 3c-1
Ongoing Family Services and Placement Services: Case Planning/
Casework Process**

Activity	Not Part of My Job	Minor Importance	Moderate Importance	Major Importance	Mode	Mean
Plan and prepare for home visits	0	2	13	28	Major importance	3.60
Engage families in collaborative relationships	0	3	15	25	Major importance	3.51
Develop and monitor case plans	2	3	0	38	Major importance	3.72

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Activity	Not Part of My Job	Minor Importance	Moderate Importance	Major Importance	Mode	Mean
Link families with community and agency services	0	2	8	33	Major importance	3.72
Observe family members interacting with each other	1	0	6	36	Major importance	3.81
Provide info to families re: agency services, resources, and case planning	1	2	18	22	Major importance	3.42
Provide guidance to parents re: child rearing and discipline techniques	8	12	14	9	Moderate importance	2.56
Contact other providers to exchange relevant information	2	3	16	22	Major importance	3.35
Home visits, and evaluate progress of case plan	2	2	4	35	Major importance	3.67
Complete case-related documentation	1	0	6	36	Major importance	3.79
Engage in concurrent planning	3	3	17	20	Major importance	3.26
Participate in case consultation	0	1	16	26	Major importance	3.58
Obtain vouchers for clothing, food, transportation, etc.	2	9	17	15	Moderate importance	3.05
Obtain protective day care for children	5	15	18	5	Moderate importance	2.53
Work with schools to monitor children's adjustment	0	7	26	10	Moderate importance	3.07
Transport families and children to appointments	6	12	17	8	Moderate importance	2.63
Complete case-related documentation	4	5	9	25	Major importance	3.28
Prepare case for transfer to adoption unit if necessary	11	9	8	15	Major importance	2.63
Prepare family for case closure	3	6	16	18	Major importance	3.14
Collaborate with volunteers to provide services to children and families	9	17	14	3	Minor importance	2.26

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- All but one activity (collaborate with volunteers) had a mode of moderate or major importance, indicating general case planning constitutes a substantial portion of workers' activities.
- Eight of the 21 activities had a mean greater than 3.50, with a mode of major importance, indicating activities of particular importance. These eight activities included: 1) plan and prepare for home visits; 2) engage families in collaborative relationships; 3) develop and monitor case plans; 4) link families with community and agency services; 5) observe family members interacting with each other; 6) complete home visits and evaluate the process of the case plan; 7) complete case-related documentation; and 8) participate in case consultation.

3c-2 Ongoing Family Services and Placement Services: Risk/Safety Assessment

This category focused on five activities associated with risk and safety assessment. Data is summarized below:

**Table 3c-2
Ongoing Family Services and Placement Services: Risk/Safety Assessment**

Activity	Not Part of My Job	Minor Importance	Moderate Importance	Major Importance	Mode	Mean
Conduct investigation on open cases	16	7	10	10	Not part of my job	2.33
Conduct on-call services	12	7	12	12	Multiple modes	2.56
Conduct risk assessment updates	6	0	12	25	Major importance	3.30
Complete risk assessment and case planning computerized documentation	8	4	11	20	Major importance	3.00
Develop safety plan to reduce risk to children remaining in their homes	2	8	17	16	Moderate importance	3.09

- The activity with the highest mean score was conducting risk assessment updates (3.30).
- Sixteen workers indicated conducting investigations on open cases was not part of their job.

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- The other activities had a mode of moderate or major importance, but with mean scores significantly lower than the mean scores for general case planning.

3c-3 Ongoing Family Services and Placement Services: Services to Children in Substitute Care

This category concerned activities related to services to children in substitute care. Data is summarized below:

**Table 3c-3
Ongoing Family Services and Placement Services: Services to Children in Substitute Care**

Activity	Not Part of My Job	Minor Importance	Moderate Importance	Major Importance	Mode	Mean
Find/assess/ approve appropriate kinship placement	4	9	8	22	Major importance	3.12
Advocate with foster care specialist for appropriate choice of foster home	2	8	14	19	Major importance	3.16
Prepare child, foster family, and primary family for placement	2	6	18	17	Moderate importance	3.16
Place children in substitute care	3	6	15	19	Major importance	3.16
Arrange visits between children and their families	5	3	5	30	Major importance	3.40
Supervise visits between children and their parents	8	8	9	18	Major importance	2.86
Coordinate visits between children and parents	8	6	10	19	Major importance	2.93
Help foster parents and primary parents develop mentoring relationships	12	5	17	8	Moderate importance	2.50
Collaborate with foster care specialist to coordinate services to children in care	7	7	13	15	Major importance	2.86
Provide support/ information to foster/kinship providers	3	5	10	25	Major importance	3.33

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Activity	Not Part of My Job	Minor Importance	Moderate Importance	Major Importance	Mode	Mean
Assist kinship providers in negotiating relationships with parent of child placed in their homes	5	5	18	15	Moderate importance	3.00

- Of the 11 specific activities, all had a mode of moderate or major importance.
- Two activities had relatively high mean scores: arrange visits between children and their families (3.40), and provide support, guidance, and information to foster and kinship providers (3.33).

