

# *Family Connections:*

Working with Grandparent  
Families to Increase Safety,  
Well-Being, & Permanence

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# Acknowledgements

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## Family Connections (FC)

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(Diane DePanfilis, PI; Howard Dubowitz & Esta Glaser-Semmel, Co-PIs)

# Other Support Received by Family Connections:

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- ❑ UMB Title IVE Education for Public Child Welfare Program
- ❑ U.S.D.H.H.S., SAMHSA, Center for Substance Abuse Prevention
- ❑ Georgia State University & the Hasbro Foundation
- ❑ MD Department of Human Resources
- ❑ MD Children's Trust Fund
- ❑ U.S.D.H.H.S. Children's Bureau Replication grant
- ❑ Annie E. Casey Foundation

# Overview of Presentation

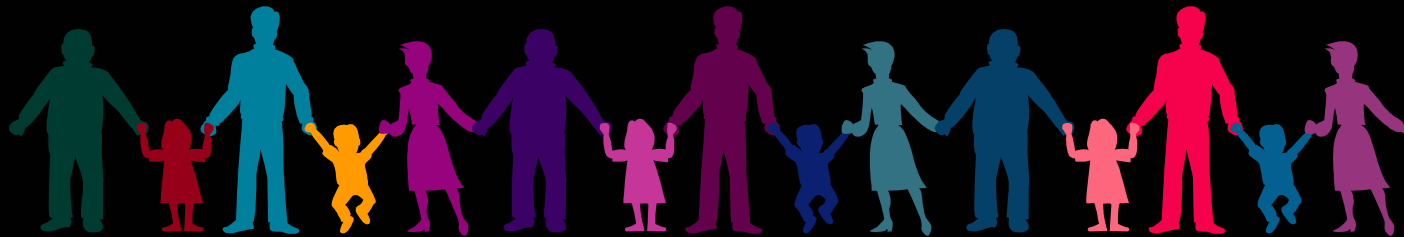
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- Background: The Family Connections Program
- Summary of Study Results
- Targeting Intergenerational Families
  - A Growing Trend in Child Welfare
  - Assessment
  - Intervention
  - Integrating Research & Practice
- Implications/Discussion

# Family Connections

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Family Connections promotes the safety and well-being of children and families through family and community services, professional education and training, and research and evaluation.



# Family Connections (FC)

## SERVICE

FC provides direct services to families at risk for child neglect, with the goals of enhancing child safety and well-being.

## EVALUATION RESEARCH

**Clients:** All case plans are outcome-driven with clear and measurable outcomes.

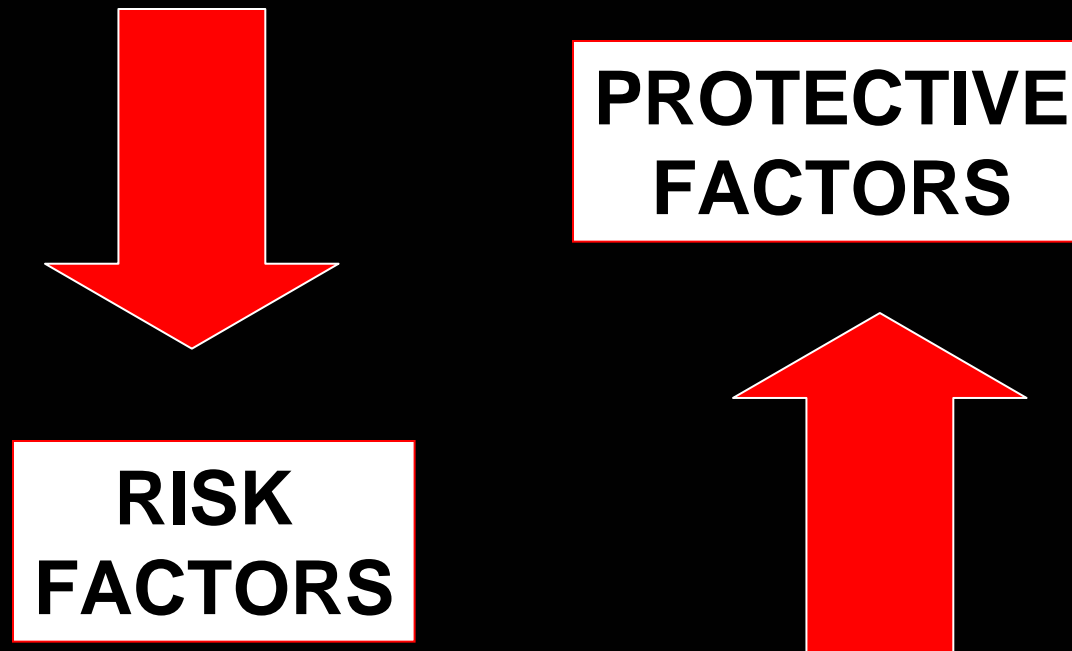
**Program:** Data gathered from clients is aggregated and combined with program information, as we conduct ongoing program evaluation.

