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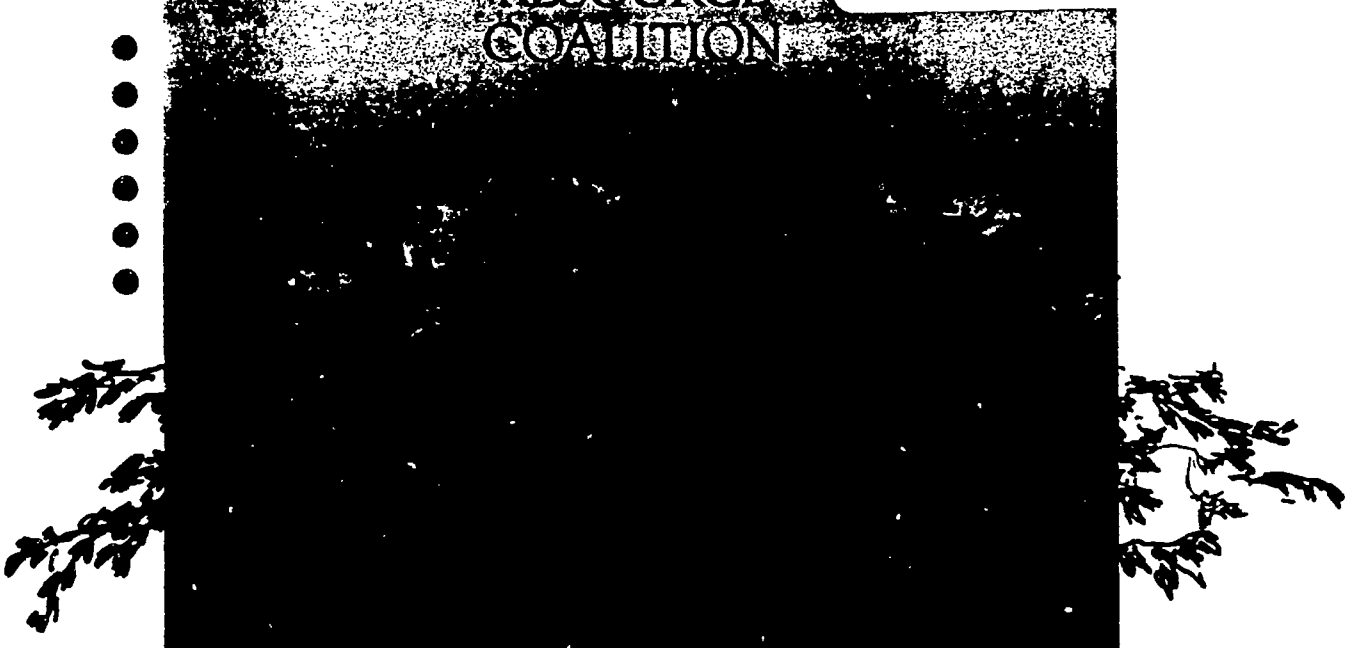
ABSTRACT

This newsletter issue focuses on the 10 years of leadership provided by the Family Resource Coalition in the support of families. The centerpiece of this anniversary issue is an interview with Coalition founder and President Bernice Weissbourd, exploring how the original ideas of the family resource movement have been implemented over the past 10 years and what her vision is for the future. Other articles in the newsletter issue include: (1) "Pioneer Programs Recall a Decade of Struggle and Success"; (2) "Family Support Principles Achieve Recognition in Many Settings"; (3) "How Family Friendly Are American Corporations?"; (4) "The View from the States: Family Resource Programs and State Policy"; (5) "Staff Development in Family Resource Programs"; (6) "Evaluating Family Resource Programs"; and (7) "America's Family Support Movement." (HTH)

FAMILY RESOURCE COALITION



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FAMILY
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Family resource programs have emerged since the 1970s as a spontaneous response to the need for more support expressed by parents and the awareness by people who work with families that preventing problems is the most effective approach. Although the settings for programs and the resources they offer families vary widely, one goal is shared by every program: increasing the capacities of all families to nurture their children.

All family resource programs are based on the assumption that parents who are confident and competent are more likely to have healthy, productive children. The pervasive, intentional incorporation of family empowerment in all aspects of a program as a way to enhance child development differentiates family resource programs from other services for families.

The guiding principles of family resource programs reflect a reliance on partnerships with parents.

- The basic relationship between program and family is one of equality and respect; the program's first priority is to establish and maintain this relationship as the vehicle through which growth and change can occur.
- Participants are a vital resource; programs facilitate parents' ability to serve as resources to each other, to participate in program decisions and governance, and to advocate for themselves in the broader community.
- Programs are community-based and culturally and socially relevant to the families they serve; programs are often a bridge between families and other services outside the scope of the program.
- Parent education, information about human development, and skill building for parents are essential elements of every program.
- Programs are voluntary, and seeking support and information is viewed as a sign of family strength, not indicative of deficits and problems.

FAMILY RESOURCE COALITION

report

FRC Celebrates Ten Years of Leadership

Volume 10, Number 1—1991

Welcome to this special edition of the Family Resource Coalition *Report*. A redesigned masthead, a unique cover, and a retrospective theme give hints that this is not a usual *Report*.

In celebration of our tenth anniversary, the Coalition asked several people who have been essential to the growth and development of the family resource field to describe what has happened in the last ten years of the family resource movement and to help us look into the future as the Coalition enters its second decade.

Long-time members and friends will recognize every author and every program and read between the lines about the years of struggle and hope that each article represents. More recent friends will discover background on the new wave of services that family resource programs deliver to families and a vision of our potential from the leaders in our movement.

Associate Director Lynn Pooley updates some of the true pioneer programs which started before the Coalition existed. Their stories vividly describe the process required to develop a completely new way of relating to families and communities.

FRC Executive Director Judy Langford Carter explores the other settings where family resource principles have been integrated into existing services. Former Board member Ellen Galinsky reports on the positive ways the workplace has been influenced by family resource programs and ideas.

The centerpiece of this anniversary issue is an interview with Bernice Weissbourd, Coalition founder and President, who has been the unquestioned leader of the family resource movement. A conversation with her friend and colleague, Dr. Dolores Norton, explores how the original ideas have been implemented over the past ten years and what her vision is for the future.

Frank Farrow, the current Coalition Board Chair, follows the public policy changes family resource programs have inspired. Carl Dunst and Douglas Powell, both long-time Coalition Board members, report on the status of training and evaluation in this still-new field. FRC Vice Chair Sharon Lynn Kagan looks at the challenges that still lie ahead as the movement continues to grow.

The commitment of the people involved in the Family Resource Coalition is what has kept it vital and growing. FRC members, the staff, and those who have served on the Board of Directors and Advisory Committee over these past ten years have invested incalculable effort to make sure that the training, networking, information sharing, and advocacy required for the movement to thrive could happen. This issue is dedicated to them and to the reality they have made possible. ■

ISSN 1041-8660

■ by Lynn E. Pooley

Pioneer Programs Recall a Decade of Struggle and Success

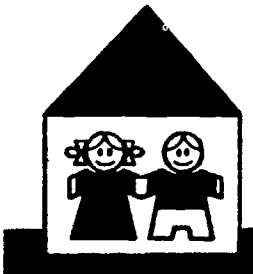
As the Family Resource Coalition celebrates its milestone tenth anniversary, it does so in the company of many family resource and support programs across the country. We asked five of those pioneer programs to reflect on the changes that have occurred over this decade, and although their descriptions are brief, we believe the thoughts and the issues expressed here are reflective of thousands of other programs operating today and represent the ever surprising diversity of families who are served by family resource and support programs.

Reading through the stories, some common themes emerge. The first and most obvious is that after ten (and in some cases more) years, the programs still exist. Their history parallels that of the Coalition's in that it has not always been easy or without struggle, but we have managed to survive, to expand, and to continue providing support and resources to families. It is an astonishing testimony to people's creativity that just these five programs alone can touch the lives of approximately 8,000 families a year.

Another theme that emerges, one that FRC can validate, is the growing understanding and recognition of the need for family resource and support programs. While everyone may not know or understand these programs, we find an increasing number of people who do. One of our most difficult tasks ten years ago was explaining the why and what of the programs. We now see the language of family support is finding its way into public policy, legislation, human service literature, and even the popular media. Not only is there greater recognition of the programs and their services, but slowly, the concept of prevention is gaining acceptance.

A third issue we see in these program pieces is a crucial one—the importance of collaborative efforts. No family resource and support program can stand entirely on its own. Few programs can meet all the needs of its families, and given the country's financial condition, it is unrealistic to believe there will be any significant funding from public sources to support a large number of programs for families. Cooperative, collaborative use of existing resources for families will be essential in the coming years. Family resource and support programs must find innovative ways to work with community resources and serve as a catalyst in bringing groups together that are invested in the well-being of families. The programs should serve as models to state and local governments on thoughtful ways to pool fiscal and community resources to support and strengthen family life.

In celebrating these past ten years of struggle and success, it is most appropriate to express regard and appreciation for the caring, compassionate, and dedicated people who work directly with families. Our family resource and support field continues to be exciting and dynamic because of them, and the work they do is vitally important in shaping future generations. ■



by Barbara Le Blanc
Assistant Director

THE PARENTING CENTER— New Orleans, LA

The Parenting Center at Children's Hospital has been doing what it does best —nurturing families—for 11 years. It is a primary prevention organization providing education and support for parents with children birth through adolescence. The program began with 136 members and has grown to serve 3,673 parents/families by direct contact in 1990. The core programs continue to meet the needs of today's parents: drop-in times, classes, workshops, resource library, support groups, counseling, WARMLINE, and babysitting training.

"Over the years we have found that the need for solid, research-based parenting information hasn't changed, but how and when we provide our services has expanded to meet the needs of working-out-of-the-home parents, step families, and to address specific concerns such as in our Dads' group," comments Donna Newton, Director of the Center. "Brown Bag Seminars at the worksite, for example, are our most successful way to reach parents who work out of the home."

