

**Kansas Early Childhood Block Grant Project for the Wichita Metropolitan Statistical Area:
First Year Evaluation Report
January 2010**

Executive Summary

The Kansas Early Childhood Block Grant Project grant application requested funding related to program priorities identified by the Visioneering Wichita Birth to K Alliance, which is a collaborative effort involving the four county Wichita Metropolitan Statistical Area (MSA) consisting of Sedgwick, Sumner, Harvey, and Butler Counties. The project's primary partners include Sedgwick County's Child Start, Rainbow's United, Inc (RUI), Greater Wichita YMCA (YMCA), Wichita Mental Health Association of South Central Kansas (MHASCK), and the Wichita Child Guidance Center (WCGC); Sumner County's Futures Unlimited and Sumner County Mental Health Center (SCMH); Harvey County's Communities in Schools (CIS), Family Connection (Fam Con), and Newton Community Child Care Center, Inc (NCCC); and Butler County's Smart Start (BCSS).

Program evaluators monitored grant activities throughout the first year of the grant based on monthly reports submitted by partners to assess progress being made by partners toward meeting indicators written for each of the following goals.

1. Expand quality child care services in the MSA to meet the needs of at-risk children not currently served.
2. Expand and/or create social-emotional and mental health services (both direct services and consultation to families and providers) in the MSA to meet the needs of at-risk children and families currently not being served.
3. MSA Partners will work collaboratively to facilitate a high quality, efficient delivery system that that will provide child care and early education, mental health services, parent support and education.

The ECBG evaluation plan, developed with partner input, was designed to assess process as well as outcome measures. At the beginning of 2009, evaluators worked with partners and grant facilitators to establish target numbers of families, children and child care providers that would receive services during the grant year. A set of specific pre- and post- indicators were written to measure the extent the interventions provided by the partners might impact grant participants. During planning meetings, much discussion occurred regarding what data would be available, collected and reported. Evaluators were made aware of the transitory nature of the population of at-risk children and families targeted for services and how that might present some data collection challenges. Data sources selected for measuring outcomes during the first year of the grant included the DECA Reflective Checklist for Environment, a classroom observation checklist (Appendix B), a professional development feedback form (Appendix C), a Parents as Teachers (PAT) parent survey (Appendix D), and ECBG partner monthly narrative reports (Appendix E). In addition, standardized screening and assessment tools including the Devereux Early Childhood Assessment (DECA), DECA-Clinical (DECA-C), the Child Behavior Check List (CBCL), and the Measure of Empathy in Adult – Child Interaction (MEACI) were used to gather and report data related to outcomes included in the ECBG evaluation plan.

Initially, a total of 20 indicators were written to assess process and outcome results related to the goals and objectives included in the ECBG proposal. Subsequently, three of the Goal 2 performance indicators were dropped from the grant due to lack of referrals. In addition, four of the Goal 3 indicators did not included

specific measurable performance outcomes. Rates of participation reported during 2009 showed partners identified and served the projected numbers of children, caregivers and families targeted for services as called for in 12 (92%) of the 13 ECBG evaluation indicators assessed during 2009. Pre- and post- outcome data reported by partners for the 13 performance indicators included in the 2009 evaluation plan showed five (38%) were substantially accomplished, two (15%) were partially accomplished, and six (46%) had missing or insufficient data reported necessary for determining if partners were successful in meeting established post- performance indicator targets. Summarized below are results relevant to each of the ECBG goals, objectives, and associated indicators included in the 2009 ECBG evaluation plan.

Summary of Goal 1 Evaluation Findings

Data reported for Goal 1 show ECBG partners substantially met their target of adding and maintaining 77 child care slots to serve previously un-served children. Five partners filed monthly reports indicating a total of 146 children received services during the year with 76 (99%) slots being maintained on an ongoing basis during 2009. All newly identified children were served in fully licensed programs within the MSA.

Indicator 1.2.1 projected 16 classrooms would implement either "*I Can Problem Solve*" (ICPS) or "*Conscious Discipline*" (CD) programs to demonstrate improvement in early care and educational environments. During 2009, 14 (88%) of the 16 projected classrooms were reported as implementing either ICPS or CD.

DECA Reflective Checklist for Environment pre- and post- ratings were collected for eight ICPS/CD classrooms that started implementation prior to August 1, 2009, and participated in the grant for at least six months. These results showed 129 (90%) of the 144 total pre- and post- observations either received the highest level ("very evident") rating possible or the post- ratings improved one or more levels. This 90% maintenance or improvement rate exceeds the 80% target set for measuring whether grant support helped teachers create classroom environments that are more conducive to promoting children's learning and prosocial skills.

