

Child Support Training Collaborators

By Rachel Ogden

Child support organizations across the country strive to provide helpful, efficient services for a diverse set of clients. Expertly trained staff are the key ingredient in providing these services. Strategically crafted trainings can prepare and maintain excellence in child support staff's work performance.

There are various differences throughout child support organizations that present challenges to learning methods and processes. Communication, relationships, organizational culture, and group dynamics all play a significant role in successfully training staff. Let's explore some of the variables that impact successful trainings in child support.

Effective training involves many factors which directly impact the success of organizational learning. Child support organizations have a variety of groups and teams working cohesively to provide services to clients. Because many of the child support process areas are very complex, they require staff to become subject matter experts in their specific area. Child support processes such as: case set-up, establishment, guidelines, medical, case close, etc. can often overlap, presenting the need for all process areas and teams to provide input and feedback in the development of trainings. Individual and team perspectives provide different layers of expertise, which are critical to the success of child support trainings.

Include subject matter experts from all related process areas in the development of training materials to ensure there are no knowledge gaps. Creating solid methods for communication and group participation amongst child support staff will ensure all perspectives are considered and the training needs of employees in all hierarchy levels are voiced. Direct communication from one group to another by an appointed communication liaison (training project coordinator) will decrease communication issues. Effective communication across all child support process areas will decrease interdepartmental issues and problems between groups sharing or duplicating resources.

Streamlining lines of communication, preparing alternate interventions or prevention methods to change direction when a project is veering off course, and strategically planning in accordance to what is best for the employees will increase the likelihood of retained, changed behavior and performance. On the other hand, projects that lack effective communication methods and diverse subject matter input risk major communication breakdowns, issues with responsibility and implementation, inaccurately processed work tasks, wasted or misused resources (time, money, labor, etc.), and loss of personnel.

Successful knowledge transfer and retention is attainable by applying the knowledge, experience, and perspectives from subject matter experts across different levels in trainings and aligning the training objectives with organizational values.