



BABY TALK

The Official Newsletter of the Ohio Association for Infant Mental Health

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Notes From the President

by Kate Merrilees

I am both delighted and awed to be writing this column as the incoming president of the Ohio Association for Infant Mental Health. Delighted certainly to be a part of an organization that is relentless in its work on behalf of young children and their families. However, I also feel somewhat in awe as I consider all of the talented individuals who are a part of this organization. I feel that I can safely say that I know each of you if not by personal exposure then through your membership forms which I received and entered into our organizational data base while serving as last year's Membership Committee chair. I was impressed by your interest in young children, your expertise and the work that you do daily to better their lives.

My hope and plan as president over the next two years is to facilitate opportunities for members to become more involved with the state chapter. Mike Thomasgard, our outgoing president, has done a phenomenal job of bringing the chapter into the age of technology by developing our website and connecting us not only with each other but with other organizations and sites around the country which work on behalf of young children. Through his efforts we are able to locate and access professionals in other counties that work in various capacities with young children and their families. We have learned of training opportunities in the state and other web sites that enrich our professional lives. I am delighted that he will remain on the board to act as a mentor to both the organization and myself.

Many of you responded to the OAIMH survey. The ideas that you shared became the impetus for four new board committees: Advocacy, Training, Publications and New Chapter Development. The Advocacy committee will provide OAIMH representation on the many Early Childhood initiatives that are being generated across the state. Many of you may be aware of the Ohio Department of Mental Health's Early Childhood Mental Health Initiative (*See story p.7*). John Kinsel and Mike Thomasgard both sit on the ECMHI advisory committee.

Notes From The President (Cont'd.)

Build Ohio, the Ohio Department of Health, the Ohio Department of Jobs and Family Services and others have begun another new initiative to develop developmental guidelines for Ohio's infants and Toddlers and John will lend his expertise to that effort. (*See story on p.3*)

The Ohio chapter of the American Academy of Pediatrics has also invited individuals to participate in a plan to identify key issues in children's mental health. The group is met at the end of February and Dr Beth Finley-Belgrad represented OAIMH. (*See story, p.5*) In addition, the Advocacy Committee will address some of the other concerns that you identified in the survey, such as being linked to other Infant Mental Health Therapists across the state. They will also explore avenues to help those counties who have few, if any, services available to young children and their families. Beth will head that committee.

There was a very positive response to the idea of having an Infant Mental Health retreat as well as regional peer supervision. The Training committee will take up the task of organizing those events as well as organizing other training opportunities to address the topics that you indicated were of interest to you. Mike Thomasgard will chair that group. John Kinsel will act as the chair the Publications Committee. In addition to BABY TALK, the group will explore other ways to promote Early Childhood Mental Health through written materials and the Internet. Chandra Pester and myself will address new chapter development. Thank you for taking the time to thoughtfully respond to the survey. It was heartening to get your feedback.

I look forward to serving as the president of OAIMH and to the opportunity of meeting many if not all of you in the coming year. I want to remind you to mark your calendars for November 3 and 4th for our OAIMH conference. Dr Georgia DeGangi and Dr Susan McDonough will be our keynote speakers. We are also planning break out sessions that will appeal to the varied and broad expertise and interest of our members. (*See story p.8*) It looks to be a great conference, part of another successful year for OAIMH! See you in November! KM

Collaborative Peer Supervision Groups

By Mike Thomasgard

In 2004, Janece Warfield (OAIMH board member) and I submitted a continuing education (CE) grant application to the Maternal and Child Health Bureau, under the category of "Special Project of Regional and National Significance." Our Collaborative Peer Supervision (CPS) Group Project model was funded (T21 MC 03418) and we're about to enter our second year this July! In year 1 (2004-2005), Janece and I each formed a CPS group in our respective cities—Dayton and Columbus. In project years 2 and 3, one additional group will be formed in IL, IN, MI, and OH.

CPS groups consist of approximately 9 to 12 members who meet for one hour, at least ten times a year, to discuss challenging and difficult children/families from our patient/client panels. These case-based sessions provide a safe, structured, and regularly occurring opportunity for child

Collaborative Peer Supervision Groups (Cont'd)

psychiatrists, child psychologists, infant mental health clinicians, nurses, Part C service coordinators, BCMH primary care physicians and social workers to experience empathic supervision. The latter can then be mirrored within the clinician-caregiver relationship, thus helping to promote a more collaborative approach to the child's health care. One hour of continuing education is provided or, in the case of Help Me Grow Service Coordinators, one hour of supervision is earned.

