



BCWEP

LESSONS LEARNED AND
RECOMMENDATIONS FOR PROGRAM ENHANCEMENT



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INTRODUCTION

The Baccalaureate Child Welfare Education Program is a partnership among a consortium of baccalaureate social work education programs, the New Jersey Department of Children and Families, and the New Jersey Chapter of the National Association of Social Workers.





The next table summarizes data on BCWEP student ethnic self-identification. We have used the ethnic designations used by the U.S. Census. Again, ten years of data are provided here, with the last column containing totals from all 15 cohorts since the inception of the program (including the first year of the federal grant).

2009-19 BCWEP STUDENTS BY ETHNICITY

Ethnicity	# of Students 2009-10	# of Students 2010-11	# of Students 2011-12	# of Students 2012-13	# of Students 2013-14	# of Students 2014-15	# of Students 2015-16	# of Students 2016-17	# of Students 2017-18	# of Students 2018-19	TOTAL 2004 - 2018	
											#	%
African American	12	6	5	6	5	9	11	8	7	9	160	29.0%
Asian	1	0	1	0	0	1	1	0	0	0	13	2.3%
Hawaiian/ Pacific Islander	0	0	1	1	0	0	0	1	1	0	4	1.0%
Hispanic/ Latino	6	6	6	6	8	9	7	8	17	16	123	22%
Native American	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	1	0	3	1.0%
Other	0	1	0	0	1	1	0	2	0	0	6	1.0%
White	11	17	20	17	12	16	16	15	18	12	249	45%
TOTAL	30	30	33	30	26	36	36	33	43	37	558	100.0%

Sixty-eight percent (68%) of this year's cohort identified their ethnicity as other than white. In fact, when all cohorts are considered together, about fifty-five percent (55%) of BCWEP participants have been non-white. The program continues to attract a very diverse group of students, a highly desirable feature, since New Jersey is one of the most ethnically diverse states in the United States.



