

February 2023

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CWLA Training Institute Registration is Open!

CWLA's post-conference Training Institute is a two-day event, designed to enhance the knowledge and skills of workers, supervisors, managers, and directors, leading to a more strengths-based, prevention-focused system of care.

These intensive training sessions afford attendees the opportunity to work closely with experts in the field. Trainings will be held on Friday, April 28, 2023 from 2:30pm – 5:30pm and on Saturday, April 29, 2023 from 9:30am – 12:30pm.

The Training Institute is available to conference attendees who are Premium Ticket holders, as well as for individuals who do not attend the conference.

[**Browse the Trainings!**](#)

The Inherent Strengths in Kinship Families: Kinship Care Training for Caregivers and Professionals

March 1, 2023, 2:00pm ET

Recognition of family strengths is an important factor in effective policy and practice. In this webinar, Dr. Crumbley will introduce his newest training, The Inherent Strengths in Kinship Families. The kinship family strengths and topics he will discuss are attachment, legacies, identity, healing, adaptability, and co-parenting.

Presenter: Dr. Joseph Crumbley, Family Therapist, Trainer, and Consultant

[**Register for the Webinar!**](#)

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CWLA Member Highlight

CWLA is a diverse community of professionals entrusted with the well-being of children. Each member uses their unique practice to partner with CWLA to fulfill our mission of advancing policies, strategies, and best practices that result in better outcomes for children, youth, and families. This month, we're highlighting the work of The Father Center of New Jersey, which is celebrating its 30th anniversary of strengthening families by strengthening fathers. Read an excerpt from our conversation with **CEO Karen Andrade-Mims**:

What is The Father Center of New Jersey?

The Father Center of New Jersey (TFCNJ) originally began as an orphanage in 1859 as Union Industrial Home for Destitute Children of Trenton. The primary focus was on the residential care of youth who are vulnerable. Fast forward to 1993, the organization applied for federal grant funding to become a pilot program that served fathers who were unemployed or under-employed and unable to meet their child support obligations. Operation Fatherhood was born and, over the next few decades, there were name changes and program shifts that ultimately led to our current iteration as The Father Center of New Jersey.

TFCNJ has two locations, one in Mercer County, New Jersey and one in Burlington County, New Jersey. These offices are programming hubs that address the needs of males ages 14 through 60. Teenagers are mentored and supported through leadership development and making healthy choices to prevent premature fatherhood. Adults are offered workforce development activities, case management, and instruction in parenting to bolster child well-being. Our goal is to promote father inclusiveness and to strengthen father engagement with their families whenever possible.

How does The Father Center of New Jersey serve its community?

The Father Center of New Jersey provides a comprehensive array of programs and services to upwards of 500 fathers and men annually in our communities. During the height of the COVID-19 pandemic, our offices were closed and the majority of the programs were held virtually. Now, like many organizations, our work is done using a hybrid model. Virtual technology allows us to reach potential clients from across the state. Our workforce development program, Bridges2Success, is comprised of a series of virtual and in-person trainings that lead to certifications in various industries such as Serv Safe Food Handler; OSHA 10 hour and 30 hour; Customer Service; NJ Forklift and CDL Driver.

Additionally, we offer online parenting education using National Fatherhood Initiative's *24/7 Dads* curriculum and anger management classes using the *Choice-based Anger* curriculum. Dress2Impress is our in-house clothing program whereby all program participants are given gently-used men's professional or business casual clothing and shoes to prepare them for their interviews or work sites. TFCNJ also serves the next generation of fathers through our Healthy Relationships Healthy Choices program. This is a prevention program for boys at Trenton school district's Ninth Grade Academy that builds leadership skills, explores career options, promotes academic achievement and healthy relationship choices.

Why is it so important to focus on fathers as a population?

It is so important to focus on fathers because children need the guidance, love, and involvement of both parents. Yet there are many more programs and services available to support mothers. Research by the Institute for Family Studies and others have shown that when fathers are involved and engaged in the lives of their children, even when they are not living in the home, the children do better in multiple areas. Fathers matter because when they are absent children experience higher rates of poverty, juvenile delinquency, school failure, involvement with drugs and/or alcohol, low self-esteem, gang activity, and even prison.

What is on the horizon for The Father Center of New Jersey?

2023 marks our 30th anniversary of strengthening families by strengthening fathers. We are planning a year-long series of events, activities, and social media blasts to celebrate this milestone. Our annual fundraiser, Platinum Dads, which is held in June, will be a special family fun day event in partnership with a local fitness and wellness center. We will continue to raise our visibility and emphasize the importance of the role of fathers in families and in the lives of their children.

Currently, The Father Center of New Jersey is engaged in a strategic planning process that will consider, among other things, expanding our footprint into other counties throughout New Jersey. We recognize that fathers everywhere can benefit from services that are geared just for them.

Is there anything else you'd like to share about The Father Center of New Jersey's work?

