

Child Support, Child Care and Head Start Collaboration: *Innovations & Ideas*

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Reading Guide

We have designed this monograph as a user-friendly guide to implementing effective partnerships between Child Support, Child Care, and Head Start organizations.

Throughout this monograph, you will find the following icons to help you quickly identify different types of “lessons learned” from the demonstration projects:

	Bright Idea (innovations to consider)
	Barriers (lessons learned about policy or collaboration roadblocks)
	Easily Transferable (practice/product that is easily transferable to another state)

Child Support, Child Care and Head Start Collaboration: *Innovations & Ideas*

Introduction

Background

This monograph tells the stories behind six demonstration grant projects funded by the federal Office of Child Support Enforcement (OCSE) in 1997-2000 to promote collaboration between the state Child Support, Child Care and Head Start programs. Seeking innovative ways for these programs to work effectively with one another, OCSE awarded Section 1115 Demonstration Grants to Alaska, Connecticut, Illinois, Maryland, Minnesota, and Missouri. These three-year projects were designed primarily to promote access to Child Support services through local Child Care and Head Start programs, and to foster a broader and more positive understanding of Child Support and parenting issues by the staff and clients of these three programs. The states tailored these demonstrations to the needs of their own communities. To assure grass-roots participation, each project committed at least 60 percent of its budget to local-level collaboration efforts, with the remaining amount devoted to state-level activities.

This monograph aims to share the stories and innovative thinking behind these projects with other states seeking to build stronger ties among their state and local Child Support, Child Care, and Head Start programs. It poses questions to consider in structuring and implementing such collaboration and suggests answers gleaned from the work of these six projects. Using each grant project's final report, this monograph extrapolates some of the most intriguing *Innovations and Ideas* and provides both practical and inspiring advice. A thumbnail sketch of each project follows, with more detailed overviews in the Appendix. The "how to" details for each project may be found in the reports themselves, which are available through the listed state contact.

Project Highlights

Alaska

Too often the view from a state agency is that "our message" must be delivered in one way, in only one direction, and with centralized control over the message. Recognizing the story behind Alaska's numbers—a relatively small, culturally diverse population, living hundreds of miles from the state agency, and with transportation between towns possible only by boat or plane—Alaska designed a far-reaching collaboration with a sweeping range of state, local, and community agencies and organizations. This project exhibits the critical need for reciprocal learning among the staff of the various entities and with their mutual clients. This Alaska project demonstrates the value of relatively simple "old" technology, and the importance of designing outreach materials that acknowledge and speak to different cultures.

Connecticut

To acknowledge that an “outsider” could run an interagency collaboration more effectively than a state agency requires mature thinking. Connecticut took this leap and invited the Connecticut Women’s Education and Legal Fund (CWEALF), a community-based organization with strength in women’s issues and advocacy, to coordinate the state’s demonstration project, piloted at three ethnically diverse sites. Focusing on fatherhood initiatives as well as on increasing low-income family participation in Child Support services, the collaboration project team recognized from the outset that a cookie cutter approach would fail to take advantage of the strengths or meet the needs of these three different communities. Advanced planning, flexibility and responsiveness to anticipated and unanticipated challenges were required to gain the participation and trust of the staff and clients of the local agencies. Examining how Connecticut tested and adjusted its project’s vision and services in response to each community’s needs and concerns offers important lessons on effective collaboration.

Illinois

Illinois learned early on that the staff and clients of its collaboration partners neither understood nor trusted the expanded mission of the Child Support program; they focused on the *financial and emotional* support of children. Educating a community to trust in the Child Support program’s broadened role is a challenging and ongoing issue. Indeed, it was because of Head Start’s added responsibilities -- to inform families about and make referrals to Child Support services -- that afforded both agencies the opportunity to learn from and about each other and to devise a referral system that served the needs of each. Two proposed pilot sites quickly expanded to more than five times the expected number. Contrary to expectations, the number of paternity acknowledgments completed at Head Start and Child Care agencies proved relatively small, but this did not represent a failure; rather, paternity had already been established for most of the children through hospitals courts and Women, Infants and Children (WIC) Food Centers—a major success story for Illinois’ paternity outreach efforts.

Maryland

Maryland had collaborative relationships in place at the start of its demonstration project. These existing partnerships included one at the state level between Child Support and Child Care—to implement strategies to ensure that Temporary Assistance to Needy Families (TANF) and Purchase of Care (POC) customers pursued child support—and, at the local level, between Child Support, Child Care, and Head Start. Recognizing a need to take these collaborations “to the next level” to enhance the economic security of non-TANF families, Maryland’s collaborations were expanded through the demonstration to reach parents not receiving TANF or POC, encouraging them to establish paternity and to collect child support, in order to stay off welfare.

Minnesota

Minnesota’s project challenged the traditional view that Child Support, Child Care, and Head Start each had a non-intersecting responsibility to and relationship with its clients. In lieu of competing territories, the collaboration partners envisioned a sophisticated system designed

to provide a seamless delivery of services to families. A “Core Team” of state staff supported the resulting collaboration—each assigned to one of the project’s four regions—and implemented a formal relationship of cross-training, information sharing, and outreach efforts among all the programs. While fulfilling the grant project’s emphasis on Child Support enforcement tools and the importance of non-economic forms of support, Minnesota created and demonstrated a model for collaboration that is now used with a wide range of new partners in the state.

Missouri

Missouri’s goal was to provide information, service links, and problem-solving support to the largest number and widest range of families in a non-threatening, user-friendly way. Recognizing common outreach interests, this demonstration project partnered the Child Support agency not only with Head Start and Child Care centers, but also with primary health care facilities in order to establish more than 30 “Parenting Corners” at four public sites throughout the state. Parenting Corners provide literature and information to help teach parents about child support, child development, child care, primary health care, and other services. They serve as centers where parents can establish paternity, obtain health screenings, and receive referrals to service providers; they also serve as staging areas for positive parent/child activities intended to involve both custodial and non-custodial parents.

With Whom Do You Collaborate?: Forming Partnerships

From the outset, these demonstration grant projects acknowledged that many of the low-income clients served by subsidized Child Care and Head Start programs were the same persons for whom state Child Support Enforcement programs were charged with providing services. Despite this commonality of clients, there were marked differences in the perceptions these programs had about each other and about their relationship with the families they served. Given the overarching project goal of providing low-income, single-parent families with more places to access Child Support services, these community-based agencies were perfect partners for Child Support. Head Start in particular, with its core commitment to parent involvement, was a perfect springboard from which the Child Support program could articulate its broader mission, including the promotion of emotional as well as financial support for children. Collaboration was a natural.