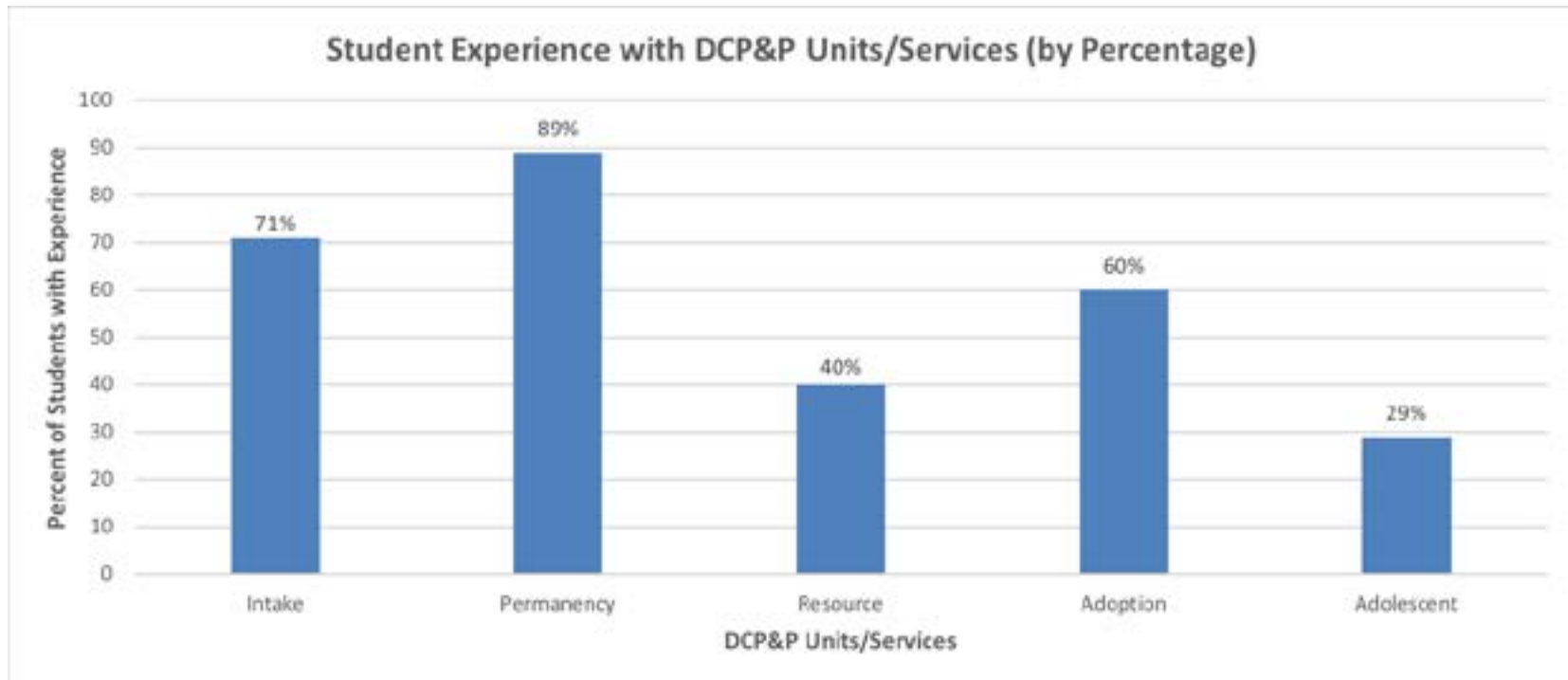




DCP&P Units/Services Experienced by BCWEP Interns

Question:

During the 2018-2019 Academic Year, most students were exposed to work in at least two units (Intake and Permanency) during their internships. In fact, most students had the opportunity to experience three or more units/services. The breakdown is as follows:



Unfortunately, the data suggests that seven students experienced only one unit this year. This comes just a year after we were finally able to eradicate this problem for students last year—something that had been a programmatic goal for years. It is unclear why or how this change occurred. We had made steady progress on the issue for years, and nothing substantial changed with our approach to students or field instructors. Nevertheless, we will put additional emphasis on this in the future. It is something we view as essential in preparing students for their eventual work assignments. While the amount of time a student actually spends in each unit varies considerably, the ability to understand how a case moves through the different units and services of DCP&P is important.



Students' Perceptions of the Strengths of BCWEP

Question:

Students identified a number of themes related to the strengths of BCWEP. The most commonly mentioned strength was the opportunity for hands-on experience with DCP&P under the supervision and mentoring of experienced professionals. The students seem to understand the role that fieldwork plays in helping them acquire the knowledge, skills, and resources that will allow them to become effective workers. Students also mentioned the value of the Work Readiness Training and the supportive community fostered by the program's staff and structure. Examples of each theme are given below, in the students' own words.

Themes Identified by Students

Strengths	Frequency Mentioned
Hands-on Employment Preparation and Experience with DCP&P	18
Work Readiness Trainings and Simulations	10
Structure and Organization of Program	7
Support of Program Staff and BCWEP Community	6

Hands-on Employment Preparation and Experience with DCP&P

- It gives you the opportunity to get your feet wet before you are held accountable by the agency. It allows you to get a good picture of what the work involves.
-





Not all students added comments to their numerical rating of their field instructors, but those who did were mostly positive. However, a few students gave some detail about their reservations. Here are some of the students' verbatim comments:

Positive

- My field instructor was always there for me when asking questions, experienced in the field, and helpful with school assignments. She made me feel appreciated in the office and know that this is the career for me.
- She was great! She really took the time to answer my questions and always gave me opportunities to learn. She connected me to other supervisors so that I could get the exposure.
- She was very receptive to me and helpful. She understood that I the first semester I worked mostly with the intake unit, so she had me working more with permanency this semester. She also role-played with me, showed me how to write case plans/allowed me to document and do case plans. She is very knowledgeable and answered any questions I had.
- My instructor worked often to find experiences for me to have and gave me adequate direction where to find new information

Some Reservations

- I wish we had more one-on-one time and more structure/organization.
-



Here are examples of student comments:

Suggestions for More Effective and Complete Fieldwork Experience

-



Almost all students expressed that they felt ready to play a role in the transformation of New Jersey’s Public Child Welfare System. Several students expressed any reservations about their readiness, citing a desire to have more knowledge and training. See the table below and the examples of students’ actual responses that follow.

