

2013 Orange County Children's Alliance Focus Groups In Preparation for the Children's Summit

Preface

In July 2013, five focus groups were conducted with officials from government, nonprofit, and faith-based organizations active in one of four social service domains that impact children in Orange County, Florida: Safety, Healthy Children and Families, Economic Well-Being, Family and Community, and Education. Each group was moderated by Dr. Thomas Bryer, Director, Center for Public and Nonprofit Management, University of Central Florida, and each group was asked the following questions:

1. Think about [safety, health children and families, economic well-being, or education]. What would you identify as the most pressing issues in Orange County with respect to that issue? Please provide details and/or examples as to why this is a pressing issue.
2. Thinking about the issues you identified, what resources are available in the community to address the issue, if any? What are the examples of organizations doing well with respect to the issues, both within and outside Florida?
3. Think ahead 20 years. What does success look like if we adequately address the issues identified. What are the indicators of success?
4. Thinking about measuring success, what metrics would be beneficial to you that you currently cannot access? (Note, this question was not asked to every group due to time constraints).
5. Thinking about those definitions of success, who needs to be at the table to achieve it for the issues identified?
6. Looking at the different issues identified, which, if any, rose to the top as the most important?

The notes taken at each focus group are transcribed in the pages that follow. A full report analyzing these notes will be produced for distribution at the Children's Summit in November 2013. Readers are invited to add to these notes using the web platform provided that accompanies these notes.

Safety

Think about safety. What would you identify as the most pressing issues in Orange County with respect to that issue? Please provide details and/or examples as to why this is a pressing issue.

- Pedestrian safety/bicycle safety
 - Accidents in neighborhoods and on way to school, particularly for aged 14 and under (pedestrian) and 18 and younger (bicycle).
- Sexual abuse
 - 1 in 4 girls and 1 in 6 boys are estimated by aged 18 to be sexually abused; 39% are abused by family members, and 93% are abused by someone they know.
- Human trafficking—need for better understanding. This is a particular problem along the I-4 corridor in tourist district.
- Underage drinking
 - 1/3 of eighth graders have tried alcohol
- Safe sleeping and co-sleeping
- Drowning: 91% of youth drowning are aged 4 and under
- Drug use
 - This is a problem, including prescription drugs, starting in middle school. Drug and alcohol use is present at school, including before and at school.
- Domestic violence, cause of many child deaths
- Abandonment, physical abuse, neglect
- Teen dating
- Affordable and stable housing; kids are being left home alone while the parents go to work
- Education/prevention; need for educating parents on safety issues
- Gangs: kids are targeted at a young age and are influenced by social media
- Social media
 - 50,000 predators are online at any one time
 - Any device that has multiple game partners (Xbox, etc).
 - Parents don't understand this threat
 - Text messages can disappear to hide from parental monitoring.

Thinking about the issues you identified, what resources are available in the community to address the issue, if any? What are the examples of organizations doing well with respect to the issues, both within and outside Florida?

- Human trafficking work groups
 - Safe Harbor funding
- Healthy Families/healthy Start
- Social media for parent education

- e.g. sharing of information through Facebook and emails
- Quick recalls of defective products

Think ahead 20 years. What does success look like if we adequately address the issues identified. What are the indicators of success?

- We can look at numbers, such as fewer car accidents, but something like sexual abuse, how do we count success? Increase in apprehension? Decrease in incidents?
- Change point of view of parents and awareness level of parents
- New legislation, e.g. lowering BAC levels, or otherwise to reflect increased community awareness
- Increase in funding for children's issues
 - Florida is low in funding for children's issues
 - It pays to incur prevention costs but a tough sell: prevention vs. beds. Seeing people get well is easier to fund.
- Community that understands prevention
 - What does good prevention look like?
- More attention to schools: newborns today will be measured in twenty years
- Education of young parents.
- Required parent participation at schools
 - School can counter-balance parent influence; 3/5 kids learn drinking habits from parents

Thinking about measuring success, what metrics would be beneficial to you that you currently cannot access?

- Domestic violence: use a variety of approaches to address, but which is most successful? Need methodology to determine what treatment for different types of anger for different types of parents.
- Affordable Care Act provides opportunity to access more types of data
- All work in a silo. Need for all to send data to a centralized place for assessment.

Thinking about those definitions of success, who needs to be at the table to achieve it for the issues identified?

- PTA
- Business Leaders
- Federal partners for gangs and trafficking
- Local political leaders for funding

Health

Think about health. What would you identify as the most pressing issues in Orange County with respect to that issue? Please provide details and/or examples as to why this is a pressing issue.

