



Child Welfare Clinical Services Program Model of Wilson County DSS



Implications for Other Jurisdictions

Why have a Clinical Team?

Psychological Evaluations can cost on average over \$2,000.00. Even so, many parents and children are “Court Ordered” to receive mental health services in spite of the high costs and lack of services in the local community for low income families. In addition, many parents have no form of insurance at all and parents who are covered by Medicaid under the Family Children’s Health Insurance program lose their coverage when their children are placed in Foster Care. Furthermore, there is little control over the pace in which cases are managed or the quality of services provided in the local community. Finally, getting updates and reports from community practitioners can often be difficult. For these reasons, the Wilson County Department of Social Services developed its own Child Welfare Clinical Services Program. The DSS Clinical Program has made a positive impact on the child welfare families and children served.

► Developing a Clinical Services Team

The Department started small by recruiting a Masters Level Psychologist (LPA) from the Mental Health System. The Department then added an LCSW to focus on therapeutic interventions. Today, the team consists of 2 LCSWs, 1 LCSW/LCAS, & 1 LPA/Psychologist. The Department contracted with a local PhD level Psychologist to meet the requirements of formal supervision.

► Positive Impacts on the Families and Children

- Children and parents become more resilient and are more apt to overcome the hardships and trauma they have experienced in their lives.
- Training such as Trauma Focused Cognitive Behavior Therapy (TFCBT) equips therapists with the tools needed to provide a higher quality of service.
- Open communication and quick access for families and social workers helps families move through the services system more expeditiously.
- The services provided helps biological, foster and adoptive families stay together and heal trauma
- Helps CWS Social Workers make critical decisions
- Critical input in Child and Family Team (CFT) meetings result in stronger plans
- Coaching for social workers provides guidance in overall family mental health needs.

► Requirements for Replicating Wilson County’s Model

- A committed DSS Director to budget and reallocate positions
- Licensed social workers are required in order to re-coup Medicaid expenses
- Must establish structure and realize limits
- Develop HIPPA and Medicaid compliant forms
- A constant understanding of the roles of the assigned Social Worker and the Therapist/Psychologist
- Develop an Appeals Process and maintain Mal-practice Insurance
- Partnership with Managed Care Organizations (MCO) & The Division of Medical Assistance (DMA) is critical.