

# OFFICE OF THE DEPUTY COMMISSIONER FOR ADMINISTRATION

## DCF Academy For Workforce Development

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### Role

The Department of Children and Families' Academy for Workforce Development (The Academy) shall provide competency-based, culturally-responsive learning opportunities in accordance with national standards for public child welfare practice and in compliance with state law.

An array of professional development training programs shall be offered annually. The Academy shall offer pre-service preparation to newly-hired caseload carrying Social Workers (herein referred to as Trainees) and in-service training to experienced employees.

Academy classes shall be made available to community service providers when possible to ensure those who work with children and families possess critical information, knowledge and skills to serve them with the highest level of professionalism.

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### Code of Conduct for Training Events

Each DCF employee has responsibility for his or her professional growth and development and must:

- value and respect others without regard to ethnicity, color and race, language, customs, styles, values, beliefs, gender, sexual orientation and identity, age, education, socio-economic status, knowledge, skills, abilities, functions, practices, religions and geographic areas;
- be prepared, organized and on time for the training program;
- engage in collaborative learning activities with other participants;
- be a learning resource when his or her personal expertise or knowledge can contribute to the learning process;
- explore new ideas in classroom discussions through his or her active participation in all classroom activities;
- engage in active listening;
- demonstrate respect to trainers and fellow trainees; and
- adhere to the DCF dress code guidelines when participating in training, unless otherwise noted.

Employees shall not:

- be late for class or returning from breaks and lunch;
- read newspapers, case record materials, books or any non-training materials during training hours;
- take part in any physical or verbal behavior that is offensive, intimidating or abusive to other participants or trainers;
- show or cause distraction to other participants by the use of cell phones, including emailing or text messaging;
- access social media as it is prohibited during all training;
- bring food or beverages into the computer training room;
- have access to computers during the training program without approval; or
- join in or initiate in any side conversations that might interfere with the learning needs of other training participants or with the trainer's presentation.

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### **Code of Conduct for Training Events** (Continued)

Failure to abide by this Code of Conduct shall result in the Academy sharing information with the employee's chain of command for the appropriate action. The Academy reserves the right to ask an employee to return to his or her work site if behavior in the classroom is disruptive to the learning experience.

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### **Pre-Service Training**

The Academy shall develop Pre-Service training according to national standards and CT DCF policies and procedures. The Academy shall offer Pre-Service training to trainees assigned to the area offices. Upon notification of hire from Human Resources, the Academy shall register trainees for training and inform the assigned supervisor and program supervisor of the dates and times of the Pre-Service training.

Former employees with more than one year of separation from service must repeat the Pre-Service Training Program.

Trainees with previous children's protective services (CPS) experience outside the State of Connecticut may be exempted from all or portions of the Pre-Service Training Program with the written approval of their direct supervisor.

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### **Completion of Pre-Service Training**

Trainees shall not receive cases until completion of Tier I training classes which includes one week of shadowing in their offices, along with five weeks of training courses. At the conclusion of the Tier I training, trainees will be prepared to receive a graduated caseload.

Full caseloads will be assigned after successful completion of Tier II training classes on or about five months. Trainees must complete all courses in order to successfully complete pre-service and receive a certificate of completion.

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### **Tier I Foundational Training Courses**

- Introduction to Child Welfare
  - Best Case Practice
  - Racial Justice
  - Legal I
  - Behavioral Health
  - Engaging Families
  - Partnering with Caregivers
  - Trauma
  - Education
  - SDM
  - Permanency Teaming
  - Case Plan
  - Car Seat
  - Link
  - Worker Safety
  - Health and Wellness
  - Behavioral Health
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| <b>Tier II Foundational Training Courses</b> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Sexual Abuse</li><li>• Substance Use</li><li>• Intimate Partner Violence</li><li>• Legal II</li><li>• Legal III</li><li>• Understanding the Numbers</li><li>• Final Test</li></ul> |
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**Attendance at Pre-Service Training**

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<b>Absences</b>	An excused absence from a mandatory Pre-Service training session shall be granted only in an emergency situation. An "emergency" means a crisis in the trainee's family, or a situation involving the trainee's workload which cannot be managed by other DCF staff and could result in danger to a child if the trainee does not personally attend to it.
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<b>Trainee Responsibility</b>	<p>In the case of an emergency, the trainee shall:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• when there is a personal emergency that prevents attendance at a mandatory training session, contact his or her supervisor prior to the start of the work day; or</li><li>• immediately notify his or her supervisor of any situation involving the trainee's workload that cannot be managed by other DCF staff and request approval to postpone attendance at the mandatory session.</li></ul>
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<b>Supervisory Responsibility</b>	<p>The supervisor shall notify the Pre-Service Academy Registrar and the trainee's Group Liaison, prior to the start of the training day, that the trainee is unable to attend and ensure that the time card reflects a non-training activity for the specified day.</p> <p>In the event that the absence is part of a multi-day program, the supervisor shall confer with the Academy as to whether the trainee will be permitted to attend the subsequent days of the course.</p>
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<b>Academy Responsibility</b>	In the event any trainee is absent from training and the Academy has not been informed of the absence by the supervisor, the Pre-Service Academy Registrar shall by the end of the day, send notification to the trainee's supervisor.
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**Tardiness at Pre-Service Training**

