The implementation of the Common Core 3.0 (CC 3.0) is upon us. Statewide implementation of the Assessment Block began in January 2016 and the remaining five blocks will be implemented in February 2017. The Assessment Block has introduced a new way of training County Social Workers. It incorporates eLearning with classroom curriculum and introduces Field Activities, which provide new social workers with skills-based learning on the job.

San Diego County has been our pilot county for Field Activity implementation. They have conducted four sessions of core training for new workers integrating the new CC 3.0 Assessment Block over the past year.

The Assessment Block of CC 3.0 includes two new Field Activities. Javier Perez, a Protective Services Supervisor in San Diego, graciously agreed to talk with us about San Diego County’s implementation of the Assessment Block Field Activities.

Javier shared that San Diego County has received great feedback from its trainees. New staff value the learning experience and feel supported as they practice new skills. When asked to share lessons learned, Javier indicated how important it is for the Field Advisors to have a pre-meeting with the new workers so they understand their role when picking a family to work with during the Teaming Field Activity. It also may take some extra explaining of the field activities depending upon the new workers’ caseload. It is vital for the experience of the Teaming Field Activity to be organic and not forced. A family centered meeting will not be conducted in a meaningful way if it is forced to occur to complete a Field Activity.

Javier shared that it is important to try and complete the field activities within six months to one year after training so that the transfer of learning for new workers can be effective. If new workers wait too long before they complete the activities, it becomes more of a checklist of skills they have already developed rather than an opportunity for learning.

San Diego chose to utilize the Safety Organized Practice “Three Questions” with their new workers following the activity, in order (CONT)
One of our main goals here at the Training Support Unit is to build and support open communication between us, our partners, and counties throughout the state. In the last few years, CDSS has been able to hire on additional staff to support this initiative, and we are just starting to develop our long-term outreach plan. We hope to make ourselves more present in the county and regional meetings, and open ourselves up to any questions/concerns that you may have regarding child welfare training throughout the state.

This year, I have been fortunate to take part in four training meetings held in the southern, northern, and bay area regions hosted by the Regional Training Academies (RTAs) and am looking to attend additional meetings in all the regions by year end. These meeting were attended by various county directors and training coordinators throughout each region, and it was so helpful to finally start building relationships in person. In these meetings, I was able to answer questions regarding statewide training and Common Core 3.0, listen to additional comments, concerns or questions that arose in these discussions. Not only does this personal interaction helps us have a better understanding of possible statewide issues, but it also provides a more intimate view of unique county/regional perspectives on training.

These regional meetings have also been helpful in building the personal relationships with the training contacts that I have been in touch with over the last year regarding their survey responses in the Annual Training Plan. I will continue to be in communication with each county as needed regarding this annual survey, and creating these relationships puts these conversations at ease.

Reminder, the TSU has an email box: cwstrainingquestions@dss.ca.gov.

Feel free to reach out to us with any training-related comments, concerns, or questions you may have. If it is not a question we can answer ourselves, we will point you in the right direction, and assist in connecting you to the right people any way that we can.

Thank you, and I look forward to seeing you all soon!

By Sarah Blake
As you may already know, getting a training need for a new initiative off the ground and delivered to workers in the county can take a while. There are factors that weigh heavily on the implementation of a training including stakeholder buy-in and feedback, availability of existing curriculum, training modality, and funding. Rest assured, though, because just like you are discussing the passing of a legislation that will inevitably affect the work that you do, we too are discussing the legislation and how to best gather the appropriate information needed in order to better serve our partners.

It all begins with an idea that will have an impact on child welfare. That idea is then transformed into a bill which must then be introduced to the legislature by a legislative sponsor. Once the bill is passed, the Department will notify the impacted division, which will then begin prep work regarding the legislation. Analysts here at CDSS are assigned to work closely around the legislation in order to begin the first steps of implementing the initiative, including training, for county child welfare agencies. Some analysts are tasked with preparing an All County Letter that would provide program instructions and/or information to counties, stakeholders, and those who will be directly impacted by the legislation. Analysts must also work to understand how the legislation will impact the work done at the county level. This is done through forming workgroups involving county representatives and other interested stakeholders. These workgroups help us gain valuable stakeholder feedback and knowledge in planning our next steps.

Part of the workgroup will be dedicated to training. During workgroup meetings, we work with our stakeholders as well as our training partners at the California Social Work Education Center and Regional Training Academies to identify key learning objectives that clearly express how workers will transfer information learned during their trainings into their field of work. The next step is curriculum development. The length of time it takes to develop curriculum depends largely upon the amount of stakeholder feedback we get and whether there is existing materials to work with. If there is relatively minimal stakeholder feedback with little existing curriculum, it will take longer to gather enough information to create adequate curriculum for training. Inversely, workgroup meetings that generate many responses from our partners can speed up the curriculum development process. After curriculum is developed, we take a deeper dive and vet the curriculum in order to make sure it is ready for the next steps. Once curriculum has been vetted, it goes out for piloting. Typically, several counties from varying geographic locations will volunteer to pilot the curriculum in their counties. Once the curriculum has been piloted, we gather feedback from our audience to reevaluate and revise the curriculum. After close reexamination, the curriculum is finally ready to be implemented.

That is just a summary of the process. With many cogs in the wheel, each step in the process has an undermined amount of time associated with how long it can take to complete. We are working hard on all levels to ensure that we deliver a quality product in a timely manner to train California social workers on the ever changing landscape of child welfare.
Last month we introduced you to our CFSD Training Support Unit Mission Statement. We have expanded that statement into an entire Vision and Mission document that will guide our work. In this document we outline our vision, mission, potential impact areas, core values and goals that we have set. The purpose of this being to ensure that we continue to evolve with the dynamic and changing landscape of child welfare in California.

The impact areas and goals are where we set our plan in to action. These are the areas that we have identified that will allow us to be able to serve all of our partners better with very concrete goals of how we would like to achieve the desired outcomes.

The first area states “Transform the current Statewide Training System (STS) to properly prepare partners in the Child Welfare System”. California already has a very robust and effective STS. Our goals reflect our desire to put the necessary practices in place to help the current system run more efficiently. They include exploring funding options to meet county needs, being more proactive and responsive to new initiatives that require training, and ensure the proper training is being provided.

Next, we would like to “Strengthen two-way communication with counties and external stakeholders”. While we have never actually made decisions without first receiving county and stakeholder input, we believe we can be more transparent in showing how our work is done. We have begun down this road by the creation of the very newsletter you’re reading now and overhauling our webpage. We also would like to shed more light on the many collaboration meetings we hold throughout the year to receive input on the STS while also making ourselves more available to receive input from counties directly.

Our final impact area is to “Unite and support training partners around a shared training agenda”. With so much going on in Child Welfare there are many training efforts that are happening throughout the State. Through our work with our partners we hope to leverage already existing collaborations such as the Statewide Training and Education Committee to support collaboration of all efforts in a meaningful way.

Visit our website to read the entire Vision and Mission document. If you would also like to provide comments, feedback or questions you can reach us by e-mail.