

***Nurturing the One, Supporting the Many:
The Center for Family Life in Sunset Park, Brooklyn***

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New York: Columbia University Press

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Introduction The Center for Family Life and Its Programs

The Introduction addresses why the authors have focused on the Center for Family Life, describes the study upon which this book is based, and answers the question “What is the Center for Family Life?” The authors describe Sunset Park, the Center for Family Life’s growing and diverse home community, including the challenges and resources of Sunset Park’s residents.

Areas presented in the book’s introduction that are not excerpted here include the chronological development of the Center’s services and a review of the many previously published reports regarding the Center.

Chapter 1 Building a Family-Focused, Community-Centered Program: Commitments, Philosophies, and Interests

Chapter 1 outlines the focus and structure of the Center’s services and the commitments that have shaped the Center over the past two decades. These include its commitments to: Focus on the family, belong to the Sunset Park community, provide comprehensive, integrated and holistic services that are both inclusive and non-stigmatizing, develop a range of working partnerships, integrate an intergenerational developmental focus in program design, achieve service continuity, and draw upon professional knowledge, values, and skills.

Additional commitments discussed in Chapter 1 but not excerpted on this Web site include commitments to draw upon theory in practice, maintain a flexible learning stance organizationally, and maintain control over organizational purpose and size while responding to community needs and opportunities. Also described are Sister Mary Paul’s and the late Sister Geraldine’s perspectives regarding where religion fits in with what the Center does and details regarding the Center’s organizational structure.

Chapter 2 The Development of the Center in the Context of Child Welfare Policy and Programming (not excerpted on web site)

In this chapter the authors review the policy shifts that have shaped the Center’s development and the structural, political, and programming issues in the City of New York’s child welfare system that have impacted on the Center’s delivery of services. (Not excerpted here.)

Chapter 3 The Core: Family Counseling Services; or, the Preventive Program

Drawing upon the voices of families and staff, this chapter describes the purpose and key characteristics of the Center’s family counseling program, referred to by staff and families as the *preventive program*. Excerpts include discussion of the following program characteristics: Comprehensive, holistic, integrated services which are grounded in the community; family focus and orientation; development of a client-centered relationship between family and worker; and individualized services, including flexibility in service duration. Other program characteristics discussed in depth in Chapter 3, but not excerpted here, include a supportive professional community and the continuous voluntary accessibility to all Center services provided to Sunset Park’s families over time.

Excerpts also include a description of the characteristics and responsibilities of the preventive program staff, those characteristics that enhance practitioners’ effectiveness, and the stresses, supports and benefits experienced by staff in the Center’s preventive program.

Not excerpted here is extensive discussion of study findings regarding program results for the children and caregivers in the study sample. These include 1) the extent to which families' service needs were addressed, 2) changes in family members' initial and final Family Assessment Form (FAF) scores, and 3) the placement of study sample children outside the home. The authors underline the feasibility and the productive nature of the Centers' preventive program.

Chapter 4 The Neighborhood Foster Care Program (not excerpted on web site)

The Center for Family Life's neighborhood foster care program is an extension of the Center's mission to sustain children in their own homes. This chapter describes the key characteristics of this program and the service outcomes for the 146 children served in the program since it was initiated. (Not excerpted here.)

Chapter 5 Supporting Families, Building Community, and Developing Children and Youth: The Community School Programs

The agency's first community school program was opened in 1979. The three community school programs are a direct reflection of the Center for Family Life's philosophy of service and an integral part of its program operations. Excerpted on this web site is a description of the range of services offered in the three community school programs, the staffing pattern, and population served. Key community school program characteristics are described, and information is given regarding the Counselor in Training (CIT) program in which Luis and Elena Castro are seen participating in A BROOKLYN FAMILY TALE.

Sections of Chapter 5 not excerpted on this Web site include study findings regarding the one community school program selected for in-depth study. These findings address the school-aged child care and parent programs, parent support services, Teen Center, Counselor-In-Training Program, and Project Youth.

Chapter 6 Supporting Family and Community Development (not excerpted on web site)

In this chapter the authors describe the services provided at the Center's storefront center (emergency food program, thrift shop, and advocacy clinic) and employment services program and through its community development initiatives. These programs are essential components of the Center's comprehensive services model. (Not excerpted here.)

Chapter 7 Lessons Learned from the Center for Family Life in Sunset Park

In Chapter 7, the authors identify core components of the Center's overall model, practice principles that inform the Center's service design and delivery, and organizational principles that support the Center's leadership and management. Excerpts discussing the four core components are included on this web site.

Not excerpted on this Web site, the practice and organizational principles are discussed in-depth in Chapter 7 and placed within the context of the current literature. The authors also examine the implications of the Center's model for professional practice and education, research, and child and family policy.

Sources Cited Sources cited in the excerpts are provided on this Web site.

Appendix A: Study Design and Methodology (not excerpted here)

Appendix B: Instruments Modified or Created for this Study (not excerpted here)

Appendix C: Initial and Final FAF Scores (not excerpted here)