

Skillman Center for Children

College of Urban, Labor and Metropolitan Affairs

Wayne State University

Volume I Issue IV

Fall 2001

Message from the Director

The terrible tragedy of September 11, 2001, and the events of the subsequent weeks have touched all our lives in very profound ways. We have all been diminished by the horrific acts of violence. We have been sickened by the perversity of human motivation and human action. And yet in these most difficult times, we have been heartened by the many acts of kindness and heroism that we have seen. Friendship, community, hope—they were all evident in the aftermath of September 11.

Yet, we also know that there has been a darker side, as hateful speculation and harassment have been directed against those who look Arab or Muslim. We must not let these events tear us apart and turn us against each other. We must come together and work to affirm diversity. We must build on our common humanity, and embrace the values of tolerance, compassion and justice.

As perplexing as these times may be for adults, they must be doubly so for children. We must be prepared to answer the questions of young people—to be truthful without being alarmist. They need some perspective in order to be able to deal with the randomness of terror. They also need to understand that religious and ethnic diversity are still prized and that stereotyping and intolerance are unacceptable. We must invite them to join us as we reach out and work together to build communities that bridge divisions.

The Skillman Center for Children can be helpful as you seek to bridge divisions. The Resource Center has materials on different ethnic groups and on resolving conflict. The Urban Families Program has trained staff who are available to assist in identifying supportive materials for parents and teachers who may be seeking ways to speak to children about the events of September 11th. The center can put you in touch with faculty and staff experts across campus who can be helpful in putting the events of September 11 in perspective, as well as gaining greater knowledge about different ethnic and religious groups. Please give us a call, or visit our Web site.

Alma H. Young, Dean and Interim Director

From a Child's Perspective: Detroit Metropolitan Census Fact Sheets, Series 2000

The children of today will one day be entrusted with the nation's economic, political and social institutions and with the continued vitality of their society. This is a critical issue for all children, but urban children, in particular, face many barriers as they prepare for this role amid accelerating change. For example, urban children often live in communities that record high rates of poverty and crime, poor housing conditions, overcrowded schools and negative health issues such as high instances of lead-based paint poisoning. It is thus imperative that we know and understand the state of our children and the nature, extent and consequences of the challenges that they face.

Yet, before we attempt to analyze the circumstance of urban children and their families, we need to build a comprehensive information base. The Skillman Center for Children and the Center for Urban Studies, College of Urban, Labor and Metropolitan Affairs, Wayne State University, have joined forces to develop a series of child-specific fact sheets based on the recent Census data released for the area comprised of Macomb, Oakland and Wayne counties. Besides looking at each individual county and the region as a whole, we have identified several key cities within the tri-county area. Tracking changing distributions across age, race/ethnicity, family structure, gender and economic status by geographic unit allows us to see how communities have been impacted differently by demographic change. In addition, we have provided timeline comparisons so that trends can be readily identified within specific locations.

Information is presented in tables, charts and maps for clarity and ease of analysis. The intent is to build a multi-faceted community profile that allows the reader to view the issues impacting urban children from various perspectives. In one way, the data are valuable in that they can be compared and contrasted within each category presented. Another method of analysis is to look at the intersections of data over geographic area and time. For example, questions to ask might include:

- What family support services are needed in Hamtramck, a city with a rapidly growing population of immigrant households where English is not the primary language?
- How will school enrollments impact communities with shrinking numbers of youth compared to those with rapidly growing populations?
- Are health issues different between communities? For example, where should immunization drives be targeted, and should lead paint testing be included in those outreach efforts?
- Over the past decade, the number of single fathers raising their children has grown sub-

continued on p. 2

Table of Contents

From a Child's Perspective	1
Resource Center Updates	2
New Releases from KIDS COUNT	3
Working with the Child in Child Welfare	3
Greetings from the Urban Families Program	4

From A Child's Perspective, cont. from p. 1
stantially. What are the implications of this new demographic trend?

Framing inquiries in this manner reveals the barriers that exist for urban children throughout the area as well as the strengths that can be drawn upon to address those barriers. This is particularly evident if the data are used in the context of evaluating public poli-

cies, best practices and service delivery strategies developed and implemented by individual communities to address their unique and common concerns.

In our last newsletter, we included a preliminary set of data. We have recently released a much more comprehensive publication that focuses on age distribution, residential patterns and changing family structure. The second issue, to be released in December 2001,

will detail race and gender data. The third in the series, to be published in July 2002, will address issues of income, poverty and housing. Additional reports will be released as data are made available.

