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Q & A CORNER

This ongoing series is designed to address questions raised by state leaders regarding developing state systems and taking HFA to scale. As part of the *State Systems Scoop*, we explore answers to these questions and offer resources for additional information.

This section summarizes a presentation by Sharon Pierce, President and CEO of The Villages of Indiana, on innovative and successful methods her agency has used to increase staff retention. The Villages is an agency dedicated to helping children and families through a broad range of programs, including Healthy Families.

Over three years ago, The Villages realized that the job market was becoming more competitive. In order to continue to draw and retain quality staff, they began to take proactive steps to position the agency as an “employer of choice.” The needs of all agency stakeholders, such as families, community members, and funders were reviewed. The Villages then recognized that in order to be an effective agency and send a message of respect and empowerment to the community, they would need to mirror this message agency-wide, tending first to internal stakeholders: the staff.

Pierce recalls concentrating on customer service training in order to make sure the value system of consideration and respect was present internally, and then evident in every service provided. The Villages further developed an atmosphere of learning and respect through proactive recruitment, a holistic orientation process, continuous training, and a range of flexible policies and morale-building incentives.

Recruitment

Position your organization as the “employer of choice” by offering competitive salary ranges and a diverse benefits package. Make it clear from the beginning that your agency believes in a flexible work and benefit plan that can best suit the needs of each employee. Recruit future employees through an internship program, making every effort to provide a salary or stipend. The Board of Directors of The Villages recognized the value of a paid internship program and is committed to supporting a pool of money for future interns. Local businesses (especially businesses that sell items and services the agency regularly purchases, such as computers and cell phones) were asked to invest in the future leadership of their community by contributing to this internship pool.

Orientation

An effective orientation of new staff includes a “Big Picture” overview, which outlines the agency’s:

- Mission and vision
- Core values and culture
- Organizational structure
- Array of programs and services
- Customers and stakeholders
- Service environment

Orientation should also include the “micro” overview, such as a thorough review of job descriptions, benefits, personnel policies, ethics and confidentiality policies, technical resources such as the computer, fax, phone, and email systems, and basic information on logistics, parking, security, and office space.

Finally, make new staff feel welcome through introductions to fellow staff, lunch with team members, and discussions about identifying and integrating personal career goals. For example, Ms. Pierce has lunch with each new staff member in order to begin get to know them, establish a pattern of communication, develop a plan for reaching personal goals.

Continuous training

Continuous training is key to developing a “learning organization” where staff have many educational opportunities and are encouraged to receive job specific training, cross training within the organization, and training relating to personal skills such as customer service, technical, or communication techniques. Whenever possible, staff could benefit from attending regional and national conferences, or taking advantage of educational reimbursement.

At The Villages, every employee that has been at the agency for six months is offered to participate in “On the Right Track” training opportunities in other departments or skill sets. These trainings, occurring every six months, are fun and interactive with opportunities for quality assurance input and evaluation. Inter-agency trainings are especially helpful because staff can gain a deeper understanding and appreciation for the work done by coworkers in each part of the agency.

Pierce also stressed training on change management. An agency that is responsive to best practice discoveries, political climate, and service environment is a changing agency. Often, these changes create the greatest source of challenge and discomfort for staff. Along with training and open dialogue about questions and concerns, Sharon suggested the book, *Work Habits for a Radically Changing World*, by Price Pritchett (<http://www.pritchett.net.com/>).

Something extra!

Many staff value flexibility and a positive work environment as much as, or more than, a higher salary range. There are many ways to create scheduling and educational choices for staff and offer extras that boost and maintain morale and show staff how much they are valued:

- The Five “P” Program: personal, polite, professional, prompt, and proud. Staff are provided with coupons to award each other for “P” behavior. These coupons can be collected and exchanged for a whole range of creative awards.
- Phone and Wal-Mart gift cards are great extras!

