



Pipeline ... the flow of OCS

By and for the
Office
of Children's Services

Sarah Palin, Governor • Karleen K. Jackson, Commissioner



From ...
Tammy's Desk

April is Child Abuse and Neglect Prevention month and a great time to remind everyone of all the prevention programs and efforts we have under our own OCS roof!

Shirley Pittz, our Early Childhood Comprehensive Systems Coordinator, is staying busy implementing all the great strategies that over 100 participants from around the state developed in the ECCS Plan. This plan focuses on improving early childhood outcomes by reaching across multiple systems within Alaska. Shirley also oversees our Strengthening Families Initiative in which several child care centers, Head Start programs, and other similar settings are participating to better promote protective factors for parents.

Erin Kinavey, our Early Intervention/Infant Learning Program Manager, is leading the charge of assuring that children 0-3 who are victims of substantiated findings of child abuse or neglect are referred for a developmental screening from the ILP, along with overseeing services targeted at children with developmental delays.

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Strengthening Families/Stronger Together 'Train the Trainers' Event

By Shirley Pittz

The week of Feb. 25, Retchenda George-Bettisworth, Leah Ogoy, Eva Hansmeyer, Margit Cox and Beverly Oskolkoff participated in the OCS-sponsored, weeklong "Strengthening Families/Stronger Together—Train the Trainers" event in Anchorage. They were joined by participants from a variety of agencies — child care resource and referral, Head Start, early intervention, family support, and the school district.

The training included an overview of the Strengthening Families "framework" and the Stronger Together Curriculum. Strengthening Families is a child abuse and neglect prevention approach that focuses on building protective factors in families. The "Stronger Together" curriculum is focused on helping staff who

work with families become more "family-centered."

The training was very successful. Many participants felt the training was "the best I've been to in a long, long time." There was a lot of appreciation for spending five days with people from other service organizations, and looking at how programs can do a better job of supporting families. Based on the feedback, the training had a tremendous impact on the participants, both personally and professionally.

The training was provided by national staff from the Parent Services Project from San Rafael, Calif. Be looking for pieces of this fabulous training from your regional representative. You won't want to miss it!

DHSS Intranet is full of resources

By Mike Lesmann

Did you know that the Department of Health and Social Services has a special place for you, and ONLY YOU, reserved in cyberspace? It's called the DHSS Intranet and you might be surprised at the resources that are only a click or two away. Want to

look at one of the department's grants? Check something in your bargaining unit's labor agreement? Research DHSS policy and procedure? Or perhaps you need a personnel form, want to look at the payroll calendar or were planning to submit an application to WorkPlace Alaska for that

promotional opportunity in your office? It's all there! And more! When you first click on Internet Explorer, you can set the DHSS Intranet as your homepage and you can personalize the page in a multitude of ways to fit your needs.

Check it out at: www.internal.hss.state.ak.us/default.cfm.

Making ORCA go faster

By Mike Matthews

Have you ever wished ORCA would run faster? If you work in any of the rural offices you have probably had that thought more than once. Well, help may be on the way. As we all know, Alaska is a very large state. In fact, it is so large that it makes the cost of

connecting all the cities and villages together with fiber optic cables almost impossible.

As a consequence, many rural villages can only connect to the Internet by satellite. Although

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CFSR Update: Child & Family Services Review

By Kristie Swanson

The CFSR Statewide Self Assessment workgroups are finishing up their final teleconferences and are beginning to draft responses for the Statewide Self Assessment. The groups and the state leads are as follows:

- Workgroup 1: Safety (Jennifer Maier and Christopher Kane)
- Workgroup 2: Child and Family Well-being (Jefty Prather)
- Workgroup 3: Permanency I (Tracy Spartz Campbell)
- Workgroup 4: Permanency II (Linda Hendricks)
- Workgroup 5: Service Array/Resource Development and Agency Responsiveness to the Community (Nancy Burns)

- Workgroup 6: Staff/Provider Training and Foster/Adoptive Home Licensing, Approval, and Recruitment (Kathy Ensor)

Each workgroup is responsible for analyzing and evaluating questions related to safety, permanency and well-being, as well as seven systematic factors. If you are interested in reviewing the questions related to each area, reference the following Web site: http://www.acf.hhs.gov/programs/cb/cwmonitoring/tools_guide/statewide.htm.

