

**TOPIC:**

**NIRN Goes to School**  
**Scaling-up Evidence Based Practices**



**SPRING 2008**

**WELCOME TO THE IMPLENET!**

The ImpleNet newsletter provides interested parties with information about the **National Implementation Research Network (NIRN)** and the science of implementation. The mission of the NIRN is to close the gap between science and service by advancing the science and practice of implementation.

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**The National Implementation Research Network goes to school: Scaling-up EBPs**

For the past several months, NIRN staff members have participated in a series of conferences and meetings in education. The people in state and federal education departments and in various technical assistance (TA) centers have patiently provided us with an education about the implementation issues facing education systems in every state and nationally. The bad news is that the implementation issues in education are very similar to those in the rest of human services. We were hoping that the issues would prove to be simpler or easier in education, but that does not appear to be the case. The good news is that the implementation issues in education are very similar to those in the rest of human services. At least we do not have to learn a whole new set of implementation activities to work in education settings.

**The SISEP Center**

This summer our application was approved to develop a new center for the Office of Special Education Programs (OSEP). The purpose of the State Implementation and Scaling-up of Evidence-based Practices (SISEP) Center is to promote

**Catch the NIRN**

- **21st Annual Research Conference "A System of Care for Children's Mental Health: Expanding the Research Base"**  
**February 24-27, 2008**  
Tampa, FL

"So what does "implementation" mean to me, my organization, and my community?"

How do issues like financing, workforce development, cultural diversity, infrastructure to maintain fidelity, outcome monitoring systems, and community context impact the success of implementation efforts?

The 21st Annual Research Conference will be held February 24-27, 2008 at the **Tampa Marriott Waterside Hotel**, Tampa, Florida. This year there will be a special "implementation track" each day, including a special presentation by our colleagues from Norway on their very successful national implementations of several evidence-based programs. Join the Implementation Interest Group Meeting on Monday, February 25th at 6:15 p.m. in Salon EF for stimulating exchanges and networking around implementation issues. Share what's working and what's not in your community with like-minded colleagues. Broaden your network while you get and give great advice.

**Upcoming Events & Training Opportunities**

These events represent national efforts to improve implementation of human services across domains.

- **Blueprints Conference: Evidence-Based Programs: Research To Practice**  
**MARCH 17-19, 2008**  
Denver, Colorado
- **Society of Behavioral Medicine 29th Annual Meeting and Scientific Sessions**  
**March 26-29, 2008**  
San Diego, CA
- **5th Annual National Training Institute on Effective Practices, "Supporting young children's**

students' academic achievement and behavioral health by supporting implementation and scaling-up of evidence-based practices in education settings. SISEP will provide the critical content and foundation for establishing a technology of large-scale, sustainable, high-fidelity implementation of effective educational practices. SISEP will work with six selected states to improve their capacity to carry out implementation, organizational change, and systems transformation strategies to maximize achievement outcomes of all students in each state.

Dean Fixsen and Karen Blase, FPG Child Development Center, University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill (formerly National Implementation Research Network, University of South Florida), are principal investigators for this effort and George Sugai, University of Connecticut, and Rob Horner, University of Oregon, are Co-Directors of the SISEP Center. Rob and George are the principal architects of the very successful national implementation of the School-Wide Positive Behavior Support program being used in over 7,000 schools in more than 40 states.

SISEP will work with six states over a five year period. Each state will already be engaged in implementing evidence-based educational practices. Through collaboration with the SISEP, states will build the organizational capacity to move proven practices to large scale, sustained implementation. Outcomes will assess (a) the state organizational capacity for scaling up, (b) the number of schools (and proportion of schools) implementing evidence-based practices to criterion, (c) outcomes for students, and (d) the sustainability and efficiency of evidence-based practices when implemented at scale.

