

CENTER FOR THE STUDY OF SOCIAL POLICY

Then & Now:

30 years

of Ideas and Innovation

Center
for the
Study
of
Social
Policy

2012 ANNUAL REPORT

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Letter from the BOARD CHAIR



For more than 30 years, I have been privileged to be associated with the Center for the Study of Social Policy (CSSP), first as a senior associate and now as board chair. With one foot in the academic arena and another in the world of policy and practice, I found CSSP to be a place where big ideas are embraced and tested in the real world.

My initial work with CSSP revolved around supporting the development of family preservation programs, innovative child welfare reform and reform through litigation. Upon leaving CSSP, I joined the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, where two of my first tasks were to lead the implementation of the Family Preservation and Family Support Services Act of 1993, as well as a national effort to establish and measure child welfare outcomes at the state level. Both of these policy initiatives were heavily influenced by CSSP.

These are just a few examples of what CSSP is. It is a place where academic and scholarly work, on-the-ground experience of families and practitioners and policy intersect. It was – and is – a place that was designed to be informed by knowledge and its application at the local and state levels. These policies affect not only governments but also people. Real people.

For 30 years – though the timeline unofficially stretches much longer – CSSP has worked to bring together different sources of knowledge. Different viewpoints, experiences and information – both qualitative and quantitative – to impact the lives of children, families and communities.

It's the coupling of emerging brain science developments with today's community needs that will create the new opportunities young children and their families must have to be successful. As a nation we must develop these opportunities to be successful.

The board of directors, leadership and staff have embraced the challenge of creating opportunities for the children, families and communities that need them most. It is this work that has been the soul of the organization and continues to be its future.

As we embark on the next 30 years, the board and I are energized by the constructive influence the organization has in Washington, DC, in state capitals and with thousands of families in countless neighborhoods across the country. CSSP's vision and work, providing leadership and fostering change in partnership with others, is what truly turns "ideas into action."

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Carol W. Spigner". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Carol Wilson Spigner, M.S.W., D.S.W.
BOARD CHAIR

Letter from the LEADERSHIP

Looking back over CSSP's history, we were asked if there's a certain theme that comes to mind. Something that so clearly resonates from the past that it cannot help but be visible in our future? We hope there are many. But if we were to stop and reflect over every piece of work, every success and every misstep, it would be clear that four things stand out, and always have.



CSSP's longstanding commitment to equity, results and the power of place – often in the context of child well-being – is what CSSP has always been about. It is these elements that can be seen clearly in our past, are the operating base for our present and guide our future.

This 2012 annual report attempts to take you through part of this journey. To show you where these ideas were born and how they've grown. To show how each of these elements exist in every project, initiative or proposal and the synergies among them.

There are plenty of ancillary themes that appear again and again in our work, like a historical emphasis on adequate economic supports for families and ensuring that community residents are helping guide the decisions that affect them on a large scale. Also prominent is the idea that it is our responsibility to help create an explosion of possibilities for young children and young families. These are themes that fit perfectly within the framework we've established during the last three decades.

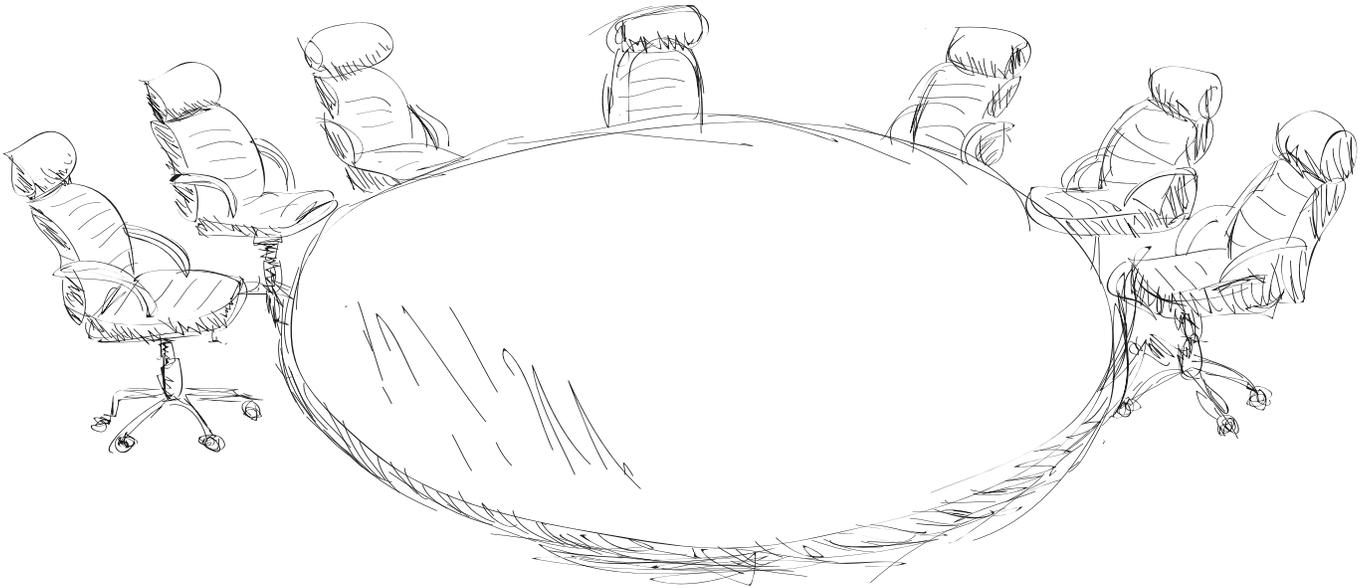
Our goal is to take what we've learned – and are learning – and continue to share why it's important. And why change and opportunity really happen when you have the intersection of many of these elements. Only then will we be able to demonstrate success on health, safety, education, happiness and opportunity for children and families who are faced with the toughest challenges.

We are thankful for every staff member, board member, policymaker, funder, partner, collaborator and innovative thinker who has been part of our history so far, and look forward to the many more that will be part of our future.

Frank Farrow
DIRECTOR

Judith W. Meltzer
DEPUTY DIRECTOR

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'82

Center for the Study of Social Policy (CSSP) officially incorporated as a nonprofit.

'83

Published *Restructuring Medicaid: An Agenda for Change*, a summary report from a national study group tasked to develop strategies to control Medicaid costs and to increase access and the quality of health care received by the poor. CSSP created and guided the group with funding from the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation.

'85

“Creative financing” work began as CSSP helped states look at creatively using pooled, joint funding under Title IV-E, Title XIX and other federal funding streams to keep families together and safe.



'90

In collaboration with the Annie E. Casey Foundation, CSSP developed and released the first national KIDS COUNT® report.

'92, '94

Improved Outcomes Project pioneered the development of results-based approaches at the community level with the National Center on Education and the Economy.

World Without Work: Causes and Consequences of Black Male Joblessness released.



Time

'83

CSSP awarded a federal contract to identify and share effective interagency state and local policies to serve handicapped children as part of implementing P.L. 94-142.

