

DRAFT

**COMMUNITY PARTNERSHIPS FOR
PROTECTING CHILDREN**

**DOCUMENTATION
OF THE
FIRST YEAR**

Prepared For:
The Edna McConnell Clark Foundation

By:
Center for the Study of Social Policy
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PREFACE

At the onset of the Community Partnerships for Protecting Children initiative, the Foundation and the Center for the Study of Social Policy made a commitment to chronicle significant events, insights, course corrections, and results. The following pages represent our effort to reflect the scope, content, and challenges of work in each of the four initiative sites—information we hope will be useful to those who endeavor to improve the safety of children and the strength of families.

This document results from the work of a strong partnership between Center staff and the skilled consultants working in each site: Francie Zimmerman in Cedar Rapids, Iowa; Patricia Schene and Marno Cook in Jacksonville, Florida; Sara Barwinski in St. Louis, Missouri, and Jean McIntosh in Louisville, Kentucky. Francie Zimmerman coordinated and edited the document, working with Center staff Frank Farrow and Jean McIntosh to craft the overview.

Especially, we commend our many partners in each site. Your work is the centerpiece of this document.

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COMMUNITY PARTNERSHIPS FOR PROTECTING CHILDREN

DOCUMENTATION OVERVIEW

REFLECTIONS ON A YEAR OF PLANNING

INTRODUCTION

The purpose of this report is to chronicle the events that occurred in the four localities selected by the Edna McConnell Clark Foundation to develop Community Partnerships for Protecting Children. It was written with several audiences in mind. For the people who have worked diligently within the sites, they now have a case study that describes the process they went through to craft their own Partnership. For people who live and work in other communities and are interested in the issue of child safety, there are ideas within this report that are provocative and lessons that could be instructive to future efforts to build Community Partnerships for Protecting Children. For national experts, advocates, policymakers, and public officials, there is information about how the sites involved diverse constituents in their work to safeguard children, and there are numerous program strategies that could be adapted in other locations.

The four cities that are forging Community Partnerships—Cedar Rapids, Iowa; Jacksonville, Florida; Louisville, Kentucky; and St. Louis, Missouri—would be the first to emphasize that their Partnerships are works in progress. The attached case studies are reflections on a one year to fifteen month planning period. There is much more to be learned. However, individuals who are closely involved with implementing change often wish they had taken the time to write about their experiences from the start. Too often, local leaders lack historical information they can use to inform and guide their reform efforts. This report is an attempt to capture that history as it unfolds—to tell the story of four places that are grappling with the complex question of how a community should respond to the troubling problem of child abuse.

ORIGINS

The Edna McConnell Clark Foundation's interest in improving child protective services stems from a long-standing commitment to strengthening the nation's child welfare system. Beginning with its focus on permanency planning for children during the 1970's and continuing with over a decade of investment in Intensive Family Preservation Services, the Foundation's Children's Program has been dedicated to helping states and communities create child welfare services that are effective in assuring permanent, safe families for all children.

Prior to devising a specific strategy, Foundation staff spent more than a year talking with Child Protective Services staff and administrators, child advocates, service providers, families, and national experts about the challenges facing child protective services (CPS). Despite the very different roles

these people play within CPS, there was a surprising degree of consensus about the problems of the current CPS systems.

- Many families who come to the CPS agency's attention don't belong there and could be helped by less authoritarian interventions. In the absence of other supports for families, the reach of formal CPS has expanded beyond original intentions.
- Even for families who are appropriately reported to CPS, the range of available interventions is limited. Too many CPS agencies use a uniform investigatory approach, narrowly focused on the alleged incident, and follow-up with limited case management services. When faced with a wide variation in family situations, workers often lack the range of interventions they need to be effective.
- Protecting children is seen as the exclusive province of the public CPS agency, yet this agency does not command the resources essential for the task, and is frequently isolated from other service providers, neighborhood-based organizations, and the extended family and informal supports necessary to keep children safe.
- Community-based organizations and individuals who have frequent contact with families often do not see child safety as part of their responsibility and are not involved in devising and carrying-out strategies that can support families and prevent abuse.

Based on its analysis of the current CPS system, the Foundation began to develop the concept of a **community partnership for child protection** that is more comprehensive, more preventive, more a part of local neighborhoods, and more focused on outcomes. The Foundation, which historically had targeted its support to states, determined that to try out the precepts of a Community Partnership it needed to focus on smaller jurisdictions—sites that could define and implement activities in specific neighborhoods. It is the people and places in neighborhoods that families rely on to meet many of their daily needs and who are often the first to be aware of problems that can place children in jeopardy. It is these same individuals and institutions that can offer timely assistance to help a parent and prevent a child from being harmed.

To be effective, Partnerships would need to build on local strengths and ensure that their activities are tailored to local circumstances. To implement such a system would require new roles and responsibilities for public agencies, parents, community organizations, service providers, the courts, civic leaders, and interested citizens. It would require policy, program, and practice changes within local and state agencies. It would require new public education strategies to engage a broader constituency in child protection. It would require new ways of working with informal neighborhood resources that can provide the day-to-day support families need.

DEFINING THE INITIATIVE

The long-term goal of a reformed child protection system is to assist all families at-risk of abuse and neglect and to try to ensure the safety of children. Recognizing the scope of this task, the Foundation decided to focus its initial work with sites on three specific outcomes:

1. **Children in the neighborhood targeted by this initiative will be less likely to be abused or neglected.** Communities want and need to respond to families before stress and problems escalate to the point where children are harmed.
2. **Children who come to the attention of CPS will be less likely to be re-abused or neglected.** While no system can guarantee safety 100 percent of the time for all children, current CPS services are too often ineffective in preventing repeat occurrences of abuse and neglect.
3. **The rate of serious injury to children, due to abuse or neglect will decline in participating neighborhoods.** Although instances of serious injury or death do not constitute the majority of child abuse reports, these are the cases, understandably, that unnerve community residents. At a minimum, community members want to know that every possible measure has been taken so that children in their neighborhood can be kept safe from severe harm.

Conceptualizing sound and robust strategies for promoting and supporting the outcomes for Community Partnerships was a challenging and adventuresome task. To assist with this effort, a *Strategy Group* was formed to serve as a “kitchen cabinet” to the Foundation, including national leaders with experience in addressing child protection reform, technical assistance grantees, staff from the Center for the Study for Social Policy, as well as the coordinators who had been selected to work intensively with each one of the sites.

Meeting approximately every six weeks, this Strategy Group (convened and staffed by the Center for the Study of Social Policy) provided guidance, direction, and clear expectations to the sites, while simultaneously learning from the sites’ experiences and ideas as their work proceeded. Group members wrestled with articulating a clear conceptual framework that would give definition to the complex idea of a Community Partnership for Protecting Children. It was an iterative process—with the key ideas being reviewed, revised and refined over the course of many months. Key concepts developed through the Strategy Group process included:

- an organizational structure for managing the work of the initiative, with the Center serving as administrator for site coordination, technical assistance, site proposal preparation and review, and convener of all-site meetings and special focus forums;

- assignment of responsibility to individual Strategy Group members for overseeing substantive areas of technical assistance (e.g., evaluation, parental involvement, frontline practice), thereby providing improved coordination of information;
- development of a “strategic map” of key areas which sites would address during the planning process (for example, evaluation, community engagement, financing); this map became the springboard for the Strategic Plan Outline which served as the content outline for implementation proposals developed by the sites; and
- delineation of outcomes and key benchmarks to measure success of the initiative’s strategies.

Because the Foundation was very well aware of the complexities of the endeavor the sites had undertaken, it funded an array of technical assistance (TA) to help the sites. Areas in which assistance was provided included: strategic planning, frontline practice and family support, parental involvement, governance, communications, policy and administration, evaluation and information systems, and financing. These areas constituted the core technical assistance “domains”—relevant to all sites and corresponding to needs the sites identified. In addition, the sites could avail themselves of experts in select substantive areas such as domestic violence, family assessments, and substance abuse.

Midway through the planning period, as work in the sites evolved, it became clear that there were some components of the Partnerships which were similar across sites. As the Strategy Group examined these common elements, a “theory of change” hypothesis emerged suggesting that four elements are *essential* to a Community Partnership for Child Protection. While detailed descriptions are still being negotiated with site teams, each site has agreed that as part of its design it will:

1. **Develop a “safety plan”**—a set of services and supports to assure safety—specific to each child identified in a community as at risk of maltreatment or as having suffered maltreatment;
2. **Strengthen the policies and practices of the public CPS agency.** In particular, the CPS agency will implement a more individualized initial response to families; intervene with families more aggressively to prevent recurrence of abuse and neglect; and share service delivery responsibilities with new partners in the community;
3. **Create a “community safety network” through which the formal agencies and informal resources** which make up the network will collaborate on specific strategies to keep children safe; and
4. **Establish a decision-making process and structure** by which the community will involve residents in designing the Community Partnership, and assure accountability to the desired outcomes.

The process of exchange and dialogue between site teams and the Strategy Group, which continues to refine the initiative's "theory of change" and other key concepts, is a mark of the growing mutual support and reliance among the initiative's primary partners: the Foundation, the Center for the Study of Social Policy, Strategy Group, technical assistance consultants, and the sites.

SITES' ACTIVITIES

In the Spring of 1995, the Foundation, working closely with staff from the Center for the Study of Social Policy, began to identify prospective sites interested in testing new approaches to child protection. By September 1995, the Foundation had awarded grants of \$175,000 over 15 months to Cedar Rapids and Jacksonville. Three months later, St. Louis and Louisville respectively, received one-year grants of \$125,000 and \$140,000.

During the planning period, sites were expected to develop a strategic plan for creating a community system for protecting children using the three outcomes as the base for their plans. They were also expected to implement some aspect of their plan—to ensure that sites' efforts would entail some early action. Assuming that the sites made adequate progress through this initial phase, the Foundation intended to continue to support the sites's implementation efforts for an additional three years.

As the attached case studies reflect, a lot was accomplished in a relatively short time period. The planning process in each site was unique, building on the specific circumstances, skills, and personalities in each location. Generally, the process began with getting the core group to the table. The group then began grappling with the vision and goals, worked to enlarge participation, got serious about devising strategies, and finally, drafted the operational plan.

The sites engaged in a logical, forward-moving process to develop their Community Partnerships, but that's not the full story. In fact, as was appropriate, the sites moved back and forth through various stages of development during the planning period. The core group enlisted new partners throughout the year (and continues to involve new members). Periodically, each site has had to return to its original mission to help orient new partners. Program strategies are revised as the first-hand experiences of workers and families demonstrate what's working and what's not. Just as the Strategy Group regularly reviewed and improved on its conceptual work, the sites, too, incorporated lessons from their own experience, responded to new ideas proposed by TA providers, and learned more about what is taking place in other sites and other parts of the country.

With support, advice and, at times, prodding, all four sites completed ambitious and impressive strategic plans. The length of the plans alone -- more than 100 pages per site -- attest to the volume of work. The complexity of strategies attests to their thoughtfulness. The people committed to carrying out the plans attest to the sites success at enrolling new partners and the strength of local leadership. Here is a planning year "capsule" of each site's activities:

Cedar Rapids developed program strategies that are clearly linked to outcomes and has developed detailed work plans that, when fully implemented, should result in a truly comprehensive community-based system of child protection. It made strides in crafting a response to the inter-related problems of child abuse and domestic violence. The site was slower to recruit parents to hold positions of authority within the Partnership's decision-making body. And, in the broader context, Cedar Rapids had to contend with a hostile environment, as attorneys and other advocates voiced strong opposition to the state's CPS reform, moving from investigations to assessments of families reported to CPS.

Jacksonville is implementing some of the most significant state-led change in its CPS system including elimination of its child abuse registry, and changing to a family assessment and service response for all child abuse reports. Its Community Support Agreement is a tangible way of getting friends, families, and neighbors to be extra "eyes and ears" looking out for the well-being of an individual child. Jacksonville is still in the process of forging ties with the Oversight Committee for one of its Full Service Schools and in enlisting community-based resources as part of the broad safety network.

In Louisville, parents hold key decision making positions, and their input has influenced all aspects of its plan. Central to Louisville's approach is a practice model, called Family Solutions, that helps families find concrete solutions to their problems and prevents relapses into old behaviors that place children at risk. Unlike the other sites, Louisville did not have concomitant state-initiated CPS reform. This was truly a local effort with strong public agency partners and support from the Family Court. Because Louisville devoted a great deal of time ensuring that all participants felt respected and were clear about their roles, the site then had to do some fast catch-up work on developing program strategies to complete its strategic plan within the prescribed time frame.

In St. Louis, state CPS changes were already underway and the Partnership had strong roots in a community, specifically the neighborhoods surrounding the Sigel school. One of the innovations in St. Louis involves work with a local day care center that is willing to conduct assessments for families whose children attend its centers if they are reported for child abuse. The St. Louis site had to spend time trying to unscramble turf issues between the school and Caring Communities, a state sponsored, school-based, family services program. In addition, the Collaborative had an ongoing struggle to manage the "full plate" agenda it had taken on because of the limited staff resources available at the school.

OBSERVATIONS ABOUT THE PLANNING YEAR

In addition to the detailed descriptions of the activities that took place in the sites during the planning period, each case study looks at how the site handled five key issues:

- how the context influenced the course of the sites' development

- the process and speed of parent and citizen engagement;
- the way in which the site grappled with the issue of safety and its importance;
- who the site engaged in the safety network and why;
- an overall assessment of where the site is in developing its community partnerships.

This section aggregates some of the key observations on each of these topics from all four sites.

1. The Importance of Context

Obviously, the development of Community Partnerships depends strongly on the local and state context. All of these sites were chosen in part because a foundation had been built. All four had already moved to creating some type of neighborhood-based, family support centers (be it community education centers, family resource centers, full services schools, or Neighborhood Places). All four had established collaboratives of public and private entities that aimed to improve outcomes for families. Although each site holds several elements of the initiative in common, each site is a unique "community development" exercise. After all, what the sites are developing is not a program, not a single agency's solution to a problem, nor is it an agency-based, collaborative response. It is a response being shared by many sectors in the community, and by multiple levels of government. At this early stage, it is important to be aware of the many different ways that context is shaping the initiative.

- ***The decision to anchor these Partnerships in neighborhoods shapes all aspects of the initiative.*** All of the Partnerships' plans are built on "place-based" strategies. Not only are sites focusing on geographic areas, the locus for much of their activities are community-based, family centers. All of the sites have had complicated negotiations related to "venue"—ironing out the details of moving workers and all of their equipment into neighborhoods, and, at the same time, trying to preserve or create an atmosphere that is welcoming and not intimidating to families. But beyond operational details, the neighborhood focus has set a unique tone for the Partnerships that is harder to capture. For example, it means that maps have been a very important tool for planning strategies and identifying resources because they clearly depict a community. It means that large agencies have learned the "lay of land" in particular neighborhoods. And, neighborhood residents have gotten to know service providers in a new and different context.
- ***Leadership for the Partnership can come from different places.*** Three of the four sites were in the midst of state-led CPS reform. In three of the four sites, school facilities are the primary "home base" for the Partnership. All have public-private collaboratives and are organizing services providers into neighborhood-based teams. But all are at very different levels in terms of the maturity and capacity of both their community-based and jurisdiction-

wide efforts. As a result of these distinctions, leadership for the Partnership has coalesced at different levels. In St. Louis, for instance, the energy and heart of the initiative is very much in the Sigel neighborhood. In Jacksonville, the activities have been spearheaded by city-wide agencies. In Louisville and Cedar Rapids, there has been a dual focus on county-wide and neighborhood activities. The good news for other places interested in starting to develop a community-based system for child protection is that it seems feasible to do it from a variety of starting points.

- ***Despite competing priorities, sites can make progress on forging a child safety agenda.*** All of the sites are in the midst of additional reform efforts. While many of the goals overlap (generally related to improving outcomes for children and strengthening families) and often target the same geographic area, the sites at times found it taxing to manage multiple initiatives. At its worst, sites found themselves dealing with conflict over turf or a sense of initiative overload. At its best, the presence of other new programs and change efforts can add new allies and strengthen the base of support for community-based child protection. Though at varied stages of resolution, all of the sites have made progress at clarifying the connection between the Partnership and other projects, and in many instances have found ways for their efforts to be mutually reinforcing through strategies such as sharing data, developing joint training and staff development plans, and coordinating outreach to parents. Over time, as local governance structures evolve, there are likely to be new skills, techniques, and technologies that will help local leaders deal with the demands of being managers and innovators.

2. The Process and Speed of Parent and Citizen Engagement

One of the most important activities for the sites this past year had been involving parents and citizens (who are not professionally affiliated with the Partnerships) in the development of the Community Partnership. Parental involvement is not just a matter of "parents being represented." When trying to ensure child safety, the issue is more fundamental and more critical than that. Children can not be safe unless parents take responsibility for keeping them safe—first in their own homes, then as the closest (both in terms of proximity and in terms of relationship) partner in any community effort to safeguard children.

While the sites have made significant progress in engaging citizens and thinking more broadly about ways in which they should participate, there is still much yet to be learned about how parents and citizens' roles will develop. Parents and citizens have brought important vitality and insights to the Partnership, yet participating in such an initiative is not without its serious challenges. For all the members of the "teams" that have taken up the responsibility of crafting the Partnership, there are complex and challenging questions that go to the core of people's own identity and values. After all, at the heart of the Partnerships is the problem of child abuse, an issue that raises very

fundamental questions for people about their own experiences as a child and as a parent, and how they view family relationships.

While the Partnerships have begun to pay attention to the important and multiple “role” that parents and community representatives can play, in fact *all* participants play several roles. Many staff members and administrators are parents too. Workers may also be residents of the area targeted by the initiative. Families who have been CPS “clients” may also be volunteers in their community. Role definition for all partners is complex and sometimes ambiguous, but ultimately, the variety of perspectives people bring has served to enrich the Partnerships.

Some observations about parent and citizen engagement:

- ***Professionals are reluctant to involve parents.*** This reluctance takes many forms. Sometimes it is in the form of "let's wait until later, so we can really do it right." Other times, it is in the form of "Well, parents aren't interested in these activities," or "We know what they think of us already." Some times it is in the form of "We want to work with parents, but we don't know how." Whatever the reason, there is a seemingly typical resistance.
- ***Technical assistance can make a significant difference in engaging parents and others.*** Working in communities is not an intuitive skill for most people. And, for many these are not skills that they have been taught in the course of their professional development. Activities participants have found useful include: pairing parent leaders with agency leaders so they have an opportunity to learn from each other; giving parents a chance to meet together and prepare as a group for events and presentations; ensuring that there are opportunities for participants to gather informally and get acquainted; having parents review and comment on draft written materials, especially those aimed at the general public; taking time to find a way of working together that is accessible and respectful to all group members.
- ***The sites' experience suggests that parents should be full participants from the beginning.*** All sites report qualitative differences in the content and breadth of the discussions when parents are represented in force and with a true voice.
- ***This is a process that takes time.*** Sites have made major progress, but in the years to come we suspect that we will look back on where we are now and realize we have just scratched the surface in terms of partnership development.
- ***The roles and activities undertaken by parents and citizens are varied and creative,*** more diverse than the official "parent" jobs that professionals tend to define. Parents are inventing their own roles, and doing much more than attending meetings. They are going door-to-door to canvass their community. They are learning to use computer technology. They are producing newsletters and brochures. They are organizing pot-luck meals and recreational

activities. They are interviewing prospective staff members. And, as parents have traditionally done, they are looking out for each others children.

3. The way the sites grappled with safety.

On the surface it seems odd to even raise the issues of safety. After all, the whole Community Partnership initiative is about child safety and that was clearly stated from its very inception. The sites are discovering that the focus on safety is not as easy to maintain as might at first be assumed. Again, future efforts will reveal even more about how to introduce and maintain a focus on child safety within the new context of a Community Partnership. Based on the planning year, certain lessons have surfaced.

- ***Discussing safety in a neighborhood is a broader issue than child maltreatment as traditionally defined by CPS.*** Legally, maltreatment is defined as abuse or neglect, where there is evidence of harm or risk of harm, to a child (under age 18) by his/her parent, guardian, or caretaker. But for communities, their concerns regarding children's safety are much broader. Their very real fears include guns in schools, drugs on the street, gang violence threatening their neighborhood. For some community members, harm or threats of harm from parents and caretakers, seems to be the least of their worries.

This does not mean that community residents and non-professionals do not care about child abuse. They do, and they are willing to make it the focus of their efforts. But, if the "maltreatment" component of the safety agenda is to be taken seriously, the Partnership must display an understanding that reducing child abuse and neglect is only one of the concerns residents have for children's safety. Operationally, this means that in most sites the comfort level with focusing on this one aspect of safety took some time to achieve.

- ***It is difficult to talk about child abuse because, given the Partnerships' neighborhood focus, it is so "close to home."*** Sites have begun to look more closely at child abuse data, and, for some partners this is the first time they are reviewing this kind of information. It is disturbing to look at patterns of child maltreatment and family violence. It can be difficult for individuals if it causes them to reflect on their own experiences: in their homes, with their neighbors in their community. These are tough issues, and it is hard to look at them "up close."
- ***Even when it is achieved, maintaining a focus on safety is not simple.*** In fact, maintaining a focus on any one thing may be difficult in a collaborative process with so many different partners and different agencies. The breadth of the Community Partnership agenda sometimes interferes with expressing a singular, core message. As a result people have to keep reminding themselves what the core goal is. Also, there is some tendency to be more excited about the preventive strategies—because they are new and because people are most enthusiastic about the prospect of stopping abuse before it begins. In fact, the sites have not

been as creative in crafting strategies for intervening with families after serious abuse has already occurred.

Over time, we expect the sites will get more accustomed to thinking outside of the traditional confines of how CPS has operated. For many of the partners, this year has been the first sustained exposure to safety issues. In that light, there has been remarkable adherence and cross-system ownership of safety as a goal. How to sustain and maintain that goal, is something we are still learning about.

Sites are now beginning to refine and implement more innovative strategies to ensure safety. For instance, several of the sites are looking at the intersection of child abuse with domestic violence and are offering training to staff that work in both sectors so that they are better able to recognize and respond to all aspects of family violence. In all of the sites, CPS staff are out-stationed in community centers where they work in close collaboration with other agency staff and community leaders. As a result, seasoned CPS workers are available to serve as “safety consultants” to confer with their colleagues about families’ situations when they are concerned about safety but the situation does not necessitate a child abuse report.

4. Who is part of the safety network and why?

The safety networks in the sites have grown enormously over the planning year. They are all much broader than when they started, and they include parents and citizens as key members. The final composition of these networks is not set, and it is likely to keep changing for at least another year (perhaps longer), but there are some general conclusions about who is a part of these networks and the roles they play.

- ***The core agency members*** tend to be schools, child care and pre-school programs, parents, health and mental health agencies, family support service providers, police, community representatives (e.g. neighborhood associations or local faith communities) and of course the public child welfare agency.
- ***In all of the sites, schools are playing a very important role often second in significance to the CPS agency.*** However, the sites have had to grapple with various issues in negotiating the relationship between school and child safety. Some of the issues have been:
 - convincing teachers and educators that safety should rank high on their agendas;
 - being reciprocal in interest—non-education partners should care about success in school, just as the educators are expected to care about safety;
 - learning more about functioning within the culture of schools, because in all four sites, schools are host to an array of other family services.

- ***The Partnerships are not dominated by the public CPS agency.*** In each site, private sector and community organizations are influential sources of leadership. The key CPS administrators have been courageous in their willingness to take risks, promote change, and encourage others to take leadership in an area that they have long "owned," pretty much by themselves, for better or worse.
- ***The balance of professional versus citizen members is far from resolved.*** The process of resident and citizen engagement is still evolving, and there are many difficult questions about control of the Partnerships that have yet to be answered. At this early state, the trend is toward more citizen ownership. Where this will balance out is still to be discovered.
- ***There are still important players who are not at the table.*** There are sectors that the sites know need to be represented and who have a role to play because they work with families that the Partnership is targeting. All of the sites need to involve substance abuse treatment programs. With the welfare reform now underway, the sites will need to seek greater participation from economic development and employment programs that will be critical to helping parents obtain jobs. Currently, Louisville is the only site with a close tie to the Family Court, a linkage the other sites want to pursue. Cedar Rapids has strong participation from a range of private services providers; the other sites are working to engage additional providers in their activities.

Finally, there are additional groups that the Partnerships would like to include but for whom a particular role and level of involvement are not yet clear, such as the business community and academics.

5. The Challenges Ahead

All of the sites have made impressive progress in the past year. Each has established a diverse group of community leaders committed to creating a Community Partnership that will protect children and support families. Each site has developed specific strategies which, while requiring refinement, are designed to achieve the initiative's three outcomes. All four of the communities have implemented some part of their plan. More families are being served, safety strategies are being intensified, and more informal neighborhood resources are being involved in child protection.

At the same time, all the sites as well as the Foundation and its technical assistance providers recognize that the challenges ahead are enormous. The first year has pointed to areas in which further work must be done and even more creative thinking will be required. Both for the sites and for the Foundation and its TA providers, success will depend in large measure on how well these challenges are met.

Challenges for the sites

Several challenges will be particularly important in the next year:

- ***Decisions must be even more data driven.*** All the sites want to have their decisions based on the most thorough, most complete, and most accurate picture of child, family, and community safety that they can obtain. All have already had experiences where a small amount of relevant data can “open people’s eyes” and act as a catalyst for change. Yet even reviewing data regularly, let alone using it to shape decisions, is not frequently done in child welfare, and all sites are likely to need encouragement, practice, and technical assistance for this to become more routine. The planned development of a “self-evaluation” capacity as part of the Foundation-sponsored evaluation should help with this challenge.
- ***Neighborhood-based service delivery requires new forms of management support and training.*** The Community Partnership strategy depends on effective services being available to families in their neighborhoods, with greater flexibility to respond to families’ needs. The initiative’s four sites are developing neighborhood service strategies which are among the most innovative in the nation. Yet these will be of limited value if they are not supported well. This requires developing good techniques for training cross-agency teams of workers; supervising and supporting decentralized work teams; creating practice models that recognize the central role of natural neighborhood supports; and reconfiguring workload standards to reflect the fact that some workers will serve communities rather than carry “caseloads.”
- ***Accountability structures will be essential for Community Partnerships.*** The initiative’s approach depends on many new agencies and people within a community feeling some responsibility for protecting children. Yet what few accountability structures exist are based on single agency accountability. The CPS agency is accountable for child protection, the school is accountable for education, and so forth. While the CPS agency will retain primary responsibility for the highest risk cases, the responsibility under a Community Partnership approach is more broadly dispersed. If some form of “shared accountability” process is not developed at the same time that responsibility is shared, the Partnerships are unlikely to hold together when partners, for whatever reason, tire of their voluntary participation or are faced with an unanticipated crisis. This challenge requires the sites to think as creatively about accountability structures as they have about service delivery.
- ***The initiatives will have to maintain their course in the face of multiple reforms.*** During this first year, the initiatives have been fueled in part by the excitement of being new. Development of Community Partnerships has attracted professional attention nationally to these communities, and some local media attention as well. The spotlight has helped people to devote extraordinary time and attention to this work.

As time passes, this initiative will have to maintain its claim on resources and attention while many other human service reforms are underway. Welfare reform is the most dramatic example, but in each of the sites, leaders have identified the struggle they have with what they see as a “mushrooming” of new initiatives.

The solution to this challenge will require strategic, political, and collaborative skills on the part of state and local leaders. The answer, of course, is not to compete with these other changes, but to find ways to interact effectively with them without losing the focus of the Community Partnership effort. There is no single “answer” to this dilemma. It is an ongoing challenge that sites will have to solve again and again as different situations arise.

The first year has not only identified challenges for sites. The Foundation and its technical assistance partners have challenges ahead as well.

Challenges for the Foundation and its partners

People working in the sites have communicated to the Center and the Foundation about several ways to strengthen the work of the overall initiative. In addition, technical assistance providers are considering ways in which they can continue to improve the effectiveness of their work. Several challenges seem most pressing:

- ***Technical assistance should build local capacity.*** Sites have relied on technical assistance (TA) from outside sources to help facilitate the planning process and to share particular expertise. During the planning year, there were times when sites were in danger of “overload” as TA visits overwhelmed calendars.

The goal for the Center (in their role as TA coordinator), for TA providers, and for sites in the next year is to become more skilled at prioritizing TA and especially to ensure that it builds local capacity. The goal is to reduce reliance on national TA, and instead to (1) emphasize the type of “peer consultation” that sites can receive from one another, and (2) cultivate and build local skills in these substantive areas. Strategies that should help to ensure that that occurs include: pairing outside experts with a local person; emphasizing activities that promote the transfer of skills, e.g., teaching people to facilitate their own planning process rather than sending in facilitators; making sure that training sessions include an opportunity for a local person to be trained, and so forth. The Center will be working with all TA providers to help them develop an explicit plan for transferring some of their skills to build local capacity.

- ***The messages to sites must be as consistent and as timely as possible.*** During this first year, the framework for the initiative was developed incrementally. The Foundation and the national Strategy Group were developing further detail about the expectations for the sites at the same time that the sites were engaged in local planning. This resulted, for example,

in the four essential elements of the Community Partnership strategy (described earlier) being discussed with sites in May of this year, two months after the strategic plan guidelines were distributed.

The sites have not complained about this “learning while doing” pattern, since they understand that the Foundation, the sites, and the technical assistance providers are all engaged in a learning process. However, as sites begin implementation, it will be critical to minimize or eliminate “changed directions.” This requires that the Foundation and its national partners think well in advance about frameworks, ideas, technologies, and strategies that can help the sites, and then get this information to them as early as possible. It also requires that the sites be seen as full partners in planning and decision-making, as they are translators of vision into results.

The long-term challenge: achieving scale

A final challenge pertains equally to the sites, the Foundation, and to TA providers. This is the challenge of developing Community Partnerships in a way that allows them to be feasible on a large scale. If this new approach is to indeed be the future direction for cities’, counties’, and states’ child protection systems, it must address the needs of large numbers of children and be implemented in many places simultaneously.

This challenge does not alter the initiative’s basic charge over the next several years: to prove that Community Partnerships are viable and effective on a smaller scale. However, even in these early days, the architects and implementers of this approach should be considering these issues, and basing their small-scale designs on principles that will eventually make large scale implementation possible.

CONCLUSION

The issue at the heart of the Community Partnership approach is, “Can the responsibility for keeping children safe from abuse and neglect be shared more broadly within a community, and thus protect children more effectively?”

Based on the first year of the initiative, the results are encouraging.

- New community agencies and neighborhood resources are becoming partners—with one another and with the CPS agency—around the goal of child safety. Awareness of “what it takes” to keep children safe is growing, as is the recognition that this is a job for many people.
- Service responsibilities are being shifted and shared. In each site, teams of workers—in partnership with families themselves—are addressing families’ needs where, a year ago, only the public agency worker would have been “working” a case. Teachers, public health nurses,

and child care workers are becoming part of networks that are working to promote child safety. Most important, friends, neighbors, ministers, and other community workers and residents are being helped to see their role in keeping children safe.

