Identifying Family Needs

The Ecocultural Family Interview is a useful tool for tailoring the health care plans of high-risk families.

► **Description:** This project aimed to improve birth outcomes in high-risk mothers by piloting and adapting the Ecocultural Family Interview (EFI), a tool to assess family strengths, challenges and gaps in services. Through conversations with parents or caretakers about their daily routine, the Ecocultural Family Interview Project uncovered strengths and barriers that affect family functioning to better identify the needs of families and to modify care plans and improve service delivery.

► **Results:** EFI was piloted with 15 families and adapted to Empowering Families of Milwaukee, a program that provides home-visiting services to high-risk pregnant women and their young children. The adapted tool was used to conduct 209 interviews, which were coded and scored in an online database for research purposes. Quantitative analysis indicated there were not significant differences across most measured outcomes; however, the care plans for families participating in the EFI were updated more frequently than control group care plans.

► **Partnerships:** Findings were presented at local and national conferences and colleges, shared with other grantees in Milwaukee and Racine, and published in the Parents’ Guide to Community Resources in Milwaukee in English and Spanish.

► **Next Steps:** This research project demonstrated that EFI is a useful tool for increasing the quality of health care plans and client services. Families in the EFM program are receiving expanded services, including mental health consultation, through Project LAUNCH (Linking Actions to Unmet Needs in Children’s Health), thanks to a $4.5 million grant awarded in 2009 over five years. In 2011, the Wisconsin Department of Children and Families funded the EFM program for an additional five years.