'83

A Dream Deferred: Economic Status of Black Americans: A Working Paper is published.



'85

With support from the Pew Charitable Trusts, CSSP developed the ideas behind states using Social Security supplements to pay for elderly and disabled long-term care.

'91

Began class action reform court monitoring work with the District of Columbia in the case of *LaShawn A. v. Dixon*.



'93

First KIDS COUNT® state grants issued.

'94

Non Adversarial Task Force established in Kansas around class action litigation monitoring.



'95

Partnered with the Annie E. Casey Foundation to create its New Futures initiative.



'99

Annie E. Casey Foundation's Making Connections began, creating a Technical Assistance Resource Center (TARC), that is managed by CSSP.

'03

Strengthening Families national initiative rolled out.



'09

PolicyforResults.org goes live.

'07

Released Customer Satisfaction framework, which utilizes community resident feedback to improve results, quality and services.



'12

Community capacity framework launched in eight Building Neighborhood Capacity Program sites.



'11

Partnered with PolicyLink and Harlem's Children Zone to create the Promise Neighborhoods Institute at PolicyLink.



line

'96

Community Partnerships for the Protection of Children established through the Edna McConnell Clark Foundation.



'01

Local governance and community decision-making work moves forward with the development of six learning guides for building community capacity.

'02

First issue of *Hired for Good* released. This newsletter worked to support quality human services through innovative human resource management.

'04

Alliance for Racial Equity in Child Welfare created.



'08

First Institutional Analysis released, documenting organizational factors contributing to inequitable child welfare outcomes for children of color.

'11

Youth Thrive, a Protective and Promotive Factors Framework for ages 11-26, is launched.



F O C U S O N
RESULTS

Then & Now

KIDS COUNT®. Results-Based Accountability®. PolicyforResults.org. These are just three tools widely used today that began as part of CSSP's commitment to outcomes-based work.

The earliest example of the organization's long history of focusing on results began through what was known as the **Improved Outcomes Project**. This educational reform effort, conducted in a partnership with the National Center on Education and the Economy, identified a core set of outcomes for children and families such as improved health, education and well-being, and then focused the work of many partners – schools, human service providers, parents and community members – on those results.

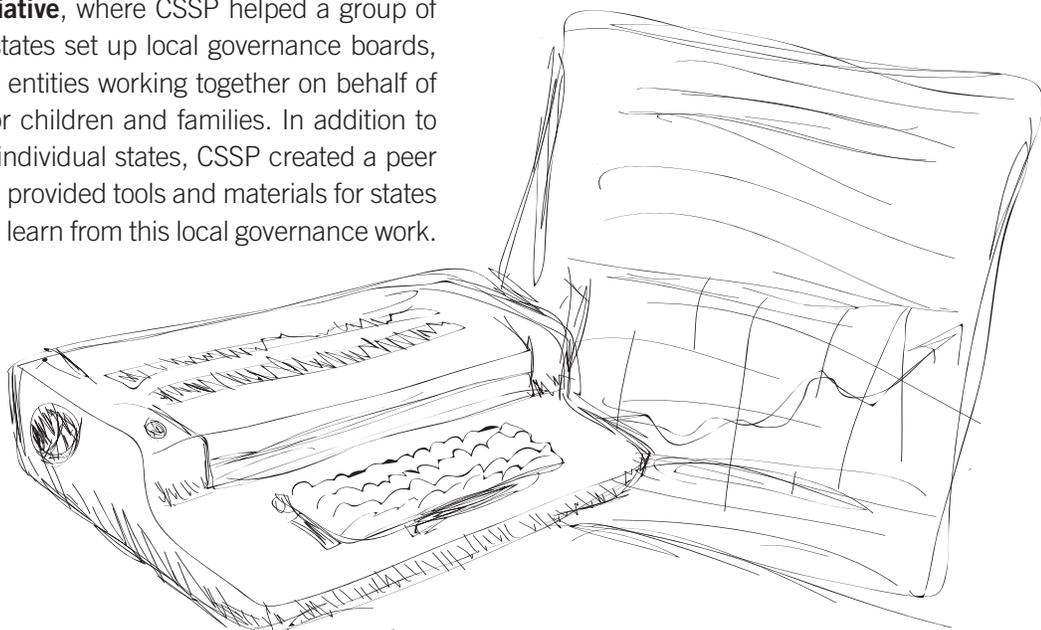
The project worked with a network of sites, including states such as Vermont and individual school districts, to create an innovative community process through which many leaders hold themselves accountable for a common set of results. From this work came the inspiration for Mark Friedman's **Results-Based Accountability®**, a disciplined way of thinking and taking action that communities can use to improve the quality of life.

Collaboration was also central in the **Child Welfare Reform Initiative**, where CSSP helped a group of pioneering states set up local governance boards, more formal entities working together on behalf of outcomes for children and families. In addition to helping the individual states, CSSP created a peer network and provided tools and materials for states to share and learn from this local governance work.

This project was one of the earliest systematic efforts to demonstrate the importance and effectiveness of systems working together in an organized and structured way. It was a deliberate effort to say that communities – and the states that backed them – had a responsibility for the well-being of children.

The idea of coordination and engaging multiple partners, which was central to **KIDS COUNT®** and the Improved Outcomes Project, also played a significant role in CSSP's **State Systems Reform Initiative**, another results-focused program initially joined by 10 states. This work sought to shift child and family service agencies – social services/child welfare, education, juvenile justice, health and mental health – from operating in isolation to coordinated systems that work together to measurably improve results for children and families statewide.

Funded by the Annie E. Casey Foundation, the underlying premise of this initiative was that systems needed to change the way that decisions were made and move from single agency decisions to decisions that included families and community members' points of view. The goal was to move



decisions from state rooms into cities and counties and closer to the families they were intended to help, and to give local communities more control over resources and decisions in exchange for greater responsibility and accountability. The initiative examined how services were funded, looking for ways to increase accountability, reduce duplication and target results. Many of these priorities are still visible in CSSP's community change and system work.

In 1990, **KIDS COUNT®** was born as a CSSP project. The earliest idea was to develop a wall chart that could be hung in the office of every state legislator in the country to depict how children were faring in his/her state in comparison with other states. CSSP understood that comparative data – and competition among states to do better – occurred on many other dimensions. Why not child well-being?

The goal was to track the status of children in the United States. At the national level, the wall chart grew into an initiative that included the publication of the annual KIDS COUNT Data Book, which used the best available data to measure the educational, social, economic and physical well-being of children state by state. CSSP worked with the Population Reference Bureau to identify a set of 10 available indicators that would portray well-being during the span of a child's development that were available nationally and by state. The next stage of development involved identifying state data and advocacy partners and funding state KIDS COUNT grantees. After three years of this work, CSSP transferred it to the Annie E. Casey Foundation, the funder of the effort. The products well-known today as KIDS COUNT use many of the same indicators and were born out of the second and third iterations of this work, in partnership with state advocacy organizations and universities that competed to be part of the project.

