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Oakland Family Services Takes Pro-Active Steps Towards Prevention in Community Health

PONTIAC, MI- Oakland Family Services (OFS) is addressing the urgent need for preventative health services by offering comprehensive programs targeting families with children up to age three, who might otherwise be at risk for abuse and neglect.

OFS' Parent and Child Support Department works to address concerns early on, which can greatly improve a child's outcome for success, as well as prevent them from entering the foster care system. Because parents with the greatest needs often lack services most, OFS offers a continuum of care reaching the entire family, including developmental assessments, counseling, substance abuse treatment, early childhood education, family preservation services, and specialized parenting programs.

Two noted prevention programs include Infant Mental Health (IMH), and the Fussy Baby Program (FB). FB provides support to families experiencing child-related stress, such as the inability to calm, difficulty with sleeping/eating, or uncontrollable tantrums. They work to eliminate treatment barriers through in-home services and comprehensive assessments on all issues. The IMH Program is for parents evidencing postpartum depression, anxiety or other mood disorders that affect their ability to parent their child. IMH provides professional counseling, and access to medication while keeping the baby at the center of treatment.

"Home-based service is something I strongly believe in," states FB/IMH Clinical Supervisor, Jan Carpenter. "Taking services to the home is more likely to be consistent and allows us to have a true understanding of the environmental stressors and how they affect the child, the parent and their relationship. Plus it helps us to know when interventions are successful.

Oakland Family Services has five Master Level Clinicians specially trained in infant mental health that provide developmental assessments, access to a medical, psychological and sensory consultation, video-based parent coaching and referral and linkage to other services.

Services are provided at a reasonable fee, or at no cost for those meeting eligibility requirements through specialized funding, including United Way, and 0-3 Secondary Prevention funding from the Michigan State Departments of Education, Community Mental Health and the Department of Human Services. Additional home-based services in Oakland County include Healthy Start, Easter Seals, and the Oakland County Health Division.

Oakland Family Services is a private, nonprofit, human service agency that provides prevention, education, support and treatment programs to families and individuals throughout Oakland County and southeastern Michigan.

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