How Community Centers and Neighborhood-based Family Support Networks can be Key Partners for Child Welfare Agencies

CWLA National Conference
Washington, D.C.
April 16, 2013

Session Presenters

Introduction: “Communities of Hope”
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Center Overviews

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Center Comparison and List of Community Center Essentials
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How the Los Angeles Prevention Initiative Demonstration Project Created Community Partnerships to Prevent Child Maltreatment: The Road to Success

Presentation for the CWLA Conference April 16, 2013

Presenter: Peter J. Pecora, representing the PIDP evaluation team: Jacquelyn McCroskey, Todd Franke, Christina (Tina) A. Christie, Peter J. Pecora, Jaymie Lorthridge, Dreolin Fleischer and Erica Rosenthal.
Prevention Initiative Demonstration Project

“The thing that we are focusing on is to reconnect people to the fact that they are part of a community that is serving a family, rather than individual agencies.”

Lead Agency

PIDP Core Prevention Values and Theories of Change

- Core prevention values
  - Community capacity building
  - Integration and alignment of services
  - Inter-departmental collaboration

- Theories of change
  - Decreasing social isolation
  - Increasing economic stability
  - Integrating community-based spectrum of prevention service
Goals of the PIDP Evaluation

- Evaluate collaborative strategies and efforts among residents, Community-based organizations, county departments and other government entities and businesses.
- Evaluate strategies and initiatives to determine "best practices" for potential countywide replication.
- Use evaluation results to better align contracted prevention-oriented program funding streams with the needs of children and families.

Overall Study Design

1. Assess network development;
2. Track changes within DCFS offices and relationships b/w DCFS offices and community partners;
3. Gather data from participating families;
4. Assess promising approaches;
5. Test outcomes for children;
Year Two Evaluation Findings

- Parent-reported changes
- Effectiveness as measured by CWS-CMS data
- Detailed descriptions of activities in each SPA

Persons Served

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>SPA (LA Geographic Areas)</th>
<th>DCFS Clients</th>
<th>Community Residents (Non-DCFS)</th>
<th>TOTAL</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>SPA 1</td>
<td>147</td>
<td>467</td>
<td>614</td>
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<tr>
<td>SPA 2</td>
<td>445</td>
<td>2,173</td>
<td>2,618</td>
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<td>SPA 3</td>
<td>281</td>
<td>491</td>
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<td>SPA 4</td>
<td>121</td>
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<td>SPA 5</td>
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<td>SPA 6</td>
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<td>3,723</td>
<td>4,320</td>
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<tr>
<td>SPA 7</td>
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<td>1,528</td>
<td>1,586</td>
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<tr>
<td>SPA 8</td>
<td>691</td>
<td>4,834</td>
<td>5,525</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unduplicated Count of Persons Serviced</td>
<td>2,391</td>
<td>15,574</td>
<td>17,965</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
A Community Based Approach to Child Welfare in Los Angeles

Some History:
Community Based Organizations Were There From the Beginning…

• Pivotal conversations among County social service agencies, community based organizations, County policy advocates, philanthropic organizations, residents and others that:
  
  • Had nascent beginnings with the implementation of the family support and family preservation programs starting with passing of the 1995 federal legislation
  
  • Amplified with the establishment in 2003-04 of an initial Prevention Workgroup convened by the LA Commission for Children & Families

A Community-Based Approach to Child Welfare (Cont.)

• Gained traction with a follow on Prevention Workgroup convened in 2004-05 by then DCFS Department Director Dr. David Sanders

• Led to a Board of Supervisors motion asking for a report back on how to design and implement child abuse prevention initiatives that address the underlying factors that lead to maltreatment (including poverty & social isolation)

• Coincided with the application and approval for a Title IV-E waiver facilitating more flexible funding

• Resulted in the implementation of a range of cutting edge initiatives including the Los Angeles Prevention Initiative Demonstration Project
A Community-Based Approach to Child Welfare
(Cont.)

From these conversations emerged:

• A commitment to the premise that children’s safety depends on strong families and strong families depend on connections to a broad range of people, organizations and community institutions.

• To address them productively, the intertwined issues of poverty, marginalization, economic dis-investment, child abuse and neglect, substance use, and community violence require an updated “non-service” family support and community capacity building approach.

  A determination that interagency collaboration is insufficient as a framework for the development of an integrated, family focused, community based service delivery system; transformative change could however occur by viewing CBO/NGO/NFP networks of organizations as a system available and necessary for cross-sector partnership.

• Recognition that doing business differently was essential.

Social Supports

• PIDP parents in all SPAs reported that they had greater involvement in their community, more desire to engage in community activities, and felt less lonely or isolated.