Continuing a focus on collaboration, CSSP turned to incorporating results into local governance, in recognition that no single system could get the outcomes for children and families without working with the other systems. This was a key concept in several CSSP projects, starting with **New Futures**, a social experiment that provided a total of \$50 million to five cities – Dayton, Ohio; Lawrence, Massachusetts; Little Rock, Arkansas; Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania and Savannah, Georgia – over five years to measurably improve school achievement, reduce adolescent pregnancy and school dropout rates and increase young people's gainful employment after high school.

The lessons learned through all of these initiatives – and other early CSSP work – established the foundation for today's focus on results. Some key lessons learned were that well-being outcomes are what people – all people – care most about. These are the outcomes that capture the aspirations of parents, community representatives and systems leaders and staff alike. This common denominator allows multiple partners, from different backgrounds and perspectives, to work on the same agenda coherently and over time.

Another critical lesson from the early work centered on the power of data – when developed and communicated in an effective way – to mobilize action. Each of these projects also reinforced CSSP's role as a catalyst for work that could then be embraced by other stakeholders to take to a greater scale.

A focus on results to ensure accountability is a consistent mantra for all of CSSP's work.

Then & Now

Today, CSSP makes sure that “beginning with the end in mind” is a starting point of all work – whether helping community members determine what they want to achieve for their neighborhoods or public agencies deciding about priority outcomes.

One of the critical lessons learned from the past is the value of collaborative, results-driven work at the local level. It must be legitimate with genuine authority to achieve results. Another important takeaway? The value of peer networks to support change. All of CSSP’s work focuses on how agencies, systems and neighborhoods can learn from and help each other. This has been translated into CSSP’s place-based work, the Strengthening Families National Network and a wide range of tools and products about local and state collaboration. Through its current **Promise Neighborhoods** and **Building Neighborhood Capacity Program** contracts with the federal government, CSSP is ensuring this work is put in place on the ground.

At the neighborhood level, the tough lessons learned from the State Systems Reform Initiative made clear that instead of just encouraging residents to be involved (often in token ways), resident ownership and leadership were essential. To do that, the locus of the control must move even closer to families: from counties and cities to neighborhoods and communities and targeted specific “places” where families are most in need. All aspects of CSSP’s current Community Change projects emphasize this.

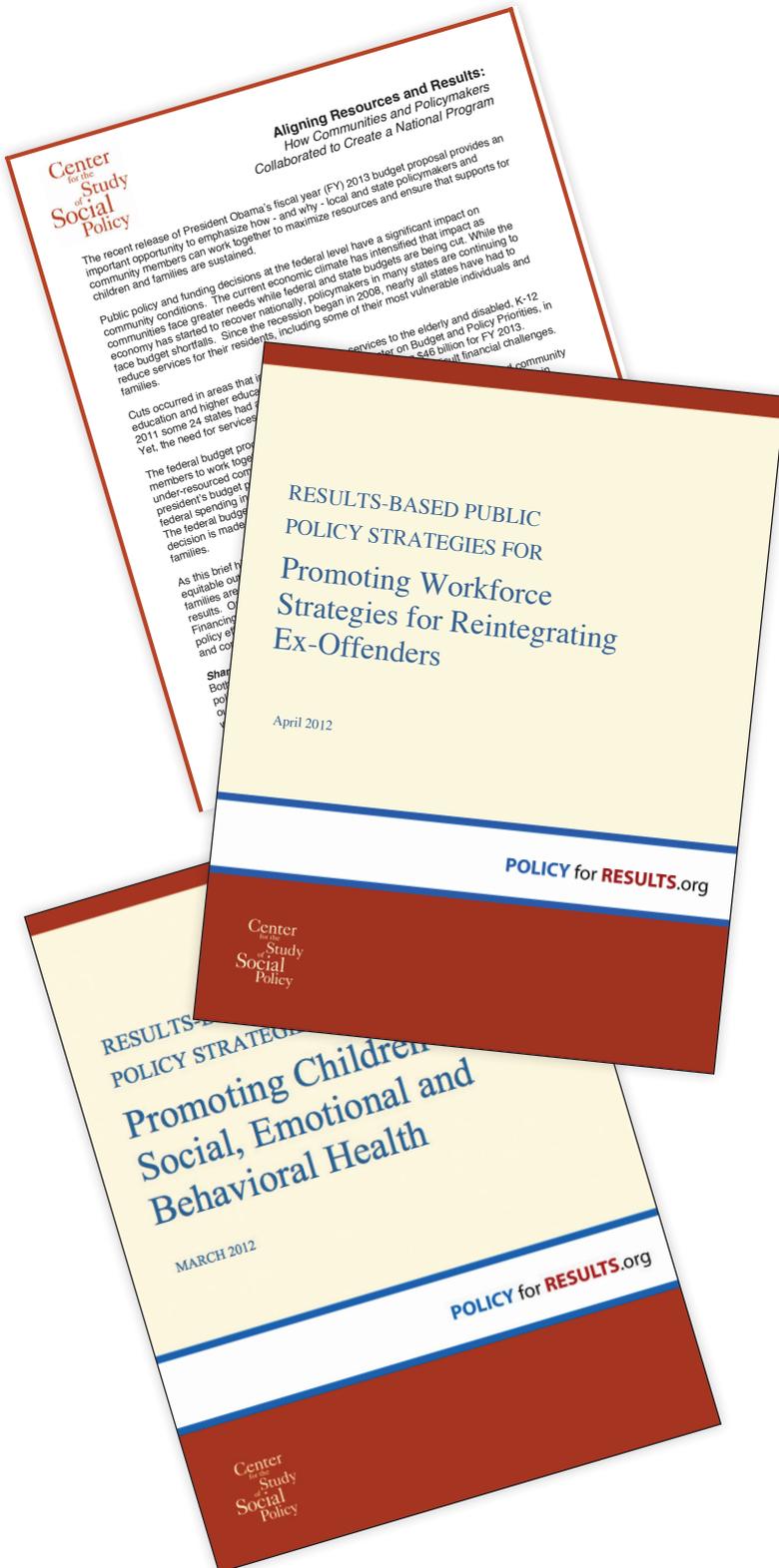
Learning from early work about the importance of state policy support for outcomes-based local work has helped drive today’s **Policy for Results**,

*Every project, every contract,
every outreach effort does its best
to focus on how agencies, systems
and neighborhoods can learn from
and help each other.*

an online set of tools for focusing policy strategies on achieving measurable results for children and families. Through this site, CSSP identifies research-based policy strategies shown to achieve targeted results. The interactive website and accompanying policy briefs influence governors, state and local legislators and policy advocates.

Last year, PolicyforResults.org added two new content areas, including *Results-Based Policy Strategies for Promoting Children’s Social, Emotional and Behavioral Health and Promoting Workforce Strategies for Reintegrating Ex-Offenders*. It was also the first year CSSP produced *Aligning Resources and Results*, a federal budget analysis developed in collaboration with partners in local communities and in government. This document connects what is happening on the federal policy level to work taking place in communities across the country.