3c-4 Ongoing Family Services and Placement Services: Court-Related Activities

This category addressed court-related activities. Data is summarized below.

**Table 3c-4
Ongoing Family Services and Placement Services: Court-Related Activities**

Activity	Not Part of My Job	Minor Importance	Moderate Importance	Major Importance	Mode	Mean
Prepare affidavits	10	1	13	18	Major importance	2.93
Attend court hearings	2	4	7	30	Major importance	3.51
Consult with prosecuting attorney	4	4	13	22	Major importance	3.23
Prepare children and families for court processes	5	5	15	18	Major importance	3.07

- One activity had a mean score greater than 3.50: attend court hearings.
- All four activities had a mode of major importance, three of which had a mean greater than 3.00.

3c-5 Ongoing Family Services and Placement Services: Service Coordination and Collaboration with Service Providers

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This category focused on coordination of services and collaboration with service providers, such as coordinating independent living and case planning services. Data is summarized below.

**Table 3c-5
Ongoing Family Services and Placement Services: Service Coordination and Collaboration with Service Providers**

Activity	Not Part of My Job	Minor Importance	Moderate Importance	Major Importance	Mode	Mean
Collaborate with adoption workers to prepare children for adoption	13	7	8	15	Major importance	2.58
Coordinate independent living services for adolescents in care	8	12	15	8	Moderate importance	2.53
Coordinate case planning with income maintenance workers	10	20	10	3	Minor importance	2.14
Work as a team member with other PCSA staff members	4	1	15	23	Major importance	3.33
Track services provided by contracted agencies	10	8	13	12	Moderate importance	2.63
Represent agency on inter-agency and community committees	10	13	13	7	Multiple modes	2.40
Respond to complaints from clients	7	9	12	15	Major importance	2.81

- All activities had a mode of moderate or major importance, except “coordinate case planning.”
- Only one activity had a mean greater than 3.00 (work as a team member with other public children services agency staff members).

3c-6 Ongoing Family Services and Placement Services: Intensive Home-Based Services

This category consisted of one question related to providing short-term intensive home-based services. Slightly less than half of the focus group participants indicated short-term intensive home-based services were not part of their job. Of the caseworkers who were responsible for providing intensive home-based services, the majority reported this activity was of moderate or major importance. Data is summarized below.

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**Table 3c-6
Ongoing Family Services and Placement Services: Intensive Home-Based Services**

Activity	Not Part of My Job	Minor Importance	Moderate Importance	Major Importance	Mode	Mean
Provide short-term intensive home-based services	19	4	9	11	Not part of my job	2.28

3c-7 Ongoing Family Services and Placement Services: Independent Living

This category focused on independent living services, with five specific job activities. Data is summarized below.

**Table 3c-7
Ongoing Family Services and Placement Services: Independent Living**

Activity	Not part of my job	Minor Importance	Moderate Importance	Major Importance	Mode	Mean
Conduct classes for teens on independent living skills	32	2	7	1	Not part of my job	1.45
Provide consultation to county caseworkers on preparing teens for independent living	28	2	10	3	Not part of my job	1.72
Work with area schools, etc., to negotiate educational and career training opportunities for teen clients	19	12	8	4	Not part of my job	1.93
Assist teens to develop collaborative relationships with community supports	12	12	15	4	Moderate importance	2.26
Work with foster parents to help them prepare teens for independent living	11	8	15	9	Moderate importance	2.51

- The focus group participants indicated that three of the activities (conduct classes for teens, provide consultation to county case workers on preparing teens for independent living, and work with area schools and training centers) were not part of their jobs.
- The remaining two activities (assist teens to develop relationships with community supports, and work with foster parents to prepare teens for

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independent living) had a mode of moderate importance, with a mean of less than 3.00, indicating less significance than other ongoing activities.

3c-8 Ongoing Family Services and Placement Services: Therapy

This area consisted of one question on providing individual, family or group therapy. The majority of the focus group members indicated therapy was not part of their job. Data is summarized below.

**Table 3c-8
Ongoing Family Services and Placement Services: Therapy**

Activity	Not Part of My Job	Minor Importance	Moderate Importance	Major Importance	Mode	Mean
Provide individual, family, or group therapy	30	2	4	7	Not part of my job	1.72

3c-9 Ongoing Family Services and Placement Services: Prevention Work

This area focused on prevention activities. Data is summarized below.