Please contact Kristie Swanson at 465-1696 or Kristie.swanson@alaska.gov if you have any comments or questions regarding the work groups or any aspect of the CFSR review.

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The Alaska's Children's Trust has recently convened a steering committee to bring together experts in the field of prevention to develop a statewide plan to reduce the rates of child abuse and neglect. That work is just beginning and information will continue to be shared as the work progresses.

I am convinced more and more that if we are to affect the high rates of child abuse and neglect in Alaska, we must first start with prevention. We must identify and implement strategies that enable parents to better care for their children, provide them with healthy starts, and prepare them for school. We must build protective factors around children and families wherever we sit and provide positive alternatives to parents for handling their stress. In the words of one of our tribal partners: Children are our most valuable resource!

Tammy Sandoval is Director of the Office of Children's Services.



Light of Hope events

Light of Hope events are part of a national movement created by the National Court Appointed Special Advocates (CASA) Association, designed to call public attention to the plight of abused and neglected children and provide them with hope. **Plans for 2008 Light of Hope events in Anchorage, Fairbanks, Juneau and the Mat-Su Valley are underway.**

Mat-Su Valley: 2–5 p.m., Sunday, April 6, at Wasilla High School. Mint Green Ribbon Tying ceremony representing each child who was abused or neglected in the Mat-Su Valley in 2007; proclamation, candle lighting and awards ceremony, free food, door prizes and activities for children of all ages. For more information, contact Cecily Skoog-Moore at (907) 746-0547 or Cecily.skoog-moore@alaska.gov.

Anchorage: 11:30 a.m.–1:30 p.m., April 18, Egan Convention Center. Will include entertainment, speakers, awards ceremony, reading of the Governor's Proclamation. For information, contact Sallye Werner at 345-6354 or slwerner@alaska.net. Or go to www.alaskacasa.org.

Juneau: April 19, includes a race and march starting at 10 a.m. outside the Old Armory. Rally begins at 11 a.m. (For more details as they're available, go to www.alaskacasa.org).

Fairbanks: Noon–1:30 p.m., April 23, Carlson Center. The event is part of the Community Cares Conference and is included with conference registration, or \$15 per person. Call the Fairbanks CASA office for tickets, (907) 451-2812.

Upcoming Tribal & Cultural Events

Anchorage area

- Eklutna Tribe located at Eklutna Village, Tribal Community Hall. Main Office: 688-6020
- Elder's Lunch every Wednesday at noon. If more than two people plan to attend, it would be helpful to call the main office so the cook can prepare enough for everyone.
- Eklutna Women's Group meets most Tuesdays at 11 a.m. to work on art, sewing, beading, and other culturally-related projects. Calling main office beforehand is helpful, but not "mandatory."

Anchorage

- Alaska Child Welfare Summit, "All Together ~ For Our Children," April 8–10, 2008, Millennium Hotel, Anchorage. For more information contact: James LaBelle Jr. at jlabelle@citci.com (907)793-3145 or Izabel Bowers at izabel.bowers@alaska.gov (907) 465-2218.