In 2012, building on the power of collaboration, CSSP continued several key policy partnerships with Center for Law and Social Policy, Child Welfare and Mental Health Coalition, Coalition for Access and Opportunity, First Focus, Food Trust and PolicyLink, among many others.



The impact of our partnership [with CSSP] has been transformational for the Center on the Developing Child at Harvard. CSSP's remarkable expertise in strengthening community-based systems aligned with public policies has emboldened us to dig deeper and aim higher in our shared quest for breakthrough impacts in reducing intergenerational poverty.

—JACK P. SHONKOFF, M.D.

Julius B. Richmond FAMRI Professor of Child Health and Development, Harvard School of Public Health and Harvard Graduate School of Education; Professor of Pediatrics, Harvard Medical School and Children's Hospital Boston; Director, Center on the Developing Child at Harvard University

**COMMITMENT TO
EQUITY**

Then & Now

If anything, equity has been the single core value of CSSP's work during the years. The organization's commitment to this value has covered income, ability, age and race.

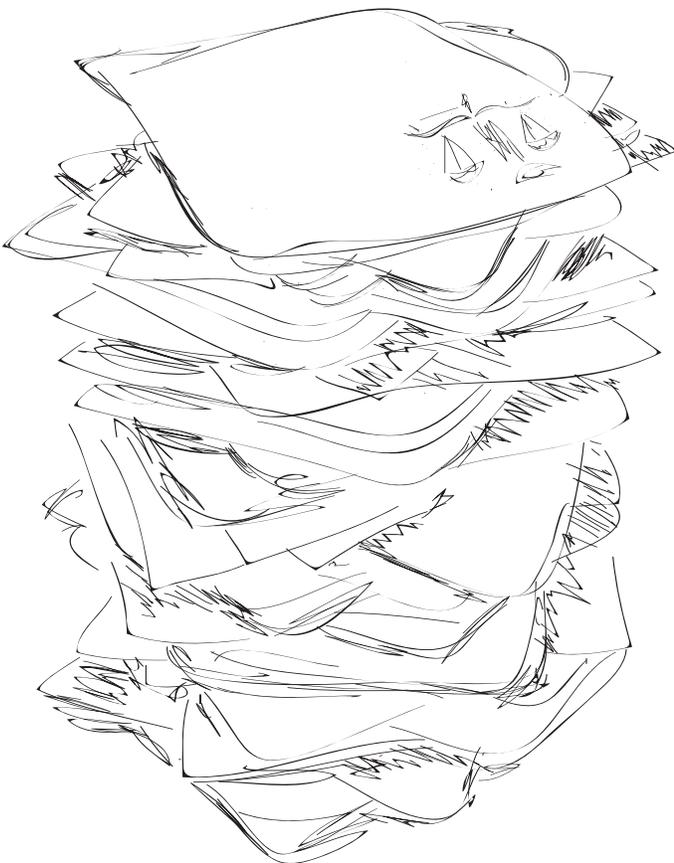
In the late 1970s, CSSP started developing ideas on how to approach welfare reform for President Jimmy Carter. The result, Triple Track, attempted to provide a route out of poverty for families through employment and training as well as an income floor for those whom, because of disability or mental illness, could not be expected to work. The "welfare" track would be for those truly not expected by society to work; the "manpower" track would combine job training and placement and public jobs for those whom society expected to work; and the "working poor" track would expand and

liberalize the Earned Income Tax Credit (EITC), which would ensure that people were always better off working than on welfare. This approach also focused on the income support needs of mothers with young children. While Triple Track was never enacted, many of the ideas within it show up in Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) today, including expanding EITC and the idea that work, not welfare, should be the center of public assistance.

Restructuring Medicaid: An Agenda for Change was published in 1983. This was a summary report from a national study group tasked with developing strategies to control Medicaid costs while increasing access and the quality of health care received by the poor. CSSP organized the group with funding from the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation. CSSP would go on to focus not just on care for the poor, but also for the elderly. This early focus on long-term care for the elderly and the disabled reinforced the organization's commitment to equity, as these were populations whose needs were not addressed by existing policy and were thus further disadvantaged.

In 1985, Tom Joe, CSSP co-founder and former director, and Cheryl Rogers wrote the book *By the Few, For the Few: The Reagan Welfare Legacy*, which was based on case studies of families that became more impoverished because of the Reagan Administration's changes to Aid to Families with Dependent Children, which reduced financial assistance to children of single parents and devolved important responsibilities for the poor to state governments. The book continued CSSP's strong commitment to equity for the nation's lowest income families.

Other early equity work was more broadly focused on the income needs of the poor disabled and poor elderly. In 1989, CSSP collaborated with the Villers Foundation on an effort known as



SSI Aware, which focused on the need for outreach so that poor elderly individuals would get access to the benefits to which they were entitled.

As the journey toward shedding more light on issues of equity continued, CSSP made the connection between race and economic consequences. *A Dream Deferred: Economic Status of Black Americans: A Working Paper* was published in 1983, and in 1994, CSSP, along with the Annie E. Casey Foundation and the Philadelphia Children's Network, released *World Without Work: Causes and Consequences of Black Male Joblessness*. The monograph sought to identify among de-industrialization, immigration and suburbanization some of the structural explanations for the joblessness of black males. This work was the start of CSSP's interest in the plight of black males – work that continues today through partnerships with AIR and the federal Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA), with whom CSSP is currently working to address the challenges facing black males in child welfare.

All of this work, along with dedicated internal efforts to train staff and critically look at the equity impacts of work, set a clear foundation for CSSP's ongoing focus on raising awareness and mandating change – policy and practice – with regard to equitable outcomes.

Along the way, CSSP articulated its desire to become an anti-racist organization, recognizing the central role that race has played historically in contributing to persistent inequities and committing itself to confronting and addressing all forms of racism, particularly institutional and structural. Critical to this work is promoting equity and reducing disparities based on race, ethnicity, sovereignty, gender, sexual orientation/gender identity and socioeconomics.

Advancing equity is a mission that cannot be borne by one organization alone. CSSP shares that goal, and we at PolicyLink are proud to have them as a long-time partner, committed to making a sustainable difference for all communities.

–ANGELA GLOVER BLACKWELL
Founder and Chief Executive Officer
PolicyLink

Then & Now

Today, CSSP integrates an equity lens into all its work, through place-based initiatives helping disinvested communities build capacities, as well as by focusing an equity lens on the consequences of federal, state and local public policies.

While a part of everything CSSP does, there are several bodies of standalone work that explicitly deal with racial equity, including the Alliance for Racial Equity in Child Welfare and CSSP's development of the Institutional Analysis as a tool for examining racial disparities.

The **Alliance for Racial Equity in Child Welfare** is a coalition of national organizations addressing racial and ethnic disparities in the child welfare system that CSSP formed and manages. It was redesigned in 2012 to broaden ownership and focus even more intensively on improving well-being outcomes for children and families of color involved with the child welfare system.

