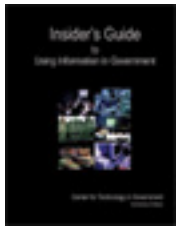# Summary

The **Kids Well-being Indicators Clearinghouse (KWIC)** project advances the use of indicators of children's health and well-being as tools for policy development, planning, and accountability at the state, county, and community levels by making the necessary data available in a more timely and accessible way.

Working with the New York State Council on Children and Families, CTG developed a well-organized, Web-based, data rich electronic resource that brings existing indicator data and supportive resources together in a publicly accessible information repository, and expands both the kinds of data available and its usefulness for smaller jurisdictions and communities.

This new resource supports users as they gather and use indicator data to assess needs, design and improve programs, and sharpen their focus on outcomes.

# Publications & Results

## Online Resources (1)



### Insider's Guide to Using Information in Government
Wed, 01 Nov 2000

Every day, the people inside government use information to develop policies, make decisions, evaluate programs, and deliver services. This Web resource draws from real agency experiences to provide a practical resource for government professionals who use information to do their jobs.

Every day, the people inside government use information to develop policies, make decisions, evaluate programs, and deliver services. The Insider's Guide to Using Information in Government draws from real agency experiences to provide a practical resource for government professionals. It covers six related topics (strategy, policy, data, costs, skills, and technology) and illustrates them with stories of state and local agency projects ranging in focus from internal knowledge sharing to statewide program evaluation.

Link to Insider's Guide

## Lessons Learned

Moving From Paper to the Web: How the Council on Children and Families is Transforming a Static Information Resource into a Dynamic One **Insider's Guide to Using Information in Government**

Providing access to data on the Web requires more than just clean data. This agency case study presents how the project team faced the challenges of creating a Web resource that will be accessible and usable by a wide audience of constituents.

# Partners

## Government Partners
• New York State Archives and Records Administration
• New York State Council on Children and Families

## Academic Partners
- Chapin Hall Center for Children, University of Chicago
- Charles McClintock, Professor, Associate Dean, Department of Policy Analysis & Management, Cornell University

## Nonprofits and Foundations
- Annie E. Casey Foundation

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- Sharon Dawes, Director
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- Jochen Scholl, Project Support Manager
- Fiona Thompson, Research Associate
- Derek Werthmuller, Director of Technology Services

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- Carol L. Anderson, Associate Director, Cornell Cooperative Extension
- Cheryl Backus, Research Scientist III, NYS Office of Alcoholism and Substance Abuse
- Doug Bailey, Business and Industry Outreach and Interagency Coordinator, New York State Education Department
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- Susan Brandt, Executive Director of Public Information, NYS ARC, Inc.
- Eric Brettschneider, Director, Agenda for Children Tomorrow
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- James Crucetti, Commissioner, Albany County, Department of Health
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- Sheryl Dicker, Executive Director, Judicial Commission on Justice for Children
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- Ruth Fennelly, Executive Director, Families Together
- Gail Flanery, Executive Director, New York Association for the Education of Young Children
- Mental Health Assoc. of NYS, Inc.
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- Gail Nayowith, Executive Director, Citizens Committee for Children of New York, Inc.
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- Bruce Oswald, Project Director, NYS Office for Technology
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- Paul Puccio, Executive Deputy Commissioner, NYS Office of Alcoholism and Substance
- James Purcell, Senior Policy Analyst, NYS Council on Children and Families
- Davin Robinson, State Communities Aid Assocation
- Bob Scardamalia, Chief Demographer, Empire State Development
- Karen Schimke, President/CEO, State Communities Aid Association
- Mary Shaheen, Director Center for Social Demographics United Way of New York State
- Sheldon Silver, Assembly Speaker, NYS Assembly
- Laurie Stein, Juvenile Justice Coordinator, NYS Division of Criminal Justice Services
- Josephine Swanson, Interim Assistant Director, Cornell Cooperative Extention
- Kryra Woudstra, Citizen`s Committee for Children of New York City, Inc.
- Michael Zuber, Director, NYS Office of Mental Health

