



ChildFirst®

The Forensic Interviewing Newsletter of the
National Child Protection Training Center

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Therapy Animals Helping Traumatized Children

By Allie Phillips, J.D.
Vice President of Public Policy
American Humane Association



Like most pet owners, I have experienced how therapeutic a pet's unconditional love can be during times of stress. It has not surprised me, therefore, to see

many organizations, counselors and health care professionals formally recognize that animals can help people with emotional and physical injuries recover faster.

The American Humane Association has long acknowledged the power of the human-animal bond, and currently trains and provides registered therapy animals to help people in need – especially children who have been maltreated or have witnessed trauma. To further support and advance this work, American Humane launched a national initiative at the 21st Annual Crimes Against Children Conference in Dallas, Texas on August 17, 2009 called the Therapy Animals Supporting Kids (TASK)™ Program.

As co-creator of the TASK Program, along with American Humane Director of Animal-Assisted Interventions Diana McQuarrie, we hope to provide guidance regarding therapy animals to child welfare professionals, attorneys and prosecutors, child protection workers, social workers, police officers,

and any other professionals who work with maltreated children. It is widely accepted that therapy animals can benefit individuals who have suffered physical or emotional trauma. The TASK Program takes this concept one step further and encourages child welfare professionals to incorporate therapy animals into sessions with children who have been abused or neglected, or have witnessed violence. When children have suffered trauma, it is often difficult for them to speak of their experiences. Incorporating a therapy animal into the process can help a child open up and promote the healing process.



My partnership with Ms. McQuarrie includes authoring *American Humane's TASK Program Manual*, a publication that merges two important areas of expertise: first, the practical issues involving setting up an animal-assisted therapy program and safely working with therapy animals; and second, the legal implications of effectively incorporating therapy animals in work with children that often entails a difficult court process.

The *TASK Manual* identifies six situations for incorporating therapy animals into work helping traumatized children, and thoroughly details the benefits, drawbacks, and potential legal ramifications involved with each type of situation. The six situations are: Greeting children (at a children's advocacy center or other agency location), the forensic interview or evaluation, the medical examination, individual or group therapy, court preparation and courtroom testimony. The manual features children's advocacy centers and prosecutors offices that currently incorporate therapy animals to assist children. It also contains sample forms that can be downloaded through the TASK webpage.

The *TASK Manual* was peer-reviewed by nationally recognized leaders in child protection and animal-assisted therapy, as well as agencies that have effectively incorporated therapy animals to benefit child victims and witnesses. The manual has received endorsements from the National Children's Advocacy Center in Huntsville, Ala.; the National Child Protection Training Center in Winona, Minn.; the State's Attorney for the 15th Judicial District in Palm Beach, Fla.; and a child psychologist and former director of the Mississippi Children's Advocacy Center in Jackson, Miss.

One story featured in the manual comes from the Palm Beach County State Attorney's Office. The office has three registered therapy dogs (Jake, Chloe and Morgan) that help children through the court process. In one situation, Chloe assisted a child who was so fearful of the process she did not want to testify. Once the child realized that Chloe could accompany her, the child relaxed and was able to testify. According to Lorene Taylor, "She was able to tell the adults what

happened. It was not easy. Sometimes she gripped the leash until her fingers turned blue. Sometimes she would only whisper to the dog about what she had seen. They all pretended not to watch while she cried into the fur on the dog's back. But she was able to tell what she knew."



As a former prosecuting attorney, I know firsthand how difficult it can be for a child to climb up to the witness stand and testify about the trauma he or she experienced or saw. Animals, especially trained therapy animals, have an innate ability to comfort and calm children and help them through the court process, often resulting in less trauma and better outcomes for everyone involved.

For more information about the TASK Program, please visit www.americanhumane.org/task, where you can download a complimentary copy of *American Humane's TASK Program Manual*.



CornerHouse Interagency Child Abuse Evaluation and Training Center would like to announce the following availability in its 2010 training schedule.

Advanced Forensic Interview Training

This training is open to law enforcement, child protection investigators, prosecutors, and forensic interviewers who have completed the required prerequisites. This course teaches advanced forensic interviewing issues, modifies the interview protocol for physical abuse and other violent crimes, outlines research on memory and suggestibility, provides a mock cross-examination demonstration, and provides participants the opportunity to learn and utilize a video-recorded interview assessment tool to critique their own interviews.