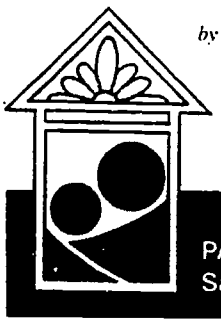
The Parenting Center is the most used parenting resource in the community, and our outreach services have tripled in 11 years. The Center works with schools, churches, museums, social service organizations, parent groups, the mayor's office, other hospitals, the Chamber of Commerce, specific businesses, and various community task forces by offering direct services as well as consultation.

The Parenting Center is a vital part of the Children's Hospital concept of health care and the Center's deficit is part of their yearly budget. Specific memberships, class fees, an Annual Giving Campaign, and "Boo at the Zoo," a Halloween extravaganza, generate income.

"In some ways our job is easier today because there are good curricula available, and the wealth of books and information written for parents is helping to reach a broader audience. Community acceptance of parent education has helped to open doors to hard-to-reach groups," says Ms. Newton, "and has provided new funding."

Ms. Newton sees the Parenting Center becoming more of a catalyst in bringing together groups that are interested in families. For example, The Partnership for Parenting and Family Life, a collaborative group of 50 organizations, will offer a program titled "Family Matters," highlighting broader definitions of parental involvement in schools. She also sees the Center providing more training for trainers—parents who help other parents—as an effective way to reach and support more families.

The commitment of the Children's Hospital and the P.C. Advisory Board, 20 community members and numerous other volunteers, makes the future of the Parenting Center look hopeful. "Our wish list," says Ms. Newton, "would include parent education at schools and community centers, and more funding for teen/pregnancy/parents programs. The future looks to new organizations such as PARENT ACTION to challenge the ways of thinking that undermine the modern family instead of strengthening it." ■



PARENTS PLACE— San Francisco, CA

by Lee Ann Slaton
Director of Education

"When we started Parents Place, family support was an unknown concept," says Amy Rassen, Assistant Executive Director of Jewish Family and Children's Services. "We had to convince professionals and lay people alike of the importance of providing information and support for new families."

"In the 1970s people began having their children later and often lived far from their extended families. It became clear that new parents were often isolated and needed a way to come together for support in facing what we term the normal crises of parenthood," explains Rassen. Parents Place started modestly in 1975 with a mother-infant support group and has developed gradually, group by group and service by service. Today it is a full-service resource center for parents of children from birth to six years old. Located in a comfortable Victorian house in the heart of San Francisco, Parents Place offers support groups for parents of babies, toddlers, and preschoolers, as well as groups, classes, and workshops on specific topics. It also houses a drop-in playroom and sponsors the Warm Line, a telephone advice service for callers who have questions about parenting and child development. There is a parenting library with a selection of videotapes and a child care and community bulletin board. A branch of Jewish Family and Children's Services, Parents Place also provides counseling and consultation on child development issues. The compre..ensive program serves 3,000 families a year.

"At Parents Place, we stress that there is no one right way to parent," notes Rassen. The professional staff is sensitive to family issues and can spot potential problems. They foster the kind of partnership with parents that allows problems to be solved before they become insurmountable.

Rassen considers JFCS's commitment to Parents Place a major factor in its success. The agency took the lead in the early 1980s, putting its resources into prevention and strengthening families.

During the 15-year history of Parents Place, family life has changed considerably. "Mothers are going back to work sooner after childbirth than ever before," observes Rassen. "We originally assumed that our site would be the hub of our activities, but in order to adjust to the needs of working parents, we now go where the people are—at the workplace, at day care centers, or by the telephone."

In addition, Parents Place sponsors groups for single mothers, divorced parents, adoptive parents, and the parents of twins. "We offer people with similar interests the opportunity to come together and provide mutual support," says Rassen.

Parents Place has been the model for more than 200 parenting programs around the country. In many ways it gave birth to and nurtured the concept of family support. "Now, instead of having to convince people that family support is necessary and valuable," says Rassen, "we find that Parents Place has become a community institution and there is recognition and credibility for the kind of work we do." ■

FAMILY FOCUS/OUR PLACE— Evanston, Illinois

by Randi B. Wolfe
Family Focus, Inc.
Program Director

Family Focus/Our Place opened in 1979 as a drop-in center for pregnant and parenting teens, their children, their family members, and their peers. This comprehensive approach evolved in order to avoid the message that a teen had to get pregnant to become involved in the program, and the recognition that teen pregnancy needs to be addressed in the context of other factors and people who impact on the youngsters' lives.

The primarily black, low-income community served is plagued with the social maladies associated with poverty, including school drop-out, gangs, drugs, homelessness, and unemployment. Says Director Delores Holmes, "If we could solve the problem of poverty, it would probably take care of most everything else."

In 1983, Our Place moved into a former elementary school building, becoming primary tenant and landlord, and established the Family Focus Family Community Center. Many local residents who had attended the school remembered it as a segregated institution that served the black community. Thus the building has special meaning for the neighborhood, and its reclamation has been a great source of pride.

Being part of a larger community center has allowed Our Place to network more easily with other service providers so that participants can have access to a wider variety of services, interconnected and right in the neighborhood. This is particularly helpful given a population that is mistrustful of traditional social service agencies and therefore reluctant to access available resources.

Over the years problems such as gang involvement and drugs have become more widespread; at the same time, community funding and response to human service needs has narrowed. Solutions are more difficult to devise and the cumulative effect of these pressures is evident in the attitudinal changes of the young people. "Unlike ten years ago, youth today seem unmotivated and without hope," says Holmes. "Kids don't dream anymore. They live for today and take tomorrow as it comes. They don't think 'when I grow up...' because they're forced to live in very grown-up worlds prematurely. That's a big change from the past."

There are times when staff members feel ineffective and inadequate to solve the problems faced by the families they serve, but there is little question that Our Place has had a positive effect on both participants and community. While not all participants have sustained involvement, it is often the case that young people in trouble —facing a family crisis, or overwhelmed by pressures—will come to the center seeking support, confident that the people there will care and respond.

The center is widely recognized as a stabilizing force for the city's black community and serves as a hub for both teens and the many adults committed to helping them succeed. The school system, a central and major institution within Evanston, has always lent special support to Our Place, recognizing the center's ability to connect with the students who have often been those hardest to reach. They value the efforts of Our Place to prevent school drop-out, to encourage students who have dropped out to return to school, and to assist the young people toward school achievement.

As for the future, Director Holmes says, "We need to get involved when the children are even younger and continue that involvement throughout their development." In the meantime, she acknowledges that increasingly families are in serious trouble and "We don't have answers for the kind of trouble they're in. We need to address the range of problems these children face and pregnancy is only a small part of it." ■

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by Carolyn Micklem
founding and current Director

WEBSTER AVENUE FAMILY RESOURCE CENTER— Rochester, NY

It's a privilege to be celebrating our 10th birthday along with yours and having the opportunity to analyze what has changed over the past decade.

Not the parents so much: Fanning out from this low income, high mobility neighborhood to more stable areas, we still find much isolation, timidity to try new things, and interest hampered by lack of transportation; little access to safe, dependable childcare; confusion around the parenting role; and a high level of financial stress.

We have changed: From a basic model of respite care, parent education, counseling, social activities, and volunteer opportunities. We have added:

- **More outreach**—from a half-time worker in 1984 to a full-time worker in 1991
- **More diversity in programming**—fewer courses and more single-session, high-interest offerings
- **More depth in programming**—added a peer-led home visiting project in 1984, job skills training in '85, single parent focus in '85, intense services for 18-25 year old mothers in 85
- **More diversity in staffing**—of 15 staff members, 5 are black, 3 Latino, 7 white
- **More support services**—increased transportation (a new van in 1989), more childcare capacity in 1990
- **More space**—now occupying four street-level stores! Added Parent Education room in '89; childcare room #2 in '90; Job Skills area in '91

Real Impact? Hard to measure. The numbers are good: consistently, about 275-300 families per year, getting about 15,000 hours of service. If you ask the parents, they say their lives change, life (and parenting) is more rewarding, friends are made, trust is built. And yes, teachers say they see a difference in the children and their parents who have been involved here. Parents gain competence and confidence and that can open many doors.

What else has changed? Prevention as a preferred approach to family stress and distress, to school failure, even to drug abuse, is gaining acceptance in discussion, if not in funding. Farsighted businesspeople are increasingly concerned about future work force competence and are discovering preschool interventions. To date, local efforts revolve around 4-year olds and the public schools; parents are part of the equation, but not an equal priority, as they are with us.

Governor Cuomo featured several preventive family initiatives in his 1991 State of the State message, but in the present climate of drastic budget cuts, little funding is expected.

The future rests on finding new and stable funding sources. We are exploring a collaborative relationship with three smaller centers (two of which we helped to start). In this way, we hope to obtain funding from state and national foundations. Our support from business, foundations, churches, and individuals was never better, but we are aging out of substantial state and city funding without replacements in sight. The federal Family Resource Program bill (thanks to FRC!) is an exception, and we have started a local advocacy group to help nudge/push New York State to meet the criteria. ■

by Maria Elena Orrego
Executive Director

The Family Place

FAMILY PLACE— Washington, DC

It all began when our founder, Dr. Ann B. Barnet, felt the need to do more than just prescribe medication for poor, sick babies at Children's Hospital National Medical Center. She realized that infants born to low-income families failed to thrive because their parents were isolated, unsupported, and lacked the resources and the information necessary to help their children.

She had a vision and made a call to her fellow members in the Church of the Saviour. That was 1978. In 1981 Family Place opened its doors to pregnant women and parents with children from birth to three. Although it took over three years to hatch Family Place, the slow and patient nurturing of the vision was all worthwhile. Ten years later, our Center has provided services to more than 2,900 families.

Family Place was and is the only drop-in family resource center in the nation's capital, and we spend a lot of time describing what we do and what we are to other service providers. On the other hand, the parents who come to the center seeking our help have been quick to understand what we are all about. They are welcomed into a community of support where the basic messages that were given ten years ago have remained the same—being a parent is the most challenging and important job a human being can do, and parents need and deserve support in raising their children.

When Family Place began, it was from scratch—like good home-made soup. It started in a rented basement located in a culturally and ethnically diverse community; the newly hired staff, a program director and a social worker, had to do a little of everything—they fixed, repaired, and painted the space; they did outreach in the community; and they provided all necessary services to participants—32 the first year. Four years ago, we moved into a large, graceful Victorian house, bought by the Family Place Board of Directors. We now have a home and Family Place is rooted in the community it serves.

