

Training for the Long Term: An Education with Child Welfare Specialization or On the Job Training?

In the realm of social work education, specialized education and training often are provided through federally funded programs such as Title IV-E in the child welfare sector to strengthen the abilities of case workers (Zlotnik & Pryce, 2013; Rheaume, Collins, & Amodeo, 2011). Current child welfare workers may enter the field without specialized social work degrees and though they receive on the job training, there is a lack of understanding what level of education for child welfare is needed (Pierce 2003). This project examined child welfare professionals' perceptions of the investment of child welfare training for entry-level caseworkers through the Title IV-E program and the investment of on the job training. Child welfare training research suggests there are positive outcomes for Title IV-E training programs. This project emerged as a result of a state's de-funding of undergraduate child welfare scholarships. The child welfare scholarships provided undergraduate students specialized training in child welfare and the guarantee of a professional position in public child welfare upon graduation. This study used qualitative methods to collect data from 24 telephone interviews from Department of Social Services Child Protection professionals, as well as from students who received specialized child welfare training during their bachelors education from 17 counties in a northeast state. Participants across position types revealed there were differences between entry level caseworkers who earned a social work degree with specialized child welfare training and those who did not. Findings from this study suggest the investment in child welfare training has a real impact on the lives of children and families in the child welfare system; the more schools of social work train students in child welfare training, the greater the number of effective entry level caseworkers in child protection (Barbee, Antle, Sullivan, Dryden, & Henry, K. 2012).

- 1.) Child welfare
- 2.) Social work
- 3.) State defunding
- 4.) Caseworkers
- 5.) Training programs
- 6.) BSW (Bachelors of Social Work) Education
- 7.) Human Services
- 8.) Scholarship Programs

Barbee, A. P., Antle, B. F., Sullivan, D. J., Dryden, A. A., & Henry, K. (2012). Twenty-Five Years of the Children's Bureau Investment in Social Work Education. *Journal Of Public Child Welfare*, 6(4), 376-389

Rheaume, H., Collins, M. E., & Amodeo, M. (2011). University/agency IV-E partnerships for professional education and training: perspectives from the states. *Journal of Human Behaviors in the social Environment*, 5, 481-50

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