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CENTER ON CHILDREN,
FAMILIES, AND THE LAW

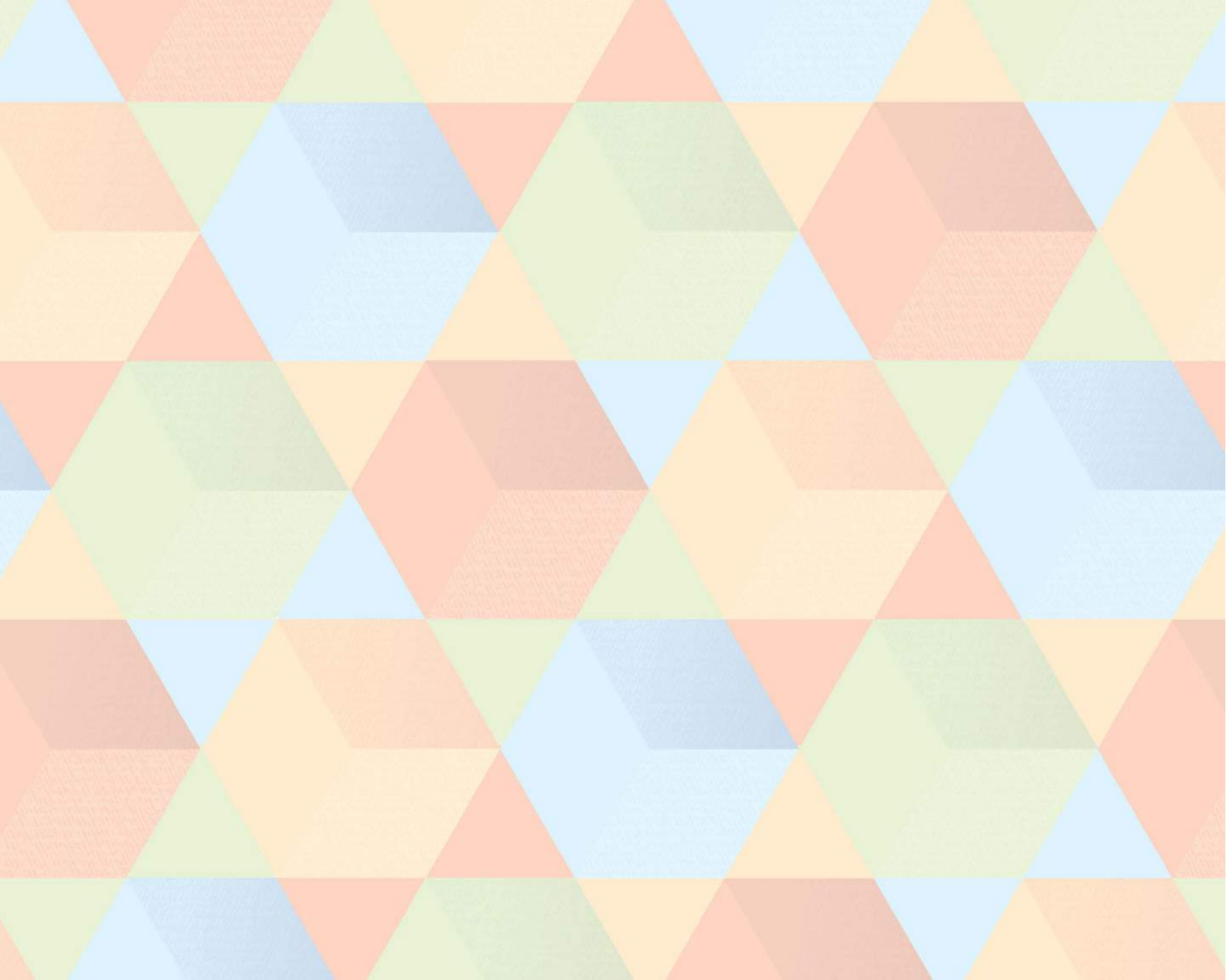
2016 Annual Report

Building Stronger Families

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NEBRASKA RESOURCE PROJECT
FOR VULNERABLE YOUNG CHILDREN





Build. Connect. Benefit.

