

What's working well in Child Welfare?

1. Caseloads in Family Reunification have decreased.
2. Supportive program managers, supervisors, and units.
3. Collaborative teamwork among co-workers.
4. Some supervisors are supportive, caring, and provide excellent training.
5. Emphasis on child and family-focused practice.
6. Good camaraderie and peer support among social workers.
7. Availability of job-related training.
8. Support for co-workers when help is needed.
9. Supportive and knowledgeable supervisors.
10. Lower caseloads in certain task areas.
11. Safety Organized Practice Model.
12. Some children are finding permanency in stable families.
13. Opportunities for promotion and internships.
14. Manageable case loads for social workers in specific areas.
15. New work site and facilities.
16. Availability of the training unit in Family Reunification.
17. Systems in place to ensure children's safety.

Why is this working well?

1. **Reduced caseloads:** Lower caseloads make the work more manageable, allowing social workers to focus on their tasks effectively.
2. **Hiring and filling vacancies:** The department's efforts to hire staff and fill vacant positions contribute to improved functionality.
3. **Financial savings:** Some changes have resulted in cost savings, such as reduced garage fees, which can benefit employees.
4. **Approachability and receptiveness:** When people are approachable and receptive to feedback, it fosters a positive work environment.
5. **Teamwork and support:** Collaboration among team members, support from management, and the presence of experienced supervisors contribute to success.
6. **Commitment to child welfare:** Staff's commitment to helping children and families drives their dedication to their work.
7. **Emotional support:** Efforts to address the emotional and psychological impacts of the job help workers cope with the stress.
8. **Training and education:** Training programs and educational resources assist workers in performing their roles effectively.
9. **Technology adoption:** The transition to technology and online resources has improved efficiency and accessibility.
10. **Focus on child and family well-being:** An emphasis on child-focused and family-focused practices guides decision-making.
11. **Camaraderie and peer support:** Supportive relationships among coworkers contribute to a positive work environment.

What are the worries in Child Welfare?

1. Concerns about staff resentment and anger in the workplace, including recent protests.
2. Worries about the lack of innovation and difficulty in advocating for positive change.
3. Criticisms of state initiatives like STRTP and their impact on children's best interests.

4. Stress, high caseloads, and staff turnover.
5. Concerns about upper management and leadership decisions.
6. Worries about administration prioritizing statistics over people and low pay for social workers.
7. Challenges related to case overload, court reports, and the inability to provide adequate support to families.
8. The need for more resources, support, and mental health services.
9. Communication issues and a disconnect between administration and staff.
10. The perception of Child Welfare not being child-focused or child-centered.
11. Overwork, low pay, and unrealistic expectations.
12. Worries about Child Welfare becoming a training facility and losing experienced workers.
13. Concerns about lack of preventative measures, support, and services.
14. Frustration with constant changes and a lack of clear guidance.
15. Worries about not having specialized task areas and increased workloads.
16. Challenges in finding adequate resource families and promoting permanency.
17. Lack of support from upper management and specialized task areas.
18. Concerns about overloading social workers with cases and inadequate training.
19. Criticisms of rigid adherence to rules and guidelines and resistance to procedural improvements.
20. Worries about the sustainability of the model under new leadership.
21. Concerns about the impact of trauma on staff and burnout.
22. Worries about being moved to different task areas and losing support.
23. Challenges in meeting the needs of children in care.
24. Concerns about inadequate assessments, burnout, and staff turnover.
25. Worries about changes made without considering the consequences.
26. Concerns about workload, unrealistic expectations, and low morale.
27. The need for more support and resources for social workers.
28. Challenges related to case load sizes, supervision, and support.
29. Concerns about staff quitting, lack of communication, and disconnect with other task areas.
30. Worries about staff not being able to effectively communicate and work with clients.
31. Challenges in dealing with complex cases and lack of resources.
32. Concerns about changes without proper training and inadequate resources.
33. Worries about upper management not considering staff needs and concerns.
34. Challenges related to case overload, worker safety, and decision-making.
35. Concerns about the removal of specialized task areas and increased workloads.
36. Worries about placement decisions, temporary placements, and inadequate support.
37. Concerns about not feeling fully supported by upper management.
38. Challenges related to visitation services and demographics.
39. Worries about early burnout in social work careers.
40. Criticisms of too many processes and high expectations.
41. Concerns about the lack of training and support for social workers.
42. Worries about administration not being supportive and low morale.
43. Challenges in building a stable workforce and retaining employees.
44. Concerns about children being returned home too soon and inadequate assessments.
45. Worries about management decisions, promotions, and lack of knowledge.
46. Concerns about placement decisions and safety.
47. The need to set consequences for minors' behavior.
48. Worries about incomplete assessments and insufficient training for new workers.
49. Concerns about minors falling through the cracks due to high caseloads and crisis situations.