Copies of the Census FactSheets can be obtained by calling the Skillman Center (313) 872-7166 or by accessing the following Web pages: www.skillmancenter.culma.wayne.edu.

Resource Center Updates

Needs Assessment Survey

We would like to thank those who completed the survey that was recently mailed to patrons of our Resource Center. If you have not had the opportunity to participate in this initial effort, please take a few minutes to complete and return the enclosed needs assessment. Your input is important because it helps us select new materials for the center while developing activities for faculty, students and community groups.

Tours

We would like to extend an invitation to any individual or group interested in touring the Resource Center. Staff will introduce you to the materials and other resources within the center. If you would like to bring your staff, co-workers, parenting group, class, etc. to the Resource Center, please contact Angie at (313) 872-7166 to arrange a date and time.

Cataloguing

Center staff have completed the testing of a computerized cataloguing system that will integrate the Skillman Center collection into the Wayne State Library system's inventory. Once this process is complete, patrons will be able access the materials housed in our Resource Center through a computer search of the larger library system. Patrons will also be able to use the Resource Center's computer work stations to search the WSU library collections.

We also want to extend a welcome to Lauren Marcus, a graduate student

in library science who is assisting us with the cataloguing process. Lauren received her bachelor's degree in Child Development and Family/Community Services. Along with Angie Martin, she will be able to assist anyone who comes to the Resource Center seeking information.

New Resources

The following is a sample of some of the new materials in the Resource Center. Please come in to see the books, videos and curriculum materials that are available for check-out at no charge.

Get Real about Violence® (Grades 4-6 and Grades 6-9) is a mixed-media, research-based violence prevention program designed to change the attitudes and behaviors that underlie violence. The program, addressing bullying, teasing and conflict resolution, consists of three separate modules: Vulnerability to Violence, Contributors to Violence and Alternatives to Violence. Each module contains a video, a teacher's guide and reproducible worksheets. The Center for Substance Abuse Prevention (CSAP) recently recognized Get Real about Violence as one of its 2001 promising programs. For more information about this series, see www.chef.org/curricl.htm.

AIDS and Black America, a three-part film series produced by the NAACP, focuses on HIV prevention, detection, treatment and access to care. The films feature Maya Angelou, Surgeon General David Satcher, Congresswoman Maxine Waters, Julian Bond, and Kweisi Mfume. The tapes also

include real life dialogue with African Americans affected by the epidemic.

- Part I: House on Fire: Black America Responds to AIDS (60 minutes) addresses community issues, such as drug use, policies and access to care.
- Part II: Sister's Keeper (30 minutes) focuses on women's issues.
- Part III: Coming to Life (30 minutes) includes interviews with individuals living with HIV and AIDS.

For more information, see www.naacp.houston.org/epidemic/AIDS&BlackAmerica.html

Zero to Three Bulletin is a bi-monthly publication written in non-technical language for individuals working in the multidisciplinary infant/family field. Zero to Three is the nation's leading resource on the first three years of life. Each issue includes several articles devoted to a single topic that provide insight from multiple disciplines on the development of infants, toddlers and their families. The bulletin informs readers of model programs and best practices, current research and clinical findings, public policy, and the latest publications and videos on children and families. The Resource Center recently subscribed to this publication. We also have back copies from 1983 to 1996. For more information about Zero to Three, visit their Web site at www.zerotothree.org.

Resource Center Hours:
Monday-Friday,
9:00 a.m.-4:30 p.m.

New Releases from KIDS COUNT

The Kids Count in Michigan Data Book 2001, County Profiles of Child and Family Well-Being, has just been released. This year's book contains the latest available data on over 40 indicators of child well-being in Michigan and 83 individual counties. Besides providing data, this valuable resource details trend information, mostly for the decade of the 1990s. Discussion and analysis of individual indicators are included in the overviews of background information, economic security, child health and safety, adolescence and education.

The 2000 Census documented high levels of segregation among Michigan children of diverse racial and ethnic backgrounds. These divisions are even more apparent in the disparities in measures of child well-being, in particular, rates of infant mortality, low birth weights and teen deaths. Although this past decade recorded some of the best economic times in the state's history, child well-being did not improve as dramatically. Of the 18 trend measures of child well-being monitored by Kids Count, Michigan reported improvement in nine, little or no change in five and worsening in four.



