

# THE KENTUCKY FREE TO GROW MODEL

## *An Implementation Manual*

Written by:  
Leslie Boden  
Lori Levine



FREE TO GROW

Head Start Partnerships  
to Promote Substance-free Communities

*Free to Grow is a national program supported  
by The Robert Wood Johnson Foundation  
with direction and technical assistance provided  
by the Mailman School of Public Health,  
Columbia University*

*The Kentucky Free to Grow Model—  
An Implementation Manual*

by: Leslie Boden and Lori Levine

**Lori Levine** serves as the Deputy Director of the National Technical Assistance Center of Free to Grow: Head Start Partnerships to Promote Substance-free Communities. She is responsible for devising and implementing a technical assistance system to support a national network of Free to Grow program sites. She has extensive experience in program development, program management and training and has worked in preventive health programs in a variety of environments, including community-based prevention programs, school-based comprehensive health initiatives, adolescent health programs and pediatric primary care programs.

**Leslie Boden**, an independent consultant based in New York City, has extensive experience in community health, primary and preventive health care, and community development. In her work with a range of public and private sector clients, Ms. Boden has provided technical assistance in planning and implementing community-based prevention strategies, developed new programs for primary care and other organizations, and advocated for policies that promote health in low-income populations.

ISBN 1-930951-01-9

© 2000 Free to Grow

# TABLE OF CONTENTS

<i>Acknowledgements</i> . . . . .	<i>iv</i>
<i>Foreword</i> . . . . .	<i>v</i>
<b>Introduction: Free to Grow</b> . . . . .	<b>1</b>
BUILDING TOWARD THE FUTURE . . . . .	3
THE FREE TO GROW APPROACH . . . . .	4
THE PARTNERSHIP WITH HEAD START . . . . .	5
ABOUT THIS MANUAL . . . . .	5
<b>I. The Kentucky Model</b> . . . . .	<b>7</b>
A. THE MODEL . . . . .	7
B. THE RESEARCH BASE . . . . .	13
C. KEY STRATEGIES . . . . .	16
D. COLLABORATION . . . . .	20
E. PROGRAM MANAGEMENT . . . . .	22
F. GAUGING RESULTS . . . . .	25
<b>II. Implementing the Kentucky Model</b> . . . . .	<b>27</b>
A. SETTING THE STAGE . . . . .	27
B. GETTING DOWN TO WORK: CREATING A PROGRAM INFRASTRUCTURE . . . . .	33
C. CONDUCTING STAFF TRAINING AND PROVIDING TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE . . . . .	38
D. RESTRUCTURING FAMILY SERVICES . . . . .	40
E. IMPLEMENTING THE COMMUNITY-STRENGTHENING COMPONENTS . . . . .	45
F. CONCLUSION . . . . .	64
<b>Appendices</b>	
A. RESOURCES	
B. SPECIFIC COMPONENTS OF THE REVISED PERFORMANCE STANDARDS MET BY THE PROGRAM MODEL	
C. LOGIC MODEL FOR KENTUCKY'S FREE TO GROW PROJECT	
D. PROGRAM STARTUP CHART	
E. AUDUBON AREA COMMUNITY SERVICES, INC.—ORGANIZATION CHARTS	
F. JOB DESCRIPTIONS	
G. FAMILY SERVICES DOCUMENTATION	
H. COMMUNITY STRENGTHENING DOCUMENTATION	

## Acknowledgements

Many people have worked with the Free to Grow National Program Office to craft the Kentucky Implementation Model. Most importantly, our thanks go to the people who actually carried out the program's activities—to the staff, families, community members, and partner agencies who had a vision for what this program should look like in their Head Start agency and community, and who worked hard to make that vision a reality. As we compiled this manual, all of these people took the time to talk to us about their experiences, and about what they had learned during five years of testing and implementation. They helped us to analyze and synthesize how their program components evolved, and reflected on what they thought others would need to know to adapt their efforts. In particular, we would like to acknowledge Ronald Logsdon, Executive Director of Audubon Area Community Services; Aubrey Nehring, Head Start Director; Suzanne Hays, Administrative Team Manager; Tami Canter-Powell, Family and Community Partnership Team Manager; and Mary Lawrence, Christy Batman-Embry, and Yvonne Hall, members of the Family and Community Partnership Team. We would also like to give special thanks to Elizabeth Blanford, the Family and Community Partnership team's Administrative Assistant, who worked closely with our office in preparing Appendix materials to support this document.

