

crb network news

october 2013

BI-MONTHLY NEWSLETTER OF THE CITIZEN REVIEW BOARD



Photo courtesy of Springfield Public Schools

KITS education intervention program provides help to foster and other children entering kindergarten

The experiences that force some children into the foster care system can mean an uphill battle in life, particularly when it comes to education.

Indeed, studies have shown that youth in foster care are at risk for academic struggles, disruptive behavior and other difficulties in the classroom. According to a 2007 article in *School Psychology International*, they're three times more likely to face disciplinary action in school than their peers.

The demographic is also five times as prone to receive special education services than children not in out-of-home care, the article also said.

Findings and observations like those are what prompted researchers at the Oregon Social Learning Center seven years ago to create a school intervention program aimed at children in foster care – **Kids in Transition to School (KITS)**.

Their effort has served hundreds of youth bound for kindergarten in the mid-Willamette Valley since then -- and it's still going strong.

KITS reached a milestone this year when it was opened to all incoming kindergartners in seven schools in Lane County's Bethel, Springfield and South Lane school districts. School cohorts will "graduate" from the program – complete with a ceremony, caps and gowns – Nov. 2.

"It's been amazing to watch something like this take off," said Katherine Pears, an OSLC research scientist and principal investigator of the early KITS efficacy trials.

"To be able to show that it's made a difference in children's skills and to affect families in positive ways that could have (beneficial) long-term ramifications for them ... it's a special experience to be able to do that," Pears said.

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WELCOME! New volunteer board members!

COOS: Josie Keating

JACKSON: Marion Denard

JOSEPHINE: Cindra Hall,
Denise Maas

LANE: Kathleen Bond, Cynthia Conrad, Ava Elong, Lillian Garcia, Jamie Lent, Elly Muiderman

CRB Network News editor: Craig Coleman
Craig.D.Coleman@ojd.state.or.us

Summing up: An explanation of TITLE IV-E

Title IV-E eligibility is something we often hear in the work we do as members of the Citizen Review Board (CRB). We hear this in terms of whether DHS is in compliance with federal requirements or not and whether a child is eligible for assistance under Title IV-E or not.

But what is Title IV-E exactly?

Let's start with Title IV. Title IV is just one program of the very large U.S. Social Security Act. Title IV provides for federal grants to states for aid and services to needy families with children and for child welfare services. Part E of Title IV is the federal Adoption Assistance and Foster Care Program, which provides federal matching funds to help states provide out-of-home care for children until they can safely return home or another

permanent plan is put in place.

Federal Title IV-E dollars are a major source of Oregon's child welfare fund-

ing. The amount of the match depends, in part, on the number of children eligible for assistance. A child's Title IV-E eligibility is determined by many things and can change from one day to the next, depending on the child's placement and whether federal guidelines are met.

There are several programs available to states under Title IV-E:

- The Foster Care Program and Foster Care Maintenance Payments Programs offer funding to states to help them provide safe and stable out-of-home care for children until the children are safely returned home, placed permanently with adoptive families or placed in other planned arrangements for permanency.
- The Guardianship Assistance Program and Adoption Incentive Payments Programs provide funding to states to facilitate the timely placement of children whose special needs or circumstances would otherwise make it difficult to place them with adoptive families. If a child is Title IV-E eligible, the state would be able to offer a subsidized adoption or guardianship.
- The John H. Chaffee Foster Care Independence



Laurie Judd

CRB Field Manager

Program provides states with flexible funding that allows programs to be developed to assist children who are aging out of the foster care system to make the transition to self-sufficiency. This program also provides funding for services to former foster care children.

In addition to the Title IV-E programs described above, Oregon is one of only a few states to be granted a Title IV-E waiver which allows some flexibility in the use of Title IV-E dollars. The waiver allows Oregon to pioneer innovative services in addition to paying foster care room and board and also to evaluate those services. Title IV-E mandates that all states adopt a case review system which ensures that each child in foster care has a case plan designed to achieve placement in a safe setting that is the least restrictive, most family like, and most appropriate setting available, which is in close proximity to the parents' home and is consistent with the best interest and any special needs of the child.

The status of each child must be reviewed every six months by either a court or by administrative review, which means a review that is open to the participation of the parents of the child, conducted by a panel of appropriate persons, at least one of whom is not responsible for case management or delivery of services to the child or parents. The CRB is Oregon's foster care review board and performs the alternate required six month administrative reviews.