The first issue each project needed to address was how wide to cast its collaboration net -- which and how many local programs should be included, where there were other agencies with similar clients, and whether additional partnerships were necessary to reach fathers. The initial question that flowed from these choices was how best to communicate Child Support’s broader message to its project partners. Interestingly, as the demonstrations worked through secondary goals, this same question was often answered in different ways as the nature of the collaboration matured.

In this and the following sections, the goal is not to provide an exhaustive accounting of each project for each topic, but to present innovations attempted and the most significant lessons learned.

Identifying Existing and/or Potential Partners

For *Alaska*, an effective collaboration required the active involvement of a wide range of partners providing services throughout the vast expanse of Southeast Alaska. Core members of the project were the Tlingit and Haida Indian Tribes of Alaska (Early Childhood Development/Head Start Program), U.S. Coast Guard Work Life Program, National Association of Education of Young Children, and the Alaska Head Start Program, and the list of secondary collaborators appended to the Final Report runs nearly six pages long. Participation by all was welcomed, and the large number of partners tells the story of how one geographically large state offset the regional isolation of the communities the project sought to engage.

Illinois and *Maryland* elected to expand existing cooperative efforts. *Maryland's* ongoing collaboration between the Child Support Enforcement and Child Care Administrations had established strategies to ensure that TANF and POC customers pursued child support. In some counties, linkages between Child Support, Child Care, and Head Start also developed independently. The demonstration project's principal objective was to build on these existing state and local partnerships and programs to reach single parents not receiving either TANF or POC. Thus, many of the same partners were involved even though the target audience changed. *Illinois*, however, did not change its target audience. With the help of a small group of Head Start agencies, with which the Child Support program had already worked, the collaboration effort spread slowly statewide. Along the way, Child Support built relationships with state and local Child Care, Head Start, and referral programs.

The *Minnesota* Collaborative established linkages among Child Support, Child Care, and Head Start staffs at all levels of government—state, county, and local—based on a shared vision that services to children and families were to be “delivered as comprehensively, competently, and cost-effectively as possible.”



Partner with primary health care facilities

Missouri identified primary health care facilities as an important “added” partner in meeting the mission of its Parenting Corners.

Finally, in *Connecticut*, the initial collaborative relationship was between the Department of Social Services' Child Support Bureau, Child Care Team and the community-based private contractor who would manage the demonstration.

As to the demonstration sites themselves, the state meticulously identified ethnically diverse pilot sites, representative of Connecticut's low-income population.

Reaching Out to Potential Partners



Identify and emphasize “WIIFM”

Given *Minnesota's* county-based program, extensive time and care was taken at the start of the project to enter into formal contracts with partner agencies and counties. However, once engaged, the project worked to ensure that all the collaborators were “advocates for change” within and outside their own agency. *Minnesota* recognized that such rethinking required not only the commitment and support of agency heads but also the identification and emphasis of “WIIFM” (*What's in it for me?*). The *Maryland* project recognized the importance of

“formalizing” the tri-part collaboration by gaining a place for a Child Support representative on the Maryland Head Start Collaboration Network Project Advisory Council.

Illinois expanded beyond its original Head Start partners by sending out written “Open Invitations” at state Head Start and the Chicago Association for the Education of Young Children conferences over a period of several months. These invitations were also published in several publications received by target agency staff. Through this innovative approach collaborators were added, and the growth in sites continued based on word of mouth. The result was collaboration with nine agencies, including 50 paternity pilot sites, rather than the one or two originally proposed. The



Send out
“Open
Invitations”



You may face an
overwhelming
response to
“Open
Invitations” for
partners

demonstration had two additional targets: to increase male involvement in the lives of their children, and to reach and focus on the particular needs of children in Hispanic communities. To support these efforts, the project identified and worked with several groups, including Southern Illinois University Carbondale, Springfield Urban League Head Start, Christopher House Head Start, and Valentine Boys and Girls Club. To support its efforts in the Hispanic community, the project partnered with Casa Central, the largest Hispanic Social Service agency in Illinois. However, it took an enormous amount of commitment and added work for Child

Support agencies to respond to and incorporate all the “volunteer” partners into the collaboration. Be prepared to handle the response generated.

Recognizing the reach of child care information and referral telephone networks, both *Maryland* and *Connecticut* incorporated their respective networks—Infoline in Connecticut and LOCATE in Maryland—into the partnership in order to offer Child Support information to callers. Finally, these projects called upon the expertise and experience of a university partner for training design and delivery, project evaluation, and/or coalition building.



Include your
state’s child
care info and
referral
network

How Do You Collaborate Effectively?: Interagency Issues

The lack of understanding by partner agency staff about the Child Support program’s commitment to foster the emotional—as well as economic—well-being of the children it serves was a universal barrier. Indeed, beyond being uninformed, the project reports universally note mistrust of and, frequently, hostility toward the Child Support program or government bureaucracies in general. The stated reasons are as complex as they are varied. But there are common themes: Individuals working in local partner agencies often brought to the collaboration their own disappointing experience with Child Support enforcement. They viewed questions about Child Support as an invasion of client privacy. They recognized that securing a support order would supplant a reliable child care subsidy with irregular Child Support. They were concerned that informal family relationships would be disturbed if the Child Support agency went after Dad. Or, they feared that a Child Support order would lead the father to assert visitation or custody rights against a client who did not want him back in her life.

Thus, the challenge to collaborate effectively went beyond overburdened staff, lack of interest, insufficient support from “above,” personnel changes, or conflicting priorities—all issues common to any partnership. To be successful, these projects had to first change the hearts and minds of those in partner agencies who would be charged with delivering the Child Support message to their constituency. Simply put, these interagency collaborations first had to find common ground and recognize the stories that they all shared.

Finding Common Ground with Partners



Emphasize shared goals

Illinois's Child Support program overcame the Head Start staff's view of Child Support workers as “enforcers” through emphasis “early and often” on the latter program's goal of two-parent involvement and putting children first. Child Support reinforced their role in achieving this goal, ensuring that Head Start and Child Care parents received “timely, quality service.” To a significant extent, identification of a common purpose was strengthened when Congress mandated Head Start programs to inform clients about the availability of Child Support services and to make appropriate referrals to Child Support offices. Thus, each partner assisted the other in meeting required tasks.



