

CONSORTIUM CONNECTIONS

In this issue

In Fall 1996 the Danforth Foundation, based in St. Louis, Missouri, granted the University of Minnesota funds to support a 2 1/2 year initiative to "improve the learning outcomes for children in our urban communities" by bringing together schools, communities and the vast human and academic resources of the University. Coordinated through the Children, Youth and Family Consortium, the *Seeds of Promise Initiative* has forged a partnership with Wilder Early Education Center in Minneapolis and the surrounding Powderhorn

community, and Jackson Preparatory Magnet school in St. Paul and their community of Frogtown.

One and a half years into the Initiative, we are pleased to show you the "blooms" of the *Seeds of Promise Initiative*. Both schools have identified *family involvement* as their primary focus of this initiative. And all members of the partnership—the University, the schools and the communities—have faced challenges and witnessed successes. Here are their stories.

Family Involvement in Children's Learning

Ann Casey, Seeds of Promise Initiative, Lead Faculty, Wilder Early Education Center

In *Goals 2000: Educate America Act*, eight national goals were established. The eighth goal is "Every school will promote partnerships that will increase parental involvement and participation in promoting the social, emotional, and academic growth of children." While schools can try to educate students without home support, it certainly is not in the child's best interest. Rather, the ideal circumstance is where the teacher and family have shared expectations about a child's achievement and both work toward supporting those achievements. Dr. Sandra Christenson and her colleagues at the University of Minnesota have conducted extensive reviews of the literature in the area of family involvement and have concluded:

- When parents are involved, students have higher academic achievement.
- When parents are involved, student attendance, attitudes about school, and behavior are improved.
- When parents are involved, the community benefits by producing a better educational program, and therefore, better educated citizens.
- When parent involvement is meaningful, useful, and well-planned, student achievement is greater.
- The earlier parent involvement starts, it is more likely that achievement gains will be higher.

What do we mean by parent involvement?

Joyce Epstein, who is at the Center on Families, Communities, Schools, and Children's Learning at Johns Hopkins University, has identified six major types of involvement: (1) Basic Obligations of Families; (2) Communications from the Schools to the Home; (3) Volunteers; (4) Learning Activities at Home and Connections to Curriculum; (5) Decision Making, Committees, Advocacy, and other Leadership Roles; and (6) Collaboration and Exchange with Community Organizations. This conceptualization of family involvement suggests there are many ways for involvement to occur and that attending school conferences is only one measure of a parent's involvement. For many families, the best type of involvement is the type that can be provided at home. For example, parents can ensure a time and place for homework to be accomplished, and be available for assistance during that time. Parents further contribute to their child's learning by asking questions about academic subjects, and setting an expectation that learning is very important.

It is sometimes too easy for school personnel to point a finger and say, "It's no wonder this student is doing poorly in school. I haven't seen a parent once this year." James Comer of

Mission Statement

The Children, Youth & Family Consortium was established in fall 1991 in an effort to bring together the varied competencies of the University of Minnesota and the vital resources of Minnesota's communities to enhance the ability of individuals and organizations to address critical health, education, and social policy concerns in ways that improve the well-being of Minnesota children, youth, and families.

The Principal Perspective

Two elementary school principals partnered with the University to launch Seeds of Promise. We asked them what they viewed as the purpose and benefits of the partnership.

Wilder Early Education Center

Gertrude Barwick, Principal

The issues faced by today's children require a collaborative focus to have an impact. The challenges that face educational institutions and the needs of the families are so great that we need all the help we can get to prepare our children as life long learners. And it's the responsibility of institutions of higher learning to provide the resources they have to be supportive and collaborative.

And schools still face great challenges. Schools are going to have to rethink the amount of time and energy put into getting parents involved in the way they think they should be. We need to focus on why we are here. The schools are here to provide the best learning experiences for the children while we have them, be it 2 1/2 or 6 hours a day.

Jackson Preparatory Magnet

Louis Martucci, Principal

There are three main goals in our family involvement program at Jackson Preparatory Magnet. We try to create a welcoming environment in which every family member can feel comfortable in our school. Secondly, we try to create many ways for parents to participate at the school. The third part is to try to enhance what parents are already doing at home that help their children become successful in school and provide opportunities for parents to develop better strategies and skills to help their children.

The ways in which parents can be involved at school are only limited by our vision. Parents can help plan and implement events and major activities or they can become involved in the site based management process. By providing many levels of opportunity for involvement we encourage parents to become involved where they feel comfortable.

The third major thrust of parent involvement has to do with the messages that parents give their children regarding school. One of the most important factors to student success is consistent and clear expectations from parents. Modeling the behaviors that are expected in children is the strongest learning tool.

Through the Seeds of Promise collaboration we have the potential to bring the vast knowledge and resources of the University of Minnesota to parents, on behalf of their children, and to school staff, on behalf of children and their families. This project, like parent involvement, is only limited by our vision, our commitment, and our ability to carry our good sound education reform.

The local positions (family liaison) that are provided by the Seeds of Promise project have enabled us to have someone in the building to focus on families and the school-home relationships. The University has given invaluable support to our Family Liaison.

Gertrude Barwick, Principal,
Wilder Early Education Center

In order to create a welcoming environment we approach parents as consumers and customers. In the education of their children we see parents as equal partners.

—Louis Martucci, Principal,
Jackson Preparatory Magnet

CONSORTIUM CONNECTIONS

Consortium Connections is published three times a year by the Children, Youth & Family Consortium, A University and Community Collaboration.

Publication staff: Judith Kahn, Peg Kennedy,
Amy Swanson-Stillman
Kathie Lee Kane Maxwell Williams



Children, Youth & Family Consortium
University of Minnesota
201 Coffey Hall, 1400 Kellogg Avenue
St. Paul, MN 55108
612-625-1212 Fax 612-625-1210
email: cyfc@umn.edu
web: <http://www.cyfc.umn.edu>

The University of Minnesota is an equal opportunity employer and educator. This publication is available in alternate formats upon request. Please contact us at the number above.