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<b>Tardiness</b>	It is expected that all trainees will demonstrate dependability by reporting to training on time, returning from breaks on time, and completing the full training class. Tardiness shall only be excused in the event of an emergency.
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**Trainee Responsibility** Trainees will notify their supervisor if they are unable to arrive to training on time and indicate an anticipated time of arrival.

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**Supervisor Responsibility** Supervisors shall contact the Academy via email prior to the beginning of training to report trainees who:

- have called in, in anticipation of being tardy;
- were excused from or delayed to class because of an emergency; or
- must leave before the close of the class.

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**Academy Responsibility** The Academy shall maintain a late sheet for trainees arriving to training more than 15 minutes late. In the event any trainee is tardy to training and the Academy has not been informed by the supervisor and there are no weather or traffic conditions to be considered, the Pre-Service Academy Registrar shall by the end of the day, send notification to the trainee's supervisor.

The Academy reserves the right to deny admission to a trainee who is more than one hour late for a training. In this case, the trainee will be required to make up the training at a later date.

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**Emergency Situations** In the event of a personal or professional emergency of a trainee who is in class, the employee's supervisor shall be contacted by the Academy Director (or designee) immediately.

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### Managing Trainees during Pre-Service Training

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**Supervisor Responsibility** During the working test period, the supervisor should:

- ensure that the trainees are scheduled for training and are adequately supported and prepared to receive cases according to policy;
- ensure that proper case coverage is provided to trainees while in training;
- attend all meetings with the Academy;
- Conduct Transfer of Learning Activities and ensure all shadowing and other Academy assigned learning tasks are completed;
- communicate with the Academy as deemed necessary to obtain feedback on trainee performance;
- evaluate the trainee's ability to appropriately apply policy to practice and provide feedback as deemed appropriate;
- determine if the trainees are a good fit for employment;
- document case assignments in the electronic database; and
- ensure that trainees do not bear sole responsibility for cases during their training period and that proper coverage of caseload activity occurs while the trainees are attending mandatory training.

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### Transfer of Learning

Supervisors of trainees shall utilize the Transfer of Learning and Theory to Practice Guides to assess the trainee's ability to apply what is being taught in the class and any further training needs.

If additional training cannot address the identified concerns, further steps may be warranted by the Area Office administration and Human Resource Management, *e.g.*, corrective counseling.

The Training Unit Supervisor and Academy staff shall work together to communicate trainee accomplishments and identify areas needing improvement.

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### Supervisory Meetings

The Academy and Regional Training Supervisory staff shall meet regularly. The purpose of such meetings shall be to:

- determine if Regional Office pre-service training is meeting the needs of the trainees;
  - provide updates of training content and progress of trainees;
  - collaborate and coordinate programmatic and administrative training issues to ensure a uniform and consistent state-wide pre-service program; and
  - troubleshoot administrative and programmatic problems that arise during training.
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### Area Office Supervisor Requests

Academy staff shall grant all requests for meetings, additional training and consultation regarding trainees made by Area Office supervisors and program supervisors.

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### When Cases are to be Assigned During Training

Trainees enrolled in Pre-Service training programs shall be assigned limited cases based on his or her progress in pre-service trainings.

Full caseloads shall not be assigned until the trainee has successfully completed Pre-Service training.

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### Academy Responsibility

During the working test period, the Academy should:

- offer training as deemed necessary and appropriate for case assignment;
  - provide via the trainee's Group Liaison written feedback to the Area Office regarding each trainee's progress in training after the completion of Tier I training and Tier II training; and
  - provide feedback about a trainee's progress upon request.
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**In-Service Training**

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**Policy**

All employees must complete a minimum of 30 hours of training per year. The hours are assessed in accordance with the employee's evaluation cycle. Failure to comply with this policy will result in a referral to Human Resource Management for disciplinary action.

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**Registration Process**

All employees must successfully complete the registration process prior to attending training. Four quarterly catalogs of class offerings with access to registration are published per year via the Academy's SharePoint page.

Please visit the Academy's SharePoint page for detailed instruction on how to electronically register for a class: [Instructions on How to Register for a Class](#).

The Academy reserves the right to make special announcements via email for some in-service classes.