Look for and join in collaboration opportunities generated by others

In *Missouri*, it was the state Child Support agency that connected to an existing vision held by ParentLink Coalition, to establish “Parenting Corners” in locations around the state. These are designed to serve as “an exciting, innovative and non-threatening method to integrate information about Child Support agencies and their services into general parenting material.” Sometimes, as in this instance, a potential collaborator has already articulated a message with which Child Support can find common ground, and it just needs to be put into action by linking the appropriate partners.



Engage in cross training and site visits with partners

In order to support the demonstration project's collaborative examination of each agency's business practices, *Minnesota* made its first priority extensive cross training of staff from all collaboration partners. Regional and statewide meetings supplemented site visits. Welfare reform had focused the state on increased interagency cooperation and enhancement of a family-focused delivery system. All involved reevaluated their current services and long-term goals in light of the need for interagency cooperation in order to “help families gain the resources they need to become self-sufficient.”

The *Alaska* project team recognized the mutual need to learn from each other and to “put a face on Child Support”—that is, to understand and acknowledge the impact of the cultures of the target population. The common commitment was increased information about, access to, and use of Child Support services by the widespread population served by the partners.

All Child Support agencies involved in these demonstrations gave up any lingering self-perception that they were stand-alone programs and openly embraced the expanded role of the Child Support program—as a cornerstone of a network of programs helping single-parent families gain economic security and emotional strength and stability for their children.

Ultimately, the common thread in all the stories behind these projects was “putting children first.”

Marketing the Child Support Message to Partners

Connecticut’s final report perhaps best stated the “marketing” issue facing the Child Support agency in all six collaboration projects: “the information needed by [Child Care and Head



Take three key steps to market the message

Start] providers and parents was essentially the same, however, the providers needed to function more like educators and advocates and the parents needed to function as educated consumers.” To get their message heard, the collaborators in all projects eventually came to view their partners’ staff as their primary target audience; for at most pilot sites, staff held many of the same misconceptions and biased attitudes as their clients. All projects included three key steps to marketing the message:

- Listen to and learn from the community collaborators about barriers that inhibit understanding of the Child Support message;
- Invest time and energy in training and educational materials; and
- Be a visible presence in the community.

Alaska surveyed its partner staff to assess their respective community views of the Child Support office and its service delivery, as well as to identify barriers that discourage parents from applying for Child Support services. The project team determined that to succeed, Child Support informational and training material needed to be more culturally relevant. And the partner agencies looked to the Child Support program to make its services more comprehensible and accessible. Over the course of the project, all training materials were reevaluated not only by the staff and parent clientele of the principal partners, but also by an impressive number of secondary collaborators. Over the three years of the project, both the message and the training methodology were revised several times to ensure they were effective, accurate, and well-received. In-person visits and timely response to concerns or cases presented by community-based partners and their clients established and reinforced trust.



Survey partners/build on feedback

Initially, Head Start agencies in Minnesota resisted delivering the “Child Support message” -- since negative personal experience had often jaded staff. But through working with the collaboration, Head Start staff learned of and came to believe in the broader Child Support mission: *to enhance the economic security of children through the establishment and enforcement of Child Support, and to affirm that fathers are important emotionally in children’s lives.*



Partner staff may resist delivering the Child Support message



Educate, engage and support provider staff

While the commitment to demonstrate that the Child Support program had evolved and was not just “out to get Dads,” the tools used to deliver this message varied: “Hot Topics” reference cards in Maryland; “Building a Happy Healthy Child” training and educational video in Alaska; cross training site visits, a joint

symposium, and a “collaboration handbook” in *Minnesota*; and outreach meetings in *Illinois*. For partner staff, changing minds and garnering support required a willingness to add this issue to already overflowing plates; on the part of Child Support staff, it required the flexibility to try again when training or material did not garner results. Most of all, it took time to persuade programs that real solutions to real problems required collaboration.

All this noted, states seeking to replicate some of these innovative techniques need to take care that, in doing so, they do not sacrifice Child Support’s penultimate goal of increased economic security for single-parent custodial families through the establishment of paternity and the timely collection of the child support due.



A great deal of time is needed to build effective collaborations

Maintaining Your Momentum

All collaborations ebb and flow -- influenced by changing financial and personnel resources, added responsibilities, the interest (or lack there of) of bosses, and divergent views over goals and objectives. These projects proved much slower to organize and move than the planners had anticipated. No cost extensions to the project period were the rule. In *Missouri*, for example, it took new Child Support leadership and a fourth year to turn the Parenting Corners collaboration into a successful reality.



Frequent staff changes will impact the collaboration

Key and inspirational leadership, strong personal relationships among project members, and an articulated common vision fostered success. Thus, the inevitable changes in staff and leadership often meant starting all over again—not just training new people but rebuilding relationships. A tacit undertone pervading these final reports is that effective collaboration is most often based on achieving personal rapport with partner staff. However, to maintain a successful collaboration beyond the project period, institutional change is needed as well. Thus, in *Maryland*, a Child Support representative was added to the state’s Head Start Collaboration Network Advisory Council to broaden its role to include state level collaboration activities among Child Support, Head Start and Child Care. Similarly, the inclusion of questions about and information on child support by the child care resource and referral networks in *Connecticut* and *Maryland* will provide continuing benefits. Likewise, understanding that training and informational material must be culturally sensitive (*Alaska*) or delivered in Spanish or other community languages (*Illinois*) should transfer to other agency tasks and future collaborations. *Missouri’s* Parenting Corners remains active and is spreading.



Develop long-lasting relationships, products, and skills

Increased knowledge of the responsibilities and procedures of other agencies allowed the *Minnesota* partners to maintain effective communication when addressing new issues. They gained knowledge and skills from the cross training, including communication skills and the broader perspective required to collaborate successfully. As a result, state, local, and county service providers applied these skills to new areas—partnering with employers,



Apply collaboration tools to other partnerships

immigrant populations, or fatherhood initiatives. But despite the reported enthusiasm and successes, when federal funding ran out some counties eliminated or reduced participation, although others continued collaboration activities without reimbursement.