CONSORTIUM STAFF

Martha Farrell Erickson, Director
Jenny Kuever, Associate Director
Amy Swanson-Stillman, Coordinator
Michael Bruff, Community Partnership and
Information Coordinator
Rose Cornier, Office Specialist
Peggy Kennedy, Coordinator, Seeds of Promise Initiative
Dwaine Simms, National Father to Father Coordinator

CONSORTIUM ADVISORY COUNCIL

Sandra Beckman, School of Social Work, U of M
Robert Blum, Past Chair, Minnesota Health Program, U of M
Bill Bounash*, U of MN Extension Service
Harry Boyer, Hoopline Institute of Public Affairs, U of M
Bonnie Braun, College of Human Ecology, U of M
Noem Coleman, Mayor, City of St. Paul
Mary Jo Czaplewski, Nat'l Council on Family Relations
Ed Ehlinger, American Health Services, U of M
Brenda Foster, Minnesota Family Assistance
Lynn Galle, S. C. Moore Laboratory Nursery School, U of M
Just Gonzalez, Minneapolis Health Department
Hal Urofsky*, Family Social Science, U of M
Burt Hirschhorn, Minnesota Department of Health
Jan Hively, College of Education and Human Development,
U of M
Junius Hogan, Chair, Family Social Science, U of M
Hubert H. Humphrey III, MN State Attorney General
Jim Kehlmeier, National Youth Leadership Council
Jill Kuppel, Children's Defense Fund
Sue Kroeger, Office of Students with Disabilities, U of M
Peggy Leppik, Minnesota State Department of Health
Bill Malcolm, Youth Advisory Board/Adolescent Health
Program, U of M
Jeanne Markell, U of M Extension Service
Sueet MacConnell, Educational Psychology, U of M
Patricia McHugh, St. Paul Schools
Colleen Moriarty, Minneapolis Youth Coordinating Board
Mary Noble, St. Louis Park Schools
Joan Patterson, Marital and Child Health, U of M
Margaret Reynolds, U of M Institute
Brian Rusche, Joint Religious Legislative Coalition
Sharon Saylor, Bellini, Mayor, City of Minneapolis
Jean Sawicki, Sheltering Arms Foundation
Carol Shields, 4-H Youth Development, U of M
Shirley Slone, American Indian Health Center
Mary Tracy, Maroon
Kate Paula Trivick, Advisory Coordinator,
MN Department of Children, Families & Learning
Carol B. Trussdall, Youth Trust
Kathleen Vellenga, St. Paul/Roseville City Children's Initiative
Sharon Vegas, Professional Development & Coaching
Services, U of M
Mark Vukelich, Family Health System
David Walsh, Patrons Hospital
Peg Wangerloren, Congregation Greenwald for Children
Richard Weinsberg*, Institute of Child Development, U of M
Geetchen Wronka, Hennepin Co. Library Assoc.
Hong Xiong, Family Social Science, U of M
Mao Yang, Coordinator for Asian Pacific Families

Continued

DEANS' POLICY COUNCIL

John Brandl, Dean, Humphrey Institute of Public Affairs
Mark Brenner, VP for Research & Dean of Graduate School
Robert Brunklin, Executive Vice President & Provost
Frank Cervo, Provost, Academic Health Center
Sandra Edwards, Dean, School of Nursing
Katharine Fennelly, Dean, U of MN Extension Service
Mary Heltzley, Dean, College of Human Ecology
Edith Leyensmeyer, Dean, School of Public Health
Al Michael, Dean, Medical School
Steven Rosenstone, Dean, College of Liberal Arts
E. Thomas Sullivan, Dean, Law School

Family Involvement in Children's Learning

—continued from cover

the Yale Child Study Center and founder of the School Development Program insists that schools adopt a no-fault approach to problem-solving. In this manner, assigning blame is not part of the problem solving discussion. Comer also encourages school staff to become more sensitive to the cultural differences between the students' families and the school staff. In the Comer model, a group of people strategized about helping a student perform better in school. And school personnel would own the problem, and focus on solutions for improving the student's achievement. They wouldn't assume that a parent won't be helpful. Instead, they would view this as another problem to be solved. What can the school do to help this parent support his/her child's learning?

Ultimately, student achievement is a partnership between the school and family. In the Live & Learn project funded by the Minnesota Extension Service, researcher Sandra Christenson found six factors that both families and schools can provide to enhance student learning. These factors are:

- standards and expectations
- structure
- opportunity to learn
- support
- climate/relationships
- modeling

Families and schools can find numerous ways to meet each of these factors. And the more both parents and schools ensure these factors are present for individual students, the more likely they will be academically successful.

Family involvement remains a major goal for many of our schools. In some cases, schools need to work on creating a more supportive school climate to reach this goal. In other cases, families are unsure about what to do. They may be willing but unsure about how best to support their child's learning. Family life today has greatly changed and there are competing demands for the attention of parents. Overcoming these circumstances will require changed attitudes on the part of both schools and families as well as hard work.

The Seeds of Promise Initiative, funded by the Danforth Foundation, is an attempt to better connect the University to real issues in our communities. A major focus of this project thus far has been on increasing family involvement in two urban elementary schools. The lessons learned in this project should be useful to other school and communities. We'll keep you posted.



Ultimately, student achievement is a partnership between the school and family.

Helping Wilder Early Education Center Help Its Children

Wilder Early Education Center (EEC) is a school on the move. It is a K-2 community school serving primarily children from its attendance area in a low-income neighborhood in Minneapolis. The reading scores at Wilder have been among the lowest in the district, but scores are moving upward at an impressive rate.

For the past 2 years, the University of Minnesota has been helping improve children's reading achievement at Wilder EEC. Professor Barbara Taylor from the Department of Curriculum and Instruction in the College of Education and Human Development and her students have been helping teachers implement her Early Intervention Reading (EIR) program. The EIR program is 20 minutes of small group, supplemental reading instruction (grades 1-2) or literature enjoyment and emergent literacy development (kindergarten) provided by the classroom teacher or a reading resource teacher every day. In addition to the small group instruction, children in grades 1 and 2 read their EIR story every day to a reading coach for 5-10 minutes. These coaches have included U of M students enrolled in service learning courses, U of M students participating in the elementary teaching licensure program, and U of M work study students who are part of the America Reads Challenge.

Wilder EEC still has a way to go to reach the America Reads Challenge goal of every child reading on grade level by third grade, but there have been important increases in students' reading performance. In the fall of the year before kindergarten EIR program was in place, first grade children at Wilder knew, on average, 50% of their letter names and 36% of their letter sounds. In the fall after participating in the kindergarten EIR program, first grade children knew, on average, 75% of their letter names and 56% of their letter sounds. In the fall before the grade 1 EIR program was in place, 24% of the second grade children were able to read a second grade passage upon entering second grade. However, after EIR had been in place in grade 1 for a year, 47% of the returning students were able to read a second grade passage at the start of second grade.

The principal and teachers at Wilder EEC are a dedicated, skilled group of professionals. Their willingness to add the program to their busy school day highlights their commitment to the belief that all of the students at Wilder EEC can be reading well by the end of second grade. The U of M students and staff have found it a privilege to assist the Wilder teachers in their attainment of this goal through the EIR program.

