

Training of Child Welfare Staff and Providers: Results of the Child and Family Services Reviews

Children's Bureau

Administration for Children and Families

Department of Health & Human Services

Overview of the Child and Family Services Reviews

- Congress authorized the Department of Health and Human Services to review State child and family service programs to assure compliance with the State plan requirements in titles IV-B and IV-E of the Social Security Act
- The CFSRs cover child protective services, foster care, adoption, family preservation, family support, and independent living
- The CFSRs are designed to help States improve child welfare services and outcomes by identifying strengths and needs within State programs, as well as areas where technical assistance can lead to program improvements

Scope of Child and Family Services Reviews

7 outcomes in the areas of safety, permanency, and child and family well being

7 systemic factors

Systemic Factors

- Statewide Information System
- Case Review System
- Quality Assurance System
- Training
- Service Array
- Agency Responsiveness to the Community
- Foster & Adoptive Parent Licensing, Recruitment, & Retention

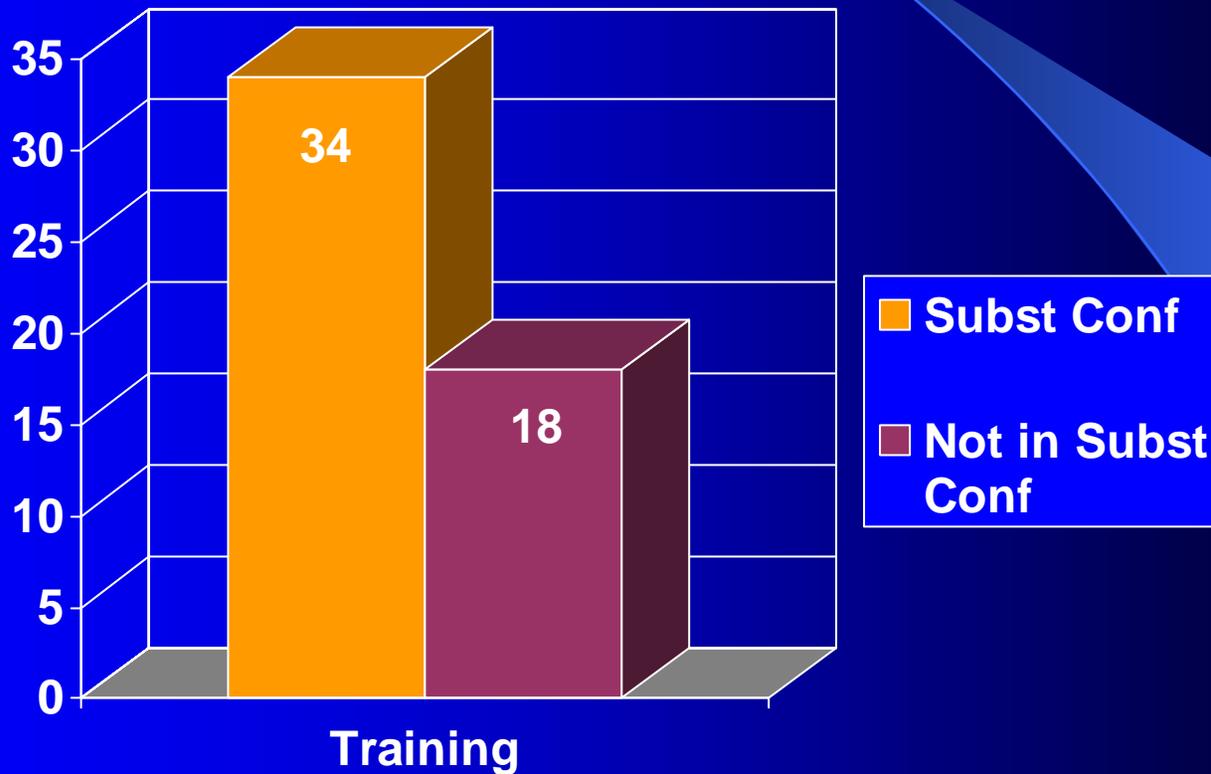
Review of the Training Systemic Factor

- Pre-service or initial staff training
- Ongoing or in-service staff training
- Foster and adoptive parent training