Students’ Perceptions of their Readiness to Play a Role in the Transformation of New Jersey’s Public Child Welfare System

Readiness	Frequency
Yes, I Feel Prepared	
Have Social Work Knowledge, Skills, Values, and Experience	12
Have Positivity, Excitement, and Passion	7
Have Knowledge of the DCP&P System’s Policy and Practice	5
No, I Lack Confidence that I am Fully Prepared	7

Have Social Work Knowledge, Skills, Values, and Experience 12





To elicit further assessment of the BCWEP program as a whole (the social work programs' generalist practice curriculum, child welfare coursework, field placement experiences, and the DCP&P Work Readiness Training), field instructors were asked to respond to several open-ended questions. Thirty-five (35) field instructors returned the open-ended questionnaires, a 100% return rate. **Overall, field instructors expressed a high level of satisfaction with the program, describing BCWEP as a program that prepares students well for their future roles in DCP&P.** This sentiment is reflected in the following summary of the findings.

Usefulness of the BCWEP Competency-Based Learning Plan

Question:

Question one required field instructors to assess the usefulness of the BCWEP Competency-Based Learning Plan using a scale from 1 to 5; with 5 meaning "most useful." The mean score was 4.2, an indication that field instructors generally found the BCWEP Competency-Based Learning Plan very useful for creating learning experiences for their students.

Suggestions for Enhancing the Competency-Based Learning Plan

Question:

When asked to give suggestions about how to enhance the Learning Plan, most field instructors had no suggestions. There were, however, a few helpful comments offered:

- Restructure learning assessment as many categories do not apply and cannot be observed at DCP&P.
- It should be simplified and made more practical. This makes it easier for the Field Instructor, student, and the respective school liaison to track.
- Provide field instructors with model learning plans that can be used as guidelines to develop plans with incoming interns.

Usefulness of the

Guide

Question:



Here are some examples of field instructor comments:

Received it and found it helpful/useful

- Yes, I thought the guide was very useful and helped structure activities for the intern while in the office.
- This guide is very valuable in helping to ensure that competencies are addressed, and within timeframes that make sense for the work we do.
- Yes, I received a copy. It was a good guide of what to focus on and teach when I would get stuck and wanted to ensure my intern was learning all that was needed.
- Yes. All the material that was provided for the field instructors was very beneficial in working with the student. It was very useful when identifying areas and what was the best exposure for the student.

Received, but did not use the

- Yes, obtained some ideas but didn't follow it specifically. We introduced the intern to certain experiences as they were available. We have a very busy office and challenging commitments. The intern was lucky to gain a great deal of firsthand experience. She is prepared for work with DCP&P.
- I received the plan; however, I did not use it.

Field Instructors' Perceptions of BCWEP Students' Professional Preparation

Question:

Many field instructors wrote detailed responses to this question. Almost all gave a very positive assessment of the program. Some of the more interesting comments are reproduced below:

- I believe it prepares them well as they have the hands-on experience and their courses allow them to understand how and why an individual function the way they do. My intern was able to apply what was learned during her time in the office, in her trainings as well as when she would accompany others in the field. She was able to keep an open dialogue with me and I could see her grow as an individual. She was always eager to share what was learning during her trainings. I would also go over her class assignments with her.
- From my experience as a BCWEP graduate and supervisor of a student I believe the program is extremely beneficial for social work students in preparing them for their future employment with the Division.
- I think the course work coincides and supports what is done in the offices. I also believe the student interns could benefit from spending more time in the local office. Two days per week does not allow the intern enough time to follow through on tasks given the time sensitive nature of a lot of the work load.
- I think the program is doing a very good job. I truly believe having the students attend our training while completing the internship is beneficial as well. They can incorporate what they learn in the LO when working with staff and the families.



- I believe the BCWEP program is doing its best in preparing the students for the professional roles in this agency. Providing them with part of the pre-service trainings including the simulation process is very important and crucial.
- The traineeship did well in preparing the BCWEP's for their future professional roles at DCP&P. The BCWEP's attended a good amount of foundation courses and the simulation and write up was useful as well.
- This traineeship serves future employees very well. It provides an opportunity to learn about the agency and all of the moving parts without the pressure and responsibility that comes with employment.