OAIMH anticipated the importance of ongoing professional development to those working with children birth to six and developed a Web site www.oaimh.org with an entire section devoted to CPS groups. The *collaborative peer group* section was expanded and updated in early 2005. By centralizing our start-up, maintenance, and evaluation resources, we will eliminate much of the need to "reinvent the wheel" as new CPS groups are formed throughout the Midwest. In project year 2 (2005-2006), two additional Web-based features will be added—a video of a typical CPS group, from start to finish and an interactive message board area. In project year 3 (2006-2007) our goal is to identify one organization or institution that will process continuing education credits for each discipline (e.g., Children's Hospital in Columbus is accredited to provide continuing medical education credits for the entire United States). This strategy will decrease the overall cost of providing continuing educational credits as the number of CPS group participants increase. In the interim, individuals wishing to start such groups outside the scope of this grant will need to work with local and state representatives, as outlined in the "Non-grant' Start to Finish" portion of our Web site.

The *short-term goals* for our project are: 1) Foster continuing education in the psychosocial-developmental aspects of children, birth to age 6, utilizing a case-based CE approach and 2) Develop, sustain and critically evaluate ten new CPS groups within MCH Region V. Specific objectives for goal 1 include:

- Facilitate a more comprehensive approach to mental health as in *Bright Futures in Practice: Mental Health and the Diagnostic Classification: 0-3R*
- Promote collaboration between child psychiatrists, child psychologists, infant mental health specialists, nurses, part C providers, BCMH physicians and social workers
- Enhance power to discriminate between normal variations, transient disturbances and more serious psychiatric disorders, as in *Classification of Child & Adolescent Mental Diagnoses in Primary Care*
- Heighten awareness of competencies and strengthen consultation/referral to other professionals as appropriate

Our project is well coordinated with *local* Part C and BCMH providers, *state* institutions of higher learning, MCH departments and the four state affiliates of the World Association for Infant Mental Health in MCH *Region V*. During the start of project Years 2 & 3, CPS group moderators will attend a regional meeting in Columbus, OH that will focus on further improvements of the CPS model.

Collaborative Peer Supervision Groups *(Cont'd)*

Impact of the project will be measured yearly by: 1) CPS Questionnaire; 2) CE form summaries; 3) Attendance patterns and Group stability; and 4) Tally of new and ongoing CPS groups in Illinois, Indiana, Michigan and Ohio. As a final note, CPS groups tie in nicely with the MI-AIMH endorsement process that requires ongoing supervision for competence Levels 3 and 4 (Infant Mental Health Specialist and IMH Mentor, respectively). For more details go to: www.mi-aimh.msu.edu and click on “MI-AIMH Endorsement for Culturally Sensitive, Relationship Focused Practice Promoting Infant Mental Health.” I hope you stay tuned for more news on this topic!

NEW DEVELOPMENTAL GUIDELINES FOR INFANTS and TODDLERS

By John Kinsel

In January of this year a collaborative effort between BUILD Ohio, the Ohio Child Care Resource and Referral Association, the Ohio Department of Education, Office of Early Learning and School Readiness, the Ohio Department of Health, Bureau of Early Intervention and the Ohio Department of Job and Family Services, Bureau of Child Care and Development began. The focus of this groundbreaking, “silo” shattering combined effort is the writing of developmental guidelines for Ohio’s Infants and Toddlers.

Based in the shared understanding that what children learn in their early years has a profound effect on who they become later in life, the purpose of this initiative is to take the best of what has been learned about early development and frame that information into a document that will be useful to all caregivers of young children in Ohio. Rather than “re-inventing the wheel,” this is an effort to “re-engineer the wheel” such that it rolls smoothly over the unique “roads” of childcare present in our state.

Ultimately, the document produced will serve as a starting point for getting to know individual infants as well as an ongoing point of reference as each child grows and learns. Used well, the document will help parents, caregivers, service providers and programs to focus on early development and become sensitized to the evolving needs, interests and capacities of each child. Long-term plans include the development of a companion publication that highlights developmentally appropriate practice at each stage of development.

The writing group is made up of professionals and parents from a variety of disciplines and backgrounds, as well as from all geographic regions of the state. The larger group has been subdivided into writing teams of approximately ten members each representing six domains of development: Physical, Social, Cognitive, Motor, Emotional, Communication/Language. There are many OAIMH members among the crowd. OAIMH Board member John Kinsel serves as chair of the Emotional Development writing team. Other Chairs (who may or may not be OAIMH members!) are: Physical Development-Ellen Steward; Social Development-Kim Whaley; Cognitive Development-Angela Parker; Motor Development-Linda Pax Lowes; and Communication/Language Development-Ginger O’Connor.

NEW DEVELOPMENTAL GUIDELINES FOR INFANTS and TODDLERS *(Cont'd)*

The writing teams have received support in their process from the WestEd Program for Infant Toddler Caregivers (PITC) from California. The process began with 2 days of training in February with J. Ronald Lally, founder of PITC and one of the original group that began Zero To Three. He was assisted by his associate, Peter Mangione. Representatives from WestEd have been present at each writing day to lend technical support.

