

## The Stage of Change Approach Gains the Interest of Providers and Funders

- Children's Institute was awarded a \$50,000 grant from the Daisy Marquis Jones Foundation to partner with Family Resource Centers of Crestwood Children's Center to enhance the effectiveness of their Parents as Teachers program through the use of the Stage of Change Approach.
- In June 2011, Children's Institute received a \$5,000 grant from Rochester's Child to provide information sessions to early childhood stakeholders on implications of readiness to change for early educator professional development and parent education.
- "Zero to Three" published an article in the May 2011 issue describing the work of the Partners in Family Child Care project.
- Children's Institute staff presented on the Stage of Change Approach at the Child Care Policy Research Consortium, National Quality Rating and Improvement System Conference, and National Child Care Resource and Referral Center Conference.
- In July 2011, Children's Institute provided a two-day training on "The Stage of Change Approach to Early Educator Professional Development" for approximately 60 child care technical assistance providers in Columbia, South Carolina.
- An 8-hour Stage of Change training was developed at Children's Institute and has been offered to child care administrators as well as home visitors and parent educators.

## A Targeted Approach to Raising Quality in Family Child Care

For the past three years, the *Partners in Family Child Care* project has used an early literacy curriculum and home visiting approach to teach group family child care providers to use emotionally responsive language and literacy interactions with young children. In partnership with the Family Child Care Satellites of Greater Rochester and Family Resource Centers of Crestwood Children's Center, the project has enrolled 84 urban group family child care providers and their assistants, serving approximately 672 children age birth to five.

### Impact of the project

Children cared for by providers enrolled in the first two years of the *Partners in Family Child Care* project (data from the third year are still being analyzed) demonstrated growth substantially above developmental expectations in standardized measures of early literacy and overall development. One provider commented, "The children have a longer attention span. During play they rhyme and sing more. They are learning the letters in their names and other words." These literacy gains suggest that home visiting helped some providers make specific programmatic changes that benefit children's development. However, in terms of changes in their literacy environment, on average, providers did not show significant changes in quality. Change is difficult, and resistance to it can hinder progress and success. Understanding the impact of the providers' readiness to change was the key to explaining this finding.



### Meeting people where they are

Child care providers who are committed to the care and education of young children provide an invaluable service to families and to our community. Yet providers vary in terms of their openness to receiving professional development services. Many seek information about how to improve their practices to support children's learning and development. Some know they need to improve, but are too overwhelmed by the stress of their job, health issues, or life circumstances to make a commitment to change. Still others are content with their current practices and have little motivation to learn about different approaches.

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## A Note from the Director

The development of social and emotional health – the ability to regulate emotions, form positive relationships, concentrate, problem solve, empathize, and demonstrate pro-social behaviors – is foundational to a student's positive school experience and success in life.



On July 18, 2011, the New York State Board of Regents adopted *Educating the Whole Child, Engaging the Whole School: Guidelines and Resources for Social and Emotional Development and Learning (SEDL) in New York State* in fulfillment of the Children's Mental Health Act. The recently adopted guidelines for incorporating SEDL into elementary and secondary school programs articulate the importance of educating the whole child and encourage the involvement of parents, teachers, schools, and community. Children's Institute stands at the ready with our research, programs, and services to support school districts, our partners, and communities in implementing SEDL efforts.

Long before the guidelines were written, social and emotional learning was a priority for the late Mary Anne Trost, a Rochester City School District social worker, who together with her colleagues, implemented an effort in 1956 to provide early identification of first graders who displayed adjustment difficulties through their behaviors. This effort was the early beginning of Primary Project, which today is used in 2,100 schools across the country to help children with emotional development and pro-social behavior. Although Mary Anne passed away in June 2011 at age 103, her legacy of educating the whole child through schools, parents, and partners continues through Primary Project and the children it serves.

Mary Anne's legacy is featured in this edition of *News & Views*, as are several services and approaches that can be helpful in implementing the SEDL guidelines. We invite you to consider how you might leave a legacy for children – by helping us work with schools in New York to implement SEDL guidelines, by working with us in developing and implementing programs and services that provide children their best opportunities for success, or by sustaining the future work of Children's Institute by becoming a member of our Legacy Society through the creation of a planned gift.

– A. Dirk Hightower, Ph.D., Executive Director

### Create Your Own Legacy

There are many ways to make a legacy gift. To have a confidential conversation about how you can provide a legacy to benefit children in our community, please contact Jane Passamonte, Senior Development Associate at (585) 295-1000, ext. 245, or [jpassamonte@childrensinstitute.net](mailto:jpassamonte@childrensinstitute.net).

Join us for a Shopping Soiree on  
Thursday, November 17, 2011, from 5:30-7:30 pm  
at People's Pottery, Springhouse Commons,  
3025 Monroe Avenue, Pittsford.

