Resources from the Field:

INTERAGENCY COLLABORATION

June 8, 2005
Updated July 20, 2010
Below is a listing of reports, books and journal articles on the topic of collaboration that are relevant to child welfare agencies. The list includes both publications on collaboration, and on collaborations between child welfare and specific systems – TANF, domestic violence, substance abuse, health, mental health, juvenile justice, education, and the courts. Many can be found at websites as indicated, while others are available from the publisher. We welcome your suggestions of other resources we should add (please contact Angie Bordeaux).

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I. CHILD WELFARE AND INTERAGENCY COLLABORATION


The authors of this publication discuss promising practices of interagency approaches involving the child welfare system. They focus on three initiatives and highlight the similarities and differences among them in addition to descriptions of the work being done. The three sites selected for discussion in this article are: Partnership for Children in New Jersey, The Dawn Project in Marion County, Indianapolis, Indiana and Massachusetts Mental Health Services Program for Youth (MHSPY) in Cambridge and Somerville, Massachusetts.

Profiles of the three sites contain detailed information about the populations they serve, structure of the child welfare system, combining goals and philosophies, accommodating child welfare laws, service integration and coordination, the level of family involvement, information sharing policies, training, technical assistance and evaluation structures, and the impact in the child welfare system.


The authors of this article discuss the stages of development for child-serving agencies to reach “true collaboration”. This information was based on a study of promising practices of grantees participating in the Comprehensive Community Mental Health Services for Children and Their Families Program at nine sites. Participants reported their most successful collaborations occurred when:

- collaborative structures were built at all levels—from top administrators to direct service professionals and
- as families were more fully incorporated in services delivery.

This book grew out of a multi-stage project of the Child Welfare League of America to encourage both family-focused practice in child welfare agencies and collaborative partnerships in communities to support family centered practice. This book describes the “toolbox” of effective practices identified through a series of community forums in Iowa, and illustrates these with examples from collaborative projects. While Hoel highlights the critical interpersonal elements of collaboration –such as mutual respect – he also highlights the importance on the state context, the power of structural elements to enhance collaboration, and the critical leadership elements that help to move collaborations forward.


This Issue Note identifies strategies for coordinating child welfare funding streams and services with the finding and services of other key state agencies to develop and support a more coherent and effective continuum of care for at-risk children and families. It describes the benefits of a continuum of care and the federal funding sources that can support a continuum. It then discusses strategies for interagency coordination:

- Staff cross-training
- Shared information and tracking systems
- Common intake and assessment forms
- Coordinated case management
- Staff collocation
- Joint planning structures
- Integrated administration
- Coordinated funding

It then describes and gives examples of coordination with welfare, substance abuse, mental health and education agencies.
In this brief article, Mattessich describes what factors can lead to successful or failed collaborations based on his examination of hundreds of scientific studies regarding collaborations to determine what made them work or fail. A sample of the twenty tips is as follows:

- Define long-term, realistic goals for all collaborators
- Spend time developing buy-in from collaborators or other potential partners
- Determine a manageable group size
- Devote time to developing trust and understanding
- Involve people at all organizational levels
- Come up with a communication plan for the group—including face-to-face meetings, rather than only communicating via email, memos and newsletters
- Focus on results and ensure that the project and its mission are self-sustaining even with membership turnover

This book reviews and summarizes the existing research literature on factors that influence the success of human service, government and non-profit collaborations. It identifies twenty success factors grouped into six categories: environment, membership characteristics, process/structure, communication, purpose, and resources. It also provides examples and practical tools, including the Wilder Collaboration Factors Inventory collaborations can use to assess their standing on the factors that promote success.

and


Making Children a National Priority presents the five universal needs of children possess, discusses why having those needs met is crucial, and describes promising strategies to meet those needs. It states that the extent to which all of America’s children are healthy, safe and thriving will depend, in large part, on actions taken in local communities. The companion piece, the Community Implementation Guide, highlights a variety of promising, practical approaches to developing and sustaining comprehensive community-based initiatives. The book describes six community action phases and includes an array of implementation tools, such as checklists, surveys and diagrams, for each phase. The six phases are:

