



**The State of Parent Education in Dallas County:
*Opportunities for the Future***

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I. Executive Summary

Parent education has benefits that expand beyond the developmental life span of a child. Parents and children benefit through many different avenues including academic success, increased self-esteem and confidence, positive parent-child interaction, and positive parent-child emotional communication. Research has demonstrated that parent education programs reduce the risk that children will experience anxiety, depression, emotional and behavioral problems, substance abuse, and risky sexual behavior and teen parenthood. Although there are many benefits to parent education, only a small percentage of parents are attending classes in Dallas County. CHILDREN AT RISK formed the North Texas Center for Parenting and Family Well-Being (CPFWB) in early 2014 in order to conduct a needs assessment on parent education, foster community partnerships, form the Family Strengthening Coalition, and develop recommendations for the future based on the needs and desires of the North Texas community.

Parent Education in Dallas County

Currently, parent education programs in Dallas County are provided by a range of organizations, including: faith-based organizations, domestic violence shelters, schools, foster agencies, universities, medical professionals, and after school programs. In 2013, there were approximately 654,000 children and 284,000 families residing in Dallas County, Texas. We estimate that 25,000 (9%) families received parent education in 2013, but of these, only 5,000 (2%) families received evidence-based parent education. Despite the limited number of parents currently accessing parent education, there is a clear interest and need in Dallas County to collaboratively develop an infrastructure so that more parents have access to effective parenting programs. In addition, although most parent education classes are currently geared towards high-risk families, limiting the benefits these services could bring to the community and promoting stigma, North Texas organizations recognize the need for a population-based approach to parent education to increase utilization and decrease stigma.

Recommendations

Overall, the Family Strengthening Coalition agreed that there is a need in Dallas County and a desire across the North Texas area for a population-based approach to parent education to reach more parents using evidence-based programming. Based on feedback from 87 multi-sector organizations in the community, the North Texas CPFWB developed recommendations to increase the participation in effective parent education across North Texas using a population-based approach. In order to achieve this goal, the following 6 recommendations were developed and revised by the Family Strengthening Coalition:

1. There is a need to address barriers to participation including, but not limited to, location, class times, language, and cultural sensitivity

2. There is a need to decrease the stigma associated with attending parenting classes in the community
3. There is a need for more professionals to be trained in evidence-based parent education curricula
4. There is a need for more evidence-based parent education to be offered
5. There is need for creation of a database so organizations are aware of parent education classes that are available in the community
6. There is a need for more coordination between organizations that provide parent education and serve families

The North Texas CPFWB is dedicated to using the data from this assessment to create a community infrastructure in which evidence-based parent education is more accessible and less stigmatized to families in North Texas.

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II. Introduction

Parents are the greatest influence on a child's life, and healthy parent-child relationships are fundamental to child health and development. Unfortunately, children do not come with an instruction manual, and all too often, children are victims of maltreatment. In 2013 alone, over 66,000 children were confirmed victims of maltreatment in Texas, and more than 25% of those children were residents of North Texas (Region 3).¹ Currently, the majority of family intervention efforts in Texas are reactionary, targeting families after child abuse has already occurred, rather than preventative.

Parent education programs are designed to prevent child and family problems, improve parenting skills and family communication, and educate parents on child development and positive parenting practices with a goal of developing safe, stable, and nurturing parent-child relationships. Effective parent education programs have been demonstrated to decrease rates of behavioral, developmental, and emotional problems in children, reduce rates of parental stress and depression, reduce rates of child maltreatment, and improve parent-child relationships.^{2,3} Given the benefits of effective, evidenced-based parent education, CHILDREN AT RISK's Center for Parenting and Family Well-Being (CPFWB) is working in the North Texas and Houston communities to conduct local needs assessments of parent education services, develop community partnerships, analyze the potential community impact of evidence-based parent education classes, and develop a comprehensive strategy to scale up evidence-based parent education. The following report outlines the needs assessment of parent education services across Dallas County and the potential benefits of a population-based approach to implementation of evidence-based parent education across the North Texas region.

III. Background

In 2009, a group of 6 leading pediatricians and academics came together to identify strategies and programs to reduce the high rates of child maltreatment in Houston, Texas. After a rigorous review of evidence-based child maltreatment prevention strategies, the coalition identified the implementation of community-wide evidence-based parent education as having the greatest likelihood of reducing rates of child maltreatment. As a result, CHILDREN AT RISK founded the Center for Parenting and Family Well-Being (CPFWB) to conduct a needs assessment of parent education in Houston and develop a plan to address observed gaps and barriers.

