

Child Welfare Information Gateway Podcast – Workforce – A State’s Approach to Change
TRANSCRIPT

Presenters: Female Narrator; Tom Oates, Child Welfare Information Gateway; Jodi Hill-Lilly, Academy of Workforce Development; Fernando Muniz, Deputy Commissioner, Connecticut Department of Children and Families

[00:00:00]: [Music Introduction]

FEMALE NARRATOR [00:00:03]: This is the Child Welfare Information Gateway Podcast, a place for those who care about strengthening families and protecting children. You’ll hear about the innovations, emerging trends and success stories across child welfare direct from those striving to make a difference. This is your place for new ideas and information to support your work to improve the lives of children, youth, and families.

TOM OATES [00:00:33]: So, what would you say if someone told you that they found a way to - in some cases - resurrect someone’s child welfare career? Well, on this episode of the Information Gateway Child Welfare podcast, you will hear a senior leader from a state agency say just that.

[00:00:48]: Hi, everybody, Tom Oates from Information Gateway here, and as we continue talking about workforce development and how embracing a holistic approach to driving lasting change, we’re gonna take a look at how one state has embarked on trying to create a holistic change across their entire child welfare system - and I’m not just talking about getting more out of staff, or improving just the work environment, or just the office culture - I’m talking about a number of aspects within the entire system itself - the people, the processes, and the tools.

[00:01:20]: We’re gonna focus on Connecticut and how they worked with a number of partners, including NCWWI, the National Child Welfare Workforce Institute, to embrace adaptive change that has resonated across policies and IT systems and how they’re empowering their managers to become leaders.

[00:01:36]: We’re gonna hear from Jody Hill-Lily the director of the state’s Workforce Development Academy, and Fernando Muniz, Deputy Commissioner for Administration within the state’s Department of Children and Families.

[00:01:46]: You’ll hear them talk about embracing implementation science, and how focusing on supervisors and middle managers has made a huge impact - including the use of NCWWI’s Leadership Academy for Middle Manager’s - called LAMM - and Leadership Academy for Supervisor’s - called LAS - they reference both of those, so keep that in mind.

[00:02:05]: Now, all of this has resonated across the state’s regions, altering policies and procedures, and all the way down to what’s on everyone’s screensaver. There’s a lot of great takeaways from this conversation, and the others, as part of our workforce series, so you should check out those podcasts as well, over at acf.hhs.gov/cb, and just search ‘podcasts’. But, for now, it’s time to talk workforce development from a state perspective, with Jody Hill-Lily and Fernando Muniz.

[00:02:36]: So, Fernando and Jody, thanks so much for joining us here on the Child Welfare Information Gateway Podcast.

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FERNANDO MUNIZ [00:02:42]: Thank you for having us.

JODI HILL-LILLY [00:02:43]: Thank you.

TOM OATES [00:02:43]: So, let’s start from the beginning here, take me through this and just give me a sense of why did Connecticut decide to take this approach, this holistic, systemic approach to workforce?

FERNANDO MUNIZ [00:02:55]: Well, it really started after our second round of the CFSR, and really looking at the practice model that we wanted to implement and the kinds of changes we wanted to see at the department. Jody, in particular, and her leadership at our training academy at the time realized that training was not gonna be enough to get us the kind of practice change that we wanted to see, and so, you know, it became evident to us that, you know, using implementation science principles - that if we wanted to focus on better engagement with families, and better quality of work - that it couldn’t just be about training the frontline staff

FERNANDO MUNIZ [00:03:33]: And so, you know, an approach that really looked at leadership development for our managers, to look at improving supervision, to looking at the culture in our offices. So, all of that, for us, really had to come into play in order to get the kind of systemic change that we wanted to see.

TOM OATES [00:03:51]: So was there something that came out of that assessment, that just kind of bubbled to the surface, that came to light, that were, kind of the first things that you guys learned that indicated to you that you had to take a holistic approach?

