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By sharing information between agencies, Dr. Stemke said, the agencies might be better able to reduce instances of child abuse.

Similarly, Dr. Stemke told the panel, the confidentiality laws surrounding child abuse investigations should be examined.

Also appearing before the committee was Debbie Richardson, executive director of the Oklahoma Committee to Prevent Child Abuse.

Richardson said the problem of child abuse in Oklahoma and other parts of the country had become "a public health crisis."

The focus of her group, Richardson said, was to break the cycle of abuse, by targeting families, particularly at-risk families, with prevention efforts. Those efforts, Richardson said, would take a period of years to be successful.

FROM: SHAWN ASHLEY

DATE: 03/07/96

## CONFERENCE ON FAMILIES PROMISES TO STRENGTHEN COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT

■(OKLAHOMA CITY) Oklahoma advocates for children and families, church and school teachers and administrators, and professionals in children and families services will exchange ideas at the First Conference "Creating Partnerships for Oklahoma Families" to be held March 18 and 19 at the Clarion Hotel Conference Center in Oklahoma City. This conference is co-sponsored by the Oklahoma Department of Human Services and the Oklahoma Commission on Children and Youth.

DHS Director George Miller said, "This conference will provide a first rate training experience for all participants that will unleash a rapid expansion of much needed community services all over Oklahoma.

"Any Oklahomans concerned about children and families should plan to attend the 'Creating Partnerships' conference," Scott said.

The welcoming addresses will be given by Miller and Thomas Kemper, Director of the Oklahoma Commission on Children and Youth, at 9 a.m. Monday. Monday evening a reception for registrants will be held at the National Cowboy Hall of Fame.

The luncheon speaker on Tuesday will be John Sidor, Executive Director, Council of State Community Development Agencies, Washington, D.C.

Five sessions include over 40 concurrent workshops presented in two days. Two workshops will address the phenomenon of community unity in crisis as exemplified by Oklahoma City's response to the bombing of the Murrah building.

To close the conference, there will be a rally on the south steps of the Oklahoma State Capitol celebrating "Children's Day" from 2-3 p.m. on Tuesday. Notable speakers, including national "Take Five for Kids" child advocate Nancy Amidei from Washington state, will address the participants at the rally prior to visitation with state legislators.

To pre-register contact Karen Gunter, Carter County DHS, 925 W. Broadway, Ardmore, Oklahoma 73402 (1-800-225-9927). Registration for the entire conference is \$50. On-site registration will be accepted at the door as space is available.

FROM: OKLAHOMA DEPARTMENT OF HUMAN SERVICES

DATE: 03/07/96

## GOVERNOR PROCLAIMS MARCH DEVELOPMENTAL DISABILITIES AWARENESS MONTH

■(OKLAHOMA CITY) Governor Frank Keating has declared March as Developmental Disabilities Awareness Month in Oklahoma. The theme for this year's awareness campaign is: "Ours is a mission to enlighten."

"More and more people with developmental disabilities are living and working in communities all over the state," said James Nicholson, administrator of the Department of Human Ser-

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