• Scale scores for the Relationship-based Protective Factors Survey follow.
CWS/CMS Findings SD 1

Figure 5.1 – Pomona (SPA 3) Exits and Achievement of Legal Permanence

<table>
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<tr>
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<th>Percent Exiting Foster Care</th>
<th>Percent Achieving Legal Permanency</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>PIDP</td>
<td>81%</td>
<td>67%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Comp. Group</td>
<td>58%</td>
<td>54%</td>
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N for PIDP: 110
N for Comparison Group: 200

CSW/CMS Findings SD 2

Figure 5.3 – Compton (SPA6) Re-Referrals to Child Protection Services

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<tr>
<th></th>
<th>100%</th>
<th>90%</th>
<th>80%</th>
<th>70%</th>
<th>60%</th>
<th>50%</th>
<th>40%</th>
<th>30%</th>
<th>20%</th>
<th>10%</th>
<th>0%</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>PIDP</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>12%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Comp. Group</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>23%</td>
<td></td>
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</tbody>
</table>

N for PIDP: 130
N for Comparison Group: 150
CWS/CMS Findings SD 4

Figure 5.2 – South County and Torrance (SPA 8) Exits from Foster Care with Faith-Based Visitation Services

![Bar chart showing percent exiting from foster care and percent achieving legal permanency for PIDP and Comparison Group.]

N for PIDP: 79
N for Comparison Group: 100

Promising child maltreatment prevention strategies for future replication across Los Angeles County

- Social connections strategies such as Neighborhood Action Councils and family resource centers, such as the ASK Centers.
- Parent economic empowerment strategies such as career counseling, job training, job placement, pro bono legal services and the EITC and VITA programs.
- Faith-Based Parent Visitation Centers for parents with children in foster care.
Promising child maltreatment prevention strategies (continued)

• The combination of Cultural Brokers and Parent Advocates into a case management team approach (strategies that include community residents and parents who have been served by the child welfare system)

Special Notable Approaches by Community

• Economic Development (VITA in SPA 4, EITC in all SPAs)
• Neighborhood Action Councils (NACs in SPAs 2, 4, 7, 8)
• Family Resource Centers (ASK Centers in SPA 6)
• Family Visitation Centers (SPA 8)
• Shared Leadership in Action Programs and Parents Anonymous® Adult and Children’s Groups (SPA 3)
• Cultural Brokers & Parent Advocates (SPA 3)
References


Continued: References


Our Beginnings

**2007:** PSF, CFP and DCF teamed up to develop a concept to reduce the number of children entering the foster care system by targeting vulnerable communities.

**June 2008:** PSF met with 100+ community partners (Faith-based, social service organizations/agencies, Alachua County School District, University of Florida, etc.) including the ACLD to identify a place to open the Resource Center.

**August 2009:** Official Community Grand Opening of the L.P. Countless partner agencies/organizations were on-site sharing information about services that they will be offering at the L.P. More than 200 community members attended.

**Our goals are to create a center that:**

- **Values Children**
- **Strengthens Families**
- **Engages the Community**

Accomplishments & Challenges

**Accomplishments**

- In 2010, the Library Partnership was one of only three library programs recognized nationwide as a Bright Idea Program by Harvard University’s School of Government.
- For the past two consecutive years, the Library Partnership has been instrumental in Alachua County being named one of the 100 Best Communities for Young People by America’s Promise Alliance, which is the nation’s largest partnership organization dedicated to children.
- The Library Partnership has also been recognized by the Institute of Museum and Library Services for delivering quality library services while also striving to improve the community’s quality of life.
- In recognition and support of the Library Partnership’s parenting programs, the following organizations have also awarded funds to the organization: Community Foundation of North Central Florida, Satchel’s Grant Program, the Gator Exchange Club, the City of Gainesville and the Institute of Museum and Library Services.

**Challenges**

- Engaging the community to take ownership in the center and realize the benefits of our programs
- Showing the correlation between the data collected and the decrease in children being placed in out-of-home care
- Obtaining funding for incentives to encourage participants to participate in our programs through completion
Utilization Data

Percentage of Library Partnership Services by Type
January 2013 - March 2013

N= 2,221

- Concrete Support: 55%
- Family Functioning/Resiliency: 8%
- Parenting & Child Development: 8%
- Social Connections: 29%
- Nurturing & Attachment: 0.4%

NOTE: Data for this graph was collected from Getting to Know You Forms, facilitator group sheets, Event Logs, as well as, ACLD programs at the LP.

