

IREX/ASSISTANCE TO RUSSIAN ORPHANS (ARO) PROGRAM



Support for Young Children in Foster Families

On March 10-15, three ARO expert consultants led an educational seminar for staff from baby homes in Krasnoyarsk Krai. During the seminar ARO consultants discussed support services for young children living in foster families and reviewed photo and video materials prepared by participants documenting the development of the children they are working with. The participants analyzed the developmental progress of 13 two-year-old children living in foster families and agreed on programmatic changes necessary to improve their support. The specialists will evaluate the children again in three months to monitor development in their motor, social, and communication skills.



Baby home specialists at the Krasnoyarsk seminar on support services for children in foster care.

Summary:

Throughout March, the ARO Program held training and educational programs for Russian child welfare specialists and administrators at seminars and workshops that covered topics such as designing and delivering support services for foster families and case management for specialists in Khabarovsk, Komsomol'sk-na-Amure, Krasnoyarsk, and Tambov.

Specialists from two Novosibirsk orphanages participated in an ARO study tour to the "Hope" Foundation in Vladimir in March. The study tour introduced participants to innovative support services aimed at helping orphaned and abandoned children better integrate into their communities once they have aged out of the orphanage system.

In March, ARO's key implementing partner, the National Foundation for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children, released the first Russian-language edition of the *Field Guide to Child Welfare.* Co-authored by Dr. Judith S. Rycus and Dr. Ronald C. Hughes, the *Field Guide to Child Welfare* is the authoritative publication for the education and training of child welfare professionals. It is the first of its kind to be published in Russia and the CIS.



Foster Family Support Services

Head of the ARO Expert Consulting Group Antonina Shepina led a seminar on foster family support services in Tambov on March 12-14 for specialists from the "For the Sake of the Future" Center. Antonina Shepina discussed foster family support services, including screening of potential foster families, training of foster parents, psychological support and counseling for foster families and the children in their care, and monitoring of families' progress. The seminar also introduced participants to family-centered approaches to work with families.



Participants at the seminar on support services for foster families in Tambov.

Family Intervention and Case Management Seminar

On March 13-15 and March 17-19, three ARO expert consultants led a two-part seminar in Komsomol'sk-na-Amure for administrators and specialists from local schools, healthcare facilities, and social welfare organizations, including Elena Gren, chief specialist from the Khabarovsk Krai Ministry of Social Welfare. ARO consultants introduced innovative methods to identify troubled families at early stages of crisis and begin work with them in hopes of preventing child abandonment. The seminar also highlighted the fundamental principles of case management and how to coordinate activity among different departments and organizations working with at-risk families.

Field Guide to Child Welfare

On March 14, the National Foundation for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children, the key implementing partner of the ARO Program, released the first Russian-language edition of the Field Guide to Child Welfare, which covers the fundamental competencies of a family-centered approach to child welfare practice. The field guide was originally published by the Child Welfare League of America to support the education and training of child welfare professionals throughout their careers and to enhance in-service training for child welfare caseworkers and supervisors. It is also used for college-level child welfare courses and field placement. The NFPCC cooperated closely with Dr. Judith S. Rycus, co-author of the Field Guide to Child Welfare, throughout the translation and editing process to ensure its quality. The field guide will be of particular interest to child welfare service providers and administrators and is the first of its kind in Russia and the CIS.

Study Tour to Vladimir Oblast

Representatives from Novosibirsk Boarding School #76 and Novosibirsk Orphanage #6 participated in an ARO study tour to the "Hope" Foundation in Vladimir on March 24-26. The participants studied support services that help integrate orphaned and abandoned children into the community as they age out of the orphanage system. The study tour allowed participants to broaden their theoretical and practical knowledge of technologies used to provide support to orphaned and abandoned children and provided examples of successful and unsuccessful support programs.

ARO expert consultants explained how to analyze target groups and then tailor support programs to best meet the needs of each individual group of orphaned and abandoned children as they venture into society. Participants also had the opportunity to discuss the efficacy of social support programs with administrators from the Vladimir Oblast Department of Education. Using the information and materials they received during the study tour, representatives from Boarding School #76 and Orphanage #6 will develop similar projects in Novosibirsk to provide services to orphaned and abandoned children who have aged out of the system.



Khabarovsk Training Seminars

From March 18-27, ARO held a series of four training seminars in the Far Eastern city of Khabarovsk for specialists from after-school activity programs in Osinovaya Rechka, Khabarovsk city schools, and Khabarovsk city libraries. Through interactive trainings the participants learned how to prepare future afterschool program specialists, how to organize after-school activities for at-risk children, and how to solve problems frequently encountered by children from at-risk families.

Tambov Early Intervention Seminar

On March 19-20, two ARO expert consultants conducted a seminar in Tambov entitled "Methods and techniques for early psychological and pedagogical assistance in baby homes" for the staff of the Tambov Oblast Baby Home. The seminar, which will train baby homes to reorganize their work to incorporate early intervention techniques, covered topics such as the use of games in the treatment of young children, methods for improving children's social skills, models of child-specialist interaction, milieu therapy, and how to deal with problematic behavior among children living in baby homes.

Project Development Seminar

On March 27-28, two ARO expert consultants conducted a seminar in Tambov on how to organize and implement projects that identify families at risk of abandoning their children and begin work with them as early as possible to prevent abandonment. The participants formed working groups and determined which local agencies and organizations will launch intervention services for at-risk families.

Upcoming Activities:

April 3-4 (Khanty Mansiysk): Seminar on support services for foster families.

April 7-10 (Krasnoyarsk): Seminar on support services for foster families.

April 15-19 (Tomsk): Study tour to Tomsk Hobby Center.

April 16-17 (St. Petersburg): Participation in seminar on early intervention.

April (Novosibirsk): Seminar on abandonment of infants. **April (Tver):** Seminar on early intervention.

April (Krasnoyarsk): Seminar on Seminar on early intervention.

April (Barnaul): Seminar on abandonment of infants.

April (Barnaul): Seminar on early intervention.

April (Tomsk): Seminar on child welfare standards.

April (Novosibirsk): Seminar on child helpline services.



