

UNIVERSITY OF MINNESOTA

Mission Statement

The Children, Youth, and Family Consortium was established in fall 1991 in an effort to bring together the varied competencies of the University of Minnesota and the vital resources of Minnesota's communities to enhance the ability of individuals and organizations to address critical health, education, and social policy concerns in ways that improve the well-being of Minnesota children, youth, and families.

Parent Education

Where We've Been - Where We're Going

by Marilyn Martin Rossmann, Associate Professor, Family Education Program, College of Education and Human Development, University of Minnesota

The role of a parent* is complex. Raising a healthy, happy, successful child calls for an endless kaleidoscope of changing patterns of mental, emotional and physical actions and attitudes. No simple task, parenting requires energy, patience, guiding, advocating, nurturing, motivating, understanding, persistence, wisdom, self-control, self-care, executive ability, stamina and more! Few jobs today are as challenging as parenthood. It is a 24-hours-a-day, 7-days-a-week, decades-long responsibility that requires knowledge, resources and support from others.

Across all eras and cultures, parents have been informally prepared by the previous generation to fulfill their parental roles. Gradually, this "natural" socialization has been supplemented by formal education programs for parenthood.

The current interest in parent education programs evolved for various reasons:

- most people become parents and take the role seriously, wanting to be successful at it;
- today's families differ significantly from those of the past (e.g. fewer children, more stepparent families, and more single parents);
- there is geographic distancing of family generations;
- due to economic and societal demands, there is an increased entry of both parents into the labor force; and
- communities are alarmed about the long-term impact on a child's well-being and ability to learn if poor environments and social experiences are provided by parents.

These factors created a new reality in which parents no longer could easily benefit from the past ways of learning their parenting roles. The time was ripe for the resurgence (since the 1970's) of programs to help parents to understand the reciprocal relationships between themselves and their children.

What is parent education? There is no one agreed upon definition. The following is used in Minnesota: An organized program to strengthen families by offering education, skills training, and support of parents and expectant parents so that the parents can provide the best possible environment for successful interactions and outcomes for their children and themselves.

What is the Minnesota story? Current programs stand firmly on a 75 year history of innovative activities. The University of Minnesota, through the Institute of

*all individuals in a primary parenting role

Consortium Connections

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Child Development, designed a framework for training graduate students to become parent educators in the 1920's. Programs reemerged in the late 1970's in the Technical College System and grew, with Minnesota legislative support, to become the statewide Early Childhood Family Education (ECFE) Program, now offered in 369 school districts and the 4 tribal schools, involving 258,000 children and parents (approximately 40% of all Minnesota children aged birth to five). Several University of Minnesota departments are now involved in the preparation and support of parent educators and the state-wide parent education programs.

The Minnesota programs are unique in the nation since they are based primarily on:

- universal access for all parents on a voluntary basis;
- respect for parents' crucial role in the challenging act of raising their children;
- professional preparation of the parent educators to engage parents in an educational group learning process that is directed toward meeting needs identified primarily by the parents;
- an assumption that parents want to and can grow and benefit from education and support in their role as parents;
- substantial involvement of both parents and their children in an on-going educational program emphasizing the reciprocal nature of parent-child interactions;
- providing models that demonstrate that a secure attachment between parent and child is essential to a child's optimal development;
- a balance between providing educational structure and developing a network of social support among parents;
- learning experiences that enhance parents' knowledge and skills regarding physical, mental and emotional development of their children;
- recognition of the community's role in providing economic opportunities to ensure that unmet basic needs do not compromise parents' abilities to provide for their children; and
- facilitating access to community resources.

In 1992, interviews conducted with parents new to ECFE programs found that participants felt: 1) increased feelings of support and self-confidence, 2) greater awareness that they are "not alone" and that other parents have the same problems and concerns, 3) increased knowledge and awareness and understanding about child development and their parental role, and 4) changed perceptions and expectations for themselves as parents and for their children. In short, they felt they knew more about their role as a parent. That's what ECFE is all about!

What are Concerns? Behavior patterns are hard to change (anyone who's tried to lose weight knows this!) It's been fairly easy to show that parent behaviors, such as paying attention to the child's safety, and getting inoculations has been accomplished via parent education programs. Parent education programs, however, are no different from other social intervention programs when it comes to evaluating beyond the specific outcomes. There are so many intervening variables (the economy, the stability of the family, the time of the year, the health of the child, the number of children, even the weather) that make it difficult to "prove" that parent education programs make a difference in the lives of the participants and their children. There is, however, an accumulating body of evidence that adult learners "vote with their feet." They walk into ECFE classes in ever-increasing numbers. Adult learners come because their needs and the needs of their children are being met.

There is also a problem of reaching the "at-risk" parents and their children. Here, too, there is increasing success, with over 7,000 families being referred to ECFE by human service agencies, medical personnel and the judicial system during 1993-94. Teen parent families constituted approximately 15% of the participants in the Minneapolis, St. Paul, and Duluth programs in '93-'94.

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Finally, there is a concern about ethical issues, such as what groups should be served, if limited resources force choices between at-risk families and seemingly not-at-risk families. Research has shown that difficulty in parenting knows no economic boundaries, making this a real dilemma. Examples of other ethical issues are: choosing what to include in program content, when there's a finite amount of time available; knowing how to confront a parent with care, when an educator knows that the parent's decisions may be harmful to their child; and determining the heterogeneous or homogeneous make-up of groups - ie. should there be groups of all fathers? all single parents? all recent immigrants? or should the groups all be a true mix of parents? A group, sponsored by the Minnesota Council on Family Relations, have been working on an ethical practices document for parent educators.