1 Texas Department of Family and Protective Services. "2013 Data Book." 2013. Web. Accessed September 22, 2014. http://www.dfps.state.tx.us/documents/about/Data_Books_and_Annual_Reports/2013/DataBook13All.pdf

2 Nowak, C., Heinrichs, N. "A Comprehensive Meta-Analysis of Triple P-Positive Parenting Program Using Hierarchical Linear Modeling: Effectiveness and Moderating Variables." *Clinical Child and Family Psychology Review* 11.3 (2008): 114-44.

3 Prinz, R., Sanders, M., Shapiro, C., Whitaker, D., Lutzker, J. "Population-based prevention of child maltreatment: The U.S. Triple P System Population Trial." *Prevention Science*, 10 (2009): 1 – 12.

The assessment revealed that less than 1% of parents with children under the age of 18 residing in Houston, Texas accessed evidence-based parent education each year, and there was community support to provide population level, evidenced-based parent education services. With generous funding from the Houston Endowment, Community Health Choice, and the Harris County Hospital District Foundation, the CPFWB launched a pilot program using the Positive Parenting Program (Triple P) that utilized a population-based approach to program dissemination. This approach does not solely focus on high-risk families, but instead targets all families by offering different program types and intensities to match the needs and preferences of families. During the first year of the pilot, the CPFWB coordinated the training and implementation of Triple P by 66 providers from 12 organizations and reached over 3,100 parents and 7,700 children from a 14 county region.

Given the success of the parenting efforts in Houston, CHILDREN AT RISK sought to expand its efforts to North Texas. Through the generous support of the Rees Jones Foundation, CHILDREN AT RISK started the North Texas Center for Parenting and Family Well-Being in 2014. Similar to the framework used in Houston, the first goal of the North Texas office was to conduct a community needs assessment on parent education in Dallas County, form a local collaborative, and develop a strategy to support families.

Theoretical Model for Child Maltreatment Prevention: The Social-Ecological Model

The Social-Ecological Model provides a framework for the prevention of child maltreatment that demonstrates how multiple levels of influence impact rates of child maltreatment. Research demonstrates that preventing child maltreatment is not as simple as changing the behaviors of “bad parents,” but requires a comprehensive multi-faceted approach to address individual behaviors, interpersonal relationships, community, and societal factors. Prevention strategies that offer a continuum of services across these levels are more likely to be sustained than interventions that only address a single level.⁴

- *Individual Factors:* The first level of the model addresses individual factors that may increase or decrease an individual’s risk of abusing their child such as attitudes, knowledge of child development, anger management, personal stress, substance use, and history of abuse. Prevention strategies may include education and counseling.
- *Interpersonal Relationships:* The second level of the social-ecological model addresses interpersonal relationships, and how social networks and relationships with family and peers impact the potential of risk for abuse. Prevention strategies may include classes

⁴ Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. “The Social-Ecological Model: A Framework for Prevention.” Sept 9, 2009. Web. Accessed on September, 2012. <http://www.cdc.gov/ViolencePrevention/overview/social-ecologicalmodel.html>.

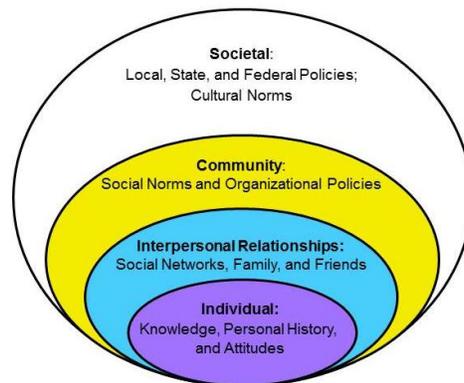
that teach parents to develop safe, stable, and nurturing relationships with their children or classes that promote healthy marriages.

- *Community*: The third level addresses community and how community factors such as unemployment rates and social norms impact rates of abuse. Prevention strategies may target social norms such as a media campaign that normalizes participation in parent education classes.
- *Society*: The final level addresses societal factors, and how local, state, and federal laws and regulations impact rates of child abuse. Prevention strategies may include passing legislation that provides funding for evidence-based parent training and home-visitation programs.

The levels of the socio-ecological model are not mutually exclusive. The promotion of risk reduction on the individual level will benefit interpersonal relationships, the community, and societal factors. In applying this to parent education, as an individual parent benefits from newly acquired parenting skills so too will the family, community, and ultimately society as a whole.

Figure 1. A Social-Ecological Model to Prevent Child Maltreatment

Adopted from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention's Injury Center's Framework for Prevention



Population-Based Approach to Parent Education

Based on the theoretical model of maltreatment, literature on parent education and maltreatment prevention, and experiences in the Houston area, CHILDREN AT RISK supports and promotes a population-based approach to parent education. A population-based approach to parent education focuses on educating all families, no matter their level of risk. This approach provides families and the community access to support services at the level they need and in formats conducive to their life circumstances. Ensuring that all families have access to parent education allows us to promote parent education as a prevention method, dealing with

child maltreatment, child behavior, and parent-child relationship issues before they happen, rather than dealing with these problems after they have happened.