- initiating (creating a team, developing a rationale for a comprehensive approach),
- invigorating (building a foundation of trust and commitment)
- inquiring (assessment and analyzing the findings)
- imagining (visioning)
- innovating (choosing priority issues, developing action plans, evaluation plans, financing strategies)
- implementing (refocus the leadership team, manage the process)

Tools include:

- a community partners worksheet
- an expertise and resource inventory for the collaborative
- a public engagement planning matrix
- steps in community mapping
- a sample community survey
This publication offers a framework for those involved in building systems of care. The Introduction discusses the history of the system of care movement, the system of care concept and philosophy, trends in system reform, and principles that guide system building. Section I describes all of the functions that require structure in a system of care, followed by examples. Section II examines the core elements of the process of system building and suggests related resource materials for each element.


This Issue Note raises some of the major issues welfare agencies need to consider when expanding collaborative efforts, describes a range of collaborative projects and identifies useful resources. It lists several actions that can lead to successful collaborative efforts and interagency projects. They include:

- developing a clear explanation for why certain issues are best addressed by multiple groups;
- ensuring support from the highest levels of the organization;
- defining organizational goals while making sure to put the client’s needs above all;
- streamlining service delivery to clients and providing a single point of contact; and
- encouraging regular communication among partners.


This book and its companion guide describes the successes and challenges of six Partnership for Action pilot sites that worked on collaborations between families, child...
welfare, and children’s mental health. The report describes principles and elements of effective collaboration, illustrating each point with examples from the pilot sites.

A checklist for organizations looking to start collaborations is included in the back of the book. The companion guide consists of profiles of each of the six partnerships to discuss issues such as how they are funded, who the participants are, how the idea came about to start a collaboration, and what lessons they have learned from the experience.


This workshop summary from a DHHS Region IV Administration for Children and Families discusses various examples of peer networks and collaborations established throughout the country and the need for more integrated services.


This handbook is a basic guide to forming and understanding collaborations. It contains instructions on how to start collaborations all the way through how to evaluate your results. The book, further, contains worksheets and other resources comprising the last nearly 40 pages.


This paper explores an intervention framework to approach collaboration and ultimately improve services. The authors touch upon the different kinds of collaboration (i.e. community collaboration involving all stakeholders), and talk of collaboration as a developmental progression. This developmental progression includes utilization of a family of “c-words” that each help to define the meaning of collaboration (i.e. connecting, cooperating, and communicating). A framework for planning and evaluating collaboration is provided, along with suggestions on how the framework can
be utilized.


A number of different organizations (including APHSA, The Finance Project, etc.) came together to develop this publication to highlight some of the major human services programs and how they might be able to collaborate services. Overviews are provided for the following programs: Child care, child support, child welfare, community services, developmental disabilities services, food stamps, Medicaid, mental health agencies, special education, substance abuse, TANF, vocational rehabilitation, workforce development, and workforce investment boards. Details on each program are provided, along with examples of current collaborations.

For the Child Welfare program area, the following collaborative efforts are highlighted: substance abuse and child welfare collaborative efforts in Connecticut, Project SAFE; domestic violence and child welfare collaborative efforts in Massachusetts; mental health and child welfare collaborative efforts in California; and juvenile justice and child welfare collaborative efforts in Ohio, the Safe Kids Safe Streets project.
Specific Collaborations

II. CHILD WELFARE AND TANF


This issue brief describes the collaborations between state child welfare and TANF agencies as a result of federal changes in those areas. Some state agencies have worked toward changes in frontline practices and information sharing to more efficiently meet the needs of their overlapping clientele.


By discussing how a cross-agency vision and collaboration was formed in El Paso County in Colorado, the authors of this paper discuss the processes, lessons learned and challenges of bringing the work of the county’s child welfare and TANF agencies together.


This document summarizes a roundtable session held in 2002 to discuss the efforts of five states: CA, CO, NC, NJ, and WI as they have each worked to better integrate their state TANF and child welfare systems to improve services for families. Programming ideas, lessons learned, promising practices, and challenges were discussed at the roundtable and are included in the summary.

