



## FAMILY DEVELOPMENT and SELF-SUFFICIENCY PROGRAM

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The mission of the FaDSS program is to “Improve the lives of families at risk of long-term welfare dependency or family instability by creating opportunities for self-sufficiency.” FaDSS is a supportive service to assist Family Investment Program (FIP) families with significant or multiple barriers to reach self-sufficiency. The foundation of FaDSS is regular **home visits** with families, using a strength-based approach. Core services include support, goal setting, and assessment. **Support** is given in many ways such as referrals, group activities, linking families to communities and advocacy. **Assessment** aids the family to identify strengths that they possess that may be used to eliminate barriers to self-sufficiency. **Goal setting** helps families break down goals that seem out of reach into small steps that will lead to success.

In fiscal 2008, the Family Resource Center FaDSS Specialist served **47** families who had faced known or suspected issues of 23 having been victim of domestic violence, 18 having been a past abuser or neglector, 18 having been a childhood victim of abuse or neglect themselves, 19 are adults in the household without a high school diploma or GED, 17 have been substance abusers, 14 had a record or incarceration, 4 were a survivor of sexual abuse, and 12 have children with special needs. Nearly half of these families faced 2 or more of the above issues.



**Area Children Receive School Supplies --** These boys were pleased with the book bags stuffed with items in anticipation of their return to school. The parents also enjoyed meeting other community parents for a picnic during the event to pass out the school bags with supplies. Establishing a sense of belonging to a community is often difficult for the families who struggle with multiple barriers such as those mentioned above.

### HEALTHY MEALS IN A HURRY NUTRITION CLASS

The Family Resource Center FaDSS Specialist obtained additional funding to sponsor a “Healthy Meals in Minutes” program in the evening for any of the FaDSS participants as well as others to learn more about nutrition and budgeting in a healthy way. The participants also received a cook book containing healthy alternatives to high-sodium foods often marketed to busy parents. There were **39** parents and providers who attended this workshop and there have already been requests for a return of this program

### SCHOOL SUPPLY READINESS

One of the barriers parents in the FaDSS program often face is a struggle to fund getting their children ready for fall’s return to school. The Family Resource Center obtained mini-grant funding to provide supplies for **112** attendees in getting **75** children ready for school with book bags, notebooks, pencils, pens, tissues, markers, pencil cases, erasers, rulers, calculators, and other special items listed by area schools as a necessity. This subsequently reduces the stress to parents over the added strains to their budgets, and local merchants were happy to cooperate with some “extras”.

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### Family Development and Self-Sufficiency

Anna, a single mother of 3 sons, enrolled in the FaDSS program in March, 2006, after leaving an abusive marriage in order to provide a more stable life for her sons. She exited this program after obtaining full-time work, and is currently working part-time while she attends college to earn her Associates Degree. She was nominated by the Family Resource Center to serve as a member of the statewide FaDSS Council of Iowa which implements policies for the program, awards service contracts, and oversees program evaluation.

### Advocacy, Support, Goals

A common supportive activity for the FaDSS worker is connecting the family with all the resources available to help them meet their needs. She often works as an advocate cutting through the confusion and barriers with other agencies, building on the family strengths and assessing how to best empower them through small steps that will lead to their success, such as phone and gas cards to schedule and go on job interviews.

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