

NWF Health Network Policy & Procedure

Series: 1200: Training and Supervision

Policy Name: Child Welfare Certification Program

Policy Number: 1203

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Regulation: 402.402(2)(b), F.S.
65C-15.016, F.A.C.

Referenced Document:

1200-1203 x 1, Child Welfare Certification Policy, Standards, and Requirements, Revised 2.17.20

Policy

It is the policy of NWF Health Network (NWFHN), to train and support Child Welfare Professionals through the implementation of a comprehensive Child Welfare training program, approved by the Department of Children and Families, to enhance the knowledge, skills, and abilities of staff, prepare personnel to assume duties, and to promote awareness of and sensitivity to cultural backgrounds and needs.

Procedure

A. Child Welfare Certification Process.

1. Obtaining and maintaining Child Welfare Certification is established by the Florida Certification Board (FCB) and the Candidate Guide for Employer-Sponsored Child Welfare Certification and can be accessed through the website: <http://flcertificationboard.org>
2. Certification is a requirement for individuals in the following positions:
 - a. Child Welfare Case Manager; Child Welfare Case Manager Supervisor (which includes any individual, regardless of position title, who is primarily responsible for providing direct supervision of Child Welfare Case Managers); Child Welfare Licensing Counselor (or any individual, regardless of position title, who conducts parent preparation pre-service training for prospective caregivers, or any individual who conducts home visit assessments for the purpose of completing foster or adoptive home studies of prospective caregivers); Child Welfare Licensing Supervisor (which includes any individual, regardless of position title, who is primarily responsible for providing direct supervision of Child Welfare Licensing Counselors, or who conducts parent preparation pre-service training for prospective caregivers, or who conducts home visit assessments for the purpose of completing foster or adoptive home studies of prospective caregivers, or who approves, by signature, foster or adoptive home studies of prospective caregivers); Child Welfare Trainer.
3. All child welfare certification applicants must hold a minimum of a bachelor's degree from an approved accredited college or university in a designated field as outlined in the Florida Certification Board and the Candidate Guide for Employer-Sponsored Child Welfare Certification or meet the approved candidate requirements as outlined by the Enhancing the Workforce for Child Placing Agencies providing Child Welfare Services memo in accordance with s. 402.40(2)(b), F.S.,

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- a. Option 1: An associate degree from an accredited college or 60+ college credits from an accredited college or university AND one of the following: Two years of professional work experience or two years of full-time social work or human services experience.
 - b. Option 2: A high school diploma or GED equivalent (official transcripts required) AND Four+ years of full-time social work or human services experience.
 - c. Option 3: A Bachelor's Degree for those without relevant professional experience, social work, or human services experience.
4. Educational waivers must be granted by the Department of Children and Families and they are accepted by the FCB to meet the formal education requirement.
- B. Provisional Certification Training Requirements.
1. The pre-service training component of Child Welfare Certification will be offered and delivered to all new hires within the NWFHN provider network who qualify for pre-service training. A calendar will be provided indicating the dates of pre-service training throughout the fiscal year. A class must contain at a minimum four (4) trainees.
 2. The NWFHN Trainers will follow the design of the curriculum as outlined by the FL DCF Office of Child and Family Wellbeing. A 2-day absence can be excused and will be made up at the earliest convenience of the trainers. Any more than two (2) days will require the trainee being dropped from the class. The trainee will not receive training until the following scheduled pre-service training.
 3. On the first day of pre-service (orientation), the trainers will provide direction on how the trainees are to access the training curriculum. It is the responsibility of the employer to ensure that the trainees have access and an opportunity to print the pre-service participants guide and other training course materials needed for the pre-service training.
 4. There is a one hundred percent (100%) mandatory attendance and participation requirement for all pre-service classroom instruction, absent special circumstances documented and approved by the hiring agency and the training entity. Any missed training, modules or material must be completed by the trainee prior to the trainee being eligible to take the certification exam. Make-up opportunities are limited to one (1) make-up day at the end of pre-service training.
 5. No new participants may start the Pre-service training class once they have missed two (2) training days.
 6. During pre-service training, the employee's supervisor is responsible for ensuring the employee has an opportunity to complete all assigned field training and labs as designed in the curriculum.
 7. The employer is responsible for the internal monitoring of all trainings, certification activities and certification status of every employee in positions requiring certification.
 8. All Child Welfare staff must maintain current training documentation in order to meet the standard requirements for certification.
 9. Prior to obtaining Provisional Certification, the individual is considered to be a candidate, and, as such, under no circumstances shall he or she carry a caseload, be assigned responsibility for any cases, conduct any unaccompanied or unsupervised home visits, perform any unsupervised home studies or interviews of children or adults, be ultimately responsible for any assessment of safety and risk, or otherwise have primary responsibility for any child, family or case.
 - a. A candidate, while bearing no responsibility for the case, may be assigned as a "secondary" worker (case manager or licensing counselor) in FSFN or other Department-approved system to no more than four (4) active cases during pre-service training.

