

Achieving Retention through Evidence-Based Practices

Building Resilience in the Child Welfare Workforce

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LOW pay,
a ton of paperwork,
a massive caseload,
upset parents?

SURE,
SIGN ME UP!



Public Child Welfare Work.
It's not for everyone.

It's for people
who believe they can
make a difference in
a world of challenges
and hard knocks.

**You know who you are.
Find a job that matters.**

Contact your
County Department of Social Services.



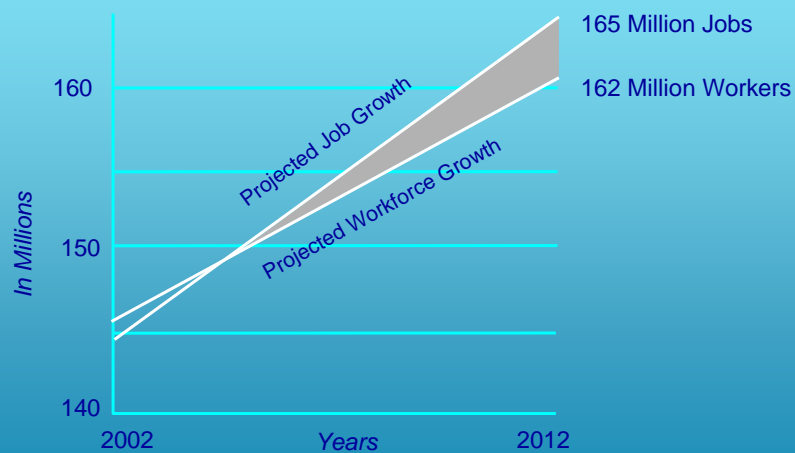
Presentation

- Child welfare workforce issues
 - What research tells us about retention of child welfare staff
 - Implications for evidence-based practices and retention strategies
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Conclusions

- There is a perfect storm of increasing expectations for delivery and outcomes of child welfare services and a decreasing availability of qualified staff.
 - What you do makes a difference to someone else
 - Child welfare work is not rocket science....it is much harder
 - There are evidence-based interventions that affect recruitment, selection and retention of resilient child welfare staff
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Demographics: More Jobs, Fewer Workers



Demographics of Social Services

- Growing need for workers (BLS projects 36% growth)
- Disproportionate aging of social service workforce
- Millennial workers – value work fulfillment & work/life balance

—Nittoli, 2003; Light, 2003; Anderson, 2007

Workforce Trends in Child Welfare

- Salaries
 - Not competitive and not keeping up
 - Increasing vacancy rates
 - Turnover:
 - Desirable
 - Unpreventable
 - Preventable
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Financial Costs of Turnover

- Weary and costly cycle of recruitment, employment, training, production, resignation
 - According to authors of *Love 'Em or Lose 'Em*, 70% of the vacant position's annual salary is the cost of that vacancy (Kaye, & Jordan-Evans, 2005)
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Human Cost of Turnover

Impact on Staff

- High stress, low morale, grief
- Increased workload for those who stay
- Insufficient time to do the work

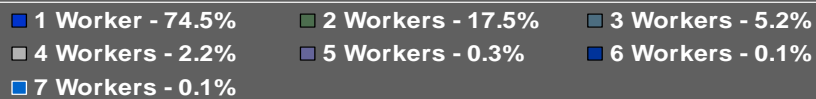
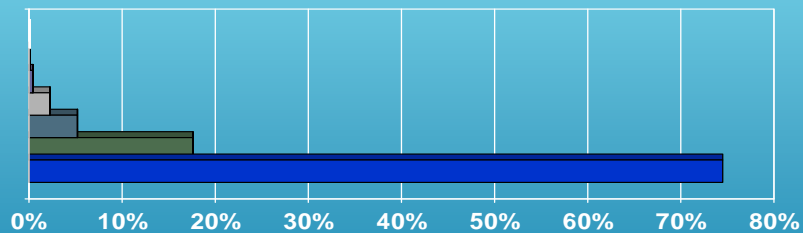
Impact on Families and Children

- Delay in timely investigations which can be detrimental to the child at risk (US GAO, 2003)
- Significantly longer stays in foster care (Flower, McDonald, & Sumski, 2005; Ryan et al., 2006)
- Higher rates of foster care re-entry (Hess, Folaran, & Jefferson, 1992)

Fewer Changes in Caseworkers:

Increases the Chances of Permanency for Children

Children Entering and Exiting Care to Permanency:
January 1, 2003 through September 2004 (N=679)



Impact on Safety

CA study compared recurrence of child maltreatment for high, moderate and low functioning counties:

- Highest functioning had lowest turnover (9%) and lowest recurrence (6-15%)
- Lowest functioning had highest turnover (23%) and highest recurrence (15-23%)

National Council on Crime and Delinquency, 2006

A Child's View



University of Southern Maine Video

Impact on Children, Youth & Families

- Decreased trust, self-esteem, sense of control
- Decreased quality and continuity of relationship

