

Culture of Poverty Sub-Committee
9-25-06

Learning: Parents in poverty often feel overwhelmed and helpless.

Recommendation: Establish a mentoring program for families in poverty. The council on Aging's foster grandmothers program was suggested as a possible model. We were wanting an alternative and more accessible/community based program. Not DFACS, etc. The foster grandmother's themselves were agreed to be an important resource for suggestions, ideas, and perceived relevance of such a program.

Learning: Lack of hope sometimes inadvertently reinforced by institutions such as DFACS. People need to feel successful at something in order to have and maintain hope. Institutional structures are frequently set people up to fail.

Recommendation: Have community based assistance that works to replace DFACS, etc. Case loads for social workers need to be smaller, mental health issues need to be better identified and understood by caseworkers.

Learning: Food habits/the kinds of food people have access to influence health (diabetes, etc.), which in turn reinforces poverty.

Recommendation: Conduct systematic community food assessments, develop food policy, establish better farmers market that is within walking distance of key low income areas, set up ability to use food stamps in farmers market, conduct cooking demonstrations at market, etc. Shayna Bailey and Shannon McBride are trying to meet someone named David Weaner who is also interested in the politics of food and food policy. We plan on spending our time fleshing this issue out in detail over the next three months.