Data reported for Indicator 1.2.2, which targets a reduction in disruptive classroom behaviors, show a total of 211 children received services in ICPS or CD classrooms during 2009, a figure which far exceeds the 150 children projected to benefit from these programs. However, the majority of children (158) were served in classrooms that began program implementation after August 1, 2009. DECA pre- and post- screening results reported for 38 pre- August 1 children who participated more than six months in an ICPS or CD classroom, indicate between 58% and 71% of the children enrolled decreased disruptive behavior related to the five DECA categories included.

Summary of Goal 2 Evaluation Findings

Goal 2 contained four objectives that called for providing services that would result in (Objective 2.1) improvement in early care and educational environments, improved protective factors, improved interactions between children and their families, improved parental understanding of child development, and improved children's social and emotional behaviors. Objective 2.2 provided for mental health services to children identified as being at risk of being expelled from their child care placement. Objective 2.3, which was written to identify and serve children and families with mental health risks, was discontinued due to lack of referrals. Subsequently, the Children's Cabinet gave permission to drop the three performance indicators, which had been written for Objective 2.3. Objective 2.4 was written to assist mental health providers in increasing their capacity to provide early childhood mental health services to at-risk children and families.

For the most part, a majority of partners did a good job of maintaining lists of Goal 2 participants being served in the grant and in collecting and reporting pre- screening and/or survey data throughout the grant year. Except for Objective 2.3, partners reported serving the targeted numbers of children, caregivers and families projected in the ECBG proposal for 2009,

However, some partners had difficulty in collecting and providing post- data necessary to assess the impact for six of the seven indicators written to measure progress related to Objective 2.1 and Objective 2.2. In some cases, partners provided comments related to why post- data were missing such as 1) parents refused to cooperate in completing forms, or 2) asking parents to complete paperwork interfered with establishing positive working relationships with the families involved. In a number of cases, children exited the programs prior to being served six months without notice, making post- data collection impossible.

Data reported by partners for Indicator 2.1.1 showed 68% of the observations made in classrooms of teachers who had implemented the *Positive Behavior Support program* prior to August 1, 2009, and had participated in the grant for at least six months, maintained high ratings or improved on items measuring early care and educational environments. However, evaluators were unable to determine whether performance targets had been met for Indicators 2.1.2, 2.1.3, 2.1.4, 2.1.5, 2.1.6, or 2.2.1 due to insufficient data being provided by a majority of partners responsible for implementing Goal 2 activities.

Evaluators feel the amount of data partners agreed to collect and report may have required additional resources that were not anticipated when the plan was developed. This may have resulted in some partners not being able to keep current with maintaining the reporting process. It is also possible, at the end of the grant year, individuals within some partner organizations assigned the responsibility for collecting and reporting post- data may have been unaware of specific requirements.

Results of professional development activities carried out in relation to Indicators 2.4.1 and 2.4.2 showed 98% of the MSA and 89% of the PAT participants who responded to professional development surveys felt the activities increased their capacity to provide early childhood mental health services to at-risk children and their families.

Summary of Goal 3 Evaluation Findings

Overall, based on the data reported by partners on the monthly narrative reports, there is evidence all partners had some involvement in implementing the four indicators developed to address Goal 3 during the first year of the grant. The most frequently identified approaches for addressing the four indicators can be summarized as participating in meetings and public forums; making presentations to small and large groups; conducting training and awareness programs; and developing and distributing materials (including media information) to child care providers, parents and the public. Activities reported by partners related to Indicator 3.1.1, confirmed each partner provided screening information to parents, organizations and communities at some time during 2009. Although all partners did not report specific numbers of contacts or quantity of materials distributed, there was sufficient evidence this indicator was substantially implemented and accomplished. Indicator 3.1.2, addressing supplemental and scholarship funds in Butler and Harvey Counties, was considered substantially implemented and accomplished based on partners' consistently reported efforts to inform parents and providers about supplemental and scholarship funds available through the grant. The remaining two indicators, dealing with promoting quality child care standards (3.1.3) and advocating for early child hood services (3.1.4), did not benefit from participation of all partners. However, the monthly narrative reports supported the fact that implementation of the two indicators was occurring. Several partners were quite active, particularly in advocating for early childhood systems. Therefore, both indicators were considered to be substantially implemented. Although reports made by

some partners related to these two indicators provided detailed information describing their efforts, other reports sometimes lacked specific details or numbers involved. Even though some reports described exciting workshops and inspiring advocacy efforts, without a target or tangible measure of achievement, it was difficult to determine how well these indicators were accomplished. Therefore, due to a lack of information reported by some partners, Indicators 3.1.3 and 3.1.4 are considered only partially accomplished at this time.