

## Maryland's Competencies for Child Welfare Workers (Revised 2009)

Competency Area	Core Knowledge Competencies	Core Skill Competencies	Attitude Competencies
Helping Relationships	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Know how social work values and principles apply to child welfare practice.</li> <li>2. Know the core conditions for developing helping relationships.</li> <li>3. Know the responsibilities of the public child welfare agency and caseworker and the outcome goals of public child welfare services.</li> <li>4. Know the continuum of Maryland's Family and Children's Services.</li> <li>5. Understand principles and philosophical tenets that support safety, permanency and well being for children in Maryland's public child welfare system.</li> <li>6. Understand the philosophical and legal bases of child welfare practice in Maryland.</li> <li>7. Understand the historical development of the legal system related to child welfare practice.</li> <li>8. Understand the values that underlie public child and family service delivery.</li> <li>9. Is aware of the impact of culture and ethnicity on his/her approach to human service delivery, and effects of diversity on the development of the helping relationship.</li> <li>10. Know strategies for establishing relationships with people from cultural and ethnic communities different from those of the child welfare worker.</li> <li>11. Understand cultural diversity and characteristics of special populations and implications for assessment and intervention.</li> <li>12. Understand the personal psychological stresses associated with public child welfare practice and be able to identify strategies to prevent emotional distress and burnout.</li> <li>13. Can identify strategies to promote worker safety.</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Ability to use self in relation to diverse children, families and agency settings</li> <li>2. Ability to articulate the mission and outcome goals of public child welfare services.</li> <li>3. Ability to articulate the role of the caseworker in the continuum of Maryland's public child welfare services.</li> <li>4. Is able to defuse hostility and manage resistance within the casework relationship.</li> <li>5. Ability to engage families and children in helping relationships to achieve safety, permanency, and well-being.</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Respect for persons of diverse racial, ethnic, and cultural backgrounds</li> <li>2. Hold the belief that caregivers involved in maltreatment of children can be helped to safely parent their children.</li> <li>3. Hold the belief that those with addictions are not "choosing" substances over their children.</li> <li>4. Hold the belief that addiction is found in all racial, cultural, social, and economic groups.</li> </ol>
Assessing and Addressing Issues of Child Safety and Risk	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Know definitions of <b>safety</b> (from maltreatment) and <b>risk</b> (of maltreatment).</li> <li>2. Understand how the components of the legal system, the child welfare agency, law enforcement, and the courts interface to intervene to achieve safety, permanency, and well-being of children.</li> <li>3. Know how to conduct an assessment of immediate safety using the "SAFE-C" instrument.</li> <li>4. Know what information to gather to assess for maltreatment risk using a process guided by the Maryland Family Risk Assessment tool.</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Ability to complete a safety assessment using the "SAFE-C" tool.</li> <li>2. Ability to complete a risk assessment using the MFRA tool.</li> <li>3. Ability to identify physical, emotional, and behavioral indicators of</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Hold a commitment to assuring the safety of children in the context of their families.</li> <li>2. Hold a belief in strengths-base, family-centered</li> </ol>

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<p><i>Continued:</i> Assessing and Addressing Issues of Child Safety and Risk</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>5. Know how family strengths and resources can mitigate immediate safety concerns and reduce risk in the investigation and initial assessment.</li> <li>6. Understand how parental, child, family, developmental, situational, and environmental factors contribute to safety and risk.</li> <li>7. Know Maryland’s legal definitions of physical abuse, sexual abuse, neglect, and mental injury, and child abuse/neglect indicators.</li> <li>8. Know how to develop a safety plan addressing each safety concern when the child is assessed as not being safe, including how to decide if and when to place the child in a safe out-of-home setting.</li> <li>9. Know the dynamics of child maltreatment and how to utilize Maryland’s child protection system.</li> <li>10. Know that substance abuse, mental illness, and domestic violence are primary factors that contribute to child maltreatment and how to intervene to address them.</li> </ol>	<p>abuse and neglect in children and their families.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>4. Ability to interview children and adults to gather information for safety and risk assessment.</li> <li>5. Ability to develop a safety plan and risk-based service agreement.</li> <li>6. Ability to access the juvenile court to protect children.</li> <li>7. Ability to write at a professional level including case documentation and court documents.</li> </ol>	<p>approach to child welfare.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>3. Hold the belief that caregivers involved in maltreatment of children can be helped to safely parent their children.</li> </ol>
<p>Permanency for Each Child in a Family</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Know the principle of reasonable efforts to prevent placement and promote timely reunification.</li> <li>2. Know the principles of permanency planning.</li> <li>3. Know the principles of concurrent permanency planning.</li> <li>4. Understand the role of out-of-home care as a temporary measure to address immediate safety and risk of future maltreatments and best practices to guide out-of-home placement decisions.</li> <li>5. Understand the needs of children for the least restrictive, family based care (including the role of kinship care) that maintains family and community connections and relationships.</li> <li>6. Know the impact of out-of-home placement on children’s mental health and connections to others.</li> <li>7. Understand the role of birth families in reducing stress for children during the</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Ability to engage families in the planning of and participation in visits with children in out-of-home care.</li> <li>2. Ability to work with the courts to achieve permanency.</li> <li>3. Ability to help children to maintain attachment to caregivers.</li> <li>4. Ability to engage families to resolve the issues that</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Hold a belief in the right of each child to a permanent family and maintenance of significant relationships.</li> <li>2. Hold a belief in the necessity of regular and frequent visits to maintain family members’ relationships, including siblings, and</li> </ol>

