

## IN THIS ISSUE:

- Homeless Children: What Every Clinician Should Know
- DisneyHand Minnie Grants to Support Youth Service Day Efforts
- The Science of Early Childhood Development
- Input on Serving Homeless Families with Older Male Children Requested
- Improving TANF Agencies' Responses to Parents with Substance Abuse Disorders
- Child Welfare Agency Involvement Needed to Help End Homelessness
- National Survey Finds over 9 Million U.S. Children Have Special Health Care Needs
- New Chartbook on Early Child Development Available from the Commonwealth Fund
- Task force recommends vision screening for children younger than age 5
- Through Our Eyes: Artwork by Homeless Children
- NAEHCY Announces Sixth Annual LeTendre Education Fund Scholarships
- Healthy Eating & Active Living for Kids& Families
- Prevent Childhood Choking: It's Up to You!
- Upcoming events: Young Children Without Homes-A National Conference

## HOMELESS CHILDREN: WHAT EVERY CLINICIAN SHOULD KNOW

Dear Pediatric Interest Group Member,

I am pleased to share with you a recent article, "Homeless Children: What Every Clinicians Should Know," published in *Pediatrics in Review*, that I co-authored with my colleague, Catherine Karr, MD. As a seasoned homeless clinician, little will surprise you when you read the literature review and the techniques and recommendations for serving homeless children and their families. I'm sure you will understand that the most challenging part of the project was to keep within the page limits of the journal with so much to share.

When drafting the article I had two goals. One was to raise the awareness of the larger health care community to the needs of the homeless population. The second goal was to provide clinicians with specific techniques that can help provide client-centered services to homeless children. As a Pediatric Interest Group Member, I would appreciate it if you would join with me to achieve the goals. Please share the article and inform the health care community of the unique needs of homeless children.

Sincerely,

Susan Kline, MN, ARNP

*The article addresses how to recognize homelessness and the risk of becoming homeless, describes specific health problems affecting homeless children, recommends health care plan modifications and prevention strategies appropriate for homeless children, and lists resources on homelessness. To obtain a free reprint, write Susan Kline at [skline@nhchc.org](mailto:skline@nhchc.org); in the subject line of your message, please put Request for Reprint.*

\* \* \*

## DisneyHand Minnie Grants to Support Youth Service Day Efforts

Deadline: December 20, 2004

Youth Service America (<http://ysa.org>) has announced the availability of the **DisneyHand Minnie Grant** to help youth, teachers and organizations implement service projects for **National Youth Service Day**, April 15 - 17, 2005. National Youth Service Day is designed to mobilize Youth as leaders to identify and address the needs of their communities through service and service-learning; supports youth on a lifelong path of service and civic engagement; and educates the public, the media, and policymakers about the year-round contributions of young people as community leaders.

The program offers grants of \$500 each to engage young people between the ages of 5 and 14 to plan and carry out service projects for National and Global Youth Service Day 2005 that respond to community needs. The program encourages projects in which children and youth work with adults (parents, coaches, teachers, youth leaders, etc.) to help address community issues. Any young person between the ages of 5 and 14, or any teacher or organization that engages youth between the ages of 5 and 14, is eligible to apply. Applicants are asked to develop a service project that responds to a need in their community. Projects should engage youth in service that is age appropriate and addresses their concerns, skills and level of understanding.

For complete program guidelines and an application form, visit the Youth Service America website. RFP Link: [http://ysa.org/awards/award\\_grant.cfm](http://ysa.org/awards/award_grant.cfm). For additional RFPs for Children and Youth, visit: [http://fdncenter.org/pnd/rfp/cat\\_children.jhtml](http://fdncenter.org/pnd/rfp/cat_children.jhtml)  
source: RFP BULLETIN, a service of the Foundation Center | October 29, 2004 | Volume 5, Issue 44 | <http://fdncenter.org>

\* \* \*

## THE SCIENCE OF EARLY CHILDHOOD DEVELOPMENT

Public Health-Seattle & King County prepared a summary report of the book, *From Neurons to Neighborhoods: The Science of Early Childhood Development* published by the National Academy of Sciences in 2000. The report is intended for use by child advocates, elected public officials, planners, educators and interested members of the public who are concerned with child development.

