



## Systems Scoop- October 2006

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### **Q & A Corner: The Streamlined HFA Credentialing Process- What to Expect Now and in the Future**

The HFA Quality Assurance/Credentialing (QA) process has been in place since 1996 and was initiated at the request of those active in the HFA field who determined the need for research-based program model standards and a process that assessed the adherence to those standards. The QA process requires a program to formally affiliate with the HFA network by agreeing to implement the program based on HFA's "Critical Elements". The critical elements form the basis of the program standards to which programs must adhere. More information on the critical elements can be found at: [http://www.healthyfamiliesamerica.org/about\\_us/critical\\_elements](http://www.healthyfamiliesamerica.org/about_us/critical_elements). Program sites are required to complete the credentialing process (which includes a rigorous on-site peer review) every four years and demonstrate adherence to standards that are linked to best practices. The HFA Self Assessment Tool (SAT) is the instrument used to rate a program's practice.

In 2006, HFA national and regional offices, with extensive input from the HFA network, led the way to improve the current QA system by streamlining the current process and developing efficiencies to achieve credentialing. This work was done in consultation with the Council of Accreditation, who had recently undergone their own revisions to their standards, as well as CARF. The goal of this effort is to ensure programs are provided with a QA process that is relevant, up-to-date and promotes continuous quality improvement. It is anticipated that these changes will ultimately allow program staff to devote more time to providing more direct services to families and children.

The initial streamlining consisted of several steps:

- Re-evaluating the existing standards for duplication and inconsistencies;
- Systematically linking the *intent* of the critical elements to the SAT and peer review process;

- Facilitating the QA process by including credentialing “tips” in the SAT and providing examples and sample documents;
- Adding “safety and sentinel” standards to the process: those standards that directly impact the safety of the children and families served and the key functions required by HFA;
- Revising all associated credentialing forms and tools to reflect the changes to the process;
- Redefining the criteria used to determine which sites are reviewed by the HFA Credentialing Panel, as well as enhancing policies and procedures for a more efficient credentialing panel process.

The above steps have been completed and a new SAT was released in August, 2006. It can be found here [http://www.healthyfamiliesamerica.org/network\\_resources/credentialing.shtml](http://www.healthyfamiliesamerica.org/network_resources/credentialing.shtml). In addition to the new SAT, you will also find a chart that outlines the differences between the 2003 and 2007 tools and a memorandum explaining the major changes to the tool. Programs whose credentialing site visits start in March 2007 will be required to utilize the 2007 SAT.

The next phase of streamlining is now underway. Steps in this phase include:

- Revisiting the required skills and application process for peer reviewers to reflect skills needed to implement the new process;
- Revamping the training of peer reviewers: This will include the creation of new trainings for both existing peer reviewers (an online distance learning training) and training for peer reviewers who are new to the process (an in-person training). The goal of this work will be to increase the consistency between peer reviewers in relation to the new process.
- Completing the streamlining of the standards which guide the multi-site credential.
- Hosting teleconference calls and webinars to help with “trouble areas” in the QA process.

Initial response to the streamlined process has been tremendous. Programs will be given opportunities to provide feedback related to developing the Self Study, the site visit and all aspects related to the process. As always, HFA’s credentialing staff and regional offices are ready for your questions and calls. For more information on these changes or with questions about particular challenges in your state, please contact:

<b>National Office</b> Cyd Wessel cwessel@preventchildabuse.org	<b>Midwest Regional Office</b> (Kathleen Strader- straderk@trinity-health.org)	<b>Western Regional Office</b> (Kate Whitaker-hfazkate@earthlink.net or Pauline Haas-Vaughan hfazpauline@earthlink.net)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Alabama</li> <li>• Arkansas</li> <li>• Connecticut</li> <li>• Delaware</li> <li>• District of Columbia</li> <li>• Florida</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Illinois</li> <li>• Indiana</li> <li>• Iowa</li> <li>• Kansas</li> <li>• Kentucky</li> <li>• Michigan</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Alaska</li> <li>• Arizona</li> <li>• California</li> <li>• Colorado</li> <li>• Hawaii</li> <li>• Idaho</li> </ul>

