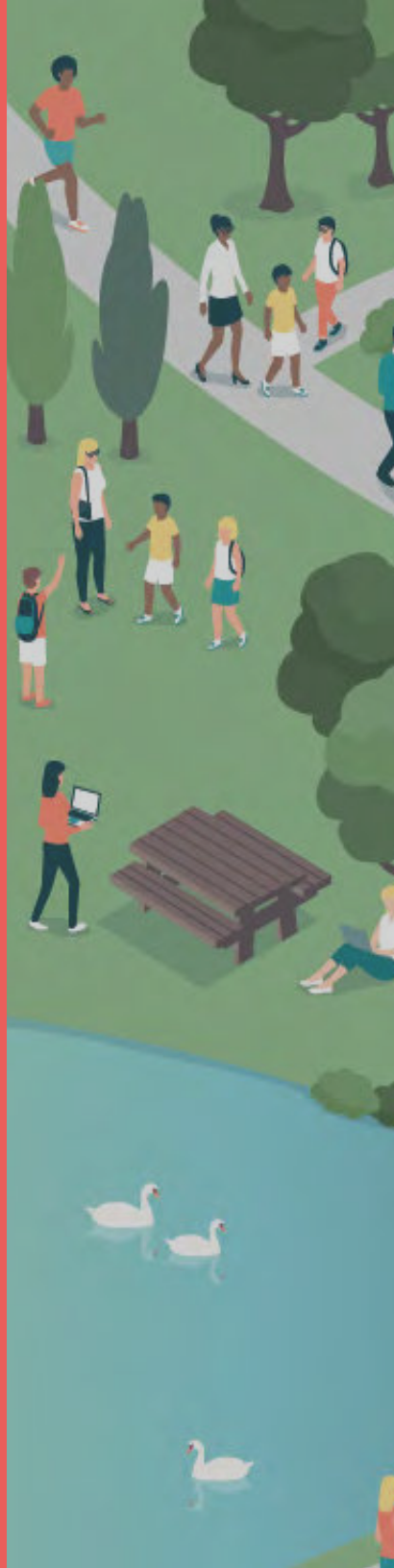




DHS Child Welfare Specialist Roles

The Oklahoma Department of Human Services (DHS) has several different worker types whose roles within DHS are very different.

Here is a general list of the different worker types and their responsibilities. This list is provided to promote a better understanding of what each child welfare specialist does.



Child Protective Services Specialist

- Responds to calls when a person suspects a child is being abused or neglected.
- Evaluates reports of abuse and/or neglect, assesses child safety, assesses the risk of future maltreatment and the need for protective services and then assists in coordinating services.
- Makes a recommendation to the District Attorney's office whether or not a child is safe in the home.

Family Centered Services Specialist

- Provides voluntary services to families following an investigation or assessment where abuse or neglect was identified.
- Collaborates with the family to assess the family's needs and refer for services.
- Focuses on maintaining the child's safety in their own home.

Permanency Planning Specialist

- Is the primary worker for the biological family and child.
- Works with the child's parents to identify services to help correct the conditions that resulted in the child being placed in DHS custody.
- Visits the child on a monthly basis and informs the foster family of family visits, court hearings and other information important to the child's case.

- Talks with the foster family when they have questions about the child, including arranging medical, visual and dental appointments.
- Reports to the court and explains the progress the child's parent(s) has made on the Individualized Service Plan and makes recommendations to the court about the child's status while in out-of-home care.
- Responsible for making placement recommendations for the child.

Resource Family Specialist

- Works with both kinship and traditional foster families.
- Assists the family with meeting DHS requirements such as training, background checks, and completion of a home study.
- Is responsible for monthly foster care reimbursement and assists the family with child care, if eligible.
- Provides additional support to the family through phone calls, visits, and yearly in-service training.

Adoption Transition Specialist

- Works with children who are legally free for adoption but do not have an identified adoptive family.
- Completes diligent searches and family finding efforts.
- Visits with child at least once a month.
- Responsible for coordinating recruitment efforts and participates in scheduled recruiting events.
- Responsible for child assessment and adoption preparation activities.

- Participates in disclosure process to give a clear, current picture of the child and describe the child's progress in preparation for a family.
- Works with the child as they transition into their forever family.

Adoption Specialist

- Coordinates with the permanency worker and resource family specialist when a child is identified for adoption.
- Submits all paperwork required for authorization.
- Completes adoption disclosure with the adoptive family and is responsible for making sure family has all available information, past and present, about the children they are authorized to adopt.
- Responsible for ensuring all subsidy agreements and paperwork needed by state law are completed by the finalization hearing.
- Attends court hearings to assist in finalization of the adoption.

Recruitment and Development Specialist

- Recruits foster and adoptive homes for DHS.
- Assists the family with meeting DHS requirements such as training, background checks, and completion of a home study.
- Coordinates targeted recruitment efforts, as well as planning and attending recruitment events.

Post-Adoption Specialist

- Assists the family after adoption of a child in DHS custody.
- Services may include adoption subsidy, child care, medical services or difficulty of care payments.
- Responsible for updating the family's information each year.
- Oversees the Mutual Consent Voluntary Registry, Confidential Intermediary Search Program, and Reunion Registry.

Case Aide/Child Welfare Assistant

- Assists child welfare specialists in day-to-day work such as paperwork or transportation.

Child Welfare Supervisors

- Each of the above mentioned worker type has an immediate supervisor who is available to answer questions.

Contract Resource Family Assessment Specialist (RFA Contractor)

- Contracts with a private agency to complete the Resource Family Assessments (RFA) for all foster and adoptive families.
- Is a subcontractor, not a DHS employee.
- Assists DHS in completing the assessment as quickly as possible. It is important for foster and adoptive families to meet with the subcontractor and provide the requested documents and information.

Resource Family Partner Agency (RFP)

DHS contracts with private agencies to recruit, develop and support traditional foster families. A family approved through an RFP agency is assigned an agency foster care worker. Additionally, when a child is placed in the home, the family works with a DHS permanency planning specialist who is assigned to the child.

Therapeutic Foster Care

Therapeutic Foster Care (TFC) is a residential behavioral management service provided in a foster home setting. TFC is designed to serve children ages four to 18 with special psychological, social, behavioral and emotional needs who can accept and respond to the close relationships within a family setting, but whose special needs require more intensive or therapeutic services than are found in traditional foster care. Therapeutic Foster Care is provided by private agency partners who contract directly with DHS. Through the TFC agency, a child and the foster family will receive supportive services from professionals such as clinical therapists and family support specialists. The assigned TFC agency collaborates with the assigned DHS Child Welfare Specialist regarding all services provided to the child and family.

Note: Private agencies may have their own worker roles that differ from DHS. Check with each agency for more information about their worker roles.



DHS Pub. No. 18-09

Issued 02/2018

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