- “Feel too good to come to work today” Days. When implementing a new MIS system, staff at The Villages were called upon (or volunteered) to contribute time and efforts above and beyond their workloads and job descriptions. This bonus day off was awarded as a way of acknowledging extraordinary efforts.
- Floating holidays. At The Villages, instead of closing the office on President’s Day, staff were given the option of taking a holiday anytime in February. This way, the office stayed open all month and staff were able to take advantage of a holiday that best fit their schedules and needs.
- Video virtual breakfast. The Villages has the use of video conferencing, so once a month anyone in a network office across the state with a birthday that month can join Sharon Pierce for breakfast and an open forum for questions and concerns.

When asked what first step she would recommend to other agencies regarding staff retention, Pierce suggests surveying your existing employee base. Ask your employees why they stay, what supports they need, and what supports they will need in the future. Begin building an internal culture of support, respect, and empowerment which best serves staff, families and your community as a whole.

LEGISLATIVE UPDATE

Promoting Safe and Stable Families Program

The Promoting Safe and Stable Families Program (Title IV-B, Subpart 2 of the Social Security Act), which was authorized by the Adoption and Safe Families Act of 1997 (AFSA), expires this year. The House Subcommittee on Human Resources of the House Committee on Ways and Means held hearings on the Promoting Safe and Stable Families Program on May 10, 2001.

Ranking minority member Ben Cardin (D-MD) asked the witnesses (see the link below) what they would do with the \$200 million increase found in President Bush’s proposed budget. Responses included prevention efforts like Healthy Families America and other prevention activities related to family support, CPS infrastructure, linking substance abuse services to child welfare services, involving parents more, linking mental health and substance abuse services, counseling, respite care, treatment, remedial intervention, and secondary prevention overall. There seemed to be a uniform call from most of the witnesses for greater flexibility by relaxing the current 20% funding requirement parameters in which 20% is apportioned to family support, family preservation, adoption, family reunification services, and the remainder where the state feels it is most needed.

Prevent Child Abuse America submitted written testimony for the public record. Our testimony supported the reauthorization of the Promoting Safe and Stable Families Program; urged Congress to maintain the program’s current spending to ensure that necessary funding is spent on prevention activities; and asked that the Committee consider diverting a portion of the proposed increase to Promoting Safe and Stable Families to the Child Abuse Prevention and Treatment Act (CAPTA) in support of child abuse and neglect primary prevention.

There have been no reports of activity on the reauthorization of the Safe and Stable Families Program since the hearing in May, which is not surprising given other pressing priorities on the recent congressional legislative agenda (e.g., the tax cut, ESEA, and the Senate restructuring).

To access the oral testimony, go to:

<http://waysandmeans.house.gov/humres/107cong/hr-4wit.htm>

The Child Abuse Prevention and Treatment Act (CAPTA)

After several months of deliberations and consensus building, the National Child Abuse Coalition has developed proposed language for Title I of CAPTA and is finalizing proposed language for Title II of CAPTA. The proposed changes to CAPTA from the current language in the CAPTA Amendments of 1996 (P.L. 104-235) represent moderate modifications. Essentially, the Coalition's proposed modifications clarify the intended scope of CAPTA, help highlight the need for increased funding for CAPTA, and aid in distinguishing the role of CAPTA from that of other federal child welfare legislation.

While the Senate restructuring is underway, it is not anticipated that any substantive activity will take place in that chamber on CAPTA's reauthorization over the next few months. Also, since the House subcommittee that has jurisdiction over CAPTA also has jurisdiction over ESEA (the Select Education Subcommittee of the Education and the Workforce Committee), no activity on CAPTA's reauthorization is expected until the House and Senate reach an agreement on ESEA.

Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA)

Ripples from the Senate restructuring are evident in the House, as well. Most importantly, the recent change in power in the Senate affects a newly split Congress, with the Democrats now controlling the Senate by a slim margin and the Republicans continuing to control the House by a slightly wider margin than that in the Senate. Consequently, there could be implications on the deliberations of the recently appointed House and Senate conference committee for the ESEA bill, delaying the submission of a final agreed-upon bill to the White House and postponing education appropriations decisions in both the House and Senate. Although none of the amendments recommended by PCA America were adopted in the final senate version of the bill, Senator Wellstone's amendment (S. 445) to establish parental involvement programs contained some very similar language and ideas. It remains to be seen if this amendment will be a part of the final ESEA bill that will be presented to the President.

Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF)

While TANF isn't up for reauthorization until 2002, there have been several hearings around reauthorization issues. More information can be found through the following links:

Tuesday, April 3, 2001 Testimony from Hearing on Welfare Reform and Work Requirements:
<http://waysandmeans.house.gov/humres/107cong/hr-2wit.htm>

Thursday, April 26, 2001 Testimony from Hearing on "rainy day" and other special TANF Funds
<http://waysandmeans.house.gov/humres/107cong/hr-3wit.htm>

Thursday, March 15, 2001 Testimony from Hearing on Welfare Reform:
<http://waysandmeans.house.gov/humres/107cong/hr-1wit.htm>

Tuesday, May 22, 2001 Testimony from Hearing on Welfare and Marriage Issues:
<http://waysandmeans.house.gov/humres/107cong/hr-5wit.htm>

Act to Leave No Child Behind

On May 23, Sen. Christopher Dodd (D-Conn.) and Rep. George Miller (D-Calif.) introduced the Act to Leave No Child Behind (S. 940), a comprehensive piece of legislation drafted in coordination with the Children's Defense Fund. Rep. George Miller (D-Calif.) introduced the legislation in the House as H.R. 1990 on May 24, 2001. The broad-based legislation includes

proposals relating to programs and systems such as child welfare, child care, Medicaid and the State Children's Health Insurance Program (SCHIP), TANF, juvenile justice, food stamps, the Social Services Block Grant, and the child support program. It also includes provisions on the minimum wage, gun safety, juvenile justice, the environment, taxes, housing, and education.

The TANF provisions of the act allow education and training to count as work activities and exempt families with severe barriers to employment from TANF time limits beyond the present 20 percent exemption. The bill would also allow families to earn back months of assistance for months worked; provide job placement for certain families; require comprehensive assessments; and create a reconciliation process for families that are out of compliance with TANF rules. The legislation also adds poverty reduction as a goal of TANF and includes a poverty reduction bonus for states.

Additionally, there are several provisions relating to the training and development of caseworkers. They include a caseworker bonus and a new program that provides grants to train workers, improve automation and application procedures, and track the benefits and services provided to recipients. The Senate version has been referred to the Senate Finance Committee. The House version has been referred to the House Committees on Ways and Means, Energy and Commerce, Education and the Workforce, Agriculture, Judiciary, and Financial Services.

PREVENT CHILD ABUSE AMERICA NEWS

Healthy Families America Website

The new HFA site, www.healthyfamiliesamerica.org, allows network members, professionals and interested individuals to access information, order publications, and identify primary contacts for each state. Those accessing the site will also be able to donate directly to HFA; read about credentialing, training, state systems support, advocacy and research; and link to HFA partners and other useful resources and publications. For more information, or to offer comments and suggestions, please contact Sara Zuiderveen at 312-663-3520.

New! Visit the newly launched web-based advocacy center on PCA America's website. Once there, you will find links to legislative updates, monthly action alerts, sample letters, and media outlets across the country. Encourage your networks to utilize this site! Check out the "Take Action" link on the PCA America homepage: www.preventchildabuse.org

Imagine a Nation Without Child Abuse: Combining our Strengths for Prevention

Prevent Child Abuse America's national conference will take place March 2-5, 2002 at the Adam's Mark Hotel in Dallas, Texas. We are pleased to announce that clinical psychologist, Dr. Alicia Lieberman, author of *The Emotional Life of the Toddler*, will be a featured keynote speaker at the conference. Dr. Lieberman's video on child temperaments, *Fearful, Flexible and Feisty*, is used in most Healthy Families America trainings of direct service staff. PCA America is delighted to welcome her to the conference.

