

CIRCLE of PARENTS
Sharing Ideas. Sharing Support.

Children's Trust Fund
Protecting Michigan's Children

The Circle of Parents Workshop
November 13, 2009
10:15 – 11:45 A.M.

1

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Sharing Ideas. Sharing Support.

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The Circle of Parents is a place where:

- Parents can connect with each other
- Learn from each other and be a source of strength
- Become a community advocate and leader

2

Training Objectives

- Gain an understanding of the Circle of Parents Model and the 5 Protective Factors
- The importance of positive fatherhood involvement – balanced parenting
- Domestic Violence awareness
- Tools for implementing a Circle of Parents program in your community

3

Why Focus on Parents

Michigan Child Abuse Statistics (Source: DHS CPS 2006 Trends Report Survey)

- Approximately 120,000 reported per year (2,300 weekly)
- In 2006, 17,523 of these reports were substantiated (28,327 Children)
- 34% of substantiated cases involve abuse and 66% involve neglect
- 64% of these children were under age 10
- 87% of the maltreatment is perpetrated by parents
- 7,591 children removed from their homes
- Child abuse is on the rise in Michigan – up 37.7% since 1993

National Child Abuse Statistics (Childhelp 2006)

- Over 850,000 substantiated cases of child maltreatment
- 1,490 child fatalities from abuse in 2006 (82% were under three years of age)
- Children under age 2 are more apt to die of abuse than from accidents, drowning and fires combined.
- One of every five children will be abused or neglected by the time they turn 18.
- Research shows that for every \$1 spent on child abuse prevention, \$34 will not be spent on publicly-funded, crisis-oriented programs after the abuse occurs.
- The average American family pays \$1,400 in taxes to pay for the consequences of child abuse versus \$1.06 in preventing maltreatment before it happens.

National & State Support

- National program with over 20 years of experience.
- Currently 17 sites in Michigan supported by the Children's Trust Fund (additional 3 pending).
- As a local program, we have a broad range of support from across the country.
- Collative Partners: Michigan Domestic Violence Prevention Board, Michigan Fatherhood Coalition partners, Department of Human Services, Great Start, Local Councils & Local Community Agencies

The National COP

- National COP is currently managed by a national staff of three: Chief Executive Officer, Training and Technical Assistance Manager, and an Administrative Assistant.
- Governed by a voluntary Board of Directors and operations heavily depend upon contributions.
- 27 National state partners, including Puerto Rico

7

What is the History

- Originally created as a federally funded project to bring: Parent Leaders, 17 child abuse prevention and family support organizations (National Family Support Roundtable) and Prevent Child Abuse America (PCA America)

8

History Continued

- Circle of Parents was incorporated in April 2004, and in October 2004 became a non-profit organization.
- Over five years of support from the Office of Juvenile Delinquency and Prevention (OJJDP) of the U.S. Department of Justice to develop and expand programs for underserved communities and populations.
- In 2007 received a 3-5 year COP Fatherhood Initiative funded thru the US Department of Health and Human Services, Administration on Children and Families, Office of Family Assistance.

WWW.CIRCLEOFPARENTS.ORG

9

CTF COP
Partner Expectations

- Program Resources
- Signed MOU
- Facilitator supervision
- Ongoing training/teleconferencing
- Data collection
- Provide recognition and support to parents

10

*Through weekly or bi-weekly meetings co-led by
parents & professionals, participants:*

- Gain a sense of belonging & relief as parents learn that their family dynamics & their child's behavior are more typical than problematic
- Become resources to each other inside & outside of the group by sharing coping strategies & parenting skills from who have "been there"

11

*Through weekly or bi-weekly meetings co-led by
parents & professionals, participants:*

- Advocate for themselves & other parents as they both give and receive help & thereby recognize that seeking help is a sign of strength – not weakness

12

The Circle of Parents is built on a strong theoretical base, of...

- Family Support
- Mutual Self-Help
- Shared Leadership

13

Circle of Parents - 5 Protective Factors - What are they (Source: www.childwelfare.gov)

- Protective factors are conditions in families and communities that, when present, increase the health and well-being of children and families. These attributes serve as buffers, helping parents to find resources, supports, or coping strategies that allow them to parent effectively, even under stress.
- Research has shown that the following protective factors are linked to a lower incidence of child abuse and neglect:

14

5 Protective Factors, Con't

1. Nurturing and Attachment: A child's early experience of being nurtured and developing a bond with a caring adult affects all aspects of behavior and development. When parents and children have strong, warm feelings for one another, children develop trust that their parents will provide what they need to thrive, including love, acceptance, positive guidance, and protection.
2. Knowledge of Parenting, and of Child & Youth Development: There is extensive research linking healthy child development to effective parenting. Children thrive when parents provide not only affection, but also respectful communication and listening, consistent rules and expectations, and safe opportunities that promote independence. Successful parenting fosters psychological adjustment, helps children succeed in school, encourages curiosity about the world, and motivates children to achieve.