The Nebraska Resource Project for Vulnerable Young Children (NRPVYC) is a building block for professionals who serve maltreated children across Nebraska. We make supportive services, training, and resources accessible to help professionals improve outcomes for these children in need.




Table of Contents

Who We Are	2
Families and NRPVYC	4
Professionals and NRPVYC	5
Our Projects	6
Areas of Focus	7-11
Who Supports Us	12

How We Help Maltreated Youth

Located at the UNL Center on Children, Families, and the Law (UNL CCFL), the NRPVYC's primary focus is helping to improve outcomes for maltreated young children in Nebraska. We do this by providing support and resources to the professionals who work with these children and their families.

Mission: To improve the wellbeing of maltreated infants and toddlers in Nebraska.



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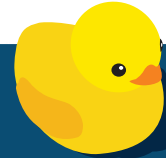
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Goals

The goals of NRPVYC include:

- To build and support our programs, primarily focused on Reflective Practice, Therapeutic Infusion Courts, and Mental Health Services for young children
- To build a sustainable infrastructure for our practices
- To train and provide Reflective Practice to individuals and organizations in early childhood and the juvenile court system (Reflective Practice)
- To build and evaluate therapeutic courts in metro areas and to expand into rural areas (Therapeutic Infusion Courts)
- To ensure sustainability of early childhood mental health services such as Child Parent Psychotherapy (Early Childhood Mental Health Services)



NEBRASKA YOUTH

by the numbers

Population



495,447 children lived in Nebraska in 2015.

55.7% of Nebraska children live in Douglas, Lancaster, and Sarpy counties.

In 2015, the maltreatment rate was **7.9 per 1,000 kids**.

Child Welfare System

5,322

total kids entered the child welfare system in 2015.

Of the court involved cases, **508** children were under the age of 1 (21.1%) and **342** children were ages 2-4 (14.9%).

905

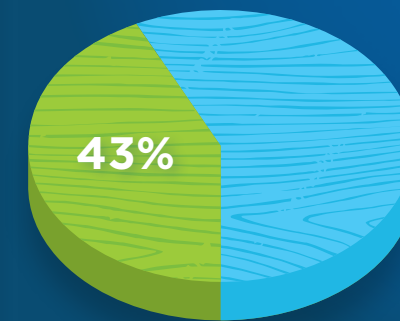
children in foster care had 4+ placement changes in 2015 (8.6% of them were under the age of 4).

55.3% of all children in foster care in 2015 were in relative/kinship care.

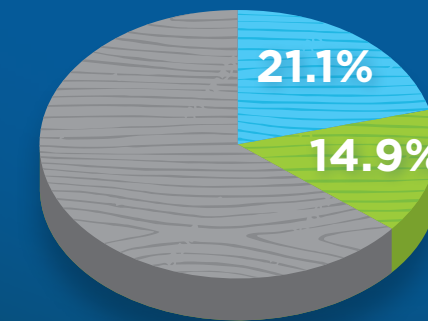
31.9% of all children in 2015 had been placed in out-of-home care for 25+ months.



Of the **1,717** children who exited out-of-home care in 2015, the average length of time away from home was **21.5 months**.



43% of those entries were court involved.



36% combined infant/toddler court involved cases.

Kids Count in Nebraska 2016 (Voices for Children)

Helping Families and Strengthening Communities

Young children grow in the context of the relationship they have with their parents. When they experience a strong, loving relationship, children grow and thrive. When that relationship is broken, inconsistent, harsh, or passive, it can prevent a baby from growing properly. We work with professionals to help build and strengthen healthy parent-child relationships in families they work with.

