



CHAPIN HALL

CENTER FOR CHILDREN
AT THE UNIVERSITY OF CHICAGO

***Creating an Effective and Powerful
Prevention System To Protect
Children and Strengthen Families***

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Key Concepts

- Review the changes in prevention thinking and program planning over the past 30 years
- Identify the most promising lessons emerging from this evolutionary process
- Identify core elements for effective leadership in the guiding the field forward
- Summarize the challenges facing us in sustaining our momentum

Prevention's Continuous Evolution

- Wave 1: Definition and Awareness (1962-1980)
- Wave 2: The Service Continuum (1980's)
- Wave 3: The Developmental Paradigm (1990's)
- Wave 4: The Community Paradigm

Wave 1: Definition and Awareness

- Objective: Public education/awareness
- Message: Look and you will find
- Typical service response:
 - Reporting laws
 - Professional education
 - Public awareness efforts
 - Sporadic education and support services

Wave 1 Lessons

- Child abuse is more complex, frequent and difficult to define than first imagined
- The “battered child” is a small proportion of all reported cases
- Reporting system was insufficient both as a case finding tool and as a gateway to interventions
- Abuse is a function of multiple personality, environmental and cultural challenges

Wave 2: Expand Service Options

- Objective: Provide diverse interventions
- Message: Let a 1,000 flowers bloom
- Typical service response:
 - Respite care
 - Parent education and self-help groups
 - Child assault prevention programs
 - Family resource centers

Wave 2 Lessons

- Change is possible but not universal--many high risk children were left behind
- Child abuse is one of many factors contributing to adverse outcomes for children
- Not all programs should be replicated – selection must be strategic and based on evidence
- Early intervention with new parents/young children offered the greatest promise

Wave 3: The Developmental Paradigm

- Objective: Reach **ALL** new borns
- Message: Begin at birth and change both parents and context
- Typical service response:
 - Intensive home visitation services
 - Interagency early education and support
 - Outcome-based performance

Wave 3 Lessons

- Empirical evidence confirms home visitation benefits but underscores limitations
- Parental capacity is influenced by community service context and normative standards
- Community matters but how parents draw on community resources (both formal and informal) and how to strengthen these linkages remain unclear

Wave 4: The Community Paradigm

- Objective: Create supportive communities and integrated systems
- Planning parameters:
 - Early intervention
 - Evidence-informed practice
 - Universal outreach

Quality Services As *Leverage* Not Solution

- **Technical solutions to strengthening systemic capacity**
 - Creating diverse programs and supportive services for new parents
- **Adaptive challenges to strengthening systemic capacity**
 - Creating a culture which validates seeking help and giving help
 - Altering institutional structures and openness to collaboration and shared responsibility for common objectives
 - Altering the political process to embrace investment in young children

Creating “Learning Environments”

- Effective programs
- Effective systems
- Effective leadership

Characteristics of Effective Interventions

- Theoretical integrity
- Intervention targets the earliest stages of the developmental process
- Employs persistent, but respectful outreach methods to engage multi-problem families
- Systematically examines the needs of the target population across a number of domains
- Builds a context that offers ongoing support and provides access to other interventions and supports

Characteristics of Effective Systems

- Cross agency agreement on a common vision and set of shared outcomes
- Utilize diverse resource streams – human & fiscal
- Build in stages – self-sufficient components that can link to other options as they emerge
- Integrated data systems where information is shared across agencies to both monitor impacts and build knowledge
- All service is local – quality is critical so insure local providers “own” the product

Characteristics of Effective Leaders

- Strong personal character
- Insatiable curiosity and openness to learning
- Capacity to build and sustain efficient organizations
- Willingness to identify and mentor a new generation of leaders
- Commitment to field building

Staying the Course

The Great Society asks not how much, but how good; not only how to create wealth but how to use it; not only how fast we are going, but where we are headed.

It proposes as the first test for a nation: the quality of its people.

This kind of society will not flower spontaneously from swelling riches and surging power.

It will not be the gift of government or the creation of presidents. It will require of every American, for many generations, both faith in the destination and the fortitude to make the journey.

And like freedom itself, it will always be challenge and not fulfillment.

LBJ (1965)