

Hot Topic Monday, November 21, 2011

Child Maltreatment Prevention

There has been a great deal of discussion surrounding the number of children in care due to abuse and/or neglect in Greene County. For months, the stakeholders of Greene County's child welfare system have been discussing through Fostering Court Improvement the numbers of children in care. Greene County has approximately 10% of Missouri's foster children within its jurisdiction. However, Greene County makes up less than 5% of Missouri's overall population. The number of foster children in Greene County is very disproportionate with Greene County's population. Exactly what factors contribute to this imbalance is unknown, but we anecdotally contribute it to the weakening economy (causing families from surrounding communities to enter Greene County for resources, and causing an overall increase in family stress), the increased methamphetamine and poly substance abuse, a concentrated number of mandated reporters, and possibly a culture which supports a higher standard for intact families in our community.

In addition to the disproportionate numbers in Greene County, the state and county are facing serious budget shortfalls. Oftentimes, preventative services are the first to be cut from the budget. Below is an article concerning child maltreatment. The article discusses the importance of prevention efforts and strategies that have been proven effective in reducing child maltreatment. Even though the national numbers are not mirrored here in Greene County, this article is an important read about prevention. Likely the Greene County numbers will only go up without the preventative services. Please support preventative services!

Child Maltreatment Prevention: Past, Present, and Future

This issue brief discusses the importance of prevention as a critical component of the nation's child protection system. It outlines programs and strategies that are proving beneficial in reducing the likelihood of child maltreatment, such as public awareness efforts, parent education, home visitation, and community prevention efforts. Key challenges and opportunities for the future of child maltreatment prevention are addressed. This issue brief was developed by Child Welfare Information Gateway, in partnership with Deborah Daro, Ph.D. This document is made possible by the Children's Bureau, Administration on Children, Youth and Families, Administration for Children and Families, U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. (2011)
http://chapinhall.org/sites/default/files/publications/cm_prevention.pdf

