

**SUMMER INSTRUCTION ON CAMPUS**

**2003**

**STUDY GUIDE**

**THE PROFESSION AND PUBLIC POLICY  
IN FAMILY SUPPORT STUDIES MODULE**

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## WELCOME TO SUMMER INSTRUCTION ON CAMPUS

Welcome to The Profession and Public Policy in Family Support Services module. This module begins on July 5, 2003 and ends on September 26, 2003. The module is divided into three phases:

Phase 1. July 5-July 18, 2003

Reading Period

This phase begins with an introductory telephone conference call on July 7, 2003, at 7:30pm Eastern Daylight Savings Time. During the conference call, the module will be introduced, and the timeline, summer instruction phase and assignments will be described and discussed. Read the information in this guide in preparation for the discussion on July 7<sup>th</sup>.

- \* Phase 1 continues as an intensive reading period during which students review all of the required readings for POLF 585 and POLF 586.

During Phase 1, students must also prepare Discussion Topics 1-8 and Exercises 1-8 in preparation for the week of summer classes in North Miami Beach, Florida.

Phase 2. July 19-July 21, 2003

Summer Instruction in North Miami Beach

Summer Instruction is the formal instructional component of the module. Students discuss assigned readings, key concepts and theoretical constructs. Classroom-based discussion, exercises and activities as well as presentations and a symposium are incorporated.

Phase 3. July 22-September 26, 2003

Completion of assignments

During this two month phase, students complete reports and final exams.

A conference call is scheduled for August 25, 2003, at 7:30pm Eastern Daylight Savings Time, to further review assignments and answer questions associated with the assignments.

This Study Guide provides an overview of The Profession and Public Policy in Family Support Services module, which formally begins with the telephone conference call on July 7, 2003. During the conference call, the module will be introduced, and the timeline, summer instruction phase and assignments will be described and discussed.

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## NOVA SOUTHEASTERN UNIVERSITY

Founded in 1964, Nova Southeastern University is an independent nonsectarian, nonprofit and racially nondiscriminatory institution. Unique among institutions of higher education, Nova Southeastern is a university for all ages. Nova College provides undergraduate education. Numerous graduate programs in a variety of fields provide master's, doctoral and post doctoral education. Nondegree continuing education programs are also offered. The University School, a demonstration school, serves children from preschool through high school. The Family Center offers a broad array of educational programs that support the needs of pre-school children and the needs of the family.

Since its beginning, Nova Southeastern University has been distinguished by its innovative outlook, its unique programs which provide nontraditional choices in educational programs, and its important research that is aimed at solutions to problems of immediate concern to mankind.

### Accreditation

Nova Southeastern University is accredited by the Commission on Colleges of the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools to award bachelor's, master's, educational specialist and doctoral degrees. Nova Southeastern University admits students of any race, color, and national or ethnic origin.

## **FISCHLER GRADUATE SCHOOL OF EDUCATION AND HUMAN SERVICES**

The Fischler Graduate School of Education and Human Services is dedicated to the training and continuing support of teachers, administrators, trainers, and other workers in education and related helping professionals. These practitioners serve as the bridge between the knowledge base in education and the quality of education experienced by their students. The school hopes to fulfill its commitment to the advancement of education by serving as a resource for practitioners and by supporting them in their self-development.

In accomplishing its mission, the school offers educational programs designed to meet the needs of the practitioner and makes a special commitment to provide educational programs in those geographical areas in which there are few resources for the training and for the professional support of practitioners in education and social service.

Because of its commitment to the working professional, the school offers alternative delivery systems that are adaptable to practitioners' work schedules and locations. School programs reflect and anticipate the needs of practitioners to become more effective in their current positions, to fill emerging roles in the educational field, and to be ready to accept changing responsibilities within their own organizations. The school also aids professional educators in achieving personal goals, including certification requirements.

## MASTER'S PROGRAM IN FAMILY SUPPORT STUDIES

This study guide is but one part of a comprehensive master's degree program in Family Support Studies. The guide, the module for which it provides direction, and all other segments of the program represent one dimension of Nova Southeastern University's response to the need to improve family support services.

This program has been developed in recognition of two generalizations about family support services that seem to be incontestable. The first generalization is that the skill and leadership of family support practitioners are the central ingredients in creating and maintaining quality family support programs. Strategies for improving these programs must include solid provisions for improving the skill and leadership of these practitioners.

The second generalization underlying the development of this academic program is that family support practitioners have few options when they seek advanced training. They must either take an advanced degree in a related field or settle for inservice, nondegree programs. Moreover, the time demands and responsibility of most practitioners make it exceedingly difficult for them to attend conventional university programs. These practitioners require a specialized curriculum, emphasizing human growth and development, family systems, leadership, and the profession and public policy. They also require an academic program that is complementary to their ongoing family support responsibilities. Finally, they require a flexible program, which they can pursue on their own turf.

