

Wichita Child Abuse Fatalities Community Response Team Accomplishments To Date: Spring, 2010

Project Overview:

The Wichita Child Abuse Fatalities Community Response Team includes 50 representatives from over 35 agencies. The targeted community for the Wichita Child Abuse Fatalities Community Response Team is Wichita, KS (Sedgwick County). The Response Team was formed in the fall of 2008 in response to 8 child abuse fatalities that occurred in Sedgwick County. The number of children's deaths due to child abuse and neglect were extremely high compared to the number of deaths in the previous 10 years which were 0, 1, or 2. Police Deputy Chief Stolz, Wichita Police Department, noted of the 2008 Child Fatalities:

- 7 child abuse related homicides
- 1 neglect homicide
- The triggering event determined in three of the five fatalities was "child crying"
- All children were birth to 4 years of age
- 6 of 8 of the alleged perpetrators were not biological parents

Community partners:

Bothner and Bradley Consulting, Butler County Smart Start, Catholic Charities Harbor House, Center for Health and Wellness, Child Advocacy Center of Sedgwick County, Child Start, Children's Mercy Family Health Partners, Community Representatives, Connecting Point, DCCCA, Delta Dental of Kansas, Dept. of Social & Rehabilitation Services (SRS), District Attorney's Office, Faith Based Community Representatives, Futures Unlimited, Harvey County Health Dept, .KS Children's Cabinet & Trust Fund, Kansas Children's Service League, KS Coalition for School Readiness, KS Health Foundation, KU Medical School, Male Focus Coalition, McConnell Air Force Base, Parent Leaders, Rainbows United, Regional Prevention Center of Wichita, Sedgwick County, Sedgwick County Health Dept., Healthy Babies, Sedgwick County Permanency Council, Sedgwick County Re-Entry Program, State House of Representatives, United Way of the Plains, USD 259 Parents As Teachers, USD 259 Wichita Public Schools, Via Christi Wichita Health, Wesley Hospital, Wichita Child Guidance Center, Wichita Children's Home, Wichita Community Foundation, Wichita Police Department, WSU CCSR, Wichita State Univ. Social Work Dept., Youth for Christ, Youthville

Roles of the Program Partners:

The Wichita Eagle, the community newspaper, discovered and wrote about a cluster of child abuse fatalities in the fall of 2008. This was important because we knew we were at the beginning of an economic downturn. Wichita calls itself "The Air Capital of the World". Their marketing niche is leisure and corporate small aircraft. Wichita was experiencing mass layoffs and knew they were at least a year behind much of the country in economic recovery. We needed to come together to decide what could be done. The CEO of the Wichita Children's Home called for a Community Summit Meeting to address the issue. The Kansas Children's Service League as the Prevent Child Abuse Kansas chapter, volunteered to become the lead agency and convener of the Coalition. Wichita State University became the evaluator and facilitator. We were unable to get data about the 8 child abuse fatalities from the Child Death Review Board because it takes two years for them to release it. The Wichita Police Department secured data that was a part of the public record so that it would not impede any of the court cases. The Regional Department of Social and Rehabilitation Services agency also secured data and created a

map of substantiated child abuse cases from 2008. The Kansas Children's Cabinet as the lead Community Based Child Abuse Prevention (CBCAP) agency in the state funded the collaborative. Two work groups were formed which meet monthly. The large Community Response Team meets quarterly.

Goal:

First and foremost, our goal is to reduce the number of child abuse and neglect fatalities in future years and lay a foundation for further prevention.

Framework:

To reach this goal, the team chose to use a strengthening families approach and shift the focus of prevention efforts from risks and deficits to strengths and resiliency and increase the protective factors which research shows can impact child abuse which are parental resilience, social connections, knowledge of parenting and child development, concrete support in times of need and nurturing and attachment. To accomplish this, the team developed community strategies through two work groups which included:

Parent Support Work Group Strategies:

- Improve access to prenatal education
- Improve referrals to services for families in hospitals pre and post delivery
- Improve service follow up after families leave the hospital

Community Awareness Work Group Strategies:

- Reach potential parents and young parents through school based programming
- Reach parents and caregivers through hospital-based education
- Reach parents and caregivers through healthcare outlets
- Reach adults who are around children through neighborhood-based outreach
- Reach out to early childhood professionals
- Use traditional and social media to communicate the message of preventing child abuse
- Reach social service system professionals with child abuse prevention materials and information

