

# Children's Voice

VOLUME 16, NO. 4

CHILD WELFARE LEAGUE OF AMERICA

JULY/AUGUST 2007

## ***In This Issue***

- **Child Welfare and Technology**
- **The Challenge of Serving New Americans**
- **Lead: Poisonous Predator**
- **Developing More Effective Supervisors**

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The Child Welfare League of America is the nation's oldest and largest membership-based child welfare organization. We are committed to engaging people everywhere in promoting the well-being of children, youth, and their families and protecting every child from harm.

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# Children's Voice

JULY/AUGUST 2007

VOLUME 16, NUMBER 4

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Easing immigrant fears. Contra Costa County, California.

# Executive

## DIRECTIONS

I have been on the job for three months now, and most of that time, I have been listening to the voices of our members, volunteers, and donors. I am deeply appreciative of the time people have been willing to share with me during these important listening sessions.

The meetings have given me the opportunity to hear first-hand about the challenges and opportunities facing our system and what you see as the League's role is in helping its members do an even better job of improving the life circumstances of children and families.

Halfway through the listening sessions, I saw clear patterns emerging. One of the most consistent themes is that all of you are dealing with an incredible level of change among the children, families, and communities you are serving, and in the nature and level of resources you have to provide these services.

Feature articles in this issue of *Children's Voice* touch on each of these themes. In "Child Welfare and the Challenge of New Americans," we learn about one of the many changes affecting families in this country and the challenges to our service delivery model—an increasing number of the children and families we serve are immigrants. As the article points out, the Latino population alone has grown 61% since 1990. In many cities, child welfare case managers are addressing the needs of people from as many as 20 different countries.

Despite society's changing demographics, child welfare practitioners often are unfamiliar with state and federal policies affecting immigrant children and families and are also affected by their inexperience dealing with people from so many different cultures and speaking so many different languages.

"Child Welfare and Technology" touches on how child welfare agencies need to increase their confidence and investment in new technologies that will make our organizations more efficient and improve the lives of workers and their clients. The innovative use of technology is one of

the many ways our members can respond to the changes we face as a system.

Information about national partnerships that address both of these issues is the bright side of these articles. A new organization, Stewards of Change, along with the Yale School of Management, is bringing together a team of business, technology, and child welfare leaders to explore better ways to apply emerging technologies to child welfare management and practice. To work on strong child welfare responses to migration issues, leading organizations in child welfare, including CWLA, have formed the Migration and Child Welfare National Network. I commend all of the agencies, organizations, and businesses involved in these efforts. We face these challenges collectively; there is no need to face them alone.

What I've learned, very importantly, from the listening sessions is the huge amount of expertise, knowledge, innovation, and just sheer persistence that exists among our members as you find ways to respond to challenges and opportunities and to better serve children and families. We want to hear more about the successful practices of our members and our friends, and we want to find additional ways of making sure we do even more to share these successes. I look forward to continuing to listen and learn all I can from you, with the objective of increasing the value of CWLA to its members and improving the life chances of all children.



Christine James-Brown

Christine James-Brown

# Give Gifts That Keep On Giving

All proceeds from the sale of these items support CWLA's efforts to serve more than 9 million vulnerable children and their families. Shop our online catalog ([www.cwla.org/giftables](http://www.cwla.org/giftables)) for other adorable gifts and charms.



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**CALL FOR NOMINATIONS**

# Serena Merck Memorial Awards

The John Merck Fund, in association with the National Association for the Dually Diagnosed, will be honoring two individuals, each with a \$5,000 cash award and plaque. These awards will be presented at the NADD 24th Annual Conference to be held in Atlanta, GA, October 24–26, 2007. The selected candidates' travel expenses to the conference will also be covered.

The John Merck Fund has established these two major, national awards to honor Serena Merck's long-standing commitment to this field, and to call attention to the invaluable role individuals play in it.

## I. The Serena Merck Direct Service Memorial Award for Innovation and Dedication in Practice

**Purpose:** The Serena Merck Direct Service Memorial Award is given annually to an exceptional individual who has demonstrated long-term, selfless dedication and compassion in the care of or service to children who have developmental disabilities and significant mental health needs. Mrs. Merck recognized the critical importance of what quality day-to-day direct care provided by committed individuals can make to children with cognitive and behavioral disabilities.

**Criteria for Selection:**

- A paraprofessional or volunteer who provides direct care services for children who have mental retardation and mental health needs.
- An individual who has demonstrated long-standing commitment and innovative care that have positively affected the quality of life and/or life opportunities for individuals.
- An individual who, in his or her position, would not typically be recognized for the quality of his or her work.

## II. The Serena Merck Leadership Memorial Award

**Purpose:** The Serena Merck Leadership Memorial Award is given annually to

a person whose proven leadership and guidance have resulted in the significant improvement of quality of life for persons with developmental disabilities and mental health needs. This prestigious award, which was established in 2005, recognizes and honors an individual who has demonstrated outstanding service in the field of dual diagnosis.

**Criteria for Selection:**

- A professional who has demonstrated outstanding leadership in the provision of services to individuals who have mental retardation and mental health needs.
- An individual whose contributions have been recognized at the city, county, or state level.

**Submission Guidelines for both awards:** Organizational entities or individuals may nominate more than one prospective awardee. No self nominations are acceptable. An individual may not be nominated for both awards at the same time.

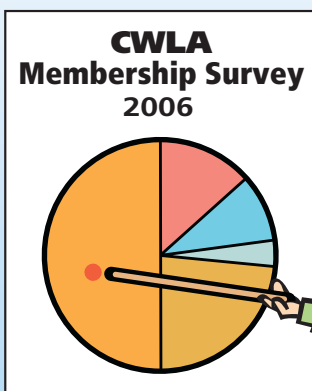
Please indicate which award the individual is nominated for and include a 300-word summary of the reason the candidate is nominated, length of service in the field, and a description of the person's impact on individuals with mental retardation and mental health needs. Two to three accompanying letters of reference from individuals qualified to evaluate the candidate's suitability for the award, as well as contact information for the nominee, should also be provided.

*Nominations should be postmarked by SEPTEMBER 1, 2007, and mailed to:*

Mr. Whitney Hatch & Ms. Dinah Buechner-Vischer, Co-Chairs, The John Merck Fund, 47 Winter Street, 7th Floor, Boston, MA 02108  
For general inquiries, email Nancy Stockford at [rstockfivd@jmfund.org](mailto:rstockfivd@jmfund.org)

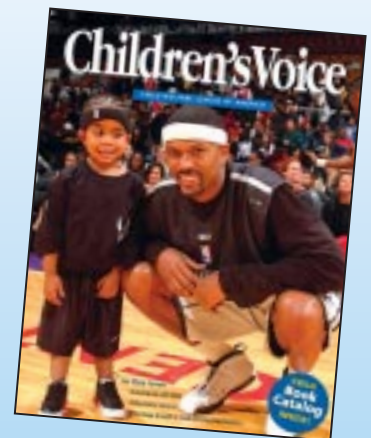
In a recent survey, CWLA members rated the bimonthly magazine *Children's Voice* as one of the top benefits of membership in the League.

**Now, CWLA is making this member benefit even better!**



Simply log onto CWLA's members-only website—[www.cwla.org/membersonly](http://www.cwla.org/membersonly).

Member agencies can sign up to receive as many copies of *Children's Voice* as they wish. And copies can be mailed directly to your staff, senior management, board, volunteers, or others who work directly with your agency.



Your member number and password are necessary to log onto the members-only site. Links on the log-in screen allow members to request that information be e-mailed to them. Once logged in, scroll down to "Administrative" and click on "Children's Voice Address." You can add as many names and addresses as you like.

**Not a CWLA member? See the ad on page 31 for a special offer on paid subscriptions.**

# Agency Briefs

## Keeping the Ties that Bond Siblings

When child welfare staff in the Oklahoma Department of Human Services (OKDHS), Children and Family Services Division, view a training video highlighting the lives of adults who were separated from their siblings as children through adoption, it's hard for the staff to hold back their tears.

Through emotionally charged interviews with youth and adults in Oklahoma who have been adopted, the video—*The Sibling Connection: Keeping Brothers and Sisters Together Through Adoption*, produced by OKDHS through a partnership with the University of Oklahoma—emphasizes the importance of sibling connections, and serves as a reminder for staff to think about keeping siblings together when seeking temporary or permanent placements for kids in care.

“Even though child welfare workers generally believe that placing siblings together is best practice, sibling placement issues are frequently put on a back burner due to the pressures and competing priorities workers face on a daily basis,” says Roland St. John, Programs Field Representative for the Children and Families Services Division.

Over the last several years, OKDHS has revised its policies and training practices to make sibling placements a priority. Doing so results in a win-win situation for the children and the child welfare staff, St. John points out—maintaining a connection to siblings is one less loss children have to deal with, and placing siblings in the same home cuts down on the number of visits workers have to conduct.

In 1995, when OKDHS implemented its Statewide Automated Child Welfare Information System—known as KIDS—which began tracking and generating automated reports on worker visits, the large number of siblings placed in separate homes became apparent.

“Having the visit information listed on paper showed that separation was not only hard on the children, it resulted in extra work for child welfare workers,” St. John says. “Instead of scheduling one visit to see all the children on one case, workers had to schedule multiple visits. This involved coordinating with various foster parents, driving to separate placements, and documenting multiple visits in KIDS.”

On any given day, about 12,000 children are within OKDHS custody. About 9,000 are part of sibling groups. In 2004, 48% of these children were placed in homes with their siblings. OKDHS is working to raise that number and is beginning to make headway. As of March 2007, 55% of siblings in care were placed together.

“Oklahoma is one of the states that has recognized the critical importance of the sibling relationship and sibling ties,” says CWLA Director of Foster Care Millicent Williams. “During the often traumatic events children may experience upon placement

in foster care, the sibling connection may be the only thing that can ease the transition for them.”

In addition to showing the video, OKDHS has designated St. John to help minimize sibling separations by tracking sibling data within the system, identifying separated siblings, consulting with field staff about these separated siblings, and supporting efforts to reunify brothers and sisters.

OKDHS also established a resource recruitment committee that meets monthly to develop targeted recruitment marketing strategies, such as brochures, videos, and public service



announcements for television and radio that support a variety of placements, including those for sibling groups.

In addition, recognizing that children placed with relatives increases the likelihood of siblings staying together, as well as helping maintain children's ties to their culture and kin, OKDHS implemented its Diligent Search program in 2005 in an effort to better locate relatives of children in custody. Workers are trained how to seek information from family and how to search for people using agency records and public information available on the Internet. The agency also has contracted with a search firm for help locating records on family members that may not be publicly available.

Along these same lines, the state's staff for both child welfare and child support have been working together to develop an interface that will allow the two divisions to share relevant information about common clients. Doing so can help identify absent parents when there is an open child support case for a child welfare client.

OKDHS plans to expand its sibling connections work by training more field staff on the Diligent Search program and increasing efforts to locate family members for children who have been in OKDHS custody for an extended amount of time.

For copies of *The Sibling Connection: Keeping Brothers and Sisters Together Through Adoption*, while supplies last, contact St. John at 918/588-1738 or [Roland.St.John@okdhs.org](mailto:Roland.St.John@okdhs.org).

# National

## NEWS ROUNDUP

### INDIANA

The Indiana State Child Fatality Review Team—an unfunded, all-volunteer unit—issued a report earlier this year calling for better cooperation among public agencies and more consistency in the investigation and tracking of deaths.

The independent team closely examined 57 child abuse and neglect deaths identified by the Department of Child Services in the state's 2005 fiscal year. The team's report recommended ways to address abuse and neglect deaths, as well as deaths from accidents, including drowning, improper use of car seats, and unsafe sleeping situations.

“Until we improve the way all child deaths are investigated and reviewed, we'll never truly understand why kids are dying, or what can be done to save them,” Antoinette Laskey, a forensic pediatrician who leads the state team, told the *Indianapolis Star*.

National statistics show Indiana has the country's highest per capita rate of child abuse and neglect deaths, and it leads the nation in preventable deaths among children younger than 1 year, according to the *Star*.

In its report, the Child Fatality Review Team focuses on four areas where prevention could help in deaths like the 57 they examined—blunt-force head trauma, drowning, unsafe sleeping, and motor vehicle accidents.

Most abuse deaths studied in the report were due to blunt-force head trauma—17 in all—and the report stressed, “It is never acceptable to shake a baby.” Providing certified flotation devices for children playing around water, and vigilant adult supervision, could have prevented the seven drowning deaths in 2005, the report noted. Regarding the deaths due to unsafe sleeping, many could have been prevented if the baby had been sleeping in a crib, not with an adult, according to the report. And to address traffic accident deaths, the team urged the use of correctly installed car seats at all times.

### IOWA

Governor Chet Culver (D) signed the state's School Anti-Bullying and Anti-Harassment Act into law last March, outlawing bullying, including harassment through e-mail and text messages, in all public schools and accredited private schools.

The new law requires schools to have procedures in place by September 1 for reporting an act of harassment or bullying, as well as for collecting harassment and bullying incidence data, and determining sanctions that can be enforced after confirmed incidents.

According to the *Des Moines Register*, the law defines bullying as any conduct toward a student, based on any actual or perceived trait, that creates a hostile school environment, places the student in reasonable fear of harm to his or her person or property, has a substantially detrimental effect on his or her physical or mental health, substantially interferes with his or her academic performance, or substantially interferes with the student's ability to participate in or benefit from the services, activities, or privileges provided by a school.

The law defines *cyberbullying* as bullying via electronic communications, including e-mail, pager, cell phones, text messages, and Internet-based communications.


### NEW JERSEY

New Jersey's child welfare system met and, in some instances exceeded, court-mandated goals from July through December 2006 for fixing its system, according to a report issued last winter by the Center for the Study of Social Policy in Washington, DC.

“New Jersey is finally on a positive path toward reforming the way it delivers child welfare services to children and families,” the report states.

