



March 29, 2004

**MEMORANDUM**

**TO:** Assistant Division Directors for Field Operations  
County Directors of Family and Children Services  
DFCS Field Directors  
DFCS Section Directors  
State Staff

**FROM:** Dr. Janet Oliva, Director,  
Division of Family and Children Services

**RE:** **Update on Training, Child Protection Certification Program (CPCP), and Career Path**

In February, general information about the CPCP was shared at the statewide meeting attended by county directors and field managers. At that time it was announced that by December 31, 2004, all staff working in the Office of Child Protection must successfully attain certification. The purpose of this memorandum is to share information about a number of significant changes that will impact DFCS staff as we move through restructuring and toward an Office of Child Protection. Please ensure that this information is shared with all new and incumbent social services staff (case manager associates, case managers, case managers advanced, social services specialists, social services supervisors) and that directions listed below are followed.

**New Workers and Certification Training:** New hires will attain certification by successfully completing new worker training. Beginning April 5, 2004 new worker certification training will be held at the training academy located on the 7<sup>th</sup> floor at 2 Peachtree Street in Atlanta. The New Worker Training Series will be 16 weeks long and will include:

- 4 Weeks of classroom training at the Training Academy
- 4 Weeks of Field Practice (Mentoring)
- 4 Weeks of classroom training at the Training Academy
- 4 Weeks of Field Practice (Mentoring)

Written tests, field observations and record reviews will be utilized to assess new hires and ensure that they have the competencies necessary for effective social work practice.

Education and Research staff members will be responsible for logistical arrangements, such as lodging, related to the training experience. Before the training session, participants will receive a letter stating all the necessary information about their upcoming training. Prior to attaining certification, “workers in training” **cannot** have an assigned caseload.

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New hires should be registered for new worker training as soon as possible. It will also be necessary for counties to ensure that these new staff have applied for user id's for groupwise/novell, CPRS, IDS, and on line training. Please direct any questions regarding these new hires to Elaine Smith, [eysmith@dhr.state.ga.us](mailto:eysmith@dhr.state.ga.us), Certification and Best Practice Unit Chief.

**Incumbents and Certification Program:** ALL social services staff must complete the attached **Application for Certification** and return it to the Education and Research Section by May 1, 2004. Incumbents who meet the 5-year service/performance requirement will be certified at their current level and will receive notification of such. Staff who do not meet this requirement will be expected to complete the following certification program, and will be notified of the process which includes:

- a. Completion of pretest on core competencies to identify any professional development needs (May)
- b. Professional development opportunities on the web (June)
- c. Assessment (July, August) via written test, record review, observation checklist
- d. Professional development opportunities for those not successful (fall)
- e. Second assessment (fall)

After December 31, 2004, only staff that have successfully completed the certification program can occupy a social services position in the Office of Child Protection.

**Recertification and Career Path:** Successful participation in ongoing continuing education is required to maintain certification. Continuing education requirements for recertification will be developed, delivered, and coordinated through the Education and Research section. Additionally, professionals in the Office of Child Protection can choose to advance their career and receive increases in pay via a Career Path. More details about the career path and recertification training will be shared at a later date.

We understand that the Child Protection Certification Program represents a significant change for new hires and incumbents. But we believe it will ultimately result in a more professionalized, well-trained workforce and provide staff with opportunity for career advancement.

We appreciate your cooperation as we implement the Child Protection Certification Program in Georgia. If you have any questions related to the certification program, please refer to the DFCS web site at <http://dfcs.dhr.ga.gov> or contact Bonnie Kirschling at [bxkirsch@dhr.state.ga.us](mailto:bxkirsch@dhr.state.ga.us).

Thank you.