Juneau

- "Aunties House," every Saturday at the Tlingit and Haida Community Council at Salmon Creek, 1–4 p.m. Tlingit/Haida sewing/beading projects with instruction. Seniors, adults and children welcome. Children can either learn to sew or they play on the computer. This promotes wellness, culture and community building. Foster families are welcome to bring the kids. This is free to the public. Folks can buy a kit if they like and learn how to make a Tlingit bib or just observe and visit. Some folks are working on regalia for the upcoming Celebration 2008 the beginning of June.
- Wednesday, April 9, noon–1 p.m. Guest Speakers: Senator Albert Kookesh and Representative Bill Thomas; 2008 Native Issues Forum, ANB Hall, Juneau, 320 W. Willoughby St., co-sponsored by Central Council, Tlingit and Haida Indian Tribes of Alaska and Alaska Native Brotherhood (ANB) Camp # 2. Bring a brown bag or buy a buffet lunch for \$10 or soup buffet for \$6.

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satellite technology sounds very neat, by today's standards it makes for slow Internet connections. Whenever any computer has to connect to the Internet via satellite, the connection experiences what is called latency. Latency is the time it takes for the local server to send a signal to the satellite, for the satellite to process the signal, then send the signal to the Anchorage server, the Anchorage server to process the satellite's signal, then for the Anchorage server to send the signal to the satellite, the satellite to process the Anchorage signal, then the satellite to send a signal to the Bethel server and so on and so on. Each signal is a delay of .5 second. In computer speak, it is considerable and can add up quickly. Latency is not exclusive to the OCS rural offices. Any computer that uses satellite technology to connect to any Web-based technology must deal with latency.

What is OCS doing about it? Until the satellites are replaced by fiber optics, latency will always be an issue. However, not all is lost. It wasn't long after ORCA went live that we realized ORCA speeds in rural offices needed to be faster. It was then we turned to compression technology called Netscaler. Basically, Netscaler is technology that takes the data to be transmitted and compresses it down to anywhere from one half to one tenth its original size before sending it through a satellite. Although it does nothing to prevent latency, it does make it so less data is transmitted, thus improving the speed in which your computer interacts with ORCA.

For example, prior to Netscaler, the time it took to expand the Intake icon could take up to 30 seconds for some offices. After Netscaler was installed, the same operation only took 3 seconds. Needless to say, we were overjoyed with the results. Unfortunately, over the last four months, we started experiencing a return to pre-Netscaler speeds. Despite considerable time and energy spent on trying to get the ORCA speed back, the solution has, so far, evaded us. State IT staff and the product's manufacturer continue to work on resolving the problem. We can make no promises but the issue of ORCA speed in rural offices continues to be a priority.

Administrative Update

By Nancy Burns

A thank you to all staff who must break up their work day by participating in the necessary evil known as the Random Moment Time Study (RMTS). Some tips to remember when completing your Random Moment Samples that will help us receive more federal funds and therefore free up additional general funds for our kids:

- Include a brief description of the activity you were performing — the use of acronyms is welcome!
- Include a reference number in the case number field of the sample. For example, use the ORCA case number if the activity you were performing pertained to it — such as case management.
- Ensure your "Out of Office" assistant is on in Outlook when you are out of the office.
- Keep your Desk Guide to the Random Moment Time Study within easy reach for a quick reference to ensure the most accurate response.

Get the '411' on '211'

Just three little numbers can put a whole world of health and social services information at your fingertips, giving you both a place to get information yourself and a resource for your clients.

A 2-1-1 phone line is now operational in Alaska, providing information on everything from finding after-school programs for children to locating caregivers for an aging parent. The line, also accessible by calling (800) 478-2221, is available from 8:30 a.m. to 5 p.m., Monday through Friday. Learn more about what services are available by visiting www.alaska211.org.

Categories of help cover everything from emergency

shelters, rehabilitation and summer youth employment services, to respite care, burial arrangements, schools and money management. The site is user-friendly and worth exploring. For example, locate "target population" on the menu, choose "youth," and find information about youth counseling, youth shelters and youth development providers.

Sue Brogan, Alaska 2-1-1 Project Director, said the service's

benefits to human-service professionals include increased visibility for their own service, "as well as a resource they can call to get information to help their clients or as a service where they can direct clients."

