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Focus on Fatherhood

National Fatherhood & Families Conference 2008

Fatima Abdullahi interviews Annette Phillips, Program Manager, Healthy Families Oneida

Program Managers, Supervisors and Father Advocates from two HFNY Programs attended the 9th Annual National Fatherhood and Families Conference in Phoenix, Arizona this past March. The conference was hosted by The Arizona Fathers and Families Coalition, Inc.

What was your reason for attending this conference?

Lillian Smith, Program Manager of HF Albany, attended last year and talked about how good it was. Lillian also brought Mr. James Rodriguez, CEO and President of Arizona Fathers and Families Coalition, to the Capital Region for the HFNY Fatherhood Initiative Symposium last fall. We liked what we heard, and Bryant Mathias, our site's Father Advocate, and I decided to attend the conference to expand our understanding and training.

What speakers or presentations stood out for you and why?

We heard some of what we had heard in Albany, but during this conference we were hearing it from the dads' point of view. We also had the opportunity to obtain a unique perspective from children, who spoke about their experiences with their fathers.

One speaker, whose perspective on her relationship with her father really moved me, was Ms. Robin Wright-King. She spoke of being the daughter of an estranged father and how women feel about the loss of a dad. Ms. Wright-King described how her father had three families in same community, and how she and her siblings had grown up never being acknowledged by her father. During her presentation, she referenced her book, *Papa Was a Rolling Stone: A Daughter's Journey to Forgiveness*, and discussed how writing this book helped her healing and allowed her to move toward a relationship with her father later in life.

Dr. Garry Mendez, President/Founder of the National Trust for the Development of African-American Men, spoke of coalition-building for all agencies serving families and fathers. He mentioned the history of insufficient funding to keep programs going that have proven records of support for families and fathers. Dr. Mendez mentioned that the vote is a great thing, but, as he pulled dollar bills from his pocket to illustrate the point, he commented, "Money talks and your activities talk." In other words, active, vocal support and sufficient, stable funding are crucial. He encouraged everyone to go to their local political representatives and let them know that the people that you work with are their constituents.

Another very moving presentation was a video depicting children's rights with regard to incarcerated fathers. The video included poetry and rap, with the children speaking from their hearts. One child offered, "Daddy may have been awful and bad for the community, but he was always good to me." This child continued to share his last memory of being with his father. He shared that as the police were wrestling handcuffs onto his father, all his Dad was interested in was handing him his Elmo doll and telling him not to be afraid. However, the police

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The Slater Family, participants with Healthy Families Allegany

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HFNY Goals

- To systematically identify overburdened families in need of support
- To promote positive parent-child interaction
- To ensure optimal prenatal care and promote healthy childhood growth and development
- To enhance family functioning by building trusting relationships, problem-solving skills and support systems

theLink

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Healthy Families New York Spring News from OCFS

Bernadette Johnson, Tina Williams, Maria Rosado, Terri Beers, and Tom Dwyer
Program Contract Managers
NYS Office of Children & Family Services (OCFS)

Someone very dear to us keeps saying, "with change, we provide opportunity." We certainly have seen our share of change here at OCFS and within HFNY. Although change can be challenging and daunting, it can also be invigorating! Since the departure of Joy Griffith we have been hard at work here at OCFS carrying on the work of this program. We have a new staff member, Tom Dwyer, whom you may have met at some point in a training you attended or maybe at the HFNY table at the Prevention Conference here in Albany. Tom has been busy getting up to speed about what HFNY is all about and getting to know what it is like to work at a state agency. What we do hear him say frequently is, "WOW, this program is really great, I feel fortunate to be part of it!" All of us here at OCFS feel the same way.

New and ongoing initiatives

Early Enrollment The random assignment study for HFNY has shown that the program has a tremendous impact on birth outcomes. With the goal of strengthening this result more broadly across enrolled families, the Central Administration group of HFNY has been working on a pilot project to get families enrolled in the program earlier in pregnancy. Approximately five programs will be involved. The pilot will attempt to reach out to and engage families in the first or early second trimester and to measure the effectiveness of these efforts. We look forward to bringing you those results.