- Even key investigatory functions which, a year ago, would have seemed as if they belonged forever to the CPS agency, are being done by community partners. The “co-assessment” approach in St. Louis is the best example of this, but other sites are sharing initial assessments as well.

These are early signs—by no means “proof”—that the Community Partnership approach is viable. Perhaps most encouraging, however, is the excitement, commitment, and enthusiasm that the sites have sustained through the first year and are carrying into implementation. This excitement is at least an emotional barometer that the ideas behind the initiative have merit. And the exceptional work done by the sites so far holds promise that the ideas can be further translated into reality.

COMMUNITY PARTNERSHIPS FOR PROTECTING CHILDREN

LOUISVILLE, KENTUCKY

Reflections on the Planning Period: January, 1996 - December, 1996

I. OVERVIEW

Louisville comprises the lion's share of Jefferson County (population 685,000), the largest metropolitan area in Kentucky. Like many larger cities, it has extensive areas of poverty in the central city with many of the lowest income residents living in low-rise public housing developments. Louisville's minority population, predominantly African-American, is approximately 17 percent of the total population.

Louisville has a slow-growth economy, but the community retains major business interests (a large United Parcel Service distribution center, several national headquarters of large corporations). An active and committed civic leadership has recently become engaged in developing major strategies for Louisville's future in human services. For example, the newly established Community Foundation brings together top civic and business leaders to promote an agenda that supports families and strengthens communities as the key to children's success.

As a state, Kentucky has been a leader in several types of reform. Its education reform program (the Kentucky Education Reform Act, known as KERA) is one of the boldest in the nation, and includes the development of Family and Youth Resource Centers in schools throughout the state. Kentucky was also a pioneer in implementing family preservation services, establishing a track record of investment in prevention and early intervention to shore up families and prevent separation of children from their homes. In Jefferson County, leaders who were both visionary and practical took family support practice one step further and created the concept of a "Neighborhood Place"—comprehensive family centers serving as "hubs" of services and supports in eight of Jefferson County's most vulnerable neighborhoods. All the major public agencies—such as county health and human services, mental health, social insurance (financial assistance), child protection, employment, schools, law enforcement—are deploying staff to these centers.

It was within this context that Louisville's community leaders requested support from the Edna McConnell Clark Foundation to craft their unique response to the Foundation's initiative, *Community Partnerships for Protecting Children*. Several factors contributed to Louisville's readiness to take on additional reform efforts:

- The second Neighborhood Place, called Ujima (Swahili for collective work and responsibility), was ready to open. Neighborhood Place partner agencies identified a centrally-located site, Duvalle Education Center, and began to reach out to community residents before the site actually opened. The neighborhood where Ujima is situated—while economically stressed

and challenged by the multiplicity of problems arising from several densely populated, public housing developments—has a history of strong community leadership.

- The creative and administrative force behind these community service centers is the Neighborhood Place Managing Board, a well-established, collaborative of major public agencies. The Board was willing to accept oversight responsibility for Louisville's Community Partnership.
- Bonnie Hommrich, the state Regional Services Administrator for Jefferson County, and Richard FitzGerald, the Chief Judge of the Family Court spoke with strong, united voices advocating for changing the way families receive help when child safety within the home is compromised. Both leaders had begun innovative programs in their respective agencies to improve the experiences of families coming into contact with child protective services and the family court.

Louisville differed from the other Community Partnership sites in one major way—the motivation and commitment of child protection reform stemmed exclusively from key leaders at the local level, not from the state's central child welfare agency or the legislature. Among their counterparts, all the other sites were engaged in state-initiated changes in child protection services. Missouri was implementing a "dual track" system. Iowa was piloting an "assessment" approach. Florida was into the third year of its Family Service Response program—the first system in the country to enact legislation permitting flexible responses, rather than formal investigations, for lower risk cases of child maltreatment.

This difference is at the heart of the Louisville "story." Their Community Partnership for Protecting Children grew from the conviction that local communities *had* to take the initiative, or things would not change. Absent state support (until the election of a new Governor in November, 1995, and his selection of a dynamic Secretary for the newly-created Cabinet for Families and Children early in 1996), local leaders from traditional public sector service agencies were willing to take on the dual, sometimes schizophrenic, roles of today's administrator and tomorrow's change agent. In many ways, the absence of reform legislation permitted reform work to bubble from the "bottom up" and allowed the flexibility for local partners (including parents) to set their own terms of engagement.

Once the Managing Board had made the leap to create Neighborhood Places, they had the strategic vision to see that child protection and safety was a "natural" agenda for staff co-located in communities. And community leaders, the faith community, informal organizations, and parent residents had first, the courage, and then the tenacity, to define themselves as partners in crafting new ways of confronting child abuse and neglect. Finally, all partners have had the *patience and trust* to understand, and then discard, old myths and non-functional roles. Public sector administrators now speak of the necessity of having parents' "voices" at the table whenever new programs are considered or established programs are evaluated. Parents have proven that, given

facts about how children are faring in their neighborhoods, they will not hide behind old biases about government intervention, but will take responsibility to monitor child maltreatment.

Given this environment of committed partnership, it is not surprising that the Louisville team anchored their strategic plan for child protection in the "family solutions" model—a teamwork approach to helping families understand what works in their lives, what triggers responses that endanger children, and how to prevent relapse into old patterns when problems are encountered. In a way, the tenets of this treatment model are also applicable to the partners themselves. To impact child maltreatment in the Neighborhood Place Ujima community, parents, child protection workers, law enforcement officers, ministers, community leaders and others must join together to discover what works and to support the service team. They must also be aware of what triggers old habits of mistrust and misjudgment among partners, and utilize new tools (e.g., conflict mediation, data analysis, self-evaluation) to avoid returning to old, but familiar, ways of work.

Surrounding and promoting Family Solutions are additional strategies focused on: building stronger linkages between traditional services and informal neighborhood supports (like churches, recreation programs, child care); establishing a Community Resource Team as an alternative to formal investigations in less serious cases of maltreatment; developing community-based substance abuse services focused on women with children; initiating a communications strategy called "All For Children" to educate the community about child abuse and neglect; and developing, in concert with the Family Court, alternative ways to work with families where educational and chronic neglect compromise child safety and well-being. Taken together, these strategies are the launching pad for Louisville's Partnership, turning plans into action that should reduce child maltreatment among the 31,000 residents reached by Neighborhood Place Ujima.

II. WHAT HAPPENED

The planning grant from the Clark Foundation gave Louisville nine months to fashion a vision for their Community Partnership. They worked hard at the major tasks of enrolling partner agencies, encouraging the involvement of parents and neighbors, identifying indicators of results, and negotiating a way of working that elicited good ideas and allowed for inclusive decision making. Progress in the beginning was slow. Long established roles and beliefs were challenged. Frustration was high. But the measure of the Louisville Partnership came to be the tenacity with which they held to their belief that convention and personal differences would not limit their vision.

Looking back, the pace and timing of key events seem (for the most part) logical and even. Living the process felt quite different. Louisville's planning year is analogous to human development: time is spent picking up small bits of information, trying them out to test utility, discarding some in favor of others, feeling the pressure of "outside" demands, denying some issues until their presence cannot be ignored, surviving crises, gathering energy to pull things together, feeling the futility of not

having the perfect solution, and then slipping almost imperceptibly into clear and resolute action.

Quarterly Summary of Major Activities

First Quarter (January - March, 1996): Understanding the Work

In late 1995, a small group did most of the work to prepare the planning grant proposal to the Foundation. Bonnie Hommrich and her staff prepared written material based on discussions with Georgia Eugene (Director Duvalle Education Center), Sylvia Johnson (formerly with the Department of Social Services, now Administrator of Neighborhood Place Ujima), Karen Hawkins (Community Council representative) and various members of the Neighborhood Place Managing Board. While the proposal addressed building a Community Partnership focused on child safety, most viewed the Foundation's planning grant as a vehicle to "help Bonnie and her staff do a better job of providing protective services in our community."

For key agency partners and neighborhood residents, the work of the first quarter was to define a vision for Louisville's Community Partnership. To some, the work of the initiative seemed to come at the wrong time. Neighborhood Place Ujima had just opened its doors two weeks before the grant was awarded and there were myriad operational issues to be worked out. Ujima's Community Council, formed six months earlier, was having difficulty finding a focus. State officials from the previous administration had been cool to the idea of community partnerships. However, Bonnie Hommrich, Georgia Eugene, and the Neighborhood Place Managing Board saw the initiative as a way to capitalize on the "loosened grip" that resulted from the changes taking place in the community and a chance to focus much-needed attention on child maltreatment.

These seasoned leaders played a critical role in shaping a vision of the Community Partnership while simultaneously figuring out the work and recruiting partners. Their importance cannot be underestimated. They became both the shock absorbers of doubt and the conscience of the community regarding the possibility of an improved child protection practice. Georgia Eugene with her history of community advocacy, outspoken loyalty to neighborhood families, and clear-eyed honesty convinced community leaders to "dare to trust" government as a viable partner to make things better for children and families. Bonnie Hommrich, quietly and convincingly, persuaded her staff and superiors that they had the experience and courage to spark change themselves. They shouldn't wait for CPS detractors (however well-intentioned) to force change from the outside.

New leaders, too, had courage. Community Council Chair Aaron Kent and Vice Chair Danielle White saw the chance to create a Community Partnership as a challenge for the leadership of the Council, and they joined in the work. Sylvia Johnson believed that Neighborhood Place Ujima had the opportunity to model the meaning behind their name—collective work and responsibility. Each leader, in their own way, had the credibility to convince their constituents to invest their trust in the Partnership. New and old leaders coalesced into a Core Group to begin planning the initiative.

This first quarter, then, was a time when established leaders and new enlistees came together to form the Partnership's Steering Committee, laying aside old roles (or prejudices) to sort out what Louisville would come to define as their unique community partnership. Steering Committee meetings became the forum for asking questions, sharing information, parceling out work assignments, and focusing on the concrete expectations of the Foundation. Simultaneously, each Committee member took responsibility to widen the circle of partners. Each worked one-on-one to recruit additional parents, community agency staff, and informal helpers. At this early stage, the actual work of the Partnership related less to child maltreatment than to establishing a work process that supported equity among partners and engaged parents and community members.

Fortuitously, a specific task—efforts to recruit and hire two Community Liaisons—actually served to "kick-off" substantive groundwork that served to clarify values and set priorities for the Partnership. Aaron Kent and Karen Hawkins, both community residents, spoke passionately in support of certain values being important criteria for selecting the Liaisons. Given the expectations for these positions, they advocated that preference be given to applicants who live in the Ujima area and that candidates' previous experience should weigh equally with formal education. Agency partners listened to their opinions and agreed. The Partnership began to forge its own identity.

Second Quarter (April - June, 1996): Struggling with the Perceptions of Partnership

The first few meetings of the Steering Committee were devoted to laying out the work required by the Foundation, using the Strategic Framework prepared by the Foundation's Strategy Group. This blueprint outlined the key building blocks believed essential to a successful community partnership: vision, outcomes, program design, community engagement, governance, self-evaluation, financing. The power of this framework and the need to produce a comprehensive product became a lever for helping partners figure out how to use their old experience in a new way. It also surfaced old perceptions, value differences, and outright skepticism. Progress was slow, and members grew frustrated when old issues kept intruding on their new and fragile partnership.

These frustrations came to a "rolling boil" during the Foundation's Grantee's Conference in Florida in late April as Aaron Kent, in particular, felt left out of the Louisville team and challenged the group to show him how their partnership was any different from the agency-centered planning of the past. "Where were the 'real' community voices? Who had the power to make decisions?" In response to these concerns, the team used five hours of "free" time during the conference to participate in what came to be a seminal work session facilitated by Jolie Bain Pillsbury.

Out of this difficult time together, team members surfaced long-held assumptions and perceptions--some valid and some not. For example, Aaron Kent assumed that unless each partner was at the table, their point of view could not be accurately represented. This led to his belief that he and other Community Council members would have to be present at all Core Group and Steering Committee meetings, rather than rely on Karen Hawkins and Danielle White (also members of the Community Council) to represent various points of view. The team also explored the origins of the Community Partnership proposal and who had oversight responsibility for the work. Georgia Eugene expressed

caution based on her long-cultivated, trusting relationship with the community regarding a premature alliance with an as-yet unfocused Community Partnership.

This discussion of roles, responsibilities, delegation, and authority provided the opportunity for team members to see that they held the same vision and agenda in common—improved safety for children at risk of maltreatment—even though each individual would play different roles in bringing that agenda to fruition. Team members also adopted rules of respectful interaction with one another that helped foster energy, creativity, and trust within the Partnership. After this arduous session, the Partnership structure and operations evolved. Roles of the Core Group and Steering Committee were delineated. Four study groups were formed to analyze key components of the Partnership's vision. And, Community Liaison workers were selected and began to engage and sustain parent involvement.

Taking time to sort out these critical issues pre-empted time required to actually develop the draft strategic plan, due to the Foundation in June. With agreement from the Steering Committee, Partners with the greatest capacity to produce written work, the public agencies, prepared a "general roadmap" rather than a draft plan, promising greater detail and definition in the final version of the document. In a face to face meeting in late June, Foundation representatives pressed the Steering Committee for more detailed action strategies and challenged them to develop a tighter and more focused work plan.

Third Quarter (July - September, 1996): The Strategic Plan Takes Shape

Paradoxically, acknowledging their failure to adequately address the Foundation's expectations for a draft strategic plan and negotiating a "fix" became the catalyst for swift action:

- Project Coordinator John Bugbee was hired full-time to staff all work groups and the Steering Committee.
- Aaron Kent moved into leadership of the Governance Group with Larry Michalczyk (a former director of social services at both the regional and statewide levels) as his co-chair, and together this team began to suggest tactics for clearer communication on governance issues among the Managing Board, Community Council, and Steering Committee.
- Parent Danielle White took leadership during the All-Site meeting on outcomes in July to convince her team members that benchmarks had to be set that are clear to all partners and focused on community needs.
- Long-time leader Georgia Eugene and "new kid on the block" Sylvia Johnson joined forces on community engagement, forging a concrete plan for parents from Duvalle Education Center to link with the Community Partnership.

- Steering Committee members assumed responsibility for crafting the key decisions and implementation activities for the strategic plan, mediating differences between public agency concerns and community priorities.

For the first time, a document submitted to the Foundation was the product of the entire Community Partnership. And this time, when clarifying questions were asked by the Foundation, a team of Steering Committee members crafted the response. In early October, the document was accepted by the Foundation and submitted to the Trustees for funding.

Fourth Quarter (October - December, 1996): Celebration, Reflection, Implementation

The pace of Partnership work had increased geometrically over the planning period, and production of the strategic plan affirmed the ability of partners to accomplish results. While a brief respite might have been expected (they were entitled to rest on their laurels!), Louisville's Community Partnership wanted to leverage support to implement their child safety strategies by inviting local and statewide policy makers to share in the honor of receiving continuing support from the Foundation.

The newly formed Communications Team planned a holiday celebration event at Neighborhood Place Ujima with two main activities: accepting the Foundation's grant of \$600,000 over two years; and asking both active and potential partners in child safety to pledge their support to continue to build the Community Partnership. Exercising their political currency, Steering Committee members extended invitations to the Mayor of Louisville, County Judge, Secretary of the CFC, and Chair of the Neighborhood Place Managing Board to join the Ujima community and Foundation representatives for a celebration and "kick-off." All officials attended, along with approximately 300 agency and community residents, and offered their support (staff, fiscal and in-kind resources) to promote key strategies outlined in the strategic plan.

During this period, important progress was made in the area of self-evaluation. Initially, the arena of benchmarks, outcomes, and evaluation confounded the partnership. Were it not for the clear expectations of the Foundation and help from national and local technical assistance resources, partners might have plunged into program development and backed away from this difficult work. However, they enlisted Dr. Robert Illback, a local evaluator of community initiatives, as a member of the Partnership with the task of formulating Louisville's self-evaluation strategy. He is constructing evaluation designs against which the success of specific strategies will be measured. Dr. Patricia Schene, (a consultant working with all of the Partnership sites) is assisting with the development of measurable benchmarks, including qualitative methods that describe the subtle and meaningful ways families are supported by informal networks.

During the fourth quarter, the Steering Committee and Core Groups also reflected on lessons learned during the planning process. They did their best work when expectations were clear. Small subgroups worked on specific issues. Staff recorded commitments and facilitated communication, and periodic checkpoints were established to monitor results. Consequently, seven implementation workgroups have been established, one for each of the elements in their strategic plan. They are:

Family Solutions; Community Networks; Select Services; Responsive Processes; “All for Children”; Evaluations, Decisions, Results; and Governance. The groups are co-chaired by community leaders and agency representatives from the Steering Committee and staffed by the project management team to facilitate integration of activities. Each group has set short-term and long-range objectives and will identify the technical assistance they need, so that the Steering Committee can craft a plan for the coming year.

III. THE PLAN THAT EMERGED¹

The Louisville Partnership for Protecting Children will initially target neighborhoods surrounding and served by Neighborhood Place Ujima, one of eight family service centers across the County. Because approximately 500 children and their families come to Ujima’s home, the Duvalle Education Center, each day—to participate in preschool, family support, recreation, and job training programs—this location presents a unique opportunity to identify and reach out to neighborhood families at-risk of child maltreatment. Based on a review of 83 CPS investigations in the target neighborhoods, and to build on the involvement of the public schools and Duvalle as key initiative partners, site strategies outlined below will target at-risk children from birth to five years, children age six to twelve at risk of educational neglect, as well as families affected by substance abuse.

The principle strategic elements designed by the Louisville Partnership are characterized as follows:

- **FAMILY SOLUTIONS:** TO ENSURE THAT ALL PARTNERS IN THE INITIATIVE WHO HAVE CONTACT WITH FAMILIES APPROACH THEM FROM A STRENGTHS-BASED PERSPECTIVE AND UTILIZE A COMMON METHODOLOGY IN THEIR WORK WITH FAMILIES, THE SITE WILL ADAPT A CLINICAL, RELAPSE-PREVENTION MODEL OF CASEWORK (“SOLUTION-BASED CASEWORK”) TO BE USED BY ALL PARTNER AGENCY STAFF AND NEIGHBORHOOD PARTNERS. A WORK GROUP WILL JOIN DR. DANA CHRISTENSEN OF THE UNIVERSITY OF LOUISVILLE, THE MODEL’S CREATOR, TO DEVELOP A CURRICULUM FOR USE WITH AT-RISK AND CPS-INVOLVED FAMILIES. FORMAL AND INFORMAL PARTNERS WILL BE TRAINED TO ENGAGE FAMILIES TO IDENTIFY CONCRETE SOLUTIONS AND ACTION STEPS THAT ADDRESS THEIR OWN NEEDS AND ENABLE THEM TO MORE EFFECTIVELY PARENT THEIR CHILDREN.
- **ASSET MAPPING:** RECOGNIZING THAT LOCAL RELIGIOUS INSTITUTIONS, BOYS AND GIRLS CLUBS, AND OTHER INFORMAL GROUPS PROVIDE MORE DURABLE SUPPORT TO FAMILIES THAN PROFESSIONAL RELATIONSHIPS, THE SITE WILL IMPLEMENT A PROJECT TO IDENTIFY, CATALOGUE, AND USE THE MANY RESOURCES THAT EXIST IN THE UJIMA COMMUNITY. ALONG WITH OBTAINING ESSENTIAL INFORMATION TO HELP PROVIDERS CONNECT FAMILIES TO SUPPORTS, THE

¹This section of the report draws heavily on material written by Jolie Kapelus of The Edna McConnell Clark Foundation.

PROJECT WILL SERVE AS A COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT STRATEGY TO INTEREST AND INVOLVE RESIDENTS IN THE INITIATIVE.

- **COMMUNITY RESOURCE TEAM:** A TEAM WILL BE DEVELOPED AT UJIMA, COMBINING FORMAL AGENCY—UJIMA AND DUVALLE WORKERS, INCLUDING CHILD PROTECTION STAFF—AND INFORMAL PARTNERS, INCLUDING PARAPROFESSIONALS AND VOLUNTEERS TO BE RECRUITED FROM THE UJIMA NEIGHBORHOODS, AND TRAINED TO SUPPORT LOCAL FAMILIES. THE TEAM WILL RECEIVE DIRECT CALLS FROM FAMILIES AND COMMUNITY AGENCIES WORKING WITH AT-RISK FAMILIES, AS WELL AS CASES DIVERTED FROM CPS THAT DO NOT MEET THE CRITERIA FOR INVESTIGATION, ARE UNSUBSTANTIATED, OR ARE DETERMINED TO BE LOWER-RISK AND APPROPRIATE FOR REFERRAL. ALONG WITH IDENTIFYING AND NURTURING RESOURCES IN THE COMMUNITY THAT CAN SUPPORT THESE FAMILIES, THE TEAM WILL FOCUS OUTREACH EFFORTS ON THREE NEIGHBORHOOD SCHOOLS AND TWO CHILD CARE CENTERS. BY BUILDING RELATIONSHIPS WITH TEACHERS AND WORKERS FROM THESE INSTITUTIONS, THEY WILL BE PREPARED TO ASSIST THE TEAM WITH EARLY IDENTIFICATION OF FAMILIES NEEDING ASSISTANCE.
- **DIFFERENTIAL RESPONSE TO CPS REPORTS:** WHILE LOUISVILLE HAS NO LEGISLATIVELY MANDATED PROCESS FOR PROVIDING A RESPONSE OTHER THAN INVESTIGATION TO FAMILIES REPORTED FOR ABUSE OR NEGLECT, THE CPS AGENCY AND OTHER PARTNERS HAVE AGREED TO IMPLEMENT A NEW INTAKE PROCEDURE THAT WILL CHANNEL CERTAIN CASES (DESCRIBED ABOVE) TO THE COMMUNITY RESOURCE TEAM. THE TEAM WILL CONDUCT A FAMILY ASSESSMENT AND LINK THE FAMILY TO RESOURCES AT UJIMA OR IN THE UJIMA COMMUNITY. IN ADDITION, CERTAIN SUBSTANTIATED CASES BELIEVED TOO SERIOUS FOR REFERRAL TO THE TEAM BUT NOT WARRANTING FORMAL COURT INVOLVEMENT WILL BE REFERRED TO A CHILD PROTECTION COORDINATOR. THE COORDINATOR WILL ASSIST THESE FAMILIES TO ARRANGE FAMILY GROUP CONFERENCES, WHICH WILL BRING TOGETHER EXTENDED FAMILY AND OTHER POTENTIAL SUPPORTS TO DEVISE A PLAN FOR ASSURING THE CHILDREN'S SAFETY. THE AMERICAN HUMANE ASSOCIATION WILL WORK WITH THE SITE ON IMPLEMENTING A FAMILY GROUP DECISION-MAKING MODEL AND WILL ALSO ASSIST THE SITE IN IDENTIFYING PROFILES OF FAMILIES WHO MIGHT BENEFIT MOST FROM SUCH A PROCESS.
- **COMMUNITY-BASED SUBSTANCE ABUSE SERVICES:** BECAUSE MOST SUBSTANCE ABUSE SERVICES ARE LOCATED OUTSIDE THE UJIMA NEIGHBORHOODS AND RELY PRIMARILY ON INPATIENT RESIDENTIAL CARE, THE SITE WILL DEVELOP A RANGE OF COMMUNITY-BASED SUBSTANCE ABUSE TREATMENT SERVICES TAILORED TO MEET THE NEEDS OF LOCAL FAMILIES. TO BEGIN PLANNING FOR THESE SERVICES, FOCUS GROUPS AND INTERVIEWS WILL BE CONDUCTED WITH FAMILIES, PROVIDERS, AND CPS WORKERS TO CRAFT A MENU OF NEEDED SERVICES. JILL KINNEY OF HOME, SAFE WILL ASSIST THE SITE TO ENGAGE THE SUBSTANCE ABUSE COMMUNITY (INCLUDING THE JEFFERSON COUNTY ALCOHOL AND DRUG ABUSE CENTER, THE HEALING PLACE, AND DRUG COURT STAFF), FRONTLINE WORKERS, AND RESIDENTS TO DEVELOP A CONTINUUM OF SERVICES. SHE WILL ASSIST IN IDENTIFYING AND ADAPTING MODEL COMMUNITY-BASED PROGRAMS FROM AROUND THE COUNTRY THAT ADDRESS THE NEEDS OF SUBSTANCE-

ABUSING MOTHERS WITH YOUNG CHILDREN, AND WILL DEVELOP AND PROVIDE TRAINING TO HELP WORKERS ADDRESS SUBSTANCE ABUSE ISSUES IN NEW WAYS.

- **JUVENILE COURT MEDIATION:** WITH THE LEADERSHIP OF JUDGE FITZGERALD OF FAMILY COURT, A DISPUTE RESOLUTION PROCESS WILL BEGIN IN EARLY 1997 FOCUSED ON FAMILIES WHERE EDUCATIONAL AND CHRONIC NEGLECT COMPROMISE CHILD SAFETY. JUDGES, MEDIATORS, AND CHILD PROTECTION STAFF WILL BE TRAINED IN TECHNIQUES AND PROCESSES WHICH SIMULTANEOUSLY PROMOTE CHILD SAFETY AND DECREASE AUTHORITATIVE COURT INTERVENTION.
- **"ALL FOR CHILDREN" - A COMMUNICATIONS STRATEGY:** PARTNERS RANGING FROM THE COMMUNICATIONS OFFICER FOR THE CABINET SECRETARY TO A LOCAL RETIRED TEACHER WELL-RESPECTED BY THE COMMUNITY, ARE WORKING WITH ELLEN FERN, OF MARTIN AND GLANTZ COMMUNICATIONS FIRM, TO CRAFT A STRONG, CONSISTENT MESSAGE THAT "CHILD SAFETY REQUIRES SHARED RESPONSIBILITY." SURROUNDING THIS MESSAGE WILL BE A COMPREHENSIVE COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT STRATEGY AIMED AT ENLISTING AND SUSTAINING COMMUNITY INTEREST AND ACTION TO PROTECT CHILDREN WITHIN THE UJIMA COMMUNITY.

IV. KEY THEMES

A. *How the context influenced Louisville's course of development*

The introduction of *Community Partnerships for Protecting Children* to Louisville was a fortuitous alignment of external opportunity with internal readiness for change. The local stage had been set with the opening of Neighborhood Places, and the Foundation's vision and technical assistance resources galvanized community-based staff around the issues of child safety, a critical and tangible problem to organize the efforts of staff from across human service and education agencies.

The major contextual factors influencing the site's course of development can be grouped into five clusters:

- **Neighborhood focus:** A carefully conceived, aggressive workplan to establish Neighborhood Places as local service hubs predated the initiative and provided an excellent blueprint from which to select the specific site, Ujima, for the community partnership. Additionally, the eight Neighborhood Place sites are structured to include oversight by a local Community Council made up of residents committed to making their service hub vibrant and community-responsive. At Ujima, the Community Council Chair is an African American, single father who is new to leadership; his Co-Chair is an African American single mother with two children who is eager to improve a child protection system which she believed too intrusive and limited to really help most parents.

- **Cross system experience:** Earlier education reform efforts (KERA) set the direction for bringing health and social services into schools as a means of improving students' readiness to learn and achieve. On the heels of KERA, the city of Louisville had competed to become a national Empowerment Zone, an effort that, though unsuccessful, left a legacy of cooperation and shared information among the area's major systems and informal networks. The implementation of Neighborhood Place brought together in a single location representatives from the major human service and education agencies with the expectation that services to families would be more flexible, engaging, and productive. While collaboration alone does not ensure collective work, sitting next to colleagues from other agencies and working with the same families, sets the stage for new ways of work.
- **Program innovations:** Both of the traditional players in child protection—the child welfare agency and the Family Court—had a history of innovation and risk-taking. Both were willing to expose their concerns about child safety to their service partners, and both had initiated new programs to improve their work with families. The child welfare agency had small, but important, pilot projects in place: a specialized unit of child protective workers focused on the connection between child abuse and domestic violence; the Reoccurrence pilot project where a reported reoccurrence of abuse or neglect resulted in the family being assigned to the previous worker (providing more information about the most frequent factors in recurring child maltreatment); and use of a newly developed Parent Plan by child protective workers to design a partnership with parents based on their strengths and responsibilities to ensure the safety of their children.

Simultaneously, the Chief Judge of the Family Court had initiated the use of mediation meetings, rather than formal court hearings, for select families amenable to safety planning. His staff strengthened their connections with the child protection workers by jointly crafting these mediated service plans, and the Court became a knowledgeable and vociferous advocate for family support services like child care, substance abuse treatment, and parent mentoring.

- **Leadership and infrastructure:** Community Partnerships require changes in roles for formal decision-makers (legislators, their appointed representatives, and public agency heads), voluntary agency partners (United Way, Community Ministries, contract non-profit agencies), and informal leaders (concerned parents, community activists). In Louisville, the environment had begun to shift with the creation of the Neighborhood Place Managing Board and their counterparts, the local Neighborhood Place Community Councils. While neither a smooth nor straight road, the inclusion of more and different partners around the decision table provided a policy and governance “home” for the community partnership for protecting children.
- **Commitment to community results:** The County Judge Executive and the Director of Jefferson County Human Services had convened a Young Families At-Risk Initiative to disseminate information about problems and assets throughout the county and to track results for children and families in the areas of self-sufficiency, safety from violence, readiness to

learn, and health. The data dramatically demonstrated the importance of child safety as a precursor to school achievement and later self-sufficiency and underscored the need for resources to be clearly focused if real results were to be achieved.

Simultaneously, the office for the Cabinet for Families and Children had initiated a Public Sector Quality Audit through the Governmental Services Center at Kentucky State University. The Regional Manager believed that a quality audit by department employees themselves would help identify underlying barriers and strengths to meeting the quantitative results for which they were both accountable and vulnerable. (Recent public attention had been critical of the department's actions in child abuse and neglect cases, to the extent that public child protection workers in another area of the state had been indicted by a Grand Jury for failure to keep children safe from harm.)

Together, these activities placed the issue of "how to achieve results" squarely before each community and each agency. Specifically, the child welfare agency was challenged to be more rigorous about the methods they used in working with families, the priorities they set in allocating resources for their work, and the tenacity with which they pursued partnership with other agencies and informal networks positioned as families allies.

Taken together, these contextual factors positioned Louisville to at first engage, and then embrace, the idea that communities can and should take responsibility for child safety, and that traditional child protection agencies have both the competence and capacity to reshape their roles as partners in this process.