IV. Methodology

A community needs assessment on parent education was conducted from April 2014 through November 2014 to determine the specific parent education needs and barriers to addressing those needs across Dallas County. Although this assessment was focused specifically on Dallas County, the North Texas CPFWB met with partners and collected data from across the North Texas area to provide a comprehensive strategy for the region as a whole.

Data collected for this assessment included information from coalition meetings, interviews with organizations who work with families and children in a variety of settings, a survey of coalition members to better understand their reasons for joining and desired outcomes, and a survey to determine the number of families receiving parent education in 2013.

Family Strengthening Coalition

The CPFWB understands the importance of collaborating with community members across multiple sectors in order to ensure that the needs of the community are understood and addressed. The Family Strengthening Coalition was established to bring the community together to address the gaps and barriers in parent education throughout North Texas. This coalition was open to North Texas organizations and not just those from Dallas County. Organizations were individually contacted and invited to participate in the coalition. Potential coalition members were recruited through current partners of CHILDREN AT RISK and their extensive networks. In order to increase the number of organizations providing input, partners and interviewees were asked who else should be invited to participate in the coalition and contacts were then made with those individuals/organizations (the snowball method).

At the first Family Strengthening Coalition meeting, held in August 2014, a presentation on child abuse was given by a local expert and input from the participants was sought to attain more information on:

- How we can collectively work together to increase the availability, accessibility, and utilization of evidence-based parenting classes; and
- What barriers we need to address in order to increase the successful use of parenting programs.

At the second meeting held in October 2014, the North Texas CPFWB provided preliminary recommendations to the coalition members to gather feedback and discuss the best methods to move forward towards implementation.

Key Stakeholder Interviews

Semi-structured interviews were conducted with 87 organizations representing a variety of sectors including:

- Advocacy organizations
- Afterschool programs
- Child abuse prevention experts
- Child care centers
- Child Protective Services
- Community centers
- Domestic violence organizations
- Faith-based organizations
- Foster organizations
- Health departments
- Hospitals
- Non-profits
- Parent educators
- School districts
- Universities

Interviews were conducted in person and over the phone, asking providers:

- What are the gaps to parent education?
- What are the barriers to providing parent education?
- What does your organization focus on?
- What do you think we can do as a community to impact change?

Assessment of parent education programs in Dallas, County

To assess the current parent education services available and the number of parents receiving these services in Dallas County, the CPFWB collected information from organizations during interviews and conducted a survey of 36 additional organizations in Dallas County providing parent education services. These organizations were identified through key informant interviews as well as recommendations during these meetings. The data collected included: organization name, program/curricula used, type of program (e.g. home visitation), and number of parents served by program.

V. Results

Description of the Need: Child Maltreatment in Dallas County

In 2013, Dallas County Child Protective Services had 22,179 initial intakes alleging child maltreatment. Of the initial intakes, 5,505(25%) were confirmed cases of maltreatment, and 1,135 children were removed from their home. According to the Texas Department of Family and Protective Services, in 2013:⁵

- 8.2/1,000 children in Dallas county is a confirmed victim of child maltreatment;
- 17 child maltreatment related fatalities occurred in Dallas County;
- Parents are the most confirmed perpetrator of abuse at 78.3%;
- Neglectful supervision is the most common confirmed allegation at 66.5%;
- Children aged 1 to 3 years are victimized at the highest rate, 23.2%;
- Medical personnel report 17.6% of cases, followed by schools at 17.5%.

Available Parent Education in Dallas County, Texas

To assess the availability of parent education services in Dallas County, data on the number of parents reached and curricula used were collected during interviews and through surveys from these organizations. The data revealed that together approximately 25,000 Dallas County families received parent education in 2013 (not including nutrition education and post-secondary parent education). Given that Dallas County was home to about 284,000 parents with children under the age of 18 in 2010,³ we estimate that less than 10% of families accessed parent education services in 2013. Agencies that provide parent education in Dallas County are listed in Table 1.

Table 1: Name and Description of Organizations Providing Parent Education Services in Dallas County, Texas

Organization	Description
Alley's House	Alley's House empowers teen mothers and their children to achieve independence through support services, education and mentoring. This is accomplished by providing comprehensive case management services, tutoring and life skill workshops.
AVANCE Parent-Child Education	The Avance curriculum enhances school readiness for children, and prepares parents to advocate for and involve themselves in their child's education. Each

⁵ Texas Department of Family and Protective Services. "2013 Data Book." 2013. Web. Accessed September 22, 2014. http://www.dfps.state.tx.us/documents/about/Data_Books_and_Annual_Reports/2013/DataBook13All.pdf