Domestic Violence Staff in the field tell us that there are many families affected by domestic violence, mental health issues and substance abuse. In fact, workers report that it is difficult to keep focused on the goals of the program when dealing with these issues. Many of us are not sure what to do in these circumstances. HFNY Central Administration in collaboration with the New York State Office of Prevention of Domestic Violence has developed DV Guidelines for our programs. We hope the guidelines will meet two main goals: first, provide you with tools to identify and work more effectively with families experiencing domestic violence, and second, provide resources for workers to make referrals for needed services.

Father Involvement Getting fathers involved in our services is the goal of our Fatherhood Initiative. Fatherhood Advocates at the program level have been working hard at helping dads understand how important they are to their children. The advocates have been taking part in meetings through conference calls in order to accumulate and compare all the tools they are using to track their activities and to brainstorm on submitting a workshop proposal for the first New York State Fatherhood Conference, slated to take place in October. How is Healthy Families New York doing in this area? We have recorded a slight increase in fathers' participation in home visits. We are anxious to see more!

continued next page

Hello HFNY, from Tom Dwyer

I am the new Program Contract Manager with HFNY, and I am looking forward to working alongside Bernadette, Tina, Maria and Terri.

Prior to accepting this position, I have worked in the education field and with populations that include foster care, adults with a traumatic brain injury and people with developmental disabilities. I also work part-time with an innovative adoption agency and provide education to people who are interested in adoption.

I am originally from Utica, currently live in the Albany area and graduated with a B.S. from SUNY Oneonta.

In my spare time I enjoy traveling and spending time with my wife, 11 year old son and 2-year-old daughter.

I am very excited to be part of the Healthy Families New York Home Visiting Program and look forward to meeting everyone involved with the program.

Training Institute We here at OCFS have been busy with planning our three-day training institute that will take place June 3–5 at Hobart & William Smith Colleges on beautiful Seneca Lake. It is shaping up to be a great opportunity to learn some new things, share ideas, get to know others across the state—including staff from our ten new sites that are involved in delivering this wonderful program. The surroundings at Hobart and William Smith are beautiful. There will be training tracks for new workers, experienced workers, supervisors, data managers, and program managers. Two special areas of focus will be father involvement and working with families affected by domestic violence.

Publication News

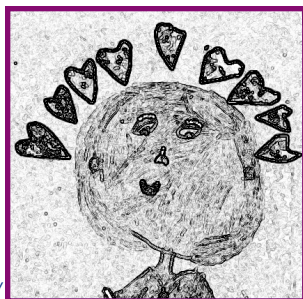
HFNY has an abstract published in the March 2008 issue #32 of *Child Abuse & Neglect, the International Journal*. The article was a joint effort of researchers at the Bureau of Evaluation and Research at OCFS, the Center for Human Services Research, and the Department of Psychology, at the University at Albany. The article discusses the effects HFNY had on parenting behaviors in the first two years of life.

Upcoming Changes

As we started this article we spoke of change. Sadly we are getting ready to say “so long” to two wonderful colleagues in the training team. Ann Pitkin has been the Director of training for quite some time. She is a fantastic leader, with a strong sense of purpose and a knowledge of this program that is hard to match. Although Ann is taking a well deserved retirement she will be sadly missed for her wisdom and guidance. Best wishes, Ann, for a happy and healthy retirement.

Louise Henrie also will be leaving HFNY. Louise is the happy voice on the phone when you call the training office, and the person who sends out the cheerful e-mails announcing a new training. Louise is responsible for all the logistics of organizing and setting up training for us in all parts of this state. As crazy as it might get for her she always is calm and professional. Louise is also responsible for the design and production of this publication. Louise you will be missed. All the best in the future!

Spring is upon us. Enjoy what the change in the season has to offer. See you in June!



by Abby

Fatherhood Initiative Committee

This important new HFNY committee is made up of program managers and fatherhood advocates from programs with fatherhood initiatives. The committee also includes Program Contract Managers, Tom Dwyer and Tina Williams, and Training and Staff Development Specialist, Fatima Abdullahi. The committee is gathering information about what fatherhood advocates are doing at various sites and determining how father involvement at sites can best be measured.