In brief, Nova Southeastern University has recognized an opportunity to make a responsible contribution to family support services by providing a distinctive program, in a distinctive format, for an exclusive and important group: family support practitioners.

## ABOUT THE AUTHOR

### Michael Forster, Ph.D.

Michael Forster, Ph.D., is Associate Professor of Social Work and Director of the School of Social Work at the University of Southern Mississippi, where he specializes in policy studies, agency management, and consultation and supervision. In addition, he is co-director of the Family Network Partnership, an award-winning community-based family support and delinquency prevention agency in Hattiesburg, Mississippi. Dr. Forster has secured external funding for this agency from a variety of sources, including the U.S. Department of Justice, the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development, the National Corporation for Service Learning, and the Mississippi Arts Commission.

Prior to joining the University of Southern Mississippi faculty in 1994, Dr. Forster was Executive Vice-President of Uhlich Children's Home in Chicago for six years, having earlier filled direct service child and youth care, supervisory, and case management positions in other child and family agencies. From 1985 to 1988, Dr. Forster collaborated with Thomas E. Linton at the University of Illinois at Chicago in advancing the *educateur* approach to working with troubled youth in the North America.

Dr. Forster has edited the newsletter of the National Organization of Child Care Worker Associations (renamed the Association for Child & Youth Care Professionals), and has published frequently in child and youth care, social work, and educational journals. In 1997 he guest edited an issue of Nova Southeastern University's *Child and Youth Care Leader*. Among recent publications in the youth and family arena is "Financial 'Rules' for Child and Youth Care Managers," in Vol. 30, #4 of *Child & Youth Care Forum* (August, 2001). Articles on youth development, "Delinquency Prevention as Empowerment Practice: A Community-Based Social

Work Approach,” and on program evaluation, “Collaboration that Works: Peer Assessment of Critical Success Factors among Family Support Networks in Mississippi,” have been accepted for journal publication.

Dr. Forster has served as a Nova Southeastern University adjunct faculty member since 1989.

## ACADEMIC EXPECTATIONS

### Degree Completion Requirements

In order to graduate with a master's degree in Family Support Studies, a student must successfully complete three nine-credit modules and one six-credit module, a total of thirty-three credits, and a seven-credit practicum. In addition, students are required to attend and actively participate in every session of summer instruction on campus during their first year in the program. Students must assume the expenses for the travel, lodging and meals to summer instruction.

Six months prior to the ending date of your cohort, you will receive a degree application for graduation. This form is to be filled out and returned to the registrar's office to be processed. When all financial obligations have been met and all course and program requirements have been completed, the degree is conferred. The University diploma will be mailed approximately three months after the date on which the degree was officially conferred by the Board of Trustees.

The University holds its annual commencement exercises in Fort Lauderdale. The main office for the program should be contacted for the location, date, and time of the ceremonies.

### Incomplete Course Work

Each student is expected to complete all assignments and other course work according to the due dates and schedules established by the course instructor. If a student is faced with some work-related or personal problem that precludes the timely completion of course requirements, a request for an incomplete can be submitted to the program office.

Please note that the "I" incomplete approval will be contingent on the fact that the student has demonstrated that he/she has completed a significant portion of the course work. If the student has

neither produced nor submitted any work to the instructor prior to the incomplete deadline then, the student is not eligible to receive approval for the incomplete.

Upon approval, this incomplete will provide the student with an additional time to complete all outstanding course work. The procedures for the incomplete are the following:

1. An "Incomplete Request Form" will be included with the registration material sent to each student at the beginning of this module.
2. When you find it necessary to request an incomplete, you are to first discuss it with your instructor and obtain his/her approval.
3. After receiving the instructor's approval, you are to fill out and mail the "Incomplete Request Form" to the program office.
4. The request for an incomplete is to be made one month prior to the ending date of the module.
5. Upon approval, the student will have four months to complete all work. At the end of the four month period, if all work is not completed, a grade of F will be given for the courses in the module which have not been completed.
6. If the request for an incomplete is not made one month prior to the module ending date, a final grade will be given based on the amount of work completed at that time.

Please note that the student is responsible for requesting the incomplete and mailing in the "Incomplete Request Form".

## Extension Policy

Students are required to complete all course work and program requirements on or before the cohort ending date in order to graduate within the twenty-six month program time period. However, a student faced with a major personal or job-related problem that prevents him or her from completing all requirements by the cohort ending date has the option of requesting a nine-month program time extension.