In the event any employee is unable to attend a class after successfully registering, the employee may electronically cancel the registration.

Please visit the Academy's SharePoint page for detailed instruction on how to electronically cancel a registration: ["Instructions on How to Cancel a Registration."](#)

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**Supervisor's Approval**

Employees must receive supervisory approval prior to registering for training, attending training and cancelling a registration. This approval shall be maintained in the employee's supervisory file.

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**Supervisor Responsibility**

Supervisors shall determine which classes are appropriate for employees to take based on the operational needs of DCF and the identified learning and development needs of the employee. In addition, supervisors shall ensure that each of their assigned employees has complied with mandatory training requirements and document this information in the employee's record.

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**Access Transcript**

To verify the transcript of an employee, please visit the Academy's SharePoint page ["How to Run Your Team's Transcript."](#)

Note: The transcript will only include classes entered into the Academy's Learning Management System. Classes taken outside of the agency shall be maintained in the employee's supervisory file and may be included in the 30 hour training requirement.

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**Acceptance Criteria**

Employees shall be accepted on a first-come, first-served basis.

Note: The Academy reserves the right to prioritize acceptance. The Academy may balance acceptance regionally, by divisions or by functional assignment for trainings with more employees than available spaces.

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**Confirmation of Acceptance** The Academy will inform employees who have been accepted into a training via email confirmation.

No employee shall plan to attend or attend a training without receiving an email confirmation.

The Academy reserves the right to send employees who arrive to training without a confirmation back to their worksite.

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**Academy Responsibility** The Academy shall ensure that in-service programs for all staff are offered on a routine basis. A minimum of 10 in-service classes are offered each month.

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**Training by Functional Assignment/ Major Topic** The Academy shall offer certification training by functional assignment and by major topic area as deemed necessary by DCF. Examples of such training programs include:

- Intake and Assessment Training (Differential Response System);
- Permanency Training;
- Adolescent Services Training;
- Leadership Academy for Supervisors;
- Leadership Academy for Middle Managers;
- Probate Training;
- Case Aides;
- Early Childhood;
- Engaging Fathers in Child Protective Services;
- Trauma Informed Practice; and
- Suicide Prevention

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**1:1 Customized Training Requests** The Academy will provide customized 1:1 training and coaching to employees, upon request from the employee's direct supervisor. To request 1:1 training, the direct supervisor shall complete the *DCF Academy Training Request Form* and submit it electronically to the Academy Liaison assigned to the location. Upon submission, the direct supervisor will be contacted by the Academy to schedule a meeting to discuss the request and develop a plan.

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**Locally-Held In-Service Training** The Academy will support locally-held in-service training coordinated by DCF by capturing such training in the agency's learning management system.

When a training is coordinated by DCF, held locally and not conducted by an employee of the DCF Academy, the Training Coordinator for that location shall complete the *DCF Academy Training Request Form* and submit it electronically to the Academy Liaison assigned to the location 30 days in advance of the training.

If Continuing Education Credits (CEC's) will be applied for through the Academy, the *Training Request Form* shall be submitted 60 days in advance. Upon completion of the training, attendance sheets and evaluations shall be submitted to the Academy Liaison.

**See "Notification and Documentation of Training"** section of this Practice Guide for further instructions.

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**Cancellation of Courses**

The Academy reserves the right to cancel trainings which do not meet the minimum enrollment of ten class participants or due to other unforeseen circumstances.

Registered participants in a cancelled training and the direct supervisor will be notified via email of the cancellation in advance.

**See** "Decision to Cancel Classes" section of this Practice Guide for additional information regarding cancellations due to inclement weather.

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**Attendance at In-Service Training**

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**Absences**

All absences from Academy training must be reported timely and no later than the start time of the class.

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**Employee Responsibility**

In the case of an emergency, whether personal or professional, the employee shall contact his or her supervisor prior to the start of the workday to communicate their inability to attend the training.

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**Supervisory Responsibility**

The supervisor shall notify the In-Service Academy Registrar prior to the start of the training day that their employee is unable to attend and ensure that the time card reflects a non-training activity for the specified day.

In the event that the absence is part of a multi-day program, the supervisor shall confer with the Academy whether the employee will be permitted to attend the subsequent days of the course.

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**Academy Responsibility**

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**Tardiness at In-Service Training**

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**Supervisor Responsibility** Supervisors shall contact the Academy via email prior to the beginning of training to report employees who:

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**Emergency Situations** In the event of a personal or professional emergency of an employee who is in class, the employee's supervisor shall be contacted by the Academy Director (or designee) immediately.

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### Supervisory Training

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**Supervisory Training Program** Newly-appointed supervisors in the Area Offices shall complete a Supervisory Training Program as soon as possible but no later than one year after appointment.

