Families want to be strong and healthy for their children providing them with the foundation that meets their physical, emotional and developmental needs. By honoring the existing strengths within families, we can support all families in providing a safe, loving home for their children. This was the focus of the Children’s Bureau’s 17th National Conference on Child Abuse and Neglect.

Research has found that when positive and successful interventions are used, it promotes the well-being of children and families. Focusing on promoting protective factors is a constructive approach which helps the families become empowered while building on their strengths.

Protective factors are positive attributes that make families stronger. This technique helps get needed supports to families that are dealing with stressors. When service providers focus on the family’s strengths, families feel more at ease when asking for extra support when needed. This helps the service provider and family develop a positive relationship. This positive relationship is essential for parents who may be hesitant to make known concerns or identify behaviors or situations that may place their families at risk. Protective factors help service providers working with families build and recognize natural supports within their family and their community. These networks are critical in helping families become empowered and to ensure the well-being of their children and families.

Research has found that the protective factors that have been the “key” in helping families succeed are the following:

- Nurturing and Attachment
- Knowledge of Parenting and of Child and Youth Development
- Parent Resilience
- Social Conditions
- Concrete Supports for Parents

These protective factors are vital for all families regardless of the family culture, economic status, or age of the child. Families are more likely to feel empowered during stressful times when they have strong natural supports, services that are community based, and service providers that work together for the well-being of the family.

If you would like to know more about the Strengthening Families and Communities: 2009 Resource Guide you can go to their website www.childwelfare.gov/pubs/surveys/PreventionGuide.cfm
Volunteer Opportunities

Ne
evada PEP has the privilege of working with so many selfless and dedicated volunteers. A recent opportunity to include volunteers the Families First Conference that was held on October 2th & 3th 2009. Although Nevada PEP has so many individuals who give of their time regularly, it’s always nice to meet new people who are willing to lighten the load of others. One of PEP’s new volunteers was such a wonderful contribution to the success of the conference. As the parent of a son with a disability, our volunteer says, “I was so excited to say the least! I got to go to the conference and I was welcomed with open arms. It was so wonderful. I would volunteer any day for Nevada PEP. It is an EXCELLENT resource for families in need. I would like to thank Nevada PEP for all that they have done for me and my family!”

Nevada PEP has many opportunities to volunteer throughout the year. If you would like to volunteer for Nevada PEP, please contact us.

Without the selfless dedication of volunteers like you, Nevada PEP would not be able to maintain the level of outreach we have worked so hard to obtain.

Neighborhood Family Service Center

Sys
tems of Care have been a part of Southern Nevada since 1998 when the first Center opened in Henderson. At that time agencies such as Division of Child and Family Services, Department of Family Services, Juvenile Justice and Nevada PEP agreed on the System of Care principles because they knew it would be better for families and workers to collaborate and work together in each community. Now there are five Centers serving families and it is more important than ever to follow the System of Care principles. As families and agencies struggle with budget cuts and fewer services are available, working together can reduce duplication of efforts and cost; and also provide the family with an individualized plan that meets their needs.

The System of Care Principles are: Community Based, Child & Family, Interagency Collaboration, Cultural Competence, Individual & Strength Based, and Accountability. These principles are on all the walls at each site so they can be remembered and followed by everyone who works with families.

Inspirational thought

“A true friend knows your weaknesses but shows you your strengths; feels your fears but fortifies your faith; sees your anxieties but frees your spirit; recognizes your disabilities but emphasizes your possibilities.”

-William Arthur Ward
Family Voices aims to achieve family-centered care for all children and youth with special health care needs and/or disabilities, including those with serious emotional disturbances. Through our national network, we provide families tools to make informed decisions, advocate for improved public and private policies, build partnerships among professionals and families, and serve as a trusted resource on health care.

Responsive systems of care for Nevada’s children and families must be guided, directed and driven by their values, needs and voices. In a time when budget constraints hinder the efficiency of our systems of care, it is important for families and youth to maintain a strong voice to ensure families have a key-decision role in the care of their children and for youth to learn to advocate for themselves.