Program	session includes a parent education component, a toy making component, and a guest speaker.
Catholic Charities of Dallas	Catholic Charities of Dallas offers the Together We Learn curriculum, a dual generation program for children under the age of five and their parent or caregiver. The children participate in high-quality early education while their parents participate in four modules: child development, health and safety, advocacy, and Work Ready! (ESL, GED, job skills training and placement).
Child Care Group	Child Care Group offers Parents as Teachers which is a home visitation program focusing on child development and parenting for families who are expecting and/or raising children under the age of three.
Children's Medical Center (Safe Kids Greater Dallas)	Safe Kids Greater Dallas (SKGD) works hard every day to make life safer for children and the communities where they live, play and grow. The 5 areas of focus for SKGD are: Car Safety, Home Safety, Water Safety, Pedestrian Safety, and Playground & Wheeled Sport Safety. They also offer Know Before You Go (KBYG) which is a drowning prevention and water safety education platform created to address the increasing number of drowning and near-drowning incidents in children living in the Dallas-Fort Worth area. KBYG strives to increase water safety awareness in the community by educating children and adults on the principles of water safety and drowning prevention.
Dallas Association of Parent Education	Dallas Association of Parent Education offers the curriculum Positive Parenting focusing on issue areas including limits, consequences, listening, anger, and challenging behavior.
Dallas ISD	Dallas ISD offers Parents as Teachers which is a home visitation program focusing on child development and parenting for families who are expecting and/or raising children under the age of three.
Family Compass	Family Compass offers four parenting curricula. Parent Aid is a program to reduce the risk of child abuse and neglect by teaching high-risk parents in Dallas County positive parenting skills. Healthy Families Dallas is a program to prevent child abuse and neglect by teaching at –risk pregnant and parenting teens positive parenting techniques, the importance of maintaining well child visits, completing high school and pursuing higher education to obtain employment. Families First is a program that aims to help parents understand the effects of divorce on their children and to promote positive parenting during this critical time. Bringing Families Together seeks to prevent the cycle of abuse for vulnerable families by reducing family and parental isolation, increasing support networks, teaching positive parenting skills, and providing access to community resources.
Family Outreach Dallas	Family Outreach Center Dallas' parenting classes are programs that provide parents with an open learning environment for supporting the development of solid parenting skills. Classroom topics include: the appropriate expectations of child developmental capabilities, the role of a parent, the development of empathic awareness, and interactive skills between parent and child, including the value of playing together. Self-care techniques are also discussed with the intention to increase the health of the entire family.
Genesis Women's Shelter	Genesis Women's Shelter provides parent training which teaches parents how to improve relationships with their children and how to break the cycle of violence with their children.
Grand Prairie ISD	Grand Prairie ISD offers parenting skills classes using the Practical Parenting

	Curriculum, Family Frameworks, and other related material.
Irving ISD HIPPY	Irving ISD offers the Home Instruction for Parents of Preschool Youngsters (HIPPY) which is a free home-based literacy program for children ages 3, 4, and 5. Home Instructors make weekly visits to teach parents how to use the curriculum with their preschoolers. The literacy based curriculum is used to help children master school readiness skills.
Jewish Family Services	Jewish Family Services offers Child Parent Relationship Therapy which is an evidence-based parent-training intervention for treating children experiencing a wide range of social, emotional, and behavioral difficulties. This unique approach involves parents by teaching them how to use play therapeutically so that the communication gap between parent and child can be diminished and their relationship enhanced.
Kids University	Kids-U provides services to the family meeting the individual needs of each family. Our Family Services program extends their educational reach to the adults of these communities providing: ESL & GED classes, Adult Computer Literacy Programs, Financial Literacy Programs and Parenting workshops.
Lumin Education	Lumin Education uses Parents as Teachers in which each family is assigned a parent educator. Parent educators act as guides and a resource for parents while at the same time making sure each child is making progress developmentally. The parent educator helps parents put into action practices for healthy communication, building strong relationships, good nutrition, exercise, discipline, engaging in activities that support brain development, and teaching parents new ways to have fun with their children.
Medical City Dallas	Medical City Dallas offers the program Sweet Beginnings which is a fun class for new moms and their babies in their first year of life together. Parents learn about the latest trends from infant massage, making your own baby food to infant sign, postnatal yoga and much more.
Momentous	Momentous Institute provides parent education classes which focus on strengthening the parent-child relationship and sharing practical, research-based information that helps parents approach their job with more insight and confidence. They offer Parents Empowering Preschoolers, Teen & Young Adult Parenting Class Series, Love & Logic, and Early Childhood Parenting Series.
Mosaic Family Services	Mosaic Family Services offers parenting classes that are 6 weeks long and parents will receive a certificate of completion at the end. The classes focuses on child development, limit setting, communication, self-esteem, challenging behaviors, and discipline. The curriculum is designed towards providing guidance and learning techniques for parents to better educate children.
New Beginning Center	New Beginning Center provides parent education to assist parents in understanding the impact of domestic violence on their children, appropriate discipline techniques, available resources for children, and other forms of assistance as needed.
Nurse Family Partnership	Nurse-Family Partnership provides a maternal health program which introduces vulnerable first-time parents to caring maternal and child health nurses. This program allows nurses to deliver the support first-time moms need to have a healthy pregnancy, become knowledgeable and responsible parents, and provide their babies with the best possible start in life.
Richardson ISD	Richardson ISD provides a program called Positive Parenting which is a hands on

