

Family Development Credential Program Curriculum Overview (revised June 2015)

The ten chapters of the handbook, Empowerment Skills for Family Workers, address the following family development skills and competencies; objectives for each chapter are as follows:

Chapter 1: Family Development: A Sustainable Route To Healthy Self-Reliance

- A. Understand how to help families restore their sense of healthy self-reliance.
- B. Explain ways the “providing services” orientation limits families and workers.
- C. Describe why using the term “family development” is more empowering for families than “case management”.
- D. Discuss the core principles underlying the family development approach.
- E. Explain the seven steps of family development and the seven roles of family development workers.
- F. Discuss the differences between using the deficit and family development approaches.
- G. Assist families to develop a plan for achieving a major goal of healthy self-reliance using the Family Development Plan.
- H. Explore selected research on brain development and how it impacts transformative learning.
- I. Recognize the importance of family systems and how poverty and environmental chaos impact health and development, starting in childhood.
- J. Focus family development on the “here and now, and offer support based on a commitment to families’ goals.

Chapter 2: Communicating with Skill and Heart

- A. Explain why effective communication takes both skill and “heart”.
- B. Build empathy with others by appropriately sharing something of your own life with the families you work with.
- C. Develop more attention to nonverbal communication messages you receive from and send to others.
- D. Understand how mutual respect and assertiveness is a way out of the submission-aggression communication loop.
- E. Create a listening atmosphere using communication “helpers,” avoiding communication “blockers” and reflecting back what you’ve heard.
- F. Learn how to say what you mean clearly and respectfully.
- G. Use skillful listening and speaking skills to resolve conflict.
- H. Handle blame and criticism.
- I. Confront people constructively when needed.
- J. Communicate about “hot topics”, such as sexuality, domestic violence, and addiction.
- K. Work skillfully with families with language barriers or low levels of literacy.
- L. Use technology to communicate in appropriate ways.

**Family Development Credential Program
Curriculum Overview (revised June 2015)**

Chapter 3: Presence and Mindfulness: Cornerstones of Healthy Relationships *New!*

- A. Recognize the value of presence.
- B. Describe the benefits of increased awareness and mindfulness in your life.
- C. Learn about research on mindfulness-based stress reduction.
- D. Use simple exercises for mindfulness-based stress reduction.
- E. Incorporate natural ways to practice mindfulness-based stress reduction at work.

Chapter 4: Taking Good Care of Yourself *Updated*

- A. Clarify your personal vision for your work.
- B. Learn how to create a support system at work.
- C. Create a healthy support system for yourself.
- D. Design a personal stress reduction and wellness program.
- E. Understand how to balance work and family life as a family development worker.
- F. Learn basics of family financial management.

Chapter 5: Our Diverse World *Updated*

- A. Understand cultural diversity in the context of family development.
- B. Explain how “culture” is defined in family development.
- C. Realize why an understanding of diversity and oppression is important to family development work.
- D. Discuss why cultural competence is an important skill of family development work.
- E. Learn skills for respectful cross-cultural communication with families and your work with interpreters.
- F. Understand how language affects family dynamics and why some cultural groups are reluctant or take “help” when it has hurt them in the past.
- G. Learn how displacement and immigration have shaped the experiences of African American, Native American, Hispanic, and Asian American families in our country.
- H. Describe four barriers to cultural competent society and their impact on growth and change for individuals and cultural groups.
- I. Reflect on the limitations of “diversity training” to make long-term institutional changes that support cultural competence.
- J. Appreciate aspects of your own cultural identity and learn ways to become more acquainted with your own culture.
- K. Describe ways that most people learn about culture and consider new ways to expand your understanding of, and sensitivity to, other cultures.
- L. Offer ways that your agency can develop and strengthen multicultural competence with families and the community.

**Family Development Credential Program
Curriculum Overview (revised June 2015)**

Chapter 6: Strengths-Based Assessment

- A. Understand what assessment is and why agencies still use deficit-oriented assessment.
- B. Apply the seven principles of strengths-based assessment in your work.
- C. Protect families' information and privacy and know the three exceptions to confidentiality.
- D. Know when to offer the Family Circles Assessment to families to help families identify the strengths, supports, and stressors that affect their ability to reach their goals.
- E. Work with your agency to review and, if needed, adapt its assessment forms to support family development.

Chapter 7: Helping Families Set and Reach Their Own Goals

- A. Learn ways to establish and build relationships with families based on mutual respect and trust.
- B. Practice techniques to help families identify their strengths.
- C. Set healthy boundaries in relationships so families won't become dependent on you.
- D. Know when and how to end a relationship in a way that supports ongoing family development.

Chapter 8: Helping Families Access Specialized Services *Updated*

- A. Understand your role as a family worker in helping families access specialized services.
- B. Offer accurate referrals to services and programs.
- C. Discuss the need for specialized services with families in a respectful and supportive way.
- D. Learn steps to make referrals and follow through, that help families access specialized services.
- E. Support family members through the initial steps of using a specialized service.
- F. Help families recognize the need for specialized services in the following areas:
 - Developmental disabilities and specialized learning needs
 - Common mental health disorders
 - Domestic violence (including child abuse and elder abuse)
 - Alcohol and drug dependency
 - Limited literacy
- G. Support military families and veterans.
- H. Gather information about other commonly needed services provided by community agencies.
- I. Work skillfully with families who have many complex problems.

**Family Development Credential Program
Curriculum Overview (revised June 2015)**

Chapter 9: Home Visiting

- A. Understand the advantages of home visiting.
- B. Use the family development approach in making effective home visits.
- C. Build a mutually respectful relationship with families during unannounced and first-time home visits.
- D. Establish a positive and clear purpose for home visits.
- E. Take practical steps to increase your safety when making home visits.
- F. Handle the practical challenges of home visiting.
- G. Use a family development approach for home visits in child protection or other domestic violence situations
- H. Keep ongoing visits productive using the Family Development Plan to focus on the family's goals.

Chapter 10: Collaboration and Community Support *Updated*

- A. Learn skills that family workers use to foster supportive communities.
- B. Help families identify and strengthen their informal helping networks.
- C. Understand the purpose and benefits of support and advocacy groups.
- D. Use the Family Group Conference model to help families make important decisions in their lives.
- E. Teach leadership skills to family members so they can facilitate their own meetings.
- F. Understand why collaboration is often one of the most challenging aspects of family development work.
- G. Discuss ways to build respectful relationships with community service partners.
- H. Explain the differences between coordination, cooperation, and collaboration in family development work.
- I. Describe the different levels of collaboration most often used in family development work.
- J. Use the “keys to successful collaboration” to build successful interagency partnerships.
- K. Recognize common pitfalls of collaboration and know how to turn them into advantages.
- L. Understand how agency, state, and national policies affect families and your ability to help them.
- M. Learn how interagency training can promote interagency collaboration.