

Version 3



Arkansas Supervisory Practice Model



***Caring about the safety,
permanency, and well-being of
children and families...***

***Committing to recognizing
family strengths and meeting
family needs...***

***Connecting families to
appropriate services and
supports to increase self-
sufficiency...***



Arkansas Supervisory Practice Model Version 3

The Arkansas DCFS Supervisory Practice Model was designed to unite our supervisory practice with an approach that demonstrates the way we value and support our staff as they work with families and align to our division’s mission.

We believe the entire system must support frontline practice through supervisory practice at all levels to achieve positive outcomes with families. This Supervisory Practice Model is designed to support enhanced supervisory practice with the ultimate goal of improving the safety, permanency, and well-being for children and families.

Developed by a diverse group of Arkansas practitioners, the model is presented through a series of “markers of effective supervision” that describe operational day to day activities that supervisors should strive to achieve and to which they hold themselves accountable. These “markers” are meant to be specific enough to help supervisors self-assess and improve performance while building accountability and consistency of practice throughout the state.

In addition, the model provides supervisors with a series of “critical thinking questions” that support the process of critical self-assessment. These questions are designed to determine how well supervisors are achieving the markers of effectiveness and will help supervisors identify their strengths, areas needing improvements, and next steps for improvement. The critical thinking questions are meant to serve as a tool for supervisors at all levels to use, as individual skill development is an ongoing process for all of us.

Finally, each section of the model includes statements of “expected outcomes”. These outcomes allow for monitoring of performance by supervisors, helping describe the results we expect to see from good supervisory practices outlined in the markers of effectiveness. If the outcomes are not being achieved, it is hoped that supervisors will continue to improve their knowledge, skills, and abilities in the identified area of supervisory practice.

The Arkansas DCFS Practice Model provided the foundation for the development of this Supervisory Practice Model. By linking the vision, goals, and beliefs of the Arkansas DCFS Practice Model to supervisory practice at every level, we demonstrate how we strive to ensure safety, permanency, and well-being of children and families through our efforts to care, commit, and connect.



Arkansas Supervisory Practice Model Version 3

The following overview of key supervisory roles and responsibilities is the foundation for the Supervisory Practice Model and conveys how we are integrating our vision of supervisory practice into our day to day work:

- **Administrative Supervision:** Through effective management of time, resources, data, and job performance we demonstrate our commitment to accountability, critical self-evaluation, and continuous improvement. (Page 3)
- **Communication:** Effective communication enhances our work as a team and supports our efforts to connect families to appropriate services and supports which increases our ability to meet their individualized needs. (Page 5)
- **Decision Making:** We are committed to the safety, permanency, and well-being of children by integrating the principles of our practice model in decision making. (Page 6)
- **Developing Staff:** Supporting the ongoing professional development of all staff at every level reflects our belief that skill based training and consultation form the foundation for successful practice. (Page 7)
- **Formal Case Consultation:** Formal case consultation reflects the care we have for supporting staff and families and our commitment to connect families to appropriate evidence informed services and supports. (Page 9)
- **Leadership:** Effective leadership skills connect daily practice to our vision as articulated in our DCFS Practice Model.(Page 11)
- **Policy:** Actively translating policy into practice demonstrates our commitment to accountability and guides practice, toward positive actions and outcomes. (Page 12)
- **Self-Care:** Maintaining a focus on self-care reflects the commitment we have for children and families by encouraging and supporting personal care of staff and self so that we can serve as an effective member of the family's team. (Page 13)
- **Supporting Staff Success:** Acknowledging the challenges our staff face along with the successes they achieve reflects the commitment we have to our staff as they provide caring services for children and families. (Page 14)
- **Teaming:** Understanding our teaming responsibilities demonstrates our commitment to shared problem solving and community involvement to support successful outcomes. (Page 16)



Arkansas Supervisory Practice Model Version 3

Administrative Supervision: Through effective management of time, resources, data, and job performance we demonstrate our commitment to accountability, critical self-evaluation, and continuous quality improvement.

