FIELD CENTER TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE: MONTGOMERY COUNTY’S NEW CHILD ADVOCACY CENTER OFFICIALLY OPENS

After several years of planning, Mission Kids, Montgomery County, Pennsylvania’s new Child Advocacy Center, officially opened its doors on October 7, 2009. For the first time in the county, victims of suspected abuse will be interviewed by trained forensic interviewers at a child-friendly, centralized location rather than experience multiple, traumatic interviews by the police, child welfare system, prosecutors, medical personnel, and victim advocates. The Montgomery County District Attorney's Office, Office of Children and Youth, and all fifty police jurisdictions within the county have formed a multidisciplinary team to support a countywide model of child abuse investigations that has the best interest of child victims in the forefront.

The Field Center was instrumental in the design and development of this new initiative, providing technical assistance to the project’s co-founders, Montgomery County District Attorney Risa Vetri Ferman and Director of the Montgomery County Office of Children and Youth Laurie O’Connor.

Said Ferman, “In our effort to open a Child Advocacy Center in Montgomery County, the Field Center has provided extremely important insight and assistance in our development. With its unique expertise and experience, the Center has been able to provide us with invaluable support and guidance about how to best protect and serve abused children in our county. I do not believe we would have accomplished as much as we have without the Field Center’s early and continued involvement in Mission Kids. We are lucky to have such a gem in our local community.”

FIELD CENTER’S THIRD BIENNIAL CONFERENCE APPLAUDED BY ATTENDEES

The Field Center for Children’s Policy, Practice and Research held its third biennial conference, One Child, Many Hands: A Multidisciplinary Conference on Child Welfare, On June 3 – 5, 2009. The conference featured a wealth of workshops and plenary panels as well as keynote addresses by nationally known experts, representing the various disciplines reflected in the child welfare field. Utilizing the facilities of Huntsman Hall at Penn’s Wharton School and the Annenberg Center for the Performing Arts, the Field Center hosted a well-attended conference with participation from across the country.


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Project PENN, the Field Center’s latest initiative, opened its doors at Philadelphia Family Court on October 26, 2009. Thanks to a generous gift from the Glickenhaus Family Foundation, Project PENN will be providing outreach to families awaiting dependency hearings in Philadelphia Family Court.

At the request of the late Judge Myrna Field, former Administrative Judge of Philadelphia Family Court, the Field Center agreed to examine the experiences of families in the court’s dependency waiting room and make recommendations to the court. In 2005, the Field Center completed a comprehensive research study that included interviews with both families and key stakeholders.

During the year prior to the study, there were 4,648 dependency cases before the Philadelphia Family Court. The Field Center’s research, conducted by Drexel MPH graduate student Morgan Model, examined the two main factors that influence the time spent in the waiting room: the social and informational resources available and the environmental and structural design of the building. Among the study’s findings were that 63% of the families surveyed waited at least two hours for their cases to be heard, and 30% experienced a wait in excess of four hours. Families reported a lack of information about both the court process and available services as well.

In response to the study’s findings, the Field Center proffered several recommendations, including the resultant Project PENN. With the encouragement and support of current Administrative Judge Kevin Dougherty, the Field Center sought to capitalize on this opportunity by designing a new program to offer families critical services that could significantly impact their lives.

Project PENN places University of Pennsylvania social work graduate students in Philadelphia Family Court’s dependency waiting room to provide information and referrals for a full range of concrete services that frequently overwhelm and immobilize families involved with the child welfare system. With current information on services such emergency and long-term housing, utility assistance, emergency food, family planning, medical, dental and vision care, Project PENN hopes to make use of the interminable wait time that families experience while reducing the burden on child welfare workers so they are better able to focus on therapeutic intervention and ameliorating risk to children. Initially open one day per week, Project PENN hopes to expand its presence in the future.

Project PENN’s new office, adjacent to the dependency waiting room, provides a private space to meet with families, and is equipped with a phone and internet access so that Project PENN staff can make immediate referrals for families in crisis. Whether helping a parent complete an application for CHIP, Pennsylvania’s child health insurance program, or making a referral for a free cell phone so families can call someone in case of an emergency, Project PENN hopes to make a difference in the lives of child abuse and neglect victims and their families.

The Field Center is grateful to the Honorable Kevin Dougherty for both his donation of office space and equipment and his continued commitment to improve the services of Philadelphia Family Court in meaningful and innovative ways.
Mrs. Schreiber then moved to Philadelphia, where she worked for a child development community mental health clinic in Somerville, focusing on families and autistic children for Christ Child Treatment, and to Boston, working in a child psychiatric unit, to Washington, DC where she worked with patients and their families, and taught medical students hospital-based social work. Her husband’s medical training then took her to Chapel Hill, NC where she worked for Duke Medical Center in their based social work. Her particular areas of interest include adults and children with developmental disabilities, individuals experiencing mental illness, homelessness, and children in the child welfare system.