**Table 3c-9
Ongoing Family Services and Placement Services: Prevention Work**

Activity	Not Part of My Job	Minor Importance	Moderate Importance	Major Importance	Mode	Mean
Provide outreach to communities to explain county activities	22	6	12	3	Not part of my job	1.90
Provide prevention services in neighborhood-based prevention offices	29	3	6	5	Not part of my job	1.70
Help at-risk families develop collaborative relationships with community supports	9	10	14	10	Moderate importance	2.58

- Focus group members indicated that two of the three activities were not part of their job, as indicated by the mode score, and the mean of less than 2.00.
- The third activity, help at-risk families develop relationships with community supports, had a mode of moderate importance, with a mean score of 2.58, which indicates a lower importance than many other ongoing caseworker activities.

3c-10 Ongoing Family Services and Placement Services: Work with Unruly, Delinquent Youth

This category of ongoing activities concerned work with unruly and delinquent youth. Two specific questions concerned working to prevent placement through juvenile court, and working with youthful offenders. Data is summarized below.

**Table 3c-10
 Ongoing Family Services and Placement Services: Work with Unruly, Delinquent Youth**

Activity	Not Part of My Job	Minor Importance	Moderate Importance	Major Importance	Mode	Mean
Provide casework services to prevent placement through juvenile court	7	7	8	21	Major importance	3.00
Work with youthful offenders	8	7	12	16	Major importance	2.84

- Both activities had a mode of major importance, with a mean of 3.00 or less, again indicating while these are important activities, the more general casework activities have greater importance.

3c-11 Ongoing Family Services and Placement Services: Casework in Schools

The final category contained one activity pertaining to conducting casework services in the schools. Of the caseworkers who were responsible to work with the schools, the majority reported that it was of moderate of major importance to their jobs. Data is summarized below.

**Table 3c-11
 Ongoing Family Services and Placement Services: Casework in Schools**

Activity	Not Part of My Job	Minor Importance	Moderate Importance	Major Importance	Mode	Mean
Conduct casework services in the schools	18	7	11	7	Not part of my job	2.16

During caseworker focus group discussions, participants reported they performed the following activities in addition to those included on the activity list: train and mentor other workers; mediate; “de-lice” children; and intervene in crises.

DISCUSSION REGARDING CASEWORKER JOB RESPONSIBILITIES

Overall, there was a wide range in levels of importance for investigation activities. However, five items had a mean of 3.75 or higher, with a mode of major importance. These were: preparing for the investigation; interviewing alleged child victims; interviewing alleged perpetrators; determining level of risk to the child remaining in the home; and completing risk assessment instruments. These were the most important activities of workers who conduct investigation activities.

Forty-three ongoing family caseworkers rated ongoing casework activities. The activities with the highest mean scores and a mode of major importance were the general activities of ongoing caseworkers, especially observing family members interacting with one another, developing and monitoring service plans, documentation, case consultation, and attending court hearings. While a substantial number of workers reported being involved in specialized functions, such as casework in the schools and independent living, the assignment of these activities is not consistent in the work force. This would suggest that training needs in these areas need to be individually assessed.

There were some additional significant findings for the OCWTP, which are listed below:

Trends in Types of Problems:

Focus groups and interviews with executive directors/designees indicated that there are significant problems facing children services clients. This data, and the literature, reveal a strong correlation between domestic violence and child maltreatment, and between substance abuse and child maltreatment (especially neglect). Working effectively with these families may involve a highly specialized subset of assessment and intervention activities.

Use of Collaborative Teams:

Many agencies use a variety of collaborative teams for case decision-making and case planning. Further, an increase in privatization and contracting for services requires PCSA staff to be directly involved with a wide variety of providers and service systems. This suggests workers must develop skills to conduct a variety of collaborative activities within their agencies and with community service providers.

Supporting Kinship Caregivers:

The qualitative data and the literature review showed significant reliance on relatives to provide homes for children who must be removed from their parents' homes. In Ohio, there is growing awareness of the need to provide formal support for these kinship providers, and for workers to develop skills in this area.

Preparing Children for Placement:

Investigators and caseworkers generally perceived preparing children for placement to be only moderately important. This is problematic since preparing children for placement is essential in preventing placement-induced trauma. The data do not indicate why staff members do not perceive this activity to have major importance in their jobs. It is possible that other PCSA staff members conduct these activities or, more likely, that workers think it is not possible to prepare children for placement during crisis placements.

Developing Safety Plans for Children Remaining in Their Homes:

Ongoing family services workers rated this activity as having only moderate importance. This is also problematic since safety planning is critical when returning children home from placement. Data was not gathered regarding why they responded in this manner. It is possible that investigators develop the majority of safety plans, and ongoing workers rated this as moderate because they conduct this activity less frequently than other activities.

