Strengthening Family Connections: Enhancing Our Grandchildren’s Future

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Interaction components
1. Understand families in their context
2. Develop a knowledge base about all aspects of the families-in-context
3. Develop a model responsive to families’ needs
4. Use current exemplars to provide guidance

Continuum of Care

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Trends: Pew Research Center
2000-2008 an increase from 2.4 to 2.6 grandparent caregivers
- 2007-2008 single year increase of 6%
- 49% live with a single parent
- 43% sole caregiver - Responsible for meeting the basic food, shelter and clothing needs of their grandchildren.

Trends
- Census Grandparents
  - 53% Caucasian
  - 24% African American
  - 18% Hispanics
  - 3% Asian
- Income
  - Over 50 years of age - 18% below the poverty line compared to 8% noncustodial
  - 32% one and three times poverty rate ($15,130)

Trends - Maryland
- 45,026 grandparents are the householders responsible for their grandchildren living with them.
  - 42% White
  - 48% are Black/African American
  - 3% are Asian
  - 5% are Hispanic/Latino, and may be of any race
  - 35% have no parents of the children present in the home
  - 66% are under age 60.
  - 13% live in poverty
  - 8,026 grandparents in Baltimore

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Explaining the Trend
- Increase in drug abuse, especially crack cocaine
- AIDS
- Parental incarceration
- Divorce
- Teen pregnancy
- Rise in single-parent households
- Poverty
- Occurrences of child abuse and neglect

Challenges and Stressors

Grandparents
- 45.9% African American care giving grandparents over 45 years of age have at least one disabled household member (Minkler & Fuller-Thomson, 2005)
- One third of African American care giving grandmothers over 45 years of age are below the poverty line (Minkler & Fuller-Thomson, 2005)
- African American care giving grandmothers over 45 years of age were more likely to live in overcrowded conditions and were more likely to have functional limitations (Minkler & Fuller-Thomson, 2005)
- 33% of children in grandparent-headed households lack health insurance (Kirby & Kaneda, 2002)

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Challenges & Stressors

1. Victims of abuse and neglect
2. Victims of domestic violence
3. Histories of living in unstable and chaotic households
4. Problem behaviors in school, home, and community
5. Emotional, academic difficulties and/or psychological or physical problems (e.g., Sands & Goldberg-Glen, 2000)

Prevention Framework

Risk Factors

Protective Factors

OUTCOMES

- Child Safety
- Child Well-Being
- Family Stability

RISK FACTORS

- High stress
- Daily hassles
- Adverse life events
- Financial instability
- Inadequate resources
- Legal uncertainty
- Impact of discrimination
- Multiple traumas
- Parental stress
- Intergenerational conflict

PROTECTIVE FACTORS

- Spirituality
- Social network
- Parenting competence
- Attitude toward parenting
- Family functioning
- Attitude toward change
- Caregiver physical health
- Caregiver mental health

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Contextual Risks
- Persons living in urban poverty share increased risk for exposure to daily hassles and strains related to meager resources, crowded conditions, etc.;
- The challenges associated with hardship conditions and exposure to traumas negatively affect individual functioning (child and adult) by increasing distress;
- Increased parental distress attenuates positive parenting and, in turn, negatively influences family functioning; and
- Parental and family functioning are associated with child outcomes by increasing or reducing risk for development of emotional and/or behavior problems.

Whittlesey, S.W., et al; Levendosky, A.A. and S.A. Graham-Bermann; and O. and B. Burman (in Kiser, 2006)

Grandparent Raising Grandchildren Practices
- Support groups
- Parenting groups
- Navigator programs
- Housing programs
- Adoption and subsidized guardianship
- Foster care and kinship care
- Financial support
- Legal services
- Respite services
- Aging programs
- Comprehensive community-based service programs

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Grandparent Family Connections
- Comprehensive home based services for families struggling to meet the needs of children
  - Evidence supported model
  - Weekly services
  - Address multiple needs
  - Emphasis on community outreach
  - Family strengths perspective
- COPE-Caring for Others as a Positive Experience
  - Multi-state initiative
  - Comparing three manualized models of group intervention (Stress management, parent education, information and support)
  - Research

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Caring for Others as a Positive Experience (COPE)

- Department of Health and Human Services
- National Institutes of Health National Institute of Nursing Research 1R01NR012256-01 Revised
- Ohio, Texas, California, & Maryland
- 126 grandmothers and grandchild
- Participate in 10 week group
- Interviews before and after the group and every 6 months to 2 years
- Understand the benefit of parental cognitions, behavior strategies, or support and information in caring for grandchild

Parenting Practices Models

- Strong relationship between social support and grand parenting practices (Ramaswamy, Bhavnagri, & Barton, 2008)
- “Aging morale mediates the influence of social support on grand parenting practices” (Ramaswamy, Bhavnagri, & Barton, 2008)
- Increasing positive parent-child interactions and emotional communication skills, teaching time out and parenting consistency, and skill practice in sessions associated with larger effects (Kaminsky, Valle, Filene, & Boyle, 2008)

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