Susan Lambiase, Associate Director of Children's Rights, a New York advocacy group that sued New Jersey in 2005 over its malfunctioning child welfare system, told the *Philadelphia Inquirer*, “It shows child welfare can be fixed if there are three things—good management, sufficient resources, and commitment to change—and those things do exist now in New Jersey.”

After a court settlement was reached in the Children's Rights case, Governor Jon Corzine (D) removed the Division of Youth and Family Services from the Department of Human Services, and put former state child advocate Kevin Ryan at the helm.

The report from the Center for the Study of Social Policy found that 1,387 children under the state's care were adopted in 2006—more than the target of 1,100, but less than the 1,418 adoptions in 2004. It also cited other changes, including increased training for staff, better case tracking, higher staff retention, more children placed out of detention facilities, and reduced worker caseloads. 



# TOO BIG to FIT...

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# Child Welfare & Tec

AND

For child welfare agencies in the digital age, technology is only as revolutionary as the plan that drives it.

When Arlene King goes on a case visit, she brings experience, compassion, and a handheld device that rivals James Bond's. Her pocket-sized PDA (personal data assistant) lets her take notes and photographs, record interviews, and file forms electronically. Using a voice recognition program, she has her conversations with clients automatically transcribed and downloaded into her case files.

Like the handhelds used by rental car companies and overnight delivery services, the customized computer, standard issue to King and her colleagues, helps her agency capture the most accurate, up-to-the-minute data possible. With reliable information, her agency can identify existing services gaps, comply with federal reporting requirements, and make the case for additional state funding.

Most important, King's child welfare agency is already linked to all other human service agencies in the county. Interagency data sharing means the children and families on her caseload are more likely to receive the full range of services they need, when they need them.

Sound too good to be true? In this case, it is. Arlene and her agency are fictional, but law enforcement officers, health care providers, and businesses worldwide are already using this kind of technology, and it's making organizations more efficient and improving the lives of workers and their clients. Despite rapid technological advances, however, many of these innovations have not yet made their way to the nation's child welfare agencies.

According to a recent Annie E. Casey Foundation report, federal, state, and local agencies have spent more than \$2.8 billion on child welfare technologies over the past 10 years, with little measurable effect on the lives of vulnerable children and

families. A 2003 General Accounting Office report found that "despite efforts to implement comprehensive information systems [in child welfare], several factors affected states' ability to collect reliable data," including inaccurate data entry, insufficient caseworker training, disparities between state and federal data requirements, and lack of federal guidance on implementing reliable systems.

## Allegheny County Data Warehouse: Improving Decision Making Across Agencies

More jurisdictions nationwide are recognizing the value of collecting and using data across all social service agencies. This coordination allows agencies to consolidate information, eliminate duplication, and most important, achieve better outcomes for the children and families they serve. A promising example of this coordinated approach to service delivery is the Allegheny County Department of Human Services Delivery Warehouse (DHSDW) in Pittsburgh.

Created in partnership with the private sector, local universities, and other community stakeholders, DHSDW is a central repository of 15 million client records, 17 internal sources, and 8 outside sources. Using unique identifiers, the data warehouse matches information with DHS-contracted providers and programs to understand and coordinate services. The data can be analyzed to produce aggregate or group information and client-specific, provider-specific, or program-specific reports. Authorized DHS staff can also use the data to identify and coordinate services for consumers served by multiple program offices.

DHSDW has become a significant community resource, encouraging partnerships and research projects with RAND, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, Carnegie Mellon University, the University of Pittsburgh, and the U.S. Department of Justice. With community support, DHS has implemented a public website with up-to-date information on DHS services and other community resources.

Allegheny County DHS soon will roll out a department-wide master client registration system to allow immediate updates and real-time reporting from the data warehouse.

—Marc Cherna, Director, Allegheny County Department of Human Services

Progress has been made in integrating technology at the federal level and in specific jurisdictions, but child welfare still lags behind business and other social service fields in harnessing information technology (IT) solutions that improve day-to-day decision making, optimize case plans, and maximize children's safety and stability.

Even for states awash in data, appropriate expertise or strategic guidance is not always available so it can be used most effectively for improving outcomes for children and families. In many states, child welfare agencies can be data rich and knowledge poor.

# h n o l o g y

By Mary Bissell and Jennifer Miller

## Leveraging Cutting-Edge Technologies

With generous support from the Annie E. Casey Foundation, Stewards of Change, a new organization dedicated to cross-sector innovation in the child welfare field, and the Yale School of Management brought together a dynamic team of business, technology, and child welfare leaders to explore more effective ways to apply emerging IT to child welfare management and practice. During a conference in New Haven, Connecticut, last year, Stewards of Change leaders and conference participants identified several guiding principles to drive technological and strategic change in child welfare and beyond.

Participants confirmed what child welfare leaders are already learning: Technology, no matter how transformative, is not a panacea for the complex challenges facing today's child protection system. Responding to unpredictable human behavior in the most difficult circumstances, child welfare leaders have been able to integrate technology effectively only when they are able to craft and implement a strong strategic vision to shape the agency's overall philosophy, operations, and practice.

A successful blueprint requires the entire agency, from senior administrators to frontline caseworkers, to understand and support the mission. "Agencies need a strategic business plan to drive the technology, not the other way around," explains Daniel Stein, a former corporate marketing executive and cofounder of Stewards of Change. "Technology can be a powerful tool, but it's only one of many that successful child welfare leaders are using to create and sustain change."

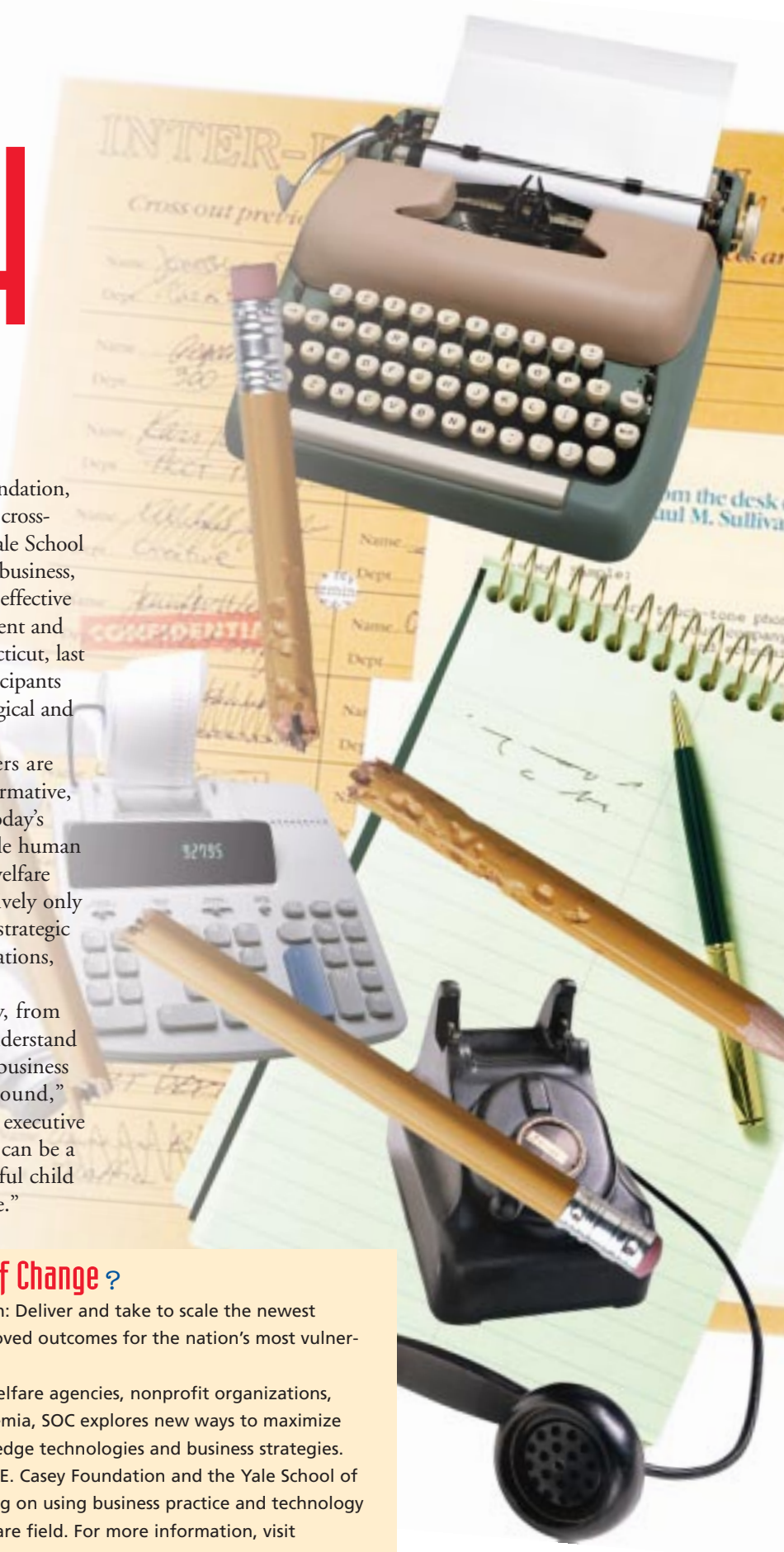
## What Is Stewards of Change?

Stewards of Change (SOC) is a business with a social mission: Deliver and take to scale the newest cross-sector innovations to help child welfare achieve improved outcomes for the nation's most vulnerable children and families.

Working closely with entrepreneurs from public child welfare agencies, nonprofit organizations, business and technology industries, foundations, and academia, SOC explores new ways to maximize the effectiveness of child welfare services through cutting-edge technologies and business strategies.

For the past two years, SOC has teamed with the Annie E. Casey Foundation and the Yale School of Management to host a multidisciplinary conference focusing on using business practice and technology to influence and support ongoing change in the child welfare field. For more information, visit [www.stewardsofchange.org](http://www.stewardsofchange.org).

To order a copy of the technology materials from the most recent Stewards of Change conference at the Yale School of Management, e-mail Michael Smith at [michael@stewardsofchange.org](mailto:michael@stewardsofchange.org).





## New Solutions for Old Systems

Responding to federal funding opportunities and evolving strategic priorities, 42 states and the District of Columbia have started working on planning, developing, and implementing their Statewide Automated Child Welfare Information Systems (SACWIS) to report on federal outcome requirements for children in care. While sporadic progress has been made to streamline and integrate child welfare agency IT systems, many states still struggle with the legacy of antiquated systems unable to satisfy multiple reporting requirements and day-to-day data needs.

“The reality is that many states are still ‘making do’ with IT systems that weren’t created with their specific needs in mind,” says Kathleen Feely, Managing Director of Casey Strategic Consulting. “As a result, many agencies are spending a lot of time and money maintaining and updating systems that were never designed for them in the first place.”

But there is good news. Dissatisfaction with current systems, along with growing federal demand for more system accountability, has led to increased reliance on “commercial off-the-shelf” (COTS) products already being used for SACWIS upgrades and, in newer systems, to improve data analysis and reporting tools. Because they are much less expensive and require less specialized maintenance than traditional government systems, COTS products, used in combination with other emerging technologies, offer a promising alternative for streamlining older systems to better meet current child welfare technology and system needs.

## Interoperability: Breaking Down Social Service Silos

Another significant challenge in using technology effectively to improve child and family outcomes is the widespread “silozation” of human services technology within state governments. Different funding sources, accountability measures, and competing agency priorities can result in dozens of separate technology systems serving the very same families. Incompatible systems result in duplication, poor service delivery, and wasted taxpayer dollars.

“Most states and counties have a patchwork of agencies and IT systems that can’t talk to each other,” notes Vernon Brown, CEO of Moss Beach Homes, a child welfare service agency with 31 sites throughout California. “It doesn’t make sense for the agencies, and the lack of coordination hurts children and families.”

To remedy this problem, Stewards of Change conference participants recommended the next phase of child welfare technology innovation focus on interoperability—allowing IT systems across multiple social service agencies to share information. With the advent of relatively inexpensive “data dictionaries,” some child welfare agencies are already using these new technologies to translate information between disparate computer systems.

## Strong Leadership for a Data-Driven Culture

As with all efforts to transform the child welfare system, strong leadership is essential to support a management team and work-force that understands, values, and actively integrates data into policies and practices.

In too many cases, frontline workers have little investment or confidence in collecting data because they have never had a meaningful opportunity to see its effect on their daily lives. As a result, individuals who are required to input the data on the ground level have no ownership in the process and no evidence to prove the information was worth gathering in the first place.

## Child Welfare's Alphabet Soup: A Beginner's Guide to SACWIS, AFCARS, and NCANDS

Just what do all those acronyms stand for? Here's a brief overview of SACWIS, AFCARS, and NCANDS, some of the most commonly used child welfare data terms.

States receive assistance from the federal government to develop and maintain the **Statewide Automated Child Welfare Information System (SACWIS)**. The federal government made this funding available for states to meet federal data reporting requirements. A SACWIS is a comprehensive, automated tool that supports social workers' foster care and adoption assistance case management practice.

Most states have added other functionality to their SACWIS to support child protective and family preservation services, thereby providing a unified automated tool to support most, if not all, child welfare services. States can also integrate other data management programs into SACWIS, such as Temporary Assistance for Needy Families, emergency assistance, juvenile justice, and child care.

As a condition of federal funding, all states must provide the federal government data under the **Adoption and Foster Care Analysis Reporting System (AFCARS)**. The required dataset includes case-level data on all children in out-of-home care who are under placement, care, or supervision of the state child welfare agency, as well as information for all children adopted with state child welfare involvement. States must submit AFCARS data twice annually to the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Administration for Children and Families.

The **National Child Abuse and Neglect Data System (NCANDS)** is a national data collection and analysis system authorized by the Child Abuse Prevention and Treatment Act. Though voluntary, almost all states and the District of Columbia participate.

NCANDS has two parts: a compilation of all child abuse and neglect statistics from each reporting state, including data on all child protection reports, investigations, victims, and perpetrators; and case-level information from those child protective service agencies currently able to provide electronic child abuse and neglect records. NCANDS data are reported annually.