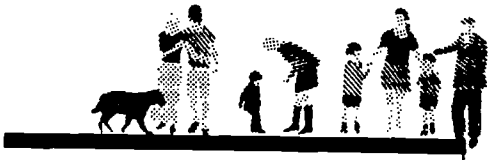
In these ten years, we have grown tremendously. We understand better the needs of poor and low-income parents and their children. We have learned to develop and sustain collaborative agreements with other human service providers. We have learned to creatively search for and utilize the many resources needed to serve an average of 400 families each year. We understand better how and what is empowering to our parents and how parents can be the best source of support to each other. We have begun to understand how to support staff so they don't burn out. And we have a vision about how the community we serve can own and sustain Family Place in the future.

In these ten years, we have continually reminded ourselves that each parent and each child is unique; that although we have to keep records and statistics of the services we provide, parents and their children are human beings—not numbers, cases, or files. We continue to strike a balance between providing comprehensive, efficient, and professionally delivered services and remaining flexible, caring, and compassionate. Ten years of service have brought many, many rewards. Some of the best are seeing how Family Place children are thriving and how their parents keep stability in their lives. But the best reward is to see how former participants become a part of the support network for new families. An example of this is that in 1990 we did not place a single homeless family in a city shelter because our own stable families provided shelter to new homeless families.

To have grown together with FRC has been a continuous blessing. Together we have nurtured a relationship of mutual support and joined our skills and experiences to help other family resource programs begin and thrive. The family resource movement has grown into a warm and supporting extended family system and we at Family Place are proud and blessed to be a part of it. ■

by Judy Langford Carter

Building Family Capacity Attracts Diverse Partners



Family resource programs have come a long way since their emergence in the late 1970s. Those spontaneous, shoe-string organizations of parents who wanted information, friendships, and support while raising their children have been joined by large, complex programs funded by a variety of public sources complete with target populations, eligibility standards, and outcome measures.

Family resource programs can be found everywhere you look.

A few examples among thousands:

- Armed Services YMCA/Hawaii
  Honolulu, Hawaii
- M.I.L.K. (Mothers/Men Inside Loving Kids)
  Virginia Correctional Institutions
  Richmond, Virginia
- Teenage Parent
  Alternative School Program
  Lincoln Park, Michigan
- Our Lady Queen of Peace Parenting Center
  Staten Island, New York
- Early Childhood Program
  Boston Children's Museum
  Boston, Massachusetts
- Ute Family Resource and Day Care Center
  Ute Mountain-Ute Reservation
  Towaoc, Colorado
- The Parent/Child Workshop and Early Education Room
  Middle Country Public Library
  Centereach, New York
- Working Parent Resource Center
  St. Paul, Minnesota

The friendly one-person staff who did everything from bake bread, care for toddlers, and write newsletters has been added to interdisciplinary teams of professionals and trained paraprofessionals. Similarly, the issues addressed in programs have expanded dramatically from providing social opportunities and workshops in child development to addressing a full range of problems from joblessness and literacy to child sexual abuse and teen parenting. The settings for family resource programs have changed as well, moving from church basements and kitchen tables to worksites, schools, health centers, social service agencies, and community gathering places.

The remarkable growth of these community-based, prevention-oriented family programs has extended the reach of the family support movement, infusing its family empowerment principles into systems and services unimaginable ten years ago.

Common Approach—Diverse Goals

Professionals and organizations working closely with families for different purposes have often independently incorporated family support principles in their work, only to discover later that their ideas and programs have remarkable similarities to other programs with very different goals. Although the initial purpose of their organization or service remained basically the same, a family-focused, family empowerment approach to working with families was added.

Thousands of different child abuse prevention programs, many inspired by the National Committee for the Prevention of Child Abuse, are based on the family resource principles of strengthening family capacities through education and support, and building parents' self-esteem and skills as a way to improve interaction with their children. These programs use a family support approach not only to reach their specifically defined goal of preventing child abuse, but to help families build their capacity to function in healthy ways.

The Family Resource Coalition's sister organizations in the Consortium of Family organizations—Family Service America, the National Council on Family Relations, the American Association of Marriage and Family Therapists, and the American Home Economics Association—each have a particular focus on family life and a unique set of ways for working with families. But each organization, representing thousands of community-based professionals and programs, uses a capacity-building, whole-family approach. This common view acknowledges the crucial role of the family in nurturing children as well as adults, and strongly supports the idea that preventing problems by strengthening family functioning is a far superior strategy than attempting to remediate problems after they occur.

In addition to individual organizations and professionals, whole systems that address the needs of families have begun to integrate family support ideas as well. These systems—charged with a specific purpose such as education, child welfare, or income maintenance—have found it more and more difficult to deal effectively with the problems of their client population without considering the whole family and its ability to assist its members.

Even the best schools, for example, cannot be effective educators for children whose outside-of-school problems are

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National networks support a variety of family resource programs.

Some examples:

National Alliance of Children's Trust and Prevention Funds
Lansing, Michigan

Links funds in all 50 states, which in turn support community programs to prevent child abuse and neglect.

National Lekoteck Center
Evanston, Illinois

Supports 45 Lekoteks, serving families with special needs children.

The Mothers' Center Development Project
Hempstead, New York

Supports 55 Mothers Centers in 22 states, based on the original Mothers Center model in Hempstead.

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overwhelming. But the child's family is the critical element in any hope of resolving those problems. Although schools have long had official policies that encouraged parent involvement in their children's education, the traditional enticements for parents to follow the schools' program of involvement—attending school conferences, joining PTA, participating in fundraising activities for the school, assisting in the classroom—have given way to some very different models. A number of new programs, funded through public systems, are working to reorient those traditional approaches toward one of full parent partnership in preventing problems and improving the chances for children's success.

Moving Toward Cultural Competence

Services to low-income families have begun a gradual change as family resource and support principles emerged over the past ten years. Traditionally, programs for low-income populations viewed families from a deficit perspective, focusing on the range of problems and stressors that affected them. The view of the low-income family as being "half empty" shaped the way services were provided:

- families were viewed as clients and recipients of services, not as partners in resolving their own issues;
- services were provided to one member of a family as the identified client, not to the whole family as a unit;
- funding was designed to pay for a single service, such as income maintenance or food stamps—provided the recipient qualified as sufficiently needy to get that particular service; individuals had to qualify separately to receive each service.

As principles of family support are integrated into the fabric of programs serving low-income families, agencies have taken a hard look at the philosophy they use and the results they have produced: What do we really want for our clients? How does someone become self-sufficient? What role do other family members play in the success of any one member? What long term impact comes from growing up in a poor family? What can we do to ensure children a better chance of NOT falling into the poverty cycle as adults? How can we possibly provide all the services necessary for our families?

Working toward answers to these questions, programs began to realize that while families are faced with many problems, they also have strengths that can be built on. Families, in fact, can be "half full": they can be viewed as resources for solving problems instead of as bundles of needs to be met. (Building a family's capacity to be self sufficient should be a more effective long term intervention than continuing to provide piecemeal services which do nothing to encourage or support progress away from dependence on the system.)

Programs have adopted an entirely new kind of relationship with the families they serve:

- considering the needs and strengths of the whole family and providing a comprehensive response
- involving families in planning and following their own paths out of poverty
- refocusing resources toward preventing problems and strengthening existing capacities

Programs for low-income families have always served a racially and ethnically diverse population. Services that have integrated family support principles into their approach to families respect and utilize the diversity their families represent. These programs celebrate the rich cultural heritage of each family and commit themselves to learning the language, values, and childrearing practices of the specific cultures represented in their programs. Staff selection, training, and program activities are all guided by a knowledge of and respect for cultural differences. Programs that aim to be competent in their understanding of the cultural context in which their program participants live and work, have discovered a much greater opportunity to be truly family supportive. ■

Acknowledging the central role that parents play in their children's education, some schools and school systems have begun to offer programs designed to improve parents' capacities to assist their children. Statewide initiatives in Missouri and Minnesota have involved parents of young children in every school district; a number of other states have similar initiatives in planning and pilot stages. In some cases, expanded outreach and comprehensive services of all kinds have been offered to families from a school site. The Commonwealth of Kentucky has recently established a system of family resource and youth services centers to be placed in or near all schools with a high percentage of low-income students.

Head Start programs, from their beginning, recognized the vital role parents could play in improving their children's chances for educational success. Their program of parental involvement historically included skill building for parents, child development information, and links to health services. Today, having increased their support services for parents every year, Head Start programs across the country may also be host to literacy programs, job training and placement services, and a variety of other opportunities for families to create the networks of support that are essential to their effective functioning.

Innovative programs aimed at helping families achieve self-sufficiency have also begun to integrate family resource principles into their services and to broaden their definitions of what kind of support is necessary for a family to move off welfare and into self-sufficiency. Emotional support and improvement in self-esteem, better parenting skills, more information about services and access to them, and full participation by families in setting their own goals and plans for achieving them are elements included in some programs.

Acknowledging that any one single service is unlikely to adequately address everything a family needs, some initiatives have pulled together a variety of resources in one place to give families more comprehensive support. Because teen parents and their children are at high risk to suffer poor health and educational achievement and long-term dependency on governmental systems, publicly funded programs to address their needs have sprung up everywhere. Essential education, health care, employment, childcare, transportation services, counseling, and appropriate

Parent Services Project

Parent Services Project (PSP) began as an experiment in providing parent services through a network of seventeen Title XX day care centers in Northern California.

The reason for transforming childcare centers into family care centers was a simple one: low and moderate income working parents who used the childcare centers were likely to have family needs beyond childcare that would also affect their ability to nurture their children effectively. The childcare center was an excellent, non-threatening entry point for offering families, many of whom were immigrants and refugees who spoke little English, the assistance they needed.

The relationships that develop between parents and caregivers in caring for children can foster a trusting environment where parents feel safe. Family issues beyond childcare—isolation, time stresses, marital problems, housing, financial pressures, the need for counseling or educational services—can be revealed and potentially resolved through the center. PSP today provides its services to 2,000 families with Family Fun Events, Parenting Classes, and Adults Only activities as well as peer support groups, parent respite, job training, mental health workshops, sick child care, and referrals to other community services.