The work of The Father Center of New Jersey was enhanced a few years ago when leadership and staff made the decision to become a trauma-informed organization. Undergoing a rigorous pre-certification process using the Sanctuary Model, developed by Dr. Sandra Bloom and her team, TFCNJ is able to help fathers acknowledge their trauma and seek healing support that allows them to move forward in their lives.

How did you become involved with The Father Center of New Jersey?

I became involved with The Father Center of New Jersey over twenty-five years ago when the organization was still called Union Industrial Home. My professional interest has always centered on serving youth and families. In those early years, I became a member of the Board of Directors. When the opportunity presented itself, I stepped down from the Board and applied for the role of Executive Director. Since May 2008, I have been privileged to be at the helm of TFCNJ, a historically relevant organization that has become a significant leader in the fatherhood movement.



Karen Andrade-Mims

Karen Andrade-Mims, CEO of The Father Center of New Jersey (TFCNJ), is at the helm of New Jersey's oldest nonprofit dedicated to child welfare. Her vision of strengthening families by strengthening fathers is realized through programs that support and empower men. Under her leadership, TFCNJ, formerly Union Industrial Home for Destitute Children of Trenton, has been the recipient of numerous community awards, proclamations, and commendations.

Karen has a comprehensive background that includes administration, supervision, training, technical assistance, program implementation, and compliance monitoring. Ms. Andrade-Mims, a member of Pi Alpha Alpha National Honor Society, is a 2007 Lead New Jersey Fellow who earned a Bachelor's degree in Sociology from the University of Pennsylvania and a Master's degree in Public Administration from Rutgers University.

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How to Compete with Compassion Fatigue

by Marcus Stallworth, LMSW

Working in child welfare can be a rewarding experience. Reunifications, adoptions, and permanency for children are gratifying and memorable moments. However, the commitment to working with children and families does not come without its fair share of challenges: court hearings, adhering to policy mandates, face to face benchmarks, and writing pages of paperwork are also par for the course. Unknowingly, this ongoing stress can impact work performance, personal relationships, and the ability to remain unbiased with clients.

Throughout the pandemic, many child welfare staff have reflected on the course and direction of their lives. Some have decided to go back to school, others chose to rekindle old passions, and quite a few made unexpected life pivots and shifted their energy in unprecedented directions. Either way, change has become one of the few areas of consistency we have learned to rely on over the past few years.

Nationally, we have begun to see an amplified number of child welfare professionals experience high levels of compassion fatigue. This can impact the way they approach their work, their willingness to engage clients, and how they provide empathy for others. Public and private agencies are witnessing many staff – direct service, supervisors, and senior management – finding themselves in places of question and uncertainty. This is leading to early retirements and resignations.

In this evolving workforce environment, it can be easy for staff to become overwhelmed by increasing demands and limited resources. CWLA has a long-standing history of being responsive to our member agencies and the needs of the field, and we continue to maintain that commitment. In response to feedback from the child welfare community, CWLA has decided to explore ways to address this issue. CWLA's Training Team has established a partnership with St. John Fisher University, and is currently working with their Executive Leadership Doctoral Program to explore the intersection and correlation of compassion

fatigue and Child Welfare. We understand if the workforce is impacted, so are families, and if families are impacted, so are communities. Our Training Team intends to develop a variety of opportunities to gather information and share information regarding this topic. This will include offering (virtual) open forum discussions and the development of a webinar series to share feedback and offer forward-facing strategies. Based on these findings, we will create a training curriculum that can identify specific ways to reduce compassion fatigue and increase retention.

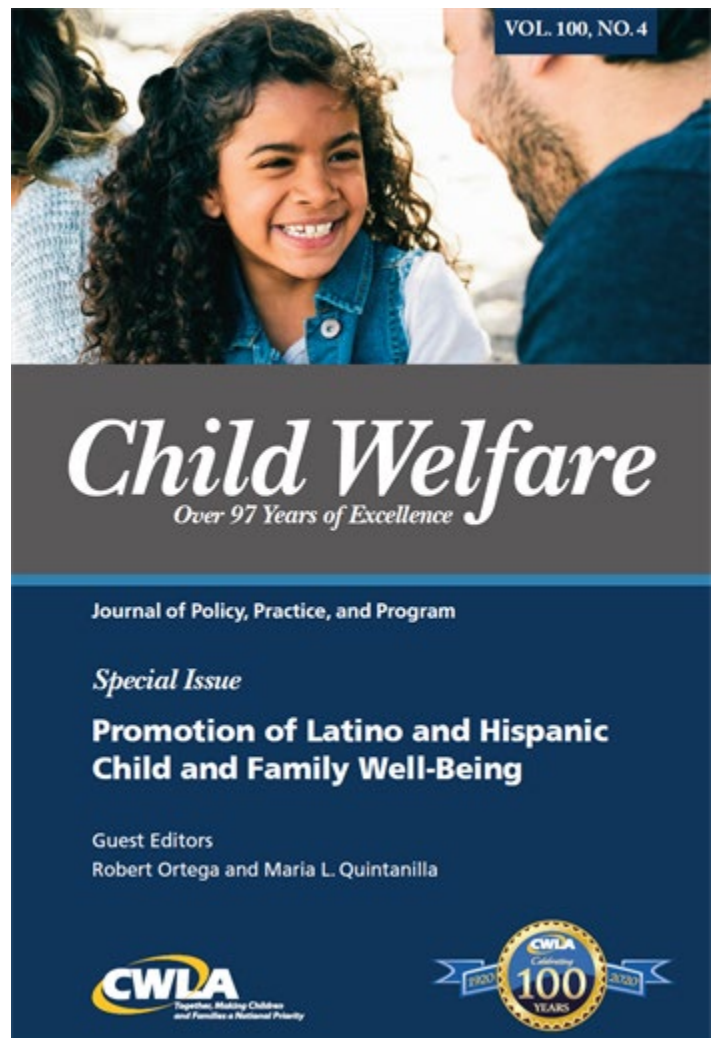
Please be on the lookout for upcoming ways you and your agency can participate. Remember, the focus will be to identify areas for development and to define ways to strengthen, maintain, and sustain our workforce. We look forward to hearing from you!

