

# A Strategic Plan for the Welfare of Marion County's Children and Families

# History

- In 1993 the child welfare system and stakeholders came together to develop new reforms and directions for Marion County
- Resulted in:
  - Creation of the Child & Adolescent Placement Project
  - Juvenile Court reforms
  - Alternative community-based programming efforts
  - Accountability initiatives
  - Dramatically reduced number of group home and institution care placements
  - Began to shift some funding to prevention & preservation programs

- In 1999 the system and stakeholders came together again to review results and develop additional innovative programs
- Results
  - Development of the Neighborhood Alliance for Child Safety (NACS)
  - Continued development of the community-based programs
  - Marion County Superior Court, Juvenile Division named a “Model Court” by the National Council of Juvenile & Family Court Judges
  - Several programs receive state and national awards

- In 2003 the system and stakeholders again decided it was time to come together
  - MCCOY was given a planning grant by Lilly Endowment, Inc.
  - Facilitated a two-year planning process
  - Culminated in July 2005, with published Strategic Plan

# PLANNING PROCESS

- Convened three groups
  - Sponsor's Group
  - Resource Group
  - Community Stakeholders Group
- Researched best practices
- Conducted a full day retreat
- Used small Work Groups around specific topics, bringing together experts and practitioners
- Produced multiple drafts for review
- Finalized and published

# STRATEGIC PLAN ELEMENTS

- Prevention
- Public Education
- System Improvement

# PREVENTION

- Increase our supports for parents
  - Enhance and expand the NACS model to entire county
  - Increase emphasis on use of a strength-based, family-centered practice model
  - Move to a dual assessment-alternative response system for reports of child abuse and neglect
  
- Increase affordable, accessible substance abuse treatment
  
- Increase affordable, quality child care

- Educate the medical community, teachers, youth workers, etc. about child abuse, prevention and intervention skills, and available resources
  - Produce a Family Support Guidebook
  
- Strongly encourage the use of age-appropriate “life skills” curriculum in all schools in Marion County



# PUBLIC EDUCATION

- Designate an existing entity (or create) that will drive and manage this work
  - Directed by a Citizens Advisory Board
  - Would publish:
    - Community Child Welfare Report Card
    - Voter's Report Card
  
- Design a public relations campaign that would focus on raising community awareness
  - Reframe the child abuse message around child development
  - Empower child welfare providers to build partnerships with families
  - Widely communicate the mission of the child welfare system

- Design an effective, sustainable advocacy effort
- Develop additional financial resources for the system

# SYSTEM IMPROVEMENT

- Improve the use of data as a management tool
  - Investigate the use of Results-Based Accounting
- Conduct an internal audit to “map” current service delivery, determine capacity (over supply/gaps), and measure effectiveness
- Address racial disparity and over-representation of children of color in the system
- Invest in nurturing the child welfare workforce
- Investigate the feasibility of developing a volunteer corps to assist with administrative functions and/or service delivery

# NEXT STEPS

- Several Action Steps have been completed or are in progress
- Currently developing an Implementation Plan; estimate will take one-to-three years for completion
- Seeking partners and financial support
  
- MCCOY is willing to add this work to our portfolio
  - Will coordinate implementation of Strategic Plan
  - Will manage specific projects
  - Will act as fiscal agent

# Implementation Funding Proposal Recently Submitted

- Prevention: Family Guidebook and Education for Medical Community
- Public Education and Advocacy: Citizens Advisory Board, Advocacy Training, ongoing monitoring and research
- System Reform: training for Family Case Managers and Community Partners in Family and Child Team Meeting model of case practice

Plans are only good intentions unless they immediately degenerate into hard work.

Peter Drucker

For more information please contact

John Brandon, President

Marion County Commission On Youth (MCCOY)

3901 North Meridian Street

Indianapolis, IN 46208

317.921.1288

[john.brandon@mccooyouth.org](mailto:john.brandon@mccooyouth.org)