A carefully designed three-year evaluation, completed in 1988, gives evidence that PSP's comprehensive services to families have had a significant effect on the lives of its families beyond their own reports of greater self-esteem and improved family life. The program has had impact on increasing their educational and language achievements, decreasing the need for more intensive (and expensive) counseling, and increasing parents' capacity to be involved in their children's education. ■

Iowa's Family Development Program

The Family Development Program (FDP) in Iowa was one of the first projects to apply family resource principles to services designed to help low-income mothers seek and obtain employment. Administered by local community action agencies and other community-based service providers, with funding from the state Department of Human Rights, this demonstration project exists in 20 of Iowa's 99 counties.

The FDP helps parents develop their capacities in childrearing and coping with many other demands in their lives, at the same time that it provides the skills necessary to obtain and hold a job. Development of self-esteem and confidence is as important to achieving the program's goals as instilling specific job skills. Local programs also stress healthy child development as a goal and help participants obtain necessary resources for their children.

All the programs utilize trained family development specialists working out of a local agency to be the chief "partner" with families as they develop a plan for self-sufficiency and work toward it. Other resources including parent education, childcare, transportation, and activities designed to assist families in becoming self-sufficient are provided through a network of local providers.

child development information have been combined in a family resource setting in a number of comprehensive programs. The Ounce of Prevention Fund in Illinois, the Ounce of Prevention Fund of Florida, New Futures School in New Mexico, and Friends of the Family in Maryland have long-term track records of working with teen parents through comprehensive family resource programs.

A new set of very promising Federal research demonstrations, the Comprehensive Child Development Program begun in 1989, has positive child development as its goal and comprehensive family support as its approach. Although they are geographically and ethnically diverse, each project includes provisions for families to receive health care, childcare, employment training and placement, child development training, linkages with substance abuse treatment and prevention, and an array of other family support services woven together through a primary center.

Several statewide human services reform efforts, now in the planning process, have gone one step further with family resource principles. Their plans call for both coordinating existing services in a comprehensive way, and for actually redeploying existing resources and personnel to create family support services. In some cases, family resource centers similar to those described in the preceding article are envisioned as the community base, the entry point, for comprehensive services as well as for more preventive programming for everyone in the community.

Dramatic Change in Supporting Families

While the family resource principles that advocate comprehensive, contextual supports for families are increasingly accepted and integrated in many systems, we are only beginning to understand the commonalities and the differences among the institutions that are implementing them. Each agency, each institution, each funding source has its own agenda, and each one is beginning to explore the extent to which its agenda can best be served using a prevention-oriented, community-based family empowerment approach.

Our challenge in the next ten years is to embrace the creative possibilities that each new setting brings while carefully examining the subtle alterations that will inevitably come as the principles are interpreted and used widely. We are poised at the beginning of a dramatic change in the way our public systems and private agencies view families and the most effective way to support them in raising their children. The family resource movement has led the way in articulating the principles of family empowerment, comprehensive support, and informed child development through strengthening families. The next ten years will be exciting ones indeed. ■

Judy Langford Carter is the Executive Director of the Family Resource Coalition.

■ by Ellen Galinsky

How Family Friendly Are American Corporations?

A Progress Report

Some corporations offer elder care resource and referral services to their employees.

In 1981, when several hundred of us convened in Evanston, Illinois at the founding meeting of what was to become The Family Resource Coalition, the possibility that American corporations would consider family needs as a strategic business issue seemed desirable but highly unlikely. In 1991, just a decade later, that dim possibility is becoming a reality.

A recent survey of 188 of the country's largest corporations, across 30 industry areas, indicates that *all* of these companies offer family-supportive policies. Conducted by the Families and Work Institute for a forthcoming book, *A Corporate Reference Guide to Work-Family Programs*,[1] the survey also showed that every company provided maternity leave, 88 percent offered part-time work options, and 86 percent had Employee Assistance Programs (EAPS) which, among other services, included counseling on work-family issues. Some companies had an extraordinary range of services and benefits; furthermore, we found that 68 percent of these companies are considering or are in the process of implementing *new* family-friendly initiatives.

Our research for the *Corporate Reference Guide* has led The Families and Work Institute to identify stages in the evolution of family-friendly programs. Please note, however, that although the three stages described below typically happen in sequence, some companies develop their work-family programs in a unique order.

Stage I: A Programmatic Approach

When work-family initiatives are first broached within a company, strong resistances tend to surface: "This is beyond the role of the company." "Family problems should be left at home." "This is an issue for women or new mothers and companies should only develop personnel policies that meet the needs of all employees." "Work-family really means childcare and that leads to on-site centers which are too expensive, serve the needs of just a few employees, and raise the possibility of liability lawsuits."

In a Stage I company, the champions who are pressing for a corporate response to family needs usually overcome these resistances by presenting a business case. Typically, their strategy involves showing that there are many ways to help employees, and on-site childcare is not the only or at times the preferred way. They also indicate what the company is losing by not addressing employees' work-family problems: higher absenteeism, tardiness, less concentration on the job, perhaps higher employee stress, more stress-related health problems, or even higher turnover. The business case is often based on internal company research or other studies.[2,3,4,5,6]

The most frequently developed initiatives by Stage I companies are childcare resource and referral services, dependent care options in a flexible benefits plan, and parenting seminars at the workplace. Typically, one new initiative is developed and management thinks it has solved the problem and can return to hard rather than soft business issues.

Stage II: An Integrated Approach

In Stage II companies, an executive level commitment to work-family issues begins to emerge. These executives are aware of the increasing number of women and the growing diversity predicted for the workforce, and they see work-family initiatives as a vehicle for attracting and retaining valued employees—a fact substantiated by research.[7]

One of the major characteristics of Stage II companies is the ability to see that the one or two policies or programs they've developed are no longer sufficient. Management therefore begins to consider how other features of their workplace (strict time schedules, early or late meetings) also affect employees' ability to manage work and family. Based on a review of their human resource policies, Stage II companies move to develop an integrated, holistic approach to work-family needs, including the issue of providing greater time flexibility.

Stage III: Changing the Corporate Culture

In Stage III, companies realize that innovative policies and programs cannot yield their intended effect if they exist within an unsupportive culture. They recognize that supervisors are the key to how their policies and programs are implemented.[8]

A number of forward thinking firms are attempting to change the company culture, making it more family friendly. Johnson & Johnson, for example, even changed its Credo to state that the company was mindful of the effect its policies had on employees' ability to balance work and family.

In order to create this new kind of workplace, some companies have developed a handbook that provides information on the company's work-family programs and they institute training for managers. The latter sensitizes management to the changing nature of the workforce, familiarizes personnel with the company's programs, and guides them in how to manage the types of work-family problems that arise.

Not only is there a broadened internal focus, but Stage III companies often adopt an external focus on improving the supply

and quality of dependent care services. For instance, AT&T has a $10 million negotiated fund to increase the supply and improve the quality of child and elder care programs that serve AT&T employees. IBM has created a $25 million fund to increase the supply and improve the quality of child and elder care services where their employees live and work.

Since 1982, when 600 companies provided assistance with childcare, there has been dramatic growth in the number and variety of options offered by employers. The Families and Work Institute estimates that 5,600 companies currently offer childcare support, representing 13 percent of the companies that hire over 100 employees.

Some Examples of New and Creative Programs

- **IBM Corporation.** In 1989, a midday flex pilot was introduced at two company sites. The first pilot adds one hour of flexibility in addition to the usual lunch period, while the second pilot experiments with a two-hour window of flexibility at lunch time. At other locations, convenience services such as dry cleaning, shoe repair, and take-home foods are offered to employees.
- **Ohio Bell.** Ohio Bell's TeenLine offers consultation, advice, and useful ideas for parents who call in with questions about their teenage children. The counselors are fully licensed local professionals with extensive experience in working with teens and their families.

As of January 1990, Ohio Bell also made a "gradual return to work" option available to all employees on leave. Their family care policy provides a 12-month leave; the employee can come back part-time over a period of three months, working at least 25 hours per week. The leave and gradual return period together are limited to a year.

- **Bruce Industries.** Nevada's largest rural manufacturer has begun a pilot program offering work hours that match children's school schedules—including 9 AM to 2 PM daily schedules, and with off time during school holidays and vacations.
- **Stride Rite Corporation.** An on-site intergenerational center opened in February 1990, and currently cares for 55 children—15 months to 6 years old—and for 24 elders, 60 years and older. The 8,500 square-foot space is divided into two separate wings and connected through a large central area. The program aims to meet the needs of each group through a carefully planned and supervised curriculum fostering regular daily contact between the elders and the children.
- **The Los Angeles Department of Water and Power.** In the fall of 1990, DWP instituted Birth Alert, a pilot beeper program for expectant fathers who work out in the field and may not be easily accessible when childbirth is imminent.
- **McDonnell Douglas Corporation.** Coordinated by McDonnell Douglas, the Homework Control Center operates four evenings per week. Employees, their spouses, and retiree volunteers answer questions about math, chemistry, and the physical sciences for high school and junior high school students in the University City School District in St. Louis County, Missouri.
- **John Hancock Mutual Life.** Kids-to-Go is a program sponsored by John Hancock and Ellis Memorial (a non-profit social agency) that provides activities for children when they have vacations or holidays from school and their parents must work. The program consists of day trips and activities around the Boston area.
- **American Express.** In conjunction with a number of new work-family initiatives, various sites have held Work and Family Events or caregiver fairs to introduce new programs and community services to employees. Tables and booths are set up where employees can sign up for programs, get information, and learn about what the community has to offer.

What is Expected in the Future?

The current recession is not curtailing corporate interest in work-family issues for those companies already involved, although some of them now scrutinize costs more carefully and some are taking a longer time to roll out new programs. The impact of the recession is more deeply felt with the pre-Stage I companies in which the recession is another resistance like equity, liability, or cost.

It is clear, however, that many companies at all stages are beginning to seek work-family programs in a new way. Even in a recession, companies recognize that downturns are short-lived and there is a need for long-term planning. In order to compete, they must attract and retain the best and the brightest employees. Work-family programs are seen as meeting this need.