FERNANDO MUNIZ [00:04:04]: Early on, you know, we described a practice model that was really focused on strengthening families and family engagement and in talking with the staff in the regions, you know, when people asked us, you know - what needed to be different, what practice did we actually want to see in the field - it became evident that they were not getting the kind of quality supervision that was gonna lead us to that kind of practice.

[00:04:30]: Our supervision had devolved into a very administrative, compliance-oriented supervision and if we were really hoping to change the way that our staff interacted with families, we needed our supervisors to change their behaviors and their actions, and so, you know, Jody and I in partnership with our regional folks and other partners, you know, developed a strategy around coaching our supervisors to a different model of how to supervise the staff, and really ensuring that the parallel process was fully in place in all of our regions.

[00:05:08]: One of the things early on with our practice model is we adopted the Principles of Partnership, which are six principles around how to partner with families and early on, some of our staff noted that the department didn’t treat them the way that we wanted them to treat the families, and so, it was a real clear early indicator that what we were talking about wasn’t just practice change, but culture change and the department needed to change the way it did its business up and down the entire chain of command if we were really gonna get the kind of quality that we’re looking for.

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TOM OATES [00:05:46]: So, Jody, let’s talk about that change - and I’m hearing this across multiple stories, about this parallel process, where the working with families and everything that you go through as a frontline professional to engage families and have them be a part of the process - now, doing that same thing is working with staff. So, what did you do to then create that change?

JODI HILL-LILLY [00:06:09]: Interestingly enough, one of the things we did concretely was to look at the goal of the work that came out of the academy. And we, at that time, embarked on what we would consider to be an identity change, or at least a name change to reflect the direction that we wanted to go in. We were formally known as The Training Academy, and we deliberately, you know, took time to figure out what the name of my division would be, and we came up with the name The Academy for Workforce Development, and I think that has a nexus to the conversation we just had, because we are more than just training. We are developing our staff and we’re developing our organization at the same time.

[00:06:57]: And so, part of that meant that you move from just didactic training and skill-based training to coaching, and the coaching could come from, you know, our central office, it could come from people from outside of the workers, sort of, chain of command but we also noticed, to Fernando’s point, the significance of that role of the supervisor and the leaders within the office and their ability to set the culture for the work to be, for the work to be done in the way that we needed it to be done for kids and families.

TOM OATES [00:07:32]: So was there an effort that you had to go through to empower those leaders and those managers to kind of spark the change? I mean, just, you can’t just point at them and say, “Okay, go.”

JODI HILL-LILLY [00:07:42]: Yeah, I mean, one of the things about implementation science that was really sort of, you know, the answer to our prayers, if you, if you will, is that we recognized that it takes more than just sort of motivating people to be different and to do things differently, and so we began to actively look at our policies and our procedures, we looked at what messages the staff were getting that might be counter-intuitive to the direction in which we were going.

[00:08:13]: And so, we took a holistic approach at looking at what other infrastructures we needed to, to change in order to support what it is that we were doing, and that included, you know, standing up other initiatives that would be in concert to those things that we were trying to achieve in our practice model.

[00:08:33]: For example, we felt like engaging families was pivotal to the culture shift that we were trying to make. With that, that meant that we started to develop policies around announced visits, so we know that our job is to protect children and ensure their safety, however, not all reports require the same amount or type of intervention. And so, on those lower risk cases, why not call the family ahead of time? And so, that to, that in our minds is in line with where we’re trying to go and will help with the culture shift.

[00:09:14]: Now, we did training as we traditionally do, and we did coaching. And we added that piece, which I think we had less emphasis before on the coaching than we did the training. But I think sort of

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making those changes in our infrastructure was really the, the, the difference, it made the difference, in terms of making the culture stick.

TOM OATES [00:09:34]: And there’s something to not only asking people to change, but giving the processes and the tools to empower, or enact that change. You know, Fernando, you talked earlier about work with partners. So, who were those key partners that you knew that you needed to engage and get their involvement?

FERNANDO MUNIZ [00:09:51]: That’s right, so, early on, it was really first about getting the entire senior leadership team of the agency on board with the practice change and with the direction that we were headed in. Obviously, the Academy, you know, as a key partner and leader in that front, but we also looked to external partners to help supplement some of this for us.

