Title IV-E: Onward into Year 20

Dr. Nancy Chavkin
A Message from the Director

This fall begins the 20th year of the Title IV-E grant through the Center for Children and Families. The Title IV-E grant has helped many students pursue their BSW and MSW degrees. Within the last five years, 91% of Title IV-E graduates are still working at DFPS and within the last ten years, 68% of graduates are still with DFPS. We are so proud of our Title IV-E graduates and the difference they are making in child welfare positions.

Speaking of graduates, the Center would like to congratulate our 2013 spring and summer graduates. The spring BSW graduates include: Jennifer Gamez from region 7 and Raquel Rodriguez and Selene Mendez from region 8.

Spring MSW graduates include: Christopher Leh from region 8, Caroline Dickens, Christina McKinney, and Ana Mejia, as well as MSW employee graduate Karon Gayoso, all from region 7.

Summer MSW employee graduates are: Jessica Cooper, Leslie Hernandez and Nicole Travis, all from region 7.

We would also like to welcome the new Title IV-E stipend recipients. Current CPS employees working on their MSW part-time are Christina Garcia and Jannet Sanchez from region 7 and Sherri Dunn, Maria Flores and Melissa Francis, all from region 8.

Congratulations to our graduates as they launch and supplement their careers and welcome to the DFPS employees as they juggle the challenges of work and school!

2013 National Title IV-E Roundtable

The National Title IV-E Roundtable took place this past May in Galveston. DFPS administrators, staff and University partners attended. This was the 3rd roundtable with a national focus and was hosted by the Center for Family Strengths at University of Houston. The theme was Professionalizing Child Welfare: Teaching and Training in the New Millennium. Keynote speakers included Ken Nakamura, Title IV-E Project Coordinator at San Diego State University, Karla Morales, Protective Service Worker in the County of San Diego Child Welfare Services, Dr. Joan Levy Zlotnik, Director of Social Work Policy Institute, and Judge Suzanne Radcliffe, specializing in the practice of family law and mediation.

PowerPoint presentations from the conference and more information can be found at: http://www.uhd.edu/academic/colleges/publicservice/cfs/title2013.php
Statistics released this month from the Children’s Bureau offer insight to the number of children involved in the child welfare system. This data comes from the Adoption and Foster Care Analysis and Reporting System (AFCARS). For the fiscal year of 2012 initial estimates show that 399,546 children were in foster care. These children were, on average, 9.1 years old. Of these children, 47% were in foster family homes, and 28% were in relative family placements. Parent reunification was the primary plan for 53% of these children, and 56% of children were ultimately adopted by a foster parent.

Also out this month, the Child Welfare Outcomes 2008-2011: Report to Congress offers a comparative statistical analysis between fiscal years on children in the child welfare system. This U.S. Department of Health and Human Services publication uses nationwide data from both the National Child Abuse and Neglect Data System and the AFCARS to obtain these numbers. Data is meant to analyze various state achievements towards the nationally stated goals of safety, permanency and well-being for children in the child welfare system. Since 2002, the number of children in foster care has decreased by 23%. In addition, the child victim rate has continued on a constant downward trend, and reports of child harm are down from 10.3 child victims out of 1,000 in 2008 to 9.9 in 2011. Additional information and statistics can be found at http://www.acf.hhs.gov/sites/default/files/cb/afcarsreport20.pdf and http://www.acf.hhs.gov/programs/cb/resource/cwo-08-11.

Resources for Practice

- Texas DFPS has created a toolkit for fathers with open CPS cases. The toolkit provides advice from fathers previously involved with CPS. It also includes a list of professionals who may come in contact with the CPS system, what to expect in court and a dictionary containing common child welfare terms. The toolkit comes in both English and Spanish and can be found at: DFPS website.

- Parental incarceration can be devastating and overwhelming for children so Sesame Workshop has developed a toolkit called Little Children, Big Challenges—Incarceration. The toolkit offers free printables, multimedia tools and videos that are kid-friendly. The toolkit comes in both English and Spanish and can be found on the Sesame Street website.

- The Children’s Bureau has a new collection of videos that feature key themes relating to the protection of children and strengthening families. The brief videos can be used for self-learning, curriculum or trainings. Videos include working with grantees, collaboration in child welfare and data and technology. The videos can be found through the Children’s Bureau website.

Promoting Child Well Being

A focus on well-being should be integrated into all child welfare services. Promoting well-being includes understanding and addressing the child and caregiver’s physical, behavioral, social and cognitive capacities. Using a protective factors framework can help prevent or mitigate the risks that negatively influence the health and well-being of children and families. Child Welfare Information Gateway features resources and literature on promoting child and family well-being. Featured topics include protective factors frameworks, child and youth well-being, as well as parent and caregiver well-being. It also includes fatherhood and parenting resources. All of these resources can help make up a protective factors framework to promote well-being in children and caregivers in the CPS system. For more information, visit: https://www.childwelfare.gov/preventing/promoting/.
Upcoming Events & Conferences

Center for Family Strengths will be holding its Family Strengths Symposium September 25-26 in Houston. The theme is Equity: Partnering for Families. Workshop topics include: engaging fathers in child welfare, parent child education programs and identifying strengths in immigrant families.

The annual program meeting sponsored by The Council on Social Work Education (CSWE) is taking place in Dallas October 31-November 3. The theme of this year’s conference is “Global Social Work – the World Is Here”.

Texas Foster Family Association is offering a training conference October 11-13 in Austin. The conference is comprised of different sessions and offers 21 hours of CEUs.

The 13th annual Partners in Prevention Training Conference is taking place in Round Rock January 22-24, 2014. The conference will focus on the prevention of child abuse, juvenile delinquency and family violence awareness.

Prevent Child Abuse—Texas is holding its 28th annual conference in San Antonio March 3-4, 2014.

Self-Care in Social Work

Social workers encounter occupational stress on a daily basis. Self-Care in Social Work is a guide to promote effective self-care tailored to the needs of social workers, in individual and organizational approaches. It goes beyond the typical prescriptions to exercise, eat well, and sleep more.

The book is based on the premise that self-care should not be an add-on activity that only happens in the instance there is some free time. Kathleen Cox and Sue Steiner teach how to approach individual self-care through the development of self-awareness, self-regulation and self-efficacy.

Out-of-Home Care Resources

Child Welfare Information Gateway has provided resources pertaining to out-of-home care of children including but not limited to, adoption, foster care, and kinship care. This resource is a one stop shop for FAQss regarding specific areas of out-of-home care for both caseworkers and families. It includes topics such as working with children and youth in out-of-home care; working with birth families; recruiting and supporting foster families; and placement decisions and stability. It specifically addresses group and residential care, kinship care, casework practice, recruiting and retaining resource families, transitioning to independent living, as well as resources for kinship caregivers and foster families. To get more information on any of these topics go to https://www.childwelfare.gov/outofhome/.