The report intends to focus public attention on the social and economic forces that influence whether or not children have the opportunities necessary for positive development. While the everyday actions of individual parents, caregivers and teachers are key, it is the social, cultural and economic environments that determine whether these individuals are able to do the right things for their children. The Summary Report can be downloaded from the website at [www.metrokc.gov/health/reports/neurons-booklet.pdf](http://www.metrokc.gov/health/reports/neurons-booklet.pdf).

By strengthening advocacy, we can build public will to address the environmental factors that shape the prospects for young children. Because child health, well-being and competence all have essentially the same basic determinants, the objectives of a wide variety of private institutions and governmental departments, whether federal, state, county or city, can be met by supporting a common policy agenda.

A 14-point policy agenda based on this common knowledge has been developed by a group of King County and Washington State stakeholders and is summarized in a brochure entitled *From Neurons to King County Neighborhoods: The Science and Policies of Early Childhood Development*. The brochure is available from Public Health-Seattle & King County by calling 206 296-6817 or downloading it from the website at [www.metrokc.gov/health/reports/neurons.pdf](http://www.metrokc.gov/health/reports/neurons.pdf).

Source: *The Science of Early Childhood Development* | A Summary Report of *From Neurons to Neighborhoods* | Executive Summary

\* \* \*

### **Input on Serving Homeless Families with Older Male Children Requested**

The National Alliance to End Homelessness, in partnership with the National Network to End Domestic Violence, the National Coalition Against Domestic Violence, the National Policy Council on Homelessness and Poverty and VAWANet, is asking organizations that provide residential services to families with children to participate in a survey exploring how agencies are responding to families with older male children.

Some homeless and domestic violence programs report they are unable to serve families that include an older male child for a variety of reasons and have sought to develop alternative responses. Other programs report that they are able to keep the family intact in their residential programs. *The purpose of this study is to help those involved in policy advocacy better understand the challenges providers face in accommodating families and the positive strategies that have been undertaken by programs that might serve as program models and policy solutions.*

We are asking that one individual from each residential program fill out this survey. We would like to get a large cross-section of providers, including urban and rural programs and small and large facilities. Please feel free as well to forward the survey to other domestic violence and homeless service providers. Responses will be anonymous and cannot be traced to individuals or programs. The survey can be completed online at [www.surveymonkey.com/s.asp?u=31759386774](http://www.surveymonkey.com/s.asp?u=31759386774). Questions about the survey can be directed to Sharon McDonald at [smcdonald@naeh.org](mailto:smcdonald@naeh.org)  
source: National Alliance to End Homelessness | Online Newsletter | October 22, 2004

\* \* \*

### **Improving TANF Agencies' Responses to Parents with Substance Abuse Disorders**

A new guidebook is available that examines how TANF agencies can better respond to parents that have a substance abuse problem. The guidebook provides an overview of the prevalence of substance abuse among families on TANF, explores steps that some TANF agencies have taken to respond, includes screening tools and assessments that have been utilized by localities, and makes practical recommendations. The guidebook's authors assert that four dimensions of trust must be developed in order to effectively address substance abuse, including trust between TANF recipients and their caseworkers and trust between TANF recipients and the TANF agencies. In order to effectively serve families that include a parent with a substance abuse disorder, the guidebook suggests that agencies will have to build the capacity of their staff, examine and explore resources for substance abuse treatment within the community, and develop collaborative relationships and create confidentiality policies that support recipients in disclosing problems.

To download the report, *Talk & Trust: Identifying Substance Abuse Among Colorado Works Families*, visit <http://peerta.acf.hhs.gov/policies/barrier.htm#sub>  
source: National Alliance to End Homelessness | Online Newsletter | October 22, 2004

\* \* \*

### **Child Welfare Agency Involvement Needed to Help End Homelessness**

New research on the overlap of families with housing crises and families involved with child welfare agencies provides further evidence of the need to include local child welfare agencies in planning to end homelessness among families. A study by Mark Courtney, Steven McMurty and Andrew Zinn found that housing problems among families served by the child welfare agency in Milwaukee, Wisconsin, were "disturbingly common." The researchers found that a large number of families on caseloads reported needing help finding a place to live. However, caseworkers who were surveyed perceived a smaller number of families in need of housing assistance, and even fewer families actually received such assistance.