The growing corporate awareness of the poor quality of childcare nationwide had led some forward-thinking companies to see the link between early education and childcare and to support childcare as an educational investment in the future of this country's workforce. This is the key message of a new Families and Work Institute report, *Education Before School: Investing in Quality Child Care*,[9] written for the Committee for Economic Development.

Another anti-recession argument used by companies to further work-family policies is that employees are really internal customers: unless their own needs are met, employees can't meet the needs of their external customers.

We see the next decade as a time in which work-family supports will spread to smaller and mid-sized companies, and those companies that have already begun to implement programs will work at providing an even more flexible workplace while maintaining or improving productivity. In the process, companies will forge new management strategies, relying on fewer people in middle management. We also expect to see companies link their work-family initiatives to other human resource concerns such as managing diversity and providing career development. In other words, the family-friendly workplace—a dim glimmer of hope when the Family Resource Coalition was founded ten years ago—is slowly becoming mainstream. □

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■ by Dolores Norton

Bernice Weissbourd, founder and President of the Family Resource Coalition's Board of Directors.

Professor Dolores Norton, The School of Social Service Administration at the University of Chicago.

A Conversation with FRC President Bernice Weissbourd

DN: Bernice, tell me about the early days of family support before you started Family Focus. How did some of those ideas get started? How did you personally get interested in the concepts of family support?

BW. Through my experiences workit·g at Head Start in Chicago and in childcare centers in poorer communities, I began to feel very strongly that as much as we were doing for children in their preschool years, it was very often too late. It became clear that it was terribly important to reach children before they were three.

"When America thinks of family support, it thinks of Bernice Weissbourd. Her work at Family Focus, the Family Resource Coalition, and PARENT ACTION has been nothing short of inspirational to scholars and practitioners —indeed to all who care about the well-being of America's families. The nation owes much of the thinking and many of its programs to Bernice's leadership. To her and to the Coalition, I give my thanks and I extend my wishes for decades more of excellent work!"

Edward Zigler
Sterling Professor of Psychology
The Bush Center in Child Development and Social Policy
Yale University

Actually, it was not just a question of reaching children. The issue was reaching their parents. It didn't matter how good we were as teachers; the important things in children's lives were their parents and what was going on for them in the non-school parts of their existence. I felt that we needed to set up a program for parents because by reaching parents we would ultimately make a difference in the lives of the children and that would be a difference that mattered.

DN: Those of us who worked with you, as Family Focus was being planned fifteen years ago, remember using the word "assumptions" in describing the basic principles we envisioned for that first family resource program. What were the original assumptions?

BW: There were several. First, that a parent's feelings about her or himself was absolutely primary to how that parent would relate to the child—that it was really off base to think that you could expect a child to develop a good sense of self and have a feeling of self-confidence and competence when the parent was feeling depressed and ineffectual. We felt that the need to feel competent cut across economic and racial lines, and we wanted to have a program that would build *parents'* capacities.

A second assumption that flows from this is the parents' role in family resource programs. The parent's role is not one in which they attend because you have something to teach them—the traditional relationship between a teacher and a parent where the parents look upon you as the authority. It must be a role in which the program really feels that parent, as the most important person in the child's life, knows the child best, has her/his own set of goals and values, and participates in the program because it offers a new opportunity to be effective as a parent.

DN: That's a key point.

BW: That principle is still key to everything we do.

A third principle was that programs should be based on the culture and traditions of the community. Programs had to function in ways that were responsive to families so that parents were part of setting the program plan, making program policy, and community people were involved in the process as well. Programs really had to reflect the needs, the desires, the hopes, and the competencies of a community. We were pretty good in guessing that programs would be quite different from each other, even though they shared the same goals.

DN: Putting these ideas into action with the first Family Focus models was one thing, but how did the idea of individual family resource programs grow into the notion of an organization for many programs—the Family Resource Coalition?

BW: One thing that surprised me was the number of requests we began to get from people all over the country who wanted to start programs, or from those who had already started programs and wanted to share information. They came like a flood. We had no idea that so much was going on beyond our own locale or that so many people were interested, but there was this sense that an idea emerges out of a need, and people all over had begun to recognize the need.

As a result of these requests, we decided, five years after Family Focus started, to hold a very small conference with a focus on the grassroots exchanges going on with other programs. We invited about a hundred people who had contacted us for one reason or another. And 350 people came. It was amazing!

The end result of this three-day meeting was that an organization formed so people could continue to share their experiences, to learn from each other, and to develop plans to stay in touch. It was a very exciting time.

"Bernice Weissbourd, through her leadership of the Family Resource Coalition, has brought us closer to the day when American families and their children at long last attain their rightful place in our actions as a people. To achieve that goal will be the most fitting tribute to Bernice for her valiant and persistent efforts in behalf of the nation's children and families."

Uri Bronfenbrenner
Jacob Gould Schurman Professor of Human Development and Family Studies and of Psychology
Cornell University

DN: Exciting is right. The Family Resource Coalition today is so much more than a grassroots group. What were the next steps in its development?

BW: Well, about two years after that first conference, Ed Zigler ran a conference for about 100 people at Yale. Ed, who had helped develop Head Start, and Uri Bronfenbrenner at Cornell picked up the idea of family support, which seemed to follow so much from the principles of Head Start.

The Yale conference pulled together a broad spectrum of people—researchers, political people, program people, theoreticians and academicians, and people from the whole social services support arena. Ed Zigler put family support on the map in that sense and focused interest on how it could affect public policy.

DN: Why was that important? Did that make a significant difference in an organization that started out to link people with common professional interests?

BW: Family support's interaction with public policy is critical. Some people tend to look at family support as a program that can "save" communities. But unless people have decent housing, unless they have nutritious food, and unless they have jobs, family support will continue to be a band-aid—a very important one, but it cannot solve all the problems.

We didn't talk about advocacy enough when we started. We did from the very onset say that parents who were feeling competent would also feel empowered, and that has proven more true than we ever thought. But in addition to parents, people working in the whole area of family resource and support programs have become very involved in the policies that make a difference in people's lives. That is a new direction for many professionals who have tended to separate their clinical roles and teaching roles from the policy roles. But in the end, you can't run an effective program without changing the conditions in which people live. You may not be the one to do it—you can't necessarily set up the housing or find jobs—but you can advocate for them.

DN: What are some ways the family resource movement is different today?

BW: It's vastly different in a number of respects.

One is that the family support approach has been taken on by social service agencies, by mental health agencies, and by state systems in an effort to find a way of reaching families that is more effective. There has been a move to take these principles and reorient services toward building family capacities, for example, to start with prevention, to get to problems before they start.

Another thing that is different now is that the family resource movement supports more than the concept of prevention, because that notion in itself reflects a deficit model.

DN: Bernice, you've seen a great deal of growth and change in your ideas. What are some of the most important challenges you see for the future?

BW: What is so astonishing is that the term "family support"—whether family resource programs or family support movement—is on everybody's lips. Although many people are talking about this and looking at it with high expectations, I don't think everybody understands it. Our big challenge is to make sure that as the principles get translated into social service systems, or into schools, or into other settings, that the translations assure quality, that they relate to people in the ways we talk about, and really build on people's capacities. How one implements a family resource program is crucial—and requires more than enthusiasm.

DN: What do you expect in the future? What are your dreams?

BW: Every community would have a family resource center, involving parents during pregnancy and assuring their children a good start in the early years of growth. The family resource center ought to be the baseline for a continuum of services, the final tier of services being those for families in crisis, with all resources coordinated, focused on the family as a whole, and based on trusting, empowering relationships. The entire community, its schools, libraries, recreation centers, parks, transportation, would be concerned with enhancing the healthy development of the family and assisting parents in their childrearing roles, orienting their programs toward meeting family needs. Work environments would be family friendly, valuing the parental responsibilities of their employees.

And this should not be a dream. It's well within our capacities as a nation with remarkable talents to deal with situations we deem to be priorities. It could happen if the nation recognized that the ultimate strength of its leadership depends on the ability of this generation to raise the next.

We know programs work, and are constantly learning more about how they work, and how to make them work better. Yet it is essential that programs are embedded in a society that cares about housing, education, health care, employment—in other words, that cares about the well-being of its families. Our programs and the messages they convey can help shape this new environment, one in which families are valued, and the resources of our nation are mobilized in their behalf. What is required is that our country's commitment to family well-being moves from the glibness of rhetoric to the actions that change reality. □

"Bernice Weissbourd is one of the great leaders who fight for families and children; her capacity for leadership is only matched by the size of her heart. Her compassion and her sensitivity to the issues that besiege families and children today led to the establishment of the Family Resource Coalition only ten years ago. Already, FRC stands as an umbrella for family-focused programs and movements nationally and as a monument to the ability of a small group of dedicated people to establish a significant intervention for hundreds of thousands of parents all across the U.S. The family resource programs that have emerged are models of community support for all families, and they *are making a difference* in the lives of the families they serve and for the future of their children. Bravo!"

T. Berry Brazelton, M.D.
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■ by Frank Farrow

The View from States:

Family Resource Programs and State Policy

Gov. William Donald Schaefer visits one of the state's family support centers in rural Cecil City, Maryland.

The impact of family resource programs on state policy has grown dramatically in the past decade. Ten years ago, most state officials would not have recognized the term "family resource and support services." Today, some of the strongest leadership for these programs is found among state nistrators, state legislators, and stat advocates.

asured by the number of programs or by their share of state budget expenditures, family resource and support (FRS) services remain a small portion of state human services. But a growing number of state leaders see these programs as the cutting edge of a new direction. Their vision is that FRS programs can help lead the way toward more preventive, more comprehensive, and ultimately more effective state responses to families and children.

Sources of State Interest

The urgency behind state governments' new interest in FRS programs has several sources:

- State governments are being called on to respond to the steadily deteriorating situation of many of the nation's families and children. Worse-off than their parents were at the same point in their lives, many young families face the stresses of tough economic times, a highly competitive labor force, and difficult social conditions with a shrinking supply of supports. As the federal government has decreased its attention in this area, governors and state legislatures have assumed new responsibilities for addressing families' concerns.
- State officials are frustrated with traditional services to families and children which are widely viewed as offering too little, too late, and they are ready to try new approaches. Policymakers are heeding the calls for reform in public education, public welfare, child welfare, and mental health services, and are seeking innovative ways to reach troubled families.
- State policymakers have become more interested in preventive approaches as state costs for children and family services continue to rise. FRS services offer a credible method of assisting families *before* crises become unmanageable and lead to family breakdown.
- Finally, state officials' interest in FRS approaches has deepened as the well-being of the nation's children has been defined as an economic issue, not just a social concern. The economic future of the United States depends upon the continuous development of a strong and skilled labor force, and this recognition has broadened the constituency that cares about how children and families are faring. State governments are sensitive to the increased interest of business leaders in preparing children for the future.