PACE Program	parent education curriculum focusing on the alternatives to physical punishment in the discipline of children. The following topics are discussed: Physical Punishment; Limits; Consequences; Listening; Anger; Challenging Behavior; And more.
The Concilio	The Concilio provide a program called Parents Advocating for Student Excellence (PASE) where parents learn how to navigate the school system, create a supportive home-learning environment and partner with teachers to ensure academic success.
The Healing Branch	The Healing Branch offers Tough Talks to Tender Hearts which helps parents learn how to have a lifetime of age-appropriate conversations with their children about healthy sexuality, personal power and personal boundaries. Learn to protect them and help them to protect themselves.
The Parenting Center	The Parenting Center offers a General Parenting Workshop - Birth through Three years, Parenting Young Children - Birth through Three years, Parenting Pre Teens and Teens, Parenting and Stress, Parenting Dynamics, Parenting to Foster Healthy Emotional Development and Parenting Challenges.
The Wilkinson Center	The Wilkinson Center's as part of its Family Literacy Program offers Adult Education Services which includes English as a Second Language (ESL) classes, GED classes in Spanish and English, and Family Literacy classes that include parent training and Parent And Child Together (PACT) Time. Children develop social and cognitive skills that prepare them for elementary school.
Turn Around Agenda	Turn Around Agenda offers a program called Parenting Young Children which will give parents the knowledge and skills necessary to parent their children from birth to school age. The course covers the following topics: Understanding Your Child, Understanding Behavior, Building Self Esteem, Communication, Learning to Cooperate, and Discipline. Parents learn to communicate and co-parent, giving their child the best possible life.
Uplift Education	Uplift Education offers Parent University which can be a day-long summit or a year-long series. The goal is to ensure that participating families' and schools build trusting relationships and gain the necessary knowledge and tools to strengthen the scholar, parent, and teacher triangle. By providing and connecting families to a larger network of experts and resources in their community, Parent University helps families navigate parenting, the education system and the transition to college and beyond.
Vickery Meadow Learning Center	Vickery Meadow Learning Center offers multiple parenting programs including: Bringing Families Together - A parent support group under the umbrella of Parents Anonymous to address issues of family violence. No Boundaries - Children and parents learn together in a workshop focused on cultural and community learning. Fun Fridays - Children and parents participate in fun activities based on literacy. The activities can be replicated at home, providing parents a tool to reduce passive television time for their children. Father & Child Workshops - Fathers, grandfathers and male relatives attend with children once a month during the evenings. Activities and discussion help adult males take an active role in the child's education and in mentoring them for success.
Vogel Alcove	Vogel Alcove provides a parent education program aimed at increasing parents' knowledge of child development and effective parenting techniques.

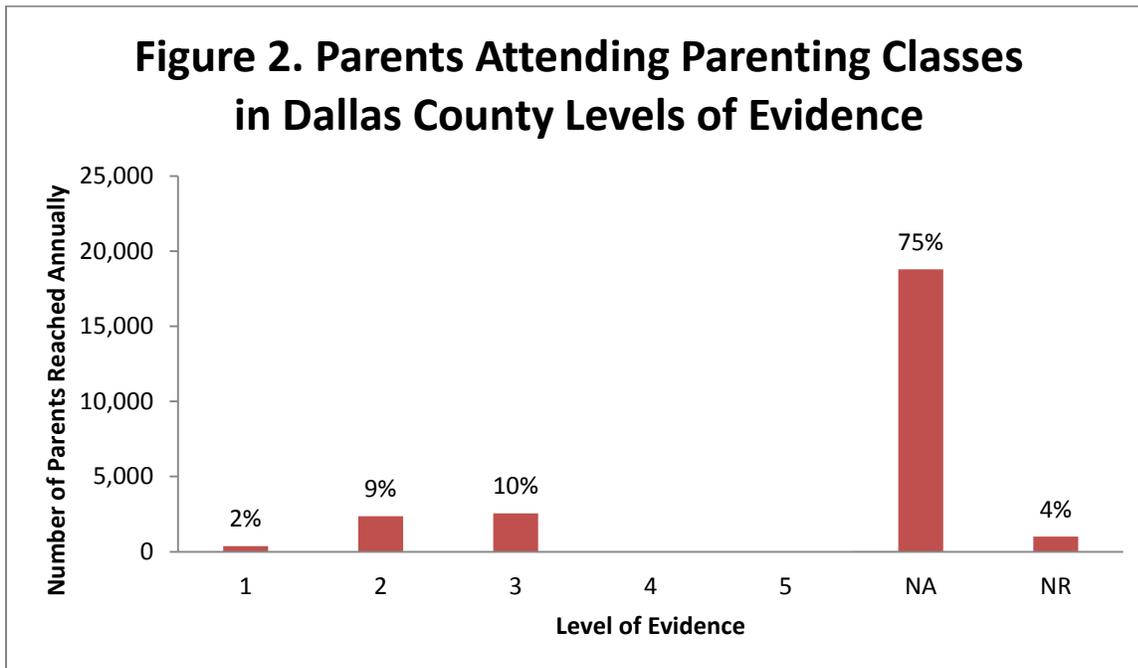
Access to Evidence-Based Parent Education