We are dedicated to providing a wide range of workshop topics at the conference and encourage proposals from individuals across all areas of the PCA America network and related fields. The Call for Proposals is now available on the Prevent Child Abuse America website:

<http://www.preventchildabuse.org> or the Healthy Families America website:
<http://www.healthyfamiliesamerica.org>. **The deadline for submissions is August 15, 2001.**

Although registration will not begin until the fall, you may want to note the following rates for the conference: \$250 Early Bird, \$275 Regular and \$325 On-site. Hotel rates are as follows:

\$120 Single, \$130 Double, \$140 Triple and \$150 Quad. Registration materials will be available in mid-fall. For further information please call the Prevent Child Abuse America National Conference hotline: 312-663-3520 ext. 221.

Wanted: Proposal Reviewers for National Conference

We are currently building our pool of proposal reviewers and we would like to extend the invitation across the Prevent Child Abuse America network. If you are interested in reviewing proposals for workshops for the 2002 national conference, please call the national conference hotline at: 312-663-3520 ext. 221. Please let us know of your interest by August 13, 2001.

New Publications from PCA America

Preparing To Be A Foster Parent

This publication covers the essentials of good foster parenting. A range of topics are addressed, including the responsibilities, rewards and challenges of being a foster parent; the basics of effective discipline; ways to child- and adolescent-proof the home; stages of child development and how to help a child thrive; and special issues associated with parenting abused children and dealing with substance abuse.

Feeling Better After Giving Birth: Dealing With Postpartum Depression

This publication was especially created to help new mothers and mothers-to-be avoid postpartum depression and cope in positive ways should they experience "the blues" after their baby is born. A quick-reading format gives readers the basics on recovering from birth, managing discomfort, and incorporating self-care and exercise into their new routine.

To order these publications or for prices please contact the PCA America Fulfillment Center at 800-835-2671.

State Systems Staffing Changes

Lori Friedman, previously the Coordinator for HFA State Systems Support, began her new position as HFA Research Liaison in mid-June. This newly created position was designed to help more closely examine PCA America's capacity to enhance the quality and sustainability of HFA. Although Lori is now housed in the Research Center, a primary function of her role is serving as the bridge between the Research and Programs Departments. All state systems calls should be directed to Susan Frankel at 312-663-3520 ext. 172, or Sara Zuiderveen at ext. 119.

Job Openings

The Prevent Child Abuse America Programs Department is seeking both a Coordinator and a Programs Specialist for Healthy Families America State Systems Support; a Quality Assurance Coordinator to work with credentialing and training; and Credentialing Coordinator for Healthy Families America Credentialing. Most positions are available immediately:

http://www.preventchildabuse.org/about_us/jobs.html

FUNDING OPPORUNTITES (Info Moved to HFA Website)

The funding opportunities section has been moved to the Healthy Families America website, where announcements are organized into foundation, corporate, and federal opportunities, and updated several times a month. Go to:

<http://www.healthyfamiliesamerica.org/services/funding.html>

RECENT REPORTS

“Research 2000” from the Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency

Prevention gives a concise overview of what we know and what it means for preventing and reducing juvenile violence and crime. For example, while communities should take seriously the delinquent acts of younger youth (under age 13), including paying attention to the warning signs of trouble in early elementary grades, there is no evidence of a new breed of young “superpredator.” Incarcerating younger offenders in correctional facilities shows little impact on preventing or reducing future offenses, but programs that enhance kids’ problem-solving and interaction skills have proven effective. Go to:

<http://www.ojjdp.ncjrs.org/pubs/generalsum.html#186732>

Pathway to Fetal Alcohol Syndrome Prevention

The National Institute on Alcohol Abuse and Alcoholism reports that recent research suggests a strategy for developing pharmaceutical interventions to prevent alcohol-related birth defects.

