Social Services Assistant

Day 1 – Participant Manual

DCFS Mission, Vision, and Values

Role and Job Expectations

Ethical Practice and Confidentiality

Introduction to Family Systems Theory

Effective Communication

Day 1:

New Social Services Assistant Training Agenda

Monday	
9:00 – 9:30	Welcome Pre-Test
9:30 – 10:30	DCFS Mission, Vision, and Values
10:30 -10:45	**Break**
10:45 – 12:00	Role and Job Expectations
12:00 – 1:00	**Lunch Break**
1:00 – 1:45	Ethical Practice and Confidentiality
1:45 – 2:15	Introduction to Family Systems Theory
2:15 - 2:30	**Break**
2:30 – 3:30	Effective Communication
3:30 – 4:00	Wrap Up and Review

New Social Services Assistant Training

UA LITTLE ROCK MidSOUTH College of Business, Health, and Human Services University of Arkansas at Little Rock

Day 1

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Insert Facilitator 1 Headshot Photo Here

Facilitator Name

Meet the Facilitator

All about me …

- Your role
- Brief Credentials/Background
- Something relatable/Passionate about
- Share a moment or experience in your professional career that shaped how you show up in this work

3

All About Me

Insert Facilitator 1 Family/Pet Photo Here (optional)

4

Insert Facilitator 2 Headshot Photo Here

Facilitator Name

Meet the Facilitator

All about me …

- Your role
- Brief Credentials/Background
- Something relatable/Passionate about
- Share a moment or experience in your professional career that shaped how you show up in this work

5

All About Me

Insert Facilitator 2 Family/Pet Photo Here (optional)

6

7

Glows

and

Grows

ACTIVITY

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Social Services Assistant Pre-Test

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Target Outcomes

- Describe the role of the Social Service Assistant and how it supports children, families, Social Services Specialists, and the DCFS mission
- Demonstrate professional skills for transporting children, supervising family time, maintaining confidentiality, communicating effectively, and documenting observations objectively
- Recognize child and family behaviors, respond professionally, and communicate concerns appropriately without making assessments or diagnoses
- Apply DCFS policies, procedures, and family-centered practices to support child safety, permanency, and well-being during daily job responsibilities

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Division Mission, Vision, and Values

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DCFS MISSION STATEMENT

Our mission is to keep children safe and help families. DCFS will respectfully engage families and youth and use community-based services and supports to assist caregivers in successfully caring for their children. We will focus on safety, permanency, and well-being for all children and youth.

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DCFS MISSION STATEMENT

Activity

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REVISITING AT ONE TABLE VALUES

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At One Table Values Review

Value 1: Relationships with children, youth, and families are the foundation

Value 2: Collaborative partnerships with resource families

Value 3: Helping children and youth achieve their full potential and develop lifelong relationships

Value 4: Shared responsibility with community partners

Value 5: A strong working relationship with the legal system

Value 6: A workplace environment characterized by reflection, appreciation, and ongoing learning

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At One Table

Activity

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Role and Job Expectations

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What's my role?

- What are the primary duties of a Social Services Assistant?
- What skills are most critical for establishing a trusting relationship with a family?

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Activity: Review of Job Expectations

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SUPPORTIVE SERVICES DURING CASES

- Provide the child with accurate information.
- Answer questions the child may have.
- Engage the child and resource parents, as appropriate.
- Assess the quality of the care being provided.
- Determine and monitor, through conversation and/or observation, the child's safety.
- Assess the child's adjustment to the out-of-home placement.