The procedures for the program extension are as follows:

1. The student is to make the request in writing thirty days prior to the cohort ending date. The letter should include the major reasons for the request and a proposed timeline and schedule for completing the unfinished program requirements.
2. Upon receipt of the letter by the program office, the request will be evaluated and the decision will be forwarded within two weeks to 30 days.
3. If the request is approved, the student is to forward the extension fee to the program office.
4. Assuming approval, the student will have nine months to complete the practicum and all outstanding program requirements.

Note: This is a one-time nine-month extension.

## Time Limit for Completion of Program

All students are required to complete their graduate program within the established time limit for their respective cohort specialization, unless they have been granted a one-time extension or a one-time withdrawal from the program.

## Temporary Withdrawal

Students who are faced with a temporary personal or professional crisis and find that they cannot keep up with their cohort, may withdraw from the program. Notification of withdrawal must be received in writing by the program director. Students who officially withdraw may petition the director if they wish to reenter the program, picking up their course of study at the point following the last module for which they received a grade. Students may re-enter the program only once and will be expected to follow all regulations that are in effect at the time of re-admission.

**SCHEDULE FOR PHASE 2, SUMMER INSTRUCTION**  
**THE PROFESSION AND PUBLIC POLICY IN FAMILY SUPPORT SERVICES**

**JULY 19 - 21, 2003**

Saturday, July 19

THE PROFESSION

8:30-10:15 a.m.

Session 1: The Roots of Family Support

Prepare Discussion Topic #1 and Exercise #1

Review Kagan & Weissbourd, pp. xi-41.

10:30 a.m.-12:00 p.m.

Session 2: Characteristics and Parameters of a Profession

Discussion Topic #2 and Exercise #2.

Review Etzioni, especially pp. 141-195; Pecora, et al., pp. 1-20, and 437-447; Schorr, pp. 3-21.

1:00-2:30 p.m.

Session 3: Competencies of Family Support Practice

Continue Topic #2 and Exercise #2.

Prepare Discussion Topic #3 and Exercise #3.

Review Kagan & Weissbourd, pp. 401-440; Pecora, et al., pp. 229-261.

2:45-4:30 p.m.

Session 4: Current Professional Challenges

Prepare Discussion Topic #4 and Exercise #4.

Kagan & Weissbourd, pp. 187-400; 471-500.

Sunday July 20

8:30-10:15 a.m.

Session 5: Addressing Professional Challenges

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<sup>1</sup> Please refer to the Summer Instruction printed program for more information about the schedule

Prepare to discuss the “Proposal for Change” assignment and to present ideas for agency change.

## PUBLIC POLICY

10:30 a.m.-12:00 p.m.

### Session 6: Policy Context of Professional Practice

Prepare Discussion Topic #5 and Exercise #5. Review Coontz, especially pp. 1-22; Jansson, pp. 2-66; Schorr, pp. xiii-xxviii; Pecora, et al., pp. 21-63.

1:00-2:30 p.m.

### Session 7: Policy Making Process

Prepare Discussion Topic #6 and Exercise #6.  
Review Jansson, pp. 68-137.

2:45-4:30 p.m.

### Session 8: Policy Analysis

Prepare Discussion Topic #7 and Exercise #7  
Review Jansson, pp. 168-286, 440-456; Schorr, pp. 3-154.

## Monday July 21

8:30-10:15 a.m.

### Session 9: Advocacy Campaigns

Prepare Discussion Topic #8 and Exercise #8.  
Review Jansson, pp. 327-404; Schorr, pp. 155-385.

10:30 a.m.-12:00 p.m.

### Session 10: Policy Analysis Topics

Prepare to discuss the “Policy Analysis” assignment.

1:00-2:30 p.m.

### Session 11: Policy Analysis Topics

Continue discussion of policy analysis topics.

2:45-4:30 p.m.

Conclusion of Summer Instruction.

## INTRODUCTION TO THE MODULE

SUMMER INSTRUCTION, 2003

### THE PROFESSION AND PUBLIC POLICY IN FAMILY SUPPORT SERVICES

(2 courses, 6 credits)

The module, The Profession and Public Policy in Family Support Services, examines the family support profession, public policies impacting families and family support programs, and the skills and techniques employed by those who develop and impact policies.

The module is divided into two courses: POLF 585-The Profession in the Field of Family Support and POLF 586-Public Policy in the Field of Family Support. The first course, POLF 585-The Profession in the Field of Family Support engages students in a sociopolitical analysis of the history of the field of family support services and the development of family support as a professional field. Beginning with the premise that family support is an emerging professional field of practice, the course focuses on the issues and challenges related to the professionalization of the family support movement. Major issues examined include the definition of family support, the characteristics of a profession, the training of family support practitioners, and the development of family support as a profession.

