

# **Hmong Children's Program**

*Evaluation report*

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*2000-01 & 2001-02 evaluation report*

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# Hmong Children's Program

The Hmong Children's Program provides counseling to boys and girls ages 4 to 12 who have witnessed or experienced violence or abuse. The goal of the Hmong Children's program is to stop the intergenerational cycle of abuse through a culturally sensitive approach. It provides children with 12 weeks of group counseling and prevention education. The groups meet once a week for an hour and a half. Children learn problem-solving skills, practice non-violent alternatives to resolving conflict, and begin working to improve family and other social relationships. While children are participating in the program, their mothers also receive counseling and support in separate groups. Hmong counselors lead both the children's and the mothers' groups.

For several months, CAP partnered with the Ramsey County Family Support Project to provide services to clients.<sup>1</sup> The Family Support Project (FSP) provides various services, including case management and financial services, to women who are in danger of having child protection involvement. New FSP clients are often placed on a waiting list before receiving services. In order to provide more comprehensive and targeted services to their clients, FSP referred clients who disclosed domestic violence occurrence to CAP. At CAP, they received counseling at a quicker pace than they would have on a waiting list. Due to this prior collaboration between CAP and FSP, some of the satisfaction ratings on CAP services should be interpreted with caution as they might be more reflective of the FSP program – including arranging the first meeting, time between meetings, funding, convenience of the program, and cultural sensitivity.

## *Research methods*

The Hmong Children Program's effectiveness is assessed through an ongoing evaluation conducted by the Wilder Research Center. The evaluation includes satisfaction data collected from parents using the Program Evaluation Questionnaire. Parents are eligible for the evaluation if they completed the Hmong parenting and women's group and their children completed the children's group. Wilder research staff administer the survey over the telephone (in Hmong) five months after parents attend the program. The instrument contains 18 items encompassing parents' satisfaction with various program services. The parents respond to the questions using a four-point rating scale: Very dissatisfied=1, Dissatisfied=2, Satisfied=3, and Very satisfied=4. In addition, parents respond to some open-ended questions regarding their satisfaction with and suggestions for improving the Hmong Children's Program.

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<sup>1</sup> The collaboration between CAP and FSP is no longer occurring.

This report also contains information on the children and their families' contextual barriers, measured by the Wilder Client Characteristics Checklist. The child's primary worker completes the checklist at discharge. Behaviors or characteristics are considered "observed" if the primary worker has documented information as occurring either before or during treatment. The 60-item checklist encompasses children's and parental figures' experiences with violence, behavioral problems, mental health difficulties, poverty, isolation, chemical dependency, and involvement with the law.

## ***Research results***

In 2000-01 and 2001-02, 93 percent ( $\underline{n} = 25$ ) of the eligible parents responded to the satisfaction surveys pertaining to the Hmong Children's Program in the two fiscal years. Fourteen parents responded in 2000-01 and 11 parents responded in 2001-02. Another group ended in May 2002. Those data will be included in the next report.

Overall, parents of children who attended the groups from October 2000 to December 2001 were satisfied to very satisfied with the services. They were particularly satisfied with the staff's friendliness, caring, and ability to communicate with them; the program's reputation for providing services to the parents' cultural group; and the way the parents were able to use their strengths in addressing their problems (see Figure 1). When asked what they liked best about the Hmong Children's program, one common response was the parents' appreciation for the availability of such a program. Parents also mentioned that the parenting advice and recommendations were very useful, particularly in relation to disciplining and communicating with their children. In addition, a number of the parents mentioned that the financial help was another benefit of the program.

Through the satisfaction and open-ended responses, parents also raised a few concerns. The lowest rated items were the ease of arranging the first meeting, the average length of time between meetings, and the staff's sensitivity to cultural issues. These ratings may have been impacted by FSP clients' ratings of the FSP program, rather than CAP. FSP clients could have been on a waiting list [for services] for an entire year before being referred to CAP. In addition, FSP does not provide Hmong-based services, which might explain their low ratings of the Hmong Children Program's cultural sensitivity.

The Hmong Children's Program staff completed the characteristics checklist for 27 children<sup>2</sup> in 2000-01 and 44 children in 2001-02 (see Figure 2). Because there were multiple children for each family, some of the family characteristics may be skewed. Clients in 2000-01 had an average number of 11 observed characteristics, while the average in 2001-02 was 8 characteristics.

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<sup>2</sup> Checklists were not completed for the first group in 2000-01.