B. The process and speed of parent and citizen engagement: what promoted it, what impeded it?

Perhaps because Louisville was not in the throes of statutory CPS reform (which tends to preoccupy public agencies with their own internal changes), the Partnership's primary efforts during the planning year were devoted to securing and sustaining parent and citizen involvement. Engaging parents and citizens was not new to Neighborhood Place Ujima. First of all, it is located within the Duvalle Education Center--a long-established, community center (formerly a junior high school) headed by a respected and vigorous, local leader and advocate for family support. Duvalle houses approximately 15 separate health and human service programs, including Head Start, child care, infant stimulation, teen parent mentoring, youth recreation and leadership, and adult support activities. Each program has a parent outreach component, and efforts to coordinate outreach across programs are ongoing and evolving.

A second factor promoting the process of community engagement was the outreach work done by Sylvia Johnson, administrator of Neighborhood Place Ujima. For several months prior to the actual relocation of staff, she visited with residents and listened to their concerns and took part in established community groups. She developed an understanding of the informal networks so

necessary for families to feel connected to their neighborhood, and worked with the Ujima Community Council to define their oversight responsibilities. Staff who volunteered for reassignment to Ujima were advised that they would need to meet three major expectations: competence in their area of expertise, willingness to work in partnership with colleagues and families, and agreement to create office procedures that are welcoming to families. When the Community Partnership was established with Ujima as its home base, the key tenets of the initiative were consistent with their developing practice.

As the Partnership Steering Committee was formed, interface with the Ujima Community Council was critical to ensure local participation. A third major factor propelling Louisville's community engagement was the willingness of the Council to actively engage in the Partnership: the Chair agreed to serve as a parent representative on the Steering Committee (the only male parent on the Council); another member, also a City employee, was selected as the official Council representative to the Partnership, and a third Council member agreed to help recruit other parent residents for the Steering Committee.

To further bolster engagement activities, the Steering Committee decided in the early months of the Partnership to use grant monies to fund two Community Liaisons, stationed at Ujima and responsible for bringing new parents and citizens aboard while sustaining those already enrolled. This decision, sound in concept and supported by fiscal resources, was a critical developmental event in the forging of the partnership. Public agencies used to the tedious and time-consuming process of hiring new staff were pushed by community residents to act quickly and stretch the personnel system to meet their needs. Specifically, residents wanted to modify the standard job specifications for generic para-professional positions to include the qualities they were looking for: residence in the neighborhood, experience in working with parents and informal networks, knowledge of community resources, and commitment to child protection and safety.

Finally, an invaluable resource in increasing parental involvement was the technical assistance provided by Maria Elena Orrego of the Family Resource Coalition. Formerly the director of a comprehensive family center, she provided knowledge and encouragement necessary to building capacity among agency professionals so that they are able to utilize the skills of paraprofessionals and parent leaders. She also helped to expand the repertoire of skills of the two community liaisons. This was especially valuable because neither had held a similar position previously. And, she worked tirelessly to help parents see themselves as leaders with voices worthy of attention. Maria Elena Orrego's capacity to affirm growth in both professionals and informal participants modeled a key partnership principle: equity and mutual respect.

Despite the success of parental involvement during the planning year, there were two major factors which impeded an even quicker pace: old issues, papered over, and misunderstanding of the multiple roles a single individual or organization can (and does) play, especially during a process of change. At the beginning of the second quarter, relations between the Chair of the Community Council and the Core Group broke down over the role that the Council would play in monitoring the progress and

decisions of the Partnership Steering Committee. He believed that the Council had authority over the process, while agency partners believed that the Steering Committee had been delegated decision-making authority by the Neighborhood Place Managing Board.

In fact, both had elements of truth, but neither was entirely accurate. After several hours of facilitated mediation, all partners came to understand that the Managing Board had not been clear with either the Community Council or Steering Committee about roles and lines of authority in monitoring community initiatives. To be fair, the press of implementation overshadowed the sometimes tedious task of sorting out roles, but papering over problems with new activities, rather than taking the time to confront the sensitive issues of power and authority, can threaten even the most vigorous partnership.

A second intermittent disturbance to engaging parents and citizens was (and is) the confusion of taking on multiple roles. An actively involved parent may also have been the subject of a child abuse or neglect report. A child protection worker may participate in a Partnership work group as an equal colleague with her Regional Administrator, but then return to the "chain of command" in the course of regular activities. A community activist who also holds a position with the school district may feel the tension of holding to one's own values while representing the policies of an employer. Together, partners learned that a challenge of the change process is that individuals often take on multiple roles, but that multiple roles need not mean that colleagues have conflicting agendas.

The Steering Committee agreed to adopt "rules of engagement" for their work together to minimize misunderstanding: to try to speak with brevity and clarity; to show "thumbs up or down" as a quick way to poll the group's position on an issue; to have one conversation at a time; and that any group member can "throw a red flag" when they don't understand the conversation. Work moves more smoothly now, but occasional reminders of the "rules" are needed when value-laden issues arise or work begins to move at a pace that is too rapid for all members to share their collective wisdom.

In the coming year, Louisville intends to deepen the ranks of involved parents and citizens by developing mentoring and support mechanisms for new parents and coordinating outreach activities between Ujima and Duvalle Center.

C. How did Louisville grapple with the issue of safety and its importance?

The issue of child safety was elusive during the first four months of the planning year. Even CPS personnel who evaluate situations of risk and safety daily were not clear that the initiative demanded new methods and responsibilities for them. Just as parents and other community residents initially saw events outside their homes (safe streets, gang-free neighborhoods, livable housing) as indicators of safety, so child protective workers came to realize they had a responsibility—along with parents and caretakers—in preventing re-abuse and re-neglect of the children referred to them. They could no longer be passive assessors of their clients' behavior. They had to be active participants in developing safety plans for children.

Two events were key to a clearer and consistent understanding of child safety among the partners. First, the public forum held in April to announce the Partnership to the broad Ujima community brought together approximately 100 residents and local child protection staff to look at key data about reported child abuse and neglect in their neighborhood. The data were simple (e.g., how many reports are made? what problems are alleged? how many children are removed from their homes?), but it served to reframe the issue of child safety as something that occurs within families, not just around them. As a result, the Steering Committee formed a Needs Study Committee, comprised of parents and agency staff, to review CPS cases, interview families, visit Family Court, and feed back information to the larger Steering Committee. Slowly, all partners came to understand the meaning of safety in the context of child maltreatment, and they learned that new participants in the Community Partnership need help in understanding the complexities of ensuring that children are free from maltreatment.

D. Who did Louisville engage in the safety network, and why? Why are some partners still not engaged?

Because Neighborhood Place Ujima is the center of Partnership activity, the natural partners initially were the public agencies with staff located at Ujima—child protection, mental health, county human services and public health, education, social insurance (financial assistance), and employment, law enforcement, and the judiciary. The administrators of these entities are all members of the Neighborhood Place Managing Board—the Partnership’s oversight body—and they have fostered strong commitment to the Partnership among their staffs.

The next addition to the Network was the Community Council—a viable group of residents and community providers with a stake in the development of the Partnership. Informal partners such as Community Ministries and Community Coordinated Child Care added historical perspective and wisdom about community assets as they linked Partnership discussions with the missions of their organizations. Because a knowledgeable and tenacious Council member was a city employee and later became the director of the City Community Action Agency, the interest and resources of the city of Louisville were added to the mix.

A vital partner was added to the Network with the Governor’s appointment of Viola Miller as the Secretary for the Cabinet on Families and Children shortly after the first of the year. Secretary Miller awakened a status quo human services bureaucracy and gave her support for two other regions in the state to join Louisville as "learning partners," thus laying the groundwork for eventual expansion of Community Partnership concepts. She also committed to review funding options to determine if additional dollars could be generated to support Partnership strategies in communities throughout the state.

One of the challenges of the Partnership has been the weaving together of program and staff functions between the Duvalle Education Center and Neighborhood Place Ujima. The history of

these two service hubs is quite different: one formed over many years and is a patchwork of long-standing community action programs; the more recent Neighborhood Place was created with the stated purpose of joining agency policies and practitioners together so that a seamless web of family service and support would result. A significant goal is to integrate Duvalle's federation of programs with the more singular mission of Neighborhood Place so that the safety network touches more families and offers residents multiple points of access to service.

The Partnership is now ready to cultivate community based provider agencies active in the Ujima area. Often, these agencies have provided "niche" services to specific populations under long-standing contract arrangements with public agencies. The Partners, encouraged by new United Way allocation methodologies that tie funded services more directly to community need and consumer satisfaction, are poised to ask these providers to help design an assessment process to test their current service menus against needs identified by Ujima community residents.

Time became a factor as the partners reached out to engage additional potential network participants. As the planning year was coming to an end, there was agreement that several groups need to be added: child welfare providers, housing authorities, youth, fathers, and economic development agencies. But the Partnership has learned that careful solicitation and support are vital to building a strong Network. Agencies require no less support and respect than neighborhood residents!

E. Overall Assessment

Key Accomplishments

Louisville's community partnership for protecting children has definition and direction—no small accomplishment for a diverse community working on a complex task over the course of only twelve months. Looking at indicators of progress, here's what the Neighborhood Place Ujima partnership has developed:

- a Steering Committee (with parents making up one-third of the membership) that has designed a respectful, productive way of working together;
- a project coordination team which works for the Steering Committee and manages the tasks and activities of the Partnership;
- clear linkages with its governing entity (the Neighborhood Place Managing Board) and advisory body (the Community Council);
- benchmarks for achieving progress toward each of the three outcomes identified by the Foundation developed with the help of a local evaluator, Dr. Robert Illback, who will remain involved with the Partnership during implementation;

- agreement from the Secretary for the Cabinet for Families and Children that she will support the concept of the Partnership, specifically through improved fiscal claiming of federal dollars and explore modification of the statewide human services information system (TWIST) to include elements important to the evaluation of the initiative;
- two community outreach workers who are actively engaged in recruiting and supporting parental involvement in the Partnership;
- agreement from the Duvalle child care center to jointly assess child safety issues that impact on its children;
- accord with three schools to pilot outreach strategies to prevent or reduce educational neglect;
- consensus that Neighborhood Place Ujima will work with other Neighborhood Places to share innovative ideas and import Community Partnership concepts into their operations;
- trained mediation staff in the Family Court to begin to select families who would benefit from this less intrusive court process;
- a communication team that is meeting regularly and held a major media event to kick-off the implementation of the Partnership;
- Neighborhood Place Ujima staff committed to child safety and actively involved in the Partnership.

Major Challenges

Information Systems: An acknowledged shortcoming in most human service agencies is the state of their information systems. Kentucky is no different, though the future may be brighter with the implementation, in late 1996, of the statewide TWIST information system. For now, the Partnership is taking on the challenge of defining benchmarks and identifying measures that can be drawn from existing data. Further, because outcome information is based on the full spectrum of work produced by the partners (not just those public agencies with data systems), creative proxies will need to be developed to assess the impact of informal supports and services that are not readily measured in traditional ways. Also, the very nature of data is that it requires skillful analysis to yield information which is clear and useful. Partners—from bureaucrat to parent—will need patience and tenacity to understand concepts and numbers which historically have been the sole province of researchers and statisticians.

Changing the response to low-risk families: A key Partnership strategy is restructuring the way unsubstantiated and some low-risk cases will be assessed by the child welfare agency. The “reengineered CPS intake and investigation process” permit greater discretion on the part of the

agency regarding investigation. The “proposed community resource team” will create a group of partners with strong community linkages to respond to those families where the children are believed to be at minimal risk. These concepts are excellent, and similar to what other jurisdictions often call “dual track assessment.” Implementation, however, requires substantial internal changes for CPS staff and will test the resolve and ingenuity of informal networks and community-based agencies to take on new responsibilities.

Substance Abuse: The Partnership learned firsthand from their review of CPS cases about the devastating effects of alcohol and drugs on parents and their children. They were also frustrated that most treatment services are residential, male-oriented, over-subscribed, and far from their neighborhood. And they learned a more subtle fact: the secrecy and denial surrounding drug use is not limited to those who are referred to the CPS system but is a factor among staff, volunteers, network helpers, and their families. Partners will need to be aggressive to secure the needed array of treatment services for their community and will have to be compassionate with one another as they confront the insidious nature of substance abuse.

Governance: Currently, the Neighborhood Place Managing Board has oversight responsibility for the community partnership. But soon, key partners who are not represented on the Managing Board will question the structure, make-up, and purpose of this body as it relates to the Community Partnership for Protecting Children. On the other hand, the Community Council has specific oversight responsibility for Neighborhood Place Ujima, the host site for the initiative. In composition, the Board is comprised of agency providers while the Council limits the number of providers so that neighborhood residents are in the majority. Racially, the Council is predominately African-American, while the Managing Board is predominately white. Structurally, the Managing Board derives its authority from the agency administration positions of its members; the Council has invited any resident to apply for membership and operates on authority derived from its creator, the Managing Board. Issues of class, institutional racism, and historical authority—which have tied other efforts in knots—will require respectful, mediated, decision-making by the Partnership and their governing authorities.

Getting Results: Another major challenge for the Partnership is the pace and impact of implementation strategies on the outcomes of the initiative—reduction of child abuse and neglect. How robust must strategies like substance abuse treatment and resource network development be to make a difference in the numbers of children referred for child protection? Will the Partnership develop timely self-evaluation methods so that strategies which are of limited success can be replaced by those with more promising outcomes? Will the Partnership have the resilience and flexibility to meet the challenges that welfare reform will present for poor and marginal families? How will partners sustain steady progress and yet push one another to be bold and ambitious?

Conclusion

Louisville's Community Partnership for Protecting Children is vibrant, yet sobered, as it moves from planning to implementation. Vibrant, because they are proud that they worked with integrity and intelligence to complete a comprehensive strategic plan affirmed by all partners and accepted by the Foundation. Sobered, because this year of exploring child safety in their own "back yard" exposed serious (and sometimes perplexing) dilemmas much easier to view from the distance of professional boundary or neighborly "minding my own business." These twin qualities demand vigorous and thoughtful action. At the end of its planning period, the Louisville's Community Partnership is poised to take such action.

ATTACHMENT A

CHRONOLOGY OF MAJOR EVENTS

January 1996

- Neighborhood Place Managing Board delegates responsibility for structuring the community partnership for protecting children to a core group of its membership and requests that the Ujima Community Council participate in planning and implementation.
- Core Group forms (as described below), identifies other potential partners, designs a preliminary process for structuring work and decision-making, and does preparation work for first Steering Committee.
- Public Sector Quality Audit of the Jefferson County District Office of the Department for Social Services conducted by Governmental Services Center at Kentucky State University
- Site team is selected and participates in the first All Site meeting for Community Partnerships for Protecting Children in Jacksonville, Florida, January 22-24.
- Visits by Norm Zimlich.

February 1996

- First Steering Committee held on February 14 to seek consensus on direction, priority tasks and inclusion of agency and community partners; first meeting at which parents from the community are involved.
- Second Steering Committee held on February 28, facilitated by Jolie Bain Pillsbury and Maria Elena Orrego, centered on meaning of safety, role of parents in the Steering Committee, and the hoped for results of establishing a community partnership for protecting children.
- Core Group meets weekly to distinguish the character and focus of the Clark Foundation initiative from other, previous collaborative efforts and to define linkages to ongoing and related initiatives.
- February 29 meeting with state representatives of the new Secretary for the Cabinet for Families and Children in Louisville to enlist their support of the community partnership. Linkage between Neighborhood Place Ujima's stand-alone PC MIS and the newly developed statewide TWIST information system discussed with state officials.

March 1996

- Two Steering Committee meetings focus on key developmental tasks: the Community Liaison positions, a project summary for use in a first large community meeting, sequencing of project activities, definition of focus group composition and content.
- Core Group meets weekly to staff the activities of the Steering Committee, especially preparation for the April 1 Community Meeting and subsequent focus groups.
- Partnership leadership and Site Coordinator meet with Secretary Miller and secure her support, including identification of two other regions in the state (the Purchase CFC District and Owensboro) for initial roll-out of the community partnership initiative.
- First focus group is held; participants are community parents drawn from those with children in programs at Duvalle Education Center. About half of these parents go on to join the Steering Committee.

April 1996

- Community Meeting held on April 1 to introduce the Community Partnership to the Ujima neighborhood; 100 residents and staff from local agencies attend.
- Two Steering Committee meetings address the April 1 Community Meeting (input, issues raised, Steering Committee volunteers identified). Steering Committee is expanded and future meetings scheduled to accommodate parents and community members.
- Core Group meets weekly, collaborates on preparation of the first quarterly report to the Foundation, and briefs the Neighborhood Place Managing Board on progress.
- Steering Committee selects team which attends the Clark Foundation Grantee's Conference in Key West, Florida, April 24-27. For the first time, two parents join the team as equal partners and Secretary Viola Miller is present at the meeting. Secretary Miller agrees to pursue funding options for sustaining local level community partnerships.

May 1996

- Project Director accompanies TA consultant Charles Bruner and Iowa state representative to the Dartington Research Institute in England to participate in a child protection research institute.
- Three Steering Committee meetings concentrate on: increased parental involvement, conducting focus groups, role of the Core Group as staff support not decision-making, planning for June 11 Community Meeting, submission of the draft Strategic Plan.
- Core Group is expanded to include part-time project coordinator, John Bugbee; draft Strategic Plan is prepared and submitted to the Foundation.
- Initial meetings with three schools expressing interest in the educational neglect component of the Community Partnership agenda.
- Focus Groups held with Duvalle Child Care Center parents and Ujima staff.
- Partnership team of three attends All-Site meeting on initiative outcomes in St. Louis, May 15-16.
- County Social Services management information specialists agree to work with state TWIST staff around building MIS capacity at Neighborhood Place Ujima.

June 1996

- Two Steering Committee meetings analyze results of focus groups, design Study Group process, and prepare for briefing of Foundation Children's Program Director, Susan Notkin to discuss Louisville's draft Strategic Plan.
- Project Coordinator John Bugbee assumes the position on a full-time basis and begins staffing the weekly meetings of the Core Group.
- Four study groups are convened (each with co-chairs and staff support): Needs, Resources, Outcomes, and Governance. Groups meet weekly for approximately seven weeks.
- Community Meeting held June 11; 60 neighborhood residents and agency representatives attend.
- Susan Notkin provides feedback on the draft Strategic Plan to Partnership members on June 19; Foundation expectations are clearly stated and partners agree that catch-up work is needed.

- Louisville team attends the All-Site Frontline Practice meeting in St. Louis, June 12-14, and agrees to pursue Family Group Conference, Parents Anonymous, and substance abuse strategies showcased at meeting.
- The Cabinet for Families and Children contracts for technical assistance to maximize categorical federal funding in support of the neighborhood partnerships for protecting children.

July 1996

- Two Steering Committee meetings focus on progress reports from the four study groups, focus group results, and design of a new assessment strategy for CPS with strong linkage to a community resource team.
- Core Group meets weekly around key themes and strategies for the proposed strategic plan.
- Study Groups continue to meet weekly (in some cases, more frequently) in order to meet deadlines for the strategic planning product.
- Six Focus Groups are held, including: ongoing CPS staff, intake and investigation CPS staff, CPS parents/grandparents, Ujima Community Council, West Louisville Community Ministries, Teen Parents.
- All-Site meeting on initiative outcomes and strategies is convened in Louisville, July 9-10; state and local partners attend.
- Core Group and Site Coordinator work out (July 18-19) two month TA plan and work management structure to ensure that expectations of the Foundation are met with the submission of the Strategic Plan.

August 1996

- Three Steering Committee meetings focus on: refashioning and finalizing the Vision, Mission, Outcomes sections of the Strategic Plan; review of Study Groups' recommendations for inclusion in the Strategic Plan; intensive discussion of drafts of Strategic Plan.
- Intense TA is provided with Jolie Bain Pillsbury and Site Coordinator Jean McIntosh alternating weekly visits: Jolie for the purpose of facilitating Core Group and Steering Committee meetings; Jean to assist with integrating data, findings, decisions, and strategic directions into the Strategic Plan.
- Consultant Dana Christensen is enlisted to craft the Family Solutions portion of the Strategic Plan.
- Consultant Robert Illback is enlisted to help design the self-evaluation strategy for the Partnership's implementation plan.

September 1996

- Steering Committee meets once: approves final strategic plan document and submits it to the Managing Board for authorization to forward the plan to the Foundation.
- Neighborhood Place Managing Board approves Strategic Plan.
- On September 23, the Foundation requests additional information on site strategies and outcomes described in the Strategic Plan by 10/4.
- Core Group works with site Coordinator and select TA resources to prepare addendum response to the Foundation.

- Maria Elena Orrego and three members of the Louisville team (Betty Marshall, Sylvia Johnson, Deborah Turner) present a workshop on their community partnership at the National Council on Child Abuse and Neglect (NCCAN) conference in Washington, DC.

October 1996

- Site submits additional information requested by the Foundation.
- One Steering Committee meeting focuses on: incorporating suggested self-evaluation strategies into their work; establishing and recruiting membership for seven work groups to guide implementation of community partnership strategies; planning leadership and staffing for the work groups.
- Core Group's weekly meetings focus on continuity, clarification of strategic elements tasks, design of the work group process, and plan for use of technical assistance.

November 1996

- One Steering Committee meeting held to review progress reports from work groups, plan for December celebration in anticipation of Clark Foundation implementation grant.
- Core Group's weekly meetings focus on integration of work group activities, development of a communications team, and preparation for the All-Site meeting where they will present their Family Solutions model.
- Six member team attends the Cedar Rapids All-Site Meeting on Outcome 2, November 19-20; consultants Dana Christensen and Robert Illback are team members for the first time.
- Maria Elena Orrego and Ellen Fern meet with the Communications Team and begin to craft a partnership slogan and design new community engagement strategies.

December 1996

- Steering Committee meeting on December 10 plans the December 19 Celebration.
- Clark Foundation awards two year implementation grant to Louisville Partnership on December 10.
- County-wide celebration of grant award is held December 19, including Foundation representatives, Mayor of Louisville, Judge-Advocate of Jefferson County, Cabinet Secretary for Families and Children, Steering Committee members, and Ujima community residents.

ATTACHMENT B

KEY DECISION MAKERS

Any “who’s who” list is necessarily incomplete. Many of those who participated are not listed here, for various reasons: they chose to add their wisdom without attachment to any particular group; their time was limited and they could not commit to scheduled group meetings; after initially committing to help, other priorities required their attention. Those who are listed below are mainstays of the Steering Committee and usually played several roles in the planning process, representing multiple groups related to the Community Partnership. A note of explanation: the Core Group of six supports the work of the Steering Committee by coordinating activities, preparing meeting materials, and troubleshooting issues. It is not an independent, decision-making body; rather, it facilitates the decision making process of the entire Steering Committee, of which it is an operations subgroup.

Steering Committee

On occasion, other agency representatives and parents, as well as youths, participated in Steering Committee meetings to add their voices to the mix of opinions and perceptions.

<i>Name</i>	<i>Capacity/ Agency</i>	<i>Additional Role(s), if any</i>
Melissa Barman	Specialist, Community Information, Jefferson Co. Public Schools	Needs Group
Jim Birmingham	Liaison, Family Court	Governance Group
Anita Black	Community Health Services Mgr., Jefferson Co. Health Dept.	Needs Group
John Bugbee	Project Coordinator, Community Partnership	Core Group, Resources Group, Needs Group, Outcomes Group
Tanita Bush	Parent Representative	Needs Group
Barbara Carter	Family Service Specialist, Dept. For Social Services	Resources
Jewell Douglas	Community Liaison, Ujima Community Partnership	Resources Group
Georgia Eugene	Principal/Director, Duvalle Education Center	Core Group, Resources Group

<i>Name</i>	<i>Capacity/ Agency</i>	<i>Additional Role(s), if any</i>
Karen Hawkins	Executive Director, Community Action Agency	Core Group, Ujima Community Council Representative
Bonnie Hommrich	District Manager, Dept. for Social Services	Core Group; Liaison with Managing Board; Outcomes Group
Karen Hublar	Parent Services Coord., Community Coordinated Child Care	Resources Group
Rev. Ron Hutchins	Counselor, Seven Counties Services	Resources Group
Sylvia Johnson	Administrator, Neighborhood Place Ujima	Core Group, Needs Group
Donna Johnston	Community Liaison, Ujima Community Partnership	Outcomes Group, Governance Group
Aaron Kent	Chair, Ujima Community Council	Governance Group, Parent Representative, Liaison with Managing Board
Betty Marshall	Parent Representative	Resources Group
Lisa Meeks	Child Care Coordinator, West Louisville Child Care Alliance	Needs Group
Larry Michalczyk	Vice President, Seven Counties Services (mental health agency)	Governance Group, Outcomes Group, Liaison with Managing Board
Eloise O'Bannon	Social Worker, Jefferson Co. Public Schools	Resources
Eddie Samuels	Team Supervisor, Dept. For Social Insurance	
Latonya Shacklett	Parent Representative	Resources Group
James Smith	West Louisville Community Ministries	
Bernita Taylor	Parent Representative	

<i>Name</i>	<i>Capacity/ Agency</i>	<i>Additional Role(s), if any</i>
Denise Taylor	Parent Representative	Needs Group
Deborah Turner	CPS Team Supervisor, Dept. for Social Services	Resources
JoAnn Weis	Manager, Jefferson County Dept. for Human Services	Core Group
Danielle White	Vice Chair, Ujima Community Council	Needs Group, Outcomes Group, Parent Representative

Policy Leaders Whose Agencies/Organizations Support Louisville's Community Partnership

Viola Miller, Secretary, Kentucky Cabinet for Families and Children

Nancy Rawlings, Management Team, Department for Social Services

The Honorable Richard FitzGerald, Judge, Jefferson County Family Court

The Honorable David Armstrong, Jefferson County Judge Executive

The Honorable Jerry Abramson, Mayor of Louisville

Martin Bell, Chair, Neighborhood Place Managing Board, Deputy Superintendent, Jefferson County Public Schools

Katie Schneider, Director, Jefferson County Department for Human Services

Roger Amon, Assistant Director, Jefferson County Health Department

Sandra Wilson, Department for Social Insurance

Joe Tolan, Vice President, United Way

COMMUNITY PARTNERSHIPS FOR PROTECTING CHILDREN

CEDAR RAPIDS, IOWA

Reflections on the Planning Period: October, 1995 - December, 1996

I. OVERVIEW

Cedar Rapids, Linn County (population 176,800) is Iowa's second largest city. The minority population is small, less than ten percent. Surrounded by fertile farmland, the city boasts high employment and a strong economy that includes agricultural, manufacturing, and service industries. Quaker Oats is headquartered in Cedar Rapids, as are growing telemarketing firms. However, there are pockets of poverty within this generally prosperous town. According to the 1990 census, in one Cedar Rapids' neighborhood half of the households had an annual income below \$10,000.

For the past several years, both the state and the county have been working to improve services for children and families. Iowa has a strong commitment to family preservation and support programs, and the state has implemented an innovative funding strategy that allows counties to *"decategorize" categorical funding streams and use the funds flexibly to respond to local needs*. The goal of "decat" is to increase support for community-based, prevention efforts and to decrease reliance on out-of-home placements.

The state has also undertaken changes in its child protective service system (CPS). In 1994, the state legislature convened a bipartisan Child Protection Task Force in response to frustrations expressed by parents, lawmakers, mandatory reporters, and advocates that child protection investigations were too narrowly focused on the alleged incident. Based on the Task Force's recommendations, the legislature passed a law in 1995 requiring that the Department of Human Services (DHS) pilot a new assessment approach to reports of child abuse and neglect. Rather than a "one-size fits all" investigation, the *assessment approach looks at families' overall situations and tries to ensure child safety by tailoring a response appropriate to families' needs and strengths*—from intrusive measures (such as foster care placement and court action) to enlisting the help of informal supports (such as extended family and neighbors). Cedar Rapids was selected as one of five areas to implement assessments.

Locally, Cedar Rapids also had a number of relevant reform efforts underway in child welfare, child protection, and community services. For the past several years, agencies have been working together to develop neighborhood-based supports for families. *Public and private agencies established a collaborative, called the Family Resource Development Association (FRDA)*, that is currently comprised of over twenty members, including representatives of: state, county, and municipal government; health, education, and human service agencies; not-for-profits and neighborhood associations. FRDA spearheads the development and operation of five family resource centers. These neighborhood centers combine agency services (such as early childhood education, preventive health care, and family support) with community resources (such as recreation activities, parent groups, pot-luck meals, food and clothing, telephones and washer/dryers for public use).

Cedar Rapids had also adapted the *Patch project* targeting CPS to a specific neighborhood (known as a "Patch" in England where it originated). *CPS staff are stationed in a family resource center where they work in a team with other local service providers*, and community resources. Through frequent and informal contact with families, the Patch team can more closely monitor safety of children known to CPS and can help other families solve problems that if left unresolved could put children at risk of abuse or neglect.

In fact, Cedar Rapids had so many activities already underway when it was selected as a Community Partnership site that it spent the planning year "doing" and "planning" in equal measure. Because many of the key players had a history of working together, participation in the Partnership and the planning process itself built on already established patterns. The initial membership of the Community Partnership Steering Committee was drawn heavily from organizations active in FRDA. Additional members were recruited based in part on the Foundation's expectations that representatives of specific constituents be included (e.g., neighborhood associations, law enforcement), and in part to capitalize on strong local capacity (e.g., the United Way and St. Luke's Hospital Child Protection Center).

During the planning year, there was practically no "down time" because of the fast pace of development in the site. The Steering Committee met every other week, and numerous ad-hoc workgroups were formed to work on particular tasks. There were numerous site visits by technical assistance providers and periodic "all-site" meetings to bring together representatives from the four Community Partnership cities.

Ultimately, the site crafted a detailed strategic plan that reflects the complexity of their endeavors. Highlights of the plan include:

- To divert families from the formal child protection system, the site hired family support workers and stationed them at family resource centers where they can assist families with a range of issues—parenting and child development, housing, health, education, employment—to improve their well-being and increase child safety. Family Support workers recruit community residents, called Neighborhood Partners, who provide support and advice to other families and promote community activities. The site will sustain and refine the family support component and infuse an emphasis on child safety into other family support programs throughout the community.
- To anchor child protection in neighborhoods, the site will expand the Patch project to additional family resource centers. The site will continue its efforts to improve its response to families reported for child maltreatment by: outstationing additional DHS assessors and service workers in FRCs (making them more accessible to families and more familiar with neighborhoods); and expanding workers' "tool kit" by adding additional assessment tools and service interventions; and increasing the use of informal supports and community resources.
- To respond to the connection between domestic violence and child abuse, the site will conduct staff training to increase awareness of family violence, and implement model policies and

protocols to improve the coordination of services between domestic violence, child protection, law enforcement, and batterers' programs.

- To assess the impact of the Partnership, the site will continue to develop strategies for tracking the results of their efforts including using geographic information systems.

The Cedar Rapids plan is noteworthy for the considerable contribution of local dollars and in-kind support for Partnership activities. It would be impossible to capture the full value of time, energy and thoughtful work that this site (and the other three sites) put into creating a Partnership with the goal of reducing child abuse and neglect. Suffice it to say that a \$175,000 planning grant generated many, many times that amount of effort.