Taken together, these factors have led state leaders not only to invest in family resource and support programs, but to view them as first steps toward a genuinely new approach to meeting families' needs.

The Diversity of State Programs

Each state's FRS programs have been shaped by a unique blend of service priorities, funding opportunities, and political leadership. Thus, in some states FRS programs are emerging from the social service system; in others, they are linked with public schools; in still others, they are associated with public health or public welfare services. While most states have begun these programs on a small scale, a few have launched their programs with a broad, statewide mandate. In short, there is no one pattern of program design or implementation. States' initiatives mirror the creativity and diversity that characterize the family resource field as a whole.

The following examples highlight just some of the past decade's innovations in state FRS policy and practice.

- ***Missouri's Parents as Teachers Program,*** administered through the State Department of Education, began in 1985 as a demonstration program that provided new parents with home visits by a trained family support worker. PAT operates in all 543 Missouri school districts, serving 57,000 families (40 percent of all eligible families in the state). As the PAT program model has grown and developed, many jurisdictions have augmented home visits with group activities for parents at school sites.

In order to assure program quality, PAT has emphasized provider training and quality control. The State's training institute develops curricula for use by local programs and itself trains staff each year.

Parents as Teachers was funded at $13 million in FY 1990-91.

- ***Maryland's Family Support Centers*** developed as a public-private partnership to help local communities support young parents. Begun in 1985, this initiative now includes 13 family support centers in all areas of the state. Centers are administered by many different community agencies including schools, a housing authority, a church, a community action agency, a community development corporation, and private social service agencies.

Maryland's initial program model focused on adolescent parents, demonstrating impressive success in reducing unwanted second pregnancies, helping teen mothers return to school, and promoting good health care for their infants. As programs expand in local communities, they usually serve a wider range of young parents.

Maryland's program is administered (on behalf of state government) by Friends of the Family, an intermediary established to combine public with private dollars to fund the local centers, provide training and technical assistance, and monitor program quality.

In FY 1991, Maryland's program is funded by $4 million plus in public and private dollars.

• ***Hawaii's Healthy Start Program*** has grown from a demonstration project in the late 1970s to a statewide system of family support. It is specifically designed to prevent child abuse and neglect as well as to promote positive parenting and achieve optimal child development.

Administered by the State Health Department through its maternal and child health service, Healthy Start includes post-partum screening and assessment (now provided for 60 percent of children in the state); paraprofessional home visits to high-risk families; case management that helps families access resources including linkage to primary health care providers; parent support groups; and community education activities. Local programs are administered by private social service agencies.

According to program administrators, Healthy Start's benefits include increased identification and treatment of developmental delays in children, a reduction in child abuse and neglect among children 0-6, and a reduction in the cost of treating families experiencing domestic violence.

Healthy Start's funding was approximately $3.4 million in FY 1990.

• ***Wisconsin's Family Resource Centers*** are a new program, begun in 1990 under the auspices of the Children's Trust Fund. Eight programs are funded for the first year, with the intent that the program will expand as Trust Fund financing grows.

Local family resource centers will provide parent support activities on a drop-in basis, including recreational and social activities, parent education, and temporary childcare. In addition, structured activities will aim at helping parents develop the skills necessary to avoid abusive or neglectful care of their children.

The Children's Trust Fund has selected the community agencies that will provide services through a competitive RFP process, and will provide training and technical assistance as programs develop.

Funding for the family resource centers is $725,000 over the 1989-91 biennium.

• ***Kentucky's Family Resource and Youth Service Centers*** represent one of the most ambitious new state FRS initiatives. Kentucky's Education Reform Act (KERA) of 1990 authorized support for family resource centers in elementary schools, for youth service centers in middle and high schools, and for all schools that have 20 percent or more of their student population at income levels below the qualifying level for free or reduced price school lunch programs. Approximately 1100 public schools will be eligible for these programs.

Family resource and youth service centers must be located in or near schools and are designed to help build the family and community support that will enable a child to succeed in school.

Core services include access to or provision of childcare, health resources, substance abuse services, and job training programs (for older youth). All centers are required to involve parents in program design and governance, reflect a philosophy of empowering parents, and aggressively coordinate existing community resources.

Kentucky's program is funded for approximately $9 million in FY 1992; the statewide cost of the program is expected to rise to $36 million at full funding.

Future Directions

These examples illustrate the richness of state FRS programs, as well as the momentum that allows existing programs to expand and new programs to be established on a broad scale.

Looking toward the future, what opportunities and challenges face state FRS programs? Three trends seem particularly important.

First, state FRS programs must increase their capacity to document their impact. Current program development has been fueled by state officials' eagerness to try new approaches and by promising evidence from small-scale programs. However, to continue growth in a period when states have severe budget constraints, FRS programs must be able to show evidence that makes a difference. This need not involve elaborate and expensive evaluations, but does require a closer accounting of program participation as well as programs' effect on some indicators of families' health, education status, social functioning, and healthy child development.

Second, state FRS programs will have to give increased attention to how they relate to existing state service systems. One of these programs' great strengths is that they are not viewed as "one more categorical program" but are seen as a new, more responsive, more flexible and comprehensive way to meet families' needs. FRS programs should build on this strength by exploring how they can best function in partnership with other public and private human services.

Finally, the biggest challenge for state level proponents of family resource programs is to instill FRS principles and values more broadly in state human services. The power of FRS programs comes from their embodiment of the principles of family empowerment, parental involvement, early support, and flexible response to family needs. These principles can be very effective if applied to current state services, and for that reason they are at the heart of most state service reform movements. The long-term goal for state FRS programs is to expand the scope of these principles until they genuinely form the basis for states' and communities' response to all families and children. □

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Federal Legislation for Family Resource Programs

A milestone in the development of family resource programs occurred as part of the Human Services Reauthorization Act of 1990 (H.R. 4151). This legislation authorized, for the first time, a federal grant program to assist states to establish networks of local family resource and support programs that enhance families' abilities to stay together and thrive.

Grants would be awarded by the Department of Health and Human Services to states on a competitive basis. Funding would range from $1.5 million per year for small states to $6 million for large states. At least 90 percent of funding to states must be used to support local programs.

The program was authorized for $30 million nationally in its first year. However, because the program was added to the reauthorization bill late in the legislative process, it did not receive an appropriation.

Thus, a legislative framework for federal funding for family resource programs is in place. *Now we must work to obtain the funds!* For more information about the bill, contact staff at the Coalition (312/341-0900). □

■ by Douglas R. Powell

Staff Development in Family Resource Programs

Illustrations: Gail Lynn Goldberg

Training

Issues related to staff training are likely to occupy a prominent place on the agenda of family resource programs for the next decade. No other topic comes closer to the heart and soul of these programs than personnel preparation. The essence of program services rests squarely with staff behaviors and attitudes.

Reasons for heightened attention to staff training reflect the developmental status of the field. The rapid expansion of family resource programs, including adaptations or replications of model programs, leads to a series of difficult questions about the types of pre- and in-service training that are necessary for staff members to pursue: What educational content and methods best prepare and support workers in a family resource program? What minimum staff education requirements should be included in policies governing family resource programs?

Increasingly there is recognition of staff development as the foundation of quality in family resource programs. Part of this recognition is fueled by growing awareness of the link between staff training and the quality of early childhood programs.[1] Concerns about the quality of America's early childhood personnel contribute to a generalized concern about staff training in the human services.

Recent Developments

The field of family resource programs has numerous experiences to draw upon in formulating policies and practices related to personnel preparation. These include the staff training requirements and components of local and state initiatives, professional guidelines regarding the structure and content of training, and the growing number of university courses and study programs focused on family resource programs.

Generally, state-funded family resource programs have been launched with minimal help for training staff in local programs, and as a result state initiatives have had to be creative in securing technical assistance in this area. Methods include establishing regional networks of programs, provisions for older programs to help newer ones, and the encouragement of staff participation in local, state, and national conferences.[2]

Minnesota's Early Childhood Family Education (ECFE) program has one of the most well-developed staff credentialing systems. The 1984 Minnesota Statute requires all teachers who work with parents and children in ECFE programs to be licensed teachers. For example, licensure as a parent educator in a family education program requires a baccalaureate degree and satisfactory completion of a minimum of 24 quarter hours of academic credit or the equivalent distributed in the following areas: child development (6 hours), family development (6 hours), adult education (9 hours), and a practicum student teaching, internship, or experience in adult education (3 hours). Not surprisingly, colleges and universities have responded with an array of relevant courses for persons working in family education programs.

Yet to be gathered and synthesized is information on how local community-based programs handle staff training issues. Especially beneficial to the field are data on how programs support lay persons who assume staff positions in family support programs. The experiences of programs such as the Child Survival/Fair Start initiative point to the powerful influence of staff orientations and ideologies on the nature of program services.[3]

Another important information source to be tapped is the training wisdom of the nation's Cooperative Extension Service, which for years has generated exemplary parent programs and conducted training for parent educators and family life educators. Also important to tap is the collective experience of ...odel programs that provide training and technical assistance for local adaptations. Key questions to be analyzed here are how well centralized training experiences "travel" to the home site and the effectiveness of training one or more core staff who in turn serve as trainers for other staff.

Recently there has been movement toward the delineation of essential components of training programs for workers in family-based programs. One such effort is the Training Approaches for Skills and Knowledge (TASK) Project of the National Center for Clinical Infant Programs. The TASK project focused on training practitioners who work with infants, toddlers, and their families, and was guided by the expertise and insight of nine professionals and parents with many years of training and experience. The project has issued recommendations that define competent infant/family personnel and set forth the nature of training experiences that foster competence, including work at the pre-and in-service levels.[4]

Professional groups are also taking an active role in generating guidelines for the requirements and training of staff in family resource programs. Several years ago the Family Resource Coalition established a task force to examine a range of training issues, and the National Council on Family Relations has developed a certificate for family life educators.