According to the primary worker's observations, the biggest challenge facing the Hmong children's families was economic distress. In 2001-02, 100 percent of the children (representing 27 families) came from families struggling with economic distress. Additional barriers that a majority of the children were dealing with included witnessing violence between parental figures (89% in the first year) and their parents' probable or adjudicated criminal activity (64% in the second year).

The characteristics with the greatest level of change between 2000-01 and 2001-02 included decreased frequency of changes in residence; increased relationships with an unrelated adult and extended family members; decreased assaultive behaviors; and decreased out-of-home placements. Finally, in both years, no children were observed to have experienced 17 of the 60 characteristics, including adjudicated delinquency, dropping out or not going to school, and smoking cigarettes.

### ***Brief summary and recommendations***

The most frequent barrier facing the Hmong Children's families was their economic situation, which all families in one year (2001-02) were observed to be struggling with. It makes sense then, that for some families, one of the benefits of the program was its financial help (that some of them were receiving through FSP). Another high proportion of the parents were dealing with domestic violence issues. Hopefully the parents' reported usefulness of the parenting skills, particularly in relation to communicating with their children, will extend to their own relationships with their spouses. Program staff are encouraged to further discuss with the parents the utility of the communication skills on their own adult relationships.

In addition to the financial assistance and parenting communication skills, parents were also very satisfied with the program's cultural appropriateness, reflected by its reputation for providing services to their cultural group. It is therefore difficult to interpret some of the parents' concern regarding the staff's cultural sensitivity. Program staff are encouraged to discuss this and other concerns with caution, due to some clients' participation in the FSP program.

# Parent satisfaction

## 1. Combined (2000-01 & 2001-02) parent satisfaction ratings

	N	Very dissatisfied = 1	Dissatisfied = 2	Satisfied = 3	Very satisfied = 4	MEAN
How satisfied are you with the friendliness and hospitality of the office staff?	25	0%	0%	56%	44%	3.44
How satisfied are you with the staff's ability to communicate with you?	25	0%	0%	60%	40%	3.40
How satisfied are you with the warmth and caring of the staff?	25	0%	0%	64%	36%	3.36
How satisfied are you with the program's reputation for providing services to people from your cultural group?	24	0%	0%	67%	33%	3.33
How satisfied are you with the ways in which you used these strengths to address your problems?	25	0%	0%	68%	32%	3.32
How satisfied are you with the comfort of the waiting room?	25	0%	0%	72%	28%	3.28
How satisfied are you with your progress toward your goals?	24	0%	0%	71%	29%	3.29
How satisfied are you with the knowledge and skills of the staff?	25	0%	0%	72%	28%	3.28
How satisfied are you with the staff's ability to help you identify your strengths, such as coping skills, family support or community resources?	24	0%	0%	75%	25%	3.25

**1. Combined (2000-01 & 2001-02) parent satisfaction ratings (continued)**

	N	Very dissatisfied = 1	Dissatisfied = 2	Satisfied = 3	Very satisfied = 4	MEAN
How satisfied are you with the results of the services you have received?	25	0%	0%	80%	20%	3.20
How satisfied are you with the ability to cope with your problems now?	25	0%	0%	80%	20%	3.20
How satisfied are you with the location of the program?	25	0%	4%	72%	24%	3.20
How satisfied are you with the usefulness of the staff's suggestions and recommendations?	25	0%	0%	84%	16%	3.16
How satisfied are you with the staff's sensitivity to cultural issues?	24	0%	0%	83%	17%	3.17
How satisfied are you with the staff's ability to listen and understand problems?	25	0%	0%	84%	16%	3.16
How satisfied are you with the staff's respect for you?	25	0%	4%	76%	20%	3.16
How satisfied are you with the ease of arranging your first meeting?	25	0%	8%	76%	16%	3.08
How satisfied are you with the average length of time between meetings?	25	0%	12%	80%	8%	2.96

**Note.** 1 = very dissatisfied; 2 = dissatisfied; 3 = satisfied; 4 = very satisfied

Please see the Appendix for parents' satisfaction data broken down by year: 2000-01 and 2001-02.