II. WHAT HAPPENED

Chris Carman, a key leader in the Partnership, described the planning year by saying that prior to initiating the Partnership, he felt as though Cedar Rapids was a turtle making slow and steady progress. With the planning grant and its concomitant activities, it was as though a rocket was strapped to the turtle's back and, like in a cartoon, the turtle sailed through the air. What a view!

The hallmark of Cedar Rapids' approach was pragmatism. While other sites might begin by stepping back from operational issues to craft a broader "vision" and focus on how to organize the planning process, Cedar Rapids concentrated on completing specific tasks and creating specific work products such as written agreements between agencies, job descriptions, and protocols for tracking outcomes.

Quarterly Summary of Major Activities

First Quarter (October - December 1995): Hit the Ground Running

A key component of the Partnership's planning grant was to "field test" the idea of adding family support workers to family resource centers and seeing if by helping families access services and support they could divert families from the formal CPS system. During the first quarter, the Partnership issued a request-for-proposals inviting applications from community agencies interested in providing neighborhood-based, family support services. Three community agencies—Hawkeye Area Community Action Program (HACAP, a community development organization), Jane Boyd Community House (a settlement house), and Four Oaks (a child welfare agency)—submitted a collaborative proposal. Rather than compete, the executive directors (Don Maniccia, Linda Winston, and Jim Ernst, respectively) joined forces to launch the family support component. These three directors and staff from their agencies were significant contributors to the Partnership throughout the planning year.

Typical of how work progressed in Cedar Rapids, the goals and duties of the family support workers and their relationship to other Partnership efforts were hashed out by working on documents and making decisions about specific next steps. Chris Carman (of HACAP) in collaboration with Ginger Hemmingsen (of Four Oaks) wrote detailed job descriptions and crafted specific outcomes and

measures for the family support component that were reviewed by the full Steering Committee. Ginger Hemmingsen spearheaded the process of recruiting and hiring the workers—advertising the position, reviewing resumes, and organizing a panel of nine people to interview candidates.

During the first quarter, the Department of Human Services (DHS) quickly moved into action too. As one of five areas within Iowa to pilot the assessment approach, Cedar Rapids' DHS workers and supervisors participated in training on techniques useful in evaluating families' overall situations. Conducted by staff at the National Resource Center for Family-Based Services, the training aimed to provide assessors with a "toolbox" so they can utilize a variety of assessments and select the ones that are appropriate to families' circumstances. Staff were trained to use genograms and eco-maps to help families look at their own history and the sources of stress and support in their lives. Other assessment approaches examine the sequence of behavior that leads to trouble and identifies interventions to stop problems from escalating to abuse or neglect.

An important change under the new assessment system is that families automatically get copies of their written assessment reports—under the investigation system a formal request was required. Supervisors credit this change with establishing more open and honest communication, helping decrease animosity between families and workers, and reducing the number of formal complaints made to DHS. However, some mandatory reporters have been uncomfortable with the fact that information gleaned during the assessment will be shared with the family themselves.

In addition to trying to change direct practice with families, DHS staff began to try to work more closely with mandatory reporters, wanting to build relationships that recognize and capitalize on the role reporters can play in supporting families and safeguarding children. Towards that end, the local DHS office wrote a newsletter, called *Mandatory Voices*, and distributed it to over 800 people, to answer questions about the new assessment approach and provide information about other local initiatives. (Three editions have been distributed to date.) Cedar Rapids' supervisors also re-enforced the expectation that assessors get back to reporters to let them know the result of the assessment—direct feedback reporters generally want but received inconsistently prior to the assessment approach.

Internally, DHS worked to improve communication and decision making by scheduling regular morning meetings for assessors and supervisors to review difficult cases. These meetings are now used as an opportunity for supervisors, assessors and CPS workers to share information and plan more carefully for the transfer (from assessor to service worker) of those families who will receive on going services.

Another critical component of the site's plan is to expand Patch to additional family resource centers. Early in the planning process, the Partnership recognized the complexity of selecting the next center, the need to resolve logistical problems, and the work entailed in conducting adequate outreach to build a local Patch team. Rather than trying to rush through these steps, the site determined that Patch expansion required a year of careful planning that included: developing a written description of Patch and a model interagency agreement for entities participating on the Patch team; establishing

criteria to assess a Center's appropriateness; and looking at the geographic distribution of child abuse reports.

Statewide, a group of critics—primarily county attorneys and some other advocates—were beginning to voice strong criticism **against** Iowa's newly piloted assessment approach.² Their criticism would garner increased attention, and the tenor of the debate would grow more adversarial in 1996.

Second Quarter (January - March 1996): Expanding the Partnership and Balancing the Workload

Two key people joined the Steering Committee during this quarter. Jean Hartgrave, a grandparent with long roots in Cedar Rapids and a history of community activism, joined as the representative of the Taylor Neighborhood Association. In addition to her familiarity with local resources and concerns, Jean Hartgrave has first-hand experience with the child protection system and was a founder of Cedar Rapids' Parents Anonymous chapter in the 1970's.

The other new member, Gloria Johnson, is director of the YWCA which administers the city's domestic violence programs. Prompted by Foundation inquiries about the involvement of domestic violence advocates in the Partnership, the Steering Committee asked Gloria Johnson to join. The site also began working intensively with Susan Schechter (a technical assistance provider) who works at the nearby University of Iowa and is a national expert on domestic violence. Because of the energetic involvement of Gloria Johnson, Susan Schechter, and other YWCA staff, the Community Partnership began to look much more closely at the connection between child maltreatment and family violence—a connection that ultimately had a significant impact on the site's strategic plan.

A significant personnel change occurred during this quarter. Marc Baty (DHS Area Administrator) and other DHS staff had been shouldering responsibility for much of the logistical work generated by the Partnership. While fully committed to the Partnership, it was untenable for DHS to continue to do the lion's share of this work, and it was inconsistent with the Steering Committee's evolving belief that the Partnership needed to be anchored in community organizations, in addition to DHS. With approval from his agency and financial compensation from the planning grant, Chris Carman, (HACAP Head Start Director) agreed to dedicate half of his time to Partnership work. John Brandt (Linn County Director of Human Resources) agreed to chair the Steering Committee meetings and take responsibility for generating agendas, notices, and minutes.

Initially, participants had been hesitant to fund a "coordinator" position out of the planning grant, wanting the Partnership to be truly "owned" by many participants and not be seen as **one** individual's project. And, they preferred to use grant resources for exciting activities such as family support workers, new computer capacity, and community outreach. However, it took only several months

² For a full discussion see "A Review of the Impact of Iowa's Assessment Legislation (SF 208 and SF 2399)," Center for the Study of Social Policy, November 1996.

for the site to feel that the amount of work involved in the Partnership required more staff time dedicated to it.

Continuing its development of the family support component, the Partnership hired and trained five family support workers who began work at three of the family resource centers. The family support workers began to recruit Neighborhood Partners.

A small ad-hoc work group met several times to establish guidelines and a process for referring families who are reported to DHS and are either "rejected" at intake (because the report does not meet the definition of child abuse) or who the DHS assessor feels would benefit from family support services. Family Support workers tried out "assessment cards" (developed by Jill Kinney) that help families set goals and measure their progress (or setbacks). Work continued on determining outcomes for the family support component and devising data collection and tracking systems. Some of the initial measurement tools that were tried out during the planning period need further refinement to fit the reality of workers and families.

One more noteworthy accomplishment this quarter: an agreement and referral process was devised to ensure that DHS assessors and family support workers can access crisis child care for families who need immediate respite. This linkage represents an example of deploying locally-controlled resources—individuals available to take care of children during a family emergency—to support the Community Partnership goal of safe children.

The site committed a significant portion of the planning grant to developing self-evaluation strategies. Towards that end, a data analyst, Mark Schmidt, was hired, and geographic information system (GIS) software and other computer equipment were purchased this quarter. Lynn Usher and Ray Kirk, (who consulted with each Partnership site on evaluation) underscored the importance of not leaving data collection and analysis to the "techies" and suggested that the site set-up a more diverse committee of stakeholders to look at and discuss information. A data work group (known as "WDDIM" for What Difference Does it Make?) was formed to ensure that evaluation efforts would be crafted by a collaboration of local practitioners, managers, and analysts.

In response to requests from the Steering Committee, Frank Farrow and Phyllis Brünson, from the Center for the Study of Social Policy, organized two meetings on the topic of governance.³ The meetings were helpful in clarifying the definition of governance, identifying strengths and problems with local decision-making processes, and prioritizing key questions related to the Community Partnership. The group also began to outline various governance options that could evolve out of current organizational structures—hoping to clarify and simplify some of the complex inter-connections between several entities (e.g., FRDA, the Decat board, the Community Partnership Steering Committee, a United Way-sponsored planning group, other special programs).

³ For a discussion of local governance see "Changing Governance to Achieve Better Results for Children and Families," Center for the Study of Social Policy.

However, it was difficult to make the conceptual discussion of governance accessible to all Partnership members, especially neighborhood representatives. And, there were some frustrations that there was not a clearer consensus about "what to do next." While the participants spent time discussing and "fleshing out" different possibilities, actual change in some of local governance structures did not occur until the summer months. The site continues to struggle with the demands of managing a variety of complex reform efforts and participating in numerous committees.

Third Quarter (April - June 1996): Looking Outside, Looking Inside

The third quarter presented opportunities for Partnership participants to expand their horizons. Several Foundation-sponsored meetings—a grantees conference, a working session on outcomes, and a forum showcasing innovative frontline practices—gave all of the sites a chance to get better acquainted with their counterparts in other Partnership cities and to step back from the press of day-to-day operations and see their efforts within a larger context. The Frontline Practice meeting in particular was effective at energizing additional people who became actively involved in the Partnership and brought back new ideas about direct services.

Within the site, attention shifted to getting the strategic plan down on paper. The Steering Committee formed four workgroups, one for each of the outcomes (Cedar Rapids added a fourth outcome related to domestic violence). Chris Carman spent his time drafting, revising, and editing the lengthy document. In constructing their plan, Cedar Rapids excelled at devising "logic chains"—explaining their hypothesis and describing step-by-step why each strategy should have an impact on the desired outcomes.

Two DHS child abuse assessors were deployed to the Brownstone Family Resource Center, location of the Patch team. Previously, only ongoing CPS service workers were outstationed. This marked the beginning of DHS's efforts to make assessment a neighborhood-based activity. It also placed increased demand on limited space available in the Family Resource Centers and pointed up the complexities of relocating workers and the phones, faxes, computers, and files that must move with them.

In May, Steve Fowler and Ellen Fern, of the communications firm Martin and Glantz, made a site visit. Their inquiries made it quite clear that while communicating with a host of audiences (from parents to judges to elected officials) was a top priority for the Partnership, it was extraordinarily difficult to explain the Partnership's purpose and activities in simple, compelling language. Rick David, Executive Director of United Way, agreed to spearhead a communications work group that would devise a concomitant communications plan to complement the strategic plan. Although the site is still working on "finding the right words," the Communications work group succeeded in getting KCRG—a local media outlet that has both a television station and newspaper—interested in working with the Partnership to increase awareness of the problem of family violence and promote community efforts to keep children safe.

At the end of June, a full day retreat was held to discuss future plans for the Partnership. Participants included the Steering Committee, members of FRDA, and key staff actively working on Partnership activities. After a year of discussion, and at times frustration and confusion, the group determined

that the Partnership should be under the auspices of the larger FRDA structure, not a "stand alone" initiative. Two additional modest, but symbolic, decisions were made at the retreat. The group made a conscious decision not to refer to the Partnership as the "Clark" project—at times a convenient shorthand but one that distanced people from owning the Partnership as their own. And the group agreed to literally "sign-off" on the final plan as concrete evidence of their commitment to enact it.

In terms of the new assessment approach, trouble that had been brewing since the fall came to a head this quarter. Already dissatisfied with the change in practice (from investigation to assessment) and the somewhat more limited use of the registry, county attorneys and a small group of advocates tried to persuade the legislature to discontinue assessments. Draft legislation that proposed a modification of the definition of child abuse and neglect further galvanized opponents. Critics of assessment were successful in changing the proposed legislation so that: the definition remained the same; county attorneys would receive copies of all assessment reports; and two additional categories were added to the criteria for placing people on the registry. Despite these modifications, critics continued to argue that assessments should be killed. The debate that ensued generated more heat than light. Misinformation and inflammatory accusations created a hostile environment for the pilot sites.

The legislation that finally passed in 1996 preserved the pilot assessment sites, required further study of the assessment approach, and delayed indefinitely plans for further implementation of assessments in other areas of the state.

Fourth Quarter (July - September 1996): Minding the Details

During the summer months, the Partnership focused on completing the Strategic Plan. Workgroups spent a tremendous amount of time ironing out a host of operational details, crafting workplans, and preparing budget requests which were eventually "rolled up" into the full strategic plan.

To garner comments from community residents (who are not professionally affiliated with the Partnership), the steering committee held three focus groups, involving a total of 35 individuals. Bruce Aune, an anchorman from KCRG's television station, lead the group discussions along with a staff member from the appropriate Family Resource Center. The focus groups were asked three general questions:

- 1) What is being done now in your neighborhood to prevent child abuse and reduce family stress?
- 2) Of the things that are being done, what works? what doesn't?
- 3) In a perfect world what new things would be done to help keep neighborhood families free from violence?

An additional 45 people participated in focus groups on domestic violence. Families were asked for their perceptions of the problem of domestic violence in their neighborhood and their familiarity with local resources. Child abuse, income maintenance and family support staff participated in additional groups to help the Partnership determine what training is needed related to domestic violence.

An introductory orientation for staff on the problems of child abuse and domestic violence, (organized by Gloria Johnson and Colleen Sutkus, YWCA, Susan Schecter, University of Iowa, Susan Tesdahl, Child Protection Center, Diane Wyckoff, DHS, Christy Hamblin, Cedar Rapids Police Department) attracted over 60 people. The organizers were very pleased with the large turnout, and saw this as an indication of the high level of concern about these issues.

In September, Iowa submitted its plan. Within a week, it was reviewed by Foundation staff and members of the Foundation's Strategy Group who had worked closely with the sites during the year. The response was extremely positive. Despite encouraging signs throughout the planning phase, the Steering Committee approached the review process with trepidation. So, the Cedar Rapids team was very gratified to get enthusiastic feedback. The Partnership breathed a big sigh of relief. Then they realized the scope of the proposed plan and the amount of future work entailed in making it a reality. One key participant called it "sobering." The site quickly got back to work, concerned that some key activities had slipped while attention was focused on writing the plan.

Fifth Quarter (October - December 1996): Back to Hard Work

Over the summer and into the fall, a great deal of energy and time was spent hashing out a new governance structure for the Family Resource Development Association (FRDA), the umbrella organization for the Partnership. The changes were motivated by several factors: the need to generate more revenues to support FRDA's modest budget; the need to clarify FRDA's complex structure; and the desire to increase community participation. After several months of discussion, FRDA members agreed to a reorganization plan. FRDA will be governed by an Operating Board with ultimate decision-making authority over the Association itself and FRDA projects such as the Community Partnership for Protecting Children. The Board is comprised of nine elected representatives. Public agencies, non-profits, and neighborhood associations each constitute one-third of the Board.

In addition to the new organizational structure and clearer lines of authority, FRDA established specific requirements for its members. All FRDA member organizations must participate in at least one standing committee (e.g. finance, center operations, quality assurance, Community Partnership). And, members must now pay dues, a small percentage of their organization's operating budget. The concept of paying dues was generally viewed favorably as a clear message to **all** participants that endorsing "neighborhood-based services to strengthen families" means actually making a financial investment, though making the contribution posed a challenge for some organizations.

The site continued to make progress on putting pieces of the Partnership in place. To help manage the growing workload, the site decided to hire a Partnership Facilitator who will provide staff support to the workgroups, fulfill grant reporting requirements, and coordinate consultation with TA providers. A hiring committee was set up to organize the selection process.

To provide an orientation to the Patch approach, the American Humane Association conducted training on Patch principles and methods for teams of staff and community members from all the Family Resource Centers.

A graduate social work student was assigned to the Brownstone Family Resource Center for her field placement. She is counseling women who have been victims of domestic violence and is a resource for the Patch team and Center staff who need help with families where they know of, or suspect, violence is occurring.

On the assessment front, at the request of Iowa legislators, the Center for the Study of Social Policy organized a fact finding team—comprised of three national experts in child protective services—to look at the controversy surrounding assessments. During the fall, the team visited Iowa, interviewed supporters and critics of assessment and drafted two detailed reports (one on assessment, one on the use of the registry) and crafted a series of recommendations as to how the state might proceed. As required by law, DHS will hold a forum in early 1997 to discuss the assessment approach. Elsewhere in the country, Iowa's assessment approach is often cited as a positive example of CPS reform; at home, it continues to be controversial, and its future is uncertain.

III. THE PLAN THAT EMERGED

In September 1996, some thirty individuals (encompassing the steering committee and key members of FRDA) signed Cedar Rapids' Strategic Plan for its Community Partnership for Protecting Children.⁴ The plan begins with a straightforward statement of the Partnership's guiding principles:

- 1) Each child has a right to be safe.
- 2) Child safety is the responsibility of all adults in the community.
- 3) Early intervention/prevention contributes to a higher likelihood of safe children.
- 4) Primary responsibility for a child's safety rests with the family. Families need to be an integral part of prevention, treatment, and intervention efforts.
- 5) Community intolerance of domestic violence is a cornerstone to the protection of our children.
- 6) Each family is unique and has strengths which can be built upon.
- 7) A commitment to child safety must include a recognition of and respect for the cultural differences in families and systems.
- 8) When opportunities are created for families to practice and learn new skills, family stability and child safety are promoted.
- 9) Involvement and inclusion in the community promotes healthy families.
- 10) It is the community's responsibility to insure that all families have the opportunity to meet their basic needs.
- 11) The new Community Partnership for Protecting Children must be built on shared responsibility, shared control, and shared beliefs. The Partnership must build upon existing community support systems, and develop action steps relevant to neighborhood concerns and actual needs of families.

⁴ This section of the report draws heavily on the site's strategic plan written by Chris Carman.

The first goal of the Partnership is that children in participating neighborhoods will be less likely to be abused or neglected. The Partnership promotes an array of prevention efforts aimed at supporting families so that abuse is less likely to occur in the first place and fewer families will end up being reported to CPS. The locus of activity for these prevention efforts are Cedar Rapids' five Family Resource Centers which provide a range of services and supports that help families meet basic needs, increase skills, and lower stress. Key strategies include:

- **FAMILY SUPPORT WORKERS** WORK WITH FAMILIES WHO HAVE SIGNIFICANT RISK FACTORS FOR ABUSE AND NEGLECT HELPING THEM ASSESS THEIR SITUATION, RESOLVE CRISES, AND LEARN ABOUT CHILD DEVELOPMENT AND PARENTING. TARGET FAMILIES FOR FAMILY SUPPORT INCLUDE LOW-INCOME FAMILIES, YOUNG SINGLE PARENTS WITH CHILDREN UNDER AGE FIVE, AND HOMELESS FAMILIES WITH CHILDREN UNDER AGE 12. REFERRALS COME FROM ASSESSORS, STAFF AT THE FRCs, PROVIDERS, TEACHERS, NEIGHBORS, OR FAMILIES THEMSELVES.

THE FIVE FAMILY SUPPORT WORKERS THAT WERE PARTIALLY FUNDED BY THE PLANNING GRANT ARE NOW FULLY FUNDED WITH FEDERAL FAMILY PRESERVATION AND SUPPORT FUNDS. HOWEVER, THE PARTNERSHIP REALIZED EARLY ON THAT THE POTENTIAL FOR BUILDING A COMPREHENSIVE FAMILY SUPPORT APPROACH LAY IN UTILIZING THE SIGNIFICANT NUMBER OF EXISTING FAMILY SUPPORT WORKERS THAT ARE ATTACHED TO OTHER PROGRAMS (SUCH AS TRANSITIONAL HOUSING, WELFARE-TO-WORK, VIOLENCE PREVENTION, AND PRESCHOOL PROGRAMS). A CONSORTIUM OF NOT-FOR-PROFIT AGENCIES HAVE IDENTIFIED OVER 20 FAMILY SUPPORT WORKERS AND HAVE AGREED TO COMMIT THESE STAFF MEMBERS TO THE GOALS OF THE PARTNERSHIP. THIS WILL ENTAIL INTEGRATING TRAINING AND DEVELOPING A SHARED APPROACH TO PRACTICE THAT HAS A FOCUS ON CHILD SAFETY. BY JOINING FORCES, THESE WORKERS WILL HAVE INCREASED ACCESS TO IMPORTANT SUPPORTS SUCH AS CRISIS CHILD CARE, PRE-SCHOOL SLOTS, HOUSING UNITS, EMERGENCY FOOD, AND UTILITY ASSISTANCE.

FOUNDATION FUNDS WILL BE USED TO PILOT A "FAMILY SUPPORT FOLLOW-THROUGH POOL" THAT WILL ENABLE 25 HIGH-RISK FAMILIES TO MAINTAIN LONGER-TERM RELATIONSHIPS WITH THEIR WORKERS ONCE THEY LOSE CATEGORICAL ELIGIBILITY (SUCH AS A FAMILY WHOSE HEAD START CHILD GOES TO KINDERGARTEN).

- **NEIGHBORHOOD PARTNERS** ARE AN IMPORTANT SOURCE OF THE INFORMAL SUPPORT FOR VULNERABLE FAMILIES. PARTNERS UNDERTAKE ACTIVITIES SUCH AS GREETING NEW PEOPLE MOVING INTO THE AREA, HELPING WITH TRANSPORTATION OR BABYSITTING, PROVIDING INFORMATION ON COMMUNITY RESOURCES, AND ORGANIZING NEIGHBORHOOD ACTIVITIES. NEIGHBORHOOD PARTNERS RECEIVE A SMALL STIPEND TO DEFRAY TRAVEL AND CHILD CARE COSTS. THEY ARE SUPERVISED BY A FAMILY SUPPORT WORKER, RECEIVE TRAINING FROM FAMILY SUPPORT CONSORTIUM STAFF, AND HAVE SERVED AT TIMES AS INFORMAL ADVISORS COMMENTING ON OTHER PARTNERSHIP ACTIVITIES.
- **PATCH TEAMS** (COMPRISED OF CHILD PROTECTION STAFF AND REPRESENTATIVES FROM A RANGE OF AGENCIES AND NEIGHBORHOOD-BASED ORGANIZATIONS) ARE CHARGED WITH COORDINATING SERVICES AND SUPPORTS TO AT-RISK AND CPS-INVOLVED FAMILIES LIVING IN THE TARGET

NEIGHBORHOODS. PATCH WORKERS ARE OUT IN THE NEIGHBORHOOD AND INVOLVED IN COMMUNITY ACTIVITIES, SO THEY CAN PICK UP SIGNS OF TROUBLE EARLY AND CAN HELP FAMILIES WHEN THEY NEED IT, WITHOUT NECESSITATING A REFERRAL TO THE CPS SYSTEM. FOR FAMILIES THAT HAVE BEEN REPORTED TO CPS, PATCH WORKERS CAN MAKE BETTER USE OF LOCAL RESOURCES AND CAN TAP INTO INFORMAL SUPPORT NETWORKS, LINKING FAMILIES TO NEIGHBORS, SELF-HELP GROUPS, COMMUNITY OR RELIGIOUS ORGANIZATIONS.

ALREADY IN OPERATION AT THE BROWNSTONE FRC, PATCH TEAMS WILL BE ESTABLISHED, IN THE COMING YEAR, AT TWO FAMILY RESOURCE CENTERS—TAYLOR, A SCHOOL-BASED CENTER, AND JANE BOYD, A LONG-STANDING SETTLEMENT HOUSE. THE OTHER FRC'S ARE ALSO BEGINNING THE PROCESS OF DEVELOPING PATCH TEAMS.

- **WRAPAROUND SERVICE FUND** PATCH AND FAMILY SUPPORT WORKERS SERVING THE TARGET NEIGHBORHOODS WILL BE ABLE TO ACCESS A "FAMILY ASSISTANCE WRAPAROUND SERVICE FUND" TO DEAL WITH EMERGENCIES THAT IF UNRESOLVED COULD ESCALATE AND REQUIRE CPS INVOLVEMENT. WHEN ASSISTANCE CAN NOT BE OBTAINED FROM ANY OTHER SOURCE, THESE FUNDS CAN BE USED FOR CRITICAL NEEDS SUCH AS TRANSPORTATION, RENT DEPOSITS, TREATMENT, EMERGENCY HEALTH CARE, OR HOMEMAKER SERVICES.

A second goal of the Partnership is to try to ensure that when children do come to the attention of the community's system for protecting children they will be less likely to be re-abused or re-neglected in the future. The strategies described above— particularly the Patch project and the family support workers—will contribute toward reaching this goal. Additional key strategies include:

- **CHILD ABUSE ASSESSORS** HAVE IMPLEMENTED A NEW ASSESSMENT APPROACH SO THAT IN ADDITION TO DETERMINING WHETHER AN ACT OCCURRED THAT MEETS THE LEGAL DEFINITION OF ABUSE, ASSESSORS LOOK AT FAMILIES' SITUATIONS COMPREHENSIVELY AND IDENTIFY THE APPROPRIATE TYPES OF SUPPORT OR INTERVENTION THAT CAN KEEP CHILDREN SAFER (OPTIONS RANGING FROM INFORMAL SUPPORTIVE SERVICES TO IN-HOME FAMILY PRESERVATION TO PLACING A CHILD IN FOSTER CARE). BY PLACING ASSESSORS IN FRCs AND CONNECTING THEM TO FAMILY SUPPORT WORKERS AND PATCH TEAM MEMBERS, THEY WILL BE WELL-SITUATED TO (1) LINK LOWER-RISK FAMILIES TO NEIGHBORHOOD SERVICES AND SUPPORTS AND (2) ACT AS CONSULTANTS TO WORKERS BASED AT THE FRCs ON ISSUES OF CHILD SAFETY THAT ARISE IN THEIR CASELOADS.
- **AN EXPANDED "TOOL KIT" OF RESPONSES** GIVES STAFF ACCESS TO A BROADER RANGE OF FACT FINDING AND ASSESSMENT TOOLS TO UNDERSTAND FAMILY SITUATIONS AND RESPOND TO THEM. THE PARTNERSHIP WILL CONTINUE TO LOOK FOR NEW APPROACHES TO PRACTICE THAT CAN EXPAND WORKERS' REPERTOIRE OF RESPONSES TO FAMILIES.
- **MULTI-DISCIPLINARY TEAMS** BRING AN INTER-DISCIPLINARY FOCUS TO SPECIAL CASES WHERE CHILD ABUSE OR NEGLECT HAS OCCURRED. IN ADDITION TO THE PATCH TEAMS, NEW SPECIAL FOCUS TEAMS ARE BEING DEVELOPED FOR DRUG-EXPOSED INFANTS AND FOR CHILD ABUSE RELATED TO DOMESTIC VIOLENCE.

- ***A NEW APPROACH TO CASE ASSIGNMENT*** PAIRS A CHILD ABUSE ASSESSOR WITH AN ON-GOING CHILD PROTECTIVE SERVICE WORKER AT THE TIME A CHILD ABUSE ASSESSMENT TAKES PLACE. IN SITUATIONS WHERE REPEAT ABUSE IS CONFIRMED AND THE CASE IS TRANSFERRED TO AN ON-GOING CPS WORKER, TEAM STAFFING PROVIDES MORE CONTINUITY IN WORKING WITH THE FAMILY AND MONITORING CHILD SAFETY.
- ***A RISK PROFILE FOR RE-ABUSE*** WILL BE DEVELOPED TO BETTER IDENTIFY THE SITUATIONS WHERE RE-ABUSE IS MOST LIKELY, SO THAT MORE EFFECTIVE INTERVENTIONS CAN BE OFFERED TO FAMILIES MEETING THE PROFILE *BEFORE* ABUSE OCCURS. THIS ANALYSIS IS NOW POSSIBLE BECAUSE ASSESSMENT PILOT COUNTIES RETAIN ALL CASES AS OPEN OR CLOSED FILES, AND THUS CAN KNOW WHEN A FAMILY HAS BEEN PREVIOUSLY REPORTED. (UNDER THE INVESTIGATION SYSTEM ALL UNFOUNDED CASES HAD TO BE EXPUNGED, SO UNLESS AN INVESTIGATION RESULTED IN THE CASE BEING PLACED ON THE REGISTRY IT WAS IMPOSSIBLE TO KNOW IF THERE HAD BEEN A PREVIOUS REPORT.)

The third goal of the Partnership is to reduce the rate of serious injury to children due to abuse or neglect in participating neighborhoods. Cedar Rapids chose to add a fourth, related outcome: "Children and families in participating neighborhoods that come to the attention of the community system for protecting children will be less likely to re-experience domestic violence." Because research suggests that some of the most serious child abuse occurs in families where there is also domestic violence, the site has devised strategies that it hopes will decrease family violence. In addition to the approaches describe D above, key strategies are:

- ***IMMEDIATE RESPONSES*** WILL BE DEVELOPED INCLUDING: (A) SCREENING FOR DOMESTIC VIOLENCE IN CHILD ABUSE ASSESSMENTS; (B) HELPING VICTIMS IN NEIGHBORHOODS LINK WITH DOMESTIC VIOLENCE SERVICES; (C) SUPPORTING THE DEVELOPMENT OF SAFETY PLANS FOR CHILDREN AND ADULTS LIVING IN VIOLENT HOUSEHOLDS; AND (D) OFFERING FOLLOW-UP SUPPORT TO WOMEN FOR A LONGER PERIOD OF TIME AFTER LEAVING THE DOMESTIC VIOLENCE SHELTER.
- ***EDUCATION AND TRAINING*** IN DOMESTIC VIOLENCE ISSUES WILL BE CONDUCTED FOR ASSESSORS, CPS WORKERS, MEDICAL PERSONNEL, SCHOOL STAFF, CLERGY, AND OTHER HUMAN SERVICES STAFF.
- ***MODEL POLICY*** WILL BE DEVELOPED TO INCREASE COORDINATION AMONG COMMUNITY PROGRAMS DEALING WITH BATTERER ACCOUNTABILITY AND VICTIM SAFETY. MODEL POLICIES RELATED TO DOMESTIC VIOLENCE WILL ALSO BE SHARED WITH LOCAL HUMAN SERVICE, HEALTH, AND EDUCATION AGENCIES FOR THEIR CONSIDERATION AND ADOPTION. PARTICIPATING AGENCIES AND THE COMMUNITY AS A WHOLE WILL BE URGED TO ESTABLISH "DOMESTIC VIOLENCE FREE ZONES" IN WHICH VIOLENCE IS NOT TOLERATED, AND VICTIMS CAN GAIN ACCESS TO A SAFE PLACE.