Writing teams have been meeting monthly, as well as doing work via email between Columbus gatherings. A draft product is expected to emerge this Fall that will be circulated among focus groups before being refined into a finished product to be distributed state-wide. A note about the process that may be of interest to OAIMH members: There was much discussion about whether to have a separate section for both social and emotional development. Many states and other publications combine these two elements. A sensitivity to the relationship-based nature of emotional development also informed this discussion. Ultimately, though, the decision was made to keep the two domains separate, as a way to highlight the importance of each in unique, as well as over-lapping, ways. Should you have a comment or suggestion related to emotional development, please feel free to contact John Kinsel at JDKinsel@shp-dayton.org. Just be sure to include a citation, as this will be an evidenced based document!

**THE OHIO CHAPTER OF AAP LOOKS AT
MENTAL HEALTH NEEDS OF CHILDREN**

By Elizabeth Finley-Belgrad, M.D.

OAIMH was invited to participate in a working conference sponsored by the Committee on Social and Emotional Aspects of Child and Family Health of the Ohio Chapter of the American Academy of Pediatrics(AAP). It was a tremendous conference. More than fifty invited participants from around the state representing an array of individuals key to child mental health care attended. James Duffee, M.D., a key player in the forming of OAIMH, was the Committee Chair charged with designing and implementing the event. Elizabeth Finley-Belgrad, M.D., as part of her work on the Advocacy Committee of OAIMH, represented our organization.

The main objective of the conference was to determine the role of pediatricians within the comprehensive system of care for children and families who experience behavioral and emotional disturbance. The emphasis was on prevention, early detection and primary intervention rather than on treatment for the more seriously mentally ill.

The conference was divided into four sessions with participants forming working groups according to their areas of interest. Sessions included such topics as barriers to access, mental health system organization, quality concerns, work force development, evidence based practice, funding and reimbursement and the development of a fifteen-month action plan.

THE OHIO CHAPTER OF AAP LOOKS AT MENTAL HEALTH NEEDS *(Cont'd)*

One of the major goals was to eliminate disparities in access to and quality and funding of mental health care for Ohio's children and their families. The 15-month action plan addresses this through activities intended to raise public awareness as well as support for behavioral health. The plan also includes strategies for increasing knowledge and skills among primary care practitioners and advocacy for legislative and regulatory reform.

Specifically of interest to OAIMH, Dr. John Duby, who is currently president of the Ohio Chapter of AAP, will be presenting a break-out session at the OAIMH Annual Conference in November on "Triple P", a parent-training program developed in Australia. Dr. Duby has found this evidenced-based program to be very effective as part of his practice as a Developmental Pediatrician at Akron Children's Hospital.

CHAPTER CHAT: "GOING TO COURT: A GUIDE FOR THERAPISTS"

By Holly Schlaak, OAIMH Board Rep. From the Southwest Chapter

GOING TO COURT: A GUIDE FOR THERAPISTS was the topic of a seminar sponsored by the Southwest Chapter of the Ohio Association of Infant Mental Health in collaboration with Pro-Kids and the Young Child Institute of Central Clinic on April 30, 2004. The focus of the seminar was to convey to therapists the importance of the testimony that they can offer on behalf of young children. Repeated over and over throughout the day was the phrase, "Therapists wear the crown". Assistant Prosecuting Attorney Rich Schneider and Pro-Kids Executive Director Tracy Cook gave an overview of the Juvenile Court process as well as how to prepare for testifying and what to expect on direct and cross examination. Magistrate Carla Guenther described how magistrates evaluate the credibility and merit of testimony that is offered in court. A mock direct and cross-examination was also presented. The day concluded with a panel discussion and a question and answer period.

Among the strategies suggested for professionals who have been subpoenaed is to maintain the mindset that the therapist is to assist the court in making a decision regarding a child, not to decide the issue themselves. In addition therapists were strongly encouraged to communicate with the attorney who has issued the subpoena regarding the content of their testimony. Preparation was also stressed. Therapists need to review their notes and background materials about the child and be prepared to relate the basis for the opinion or recommendation that they are offering. Professionals were advised to be clear, logical and brief in their responses to questions while realizing that a part of testifying is educating the magistrate about the salient issues related to the child. For example, issues such as when and why a child might behave a particular way as well as how children might understand the experiences that they have may be addressed.

The day ended on a less serious note with a review of the "Unofficial" rules of court. Among them: Parking and paying the all day rate to attend a juvenile court hearing will ensure that the hearing will take only a half hour to complete.