The second course, POLF 586-Public Policy in the Field of Family Support, examines the policy-making process and its impact on services to families. Students are expected to develop competencies in policy analysis and advocacy activities. After reviewing the factors and conditions that place families at risk, the principles and practices used by individuals, agencies and other organizations involved in policy development and implementation are studied. The course focuses on the imperatives of change and, to that end, examines various effective means of

influencing public policy. The specific methods, skills and techniques that individuals and the groups they represent can employ are studied.

### Method of Instruction

The format of instruction is nontraditional and varied. Telephone conferencing and summer instruction are employed. Students attend one week of summer instruction and participate in two telephone conference sessions with the instructor.

### Expectations of Students

Telephone Conference Sessions. It is required that students be available for two scheduled telephone conferences: one on **July 7, 2003 at 7:30 p.m.** Eastern Daylight Time and the second on **August 25, 2003, at 7:30 p.m.** Eastern Daylight Time. If a student cannot be available for a scheduled telephone session, it is the student's responsibility to contact the instructor and arrange for a "makeup" session.

The telephone conference sessions complement Summer Instruction. They incorporate an introduction to the module, formal discussion of selected issues, question and answer periods, and a review of assignments and exams.

Summer Instruction. The student is required to attend and participate in every session in the Summer Instruction schedule.

Reading Assignments. Students are expected to complete ("skim") all reading assignments prior to Summer Instruction. More thorough reading should follow Summer Instruction for preparation of written assignments.

Written Assignments. Written assignments are designed to encourage the processing of information and offer students an opportunity to approach various topics from multiple vantage

points. Assignments call for students to analyze and synthesize the material read and examined, and to apply this knowledge to professional and personal experiences.

Students are required to complete and submit one report and one take-home final exam for each of the two courses.

Students are expected to send their completed assignments to the instructor by either email or by first class mail by the date indicated by the instructor. All assignments must be typed with a cover page identifying the student's name and cohort number, the assignment title and the date that the assignment is being mailed to the instructor.

Course Readings for POLF 585- The Profession in the Field of Family Support

Coontz, S. (1992). The way we never were: American families and the nostalgia trap.

Basic Books.

Etzioni, A. (1969). The semi-professions and their organization. New York: Free Press.

Kagan, S., & Weissbourd, B. (Eds.). (1994). Putting families first. Jossey Bass.

Pecora, P. J., Whittaker, J. K., Maluccio, A. N. & Barth, R. P. (2000). The child welfare challenge (2<sup>nd</sup> ed.). New York: Aldine de Gruyter.

Schorr, L. (1997). Common purpose: Strengthening families and neighborhoods to rebuild America. Doubleday/Anchor.

In addition, students should be familiar with the contents of the website of Family Support America, which may be found at <http://www.familysupportamerica.org/>

Course Readings for POLF 586-Public Policy in the Field of Family Support

Coontz, S. (1992). The way we never were: American families and the nostalgia trap.

Basic Books.

Jansson, B. S. (2003). Becoming an effective policy advocate (4th edition). Brooks/Cole Publishing Company.

Kagan, S., & Weissbourd, B. (Eds.). (1994). Putting families first. California: Jossey Bass.

Pecora, P. J., Whittaker, J. K., Maluccio, A. N. & Barth, R. P. (2000). The child welfare challenge (2<sup>nd</sup> ed.). New York: Aldine de Gruyter.

Schorr, L. (1997). Common purpose: Strengthening families and neighborhoods to rebuild America. Doubleday/Anchor.

In addition, students should be familiar with the contents of the website of Family Support America, which may be found at <http://www.familysupportamerica.org/> See especially the section on policy and legislative alerts.

## **POLF 585**

### **THE PROFESSION IN THE FIELD OF FAMILY SUPPORT**

#### Course Description

This course provides a historical review of the field of family support and sociopolitical analysis of its current status as an occupation and a human service.

#### Overview

The family support movement can be described both as a genre of human services and as a human service philosophy. The movement has been stimulated and nurtured by the efforts of a broad range of individuals, groups, and organizations in different parts of the country who question the impact of previous policies and programs on families, and want to improve the services being delivered. The movement has its roots in small, grass roots community-based initiatives as well as in large, innovative social programs that demonstrate the effectiveness of approaches that are supportive of families.

The field of family support is relatively young, developing rapidly within the last 25 years. The course begins with an examination of the historical development of the field and its relationship to the principles and practice of family support work. Students then study the characteristics commonly attributed to professional fields and examine the professional status of family support practice. Recognizing the complex nature of the position and status that a professional worker holds, the history of the movement, its innovative philosophy and approach, and the difficulties and dilemmas that accompany efforts to assume professional status are closely reviewed.