What's Next? The future of parent education in Minnesota is very bright. One obvious and needed area of program expansion is to serve parents of school-age and teen-age children. Another growing area is the increasing involvement of both parents. Parents in greater Minnesota, who may not have enough numbers in one geographic location to fill classes, will need to be served by creative planning and possible use of technology. Greater emphasis needs to be placed on preparing parents to work with their child's teachers throughout their child's school life. And, nutrition education needs to be added to the parent education curriculum.

In order to accommodate programming for these new populations and new areas, leaders in the field will need to work with legislators, school boards and administrators as well as state agency personnel to move the field of parent education ahead toward the year 2000.

Parenting Options

Positive Parenting (Video based curriculum) 6 sessions \$80

Positive Parenting (28 individual fact sheets) \$9.00

Love and Limits. Parenting education for limited resource audience. \$20.

For the above items contact the Minnesota Extension Distribution Center (612) 625-8173.

Self Kare for Kids. Curriculum to help parents make decisions about child's readiness to stay at home alone. Waseca County Extension Office (507) 835-0600.

Parenting the First Year. A set of twelve newsletters on the development of babies. Call Goodhue County Extension office 1-800-385-3101.

If you have questions about Extension Service parenting classes or parenting resources in your county contact Madge Alberts, Extension Service program leader for the Children, Youth and Family Initiative (see description in Consortium Connections on page 10) in the Consortium office (612) 624-9730

Steps Toward Effective, Enjoyable Parenting

by Martha Farrell Erickson, Ph.D. Director, Children, Youth and Family Consortium

Byron Egeland, Ph.D. Institute of Child Development, College of Education and Human Development

For all of us as parents, there is a gap between what we know and what we actually do in our daily lives. For parents in highly stressful life circumstances, who find little support for themselves, or who struggle to come to grips with an abusive past, that gap can be major. Anxiety, exhaustion, anger and shame become barriers to acting on one's best intentions as a parent. These same barriers also can stand in the way of seeking the support and education that we all need; distrust, lack of confidence, and a history of negative interactions with schools and other public institutions too often leave parents understandably reluctant to join parenting classes or support groups.

It was to address those needs that we developed the STEEP program, "Steps Toward Effective, Enjoyable Parenting." Guided by attachment theory and grounded in over 20 years of longitudinal research on risk and resilience, STEEP reaches out to parents even before their first child is born. STEEP works on the premise

that a secure attachment between parent and infant establishes ongoing patterns of healthy interaction and lays the foundation for later competence and wellbeing. Through home visits and group sessions, STEEP facilitators work alongside parents to support them in understanding their child's development, responding sensitively and predictably to their child's needs, and making decisions that ensure a safe and supportive environment for the whole family.

Funded by NIMH, we conducted a rigorous, controlled evaluation of the program beginning in 1987, and we now are analyzing followup data collected when the children were 8-9 years of age. What we have learned from STEEP and our related research on parent-infant attachment has informed home visiting and parent education programs across the country. Specifically, the families who have let us share their journey have taught us that:

- While many factors contribute to quality of attachment, parental sensitivity to a baby's signals is the

primary pathway to a secure relationship. Through experience with a sensitive caregiver the baby develops trust in others, as well as a basic confidence that he or she is effective in soliciting a caring response.

- Parents do not always automatically understand their baby's cues, but with support and encouragement can discover what their baby is telling them. Videotaping parent-infant interaction, then watching the tape with the parent, has been an especially effective way to promote sensitivity. At the end of the STEEP program, parents have been delighted to keep the tape as a record of their developing relationship with their child.

- Sensitive care is based on an understanding of the meaning of child behavior and an ability to see through the eyes of the child. Beyond knowing the basics of what children typically do at what ages, there is a deeper understanding and perspective-taking that allows parents to adapt to the ever-changing behaviors and needs of

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Education for Families in Divorce Transition

by Nancy Neil, Extension Educator, Minnesota Extension Service, Rice County

Over 40% of children will experience parental divorce at least once as a child. That is an alarming fact, which makes us aware of the need to educate families experiencing a divorce.

Divorce is a major change for all members in a family. It affects people in different ways and to varying degrees but there are challenges before, during and after the actual divorce. Children and parents must attempt to rebuild their lives and make the transition to a different family structure.

The Minnesota Extension Service is developing an educational program that can help parents in making this difficult transition. The program, which originated in Winona County, is

designed around a community collaborative model. This brings richness to the project, as agencies share ideas and resources. Currently the Divorce Education Project Team is revising the curriculum for piloting in several locations around the state; the other dimensions of this project will include collaboration, training, funding, marketing and research, and evaluation.

The response from counties wanting to pilot the curriculum has been overwhelming, which indicates the true need for this type of education. By recent legislation, district court judges can court order married couples with children, who have filed for divorce, into educational programs.

The curriculum involves over twelve hours of comprehensive education, which gives individuals critical information to make this a smoother transition. There are seven areas to the curriculum component. One of the most vital pieces is the Collaboration Guide. This will help communities in developing a collaborative that will work for residents in their community. Although education may look different around the state, all the basic materials will be the same. A successful collaboration is essential to making this program work.

Reconciling/Divorcing Well is a segment of the program that looks at

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Positive Parenting

by Ron Pitzer, Family Sociologist, Minnesota Extension Service

The nurturing and discipline (or guidance) of children are the primary tasks of parents. Most parents have considerable concern and many questions about the best ways to perform these functions. One of the most perplexing aspects of childrearing is the use of physical punishment. On the one hand, most parents probably experienced some degree of physical punishment in their own upbringing and our culture tends to support parents in its use. On the other hand, most parents do not feel good about hitting their children and realize that it is not a very effective way to teach.

These matters are what "Positive Parenting," a multifaceted project of the Minnesota Extension Service in cooperation with many other agencies, is all about—to review for educators, family-serving professionals, and parents what is known about physical punishment and its consequences; to teach parents alternative ways to nurture and discipline their children; and to attempt to influence the attitudes of parents in Minnesota about the hitting of children.