Formerly the community relations manager for Greater Media Cable, Ms. Powell-Lee retained her title during the merger between Comcast and Greater Media Cable in mid-1999. A graduate of Temple University’s Radio-Television-Film program, Ms. Powell-Lee’s background also includes positions as announcer/producer for various radio stations, editor/reporter for the Philadelphia Sunday Sun and press secretary for the Philadelphia City Commissioner’s office.

As the Director of Government and Community Relations, Ms. Powell-Lee supervises the coordination of the government and community relations activities for the Comcast Cable system in Philadelphia. Recently, she was recognized as a “Woman on the Move” in the 2009 special publication of the Philadelphia Tribune.

Ms. Powell-Lee felt compelled to join after Advisory Board member Sonia Treister shared the important work the Field Center was engaged in advocating for children. Since joining the board, she has learned about the need to better protect children and educate the public-at-large about this important issue.

In addition to her work with the Field Center, Ms. Powell-Lee serves on the board for many organizations throughout the Philadelphia area, including the Point Breeze Performing Arts Center and the Dawn Staley Foundation. The Field Center is grateful to have Sharon Powell-Lee as an active member of its Advisory Board.

The Field Center is pleased to welcome the newest addition to its Advisory Board, Pamela Schreiber, MSW.

Mrs. Schreiber, originally from New York, earned her MSW from Columbia University, focusing in casework. She then worked for the Albert Einstein College and Hospital in the Bronx, where she worked with patients and their families, and taught medical students hospital-based social work. Her husband’s medical training then took her to Chapel Hill, NC where she worked for Duke Medical Center in their child psychiatric unit, to Washington, DC where she worked with autistic children for Christ Child Treatment, and to Boston, working in a community mental health clinic in Somerville, focusing on families and child development.

Mrs. Schreiber then moved to Philadelphia, where she worked for a community mental health center in Mount Airy and for the University of Pennsylvania in their outpatient adult psychiatric clinic. She then entered corporate America, working in investor relations and communications. Her social work training enabled her to bring a well-rounded view of the forces at work in the economy and community, and the new role honed her marketing and public relations skills. She now works with her husband in development of his new asthma medication, which is now in trials, and improving treatment for a condition that negatively impacts the lives of many children.

She was introduced to the Field Center by Joe and Marie Field, who felt that she would be a great fit for the Advisory Board. Since joining the board, Mrs. Schreiber has become an active member of the marketing committee. We look forward to benefiting from her experience and perspective.

SAVE THE DATE!
Field Center Community Symposium
featuring
Congresswoman Allyson Schwartz
on children’s health care reform
Monday January 25, 2010
8:30 – 10:30 am
Pre-registration is required
Registration opens Jan. 1, 2010
fieldctr@sp2.upenn.edu
or
215.573.9779

FIELD CENTER STUDENT PROFILE:
LEAHT FELDMAN

Originally from Wilmette, Illinois, a suburb of Chicago, Leaht Rebecca Traube Feldman joined the Field Center for Children’s Policy, Practice & Research as an intern in July 2009. In May 2008, Leaht received her Bachelor’s Degree in Social Welfare from the University of Kansas in Lawrence, Kansas and had a focus on international studies. Following that, she worked as a substitute teacher for children in the kindergarten to high school range, with an emphasis on children with special needs. In spring 2009, Leaht lived in her mother’s home country of Israel and had an internship for an international social change organization named Brit Olam. She is currently pursuing a Masters Degree in Social Work from the University of Pennsylvania School of Social Policy & Practice, and plans to graduate in May 2010. Her focus is on macro-level change, but she is passionate about working directly with people in oppressed situations. Her particular areas of interest include adults and children with developmental disabilities, individuals experiencing mental illness, homelessness, and children in the child welfare system.
FIELD CENTER’S THIRD BIENNIAL CONFERENCE
APPLAUDED BY ATTENDEES
(continued from page one)

at a conference-wide luncheon during the conference’s second day. Philadelphia Department of Human Services Commissioner Anne Marie Ambrose introduced the conference’s Centennial Speaker, Dr. David Gil, who closed the conference with a keynote address on Child Welfare and the Politics of Human Liberation.

An outside evaluation demonstrated that conference attendees were very satisfied with the conference. The respondents provided high marks for the overall conference, the quality of the keynotes, plenary panels and individual sessions, with 89% providing positive feedback about the conference.

Attendees most often commented about the quality of the presenters and the information learned at the plenary panels and individual sessions. All of these components contributed to a successful professional development opportunity for child welfare professionals. Respondents described the conference as “inspiring,” “informative,” and “engaging,” with over half of the respondents stating they likely will attend the next conference and nearly all reporting that they would recommend the conference to a colleague.

