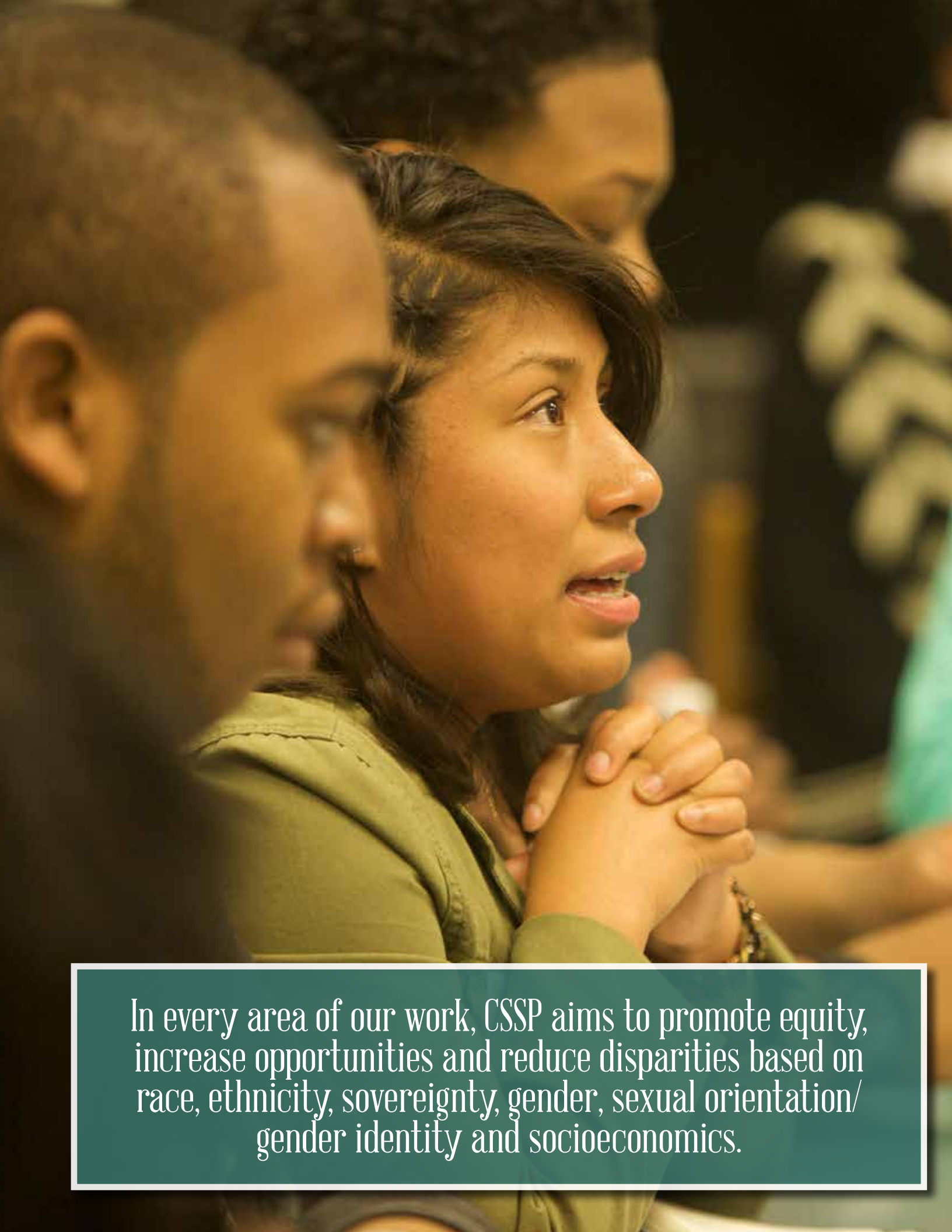


Center
for the
Study
of
Social
Policy

Equity & Opportunity



2014 ANNUAL REPORT

A close-up, profile view of a woman with dark hair, wearing a green shirt, looking towards the right. Her hands are clasped together in front of her. In the foreground, the back of a man's head and shoulder are visible, slightly out of focus. The background is blurred, showing other people in a group setting.

In every area of our work, CSSP aims to promote equity, increase opportunities and reduce disparities based on race, ethnicity, sovereignty, gender, sexual orientation/ gender identity and socioeconomics.



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Who We Are

Letters from Leadership, About Us



Toward Achieving Equity for People & Communities



FRIENDS, for more than four decades, my work at the federal, state and local levels on child welfare programs and policies was geared toward helping children and families have the supports and opportunities to be safe, healthy and successful. I am honored to continue that work as a leader of the Center for the Study of Social Policy—not only because its mission reflects what called me to service—but because CSSP’s work makes a difference toward helping all children, families and communities thrive.

I am proud that CSSP is a national leader in work to ensure the well-being of all children, championing efforts to support public child welfare, mental health, juvenile justice and other systems so that the children and families they serve come out of that experience better off and with outcomes on par with their peers. I am proud that CSSP’s work goes beyond public system reform and is aimed at supporting community revitalization efforts that seek to enhance opportunities for all. I’m proudest that we direct our efforts to address the barriers created by race, ethnicity, gender and geography that stand in the way of achieving success for all children, families and communities.

Opportunity means that no matter to whom a child is born, no matter where he or she lives and despite traumatic experiences, we can ensure that there are formal and informal helping systems in place to activate a range of family, economic, health and social supports to successfully usher that child into a secure and prosperous adulthood.

We are at a critical juncture in our nation’s history where events have dismantled popular assumptions about race, wealth, mobility and poverty. As professionals, we must examine how institutions advantage and disadvantage different groups. As individuals and as an organization, it is a time to boldly proclaim and act on our values and commitment to equity in opportunities and outcomes.

CSSP is a small but mighty group of smart, dedicated professionals who are steering communities and policymakers into exciting new territory. CSSP’s Board of Directors stand firmly with them and continue to affirm the commitment to conquer and eliminate poverty, inequities and disparities and cement opportunity as a basic right of being.

Carol W. Spigner

Carol Wilson Spigner, M.S.W., D.S.W.
Chair, CSSP Board of Directors

Advancing Equity, Creating Opportunity



2014 brought into sharp focus the challenges that beset our nation in creating equity and opportunity for children, youth and families. Embodied in the confrontations of citizens and police, the excoriating and pent-up anger of citizens and the increasingly organized calls for change was the recognition that despite progress, we have a long distance to go to realize our goal of a safe, healthy and economically vibrant community for every child and family.

The facts remain stark: 16 million children in the United States live in families with incomes beneath the federal poverty threshold—about 22 percent of all children. Sixty-five percent of African American children, 63 percent of Latino children and 63 percent of Native American children live in low-income families. Recent research tells us that geography is more important than genetics when it comes to life chances for children. Zip codes have become the unacknowledged arbiter of income inequality, health, housing stability and even life expectancy. A staggering 45 percent of all children live in families earning low incomes—meaning not having enough to cover basic expenses—and often in neighborhoods, rural areas and tribal lands that struggle to offer opportunities for them to thrive.

