DCAT Narrative - Final FY 2016

Wee Care Respite Program

The Wee Care Respite Program served 151 Warren County families in FY 2016. This included 241 parents and 240 young children with 9,292 hours of free, state-licensed respite care provided. Twenty-eight percent of the children were connected with Heartland Area Education Agency/Early Access due to developmental delays. As a result, children received timely intervention and remedial services before they enter school, ultimately increasing the likelihood of being successful once they get to school. Parents received support and guidance.

The program provided 204 referrals to community resources connecting families with supports and services. Fifty-six items were checked out of the parenting lending library for use at home . Parent education was provided at every session and families were informed of other parenting education offered in the community. Several workshops were offered onsite during respite sessions, including the Family Nutrition Education series through ISU Extension.

Sixty-eight percent of the families completed the written program service evaluation and the responses were once again very favorable. All of the parents reported that the program had reduced parental stress and 76% of those reported using Wee Care specifically in order to reduce parental stress. Ninety-eight percent of families reported a better support system after participating and 97% reported improved family interactions. Approximately 95% of the parents reported increased knowledge about parenting and child development with 97% reporting improved parent-child nurturing and attachment. Comments from the parents about what they liked included: "Handouts and resources, quality of care, clean and fun environment, learning experience, care providers" and "Friendly caring staff. Clean facility. Al's Pal's". The evaluation composite summary was shared with the program staff and the Council.

The program generated $43,042.87 in In-Kind contributions in FY 2016 with tremendous local community support and involvement of volunteers.

The program utilized the DCAT- funded *Al's Pals Kids Making Healthy Choices* curriculum on a regular basis as well as the *Care for Kids* sexual abuse prevention curriculum.

The following thank you note was received by the Wee Care staff in FY 2016 and this illustrates how the program provides concrete supports and helps young families:

"Thank you, from the bottom of our hearts, for the time and love you invest into our children's lives. They have learned so much! What a wonderful opportunity you have provided. It was very hard for all of us to adjust when we moved here two years ago. Our children left the only friends they had ever known, and I was desperate for some rest/time to think/be a human again. Wee Care provided all of that. My three children have made so many friends while I have been able to run errands, go to appointments and occasionally just sit in silence. We ALL look forward to Wee Care each week!

*Story Submitted by : Lisa Kerr Gray, Wee Care Respite Director*