Financial constraints are real

To some extent, a failure to institutionalize change is understandable. These projects could not change federal or state eligibility requirements that present



There may be inherent policy conflicts between partner agencies

a perceived “no-win” situation to the community partners. The example cited repeatedly was recognition by Child Care and Head Start staff that Child Support services may result in the loss of subsidized child care—generally the more reliable benefit to a working single parent. Overall though, the ability to keep Child Care, Head Start, and Child Support collaboration issues in the minds of agency policy makers and to transfer the lessons learned about the *process* of collaboration itself will be the measure of the long-range success of these efforts.

How Do You Collaborate Effectively?: Practical Issues

A myriad of “how to” and “how not to” lessons learned through the six collaboration projects make their final reports valuable reading for any state interested in collaboration between Child Support, Child Care, and Head Start—or indeed, in collaboration in general. The most universal lessons are also the most basic. Count on collaborative efforts taking more time and more commitment than expected. Be willing to listen to and learn from the experience and perspective of all partners. Be prepared to deal with partner staff turnover. Training and outreach materials are more effective when reflecting the culture of their target audience. Expect to face resistance and negative attitudes towards the Child Support program. Develop flexible strategies for how to transform misinformation or hostility into acceptance and trust.

Translating the Child Support Message

The question underlying much of the *Connecticut* demonstration project was: Would clients more readily receive the Child Support message if presented by someone outside the Child Support system? Collaborations were structured to engage representative community-based



Engage culturally and ethnically sensitive partners to deliver the message

organizations in “selling” Child Support services to their communities. The providers reflected a “healthy cross section” of the state’s ethnic/cultural makeup. The Education Connection, for example, is a Head Start facility that serves a large geographic area in Litchfield County, where the majority of participants are low-income, single-parent Caucasian families. Mary Hooker Family Resource Center, on the other hand, is located in an urban elementary school and serves a large Latino population. All of its programs are offered in both Spanish and English. Finally, the New Haven Child Development Program is the largest state-subsidized Child Care program in the state, operating at 10 sites and serving parents who are low-income, employed, and

overwhelmingly African American. While the goal was the same statewide, the partners and types of clients were diverse; therefore, how the message was formulated and who delivered it varied significantly among the local project sites.

For example, when child care providers in New Haven resisted training their clients about child support, the project modified its approach. Provider staff served as information support, while training duties were assumed by a statewide education and outreach program.



Train, train,
train!

Likewise, in *Illinois* and *Maryland*, the culture and mission of the partner agencies made them hesitant to promote the Child Support program. Indeed, they generally viewed child support as “none of their business.” Having decided that the Child Support system presented more drawbacks than benefits, provider staff sought to “maintain their neutrality.” But reminding collaborators that their shared goal was to ensure families access to a continuum of services, in which securing child support is often critical, and engaging in “friendly persuasion” through networking, education and training, served to dispel the initial resistance to promoting Child Support services among their clients.



Develop culturally
and ethnically
sensitive products
to deliver the
message

In *Alaska*, quarterly meetings among the partners built trust, allowing for a “free flow of information and ideas” and a constant check that the materials produced through the demonstration included “a diverse range of views and culturally relevant perspectives.” The result was the inclusion of rural and urban scenes and Alaska native and non-native actors in a Child Support informational/training video used by partner staff and custodial and non-custodial parents. Reciprocally, Child Support staff reported a greater understanding of Alaskan Native culture and its impact on the establishment and enforcement of child support.



Implement
“core teams”

Minnesota identified its decision to implement a “Core Team” as critical to the project’s ultimate success. Staff turnover and slow hiring to fill vacant positions inhibited progress. The Core Team was made up of state staff from Child Support, Child Care, and Head Start with each assigned as a contact point for a region. Monthly meetings enhanced both information exchange and strategic planning. The Core Team also became a presence

for the Collaboration at training sessions, conferences, and regional outreach activities. Overall, the cross training and supporting materials enabled staff at the collaborating agencies to refer parents to the appropriate agency or community resource.

For *Maryland*, a key collaboration was expanding LOCATE, a child care resource and referral network, to include questions on child support during the phone intake process, as well as training telephone counselors to administer the questions. A similar result was obtained in *Connecticut* using Infoline.



Partners need
to know about
federal and
state
confidentiality
rules

Illinois found it had to first educate Child Care programs about federal and state confidentiality requirements limiting Child Support’s ability to share client data. However, working together, the partners developed a consent form that resolved much of the problem. Further, with a specific goal of reaching the large Hispanic population in the state, project partners delivered over a hundred presentations in Spanish and provided Spanish translations for all the educational material.

Missouri supported training with technology in its Parenting Corners. ParentLink staffs were trained on the basics of the Child Support program and on how to refer clients to the appropriate Child Support or customer service office. This training was supplemented by brochures at each site and through Internet access at the Parenting Corner. The latter allows users to ask questions either of ParentLink staff or to link directly to the Child Support office.



Offer a variety of training and materials, including bi-lingual and web-based

Transferring Credibility

A critical issue as the demonstration projects began was how to transfer the trust and credibility Head Start and Child Care partners enjoyed with their clients to the Child Support partner. The idea was to ensure that all eligible clients availed themselves of Child Support services, as appropriate, by having easy access to information and referrals through the familiar, supportive setting of their Head Start program or Child Care center. But what the projects recognized early on is that many in the target population viewed the Child Support program as ineffectual, bureaucratic, coercive, irrelevant, or intrusive. To a significant extent, these feelings arose from misunderstanding the program's new tools and expanded mission. But they also reflected the fact that cooperation was a condition for receiving public benefits, although child support payments often were only sporadically received.

As opposed to the Child Support system, Child Care and Head Start provider partners were local, trusted, and viewed as responsive to individual client needs and issues. The staff of these agencies was overwhelmingly female and often similar in experience, attitude, and life issues to their clients. The task then was to engage the credibility of these agencies and staff to get client families, both custodial and noncustodial parents, to view Child Support services through the eyes of people they trusted. Delivering the message through or in collaboration with these community partners would hopefully reduce resistance and encourage non-participants to apply for Child Support services. However, once the community agencies put their own credibility and reputation on the line, Child Support could not, and did not, fail to deliver, as the examples below illustrate.

Custodial Parents



Consider dedicated staff to work with community partners

Alaska responded to the challenge by establishing a toll free number so that the Child Support agency was accessible to families at no cost and making sure that Child Support project staff promptly answered the questions raised at the project sites. This latter step reinforced the ability of the local Child Care or Head Start staff to assist the client. Additionally, when Child Support staff delivered training locally, they also met with parent groups and, sometimes, individual clients. The Child Support agency also learned from its partners about specific cultural issues that needed to be considered. The willingness of the agency to listen, learn and apply these lessons enhanced their credibility and put a positive "face" on Child Support.

