

Healthy Families Illinois Updates

September 2006

Vol 5., No. 1

Dates to Remember:

Southern Cluster

November 8, 2006

Suburban Cook Cluster

September 22, 2006

Northwest Cluster

September 29, 2006

Central Cluster

November 13, 2006

Chicago Cluster

November 16, 2006

Public Awareness and Community

Development,
teleconference

November 14, 2006

Program Committee

December 11, 2006

Policy & Advocacy Committee

September 28, 2006

Work Group

December 7, 2006

The Illinois Department of Human Services' Division of Community Health and Prevention (DCHP) recognizes Illinois' communities as its most significant partners in preventing conditions that keep children and families from reaching their full potential, and in providing services and supports that build toward truly healthy environments in which children develop and families live and work.

Because of the vast array and scope of services and programs offered through the Division we are uniquely placed within the Department of Human Services to serve communities. Families do not fit into categories or silos of programs, you as community agencies and health departments assist families across their spectrum of life. That being said, it is essential that we fit into community rather than the other way around. The Division began an organizational development project with a series of regional conversations and used this as a foundation to improve our method, scope and range of work. The key issues related to the emergence of the division as a viable and responsible entity of support caused us to revisit our structure and staff roles and responsibilities. We looked at the integration of prevention across the programs, how programs are coordinated, supported and monitored, how can we more effectively communicate, are we united in our direction and are we helping to build capacity at the local level? Are we guiding providers in a manner that will help them achieve their outcomes and maximize their resources? Is leadership moving to support collaboration and promote best practices? With this in mind to ground our decisions, now centered in an organizational pattern where all aspects of the structure support working with and improving community and family support.

The Healthy Families Illinois program remains within the Bureau of Child and Adolescent Health under my leadership, Andrea Palmer continues as Acting Coordinator and Jean Hannig remains Assistant Coordinator. The Bureau has moved into the newly created Office of Community Support Systems where bureaus and regional administration, are under the leadership of Melissa Wright. This convergence provides a system of support, both programmatically and technically to bring about effective, targeted and even groundbreaking collaboration across domains.

We look forward to continuing our work together, by putting "prevention on the same page."

Denise Simon, Chief
Bureau of Child and Adolescent Health

The Fussy Baby Network

Launched in March 2003, the Erikson Institute's Fussy Baby Network is Chicago's first initiative for fussy babies. The network includes a clinic, a home visiting program, telephone support line and support groups for parents. Additionally, the Fussy Baby Network provides monthly interdisciplinary consultation to Healthy Families Illinois home visiting staff about challenging infant behavior and supporting the parent-infant relationship.

The consultation program began at Advocate Illinois Masonic Medical Center in June, 2004 as an additional piece to the services the program had already been providing to the community. During the 1.5 hours of consultation per month provided by the Fussy Baby Network staff, the HFI Staff present specific cases and are offered concrete suggestions on how to work with the family. Additionally, the staff can refer families to the warm line, a telephone line that offers support and resources, the home visiting program or the outpatient Fussy Baby Clinic at the University of Chicago.

Consultation to the HFI program is provided once a month by Karen Benson, Senior Infant Mental Health Specialist and Marsha Baker, Occupational Therapist with certificates in Infant Mental Health and Infant Studies. Both Marsha and Karen are on staff at the Fussy Baby Network in Chicago. In addition to case specific consultation the consultation team provides up to date research data and clinical information on a variety of infant mental health topics. Sara Barrera, HFI Program Supervisor, reports that the consultation time is invaluable to both herself and her staff.

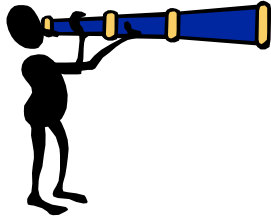
Sara reports that the consultants have provided critical information on such topics as feeding and sleep issues. She adds, "The consultation helps us to think about it from a different way. It offers the home visitor a time to vent and then concrete ideas for when we're feeling stuck." As a supervisor Sara finds that the clinical knowledge of the consultants is invaluable to her, "If staff is having a difficult time with a particular client I can suggest that we take this case to the monthly consultation meeting. The FSW and I benefit from the vast knowledge that the consultation team brings to us."

