Hello to all Title IV-E Child Welfare Partnership participants, alumni, and stakeholders,

Happy Spring from the Title IV-E Child Welfare Partnership program! We are busy celebrating graduates, welcoming new students and child welfare employees to the program, and continuing to build strong relationships with regional DFPS partners, SSCC representatives, and other stakeholders.

In May, the Title IV-E Child Welfare Partnership Team will travel to Burlington, Vermont, to participate in the National Title IV-E Roundtable. The Roundtable is an annual gathering of public and private child welfare agencies and their university partners, with the goal of building a strong child welfare workforce through education and training. The Center for Children and Families and the School of Social Work at Texas State University, under the leadership of Dr. Nancy Feyl-Chavkin and Dr. Karen Brown, originated and hosted the first Title IV-E Roundtable over 25 years ago, and it has now grown to a large national conference.

The theme of this year’s Roundtable, hosted by the Vermont Child Welfare Training Partnership, is Transforming Child Welfare: The Aims and Gains of Social Movements and the Vision and Voice of Everyday Lives. The goals of this year’s Roundtable include looking at how federal, public, tribal, and university funds can blend to fund education and training programs, discussing current federal policies and guidance on child welfare training and education programming, and reviewing best practices in training and education for partnerships. We are excited to network and learn from others about best practices!

We hope everyone has a fun and safe summer.

- The Title IV-E Child Welfare Partnership Team

“Having compassion for yourself means that you honor and accept your humanness.”
-Kristin Neff

“YOU ARE WORTH THE QUIET MOMENT.
YOU ARE WORTH THE DEEPER BREATHS,
AND YOU ARE WORTH THE TIME IT TAKES TO SLOW DOWN,
BE STILL,
AND REST.”
-Morgan Harper Nichols

Welcome, Amanda!

The Title IV-E Child Welfare Partnership is excited to welcome our new student worker, Amanda Graves. Amanda is a MSW student who started at Texas State University in Fall 2023 and started working with the Title IV-E CWP program this spring. She is interested in social justice issues that affect women of all ages. When not in school, Amanda enjoys running, biking, reading and spending time with her friends and family.
The Title IV-E Child Welfare Partnership is excited to welcome two new students to the program. Johanna Foster, BSW student, and Alex Papacek, MSW student, were both selected to complete their final field placement at CPS in the Austin area in the fall, and will sign an agreement to work at DFPS after graduation in December 2024.

Welcome to the program!

The Title IV-E Child Welfare Partnership is excited to announce the graduation of three Title IV-E Child Welfare students this spring. Natisha Brown (pictured left) completed her final BSW internship at Child Protective Services (CPS) in Temple in the Spring of 2024, and is planning to start her career in child welfare when she is hired as a CPS Conservatorship Worker after graduation. We are also celebrating the graduation of two employee-students: Anitra Copeland (pictured right) and Stephanie Smith (not pictured). Anitra and Stephanie completed the part-time MSW program at Texas State while continuing to work full-time at CPS in Region 7, and they will both be graduating in May 2024.

Congratulations to all three graduates!

“The future belongs to those who believe in the beauty of their dreams.”

- Eleanor Roosevelt

"The Title IV-E Child Welfare Partnership provided me with the opportunity to not only develop a solid foundation of professional skills and knowledge but also provided me with a deep sense of fulfillment in making a difference in the lives of children and families. Interning at Child Protective Services has solidified my long-term career goal as a conservatorship caseworker!” - Natisha Brown

“I am thankful for the Title IV-E program as it has afforded me the opportunity to further my education. By completing my Masters in Social Work, I have gained a vast amount of knowledge that will help me in my career with DFPS and beyond. I am glad that I chose to complete the program at Texas State University. It has been a wonderful experience!” - Anitra Copeland
“The expectation that we can be immersed in suffering and loss daily and not be touched by it, is as unrealistic as expecting to be able to walk through water without getting wet.” - Rachel Remen

In February, the Title IV-E CWP program arranged for Kate Cunningham of the University of Vermont to present Professional Dangerousness training to CPS staff in the central Texas area.

**Professional Dangerousness**

The process by which individual workers or multidisciplinary networks can, most unwittingly, act in such a way as to collude with, maintain, or increase the dangerous dynamics of the family in which the abuse takes place.

**Individual Dynamics**

- **Rule of optimism** - professional finds the most positive explanation of a situation, one which creates the least conflict with parents and with themselves.
- **Cultural relativism** - creating an elastic set of norms, re: care, protection, and advice. This immobilizes professionals when dealing with families of a different culture.
- **Concept of helping** - needing to defuse rather than using a crisis as a basis of intervention.
- **Feelings of omnipotence** - professionals believing they know the best interest of the child
- **Professional confidence and feelings of uncertainty** - leads to a struggle to challenge decisions and behavior of multi-agency colleagues when a child is at risk.

“Your past mistakes are meant to guide you, not define you.” - Anonymous

**Counteract Risk**

- Deal openly with the power dynamic.
- Balance empathy and relationship skills with an eyes-wide-open, boundaried, authoritative approach aimed at ensuring the child’s needs stay in sharp focus.
- Avoid permitting the complexities of adults’ problems from eclipsing the child’s immediate needs.
- Family non-engagement or hostility hampers one’s decision-making capabilities and follow through with assessments and plans.
- Observe parent-child interactions with every effort to capture the child’s voice.


*Special thank you to Nicki Weld, PhD who presented the term Professional Dangerousness to VTCWTP in 2012*

For additional information, listen to Kate Cunningham & Cassie Gillespie from VT-CWTP as they talk about Professional Dangerousness & Safety Culture in child welfare work:

[https://vermontcwtp.podbean.com/e/episode-9-professional-dangerousness/](https://vermontcwtp.podbean.com/e/episode-9-professional-dangerousness/)
“Professional self-care is paramount for competent and ethical social work practice.” - NASW Code of Ethics

For additional self-care resources:

This paper suggests that incorporating personal self-care practices mediates the relationship between secondary trauma experienced by child welfare workers and their mental health outcomes.


This paper discusses the importance of self-care in maintaining a balanced work/personal life. It also explores specific steps to take when developing an individualized self-care plan


Problems arise in that one has to find a balance between what people need from you and what you need for yourself.

- Jessye Norman

For a clearer view of the infographic or to obtain more information, please click [here](https://socialwork.buffalo.edu/resources/self-care-starter-kit.html).

Infographic courtesy of the University at Buffalo School of Social Work. For a self-care starter kit, please visit: [https://socialwork.buffalo.edu/resources/self-care-starter-kit.html](https://socialwork.buffalo.edu/resources/self-care-starter-kit.html)