PREREQUISITES

Completion of one of the following basic interviewing courses:

- CornerHouse Child Sexual Abuse Forensic Interview Training or On-Site training
- *First Witness*™ Forensic Interview Training
- *ChildFirst*®: Forensic Interviewing and Preparing for Court
- *Finding Words*™ Forensic Interview Training (that teaches RATA[®])

Completion of a minimum of fifteen (15) interviews using RATA[®] (waived for prosecutors)

Openings for Advanced course at CornerHouse in Minneapolis, MN:
March 23-26, 2010
June 15-18, 2010

Advanced OnSite Forensic Interview Training

This course teaches advanced forensic interviewing issues and research to professionals who have completed a CornerHouse, First Witness, or Finding Words forensic interview course. Participants must have completed a minimum of 15 interviews utilizing the CornerHouse interview process, RATA[®].

Openings for 3-day course at your site:
February 22-24, 2010
August 2-4, 2010

For more information or to register, contact Sandy Heitkamp at CornerHouse. (612) 813-8310 or sandra.heitkamp@childrensmn.org

ChildFirst® State Training Calendar 2010*

MARCH

March 1-5 (Georgia)
March 8-12 (Maryland)
March 29-April 2 (Arkansas)

APRIL

March 29-April 2 (Arkansas)
April 12-16 (Oklahoma)
April 19-23 (Indiana)

MAY

May 3-7 (Georgia)
May 3-7 (Illinois)
May 10-14 (Ohio)

JUNE

June 21-25 (Arkansas)

JULY

July 19-23 (Indiana)

AUGUST

August 2-14 (Georgia—Advanced Course)
August 30-September 3 (Ohio)

SEPTEMBER

August 30-September 3 (Ohio)
September 13-17 (Georgia)
September 20-24 (Arkansas)

OCTOBER

October 18-22 (Illinois)

NOVEMBER

November 15-19 (Indiana)
November 15-19 (Oklahoma)

***ChildFirst® state programs are open only to child protection professionals working or residing in the state in which the course is held. Also, please note that several states have not finalized their 2010 calendar and thus you should contact individual state coordinators for updated calendars.**

ChildFirst® National Training Calendar 2010

When Words Matter: Emerging Issues in Forensic Interviewing

July 12-15, 2010
Savannah, Georgia

When Words Matter is designed to extend the concepts taught at five day forensic interviewing courses teaching the CornerHouse interviewing protocol RATAAC®.

All child protection professionals are encouraged to attend including prosecutors, law enforcement officers, child protective service workers, forensic interviewers, mental health professionals, medical professionals, victim advocates, and anyone else who interviews children or prepares them for court.

The Forensic Interviewer at Trial

September 13-15, 2010
National Child Protection Training Center, Winona, MN

This course is designed for teams of prosecutors and forensic interviewers. The course will require the prosecutors to conduct a direct examination of their forensic interviewers, and to conduct a re-direct examination after their forensic interviewers have been cross-examined. The prosecutors, working with their forensic interviewers, must also respond to the critiques of their forensic interviewers from a defense expert.

ChildFirst®: Interviewing Children and Preparing for Court

November 15-19, 2010
National Child Protection Training Center, Winona, MN

ChildFirst® is the forensic interview training program of NCPTC. Presented in collaboration with CornerHouse, this course is designed for investigative teams of law enforcement officers, social workers, prosecutors, child protection attorneys, and forensic interviewers. Students are taught the forensic interviewing protocol developed by CornerHouse. This protocol, entitled RATAAC, has been specifically recognized and approved by a number of appellate courts and is the most widely used protocol in the United States. The course includes lectures and discussion, review of CornerHouse videotaped interviews, skill building exercises and an interview practicum.

To register for these courses, or to receive additional information, visit our website at www.ncptc.org or call the National Child Protection Training Center at 507-457-2890.

ChildFirst® State Updates

(in order of admission to the program)



We held three ChildFirst® South Carolina trainings in 2009 (in January, April, and July) and have one scheduled for October 26 – 30. The 2010 schedule has not yet been set but we anticipate conducting three basic courses and one advanced course. Our practice has been to determine the following year's schedule in October of the year preceding the training, and we will adhere to that practice this year. Once determined, our 2010 schedule will be published on the Children's Law Center web site, childlaw.sc.edu.

