

COMMITTEE ON CHILDREN, YOUTH, AND FAMILIES

The Committee on Children, Youth, and Families (CYF) was established by a vote of Council in August 1985 to ensure "...that children, youth, and families receive the full attention of the Association...in order that all human resources are actualized." The Committee consists of six members and reports to the Council of Representatives through the Board for the Advancement of Psychology in the Public Interest (BAPPI). The 2007 CYF Annual Report provides information on CYF's goals and a summary of activities as they relate to the Committee's goals.

COMMITTEE ON CHILDREN, YOUTH, AND FAMILIES 2007 ANNUAL REPORT

COMPOSITION

The six members of the Committee on Children, Youth, and Families (CYF) for 2007 were: Lonnie Sherrod, PhD (chair); Barbara Fiese PhD, (Chair-elect); Mario Hernandez, PhD; Karen Budd, PhD; John Hagen, PhD, and Scott Nolen, JD, PhD.

MEETINGS

The Committee held two formal meetings in the Washington, DC, area on March 23-25, 2007, and September 28-30, 2007. In addition to these sessions, the Committee accomplished other business by e-mail exchange and conference call.

LIAISON FUNCTIONS

CYF maintains active monitor and liaison relationships with APA divisions, boards, committees and task forces. Division liaisons to CYF are active and involved in the work of the Committee. Liaisons who participated in one or more meetings during 2007 included:

Kathy Katz, PhD, Division 7 (Spring 2007); Kali Trzesniewski, PhD, Division 7 (Fall 2007); Karen Saywitz, PhD, Division 37; Margaret Feerick, PhD, Division 37 Section 1 (Spring 2007); Shelley Heaton, PhD, Division 40; Rachel Kalbeitzner, Division 41 (Fall 2007); James Bray, PhD, Division 43 (Spring 2007); Michael Southam-Gerow, PhD, Division 53; Connie Morrow, PhD, Division 54; Jean L. Chin, EdD, Board for the Advancement of Psychology in the Public Interest, (BAPPI – Spring 2007); Douglas Kimmel, PhD, BAPPI, (Fall 2007); and Diane J. Willis, PhD, Committee on Rural Health and the American Orthopsychiatric Association.

Each CYF member is a monitor or liaison to several APA boards and committees. They review pertinent material and bring relevant issues to CYF's attention. In addition, CYF strives to comment appropriately on all cross cutting agenda items that impact children, youth, and families to ensure that adequate and accurate consideration is devoted to those issues.

MISSION AND GOALS

CYF's mission is to further the central purpose of APA -- to advance psychology as a science and a profession and as a means of promoting health, education, and human welfare -- by specifically ensuring that children, youth, and families receive the full attention of the Association in order that all human resources are actualized. CYF's goals are to:

- Identify and disseminate information concerning the psychological status of children, youth, and families for psychologists, other professionals, policy makers, and the public;
- Offer consultation to relevant APA boards and committees responsible for psychologists who conduct research and provide services for children, youth, and families;
- Encourage psychological research on the factors that promote or inhibit the development of individual and family competence;
- Contribute to the formulation and support of policies that facilitate the optimal development of children and youth within families;
- Designate priorities for APA involvement in the issues affecting children, youth, and families including issues related to gender, ethnicity, sexual orientation, and disability.

SUMMARY OF CYF 2007 ACTIVITIES

Diversity Training and Representation

Diversity is a longstanding and continuing concern of the Committee. In all its efforts from Committee membership to policy statements, the Committee works diligently to ensure that diversity issues receive the Committee's full attention. For example, CYF's 2007 membership was diverse with respect to ethnicity (i.e., one African-American, one Hispanic-American, four European-Americans), gender (two females and four males), and geographic location. This year, the Committee solicited nominations from ethnic minority psychological associations that enhanced the ethnic diversity of the 2008 candidate pool. The Committee also advocates for and develops publications, policies, and programs that are appropriate with regard to age and developmental level, culture, ethnicity, language (certain public information materials are available in both Spanish and English), disability, gender, sexual orientation, and socioeconomic status.