So far the committee has identified the following roles/activities of fatherhood advocates:

- Serving as FSW with a caseload of families in which fathers are active participants
- Partnering on home visits with a female to serve families in which both parents are involved in the program.
- Working with fathers who are not in current relationships or living at the same address as the mothers.
- Creating groups outside of home visits just for fathers, with or without their babies in attendance.

The current target statewide is a 1% increase each quarter in the number of FOBs and other father figures involved in home visits. Besides home visit participation, other measures considered by the committee include: measurement of community outreach to fathers and other involved men, examining whether father involvement tends to bring an increase in family retention. The committee raised another key question: Does father involvement increase the breastfeeding rate? The Link and OCFS program contract managers will continue to provide information and updates about how HFNY will measure outcomes related to fatherhood initiatives.



Healthy Families Jamaica — first graduation!

HFJ held a semi-formal affair on March 31, 2008, to honor five families with seven target children, including a set of triplets, who graduated from the HFJ program. All of the families have been with the program for five years and have moved through levels 1-4, resulting in successful completion. The families have taken great pride in giving their children a healthy start and achieving all of their goals. The parents were elated to talk about the program and the support that the Healthy Families program has provided to them over the years.

Spotlight on Prevent Child Abuse New York Department of Training & Staff Development

Big changes are happening at Prevent Child Abuse New York—appointment of a new Director of Training and an Assistant Director, a retirement, closing of the Ithaca office, and a move in Albany.

Along with these changes comes the loss of Louise Henrie, the Program Associate. As the new Director will not be located in Ithaca, there was a need to relocate the Program Associate's position to the Capital region. Unfortunately, with a rich network of family and friends in the Ithaca area, moving to Albany was not an option Louise could consider.



Louise Henrie, Program Associate for PCANY Training and Staff Development

Louise Henrie has been with PCANY for five and half years. All program managers and many supervisors know Louise as their main contact for registering people for trainings. And they know her as someone who is responsive, responsible and caring to a fault. PCANY has been very fortunate to have Louise keeping track of all the nitty-gritty details of training events. None of these events could have happened without her invaluable work! Louise is also a talented graphic designer who has produced many effective and attractive pieces, most notably THE LINK. Her contributions have been outstanding, and she will be greatly missed.

Louise lives, and will continue to live, in Ithaca with her husband, David, nineteen year old son Tavis, and her beautiful garden. Another son, Ned, is married and lives in the Boston area.

Ann Pitkin of PCANY is retiring as Director of Training and Staff Development at the end of May.

The new Director will be longtime Training and Staff Development Specialist, Pam Balmer.

Pam Balmer has accepted a new appointment as Director of Training and Staff Development. She will be working in partnership with Ellen Butowsky, who will step into a newly created position of Assistant Director of Training and Staff Development. Pam comes to this position with a wealth of experience in numerous



New PCANY Director of Training and Staff Development, Pam Balmer with friend Charlotte MacNeal

roles within and outside of HFNY. Originally an FSW at Healthy Families Chemung in Elmira, Pam also has served as the Program Associate with PCANY (the position currently held by Louise Henrie), as a Supervisor with the Healthy Families Rensselaer Program (formerly Healthy Kids), as a Quality Assurance Consultant for Healthy Kids, and since 2003 as Training and Staff Development Specialist with PCANY. She is also an HFA Peer Reviewer for credentialing, and a certified HFA FSW Trainer. Many of you already have firsthand experience with Pam's excellent interpersonal and teaching skills through training events and workshops. We know that Pam brings a great deal of knowledge, creativity, and thoughtfulness to her new position and have every confidence that she will excel in this role also, as she has done in the past!

She lives in the Saratoga area with her husband, Steve. She is also the proud and loving mother of two wonderful daughters who are both currently in college, Caitlin and Abby.

Ellen Butowsky has accepted the newly-created position of Assistant Director of Training and Staff Development at PCANY. Like Pam Balmer, Ellen will continue to provide some training and quality assurance to programs in her new role. Ellen has been with PCANY since 2004 as a Training and Staff Development Specialist. Before joining PCANY, for nine years, Ellen was Program Manager at Ulster County Healthy Start and Project Director for Dutchess County Healthy Families. She also was Project Director for the Community Health Worker Program in Poughkeepsie.



