

# Child Find Coordinator Pilot Annual Report

July 2008- June 2009

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**Introduction**

C Mattern Consulting was contracted by Early Intervention Connections to implement the Child Find Coordinator Pilot as outlined in Senate Bill 112. The role of the Child Find Coordinator, hereinafter referred to as CFC, is to generate appropriate referrals for System Point of Entry (SPOE) Region 1 by increasing general awareness of the First Steps (FS) program.

The CFC created several PR materials to educate the general public about FS and some that were specific to certain referral sources. The CFC also set up tables at walks, expos and fairs with the intent of raising general awareness of FS. The CFC made several presentations to current referral sources and targeted the medical community in order to generate appropriate referrals.

**Referral Source and Community Education**

**Parents as Teachers (PAT)**

The CFC presented at St. Louis City, St. Charles City and Wentzville PAT. The presentations were successful. Parent educators were given current information regarding recent changes to the program and given an opportunity to discuss the program and ask questions. The CFC was asked to establish a relationship with St. Charles City PAT after several unsuccessful attempts by a service coordinator. After informing the SPOE that this presentation was made, the CFC was discouraged by the SPOE director from making anymore presentations to PAT without bringing along a service coordinator. It was not made clear as to why this was necessary.

**Nurses for Newborns**

The CFC met with Claire Devoto, Chief Development Office for Nurses for Newborns. Ms. Devoto was very receptive to continuing to refer families to FS. However, the nurses that serve families did not have a very positive impression of the program. The nurses stated their concerns regarding FS to the CFC. However, the CFC did not know enough history regarding Nurses for Newborns and its relationship with FS to adequately address the issue. The CFC contacted Marcy Morrison, Regional Consultant for the St. Louis Area, and asked that she address the concerns of the nurses. Ms. Morrison has met with the organization and was able to remedy the situation.

**Epilepsy Foundation**

The CFC met with Anne Ross-Weldy, Epilepsy Educator for the Epilepsy Foundation. Ms. Weldy stated that they currently refer families to the FS program. However, they had been referring families to the Department of Mental Health and not the SPOE. Ms. Weldy was given a SPOE map along with contact information for each SPOE region.

### **Our Lady's Inn**

Our Lady's Inn is a home for unwed mothers. There is a home in St. Louis City and in Defiance. The CFC met with Leona Swank, Program Director to discuss the FS program. Ms. Swank and the CFC discussed eligibility and the referral process.

### **St. Louis Crisis Nursery**

The CFC met with Bonnie Define, Director of Community Relations for the St. Louis Crisis Nursery. Ms. Define knew of the program but did not have many details regarding how FS served families. After a brief presentation, Ms. Define stated that she was very impressed with the program and that the Nursery would send appropriate referrals to FS.

### **Parent Infant Interaction Program (PIIP) at Vashon High**

The Parent Infant Interaction Program offers child care for children of young mothers who are attending school at Vashon High. The program was not aware that they could refer children to FS but was very receptive to the idea. The program director, Marcia Hayes-Harris, stated many students drop out of high school soon after having a child. She was concerned that a family may not make it through the referral process due to dropping out of school and losing contact with the SPOE. The CFC suggested that PIIP refer children to FS regardless of this possibility. It is suggested that PIIP be followed up with in July 2009 to see if referrals have been made.

### **Mother to Mother Hotline**

The Mother to Mother Hotline is a phone hotline that was established to help mothers experiencing post-partum depression. The CFC met with Lynda Meyer, Executive Director, to discuss how FS can help mothers of infants with special needs that are experiencing post-partum depression. Ms. Meyer stated that they do get calls from mothers who need support after having a premature or special needs child. She stated that she would add FS to the community resource database that the organization's operators access when attempting to assist a caller.

### **Queen of Peace**

Queen of Peace is a substance abuse shelter for mothers and their children. The CFC along with Jo Wiggins, St. Louis City service coordinator met with Mary Ann Eversgard, director of Peace for Kids, the Queen of Peace Child Care Center. Ms. Eversgard stated that while Queen of Peace refers families to FS the families often don't follow through due to lack of trust. She stated that the Missouri First Steps Parents Rights document is too complicated for uneducated parents to understand. Subsequently, at-risk children who might possibly be eligible for FS are being kept out of the referral process. The CFC did inform the Margaret Pickett, SPOE 1 Region Director and Ms. Morrison of Ms. Eversgard's comments.