This course also examines the programs in which family support practitioners practice and the range and depth of competencies they employ. Recognizing family support as both a philosophy and a program genre, the course challenges students to identify a core of competencies that are essential, regardless of the agency setting. Students are also challenged to identify additional competencies specific to the different agency settings in which family support practitioners are working. These may be related to a primary discipline or the particular constellation or organization of services being offered.

Based on the assumption that the effectiveness of family support services is determined by the quality of its practitioners and their status, the course culminates with an examination of issues related to future directions and the professional development of the field. The challenges that lie ahead for the family support field are considered. The strides that have been made in the last 25 years and the directions that need to be taken are addressed. An implicit, core question debated is whether the family support field will, or should move in the direction of becoming a recognized distinct profession with its own system for certifying professionals or should, instead, focus on infiltrating human service delivery systems.

Readings and assignments explore issues that must be addressed as family support continues to grow as a respected field of practice. They provide opportunities for students to examine the definitions of a profession and its characteristics, the competencies of family support practitioners and the status of family support as a professional field of practice. The readings invite comparisons of family support practitioners with other human service practitioners, such as nurses and social workers who have, over time, developed many of the characteristics of a profession.

## Course Objectives

1. To describe the roots of family support differentiating between family support as a program genre and family support as a philosophy.
2. To identify the competencies of a family support professional in accordance with the type of services provided and the level of responsibility.
3. To describe the current status of family support as a profession.
4. To describe current professional issues and future trends and challenges of the family support field.

## Assignments for POLF 585

Students are expected to submit one report and a take home final exam. Each is worth 50% of the final grade. The formula for converting the numerical Final Grade to a letter grade is:

A = 90-100 pts. B = 80-89 pts. C = 70-79 pts. D = 60-69 pts. F = less than 60 pts.

Final Exam. The take-home final exam will be distributed during the week of Summer Instruction and must be returned to the instructor by either email or first class mail, sent or postmarked no later than **August 18, 2003**.

No extension will be given for completion of the final exam. If an emergency occurs which prevents the student from completing the final exam, a new exam will be administered and a 20 day period for completion of this exam will be allotted.

Report: A Proposal for Change in Professional Climate of Agency/Center. Write a 10 page proposal of a project you would like to offer in your agency/unit which offers promise of improving and/or enhancing the professional climate in your agency or one of its units. This assignment must be sent to the instructor, either by email or first class mail, sent or postmarked no later than **September 8, 2003**.

Use the following outline to compose your proposal:

1. The problem.

a. Problem statement formulated in terms of a discrepancy between “what ought to be” and “what is” currently.

b. Documentation of the problem - What empirical evidence is there of the identified problem? How does the problem manifest itself?

c. Analysis of the problem - What factors cause the problem and/or contribute to its continuance?

2. Objectives(s) of a solution B Who or what is to change as a result of your solution strategy? When will the change occur? What empirical evidence will there be that change has in fact occurred? Objectives should be formulated as specific, measurable outcomes.

3. Solution strategy.

a. Review of major alternative approaches to the problem.

b. Selected approach with rationale for selection.

c. Step-by-step solution plan. What specific activities will be needed to implement your solution and achieve your change objective(s)? In what sequence must they occur? Who will carry them out?

d. Resources and other issues. What resources, financial and otherwise, will be required to implement your plan? What obstacles might hinder implementation of your solution strategy? What factors might facilitate implementation?

A review of appropriate literature should be reflected throughout the proposal.

Evaluation of Exam and Report. The instructor will review the report and final exam, and provide each student written comments and a grade. In cases where the grade is less than “A,”

students will receive an explanation of points awarded on the following Assignment Grading Form.

*Nova Southeastern University*  
**The Profession and Public Policy in Family Support Services**  
**ASSIGNMENT GRADING FORM**

**Student:** \_\_\_\_\_ **Cohort:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Assignment:** \_\_\_\_\_ **Date:** \_\_\_\_\_

<b>CRITERIA</b>	<b>POINTS</b>
-----------------	---------------

*Timeliness*

Paper was posted by the due date	10 _____
----------------------------------	----------

*Format*

Paper is of proper length.	5 _____
----------------------------	---------

Paper is well-organized.	5 _____
--------------------------	---------

Paper uses proper grammar and spelling.	5 _____
---	---------

Paper is edited to read well.	5 _____
-------------------------------	---------

Paper references appear in APA style.	5 _____
---------------------------------------	---------

*Content*

Paper meets all assignment requirements.	10 _____
--	----------

Paper is logically coherent and compelling.	10 _____
---	----------

Ideas and arguments are well developed.	10 _____
---	----------

Paper includes well-supported conclusions and/or recommendations.	10 _____
---	----------

Paper reflects comprehension of the reading materials.	10 _____
--	----------

Paper reflects an ability to apply key concepts and themes to the professional setting.	10 _____
---	----------

Paper includes appropriate and sufficient references to the reading materials.	5 _____
--	---------

*Total points:* \_\_\_\_\_

*Conversion of points to letter grades:*

A	=	90-100 pts.	D	=	60-69 pts.
B	=	80-89 pts.	F	=	0-59 pts.
C	=	70-79 pts.			