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DCFS POLICY & PROCEDURE: TRANSPORTATION

Internal Procedure 105:
Vehicle and Passenger Safety

Internal Procedure 103:
State Vehicle Safety Program for Employees

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DCFS POLICY & PROCEDURE: FAMILY TIME & MAINTAINING FAMILY CONNECTIONS

9 CAR § 40-712.
Maintaining family ties in out-of-home placements

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FOUR CORNERS KNOWLEDGE EXCHANGE

Activity

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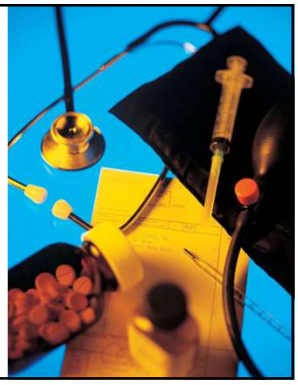
DCFS POLICY: DRUG SCREENINGS

9 CAR § 40-413.
Client drug and alcohol screening.



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Ethical Practice and Confidentiality

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REFLECTION

Lets take an opportunity to identify the emotional and professional impact that confidentiality violations have on the helping relationship.

Confidentialty

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ETHICS:

CONFIDENTIALITY and TRUST

- Confidentiality requirements
- Clarify limits
- Trust = Core Ethical Obligation

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CONFIDENTIALITY & TRUST

Lets take an opportunity to identify ways to maintain confidentiality and distinguish them from situations requiring disclosure.

Activity

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Introduction to Family Systems Theory

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FAMILY SYSTEMS THEORY: TYPES OF FAMILIES

- **Nuclear -** 2 caregivers, children
- **Single -** 1 caregiver, child(ren)
- **Blended -** 1 biological parent, 1 stepparent, child(ren)
- **Extended -** Grandparents, aunts, uncles, cousins, perceived kinship, etc.
- **Adoptive -** Legal caregiver(s), child(ren)
- **Resource -** Substitute caregivers(s), child(ren)
- **Older Sibling -** Siblings
- **Communal -** 2 or more adults not married/related

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DEFINING FAMILY

Activity

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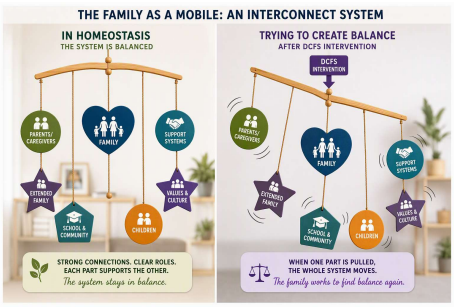
THE FAMILY AND THE FAMILY SYSTEMS THEORY



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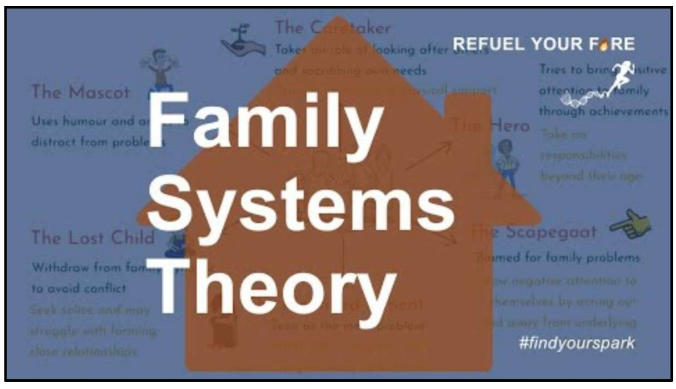

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THE PRINCIPLES OF FAMILY CENTERED SERVICES

- ✓ Families need to feel confident in the part that they play in the investigation process. Remind participants that the families are the experts
- ✓ Using a rigorous and balanced assessment is the foundation of a good working relationship with families
- ✓ Empowerment is the primary goal for strengthening the family

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Effective Communication

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COMMUNICATION CONDITIONS

- Emotional State of the Sender
- Quality of Information
- Time and Pacing
- Psychological and Physical State
- Credibility Attitude

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BARRIERS TO COMMUNICATION

Nonverbal
- Awareness of background differences
- Lack of direct eye contact
- Lack of warmth

Verbal
- Moralizing, Sermonizing
- Offering premature solutions

Environmental
- # of people in the home
- State of family & Assistant
- Conditions of physical environment

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COMMUNICATION IN ACTION

Activity

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ACTIVE LISTENING

- Hearing what is said
- Picking up the feeling or attitude underlying the words
- Communicating understanding of that message back to the speaker.

