Statewide Dissemination of Sesame Street Workshop Resources: Little Children, Big Challenges: Incarceration
Amanda A. Wanous, Rebecca J. Shlafer

Initiative Goals
Little Children, Big Challenges: Incarceration was designed to:
- Support, comfort, and reduce anxiety, sadness, and confusion that young children (ages 3-8) may experience during the incarceration of a parent
- Provide at-home caregivers with strategies, tips, and age-appropriate language they can use to help communicate with their children about incarceration
- Inform incarcerated parents that they can parent from anywhere, and provide them with parenting tips highlighting the importance of communication

Project Components
- Multimedia Resource Kits
- DVD with puppet, animated and live-action stories
- Guide for parents and caregivers
- Children’s storybook
- App for Tablets and Phones
- All Materials Online at sesamestreet.org/incarceration

Pilot State Project

Outreach Strategies
On June 12, 2013, Sesame Workshop announced the release of the Little Children, Big Challenges: Incarceration materials. To spread awareness of the project in Minnesota, we utilized a multimedia, “snowball contact” strategy. Print and video news stories, both nationally and locally, were released creating initial awareness of the project. Mass emailing targeted jail programmers; informal presentations were used to raise awareness among community partners (i.e., Head Start Directors, HCMC pediatric providers), and an article was included in a newsletter for the Minnesota School Psychologist Association. Individual resource kits were sent, along with letters detailing the project, to organizations providing resources directly related to incarceration or those that serve populations in which incarceration is prevalent (e.g., homeless shelters). Ordering was completed via an online Google form or through personal contact (mail or email).

Minnesota Dissemination

Cumulative Kit Requests
Kits were available in boxes of 50. The number of kits requested was recorded each day after June 15th (t=0) for the two months. These numbers do not include kits provided to organizations as examples.

Requests were plotted on a map of Minnesota based on zip code. Kits were requested from 49 of Minnesota’s 87 counties across the state.

Evaluation
Sesame Workshop developed evaluation surveys for providers to complete every month for six months. Questions ask providers to report how often, and which tools they use, and with how many others they have shared the resources. Questions had defined responses, asking providers to check all that apply and an open-ended “other” option.

Next Steps
Kits continue to be disseminated in Minnesota and other pilot states. Evaluation surveys will be analyzed as more data become available. A webinar is scheduled for providers in Minnesota to share utilization strategies. A joint project between the University of Minnesota and the University of Wisconsin was also designed to study the impact of the kits on children’s health.

Translation
This project is T3 translational research.
- Identified novel approaches to reach diverse providers across the state
- Assisted in implementation of evidence-based resources as interventional tools
- Evaluation of diffusion of resources is in progress
- Future research should investigate utilization among parents and caregivers directly.

Acknowledgements
All materials for this project were created and provided at no cost by Sesame Workshop. The autho smell time was funded by two University of Minnesota grants: 1P60MD003422 from the National Institute on Minority Health and Health Disparities and the National Center for Advancing Translational Sciences of the National Institutes of Health Award, UL1TR000114. The content is solely the responsibility of the authors and does not necessarily represent the official views of the funding institutions.

References

[Image: Chart showing cumulative kit requests]

[Image: Map of Minnesota with kit requests by zip code]