As of our July course, ChildFirst® South Carolina has trained 633 forensic interviewers including: 38 prosecutors; 199 law enforcement officers; 187 children's advocacy center interviewers; and 209 child protective service case workers. Thirty-seven of our forty-six counties have ChildFirst® South Carolina trained forensic interviewers.

In July 2006, our general assembly passed a child hearsay statute which permits the introduction of a recorded interview of a child victim or witness under twelve years of age in certain sex offense prosecutions. The statute is South Carolina Code section 17-23-175. Our court of appeals has rejected challenges to the statute in two recent reported cases, *State v. Bryant*, 675 S.E.2d 816 (S.C. Ct. App. 2009) and *State v. Russell*, 2009 WL 1851327 (S.C. Ct. App. June 25, 2009). The statute provides a useful tool for our prosecutors and underscores the importance of proper forensic interviews of children.

Allison Foster and other ChildFirst® South Carolina faculty continue their work on the research Allison presented at When Words Matter in St. Louis and continue their collaboration with other professionals involved in the ChildFirst®/Finding Words coalition of states. Allison and Ray Olszewski also

recently conducted training for veteran and several new ChildFirst® South Carolina professional actors.

The South Carolina ChildFirst® faculty appreciates the opportunity to participate in the coalition of states and to partner with NCPTC and CornerHouse in training forensic interviewers. The coordinated support of NCPTC, CornerHouse and the coalition of states has made a substantial contribution to the protection of South Carolina's children.



ChildFirst® New Jersey has had two out of the three scheduled trainings for 2009. The Southern New Jersey training was held at Cumberland County Community College in Bridgeton, NJ on March 16-20, 2009. The Northern New Jersey training was held at the Passaic County Public Safety Academy in Wayne, NJ on June 1-5, 2009. The third training is in Central New Jersey, and will be held at the Middlesex County Fire Academy in Sayreville, NJ on October 19-23, 2009.

New Jersey has held 22 trainings and has trained a total of 770 people in all 21 counties. New Jersey continues to train Detectives, Assistant Prosecutors, DYFS (Department of Youth and Family Services) Intake Workers, Deputy Attorney Generals, Clinicians, and Medical Doctors.

In collaboration with NCPTC and CornerHouse, New Jersey is developing a research project based on the process of disclosure when using the CornerHouse RATAc® protocol. Representatives from New Jersey attended the When Words Matter Conference in May 2009.



ChildFirst® Mississippi is a training program adopted in 2007 by the Children's Advocacy Centers of Mississippi. It has remained the only forensic interview training in the state. To date we have trained hundreds of front-line professionals. At the beginning of 2009, due to economic hardships, financial funding for the training was cut. During these challenging economic times one of our member centers (Wesley House, Meridian MS) offered to sponsor our October 19-23 training. This is our only scheduled training for the year. ChildFirst® MS is extremely encouraged with the funding opportunities and future partnerships that will strengthen our training efforts throughout the state. As soon as these partnerships are solidified our 2010 training schedule will be posted.



For 2010, we offer our ChildFirst® course April 19 - 23, July 19 -23, and November 15-19. We are continuing to schedule three (3) trainings per year which are available to all MDT members across the State. In 2009, we held three (3) additional sessions funded by MDT entities who need to train a number of individuals. Two (2) of these sessions were for the Indianapolis area MDT and attended primarily by child protection workers. These additional sessions are necessary due to a rapid increase in total staff which has resulted from a significant budget increase to adequately staff the State's Dept. of Child Services.

At the September training for this group, we had several deaf interpreters being trained and we hope to use this opportunity not only to train the interpreters in forensic interviewing but to be trained ourselves in how to better serve the deaf community. The third special training for 2009 is for our State Police and will include a large percentage of law enforcement, both child abuse investigators and those who work on Internet Crimes Against Children on the state taskforce.



ChildFirst® Georgia started in 2003 and has continually received high evaluations and maintains waiting lists, thereby demonstrating the need for continuing this training program. The number of applications exceeds the number of students accepted for each course offering. To date, the program has trained over 900 persons from 109 counties. Each calendar year, 3 courses are offered.

Due to the overwhelming success of the course, the Office of the Child Advocate decided to develop an advanced ChildFirst® course. Each course is limited to 15 students due to intense interactive scenarios. Students are furnished a "mock case file" containing investigative documents generated in a child sexual abuse investigation, participate in a mock MDT meeting and testify in a mock trial.

