

Area of Specialized Practice #2: Children, Youth and Families Practice

Competency 1: Demonstrate Ethical and Professional Behavior

Social workers understand the value base of the profession and ethical standards as they relate to practice in settings which serve children, youth and families. Social workers practicing with children, youth and families understand their role and the roles of other professionals. Social workers understand the policies, laws and regulations that impact children, youth and families (for example circumstances involving mandated reporting, child protection, juvenile justice, and domestic violence). Social workers understand frameworks for ethical decision making and how to apply them in practice with children, youth and families. Social workers understand how personal experiences and affective reactions influence professional judgement and behavior, especially when working with children, youth and families. Social workers understand that self-care is paramount for competent and ethical social practice in these settings and take measures to take care of themselves both professionally and personally. Social workers critique the profession's history in working with children, youth and families which includes using an anti-racist, anti-oppressive, human rights based lens to examine the mission, roles and responsibilities of the profession. Social workers recognize the historical and current contexts of oppression in shaping institutions serving children, youth and families. Social workers recognize the importance of lifelong learning and stay up to date on research which informs practice skills for effective practice with clients and their families in the settings that serve children, youth and families. Social workers:

- Make ethical decisions using the National Association of Social Workers Code of Ethics as a guide and within the laws and regulations related to practice with children, youth and families,
- Use anti-racist/anti-oppressive lenses to examine and critique the roles and responsibilities of the social work profession to identify the ethical implications for practice working with children, youth and families given institutions that have been shaped by contexts of oppression.
- Demonstrate commitment to using research evidence and lifelong learning to inform and update practice skills for relevant and effective practice in settings serving children, youth and families.
- Use supervision to guide professional judgment and behavior within the settings that serve children, youth and families.

Competency 2: Advance Human Rights and Social, Racial, Economic, and Environmental Justice

Social workers understand that every person, including children and youth, have fundamental human rights. Social workers are knowledgeable about ongoing injustices that result in oppression and racism. Social workers critically evaluate the distribution of power and privilege as it relates to child welfare and family services in order to promote social, racial, economic and environmental justice. Social workers understand that children are particularly vulnerable to social, economic, and environmental injustice. Social workers understand strategies designed to eliminate oppressive obstacles to ensure more equitable distribution of social goods, rights, and responsibilities. Social workers value human rights and work to ensure that human rights are protected through advocacy at individual and system levels for children, youth and families. Social workers:

- Apply their understanding of social, economic, racial, and environmental injustice to advocate for human rights that promote the well-being of children, youth and families.
- Apply understanding of human rights to identify systems of oppression and engage in strategies to eliminate barriers to equitable distribution of resources and services that specifically impact the lives of children, youth and families.
- Advocate for policies that protect the rights of children and youth.

Competency 3: Engage Anti-Racism, Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (ADEI) in Practice

Social workers understand that racism and oppression shape human experience, including the health, development and wellbeing of children, youth and families. Social workers also understand that as a consequence of diversity, a person may experience oppression and discrimination or privilege which also impacts child development, family growth and functioning. Social workers understand that structural mechanisms that oppress or create power impact infant and child mortality, health outcomes, contribute to education disparities, and access to resources. Social workers recognize that cultural structures and values influence identity, growth, equity and inclusion. Social workers understand how diversity and intersectionality shape human experiences and identity development and affect equity and inclusion. The dimensions of diversity are understood as the intersectionality of factors including but not limited to age, caste, class, color, culture, disability and ability, ethnicity, gender, gender identity and expression, generational status, immigration status, legal status, marital status, political ideology, race, nationality, religion and spirituality, sex, sexual orientation, and tribal sovereign status. Social workers understand that this intersectionality means that a person's life experiences may include oppression, poverty, marginalization, and alienation as well as privilege and power. Social workers understand that diversity shapes their own experiences as well as those of their clients and this experience impacts the professional relationship. Social workers:

- Apply understanding of how diversity and intersectionality shape life experience and may include oppression, poverty, marginalization and alienation as well as privilege and power within settings serving children, youth and/or families.

- Demonstrate cultural humility by applying, reflection, self-awareness and self-regulation to manage the influence of bias, power and privilege and values when working with children, youth and families. Understanding of the influence of culture on identity development.
- Apply understanding of the influence of culture on family roles, structure and norms.

Competency 4: Engage in Practice-informed Research and Research-informed Practice

Social workers working in settings serving children, youth and families understand how to access the vast interdisciplinary knowledge base available to inform their practice. Social workers use ethical, culturally informed, anti-racist and anti-oppressive approaches in conducting research concerning children, youth and families. Social workers understand how to translate research findings to better understand child and family development, problems occurring in childhood, and for more effective engagement, assessment and interventions. Social workers also design, analyze and interpret research using an anti-racist and anti-oppressive perspective in order to address inherent bias in research and program evaluation. Social workers use research findings to improve policy and programs serving children, youth and families. This includes but is not limited to examining racial disparities within child welfare, education, health and employment. Social workers utilize qualitative and quantitative data from both practice settings and empirical sources to inform their practice. Social workers understand the importance of using practice experience to influence scientific inquiry and research. Social workers:

- Evaluate, translate and use research findings to inform and improve practice, with children, youth and families.
- Identify ethical, culturally informed, anti-racist, and anti-oppressive strategies that address inherent biases within research methods in order to use research to improve policies and service delivery for children, youth and families.
- Use practice experience with children, youth and families to guide their research inquiry and evaluation of practice.