This past year Family Voices developed a tool to help families, family support and advocacy organizations, and professionals to increase their awareness and knowledge of the specifics of family-centered care. I encourage you to download the Family Tool to learn more about assessing the quality of the care that you and your children receive.

You can find the tool at:


Questions on the tool address the ten components of family-centered care and the key aspects of family/youth/provider partnerships:

1. Acknowledges the family as the constant in a child’s life.
2. Builds on family strengths.
3. Supports the child in learning about and participating in his/her care and decision-making.
4. Honors cultural diversity and family traditions.
5. Recognizes the importance of community-based services.
6. Promotes an individual and developmental approach.
7. Encourages family-to-family and peer support.
8. Supports youth as they transition to adulthood.
9. Develops policies, practices, and systems that are family-friendly and family-centered in all settings.
10. Celebrates successes.

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Family Story

By Tom Dennis

My niece is a very important person to me. When my niece came to live with me, I wanted to make sure she had all the supports she needed. I felt she might benefit from some type of social group to help her with her social skills. As I was surfing the internet for places that could help me find resources I came across Nevada PEP.

I gave them a call, and they gave me information about services that I was looking for. I went to Nevada PEP and was offered lots of relevant information and explained about IEP’s. I learned that through the IEP, my Niece, would be able to get services to help develop her social skills. I was given resources on outside agencies as well and some hands on knowledge and information on training’s and I was also told how to access the lending library.

I think one of the biggest bonuses was the library PEP maintains. It’s incredible. What if your child is dealing with a brain malady like Bi-polar, or social pressures relating to peers, or maybe you don’t understand how to apply this new information? My new hero is now Richard Lavoie. This educator helped me tremendously to understand the environment a child needs to succeed. That one aspect can make the difference between success and failure. My niece was a couple grades behind in her classes and these tapes helped me formulate a plan, that to date, has helped her increase two grades since April 2009. Without question this library made me a more informed advocate for my niece. I continue to use this valuable resource.

I feel a guardian needs to understand what the school expects from a child, an IEP meeting is a good place to start. What happens when you’re not sure what to expect in your first IEP meeting or what one is? PEP offered me a free 3 hour course that explained everything I need to know about the IEP. I learned what questions to ask. Having enough information in hand relieved a lot of my worries about whether my niece was being given the right supports and that they were really tailored specifically to my Niece’s needs. It was good to know enough relevant information. The trainer really knew this subject well.

I have long held that good coaching and mentoring are incredible gifts when you care a great deal for a child, family member or co-worker. Coaching and mentoring replaces doubt with a person and allows them quickly to move to and through to the next level. I sure appreciate the coaching and mentoring PEP offered me. One thing happens when we find that special coach, You never, ever forget their time and effort.
Reno/Sparks

Nevada PEP Family Support Group
Meets the third Tuesday of every month from 6:30 p.m.-8:00 p.m., at the PEP Office Building, Room I-204. Contact Nevada PEP at 775-448-9950.

City of Reno’s Parks and Recreation
Recreation programs for children with disabilities and those who need accommodations. Call April McIntyre at 775-333-7765 or by email at mcintyrea@cityofreno.com, or contact inclusion at 775-334-2262.

City of Sparks Parks and Recreation
Children 14 and up can bowl every Wednesday at the Grand Sierra Bowling Alley from 3:30-5:00 pm. Cost is $3.00 weekly. Art Class for children 14 and over every Thursday from 4:30-6:00 pm at the Larry D. Johnson Community Center on 12 St. and Oddie Blvd in Sparks. Cost $5.00 monthly. For more information on these events and others contact Shauna Nelson at 775-353-7815, e-mail shnelson@cityofsparks.us, or visit the website at www.sparksrec.com

Grandparents Raising Grandchildren
One-on-one support for those who are raising their grandchildren. Please contact Dawn Costa at 775-353-3112 for more details.

Las Vegas / Henderson

Nevada PEP Family Support Group
Meets the 2nd Wednesday of every month 6:00 p.m. – 7:30 p.m. For more information, please call Nevada PEP at 702-388-8899.