In the U.S. Department of Education document "Strong Families, Strong Schools," several steps for improving the learning environment at home are suggested:

- read together
- use TV wisely
- establish a daily family routine
- schedule daily homework times
- monitor out-of-school activities
- talk with children and teenagers
- communicate positive behaviors, values, and character traits
- express high expectations for children and offer praise and encouragement for achievement

In the same document schools are encouraged to:

- establish family-school-community partnerships
- make learning relevant to children
- emphasize early childhood education
- recognize the disconnection families feel with education
- expand opportunities for contact
- use technology to link parents to the classroom
- encourage family learning
- reduce distrust and cultural barriers
- address language barriers
- evaluate parents' needs
- train teachers to work with parents
- establish a home-school coordinator
- give parents a voice in school decisions

Family Involvement From a Wilder EEC Parent Perspective

"I sent my son to kindergarten knowing all his letters and how to count, yet three months later the teacher tells us our son isn't learning. I was really angry and thought there must be something wrong with that teacher. It turned out that nothing was wrong with either my way or her way of teaching — our ways were just different. I taught him the letters alphabetically and she taught them randomly. Once I knew the expectations of what he needed to know and how to reinforce it at home, my son is right on track with the rest of his class." Sheryel Hanuman, a parent of two kindergarten children, Matthew age 5, and Michael age 6, now enjoys involvement in her sons' school.

Sheryel defines "parent involvement" at Wilder EEC in terms of contact with the classroom teacher. "My best communication link is checking the back pack every night; I think that's the best thing parents can do. The calendar the school sent home at the beginning of the year is my main schedule I work from. The boys absolutely loved the Open Gym night but I wish there would have been something for the parents to do.

"The *Wild About Reading* program has been a real incentive. We had a blast at the Pajama Jam this winter. After that we started taking field trips to the library, Goodwill, and Savers to pick out books. The children loved it so much we read 125. Through the books we learned about science, including tornadoes and volcanoes. We have developed speeches and demonstrations for the boys to bring to school. Before Pajama Jam, we would just read the same books we had over and over."

Quality Partnerships Between Home and School - Everyone Plays a Part

Kathleen O'Donnell, Coordinator, Office of Family Involvement, Minneapolis Public Schools

"Team Up For Learning: Do Your Part" is the theme that guides the work of Minneapolis Public Schools (MPS) to support quality partnerships between home and school. This slogan launched the Fall 1996 adoption of the district's Family Involvement Standards and has since echoed as a campaign to increase the level and quality of family involvement throughout the district.

The path is clear for MPS. The Family Involvement Standards were written together by a stakeholders group with representation from parents, teachers, principals, students, district staff, board members, school support staff, and community members. With input from open forums focusing on a template of research and best national and local practice, the group generated a list of expectations and indicators of successful partnership in four critical arenas: at the district level, at the school level, at the classroom level, and at the home level. These district standards, first of their kind in the nation, spell out clearly the necessary elements at all levels of the system for effective partnerships to become reality. All players need to "know their part."

Changing a system means integrating into the structures and processes through which the system operates. Simply, this means that family involvement in Minneapolis Public Schools is not an "add on." School improvement plans must include strategies for working collaboratively with families on initiatives to improve student achievement. Families must be a part of the decision-making and feedback processes that create such school improvement plans or those that determine district policy. Staff development programming must weave ongoing, constructive communication with families across training opportunities, whether on new materials, instructional practices, assessment, or leadership, families also should have opportunities to participate in staff development. District offices must recognize successful partnerships and work to promote the replication of best practices while at the same time sustaining the creativity of sites to determine their own unique needs and solutions. All staff should respectfully welcome and answer questions families may have, as well as build on family strengths and celebrate diversity. Accountability to families and the community should be institutionalized. These are the quality standards that the Minneapolis Public Schools system upholds.

Finally, and most importantly, a "system" is not insulated. It both depends on and gives life to the environment in which it thrives. Our superintendent Carol Johnson and the reorganization of the district into five geographic areas remind us of the importance of working with the community to create a climate for learning and healthy development. We partner with neighborhood organizations, our city and county facilities and services, faith communities, agencies, businesses, colleges and universities and others to support families, expand opportunities to become involved, and echo the message of the importance of learning and the need to work together.

While teachers, schools, and even district offices actively seek ways to improve partnerships with families, families are encouraged to "do their part." The home-level



Developing a family involvement philosophy and program often requires breaking new ground. Early childhood teachers report that it demands great patience and endurance over a long period of time. And yet staff are sustained by their long-term view: the knowledge that early childhood programs are the warm-start for many children's academic success and positive lifelong contributions.

—Mary Dooley Burns, St. Paul Public Schools



There is a preference for the term "Family Involvement" rather than "Parent Involvement" because it includes parents, partners, grandparents, extended family members, neighbors...all adults who play significant roles in the lives of children.

—Mary Dooley Burns, St. Paul Public Schools

Wilder Early Education Center Parent Involvement Evaluation

Becky Matter, Graduate Student, Humphrey Institute of Public Affairs

Over the past two months, I have been working with the Seeds of Promise Initiative through a "Community Personnel Grant," a unique program of the University's Center for Urban and Regional Affairs through which graduate students can work for community agencies. I have been working on improving parent involvement at Wilder Early Education Center in south Minneapolis and I've come to appreciate the deep concern and interest parents have in their child's education as well as realize how incredibly challenging it is to get parents involved.

I conducted two small evaluation projects during my first few weeks at Wilder to find out 1) why parents were not able to attend the High-5/Kindergarten family activity; and 2) to get parent feedback on the "Looping" program (teachers stay with same group of students for two consecutive years). While implementing these projects I engaged in phone conversations with nearly 40 parents. The initial response to my phone call was usually defensive, but after a few more minutes of explaining that I was calling to get their feedback on the school, they had valuable suggestions and experiences to share. It was obvious that many of these parents had never been asked for their opinions regarding parent involvement or their child's education, and when given the time to develop ideas they had plenty to offer. Through these discussions I was able to identify a realistic starting place to unravel the challenges facing parent involvement.

The starting place was to begin a conversation among parents about parent involvement. The Seeds of Promise team at Wilder EEC developed and implemented a participatory evaluation project in which an evaluation team of five parents was trained to conduct focus groups with other parents. Each member of the team is responsible for connecting with 10 parents to collect information about parent involvement. The information collected through this process will be presented by the parent team members to all Wilder staff at the last staff meeting this year and used to develop parent involvement programming for next year.

Even though I have been on the project for only two months, my experiences at Wilder have provided me with a greater understanding of a few aspects surrounding parent involvement.

One challenge was that the traditional definitions of parent involvement did not fit Wilder EEC, evaluation questions needed to be re-worded to accommodate a broader definition.

Another challenge occurred in the area of communication. While trying to contact parents for evaluation projects, we found that more than half of Wilder parents are unreachable, either their phones were disconnected, the number had been changed with no new number available, or a parent was out of the home all day. One parent team member, Sheryl Ann Hamman, had this experience when she tried to contact parents to invite them into focus groups. Her great concern was that if there was an emergency with a child, there would be no way for the school to inform the parents.

Through evaluating the High-5/Kindergarten family activity event, I found that the main reasons for not attending were health problems (sick child or parent), no time, or that parents needed reminders and different ways to be informed of events. One kindergarten teacher provides parents with a monthly calendar of all upcoming parent events, a technique which has yielded her high parent attendance.

Lastly, parents want to know that their ideas are being considered. Parent evaluation team members felt that parents lost interest in being involved because none of their ideas or suggestions were taken into consideration or implemented. Parent team members wanted to be sure that the information they were going to collect from other parents would be used to make changes.