In 2014, we learned a lot about what it takes to move forward on CSSP's equity-in-outcomes agenda and to assure

well-being outcomes for all children and families. We worked with practitioners in public systems across the country to help reduce disparities in child welfare, establish community-based systems to give young children the best possible start in life, develop cradle-to-career pipelines to launch young people toward college success and support communities to move toward two-generational approaches to community change.

We spent much of 2014 incubating ideas about helping children, youth and their families advance to opportunity no matter where they live and no matter what their racial, ethnic or gender identity. We're translating new knowledge about brain development in children and youth into applications in communities around the country. These ideas expand upon CSSP's stable core of work, including our work through YouthThrive, Early Childhood-LINC and our Strengthening Families framework and our support for place-based initiatives like First 5 LA's Best Start initiative, Promise Neighborhoods, Choice Neighborhoods and the Building Neighborhood Capacity Program. This report documents those initiatives and highlights our successes in implementing policy changes that open the door to opportunity.

We welcome your feedback!

Frank Farrow
Director

Judith Meltzer
Deputy Director



About the Center

Center
for the
Study
of
Social
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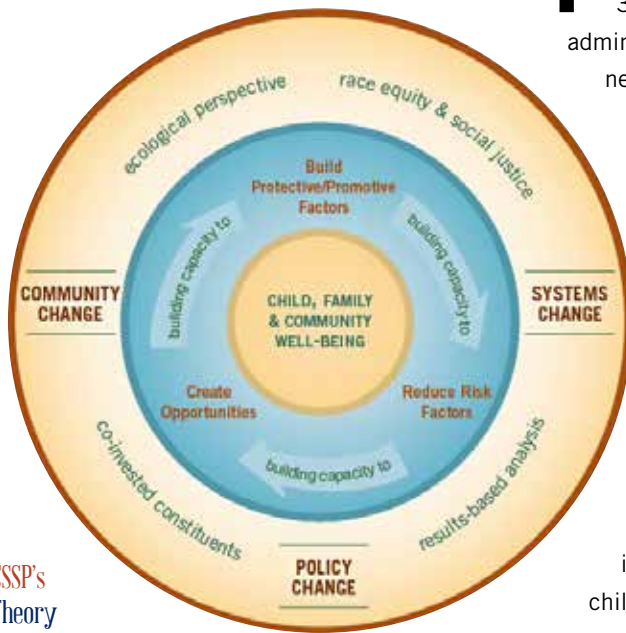
*Ideas
into
Action*

our **mission**

To create new ideas and promote public policies that produce equal opportunities and better futures for all children and families, especially those most often left behind.

About Us

The Center for the Study of Social Policy (CSSP) is a national, nonprofit organization recognized for its leadership in shaping policy, reforming public systems and building the capacity of communities. For more than 35 years, CSSP has influenced and supported elected officials, public administrators, families and neighborhood residents to take the actions they need.



CSSP's Theory of Change puts children and families in the center of a multifaceted model that includes building protective factors and reducing risk factors for children and families, strengthening local communities and connecting all of this to systems change and policy—and infusing it with a fierce commitment to equity across lines of race, ethnicity and culture.

Headquartered in Washington, D.C., with offices in New York City and Los Angeles, CSSP translates research and new ideas into on-the-ground solutions. We then use the knowledge from those real experiences to better inform the next generation of ideas, programs and policies.

To achieve our goals, we focus on those who face the most significant barriers to opportunity, including racial and ethnic minorities, immigrants and refugees, families in neighborhoods of concentrated poverty and families in contact with intervening public systems (e.g., child welfare, juvenile justice). Our work positively impacts outcomes for multiple generations—both parents and their children.

CSSP's work covers several broad areas, including:

- Promoting public policies and practices that support child and family well-being
- Accelerating the development of effective, integrated, local early childhood systems and family supports
- Ensuring optimal development for young children and youth through strategies to develop protective and promotive factors
- Providing neighborhoods with the tools needed to help leaders mobilize and ensure parents and their children succeed
- Improving healthy sexual and gender identity development for all children and youth in the child welfare system
- Confronting inequities and structural barriers to create an even playing field for children of all races, ethnicities and income levels

our vision

Underlying all of our work is a vision of child, family and community well-being. It's a unifying framework for the many policy, systems reform and community change activities in which CSSP engages.

our values

We adhere to six core values to promote organizational effectiveness and strengthen our relationships. Those values are: equity and diversity, respect, transparency, accountability, optimism and excellence and integrity.



What We Do

System Reform, Community Change & Public Policy



System Reform

Every child deserves to grow up within families that are safe, healthy, happy, financially secure and fulfilled. To access the best opportunities in life, our public systems must be forward thinking. They must be ready to work with families and communities from the prenatal stage, engaging families in early childhood, using methods that bolster families for inevitable periods of crisis and taking special care of youth who touch the foster care or juvenile justice systems. They also must be equipped to support children and adults with good schools, safe streets, health care and sustainable employment.

When the public systems designed to protect children are uncoordinated, subject to ineffective policies, shaped by structural racism and lack funding, they cannot effectively help the children, youth and families they serve.

This leads to widespread mistrust, lack of accountability and families involved with systems longer than necessary.

Improving child- and family-serving public systems and creating policies and practices that give children and

their families a chance to succeed means kids will be safe, families will be stronger and communities will prosper.

In our system reform work, CSSP is focused on encouraging the best work by child welfare and other human services professionals, addressing the complex problems facing families in public child- and family-serving systems and helping elected officials and other leaders find the evidence of what works and the financial resources needed to make changes.

Early Childhood - Learning and Innovation Network for Communities

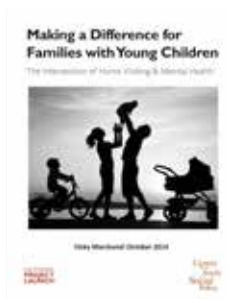
Our early childhood work takes a proactive stance on ensuring children have the best start in life. The **Early Childhood-Learning and Innovation Network for Communities** (EC-LINC) supports families and improves results for young children by accelerating the development and impact of community-based integrated early childhood systems.

Nine communities with long histories of building effective, integrated, local early childhood systems are the inaugural members of EC-LINC. They are working together to build evidence about how to improve results for children and families to share with other communities and state and federal policymakers.

In 2014, EC-LINC:

- Convened the initial meeting of the nine member communities to exchange ideas on making early childhood systems more effective.
- Launched “Learning Labs” to tap the expertise of the member communities and engage in shared learning on two priority issues identified by the communities: Community Responses to Toxic Stress and Evaluating Systems.

- Reached a broader audience of community early childhood systems, programs and initiatives via webinars, peer-to-peer conference calls and *LINC-UP!*, a monthly digital newsletter. **Sign up at <http://bit.ly/CSSP-Signup>.**
- Laid the groundwork with five network communities to implement and adapt Project DULCE, a pediatric primary care intervention aimed at building protective factors and buffering stress among families with infants living in high-poverty neighborhoods.
- Served as a technical assistance partner with Invest in US, the White House Domestic Policy Council’s campaign to improve early childhood education.



- Published ***Making a Difference for Families with Young Children: The Intersection of Home Visiting & Mental Health***, an issue brief that was used to successfully add funding for mental health staff to local home visiting programs.