<http://www.niaaa.nih.gov/press/2001/longchain.htm>

Heads Up for Kids Count

Every year the Annie E. Casey Foundation’s Kids Count project holds a mirror up to America, showing us how well our children are faring on a number of key benchmarks, like the percentage of kids completing high school or the number of infants dying in their first year. This year’s Kids Count report was released Tuesday, May 22. <http://www.kidscount.org>

Training Improves Doctors' Violence Screening Skills

A brief violence prevention education program using teen health educators helped train physicians to ask about violence in their adolescent patients' lives. It increased doctors' comfort level, skills and understanding of their role in violence screening, according to an assessment in the May 2001 issue of Pediatrics. <http://www.pediatrics.org/cgi/content/abstract/107/5/e68>

Making Ends Meet

There is a Native American saying – don’t judge me until you’ve walked a mile in my shoes. Barbara Ehrenreich took this seriously when she set out to see what it’s like to try to make ends meet at the low end of the wage ladder. What she describes in her new book “Nickel and Dimed” should outrage and shame an America that prides itself on being the land of opportunity, according to the New York Times review by Dorothy Gallagher.

<http://www.nytimes.com/books/01/05/13/reviews/010513.13gallagt.html>

Identifying Children with Special Needs

Various federal and state statutes now mandate that community-based, coordinated, multidisciplinary, family-centered programs be established to identify children with special needs early on, and provide services for them and their families. According to the American Academy of Pediatrics’ new policy paper, pediatricians, in close collaboration with the family and the early intervention team, play a critical role in providing a medical home for children with special health care needs. <http://www.pediatrics.org/cgi/content/abstract/107/5/1155>

I Am Your Child Focus Groups

The public has some awareness of the importance of the early years for brain development, but they tend to see early childhood development and learning as a matter primarily for parents. Only when pressed about the role of government do they offer ways that the state might provide more leadership in making child care affordable, protecting young children from neglect and abuse, or improving their health and nutrition. They are hostile to government policies that appear to

reward or encourage young mothers to leave their children and go to work, although they are sympathetic to single mothers and low-income parents who must work to provide for their children. These are some of the findings reported to the June 13, 2001 audioconference summarizing the I Am Your Child focus groups. Go to: <http://www.earlycare.org>

The Role of Fathers in Early Childhood Development

Last winter, Children Now held a conference call on the role of fathers in healthy early development and how health plans can support fathers' involvement with their infants and young children. In this call, speakers identified some subtle, and not-so-subtle, barriers that limit health services' success in engaging fathers. To read the transcript, go to: <http://www.childrennow.org/health/conferencecalls.html>

RESOURCES

Getting Tough on the Juvenile Justice System

Maryland advocates succeeded in shifting the state away from a "get-tough" incarceration-heavy model for juvenile justice by using an aggressive communications campaign targeting the local media, according to this Making a Difference brief from the National Association of Child Advocates. The public outcry sparked by a series of reports in the Baltimore Sun led to the departure of senior officials at the State Department of Juvenile Justice and an increase in its funding to improve staffing and juvenile detention facilities, demonstrating the potential of hard-hitting public awareness campaigns to stimulate policy changes. Go to: <http://www.childadvocacy.org/camad.htm>

CityMatCH Ask-a-Colleague Service

Child and maternal health providers can ask specific questions not only of their colleagues in their own agencies, but across the country via the CityMatCH fax network. CityMatCH staff take submitted questions, craft the query and fax it to member health departments, who then respond to the questioner. For more information on how it works, contact Maureen Fitzgerald (402-595-1700; mfitzger@unmc.edu).

2001 Congressional Workbook for Children's Advocates

The Children's Defense Fund 2001 Congressional Workbook is tailored for people concerned about children's policies and programs. Learn how Congress drafts budgets and legislation, find a guide to who's who in key positions and the basics on key children's programs. Cost: \$8 plus shipping and handling.

http://www.childrensdefensefund.org/pubs_best sellers.asp

New Anti-Drug Brochure for Juventud Latina (Latino Youth)

This new Spanish-language brochure offers a science-based discussion tool for Hispanic/Latino families, with the latest information on the health effects of inhalants, marijuana, cocaine, methamphetamine and heroin, in addition to information on drug abuse prevention and treatment strategies. Go to: <http://www.nida.nih.gov/LatinoBrochure/Index.html>

New Listserv on Child Care and Early Learning

Supported by a grant from the Graustein Memorial Fund, Connecticut Voices for Children is hosting a new listserv for parents, citizens and organizations committed to quality early care and education for children birth through age 8, including supports for parents who wish to stay home with their young children. To learn more, contact Peg Oliveira (peg@ctkidslink.org). To subscribe, send an e-mail message to majordomo@mail.ctvoices.org and write "subscribe ece-list" in the body of the message only.