4. Supervisory Job Responsibilities

Data regarding supervisory functions was gathered from the literature review and key informant interviews with executive directors/designees. In addition, 40 supervisors participated in eight focus groups to collect more in-depth data about supervisors' perceptions of their job functions and activities.

FINDINGS:

During these focus groups, supervisors were asked to complete activity checklists that divided supervisory activities into three categories: administrative supervision, educational supervision, and supportive supervision. Participants ranked each individual activity using a four-point Likert scale. The possible responses on the scale included: "Not part of my job," "Minor importance,"

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“Moderate importance,” and “Major importance.” Each category will be described separately, beginning with administrative supervision.

4a Supervisory Responsibilities: Administrative Activities

The administrative supervision category included eight activities, summarized in the table below.

**Table 4a
Supervisory Responsibilities: Administrative Activities**

Activity	Not Part of My Job	Minor Importance	Moderate Importance	Major Importance	Mode	Mean
Manage personnel issues	3	11	16	10	Moderate importance	2.83
Implement corrective action with staff	5	9	18	8	Moderate importance	2.73
Monitor caseworkers' activities	0	2	8	30	Major importance	3.70
Develop policies and/or procedures	3	9	19	9	Moderate importance	2.86
Develop goals for the unit and unit staff	2	6	13	18	Major importance	3.21
Fiscal monitoring and management	8	16	12	4	Minor importance	2.30
Monitor services provided by contracted agencies	6	16	10	8	Minor importance	2.50
Manage workflow	1	6	10	23	Major importance	3.38
Data analysis / review unit statistics	3	9	20	8	Moderate importance	2.83
Conduct unit meetings to discuss issues	2	3	15	20	Major importance	3.33
Termination of staff	11	11	14	4	Moderate importance	2.28
Respond to client complaints about casework services	1	8	16	15	Moderate importance	3.13

- Four activities (manage work flow, monitor caseworkers' activities, conduct unit meetings, and develop goals for the unit and unit staff) had a mode of major importance, with a mean greater than 3.21, indicating major importance.
- Six activities (manage personnel issues, review unit statistics, termination of staff, respond to client complaints, implement corrective action, and develop policies and/or procedures) had a mode of moderate importance, with mean scores ranging from 2.28 to 3.13.

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- Two activities (fiscal monitoring, and monitoring services provided by contracted agencies) were reported to be of minor importance, with a mean of less than 3.00.

4b Supervisory Responsibilities: Educational Activities

The second category of activities focused on educational supervision, delineated in the table below.

**Table 4b
Supervisory Responsibilities: Educational Activities**

Activity	Not Part of My Job	Minor Importance	Moderate Importance	Major Importance	Mode	Mean
Orient new staff to the unit/agency	2	3	10	25	Major importance	3.45
Train staff	1	4	10	25	Major importance	3.48
Coach and/or mentor staff	0	2	9	29	Major importance	3.68
Supervise social work students	21	14	3	2	Not part of my job	1.65

- Of the four activities, all except “supervise social work interns” had a mean score greater than 3.40, with a mode of major importance. This indicates that orienting new staff, training staff, and coaching and mentoring staff are viewed as essential activities by supervisors.

4c Supervisory Responsibilities: Supportive Activities

The final category focused on supportive supervision. Fourteen specific supportive supervision activities were listed and are delineated in the table below.

**Table 4c9
Supervisory Responsibilities: Supportive Activities**

Activity	Not Part of My Job	Minor Importance	Moderate Importance	Major Importance	Mode	Mean
Track individual and unit accomplishments	2	7	14	17	Major importance	3.15
Support workers in best practice	1	1	7	31	Major importance	3.70
Convene and lead work groups	8	20	9	3	Minor importance	2.18

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Activity	Not Part of My Job	Minor Importance	Moderate Importance	Major Importance	Mode	Mean
Manage conflict within the unit and with other agency staff members	0	16	11	13	Minor importance	2.93
Change management	11	8	9	11	Multiple modes	2.52
Motivate staff	0	2	8	30	Major importance	3.70
Conduct or participate in case conferences	1	4	6	29	Major importance	3.58
Participate in agency committee, work team, or management team meetings	0	10	19	11	Moderate importance	3.03
Provide feedback to staff regarding their work performance	0	2	8	30	Major importance	3.70
Participate in court hearings	5	11	12	12	Multiple modes	2.28

- Four activities (support workers in best practice, motivate staff, conduct or participate in case conferences, and provide feedback to staff) had high mean scores (3.58 – 3.70), and a mode of Major Importance, indicating these activities were the most significant activities related to supportive supervision. In fact, these activities had the highest mean scores of all supervisory activities.
- The remaining activities all had mean scores less than 3.25. This suggests while the remaining activities had moderate importance, they did not have the importance of activities related to motivating staff and providing feedback to staff members.

