Child Protective Services: 1992

Several years ago (Summers, 1984) VCPN examined the status of child protection and the role of the child protective service (CPS) worker. The issue approached the subject by presenting a historical perspective and by examining the controversy surrounding certification. In addition, results of a worker survey and issues related to worker burnout were presented.

Since 1984, society's needs and child welfare practice have changed considerably. This issue of VCPN will revisit the CPS worker and evaluate the similarities and differences between then and now. Who is the present day worker? What are the day-to-day stresses and problems that a worker encounters? How have training issues been addressed over the last eight years? Let's take a look.

Changed Social Environment

The CPS worker of today is functioning in an environment that has changed rather significantly over the past decade. Indications that a change was occurring could be seen as early as 1980 when the American Humane Association (1983) conducted a survey to assess the status of child protective services at a time of severe funding cuts. As that time respondents noted that between 1981 and 1983 there had been changes to three areas: client population identified as "in need" of CPS services, levels of service and levels of funding. The specific changes in client population were documented as increases in severity of client problems, in the number of clients faced with economic problems, and in the overall number of referrals to CPS. However, specific services needed to address these problems had not increased.

Changes have continued and problems have become more severe. "Crack" cocaine has played havoc with the lives of families (see VCPN issue 3), "Substance Exposed Baby") Homelessness is increasing. The number of pregnant or parenting teens continues to rise. Single parent households are in abundance. Forty states, including Virginia, have seen the percentage of children living in poverty rise over the last decade for a nationwide increase of 22 percent. Median income of families with children fell by 5 percent while costs of raising children rose (Kids Count, 1992).

The lives of children are adversely affected by these problems, and child welfare workers are seriously impacted. Many authors and commissions suggest that the system's responses are inadequate.

"Terms such as "national emergency" and "crisis" are being used again and again in reports being issued by bipartisan government and private, policy, and policy makers." The concerns cited are numerous, the reasons are complex and recommendations for change suggest significant and far-ranging changes are necessary.

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Advocacy Issues

The 1992 General Assembly Session provided VCAP, its affiliate network and hundreds of other child advocates with a variety of challenging bills to work both for and against. VCAP established a Legislative Information Telephone Service. Callers were supplied with a phone number that gave them up-to-date information on pertinent child abuse legislation. After many hours of hard work and some considerable anguish, a number of bills that would have jeopardized children's safety were defeated or carried over.

Three bills sponsored by Del. William Robinson of Norfolk would have negatively altered the definition of child abuse and eliminated the category of "reason to suspect." Another bill sponsored by Del. Mary Chris- tian of Hampton proposed that teaching personnel would no longer be investigated for child abuse by Child Protective Services, but that, instead, reports of child abuse against a teacher would be made to the school superintendent and the Attorney for the Commonwealth. This particular bill was carried over so that a task force can thoroughly look at how best to handle reports of non-familial child abuse allegations. VCAP is participating on this task force.

The Joint Subcommittee Studying Materials and Pettinial Drug Exposure, chaired by Del. Marian Van Landingham was extended. They have done a thorough job exploring an issue that is seriously impacting more and more children throughout the Commonwealth. Del. Van Landingham's committee presented a full menu of bills for the Assembly to consider. Most of them were approved.

HB 815, the state far-reaching of the bills, directs the Secretary of Health and Human Resources to develop criteria for giving priority to substances used by pregnant women in abuse treatment programs; develop a determination process for referring a drug exposed infant to social services; and mandates the Board of Health to include a requirement for licensed hospitals to develop and implement a protocol for written discharge plans for substance abusing postpartum women and their infants. VCAP supported all of the initiatives, and commends the Health and Human Resources committee for their valuable and untiring work.

Perhaps one of the most significant actions taken by the General Assembly was to be found in HB 935 and SB 171. These bills provide for a collaborative system for services and funding for troubled at-risk youth and their families. This new system is designed to lower the rapidly escalating costs for youth residential placement and allow the merging of funding streams on the local level to help provide services based on need rather than prescribing services that "follow the money." This proposal was based on the work of the Council on Community Services to Youth and Families and was widely supported.

Prevention Month

April was celebrated as Child Abuse Prevention Month to the country. Governor Wilder signed a proclamation on April 3, 1992, establishing April as Child Abuse Prevention Month in Virginia. Prevention Month is annually sponsored by a group of 15 corporations, public and private agencies, and volunteer organizations. This year, the Honorary Chairperson of prevention month was Sheriff Huffman, Miss Virginia 1991. Miss Huffman made appearances on the state on behalf of the Coalition and spoke compellingly for renewed strength in our families and increased concern for our children.

Two thousand individuals, schools, organizations, churches, social work professionals and businesses received a packet of information designed to help them participate in Prevention Month. Everyone was encouraged to wear a BLUE RIBBON to show support and concern for children. The BLUE RIBBON campaign has really caught on with child supporters-at least 1; other states are participating and the federal government featured the blue ribbon campaign in a video news release.