"Most caseworkers who spend time gathering information, don't necessarily see how it can really be used to make their jobs easier or improve the lives of their clients" explains Stewards of Change cofounder Michael Smith. "Child welfare leaders need to provide the training and tools to build a culture that shows data in action."

To create a data-driven culture, agency heads must also do what businesses have done effectively for years: invest in and empower a chief information officer (CIO)—a top-level manager responsible for shaping the agency's technology vision and overseeing its implementation at all management levels. That

means fully integrating the CIO into overall management of and strategic planning for the agency, not just to solve technical glitches or update systems.

## Connecting with Courts

Like child welfare agencies, dependency courts are also running to catch up with technologies to better track cases, manage caseloads, and communicate with human service agencies more effectively.

"Too often, permanency for a child is put on hold because judges can't get basic, reliable information," says Nancy Sidote Salyers, a retired judge and Codirector of Fostering Results, a national education and outreach campaign to support foster care reform. "The information exists, but it's a matter of making it easily accessible to those who need it to make decisions. Eliminating delay with timely information always translates into better decisions."

Fully integrated technology systems ensure courts, agencies, and other social service providers are able to access immediate information on children and families to reduce the backlog of children waiting on court decisions and vital services.

## Empowering Workers

In addition to data collection and analysis, cutting-edge technology must also be adapted to serve the needs and workloads of frontline administrators and caseworkers. Just as businesses have invested in customizing equipment for workers, state policymakers and child welfare workers must also receive targeted technological support so they can spend less time on paperwork and more time with children and families.

New integrated handheld technologies, Tablet PCs, web smart phones, and verification technologies are used widely and successfully in other fields with proven results but haven't made it to the frontlines of child welfare. Making these devices available not only would save caseworkers time, it would help recruit and retain young caseworkers who have grown up to expect cutting-edge technology in their homes and workplaces.

In some cases, concern about protecting the confidentiality of children and families discourages the use of new technologies that allow child welfare agencies to communicate more effectively with other social service systems and the courts. As a result, child welfare leaders and workers may not have access to accurate, real-time data to help them make better decisions on behalf of children in care.

Just as timely data is not available to workers, it's also unavailable to the public and policymakers responsible for holding agencies accountable for child and family outcomes. Political leaders considering child welfare reforms often must rely on two-year-old data when new technologies provide more capacity to share legally protected information and other sensitive data without compromising families' privacy.

## Using Data to Predict and Improve Outcomes

Although many jurisdictions are using technology more effectively than ever to collect and analyze data, few are using it to help predict and change outcomes for children and families.

The business world uses "predictive analytics" to forecast consumer behavior and modify products to meet anticipated needs and challenges. Some hospitality chains, for example, analyze consumer data to predict which customers might switch hotels, then customize a promotional package to prevent their defection.

"In the same way an insurance company can predict outcomes based on hundreds or even thousands of factors," says Michael Smith of Stewards of Change, "the child welfare field can also use data points to build new models for more proactive case management."

## CWLA Teams with States to Provide Data Resources

The **National Data Analysis System (NDAS)** is a free online service started in 1999 by CWLA and sponsoring states. The NDAS website, <http://ndas.cwla.org>, enables child welfare workers to access the most recent statistics on adoption, children's health, child care services, juvenile justice, out-of-home care, and other related topics.

All data can be downloaded directly to a desktop, and users can create online graphs in minutes. User-defined reports enable visitors to view data according to their specific needs. Users can also browse the State Data Trends page, providing links to state's child welfare data over a period of time. State data can also be compared against each other.

NDAS also contains hard-to-find data on agency administration, caseloads, salaries, and child welfare staff education and training. Last winter, NDAS added a kinship care section featuring information on kinship care demographics, funding, policies, and providers.

CWLA staff and consultants also offer data and technology resources through the **National Resource Center for Child Welfare Data and Technology (NRC-CWDT)**, one of several resource centers funded as a service of the Children's Bureau to assist public and tribal child welfare systems. The center, online at [www.nrcwdt.org](http://www.nrcwdt.org), assists in strategies to promote the collection, quality, and use of child welfare data for policies and practices that benefit children and families. Specific services include

- assisting with data mapping, report programming, and information system design, focused on the Adoption, Foster Care Analysis and Reporting System (AFCARS) and the National Child Abuse and Neglect Data System (NCANDS).
- assisting state, court, and tribal staff with how data are used in the Child and Family Services Review process; and
- providing onsite and regional training on data use and data management to build the capacity of child welfare programs to use child welfare data in policy, practice, management and decision making.

Predictive analytics help caseworkers determine a child's risk level, the type of services that would be most helpful to a family, and a case plan to maximize a family's chances of staying together safely.

## Software Solutions

### from CWLA and Children's Bureau of Southern California

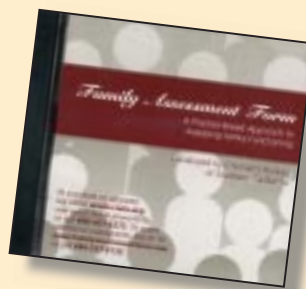
#### **The Family Assessment Form on CD-ROM**

Developed by Children's Bureau of Southern California, the Family Assessment Form (FAF) uses a nine-point rating scale to allow workers to complete a psychosocial assessment and assess families at the beginning of service, develop individualized family service plans, monitor family progress, and assess outcomes for individual families and programs.


FAF is designed as a standardized form but is adaptable for a variety of clinical, procedural, or program needs. FAF is available from CWLA in two HIPAA-compliant software applications, both on CD-ROM and usable with single-user or networked systems:

- **FAF Pro** (\$495) supports a range of case management tasks, including assessment, service planning, case notes, and termination, as well as family and program outcome and administrative reporting. Go to [www.tinyurl.com/2zhfq6](http://www.tinyurl.com/2zhfq6).
- **FAF Express** (\$295) is a shorter version designed strictly for limited data entry and reporting on family functioning only. Go to [www.tinyurl.com/29xqrk](http://www.tinyurl.com/29xqrk).

Both the Pro and Express versions come with 50 assessments. Additional assessments, additional site licenses, and upgrading from the Express to the Pro version are available exclusively from Children's Bureau of Southern California (online at [www.familyassessmentform.com](http://www.familyassessmentform.com), or call toll-free 888/357-9135).



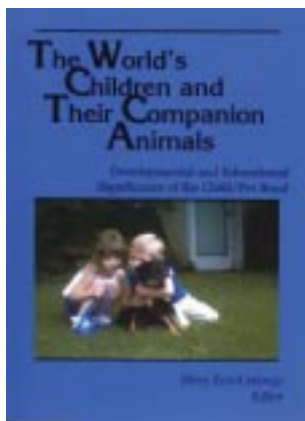
## Helping Child Welfare Reach It's Technology Potential

Efforts to use technology to improve outcomes for children and families at risk, both inside and outside the child welfare system, are complex, especially given the laws and regulations designed to protect private information. But just as health care providers and financial institutions have determined that the advantages of well-designed technologies outweigh their risks, the child welfare field must also continue to pursue new strategies to inject creativity and connectivity into its operating systems. 

Mary Bissell and Jennifer Miller are partners in ChildFocus, a child welfare policy consulting, research, and strategic planning firm. Learn more at [www.childfocuspartners.com](http://www.childfocuspartners.com).

# The World's Children and Their Companion Animals: Developmental and Educational Significance of the Child/Pet Bond

Mary Renck Jalongo, Editor



*Internationally renowned physician Albert Schweitzer once said, "We need a boundless ethic which will include the animals also." It is just such an ethic, an ethic of compassion and generosity, that holds the greatest promise for more responsive parenting, more compassionate teaching, and a more tolerant and just society.*

**Foreword:** Stars in a Child's Universe by Michael J. Rosen

**Introduction:** The Special Significance of Companion Animals in Children's Lives by Mary Renck Jalongo with Marsha R. Robbins and Reade Paterno

**Part One: Children, Families, and Companion Animals**

- \* Bonding With and Caring for Pets: Companion Animals and Child Development
- \* Companion Animals in the Lives of Boys and Girls: Gendered Attitudes, Practices, and Preferences
- \* Companion Animals at Home: What Children Learn From Families

**Part Two: Companion Animals in Schools and Communities**

- \* A Friend at School: Classroom Pets and Companion Animals in the Curriculum
- \* Animals That Heal: Animal-Assisted Therapy With Children
- \* Global Companion Animals: Bonding With and Caring for Animals Across Cultures and Countries
- \* Portraying Pets: The Significance of Children's Writings and Drawings About Companion Animals

**Part Three: Companion Animals in Print and in the Media**

- \* Companion Animals in Books: Themes in Children's Literature
- \* Companion Animals and Technology: Using the Internet, Software, and Electronic Toys To Learn About Pets

**Afterword** by Mary Renck Jalongo

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# Exceptional Children

NAVIGATING LEARNING DISABILITIES & SPECIAL EDUCATION

## REACHING FOR RESILIENCE:

### A LIFELINE TO SUCCESS FOR CHILDREN WITH LEARNING DISABILITIES

By Sheldon H. Horowitz

Let's face it...school can sometimes be a stressful and tension-filled place. For students with learning disabilities (LD), the demands of listening and taking notes in class, completing homework assignment and projects on time, meeting with teachers for extra support, and staying connected socially to peers in and out of school can be exhausting! That's why building resilience is so important.

Search for a dictionary definition of *resilience* and you might find:

- the capacity of a strained body to recover after a period of stress,
- the ability to recover from or adjust to misfortune, or
- the process of persisting in the face of adversity.

Reflecting on the challenges faced by students with LD, it's easy to see how the concept of resilience would apply to their everyday experiences. Dealing with uncertainty of academic status, worrying about their grades and their ability to keep up with peers, measuring their progress against others who seem to accomplish work with seemingly little effort—these are just a few reasons to justify working with these students to bolster their confidence and boost their resiliency.

By helping children become more resilient, the goal is not to have them deny the reality of their struggles but rather to recognize their areas of special need and help them gain insight into their talents and inner strengths. Knowing how to face up to and answer tough questions, connect with people in ways that are helpful, and deal with frustration with creativity, imagination, and even humor are all ways we can help children with LD to become more independent and enjoy success in school and in the community.



## THE SOCIAL SIDE OF LD

Think about someone you know who has a learning disability. Ask yourself whether, compared with others without LD, this person is prone to any of the following challenges:

- having difficulty adapting to new social situations;
- not being sure how to ask for help, and from whom;
- looking to peers for how to respond, rather than forming an independent opinion;
- missing social cues or having trouble reading nonverbal cues (for example, standing too close to someone during conversation even when they pull away, laughing inappropriately at jokes, or telling jokes at inappropriate times);
- feeling that, no matter how hard they try, they just can't succeed;



- rating themselves as less capable than their peers, and lacking self-assurance; or
- attributing their successes to luck rather than hard work, good effort, or even innate ability.

I'll bet some, if not a substantial number, of these characteristics fit the person you have in mind. Although it's safe to say that individuals with LD do not typically have significant social-emotional problems, it's also safe to say that, compared with their peers, they do run a greater risk of having problems dealing with their emotions and knowing how to behave in certain situations.

Considerable debate exists whether and how social-emotional skills can be taught, but there's little doubt that problems in this area can and do pose some of the greatest challenges for individuals of all ages with LD.

How important are these skills for people with learning disabilities? Very! Let's look at the results of a much quoted 20-year longitudinal study conducted by the Frostig Center in California. The researchers looked at the "natural history" of learning disabilities in a group of students followed over many years, and one of the main questions they asked was, "What factors promote or prevent the success of individuals with LD?" The study concluded that even more than academic skills, the factors that predicted success over time were


- self-awareness
- proactivity
- perseverance
- emotional stability
- goal setting
- effective support systems

So while much of our attention in helping students with LD is often directed toward improving academic performance, some of the characteristics that really make a difference in the lives of these individuals appear to fall within the social-emotional domain.

## COPING WITH STRESS, BUILDING CONFIDENCE

In *The Power of Resilience: Achieving Balance, Confidence, and Personal Strength in Your Life* (2004, Contemporary Books), Robert Brooks and Sam Goldstein offer 10 guideposts to help children develop the strength and skills to cope successfully with the stresses and challenges they face:

- **Be empathetic.** See the world through your child's eyes.
- **Communicate with respect.** Don't interrupt or put them down. Answer their questions.
- **Be flexible.** If we want kids to be flexible, we must model that behavior.
- **Give undivided attention.** Children feel loved when we spend one-on-one time with them.
- **Accept your children for who they are.** When children feel appreciated for who they are, they'll feel more secure reaching out to others and learning how to solve problems.
- **Give children a chance to contribute.** When we enlist children in helping others, we communicate our faith in their ability to handle a variety of tasks and give them a sense of responsibility.

- **Treat mistakes as learning experiences.** Children whose parents overreact to mistakes tend to avoid taking risks and end up blaming others for their problems.
- **Stress your children's strengths.** Their sense of accomplishment and pride gives them the confidence to persevere the next time they face a challenge.
- **Let your children solve problems and make decisions.** Instead of always telling children what to do, encourage them to come up with solutions to problems.
- **Discipline to teach.** Don't discipline in a way that intimidates or humiliates your child. 



*Sheldon Horowitz EdD is Director of Professional Services at the National Center for Learning Disabilities (www.LD.org), New York, New York. NCLD provides essential information to parents, professional, and individuals with LD; promotes research and programs to foster effective learning; and advocates for policies that protect and strengthen education rights and opportunities. This article was adapted from "Research Roundup" columns in LD News, September 2004 (www.tinyurl.com/yokypd) and May 2005 (www.tinyurl.com/22urhk). Visit www.LD.org for more information about this topic and resources for families, educators, and more. For permission to reproduce this article, or to contact Dr. Horowitz, e-mail help@ncl.org. © 2004, 2005, 2007 National Center for Learning Disabilities. All rights reserved. Used with permission.*

## RECOMMENDED READINGS AND RESOURCES

Following is a list of websites and materials that can be helpful in bolstering resilience and building confidence in children, especially those who struggle with learning.