IV. KEY THEMES

A. How did the context influence Cedar Rapids' course of development?

Because Cedar Rapids had many of the prerequisites for developing a new approach to child protection, it was a "fertile field" for establishing a Community Partnership. Human service organizations and public agencies had already formed strong working relationships. Several service delivery and financing innovations were underway.

In addition to these positive "pre-existing conditions," the Cedar Rapids site proved to be a place with enviably strong local leadership in its public agencies and its family service/community development organizations. Within the agencies most active in the Partnership, there is an impressive depth of staff competence, commitment, and intelligence. This "bench strength" meant that the Partnership did not have to rely exclusively on agency executive directors, but was able to involve and benefit from talented staff within organizations.

Despite the conducive local context, there were times when local problems and conflicts between key participants impacted on the Partnership. For example, FRDA's dues requirement posed a challenge for DHS (one of FRDA's most significant supporters) because public agencies generally cannot pay dues and are often hampered by limited fiscal flexibility. It took time and some difficult negotiations to work out the specifics. Ultimately, the Decat board agreed to use flexible decategorized funds for DHS's contribution to FRDA's operations. Solving this problem, which involved many of the same people who are active in the Partnership, was time consuming and resulted in tensions amongst key participants.

In another instance, some Partnership participants were very disappointed at the lack luster response to the suggestions that FRDA and Steering Committee meetings be held in the evening so more community residents could attend after work. The time of some meetings was shifted to early evening, but a few local leaders questioned the extent of others' commitment to community involvement if they hesitated to put such talk into action.

The Partnership has continued to gain momentum and make solid progress despite these types of conflicts and disappointments. But, it would be foolish to think that any initiative is immune to these kind of problems that may, on the surface, seem minor, but can fester, fostering resentments and personal conflicts that can derail a local partnership.

What appeared initially to be a strong state context—because of Iowa's CPS reform legislation and history of child welfare innovation—turned out be highly contentious. The debate about the assessment approach became a lightning rod for skepticism about government generally. At the same time that the assessment controversy was roiling, DHS was underfire for plans it had devised to deal with upcoming changes in federal policy. Some providers were angered that these "modification plans" were forged without representation from parties outside of DHS. Frustration at the Department over these other issues made it even more difficult to rally supporters for the assessment approach.

B. The process and speed of parent and citizen engagement: what promoted it? what impeded it?

Cedar Rapids did well at involving parents and neighborhood residents as neighborhood partners. However, recruiting neighborhood partners sparked considerable debate about who best represents a community and who is best able to lend support and assistance to others. Initially, people recommended or interested in serving as neighborhood partners were described as "professional volunteers" or "junior league types." It took further recruitment efforts to identify grassroots, neighborhood leaders who already had strong ties to their blocks and relationships with families and children. Not surprisingly, members of the Community Partnership had differing perspectives and questioned whether individuals who they had difficulty with or who had been "in trouble" should be selected for this type of position. It is a continuing challenge for all members of the group to value the variety of contributions people can make.

Another mechanism the Community Partnership used for soliciting citizen input was focus groups of neighborhood residents. Residents' comments in these groups underscored the degree to which families feel isolated from each other, yet want to reach out, especially to young parents. Participants also identified local activities that they find helpful in managing the demands of raising children—from afterschool kids clubs to a Drum and Bugle Corps to a Parents Day Out program. Some of the gaps in supports were identified too, such as a lack of activities for families on Saturdays and the need for a "welcome wagon" to introduce new residents to the community. Focus group participants emphasized the importance of neighbor-to-neighbor contact, indicating that people are wary of "programs and agencies." In terms of sharing information, participants generally felt the most effective way of communicating was directly and informally—knocking on people's doors, contacting people where they naturally congregate in parks and playgrounds, putting fliers in mailboxes and so on.

While Cedar Rapids' Partnership was successful in enlisting parents as active volunteers and in consulting with citizens for feedback on Partnership activities, the site had difficulty consistently involving parents in governing the Partnership. Though Steering Committee members expressed belief in the value of parent participation, their very way of doing work perhaps impeded broader parent involvement in making decisions and setting priorities. Because the "professional" participants have a long history of working together, tend to be oriented towards formal meetings, and are focused on generating specific work products—it can be daunting for a newcomer to join and take part. The Partners' language and topics of discussion can be foreign and intimidating.

While two neighborhood association representatives, Jean Hartgrave and Doreen Meier, were consistent members of the steering committee, it was not until the end of the planning period that two parents with young children, both active in Head Start, were asked to join the committee. A sign of progress: both parents are in the small work group responsible for selecting the Partnership Facilitator, as both have experience with interviewing and hiring staff for Head Start.

Ironically, at times it seemed like there were too many citizen or parent groups—site councils for the family resource centers, parent councils for Head Start, and community advisory groups for

Patch—that resulted in volunteer efforts being spread thin. By the end of the planning year, the Partnership steering committee was determined to increase its number of parent participants, but also recognized that it should be more responsive to the needs of other community groups. (For instance, providing child care when neighborhood associations meet to make it easier for families with young children to join.) Putting their money where their good intentions are, the Partnership has set aside a pot of money (\$15,000) that neighborhood groups can utilize to support grassroots efforts that improve child safety.

Finally, other external issues may have impeded fuller community participation. Obviously, neighborhood associations have other priorities than just the goals of the Community Partnership. Generally, the associations have been concerned with maintaining housing stock, preventing crime, and improving the appearance of their neighborhoods. At times, associations have been in conflict with other entities. For instance in one neighborhood, the association was trying to stop a church that wanted to demolish several homes to build a parking lot. Despite protests by the association, the church prevailed. While not in any way related to concerns about child safety, such conflicts have a spill-over effect, and can make it more difficult to foster cooperation between government, citizens and not-for-profits at the local level.

C. How did Cedar Rapids grapple with the issue of safety and its importance?

Because Cedar Rapids was already the site of local and state-initiated CPS reform, the Community Partnership's emphasis on safety specifically related to preventing child abuse and neglect was a comfortable match. There were two important changes during the planning year in how the participants viewed the issue of safety. The first was the recognition of the link between child maltreatment and domestic violence which resulted in the Partnership's decision to develop a range of strategies to address this complex problem.

The second was the recognition that child safety is *not* exclusively the public agency's responsibility. While many participants committed an enormous amount of time, energy and resources to the Partnership, for some there was still a lingering sense that they were "helping with a DHS initiative"—critical and important but primarily a "public agency effort." It took a year of talking together, and some important data, for the sense of this being a **Community** Partnership to take root.

A moment when the "light bulb went on" for the Steering Committee was when Tony Montoya (DHS analyst), and Mark Schmidt presented some clear but compelling data. They showed the progress of a cohort of families reported for child abuse or neglect as they moved through the CPS system. Out of over 617 assessments, abuse was confirmed in 146 cases; 98 of those families received services; 48 did not receive services (most likely because it was an isolated, minor incident or the child's situation changed). An additional 189 families, where abuse or neglect was **not** confirmed, did receive services. That means a total of 330 cases did not receive any follow-up services. Some of those families are probably just fine and not in need of assistance, but what about the other families who may need help? Who should be responsible for offering some support? And that's just families reported to the system, what about families that no one realizes are in trouble? This information was worrying to providers and residents, and made it more evident that child safety

is not just a DHS issue. These families are their neighbors, their clients, their students, their co-workers.

One additional comment on the topic of safety: Partnership members had to be cautious not to fall into the trap of seeing a new program component—specifically a community-wide family support approach—as a panacea. Family support and informal networks alone are not *the* solution to the problem of child abuse but are a part of a continuum of responses needed to prevent child maltreatment. However, there will continue to be some "high end, egregious cases" that necessitate swift, intrusive intervention. Work still needs to be done to look at the kinds of coercive measures that are currently employed—are they adequate? appropriate? how can they be improved?

D. Who did Cedar Rapids engage in the safety network, and why? Why are some partners still not engaged?

A core group of about a dozen individuals provided consistent leadership for the Partnership. This group includes representatives of DHS, county government, community-based and child welfare service providers, the child protection center, and staff from the Family Resource Centers. Because so many activities were implemented during the planning year, there are dozens of direct service workers who changed their frontline practice as a result of the Community Partnership.

The courts have not been involved in the Partnership to a significant degree—in part, because of the assessment controversy, and in part because many of the Partnership's initial priorities emphasized prevention efforts (that should keep some families from ever having to enter the formal CPS and court systems). The site recognizes that it is critically important to involve the legal system to a greater extent, and, in recent conversations, the County Attorney and Police Chief have indicated interest in working with the Partnership particularly on domestic violence strategies.

The site has done some initial work on the intersection of child abuse and substance abuse. With leadership from hospital and DHS staff, a task force has developed a coordinated response to infants born with drugs in their systems. While this is an important first step, the Partnership will need to involve substance abuse treatment programs in its overall efforts. Historically, substance abuse programs have been more isolated from other agencies, and frankly, it wasn't possible to cover all the bases adequately in the first year of Partnership activity. But given the growing problem of drug use in Iowa, this is an area that will require future attention.

E. Overall Assessment

Key Accomplishments

Key accomplishments in developing Cedar Rapids' Community Partnership for Protecting Children include:

- A steering committee was formed and expanded and has created a workgroup structure to develop and coordinate the growing activities of the Partnership. Renewed emphasis has been

placed on enlisting the participation of unaffiliated community residents and court representatives.

- The site was able to meet the pressing need for staff to sustain the Partnership's myriad activities by redeploying existing staff, and through the efforts of several individuals—who committed considerable time above and beyond their already full schedules.
- The site piloted a new child abuse assessment approach, outstationed two DHS assessors, and continues to examine how it can improve its initial interactions with families.
- The Family Support/Neighborhood Partner program was launched. Five family support workers were hired, trained, and based at family resource centers. Two dozen neighborhood partners were recruited. Outcomes and measurement tools for this component are being tried out and revised as needed.
- The groundwork was laid to expand the Patch project increasing the geographic target area of the Partnership.
- The inter-relationship between child abuse and domestic violence was identified and given concerted attention in the strategic planning process.
- The site developed an increasing level of sophistication in using computer technology and interpreting data. Mapping of community indicators, assets and problems using GIS software is well underway.
- The Ford Foundation and the Kennedy School of Government selected the Cedar Rapids Patch project as one of 25 finalists in its Innovations in American Government competition, out of over 1600 applications. As a result, the county received a \$20,000 grant to promote the Patch approach.
- The site garnered positive media coverage—an article in the local paper about Family Resource Centers, an article in the Des Moines Register on Patch, a feature story on Monitor Radio—and interested a local media outlet in supporting a campaign to reduce family violence.
- An integrated family support approach was developed that brings together a consortium of existing Family Support programs at the local level.

The Major Challenges

Maintaining Assessments and Moving On with State Reform: A major challenge will be whether the State of Iowa can sustain assessments, and if so, whether the state will continue to move forward with CPS reform. A supplementary Foundation grant to the State provides opportunities for other counties to begin developing community systems of child protection. The other four assessment

pilot sites, and/or other "decat" counties are obvious choices for additional locations to develop Community Partnerships.

Assuring Quality: While doing so much more, the Partnership will also have to be vigilant to ensure that it continues to provide high quality services. For example, this past year the original Patch team experienced some personnel changes and lost some of its initial momentum. At the same time, managers were planning Patch expansion.

Another aspect of maintaining quality will be ensuring that informal supports remain informal. Partnership members have voiced concerns that in cultivating informal networks of support for families, they run the risk of making them formal. For instance, they want to include neighborhood partners in the development of the Community Partnership, train and support them, and yet preserve their identity as a neighbor, a parent, a friend. It will be a challenge for the site to maintain a dual focus on moving ahead and making sure that current operations are optimal.

Balancing Demands: Interest in Cedar Rapids' work is growing, as are requests for individuals from Cedar Rapids to make presentations and consult with other communities. The invitations are flattering and present exciting opportunities to "spread the word" and learn about other places. But, already site representatives are having to be more selective about what they respond to, trying to determine when and where their particular perspective will really make a difference. Fulfilling the key activities outlined in the strategic plan is a truly daunting task. Meeting the Foundation's requirements is critical. Sharing ideas with peers is stimulating. And, yet there are only so many hours in a day. Attending to internal needs while responding to external requests will continue to be a difficult, at times precarious, balancing act.

Conclusion

Cedar Rapids' strategic plan states that the heart of the Partnership is not the support received from outside the community, as important as that is, but instead is the growing understanding that the safety of children depends upon how well the community supports families, organizes services, makes decisions, and uses available resources. Cedar Rapids has crafted and begun to implement many of the components that are essential to creating a community-based system of child protection. It has articulated the hypotheses it is testing with each strategy and has identified benchmarks to assess advances and setbacks. It has recognized the critical importance of redeploying existing resources toward this effort. And, it is trying to "weave" closer connections in its safety network—between assessments and on going services, between family violence and child abuse, between community-based programs and neighborhood residents. In the coming years, Cedar Rapids is poised to put these pieces together and to see if they have an impact on child safety.

ATTACHMENT A
CHRONOLOGY OF MAJOR EVENTS

August 1995

- A Steering Committee for the Community Partnership for Protecting Children begins meeting to draft and review the planning grant proposal to the Edna McConnell Clark Foundation (approximately ten members).

September 1995

- The Edna McConnell Clark Foundation awards a planning grant to Cedar Rapids.

October 1995

- The Steering Committee adds several members including representatives from three neighborhood associations, the schools, and the police and continues meeting, approximately every other week, throughout the planning period.
- A Child Abuse Assessment Pilot workgroup meets weekly throughout the fall to work out operational details related to implementing assessments and informing others about the change.
- Lynn Usher and Ray Kirk visit the site to introduce the concept of self-evaluation and determine the availability of data, at the state and site level, for their evaluability study.

December 1995

- The new assessment approach is implemented by DHS.
- The first governance meeting is organized by the Center for the Study of Social Policy; FRDA and Steering Committee Representatives attend.
- Norm Zimlich visits to examine local and state financing strategies.

January 1996

- The family support workers begin at three neighborhood-based Family Resource Centers.
- Family support worker training is conducted.
- Jolie Bain Pillsbury facilitates a strategic planning meeting.
- The first all-site meeting is held at Amelia Island, Florida.
- The second governance meeting is held.

February 1996

- John Brandt agrees to chair the Steering Committee meetings.
- Chris Carman agrees to work on the Community Partnership 20 hours a week "on loan" from HACAP.

March 1996

- Gloria Johnson, director of the YWCA, joins the steering committee and brings expertise on domestic violence to the group.
- Key Desired Outcomes for the family support program are established after considerable discussion and review.

April 1996

- Jean Hartgrave joins the Steering Committee.
- The Edna McConnell Clark Foundation's Children's Program Grantees Conference introduces site representatives to other organizations working on the issue of child safety.
- Workgroups are formed for each of the four outcomes of the strategic plan. The groups are charged with defining strategies, benchmarks, and budgets for their section of the plan.

May 1996

- The first outcomes meeting is held in St. Louis.
- Steve Fowler and Ellen Fern, of the communications firm Martin and Glantz, spend three days in the site to familiarize themselves with activities and people involved in the Partnership and begin discussions about goals and ideas for communications.
- An informational session is held on domestic violence and child abuse.

June 1996

- The draft strategic plan is submitted to the Foundation.
- A communications work group is formed.
- Susan Notkin and Jolie Kapelus, from the Edna McConnell Clark Foundation, visit to review the draft strategic plan.
- FRDA retreat is held to review reorganization plan and other issues.
- Frontline practice meeting is held.
- A full-day retreat is held for the Community Partnership.

July 1996

- The second outcomes meeting is held in Louisville.

August 1996

- Focus groups are held with community residents to discuss the topic of child safety.
- Focus groups are held with neighborhood-based staff members, and with local women on the problem of domestic violence and child maltreatment.

September 1996

- Steering Committee and Family Resource Development Association members sign off on the final strategic plan.
- The strategic plan is submitted to the Foundation.

November 1996

- The third outcomes meeting is held in Cedar Rapids.
- Rosalind Stevenson of Metis Associates visits Cedar Rapids to look at its information systems and suggest ways to utilize data.
- Steve Fowler makes a second site visit to work with the Communications group.

December 1996

- The Edna McConnell Clark Foundation approves a two-year grant for the Cedar Rapids Community Partnership.
- Patch team training is conducted by the American Humane Association.
- The hiring process begins for the Partnership Facilitator.

ATTACHMENT B

KEY DECISIONMAKERS

The decision making body for Cedar Rapids' Community Partnership for Protecting Children is the Steering Committee. Its membership is listed below. At the conclusion of the planning period, the Steering Committee established five standing workgroups:

- 1) Communications and Community Engagement
- 2) Data Workgroup
- 3) Child Abuse Assessment
- 4) Family Centered Activities/Family Support Worker
- 5) Domestic Violence

A hiring committee has also been set-up to select the Partnership Facilitator.

Most of the individuals listed below, and/or other representatives from their organizations, serve on more than one of these committees. In addition, representatives of other entities who are not part of the Steering Committee are invited to participate in workgroups such as Patch team members, neighborhood partners, representatives from the courts, the Housing Department and so on.

The list of Steering Committee members includes many people who have been essential to the formation and development of the Partnership. It does not include many, many other people who make day-to-day Partnership activities happen—family support workers, DHS personnel, neighborhood partners, administrative support staff, shelter staff, and families—too numerous to list. They deserve a lot of credit.

<i>Name</i>	<i>Capacity</i>	<i>Agency</i>
Chuck Abel	Program Facilitator	Family Resource Development Association
Becky Abernathy	Parent	Head Start Policy Council
Joyce Andrew	Supervisor	Dept. of Human Services
Marc Baty	Area Administrator	Dept. of Human Services
John Brandt	Executive Director	Linn County Department of Human Resource Management
John Burke	Service Administrator	Dept. of Human Services

<i>Name</i>	<i>Capacity</i>	<i>Agency</i>
Chris Carman	Head Start Director	Hawkeye Area Community Action Program
Rick David	Executive Director	United Way of East Central Iowa
Jim Ernst	Executive Director	Four Oaks
Christy Hamblin	Police Officer	Cedar Rapids Police Dept.
Leanne Harman	Representative	Oakhill/Jackson Neighborhood Assoc.
Jean Hartgrave	Representative	Taylor Area Neighborhood Association
Chuck Harvey	Representative	NorthWest Neighborhood Association
Ginger Hemmingsen	Program Manager	Four Oaks
Kay Jackson	Director of Women's	Mercy Medical Center and Children's Services
Gloria Johnson	Executive Director	YWCA
Don Maniccia	Executive Director	Hawkeye Area Community Action Program
Doreen Meier	Representative	Mound View Neighborhood Association
Chris Mithelman	Parent	Head Start Policy Council
Sue Tesdahl	Director	St. Luke's Hospital Child Protection Center
Tim Virden	Learning Specialist	Polk Elementary School
Linda Winston	Executive Director	Jane Boyd Community House
Diane Wyckoff	Supervisor	Dept. of Human Services
Francie Zimmerman	Technical Assistance Coordinator	Center for the Study of Social Policy

COMMUNITY PARTNERSHIPS FOR PROTECTING CHILDREN

JACKSONVILLE, FLORIDA

Reflections on the Planning Period: October, 1995 - December, 1996

I. OVERVIEW

Jacksonville, located in Duval County, has a population of 700,000. The area is one of the most populous within the state and has a more diverse economy than many other Florida cities which depend primarily on tourism. Jacksonville is rebuilding its urban core which is surrounded by a geographically large extended city. Jacksonville's minority population, primarily African American, comprises about 24 percent of the total population.

The economic situation for families in Jacksonville is a mixed picture. While the overall unemployment rate ranks below the national average, the per capita income for residents is among the lowest of Florida's urban areas. The child poverty rate for Jacksonville is 18.7 percent, with high rates of infant mortality and low birthweight babies. In 1992, only 53 percent of women received prenatal care before the third trimester of their pregnancies. Community leaders believe that these numbers reflect the difficulties faced by many poor families in accessing needed medical and social services.

The municipal government has a long history of providing financial support to a variety of initiatives that serve families and children. Despite some improvements in coordination of social services by Jacksonville's Human Services Council (members include public and private human service agencies and their funders), leaders in Jacksonville recognized the need to redouble their efforts to make services for children more effective. This led to the creation, by local ordinance, of the Jacksonville Children's Commission. In addition to coordinating services to children, the Children's Commission has established several important initiatives, including Healthy Families Jacksonville, a project that provides home visiting services to families with children from birth to age five.

At the state level, the Governor and lawmakers created legislation changing the Department of Children and Families' (DCF) response to reports of child abuse and neglect. This change followed numerous public hearings across the state in which citizens expressed concern that the public agency had become too investigatory and needed to place greater emphasis on its role as a helping agency for children and families. After several rounds of legislative revision, the state now requires that all abuse and neglect referrals be assessed (rather than investigated). The assessment must involve an evaluation of the safety of the children as well as the over-all functioning of the family. Less emphasis is placed on the specific incident reported. For cases where criminal charges are warranted, DCF continues to work with the child and family, but refers the report to the appropriate law enforcement agency which may conduct an investigation. The legislation also eliminates the central registry which had maintained the names of child abuse perpetrators and had been used for employment screening of applicants for some occupations involving the care of children. This screening now occurs through background checks of criminal records.

The early planning for Jacksonville's Community Partnership was done primarily by leaders from DCF, the city, the Duval County School System, and the United Way. The notion of "community engagement" sounded good—and easily attained, but site leaders had seriously underestimated the time and attention that involving citizens would demand. By attempting to implement the initiative across much of the city, staff and others were "spread too thin" to build bridges with community members. Although site leaders arranged for a myriad of community meetings, retreats, and resource fairs, they had difficulty moving from these sessions to full inclusion of "non-professional" citizens in decision-making for the initiative. The site continually re-adjusted the geographic locus of the Partnership, trying to "get a fix" on how to manage the work of engaging, then including, the community.

By the end of the planning period, the site had selected one "full service school" (Ribault) as the focus of the formal service network for the partnership and six distinct neighborhoods (all public housing projects) within the Ribault area where intense efforts would be made to identify citizens as partners in decision making and to add informal helpers to the safety network for children. Full service schools are high schools where an array of child and family services are located. Each is governed by an oversight committee made up of parents, neighborhood and community leaders who live within the full service school's catchment area.

Decision making for the initiative rested with a Steering Committee which was made up of some members of the Human Services Council, the Jacksonville Children's Commission, and staff from various public and private human service agencies. More recently, attempts have been made to include persons from those communities targeted by the initiative, such as recipients of services and representatives from two of the full service schools' oversight committees. Since the oversight committees make decisions regarding the types of services available at the school site, they are an important voice within the initiative, and can affect its course.

Some key components of the site's strategic plan include:

To offer help to families before abuse occurs, the site is diverting Hotline calls which are rejected (generally because the report does not meet the definition of abuse or neglect) to telephone counselors at First Call, an information and referral service. When additional help is needed, First Call gives Hotline information about families to staff at full service schools who make contact with the family and offer assistance and support.

To increase numbers of informal helpers, the site will expand its use of community support agreements to other service providers including teachers, home visitors from Healthy Families Jacksonville, and DCF workers who provide on-going and foster care services. Currently, these agreements are used with families who have been assessed by DCF. The family identifies a person they trust who can be counted on to help ensure the safety of their children.

To increase DCF staff's involvement in the community, teams of DCF staff (assessment, foster care, and on-going protective service workers) will primarily receive case assignments from one of the five areas of Jacksonville served by the full service schools. They will become familiar with

local resources in their assigned community by attending public meetings, contacting service providers, and visiting organizations such as child care centers, churches, boys clubs, and girl scouts.

To better understand the relationship between domestic violence and child abuse, the site will conduct training for DCF workers, will develop a local training capacity and will have DCF workers shadow staff at Hubbard House, the city's domestic violence shelter.

To decrease the rate of serious abuse, members of the Steering Committee and oversight committees will review information about cases where children died or sustained serious injuries. They will identify areas where interventions could have prevented the situation from occurring and will recommend modifications to policies as needed.

As the planning year drew to a close, participants recognized the challenge in moving from visions to action. As one important step towards meeting these challenges, the Partnership hired a full-time project director, Kara Page. She, along with other key leaders, is committed to ensuring that the site remains focused on the goals it has selected as it develops its own unique Community Partnership for Protecting Children.

II. WHAT HAPPENED

Quarter by Quarter Summary of Major Activities

First Quarter (October - December 1995): Early enthusiasm

The Jacksonville site received its planning grant in October, 1995. The proposal included plans to divert rejected Hotline calls, map neighborhood assets, establish "teams" of staff from various agencies at the Full Service Schools, and develop an automated system for shared case management, community resource information, self-evaluation, and community engagement.

The Jacksonville site created a Steering Committee to govern the Community Partnership initiative. The Committee's initial membership was drawn from Jacksonville's Human Services Council and was primarily made up of DCF representatives and other public agencies.

During this quarter, two other initiatives—Healthy Families Jacksonville and the Family Transition Program—were launched. Healthy Families Jacksonville provides home visits for all parents with newborns, following-up until the child is 5 years old for those families most in need of support. Home visitors offer information, referrals to other services and support for parents. The Family Transition program aims to move welfare recipients into jobs by providing intensive help seeking and keeping employment. Jacksonville intended to establish its Community Partnership in the same zip code areas where Healthy Families Jacksonville and the Family Transition program were being implemented. Though the initiatives have different specific goals, leaders of each initiative viewed the work of all three programs as mutually re-enforcing because all aim to improve the outcomes for families with young children.

To empower neighborhood-based leadership, funds from the family preservation and support program were provided to all five of the full service schools' oversight committees. Each committee received \$11,000 to spend on services or activities identified as needed by their respective communities. The types of services or supports identified included: mental health counseling, medicine for head lice, homework assistance, music lessons, SAT preparation, cultural dance lessons, and others.

In early December a meeting was held, jointly organized by Pat Schene, site coordinator, and Jolie Bain Pillsbury, a TA provider, to facilitate early planning work for the site. In addition to the Steering Committee, Linda Radigan, Assistant Secretary in the Children and Families Division of DCF's central office in Tallahassee, attended the meeting and provided support and state-level leadership for mobilizing and developing community resources to support families and protect children. At this meeting, the Steering Committee began to identify "domain leaders" to work on various aspects of the planning process. Later in December, a retreat of the Human Services Council was held which resulted in formation of a committee to develop a common set of outcomes for the various initiatives occurring within the city.

Second Quarter (January to March 1996): Reality sets in

By the beginning of the second quarter, the site experienced some delays in decision making and action related to the Community Partnership. The Jacksonville team had anticipated implementing its Hotline diversion strategy early in the planning process. However, the organization that administered First Call did not have the resources necessary to support an extensive expansion of its role.

The site wanted to improve coordination and cooperation among service providers within the initiative. To that end, a day-long training session occurred for staff from DCF, Healthy Families Jacksonville, the Family Transition Program, and other service providers housed at each full service school. A goal of this training was that service teams would form at each full service school and that the teams would agree to use common assessment and service planning tools. Another goal was to develop guidelines to determine which agency would take the lead on certain types of cases. These goals were not fully realized as turf issues and misunderstandings about each others' roles emerged. This session reminded site leaders that creating work teams takes time and intensive work. A more concrete effort to improve coordination of services at each full service school was the purchase of computers for each service site to aid in tracking and serving families.

The site worked to expand the use of community support agreements. Assessment workers were trained on ways to use the agreements, how to encourage their use with families, and how to help parents select the best informal helper. These agreements were gaining greater acceptance by some workers with 64 agreements in place by the end of the quarter. An example of how a community support agreement has been used follows: Two brothers, age 12 and 13, are reported to the Hotline because their mother hit them with an extension cord, leaving welt on their buttocks and upper thighs. The mother conceded that her discipline of her sons was excessive and agreed to attend parenting classes. She, with help from her DCF worker, selected her brother, the boys' uncle, to begin a community support agreement which stated that the uncle will visit the boys frequently, check

on their mother's progress with parenting classes, and monitor the family's situation, reporting any problems to DCF.

Lynn Usher and Ray Kirk, technical assistance providers on evaluation visited the site to initiate discussions on self-evaluation strategies. This coincided with the site's selection of Dr. Suzanne Murphy from the University of North Florida as the local evaluator for the project. The selection of Dr. Murphy was particularly appropriate because she had also been selected as the evaluator for Healthy Families Jacksonville.

The first all-site meeting was held at Amelia Island in Florida and participants from all four community partnership locations started to learn about each other's work. They also began to comprehend the complexity of the task they were undertaking. This meeting provided an opportunity for sites to take stock and compare themselves with the progress and problems of other sites. Jacksonville began to identify its difficulties in meeting the goals and timeframes laid out in its plan. Areas of concern to the Foundation included lack of parents, citizens and other community organizations represented on the Steering Committee and other decision-making bodies; delayed implementation of the diversion of Hotline calls; and slow progress made by the various domain workgroups set up during the first quarter.

Third Quarter (April - June 1996): Re-focusing efforts

Because of the Foundation's emphasis on the need for the site to engage neighborhood and community members, a site meeting was held which was attended by staff from the Center for the Study of Social Policy and Pat Schene. As a result, plans were made to reach out to the neighborhoods served by the Englewood Full Service School, culminating in a gathering of 40 community members. At the meeting, participants identified areas of need for children and families and began to address ways to keep children safer from child abuse and neglect, such as offering advice and support to new parents and forging better linkages between school and social service programs (as school problems are often indicators of family problems). Leaders of Englewood Full Service School oversight committee, tenant leaders from nearby public housing, recipients of services from Healthy Families Jacksonville, and teachers and administrators from the full service school network, all participated in these discussions.

Two major all-site meetings occurred during this quarter, the Key West grantees meeting, and the Louisville outcomes meeting. At the all-site meeting in Louisville, the focus was on connecting site strategies with the three outcomes and the four "key elements" of change, (written safety plans for targeted children, changes in CPS policy, practice and culture, a community safety network, and community ownership and accountability) common to all sites. Suzanne Murphy, site evaluator, Diane Seymore, Program Administrator for DCF, and Lettie Ballard, field instructor for the Professional Development Center, participated in the meeting and used the discussion to construct the section of the site's strategic plan addressing outcomes, strategies and benchmarks.

In an effort to improve coordination and accessibility of services in Jacksonville, the Partnership purchased the Community Service Network (CSN), a computer software package designed to assist service recipients and service providers in avoiding duplication and in locating the best resources

for families. Unfortunately, lack of technical support and staff have delayed the system's implementation. Currently, information about services available throughout Jacksonville are being entered into the CSN for use by the First Call staff.

Jolie Bain Pillsbury continued working with the Jacksonville site during this quarter. She facilitated a community wide meeting, hosted by the Steering Committee, that was attended by over one hundred people including individuals affiliated with the five full service school oversight committees, high school students, and other community representatives. The goal of the meeting was to help those attending view themselves as a "community." Discussions regarding the strengths of their individual communities took place as well as discussion about the Partnership agenda to address child abuse and neglect. The impressive turn-out at this meeting can be attributed to the outreach and resources of the oversight committees and the full service school staff. This was definitely a "community" meeting—not orchestrated by agency leaders, although they were in attendance.

