

THE PARTNERSHIP FOR CHILDREN

**A Tarrant County
Early Childhood Collaboration**
September 1999 – March 2004

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Community Need:

1999:

- Community meeting: passionate advocates
- Issue: fragmented provider community: quality child care disconnected from health, neglect & abuse, infant mortality issues
- Current solutions didn't seem to be working: collaborators wanted to explore non-traditional, across professional domain, problem-solving

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Community Action:

- **Structured passion:**
 - Generated by-laws
 - Elected officers
 - Created an Executive Committee
 - Reached out to range of organizations
 - Set regular meetings with agendas
 - Developed a marketing image

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Community Action:

- **Collaborative mindset:**
 - Not one more funding feeding frenzy
 - Focus on recruiting senior management, not EDs
 - Focus on problem-solving, not programs
 - Doing together what we cannot do alone
 - No whining

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Community Results:

2000-2001:

- Collaborated with United Way of Metropolitan Tarrant County to receive and implement a Success By Six grant
- Forged partnership that brought Dr. T. Berry Brazelton's Touchpoints program to Tarrant County
- Developed an informal caregiver training program

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Community Action:

2002:

- Formal strategic planning process: why? Focus.
- Funding pressures: partnership members want to collaborate to seek federal, state, local government and foundation funding
- Coordinated plan: support the planning efforts of the Mental Health Connection of Tarrant County, United Way of Metropolitan Tarrant County, and Tarrant County Youth Collaboration

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Strategic Planning Process:

- SWOT Analysis by University of Dallas MBA students:
30 of 65 key stakeholders interviewed
- Early Childhood Panels: Health, Safety, Early Care & Education:
15 panelists
- Strategic Planning Retreats:
15 member Strategic Planning Committee

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2003-2004 Strategic Plan *Statements of Principle:*

- Promote prevention through awareness, activity and programs
- Partner with existing service providers to engage the whole community (avoid unnecessary duplication)
- Promote relationship-based programs designed to create a supportive community of caring adults around each child

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2003-2004 Strategic Plan *Statements of Principle:*

- Focus on the care-giving and developmental needs of all children with special attention given to those children who are most at-risk
- Seek to create local, and perhaps non-traditional, solutions based on local standards

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2003-2004 Strategic Plan

Goal #1:

- Develop pilot partnership models between social service agencies and grass roots community groups

Goal #2:

- Increase community awareness of early childhood issues

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2003-2004 Strategic Plan

Goal #3:

- Develop an answer to the question “What does quality childcare look like?”

Goal #4:

- Increase early childhood mental health prevention efforts

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Community Results:

2003-2004:

- Provided project oversight for Touchpoints Fort Worth/Tarrant County
- Co-lead Early Childhood Mental Health Committee with Mental Health Connection of Tarrant County that produced an Interim Report
- Participated in the National League of Cities Early Childhood Success process in Fort Worth

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Community Results:

2003-2004:

- Assisted in creation of Tarrant County Early Care & Education Collaboration
- Received United Way grant to facilitate the development of the Arlington Child Care Council
- Facilitated Dr. T. Berry Brazelton Fort Worth tour
- Assisted in Early Care & Education Symposium

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Community Results:

2004:

- **Implementing 4 neighborhood-based models:**
 - Fort Worth: School District lead
 - Fort Worth: City of FW Public Health lead
 - Arlington: Girl Scouts lead
 - NE Tarrant County: Faith-based lead

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Neighborhood Initiative:

How will we define success?

- A neighborhood project will be successful when there is a sustainable, neighborhood-led infrastructure dedicated to supporting all pregnant women, infants, toddlers and preschoolers in a neighborhood agreed upon geographical area

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Neighborhood Initiative:

How will we define success by May 2005?

- there will be a defined, geographical area for the project
- there will be a completed neighborhood survey
- there will be a neighborhood group that meets regularly
- there will be a new parent support group that meets regularly

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Dos and Don'ts of Collaboration:

➤ Don't:

- Compete with partners for funding
- Duplicate other community efforts
- Let a few agencies dominate
- Play one community group vs. another
- Be afraid to challenge status-quo

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Dos and Don'ts of Collaboration:

- **Do:**
 - Be transparent
 - Have a strong Executive Committee
 - Recruit diverse membership
 - Keep the group focused on passion and outcomes
 - Be nimble

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Funding for The Partnership:

- Staff: part-time coordinator funded through a Foundation grant, UW grant, Touchpoints management
- Supplies: UW grant, membership dues
- Office, phone: in-kind from one of the member organizations
- Meeting space: in-kind from one of the member organizations

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- Camp Fire USA First Texas Council
- Castleberry Independent School District
- Catholic Charities
- Child Care Associates
- City of Fort Worth
- Clayton YES
- Communities In Schools
- Cook Children's Medical Center
- Crime Prevention Resource Center
- Early Childhood Intervention
- Family Pathfinders of Tarrant County
- Fort Worth Independent School District
- Fort Worth Area AEYC
- Gill Children's Services
- Girl Scouts, Circle T Council
- Harris Methodist Fort Worth
- March of Dimes
- Maximus
- Mental Health Connection, Tarrant County
- Tarrant County Fatherhood Coalition
- Tarrant County WIC
- Tarrant County Youth Collaboration
- TDPRS: Child Care Licensing
- The Parenting Center
- United Way of Metropolitan Tarrant County
- Women's Center
- Work Advantage

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