

## Report of the Early Childhood Work Group and Coordinator December 14, 2009

### **Caring Connections Program Highlights**

Data collection has been a key focus of the work group for the past few months. Because Caring Connections ultimately connects across many agencies and many programs, there are many factors to consider when tracking data. Technically, the *Caring Connections Program* label is tied to at least five different specialized programs under its one umbrella. First time parents are visited four times in their child's first year of life; Early Head Start and Public Health provide intense home visiting, including the four specific Caring Connections home visits as part of their overall visits; Child Care Providers receive visits with a focus on early care issues; and families involved with Parent Support Outreach have a completely different focus yet!

Based on the very unique and individualized programs that encompass the Caring Connections logo, the group has decided that they will conduct evaluation separately for each of the program components. Based on this discussion, the work group will collect data specific only to the first time parent visits. Child Care Resource and Referral will continue to track information from the child care visits; Public Health will track and monitor data directly related to NFP and other visits they provide; Early Head Start will track their own program data; and Human Services will be involved in data collection for the PSOP program. The Early Childhood Work Group will periodically monitor and report data from all of the various program components as they feel is useful and helpful. They will also use the data for future program planning.

<b>Fiscal Year</b>	<b>Total Births</b>	<b>Families eligible for on-going visits</b>	<b>Total Postpartum Visits</b>	<b>Total 1 Month Visits</b>	<b>Total 5 Month Visits</b>	<b>Total 12 Month Visits</b>
2007-08	643	196	276	62	76	100
2008-09	222	90	62	29	14	23

### **Child Care Provider Visits**

At this point in the year, only four new providers have been enrolled since July due to low numbers of people being licensed. While there are a few more currently completing the licensing process, the work group has concerns about enrolling 17 new providers by June. The group discussed how to best utilize the dollars available for these visits and decided that they would request permission to enroll other providers who are not newly licensed, and that have not previously been offered the program.

**REQUEST FOR ACTION:** Permission to adjust the providers served due to low numbers of newly licensed providers in the county and offer visits to other licensed child care providers in Otter Tail County that have not previously been offered the program so up to 17 providers are served this fiscal year.

### **Parent Support Outreach Program (PSOP)**

December 31<sup>st</sup> will mark the end of the fifth year for this unique and valuable program. Word was received from the State that additional grant funding of up to \$24,000 per year will be reallocated to Otter Tail County families to support this program through December 2011. Since January 1, 2009, 25 families with a combined total of 51 children have been enrolled in the program. The program is currently serving 16 families from communities across the county through six different service providers. The program will be compiling their year-end financial reports shortly to determine how close they have come in utilizing all the funds allocated.