Recommendations for Changes in BCWEP

Question:

Field instructors were asked whether they had any suggestions for change in BCWEP. Most gave no recommendations. As in past years, the few suggestions that were provided focused on more freedom and access for students, as well as logistical changes affecting field instructors. Here are examples of comments and suggestions:

Changes to Students' Internship and Training:

- I believe there should be a greater focus on NJSPIRIT and documentation. As a worker more than half of our time is spent documenting our work in NJSPIRIT and there needs to be more training for new workers to understand this aspect of the work.
- The only thing I would change would be allowing field instructors to have access to the simulation training. I know it was difficult to share due to the size of the video file. Maybe you can consider having us be present during the simulations.
- No, just more hands-on involvement as it pertains to documentation. This is an important part of the job and the more experience students have in documenting in the system, the better prepared they will be in how to navigate through NJSPIRIT.
- BCWEP needs to have interns have access to safe measures. Safe measures is used to track DCP&P workload and is a tool that can enhance an intern's experience and carry over to when they become workers.
- I do believe that the internship program should incorporate a documentation course or guide for potential DCP&P employees since it is such an important component in the work that we do.
- It would have been helpful if the offices the BCWEP's are assigned to could provide an assigned phone and computer for them to use while they are in the office. Also, it would be nice if the supervisor of the BCWEP student could be provided with some training hours.

Field Instructors' Interest in Working to Enhance BCWEP

Question:

About a third of this year's field instructors expressed willingness to work with BCWEP staff towards enhancing the program. The rest chose not to respond to this question at all, though a few field instructors explained that they would like to do so, but their current workload would not allow for it.





3. For unknown reasons, several students in this year's cohort reported exposure to only one DCP&P unit during their internship. We have been trying to prevent this from happening to our students, and had made steady progress toward that goal for years, so this change is troubling. In the 2019-2020 academic year, we will attempt to ensure that all students get experience in multiple units.

As summarized in previous reports, BCWEP has accomplished a great deal since its inception. Its greatest strength is that it is a partnership between the state public child welfare system and the academic community, with the full support of the professional community (NASW-NJ). BCWEP continues doing its part to ensure that there are professionally qualified, diverse, skilled, and committed workers in caseworker positions at the New Jersey Division of Child Protection and Permanency. It has already done



