

Improving Urban Service Systems for Children and Families

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Juanona Brewster joined the Illinois Chapter of the American Academy of Pediatrics as director of early childhood development projects in 2008. Throughout her nonprofit career, she has advocated on behalf of vulnerable child and family populations. She received her BA from Northeastern Illinois University, and has graduate degrees from Northwestern University (M.Div. and M.T.S.-Garrett Seminary) and Loyola University of Chicago, School of Law (M.J.-Child and Family Law) and is currently a fellow at University of Illinois, School of Public Health Policy.

Olivia Golden, an institute fellow at the Urban Institute, is an expert in child and family programs at the federal, state, and local levels with a special interest in the way services are delivered on the front lines. From 2001 to 2004, she was director of the Child and Family Services Agency of the District of Columbia, leading the agency out of federal court receivership. She shared her experiences and expertise in the recently published *Reforming Child Welfare* (Urban Institute Press, 2009). From 1993 to 2001, she served in two presidentially appointed positions within the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, first as commissioner for children, youth, and families and then as assistant secretary for children and families. In these roles, she was responsible for over 60 programs, including Head Start, Early Head Start, child care, welfare reform, and child abuse and neglect. In her most recent public sector role, in 2007, she served as director of state operations for New York State, overseeing all public agencies from the Governor's office.

John Simmons is the president of Strategic Learning Initiatives, a nonprofit organization serving public schools. For the past 35 years, he has worked in the field of education in the United States and abroad. His latest book, *Breaking Through: Transforming Urban School Districts* was published by Teachers College Press in 2006. He helped establish a national research collaborative for looking at student work and helped design the Chicago Academy for School Leadership, established by the Chicago Principals and Administrators Association and the Board of Education. His current work includes scaling up a successful model of whole school improvement for networks of neighborhood schools to accelerate student and adult learning.

Cheryl Smithgall is a research fellow at Chapin Hall. Her work spans the areas of child welfare, education, and children's mental health, often incorporating the perspectives of both social service systems and family systems. Her early work at Chapin Hall was with the National Evaluation of Family Preservation and Reunification Services. She has since led several projects examining educational issues for children involved with the child welfare system and mental health service utilization among children in child welfare placements or kinship care families. She has also conducted and contributed to several evaluations of community schools and school-service provider collaborations. She is currently leading a 5-year evaluation of the Illinois Department of Children and Family Services Integrated Assessment program.

Matthew Stagner is the executive director of Chapin Hall and a senior lecturer at the Irving B. Harris School of Public Policy Studies at the University of Chicago. Prior to joining Chapin Hall, he directed the Center on Labor, Human Services, and Population at the Urban Institute, and also served as director of the Division of Children and Youth Policy, Office of the Assistant Secretary for Planning and Evaluation, in the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. He is an expert on youth risk behaviors, child welfare services, and program evaluation. He holds a MPP from Harvard University's John F. Kennedy School of Government and a Ph.D. from the Harris School of Public Policy Studies.