- Access for children/implementation for Affordable Care Act
- Childhood obesity
- Lack of collaboration across agencies and health literacy
- Substance abuse in middle and high school
- Childhood trauma
- Silos of programs and funding
 - Money should follow the child, e.g. with a voucher to person showing eligibility for services.
 - Mental health and ranges of pre-authorization required
 - Child welfare system, lack of healthcare
 - Caught up in paperwork nightmare
 - Multiple funding streams are hard to track
- Child maltreatment
- Children's health equity
 - Addresses physical, social and economic well being of community

Thinking about the issues you identified, what resources are available in the community to address the issue, if any? What are the examples of organizations doing well with respect to the issues, both within and outside Florida?

- Geisinger Medical Center in Pennsylvania—holistic model
- Second Harvest Food Bank's Food Policy Council addressing nutrition issues
- Children's Services Councils (examples in Polk County; Miami-Dade)
- Healthy Start, Whole Child Project
 - Not funded at 100% of need
- Look to nonprofit hospitals to spend 5-7% of revenues on prevention, and pool the money. Examples in Illinois, California, New York City, Boston
- Healthy Orange Collaborative

Think ahead 20 years. What does success look like if we adequately address the issues identified. What are the indicators of success?

- 100% access to care
- Elimination of existing disparities
 - Ensure providers are responsive to cultural differences
 - Whole person fragmentation
 - Social determinants matter
- Healthy births
 - Infant mortality and low birth weight

- Access to family planning (Florida is worst state re: contraceptives)
- Silos in 'bigger' system
 - 211 example: clients are inundated with numbers and services
 - Doctors all prescribing something different
 - Financial silos/funding streams
- People will be comfortable approaching the system
- Children's Service tax
- Lone-term psychiatric hospitals

Thinking about those definitions of success, who needs to be at the table to achieve it for the issues identified?

- Early Learning Coalition
- SHWP
- Nurse/Family Partnerships
- Education, business, etc. leaders
 - Need heavy hitters to address social determinants
- HMOs
- Political clout
- Health producers
- Economic development people
 - ROI
 - Make statistics more attractive
 - Job creation
- Chamber of Commerce

Economic Well-Being

Think about economic well-being. What would you identify as the most pressing issues in Orange County with respect to that issue? Please provide details and/or examples as to why this is a pressing issue.

- Hunger and homelessness
 - Number of homeless kids in OCPS has grown astronomically
 - 1 in 4 kids in OCPS has hunger needs
 - Transportation is a related issue
- Lack of jobs
 - For undocumented workers
 - Lack of skills for market needs (e.g. soft skills, IT, trade skills)
 - Felony/criminal backgrounds make it hard to get in and stay in job market
- Understanding of money
 - Predatory companies (check cashing)
 - 1/3 of county population in under-banked (using pawn, check cashers)
 - 69% of teenagers learn about money from parents
 - 69% of parents would rather talk to kids about sex than money
- Understanding of labor market (for young adults and kids)
 - Unaware of opportunities in Central Florida
 - Career development preparation
 - Students taking out loans for small for-profit schools and programs
 - Mismatch between degree sought and employment opportunity available
- Financial literacy
 - Using credit reports to weed out job applicants
 - Interest rates on credit cards
 - Prevention: stand alone financial literacy requirement in schools
 - Full time vs. part-time jobs. Full time lost; part-time sky rocketing.

Thinking about the issues you identified, what resources are available in the community to address the issue, if any? What are the examples of organizations doing well with respect to the issues, both within and outside Florida?

- Hunger and homelessness
 - Second Harvest
 - Food pantry
 - OCPS Title I
 - Commission on Homelessness
 - Community Food and Outreach Center
 - Goodwill
 - IDignity

- Summer feeding program (OCPS)
- Harvest Time International
- Shelters
- Understanding of labor market
 - Workforce Central Florida workshops
 - Christian HELP
 - Job Partnerships
 - Orange County Library—online training/development
 - Goodwill
 - FL DOE
- Lack of Jobs
 - HOPE Center
 - Jobs Partnerships
 - Workforce Central Florida
 - Goodwill
 - Catholic Charities
 - Farm Workers Association
 - Christian HELP
 - Salvation Army
 - Faith community
 - UCF Marriage and Family Research Institute
 - Legal Aid Society
 - Parent Involvement (OCPS Parent Academy)
- Financial Literacy
 - IFIS (UF)
 - In charge
 - Latino leadership
 - Goodwill
 - Financial Peace University
 - Crown Ministries
 - Bank On Greater Orlando

Think ahead 20 years. What does success look like if we adequately address the issues identified. What are the indicators of success?

- Hunger and homelessness
 - Less need for shelter
 - Working with families as a whole unit
 - Deal with people where they are
 - Mental health and substance abuse issues alleviated through coordination
 - Integration of wraparound services
 - Agencies working together—collaboration & coordination
 - Road map

- Better education (all inclusive)—break the cycle from parent to kid: parent involvement
 - More robust transportation
- Lack of Jobs
 - More robust transportation

Thinking about those definitions of success, who needs to be at the table to achieve it for the issues identified?