## TRAINING & EDUCATION

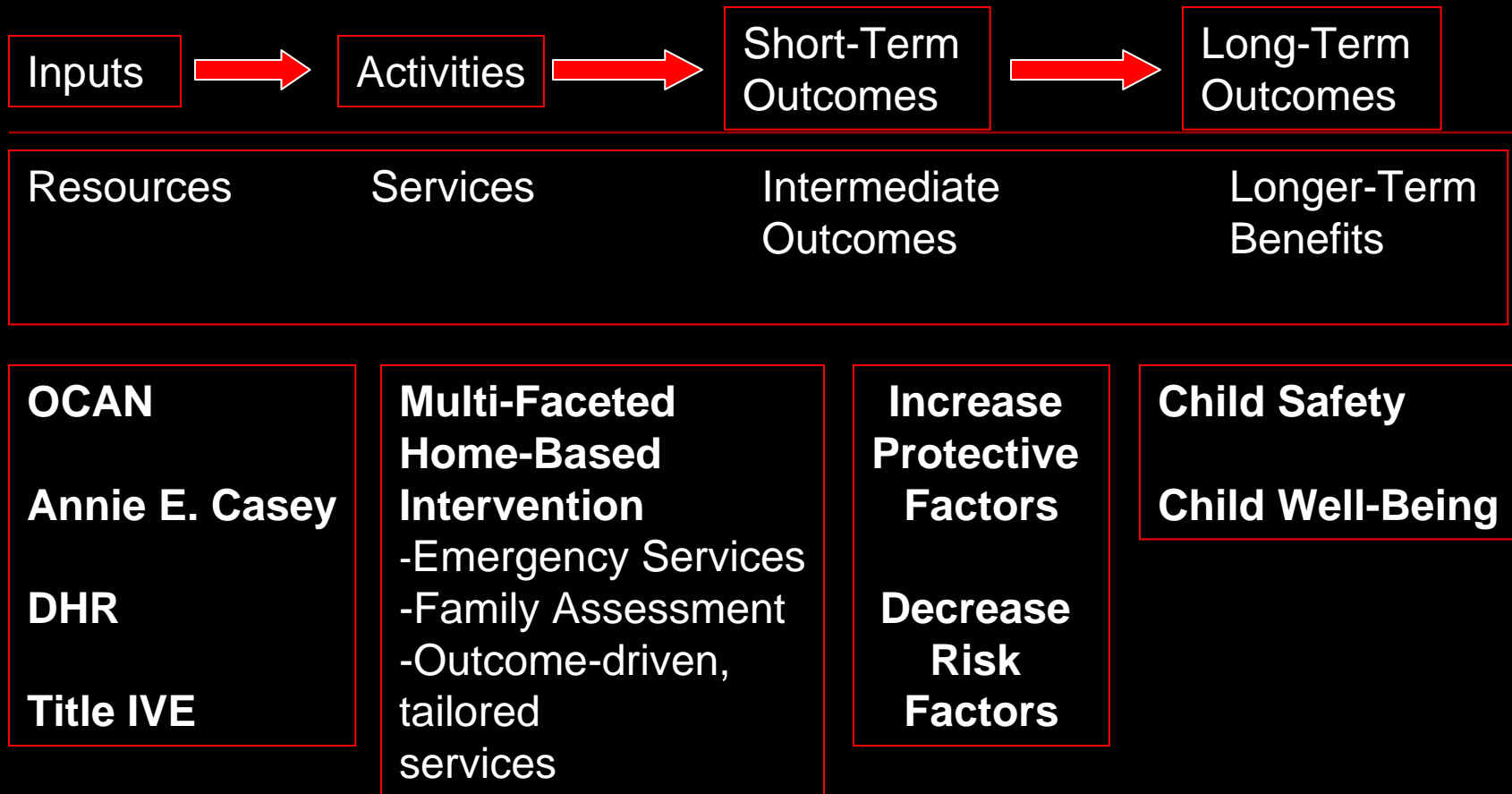
Services are provided by social work interns who receive funding through Title IVE. The Program Director, Dr. Fred Strieder, is a University of Maryland faculty member.