This publication highlights ten different cities that implemented programs to meet the needs of families receiving Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) through the Urban Partnerships Initiative. The ten cities are: Atlanta, Baltimore, Boston, Dallas-Fort Worth, Detroit, Minneapolis, Oakland, Omaha, Seattle, and St. Louis. Profiles for each city are provided, and include successes, lessons learned, and helpful tips on how to implement such programs. For example, the Boston profile highlights their desire and commitment to improve on collaboration and system integration. They reduced the food stamp error rate without having to increase staff delivering TANF services at the case manager level.


This research paper looks at the intersection of poverty and child maltreatment, and the impacts that TANF may have. The authors examine previous data and studies, highlighting aspects of TANF that may inhibit or promote child safety. The authors then provide a detailed examination of California’s “Linkages” initiative that was designed to coordinate services between California’s child welfare system and their welfare to work program. Interviews and focus groups were conducted to develop a process evaluation of this initiative. The way counties within California approached this coordination of services varied, and different methods are discussed, along with challenges faced.
III. CHILD WELFARE AND DOMESTIC VIOLENCE


These Guidelines provide broad guidance and describe model policies, practices, programs and protocols that address the multiple needs of families and children affected by domestic violence and child maltreatment.


This bulletin for child welfare and domestic violence professionals addresses the overlap between child maltreatment and domestic violence and the impact this has on children who are exposed to such violence. Differential response is discussed as a possible approach, as “A differential response approach maintains that protecting at-risk children should be the child welfare system’s highest priority, but it also acknowledges the need for a rich network of community-based institutions offering additional support services to families.” The increasing awareness of domestic violence and child maltreatment co-occurrence has prompted a more collaborative approach between these two systems. This bulletin touches upon such an approach, and highlights some promising practices communities are using nationwide.


Chapter 6 of this publication, “Building a Collaborative Response for Families Experiencing Domestic Violence,” provides information on how domestic violence service providers and child welfare systems can collaborate to meet the needs of the
children and families that they serve. Activities that child protective services (CPS) caseworkers can do to promote a collaborative partnership with service providers are addressed: shadowing activities, cross-training opportunities, integrating case practice knowledge and expertise, and sharing information. Also addressed are promising initiatives, models, and programs.
IV. CHILD WELFARE AND SUBSTANCE ABUSE


This report summarizes the impact of IV-E waivers on the states of Delaware, Illinois, Maryland, and New Hampshire as of early 2002. Further, the report discusses state initiatives, lessons learned and recommendations for future waiver programs. A synthesis of findings report was developed in 2005 based on evaluation reports submitted by the above states receiving IV-E waivers, and is available online at: http://www.acf.hhs.gov/programs/cb/programs_fund/cwwaiver/substanceabuse/index.htm


This Issue Note from the Welfare Information Network discusses the need to coordinate and integrate substance abuse and child welfare services given the significant number of overlapping clientele working with the two systems. The paper describes policy issues, research findings, resources, and innovative practices related to collaboration.


This report provides background on the problem of addiction in the child welfare system, and discusses ASFA and its implications for families at risk of or involved in the child welfare system because of parental addiction. It presents two case studies of how two localities – from Cook County, IL and Cuyahoga County, Ohio – are addressing addiction in their child welfare systems, and presents a model for addressing addiction among families involved in the child welfare system based on the case study findings.

This statement, put forth by the National Center on Substance Abuse and Child Welfare Consortium, reflects shared values and guiding principles that can be used when working towards a collaborated approach to improving services for families and children when the substance abuse, child welfare, and judicial systems are involved.
V. CHILD WELFARE AND HEALTH/MENTAL HEALTH


This paper describes a model treatment program in Milwaukee for juvenile offenders with mental health disorders. In addition to discussing its managed care and wrap-around philosophies, the paper further describes outcomes, challenges and solutions to system collaboration.