Markers of Effective Supervision/We Care	Critical Thinking Questions/We Commit	Expected Outcomes/We Connect
<p>The Personal Performance Evaluation System is viewed as a meaningful staff development process used to improve worker skills and ultimately client outcomes. PPES is an ongoing dynamic process of shared communication and feedback based and worker performance, observations, and the changing developmental needs of staff that results in the implementation of training and development plans.</p> <p>Supervisors demonstrate organization and good time management skills, modeling advance planning, meeting deadlines, and a attaining a high level of performance accuracy.</p> <p>Data is used proactively and progressively (not a one-time event) to identify service needs, budget and financial issues, and practice outcomes.</p> <p>As new tools are developed they are seamlessly integrated into the work of the unit or department.</p> <p>Hiring and promotion processes are effectively managed and reflective of the values of care, commit, and connect.</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. How do my workers experience PPES? 2. What steps do I need to take to have PPES feel like a staff development process and not feel like a punitive effort? 3. How am I using data to inform my work? What steps can I take to improve in this area? 4. How am I managing the hiring and promotion process? Is that effective? Why or why not? How can I monitor the effectiveness of this work? 5. What is my practice for handling complaints? What steps do I take to assure I have done all I can do prior to the complaint being elevated? 	<p>PPES process is completed in a timely and effective manner that demonstrates value for staff and improves performance.</p> <p>Use of data results in the development of tools to monitor progress.</p> <p>Responsibilities are clear for all staff.</p> <p>Workers have the tools and relationships necessary for them to do their jobs.</p> <p>Mutual understanding of roles and responsibilities throughout DHS. Understanding is applied for mutual benefit throughout the system.</p> <p>Hiring and promotions are timely and staff members are an appropriate fit for their positions with diversity that is reflective of the culture of the community served.</p>



Arkansas Supervisory Practice Model Version 3

Markers of Effective Supervision/We Care	Critical Thinking Questions/We Commit	Expected Outcomes/We Connect
<p>Supervisors respond to complaints empathically, investigate allegations, and seek solutions and resolution prior to the complaint being elevated.</p> <p>Disciplinary action is administered in a fair, timely, just, and equitable way. Formal processes are followed and accurately documented.</p>		



Arkansas Supervisory Practice Model Version 3

Communication: Effective communication enhances our work as a team and supports our efforts to connect families to appropriate services and supports which increases our ability to meet their individualized needs.

Markers of Effective Supervision/We Care	Critical Thinking Questions/We Commit	Expected Outcomes/We Connect
<p>All communication is: factual, accurate, concise, understandable, respectful of confidentiality and timely.</p> <p>All supervisors evaluate and utilize the best method to communicate (email, face to face, phone...) a message based on the situation and the audience.</p> <p>Written communications demonstrate a conscious effort to balance thoroughness with conciseness. Written records of communications are easily accessible.</p> <p>Communications are “two way” and reciprocal, demonstrating respect, dignity, consideration, and cultural competence.</p> <p>Supervisors demonstrate willingness and ability to communicate “up” and provide input regarding key areas of agency performance and practice. Supervisors are open to their staff communicating “up” to them and are responsive.</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. How am I assuring my communications are clearly received? What steps am I taking? 2. How am I receiving feedback on the effectiveness of my communication? 3. Have I put myself “in the shoes” of the person receiving the communication, assuring my messages are respectful? 4. How am I assuring records are kept appropriately and are easily accessed? 5. How am I effectively managing my time regarding communications? 6. Am I achieving the desired impact with my communications? If not why not? What adjustments should I make? 7. When communicating decisions or directives how am I explaining the “why”? How am I assuring my supervisees understand the basis for my decisions? 	<p>Communication of relevant information is shared and received through the appropriate channels.</p> <p>Supervisors communicate their needs for support from their leaders and peers.</p> <p>Supervisors demonstrate understanding that all levels of the organization need and want constructive input.</p> <p>Written communications are easily found when needed supporting good information gathering.</p>



