

**William Caspar Graustein Memorial Fund
Discovery Data Collection Methods Workshop**

July 14, 2005

Breakout Session Assignment: Focus Groups

Sheffield, Connecticut: Sheffield, Connecticut is a diverse community of 40,000 people. According to the 2000 Census there were 2500 children ages 0 to 5. It is estimated that the population size and age demographics have not changed much in the past 5 years. Three languages are spoken in Sheffield in addition to English, including Spanish, Chinese and Polish.

The Sheffield Discovery Collaborative is focused on expanding the supply and improving the quality of early education opportunities in the community. Sheffield is a severe needs district, with a low rate of students attending preschool. The community has many assets, such as a very active library that provides many programs for young children, several family resource centers and a strong network of early care and education providers from center and home-based facilities. Sheffield is also home to a well known hospital and several large corporations.

Anecdotal information suggests that early care and education opportunities in Sheffield vary greatly in terms of quality, with most of the higher quality programs being too expensive for many parents to access.

The Sheffield Discovery Collaborative wants to conduct focus groups to understand parents' perceptions around the availability of quality of care in the community, the factors that they consider in choosing care arrangements and their experience with the care that is available. This information will be used to inform local leaders' understanding of the availability and quality of care in town.

1. Participants:
 - a. Determine how many focus groups you are going to conduct
 - b. How many individuals you are going to invite to each
 - c. How you are going to determine who to invite, and
 - d. How they will be invited
2. Logistics:
 - a. Determine options of where you might hold the focus group
 - b. What day of the week or time of day/evening, and
 - c. Ways to improve your participation rate.
3. Questions:
 - a. Determine three to four themes to cover in the groups, and
 - b. Write three questions for one of the themes.