

For Immediate Release

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Funding from National Science Foundation Will Allow University Researchers to Focus on Well-Being of At-Risk Children through Expanded Data-Sharing

St. Paul, MN – September 26, 2013 – The Center for Advanced Studies in Child Welfare at the University of Minnesota School of Social Work has received a competitive grant from the National Science Foundation (NSF) that will provide \$489,119 over three years to create the capacity for data intensive research through expansion of the Center’s Minn-LInK project.

The Minn-LInK project, or *Minnesota Linking Information for Kids*, is an integrated, cross-system data project housed at the Center for Advanced Studies in Child Welfare. Minn-LInK utilizes administrative data from state agencies to examine a variety of indicators of well-being for children involved in the child welfare system and children in other at-risk populations, with an aim of highlighting policy and practice implications and improving services for children. For example, a recent study examined educational outcomes of children involved in the child welfare system, with a specific focus on children in out-of-home placement, or foster care. This study helped local and state educators and service providers (including the Minnesota Educational Stability Taskforce) better understand the educational experiences of this at-risk population and informed decision-making. Minn-LInK uses data in accordance with data sharing agreements and strict security protocols are in place to ensure the privacy and confidentiality of data.

The NSF grant will allow the Center to expand the infrastructure of Minn-LInK by integrating additional statewide administrative data and developing ready-to-use datasets and tools. It will also fund the creation and piloting of the Minn-LInK Fellowship Program to prepare future researchers for cross-system research on child well-being. Through this grant the Center will be able to organize a community of researchers whose focus is on child well-being.

“We are excited that the Minn-LInK project is being recognized by a national entity as a tremendous asset to the state of Minnesota,” says Dr. Kristine Piescher, Director of Research and Evaluation at the Center and Principal Investigator of the NSF project. “The Minn-LInK project has been fortunate to have a committed partnership with the Minnesota Department of Education and Department of Human Services for over a decade. We’re looking forward to expanding that partnership through the support of the National Science Foundation by exploring partnerships with the Department of Corrections, State Court Administrator’s Office, and the Department of Human Services Health Care Administration.”

Located in the University of Minnesota’s School of Social Work, the Center for Advanced Studies in Child Welfare works to improve the well-being of children and families involved in the child welfare system through research, education, and outreach. For more information, please visit the Center’s website at <http://z.umn.edu/CASCW>.

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Minnesota-Linking Information for Kids

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