Welfare Reauthorization Listserv

The Coalition on Human Needs has launched a new listserv to help connect national, state and local advocates working on the reauthorization of TANF and other anti-poverty programs. Contact Carrie Kilman (ext. 23) or Liz Wroe (ext. 26) at 202-223-2532, (lmwroe@chn.org).
<http://www.chn.org/welfare/index.html>

Writers Wanted

Pam Anderson, managing editor for the Human Ecology Encyclopedia, is welcoming proposals for potential entries from practitioners who can speak to human development/child development issues from the depth and breadth of successful practice. The Human Ecology Encyclopedia represents a first effort of its type to place the dimensions of human ecology in the context of family and community. For details, e-mail Pam(pamela.anderson@tufts.edu)

Connect for Kids Weekly

Many of the resources in this newsletter are gathered from the Connect for Kids Weekly, an electronic newsletter of Connect for Kids, a resource for adults who want to build better communities for kids and families. The Benton Foundation, the publisher, works to realize the social benefits made possible by the public interest use of communications. Visit www.connectforkids.org for more information.

Please continue to forward any new resources, funding information, conference dates, and news items (reply to this email) so that we may share this information with the rest of the network.

CONFERENCES

July 29-August 1, 2001

Atlanta, Georgia

The Georgia Council on Child Abuse and the American Professional Society on the Abuse of Children (APSAC) is sponsoring its 17th Annual training Symposium and APSAC Advanced Training Institutes, "The Power of Prevention, Give Children Back Their Childhood."

Location: Crowne Plaza Ravinia, Atlanta, GA

Contact: Georgia Council on Child Abuse, 404-870-6565

September 9 – 12, 2001

Charlotte, North Carolina

Get ready to enjoy the most stimulating, comprehensive National Prevention Network (NPN) Research Conference yet! Make plans to attend our 14th Annual NPN Prevention Research Conference in Charlotte, North Carolina. You will gain knowledge from nationally recognized researchers and practitioners who are using research as a guide for prevention programming. You will have the opportunity to network with leaders from the federal agencies supporting prevention, including SAMHSA, CSAP, ONDCP, NIDA, NIAAA, OJJDP, USDE as well as prevention workers from around the country. And you will have the opportunity to explore historical Charlotte and the surrounding area. Visit: <http://www.cfd.com/NPN/index.shtml> for more information.

October 31 – November 3, 2001

Convention Center, Anaheim, CA

National Association for the Education of Young Children 2001 Annual Conference

Take a break from your daily routines and experience Southern California's incredible weather and relaxed lifestyle. Anaheim will provide a venue for early childhood professionals to share cutting-edge information from across the country and around the world. Conferees will prepare for the future of early childhood education while celebrating the Association's first 75 years.

Contact: 202.232.8777 Ext 2004 <http://www.naeyc.org/conferences/annual/default.asp>

January 22-23, 2002

Prevent Child Abuse Texas is proud to announce the Sixteenth Annual Conference on the Prevention of Child Abuse on January 22-23, 2002 at the San Antonio Omni Hotel. PCAT is now soliciting Call for Presenters for workshops to be offered at this statewide conference. Last year's conference had a final attendance of 750. Please visit the web site at www.PreventChildAbuseTexas.org and go to the annual conference link for a copy of the Call for Presenter form. Fifty workshops will be selected for inclusion in the conference.

If you received this newsletter via mail and you have an email address, please email your address and any other updated contact information to: szuiderveen@preventchildabuse.org.

Thank You!