**Project Resilience** ([www.projectresilience.com](http://www.projectresilience.com)), based in Washington, DC, offers teaching materials and products; provides training and disseminates information for professionals working in education, treatment, and prevention; and promotes a strengths-based approach to both youth and adults struggling to overcome hardship.

**Drs. Robert Brooks and Sam Goldstein** have written *The Power of Resilience: Achieving Balance, Confidence, and Personal Strength in Your Life* (2004, Contemporary Books). Visit [www.drrobertbrooks.com/products/index.html](http://www.drrobertbrooks.com/products/index.html).

Additional Brooks and Goldstein resources include:

- Listen to an interview with Brooks about nurturing resilience in your child at [www.tinyurl.com/2bdr9m](http://www.tinyurl.com/2bdr9m).
- Take a quiz for parents and other caregivers to assess whether they possess a mindset that fosters resilience in children at [www.tinyurl.com/2facwd](http://www.tinyurl.com/2facwd).
- Read an article by Dr. Brooks, "Fostering Motivation, Hope, and Resilience in Children with Learning Disorders," from *Annals of Dyslexia* (2001). Visit [www.tinyurl.com/2daogj](http://www.tinyurl.com/2daogj).

**40 Developmental Assets (for Early Childhood, Middle Childhood, and Adolescents).** Since 1989, Search Institute has surveyed developmental assets in more than 2 million 6th- to 12th-graders in communities nationwide. Learn about these important characteristics youth need to be healthy, caring, and responsible. Go to [www.tinyurl.com/ypedfg](http://www.tinyurl.com/ypedfg).



You are invited to register to attend the Child Welfare League of America's National Adoption and Foster Care Training Conference, a conference for adoption and foster care professionals.

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 Millicent Williams at 202/942-0253, [mwillia@cwla.org](mailto:mwillia@cwla.org).

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*To register online, visit [www.cwla/conferences](http://www.cwla/conferences).*

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# The Down to Earth Dad

PATRICK MITCHELL

## Physical Punishment

...And Why Kids Are Better Off Without It

**I**n my opinion, the best kept secret of American child psychology is that chil-

dren who are not spanked are, on average, the best behaved and have the fewest psychological and social problems." That's what Murray A. Strauss, professor of sociology and codirector of the Family Research Laboratory at the University of New Hampshire told me recently.

His 30 years of family research convince him the phrase *Spare the rod, spoil the child* is backward. "It's really, 'Use the rod and spoil the child,'" he says. "It's using the rod that causes problems for the child."

Most people think of spanking when they hear the phrase corporal punishment, but Strauss has a broader definition: "Corporal punishment is an act carried out by the parent with the intention of causing the child physical pain, but not injury, for the purposes of correction or control...So, washing a child's mouth out with soap fits the definition exactly." So does pinching a toddler's arm to make the child sit in the car seat, paddling with objects, shaking a child, and slapping.

"The mom or dad intentionally squeezes the child's arm while putting them in the car—that's a form of *corporal punishment*," he says. "The kid says, 'Mommy, that hurts.' Well, mommy might not reason it out that way, that she wants to hurt the child, but that's what she wants to do. It's using more force than is necessary to get the child into the car. You're kind of doing two things at once—getting the child in the car and inflicting corporal punishment."

Here's the rub: Corporal punishment may succeed in temporarily controlling a child's behaviors. The trouble is, the children may suffer from low self-esteem and depression, become overly aggressive, and exhibit antisocial behavior later as a result.

"Corporal punishment, while it does stop the behavior in an immediate situation, occurs at the cost of creating problems down the line, including undermining the bond between the child and the parent and increasing the probability of delinquent behaviors," Strauss says.

"Corporal punishment weakens the bond between child and parent...it chips away at the bond, particularly if it's repeated a number of times. This is a problem for parents who want to be close to their kids and who want their kids to be close to them."


My parents were cleaning my vocabulary when they washed my mouth out with soap. I wasn't alone. Strauss and

his colleague, clinical psychologist Angèle Fauchier, recently gleaned data from a questionnaire completed by about 500 university students on questions about the discipline methods used by their parents when they were 10 and 13 years old. Among the findings, about 25% of the respondents said a parent washed their mouth out with soap as a child. That's corporal punishment, according to Strauss and Fauchier, and it therefore holds the possibility for more negative outcomes than positive ones.

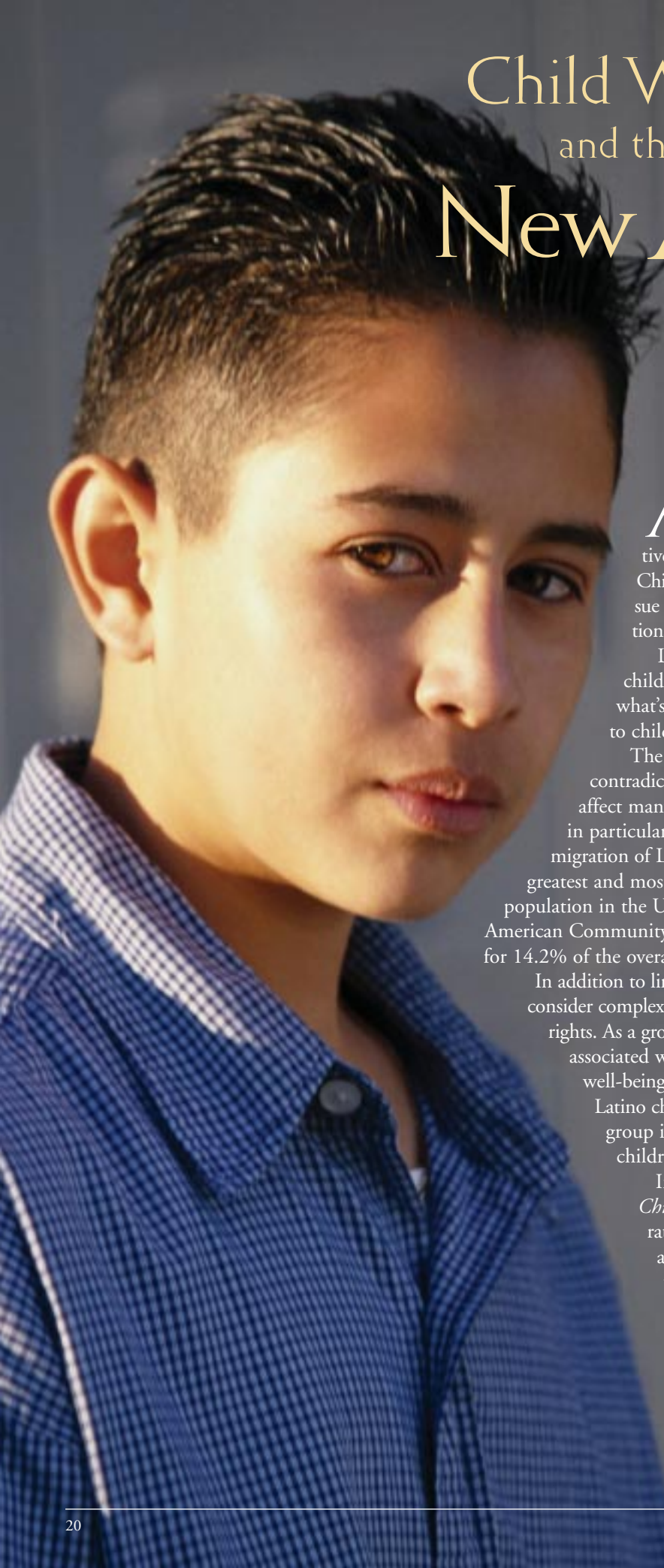
"Study after study shows the more corporal punishment, the greater the chance the child is going to be higher than normal in physical aggressiveness," Strauss notes, adding that physical punishment sets the stage for "a higher probability of antisocial, delinquent behavior, such as getting in trouble in school, vandalism, theft, and things like that." He says children whose parents regularly use corporal punishment are more likely to be depressed than are children whose parents don't.

"The research shows corporal punishment doesn't work any better than just saying no," Strauss says, adding that if you can avoid corporal punishment, you avoid its negative effects. "Saying no will stop a 2-year-old for a minute or two. It's the same for slapping a 2-year-old's hand. "The recidivism rate for misbehavior by a 2-year-old is about 50% within two hours. It's 80% within the same day. And that applies to whether it's just saying no, removing the child, or spanking a child.

"So...it doesn't take a whole new parent to avoid corporal punishment. Parents are doing dozens and dozens of things besides spanking, even parents who are doing some spanking. If they just left out the spanking, they'd be doing the alternatives, and their child would be better off."

San Francisco Bay-area Assemblywoman Sally Lieber dropped her widely ridiculed campaign this winter to make spanking a crime in California. Perhaps we're not ready for such a law, but as child- and family-serving advocates and programs, perhaps we can do more to educate parents on the topic. 

*A regular contributor to Children's Voice, Patrick Mitchell publishes a monthly newsletter, The Down to Earth Dad, from Coeur d'Alene, Idaho, and facilitates the Dads Matter!™ Project for early childhood programs, schools, and child- and family-serving organizations. He conducts keynote addresses, workshops, and inservice and preservice trainings. To reserve Patrick Mitchell for speaking engagements, or to implement the Dads Matter!™ Project for your families and community partners, call him toll-free at 877/282-DADS, or e-mail him at [patrick@downtoearthdad.org](mailto:patrick@downtoearthdad.org). Website: [www.DownToEarthDad.org](http://www.DownToEarthDad.org).*



# Child Welfare and the Challenge of New Americans

*Growing immigrant populations are creating questions for child welfare policy and practice.*

*By Sonia Velazquez, Ilze Earner, and Yali Lincroft*

As the immigrant population continues to grow nationwide, the child welfare field has an increased need to effectively intersect with immigration practices, policies, and laws. Child welfare workers need to have the resources to actively pursue answers to a large number of confusing situations and questions that affect the lives of children from immigrant families.

Little concrete data exists about the number of immigrant children and families involved in the child welfare system; what's clear, however, is these families present unique challenges to child welfare systems that we can no longer ignore.

The intersection between child welfare and immigration unveils contradictions and gaps in knowledge, policy, law, and practice that affect many social and ethnic groups. Latino families and children, in particular, are disproportionately affected, and given the massive migration of Latino families in recent years, they present some of the greatest and most unique needs. According to the 2000 census, the Latino population in the United States has increased 61% since 1990. The 2004 American Community Survey estimated the Latino population now accounts for 14.2% of the overall U.S. population.

In addition to linguistic and cultural factors, child welfare practice needs to consider complex legal issues related to immigration, social welfare, and civil rights. As a group, immigrant families present a number of characteristics associated with negative child outcomes of safety, permanency, and well-being. For instance, according to several Urban Institute studies, Latino children continue to be the most uninsured racial and ethnic group in the United States, and roughly 10% of immigrants are children under age 18.

In a 2005 study, *The Health and Well-Being of Young Children of Immigrants*, the Urban Institute found poverty rates are generally higher among children of immigrants than among children of native-born citizens, and are highest for young children of immigrants. This same study also found young children of immigrants are less likely to receive public benefits, such as TANF, food stamps, and child care.

Child welfare practitioners often are unfamiliar with federal and state policies that affect immigrant children and families. National CASA's magazine *The Connection*, noted in 2006 that caseworkers must

See *New Americans*, page 22

## Easing Immigrant Families' Fears

Children and Family Services (CFS) staff in Contra Costa County, California, realized they had a problem on their hands when, during the 2005–2006 school year, rumors began circulating among immigrant parents at a local public elementary school that CFS was taking children away without warning.

The rumors started among the Latino immigrant community following a handful of cases where students at Cambridge Elementary School in Concord, California, were placed in foster care following separate child abuse investigations. Parents believed that bowls of candy in the principal's office during the holidays, and the school's distribution of free bikes to needy students, were props to lure their children away from them.

To make matters worse, the teachers felt parents were blaming them for the removal or investigation of their children. Teachers complained about being asked to interpret for child welfare staff, law enforcement asking them to identify students who may need to be assessed for child abuse, and police not providing adequate explanations to parents after children were removed from homes.

CFS staff were viewed as “baby-snatchers,” said CFS Division Manager Steve Peavler, “only slightly more popular than immigration officials.”

A San Francisco Bay bedroom community, Concord has experienced an influx of immigrants from all over the world. Two decades ago, whites comprised 86% of Concord's population, and Latinos made up only 7%. Today, approximately 61% of Concord's 121,789 residents are white, while Latinos account for almost 22%.

Cambridge Elementary's 2004–2005 student population was 87% Latino, 4% white, 3% African American, 3% Pacific Islander, and 3% other ethnicities. About 90% qualified for free or reduced lunches, and 73% were English learners.

To debunk the myths about CFS and address parents' fears, CFS, school staff, and local law enforcement and immigrant agencies, including Concord's League of Latin American Citizens, organized a community forum that drew more than 250 adults and 400 children.

### Collaborating and Cross Training

Leading up to the community forum, school staff recommended CFS and local police officers make a presentation to 20 Cambridge PTA parents. The meeting, held primarily in Spanish, answered questions about CFS procedures for removal of children. After the PTA meeting, CFS sought advice from its community partners about how to deal with the issues raised at the meeting and develop a proactive strategy to improve relationships.

Cross training between parents, school staff, police officers, and CFS also took place. CFS made presentations about child abuse reporting and investigation procedures to the Catholic Deanery, representing the Catholic churches in the region, and to the Contra Costa Interfaith Supporting Community Organization, a federation of 25 religious congregations and five youth and parent groups. A Cambridge teacher translated the California child abuse reporting law into Spanish and explained a

teacher's legal obligation to report suspected child abuse to a PTA meeting attended predominately by immigrant parents.

A workgroup met weekly for three months leading up to the community forum. “The planning process for this forum was parent- and resident-driven, which is why it worked so well,” Peavler said.