Title IV-E funding is contingent upon each state developing a plan to administer or supervise the administration of its Title IV-E programs. The Administration for Children and Families is the federal agency that adopts regulations and monitors each state's Title IV-E foster care and assistance programs. Oregon's Title IV-E plan can be found under Oregon Administrative Rules (OAR) 413-100-0000 to 413-100-0345, and is administered by the Department of Human Services. The Department must re-determine, for each month a child is in substitute care, whether the child continues to be Title IV-E eligible. A child may lose and regain eligibility and the loss of eligibility in any one month does not permanently end the child's future eligibility. Staying on top of Title IV-E is a full time job for at least one person in every DHS office. In Oregon, DHS utilizes the federally compliant OR-Kids program to generate required Title IV-E eligibility information and reports.

References:

[Compilation of the Social Security Laws — Part E
DHS Child Welfare Manual](#)

INTO THE SUNSET...



DonnaJean Wendle

Story and photograph
by Suzanne Callahan
CRB Field Manager

Volunteer's 3 decades of service with CRB comes to an end

After almost 29 years of service, we bid farewell to Josephine County volunteer DonnaJean Wendle, who officially retired in August. DonnaJean was instrumental in the establishment of the CRB and her contributions to the program have been invaluable.

Prior to the CRB program's statewide creation under the Oregon Judicial Department in 1985, DonnaJean served as a community representative on the Josephine County Children's Services Advisory Council.

DonnaJean was the board chair of Josephine Board 1 and has been known as the educational guru for the CRB. She served as a Chairman of the State Advisory Council (SAC) and on the CRB Advisory Committee, which provides a vital link between CRB administrative staff and local volunteer board members. She has participated in state rallies and used her political alliances to advocate for the CRB program during times of budget crisis and legislative change.

DonnaJean was previously a Grants Pass City Councilor and is currently the President of the Josephine Community Library and a Board Member of Josephine Housing CDC and Public Transportation Advisory Committees.

DonnaJean and her husband, Dean, moved to Oregon from Idaho in 1977 to raise their five children. They are the proud grandparents of seven and consider themselves permanent residents of Grants Pass. She'll leave behind a legacy with the CRB, but will continue to serve as a pillar of her community.

DonnaJean is currently the elected Director for Southern Oregon Education Service District (SOESD) representing Grants Pass and Three Rivers School Districts. She was an elected board member of the Grants Pass School District and continues to serve on its budget committee. She serves on the Board of Directors for Kairos (a local umbrella agency providing therapeutic and residential treatment services) and is a highly active board member of the College Dreams program, making it possible for many at-risk teenagers to become successfully prepared for college. Through these leadership endeavors, DonnaJean remains highly invested in educational outcomes.

In her downtime – which is scarce – DonnaJean enjoys reading, walking, traveling, visiting family and participating in other community activities with PEO, their church and friends.

"It has been a privilege and honor to serve with dedicated volunteers and staff in helping to ensure permanency and safety for the children in out-of-home-placement in the State of Oregon," DonnaJean said of her time on the board and her departure. "I remain dedicated to our unique Citizen Review Board model under the Judicial Branch of Government."

The Chief Justice signed a Blue Ribbon Award honoring DonnaJean for her years of outstanding service. DonnaJean will be recognized by CRB staff and fellow Josephine County CRB board members at a local luncheon in November.

KITS: impact on behavior issues “significant.”

Continued from Page 1:

The KITS program is a short-term scalable preventive intervention focused on school readiness. It's based upon the principle that a child's successful transition to school requires them to possess early literacy and social-emotional skills.

Enrollees participate during the two months prior to the start of kindergarten and the first two months of the school year. Parents and caregivers, meanwhile, take part in group meetings and curriculum.

The program entails a 24-session school readiness group that meets multiple times each week in structured routines. Sessions cover three main skill areas -- early literacy, pro-social and self-regulation -- learned through multiple activities.

Pears and her OSLC and University of Oregon colleagues started work on KITS in 2006 via a federally-funded randomized clinical trial, concentrating specifically on children in substitute care in Lane and Marion counties. The Department of Human Services assisted with the recruitment of 192 families.

Children who have been maltreated and subsequently put into foster care -- and endured multiple placements -- have problems with behavioral self-regulation that may be linked to their histories of early adversity, according to the *Children and Youth Services Review*.

“Self-regulation is important in reading,” Pears said. And in the classroom “you must focus your attention, listen to what people are teaching you and take in that information ... those are big skills in terms of learning.”

Pears said her own professional experience, that of her colleagues, and academic literature show some youth in foster care enter school with less developed skills than their non-foster counterparts. Behavioral problems -- such as overreactions to minor classroom accidents or interactions -- meanwhile, can contribute to higher rates of suspensions or academic failure that lead into long-term consequences in adulthood.

The first KITS intervention, which took place over four

years, yielded favorable results. Participants showed improvement in almost every indicator of literacy skills -- from letter naming to concepts of print -- while boosts in self-regulatory skills were “significant,” according to a July article on the program in *Early Education and Development*.