For further information, visit the Center's website at [www.scalingup.org](http://www.scalingup.org)

### **MI3 Project**

The state of Michigan also has contracted with the NIRN to help design their scale up of a variety of evidence-based and "best" practices in special education settings across the state. This initiative, known as MI-3 (Michigan Integrated Improvement Initiatives), seeks to take advantage of exemplary practices that already are in place and functioning well by scaling them up for use as needed to benefit students statewide. The NIRN also is participating in the system transformation planning that is ongoing in several other states.

### **Technical Assistance Centers – 'their roles'**

It is interesting that the prompts for action in many states, and federally, are the results of the measures of performance mandated by the No Child Left Behind (NCLB) legislation passed 6 years ago. While some parts of the NCLB efforts have been controversial, the uses of the data to prompt a new look at education systems is a healthy outcome. For example, education spends over \$1 billion a year on technical assistance (TA) – some topical (e.g. reading), some regional (e.g. New England), and some comprehensive (e.g. teacher education) – but the effectiveness of current TA efforts is being questioned in light of the continuing lack of progress in student achievement and behavior (very little change in the past 25 years). The NIRN has entered this discussion and has pointed out that the TA Centers are doing just what they are being asked to do: they are disseminating information about better/ best practices and conducting some training to further elaborate those practices. While these activities are very useful for helping to inform and create readiness for change, dissemination of information and training by itself repeatedly have been demonstrated to have limited/ no effect on implementation. Implementation requires a whole new set of organized and intensive activities to assure the successful use of evidence-based practices and other innovations. Funding structures for TA Centers are being re-considered and TA Centers are taking the initiative to do more active implementation work in addition to their typical dissemination/ training work.

### **The Future – 'Let the Work Begin'**

It is fascinating to think about the possibilities in education. It is such a huge system with over 100,000 schools located in 3,143 counties and employing over 6 million teachers and staff to educate nearly 60 million children. On any given school day, 1 out of every 5 people in the United States is in school. It is easy to see why every social issue is visited upon the education system – it is truly a slice

**social/emotional development"**  
**April 2-5, 2008**  
Clearwater Beach, Florida

**Previous edition**

**"It Can't Be Done" - Overcoming  
the Myths of Implementation**

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of all of our lives as a nation. Name a topic in education and some people will be for it and some opposed and most will feel strongly about their position. Thus, everything we have learned about “complexity theory” and dealing with “wicked problems” will be directly relevant as the new SISEP Center begins the capacity development process in six states. The focus of scaling up is on the evidence-based practice and the benefits to students and communities. However, scaling up really is all about increasing the knowledge, skills, and abilities of state-based staff to carry out effective implementation methods. The SISEP Center will work to establish these capabilities in the 6 states and to align education systems, district systems, and school management with desired practices to be used by teachers. The lessons learned will have direct implications for implementation and system transformation efforts in other domains such as mental health, juvenile justice, substance abuse treatment, and child welfare.

There is much to do. The NIRN is so pleased to have the Network as a partner in this effort.

#### **NETWORK NEWS**

### **The National Implementation Research Network is Contributing to the National Child Welfare Leadership Training Institute**

**By Storie Miller**

NIRN staff are among a group of highly qualified child welfare experts contributing to the **National Child Welfare Leadership Training Institute (NCWLI)**, a new program offering leadership training for public and tribal mid-level child welfare managers. Our role is to provide leadership in curriculum development, e-learning coordination and evaluation activities.

The **National Implementation Research Network (NIRN)** team, consisting of **Karen Blase, Dean Fixsen, Melissa Van Dyke**, is developing the training curriculum on implementation and change management. With evidence-based practice a common link across the entire curriculum, a focus will be on leadership skills that bring about effective relationships among mid-level managers and others within the work setting and within the broader child and family services systems. NIRN is also coordinating e-learning communities, an innovative resource for use following regional training sessions. Regularly scheduled e-learning training community meetings will be held via conference call, chat room or other agreed-upon methods. Website resources will be developed for each community and will provide development opportunities (homework/practicum period) that will be accomplished by participants at their home agencies.