CONTRA COSTA COUNTY CFS

*Immigrant families learned more about Contra Costa County CFS at a community forum.*

### Meeting Face-to-Face

The forum, held in Spanish, took place in April 2006. Three immigrant mothers representing the PTA, and an immigrant youth representing the student body, served as masters of ceremony and explained the forum's goals. Child care services and food were provided. Aztec dancers opened the program, and the school's hula class demonstrated Polynesian dances. Information about community services for families was distributed and posted.

A short video, filmed in Spanish at one of the social worker's homes using CFS staff as actors, illustrated a child abuse scenario. Following the video, CFS social workers explained how calls are screened and described the juvenile dependency court process. An attorney explained due process, parent's rights, and how judges make final decisions.

During a question-and-answer session, an audience member claimed social workers were inhumane and parents needed a second chance. Two parent moderators defended CFS and stressed the role of social workers to provide services to keep families together.

“The lessons I learned from my work [during] the forum,” Peavler said, “is the importance of being flexible, meeting the community on their home turf, allowing them to speak in their own language, and allowing leadership to move from agency and staff to community and parents.”

Since the forum, CFS has worked with an attorney at the Immigration Legal Resource Center in San Francisco to review its protocol for undocumented children in foster care applying for immigration relief options, and has developed a training-of-trainer curriculum for staff working with immigrant families. Two CFS social workers are serving as liaisons for a local community partnership working with local government, community-based agencies, and businesses to create social and economic opportunities for immigrant residents.

—Yali Lincroft

*Steve Peavler passed away in February 2007. This article was written with Peavler before his death and is dedicated to his memory.*

## The Migration and Child Welfare Network

Leading child welfare organizations have formed the Migration and Child Welfare Network to improve the effectiveness of the field's response to migration.

The network has four main areas of focus—advocacy and policy, promising practices, research, and transnational relations—each with activities planned for the next two years, including a conference in 2008. Members share knowledge and strategies and participate in collaborative efforts to improve services for immigrant families in the child welfare system.

Members can join for free as individuals, agency representatives, or both. Contact the American Humane Association at CWMN@americanhumane.org for more information.

Founding members include CWLA, the American Bar Association Center on Children and the Law, the American Humane Association, the Annie E. Casey Foundation, Chapin Hall Center for Children, the Family Violence Prevention Fund, Hunter College School of Social Work, Immigrant Legal Resource Center, International Social Services, Loyola University at Chicago, University of Illinois at Chicago, University of Texas at Austin, the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops/Migration and Refugee Services, and the public child welfare agencies in Washington, DC, and Illinois.

## Special Immigrant Juvenile Status

In 1990, Congress created the special immigrant juvenile status (SIJS). An undocumented child who is eligible for long-term foster care can be granted this status and become immediately eligible to file for permanent residency in the United States. Although the process can be completed in less than a year, it takes much longer in some jurisdictions, and early identification is extremely important because a child can lose SIJS eligibility once the court terminates jurisdiction over the child.

Despite the fact that Congress created SIJS 15 years ago, implementation remains inconsistent. More often than not, courts are either completely unaware of or confused about its technical requirements. The precise number of undocumented children who emancipate from foster care without obtaining permanent residency is unknown. Most advocates, however, are convinced child welfare agencies and the courts have failed to inform many eligible youth in a timely manner of their right to apply for SIJS status.

Once a child receives SIJS status, child welfare agencies are able to save significant costs by receiving federal reimbursement for the child's care. SIJS does not provide retroactive reimbursement, however, so the sooner it is enacted, the greater the cost savings to the agency.

*Source:* Undercounted, Underserved: Immigrant and Refugee Families in the Child Welfare System, *Annie E. Casey Foundation* (2006).

*New Americans*, from page 20

understand the resources and programs available to immigrant children and families, such as special immigrant juvenile status (see above, right), so caseworkers can educate their clients and make appropriate referrals to help families address issues resulting from migration and immigration status.

As the 2006 Urban Institute report, *Immigration and Child and Family Policy*, points out, however, immigration status within a family is often mixed, resulting in complex situations for which caseworkers frequently are unprepared.

## Responding to the Challenges

Immigration and child welfare issues are slowly gaining national attention. Sustained technical assistance and training and education efforts by projects such as Bridging Refugee Youth and Children's Services, a project of the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops, are being built upon by national organizations such as the American Humane Association, the Annie E. Casey Foundation, and CWLA, with a commitment to improving child welfare systems and outcomes for children.

Each of these organizations has been working along parallel roads to address these issues, publishing journals and undertaking

initiatives to promote responses to the challenges immigration poses to child safety, permanency, and well-being.

In 2005, CWLA published a special issue of its journal, *Child Welfare*, on "Immigrants and Refugees in Child Welfare." This special issue represents an initial effort to provide a clearer picture of what happens when immigrant and refugee families, children, and youth intersect with the public child welfare system.

In 2006, the Annie E. Casey Foundation published a report, *Undercounted, Underserved: Immigrant and Refugee Families in the Child Welfare System*, drawing attention to the need for child welfare to focus on immigrant families, and providing examples of best practices and policy recommendations. The report is a result of targeted interviews, literature review, and a consultative session with individuals with expertise in both immigration and child welfare.

Also in 2006, American Humane's quarterly journal, *Protecting Children*, published an issue entitled "Migration: A Critical Issue for Child Welfare" that presented important emerging concerns about child and family well-being from national, international, and interdisciplinary perspectives. American Humane and Loyola University Chicago Graduate School of Social Work collaborated on the issue to promote a national discussion on the intersection

See *New Americans*, page 24

## Helping Immigrant Families in Federal Custody

In addition to stepping up border enforcement, the U.S. Department of Homeland Security has been removing undocumented residents in increasing numbers. This has led to several well-publicized raids on large employers, as well as smaller enforcement activity less known by the public. In either case, child welfare providers and others may be called on for help.

Julianne Duncan, Associate Director for Children's Services, Office of Refugee Programs, U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops/Migration and Refugee Services, answered the following questions for *Children's Voice* readers unsure of how best to help immigrant families facing federal authorities.

### **When an entire family is taken into federal custody, what happens to the children?**

For children detained with their families, the theory is they are kept with their families, and the whole family is either released or placed in family detention centers in Berks County, Pennsylvania, or Hutto, Texas. Typically, they are held pending the outcome of their immigration case. They are either released in situations in which they get some type of immigration relief, or removed if they don't qualify for relief. Homeland Security runs the facilities via contract with local providers. Sadly, we are aware of situations in which children and parents are separated from each other and held in different facilities.

### **What happens to unaccompanied children taken into custody?**

Unaccompanied children are referred to the Division of Unaccompanied Children's Services (DUCS) within the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services' Office of Refugee Resettlement—not the Unaccompanied Refugee Minors Program—where they are held in any one of 30 or so facilities in the United States. Most are in Texas, but others are located in Arizona, California, and Florida. The children are predominantly housed in large, institutional-style shelters, although some are placed in foster care or small group care settings. Children are placed wherever there is space, so you cannot assume that if a child is picked up in a particular state, he will be housed within that state.

### **What happens to children who may live with their parents but are taken into custody separately or separated from their parents during a raid?**

This is a contentious issue. Homeland Security and DUCS both claim these children do not fit the definition of *unaccompanied*; therefore, many of these children are not turned over to DUCS. Homeland Security cares for them somewhere, but it's very unclear where that may be. These children often are removed from the country quickly, without legal representation before removal.

### **Do the same agencies handle a child's immigration status case and her care while she is in federal custody?**

The child's immigration legal case ticks along independently of her care situation, which is sometimes confusing to those trying to figure out what is happening. While DUCS is taking care of the child and arranging for her reunification with her parents, if possible, Homeland Security is responsible for prosecuting the immigration violation and continues that whether or not the child is released to family.



Anyone who knows the child's alien registration number can navigate the Homeland Security website for the child's immigration case status.

### **How can I locate an unaccompanied child taken into federal custody?**

The best course of action to find and help children picked up in raids is to fax a letter to DUCS at 202/401-1022. The letter should contain as much information as possible about the child, including the date and place of apprehension. Additionally, the letter should explain who is asking for this information and that person's relationship to the child.

See *Helping Immigrant Families*, page 24



*New Americans*, from page 22


of immigration and child welfare issues, examining how immigration affects child welfare policy, practice, research, funding, and professional development.

In July 2006, American Humane and Loyola University hosted a roundtable discussion in Chicago on immigration and child welfare. The gathering brought together more than 70 diverse professionals from the United States and Mexico to discuss the migration of individuals and families in the United States and South America and its effect on children and on child welfare policy, systems, and services (see “The Migration and Child Welfare Network,” page 22).

Dialogue examined

- causes, patterns, and projections of migratory flows in the Americas;
- migration and its effects on the family;
- migration and child well-being, including child maltreatment, mental and physical health, and education;
- current and proposed immigration laws and policies as they relate to child welfare practice; and
- the effect of migrating families and immigration policies and laws on child welfare systems.

The roundtable formed the basis of a multidisciplinary collaboration designed to inform and influence policy at the local, state, national, and international levels. The roundtable report, *Migration: A Critical Issue for Child Welfare*, highlights specific issues and activities relating to research, training, policy, advocacy, elimination of barriers, and collaboration across systems.

Immigrant children are quickly becoming the new Americans. That this vulnerable and rapidly growing population receives the services needed to thrive is in everyone’s best interest. Their unique service needs cross all areas of child welfare and must be included in debates about how to accomplish the child welfare mandates of safety, permanency, and well-being. 

*Sonia Velazquez is Vice President, Children’s Services Division, American Humane Association. Ilze Earner is Assistant Professor, Hunter College School of Social Work. Yali Lincroft is a consultant for the Annie E. Casey Foundation and the California Family to Family Initiative.*

## Helping Immigrant Families in Federal Custody

continued from page 23

If the child is in the DUCS system, he is safe and adequately cared for, and efforts are being made to find his family. If someone knows the whereabouts of the child’s kin, this information can help DUCS proceed faster.

For children whose parents are detained but the children are not, it isn’t wise to contact DUCS regarding the children’s care. Getting the children into the system puts them in removal proceedings.

### **How can I locate a child who has been taken into federal custody with her parents?**

If the child is detained with her parents, Homeland Security is responsible. It’s a hard system to navigate. She is possibly in a family shelter with her parents, if not yet removed from the country. Pro bono legal help is useful in some cases.

### **How can the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops/Migration and Refugee Services help?**

We have staff whose responsibility is to provide “best interest” recommendations for children in many of the facilities, and we also provide suitability assessments and follow-up services

for some children. Some of our foster care programs take DUCS children who have no family reunification options. Our partner agency, Lutheran Immigration and Refugee Service, similarly has staff in some locations and provides foster care for children with no family reunification options.

For further questions about a child caught in the Homeland Security system, contact our child welfare technical assistance program, Bridging Refugee Youth and Children’s Services, at [info@BRYCS.org](mailto:info@BRYCS.org), or 888/572-6500.

### **What’s the long-term outlook for immigrant families of questionable legal status?**

Homeland Security raids in the interior of the country will likely continue. Children and families will continue to be caught up in the care system for DUCS or in family detention under Homeland Security. Children and families will continue to need all our assistance to remain together and receive the best care possible under difficult circumstances.

The long-term outcome for children or families caught in the raids and enforcement system is typically not encouraging. Most do not face the possibility of immigration relief and are removed from the United States to their country of origin.



## Survey Participants Needed

Most immigrant children and families reside in 6 states—California, Florida, Illinois, New Jersey, New York, and Texas. Another 10—Arizona, Arkansas, Colorado, Georgia, Kentucky, Nebraska, Nevada, North Carolina, Tennessee, and Utah—are emerging destinations for immigrant families.

To improve service delivery, the Migration and Child Welfare Network is surveying child welfare agencies in these destination states on their policies and practices regarding immigrant children and families. Results will be disseminated to provide child welfare agencies nationwide with examples of policies and practices that meet the needs of immigrant populations, as well as examples of challenges associated with serving this population.

If you are a child welfare administrator in one of these states, your participation in the survey is appreciated. E-mail Alan J. Dettlaff, University of Illinois at Chicago, [aland@uic.edu](mailto:aland@uic.edu).

## Learn More

- *Immigrants and Refugees in Child Welfare: A Special Issue of CWLA's Child Welfare Journal*, edited by Ilze Earner and Hilda Rivera. CWLA, 2005. To purchase (\$25, plus shipping, handling, and sales tax), go to [www.tinyurl.com/yuxhfd](http://www.tinyurl.com/yuxhfd).
- *Migration: A Critical Issue for Child Welfare/2006 Transnational Research and Policy Forum Report*, by Sonia Velazquez, Lara Bruce, Maria Vidal de Haymes, Robert Mindell, and Alan J. Dettlaff. American Humane Association, 2006. To download the roundtable report, go to [www.tinyurl.com/2k5ktx](http://www.tinyurl.com/2k5ktx).
- *Migration: A Critical Issue for Child Welfare—A Special Issue of American Humane's Protecting Children Journal*, edited by Sonia Velazquez, Maria Vidal de Haymes, and Robert Mindell. American Humane Association, 2006. To purchase, go to [www.tinyurl.com/2k5ktx](http://www.tinyurl.com/2k5ktx).
- *Undercounted, Underserved: Immigrant and Refugee Families in the Child Welfare System*, by Yali Lincroft and Jena Resner. Annie E Casey Foundation, 2006. To download the report, go to [www.tinyurl.com/24nuzv](http://www.tinyurl.com/24nuzv).



## Web Resources

- **Bridging Refugee Youth and Children's Services**, [www.BRYCS.org](http://www.BRYCS.org), is a national technical assistance project focusing on the challenges refugee youth and children face in adjusting to life in the United States.
- **Child Welfare Information Gateway**, [www.childwelfare.gov](http://www.childwelfare.gov), a service of the U.S. Children's Bureau, provides information and resources to help protect children and strengthen families, including articles on working with immigrant families and a glossary of child welfare terms translated into Spanish.
- **Family to Family California**, [www.f2f.ca.gov](http://www.f2f.ca.gov), is a public-private partnership to improve child welfare services in California. The website includes resources related to immigrants in the child welfare system.