Positive Supports for Children -
Provides full or part-time individual programs and specific intervention to promote social, emotional, and behavioral functioning. Low teacher to child ratio encourages developmental, educational, and cognitive stimulation. Also allows staff to emphasize relationship and self-esteem building. For more information, please call Christy Buckingham at 702-367-0306 or email at ps4children@lvcoxmail.com

City of Las Vegas, Adaptive Recreation Division -
3333 W. Washington Ave. Offers a variety of recreational activities for youth of all ages, with and without developmental disabilities, in sports, drama, roller skating, swimming, arts and crafts and field trips. Call Cassie Jemison at 702-229-6358 for details.

GAB (Give me a Break, Inc.) -
A respite program will hold respite days the 3rd Saturday of each month in the Vegas Valley. Contact Scherrie Adams at 702-898-2216 or Toll Free at 866-486-2275. Their fax number is 702-248-4739. Please RSVP in order to reserve a spot.

R.E.C. (Recreation and Experience Club)
is a year-round after school recreation program for youths with disabilities in grades 9-12 located at 303 South Water Street Suite 200 Henderson, NV 89015. Please contact Sara at 702-267-4065 for details.

Special Olympics -
Offers a variety of athletic activities for children and young adults with disabilities. Contact Rachael Hudson at 702-474-0690 ext. 205 for details.

CHADD -
Support Group for families that have children with ADD/ADHD to offer education and encouragement. Please call 702-558-7020 or e-mail at clark_county@chadd.net for more information.

The Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMSHA), Center for Mental Health Services has a strong focus on our American heroes, our men and women who have been deployed to serve in support of overseas contingency operations, including Operation Enduring Freedom (OEF) and Operation Iraqi Freedom (OIF). Individuals returning from Iraq and Afghanistan are at increased risk for suffering post-traumatic stress and other related disorders. Many of our returning veterans will need mental health and/or substance abuse treatment and related services. In addition, the family members of returning veterans have an increased need for related support services. Nevada PEP has recently joined the Exceptional Family Member Program (EFMP) committee at Nellis AFB. The EFMP committee is currently working on an informational brochure and a quarterly newsletter to better assist military families about services available in the community. Nevada PEP continues to work closely with military installations throughout the state to address the unique needs of returning veterans and their families who have children with a serious emotional disturbance. We are proud to join SAMSHA in supporting their focus on our veterans; we realize the sacrifice and dedication that our veterans have made for our freedom and salute our heroes.
Clark County Children’s Mental Health Consortium

By Cynthia Escamilla

Clark County Children’s Mental Health Consortium members celebrated the completion of their 10-year strategic plan at their most recent meeting on January 22, 2010. The completion of the plan represents endless hours of hard and much appreciated work by consortium members, families and other local stakeholders interested in improving children’s mental health service delivery. The plan’s goals were developed through the collaboration of many dedicated family members and service providers who served on a workgroup over the last six months. The workgroup reviewed the findings of many local studies, spoke to countless agency representatives, and surveyed service providers and families to ensure the quality and effectiveness of the plan in educating our community and legislators. As required by Nevada Revised Statute 433B, the plan was submitted to the Nevada Commission on Mental Health and Developmental Services and to Mike Willden, Director of the Nevada Department of Health and Human Services.

The 10-year plan provides information and data on gaps, barriers, supports and successes in the current delivery of children’s mental health services in Clark County. The plan’s “Vision of Success” describes what the “System of Care” should look like in order to meet the needs of Clark County’s children. The plan is based on a public health approach to children’s mental health, where all families are supported in promoting the positive social and emotional development of their children through prevention programs. The plan also recommends specific strategies for helping families access services if their child does experience any mental health difficulties. For families who have children with serious emotional disturbance, the plan includes objectives and strategies that will support those families in helping their children thrive within the community.

In the plan, families play a key role in the successful delivery of services. The plan describes how families are actively involved in every aspect of the system. The plan also emphasizes the importance of evidence based practices and much needed partnerships in achieving positive outcomes for children in Clark County.

Congratulations to a valuable team that has the “Vision of Success” and hears the voices of our children and their families. The plan is available on the following link: http://nvpep.org/CCCMHC10YearPlan.pdf

By Retta Dermody

Mental Health Planning Advisory Council

The Mental Health Planning Advisory Council held its quarterly meeting on November 6, 2009. Several topics which addressed the concerns that families of children with serious emotional disturbance were discussed.