[00:10:10]: So, the coaching that Jody and her team have been leading with supervisors in the field, a lot of that was provided through Yale, through their supervision model, and some of the work that they've done there. We’ve got great partners in Casey Family Programs, for example, in helping us get the support to do what we call the Partners in Change Calls, so we had these monthly conference calls where folks could discuss topics, discuss difficult cases that they were having and so Casey provided some of the support for the coaching for some of the leadership development work. Certainly, the partnership with NCWWI, you know, we’ve made full use of LAMM and LAS you know, throughout the agency it’s become, you know, an expectation that all of our leaders will - at least at a foundational level - avail themselves to those opportunities.

[00:11:04]: And so, we’ve really tried to expand, in every way, the supports and the tools that people have, and really leverage those partnerships to bring additional training and support to the table.

[00:11:17]: I can say, you know, we’ve always been proud of the work that our academy has done. I think we’ve got top-notch pre-service training, but for a long time, it really, it didn’t go much further beyond that. So, for us, the ability to, to build on those partnerships, to provide ongoing training and professional development to everyone up and down the chain of command was a really critical piece.

TOM OATES [00:11:41]: Was there a mind shift? Because you talked about senior leadership and getting everyone at the roundtable involved and getting their buy-in, but was there a mind shift that had to happen to say, “you know, yeah, we need help from the outside, we just can’t do this on our own.” Did that take some convincing amongst the leadership team?

FERNANDO MUNIZ [00:12:00]: Absolutely, I think, you know, it might be the nature of large bureaucracies or the nature of child welfare agencies in particular that, you know, it’s such unique work that it’s not often the case that people think that they need external help, because we have a lot of expertise. But, we didn’t need content expertise on child welfare practice, what we needed was expertise on leadership and management and motivating people and the soft skills around how to move a culture forward in such a complex environment. And so, you know, once the senior leadership team understood the, the nature of the problem that we were trying to solve - you know, this is not a technical problem, you know, this really required, you know, an adaptive change, people got on board with, with the external help, and then it’s, it’s been great.

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[00:12:54]: You know, we’ve also had a lot of support from the Child Welfare Strategy Group at Annie E. Casey, that provided us a lot of models from other places that we’ve been able to implement, you know, within our practice model, and so, I think people have come accustomed to getting that external help and it’s really shifted the way that we think about our partnerships.

TOM OATES [00:13:16]: And also, no, no, Jody, go ahead.

JODI HILL-LILLY [00:13:18]: Oh, I was gonna say, the other thing that we did very deliberately was very early on in this administration, we made a decision to send all of our leaders, our top leaders, through the LAMM process. So, as we speak today, an upwards of 85% or so of our leaders have gone through the LAMM process.

[00:13:42]: That did, that really had an impact on our ability to talk, to speak the same language, first of all. So, when we talk about a technical versus adaptive leader, you know, the overwhelming majority of our staff know what we’re talking about. When we talk about empowering people that you work with, giving the work back to the people, they know what we’re talking about. When we mention implementation science, we all have a common language, now, about what we mean by that.

[00:14:16]: So, I think part of that shift was being deliberate about ensuring that our managers understood that they were more than managers, that they were leaders. And they were leaders that needed to aid in the shift of the culture. So, I wanted to just mention that because it was so, it was very deliberate, first of all, and strategic, and then, then we brought LAMM back to Connecticut so that we can go deeper into our culture, given the fact that I was a LAMM faculty, I could do that, and we owned it. And I could say it in front of our leadership, it wasn’t a training, or an experience that people went through, it was a culture shift that was, that was embraced by the leadership, and they took, they took, their, their, their, their commitment to the model and to the leadership principles involved in NCWWI and they made sure that they supported the implementation of it through the line staff.

TOM OATES [00:15:22]: So, what are those managers, when they get back from LAMM, what are they telling you? What have been their reactions?