APPENDIX

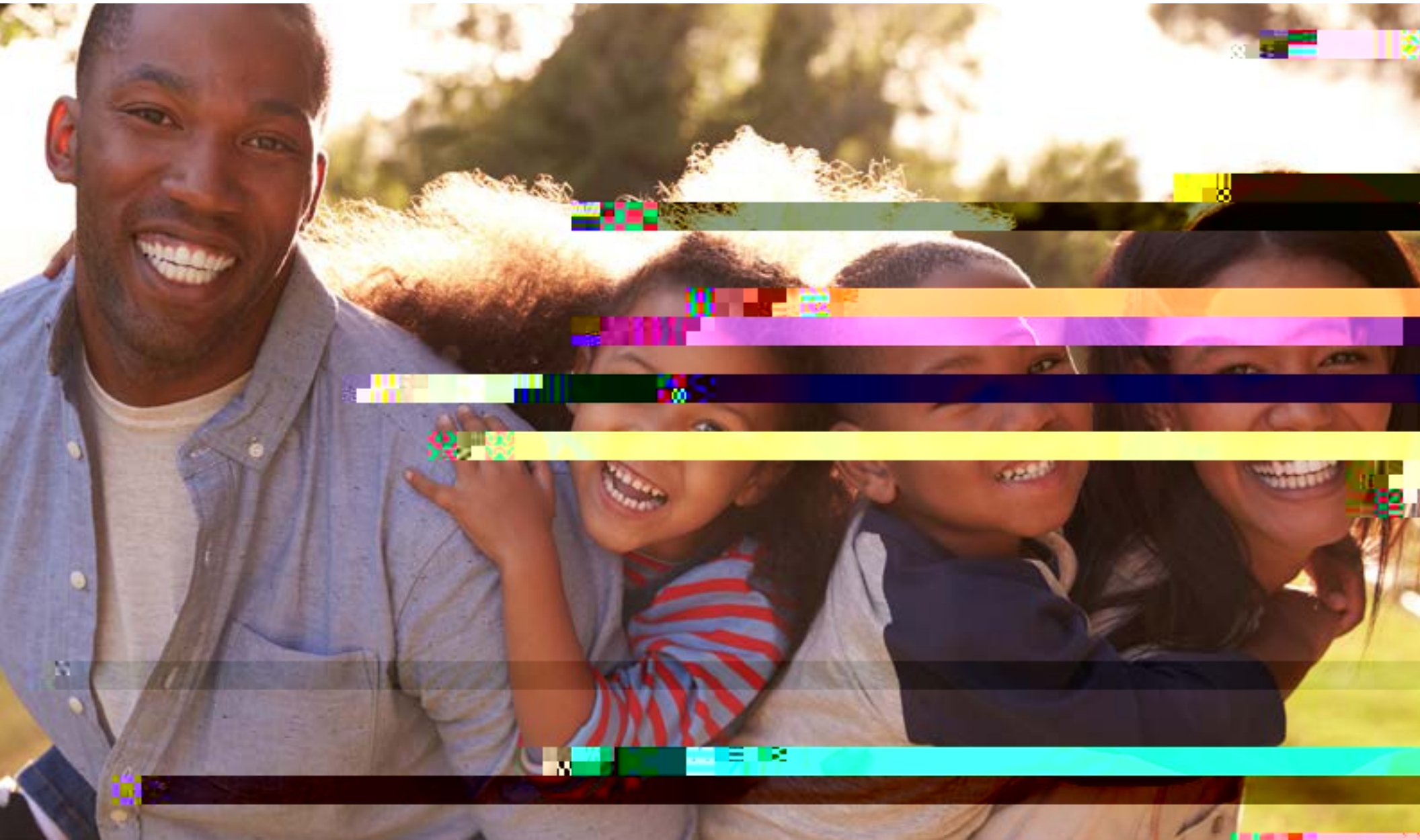


TABLE A
CHILD WELFARE TRAINEE ASSESSMENT

June 2019 (Academic Year 2018-19) Results
 Return rate: 100% (35 of 35 trainees completing program)

The table below reflects BCWEP interns' self-assessment on the 35 child welfare competencies that the BCWEP curriculum was designed to teach. The highlighted column contains mean scores for 2018-2019. Mean scores from the previous ten years of the program are also included for comparison. The students were asked to rate their level of preparedness on a scale of 1-5, where 1 = inadequately prepared, 2 = fairly well prepared, 3 = adequately prepared, 4 = well prepared, and 5 = very well prepared.

WORKPLACE MANAGEMENT COMPETENCIES	Mean Score 2019	Mean Score 2018	Mean Score 2017	Mean Score 2016	Mean Score 2015	Mean Score 2014	Mean Score 2013	Mean Score 2012	Mean Score 2011	Mean Score 2010	Mean Score 2009
1. Demonstrates knowledge of the basic structure of DCP&P and child welfare practice, including Title 30, Title 9, and Adoption and Safe Families Act of 1997.	4.0	3.8	4.1	3.9	4.0	4.0	4.0	4.2	4.1	4.3	4.1
2. Understands the vision, values, mission, mandates and desired outcomes of the New Jersey Child Welfare System.	4.5	4.3	4.4	4.3	4.4	4.4	4.5	4.6	4.3	4.6	4.4
3. Is able to work productively with agency staff, supervisors, and clients in an environment characterized by human diversity.	4.6	4.5	4.3	4.4	4.5	4.6	4.4	4.4	4.6	4.3	4.1
4. Demonstrates an awareness of community resources available for children and families and have a working knowledge of how to utilize these resources in achieving case goals.	3.4	3.6	3.6	3.3	3.6	3.6	3.6	3.42	3.6	3.5	3.2
5. Has a working knowledge of collaboration with multidisciplinary teams and can work productively with team members in implementing case plans.	3.8	4.1	3.7	3.6	3.7	3.8	3.7	3.6	3.5	3.7	3.3
6. Is able to plan, prioritize, and complete activities within appropriate time frames.	4.3	4.3	3.9	3.6	4.2	4.2	4.0	4.1	4.0	4.0	3.8
7. Is aware of potential work-related stress factors and begin to develop appropriate self-care strategies.	4.3	4.3	4.4	4.3	4.4	4.4	4.2	4.1	4.0	3.8	3.8
ALL WORKPLACE MANAGEMENT COMPETENCIES MEAN SCORES	4.1	4.1	4.1	4.0	4.1	4.1	4.1	4.0	4.0	4.0	3.8