Arkansas Supervisory Practice Model Version 3

Decision Making: We are committed to the safety, permanency, and well-being of children by integrating the principles of our practice model in decision making

Markers of Effective Supervision/We Care	Critical Thinking Questions/We Commit	Expected Outcomes/We Connect
<p>Decision making is a well thought out process based on gathered information that balances family centered practice, cultural responsiveness, ethics, policy requirements, and child safety, permanency and well-being.</p> <p>Structured decision making methodologies are used effectively throughout the life of the case- supporting good information gathering and assessment techniques.</p> <p>Decisions are collaborative whenever possible, engaging and supporting those impacted by the decision along with the involved staff.</p> <p>The decision making process is used as an opportunity for mentoring and training with staff supporting a learning environment.</p> <p>Decisions are thoughtful and made with the appropriate sense of urgency and importance. Decisions are not always made “on the spot” if more information would support better decisions.</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. What methodologies am I using to improve information gathering and decision making (for example: SDM, Learning Circles, 0-3, Safe Home Studies)? 2. What steps have I taken to assure consistency in my decision making? 3. How effectively do I collaborate with my supervisor when making decisions? With my supervisees? 4. When collaborating with my supervisees how am I building their skills for gathering information and making good decisions? As a supervisor, how open am I to ideas from my staff? How willing am I to pull staff back if I feel their decisions are off course? How willing am I to “communicate up” when making tough decisions? 5. How am I assuring the appropriate level of information has been gathered to make decisions? 6. How am I assuring workers are asking the right questions to gather information? What steps am I taking? 7. What critical thinking questions do I use to elicit information from my staff? 	<p>Supervisors and supervisees feel empowered to be creative when gathering information and making decisions based on the best interests of the child, youth, and family. Innovations in practice and services result from this empowerment.</p> <p>Good decision making practices become a parallel process that is reinforced at every level.</p> <p>Decisions are made once supervisors and staff feel comfortable that they have gathered all available information prior to decision making, resulting in improved outcomes.</p>



Arkansas Supervisory Practice Model Version 3

Developing Staff: Supporting the ongoing professional development of all staff at every level reflects our belief that skill based training and consultation form the foundation for successful practice.

Markers of Effectiveness/We Care	Critical Thinking Questions/We Commit	Expected Outcomes/We Connect
<p>Staff views the supervisor as available and approachable, demonstrated by the supervisor’s willingness to listen and take the time to think critically and confidently answer questions or find needed answers. When the supervisor is not available, steps are taken to assure staff has alternatives for support.</p> <p>Expectations for performance are clear to staff through ongoing communications and monitoring from the supervisor.</p> <p>Supervisors accompany staff for the purpose of observation and feedback or modeling performance as a teaching opportunity. Field experiences are reviewed for lessons learned.</p> <p>Classroom training experiences are discussed, reinforced, and transferred into skills through field experiences. Supervisor is an active partner in the review process. These experiences serve as the basis for connecting performance management with training plans.</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Does my staff see me as available? Approachable? 2. In my absence where does my staff go for support? 3. How am I assuring that performance expectations are clear to the staff I supervise? 4. When was the last time I observed my staff in the field and provided them feedback? How am I assuring continuous improvement of their work with clients? 5. When my staff attends training, what steps do I take to reinforce their learning? How do I assure their learning is transferred into their practice? 6. When assigning work what role does the worker’s developmental needs play in that assignment? 7. What steps am I taking to continue my own professional development? What skills do I need to develop further? What are my next steps? 	<p>Excitement, energy, and a sense of caring for clients is transferred from supervisor to their staff.</p> <p>Information from training is quickly integrated into field experiences for staff.</p> <p>Professionalism is demonstrated at all times and during all contacts by supervisors, intentionally modeling desired behaviors of staff and reinforcing performance expectations.</p> <p>Ongoing opportunities for staff growth and development are visible at every level.</p>



