The NEVADA YOUTH AND FAMILY SUPPORTS STUDY
Project Overview
Eric Bruns, University of Washington, and Ramona Brinson, UNLV

What is the “Nevada Youth and Family Supports Study”? 
The Nevada Youth and Family Supports Study is being conducted by the University of Washington and the University of Nevada-Las Vegas, with the Nevada Division of Child and Family Services (DCFS) and Clark County Department of Family Services (DFS). The study is measuring the effectiveness of services for youth with serious emotional and behavioral challenges who are involved in the child welfare system in Clark County. The project is funded by the National Institute of Mental Health (NIMH) and will take place from 2007 – 2009.

What is the purpose of the study?
The main purpose of the Youth and Family Supports Study is to determine what services are associated with the best health, school, and well-being outcomes for youth with serious emotional concerns. The study is focusing on comparing outcomes for wraparound care coordination as implemented by the “Wraparound in Nevada” (WIN) and Children's Clinical Services (CCS) programs that are delivered by DCFS, and intensive case management as administered by Mojave Mental Health. The study will determine how effective each of these intensive care coordination models are, as well as shed light on their costs and benefits.

Why is this study important?
There are several reasons the Youth and Family Supports Study was prioritized by the state of Nevada and then funded by NIMH. First, there have been few good studies on the impact of wraparound and case management on the lives of children and families. Second, Nevada has invested heavily in the use of wraparound. It would be important to document whether this investment is worthwhile. Finally, the study will let us assess the level of quality of services provided to these children and youth in a rigorous way. Data collected through the study will be used to help improve services delivered in Nevada and "make the case" for more resources.

What children may benefit from these intensive services?
Wraparound as delivered by the WIN and CCS programs and Mojave case management are intended to serve youth 6-17 years old with severe emotional disturbance (SED). This means that they have a diagnosable mental health disorder that negatively impacts their functioning in the home, at school, or in the community. Such children and adolescents often have difficult behaviors, such as explosive tempers, aggressiveness, or problems with the law. But they may also have other challenges, such as extreme anxiety, attention/hyperactivity problems, depression, or substance abuse issues. Services like WIN and intensive case management aim to create individualized and creative plans that support the adults in these children’s life to better care for them, through therapy, behavioral plans, and medical, school, and other services that will help the child meet his or her goals for a successful life.

Who can I contact for more information?
For more information about the Youth and Family Supports Study, please contact Ramona Denby Brinson, UNLV School of Social Work (ramona.denby@unlv.edu; 702-895-1336) or Eric Bruns at the University of Washington – ebruns@u.washington.edu; 206-685-2477.