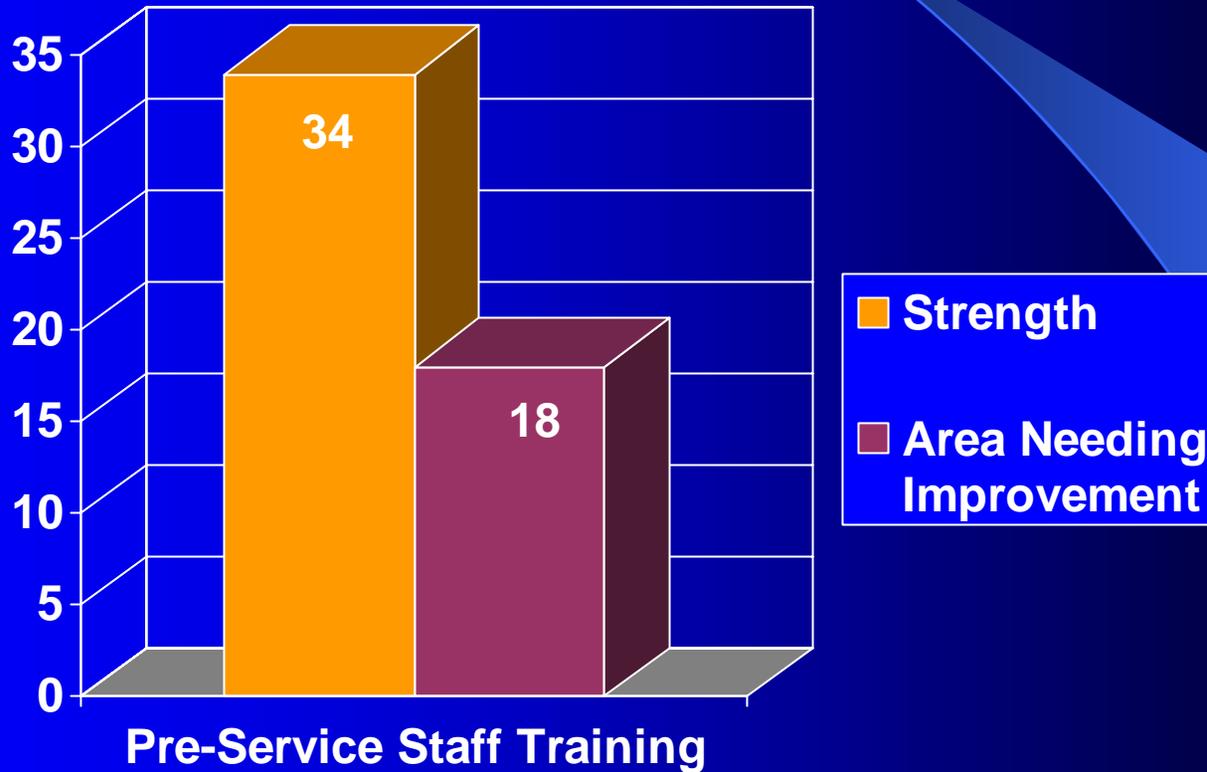
Determining Substantial Conformity for Training Systemic Factor

- The State is determined to be in substantial conformity with the Training Systemic Factor if the State has policies, procedures, or requirements in place that address all three training areas, and if no more than one of the three areas fails to function effectively