For example:

- Overall, the percentage of 4th and 7th graders performing satisfactorily on the reading portion of the Michigan Education Assessment Program (MEAP) tests increased by 65 and 48 percent, respectively.
- Teen birth and teen death rates declined steeply with the most dramatic drops occurring among African-American teens. Still, African-American youth remain twice as likely to die from an injury death than white teens and are almost three times as likely to become a mother before the age of 18.



- One of the most disturbing trends was the increased rate of children involved in an investigation of alleged child abuse or neglect—the rate climbed from 47 to 66 (per 1000) children involved in such an investigation. The rate of confirmed victims also remains high.

Copies of the Michigan's Kids Count book are available in the Resource Center. For personal copies of the book, or for further information or presentations, please contact: Kids Count in Michigan toll free at (800) 837-5436 or by their Web site: www.mlhs.org.

In addition to the Michigan data book, the national Kids Count has expanded its interactive, on-line database of 2000 Census data. This

system provides access to data on families and children in a far simpler and more detailed format than what is currently available from the Census Bureau's Web site. Kids Count offers easily readable summary profiles of data on age and sex, race, Hispanic origin, and living arrangements for the United States, individual states, counties, congressional districts, cities, and metropolitan areas. Users of the database will also be able to create rankings of states, counties and other regions on all available indicators.†Visit <http://www.aecf.org/kidscount/census/> to access the new and significantly updated KIDS COUNT Census Web site.

Working with the Child in Child Welfare

The Skillman Center is currently offering a training series that provides a unique opportunity for child welfare specialists to develop an improved ability to work with infants, children and adolescents. Funded in part by the Administration for Children, Youth and Families, the series is free to Family Independence Agency (FIA) employees and FIA contractual specialists and supervisors. Each training session provides participants with:

- hands-on training to develop practical assessment and intervention skills.

- discussion of developmental issues relevant to work with infants, children and youth. information and strategies to access children's services.
- opportunities to discuss case material and learn from the collective experience of co-workers and other specialists working with children.

There are two sessions scheduled for the remainder of fall 2001:

November 13: Part I: What Children in the Child Welfare System Can Tell Us: Children as Sources of Information

December 4: Part II: What Children in the Child Welfare System Can Tell Us: Observation, Assessment and Interviewing Methods

The first training module for the 2002 series will be: Common Mental Health Problems in Children. The training session will be offered on two different dates: January 22 or January 31 (tentative dates).

For further information, contact Kristin Kaylor Richardson at (313) 872-7107. To register, contact your supervisor or call the Skillman Center for Children (313) 872-7166.

Greetings from the Urban Families Program



The Urban Families Program (UFP) recently joined the Skillman Center for Children. Rather than publish a separate newsletter as in the past, we will now be included in the Center's publication which allows us to reach a much larger audience and gain some new friends. We are still in our offices in the Faculty/Administration Building with our same main telephone number (313-577-2267), but will be sure to notify everyone when we are able to move to a permanent home in the Skillman Building.

In light of the tragic events of the past few weeks, we have pulled together materials that may assist parents and caring adults in helping children deal with the disaster. As always, it is important to consider the developmental stage of the child. For example, a young child's primary need is for physical comfort (hugs and cuddling), reassurance and stability. They need to know that adults are doing all they can to protect them and keep them safe. Be sure to welcome and encourage talking about things that bother them. Watch for changes in behavior, such as bed-wetting or clinging, that may be symptoms of stress. Dramatic play can provide an opportunity to act out concerns—pretending to be big and strong can help gain control and overcome feelings of helplessness.

For older children, it is most important to listen and respond to questions as much as possible and in an age-appropriate manner. You may not have the answers as to why bad things happen, but be willing to share factual information. Acknowledge that it is okay for them to be afraid and

upset, but emphasize that adults are doing all they can to keep them safe.

In the aftermath of the terrorist attacks, it becomes important to address the need to promote tolerance and peace. Anger is a natural response to terrorism, but we must be careful not to unfairly accuse groups of people, who should not be judged by the actions of a few. Children can relate to how unfair it is to be accused of something you didn't do. Most importantly, adults must remember to model tolerance and compassion in their words and behavior.