Arkansas Supervisory Practice Model Version 3

Markers of Effectiveness/We Care	Critical Thinking Questions/We Commit	Expected Outcomes/We Connect
<p>Methodologies are provided to workers with explanations that enhance their understanding and their ability to use the tool effectively in the field.</p> <p>Assignments are managed in a way that promotes learning and new experiences for staff.</p> <p>Supporting staff’s professional development needs is viewed as a primary responsibility for supervisors demonstrated by ongoing coaching of critical thinking skills for new and experienced staff appropriate to their developmental skill level.</p> <p>Supervisors at every level continue their own professional development and model learning new skills and strategies in support of improving their own performance and ability to mentor staff</p> <p>Successes are celebrated, providing support and reinforcing good performance as a staff development strategy</p> <p>New workers receive sufficient time designated for orientation from their supervisor.</p> <p>Supervisors assure that they have capacity to provide such support.</p>	<p>8. When was the last time I “celebrated success” with a staff member? With my team?</p>	



Arkansas Supervisory Practice Model Version 3

Formal Case Consultation: Formal case consultation reflects the care we have for supporting staff and families and our commitment to connect families to appropriate evidence informed services and supports

Markers of Effective Supervision/We Care	Critical Thinking Questions/We Commit	Expected Outcomes/We Connect
<p>Case consultation is considered a formal expectation of supervisory practice and is handled in a “face to face” and proactive manner supporting progress and advancement of work from the circumstances that brought the family to the attention of Arkansas DCFS.</p> <p>Case consultation includes reviewing case plans and services and progress toward goals. This work helps develop understanding and critical thinking towards decisions and next steps.</p> <p>Case consultation is conducted in a safe environment demonstrating focus and protected time for the worker and allowing the sharing of doubts and concerns. The meeting encourages learning through two way communications, coaching, and a non-punitive environment.</p> <p>Both the staff and supervisor contribute to the agenda for discussion demonstrating engagement.</p> <p>Discussions and decisions from case consultation are documented and used for future reference and monitoring of progress.</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. How effective am I at improving outcomes for clients by supporting workers in case consultation? 2. How am I assuring case consultations are of the proper intensity level for staff member’s needs? 3. How do I prepare for case consultations? (For example: review notes from previous sessions? Prepare questions? Assure the time will be uninterrupted?) 4. How does staff prepare for my case consultations? Do they typically gather enough information or look to me for answers and direction on next steps? What does that tell me? 5. What do I need to do to make my consultation time more effective? What are my next steps? 6. How am I including all appropriate team members in case consultations? 	<p>Supervisee’s time management is supported by enabling them to prioritize work.</p> <p>Practice skills improve through protected time for coaching and development.</p> <p>Informal connections and discussions are more meaningful as the supervisor is aware of the dynamics of the situation.</p> <p>Supervisors understand their own accountabilities for cases and involve themselves while still empowering staff.</p> <p>Barriers for worker performance are identified and addressed as a team.</p> <p>Cases are reviewed for quality practice along with compliance, timeliness, and thoroughness.</p>



Arkansas Supervisory Practice Model Version 3

Markers of Effective Supervision/We Care	Critical Thinking Questions/We Commit	Expected Outcomes/We Connect
<p>Formal case consultation includes appropriate team members.</p> <p>Frequency of consultation is based on the level of intensity needed, with specific focus on cases in their first weeks and months.</p> <p>Resources needed by staff are identified during case consultation and supervisors follow up as advocates on behalf of workers.</p>		



Arkansas Supervisory Practice Model Version 3

Leadership: Effective leadership skills connect daily practice to our vision as articulated in our DCFS Practice Model.

