



BACCALAUREATE CHILD WELFARE
EDUCATION PROGRAM
2017-2018 ANNUAL REPORT

*LESSONS LEARNED AND
RECOMMENDATIONS FOR PROGRAM ENHANCEMENT*

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INTRODUCTION

The Baccalaureate Child Welfare Education Program is a partnership among a consortium of baccalaureate social work education programs, the New Jersey Department of Children and Families, and the New Jersey Chapter of the National Association of Social Workers.



There are many ways of examining retention data. Since the year of employment is not necessarily the year of program completion, retention data was examined by year of employment, rather than the cohort method used in the previous table.

BCWEP/FEDERAL CHILD WELFARE EMPLOYMENT RETENTION DATA

	1-year commitment			2-year commitment										
	TRAINEES FIRST EMPLOYED IN 2005 (N=14)	TRAINEES FIRST EMPLOYED IN 2006 (N=21)	TRAINEES FIRST EMPLOYED IN 2007 (N=62)	TRAINEES FIRST EMPLOYED IN 2008 (N=67)	TRAINEES FIRST EMPLOYED IN 2009 (N=46)	TRAINEES FIRST EMPLOYED IN 2010 (N=28)	TRAINEES FIRST EMPLOYED IN 2011 (N=29)	TRAINEES FIRST EMPLOYED IN 2012 (N=32)	TRAINEES FIRST EMPLOYED IN 2013 (N=29)	TRAINEES FIRST EMPLOYED IN 2014 (N=27)	TRAINEES FIRST EMPLOYED IN 2015 (N=31)	TRAINEES FIRST EMPLOYED IN 2016 (N=31)	TRAINEES FIRST EMPLOYED IN 2017 (N=35)	TRAINEES FIRST EMPLOYED IN 2018 (N=39)
	Federal only	BCWEP/Federal	BCWEP/Federal	BCWEP/Federal	BCWEP/Federal	BCWEP only	BCWEP only	BCWEP only	BCWEP only	BCWEP only	BCWEP only	BCWEP only	BCWEP only	BCWEP only
# (%) retained in employment for 1 year	14 (100%)	20 (95%)	60 (97%)	66 (99%)	46 (100%)	26 (93%)	24 (83%)	30 (94%)	27 (93%)	25 (93%)	29 (94%)	30 (97%)	35 (100%)	N/A
# (%) retained in employment for 2 years	14 (100%)	17 (81%)	55 (89%)	63 (94%)	45 (98%)	26 (93%)	22 (76%)	27 (84%)	26 (90%)	25 (93%)	29 (94%)	29 (94%)	N/A	N/A
# (%) retained in employment for 3 years	14 (100%)													

Four hundred ninety-three (493) individuals have moved into positions within the child welfare workforce. Across all fourteen cohorts of the program, of those who successfully completed the program and accepted caseworker positions, 344 (70%) are still employed at DCP&P. This is remarkable, given that researchers have found high annual attrition rates in child welfare caseworker positions. For example, some counties in one state reported annual turnover as high as 100% (Ellet and Leighninger, 2007)! Remarkably, 100% of our original cohort is still on the job.



The next table summarizes data on BCWEP student ethnic self-identification. We have used the ethnic designations used by the U.S. Census.

2004-18 BCWEP STUDENTS BY ETHNICITY

Fifty-eight percent (58%) of this year's cohort identified their ethnicity as other than white. In fact, when all cohorts are considered together, about fifty-five percent (55%) of



A number of BCWEP trainees have fluency in a language other than English. The table below summarizes the extent of this skill that BCWEP graduates bring into their



PROGRAM OUTCOMES 2017-2018



DCP&P Units/Services Experienced by BCWEP Interns

During the 2017-2018 Academic Year, all students were exposed to work in at least two units (Intake and Permanency) during their internships. In fact, most students had the opportunity to experience three or more units/services. The breakdown is as follows:

This year, we were finally able to prevent any students from getting experience in only one DCP&P unit—something that has been a programmatic goal for years. Eleven students (28%) were exposed to just two units, and another 8 (21%) had learning experiences in three units. Twelve individuals (32%) had the opportunity to experience four units, and 8 (20%) were exposed to five or more. While the amount of time a student actually spent in each unit varied considerably, it is notable that all students this year had learning experiences in multiple units. This is something that our program has promoted as essential in preparing students for their eventual work assignments, and it seems our efforts to encourage varied experiences continues to be effective.