By elevating parent-child relationships, we also make an impact on the community at large. Maltreated children can create a significant cost to society, both financially and in other ways. Maltreated children are at a much higher risk for poor outcomes like lower graduation rates, increased pregnancy rates, greater challenges at work, and a higher chance of being incarcerated. By making more effective efforts earlier in life, we can assist in maximizing a child's potential.



OUR ROADMAP TO SUCCESS

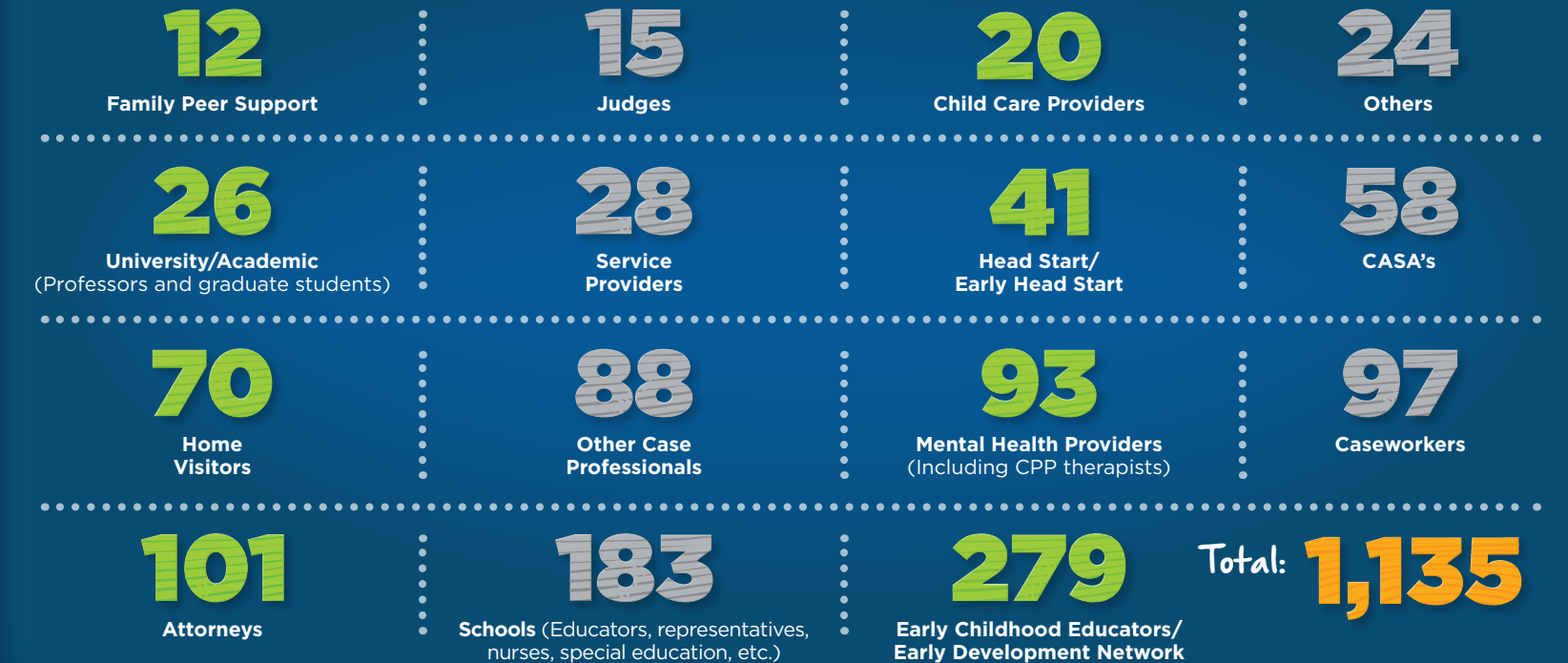


Making Their Work Easier and More Effective

The professionals we serve often work at either a systems or local case-level. At a systems level, we partner with other Nebraska organizations to address issues and improve accessibility to services. This includes expanding evidence-based practices like Child-Parent Psychotherapy (CPP), and making early intervention (Early Development Network) services and high-quality childcare more accessible. Case-level issues are focused on developmental needs, eligibility for Early Development Network services, improving parent-child relationships, and accessing child care and medical care.

