

Strengthening Families State Evaluation: Missouri

Overview: The report entitled *Child Abuse and Neglect Prevention: A Qualitative Examination of Missouri's Strengthening Families Initiative* aims to examine the piloting of the Strengthening Families Initiative in six early care and education programs across the state of Missouri. These programs were provided a small grant to support the integration of the Strengthening Families Protective Factors. In addition, the programs received technical assistance and training in *Zero to Three's Preventing Child Abuse and Neglect: Partnering with Parents* Curriculum through the Missouri Child Care Resource and Referral Network (now Child Care Aware® of Missouri), and training on the MELD curriculum from the Parents as Teachers National Center. The report was completed by Sheila Brookes, PhD (University of Southern Mississippi) through a contract with Northwest Missouri State University, Maryville. Funding was provided by the Children's Trust Fund of Missouri, The National Alliance of Children's Trust and Prevention Funds, and the Missouri Department of Social Services/Children's Division.

Methodology: The report synthesizes results from an in-depth qualitative evaluation of the initiative, utilizing cross-case analysis and constant comparison techniques for the data collection process. Over the duration of the project, a series of interviews were conducted with staff, administration, parents, and selected providers of technical assistance.

Findings: Multiple techniques were used in the various programs' efforts to work with children and families to prevent child abuse and neglect. The populations served varied greatly among the different pilot sites. The experience and expertise of the staff and administrators of the programs also varied. Results indicate that the programs involved in this study were aware of and diligently sought to partner with parents to work on reducing risk factors and enhancing protective factors.