Students' Perceptions of the Strengths of BCWEP

Students identified a number of themes related to the strengths of BCWEP. The most commonly mentioned strength was the opportunity for hands-on experience with DCP&P under the supervision and mentoring of experienced professionals. The students seem to understand the role that fieldwork plays in helping them acquire the knowledge, skills, and resources that will allow them to become effective workers. Students also mentioned the value of the Work Readiness Training and the supportive community fostered by the program's staff and structure. Examples of each theme are given below, in the students' own words.

Themes Identified by Students

Strengths	Frequency Mentioned
Hands-on Employment Preparation and Experience with DCP&P	28
Work Readiness Trainings and Simulations	17
Structure and Organization of Program	10
Support of Program Staff and BCWEP Community	8
Financial Incentives and Guaranteed Employment Upon Completion	4

Hands-on Employment Preparation and Experience with DCP&P

- Getting firsthand experience before working.
- It offers hands-on and comprehensive experience to better prepare us for such a complex field of work.
- The BCWEP Child Welfare Traineeship program has many strengths including exposing interns to the field.
- Caseworkers helped interns by taking them on various visits, investigations and court hearings. Caseworkers were very helpful in showing me different forms and ways to handle crisis situations. They also showed me ways to stay organized.

Work Readiness Trainings and Simulations

- What helped was having the advantage of training. The trainers were very helpful and they were able to fully elaborate on the material. Although there are some tweaks needed, such as more hands on experience, it was a great program to be a part of. Training is crucial and BCWEP taught me a lot.
- Being able to experience DCP&P as an intern taught me almost everything before entering the field as an employee. The trainings and education helped tremendously. These trainings helped shape my successful future as a DCP&P worker.
- The trainers were great – very knowledgeable and engaging – training materials were very helpful and thorough.



Structure and Organization of Program

- BCWEP students are able to apply their knowledge from school courses and trainings and apply it to when they begin working. The program is amazing because we already have a year worth of experience.
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Students' Perceptions about Field Instructors' Helpfulness

In general, students viewed their field instructors as helpful in providing appropriate learning experiences with regard to the BCWEP competencies. Students were asked to rate their field instructor's helpfulness on a scale of 1 (Extremely Unhelpful) to 10 (Extremely Helpful). The mean rating was 8.7, which is 0.4 higher than last year's mean. Over the years, students have generally rated their field instructors high on this scale. This is likely due, at least in part, to the extra level of attention and monitoring that BCWEP participants receive. We exhort students to notify the program immediately if field experiences are not satisfactory, so that effective interventions can occur early in the year. Still, as usual, this cohort of students did have a few dissatisfied students who gave their field instructors low ratings.

Not all students added comments to their numerical rating of their field instructors, but those who did were mostly positive. However, a few students gave some detail about their reservations. Here are some of the students' verbatim comments:

Positive

- My Field Instructor was amazing. She answered any and all questions or concerns I had. She educated me and put me into the field to learn hands on.
- My Instructor went above and beyond for me. Every morning I was at the office, she would try and link me with a case worker. If I had any issue whatsoever, she helped me through it. Her door was always open for me, and I received lots of supervision.
- This was my supervisor's first time being an instructor and I believe she did a phenomenal job to ensure that I have a full experience in all units, and pushing me to do things on my own.

Some Reservations

- I had limited supervision—my supervisor was more of a task manager.
- I would have liked to be in more units and included more.





General Logistical and Administrative Suggestions

- Different location for meetings—too much driving.
- I think stipends should make a comeback. Balancing school and intern is difficult enough, but the BCWEP internship doubled my workload and I had to work on top of that to support myself.

Requests for More NJ SPIRIT Training and Access

- More NJ Spirit trainings.
- More access to NJ Spirit – so that the training can be more useful to us.
- I think a second training should surround NJ Spirit because this is something we use daily. I think learning how to properly file case records is also something that should be taught.



