



Child and Family Services Specialization Competencies & Practice Behaviors

The specialization in child and family practice enhances and expands on the foundation competencies by applying professional knowledge, values, ethics, and skills to advanced practice with children and families. This specialization sequence is grounded in the core professional values including: service, social justice, the dignity and worth of individuals and family members, the importance of human relationships, integrity, competence, human rights, and applying scientific knowledge. The child and family curriculum integrates these values into every course through applied assignments. Students develop applied practice competencies in micro, mezzo, and macro child practice with a specific focus on advanced practice with children and families.

Advanced Child & Family Competency 1: Demonstrate Ethical and Professional Behavior in Child & Family Practice

Social work practitioners in child and family services apply social work values and ethics in practice settings that serve children and families. Students in the Child and Family specialization sequence build upon their foundation competencies through applying professional knowledge, values, and ethical principles in the context of specific roles common in child and family services. Students use critical thinking to strengthen their use of ethical principles ensuring that their practice strategies and skills respond to the vulnerabilities that emerge in the interplay of priorities between society, social systems, dependent children, and adult family members. Within the framework of social work values and ethics, students acquire skills for analyzing and challenging the unique ethical challenges that undermine child and family wellbeing when conflicting priorities emerge in practice. Values and ethics-related practice behaviors include:

- Students demonstrate the ability to identify and articulate, and when applicable, resolve interpersonal, interprofessional, structural, and technology-focused ethical challenges that emerge in child & family practice.
- Students demonstrate the ability to solicit, accept and integrate feedback from clients, instructors/supervisors, and consultants into skill, intervention, and competence improvements.
- Students demonstrate the capacity to maintain professionalism and self-awareness when working with children and families, and when working interprofessionally or in host-settings.

Advanced Child & Family Competency 2: Engage Diversity and Difference in Practice in Child & Family Services

Social work practitioners in child and family services understand and apply knowledge about how diversity and difference influences children and families. Students in the Child and Family specialization sequence are aware that there is intersectionality among multiple factors including, but not limited to, age, class, color, culture, disability/ability, ethnicity, gender, gender identity and expression, geographic regions, immigration status, marital status, political ideology, race, religion/spirituality, sex, sexual orientation, and tribal sovereign status. This knowledge is applied as students learn how to adjust their approach to practice in response to child and family diversity ensuring that the unique needs of children and families are met. Students engage with, and learn from, family members to identify how multiple forms of diversity and difference intersect in each family.

Students demonstrate an ability to adjust their actions, skills, and strategies in response to diverse child and family needs. Specific practice behaviors include:

- Students demonstrate the ability to select appropriate intervention strategies based on current evidence-supported practices that are responsive to the needs of diverse clients and constituencies.
- Students demonstrate the capacity to tailor intervention strategies to meet needs of diverse children and families.
- Students demonstrate self-awareness, curiosity, and humility in their interpersonal exchanges with diverse clients and families.
- Students demonstrate the ability to identify and manage biases that emerge in their interactions with children and family members, other professionals, organizations, and communities.

Advanced Child & Family Competency 3: Advance Human Rights and Social, Economic, and Environmental Justice in Child & Family Services

Social work practitioners in child and family services identify human rights violations and injustices that compromise the wellbeing of children and their families. Students in the Child and Family specialization sequence use professional knowledge and critical thinking to expose justifications and rationalizations while identifying the negative impact and inherent harm that emerges from systemic, organizational, and procedural injustices. They further demonstrate an ability to partner with others in targeting specific procedures, structures, and individuals bringing awareness, scrutiny, and motivation to change situations that infringe on the rights of children and their families. The child and family social-justice-related professional behaviors include:

- Students demonstrate the capacity to identify and analyze organizational, systemic, and procedural structures, policies, and actions that infringe on children and family members' rights.
- Students demonstrate the ability to identify and engage constituency groups and representatives within the community and/or service system who are willing, able, and/or mandated to take action to protect the human rights of children and their family members.
- Students demonstrate the ability to develop and implement an advocacy plan in response human rights violations/infringements that compromise the wellbeing of children and other family members.

Advanced Child & Family Competency 4: Engage in Practice-informed Research and Research-informed Practice in Child & Family Services

Social work practitioners in child and family services understand and use empirical knowledge and evidence informed approaches in practice to anchor professional interventions. Students in the Child and Family specialization sequence apply critical thinking to understand and evaluate empirical findings and evidence supported practices. This knowledge is applied to practice-based decisions and adjustments to professional skill sets used in their work with children and families. Students demonstrate the use of evidence supported interpersonal skills in child and family interventions, use theoretical frameworks developed and sustained through ongoing research, and apply techniques based on evidentiary support. Students in the child and family sequence further demonstrate a capacity to develop practice informed research questions and empirical investigations to adjust and expand professional knowledge of effective practice with children and families. Specific research related practice behaviors include:

- Students demonstrate the ability to critically think and apply evidence-supported child and family practices to ensure that practice is appropriate given the child's developmental needs and the family's background, diversity, and needs.

- Students demonstrate the capacity to use practice experience with diverse child and family systems to conceptualize, develop, and implement research and/or evaluation practices that can improve services for diverse children, families, and/or constituencies.
- Students demonstrate the ability to implement research, practice, and/or evaluation protocols that are appropriate for the developmental capacities of children.
- Students demonstrate the ability to identify ethical problems and resolutions in research questions, protocols, and reporting in child and family research.