Why are these the worries in Child Welfare?

1. **Workload and Burnout:** Social workers are grappling with high caseloads, long hours, and a lack of work-life balance. This has led to burnout, mental breakdowns, and high turnover rates. The heavy workload affects their ability to provide quality services to clients.
2. **Incompetent Supervisors:** Some supervisors are perceived as incompetent, and there's a lack of trust in the leadership's ability to address the needs of the social workers effectively.
3. **Lack of Training and Support:** New social workers often struggle due to insufficient training and a challenging work environment. This situation is aggravated by a lack of experienced staff.
4. **Communication Issues:** There are problems with communication and decision-making within the organization. Important changes and messages are not consistently or effectively communicated to all staff members, leading to mixed messaging and low morale.
5. **Low Morale and High Turnover:** The overall low morale among social workers and supervisors has resulted in many leaving for other departments or positions, which hinders the agency's growth and the development of new staff.
6. **Impact on Families and Children:** The concerns raised indicate that the well-being of families and children may be compromised due to the inability of social workers to provide adequate support and services.
7. **Resource Allocation:** The removal of specialized units and a lack of support staff have added to the workload, making it difficult for social workers to manage their tasks effectively.
8. **Compromised Quality of Work:** The heavy workload, inadequate training, and lack of support may lead to compromised quality of work, potentially affecting the safety and well-being of children and families.
9. **Lack of Leadership Support:** Some staff members feel unsupported by upper management, and this perceived lack of support is contributing to the challenges they face in their roles.
10. **Impact on Retention:** The concerns raised about work conditions and support may hinder the retention of experienced staff, making it difficult to provide the necessary services to families and children effectively.
11. **Safety Concerns:** There are safety concerns for both social workers and clients, particularly when dealing with difficult cases or situations involving CSEC (Commercially Sexually Exploited Children).

Is there anything else you'd like to share with the FCSOC?

Positive Feedback:

- Some staff members praised their program managers and leaders.
- Support and camaraderie among coworkers were highlighted as positive aspects.

Negative Feedback:

- Many staff members expressed concerns about the heavy workload, understaffing, and being overworked and underpaid.
- There were mentions of difficulties in retaining experienced social workers due to low pay compared to other professions and organizations.
- Concerns were raised about the lack of support from upper management and the feeling that staff's concerns and ideas were not being heard.
- Some staff members pointed out the need for more training, better support for supervisors, and addressing issues related to caseloads and work-life balance.

Specific Concerns:

- Several comments highlighted issues related to the care and safety of children in the system, including the need for more workers, proper training, and increased support for foster parents.
- There were mentions of confusion and frustration resulting from changes in procedures and responsibilities without adequate training or support.

- The need for flexible work schedules, improved communication, and better alignment between staff and upper management was emphasized.

Suggestions for Improvement:

- Recommendations included offering competitive pay and benefits to retain social workers, implementing flexible work schedules, and providing more training and support for staff.
- Some respondents suggested more involvement of line workers in decision-making processes, better communication, and transparent leadership.