One of our strongest assets is training. We train a range of professionals, including caseworkers, attorneys, judges, and others, so they can easily implement evidence-based practices in their work. Training helps professionals identify trauma in young children, better represent young children, and successfully address other challenges affecting these youth.

NUMBER OF PROFESSIONALS that received training from NPRVYC in 2016



Examples of Our Work

Expanding Services for Young Children

In 2016 we focused on training new CPP therapists, providing consultation to existing CPP therapists, continuing our consultation program for new CPP therapists, and offering ongoing implementation support.

For example, through ongoing implementation support, we've worked with a community group in Hastings to:

- Train four therapists to provide CPP
- Inform court professionals about CPP and the trauma screen
- Work with caseworkers to complete trauma screens, make CPP referrals, and troubleshoot issues as they arose

General Expertise

We provide expertise for maltreated young children on a general basis to anyone. This might be an attorney asking about what the appropriate amount of visitation a parent

should have with a baby, a caseworker asking about which early childhood mental health service is suitable, or a therapist asking about using the trauma screen tool.

Trauma Screen

We help expand the use of trauma screening in children of all ages, and provide specific expertise for use of the screening tool in children under the age of five. This includes a "cross walk" that is more descriptive for young children who are frequently more difficult to screen than older children. We show professionals how to implement information within "The Path to Trauma Therapy" brochure.

We also provide case consultation to caseworkers and attorneys who need help using the trauma screen and work with systems to make it easier to use the trauma screen in cases.

IceBreaker Meeting Pilot Program

Implemented in 2016, this service provides facilitated meetings between the foster parent and biological parent soon after the child's

removal to ensure best care and a smooth transition for the child, to build the relationship between parents and foster parents, and to answer questions.

Broader System Improvement

Most professionals work in systems where children of all ages receive support and services. We help the professionals serve these families, including parents.



Areas of Focus

GIVING PROFESSIONALS THE RIGHT TOOLS, RIGHT WHEN THEY NEED THEM

Everything we do is focused on providing assistance to professionals who work to improve the lives of maltreated young children. We work behind the scenes, offering technical assistance, training, evaluation, and special projects that help bring, and keep, families together.



Trauma Screen

The NRPVYC provides case consultation to professionals completing trauma screens and works with judges with the use of trauma screening in their courtrooms. The NRPVYC created "The Path to Trauma Therapy" brochure, which assists professionals in the steps from trauma screening to trauma treatment.



Child-Parent Psychotherapy

This program is an evidence-based intervention for children under the age of five who have experienced trauma and is used to improve the relationship between parent and child. NRPVYC supports training and consultation of CPP therapists in Nebraska.



Therapeutic Courts

The NRPVYC provides different levels of help to court teams, early childhood practitioners, court professionals, and local communities.



Reflective Practice

The NRPVYC focuses on expanding the use of Reflective Practice, reflective supervision, and reflective consultation, in Nebraska. The NRPVYC is partnering with UNMC-Munroe Meyer, Nebraska Department of Education-Step Up to Quality, and the Nebraska Children and Families Foundation (NCF) on this project.



Evaluation Programs

Evaluations can aid groups interested in helping vulnerable young children by providing systematic data regarding their target population and programs. Projects can range from short-term data collection, to long-term, in-depth evaluations of outcomes.

Trauma Screen

Gaining Better Knowledge for the Best Results

All children who have been maltreated should be screened for the effects of trauma. Some children have protective factors that buffer the effects of trauma; however, many are exposed to such severe or prolonged trauma that they have short-term and long-term serious physical and mental health consequences that need to be addressed.