Focus groups with supervisors revealed they performed some additional activities not included on the activity list. They included the following:

- Supervisors from Lucas County and a large sized northeast county reported that they delegated responsibilities to their staff, and conducted foster and adoptive parent recruitment activities.
- Supervisors from Lucas County and from a medium sized east central county reported they covered each other's management responsibilities during absences.
- Supervisors in a medium sized east central county reported they covered their caseworkers' cases during vacation or sick leave.

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- A supervisor from a large sized northeast county reported managing "turf wars," helping to develop positive working relationships between agency units, assisting the agency in obtaining Council on Accreditation (COA) accreditation, providing peer review to staff from other agency units, interpreting ODJFS rules, discussing best practice guidelines with staff, and participating in union-related activities.
- Supervisors in a small sized southwestern and medium east central county provided education on child abuse and neglect issues to police officers, school staff, and staff of community agencies.
- One small sized southwest county supervisor transported clients.

Supervisors reported that being accessible to workers, enabling staff to use technology, and providing positive reinforcement were the most effective supervisory methods. Several focus groups stated that supervisors needed training in coaching their workers to problem-solve rather than merely providing answers to their workers' questions.

Many executive directors/designees expressed strong support for supervisory coaching, mentoring, and orienting new staff. Many directors also reported their supervisors were not spending adequate time on this job responsibility. (See Section VIII, *Skill Building and Transfer of Learning*, for more information about coaching, mentoring, shadowing, and orientation.)

DISCUSSION:

Twenty-six questions focused on activities related to supervision. The activities with the highest mean scores (greater than 3.5) and a mode of major importance all involved direct face-to-face interaction with workers, including supporting workers in best practice, motivating staff, providing feedback to staff, monitoring caseworkers' activities, coaching staff, and conducting or participating in case conferences.

Supervisory focus group discussions, interviews with executive directors/designees, and the literature are all highly consistent with the supervisory survey data.

While administrative activities were ranked as important, and require a significant time commitment, supervisors indicated administrative activities were less important than educating, supporting, and monitoring workers. Furthermore, the literature strongly indicates that this type of support is critical to retaining workers.

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While all data sources agreed that supportive and educational supervision were critically important, the data also made clear that supervisors do not spend an adequate amount of time performing these activities. Factors that may contribute to this problem include: lack of supervisory time to perform these activities; increased responsibility for monitoring workers; substantial administrative responsibilities; lack of knowledge and skill in practice areas and/or lack of knowledge about how to coach or use transfer-of-learning strategies (GOALS-RATE Enhanced, 2001).

Survey data also indicated that supervisors perceived some activities to be of minor or moderate importance that best practice indicates are of major importance. Examples include the following:

- Monitoring contracts with social service providers: Supervisors reported that monitoring services provided by contracted agencies was of minor importance to their jobs. No analysis was conducted to determine why supervisors responded in this manner, and it is not known whether other staff members (such as quality control staff or executive directors/designees) conduct these activities. Failure to diligently manage contracts can result in gaps in service, duplication of services, and poor quality of contracted services.
- Change management: 11 of the 39 supervisors who responded to the question about the importance of managing change in their agencies indicated that this was not a part of their jobs. An equal number of supervisors indicated that this was of major importance to their jobs. This may indicate confusion at the supervisory level about their role in managing the change process. Alternately, supervisors who rated this activity “Not part of my job” could have misunderstood the question, assuming that “change management” referred to upper level implementation of major change initiatives.

Finally, supervisors rated “Participation in court hearings” to be of moderate/major importance. Two factors appear to compel supervisors to attend court hearings: a) to mentor caseworkers in developing skills and maintaining composure when testifying in court, and b) to ensure that the PCSA’s interests are well represented. Testifying in court and advocating for the agency’s interests are critical skills that require considerable practice. The data would suggest that the activity of helping workers develop these skills is primarily the responsibility of supervisors.

5. Case Aide Job Responsibilities

For the purposes of this report, “case aide” refers to a variety of job classifications including transporters, case aides, and, in Lucas County, “Caseworker 1s.” These staff perform a wide variety of direct services to families and children. Thirty-five staff involved in case aide activities participated in five case aide focus groups.

FINDINGS:

The activities for case aides were divided into four categories: transportation, working with parents and children, documentation, and casework support. Participants ranked each individual activity in the four categories, using a four-point Likert scale that ranged from “Not part of my job,” to “Major importance.” Each category will be described separately, beginning with transportation.

5a Case Aides: Transportation Activities

The transportation category included three activities involving transporting children and their families. All three activities had a mean rating of higher than 3.00, and a mode of Major importance, indicating that these activities are a significant priority for case aides. Data is summarized in the table below.