CORE CHILD WELFARE PRACTICE COMPETENCIES (CONTINUED)	Mean Score 2019	Mean Score 2018	Mean Score 2017	Mean Score 2016	Mean Score 2015	Mean Score 2014	Mean Score 2013	Mean Score 2012	Mean Score 2011	Mean Score 2010	Mean Score 2009
25. Recognizes the need to monitor the safety of the child by initial and ongoing assessment of risk, especially for children with special needs.	4.3	4.4	4.0	4.2	4.0	4.1	4.3	4.5	4.0	4.0	4.3
26. Demonstrates a beginning understanding of legal process and the role of social workers and other professionals in relation to the courts, including policy issues and legal requirements affecting child welfare practice.	3.5	3.8	3.7	3.2	3.6	3.5	3.6	3.4	3.7	3.2	3.8
27. Is in the process of developing a knowledge base about the effects of attachment, separation, and placement experiences for the child and the child's family and the effects on the child's physical, cognitive, social, and emotional development	4.1	4.2	3.8	3.6	3.7	4.0	3.9	3.8	3.6	3.8	3.8
28. Is in the process of developing an understanding of the importance of evidence-based practice and a basic understanding of empirical research.	3.7	3.9	3.7	3.5	3.6	4.0	3.8	3.9	3.4	3.4	3.9
29. Demonstrates awareness of the principles of concurrent and permanency planning with regard to younger children as well as planning for older children about to terminate from the child welfare system.	3.9	4.1	3.6	3.5	3.5	3.7	4.0	3.9	3.8	4.0	3.8
30. Is developing the capacity to utilize the case manager's role in creating a helping system for clients, including working collaboratively with other disciplines and involving and working collaboratively with biological families, foster families, and kin networks.	4.1	4.1	3.6	3.4	3.7	3.9	3.8	3.9	3.8	4.0	3.8



CORE CHILD WELFARE PRACTICE COMPETENCIES (CONTINUED)	Mean Score 2019	Mean Score 2018	Mean Score 2017	Mean Score 2016	Mean Score 2015	Mean Score 2014	Mean Score 2013	Mean Score 2012	Mean Score 2011	Mean Score 2010	Mean Score 2009
31. Shows understanding of the value base of the profession and its ethical standards and principles, and practices accordingly.	4.5	4.4	4.0	4.1	4.3	4.2	4.3	4.5	4.1	4.3	4.1
32. Demonstrates the appropriate use of power and authority in professional relationships, as well as the dynamics of engaging and working with involuntary clients.	4.2	4.2	3.9	3.9	4.1	4.0	4.0	4.3	3.8	4.0	3.9
33. Demonstrates the ability to assess his or her own emotional responses to clients, co-workers, and situations.	4.4	4.3	4.0	4.2	4.3	4.4	4.2	4.4	4.3	4.1	3.9
34. Demonstrates an understanding of the importance of the termination process, with clients and with systems.	3.7	3.9	3.7	3.9	3.7	4.2	4.0	4.0	3.9	3.8	3.9
35. Demonstrates an understanding of the critical importance of documentation in public child welfare..	4.5	4.6	4.4	4.3	4.5	4.5	4.6	4.6	4.4	4.7	4.4
ALL CORE CHILD WELFARE PRACTICE COMPETENCIES MEAN SCORES	4.1	4.2	3.9	3.8	3.9	4.0	4.1	4.1	3.9	4.0	4.0



TABLE B



ETHNIC SENSITIVE AND MULTICULTURAL PRACTICE COMPETENCIES	Mean										







CORE CHILD WELFARE PRACTICE COMPETENCIES (CONTINUED)	Mean Score 2019	Mean Score 2018	Mean Score 2017	Mean Score 2016	Mean Score 2015	Mean Score 2014	Mean Score 2013	Mean Score 2012	Mean Score 2011	Mean Score 2010	Mean Score 2009
31. Shows understanding of the value base of the profession and its ethical standards and principles, and practices accordingly.	4.1	4.3	4.6	4.2	4.1	3.9	4.2	4.3	4.0	4.2	4.3
32. Demonstrates the appropriate use of power and											





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