

Fundamentals in Evidence Based Decision-Making

A Hands-On Opportunity to Learn and
Apply Core Principles of Continuous
Quality Improvement, Implementation
Science, and Data Analysis

June - November, 2018

Welcome to Fundamentals!

Welcome to the *Fundamentals in Evidence Based Decision-Making*, a new program (formerly the Practicum) developed to support skill development in making evidence based decision in child welfare. All actors in a child welfare system have an obligation to think critically about the system in which they are working in order to be part of the ongoing effort to improve outcomes for children and families, and we are excited to have the opportunity to work with you in this collaborative mission.

About Fundamentals

Fundamentals responds to the imperative for strong CQI leadership by supporting leaders to be disciplined, evidence-based problem solvers. The *Fundamentals* strengthens leadership's capacity to bridge the gap between *data* (bits of information), and *evidence* (appropriate use of data to draw conclusions), and then apply evidence to decisions and actions at all points in the cyclical process of improvement. Participants will learn how to ask mission-critical questions about the performance of the child welfare system, use administrative data to generate and interpret the answers to those questions, use the resulting evidence to craft local/state-level improvement efforts, and finally, implement those strategies for improvement using implementation science.

Program Format

The program includes five day-long onsite classroom sessions, homework and practice exercises, remote support and technical assistance, and opportunities for students to apply new concepts and skills to self-initiated areas of inquiry. *Fundamentals* begins with classroom sessions focused on learning and applying best practices in performance measurement and evidence use. Following the classroom-based instruction, students use their new skills to develop an evidence-based plan for improving an identified outcome in their own county. A *Fundamentals* instructor is assigned to each participant to function as coach, providing feedback and technical support along the way.

Classroom Sessions

The focus of the five sessions will be on addressing a permanency challenge common to all participants, and developing rigorous evidence to support participants as they progress through each stage of the Plan-Do-Study-Act (PDSA) cycle. This will include developing and planning the implementation of a county-specific remedy addressing the identified permanency challenge.

Classroom Schedule

Session	Date and Time	Location
Session 1	Tuesday, June 5, 2018 – 9am - 4pm	Sacramento Galleria, 2901 K Street
Session 2	Tuesday, July 31, 2018 – 9am – 4pm	Davis 1632 Da Vinci Court
Session 3	Thursday, September 13, 2018 – 9am – 4pm	Davis 1632 Da Vinci Court
Session 4	Tuesday, October 9, 2018 – 9am – 4pm	Davis 1632 Da Vinci Court
Session 5	Tuesday, November 6, 2018 – 9am – 4pm	Davis 1632 Da Vinci Court

Participant Expectations





Fundamentals is a highly interactive learning experience with faculty and class participants. Registered participants will be expected to:

- Attend each session
- Attend a pre-session webinar in advance of the first session date, June 5, 2018.
- Complete assignments/homework in between sessions, both on their own and in consultation with instructors. These assignments could include such tasks as developing some basic analyses using course materials, interpreting the results, and in some cases collecting data on their own. Participants should expect to spend about 3 hours per month on autonomous work.
- Work with a coach to review homework and other key learnings.

Purpose

The purpose of the Fundamentals series is to help participants use administrative data and other resources to build evidence that supports a CQI Plan. This includes learning how to make use of those resources to make specific and sound observations about an outcome that may need improvement. The course will then use implementation science principles to develop implementation strategies for their CQI plan.

The central premise of Fundamentals is that efforts to improve outcomes for children and families should be rooted in a theory of change that is supported by evidence. At its core, that theory is composed of four main claims:

-  I observe that...
-  I think it's because...
-  So I plan to...
-  Which I think will result in...

In a defensible theory of change, these four statements are supported by evidence. The goal of *Fundamentals* is for participants to identify a performance area that needs improvement (I observe that...) and to build a theory of change accordingly. However, this process is never linear. Students should expect to acquire new evidence about performance in their county, but they should also expect to encounter the classic hiccups that can reroute the process of improvement. As such, the goal of the series is not for students to create a theory of change that perfectly defends all four statements with evidence. Rather, the goal is for students to use their new skills to get as far along as possible, understanding that the pace of improvement varies from project to project.

Course Logistics

What times does Fundamentals begin each day? Fundamentals starts promptly at 9:00 a.m. and ends at 4:00 p.m.

How much time will I need for homework? You can expect about 3 hours of homework between monthly sessions. Please be sure to share this expectation with your supervisor so time can be supported to complete assignments.

Will I be required to speak publicly? Yes, the course does involve some public speaking, which is typically done in small groups. There will be plenty of time for preparation and practice.

How will meals be handled? Coffee and tea will be provided each morning, along with lunch. We will provide a vegetarian option, but if you have further food restrictions please plan on providing your own meal.

Who should I contact if I have questions or need support? Scott Fong is the contact for logistics and most technical support, scofong@ucdavis.edu. Once the program begins your coach will be the contact for content questions.

Faculty

Lily Alpert, Ph.D., is a Senior Researcher at Chapin Hall. Her current work focuses on research evidence use by public and private child welfare agency administrators and the development of interventions that promote the adoption and diffusion of longitudinal methods in child welfare performance measurement. Her main research interests pertain to the factors that predict foster care agencies' acquisition and use of research evidence, and how the incorporation of research evidence use into continuous quality improvement activities influences policy and practice decision making and outcomes for children and families.

Renée I. Boothroyd, Ph.D., M.A., M.P.H., is a Senior Implementation Specialist and Scientist with the Frank Porter Graham Child Development Institute. In this role, Dr. Boothroyd guides human service, public health, and philanthropic organizations to enhance competency, organizational, and leadership supports for effective implementation of evidence-based and -informed interventions.

Jennifer M. Haight, M.A., is a Policy Fellow at Chapin Hall at the University of Chicago and a senior staff member of the Center for State Child Welfare Data. She has worked extensively with public and private child welfare agencies, helping them use administrative data to evaluate and structure continuous program improvements. For nearly 20 years, Haight has assisted public child welfare agencies in the development, implementation, and monitoring of performance-based contracting initiatives. She is an instructor of Advanced Analytics for Child Welfare Administration and has co-developed and delivered a series of similar courses developed through the Northern California Training Academy designed specifically for Northern California counties.

Daniel Webster, M.S.W., Ph.D., is a Research Specialist at the Center for Social Services Research at U.C. Berkeley. He serves as co-principal investigator of the California Child Welfare Indicators Project. For more than a decade, he has provided technical assistance in the understanding and use of longitudinal data to promote child welfare system improvement in the states of Alaska, California, Florida, Nevada, Oregon and Washington. He regularly co-instructs courses through the Regional Training Academies on the application of advanced analytics for public child welfare administrators from state and county agencies.