



August 2005

## **Building Brighter Visions – 25<sup>th</sup> annual Coalition conference**

The Coalition for Family and Children's Services announces its 25<sup>th</sup> annual conference, **September 28, 29 and 30, 2005 at the Airport Holiday Inn in Des Moines.**

### ***FEATURED SPEAKERS AND TOPICS***

**Bob Bertilino** – Strength Based Approaches to Working with Kids and Families, From Problems to Possibilities, and Thriving in a Field of Dreams

**Earl Kelly** – Social Work Ethics

**Jane Middleton-Moz** – Bullies, Healing for Healers; Shame, Guilt and Blame; and From Legacy to Choice

**Kenny Miller** – Reactive Attachment Disorders

To see an on-line brochure, go to [www.iachild.org](http://www.iachild.org) or call 515-244-0074 to request a conference brochure in the mail.

### **Group Care Waiting List**

**Once again, Iowa has a group care waiting list. As of August 24, 2005, it stands at about 120 kids.**

**42 beds were taken out of group care to fund the children's mental health waiver. Another 150 beds will be taken out to fund the Title IVE waiver, when the federal government approves it.**

## Sex Offender Legislation

Kids and adults are not the same physically, emotionally or mentally and are not the same in responding to sexual offender treatment.

However, in Iowa and in our nation's capitol, sex offender legislation is being considered and passed which will greatly affect juvenile sex offender because the legislation does not differentiate between adults and youth.

The following are facts to take into account concerning juvenile sex offenders:

The vast majority of these youth remain free of sexual offense recidivism at long-term follow-up. Low sex offense recidivism rates are a consistent finding across over five decades of follow-up research comprising over 30 U.S. follow-up studies (e.g., less than 8% in most treatment follow-up studies).

As many as 1/3 of sexually abused children will demonstrate some sort of sexual behavior problem, usually transient and minor, in response to their own abuse. In some cases, this behavior may even involve other children or younger children and result in a delinquent adjudication. However, the motivation and manifestation of these sexually inappropriate behaviors are very different from those of adult offenders. **And, children with sexual behavior problems generally respond well to treatment interventions.**

The United States has a long tradition of separating our handling of juvenile delinquents from our handling of adult criminals. We recognize, and the data support, that most youth who break the law during their childhood or early adolescence can and will mature out of this behavior given appropriate guidance and limits. Consequently, our society believes that individuals should not be stigmatized for life on the basis of their childhood behavior.

There is a perception that the vast majority of sex offenders will repeat their crimes. However, sex offenders comprise a very broad range of offense patterns and re-offense risk. Research studies by the US Dept. of Justice and the Canadian Government have found that sexual offense recidivism rates are much lower than commonly believed.

Studies that have tracked sex offenders over longer follow-up periods have found that pedophiles, who molest boys, and rapists of adult women, were most likely to recidivate.

It should be noted that there is no evidence that community notification reduces sex offense recidivism or increases community safety. The only study to date found no statistically significant difference in recidivism rates between offenders who were subjected to notification in Washington and those who were not.

This information is excerpted from a letter to Congress from the national Association for Treatment of Sexual Abuser