The project's five components are designed to build on one another. The *research component* includes an

extensive review of the research literature, as the basis for the training and educational components, and an original three-wave study of 1000 parents. The *professional development* component includes providing considerable background material to the Extension project team; seminars and conferences on the socialization of children, with emphasis on the consequences of physical punishment conducted by sociologist and family violence researcher Murray Straus, Consortium director Marti Erickson, Extension family sociologist Ron Pitzer, and several county Extension educators; and training in the use of the curricula, referred to below, by the project team.

The *education component* consists of the development of three curricula and the conduct of parent education programs by staff of ECFE, Headstart, public health, social services, churches, Extension, Ys, and others. The most recent product of the project is a six-lesson video-based curriculum dealing with physical punishment, limits, consequences, listening, anger, and challenging behaviors. A series of Info-U recorded telephone messages also have been prepared.

The *public awareness* component of the project, also a form of education, attempts to raise public awareness about the hitting of children. These efforts include "no-hit days" decreed by county commissioners and/or mayors and city councils in Goodhue, Ottertail, Clay and other counties; kitchen magnets with gentle discipline messages; table tents with discipline messages placed on restaurant and business dining room tables; church/synagogue bulletin inserts; sermons; media coverage; displays; presentations at many conferences and events; and others. Evaluation includes the second and third waves of interviews with parents, and quantitative and qualitative data provided by users of the curricula and by the parent participants in those programs.

For further information about the project, contact Ron Pitzer (612-625-8169) or your county Extension office. To purchase the curricula, call 612-625-8173. Info-U recordings can be heard by dialing 624-2200 in the Twin Cities area or 1-800-525-8636 for Greater Minnesota participating counties.

Supporting Communities to Support Parents

by Beth Sandell, Director, MELD

MELD (formerly Minnesota Early Learning Design) is a private, non-profit parent education and family support program based in Minneapolis, Minnesota. Since 1973, MELD has developed and disseminated collaborative family support programs, generally focused on the early childhood years, in over 150 communities across the U.S. MELD uses group-based, peer-facilitated "learning communities" to help parents solve problems and make informed decisions about their child's health and development.

MELD's mission is to strengthen families at critical periods of transition in parenthood. To fulfill this mission, the MELD model brings together parents who have similar parenting concerns, provides them with pertinent information and helps them develop into supportive peer groups. The parents meet regularly for two years with trained facilitators who are provided with culturally sensitive curriculum and training. The MELD programs serve families who can benefit from strong support and parenting strategies, including adolescent parents, low-income families, culturally diverse families (Hmong immigrants, Latino immigrants, deaf or hard of hearing parents), or families who have young



The MELD for Young Dads program helps fathers connect with their children.



MELD has a program for parents who are deaf and hard-of-hearing.

children with disabilities or chronic illnesses.

Recent longitudinal evaluation data has been encouraging about the effects of the MELD family support program in the prevention of child abuse. MELD, in combination with a home-based intervention program at the Philadelphia Society for Services to Children, significantly improved the parent scores on the Child Abuse Potential Inventory (Daro, D., E. Jones, and K. McCurdy. 1993. Preventing Child Abuse: An Evaluation of Services to High-Risk Families. Chicago, IL.; National Committee for Prevention of Child Abuse). These scores reflect a reduction in the use of corporal punishment, lack of emotional involvement, and inadequate supervision.

For more information on establishing a MELD program within your organization, contact Joyce Hoelting, Development Manager, MELD, Suite 507, 123 North Third Street, Minneapolis, MN 55401, (612) 332-7563, fax (612) 344-1959 or by e-mail at MELDCTRL@aol.com.

Be sure to check out the parenting education information on the Consortium Electronic Clearinghouse on the World Wide Web.

Our new Web address is
www.cyfc.umn.edu

If you have items for the Connection Corner or Consortium Calendar of the Spring issue, please send them to the Consortium office by April 30, 1996.

Consortium Update

New Staff

Rosa Garner joined the Consortium staff as Office Specialist in January. Rosa worked in different state agencies during the past 12 years, including Minnesota Planning. Rosa's voice should become familiar to you in no time: you'll find Rosa at the front desk and answering the main phone.

Lisa Ahlberg joined the Consortium team as a Graduate Assistant with the Homework Project. Lisa is a first year graduate student in the Counseling and Student Personnel Psychology program in the College of Education and Human Development.

Lynn Nelson, a graduate student in Public Affairs at the Humphrey Institute, began working for the Consortium in January. Lynn is working on the photojournalism project, "Seeds of Promise or Seeds of Violence." Previously, Lynn worked in public relations for IDS. She also plied her PR skills and her interests in children and family policy as a volunteer for United Way's "Success by Six" initiative.

Book Drive

From November 15 - December 15, 1995, the Consortium and the School Psychology Student Organization (formerly Chi Psy) conducted the annual book drive, "Food for Thought." This year, nearly 4,000 books were donated and then delivered to various sites across the Twin Cities. A special thanks goes to "Road Runner" transportation service for picking up and delivering tons of books!

HOME WORK

Celebrating an Anniversary

A year ago the HOME WORK project was initiated to bring information about parenting to those parents (or others caring for children in their homes) who are not involved in any parenting education programs. On the first anniversary of the project, there are many

accomplishments to celebrate. The HOME WORK group has:

- compiled information about low cost, high quality education materials;
- posted it on the Internet, with a HOME WORK home page on the World Wide Web and accessed through the Consortium Electronic Clearinghouse or directly through CYFERNET (the national CYF Education and Resource Network) at <http://www.cyfernet.mes.umn.edu:2400/homework.html>;
- prepared a HOME WORK brochure to show a sample of the items from the data base;
- prepared a computer diskette with the brochure template so that organizations can fill in their own lists of materials;
- taken part in producing a video prepared by the Minnesota Extension Service showing innovative programs focusing on children and families, including the HOME WORK project.

