

MCWNN SAN ANTONIO LEARNING LABORATORY

San Antonio & Corpus Christi (Regions 8 & 11)
Department of Family & Protective Services
Staff

Overview

- ◉ Blended funding from the Annie E. Casey Foundation & American Humane in 2008
- ◉ Identify emerging practices that support immigrant children and families who are in need of social services
- ◉ Provide practice and policy recommendations

PHASE I

- ◉ American Humane's staff conducted a brief literature and resource review from Oct. -Nov. 2008.
- ◉ In Nov. 2008 began developing research questions for key informant interviews and focus groups.
- ◉ In Jan. 2009, conducted interviews and focus groups with key informants in the San Antonio and Corpus Christi regions.
 - Focused on prevention and intervention practices in child welfare and the strengths and challenges faced when working with immigrant children and families.

INTERVIEWS & FOCUS GROUPS

◉ 4 Focus Groups

- Program Directors
- Border Supervisors
- Various Supervisors
- Program Administrators

◉ 2 Interviews

- Border Liaison
- Regional Director

◉ 24 Participants

WHO'S THE IMMIGRANT POPULATION?

- ◉ Primarily undocumented
- ◉ 70 to 98% Hispanic
- ◉ Mixed status, traditional families
- ◉ Hold multiple odd jobs
- ◉ Usually no more than elementary school education
- ◉ Families are in transition

REASONS FOR MIGRATION

- ⦿ 'Pursuing the American Dream'
- ⦿ Join other family members
- ⦿ Looking for work

MIGRATION CHALLENGES

- ◉ Families are scattered & less supports
- ◉ Job exploitation
- ◉ Dealing with officials
- ◉ Lack of resources and access to resources
- ◉ Housing

CHALLENGES TO WORKING WITH IMMIGRANT FAMILIES

- ◉ Lack of training
- ◉ Lack of services
- ◉ 'Don't ask, Don't tell' policy
- ◉ Cultural differences
- ◉ Language barriers
- ◉ Clarifying roles
- ◉ Organizational racism
- ◉ Personal/worker bias
- ◉ Working with undocumented families
- ◉ Youth aging out undocumented

STRENGTHS OF DFPS WORKING WITH IMMIGRANT FAMILIES

- ◉ Working with the Mexican Consulate
- ◉ Working with community-based services
- ◉ Border Liaisons
- ◉ Language (safety plans)

PREVENTION & OUTREACH

- ◉ Speaker's Bureau
- ◉ Neighborhood Place
- ◉ Outreach
- ◉ Fear is a Barrier

DATA COLLECTION

- ◉ No check box for citizenship status
- ◉ May be included in narrative & family assessment/service plan
- ◉ Missing social security numbers may be the best indicator

EDUCATION

- ◉ Minimum if a BA in any field
- ◉ Program Directors have a BA in human services, 2 years of supervision, & 5 years total experience at minimum
- ◉ Program Administrators, LMSW

TRAINING

- ◉ 90 days of basic skills training & shadow multiple workers
- ◉ Supervisors need to complete 40 hours every 2 years
- ◉ Other elective cultural trainings

WORKER STRESS

- ◉ Attempting to reduce turnover
- ◉ Need for training on time management
- ◉ Caseloads are flattening out
- ◉ Salaries

PRELIMINARY RECOMMENDATIONS

- ◉ Identify the population
- ◉ Identify community supports and referrals (esp. emergency & day-to-day services)
- ◉ Cross-agency training and role clarification
- ◉ Continue & increase prevention efforts in 'safe' places

NEXT STEPS

- ◉ Assessment and feedback during this conference
- ◉ February 2009- Interviews and focus groups with direct services providers in DFPS and community-based organizations.
 - Child welfare and immigrant advocates
- ◉ March 2009- Interviews and focus groups with families and youth who have been involved in the child welfare or community-based services and have also had immigration issues.

PHASE II

- ◉ April 2009- Summary and dissemination of findings during the MCWNN meeting in conjunction with the 17th National Conference on Child Abuse and Neglect
 - Staff will also conduct focus groups with national child welfare and immigration experts to focus on permanency outcomes for immigrant children in public child welfare.
- ◉ Selection of Site #2

POTENTIAL STUDY PRODUCTS

- ◉ Basis for the development of a quality improvement center model in the San Antonio region.
- ◉ Immigrant family friendly assessment tool for immigrant and child welfare serving organizations.
- ◉ List of bilingual vocabulary for child welfare workers and translators.
- ◉ 'How to' handbook for assessing immigrant families.
- ◉ More to come!