# Client characteristics checklist

## 2. Parent, child, and family characteristics – percent of children and families who have experienced each item as observed by the therapist

Parent, child, and family characteristics	2000-01 (N=27)	2001-02 (N=44)
Chronic economic distress	74%	100%***
Chronic, unresolved conflict between parental figures	82%	82%
Parental figure has less than high school education	78%	77%
Child has witnessed violence between parental figures	89%	73%
Probable or adjudicated criminal activity of one or more parental figures	48%	64%
Probable or documented physical abuse	37%	52%
Parents exhibit poor or inconsistent monitoring of child's behavior	41%	44%
Parental figures involved with social service agencies for two years or more	41%	39%
Parental divorce or separation	41%	34%
Single-parent family	37%	30%
Frequent, unresolved conflicts between parental figure(s) and child	26%	27%
Parental figure or sibling has serious chronic physical illness or handicap	7%	27%
Probable neglect by current or previous caregivers	11%	25%
Mental illness outpatient treatment of one or more parental figures	15%	23%
Serial changes of parental figure(s)	33%	23%
Mother under 18 when child was born	26%	18%
Child does not participate in organized social activities	30%	11%
Parental figure or sibling of child has died	15%	11%
Child does not have strong positive relationships with any unrelated adults	37%**	9%
Child exhibits poor or insecure attachment to parents	15%	9%
Current or history of chemical abuse by one or more parental figures	0%	9%
Child does not have strong connections to extended family	26%*	7%
History of isolative or withdrawn behavior	11%	7%

**2. Parent, child, and family characteristics – percent of children and families who have experienced each item as observed by the therapist (continued)**

<b>Parent, child, and family characteristics</b>	<b>2000-01 (N=27)</b>	<b>2001-02 (N=44)</b>
Child exhibits sedentary lifestyle or does not exercise regularly	30%*	7%
Child does not participate in organized religious activities	30%**	5%
Child exhibits separation anxiety	15%	5%
Child exhibits unhealthy eating habits	0%	5%
Frequent changes in residence (3 or more times in previous 5 years)	37%***	2%
Child is assaultive or physically attacks others	19%*	2%
Child threatens or intimidates others	11%	2%
One or more previous out-of-home placements for child	15%*	0%
Child's natural or adoptive parents terminated parental rights regarding the child	7%	2%
Multiple episodes of truancy	0%	2%
Child is easily distractible or has attention deficits	19%**	0%
Child is often hyperactive	15%*	0%
Pattern of impulsivity	11%*	0%
Recipient of special education services	7%	0%
One or more previous outpatient intervention efforts for child	7%	0%
Child is often irritable	7%	0%
Child has a history of temper tantrums	7%	0%
Probable or documented sexual abuse	7%	0%
Child has a history of low academic performance	7%	0%
History of self-injurious behavior (e.g. scratching, biting, hair-pulling, suicide gestures)	4%	0%
Multiple suspensions and/or at least one expulsion-administrative transfer from school	0%	0%
Adjudicated delinquent	0%	0%
Probable chemical abuse or diagnosed chemical dependency	0%	0%
Multiple episodes of running away	0%	0%
Child smokes cigarettes	0%	0%

**2. Parent, child, and family characteristics – percent of children and families who have experienced each item as observed by the therapist (continued)**

<b>Parent, child, and family characteristics</b>	<b>2000-01 (N=27)</b>	<b>2001-02 (N=44)</b>
Child has dropped out or stopped attending school	0%	0%
Prenatal exposure to drugs or alcohol	0%	0%
Child has chronic illness or health problems	0%	0%
Multiple episodes of vandalism	0%	0%
Child's behavior endangers self or others	0%	0%
Child has had at least one pregnancy or has fathered a child	0%	0%
Child has made previous suicide attempt	0%	0%
Child was born prematurely	0%	0%
Child has a history of feeding and/or sleeping problems	0%	0%
Physical cruelty to animals	0%	0%
Child is preoccupied with or inappropriately plays with fire	0%	0%
Family history of suicide (not client)	0%	0%

**Note.** Program staff collect this data using the Wilder Foundation's Client Characteristics Checklist.

**Note.** \*p<.05, \*\*p<.01, \*\*\*p<.001

# Open-ended responses<sup>3</sup>

## 2000-01 open-ended responses

### What do you like best about the Hmong Children's Program?

I am happy that they helped us out financially.

I know how to control myself. I know my responsibilities as a parent.

I like the advice and recommendations. The program also helped my children to better communicate with me.

I know how to help my family and myself. I know better how to control myself and think before I take action.

I like that there is a program like this for my family.

I like that they communicate well with me and that this service is available to my family.

The money was very helpful.

