



**The Charter of
The Child Welfare Supervision Advisory
Committee**

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Background

In 2005, the Leadership of Missouri's Children's Division asked the National Child Welfare Resource Center for Organizational Improvement (NRCOI) for technical assistance in improving child welfare supervision in the State. Missouri had just drafted its Program Improvement Plan (PIP) as part of the Child and Family Services Review (CFSR), and many of the areas of child welfare identified as needing improvement were issues that are typically addressed in child welfare supervision.

Moreover, the field of public child welfare increasingly is focusing on supervision as a strategy for improving practice and outcomes. Across the United States, it is clear supervisors are the most stable element of the child welfare system. They are the keepers of the agency's culture. Their involvement and support is crucial to introduce and achieve systemic change. These conclusions are reinforced by the fact that over 20 states built improving child welfare supervision as a key strategy in their Program Improvement Plans in the first round of the CFSRs.

For these reasons, the leadership of the Children's Division, in consultation with the NRCOI, decided to convene a Child Welfare Supervision Work Group in Missouri, and to use that group to study how to better support supervisors and improve supervision and, ultimately, prepare and implement a Child Welfare Supervision Strategic Plan. This Work Group was formed with the assistance of the Regional Directors and Central Office staff and supported through technical assistance provided by staff and consultants of the NRCOI. The core Work Group was composed of eight supervisors from the five regions, three clinical specialists, and three Central Office staff (managers of Quality Assurance (QA), PIP and Training). The Work Group was assisted by two staff and one consultant from the NRCOI.

The Work Group met quarterly (every three months), with work conducted between meetings and conference calls held as necessary. During the course of these meetings, several changes in membership occurred, most notably the addition of a faculty member from the School of Social Work, University of Missouri at Columbia. At the conclusion of each Work Group meeting, the members met with the leadership of the Children's Division to de-brief about its work, and to get guidance and approval from the leadership. Over a period of two years, the Work Group not only produced a strategic plan with 29 action steps to support and improve supervision in Missouri but, upon approval of the plan by the Children's Division leadership, began working with components of the Children's Division to implement the action steps.

The technical assistance provided by NRCOI was completed, as scheduled, in 2007. Recognizing its contribution to enhancing supervision within the state, the Director of the Children's Division, Paula Neese, asked the Work Group to prepare a plan for its continuance. The Work Group recommended a formal charter for a standing, on-going committee to monitor and continuously advise the Division's leadership about supervision.

A charter is an official, written instrument, executed by the participating parties, that formally specifies the entity's purpose and other elements of its work. These are some of the benefits of having a formal charter:

- A charter can help the standing committee's credibility—it provides a formal definition and identity.

- It is an instrument that will help others to understand the purpose of the standing committee.
- It can help other potential partners understand how they can participate in the work of the standing committee.
- A charter can help establish a system of accountability—it defines the purpose, functions, relationships, boundaries, and responsibilities. Defining these can help the standing committee remain functional and productive.

The Work Group submitted a draft of the Charter to the Children's Division leadership for review and modification on January 28, 2008. The Charter was finalized and approved on March 10, 2008. The Committee submitted a revised Charter on April 15, 2009 to the CD Director for consideration. The revised Charter was approved on April 17, 2009.

Designation

The name of this entity is *the Child Welfare Supervision Advisory Committee* of Missouri's Children's Division, Department of Social Services.

The Child Welfare Supervision Advisory Committee is a standing committee of the Children's Division, created at the request of the Division's director. While it is a standing committee, it serves at the pleasure of the Division Director and can be modified, continued, or de-commissioned by the Division's leadership.

Vision

We envision supervisors as skilled practice change agents who promote job satisfaction and retention among front-line workers through skill development, thereby improving achievement of outcomes with children and families they serve.

Purpose/Functions

The Supervision Strategic Plan has been adopted as the Division's plan to support supervisors and enhance supervision. The purpose of the Child Welfare Supervision Advisory Committee is to advise the leadership of the Children's Division on continuous improvement of supervision and monitor the implementation and effects of strategies adopted to achieve such improvement.

Committee functions include:

- Monitoring developments in child welfare supervision across the country to identify emerging best practice.
- Recommending to Division leadership strategies and activities for incorporation into a strategic plan for supporting and improving child welfare supervision, including strategies and activities addressing new expectations of supervisors inherent in new policy.
- Monitoring the implementation and effects of the Division's strategic plan for supporting and improving child welfare supervision and reporting the results to Division leadership.
- Serving as the planning committee, with other participants, for any conferences of Missouri Child Welfare Supervisors.

Membership, Leadership, and Terms of Service

Typically, the Committee's membership consists of approximately 18 members:

- Two representatives from each of the seven sub-regions, nominated by the Regional Director and appointed by the Division Director. Any current member may recommend to his/her Regional Director other person(s) from the region for nomination. At least one of these representatives from each region must be a supervisor at the time of his/her appointment; however, should a supervisor assume another position while serving on the Committee, s/he may complete his/her current term of appointment.
- Three Central Office staff: (1) the CFSR Coordinator; (2) a leader from the Training Unit; (3) a leader from the QA staff.
- From a university within Missouri, a faculty member with a professional focus on child welfare supervision.

Additional members may be added to the Committee by recommendation to the leadership of the Children's Division or by the leadership itself.

Representatives from the regions are appointed for two year terms of service. These should be staggered for the purpose of continuity, so that one regional representative from each region is appointed annually (i.e., calendar year). They may be re-appointed for additional terms of service.