This website describes a three year study conducted by the Georgetown University Child Development Center that identified and described promising approaches for meeting the health care needs of children in the foster care system. Based on site visits and interviews, a framework of critical components was developed, and other products were developed to assist states in their efforts to improve health care services for children in foster care, including descriptions of strategies used, a compendium of approaches, fact sheets and issue briefs. All the products of the study are available at this website.


The National Resource Center for Family-Centered Practice and Permanency Planning has put together an information packet containing facts, statistics, policy, and legislation regarding mental health services, preservation of families, and protection of children. Best practice tips and identifications of model programs are discussed, such as the Emerson-Davis Family Development Center in Brooklyn, New York which specializes in the reunification of children with their parents who have been separated due to parental mental illness and homelessness.

A workgroup was developed to identify ways in which behavioral health services could be improved to better serve children, youth and families in the child welfare system. A national survey was developed and administered to learn how states and communities are financing mental health and substance abuse services for families involved in the child welfare system. This report represents the findings from that survey. A major outcome and accomplishment through implementation of a financing strategy, as described by survey respondents, included improvements in collaboration (between child welfare and mental health, among stakeholders, through multi-system responsibility for services for children, etc.). Many challenges to collaboration were also noted, which included turf issues, breaking down silos, merging different agency cultures, and more. Collaboration was also noted by respondents as a key element needed in order to achieve success. Individual snapshots of each participating state’s financing strategies are provided (24 states).
VI. CHILD WELFARE AND JUVENILE JUSTICE


Project Confirm in New York City was created to address the gap between the juvenile justice and child welfare systems. Because front-line workers are not always aware that their clients are involved in other systems, there is often a lack of communication and unclear roles regarding working with the various systems. Due to the confusion surrounding roles of service professionals when a juvenile faces delinquency charges, Project Confirm created a notification system for Department of Juvenile Justice workers. The system consists of having DJJ workers call Project Confirm when police admit a minor to a facility. Project Confirm screeners search a database to determine the foster care status of the offender and contact an agency liaison and detention officer to meet with the child if he or she is in foster care. The notification system was established to help prevent unnecessary detentions of children in foster care. With the notification and court conferencing systems the project established, stronger connections were formed with DJJ and Project Confirm staff. In time, the project hopes that they will enable front-line workers to eliminate gaps between agencies without a liaison program like theirs.


This Guidebook provides detailed direction to state and local jurisdictions on how to integrate the juvenile justice and child welfare systems, from the beginning initiation through implementation. The Guidebook guides jurisdictions through a series of phases that are designed to enable them to engage in a process of determining how they can best integrate and coordinate juvenile justice and child welfare efforts to achieve improved outcomes for the children, youth and families they serve.
VII. CHILD WELFARE AND EDUCATION


This policy paper discusses the issue of meeting the educational needs of children in the child welfare system. In addition to an overview of the research focusing on the issue, the report also discusses the performance indicators addressed in the CFSRs and some model programs.


This resource brief discusses connections between child welfare and early childhood services. Designed as a primer for child welfare staff, a section of this resource provides an overview of school readiness and child welfare, supplying information on policy and research displaying the need to address developmental issues of children in the child welfare system. The authors then provide opportunities and steps that child welfare systems can engage in that will enhance the educational developments of the children they serve. Examples of successful collaborative efforts are provided throughout.


This study focuses on the collaboration between child welfare and public education systems. The author of this study held focus groups with child welfare workers, educators, and students living in foster care to identify positive collaborative practices, as well as barriers to success. The findings from these focus groups are provided, along with suggestions on how to achieve successful collaboration.
VII. CHILD WELFARE AND THE JUDICIAL SYSTEM


Scott Tonbridge, staff attorney at the American Bar Association Center on Children and the Law, touches upon the value of collaboration between courts and child welfare agencies. Examples of such collaborative efforts are addressed, and include things such as the American Bar Association’s Permanency Barriers Project and the federally funded Court Improvement Programs.


This paper discusses how child welfare agencies and juvenile and family courts are working together outside of the court room. Data and information is being shared throughout these systems to work towards improving outcomes for children and families. National and State efforts towards collaboration are explored, along with the different roles each system plays.