**Table 5a
 Case Aides: Transportation Activities**

Activity	Not Part of My Job	Minor Importance	Moderate Importance	Major Importance	Mode	Mean
Transport a child	2	4	4	25	Major importance	3.49
Transport more than one child	2	5	7	21	Major importance	3.34
Transport a child and other family members	4	5	10	16	Major importance	3.09

5b Case Aides: Working with Parents and Children

Ten activities were listed for this category. Data is summarized in the table below.

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**Table 5b
Case Aide Activities: Working with Parents and Children**

Activity	Not Part of My Job	Minor Importance	Moderate Importance	Major Importance	Mode	Mean
Accompany parents and model appropriate skills for interacting with service providers	6	8	9	12	Major importance	2.77
Help parents develop working relationships with formal and informal supports	11	11	5	8	Multiple modes	2.29
Accompany parents and help them negotiate services outside the agency	13	9	7	6	Not part of my job	2.17
Supervise visitation with parents or others with visitation rights	1	5	4	25	Major importance	3.51
Model appropriate parenting behaviors and skills	5	8	7	15	Major importance	2.91
Work with parents regarding budgeting, and household activities	18	6	1	10	Not part of my job	2.09
Work with parents to teach appropriate nurturing and discipline behaviors	13	5	6	11	Not part of my job	2.43
Work in a school / tutoring setting with individual children	23	5	4	3	Not part of my job	1.63
Work in a school / tutoring setting with groups of children	24	6	2	3	Not part of my job	1.54
Work in the child's home with the child	19	5	5	6	Not part of my job	1.94

- There was a wide range of importance indicated, from a high mean score of 3.51 for “Supervise visitations” to a low mean score of 1.54 for “Tutor groups of children.”
- Seven of the 10 activities had a mode of either “Not part of my job,” or “Minor importance,” with a mean of less than 2.5. This suggests that, other than three activities (model appropriate skills for interacting with providers, supervise visitations, and model appropriate skills and behaviors for parents), these activities do not have a high level of importance for case aides, or are generally not a part of their job.

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5c Case Aides: Documentation

The third category of case aide activities was documentation. There were three activities in this category. All three activities had a mean score of 3.00 or greater, with a mode of major importance. This indicates documentation is a significant activity for case aides. Data is summarized in the table below.

**Table 5c
Case Aide Activities: Documentation**

Activity	Not Part of My Job	Minor Importance	Moderate Importance	Major Importance	Mode	Mean
Write notes or keeping activity logs	4	2	8	21	Major importance	3.31
Write notes regarding observing/supervising parent-child visits	3	3	5	24	Major importance	3.43
Write critical incident reports	2	8	2	23	Major importance	3.31

5d Case Aides: Casework Support Activities

The final category of case aide activities involved casework support and included two activities. Both activities had a mean score greater than 3.00, with a mode of major importance, indicating that casework support activities are significant for case aides. The following table presents the data on activities associated with casework support.

**Table 5d
Case Aide Activities: Casework Support**

Activity	Not Part of My Job	Major importance	Moderate importance	Major Importance	Mode	Mean
Complete routine paperwork	6	1	10	18	Major importance	3.14
Make phone calls to providers to gather information	3	4	9	14	Major importance	3.26

During focus groups, case aides reported that they conducted the following activities in addition to the activities included on the activity list:

- office manager responsibilities (large sized northeast county);
- clerical responsibilities (medium sized central, large sized northeast, central, and southeast counties; and Cuyahoga County);

- visit with families and children to monitor the safety of children and comply with requirements for monthly face-to-face visits (medium sized central, large sized northeast and central counties, and Cuyahoga County); and,
- assist caseworkers with gathering information for foster parent home studies, such as ensuring that fire inspections are completed (Cuyahoga County).

DISCUSSION:

Case aide survey data suggests that transportation, documentation, casework support, and supervising visitations were consistently their most significant job activities.

Other activities had mixed importance, such as working with parents on parenting skills and household duties. Many case aides were not involved in these activities, while others considered them of major importance. Activities involving tutoring and working in public schools were generally not part of the duties of case aides.

Throughout Ohio, case aides provide a range of services. Some are integral members of service teams and others primarily provide transportation services. They reported that they believe they were not always recognized for the important contributions they made in providing concrete services and practical guidance to families. A large majority of case aides felt under-appreciated, and thought they could make a more significant impact on families if their skills and expertise were more fully developed and utilized by other professional staff.

6. Residential and Group Home Child Care Worker Job Responsibilities

Twenty-three residential and group home child care workers participated in four focus groups.

FINDINGS:

The activities for residential and group home child care workers were divided into four categories: daily living, collaboration and coordination of services, managing behavior and the therapeutic milieu, and educational support. Participants ranked each individual activity in the four categories using a 4-point Likert scale

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that ranged from “Not part of my job,” to “Major importance.” Each category will be described separately, beginning with daily living activities.