JODI HILL-LILLY [00:15:28]: Well, I can tell you hands down people say it was transformative for them. One manager said I didn’t know that I had the capacity to do, to be a leader, and that for that person, that made the shift for them. Because as a manager, you’re just doing what you’re told, as a leader, you are changing the culture and you’re leading the charge and you feel less helpless, if you will, and you understand your charge to be part of the solution. That was a major shift for that particular person, and many of the people who are involved.

FERNANDO MUNIZ [00:16:16]: And, I can add that, without exaggeration, the LAMM process has literally resurrected careers at this agency. There were people who were burnt out, who didn’t really see their role as meaningful anymore, and it’s reinvigorated them and given them, you know, some great opportunities. And, we have a regional structure in Connecticut and each of our regions has area offices. Of the last six or seven people that have been promoted to lead our offices, they’re all LAMM graduates. And so, those are the folks that are now rising to the top in terms of promotional opportunities, in terms of major projects across the state, so it’s become a coveted opportunity for folks in that way, as well.

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TOM OATES [00:16:54]: It sounds like, while you didn’t mention the words specifically, that there’s an empowerment factor, that once someone feels empowered, it takes the mental constraints or those blinders off - am I walking down the right path, here?

FERNANDO MUNIZ [00:17:06]: Absolutely, and, you know, for most of our managers, I think their experience over time was, you know, of a very hierarchical, compliance driven culture, where you just do what the person above you in the hierarchy says. And that creating this culture of empowerment - you know, in particular, for example, when Jody and her team lead the LAMM sessions, we have people do their change initiatives, like they would do, you know, at the national LAMM through NCWWI - some of those change initiatives, those pilots that people have developed in one area have become statewide practice. So the idea that you could be a middle manager here and offer an idea that then becomes policy for the entire department, I think, has also been very empowering for folks. And has lead us to some really great solutions, because those are the people that are closer to the work, and so it’s actually helping, you know, advance the continuous quality improvement of our work.

TOM OATES [00:18:04]: There’s got to be a buy-in factor there as well, I mean, the closer the solution comes from those who are actually going to enact it, you know, if the solution’s suggested by those folks, there’s gotta be a greater buy-in.

FERNANDO MUNIZ [00:18:16]: Absolutely.

JODI HILL-LILLY [00:18:17]: Absolutely - and, and what’s interesting is that we have, we’re starting our third iteration of LAS, and so, in our structure here in Connecticut, the coaches for LAS are LAMM graduates. And so, we have this, you know, sort of infrastructure that we’re building to support the foundation that we gave to our leaders

[00:18:40]: And what’s interesting there, is that we’re starting to see LAS change initiatives support LAMM change initiatives. And so, it’s just through line that’s developing in our, in our, in our state here and in our child welfare arena that is really starting to take off and, as Fernando said, make a difference in practice.

[00:19:04]: And I, what’s interesting is that the people we selected as coaches are people who, who work here and really have some resources to have the change initiatives come to fruition. So, it’s really quite exciting, what’s happening here, and I would say that it, it, it really hands down is a result of our, sort of, embracing the LAMM principles.

TOM OATES [00:19:30]: You’ve already hinted at how you sustain change. So besides what you’ve been able to do to tie in LAMM to LAS, what else are you doing to sustain change?

FERNANDO MUNIZ [00:19:40]: Well, I think at a foundational level, let me just say that our changes began as a series of initiatives. So, the implementation of a practice model as a project, or an initiative; the implementation of a differential response system. And what we wanted to do was move away from people thinking about these things as initiatives and baking it into the very fabric of the department.

[00:20:05]: And so, you know, instead of a new training, all these things are now just part of the pre-service training that Jody offers, it’s just the way we do business. We’ve gone about changing our policy

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and practice guides to incorporate the way we want things done into that level; we’ve changed statutes where necessary, to promote a more family engaging practice.

[00:20:32]: One of the things, right now, we’ve embarked on replacing our SACWIS system with a CCWIS, and we really see an opportunity there to bake in this kind of practice into the computer system, right. And so, you know, policies are much easier to change than the case management system, and so, if the case management system includes considered removals meetings, if it includes, you know, structured decision making, if it includes the differential response system, that will be baked into the way that the agency does its work moving forward.