Utilization Data

Percentage of LP Visitors by Age Group
January 2013 - March 2013

N= 1,212

- 0-4: 1%
- 5-17: 18%
- 18-45: 33%
- 46-64: 5%
- 65+: 18%
- Unknown: 76%

Percentage of LP Visitors by Race
January 2013 - March 2013

N= 1,212

- African American: 78%
- Caucasian: 18%
- Other: 1%
- Unknown: 1%
Utilization Data

How did you hear about the Library Partnership?

- Walk-in: 22%
- Other: 17%
- DCF: 6%
- Media: 5%
- Family/Friend: 43%
- Calendar: 8%

How pleased were you with the services you or your family received?

- Very Pleased: 94%
- Somewhat Pleased: 5%
- Not Very Pleased: 1%

Satisfaction Data

Would you recommend others to the Library Partnership?

- Highly Recommended: 91%
- Somewhat Likely: 5%
- Not Likely: 0%

Would you return for additional services?

- Most Likely: 97%
- Somewhat Likely: 3%
- Not Very Likely: 0%
**Programs and Services**

**My FIRST Nest Egg** gives parents the opportunity to create a savings account for their child’s future education-related expenses while learning important parenting and financial planning information.

Hello!! I just wanted to tell you that I just dropped my cable boxes at COX!! I reduced my bill from $220 to $65 and after 12 months it will only increase $20!! I'm working on the emergency fund but it is going to take me awhile to get it saved but it will happen... Baby steps :)  

_Kelly Christian, participant_

**Fight For Your Money** (F.F.Y.M) provides participants knowledge on different financial topics. Participants also obtain multiple financial tools that will empower them to seek financial sustainability for their families.

Other programs include: Teacher’s Open House, Health Fair, Job & Career Fair, Clothing Closet, Youth Book Club, Beading Class and many more!

**Project Job Makeover** trains and empowers women to succeed in the current job market. The program’s approach addresses both practical methods and emotional growth and includes the following topics: Employability Skills, Career Counseling, Dress for Success and more.

Services typically requested from our Family Support Facilitator relate to the five protective factors. Our Family Support Facilitation program creates one-on-one interactions with the families to discuss the issues they are experiencing, identify their strengths and connect them with resources in the community to form a system of support. This is our most utilized service.
Mission Statement

The mission of Family Support Services of North Florida, Inc. is to be the leader in providing safety, stability, and quality of life for all children by working with the community to strengthen the family unit.

Mission Statement

Edward Waters College, through the Schell-Sweet Community Resource Center, is committed to providing senior wellness, prevention services, and a community collaboration network with a direct focus on health, social, and educational services.
Programs and Services

- Magnolia Project
- Born Learning
- Access Services
- Strengthening Ties and Empowering Parents
- Community Resource Specialists

Community Outreach

- Community Safety Training
- Community Food Distribution
- “CHOICES”
Dad All Day Network

D.A.D.

Dad All Day is a free educational program from FSS.

Dad’s who bring their baby to school often face hurdles of getting to work, taking care of their children, and being a good parent at the same time.

D.A.D. Initiative
- A support system for fathers
- A chance to network with other dads
- A chance to learn from experts
- A chance to help others

Join us!

North Park Community Center
1073 King Street
Jacksonville, FL 32206

To speak with a Family Support Services representative, call 404-239-8414.

Breakfast Learning Series

Wed., Mar. 20 and Thurs., Mar. 21
9 a.m. to 10:30 a.m.
Networking and Continental Breakfast at 9:30 a.m.

Topic: Helping Children with Mental Health Issues
Speaker: Laura Knelworth, Manager of Family Support Services

Learn about the social and emotional needs of children and the various services available in our community.

Breakfast: Coffee and bagels

Register to attend: FSSFLS.development@fl.org or 904-430-2139. No charge to attend.
RECIP Grant

Teen Leaders of America
Senior Services

GED and Pre-GED
Future

- Develop a system to collect data more efficiently

- Develop ways to increase community ownership including:
  - Seeking funding sources
  - Board development
  - Ongoing community needs assessments
### Community Center Comparison

**Similarities**

- Find many of the same issues challenging
- Heavy reliance on volunteers
- Formal and informal relationships with other organizations are critical
- Incorporation of “self-worth” and empowerment
- Emphasis on building trust in the community

**Unique Aspects**

- Years in operation
- Technological sophistication
- Address same core issues in different ways
- Program structure
- Service focus and primary client base

### Community Center Essentials

- “Identity” or presence in neighborhood
- Diverse and supportive community network
- In-house administrative function for service coordination and data collection
- Skilled, committed volunteer base
- Sufficient funding and careful program planning for maximum service
- Coordination with child welfare agency
Additional Information


Full research chronicles can be found online through Casey Family Programs ([www.casey.org](http://www.casey.org)) or the The Ounce of Prevention Fund of Florida ([www.ounce.org](http://www.ounce.org))