Markers of Effectiveness/We Care	Critical Thinking Questions/We Commit	Expected Outcomes/We Connect
<p>Convey the ongoing vision of the agency, our DCFS Practice Model, new policies, technologies, methodologies and initiatives through speech and actions supporting a unity of purpose among staff and other stakeholders.</p> <p>Effectively link the vision of the agency to the practices that staff performs day to day.</p> <p>Leadership always demonstrates the principles, goals and beliefs, provides an excellent example, leads and motivates staff to exceed established goals and objectives and the work unit achieves high performance, excellence, and results.</p> <p>Encourages and acknowledges leadership at every level.</p> <p>Considers how resources should best be allocated for positive outcomes and responsible stewardship of funds.</p> <p>Internal relationships are developed, maintained, and repaired if necessary as resources are shared and teaming occurs outside of one’s work unit.</p> <p>Contributes knowledge and experiences as part of statewide or local work groups and committees.</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. How comfortable am I articulating the vision of the agency? 2. What steps do I take to assure “unity of purpose” among my staff? What steps should I take to improve this among my staff? 3. Do I see leadership among the staff that I supervise? How am I helping to develop that leadership? How am I using that leadership to help develop the rest of my staff? To advance our mission? 4. What is the perception of my staff of my leadership? Do I agree with that perception? Is that satisfactory to me? What steps can I take to improve my leadership? How do I know? 	<p>Resources and performance actions are all aligned to the strategy of the agency.</p> <p>Performance and results demonstrate a high level of achievement in alignment with the Practice Model.</p> <p>Resources are utilized thoughtfully and responsibly.</p> <p>Supervisees observe energy and interest in their work from their supervisor, specifically regarding matters of direct service practice, living the values of care, commit, and connect, and improving outcomes for clients.</p>



Arkansas Supervisory Practice Model Version 3

Policy: Actively translating policy into practice demonstrates our commitment to accountability and guides practice, toward positive actions and outcomes.

Markers of Effectiveness/We Care	Critical Thinking Questions/We Commit	Expected Outcomes/We Connect
<p>Supervisor is knowledgeable regarding policies and is able to understand and implement policy in alignment with expectations of the DCFS Practice Model.</p> <p>Supervisor competently integrates policy into practices and training and enforces policy among supervisees.</p> <p>Supervisor seeks clarification for policies that are unclear to them.</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. What policies am I responsible for that I simply do not understand? What steps can I take to improve my understanding? 2. When new policies are developed, what steps do I take to integrate the policy into my staff's work? How am I assuring that is sufficient to be effective? 3. What steps do I take to encourage staff to research policy and seek answers on their own? 	<p>Policies and procedures are consistently implemented correctly by staff at all levels.</p> <p>As new policies and procedures are developed there are corresponding changes to actions of staff.</p>



Arkansas Supervisory Practice Model Version 3

Self-Care: Maintaining a focus on self-care reflects the commitment we have for children and families by encouraging and supporting personal care of staff and self so that we can serve as an effective member of the family’s team.

Markers of Effectiveness/We care	Critical Thinking Questions/We Commit	Expected Outcomes/We Connect
<p>Maintaining awareness of our own needs and sense of fulfillment through critical self-evaluation and seeking feedback from peers and supervisors that results in intervention plans and conscious efforts to prevent burnout.</p> <p>Supervisors model self-care and personal safety for staff, identifying their own protected time, identifying training and developmental needs, and recognizing and responding to secondary trauma in own self.</p> <p>Celebrate successes and acknowledge achievement in ourselves, our teams, and the staff we supervise.</p> <p>Supervisors maintain their own “work/life” balance, remaining accountable for responsibilities while acknowledging and responding to their personal needs to perform effectively.</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. How am I feeling about my work? Is that feeling satisfactory to me? What steps can I take to improve that feeling? What support do I need? Does the dynamic of secondary trauma impact my life? How am I judging that? 2. What do I do to promote personal safety for myself and my staff? 3. How am I monitoring the self-care of my supervisees? 	<p>Supervisors demonstrate the energy needed to support their staff.</p> <p>Supervisory capacity is enhanced as a result of attention to their own self-care.</p>



Arkansas Supervisory Practice Model Version 3

Supporting Staff Success: Acknowledging the challenges our staff face, along with the successes they achieve, reflecting the commitment we have to our staff as they provide caring services for children and families.