The Fussy Baby Network also currently provides consultation services to the Northside Metropolitan Family Services Healthy Families Program and the South Chicago Metropolitan Family Services Healthy Families Program. Beginning in April, two new sites-the Healthy Families program at St. Bernard's Hospital and the Catholic Charities Parents Too Soon Program in the Roseland community will participate in consultation. If you would like more information about the Fussy Baby Network or about the possibility of consultation services in your area, please contact **Linda Gilkerson, Director of Fussy Baby Network**, at (312) 893-7138. You can also visit www.fussybabynetwork.org.

The Fussy Baby Network is funded by the Doris Duke Charitable Foundation with support from the Irving B. Harris Foundation. The Fussy Baby Network consultation program to the Healthy Families Illinois program is supported by a grant from the Michael Reese Health Trust.

Eye on our Colleague Stephanie Broshous

Stephanie was nominated for the 2005 HFI Employee of the year. Her supervisor, Julia Marynus, described her as having “quick in-sight and an ability to enroll clients who may otherwise have chosen not to accept the program.” Her coworkers described her as being an “endless resource to our clients and staff.” Additionally she is described as “compassionate, thorough and organized and detail oriented.” Stephanie’s story is shared with us in her own words.



My name is Stephanie Broshous. I have been a Family Assessment Worker for Stephenson County since 2001. I started working with Healthy Families in 2000 as a support staff member, basically doing clerical work such as meeting minutes and other miscellaneous paperwork. This taught me the Healthy Families program and I really got to know the staff—the Supervisors, Assessment Worker, and Family Support Workers, and all that their jobs entailed.

In 2001, our program began to see some staff turnover and in order to keep our statistics at the level they needed to be, I attended the Family Assessment Worker Track. Little did I know the job would be such a match to my character! The first thing Dr. Brady told me at my training was that my job was to “love them and leave them.” That sounded easy! It sounded like the story of my life.

I had graduated high school and excelled in sports. Academics were never my favorite. I went to Western Illinois University and majored in Computer Science—only because I needed to have a major in order to keep all of my scholarships intact. I continued to excel in sports—winning the Women Athlete of the Year award as a freshman. I followed that award up with academic probation and then suspension. I moved home with the parents again. I then attended a local Community College, where I had to start all over, as none of my grades were good enough to transfer. I attended one year, and dreaded getting up each day. So, I quit.

I began working as an Aquatic Director at our YWCA. That lasted two years and the facility closed. I started attending Beauty School. Thought perhaps maybe that was my niche. I was hired at a local salon and was enjoying my new classes. After a year and a half, I had absolutely had it with the teacher, who I felt was holding me back, because I had obtained more skills at the salon where I was employed. I quit school and “grandfather clocked” my license in with the state so that I could work as a nail technician. I worked there until I was hired at an electric company doing payroll. After one year of that, I once again was frustrated and was feeling like a waste of space.

I went to work as an Aquatic Coordinator at a local YMCA, where I had a lot of fun, but had no health insurance. Finally, a job came open with the health department, and I was hired to provide support to the Healthy Families program, and here I am, YEARS later. My job as an assessment worker has been very fulfilling. I have met with a variety of first time moms, and I love to hear their stories. The “love them and leave them” method works. Since I am very easily

bored, I get all the information I need in one visit. I explain our program, and then I offer them information regarding our Support Workers. I tell the moms up front that they “will not see me again in the same setting, but if they have questions, to please call.” I explain that the program is designed to help them, to give them an encouraging voice, and to make sure that they will have at least one advocate in all they do. Knowing that a person will stand by you to the best of their ability is what our Support Workers do best, and that is very important to these moms.

I can honestly say that this job has been the most rewarding job I have had. I can relate to the frustration and doubt that these moms often feel. And, I leave them with direction and hope. The number of “thank yous” that I have received for introducing Healthy Families to first time moms has given me the fulfillment and satisfaction that I needed--I think I have finally found my niche!