The Rural Monitoring Committee just returned from a visit to the Rural Mental Health Clinic’s in Fallon and Silver Springs. Unfortunately the committee was unable to meet with family members, but they were able to meet with service providers who provided feedback. Service providers have a desire to serve children but have not been trained on the diagnostic application tool. Both clinics have at least one provider who sees children but the caseloads are a factor in determining how many children are served. The Rural Monitoring committee is putting together their report with recommendations for adjustments that would mitigate the concerns of families and service providers.

The Child in Transition Committee identified three primary tasks to support youth who are transitioning into adult services:

1. The revision of the memorandum of understanding (MOU) between Mental Health and Developmental services (MHDS) and the Division of Child and Family Services (DCFS) to assist youth transitioning into the adult services
2. Engagement of the education system
3. To provide a list of resources to the three primary regions: Southern Nevada, Rural Nevada and Northern Nevada

The Council continues to look for family members and consumers interested in becoming members. You can download an application at http://mhds.nv.gov or call 775-684-5943 to have an application sent to you.
For the past six months the members of the Washoe County Children’s Mental Health Consortium have been focusing on the development of the consortium’s ten year plan. This plan is a “Call to Action” requiring State agencies, local government, social services agencies, nonprofit organizations, community supporters, families and youth to work together as partners in a System of Care. The Consortium wants a system that responds to the needs of families of children with mental health and behavioral disorders with policies and services that work and are delivered in the most coordinated, positive manner possible.

The Consortium conducted a survey asking families for their input on the needs, gaps, and barriers they have faced when trying to receive services for their children. Families told the Consortium that:

- Too many youth are placed out of state;
- Services are fragmented and barriers to access are frustrating and unyielding;
- Success in school is the foundation for success in life;
- Youth with mental health needs face an uphill transition from childhood to adulthood.

Consortium members developed these five goals after taking into consideration the concerns of families.

1. Enhance Washoe County’s capacity to provide community-based, wraparound treatment and care to serve youth locally in a manner that supports safety, stability, and permanency.

2. The Consortium will promote the coordination of formal and informal strategies and resources that support youth and family autonomy in actively managing and finding solutions to fit their needs.

3. The Consortium will promote the coordination of formal and informal strategies and resources that support youth and family autonomy in actively managing and finding solutions to fit their needs.

4. The Consortium will work with community agencies and Washoe County School District to support system wide adoption and implementation of Positive Behavioral Supports so youth can develop pro-social skills while remaining in their homes, schools, and family settings, and the need for more intrusive or aversive interventions will be reduced.

5. Develop, fund and implement system-level policies coupled with successful strategies to help youth with mental health needs transition to postsecondary education, employment, and independent lives.

The Consortium acknowledges that there is a lot of work to be done. With this the goals will be a priority for all members and agencies represented and a commitment to families and children for the next decade. The plan is titled “2020 VISION” A Call to Action.

The Consortium meets the third Thursday of every month from 3:00 – 5:00pm at the Washoe County Complex, Central Conference Room, 9th Street. The Consortium welcomes and encourages family member to join them at their monthly meetings. For more information call Retta Dermody at 775-448-9950.

**Q. My child is in foster care, and we are working on reunification. I still have my parental and educational rights and have been a participating member in my child’s IEP along with the foster parent and my child’s social worker. Can my child’s social worker make special education decisions?**

**A.** According to Individual Disability Education Act of 2004, if a parent is located and able, the parent has the right to make educational decisions and sign the IEP. A Social Worker may attend and participate in the IEP process; however, he or she shall not be deemed “acting as parent” or sign any document that gives permission for any type of educational services. (IDEA 300.30, 300.45, NAC 388.071, Interpretation and Technical Assistance Document, NDOE)
Since the summit in June, the Rural Children’s Mental Health Consortium has been actively working on their ten-year strategic plan. The RCMHC’s ten-year plan is a proposed roadmap to build on the technical assistance and funding that help rural communities problem solve. System of Care values and principles will be utilized while working with children with mental health and behavioral problems. The RCMHC is planning to have their ten year plan completed and submitted by the end of January. The plan includes six goals which are:

- Determine and promote awareness of the specific challenges families of children with mental health and behavioral disorders face in Nevada’s Rural Region.