A Word from Two EC-LINC Communities

Participating in Early Childhood-LINC provides an incredible opportunity to network with other communities across the country, learn together and tackle issues like toxic stress and systems reform. Through our EC-LINC work, we have been able to better position ourselves for leadership in our state and community efforts. Another big plus is that EC-LINC is structured so that our local staff can be involved and connected with other communities in the network and can contribute to a national effort to improve results for young children.

—Janis Burger, Executive Director, First 5 Alameda County, Calif.

The Lamoille Family Center and the Building Bright Futures Council have valued our involvement in EC-LINC—greater size and scale—and we have found that the systems issues we all encounter are not bound by small vs. large. The dynamics of relationship, policy, practice, politics, money and human resources can be amazingly similar regardless of the size of the community. Perhaps our common ground comes from the belief that the most critical issues related to a child’s health and safety, social and emotional development and positive experiences are universally rooted in nurturing relationships and high-quality environments.

—Scott Johnson, Executive Director of the Lamoille Family Center, Morrisville, Vt.



cssp.org/reform/early-childhood/early-childhood-linc

CENTER FOR THE STUDY
OF SOCIAL POLICY'S

strengthening families™

A PROTECTIVE FACTORS FRAMEWORK

CSSP's theory of change stresses that for families to thrive, we must address risk, build protective factors and create opportunities. In 2001, CSSP developed a protective factors framework for families of young children, initially designed to be used by early care and education programs to help families build five protective factors. These protective factors are a synthesis of research on how families sustain an optimal nurturing environment for their children. The Strengthening Families approach has since been adapted to most child- and family-serving systems, including child welfare, family support, home visiting and child abuse and neglect prevention.

In 2014, CSSP focused on consolidating the implementation of Strengthening Families across the nation over the past 13 years: creating an updated web platform of free tools and materials, supporting networking and learning opportunities for leaders to continue to deepen their work and encouraging state leaders and national organizations to take on expanded leadership for training and peer learning.



strengtheningfamilies.net

2014 Strengthening Families Summit - Reaching Deeper - Growing Stronger - Branching Out

From October 6-8, 2014, CSSP hosted the largest **Strengthening Families Summit** ever. Close to 450 individuals gathered in Chicago to learn from each other, share their work and sample the latest CSSP guidance materials.

The convening included state and community-level Strengthening Families partners, along with national organizations, agencies and systems working on implementing the protective factors framework.

Reaching Deeper

2014 saw the re-launching of the Strengthening Families website and the addition of significant new Strengthening Families resources, available free through the CSSP website, including:

- A new, fundamental resource:

The Strengthening Families



Approach and Protective Factors Framework:

Branching Out and Reaching Deeper,

which incorporates the latest research on parent-child attachment, trauma, brain

development and adverse childhood experiences.

- Revised and updated early childhood program self-assessments (for both center-based and home-based programs) as well as new self-assessments for home visiting programs and community-based programs.

- PowerPoint presentations, handouts and background materials on core meanings and everyday actions related to each protective factor, ready to use for trainers and implementers in several fields.
- A new implementation guide for child welfare workers working with the families of infants, toddlers and young children.

Strengthening Families also continued to engage with new audiences in 2014.

- Three states formed a learning community to explore using a protective factors approach for parents in correctional facilities and on probation or parole.
- Child- and family-serving professionals from more than 30 countries participated in the online Strengthening Families training offered by CSSP's partner, the National Alliance of Children's Trust and Prevention Funds.

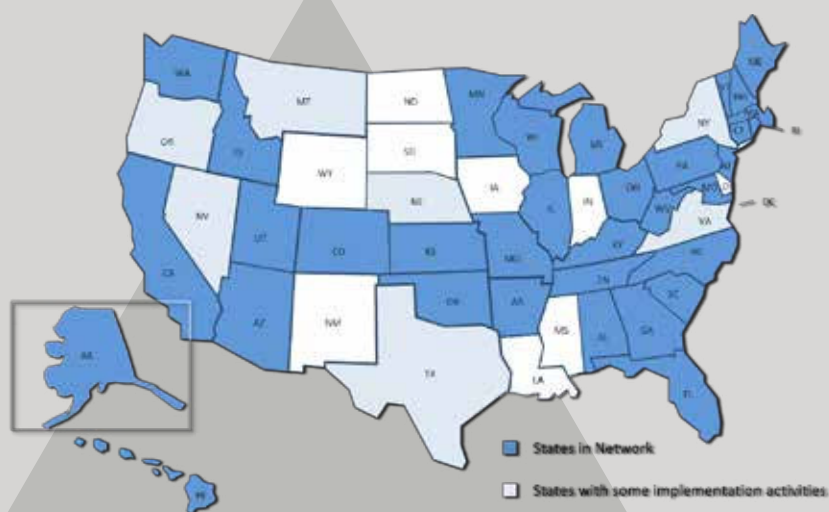


Quality Improvement Center ON EARLY CHILDHOOD

The Quality Improvement Center on Early Childhood (QIC-EC) was a five-year project to generate and disseminate new knowledge and robust evidence about programs and strategies that contribute to child maltreatment prevention and optimal development for infants and young children (0-5) and their families. A service of the Children's Bureau, Administration for Children and Families, HHS, the QIC-EC was awarded to the Center for the Study of Social Policy, partnering with ZERO TO THREE: National Center for Infants, Toddlers and Families and the National Alliance of Children's Trust and Prevention Funds.

QIC-EC's activities during 2014 centered on completing the research and demonstration projects, with support from the cross-site evaluation team and QIC-EC leadership team and partners. Several reports and products were generated that reflect the successful achievement of the QIC-EC's broad goals; specifically, knowledge development, dissemination and integration about building protective factors to increase parents' capabilities, promote optimal child development and decrease the likelihood of child maltreatment. These include:

State Implementation of Strengthening Families



The states in dark blue have developed state-level interdisciplinary leadership teams committed to implementing the Strengthening Families approach across agencies and programs. Three new states—Arizona, Kentucky and Vermont—officially joined the network in 2014, bringing the total to 35, with other states adding local programs.

In addition to parent leaders, state leadership teams usually include representatives from child welfare, early childhood, maternal and child health, education, mental health, juvenile justice and sometimes corrections and legal services.

The lighter blue color indicates implementation in single state agencies, local jurisdictions and programs. Currently, 18 states use the Strengthening Families early childhood program self-assessment as a requirement for the Early Childhood Quality Rating and Improvement System, as required by their Race to the Top Early Learning Challenge grants.

Stay up to date with Strengthening Families by subscribing to our monthly newsletter at <http://bit.ly/CSSP-Signup>.



A special issue of *The Journal of Zero To Three* (September 2014), which included articles summarizing the overall work of the QIC-EC, findings from the research and demonstration projects and the cross-site evaluation and reflections from the QIC-EC

federal project officer about building a foundation for promoting protective factors across Children's Bureau programs.

- Final reports from the four research and demonstration projects, cross-site evaluation team and QIC-EC project director.
- Implementation plans of the research and demonstration projects.
- Psychometric validation of the Parents' Assessment of Protective Factors inventory—a strengths-based survey of parents' perceptions of their protective factors.
- A comprehensive User's Guide for the Parents' Assessment of Protective Factors.