Build

We provide training and technical assistance for professionals on using

the screening tool. We also created “The Path to Trauma Therapy” brochure, which assists professionals through each step of the process, from trauma screening to trauma treatment.

Connect

We make screenings and assessments easily accessible to help professionals give children the appropriate evidence-based trauma therapy to address their needs and the needs of the family. Due to the complexity of recognizing trauma in very young children, we also provide on-the-spot and scheduled consultations for case professionals to assist them in using the

trauma screen, conceptualizing the case, and making appropriate referrals.

Benefit

Since implementation, we have trained more than 500 professionals on how to use the trauma screening tool, further helping them support Nebraska families. Using this tool in and out of the courtroom elevates professionals’ knowledge of each child’s history, an invaluable asset in helping professionals make the right decisions on how a child and their parents can move forward in a positive manner.

Child-Parent Psychotherapy

Strengthening Parent-Child Relationships

We work to support the training and consultation of Nebraska Child Parent Psychotherapy (CPP) therapists. CPP is an evidence-based intervention for children under the age of five who have experienced trauma that is used to improve the relationship between the parent and child.

Build

To help bring this intervention to Nebraska families, four certified CPP trainers regularly

train and consult providers, old and new. We also work with court practitioners to ensure the child’s needs are properly addressed early in each case. This is done using trauma screens, pre-hearing conferences, use of the Trauma Brochure, and assistance with referral to early childhood mental health services.

Connect

There are more than 70 providers across Nebraska qualified to provide CPP; however, waiting lists of families exist in some areas. We continue to build our partner network to help expand the availability of CPP across the state. By connecting professionals to much-needed resources, we can empower them to help even more families in need.

Benefit

Substantial, collaborative efforts are needed to help ensure quality delivery and expansion of CPP services. Ongoing efforts are put in place to inform child welfare professionals about the service, and provide technical assistance in specific cases. We’re committed to creating resources and providing training to help professionals give families proven interventions that benefit parent-child relationships.

MALTREATED YOUTH

34,143

reports of abuse or neglect were made to the Neglect Hotline in 2015.

Of those calls,

13,309

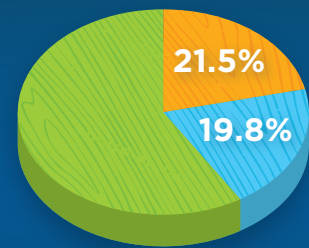
reports were assessed by DHHS and/or law enforcement.

Of those assessments,

2,223

reports were substantiated

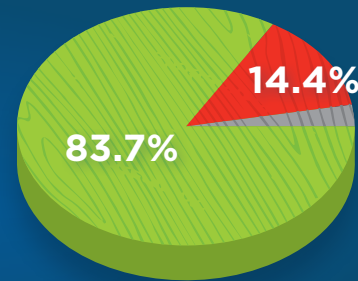
Kids Count in Nebraska 2016 (Voices for Children)



794 maltreated infants in 2015
(21.5% of maltreated children)

729 maltreated toddlers in 2015
(19.8% of maltreated children)

41.3% combined maltreated infants/toddlers in 2015

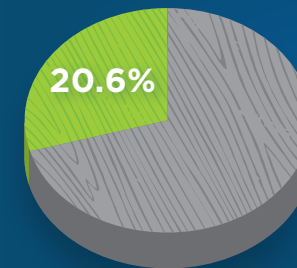


Physical Neglect made up **83.7%** of substantiated maltreated in 2015.

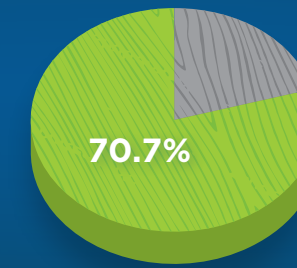
Physical Abuse made up **14.4%** of substantiated maltreated in 2015.

