

ERIKA SETTLES, LMSW

PERMANENCY TRAINING COORDINATOR

The University of Texas at Austin
Texas Institute for Child & Family Wellbeing

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(512) 626-8388

EDUCATION

MASTER OF SOCIAL WORK | CLINICAL CONCENTRATION | MAY 2018

The University of Houston

Child Welfare Education Project; Phi Alpha Honor Society; Summa Cum Laude

BACHELOR OF SOCIAL WORK | MAY 2002

The University of Texas at Austin

Golden Key International Honour Society; Phi Alpha Honor Society; University Honors; Helen Farabee Memorial Endowed Presidential Scholarship Recipient; Margaret Foley Murray Scholarship Recipient

PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE

CLINICAL THERAPIST | SEP 2025 - PRESENT

Colors of Austin Counseling

Provide relational, collaborative psychotherapy to adults navigating identity transitions, complex trauma, perinatal experiences, and midlife transitions. Draw on fifteen years of child welfare and clinical experiences to support clients in examining how early relationships, generational patterns, and systemic context shape present-day ways of showing up. Integrate narrative therapy, attachment-based therapy, and liberation-focused frameworks to help clients rewrite internalized stories, honor the strengths they have carried, and move toward a more self-authored sense of self. Hold space with warmth, curiosity, and gentle challenge, with particular care for those who have been overlooked, misunderstood, or silenced.

PERMANENCY TRAINING COORDINATOR | DEC 2023 - PRESENT

Texas Institute for Child & Family Wellbeing
The University of Texas at Austin

Improve child and family well-being by leading the development and delivery of evidence-based training initiatives for caregivers, child welfare professionals, and community stakeholders. Collaborate with practitioners, researchers, and individuals with lived experience to assess training needs and co-design responsive content. Design and facilitate a recurring catalog of training and webinars on permanency, attachment, trauma-responsive care, inclusive adoption language, and youth engagement, reaching audiences across Texas and beyond. Authored two field-facing publications and developed an accompanying course on obtaining consent from youth in foster care that serves as a national model for other Heart Galleries. Provide ongoing consultation to support the application of learning in practice and strengthen permanency outcomes.

CPS WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT SUPERVISOR II | APR 2019-OCT 2023

Department of Family & Protective Services

Led the regional CPS Hire Ahead and Title IV-E Stipend Student programs, overseeing recruitment, training, and supervision of over 250 emerging child welfare professionals. Strengthened staff retention through coaching, leadership development, and collaborative supervision practices. Developed and sustained university partnerships with the University of Texas at Austin, Texas State University, and Tarleton State

University to align field education with agency needs and support student success. Designed and facilitated onboarding and training curricula, integrating state and federal policy with best practices in child welfare. Spearheaded onboarding protocols to ensure a smooth transition for new staff and social work interns entering public child welfare practice.

CPS ADOPTION SUPERVISOR II | [APR 2017-APR 2019](#)

Department of Family & Protective Services

Appointed to lead a newly formed CPS adoption unit serving over 200 children in Travis County, supervising a diverse team through reflective supervision and individualized mentoring to promote safety, permanency, and well-being for youth in foster care. Centered youth voice in permanency planning, empowering adolescents exiting foster care to make informed decisions about their futures. Partnered with family members, supportive adults, and multidisciplinary professionals to ensure trauma-informed, culturally responsive transition planning. Directed adoption recruitment efforts through TARE profiles, match events, and collaboration with the Adoption Collaborative of Texas. Oversaw documentation and case planning aligned with agency policy and individual child needs. Provided crisis response for emergencies, including placement disruptions, trafficking-related interventions, and behavioral health crises.

CPS CONSERVATORSHIP SUPERVISOR II | [AUG 2014-MAR 2017](#)

Department of Family & Protective Services

Supervised and trained CPS caseworkers and support staff to ensure the safety and well-being of over 250 children in Harris County, with a strong emphasis on equity and family preservation. Collaborated with community providers to connect families with resources addressing basic needs, mental health, and substance use recovery, supporting reunification and safe caregiving environments. Interpreted complex policies and procedures for families, staff, legal partners, and service providers to promote access, clarity, and culturally responsive engagement. Provided expert input during mediations and court proceedings, advocating for both child safety and family preservation.