Further, advocacy priorities established by the Committee pay special attention to issues uniquely important to those from diverse backgrounds. This commitment is reflected in the Committee's federal advocacy priority focused on diversity. In that priority, CYF calls for advocating for federal funds for research on the normative development of minority children, youth and families; funding to support training for psychologists to work with children, youth and families from diverse backgrounds in culturally sensitive ways; supporting and funding research based policies that promote the healthy development of children in all families, including those from married, unmarried, single parent, lesbian, gay, and grandparent-headed households; and for preserving and protecting the rights of and services to immigrant, migrant, and refugee children and youth and for funds for research and programs to serve these families; among others.

This year, the Committee reviewed its strategic plan to ensure its consistency with the APA diversity goals and also supported the continued work of the Task Force on Resilience and Strength in Black Children and Adolescents. CYF looks forward to reviewing their product.

I. Identify and Disseminate Information

Newsletter

CYF NEWS is the primary vehicle for communication of information about CYF activities and issues of concern. Every year, two CYF members edit the newsletter. Drs. Hagen and Nolen shared that responsibility in 2007 (Summer 2007 issue). Copies of the newsletter are available at <http://www.apa.org/pi/cyf/cyfnews.html>. The Committee also disseminates information to members through APA media vehicles such as the APA Monitor on Psychology and Division Dialogue and to the lay public through Children, Youth, and Families Office (CYFO) products (e.g., Tips for Talking with Adolescents and Yes...It's Normal for Adolescents to... bookmarks, which are available in English and Spanish).

2007 APA Convention

BAPPI sponsored a CYF-CWP symposium titled *The Psychological and Health Impacts of Social Injustice: Vulnerable and Impressionable: Social Inequality and Children's Exposure to Health Risks*. Speakers included Drs. Tomi-Ann Roberts, Brian Wilcox, and CYF Chair-elect, Barbara Fiese. Co-listing divisions/groups consisted of CYF; CWP; Divisions 9, 27, 45, and 51.

In addition, the Committee and Division 37 cosponsored a social hour that was attended by current and former members of CYF, Division 37, other various child-focused divisions, and current task forces assigned to CYFO. The Committee pursued collaborative 2008 Convention programming with APA divisions and governance groups.

II. Provide Consultation:

The Committee consulted with a variety of APA boards, committees, task forces, directorates, and divisions through its liaison and monitor relationships to these groups and on items placed on the Spring and Fall 2007 cross-cutting agendas. These groups included: BAPPI; Commission for Recognition of Specialties and Proficiencies in Professional Psychology; Committee for Ethnic Minority Retention, Recruitment, and Training; Committee on Socioeconomic Status; Committee on Women in Psychology; Committee on Disability Issues in Psychology; Committee on Ethnic Minority Affairs; Committee on Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, and Transgender Concerns (CLGBTC); Committee on Professional Practice and Standards; and the Policy and Planning Board.

The Committee also provided comment and recommendations on the draft reports of the Task Force on Evidence-Based Practice with Children and Adolescents; the Task Force on Resilience and Strength in Black Children and Adolescents; the Task Force on Gender Identity, Gender Variance, and Intersex Conditions; and the Task Force on Mental Health and Abortion. CYF also made recommendations to the Public Interest Government Relations Office (PI-GRO) 2008 advocacy goals.

The Committee also met with CLGBTC during the Fall 2007 consolidated meetings to discuss collaboration on:

- Increasing diversity in recruitment of new members to CYF with regards to gender identity and sexual orientation.
- Addressing, in a broader manner, issues related to gender identity and sexual orientation on the CYF agenda.
- Integrating developmental concerns with regard to gay, lesbian, bisexual, and transgender youth on the CLGBTC agenda and lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender concerns on the CYF agenda.

III. Encourage Psychological Research and

IV. Formulate Policy:

CYF's initiatives, listed below, encompass activities that concurrently address both of these important aspects of the Committee's responsibilities.

