Transfer of Learning is the effective and continuing APPLICATION, by trainees to their jobs, of the KNOWLEDGE and SKILLS gained in training.

Adapted from Mary L. Broad and John W. Newstrom in Transfer of Training: Action-Packed Strategies to Ensure High Payoff from Training Investments

The purpose of training is to assure that caseworkers have the knowledge, values, and skills necessary to perform their professional responsibilities. Research shows that a phenomenon called the “results dip” occurs shortly after training as a caseworker tries to transfer the new knowledge and skills to practice. During the “results dip” period, it is typical for a caseworker to feel awkward and experience frustration when practicing new skills. As a result, many caseworkers abandon efforts to implement new knowledge and skills and instead, return to old practices that feel more comfortable to them. The effects of the “results dip” can be reduced through a commitment by caseworkers and supervisors to achieve Transfer of Learning (TOL) goals and objectives.

WHO IS INVOLVED IN TRANSFER OF LEARNING?

Effective learning is achieved through a partnership between individuals and organizations. The Learning Partnership is a triad formed with staff from the Pennsylvania Child Welfare Training Program (Training Program), county Children and Youth Agency representatives (supervisors and administrators), and trainees. This partnership facilitates effective application or transfer of learning on the job through shared responsibilities at each phase of the learning cycle.

WHAT IS THE LEARNING CYCLE?

The Learning Cycle describes the process that we follow as individuals and agencies when learning new information and developing new skills. The stages of the Learning Cycle include:

- Assess Learning Needs;
- Identify Learning Methods;
- Prepare for Learning;
- Experience Learning;
- Apply Learning; and
- Feedback.

Each member of the learning partnership has a critical role throughout the cycle in order to achieve positive outcomes that promote the safety, permanency, and well-being for Pennsylvania’s children.
**WHAT IS A TOL MEETING?**

Any meeting held with a county to market Transfer of Learning Packages or to discuss TOL Package possibilities, and/or to plan for TOL delivery. There is no training credit associated with a TOL Meeting.

**WHAT IS A TOL PACKAGE?**

A TOL Package is a set of steps/activities built around an identified curriculum designed to enhance application of knowledge and skills from the training. The Training Program offers three types of TOL packages: Ten Step, Standard, and County Specific.

Both supervisors and caseworkers can receive training credit for their participation in a TOL Package. In addition, many activities in a TOL Package meet the applicable educational and professional standards for Continuing Education (CE) hours for Licensed Social Workers.
WHAT TYPES OF TRANSFER OF LEARNING OPPORTUNITIES ARE AVAILABLE?

- **Ten Step TOL Package:** The most comprehensive package designed to provide optimum application of an existing Training Program curriculum.

**Steps in a 10 Step TOL Package:**

1. **TOL Support Session, Supervisor Initial Meeting:** The Transfer of Learning (TOL) Specialist will make an initial onsite visit to the county Children and Youth Agency to explain the steps of the TOL process to the supervisors. The very critical role of the supervisors in the TOL process will be explained. This will include a review of transfer of learning strategies supervisors can use with their workers to help facilitate transfer. Supervisors will also be asked to complete an initial assessment of their caseworker’s skill level for performance items connected to the Child and Family Services Review (CFSR).

2. **TOL Support Session, Caseworker Initial Meeting:** The TOL Specialist will make an initial onsite visit to explain the steps of the TOL process to the caseworkers. The agency may decide to have supervisors present or not. This meeting will also give caseworkers an opportunity to do an initial self-assessment of their skill level for performance items connected to the CFSR.

3. **Pre-Work:** Pre-Work Activities are designed to connect the job with the initial training; to be completed by the caseworker prior to the workshop; and be discussed/processed by the trainer at the beginning of the workshop. They provide the caseworker with an opportunity to “tune-in” to the content of the curriculum.

4. **Training:** Initial Trainings with TOL Packages are not intended to be “stand-alone” training events that are disconnected from the workplace. Although the subject matter is typically the same as the on-calendar workshops, participants involved in the TOL process will experience it differently than those who attend it as a regular training. Trainers will facilitate different activities that encourage caseworkers to use the skills and knowledge learned in the classroom back on the job. Supervisors must attend the training with their caseworkers, and TOL Specialists are also available for consultation throughout the process.