PCANY Assistant Director of Training and Staff Development, Ellen Butowsky

Ellen's impressive experience also includes past work with HIV-AIDS, Migrant Farmworker programs, three years with the Peace Corps in Honduras, and a dual Master's degree in Public Health and Social Work.

Ellen lives in New Paltz with her husband, Seth, and two wonderful children, Olivia and Elijah!

Adieu, Adios, and Farewell from Ann Pitkin

Many of you already know that as of the end of May, I will retire from my current position of Director of Training and Staff Development with Prevent Child Abuse New York.

I began in this field many years ago as a home visitor to families in crisis. This started a long commitment to home visiting as a way of serving families. My involvement with Healthy Families New York began in 1995, when I became a certified FSW Core Trainer and worked with some of the first programs in our state. Many of the wonderful people I count as colleagues today are people I have known since that time. I never imagined that a work environment could offer so many opportunities to know and learn from such a wide variety of thoughtful, creative, and caring people. And I deeply appreciate the humor, creativity, hard work and wonderful intentions I saw expressed along the way, sometimes in the middle of difficult times! I am so grateful for the experience I have had with all of you. There is no question, I have been one lucky person and I appreciate all I have learned directly and indirectly from all of you.

Ann Pitkin with granddaughter, Sara



PCANY Albany Office Moving to Elk Street

After many years at 134 South Swan St. in Albany, just by the Empire State Plaza, PCANY will relocate in May to 33 Elk St. In addition to the PCANY staff already based in Albany, the new office will provide space for the new HFNY Program Associate, the Director of Training and Staff Development, the HFNY Resource Library, and all the equipment, files, and curricula for HFNY.

Other Training and Staff Development staff will continue to work out of home offices, when they are not out training or visiting programs. This includes: Ethelena Persons (Brooklyn), Myrna Bridges (Croton-on-Hudson), Ellen Butowsky (New Paltz), Wendy Bender (Delanson), and Fatima Abdullahi (Guilderland). Two other excellent trainers employed at HFNY sites will continue to provide two core trainings per year for PCANY. These are Rayza DeLaCruz-Stitt (Bushwick Healthy Families), and Charity Leslie (Healthy Families Oneida).

ESPECIALLY FOR DADS, from Prevent Child Abuse New York

These short, well-written one-page pieces are available at no cost from PCANY. The web site is the best way to get copies of these for use at your site. They can all be downloaded and printed at: <http://www.preventchildabuseny.org/resource.shtml>

Help With Breastfeeding—Outlines specific steps fathers can take to help mothers continue to breastfeed. Explains some of the health, developmental and economic benefits of breastfeeding.

New Father Tips—The focus is mainly on calming a crying baby, how to read the baby, how to calm oneself and ask for help if it is needed.

Dad's Guideline to Parenting on a Budget—Ideas for containing the potential costs of becoming a parent. May be most suitable for first-time fathers.

Bonding With Baby—Tips for new fathers, including trust-building, reading, massage and other types of gentle touch, play, and eye contact.

Dad's Guide to Discipline—touches on communication, consistency, rules, consequences, and respect.

To get copies of these and other materials produced by PCANY, you may also call 1-800-342-PIRC.. or 1-800-342-7472.

Fatherhood & Families

cont. from p. 1

grabbed the doll and cut it open before handing it back to him. This meant that the last thing that his father handed him was ripped up in front of him.

Are there any approaches to father involvement that were presented at the conference that you've brought back to incorporate into your program's work with fathers?

One observation that hit home for us was that dads who have received lots of other services sometimes want to give back and help other people. Sometimes we can look to these fathers to step into leadership roles.

Also, we learned about the importance of modeling "the daddy thing" for young men who may not have known their own fathers. Sometimes working with groups or programs for teen mothers can be a way to involve fathers.

We returned with useful information to incorporate on-site. One presenter made the point that fathers tend to be crisis driven. If you can't do something for them, for example, make a call, referral, point them in the right direction, then they won't be around for the rest of it. Men don't really want to be told what to do. They like to find a way to give back. Sometimes the macho stuff is a front. Let them have their story and be heard and quickly move on.