A subsequent OSLC KITS project in 2010 showed that the percentage of responses categorized as aggressive from participants dropped from 11 percent at the start of the study to 6 percent by the end.

KITS has grown in scope. From 2008 to 2011, OSLC offered it to 209 children with developmental disabilities and behavioral difficulties. Funding from United Way of Lane County in 2010 allowed OSLC to expand the intervention to all incoming kindergartners in two high-risk neighborhoods in Eugene and Springfield; The project received money in 2012 from the U.S. Department of Education to gauge KITS's impact on those children.

“(The program) will run until 2016,” Pears said. “We are expecting to recruit 240 children.”

There will eventually be enough empirical data to see how well KITS children have done in the years after kindergarten, Pears said. If those results are anything like the anecdotal feedback received so far, it will be promising.

“We've had teachers who've told us they don't think kids would have done as well without the KITS program,” Pears said. “And to have parents who were anxious about their children's transition (into school) say, ‘you helped us feel like we can do this’ ... that's a huge positive.”

For more information on Kids in Transition to School, visit the [Oregon Social Learning Center website](#).

Story by Craig Coleman, CRB Network News editor

Sources: *Early Education and Development*, 24 (2013); *Children and Youth Services Review*, 34 (2012).

FOSTER CARE NEWS — IN BRIEF

An international review of past studies of children adopted from orphanages or in foster care showed that the youth have a high rate of fetal alcohol syndrome and other physical, mental and behavioral problems related to alcohol exposure before birth, according to a story published in September by the Reuters news agency.

Researchers found that rates of alcohol-related problems -- which can include deformities, mental retardation and learning disabilities -- among those children were anywhere from nine to 60 times higher than in the general population, the Reuters article said.

The findings are based on a review of 33 studies of children in

the care of child welfare agencies or foster parents, as well as kids before and after their adoption from orphanages. Most of the studies were conducted in Russia or the United States. Six percent of children in those settings had fetal alcohol syndrome and close to 17 percent had a more loosely-defined fetal alcohol spectrum disorder, which covers any physical, mental or behavioral issues caused by prenatal alcohol exposure.

To read the Reuters article, click [here](#). If you're interested in the full study review, see the [Sept. 9 issue of Pediatrics, the Official Journal of the American Academy of Pediatrics](#).

CRB BULLETIN BOARD

The CRB Advisory Committee provides state-wide counsel to the leadership of the CRB. The membership of the advisory committee is diverse with a variety of perspectives. The CRB Advisory Committee meets quarterly via teleconference in January, July, and October. There will be one in-person meeting each year in April or May at the annual training conference. If you are interested in joining the CRB Advisory Committee, contact Amy Church and indicate why you are interested. Amy.M.Church@ojd.state.or.us or 503-986-4535

The 15th annual **Shoulder to Shoulder Conference** will take place Nov. 19 at the Portland Red Lion Jantzen Beach Hotel. The event, is a collaborative partnership between various community agencies to provide quality training and networking opportunities to those who work and care for children connected to child welfare.

For more information, visit the [Shoulder to Shoulder website](#) or call 503.542-2301.

Are you interested in helping to shape the content and activities at the annual **Every Day Counts...** conference? Join the CRB Conference Committee! The Conference Committee meets via teleconference approximately six times per year. Please contact David Smith if you are interested in serving on the conference committee. David.B.Smith@ojd.state.or.us or 503-731-4356

SAVE THE DATE!

The CRB ANNUAL CONFERENCE is May 2-3 at the Eugene Hilton!

Thank You!

The following individuals recently ended their service as volunteers for the Citizen Review Board. We thank them for their professionalism, hard work and sincere dedication in making a difference in the lives of children!

BENTON COUNTY

Debra Anderson — Aug. 2012 to Aug. 2013

COOS COUNTY

Bonnie Kareen — July 2006 to Aug. 2013

DOUGLAS COUNTY

Margaret Peterson — June 2011 to Oct. 2013

JACKSON COUNTY

Bunny Owen — Jan. 2012 to Oct. 2013

Bill Richardson — Dec. 1996 to Sept. 2013

JOSEPHINE COUNTY

Wendy Dickerman — Jan. 2000 to Sept. 2013

KLAMATH COUNTY

David Warner — Jan. 2005 to Sept. 2013

LINCOLN COUNTY

Sener Otrugman — Dec. 2011 to Oct. 2013

POLK COUNTY

Judy Jeffreys — Feb. 2009 to Oct. 2013

UMATILLA COUNTY

Mary Bloom — May 2007 to Oct. 2013

WASHINGTON COUNTY

Manola Kerr — Jan. 2013 to Sept. 2013

CITIZEN REVIEW BOARD

1163 STATE STREET

SALEM, OR 97301

503-986-5861