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Georgia</li> <li>• Louisiana</li> <li>• Maine</li> <li>• Maryland</li> <li>• Massachusetts</li> <li>• Mississippi</li> <li>• New Hampshire</li> <li>• New Jersey</li> <li>• New York</li> <li>• North Carolina</li> <li>• Pennsylvania</li> <li>• Rhode Island</li> <li>• South Carolina</li> <li>• Tennessee</li> <li>• Vermont</li> <li>• Virginia</li> <li>• West Virginia</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Minnesota</li> <li>• Missouri</li> <li>• Nebraska</li> <li>• North Dakota</li> <li>• Ohio</li> <li>• South Dakota</li> <li>• Wisconsin</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Montana</li> <li>• Nevada</li> <li>• New Mexico</li> <li>• Oklahoma</li> <li>• Oregon</li> <li>• Texas</li> <li>• Utah</li> <li>• Washington</li> <li>• Wyoming</li> </ul>
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**Prevent Child Abuse America News**

**Congratulations to Circle of Parents: Winners of a 5-Year Federal Grant to Build the Capacity of Home Visitation Programs to Promote Responsible Fatherhood!**

Circle of Parents has been awarded a 5-year grant to implement a comprehensive training and technical assistance project to increase the capacity of local home visiting programs to provide parent support and education that promotes responsible parenting among expectant and new fathers. The targeted population shall include married and unmarried fathers whose spouses or partners are receiving home visiting and family support services through Healthy Families America (HFA) and Parents as Teachers (PAT) programs. Utilizing the self-help parent support group model and Conscious Fathering™, a successful program of Parent Trust for Washington Children, fathers will have the opportunity to share ideas and support and learn from each other and trained group facilitators parenting knowledge and skills associated with the healthy development of their children. Please keep on the lookout for more information as this exciting new project unfolds. Questions may be directed to Cyndi Savage at [csavage@circleofparents.org](mailto:csavage@circleofparents.org)

**Advocacy Update: Congressional Hearing Highlights Home Visiting Field**

On September 27<sup>th</sup>, 2006 the Education Reform Subcommittee of the House Education & Workforce Committee held a hearing on *Perspectives on Early Childhood Home Visitation Programs*, to learn more about home visiting programs, such as Healthy Families America, that enhance parent-child relations, prepare young children for success in school, improve parenting, and reduce the incidence of child abuse and neglect. The hearing brought increased visibility and support to the service delivery model that is the centerpiece of the *Education Begins at Home Act* (HR 3628).

Turnout among members of Congress was extraordinary – a bipartisan mix of eleven out of twenty subcommittee members, plus the full committee chair, were in attendance – and far exceeded expectations. Here’s who was there in addition to Representative **Osborne** (R-NE-3), who chaired the hearing in place of Michael Castle (R-DE-At Large), absent due to illness: Representatives **Biggert** (R-IL-13); **D. Davis** (D-IL-7); **S. Davis** (D-CA-53); **Kucinich** (D-OH-10); **Kuhl** (R-NY-29); **Musgrave** (R-CO-4); **Platts** (R-PA-19); **Scott** (D-VA-3); **Wilson** (R-SC-2); and **Woolsey** (D-CA-6). Mr. **McKeon** (R-CA-25), chair of the full Education and Workforce Committee, also spent time at the hearing.

Said Representative Danny K. Davis (D-IL-7) - lead sponsor of HR 3628 - following the hearing, “The strong bipartisan support shown for home visiting and for the Education Begins at Home Act during the hearing make me optimistic that this bill and other early childhood education efforts will gain momentum in the next Congress.”

#### [Take Action on the Education Begins at Home Act \(EBAH\)](#)

To view an archive version of the EBAH hearing, visit the [Education Reform subcommittee's website](#).

To see an updated list of EBAH cosponsors, visit <http://thomas.loc.gov/>.

#### **HFA Training Updates**

A Train the Trainers Institute was conducted in Chicago for 11 state trainers representing Oregon, Nebraska, Missouri, New Jersey, Florida, Iowa and Oklahoma. The training was held September 24-29, 2006 at the national office in downtown Chicago. Both assessment and home visiting trainers attended and most have already scheduled their observation trainings in their state. All trainers from the 2005 Institute have now been certified. Two upcoming Advanced trainings will be conducted in October and November for HFA certified trainers. A three-day training on Motivational Interviewing will be conducted in October and a three-day training on the prenatal curriculum "Great Beginnings Start Before Birth" will be held in November. The training in November is also open to trainers outside of our HFA and PCA America Chapter networks. For more information on the upcoming trainings, contact Helen Reif at [hreif@preventchildabuse.org](mailto:hreif@preventchildabuse.org)

#### **“My Family Farm”- A New Partnership with Prevent Child Abuse America**

My Family Farm, an award-winning, family-owned manufacturer of all natural and organic cookies and crackers, announced that net profits generated from the sale of its products will benefit its new charitable partner – Prevent Child Abuse America. By entering into this partnership, My Family Farm is delivering on its promise to support organizations which consistently demonstrate their ability to help children and families. This new partnership will be featured on the back panel of My Family Farm’s redesigned packaging and will also be included in new in-store demonstrations, coupon mailings, Internet campaigns and other consumer promotions. For more information, please visit [www.myfamilyfarm.org](http://www.myfamilyfarm.org) or call 859.261.2627.