Healthy Families Illinois/OPF Training Institute News **Bill McKenzie**

We are happy to announce that fully electronic training registration is coming your way. We are



loading the software, getting our own internal training on how to run it, and hopefully in a short time after that, we will notify you that we are beginning online training announcements and registration/confirmation. Please note: We will give ample time for everyone to get oriented on *how* to use it, and send a user guide out for you to follow. After that we will be offering some online training. We are working now on which content to start with, and how it will supplement our live events. Stand by for more information on the online training.

Please keep us posted when there are changes in Supervisory positions at your sites. It's now more important than ever that we have accurate name and e-mail information for our records so that we don't send e-mails to dead links.

The Certification Program is looking for folks who wish to submit a portfolio and start the process for direct service, or supervisor certification. Patti Torchia is the contact person and will personally guide you though the process. Call Patti for information at 217-522-5510.

The Training Handbooks have been distributed and contain 18 months of training events, and descriptions. This year for the first time, it will also be available on our web site. You will see new offering there concerning a *Supervisory Special Topics Track*, and *video usage in home visits*. For now, the training handbook [calendar](http://www.opfpts.org/ptstraininghandbook.html) can be found in PDF format at <http://www.opfpts.org/ptstraininghandbook.html> Program supervisors will receive e-mail notifications when the whole handbook is available. It should be before the end of June. Next Core Training – October 23-26, 2006 in Springfield. Announcements will be out soon.

Also, the Chicago OPF Office is moving. We are re-locating only 2 and a half blocks from where we are now in late September. We will give you clear instructions on how to get there before the move. The new address will be 33 W. Monroe. Anyone out there talented at moving desks?? ☺

As always, we are interested in hearing from you about training ideas, needs and interest in special topics. Please contact Patti Torchia, Kelly Woodlock in the Chicago office or myself for any and all information, or to help us out with suggestions.

Credentialing and Affiliation

**healthy
families
america**



The Illinois Department of Human Services has provided funding to offset the costs of both credentialing and affiliating. To access this funding, \$200.00 for affiliation and \$3,000.00 for credentialing, contact Mary Salisbury at (217) 522-1129 or msalisbury@preventchildabuseillinois.org. She will forward you a form and guidelines for application.

Congratulations to the following programs for credentialing recently: VNA Fox Valley Healthy Families, Aurora, re-credential, Healthy Start, The Children's Foundation, Bloomington, re-credential, Healthy Families, Children's Home and Aid Society, Sycamore Healthy Families, Fayette County Health Department, Vandalia, Clay County Health Department,

Flora and Healthy Families, Ford-Iroquois Public Health Department, Watseka. Good Work!!

Committee Updates

Healthy Families Illinois (HFI) is a public and private partnership formed through a collaboration of the Illinois Department of Human Services, Prevent Child Abuse Illinois, Voices for Illinois Children and the Ounce of Prevention Fund. The collaborative utilizes a system consisting of two advisory structures, the Executive Committee and the Work Group. The Executive Committee and Work Group work together to assure that the HFI program remains responsive to the needs of the community, providers and collaborative partners.

The **Work Group** consists of three sub-committees, which meet quarterly:

- Program, Training and Evaluation
- Public Awareness and Community Development
- Policy and Advocacy

Program, Training and Evaluation Committee

The Program, Training and Evaluation Committee serves as an inclusive, statewide forum for discussion, idea sharing, and problem-solving. The committee recommends action in the areas of program development and implementation, training, and evaluation for the Healthy Families Illinois network of programs and the state system of support.

The committee's last meeting was held on Monday, June 12, 2006. The group welcomed Jean Kleen, Livingston County Health Department, as the new co-chair. The group also thanked Julie Crouch for her service to HFI and wished her well. There were also committee and cluster updates.

The next meeting is scheduled for December 11, from 11:00 am to 2:00 pm in Chicago, Springfield and via telephone conferencing. For more information about the HFI Program, Training and Evaluation Committee please contact Co-Chair Jean Kleen at the Livingston County Health Dept. at (815) 844-7174 or jkleen@lchd.us or Makeda London of Near North Health Service Corporation at (312) 337-1073 or mlondon@nmh.org.