Results for the Training Systemic Factor



Results for Pre-Service or Initial Staff Training



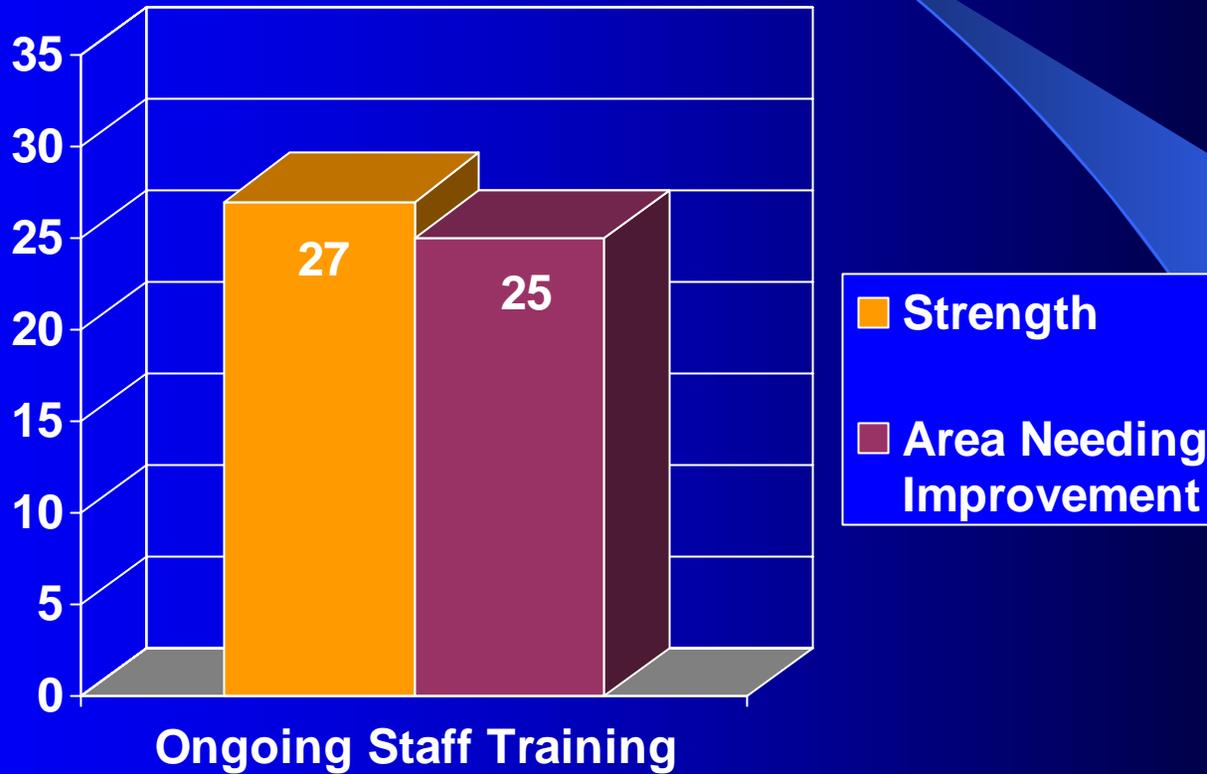
Strengths regarding Pre-service or Initial Staff Training

- Mixture of on-the-job training and classroom instruction
- Require staff to become certified as a result of training and prerequisite to continued employment
- Training focused on building competencies staff need to work effectively within the agency
- Staff members are responsible for ensuring the quality and consistency of pre-service training and that all new staff receive pre-service training

Concerns regarding Pre-service or Initial Staff Training

- Caseloads assigned to caseworkers prior to training
- Inconsistent training requirements
- Insufficient time devoted to training
- Training curricula are little more than orientation to the agency
- Training is heavily focused on policy rather than practice skills