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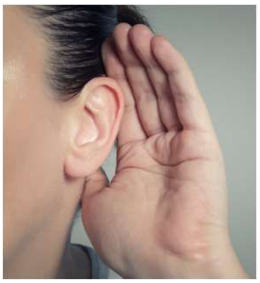
ACTIVE LISTENING



Activity:

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Recognizing Resistance and Handling Conflict

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DEALING WITH RESISTANCE

Assistants can expect resistance for the following reasons:

- The Assistant is an outsider and an authority figure.
- Very personal questions are being asked.
- Changes are expected to be made.

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RECOGNIZING RESISTANCE

Activity

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HANDLING CONFLICT

Styles Of Conflict Management

- Competing
- Collaboration
- Compromising
- Avoiding
- Accommodating

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Handling Conflict

Attitude
Ownership
Intent
Avoid Power Struggles
Timing
XYZ Method

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RESPONDING TO CONFLICT "XYZ" METHOD

Activity

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Target Outcomes Evaluation

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JOB DESCRIPTION: SOCIAL SERVICES ASSISTANT

SUMMARY

The Department of Human Services (DHS) Program Assistant is responsible for providing social services to program recipients and support for families. This position is governed by state and federal laws and agency/institution policy.

TYPICAL FUNCTIONS

- Teaches and demonstrates living skills to clients, such as budgeting, cooking, menu planning, housekeeping, and child care.
- Transports clients and/or family members for medical, dental, educational, and counseling appointments.
- Aides clients in locating resources by contacting organizations or agencies for assistance.
- Assists with developing and monitoring behavior plans, parenting/anger management classes, and maintaining narratives detailing action taken on behalf of the client/family.
- Participates in training clients in employment skills by providing materials and tools, monitoring work assignments, and providing direct assistance when needed.
- Attends staff and mandatory trainings.
- Schedules, monitors, and documents family visits.
- Performs clerical duties, such as answering the telephone, routing calls, receiving referrals for clients, typing documents, filing, and handling mail.
- Performs other duties as assigned.

KNOWLEDGES, ABILITIES, AND SKILLS

- Knowledge of agency and community resource organizations.
- Knowledge of applicable computer functions and applications.
- Ability to teach or model functional living skills.
- Ability to observe and evaluate contacts and case development.
- Ability to interview clients and collect and evaluate data.
- Ability to prepare and present oral and written information.

MINIMUM QUALIFICATIONS

The formal education equivalent of a high school diploma; plus one year of experience in a social-service related field. Additional requirements determined by the agency for recruiting purposes must be reviewed and approved by the Office of Personnel Management.

OTHER JOB-RELATED EDUCATION AND/OR EXPERIENCE MAY BE SUBSTITUTED FOR ALL OR PART OF THESE BASIC REQUIREMENTS, EXCEPT FOR CERTIFICATION OR LICENSURE REQUIREMENTS, UPON APPROVAL OF THE QUALIFICATIONS REVIEW COMMITTEE.

Arkansas Department of Human Services
Division of Children and Family Services
CHECKLIST OF HOMEMAKER'S ACTIVITIES

Name of Homemaker: Supervisor:

Period Covered; From: To:

Name of Family:

Activities Undertaken by In-Home Caretaker/Homemaker

Housekeeping	M	T	W	T	F	S	S	M	T	W	T	F	S	S
1. Dusted and vacuumed	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
2. Washed dishes	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
3. Cleaned kitchen	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
4. Cleaned bathroom	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
5. Cleaned bedroom	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
6. Laundry	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
7. Other (Specify)	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

Homemaking	M	T	W	T	F	S	S	M	T	W	T	F	S	S
1. Grocery shopped	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
2. Cooked meals	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
3. Cared for children	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
4. Cared for adult	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
5. Assisted w/money management & budget	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
6. Established household routine	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
7. Other (Specify)	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

