

IU School of Social Work Partnership with Indiana Department of Child Services

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Abstract

The Indiana University School of Social Work (IUSSW) has continued a partnership with the Indiana Department of Child Services (DCS) since 2001, providing Master/Bachelor's level education and pre-service training for the employees of DCS. As part of the ongoing evaluation of the services provided by IUSSW, a cohort of BSW graduates and a cohort of DCS trainees were surveyed to compare the relative strengths and challenges that new Family Case Managers face as they begin their careers in the demanding public child welfare system. A survey was adapted from the New Jersey social work education partnership and administered at five to seven months after the students/new employees had graduated/completed training. Survey results indicate that the BSW graduates felt more competent than their counterparts who attended twelve weeks of pre-service training on many items, some of which were significant. There was similarity on some areas that both the BSWs and trainees felt less competent which has implications for curricular changes for both forms of training to prepare the child welfare workforce. Retention data also shows that the BSW group was more likely to remain in employment almost one year later, however, results are limited by very small sample sizes.