Bryant returned ready to take on more activities at HF Oneida. In March he helped organize the fathers for the St. Patrick's Day Parade. They carried a banner stating, "We're proud to be Dads on Saint Patrick's Day." The next activity is a Fathers' Day appreciation breakfast.

For more information see:

<http://www.azffc.org/2008Fatherhood%20Conference%20Booklet.pdf>



by Meghan

Parenting Styles—An Overview

Myrna Bridges

Training & Staff Development Specialist, PCANY

Four main parenting styles were first identified by Diana Baumrind of the University of California at Berkeley. She began by capturing two important elements of parenting: parental responsiveness, which is also known as parental warmth or supportiveness; and parental demandingness, also known as behavioral control. Based upon these two elements, she described four parenting styles: permissive, authoritarian, authoritative, and neglectful or uninvolved.

Within the first style of parenting, known as **permissive** (also referred to as “nondirective”), are those who are more responsive to their child’s needs and less demanding. They tend to have few rules and accept the child in a warm and loving way, regardless of the behavior. They will also often avoid confrontation by not providing consequences for questionable behavior.

Second is the **authoritarian** style, which includes people who set strict rules and want a sense of control. These parents provide well-organized, structured environments with clear rules. Children are often not provided with choices and may be criticized when they do not obey. If authority is questioned they may hear the response, “Because I said so.” These parents tend to focus on bad behavior, not positive, and mostly don’t show warmth and affection, though they may well feel it.

The third style, **authoritative**, is both responsive and demanding. The belief is that both the child and parent have rights, and both of their needs are important. These parents focus more on teaching responsibility through the use of consequences, utilizing a warm and loving style, and less on punishing “bad” behavior. Finally, they tend to focus on their child’s positive behaviors in order to encourage and support desired behaviors.

The fourth parenting style is called **neglectful** or **uninvolved**. These parents are neither responsive nor demanding. They focus on meeting the child’s basic needs and are generally not very involved with the child. Mostly, this style does not fit into the legal definition of neglect.

It’s important to remember that parents may not fit neatly into one of the types, but may be a combination of the four styles.

How do the different styles affect children? Parenting styles may affect adolescent and adult behavior. For example, children and adolescents from authoritarian families tend to perform moderately well in school and be uninvolved in problem behavior, but have poorer social skills, lower self-esteem, and higher levels of depression. On the other hand, children and adolescents from permissive homes are more likely to be involved in problem behavior and perform less well in school, but they have higher self-esteem, better social skills, and lower levels of depression (Baumrind, 1991; Weiss & Schwarz, 1996; Miller et al., 1993).

When it comes to parenting, we tend to parent the way we were parented or we do the opposite because we feel that the way we were parented was ineffective.

Are male and female parenting styles different? Some research says yes, some says no! In other words, like many social issues it is up for debate. In some cultures, men engage in more physical play with babies and children, but this does not hold true in all cultures. It is also sometimes true that fathers will allow their children to take more risks than mothers. In other words, mothers may be more protective.

However, the one thing that researchers consistently say is that there is no one right way of raising a child. It is important for parents to be effective. Effective parenting consists of many factors, such as flexibility, consistency, realistic expectations, and the list goes on. What is important to remember is that effective parenting begins with a strong bond, and it all relies on a positive two-way relationship between parent and child.

What type of parent are you? Take the parenting styles quiz at http://pediatrics.about.com/cs/quizzes/l/bl_prnt_style.htm

...there is no one right way of raising a child...

For more information:

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Tom with daughter at Healthy Families Allegheny’s first “Fatherhood Night”



The Milky Way

Rayza DeLaCruz-Stitt, RN, BSN, MSN
Certified Healthy Families FSW Trainer
Program Director, Bushwick Bright Start Healthy Families
Program, a program of Public Health Solutions (formerly
MHRA) and The Coalition for Hispanic Family Services

Interview with a “Breastfeeding Dad”

Jason Albin and his wife Selma are the proud parents of three children: Aiden (4 yrs), Reyna (2) and Shane (18 yrs). Jason is a Special Educator, and works as an Assistant Principal in NYC.

What helped you and Selma decide to breastfeed?