Following the May meeting each year, a person designated by the Committee Co-Chairs shall notify the Regional Directors about expiring memberships and the need to have a new supervisor appointed. This notice would be carbon copied to the chairpersons. The Co-Chairs will assure the newly appointed supervisor will be notified of the date, time and location of the August meeting for the transition. The member rotating off will be responsible for providing a SAC information packet to the newly appointed member prior to the August meeting date.

Transition Plan

August is designated as the month of transition for supervisors after a supervisor has served two full years on the Committee. This will coincide with the annual two-day meeting. Both the incoming and the departing supervisors will attend the two day meeting. This will provide an opportunity for networking, exchange of ideas and a structured process so historical information can be passed along and the momentum of the strategic plan can continue.

The other members of the Committee serve because of the positions they hold in the Children's Division and the university and serve as long as they hold these positions.

The Committee is chaired by two co-chairs. One co-chair will be elected for a two-year term by the members during the Committee's first meeting of each calendar year. The co-chairs prepare the agendas for the meetings, convene the Committee, and chair the meetings. The co-chairs will also record attendance.

Scribe: A member of the committee shall be appointed as Scribe by the Co-Chairs.

- Scribe shall serve a term of one year, transition to occur each August
- Attends all meetings and informs co-chairs if unable to attend
- Writes or types notes according to agenda items as scheduled; scribe will have a flash drive provided to keep in scribe's possession in order to maintain files
- Updates strategic action plan as changes and additions are identified; captures all of the pieces of the strategic action plan and will check with team for accuracy
- Sends copy of minutes and strategic plan to co-chairs within two weeks of meeting date
- Copy any materials that team members need prior to or following meetings as requested by co-chairs

Responsibilities of Members

Members have a duty to promote quality in supervision within their region. This includes on-going communication with their respective Regional Director, Field Managers, supervisors and front-line staff within their region regarding the supervision strategic plan.

Meetings

The Child Welfare Supervision Advisory Committee meets at least quarterly. Meetings typically are held in Jefferson City because of its central location. Three of these meetings each year are one day in length with the fourth meeting – an annual planning meeting – being two days in length. Additional meetings or variations in these standing meetings can be authorized by Division leadership.

Each annual planning meeting will begin with a review of and all subsequent work will be guided by the Vision contained herein and Appendix A of the Charter; i.e.,

- The purpose of child welfare supervision in Missouri
- Values and principles that guide the work of the Child Welfare Supervision Advisory Committee
- What child welfare supervisors do

Whenever possible, the Committee will meet with Division leadership at the end of each of their meetings to de-brief on their activities. Co-chairs will present information if comfortable. Others can be appointed to present upon group's consensus. Minutes of the meeting will be taken by the Scribe.

The co-chairs will prepare and submit to the Committee members and leadership of the Children's Division a written report of the proceedings following each meeting. The report following the annual planning meeting will include a summary of each member's attendance of meetings held during that calendar year. Attendance – and reasons for any absence(s) – will be a consideration for leadership in determining continuing membership.

Subcommittees

- The Child Welfare Supervision Advisory Committee can create subcommittees to focus on specific supervision activities and issues (e.g., planning for the creation of learning labs; planning for a supervisors' summit, etc.). Membership on the subcommittees does

not have to be limited to the members of the Committee but can include other supervisors and other internal and external stakeholders, based on the subcommittees' foci. Membership of subcommittees should have approval of Advisory Committee.

Changes to the Charter

Changes to this Charter can be made at any time by recommendation to the leadership of the Children's Division. However, intent to amend the Charter should be noted on the agenda for the meeting where a change will be proposed, and the agenda should be sent to the Committee's members prior to the meeting to give participants time to think about the proposed change. Changes must be approved by the Division's leadership.


Paula Neese, Director


Date

Appendix A

The Purpose of Child Welfare Supervision in Missouri

The Child Welfare Supervision Advisory Committee defines the purpose of child welfare supervision in Missouri's Children's Division is to:

- Assist workers in achieving positive outcomes for children and families.
- Advance the vision, the mission, and the principles of the Children's Division.
- Ensure the consistency of practice and policy application.
- Be responsible for worker accountability and fairness in relation to practice standards, service delivery, adherence to policy, disciplinary action, and performance appraisal.

Values and Principles that Guide the Work of the Child Welfare Supervision Advisory Committee

The Child Welfare Supervision Advisory Committee will:

- Promote the Children's Division as a Learning Organization – using data at every level, including supervision, to learn about practice and to achieve better outcomes.
- Advocate for clinical supervision at all professional levels to enhance the quality of services to families.
- View the worker/supervisor and supervisor/manager relationships as parallel processes to the worker/family relationship.
- Advocate for consensus.
- Make the Committee's work action oriented, with actual follow through and results documented.
- Recognize the challenges and tough issues, and face each one and find a solution.
- Commit to work with a spirit of trust, honesty, and mutual respect to build upon our individual and combined strengths.
- Plan strategically, continuing to review and build upon the plan developed in 2006, recommending changes, additions and deletions for enhancing supervision and improving the system, thereby achieving safety, permanency and well-being for the children and families we serve.

What Child Welfare Supervisors Do

The Committee defines what child welfare supervisors do with their supervisees:

- Seek opportunities to teach by informing, demonstrating and supporting workers as they develop new skills (On the job training).
- Helping workers develop skills by modeling, coaching, mentoring, and supporting.
- Helping workers get the big picture.
- Ensuring accurate and timely data entry, and using data to manage for results (outcomes) and manage caseloads.
- Problem solving.
- Trouble shooting.
- Crisis management.
- Time management and helping workers prioritize.
- Direct/monitor casework practice (Supervisory Case Review Tool).