The “new” Alliance is committed to monitoring and tracking national trends and serving as a national clearinghouse and information-sharing resource, focusing on successful policies and practices. The Alliance is results-focused and aims to improve achievement of the following outcomes for children and families:

- Strengthening families in their own homes and communities
- Safe reduction of entries into foster care
- Swifter movement to reunification and other permanency options
- Improvement of children's social, emotional and overall well-being

During 2012, after a series of thoughtful discussions with initial partners, the Alliance determined the next phase of work will be

organized around the achievement of the following three major goals:

1. Deepening the field's understanding and knowledge of the causes and consequences of current outcomes for children and families of color in the child welfare system.
2. Identifying, lifting up and promoting programs, policies, strategies and conditions that improve those outcomes.
3. Advancing a national policy agenda focused on improving access to supportive resources and responsive systems, resulting in improved outcomes for children and families of color.

Also in 2012, in partnership with Child Trends, CSSP developed a quantitative data analysis tool to be used by public child welfare agency administrators to track key data indicators by race and ethnicity for child welfare-involved children and families. The tool compiles multiple indicators related to child maltreatment, foster care, child physical health, education and cognitive development and child social and emotional well-being. The tool supports demographic analyses and the comparison of indicator data across each of the following variables: race/ethnicity, child age, child gender and geographic location as defined locally (i.e., neighborhood, zip code, county, etc.).

Another innovative body of work that is focused on reforming systemic inequity is the **Institutional Analysis**, a set of qualitative diagnostic tools that seeks to understand and address organizational and structural contributors to poor outcomes for children and families involved in the child welfare, juvenile justice and other systems. With a long history of working with state, local and community groups to generate ideas to inform national

policy, the Institutional Analysis work continues CSSP's tradition of learning from the field, but is different in its intentional race equity lens.

Last year, CSSP used the Institutional Analysis methodology to take an in-depth look at the experiences of African American children who do not reunify with their families or find alternative permanent homes in three Los Angeles County child welfare field offices, and the experiences of African American and Latino youth in the juvenile justice system of Fairfax County, Virginia.

To date, CSSP has completed 10 Institutional Analyses in six different jurisdictions across the country. Key partners last year included the Fairfax County and Los Angeles County leadership. In the California work, CSSP benefited greatly from partnerships and in-kind support from Casey Family Programs, the Black Community Task Force, the California Department of Social Services and the Child and Family Policy Institute of California.

In 2012, CSSP also began developing the ideas for an **Equity Index** and an equity-focused policy initiative intended to provide information on the way current public policies are impacting children and families in often marginalized groups. This index will provide a baseline – envisioned as a state-by-state database – of the differential and cumulative effects of public policy across a variety of areas.

Today's equity work is critical to progress. Without examining the ramifications of inequity in *all* work, CSSP's goal of child and family well-being cannot be achieved.



PLACE
MATTERS

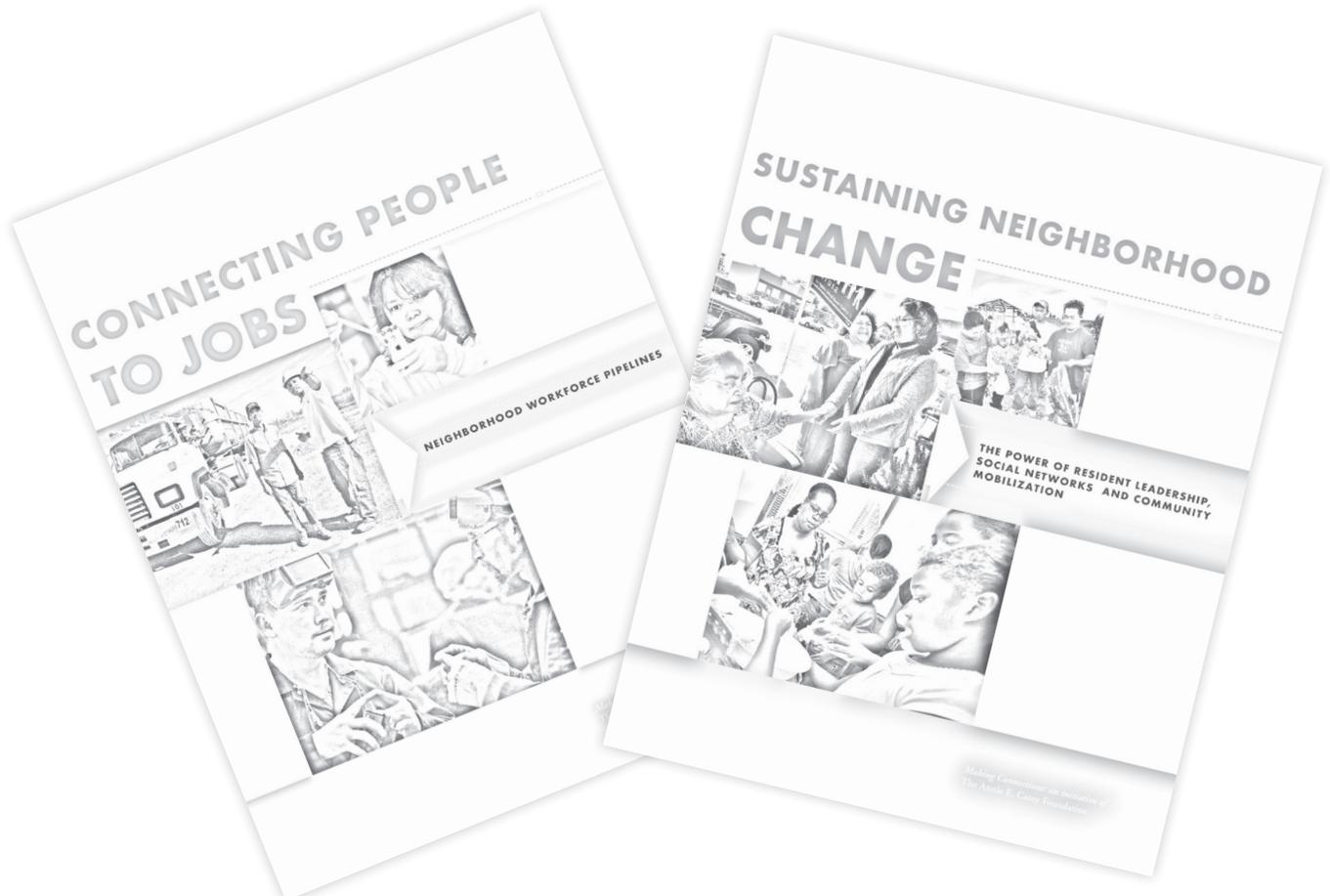
Then & Now

The necessity of “community” is a thread that was woven throughout much of CSSP’s early work, from child welfare reform initiatives like Community Partnerships for the Protection of Children to the focus on local governance to state reform initiatives and more. “Place” was always central to the work CSSP was doing. And while much of the early work was about state systems recognizing local government, priorities shifted in the late 1990s to a focus on neighborhoods and the systems that support them, as part of CSSP’s work with the **Making Connections** initiative.