Well, for me it was a given. I just knew my children would breastfeed. My mom was a La Leche League person, and I grew up watching my brother nurse. Anyway, all my life I heard my mom answer calls from breastfeeding women seeking help.

In what specific ways would you say it is important for your babies?

Well...I am a Special Educator (SE) with the Board of “Ed.” As an SE, I understand and love child development. I recognize the benefits of “mother nature” in evolution and development. I think that something that is so natural and given to humans should be good for babies. The babies benefit in so many ways from the protection provided by breastfeeding, even in fighting infection.

Can you talk about some specific ways in which you helped Selma be more successful with breastfeeding Reyna?

First, I supported her unconditionally. I sit with my wife while she is nursing, bring her water, whatever she needs. We always encouraged her to feel comfortable breastfeeding in public and became comfortable with techniques that helped feed the babies discreetly. Therefore, we were not restricted from going on family outings. We have had many playful moments with all the kids sitting around during breastfeeding. This support reinforces to my wife and the family that breastfeeding is a family affair and a very natural part of our lives.

I can think back to Aiden’s early breastfeeding days when Selma was experiencing difficulties. The baby was not latching on correctly and Selma was experiencing pain. She was great and continued to nurse because it was important to her, but we needed to get a lactation consultant, and I helped to find that person.

What we learned from our lactation consultant and that experience, we have put into practice with Reyna. I helped line up the baby with the nipple because the “latch” and position of the baby are important.



*Reyna, Selma,
Jason, Aiden*

This helped to get started right so the breastfeeding did not hurt. I felt instrumental at that point.

What would you say to a dad who wants to feed the baby a bottle sometimes so that he can be more involved?

I would tell him that it is really good that he wants to be involved in parenting his baby. We did save pumped frozen milk and I fed it to the kids when Selma was not around. But that came later.

However, there is so much that I do with the kids that’s just “our” stuff. For example, as babies, I bathed them. We’d do moving exercises, “pretend to bike with their legs”, cooing, comb their hair. I walked with the babies in the Baby Bjorn, and vacuumed, did the dishes while carrying them. We all play on the bed a lot, cook together, read together. The only thing I don’t do is choose clothing, ‘cause I am never right about that. I comfort them, and protect them, and support them. “I am Dad.”

In your opinion, is breastfeeding easy or hard?

Hard? No offence; that’s ridiculous! I never got up in the middle of the night to prepare a bottle. Selma just rolled over and fed the baby. We had a side attacher as part of our bed...

A “co-sleeper” is a safer alternative to actual co-sleeping. It is a three-sided crib or bassinette that is placed at the same level as the parents’ bed, allowing a baby to be within arms reach, and to be close during sleeping, yet still safe, with his or her own space.

One of those “co-sleeping” cribs?

Oh, is that what it’s called? We did not use it all the time, but had it available. The babies are within reach, and have their own space. Once we knew the techniques, breastfeeding was very easy for us.

What message would you send to FSW’s working with Dads?

Thank you for doing this work, because having information and support makes such a difference for dads out here. I was able to support my wife because I had information and saw breastfeeding as natural. Our daughter Reyna is still breastfeeding at 22 months!



*Brothers Shane and
Aiden with Jason,
their father*



Roving Reporter

Pam Balmer
Prevent Child Abuse
New York

Question: What have you noticed that fathers especially like about home visits?



Matt Brown, Fatherhood Advocate, Healthy Families Tioga County. Information that's specific to them and that highlights the importance of having a father in the household, and highlights how they might do things differently than the mom does. Curriculum

Sandra Robillard, FSW, Broome County Healthy Families. Dads really like if you can connect child development with the real world—connect it to their job or something they enjoy. They like hands-on stuff.



Jeremy Hoad, Fatherhood Advocate, Healthy Families Steuben. Activities with their children. They can be reluctant at first; they're afraid they might hurt the baby. They don't realize how resilient babies are and how much stuff they can do.



that acknowledges that they aren't just there for financial support or discipline. It gives them an opportunity to show their softer side.



Andre Abaya, Fatherhood Advocate, Broome County Healthy Families. When they are hands-on with PCI! They're really good at showing off what their child can do.



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New York

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