[00:21:11]: And so, you know, we’ve really looked for all the organizational drivers that would change the way that people think about their work and about families, in every way - down to the screensaver and background on our computers all having the principles of partnership on every desktop. And that’s a decision we made early on - I don’t want anyone being able to escape the values that are the foundation for the practice model. And so, we’ve looked for every, every way to really sustain the change by making it part of everyday life.

TOM OATES [00:21:47]: Well, that’s positive reinforcement, right there. It gets back to the organizational change models that others across the public and private sector are using - you know, people, processes and tools. And you can try to drive change through one, but if the others aren’t connected, you know, success is gonna be hard to come by. You know, you talked about the people, you know, getting them up to speed with the leadership academies, and speaking the same language - you know, processes and policies and procedures, and now I hear, you know, there’s the time with the tools, with the new CCWIS - it sounds like you’ve created a network, where everything that everyone is working with supports that culture you’re trying to create.

[00:22:26]: Now, that’s commendable, but I know there’s a lot of effort that had to happen to make all of this work. So talk to me about that, talk to me about that effort that went into, kind of, creating this new environment.

FERNANDO MUNIZ [00:22:39]: That’s right, and so, so what I’m describing is a process that began with the 2008 CFSR, right, so it’s, you know, years in the making, it’s building piece after piece, so it didn’t all come together at once. Some of it, you know, some of the coaching, some of the staging of training comes from earlier implementations that didn’t stick, right, and so, you know, we learned lessons - like when we implemented structured decision making, we trained too many people too quickly, we trained supervisors and social workers at the same time, so that the social workers knew the same thing their supervisor did and there was no opportunity to build on supervision as a coaching strategy.

[00:23:31]: So, all of that, you know, we’ve learned a lot of lessons about how to stage training, you know, how to try to manage the pace of change. We actually created a committee at the department called the Change Management Committee, and the original task of that committee was to make sure that all these different initiatives were not bumping into each other - and we have a Director of Change Management and when we created the role, the way that I described it to the original person in the role is, you’re gonna be the air traffic controller, right, you’re gonna have, you know, your eyes on everything and you’re gonna make sure that the planes are landing in the right sequence and in the right way, and you’re gonna make sure nothing crashes.

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[00:24:18]: And so that, that’s basically the role, we’ve had that in place for about five or six years now. But, you know, we’ve built this, you know, over time and as the academy continues to grow and mature, we’re adding additional pieces, so, you know, we added the LAMM, then we added the LAS, you know, Jody’s had a mentoring program that we have for frontline staff for many years and, and so building on all those things, to provide professional development opportunities for folks at all levels and making sure that everybody’s speaking the same language, you know, that’s the way we sort of have done it.

JODI HILL-LILLY [00:24:54]: And we also feel that it’s critically important to build in - if I’m thinking about implementation science - accountability. And so, we did everything to make sure we messaged things right, to make sure we had communication, to make sure we trained and we coached, changed policies, looked at legislation, partnered with people on the outside.

[00:25:16]: And we had to then look at accountability. Like, how do we make sure that we are not drifting from our original intent? And so, we have this process in place called the Performance Expectations, whereby the commissioner established five expectations to which she would hold her leaders accountable to. All four, the first four, are all practice related; making sure we’re engaging families, making sure children are safe and that they’re receiving timely permanency, that we’re having teenagers exit, that they, we have a racial justice performance mandate.

[00:25:56]: But the fifth one that I want to focus in on, really, has to do with workforce development. And so, the fact that the commissioner identified workforce development as a key element of her performance expectations, that she would hold, to which she would hold her leaders accountable, I think speaks volumes.

[00:26:18]: So, that's how we sustain it, is that we keep it on the forefront of the conversations of our leaders and that there is executive staff are holding leaders accountable for workforce development on an ongoing basis.

TOM OATES [00:26:33]: You know, you, you bring me to a point here where we can pull on. You’ve given some lessons on what you would do differently. So, what if you could go back in time and tell yourselves hey, these are the must haves that you absolutely need for success? You know, you mentioned getting senior leader buy-in - but what else would you identify as, as a must have for success?

