

NEW YORK STATE
 DEPARTMENT OF SOCIAL SERVICES
 40 NORTH PEARL STREET, ALBANY, NEW YORK 12243



CESAR A. PERALES
 Commissioner

[An Administrative Directive is a written communication to local Social Services Districts providing directions to be followed in the administration of public assistance and care programs.]

ADMINISTRATIVE DIRECTIVE

TRANSMITTAL NO.: 83 ADM-56
 [Family and Children Services]

TO: Social Services Commissioners

SUBJECT: Implementing A Foster Parent Training Program As Required By 18 NYCRR 443.3(i) of State Department of Social Services Regulations

DATE: November 9, 1983

SUGGESTED DISTRIBUTION:

Social Services Districts
 Child Placement Agencies
 Council on Children and Families

CONTACT PERSON: Any questions concerning this release should be directed to Peter Kasius, Associate Social Services Consultant, Office of Family and Children Services Operations, telephone 1-800-342-3715, extension 4-4627.

I. PURPOSE

The purpose of this administrative directive is to advise authorized agencies about the Department's requirements for implementing the regulation on foster parent training established in 1981 by 18 NYCRR 443.3(i):

"Authorized agencies shall provide training to each certified foster parent in a training program approved by the department which will prepare foster parents to meet the needs of children in their care so that the best interests of the children placed by the certifying agency will be met."

This directive amplifies and modifies the instructions on page 6 of 82-ADM-66 about required agency action for developing a foster parent training program.

FILING REFERENCES

Previous ADMs/INFs	Releases Cancelled	Dept. Regs.	Social Services Law and Other Legal References	Bulletin/Chapter Reference	Miscellaneous Reference
82-ADM 66		443.3(b)	SSL 371		Survey of Foster Parent Training (SDSS-1981)
81-INF 11		443.3(i)	374		
78-INF 22			375		
77-INF 14			376		
			378		

DSS-296 (Rev. 8/82)

II. BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Training for foster parents is one of a number of important policy and program changes representing efforts in recent years to improve the quality of life for children in foster care and to reduce the risk and uncertainty for children in need of foster care placement. The policy requiring agencies to establish a training program for certified foster parents was based on several related assumptions:

1. The most potent resource for meeting the needs of foster children is foster parents.
2. Most persons, however, find some aspects of the foster parent role to be difficult, exacerbated by either role confusion or a lack of understanding about the foster parent - caseworker relationship as well as the inevitable stress upon the family resulting from its increased complexity in structure and relationships, the transitory nature of the child's placement, and the task of relating to the authority of the supervising agency.
3. Appropriate and effective training will help most new foster parents in acquiring a more functional understanding and definition of their agency role and to maintain the emotional and psychological equilibrium that is essential to assure foster children a sense of security and a feeling of being accepted.
4. For most new foster parents an introductory training group will be a valuable source of emotional support, an outlet for alleviating some of the tensions that are experienced in working with the agency and coping with the interpersonal and situational problems that arise in the course of providing temporary care to children in a state of transition.
5. Most experienced foster parents will be able to improve and update their child care skill and role effectiveness by participation in training programs that are based upon a careful and thoughtful assessment of their learning needs.
6. Some of the diffuse dissatisfaction with the foster care system will be reduced as foster parents become more certain as to what is expected of them and, subsequently, enjoy more satisfying relationships in their work with agency staffs.

III. PROGRAM IMPLICATIONS

Authorized agencies are expected to develop and maintain a training program that is responsive to the learning needs of certified foster parents. The program should include training for newly certified foster parents as well as for experienced foster parents. Each agency should have a written plan for implementing a training program. The plan which is to be completed by

February 1, 1984, and ready for review upon request by the Department staff, should have the following components:

1. A description of the method that will be used for assessing the training needs and interests of the foster parents.
2. A training schedule showing how the agency will offer new foster parents at least 10 hours of training within a year of certification and how the agency will offer experienced foster parents at least four hours of training each year.

Note:

- (a) One module for new foster parents should include, but not be limited to, a discussion of the effects that foster parenting responsibilities have had or may have upon family life. This module should focus especially upon the family's structure, interaction, communication, and relationships. It is recommended that agencies engage the services of 2 or 3 experienced foster parents for leading a discussion of the topic.
 - (b) One module for new foster parents should include, but not be limited to, a review and discussion of department policy, 18 NYCRR 441.9, on the discipline of children in foster care.
3. A listing of the training objectives, a description of the training methodology and the resources that are to be used in developing each training module.
 4. A description of the method that will be used for evaluating the effectiveness and relevance of the training.

IV. REQUIRED ACTION

By February 1, 1984, each agency will be expected:

1. To have concise but comprehensive plan for offering to all new and experienced foster parents opportunities for training. Implementation of the plan should begin on or before March 1, 1984.
2. To have selected one or more persons for planning and conducting the training.
3. To have made it possible for persons responsible for conducting the training to have received adequate, specialized preparation for training foster parents.
4. To have advised foster parents about the agency's training plan.
5. To have completed an assessment of the training needs of new and experienced foster parents.
6. To have assigned responsibility for evaluating the effectiveness and relevance of the training and for preparing a written report of the evaluation findings.

V. ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

1. Recommended sources for developing a curriculum for foster parent training are:

(a) The Child Welfare League of America - Foster Parent Training Curricula

- (i) Introduction to Foster Parenting
- (ii) Foster Parenting an Adolescent
- (iii) Foster Parenting a Mentally Retarded Child

A 1981 SDSS report of a survey among local social services districts on the use that was being made of the CWLA curriculum materials will assist staff in identifying the CWLA materials that agencies have found to be most useful. The report includes order forms with list prices for the three CWLA curriculums.

(b) The Eastern Michigan University Foster Parent Education Program, a 17 course outline for Foster Parent Training, is available from the University. Each outline addresses an area of foster family care parenting children at different developmental stages, managing specific types of problematic behaviors, working with professionals and natural families, legal aspects of fostering, and consists of general objectives, specific goals, important discussion topics, suggested activities and a bibliography. Instructor's manuals and student workbooks for individual courses are also available. Contact: Child and Family Publications, Institute for the Study of Children and Families, Eastern Michigan U., Ypsilanti, Michigan 48197.

(c) State University College at Buffalo has developed a training manual related to foster parent training entitled:

Foster Parent Training - A Core Curriculum for Foster Parents in Public and Private Agencies, November, 1982

(d) State University of New York at Albany
Foster Parent Manual (currently under development)

This manual will contain core information related to foster parenting such as rules, regulations, and procedures, and can be adopted to include county-specific information.

(The above mentioned resources are available through the Materials Resource Center, Arcade Building, 488 Broadway, Albany, NY 12243. Materials mentioned in paragraphs (a) and (b) are available for loan; Copies of the training manuals listed in paragraphs (c) and (d) may be requested. Additionally, the Center distributes, upon request, a catalog of its holdings which offers other resources for foster parenting and other social welfare programs.)

(e) Foster Parent Education Resources Project at Kansas State University. Course outlines and training materials related to developing a team

approach to foster care case management are designed for joint training of social workers and foster parents. Contact: Pamela C. Marr, Department of Family and Child Development, 143 Justin Hall, Kansas State U. Manhattan, Kansas 66506

2. 18 NYCRR 443.3(i) does not require foster parents to participate in an agency training program for either certification or recertification. The mandate is upon the agency to provide a training program for certified foster parents. The completion of a training course may be a certification or recertification requirement if the written agreement made pursuant to 18 NYCRR 444.5(c) includes a provision stipulating that certified foster parents must participate in a designated number of hourly training sessions each year. For agencies with this requirement, it is requested that an assessment of the advantages and disadvantages of the policy be included in the evaluation of the training program.

Note:

Agencies providing prospective foster parents with formal precertification training that goes beyond an orientation to foster care services as required by Section 443.3(b) of Department regulations may reduce the minimum ten hours training which agencies are expected to provide new foster parents in the year following certification. The maximum reduction in training hours should not exceed six hours. This means, for example, that newly certified foster parents who participate in six hours of an agency precertification training program, that is exclusive of the required orientation, would only be expected to be offered four hours of training during the first year. If precertification training, for example, was four hours, the agency would be expected to provide the newly certified foster parents with six hours of training during their first year.

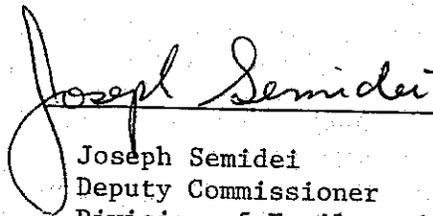
3. An evaluation of the training program should be completed within 30 days after December 1, 1985. The evaluation should answer these questions:
 - (a) What part of the parent training program did foster parents find to be most useful? Least useful?
 - (b) What changes, if any, of the agency's training curriculum should be made and what are the reasons for the change?
4. The Department is planning a revision to the foster parent data entry form DSS 2892-A by adding a code to report when a new foster parent certified in 1983 or thereafter has completed an introductory training course, and, also when a foster parent certified in 1982 or before has completed at least four hours of advanced training. Details about the revision that is to be made to form DSS 2843-A, will be the subject of a separate administrative directive scheduled for release in 1983. In anticipation of this eventual reporting requirement agencies should maintain a record of all foster parents who have completed a training course. This record will be reviewed periodically by Department field staff. Each foster parent's record should include information about the training courses that the foster parent has completed.

5. The Department will assign a staff member to serve as a program coordinator on foster parent training. The coordinator will be responsible for: a) providing assistance to agencies in understanding the Department's foster parent training regulation and its implementation requirements; b) evaluating agency training programs; c) monitoring agency compliance with the regulation; and d) preparing and completing a report before 3/1/86 on foster parent training by authorized agencies during the period, 3/1/84 - 11/30/85.
6. Authorized agencies subject to the requirements of this directive include all local social services districts and private agencies that operate a foster family boarding home program.
7. Written requests for exceptions or modifications to the requirements of this directive should be forwarded in duplicate to the Associate Commissioner, Office of Family and Children Services Operations, 11th Floor, 40 North Pearl Street, Albany, NY 12243. Justification for the exception should be provided with the request.

The Department's foster parent training requirements are intended to be broad enough to encourage some degree of experimentation in the use of available training materials and testing of existing training models. It is expected that the evaluations that are to be completed by March 1, 1986, will provide a basis for determining whether the latitude allowed by the current requirements represents the best policy for the many diverse New York agencies administering foster family care programs.

VI. EFFECTIVE DATE

The requirements described herein for establishing compliance with Department Regulation 443.3(i) will be effective February 1, 1984.



Joseph Semidei
Deputy Commissioner
Division of Family and
Children Services