

***"Families Moving Forward"* Offers New Hope for Washington State Families Raising Children with Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorders**

Federal Way, Washington, May 1, 2007 – The Institute for Family Development announced today that as of May 1, 2007 it expanded its services in the Puget Sound Area to families raising children with Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorders (FASD) through an innovative in-home program, *Families Moving Forward*. This ground-breaking new program, a collaborative project through Children's Hospital & Regional Medical Center, the University of Washington Fetal Alcohol Syndrome Diagnostic & Prevention Network, NOFAS Washington State, and the Institute for Family Development, offers ongoing support to parents in Washington State and teaches them specialized parenting techniques for raising children with FASD. Research and development of the *Families Moving Forward* Program, funded by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), began in 2001. Participation in the current phase of the research project is limited and not open to the public. Once this program is tested in the community in this research phase, the hope is that it will then become more widely available and accessible to families. It may also be useful for children with other types of neurodevelopmental problems.

Families with children affected by FASD are often at a loss for how to deal with the complex and difficult behavior of their children. Most caregivers who come to *Families Moving Forward* are adoptive or foster parents, although birth parents are also welcome. Many did not realize their children had this disorder until the pattern of learning and behavior difficulties became disruptive at home or at school. As they grow older, those affected with FASD often experience mental health problems, and can have disrupted school experiences, legal troubles or even difficulty living independently. This means that children with FASD can have lifelong special needs, so treatment is needed.

How the *Families Moving Forward* Program works:

- Children clearly identified with FASD at the University of Washington first receive neurodevelopmental testing at Children's Hospital. Parents fill out questionnaires and are interviewed.
- Institute for Family Development *Families Moving Forward* Specialists make home visits over 9 to 11 months. These home visits provide parent support, specialized education, and practice on specialized skills to help parents and caregivers reshape their child's behavior to be more adaptive (and less challenging!) in everyday life.
- The intervention is designed to be useful, individualized, and to help parents feel more effective and hopeful.

Why the *Families Moving Forward* Program can be helpful:

- The *Families Moving Forward* intervention model provides ongoing support to parents, and helps them develop a more complete understanding of their child with FASD.
- The intervention helps parents build on skills they already have, and add specialized parenting techniques and advocacy skills to their caregiving repertoire.
- The intervention provides flexible, ongoing, comprehensive support that is carefully targeted to the individual needs and strengths of caregivers.
- When behavioral consultation is provided in the home, treatment barriers are reduced and practical intervention ideas are generated based on a true understanding of the child at home and at school.
- These specialized techniques are based on best practices for raising children with FASD and challenging behavior.

Background on the Institute for Family Development www.institutefamily.org

The Institute for Family Development (IFD) provides innovative, cost-effective and proven in-home services to children and families that address the growing problems of child abuse and neglect, juvenile delinquency, family conflict and family dissolution.

Founded in 1982, IFD's mission is to develop, deliver and disseminate evidence-based practices to keep children safe, strengthen families, and reduce the need for placing children into state-funded care. Their internationally renowned Intensive Family Preservation Services and Reunification Service (HOMEBUILDERS) is designated a "model family strengthening program" by the United States Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention and the Center for Substance Abuse Prevention. For over 20 years the Institute has provided training and technical assistance nationally and internationally to public and private human service agency professionals.