—Folman, 2000; Hess, Folaron & Jefferson, 1992

Child Welfare Work is Not for Everyone

- Recruit broadly....select purposefully
 - Don't spend your time training a turkey to climb a tree....hire a squirrel
 - Do what it takes to keep the competent and the committed
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- **Impact is a 3 legged-stool:
Recruitment, Selection and Retention**

CW Retention Research



Worker Characteristics and Retention

1. **Desire to help** (Ellett, 1996, 1997, 2002; AECF, 2003; Cicero-Reese & Black, 1998; Landsman, 2001; Rycraft, 1994).
2. **Self-efficacy** (Ellett, 2000; Glisson & Hemmelgarn, 1998; Harrison, 1995).
3. **Prior experience** (Balfour & Neff, 1993; Rosenthal et al., 1998)
4. **Social work education** (Cicero-Reese & Black, 1998; Dhoooper, Royse & Wolfe, 1990; Ellett, 2000; Jones, 2002; Liebermann, Hornby, & Russell, 1988; Lewandowski, 1998; Russell, 1987; Rycraft, 1994).

Social Work Degree and Retention

- Possession of BSW or MSW does not relate to likelihood of turnover:
 - Nebraska sample of 209 new child protection worker followed for 2 years (Graef, & Potter, nd)
- Child welfare workers with BSW or MSW are likely to remain in the child welfare workforce for a longer period of time than others (Barth, et al., 2007; Cicero-Reese & Black, 1998; Curry, et al., 2005; Ellett & Ellett, 2005; GAO, 2003)
- Position requirement of a social work degree associated with lower turnover (Bernotovicz, 1997)

Specialized Social Work Degree and Retention

- Graduates of specialized child welfare social work programs are more likely to remain (Fox, 2000; Okamura & Jones, 2000; Rosenthal & Waters, 2006)
- ..especially among previously-employed county staff (Lewandowski, 1998)
- Retention rates as high as 78% (Dickinson & Perry, 2002)
 - Less emotionally exhausted
 - Higher salaries
 - More supportive supervisors

Nature of the Work and Retention

1. **Challenging work/workload** (Alwon & Reitz, 2000; Cyphers, 2001; Gabbard et al., 2004; GAO, 2003 Hopkins, Mudrick, & Rudolph, 1999; Scannapieco & Connell-Carrick, 2003; Weaver & Chang, 2004)
2. **Match between skills/interests and job demands** (Bernotavicz & Locke, 2000; CWLA, 2001; Graef & Potter, 2002; Rycraft, 1994)
3. **Stress/burnout** (Bernotavicz, 1997; Cahalane & Sites, 2004; Dickinson & Perry, 2002; Drake & Yadama, 1996; Mor Barak, Nissly, & Levin, 2001)
4. **Role clarity and role expectations** (Dickinson, Painter & Lee, 2007)

Organizational Conditions and Retention

1. **Supervision** (Alwon & Reitz, 2000; Bernotavicz, 1997; Dickinson & Perry, 2002; Ellett, 2000; GAO, 2003; Harrison, 1995; Landsman, 2001; McCarthy, 2003; Rycraft, 1994; Samantrai, 1992; Smith, 2005)
2. **Organizational climate** (AECF, 2003; Cahalane & Sites, 2004; Ellett et al., 2003; Glisson & Hemmelgarn, 1998; Hopkins et al., 1999; Keefe, 2003; Kleinpeter et al., 2003; Lewandowski, 1998; McCarthy, 2003; Nissly et al., 2005; Scannapieco & Connell-Carrick, 2003)
3. **Co-worker support** (Alwon & Reitz, 2000; Dickinson & Perry, 2002; Ellett, 2000; Nissly et al., 2005)

Metanalysis of Intent to Leave and Turnover (Mor Barak, Nissly, & Levin, 2001)

- **Outcome variables:**
 - Intention to leave
 - Turnover
- **3 main categories of antecedents**
 - Demographics, personal and work-related characteristics
 - Professional perceptions
 - Organizational conditions

Intent to Leave Results

- Best predictors of intention to quit:
 - organizational commitment, professional commitment, burnout and job satisfaction
- Employees who lack organizational and professional commitment, are unhappy with their jobs and who experience excessive burnout and stress but not enough social support are likely to think about leaving

Turnover Results

- Strongest single predictor of actual turnover is intention to leave, followed by
 - employment alternatives, job satisfaction, and burnout
- Employees who have actually left their jobs considered quitting prior to doing it, were unhappy with management practices and had alternative employment options

Organizational Climate

- The collective perception that employees have of their work environment
- Workers who perceive a positive organization climate report higher job satisfaction and a greater commitment to their agency (Glisson & Durick, 1988; Glisson, 2000).

