

Kansas Public Health Leadership Scholar Completes Year-Long Evaluation of Child Care Health Consultation Training

By Brenda Nickel, Child and School Nurse Consultant

Rebecca Gillam, LMSW completed a year-long evaluation of Child Care Health Consultation (CCHC) in Kansas as her Capstone Project for the Kansas Public Health Leadership Institute (KPHLI). She participated as a Cycle VI scholar. Gillam presented her findings at the July 30 KPHLI session held at the Spiritual Life Center in Wichita that heralded the conclusion of the VII KPHLI Cycle and welcomed the Cycle VIII scholars.

In Kansas, CCHC was implemented in 2009-2010 by a group of thirteen public health nurses who chose to participate in a voluntary CCHC project. According to Gillam (2010), "CCHC is a promising approach to improve early childhood outcomes and increase school readiness by supporting quality child care care. It is a strategy that has drawn a lot of interest and has considerable momentum nationally." (p. 24)



Her findings suggest the work responsibilities of the registered nurses participating from school and public health settings "limit the reach of services in Kansas" (p. 24), but proved to increase the participant's knowledge of quality in child care that includes health and safety. (Pictured left: Gillam reviews Kansas Early Childhood Comprehensive Systems for scholars in KPHLI.)

Gillam works at the University of Kansas School of Education, Institute for Educational Research and Public Service in Lawrence. She holds a Master of Social Work from the University of Kansas, Lawrence, Kansas, and a B.A., in History/International Relation from the American University, Washington, D.C. She is currently in the doctoral program at the University of Kansas.

Reference

Gillam, R. (2010). Evaluation of child care health consultation in Kansas. Unpublished Manuscript. Public Health Leadership Institute.

Child Care Health Consultation Evaluation Summary

By Rebecca Gillam, LMSW, University of Kansas School of Education Institution for Educational Research and Public Service

Child Care Health Consultation (CCHC) is a relatively recent intervention strategy used to improve the quality of child care by creating a partnership between CCHCs, child care providers and families. CCHC is a key factor in increasing early detection and recognition of childhood illnesses and disease, ensuring environmental safety of child care settings and increasing children's access to health care. The high volume of children who are cared for in child care settings make CCHC an important resource for child care providers and families to learn about health and safety during a critical time in children's growth and development.



CCHC was implemented in 2009-2010 by a group of thirteen public health nurses who chose to participate in a voluntary CCHC project. The evaluation was designed to determine the factors that motivated voluntary participation in the project; the methods for implementation of CCHC; the barriers to implementation of CCHC in a voluntary system; and the lessons that can be learned moving forward with CCHC in Kansas.

Evaluation included one focus group and three online surveys that captured information on the implementation of CCHC over the year following completion of the training.

Participants indicated that CCHC training was helpful in better understanding the needs of child care providers and how to improve the quality of care in their communities. The surveyors who participated in CCHC training indicated that they now have enhanced knowledge, skills and abilities to continue on in their work.

Results indicate that participants had both personal and professional motivations for participating; that sustainability of voluntary implementation over the year after training was challenging; that time, resources and perceived lack of need for CCHC services were barriers to implementation; and that there are questions that should be addressed by early childhood leadership about the role of CCHC within the State early childhood system before moving forward with any future implementation of CCHC in Kansas.

For more information about the evaluation, contact Rebecca Gillam at rgillam@ku.edu.

Kansas Cavity Free Kids

Kathy Hunt, RDH, ECPII, Project Director for KCFC

The Kansas Head Start Association in 2007, with support from the Delta Dental of Kansas Foundation and the United Methodist Health Ministry Fund, introduced a statewide oral health initiative known as Kansas Cavity Free Kids (KCFK). The focus is on improving the oral health of pregnant women and young children through education, advocacy and increased access to care.

Cavities are the most common chronic disease in children. The good news is that it can be prevented.

This program partners with health departments as well as other agencies that work with pregnant women and very young children such as Head Start, Kansas Association of Child Care Resource and Referral Agencies (KACCRRRA), Parents as Teachers and Tiny K. In this first of a three part series, Project Director, Kathy Hunt, RDH, shares one way health departments can play a vital role in supporting better oral health.

Dental caries (cavities) is the most common chronic disease in children. The recent national surveillance study shows there is a rising trend of dental decay in children 2-5 years old. Dentists report severe caries in children as young as 10 months old. Sadly, at least 28 percent of young children are entering kindergarten with untreated dental disease, impacting their ability to be successful at school.

Although this infection can affect all children, those growing up in poverty are at significantly higher risk. Oral disease can have a lasting effect on the overall health of our children. The good news is that it can be prevented.



Many people suffer from dental disease because they lack information about what they can do to improve their own oral health. Knowing what causes oral disease can help a person understand what actions they can

take to reverse the conditions. Health department staff, especially those who make regular home visits, have an opportunity to support better oral and overall health of those they serve by providing knowledge and self-help skills that are powerful tools in combating oral disease.

In partnership with Oral Health Kansas, KCFK has developed an evidence-based oral health curriculum that is easy to use and ideal for educating families with very young children. The KCFK Home Visitor Curriculum for Families of Infants and Toddlers is designed for use at the individual level, to share information and ideas that help parents make good choices to ensure optimum oral health for their children.

The curriculum contains 14 issue specific modules that take minimal preparation and contain current; evidence based information as well as suggestions for demonstrations.

Kansas Cavity Free Kids is committed to providing education in other areas as well. Oral health curriculum and training is also available for the following situations:

- **Early Learning Centers:** A comprehensive, extensive curriculum for classroom educators that comes with flexible lesson plans, hands-on fun activities for children and their families and ideas for inexpensive teaching materials for stimulating lessons.
- **Child Care Centers:** A shorter version based on the early learning curriculum that offers concise information, fun activities and ready-to-use newsletters for parents.
- **Coming soon! Home Visitor Curriculum for Pregnant Women:** This material is being designed for home visitors and health department staff to use at the individual level to share information and ideas that help pregnant women understand how their own oral health and oral health habits can impact their baby's oral and overall health.
- **Supplemental Literature:** Supporting literature that can be provided to your families to reinforce your key messages.

KCFK offers free regional staff training and will be happy to work with you to provide a workshop in your area. The second installment of this series will look at how new legislation in Kansas is helping improve access to preventive dental services.

For more information regarding these educational opportunities, contact Kathy Hunt at khunt@ksheadstart.org or 785-458-9775.