Eradicating Racial Patterns in Outcomes Experienced by Children and Families of Color Involved with Child Welfare

The **Alliance for Racial Equity in Child Welfare** provides national leadership in support of improved outcomes for children and families of color involved with child welfare systems. The Alliance is committed to taking action in the context of our overarching commitment to improve outcomes for all children and families receiving child welfare services.

The Alliance is guided by a coalition of national organizations, state and local leaders, judges, researchers, practitioners, policymakers, advocates and parents, as well as alumni and youth who have had direct experience with the child welfare system. Strengthening this network of more than 35 professionals was a major focus throughout 2014, and included platforms to problem-solve, exchange ideas and respond to major events within its purview.

Since its formation in 2004, the Alliance has helped to raise the visibility of equity issues in child welfare; consulted with state and local agencies to test innovative strategies; reported on recent research about the nature, causes and consequences of racial disparities and disseminated data tools so that jurisdictions can track their progress in achieving better outcomes. Reflecting a

fundamental Alliance value, each of these efforts has been directly informed and shaped by youth, parents and other family members with direct experience with the child welfare system. Much of that work has been distilled in webinars held throughout 2014, which are archived on the Alliance's webpage:



- Changing Course: Improving Outcomes for African American Males Involved with Child Welfare Systems (covering a seminal paper by the same name)
- Improving System Responses to Latino Children and Families
- Understanding and Improving the Quality of Service Delivery for Immigrant Families
- Understanding the Intersection of Race, Housing and Child Welfare



cssp.org/reform/child-welfare/alliance-for-race-equity

getR.E.A.L
Recognize. Engage. Affirm. Love

Supporting Healthy Identity Development among System-Involved Youth

The **getR.E.A.L** name and logo were crafted as a challenge to public systems working with children. It stands for **Recognize. Engage. Affirm. Love**. This initiative calls on child welfare systems to confront and address the issues surrounding LGBTQ youth in foster care, who generally suffer poorer outcomes and face greater risks due to bias and rejection. getR.E.A.L provides a clearinghouse of research and information for child welfare policymakers—and families—to promote the healthy sexual and identity development of all system-involved children. Like other CSSP projects, getR.E.A.L accomplishes its objectives through targeted site work, a coalition of partners and convenings that allow for dialogue and information exchange.

getR.E.A.L's network is comprised of 79 participants from public child welfare, child welfare nonprofit agencies, universities, mental health providers, funders and advocacy organizations.

In 2014, getR.E.A.L continued work in Allegheny County, Pennsylvania, and statewide in California to:

- influence policy and practice
- ensure safe and affirming placements
- reduce reliance on congregate care
- create welcoming and affirming treatment programs

Webinars have been strategically used as a capacity-building mechanism to orient agencies toward policy and practice change. They covered such topics as estimating LGBTQ youth in foster care, the role of foster family acceptance, the Rise Initiative in Los Angeles, understanding the effect of implicit bias on practice and system experiences of gender non-conforming youth.

In the Field. getR.E.A.L team members worked with Allegheny County to conduct an internal analysis based on CSSP's

Caring for Young Parents in Foster Care and Their Children



Expectant and parenting youth in foster care are a particularly at-risk population. Our work on behalf of those youth and their young children reflects a multigenerational approach to child and family well-being that builds and strengthens the protective capacity of

young parents while simultaneously recognizing and supporting their adolescent development and success.

Between 2011 and 2014, CSSP partnered with four jurisdictions to begin implementing the recommendations CSSP made in *Pregnant and Parenting Youth in Foster Care: A Guide to Service Improvements*. As a result of these partnerships, CSSP produced a set of policy recommendations for the field, published in the 2014 report ***Twice the Opportunity***. The recommendations contained within the guide formed the basis of a national blueprint for action for serving expectant and parenting youth put forward by the Juvenile Law Center and Jim Casey Youth Opportunities Initiative.



In 2014 we also issued ***Expectant and Parenting Youth in Foster Care: A Resource Guide***. This is an updated compendium of evidence-based/evidence-informed practices that align with desired well-being outcomes for expectant and parenting youth.

CSSP is now working with two jurisdictions to further shape its multigenerational

strategy: the New York City Administration for Children's Services (ACS) and the Sacramento County, California Department of Health and Human Services, in partnership with the Children's Law Center of Sacramento. Each jurisdiction is receiving a small grant to support its on-the-ground implementation and progress tracking in addition to technical assistance provided by CSSP staff. CSSP is also sponsoring the Expectant and Parenting Youth in Foster Care Learning Collective to further extend its multigenerational approach to the field.



cssp.org/reform/child-welfare/expectant-parenting-youth-in-foster-care

Institutional Analysis tool. The analysis gathered baseline experiences of LGBTQ foster youth, as well as the promising system changes that could be leveraged to implement the *Guidelines for Managing Information Related to the Sexual Orientation & Gender Identity and Expression of Children in Child Welfare Systems*. The county contracted for a training program for implementing these guidelines and alignment with getR.E.A.L.'s core principles—sexual orientation, gender identity and expression, or **SOGIE**. The county is changing its data fields to be gender non-binary, meaning youth are allowed to identify as being more than male or female. Moreover, it is working toward transforming from a maternal-centric case management system to one that is parent-centric and more inclusive of different kinds of families. The CSSP team introduced getR.E.A.L. to attorney groups, a county steering committee and participated in two of the county's LGBTQ community forums.

In California, the getR.E.A.L. team is led by Family Builders by Adoption. The team briefed several state stakeholder groups, hired a project manager for all activities in the state and secured a permanent seat for that project manager on the California State

Training and Education Committee, which coordinates all training for child welfare staff and partners. The team also held a series of regional convenings for northern, central and southern counties to support policy and practice development.

getR.E.A.L. Partnerships

getR.E.A.L. works with a number of state systems, networks and partners to engage on a deeper level with system-involved youth who identify as LGTBQ. Our 2014 partners include **Family Builders by Adoption, National Center for Lesbian Rights, University of Illinois, Chicago, University of Houston, National Center on Crime and Delinquency, Los Angeles LGBT Center and Impact Justice**. Other connections include the **SAMHSA LGBTQIA2S Work Group, the Forty to None Project of the True Colors Fund and the Human Rights Campaign Foundation**.



cssp.org/reform/child-welfare/get-r-e-a-l



Youth Thrive is an approach developed by CSSP that uses the latest science to advance work based on five protective and promotive factors for youth's success and well-being. It is a lens for assessing current efforts and for making changes to the policies, programs, training, services, partnerships and systems that impact young people in foster care, juvenile justice and other public systems. To translate our ideas into action, we are working with jurisdictions to use the Youth Thrive framework, tools and resources in policy and practice. Our major work in 2014 includes the following:

Creating a National Network. Building off the momentum and contacts made through an “Exemplary Initiative” search, Youth Thrive began developing its National Network. Currently, the Network is comprised of: the 15 exemplary initiatives selected and recognized by Youth Thrive, the sites/ jurisdictions that are implementing Youth Thrive and other advocates and experts. In 2014, we began publishing the *Youth Thrive Connection* newsletter, facilitating informal peer-to-peer relationships and connections, providing information and support in response to the group's needs and interests and recruiting volunteers to serve on a Steering Committee to guide the Network going forward.