### **Early Head Start/Head Start**

The CFS conducted a FS training for Early Head Start staff at Garfield Head Start. The staff did not seem to have very much knowledge about FS. They had a lot of questions regarding referral and developmental delay. It is suggested that staff trainings with Early Head Start programs be a yearly occurrence.

The CFC also met with Beth Hesse and Sharon Johnson of Youth in Need Head Start. Ms. Hesse is the St. Charles West County Director and Ms. Johnson is the St. Charles City Director. They had a very good understanding of the FS program but had a lot of questions regarding FS referring families to Early Head Start. Margaret Pickett, Region 1 SPOE director, was informed of the discussion.

### **Women, Infants and Children (WIC) offices**

The CFC called 15 St. Louis City WIC offices to discuss FS. Some locations were no longer available. In most cases, the phone calls were not returned or the CFC was hung up on and in one instance yelled at for calling during the office's lunch hour. The CFC was able to deliver materials to the St. Charles County WIC office and found the staff to be very courteous.

### **Health Clinics**

The CFC contacted several Health Clinics to discuss FS. St. Louis Comprehensive Health Clinic II, stated that they already use FS and allowed the CFC to leave brochures in the clinic lobby. First Steps information was delivered to the clinic manager at the Homer G. Phillips clinic. The CFC was turned away at Myrtle Hillard Davis.

The CFC met with Yvonne Buhlinger, Vice President of Community Health Services at Grace Hill. Ms. Buhlinger was very excited about Grace Hill staff having more FS training and put the CFC in touch with Tom Vogel, Director of the Grace Hill Child Development Center. The CFC and Kimberly Steger, St. Louis City Lead Service Coordinator, met with staff at the Center.

### **Physician Offices**

The CFC delivered packets of FS information to approximately 100 obstetrician/gynecologist (OB/Gyn) and approximately 80 pediatricians and pediatric nurse practitioners. The CFC was often referred to the office manager. In most cases the office manager was willing to share the information with the physicians or make the information available to patients. Information was also shared with the maternal/fetal education offices at St. John's Mercy Medical Center, Progress West, SSM St. Joseph- St. Charles and SSM St. Joseph- Lake St. Louis. Packets were also delivered to Octavia Chirino, department head for obstetrics at St. John's, and the nursery at St. Mary's Health Center. The CFC provided lunch and met with Dr. David Anderson, a pediatric orthopedist, and his staff. The CFC also provided lunch for Dr. Barbara Walsh, her partners and their staff at St. John's.

The medical offices that were chosen were based on geographical location and proximity to public transportation. The physicians and medical staff at all locations have been very receptive of FS. The OB/Gyn offices and maternal fetal medicine offices appreciated having a resource to share with mother's-to-be that are having a baby with an identified special need. The pediatricians seemed to be very knowledgeable of FS. Two pediatrician offices have requested FS presentations. The CFC forwarded the information to Juli Darlington, Child Find Committee Chair.

### **Legislative Advocacy**

The CFC sent a letter to Missouri state senators and state representatives that represent SPOE 1 to request that Greater St. Louis First Steps be included in their public directories. St. Charles County representatives Mark Parkinson and Cynthia Davis sent correspondence that stated that they would include FS information in the directories from their offices. Senator Scott Rupp stated that his office would include FS information as well.

The CFC took part in Child Advocacy Day at the Capitol. Emily Mattern, a former First Stepper, was introduced to several legislators in attempt create a personal connection between the legislators and the program. Emily was introduced to legislators who have displayed a commitment to FS including Senators Jack Goodman, Brad Lager and Eric Schmitt as well as Representative Brian Nieves.

The CFC also met with State Representatives Joe Smith, Sally Faith, Anne Zerr, Doug Funderbirk and Chuck Gatschenburger and State Senators Jeff Smith and Tom Dempsey. The CFC also met with Patty York, St. Charles City Mayor. All elected officials were aware of FS and reaffirmed their commitment to the program.

The CFC also participated as panelist at the 2009 Legislative Breakfast.

### **Community Events**

The CFC set up a table several health fairs including Early Head Start/Head Start YWCA, The Mathew Dickey Boys and Girls Club and the Healthcare USA Back to School Fair.

The CFC also sponsored tables at the Walk Now for Autism resource fair, the St. Louis Down's Syndrome Association Walk, the Baby Expo, The North County Community Networking Forum and Community Council of St. Charles Community Networking Forum.