One challenge was that the traditional definitions of parent involvement did not fit Wilder EEC.

...parents want to know that their ideas are being considered

Quality Partnerships Between Home and School—<http://www.cyfc.unn.edu/Lesans/impstandards.html>

Family Involvement Standards remind us of how important it is for families to:

- Support lifelong learning for family members
- Have high but reasonable expectations of each child's educational achievement and make those clear
- Understand what is expected of them in supporting their child's success in school

Clearly, family involvement goes more than "one-way." It's about relationships, building them and sustaining them around one common goal: the success and well-being of the children who are our future. Minneapolis Public Schools welcomes you and celebrates your commitment and dedication.

If you would like a copy of the Family Involvement Standards, they are available on the internet through the Children, Youth and Family Consortium website at <http://www.cyfc.unn.edu/Lesans/impstandards.html> or call the Office of Family Involvement at (612) 627-2255.

Support for Parents of School-Age Children and Teens

Parents don't stop having child rearing questions when their children reach school age. If anything, they have more concerns.



... "parent connectedness is the single healthiest force in the lives of U.S. teenagers."

—Journal of the American Medical Association

Families bring our best experience in terms of income, education, employment, ethnicity, race, citizens, recent immigrants, and step families, and yet, all need to be seen as co-equals with teachers in reinforcing the child's learning and development.

—Mary Dooley Burns, St. Paul Public Schools

That's the philosophy behind Parent Connections, a program launched statewide in 1997 that provides support for parents with school-age children and teens and continues to grow in Minnesota communities.

The Parent Connections program, modeled after a Hopkins Community Education program, was developed by a team of the Minnesota Family Involvement Initiative, a collaborative of several public agencies. The University of Minnesota Extension Service is one of the collaborators, providing funding for Parent Connections program development and training statewide. Extension Educators teamed up with other community education providers to develop local training for facilitators and to organize parent discussion groups. More than 300 parenting professionals have been trained to do community organizing and train volunteers to operate Parent Connections programs.

In volunteer-facilitated discussion groups, parents share information, concerns, feelings, challenges and hopes about parenting their elementary or teen-aged children. Topics are driven by members of the group; they decide what to discuss and help determine how the topics will be covered — through a guest speaker, through their own research, or through a facilitator's or another member's guidance.

One parent involved in an Apple Valley group sees a great need for the program. "The fact is that children are constantly growing and changing, and with each new chapter in their life comes new challenges and questions," she said. "I think the need almost increases as your children get older."

Many parents seem to really flounder when their kids reach adolescence. "They need continued support and education about what comprises quality parent/child relationships and a positive learning environment at home."

A recent article in the *Journal of the American Medical Association* concluded that "parent connectedness is the single healthiest force in the lives of U.S. teenagers," and "time and time again, the home environment emerges as central in shaping health... for American youth."

Locally, Parent Connections groups have provided many parents a greater connection to the school. "When I saw that there were evening as well as day-time (classes) for parents, it was as if the school was giving all parents that gift of community. And the school seems more welcoming this year," said another Apple Valley parent.

Parent Connections groups are also cooperating with the research of the Live & Learn project (see article in Consortium Connections, Fall 1997). Members are involved in focus groups discussing the six factors youth need to be productive, self-motivated learners. Groups meeting this fall will be using Live & Learn materials as support in their efforts to be involved in their children's education.

Currently, the program is in local hands throughout the state. The original program design team is working with the Minnesota Parenting Association to find continued funding and an administrative "home" for a statewide program coordinator.

For more information about Parent Connections, call Diane Nagler at (612) 432-8035.

Parent Involvement and Family/School Partnerships

Robyn Lardowski, Jackson Magnet Preparatory School, St. Paul



I've watched and have been a part of parent involvement at Jackson School for almost 11 years. I've seen parent involvement evolve from field trip supervision to classroom help for all students, advocacy for the education of children, and parents on decision-making committees. Ours is a family/school partnership where parents, teachers, paraprofessionals, students and communities all play a role in quality education for children.

The home school liaisons play an important role in linking parents to our school. They support parents with phone calls to remind them of committee meetings or to review the agenda or issues of concern before the meeting or to discuss upcoming events. Home School liaisons conduct home visits to establish relationships and make a connection with the home in order to better understand the families.

We have a number of family activity nights that focus on reading, math, and geography and to celebrate our different cultures. Sometimes things happen at a family activity night that give us a great deal of encouragement. For example, during one family event, a non-English speaking family received instructions from the teacher and translator on how to do the activity. Later, when the teacher was busy and the translator was with another family, an English speaking family sat down next to them. The non-English speaking family began to show the English speaking family how to do the activity. Even though language can be a barrier for many families today, without a word being spoken two families were able to communicate and work together as Jackson School families.

Check & Connect: Promoting School Completion Among Minneapolis Youth

What is Check & Connect? Check & Connect is a field-tested model designed to promote students' engagement in school. At the secondary level, the goal of the model is to help students attend school regularly, actively participate in school, and ultimately graduate with the skills and knowledge to pursue further education, employment or other post-school goals. "Check" involves regularly checking on students' participation in school (attendance, credits, suspensions). "Connect" involves strategies used to build and maintain students' involvement with school. Support is provided by a person referred to as a "monitor." Monitors follow students over an extended period of time and use individualized strategies to keep education a top priority among the students, family members, and school staff. These strategies include: (a) talking to students about their academic progress and what assistance they think is needed, (b) contacting students' families to share information about students' progress, (c) encouraging and assisting students to enroll in school if they have dropped out, (d) encouraging the use of constructive problem-solving strategies, (e) collaborating with school staff to develop strategies for improving students' attendance or grades, and (f) helping students and families access community services and agencies.

One of the basic assumptions of the model is that families are resources for, and clients of, the educational system. Monitors draw upon parents' knowledge of their children. Outreach to families focuses on enhancing ways parents or other family members can provide educational support to the target students. These outreach strategies are individualized, depending upon the skills and knowledge of the parents and their comfort level with the schools. For all families with secondary-aged children with disabilities, monitors work to engage parents in the transition planning process.

The model is based on five key elements:

students and adults; monitoring student levels of engagement with school; students' affiliation with school; and problem-solving. Persistence-plus, one of the most important elements, means someone is not going to give up nor allow the student to be distracted from the importance of school — throughout the school year, through the summer, and into the next year. Persistence leads to relationships built on trust and mutual respect. The five elements are all intertwined. For monitoring to be successful, it has to be consistent and visible to the student when risk behaviors start to show. Monitoring at its best is done by the same person and requires at least weekly connections with the student. For relationships to support educational progress, they have to focus on consistency, continuity, and persistence in the message that school is important and the relationships have to provide students with essential skills for solving problems in any setting — and everything has to promote affiliation with the school.

