

## **FDC Outcomes: What the research shows**

From June 1998 to May 2000, the Cornell Empowering Families Project investigated the impact of the New York State Family Development Credential and Training (FDC) Program on families, family support agencies, and their communities<sup>1</sup>. Three FDC programs (Brooklyn, Dutchess and Monroe Counties) were chosen to study the effects of FDC training on families, workers and family support organizations. Data were collected through focus groups of family members, interviews of frontline workers and some of their supervisors, FDC facilitators, and meetings with FDC facilitators, field advisors, advisory council members, and state policymakers. The research identified initial, intermediate, and potential long-term outcomes of FDC training on family support practice in New York State. Findings revealed the following outcomes for families, workers, and family support organizations:

### **Outcomes for families:**

- Family members recognized their strengths, set their own goals, and developed plans to reach those goals of healthy self-reliance
- Families increased their involvement in agencies, school, and community organizations and in ways that reflected self-empowerment.

### **Outcomes for workers:**

- Workers reported increased self-esteem, confidence, and assertiveness in helping families, as well as in setting higher education, and career goals
- Workers related improved communication and relationship skills in personal and professional lives with families, co-workers, and their own family
- Workers expressed increased knowledge and use of empowerment-based family support skills in working with families.

### **Outcomes for organizations:**

- Workers further developed outreach and networking capacities so that families gained access to services at interagency and cross-system levels
- Supervisors reported higher staff morale and lower turnover
- Agencies incorporated use of FDC empowerment-based assessment tools to help families identify their own strengths, and create plans to achieve short and long-term goals of family self-reliance
- Agency directors, policymakers, and state level officials expressed commitment to efforts to implement empowerment-based family support practices across programs, agencies, and systems.

These findings describe some elements of the change process in families, workers, organizations and systems that implemented empowerment-based staff training in locations where FDC had broad community support. Future research was recommended to assess outcomes of FDC training using a more random sample of participants, and to develop measurable indicators of change to assess programs and agencies using outcome-based accountability.

<sup>1</sup>Crane, B. (2000). Building a theory of change and a logic model for an empowerment-based family support training and credentialing program. (Doctoral dissertation). Ithaca, NY: Cornell University.