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# POISONOUS PREDATOR

*By John Pekkanen*



Once a joyful child with lots of promise, Jonathan Harrison seldom smiles now.

SCOTT ROBINSON

# Lead is gone from gasoline and paint but continues to pose danger to kids, particularly in older neighborhoods.

Jonathan Harrison is 8 years old and has no friends. He struggles to read and do basic arithmetic.

“No one likes me,” he tells his mother. “I just want to die.”

A little boy with somber brown eyes, Jonathan began life with promise. He weighed 10 pounds at birth, walked at 1, began speaking before 2, and always seemed to be smiling, recalls his mother, Connie Royster. “Jonathan was a beautiful baby, happy all the time. He was a child anyone would want.”

Born in October 1997, Jonathan lived the first 10 months of his life in Fort Washington, Maryland. Then the family moved to the District of Columbia, renting a turn-of-the-century house.

Jonathan did the things little boys do. He played with trucks, watched Sesame Street, went shopping with his mother. But around age 2, his personality changed. He became temperamental and hard to control—almost a different child.

“Jonathan cut all the cables in the house,” his mother says. “To the TV, VCR, to everything. Cut them to pieces.” The mother of three older children, Royster knew Jonathan’s behavior was not normal, even for the terrible twos.

She took Jonathan to a Kaiser health clinic and was surprised when tests revealed a blood-lead level of 20 micrograms per deciliter (mcg/dl)—twice the “action level” for lead poisoning established by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC). A repeat test put the level at 22 mcg/dl.

Like most lead-poisoned children, Jonathan exhibited no physical symptoms. But his mother, a DC native and registered nurse, knew of lead’s toxicity to the brain and believed his high level explained his behavior change.

Notified of Jonathan’s lead poisoning, the DC Department of Health sent inspectors to the home, where tests detected lead in the interior paint and paint dust. Royster remembered occasionally removing paint chips from Jonathan’s mouth when he was a toddler and how he liked to play and crawl in the corner room where all the windows let sunlight in. Leaded dust often results from the opening and closing of windows.

The health department ordered Jonathan and his family not to live in the house until a lead-abatement contractor, to be hired by the landlord, rehabbed the house. The abatement was supposed to take three months but lasted six.

Kaiser doctors referred Jonathan to a pediatric neurologist and a psychiatrist at Children’s National Medical Center, where Jonathan was diagnosed with attention deficit/hyperactivity disorder (ADHD). Doctors prescribed two drugs—one for ADHD, and one to prevent Jonathan from sleepwalking. The medication helped calm Jonathan for periods of time, but when it wore off he sometimes threw tantrums and became impulsive and aggressive.

At age 4, while riding the Metro subway with older brother Gregory, Jonathan bolted out at a station just as the doors opened. Gregory, now 20 and a junior at the University of the District of Columbia, ran after him, yelling, “Move, move,” as he pushed aside incoming passengers. He found Jonathan on the Metro platform, laughing.

One day Jonathan set his mother’s bed on fire.

“I knew Jonathan did not act in any way like my other children or like any child I ever knew,” Royster says. “He was getting more and more uncontrollable, and there didn’t seem to be anything anyone could do to stop it.”

## Toxic Legacy

Variations of Jonathan’s story occur too often in this country. Hundreds of children are harmed by lead poisoning every year in Washington, DC. Nationwide, 310,000 children under age 5 are lead-poisoned each year, according to CDC; the World



SCOTT ROBINSON

Health Organization (WHO) reports up to 18 million are harmed worldwide.

What is remarkable about lead poisoning is how destructive it has been to children and society over many decades, yet how slowly we are working to eliminate it.

This disconnect persists despite scientific evidence of lead’s harm that goes back centuries and is as convincing as that linking cigarette smoking to lung cancer. Lead is a powerful neurotoxin. From the turn of the 20th Century to the

## Watch Out! Surprising Sources Of Lead Exposure

- **Toys and furniture** made before 1978 and painted with lead-based paint.
- **Miniblinds** (imported vinyl, nonglossy varieties). As they age, lead dust can be released. Look for a label that says “nonleaded” or “no lead added.”
- **Lead in soil** may come from paint chips that have flaked off older homes, or from leaded-gasoline exhaust from cars. When children play in the soil, lead clings to their hands.
- **Lead-glazed ceramic dishes and cups**, especially hand-made items and Mexican terra-cotta pottery. These and lead crystal and pewter dishes should not be used to store food or beverages—particularly acidic drinks like orange juice—for long periods.
- **Metal toy jewelry and trinkets**. In July 2004, 150 million pieces of toy jewelry from India were recalled because of lead. Several other recalls of inexpensive metal charms and jewelry have taken place since then.
- **Lead used in hobbies**—especially lead soldiers, ceramic glazes, and the lead dividers in stained glass.
- **Many garden hoses** contain lead and should not be used for drinking unless labeled “safe for drinking.”
- **Folk remedies** containing lead, such as greta and azarcon, used to treat upset stomach in Latino and Asian communities.
- **Chapulines** (grasshoppers) from Mexico, eaten as snack food. Usually seasoned, sold in small, unlabeled bags at Latino food stores or flea markets, some have been found to be highly contaminated with lead.
- **Cosmetic products** called *Sindoor* (also called *kohl*), produced in India, contain high levels of lead.
- **Litargirio**, a skin product from the Dominican Republic. Nearly 80% lead, this powder may be used as an antiperspirant or foot powder or to treat fungal skin infections and burns.
- **Certain imported candies**, especially from Mexico. Dulmex-brand Bolirindo lollipops, tamarind candy, and candies flavored with chili powder have been found to contain unacceptable amounts of lead.
- **Some imported candles**. When leaded wicks burn, they release poisonous fumes that can be inhaled and may also leave a toxic dust.
- **Sidewalk chalk**. Multicolored sidewalk chalk manufactured in China was found in 2003 to contain high levels of lead.

1970s, thousands of children died from acute lead poisoning, many misdiagnosed with TB or other illnesses.

Although a child died of lead poisoning in Minneapolis last year, lead now seldom kills children; it only damages their brains, and the damage is irreversible. Scores of studies link childhood lead exposure to diminished intelligence, school failure, behavioral disorders, violence, and criminality.

Lead exposure offers a largely unexamined explanation for some of what continues to go wrong in this country.

“Lead’s impact on public health and social functioning is such that I think in a hundred years we will look back and recognize that lead, tobacco, and air pollution were the choleras and typhoids of the 20th Century,” says Bruce Lanphear, one of the country’s top lead researchers.

Carl Shy, Professor Emeritus of Epidemiology at the University of North Carolina, told WHO, “The mining and production of lead and lead products is the mistake of the 20th Century.”

Some people assume lead poisoning went away with the total ban on leaded gas in 1995, 23 years after its phaseout began and almost 50 years after lead was first added to gasoline as an anti-knock agent. National health surveys in the 1970s had revealed high lead levels among children and adults but showed a 75% decrease by 1991. As the tide of childhood lead poisoning ebbed, there were declarations of victory; a 1995 *Atlantic Monthly* article hailed America’s “triumph over lead.”

But lead poisoning remains the most significant environmental-health disease of children; it’s especially prevalent among inner-city kids. Even though environmental lead levels caused by gasoline have dropped, lead poisoning is a pressing issue now because we’ve discovered much more about its capacity for human harm.

Children from all levels of society are at risk of lead poisoning, but those at the bottom, who are more apt to live in older, poorly maintained housing, are most often harmed. African American children have two and a half times the risk of white children, and Latino children about one and a half times the risk, according to CDC. Ellen Silbergeld, Professor of Environmental Health Sciences at the Johns Hopkins Bloomberg School of Public Health, refers to this as the “ghettoization” of lead poisoning.

In DC, as in other cities, some children grow up in lead traps. They may drink lead-contaminated water from their taps. They play in, and sometimes eat, lead-contaminated soil in their yards and playgrounds, a decades-old legacy from leaded-gasoline automobile exhaust and lead paint. They inhale lead-paint dust and eat lead-paint chips in their homes. Children living near waste sites breathe lead particles from the burning of batteries, computers, and other leaded products.

Lead can harm children before birth: It leaches from the bones of expectant mothers exposed during their own childhoods and crosses the placental barrier to enter the fetal brain. The May 2006 issue of *Environmental Health Perspectives* confirmed earlier findings that very low lead exposure during gestation may cause “lasting and possibly permanent effects” on a child’s cognitive development.

The toxic legacy of early lead exposure extends into adulthood. Analyzing census and health-survey data on more than 20,000 Americans, Silbergeld, and Mark Lustberg of the University of Maryland, reported in 2002 in *Archives of Internal*

*Medicine* that more than 29 million adult Americans may be at increased risk of premature death because of lead exposure in the 1970s, before the use of leaded gas began to drop. The authors found that premature mortality occurred at lead levels above the current CDC action level of 10 mcg/dl and rose sharply as the levels went higher. When childhood lead levels reached 30 mcg/dl, adult cancer deaths increased 68%.

Early lead exposure is also linked to vascular and kidney disease, hypertension, Alzheimer's disease, stroke, and diabetes.

## Houses of Poison

The greatest risk of lead exposure today comes from housing stock built before 1978, the year the federal government, after earlier restricting the amount of lead in paint, eliminated it entirely. Up until 1950, paint used in houses contained as much as 50% lead by weight. Even though it may have been put on 60 or more years ago and painted over many times since, old paint remains a hazard. If the newer paint chips off, the old paint can, too.

Lead-paint dust and chips appeal to children because they taste sweet, and even a dime-size chip of pre-1950 lead paint contains enough lead to poison a 2-year-old. Toddlers are especially vulnerable because their brains are developing. Like Jonathan, they crawl on the floor and put all manner of things in their mouths. In fact, lead poisoning is most prevalent in 1- and 2-year-olds, the ages kids are most apt to put their fingers in their mouths after crawling on floors with lead-paint dust.

The U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development estimates that 38 million American housing units contain lead-based paint, and more than half are in dilapidated condition. CDC estimates 90% of American preschoolers with elevated blood-lead levels live in pre-1978 housing. Children are especially sensitive to lead's harmful effects in part because their stomach and intestines absorb up to 50% of ingested lead, whereas adults absorb about 10%. Children deficient in certain nutrients, especially iron and calcium, are even more disposed to absorbing lead.

In DC, according to the best estimates, about three-fourths of the housing stock was built before 1978. Although housing in the Washington

suburbs is generally newer and freer of lead contamination, suburban children are not immune, especially when lead dust is generated during renovations of older homes.

## The Brain Drain

Until the 1970s, lead poisoning was defined by a blood-lead level of 60 mcg/dl, six times the current action level—and then only when there were overt symptoms such as anemia, stomach ailments, convulsions, and seizures. By 1991, when it was clear that children were harmed at much lower lead levels, CDC lowered its threshold to 10 mcg/dl.

*Jonathan and his mother, Connie Royster, on the sidewalk near the home where he was lead-poisoned. More than 20 years earlier, three other children were lead-poisoned while living in the same rental property. Nothing was done to prevent it from happening again.*



SCOTT ROBINSON

“Lowering the threshold to 10 was a very important step in public health,” says Jerome Paulson, Codirector of the Mid-Atlantic Center for Children’s Health and the Environment. “But no one should have assumed that kids with blood-lead levels below 10 were safe.”

Studies by Lanphear and others have found that children’s brains are impaired at lead concentrations of 5 mcg/dl—half the CDC’s standard—and lower. This came to light recently, Lanphear explains, “because until the last decade, we couldn’t find children with levels low enough to study them in this way.” Lanphear says this evidence proves there is no such thing as a safe level of lead exposure for children.

Children with lead levels below 10 mcg/dl are not considered lead-poisoned by city or state health departments or CDC, so no official numbers exist on children damaged by supposedly harmless levels. But lead researchers believe many more children have been harmed by lead levels below the action level. A reasonable estimate is that a million or more mostly minority children nationwide are at risk each year of preventable cognitive or behavioral impairments from lead exposure, perpetuating what Silbergeld calls “the social tragedy of lead poisoning in the United States.”

This may help explain why so many urban schools have so many young children who don’t meet academic standards and why more than half of young African American men do not finish high school. In DC, 90% of fourth graders do not read at grade level; some 11,000 District youngsters are in special-education programs. Only 1 in 4 DC high school freshmen graduates from high school.

Blame is assigned to educators, parents, and students themselves, but it may well be that lead has so impaired the brains of many young urban children that they cannot succeed in school.

A 2002 study of school failure, *A Strange Ignorance*, conducted by analyst Michael T. Martin for the Arizona School Boards Association, said of lead: “The fact that most ‘failing schools’ are in low-income neighborhoods where children live in housing known to be laced with a brain damaging neurotoxin is not just a coincidence.”

## An Uncertain Future

Jonathan became more aggressive as he grew older. In a swimming pool, he pushed his brother Gregory’s girlfriend’s head underwater and held it there as she struggled to break free. As she reached the surface gasping for air, Jonathan laughed.

At a shopping mall with Gregory, Jonathan waited at the door for a woman walking in. He suddenly slammed the door against her, pinning her between the door and the frame. She screamed, but Jonathan kept pushing on the door until Gregory pulled him away and freed the woman.

“You don’t know from one second to the next what Jonathan will do,” says Gregory, who has great affection for his little brother. “He can be sitting next to you quietly watching TV, and the next second shove popcorn in your face and try to start a fight. With Jonathan, you always have to expect the unexpected.”

Jonathan’s half-sisters, both in their 20s, told their mother they’re afraid to take Jonathan on outings because he dashes into the street. His mother says he can’t be trusted to tell the truth.