This large group meeting resulted in two retreats, one for members of the Ribault and Englewood full service school oversight committees and the Steering Committee, and another for residents of the Ribault full service school area to encourage them to identify neighborhood-based services as well as services needed.

The Steering Committee organized additional events aimed at greater community engagement during this quarter. These included:

1. child safety surveys conducted by staff from the Englewood Full Service School to obtain the community's perceptions about what makes children safe.
2. a day-long resource fair to familiarize provider agencies and community members with services and resources available.

A draft of the site's strategic plan was submitted to the Foundation in June. It reflects the Steering Committee's decision to focus on only two full service school communities (Ribault and Englewood).

Fourth Quarter (July - September 1996): Setting the Stage

During this quarter the site made the important decision to hire Kara Page as project director. She comes to the initiative with a background in nursing and public health. This is the first time the site has employed a full-time director whose work is solely related to the Partnership. Partners at the site, as well as those within the Clark team, were heartened by her arrival.

The major activity this quarter was developing a final implementation proposal (the site's strategic plan) to submit to the Foundation. A team consisting of Diane Seymore, Lettie Ballard, Suzanne Murphy, and Carol Brady, grant writer for the Children's Commission, coordinated the preparation of the proposal. Despite the diligent work of this team, the difficulties of the planning year were evident in the proposal, particularly those related to the slow pace and difficulty focusing community engagement and the need to develop a more robust safety network of public and private agencies and

community institutions. Feedback from the Foundation was provided to the site with the request that the site develop an operational plan for the first six months of the implementation period (January - June, 1997) to address these two threshold issues.

An all-site meeting was held in St. Louis to expose the sites to cutting-edge front-line practices. Two opportunities to access technical assistance that were presented at this meeting were of particular interest to the Jacksonville team. In early 1997, Parents Anonymous will help the site establish self-help groups and the Family Violence Prevention Fund will work with the site to devise strategies that address domestic violence in cases involving child abuse or neglect.

Ellen Fern and Steve Fowler of the communications firm, Martin and Glantz, had been engaged by the Clark Foundation to assist all four sites in developing a communications strategy. During this quarter, they visited Jacksonville and met with the Steering Committee, service providers at the Englewood Full Service School, members of the Healthy Families Jacksonville program, and the "community engagement" committee of the Steering Committee (co-chaired by Wilma Austin, Supervisor of school social work for the Duval County School Board). They reviewed print materials developed by various Jacksonville agencies and began to assist all these groups to identify what was most important to them to communicate to various audiences and the public. Much work remained to be done with communications to move beyond "just developing brochures" to crafting a more comprehensive public education strategy to support the goals of the Partnership's over-all plan.

A critical and positive breakthrough occurred when the United Way took formal administrative responsibility for the staff of the full service schools as well as overseeing the implementation of First Call. Full service schools had been a joint effort of DCF and the Department of Education to make services and supports more accessible and non-stigmatizing to families. However, funding for these programs was tenuous, and the schools' coordinators were considered "temporary" employees, without benefits or job security. First Call lacked sufficient administrative support to manage the additional responsibility of handling diverted Hotline calls. Having United Way assume responsibility for these two critical pieces of the initiative has gone a long way toward stabilizing the project and set the stage for the much delayed implementation of diverting rejected Hotline calls to community-based services.

Jolie Bain Pillsbury facilitated a retreat for individuals involved with the full service schools at Ribault and Englewood. Participants included the oversight committees for each, as well as community volunteers interested in the partnership. The purpose of this retreat was to develop more specific plans for implementation of the initiative and to aid in developing the strategic proposal and the subsequent operational plan.

Fifth Quarter (October 1996- present): Successes, small and large

Because the site recognized difficulties it experienced in developing coordinated, cooperative teams of staff from various agencies at the full service school sites, it decided to concentrate its efforts on one full service school site. Ribault School will be the hub of the Partnership. This decision is reflected in the operational plan.

Also included in the operational plan are concrete activities to make progress on community engagement and the development of a more comprehensive safety network which includes informal helpers. These activities will be concentrated within six distinct neighborhoods within the Ribault area and they include:

- Identification of neighborhood leaders and informal helpers through door-to-door campaigns, and contacting parent organizations within schools.
- Development of a bartering system to encourage and recognize neighbors who help other neighbors.
- Providing funds to each of the six targeted neighborhoods to enable them to decide how to support some activities that will help keep their children safer from abuse and neglect.

The composition of the Steering Committee has been changed from a 23-member committee made up entirely of "professionals" to 18 members which include new partners such as Rita DeYoung from Hubbard House (a domestic violence shelter) and community members from two full service school oversight committees. The 18-member committee includes parents and teens, although specific persons have not yet been selected for some of these positions.

Teams of DCF staff (assessment workers, on-going protective service workers, and foster care workers) have begun to be assigned cases based on the catchment areas of the five full service schools. Although the DCF teams are not housed at their respective full service school, they are expected to spend time there each week to serve as safety consultants for those providers located at the school and to become more familiar with the resources located there. CPS line staff, supervisors and administrators, (Al Walker, Fannie Green and others) are participating in community meetings, promoting a community-based safety agenda, and getting to know their assigned areas far better than before.

Coordinators at the full service schools have extraordinary opportunity to marshal services and supports for families as well as to reach out to community members and natural resources. With the addition of Lois Crook as director of full service schools, much greater involvement in the Partnership will occur at full service school sites. (She has been a key member of the Steering Committee and had formerly worked for DCF).

The site coordination responsibilities for Jacksonville were formally transferred from Pat Schene to Marno Cook. Pat Schene will continue working within all four of the Partnership sites, concentrating on work related to outcomes and benchmarks. Marno Cook, who recently joined the staff of the Center for the Study of Social Policy, will now serve as the site coordinator and will provide intensive technical assistance related to the overall progress of the project.

Susan Schecter and Janet Carter, of the Family Violence Prevention Fund, visited Jacksonville and met with staff from agencies responsible for providing services to victims of domestic violence.

They also worked with the Steering Committee to foster coordination between CPS assessments and domestic violence screening. Future visits and training are scheduled.

Theresa Pringle and her staff organized a Family Advisory Committee of former clients of DCF to help agency workers learn from these families' experiences about how to provide services more effectively. This is a promising manifestation of the site's desire to involve new partners in designing safety networks for children.

First Call was implemented in early November and procedures are in place to have all "screened-out" reports electronically transferred to the city's information and referral system so the caller can explain concerns to First Call staff. First Call personnel then contact the Full Service School coordinator if the family or children need services. In general, the family liaison worker from the full service school is the person who contacts these families.

The Steering Committee designated standing subcommittees to do much of the work of the initiative, maintain momentum, distribute responsibilities, and involve as many relevant participants as possible. Kara Page will coordinate the chairs of these subcommittees and provide staff support.

To help orient herself to the Community Partnership, Kara Page visited the Cedar Rapids site and spent time learning about how they are using informal helpers, utilizing geographic information system software, and managing the work of the initiative.

III. THE PLAN THAT EMERGED AND WHY

Jacksonville developed a strategic plan for the first two years of implementation in their proposal submitted in mid-September. This plan was supplemented in October by an "operational plan" which was much more concrete and specific. Many of the strategies to be implemented reflect the public agency's strong involvement with the initiative.

Jacksonville will initially target six neighborhoods serviced by the Ribault Full Service School. This includes about 1500 families living in public housing projects in those neighborhoods. Because of the city's focus on the health and well-being of its youngest children, and because many of the services involve school-based programs, the site will further target its strategies to reach children from birth through age twelve.

- **FIRST CALL:** ALL REPORTS MADE TO FLORIDA'S CENTRAL CHILD ABUSE HOTLINE THAT ARE NOT ACCEPTED FOR INVESTIGATION BY DCF (APPROXIMATELY 40%) WILL BE ELECTRONICALLY TRANSFERRED TO FIRST CALL WHILE THE CALLER REMAINS ON THE LINE. WHEN ADDITIONAL FOLLOW-THROUGH IS NEEDED, FIRST CALL WILL REFER THESE SCREENED OUT CASES TO THE FULL SERVICE SCHOOL TO ENSURE APPROPRIATE AND PROMPT LINKAGE WITH NEIGHBORHOOD SERVICES AND SUPPORTS. FULL SERVICE SCHOOL COORDINATORS WILL REVIEW EACH REFERRAL AND WILL SELECT THE MOST APPROPRIATE SERVICE PROVIDER TO MAKE THE FIRST CONTACT. IN MOST CASES THIS WILL BE THE FAMILY LIAISON WORKERS.

- **COMMUNITY SUPPORT AGREEMENTS:** THE USE OF COMMUNITY SUPPORT AGREEMENTS WILL BE EXPANDED BEYOND CHILD PROTECTION STAFF FOR USE BY OTHER COMMUNITY PARTNERS SUCH AS HEALTHY FAMILIES JACKSONVILLE OR TEACHERS CONNECTED TO THE FULL SERVICE SCHOOL AND ITS FEEDER SCHOOLS (ELEMENTARY AND MIDDLE SCHOOLS WHOSE STUDENTS WILL ATTEND RIBAULT IN HIGH SCHOOL). THESE AGREEMENTS CONNECT FAMILIES TO A PARTICULAR SUPPORT PERSON IN THE NEIGHBORHOOD OR WITHIN THE EXTENDED FAMILY AND THIS PERSON AGREES TO ASSUME SOME RESPONSIBILITY FOR HELPING ASSURE THE SAFETY OF THE CHILDREN.
- **FAMILY SAFETY PLANS:** WRITTEN PLANS WILL BE DEVELOPED AND UTILIZED BY DCF WORKERS AND OTHER MEMBERS OF THE INTEGRATED SERVICES TEAMS WORKING WITH AT-RISK OR FAMILIES INVOLVED WITH DCF. A PROTOCOL WILL BE ESTABLISHED REQUIRING DCF WORKERS TO COMPLETE THESE PLANS AT THE CLOSE OF ANY CASE WHERE THERE IS A RISK OF RE-ABUSE AND AT THE OPENING AND CLOSURE OF ANY CASE DEEMED TO PRESENT HIGH RISK. THE PLAN WILL ALSO SCREEN FOR DOMESTIC VIOLENCE.
- **INTEGRATED SERVICE TEAMS:** AT RIBAULT FULL SERVICE SCHOOL (THE SERVICE LOCUS FOR THE INITIATIVE), A TEAM OF FRONTLINE WORKERS CURRENTLY SERVE THE SAME NEIGHBORHOOD FAMILIES. THE TEAM IS COMPRISED OF DCF WORKERS, FAMILY TRANSITION WORKERS, HEALTHY FAMILIES JACKSONVILLE, THE FSS COORDINATOR, A CASE MANAGER, FAMILY LIAISON WORKER, JUVENILE JUSTICE AND ECONOMIC ASSISTANCE WORKERS. THIS TEAM WILL BE CO-TRAINED AND INTEGRATED TO WORK ON ALL CASES WITHIN THE RIBAULT COMMUNITY. THE PLAN IS TO HAVE ONE TEAM MEMBER ACT AS THE FAMILY'S CONTACT PERSON TO DECREASE MULTI-AGENCY INVOLVEMENT. INTEGRATION WILL EVENTUALLY TAKE PLACE IN ALL FSS CATCHMENT AREAS.
- **NEIGHBORHOOD-BASED CPS:** TEAMS OF DCF WORKERS (AND THEIR SUPERVISORS AND ADMINISTRATORS) WILL BE ASSIGNED TO HANDLE CASES IN A DESIGNATED GEOGRAPHIC AREA AND WILL BECOME FAMILIAR WITH NEIGHBORHOOD RESOURCES. EACH TEAM WILL PAIR INVESTIGATORS, ONGOING CASEWORKERS, AND FOSTER CARE WORKERS IN AN EFFORT TO ENSURE CONTINUITY FOR FAMILIES WITH OPEN CASES AND EXPEDITE LINKAGE TO NEIGHBORHOOD SUPPORTS AND SERVICES. TEAMS WILL ALSO IDENTIFY SERVICE PROVIDERS AT THEIR RESPECTIVE FULL SERVICE SCHOOLS AND OTHER LOCAL AGENCIES WELL-POSITIONED TO PROVIDE THE INITIAL RESPONSE TO CERTAIN REPORTS AND REFERRALS. THE FAMILY ADVISORY COMMITTEE COMPRISED OF FAMILIES FROM ACROSS THE CITY WHO HAVE BEEN INVOLVED WITH DCF WILL HELP THE TEAMS IMPROVE CURRENT PRACTICES.
- **COMMUNITY PUBLIC EDUCATION AND AWARENESS:** A RANGE OF ACTIVITIES TO EDUCATE THE BROADER COMMUNITY ABOUT CHILD SAFETY AND INVOLVE THEM IN STRATEGIES TO PROMOTE THE SAFETY OF CHILDREN WILL BE EXPLORED. TRAINING DAY CARE PROVIDERS, TEACHERS AND OTHER PERSONS WHO COME INTO FREQUENT CONTACT WITH CHILDREN TO IDENTIFY ABUSE AND NEGLECT AND REFER FAMILIES TO FSS WILL BE ONE STRATEGY. PROFILES OF AT-RISK AND HIGH-RISK FAMILIES AS WELL AS FAMILIES AFFECTED BY DOMESTIC VIOLENCE WILL BE DEVELOPED AND USED TO CREATE PUBLIC EDUCATION MATERIALS INTENDED TO INCREASE COMMUNITY AWARENESS. FUNDS WILL BE ALLOCATED TO EACH OF SIX TARGET NEIGHBORHOODS FOR

COMMUNITY FORUMS OR OTHER EVENTS TO PROMOTE BROADER COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT IN CHILD SAFETY. TO PROMOTE THE USE OF INFORMAL RESOURCES, A "BARTERING" SYSTEM WILL BE CREATED IN EACH TARGET NEIGHBORHOOD. THIS SYSTEM WILL ALLOW FAMILIES AND OTHER RESIDENTS TO MEET BASIC NEEDS BY TRADING SERVICES, SUCH AS AN ELDERLY PERSON PROVIDING AFTER-SCHOOL CHILD CARE IN EXCHANGE FOR ASSISTANCE WITH GROCERY SHOPPING AND HOUSEHOLD CHORES. "NATURAL HELPERS"—RESIDENTS FAMILIAR WITH NEIGHBORHOOD FAMILIES—WILL BE IDENTIFIED AND PROVIDED WITH INFORMATION TO CONNECT FAMILIES WITH LOCAL SUPPORTS.

- **FATALITY REVIEWS:** INFORMATION ON CHILD FATALITIES AND SERIOUS INJURIES RESULTING FROM ABUSE AND NEGLECT AND RECOMMENDATIONS FOR PREVENTING SIMILAR INCIDENTS WILL BE SHARED WITH ALL KEY AGENCIES AND ORGANIZATIONS WORKING WITH CHILDREN AND FAMILIES. FSS OVERSIGHT COMMITTEES AND THE STEERING COMMITTEE FOR THE INITIATIVE WILL REVIEW INFORMATION ABOUT THESE REPORTS TO RECOMMEND STRATEGIES FOR INCREASING CHILD SAFETY AND DECREASING INCIDENTS OF SERIOUS INJURY OR DEATH.

IV. KEY THEMES

A. How did the context influence Jacksonville's course of development?

Legislative changes involving how child abuse reports are handled: A major contextual factor is that Florida had passed statutory reform in child protective services to establish a dual track response to reports of child maltreatment, either "assessment" (referred to as the "family service response system"), or the traditional "investigation" track. All districts in the state went through an extensive planning process to identify community-based organizations that could be enlisted to serve those families on the assessment track. The Department of Children and Families in Jacksonville was exceptionally ambitious and worked very hard with an advisory board to ascertain public perceptions of their work in child protection, to listen to extensive public criticism, and to use those insights to develop plans for implementing an assessment/service response capacity. The implementation plan in Jacksonville was for all Hotline reports to be assessed, with more serious cases investigated and others referred to the Family Services Response track for further evaluation. As in other states, experience with implementation of dual track responses revealed that the overwhelming majority of the reports went to the assessment track. An independent evaluation of the Family Service Response system named the Jacksonville DCF office as the state's most successful in implementing the program.

Additional statutory change was implemented in October 1995 just as planning for the community partnership initiative began. This legislation directed *all* reports to follow an assessment track with those involving criminal activity immediately being turned over to law enforcement for evidence-gathering and possible prosecution (although DCF continues to provide services to the child and family). Another important change initiated through this legislation was to eliminate the classification system for CPS cases (the requirement that all reports be classified as substantiated or not with an identified perpetrator), and the elimination of the state's Central Registry which had been

used for employment screening. Once the registry was eliminated, legislation allowed DCF to maintain information on all reports for seven years. This gives the site access to additional information useful in tracking outcomes.

Coordination of services within the Jacksonville site: A second significant contextual factor from the outset was the existence of the Human Services Council, an overarching committee with representation from all major funders and providers of human services in Jacksonville. The Human Services Council (HSC) was a group committed to collaboration and coordination of efforts in human services throughout the city. Membership on the HSC includes the Jacksonville Children's Commission, the United Way, the Juvenile Justice office, the housing department, the Family Transition Program (welfare to work), the Duval County School System, the Chamber of Commerce, and others who meet regularly to plan for coordinated development of services. There is also a planning body—the Jacksonville Community Council, Inc. which develops in-depth data on needs, resources, and common outcomes across agencies on identified projects.

City of many initiatives: During the summer of 1995, Jean McIntosh and Pat Schene from the Clark team visited Jacksonville to help the site develop its planning proposal. At the time of this visit, it was announced that Jacksonville had been chosen to pilot the new Family Transition Program—a welfare to work initiative. This was particularly significant because it meant that several zip code areas within the city would have Full Service Schools, the Community Partnership initiative, Healthy Families Jacksonville, and the Family Transition Program—all programs aimed at improving the circumstances of some of the city's most needy residents. Each of these initiatives encouraged neighborhood involvement and each required enormous time and energy. Collectively, the initiatives represented an opportunity to create a comprehensive community service system. The reality, however, was that the institutional framework for community governance was not in place in these neighborhoods. Also, the richness of multiple initiatives can result in difficulty in coordinating and prioritizing the work. At times, the Foundation felt as if the Community Partnership was “getting lost in the shuffle” of the many new activities occurring in Jacksonville.

B. The process and speed of parent and citizen engagement: what promoted it, what impeded it?

Involvement in the Community Partnership initiative was begun by high level agency leaders from DCF, the Jacksonville Children's Commission, the Board of Education, and United Way. The process and speed of parent and citizen engagement has been slow, cautious, and had many lags. The absence of a culture or norm for parent/community engagement made it difficult to generate a vision of how the process could unfold and could contribute to an improved safety network for children. This resulted in a lack of strategic focus to the site's community engagement efforts. Sheer size of the geographic area and of the numbers of people targeted initially prevented the continuous intensity required to form new “real” partnerships with informal helpers, parents, and private citizens.

There have been significant factors to promote parent and citizen involvement such as:

- the use of the community support agreement

- the creation of the Family Advisory Committee
- the planned development of a bartering system, starting with the Washington Heights neighborhood

In addition, the site purchased Arcview geographic information equipment to map formal and informal resources within an area, and which can assist residents in identifying areas of need.

C. How did Jacksonville grapple with the issue of safety and its importance?

One of the advantages of having an agency-driven initiative dominated by DCF is that child abuse and neglect were at the forefront from the very beginning. The implementation of the Family Services Response system is especially relevant to the safety agenda. The grantee for the initiative, the Children's Commission, has a focus on reducing child abuse and neglect as one of the key outcomes for Healthy Families Jacksonville. Thus, for the original members of the Steering Committee, "safety" has always been synonymous with reducing the risk of child abuse and neglect.

At the community level, however, safety is more naturally seen as crime prevention and anti-gang activity. Much work needs to be done to expand the community's definition of "safety" to include a decrease in the incidents of child abuse and neglect. Recent meetings within the six targeted neighborhoods have focused on this issue, and many residents are receptive and have readily identified concerns that connect to the Community Partnership's agenda. For the full service schools' oversight committees, additional work is needed to link the problems of abuse and neglect to success in schools because the oversight committees' main focus is on educational objectives.

D. Who did they engage in the safety network and why? Why are some partners still not engaged?

Top leaders from DCF are committed to implementing strategies that expand the safety network beyond their own staff. This has resulted in creative activities, developed by DCF, to get others involved in protecting children. New members of the safety network include those informal helpers who signed community support agreements, and service providers at the full service schools, who respond to diverted Hotline calls. Early efforts have been made to engage less traditional entities, such as churches, the YMCA, tenant associations, day care providers and those who provide services to victims of domestic violence.

There is still a need to more actively involve Head Start agencies, the YMCA, neighborhood associations, law enforcement, health care facilities, additional church programs, recreational facilities, the Florida Cooperative Extension, and private clinicians, among others. Also, the site needs to develop a strategy to identify community residents within the six targeted neighborhoods who can reach out to vulnerable families, and link them with local services, supports, and community building activities.

As to "why" some of these resources are still not engaged—the answer is partly that it will take time and, more importantly, it requires a clearer idea of potential roles and activities for this broader

safety network. The fact that there is now a project director and that some key individuals on the Steering Committee have consistently advocated for building a broader safety network, will aid the site in its efforts to engage more partners.

E. Overall Assessment

Key Accomplishments

Jacksonville has moved forward in many important ways, picking up speed towards the end of the first year in terms of developing a Community Partnership. Some important signs of their progress are:

- greater attention to community engagement in the six targeted neighborhoods; they have begun to "do it" rather than just plan it.
- creation of a Family Advisory committee made up of families who have been clients of DCF to provide advice and assistance in making the public agency's response more effective.
- selection of a strong, full-time project director.
- diverting screened-out Hotline calls to First Call for assessment and outreach by full service school staff.
- putting in place more than 200 community support agreements. Other agencies are now planning to implement similar agreements with their clients.
- assigning cases to DCF staff within the catchment areas of the full service schools; this includes front-line workers, supervisors and administrators.
- emergence of key leaders within the initiative who are truly committed to the measurement of outcomes.
- a clearer connection between domestic violence and child safety, connecting DCF staff to the local domestic violence program and developing staff training.
- identification of possible data sources for evaluation of the project.

Major Challenges

Merging site and initiative perspectives: Since early in the planning period, the site recognized (and was concerned) about its failures to meet some of its own goals and timelines. The site tended to

view these delays and missteps as natural and expected when attempting such broad reform. Advisors to the site from the Center and the Foundation also recognized that some delays would occur, but felt that a quicker pace and better integration of the Partnership with other reforms and initiatives taking place would lead to improved safety for vulnerable children. These differing perspectives, at times, proved challenging for the site team and for those assisting the site. As the site moves to implement its Community Partnership, it is important that the team, both local and those from the national team working on the initiative, review the planning year, celebrate successes and merge their perspectives about expectations of the work set forth in Jacksonville's strategic and operational plans.

Assessing the direction and scope of activities: The site must evaluate and re-evaluate the scope and depth of activities it implements for the Partnership. It must ensure that adequate numbers of persons are impacted as well as assess if the activities are robust enough to affect the three outcomes of the Community Partnership. Activities developed around safety planning in general, as well as individual safety plans, must be continuously scrutinized to ensure success.

Capitalizing on vision and leadership: Two great strengths in Jacksonville are the vision and leadership of many key players. A broad vision of what a changed service delivery system would look like has emerged from the "visioning" of Lee Johnson, the DCF District Administrator for Jacksonville. Moving away from a system that has separate agencies serving the same families to a coordinated intervention of services is part of this vision. Eventually, families would be served by one generic frontline worker who can readily obtain services or supports from all partnering agencies. These formal services would be supplemented by an informal set of voluntary and neighborhood-based resources. Another visionary leader has been Linda Radigan, the statewide DCF administrator for the children and families program. She has implemented policies which reflect her belief that DCF staff must work from a strength-based perspective of family support and preservation, while drawing on natural connections of children and families. These visions, while in the early stages of realization, provide a "roadmap" for the site, giving a sense of direction for those engaged in the provision of human services. The challenge for the site will be to put these visions into action. Facilitated meetings, cross training sessions, and case staffings will need to occur on a frequent and regular basis to begin to realize the vision of integrated services. All players, from line workers to top administrators, will need to be "on board" with this plan and will need to remove barriers, rather than allowing them to stop progress. While legislation and policies developed at the state and local level have been among the most impressive in the nation, DCF will need to continue to challenge itself to include new partners, re-configure workloads, and modify job expectations.

Assuring adequate staff resources: Many of those most important to Jacksonville's partnership have demanding and time-consuming job responsibilities. Those responsibilities have prevented them from giving the initiative the sustained daily attention that it needs. With the Steering Committee's decision to hire Kara Page as project director, there will be someone available to attend to the Partnership every day and ensure that progress is being made, trouble shooting when there are

delays. However, there is always a danger that, with the hiring of a full-time director, those who have already given the Partnership so much time and attention may feel this level of work is no longer needed. That will not be the case, and the site needs to establish clear roles so that the project director facilitates the progress of the partnership, rather than being expected to "do" all the work. Hopefully, the existing team (and new members yet to be identified) will resolve to maintain a high level of energy, interest and focus if they are to succeed in attaining the goals they have set out for themselves.

Conclusion

The Jacksonville Community Partnership moves into implementation with realistic optimism about the hard work needed to meet the goals developed during its planning period. This optimism stems from its recent successes with previously delayed activities, and the relief that comes from having a full-time project director to keep all partners focused on the initiative. Site leaders would probably agree that they have learned as much from their difficulties as they have from their successes during the planning year, with team members resolving to set realistic (though ambitious) goals and adhere to their timelines for reaching them. As the planning period draws to a close, the site is looking forward to continuing to create its own Community Partnership for Protecting Children.

ATTACHMENT A**CHRONOLOGY OF MAJOR EVENTS**October - December 1995

- Steering Committee forms to oversee initiative
- Healthy Families Jacksonville begins—targeting same geographic areas of the city as the Community Partnership
- Families Transition Program (a welfare to work program) is initiated
- Workgroups are established to plan implementation of key activities
- Discretionary funds from Family Preservation and Support Act are provided to five full service school oversight committees (a total of \$55,000) for purchasing services designed to meet their communities' needs.
- Oversight committees identify individual community needs for which discretionary funds may be spent. These needs include mental health counseling, homework assistance, music lessons, SAT preparation, cultural dance classes, and others.
- Community support agreements are developed and implemented
- Presentations are made to the Health Department, Healthy Families Jacksonville and Department of Education on the use of community support agreements and other aspects of the Partnership.
- Presentations are made on community support agreements to Southeastern Network of Youth and Family Services in Atlanta and the Sharing Solutions Conference in Orlando.
- United Way includes a clause into each funding contract requiring funded agencies to support the Community Partnership
- December meeting occurs with local and state-level team members to initiate planning work for the site, such as identification of domain leaders for each area of work for the initiative, including identification of common outcomes across various initiatives

January - March 1996

- Norm Zimlich makes site visit to provide technical assistance on maximizing federal financial strategies
- Lynn Usher and Ray Kirk make site visit to provide technical assistance on project evaluation
- All-site meeting occurs at Amelia Island Florida; all sites begin to share their experiences
- Human Services Council retreat occurs; initiative addressed at retreat
- Dr. Suzanne Murphy is established as site evaluator
- Survey of 900 churches in Jacksonville is conducted as a result of family preservation and support staff in an effort to determine types of services and support available at area churches
- Computers are purchased for full service schools; seen as an aid in serving and tracking families

- Integrated training on child abuse and neglect, development of common assessment and service planning occurs for staff from Healthy Families Jacksonville, DCF, Family Transition Program and full service schools.

April - June 1996

- Joint meeting is held with five full service school oversight committees, facilitated by Jolie Bain Pillsbury, consultant
- Retreat is held with members of two full service school oversight committees and Steering Committee members - facilitated by Jolie Bain Pillsbury
- Meeting of neighborhood residents is held regarding what's working and what's needed in the neighborhoods served by Ribault Full Service School
- Child safety surveys are completed by Englewood community
- Day long resource fair held; focus on children and their safety/well-being
- Building Bridges Conference is held
- Site meeting occurs with Frank Farrow, Jean McIntosh, Jolie Bain Pillsbury and Pat Schene to take stock of site's progress
- Key West all-site meeting occurs; team learns more about efforts of other sites', technical assistance available
- Outcome meeting for all sites held in Louisville; team begins to establish benchmarks
- Susan Notkin and Pat Schene visit site to address status of site's progress
- Community Service Network is purchased; expected to aid coordination of all human services in Jacksonville
- Decision is made to narrow initiative's focus to two full service school sites (Ribault and Englewood)
- Submission of draft strategic plan to the Foundation occurs

July - September 1996

- Technical assistance from Norm Zimlich occurs on financial strategies
- Ellen Fern and Steve Fowler, communications experts, provide assistance regarding development of a message to multiple audiences
- Project director (Kara Page) is hired
- Retreat is facilitated by Jolie Bain Pillsbury for Ribault and Englewood Full Service School community members (includes the oversight committees as well as local citizens interested in the partnership)
- All-site meeting on Front Line Practice is held in St. Louis; site team members learn about new ways of practice, are exposed to additional TA opportunities
- Site purchases ArcView for community mapping
- Strategic Plan is submitted

October - December 1996

- Operational plan is developed and submitted to supplement strategic plan

- Decision is made to focus community engagement on six targeted neighborhoods within the Ribault Full Service School area
- Technical assistance is provided by Susan Schechter and Janet Carter on domestic violence strategies and their link to child abuse/neglect
- Newly configured workgroups for initiative are formed; an attempt to focus work of the initiative
- Family Advisory Committee (parents who had formerly received services through DCF) is formed to advise DCF on policies/practices
- Transfer of rejected Hotline calls to full service schools through First Call is begun.
- All-site meeting is held focusing on outcome #2 in Cedar Rapids; site team addresses evaluation issues
- Pat Schene and Marno Cook make joint visit to transition roles - Pat as consultant for outcomes and benchmarks; Marno as site coordinator
- Clark team members provide assistance and review of site's operational plan
- Members of local community partnership team meet with oversight committee for Ribault Full Service School
- Members of local community partnership meet with residents of six targeted neighborhoods
- Follow-up meetings occur with neighborhood residents

ATTACHMENT B**KEY DECISIONMAKERS**

No list can completely include the many people who have helped to shape the partnership in Jacksonville. Some participated early on and then dropped out, only to be re-engaged later; others were slow to “come aboard” and have turned out to be helpful, contributing members. However, throughout the planning year, the following persons were key contributors to the direction of the initiative:

<i>Name</i>	<i>Capacity</i>
Wilma Austin	Supervisor of School Social Work, Duval County School Board
Letty Ballard	Field Instructor, Professional Development Center
Lois Crook	Director of Full Service Schools United Way of Northeast Florida
Lucy Farley	District Program Manager Department of Children and Families
Mary Freeland	Director, Jacksonville Children’s Commission (and Clark Foundation grantee)
Mike Haney	Chief of Family Preservation and Support, Department of Children and Families, Tallahassee
Lee Johnson	District Administrator Department of Children and Families
Dr. Suzanne Murphy	Project evaluator/University of North Florida
Kara Page	Project Manager for Community Partnerships Initiative, Jacksonville Children’s Commission
Theresa Pringle	Program Operations Administrator Department of Children and Families
Linda Radigan	Assistant Secretary, Department of Children and Families, Tallahassee

<i>Name</i>	<i>Capacity</i>
Diane Seymore	Program Administrator Department of Children and Families
Linda Taday	Executive Vice President, United Way of Northeast Florida

Other individuals important to the planning year are: Colleen Doherty, DCF's domestic violence specialist; Peggy Egan and Larry Watkins, DCF specialists working on improving the ways assessment and on-going CPS services are delivered; Beverly Keneagy who chairs the site's communications workgroup; Sallie O'Hara, who has worked on the data base designed to link services across the community; Rita DeYoung, executive director at Hubbard House who is helping to link CPS and DV services; Claudette Glover and Mel Thomas, chairs of the oversight committees for Ribault and Englewood schools respectively; and Fannie Green, DCF operations program administrator, who oversees a DCF team within the Ribault area.

