

SIGNIFICANT ISSUES REPORT – September, 2006

Children's Network

Solano County Children's Budget Featured in National Publications: Produced by the Children's Network in collaboration with several County Departments for budget years 2000, 2002, and 2003, and under a grant with The California Endowment, the *The Solano County Children's Budget* is featured in two recently released national publications co-produced by The Forum for Youth Investment and the Finance Project and funded by Atlantic Philanthropies.

Kim Thomas, Executive Director of the Children's Network, and Tam Stevenson, Senior Research Analyst for the Children's Network and primary author of the Solano County Children's Budget in 2002 and 2003, had conferred with producers of other CYF Budgets and project directors at their invitation while the project was initially under development.

Adding It Up: A Rationale for Developing a Children, Youth and Families Budget (CYF Budget) explains why a county, state, or city should have a CYF Budget and also provides examples of model budgets and how findings have had an impact on planning and policy. It highlights the Solano County Children's Budget recommendations for using blended/braided funding strategies to maximize resources for children's mental health, and the Solano First 5 Commission's investment of \$50,000 to leverage \$1 million for crucial mental health services for eligible children 0-5 through Early and Periodic Screening Diagnosis and Treatment (EPSDT).

Adding It Up: A Guide to Developing a Children, Youth and Families Budget explains the process of developing a CYF Budget, provides tips and warnings, tools and worksheets, and technical resources. The Solano County Children's Budget is highlighted as a model for compiling, organizing and analyzing data for development of a CYF Budget.

Both publications are available from The Forum on Youth Investment at www.forumfyi.org. *The Solano County Children's Budgets* are available at www.childnet.org.

Family Resource Center Network

Solano County FRC Network and CWS Chosen for Matrix Pilot. Solano Child Welfare Services and the Children's Network, in coordination with the Solano FRC Network co-applied and have been selected to participate in Cohort 2 of the Family Development Matrix Pilot Project. Five counties were chosen to participate.

The Family Development Matrix Pilot is a project of Strategies, a program of the California Department of Social Services Office of Child Abuse Prevention (OCAP), and the Institute for Community Collaborative Studies, Department of Health, Human Services and Public Policy at California State University Monterey Bay (ICCS). The eighteen-month project provides technical assistance and training to Child Welfare departments implementing Differential Response and FRCs providing family support services to Path 1 and 2 families.

We anticipate that the benefits to participating in this project will include:

- Case managers will be more effective in assessing families' strengths and recognizing areas for improvement in partnership with the families;
- Program services will improve by analyzing aggregated data and making changes accordingly;
- The FRC Network and CWS will have a shared language to communicate about clients and outcomes; and
- The FRC Network and CWS will have an outcomes-based method for reporting to funders and policy makers.

Additionally, agencies will receive a mini-grant for participation to fund staff time to attend meetings, the design team, training, and/or for technology capacity building.

Agencies in the Solano FRC Network already utilize the Family Development Matrix. This is an opportunity to refine the tool in response to new expectations for community-based family serving agencies following the CWS Redesign. In 1998, Solano FRCs participated in a three-part, comprehensive training on the Matrix and modified the tool for their use. Subsequently, the Solano Matrix was embedded in the database used to track families, demographics, services, funding streams, and outcomes. The ChildNet Results Manager, including the Matrix, has been featured as a model at national conferences and was recognized by the Foundation Consortium as among the most effective databases in the family support field in use in California.

Parenting Partnership Offers Facilitator Training: The Solano Parenting Partnership and Youth & Family Services are collaborating to offer a three day Facilitator Training for the evidence-based Nurturing Parenting Program from October 16 through 18, 2006. Participants will learn to facilitate the Nurturing Program curricula which focus on developing and practicing empathy, nurturing and positive discipline skills. The fifteen distinct curricula available under the Nurturing Program umbrella are designed to meet the needs of a variety of populations. The Nurturing Programs utilize a validated assessment tool to measure parents' attitudes and beliefs over time, and have received national recognition for their effectiveness. They were identified as "Promising Programs" in a 2005 meta-review of evidence-based parenting programs for use in the Child Welfare system*, and are SAMHSA/OJJDP "Model Programs" for substance abuse and delinquency prevention.

With support from First 5 Solano Children & Families Commission and in-kind contributions from Youth & Family Services and the Children's Network, we are able to make this Facilitator Training available to child-serving professionals in Solano County for a reduced fee of \$75 per participant. Registration is open to all Solano County community members. Priority is given to active members of the Parenting Partnership, and to participants serving parents in identified areas of need. For registration materials and more information, contact Nicole Bandy at the Children's Network, 421-7229 x102 or nicole@childnet.org.

*Barth, Richard P., et al., "Parent-Training Programs in Child Welfare Services: Planning for a More Evidence-Based Approach to Serving Biological Parents" in *Research on Social Work Practice*, Vol. 15, No. 5, September 2005, 353-371, DOI 10.1177/1049731505276321.

Child Care Planning Council

Child Care Needs Assessment: Local Child Care Planning Councils are mandated to "conduct an assessment of child care needs in the county no less than once every five years." The Assessment includes all factors deemed appropriate by the local planning council to obtain an accurate picture of the comprehensive child care needs in the county. The Council has been working for the past several months on updating Solano County's assessment plan, which will be submitted to the Office of Education and Board of Supervisors for approval this Fall.

Presenting Constructing Connections: In order to both inform elected officials about the need for child care throughout the County and to develop political support for the development of child care centers, staff of the Children's Network has requested time on the agendas of each city council and the Board of Supervisors in Solano County. Constructing Connections, managed at the state level by the Low Income Investment Fund, is a program made possible by the Affordable Buildings for Children's Development (ABCD) Initiative with additional funding from First 5 California, First Five Solano, the Children's Network and Solano Family and Children's Services.

Presentations to the city councils and the Board will focus on how the Constructing Connections program is collaborating with city and county staff members, developers, financial institutions, child care providers, real estate professionals and others to build support for the development of child care centers. By connecting with local government officials, we hope to ensure that child care issues become part of the planning processes within each city so that opportunities to site child care centers are not lost.

Presentations have been scheduled with the each City Council as follows:

- Vallejo, September 12;
- Fairfield, September 19;
- Benicia, October 3;
- Dixon, October 10;
- Suisun City, October 17;
- Rio Vista, October 19.

A presentation will be made to the Board of Supervisors in October, 2006.