Competency 5: Engage in Policy Practice

Social workers are knowledgeable of the historical and current policies that impact the delivery of child welfare and other services for children, youth and families. Social workers recognize the historical, social, racial cultural, economic, organizational, environmental, and global influences that affect social policy that impacts children, youth and families. Social workers identify local, state, federal and global policies that affect the well-being, human rights and justice, service

delivery, and access to social services for children, youth and families. Social workers understand the role of practice in policy development. Social workers understand their role in policy development. Social workers engage in policy practice at micro, mezzo and macro levels to affect change within children, youth and family service sectors. Social workers influence policy formulation, analysis implementation, and evaluation within practice settings with children, youth and families. Social workers:

- Use social justice, anti-racist, and anti-oppressive lenses to assess how policies at the local, state, and federal levels that impact service delivery to children, youth and families.
- Apply critical thinking to analyze formulate and advocate for children, youth and family policies that advance human rights, social, racial, economic and environmental justice.

Competency 6: Engage with Individuals and Families

Social workers value the importance of human relationships and understand that engagement is an integral and ongoing part of social work practice with children, youth and families. Social workers understand theories of human behavior, and the social environment, human development and other theories that inform the engagement process. Social workers understand strategies to engage diverse clients. Social workers understand that their personal experiences, affective reactions and position of privilege may impact effective engagement with children, youth and families. Social workers:

- Apply theories applicable to working with children, youth and families to inform the engagement process.
- Use empathy, self-awareness, and interpersonal skills to engage with children and youth of all ages and their families.
- Use self-reflection to manage the influence of personal bias in engagement with children, youth and families.

Competency 7: Assess Individuals and Families

Social workers understand that assessment is an ongoing part of practice with children, youth and families. Social workers understand theories of human behavior and the social environment, risk and protection factors, human resilience, human development and others. Social workers apply theoretical frameworks to the assessment of children, youth and families. Social workers understand the larger practice context and the multi-disciplinary nature of services for children,

youth and families and participate in professional collaboration in the assessment process of individuals and families. Social workers understand and use assessment of cognitive and behavioral functioning for identifying needs, strengths, development, coping, resilience and response to interventions. Social workers value self-determination and develop mutually agreed-upon intervention goals with the children, youth and families they work with. Social workers understand that personal experiences and affective reactions can influence the assessment process especially with children youth and families. Social workers use reflection, supervision and consultation as needed to mitigate the effects of bias, power, privilege, personal values and experiences on their assessment and decision making process. Social workers:

- Apply theories of human behavior and the social environment, human development, the impact of trauma, and family systems to assess children, youth and families.
- Apply self-awareness and reflection to minimize the influence of personal bias and affective reactions on the assessment process.
- Use interdisciplinary collaboration as part of integrated and effective assessment of individuals and families.
- Demonstrate respect for client self-determination during the assessment process by collaborating with clients to develop mutually agreed-upon plans.

Competency 8: Intervene with Individuals and Families

Social workers understand that intervention is an ongoing part of practice with children, youth and families. Social workers understand theories of human behavior and the social environment, human development, trauma, family systems and others. Social workers understand methods to identify and analyze research findings in order to become knowledgeable about evidence informed interventions for children, youth and families. Social workers apply this knowledge to select culturally responsive interventions with children, youth and families. Social workers participate in inter-professional collaborations to intervene with children, youth and families. Social workers understand the multi-disciplinary nature of providing services and care to children, youth and families and participate in professional collaboration in the intervention process. Social workers understand that the application of theory of human behavior in the social environment may turn the focus of social work intervention from clients to their environment. Social workers use practice skills to mediate and advocate on behalf of diverse clients. Social workers facilitate effective transitions and endings. Social workers:

- Apply knowledge of human behavior and the social environment, human development, the impact of trauma and family systems to develop interventions with children, youth and families.
- Identify and use critical analysis to choose evidence informed, culturally responsive interventions to be implemented with children, youth and families.

- Facilitate effective transitions and endings towards, healthy development, safety, adjustment and other related goals.
- Use interdisciplinary collaboration as part of integrated and effective intervention with children, youth and families.

Competency 9: Evaluate Practice with Individuals and Families

Social workers understand that evaluation is an ongoing part of social work practice with children, youth and families. Social workers understand theories of human behavior and the social environment, risk and protection factors, human resilience, human development and others. Social workers apply theoretical frameworks to the evaluation of practice with children, youth and families. Social workers understand the importance of evaluating practice intervention processes and outcomes in order to promote effective practice and service delivery for children, youth and families. Social workers apply anti-racist and anti-oppressive perspectives in evaluating outcomes. Social workers understand qualitative and quantitative methods in order to choose appropriate methods for practice and program evaluation. Social workers understand how to analyze practice evaluation findings in order to improve practice and inform policy and service delivery for children, youth and families. Social workers understand the multi-disciplinary nature of services for children, youth and families and participate in professional collaboration in the evaluation of practice with individuals and families. Social workers:

- Apply knowledge of human behavior and the social environment, human development and family systems to analyze assessment data from clients.
- Select and use culturally responsive methods to evaluate practice with children, youth and families.
- Critically analyze outcomes and apply evaluation findings to improve practice effectiveness with children, youth and families.