

# The JBFCs Institute for Child Care Professionalization and Training

by Frank Delano and Jill Shah

In September 2006, the Jewish Board of Family and Children's Services (JBFCs) Institute for Child Care Professionalization and Training held its third graduation ceremony at the agency's main office in New York City. Keynote Speaker Lloyd Bullard, CWLA's Director of Residential Services and Cultural Competence, spoke on "Life-long Connections." JBFCs Executive Vice President and CEO Alan Siskind, JBFCs Associate Executive Vice President (and future CEO) Paul Levine, and Rick Greenberg, Director of the Martha Selig Educational Institute, were among the other speakers addressing the child care workers and supervisors being honored, accentuating the importance the agency places on the training and development of the child care workforce.

Previous keynote speakers at the Institute's graduation ceremonies have included Floyd Alwon, Vice President, Consultation, Research, and Professional Development at CWLA, and nationally known presenter and author Charlie Applestein, adding an important national vision to the message the agency wants to impart to child care workers.

JBFCs, a large, voluntary social service and mental health agency with more than a century of history, serves more than 65,000 families, adults, and children of all ethnic, racial, religious, and economic backgrounds in the New York City area. The agency has more than 185 community-based programs, day treatment and residential treatment centers, and approximately 2,300 employees. It serves nearly 300 children and families in residential programs.

The Institute for Child Care Professionalization and Training was established in 1999 with a generous endowment from a benefactor who long

admired the rich history and quality of care JBFCs provided in its residential services to children. Frank Delano served as part-time director, bringing more than 20 years of experience at Hawthorne Cedar Knolls, the agency's oldest and largest residential center. Delano was Associate Director of Hawthorne for 11 years and began his career there as a child care worker.

Dana McCarthy was named as part-time administrative assistant. McCarthy began her career as a child care worker at Hawthorne. She is currently an LMSW, working full time at another agency. From its inception, the strong message of professional growth for child care workers was built into the structure of the institute's staffing as both regular staff began their careers as child care workers in the agency.

Recognizing the importance of quality training (from feedback from child care workers after the early trainings), and realizing the need for more training given the increasing needs of children in our society, the agency shifted resources and in 2001 established the director as a full-time position. This led to a dramatic increase in the services the institute has been able to deliver.

Using feedback from established courses, and through a series of meetings with child care workers and residential administrators, the institute developed a 50-hour Excellence in Child Care certificate that now is required for all child care staff in their first year of employment. These certificate courses are completed in addition to program- or client-specific trainings that child care workers receive in their individual programs.

The current certificate includes:

- ABCs of Residential Child Care (7 hours),
- Making Recreation a Therapeutic

Activity (4 hours),

- Cornell Therapeutic Crisis Intervention (24 hours),
- Working with GLBTQ Children in Residential Treatment (4 hours)
- Basics of Child Development (7 hours), and
- Beyond Cultural Diversity: Moving Along the Road to Delivering Culturally Competent Services to Children and Families (4 hours).

In addition to these courses, the institute offers more than 15 other workshops geared to more specific topics, including Behavior Modification with Children and Teens, Working Overnight in Residential Care, and More Than Broken Hearts: Teen Relationship Abuse. These courses are not required for the certificate but provide another resource for programs to have their workers gain skills in targeted service areas.

More than 150 child care workers have received the certificate in three graduations. Although the certificate was originally targeted to new child care workers, the programs have also sent many more experienced workers to the courses to also achieve the certificate.

Joyce Carty, currently at the Goldsmith Center for Adolescent Treatment and a child care worker at JBFCs for 30 years, received her certificate at the 2006 graduation. Carty spoke of not only a source of pride for herself in getting the certificate but an immense joy in seeing child care workers in such a visible and honored position for their work. Thanks to a second endowment each child care worker or supervisor who successfully completes the certificate receives a one time \$1,000 bonus at the time of graduation.

As the child care worker certificate program developed, another significant need was uncovered for the institute to

address. In postcourse evaluations, and consistently in class discussions, child care workers said they felt a need for more in-depth, formal supervision. The nature of children's residential treatment makes that task very difficult for supervisors, and as a way to address the issue the institute developed a plan to deliver the 36-hour CWLA Effective Supervisory Practice course to all line children's residential supervisors. The decision to choose the Effective Supervisory Practice Courses turned out to be an excellent one as by having a nationally recognized curriculum it brought instant credibility both inside and outside the agency. The broad range and relevance of topics established a cornerstone for growth in the supervisory trainings.