There are many parent education programs that are intended to provide parents with the correct tools to help them provide the best care for their children. There are a number of programs available in Dallas County, but only a few of them have research and evidence to support the intended outcomes. Because the outcomes are unknown, non-evidence-based parenting programs could cause unintentional harm and may not benefit the families as intended. With such a low amount of families accessing parent education, there is a missed opportunity to decrease rates of ineffective and harmful parenting practices.

The California Evidence-Based Clearinghouse for Child Welfare (CEBCL) offers a searchable website of evidence-based parent education programs providing their scientific rating, citations and summaries of relevant research, a brief description, and training and contact information. The CEBCL uses published peer-reviewed research when evaluating a program and is regarded as a strong resource for evaluating evidence-based programs.

The CEBCL rating system was used to determine which programs offered in Dallas County were evidenced-based. Overall, less than 3% (5,860) of families in Dallas County received evidenced-based parent education services in 2013. Of those parents accessing parent education in Dallas County, approximately 80% received parent education that lacks research to support its impact on child well-being. Only 11% of the parents that participated in parenting classes received an evidence-based curriculum with a rating of “well supported by research evidence” and “supported by research evidence” (Figure 2).

Figure 2. Parents Attending Parenting Classes in Dallas County Levels of Evidence



California Evidence-Based Clearinghouse for Child Welfare Levels of Evidence

- 1:** Well Supported Research Evidence
- 2:** Supported by Research Evidence
- 3:** Promising Research Evidence
- 4:** Evidence Fails to Demonstrate Effect
- 5:** Concerning Practice
- NR:** Not able to be rated
- NA:** Not in the CEBC database

Input from Organization and Providers across North Texas

Although the assessment of services was focused exclusively on Dallas County, the interviews conducted to assess gaps and barriers as well as the coalition were open to organizations and providers across North Texas. Information gathered through the coalition and interviews is described below.

Family Strengthening Coalition Feedback

In August 2014, an initial survey was given out to the North Texas organizations (n = 46) who attended the first Family Strengthening Coalition Meeting. The survey was designed to determine the reasons for joining the coalition and the types of outcomes members were interested in working towards as a collaborative. The vast majority of organizations expressed the desire to increase the availability of parent education in North Texas, share resources/learn

of other services for parents, and identify challenges and solutions to providing parent education services (Table 2).

Table 2. Outcomes/Reasons for Joining the Coalition

<i>Develop partnerships and infrastructure to increase the availability of parent education classes in North Texas</i>	91%
<i>Share and receive parent education resources</i>	89%
<i>Learn about available programs so I can refer parents to the programs</i>	73%
<i>Help identify challenges and solutions in parent education services in North Texas</i>	64%
<i>Implement an evidence-based parent education program at your organization</i>	41%

Expanding Evidence-based Parent Education

As the coalition survey revealed that increasing the availability of parent education in North Texas was an important outcome to nearly every member of the coalition, time was spent in the second Family Strengthening Coalition meeting to discuss various evidence-based programs to determine which would be the best fit for the community. Coalition members did not believe that there was one curriculum that will fit the needs of everyone, but rather a variety of programs that should be explored with regard to the feasibility of bringing them to the community. During this meeting, three main curricula were discussed as programs the coalition thought should be used to increase the availability of evidence-based parent education, including: Parents as Teachers, Triple P, and Parents Anonymous. A brief description of each program is provided below.