Students' Perceptions of Their Roles as Change Agents

Almost all students expressed that they felt ready to play a role in the transformation of New Jersey's Public Child Welfare System. Only 3 students expressed any reservations about their readiness, citing a desire to have more knowledge and training. See the table below and the examples of students' actual responses that follow.

Students' Perceptions of their Readiness to Play a Role in the Transformation of New Jersey's Public Child Welfare System

Readiness	Frequency
Yes, I Feel Prepared	
Have Knowledge of the DCP&P System's Policy and Practice	11
Have Social Work Knowledge, Skills, Values, and Experience	9
Have Positivity, Excitement, and Passion	6
No, I Lack Confidence that I am Fully Prepared	3

Have Knowledge of the DCP&P System's Policy and Practice

- Yes, I feel that the knowledge and skills I learned during my 9 months of in office training, fieldwork and WRT has prepared me to transform work with NJ public child welfare system.
- I feel like I am prepared. Having the mixture of WRT, school, and the experience I had during field I was able to have the experience of knowing what a day may look like. I witnessed a crisis and was able to pick up tips from other workers on how they handled difficult situations.
- Yes, we learned enough about the nature of the work and core values to understand how to be an effective change agent.

Have Social Work Knowledge, Skills, Values, and Experience

- I do. Especially from a social work background, I think I'll be able to bring a different viewpoint than some of my coworkers, and be very strengths-based.
- I do. As a social work major, I am more knowledgeable about some of the important things that individuals need to be successful in this work, and I know how to put them into practice.
- Yes. We have fresh eyes, not jaded ones. And we have training to apply our theory in the field. We will also be less judgmental and more culturally competent.



Have Positivity, Excitement, and Passion

- Yes, because I am very passionate for the career I have chosen. I feel I can contribute to the positive image we are now trying to show, as well as my hard work ethic being an asset to my future unit.
- Yes. I am very excited and ready to apply what I have learned.

No, I Don't Feel Fully Prepared Because I Lack Knowledge or Skill

- I feel I require further training because I shadowed a lot as a trainee, but I didn't take the lead very much. I do feel that I have what it takes to aid in the transformation, but a bit more training (hands-on) would increase my confidence.

Additional Comments Shared by Students

Approximately 40% of students added additional substantive comments in response to the open invitation to do so. Of those who added comments, most responded with gratitude and related positive comments. The only other comments were miscellaneous suggestions for improvement, all of which had already been reflected in responses to previous questions, above. Below are some of students' actual responses.

Positive Comments and Gratitude:

- This is a difficult time in my life and I just wanted to say thank you for reassuring us and de-escalating when we got anxious. This is an amazing opportunity and it has provided me with a lot of knowledge.
- This program was incredible in every aspect. I was able to learn a lot of information, more about the role that I am entering and how my role can impact the community. The trainings were very thorough and I always left each training feeling more confident to begin working.



Usefulness of the

Guide

Most of our field instructors indicated that they found the Learning Path to be helpful in planning and scheduling learning experiences for their students. A few field instructors reported that they received the Learning Path, but had not used it, and three individuals stated that they were unsure if they received the guide. It was distributed to all field instructors at the BCWEP Orientation and mailed to those not able to be present, so the source of this confusion is unclear.

Here are some examples of field instructor comments:

Received it and found it helpful/useful

- Yes. I found the guide to be comprehensive and detailed.
- Yes. I could have utilized it more and will be sure to do so for future interns if given the opportunity.
- Yes, I did receive a copy of the guide. The guide was helpful in planning learning experiences for my student.

Received, but did not use the

- I have had the guide for several years. I would strongly suggest that the guide be revised to reflect our new procedures and policies. Also, I think there are some areas that need to be updated as we have grown as an agency.
- Yes, I received a copy, but I did not get the opportunity to utilize it.