The Check & Connect model is being implemented in Minneapolis public high schools as part of a research project funded by the U.S. Department of Education. The project is intended to promote school completion among youth with emotional and behavioral challenges and to identify ways to keep more students in school in the future. Among several additional sites, we are presently adapting the Check & Connect model for elementary school age children and their families in conjunction with Dakota County Community Services and several area public schools. To obtain an informational brochure and other materials about this model, contact the Publications Department of the Institute on Community Integration at (612) 624-4512 or at www.tci.coled.umn.edu. Program directors include Sandra Christenson, Carol Davis, Mary Sinclair and Martha Thurlow of the University of Minnesota and David Evelo of the Minneapolis Public Schools.

The Check & Connect model is based on five key elements.

- persistence-plus
- relationships between students and adults
- monitoring student levels of engagement with school
- students' affiliation with school and
- problem-solving

In our blossoming multi-lingual communities, families arrive in packages with varying linguistic and academic experiences. Many, richly literate in their own backgrounds, are English language learners in the early childhood setting. These families bring their strengths and needs, culture and child rearing concerns, as well as a variety of learning styles and motivations to our learning communities.

—Mary Douky Burns, St. Paul Public Schools

Kindergarten Check & Connect Success Story

Peg Kennedy, Seeds of Promise Coordinator

When 10 kindergarten students were identified to be at risk of dropping out of school, the Seeds of Promise team at Wilder EEC began developing a kindergarten version of the D of M "Check and Connect" program. Ann Casey, Seeds of Promise lead faculty for Wilder, worked with Christy Cook, Wilder's Family Liaison, to track families and begin home visits.

In January, Christy met with a parent whose child had significant attendance and other problems. This family had just moved to Minnesota and was very isolated. Christy learned that the mother was keeping her child home so she would have someone with whom to talk. After only one meeting, Christy was able to connect the mother to several programs in the community: Way to Grow, Early Childhood Family Education, and parent support groups at a family resource center at Andersen School.

Now the parent comes into the school frequently and her child has been coming to school on a regular basis. Not all families needs are so easily met, but it is great to have a tangible success.



Levels of Family Involvement for Parent and Family Educators

Level 1: Minimal Emphasis on Family

Interactions with parents are institution-centered, not family-centered. Families are not regarded as an important area of focus but parents are dealt with for practical or legal reasons.

Level 2: Information and Advice

Knowledge Base: Content information about families, parenting, and child development.

Personal Development: Openness to engage parents in collaborative ways.

- Skills:**
1. Communicating information clearly and interestingly.
 2. Eliciting questions.
 3. Engaging a group of parents in the learning process.
 4. Making pertinent and practical recommendations.
 5. Providing information on community resources.

Level 3: Feelings and Support

Knowledge Base: Individual and family reactions to stress, and the emotional aspects of group process.

Personal Development: Awareness of one's own feelings in relation to parents and group process.

- Skills:**
1. Eliciting expressions of feelings and concerns.
 2. Empathetic listening.
 3. Normalizing feelings and reactions.
 4. Creating an open and supportive climate.
 5. Protecting a parent from too much self-disclosure in a group.
 6. Engaging parents in collaborative problem-solving discussion.
 7. Tailoring recommendations to the unique needs, concerns, and feelings of the parent and family.
 8. Identifying family dysfunction and psychological dysfunction.
 9. Tailoring a referral to the unique situation of the parent and family.

Level 4: Systematic Assessment and Planned Intervention

Knowledge Base: Family systems theory.

Personal Development: Awareness of one's own participation in systems, including one's own family, the parents' systems, and larger community systems.

- Skills:**
1. Asking a series of questions to elicit a detailed picture of the family dynamics of a parent's problem.
 2. Developing a hypothesis about the family systems dynamics involved in the problem.
 3. Working with the parent for a short period of time to change a family interaction pattern beyond the one-to-one parent/child relationship.
 4. Knowing when to end the intervention effort and either refer the parent or return to level three support.
 5. Orchestrating a referral by educating the family and the therapist about what to expect from each other.
 6. Working with therapists and community systems to help the parent and family.

Level 5: Family Therapy

This referral level is outside the scope and mission of parent education.

The following description is offered to show the boundary between Level 4 parent education and Level 5 family therapy.

Levels of Family Involvement for Parent and Family Educators

William J. Doherty, Ph.D., Family Social Science Department, University of Minnesota

Overview

Originally developed for training family physicians, this model (outlined on this page) was adapted to help clarify the professional role of parent and family educators in working with families. Like family physicians, parent and family educators often work with families who have problems, sometimes serious problems, but in a role different from that of therapists. What are the boundaries between parent education and family therapy; between support and intense involvement? If the parent educator takes a mainly didactic approach, there is safety but not enough depth to help parents learn and change. If the parent educator moves too far into intervention, the risks are excessive for parent and educator alike.

The Levels of Family Involvement for Parent and Family Educators delineates five qualitatively different ways of working with families, with the depth and intensity of involvement increasing as each higher level adds new dimensions. Level 1 (Minimal Emphasis on Family) and Level 5 (Family Therapy) are outside of the role of parent and family educator. They are described in the model to indicate the lower and upper boundaries of the role of parent and family educators.

Levels 2-4 represent options for parent and family educators' work with parents and families, whether one-to-one or in groups. However, it is assumed that Level 3 is an ideal level for most parent and family education activities because it combines information and emotional support, but without the extra risks involved in intervention. All parent and family educators, then, should be trained at Level 3 competencies.

Level 4 represents the most intense involvement that parent and family educators would offer to individual parents or groups. It is appropriate for parents who bring up concerns that are not helped by education and support, but that are not serious enough for a therapy referral. Level 4 may also be appropriate when the parent educator is working collaboratively with other professionals who are providing Level 5 services to the family. Level 4 skills require more training than is generally provided to parent and family educators. Level 4 also requires ongoing consultation from a family therapist and close collaboration with other professionals who may be working with the family.

How the Levels Can Be Used

The levels model can be used in a number of ways: a) To describe the depth or intensity of an interaction of a parent or family educator with a parent or group; b) To describe the competency of a parent and family educator in working with parents; c) To establish training and professional development goals for programs and for individual parent and family educators; d) To establish programmatic goals for what level of services will be offered to parents.

For more information on Levels of Family Involvement for Parent and Family Educators contact William Doherty, Ph.D. at (612) 625-4752.

America Reads Challenge

In 1996, President Clinton issued a grassroots call to action, the America Reads Challenge. The national campaign challenges every American to identify the role we can play to help ensure that every child reads well and independently by the end of third grade.

The America Reads Challenge:

- mobilizes volunteers to give students help after school and during the summer
- motivates parents as their child's first teacher
- recruits colleges to enlist work study students to tutor children
- engages businesses to involve employees and offer incentives to young readers
- unites communities to form strong partnerships to promote child literacy

The America Reads Challenge is here at the University of Minnesota. The U partners with community agencies including 13 libraries, 13 community centers, and 14 public schools across the Twin Cities. University students become tutors through regular and service-learning courses, by qualifying for federal work study (there have been as many as 125 work-study students in 26 schools and community centers), and through the Chicano/Latino Resource Center.