I know how to discipline my children better than before; I also know the law better.

How to protect our children. How to discipline children. I have more experience than before.

Family development and I know how to discipline my children.

I know how to discipline my children more than before, by law or family policy.

I learned how to discipline my kids and how to protect my family and to be safe.

I know how to discipline my children better than before. I know how to protect my family better than before.

Family discipline. Protection of the family or children.

### What do you want the Hmong Children's Program to change<sup>4</sup>?

I am not satisfied that they take \$750 away. They didn't give us the checks after we completed the program. It took too long for the checks. I want them to be quicker about giving us the checks. My family depends on those checks. I want them to not require us to provide a receipt to get the money we were promised.

I want the location to be closer, and I want the program to always be available when I need their services.

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<sup>3</sup> These parents' open-ended responses have been translated from Hmong to English.

<sup>4</sup> Some clients received money from the FSP program, not CAP.

My concern is the money they give to us. They make it too difficult and long to get the money and I depend on this money.

I want them to allow my older children, like 14 to 16 year olds, to participate in the program.

Don't know.

None

The money we received did not buy the things my family needed like furniture and book bags for my kids.

I don't know, I think it is good to me.

This program is good for our parents.

CAP should order for both parents to participate in this program. CAP must hire someone who is middle-aged or knows both cultures to facilitate our parents, because they are too young to facilitate.

CAP should request the younger couple to participate in this program. Because we are the elderly, when we try to teach or explain to them, they think we know nothing.

I would like CAP to work closely with my social worker, because she promised me that after I learn from CAP they will give my children back, but they lied.

I would like CAP and all communities to request the men or our husbands to participate in this program too, because they never know what we learn.

Budget or need more gifts. Need a male facilitator as well.

**Do you feel that your parenting skills have improved? (If yes, how)**

My family and I communicate better and I understand my children better when they don't listen to me.

I learned to communicate more effectively with my children.

My children learned how to better communicate with me and vice versa.

My children learned to better communicate with me.

My children are more respectful towards me.

Before I did not have any idea how to best discipline and communicate with my children. I thought that my children should obey me because I am their mom. After I participated in the program I have more respect for my children. I also understand about their needs and feelings.

I know how to discipline more than before and I know how to reduce my anger.

I know how to discipline my children better than before. I am more patient than before. I think before I say or do something.

I know a lot about how to discipline my children because I have more patience and know more about the law and how to control my children.

I have a lot of experience on how to control my children and know how to change my self-discipline.

Yes, I have learned a lot about discipline. I know how to protect my children more than before.

Yes, I have learned a lot of things from CAP. I know how to discipline my children.

I know a lot about life in the USA and know that when I have problems I know how to get help. I changed my attitude too.

## **2001-02 open-ended responses**

### **What do you like best about the Hmong Children's Program?**

I'm happy that there is a program that is around to help families in my situation. We need programs like CAP.

They (CAP) take the time to explain the rules and regulations on parenting in the U.S. CAP was there to listen and help out with my problems.

I like them giving me suggestions and telling me what I should do for my children so it would be best for my children.

I like the financial help from the program and after the program my children listened to me more.

They helped me to realize that I am not the only one who has family problems. They gave me ideas to solve my family issues and problems.

I like the ideas and suggestions. The ideas helped me to communicate better with my kids.

I like their suggestions.

I like their suggestions. Their suggestions and ideas were helpful and practical to my family issues.

They helped me with my family problems and gave me suggestions to solve and work with my family issues.

I like them helping me with the money and the ideas and suggestions so that I know how to deal with my problems and issues.

I like the suggestions and ideas they gave to my child. They helped her to communicate better with me.

**What do you want the Hmong Children's Program to change?**

In the future I'd like them to help us more and understand that all Hmong are not like in my situation. Also they need to work with both parents so that there is good communication between the two.

I like the program to give me the stipend to help me buy chairs and furniture for my family. My husband doesn't work and the stipend would help a lot.

The stipend took a little long. It was about one month before we received the stipends. I'd like them to mail us the stipends sooner.

None (4)

I like them to help us with all the expenses when it comes time to purchase items for my family. They seem to only help pay for half of the cost and we have to pay for the other half. But paying for our half of the cost puts a strain and hardship on our financial income.

I like them to keep on working with my children to help them communicate with us [parents]. I also want CAP to explain to my children their responsibilities as young adults and help with house chores.