Parents as Teachers

Overview

Parents as Teachers was established in the 1970's by Missouri educators. It is a home visiting program that focuses on four core services and emphasizes parent-child interaction, development-centered parenting and family well-being. The core services are personal visits, group meetings, screenings, and a resource network. Personal visits are a major component to this program. During these visits parents are educated on child development, engaged in parent child activities, and have their parenting concerns addressed. Group meetings give parents an opportunity to share with other parents what is working well for them and get questions answered from their peers. Parents are able to support each other and learn from each other in

this environment. Children are also screened for developmental delays and parent educators regularly review each child's developmental progress with the families. Parent educators also help families research and seek out the resources they need in the community.

Primary Goals

- Increase parent knowledge of early childhood development and improve parenting practices
- Provide early detection of developmental delays and health issues
- Prevent child abuse and neglect
- Increase children's school readiness and school success

Outcomes

Children of families enrolled in Parents as Teachers experienced higher rates of school readiness at kindergarten, were more likely to attend preschool and had parents who adapted their childrearing practices.⁶

Triple P

Overview

The Triple P – Positive Parenting Program was developed by Matthew Sanders at the University of Queensland in Australia. It is a multilevel system of parenting intervention designed to improve the quality of parenting support available to parents that has evolved into a comprehensive public health model of intervention. All levels aim to prevent behavioral, developmental and emotional problems in children. The program promotes: the enhancement of skills, knowledge, confidence, and resourcefulness of parents; nurturing, safe, engaging, and nonviolent environments for children; and children's social, emotional, linguistic, intellectual, and behavioral competencies.

Triple P uses a self-regulatory framework and teaches parents to be independent problem solvers. The program is based on five key principles and teaches seventeen specific parenting skills. The five key principles are: ensuring a safe and engaging environment, creating a positive learning environment, using assertive discipline, having realistic expectations, and taking care of oneself as a parent.

⁶ The California Evidence Based Clearinghouse for Child Welfare. "Parents as Teachers." 2013. Web. Accessed October 1, 2014. <http://www.cebc4cw.org/program/parents-as-teachers/>.

The seventeen parenting skills included in the program are:

- Brief quality time
- Engaging activities
- Talking to children
- Establishing ground rules
- Affection
- Directed discussion
- Modeling
- Planned ignoring
- Incidental teaching
- Clear, calm instructions
- Ask, Say, Do
- Logical consequences
- Behavior charts
- Quiet Time
- Praise
- Time Out
- Positive Attention

Through its multi-level approach, Triple P matches intervention intensities to a family's needs, builds on a strong scientific base, provides multiple access points for parents, and offers a de-stigmatized, cost-efficient framework. It incorporates five levels of intervention of increasing strength for parents of children and adolescents from birth to 16 years. A key element of the multiple levels of intervention is a universal media campaign which aims to remove stigma associated with attending parenting classes and informs parents how to ask for help. The tiered approach with Triple P is designed to maximize efficiency, contain costs, and avoid waste and over servicing. It ensures the program has wide reach in the community. The multi-disciplinary nature of the program utilizes the available professional workforce in the task of promoting competent parenting.

Outcomes

Triple p helps produce some positive outcomes for families and children including improved parenting skills, child problem behavior and parental well-being.⁷

Parents Anonymous

Overview

Parents Anonymous was founded in 1969 by Jolly K. and Leonard Lieber. It is a treatment and prevention program to help families in need as well as families at risk for entering the child welfare system. The program is facilitated by a trained facilitator and a parent leader. The program address areas such as child development, communication skills, positive discipline, parental roles, age appropriate expectations, effective parenting strategies, anger

⁷ Nowak, C., Heinrichs, N. "A Comprehensive Meta-Analysis of Triple P-Positive Parenting Program Using Hierarchical Linear Modeling: Effectiveness and Moderating Variables." *Clinical Child and Family Psychology Review* 11.3 (2008): 114-44.

management techniques, mental health concerns, drug/alcohol, safety, and self-care to ensure well-being.

Primary Goals

- Strengthen and empower families by improving well-being
- Prevent child abuse and neglect
- Ensure safe, stable, and nurturing relationships for families
- Reduce risk factors, increase protective factors, and significantly reduce harmful behaviors towards children
- Enhance the social and emotional well-being of children, youth, parents, and caregivers
- Achieve safety, permanency and reduced out-of-home placements for child welfare involved families
- Create opportunities for parent and youth partners to develop leadership skills to give back to their communities ensure public policies created to meet the needs of diverse families are responsive by creating measurable positive results, and produce better long-term outcomes for families.
- Increase parental and child/youth resilience
- Achieve positive personal growth and change
- Improve family functioning
- Increase reunifications

Outcomes

Parents Anonymous has some significant outcomes for families and children including improvement in: parenting distress, parenting rigidity, psychological aggression toward children, life stress, intimate partner violence, alcohol use, and drug use.⁸

Current Gaps and Barriers

The North Texas CPFWB interviewed 87 organizations to adequately understand the current landscape of parenting services, identify gaps and barriers, and assess the level of community interest in parent education expansion. The following themes around barriers/gaps emerged from the interviews:

Awareness of Parent Education Services

⁸ The California Evidence Based Clearinghouse for Child Welfare. "Parents Anonymous." 2013. Web. Accessed October 1, 2014. <http://www.cebc4cw.org/program/parents-anonymous/detailed>.