Developing a Curriculum. Youth Thrive's Train the Trainer curriculum was developed by the National Resource Center for Youth Development and the Academy for Competent Youth Work. In September 2014, the comprehensive, three-day training was piloted in two Youth Thrive jurisdictions: New Jersey and Brevard County, Florida.

Presenting Our Ideas. In 2014 Youth Thrive made presentations at the National Center for Excellence and Innovation Conference, NCAAN Conference, the Strengthening Families Leadership Summit, the National Pathways to Adulthood Convening, Alliance for Children and Families, Orangewood

Children's Foundation and National Summit on Authentic Youth Engagement.

Embedding Youth Thrive in New Jersey. Our team has worked with the state Department of Children and Families to infuse Youth Thrive principles into its practices. This included leadership and staff-level trainings, Youth Thrive language in contract requirements, along with revision of policies governing work with youth. For example, the Department piloted a new assessment tool, the *Transitional Plan for YOUTH Success*, which actively engages youth in identifying their own strengths, setting goals and deciding on action steps.

Over the course of 2014, CSSP worked closely with New Jersey on its federal *Youth At Risk of Homelessness* planning grant—one of 18 awarded nationally. This project, guided by the Youth Thrive framework, enabled the state to analyze extensive data, solicit feedback, identify risk and protective factors and plan for more comprehensive, effective strategies to prevent future homelessness for youth in foster care.

Youth Thrive Goals

1 To give child welfare agencies and their partners a way to translate the federal mandate for child well-being into actions that will secure the healthy development of youth in foster care.

2 The developmental needs of young people involved in the child welfare system will be better attended to, and these youth will receive the supports and experiences necessary to ensure enhanced opportunities for productive and secure lives.

EXEMPLARY INITIATIVE: My Life at Portland State University

My Life Project works with youth preparing to exit foster care, including the large percentage of youth with disabilities. The Project uses the principle of self-determination to help young people learn how to direct their own lives and achieve their goals. My Life recently received funding from the National Institute for Disability and Rehabilitation Research for its new Project FUTURES initiative, which will work to increase the enrollment and retention of youth who have been in the child welfare system or have mental health issues in higher education – a vital step to transitioning into adulthood.



cssp.org/reform/child-welfare/youth-thrive



In January 2014, Youth Thrive selected 15 organizations as a result of our national search to identify and recognize exemplary programs or initiatives that use protective and promotive factors to reduce risks and enhance healthy development for youth involved in the child welfare system. CSSP recognized initiatives that engage in a variety of activities including, scholarships, academic and emotional support for former foster youth now attending college; a neighborhood center linking youth to education and employment; youth advisory boards that review statewide child welfare policies; a creative arts summer camp and programs that ensure youth have lasting, positive connections to family.

The **Youth Thrive Exemplary Initiatives Conference**, held in March in Florida, included staff and youth from each of the 15 programs, representatives from Youth Thrive sites, youth advocates who participated in the search process, expert panelists who advised us throughout the process, other key partners and CSSP staff. The three-day forum offered critical opportunities for initiatives to share program, policy, evaluation and advocacy strategies and to learn from each other's experience.



Advancing Healthy Adolescent Development and Well-Being was published by Youth Thrive in September 2014. This paper establishes the foundation for the Youth Thrive framework and delineates the research base for the protective and promotive factors. It includes an in-depth review of key theories, including the strengths-based perspective, the biology of

stress, resilience theory, the nature of risk and more.



The July/August edition of **Fostering Families Today**, a magazine for resource, foster and adoptive parents, published our article describing Youth Thrive and giving families tips for how to build the protective and promotive factors in adolescents.

Helping Communities Build a Platform for Well-Being

Child Welfare & Supportive Housing RESOURCE CENTER

The **Child Welfare and Supportive Housing Resource Center** is a joint effort of CSSP and the Corporation for Supportive Housing intended to provide technical support, facilitate information-sharing and assist in capacity-building to the five jurisdictions taking part in the federal *Partnerships to Demonstrate the Effectiveness of Supportive Housing for Families with Child Welfare*. The five federal grantees are located in Broward County, Florida; Cedar Rapids, Iowa; Memphis, Tennessee; San Francisco and the state of Connecticut. They are providing housing and intensive family services with the goal of keeping families together and improving their well-being. In 2014, CSSP, in its role in the Resource Center, helped facilitate several learning opportunities among the participating jurisdictions and between the jurisdictions and established family supportive housing programs in Chicago and New York City. CSSP also supported representatives from the five jurisdictions present at the 2014 National Conference on Child Abuse and Neglect. In total, 153 families were housed through the project and 53 more families were in the pipeline at the end of 2014.

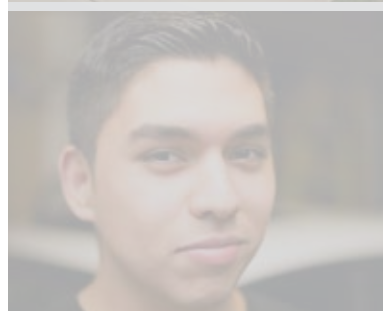
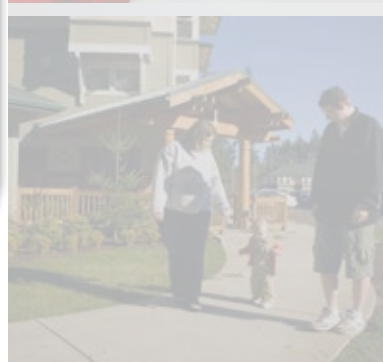
Community Change

Neighborhoods are not random collections of people and institutions, but rather are organized around historical policies, assets and opportunities that benefit or hinder their residents.

Neighborhoods are intricate social networks, where economic and social futures are shaped and where residents have a strong interest in ensuring that neighborhood conditions contribute to children's futures. As neighborhoods are transformed, from low-income to mixed-income communities, they typically gain greater access to job opportunities and to better schools, and they realize new potential for residents to own businesses and gain political power. By contrast, families whose neighborhoods don't improve often express a feeling of being "trapped" or of having too few opportunities for their children.

For children to do well, they must be embraced not only by their families but by other caring adults and by good schools, jobs for their parents and a safe environment. When children are healthy and optimistic about their future, the risk of anti-social behavior diminishes and their ability to seize opportunity is maximized.

Each community holds an aspiration for its children: that by its cohesiveness, safety and access to opportunity, it will vault a child toward educational success and a positive transition to adulthood. Helping communities make good on this promise is where **place-based initiatives matter**. We have seen dramatic results when engaged residents align with committed public and private partners to foster political will, improve housing, create good schools and eliminate barriers to economic mobility. In partnership with federal, state, local and philanthropic leaders, CSSP works in all these domains to ensure that communities help children to be everything that they can dream of becoming.



Creating Communities of Opportunity

The Building Neighborhood Capacity Program (BNCP) seeks to catalyze community-driven change in neighborhoods that have historically faced barriers to revitalization. BNCP focuses on building community capacity: the knowledge, skills, relationships, processes and resources that neighborhood residents, local organizations and cross-sector partners need to work together to achieve better results in public safety, education, housing, employment and other key areas.

