

NATIONAL RESOURCE CENTER FOR CHILD PROTECTIVE SERVICES

Technical Assistance Site Report



Prepared for Alaska Office of Children's Services

By Therese Roe Lund, MSSW
National Resource Center for Child Protective Services

Dates of onsite technical assistance summarized in this report:
March 28, 29, and 30, 2006

Technical Assistance Request

The Alaska Office of Children's Services (OCS) requested technical assistance for the purpose of enhancing and regulating supervisory practice. Subsequent to this request, the Federal Regional Office suggested further refinement of the state's need to ensure that 1) the appropriate Resource Centers were secured to offer help and 2) that the strategies selected would be effective in building the state's capacity in carrying out its objectives.

Following several conference calls and written communication, 3 days of technical assistance (TA) were approved by the Federal Regional Office for the National Resource Center for Child Protective Services (NRCCPS) to assist OCS with the following objectives:

- Assist with the development and maintenance of an executive team to support the Deputy Commissioner and fully participate in the necessary decision making and monitoring tasks related to the state's initiative to implement a more comprehensive approach to child safety decision making
- Assist with the development of a strategic plan to support the implementation effort
- Assure that efforts for implementation and planning processes include necessary partnerships with Tribal representatives and that plans meet the unique needs of Alaska.

Site Visit

The technical assistance site visit occurred on March 28, 29 and 30, 2006. Participating in the site visit were Terry Roe Lund from the NRCCPS and managerial staff from all regions, including the OCS central office staff and the Deputy Commissioner.

The initial steps the participants took were to identify their own readiness and confidence in understanding the implications of the safety decision making model they are implementing. In addition, time was spent considering the level of expertise among supervisory staff (their supervisees). These issues were discussed in order to appreciate the challenges that lie ahead for the implementation effort, since they are often why implementation of any initiative fails.

Decision making regarding key aspects of implementation was the next task of the group. Key decisions made include:

- Implementation of the new safety decision making model will begin the next business day after a worker and supervisory complete training
- A notetaking guide with the six questions as prompts will be developed to assist workers in the field
- The answers to the six questions will be entered along with each of the six questions as “headers” into ORCA on the Investigation Summary tab
- A word template will be developed for optional use to replicate the six question format for those staff who wish to cut and paste the information into ORCA
- The formats used in training will be implemented (and developed into Alaska formats). These formats are for:
 - Assessing present danger
 - Initial contact protective action
 - Assessing impending danger
 - Continuing safety plan
- The safety assessment and analysis and plan formats will be either hand completed or entered on a Word template
- Benchmarks were developed to measure success for the first 3 months of implementation. These benchmarks will be expanded for both the first quarter and beyond.

The final day of the TA meeting involved the development of the assignments and first tasks of workgroups to carry out a strategic plan to support the implementation effort. Workgroups were formed around the various system supports necessary: Policy and procedure; Supervision; Program Management; Staff Development; Documentation; and Quality Assurance. Tasks and timelines were established with all activities and products subject to the approval of the Deputy Commissioner.

Next Steps

Subject to Federal Regional Office approval and OCS readiness, further TA is tentatively scheduled for the week of May 15. At this time NRCCPS is holding this time period to be of further assistance.

Tentative plans for this site visit could include:

- Engaging Tribal partners in the strategic plan process, both for overall OCS implementation but possibly, if interested, in assisting with Tribal implementation
- Continuing the decision making process and further development of the executive team to assist with implementation planning and monitoring.