5. **TOL Support Session, 30 Day Visit:** Research shows that a phenomenon called the “results dip” occurs shortly after a caseworker tries to implement new skills. There may be a temporary decline in performance and results while the worker is learning to apply the skill. This is a very frustrating time and
additional coaching is needed to support the caseworker during this critical period. The TOL Specialist will make a follow-up visit approximately 30 days after the initial training with the caseworkers and supervisors to review the key learning objectives and to assess the progress/problems associated with skill implementation that have occurred during this period. Following the meeting with the caseworkers, the TOL Specialist will meet with the supervisors to discuss supervision techniques and tools utilized to assist their caseworkers in the TOL process. Successes and barriers to assisting caseworkers to achieve transfer of learning and CFSR outcomes will be discussed.

6. **TOL Support Session, 60 Day Visit:** This is a repeat of the TOL Support Session, 30 Day Visit. It will continue to focus on strategies for assisting caseworkers and supervisors in their efforts to apply new skills and decrease the effects of the “results dip.” During this visit, both caseworkers and supervisors will be asked to complete an assessment. Supervisors will be asked to complete an assessment of their caseworker’s skill level for performance items connected to the CFSR. Caseworkers will complete a self-assessment measuring those same items.

7. **Booster Shot Training:** This is a three hour follow-up training that will provide a review of the key learning points from the initial training. It will use case studies and other practice exercises and, for continuity purposes, will be facilitated by the same trainer who did the Initial Training. Its primary purpose is to continue reducing the effects of the “results dip,” as well as continue efforts to assist caseworkers and supervisors to advance the learning and apply it to practice. The trainer and TOL Specialist can work together to add content to the “Booster Shot” training that has been identified as a training need through the TOL Support Sessions, 30 Day & 60 Day Visits.

8. **TOL Support Session, 5 Month Visit:** This is a repeat of the TOL Support Sessions 30 Day and 60 Day Visits but will also include information and preparation for the caseworkers and supervisors about the upcoming Assessment.

9. **6 Month Assessment:** This is an assessment completed and reviewed by the caseworker and supervisor. The caseworker tasks in the assessment are tied to the learning objectives of the initial training and its identified CFSR outcomes. It is intended to assess a caseworker’s skill level at the conclusion of the TOL process. It is also meant to be a collaborative process for the supervisor and caseworker in developing a further Professional Plan of Action for the caseworker in the curriculum topic area.

10. **TOL Support Session, TOL Closure Visit:** This final visit by the TOL Specialist closes out the TOL Package. The TOL Specialist will provide the caseworkers and supervisors with
feedback on the caseworkers’ general progress in regards to the transfer of skills from the initial training. In addition, an After Action Review will be conducted to provide supervisors and caseworkers an opportunity to give the Pennsylvania Child Welfare Training Program (Training Program) feedback on the TOL Package process. The Training Program will consider all feedback when preparing for the delivery of future TOL Packages.
- **Standard TOL Package**: A combination of learning steps and activities that supplement an existing curriculum designed to meet a statewide need.

- **County Specific TOL Package**: Customized curriculum content and/or transfer of learning steps developed to meet a county agency need.

**WHAT ARE THE POSSIBLE COMPONENTS OF A TOL PACKAGE?**

A TOL Package can include the following components:

- **Pre-work**: Pre-work Activities are designed to connect the job with the initial training; to be completed by the caseworker prior to the workshop; and be discussed by the trainer at the beginning and/or throughout the workshop. Pre-work provides the caseworker with an opportunity to “tune-in” to the content of the curriculum.

- **TOL Support Session**: This is an onsite visit to an agency by a Practice Improvement Specialist before or after training. The purpose of the visit is to support and advance the participants’ application of the knowledge and skills learned within training to their practice. The session is typically held with caseworkers and/or supervisors.

- **Booster Shot Training**: This follow-up training provides a review of the initial training’s key learning points. It aids in the retention of learned knowledge from the initial training, continues reducing the effects of the “results dip”, and to continue efforts to advance the learning and apply it to practice.

- **Assessment**: This is a written assessment that is tied to the learning objectives of the training completed and is reviewed by the caseworker and/or supervisor. It is intended to assess a caseworker’s skill level at a point during the TOL process. This is meant to be a collaborative process between the supervisor and caseworker.