Advanced Child & Family Competency 5: Engage in Policy Practice in Child & Family Services

Social work practitioners in child and family services possess a knowledge and understanding of government, local, and agency policies that mandate and structure child and family services. They use this understanding to evaluate, critique, and propose changes to service systems. Students in the Child and Family specialization sequence learn the development and operational principles of federal, state, and local policy structures that influence the delivery of child and family services. Students use critical thinking to evaluate policies and identify policy-elements and procedures that interfere with the achievement of the intended purposes. Students are able to identify shortcomings within current child and family services policy and propose solutions to improve service delivery. The practice behaviors include:

- Students demonstrate the ability to use critical thinking skills to analyze and understand the impact of child and family policy on child/family wellbeing.
- Students identify how procedures within service delivery systems impact policy intent and impact child and family outcomes.
- Students demonstrate the capacity to collaborate with community, interprofessional, and/or organizational colleagues to formulate and propose policy changes that can improve the effectiveness of policies and systems that govern the delivery of child and family interventions.

Advanced Child & Family Competency 6: Engage with Individuals, Families, Groups, Organizations, and Communities in Child & Family Services

Social work practitioners in child and family services select relevant and evidence supported child and family theory/knowledge frameworks to guide their engagement activities with children, families, groups, organizations, and communities. These frameworks are understood within the context of social and economic justice and child and family diversity and difference. Students in the Child and Family specialization use these theory/knowledge frameworks to guide their actions and interactions with children and other family members through developing a collaborative and focused working alliance. Students develop their interpersonal skills to effectively manage the challenges of engaging children, family members, interprofessional partners, organizational representatives, and community members into a collaborative working alliance. The engagement-related advanced practice behaviors include:

- Students demonstrate the capacity to apply evidence-informed and supported actions within the engagement process with children, families, groups, organizations, and communities.
- Students demonstrate the effective use of interpersonal skills to help children and family members identify their assets, strengths, resilience, current needs, and challenges including organizational/systemic barriers.
- Students will demonstrate the ability to identify, ethically engage, and maintain a collaborative working alliance with child, family, group, informal/formal community members, and interprofessional/organizational supports as necessary to enhance the child and family's capacity for successfully achieving their goals.

Advanced Child & Family Competency 7: Assess Individuals, Families, Groups, Organizations, and Communities in Child & Family Services

Social work practitioners in child and family services apply relevant and evidence supported theory/knowledge frameworks to inform assessment decisions. The application of these frameworks is used to identify and frame child, family, group, organization, and community problems, goals, and objectives. These knowledge frameworks concurrently guide intervention decisions with children and other family members through understanding the underlying needs as they emerge during the assessment phase of service. Students in the Child and Family specialization sequence use evidence-supported knowledge to identify linkages among the needs and experiences of each family member to create a dynamic understanding of child/family problems. They concurrently use evidence-supported child and family theories/knowledge to shape goals and select intervention strategies. The assessment-related child and family practice behaviors include:

- Students demonstrate the ability to integrate individual and family theories, child, family, group, organizational, and/or community dynamics and needs to collaboratively work with the child/family to develop a flexible, evolving, and mutually endorsed assessment.
- Students demonstrate the ability to assess children, families, groups, organizations, and communities to identify dynamics and/or structures that influence the child and family's capacity to thrive and also identify assets and supports to enhance intervention outcomes.
- Students demonstrate the ability to use a mutually developed, comprehensive understanding of the child/family, group, organization and/or community situation to develop measurable and inclusive treatment/service goals with the child and family.

Advanced Child & Family Competency 8: Intervene with Individuals, Families, Groups, Organizations, and Communities in Child & Family Services

Social work practitioners in child and family services use their evidence-supported child and family knowledge frameworks to guide their practice with children, families, groups, organizations, and/or communities. These frameworks inform student understanding and targeting of intervention activities. Students in the Child and Family specialization sequence use cognitive-affective and interpersonal skill-sets/strategies that emerge from the knowledge frameworks. Students are able to articulate rationales for their interventions based on clearly identified rationales that emerge from their understanding of the theory/knowledge frameworks. The practice behaviors include:

- Students demonstrate the ability to apply evidenced-supported theory and interpersonal practices to guide goal-focused child, family, group, organizational, and community interventions with, and/or on behalf of children and/or families.
- Students demonstrate the ability to use evidence-supported theories and interpersonal practice skills that can influence cognitive, affective, interpersonal, relational, and behavioral child and family dynamics.
- Students demonstrate the capacity to engage in reflective practice that includes thoughtful examination of their responses to practice with children and/or families and how such responses influence relationships and interventions with children and/or families.

Advanced Child & Family Competency 9: Evaluate Practice with Individuals, Families, Groups, Organizations, and Communities in Child & Family Services

Social work practitioners in child and family services use goal operationalization, measurement, and evaluation skills to assess practice outcomes at the child, family, group, organization, and/or community level. Students in the Child and Family specialization sequence use research-based knowledge and skills to inform the intervention contract. They use measurable goals to monitor and evaluate child, family, group, organization, and community progress achieved through intervention. Outcomes are used to inform future

professional practices, shape programs, and promote practice-focused research. As intervention ends, students assess outcomes and plan to sustain the outcomes as children and families transition out of services. The practice behaviors include:

- Students demonstrate the ability to use the measurable intervention goals and methods identified during assessment to monitor and evaluate intervention progress and outcomes.
- Students demonstrate an understanding of how evaluation data can serve as an advocacy tool for additional services, program development, and/or funding within an organization and/or community.