



The Insider

Life Span Institute at Parsons

March, 2006

Pat White, Editor

Honors

Vera Stroup-Rentier, the Technical Assistance Coordinator for the Kansas Inservice Training System received the Kansas Division for Early Childhood Award of Excellence. This award is given to an individual who has made significant contributions to the field of early childhood and to children with disabilities and their families in Kansas.

Kansans Mobilizing for Direct Support Workforce Change (KMFC) received the Moving Mountains Award on February 14, 2006 at the *Reinventing Quality Conference 2006* in San Diego, CA. The award is presented by the Research and Training Center on Community Living at the University of Minnesota in partnership with the National Alliance for Direct Support Professionals to organizations and agencies that have demonstrated best practice in direct support professional (DSP) workforce development. As a result of KMFC, service providers report that they changed marketing and recruitment practices, changed orientation and training practices, and implemented recognition and other high performance practices for DSPs. Turnover decreased by 15%.

KMFC was originally funded through a grant from the Kansas Council on Developmental Disabilities. Kathleen Olson and Patricia Black-Moore of Kansas University Center on Developmental Disabilities directed and coordinated this project in Kansas, working with 15 service providers, self advocates, and other stakeholders.

Announcement

Sara Sack has been invited to serve as a peer reviewer for ASHA DAAC Perspectives—the American Speech-Language-Hearing Association’s Division of Augmentative and Alternative Communication’s publication. She will serve for a 2-year term.

Sara Sack has also been nominated by the KSHA Board for ASHA’s Di Carlo award for clinical achievement.

Grants and Contracts Funded and/or Renewed

Sara Sack has received word that the AgrAbility grant has been funded by the U. S. Department of Agriculture. K-State, KU, and the Southeast Kansas Center on Independent Living are working together to support farmers and farm workers who have been injured to return to their occupations. It will run through 2010.

The Child Care Focus: Resource and Referral Center recently received a \$5,000 contribution from the Kansas Health Foundation to promote quality child-care in its service area.

Kate Saunders has received a very favorable score for her NIH RO1 proposal (Recombinative Generalization of Within-Syllable Units in MR).

Presentations at the Kansas Division for Early Childhood 24th Annual Conference in Overland Park, KS.

Benham, T. J. (2006, March). *More meaningful than email: strategies for distance collaboration.*

Goosen, M.D. (2006, March). *Increasing early childhood placements in least restrictive environments: Strategies for school districts and local education agencies.*

Hornback, M., Peterson, D., Goosen, M., & Stroup-Rentier, V. L. (2006, March). *Early childhood outcomes: Setting the stage for improvements in special education.*

Hornback, M., & Rinkel, P. (2006, March). *Innovative practices in transitions from Part C to Part B services.*

Nelson, C., Stroup-Rentier, V. L., & Lindeman, D. P. (2006, March). *Itinerant early childhood services in community programs: Supporting personnel through state-level technical assistance.*

Purvis, B., Stroup-Rentier, V. L., Peterson, D., & Mellard, E. (2006, March). *Making a difference for premature and medically fragile children and their families: A crackerbarrel discussion session.*

Stroup-Rentier, V. L., Kroboth, L., & Miksch, P. (2006 March). *Natural learning opportunities and primary coaching: What is it and why are we doing it?*

The Kansas Inservice Training System supported a featured speaker at the KDEC Conference, Carla Peterson from Iowa State University. She presented two sessions titled: Classroom Instruction to Promote Engagement, Social Interaction, and Fun and Promoting Parent-child Interaction within the Context of Home Visits.

Other Presentations

Benham, T. J. (2005, November). Including children with special needs in your library. *ITV presentation hosted by Kansas State Library, Parsons, KS.*

Black-Moore, P. (2006, January). *Educating persons with developmental disabilities about self-direction.* Presentation to the Kansans Mobilizing for Change Task Force, Topeka, KS.

Cress, P. J. (2006, February). *Making best practices usable.* Moderator for the session at the AccessIT Training on Accessible IT in Education, Scottsdale, AZ.

Sack, S., Morton, S., & Simmons, S. (2006, March). *Accessing AT Services in Kansas.* Presentation to the Independent Living Day at the Capitol to Consumers, Service Providers, and Legislators, Topeka, KS.

Simmons, S. (2006, January). *Impact of the Assistive Technology Act on State AT Services*.
Teleconference presentation to the Idaho AT Program Staff.

Project Highlight

Evaluating the Ohio Quality Assurance Systems Change Initiative

Christopher L. Smith

The objective of this evaluation project is to evaluate whether or not the Ohio CMS Systems Change Project has met its stated objectives. The evaluation methods will include interviews, focus groups, document reviews, and surveys. Throughout all of these data collection methods, the goals outlined in the Ohio Project will inform the evaluation. To do so, four key questions (and sub-questions) will be asked throughout the evaluation process. These include:

1. Has the project improved the availability of useful information for individuals and families?
2. Has the project produced a comprehensive, statewide quality framework that outlines desired outcomes for the service system?
3. Does the new system provide information to determine:
 - a. training initiatives
 - b. technical assistance methodologies
 - c. public policy
 - d. effective and efficiency measures
 - e. improved state and local resource deployment
 - f. statistically-based trends and analysis
4. Has the project produced an agile system for reporting information and discoveries?

Data Collection

The project will use two primary modes of data collection. These include qualitative evaluation and quantitative analysis of survey responses. The qualitative evaluation will further use three primary methods including interviews, focus groups, and document reviews. The purposes of these methods include: a) to collect information, and b) to validate findings and assumptions through triangulation using multiple sources. During each interview and focus group, the evaluator will elicit information regarding any documents the participants feel should be a part of the evaluation. These documents will become a part of the overall document review process including the initial grant award documents and any updates as a part of the granting procedure. Finally, documents relating to any significant databases that house relevant data will be requested to augment the determination of progress and/or attainment of goals.

The survey data collection process will involve the identification of appropriate target groups for surveys, distribution of surveys, and collection of surveys. It is assumed that all surveys will be distributed electronically whenever possible, though traditional mailings will be possible as well. The evaluator will work with the AQ/QI Evaluation Project Manager as well as the Grant Advisory Committee to identify potentially meaningful target groups for any surveys, as well as to

agree on sampling procedures. All interviews, focus groups, document reviews, and surveys will focus on the evaluation questions outlined above.

Data Analysis

Analysis of qualitative information from interviews, focus groups, and document reviews will follow steps outlined in accepted qualitative analytic literature. These include preparing transcripts or written records, breaking down the records into units (the smallest meaningful pieces of information), categorizing the units into groups of units that have similar meanings, and creating a final category of units from all qualitative data sources. These units and categories are used in creating the evaluation reports including the Formative and Summative Reports. Units and categories will also be used to create a report called a “Member Check,” a document that is used in the final phase of the evaluation to elicit feedback from evaluation participants regarding initial evaluation findings. Survey data will be analyzed to create summaries of demographic indicators as well as respondents’ data. Survey questions will be created to address the initial grant outcomes, and data summaries will be prepared in both text and graphic forms to allow for quick access to assessment of progress and/or attainment of overall grant project outcomes. Survey data will be intended to be used to triangulate the findings from the interview, focus groups, and document reviews. Through all data collection processes, no identifying information will be collected and all participants will be asked to sign a consent form.

Staff News

Dr. Katie Hine has been hired as Coordinator of the Foster Care Project and has an office in the Parsons Research Center.