## Foods That May Lessen the Effects of Lead Exposure

- **Vitamin C.** Studies have found a link between decreased blood concentrations of lead and increased concentrations of vitamin C. There is some evidence, though not as well-established, that vitamin E also may offer some protection from childhood lead exposure.
- **Calcium.** Studies show that calcium reduces both absorption and retention of lead. Calcium is present in dairy products and many vegetables.
- **Iron.** There is evidence that iron helps block lead absorption in the gastrointestinal system. It’s available in many foods, including beef, kidney beans, boiled spinach, and oatmeal, as well as iron-fortified breakfast cereals such as Cheerios, Fruit Loops, and Cap’n Crunch.

Jonathan throws things without provocation. His mother says she cannot allow Jonathan to be around a younger child if no adults are present. “If he’s alone with young kids, he’ll hurt them.”


Jonathan once told his mother if he had a gun he would shoot his father. When she asks why he says and does these things, he answers, “I don’t know why. I just do them.”

Jonathan often paces until daybreak. He’s been prescribed sleeping medication, but his mother uses it sparingly. “I don’t want to turn him into a zombie.”

Jonathan resists going to school and taking ADHD medication, so Royster, who works part-time to be home with him, grinds it up and puts it in applesauce. Jonathan’s father, Clayton, a teacher at the elementary school Jonathan attends, no longer lives with Royster but often arrives in the morning to take his son to school. Royster says Jonathan has had violent outbursts at school.

“The fact that his father teaches at that school and helps with Jonathan is why Jonathan is still there,” Royster says. “Otherwise, I think the school might have already expelled him.”

On medication, Jonathan is cooperative with his teachers and friendly to his classmates. He can be affectionate and loving to his family. But neither medication nor the group therapy he attends with his mother has diminished his emotional eruptions when the medication begins to wear off.

Royster, who gave birth to Jonathan when she was 43, despairs for his future and her own. “He keeps getting bigger and stronger,” she says, “and I keep hoping he’ll get better, but the older he gets, it seems, the worse he gets.” 

*This article was excerpted and adapted, with permission, from the August 2006 issue of Washingtonian magazine. A Contributing Editor with Washingtonian, John Pekkanen has been writing about health and medicine for three decades. For more information about lead poisoning and advocacy efforts, visit the Coalition to End Childhood Lead Poisoning at [www.leadsafe.org](http://www.leadsafe.org).*



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# Eye On CWLA

## Q&A GUIDE MAKES APPLYING FOR NEW FEDERAL GRANTS EASIER

A new resource guide developed by CWLA and other groups helps answer common questions about applying for grants under the new Child and Family Services Improvement Act of 2006.

The guide is intended to stimulate organizations and agencies to begin planning and forming regional partnerships so they will be well prepared to apply for grants under the act. Available at [www.tinyurl.com/yp7st8](http://www.tinyurl.com/yp7st8), the Q&A includes essential information on the types of activities supported by these new funds, and eligibility and application requirements.

Other groups that contributed to the guide include the American Public Human Services Association, the Center for Law and Social Policy, the Children's Defense Fund, the Legal Action Center, the National Association of State Alcohol and Drug Abuse Directors, and the Rebecca Project for Human Rights.

The Child and Family Services Improvement Act of 2006, which reauthorized the Promoting Safe and Stable Families Program, targets \$145 million over five years for competitive grants for substance abuse prevention and treatment activities for children who are in out-of-home care or are at risk of placement in care as a result of a parent's or other caregiver's methamphetamine or other substance abuse.

Responding to research that quality prevention and intervention can have a positive effect on families, the grants will be awarded to regional collaborative partnerships of public and private agencies and programs and services providing activities designed to increase children's safety and well-being.

## COMING SOON: MID-ATLANTIC REGION TRAINING CONFERENCE

Hundreds of CWLA members and friends in the Mid-Atlantic region will gather just a few blocks from Baltimore's bustling Inner Harbor this fall for a training conference that will focus on the current climate for America's most vulnerable children, families, and communities.

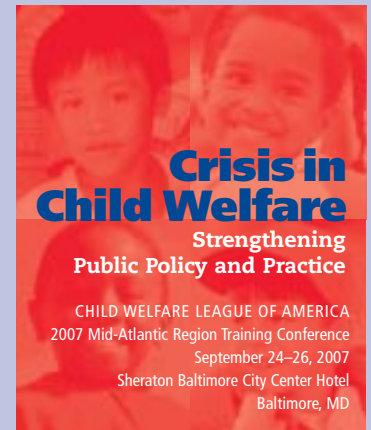
"Our goal is to raise expectations and move practice, policy, and social issues forward," says CWLA Mid-Atlantic Region Director Cassandra Rainey. "Participants can expect an inspiring and engaging experience."

The conference, *Crisis in Child Welfare: Strengthening Public Policy and Practice*, will take place at the Sheraton Baltimore City Center Hotel, September 24–26. Invited guest speakers include William Bell, President and CEO of Casey Family Programs; Maryland Lieutenant Governor Anthony Brown; Maryland U.S. Representative Elijah Cummings; New York State First Lady Silda Wall Spitzer; and the Reverend Alfonso Wyatt, Vice President for the Fund for the City of New York.

Planned workshop topics include

- traumatized youth in child welfare—what practitioners need to know and do;
- children separated from families across international borders;
- supervising and training family reunification staff;
- changing the system—a shift to family-centered, evidence-based practice; and
- poverty on the brain—using neuroscience to empower resilience in children.

Visit [www.cwla.org/conferences](http://www.cwla.org/conferences) to register and learn more.



## MARK YOUR CALENDAR

CWLA is holding a joint conference with the Texas Alliance of Child and Family Services, October 10–12, in Houston. The conference, *Strengthening Alliances for Our Children's Future*, will bring together child welfare providers and other human service professionals to learn from one another and network.

Conference workshops will address a broad spectrum of clinical and administrative issues within organizations serving children and families in Texas and throughout CWLA's 11-state Mountain-Plains region. Visit [www.tinyurl.com/2vnpf2](http://www.tinyurl.com/2vnpf2) for more information.



## AFTER DISASTER, NEW WEB TOOL HELPS LOCATE CHILDREN

When Hurricane Katrina hit, John McInturf, Director of Child Welfare Programs at the Office of Community Services, Louisiana Department of Social Services, developed a simple database, updated daily, to help caseworkers locate children separated from their families.

This Katrina Database evolved in the weeks and months following the storm, helping reconnect children with social workers, caregivers, and birth families. The database enabled users to enter multiple addresses for children and became the primary tool to record the search results for displaced foster children after the storm.

"I was able to report to the governor and the federal government twice a week the number of children located and the number of children still missing," McInturf recalls.

Investigations of missing children could be easily tracked and updated using the database. If a caseworker talked to a neighbor about where a child was last seen, for example, that information was put into the database and viewed by everyone working on the case. "It was a place you could deposit that information so that you didn't have people running down the same clues," said McInturf.

Now, the National Resource Center for Child Welfare Data and Technology (NRC-CWDT), housed at CWLA, is working with McInturf to create a more complex, web-based database using the same concept, called Reconnecting Families. McInturf hopes that because the Reconnecting Families database is a full design, rather than the piecemeal database originally designed after the hurricane, it will give agencies a complete tool to prepare for any situation. He says Reconnecting Families is important because even though most agencies have database systems that track children, the limits of those systems are pushed during disasters because they don't allow room for all of the information recorded during the search process.

A full demonstration of the database will be available this July on the NRC-CWDT website at [www.nrcwdt.org](http://www.nrcwdt.org). Caseworkers or agencies can go online to become familiar with the Reconnecting Families demo. Then, in the event of a natural disaster, agencies may contact CWLA—call or



email Julie Ohm Chang, Senior Child Welfare Data Specialist at NRC-CWDT, at 703/263-2024 or [johm@cwla.org](mailto:johm@cwla.org)—to use the database to track and locate missing children.

When using the database, agencies have two options. They can either use it through NRC-CWDT's secure website, or they can use a code to put Reconnecting Families on their own website. Agencies can then upload their data directly into the Reconnecting Families program. And because it's a real-time database, only the most up-to-date information will be shown. As a preventative measure, agencies may put the database on their own website at any time so they'll be prepared if disaster strikes.

The Reconnecting Families database will be demonstrated at the 10th National Child Welfare Data and Technology Conference in Washington, DC, July 18–20. For information about the conference, visit the NRC-CWDT website and click on Conferences.

### UPCOMING

#### **JULY 18–20**

National Resource Center for Child Welfare Data and Technology  
*Making IT Work: Linking Data with Practice and Outcomes*  
L'Enfant Plaza Hotel,  
Washington, DC

#### **SEPTEMBER 24–26**

Mid-Atlantic Region  
Training Conference  
*Crisis in Child Welfare:  
Strengthening Public Policy  
and Practice*  
Westin Hotel, Baltimore, MD

#### **OCTOBER 10–12**

Texas Child Care Administrators;  
CWLA Mountain-Plains Region  
Training Conference  
*Strengthening Alliances for Our  
Children's Future*  
Westin Galleria Hotel, Houston, TX

#### **DECEMBER 10–12**

National Adoption and Foster  
Care Training Conference  
*Shared Beliefs...Shared  
Values...Achieving Excellence in  
Adoption and Foster Care*  
Marriott New Orleans,  
New Orleans, LA

Dates and locations subject to change. For more information on the CWLA calendar, including conference registration, hotels, programs, and contacts, visit CWLA's website at [www.cwla.org/conferences](http://www.cwla.org/conferences), or contact CWLA's conference registrar at [register@cwla.org](mailto:register@cwla.org) or 703/412-2439.

# The Professional

## One Agency's Journey to Developing More Effective Supervisors *By William Atkinson*

***The Jewish Board of Family and Children's Services (JBFCs) began a process to improve the effectiveness of its residential milieu line supervisors through two 18-hour effective supervisory practice courses. What began as two courses geared to one targeted discipline has blossomed into a 60-hour certificate in supervision, with 30 more elective hours, now used by supervisors throughout the agency. JBFCs staff discussed how their agency's targeted efforts to address a single issue became a significant transformational project for the entire agency during CWLA's 2006 Competence on Call teleconference series. This article is based on that teleconference.***

JBFCS in Hawthorne, New York, is one of the largest nonprofit, nonsectarian mental health and social service agencies in the United States. In existence since the 1890s, it offers 185 community-based, residential, and day treatment programs throughout New York City and Westchester County, and serves more than 10,000 clients. The organization has a staff of 3,200, plus 2,000 trained volunteers.

In 1999, JBFCs created the Institute for Child Care Professionalism and Training for its nonresidential programs, and the following year added a program designed to improve the effectiveness of its residential line supervisors. "Participants reported that, when they returned to their work, their supervisors weren't always tuned in or engaging in consistent supervision," explains Institute Director Frank Delano. "We realized we needed to create a parallel process for supervisors."

Today, the institute offers four programs: a 50-hour child care worker certificate, a 60-hour supervision certificate, additional workshop training on a variety of topics for outside participants, and involvement and participation in training on national and international levels.

The supervisory training program began with two 18-hour courses developed by CWLA called Effective Supervisory Practice. The first course covers the role of the middle manager, managing problems, constructive confrontation, supervisory relationships, behaviors of competent supervisors, effective communication, structuring the supervisory session, team building, conducting effective meetings, stress management, and time management.

The second course covers recruiting and screening, interviewing and hiring, orientation and training, personnel evaluations, progressive discipline, managing conflict, termination of employment, managing change, and agencywide crisis management.

"As we conducted these sessions, we [received] consistent feedback from people...that they needed more depth," Delano says. This led JBFCs to expand the program in 2003, culminating with a certificate in supervision. The 60-hour certificate program includes

- Effective Supervisory Practice 1 (18 hours),
- Effective Supervisory Practice 2 (18 hours),

- Establishing Yourself as a Supervisor/Director (6 hours),
- Professionally Packaging Your Meetings (4 hours),
- The Art of Delegation for Supervisors (4 hours),
- Interviewing Skills to Hire: Developing a Professionally Packaged Interview (4 hours),
- Building a Professional Package: The Art of Constructive Confrontation (4 hours), and
- Power in the Supervisory Relationship (2 hours).

Course content was a result of feedback from the first two courses, as well as program requests. The institute has had three graduating classes, in 2003, 2004, and 2006.

Even with 60 hours, participants said they still wanted more. As a result, the program now also offers 30 additional elective hours, consisting of various related supervisory courses.

### Challenges

The program's expansion has not been without growing pains. Some residential program administrators resisted the training early on, which Delano attributes to agency politics and administrative changes within JBFCs. The agency addressed these internal issues, he says, and staff acceptance of the training program has improved.

The institute created a "training cabinet," comprising all the milieu directors of the residential programs. The cabinet meets twice a year to measure satisfaction levels for the training institute's programs and to plan programs for the following year. The institute has also expanded training to different programs and disciplines in JBFCs and to integrate these different groups.

The institute also spent \$8,000 to certify Delano to train staff. "Once we made the investment...it legitimized the process," Delano says. "Once the agency agreed to spend the money, more ears tuned into the program."

The institute has also focused on participant retention rates in the program, especially for the three-day courses. "During the first six months of the three-day program, the dropout rate was about 50%," Delano recalls. "Now, it's down to 15%, the result of improved program credibility."

Some supervisors still have difficulty admitting they need supervisory training. "We explain to them that what they don't know isn't a problem," Delano says, "however, we still face this reluctance at different levels."

Some participants have been concerned about confidentiality during the training. "Some of them worried what they said would be shared outside," Delano explains. JBFCs has moved to address these concerns, however. For example, the institute conducts a four-month follow-up after training, either by bringing people together or by conducting phone surveys; one of the questions relates to confidentiality. Delano says, "The results of the last survey found that 90% of the participants were happy with the level of confidentiality."

# Package

Management  
MATTERS

The institute occasionally has found that training philosophies were in conflict with program activities or philosophies. “The solution was to get higher-level supervisors into the training,” Delano explains. Trainers also allow participants to say, “That’s not how we do it.”

“We allow different philosophies to merge,” Delano says, “or we explain they can be different and still be good practice.”

