

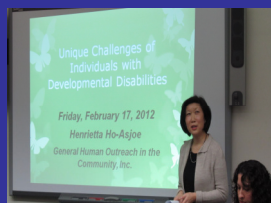


Treatment and Services for Children with Special Needs

On February 17 2012, Asian Health and Social Service Council (AHSSC) held its monthly session at the University Settlement located at 184 Eldridge Street in Manhattan. The title of the presentation was "Treatment and Services for Children with Special Needs". Maggie Wong, Vice President of AHSSC gave welcoming remarks. Michael Sisler, Executive Director and Melissa Aase, Director of Community Development at University Settlement also welcomed the attendees and presented briefly the history of the organization.

Nelson Mar, Esq. Senior Staff Attorney, Education Law Specialist of the Legal Services NYC in Bronx, gave a presentation on the Special Education Process in NYC. Mr. Mar first gave an overview of the Laws on the Federal, State and City level. He stated that Special Education, as defined by the Federal Law, means specially designed instruction, at no cost to the parent, to meet the unique needs of a child with a disability which may include speech-language pathology services, travel training as well as vocational education. In other words, Special Education means 1) services are free, 2) student must have a disability, 3) services must be appropriate and planned with the particular student in mind, and 4) services must meet the standards of the state.

In addition, Mr. Mar explained the Special Education process which included: 1) Identity, 2) Refer, 3) Evaluate, 4) Determine Eligibility, 5) Make Recommendations (IEP), and 5) Offer Placement. He stated that school and school districts must identify, and evaluate all children



(ages of 3 to 21) with disabilities to determine the need for special education services. These children include children who are homeless, in private schools, wards of the state and suspended or expelled from school. With regards to referral for evaluation, Mr. Mar mentioned that a parent, school staff member or a state agency may refer a student to the school or Committee on Special Education (CSE) for an evaluation to see if a student qualifies for special education services. However, parent must give consent for the evaluation although the district can force the student to be evaluated through an impartial hearing should the parent does not give consent. Furthermore, evaluations must be completed in 60 school days from the date the parent signed consent for the evaluations. Mr. Mar also explained in details on the Individual Education Program (IEP), which is a child's plan for special education.

The second keynote speaker, Henrietta Ho-Asjoe, MPS, Executive Director of the General Human Outreach in the Community, Inc. (GHO), gave a presentation on "unique Health Challenges of Individuals with Developmental Disabilities. Ms. Ho-Asjoe explained the characteristics of persons with developmental disabilities which included: 1) mental retardation, cerebral palsy, epilepsy, neurological impairment, or autism, 2) any other condition of a person found to be closely related to mental retardation, 3) originates before the person attains age 22, 4) expected to continue indefinitely, and 4) constitutes a substantial handicap to such person's ability to function normally in society. Furthermore, Ms. Ho-Asjoe provided the definition and issues related to each of the above characteristics.

With regards to the challenges for families, Ms. Ho-Asjoe stated that families with mentally ill members often struggled with their won sanity and self-worth as they sought care for their loved ones. Families also found a contradiction between care for developmentally delayed disorders and mental illnesses. Parent also said that their early reports of children's problems were discounted. Segregation and labeling of children with severe emotional disturbances continues to be a problem because of several reasons: 1) the intellectual potential of these special-needs children often goes unrecognized, 2) children are assumed to have developmental delays, and 3) transitional services for late adolescents and young adults are practically non-existent. There were also many other challenges that families often encountered. Ho-Asjoe suggested that "identity" and "treat" are the perfect combination to get these families and clients connected. Family support services, health care, mental health, rehabilitation, day and employment services along with residential services are resources available for these families and clients. GHO provides family support services, Medicaid services coordination, community habilitation, day habilitation, prevocational services as well as individualized residential alternative housing.

"Special Testimony: A Parent's Path: Caring for a Disabled Child"

Ms. Y gave a special testimony about the challenges raising her child with mental disabilities. Ms. Y mentioned that there were not many Chinese-American physicians in the community many years ago. The physicians told her that her child would be fine even though she had noticed speech delay. Ms. Y's child did enroll in a special education school when she was six years old. The child did not enjoy going to

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school when she was six years old. The child did not enjoy going to school at all as she was often bullied. Ms. Y did not think that her child learned the necessary skills needed to be independent. Ms. Y mentioned that the family and friends were very loving toward the child and were very protective of her. However, her child is now 53 years old and Ms. Y is in her 80's. She was worried about her child's survival skills as she's aging.

"Agencies Sharing"

Peter Cheng, Executive Director of Indochina Sino-American Community Center, presented his organization and services. Indochina provides citizen and immigration Services, NYC ESOL project, employment training for refugees/immigrants, computer classes as well as accounting classes.

Bonnie Cohen, Program Director of the Early Intervention Program at University Settlement, gave an overview of her program and services. Her program offers home-based and supplemental evaluations, which are available in Chinese, Spanish, French, Russian and ASL.

Agenda of Monthly Meeting

Medicaid Redesign – How It Impacts Home Care/Personal Care

Date: 3/16/2012 (Friday)

Place: Charles B. Wang Community Health Center

168 Centre Street, 3/F Conference Room, NY NY 10013

9:00 Coffee/Networking

9:30 Welcome Remarks – Susan Wong,
Senior Advisor of AHSSC

9:35 Presentation:

Kieu-Loan Mai, Ph.D., Research Consultant
and Psychologist

Regina Hawkey, VP of Clinical Operations

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10:35 **Agencies Sharing:**

11:30 **Closing**