Lead agencies for the initiative are the Social Research Institute, College of Social Work at the University of Utah, together with Independent Living Resources, Inc. of Durham, North Carolina. Another important partner agency is the American Humane Association in Denver, Colorado.

Currently, child welfare and tribal chief executive officers are encouraged to nominate mid-level managers to participate in the training model. For additional information, visit **NCWLI**.

#### **NETWORK NEWS**

### **Applications now open for the SAMHSA 2008 Science and Service Awards**

Following the success of the inaugural Science and Service Awards sponsored by the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA), the SAMHSA has issued a call for applications for the 2008 Science and Service Awards. This national program recognizes community-based organizations and coalitions that have carried out exemplary implementations of evidence-based mental health, substance abuse, and dual diagnosis interventions.

For the 2007 Science and Service Awards, 20 organizations were selected based on independent reviews of written applications, as well as site visits. Applications were submitted to the following categories: substance abuse prevention; treatment

of substance abuse and recovery support services; mental health promotion; treatment of mental illness and recovery support services; and co-occurring disorders. To be eligible for an award, an organization had to demonstrate successful implementation of a recognized evidence-based intervention, including interventions that have been published in the scientific literature and/or appear on a federal or state registry.

Detailed information about the 2007 Award winners is available at <http://www.samhsa.gov/scienceandservice/currentWinners.aspx>.

Application information for the 2008 Science and Service Awards is now available on the SAMHSA web site at [www.samhsa.gov/scienceandservice](http://www.samhsa.gov/scienceandservice) by clicking on "Application Materials for 2008 Awards."

Applications must be emailed by March 31, 2008 to [dfixsen@mail.fpg.unc.edu](mailto:dfixsen@mail.fpg.unc.edu). For those without access to email, the application must be postmarked by midnight on March 31, 2008 and mailed to Dean Fixsen, Ph.D., Science and Service Award Coordinator, University of South Florida, 13301 Bruce B. Downs Blvd., MHC 2312, Tampa, Florida 33612 .

**Source: The Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration**

#### **PRESENTATION HIGHLIGHTS**

### **Dean Fixsen Invited to Speak at Stockholm Conference on Implementation Research**

Dr. Fixsen's presentation profiled findings from an extensive review of research literature on implementation, and outlined six core components that drive successful programs.

[Read the full article here](#)

#### **Articles/Reports of Interest**

**Barber, M., & Fullan, M. (2005). Tri-level development: Putting systems thinking into action. *Education Week*, 24(5), 32, 34-35.**

The authors see little evidence that systems thinking had led to systems action. They call for systems action that is strategic, powerful and pursued in practice. The authors also note that No Child Left Behind is a classic example of an accountability scheme that as yet, has no grounding in the reality of capacity building.

[View this article](#)

**Dunst, C. J., Trivette, C., Masiello, T., & McInerney, M. (2006). Scaling up early childhood intervention literacy learning practices. *Cell Papers*, 1(2).**

The primary means to scaling up targeted practices will be state, regional, and local resource teams. The resource teams will include stakeholders and key players at different levels throughout a state. Specialized technical assistance will be provided to the resource teams to build their capacity, who in turn, will build the capacity of end users to adopt and use CELL early literacy learning practices. Scaling-up will occur through replications of replications to produce spread (scaling-out) in ways that the practices and their consequences (outcomes) are "recreated repeatedly" in an iterative manner.

[View this article](#)

#### **Web Sites of Interest**

**Best Evidence Encyclopedia**  
[www.bestevidence.org](http://www.bestevidence.org)

From the website:

"The Best Evidence Encyclopedia is a free web site created by the Johns Hopkins University Center for Data-Driven Reform in Education (CDDRE) under funding from the Institute of Education Sciences, U.S. Department of Education. It is intended to give educators and researchers fair and useful information about the strength of the evidence supporting a variety of programs available for students in grades K-12."



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of NORTH CAROLINA  
at CHAPEL HILL

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FPG Child Development Institute

University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill For general questions regarding NIRN, please use **our contact form**.

To correspond with network **faculty or staff**.

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