- Community we serve: those facing the barriers
- Key businesses representing sectors—businesses we want to see grow and emerging business sectors
- Budget—Money is not there
- LYNX
- Faith community
- School board
- Community leaders
- Colleges/universities

Education

Think about education. What would you identify as the most pressing issues in Orange County with respect to that issue? Please provide details and/or examples as to why this is a pressing issue.

- Keeping children engaged in learning
 - Low performing kids dropping out
- Resiliency: continuing on despite academic setbacks
 - See Tony Wagner's *Creating Innovators*
 - Self-efficacy
 - Culture of can't
 - False self-esteem: give constructive criticism
 - Lack of support at home: no path of consistency/foundation
 - IT, books, materials, positive encouragement, etc.: overall lack of resources for kids
 - Parents don't have resources
 - Children are in very traumatic home environments with uncertain access to food—thus education becomes a luxury
 - There is no equality of opportunity
 - Resources for every child, not just in schools: financial, academic, relational, discipline
 - Our norm can be high expectations
 - Discrepancy in resources across schools, families, student and overall
 - More discipline needed without arrests and shame; hold kids accountable without public humiliation. Keep them in the community of learners.
 - Not enough meaningful relations between adults/teachers and students
- Lack of communication between agencies
 - Between parents and schools; lack of information sharing
 - Parent education
- Teacher preparation programs
 - Theory vs. practice in teacher prep. Green teachers.
 - Urban teachers are new teachers. Lack of support in urban settings
 - Colleges/university should profile young professional/students and recruit teachers in college
- Lack of measures of learning
- Focus on fathers
 - Speaking positively and encouraging to young boys
 - Reach the whole family
- Focus on STEM/STEAM
 - Workforce gap
 - Not enough students being adequately trained in these areas.

- Lack of analytical thinking
- Too much reliance on calculators and computers
- Cradle to Career
 - Need to be there every step of the way
 - Black boys/men doing proportionately worse. Embrace and uplift.
- Reading gap: learn to read vs. read to learn

Think ahead 20 years. What does success look like if we adequately address the issues identified. What are the indicators of success?

- All students employed
- All employers have employees they need
- Children in community today will be better equipped for their kids
 - No reliance on human service network
- Healthier neighborhoods
- Empower/Encourage kids to serve community
- Empathy
 - Have children lost confidence in the people around them?
- What do the metrics say?
 - Poverty down
 - Gap narrowed
 - HS graduation up
 - Teen pregnancy down
 - College/trade school up
 - 3rd grade literacy
 - Higher median income
 - Reduction in violence

Thinking about those definitions of success, who needs to be at the table to achieve it for the issues identified?

- Our children
- People with power
- Elected officials
- Parents
- Police
- Court system/diversion programs
- People with money
- People on the front lines
- Foster care/Guardian Ad Litem
- System itself—sharing of information, coordination... all entities at the table, not operating in silos
- Preparation for kids and other stakeholders to participate meaningfully
 - Treat evidence credibly, sensitively

Family and Community

Think about family and community. What would you identify as the most pressing issues in Orange County with respect to that issue? Please provide details and/or examples as to why this is a pressing issue.

- Homelessness
 - Central Florida not decreasing in homelessness, impacts on education, safety
- Transportation
 - Not connected to affordable housing
- Economic self-sufficiency
 - Single-female households
 - Living wage not provided
- Access to affordable healthcare
- Mental health
- Substance abuse
- Domestic violence
 - Runs through all components
- Shift to Common Core Standards
- Lack of parent knowledge & understanding
 - Challenges of accessing paperwork

Thinking about the issues you identified, what resources are available in the community to address the issue, if any? What are the examples of organizations doing well with respect to the issues, both within and outside Florida?

- Head Start
 - Parent/family/community engagement
- Parramore KidZone
- Hospitality House Movement—Public-private partnership
 - Chunking issues to more narrow components
- Neighborhood Community Centers for families and children
- Heart of Florida United Way collaborative grants

Think ahead 20 years. What does success look like if we adequately address the issues identified. What are the indicators of success?

- Informed community aware of issues and how issues are addressed
 - Now people think of homelessness as a guy using drugs and alcohol
- Evans High School is an example of what worked
 - External forces helped make community accountable for change
- Reduced wait lists for programs
- Reduced gap in achievement (3rd grade and middle school)
- Revisit rules and guidelines that might prevent some action

- Change of funding system—doesn't encourage collaboration
 - See shift in funding mechanisms

Thinking about measuring success, what metrics would be beneficial to you that you currently cannot access?

- Too many measures now; need to narrow
- Department of Education and Housing and Urban Development define homelessness differently
 - Lack of data alignment

Thinking about those definitions of success, who needs to be at the table to achieve it for the issues identified?

- Concord Management—Apartment management company
- Corporations
- Faith-based—scared to death of federal and state government
 - Prefer to start themselves rather than collaborate
- Visit Orlando
- Chambers of Commerce
- Hotel/Motel Association
- Technology Companies