Twenty Things Supervisors Can Do to Support Workers to Competently Practice with LGBTQ Children, Youth, and Families

1. Use supervision and the supervisory relationship to promote positive, culturally competent approaches to working with LGBTQ children, youth, and families.

2. Involve and support workers in an ongoing process to develop skills, resources, knowledge, and attributes that are recognized as LGBTQ-competent. Provide workers with resources and training opportunities to strengthen their ability to work effectively and competently with LGBTQ children, youth, and families.

3. Coach staff in the importance of and the skills and language necessary to support LGBTQ children, youth, and families. Help staff to practice using these skills and LGBTQ-affirming terms through role play during supervision.

4. Listen to workers about challenges in serving LGBTQ children, youth, and families in terms of practice, policy, and collaboration in order to identify unmet needs and better serve LGBTQ children, youth, and families. Advocate for/allocate resources which respect the diverse needs of LGBTQ children, youth, and families.

5. Support workers in engaging birth families and exploring permanency options for LGBTQ youth.

6. Develop and sustain collaborative community relationships (including foster parents and group care providers) that support LGBTQ children, youth, and families. Encourage workers to visit and explore whether community groups are LGBTQ-affirming and competent before providing referrals.

7. Coach workers to incorporate knowledge of LGBTQ competency into assessment and case planning. Use case examples involving LGBTQ children, youth, and families in supervision and training.

8. Recognize indicators of mental illness and developmental disabilities in LGBTQ children, youth, and families and provide clinical consultation to workers. Support workers in distinguishing between issues that relate to gender and sexuality and those that are unrelated.

9. Supervise workers in implementing policy and programs relevant to LGBTQ children, youth, and families. Support any policy or program changes necessary to better meet the needs of LGBTQ children, youth, and families.

10. Assist and support workers in developing an advocacy plan for meeting the LGBTQ child, youth, or family's needs with outside agencies and organizations (i.e., schools) as warranted.

11. Understand the factors that contribute to placement stability and implement strategies to achieve placement stability for LGBTQ children and youth (including sensitive management of placement transitions).

12. Demonstrate knowledge of LGBTQ child and adolescent development, characteristics, behaviors, and social challenges through thoughtful assessment and case planning.

13. Help workers to work through their bias and provide them with accurate information about LGBTQ children, youth, and families. Support workers in bridging any gaps between their personal views and their professional responsibilities.

14. Be aware that some workers may have religious issues concerning LGBTQ people. Support workers in bridging any perceived conflicts between their religious views and their professional responsibilities.

15. Raise awareness of LGBTQ issues by helping workers to create LGBTQ-affirming environments in their offices and by use of LGBTQ-friendly "cues". Model this by making your own office an LGBTQ-affirming environment.

16. Support workers who are trying to identify LGBTQ resources in the community or create new LGBTQ resources.

17. Model LGBTQ affirming behaviors and language.

18. Be clear that you will uphold the policies and practices of the organization as they pertain to LGBTQ children, youth, and families.

19. Be prepared to confront and address blatant and subtle anti-LGBTQ sentiment. Be familiar with policies for addressing and reporting anti-LGBTQ incidents, and utilize these protocols as needed.

20. Be prepared and available to provide clinical consultation support to workers working with LGBTQ children, youth, and families.