We suggest the following as ways to cope with the grief and trauma many children may be experiencing:

- Do something fun with your child
- Contribute to the relief funds (Red Cross, United Way, Salvation Army, etc.) and have your child be part of deciding how those contributions should be made.
- Share your feelings with your child
- Provide your child with a sense of security—"We are working to keep you safe."
- Be available to answer questions for your children
- Maintain daily routines
- Limit television watching of the disastrous events and other upsetting news reports
- Listen to your child express his or her feelings
- Express how badly you feel and that it is normal to feel this way
- Assure your children you will take care of them and love them
- Take care of yourself!!



The following Web sites are sources of excellent information and materials:

- www.naeyc.org -- National Association for the Education of Young Children
- www.zerotothree.org -- Zero to Three
- www.counseling.org -- American Counseling Association
- www.nasponline.org -- National Association of School Psychologists (available in Arabic, Spanish, Chinese, Farsi, Urdu and Vietnamese)

Spotlight on Links to Learning

This proven program designed to strengthen parent involvement in children's learning within the family and community was developed at Purdue University under the direction

of Dr. Douglas R. Powell. Dr. Powell was affiliated with the Merrill-Palmer Institute, Wayne State University, for several years and is well-known and highly respected in the

Detroit area for his work with families.

Links to Learning is designed for parents of elementary school-aged children, an important period of parenting that is often overlooked. The program emphasizes the use of parent-child conversations and activities as tools that improve problem-solving skills. Using a discussion group



approach, sessions are facilitated by a parent and a professional working together on an equal basis. The curriculum involves parents telling about their experiences, looking closely at typical situations, taking the views and roles of others, and solving real-life problems. Examples of topics explored in Links to Learning include:

Healthy Partnerships with Schools

- Become a partner with schools
- Families and schools connect for support for the child
- Open communication between parents and teachers builds partnership

Children Are a Part of the Partnerships—Learning in Family Daily Routines

- Talking with children about television shows can be helpful to children.
- Learning from games can be fun
- Chores can be valuable learning experiences for children
- Learning from telling stories
- Asking questions
- Responding to children's questions
- Open-ended questions build problem-solving skills



Libraries: A Place for Families

- Talking about stories strengthens learning
- Support your child's reading skills

Parents Dreams and Expectations Influence How and What Children Learn

- Expectations influence children's learning
- Communicating expectations

On many occasions, the Urban Families Program has successfully used Links to Learning. For example, the program works well in schools because

it emphasizes that children from families involved in partnerships with schools have better self-esteem, fewer behavior problems and higher levels of school attendance and academic achievement. For further information about this program, please contact the Urban Families Program at (313) 577-2267 or 577-6556.

Faith-Based Network Detroit

The Urban Families Program is starting the second of a three year project that focuses on increasing the knowledge, strategies and skills of faith-based organizations who want to work with families and their communities to reduce the risk of use and abuse of alcohol, tobacco and other drugs (ATOD). During the first year, more than 15 organizations worked with UFP to put together programs for their constituencies. UFP is now recruiting new faith-based organizations that would like some technical assistance in enhancing

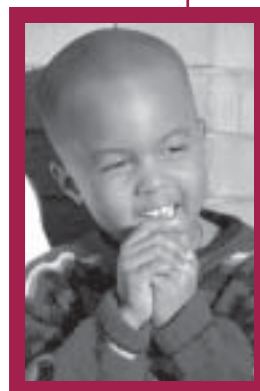
existing programs or implementing new ones for children, youth and families.

If you are a member of a faith-based organization and would like free training, technical assistance and ongoing support to enhance your program, please contact Dorothy Roman at (313) 577-6556 or by e-mail: aa7636@wayne.edu and/or Dorene Brown at (313) 993-1343 or by e-mail: ab0029@wayne.edu.

Cool Parenting Rules and Tools for the Prevention of Substance Abuse

The Urban Families Program has developed a fun tool for families to use together that helps parents and children understand how to prevent the use or misuse of various substances. The tool is a packet of brightly colored cards that provide various activities for adults and children to do together. Encased in plastic, they have a large magnet on the

back, so they can be put up on a refrigerator for easy access. The packets are provided at no cost, and multiple copies are also available. Please call UFP staff at (313) 577-2267, 993-1343, or 577-6556. Or, you may call the Skillman Center at (313) 872-7126.





Resource Center Patron Survey

The Skillman Center for Children Resource Center is a library comprised of books, pamphlets, monographs, reports, videotapes, and curriculum materials. We are planning to improve our Resource Center and would like your input. Please fill out the following questionnaire as completely and candidly as possible.