Other important training resources are courses and study programs offered by colleges and universities. There are well-established child development and family studies programs at land grant universities throughout the country that for years have prepared individuals to work with families in a variety of settings. Social work programs also have a long history of providing professional education that supports staff in family-oriented programs. Recently, new courses and entire study programs focused specifically on family resource and support programs have been initiated: For example, a master's degree program in family support has been instituted by Nova University in Fort Lauderdale, Florida.

The Years Ahead

Training issues will be in the forefront of the family resource movement in the years ahead. There will be intensified calls for useful statements from credible professional groups on the essential competencies of staff in family resource and support programs. Serious questions will be asked about the appropriate content and methods of programs that successfully foster staff competence.

Fortunately, the field has a growing base of professional wisdom and training experience to draw upon as it addresses complex and often controversial training issues. Unfortunately, much of the existing professional wisdom and experience has not been shared or pooled in a form that is easily accessible. The challenge is to critically assemble the current knowledge base in a way that points to exemplary practices and needed directions toward a collective understanding of how best to support the growth of individuals who support America's families. □

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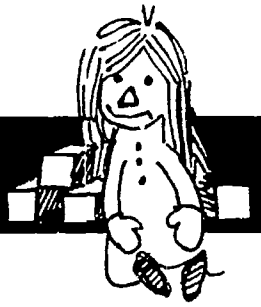
■ by Carl J. Dunst



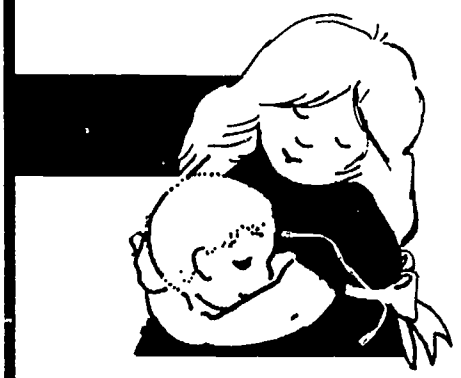
Evaluation

Evaluating Family Resource Programs

Zigler and Friedman commented that the "survival of family (resource) programs...is dependent in part on having information about their efficacy."[1] Yet as Powell has noted, "using conventional research practices with community-based family (resource) programs is akin to putting a square peg in a round hole."[2,3]

The purposes of this article are to (a) briefly note what we know about the "evaluation status" of family resource programs, and (b) list some but certainly not all of the challenges that face those who seek to establish the benefits of these programs. Much of the content of this article derives from the thoughts and writings of scholars in the parent and family support program movement.[4-6]

A good starting point in making sense of the family resource program evaluation literature is to define what we mean by family resource programs. Family resource programs are community-based social action initiatives that aim to strengthen family functioning by promoting the flow of supports and resources in ways that enable families to help themselves and their children.[7] These programs



differ conceptually, organizationally, and procedurally from other parenting programs (e.g., Consortium for Longitudinal Studies[8]) despite their apparent similarities.[9] These differences are to a large degree reflected by the fact that family resource programs (a) are based upon unique assumptions about the "best" ways to support and strengthen families,[10] and (b) provide and promote the flow of resources and supports in an individualized, responsive rather than prescriptive manner.[3]

Evaluation and Evaluative Research

A second step in making sense of the family resource program evaluation literature is to briefly define and illustrate what we mean by evaluation and evaluative research. Evaluation is a "process of delineating, obtaining, and providing useful information for judging decision alternatives."[11] Evaluation is a multifaceted, multi-level, multi-purpose endeavor that involves the gathering of diverse sets of information so as to have empirical data about various aspects of a program (who was served, how often, progress achieved, etc.) in order to make informed decisions about continuing, modifying, etc., a program.[12,13]

Evaluative research is the "use of the scientific method for collecting data concerning the degree to which some specified activity achieves some desired effect."[14] Evaluative research concerns itself specifically with questions of effectiveness and efficacy, attempting to establish how a program (the independent variable) produces changes in intervening events, which in turn influence the behavior of program participants (dependent variable) while controlling for competing explanations for observed effects.[15] For example, the evaluation of a family resource program might ascertain whether and how a particular type of informational support (independent variable) affects the ability of families to mobilize resources (intervening variable), which in turn positively influences their sense of competence and well-being (dependent variable).

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What We Know

There is a growing and burgeoning body of evaluative evidence documenting the need for operationalization and efficacy of family resource programs. There is also mounting concern about the need for different types of research to answer unresolved evaluative questions.

There is general consensus that we know at least the following:

- There is now agreement that the goals of family resource programs are to empower and strengthen families so that children and parents optimally benefit from provision of support and resources.[16]
- Family resource programs are predominantly family-oriented as opposed to child-oriented,[17] and are consumer-driven rather than professionally-driven programs.[2,3]
- Despite the fact that family resource programs share common beliefs and assumptions, these programs are quite diverse in who they serve, what they do, and how supports and resources are provided to families.[3,16,18]
- Empirical evidence to support the contention that family resource programs produce positive changes among program participants comes from different but corroborative lines of research.[2,16] What we don't know with certainty is how much of the changes can be directly attributed to the efforts of family resource programs.
- Most of the programs claim to use ecological theories as their conceptual underpinnings. For the most part, however, family resource programs use "loose" theoretical frameworks that make it almost impossible to know with any certainty the causal pathways that exert the positive influences that are found among program participants.

What We Need to Know

A number of family resource program scholars have indicated a need for at least the following as part of the further evaluation of these programs:

- We need different types of studies that document different aspects of program implementation[19] (e.g., we need to know more about how and whether the principles of family resource programs relate to program practices).
- We need studies that examine the relationship between program implementation variables and both intervening and outcome measures.[2,18]
- We need more explanatory case study research[20] that sheds light on the processes of program implementation, and how different processes produce similar or different results.
- We need more outcome evaluation studies of family resource programs that longitudinally establish patterns and changes in different aspects of child, parent, and family functioning.[18]
- We need to make a shift away from using only or primarily negative measures of functioning (e.g., stress) toward use of more positive behavior indicators (e.g., well-being) as outcome measures in these evaluations.[7]
- We need more theory-driven, explanatory studies that specifically examine the relationship between and pathways involved in what programs do and what effects are expected and observed.[2]
- We need, as part of the studies described above, more investigations that examine the interactions between program variables and family variables, and how interactions influence outcomes.[2]
- We need to move beyond the use of traditional research methodologies toward use of alternative methodologies if we are ever to adequately document program efficacy.[20,21,22]

Conclusion

The contemporary family resource program movement has a short but rich history. Surprisingly, we already know quite a bit about these programs; no doubt because evaluators have learned from previous efforts at evaluating social action programs. Some of the challenges that face those of us who are interested in further evaluation are briefly reported in this article. □

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Photo: Archie Lieberman

by Sharon L. Kagan

America's Family Support Movement

—Today's Accomplishments —Tomorrow's Challenges

By any account, a decade is a milestone —a time for reflecting on what has been and what might be, for looking retrospectively and prospectively. For those involved in the family support movement, this has indeed been a miraculous decade. Who would have ever believed that a small grassroots conference would have blossomed into a movement thousands strong? Who could have predicted that in one short decade a field replete with principles, programs, evaluations, national and state associations, publications, and conferences would have emerged? Indeed, family support has had a miraculous ten years—a childhood of unparalleled accomplishment.

In fairness, the burgeoning of family support during the 1980s did not happen in isolation: it was hastened by numerous important socio-political forces. Early in the decade, demographics changed drastically as a result of the flood of mothers with young children into the paid labor force, the feminization of poverty, and the increased numbers of youngsters in poverty—all populations ripe for family support. Data popularized during the decade bespoke the importance of early intervention and prevention, echoing family support's fundamental precepts. Concern about the ineffectiveness of America's human service institutions ushered in countless reforms—school restructuring, collaboration, and case management—simultaneously, nourishing the zeitgeist for family support.

By decade's end, family support's fundamental principles—a focus on prevention and a recognition of the importance of the early years, an ecological approach to service delivery, a developmental view of parents, and a recognition of the universal need for support—hallmarked progressive thinking that transcended disciplines and sectors. Corporations became family friendly; state legislatures voted "yes" on family support bills, hoping that their investments of dollars and will would ameliorate a faltering social service system; conventional state bureaucracies infused family support concepts into mainstream services; and even the federal government, so long ambivalent about its rightful role regarding families, saw fit to craft legislation fostering family support.

In one short decade family support not only coalesced a disjointed array of grassroots programs, but became a fully respected, politically legitimated social movement. As no other family effort in history, family support captured America's heart, forever reshaping American government's relationship with families.

Inevitably, any new social form—and particularly one this dramatic—is appropriately subjected to skeptical queries. Readers of this article will recall the onslaught of concerns: How do we know family support works? How can such a benign intervention impact a society with increasingly complex social needs? How can a movement born and bred in intimate, flexible, and family-responsive settings be successfully transplanted to massive, hierarchical, rigid, social service bureaucracies?

Though not always able to render definitive answers to these provocative questions, pioneers moved on. Family support programs, existing initially and primarily in the private sector, were launched in the public sector—in childcare centers, in schools, in community health programs. Sometimes they began as actual family support programs and sometimes family support principles were woven into the fabric of extant efforts. Sometimes they were visioned as agents of institutional reform and sometimes as separate appendages, discrete from the life of the institution. Often the programs attracted considerable fanfare, commandeering public-private support and attendant press coverage. But many also began as the quiet quest of a lone provider, anxious to redress decades of systemic pain. Sometimes, in the very act of doing, the hard questions were addressed: sometimes they were reframed; and sometimes they went unanswered.

