

# Beginning Practice in Child Protection – Intensive Program

Program structure and design, January 2023

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## Background

The Beginning Practice in Child Protection program, Intensive program (BP Intensive) is a 17 day practice induction learning program spread over five months for all new child protection staff in Victoria.

Prior to the COVID 19 Pandemic, BP was delivered as a face to face learning program. It was converted to an online program from March 2020.

In May 2022 the BP Intensive was developed to reduce the time it takes to induct new practitioners to be eligible to be allocated case work, given current business continuity and workload demand issues.

The structure and design of the online program includes:

- (a) The first three modules of the program are delivered in a full time three week block, with Module Four scheduled approximately three months after the beginning of the program.
- (b) Participants are not able to be allocated lead responsibility in a Child Protection case, including unable to be a applicant in any Children’s Court matters, until they have completed Module Three.
- (c) Participants to be exposed to many and varied aspects of Child Protection work, to support their learning and help them orientate to their team and workplace, during the weeks they are not attending training,
- (d) Material/video/alternative presentation approaches (e.g. narrated PowerPoints) and new formats for delivery, including recorded or live presentations from guest presenters
- (e) Participants are split into smaller groups to allow a higher trainer : participant ratio, allowing a stronger coaching style within each module
- (f) Utilising Microsoft Teams to connect with participants for discussions, exploring key concepts from their learning, coaching around their practice as well as examining themes of practice in the current environment
- (g) Simulation learning approaches for interviewing and giving evidence practice skill development
- (h) All four clinics are now structured as ‘modules’ of the overall program, still aligning with the Child Protection Capability framework and identified learning objectives
- (i) Pre-learning tasks and workplace learning tasks with options depending on current COVID 19 restriction settings.
- (j) Workbooks have been developed for each module incorporating tasks to be completed, and prompt questions for discussion. This also allows capacity for lead trainers to review work, enabling individual feedback on capability
- (k) Use of MSforms, to provide ‘learning checks’ throughout the program. Where participants complete multiple choice quizzes that provide immediate feedback on their learning.
- (l) Reference to, and use of, existing online resources, videos, policy, practice materials and the e learning portal

- (m) Structured communications to participants and managers about detailed requirements, and logistics for the overall program and each module, including a supervisor's briefing each month for supervisors of staff completing the program.
- (n) Continual reference to DFFH staff hub for resources for frontline staff in the current pandemic
- (o) External participants (AFLDM convenors, ACSASS staff, and S18 program staff from Aboriginal agencies) can continue to complete the Beginning Practice Intensive program.
- (p) VAC employees with a successful final assessment and working in CPP2 roles (pending final academic statement and with an offer of CPP3 employment) can enrol in Beginning Practice Intensive.
- (q) Participants are welcomed to the program and Child Protection on the first day of Module 1 by a Senior Executive staff member, and the same Executive returns to meet with the group during Module 4 (some 5 months later).

## Program Goal and Learning Objectives

### Goal

Beginning Practice in Child Protection provides practitioners new to the Victorian Child Protection Program with foundational theory and practice to enable them to be competent and confident as they begin to practice in the Victorian jurisdiction.

### Learning Objectives

Upon successful completion of this course, practitioners will be able to:

- a) Analyse and assess risk to children in accordance with organisational framework and guidelines.
- b) Demonstrate the theoretical frameworks that guides child protection work, in particular the Best Interests Case Practice Model and the department's Risk Assessment Framework, SAFER.
- c) Interpret the *Children, Youth and Families Act 2005*.
- d) Use technology, including the Client Relationship Information System (CRIS) to record, maintain and prepare information in accordance with legislative requirements and organisational policies.
- e) Translate and apply critical reflection skills into child protection practice.
- f) Describe the role of the Children's Court.
- g) Display organisational values and respect for diversity and culture.
- h) Engage and communicate with individuals, families, communities and organisations within legislative and policy requirements.
- i) Engage holistically to increase the safety of children, young people and families.
- j) Recognise the Child Protection Program within the broader objectives for the Department of Families, Fairness and Housing.

## Program Structure

Week	Activity	Primary responsibility
Week One	BP Module One 5 days	Children and Families Professional Development
Week Two	BP Module Two 5 days	Children and Families Professional Development

Week Three	BP Module Three 5 days	Children and Families Professional Development
3 months	Divisional Workplace Learning	Supervisor
Four months	BP Module Four 2 days	Children and Families Professional Development

## Program content summary

Program content is aligned to the Child Protection Capability Framework and updated/amended following any change in child protection policy, practice or legislation, and relevant changes in the Child Protection Manual. Where internal or external investigations or reviews identify the need to change or reinforce messaging in learning programs, this also leads to change in the BP program content. The content is also reviewed on a regular cycle according to the Child Protection Learning and Development Quality Assurance approach.

### Module One

Module One is focussed on working for the Department of Families, Fairness and Housing and the role of a child protection practitioner in the Victorian context. It provides the theoretical foundations and assessment framework for practice. This clinic also provides key organisational responsibilities in regards to Occupational Health and Safety, departmental supports and self-care messages.

Summary content list for Module One:

- Introduction to the program
- Welcome to Child Protection – CSOD Deputy Secretary
- DFFH Structure, and CPP roles and structure
- Human Rights in Child Protection context
- Departmental Values in Child Protection context
- Corporate integrity
- Legislative Frameworks
- Working in a Statutory environment
- Best Interests Case Practice Model
- SAFER Framework
- Child Protection phases
- Best Interests principles including introduction to the Lawson Family (case study used throughout the program).
- Child development, attachment and trauma
- CPSU presentation
- Seeking, sharing, sorting and storing information in child protection practice
- Harm types
- Mandatory reporting (including reportable conduct and child safe standards)
- Analysing and Formulating a Case Plan
- Child Protection manual, e learning portal, ESS and other online resources
- CRIS
- Supervision
- Occupational Health and safety, including an introduction to prevention of occupational violence
- Self-care and wellbeing
- Maternal and Child Health presentation including SIDS and safe sleeping
- Investigation planning

- Enacting and Reviewing a case plan

## Module Two

Module Two introduces practitioners to engagement skills, relationship building and collaborative practice with children, young people, families and professionals in the context of child protection or statutory intervention.

