

Child Welfare Social Worker Self-Assessment Fit Checklist

The following is a self-assessment. Review the items and check each item that fully describes you.

_____ I can work with parents who have abused or neglected their children and provide them dignity and respect.

_____ I believe that most parents love their children, that most children love their parents, and that even when abuse or neglect has occurred in the home in the past, once safety threats have been mitigated, the best place for children is with their families.

_____ I understand that past experiences with trauma, loss, grief, and adversity can have a profound influence on people's current coping capacities and behaviors. I can place people's behaviors in this context.

_____ I understand that structural racism creates oppressive experiences for people of color and that these experiences can create barriers in their ability to provide for their children. I can place people's actions or inactions in this context.

_____ I enjoy hearing people's stories of their strengths and struggles.

_____ I can work with children who have been severely abused and neglected. I can be fully present when they name and tell of their traumas, as well as, recognize their resilience, individuality, and strength.

_____ I am familiar enough with the needs of infants, toddlers, and children, that I could transport and care for them. I could maintain proper care and supervision of infants, children and adolescents even if they needed a diaper change, had lice, were throwing a tantrum, were rude to me, did not want my help, called me bad names, or smelled bad.

_____ I can remain professional and calm even if someone yells at me or engages in behaviors that annoy me.

_____ I have strong time management skills. I can identify priorities from among long lists of tasks and hold myself accountable to completing specific tasks within specific timeframes.

_____ I am flexible and can adapt to changing priorities, both those of the agency I work for, and in the plans I had laid out for my work day.

_____ I can accept not being able to get everything done and not knowing whether or not I did everything exactly right.

_____ I enjoy working with a team to solve problems and I don't assume that I always know what's best for others.

_____ If I have dependents, I also have supports in my life who could assist me if I had to work outside the normal work hours without much prior notice.

_____ If I have experienced traumas in my own life, I have reconciled them to degree that exposure to similar experiences would not overwhelm me or trigger unhealthy responses.

_____ I enjoy working in a variety of environments, I am comfortable going from a formal court setting to a family's home who has a dirt floor. I don't want to just be in an office or sit behind a desk all day.

_____ I would be willing to go to homes in low-income neighborhoods where there may be high crime rates. I could remain neutral in my affect when entering people's homes who have limited resources and may live very differently than I do.

_____ I am accepting and appreciative of multicultural perspectives and family systems. I don't assume that the dominant culture's value system regarding parenting is the right or only acceptable way of parenting.

_____ I am comfortable using a computer and can learn new software programs.

_____ I can talk to people about very private and uncomfortable topics. I could talk with teens in foster care about condom use or could talk to a parent about allegations against them of sexual abuse.

_____ I am efficient and organized in my work. I have a method for tracking and managing information and to-do items. I have systems for organizing both hard copy and electronic documents.

_____ I am assertive without being aggressive; I can advocate on behalf of families without alienating providers.

_____ I am patient. I can work within a bureaucratic system and jump through the necessary hoops to get things done.

_____ I have hope. I believe in people and believe that they can change when they have the resources necessary and are self-motivated to do so.

_____ I can have hard conversations with people and can name and identify behaviors that need to change without being rude or judgmental while also being clear and firm.

_____ I can express myself competently both through oral and written communication.

_____ I believe that parents in poverty can love and care for their children. I don't believe that children would be better off if they were moved to a family with more financial resources.

_____ I can be decisive when need be; in a crisis I could assess the situation, make a decision based on the safety and welfare of the individuals involved, and act on it without supervision or direction from others.

_____ I understand and am prepared to spend as much time working with “paper” as with people. I am prepared to spend about half of my time documenting conversations, writing assessments, and completing forms.

_____ I am willing to examine my implicit biases and make active efforts to mitigate them when working with people who are different from me based on race, ethnicity, national origin, socioeconomic status, religion, sexual orientation, gender identity, and ability status.

_____ I can talk about issues relating to racism, ethnocentrism, and classism even if they initially create discomfort in me.

_____ When I am troubled by something or struggle with knowing what to do in a situation, I am comfortable seeking out supervision and/or consultation from others.

_____ I do not believe my experiences with trauma and adversity can-always be applied to other people who experienced similar ordeals. I am comfortable allowing people to respond, heal, and reconcile trauma in their own way, even if it is not what worked for me or is not how I responded.

_____ I have a healthy personal life and sufficient healthy coping skills for me to handle daily exposure to stress and not allow it to consume me.

_____ I am comfortable driving in all different conditions, including with crying babies or fighting siblings, at night, in heavy traffic, on unpaved roads, in rural areas, and in unfamiliar parts of town.

_____ I can accept directives and act on them even if I do not wholly agree with them. I could remove a child or leave a child in a home if directed by my supervisor or manager to do so, even if I did not personally agree with that decision.

_____ I have strong interpersonal social skills and enjoy the camaraderie of close connections with my co-workers and a close office unit.

_____ With adequate supervision and consultation, I could handle the profound responsibility of making decisions about the constellations of families, about the best interests of children, and about children’s safety, sometimes with inadequate or insufficient information.

If you checked most of the items, you may enjoy the challenges and rewards of child welfare social work. If there were several items you did not check, you might want to further explore whether a career in child welfare is a good fit for you. You can speak with the Child Welfare Education Program staff about those items and the degree to which they would affect your day to day work as a Department of Child Safety Specialist. Please note that this self-assessment is a tool for your personal reflection, it is not necessarily predictive of your ability to succeed as a DCS Specialist. **DO NOT submit this with your CWEP application.**