### **New Grant to Upgrade PIMS**

Thanks to a \$25,000 grant from the Verizon Foundation, PCA America will be able to upgrade the Program Information Management System

<http://www.healthyfamiliesamerica.org/research/pims.shtml> (PIMS), a database used by HFA programs to ensure that they are delivering quality services.

Building on what has been learned from the HFA Implementation Study

<http://www.healthyfamiliesamerica.org/publications/download.shtml#research>

(2004), ten years of HFA Research Network activities, and nine years of PIMS implementation, the improvements to PIMS focus primarily on 1) improved quality assurance reporting and alignment with the 2007 Self Assessment Tool 2) new reports on family outcomes based on data already collected in PIMS; and 3) ad-hoc querying capability designed to help program managers answer their own questions based on program data. PIMS version 6 is expected to be available in Fall 2007. Our deepest thanks to the Verizon Foundation for its generous and continued support of PCA America.

### **Research from the Field**

#### **Kudos to Healthy Families New York: Randomized Trial Extended to Seven Years**

The National Institute for Justice has awarded \$648,056 to the New York State Office of Children and Family Services (OCFS) under an initiative to fund Evaluations of Violence Prevention Programs. The grant, entitled, “A Randomized Trial of Healthy Families New York: Does it Prevent Child Maltreatment?” extends the existing randomized trial of Healthy Families New York (HFNY) initiated by OCFS and the Center for Human Services Research at the University of Albany to seven years in order to test the program’s long-term effectiveness in preventing child abuse and neglect.

This extension of the HFNY evaluation builds on baseline and follow-up data already collected for 1,173 women who met assessment criteria for HFNY and were randomly assigned to either an intervention group that was offered HFNY services or a control group that was given information and referrals to other appropriate services. The evaluation collected information about the families at the time of the child’s birth, and first, second, and third birthdays from in-depth interviews with mothers, Child Protective Services (CPS) records, the HFNY Data Management System, and videotaped observations of parent-child interactions (at Year 3 only). The extension of the evaluation will again extract information from CPS records and reinterview mothers in both the intervention and control groups at the time of the target child’s seventh birthday. In addition, for the first time, the target children will be interviewed.

These data will be used to examine the extent to which 1) HFNY prevents and/or reduces abuse and neglect of school-age children; 2) the program’s effects on child maltreatment can be explained by its success in changing early parenting attitudes and behaviors and improving access to health care; 3) HFNY reduces precursors of juvenile delinquency, such as aggression, poor impulse control, compromised health and cognitive disabilities, among target children; and 4) the long-term benefits of HFNY outweigh its costs. Findings will inform national child welfare policy about the long-term outcomes and

costs and benefits associated with the HFA home visitation model and how the program can be targeted and enhanced to maximize its success.

### **Population Served May Explain Home Visitation Results**

The recent evaluation of the Healthy Families New York (HFNY) home visiting program offers a possible explanation for some of the discrepant findings from home visiting programs around the country. The HFNY study suggests that the differential impact of home visiting programs on parenting outcomes may be due to characteristics of the parent populations served by each program.

The researchers analyzed the impacts of HFNY enrollment on child maltreatment at the target child's first and second birthdays for the sample as a whole as well as for two subgroups: (1) women younger than 19 years who joined the program while they were pregnant with their first child and (2) mothers classified as psychologically vulnerable.

The results to date show that HFNY's home visiting intervention had positive effects on a number of different forms of self-reported child abuse and neglect for the sample overall. These included very serious physical abuse, neglect, minor physical aggression, and psychological abuse when the child was 1 year old, and serious physical abuse at age 2. The program was particularly effective for the subgroups of young, first-time mothers enrolled while pregnant and psychologically vulnerable mothers. Specifically:

- At the target child's second birthday, the young, first-time mothers who had participated in home visiting since their pregnancy were substantially less likely to report engaging in minor physical aggression against their children and in harsh parenting, compared to their counterparts in the control group *and* compared to the more diverse group of mothers in both the intervention and control groups.
- Psychologically vulnerable mothers (those with limited intellectual functioning, mental health, and sense of control over their lives) in the intervention group were only about a quarter as likely to report engaging in acts of serious abuse or neglect when compared to similar mothers in the control group.