Next steps for HOME WORK include:

- expanding the data base;
- distributing the home work brochure and diskette through parent educators and parent advocacy organizations;
- working with representatives from different cultural communities to identify and create other appropriate information materials;
- collaborating with advocacy organizations to collect and distribute information through their existing channels.

The main thrust is to create the tools to support and build on what is already there now to inform parents who are too busy or isolated to participate in formal parenting education programs.

Please call Lisa Ahlberg at (612) 625-7248, the HOME WORK graduate assistant, to borrow the video, ask for brochures, purchase a diskette (\$5.00), provide information about useful materials for parents, or otherwise become better acquainted with the HOME WORK project.

ATTENTION COMMUNITY COLLABORATIONS!

Are you involved in a community collaboration on behalf of children and families? Many people involved in the family service collaboratives and other child- and family-focused initiatives have indicated a need to share their information and questions with others. Until now, most of this has been done through one-to-one phone calls and common meetings. Both of these practices are useful, but often are not enough. Wouldn't it be nice to ask a question of hundreds of people in one easy step (e.g. "How have your local organizations addressed the issue of data privacy?"). It is possible to do this through e-mail on the Internet and it's called a LISTSERV. In a way, a LISTSERV works like a telephone party line where many people are on one phone line and can talk to everyone at once. Only a LISTSERV is much more efficient, comes directly to your e-mail mailbox and doesn't have people screaming to be heard!

The Consortium has established a LISTSERV called collab-L; it was established for those involved in the family service collaboratives and others interested in the work. All you need is an Internet e-mail account.

To sign up, just follow these simple instructions:

1. send an e-mail message to LISTSERV@vm1.spcs.umn.edu
2. leave the subject line blank
3. start the text on the first line
4. text should read: SUBSCRIBE
COLLAB-L userid@node
firstname lastname (e.g.
SUBSCRIBE COLLAB-L
jsmith@some.where.com John
Smith)

Nothing else may be written within the message page. You will receive a return e-mail message confirming receipt. Some instructions about the LISTSERV will also be included. The LISTSERV program does the rest. Any questions, call Lori at 612/625-7251.

Consortium to kick off public education project

The Consortium will kick off a public education project with its media partners, the Star Tribune and WCCO-TV, at the end of March. The



project, titled "Seeds of Promise or Seeds of Violence" is a photo/editorial series of reports designed to educate and motivate people at all levels in our community about critical issues facing Minnesota children; in particular, the reports will share widely compelling information on some of the underlying causes of violence in our society. The reports will showcase the learnings and research of the University of Minnesota and other research organizations.

The project will include four quarterly reports, each devoted to an area that has a strong impact on all children. Each topical report will include both problems and suggested solutions. An important component of each report will be a call to action telling readers what role they can play in becoming part of the solution.

The first report, which features the protective factors all children need to succeed in life, will focus on the findings of University researchers Byron Egeland, Ann Masten and Michael Resnick, as well as Search Institute President Peter Benson. The researchers' views will be complemented by the perspectives of three families raising children today in an often challenging environment.

Future reports will include the power of emotional investment in children, the impact of father involvement on children and families, and how some communities are putting children first. The project is directed by Marti Erickson, CYFC director, and is coordinated by consortium staff. For more information or to receive a copy of the first report, please call the consortium office at (612) 626-1212.

What are the Effects of Early Childhood Family Education?

By Lois Engstrom, Team Leader, Community and Family Education

Early Childhood Family Education is a voluntary public school program for all Minnesota families with children between the ages of birth and kindergarten. More than 258,000 young children and their parents participated in the program during the past school year. The mission of Early Childhood Family Education (ECFE) is to strengthen families and support the ability of parents to provide the best possible environment for the healthy growth and development of their children. Funded by more than \$32 million in state aid and local levies in fiscal year 1995, it is the nation's largest and oldest program of its kind.

Difficult issues in parenting are reflected by changes in society which underscore the need for Early Childhood Family Education. The high divorce rate creates a growing number of single parent and stepparent families. Economic pressures result in more families with both parents employed. A growing percentage of children and families are living in poverty which makes meeting even basic needs a daily struggle. The high mobility and general complexity of modern life combine with these and other factors to create intense stress on families of all income levels.

Families come to ECFE with a wide range of needs. Thus, various types and intensities of services are offered. It is the goal of ECFE to serve a representative cross-section of families with young children. This usually requires special outreach and program delivery strategies. To meet family needs, activities are provided at a variety of times during the day, evening and weekends at various sites throughout the community that are accessible and comfortable for families. Because of the program's history of working closely with education, health and social services to address the needs of parents and children, ECFE is now viewed as an important part of the base for Family Service Collaboratives.

Recent outcome studies document the effects of the program on participating families. A study of parents new to ECFE revealed five overall change themes after a year of participation. These include:

- Increased feelings of support from others, knowing they are "not alone" in their feelings and experiences and that other parents have the same problems and concerns;
- An increased sense of confidence and self-esteem as a parent;
- Increased knowledge, awareness and understanding about children and child development and the parental role in relation to child development;
- Changed perceptions and expectations for themselves as parents and for their children; and
- Changes in behavior based on all of the above. (B. Cooke, *Changing Times*, *Changing Families I*, 1992)

Most recently, an intensive evaluation effort funded by the McKnight Foundation studied the impact of ECFE on lower income families. Preliminary findings include the following:

- More than 80% indicated that ECFE was a worthwhile experience;
- More than 90% of parents felt that staff were respectful and responsive;
- Over 92% of all parents felt that ECFE made a difference in their confidence as a parent, their social contact with other parents, and their knowledge and awareness of child development;
- Over 63% noted that the way they relate to their child had changed;
- About 70% said they changed the approaches they use to get their child to mind them; and
- Most parents said they changed the way they express their feelings toward their children when frustrated or angry.

