

Network News

Fall 2006*YOUNG PARENTS NETWORK*Cedar Rapids, Iowa



MISSION

Young Parents Network is dedicated to the prevention of adolescent pregnancy, and building successful families.

A NEW LOOK

We are pleased to present the new look of Young Parents Network! Thanks to the talented individuals at Henry, Russell, Bruce, they have helped us develop our new logo, tag line, and mission statement.

We are very excited to move into the future with our new look and refined mission statement as it is a reflection of our agency's innovation and creativeness in developing programs and delivering quality services to our surrounding communities. The new look of YPN will carry our agency for many generations to come!

In addition, we have developed a YPN website at www.youngparentsnetwork.org. Please take a look and see what our agency's been up to!



2006-2007 BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Kent Baker
United Fire Group

Ron Bode
Gazette Communications

Carol Cassells
Educational Service Center
Cedar Rapids Community Schools

Ann Feldmann
Cedar Rapids Community Schools

Bernardo Gauna
Alliant Energy

Brad Hart
Bradley & Riley, P.C.

Julia Hawkins
University of Iowa Hospital and Clinics

Kent Jackson
St. Luke's Hospital

Kathy Kaiser
Kirkwood Community College

Brad Kiburz
Rinderknecht & Associates

Linda Klein
Mercy Medical Center – Birth Place

Julie Ligtenberg
Deloitte & Touche CPA

Dana Nichols
Cedar Rapids Bank & Trust

Jane Pate
Ament, Inc.

Ron Pins
Wells Fargo Business Banking

Jason Rexroth
Linn County OB/GYN PC

James Shipman
Simmons, Perrine, Albright & Ellwood, PLC

Ida Sorensen
St. Luke's Family Health Center

Brad Stahlecker
Penford

Dan Thies
OPN Architects

Ken Wilmot
Alliant Energy

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S CORNER

As is always the case when it comes time to write my piece for the newsletter I begin my research to see what might peak my interest to comment on. What I found was for the last six years or so, the Executive Corner piece at this time of year started with "What an excellent year for Young Parents Network". This has probably been the opening because in August and September of every year we are gathering all of the data that tells us how we did for our last fiscal year and it is typically very exciting. It has also been the case that we have continued to have excellent staff and volunteers, which has promoted greater participation, and therefore the numbers served has continued to increase. This year has been no exception to the trend; the increased number of children and families served through Young Parents Network services continues to be a source of pride.



**Brian Stutzman,
Executive Director**

This being said what I chose to comment about is what creates this continued success. I could go into great detail about philosophy, our organizational strategic planning, and attribute the success to those types of things, but when it comes down to it, why YPN continues to have success can be defined in two words; the staff. The truly amazing accomplishments that we all read at the end of the year are the result of a very mission driven dedicated group of staff. They deliver the mission of serving children and families every day, of every week, of every month, in the evenings, on the weekends, not because of what you see as a consolidation at the end of the year, but because that one child or family will benefit from the role YPN can play in their life. This is what creates success. Thank you to the staff for all of their tireless efforts.

I had the opportunity this month to observe a presentation from some of the staff at a Board of Directors meeting. To say it was an enlightening experience is an understatement. During these presentations one staff member in particular shared her role with the organization, she stated she had volunteered for years before her employment and also shared, how her son and daughter in-law had participated in groups, she did this while holding her 6-month-old granddaughter whom receives home visits from an YPN parent educator. She closed by saying "YPN is a part of my families life." What an excellent year for Young Parents Network.

Best Regards,

*Executive Director
Young Parents Network*

THE CASE FOR EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION PROGRAMS PARENTS - A CHILD'S FIRST AND MOST IMPORTANT TEACHER



"Will my child be ready for kindergarten?" is a very common question heard by many parent educators. The news is filled with concerns about children not being ready for school. The State Kindergarten Readiness Perception Survey assesses five major areas of readiness skills. Linn County results of readiness for the 2003-04 school year were as follows:

- Motor Skills 47%
- Communication 29%
- Cognitive 40%
- Social Emotional 46%
- Self Management 42%

(Linn County Community Empowerment, 2005)

Data indicates that since its inception in Linn County results on the Kindergarten Perception survey have declined. Linn County scores were lower than the state in the areas of communication, cognitive and social emotional.

Preparation for kindergarten begins long before the child walks through the school door. Getting a child ready for school requires the parent to spend time reading, talking, and playing with their child.

DID YOU KNOW?

- 60% of brain development occurs from birth to 3 years of age and 90% by 5 years. Early intervention has the greatest chance of molding and developing the child's brain, even after severe situations.
- In 2003, 6.5% of Linn County births were low birth weight babies (born under 5 lbs. 5oz). Low birth weight can be an indicator of inadequate prenatal care or poor lifestyle choices during pregnancy, and is often a good predictor of future health and developmental complications.
- The number of confirmed child abuse reports continue to rise in Linn County. In 2005 there were 1031 confirmed abused children, 492 of whom were 0-5 years old. The greatest number of abused children were from denial of critical care.
- A research effort in 2004 for the Linn County Mental Health Services Planning Committee indicated that between 135 to 1,215 children (birth through age 5) in Linn County may have a diagnosable behavioral condition/disorder of varying severity.
- According to the Children At Risk Task Force 2006 Annual Report, of the 3,494 total deliveries in Cedar Rapids, 1036 were screened for illegal drug exposure and 41 tests were confirmed positive, representing 4% of screenings.



Early strength-based intervention programs with parents address these critical issues and promote optimal development of children during their early years. Focus upon age appropriate child development, brain development, parenting strategies, parent/child activities and book sharing work together to provide an optimum environment to nurture a child's development and readiness for school. Early interventions have demonstrated the greatest success rate in creating change in families, enhancing opportunity for positive development of the child.