While housing problems were high among families receiving services to preserve families, it was much more severe among families whose children were placed in out-of-home care: 26 percent reported an eviction, 42 percent reported living in a doubled up situation and 29 percent reported experiencing homelessness. A homeless episode also had lasting consequences: when controlling for other risk factors, the researchers found that a recent homeless episode made it half as likely that a child in care would be reunified with his or her family.

A second study by Jung Min Park, Stephen Metraux, Gabriel Brodbar and Dennis Culhane found significant child welfare involvement among families who entered the homeless shelter programs in New York City in 1996. Sixteen percent of the 8,251 children who entered shelter in that year experienced an out-of-home placement within the five subsequent years examined. Involvement with the child welfare system seemed to "peak" in the year prior to entering a homeless shelter program and was much higher among children in families who had multiple homeless episodes, families who remained in the shelter system for a longer period of time and families who attributed their homelessness to domestic violence as opposed to economic issues. The researchers concluded that homelessness among families may strain the resources of child welfare agencies and alleviating those strains should be counted among the benefits of preventing homelessness or assessing the efficacy of housing interventions.

The above articles are included in the September/October issue of the **Child Welfare Journal** which is dedicated to examining housing/homelessness concerns for child welfare workers. The journal is available from the **Child Welfare League of America**, located on the web at [www.cwla.org](http://www.cwla.org)

\* \* \*

### **NATIONAL SURVEY FINDS OVER 9 MILLION U.S. CHILDREN HAVE SPECIAL HEALTH CARE NEEDS**

According to a new national survey, approximately 9 million children in the U.S. have special health care needs and require services beyond those provided for most children. The survey is available at <http://www.astho.org/newsletter/newsletters/8/display.php?u=Jmk9OCZwPTEyMCZzPTk4Mw%3D%3D>  
<<http://www.astho.org/newsletter/newsletters/8/display.php?u=Jmk9OCZwPTEyMCZzPTk4Mw%3D%3D>>

**SOURCE: Primary Care Network News | September 10, 2004**

\* \* \*

### **New Chartbook on Early Child Development Available from the Commonwealth Fund**

The Commonwealth Fund recently released a chartbook on early childhood development that examines over 30 key indicators of health and development for children up to the age of six. **"Early Child Development in Social Context: A Chartbook"** also examines social factors in families

and communities that affect health and developmental outcomes and offers practical implications for providers and parents. According to the chartbook, many American children, especially those from low-income or minority families, are not achieving their full potential because of problems that go unrecognized or untreated. The chartbook also says that despite increased attention to children's development, many young children fail to receive the social, developmental and health care support they need to be ready for school. To access the chartbook, go to [www.cmwf.org/publications/publications\\_show.htm?doc\\_id=237483](http://www.cmwf.org/publications/publications_show.htm?doc_id=237483).

**SOURCE: Primary Care Network News | September 10, 2004**

\* \* \*

### **TASK FORCE RECOMMENDS VISION SCREENING FOR CHILDREN YOUNGER THAN AGE FIVE**

Children who are younger than five years of age should be screened in the primary care setting for vision problems, including lazy eye, crossed eyes, and near- and far-sightedness, according to a recommendation from the U.S. Preventive Services Task Force. The screening for visual impairment in children younger than five years of age recommendations and materials for clinicians are available on the [Agency for Healthcare Research & Quality](http://www.ahrq.gov) website at [www.ahrq.gov](http://www.ahrq.gov). Summaries of the evidence, easy-to-read fact sheets explaining the recommendations and related materials are available from the AHRQ Publications Clearinghouse by calling 800 358-9295 or use the online order form at [http://www.ahrq.gov/news/pubcat/c\\_order.htm](http://www.ahrq.gov/news/pubcat/c_order.htm). Clinical information is also available from the National Guideline Clearinghouse at [www.guideline.gov](http://www.guideline.gov).

