



A System of Care for Children's Mental Health:
Expanding the Research Base
March 3-6, 2002, Tampa, Florida

15th Annual Proceedings



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About the Center . . .

The Center is part of the Department of Child and Family Studies at the Louis de la Parte Florida Mental Health Institute, University of South Florida. Since its inception in 1984, the Center has conducted an integrated series of research, training, consultation, and dissemination activities to achieve its mission of improving service delivery systems for children with serious emotional or behavioral disabilities and their families. The Annual Research Conference represents one of the events coordinated by the Center to encourage the development and sharing of information on effective service systems.

Events, activities, programs and facilities of the University of South Florida are available to all without regard to race, color, marital status, gender, religion, national origin, disability, age, Vietnam or disabled veteran status as provided by law and in accordance with the University's respect for personal dignity.

Preface

We are pleased to present the Proceedings of the 15th Annual Research Conference, *A System of Care for Children's Mental Health: Expanding the Research Base*, held March 3-6, 2002, in Tampa Florida. Each year, the conference is host to researchers, policy makers, service professionals, educators, and family members who gather to share their research, insights, and experiences with one another in an effort to improve mental health services and outcomes for children and their families. The Proceedings are designed to capture the discussions, papers, and posters presented at the annual conference, and to inform future research on many aspects of the design, implementation, and evaluation of systems of care for children and their families. The Annual Research Conference's presenters are selected for their commitment to high quality research, and all are invited to submit a brief summary of their work for the Proceedings.

Having hosted the conference and published its Proceedings for the last 15 years, we are struck by the enormous growth of the conference and the concomitant research presented in the Proceedings. Indeed, the Proceedings reflect the evolution of the field of children's mental health research; from initial articles that were primarily talking about work yet to be done to current discussions of national initiatives to build and maintain evidence-based systems of care, or from early epidemiological studies to large-scale, national studies, the Proceedings mark our progress toward increasing the availability of efficacious mental health treatment for children and their families. For example, in the current volume, *Building and Maintaining a System of Care*, is our longest chapter and as such, speaks to the tremendous growth of the field overall. Another lengthy chapter, *Parent and Caregiver Issues*, also reflects an impressive increase in research on family issues. Furthermore, whereas early volumes combined research on education, child welfare, and juvenile justice into one chapter, this volume presents three separate chapters devoted to each issue. A quick overview of the 11 chapter titles in this volume bears witness to the wealth of research currently underway, and hints of further, important research to come.

The Proceedings' contents describe research projects, program evaluations, aspects of investigation, implementation, and innovations to service delivery systems. The summaries reflect an interdisciplinary approach to children's mental health research, and continue to capture trends that influence the work we do for children and their families. These overviews are intended to provide a thumbnail sketch of each project's methodology, findings, and implications for further research. Much of the information here can be found in more detail elsewhere—in published journal articles, books, reports, or through direct contact with the authors. In the back, the author index will help you locate abstracts from your colleagues, friends, and mentors.

With sincere appreciation for our authors, reviewers, and to our colleagues in the field, thank you for your insight, hard work, and dedication to the field of children's mental health research. We hope you will find the Proceedings of theoretical interest and practical use.

On The Web...

The Proceedings are available on the World Wide Web. Go to <http://rtckids.fmhi.usf.edu>, and you will find a route to this Proceedings in its entirety, as well as past issues.

A Special Thank You...

Each year, as the Research Conference concludes, we look ahead to the Proceedings. The first step, of course, is to invite our presenters to share their work, and we are grateful that so many agree to do so. Thanks to all for their timely submissions, and patience with edits, suggestions and requests.

Upon receipt, each submission is matched with two expert reviewers from the University of South Florida's Louis de la Parte Florida Mental Health Institute faculty and staff. Their thoughtful comments and suggestions continue to contribute enormously to the quality of this volume.

This year's review team included: Kathy Armstrong, Mary Armstrong, Ilene Berson, Richard Briscoe, Hewitt ("Rusty") Clark, Norín Dollard, Albert Duchnowski, Mary Evans, Robert Friedman, Angela Gomez, Paul Greenbaum, Mario Hernandez, Sharon Hodges, Ruby Joseph, Mary Ann Kershaw, Krista Kutash, Katherine Lazear, Lodi Lipien, Debra Mowrey, Teresa Nesman, Diane Powell, Steve Roggenbaum, Starr Silver, Bobbie Vaughn, and Svetlana Yampolskaya. Much interdisciplinary expertise is represented by this list. Thank you.

The research conference is characterized by the collaboration of many disciplines; this is true for the production of this volume, as well. The Department of Child and Family Studies (CFS), which is home to the Research and Training Center, contributes support for production of the Proceedings. The department's CFS Communication staff members have worked on the Proceedings project for many years, and have created numerous strategies that make this publication possible. A special thank you goes to our desktop publishing team, Dawn Khalil and Julie Diniz-Almeida, for their expert assistance in transforming hundreds of tables and figures into publication-ready digital images. We also want to thank Michelle O'Connor, Kiki Harris, and Francis Vayalumkal for their tireless administrative support throughout the publication process.

And last, but not least, we are thankful for the continued leadership and support of our funders: the National Institute on Disability and Rehabilitation Research, U.S. Department of Education, and the Center for Mental Health Services, Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration. These agencies' commitment to excellence and to improving services for the nation's children and their families is strong. Our goal is for these Proceedings and all products disseminated by the Center is to reflect their vision.

The editors: Catherine C. Newman, Cindy J. Liberton, Krista Kutash,
and Robert M. Friedman

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