

## IL HEAD START ASSOCIATION COMMUNITY COALITION MINI-GRANT PROJECT

### **BACKGROUND.**

The Illinois Head Start Association (IHSA) distributed an RFP in November 2004 for the Community Coalition Mini-Grant Project. This Project's purpose is to cultivate collaborative strategies that result in better outcomes for low income children, families and communities. One-time mini-grants of \$5,000 each were distributed to ten (10) successful community-wide coalitions in January 2005. These coalitions will complete their projects by July 1, 2005. The IDHS Head Start State Collaboration Office will take results from the coalitions and produce an evaluation report. It is hoped that best practice strategies will emerge that can be replicated in other community coalitions statewide.

### **SUMMARY OF THE COMMUNITY COALITION GRANT RECIPIENTS (in alpha order).**

#### **Blended Early Childhood Coalition. Clay & surrounding counties.**

*Contact.* Judy Veach, ERBA Head Start, at phone no. 217-923-5141 or [judy@erbainc.org](mailto:judy@erbainc.org)

*Coalition History.* Initiated in 2001 as a three-way program collaboration among ERBA Head Start, Kid's Kingdom Early Learning Center and the Oblong School District in Crawford Co. Since 2002 it has expanded to include the Regional Office of Education, other providers and surrounding counties. The partners meet at least monthly to assess the needs of the communities & discuss ways to further improve services for families.

*Purpose and Activities of Mini-Grant Project.* To expand coalitions and collaborations in the counties surrounding Clay. Partners that will be added include county health departments, Special Education agencies, LANS, Chambers of Commerce, community service organizations, ministerial and doctors' alliances, parent organizations, sheriff's departments, Project Child, United Way and others, as the group and work dictate. The core group of partners will initiate and host a series of community meetings in other communities to present its model and introduce the benefits of collaboration and working together for children and families.

#### **Early Childhood Coalition of the IL Quad Cities.**

*Contact.* Kathryn Griffith, Division of Specialized Care for Children, at [kegriffith@uiuc.edu](mailto:kegriffith@uiuc.edu).

*Coalition History.* Initiated in 2001 with a round table discussion among area providers and educators about issues affecting families in the IL Quad Cities hosted by the Regional Office of Education. January 2002, completed needs assessment process and determined a mission/vision and goals statement for six issue areas affecting children, families and providers. Established organizational structure, group processes for consensus, and a process for community asset mapping that summer; has been meeting monthly since to improve service delivery and outcomes for children and families. Fall 2004, revisited its overall mission/vision and goals through a facilitated planning/evaluation process.

*Purpose and Activities of the Mini-Grant Project.* One of the items for the coalition's future that emerged from the fall planning/evaluation process was the need for a comprehensive marketing plan to expand the coalition and its work. To that end, the Coalition will develop marketing materials, a web site, promotional clips with testimonials, and displays to use at a variety of upcoming events, including a Ready to Learn Conference, a Churches United event, various CCR&R and screening events.

#### **Early Childhood Education Council (ECEC) of Kankakee Co.**

*Contact.* Rebecca McBroom, Kankakee County Head Start, at phone no. 815-929-8775 or [becky-mcbroom@ksd111.org](mailto:becky-mcbroom@ksd111.org).

*Coalition History.* Initiated in 1989 as the required Advisory Council for an ISBE parental training grant. Expanded to bring together all professionals for networking purposes. This evolved into collaboration on many activities and partners, including the Junior League, Regional Office of Education, private preschools and the community college. Meets monthly Sept. through May. Leadership is shared and meetings hosted on a rotating basis at each program. The ECEC sponsors an annual conference.

*Purpose and Activities of the Mini-Grant Project.* To raise the awareness of Kankakee Co. parents about the programs offered to improve transitions, particularly between Early Intervention and school districts. The coalition will conduct an extensive resource assessment compiled into a user-friendly format for parents and professionals, expand the coalition to more actively involve EI providers, facilitate a meeting between EI and school districts to plan for better collaboration and transition.

**Early Childhood Forum of Central IL.**

*Contact.* Bonnie Jones, Tazewell-Woodford Head Start, at phone no. 309-699-6843 or [bjones@twhsp.org](mailto:bjones@twhsp.org).

*Coalition History.* First met under the direction of STARNet in 1998. Has met monthly since. Original purpose was to share program information and staff training opportunities. Have mission & values statements and different committees. Have organized 2 large conferences, held a legislative breakfast, participated in Stand for Children day and presented at AEYC conferences.

*Purpose and Activities of the Mini-Grant Project.* Marketing the work of the Forum to provide advocacy for issues impacting children and promote public awareness of children's needs. Major activities include a web site, development of marketing information and formalization of the Forum's membership to expand its work.

**Early Childhood Quality Service Coalition (ECQSC) - Adams Co.**

*Contact.* Denise Konkright, PACT Head Start, at phone no. 217-773-3903 or [dconkright@pactheadstart.com](mailto:dconkright@pactheadstart.com).