Markers of Effectiveness/We Care	Critical Thinking Questions/We Commit	Expected Outcomes/We Connect
<p>Supervisors support protected time for their staff to complete their duties including covering other duties in support of the worker.</p> <p>Supervisor recognizes when workers are burning out or suffering secondary trauma and engage staff in identifying the contributors to burn out together, seek solutions and develop intervention plans proactively.</p> <p>Supervisor is aware of a staff needs (including training needs) and functions “as a team” to identify and develop resources needed to get the job done.</p> <p>Supervisors monitor workload (not just caseload) and adjust their level of intensity of support and/or adjust workload level to support staff.</p> <p>Supervisor monitors staff safety, consciously expresses concern for staff, and is aware when safety issues arise. Supervisors consistently advocate for staff safety.</p> <p>Staff is treated equitably, without bias or favoritism.</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. What steps have I taken to assess staff needs? How do I differentiate between training needs and other needs of staff? 2. How aware am I on a daily basis of my staff’s level of “burn out”? How does that impact my communications to them? 3. When assigning new work, how am I adjusting my level of support to meet staff needs? 4. What steps have I taken to monitor staff safety? What steps should I take next? 5. Do my staff members perceive bias or favoritism from me? How do I know? 6. How would my supervisees describe the climate of my team? Is that satisfactory? Optimal? What steps can I take to improve in this area? 	<p>Staff members are comfortable identifying needs with supervisors and developing plans that address those needs.</p> <p>A positive climate where staff has the supplies, resources, and tools to achieve goals</p> <p>Workers are confident and able to perform required job functions.</p> <p>Retention of staff improves over time.</p>



Arkansas Supervisory Practice Model Version 3

Markers of Effectiveness/ <i>We Care</i>	Critical Thinking Questions/ <i>We Commit</i>	Expected Outcomes/ <i>We Connect</i>
<p>Supervisor is aware of the morale of their staff and proactively works to build a culture of teaming, engaging, and learning. The culture supports humor and fun while focusing on achieving goals and working well together.</p> <p>Supervisor monitors workload, overtime usage, and leave balance and supports staff maintaining work life balance and their own self-care.</p>	<p>7. How am I assessing my supervisees' needs and the impact of those needs on their ability to comfortably perform their job?</p>	



Arkansas Supervisory Practice Model Version 3

Teaming: Understanding our teaming responsibilities demonstrates our commitment to shared problem solving and community involvement to support successful outcomes.

Markers of Effectiveness/We Care	Critical Thinking Questions/We Commit	Expected Outcomes/We Connect
<p>Supervisor encourages, facilitates, and demonstrates teaming in all of their interactions including supervisees, peers, families, internal Arkansas DCFS staff, DHS staff, and system partners and stakeholders.</p> <p>Demonstrates thoughtful inclusion of team members when discussing cases or agency efforts.</p> <p>Supervisor is thoughtful about who should be on the team prior to discussions, modeling for workers.</p> <p>Covering supervisee’s work to allow them to attend training, and modeling “teaming” with staff to complete tasks and improve service outcomes.</p> <p>Community and professional partnerships are developed, maintained, and repaired if appropriate as a natural part of advocating for staff and clients.</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. What actions do I take that model teaming for my staff? How am I coaching them to value teaming? 2. How open am I to teaming? Under what circumstances should I try to team better? 3. What internal processes do I create for my staff that encourage or demonstrate teaming? 4. What am I doing that discourages teaming? What do I need to do to avoid that behavior? 	<p>Supervisors observe staff teaming more with each other, families, peers, and community providers.</p> <p>The organizational climate is team oriented and not “everyone for themselves”.</p> <p>Services plans are customized as a result of team member’s understanding of individualized strengths and needs of children and families.</p>

