
Introduction

Research documents that families are the most powerful, humane, and economical system for building competence and character in children. Thus, it came as no surprise that policymakers, human service providers, and family professionals requested a Family Impact Seminar on government's role in promoting competent parenting. Since this is a complex issue, this introduction is intended to aid the reader in locating those parts of the report of most interest by identifying the questions each writer addresses.

In the first section of the report, "Some Principles for Designing Effective Parent Education/Support Programs", Dave Riley poses these questions which underlie the development of any program or policy to support parents:

- ❖ What evidence is there that parents are struggling today?
- ❖ Do we know what competent parenting is?
- ❖ Do we know enough to mount effective programs to improve parenting?
- ❖ How can we adapt parenting programs to meet the needs of specific families?

In the next section of the report, "Innovative Policies and Programs that Promote Competent Parenting and Support Families", Karen Bogenschneider raises and responds to the following questions:

- ❖ Why the recent interest among policymakers in promoting competent parenting and supporting families?
- ❖ What is the family support and education movement?
- ❖ What policies can support families and promote competent parenting?
- ❖ What family support and education efforts have five pioneering states invested in?
- ❖ Do family support and education programs work?
- ❖ What challenges face state government in this area?
- ❖ What federal funding opportunities exist?