Unlicensed Residential Treatment Centers for Youth

CYF member, Mario Hernandez, PhD, developed and distributed a survey on unlicensed residential treatment centers (via the Practice Directorate's State Issues office) to the executive directors of state, provincial, and territorial psychological associations (SPTAs). The survey assessed awareness and knowledge among psychologists regarding the treatment of youth in "specialty" residential programs. A secondary goal of the survey was to increase awareness among psychologists about the concerns surrounding allegations of abuse, maltreatment, and neglect at unlicensed residential treatment centers. Dr. Hernandez was also instrumental in PI-GRO efforts to boost oversight of personnel in unlicensed residential treatment centers in the *End Institutionalized Abuse against Children* legislation.

No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB) and Civic Engagement

CYF member, Lonnie Sherrod, PhD, collaborated with PI-GRO on its comprehensive recommendations for the anticipated reauthorization of NCLB, specific to civic engagement in youth. NCLB has significant sections on civic engagement and character education, which advocate for increased research in these areas and for a holistic perspective on the child in education.

Mental Health Treatment in the Juvenile Justice System

CYF member, Scott Nolen, JD, PhD, is taking the lead on this topic on the Committee's behalf. The Committee is particularly focused on suicide prevention standards and access to mental health treatment for children and youth in the juvenile justice system. CYF established a liaison relationship with Division 41 (Psychology-Law) for the length of Dr. Nolen's term.

The Importance of Developmental Transitions in Children, Youth and Families

CYF member, John Hagen, PhD, is particularly interested in the impact of developmental transitions on children, youth, and their families. Developmental psychology has a substantial role to play in the effective education of children and youth. The Committee noted the importance of developmental scientists and educators working in concert to maximize the educational opportunities of children as early as possible.

Overweight Conditions in Children

CYF Chair-elect, Barbara Fiese, PhD, is taking the lead on this topic on the Committee's behalf. Pediatric obesity is a multi-faceted issue, which is embedded in several public policy issues. The Committee agreed that APA must be proactive and find its own unique method of confronting this crisis. The role of media in the childhood obesity epidemic is a critical area for examination since advertising towards children is highly saturated with commercials for unhealthy foods and is particularly targeted towards young children who are most vulnerable to such messaging. These targeted advertisements have significantly impacted the increase in childhood obesity. Dr. Fiese began collaboration with PI-GRO on a public policy fact sheet on childhood obesity and disordered eating.

Mental Health Interventions in the Child Welfare System

CYF member, Karen Budd, PhD, edited the Winter 2007 issue of *CYF News*, which focused on the need for evidence-based mental health services for children, adolescents, and families in the child welfare system. Dr. Budd collaborated with PI-GRO on legislation with implications for this population such as the SAMHSA reauthorization and the Keeping Families Together Act. In addition, the Committee submitted a proposal for a symposium at the 2008 Convention that will bring researchers and organizations in the child welfare arena together to discuss effective treatments for this population.

V. Designate APA Priorities for Children, Youth, and Families

This goal permeates every aspect of CYF's work and is evident in its consultation efforts with various groups. CYF is particularly effective in ensuring that its members have expertise to respond to present-day events affecting children, youth, and families. The 2009 nominations statement explicitly encourages applications from candidates who have particular expertise in addressing research and policy relevant to contemporary issues facing children, youth, and families in the context of their socioemotional and cognitive development and mental health. Candidates who have particular interest in culturally and linguistically diverse, understudied, underserved, and diverse populations (e.g., ethnic minorities, sexual minorities, and those with disabilities) and who have expertise in topics relevant to these populations are also particularly encouraged to apply.

Revised Legislative Priorities

After consultation with staff from the PI-GRO, the Committee revised and reorganized the CYF legislative priorities related to children's mental health, physical health, education, diversity, family support, and children's rights and civic engagement.

Conclusion

CYF focuses APA's organizational efforts and capabilities on issues of critical social importance. During the past year, those efforts have encompassed numerous topics for which APA has provided assistance in the areas of education, information dissemination, training, and public policy recommendations. These contributions clearly enhance the reputation of the Association while at the same time delivering important public service. CYF members are proud of this service and confident that it has had a meaningful positive impact on the lives of many young people and families.

Respectfully Submitted:

Lonnie R. Sherrod, PhD
2007 Chair
Committee on Children, Youth, and Families
December 19, 2007