

Social Work in Child Welfare I
Fall 2009 7750:451-001

Pam Reid, ACSW, LISW-S
Polsky Building, Room 499
The University of Akron
Akron, Ohio 44325-8001
Phone: 330 – 379-1877
Fax: 330- 379-1800
E-mail: pjreid@uakron.edu
Office hours by appointment

COURSE REATIONALE AND DESCRIPTION

This course is the first of a two-course series that provides the knowledge, concepts and fundamental skills needed for beginning level practice in public and private child welfare. The course focuses on interventions to protect children from abuse, neglect and sexual abuse by strengthening, supporting and empowering their families. The course is organized around four themes. **First**, content is provided on the mission and scope of child welfare practice, articulating the underlying philosophy and values that drive child welfare practice and addressing cultural and relationship issues when working with families. **Second**, the course provides conceptual and practical information on identifying child maltreatment, assessing family needs and strengths and determining both immediate and long term risk to children of future maltreatment. **Third**, information is presented on case planning and applying a casework model to working with families. **Fourth**, content is presented on interviewing skills in a child welfare setting, especially as these skills relate to family assessment and case planning activities.

COURSE OBJECTIVES

Upon completing this course, students will:

1. Understand the mission and scope of child welfare services. This includes being familiar with the historical roots of child welfare, the legal base of practice, the definition of “family centered” practice, type of maltreatment, and the roles and responsibilities of the child welfare agency.
2. Have beginning knowledge and skill in developing a casework relationship with families, understand the dynamics of resistance and be able to discuss how cultural factors of the client and the worker can influence that relationship.
3. Know the principles of risk and safety assessment, be familiar with models used to assess risk and safety, how to conduct a safety and family assessment and understand how to draw accurate conclusions from the information collected.

4. Be able to develop an intervention plan, know how to engage the client in the service delivery process and understand the importance of community and multidisciplinary involvement and collaboration.
5. Learn how to conduct interviews that engage families, reduce resistance and involve families in the assessment and planning process.

RECOMMENDED TEXT

Rycus, J.S. & Hughes, R.C. (1998). Field Guide to Child Welfare (Volumes I & II). Washington, DC: CWLA Press & Columbus, Oh: Institute for Human Services

HANDOUTS

Numerous handouts will be referenced during class. You may access the handouts at: www.uppua.org

SUPPLEMENTAL READINGS

Supplemental readings may be assigned from a variety of sources. Please see the bibliography for additional readings.

TEACHING/LEARNING METHODS

Content presentation methods may include lecture and discussion, group presentations, role plays, visual and written assignments.

The professor reserves the right to modify and/or change assignments based on the needs of the class.

EXPECTATIONS FOR STUDENT'S BEHAVIOR

Each student is expected to attend class on a regular basis. Students are responsible for acquiring any content missed.

The students in the School of Social Work program are expected to be familiar with and follow the National Association of Social Workers' Code of Ethics while a student in the School of Social Work. Some subject matter may be controversial and while students may vary in their strength and support for a certain position, it is expected that all students will be tolerant of other's viewpoints and will develop an ability to listen and understand each other's perspective. In addition, students are expected to develop the

Take Home Assignment due August 26

Take home assignment can be found at: www.uppua.org It is called “Child Welfare Values and Principles”.

Please read the document and turn in page 27, making sure to put your name at the top of the page.

Assignment #1 due November 18

Many times during the intake process, child welfare caseworkers must make initial assessments based on limited information and a single contact with the child and family. Interviewing a non-voluntary and resistant client requires special skills and a clear focus on the part of the caseworker to be successful in gaining needed information to determine if a child is safe in his/her home environment.

You will be asked to develop a plan for an intake assessment. The plan should include, but not be limited to the following:

Whom would you interview?

In what order?

What factors you might need to consider?

What types of family dynamics you would look for?

What type of documentation you would need to validate risk and the need to validate safety?

Also discuss:

How would you introduce yourself?

How would you explain your presence?

What external resources would you utilize?

What background information will you need?

How would you assure the immediate level of risk of the children?

What questions will you need to ask and in what order to determine risk?

You will receive your case assessment during the week of November 2.

You will need to be able to make a final recommendation regarding the case study assessment. Additional details of this will be provided at the time of receiving the case assessment.