COMMUNITY PARTNERSHIPS FOR PROTECTING CHILDREN

ST. LOUIS, MISSOURI

Reflections on the Planning Period: January - December 1996

I. OVERVIEW

St. Louis (population 400,000) is the largest city in Missouri, extending 19 miles along the Mississippi River. Although the surrounding jurisdictions are experiencing population increases and prosperity, St. Louis City's population has declined by over 36 percent since 1970. St. Louis is one of the few cities in the United States that is not part of a larger county. As a result, the city has growing difficulty in mustering the resources needed to support its public schools and other vital institutions.

The Community Partnership Initiative's site in St. Louis includes two zip-codes (63104 and 63118) located just south of the downtown area. The target area covers almost seven square miles and has a population of approximately 61,000. This is the service area of the Sigel Elementary Community Education Center, which is also the home base for the initiative. (There are 16 Community Education Centers (CEC's) in St. Louis that provide a variety of education and community services in addition to the normal academic activities of each school. Generally, as is the case at Sigel, the CEC's service area is much larger than the catchment area for the school itself.) This target area includes 14 old and well established residential neighborhoods, facing radical changes in their economic and racial composition. The neighborhoods are diverse. Certain sections have experienced urban revitalization while other areas are undergoing distress and deterioration. The population is in constant flux, with the student mobility rate between 60 and 70 percent. The rate of reported child abuse and neglect is over three times higher than the national rate.

An important impetus for St. Louis' child protection initiative came from state legislation. In 1994, the legislature enacted SB 595 which allowed the Missouri Division of Family Services (the child welfare agency within the State Department of Social Services) to pilot a "dual response" system for responding to reports of child abuse and neglect. Depending upon the severity of the allegations, hotline reports can be either investigated by traditional means (gathering evidence about a specific event) or "assessed" (where emphasis is placed on developing a service plan with the family). SB 595 also mandated that DFS work more intensively with communities to ensure a continuum of services to prevent and treat child abuse and neglect. Authorized to pilot-test this approach, DFS selected the Sigel community as one of the initial sites.

Changes to Missouri's child protective service system are occurring within a broader context of human services reform. In 1995, Governor Carnahan launched an effort to achieve better results for children and families. *Community Partnerships* (local governance structures) were created in selected localities of the state to strengthen local decisionmaking in the design and oversight of human services/education systems. Pooled state agency funds were made available to these local

entities to design *Caring Communities*, which include school-based or school-linked services to help assure that children are safe, healthy, successful in school, and that their parents are working. The Sigel Elementary School was also chosen to be one of these Caring Community sites. Thus, as the initiative began, the neighborhood faced both the opportunity and the challenge of combining two of the state's major reform initiatives.

Unlike the three other Community Partnership sites, which had the rudimentary infrastructure in place for neighborhood-based services (e.g., Neighborhood Place in Louisville, full service schools in Jacksonville, family resource centers in Cedar Rapids), the Sigel community was just starting to create neighborhood service delivery. Each of the major program components was struggling to implement its own mission, and the challenge for the Sigel School and its partners was (and is) to fashion these components into a coherent, community-owned network of child safety and family support.

The leadership of St. Louis' initiative—made up predominantly of staff and administrators from an elementary school and neighborhood leaders—created a constant “reality check” on the planning process. The grass roots character of this site brought with it a discomfort for “all talk and no action.” Participants were at times frustrated with the length and intensity of the planning process, and key stakeholders pressed for tangible successes and for activities that demonstrated that the community was respected. Family night activities, community celebrations, neighborhood canvassing by parents, and visible progress on the “geomapping” of community assets were important sign posts that community needs and strengths were recognized and utilized in this initiative.

Planning for the Community Partnership had reciprocal benefits for the Sigel School and the Sigel community. It helped the community stakeholders be more *intentional* on many levels. The initiative planners became conscious of who was around the table when decisions were made, and began engaging more parents and other new partners. The planning team became more rigorous in designing strategies and in thinking through the relationship between strategies, outcomes, and evaluation.

The plan that emerged from the St. Louis site has many dimensions. It is “anchored” in the community through plans to develop several family support centers that will be neighborhood-based and school-linked. (The Sigel School houses the first of these centers.) Each center will include services and educational opportunities for families in the community, with specific components responsive to neighborhood priorities. To augment what the centers can do, the initiative is forming a “community network” of public and private agencies that are committed to child safety and family support. Together, members of the network will provide an array of prevention and intervention services to families. Families who are reported to the DFS hotline will receive an intensive response, with DFS workers based at schools often “teaming” with other staff located there. The Sigel community will also be piloting a “coassessment response” to child abuse and neglect—a first in

Missouri—which involves child care centers taking responsibility for initial assessments for hotline reports on families attending those centers.

The planning year was an intense experience for all concerned. It combined frustrations with creative breakthroughs, and yielded a sense of collective productivity. Leadership was shared amongst the many people involved in planning, with different members shouldering significant responsibilities during the year. Perhaps a quick phrase to summarize St. Louis' efforts is that the partners are "realists who dream." The down-to-earth perspective that came with the initiative's strong roots in the Sigel neighborhood has been balanced by the equally strong willingness to envision neighborhood services as they should be, not just as they are.

II. WHAT HAPPENED

Quarterly Summary of Major Activities

First Quarter (January - March 1996): Engaging New Partners

In the first quarter, key staff from the Sigel school, leaders from the Sigel Community Education Council (which governs the CEC), and state and local officials of the Missouri Division of Family Services (DFS) began building the foundation of the Community Partnership and taking the first steps forward in the planning process. A "Community Support Collaborative" (the Collaborative) was formed as the overall planning group. It evolved from an existing task force by adding teachers, parents, and a variety of service providers to its membership. This Collaborative was deliberately large to embody the concept of inclusive partnership. From its inception, this group provided guidance and direction to a smaller "planning team" that was responsible for day-to-day coordination. In addition, the full Collaborative was the source of members for several specific workgroups, formed to address important dimensions of the initiative.

Early on, the Collaborative agreed to focus on a child safety and family support agenda, broadly defined. At least initially, the Collaborative wanted to ensure that its work touched on health, education, employment, juvenile justice, and community development outcomes. Working within this broad scope, all parties began exploring what a community-based system of child protection might mean. From the start, the energy level was high, and new partners were attracted to the initiative.

During this first quarter, the planning team began to function as a cohesive group. Attendance at the first "all site" meeting convened by the Center for the Study of Social Policy (on behalf of the Foundation) at Amelia Island brought team members closer together. Similarly, an intensive job search for a project director was a "bonding" experience as planning team members had to agree on the type of person they wanted to staff their initiative. The decision to hire a staff person already working at Sigel School, Holly Ingraham, had some pluses and some minuses. In addition to her energy and skills, the new director was already familiar with the initiative's goals and had good

relationships also with many key partners. The downside was that her selection left vacant another staff position at the school. Since this was not filled until June, 1996, the project director often felt stretched to be covering new and old duties. Other administrative strains included space limitations in the school (for new staff to be located there) and delays in outstationing DFS child protective services staff. "Trying to do too much with limited resources" was a problem with which the Collaborative struggled in this quarter and thereafter.

Substantively, several issues emerged in these first months. The Family Intervention work group—established to design services for families experiencing stress—began developing a common referral form, a confidentiality agreement, and a general interagency operating agreement to be used by agencies participating in the Partnership. This work was time-consuming and occasionally frustrating, as it involved "meshing" different agency protocols.

Strong progress was made in the planning team's work with Washington University, which had agreed to help the initiative develop its "geomapping" technology (computer mapping of neighborhood resources and problems). A team of students worked with the Collaborative to collect and enter data on the target area's demographics and resources.

In this first quarter, the Collaborative agreed on the importance of parental involvement in the initiative. At this early stage, the only parents directly involved were parents who were connected to the project by employment at the school or through their membership on Sigel's Community Education Council. Collaborative members recognized that outreach to parents would have to be an important priority in the coming months.

Second Quarter (April - June 1996): Early Strategy Development

In the second quarter, the Collaborative focused more directly on developing service strategies that could achieve the initiative's three outcomes. Workgroups, with eight to ten members, were responsible for doing this more detailed planning.

Technical assistance from the TA team assembled by the Foundation (and coordinated by the Center) began in earnest during this quarter. Jolie Bain Pillsbury helped the Collaborative work through the steps of a strategic planning framework, facilitating full Collaborative meetings and small workgroup sessions. Sara Barwinski, the on-site "site coordinator" for St. Louis and part of the Center's TA team, provided extensive assistance. During this period, the planners wrestled with the difficulty of understanding outcomes, thinking through the "logic train" of designing services to achieve results, and also considered issues of the scope and scale of the proposed initiative. This type of rigorous thinking was a challenge for everyone, especially in a collaborative context that relied on consensus.

The challenges of developing specific strategies was exacerbated by the fact that the Collaborative was constantly engaging new partners. Occasionally, so many new people were present at Collaborative meetings that participants found it difficult to build on previous discussions. Some

people stayed on, while others came to only one or two meetings. New partners had to be “brought up to speed” at the same time that the group was trying to reach agreement about specific strategies.

This second quarter revealed the need to make some changes to the initiative’s administrative structure. For example, the small workgroups were intended as the place where partners would become fully engaged and where work would be done. However, because of the wide range of interests identified by Collaborative members, more working groups were formed than could be adequately staffed. As a result, only the workgroups that were most integral to the project received adequate attention. Staff tried to increase coverage, and the number of working groups was streamlined. Changes were also made to the structure of the core planning team. Chairs of all the workgroups, as well as several other key partners, were added to the planning team and this added breadth and depth to its work.

In terms of program strategies, several significant ideas emerged in this quarter. The co-assessment strategy was more fully explored. And Collaborative partners learned about Missouri’s initial efforts to explore the Healthy Families America home visiting program, liked it, and began to partner with this effort to incorporate it into their strategies.

The Collaborative’s focus on safety and protection grew during this period. Susan Notkin’s (Clark Foundation Program Director) site visit, the all-site meetings on outcomes, and the meeting on frontline practice all reinforced the need for strategies addressing safety issues. This was critical for the initiative, since it allowed participants to discuss how they intended to balance the emphasis on child protection with other community concerns. Some partners were engaged with the Community Education Center and the Collaborative because of broader community interests—for example, because of an interest in health, juvenile justice, employment or community improvement. They were concerned that their interests would not be adequately reflected. After considerable discussion, consensus was reached that the Community Education Center’s focus was (and should be) a broad range of community issues, but that for this initiative the appropriate focus was on a more targeted strategy of child safety and family support. Most participants realized that there was considerable crosswalk between a child protection agenda and overall issues of family and community well-being, and agreed to address those broader issues “through the lens” of child safety.

The initiative experienced a major milestone when, in mid-April, the DFS staff unit (ten workers and a supervisor) moved into Sigel School. These staff would respond to reports of abuse and neglect in the neighborhood directly from the school. Moreover, staff would be part of a broader staff team based at Sigel, and thus able to work together to help other families and consult with school staff on safety issues. The staff were happy to be based in the school and in the neighborhood. Proximity created more opportunities for interaction. Not surprisingly, some glitches arose. In spite of the best intentions, little was done right away to insure that DFS staff were fully oriented to the Collaborative’s goals and integrated into the work of the school. With the press of planning deadlines, DFS administrators were more engaged in the planning process than were frontline staff, who did not feel they had time to devote to “endless meetings.”

DFS staff's presence as service providers raised interesting practice issues which are critical to the nature and future potential of the Sigel Community Partnership. Late in this quarter, the Collaborative faced the challenge of staff having different professional opinions about which families are at risk and how to intervene. DFS staff stressed safety concerns, and some expressed concern that private providers in the community network were too lax in their assessments and follow-up. Private sector partners felt DFS did not always involve them appropriately and were sometimes too quick to intervene "with a heavy hand." Talking through these cases illuminated both perspectives. Staff eventually came to agreement on the specific cases, and decided that they should all participate in common training about safety issues. Everyone realized, however, that these few cases were just the "tip of the iceberg" in terms of issues that the Partnership would have to resolve about how best to address safety—and *that resolving these issues, in fact, was central to the reason for having a Partnership in the first place.*

During this quarter, all the partners dealt seriously with the issues of parental involvement and citizen engagement. The Clark Foundation's grantees meeting in Key West was an important "eye opener" on this issue. The meeting agenda highlighted the importance of listening to different voices, and the passion of the voices heard at Key West re-enforced this message. Also, team members at Key West met Maria Elena Orrego, the technical assistance provider in this area, and formed a connection that led to extensive assistance. Maria Elena worked with several Collaborative members to, among other things, strengthen the parent-teacher organization at Sigel as a vehicle for parent participation. This enabled a core group of parents to commit to working together through the summer and to host a series of "family night" activities.

Further progress on several of these issues occurred during the joint retreat of the Community Education Council and the Collaborative in June. A group exercise in which participants looked at the current and future realities of a "high risk" and "low risk" family was enlightening and helped shape participants' views about safety, as well as the strategy sections of the plan. Parents' concerns about teachers' treatment of students, parents' negative perceptions of DFS, and all the participants' differing views about discipline (i.e., is spanking abuse?) were all discussed in a constructive forum.

The quarter ended with the submission of a draft strategic plan to the Foundation for review by the Strategy Group. The draft was not complete, but it represented an important step for the Collaborative in that it committed to paper the best consensus about specific strategies to date. It captured essential information about the Collaborative's vision, their commitment to inclusive partnership, and initial ideas about needed services and supports.

Third Quarter (July - September 1996): The Plan Refined—Ready to Roll!

Work begun in earlier quarters came to fruition during these months, as the Collaborative prepared to submit its strategic plan in September. While the Collaborative and the planning team were again sometimes juggling much more than staff resources permitted (especially as summer vacations began), an enormous amount of intensive work was accomplished. The quarter was a fast-paced blend of implementation activities, continued planning, and project administrative changes.

In terms of implementation, it was important for the Collaborative to move forward with real actions that helped neighborhood residents. Many partners were ready to see results. (Implementation activities also provided experiential learning, which strengthened the planning process.) Key activities included:

- The Collaborative sponsored a “networking luncheon” attended by 90 service providers active in the Sigel community. This event was enthusiastically received and provided a way to disseminate information, enroll new resources, and show support and appreciation for the provider constituency. The Collaborative recognized that this type of occasional get-together was probably a more effective way of engaging providers than continuing with monthly, large Collaborative meetings.
- Family Nights were held at Sigel School every Tuesday evening in July including activities such as movies and arts and crafts projects. A highlight was a dance and barbecue, where parents, DFS workers, and teachers danced the “Macarena” together.
- A new Caring Communities site coordinator was hired, Elam King. He, in turn, hired a substance abuse therapist, a latchkey coordinator, and a student assistance coordinator, thereby expanding significantly the school’s direct service capacity. His leadership led to progress on the tasks of defining smoother working relationships between Caring Communities and the other activities at Sigel School.
- Knowledge of and participation in the initiative was expanded to the second zip code area. This occurred as the Collaborative involved as an important member Rev. Morgan, the Caring Communities site coordinator at Shepard Elementary. Also, three other schools, five neighborhood organizations, and two aldermen from this broader community area were engaged in the initiative through outreach from the Collaborative and planning team members. The Planning Team awarded a small “Community Innovations” grant (using Foundation funds) to a project sponsored by these entities as part of their ongoing “Clean City” campaign.
- A problem solving session was facilitated by Jolie Bain Pillsbury between DFS staff and other frontline service providers based at Sigel. The intent was to clarify roles, identify issues, and reach understanding about how to work together with families. This improved communication and reduced the immediate tension among staff. Disagreements continue to arise about how best to handle particular cases, but the ability to communicate has improved staffs’ ability to resolve differences amicably.
- Citywide, DFS child protection workers and Caring Communities staff received cross-training, and this had a direct benefit for the team at Sigel. Better understanding about how to handle joint cases and mutual referrals emerged, and future possibilities for co-assessment were explored.

- A community survey, managed primarily by parents, was designed and implemented. Five canvassers (community residents) were trained and surveyed over 260 homes. The purposes of the canvass included outreach, needs assessment, and identification of community assets.
- To strengthen ties with school staff, Bill Parker, the Vice Principal who is active in the Collaborative, conducted weekly in-service trainings with teachers to work on team building, culture change, and improved interaction with parents.
- A student who had worked on the initial “geomapping” project was retained to customize the software so that it would be “user friendly” for parents and line staff. As a result, parents became strong proponents of the importance of “seeing” on the computer where community needs and resources actually are.
- Responding to the Sigel PTO’s concerns about starting the new school year on a positive note and emphasizing even stronger ties among the school, the Collaborative, and the community, a successful community open house and fair was held. Mustafa Abdul Salaam (a parent organizer from Connecticut), was invited to be a special guest and he gave further insights into parent involvement.

While all of this was going on, the planning process accelerated markedly in order to produce the strategic plan by the Foundation’s deadline of early September. Small workgroups drafted parts of the plan and these were then integrated by the Planning Team and core staff (with significant assistance from the site coordinator). In practice, the final weeks of planning became a marathon of writing, rewriting, and refining the group’s ideas, with a small handful of planning team members ultimately adding finishing touches. Submitting the plan represented a major accomplishment.

Several important aspects of the process leading up to submittal of the plan were:

- The work groups and the Planning Team agreed on a unifying concept that helped build consensus for the Collaborative’s full plans: a “pyramid” which illustrates how more intensive services for higher risk families build upon a broad base of family support for all families in the neighborhood.
- Greater attention was placed on outcomes and data. The Collaborative strengthened its relationship with the Institute of Applied Research (IAR), the evaluator for the state’s overall changes (SB 595) to child protective services. IAR’s information was so valuable that it helped team members appreciate the importance of data to inform decision making.
- Two aspects of the plan submitted to the Foundation received less attention than others: the budget and the workplan. The Planning Team knew that these needed more work, and when the Foundation review team concurred, these became the agreed-upon priority for follow-up work during the fourth quarter.

Several important administrative developments occurred during this quarter.

- Holly Ingraham, the project director, announced that she would be moving to England in the fall. After discussions with the Planning Team, Holly agreed to stay through November.
- During the proposal process the project was fortunate to find an extremely competent and committed person (Kristin Flachsbart) who helped immensely with internal organization and communication. With hindsight, it became obvious that a permanent position should have been created earlier, but until this point the Collaborative believed that shared resources of partners could handle administrative support.

Fourth Quarter (October - December 1996): Regrouping and New Beginnings...

Critical fourth quarter activities included (1) hiring a new director for the initiative, (2) wrestling with internal tensions, and (3) juggling a host of technical assistance opportunities to help the site move forward with implementation. Implementation activities increased as well. Staff "teamings" to discuss individual families became more regular. The neighborhood canvass expanded. And, there was continued progress in the areas of geomapping, co-assessment, and engaging the early childhood network.

The new project director, Doni Driemeier, began work in November, after a representative team of partners screened resumes and conducted multiple interviews. All the partners feel that Doni brings strong skills to the job, and, in addition, has a strong values base, excellent interpersonal skills, and a background in collaborative work with diverse groups.

The hiring process itself however, as well as the additional work required on the workplan and budget, brought some tensions to the table that had previously been brewing. No one of these tensions was insurmountable, but together they represented important issues of role, structure, and responsibility that required attention and resolutions as the site moved further along with implementation.

A series of meetings including a joint retreat between the Sigel Council and the Planning Team, during which all parties agreed to focus on conflict management skills, helped resolve or make progress on these issues. In addition, taking the time for this retreat helped the group celebrate its progress, affirm one another as partners, and look to the future. Important resolutions of key issues included:

- The relationship between the Council and the Planning Team was clarified to everyone's satisfaction, and the Council set up a committee to begin to broaden its representation to include both zip codes.
- It was agreed that the principal would supervise the new director, and a sub-committee of the Planning Team was formed to give additional guidance and support.

- Coordination of Sigel School's community education programs and the services that are part of the Collaborative's initiative will be a priority for staff involved in both. There is growing appreciation of the philosophy of community education as an overarching philosophy which can be integrated fully with the safety emphasis of this initiative.
- Opportunities are being created to build stronger connections to support teachers and the academic agenda of the school. In January, the Collaborative will sponsor a teachers appreciation luncheon followed by a half-day conference on sharing resources and strengthening the internal community. Teachers also met once a week for five weeks to receive training in recognizing and responding to child abuse and neglect.
- There is strong support for maintaining both an early childhood emphasis and supporting the children and families at Sigel (K-5th). (The concern had been finding the time and energy to do even one of them well). The partnership has recently engaged the United Way's Success by Six program as a partner and are exploring ways to have mutually supportive workplans to help share the load.

In addition to problem-solving around these key issues, the initiative juggled increased technical assistance from the TA network related to work on family assessment, management information systems, communications, parent involvement, and financing.

III. THE PLAN THAT EMERGED

The plan that emerged has many components. In order to prevent and address child maltreatment in the neighborhood in a comprehensive way, the Collaborative decided to address several priority target groups and to mobilize multiple strategies, from broadly available supports for all families to intensive interventions for families most at risk.

The three highest priority groups for the Collaborative are:⁵

- **FAMILIES WITH CHILDREN IN ELEMENTARY SCHOOL (GRADES K-5).** INITIALLY, THE FOCUS WILL BE ON FAMILIES WITH CHILDREN AT SIGEL, BUT THE INITIATIVE WILL SOON INCLUDE FAMILIES AT OTHER ELEMENTARY SCHOOLS IN THE TARGET AREA (STARTING WITH THE SCHOOLS THAT ARE SERVED BY CARING COMMUNITIES). SETTING THIS PRIORITY WAS RESPONSIVE TO THE HOST SITE, TOOK ADVANTAGE OF THE FACT THAT DFS WAS OUTBASING WORKERS IN SIGEL, AND LINKED THE INITIATIVE WITH CARING COMMUNITIES, A MAJOR STATE SYSTEM REFORM EFFORT.

⁵This section of the report draws heavily on material written by Jolie Kapelus of The Edna McConnell Clark Foundation.

IN ADDITION, THE LARGEST NUMBER OF DFS HOTLINE CALLS ARE RECEIVED REGARDING CHILDREN IN THIS AGE GROUP.

- **FAMILIES WITH VERY YOUNG CHILDREN (FROM BIRTH THROUGH AGE 5).** THIS TARGET GROUP WAS CHOSEN BECAUSE OF THEIR EXTREME VULNERABILITY TO SERIOUS INJURY, THE CONCERN THAT ABUSE FOR THIS GROUP IS OFTEN UNDETECTED AND UNREPORTED, AND THE DESIRE TO INTERVENE EARLIER TO GET FAMILIES OFF TO A GOOD START. IT ALSO ALLOWED THE SITE TO LINK WITH THE HEALTHY FAMILIES INITIATIVE WHICH IS JUST BEGINNING IN MISSOURI. IN ADDITION THE COLLABORATIVE HAD STRONG PARTNERS FROM THE EARLY CHILDHOOD COMMUNITY SUCH AS SOUTH SIDE DAY NURSERY AND PARENTS AS TEACHERS.
- **FAMILIES WHO ARE IDENTIFIED AS CHRONICALLY NEGLECTFUL OF CHILDREN.** THIS GROUP WAS CHOSEN BECAUSE IT IS A HIGH RISK GROUP FOR WHICH THERE HAS NOT BEEN A CONSISTENT, EFFECTIVE RESPONSE FROM THE CURRENT CPS SYSTEM. SPECIAL INTEREST IN THIS POPULATION WAS SPURRED BY A RECENT CHILD DEATH IN THE NEIGHBORHOOD, AND THE RESULTING RECOMMENDATIONS FOR POLICY AND PRACTICE CHANGE THAT ENSUED FROM THE INVESTIGATION.

ALTHOUGH THESE TARGETS WERE CHOSEN, THE COLLABORATIVE FOUND THAT IT COULD NOT COMPLETELY RESTRICT ITS FOCUS TO THESE GROUPS AND STILL BE RESPONSIVE TO COLLABORATIVE PARTNERS AND COMMUNITY CONCERNS. FOR EXAMPLE, THE PLAN INCLUDED MODEST RESOURCES TO HELP DEVELOP A YOUTH COUNCIL SO THAT YOUNG PEOPLE THEMSELVES COULD BE INVOLVED IN THIS INITIATIVE, AND SO THAT ALTERNATIVES COULD BE EXPLORED FOR MIDDLE AND HIGH SCHOOL AGE YOUTH. THE COLLABORATIVE IS ALSO COMMITTED TO BEING IMMEDIATELY RESPONSIVE (INCLUDING HAVING A STAFF "TEAMING") FOR ANY CASE IDENTIFIED BY DFS WORKERS AS VERY HIGH RISK.

THE MAJOR ACTIVITIES OF THE PLAN ARE:

- **FAMILY SUPPORT CENTERS.** FAMILY SUPPORT CENTERS (FSC'S) WILL PROVIDE A RANGE OF ACTIVITIES AND SERVICES TO FAMILIES WITH CHILDREN ATTENDING THE SCHOOL OR SITE IN WHICH THE CENTER IS BASED OR LIVING IN THE IMMEDIATE NEIGHBORHOOD. FSC'S WILL HOUSE A "WELCOME CENTER" (DROP-IN CENTER) OPEN TO ALL FAMILIES, AND WILL CONTAIN A MIX OF FORMAL AND INFORMAL SERVICES RANGING FROM YOUTH PROGRAMS AND PARENT SUPPORT GROUPS TO FAMILY COUNSELING AND CRISIS ASSISTANCE. A GEOMAPPING INFORMATION SYSTEM WITH STATIONARY AND LAPTOP TERMINALS WILL BE ESTABLISHED AT EACH FSC TO ALLOW COMMUNITY MEMBERS AND FRONTLINE WORKERS TO LOCATE FORMAL AND INFORMAL SUPPORTS IN THE SURROUNDING NEIGHBORHOOD. RESOURCES WILL BE IDENTIFIED THROUGH GEOMAPPING, COMMUNITY CANVASSING BY PARENT VOLUNTEERS, AND OUTREACH TO THE 14 NEIGHBORHOOD ASSOCIATIONS IN THE PROJECT AREA. COMMUNITY OUTREACH WORKERS WILL HELP SUPERVISE THE CANVASS, ENGAGE VOLUNTEERS FOR THE SAFETY NETWORK, AND HELP CONNECT ISOLATED FAMILIES WITH SERVICES AND SUPPORTS.

- **COORDINATED SERVICES FOR NEWBORNS AND YOUNG FAMILIES.** UNIVERSAL SCREENING WILL BE PROVIDED TO NEW MOTHERS FROM THE TWO ZIP CODE AREA, WITH LOCAL HOSPITALS AND MANAGED-CARE PROVIDERS REFERRING AT-RISK CASES TO FAMILY SUPPORT WORKERS (BASED AT THE FAMILY SUPPORT CENTERS AND WITH OTHER PROVIDERS) FOR FOLLOW UP. FAMILY SUPPORT WORKERS WILL ASSESS NEEDS, CONDUCT HOME VISITS, AND LINK FAMILIES TO ONGOING SUPPORT. THE GRANT WILL SUPPORT AT LEAST ONE FAMILY SUPPORT WORKER FOR INFANTS. DFS WILL SPONSOR ONE WORKER SPECIFICALLY FOR DRUG EXPOSED INFANTS. THE COLLABORATIVE WILL PARTNER WITH HEALTHY FAMILIES AMERICA, NURSES FOR NEWBORNS, PARENTS AS TEACHERS, AND OTHERS TO CREATE AND COORDINATE A NETWORK OF OTHER WORKERS ABLE TO PROVIDE FOLLOW UP TO HIGH RISK FAMILIES.
- **BIRTH TO FIVE COMPONENT.** A RANGE OF ACTIVITIES WILL BE CONDUCTED TO REACH FAMILIES WHOSE CHILDREN HAVE NOT YET ENTERED THE FORMAL SCHOOL SYSTEM. CHILD CARE CENTER STAFF AND FAMILY DAY CARE PROVIDERS IN THE TARGET NEIGHBORHOODS WILL BE TRAINED TO IDENTIFY ABUSE AND NEGLECT AND WILL HOST AN ARRAY OF PARENTAL AND COMMUNITY EVENTS FOR FAMILIES. COMMUNITY OUTREACH WORKERS WILL FOCUS ON TRAINING AND SUPPORTING VOLUNTEER MENTORS FOR YOUNG MOTHERS.
- **KINDERGARTEN TO FIFTH GRADE PROJECT.** BY LINKING WITH THE CARING COMMUNITIES INITIATIVE, CHILDREN AND THEIR FAMILIES WILL HAVE ACCESS TO A RANGE OF SCHOOL-BASED OR LINKED SERVICES INCLUDING BEHAVIOR THERAPY, SUBSTANCE ABUSE TREATMENT, AND A LATCHKEY PROGRAM. TEACHERS WILL BE TRAINED IN IDENTIFYING RISK FACTORS, INCLUDING THOSE OF ABUSE AND NEGLECT, AND WILL REFER CASES TO THE CARING COMMUNITIES COORDINATOR. THE PROJECT WILL FOCUS ON PREVENTING EDUCATIONAL NEGLECT BY UTILIZING PARENT LIAISONS TO CONTACT ABSENTEES, AND CREATE STRONG LINKAGES BETWEEN SCHOOL SOCIAL WORKERS AND CPS STAFF SO THAT SITUATIONS CAN BE RESOLVED WITHOUT NECESSITATING A HOT LINE CALL.
- **CPS DIFFERENTIAL RESPONSE TO REPORTS, AND OUTSTATIONING OF STAFF.** DURING THE PLANNING YEAR, TEN CPS WORKERS WERE OUTSTATIONED AT THE SIGEL COMMUNITY EDUCATION CENTER, WHERE THEY WERE ABLE TO ACCESS THE CENTER'S RESOURCES FOR USE WITH OPEN CASES AND BEGIN CONSULTING WITH TEACHERS AND OTHER PROVIDERS IN THE CENTER ABOUT POSSIBLE ABUSE AND NEGLECT CASES. THESE WORKERS WILL BE DEPLOYED TO ADDITIONAL SCHOOLS, AND WILL FOCUS SOLELY ON REPORTS FROM THE SURROUNDING NEIGHBORHOODS. IN BOTH INVESTIGATIONS AND ASSESSMENT CASES, CPS WORKERS WILL EMPLOY NEW TOOLS TO IMPROVE CHILD SAFETY, INCLUDING A WRITTEN SAFETY ANALYSIS AND PROTECTION PLAN DESIGNED TO DETERMINE IMMEDIATE RISK TO A CHILD AND DELINEATE THE ROLES THAT PARENTS, EXTENDED FAMILY AND FRIENDS, FORMAL PROVIDERS, AND CPS WILL PLAY TO KEEP THE CHILD SAFE. THE SITE WILL ALSO ADOPT THE IDEA OF COMMUNITY SUPPORT AGREEMENTS FROM FLORIDA.