For more information, please contact: Marcus Stallworth at mstallworth@cwla.org.

Child Welfare Journal Special Issue

Child Welfare journal's latest special issue, *Promotion of Latino and Hispanic Child and Family Well-Being*, examines the well-being of children who are Latino and Hispanic and in families that are the subjects of increased stereotypes, biases, and discrimination affecting their communities and resulting in impediments to their basic human rights.

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Child Support Collection for Families Involved in Child Welfare

On Friday, July 29th, 2022, the Children’s Bureau and the Office of Child Support Enforcement released a joint [Dear Colleague letter](#) highlighting a new question and answer in the [Child Welfare Policy Manual](#) that encourages child welfare agencies to implement across-the-board policies that require an assignment of the rights to child support for children who receive title IV-E services only in very rare circumstances.

Question: Section 471(a)(17) of the Social Security Act (the Act) requires title IV-E agencies to “where appropriate” take “all steps” to secure an assignment of the rights to child support for a child receiving title IV-E foster care maintenance payments (FCMPs). How should a title IV-E agency determine when it is “appropriate” to secure an assignment of the rights to child support?

Answer: We are issuing revised policy for title IV-E agencies to define more narrowly “where appropriate” so that the default position in these determinations can be for the title IV-E agency *not* to secure an assignment of the rights to child support for children receiving title IV-E FCMPs.

This guidance seeks to ensure that only cases that have been thoroughly reviewed, and will not disrupt the reunification process, are referred to the state IV-D agency for the establishment of paternity or a support order, allowing the IV-D agency to continue their current practices of processing appropriate cases, and will result in both state agencies being less intrusive in the lives of the families.

Reducing or stopping the collection of child support from families involved in the child welfare system has long been a priority of CWLA, as these collections have been shown to be burdensome for families, delaying reunification and leading to extended stays in foster care. This practice is also not cost-effective for agencies, as they spend more money on the referral and collection process than they end up recouping. For more information, see this [resource guide](#).

On October 20th, 2022, CWLA partnered with the American Public Human Services Association (APHSA), the National Child Support Enforcement Association (NCSEA), the National Council of Child Support Directors (NCCSD), and the Administration for Children and Families (ACF) to bring together state child welfare directors and child support directors to discuss implications and implementation of the new federal guidance on this issue. Children's Bureau Associate Commissioner Aysha Schomburg and Office of Child Support Enforcement Commissioner Tangular Gray gave introductory comments that highlighted the importance of this policy shift for the Administration, and leaders from several states shared the changes they've made to their child support enforcement policies for families with child welfare system involvement. Participants were able to ask questions, discuss barriers, and share best practices with one another during the call.

Since that time, CWLA's Policy and Practice teams have been active in ongoing efforts to equip states to implement this new guidance. There will be a survey distributed to Child Welfare and Child Support Directors this winter to gather more information about states' progress and limitations, and both CWLA and APHSA will feature workshops on this issue at their respective conferences.

Good News in Child Welfare

At times, the news media's bad news bias towards child welfare can lead us to feel disheartened, dispirited, and discouraged. But we know the truth – that all over the country dedicated child-serving professionals are having an immense positive impact on the lives of children and families.

In partnership with the Field Center for Children's Policy, Practice, & Research, each month we highlight one inspiring, joyful news story from the child welfare system. We hope this segment brings joy and delight into your day.

[New Website for Youth in Foster Care by Youth](#)

The New Jersey Department of Children and Families Youth Council is a 25-person board that advises the department on policies and practices. These members are youth with lived experience with the Division of Child Protection and Permanency. The Youth Council recently re-launched the New Jersey Youth Resource Spot, a newly crafted and re-imagined website with a more straightforward approach designed by youth for youth. They aim to provide youth who have transitioned out of foster care or who are currently in foster care with resourceful information, including continuing education, scholarships, benefits, housing, financial literacy, insurance, and more.