In summary, the parents mentioned increased feelings of social support, increased knowledge and awareness of child development, and positive changes in their child's behavior. Parents also mentioned improved relations among family members and more discussion between parents. (M. Mueller, *Changing Times*, *Changing Families II*, to be published Spring 1996.)

For additional information on Early Childhood Family Education, call 612/296-8414, MN Department of Children, Families and Learning.

Safe Zone Demonstration Project Parent Education Approach To Crime Prevention

by Roxy Foster, Minnesota Parenting Association

The National Parenting Association (NPA) founded in 1993 by Dr. Sylvia Ann Hewlett is a private nonprofit membership organization committed to building a family-friendly America.

NPA has undertaken in-depth research to identify issues of concern to families that cross-cut lines of race, economic status, and geographical boundaries.

One issue has recurred with frequency and urgency: parents want to reduce the violence and threat of violence in the lives of their children and gain information regarding adolescent behavior and development. Therefore, the NPA has adopted the prevention of violence to young people and by young people as its first cutting edge initiative.

A task force on youth violence was formed in 1994, co-chaired by Dr. Hewlett and Cornel West, Ph.D., Harvard University Professor of Afro-American Studies, to address these urgent concerns of parents.

National statistics on crime show that, between 1973 and 1992, assaults, robbery and rape had decreased. These data are less than reassuring to parents when the arrest rate for violent crime involving young people under age 25 increased by over 50%, and death rates for 15 to 19 year olds increased by 154% between 1985 and 1991, mostly due to firearms and drug involvement.

Studies have found that children and youth are far more likely to get into trouble with the law if they have low educational attainment, experience family violence or neglect, are impoverished, become involved with drugs or alcohol, or have babies while they are too young.

Safe Zone Model

The Minnesota chapter of the NPA is creating partnerships around the concept of Safe Zones (a product of the Task Force), places in which the safety of children is jealously guarded and the work of raising children is supported, respected and nurtured through education and support. Safe

Zones initially will be demonstrated in three communities in St. Paul and will consist of a learning and a community organizing component.

"Family Learning Environments" will be implemented in an elementary, a middle and a high school; the sites will be selected by the Minnesota Parenting Association, the Children, Youth and Family Consortium, and Saint Paul Public Schools. These environments will provide education and support to parents regarding child development of school-age children, creating a continuum of learning for parents.

A community organizing component will be established in the neighborhoods of the schools selected. Parent networks will be formed to create informal support and partnerships with crime prevention initiatives such as block clubs. Parent leadership training in the networks along with education on child development, especially in the area of adolescent growth and development, will provide parents with skills and protective factors to raise their children, support their learning and build strong, safe communities.

MORE MONEY FOR FAMILIES!

The Consortium, as a member of the Minnesota Alliance for Children, is working to get the word out on tax credits that can benefit working families. Workers with low to moderate incomes can put more money in their pockets this tax season if they qualify for the federal Earned Income Credit and state Working Family Credit. These tax benefits are designed to help working families make ends meet.

Who's eligible and for how much?

- Workers making less than \$26,673 with two or more children at home may receive up to \$3,576.
- Workers making less than \$24,396 with one child at home may receive up to \$2,408.
- Workers without children who make less than \$9,230 and are 25-64 years of age may receive up to \$361.

If you get the Earned Income Credit, you are eligible for the Minnesota Working Family Credit. You may also be able to get two other state tax credits: the Child and Dependent Care Credit and the Property Tax Refund.

You may qualify for refunds even if you don't earn enough to be required to file a tax return or have taxes taken out of your paychecks.

Free Help Available!

The only way to get this extra money is to file federal and state tax forms. Trained volunteer tax preparers are available at Volunteer Income Tax Assistance (VITA) sites to help with the tax forms - for FREE!

Information about the tax credits can be found in state and federal tax booklets. To find out if you might qualify for the credits call 296-6417 in the Twin Cities or 1-800-937-5437 from elsewhere in the state. Those with hearing or communications impairments can call 1-800-627-3529 for the Minnesota Relay, and ask for (612) 296-6417. To find the nearest VITA location, call 297-3724 or 297-3725 in the Twin Cities or 1-800-652-9094 in other parts of Minnesota.

Bicultural Parent Education Curriculum for Southeast Asian Families

by Blong Xiong, Graduate Student, Family Social Science, University of Minnesota
Dan Detzner, Family Social Science, University of Minnesota

More than 50,000 Southeast Asian immigrants and their children are now living in the state of Minnesota, most of them in the Twin Cities metropolitan area. Many South Asian families are living at or below family poverty levels and many continue to confront a variety of interconnected problems including language skills, post traumatic stress, unemployment, generational adaptation differences, and unfamiliar social, political, and educational systems. Nearly two-thirds of Hmong people in the Twin Cities metropolitan area, for example, are living at or below poverty and currently receive public assistance. Recent dramatic increases in adolescent delinquency, juvenile arrests, and gang activities of Southeast Asian youth have caused alarm in areas where resettlement has occurred. Leaders of the Southeast Asian mutual assistance associations, teachers, and parents all agree that these overt delinquent acts, seldom seen in their homelands, have their source in the ongoing adjustment problems of families.

Among the most important family issues that have been identified as concerns are gender and generational relations, bi-cultural parenting skills, child discipline, child care, elder roles, responsibilities of adult children, maintaining and adapting traditions and rituals, divorce, and relations with western systems outside the family. These types of family concerns are consistent with what is known

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Effective, Enjoyable Parenting - *Continued from page 3*

their child. One effective strategy in STEEP has been to write letters to the parents in the voice of the baby, gently inviting them to see through the child's eyes.