# A Prevention Science Framework

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# LOGIC MODEL



# Highlights of the Original Study

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- Random assignment of 154 families to 3- or 9-month intervention
- Self-directed, computer-assisted interview
  - **Standardized self-report measures administered at baseline, case closure, and six-month follow-up**
- Standardized self-report and observational measures integrated with intervention
- ANOVA with Repeated Measures ITT Analyses

# Study Sample Caregiver Demographics :

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- **98% female (151 females, 3 males)**
- 86% African American
- **Mean age= 39 years old**
- 62% had less than high school degree
- 58% unemployed
  - 19% employed full-time, 8% employed part-time, 10% in training, 5% retired
- **65% never married**
  - **13% separated, 10% divorced, 7% widowed, 5% married**

# Summary of Selected Results

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- Results for Both Groups
  - Reduction of risk factors  
(depressive symptoms, life stress, parenting stress)
  - Enhancement of protective factors  
(social support, parenting attitudes, parenting satisfaction)
  - Increase in Child Safety  
(physical and psychological care)
  - Increase in Child Well-Being  
(child behavior)

# Summary of Selected Results (cont'd)

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- Comparison of Intervention Groups
  - 9 month intervention demonstrated greater
    - reduction of depressive symptoms
    - reduction of externalizing and internalizing child behavior

# *Grandparent Family Connections (GFC)*

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A Replication of the  
Family Connections Program funded by  
the U.S.D.H.H.S.  
Children's Bureau

# Intergenerational Families

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## Why focus on intergenerational families?

Intergenerational families represent a growing trend in child welfare. Many of these families face challenges that increase the likelihood that child maltreatment will occur.

# Explaining the Trend

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A number of factors have contributed to the increase in intergenerational households:

- Increase in drug abuse, especially crack cocaine
- AIDS
- Parental incarceration
- Divorce
- Teen pregnancy
- Rise in single-parent households
- Poverty
- Occurrences of child abuse and neglect

# Challenges & Stressors

Accumulation of risk factors, especially among African-American, urban grandparent caregivers:

- More likely to live in poverty (Fuller-Thomson et al., 1997; Kelley, et al., 2000).
- Providing long-term care (Fuller-Thomson et al., 1997).
- Increased psychological distress, social isolation, depression, deteriorating health (Kelley et al., 2000; Minkler & Fuller-Thomson, 1999).
- Intergenerational strain (Climo et al., 1999).
- Complex legal situations (Grant, 2000).

# Challenges & Stressors (cont'd)

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## Grandchildren:

- Victims of abuse and neglect.
- Victims of domestic violence.
- Histories of living in unstable and chaotic households.
- Problem behaviors in school, home, and community.
- Emotional, academic difficulties and/or psychological or physical problems (e.g., Sands & Goldberg-Glen, 2000).

# A Population in Need of Services

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Though their needs are serious and unique, few programs assist intergenerational families. Grandparent caregivers often fall between the cracks of foster care, aging, education, and disability service systems.

# Grandparent Family Connections: An Overview of the Program

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Assessment  
Intervention  
Research

# Comprehensive Assessment

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Using Instruments to Enhance  
Practice and Select Outcomes

# Family Assessment Form (FAF)\*

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- Designed to integrate assessment, service plans, and documentation
- Subscales based on areas of family functioning
- Ecological perspective
- Assesses context
- Strengths and needs based
- Multiple sources of information

\*Children's Bureau of Southern California, 1997.

# Family Assessment Form

## Family Functioning Factors

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- Living Conditions
- Financial Conditions
- Supports to Caregivers
- Caregiver/Child Interaction
- Developmental Stimulation
- Interaction Between Caregivers
  
- (ALSO: Caregiver History & Caregiver Personal Characteristics)

# Family Assessment Form

## Behavioral Concerns Observational Checklist

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- Acting-Out Behaviors
- Inner-Directed Behaviors
- School Behavior Problems
- Health and Development Problems
- Temperament

# Research/Clinical Instruments

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Families participate in research interviews. Some of the data gathered is shared with service providers...

## Family Resource Scale

Dunst, K. J., & Leet, H. E. (1987). Measuring the adequacy of resources in households with young children. *Childcare, Health, and Human Development*, 13, 111-125.

## MAST

Selzer, M. L. (1971). The Michigan Alcoholism Screening Test: The quest for a new diagnostic instrument. *American Journal of Psychiatry*, 127, 1653-1658.

## DAST

Skinner, H. (1982). The Drug Abuse Screening Test. *Addictive Behavior*, 7(4), 363-367.

# Research/Clinical Instruments

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## RAND Health Survey

Ware, J. E., Sherbourne, C. D., & Davies, A. R. (1988). *A short-form general health survey*. Publication P-7444. Santa Monica, CA: Rand Corporation.

## BSI

Derogatis, L. R. (1993). *Brief Symptom Inventory Manual*. Towson, MD: Clinical Research.

## CES-D

Radloff, L.S. (1977) The CES-D scale: A self-report depression scale for research in the general population. *Applied Psychological Measurement*, 1, 385-401.

## Support Functions Scale

Dunst, C., Trivette, C., & Deal, A.(1988). *Enabling and empowering families: Principles and guidelines for practice*. Cambridge, MA; Brookline Books.