From roughly 1999 through 2010, CSSP was the coordinator of the technical assistance for the Annie E. Casey Foundation’s Making Connections initiative, a 10-year, \$100 million effort in 10 cities across the country. One of the most valuable

lessons from this extensive project, led by CSSP Director Frank Farrow, is the importance of place in children’s futures.

The goal of the initiative was to demonstrate that results for children and families could be improved through a variety of family strengthening interventions. The focus was on improving family economic success (employment and asset development) for adults and the healthy development and school success (third grade reading) for young children. CSSP connected site leaders, parents and a host of partners with the knowledge, skills, tools and effective approaches they needed to accomplish their goals. In keeping with CSSP history, Making Connections was a results-driven initiative, but it also pioneered a host of other concepts that have become





accepted in the broader field, including the need to build community capacity to achieve results and the importance of resident engagement and leadership as keys to that capacity.

From this work grew CSSP's overarching theory of "community capacity to achieve results," which has become an increasingly well-established framework nationally. CSSP is further developing its community capacity work through support of the U.S. Department of Justice – funded Building Neighborhood Capacity Program and the U.S. Department of Education's Promise Neighborhoods initiative.

The Center for the Study of Social Policy has been a leading advocate for comprehensive, place-based initiatives to fight poverty, and their compelling work has made them an important partner of the Harlem Children's Zone and Promise Neighborhoods.

—GEOFFREY CANADA

President and Chief Executive Officer
Harlem Children's Zone

Then & Now

In 2012, CSSP's community change work continued to reinforce the theme of building community capacity to achieve better – and more equitable – results. The work today is based on three main concepts:

- **Place Matters** – Bad outcomes tend to cluster in certain neighborhoods and communities across the country. Public services and the private market do not function well for people living in concentrated poverty, and access to opportunity is not evenly distributed.
- **Race Matters** – People of color are disproportionately represented in neighborhoods of concentrated poverty.
- **Capacity Matters** – Decades of disinvestment in low-income neighborhoods have undermined the infrastructure and capacity that these neighborhoods need to address the lack of opportunity and structural inequities they face.

In 2012, CSSP continued to work with **Promise Neighborhoods** across the country, as a partner in the Promise Neighborhoods Institute (PNI) at PolicyLink and through a contract with the U.S. Department of Education. CSSP managed and coordinated both PNI's and the Department of Education's technical assistance strategies, provided assistance to the first five communities receiving multi-million dollar implementation grants and worked to ensure that the 15 federal planning grantees – and other communities planning with local resources – developed strong approaches to building cradle-to-college-to-career pipelines of services, supports and opportunities. In 2012, in partnership with the Talent and Leadership Development Unit of the Annie E. Casey Foundation, PNI developed and launched a new program designed to ensure Promise Neighborhoods' leaders have the requisite skills to accelerate efforts to improve results in their communities. In the spirit of learning through its

work on the ground, CSSP also began production on a series of products that will chronicle the experience of different communities and share early lessons learned.

Last year's launch of the **Building Neighborhood Capacity Program (BNCP)** enabled CSSP to expand its efforts to eight new neighborhoods in four cities. BNCP is supported through a cooperative agreement with the U.S. Department of Justice and its federal partners in the Neighborhood Revitalization Initiative—the U.S. Departments of Education, Health and Human Services, Housing and Urban Development and Treasury. CSSP acts as the program's training and technical assistance coordinator, and after a competitive process, staff began providing hands-on help to local partners in neighborhoods in Flint, MI; Fresno, CA; Memphis TN and Milwaukee, WI.

The four cities have all formed partnerships made up of public agencies, local governments, philanthropy and civic leaders who have committed to support the work at the neighborhood level and transform their own policies, practices and funding patterns in ways that will help sustain the work and ensure it benefits other neighborhoods as well. CSSP's approach to BNCP builds on lessons learned from early work in the 1990s to help communities develop effective approaches to local decision-making as well as Making Connections. In 2012, CSSP created a new set of tools, including an assessment to gauge current capacity levels and needs, to help BNCP neighborhoods guide their work to create revitalization plans, use existing resources more effectively and attract new investments. To make sure that the impact of this work is felt beyond the eight neighborhoods, CSSP is also developing a Web-based BNCP Resource Center and conducting a formative assessment to capture lessons learned about the approach. Partners in this program include the Aspen Roundtable on Community Change, the Institute for Community Peace and the National League of Cities.

To broaden the impact of CSSP's work beyond the 50 neighborhoods implementing Promise Neighborhoods-like approaches and the Building Neighborhood Capacity Program, CSSP also continued to provide resources, funding opportunities, tools and information about what works through its **Investing in Community Change** blog. The blog is reaching a rapidly growing readership and providing real-time information to thousands of partners who, when CSSP was first formed in the early 1980s, would have had to wait for months to read these types of analyses through issue briefs, case studies, white papers and newsletters.

In 2012, CSSP continued its work with First 5 LA's **Best Start**, designed to build the capacity of 14 community partnerships in some of Los Angeles County's toughest neighborhoods. Still in its early stages of a long-term, place-based approach, Best Start aims to build capacity in local neighborhoods to prevent child abuse and neglect, reduce childhood obesity and ensure that children are prepared to succeed in school. CSSP, and its local partners in Los Angeles, provided training and technical assistance to each community partnership, including the development of capacity building self-assessment tools and individualized community plans.

CSSP also continued the evolution of its **Customer Satisfaction Project** in 2012, testing innovations and continuing to promote resident leadership and ownership of change. Guiding this work is the long-standing commitment to authentic involvement of constituents – residents, families, community leaders, parents and youth – as expert advisors on the changes needed in their communities.

The Customer Satisfaction Project expanded at both the neighborhood level through work in the Grove Hall community – a historically challenged neighborhood in Boston where people of color live with difficult quality of life realities – and as a tool to

improve customer and workforce experience within the Montgomery County, Maryland Department of Health and Human Services.

CSSP was introduced into the Grove Hall community by Boston Rising, which supported the campaign as an effort to engage residents to weigh-in on quality services and supports in their neighborhood and to establish an ongoing marketplace to test, rank and advocate for improved conditions.

Montgomery County embarked on its second installment of work with the Customer Satisfaction Project by agreeing to test worker tolerance and understanding on how to deliver quality services and improve the overall satisfaction with the department's safety net services. This work, which began in early 2012, culminated with the department engaging CSSP to train all the workers in their system to improve customer satisfaction and effectiveness and to implement a site-based customer feedback process.

The work did not just stay stateside in 2012, as CSSP also continued working with the Council of Europe's **Intercultural Cities** initiative to help three cities develop local community partnerships using community-based results accountability. In three pilot cities – Lisbon, Portugal; Melitopol, Ukraine and Tilburg, Netherlands – CSSP worked with local officials to target a neighborhood in each city with a history of diversity, immigrants and newcomers. In each city, a diverse group of participants set markers for improvements, established indicators to gauge their progress and designed strategies they believe will improve intercultural and equitable results. The three-year project is intended to be a pilot for other European cities.