Public Awareness and Community Development Committee

The Public Awareness and Community Development Committee is co-chaired by Mary Salisbury, Prevent Child Abuse Illinois and Julie Marynus, Stephenson County Health Department. The committee is currently working on the annual Healthy Families Illinois Celebration Lunch and the selection of the HFI Employee of the year. Additionally, the committee focuses on promoting Healthy Families across the state.

Some of the past work of the committee has included development and distribution of a power point presentation and a press kit for sites to use when promoting their programs in their home communities. To receive either of these tools please contact Mary Salisbury at (217) 522-1129 or msalisbury@preventchildabuseillinois.org.

The committee's next teleconference is scheduled for November 14, 2006 from 10:30 a.m. to Noon. The group will be discussing the production of a document comparing HFI to other home visiting programs. If you would like to join the committee, please contact Mary Salisbury at 217-522-1129 or Julia Marynus at (815) 235-8390.

Policy and Advocacy Committee

Mary DeBose of Children's Home and Aid Society, Karen Yarbrough, The Ounce of Prevention Fund and Becky Beilfuss, Teen Parent Connections are current co-chairs of the HFI Policy and Advocacy committee. The committee focuses its efforts on ensuring that your Illinois legislators know about the Healthy Families Program. They do this by providing you with information and opportunities to advocate for your programs.

The Policy and Advocacy Committee wants to thank everyone for their support in contacting their legislators. The result is a 3% COLA increase for HFI programs. The next meeting for the Policy and Advocacy Committee is scheduled for September 28, 2006 at 1:00 pm by teleconference. They will be discussing the Strategic plan.

For more information about the Policy and Advocacy Committee please contact either Becky Beilfuss, of Greater DuPage MYM at (630) 790-8433 ext. 282 or BBeilfuss@greaterdupagemym.org or Mary DeBose of Children's Home and Aid Society, at 312-424-6803 or electronically at mdebose@chasi.org or, Karen Yarbrough at KYarbrough@ounceofprevention.org.

HFI Works Closely with Parents Care and Share



Parents Care and Share of Illinois is a service of Children's Home and Aid. It is a self-help parent support program, which began as a chapter of Parents Anonymous, Inc. For nearly ten years Children's Home and Aid nurtured and helped develop a local network of Parents Anonymous groups in Illinois. In 1999 they developed a new model of parent support, which held onto the principles of self-help but promoted a more positive image that is welcoming to parents, grandparents and other caretakers of children that is Parents Care and Share today.

The HFI Program at the Children's Foundation in Bloomington has joined forces with Parents Care and Share to provide groups for its participants. The programs began working together approximately two years ago. Currently, Parents Care and Share offers 12 different groups in central Illinois. HFI is the primary referral source for 5 of the groups sponsored at the Children's Foundation and for three others located in Piatt, Decatur and Pontiac. These groups include a dad's group, a Latino moms and dads group, a group for parents of children with Autism, a relative's raising kids group and an Eastern Indian moms group. More traditional groups include, a teen Heart to Heart group and a Parents Supporting Parents group.

Teri Burrows, the HFI Program Supervisor at the Children's Foundation, reports "we as a program wanted to provide this service. Parents Care and Share makes that easy to do." In working with the Children's Foundation, Parents Care and Share provides a facilitator for the group meetings as well as a trained childcare specialist who provide a children's program as well. The facilitator is trained by Parent's Care and Share but is a volunteer. The children's program specialists are paid a small stipend and provide services for the children in the same location and time frame as their parent participants.

Other support that Parents Care and Share provides includes financial support and staff support. Financial support that may be provided through Parents Care and Share are transportation, children's materials including books and art supplies, snacks and marketing of the group. Additionally, the regional coordinator, Mendy Smith, regularly attends HFI staff meetings at the Children's Foundation to gather information about how the program can continue to support the

staff and the participants. Teri states “this kind of connection and support has truly helped to make the program successful.”

