

TO: Juvenile Welfare Board Members

FROM: James E. Mills, Executive Director 
Browning Spence, Director, Community Planning and Research *HBS*

Requested Action

The Board is requested to approve an allocation of \$10,240 in FY 2002-2003 to the University of South Florida on behalf of Healthy Families for the project titled "Validation Study for the Parent-Child Interaction Inventory". This is a joint project with the Hillsborough Children's Board. Additional funding in FY 2003-2004 and FY 2004-2005 would be contingent on continued funding from the Hillsborough Children's Board.

Options

1. Approve the request.
2. Deny the request.
3. Any other action recommended by the Board.

Recommended Action

Approve the allocation of \$10,240 to the University of South Florida on behalf of Healthy Families for the project "Validation Study for the Parent-Child Interaction Inventory" for the time period May, 2003 through September, 2003.

Source of JWB Funds

The FY 2002-2003 Research Unallocated Funds and the FY 2003-2004 Research Allocated Budget, subject to the TRIM (Truth in Millage) process.

Fiscal Impact

The FY 2002-2003 Research Unallocated Fund would be reduced by \$10,240 from \$28,440 to \$18,200. Future funding for this study is contingent upon continued funding by the Hillsborough Children's Board. If they continue to fund the study then the fiscal impact for JWB in FY 2003-2004 will be \$24,578 from the Research Allocated Budget. Fiscal impact for FY 2004-2005 will be \$14,336 from the Research Unallocated Fund.

Narrative

The Parent-Child Interaction Inventory (PCII) was developed in 1998 by the team of University of South Florida researchers responsible for evaluating Healthy Families Pinellas. The instrument was designed as a diagnostic tool to identify potential attachment problems among parents and their children. Parent-child attachment is a critical issue for appropriate child development. Children who do not establish strong bonds with their parents in the first few years of life are more likely to be abused and to engage in much higher rates of risk taking behavior as adolescents. Other Healthy

Families America programs have adopted the PCII, including Healthy Families Florida. It appears this instrument is meeting an important need, as evidenced by its widespread adoption. The instrument, however, has not yet been validated. The proposed study is an attempt to assure the PCII is measuring what it is supposed to measure.

The Hillsborough Children's Board is interested in a jointly sponsored study since both counties have Healthy Families Programs. The joint investment in the Healthy Families program for the two counties is \$3,851,277. The Children's Board has allocated funds for this study for this year and is planning on budgeting funds for next year, contingent upon participation by JWB. The total cost of the two year, two county study is \$98,308.

One hundred families will be used for this study, fifty each from Healthy Families Pinellas and Healthy Families Hillsborough. Family Service Workers (FSW's) from these programs will videotape and take notes on parent-child interactions over the course of three one-hour home visits with each family. FSW's complete the PCII at the end of the third visit. When FSW's have completed all sessions, they will exchange videos among themselves so that each family can be rated by a second FSW to provide a measure of inter-rater reliability.

The same videos will also be rated by USF research personnel who will be trained in the use of the NCAST, an instrument that measures parent-child interaction. As a measure of parent-child interaction, it is traditionally considered the "gold standard" but it is difficult to use without substantial training. Data on parent-child interaction gathered from the PCII will be compared to normative data available from the NCAST to determine the extent to which the PCII is measuring the same kind of information.

The validation of the PCII would be a major contribution to the home visiting service delivery system. The biggest advantage of this instrument is that it is a relatively simple tool that can be used by paraprofessionals. The other main instrument used in this line of work, the NCAST, requires special training and is difficult to use in day-to-day practice with families. It is important to provide paraprofessionals with an effective, easy-to-use instrument to gauge the quality of the parent-child attachment and identify any problems that might be occurring. This allows the FSW to work with the parent and child to improve in these areas and thereby reduce the risk of child abuse occurring.

Another important contribution is that by validating this instrument, it will gain credibility within the research community as being grounded in scientific research. This, in turn, can mean that the instrument will become used by many programs to facilitate the work they do with at-risk families. Currently, there is a scarcity of instruments that measure parent-child attachment and interaction and the PCII could make a significant contribution to this field.

Staff Resource Person: Starr Silver Ph.D. Manager Research & Evaluation Department