CSSP anticipates its community change work will continue to grow in the coming years, as partners at the federal, state and local level see the impact this work can have on child, family and community well-being at scale.

**CHILD &
FAMILY
WELL-BEING**

Then & Now

From day one, CSSP placed itself at the forefront of promoting an ideological shift in child welfare practice by recognizing the value of keeping children safe at home. This foundational work focused on family preservation and family support and the policies, best practices and services designed to prevent the unnecessary separation of families. To this end, CSSP worked as part of a coalition to develop and pass the Adoption Assistance and Child Welfare Act of 1980 and led a network of states pioneering the use of intensive family preservation services. The implementation of family preservation services, funded primarily by the Edna McConnell Clark Foundation, was a successful campaign that helped mark a change toward a more proactive child welfare philosophy that focused on safely avoiding unnecessary out-of-home care.

Building on the experiences of the **family preservation services work**, CSSP again led the way in capturing ideas about community child protection. Director Frank Farrow authored a seminal paper for a Harvard University session that began to make the case for community partnerships where public agencies work with communities to protect children and achieve better results in terms of safety and well-being. This work preceded the **Community Partnerships for the Protection of Children** initiative, a 10-year, multi-site demonstration accompanied by a range of publications that promoted community-oriented policies and child welfare practice, operating from the premise that no single factor is responsible for child abuse and neglect, and thus no one public agency can safeguard children.

Work on the Community Partnerships for the Protection of Children built on that early experience and created a neighborhood-based approach to child abuse and neglect prevention and amelioration. Again, efforts were aimed at addressing parents' needs so that they could be

more nurturing parents, thereby improving the life experiences and well-being of their children. As part of this work, the practice of family engagement and teaming was further developed. Another publication of that time was *Bringing Families to the Table: A Comparative Guide to Family Meetings in Child Welfare*, which explored a range of family teaming approaches. While innovative then, it is now the foundation of most child welfare policy and increasingly a recognized part of effective practice.

While the early family preservation services work emphasized the measurement of whether foster care placement could be avoided, in fact, the strategy was broader and geared to strengthening families and addressing family well-being.

In 2001, CSSP studied the role that early care and education programs nationwide could play in preventing abuse and neglect through understanding positive family attributes that also promote healthy child development. This new conceptual framework and approach to preventing child abuse and neglect was called **Strengthening Families**. It involved examining research literature to build protective factors around young children by working differently with



their families. This new framework emphasized collaboration across disciplines. CSSP spent a year in the field learning from exemplary early care and education programs and practitioners around the country about how to build protective factors in everyday work. This knowledge base was used to develop tools to support early childhood programs, policymakers and advocates in making small but significant changes that build the protective factors.

The Strengthening Families work engaged a much broader range of actors around a family support framework and created a compelling argument for why family support is important by marshalling the research evidence that ties parental protective factors to optimal child development and child abuse prevention.

In 2008, CSSP began operation of the **Quality Improvement Center on Early Childhood**, a service of the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services' Children's Bureau. It was established to address the nation's urgent need to find effective approaches for reducing the likelihood of abuse and neglect of young children from birth to age five, with an emphasis on testing the protective factors as a method to do this.

Simultaneous with work to shift the focus of child welfare systems to help families *before* abuse or neglect occurs was the glaring recognition that too many public child welfare systems had unacceptably poor results and were failing children and families. Out of this realization grew work to support child welfare system change in the context of **class action litigation**.

To this end, CSSP has been involved in monitoring progress, mediating agreements and supporting change since the early 1990s. CSSP pioneered an approach to this work by advocating for non-adversarial strategies that support reform in what is often a very litigious process.

CSSP has been instrumental in my professional life for more than a decade. From being on both ends of class action monitoring and mediation work to re-engineering customer service in the department I oversee, I've been affected by their work on many levels. A career-long commitment to child well-being has only been nurtured and evolved by working so closely with CSSP staff on these – and many other – issues that affect the future of the children, families and communities I serve.

–UMA AHLUWALIA

Director, Montgomery County, Maryland
Department of Health and Human Services

As this work has evolved, CSSP has become much more explicit about the child outcomes and results states need to ensure child and family safety, permanence and well-being. This work – and ensuing progress – has taken place in jurisdictions as diverse as the District of Columbia, Georgia, Missouri, New Jersey, Tennessee and Washington.

Then & Now

Today, child and youth well-being – always in the context of families and communities – is one of the cornerstones of CSSP’s work. With an ever-growing range of initiatives and work directed at reforming systems and providing opportunities and ideas for promoting optimal, healthy development, CSSP is at the forefront of much child welfare work.

In 2012, CSSP’s **Pregnant and Parenting Youth in Foster Care** network was established, with four sites – the District of Columbia; New York City; Knox County, TN and Washington state – being selected from a national competition to pilot the work. Each site has selected a set of child and family well-being results they hope to impact during the next two years (examples: reductions in child abuse and neglect substantiations, increases in high school graduation, postponement of subsequent pregnancy, healthy births, etc.) as well as developing a range of strategies and policies to better serve two generations. A key part of this work is data collection to capture the incidence of parenting within the foster care population, something the field is lacking. This national effort will help inform the field about this very vulnerable population.

In collaboration with the American Bar Association, last year CSSP also convened more than 60 child welfare administrators, judges, attorneys and foundation partners to examine new models of **quality legal representation for parents** and the positive outcomes they have achieved for children and families. The work continues to evolve.

CSSP also continued its extensive **class action litigation monitoring** work in 2012, with staff working in the District of Columbia, Georgia, New Jersey and Tennessee. All four jurisdictions achieved improvements toward mandated child well-being outcomes. CSSP continues to produce regular monitoring reports for each of these jurisdictions and works closely with public agencies and their partners to implement strategies to improve outcomes.

Last year, **Youth Thrive**, CSSP’s Protective and Promotive Factors Framework for youth ages 11-26, was adopted by New Jersey, which is using the factors to re-think how the state provides services to youth in care. New Jersey will be examining their policies, practices, contracting, licensing and training efforts to ensure that they build the Youth Thrive factors. With the help of youth from Connecticut, the District of Columbia, Massachusetts and New York, CSSP also produced a video in 2012 that captured the voices of youth and what they need to thrive. Their input helped affirm that the Youth Thrive framework had resonance to youth regardless of whether they were in college, foster care or had experienced homelessness and early pregnancy. CSSP also began developing a menu of strategies to translate these ideas into practice.

As an organization that sits at the nexus between policymakers and practitioners, CSSP’s goal is always bridging the policy and practice environment to have impact at scale, while staying grounded in real-world practicalities. **Strengthening Families**, Youth Thrive’s protective factors counterpart for children 0-5, has been particularly attuned to this balance, structuring its work to have national policy-level impact while maintaining an active and engaged presence with state and local networks to ensure that all conversations are informed by the priorities and experiences of states, communities and the programs they fund.