The HFI Program at the Children’s Foundation is working closely with Parents Care and Share by ensuring that they have consents and releases signed and up to date, they distribute meeting flyers to participants and encourage their participants to engage in this free service to provide support. Teri adds that “there are really good things coming out of the teen group which is using the Heart to Heart curriculum. The fact that there is as children’s program available really allows the group participants to take that time to concentrate on themselves and share their concerns with others so that they can go out and be better parents. I can’t say enough good things about how the program has benefited our participants.”

If you would like to discuss the program with Teri Burrows she can be contacted at 309-827-0374. Parents Care and Share is very interested in partnering with Healthy Families programs across the state and with ___ number of programs already working together it is an ideal coupling. Program managers may contact your Parents Care and Share regional coordinator for more information.

Parents Care & Share of Illinois Program Staff

State Director: Karen Selman
Address: 721 S. Quentin Road
Palatine, IL 60067
Phone: 847-991-1030
FAX: 847-358-1790

Regional Coordinators

1. Northern Region

Coordinator: Vershon Allen
Address: Children's Home & Aid Society of Illinois
910 2nd Avenue
Rockford, IL 61104
Phone: 815-962-1043 ext. 273
FAX: 815-962-0344

2. Northwest Suburban Region:

Coordinator: Earl Kloppmann
Address: Community Child Care Center
721 S. Quentin Road, Suite 104
Palatine, IL 60067
Phone: 847-991-1030
FAX: 847-358-9278

3. Metropolitan Region:

Coordinator: Ayanna K. Smith
Address: Children's Home & Aid Society of Illinois
CHASI 2nd Floor
10 W. 35th St
Chicago, IL 60616
Phone: 312-808-0160, x.205
FAX: 312-808-9571

4. Mid Central Region:

Coordinator: Melinda Smith
Address: Children's Home & Aid Society of Illinois
403 S. State Street
Bloomington, IL 61702
Phone: 309-834-5231
FAX: 309-828-0745

5. Southern Region:

Coordinator: Lisa Durzo
Address: Children's Home & Aid Society of Illinois
2133 Johnson Road
Granite City, IL 62040
Phone: 618-452-8900 ext. 112
FAX: 618-452-9062

Cluster Corner

Cluster Corner is designed to provide a brief update from each of the clusters across the state. The clusters are groups of programs regionally assigned that are designed to allow for meaningful communication in between committee meetings and workgroup meetings. Each cluster functions in its own unique way to meet the needs of its attendees.

The **Central Cluster** currently meets with supervisors only. They are next scheduled to meet on November 13, 2006 at the Children's Foundation in Bloomington. The group last met on July 10, 2006 and discussed staff documentation, credentialing, advisory boards, participant satisfaction and participant aging out and graduation.

For more information about the central cluster please contact:

Jean Kleen

Livingston County Health Dept.

(815) 844-7174

jkleen@lchd.us

The **Chicago** cluster is being used to help support supervisors on various topics and provide training to staff. The group last met August 17, 2006 at Winfield Moody for a training on immunizations. The next meeting is scheduled for November 16, 2006 from 1-3:00 pm the location is to be decided

For more information about the Chicago cluster please contact:

Sara Barrera

(773) 296-5943

Sara.Barrera@advocatehealth.com .

The **Northwest Cluster** group is currently restructuring. The group is joining the Suburban Cook cluster for most meetings but will meet two times per year. The next meeting is scheduled for September 29th at Sinnissippi Center from 10- 2.

For more information about the Northwestern Cluster group please contact:

Julia Marynus

Stephenson County Health Dept.

(815) 235-8390

julia.marynus@aeroinc.net

The **Suburban Cook** cluster is the oldest functioning cluster group. They began as a support to supervisors before clusters were identified as a statewide need. They meet bi-monthly or as needed. They meet as supervisors regularly but also develop trainings for all of their staff. Also, of note is that this cluster developed a satisfaction survey with the help of Julie Crouch at NIU and developed a database for data input and retrieval. Some member programs of the cluster share this database and its data is being used to analyze outcomes for those programs and HFI in the region.

