

## Speaker Biographies: Promoting the Optimal Development of Young Children and Their Families Affected with HIV/AIDS and/or Substance Abuse

The following speakers presented on the Quality Improvement Center on Early Childhood's Learning Network webinar on September 25, 2009, *Promoting the Optimal Development of Young Children and Their Families Affected with HIV/AIDS and/or Substance Abuse*.

### Jeanne Pietrzak, MSW

Jeanne Pietrzak, MSW, is the Founding Director of the National Abandoned Infants Assistance Resource Center, a unit within the School of Social Welfare at the University of California, Berkeley (UCB) that was established in 1991. In her 25 year tenure at UCB, Ms. Pietrzak has directed numerous state, federal, and private research projects, program evaluations, and service projects focused on drug- and HIV-affected children and families. She also co-authored a book on *Practical Program Evaluation* (Sage) and co-edited another on *Families Living with Drugs and HIV* (Guilford). She taught child welfare courses to undergraduate students at California State University, East Bay. Earlier positions Ms. Pietrzak held in Michigan included community planner, foundation coordinator, and case manager working with families of children who were severely mentally and multiply impaired, and with adults who were mildly developmentally disabled.

### Rizwan Z. Shah, M.D., FAAP

Dr. Rizwan Shah is Medical Director of the Regional Child Protection Center at Blank Children's Hospital in Des Moines, Iowa.

Dr. Shah has devoted her time to child abuse and neglect since 1981. She started the first clinic for child sexual abuse validation in Iowa. In 1989 Dr. Shah established the Family Ecology Center and CAIRE Program at Blank Hospital in Des Moines, Iowa, for assessment and follow-up of drug affected babies. She is involved in professional and public education and legislation efforts in the areas of sexual abuse, drug-affected babies, attachment disorder and the effect of violence on families and children. Dr. Shah is an acknowledged state expert in child abuse/neglect and a national expert on drug exposed infants and children. Dr. Shah's work with drug exposed infants has been featured in national newspapers and magazines and she has had featured appearances on national TV news programs.

Dr. Shah volunteers in multiple community projects with the refugee population and homeless and minority children.

## Wendy Courts

Wendy is a peer counselor with FCAN (Families' and Children's AIDS Network). Ms. Courts also speaks to social workers and counselors about being impacted by HIV/AIDS, and facilitates a group called *Making Positive Changes*, which consists of Department of Children and Family Services mothers who are infected with HIV/AIDS.

Wendy resides in South Holland, IL and can be emailed at [wencour@netzero.net](mailto:wencour@netzero.net).