THE ECMHI PREPARES FOR FY2006*by John Kinsel*

Even in this age of reduced state budgets and belt-tightening throughout government programming, the Early Childhood Mental Health Initiative is healthy and ready to expand. As recently as June 14, 2005 (at an ECMHI Advisory Committee meeting), Marla Himmeger reported that she expected state funding levels for the Initiative to remain steady. This is good news for those of us who value mental health services to young children for two reasons: state funded mental health prevention work with this population will continue and the non-reduced funding signifies the Ohio Department of Mental Health's commitment to early childhood mental health.

Flat line funding for the ECMHI means that the 16 communities that have existing programs can continue their current level of service. But expansion of the project across the state is also in the works thanks to a generous grant from the Ohio Children's Trust Fund. Plans are taking shape for a system by which unserved counties can access funding and technical support. With an expected influx of first-time consultants (in the future to be known as "specialists!"), training materials and in-service programs used in the past are being reviewed and updated.

The Ohio Children's Trust Fund was interested in providing funding in part due to the symmetry of the ECMHI with a national Children's Trust Fund project targeting the infusion of basic mental health principles into early childhood settings as a means of prevention of child abuse and neglect. At the June 14 ECMHI Advisory meeting, Sally Pedon of the Ohio Children's Trust Fund shared an overview of a joint venture between CTF and the Ohio Association for the Education of Young Children funded by the National Children's Trust Fund "Strengthening Families" Project. One of only a very few such programs in the country, their effort will intertwine with the ECMHI, providing, among other things, public awareness and assessment support.

BOARD BITS*by John Kinsel*

At the January meeting of the OAIMH Board at (at Molly Woo's Asian Bistro north of Columbus) the Board not only welcomed Kate Merrilees to her new position as Board **SAVE THE DATES: NOVEMBER 3&4, OAIMH ANNUAL CONFERENCE!!!!** President, but also recognized the addition of two newly elected Board members: Harvey Kayne and Barbara Clark. Here is a bit about each of them:

Harvey Kayne is a licensed psychologist and current Clinical Director of the D&E Counseling Center in Mahoning County. Harvey received his doctorate in Psychology from Kent State University in 1973 and has been active in the delivery of community based mental health services ever since. At D&E, which serves children and adolescents, Harvey has become engaged in early childhood prevention programs, in particular utilizing The Incredible Years program with parents, day-care providers and Head Start Staff.

BOARD BITS (Cont'd)**SAVE THE DATES: NOVEMBER 3&4, OAIMH ANNUAL CONFERENCE!!!!**

Barbara A. Clark, MSW, LISW, has served as the Executive Director of Portage Children's Center(PCC), a non-profit child behavioral healthcare agency located in Ravenna, OH, for the past 5 years. She is a certified Families and Schools Together(FAST) trainer and was certified as an NCAST evaluator. Barbara was instrumental in PCC receiving funding through the ODMH ECMHI, which they have used to start and maintain a childcare consultation and training service in Portage County.

Also new on the Board is Holly Schlaak as representative from the Southwest Chapter.(More about her in a future BABY TALK!) The third open position on the Board was filled by Jeff

SAVE THE DATES: NOVEMBER 3&4, OAIMH ANNUAL CONFERENCE!!!!

Rosenbaum, who will continue on the Board for another three-year term. Jeff was re-elected by the Board to remain our Treasurer(much to his delight). Other officers chosen for 2005 are Chandra Pester, Vice-President and John Kinsel, Secretary.

Much of the two board meetings held thus far this year have centered around the planning of OAIMH's first two-day annual conference, scheduled for November 2&3, 2005 at the Columbus Convention Center. Event planner Eleanor Garrison has been engaged to coordinate the detail work. The Conference Committee has confirmed the commitment of two national level keynote speakers, Susan McDonough and Georgia DeGangi, as well as speakers for 10 cutting edge breakout sessions.

In other work, the Board continues to move closer to achieving 501.c3 non-profit status, has

SAVE THE DATES: NOVEMBER 3&4, OAIMH ANNUAL CONFERENCE!!!!

organized new committees and continued to grow the organization as an effective vehicle for education, advocacy, networking and support for Infant Mental Health.

SAVE THE DATES: November 3&4, 2005, OAIMH Annual Conference *by John Kinsel*

If you are particularly perceptive, you may have picked up subliminal messages regarding the conference hidden throughout the previous article. Please save the dates and look for more details soon to arrive regarding the exciting content of OAIMH's most ambitious conference!

NEW BABY TALK FORMAT

by John Kinsel, Editor

This issue of Baby Talk flows from one article to the next for easier reading while scrolling on a computer, as opposed to the old, more newspaper-like format. What do you think of it? We want to add a question and answer column as a regular feature. Folks send in questions re: practice, diagnosis, etc and we get an Ohio expert to reply. What do you think of that? Please send questions and comments to me at JDKinsel@shp-dayton.org. Thanks for your help! JDK