Evaluations will be sent to the student within about five working days from the date on which the paper is received by the instructor.

Rewrite Policy. The report may be rewritten once but a rewritten paper may not receive a grade higher than “B.” The final exam may not be rewritten.

## **Discussion Topics and Exercises for POLF 585**

### Discussion Topic #1 and Exercise #1

Family support and family preservation program services reflect a continuum of care for families rooted in a common philosophy.

Study the principles that are central to family support. Note five goals, values and/or process objectives that form the foundation and guiding principles of the field of family support.

Identify three ways in which family support and family preservation are different and three ways they are similar (e.g., note similarities and differences in philosophy, history, staffing patterns, and the skills and competencies needed for practice.)

### Discussion Topic #2 and Exercise #2

The purpose of this assignment is to develop a perspective on the status of family support as an emerging field of professional practice. Take some time to consider the characteristics of a profession and the strides that have been made towards becoming a professional field. Consider the status of family support as a professional field, and compare and contrast it with another group of professionals or semi-professionals.

To this end, you may use Chart I to list at least five characteristics of a profession and note the extent to which family support has attained these features. Prior to completing the chart, review the relevant readings and engage in conversations with professional contacts.

Chart 1.

List 5 characteristics of a profession.	What function(s) is served by this characteristic?	Has family support accomplished this?
1.		
2.		
3.		
4.		
5.		

Discussion Topic #3 and Exercise #3

It is a fair assumption that there are core competencies that all family support practitioners must acquire and utilize, regardless of their agency setting or professional affiliation. Family support practitioners enter family work from diverse educational and

experiential backgrounds, with skills and training that are often useful and applicable to family support work. The values, goals, and techniques used in family work tend to draw from varied disciplines and professional fields, and coalesce into a configuration underpinning family work. The philosophy, approach, and techniques used in family support work, however, differ in several ways from those used in other fields of practice. This assignment asks each student to identify the competencies that are central to family support work.

Part 1 . Study the core features of family support programs described in the reading assignments and identify and describe at least 10 competencies that all family support practitioners should have.

Part 2. Family support practitioners often work in multi-service institutions such as schools, family resource centers and social service agencies. Each student should be prepared to discuss:

1. the knowledge base, skills, qualities and competencies they need when working with families in their work setting; and
2. the types of program structures that they think would allow them to be most effective in their work setting as family support practitioners.

To this end, each student should be prepared to discuss the tasks they perform and the competencies that they must demonstrate in order to accomplish their work effectively. In Chart II at least five tasks they must perform and the competencies needed to successfully accomplish these tasks should be noted. Also ways in which these tasks and the associated competencies demonstrate and reflect family support tenets (or do not) should be described.

Chart II: Outline of tasks, competency areas, and adherence to family support principles in your work

Identify tasks	Competencies demonstrated	Family Support Principles

Discussion Topic #4 and Exercise #4

Students should be prepared to discuss their thoughts about the following:

- \* current challenges to the development of family support as a profession
- \* whether family support should or should not work towards establishing itself as a profession.

## **POLF 586**

### **PUBLIC POLICY IN THE FIELD OF FAMILY SUPPORT**

#### Course Description

This course examines the policy-making process as it relates to children and families. It reviews the goals and activities of groups, agencies and organizations involved in developing and implementing child and family policy programs. Principles of advocacy are examined.

#### Overview

In this course, an understanding of the roots of the family support field and the practice of family support is applied to the study of how family policies are developed and how they can be changed. Key policies that impact, support and undermine the factors and conditions that place today's family at risk as well as the processes that influence public policy are the focus of this course.

The impact of historical patterns on the development and implementation of policies is considered. Efforts to change individual and societal attitudes about families and the government's role in bringing about changes are reviewed.

This course focuses on imperatives for change and the importance of family support practitioners initiating efforts to bring about necessary changes. Societal priorities are examined and recommendations to create a national climate conducive to families growing strong and flourishing are developed.

Professionals working in the field with children and their families are often wary of getting involved with public Policy. "I am busy enough with my job. Let someone else worry about

politics,” is a common refrain. Unfortunately, this kind of statement leads to negative outcomes. When the people who know the most about the needs of children and their families do not become involved in Policy-making, less informed people step in. (Oftentimes, the people who step in to influence public Policy do not have as their primary agenda, the well-being of children and their families.)