Achievements:

Achievements of the Parent Support Work Group:

- Creation of a Strengthening Families Resource Map with information about Wichita area Home Visitation Programs, Parent Education Programs, Quality Child Care Referral Line, Mental Health Services, Respite Care, Medicaid/SCHIP Information Lines and Parent Support Groups for distribution to pre-natal service providers, health care providers, hospitals, case managers and others.
- Networking amongst service providers to improve service delivery system and remove barriers to services in Wichita area, pre and post hospital.
- Funding has been received for a hospital to home position at the hospitals through Child Start's Early Head Start Program (with ARRA funds) to improve identification of at risk families, their referrals into programs and services, and follow-up.
- A Home Visitation group has been re-established with representatives from community home visitation programs; home visitation is the "gold standard" for child abuse prevention work.

- The Kansas Children’s Service League (KCSL) received funding from SRS and the Casey Family Foundation through SRS and from the Early Childhood Block Grant through the Kansas Children’s Cabinet and Trust Fund to re-establish the Healthy Families Program in Sedgwick County.

Achievements of the Community Awareness Work Group:

- Research of evidence based shaken baby syndrome prevention models and selection of The Period of PURPLE Crying, a program of the National Center for Shaken Baby Syndrome Prevention. KCSL received funding to implement this program in Wichita and statewide from the Kansas Children’s Cabinet and Trust Fund, Kansas Department of Social and Rehabilitation Services, Kansas Health Foundation, Junior League of Wichita, Topeka Community Foundation, Early Head Start ARRA funds, and numerous hospital foundations.
- Implementation of Dose One of The Period Of PURPLE Crying in area hospitals with funding from SRS, the Kansas Children’s Cabinet and Trust Fund and Kansas Health Foundation, delivering a 10 minute DVD and 11 page brochure, available in 10 languages and a 3 minute script at exit to caregivers of the 10,000 live births a year through trained nurses at Via Christi Health Systems and Wesley Medical Center.
- Implementation of Dose Two of the Period Of PURPLE Crying which consists of supporting materials through community based agencies. The Kansas Children’s Cabinet and Trust Fund funded early childhood partners. 20 members of The Junior League of Wichita were trained and delivered materials to 330 pediatrician, ob/gyn, and family physician offices with funding from the Junior League. School Resource Officers have been trained and are delivering information to every high school senior through English and Government classes. Wichita Public Schools Family and Consumer Science teachers have been trained and are delivering information through their classes. Home visitors and child care providers were trained and have materials with funding from the Early Childhood Block Grant. Child welfare agency and Dept. of Corrections staff members are in the process of being trained and receiving materials.
- Implementation of Dose Three of the Period Of PURPLE Crying which consists of radio public service announcements and print ads in publications with funding from the Kansas Children’s Cabinet and Trust Fund. Two radio stations in the Wichita market, Power 93.9 and 105.3 The Buzz, have begun running 30 second spots in February and March. The spots have also been accepted on the Wichita Eagle website and the websites of five major television stations in the Wichita area – KSN, KAKE, KWCH, Fox Kansas and the Kansas CW. A newspaper article announcing the Period of PURPLE Crying appeared in the Wichita Eagle and all major news stations aired stories following the press conference.
- KCSL has received funding from the Lattner Family Foundation to fund two new parent tip cards that address the two child development milestones that were triggers in the 2008 child abuse fatalities: “Soothing a Crying Infant” and “Surviving Toilet Training”.
- Community leaders and legislators have been updated as to the progress of the Community Response Team. A legislative open house was held in December. That led to an invitation to brief the entire South Central Legislation Delegation and other community leaders at a meeting in January before the session began.
- The general public has been updated as to the progress of the Community Response Team through media which have been contacted through Twitter, press releases, and a press conference. The latter resulted in an article which the Associated Press picked up.

- Wichita State University's undergraduate social work program has infused the Period of PURPLE Crying and information about the protective factors into their children and family coursework and curriculum.
- In addition, the Period Of PURPLE Crying is being implemented statewide now in all three doses and changes the way people view infant crying. 91% of all 42,000 Kansas live births are funded.

Impact:

- In 2008 there were 8 child abuse homicides in Wichita, KS according to Wichita Police Dept.
- In 2009 there were 2 child abuse homicides in Wichita, KS according to Wichita Police Dept.