Our work with BNCP neighborhoods is rooted in CSSP's theory of change, which recognizes that access to opportunity differs profoundly by place. BNCP neighborhoods have many assets, including the neighborhood leaders, residents, organizations and cross-sector partners that have deep roots in their community and work on its behalf. At the same time, neighborhoods that participate in BNCP often have a history of low or poorly targeted investments from public and private funders, isolation from anchor institutions (such as universities and hospitals), high rates of poverty, low levels of educational success, limited sources of economic growth, too much crime and experience with racial or economic segregation that restricts opportunities.



buildingcommunitycapacity.org

In 2014, the BNCP technical assistance (TA) team provided on-the-ground support to eight neighborhoods and their citywide cross-sector partnerships. Each of the eight neighborhoods selected “safety” as their desired result. Though “safety” was defined in various ways, all eight neighborhoods increased their capacity to address community safety concerns and submitted revitalization plans in March 2014, which outlined their plans to continue addressing this issue in the future. The following are examples of increased capacity at the neighborhood and city level.

- The city of **Fresno**, California, created a new Community Revitalization Division, which was formally launched in July 2014. The division coordinates a Neighborhood Revitalization Team (NRT), which focuses on priority neighborhoods and corridors in the city.
- Members of **Milwaukee's** BNCP Executive Committee have aligned their funding and resources to create a Community Connections Small Grants program, which provides residents with funding to implement a project in their neighborhood.
- **Flint**, Michigan, designed its BNCP approach to leverage opportunities for alignment with, and inclusion in, a concurrent citywide master planning process. Supported by a \$1.75 million grant from the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development, the city's master plan highlighted the importance of community and neighborhood involvement in public decision-making and recognized BNCP as a model that should be used for “establishing future planning areas and neighborhood plans.”
- The BNCP neighborhoods in **Memphis**, Tennessee, engaged in extensive data collection to inform results-driven strategies, from using a smartphone app developed by a neighborhood resident to generate information about blighted properties to surveying more than 4,000 residents about their aspirations for their community.

CSSP's BNCP team also hosted two cross-site meetings for the eight BNCP neighborhoods. The meetings took place in Fresno (February 2014) and Washington, D.C. (October 2014).

The October 2014 meeting—**Finance and Federal Partnerships**—brought together residents and partner organizations from each city, as well as federal representatives from the U.S. Departments of Education, Health and Human Services, Housing and Urban Development and Justice. Participants had the opportunity to engage with federal representatives to learn about programs and funding, such as the Community Development Block Grant Program and the My Brother's Keeper Initiative.

Going forward, each BNCP city is adding a third neighborhood and using the lessons learned from the first phase to adjust the planning process. With lessons captured in the BNCP formative assessment, the BNCP model will increase its focus on building citywide partnerships to support neighborhood revitalization and engaging neighborhood residents and stakeholders in early-action projects. These lessons and others are captured in several new CSSP documents, including the *BNCP Process Guide* and the *BNCP Toolkit*.

New BNCP Resources

- **BNCP Formative Assessment** - Highlights and findings from the first cohort of neighborhoods reported to contribute to the field's knowledge about effective strategies for building neighborhood capacity.
- **BNCP Process Guide** - Description of the data-driven and inclusive processes that will guide BNCP expansion.
- **BNCP Toolkit** - A six-part toolkit that highlights key capacities and elements of the BNCP model.

Housing as a Lever for Change



Choice Neighborhoods is a program of the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) that supports a community-driven revitalization process in neighborhoods with distressed public or HUD-assisted housing. Through the engagement of local leaders, residents and stakeholders, including public housing authorities, cities, schools, police, business owners, nonprofits and private developers, Choice grantees develop a transformation plan that revitalizes distressed HUD housing and addresses the challenges in the surrounding neighborhood. The program is allowing grantees across the country to replace obsolete, distressed housing with vibrant mixed-income communities and to develop new commercial activity, turn around failing schools, strengthen early education, prevent crime, improve transportation, ensure basic neighborhood assets and increase access to jobs.

Through our partnership with HUD, CSSP hosted community webinars and published resources for communities,



including:

- **Seattle**

Promising Practice Guide.

This report highlights how the Seattle Choice Neighborhoods team prioritized educational

improvements in the Yesler neighborhood by collaborating with multiple partners, including Seattle University, the school

district and child-centered nonprofit organizations. As a result of their collaborative efforts, positive outcomes are emerging for students in a local elementary school. Seattle's experience serves as a promising practice for other communities looking to use school improvement and student achievement as a cornerstone of creating desirable neighborhoods.

- **Boston Promising Practice Guide.** This guide highlights the process that the Boston Choice Neighborhoods team used to determine the neighborhood improvement projects to fund with Choice Neighborhoods

Critical Community Improvements dollars. The projects—a commercial food production facility, retail facade improvements, facilities



improvements for local nonprofits, community wi-fi and playgrounds—reveal the potential and flexibility of these funds. Boston's story serves as a

promising practice for communities seeking to prioritize strategic neighborhood investments.



cssp.org/community/neighborhood-investment/place-based-initiatives/choice-neighborhoods

Best Start is First 5 LA's place-based initiative designed to improve results for children, families and communities. The initiative, which operates in 14 of Los Angeles' most challenged communities, supports the development of local community partnerships of parents, residents, business and community leaders, health care providers, community service agencies, faith-based leaders, local government officials and interested community members who have made a commitment to work together to improve results for children, families and the communities in which they live. CSSP's primary role with First 5 LA and the Best Start initiative is to help build the capacity of the 14 community partnerships so that they are high-functioning, results-focused entities that continuously seek to improve community and family



conditions for children. With a team of approximately 10 members, the Los Angeles-based CSSP team works directly with community partnership members and other consultants to ensure that the essential capacity-building measures that have been the core of CSSP's work over time are established in each of the community partnerships.

Early in 2014, CSSP contributed to the work of First 5 LA leadership to develop a plan for the next five years of Best Start, with explicit aims, targeted results and a sustainable community investment strategy. This

framework incorporates emerging science about child development and what it takes for parents to ensure that the young brains of their children flourish. Best Start's Building Stronger Families' Framework (BSFF) reflects the Protective Factors approach of CSSP's

Cradle-to-Career Opportunity



The **Promise Neighborhoods Program** is a federal initiative that supports community-driven, place-based efforts to improve educational and developmental outcomes for children in distressed communities. It is a key component of the White House Neighborhood Revitalization Initiative, an interagency federal partnership focused on empowering local communities to develop and obtain the tools and resources they need to transform neighborhoods of concentrated poverty into neighborhoods of opportunity that support the optimal development and well-being of children and families.

In partnership with the U.S. Department of Education and the Promise Neighborhoods Institute at PolicyLink (of which CSSP is a partner), CSSP planned the 2014 Promise Neighborhoods National Network Conference, with the theme ***Pipeline to Success: Engaging School, Family and Community Partners***. The conference featured a “fireside chat” with Secretary Arne Duncan and Geoffrey Canada, former president/CEO of Harlem Children’s Zone (pictured right) and was attended by more than 200 participants drawn largely from the Promise Neighborhoods network but also including individuals who represented other federal programs, such as Full-Service Community Schools, Choice Neighborhoods, the Byrne Criminal Justice Innovation Program and Promise Zones.