We would also like to acknowledge those individuals who reviewed this document and provided insightful comments and feedback—the Audubon Area Community Services staff team; Marjorie Gutman, Special Consultant to the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation and one of the individuals who designed the Free to Grow program; and Colleen Mendel, Director of the Head Start Region IV Quality Improvement Center. Special thanks go to Judith Jones, the Director of the Free to Grow National Program Office, who, through review of numerous drafts, provided guidance and hours of assistance in crafting the manual's structure and final format. Finally, our thanks also go to Rima Shore, who skillfully edited earlier drafts of the document. It is not an overstatement to acknowledge that the final version of this document would not have been possible without these combined efforts. Our thanks to you all.

## Foreword

*...Perhaps the most innovative idea found in the recommendations of the Head Start Planning Committee—an idea that continues to be fundamental to Head Start—is that effective intervention in the lives of children can only be accomplished through involving parents and the community in the intervention effort...*

-Excerpted from “Head Start” by Julius Richmond, Deborah Stipek and Edward Zigler

The family and community—since its inception, these two pillars have been seen as the roots and foundation of the Head Start program. Head Start’s creators understood clearly that without strong families and nurturing communities, young children’s chances for healthy development would be hampered. Because, as we all know, environment matters. Children don’t learn well with bullets whizzing by, or in families unable to meet their basic needs.

This manual describes the implementation of one of five models developed through a program called *Free to Grow: Head Start Partnerships to Promote Substance-free Communities*. In the pages that follow, we have called this model the “Kentucky Model” in honor of the home state of the agency that created it—Audubon Area Community Services, located in Owensboro, Kentucky. Other models have been developed by Head Start programs in San Isidro, Puerto Rico, Colorado Springs, Colorado, Compton, California and the Washington Heights community in New York City.

Free to Grow builds upon Head Start’s roots to devise strategies to address the impact of substance abuse on young children—reaching out to create diverse partnerships with schools, police departments, substance abuse prevention and treatment organizations, municipal officials and many others to strengthen the families and neighborhoods of the children it serves. In Kentucky, these efforts have resulted in significant positive changes for the communities involved. Institutionalized community policing and greater sensitivity to community concerns in local probation and parole guidelines have given residents

a sense that the police and judicial system are working *with them*, not against them, to make their neighborhoods safer. School partnerships have resulted in expanded support for high-risk families and a broader range of after-school tutoring and recreational activities for neighborhood children. A collaborative project with a local corporation has provided resources for building a community-designed playground. Families, some for the first time, have gained a deeper understanding of the local political structure, and feel more competent advocating for change.

The strategies described in this manual were designed to build upon and enhance existing Head Start activities. In particular, they are relevant to activities required in revised Head Start Performance Standards in the area of Family and Community Partnerships. (For a more detailed description of this relationship, see Appendix B.) In the Kentucky model, family-strengthening strategies work specifically to address efforts to reduce family/worker ratios and to provide broader-based support for high-risk families. Community-strengthening strategies are structured to forge innovative partnerships and expand parents’ advocacy skills.

While it is difficult to estimate exact program costs, prior experience indicates that the strategies described in this manual, which reach hundreds of families, cost approximately \$100,000 per year to implement in a typical Head Start agency. This number includes projected staffing, contractual relations to support training and program partnerships, and program activity costs. The Audubon Area Community Services Head Start used Head Start Quality dollars to

integrate Free to Grow activities into Head Start operations. Other possible sources of support include grants from local community foundations, United Way allocations, State Alcohol and Substance Abuse Prevention and Treatment dollars, or Federal “Weed and Seed” and “Drug-free Communities” dollars. Partnerships with local schools may also provide access to local “Safe and Drug-free Schools” dollars.

As Head Start moves into the new millennium, we hope that you will find the strategies contained in this manual useful and relevant to your work on behalf of children and families.