JODI HILL-LILLY [00:26:53]: You know, we’ve, we’ve, we’ve realized, first of all, that we have to be clear in what it is that we’re trying to, to do - and so that the messaging has to be timely, it has to be done in a variety of ways, you can’t sort of, shift culture with an email. So that you have to be clear what it is that you’re trying to communicate and do it, and communicate it frequently.

[00:27:16]: You do have to train, you do have to coach and one of the things that we have learned over time is that - and it’s not different from what the research says - is that the supervisory level is really your key. And that, so a lot of emphasis has to be on that role of the supervisor, and, and how we support the supervisor to hold, to support the line staff and to make sure that we’re holding staff accountable to the message and to the practice model that we’re trying to implement.

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[00:27:52]: So I think that is, is a definite must have. You must have and pay attention to how outside stressors are impacting organizational culture. If we have a fatality, if we have staffing issues, if we have things that are going on organizationally, those things have to be taken into context with what you’re trying to do. And, you know, it’s not, it’s white water rafting. It’s not canoeing, it’s white water rafting, and so you have to be adaptive and you have to be flexible and you have to be able to change and react and respond when it’s necessary. And so, having some agility, in terms of being able to pivot when you need to, is critically important for the, for the, for the leadership. So, I mean, I would add that.

FERNANDO MUNIZ [00:28:48]: I think another must have, in my mind, is a really clear quality improvement, quality assurance framework, so that if, if you’re looking for practice change, you need to be able to articulate how will we know when we’re there and how are we gonna measure it so that we know when we see it? And so, you know, we could point to measures of success, like, you know, the reduction of the overall caseload, the reduction of the number of children in placement, the improving quality of our supervision.

[00:29:24]: And those are things that you can quantify and really point to and it gave staff some rallying points where they can say, alright, now we know we’re moving in the right direction, and so I, I think it’s important to have that really well thought out before you begin.

[00:29:39]: The other, the other thing that I just, I would be remiss if I didn’t mention, that is we found to be critically important and we’re spending a lot of time - we’ve put infrastructure around this and we’re actually funding this - and that is, the support for the work, for the work, for the workers, so that, you know, this work is complicated and it has an indeli-, it leaves an indelible impression on, on the workforce, and it has lasting impact on their mental health.

[00:30:12]: And so, secondary trauma is something that we consider at all times, and we feel that it is important to support the people who actually do the, the direct care with our kids and families. And so, we feel like, we deliberately stood up a supervision model that has us pay close attention to work life balance of, of, of the staff. We made sure that we have infrastructures in place to promote wellness for our staff, and we did training around secondary trauma. We, we rebid our contract with our EAP provider to make sure that it was giving the support necessary to, to intervene in a way that was helpful for the staff. So, we paid a lot of attention to the, the, the environment in which our staff work in every day.

TOM OATES [00:31:18]: So, you’ve gone through all these things that you consider must haves, and Fernando, you mentioned the question of understanding how do we know when we’re there and what does change look like? So, let me ask it, so guys, what has change looked like? What have the outcomes been from, from 2008 to today - when someone comes up to you and asks you, how is this working out for you, what do you tell them?

FERNANDO MUNIZ [00:31:39]: Sure, so, even though, during the entire time period that you’re talking about, reports of abuse and neglect have steadily increased in Connecticut because we’ve expanded the mandated reporter law and some other changes - even with rising reports, the number of children in placement is down; the number of open cases are down; our permanency measures have held steady and we’re achieving permanency for kids, you know, at a great rate; our re-entry number is very low.

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[00:32:11]: So, all the safety related indicators for Connecticut are the same or better, and we’re doing that by serving more kids in families and communities; fewer kids in congregate care, so it’s really shifted the system in a pretty significant way without jeopardizing any of those outcomes. And, you know, for many, many folks on our staff and in the provider community were concerned that if we moved to a model that was more engaging with families, that somehow we would lose the focus on safety, and we’ve proven that you can do both. You can do safety and you can do family engagement and hold that balance really well, and so we’re very proud of having achieved all those outcomes and think Connecticut really has a good story to tell.

