



**SBIR/STTR SUCCESS**

One of IRIS' product lines – Education Center for Adoptive Parents – is focused on providing assistance and support for families with adopted children.

# IRIS EDUCATIONAL MEDIA

**D**ivorce has many facets, and although the adults involved have their own set of feelings and new realities to come to grips with – it is usually the children that suffer the most. Since divorce doesn't come with an instruction book, it is left up to the parents to help their children deal with the process in the healthiest way possible. Many times, parents do a great job. Other times, they let their feelings of hurt and anger affect their decision making and parenting.

## PHASE III SUCCESS

Commercial product sales equal \$500,000 per year on average; largest customer is Los Angeles Unified School District.

## AGENCIES

Department of Education, HHS (NIH)

## SNAPSHOT

By collaborating with leading researchers and educators, IRIS Media provides families and schools with video-based learning solutions focused on Positive Behavior Intervention and Support (PBIS), behavior management, intellectual disabilities and parenting.

## IRIS EDUCATIONAL MEDIA

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Realizing this dichotomy, many states mandate a parenting course for all divorcing parents. Enter IRIS Media, and its human centered design approach. The company's best-selling *Two Families Now* has helped thousands of separated families come to terms with the realities of co-parenting and stepfamilies – easing the transition for both the children and the parents alike.

“When we started the company in 1999, there was a growing need to deliver innovative approaches to professional development,” explains IRIS Educational Media Chief Operations Officer and Co-Founder Adam Wendt. “We began partnering with behavioral researchers to design a new model for delivering content so that it was not only effective, but marketable.”

A grant given by the National Institutes of Health soon paved the way for the company's patented human centered design approach to adapt interventions. IRIS prides itself on packaging intervention in a way that is more usable by the end consumer. Family stabilization, or co-parenting classes are readily available on the web, but IRIS' approach is different. It is based on best practices, and focuses on delivering engaging content that strikes a chord with the end user. IRIS' research takes into account the complexities of social systems and focuses on what the user wants to know, and which format will work best for the user to make it scalable, sustainable, and above all, relevant. To this end, IRIS employs a full-time staff of writers, directors, producers, editors, and uses local talent from the state of Oregon. IRIS always makes a habit of assessing the marketplace and the apparent needs, before responding to an SBIR solicitation.

Another SBIR project seeded the development of *Fathering through Change*, an e-learning course for non-residential fathers who wish to take a greater role in their kids' lives. For parents who are returning from active deployment in the military, there is *ADAPT* – After Deployment Adaptive Parenting Tools – to help with the transition from the battlefield to

the home. IRIS is also currently rolling out a course designed for adoptive parents to help them meet the 10 hours of training often required to adopt.

“We are really about active learning and engaging the audience,” adds Wendt. “Instead of lecturing the viewers for an hour from the experts, we put their ideas into practice. We aim to show. We go out and film actual complex scenarios. For example, we see a child acting out and how the adults around him/her are responding to it and we dissect those situations. The scenes played out feel real, which helps viewers retain the lesson more than just being told.”

IRIS was awarded a grant from the Institute of Educational Sciences through the Department of Education to study the efficacy of its new e-learning platform - *We Have Skills* - a series of videos and tools to teach children from kindergarten through third grade important social skills. The study will take place in Washington, Oregon and California. The goal of the study is to get participation from over 3,000 elementary students and 160 teachers. Supplementing *We Have Skills* is the *Progress Monitoring Tool (irisPMT)*. Together, the two programs help teachers to track behavior for each student. The tool helps teachers identify which students need extra practice for learning the seven essential social skills for learning success.



**LEFT** IRIS Educational Media has a full video production facility and uses local talent, along with a full-time crew of writers, cameramen, directors, editors, and producers.

**RIGHT** IRIS' e-learning courses are used in schools across the country, and overseas, to help teachers assist children in learning vital social skills.

Another NIH SBIR funded project, Systematic Supervision, got attention when representatives from Norway called IRIS and expressed interest in implementing the curriculum. Employees then translated the software into Norwegian and it is currently being used in every elementary school in the country, and in some schools in Sweden. Spanning the globe is not something new for IRIS, however. Half of its staff is bilingual and many of its products can be found, or originated, in Spanish. One of these programs is called *Padre Preperados*, which is an online tutorial for Latin families who have kids in Head Start. It aims to bridge cultural differences and helps parents to help their kids be more successful in school.

“The value of the SBIR program is really huge to any small business, and it has been absolutely instrumental in our success,” said Wendt. “Even though our products are making a huge difference in schools and households, the market for them is small and not always a popular target for traditional business, and it would have been difficult to make them if it weren't for the SBIR program helping to offset the risk.”