This course, therefore, considers ways in which individuals and the groups they represent can assume advocacy roles. Students review the political process and the type of knowledge and kinds of skills needed to advocate for families. Issues currently under public debate are identified and each student is called upon to map out a personal advocacy agenda and, in a group, design an advocacy campaign. The intent of this effort is to offset the pessimism that comes when students think, “I am just one person. Even if I had the time, the strength, and the motivation, how can one person even hope to make a difference?”

### Course Objectives

1. To demonstrate knowledge of the processes and procedures that guide the development and implementation of policies at the state and national level, and of how they impact, and are impacted by family support issues.
2. To demonstrate knowledge of the issues related to families that are being debated in the public arena, and develop a personal action agenda.
3. To describe and understand the knowledge base, political skills, and techniques germane to advocacy for, and with, families.

4. To analyze a piece of legislation or proposed legislation with significant impact on the welfare of families.

#### Assignments for POLF 586

For this course, the student must submit one report and a take-home final exam. Each is worth 50% of the final grade. The formula for converting the numerical Final Grade to a letter grade is: A = 90-100 pts. B = 80-89 pts. C = 70-79 pts. D = 60-69 pts. F = less than 60 pts.

Final Exam. The take-home final exam will be distributed during the week of Summer Instruction and must be returned to the instructor by either email or first class mail, sent or postmarked no later than **August 25, 2003**.

No extension will be given for completion of the final exam. If an emergency occurs which prevents the student from completing the final exam, a new exam will be administered and a 20 day period for completion of this exam will be allotted.

Report: Analysis of Legislation. Locate either a bill that is currently being deliberated by local, state or national legislature, or a recently passed law. The bill/law need not be identified as family support legislation but it must be concerned with family issues in some evident way. Write a 10-15 page paper which incorporates and integrates the material included in the Family Support Policy Analysis Checklist which follows. This assignment must be mailed to the instructor, postmarked no later than **September 15, 2002**.

## Family Support Policy Analysis Checklist

### I. Summary of Essential Content.

Goals(s). What problem does the policy attempt to address? What are the desired outcomes of the policy?

Major provisions. What does the policy actually do or plan to do? How is the policy to be implemented, by what agency at what level of government?

X Coverage. What groups or individuals are directly affected by the policy (who are the intended beneficiaries)?

X Funding. What is the budgetary appropriation for the policy? What are its projected costs over a given period of time? What is the established or proposed allocation formula or funding mechanism?

### II. Summary of Relevant Process.

X Background history. How did the policy get on the policy-making agenda? Were earlier attempts made to address the same problem? With what level of success/satisfaction?

X Recent history. In the immediate process of making this policy (or attempting to do so thus far), what factors or events are important to an understanding of the current situation? (For example, current policy proposals may face a threatened presidential veto.)

### III. Critique.

- X Ideology. What values and beliefs about human nature (what people are “really about,” “down deep”) and the proper order of society (“a good and just society”), implicit as well as explicit, underlie the logic and philosophy of the policy?
- X Interests. What (whose) interests (especially financial) are at stake? Who are the “winners” and the “losers” as a result of the adoption of this policy?
- X Unintended impact. Are there important considerations that have may been overlooked in the formulation of this policy that could lead to results, notably for families, other than those intended or expected?

#### IV. Recommendations.

- X Support/ opposition. Should family support professionals support or oppose this policy?
- X Alternatives. Would other policies or approaches better address the problem from a family support point of view?

Evaluation of Exam and Report. The instructor will review the report and final exam, and provide each student written comments and a grade. In cases where the grade is less than “A,” students will receive an explanation of points deducted on the following Assignment Grading Form.

*Nova Southeastern University*  
**The Profession and Public Policy in Family Support Services**  
**ASSIGNMENT GRADING FORM**

Student: \_\_\_\_\_

Cohort: \_\_\_\_\_

Assignment: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

**CRITERIA**

**POINTS**

***Timeliness***

Paper was posted by the due date

10 \_\_\_\_\_

***Format***

Paper is of proper length.

5 \_\_\_\_\_

Paper is well-organized.

5 \_\_\_\_\_

Paper uses proper grammar and spelling.

5 \_\_\_\_\_

Paper is edited to read well.

5 \_\_\_\_\_

Paper references appear in APA style.

5 \_\_\_\_\_

***Content***

Paper meets all assignment requirements.

10 \_\_\_\_\_

Paper is logically coherent and compelling.

10 \_\_\_\_\_

Ideas and arguments are well developed.

10 \_\_\_\_\_

Paper includes well-supported conclusions and/or recommendations.

10 \_\_\_\_\_

Paper reflects comprehension of the reading materials.

10 \_\_\_\_\_

Paper reflects an ability to apply key concepts and themes to the professional setting.