# **Appendix**

*Parent satisfaction: 2000-01*

*Parent satisfaction: 2001-02*

## 2000-01 parent satisfaction ratings<sup>5</sup>

	<b>N</b>	<b>Very dissatisfied = 1</b>	<b>Dissatisfied = 2</b>	<b>Satisfied= 3</b>	<b>Very satisfied = 4</b>	<b>MEAN</b>
How satisfied are you with the staff's ability to communicate with you?	14	0%	0%	57%	43%	3.43
How satisfied are you with the comfort of the waiting room?	14	0%	0%	79%	21%	3.21
How satisfied are you with your progress toward your goals?	13	0%	0%	62%	39%	3.38
How satisfied are you with the results of the services you have received?	14	0%	0%	71%	29%	3.29
How satisfied are you with the ability to cope with your problems now?	14	0%	0%	71%	29%	3.29
How satisfied are you with the knowledge and skills of the staff?	14	0%	0%	64%	36%	3.07
How satisfied are you with the usefulness of the staff's suggestions and recommendations?	14	0%	0%	86%	14%	3.14
How satisfied are you with the warmth and caring of the staff?	14	0%	0%	64%	36%	3.36
How satisfied are you with the friendliness and hospitality of the office staff?	14	0%	0%	57%	43%	3.43
How satisfied are you with the program's reputation for providing services to people from your cultural group?	13	0%	0%	62%	39%	3.38
How satisfied are you with staff's sensitivity to cultural issues?	13	0%	0%	69%	31%	3.31
How satisfied are you with the staff's ability to help you identify your strengths, such as coping skills, family support or community resources?	13	0%	0%	69%	31%	3.31
How satisfied are you with the staff's ability to listen and understand problems?	14	0%	0%	93%	7%	3.07
How satisfied are you with the staff's respect for you?	14	0%	7%	64%	29%	3.21
How satisfied are you with the location of the program?	14	0%	7%	79%	14%	3.07
How satisfied are you with the ways in which you used these strengths to address your problems?	14	0%	0%	57%	43%	3.43
How satisfied are you with the ease of arranging your first meeting?	14	0%	14%	71%	14%	3.00
How satisfied are you with the average length of time between meetings?	14	0%	14%	71%	14%	3.00

<sup>5</sup> Caution is urged in interpreting these results due to the small sample size.

## 2001-02 parent satisfaction ratings<sup>6</sup>

	N	Very dis- satisfied = 1	Dis- satisfied = 2	Satisfied= 3	Very satisfied = 4	MEAN
How satisfied are you with the staff's ability to communicate with you?	11	0%	0%	64%	36%	3.36
How satisfied are you with the comfort of the waiting room?	11	0%	0%	64%	36%	3.36
How satisfied are you with your progress toward your goals?	11	0%	0%	82%	18%	3.18
How satisfied are you with the results of the services you have received?	11	0%	0%	91%	9%	3.09
How satisfied are you with the ability to cope with your problems now?	11	0%	0%	91%	9%	3.09
How satisfied are you with the knowledge and skills of the staff?	11	0%	0%	82%	18%	3.18
How satisfied are you with the usefulness of the staff's suggestions and recommendations?	11	0%	0%	82%	18%	3.18
How satisfied are you with the warmth and caring of the staff?	11	0%	0%	64%	36%	3.36
How satisfied are you with the friendliness and hospitality of the office staff?	11	0%	0%	55%	46%	3.45
How satisfied are you with the program's reputation for providing services to people from your cultural group?	11	0%	0%	73%	27%	3.27
How satisfied are you with the staff's sensitivity to cultural issues?	11	0%	0%	100%	0%	3.00
How satisfied are you with the staff's ability to help you identify your strengths, such as coping skills, family support or community resources?	11	0%	0%	82%	18%	3.18
How satisfied are you with the staff's ability to listen and understand problems?	11	0%	0%	73%	27%	3.27
How satisfied are you with the staff's respect for you?	11	0%	14%	91%	9%	3.09
How satisfied are you with the location of the program?	11	0%	0%	64%	36%	3.36
How satisfied are you with the ways in which you used these strengths to address your problems?	11	0%	0%	82%	18%	3.18
How satisfied are you with the ease of arranging your first meeting?	11	0%	14%	82%	18%	3.18
How satisfied are you with the average length of time between meetings?	11	0%	9%	91%	0%	2.91

<sup>6</sup> Due to the small sample size, caution is urged in interpreting these results.