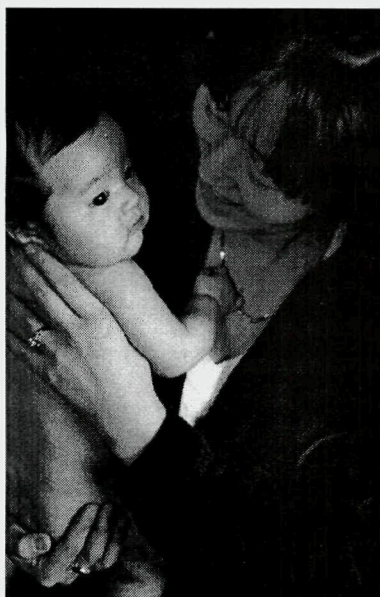


How CalSWEC has influenced Training and Education for Public Child Welfare Practice at California State University, Sacramento

The author has been closely associated with the IV-E program since its inception at California State University, Sacramento.

by
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Our commitment and interest in child welfare practice preceded the introduction of a Title IV-E training program in the Division of Social Work. In the mid 1980's The faculty in this program recognized the need for specialized training in working with children and families. The curriculum committee was then charged with developing a Child and Families concentration. Specific to this concentration was a specialized course on policy related to children and families, and two advanced practice courses.

More recently, the faculty of the division engaged in a three-year process aimed at overhauling the curriculum for the Master's degree program. The need for the change was fueled by input from field instructors, students, faculty, and advisory committee members, many of whom are currently employed in providing child welfare services. The decision to move away from concentrations and adopt a model using the Advanced Generalist theory base has been the result of this process of discovery.

Course work in the re-designed curriculum supports

and enhances the core competencies required for the Child Welfare training in several ways. First, as opposed to having only those students who choose the Child and Family concentration exposed to child welfare competencies—as was the case for the most part in the old model—all students will get exposure to areas of practice most crucial to delivering of effective child welfare services. The new curriculum has as its focus service delivery to vulnerable populations with specific interest in children and their families. Second, students in the Title IV-E Program get exposed to a broader range of competencies which meet and exceed the standards set by the CalSWEC competencies for Title IV-E Programs.

The greatest impact of the change is reflected in the advanced practice courses. The required practice courses are in the Multilevel Practice with Vulnerable Life Conditions concentration. They are taken sequentially in the final year of the program and are required of all students. Students are simultaneously placed in field settings which complement and enhance the integration of the competencies for the course. The Multilevel

Practice with Vulnerable Life Conditions curriculum focuses on developing the students' capacity to think critically and systematically so they can select from a range of appropriate intervention strategies and combine interventive tasks. These tasks include, but are not limited to, direct practice, advocacy, program planning and development, evaluation, community practice, and supervision. They enable students to integrate advanced practice approaches using the values and ethics of the profession and the commitment to social justice.

The advanced practice courses are organized into four modules delivered over the course of two semesters. The modules provide a framework for reinforcing the focus on vulnerable life conditions by segmenting the two semesters into four specific social conditions. The first eight weeks focus on "Violence and Trauma," and the second eight weeks on "Children and Families in Poverty." The modules for the spring semester are "Community Mental Health," and "Chronic Illness and Disability."

The first of the two advanced practice courses introduces and defines for students a conceptual framework that will enable them to understand the needs of excluded and underserved populations and to respond in a collaborative manner to promote empowerment and social justice. Theories related to violence and trauma build on the core frameworks utilized in generalist social work practice: ecosystems, feminist and strengths models, empowerment, childhood and lifespan development, diversity, social sta-

tus, and oppression theories. The course also introduces advanced practice principles for operationalizing the social justice perspective with children and communities in poverty.

The second of the two required advanced practice courses is the Multilevel Practice with Vulnerable Life Conditions concentration. It builds on and develops the themes introduced in the first course helping students to see beyond the boundaries of a series of independent cases. Using the social agencies in which they work as a base, the course helps students identify how different sized systems affect each other and how they can intervene in a way that is sensitive to multiple constituents.

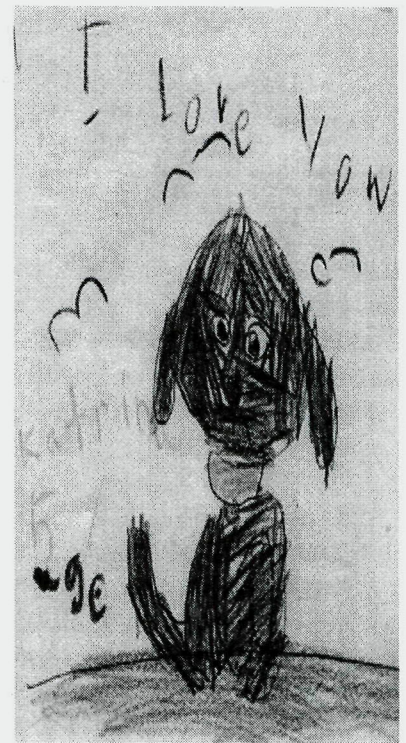
In the second advanced practice course, students develop skills in psychodiagnosis and treatment as they learn how to challenge institutional inequities and injustices in the provision of mental health care. They also develop the capacity to understand and thus intervene when chronic illness or disability leaves their clients vulnerable in many significant ways. Finally, Title IV-E students focus their culminating experience in child welfare-related research projects.

In addition to the influence CalSWEC has had on the development of the new curriculum, the very presence of a Title IV-E Child Welfare training program has influenced training and education in our program. The high visibility of the program draws in students not initially considering careers in child welfare. Interest in child welfare course content by undergraduates prompted the under-

graduate program committee to adopt an elective course entitled "Child Welfare Practice."

The division has also had a quite radical turnover in faculty as many of the senior faculty reach retirement age and move on. Search committees charged with recruiting and hiring new faculty have shown special interest in candidates who bring a child welfare background because of the needs of our Title IV-E program and curriculum.

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