Children's Institute and People's Pottery will present  
an evening of wine and cheese, hors d'oeuvres,  
door prizes, and shopping for our friends.

Twenty percent of all purchases made during the event  
will be donated to Children's Institute to support our work  
on behalf of children and families in our community.

Please mark your calendars and plan to join us.

## Community Update Breakfast Scheduled for October

On October 27, 2011, Children's Institute will host a Community Update Breakfast at The Strathallan Hotel. This event, which is held biennially, includes a report to the community about the agency's work to address the current challenges facing children and families in our community and across the nation. Invited guests include donors, community partners, and friends of Children's Institute.

This year, the founding members of the newly-formed Legacy Society will be honored. If you have already made provisions for a planned gift to benefit the work of Children's Institute, or if you are considering doing so, please call Jane Passamonte, senior development associate at (585) 295-1000 ext. 245, so that we may include you in this special celebration.

### A Targeted Approach to Raising Quality in Family Child Care

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Home visitors used the *Stage of Change Scale for Early Education and Care*, developed at Children's Institute, to assess providers' readiness to change at the beginning and end of the program. Interestingly, providers who were rated as "ready to change" showed small but significant increases in quality, whereas providers who were in the early stages of readiness actually showed decreases in quality. This finding suggested that home visiting services are likely to have the biggest impact on child care providers who are ready to change.

### Transition year and future directions

Based on this finding, as *Partners in Family Child Care* enters its fourth year, the program will use the targeted approach of matching interventions to the provider's readiness to change. The goal is to increase motivation for learning among providers who have not yet demonstrated a readiness to change.

In Year 4 of the program, providers who are ready to change will receive an additional year of home visits focused on literacy activities. Providers who do not have an intention or commitment to change will be invited to participate in a small group intervention designed to raise awareness of child care practices. The latter group will draw on evidence-based group process and communication techniques, with the goal of increasing participants' openness to professional development services.

Targeting services to match the learner's readiness to change is a promising strategy for many fields, including early educator professional development, parent education, youth development and after-school programs, and organizational change. Children's Institute currently offers training and consultation for organizations that wish to incorporate a Stage of Change Approach to enhance the effectiveness of their services. For more information, please contact Shira Peterson, Ph.D. at (877) 888-7647 ext. 233 or [speterson@childrensinstitute.net](mailto:speterson@childrensinstitute.net).

The *Partners in Family Child Care* project has been made possible through the generosity of the following funders: Anonymous, Brighter Days Foundation, The Brush Family Fund, Cary and Gerry Wenzke, The Community Foundation, The Feinbloom Supporting Foundation, JP Morgan Chase Bank, M & T Bank, and Rochester's Child.

## Primary Project Continues to Grow

In its 54th year, Primary Project continues to give children across the nation a strong start in school and increased chances for long-term success. This fall, Children's Institute is expanding Primary Project to several new schools.

**On the national scene**, Bowling Green, Kentucky will begin Primary Project in four of its elementary schools. Looking for ways to bring evidence-based programs to the district's young students, Associate Superintendent for Learning Programs, Vicki Writsel, has spearheaded the effort to add Primary Project to the continuum of services offered. Deborah Johnson, MS, and Mary Anne Peabody, LCSW, RPT-S, traveled to Bowling Green in late July 2011 to train the school teams in program implementation practices. A full day of professional development for teachers was also provided on the topics of *Teachers as Emotional Coaches*, *Intentional Language: The Power of our Words*, and *Making Room for Social and Emotional Development in Your Classroom*.

**In New York State**, eight new schools will begin offering Primary Project to their students:

*Altar Elementary & Parish Elementary, Altmar-Parish School District*

*Copenhagen Elementary, Copenhagen School District*

*West Street Elementary, Geneva City School District*

*Montgomery Smith Elementary, Hudson City School District*

*Pioneer Elementary, Pioneer School District*

*Watkins Glen Elementary, Watkins Glen School District*

*Beth Jacob School Brooklyn collaborating with Counter Force, one of the largest mental health/educational agencies serving the Greater New York area.*

We anticipate that within these new Primary Project schools, an additional 2,400 children will be screened and an estimated 230 children will receive Primary Project services during the coming school year.