CHILDHOOD MENTAL HEALTH

children helped in numbers



20.6% of children ages four months to five years were at moderate to high risk of behavioral or developmental problems based on parents’ specific concerns.



70.7% of children needing mental health counseling actually received it.

1,933

children received community-based mental health services in 2015.

Kids Count in Nebraska 2016 (Voices for Children)

Therapeutic Courts

A Team-Based Approach to Abuse and Neglect Cases

Family Involved Rehabilitation and Services Track (FIRST) Court, is a problem-solving therapeutic court designed to increase trust and improve family relationships.

Build

FIRST Court was implemented by Judge Crnkovich in Douglas County to bring families into the court more frequently to increase engagement and participation of parents during a hearing.

Connect

FIRST Court is a unique solution for many reasons: A monthly Court Team Meeting with the judge is held, a CASA is appointed, caseworkers and attorneys receive reflective consultation, and a snapshot court report is sent by caseworkers before each Court Team Meeting.

Benefit

The Court Team Meeting brings every necessary party together, such as therapists, school personnel, the judge, attorneys, and parents, to have an engaging, solution-oriented conversation. This includes discussing the child's involvement in the

team meetings and next steps for the parent to take in the following month. Working together, the group can help provide support and guidance for the parent and the child to improve the overall relationship.

Evaluation Programs

Helping Families Stay Connected

The NRPVYC offers evaluation services to communities, teams, and agencies. This can include: an assessment of needs to help shape an intervention, a summary of processes and procedures while implementing an intervention, or an evaluation of outcomes associated with a new intervention.

Build

Through these evaluations we can aid groups interested in helping vulnerable young children by providing systematic data regarding their target population and programs. Projects range from short-term data collection to long-term, in-depth evaluations of outcomes.

Connect

In addition to the evaluations, we are also involved in evaluating the court. In 2014, Judge Roger Heideman of the Lancaster County Separate Juvenile Court established the mandatory Family Treatment Drug Court

(FTDC) Track to target parents involved in the child welfare system who suffer from substance dependency. Through this Track we examine both the process and the outcomes.

This unique Track seeks to:

- Establish a network of service providers who have experience with substance abuse
- Provide ongoing support to parents
- Monitor families' growth and progress
- Acknowledge progress with praise
- Allow participants to assess their own progress on the Track
- Provide services for emotional and physical development of children through evidence-based services

Benefit

The Track offers many benefits; however, most importantly, it seeks to safely return children to their parent's care and custody. Through our evaluation programs, families work with a dedicated case manager and receive specialized substance abuse services, as well as CPP and Circle of Security. Additionally, Judge Heideman remains involved throughout the process, which enhances success across the board.

Reflective Practice

Learning From Experience to Help More Youth

Reflective Practice is the critical analysis and evaluation of decision-making. This process is a way of studying one's own experiences to improve the way he or she works. Reflective Practice can assist professionals in dealing with the unique stresses of working with young children, and the child welfare and/or court systems.

Build

The NRPVYC recently created the Nebraska Center on Reflective Practice to help expand the use of this practice, including reflective supervision and reflective consultation.