Organizational Climate and Retention

- Mission Driven
- Performance Based
- Affirming

Organizational Climate

■ Workers who stay

- Understand the agency's mission and feel valued as contributors to that mission (Keefe, 2003; Rycraft, 1994)
- Experience clear expectations and measurable performance objectives (Annie E. Casey Foundation, 2003)
- Perceive recognition and rewards for performance (Child Welfare Training Institute, 1997)
- Feel respected as individual staff members (Landsman, 2001)

Organizational Climate and Turnover

■ Those leaving child welfare:

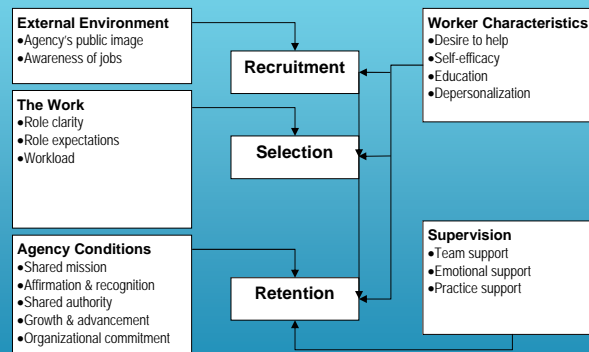
- Significantly greater levels of role conflict and role overload
- Higher levels of depersonalization
- Lower job satisfaction

Intervention Research and Retention Practices

- The correlates of turnover have been identified
- What interventions stem turnover and increase retention?

Child Welfare Worker R & R Project: Conceptual Framework

Influences on Recruitment, Selection, and Retention



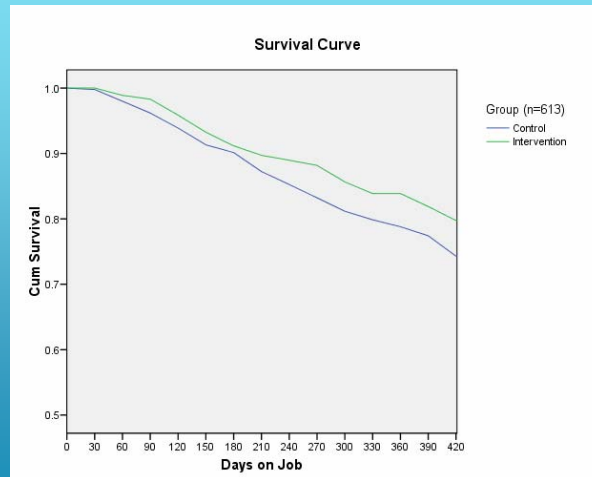
An Experimental Study of Child Welfare Worker Turnover in NC

- Random assignment to 17 intervention and 17 control groups
- Provision of intervention:
 - Supervisor and manager training in recruitment, selection, retention skills
 - Toolkits and TA for transfer of learning
- Collection of data between 12/1/04 and 9/1/08

Results

- Significant improvements for intervention group on:
 - Self efficacy
 - Organizational commitment
 - Agency affirmation
 - Shared mission
 - Depersonalization
 - Role clarity
 - Supervisor practice support
 - Supervisor team support
 - Intent to leave

Impact of Intervention on Retention



Supervision as a Retention Tool

- Good supervision is the most important factor (APHS, 2005)
- Quantity of supervision influences job satisfaction (Barth et al., 2007)
- Quality of supervision affects retention (Dickinson & Painter, 2007; Nissly, et al., 2005)
 - Practice support
 - Team support
 - Emotional support

Impact of Evidence-Based Practice on Staff Turnover (Aarons, et al., 2009)

- Effect of EBP implementation on staff retention in context of statewide, randomized trial of intervention designed to reduce child neglect
- Implementation of SafeCare in OK's statewide children's services system
- 21 teams consisting of 153 Home-based service providers were followed over 29 months.
- SafeCare with & without fidelity monitoring; Services as usual with and without monitoring.
- Greater staff retention in the condition where the EBP was implemented along with ongoing fidelity monitoring presented to staff as supportive consultation

Perspectives on EBP Implementation and Turnover

- Having to learn new skills and dissatisfaction with SC or with being monitored may have led to some of the older CCMs to quit their jobs
- Learning skills like SC were motivators to stay with current employers
- Implementation of EBPs helps to recruit and retain new staff

Effects of an Organizational Intervention on Worker Turnover

The Availability, Responsiveness, and Continuity (ARC) Intervention (Glisson, Dukes, & Green, 2006)

- Reduced worker turnover by two-thirds
- Improved work environments by reducing
 - Role conflict
 - Role overload
 - Emotional exhaustion
 - Depersonalization

Implications for Retention Strategies

Role of Leadership

- Inspiring vision
- Congruence of agency/individual values, mission and practice
- Provide resources to do job
- Learning and high performance organizations
- Communication channels
- Celebrate performance

Organizational Retention Strategies

- Agency mission is clear and workers feel valued as contributors to that mission
- Clear expectations and measurable performance objectives
- Staff able to use knowledge and skills
- Professional discretion and participatory decision making
- Open communication and team work
- Opportunities for professional growth and education
- A rewards and recognition program
- Family-friendly job supports