CPS CONSERVATORSHIP CASEWORKER III | [DEC 2011-JUL 2014](#)

Department of Family & Protective Services

Oversaw the safety, permanency, and well-being of children in state custody through trauma-informed, multidisciplinary care planning. Conducted comprehensive child and family assessments and collaborated with biological parents, caregivers, and professionals to address mental health, educational, medical, and emotional needs. Co-developed family plans to reduce risk factors and support reunification. Coordinated services addressing substance use, mental health, and basic needs. Completed legal documentation and testified in court to inform case decisions with accuracy and integrity.

TRAINING DESIGN & FACILITATION

TRAININGS FOR FOSTER/ADOPTIVE PARENTS

Settles, E. (2025, May). *Guiding Caregivers Through the Adoption Journey*. Virtual training for caregivers. Texas Institute for Child & Family Wellbeing, Heart Gallery Project.

Settles, E. (2025, Quarterly). *Introduction to the Adoption Process*. Virtual training for caregivers. Texas Institute for Child & Family Wellbeing, Heart Gallery Project.

Settles, E. (2025, Quarterly). *Beyond the Dream: Understanding the Realities of Adoption*. Virtual training for caregivers. Texas Institute for Child & Family Wellbeing, Heart Gallery Project.

Settles, E. (2025, Quarterly). *Embracing the Lifelong Journey of Adoption*. Virtual training for caregivers. Texas Institute for Child & Family Wellbeing, Heart Gallery Project.

Settles, E. (2024, Monthly). *Adoption: What to Expect*. Virtual training for caregivers. Texas Institute for Child & Family Wellbeing, Heart Gallery Project.

Settles, E. (2024, May). *Supporting Your Child Through Grief and Loss*. Virtual training for caregivers. Texas Institute for Child & Family Wellbeing, Heart Gallery Project.

TRAINING FOR PROFESSIONALS

Settles, E. (2026, May). *Consent Conversations: Engaging and Involving Youth*. Web-based asynchronous training developed as a national model for child welfare caseworkers facilitating Heart Gallery participation with youth in foster care. Texas Institute for Child & Family Wellbeing, Heart Gallery Project.

Settles, E. (2025, July & 2024, August). *Words Matter: The Impact of the Language We Use*. Virtual training for child welfare professionals. Texas Institute for Child & Family Wellbeing, Heart Gallery Project.

Settles, E. (2024–2025, Quarterly). *Engaging with Youth in Foster Care*. Virtual training for child welfare professionals. Texas Institute for Child & Family Wellbeing, Heart Gallery Project.

Settles, E. (2024–2025, Quarterly). *Strengths-Based Approach to Telling a Child's Story*. Virtual training for child welfare professionals. Texas Institute for Child & Family Wellbeing, Heart Gallery Project.

WEBINARS

Settles, E. (2025, October). *Centered and Heard: Empowering Youth in their Adoption Journey* (Co-presenter). Webinar presentation. Texas Institute for Child & Family Wellbeing, Heart Gallery Project.

Settles, E. (2024, November). *A Year in Review: Texas Heart Galleries* (Co-presenter). Webinar presentation. Texas Institute for Child & Family Wellbeing, Heart Gallery Project.

Settles, E. (2024, August). *Consent Conversations: Engaging and Involving Youth*. Webinar presentation. Texas Institute for Child & Family Wellbeing, Heart Gallery Project.

Settles, E. (2024, March). *Words Matter: The Impact of the Language We Use*. Webinar presentation. Texas Institute for Child & Family Wellbeing, Heart Gallery Project.

PUBLICATIONS

Settles, E. (2024, November). *Consent Guide: Obtaining Consent for Heart Gallery Participation*. Heart Galleries of Texas.

Settles, E. (2024, April). *Words Matter: A Guide to Inclusive Adoption Language*. Heart Galleries of Texas.

CONTINUING EDUCATION

Polyvagal Neuroscience: Safety, Trauma, and Anxiety. Online CE Credits. Timothy Cassidy, MBA, MA, LPC. May 2026.

Introduction to Soul-Based Parts Work. Sage Recovery and Wellness Center, LLC. Alice Robbins, LCSW, LCDC. January 2026.

Vicarious Trauma: Awareness, Impact and Treatment Strategies. Texas Institute for Child & Family Wellbeing, Steve Hicks School of Social Work, The University of Texas at Austin. Samantha MacCallon, LPC-S. September 2025.

Privacy Ethics and HIPAA Fundamentals for Mental Health Professionals in the Agency or Group Practice Context. Person-Centered Techn Incorporated. Roy Huggins, LPC, NCC, and Liath Dalton. September 2025.

Texas Child Care Administrators Conference: The Village. The Center, Texas Center for Child and Family Studies. August 2025.