6a Residential and Group Home Child Care Workers: Daily Living Activities

Nine activities were identified with daily living. They are presented in the table below.

**Table 6a
Residential and Group Home Child Care Workers: Daily Living Activities**

Activity	Not Part of My Job	Minor Importance	Moderate Importance	Major Importance	Mode	Mean
Assist children with activities of daily living	2	1	1	19	Major importance	3.61
Monitor children in their rooms	3	1	2	17	Major importance	3.43
Move children individually from place to place within the facility	2	8	6	7	Minor importance	2.78
General interaction with individual children	1	0	4	18	Major importance	3.70
General interaction with groups of children	1	0	3	19	Major importance	3.74
Complete paperwork	2	1	3	17	Major importance	3.52
Transport a child for community services, activities, or family visits	3	3	6	11	Major importance	3.09
Transport a group of children for community services, activities, or family visits	3	5	4	11	Major importance	3.00

- The two highest mean scores were general interaction with individual children (3.70), and general interaction with groups of children (3.74).
- With the exception of two activities associated with moving individual children and groups of children within the facility, the other seven activities had a mean score of at least 3.0, and a mode of major importance, indicating that daily living activities are of high priority for residential and group home child care workers.

6b Residential and Group Home Child Care Workers: Collaboration and Coordination of Services

The second category focused on collaboration and coordination of services. Four items were ranked. Data is presented in the table below.

**Table 6b
 Residential and Group Home Child Care Workers: Collaboration and Coordination of Services**

Activity	Not Part of My Job	Minor Importance	Moderate Importance	Major Importance	Mode	Mean
Work with other providers to coordinate treatment	2	4	2	15	Major importance	3.30
Work with parents on the child's adjustment and progress	5	5	4	9	Major importance	2.74
Work with staff on facility operation and treatment strategies	0	3	2	18	Major importance	3.65
Work with schools and community service providers	1	5	3	14	Major importance	3.30

- Working with internal staff on facility operations and development of treatment strategies clearly had the greatest importance among the focus group participants.
- All four items had a mode of Major importance, and mean scores ranged from 2.74 – 3.65.
- Generally, the mean scores for collaboration and coordination of services were lower than for daily living activities.

6c Residential and Group Home Child Care Workers: Managing Behavior and the Therapeutic Milieu

The third category of activities for residential and group home child care workers focused on managing behavior and the therapeutic milieu. Seven specific activities were identified under this category. Data is summarized in the table below.

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**Table 6c
Residential and Group Home Child Care Worker Activities: Managing Behavior and the Therapeutic Milieu**

Activity	Not Part of My Job	Minor Importance	Moderate Importance	Major Importance	Mode	Mean
Participate in treatment planning	4	0	3	16	Major importance	3.35
Develop and monitor service plans for children	4	2	6	11	Major importance	3.04
Implement appropriate behavior management strategies	1	1	5	16	Major importance	3.57
Handle crisis situations with individual children	0	1	2	20	Major importance	3.83
Perform restraint, implementing time-out and isolation when appropriate	2	0	8	13	Major importance	3.40
Conduct or co-lead group meetings with children	5	6	4	8	Major importance	2.65
Arrange or create opportunities for youth to visit family members	5	4	12	2	Moderate importance	2.49

- Two activities (“Implement appropriate behavior management strategies” and “Handle crisis situations with individual children”) had a mean greater than 3.5, as well as a mode of Major importance, indicating these activities were of high importance.
- Six of the seven activities had a mode of major importance, while one activity (arrange and create opportunities for youth to visit family members) had a mode of Moderate importance.

6d Residential and Group Home Child Care Workers: Educational Support

The final category focuses on three activities associated with educational support for children in care. All three activities had a mean of 3.00 or less, with a mode of moderate or major importance. While child care workers identified these activities as relevant to their work with children, when compared to other activities, these were rated as of less importance.

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**Table 6d
Group Home and Residential Child Care Worker: Educational Support**

Activity	Not Part of My Job	Minor Importance	Moderate Importance	Major Importance	Mode	Mean
Teach independent living skills to either a child or group of children	1	4	12	2	Moderate importance	3.00
Work with individual children on educational and social skills	3	4	8	8	Multiple modes	2.91
Work with groups of children on educational and social skills	3	4	8	8	Multiple modes	2.91

Child care workers indicated they conducted additional activities:

- Assured resident compliance with juvenile court or probation orders (small sized southeast, large sized east central, and large sized western counties)
- Attended parent-teacher conferences (small sized southeast, large sized east central, western and northeast counties)
- Handled school crises (small sized southeast, large sized east central and western counties)

DISCUSSION:

Twenty-three questions focused on activities related to residential and group home child care workers. The activities with the highest mean scores (greater than 3.5) and a mode of major importance generally focused on direct practice, including interactions with individual children and with groups of children. These included assisting children with activities of daily living, implementing appropriate behavior management strategies, and handling crisis situations. Other activities with a mean of 3.5 or higher included completing paperwork, working with internal staff on facility operations, and developing treatment strategies. Generally, activities associated with transporting children and working with parents and schools had lower mean scores, indicating these activities had less importance than direct practice activities with children.