The Field Center will be holding the next One Child, Many Hands: A Multidisciplinary Conference on Child Welfare in 2011.

This year, the conference featured four compelling Plenary Panels:

• Child Welfare in the New Administration
• Risk Assessment in Child Welfare: Making Life and Death Decisions
• Making Your Agency Legally Bulletproof
• The Use of Psychotropic Medications in Foster Care

Each plenary panel boasted excellent attendance and participation, offering panel presentations on some of the more critical issues facing child welfare today. (See accompanying article on critical new research first presented by Dr. David Rubin during the plenary panel presentation on “The Use of Psychotropic Medications in Foster Care.”)

The program featured thirty different breakout sessions offered by presenters from around the country, representing innovative and compelling work by professionals representing a variety of fields and disciplines. Many of the presentations are available on the conference’s website, found online at www.sp2.upenn.edu/onechild.

A guided Mural Arts Tour was offered as an additional activity for conference participants.
THE USE OF PSYCHOTROPIC MEDICATIONS IN FOSTER CARE: CONFERENCE PLENARY ANNOUNCES NEW RESEARCH FINDINGS

Conference attendees were treated to a dynamic Plenary Panel discussion on The Use of Psychotropic Medications in Foster Care during the final day of the conference. Distinguished panelists included David Rubin, MD, MSCE, Co-Director of PolicyLab: Center to Bridge Research, Practice and Policy at the Children’s Hospital of Philadelphia, Kathleen Noonan, JD, Managing Director and Senior Policy Fellow of PolicyLab: Center to Bridge Research, Practice and Policy, Christopher Bellonci, MD, Medical Director of Walker in Needham, MA, and Marilyn Benoit, MD, Past President of the American Academy of Child and Adolescent Psychiatry.

Dr. Rubin presented his compelling research examining the use of psychotropic medications in children in foster care, comparing state by state data. Research found that there was a significantly higher use of psychotropic medications among children in foster care. State Variation in Psychotropic Medication Use by Foster Care Children With Autism Spectrum Disorder can be found in Pediatrics Vol. 124 No. 2 August 2009, pp. e305-e312.

ABSTRACT: STATE VARIATION IN PSYCHOTROPIC MEDICATION USE BY FOSTER CARE CHILDREN WITH AUTISM SPECTRUM DISORDER

David M. Rubin, MD, MSCE, Chris Feudtner, MD, PhD, MPH, Russell Localio, PhD and David S. Mandell, ScD

OBJECTIVE: The objective of this study was to compare on a national cohort of children with autism spectrum disorder (ASD) the concurrent use of ≥3 psychotropic medications between children in foster care and children who have disabilities and receive Supplemental Security Income, and to describe variation among states in the use of these medications by children in foster care.

METHODS: Studied was the concurrent use of ≥3 classes of psychotropic medications, identified from the 2001 Medicaid claims of 43406 children who were aged 3 to 18 years and had ≥1 annual claim for ASD. Medicaid enrollment as a child in foster care versus a child with disabilities was compared. Multilevel logistic regression, clustered at the state level and controlling for demographics and comorbidities, yielded standardized (adjusted) estimates of concurrent use of ≥3 medications and estimated variation in medication use within states that exceeded 1 and 2 SDs from the average across states.

RESULTS: Among children in foster care, 20.8% used ≥3 classes of medication concurrently, compared with 10.1% of children who were classified as having a disability. Differences grew in relationship to overall use of medications within a state; for every 5% increase in concurrent use of ≥3 medication classes by a state’s population with disabilities, such use by children in a state’s foster care population increased by 8.3%. Forty-three percent (22) of states were >1 SD from the adjusted mean for children who were using ≥3 medications concurrently, and 14% (7) of the states exceeded 2 SDs.

CONCLUSIONS: Among children with ASD, children in foster care were more likely to use ≥3 medications concurrently than children with disabilities. State-level differences underscore policy or programmatic differences that might affect the receipt of medications in this population.

FIELD CENTER TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE: MONTGOMERY COUNTY’S NEW CHILD ADVOCACY CENTER OFFICIALLY OPENS  
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With funding from the North Penn Community Health Foundation and the Pottstown Foundation, the Field Center designed and completed an initial needs assessment, instituted a feasibility study among countywide stakeholders, conducted research into national best practice, and crafted a strategic business plan to inform the agency’s development. The Field Center drafted agency policies and procedures, provided consultation on the facility design, and formulated the structure of the organization, including the establishment of Mission Kids’ Management Team, comprised of leadership from child welfare, police, mental health, prosecution, pediatric medicine, and victim advocacy.