- Home visits and group services increase parenting knowledge, reduce isolation, lessen family stress and improve family functioning, thereby reducing the high risk factors for child abuse.
- Parents involved in the Parents as Teachers program or YPN group indicate that they read more to their children than previous. Literature continues to promote reading to their children as the most important thing parents can do to prepare their child for school success.
- Research shows that parents who have received Parents as Teachers curriculum showed improvements in parent knowledge, parenting behavior and parenting attitudes. (McGilly, 2000)
- Research shows that children who have received Parents as Teachers home visits scored significantly higher on kindergarten readiness tests and on standardized measures of reading, math, and language in the elementary grades. (Pfannenstiel, 1996, 1998; O'Brien, 2002).

Young Parents Network continues to be a leader in the early childhood education movement by providing group services and home visits to families with children prenatal to 5 years of age. New collaboratives and partnerships provide increased opportunities to create positive change for children in the Linn County community. Parents are a child's first and most important teacher and together we at YPN have the opportunity to help parents to be the best parents they can be to create strong and healthy families for today and tomorrow.

MARK YOUR CALENDARS!

Get ready for the Broadway Maybies 2007!

Theme: "The Early Years"

Date: February 2, 2007

Time: 7:00 pm

Location: Paramount Theatre

Cost of Admission: Tickets are \$10.00

For more information, call 319-364-8909.



Proceeds from this year's event will directly support YPN's Early Childhood/Early Intervention programming.

YOUNG PARENTS NETWORK

A YEAR IN REVIEW FY2006

Youth Development:

Youth Development is dedicated to offering abstinence education in Eastern Iowa. The program targets, but is not limited to serving 6th-12th grade youth and their parents. YPN's greatest priority is the prevention of adolescent pregnancy.

- 11,622 area youth received abstinence pregnancy prevention messages
- 287 youth experienced what it was like being a parent by utilizing the "Baby Think It Over" program
- 28% of youth surveyed showed an increased knowledge regarding four important life skills, personal accountability, goal setting, communication, and decision making

Parents as Teachers:

Parents as Teachers is an in-home visitation program for parents of children 0-5 that offers early childhood parent education and family support to help parents be the best and most influential first teacher for their child.

- 374 Families received PAT personal visits
- 545 Children received PAT personal visits
- 48% Low Income
- 20.1% Low Education Attainment
- 26% Single-Parent Household

Number of visits provided per age group during 7/01/05-6/30/06:

Child Age	Count
Prenatal	122
Birth-11months	969
One Year Olds	938
Two Year Olds	960
Three Year Olds	641
Four Year Olds	431
Five Year Olds	204

Group Services:

Group services provide support and education for prenatal and parenting families in a four county area. Young families participate in interactive parent/child activities and break out into small group sessions for topic discussion.

- 379 Moms and Dads
- 299 Children
- 81 Support people
- 4,703 units of service (one count for each time a person attends)

Group Demographics	Percent
Caucasian	89%
African American	9%
Single Parent	89%
Married	7%
WIC	68%
Food Stamps	49%
Title XIX	68%



2006-2007 BOARD OF TRUSTEES

Catherine Blando
University of Iowa

Dana Ehrhart
Community Volunteer

Rob Gettemy
Liquid Capital

Nancy Penner
Shuttleworth & Ingersoll, P.L.C.

Ralph Savoy
Consult Savoy

Nancy Ziese
Adoption Specialist and Consultant

YPN serves families and youth
in Benton, Cedar, Dubuque,
Iowa, Jones and Linn Counties.

The mission of
Young Parents Network would not
be possible without the efforts of
our Board of Directors,
Board of Trustees, and staff.



Non Profit
Organization
U.S. POSTAGE
PAID
Permit No. 253
CEDAR RAPIDS, IOWA

205 12th Street S.E. • Cedar Rapids, Iowa 52403

RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED

YOUNG PARENTS NETWORK STAFF

Rachel Anderson
Prenatal Coordinator - Linn County

Patti Bammer
Community Wide Parent Educator -
Jones County Resource

Lea Benson
Director of Outreach Services -
Benton, Iowa & Jones Counties

Rhonda Blomme
Parent Educator - Iowa County

Amy DeLine'-Glaw
Family Support Worker - Linn County

Sheri Drahos
Parent Educator - Benton County

Libby Duffy
Parent Educator/Program Manager -
Benton County

Nancy Dunkel
Family Support Worker - Dubuque
County

Beula Dvorak
Director of Linn County Prenatal &
Parenting Programs

Jessica Eash
Family Support Worker

Nicky Eilers
Parent Educator/Program Manager -
Jones County

Cindy Geerts
Parent Educator/Family Support
Worker - Iowa County

Sara Gerlach
Prevention Specialist - Cedar, Linn, &
Jones Counties

Crystal Hall
Youth Development Coordinator

Judy Judd
Moms Coordinator – Linn County

Kathy Kaiden
Director of Development

Danielle Leeser
Cornerstone Program Manager

Jan Moffit
Parent Educator/Family Support
Worker-Benton County

Steve Nylin
Dads Coordinator/Parent Educator -
Linn County

Diane Olejniczak
Receptionist

Lynette Otten
Parent Educator/Family Support
Worker - Jones County Resource

Nancy Pallardy
Parent Educator - Iowa County

Ann Pieper
Parent Educator - Iowa County

Karla Pisarik
Youth Development Consultant

Jeanette Shoop
Parent Educator - Jones County
Resource

Brian Stutzman