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ANALYSIS OF AN EXPLORATION FOR
TRAINING MATERIALS IN CHILD WELFARE

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ABSTRACT

Currently there is a serious gap in the child welfare system in the area of in-service training. As the child welfare system begins to fill this gap, information on what materials are available for training becomes critical. This article reports on an extensive exploration of what is currently available for training in the child welfare field. Several important findings emerged concerning the sources of materials and the lack of training materials for specialized groups.

A recent national study found that in-service training is one of the most serious gaps in the child welfare delivery system (Shyne and Schroeder: 158). The problem of delivering adequate in-service training is complicated by the fact that only one-fourth of the workers in child welfare have professional degrees in social work (Shyne and Schroeder: 78). These findings suggest that the need for in-service training is great, not only to enable those who are trained in social work to keep abreast of changes in the field of child welfare and to improve their expertise, but especially to train those having little background in social work or child welfare.

The need for in-service training in child welfare has been clearly established. However, there has been little effort to explore the field for materials available to trainers to use for in-service training. As in-service training materials are developed, it is critical that information about their availability reach social workers in the field. This article reports on an extensive exploration of what resources are currently available for training in the field of child welfare. The findings suggest that many materials are available for the traditional areas of child welfare practice; however, materials for newer or more specialized topics of training are lacking.

The search for training materials was conducted by the staff of the Region VI Child Welfare Training Center during the summer of 1980.¹ The search was designed to

¹The Region VI Child Welfare Training Center was established in the Fall of 1979. The Training Center is located in the Tulane University School of Social Work. Region VI covers the following states - Louisiana, Texas, New Mexico, Arkansas, and Oklahoma.

find materials which could be included in a training manual developed specifically for trainers in the child welfare field.²

METHODOLOGY

Eighteen major topics were chosen as areas of concern for the training manual: adoption, American Indian clients, assessment and interviewing, Black urban clients, child abuse, child care in institutions, foster care, homemakers, in-home services, law and the court, licensing, migrant farmworker clients, minority clients, permanency planning, Spanish speaking clients, training methods and techniques, training supervisors, and training volunteers. These topics were selected because trainers in Region VI had expressed the need for materials in these areas.

To insure that the materials were current, available, and appropriate for staff training, three criteria were established for the items included in the training manual. They were as follows:

- 1) only materials developed after 1964 were included;
- 2) the materials had to be readily available from publishers;
- 3) only materials clearly appropriate for training in child welfare were included.

SOURCES EXPLORED

The extensive search for training materials involved exploration of three main sources: computerized data banks; commercial and non-profit publishers; and relevant social work journals and government catalogs.

An evaluation of available computerized data banks was conducted to determine which were potentially most useful for the search. ERIC (Education Resources Information Center) was finally selected because of its educational focus and because it draws from a variety of human services sources. Other data bases were not used because they did not appear to focus on training materials in child welfare.

The inquiry to commercial publishers for available training materials included, among others, Human Sciences Press, Learning Resource Corporation, C. V. Mosby Company, and Sage Publications. Some of the major non-profit publishers contacted were American Public Welfare Association, Child's Defense Fund, Child Welfare League of America, Family Service Association of America, National Association of Social Workers, National Council of Homemaker-Home Health Aide Services, and North American Council on Adoptable Children. The commercial and non-profit publishers proved to be an excellent source of training materials in child welfare.

²The manual resulting from this search, entitled Child Welfare Training and Practice: An Annotated Bibliography by John T. Pardeck, Rebecca L. Hegar, Kathy N. Nance, and Cynthia Christy Baker, is forthcoming from Greenwood Press, 1982.

³A broad topic including training items for general minority and cultural group concerns.

The search of social work journals included the following: Child Welfare, Children, Journal of Education for Social Work, and Social Work. This search proved to be of limited use. However, government catalogs which listed a variety of materials from both state and federal governments were found to be extremely useful. Also listed in the government catalogs were numerous training items which had been developed by universities. Government sources and universities were found to be the major agents from which training materials are available.