DECISIONS OF THE OCWTP STEERING COMMITTEE REGARDING JOB RESPONSIBILITIES

The consistency of the data in this report regarding the job responsibilities of professional staff in Ohio's public child welfare agencies is impressive. The strength of this assessment, in large measure, is due to its concentration on the triangulation of information from multiple populations and on multiple subjects that, almost without exception, portray the same findings, again and again.

For example, recent trends have impacted the roles and responsibilities of child welfare staff reported in this section and Section III, *Trends in Child Welfare*. The reader will find the same consistency across other sections of this document, particularly in Section IV, *Work Force Characteristics*, Section V, *Client Characteristics*, and Section VIII, *Skill Building and Transfer of Learning*.

1. **The OCWTP will review and revise, as necessary, caseworker and supervisory competencies to reflect best practice standards, include additional high priority topic areas as identified by the Assessment Report, and divide accreted competencies into discrete competencies.** (This decision is also supported by assessment findings presented in Section V, *Client Characteristics*, and Section VII, *Training Content*.)

This assessment did not result in the identification of qualitatively new job responsibilities for any of the surveyed populations. However, particularly for child welfare caseworkers, it did identify a shift in the comparative importance of certain types of job activities; the degree to which many workers are performing these core functions in more specialized and potentially challenging environments; and some shift in emphasis from direct service provision to case management. This shift in job responsibilities is consistent with the changing trends in child welfare practice and client family needs and problems, identified in other sections of this report.

2. **While ODJFS is primarily responsible for laws, rules, and policy training, the OCWTP will integrate laws, rules, and policy into appropriately sequenced competency training.** (This decision is also supported by assessment findings presented in Section VII, *Training Content*.)
3. **The OCWTP will gather additional information regarding the numbers and types of nontraditional casework staff that are currently employed in county PCSAs and their job responsibilities. This will include social workers in schools, court diversionary workers, prevention workers, juvenile services workers, outreach workers,**

independent living workers, and other non-traditional casework positions. The OCWTP will use this information to develop and conduct informant focus groups for these job areas. The OCWTP will utilize information gained from these key informant groups to inform the development of competencies and curricula. (This decision is also supported by assessment findings presented in Section VII, *Training Content*.)

4. **The OCWTP will identify methods to help supervisors gain necessary clinical skills and perform educational supervision.** (This decision is also supported by assessment findings presented in Section VII, *Training Content*, and Section VIII, *Skill Building and Transfer of Learning*.)
5. **The OCWTP will collect additional information about significant populations of “new arrivals,” by RTC region, and identify resources available to assist RTC coordinators in responding to staff training needs when working with specific client populations.** (This decision is also supported by assessment findings presented in Section V, *Client Characteristics*, Section VI, *Culture and Diversity: Providing Responsive Services*, and Section VII, *Training Content*.)
6. **The OCWTP will conduct focus groups to identify specific job responsibilities of public agency case aides, parent aides, homemakers, community liaisons, etc. who provide direct services to families. Competencies will then be revised and staff will be able to access appropriate existing or newly developed training.** (This decision is also supported by assessment findings presented in Section VII, *Training Content*.)

The job responsibilities of case aides vary considerably from agency to agency. However, with the exception of completing paperwork, their most important activities put them in direct contact with client families. This includes conducting home visits for caseworkers, arranging and supervising family visits, and transporting children and families to appointments. Many respondents identified "Supporting the caseworker" as a primary job function. This would suggest that case aides need to be viewed as an integral part of the professional service planning and delivery team.

7. **The OCWTP will continue to offer training to public residential child care workers on a space-available basis. The existing public residential child care worker competencies will be reviewed and revised to ensure compliance with current law and rule.** (This decision is also supported by assessment findings presented in Section VII, *Training Content*.)

Child care workers reported their most important job responsibilities to be in face-to-face individual and group work with children and youth in care. Planning, implementing, and monitoring daily living activities, and coordinating these activities with other service providers, form the core of the child care worker's job. Again, the OCWTP may need to discuss and determine its role in training child care workers.

8. **The OCWTP will incorporate competencies related to intra-agency and cross-system collaboration into OCWTP training for all target groups at all levels in the training sequence.** (This decision is also supported by assessment findings presented in Section III, *Trends in Child Welfare*, and Section VII, *Training Content*.)