This module provides an introduction to working with Aboriginal children and families as per the legislative and policy requirements and it also provides practitioners with policy and practice skills in completing an initial investigation and interviewing and engaging children, young people and families.

Summary content list for Module Two:

- Introduction to engagement
- Working with Aboriginal Children and Families
- Culture
- Recording client information in CRIS
- Working with professionals
- Engaging children, young people and families
- Family violence and MARAM Stage 1
- Preparing for engaging skills practice clinic including CRIS activities and preparing for a first home visit
- Engaging skills practice clinic (simulation learning activity with actors playing Mr Lawson on a first home visit)
- First home visit CRIS recording
- Essential information categories, substantiation and responsible for harm, including CRIS recording
- Case planning, including CRIS recording
- Out of home care and contact
- Leaving care and Missing children
- Youth Justice, dual clients
- Sexual Offences and child abuse investigation team (SOCIT) presentation on collaborative practice.

## Module Three

Module Three is primarily focussed on legal practice within the Victorian context.

Practitioners are provided with an overview of court processes, court orders and court reports.

They are also provided with an outline of the statutory responsibilities in regards to case planning for children and young people involved with the child protection system.

Summary content list for Module three:

- Court processes
- Case recording, IAO conditions and Court Activity case note
- Court Orders
- Court Reports
- CPLO presentation

- Case recording, Court Summary and Addendum report
- Case recording, Action Chronology and Addendum report
- Giving Evidence
- Preparation for Giving Evidence Skills practice clinic – including Lawson file preparation
- Barrister's presentation
- Practice Skills clinic on Giving Evidence (simulation learning exercise using Barristers who work in the Children's Court)
- Case recording – Court screens
- Magistrate's presentation, including observations at Children's Court, and Conciliation Conference presentation.
- Reflection, selfcare, and Module 3 conclusion

## Module Four

Module Four is designed to bring participants back into the learning environment following a three-month break from learning, where they have been actively working child protection cases.

The content is designed to continue to extend their learning whilst also offering a space for them to reflect on learnings so far, challenges, and future learning.

Summary content list for Module Four:

- Child Death Inquiries – Key learnings for practice
- Ice and methamphetamines
- CREATE presentation
- Meeting with Dep Sec CSOD (half hour session)
- Key, learnings, challenges, and next steps

## Workplace learning

Workplace learning tasks (including pre-learning tasks) were a component of the face to face version of BP, and continue to be an important part of the program in its online format.

Workplace learning helps participants to recognise the services and resources available in their division and translate the material provided in the learning program to the workplace environment. Opportunities to work with other more experienced practitioners, their supervisor and teams, supports new practitioners in their orientation to the role and the workplace.

Pre-learning tasks are provided to participants when they receive detailed information regarding the program (approximately a week before the program start date).

Workplace learning tasks are set as part of Module one and two of BP, documented in each participants workbook for easy reference, and are required to be completed by the end of the BP program (i.e. once they complete Module four).

## Pre-Learning Tasks

Prior to starting Module one, participants are provided with pre-learning material and asked to complete compliance eLearning modules (listed in the table below) responding to a series of questions as they complete each module.

<b>Module name</b>	<b>Estimated duration</b>
Welcome to DFFH – orientation for new staff	20 minutes
Code of Conduct	20 minutes
Privacy Awareness	20 minutes
Cyber Security Awareness for all staff	25 minutes
Charter of Human Rights modules 1-3	Module 1, 10 minutes
	Module 2, 15 minutes
	Module 3, 10 minutes
Sexual Harassment Prevention	15 minutes

## Workplace learning tasks between Module Three and Four

1. Practice completing a SAFER risk assessment on a fictional family provided.
2. Practitioners to complete a supervision agreement with their supervisor.
3. Practitioners to discuss their selfcare plan with their supervisor.
4. Practitioner to contact the local Family Violence support services and clarify and record the following information
  - How do families access the service?
  - What services do they provide?
  - What local services are there for perpetrators of violence?
5. Practitioners to identify their local Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services (CAMHS) and research the following:
  - What age group do they work with?
  - What services they provide?
  - How do you refer to and work with the service?
6. Practitioners to shadow another worker on a client visit (first visit if possible is preferable), this may be an online or face to face interaction depending on current pandemic settings.
7. Practitioners to research/visit the local Victoria Police Sexual Offences and Child Abuse Investigation Team. Practitioners to discuss the following\*:
  - What do they expect from Child Protection Practitioners when providing information?
  - What do they expect from Child Protection Practitioners when doing a joint home visit?
8. Practitioners to discuss the assessment from the engaging skills practice clinic during supervision.
9. Practitioners to attend their local Children’s Court (if it is having face to face hearings) if not, practitioners to work with their supervisor to arrange for them to attend a Webex Court Hearing of a suitable case. \*
10. Practitioners to research/attend the local Aboriginal agency and discuss the following\*:
  - What services they provide?
  - What is the referral process to access the services?
  - Who are the traditional owners of the land that the DHS office is on?

\* Note for tasks 4,5,7,9 and 10 – If these tasks have already been completed as part of a student placement or workplace orientation, practitioners are not required to repeat them, however they will still need to answer the dot points and include the evidence of the completion of these in their workbook.