This cluster last met on June 9, 2006. The group discussed quality assurance, curriculum use, developmental screenings and staff supervision. The next meeting is scheduled for September 22, 2006 from 1-3 pm at Teen Parent Connections, Glen Ellyn.

For more information about the Suburban Cook Cluster please contact:

Becky Beilfuss

Teen Parent Connections

(630) 790-8433 ext. 282

beckyb@teenparentconnections.org

The **Southern Cluster** incorporates training with every meeting. Additionally, FAW's, FSW's and Supervisors have breakout sessions at each meeting. Meetings are held quarterly and rotate among the sites.

The last meeting was held July 18, 2006 and was hosted by the Bond County Health Department in Greenville. There was a training on Bi-Polar Disorder and discussion around the cost of travel, supervision issues and statewide updates. The next meeting is scheduled for November 6, 2006 in Carbondale.

For more information about the southern cluster please contact:

Dee Sanders

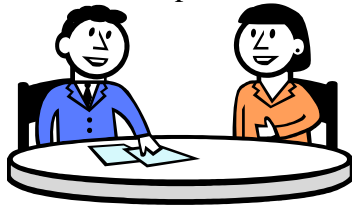
Fayette County Health Department

(618) 283-1044

dsanders@fayettehealthdept.org

Reflective Supervision

Reflective supervision, what is it and how can a supervisor begin to implement it into their style?



Reflective supervision is really about the relationship that the supervisor and employee have with one another. It is about thoughtful listening and questioning by both. The goal of reflective supervision is to ensure that staff work and program quality are high. With this as the ultimate goal, reflective supervision allows for individual, group or peer supervision. All of which take place

with the relationship at the heart of the process.

The Zero to Three Center for Program Excellence reports that programs, which have implemented reflective supervision, have found a positive impact on staff turnover, retention and morale. Additionally, program staff feel more confident in their work and program outcome effectiveness has been increased. How can a supervisor incorporate reflective supervision into their current set of skills? Listed below are ten tips that The Zero to Three Center for Program Excellence identifies for successful inclusion of reflective supervision in one's work.

1. Establish regular staff meetings that provide opportunities for peer mentoring. Designate one staff meeting per month, or a portion of each meeting, solely to staff development. Ask one or more staff to discuss a family in the program, and encourage them to raise questions they may have about their work with this family. Facilitate suggestions and feedback from the group.
2. Look for opportunities to share responsibility for program management decisions with staff. When appropriate, solicit staff feedback or establish staff committees to provide direction on programmatic issues.
3. Schedule regular supervisory sessions with staff. These should take place at a frequency and length that works best for supervisor and supervisee; many programs begin with monthly meetings of 30 minutes to 1 hour in length.
4. Ensure that all staff members-direct service and administrative staff-are assigned supervisors. Provide training to new supervisors in communication, coaching, and relationship-based work. Encourage new supervisors to "shadow" more experienced colleagues to ensure the quality of supervision across the program.

5. Introduce a question-based approach to analyzing staff's concerns about a family. For example, one infant/family program we know uses the following questions to gather more context about a staff member's experiences with a particular family (Copa, et al., 1999):
 - What does the staff member need help thinking about?
 - What has the staff member tried so far?
 - What are the family's strengths?
 - What has the family tried?
 - What's working?
 - Why might things be happening this way?
 - What more does the staff member need to know to understand the situation better or clarify their feelings and involvement?
6. Identify staff members' individual strengths. When discussing areas for growth, use these strengths as a foundation for ongoing development and learning.
7. Ensure that staff job descriptions and performance reviews include skills that support the use of reflective supervision (e.g., participates in supervision; seeks supervisory support when needed; is able to accurately identify strengths and areas targeted for growth and development).
8. Periodically discuss staff performance-both achievements and areas for growth-across the year. (Quarterly discussions are the minimum standard, though these issues should ideally be addressed more frequently than that.) Ensure the discussions are collaborative and reciprocal in nature.
9. Provide either group or individual supervision to supervisors. Like staff, supervisors, too, need an outlet to discuss their concerns, challenges, and stresses.
10. Recruit staff members who are open to reflective supervision by asking interview questions that gauge self-awareness, communication skills, and relationship-building skills. Some suggestions follow:
 - Do you work best independently or in teams?
 - If you had a conflict with your supervisor, what would you do?
 - What type of relationship do you like to have with your supervisor? What do you do from your end to help establish that kind of relationship?