While all of these events were good exposure for FS, there was very little interest communicated in regards to the FS program. It is good to remain a presence at all of these events as long as they are reasonable in terms of cost.

### **Engaging St. Louis City**

In July of 2008, the CFC asked FS stakeholders to discuss the lack of engagement by St. Louis City families who have a child in need of FS services. The common thread appeared to be a lack of trust of having a government agency in the home. The CFC suggests that the Trusted Friend campaign (see Public Relations Materials) be continued and expanded upon.

It was also noted that some in the medical community do not endorse FS because it is not a medical model of therapy. The CFC worked towards educating medical staff on the merits of FS. It is suggested that this education be continued.

While the CFC can campaign to the general public the positive aspects of FS and appeal to referral sources to help facilitate trust between a family and FS, several of the St. Louis City issues are SPOE issues or cultural issues. Service coordinators noted that some families will cancel appointments due to personal appearance or lack of a clean home. However, that is a challenge that the SPOE should address. In some areas of St. Louis City, special education of

any kind is looked down upon. This is a cultural issue that will take time and education on much greater scale to tackle.

### **Referral Source and Community Education Analysis**

The CFC requested that SPOE I capture referral data that was specific to the presentations and education being done by the CFC. The CFC was told that the SPOE Key Indicator Reports should give the CFC all the data needed to measure the success of the pilot. If the CFC was the only person doing child find activities then it is possible that the SPOE Key Indicator Reports might be enough to measure success. However, child find activities are also being carried out by the SPOE and by a Child Find Committee. According to the SPOE Key Indicator Reports there is nothing to indicate if the CFC pilot is generating more, appropriate referrals. The only way the success of the CFC pilot can be measured is if there is more collaboration between the SPOE and CFC.

### **Public Relations Materials**

#### **First Steps Poster**

The First Steps Poster was created to raise general awareness about the First Steps program. It is a 16x20 educational tool that is eye-catching and culturally diverse. It is titled "Are you concerned about your child's development?" The poster includes eligibility, referral and SPOE I and Department of Education and Secondary Education (DESE) contact information. It also has a red flag developmental checklist that encourages families to consult with their child's pediatrician if they have concerns about their child's development.

It has hard to measure the effectiveness of the poster especially since the SPOE would not add it as a data category for incoming referrals. One of the complaints that the CFC heard about the poster was in regards to the amount of information on it. However, since it is important not to generate inappropriate referrals the CFC feels that the information is necessary.

The poster has been put up in several locations such as grocery stores, child care centers, health clinics, libraries and physician offices. The CFC visited some of the locations a month later to see if the poster was still intact and found that most of the posters put up in libraries and grocery stores had been taken down. The poster in health centers and physicians offices remained intact.

It is suggested that the poster continue to be given to main referral sources. It is also suggested that a smaller poster be created for community bulletin boards and other locations.

#### **Poster Attachment**

The poster attachment is a one sided red flag developmental checklist that has been made into 100 page pads. It can be adhered to the posters or be given used separately from them. The CFC found that it is cost effective to use the pads instead of the "Are you concerned about your child's development" brochure when hosting a table at fairs and expos.

### **Neonatal Intensive Care Unit (NICU) Brochure**

Joan Walsh, NICU Discharge Coordinator for Children's Hospital, felt that existing FS brochures were not family friendly for parents whose child would qualify for FS based on newborn conditions. Ms. Walsh felt that the existing brochures place too much emphasis on "special needs" and developmental delay. For some parents the brochures were considered to be too intimidating. Other parents felt the brochures were not relevant to their current situation. Therefore a brochure specific to the NICU was developed to assist neonatal discharge nurses educate parents about FS.

The NICU brochure is soft in its tone yet informative. It is sensitive to the emotional needs of a family whose premature child is transitioning from NICU to home. The language was developed collaboratively by the CFC, Cassie Geithman, SPOE Region 1 Service Coordinator and Ms. Walsh.

In January and February 2009, the NICU brochures were delivered to St. Louis Children's Hospital, St. Mary's Health Center, and SSM Cardinal Glennon. According to SPOE key indicator reports, there has been no significant change from the previous year in NICU referrals that have resulted in an IFSP. However, since the purpose of the brochure was to be a much more emotionally sensitive introduction to FS, it should be continued to use as tool given to NICU families.

