Overview

- Blended funding from the Annie E. Casey Foundation & American Humane in 2008

- Identify emerging practices that support immigrant children and families who are in need of social services

- Provide practice and policy recommendations
American Humane’s staff conducted a brief literature and resource review from Oct. -Nov. 2008.

In Nov. 2008 began developing research questions for key informant interviews and focus groups.

In Jan. 2009, conducted interviews and focus groups with key informants in the San Antonio and Corpus Christi regions.

- Focused on prevention and intervention practices in child welfare and the strengths and challenges faced when working with immigrant children and families.
Interviews & Focus Groups

- 4 Focus Groups
  - Program Directors
  - Border Supervisors
  - Various Supervisors
  - Program Administrators

- 2 Interviews
  - Border Liaison
  - Regional Director

- 24 Participants
WHO’S THE IMMIGRANT POPULATION?

- Primarily undocumented
- 70 to 98% Hispanic
- Mixed status, traditional families
- Hold multiple odd jobs
- Usually no more than elementary school education
- Families are in transition
REASONS FOR MIGRATION

- ‘Pursuing the American Dream’
- Join other family members
- Looking for work
MIGRATION CHALLENGES

- Families are scattered & less supports
- Job exploitation
- Dealing with officials
- Lack of resources and access to resources
- Housing
CHALLENGES TO WORKING WITH IMMIGRANT FAMILIES

- Lack of training
- Lack of services
- ‘Don’t ask, Don’t tell’ policy
- Cultural differences
- Language barriers
- Clarifying roles
- Organizational racism
- Personal/worker bias
- Working with undocumented families
- Youth aging out undocumented
STRENGTHS OF DFPS WORKING WITH IMMIGRANT FAMILIES

- Working with the Mexican Consulate
- Working with community-based services
- Border Liaisons
- Language (safety plans)
PREVENTION & OUTREACH

- Speaker’s Bureau
- Neighborhood Place
- Outreach
- Fear is a Barrier
DATA COLLECTION

- No check box for citizenship status

- May be included in narrative & family assessment/service plan

- Missing social security numbers may be the best indicator
EDUCATION

- Minimum if a BA in any field

- Program Directors have a BA in human services, 2 years of supervision, & 5 years total experience at minimum

- Program Administrators, LMSW
TRAINING

- 90 days of basic skills training & shadow multiple workers
- Supervisors need to complete 40 hours every 2 years
- Other elective cultural trainings
WORKER STRESS

- Attempting to reduce turnover
- Need for training on time management
- Caseloads are flattening out
- Salaries
Preliminary Recommendations

- Identify the population
- Identify community supports and referrals (esp. emergency & day-to-day services)
- Cross-agency training and role clarification
- Continue & increase prevention efforts in ‘safe’ places
Next Steps

- Assessment and feedback during this conference
- February 2009 - Interviews and focus groups with direct services providers in DFPS and community-based organizations.
  - Child welfare and immigrant advocates
- March 2009 - Interviews and focus groups with families and youth who have been involved in the child welfare or community-based services and have also had immigration issues.
PHASE II

- April 2009 - Summary and dissemination of findings during the MCWNN meeting in conjunction with the 17th National Conference on Child Abuse and Neglect
  - Staff will also conduct focus groups with national child welfare and immigration experts to focus on permanency outcomes for immigrant children in public child welfare.

- Selection of Site #2
POTENTIAL STUDY PRODUCTS

- Basis for the development of a quality improvement center model in the San Antonio region.
- Immigrant family friendly assessment tool for immigrant and child welfare serving organizations.
- List of bilingual vocabulary for child welfare workers and translators.
- ‘How to’ handbook for assessing immigrant families.
- More to come!