

VII. STANDING COMMITTEES

A. Academic and Student Affairs Committee

Faculty Presentation: Partners for Our Children: A university-based collaboration to improve Washington's child welfare system

INFORMATION ONLY

Benjamin de Haan, Ph.D, the Executive Director of Partners for Our Children (POC), will present a brief overview of this unique public/private partnership, which is focused on improving outcomes for Washington's most vulnerable children and families. In his presentation, Dr. de Haan will present the fundamental elements of the partnership, describe POC's strategy for child welfare systems change, and highlight a few projects currently underway. Dr. de Haan will be accompanied by Joseph Mienko, a doctoral student in the School of Social Work. Joe is a former social worker in Washington's child welfare system; now a doctoral student, he is in a unique position to discuss the University's role in improving services to Washington's at-risk families.



For more than 30 years, Benjamin de Haan has been bringing together leaders and policymakers in academia, child welfare, justice systems and related fields to make change and improve lives of vulnerable children, adults, and families. Prior to joining Partners for Our Children as Executive Director, Ben directed child welfare services for the State of Oregon, and served there in a variety of leadership positions for nearly 20 years. He has also led two university-based research centers and was the managing director of Casey Family Programs' State Strategy Division. Ben was the founding president of the Children's Justice Alliance and currently serves as president of the Oregon Children's Trust Fund Foundation, a private endowment focused on preventing child maltreatment. He holds a master's degree in public administration from Lewis and Clark College and a Ph.D. in social work and social research from Portland State University.



Joe Mienko has spent more than five years working with children and families involved in the child welfare and juvenile justice systems. Prior to serving in Child Protective Services at DSHS Children's Administration, he was an intelligence analyst with the US Army where he gained experience in the analysis of geographic and demographic data. Joe completed his MSW from the University of Washington in June 2010 and is a doctoral candidate in the UW School of Social Work. His primary research interests include the application of epidemiological and econometric techniques to child welfare data. He is also interested in research related to assessment and intervention in cases of child neglect. Joe has spent more than five years working

VII. STANDING COMMITTEES

A. Academic and Student Affairs Committee

Faculty Presentation: Partners for Our Children: A university-based collaboration to improve Washington's child welfare system (continued p. 2)

with children and families involved in the child welfare and juvenile justice systems. Prior to serving in Child Protective Services at DSHS Children's Administration, he was an intelligence analyst with the US Army where he gained experience in the analysis of geographic and demographic data. Joe completed his MSW from the University of Washington in June 2010 and is a doctoral candidate in the UW School of Social Work. His primary research interests include the application of epidemiological and econometric techniques to child welfare data. He is also interested in research related to assessment and intervention in cases of child neglect.

Attachment

Partners for Our Children: Our Work



Our Work

partners
for our children™

OUR PROJECTS

We invest in projects that have the potential to yield high positive effects on children:

- Developing a comprehensive university-based training program for child agency field workers in Washington.
- Creating a web-based sharing site to support internal planning at the state public child welfare agency and keep the public informed of selected outcomes for children and families in Washington.
- Identifying more effective policies and services for specific subgroups.
- Supporting performance-based contracting.
- Conducting child welfare systems research.

Who We Are

- Partners for Our Children was founded in 2007 for the purpose of making positive changes in the child welfare system. We work collaboratively with the University of Washington School of Social Work, the Washington State Department of Social and Health Services, and private philanthropy to improve outcomes for children and families in Washington State.
- We provide information, experience and evidence to inform public policy that affects the well being of children and families.
- We focus on children who are involved in the child welfare system or at risk of being involved.

Our Research & Practice

- We adhere to the highest scientific standards to identify what at-risk children and families need and to help the public child welfare system make the most effective policy and practice decisions.
- We provide unbiased information, experience and practical action-oriented strategies for improving outcomes for children and families.
- We focus on the child welfare system as a whole rather than component parts: the courts, the private sector, the legislature and academia are all involved with our work.

Our Future

- We will become a more visible participant in the national dialogue on creating sustainable change in our nation's child welfare systems.
- We will make our research findings accessible to the public and the broader child welfare community.
- We will expand our abilities to guide services to children and families.
- We will bring the most innovative child welfare practices to bear on the challenges faced by vulnerable families in Washington.



Partners for Our Children: A University- Based Collaboration To Improve Washington's Child Welfare System

Presentation to the University of Washington Board of Regents
Committee on Academic and Student Affairs

Benjamin de Haan, Ph.D., Executive Director – Partners for Our
Children and Affiliate Professor, School of Social Work

Joseph Mienko, Research Assistant

November 18, 2010

Who We Are

2

- Founded in 2007 to improve outcomes for children in the public child welfare system.
- POC is a unique partnership between the university, DSHS and private philanthropy.
- Our model allows an innovative leveraging of funding streams.
- Focused on the needs of families in the public system or at risk of being involved.
- Unprecedented direct access to systems data.

About Child Welfare

1,850,300 Children in Washington State*



- * Ages 0-17, based on 2005 Census
- ** Including 16,300 voluntary requests for service
- + Unduplicated count of children in placement. Children may experience more than one placement during a fiscal year.
- ++ Other exits include: reached age of majority, transfer of custody, no exit reason, or deceased.

More than 7,100 Children Exited From Out-of-Home Care⁺



Our Approach

4

- Application of rigorous science to real world issues.
- Focused on the entire system, not a single child welfare agency.
- High level of public engagement.
- Involvement of diverse groups of stakeholders.

Our Strategy for Child Welfare Systems Change

5

- Long-term, sustained relationship building and carefully targeted efforts.
- Guiding the policies, not just measuring their effects.
- Adapting innovative practices from other child welfare jurisdictions.
- Leveraging funding through long-term collaborations.

How Academia Can Impact Field Work

6

- Developing a comprehensive university-based training.
- Creating a web-based information-sharing site.
- Identifying effective policies and services tailored to the needs of specific groups of children.
- Supporting the state's transition to performance-based measures of accountability in contracting.
- Conducting research to understand and improve child welfare systems.