Field Instructors' Perceptions of BCWEP Students' Professional Preparation

Many field instructors wrote detailed responses to this question. Almost all gave a very positive assessment of the program. Some of the more interesting comments are reproduced below:

- As the Casework Supervisor of the training unit in my office, and a three-time BCWEP Field Instructor, it is my belief that this program produces the most well-prepared trainees possible. If it were feasible, I'd like to hire only BCWEP graduates as trainees.
- BCWEP is preparing undergraduate social work students for their future professional roles at DCP&P very well. These students start as Division cases foms DdEFF0 ps T



Recommendations for Changes in BCWEP

Field instructors were asked whether they had any suggestions for change in BCWEP. Most gave no recommendations. As in past years, the few suggestions that were provided focused on more freedom and access for students, as well as logistical changes affecting field instructors. Here are examples of comments and suggestions:

Changes for Students:

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Previous Year's Goal #2: "For the 2017-18 Academic Year, it is our goal to complete our review of the Child Welfare Course and its delivery methods across the BCWEP Consortium. We plan to create an updated and revised model syllabus, and use the BCWEP website to create an electronic clearinghouse for resources related to the course. Doing so will enable all member institutions to access the same educational materials and help ensure parity across the consortium."

Again, significant progress was made on this goal during the 2017-18 Academic Year. A committee of BCWEP staff, Campus Academic Coordinators, and DCP&P staff was formed to review and revise the model syllabus traditionally distributed to consortium members. After a significant amount of discussion, this committee produced several helpful resources related to the Child Welfare Course. Rather than attempting to dictate the specific textbook and assignments to be used by Consortium member schools, the committee created a formal list of content areas that must be included in each school's Child Welfare Course offering. In addition, two model syllabi (utilizing different textbooks) were created and shared, as well as an extensive list of readings and resources for students. The list of content areas, the model syllabi, and all the readings are now available on a new page on the BCWEP website.

Previous Year's Goal #3: "Even more than in past years, this year's student evaluations revealed just how much students value the supportive community that accompanies participation in BCWEP—they see this as one of program's greatest strengths! According to the data, students feel this sense of support from their fellow student participants, BCWEP staff, and the helpful individuals (future colleagues) they interact with during their internships. During the upcoming year, therefore, it is our goal to explore other ways to foster this sense of community among our students. We hope they feel supported by the whole network of people and organizations that are investing in their success through BCWEP!"

A limited amount of progress was made on this goal during the past year. BCWEP staff attended each session of the Work Readiness Training this year. After each session, staff members facilitated a discussion and time of sharing, which gave students the opportunity to talk with each about their ongoing experiences in the field—both challenges and successes. This fostered the sense of group cohesion, community, and support that students value about BCWEP. We feel that still more progress could be made toward this goal, and will continue our efforts in the next Academic Year (see Goal #2 below).



In reviewing the feedback received from students and field instructors, as well as the progress made on last year's goals, the following goals for BCWEP in the 2018-2019 Academic Year are proposed:

1. Implementing the revised Work Readiness Training (WRT) model this academic year was a major effort, led by the Office of Training and Professional Development (OTPD). Throughout the implementation process, formal and informal feedback has been obtained from students, OTPD staff, and DCP&P field instructors. For the 2018-2019 Academic Year, it is our goal to analyze this data and incorporate any necessary changes into the WRT program. After the 2018-2019 BCWEP cohort graduates, we will have two cohorts that have finished the first stage of WRT (while students are interning), and one cohort that has completed both stages (including the remaining foundational trainings that graduates complete once they become employees). This will present us with an opportunity for more comprehensive evaluation of the new WRT model.
- 2.