- To meet the needs of their children, parents must have support for themselves. Although STEEP facilitators provide direct support to parents, what is most critical is that families build on the natural networks that will sustain them longterm. This means identifying both informal and formal resources available to the family and, for many parents, building skills and confidence to access those resources.

- A key to a better future is an honest look at the past. For all parents, it is helpful to examine how we were cared for and to decide what we want to carry forward or leave behind as we care for our own children. As our research has documented, this is especially critical for parents who were abused or neglected in childhood. Breaking intergenerational cycles of abuse happens best through a guided look at both the past and the future.

- Transformation comes through

relationship. Some individuals bring to parenthood a long and troubled relationship history. Old patterns learned in those relationships can be difficult to change, but transformation happens when someone sees the possibilities and keeps expecting the best. This requires time, patience, and a program philosophy that recognizes that relationship is often more important than curriculum.

Since its original implementation and evaluation, the STEEP program has been carried out successfully in a variety of community settings and we have provided training and consultation in the STEEP approach to professionals throughout the US and abroad. To continue to link practice to research, the Consortium hosts quarterly meetings of researchers involved in the followup study of the program, STEEP facilitators, and other professionals who use STEEP strategies in their work with parents and infants. Contact the Consortium office if you would like to receive more information about STEEP or if you are interested in training and consultation for your agency (612) 626-1212.

Families in Divorce

- Continued from page 4

the options available to couples as they are starting the divorce proceedings. During this segment, and throughout the curriculum, there is a major focus on problem solving and decision making. Because the curriculum encourages couples to expand the list of options available to them, some couples have decided against the divorce after attending the sessions.

Financial Issues can be difficult for all married couples, and even more challenging when there is divorce and the financial resources and child care costs must be split. A group of educators who specialize in financial business management are developing this segment of the curriculum.

Children can be the hardest hit during a divorce. The two people they love the most have decided they no longer love each other. Children may feel they are to blame, and they don't like to be put in the middle. A component of the curriculum focuses on the impact of divorce on children and developing a co-parenting plan.

Adults feel the impact of divorce in many ways too. This segment focuses on the adults taking care of themselves and strategies for coping during the divorce process. Other areas of focus include Conflict Management and Communication Skills.

After the divorce, it is likely that each individual may start another relationship, which may later develop into marriage. A component of the curriculum focuses on step family development issues that may occur, and community resources available to parents.

Legal issues can be overwhelming during a divorce. The segment on Legal Issues explains the issues and processes. Mediation, as an alternative to divorce litigation, is presented and demonstrated using a video.

If you would like more information about the Education for Divorce Transition Project, please contact Ron Pitzer at (612) 625-8169 or Nancy Neil at (507) 332-6109.

Connection Corner

FAST Forward

The U.S. Department of Education has selected PACER Center as one of 28 parent assistance centers nationwide that will receive funding to develop ways to encourage parents and communities to become more involved in the education of all children.

PACER will use its expertise in working with parents to carry out the new Families and Schools Together (FAST) Forward project. FAST Forward will focus on the many changes that are occurring in education by providing current information, making use of new technology, and expanding parent and professional contacts statewide. The project will work with parents, schools and communities throughout Minnesota to ensure the success of this goal.

PACER will be collaborating with the Home Instruction Program for Preschool Youngsters (HIPPPY), which is a home-based early intervention program, and the Center for School Change, a program out of the Humphrey Institute at the University of Minnesota. For More information, contact PACER at (612) 827-2966.

Consortium Partners with Minnesota Extension Service in Children, Youth and Families Initiative

In a move to focus resources, staff and program visibility on issues related to children, youth and families, particularly those with a high number of risk factors, the Minnesota Extension Service (MES) developed its Children, Youth and Families Initiative in 1991.

The Initiative has a number of very specific objectives, but its overall goal is to provide support, visibility and staff development for programming around children, youth and families. Toward this goal, the Initiative has awarded grants for programs, materials, staff development and other relevant work; the Initiative also has focused on research, education and utilization of existing community resources.

Currently, there are four "umbrella areas" under which the Initiative conducts its work: Parenting Education, Violence Prevention, School and Work Connections, and Education for Families Experiencing Divorce.

Madge Alberts of Pine Island, Minnesota, who has been serving in the role of Extension Educator in Dodge County, has been hired as the program leader for the Initiative until its closure in June 1997. She will

work with the Initiative's leadership team to bring formal closure to the Initiative and create linkages needed to continue the work once the Initiative ends. Because the Consortium has been a part of the Initiative, and because the work has such a similar focus, Madge is being housed in the Consortium office. This cooperative arrangement between MES and the Consortium will provide a strong base for future work together.

Volunteer Recognition Week

Governor Arne Carlson has proclaimed April 21-27, 1996 as Minnesota Volunteer Recognition Week, a time to honor the two million volunteers who serve throughout Minnesota. This week in April coincides with the 23rd annual observance of National Volunteer Week. This year's theme, *Volunteers: The Heart of Minnesota*, celebrates outstanding volunteer contributions and brings visibility to the efforts of those who serve.

Who's the Consortium

Barbara Monsey a Research/Communications Associate for Wilder Research Center, who has been a member of the Consortium Research Workgroup for several years, serving as co-chair since last fall.

Jean King, Coordinator of the Evaluations Studies program in the U of M's College of Education and Human Development, who has collaborated with the Consortium on evaluation-related initiatives.

Tim Reardon, an Education Specialist working with the Minnesota Department of Children, Families and Learning, who spoke on Family Service Collaboratives at the Consortium's Policy Day event.

Barbara Yates, Director of the Office of Community Services for the Minnesota Department of Children, Families and Learning, who spoke on the creation of the new department at the Consortium's Policy Day event.

Bicultural Education - Continued from page 9

historically about adjustment problems in migrating families.

