

SECTION F: LOCAL EVALUATION

Executive Summary

Grant Awarded to: Northern Valley Catholic Social Service
Program Name: Young Parent Support Services (YPSS)
Funded By: Butte County Children and Families Commission
Report Date: August 26, 2005

Program Components

- ' Young Fathers' Support Group
- ' Mental Health Counseling
- ' In-Home Parenting Classes

Desired Results

- ' There will be a 10% increase in stress and anger management skills among participants.
- ' There will be a 10% increase in self-sufficiency skills.
- ' There will be a 10% increase in knowledge of appropriate play activities and how they relate to attachment, bonding and brain development of 0-5 year old children.
- ' There will be a 10% increase in knowledge and skills regarding child development and age-appropriate discipline of 0-5 children.
- ' There will be a 10% increase in participants' understanding of the potential impact of their behaviors on their 0-5 children.
- ' Parents in in-home parenting classes will demonstrate effective parenting skills through training methods, role modeling, role-playing, handouts, and homework per the *Parents As Teachers* curriculums.

Evaluation Results

Although post-test scores reflect a slight negative change in knowledge, clients scored high overall on the pre-tests (overall, 86 percent of the answers were correct). These scores indicate that clients were knowledgeable of the material before entering the program, thus demonstrating little room for growth on the post-tests. It is recommended that the knowledge test be revised in order to show greater improvement.

The social worker and group volunteer gave the fathers' group high marks overall and reported witnessing change in almost all (92.5%) of participants. The changes in parents as witnessed by the social worker and group volunteer were openness to discuss issues and to listen, confidence, better social skills, pride in terms of being better fathers, and an eagerness to learn and participate in group discussions and activities.

Discharge summaries were provided by counseling staff at the end of the fiscal year on thirteen clients in the counseling component of the program. Of these thirteen, 4 (31%) did not attend enough sessions to complete an assessment or outline their goals. The reasons provided were that the clients moved or dropped out of school. The majority of clients (46%) did not meet their goals due to the brevity of their therapy for the following reasons: medication was sought for depression at Butte County Behavioral Health, dropped out of school, therapy sought elsewhere, resistance to/disinterest in continued therapy.

About a quarter of the clients partially met their goals but did not meet all of them due to scheduling issues or lack of attendance at school. None of the counseling clients met their goals. It is clear that this target population is difficult to engage. Even when some clients were initially interested and seemed eager for counseling, their issues as young teenage parents soon became overwhelming. With a lack of commitment to face their issues, it appears that most clients were unable or unwilling to bond with their counselors in order to give the counseling sessions an opportunity to help. If incentives and intensive follow-up cannot engage these clients, perhaps resources might be better utilized in the classroom to help prevent teen pregnancies.

Social workers feel that all parents involved in YPSS have improved their behavior and benefited from the services it provides. They have seen positive behavior change in these parents and, in turn, the parent/child relationships. Given that these social workers work with these parents over a long period of time and have witnessed positive change that they attribute to YPSS, the program appears to have had a beneficial impact after its first year of implementation.

The results of the "Parent Class Teacher Questionnaires" indicate parents demonstrated a moderate improvement overall in YPSS in regard to knowledge and skills regarding parenting and child development. Generally, the teachers gave the overall group an average rating in regard to movement towards positive change. Given that both teachers saw at least some improvement in YPSS youth in the targeted areas in the first year of implementation, it is likely that they will see even better results in the second year.