# Promising Intervention Strategies

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**Working With Grandparents to  
Increase Capacity & Reduce Risk**

# Practice Principles

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- Ecological developmental framework
- Empowerment/strengths-based
- Community outreach
- Cultural competence
- Family assessment & tailored intervention
- Outcome-driven service plans
- Helping alliance with family

# Special Considerations

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- Life Stage Issues
- Traumatized Children
- Attachment Challenges
- Intergenerational Conflict
- Legal Issues
- Health Care Issues

# Intervention Services (Core FC Services)

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- Crisis Intervention
- Emergency Assistance
- Individualized Outcomes-Based Services
- Individual and Family Counseling
- Advocacy
- Case Management
- (GFC) Interdisciplinary Practice

# GFC Research Design

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Approximately 200 families are randomly assigned to intervention groups:

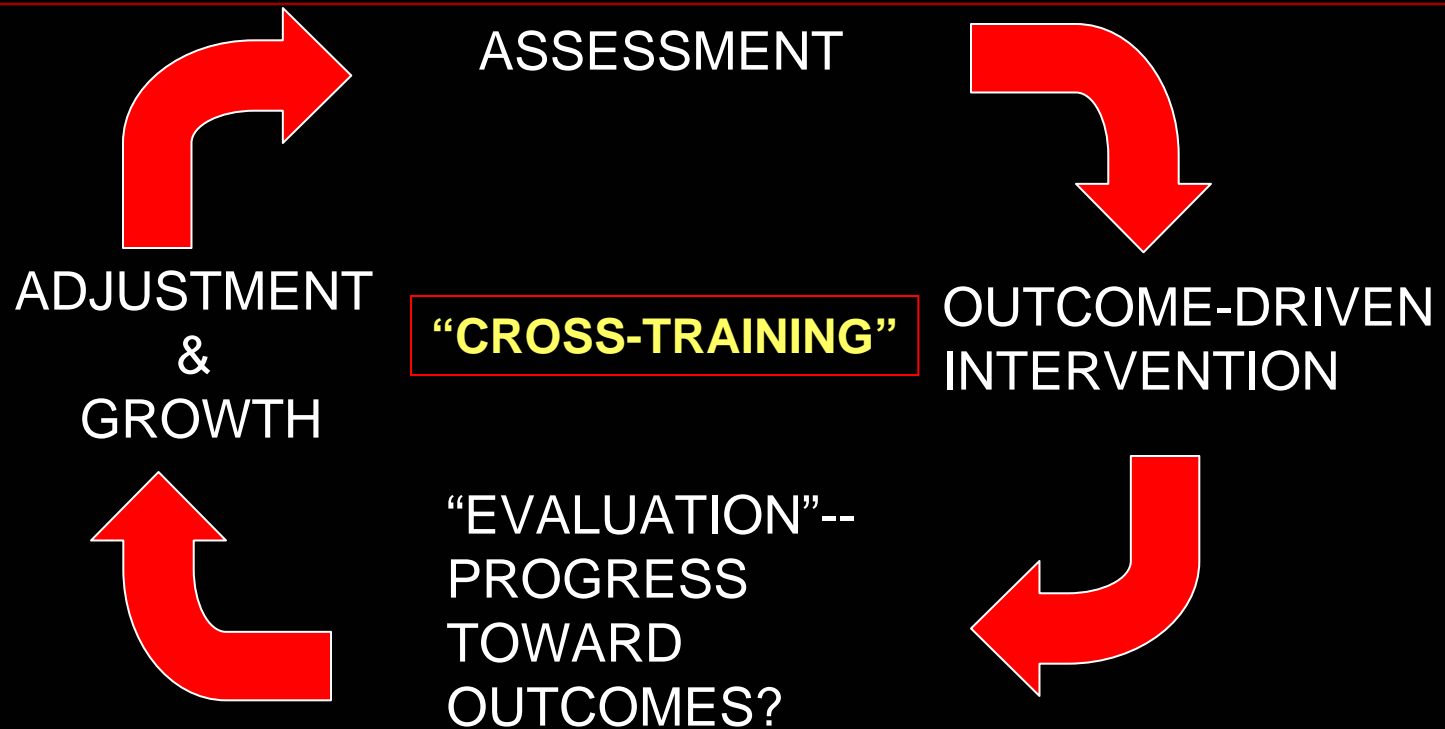
## Information & Referral

FC 3-Month

**FC 6-Month**

FC 6-Month “Plus”

# Putting It All Together...



This process occurs at both individual (i.e., client) and programmatic levels.

For more information on  
Family Connections &  
Grandparent Family Connections,  
please visit the University of Maryland,  
Center for Families web site:

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<http://www.family.umaryland.edu>