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- b. Every piece of casework completed by the candidate shall be reviewed and approved by either the primary worker on the case, the supervisor of the primary worker on the case or other designated certified staff member, prior to the casework being included and saved in FSFN.
 - c. The candidate will not conduct court or public appearances and will make no recommendations or reports without the written approval of their direct supervisor or CMO Program Director, this includes appearances at NWFHN System of Care and community hosted meetings.
 - d. The candidate will not be assigned on-call duties until obtaining Provisional Certification.
10. Candidates are expected to display professionalism during training which includes punctuality, courtesy, respect for others' opinions and appropriate dress. Attendance and professional behavior are evaluated and reported to each candidate's supervisor as part of the assessment of the candidate's performance.
11. In lieu of participating in all of the pre-service training requirements, a service provider/CMO may request a Waiver Exam for individuals who may already meet certain educational and experiential criteria.
12. If the individual fails the waiver test, the individual must complete the full pre-service training program.
- C. Intern Participation in Pre-service Training.
1. The guidelines for intern participation in Pre-service training include the following:
 - a. Any intern who will conduct any casework or have client contact is required to attend pre-service training, fulfill the same training requirements, and be expected to conduct him or herself according to the same professional behavior as other candidates.
 - b. Although efforts will be made to accommodate interns, their participation in training may be limited due to availability of space, priority of hired staff, and access to technology and materials.
 - c. The selection of interns to attend pre-service training is decided by the Training Team, the college or university representative and the intern's assigned agency.
- D. Certification Exam Procedures.
1. Prior to administering the certification exam, candidates must register for Full Certification on the Florida Certification Board website.
 2. The Training Team will ensure that all classroom instruction required on-line courses, Core labs and applicable field activities have been completed prior to approving a candidate for the exam.
 3. Three (3) weeks prior to the exam date, the trainer will notify each candidate's HR Department contact person of their readiness to take the exam and request the completed CWP Background Verification Form to the trainer at least two (2) weeks prior to the exam date. During this same period, either the employer or the candidate must submit the published certification payment to FCB.
 4. The trainer will submit the Test Pre-Registration Form and CWP Background Verification Form's to FCB at least two (2) weeks prior to the exam date.
 5. The exam is graded electronically and the Test Proctor (Trainer) will immediately notify the candidate and their Supervisor/Program Manager of the results.

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6. If the candidate is unsuccessful on the first attempt, the trainer will schedule a re-test date at the direction of the candidate and the employer and submit the Test Pre-Registration form to FCB immediately. The re-test will be scheduled for three (3) to five (5) days following the first attempt. Payment and submission of forms follows the process outlined previously.
 7. When a candidate successfully passes the certification exam, they are considered Provisionally Certified.
 8. The Training Team will submit the Training Verification Form to FCB within five (5) days of the candidate successfully passing the certification exam.
 9. FCB will mail all Provisional Certification documents to the designated Training Team contact for distribution to the individual.
 10. During the first thirty (30) days following successful completion of the certification exam, the caseload for Provisionally Certified Case Managers should be limited to no more than five (5) open, active cases, and shall not exceed ten (10) children at any time.
 11. During the first thirty (30) days following successful completion of the certification exam, the caseload for Provisionally Certified Licensing Counselors should be limited to no more than three (3) open, active home studies at any time; the number of licensed foster homes on the caseload shall not exceed five (5) at any time during this 30-day period.
 12. After the thirty (30) calendar day period of caseload protection, the caseload of new Provisionally Certified staff may be increased gradually over time, based upon the ongoing assessment of the individual's developing knowledge, skills, abilities and priorities by the Supervisor and other leadership within the employing agency.
- E. Full Certification Procedures.
1. Full Certification requires the completion of Direct Supervision, On-the-Job Experience and the service provider/CMO completion of the Work Verification Form.
 2. When a candidate is ready to apply for Full Certification they must:
 - a. Apply on the FCB website for Full Certification.
 - b. Have each Supervisor complete the Direct Supervision Verification Forms for individual supervision, group supervision or field observations.
 - c. Bring all signed Direct Supervision Verification Forms to the Training Team for review and submission to FCB.
 3. After receiving the Full Certification documents from FCB, the Training Team will distribute them immediately to the candidate.
 4. All staff in positions requiring certification must follow the Recertification procedures and requirements as established by FCB.