Connecticut showed that the variations in configuration and focus of the local Child Care, Head Start, or family resource providers required the project to be flexible about how and by

whom the parent education message was delivered. For example, in Litchfield County, information on Child Support services came to parents through their Family Service Worker (FSW). This individual functions as a caseworker and visits the family at the start of the school year to complete a “family partnership agreement.” The FSW discussed both the benefits of Child Support services and how to access them. Where appropriate, obtaining Child Support services became a specific goal in a family’s partnership agreement.



Make Child Support information a natural part of the discussion of family goals

For working parents, child care resource and referral networks are invaluable. Adding questions about Child Support and educating counselors to refer clients for Child Support services as was done in both *Maryland* and *Connecticut* is a non-threatening, user-friendly way of getting the Child Support message to the target population. *Missouri* similarly educated and empowered the WarmLine staff to answer basic questions about paternity establishment and Child Support.

Finally, several projects point out that one of the most valuable ways for the Child Support agency to gain credibility proved to be resolving the personal child support problems of partner staff.

Fatherhood Initiatives

All projects included collaborations designed to stress the importance of involving both parents in their children’s lives. A universal goal was to make the Child Care and Head Start sites “father friendly.” In *Illinois* intake assessments were changed at many Head Start facilities to add fathers’ interests, questions, and preferences—information that had generally been gathered only from mothers. Some 129 presentations during the four-year grant period were “father-focused.”

In *Connecticut*, the New Haven project site incorporated all elements of a Fatherhood Initiative—job readiness, job placement, peer support, parenting education, and father-child activities. Indeed, some mothers voiced concerns that they were being left out. As a result, two “Mothers’ Night In” events were planned. Over dinner, without the children, staff engaged the mothers in a discussion of the need “to include fathers, for the developmental and financial needs of the children.” During training in “Education Connection,” staff discovered some of their own “biases toward men and how that played out when they interacted with them.”



Educate everyone about what you’re trying to do and listen to mothers’ questions and concerns

Finally, the *Minnesota Family Ties Summit* also focused on fathers “to emphasize that fathers are important in the lives of their children.”

Marketing the Child Support Message to Constituents

Given its size and lack of population density, *Alaska* relied on a toll free number, a fairly low-cost, low-tech solution, to resolve the need for the Child Support agency to be more accessible and responsive to its clients. This change now allowed parents in the Southeast who couldn’t afford the phone call to call the agency for assistance. The Alaska project also created and distributed an educational video entitled “Building a Happy, Healthy Child.”

This video, accompanied by a Child Support informational guide, was used to train staff in the collaborating agencies and to educate parents in local communities.

Similarly, all the projects developed brochures, delivered speeches, and created public service announcements and videos, all of which were available through the collaborating agencies. The material was designed to be culturally sensitive, easily readable (i.e., written in non-bureaucratic language), and frequently bi-lingual. The final reports provide descriptions of the materials produced and copies may be requested through the state contacts identified in the Appendix.

Finally, *Missouri's* Parenting Corners stand out as an example of a very different marketing approach. Though slow to start, the Parenting Corners were well received by community professionals, families, and potential Child Support clients. The Parenting Corners proved so successful that some grant funds were used to develop a catalogue of the models and a training manual to show how to build community collaboration around them.

How Do You Know Your Collaboration Was Successful?: The Numbers Behind the Story

A multitude of statistics in the final reports of the six projects provide a picture of their successes: the number of copies of material developed and distributed, community presentations (in English and Spanish), site-visits and training sessions, calls to child care resource and referral networks, toll free calls or website hits seeking Child Support or paternity information, or custodial parents referred for Child Support services.



Obtain funding and expertise to ensure adequate independent evaluation is made

Further, anecdotal evidence and survey results provide ample support for the projects' success. Generally, however, the project evaluators were unable to contact and interview clients. Either names were not kept or program staff was reluctant, for privacy reasons, to divulge client contact information.

Overall, most of the projects did not have the time, funding, and/or expertise to ensure reliable data collection.

While the statistics yielded by these six collaboration projects were limited, the stories behind the "*Innovations and Ideas*" discussed here offer "how-to" lessons on collaboration. Results include: the negative perceptions challenged and changed; the partner staff won over; the fathers brought into the picture; the outreach materials and activities developed; the integrated service delivery systems built; and credibility shared. These experiences provide other states with a fresh, more mature perspective on the "value added" for staff and clients alike when Child Support, Child Care, and Head Start agencies collaborate.

Appendix

Summaries of Projects

Alaska Child Support Enforcement Division (CSED), Child Care, and Head Start Collaboration Project

Goal of Project

Alaska's primary goal was to increase Child Support collections while fostering the involvement of non-custodial parents in their children's lives. The project sought to increase CSED's responsiveness to both parents and their agency partners,¹ and decrease negative attitudes about Child Support "by operating a collaborative information exchange, cross-training and public education program."

Description

The Alaska project was based in the Juneau Child Support office of the Alaska Department of Revenue. The project involved 14 Southeast Alaska communities and included staff from eight primary collaborators¹ and various secondary collaborators from other family service agencies in the region.

The first year of the project focused on the development of a referral system and development and distribution of training and educational materials. A survey instrument was designed to elicit the communities' view of CSED services and to identify perceived barriers to the use of Child Support enforcement services. These surveys informed the development of local and regional training of partner staff. The goal was to enhance the knowledge of collaborator staff about CSED services so they were not only informed but also willing to act as the initial contact for parents considering Child Support enforcement services. Additionally, CSED implemented two other outreach initiatives: meeting with parents from the community when collaborator training took place; and establishing a regional Toll Free number to encourage parents in rural, isolated communities to contact CSED about their cases.

During the second and third years, the project produced and distributed a brochure, "A Guide to Child Support Services,"² while refining ongoing training, outreach, and data collection efforts. A companion training/educational video, "Building a Happy, Healthy Child," was also produced, with careful attention to its regional and cultural accuracy. The video included rural and urban settings and native and non-native Alaskans.

¹ Tlingit and Haida Indian Tribes of Alaska (Early Childhood/Early Head Start); State of Alaska Head Start; State of Alaska Child Care Program; National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC) Southeast Alaska; Healthy Families; Juneau Even Start (Literacy Program); U.S. Coast Guard Work Life Program; and Local Child Care Staff.

