

**DCFS Entry Level Competencies**  
**Based on Competencies Developed by the Institute for Human Services**  
**And Adopted/Modified by the Arkansas Division of Children and Family Services**

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**100                      Core: Legal Aspect of Child Protection**

100-1                      The worker knows how to use the state's legal definitions of physical abuse, sexual abuse, neglect, dependency/neglect, dependency and endangerment to determine the validity of child maltreatment reports.

100-2                      The worker understands the Family Service Worker's role in the court systems and how to use the court systems to protect children including:

- How to gather pertinent evidence and write effective affidavits and court reports
- How to prepare for court
- How to present effective testimony

**101                      Core: Family-Centered Child Protective Services**

101-1                      The worker knows the values of family centered child welfare practice and understands that effective family-centered services can strengthen families, promote positive change and help prevent removal of children from their homes. Family-centered child welfare values include:

- safe and stable families
- permanence for children
- preservation of parents' and children's rights and dignity
- client self-determination
- reasonable efforts
- respect for individual and cultural differences
- awareness of how one's own values and culture can impact the delivery of child welfare services.

101-2                      The worker understands the dual roles of the Family Service Worker to protect children from maltreatment and to empower families by providing services designed to strengthen and support families.

101-3                      The worker can accurately identify the physical, behavioral, and emotional indicators of child maltreatment and can identify and evaluate how individual, family, developmental, situational and environmental factors contribute to child maltreatment.

101-4                      The worker knows what data must be gathered from collaterals contacts, from the reporter, from case records and from other sources and can identify factors that must be evaluated when assessing immediate safety threats, the level of risk for maltreatment and family strengths and protective factors that mitigate or reduce risk.

101-5                      Using required agency protocols, the worker can determine when reports of maltreatment are true, when they are unsubstantiated and can use the data gathered in assessments to plan and provide relevant protective and supportive services.

101-6                      The worker knows the broad range of responsibilities of the child welfare agency and the range of interventions to assure child safety from least intrusive to most intrusive, including providing supportive services, differential response, in-home services, arranging temporary out-of-home placements and reunification,

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	placement with fit and willing relatives, and providing permanent homes for children who cannot return to their parents or caregivers.
101-7	The worker knows the proper roles and responsibilities of other community agencies and child welfare service providers and knows how to collaborate with these agencies and providers to develop case plans and provide services that assure a safe and stable family environment for children.
101-8	The worker can recognize indicators of mental health problems, substance abuse, and interpersonal violence and can assess the degree to which these problems are impacting child safety and family stability.
<b>102</b>	<b>Case Planning and Family-Centered Casework</b>
102-1	The worker understands knows the importance of effective assessment, case planning and concurrent planning and understands the factors that must be addressed in a thorough assessment including contributing factors to maltreatment, the functioning of the family as a unit, the cognitive, behavioral, social and emotional strengths and limitations of each family member, the formal and informal resources available to the family, and any other domains address by agency assessment tools and protocols.
102-2	The worker knows strategies to engage family members in constructive and collaborative casework relationships that empower families; promote family participation in assessment and planning; overcome resistance; are culturally sensitive; and defuse anger, fear and hostility while appropriately using authority to assure the protection of children.
102-3	The worker knows how to involve families in the development of appropriate, time limited case goals and objectives; knows how to prioritize family and child needs; knows how to formulate observable, behavioral measures of goals and objectives which address the highest priority needs; and knows how to identify the most appropriate services and activities to meet the case plan objectives.
102-4	The worker knows how to write concise, timely assessments and case plans using agency approved assessment and planning protocols and instruments and knows how to document supporting contacts and casework actions in the family case record.
102-5	The worker can promote delivery of effective services through providing direct casework services and case management and also through referral to community resources and using community support systems including non-traditional and neighborhood resources.
102-6	The worker knows strategies to conduct effective interviews. These include communicating the purpose of the interview; controlling the process and direction of the interview while encouraging family participation; and using a variety of interview methods including open and closed ended questions, clarification, support, summarization, confrontation and helping families communicate feelings as well as facts.
102-7	The worker knows how family-centered casework methods are used to promote safe and stable families and to promote permanency for children by involving parents and other family and/or community members in assessment and case planning; providing services to maintain children in their own home; assuring family

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102-8	members' involvement with their children in placement; and providing the necessary services to achieve timely reunification or other permanency options. The worker understands the importance of conducting routine and timely case review staffings with families and knows how to reassess the outcomes of all case plan and service interventions and make changes to the plan as needed.
<b>103</b>	<b>The Effects of Child Abuse, Child Neglect, Interpersonal Violence and Other Traumas on Child Development and Functioning</b>
103-1	The worker has a thorough knowledge of the stages, processes and milestones of normal physical, cognitive, social, and emotional development of children from birth through adolescence.
103-2	The worker knows the potential negative impacts of maltreatment and trauma on normal development and can identify indicators of developmental delay or problems related to trauma in children who have been abused or neglected.
103-3	The worker is able to make appropriate referrals for trauma informed services and developmental assessments and can incorporate recommendations from these assessments into the case plan.
103-4	The worker is able to educate and advise families, caregivers, and foster parents about the effects of abuse and trauma on children and help them have reasonable expectations for abused, neglected and traumatized children.
<b>104</b>	<b>Core: Separation, Placement, Reunification and Permanency</b>
104-1	The worker understands the process and dynamics of normal, reciprocal attachments of children with their families and other significant caregivers.
104-2	The worker understands the potentially traumatic outcomes of separation and placement for children and families - including psychological crises, serious disruption of family relationships and attachment, and disturbances in the child's development – and can weigh the risk to a child of remaining with his/her family against the trauma of separation when deciding whether to place a child out-of-home.
104-3	The worker understands the serious negative effects on children in changing and inconsistent living arrangements, including many changes in out-of-home caregivers, and can recognize the physical, emotional, and behavioral indicators of placement induced stress.
104-4	The worker understands the necessity of permanency planning and reasonable efforts to prevent removal, to prevent placement disruption and to achieve timely reunification or other permanency options.
104-5	The worker can identify ways that agency foster care policies and practices can contribute to successful out-of-home placements, including properly structuring a placement to help prevent crisis and its consequences; involving agency team members, and designing placement activities, including pre-placement preparation and visits, that minimize stress and provide emotional support to the child and family.

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| 104-6                                 | The worker understands the concept of "continuum of care" in determining the best placement for a child; knows strategies to identify, strengthen, and maintain the least restrictive, most homelike, culturally relevant placement to meet a child's needs; and knows how to prepare kinship relatives, foster parents, and other caregivers to receive children in placement to reduce stress and facilitate adjustment. |
| 104-7                                 | The worker knows the necessity of regular and frequent visits to maintain family members' relationships with the child in out-of-home placement, and can use casework strategies that empower families to participate in planning and attending visits, assessing the child's developmental, medical, social, and emotional needs and determining appropriate services.  |
| <b>105                      CHRIS</b> |  |
| 105-1                                 | The worker understands the importance of CHRIS in the effective delivery of casework to the family and the management of the child welfare system.   |
| 105-2                                 | The worker knows how to access and input information into CHRIS in a timely and accurate manner.   |