

THE FAMILY CENTER



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THE FAMILY CENTER WINS NEW YORK STATE'S ONLY FEDERAL AIA GRANT TO SERVE INFANTS AND CHILDREN PERINATALLY EXPOSED TO HIV

NEW YORK, NEW YORK, NOVEMBER 26, 2008 – The Federal Abandoned Infants Assistance Program (AIA) recently awarded The Family Center a grant to serve infants and children perinatally exposed to HIV/AIDS. A New York City -based nonprofit agency, The Family Center provides legal and social services to children and families affected by the loss, absence or life-threatening illness of a parent.

Founded in 1994, The Family Center has witnessed major advancements in the development of drugs that prevent intrauterine transmission of the HIV virus from mother to fetus. The agency serves all children perinatally exposed to HIV –both those who become infected in-utero with the virus and those who remain HIV-negative. With this AIA grant award, The Family Center will expand services to these infants and children by adding agency staff specializing in Early Intervention, Education Advocacy, and Play Therapy.

A division of the Administration for Children and Families of the U.S. Health And Human Services Administration, AIA previously funded 21 programs across the country. This year, AIA cut the number of funded programs down to nine, and honored The Family Center with a four-year, \$475,000 award –the only AIA grant awarded in New York State.

“This award acknowledges and recognizes the powerful work that The Family Center is doing with children and families affected by HIV/AIDS in New York City,” said Ivy Gamble Cobb, The Family Center Executive Director. “This AIA grant allows us to expand our services for these families, whom we are privileged to serve.”

The Family Center has received this AIA award to create, develop, implement and evaluate, Early Support for Lifelong Success (ESLS), an 18-month intervention specifically targeting the

well-being, school readiness, and safety of children 0-7 years old perinatally exposed to HIV. The Family Center's ESLS program goals include 250 children of HIV-positive mothers meeting or making progress toward age-appropriate developmental milestones and educational goals, and 180 HIV-positive mothers, or the caregivers of the children, involved in the educational activities of their children.

Through ESLS, The Family Center will also ensure that: the home environment of these families is physically and psychologically safe; the children are not at risk for abuse, neglect, or abandonment; and these children have a stable and legally valid relationship with their HIV-positive mothers, or caregivers. The Family Center plans to disseminate the findings of the agency's work, as well as the intervention products developed, through presentations, publications and trainings.

The Family Center has received AIA grant awards in the past, most notably in 1997, shortly after the re-authorization of the Abandoned Infants Assistance Act by Congress. This legislation, initially passed in 1988, provides funding to support direct service projects for children, who are abandoned, or at-risk of abandonment, due to HIV and substance abuse, and their families. With past AIA funding, The Family Center has enrolled caregiver-headed households in its programs and sent children affected by HIV/AIDS away to camp.

For additional information on The Family Center's receipt of the only Abandoned Infants Assistance grant awarded in New York State, please contact Ivy Gamble Cobb, the agency's Executive Director, at (212) 766-4522 ext.144 or igamble@thefamilycenter.org.

ABOUT THE FAMILY CENTER – The Family Center works to create a more secure present and future for children whose parents have a life-threatening illness by providing comprehensive legal and social services, education and research. The agency's work is fueled by the belief that every child deserves an answer to the question: *Who Will Take Care of Me?* For more information on The Family Center, visit www.thefamilycenter.org.

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