Championing Kinship Family Bonds. Texas Institute for Child & Family Wellbeing, Steve Hicks School of Social Work, The University of Texas at Austin. Nelkasia Graves, M.Ed, LCPAA, and Jeanette Willis, LCPAA. August 2025.

Helping Children Who Have Experienced Trauma. Texas Institute for Child & Family Wellbeing, Steve Hicks School of Social Work, The University of Texas at Austin. Samantha MacCallon, LPC-S. July 2025.

The Nervous System and Somatic Parts. Therapy & Mor. Anna Cook, LMSW. June 2025

Mastering the DSM-5-TR. George B. Haarman, Psy.D., LMFT. June 2025.

Ethical Aspects of Mental Health Care for Lesbian, Gay, Bi-, Pan-, Asexual, and Transgender People. CE Learning Systems, LLC. May 2025.

The Lost Generation of Autistic Adults. Neurodivergent Insights. May 2025.

Adopting a Lifespan Lens to Understanding the Experiences of Autistic Females. Autism Consortium of Texas. March 2025.

Increase of Autism: Its Meaning and Implications. Autism Consortium of Texas. December 2024.

Exploring Solutions in Adoption and Foster Care Conference. Families Rising. July 2024.

Undoing Racism®. The People's Institute for Survival and Beyond, Austin, TX. June 2024.

Autism Spectrum Disorder: Screening, Diagnosis, and Management. Texas Department of State Health Services. November 2023.

Light the Way: End Human Trafficking Summit. Texas Department of Family and Protective Services, Dallas, TX. August 2023.

Clinical Art Psychotherapy in Complex Trauma Treatment with Diverse Populations. National Association of Social Workers. June 2023.

Hurting & Healing from Race-Based Toxic Stress. National Association of Social Workers. June 2023.

Ethical Social Work with Suicidal People. National Association of Social Workers. June 2023.

Neural Linguistic Programming: The Science of Transformation. National Association of Social Workers. May 2023.

A Real Conversation about Critical Race Theory in Social Work Practice. National Association of Social Workers. May 2023.

Mind-Body Therapies: Quieting the Neurological Landscape. National Association of Social Workers. May 2023.

Suicide Prevention: What to Know & What to Do. National Association of Social Workers. April 2023.

Supporting Children's Development and Mental Health in Vulnerable Families. Travis County Health and Human Services, Office of Children's Services. March 2023.

Trauma-Informed Ethical Case Management. Title IV-E Child Welfare Partnership, Texas State University. February 2023.

A Solution-Focused Approach to Shifting Challenges into Sustainable Solutions. National Association of Social Workers. June 2023.

Trauma-Related Practice Child Welfare Conference. Title IV-E Child Welfare Partnership, Texas A&M University, Central Texas, Killeen, TX. November 2022.

MEDIA

Families: Edgar, Steven, and Alyssa, CBS Austin, August 30, 2018.

Forever Families: Zach's Update, CBS Austin, January 24, 2018.

Forever Families: Holiday Wishes Delivers, CBS Austin, December 13, 2017.

ADVISORY GROUPS

NASW Child Welfare Standards Task Force | 2024-Present

Actively engaged in revising NASW Standards for Social Work Practice in Child Welfare, with direct authorship on seven standards. Contribute subject matter expertise in inclusive language, family and youth engagement, and ethical, trauma-informed child welfare practice. Collaborate with fellow practitioners, researchers, and policy leaders to ensure the standards reflect current, strengths-based practices.

Supervisor Development Advisor | 2018-2023

Provided training, guidance, and feedback on policy and best practices, as well as technical and professional support to Child Protective Services supervisors.

Adoption Advisory Workgroup | 2018

Led adoption advisory workgroup to streamline the adoption process for caseworkers and expedite the time children spend in foster care.

Title IV-E Child Welfare Program Implementation | 2015-2016

Collaborated with the DFPS State Office, University of Chicago's Chapin Hall, and Casey Family Programs to integrate the Child and Adolescent Needs and Strengths (CANS) Assessment. This effort enhanced the identification of children's needs at foster care entry and contributed to reducing their length of stay. The CANS Assessment was subsequently adopted as the statewide screening tool in 2016.

LICENSES, CERTIFICATIONS, AND MEMBERSHIPS

Licensed Master Social Worker (LMSW) | 2021 – Present

Texas State Board of Social Worker Examiners (TSBSWE), License #104842

Dare to Lead™ Trained | 2020-Present

Brené Brown

Member, National Association of Social Workers (NASW) | 2023 – Present

Texas Chapter