



KECCS Update

November 2008

Watch for an upcoming special edition of the KECCS Update with news and resources from the fall KECCS stakeholder meeting!

Kansas' First Infant Mental Health Endorsements

Last January Kansas began the process of implementing the Michigan Association of Infant Mental Health (MI-AIMH) infant mental health endorsement system in Kansas. Kansas was the seventh state to implement this professional development system for ensuring that infants and young children's mental health is protected by all their caregivers through attention to the competencies that are needed. Nine early childhood mental health leaders from across the State volunteered to go through the endorsement process for professionals at Levels 3 & 4 as a first step. The endorsement process included completion of an extensive portfolio that was reviewed and evaluated and prepared for and completed a three hour monitored examination. The following people are now endorsed:

- Alice Eberhart-Wright
- Cathy Estes
- Lana Messner
- Peggy Miksch
- Rick Gaskill
- Suzanne Chapel-Miller
- Shelley Mayse
- Sophie Thayer
- Tiffany Smith-Birk

This year the Kansas Association of Infant & Early Childhood Mental Health (KAIMH) will begin the process of inviting professionals to join the endorsement process through application, portfolios, and examinations. Watch the [KAIMH website](#) for ongoing news about how to become involved. Other states that have been doing this for several years and are beginning to experience employers searching for professionals with the Infant Mental Health endorsement (IMH-E) endorsement initials behind their name.

Plan in Action

The 2008 Kansas Parent Leadership Conference held last month was attended by nearly 150 parents from across the state --- more than 3 times the number of parents who attended last year's conference. The Kansas Museum of History was the setting where parents were provided not only opportunities to learn advocacy and leadership skills but also time for families to visit the Topeka museum's exhibits and explore Kansas history together. Childcare was provided, free of charge, at this year's event.

Both new and established parent leaders were in attendance and received broad-based training in furthering their leadership skills that included: advocacy, decision-making, communication, children with special needs, and practitioner/parent partnerships. Keynote speakers were Stephanie Vance, also known as the "Advocacy Guru," (www.advocacyguru.com), who encouraged parents to advocate on behalf of their children and provided them a framework in which to advocate, and Senator Laura Kelly who talked about the children's issues that were a part of the campaign during this election year and ways that Kansas is stepping up to try to ensure that this state is the best place to raise a child. Translators were available to make sessions accessible to both English and Spanish speaking participants. Close to one third of the audience were participants for whom English is a second language.

The event ended on a high note with parents providing testimony of how they intended to use what they had learned during the 2 day event in order to strengthen their own families.

The Parent Leadership Conference is a unique collaboration that brings together organizations and parents to fund, organize, and lead the annual event. Organizations participating this year were:

- Children's Cabinet and Trust Fund
- Families Together, Inc.
- Head Start-State Collaboration Office
- Kansas Association of Child Care and Resource Referral Agencies
- Kansas Children's Service League
- Kansas Family Advisory Network Inc.
- Kansas Head Start Association
- Kansas Parent Information Resource Center
- Kansas State Department of Education Migrant Education
- State Interagency Coordination Council

In addition, parents played a key role in the Conference: parents were on the planning committee, co-presented with practitioners in many workshops, and provided a keynote panel where they were able to share their own experiences as parent leaders and the benefits of their parent involvement for their families and communities. There was a New World Café for parents to share with one another.

The Conference addresses the KECCS Plan, Goal 4: Parent Education, which includes strategies to promote advocacy training for all parents. Parent Leadership is also the top priority of the Kansas Strengthening Families Plan for 2008-09.

For more information about the Parent Leadership Conference, visit www.kpirc.org.

BELIEF Early Childhood Leadership Institute

Building Excellent Leaders Influencing Early Foundations (BELIEF) is a professional development opportunity for child care center directors and family child care providers. Participants receive over 63 hours of instruction over the eight days of the Institute in 2009. Spread the word along to center directors and family child care providers in your area that you feel would be good candidates for the Institute. The application deadline is December 1, 2008. Contact [Becky Woerz](#), Professional Development Director at the Kansas Association of Resource & Referral Agencies, with any questions.

Upcoming Events, Conferences & Training Opportunities

- *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** will be held April 9-10, 2009 in Salina, KS. Victor Bernstein will be the keynote speaker.

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.