As part of CSSP’s work with the Department of Education, we hosted four Promise Neighborhoods webinars for grantees and oversaw the development of a dedicated Promise Neighborhoods microsite. **Visit the site at promiseneighborhoods.ed.gov.**



<http://promiseneighborhoods.ed.gov>

Strengthening Families initiative. Throughout 2014, CSSP helped the 14 community partnerships establish individual capacity-building plans.



cssp.org/community/neighborhood-investment/place-based-initiatives/best-start-la



Public Policy

CSSP's policy priorities are focused on strategies that have the greatest potential to promote child and family well-being, advance equity, improve the performance of public systems and strengthen communities. We believe that no public policy is race or ethnicity neutral and that policy-making with attention to equity creates solutions that best meet the needs of the entire community.

In 2014, CSSP developed and released a detailed policy agenda outlining our policy priorities and describing the principles that guide our policy work—including a focus on equity, two generational approaches and results. Our policy work is framed with an eye toward comprehensive and coordinated solutions, community co-investment and the use of research and evidence. The agenda is based on the CSSP Theory of Change and is focused on priority areas aligned with our broader program work, including early childhood, youth, health, education, child welfare and family supports and poverty and economic opportunity.

Our policy priorities and products are closely linked to our work with public systems and communities. For example, in 2014 new federal legislation required states to implement a reasonable and prudent parent standard in foster care. Building on our getR.E.A.L initiative, CSSP developed a policy brief titled **Promoting Well-Being through the Reasonable and Prudent Parent Standard: A Guide for States Implementing the Preventing Sex Trafficking and Strengthening Families Act (H.R.4980)**. The brief helps states implement the new provision while creating a more developmentally supportive environment for youth. The brief highlights the role of race and ethnicity and the need to address compounding disadvantage through policies for youth in foster care, including LGBTQ youth, as well as expectant and parenting teens.

We work in collaboration with partner organizations to share our perspective on important policy issues. **Prevent, Protect & Provide: How Child Welfare Can Better Support Low-Income Families** is a policy paper written for First Focus's network of state advocacy organizations. It outlines an agenda for meeting the economic needs of low-income families as a child welfare prevention strategy and describes state examples. It highlights the importance of considering the intersection of poverty and race in any such

policy agenda. It was listed as one of the advocacy network's top resources for 2014.

CSSP's policy brief, **Expanding the Earned Income Tax Credit to Childless Adults**, addresses the impact of rising inequality and high rates of poverty on young adults and gives special attention to the ways that expanding the earned income tax credit (EITC) can increase the well-being of young parents and youth aging out of foster care. It highlights current proposals to expand the EITC: two federal proposals and a local one from the District of Columbia, and provides policy recommendations to help state leaders considering EITC expansion.

In 2014, eight policy briefs were published and disseminated to partner organizations, advocates and public policymakers at the federal, state and local levels. Notable results of their influence include:

- The budget brief, **Aligning Resources and Results: The Importance of Meaningful Partnerships**, was used in a Minnesota budget hearing to demonstrate the effectiveness of partnerships between state policymakers and community leaders. This was of particular importance to our partners at the Northside Achievement Zone, a Promise Neighborhoods site highlighted in the brief.

- Based on the publication of ***Expanding the Earned Income Tax Credit to Childless Adults***, states have requested technical assistance to improve and expand their EITC. For example, we worked closely with advocates in California in their effort to expand EITC to young people aging out of foster care.
- The issue brief ***Promoting Well-Being through the Reasonable and Prudent Parent Standard*** has been widely shared and has led states to request technical assistance in their efforts to implement this federal policy. On the national level, several of our policy partners used this brief in their recommendations to the Administration for Children and Families on federal guidance.

Additionally in 2014 CSSP developed statements in support of our policy priorities, related to poverty reduction, early childhood and our place-based work, including:

- *50 Years Later—Lessons from the War on Poverty*
- *CSSP Statement on New Poverty Data & the Need for Multi-Generational Policy*
- *A Look at the 2013 American Community Survey Data & Three Cities*

2014 Policy Briefs



**Aligning Resources and Results:
The Importance
of Meaningful
Partnerships**



**Results-Based
Public Policy
Strategies for
Reducing Child
Poverty**



**Expanding the
Earned Income Tax
Credit to Childless
Adults**



**Prevent, Protect
& Provide: How
Child Welfare Can
Better Support Low-
Income Families**



**Universal Credit:
A Primer**



**Promoting Well-
Being through the
Reasonable and
Prudent Parent
Standard**



**Improving Economic
Opportunity
Alternatives to the
Opportunity Grants**



**Twice the
Opportunity:
Policy
Recommendations to
Support Expectant
and Parenting Youth**



PolicyforResults.org

Evidence to Achieve Quality Results, Reliably, at Scale

Research and experience over the last two decades have produced more knowledge than ever before about what it takes to improve outcomes for disadvantaged children and families. Despite that, we have not been successful in achieving significantly better outcomes at a magnitude that matches the need in critical areas. CSSP, and the Friends of Evidence group it convened in 2014, share the conviction that to achieve better results we must expand what constitutes acceptable, rigorous, credible evidence, especially in a time of scarce resources. Programs and practices that are proven through experimental methods are a useful starting point, but now the challenge is to build on progress to date, marshal the full extent of available knowledge and continuously learn from the most complex and most ambitious efforts under way. Drawing on all these sources, the Friends of Evidence seek to create a full spectrum of evidence as the foundation for further innovation to address our toughest social problems.



The Friends of Evidence have identified five elements that innovative efforts around the country are combining to generate a fuller spectrum of evidence. Documented in our background paper, ***An Evidence Framework to Improve Results***, they are:

- The use of many sources of evidence, not just clinical research trials, to inform the design of interventions
- The use of results to continuously shape the form and nature of intervention implementation
- Leverage of networks that accelerate knowledge development and dissemination
- Multiple evaluation methods to fit diverse purposes
- A strong infrastructure to support continuous learning and improvement

The Friends of Evidence spent much of 2014 recruiting the best and most innovative thinkers on the subject, committing our ideas to paper and sharing our earliest thinking at CSSP's Harold Richman Symposium. In the coming years, the Friends of Evidence will join with national, state and local partners to document these ideas and to discover and lift up other approaches so that we can all be confident that we are indeed achieving better quality results, reliably, at scale.



cssp.org/policy/evidence-for-results

Friends of Evidence

Susan Bales
President
FrameWorks Institute

Donald M. Berwick, M.D., M.P.P.
President Emeritus & Senior Fellow
Institute for Healthcare Improvement

Angela Glover Blackwell
Founder
PolicyLink

Anthony Bryk
President
Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching

Deborah Daro
Senior Research Fellow
Chapin Hall at the University of Chicago

Kathleen P. Enright
Founding President and CEO
Grantmakers for Effective Organizations

Frank Farrow
Director
Center for the Study of Social Policy

Thaddeus Ferber
Vice President for Policy
The Forum for Youth Investment

Lawrence Green, D.P.H.
Professor of Epidemiology and BioStatistics
UCSF School of Medicine

Michele Jolin
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Patti Patrizi
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Charles Payne
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School of Social Service Administration
University of Chicago

Karen Pittman
President and CEO
The Forum for Youth Investment

Alice Rivlin
Former Director
Office of Management and Budget
Brookings Institution

Lisbeth B. Schorr
Senior Fellow
Center for the Study of Social Policy

Joshua Sparrow, M.D.
Director of Strategy, Planning and Program Development
Brazelton Touchpoints Center
Boston Children's Hospital

Friends of Evidence member and Brookings Institution director and senior fellow Alice Rivlin at The Future of Evidence Symposium, November 2014.