15

5 Protective Factors, Con't

- 3. **Parental Resilience:** Parents who can cope with the stresses of everyday life, as well as an occasional crisis, have resilience; they have the flexibility and inner strength necessary to bounce back when things are not going well. Multiple life stressors, such as a family history of abuse or neglect, health problems, marital conflict, or domestic or community violence—and financial stressors such as unemployment, poverty, and homelessness—may reduce a parent's capacity to cope effectively with the typical day-to-day stresses of raising children.

5 Protective Factors, Con't

- 4. **Social Connections:** Parents with a social network of emotionally supportive friends, family, and neighbors often find that it is easier to care for their children and themselves. Most parents need people they can call on once in a while when they need a sympathetic listener, advice, or concrete support. Research has shown that parents who are isolated, with few social connections, are at higher risk for child abuse and neglect.
- 5. **Concrete Supports for Parents:** Families who can meet their own basic needs for food, clothing, housing, and transportation—and who know how to access essential services such as child care, health care, and mental health services to address family-specific needs—are better able to ensure their children's safety and well-being. Some families may also need assistance connecting to social service supports such as alcohol and drug treatment, domestic violence counseling, or public benefits. When parents do not have steady financial resources, lack health insurance, or suffer a family crisis such as a natural disaster or the incarceration of a parent, their ability to care for their children may be at risk.



Family Support

An approach to strengthen & empower families that recognizes & honors families as having the primary responsibility for the development & well-being of children.



Mutual Self-Help

A process in which people who share common experiences, situations, or problems can offer each other a unique perspective that is not available from people who have not shared these experiences



Shared Leadership

Also known as "family involvement," meaning that everyone assumes leadership tasks & responsibilities, with the assumption that the collective wisdom held by each member can provide necessary support, information, & skills

Positive Fatherhood Involvement and Domestic Violence

- Fatherhood Involvement Discussion
- Domestic Violence Discussion
- Safety First Discussion

Why Positive Fatherhood Involvement is Important

- According to 72.2% of the U.S. population, fatherlessness is the most significant family or social problem facing America (Source: National Center for Fathering, Fathering in America Poll, January 1999).
- Over 20 years of growing research, funded by federal agencies, show the importance of fathers in the lives of their children.....high "positive" father involvement relates to "optimal" child development.

22

Program Components

- Parents
- Parent Leadership
- Children's Program
- Responsible Fatherhood
- Community Collaborating

23

Tools for Program Elements

- Parent led
- Facilitated by a trained professional (who is accountable & acts as a resource to group)
- Meet weekly (1 ½ - 2 hours), or bi-weekly
- Group is open-ended/ongoing
- Consistent structure, which is defined by the group

24

Program Elements Cont'

- Safe, convenient, non-threatening location
- Free, no charge
- Confidential within the limits of the law
- Non-judgmental
- Strength-based
- Understanding & respect for diversity

25

Program Elements Cont'

- Based on shared leadership
- Provide information about available community resources
- Children's program or child care
- "Trust the group" is an operating principle

26

Program Benefits/Impact

- Parents connecting with other parents & resources for support
- Group helping build self-confidence in themselves & their parenting abilities
- Parents learning and demonstrating problem-solving skills

27

Program Benefits/Impact Cont'

- Parents learning new ways to cope with stress & managing impulsive reactions
- Parents learning new parenting skills & becoming familiar with child development

28

Where are we Headed?

- Increase sites and educate local CAN Councils and community leaders
- Develop better outcome data – Protective Factor Pre/Post assessment evaluations (Joined a National Evaluation Plan Initiative – 2009).
- COP sites mentor new program sites
- Increased statewide participation with the National COP partners
- Decreased CAN and effective parenting that leads to increased family stability

29

CTF's Relationship

- Legislative Mandate for CB-CAP Grants available for:
 1. Non-Profit Lead Agencies that work with other State and community-based agencies, and provide T&A.
 2. Commitment to involve parents that can provide leadership in the community.

30



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