

2016 LIAISON REPORT

ChildServe

Liaison – Ron Smith

Need for Program: ChildServe is a non-profit agency providing full day childcare services. Services are available from 6:30 a.m. to 6 p.m. Monday through Friday at the ChildServe Center on Philadelphia Street. In addition to the integrated day care program, ChildServe provides summer camp programming for children with special needs. Supported community living, respite care, day habilitation (age 16-adult) and therapy services are also significant components of their mission. Last fall the agency started day health service for infants to age 6; providing therapy, nursing, early intervention, skill development for children with high medical acuity.

During 2016, approximately 530 children from Story County and surrounding counties have utilized services from ChildServe; this represents an decrease of 17 children from 2015. ASSET funding is a small portion of the overall services provided by ChildServe; as only 6 children were qualified for ASSET funding during 2016.

Program Strengths: Rachelle Flory, full time Regional Manager, was appointed in November 2007 to manage the day to day activities of the Ames center. Kate Reynolds, full time Outpatient Therapy Manager, was added to the Ames center in 2009. Melody Bruns, Community Program Director, provides leadership to a staff of 57 FTEs at the Ames site, but spends the majority of time at the Des Moines office.

The Ames facility is well designed, well equipped and staff members are dedicated and well trained. Facility improvements over the past year include a new playground, updates to the parking lot and signage, and a newly remodeled waiting area, lobby and reception desk.

ChildServe continues to use a sliding fee scale which allows low-income families, not on DHS funding, to qualify for the ASSET subsidy. This practice is in keeping with the goals of ASSET funding to provide direct support to low-income families and young children.

The center increased their infant/toddler program with the renovation and expansion to the building in 2007. Currently, the infant program is full and there is a waiting list of 8 infants; while 14 openings exist for non-infants. Day health services are also currently full with 14 children and a waiting list of 8.

Respite services continue to use DHS waiver funds; however, the recent changes to Medicaid (MCOs) have resulted in a waiting list for waiver funds of over 2 years. ASSET dollars were cut from Respite in 2009, but ChildServe is now anticipating to request ASSET funding for this service to assist families who are needing services but are on a waiting list for waiver funds.

Program Challenges: The current challenge facing ChildServe is finding more space as the existing building in Ames is completely full. The recent addition of care managers to the Ames staff was accommodated by converting a storage room into office space and subsequently a restroom into a storage space.

Currently, the infant program runs at full capacity and there continues to be a large need for infant childcare services. Recent openings for non-infants are a result of several clients moving from the area or choosing other day care providers, and Childserve is working diligently to fill these openings.

Summary: Although the ASSET component of the overall ChildServe budget is relatively minor, this agency continues to serve a need in Story County. With the revised sliding fee scale, more low-income families have the opportunity to avail themselves of this agency's services. It may be worthwhile to initiate discussions with this agency in attempt to identify additional opportunities which ASSET dollars could be used to provide or enhance ChildServe services to low-income families.