There is a need for an increase in awareness for parents and providers by creating an infrastructure for places currently offering parenting classes. Providers would like a centralized location online or through a book where parenting resources for the community can be listed and easily accessed. It is believed that community members and partners are not aware of the resources available throughout North Texas. Partners agreed that there is a need to have a common resource that provides organizations and parents with a list of providers and services in the community

Participation and Access to Parent Education

Partners agreed that there is a need to increase the number of classes that are being offered in the community and usage of these classes. Classes need to be offered across North Texas where families are comfortable and in their environment. This would mean increasing the amount of classes that are offered and providing these classes through nontraditional partners. Partners expressed concerns in addressing barriers to participation including transportation, cost, childcare, language barrier and cultural sensitivity. Partners expressed concern in ensuring that all types of parents regardless of current situation have access to a parenting class that would best meet their needs.

Parent Empowerment

Partners reported that parents in Dallas County need a resource that provides assistance to parents in managing the school system and encourages participation in their children's education. It was reported that parents have a difficult time navigating the education system thus inhibiting their desire to be involved in the school system. Also, parents are not sure of their role once their child enters school. Parent empowerment needs to be expanded in order to provide culturally sensitive information to meet the needs of more than what is seen as the typical family mother and father family and expand towards other family structures which may include single parents, grandparents, or other individuals raising children.

Child Safety

Partners reported that there is a need for parents to be taught basic safety issues in order to prevent childhood injuries that often lead to fatalities. It was reported that partners are not aware of community resources that provide education in these areas. Also, parents are not aware of proper safety protocols and are often looking for correct information regarding a variety of safety issues.

Recommendations and Conclusions

Currently in Dallas County, parenting classes hold a negative stigma as they address parenting from a retrospective lens rather than as a preventative measure. Increasing the amount of evidence-based parent education across North Texas would allow us to reduce the negative stigma of parenting classes by offering them across sectors and organizations allowing parenting for the whole population. Research continually shows the benefits of parent education to include the impact of child abuse rates, school readiness and parent-child relationships.

Based on the data from the surveys and interviews, the North Texas CPFWB developed a set of preliminary recommendations, which were shared at the second coalition meeting in October 2014. Coalition participants (n = 26) were given an opportunity to discuss with one another to determine which recommendations were best suited for meeting the needs of the North Texas community and provide feedback/revisions. Overall, the coalition agreed that there is a need in Dallas County and a desire across the North Texas area for a population-based approach to parent education to reach more parents using evidence-based programming. Final recommendations, approved by the coalition, to achieve this goal are as follows:

1. There is a need to address barriers to participation including, but not limited to, location, class times, language, and cultural sensitivity
2. There is a need to decrease the stigma associated with attending parenting classes in the community
3. There is a need for more professionals to be trained in evidence-based parent education curricula
4. There is a need for more evidence-based parent education to be offered
5. There is need for creation of a database so organizations are aware of parent education classes that are available in the community
6. There is a need for more coordination between organizations that provide parent education and serve families

The North Texas CPFWB also acknowledges that parent empowerment and child safety were concerns that came up during the community needs assessment. The North Texas CPFWB will focus on parent education, and is happy to partner with the Children's Health Injury Prevention Program Safe Kids to address child safety and other partners in the community to address parent empowerment. CHILDREN AT RISK currently publishes the Texas School Guide which provides information for parents to encourage them to be involved in their child's education. We are happy to partner with organizations taking the lead on these issue areas.

VII. Limitations

This report provides information that will be beneficial to the North Texas community in strengthening our parents and families. However, there are some limitations of the study which include:

- Child abuse statistics are inherently underreported; thus, limiting the scope of the problem in the North Texas area.
- Results are based on self-reported data/information from community organizations
- This report focused only on a study of Dallas County. There is a need for additional research and funding to expand to Tarrant County, Collin County, and other counties in North Texas for more representation.
- There may be additional organizations in Dallas County that were not included in this study, which may alter the numbers.

Next Steps

Through collaboration and input from the Family Strengthening Coalition members, the North Texas CPFWB is working to seek funding to develop a database of parenting resources for parents and providers, collaborate with community providers to decrease stigma for parenting classes and developing a plan to increase the amount of families accessing evidence-based parenting classes in North Texas. The Family Strengthening Coalition will work within the North Texas community to develop a unified campaign to decrease the stigma around parent education and continue with the coalition in order to increase collaboration. Also, funding will be sought in order to train professionals to ensure more organizations in the community provide evidence-based parent education.