Our training dates for 2010 are March 1-5, May 3-7 and September 13-17. Our advanced course will be held August 2-4. For more information, visit our website at: www.oca.ga.gov. Click on "Training" in the left column for 2010 dates, applications, and "Frequently Asked Questions."



Missouri ChildFirst® has set the schedule for its ChildFirst® training for the next 18 months. Trainings will be held regionally in September and November of 2009 and in March, June, September, and November of 2010.

To try and limit the impact of cuts in training budgets for agencies in Missouri, ChildFirst® training will be provided regionally in an attempt to reduce travel and overnight costs for attendees. Attendees will be charged a modest registration fee for the first time. In an effort to expand access to the training, a 3-day training for multidisciplinary team members is being held in conjunction with the full ChildFirst® forensic interviewer training. Missouri is also looking to add faculty over the next several trainings to accommodate the new regional format.



The State of Maryland recently held three trainings at various locations in Maryland and we trained 88 attendees. Our goal is to take the training throughout the State so that we are able to offer the training to those that might not be able to travel to attend. With the budgetary issues that we all face, travel expenses are often hard to come by. This year we have a higher ratio of law enforcement officers attending the training. Our next training session is to be held on March 8-12, 2010 in Sykesville, Maryland.



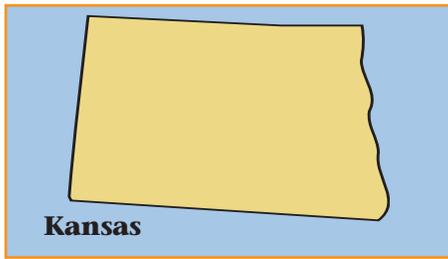
ChildFirst® West Virginia will complete its training schedule for 2009 with one more course to be held October 26-30. The course will be held at the WV State Police Academy in Charleston.

We were again fortunate to have received a grant from the Claude Worthington Benedum Foundation which has enabled us to conduct two trainings this year. The staff of ChildFirst® West Virginia would like to thank Beverly Robinson of the Claude Worthington Benedum Foundation, for her belief in the ChildFirst®/Finding Words program and her assistance in administering the grant funds.



This year, Illinois held its 11th forensic interview training course. Having trained over 400 child protection professionals in over 80% of our counties, we are excited about the tradition that has been established and what the future holds.

After reducing our training schedule last spring, we are now resuming our usual offering of two courses per year. We are eager to meet our next group of participants, arriving in October, and we are confident that they will complete the course with a wealth of new information and skills to help them serve the children of Illinois. In 2010, we will hold courses May 3-7 and October 18-22. For more information about upcoming courses, child abuse professionals in Illinois should contact Jordan Benning, Associate Director of Training and Education (217.528.2224, jordan@cacionline.org).



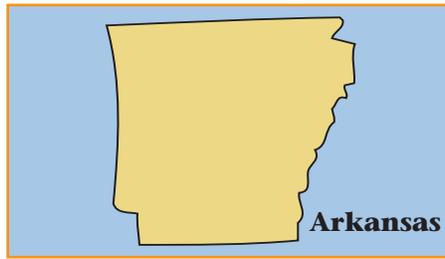
In 2009, ChildFirst® Kansas was offered four times. The United States Army contracted with us for a second time to provide the training to their people and they hope to make that a bi-annual event. Three classes are planned for 2010 in January, May and September. The enrollment has stayed steady, although with the economy we do not have the waiting lists like we have in the past, but that also means we are able to get those that want and can attend into the class.



Since 2005 Ohio has offered ChildFirst®, three times a year. Yet, Ohio has opted to offer the course twice a year in 2009 and 2010. This decision was made due to: 1) a slight decrease in demand for the course 2) less availability of faculty and 3) a need to budget more conservatively in the existing economic climate. Additional changes include a new training location, curriculum addition, and course name.

First, the 2009 and 2010 trainings will be hosted at the Ohio Peace Officer Training Academy (OPOTA). OPOTA is a state of the art training facility, under the auspices of the Ohio Attorney General's Office. Second, a medical component was piloted in 2008. The reviews were positive and it is anticipated that it will become a permanent addition to the Ohio curriculum. Third, the course had adopted the name: Finding Words Ohio - A ChildFirst® State.

Ohio is pleased that all efforts mentioned have made it possible to meet the course demand at the existing tuition fee of \$200 per participant. In 2010, we will offer the course May 10-14 and August 30-September 3. A training brochure is available at www.ohioattorneygeneral.gov.