Although a number of small scale and unconnected efforts to reach Southeast Asian families with family life and parent education have been attempted in the Twin Cities area, these programs have fallen short of the desired outcomes due to inappropriate or culturally irrelevant materials and hit or miss delivery systems.

The overall goal of the Bicultural Parent Education Curriculum for Southeast Asian Families is to prevent, reduce and resolve parent-child and intergenerational problems in the Southeast Asian community. Culturally grounded parent education curricular materials will be developed for four Southeast Asian groups (Vietnamese, Cambodian, Lao and Hmong) using focus groups of parents and adolescents and pilot testing with parents in specific settings. A six module curriculum will be developed and will include case stories, fact/idea sheets, workbooks, and other educational materials that address common parenting issues. Once completed, training in the use of the curricular package will be made available to interested organizations in Minnesota with programs serving Southeast Asian families.

For more information contact Blong Xiong or Dan Detzner at (612) 625-0252.

Consortium Calendar

- March 23 *National Restorative Justice Training Institute. Reparative Probation Through Community Boards: The Vermont Model.* At Earle Brown Continuing Education Center, University of MN — St. Paul Campus. Contact the Center for Restorative Justice and Mediation at (612) 625-4209.
- March 25 Media/Culture/Youth: A 1996 Walker Art Center Lecture and Seminar Series. *New Visions and Points of View in Media.* Independent producers, media artists and youth use technology to create fresh content and personal points of view. For additional information, call Karen at (612) 374-5154. (Third in a series of four.)
- March 27 Winona State University's Lyceum will feature Theresa Funciello as the Women's History Month Keynote Speaker. The event, "*Women and Poverty: Welfare is a Women's Issue*", will take place at 7:30 p.m., Stark Auditorium (free admission) on the campus.
- April 4 *National Day of Action Against Violence* will be held on April 4 — the anniversary of the assassination of Dr. Martin Luther King. Sponsored by the Black Community Crusade for Children and the Black Student Leadership Network. Contact Kelli Doss at the Children's Defense Fund - MN Office, (612) 227-6121.
- April 15 Media/Culture/Youth: A 1996 Walker Art Center Lecture and Seminar Series. *Learning With and About Media: International Perspectives.* Media literacy is a formal part of K-12 education in many countries - not so in the US. For additional information, call Karen at (612) 374 5154. (Last in a series of four.)
- April 19 and 20 *Adolescent Health Conference.* Sponsored by the Division of General Pediatrics and Adolescent Health, Department of Pediatrics, University of Minnesota, in conjunction with Children's Health Care. Madden's on Gull Lake, Brainerd, MN. For more information, call Kathy Ingerson at (612) 813-5884.
- April 29 *Re-Linking Life and Work.* Co-sponsored by Center on Women and Public Policy, Humphrey Institute of Public Affairs and the Children, Youth and Family Consortium. Rhona Rapoport and Lotte Bailyn, authors of a soon-to-be-released study on work and family issues, will discuss the findings of their study with a panel of leaders in the field. The event is free and open to the public; 4:00 - 6:00 p.m., Cowles Auditorium, Humphrey Center, University of Minnesota. For more information, contact Clare Graven at (612) 625-4335.
- May 9 Annual Gisela Konopka Lecture, sponsored by the Division of General Pediatrics and Adolescent Health, Department of Pediatrics, University of Minnesota. Judith Musick, Vice Chair of Ounce of Prevention Foundation in Chicago, will speak on "*Community-based Pregnancy Prevention Programs.*" Lecture begins at 3:30 in the Theater/Lecture Hall of Coffman Union; reception follows. No fee or pre-registration. Call Deb Seyfer at (612) 626-2953 for more information.
- May 10 School Psychology Spring Reception, "*Strategies for Promoting Psychological Competence in Children and Youth.*" Speaker: Joseph Strayhorn, author of *The Competent Child*, 2:00 to 3:30, Cowles Auditorium, Humphrey Center, University of MN. (Reception in the Humphrey Atrium immediately following.)
- May 13 The 1996 CEED Roundtable, "*Children Learn Violent Relationships — Victims Becoming Perpetrators*" will take place from 8:30 a.m. - 4:30 p.m. at the Radisson Hotel Metrodome in Minneapolis. Call (612) 625-2874.
- May 16 "*Social Attachment in Rhesus Monkeys: Early Experiences, Life Span Consequences, and Patterns of Cross-Generational Transmission.*" presentation by Steve Suomi, NICHD, 12:15 to 1:15, 172 Child Development Building. (Part of the Institute of Child Development's Visiting Scholar Series.) University of MN, Minneapolis, MN.
- Friday, May 24 "*Fathers Are Essential Conference*" will take place from 8 a.m. to 4 p.m. at the Gale Mansion, 2115 Stevens Avenue S, Minneapolis. Designed for young teen and adult fathers to recognize and enhance fathers' parenting and life skills through education and empowerment. Contact: Steve Brown (612) 874-1509 or Tim Balke at (612) 625-7243
- May 28-30: "*Challenges of Change,*" the Fourth Annual Statewide Children's Mental Health Conference, will be held at Northland Inn Executive Conference Center in Brooklyn Park on May 28-30, 1996.
- May 31 Human Service Management Training. *Discrimination Complaints and Investigations in Human Services.* For additional information, call Carole Broad or Coreen Rohrbeg, School of Social Work, University of MN (612) 625-4209.

Father to Father Kits Now Available

The Father to Father program is a product of Family Reunion III: The Role of Men in Children's Lives; a national conference held in July, 1994, which was co-moderated by Vice President Al Gore and his wife, Tipper. After spending a year developing the guiding principles and objectives of Father to Father, Vice President Gore and the other Board of Directors kicked off the program during the week of Father's Day this past summer in Washington, D.C.