For more information on the America Reads Challenge at the University of Minnesota call either: the Office of Special Learning Opportunities (612-625-3314), Bill Wilson, College of Education and Human Development and Center for Urban and Regional Affairs (CURA) (612-625-0180); or Manuel Guerrero, Chicano/Latino Resource Center (612-625-7308).

Education: A Right or a Privilege?

Marti Erlakson, Consortium Director

As I read a recent newspaper article, a quote from a Twin Cities woman jumped right off the page: "Education is not a right!" Although I don't recall the exact context of her remark, I know that leaders of nearly two hundred countries around the world would disagree. The right to education is one of the basic human rights of children encompassed in the U.N. Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC), an international treaty adopted in 1989 by the United Nations and ratified by 191 of 193 recognized nations. (Note that the only two countries that have not ratified the UNCRC are the United States and Somalia. In 1995 Madeline Albright, then U.S. delegate to the U.N., signed a statement of intent to consider ratification. However, the ratification process has not progressed, partly because of lack of public awareness, lack of national leadership, and political controversy. More on that in a future issue of our newsletter.)

In April I had the honor of serving as a rapporteur at an international conference on the educational rights of the child, convened by the Danish Ministry of Education in Copenhagen. Delegates from all parts of the world gathered to report on children's rights progress in their own countries and to define and explore the UNCRC's implications for education. Discussion centered on the UNCRC's three areas of obligation with regard to education: 1) education as a human right for all children; 2) respect for the human rights of children within the education system; and 3) the provision of education about human rights.

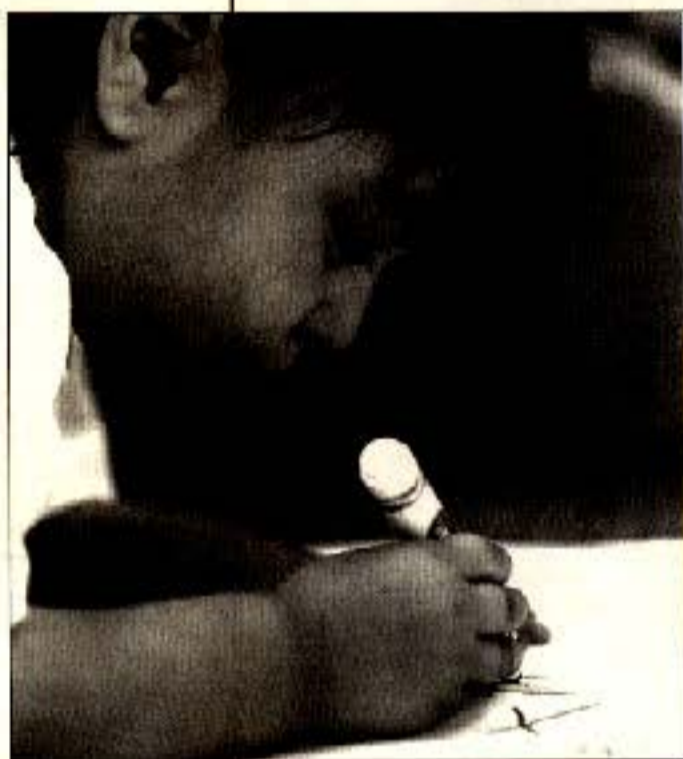
In more concrete terms, we talked about the right to free, compulsory education for all children, regardless of ability level, gender, ethnicity or where in the world they live. One speaker noted that today 100 million children, 60 million of them females, have no access to primary education, a fact that has global economic and environmental impact, not to mention heartbreaking implications for the individual children. Barriers to education include such factors as child labor, lack of transportation, and discriminatory attitudes and policies. Understanding that education is more than formal schooling, we also talked about the millions of children (including far too many in our own Minnesota communities) who lack the early nurturance and appropriate stimulation that lay the foundation for later learning.

Looking beyond a child's right to education, we also discussed how to recognize and honor a child's rights *within* education, including the right to self-expression, discipline with dignity, and opportunity to develop to full potential. Participants agreed that these rights imply that children must be active researchers, makers of meaning, and shapers of their own experience, not passive recipients of information. This is consistent with the UNCRC's emphasis on a child's basic right to participation and self-determination, appropriate to the child's evolving capacity. To bring these principles to life, our Danish hosts introduced us to an extraordinary school in Copenhagen that has given students a chance to demonstrate what a rich and active learning environment they can create when they are engaged as full participants in designing and governing their own school community.

Finally, the conference also focused on the importance of promoting human rights *through* education. This means providing both information and experiences designed to teach children from the earliest years to understand their own rights, recognize and respect the rights of others, and accept increasing responsibility for building a just and respectful community. In the spirit of the UNCRC's emphasis on youth participation and self-determination, we returned often to the idea of young people themselves as teachers of human rights. And throughout the Copenhagen conference we experienced this principle in action; among the conference's most eloquent speakers were children and youth from Romania, the Czech Republic, Belarus, Norway and Denmark.

The proceedings of the Copenhagen conference will be available through the Consortium office this summer, and a series of more detailed articles will appear in a variety of publications over the next year. (We will post these to our website as they become available.) Also, during the 1998-99 academic year the Consortium will facilitate discussions about human rights of children through University-community forums, online chats and a special edition of our newsletter. We hope to encourage an open exploration of the benefits and concerns associated with U.S. ratification of the U.N. Convention; promote understanding about the importance of children's rights in today's global society; and examine how the UNCRC can be used as a framework for considering how we support children's optimal development in our own families, schools and communities. To request additional information or to add your name to our mailing list for related events, please call the Consortium office at (612) 626-1212.

The right to education is one of the basic human rights of children encompassed in the U.N. Convention on the Rights of the Child.



We recognize a child's rights... to self-expression, discipline with dignity, and opportunity to develop to full potential... these rights imply that children must be active researchers, makers of meaning, and shapers of their own experience, not passive recipients of information.

Consortium Calendar

June

June 22-24

"1998 Institute for Interdisciplinary Research Development: Adolescent Pregnancy." Earle Brown Continuing Education Center, St. Paul campus/University of MN. The overall goal is to develop interdisciplinary collaborations to address research development in adolescent pregnancy prevention. Cost: \$300 noncredit (also available for graduate credit). Contact: Maureen Smith, msmith1@mail.cee.umn.edu, or (612) 625-1832.

June 26-27 and July 24-25

"Breastfeeding: Individual, Community, and Global Perspectives." Earle Brown Continuing Education Center, St. Paul campus/University of MN. Cost: \$300 noncredit (also available for graduate or undergraduate credit). For more information contact: Maureen Smith, msmith1@mail.cee.umn.edu, or (612) 625-1832.