### **Trusted Friend Post Card**

After meeting with individuals who represent the City of St. Louis and the Engaging St. Louis City meeting, the CFC noticed a trend. The majority of low-income parents who are city residents, do not feel comfortable with allowing a government agency in their home. The Trusted Friend post card was developed to inform current referral sources that with parent permission they are allowed to come to take part in any intake/referral and IFSP meetings. Unfortunately, there were issues with printing. When the post card was finally finished the SPOE contracts had been rebid so the contact information was incorrect. It is recommended that the Trusted Friend post card be mailed out with corrected information.

### **SPOE Map**

While the CFC pilot is specific to SPOE Region 1, its referral sources are not. Therefore, the CFC took the SPOE Map from the DESE website, along with SPOE contact information, and had it made into a two sided document that was coated with an aqueous solution. Referral sources have told the CFC that they appreciate document and believe it will be helpful when referring families to FS.

### **Referral Pad**

The CFC had the referral form, which was created by DESE , printed and made into 50 page pads. It was a very simple step but has generated the most enthusiasm, thus far, by referral sources. The CFC received several positive comments about the referral pads. One office manager stated "It is about time! Finally the state is spending money on something we need." Another comment was "thank you so much. This is so helpful."

It is encouraged that the CFC follow up with referral sources and pediatrician offices to ensure that they are fully stocked with referral pads.

### **Power Point Presentation**

The power point presentation is a collaboration between Ms. Darlington, Suzanne Falvey of Head Start, Ms. Geithman and the CFC. The presentation includes information on the goal of FS, eligibility, referral, DAYC, what happens if a family is denied services and touches briefly on development. The intended audience is child care centers, physician offices, Early Head Start staff trainings and any other referral source who requests it.

### **Developmental Booklet**

The developmental booklet is an educational tool that was created to raise general public awareness about FS and generate appropriate referrals. The booklet includes 5 interactive wheels with developmental milestone information for ages 3 months, 7 months, 12 months, 24 months and 36 months. The information was taken from the Center for Disease Control's "Act Early, Learn the Signs" campaign. The booklet also includes eligibility and FS contact information.

The booklet is intended specifically for pediatrician offices. It is encouraged that each pediatrician office be given enough booklets so that there is one available in each patient room. It is suggested that the CFC encourage pediatrician offices to put the booklet in a visible place in order to encourage families to discuss their child's development with the pediatrician.

### **First Steps Folder**

The folder compliments the developmental wheel. It is a 3 pronged, two pocket folder with FS information on all sides. It has two spots on the inside pockets for business cards.

### **Public Relations Material Data**

Approximately 200 packets of information have been given out to physician offices and referral sources.

The pediatrician folders contained a referral pad, a SPOE Map, eligibility criteria, power point presentation slides, FS Speakers Bureau information, the Trusted Friend document and a document highlighting the services available to families. Each pediatrician office was given a First Steps poster and several "What is First Steps?" brochures. The developmental wheel and FS folder were still being developed at this time.

The folders given to pediatric specialists, OB/Gyn office, maternal fetal medicine offices, and other referral sources contained a referral pad, a SPOE Map, eligibility criteria and a document highlighting the services available to families. Each office or referral source was given approximately 50 "What is First Steps?" brochures.

Several hundred Missouri First Steps pens have been given to the general public at fairs, expos and charity walks.

It is difficult to know if any PR material generated appropriate referrals since the SPOE did not keep data specifically for the CFC pilot.

### Recommendations

The CFC recommends that next year attention be focused on educating pediatric specialists about FS. It is also recommended that health clinics be targeted once again. Pharmaceutical representative are no longer allowed to supply office materials or gifts to health clinics. However, a program that is not sales related is able to. This is a potential angle to get in doors that have been previously shut. The CFC also recommends that advertising with media outlets such as PBS be explored.

The CFC also recommends that the SPOE better support the goals of the CFC pilot. The SPOE director seemed at times to be working against the CFC. Also, the CFC felt demeaned on several occasions such as being told that she had to take a service coordinator to all Parents as Teachers trainings or that a referral source did not exist that did indeed exist.

Overall the pilot can be a success if supported by the SPOE and if the CFC is given specific referral sources to target. Three separate entities have been working on child find and there has been overlap.

Also, it is recommended that more specific referral data be kept by the SPOE. The success of the pilot cannot be measured if appropriate data is not kept.