

Family Development Training and Credentialing Program Curriculum Overview (revised June 2015)

The ten chapters of the worker's handbook, Empowerment Skills for Family Workers, address the following family development skills and competencies; objectives for each chapter are as follows:

Chapter 1: Family Development: A Sustainable Route To Healthy Self-Reliance

- A. Understand how to help families restore their sense of healthy self-reliance.
- B. Explain ways the “providing services” orientation limits families and workers.
- C. Describe why using the term “family development” is more empowering for families than “case management”.
- D. Discuss the core principles underlying the family development approach.
- E. Explain the seven steps of family development and the seven roles of family development workers.
- F. Discuss the differences between using the deficit and family development approaches.
- G. Assist families to develop a plan for achieving a major goal of healthy self-reliance using the Family Development Plan.
- H. Explore selected research on brain development and how it impacts transformative learning.
- I. Recognize the importance of family systems and how poverty and environmental chaos impact health and development, starting in childhood.
- J. Focus family development on the “here and now, and offer support based on a commitment to families’ goals.

Chapter 2: Communicating with Skill and Heart

- A. Explain why effective communication takes both skill and “heart”.
- B. Build empathy with others by appropriately sharing something of your own life with the families you work with.
- C. Develop more attention to nonverbal communication messages you receive from and send to others.
- D. Understand how mutual respect and assertiveness is a way out of the submission-aggression communication loop.
- E. Create a listening atmosphere using communication “helpers,” avoiding communication “blockers” and reflecting back what you’ve heard.
- F. Learn how to say what you mean clearly and respectfully.
- G. Use skillful listening and speaking skills to resolve conflict.
- H. Handle blame and criticism.
- I. Confront people constructively when needed.
- J. Communicate about “hot topics”, such as sexuality, domestic violence, and addiction.
- K. Work skillfully with families with language barriers or low levels of literacy.
- L. Use technology to communicate in appropriate ways.

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Chapter 3: Presence and Mindfulness: Cornerstones of Healthy Relationships *New!*

- A. Recognize the value of presence.
- B. Describe the benefits of increased awareness and mindfulness in your life.
- C. Learn about research on mindfulness-based stress reduction.
- D. Use simple exercises for mindfulness-based stress reduction.
- E. Incorporate natural ways to practice mindfulness-based stress reduction at work.

Chapter 4: Taking Good Care of Yourself *Updated*

- A. Clarify your personal vision for your work.
- B. Learn how to create a support system at work.
- C. Create a healthy support system for yourself.
- D. Design a personal stress reduction and wellness program.
- E. Understand how to balance work and family life as a family development worker.
- F. Learn basics of family financial management.

Chapter 5: Our Diverse World *Updated*

- A. Understand cultural diversity in the context of family development.
- B. Explain how “culture” is defined in family development.
- C. Realize why an understanding of diversity and oppression is important to family development work.
- D. Discuss why cultural competence is an important skill of family development work.
- E. Learn skills for respectful cross-cultural communication with families and your work with interpreters.
- F. Understand how language affects family dynamics and why some cultural groups are reluctant or take “help” when it has hurt them in the past.
- G. Learn how displacement and immigration have shaped the experiences of African American, Native American, Hispanic, and Asian American families in our country.
- H. Describe four barriers to cultural competent society and their impact on growth and change for individuals and cultural groups.
- I. Reflect on the limitations of “diversity training” to make long-term institutional changes that support cultural competence.
- J. Appreciate aspects of your own cultural identity and learn ways to become more acquainted with your own culture.
- K. Describe ways that most people learn about culture and consider new ways to expand your understanding of, and sensitivity to, other cultures.
- L. Offer ways that your agency can develop and strengthen multicultural competence with families and the community.

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Chapter 6: Strengths-Based Assessment

- A. Understand what assessment is and why agencies still use deficit-oriented assessment.
- B. Apply the seven principles of strengths-based assessment in your work.
- C. Protect families' information and privacy and know the three exceptions to confidentiality.
- D. Know when to offer the Family Circles Assessment to families to help families identify the strengths, supports, and stressors that affect their ability to reach their goals.
- E. Work with your agency to review and, if needed, adapt its assessment forms to support family development.

Chapter 7: Helping Families Set and Reach Their Own Goals

- A. Learn ways to establish and build relationships with families based on mutual respect and trust.
- B. Practice techniques to help families identify their strengths.
- C. Set healthy boundaries in relationships so families won't become dependent on you.
- D. Know when and how to end a relationship in a way that supports ongoing family development.

Chapter 8: Helping Families Access Specialized Services *Updated*

- A. Understand your role as a family worker in helping families access specialized services.
- B. Offer accurate referrals to services and programs.
- C. Discuss the need for specialized services with families in a respectful and supportive way.
- D. Learn steps to make referrals and follow through, that help families access specialized services.
- E. Support family members through the initial steps of using a specialized service.
- F. Help families recognize the need for specialized services in the following areas:
 - Developmental disabilities and specialized learning needs
 - Common mental health disorders
 - Domestic violence (including child abuse and elder abuse)
 - Alcohol and drug dependency
 - Limited literacy
- G. Support military families and veterans.
- H. Gather information about other commonly needed services provided by community agencies.
- I. Work skillfully with families who have many complex problems.

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Chapter 9: Home Visiting

- A. Understand the advantages of home visiting.
- B. Use the family development approach in making effective home visits.
- C. Build a mutually respectful relationship with families during unannounced and first-time home visits.
- D. Establish a positive and clear purpose for home visits.
- E. Take practical steps to increase your safety when making home visits.
- F. Handle the practical challenges of home visiting.
- G. Use a family development approach for home visits in child protection or other domestic violence situations
- H. Keep ongoing visits productive using the Family Development Plan to focus on the family's goals.

Chapter 10: Collaboration and Community Support *Updated*

- A. Learn skills that family workers use to foster supportive communities.
- B. Help families identify and strengthen their informal helping networks.
- C. Understand the purpose and benefits of support and advocacy groups.
- D. Use the Family Group Conference model to help families make important decisions in their lives.
- E. Teach leadership skills to family members so they can facilitate their own meetings.
- F. Understand why collaboration is often one of the most challenging aspects of family development work.
- G. Discuss ways to build respectful relationships with community service partners.
- H. Explain the differences between coordination, cooperation, and collaboration in family development work.
- I. Describe the different levels of collaboration most often used in family development work.
- J. Use the “keys to successful collaboration” to build successful interagency partnerships.
- K. Recognize common pitfalls of collaboration and know how to turn them into advantages.
- L. Understand how agency, state, and national policies affect families and your ability to help them.
- M. Learn how interagency training can promote interagency collaboration.