

S N A P S H O T

Addressing the Co-Occurrence of Domestic Violence and Child Welfare-Related Issues



 **Kansas Coalition**
against sexual & domestic violence



Spotlight on the Empowered Families Kansas Project

The [Kansas Coalition Against Sexual and Domestic Violence](#) (KCSDV) began the [Empowered Families Kansas Project](#) in 2016. Empowered Families Kansas is a 4-year demonstration project implemented under the ACF's *Family and Youth Services Bureau, Family Violence Prevention and Services discretionary grant, Specialized Services to Abused Parents and Their Children (SSAPC)*. KCSDV focuses on three strategies to build evidence-based practices that improve outcomes for children and youth exposed to domestic violence and their non-abusing parents or caregivers. This article focuses on one strategy of Empowered Families Kansas – the child welfare project. The child welfare project aims to improve the response by Kansas child welfare professionals to the needs of children and their non-abusing parents or caregivers when domestic violence and child abuse co-occur.

The importance of an ongoing needs assessment throughout the project lifecycle has led to the successful foundation of training and collaboration for child welfare professionals on domestic violence related to child welfare issues. A significant component of the needs assessment was a survey disseminated to child welfare professionals to best inform the strategies to create collaborative methods between domestic violence programs and the child welfare system. This survey informed the development of best practice responses through training and technical assistance needed to address the themes prevalent with child welfare. Further, listening sessions were completed with child welfare administrators, domestic violence advocates, and with non-abusing parents navigating the child welfare system.

Needs assessment findings, child welfare research, and collaborative partnerships with child welfare agencies informed the development and implementation of training curricula and resources for child welfare professionals on how to respond to families experiencing domestic violence. Project training began in the fall of 2017, with opportunities including in-person training, webinars, conference workshops and preconference institutes with topics including safety planning with survivors and their children, strategies and skills to address domestic violence in child welfare and building collaborative partnerships between child welfare professionals and domestic violence advocates.

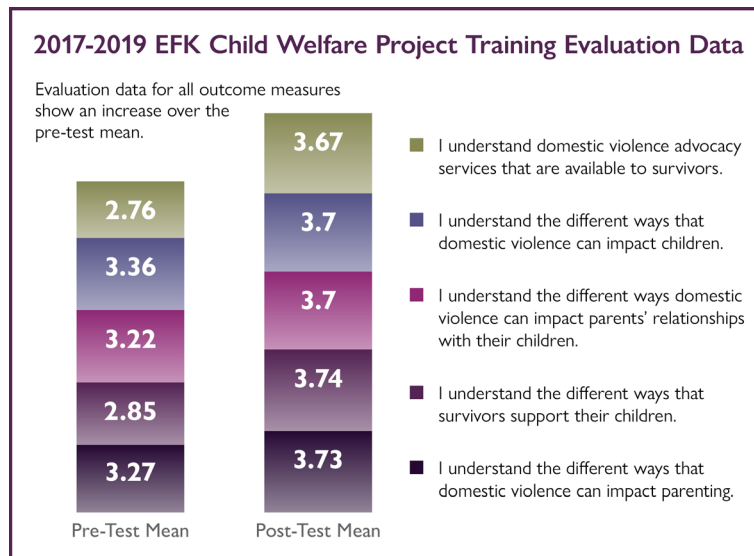
Significant training and resources developed under this project include the 4th edition of the *Domestic Violence Manual for Child Welfare Professionals: Desk Reference Guide*, and the core skills-based training *Strategies and Skills to Address Domestic Violence in Child Welfare* that is conducted throughout the state of Kansas. This training and resource provide child welfare professionals the strategies and skills necessary to effectively identify domestic violence in child welfare cases, as well as how to apply appropriate interventions for families experiencing domestic violence. A success of the implementation of the core training is the high attendance by child welfare professionals, which resulted in additional opportunities for this training to be added to accommodate for the demand. Over the four year period of this project, over 1,450 child welfare and domestic violence professionals have been trained to date, and over 1,500 copies of the child welfare manual have

been disseminated. The positive impact of project trainings has been translated through training evaluations. Evaluation data (see *table*) for all trainings across common outcome measures show an increase over the pre-test mean.

An additional success of the child welfare project is the implementation of training formats that address the demands of service provision. To meet these demands, trainings were offered across the state of Kansas at multiple intervals, within child welfare agencies' buildings, and through remote learning opportunities through webinars and archived recordings. A project child welfare list-serv was created as a project tool to increase participation in the variety of training formats available, and to further enhance collaborative opportunities.

This final year of the project will continue to build on collaborative partnerships between child welfare and domestic violence advocacy programs. To further enhance this collaboration in the final year, a roundtable will be held consisting of child welfare professionals and domestic violence advocates.

The collaborative relationships developed as a result of this roundtable will enhance the safety and resiliency of families experiencing domestic violence in the child welfare system.



Have questions about our *Child Welfare Project*? Contact Kristina Scott, Child Welfare Project Coordinator, Kansas Coalition Against Sexual & Domestic Violence at kscott@kcsdv.org.

This guest Success Story was written by the Kansas Coalition Against Sexual and Domestic Violence, a grantee of ACF's Family and Youth Services

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RCDV:CPC

Resource Center on Domestic Violence:
Child Protection and Custody

A project of the National Council of Juvenile and Family Court Judges

ABOUT THE RESOURCE CENTER

The National Council of Juvenile and Family Court Judges houses The National Resource Center on Domestic Violence: Child Protection and Custody. The Resource Center is devoted to helping domestic violence survivors and professionals such as judges, attorneys, social workers, and domestic violence advocates who work with survivors in the child protection and custody systems. In addition to providing training and technical assistance, the Resource Center also conducts research and evaluation projects focused on the intersection of domestic violence and child protection or child custody. Contact us by telephone at (800) 527-3223 or by email at fvinfo@ncjfcj.org.