Many Healthy Families supervisors already utilize these skills as a part of how they implement supervision in response to the critical elements. However, the review of the skills or suggestions may remind one to incorporate or reintroduce these skills into their own work.

For additional information on reflective supervision please visit www.zerotothree.org and type reflective supervision in the search box. Additionally, *Reflective Supervision in Practice: Stories from the Field*, by Rebecca Parlakian is available for purchase in their bookstore.

References:

Lessons Learned from Implementing Reflective Supervision, February 2003, Zero to Three Center for Program Excellence, Tips for Practitioners at www.zerotothree.org

Introducing Reflective Supervision into an Infant/Family Program, April 2002, Zero to Three Center for Program Excellence, Tips for Practitioners at www.zerotothree.org

Pflieger, Jackie (2002) *Reflective Supervision*, Headstart Bulletin, Issue 73, 2002 at http://www.headstartinfo.org/publications/hsbulletin73/hsb73_32.htm

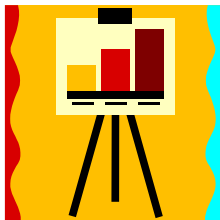
HFI and PTS Employee of the Year and Celebration Lunch

The HFI and PTS Celebration lunch will be held October 20, 2006 at 1:00pm following the close of the PCA Illinois conference. The lunch will be held at the Hilton in Springfield. Additionally, the HFI and PTS Employee's of the year will be announced. Those persons having worked with HFI and PTS for 5 to 10 years will also be recognized. Supervisors please watch for your employee nomination forms in the mail and for the lunch invitation to follow closely behind.



Make Room for Data: Helping Monitoring and Technical Assistance Work Together

Mark Valentine



Healthy Families Illinois (HFI) and Parents Too Soon (PTS) programs are funded by public dollars administered through the Illinois Department of Human Services (IDHS). For some programs the Ounce of Prevention Fund (OPF) serves as an intermediary. As stewards of public dollars, both IDHS and OPF must put mechanisms into place to ensure that the funds entrusted to us are being spent wisely and efficiently. As believers in the parallel process who wish to promote programming that is strength-based and relationship-centered, we aim to ensure that the folks actually doing the work of HFI and PTS have the resources, training, and support they need. There is a tension between these roles; that of the Trainer/TA provider, and that of the Monitor, and yet there may be some upside to having these two functions reside in the same house.

Staffs from IDHS and OPF have been meeting to talk about how we might better integrate these roles. Ideally monitoring should inform TA and training so that the supports provided to the program are matched to their strengths and needs. Similarly the on-site knowledge of the program gained through technical assistance contacts supplements data from quarterly reports

and other sources to ensure that program performance is represented accurately and in context. As we talk together, there are several themes emerging:

- Data should provide a wider and more accurate window into the program. While numbers can never tell the whole story, we have progressed beyond the point where immunization rates and EPSDT visits constituted the bulk of our outcome data for programs. We will continue to find ways to capture the impact that programs have so that quarterly reports are more accurate reflections of what programs are doing.
- Data must be understood in context. We aren't looking to cede decision-making power to Cornerstone or Ounce net. The human beings that work for IDHS and OPF who interact with other human beings that work in the programs are crucial to making sense of the data that the MIS systems give us. Information about the transience of a particular program's target population will inform our expectations about participant retention, knowing that there has been a spike in gang violence in a certain neighborhood will help us understand that quarter's home visit completion rate, and being aware of where new staff are at in terms of their training and professional development, will guide our timetable for expecting a program to reach capacity.
- Monitoring should inform training/TA and vice versa. Assessments of program's needs and strengths should help program staff make better use of the Training Institute's offerings as well as shape what new trainings should be offered in the future. The monitoring process should tailor similarly on-site TA to individual program needs as determined, in part.
- We should continue to share the wealth. To maintain objectivity and to keep peer reviews focused on the critical elements, HFA Peer Reviewers are asked not to provide any TA while conducting a peer review. This often requires a good deal of tongue-biting as Peer Reviewers have often been witnesses to creative and brilliant practices from a diverse group of programs and it seems a shame not to be able to share that. Fortunately, within our own state, we have no such constraints. The statewide work group, committees, and cluster groups are forums for this kind of sharing, but the sharing of ideas needn't be limited to these venues. Monitors and TA providers are often the bees that facilitate the cross-pollination of ideas.