After 18 months of delivering those two courses, feedback made clear that more depth was needed in many of the topic areas, and a similar theme of line supervisors wanting more in depth supervision emerged. As a result, the institute developed a 60-hour certificate for supervisors, which includes:

- Effective Supervisory Practice 1 (18 hours),
- Effective Supervisory Practice 2 (18 hours),
- Building That Professional Package: The Art of Constructive Confrontation (4 hours),
- Power in the Supervisory Relationship (2 hours),
- Developing a Professionally Packaged Interview to Hire (4 hours),
- The Art of Delegation for Supervisors (4 hours),
- Establishing Yourself as a Supervisor/Director (6 hours), and
- Professionally Packaging Your Meetings (4 hours).

Similar to the structure for child care workers, the institute offers more than 15 other targeted workshops on supervisory topics, including Blossoming Into a More Effective Supervisor, Negotiating the Pitfalls of Being a New Supervisor, and so on. Each supervisor completing the supervisory certificate is honored along with those achieving the child care certificate at graduation, creating an important visual connection

about the importance of the flow of excellent child care services. Over the past two graduations, 40 supervisors have received the certificate.

A significant development in the institute's growth took place in 2004 when Jill Shah joined the program as a training consultant focusing on the supervision trainings. As Shah began to do the trainings, she discovered that although the courses included many substantial concepts, a common theme was lacking to link the concepts together. Working with Delano, she helped formulate a definition of supervision that now permeates all of the courses.

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### **Supervision**

Supervision is a professional relationship that provides support, education, and monitoring of quality, and creates a safe forum to reflect on professional practice. It should encourage constructive confrontation and critical thinking that informs and improves the practice of all parties. Respecting the inherent hierarchy in the relationship, it should accept the ethical responsibility to use power in a thoughtful manner. The dynamics in the supervisory relationship can create a parallel process in all other relationships, including that of the client and worker. Ultimately, supervision should be the vehicle to create dynamic growth, establish high professional standards, and enhance quality and culturally competent services.

In addition to the common supervision definition, the common theme of striving for high professional standards emerged in the definition of *professional package*.

### **Professional Package**

A professional package is a cohesive concept that logically articulates a commonly accepted professional standard

that depersonalizes an issue and stimulates a professional process. Consistent use of the package cultivates an organizational culture that promotes a standard of excellence, cultural competence, and highest quality services.

The emergence of these two common themes solidified the base of the supervision trainings, but also symbolized an interesting process that developed naturally in the institute's history.

The professional package theme nicely captured the institute's mission to consistently reinforce the importance of high professional standards and professional growth for child care workers and how those standards should be consistently monitored as part of ongoing professional processes. Supervision should be the main vehicle to provide a forum for those discussions. The supervision definition provided a good reminder of the many parallel processes that the supervisory relationship can create and the importance of continually understanding the significance of "relationship" in residential treatment at all levels.

These themes were developed at the same time a series of discussions were being held with Lenny Rodriguez, JBFCS Assistant Executive Director and Director of Children's Residential Services. The discussions focused on strategizing how the institute could best teach the skills necessary to do the job while maintaining JBFCS's long-standing philosophy that residential treatment of children is primarily a relationship-based process from which everything else emanates. Supervisors must be competently trained in how to do that.

In supporting the importance of relationships, the courses are open to staff at all levels and disciplines in the agency and can also include children in care or family members. The focus on the supervision courses recognizes the reality that if child care workers are to nurture and support the children they are working with, they must also be receiving those qualities from their supervisors.

The supervision courses are targeted to residential supervisors but regularly include large numbers of clinical supervisors, support service supervisors, fiscal

staff, and human resource specialists who talk about how to enhance their relationships to best blend their contributions to quality care for children and families.

In keeping with a theme of professionalization of child care, the institute tries to maintain a strong presence outside the agency locally, nationally, and internationally. Many of the courses are delivered for numerous agencies in the New York area. In particular, the institute has become very influential in the area of supervisory trainings, providing courses to more than 35 different agencies in the area. The director has been a member of the CWLA National Residential Advisory Committee for the past eight years and has served on a number of other national committees and boards. He has been a regular presenter at a number of national and international conferences.

This past year, the institute sponsored four JBFCs child care workers identified as doing outstanding work by their programs to attend the Eighth International Child Youth Care Workers Conference in Montreal, where they were able to learn and share their practice with delegates from more than 35 countries.