RESULTS

Through an analysis of Table I, several important trends appear to emerge. These concern the sources of training materials and the number of materials available for traditional and specialized topics in child welfare.

The two major publishers of training materials are universities, with a total of sixty four, and government, with sixty. The non-profit and commercial publishers are the next major sources with total numbers of forty four and thirty nine respectively. The professional journals are the least likely source of training materials.

The three topics which have the greatest number of materials available are child abuse and neglect with forty items, assessment and interviewing listing twenty five, and foster care with twenty one. These are all traditional areas of concern in child welfare, so the large number of materials is not surprising. However, other traditional areas are lacking in available training materials. The search revealed only eight items designed for training about adoptions, and only six materials were located concerning in-home services and homemakers. The reason for the apparent lack of training resources for these traditional topics in child welfare services is not clear.

A moderate number of materials is available for the following: law and the court listing eighteen; training supervisors with seventeen; training methods and techniques having sixteen training items; and child care in institutions showing thirteen. A variety of materials is therefore available to trainers in these important areas of child welfare practice and training.

Three topics having relatively few materials available are training volunteers with nine, licensing with four, and permanency planning having only three. The use of volunteers has always been a part of the child welfare tradition (Kadushin: 237), and it seems that more training materials should be available. Licensing is an increasingly important function, and more training materials need to be developed. Permanency planning is a relatively new area, which suggests that sufficient time may not have passed for the development of materials for training staff.

The topics which deal with minority group members also reflect a small number of training materials. For minority clients in general, only three items could be found. The search for materials concerning Black clients and Spanish speaking clients resulted in six training items for each of these two topics. The search produced eight training items concerning Indian clients. Only one training product was located about work with migrant farmworker clients. These findings are extremely important because a large part of the client population served by the child welfare system consists of

TABLE I
SOURCES OF TRAINING MATERIALS

TOPICS	Professional	Universities	Government	Commercial	Non-Profit	TOTAL
	Journals			Publishers	Publishers	
Adoption	--	--	3	4	1	8
American Indian Clients	--	3	1	2	2	8
Assessment and Interviewing	--	11	9	3	2	25
Black Urban Clients	--	1	2	--	3	6
Child Abuse and Neglect	--	8	19	9	4	40
Child Care in Institutions	--	1	4	--	8	13
Foster Care	--	8	3	4	6	21
Homemakers	--	--	1	1	4	6
In-Home Services	--	1	--	3	2	6
Law and Court	--	8	7	--	3	18
Licensing (Day Care and Institutions)	--	--	4	--	--	4
Migrant Farm- worker Clients	--	--	1	--	--	1
Minority Clients	--	2	--	--	1	3
Permanency Planning	--	3	--	--	--	3
Spanish speaking Clients	--	3	--	--	3	6
Training Methods and Techniques	2	7	1	5	1	16
Training Supervisors	1	7	3	5	1	17
Training Volunteers	--	1	2	3	3	9
TOTALS:	3	64	60	39	44	210

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Migrant Farm- worker Clients	--	--	1	--	--	1
Minority Clients	--	2	--	--	1	3
Permanency Planning	--	3	--	--	--	3
Spanish speaking Clients	--	3	--	--	3	6
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children and families from minority groups. The sheer number of minority group members within the child welfare system suggests that more training materials should be available for trainers to help workers and other staff better meet the special needs of these clients.

CONCLUSION

Several conclusions can be drawn from this search for available training materials in child welfare. One finding is that universities and government are the major developers of training materials. Another important finding is that, for many of the traditional services and concerns in child welfare, an abundance of materials is available; however, this is not true of all aspects of child welfare practice. Probably the most important discovery is that only a small number of materials is available for training staff to serve minority clients.

⁴A forthcoming manual designed to help fill this void, entitled Permanent Planning For Mexican-American Children in Foster Care: A Handbook Supplement by Rebecca L. Hegar and Loyda Rodriguez will be published by Region VI Child Welfare Training Center, 1982.

REFERENCES

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