1. What is your affiliation?

Community Organization (Name of organization: _____)

Parent

WSU Faculty or Staff (Department: _____)

WSU Student (Department: _____)

Other _____

2. How did you first hear about our Resource Center? _____

3. How often have you used the Resource Center?

More than 10 times

Between 3-10 times

Once or twice

Never

4. Please rank the following subjects in terms of interest or use to you.

(0 = no interest or use, 1 = some interest or use, 2 = moderate interest or use, 3 = great interest or use)

Adolescents/Teens	0	1	2	3	Grief and Loss	0	1	2	3
Adoption	0	1	2	3	Health and Nutrition	0	1	2	3
Advocacy	0	1	2	3	HIV/AIDS	0	1	2	3
African-American Issues	0	1	2	3	Juvenile Justice	0	1	2	3
Anger Management	0	1	2	3	Latino Issues	0	1	2	3
Arab/Chaldean Population	0	1	2	3	Life Skills	0	1	2	3
Child Abuse/Neglect	0	1	2	3	Men's Issues	0	1	2	3
Child Care	0	1	2	3	Mentoring	0	1	2	3
Child Development	0	1	2	3	Parenting/Families	0	1	2	3
Communication	0	1	2	3	Pregnancy	0	1	2	3
Community Building	0	1	2	3	Professional Development	0	1	2	3
Conflict Resolution	0	1	2	3	Self-Esteem/Self-Help	0	1	2	3
Cultural Diversity	0	1	2	3	Sex/Sexuality	0	1	2	3
Domestic Violence	0	1	2	3	Single Parents	0	1	2	3
Early Childhood	0	1	2	3	Special Needs Children	0	1	2	3
Education/School Success	0	1	2	3	Substance Abuse	0	1	2	3
Employability	0	1	2	3	Teaching/Fun Ideas	0	1	2	3
Fatherhood	0	1	2	3	Violence Prevention	0	1	2	3
Foster Care	0	1	2	3	Welfare/Welfare Reform	0	1	2	3
Grandparents	0	1	2	3	Women's Issues	0	1	2	3
Grant Writing	0	1	2	3					

5. What other subject areas do you recommend? _____

6. Please rank the following types of materials in terms of interest or use to you:
(0 = no interest or use, 1 = some interest or use, 2 = moderate interest or use, 3 = great interest or use)

Books	0	1	2	3
Curriculum Guides	0	1	2	3
Pamphlets	0	1	2	3
Videos	0	1	2	3
Materials on the World Wide Web	0	1	2	3
National Statistics / Data	0	1	2	3
Michigan Statistics / Data	0	1	2	3
Metropolitan Area Statistics / Data	0	1	2	3
Materials in Spanish	0	1	2	3
Materials in other language(s)				(language(s): _____)

7. What specific resources or publishers do you recommend? _____

8. What activities or services would you like for the Resource Center to offer? _____

9. Any other suggestions or comments? _____

Thank you for your time in completing this survey.

Please return by August 31 to:
Skillman Center for Children
100 E. Palmer, Room 123
Detroit, MI 48202
Fax: (313) 872-7126

(Optional)
Name: _____
Phone: _____
Email: _____

Questions? Call (313) 872-7166, or email
skillmancenter@wayne.edu

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School of Social Work
Wayne State University

The mission of the Skillman Center for Children is to enhance the economic and social well being of urban children and their families. We do this by informing, influencing and facilitating the strengthening of policies, best and promising practices, and programs affecting children locally, regionally, nationally and globally. Our efforts focus on three areas of expertise: economic security for families; family and community support; and child resiliency and competence through safe families and neighborhoods. The center draws upon a diverse coalition of researchers, educators, service providers, policy makers and community-based colleagues for advice and knowledge as we build the interdisciplinary and community collaborations needed to meet the challenges of our mission.

Center staff and associates pursue this mission by:

- stimulating the creation of knowledge about urban children to be disseminated within the university and to practitioners and policy makers.
- creating, synthesizing and translating knowledge about urban children from diverse racial and ethnic groups and in varying social settings.
- collaborating with university faculty and community-based partners to meet the needs of the university, policy makers and those who implement programs.
- providing opportunities for discussion of critical policy issues affecting children through forums, conferences and workshops.
- building and strengthening public and private support for children-related issues and activities.


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