Results for Ongoing or In-Service Staff Training



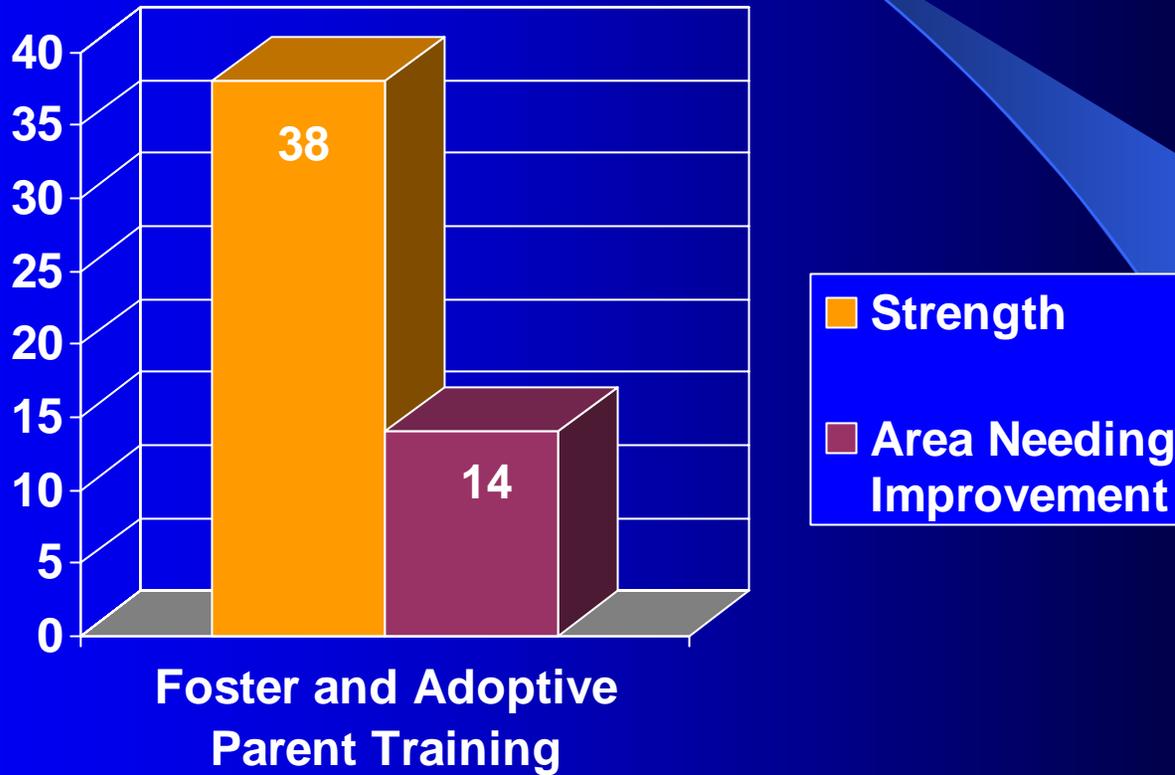
Strengths regarding On-going or In-Service Training

- Sophisticated and highly structured training programs that focus on best practice in child welfare
- Requirement that staff participate in a specific amount of training within a specified amount of time (e.g., a certain number of hours per year)
- Agency provides an adequate number of training sessions

Concerns regarding On-going or In-Service Training

- No standardized or core requirements for ongoing training
- Inconsistent training requirements
- Barriers to staff access to training
- Insufficient time devoted to training
- Training focused on a single issue, such as a policy change, rather than a comprehensive approach to build needed competencies

Results for Foster and Adoptive Parent Training



Strengths regarding Foster and Adoptive Parent Training

- Implementation of standardized training curricula (examples of several nationally marketed training curricula being utilized)
- Development of statewide curricula and requirement of training prior to licensure or receiving children

Concerns regarding Foster and Adoptive Parent Training

- Lack of pre-service and ongoing training requirements
- Inconsistent training requirements
- Barriers to access to training
- Poor quality of training content
- Not training caretakers and child welfare staff on the same philosophies or approaches

Training of Supervisors

- Reports for 19 of the initial 52 reviews identify a lack training of supervisors, either in pre-service or ongoing training, or both
- Another 6 reports cite no ongoing staff training requirements in states, so there is an assumption that those agencies also do not train their supervisors on an ongoing basis

Concerns regarding Training of Supervisors

- Problems associated with promoting caseworkers to supervisory positions before they have necessary experience are compounded by lack of adequate supervisory training
- Not training supervisors in practice changes prior to training caseworkers
- When seeking systemic change in practice there is a need for staff, including supervisors, who have practiced for many years to receive training as much as those newly entering the Agency

Implications for Improved Child Welfare Practice

- Staff should have training in the core skills and practices that affect improved outcomes
- Job performance should reflect the training provided to staff
- Training should be reinforced at all levels of the agency
- Training is only one part of changing practice in child welfare agencies

Milner, J., & Hornsby, W. (2004). Training of Child Welfare Staff and Providers: Findings from the Child and Family Services Review. *Protecting Children*, 19 (3), 4-14.

Children's Bureau Website:
www.acf.hhs.gov/programs/cb