These results suggest that targeting young women who have not yet had an opportunity to abuse or neglect a child by providing them with home visiting services early in their first pregnancy may help prevent abuse and neglect. Likewise, targeting psychologically vulnerable women may buffer these women against committing child abuse or neglect.

The HFNY study also reports on a possible surveillance bias that may explain why no reduction in CPS reports was found. At their child's first birthday, intervention families who self-reported serious abuse and neglect were more likely to have CPS reports (43 percent) than control group families who self-reported similar rates of serious abuse or neglect (18 percent had CPS reports). Thus, enrollment in the HFNY program and the increased scrutiny by home visitors and other providers may artificially inflate the rate of CPS reports for intervention families.

To read the full report, *Healthy Families New York (HFNY) Randomized Trial: Impacts on Parenting After the First Two Years*, by K. A. DuMont, S. Mitchell-Herzfeld, R.

Greene, E. Lee, A. Lowenfels, and M. Rodriguez, view the PDF:  
[www.ocfs.state.ny.us/main/prevention/assets/HFNYRandomizedTrialWorkingPaper.pdf](http://www.ocfs.state.ny.us/main/prevention/assets/HFNYRandomizedTrialWorkingPaper.pdf)

**Risk factors for recurrence of maltreatment: a systematic review.** Hindley, N. Ramchandani, P.G . Jones, D. P. H. 2006, Archives of Disease in Childhood.  
The aim of this study is to systematically review the research base predicting those children at highest risk of recurrent maltreatment. A systematic review of cohort studies investigating factors associated with substantiated maltreatment recurrence in children was conducted. Children maltreated previously were approximately six times more likely to experience recurrent maltreatment than children who had not previously been maltreated. The risk of recurrence was highest in the period soon after the index episode of maltreatment (within 30 days), and diminished thereafter. There are factors clearly associated with an increased risk of recurrent maltreatment, and these should be considered in professional assessments of children who have been maltreated. A comprehensive approach to risk assessment, including but not solely based on these factors, is likely to lead to interventions which offer greater protection to children. (Author abstract) <http://press.psprings.co.uk/adc/june/ac85639.pdf>

### **New Resources: Public Policy and Funding**

#### **Implementation of Home Visitation Programs: Stories from the States. Chapin Hall Center for Children. 2006**

Home visiting programs that support pregnant women and families with young children have proliferated in recent decades. Several program models have established national offices that support the expansion of their program in new states. As the number of establishments has grown, they have also instituted state-based systems which deal with collective concerns such as funding, advocacy and quality assurance within their particular state's circumstances. This study looks at the experience of developing state-based home-visiting systems. Interviews were conducted with state and national representatives from four of the large national home visiting models: Healthy Families America, the Nurse-Family Partnership, Parents as Teachers, and the Home Instruction Program for Preschool Youngsters. Despite differences in their initial implementation and context, state-based home visiting systems confront similar challenges with respect to sustainability: they have to secure funding that supports services and system functions without compromising quality or the model's design; they have to be able to demonstrate the efficacy of their model and its implementation; and they need to ensure that new programs are able to reproduce the model with quality, embracing those characteristics that have made programs successful in the past. (Author abstract)  
[http://www.chapinhall.org/article\\_abstract.aspx?ar=1433](http://www.chapinhall.org/article_abstract.aspx?ar=1433)

#### **Understanding Recent Changes in Child Poverty.** Nichols, Austin. Urban Institute. 2006

This brief shows that economic conditions, together with parental education and work, are the dominant factors behind recent changes in child poverty. Changes in the share of families headed by single parents seem to have played almost no role in the recent changes in child poverty. According to the analysis, the 1993 to 2000 drop in child poverty is largely due to improvements in the job market, especially for less-educated

workers. The economic downturn beginning in 2000 hit all families, even those with more education, but the families of black children were hit hardest. (Author abstract) [http://www.urban.org/UploadedPDF/311356\\_A71.pdf](http://www.urban.org/UploadedPDF/311356_A71.pdf)

### **Overview of Selected Data on Children in Vulnerable Families: The Urban Institute's Overview of Selected Data on Children in Vulnerable Families**

(<http://capwiz.com/zerotothree/utr/1/NHEEGHDRBT/OPIGGHHIKJ/854809716>)

This paper outlining trends over time in the number of children in particularly vulnerable families. This paper defines vulnerable families as those facing such risks as domestic violence, child maltreatment, substance abuse, depression, and childhood disabilities. The report highlights the implications of sound policy given the considerable risk to children's safety and development, the challenges to parents' ability to support a family as well as raise children when they are facing these major stressors, and the potential requirement for strong public or community roles to meet children's needs when parents cannot. Furthermore, the report distills some of the key trends related to these risks, providing key data on families with low-incomes.