² Later updated for statewide distribution and renamed "Child Support: A Guide for Parents."

Results

Neither project staff nor the evaluator was able to determine if child support collections had increased as a result of project activities. However, despite staff turnover, the project reports that cross training efforts were successful and that child support information and applications are being distributed by partner agencies throughout the Southeast Region. Further, an annual survey of collaborators has enabled CSED to take action to rectify reported issues, which has resulted in a decrease in negative attitudes toward CSED. Referrals continue from collaborating agencies and the Toll Free customer service line reported increased use during the second year of the project, although there was a slight decrease in the third year. CSED concludes: “We improved our responsiveness to parents and agencies, built trust and showed that we cared. The training methodologies we developed during this collaboration project have been well received, particularly in the rural communities of the region.”

Replication Advice

Two issues that interfered with the Alaska project need to be considered more thoroughly at the outset of such projects: 1) How can you counteract inevitable staff turnover at all the collaborating agencies and the resulting waning of enthusiasm in the project? and 2) How can you design and conduct an evaluation of such projects, given no or very limited funding?

Two valuable lessons learned from this project are: 1) Information exchanges have two-way benefits, allowing staff of all participating agencies to assist client families more effectively by providing them with information about a range of services in the community; and 2) Training and outreach materials are more effective and positively received when they reflect the community culture. For example, CSED staff report greater awareness of Alaskan Native Culture and the impact of this awareness on the establishment and enforcement of child support.

Overall, states with isolated, rural communities might consider Alaska’s approach of wide-ranging collaborations, in-person training and outreach, and a Toll Free phone line to allow both community staff and clients to follow-up on individual cases, bringing a more positive “face” to the Child Support program.

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Connecticut Child Support, Child Care, and Head Start Collaboration

Goal of Project

Connecticut’s goal was to demonstrate strategies for outreach, education, and advocacy about Child Support services to clients using Child Care, Head Start, and family resource programs. Additional project goals were: to facilitate non-custodial parents’ emotional as well as financial support of their children; to engage the staff of the partner agencies in encouraging parents to pursue financial support and greater non-custodial parent involvement; and to make the Bureau of Child Support Enforcement more responsive to family needs.

Description

The Connecticut demonstration used a community-based private contractor, the Connecticut Women’s Education and Legal Fund (CWEALF) to manage the project. CWEALF was accountable to the state Child Support Bureau and Child Care Team, creating an additional collaborative relationship. Project partners were selected to reflect the state’s ethnically diverse low-income population and included: 1) Education Connection, Head Start Center (serving a large geographic area of mostly Caucasian families); 2) Mary Hooker Family Resource Center (an urban center, serving a large Latino population in Hartford); and 3) New Haven Child Development Program (a ten-site program serving predominately low-income African-American families where the parent is either employed, in job training, or high school).

Given the varied populations, the project used different mechanisms to encourage and enable Child Care, Head Start, and Family Resource Centers to engage parents in pursuing child support. The project’s ability to customize services for the three agencies was a key, yet complex and time-consuming task. The project brought together two additional partners to assist with strategy, training development, and information delivery: 1) Infoline, Connecticut’s statewide telephone information and referral service; and 2) University of Connecticut Office of Organizational and Skill Development (OSD).

The project invested time and resources to educate and mentor staff at the project sites. In addition to providing training and tools to create a paradigm shift in the attitude of site staff regarding their role in engaging parents on child support issues, the project implemented skill-building training and provided technical assistance on matters such as project planning and public relations. Besides building favorable “publicity” about Child Support services, these efforts provided information and training that enabled the staff to “function more like educators and advocates and the parents...to function as educated consumers.”

A Fatherhood Initiative component, begun in the project’s second year, offered supportive employment-related services to non-custodial fathers in an effort to increase the amount and regularity of child support payments. This effort was individualized at the site locations to respond to concerns raised by the predominately female staff and clientele. All sites created a more father-friendly environment and initiatives, including offering referrals for job training or educational programs to non-custodial fathers, removing obstacles to paternity establishment and payment of child support, and enhancing father-child contact through

onsite activities, such as domino tournaments held at the Mary Hooker Family Resource Center.

Results

Over the three-year demonstration period, 1,538 parents received training and information about Child Support. An additional 1,159 participated in Father Initiative activities. The responses and feedback from staff and parent surveys support the success of collaboration efforts among Child Support, Child Care, Head Start, and Family Resource Centers. Surveys of parents and staff, however, indicate that although they support the promotion of child support, there is continuing ambivalence about the details—who should pay, how much should be collected from low-income obligors, and what should happen when payments are not made.

The New Haven site incorporated all Fatherhood Initiative elements—father-child activities, job readiness, peer support, and job placement/employment opportunities. Project evaluators concluded its holistic approach “clearly demonstrated that bonding with children and improved employment does result in payment or increased payment of child support.... Parental relationships—custodial and non-custodial—access to the child, interactive activities, employment, etc. are factors that have an impact on the payment and non-payment of child support.”

Replication Advice

The Connecticut project suggests that at least two activities are critical to success of such collaboration projects: 1) taking the time to understand the unique culture of the programs with which you are collaborating, and 2) training and mentoring the staff early on in the project. Do not assume that Child Care, Head Start, and other staff will be universally comfortable carrying the Child Support message to their community. Flexibility, persistence, and cultural sensitivity appear to be key. Make sure the sites are father-friendly, but remain sensitive to the needs of the custodial mother. Screen for domestic violence issues, address pre-existing conflicts between the parents, and make sure that the message about the benefit of father involvement is communicated clearly. Finally, using a private contractor to manage the project appeared effective and may be a viable alternative if a Child Support agency has a large caseload and limited staff resources.

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Illinois Head Start/Child Care/Child Support Collaboration: Making a Difference in Children's Lives

Goal of Project

Illinois' primary goal was to increase paternity establishment and Child Support collections for children and families in Head Start and Child Care programs. To get there, the project sought to develop strong partnerships among the staff, teachers, and parents of the collaborating agencies—Division of Child Support Enforcement (DCSE), Head Start, Early Head Start and Child Care, including the child care resource and referral network agencies. Specific objectives included: educating clients and staff about the importance of and procedures for paternity establishment, addressing misconceptions about the Child Support program, and building the confidence of parents so that they could approach and work with the Child Support system. The overarching goal was to foster the child's well-being through the emotional and financial support of both parents, with a focus on strengthening the child's bond with the non-custodial parent. An additional major objective was to reach out to parents in the Hispanic community.