TOM OATES [00:33:02]: So, what are your workers - especially those who were with you in the early 2000’s to now - what are they telling you about what they’ve seen?

JODI HILL-LILLY [00:33:09]: Yeah, I mean, for somebody who’s been around for 29 years, in the same department, I think what we hear - I just heard this yesterday, actually - somebody was telling me a story about the fact that they were interviewing a youth who was, who was, who had exited from care and was really sort of venting about the experiences that she had as a youth in care and the person hearing the youth talk, or the young adult talk, was saying my goodness, that would not happen today, because we have shifted so much in our practices.

[00:33:50]: And so, I believe that we are a different agency. I mean, having been here 29 years, I’ve seen a lot of ebbs and a lot of flows, but I think we are going in the right direction. And that balance between ensuring safety and engaging families and keeping your workforce, you know, healthy, safe, smart and strong, I mean, that, that’s a, that’s a very challenging thing to do. And, while we’re not perfect - lord knows, we have our challenges and we have a lot of areas in which to improve - I do believe that we are definitely in the right direction and we are not the agency we were ten years ago.

TOM OATES [00:34:36]: As you both mentioned before, there are plenty more rapids ahead, but it now sounds like you’ve got everybody in the raft, paddling together and in the same direction. Hey, Jody Hill-Lilly, Fernando Muniz, I wanna thank you guys so much for your time and your energy to share your story with us and talk about the pathway that you’re walking there in Connecticut. And thank you both for being our guests here on the Child Welfare Information Gateway Podcast.

FERNANDO MUNIZ [00:35:00]: Thank you, Tom.

JODI HILL-LILLY [00:35:01]: Thank you.

TOM OATES [00:35:03]: You know, I had one state child welfare director tell me that her staff, especially those in the front line work “in an emergency room”. Well the stress, the importance, the reactive nature at times, it’s easy to overlook the, the impact to staff.

[00:35:20]: What Jody and Fernando also mentioned about how adopting the same partnership approach they take with families to how agencies approach their workforce - especially at the supervisor level - helps empower those staff and prepare them for, you know, using Jody’s terms, when the rapids get a bit rocky.

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[00:35:37]: So, if you go to the web page for this podcast - again at acf.hhs.gov - we’ve put up some links for you to other workforce related podcasts, including looking at the workforce development framework. We’ve also got some more workforce related podcasts coming up in the queue, including taking a look at implementing workforce development at local levels and how a university is partnering with a state to create a network of child welfare scholars to enhance of performance of current and future child welfare professionals.

[00:36:06]: You’ll also find links to tools and stories from the National Child Welfare Workforce Institute and from the Child Welfare Capacity Building Center for States. Of course, as always, you can find data, tools, best practices, guidance for managers, materials for families, or what other states are doing over at Child Welfare Information Gateway. That’s at childwelfare.gov. You should also check out the state statutes database - it’s a complete listing of more than 40 statutes covering child welfare, child abuse and neglect and adoption. You know, you can separate by statute or by state to see all the statutes or see how they compare across the nation. Or find statutes impacting your work and the families you serve.

[00:36:48]: If you're looking for something in particular or have a specific need, hey, do not hesitate to reach out to our Information Specialists at info@childwelfare.gov. And if you’re on the Information Gateway website, you can also live chat for help finding information to help you in your work.

[00:37:04]: Alright, that will do it for this edition of the Child Welfare Information Gateway Podcast, you know, we appreciate you listening and appreciate you being a part of this with us, so until the next time, I’m Tom Oates, have a great day.

FEMALE NARRATOR [00:37:20]: Thanks for joining us for this edition of the Child Welfare Information Gateway podcast. Child Welfare Information Gateway is available at childwelfare.gov and is a service of the Children’s Bureau, U.S. Department of Health and Human Services Administration for Children and Families. The views and opinions expressed on this podcast do not necessarily reflect on those of Information Gateway, or the Children’s Bureau.