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**Responsibility of the Area Office Program Supervisor** During the working test period, the Area Office Program Supervisor shall meet with the newly appointed supervisor to:

- discuss specific, required content areas of the training program;
  - discuss other identified training issues; and
  - ensure information acquired in training is applied to practice.
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**Content of Supervisory Training Program**

The mandatory Supervisory Training Program shall include but not be limited to the following content areas:

- the policy regarding supervisory standards;
- transition to the supervisory role;
- the supervisor as an administrator, educator and motivator;
- evaluating the quality of staff performance including decision-making, assessment procedures and case plans;
- developing performance appraisals;
- selecting training programs and assignments for staff;
- encouraging and rewarding effective staff behavior;
- using available research findings for decision making, case planning and service provision;
- monitoring the provision of services to clients and case outcomes;
- negotiating with service providers;
- coordinating the provision of services;
- developing and maintaining case records and accurate documentation in the electronic database;
- cultural issues in supervision;
- planning and managing organizational change;
- individual, group and peer supervision; and
- conflict management for supervisors.

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**Inclement Weather**

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**Decision to Cancel Classes**

In the event of inclement weather on days when classes are scheduled at the Academy, a Director or designee shall decide if classes should be canceled. A decision to cancel classes shall be made by 7:00 A.M. and shall be publicized on Channel 3, WFSB and shall be reflected in a recorded message on 860-560-5055.

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**Report to Work Site**

Unless state offices have been closed due to inclement weather, employees whose training classes have been cancelled shall report to their work sites at the regularly scheduled time.

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**Careline**

Employees should not call the Careline to obtain cancellation information.

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**Academy Media Center**

Services provided by the Academy Media Center include but are not limited to:

- coordination and planning of all media support for DCF functions, meetings and events;
- development of training videos when appropriate and as defined by project scope and timeline;
- oversight and maintenance of Academy and Media Center equipment; and
- collaboration with and consultation to other DCF divisions and units that are managing projects that require the use of the Media Center equipment.

All media requests shall be submitted via the Media Request Form.

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**Learning Management System**

The Academy's Learning Management System (LMS) currently:

- allows staff to register for trainings with prior supervisory approval or cancel registration in advance if the employee is unable to attend the training;
  - captures all training data provided for DCF staff;
  - provides data and reports to the Revenue Enhancement Division for reimbursement consideration;
  - provides data and ad hoc reports that are used to manage employee training initiatives; and
  - provides transcript data for employees upon request.
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**Notification and Documentation of Training**

- All training offered to DCF staff by the Academy and other divisions must be documented in the Academy's LMS. An LMS code must be secured by the Academy prior to the class being conducted.
- Each office and facility has a designated Training Coordinator and Academy Liaison.
- A notification of an intent to conduct a training must be submitted to the Academy by the Coordinator no later than 30 days prior to training for an acquisition of an LMS code. This notification can be made on the DCF Academy Training Request Form.
- A code will be assigned by the Academy.
- Attendance shall be taken at each training utilizing the Attendance Sheet.
- Attendance sheets shall be forwarded to the Academy no later than the last day of each month at which time the Academy will enter the data in LMS.

**Note:** When attending training, employees should utilize the code "RTRNG" on their timecard.

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**Continuing Education and Professional Development**

The Academy offers professional development programs to DCF employees to support continuing education efforts. The programs are the Graduate Education Support (GES) and Master of Social Work (MSW) Field Internship.

- Staff pursuing higher educational opportunities are encouraged to participate in the Academy supported programs.
  - Flex time may be used to accommodate time off to attend educational requirements but may not exceed the boundaries of the employee's union contract.
  - Trainees shall be prohibited from doing internships during their pre-service training period.
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**Internship Programs for Non- DCF Students**

The Academy shall partner with institutions of higher education to offer students across disciplines internship opportunities within DCF.

All interns must complete a comprehensive background check prior to the start of the internship.

At times, schools may require the Field Supervisor be certified via the Seminar in Field Instruction (SIFI) course.

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### **Shadowing Programs**

The Academy coordinates shadowing opportunities for students as deemed necessary and appropriate. All students must complete a comprehensive background check prior to the start of the shadowing experience.

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### **DCF Staff Mentoring Program**

The DCF Staff Mentoring Program is a voluntary partnership between Managers as mentors; and Social Workers/Social Work Supervisors as mentees.

Through the Mentor/Mentee partnership, participants enhance professional development and leadership capacity as well as deepen their understanding and commitment to the mission and workings of the agency.

Successful completion of the program is determined by the mentee and mentor attending required events unless otherwise excused.

The formal mentoring relationship is for a one-year period as determined by the mentoring committee.

Selections will be based solely upon a formal application process and written application materials.

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