APPENDIX





TABLE A



HUMAN BEHAVIOR AND THE SOCIAL ENVIRONMENT COMPETENCIES	Mean													



ETHNIC SENSITIVE AND MULTICULTURAL PRACTICE COMPETENCIES	Mean Score 2018	Mean Score 2017	Mean Score 2016	Mean Score 2015	Mean Score 2014	Mean Score 2013	Mean Score 2012	Mean Score 2011	Mean Score 2010	Mean Score 2009	Mean Score 2008	Mean Score 2007	Mean Score 2006
14. Demonstrates sensitivity to clients' differences in culture, ethnicity, and sexual orientation.	4.3	4.5	4.2	4.2	4.4	4.4	4.6	4.4	4.4	4.4	4.3	4.2	4.7
15. Demonstrates the ability to conduct an ethnically and culturally sensitive assessment of a child and family and to develop an appropriate intervention plan.	4.0	3.9	3.5	3.8	4.0	4.0	4.2	3.6	3.9	3.9	3.6	3.8	3.7
16. Demonstrates understanding of the importance of a client's primary language and support its use in providing child welfare assessment and intervention services.	4.2	3.9	3.8	4.1	4.2	4.1	4.3	3.9	3.8	4.1	3.9	4.0	4.5
17. Demonstrates understanding of the influence and value of traditional, culturally based childrearing practices and use this knowledge in working with families.	4.1	4.0	3.9	3.9	4.1	3.9	4.2	3.8	4.0	4.1	3.9	3.9	3.9
18. Demonstrates the ability to collaborate with individuals, groups, community-based organizations, and government agencies to advocate for equitable access to culturally sensitive resources and services.	4.1	3.9	3.7	3.5	4.1	3.9	3.8	3.6	3.6	4.0	3.7	3.7	3.5
ALL ETHNIC SENSITIVE AND MULTICULTURAL PRACTICE COMPETENCIES MEAN SCORES	4.1	4.0	3.8	3.9	4.2	4.1	4.2	3.9	3.9	4.1	3.9	3.9	4.1





TABLE B
CHILD WELFARE TRAINEE ASSESSMENT (By Field Instructors)

June, 2018 (Academic Year 2017-18) Results
 Return rate: 79% (31 of 39 field instructors)

The table below reflects field instructors' assessment of their students' progress on achieving the 35 child welfare competencies that the BCWEP curriculum is designed to teach. The highlighted column contains mean scores for 2017-2018. Mean scores from the past years of the program are also included for comparison. Field instructors were asked to rate students' level of preparedness on a scale of 1-5, where 1 = inadequately prepared, 2 = fairly well prepared, 3 = adequately prepared, 4 = well prepared, and 5 = very well prepared.

WORKPLACE MANAGEMENT COMPETENCIES	Mean Score 2018	Mean Score 2017	Mean Score 2016	Mean Score 2015	Mean Score 2014	Mean Score 2013	Mean Score 2012	Mean Score 2011	Mean Score 2010	Mean Score 2009	Mean Score 2008	Mean Score 2007	Mean Score 2006
1. Demonstrates knowledge of the basic structure of DCP&P and child welfare practice, including Title 30, Title 9, and Adoption and Safe Families Act of 1997.	3.9	4.4	4.2	4.0	4.1	4.0	4.2	4.1	4.2	4.2	4.1	4.0	2.8
2. Understands the vision, values, mission, mandates and desired outcomes of the New Jersey Child Welfare System.	4.3	4.6	4.4	4.2	4.1	4.3	4.4	4.4	4.2	4.3	4.3	4.4	3.2
3. Is able to work productively with agency staff, supervisors, and clients in an environment characterized by human diversity.	4.5	4.6	4.7	4.2	4.2	4.5	4.5	4.6	4.3	4.5	4.4	4.6	3.8
4. Demonstrates an awareness of community resources available for children and families and have a working knowledge of how to utilize these resources in achieving case goals.	3.8	4.1	3.8	3.7	3.5	3.8	3.8	4.0	3.9	3.8	4.0	3.9	3.3
5. Has a working knowledge of collaboration with multidisciplinary teams and can work productively with team members in implementing case plans.	3.8	4.2	3.7	3.7	3.6	4.0	4.1	3.8	3.9	3.8	4.0	4.2	3.7
6. Is able to plan, prioritize, and complete activities within appropriate time frames.	3.9	4.4	4.1	4.1	3.8	4.3	4.5	4.2	4.0	4.3	4.2	4.4	3.3
7. Is aware of potential work-related stress factors and begin to develop appropriate self-care strategies.	4.1	4.5	4.3	4.2	3.8	4.1	4.1	3.8	3.9	3.9	4.1	4.3	3.3
ALL WORKPLACE MANAGEMENT COMPETENCIES MEAN SCORES	4.0	4.4	4.2	4.0	3.9	4.1	4.2	4.1	4.1	4.1	4.2	4.3	3.3



HUMAN BEHAVIOR AND THE SOCIAL													