Personal Care	M	T	W	T	F	S	S	M	T	W	T	F	S	S
1. Assisted w/bathing	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
2. Fed family or adult	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
3. Helped w/dressing	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
4. Assisted w/grooming, shampoo, shaking	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
5. Assisted w/mobility (moving from bed to chair, to wheelchair, etc.)	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
6. Assisted w/care of teeth & mouth	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
7. Other (Specify)	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

Substitute Parenting	M	T	W	T	F	S	S	M	T	W	T	F	S	S
1. Provided child care	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
2. Adapted home to meet family needs	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
3. Accompanied to doctor/clinic	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
4. Other (Specify)	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

Teaching	M	T	W	T	F	S	S	M	T	W	T	F	S	S
1. Demonstrated parenting skills	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
2. Taught exercises	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
3. Taught homemaking skills	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
4. Taught menu planning & nutrition	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
5. Other (Specify)	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

Relationship Support	M	T	W	T	F	S	S	M	T	W	T	F	S	S

1. Emotional support	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
2. Socialization experiences	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
3. Listened, visited	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
4. Child stimulation	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
5. Encouraged	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
6. Escorted parent on errands	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
7. Other (Specify)	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

Major Accomplishments with Family

1.

2.

3.

4.

Special Problems of the Family (e.g., danger of abuse, neglect, etc.)

1.

2.

3.

4.

Areas Which Need Improvement

1.

2.

3.

4.

Comments

CONFIDENTIALITY AND TRUST

Working in your small group, brainstorm three limits to confidentiality and three ways to maintain confidentiality. Record your group's answers in the boxes below. After each group shares, fill in the official answers in the second table.

THREE LIMITS TO CONFIDENTIALITY	THREE WAYS TO MAINTAIN CONFIDENTIALITY

REMEMBER: Wrongful disclosure is not just a breach of trust; it is a Class A misdemeanor and grounds for termination. Always be honest with families about the limits of confidentiality so trust is never built on a false promise.

Source: *Internal Procedure 101: Confidentiality and Disclosure of Information*

DEFINING FAMILY

Work with your small group to complete both sections below. Be prepared to share your group's responses with the full class.

Definition Of Family

As a group, reach a mutual definition of family that captures all members' perspectives. Record it in the box below.

What Makes A "Good" Family?

List the characteristics your group believes make a "good" family. Note any areas where group members significantly disagree.

CHARACTERISTICS WE AGREED ON	AREAS WHERE WE DISAGREED

Reminder: Rather than asking whether a family is "good," it may be more helpful to ask whether the family is functional, especially around the roles of nurturing and socializing children.

VIDEO: Family Systems Theory

REFLECTION SHEET

Instructions: As you watch the video, listen carefully for the answers to the questions below. Record your responses in the boxes provided. Once the video is complete, we will review and discuss each question as a group.

Based on the video, how can a change in one family member affect the whole family system?

How does family systems theory help us understand why families may resist DCFS involvement?

Thinking about your role as a Social Services Assistant — how might understanding family systems theory change the way you approach a home visit or family interaction?

XYZ METHOD: CONFLICT RESOLUTION REFERENCE

The XYZ Method provides a structured, objective way to address conflict without blame, judgment, or escalation. Use it when initiating a difficult conversation with a family member, a colleague, or a caregiver.

"When you do X, Y happens; and I feel Z."

X	The specific behavior — what the person did or said	"When you cancel family time without notice…"
Y	The impact or consequence of that behavior	"…it becomes difficult to coordinate transportation and prepare the child…"
Z	Your feeling or professional concern in response	"…and I am concerned that it is affecting the child's sense of stability."

TIPS FOR USING THE XYZ METHOD

- Focus on the specific behavior, not the person's character or intentions
- Keep X observable and factual, avoid assumptions or labels
- Keep Z professional, express concern for the child or the case, not personal frustration
- Use it as an opening, not a closing. After stating your XYZ, invite the other person to respond
- Practice before difficult conversations so the language feels natural

PRACTICE: WRITE YOUR OWN XYZ STATEMENT

Think of a conflict situation you have experienced or might encounter in your role. Draft your own XYZ statement in the space below.

X	
Y	
Z	