



KECCS Update

February 2009

KAC Report Analyzes KIDS COUNT Data

Kansas Action for Children has recently put out a report, entitled “*What will it take? A guide to making Kansas the best state in the nation to raise a child*”, which analyzes the data found by KIDS COUNT. KIDS COUNT releases annual data on child well-being ranked by state. For 2008, Kansas has now fallen 6 spots, from 12th to 18th over the past year, however, Kansas still remains in the top one-third of states to raise a child.

So how can we improve our situation? *Kansas Action for Children* examines potential improvements to health, education, and economic security as gateways to give children in Kansas one of the best states to grow up in.

The report is available at:

http://www.kac.org/ftp/File/Publications/KC_supplemental2008.pdf

Unclaimed Children Revisited the Status of Children's Mental Health Policy in the United States

Jane Knitzer, executive director of the National Center for Children in Poverty (NCCP) and editor of *Social & Emotional Health in Early Childhood*, has spent her career studying the disconnects that kept children and youth with mental health needs from the services they needed. Her initial report 25 years ago, along with family advocacy, served as a spur to improve service delivery for the most troubled children. Since then, there has been even more research on biological and social determinants of children's mental health issues, new understandings of how children and their problems develop and new ways of providing preventive and treatment services.

NCCP posed the central question for today's children's mental health system: to what extent is this new knowledge about biological and social determinants of mental health issues incorporated into the policy and practice frameworks governing children's mental health?

Their latest report is based on a study that documents how current child mental health policies across the United States responds to the needs of children and youth with mental health problems, those at-risk and their families. Their primary aim was to identify best policy practices that support family- and youth-focused, research-informed, developmentally appropriate, culturally and linguistically competent services and supports.

For the full Executive Summary and more information, please visit:
http://www.nccp.org/publications/pub_853.html

Tips & Tools

- *See-to-Learn* is an innovative, three-step preventive health program designed to ensure that kindergarten children entering school can see to learn and to educate parents and teachers about the warning signs of vision problems in children.
 - Step 1: Ongoing education to alert parents and educators about the signs of vision problems in children of any age.
 - Step 2: A **free vision assessment** for three-year-olds by a participating Eye Care Council optometrist. This is designed to detect vision conditions that require correction at an early age. Although vision problems among the very young are generally uncommon, some serious conditions like amblyopia (lazy eye) and strabismus (turned eye), require care before age 5 to avoid permanent loss of vision.
 - Step 3: A professional vision examination by an optometrist or ophthalmologist paid for the parent before or during a child's first year of school. This is an important investment that will help ensure that vision problems do not affect children's ability to learn and do well in school.
- *InfantSEE®* is a public health program designed to ensure that eye and vision care becomes an integral part of infant wellness care to improve a child's quality of life. Under this program, which became available in Summer 2005, member optometrists will provide a **no cost, comprehensive infant eye assessment** within the first year of life as a public health service.

National Trainings and Conferences

- **Celebrate the National Healthy Start Association's 10th Anniversary** - March 1-4, 2009, Washington, DC
The mission of the National Healthy Start Association is to promote the development of community-based maternal and child health programs, particularly those addressing the issues of infant mortality, low birth weight and racial disparities in perinatal outcomes. As part of its mission, the National Healthy Start Association supports the expansion of a wide range of activities and efforts that are rooted in the community and actively involve community residents in their design and implementation.

- **NICHQ's 8th Annual Forum for Improving Children's Healthcare** -March 9-12, 2009, Grapevine, TX
This interactive forum will bring nearly 1,000 healthcare professionals of all disciplines together to highlight the most promising work being done in support of NICHQ's agenda to improve children's healthcare quality. Session topics include: patient safety, childhood obesity, chronic conditions, and quality improvement—linked to advocacy, equity in care and finance. Sessions will also highlight cross cutting themes of family engagement, promoting equity, and translation of evidence into practice.
- **The Future of Pediatrics: Quality Care for ALL Children** - February 27-March 1, 2009, Anaheim, CA
This AAP conference will provide current information on clinical and practice management, topics with a focus on strategies to advance medical homes and build partnerships within communities. Learning will take place in small group settings, through interaction with faculty, by networking with peers, and by taking advantage of opportunities to present and discuss successful projects and ideas.

Upcoming Events, Conferences & Training Opportunities in Kansas

- The [Kansas Mission of Mercy Dental Clinic](#) will be held [February 20-21, 2009](#) in Manhattan, KS.
- *Save the Date!* A Natural Playscapes Workshop with Rusty Keeler will be held [March 6, 2009](#) in Hesston, KS. Visit [KACCRRRA's website](#) for more details.
- *Save the Date!* The **Kansas Fatherhood Summit** will be held [April 2-3, 2009](#) in Wichita, KS. Stay tuned for more information.
- *Save the Date!* The **Infant Mental Health Conference, entitled "Growing Relationships for Infant & Early Childhood Mental Health"** will be held April 9-11, 2009 in Salina, KS. Featured speakers include Victor Bernstein (Department of Psychiatry at the University of Chicago), Deborah Weatherston (Michigan Association of Infant Mental Health), and Dr. Charlyn Harper-Browne (National Quality Improvement Center on Preventing Abuse and Neglect of Infants & Young Children).

Do you have an event, conference or training coming up that would benefit other KECCS partners? Let us know, and we will promote it on the KECCS website and in the newsletter, the KECCS *Update*. Send information to keccs@ku.edu or contact Rebecca Gillam at (785) 864-7123.