With this history—a mix of stellar accomplishments and unanswered questions—where can and should family support go in its second decade? What should be its priorities? Not unlike a child moving into adolescence, family support must reaffirm its values and solidify its identity in light of past accomplishments. But we also need to understand that family support—while adhering to its fundamental principles—is not the same as it was a decade ago. It is spreading its wings, moving agilely between public and private sectors, between small isolated programs and large institutions, between programs and approaches. Such change demands that we augment our analytic repertoire by tackling the challenges occasioned by our growth and diversity. We need to discern what the ultimate federal role in family support should be; how family support can reconcile universalistic and particularistic missions, grassroots and bureaucratic approaches to service delivery; how we define and plan for quality given the diversity of family support efforts? In short, the challenge of our second decade is not only expanding family support, but discerning how the entire system can be most effective. It is the decade for an honest taking stock of what we are and what we wish to become.

Tomorrow's Challenges

Taking stock has two dimensions: process and content. From the process perspective, any useful analysis of tomorrow's challenges must first chronicle and assess gains of the past; second, vision broadly and creatively for the future; and third, convert that vision into realistic strategies that will permanently undergird family support in our nation. With support growing at the national and state level, with increased investments in family support predicted, and with programs being fostered in our mainstream institutions, the time is opportune for such stock taking. To that end, formal "futuring" mechanisms should be put in place, either through a national panel, working conferences, and/or a series of commissioned papers.

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Though the present fertility of family support suggests numerous contexts for deliberation, three umbrella issues warrant attention as we strive to maximize practice and policy effectiveness: (1) defining and accessing quality services; (2) structuring the transition from a program to a systems orientation while maintaining quality; and (3) building, sharing, and applying knowledge.

● Defining and Accessing Quality Services

Throughout the nation, the words "family support" have been interpreted in a myriad of ways. In some circles, family support is a synonym for welfare reform; in others the words designate a particular program; in still other circles, family support refers to the basic set of principles that undergirds any programmatic approach to family development. Such disparity in nomenclature reflects broad public confusion about family support's meanings and missions. Difficult now, such confusion will increase as interest intensifies in family support as a functional preventive intervention to an array of social problems. It is incumbent upon the family support movement to craft clear comprehensible language that effectively communicates its unique program design, principles, and philosophy.

In addition to clarifying terms, this second decade demands that we clarify standards of program quality. Presently, though thousands of programs strong, there are no commonly accepted indices or guidelines by which to vision or gauge service quality. Such quality indices, while difficult to develop because of the diversity of family support endeavors, would help define the profession and would be benchmarks for self-evaluation and improvement.

Moreover, if indices of program quality were more explicit, training efforts, irrespective of disciplines, could more effectively prepare people to work in the field. Presently, there is no single entry avenue or discipline, no single standard for training, and no consistent credential required. In the absence of such, staff competence varies dramatically from setting to setting. While the field may indeed decide not to impose a uniform credential or entry discipline, guidelines regarding essential training domains or minimum competencies that transcend disciplines and are geared to indices of program quality are a necessity for the development and improvement of quality in the field.

Beyond defining and enhancing quality, family support efforts must be more accessible. Explicitly, this means that there should be more family support programs and wider infusion of family support principles throughout community institutions—schools, churches, childcare, health and social service agencies. Further, communities must be empowered to adopt a family support "think"—a mindset that accords real importance to families and to the collective community role in their development and empowerment. Rather than another add-on program, supporting families must be understood as the critical element in rebuilding the social infrastructure of this nation.

Implicitly, such vision of family support is enmeshed with a clear commitment to revivifying the role of families within programs, institutions, and communities. The family support movement must not just access more programs or services, but must access a sense of power and self-determination that will enable all parents to thrive in an increasingly stressful society. Family support programs must crisply articulate this commitment and model it in every effort. Parents need to be leaders in creating, planning, and tailoring efforts; their voices must be heard and coalesced. Through its work in founding PARENT ACTION, a national organization for parents, the family support movement and its national organization, the Family Resource Coalition, have taken important steps in that direction. Second decade strategies must fortify these fundamental commitments.

● Structuring the Transition from a Program to a Systems Orientation

During the first decade, family support focused primarily on promulgating free-standing programs, assuming that they generally adhered to a set of beliefs. As we begin the second decade, two changes are occurring: First, programs are becoming more aligned with existing institutions, often large and highly regulated bureaucracies. Second, principles rather than

PARENT ACTION — Putting Parents in Charge

Happy 10th anniversary to the Family Resource Coalition!

In the two years since PARENT ACTION was introduced at the second national FRC conference, we have experienced enormous interest from parents, from the media, from policymakers and—most gratifyingly—an outpouring of help and moral support from Coalition members and friends. As with any new organization, we have also experienced our share of growing pains. But now we stand on the brink of a new social movement, a movement that will put parents in charge, a movement that will empower parents to demand strong, responsive government, community, and work place systems that meet the changing needs of *today's* families.

PARENT ACTION believes that parenting is the most important job we'll ever have. Our goal is to once again get America's parents to believe—and act—upon this. During the past twenty years, parents have been devalued, diminished, and disrespected. Society has adopted a bias that families should be self-sufficient; if they are not they deserve to suffer. Is it any wonder young families are on the bottom rung of society's ladder? Is it any wonder policymakers and business leaders mouth support for the family, but rarely translate these verbal platitudes into positive action?

PARENT ACTION intends to use every available avenue to increase parents' self-esteem and turn a reawakened pride into positive action. PARENT ACTION intends to show that parents are an inclusive constituency with common bonds bridging political and sectarian differences. Parents have the power to take control over the future of families: *they* can and must organize for their individual family and for all families.

Over the next eighteen months, PARENT ACTION intends to:

- launch an intensive campaign through the media, coalition building, and personal outreach to enhance the image of parents and to convince parents that by joining together they can make a difference
- build a national membership base
- become a national network for support and information. We will work to link our members together, inform them of emerging issues, and ask them for their views. We will share these insights with policymakers, business leaders, and the media. WE WILL PROVIDE A VEHICLE FOR PARENTS TO MAKE THEIR VOICES HEARD. □

programs are being adopted. Though very different strategically, both approaches pose important questions regarding how we maintain quality and fidelity to our original beliefs.

For example, because family support was bred in primarily informal settings, without hierarchical staff pyramids or stringent entry requirements, flexibility prevailed. Dependency on staff was addressed and held to a minimum. However, as family support programs edge their way into institutions where traditionally there has been no opportunity for client-professional reciprocity and where dependency has been fostered, new challenges emerge. How will reciprocal relationships be negotiated? How will role flexibility among staff be accommodated? How will parents' needs for program variability be handled in settings used to delivering cookie-cutter services? To avoid the trauma of attempting to fit a square peg in a round hole, advocates of family support will need to reconsider their vision of quality and work to tenaciously preserve it as family support matures in America's institutions.

Second, and simultaneously, we must recognize that family support is now being fully recognized as more than a set of principles or an effective program; it is visioned as a tool of institutional reform, a lever to realign fundamental roles, processes, and relationships. Consequently, advocates of family support need to be astute students of organizational change, willing to tailor principles without diluting them, understanding that implementing systems change may necessitate different skills, strategies, and timelines than those conventionally associated with implementing isolated programs. While we need to assure that stringent regulations and rigid bureaucratic roles do not quash the vitality of family support as we know it, we also need to be sufficiently flexible to accommodate the inevitable symbiotic change that will occur as institutions adapt family support principles.

● Building, Sharing, and Applying Knowledge

Second decade visioning must come to grips with the exciting reality that family support is growing up and becoming a legitimately accepted component of the nation's preventive strategies. Despite its popularity and accomplishments, there is much we do not know about family support and much we know remains underutilized. Second decade work must focus on both the generation of new knowledge from research and practice, and its broader application.

To date, the field is replete with exciting efforts that have much to contribute to emerging family support programs. Family support programs do understand how to empower parents, how to staff for flexible programming, and how to articulate a truly non-deficit, non-hierarchical approach to staffing. They understand how to commandeer limited resources, how to create community support, and how to build state networks. These lessons from our nation's pioneers need to be accessed and utilized more widely. Next decade efforts of the Family Resource Coalition must focus on enhancing its already important resource-sharing efforts by strengthening its publication, membership service, training, technical assistance, and networking capacities. This essential link will enable the field to learn from itself and to grow.

Beyond sharing what we know from practice and research, we also need to learn more about the conditions under which and the populations for which family support works best. Program outcome evaluations, whether conducted by program staff or researchers, need to flourish. Further, the information they yield needs to be aggregated and accessed so that it is usable by practitioners in a wide array of settings and communities. Longitudinal studies must be planned and implemented in a large number of programs so that we have more robust data on long-term effects.

And as family support grows, we will need to assess effects not only for children and families, but for institutions and communities. As important, we should be fostering process evaluations so that our knowledge of effective strategies and contexts is enhanced. How do intergenerational efforts make a difference? How does context influence process? How does mandate alter outcome? In short, while we know family support makes a difference, we need to be more precise in discerning for whom, under what conditions, and over what period of time.

The challenge for the next decade is building on strength. We know that—but are not quite sure how—family support will burgeon in the 1990s. We know that the Family Resource Coalition can and will provide the leadership to be sure we stay on track, by defining the issues, asking the hard questions, and pressing for new ideas and new resources. To the Coalition, we owe thanks; in it, we place our hopes.

But we also know that nurturing quality, empowering families, and infusing family support principles into institutions is hard work. It demands a society that values parenting and a political system concerned with the importance of supporting families. To that end, those concerned about family and societal well-being—and those who understand how intimately they are connected—must vigilantly rededicate themselves and their work. Never has the opportunity been more ripe, nor our collective work more needed. □

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The Family Resource Coalition's mission is to build support and resources within communities that strengthen and empower families, enhance the capacities of parents, and foster the optimal development of children and youth. This national Coalition provides leadership by developing resources for programs, by affecting public policies, and by increasing the public understanding of and commitment to families.

The Coalition represents more than 2500 family resource programs and assists thousands of people throughout the United States and Canada who work with programs and families:

- by developing a national resource center on family resource programs and continually updating and reviewing information to aid program providers and parents
- by advocating on issues that affect families at local, state, and federal levels
- through consulting and training services for state and local governments, schools, and other agencies in the process of integrating family-focused, prevention principles into their systems
- by publishing books, guides, reports, and periodicals on practical as well as cutting-edge work in the family resource field
- by sponsoring national and regional conferences, establishing state networks, and assisting in the creation of affinity groups
- by providing technical assistance on program development for FRC members. □

FAMILY
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