

Children's Institute Plays Role in Transforming the Delivery of Mental Health Care to Children



In October 2005, the County of Monroe received a grant from the Substance and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA) to transform the delivery of mental health services to youth challenged with serious emotional disturbance. The goal was to provide a more family-driven, youth-guided system – one that transformed mental health services from the traditional case management model to one where planning was directed by a child and family team. Realizing that a child is touched or influenced by a number of people across the child serving system, the County sought to create a system of care that would seek input from family members, school personnel, religious and community leaders, as well as from the youth who receive services.

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A Note from the Director

During the New York State Budget process earlier this year, the Governor identified student achievement as a priority. With New York State's increased focus on teacher evaluation and even stronger emphasis on academic outcomes, why should schools pay close attention to social and emotional learning (SEL)?



Quite simply, SEL improves positive behavior and reduces negative behavior so that children can focus on learning. Our colleagues at CASEL recently completed a meta-analysis of 213 prevention interventions and found that social and emotional learning programs yielded multiple benefits for children, including improved academic performance. The achievement test scores of students who took part in SEL programs were raised by 11 to 17 percentile points compared to those of students who did not.

Children's Institute continues to partner enthusiastically with the Rochester City School District and agencies that serve children to identify and implement effective social and emotional programs that support children's success. Our flagship program, Primary Project, helps children to regulate their emotions, problem-solve, and address behaviors associated with school adjustment difficulties.

Just as we measure students' progress during the time they participate in Primary Project, we also help schools and organizations measure their efforts in promoting student success. Currently, we are partnering with the Rochester City School District to evaluate the effectiveness of its new K-2 Math and Reading curricula. Our COMET® Data Collection and Management System facilitates evaluation by converting data into meaningful reports for teachers and administrators. Children's Institute helps our partners to use those reports to improve their work with children and integrate social and emotional learning into daily educational practice.

In this issue of News and Views, you will read about Children's Institute's evaluation role in changing the mental health system for children with severe emotional disturbances, the evaluation of before- and after-school care for young children, and the expansion of an evidence-based social and emotional program to more schools in Rochester.

With the right blend of social and emotional learning programs and evaluation services, we believe that schools can transform education to ensure children's success in school and in life.

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

Monroe County Assessment

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Children's Institute's expertise was called upon to assist the local community with its continuous quality initiative by identifying the extent to which:

- Care coordination was implemented in line with its established guidelines;
- Families found services and supports to be satisfactory and culturally competent, and;
- Youth felt involved and empowered.

Through a variety of survey tools, the staff at Children's Institute collected and interpreted data and shared the results with several stakeholder groups, including family caregivers. As a result, collaboration between the child-serving system and agencies was enhanced.

As the grant program comes to a close, the focus will be on sustaining the work that has occurred over the past six years to ensure that:

- Every child with serious emotional disturbance has access to care directed by a Child and Family Team as needed.
- Family and youth are equitably represented and drive all decision-making.
- Quality mental health care for all children designated as having serious emotional disturbance and the families is enhanced, particularly those of African American and Latino descent who are underserved by the traditional mental health system.
- Mechanisms are created to promote recovery and smooth transitions into and out of care.
- A funding structure is created that maximizes the integration of various funding streams to support an effective and sustainable system of care.

Steve Fielding, Ph.D., Research Associate directed the evaluation work on behalf of Children's Institute, assisted by Melissa Reynolds Weber, MS, Senior Information Analyst.

More Monroe County Children get Quality Child Care

An additional 300 children in Monroe County will have access to quality child care while their parents work this year thanks to a bill passed by the Senate and Assembly and signed by Governor Cuomo. The bill adds \$1.6 million dollars to the Childcare Dollar\$ facilitated enrollment subsidy program at Children's Institute and assists working families who have children under the age of 13 who need child care and who meet the income guideline for their household size.

Since 2004, Childcare Dollar\$ has provided financial support for over 1,000 children.

Additional information and an application can be found at www.childrensinstitute.net/community/ChildcareDollars.

