

Report of the Early Childhood Work Group and Coordinator January 25, 2010

Caring Connections Program Highlights

Training will be hosted for all of the Caring Connections staff at the end of this week, and again in late February or early March. The focus of the first session on January 29 will include a presentation by Someplace Safe and by the local IEIC Parent Support Consultant. At the end of February, the group will be attending the "Brain Gym" workshop hosted by Lakes Country Service Cooperative. These on-going and continued training opportunities are one of the essential components contributing to the continued cohesiveness of this program.

Fiscal Year	Total Births	Families eligible for on-going visits	Total Postpartum Visits	Total 1 Month Visits	Total 5 Month Visits	Total 12 Month Visits
2008-09	643	196	276	62	76	100
2009-10 (YTD)	310	119	82	56	37	37

Child Care Provider Visits

Upon approval from the Executive Council to offer the Caring Connections Child Care Provider Visits to not only new providers but existing providers that had not yet receive the program, LuAnn was able to connect with several providers who were very interested in enrolling in the program. This is good news in that the program will now certainly be able to serve 17 providers across the county allowing the program to reach out to as many providers and families as possible.

Through a partnership with West Central Initiative and the local Early Childhood Initiative programs, funding was provided to incorporate oral health training into the existing structure of home visiting by adding one additional visit to those providers served during the last fiscal year. As a result of this additional funding, 13 oral health visits were made to family child care providers in October and November. These providers currently have a combined total of 118 children enrolled in their care, and reside in the communities of Elizabeth, Erhard, Perham, Wadena, Henning, Parkers Prairie, Bluffton, Underwood, Fergus Falls, Deer Creek, Vergas and Battle Lake. Nine parents also attended these sessions where oral health information was shared. Providers and families were supplied with toothbrushes and toothpaste for all children, timers, chewing gum and a book entitled "Going to the Dentist." The following is an e-mail sent by one provider in response to the visit she received:

"Dear (service provider),

I wanted to send out a heartfelt thank you for the recent visit you provided on Dental Health. It was very nice to have a parent join our discussion. I have sent out the information with highlighted information on the key points. If the parents read only the highlighted points I think we did a good job. I also revisited the topic in my monthly newsletter as I shared that some parents are putting Kool-Aid in their child's bottles. Ouch! I think that just being aware (which is what you were providing) is a huge step in our children's positive dental health. Please give a big thanks to the providers of the grant funds, as without them I know I couldn't get the wonderful visits from you."

Parent Support Outreach Program (PSOP)

Fifteen families from the communities of Battle Lake, Fergus Falls, Henning, Perham, Parkers Prairie and Underwood have been enrolled in the program since July 1. Seven additional families are being served by the program from enrollments during 2008-09. There are a total of twenty families actively involved in the program at the present time. The program was especially pleased this month to welcome back a home visitor from Head Start who previously worked with PSOP families. The program now has eight home visitors from seven agencies serving families throughout the county.