The key guiding principle of Father to Father is that supportive unions between two or more fathers can help them be the best fathers that they can be. By nurturing these alliances,

existing local community organizations and agencies will help strengthen fathers' roles in their families and communities. Using the Father to Father principles to guide their efforts, communities will be able to develop and implement programs that are specific and sensitive to the fathers and families within their local areas.

In order to help communities get started and/or build upon their services for fathers, the national board of Father to Father, practitioners in the field, and the staff of CYFC developed the Community Starter Kit which is available from the Children, Youth and Family Consortium (CYFC). The CYFC will not only distribute the Kits to

interested organizations (e.g., YMCA, ECFE), but also act as a liaison among communities around the nation by linking them with resource people and organizations to support them in reaching out to fathers. One way that the CYFC will do this is through FatherNet, an electronic clearinghouse of resources related specifically to fathers. You can access FatherNet through the World Wide Web at: <http://www.cyfc.umn.edu>.

To receive more information about Father to Father, FatherNet, and/or to order a Community Starter Kit, call Tim Balke at (612) 625-7243.

UNIVERSITY OF MINNESOTA

Children, Youth, and Family Consortium
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Outcome Evaluation from Alpha to Omega

Tuesday, May 14, 1996

Radisson Hotel St. Paul

11 East Kellogg Boulevard

A Conference Sponsored by
MN Chapter American Evaluation Association
Center for Applied Research and Educational Improvement
Children, Youth, and Family Consortium, University of Minnesota,
Wilder Research Center

ABOUT THE CONFERENCE

Nonprofit organizations, government, private funders and others increasingly seek good outcome evaluation research. Such research can point out strengths and weaknesses in programs, give direction for changes in programming, and is often essential for future funding of programs.

CONFERENCE GOALS

- To bring together people interested in any aspect of outcome evaluation research.
- To facilitate networking among people with diverse perspectives, from program development, evaluation, funding/accountability, and policy making.
- To help conference participants improve their skills in doing and using outcome evaluation research.
- To increase awareness of critical issues and new directions in outcome evaluation research.

KEYNOTE SPEAKER

Michael Q. Patton, Ph.D.

"It's the Outcomes, Stupid"

Michael Q. Patton is Director of Utilization-Focused Information and Training; on the Faculty of Union Institute Graduate School; Past President of the American Evaluation Association; and author of *Utilization Focused Evaluation*.

REGISTRATION FORM

PLEASE PRINT

Name: _____ Daytime Phone: _____
Organization: _____
Address: _____
City: _____ State: _____ Zip Code: _____

Registration Deadline - May 1, 1996

(No refunds issued after this date)

REGISTRATION FEES

Please check one:

- \$35.00 Registration Fee,
if payment is received by April 30, 1996
- \$40.00 Registration Fee,
if payment is received May 1, 1996 or later
- \$25.00 Student Registration (by 4/30/96)

PRESENTATIONS (See reverse side for options.)

Please check one choice for each session.

- Session 1: a. b. c.
- Session 2: d. e. f.
- Luncheon Table Topic: 1st choice 2nd choice

Registration without payment and purchase orders will not be accepted. Make checks payable to Wilder Foundation. Mail check and registration form to: Marilyn Conrad, Wilder Research Center, 1295 Bandana Boulevard North, Suite 210, St. Paul, MN 55108. For further information contact Marilyn Conrad at 612-647-4603.

9:00 - 10:00 a.m.	Registration	12:45 - 1:30 p.m.	Poster Session
10:00 - 11:30 a.m.	Keynote Address Michael Q. Patton, Ph.D. <i>"It's the Outcomes, Stupid"</i>	1:30 - 3:00 p.m.	Session 1 Presentations
		3:00 - 3:15 p.m.	Break
		3:15 - 4:45 p.m.	Session 2 Presentations
11:45 - 12:45 p.m.	Luncheon/Round Table Discussions		

PRESENTATIONS

Session I Presentations

- Outcome Evaluation 101: An Introduction
- Measuring Outcomes: Overcoming the Obstacles to Developing Good Measures
- Outcome Evaluation in Cultural Diversity

Session II Presentations

- Outcome Evaluation is Not Benign: Ethical Issues in Outcome Selection and Use
- Funders/Policy Makers: What They Look For; Packaging Materials for Impact
- Outcome Evaluation to Improve Practice and Social Action

LUNCHEON TABLE DISCUSSION TOPICS

We will organize luncheon tables around topics. Please write the letters of your first and second choices on the registration form.

- | | |
|------------------------|--|
| A. Action Research | I. Longitudinal Outcome Evaluation |
| B. Children | J. Measurement Issues |
| C. Criminal Justice | K. Mental Health |
| D. Diversity Issues | L. Needs Assessment |
| E. Education | M. Professional Development for Evaluators |
| F. Ethics | N. Theory-Driven Evaluation |
| G. Funders | O. Youth |
| H. Integrated Services | |

REQUEST FOR POSTERS: If you would like to present a poster on a successful outcome evaluation, send **Title and One Page Abstract** to Marilyn Conrad, at Wilder Research Center, by April 10, 1996. (You will hear back from us by May 1.)

CONFERENCE VOLUNTEER OPPORTUNITIES: If you would like to volunteer, please send a note to Marilyn Conrad by April 10, 1996. Indicate your choices: host poster session; chair a presentation session; facilitate a luncheon table discussion; help with conference evaluation, other (please specify).

For further information call Marilyn Conrad at 612-647-4603

HOTEL INFORMATION

We have special rates at the Radisson Hotel Saint Paul for those who would like to stay overnight. For hotel reservations call 1-800-333-3333. Reservations must be made by April 23, 1996 to get the listed prices.

Daily Rate: \$79.00 (Rate does not include taxes)

Facilities are accessible to handicapped persons.