Dr. Cindy Christian and DA Risa Vetri Ferman

The Field Center will play an ongoing role with Mission Kids. With the support of a National Children’s Alliance grant, Field Center Faculty Director Dr. Cindy Christian established a new satellite child abuse clinic staffed by her team of child abuse experts in King of Prussia, the first child abuse medical facility located in Montgomery County. Field Center Executive Director Debra Schilling Wolfe has been elected to the Mission Kids Board of Directors.

Mission Kids’ Executive Director, Abbie Newman, praised the work of the Field Center. “In the continuing development of our young Child Advocacy Center, the Field Center has been an invaluable resource, providing a wealth of information on local and national policies, clinical articles, and practical advice on working with abused children from a multidisciplinary perspective. The Field Center is a precious asset to any child advocacy center, and I look forward to a lasting relationship with them as our own Center continues to grow.”
## Children's Saviors ($2,500 and above)
- Borowsky Family Foundation
- Children's Hospital of Philadelphia
- The W. Clement and Jessie V. Stone Foundation
- Joseph and Marie Field Foundation
- Glickenhaus Foundation
- Hite Foundation, in memory of Sybil E. Hite
- Marcus Family Foundation
- Mission Kids Child Advocacy Center
- William Penn Foundation
- Penn Law
- Penn School of Medicine
- Penn School of Social Policy & Practice
- Philadelphia Department of Human Services
- Dr. Erwin A. Carner
- Mr. Robert Field
- Mr. Albert E. Gibbons
- Sonia and Stanton Triester

## Children's Angels ($1,000 - $2,499)
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- Mr. and Mrs. Marvin Alloy
- Mr. and Mrs. Richard J. Fox
- Janis and Stephen Goodman
- Maida and Francis Milone
- Shanin and Tracey Specter
- Joe and Renee Zuritsky

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- Jewish Federation of Greater Philadelphia
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- Rita and Richard Jacoby
- Alan Lerner, Esq.
- Steven Joshua and Anne Marcus Weiss

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- Ms. Juanita Woodland

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**THANK YOU TO OUR DONORS!**

The Field Center would like to thank the following individuals, foundations and corporations for their generous support.

Your tax-deductible donation to the Field Center for Children’s Policy, Practice & Research enables us to continue our critical work. Thanks to a challenge grant from the Joseph and Marie Field Foundation, gifts are matched on a dollar-for-dollar basis.

An envelope is attached for your convenience, or you may give a gift online by visiting www.fieldcenteratpenn.org. For more information, please contact Director of Development Nadina Deigh at (215) 898-5518 or deighn@sp2.upenn.edu or Field Center Executive Director Debra Schilling Wolfe at (215) 573-5442 or dwolfe@sp2.upenn.edu.
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<td>December 4 - 6, 2009</td>
<td>ZERO TO THREE/National Center for Infants, Toddlers and Families</td>
<td>Phone: (202) 638-1144</td>
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<td>Dallas, TX</td>
<td>24th National Training Institute</td>
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<td>December 6 - 9, 2009</td>
<td>American Association of Public Welfare Attorneys</td>
<td>Phone: (202) 682-0100</td>
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<tr>
<td>Portland, OR</td>
<td>42nd Annual National Training and Continuing Education Conference</td>
<td>Email: <a href="mailto:fwiggins@aphsa.org">fwiggins@aphsa.org</a></td>
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<td>January 25, 2009</td>
<td>Field Center Community Symposium</td>
<td>Phone: (215) 573-9779</td>
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<td>Philadelphia, PA</td>
<td>Children’s Health Care Reform with Congresswoman Allyson Schwartz</td>
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<td>Child Welfare League of America (CWLA)</td>
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<td><em>Children 2010: Leading a New Era</em></td>
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<td>The Chadwick Center for Children and Families, Rady Children’s Hospital - San Diego</td>
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<td>San Diego, CA</td>
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<td>Website: <a href="http://www.chadwickcenter.org">www.chadwickcenter.org</a></td>
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<td>March 14 - 17, 2010</td>
<td>National Council of Juvenile and Family Court Judges (NCJFCJ)</td>
<td>Phone: (775) 784-6012</td>
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<td>Las Vegas, NV</td>
<td>National Conference on Juvenile and Family Law</td>
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<td>NICWA’s 28th Annual “Protecting Our Children” National American Indian Conference on Child Abuse and Neglect</td>
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<td>May 17 - 19, 2010</td>
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<td>Jacksonville, FL</td>
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NEWS FROM THE FIELD

Fall 2009

Newsletter Highlights...

- Project PENN Opens Its Doors at Philadelphia Family Court
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- Groundbreaking Research Presented at Field Center's
- Field Center Technical Assistance: Montgomery County’s
- New Child Advocacy Center Officially Opens

THE FIELD CENTER
for Children’s Policy, Practice & Research

University of Pennsylvania
3815 Walnut Street
Philadelphia, PA 19104