### **America's children in brief: key national indicators of well-being, 2006.**

Federal Interagency Forum on Child and Family Statistics.

This report, an abbreviated version of America's Children: Key National Indicators of Well-Being series, provides information on children's health. It presents data on age, gender, and ethnic demographics related to child and adolescent well-being. It includes data on surveys conducted on children's health, and maps on all 50 States and the District of Columbia. The next full report is scheduled to be published in 2007.

<http://www.childstats.gov/amchildren06/index.asp>

### **Commonwealth Report Examines the Effects of New Legislation on Early Childhood Services**

A new Commonwealth report, *The Deficit Reduction Act of 2005: An Overview of Key Medicaid Provisions and Their Implications for Early Childhood Development Services*, discusses how the federal law enacted last year could either expand access or limit important Medicaid services for children and their families. The report outlines key provisions in the Deficit Reduction Act of 2005 that grants states flexibility to modify their Medicaid programs in ways that could negatively affect access to early childhood development services. The report also looks at how these provisions allow states to actually expand eligibility for Medicaid, thereby potentially serving more children. The new report discusses key parts of the legislation related to eligibility, cost-sharing, premiums, the benefit package, and targeted case management, including the latest guidance from the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services. View the report here

<http://capwiz.com/zerotothree/utr/1/ABESGJUHJW/HCKXGJUKBY/921081331>

## **New Resources: Programmatic Ideas**

**ZTT Hosting a New Training on Preventing Abuse and Neglect of Young Children**  
ZERO TO THREE is sponsoring a new training for trainers January 30 to February 1, 2007 in Washington D.C. based on their soon to be published Preventing Child Abuse and Neglect: Parent-Provider Partnerships in Child Care (PCAN) curriculum. This

curriculum supports child care professionals in helping to reduce the risk of child abuse and neglect through their every day interactions with families. This is an opportunity for experienced trainers with expertise in early care and education, and/or child abuse & neglect to participate in a unique professional development opportunity.

<http://capwiz.com/zerotothree/utr/1/ABESGJUHJW/ATDBGJUKBZ/921086746>

**Father friendly check-up for social services and programs. National Fatherhood Initiative. 2006**

This tool will help you assess the degree to which your organization's operations encourage father involvement in the activities and programs offered by your organization.

(Author abstract) <http://www.fatherhood.org/checkupsocial.asp>

**Early childhood brain development [e-learning].** Sasser, Diane D. Bales, Diane. Texas Cooperative Extension. Cooperative Extension Curriculum Project. Louisiana State University. 2006 Sponsoring Organization: National Center for Rural Early Childhood Learning Initiatives.

This on-line course is about infant brain development for extension agents. Modules include "The Basics of Brain Development," "Brain Development Processes," and "Effects of Environment." Anyone can view the course after registering and creating their own user name and password. <http://cecp-online.org/course.cfm?Course=124>

**Conferences/Trainings**

**November 7-10, 2006-Nurturing Fathers annual Consultant/Trainer Certification**

Workshop will be held in Sarasota, FL. This is an in-depth training in my curricula, as well as strategies for non-violent family relationships. The training includes a copy of the program Facilitator Manual and Workbook/Journal, plus breakfast and lunch each day. If interested, contact Mark Perlman, Author/Trainer, 941-922-6961

**FFCMH 18th Annual Conference**

*Improving Outcomes Through Practice-Based Evidence: Youth & Families Speak Out!* Federation of Families for Children's Mental Health

December 1–3, St. Louis, MO

<http://bcinnovations.com/ffcmh/index.html>

**ZERO TO THREE's 21st Annual National Training Institute**

*Sharing a Vision for Babies and Families*

December 1–3, Albuquerque, NM

[www.zerotothree.org/nti](http://www.zerotothree.org/nti)

**21st Annual San Diego International Conference on Child and Family Maltreatment**

The Chadwick Center for Children and Families

January 22–26, San Diego, CA

[www.chadwickcenter.org/conference.htm](http://www.chadwickcenter.org/conference.htm)

**The National Conference on Substance Abuse, Child Welfare, and the Courts**  
***Putting the Pieces Together for Children and Families***

Children and Family Futures

January 31–February 2, Anaheim, CA

[www.cffutures.org/conference\\_information/index.shtml](http://www.cffutures.org/conference_information/index.shtml)

**Thanks for reading SCOOP! We'll see you again in January, 2007!**