Description

The demonstration project was located in DCSE's Office of Community Outreach in order to take advantage of the existing staff knowledge of and relationship with collaborating partners. To work through misconceptions, the project developed and exchanged an array of educational and outreach material for both staff and clients about the Child Support program in general and voluntary paternity establishment in particular. Information was mailed annually to all Head Start agencies. Two videos, "Every Child's Right" and "The Power of Two," were distributed in both Spanish and English to Head Start and Child Care staff and parents throughout Illinois. A total of 667 presentations, in-service training, and *cross-training* sessions were held throughout the state, including 129 father-focused programs and 104 presentations aimed at the Hispanic community.

From the beginning, the demonstration planned for paternity pilot sites where staff spoke to parents about the benefits of paternity establishment, provided the needed forms, helped parents complete the forms (if needed), and witnessed the Voluntary Acknowledgment of Paternity forms. The proposed two pilot sites grew quickly to a statewide endeavor. A special collaboration project developed at Southern Illinois University evolved from a particular emphasis on paternity to a broader emphasis on assisting parents with many Child Support concerns.

The grant afforded Illinois the opportunity to address three specific areas of interest through workgroups: policy/advocacy, male-involvement, and technology. These workgroups not only focused project tasks during the grant period, but also considered how these collaborations could best continue afterward. Three major projects that evolved from the workgroups were a collaboration website, internet training for Head Start staff and parents to access and utilize Child Support information, and recommendations to enhance future cooperation.

Especially noteworthy was the development of the Illinois Collaboration Website, which brought together a diverse group of people working to improve the lives of Illinois children. Initially conceived as a training site to help parents learn how to use the Internet, it grew into a free-standing site where people could go to find information about Head Start, Child Care and Child Support Enforcement programs. The site, available in English and Spanish, also provides parents and grandparents links to other interests, including information on child development.

Results

One of the major signs of the project's success is the number of Head Start and Child Care agencies that elected to participate—more than five times the expected number. Yet despite the strong interest, the programs' staff and parents required a great deal of time and education to overcome their initial distrust and/or discomfort with the Child Support mission. As the final report states: "It took time for most people to understand that Child Support had changed in the last five years or more, focusing on the total support for the child—emotional, educational, as well as financial. It took more than three years for some Head Start staff and parents to realize that Child Support staff is not out to 'get the fathers.' Of course, for every person who 'changed' their mind about the Child Support system, there are many who continue to hold these views, and new staff and parents who could benefit from knowledge gained through collaboration."

As for the paternity pilot projects, contrary to expectations, most children in Head Start and Child Care programs already had paternity established through hospitals, courts, and WIC Food Centers. Overwhelmingly, these families were already involved in Child Support services. Although the number of paternity acknowledgements completed at the Head Start and Child Care sites was relatively small, opening the issue for discussion and clarifying the benefits of establishing legal paternity proved to have a positive effect on the client families.

One key lesson learned in the Illinois project is that collaboration takes time and is an ongoing effort. Building slowly on existing relationships and responding to the unique needs of different populations is critical to success. Equally important is the need to discuss how Child Support is integrated in the continuum of services by family service providers.

Overall, this demonstration showed that defining and reiterating common goals are critical throughout such projects, as is understanding the language used by each agency. Networking through the respective partners' conferences to help identify willing participants and generate interest, as well as educate, also proved to be a successful strategy.

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Maryland Child Support, Child Care and Head Start Collaboration

Goal of Project

Having previously established collaboration between Maryland's Child Support Enforcement Administration (CSEA) and Child Care Administration involving TANF and Purchase of Care (POC) clients, this demonstration sought to expand that effort to non-TANF custodial parents. The primary goal was to assist such parents in pursuing Child Support, thereby enhancing their economic security. The primary components of the project were resource and referral services, development and distribution of materials, and outreach to local providers.

Description

Three local sites representing different types of Maryland communities (Anne Arundel County, Baltimore City, and the Tri-County Area of Southern Maryland) implemented activities to enhance the collaborative efforts between Child Support, Child Care, Head Start and Early Head Start. Anne Arundel is a suburban county with approximately 13 percent of female-headed households with children under age five in poverty. Baltimore is a large, poor city with over half of the female-headed households with children under age five in poverty, and with a privatized Child Support agency. The Tri-County Area of Southern Maryland is a predominantly rural area where the female-headed households with children under age five in poverty range from 18.5 to 39.1 percent.

Project activities were aimed at assisting families not currently receiving either TANF or POC. With the goal of helping them pursue child support, each site designed their own tools and techniques to share the Child Support message with Child Care and Head Start clients. "LOCATE," a child care resource and referral network, was expanded to include all child care networks in Maryland, and added questions on Child Support to the LOCATE Community Line phone intake process. Telephone counselors were trained to administer these questions. A CSEA representative was also added to the Maryland Head Start Collaboration Network Advisory Council, with the specific goal of broadening the Council's work to include state-level collaboration activities among Child Support, Head Start and Child Care programs.

Results

Initial strategies to obtain feedback from parents who learned about child support through the demonstration project were unsuccessful. Local sites had difficulty tracking the parents and focus groups were cancelled because "child care directors were concerned that participants would not be comfortable answering Child Support questions with other families present." One success noted was increased awareness *by clients and staff* of the importance of child support. Overall, the collaboration achieved positive results, offering new resources for families with children in child care and empowering staff to help them. Some site directors highlighted the opportunity to address the role of the father in mother-headed households in a

more positive way and awareness of the important role fathers play led to the creation of more Male Involvement Groups within Head Start.

Permanent policy changes positively impacted the collaboration project, including the following: incorporating Child Support in the Child Care Administration's strategic plan, developing statewide Child Support information through the child care referral system, providing Head Start families in the Child Support data base with information annually, and establishing annual Child Support training for Head Start staff.

Replication Advice

As with all the other demonstration projects, states seeking to adopt Maryland's approach need to plan for two major roadblocks: 1) staff changes at all levels, and 2) resistance within the community organizations to taking on the issue of Child Support. Staff concerns often stem from their own life experiences, in many cases similar to those of the parents involved with Child Care and Head Start. Given the initial reluctance to trust or rely on the Child Support system, it is particularly important that states planning similar collaborations ensure that the Child Support system provides a timely and adequate response to the cases gleaned from Child Care and Head Start referrals.

