

ECS TODAY

With news you can use from Every Child Succeeds!

APRIL 2009

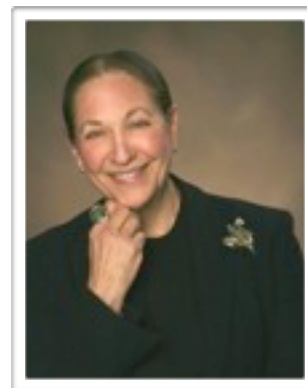
Program Notes

"From Risk to Resilience," our annual training conference, was a resounding success! About 200 people attended, several indicating that this was the best ECS conference to date. Survey results showed that almost all attendees agreed that the conference was well organized and met their expectations. Dr. Maldonado was very well received. Comments suggested that as a result of his presentation, attendees will be more observant, look more deeply into family dynamics and be less quick to judge. Participants were very impressed by the break-out sessions, including those on stress and time management, language development and CARE. Parental mental health and The Battelle also received good feedback.

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Special thanks to Barbara Smith and Ruth Ann Dopp, home visitors from Santa Maria, for presenting excellent workshops at the Learning Through Play Conference on Saturday, March 28. As a promo for the conference, Barbara also did an outstanding job on Channel 19 news demonstrating ECS activities that promote fine motor development. Thanks, too, to ECS staffers Anita Brentley, Ruthanne McKeever (and husband Alan) and Dawn*

A Letter from Judy Van Ginkel, ECS President

Not long ago, a young, pregnant girl came to a local emergency room. She was accompanied by a woman who helped communicate the girl's concerns to medical staff and generally advocated for her. The ER doctor was very impressed by their relationship and by the woman's obvious dedication. You can guess "the rest of the story": that woman was an ECS home visitor, and the girl was an ECS mom. Another example of how ECS staff truly care, and go the extra mile for those they serve. Thank you!



All Together Now . . . Adams/Brown County Economic Opportunities

At Adams/Brown County Economic Opportunities, the glass is half full for ECS Program Manager Vicki Brown. Sure, there's only one full-time ECS home visitor. Sure, ECS clients are spread out over a large rural area. And yes, resources are somewhat scarce. Still, positives abound.

The agency is home to ECS and several Community Action Agency-funded programs, including Help Me Grow, Head Start, WIC and Workforce Connections. "This allows for a lot of interagency exchange of clients and information, as well as much multi-program partnering to meet family needs," Vicki explains. "For instance, if an at-risk mom doesn't qualify for ECS, we can connect her with Help Me Grow the same day, and even hand-pick the service coordinator with whom we feel she would most easily develop rapport. When a mom is transitioning from ECS, we can 'walk her down the hall' to check on the status of her child's Head Start application and make sure the staff understand any parent concerns or barriers that might need to be addressed. With so many services under one roof, caseworkers can work together to understand a client's needs and meet them in a cost-effective way."

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Reynolds for supporting the event.

The names of three ECS social workers were pulled from the hat to receive a free lunch in honor of National Social Work Month. The grand winners are Mary Martin, Family Service; Robin Brock, Services to Area Youth; and Annie King, Brighton Center. Your Panera gift certificates are in the mail!

Per the March 11 letter from Donna Bell, many of you will be hearing from Christopher Caldemeyer to schedule a time to conduct a language assessment with identified children. Chris is working with our Bringing Literacy Home program. Please help Chris meet our deadline of early May to complete these assessments. Thank you!

April is National Child Abuse Prevention Month. Did you know that 78% of children who were killed in 2006 were younger than four years of age? Thank you for the work you do every day to strengthen families and prevent abuse of our most vulnerable children.

Correction! New home visitor Jamie Lecian is with Brighton Center, not Beech Acres, as reported in our last issue.

In an emergency, this interagency cooperation is vital, Vicki says. "A family recently called us because a medical consultation at Cincinnati Children's that they had been waiting months for was rescheduled at very short notice. They live 90 minutes from the hospital, have no car, and had exhausted all transportation options. Since it was extremely important that this child receive further diagnosis as soon as possible, the ECS home visitor borrowed a van from another program in our building and transported the family herself."

The ECS home visitor staff includes Kathy Harmon and Harleen Thompson, who also is a home visitor for Help Me Grow. Their service area includes several small towns, with populations ranging from 200 to 4,000.



The Adams/Brown County Economic Opportunities ECS staff includes, from left to right, Kathy Harmon, Vicki Brown and Harlene Thompson

"We serve an Appalachian population for whom family ties and relationships with others are often more important than achieving economic goals," Vicki explains. "It can be a challenge to help clients become self-sufficient through education and career advancement. Also, our clients don't usually worry about finding quality child care, because they either don't work or they depend on relatives for help."

Vicki and her team strive to create a network of support for ECS clients. "A good example of this is our use of playgroups to meet family needs," she says. "Recently, we became very concerned about an ECS mom's social isolation. A Help Me Grow staff member added the mom to the HMG van route to ensure she could attend our joint playgroup. We then identified two HMG moms with compatible personalities and interests, and made sure to plan playgroup activities that would encourage parent interaction. This is one way we can make the most of our county's very limited resources while helping families. It's subtle things like this that make our job fulfilling."

To learn more about the Adams/Brown County Economic Opportunities, please visit www.abceoi.org.

Getting to Know . . . **Bob Ammerman, Ph.D., Scientific Director**



ECS is unusual among home visitation programs for its fully integrated scientific component. Add to that another distinctive: our unusually good scientific director, Bob Ammerman!

What's your main role with ECS?

I oversee ECS's evaluation component, quality improvement program and research projects. Right now we have two funded research studies, one looking at our treatment for postpartum depression, another at retention in home visitation. I also keep up with the home visitation research literature to make sure that as knowledge is generated in the field, we can use it to improve.

What brought you to ECS?

I was hired when the organization began, back in 1999. At the time, I was working at the University of Pittsburg, where I had earned my doctorate in clinical psychology. My work there focused on two areas of NIH-funded research. These included trying to develop interventions for children who had been abused and neglected by their parents, and the other examining the causes of substance abuse and antisocial behavior in children. These led to my interest in prevention, and to my work here.

What do you enjoy most about your job?

Probably analyzing data and finding things I hadn't expected, and applying research findings to improve our program. For example, when we conducted the study looking at infant mortality at ECS, we identified that ECS had a lower infant mortality rate than a matched group of participants who hadn't been in ECS. Much of that decreased mortality had to do with lowered death rates for premature births. This finding led us to bring pregnant women in to the program earlier and to emphasize aspects of the prenatal curriculum to improve outcomes.

Tell us about your family.

My wife, Caroline, and I have two teenage sons, Patrick and Evan. We like to ride bikes, take pictures, garden and play with our two dogs. We also enjoy traveling—last spring, we went to California and, among other things, visited Monterey Bay Aquarium.



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