



CW Retention Research

Over the past 10 years research focused on the child welfare workforce has been evolving in a number of areas of the country. Greatly assisted by funding from the Children's Bureau, much greater attention has been brought to bear on workforce recruitment, selection and retention and on the organizational factors that have an influence on workforce capacity building. The following is a brief summary of some of the literature.

Organizational Conditions and Retention

Supervision (Alwon & Reitz, 2000; Bernotavicz, 1997; Dickinson & Perry, 2002; Ellett, 2000; GAO, 2003; Harrison, 1995; Landsman, 2001; McCarthy, 2003; Rycraft, 1994; Samantrai, 1992; Smith, 2005). Also supported in work of the R&R grantees.

Organizational climate

The collective perception that employees have of their work environment. (AECF, 2003; Cahalane & Sites, 2004; Ellett et al., 2003; Glisson & Hemmelgarn, 1998; Hopkins et al., 1999; Keefe, 2003; Kleinpeter et al., 2003; Lewandowski, 1998; McCarthy, 2003; Nissly et al., 2005; Scannapieco & Connell-Carrick, 2003). Also supported in the work of the R&R grantees.

Workers who perceive a positive organization climate report higher job satisfaction and a greater commitment to their agency (Glisson & Durick, 1988; Glisson, 2000).

The research on the relationship between organizational conditions and retention can be summarized in 3 terms:

Mission driven: an organization whose mission and values are clear, congruent

with best practices and supported by the investment of all staff will be a retention-oriented organization.

Performance based: clear expectations for high performance and dedication to professional development (a learning organization) that enables staff to meet those expectations

Affirming: reward, reward, reward

Organizational Climate

Staff who stay

- Understand the agency's mission and feel valued as contributors to that mission (Keefe, 2003; Rycraft, 1994; Michigan State, 2008; University of North Carolina, 2008)
- Feel part of a learning organization (Fordham University, 2008)
- Experience clear expectations and measurable performance objectives (Annie E. Casey Foundation, 2003)
- Perceive opportunities for advancement (Denver University; University of Southern Maine, 2008)
- Perceive recognition and rewards for performance (Child Welfare Training Institute, 1997; University of North Carolina, 2008)
- Feel respected as individual staff members (Landsman, 2001)

Organizational Climate and Turnover

Those leaving child welfare:

- Significantly greater levels of role conflict and role overload (Denver University, 2008; University of North Carolina, 2008)
- Higher levels of depersonalization (UNC, 2008)
- Lower job satisfaction (Fordham University; University of Southern Maine, 2008)
- Lack supervisory/organizational support (Denver University, 2008; Fordham University, 2008; University of Michigan, 2008; University of North Carolina, 2008; University of Southern Maine, 2008)