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CHILD ABUSE & NEGLECT
Prevention Board

Newsletter

ISSUE JUNE 2024

WI Child Abuse and Neglect Prevention Board Updates

Providing you with the latest news and updates from the Child Abuse and Neglect Prevention Board



Welcome to our 8th newsletter. We have some information on the importance of play for children and the importance of a continuum of services for parents. This newsletter is a little longer to provide you with some new resources (at the end of the newsletter).

From the Field

Many family resource centers in Wisconsin strive to offer a continuum of services to meet the diverse needs of families they serve. FRCs may offer a variety of play-based learning activities, Parent Cafés, family nights, as well as evidence-based parent education programs. Cafés are an excellent way to build a community while learning to proactively respond to challenging situations. The additional Research article in this newsletter goes on to emphasize the importance of play-based learning. Evidence-based/evidence-informed parent education focuses on strengths-based approaches to reinforce and build

Wisconsin FRCs who are implementing a menu of services are seeing that parents are accessing several services across the FRC's continuum. When it comes to depth of services, FRCs often look to a range of programs across a spectrum of intensity. For example, a FRC might offer lighter touch programs to engage parents, like car seat safety programs or play groups, then increase the intensity and commitment with offerings like a parent café where parents connect with peers over several sessions. Many evidence-based parent education options have tiered or customizable options of higher intensity. For example, the evidence-based parent education program, Triple P, has a range of offerings for families that vary in focus and time commitment.

“During summer Parent Cafés, several parents requested an opportunity to go more in-depth on some concerns they had with their child(ren's) behavior as they transitioned from summer vacation back into the school year. Parents enjoyed the workshops, and two families who attended these workshops also signed up for 1:1 coaching sessions to further strengthen their parenting skills.”
The Parenting Network (Milwaukee, WI)

“We have been gratified to see increasing crossover in parents among the different FRC programs. As we'd hoped...after attending one Parent Café, felt comfortable returning to our center for Drop in and Play or Playgroups.”
FRC, Inc. (Eau Claire, WI)

Families who access FRC services and have a positive experience are reaching out to staff to become involved in other types of interventions. In Parent Cafés, caregivers are provided opportunities to come together in small groups to learn and share authentic conversations about the challenges they face. In creating space for parents/caregivers to openly discuss parenting (through cafés or play-based learning programs), opportunities may arise for FRC staff to provide parenting resources and supports related to the current interests and concerns of the group. When family resource centers offer Parent Education along with these 'lighter touch' services, parents can receive concrete parenting strategies and opportunities for active skill building.

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Research

Play is Fundamental to Child Development and Learning

Over time, play has come to be viewed as a frivolous use of children's time when compared to structured activities and learning. This school of thought has coincided with a steady rise in parental anxiety and fear for children's safety, intensive parenting practice, and concerns about academic achievement. The isolation imposed by COVID cemented a generational deficit in opportunity to engage in unstructured free play with friends and peers.

Recent research has reaffirmed and established the important and irreplaceable role of play for brain building, healthy child development, social and emotional learning, and overall well-being. In fact, a 2023 article in the *Journal of Pediatrics* attributes the steady decrease in the mental health of US children over the past five to six decades, in part, to a marked decline in time and opportunity for unstructured, independent play. Children with the freedom to engage in activities or play, outside of direct oversight or involvement of adults, derive both short and long-term benefits to their mental well-being. Play is a direct source of immediate enjoyment and happiness for children. Vigorous, unstructured play, without adult interference, provides occasion to practice self-control, read social cues, negotiate, problem solve, communicate effectively, and engage in risk taking and challenge - all skills that support autonomy and self-confidence in adulthood.

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Play is not only a source of self-awareness and well-being but also an important means to acquire new knowledge and understanding of the surrounding world. Research indicates that the most effective way for children to gain knowledge, even academic knowledge, is to learn through play. Play-based learning or guided play provides enjoyment, motivation, and agency that is so beneficial to children and adds the inclusion of guidance by a supportive adult. Incorporating play into educational environments opens the opportunity for spontaneous and deep learning tailored to the needs, interests, and abilities of each unique child.

Celebrate Children Foundation

The Foundation awarded grants to six agencies to Strengthen Families through reading in December 2023. The funding for book distribution and events ends on June 30, 2024. Over the first three months of the project 841 books were distributed to 566 families.

Some highlights and takeaways:

- Parents want to learn more about the importance of books and reading to their children.
- Books are a good motivator to get parents and children to events.
- All five agencies that submitted reports are handing out Five for Families materials with the children's book. Four are using the Five for Families bookmark.

[Celebrate Children Foundation | Building Strong Children and Families | Wisconsin \(celebrate-children.org\)](#)



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Summer in Wisconsin is an ideal time for family adventures and creating lasting memories. However, the unstructured days can sometimes be overwhelming for both parents and kids. This year, we are excited to provide a series of assets that can be used during summer to help encourage families to make the most of their time together. These messaging, tip and activity sheets are designed to reduce stress and enhance the joy of family interactions.

Check it out here: [Child Abuse and Neglect Prevention Board \(wi.gov\)](#)

Resources:

The Prevention Board would like to provide information on new resources for our grantees and partners.

[Data Resources](#) is a new page on our website with an annotated summary of quality data sources that provide quick access, clear interpretation, and the ability to search and sort data related to children and families, their needs, their well-being, and the policies and strategies that support their optimal development.

[Wrap up on Parenting Inside Out support](#)

The Prevention Board has been providing funding support to the University of Wisconsin-Madison Sandra Rosenbaum School of Social Work (UW) to provide technical assistance and evaluation research to the Wisconsin Department of Corrections (DOC) for parenting education services delivered to parents incarcerated in state correctional institutions. There are two resources from this project that UW would like to share.

[Supporting Incarcerated Parents and Children: An Implementation Toolkit for Parenting Inside Out in Prisons](#): The purpose of this toolkit is to share resources for implementing and operating PIO in correctional settings based upon lessons learned from piloting the program at four Wisconsin DOC institutions. The toolkit is geared toward a variety of audiences including prison staff, correctional administrators, as well as researchers, policymakers, and other stakeholders with interest in approaches that mitigate the negative consequences of incarceration on parents and children. The toolkit focuses on practical applications and strategies to help staff implement PIO, taking into account various staffing limitations, resource constraints, and other logistical issues. While some parts of the toolkit are specific to the WIDOC, the intent is

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[Caregiver and Child Community Resources](#) guide is also in the toolkit but could be used separately for service providers in Wisconsin that work with families. UW used this community resource guide to help connect caregivers with resources across the state.



Funding Opportunities:

The Prevention Board doesn't have any funding opportunities at this time. Please [sign up](#) to receive funding notification emails.



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