# Participants

## 13 NYS Council on Children and Family Member Agencies:

- New York State Office of Children and Family Services
- New York State Office of Temporary and Disability Assistance
- New York State Department of Health
- Commission on Quality of Care for the Mentally Disabled
- NYS Office of Advocate for Persons with Disabilities
- NYS Office for the Aging
- NYS Office of Alcoholism and Substance Abuse
- NYS Division of Criminal Justice Services
- NYS Division of Probation and Correctional Alternatives
- NYS Education Department
- NYS Department of Labor
- NYS Office of Mental Health
- NYS Office of Mental Retardation and Developmental Disabilities

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# Funding Sources

# Original Scope of Work

## The Problem

In New York State, billions of dollars are expended every year to provide services designed to benefit children and families. The combination of public tax dollars (federal, state, local) and private philanthropic contributions offer an extensive array of services to address a range of social issues.

These services include public education, family support and preservation, delinquency and drug prevention, mental health and chemical dependency treatment, juvenile justice, early childhood education and child care, services for the disabled, employment and training, health maintenance and wellness, and recreation and social development. However, despite the intentions of the many individuals and organizations (both public and private) that plan, fund, and deliver services, little is known about the combined impact of these services, and whether they collectively or individually reflect wise use of these resources.

The New York State **Touchstones** project grew out of the State's commitment to address this information need. Developed by the 13 member agencies of the **NYS Council on Children and Families**, **Touchstones** established a set of goals, objectives, and outcome measures that the Council's member agencies use to determine whether current services are helping to solve the problems facing children and families in New York. **Touchstones** includes such vital information as the number of low birth weight babies, children living in poverty, youngsters without medical insurance, high school dropouts, and teen pregnancies that occur in the state every year. The core data from **Touchstones** is made available each year in the **Kids Count Data Book**.

New York has embraced the use of county level measures as critical to responsible monitoring and evaluation of welfare reform. There are a number of important reasons for this development. First, like many other states, welfare is administered in New York by 57 county-based local districts plus New York City. These districts need a timely mechanism to assess the impacts new policies are having on children, particularly given the increased flexibility within the new welfare laws. As noted in New York's evaluation plan - "Framework For Comprehensive Evaluation of Welfare Reform" submitted to the Legislature in January 1998 - a major component of the plan is the development of performance monitoring and decision support capability at the local level through the creation of county level performance indicators. Such careful attention to key child outcomes is particularly important for government in a period of rapid policy changes that could have important impacts on its young citizens.

More rapid access to expanded levels of county-based information will become a key to monitoring and evaluating the combined impact of service programs in areas such as health care and education, and of social changes such as welfare reform on children within New York and throughout the nation.

## The Project

In order to address the need for more rapid and timely access to indicator data the Council on Children and Families sought and received funding from the US Department of Health and Human Services to undertake the **Kids Well-being Indicator Clearinghouse (KWIC)** project.

The KWIC project developed a well-organized, Web-based, data-rich electronic resource that brings existing indicator data and supportive resources together in a publicly-accessible information repository. It expanded both the kinds of data available and its usefulness for smaller jurisdictions and communities. This new resource was designed to support users as they gather and use indicator data to assess needs, design and improve programs, and sharpen their focus on outcomes.

The goal of this project was to further advance the use of indicators of children's health and well-being as tools for policy development, planning, and accountability at the state, county, and community levels by making the necessary data available in a more timely and accessible way.

Specifically, the KWIC project:

- makes **Touchstones** indicator data and a variety of supporting resources available to all interested agencies, organizations, and individuals through the World Wide Web; and
- enhances available data and its usefulness for smaller jurisdictions and communities by deploying new data analysis tools that will allow users to manipulate data and generate reports to meet their particular needs.

The successful completion of this project provides a new vehicle for more effective information sharing among government agencies, private sector organizations, and the general public. It supports and advances access to indicator data across agencies - a mechanism that did not exist within New York State prior to this project.

# Related Web Sites

Cornell University, College of Human Ecology
http://www.human.cornell.edu/

Annie Casey Foundation (national kids data)
http://www.aecf.org/kidscount/kc1998/over2.htm

United States Census Bureau
http://www.census.gov/

North Carolina State Center for Health Statistics
http://www.schs.state.nc.us/SCHS/

Utah Department of Health
http://www.health.state.ut.us/html/health_data.html

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