Connect

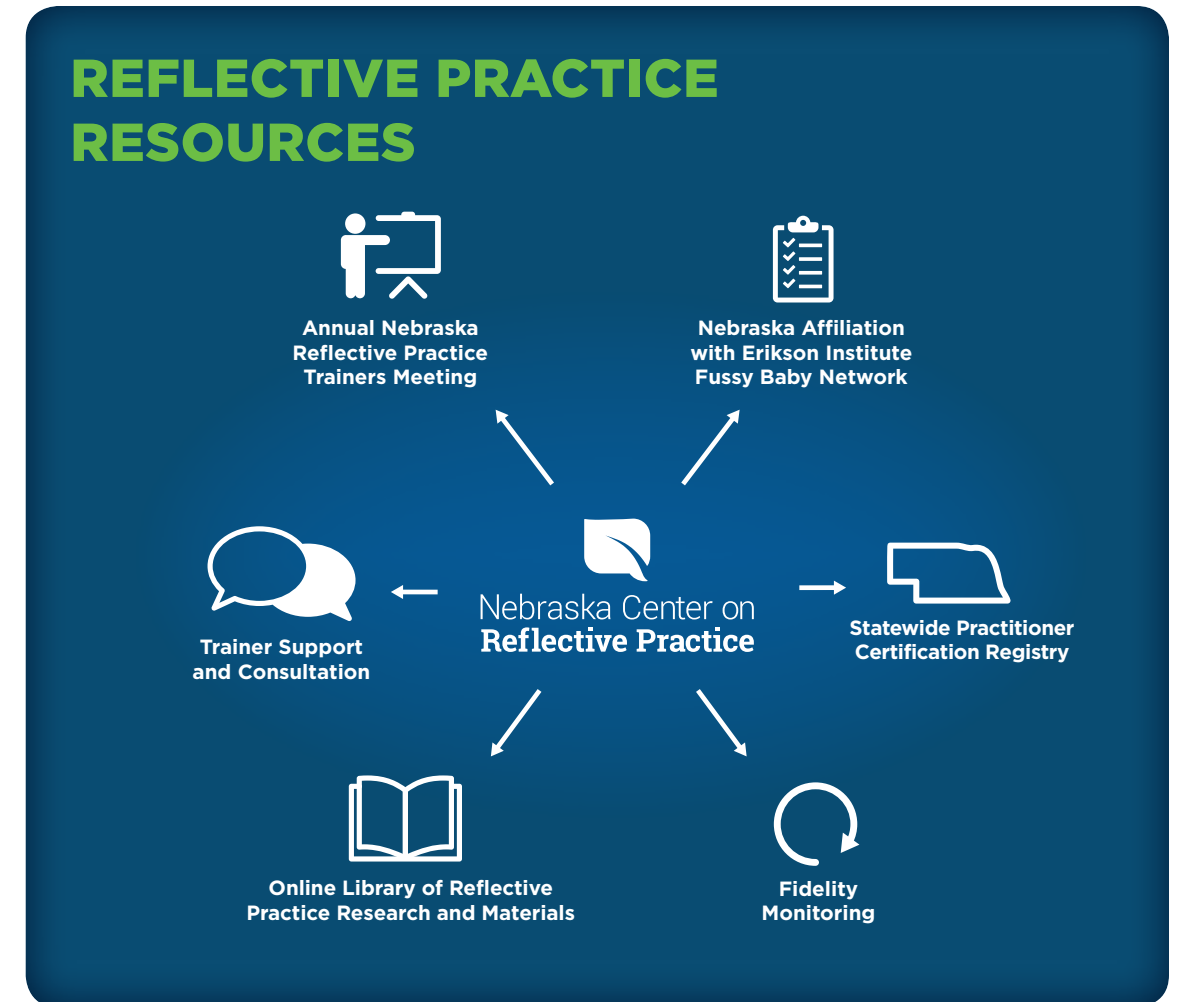
We are working to make Reflective Practice an option for caseworker groups and other court professionals. By creating partnerships with the University of Nebraska Medical Center (UNMC)-Munroe Meyer, Nebraska Department of Education-Step Up to Quality, and the Nebraska Children and Families Foundation (NCFE), we're able to further elevate this initiative.

Benefit

Through Reflective Practice we can help professionals take a look at his or her past actions, emotions, experiences, and

responses, and use that information to understand how he or she responds to current situations. Reflective Practice increases a professional's capacity to make the right decisions, and grows their confidence in their decision making. In

doing so, professionals can enhance the services they provide to Nebraska families, which ultimately leads to better outcomes.



Our Partners

Just as we value and promote relationships between parents and children, and between professionals and those they serve, we also value the relationships with our partners. We could not do our work without the partnerships and collaborations that we have built across the state.





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