- **CO-ASSESSMENT PILOT WITH TWO DAY CARE CENTERS.** DFS, TWO DAY CARE PROVIDERS, AND PARENTS HAVE DESIGNED A PILOT WHICH WILL ALLOW THESE CENTERS TO CONDUCT FAMILY ASSESSMENTS IN RESPONSE TO HOTLINE CALLS ON FAMILIES OF CHILDREN THAT THEY SERVE. THE ACTUAL ASSESSMENT MAY BE CONDUCTED SOLELY BY THE CHILD CARE SOCIAL WORKER, OR WITH THE ASSISTANCE OF DFS WHEN DESIRED. WHEN APPROPRIATE, THE CHILD CARE SOCIAL WORKER MAY ALSO BE A PARTNER IN AN INVESTIGATION. TRAINING, SUPERVISION AND ULTIMATE RESPONSIBILITY REMAIN WITH DFS, BUT THIS IS A FIRST STEP TOWARDS GREATER SHARED RESPONSIBILITY AND ACCOUNTABILITY FOR CHILD PROTECTION. THIS WILL GIVE THE SITE THE OPPORTUNITY TO EXPLORE LIABILITY ISSUES AND OTHER CONCERNS RELATED TO PRIVATIZATION.
- **FAMILY SUPPORT TEAMS FOR HIGH RISK CASES.** PROVIDERS DIRECTLY CONNECTED WITH THE FSC MEET WEEKLY TO STAFF ANY FAMILY THAT HAS SIGNED A CONSENT FORM AND HAS BEEN IDENTIFIED AS NEEDING COORDINATED ASSISTANCE BY A COLLABORATIVE PARTNER. AN INDIVIDUALIZED FAMILY SUPPORT TEAM WILL BE CREATED TO MEET DIRECTLY WITH FAMILIES EXPERIENCING CHRONIC NEGLECT AND MULTI-PROBLEM/HIGH RISK FAMILIES (SUCH AS SERIOUS INJURY). THIS TEAM WILL INCLUDE THE FAMILY, APPROPRIATE FORMAL SUPPORT PROVIDERS, AND EXTENDED FAMILY OR INFORMAL SUPPORTS WHOM THE PARENTS INVITE TO ATTEND. THE TEAM WILL WORK TOGETHER TO DEVELOP AND COORDINATE THE SAFETY PLAN AND THE ONGOING FAMILY SUPPORT PLAN. A FAMILY SUPPORT WORKER FOCUSING ON CHRONIC NEGLECT, AND A DFS CHRONIC NEGLECT SPECIALIST WILL ALSO BE AVAILABLE TO HELP “TEAM” CHRONIC NEGLECT FAMILIES.

IV. KEY THEMES

A. *How the context influenced St. Louis’ course of development*

The Sigel community site was strongly influenced by other events in St. Louis and Missouri. New child protection legislation, other human service reforms, and perhaps most of all the culture of the host school—all shaped the way the first year progressed.

The recent passage of “*dual track*” legislation, *SB 595*, was a major factor in preparing the way for this initiative, since the Sigel community had already been chosen as a pilot site for this legislation (which entails DFS responding to child abuse and neglect reports with *either* an investigation or a family assessment, and working in collaboration with the community to ensure a continuum of prevention and treatment services). Both the state and local DFS offices were heavily invested in making the pilot a success, and willing to devote time and energy to the project. The Clark initiative was embraced as an important tool to reach their goal. Also, since the Sigel school administration (led by its principal, Gerry Arbini) had been strong supporters of having *SB 595* piloted in the neighborhood, these leaders were already enthusiastic promoters of a child safety agenda (something that is not always the case with school officials).

SB 595's implementation in the Sigel community had a further benefit: it mandated an independent evaluation of the pilots. The Institute for Applied Research, based in St. Louis, was chosen to conduct the evaluation. In addition to analyzing DFS data related to the project, they established baselines (both historic trends as well as for comparison sites), and were collecting some qualitative data from DFS workers, clients, and community members. This gave the Sigel community a “jumpstart” in agreeing on benchmarks to measure their progress, and in the long run should greatly help the site as it develops its self-evaluation capacity.

A further part of the context was Missouri's broader state human service reform initiative, variously known as *Missouri's Direction for Change* and Missouri's *Caring Communities initiative*. This “new direction” for Missouri involved the five state agencies serving families and children. Working through the Family Investment Trust (a public-private intermediary established to lead this reform), state agencies were pooling funds that went to new “community partnerships” (also known as local governing boards) so that local leaders and citizens could have greater flexibility and control over the design of community and neighborhood-based services systems.

While the philosophy of Caring Communities and the Community Partnership to Protect Children initiative seem completely compatible, in reality the attempt to implement these major initiatives simultaneously at Sigel was a difficult process. Elsewhere in the state, community partnerships provided the funding to neighborhood schools and allowed great flexibility in the plan for those dollars, based on local priorities. It was the expectation of the Sigel Collaborative and the Sigel Education Council that they would have that type of input into “their” Caring Communities program.

However, in St. Louis, a central Caring Communities office maintained more control over neighborhood program development. Consequently, tension between Sigel administrators and Caring Communities administrators occurred, as both sought to exercise what they believed to be the appropriate level of control over resources. This would not have mattered so much except that Caring Communities resources were seen as an important adjunct to the child safety initiative. Even more importantly, in a “community” as small as that within Sigel School, frontline staff cannot help but be affected by organizational tussles going on among their host organizations.

Eventually, after several “clear the air” meetings, determined efforts by leaders on both sides of this dispute, a new Caring Communities coordinator who is building strong trust (Elam King), and technical assistance from the Family Investment Trust and the Center, a better working relationship has been established. The time spent building trust between the school and the St. Louis Caring Communities operation has resulted in the beginnings of a real partnership—an important success.

Perhaps the most important contextual factors has been *the initiative's location at a Community Education Center and the specific culture of the Sigel School*. Sigel is one of 16 Community Education Centers in St. Louis, and its service area includes two zip codes and ten other elementary schools. At this stage in its development, Sigel primarily serves its immediate geographic area. The governing body for the Community Education Center, the Sigel Council, contains no representation from other schools or neighborhoods in one of the zip codes, and the Council was not necessarily

seen by those communities or schools as being related to them. This needed to change, because as the Collaborative reached out to partners in this zip code, these partners did not see the Sigel Council, as constituted, as an appropriate oversight body for “their” initiative. The Sigel Council recognized this problem and broadened its representation to include people from the full target area.

The impact of the host site went beyond issues of appropriate jurisdiction, however. Historically, Sigel School, like too many urban public schools, operated with a somewhat insular culture and with very scarce resources. Under the previous principal, the school was not seen by the community as an open, parent-friendly institution. The current principal, Gerry Arbini, and Holly Ingraham were trying to change perceptions and bring resources to the school. However, when the initiative started, the school culture had only partially changed, and there was not enough administrative staff to handle all the new resources the school attracted. Basic secretarial help was at a premium. Ordering supplies, getting out mailings, and answering phones—all critical tasks when the Collaborative began trying to engage dozens of community partners and convened dozens of meetings—became major projects because of staff shortages.

Further, Sigel administrators spent energy “doing battle” with the larger school bureaucracy on basic administrative issues such as how to utilize existing space or deal with redistricting issues instead of having the time to invest in planning the community agenda. (Staff from the central Community Education office, especially Ron Miller and John Windom, were active members and valuable resources for the Collaborative. However, in administrative areas, difficulties with the school district administration recurred.) The school was receiving publicity and a variety of grants but worried that it lacked some of the basic resources to allow the school to always “walk its own talk.”

This rich, but sometimes difficult context made planning a challenge. However, all members of the Collaborative agree there is irreplaceable value in operating at the neighborhood level. Strategies that grow out of this “hands-on” environment tend to be creative, practical and on target. There is a positive synergy when parents, teachers, DFS, and providers put their heads together to solve a problem. The site feels “down to earth” even when its goals are in the stars. There is conflict to be sure, but a lot of laughter and mutual support.

B. The process and speed of parent and citizen engagement: what promoted it, what impeded it?

The Sigel Collaborative began with a commitment to parent and citizen engagement which, over the planning year, grew in scope and depth. The Collaborative members learned how to make their commitment operational and by the end of the year, parents and neighborhood residents were playing a more central role in almost all aspects of the Collaborative.

At one level, the interest in engaging parents was built into the fact that the initiative was housed at a neighborhood school. The Sigel School’s commitment to community education, with a Council that included parents and residents, was an important factor in Sigel’s selection for both the SB 595

pilot and the Clark initiative. Don Owens (then the Sigel Community Education Council President) had been actively engaged with the school and the community for years and brought to the Collaborative a wealth of knowledge and experience. Bennie Riddle, a Community Outreach Worker based at the School, and Geneva Bridges, the School's Parent Liaison, both have children who attend Sigel, are active in the neighborhood, and contributed their deep experience in the community to the Collaborative.

The Collaborative's desire for meaningful parent participation was evident from the first large meeting. Several parents were in attendance, and parents were identified by all participants as the most important group to engage. However, moving from this expressed commitment to a meaningful reality took some time. It was easy to fall back on the belief that parents who were paid staff could more easily attend meetings and could completely represent parents. It was more difficult to ensure that outreach occurred, child care and transportation were always available, and schedules adjusted to make broader representation possible.

Trust issues played a part as well. Many parents who had a previous history with the school did not see Sigel as welcoming. Parents had seen new initiatives come and go, raising expectations and then disappearing. The Division of Family Services also had baggage. DFS staff were perceived by some parents in the neighborhood as "baby-snatchers". Agencies, too, had some skepticism. Because of past failed experiences to involve parents, some partners doubted that enough parents could ever be engaged and preferred to devote energies to service strategies directed at children.

Community factors also complicated parent and citizen involvement. The neighborhoods surrounding Sigel School are marked by great disparities in income; substandard houses are within blocks of refurbished mansions. The racial divide is evident as well. Although the two zip-codes are predominantly white (70 percent), the school population is overwhelmingly African-American (80 percent). The need for cultural sensitivity, the examination of prejudices, and the objectivity to not reduce all differences of opinion to a matter of race is a continuing need in the community, as it was for the Collaborative.

Several turning points helped move the initiative to new levels of parent participation, and to develop the trust needed to tackle some of the divisions. The Foundation's grantees meeting (Key West) was an important step in having Planning Team members trust one another by getting to know colleagues on a personal basis. Months later, when Don Owens and Bennie Riddle were experiencing a difference of opinion, Bennie observed, "Heck, I know he isn't all bad... in fact I like him—after all we went out dancing!"

The technical assistance provided by Maria Elena Orrego was extremely helpful, over a sustained period, in keeping St. Louis focused on parent involvement. She helped the Planning Team translate the general concept of parent involvement into the satisfying reality of parents carrying out important roles, ceasing to be some specially courted group and instead being an integral part of the "doers." She worked with a core group of parents to gain greater familiarity and confidence in the initiative,

to carry out community-building activities, and recruit others to join the Collaborative and the parent-teacher organization. In August, the Collaborative initiated a neighborhood canvass, and over 200 households were surveyed *by parents* who received training and a stipend. The information gathered was helpful to the plan; significant outreach to neighborhood residents occurred; and the canvassers gained skills and provided mutual support to one another. Additional canvassers were recruited, and a fall canvass covered more neighborhoods.

A different avenue for parental involvement arose through the strong participation of two child care centers in the initiative. From the beginning, South Side Day Nursery and Kingdom House included parents in the development of their co-assessment process. This was a valuable experience for all parties, and slowly influenced other work groups. Thus, the Collaborative's work on communications and new family assessment techniques also included parents in the design phase.

Perhaps most importantly, Collaborative members realized now that there is no such thing as parent and citizen involvement being "done." It is a continuing, ever present, and essential part of the process of designing a community partnership. While significant progress was made in the first year, sustaining and increasing the progress will be an ongoing challenge as the initiative moves into its implementation phase.

C. The way in which the site grappled with the issue of safety and its importance

Many factors—the initiative's outcomes, frequent technical assistance, the all-site meetings—served to keep safety and child protection a prominent focal point of the St. Louis Plan. These external reminders of the importance of safety were internally reinforced by the leadership roles that DFS staff (local and state) play in the Sigel initiative Collaborative. However, what various partners mean by safety, its relationship to other values, and how it is operationalized has and will continue to be a source of discussion.

The very first large Collaborative meeting (January, 1996) focused on "what is child protection and safety?" It was clear then that most parents and community participants view safety through the lens of keeping children safe from threats outside the home: guns, gangs, crime, and drugs. In contrast, DFS and many providers think first of keeping children safe in their homes, that is, safe from maltreatment by a caretaker. And even when both of these agendas were recognized as valid, partners still were dissatisfied with them as representing the Collaborative's full views about safety. Both of these agendas were seen as deficit driven and not based on the strengths of the community or families.

A breakthrough came at this first meeting when dyads of parents and providers conversed about what children and parents need. A parent who was deeply concerned about violence in the community and a hospital physician who was angry about parent-inflicted abuse in the home, had no trouble agreeing that children needed love and parents needed support. Strong communities were seen as

the place to nurture healthy families for the sake of safe children. The entire Collaborative became comfortable about viewing safety ultimately in this broad context.

The focus on safety became even deeper throughout the planning year. A series of relatively small-scale activities kept reinforcing the theme of safety. For example, when parents were being engaged to help develop the co-assessment process with child care centers, DFS did an orientation to child abuse and neglect that included graphic slides of child abuse and neglect. Parents indicated that this helped them realize the seriousness of the problem, moved them beyond the “spanking debate”, and helped them view DFS in a more favorable light. (Alternatively, non-DFS professionals who saw the slides expressed concern that this approach reinforced negative attitudes about “abusing” parents, and created a “good parent/bad parent” dichotomy.)

Conversations about the importance of safety took on yet another dimension when DFS introduced a “safety assessment” to be piloted in St. Louis. The tool helps workers assess the immediate danger to a child and leads toward a “safety plan” that can engage collaborative partners to assure safety. In this framework, safety assessment is seen as the start of a continuum that moves on to risk and strength assessments. (Work with Pam Day of the Child Welfare League, a TA grantee, on assessments is helping the Collaborative map out the variety of assessments currently in use with families and to move toward more shared tools and processes).

An interesting caution about the theme of safety comes from the Collaborative’s mixed reactions to “safety messages” in its communications planning. Despite the Collaborative’s strong commitment to safety goals, partners react negatively to calling their work a “Partnership for the Protection of Children”, or referring to the Collaborative only as a “safety network.” Partners feel that it is important to describe their work as “a community development, family support agenda which assures safety.” A provider who is a single parent observed, “I would not come to a ‘safety network’ for help. It feels like they think I am a threat to my children.”

A final challenge is balancing the strong emphasis on safety with the concerns of school officials for improving education outcomes. While the school administration and teachers strongly support the emphasis on safety, they want to ensure that the school and its community partners give equal attention to educational goals. This is not a quarrel with safety as a goal, but an indication that it should be recognized as linked to family and community goals. Safety should be seen as part of a rich package of “good results” a neighborhood and its families want for children.

D. Who is part of the safety network, and why? Why are some partners still not engaged?

The key partners have been mentioned repeatedly throughout this case study. Briefly to review, the main players are:

The *Missouri Division of Family Services* has been a key and consistent participant in the Collaborative, providing leadership in many ways. State office staff (Fred Simmens and Joan

Garrison) and St. Louis City DFS officials (Tena Thompson and Fran Johnson) have provided exceptional leadership from the start. They have used their expertise to help community planning, but never acted as if their public sector roles give them special authority. The DFS frontline staff (led by Remona Garrett) who volunteered to be outbased at Sigel, have been trained in SB 595 protocols, and were generally supportive of the changes from the start. The community aspects of the initiative—the geomapped resource bank and the ability to “team” cases, for example—have increased this commitment steadily.

Sigel administrators have been key leaders from the start, and **Sigel teachers and other staff** are represented on the planning team, were engaged in the retreat, and have received updates in staff meetings. Within the “community within the school”, the **Caring Communities initiative** has become an increasingly active partner. This is important because the expansion of the initiative in the St. Louis area is going to move first to other Caring Communities schools.

The most active **private social service providers** are the Family Resource Center and the Family Support Network, two agencies which have staff on-site at Sigel. Several other agencies that have historic relationships with DFS as child treatment providers are also actively engaged. Agencies providing crisis assistance, health care, housing, employment services, domestic violence services, substance abuse treatment, and other resources participated in the Collaborative sporadically. They are a reliable part of the referral and service network, but have not played as active a role in the initiative’s planning process.

The **early childhood community** has been represented strongly on the Collaborative. Parents as Teachers (part of a network of Missouri’s family support programs) was involved from the beginning and was seen not only as a vehicle to reach families under stress, but to improve school readiness. South Side Day Nursery and Kingdom House child care centers (working in co-assessment) bring a wealth of knowledge and inroads into this important constituency. Marlene Levine, executive director of South Side Day Nursery, has ensured day care services’ strong involvement through her leadership within the Planning Team.

The **police and the court** are viewed as key partners. While not actively represented on the Planning Team, they have sent representatives to key Collaborative meetings. Family Court Officers have participated in several work groups as has the COPS (community police) officer stationed at Sigel.

While no important constituency has been completely absent, the Collaborative has identified neighborhood organizations, churches, and the business community as partners to more fully engage. Contacts have been made with individual churches, neighborhood representatives, and businesses but specific strategy for their involvement has not been developed. This will be a priority for the next year.

E. Key Accomplishments

By any measure, progress in the Sigel community of St. Louis has been significant. In the process of developing the strategic plan, relationships were forged, commitments strengthened, and visions clarified which form the basis of an effective partnership.

The site has primarily focused on developing clear, well-defined prevention strategies as well as interagency (team) responses to families at risk of abuse and neglect. The issues of shared accountability are just beginning to be explored through the planned co-assessment process in the two child care centers, and through a proposed "Collaborative response" to any adverse media attention or CPS tragedy that occurs in the neighborhood. (This response is in contrast to the usual attitude of "let DFS explain it" when negative news about child protection occurs.)

Perhaps most importantly, the vision of a Community Partnership is now broadly owned. The partners are far enough down what will be a long road to know that there is no turning back. In fact, they have no desire to retreat, and are excited by the growth that will come with implementation.

The Largest Challenges Looming

Continuing to build a unified, community-responsive team at Sigel School. Creating a positive common culture has begun at the Sigel School. However, some teachers, DFS workers, parents, community members, providers and administrator have functioned for a long time with beliefs and stereotypes that make building trust, making change, and creating a mini-community just within the school a long-term task. One thing that can threaten partnerships is believing that **others** will never change, and the Collaborative has learned to be on guard against the following types of statements:

"Those parents will never be able to take care of their kids."

"Teachers don't care about my kids—it's just a job to them."

"DFS doesn't really want to do business in a new way."

"Private providers won't keep kids safe."

"Outsiders can't really understand our community."

Breakthroughs have happened already in the Sigel community as diverse people work and accomplish together. The challenge for all the partners is to continue building the type of family-supportive community they envision within the walls of Sigel school and, from there, out into the community.

Managing multiple strategies and agendas. The St. Louis strategic plan has multiple strategies designed to address the three outcomes. However, just a few parts of this plan could easily absorb all of the Collaborative's time, resources, and energy. The challenge is to prioritize, sequence, and leverage activities so that capacity is built that multiplies the impact of what is done.

Dealing with problems pushed down from “higher levels”. The site is continually having to deal with the pain that is pushed down the system from decisions made (or not made) by higher levels of authority. For example, part of the difficulty has been needing to negotiate the sometimes cumbersome administrative requirements of St. Louis Public Schools, which seem not well-designed to support collaborative community activities. Another challenge has been the State’s inability to move forward with decisions about an overarching governance structure in St. Louis as part of state human service reforms. The lack of a strategy for this task at the state level creates confusion at the local level as various entities wrestle with problems they don’t have the authority to resolve.

Becoming more data driven, establishing baselines, taking more responsibility for evaluation, and developing MIS systems that work. The site’s relationship with the Institute for Applied Research has been a positive factor for data gathering and evaluation. The challenge will be in making staff time available to build on the data and expand it to become the data base needed for a more complete self evaluation.

A related challenge will be (with the help of technical assistance from Metis Associates) to figure out ways to link partners’ technological capacity for data collection. The Collaborative is committed to engaging partners outside the project area in this task so that the St. Louis human services community can move forward with compatible data collection technologies. This will require regional as well as neighborhood-based solutions.

Engaging in systems reform through the lens of child safety. This is a challenge for St. Louis and for the initiative as a whole. To achieve true **systems** reform, a variety of public and private partners need to have high levels of commitment that emerge most strongly when their own “key issues” are directly engaged. Thus, the challenge for the initiative is to keep the momentum around child protection outcomes strong, while also fully recognizing the importance—substantively and strategically—of ensuring that the broader Sigel community is effectively addressing other critical community goals such as educational success and economic self-sufficiency. Child safety should not be viewed as a separate goal, but as an important part of an overall community agenda.

Conclusion

In examining the full scope of what has been accomplished in the Sigel community of St. Louis during the past year, the lingering impressions are of growth and energy. “Growth” is key because of the steady increase in the scope of the agenda, the ambition of the plan, the inclusiveness of the partners, the day-to-day increase in the responsiveness to families’ needs, and the fact that relationships, services, and supports now exist in the community which were not there a year earlier. This is growth by any definition.

The community’s energy is also impressive because, looking back, there have been no lulls in activity during any planning period of this initiative. The planning year has brought to the surface major problems that had to be solved. But with all that, energies rarely flagged. The commitment

of many people, from many different walks of life, which fueled the early formation of the Collaborative is still strong. This, as much as anything, creates optimism and anticipation of what this community will accomplish in the years ahead.

ATTACHMENT A

CHRONOLOGY OF MAJOR EVENTS

January 1996

- Broader collaborative convened for the first time. Announcement of the Clark Grant. Focus on Child Protection and who should be at the table. (Jolie Bain Pillsbury facilitates. Establish pattern where full collaborative meets half day, planning team meets half day).
- Frank Farrow and Sara Barwinski met with Sigel Community Council to dialogue about the initiative and the Council's role.
- All site meeting at Amelia Island. Increased buy-in, enthusiasm, and greater appreciation for the magnitude of the task at hand.
- Job search begun for project director. Family Intervention Work Group meeting regularly to work on protocols for interagency work with families, evolved from already existing group.
- Site visit by Norm Zimlich regarding financing strategies.

February 1996

- Collaborative Meeting and Community Support Collaborative name adopted. Hiring process clarified. Additional work groups formed.
- Collaborative Meeting. Presentations from DFS, courts, police about their current roles in Child Protection (as is) as a spring board to envisioning community relationships (to be).
- Job Search continues with multiple interviews of candidates by a diverse team from the Collaborative. Geomapping project gets under way with a team of students from Washington University.
- Site visit on evaluation and data capacity, Lynn Usher.

March 1996

- Collaborative meeting. Vision, goals and principles adopted. Work groups reporting back on strategies.
- Work groups focusing on developing strategies to impact outcomes, with some functioning better than others. Holly Ingraham hired as project director.

April 1996

- DFS moved into the Sigel Site.
- Susan Notkin site visit. Presentation on Geomapping capacity for the Community Collaborative meeting. Focus on Strategic Plan and modeling about logic chain and connecting strategies to outcomes.
- All Site meeting in Key West turning point in commitment to parent involvement, greater trust among participants, concern about under representation of education.

May 1996

- All site Outcomes meeting in St. Louis. Ron Miller with St. Louis Public Schools attends and becomes more fully engaged.
- Collaborative Meeting Community Outreach and Parent Involvement work group presentation/input session. Adopt top 6 strategies with focus on child protection.

April/May 1996

- Additional Work Groups formed. Marlene Levine added to Planning team. Series of meetings with DFS, Kingdom House, South Side Day Nursery and Parents held around co-assessment. Series of meetings with Khatib Waheed about interface with Caring Communities. Connection made with Healthy Families America. Planning team meeting more frequently.

June 1996

- Draft Strategic Plan Submitted.
- Day long Sigel CEC/Collaborative retreat. Over 75 participants. Exercise on vision of community based child protection.
- All site Front-line Practice meeting in St. Louis.
- Phyllis Brunson and Sara Barwinski provided TA with Khatib Waheed, Gerry Arbin and Don Owens regarding issues with Sigel and Caring Communities.
- Heather Lawrence hired as new CEC Coordinator.

July 1996

- Jolie Bain Pillsbury provides facilitation and problem-solving with Family Intervention Work Group around tensions regarding various roles and views of safety and support.
- Clark Outcomes meeting in Louisville. Bill Parker attends and becomes more fully engaged.
- Collaborative Meeting Develop Strategy Maps to better depict plan.
- Weekly "Family Nights" sponsored by the PTO. Barbecue and dance particularly successful with participation from teachers, DFS, providers, and parents. Elam King hired as new Caring Communities Coordinator.

August 1996

- Planning team meeting with Frank Farrow on governance issues.
- Collaborative meeting. Strategies finalized, work related to writing the plan agreed upon.
- Outcomes meeting with Institute of Applied Research, DFS state office data processing and work group.

July /August 1996

- Intensive work with Maria Elena Orrego on parent involvement strategies. Design and implementation of neighborhood canvass.

September 1996

- Successful Community Open House at Sigel. Mustafa Abdul Salaam and Maria Elena Orrego guests.
- Marathon meetings of various small groups to complete Strategic Plan.
- Strategic Plan submitted.
- Feedback on plan given to planning team. Attention needed to vision, workplan and budget.

October 1996

- Planning group meets at Shepard Caring Communities Site. Tension about governance, roll out more clearly identified.
- Planning group meets at Good Samaritan Center. Affirms plan to present to Council about structure, identifies desire for conflict resolution skills to be part of the retreat.
- Intensive Job Search by select committee from Planning Team and Council, Doni Driemeier accepted the position to begin in November.

November 1996

- Retreat with planning team, and executive committee of the Council. Reviewed successes, challenges of past year. Identified key goals for next two years. Clarified relationship issues. Welcomed new director. Celebrated the planning year. Jolie Bain Pillsbury facilitated.
- Technical assistance from Pam Day of Child Welfare League of America about assessment tools.
- Technical Assistance from Metis Associates regarding Management Information Systems.
- All site meeting in Cedar Rapids.
- Planning team continued work on vision, work plan and budget. Farewell party for Holly Ingraham.

December 1996

- TA with Steve Fowler and Joanne Edgar re communications
- TA about Parental Involvement, Family Support Centers, and Parent/Teacher interactions with Maria Elena Orrego.
- Pam Day, follow up on assessment.
- TA from Norm Zimlich regarding fiscal strategy.
- Statewide Meeting with all SB 595 sites.

ATTACHMENT B

WHO'S WHO

Sigel Community Education Council. This is the governing body with representatives from the community, teachers, parents, school administration, and providers. The Council is responsible for overseeing the Community Education program in the two zip-code areas, but the breadth of this agenda also focuses on concerns relating to the elementary school. Representation primarily stems from the two neighborhoods in and near the elementary school's attendance area. The Council is the official grantee of the Clark grant, with ultimate oversight accountability for performance.

The Planning Team

The planning team was delegated the responsibility for carrying out the planning process and developing the strategic plan. The team had council representation, and reported back to the council for guidance and ultimate approval.

Planning Team Members

<i>Name</i>	<i>Capacity/Agency</i>	<i>Additional Role(s)</i>
Gerry Arbini	Principal	
Sara Barwinski	Technical Assistant Site Coordinator	Multiple Workgroups
Barb Chiodoni	ESL Teacher Sigel CEC	Parent/Teacher Involvement
Ruth Ehresman	Citizens for Missouri's Children, Associate Director	Governance
Remona Garrett	St. Louis City, DFS Supervisor, 595 Unit	Family Intervention Geomapping Users Group
Joan Garrison	DFS, Central Office MO SB 595 Project Director	Family Intervention
Holly Ingraham	Project Director, Sigel/Clark Initiative	Initially CEC Coordinator
Fran Johnson	St. Louis City, DFS Supervisor, Investigation	Multiple Work Groups

<i>Name</i>	<i>Capacity/Agency</i>	<i>Additional Role(s)</i>
Elam King	Caring Communities Sigel Site Coordinator	Family Intervention
Annie Kreiger	Parents as Teachers Blow Site Coordinator	Birth to Five, Chair
Heather Lawrence	Sigel CEC Coordinator (June)	Family Intervention Youth Focus, Chair
Marlene Levine	South Side Day Nursery Executive Director	Co-assessments, Co-chair Birth to Five Workgroup
Ron Miller	St. Louis Public School Office of Community Education	Governance, Co-chair Outcomes Workgroup
Rev. C. E. Morgan	Caring Communities Shepard Site Coordinator	Capacity Building
Don Owens	Sigel Community Council Representative	Council Chair - January-July
Bill Parker	Administrative Assistant, Parent/Teacher CEC (vice principal) Involvement	Sigel
Loren Ribley	Family Resource Center Associate Director	Family Intervention, Chair
Bennie Riddle	Family Resource Center Community Outreach Worker	Parent Involvement, Chair Outcomes Workgroup Sigel Council Member
Fred Simmens	DFS, Central Office	Outcomes Work Group Asst. Deputy Director
Tena Thompson	St. Louis City DFS Director, Children's Services	Multiple Workgroups Co-assessments, Co-chair Governance, Co-chair
Dawn Williams	Family Investment Trust	Governance

<i>Name</i>	<i>Capacity/Agency</i>	<i>Additional Role(s)</i>
Bettie Williams	Teacher Representative Sigel CEC	Parent/Teacher Involvement