The ultimate goal of course is better outcomes for children and families. Always keeping our eyes on that prize helps us envision, and we hope it will help you envision, the importance of the support roles that training, technical assistance, and monitoring play, and the need for these roles to evolve as the program evolves.

Prevent Child Abuse Illinois Updates

12th ANNUAL CHILD ABUSE PREVENTION CONFERENCE

Save these dates, **October 19 and 20, 2006**, to attend the 12th Annual Child Abuse Prevention Conference, *“Shadows of Childhood Trauma: Lighting Pathways for Change”* The conference will be hosted by Prevent Child Abuse Illinois at the **Hilton Hotel in Springfield**. Keynote speaker, **Bruce D. Perry, M.D., Ph.D.**, is an internationally recognized authority on children in crisis. Registration & workshop information can be found online at www.preventchildabuseillinois.org

TEAMING UP TO KEEP KIDS....SAFE AT HOME!

Three Child Abuse Prevention Month Launch Events

Three statewide Child Abuse Prevention Month Launch Events were held on April 3rd at the State Capitol Rotunda - Springfield, the Fourth Presbyterian Church, Michigan Ave. & Chestnut - Chicago and Central Christian Church - Mt. Vernon. Organizations throughout the state assisted in making the launch events so successful.

Teaming up to keep kids...



Program Excellence Awards were presented at each of the Launch Events to programs for their exemplary prevention efforts for Illinois children. Congratulations to the **Sinnissippi Centers, Inc. Healthy Families Illinois** program for receiving the Northern Illinois Award; to the **Macon County Safe From the Start** program for receiving the Central Illinois Award and to the **Violence Prevention Center Children's Program** for receiving the Southern Illinois Award.



Blue Ribbon Campaign Awards were also presented to three outstanding campaigns in Illinois. Congratulations to the **DuPage Child Abuse Prevention Coalition** for receiving the Northern Illinois Award; the **21st Judicial Circuit Family Violence Coordinating Council** for receiving the Central Illinois Award and the **Jackson County Child Abuse Prevention Month Committee** for receiving the Southern Illinois Award.

Thanks to everyone who participated in so many ways to the 2006 April Child Abuse Prevention Month Campaign such as submitting an activity to the statewide calendar; by assisting with and/or attending a launch; by participating on a planning committee; by helping to select award recipients and by planning and holding local activities. Many people are involved with making this April campaign successful and we couldn't do it without each one of you!

Article Submission

Please contact Elaine Duensing of Prevent Child Abuse Illinois to submit articles for inclusion in the Healthy Families Illinois Update. Elaine can be contacted at 217/522-1129 or eduensing@preventchildabuseillinois.org . We look forward to reading an article about your program in the next issue.

Upcoming Trainings

Stronger Roots Stronger Branches Moving to Action, September 28 -29 at Holiday Inn Select Hotel and Conference Center in Naperville, IL. Presented by the Illinois Department of Human Services in collaboration with Prevention First, Illinois Latino and African American Coalitions for Prevention and the Center for Substance Abuse Prevention, is a multicultural conference for everyone working to sustain and strengthen the health and well being of communities of color. Registration deadline is September 13, 2006. For detailed information about speakers, sessions and conference registration visit www.prevention.org