



Commitment & Retention

-  Barbee, A. P., Antle, B., Sullivan, D. J., Huebner, R., Fox, S., & Hall, J. C. (2009). Recruiting and retaining child welfare workers: Is preparing social work students enough for sustained commitment to the field? *Child Welfare*, 88(5), 69-86.
-  Faller, C. K., Grabarek, M., & Ortega, R. M. (2010). Commitment to child welfare work: What predicts leaving and staying? *Children and Youth Services Review*, 32(6), 940-946.
-  Jayaratne, S. & Faller, K. C. (2009). Commitment of private and public agency workers to child welfare: How long do they plan to stay? *Journal of Social Service Research*, 35(5), 251-261.

WHAT ARE THESE RESOURCES?

These three journal articles highlight the findings of research exploring influences on recruitment and retention of public and private child welfare employees and the effect of worker commitment to their agency and the field. The studies offer suggestions of innovative methods to improve workforce retention.

WHAT ARE THE CRITICAL FINDINGS?

Recruiting and retaining a high-quality child welfare workforce continues to be a challenge. A variety of *personal, supervisory, and organizational factors* lead to committed employees.

- Child welfare workers in *public agencies* are found to have *higher levels of commitment*, higher pay rates, and take the job because of pay, benefits, and advancement.
- Child welfare workers in *private agencies* are found to have *lower levels of commitment*, lower pay, and the majority report taking the job because it was the only one available.
- *Workers of color* are found to have lower levels of commitment to the agency and the field.
- Graduates of specialized child welfare *BSW programs* are more likely to *stay for 2 years* of service, but may *leave after 4 years* or once they feel that the job is mastered.
- *BSW graduates* are more likely to *engage in best practices*, be more *confident* and *prepared* to do child welfare work, and actually do a *better job* than those without a BSW.

*Limitations: sampling and data collection, including a small sample; lack of longitudinal data; threats to internal validity.

Factors Influencing Recruitment & Retention	Factors Influencing Job Turnover
Specialized child welfare BSW program	Excessive paperwork
Previous experience, high levels of preparedness	Inadequate training
Commitment to helping children and families	Poor supervision
Viewing Realistic Job Preview	Lack of co-worker support
Commitment to agency and child welfare	Organizational stress
Good supervision and support	Personal stress
High job satisfaction	More lucrative position elsewhere
	Negative work environment
	Lack of resources
	Insufficient time

WHAT ARE THE IMPLICATIONS FOR OUR WORK?

-  Improving employee retention can benefit a child welfare agency financially, increase morale, and improve quality of service delivery. Greater emphasis should be placed on creating positive work environments and improving the quality of the workforce in a given agency.
-  There are benefits to preparing students through specialized child welfare BSW programs. Agencies should also develop more rigorous supervisor selection, preparation, and management processes, with extensive ongoing training and education.
-  Agencies might consider restructuring frontline child welfare practices by dividing labor into clinical aspects and administrative tasks and assigning separate staff accordingly.