Last year, Strengthening Families’ influence continued to grow, with 32 state members of the Strengthening Families National Network and eight additional states/territories launching new activities.

There was also greater Strengthening Families penetration and implementation in four key sectors: early childhood (29 states reported implementation), child abuse and neglect



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prevention (30 states reported implementation strategies), home visiting (23 states reported strategies) and child welfare practice (23 states reported strategies). Each of these reflects increases from the previous year. Early data show that 13 states have incorporated Strengthening Families into their federal Maternal Infant and Early Childhood Home Visiting Program grants; 12 states are using the protective factors to create a common framework across home visiting models; six states are using Strengthening Families as a framework for intake and referral services and 15 states are providing training for home visitors using Strengthening Families.

Strengthening Families continues to be supported by a partnership of national organizations and federal partners. These partners meet on a quarterly basis to share experiences and coordinate national Strengthening Families work. The national partners include the BUILD Initiative, the Child Welfare Information Gateway, FRIENDS National Resource Center, Help Me Grow National Center, the National Alliance of Children's Trust and Prevention Funds, the National Association for the Education of Young Children, Parents Anonymous, Parents as Teachers and United Way Worldwide. Federal partners have been engaged from the Administration for Children Youth and Families, the Health Resources Services Administration, the Office of Child Care and the Office of Head Start.

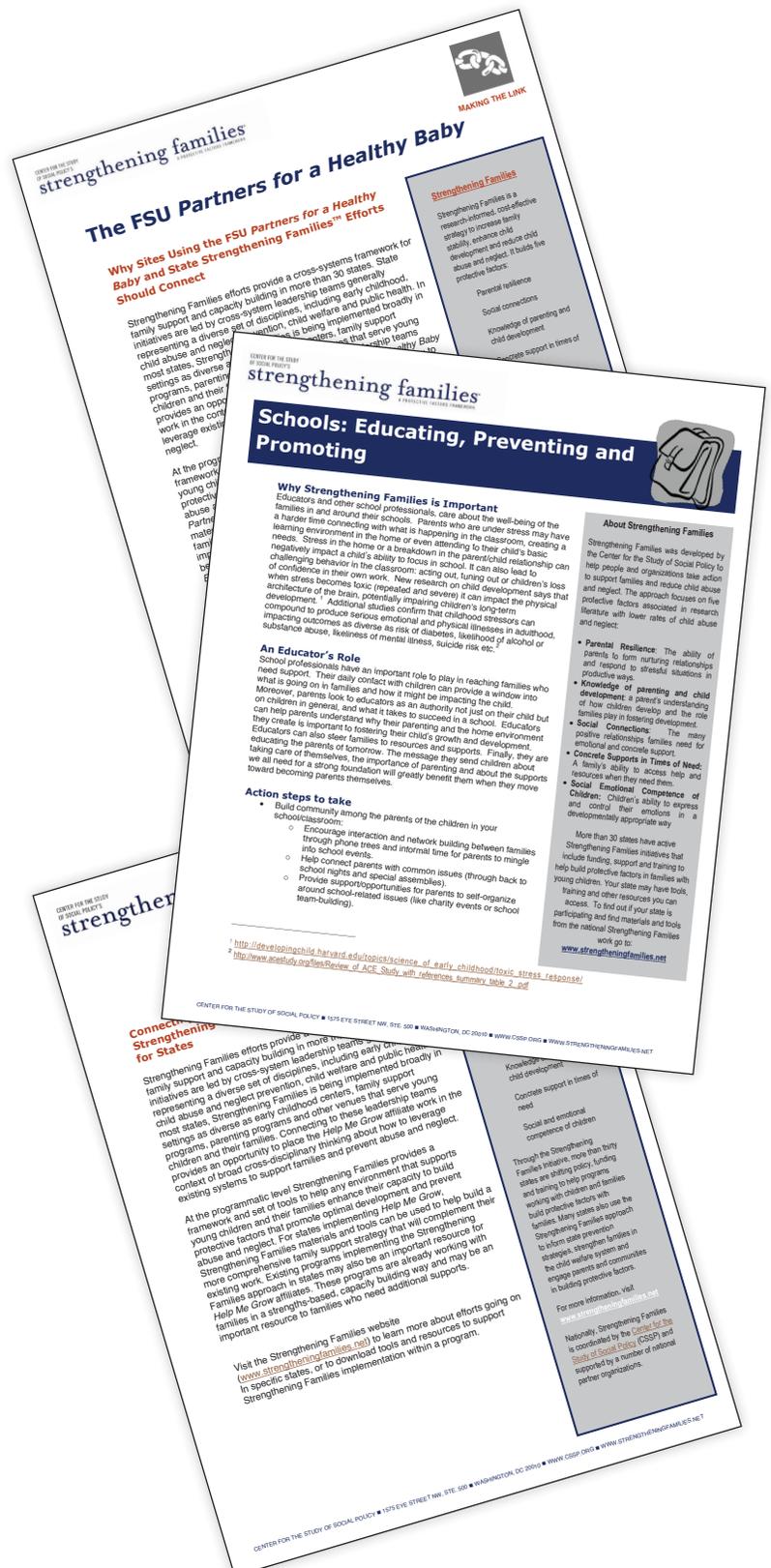
Last year, the **Quality Improvement Center on Early Childhood** continued to fund four research and demonstration projects that are investigating and evaluating the impact of collaborative, innovative programs and strategies to promote optimal development, strengthen families and reduce the likelihood of abuse and neglect. The

project sites were also instrumental last year in testing the development of an instrument to measure the Strengthening Families protective factor constructs, providing 673 pre-test cases to conduct exploratory analysis. Also in 2012, CSSP brought together 16 ethnically diverse scholars in the fields of psychology, social work, research science, public policy, child welfare and culture science to address the implications of culturally specific understandings and manifestation of the protective factors. Grantees, members of the leadership team and doctoral fellows all also did a significant number of presentations on their work last year, as the Quality Improvement Center funding will conclude in 2013.

Strengthening Families and the related child and family well-being work CSSP has focused on during the years relies on data and the best available science. It's these things that undergird the work and help ensure impact. In 2012, a partnership with the **Center on the Developing Child at Harvard University** continued to strengthen that commitment. The center is focused on increasing scientific understanding of how genes, experience and the environment interact during prenatal, child and adolescent development to affect brain development and lifelong outcomes in health, learning and behavior. The learnings help reinforce the validity of CSSP's Protective and Promotive Factors Framework.

CSSP is also using this partnership as part of its work with the Promise Neighborhoods initiative, helping communities around the country to explore what can be known about identifying biomarkers in young children associated with early trauma, introducing the work to the network in 2012.

In the coming years CSSP will continue to use this type of deep knowledge, along with practical experiences, to inform and ground all systems in what's critical to ensure well-being. Along with results, equity and place, it's the only way improved outcomes will happen.





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