Our budget for the next year has increased tremendously. As we all know the economy has impacted many of the agencies we work with, cutting their funds significantly. Our increased budget, along with taking our training program to varying sites in the state, is going to allow us to provide a large number of full scholarships (which include meals, lodging and mileage) to frontline investigators who otherwise wouldn't have the opportunity to attend. This is especially exciting for us as we now know we are going to be able to reach and train those investigators that operate in remote areas of the state. We have scheduled courses in March, June and September of 2010.

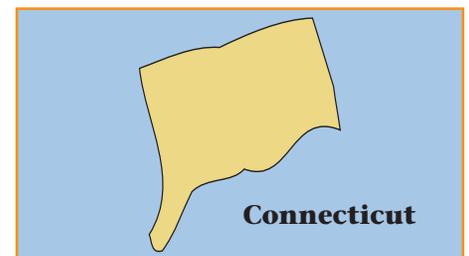


In 2009, we began to offer ChildFirst® regionally in our state. We held a June course in Loudoun County and a September course in Roanoke. We waive our registration fee for six members of the jurisdiction where we hold the training, in exchange for the use of their police academy. Also in 2009, our Virginia State Department of Social Services provided a scholarship to all of the child protective services workers who attend ChildFirst® Virginia. The scholarship provided funds to cover lodging, mileage, meals and their registration. In these tough times, it was a huge benefit to the workers. For our September training we received applications from over 100 people from all disciplines and at least 25 phone calls from those who missed the application deadline, yet hoped to get into the course. We expected to have a greater response from child protective services (CPS), due to the scholarship; however, it was only moderate from CPS. We actually had more prosecutors apply this time, than ever before. It is great to have such interest!



We have three items of interest and excitement in our state. First, we have been approached by the OSBI (Oklahoma State Bureau of Investigation) to devote our Spring 2010 training week to training 30 OSBI agents as part of their academy. We are very pleased by this possibility and are working to make this happen. Second, Oklahoma was represented at the CAST (Child Advocacy Studies) Curriculum Training held at the National Child Protection Training Center at Winona State University this past summer. We are making significant progress in implementing CAST at one of our Oklahoma City campuses. Third, we had three national ChildFirst® faculty (Victor Vieth, Angie Scott-Dixon and Alison Foster) speak at our annual Child Abuse and Neglect Conference in September.

We have one more training scheduled for 2009 (November 2nd – 6th) and have two planned for 2010 (April 12th thru April 16th and November 15th thru November 19th).



Connecticut completes its third full year on October 23, 2009 with our 7th course. We will have trained over 230 child abuse professionals with waiting lists for all courses to date. On October 23rd we will be having a thank you ceremony for all of the people and organizations that donate their time, talent and facilities to our program. We were fortunate to be able to send all of our faculty to When Words Matter this past year and hope to do so again in 2010. We are currently in the process of planning our courses for 2010, which we intend to hold two again at our police academy.

National Program Updates



CornerHouse

This quarter has brought several staff changes for CornerHouse. Previous Training Coordinator Jodi Lashley is now the Program Director and Miriam Maples, who had been the Family Liaison/Volunteer Coordinator, moved in to the Training Coordinator role. Nancy Van Thorre was hired to fill the Family Liaison/Volunteer Coordinator position and Sara Brandt has been added as the newest Forensic Interviewer/Trainer. In addition, Assistant Executive Director Jennifer Anderson returned from maternity leave on September 1, 2009. And sadly, Executive Director Tom Frost recently announced that he will be retiring at the end of this year, causing the Board to begin the search for next director of CornerHouse.

All of these changes have occurred in a monumental year – 2009 marks the twentieth anniversary of CornerHouse. It is unfortunate that the need for CAC's exists in our world. But as long as it does, we are proud to continue in our efforts to positively impact the lives of children and families – in collaboration with so many exceptional professionals across the country.



National Child Protection Training Center

NCPTC will continue to offer several advanced forensic interview training courses in 2010. These courses include *The Forensic Interviewer at Trial* and *When Words Matter*. We will also continue to offer free, advanced forensic interviewing workshops as part of our monthly webinars. We have also written a law review article entitled *The Forensic Interviewer at Trial: Guidelines for the Admission and Scope of Expert Witness Testimony Concerning an Investigative Interview in a Case of Child Abuse*. The article will be published by the William Mitchell Law Review and is expected to be in print by January of 2010.