## Key Developments and Strategies

In addition to the improvements the institute has made along the way, it has adopted additional changes that have helped the training programs flourish. For example:

- The institute hired a highly qualified administrative assistant.
- The institute seeks feedback about the need for additional training and ideas for new courses; these participant evaluations are a primary vehicle for moving the institute forward.



- When the institute created its residential training cabinet, getting program directors involved was challenging because of their lack of availability. “As a result, we decided to staff the cabinet with milieu directors,” Delano explains, “because they’re the ones sending people to training.”
- The institute decided to deliver courses at a local hotel to remove supervisors from their everyday work environments.
- An element of the program asks that participants create action plans. At the end of each three-day course, participants must announce two action plans they will work on during the next four months, such as redoing a manual or a meeting structure. Over the last three years, 88% of participants report they have implemented their action plans, and 73% say they have seen significant positives coming from them.
- To provide better customer service, the institute began scheduling more courses on weekends and evenings. This opened the door to larger audiences since many supervisors can’t get away from work during the day.
- JBFCFS has moved to expand the program’s availability to more supervisors. The original audience was residential milieu supervisors, but now the program has expanded to clinical supervisors, supervisors of nonresidential programs, support service supervisors, shift supervisors, human resource specialists, art therapists, intern supervisors, and even employees being groomed to be supervisors. “Widening the audience enriches the training because of different backgrounds, levels, and experiences,” Delano reports.

Since the institute opened the course to those being groomed as supervisors, for example, three participants have become supervisors, four are still being groomed, and two decided not to become supervisors because the course helped them realize they didn’t want to become supervisors after all. “We think this is actually a good result,” Delano says. “We didn’t end up promoting people who shouldn’t be promoted.”

- Participants now receive a \$1,000 bonus for completing the certificate program.
- The institute has developed a “professional package” concept that links the themes and key ideas.

In establishing the institute, JBFCFS has learned the importance of organizational structural autonomy. “The training programs aren’t linked to a particular program department, which allows the training to progress without a lot of red tape,” Delano explains.

JBFCFS also has learned the importance of evaluations. Delano emphasizes, “We receive evaluations on every course.” One question, for example, asks whether the trainer showed respect for the knowledge of participants, on which the institute places particular emphasis.

Delano says the emphasis on confidentiality is also important. “We want to make sure no content leaves the room; however, we explain that themes can leave the room.”

Finally, the institute has found that advertising the programs directly to the targeted audiences leads to more participation. Instead of the institute advertising to targeted participants’ bosses and asking them to find someone to cover a shift before allowing an employee to attend training, targeted participants contact their supervisors to ask permission once they receive notification about the available training.

## Results and Benefits

Although the program’s initial purpose was to bring supervisors from different levels and functions together to receive training, an additional benefit has been a dynamic synthesis resulting from the interaction of supervisors. Sharing their different professional experiences has helped improve understanding of different roles and led to an increased blending of clinical and milieu philosophies.

Another significant benefit is that participants have come away with a lot of information and strategies that help them deal with workplace confrontation.

As mentioned earlier, the institute incorporates a professional package concept, which JBFCFS defines as

*a cohesive concept that logically articulates a commonly accepted professional standard that depersonalizes an issue and stimulates a professional process. Consistent use of the package cultivates an organizational culture that promotes a standard of excellence, cultural competence, and highest quality services.*

One of the topics the program reviews is the “professionally packaged confrontation,” defined as “using assessment skills to frame the confrontation in order to depersonalize the issue and explain the problem in a way that reflects an acceptable professional standard that is unquestionable to most.”

Brice Moss, Assistant Director of Continuous Performance Improvement at JBFCFS’s Linden Hill Residential Treatment Facility, participated in the institute’s training when he was a team leader. “One thing I learned was that being direct during a confrontation with someone who isn’t meeting expectations doesn’t just set the stage for progressive discipline,” he says. “It also offers the supervisee the best chance of recognizing there is a problem and making a needed correction.” Rather than focusing on the conflict, according to Moss, the training helped him see direct confrontation as an effort to be helpful to a staff person.

He used this approach with two of his staff—individuals who didn’t want to play by the rules and didn’t see anything wrong with that. “They were hard to supervise and were also unkind to the children,” he says. “I undertook the confrontations, and the results were good.” One individual moved to another job, the other agreed to accept an overnight staff position, which was helpful in its own way.

“Since that time, I have moved on to my current position,” Moss says. “With the confidence I gained from the training, I felt ready to take on this position in senior management.”


Deborah Mondello, Clinical Supervisor and Intake Coordinator for JBFCFS’s Goldsmith Center for Adolescent Treatment, was hired as a clinical supervisor in 2003 and signed up for the 60-hour course. She too learned a great deal related to confrontation issues. “Although I had experience as a supervisor before, I became much more comfortable with constructive confrontation, supervisory interaction, evaluation writing, and disciplinary action,” she says. “Supervisees also began to appreciate my ability to create personal corrective plans when needed. I was able to evolve into a supervisor who was able to teach rather than point out flaws.”

## The Future

The institute has a number of goals. One is to continue to develop ways to link training back to “the floor” and to the programs. “We want to link action plans back to supervisors, so they sign off on them and send the results back to us,” Delano says. A second goal is to develop the certificate program into a competency-based model, which may involve tests and a more formalized structure for how the certificate is earned.

A third goal is to attract more senior-level supervisors and directors to the training. “We want to structure the courses in such a way that we can attract these people,” Delano explains.

Two additional goals are to create a strategy for conducting formal research on the program and process, as well as to identify ways to involve more staff as trainers.

For more information about JBFCFS and the Institute for Child Care Professionalism and Training, visit [www.jbfcfs.org](http://www.jbfcfs.org). For more information about CWLA’s Effective Supervisory Practice program, visit [www.cwla.org/pubs](http://www.cwla.org/pubs). 

*William Atkinson is a full-time business writer and former regional reporter for TIME, and a regular contributor to Children’s Voice.*

# Other Voices

DONALD T. FLOYD JR.



## The Five Cs Are Key for Positive Youth Development

Researchers say young people are resources to be developed. This is the underlying theme of the Positive Youth Development (PYD) theory. A recent 4-H study on Positive Youth Development, led by Tufts University's Richard Lerner, is the first longitudinal investigation of a diverse sample of fifth graders and their parents that tests ideas linking PYD, youth contribution, and participation in community youth development programs. The study provides evidence-based support for the value of quality youth development organizations in promoting positive characteristics for success in youth.

The study validates the 100-year impact of 4-H PYD programs on the youth who have participated in 4-H. It shows that by encouraging the five Cs of PYD—competence, confidence, connection, character, and caring—every youth development program can help young people become contributing citizens to their communities, their country, and their world. The five components focus on the positive aspects of developing a young person. By doing so, young people feel valued and realize they have the potential to do exceptional things.

Since it was founded in 1902, 4-H has provided critical citizenship, leadership, and life skills to more than 60 million American youth. Through innovative programs, 4-H members have become community leaders and experienced the essential elements that shape them into contributing young people and adults. These elements are mastery, independence, belonging, and generosity. They are the cornerstones of all 4-H programs, and they correlate directly with the five Cs of PYD.

Competence (mastery) is an important element of PYD, because youth learn they are capable individuals, able to contribute to their environment, and they are valued resources. By participating in new experiences, young people can actively pursue their interests and potential future career choices.

Encouraging confidence (independence) in a young person gives them the assurance to make good decisions and the ability to influence their surroundings. Confidence enables young people to make needed changes to improve their circumstances and the circumstances of those around them.


Connection (belonging) might be the single most powerful element youth development programs can contribute to the development of a young person. All young people need to know that others care about them. A safe environment, where young people are encouraged to give their input and try new things, creates opportunities for them to interact with one another. Youth are then exposed to diverse people and experiences.

Character and caring (generosity) gives purpose and meaning to the lives of youth. By participating in community service and citizenship activities, youth learn to connect with their communities and the importance of giving back to others. Seeing their role in the larger context of society gives young people a basis for understanding their responsibility to give back to the communities in which they belong.

The 4-H study of PYD shows the essential elements of 4-H effectively capture the five Cs in a way that serves as a model program for fostering positive youth development. The study also found that the greater the number of different types of structured afterschool activities youth engage in, the better their positive youth development. This tells us more is better!

Fortunately, more young people than ever are participating in afterschool activities—fewer than 10% do not participate in any afterschool activity, according to the 4-H study. These structured activities, especially those that encourage the five Cs of PYD, will increase civic participation in today's youth and when they become adults.

All youth development organizations can incorporate the five Cs in their programming. We need to work together to encourage them to take the necessary steps to create opportunities, ensuring that programs are available to all young people and that these young people are important contributors to their own development.

As young people mature through various programs that encourage competence, confidence, connection, character, and caring, they become invaluable resources to their communities. Young people learn that contributing to society is a responsibility. By becoming contributing citizens, they ultimately make our world a better place to live. We all need to work together to make this possible. 

*Donald T. Floyd Jr. is President and CEO of the National 4-H Council, the private sector, nonprofit partner of 4-H, one of America's largest and most diverse youth organizations.*

"Other Voices" provides leaders and experts from national organizations that share CWLA's commitment to the well-being of children, youth, and families a forum to share their views and ideas on crosscutting issues.

# Bulletin Board

## U.S. Child Welfare Ranks Low on International Survey

A United Nations survey released in February ranks the United States and Britain the lowest among 21 wealthy countries for child welfare.

The study by UNICEF ranked the countries in six categories based on national statistics—material well-being, health and safety, education, peer and family relationships, behaviors and risks, and young people's own subjective sense of well-being. The United States and Britain were in the bottom two-thirds of five of the six categories, according to an Associated Press story about the survey.

The Netherlands, Sweden, Denmark, and Finland came out on top in the survey, whereas the United States was 20th and Britain 21st.

Despite overall levels of national wealth, children fared worse in the United States and Britain because of greater economic inequality and poor levels of public support for families, according to Jonathan Bradshaw, one of the study's researchers and a professor of social policy at the University of York in Britain.

"What they have in common are very high levels of inequality, very high levels of child poverty, which is also associated with inequality, and in rather different ways poorly developed services to families and children," the Associated Press quoted Bradshaw.

Both countries also ranked low for their higher incidences of single-parent families and risky behaviors among children, including drinking alcohol and sexual activity. On average, 80% of children living in the wealthy countries surveyed live with both parents, but there were wide variations, from more than 90% in Greece and Italy, to less than 70% in Britain, and 60% in the United States.

## Adoptive Parents Tend to Dote

A study published earlier this year in the American Sociological Review finds that couples who adopt spend more money on their children and invest more time in activities such as reading to them, eating together, and talking with them about their problems.

"One of the reasons adoptive parents invest more is that they really want children, and they go to extraordinary means to have them," the Associated Press quoted Indiana University Sociologist Brian Powell, one of the study's three coauthors. "Adoptive parents face a culture where, to many other people, adoption is not real parenthood. They recognize the barriers they face, and it sets the stage for them to be better parents."

For the study, Powell and his colleagues turned to information contained in the Early Childhood Longitudinal Study, sponsored by the U.S. Department of Education and other agencies. They examined data from 13,000 households—161 of which were headed by two adoptive parents—with first graders in the family. The adoptive families rated better overall than families with biological parents on several criteria, including help with homework, parental involvement in school, and exposure to cultural activities.

According to the Associated Press, the researchers said their findings call into question the longstanding argument that children are best off with their biological parents, including such arguments made in state Supreme Court rulings in New York and Washington that upheld laws against same-sex marriage.

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## Thumbs Down to Youth Jail Time, Polls Finds

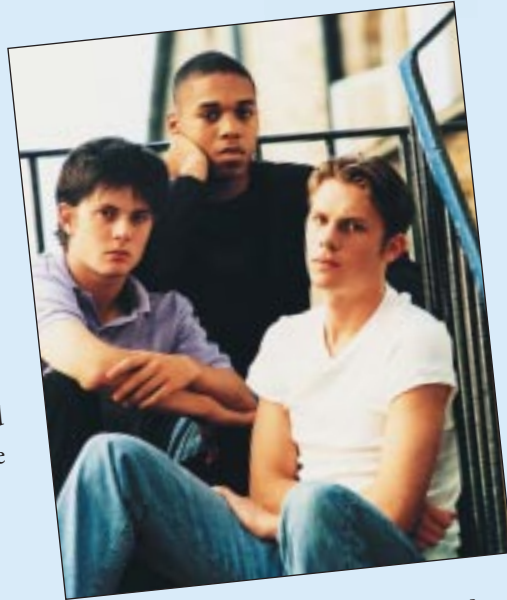
A poll conducted by Zogby International for the National Council on Crime and Delinquency (NCCD) finds the public overwhelmingly supports rehabilitation and treatment for young people in trouble, rather than prosecution in the adult court or incarceration in adult jails or prisons.

Major findings from the survey include:

- Nine out of 10 people polled believed rehabilitation and treatment for incarcerated youth can help prevent future crime, and 8 out of 10 thought spending money on rehabilitative services and treatment for youth will save money in the long run.
- Seven out of 10 surveyed felt putting young people younger than 18 in adult correctional facilities make them more likely to commit future crime. More than two-thirds (68%) disagreed that incarcerating youth in adult facilities “teaches them a lesson and deters them from committing future crimes.”
- By more than a 15 to 1 margin (92% to 6%), those polled believed the decision to transfer youth to adult court should be made on a case-by-case basis.
- Sixty-six percent of those polled said it was “unacceptable” that a criminal conviction should negatively affect a youth’s future opportunities for jobs and education.

Conducted in January 2007, the survey used a national sample of likely voters and followed methodology approved by the American Association for Public Opinion Research. Likely voters were polled about their views on whether prosecuting youth in adult court and placing youth in adult jails and prison are effective ways to deter crime, as well as their views on other public safety approaches.

According to NCCD, a number of states, including Connecticut, Illinois, North Carolina, and Wisconsin, are considering proposals to reduce the number of youth automatically tried as adults.



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