Overall, Maryland's outreach materials and, in particular, the Child Support enhancements made to the child care resource and referral system (LOCATE), as well as CSEA's commitment to work at every level of government, are well worth examining when modeling a collaboration project.

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Minnesota Head Start, Child Care and Child Support State and Local Collaboration Project

Goal of Project

The Minnesota project aimed to promote Child Support services through Child Care, and Head Start programs by formalizing a relationship between the Department of Human Services, Child Support Enforcement Division (CSED), the Department of Children, Families and Learning, the Child Care community, and Head Start. The project sought to examine the way each of these agencies conducted business, with a focus on identifying opportunities for collaboration. Both state and local collaboration opportunities were then engaged, with an emphasis on information sharing and dissemination, training, strategic planning, and outreach. The desired result was a more seamless delivery system for families served by these agencies.

Description

Project activities were initially conducted in four geographic areas of the state, coinciding with Head Start regions. These areas covered rural and urban settings, large and small counties, and a variety of economic levels. Several Native American sovereign nations were within the geographic areas, and one tribal Head Start agency was very involved in the collaboration. One CSED staff member was assigned to coordinate each region's activities, with overall project supervision also coming from CSED.

Among the first priorities was cross-training staff from all involved programs. This investment of time and resources ensured that staff in all the programs would have a working knowledge of other collaborating programs, enabling them to make knowledgeable referrals. The cross-training included site visits supplemented by regional and statewide meetings to enhance knowledge exchange.

The next step was development of outreach materials about the Child Support program and regional outreach activities. A *Minnesota Family Ties Summit* was planned to show how welfare reform increased the need to "tie" services together. A focus on fathers emphasized their importance in the lives of their children. The conference also brought attention to Minnesota's commitment to a more family-focused service delivery. Many of the workshops and presentations on collaboration were repeated in the regions. The following year's training event was *Strengthening Fatherhood and Families through Community Supports*.

Results

Minnesota made several key commitments that proved uniquely beneficial. For example, time was expended up front to engage in substantial cross-training of all agency staff. The project also developed a "collaboration handbook"—a reference guide of program and contact information for all participating agencies—made available broadly in the demonstration areas. Throughout the project, the agencies held joint strategic planning and information sharing meetings at the state and local level. Much of the outreach material

prepared to explain Child Support's broader mission and procedures won state and national awards and was widely distributed through extensive outreach efforts.

As with the other demonstration projects, Head Start agencies initially resisted delivering the Child Support message. However, because of increased interaction with local agencies and an improved understanding of CSED's broader mission, Head Start overcame its reluctance, and recognized that Child Support's commitment to helping families become independent and self-sufficient is consistent with Head Start's parent education goals. Increased communication benefited all of the partners. For example, mandated referral mechanisms from Head Start and child care were readily implemented. Overall, despite delays setting up the contract mechanism and some resistance on all sides, the demonstration helped establish a model for collaboration that will be expanded to other family programs.

Replication Advice

States that have a county-administered Child Support program would be well-served by examining the time, expense, and resources required to contract with all the partner agencies and counties before project work begins. All states may find Minnesota's cross-training staff and outreach materials to be effective models. Finally, the demonstration project's expansion of its focus to include fathers, consistent with the Child Support's expanded mission, may also be a valuable strategy for other states.

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Missouri Head Start, Child Care, Child Support Collaboration: Parenting Corners

Goal of Project

Missouri's demonstration grant project sought to develop an effective method of disseminating information about child support to parents and the general public through the establishment of "Parenting Corners," in collaboration with organizations and agencies involved in Child Care, Head Start, Early Head Start, and primary health care facilities. The project aimed to help families, human service agencies, and the general community view the Division of Child Support Enforcement (DCSE) more positively through recognition of its expanded mission to promote the emotional, social, and economic welfare of children. The ultimate goal was to make DCSE more accessible and responsive to families' needs. Subordinate objectives included: expanding non-custodial parents' involvement with their children; helping families active with Head Start, child care, or primary health care agencies obtain Child Support services; and educating mothers and fathers about their parental responsibilities.

Description

Parenting Corners are used to promote public knowledge of and links to social service agencies. In addition to Child Support material, the Parenting Corners provide "...a comprehensive network of support for parents and families within their communities through diverse models that include information and materials, links to services and supportive conversation/problem solving support."

The demonstration's initial goal was to establish Parenting Corners in five Missouri communities. Phase One engaged DCSE in a partnership with ParentLink Coalition, an extension of the University of Missouri-Columbia working through a coalition of agencies that serve children and families throughout the state. Phase Two involved bringing provider activities and parent/child gatherings to the Parenting Corner. Here, parents received tangible services, information, and opportunities for positive parent-child interaction.

DCSE staff were involved in local collaboration teams and provided input on program development. They also provided information and educational materials to the collaborating partners.

Results

The Parenting Corners project came to fruition using five models for a manufactured display. These models, still in use today, are intended to be a staging area for parent-child activities as well as a delivery point for service providers (for example, story hours and immunizations would both make use of these areas).

Displays of brochures and other information at the Parenting Corners promoted Child Support services to parents, community agencies, and the general public. Currently, eight

selections are available, including material on fatherhood, mediation and paternity, Parent's Fair Share, centralized collection, and Child Support enforcement. ParentLink staff has been trained in the basics of the Child Support program and makes referrals to the appropriate Child Support office or to DCSE's centralized customer service unit. Internet access permits users to ask questions about paternity or Child Support either to ParentLink staff who answer the WarmLine calls and respond to questions posted on the website—or to DCSE using a hot link.

The project has expanded to over 30 Parenting Corners and requests are growing. In addition to the collaboration partners, local agencies are using Parenting Corners for health screening, fingerprinting, and other projects. Information is continuously being requested by parents and community professionals. Comment cards report enthusiasm from families and the evaluation concluded that Parenting Corners are a non-threatening, reasonable way to establish an easily accessible, user-friendly information exchange.

Replication Advice

Missouri's Parenting Corners project has proved so successful that DCSE and ParentLink used the grant as an opportunity to "build their capacity to support future Parenting Corner implementation."

A catalog of display models and costs is being developed for interested agencies and communities. The project has also developed both a training manual to show how to build community collaboration around Parenting Corners and a manual to help handle their daily maintenance. Finally, a marketing plan is in development to assist communities in gaining sponsorship to offset the cost of Parenting Corners.

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