*Coalition History.* Began January 2004 as the Home Visiting Collaboration project. Since all participating agencies were members of the All Our Kids (AOK): Birth to Five Network, became a subcommittee of the network, broadened its focus beyond home visiting services to the processes from referral to screening to transition to closure, redefined its goals and became the ECQSC. Meets monthly, or as needed, for information sharing & discussion and data compilation & examination.

*Purpose and Activities of the Mini-Grant Project.* Conduct and analyze an extensive interagency community assessment of birth to five services, including surveys, GIS mapping, and focus groups. Collate and analyze the data and use it to plan, close service gaps, and apply for additional funding to meet families' needs.

**Kankakee-Iroquois HELP Information Network (KAN-I HELP).**

*Contact.* Roxanne Hooper, Pledge for Life Partnership, at phone no. 815-936-4606 or [rhooper@i-kan.org](mailto:rhooper@i-kan.org).

*Coalition History.* Established in 1998, community collaboration that uses information technologies to help community residents access up-to-date human development information. Governed by a Policy Council of community members and network partners' representatives.

*Purpose and Activities of the Mini-Grant Project.* Develop a local vision and blueprint to implement the IL Children's Mental Health Act goals in the community. Will implement community-wide forums and discussions and hold a two-part summit, out of which will come community-wide action plans, and a summary report document.

**Peoria Area Early Childhood 0-5 Network.**

*Contact.* McFarland A. Bragg II, Peoria Citizens Community for Economic Opportunity, Inc., at phone no. 309-671-3900 or [mabragg@pccceo.org](mailto:mabragg@pccceo.org).

*Coalition History.* Formed in 1985; comprised of members from early childhood education & family development programs in Peoria Co. Initially included services for children ages 3-5; formalized in 1998 and expanded to include B-3. First formed to identify & screen children; branched out to include transition issues & professional development needs. Meets monthly; purposes are to facilitate appropriate developmental practices & provide cohesive accessible services.

*Purpose and Activities of Mini-Grant Project.* Long term & immediate needs of network have been identified. Long term goal is develop a data collection system that is available to all network members. More immediate objectives are: implement standardized community-wide screening process; collaborate on Child find activities; facilitate transitions at all levels (transition handbook birth to kindergarten that all programs use); create community-wide data collection and staff training plans.

**Rockford Early Learning Council.**

*Contact.* George Davis, City of Rockford Human Services Dept., at phone no. 815-987-5782 or [george.davis@ci.rockford.il.us](mailto:george.davis@ci.rockford.il.us).

*Coalition History.* Formed in April 2003; coalition of CCR&R, School District, Head Start & Child Care serves as the Steering Committee of the Council, which has 25 members from a wide range of service delivery systems. Key partners have worked together for more than 10 years to coordinate services & improve public awareness of early care & education. Endorsed by the Mayor; 3 Committees – Public Awareness, Data & Resources. Meets monthly.

*Purpose and Activities of Mini-Grant Project.* To raise public awareness of the community's early care & education system, build public support, and focus the Council's efforts. Compile and analyze early care and education community need data across all service providers, complete a report to the community, facilitate a community event & public forum, and support Council unified planning efforts and reorganization.

**Sauk Valley Early Childhood Education Coalition (Whiteside Co.).**

*Contact.* Terri Lawrence, TCOC Head Start, at phone no. 815-625-7830 or [tlawrence@wmccinc.com](mailto:tlawrence@wmccinc.com).

*Coalition History.* Coalition held first meeting March 2004; outgrowth of staff meeting among Even Start, PAT & ROE. Purpose was/is to make sure all young children in Whiteside Co. have access to services/programs best suited to their individual needs and includes programs that serve birth-age 5 population. Meets quarterly, unless other needs arise. Have mission, purpose, County EC matrix, list serve for communication, drafting by-laws, & looking at non-profit status.

*Purpose and Activities of the Mini-Grant Project.* Since Coalition is in "infancy" stages, will further organizational & formalization activities, e.g., complete & adopt by-laws, file for non-profit status, implement public relations campaign about early education & intervention opportunities, and develop web site & print/web county-wide resource directory.

**Waukegan Early Prevention Initiative & Collaboration (EPIC).**

*Contact.* Kay Petersen, Lake Co. Family Y Early Head Start, at phone no. 8147-360-9622 or [kpetersen@ymcalakecounty.org](mailto:kpetersen@ymcalakecounty.org).

*Coalition History.* Formed in May 2004 to jointly assess community needs for children birth to 5. Meets monthly; committees include referral, assessment, and intake information. Collaboration discusses information presented and plans how to proceed.

*Purpose and Activities of the Mini-Grant Project.* Develop & implement strategies to jointly assess needs, link families with services, strengthen school district/community services collaboration, educate families and inform the district and community about families' issues. Training needs and policy development will also be addressed.