**Source: Research Activities | June 2004**

\* \* \*

### **Through Our Eyes: Artwork by Homeless Children**

[Entergy KidsFree Children's Art Gallery](http://www.cacno.org/education-gallerylist.html) in New Orleans presents Through Our Eyes: Artwork by Homeless Children, October 2 - December 19. An exhibition of artwork by homeless children, organized by DrawBridge, an arts program for homeless children in San Rafael, California. Angels at the Inn, featuring artwork by local homeless children, will also be on display in the Entergy KidsFree Children's Art Gallery. [www.cacno.org/education-gallerylist.html](http://www.cacno.org/education-gallerylist.html)

**source: The NPACH Report, Vol. 1, No. 9 | National Policy & Advocacy Council on Homelessness**

\* \* \*

### **NAEHCY Announces Sixth Annual LeTendre Education Fund Scholarships**

Twelve students received the sixth annual LeTendre Education Fund for Homeless Children scholarship award at the [National Association for the Education of Homeless Children and Youth](http://www.npach.org) conference held in St. Paul, Minnesota, on October 17. The awards were established in memory of André LeTendre, husband of Mary Jean LeTendre. Mary Jean LeTendre is the former Director of Compensatory Education Programs at the U.S. Department of Education. The LeTendre Fund provides scholarship assistance to students who are, or have been, homeless. The scholarships are a one-time award of \$1,000 to help defray the costs of higher education. Read the LeTendre Scholarships press release at [www.npach.org/letendre.pdf](http://www.npach.org/letendre.pdf)

**source: The NPACH Report, Vol. 1 No. 9 | National Policy & Advocacy Council on Homelessness**

\* \* \*

## HEALTHY EATING & ACTIVE LIVING FOR KIDS & FAMILIES

The International Food Information Council Foundation introduces the new Kidnetic.com *Leader's Guide to Healthy Eating & Active Living for Kids & Families*, a resource that allows health professionals, educators and community youth organizations to conduct lessons and activities on healthy lifestyles with kids ages 9 to 12 years. The *Leader's Guide* is based on content from **Kidnetic.com**, an interactive educational website designed to appeal to kids ages 9 - 12 and their parents and consists of a services of modules featuring lessons that teach kids about fitness, food, fun, feelings and family dynamics. The *Leader's Guide* can be downloaded from the site at <http://ific.org/kidnetic> at no cost.

Source: *Food Insight* | May/June 2004

\* \* \*

## PREVENT CHILDHOOD CHOKING

*Prevent Childhood Choking: It's Up to You!* is a colorful, two-sided poster in both English and Spanish that can help parents and caregivers take the necessary steps to prevent childhood choking on food or other objects. Developed in partnership with the **National SAFE KIDS Campaign**. Single copies free; multiple copies \$1.50 each. To order, contact the International Food Information Council Foundation at 1100 Connecticut Avenue NW, Suite 430, Washington, DC 20036.

Source: *Food Insight* | May/June 2004

\* \* \*

## UPCOMING EVENTS

Horizons for Homeless Children is sponsoring **Young Children Without Homes: A National Conference**, to be held April 27 - 19 in Boston, MA. The conference will focus on the issue of child and family homelessness and its effect on young children (0 - 5); cross-systems training; networking and collaboration; and strategies and solutions. For more information, visit [www.horizonsforhomelesschildren.org](http://www.horizonsforhomelesschildren.org) or contact Karin Elliott at 617 287-1900 x 135 or [kelliott@horizonsforhomelesschildren.org](mailto:kelliott@horizonsforhomelesschildren.org).

# # #

--

This Pediatrics Interest Group e-mail update is brought to you by the Health Care for the Homeless Clinicians' Network. We invite you to share your opinion on issues of concern to the pediatrics community. Plus, we welcome your feedback. If you have comments or suggestions for improvements to the newsletter, please send them to the Pediatrics Interest Group newsletter editor, Brenda Proffitt, at [bproffitt@nhchc.org](mailto:bproffitt@nhchc.org).

If you decide to cancel your subscription, please send a blank e-mail to [network@nhchc.org](mailto:network@nhchc.org), and put Leave Pediatric Interest Group in the Subject line of your message.

Virtually yours,  
Brenda Proffitt