## Speaking of growing and gaining...

The Primary Project "Grow and Gain" mini-grants opportunity was available to all Primary Project programs throughout New York State. The mini-grant application required applicants to look for creative ways to enhance their programs by integrating best practices. This fall a total of \$24,000 will be awarded to the following 36 Primary Project Schools:

*Black River & Carthage Elementary, Carthage Central School District*

*Charter School for Applied Technologies, Buffalo*

*Chazy Central Rural Elementary, Chazy Central Rural School District*

*Cooperstown Elementary, Cooperstown Central School District*

*Drake Elementary, North Tonawanda City School District*

*French Road Elementary, Brighton Central School District*

*Groton Elementary, Groton Central School District*

*Harris Hill & Ledgeview Elementary, Clarence Central School District*

*Heim & Maple East Elementary, Williamsville Central School District*

*Homer Brink Elementary, Maine-Endwell School District*

*Lake Placid Elementary, Lake Placid Central School District*

*Morrisonville & Saranac Elementary, Saranac Central School District*

*Newfield Elementary, Newfield Central School District*

*Palmyra-Macedon Elementary, Palmyra-Macedon Central School District*

*School No. 2, 4, 5, 6, 9, 15, 16, 19, 28, 29, 34, 35, 41, 44, 57, 58, Rochester City School District*

*Ticonderoga Elementary, Ticonderoga Central School District*

*Westmoreland Elementary, Westmoreland Central School District*

Schools will receive funds to implement parent engagement activities, professional development including training in social and emotional development and learning, and rigorous work towards achieving the status of a Nationally Certified Primary Project Program in Best Practices and Implementation. Congratulations to all.

## Understanding the Challenges of Military Families

Over the past few years, Children's Institute has developed a continuum of services to support children and families who are experiencing military deployment. September marks the beginning of the third year of a pilot program using the Same Sky Sharing® curriculum in the Carthage Central School District near Ft. Drum, NY. This program continues to increase our understanding of the challenges faced by military families.

Our research during the past year has yielded new insight into the impact of deployment on children's social and emotional health. Surveys revealed that children worried more, felt sad, and had difficulty controlling their behavior during the time their parent was deployed. Parents also reported that more programs to support military families

are needed and that schools and communities would benefit from increased awareness and education about the challenges military families face.

## Taking awareness beyond our own backyard

Deborah Johnson, MS, Director of National Services, had several opportunities to increase awareness of the unique challenges military families face and to advocate for children of military families on a national level. Johnson has presented Same Sky Sharing at multiple conferences, including the Rosalynn Carter Symposium on Mental Health Policy and the Conference on Advancing School Mental Health. She was also invited to speak at the Military Child Education Coalition Annual Conference on the challenges of transitions and reintegration and ways to support resiliency in families and children when a parent is deployed.



**In Memory of Mary Anne Trost**  
Social Worker, Child Advocate, Visionary  
June 10, 1907 – June 7, 2011

Mary Anne Trost died June 7, 2011, at the age of 103, but she left behind a legacy that has impacted the lives of over a million children across the nation by giving them a strong start in school, paving the way for success in their studies and in their lives.

In 1956, Mildred Potter, the principal at Rochester City School District's (RCSD) No. 33 school, Louis D. Izzo, clinical psychologist, and Mary Anne, the school's social worker, conceived and implemented a program to provide early identification of first graders who displayed adjustment problems in school. This was the first Primary Mental Health Project (PMHP). A subsequent NYS grant awarded to RCSD provided funds for a research consultant, which brought Emory Cowen on board. Thereafter, Cowen became PMHP's first director. Under his leadership, the program evolved, expanded, and became implemented nationally.

Today, Primary Project (as it is now known) operates in more than 2,100 schools across the United States, and Mary Anne Trost's legacy lives on through the hands of every staff member, child associate, teacher, and partner involved with the program and in every child who benefits from it.

We thank Jonathan Trost, Mary Anne's son and a long-time member of the Board of Directors of Children's Institute, who has generously shared his mother's handwritten notes with us. These notes, along with Jonathan's long conversations with his mother about her early work, give us an intimate and detailed history of Mary Anne's passion for children and depict her vital role in the early days of Primary Project.

**COMET®'s Power of Assessment Helps United Way Improve Program Effectiveness**

In summer 2010, United Way began using COMET, a web-based data collection system developed by Children's Institute and its technology partner, SophiTec, in its strategic planning process to measure some of its key strategies. Using COMET as an evaluation tool offers a range of features to United Way and its providers, including:

- A systematic way to record the information
- Access to program data from any Internet-connected computer
- Provider integration of evaluation into its work—a key goal for United Way
- Easy monitoring of provider success in data collection

United Way's providers of The Incredible Years, Parents as Teachers, and Nurse-Family Partnership programs use assessments created to measure parent skills and parent-child relationships, entering data into COMET for each assessment at the beginning, middle, and end of programs. In addition, United Way has begun using COMET to measure program attendance in after-school programs that it supports in 10 agencies and is using COMET in evaluating a new program called Transition Coaching, which provides resources for people with a disability who are either not eligible for or not currently enrolled in a care system but who are nonetheless facing a professional or life transition.

To learn more about how COMET is assisting the United Way to track data and evaluate the effectiveness of its programs, please visit [www.childrensinstitute.net/comet](http://www.childrensinstitute.net/comet).

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