



***Peer Technical Assistance (TA) Summary***

<b>Requesting Agency:</b>	Metropolitan Nashville/Davidson County Social Services
<b>Point of Contact (POC):</b>	Mrs. Gerri Robinson, Executive Director Metropolitan Nashville/Davidson County Social Services
<b>POC Telephone No.:</b>	615-862-6401
<b>POC E-Mail Address:</b>	<a href="mailto:gerri.robinson@nashville.gov">gerri.robinson@nashville.gov</a>
<b>TA Event:</b>	#111
<b>TA Requested:</b>	Metropolitan Social Services requested TA in crafting a proposal utilizing best practices to partner with the Davidson County Family First Agency to provide case management and support services to care givers and children in the child only case load of Davidson County, Tennessee.
<b>TA Goal:</b>	To develop programs and activities to improve the well being of children and families including partnering and improving relationships with key strategic agencies to serve the child-only TANF recipients of Davidson County.
<b>TA Format:</b>	Representatives from Federal, State, Local and non-profit organizations met over two days as a Roundtable to network and exchange information about the needs of child-only TANF recipients, to discuss best practices for serving this population, examine programs from Illinois and Colorado and to develop action plan strategies for collaboration among Federal, State and Local agencies to serve this growing population.
<b>Sample Evaluations:</b>	Selected highlights from the evaluations include:  “Good sources and useful data and good ideas from other areas of the country.”  “There were issues that needed to be discussed and were put in the forefront. The agencies needed to desperately be brought together. Thank you.”  “External facilitation, notebook and action planning was great.”  “Excellent facilitation skills ... gauging the group’s mood and keeping us on task.”

## **Analysis:**

A child-only TANF case is one in which no adult is included in the cash grant. Child-only cases fall into two categories: parent caregivers and non-parent caregivers. In 2002, nearly 40% of national, and 28% of Tennessee TANF cases were child-only cases (RTI, June 2004; Welfare Peer TA, 2002). Non-parent caregivers are usually relatives of the children. Federal and state policies specify preference for relative care over other forms of out-of-home care because research shows that children fare better with relatives because these placements are more likely to be stable and long-term. However, relative caregivers often lack resources to respond to children's needs, and because TANF is designed to move families into employment, children in TANF child-only cases with relative caregivers receive few services from TANF, and sometimes become engaged in the child welfare system to access services.

The 2003 Census data for Davidson County, Tennessee showed that overall there were 6,699 households in which grandparents were responsible for their grandchildren, of which 60.7% were female headed, 53.5% were in the work force and 23.5% lived in poverty. Utilizing 2002 TANF specific Davidson County data, there were approximately 1,700 child-only cases, of which 1,250 (75%) were made up of relative caregivers. Appreciating the fact that not all relative caregivers were accessing TANF financial support, and understanding that the existing case management and supportive services were not being provided to the majority of TANF child only relative caregivers, Metropolitan Social Services requested technical assistance to more actively and innovatively partner with the Davidson County Family First Agency to provide case management and support services to care givers and children in the child only case load of Davidson County, Tennessee.

The Welfare Peer TA Network planned, designed, and implemented a Roundtable event that was held on April 26-27, 2005 in Nashville, TN. The Roundtable event was attended by approximately 40 individuals representing a wide variety of Federal, state and local agencies, and community-based organizations. The goal of this TA effort was to assist the community in developing collaboratives to improve the well being of children and families in Davidson County, improve relationships with key strategic partners, improve family stability, improve services to struggling families and improve employment and self-sufficiency outcomes.

At the Roundtable, presenters discussed a comprehensive range of issues facing TANF child-only relative caregivers and the children; the importance of an integrated approach to the child-only caseload; the challenges and successes that local agencies have had in working with this population; and the importance of caregiver and child well-being. Utilizing the knowledge shared by the various faculty, the information provided by peer programs in El Paso County Colorado, and Chicago, Illinois, and the planning tools provided to the participants, the Roundtable served as a central catalyst for the collaboration of Federal, state and local agencies, and non-profit organizations to begin to develop an action plan to provide needed services to the Davidson County child-only TANF relative caseload.

Evaluations submitted by attendees indicated that participants valued the opportunity to network with each other and considered the information provided to be both valuable and motivational.

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