Welcome Aboard



Edward (Ted) Boucher, MBA is the former President and CEO of Caldwell Manufacturing and current Chief Business Development Officer and Vice Chair of the Board of Directors. Ted has a distinguished record of board service and involvement in the community. He currently serves on the honorary board of GEVA Theater and the board of Rochester's Child; he is co-chair of the Capital Campaign for GEVA Theatre Center and is a former Board Chair of Rochester Area Community Foundation. Ted has been volunteering with Children's Institute as a member of the Development Committee since winter 2011, and in January, Ted joined the Board of Children's Institute. Ted lives in Brighton with his wife, Peggy. They have two children, Nicole and Timothy, who are attending college. Ted enjoys scuba diving, fishing, and traveling.



Miranda Cairns, University of Rochester graduate student, is completing her field placement and final semester at Children's Institute. Miranda will be working with Children's Institute researcher, Shira Peterson, Ph.D., on developing a policy brief and grant relating to the Stage of Change Approach.

Miranda's desire to improve education and help children led her to this field placement. She is expected to earn her Master's in Educational Policy from the Warner School in May 2012.



Pat Clancy of LifeSpan's Senior Community Service Employment Program joined Children's Institute in December as our front desk receptionist. Pat is a retiree from the Rochester City School District, having served as a cook for 20 years and then as a para-professional in the classroom for another seven years. She is a mother of three, grandmother of 10, and great grandmother of five.

David Pieramico, MBA, joined the Board in January 2012. Currently, he is the Associate Executive Director for Finance and Administration at the Jewish Community Center where he is responsible for the finance, human services, facilities, and information technology areas of the organization. He has been an adjunct faculty member at Medaille College in Rochester for over 10 years and at the Center for Community Engagement at St. John Fisher College, where he teaches accounting and a variety of leadership and business courses. David has over 30 years of professional finance experience. He is married and the proud father of two daughters, one a pharmacist in Albany and the other a senior at LeMoyne College in Syracuse. David lives in Penfield and has been a volunteer youth coach for soccer and lacrosse. He is a longtime golfer and has recently become a serious pickleball player.

A Holiday Gift from First Unitarian Church Funds Program Expansion

Each year, the members of the congregation of First Unitarian Church of Rochester are asked to tally what they spend on the holiday season from presents, wrappings, trimmings, travel, food, and entertainment and then divide that amount in half and contribute that to a project at the church – a gift to the Greater Good. The youth of the congregation are key decision makers in naming recipients of the Greater Good Awards.

This year, Children's Institute received \$25,000 in support of Coping Power, a violence prevention program that helps middle school students reduce aggressive behaviors and manage conflict constructively. Coping Power is an evidence-based social and emotional program that is proven to decrease delinquent behaviors by teaching skills in adaptive coping, organization, goal-setting, and self-control. The program reduces aggressive behaviors, decreases suspensions, increases school bonding, and improves social competence – all leading to a decrease in youth violence and juvenile crime. Coping Power has been implemented in Rochester City School District's School No. 29 and No. 35 and School No. 9's Boys Academy. At the end of January, Schools 2, 5, 16, 34, 41, 42, 43, 44, 45, and 46 are scheduled to implement the program, along with School No. 34, which will use the program in its after-school setting. First Unitarian Church's gift will allow Children's Institute to bring the program into eight additional Rochester schools.



Associate Minister Rev Jennifer Crow of the First Unitarian Church in Rochester presents \$25,000 to Deborah Johnson, director of national services, Children's Institute.



Children's Institute Partners with Synergy Enterprises, Inc.

Children's Institute has extended its reach across the United States in partnership with Synergy Enterprises, Inc., a nationally recognized firm that helps advance initiatives in education. Teams of our specially trained staff and master observers have travelled the country collecting program quality data from forty 21st Century Community Learning Centers (CCLC) serving prekindergarten and kindergarten children. The 21st CCLC is a federally-funded program designed to provide activities that address the educational, health, social services, cultural, and recreational needs of students during out-of-school time.

The main purpose of this project is to identify high quality practices in early childhood 21st CCLC programs that can be shared across the entire program and in the after school field overall. Children's Institute will contribute work on data analyses and a report on quality trends, staff qualifications, and practices in addition to operational challenges observed during the site visits. Of the 11,000 21st CCLC sites across the country, approximately 877 serve prekindergarten and 4,988 serve kindergarten students. The information collected and reported by our staff will inform programming that serves thousands of young children in rural, suburban, and urban locales throughout the United States. Due to the limited amount of research on 21st CCLC sites serving young children, this study will make a significant contribution to the early education field and its programming funded by the United States Department of Education.



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EMOTIONAL HEALTH

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