



Foundations for Success

*Improving early childhood mental health
to support successful families and communities in Ramsey County*

Training evaluation results April 2007

Foundations for Success is a five-year initiative designed to develop and implement a county-wide system for early childhood mental health services in Ramsey County. Funded by the John S. and James L. Knight Foundation and coordinated by the Community Action Partnership of Ramsey and Washington Counties, the initiative promotes culturally competent and family friendly services. Services are developed and implemented by a collaboration of more than 100 community agencies, representing local foundations, government, parents, school districts, health, mental health, early childhood professionals, and the University of Minnesota.

The initiative is evaluated by Wilder Research. One component of the initiative is an evaluation of training opportunities sponsored by Foundations for Success. At the conclusion of the trainings, participants report their level of satisfaction with the training. This report summarizes the results from two training sessions conducted in June 2006.

The first training addressed Early Childhood Information and Referral (ECIR) Triage and was attended by nine participants. The second training addressed Early Childhood Development and Issues and was attended by 60 participants.

Participants learned about the trainings from a variety of sources, although primarily from a work or agency training (65%). Participants also learned about the trainings from their ECIR Team Leader/staff (11%), the Head Start listserv (7%), or a Supervisor (7%).

Participant demographics

- Most training participants were female (84%).
- Participant age varied considerably from age 20 to over 60; two-thirds were between the ages of 20 and 39 (68%).
- About half of the participants (51%) identified themselves as Caucasian. The remaining participants represented a diverse range of other racial and ethnic groups: African American (24%), Asian (7%), Multiracial (7%), Native American (6%), Hispanic (2%), and Other (4%).
- All participants worked in either Hennepin (83%) or Ramsey County (17%). Most participants also lived in Hennepin (67%) or Ramsey County (20%).
- Participants reported a range of occupations, although most were child care or preschool teachers (63%).

Overview of participant satisfaction

- Most participants (82%) “agreed” or “strongly agreed” that the trainings were of high quality overall.
- Participants were especially satisfied with the presenters.
 - Almost all of the participants (97% to 99%) “agreed” or “strongly agreed” that the presenters had strong knowledge of the material presented and related the information in a clear and understandable manner.
 - Most (94%) also felt that the presenters were well prepared and responded well to questions.

- Overall, fewer participants (70%) “agreed” or “strongly agreed” that the presenters were able to involve the group in the training sessions. Ratings, however, differed across the two sessions, such that fewer participants of the larger training (67%) felt that the presenter involved the group in the session.
- Most participants (93%) indicated that the handouts or written materials contained helpful information, although fewer (84%) reported that the material presented would make them more effective in their work.
- Most participants felt that the trainings were held at a convenient location (97%) and time (88%).
- Eighty-seven percent said they would recommend the training to others with similar needs.
- Various suggestions were offered by a few participants. Among those who attended the ECIR Triage Training, some suggested increasing the number of referral sites and providing ongoing support and feedback for agencies. Some participants of the Early Childhood Development and Issues Training suggested including more information on mental health issues, respecting other languages and cultures, providing information on drug-exposed Fetal Alcohol Syndrome children, and either extending or shortening the length of the training itself.

Open-ended responses

- When asked to describe the most useful part of the trainings, participants reported a variety of aspects. The resource directory was cited by most of the ECIR Triage Training participants as particularly useful. Participants of the Early Childhood Development and Issues Training reported that the information on referrals, available resources and services, and child development were most useful.
- Most participants did not identify a least useful aspect of the trainings, although a few participants of the Early Childhood Development and Issues Training cited the developmental focus of the training and its emphasis on the early childhood period rather than school-age children.
- Several respondents reiterated that each of the trainings overall were useful and expressed appreciation for them.

For more information

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