- Promote the mutual sharing of regional resources to improve mental health services for families of children with mental illness and behavioral disorders in Nevada’s Rural Region.

- Promote and support the use of technology to enhance mental health services for families of children with mental health and behavioral disorders in Nevada’s Rural Region.

- Investigate potential delivery of mental health services to families of children ages 0-3 with possible mental health and behavioral disorders in Nevada’s Rural Region.

- Bring mental health services to the families of children and adolescents in Juvenile Justice Detention facilities in Nevada’s Rural Region.

- Explore the potential for mental health service provisions in public schools in Nevada’s Rural Region.

The Rural Children’s Mental Health Consortium mission is to advocate for the continuum of accessible community-based mental health services for families, children, and adolescents in Nevada’s Rural Region.

The consortium is made of families, educators, and services providers who are dedicated to this mission to support families with children who have mental health and behavioral disorders.

The Rural Consortium meets every month and welcomes parent and family input. If you would like to attend a meeting and need more information, please contact Retta Dermody or Jennifer Cunningham at 775-448-9950 or toll free at 1-800-216-5188.

THE ABC’S OF EMOTIONAL BEHAVIORAL DISORDER

This video shows the strategies and tools that parents, educators and family members of children diagnosed with Severe Emotional Disturbance (SED) can use to encourage children’s success and independence. Two students share their stories, successes and strategies through the positive approach to learning. They also share ways they have reached their goals.

This video shows different ways to identify and manage emotions and behaviors, create a responsive environment, and provide what is necessary for children to learn and grow. This video also describes some myths, misconceptions, and statistics associated with SED and those who are diagnosed with this disorder.

This video and others like it are available to check-out at Nevada PEP’s free resource library. If you are interested in checking this video out from Nevada PEP’s lending library, please call 775-448-9950 in Reno; 702-388-8899 in Las Vegas; or 1-800-216-5188 statewide.
Annual Membership Information

Annual membership dues are $25.00 per family, organization or professional.

Please provide the following information

NAME

PROFESSIONAL AFFILIATION

ADDRESS

CITY

STATE    ZIP

PHONE    email

CHILD’S NAME

DATE OF BIRTH

☐ I am a parent/caregiver.
☐ I am a professional working with children.
☐ I am a concerned member of the community.

☐ Enclosed is a tax deductible donation in the amount of $________ to help support the efforts of Nevada PEP.

☐ I would like to be a member of Nevada PEP, please waive the annual dues.
☐ I would like to volunteer.
☐ I would like to receive E-POST updates.

Nevada PEP, Inc. is an independent non-profit tax exempt organization. #88-0301113

Please make checks payable to: Nevada PEP

Mission Statement

To increase the opportunities for home, community, and school success for children with disabilities, including those who are at risk or who have serious emotional disturbances, their families and their service providers, through education, encouragement and empowerment activities.

IN THIS Issue

Nevada PEP is a participating agency for:

- United Way of So. Nevada Designated gift # 2192
- United Way of No. Nevada & the Sierra Designated gift # 27052
- MGM Mirage Voice Foundation Designated gift # 120885
- Combined Federal Campaign #29441

Project development under grant from the Center for Mental Health Services. Endorsement is not assumed and does not necessarily reflect the views or policies of the Center of Mental Health Services.

News and Updates

iPhone App for Special Education

IEP Checklist is a new iPhone application (app) that the Parent Educational Advocacy Training Center (PEATC) developed. PEATC is the parent training and information center in the Commonwealth of Virginia that serves families and professionals of children with disabilities.

This free app is a very useful and valuable tool available for parents, professionals, and others who are interested. The IEP checklist shows different categories related to the Individualized Educational Program (IEP), and it provides references to the federal regulations associated with these categories. In addition, this app also gives you the opportunity to write and save notes relevant to the IEP process. These and other apps related to special education are tools that educate, encourage, and empower children and families to become the best advocates. If you would like more information about this app, please visit www.peatc.org or www.apple.com.