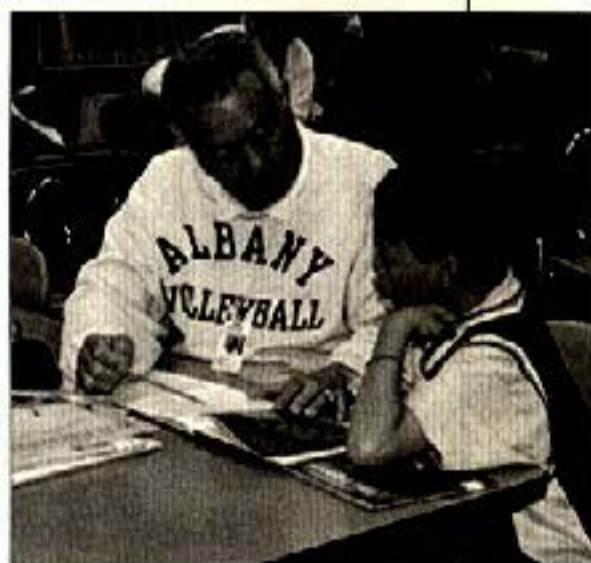
July

July 8-11, 1997

"National Maternal Nutrition Intensive Course." Room 2-550 Moss Tower, Minneapolis campus/University of MN. Cost: \$195. Contact: Maureen Smith, msmith1@mail.cee.umn.edu, or (612) 625-1832; also see Web page: <http://www.cee.umn.edu/pubs/MatNut.htm>

July 31-August 1

"Baby Summit: Healing Birth, Healing Earth." Sponsored by the Association for Prenatal and Perinatal Psychology and Health. Earle Brown Continuing Education Center, St. Paul Campus, University of Minnesota. For further information call Millie Adams Dash, (612) 625-1816.



Service Learning Opportunities: They benefit everyone

Tutoring in elementary schools, mentoring middle school youth and teaching elementary students about different countries and cultures are several ways University of Minnesota students have been working in Minneapolis and St. Paul area schools through programs coordinated by or affiliated with *Community Involvement Programs*. Community Involvement Programs (CIP), a division of the Office for Special Learning Opportunities in the College of Liberal Arts, provide opportunities for students, staff, faculty and community organizations to help facilitate authentic partnerships between the University and community based organizations. We help students and staff assess their interests, skills, abilities, and goals so they can make appropriate decisions about volunteering, interning, or academic service-learning via U courses. We support faculty teaching courses that integrate experiential community-based learning as a way to deepen student comprehension of course learning objectives. In addition, we work with faculty to design or redesign curricula to create additional credit-bearing opportunities for students. Here are some examples of Community Involvement Programs.

The Early Intervention Reading program, under the direction of Curriculum and Instruction faculty member Dr. Barbara Taylor, has involved many University students in elementary schools (see article on page 3). In the past two years, approximately 500 University students have tutored Minneapolis and St. Paul public elementary school students in grades K-3 to improve their reading levels.

Project ADAPT (Appreciating Differences Among People and Things) started in 1967 with the goal of moving beyond desegregation and accomplishing real integration in schools. Through a partnership with St. Paul Public Schools, University of Minnesota international students, U.S. students with multicultural backgrounds, and those who have lived and studied abroad teach cross-cultural and intercultural understanding to the elementary school children. In time, through increased involvement of international students from the University, the Project has developed an international focus as well.

The Literacy Instruction Network with the Community (LINC) program recruits and advises interested students on opportunities to do literacy work in schools and community-based organizations. Students can tutor English as a Second Language with children or adults in programs, or they can work on computer, math, reading, citizenship or other topics being covered in the classroom.

The Dugst Project, an academic tutoring program for Somali youth, is in its first year working with Roosevelt High School students. Approximately two years ago, two teachers from Roosevelt, who are elders in the Somali community, approached the University of Minnesota seeking more support for youth to improve their English skills and to gain exposure to university settings.

For information on how you can connect with the Office for Special Learning Opportunities' Community Involvement Programs office, call (612) 626-2044.

National Service-Learning Clearinghouse

The National Service-Learning Clearinghouse, sponsored by the College of Education and Human Development's Department of Work, Community and Family Education, collects and disseminates information for Learn & Serve America programs, as well as other K-12, higher education, and community-based programs and practitioners.

People can contact the Clearinghouse via phone (1-800-808-SERVE [7378] [voice/TTY], email (serve@tc.umn.edu) or through their website (<http://www.niesl.ened.umn.edu>) and receive a free general information packet. The packet includes a list of Clearinghouse publications and ordering information. Information specialists answer questions and requests via phone from 10:00 AM to 2:00 PM Central Time or by email.

Services include:

- 1) Responding to requests for resources about planning and implementing service-learning projects; integrating service into curriculum; evaluating programs; reviewing current research; securing funding; addressing legal issues; and other related topics.
- 2) Searching Clearinghouse databases for library resources, program information, program contacts, and events.
- 3) Providing referrals to appropriate organizations, sources of published and unpublished materials about service-learning and related topics, videos, research; and to seminars and conferences.
- 4) Distributing Clearinghouse bibliographies that list resources on service-learning topics.

CONSORTIUM UPDATE

A WARM WELCOME to Jenny Keyser, the Consortium's new Associate Director! With a Ph.D. in comparative literature from the University of Wisconsin-Madison, Jenny brings a wealth of experience in the humanities, with a particular focus on literacy and K-12 education. Jenny has taught English at the College of St. Thomas, served as a program director for the Minnesota Literacy Council, and most recently was director of the Teacher Institute at the Minnesota Humanities Commission. Jenny's passion for CYF Consortium work is rooted in the human rights and social justice activism that has been central to her life since her college days. On a personal note, if you want to see Jenny sparkle, ask about her family. Married for 27 years to Dan Keyser, a theater professor at Macalaster, Jenny is the proud mother of Emma, a sophomore and softball whiz at St. Paul Central High School, and Zan, a junior in art history at Lawrence College in Appleton, Wisconsin.

AND CONGRATULATIONS to Judith Kahn, former CYFC Associate Director, who has moved on to become Director of the U of M's Gisela Konopka Institute on Best Practices in Adolescent Health within the Academic Health Center. Based in the Division of General Pediatrics and Adolescent Health, the Konopka Institute will work with the Schools of Public Health, Nursing, and Medicine to identify and disseminate best practices in adolescent health through publications, forums, and University-community partnerships. We're pleased that Judith will continue her involvement with the CYF Consortium as a member of our Advisory Council.

WE ARE HONORED...

A warm *thank you* to two organizations that recently gave special recognition to the CYF Consortium and director to Marti Erickson:

- On May 1 the Consortium received an award from the Minnesota Chapter of the National Association of Pediatric Nurse Associates and Practitioners for our "outstanding contribution to the promotion of the health care of children." The Consortium was selected for this honor in recognition of our partnership with healthcare professionals, particularly around the promotion of positive parent-child relationships and healthy child development.
- Marti Erickson is the first recipient of the Distinguished Service Award from the Child Abuse Prevention Studies Program in the U of M School of Social Work. According to CAPS director Ann Ahlquist, who presented the award at the June 4 graduation, students selected Marti because of her leadership, dedication and vision in the field of child abuse prevention.

