

**CHINS FORUM OUTCOMES - JAMAICA PLAIN**  
**Co-Sponsored by The Children's League of MA & Community Cares**  
**Responses - June 22, 2006**

**WHAT WORKS IN THE PRESENT CHINS SYSTEM?**

- Speeds up process to get child help
- It's a resource for schools to shake kids who are truant up
- Decriminalizes run away kids.
- Makes a big difference for some kids and families to get the services they need.
- The court can give leverage to parents.

**WHAT FRUSTRATES YOU ABOUT THE PRESENT SYSTEM?**

- Service availability is limited. Can't find needed services
- Some families are chronically involved in courts with no outcomes
- Easy way for schools not to deal with kids issues. It gives a quick out
- Lack of Parent education of what CHINS is.
- Times and resources have changed since the law was first enacted.
- No alternative for parents who are the ones who also need the help.
- No prevention or early intervention in place.
- No real trauma assessment.
- Consequences equal family being punishment not help.
- Schools lock doors 5 mins. after kids are suppose to be there and if kid is late s/he gets punished – sometimes CHINS comes out of this. Not fair to kid.
- Parents don't realize they can loose custody of their child.
- Even present local roundtable doesn't have families around them. Make plans for kids without families involved.
- No community services.
- No \$\$\$\$\$\$ for community-based services
- No consistent across the board diversion programs and no money to fund them
- DSS access limited
- Many families don't belong in DSS and suddenly find themselves there.
- Special needs kids find themselves in courts
- DMH needs to be more involved in CHINS
- CHINS solely focused on child not the whole family.
- No data regarding CHINS cases across the state
- No family coordination
- Not enough police, clinician, school training around educated around CHINS process or human/mental health services available in community and/or state.
- CHINS system has no clear philosophy.

- No centralized entry point.
- CHINS not transferable. If a person moves they have to start the process all over again.
- No recognition of family trauma. Right questions aren't asked. (Sexual abuse, Domestic Violence) etc.
- Family rights are not considered
- Families personal time not respected (have to take time off from work for court and then moved to another day. Kids taken out of school several days and then they are punished for missing school)
- Kids become nameless in the process (Hey you in the plaid shirt!) denigrated by the process.
- No respite care for kids or families.
- Fragmented system all over the place.

## **HOW WOULD YOU ENVISION/REFORM A NEW CHINS?**

- A single point of entry. Family Assessment Center or something similar Where a family is assessed and given a service/wellness plan.
- Court should be last stop not the first.
- It should be a family service system – not just about the child.
- There should be an office/authority established to oversee CHINS so it's not all over the place and services can be more consistent.
- Bring it back to the community – Money for community and other youth programs
- Diversion Programs available
- Early Intervention into families
- Families in Need of Services (FINS)
- Empower families
- No stigmas with CHINS and no stereotypes about families who need services
- Schools should get kids involved in programs for success – life skills etc
- Support for families – Parent to Parent mentoring and parent education
- Everyone involved in whole system works together as a team – no hierarchy
- Responsibility lies where it should – no passing the buck
- Should look at old Office for Children Model
- Enough \$\$\$\$\$\$\$\$ for community-based human/mental health services
- Culturally appropriate services
- All agencies, families, schools involved in new system – should see it in a positive- service light – not criminal light.
- Intensive family assessment upon entry and follow up along the way. Data kept on how families are doing. Re-assessment of original plan.