10 \_\_\_\_\_

Paper includes appropriate and sufficient references to the reading materials.

5 \_\_\_\_\_

*Total points:* \_\_\_\_\_

*Conversion of points to letter grades:*

A	=	90-100 pts.	D	=	60-69 pts.
B	=	80-89 pts.	F	=	0-59 pts.
C	=	70-79 pts.			

Evaluations will be sent to the student within about five working days from the date on which the paper is received by the instructor.

Rewrite Policy. The report may be rewritten once but a rewritten paper may not receive a grade higher than "B". The final exam may not be rewritten.

## Discussion Topics and Exercises for POLF 586

### Discussion Topic #5 and Exercise #5

From its beginnings in individual community programs, the principles of family support have effected changes in state systems of child welfare, education and social services. Recognition of the value of prevention and family-oriented, family-focused principles has resulted in several states developing plans to integrate family support approaches into compatible program structures. As a result in numerous state and national policies, family support principles are being incorporated as a means of more effectively meeting a wide range of family needs. They are often being incorporated into child care and residential center settings, for example.

Each student must consider their work setting and the obstacles to incorporating family support principles and practices that are present, and how these might be addressed. What would have to be recognized and honored for any family support type program to be well received?

### Discussion Topic #6 and Exercise #6

Whether attempting to effect policy on the national, regional, provincial/state, or local level, family support workers need to know how policy is made, and at what point in the policy making process advocacy makes a difference.

First, list as many types of “policy” as you can, describe the policy “agenda building” process, and identify as many actors and influences involved in the policy making process as you can.

Next, sketch out the steps in a typical legislative process that proposed legislation (a “bill”) must pass through in order to become law (formal policy). Investigate the process in your home

state or province, beginning with the initiation of a bill, and tracing the process of its becoming law via committee consideration, etc.

Draw a flow chart (graphically present basic information) describing the steps that legislation must pass through before it can become a law. Begin with the initiation of a bill and record the steps the legislation must pass through before it becomes law.

Finally, consider all of the “players” in the legislative process. For example, once a bill has made its way through the house and senate (standard process), and is passed on to the executive for approval, what options does the executive have? What role does the judiciary play in the legislative process? Once a bill has been passed, what roles do regulatory agencies play in its implementation? What role can advocates play all along the way?

#### Discussion Topic #7 and Exercise #7

In preparation for Summer Instruction and for the Policy Report, each student must locate a significant policy initiative. This may be (1) a policy proposal that is under development; (2) a bill that is currently being deliberated by a local, state or national legislature, or (3) a recently (within ten years) passed law. The policy initiative need not be identified as family support policy per se, but it must be concerned with family issues in some evident way. Bring material related to this policy initiative to Summer Instruction.

Prior to Summer Instruction, each student should:

- X outline the policy initiative,
- X describe ways the initiative would affect their agency's operations – its goals, activities, staff, ability to adhere to family support principles, and

X describe ways it would affect the lives of the families with whom agency works.

Discussion Topic #8 and Exercise #8

Each student must at least sketch out an advocacy agenda and campaign in support or opposition to the initiative and bring the outline to Summer Instruction.

Part 1. Prepare a written content outline of the advocacy campaign. Include at least three specific advocacy activities, and do not limit advocacy efforts to lobbying legislators. (Be prepared to report to the class as a whole.) In developing your outline, take the following points into consideration:

## I. Summary of Campaign.

- X Background history. What is the reason for this advocacy effort? What problem/ issue does it seek to address? Is it part of a larger pattern of advocacy efforts, and/or does it have historical antecedents?
- X Coverage. What groups or individuals are expected to be directly affected by the advocacy campaign (who are the intended beneficiaries)?
- X Current dynamics. Which interest groups (might be expected to) support or oppose this effort? Are there any other events, factors or issues in the political/ policy environment impacting on the project?

## II. Goals and objectives.

- X Goals(s). What are the desired outcomes of the policy, expressed in general terms?
- X Objectives. What are the specific, measurable outcomes that the advocacy effort intends to achieve?

## III. Action Strategy.

- X What are the specific and detailed action steps to be taken in order to achieve each of the objectives? (*Who will do what by when in what way?*) What is the recommended sequence of action steps?

## IV. Critique.

- X Ideology. What values and beliefs about human nature, a “good society,” and the role of government, implicit as well as explicit, underlie the logic of the project?

X Resource requirements. What resources are needed to pursue the project successfully?

Consider (at least) financial, personnel, materials, and skill resources required.

X Family support principles/values. What is the relationship of this project to family support principles and values? Why should family support professional endorse this advocacy campaign?

Part 2. Each student should be prepared to present and discuss her/his advocacy campaign in class.