

## September 2009 State Liaison Officer Update e-Newsletter

Welcome to the September 2009 SLO Update e-Newsletter. In this month's e-Newsletter:

### ➤ *Interim Report to Congress on the Feasibility of a National Child Abuse Registry-*

Included in The Adam Walsh Child Safety and Protection Act of 2006 was legislation that called for the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) to conduct a study to determine the feasibility of establishing a national child abuse and neglect registry. According to the legislation, the purpose of the study was to look at the costs and benefits of a registry and to make recommendations about due process procedures and required data standards. The report entitled, *Interim Report to the Congress on the Feasibility of a National Child Abuse Registry*, authored by Laura Redel, has just been released. According to the report, there is insufficient data to indicate whether child safety would be improved with a national registry. The report also states that changes would need to be made in the current authorizing legislation to allow for collection of sufficient identifying data on perpetrators, to provide sufficient incentive for participation and to address unclear language. Further study into the national registry is continuing and will be included in a final report to the Congress. To view the interim report, go to the HHS Office of the Assistant Secretary for Planning and Evaluation (ASPE) website at: <http://aspe.hhs.gov/hsp/09/ChildAbuseRegistryInterimReport/index.shtml>

### ➤ *Report on Trends in Local Child Protective Services Practices-*

Another report, issued in July, 2009 by the ASPE, provides information on changes in policies and procedures in local child protective services (CPS) agencies between 2002 and 2005-2006. The study looked at changes in administration and staffing, screening and intake procedures, investigation of maltreatment allegations and alternative CPS responses. Despite the short time period between the study periods, the report indicated that there were a significant number of changes in 2005-2006 as compared with 2002 including:

- ✓ Fewer agencies reported conducting alternative CPS responses (39% in 2005-2006 versus 69% in 2002).
- ✓ Fewer agencies expressed concern over excessive investigation workloads (47% versus 64%).
- ✓ More agencies relied on state hotlines to screen CPS referrals during non-business hours.
- ✓ Agencies reported an increased number of activities that are required in every investigation.
- ✓ Agencies more often reported a range of obstacles to the timely completion of investigations.
- ✓ Agencies more frequently offered parenting classes and substance abuse treatment services.
- ✓ Agencies less frequently offered all other types of services including various types of counseling services, homemaker services, and employment services, among others. Substantial declines were reported in the availability of many services.

For a copy of the complete report, go to: <http://aspe.hhs.gov/hsp/09/TrendsInCPS/index.shtml>

### ➤ *Educational Resources for Child Welfare Staff and Tribal Families-*

As part of assessing the continuity of family connections and relationships, the Child and Family Services Review (CFSR) process gathers information on how well the State child welfare agency addressed the needs of children who may be an Indian child subject to the Indian Child Welfare Act (ICWA). The CFSR determines whether the State agency:

- ✓ explored if the child may be an Indian child;
- ✓ made timely notifications to the tribe; and
- ✓ placed the child according to the ICWA placement preferences.

According to information gathered from the CFSRs, lack of knowledge about the Indian Child Welfare Act (ICWA) among child welfare staff and the families of tribal members can be a hindrance to the appropriate application of ICWA requirements. One source of educational resources available for child welfare staff and tribal families comes from the National Indian Child Welfare Association (NICWA). Among the educational resources created by NICWA are brochures explaining ICWA requirements with a glossary of commonly used terms within the ICWA. To access the brochures and other training materials, go to:

[http://www.nicwa.org/Indian\\_Child\\_Welfare\\_Act/ICWAbrochure.pdf](http://www.nicwa.org/Indian_Child_Welfare_Act/ICWAbrochure.pdf)

### ➤ *National Abandoned Infants Assistance Resource Center Focus Group Results-*

During the summer and fall of 2008, the National Abandoned Infants Assistance Resource Center had a series of focus groups with child welfare administrators, pediatricians and obstetricians. Each group was asked a series of questions about their experience in the identification, referral and treatment of pregnant substance users and their newborns. The focus group findings are now available and the final report can be viewed at: [http://aia.berkeley.edu/media/pdf/SENReport\\_Final.pdf](http://aia.berkeley.edu/media/pdf/SENReport_Final.pdf)

### ➤ *September ACTION for Child Protection Safety Article-*

This month's child safety article addresses the process for making decisions about response time to reports of child abuse and neglect. The article provides three examples of reports that may involve present danger and then lets the reader apply criteria to the reported information to determine whether there is present danger and to confirm the priority decision to respond. The article provides a chart so a report information analysis can be completed based on the information in each report. To view the article, go to:

[http://www.actionchildprotection.org/documents/2009/doc/September\\_The\\_Intake\\_Priority\\_Response\\_Decision\\_2\\_\(1\)\\_1.doc](http://www.actionchildprotection.org/documents/2009/doc/September_The_Intake_Priority_Response_Decision_2_(1)_1.doc)

### ➤ *Reminder - Register for the Domestic Violence Webinar on September 23<sup>rd</sup>-*

We hope you can join us for the joint National Resource Center for Child Protective Services and Family Violence Prevention Fund Webinar entitled *Integrating Domestic Violence Best Practices and Policy into CW Program Improvement Plans*. The live Webinar will be held on Wednesday, September 23, 2009, at 1:00 PM EDT. Register for the Webinar at

<https://www2.gotomeeting.com/register/448915355>.