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<p><i>Continued:</i> Permanency for Each Child in a Family</p>	<p>placement process.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>8. Know the federal and state mandated timelines for achieving permanency for children in out-of-home care.</li> <li>9. Understand how the timelines for permanency for children may compete with the process of addiction recovery.</li> <li>10. Know the role of the juvenile court, Local Department of Social Services, child welfare worker and attorneys representing the child, parents, and agency in achieving permanency.</li> <li>11. Know strategies that promote reunification.</li> <li>12. Know the physical, emotional, and behavioral indicators of the effects of separation and loss on children as a result of out-of-home placement.</li> <li>13. Understand the role of foster, kinship, and adoptive families in achieving permanency.</li> <li>14. Know typical grieving reactions of parents resulting from the separation from their children and how this may affect behavior and interactions with the child welfare worker.</li> <li>15. Know how to develop a life-book with a child.</li> <li>16. Understand the need to prevent placement disruption through the use of community supports.</li> </ol>	<p>underlie the necessity of out-of-home placement.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>5. Ability to assess safety and risk in out-of-home care settings.</li> <li>6. Ability to work with foster and kinship families to meet the needs of children.</li> <li>7. Ability to involve birth families in the placements of their children.</li> <li>8. Ability to engage out-of-home providers in implementing permanency plans.</li> <li>9. Ability to assess potential foster and adoptive families.</li> <li>10. Ability to prevent placement disruption.</li> <li>11. Ability to facilitate transitions for children and families.</li> <li>12. Ability to match the child's needs with the most appropriate placement resources.</li> </ol>	<p>other significant relationships with the child in out-of-home care.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>3. Hold a belief in the significance of a child's connection to birth and foster families and maintaining an accurate placement history.</li> </ol>
<p>Family-Centered, Strengths-Based, and Collaborative Practices</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Know the philosophy, values, characteristics, and practices of family-centered child welfare practice.</li> <li>2. Understand how the provision of in-home services can prevent the removal of children from their homes.</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Ability to form collaborative relationships with families and community</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Hold a belief that each child and family member should be empowered to work</li> </ol>

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<p><i>Continued:</i> Family-Centered, Strengths-Based, and Collaborative Practices</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>3. Understand the importance of engaging children and family members in collaborative casework relationships to achieve safety, permanency, and well-being.</li> <li>4. Know family-centered practice strategies such as family involvement meetings, use of kinship resources, and engagement of fathers in decision making.</li> <li>5. Know the services available for families and children through economic security, housing, education, substance abuse, mental health, and health systems.</li> <li>6. Know the roles and responsibilities of community agencies and how to effectively collaborate with them to develop and implement service plans that to ensure safety, prevent maltreatment, and achieve permanency and well-being.</li> <li>7. Understand the dual roles of the child welfare worker in protecting children from maltreatment and providing services that preserve and empower families.</li> <li>8. Know how to use a sequence of steps in the case planning process to effectively deliver child welfare services.</li> <li>9. Know the factors that increase the likelihood of resiliency in children.</li> </ol>	<p>services providers who are working with the child/family to assess a child's need for special developmental, medical, educational, social, psychological, and other services.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>2. Ability to provide services to families in their homes and other out-of-the-office settings.</li> <li>3. Ability to identify strengths and needs of children/families.</li> <li>4. Ability to diffuse anger/hostility/resistance to engage the child/family in a strengths-based, family centered assessment and service provision process.</li> <li>5. Ability to access a range of services in the public and private child welfare and social services systems that address safety, risk, permanency, and well-being.</li> <li>6. Ability to provide case management services (coordinating services,</li> </ol>	<p>for his/her own needs and goals.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>2. Hold a commitment to strengths-based, family-centered practice.</li> <li>3. Value family preservation, permanency for children, preservation of parents' and children's rights, self-determination, and respect for individual and cultural differences.</li> </ol>

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<i>Continued:</i> Family-Centered, Strengths-Based, and Collaborative Practices		facilitating communication, and setting mutual goals). 7. Ability to implement family-centered practice strategies such as family involvement meetings, use of kinship resources, and engagement of fathers in decision making.	
Developmental Approaches that Enhance Child Well-Being	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Know the stages, milestones, and processes of child’s physical, mental, and emotional development from pre-natal development through adolescence.</li> <li>2. Know the range of influences that impact development and their affects.</li> <li>3. Understand the effects of maltreatment on children’s development.</li> <li>4. Know the outcomes of the separation and placement experience for children and their families.</li> <li>5. Understand attachment theory and its applicability to child welfare services.</li> <li>6. Know the indicators of substance abuse in children and adolescents.</li> <li>7. Know the common developmental delays and how to screen for them.</li> <li>8. Understand the importance of early identification and intervention for children with developmental delay.</li> <li>9. Know how to engage children at different stages of development in helping relationships.</li> <li>10. Understand the specialized needs of gay/lesbian youth in the child welfare system.</li> <li>11. Understand how mental health needs of caregivers affect their ability to provide safe and permanent families for children.</li> <li>12. Understand the affect of multiple placements and caregivers on child development and well-being.</li> <li>13. Understand “duty to warn” principle.</li> <li>14. Understand permanency timelines from the child’s perspective.</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Ability to weigh the risks to a child remaining at home against the potential trauma of separation.</li> <li>2. Ability to screen for developmental delays.</li> <li>3. Ability to screen for failure to thrive.</li> <li>4. Ability to address issues of sexuality with adolescents and their caregivers.</li> <li>5. Ability to screen for mental health needs and link children/caregivers with mental health providers.</li> <li>6. Ability to assess for substance abuse, suicidal and homicidal intention and provide appropriate intervention.</li> <li>7. Ability to talk to children about parental substance abuse.</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Hold a belief in early intervention.</li> <li>2. Belief that each child in the child welfare system should be helped to reach his/her potential.</li> </ol>