Family Re-Union 7: On the web

Once again, the Children, Youth and Family Consortium will be co-sponsoring "Family Re-Union," the annual national policy conference moderated by Vice President and Mrs. Gore that provides a useful intersection between research, practice and policy development on issues of critical concern to families and children. Family Re-Union 7, scheduled for June 22 and 23, 1998 at Vanderbilt University in Nashville, TN, will focus on the issue of families and health. The audience and presenters, drawn from across the country, will include representatives of state and local health care administrations, senior federal officials, academic researchers, national health care organizations representing hospitals, consumers, managed care organizations and purchasers of managed care; health care workers and executives; foundations; and others including human services, medical education and training, and wellness and prevention programs.

An overarching concern about the intersection of a changing health care environment with the changing and complex needs of families and children is driving the planning process. Initial planning discussions have included leaders from the fields of family-centered care, mental health, public health, as well as family members and physicians involved in the care of chronically ill children; hospital administrators; and experts in managed care, and the legal and financial aspects of health care. Discussion participants have explored various approaches to comprehensive care in a wide range of settings. They have raised the issues of training of health care professionals, the impact of managed care and public health policy, the support needed for the entire family of dependents who are chronically ill, and the importance of treating family members as full partners in health care.

As in years past, the Consortium is developing a web site to feature health care experts, research and articles on some of the critical issues in family-centered health care. On May 1, 1998 the Consortium launched the first version of the Family Re-Union series web site. Developed and managed by the Consortium, this site (www.familyreunion.org) features information on all seven conferences, including select speeches, outcomes and history of the series. The site can also be accessed via the Consortium's Electronic Clearinghouse (www.cyfc.uma.edu).

August

August 5

"Beyond the Classroom: Models for Extending Learning Opportunities," 12:00-1:00, 585 2 Park. CAREI brown bag discussion featuring Liz Fulmer. For more information, call (612) 624-0300.

August 13-16

"Our Family: 24th Annual Conference on Adoptable Children." Hyatt Regency Hotel and Convention Center, Cincinnati, Ohio. Sponsored by the North American Council on Adoptable Children. For more information write NACAC, 870 Raymond Avenue, Suite 100, St. Paul, MN 55114-1149.

September

September 24-26

"Taking Play Seriously: Valuing Excellence in Early Childhood Education." MN Association for the Education of Young Children 40th Conference on Children and Families. For more information, call (612) 648-8688.

September 25

20th Anniversary Celebration of the Gisela Konopka Adolescent Health Leadership. Featured speakers: Lisbeth Schorr and Henry Foster. For more information, call (612) 628-2920.

November

November 12-13

"Gender Journeys: Embracing the Unique Qualities of Gender" 1998 Symposium sponsored by St. David's Child Development and Family Services, the Children, Youth and Family Consortium, and Hennepin County Medical Center. For more information, call (612) 938-0996.



A Systemwide University Initiative: Strengthening Partnerships for Learner Success

Jan Hively, Director of Community Outreach, College of Education and Human Development and Collegiate Program Leader, MN Extension Service

The broad scope of University engagement with preK-12+ programming, illustrated by the size of the "Youth and U" data base (see article below), has generated discussion about how best to maximize the positive impacts of these efforts on learning achievement and other aspects of youth development.

Bob Bruininks, the Executive Vice President and Provost, is reviewing strategies to respond to three hard questions:

- 1) How can we assure easy access to information about the University's resources? The Center for Applied Research and Educational Improvement (CAREI) has begun to continuously update, expand and improve the "Youth and U" website, but a process is needed to ease the distribution and sale of teaching and learning materials developed through the U.
- 2) How can we maximize active participation of faculty, staff and students in University-community partnerships? One way to respond is to build on programs such as "Scholars in the Schools" that expand U faculty interaction with preK-12+ teachers and students. Another approach is to demonstrate that the U campus is "family friendly," and to expand programs that bring young people to the campus.

Learning through community service should be an essential part of every University student's experience. Minnesota's national leadership in experiential learning through service should be reinforced throughout both the preK-12 and college curriculum.

- 3) How can we collaborate on a few cross-cutting, high priority program initiatives? The Provost is considering priorities for coordinated outreach that builds on the University's strengths along the continuum of preK-12+ developmental learning. In the preK and primary years, the focus would be on early literacy, assuring connections with the "America Reads" initiative. In the middle school years and beyond, the emphasis would be on partnerships to keep students with developmental needs engaged in successful learning. Another priority should be to inform and support post-secondary transitions for non-traditional students. Also, the U can create visible, interdisciplinary career pathways for competent and interested learners to take advantage of the opportunities created by major U initiatives such as those in Biology, Digital Technology and in Food Systems Education.

One benefit of strategic planning lies in the conversation that it stimulates. If you as a reader would like to provide feedback or hear more about preK-12+ efforts, call Jan Hively in the College of Education and Human Development's Dean's Office, 612-626-7786 or fax your comments to her at 612-626-7496.

Consortium Listserv

Do you have email? Would you like to be kept informed on what is happening at the Consortium and its related activities? The Consortium has established a new email listserv that will send you periodic notices about conferences, trainings, research and other child and family related information. To sign up, email your name and email address to cyfo@tc.umn.edu.

Who's the Consortium?

Christy Cook has been the School/Family Liaison for the Seeds of Promise initiative since it first started at the Wilder Early Education Center. She is a resident of the Powderhorn community and is the proud mother of three boys and one girl.

Robyn Landowski has been the School/Family Liaison for the Seeds of Promise initiative since it first started at Jackson Magnet Preparatory School. She is a resident of the Frogrow community and is the proud mother of three boys.

Barbara Taylor, Ph.D. is a Professor in the Department of Curriculum and Instruction in the College of Education and Human Develop at the U of MN. Dr. Taylor has been helping children learn to read through her Early Intervention Reading program.

And the Consortium is You!

Youth and U: Getting Connected

Youth and U is a new web site that provides an inventory of programs connecting U of MN faculty, staff, and students with more than 300 programs serving children and youth. Created in the College of Education and Human Development, Youth and U serves parents, administrators, and teachers who can search for programs in their region that pertain to a subject or to an age group. University programs welcome the opportunity for partnerships with schools and agencies.

The web site is gathering information on teaching and learning materials for children and youth that have been developed at the University ("U Teach"). Youth and U will also soon display programs and events which bring children to the campus and that directly involve University faculty or staff in preK-12 learning. If you know of any programs which fit these criteria, add the information on the website, <http://carei.coled.umn.edu/YouthandU> or email carei@mail.coled.umn.edu



UNIVERSITY OF MINNESOTA
Children, Youth & Family Consortium
201 Coffey Hall
1420 Eckles Avenue
St. Paul, MN 55108