The institute is part of the agency's Martha Selig Educational Institute. In addition to providing training to children's residential workers, it provides trainings and support to any of the agency programs at the request of program directors. It is one of many agency training resources for the programs at JBFCs, and there are a number of structures to blend the institute's work with other agency programs and themes.

Over the past four years, JBFCs has made a strong commitment to address the issues of racism, both interpersonally and institutionally. The director is a member of the agency's antiracism task force, and many of the antiracism themes are woven into the trainings.

Many of the residential programs use the Sanctuary model, and although the institute does not teach sanctuary courses directly, it works with sanctuary staff to infuse many of the common Sanctuary terms and themes in the courses. Two basic trauma-sensitive

courses have recently been added to support the Sanctuary process. Delano cochairs a Residential Training Cabinet with one of the program milieu directors. This cabinet meets three times a year to consistently review curriculum, quality, program satisfaction, and future goals for the institute.

As the institute moves forward, two exciting developments will expand the program and its effect on the quality of child care. The institute recently moved into a permanent space on Westchester Residential Campus, which will allow for much more flexibility in training schedules. The cabinet has also completed the plan for an additional 24 hours of courses to the Excellence in Child Care certificate. This will now make the certificate a total of 74 hours for programs that require the Cornell TCI course and 50 hours for programs that do not require TCI. The additional courses include:

- Professional Boundaries for Child care Workers (5 hours),
- Introduction to Trauma and Trauma-Informed Care (7 hours),
- Avoiding Power Struggles with Children (4 hours),
- Basic Understanding of Mental Illness (4 hours), and
- Building Your Professional Package: A Conversation About Professional Presentation, Growth, and Development (4 hours).

To support the concept of continued professional growth, the institute will now offer an Advanced Supervisor's Certificate of 25 hours that will be required for all those who completed the basic 60-hour supervisory certificate. Participants can choose from the following courses that would best enhance their supervisory growth in consultation with their director:

- Outcome Thinking and Infusing the Agency Mission Into Your Program (4 hours),
- Finding Your Professional Groove: Developing Excellent Time Management Skills (4 hours),
- Establishing Yourself in the Role of Supervisor/Director (6 hours),
- Developing Into a More Effective and Efficient Leader (4 hours),
- If I Could Supervise My Supervisor:

The Art of Managing Upward Constructively (4 hours),

- It Is Not All Just "Them": Self-Awareness in the Workplace: How Can I Effect Positive Change Starting with Me (3 hours),
- Navigating the Seas of Organizational and Agency Politics in a Constructive Way (5 hours), and
- Defining Supervision in a Professionally Packaged Way (3 hours).

Moving into the new space, and the addition of these two certificates, should provide a strong base for the institute to move into its ninth year with the mission of professionalizing child care work and enhancing the quality of care for children in JBFCs and throughout our society. The courses are designed to reinforce the underlying theme of the importance of relationship throughout the spectrum of residential care.

That concept was accentuated recently when Heather Goldman, a former resident in the Hawthorne Cedar Knolls Girls Program in the late 1980s, returned to Hawthorne to do two presentations with Delano entitled "Relationships in Child care: Looking at the Real 'Money in the Bank' and How It Can Change Lives." Goldman spoke particularly about how the relationships that touched her in residential treatment nearly 20 years ago helped her grow into a confident, successful adult.

Those presentations included both new and very experienced child care workers, social workers, administrators, support service staff, and children from residential programs who were able to hear and contribute about relationships that impact their lives, symbolizing the Institute's focus of professionalization and quality care for children through relationship building.

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Additional resources may be found online at [www.cwla.org/programs/group\\_care/rgcpositionstatement.pdf](http://www.cwla.org/programs/group_care/rgcpositionstatement.pdf).



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- Systems of care
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- Building public will
- Achieving positive change for children
- The relationship between outcomes, integration, and public policy

The CWLA National Conference is highly regarded in the child welfare community and the selection process for workshop proposals is extremely competitive. This year we plan to narrow our focus and feature fewer workshops. We hope this will allow us to fill each session with an interested audience and present some of the field's most effective and innovative work.

We invite you to submit a workshop proposal for Children 2008, which will be held in Washington, DC, February 25–27, 2008. Proposals must be submitted electronically by noon (ET) on **Tuesday, July 31, 2007**, by visiting and following the guidelines at [www.cwla.org/conferences](http://www.cwla.org/conferences).