



History of the Coos Family Support Project and Coos Watch Me Grow Project

In 2007 a group of Coos health, mental health and human service organizations formed the **Coos Family Support Project**. The goal of this project was to:

“ To create a coordinated system of sustainable services for families with children aged 0-6 in Coös County to prevent child abuse and neglect, improve family functioning, promote wellness and build social, emotional and financial stability for families so that children thrive. ”

The project is funded by the Neil and Louise Tillotson Fund of the NH Charitable Foundation. The Family Resource Center at Gorham is the lead organization and fiscal agent. The other partners include Coos County Family Health Services, Indian Stream Health Center, Weeks Medical Center, Northern Human Services (NHS), Child and Family Services, North Country Health Consortium and the Carsey Institute, which provides research and evaluation for the project.

The Coos Family Support Project is currently working on three target issues to improve outcomes for families and children in Coos County:

1. To improve parenting skills and reduce abuse and neglect through coordinated/cross organization training and implementation of **Triple P**, an internationally renowned evidence based parenting/relationship building curriculum
2. To improve literacy and language development using the evidence based program **Reach out and Read** which trains medical providers to discuss the importance of reading and gives out a free book to each child 0-6 at their well child visit.
3. To reduce the incidence of significant long term developmental delays by creating a coordinated system for early developmental screening for children 0-6 using the ASQ-3 and ASQ-SE as part of a statewide project to create consistent and universal developmental screening called **Watch Me Grow**.

The **Coos Watch Me Grow Project**, which is coordinated by the Coos Family Support Project, is a collaborative effort created to support universal developmental screening in Coos County using the ASQ-3 and the ASQ-SE for children 0-6. The goal of Coos Watch Me Grow is to provide Coos families access to developmental information and developmental screening in order to detect and treat developmental delays in growth and social /emotional behaviors as early as possible. Research consistently demonstrates that earlier detection of delays improves the opportunity for successful interventions and treatment. Early detection leads to better outcomes for children and reduces the need for costlier services over the long term.

The **Coos Watch Me Grow Project** is guided by a steering committee that meets quarterly to coordinate training, protocols for implementation, information sharing and publicity for the project. The following organizations are members of the steering committee:

- Child and Family Services
- Childcare Resource and Referral
- Family Resource Center at Gorham
- Northern Human Services
- SAU #36
- SAU#3
- White Mountains Community College

Ultimately, The Coos Watch Me Grow Project will help to increase awareness and understanding of the importance of early childhood development in the over all health and future sustainability of Coos County.