“

Social change is possible. Some combination of public policy and private initiative can improve the life chances of children and their families and make America a more just and fair and productive and less unequal society. But making and implementing effective social policy is very hard work. We have to keep trying things to see how they work and keep learning from our mistakes. We must generate solid convincing evidence that interventions are working and then keep trying to make them better.

—Alice Rivlin

”

The first stage of the work of the Friends of Evidence culminated in November 2014, with a Symposium on the Future of Evidence, to explore how a broader approach to evidence could make reform efforts in health, education, social services and community change more effective, as well as more accountable. The participant deliberations during the event illuminated the growing complexity of social problems and their solutions, and the new approaches to generating, analyzing and applying evidence now in use to improve critical societal outcomes and to assure the wise allocation of scarce resources.

The event featured engaging speakers, lively panels and ongoing floor discussions that left attendees with a sense of momentum

around shifting both theory and practice to strengthen the generation, analysis and application of evidence to improve results in the fields of health, education, social services and community change. Topics included:

- The Changing Role of Evidence in Social Policy
- Generating a Full Spectrum of Evidence
- Generating Evidence in Systems and Communities
- What Is Required to Support a Full Spectrum of Evidence?
- Shaping Consensus, Encouraging Debate, Implications for the Future
- Looking to the Future

A detailed close-up photograph of a mechanical watch movement. The image shows several large, silver-toned gears with fine teeth, some of which are partially obscured by other components. A prominent gold-colored gear is visible on the right side. The background is a textured, metallic surface, likely the watch case or a component of the movement. The lighting highlights the intricate details and textures of the metal parts.

How We Do It

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Mandel School of Applied Social Sciences
Case Western Reserve University

Mr. Thomas Bates

Special Counsel and Director of Government Affairs
Fred Hutchinson Cancer Research Center
Seattle, Washington

Ms. Yolie Flores

Senior Fellow
Campaign for Grade-Level Reading
Los Angeles, California

Ms. Sandra Moore

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Urban Strategies
St. Louis, Missouri

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Salt Lake City, Utah

Mr. Frank Farrow

Director
Center for the Study of Social Policy
Washington, D.C.

Ms. Judith Meltzer

Deputy Director
Center for the Study of Social Policy
Washington, D.C.

Staff

As of April 2015

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Bill Bettencourt	Lizbeth (Beth) Leeson	Kanchan Sakya
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Senior Fellows

Uma S. Ahluwalia
Montgomery County (MD) Department of Health
and Human Services

Leonard D. Burton
CSSP

Steve Cohen
CSSP

Amy Fine
CSSP

Mark Friedman
Fiscal Policy Studies Institute

James O. Gibson
CSSP

Judy Langford
CSSP

Charles M. Payne, Ph.D.
University of Chicago

Lisbeth (Lee) B. Schorr
CSSP

Robert Sege, M.D., Ph.D.
Health Resources in Action

AUDITED STATEMENTS OF FINANCIAL POSITION

Audit performed by Councilor, Buchanan & Mitchell, P.C.

DECEMBER 31,	2014	2013
ASSETS		
CURRENT ASSETS		
Cash and cash equivalents	\$2,341,297	\$1,604,255
Investments	4,759,369	5,292,262
Grants and contracts receivable	1,538,734	2,299,897
Prepaid expenses	157,741	199,419
Other assets	6,070	-
TOTAL CURRENT ASSETS	8,803,211	9,395,833
Property and equipment, net	140,832	172,525
Cash surrender value of life insurance	428,829	427,811
Deposits	54,840	54,840
TOTAL ASSETS	9,427,712	10,051,009
LIABILITIES AND NET ASSETS		
CURRENT LIABILITIES		
Accounts payable	\$248,092	\$247,864
Grants payable	\$50,000	\$454,495
Accrued vacation	303,195	291,946
Deferred rent, current portion	41,773	23,107
Refundable advances	2,167,758	2,389,467
TOTAL CURRENT LIABILITIES	2,810,818	3,406,879
Deferred rent, net of current portion	398,080	434,343
Deferred compensation	428,829	427,811
TOTAL LIABILITIES	3,637,727	4,269,033
UNRESTRICTED NET ASSETS	5,789,985	5,781,976
TOTAL LIABILITIES AND NET ASSETS	\$9,427,712	\$10,051,009

AUDITED STATEMENTS OF ACTIVITIES

FOR THE YEARS ENDED DECEMBER 31,	2014	2013
SUPPORT AND REVENUE		
Grants and contracts	\$10,178,494	\$12,452,508
Investment income	133,244	291,307
Conference registration fees	130,350	-
Publication income	532	518
Miscellaneous income	569	-
Loss on disposal of property and equipment	-	(304)
TOTAL SUPPORT AND REVENUE	10,443,189	12,744,029
EXPENSES		
Program services		
Child and Family Well-being and Public System Reform	4,291,982	5,992,686
Building Strong Communities, Promoting Community Change, and Building Capacity for Resident Leadership	4,391,137	4,870,845
Promoting Public Policy to Improve Outcomes for Children, Youth and Families	138,668	158,757
Total Program Services	8,821,787	11,022,288
Fundraising	101,252	68,458
Management and general	1,512,141	1,563,345
TOTAL EXPENSES	10,435,180	12,654,091
CHANGE IN NET ASSETS	8,009	89,938
UNRESTRICTED NET ASSETS, BEGINNING OF YEAR	5,781,976	5,692,038
UNRESTRICTED NET ASSETS, END OF YEAR	\$5,789,985	\$5,781,976

The notes in the full audit are an integral part of these financial statements.

2014 SOURCES OF SUPPORT

Alliance for Children and Families

Anonymous Donors (2)

BCT Partners/U.S. Department of Housing and
Urban Development

California Newsreel

Casey Family Programs*

Center for Supportive Housing

Center on the Developing Child at Harvard University

Children Services Council of Palm Beach County

County Board of Arlington County, Virginia

District of Columbia Child and Family Services Agency

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New Jersey Department of Children and Families

Promise Neighborhoods Institute at PolicyLink

State of Maryland Department of Human Resources

State of Tennessee Department of Children's Services

The Annie E. Casey Foundation

The Boston Foundation

The Richard T. Goldman Family Foundation

The Seattle Foundation

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U.S. Department of Education

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CENTER FOR THE STUDY OF SOCIAL POLICY

1575 Eye Street, NW
Suite 500
Washington, DC 20005

50 Broadway
Suite 1504
New York, NY 10004

1000 North Alameda Street
Suite 102
Los Angeles, CA 90012