Local organizations came up with some wonderful ideas to get their communities involved. Greater Richmond CAN (Stop Child Abuse Now) and a large coalition of interested child related organizations managed to find a way to involve significant numbers of the Richmond metropolitan area population in one project to focus attention on the problem of child abuse. They sponsored "Family Chain Day at the Diamond." The Diamond is the home of the Richmond Braves baseball team. Families, child care facilities, school children, churches, anywhere children were to be found, were encouraged to make paper chains and come to the Diamond to join them in one great chain of support for Richmond's kids and families. The effort involved television and newspaper coverage and the creation of a colorful poster and a "how to" packet. Game day featured chains, prizes, clowns and the grooviest game of baseball—all presented across the backstop of children and parents working and playing together.

The Roanoke Board of Realtors printed and distributed 35,000 bookmarks and the Child Abuse Council of Roanoke Valley distributed 20,000 "Be a Sagger Not a Slugger" stickers at fairs and special events, put up five billboards, and housed a visit by Spiderman, a superhero who talks to children about self-esteem and child abuse. The Williamsburg multi-disciplinary team started April off with a reception honoring the children who participated in an art show on the theme "I am special." Over 200 attended the reception.

If you are interested in being involved in Child Abuse Prevention Month in 1993, send your name, address and phone number to VCAP, 224 E. Broad St., Suite 302, Richmond, VA 23219.

It shouldn't be a child.

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What CPS Entails

Stress is constant for CPS workers. Their job is to investigate allegations of child abuse and neglect, and to make decisions about future risk to the child. They also perform case management services for substantiated cases of abuse and neglect. If necessary, they are witnesses in court. They network with other professionals, provide treatment, and coordinate follow-up services. While community education and prevention services are essential to solving child abuse, there rarely is enough for the CPS worker to assist with these efforts.

CPS workers knock on people's doors never knowing what to expect. They present parents with allegations and are met with a range of responses. People attack, or worse, let their dogs loose. Workers may be met with an angry barrage of insults. "I'm not Simon LeGree of social work, the Bogus man with a clipboard; I'm a child abuse investigator, and people always think I'm going to take their child away.... It's a dies circumstantiae I can," says Keith Richards in his book, Teen Mercies: Inside the World of a Child Abuse Investigator (1992). It is a trying and difficult job.

CPS workers reported in its winter 1987 edition, family-centered, home-based services have begun to supplant earlier approaches to coping with child abuse and neglect. Ultimately, child welfare workers and supervisors are directly responsible for implementing such services and for enhancing the functioning of troubled families to prevent placement. However, as they are also responsible for maintaining extensive documentation of actions and decisions, documentation is important for many reasons. It provides a tool for treatment planning, the data necessary for decision making, and as substantiation, recommendations in a court of law. Therefore, while responsible for providing intensive services to prevent placement, workers must also be accountable through their documentation.

Richards (1992), in his explicit account of the life of a child welfare worker, raises the conflict between delivery of services and documentation. "One is constantly caught between staying in the office to write papers, thereby not visiting the ongoing cases in a timely fashion, and making the field contacts in the exclusion of an up-to-date case record. There are too many cases and not enough workers to satisfy both criteria, just another pressure in an already stress-filled job." (p. 79).

Vinker-Kaylin and Hartmen (1986) present the results of a 50 state, national survey conducted by the National Child Welfare Center in 1981. Workers and supervisors told researchers many things about child welfare work, including what they are doing with their time. When asked to select from a list of 12 different activities, workers reported spending the greatest amount of time doing case recording and paperwork, followed by working with children in their homes or in placements, resolving emergency situations, general case management, and job-related travel. When asked how they would prefer to spend their time, workers stated that they would like to spend less time on paperwork, resolving crises, general case management and travel, and would like to spend more time working with children. They also wished to spend more time in enhancing their ability to deliver services to children. Both workers and supervisors indicated that they devote considerable time to protective services. However, it was apparent that in 1981, there was a lack of time committed to prevention of placement, is nearly half of the supervision workers did not indicate spending any time in services to children in their homes. The results of this study demonstrated significant gaps in how workers wanted to spend time and how their time was actually being spent.

VCPS recently conducted a statewide survey of CPS workers. Sixty-two people (50 percent) of the 128 local agencies were surveyed. VCPS interviewed one CPS worker at each of the 62 agencies. Since most agencies have almost exclusively on caseloads, responses from the workers surveyed may not be representative. The 62 CPS workers constituted approximately 10 percent of the total number of workers involved in child protection.

Among the many questions was one asking the workers to provide a breakdown of the time they spend on the job, More than half of those interviewed (35) spend 30 percent or greater of their time investigating cases and on subsequent paperwork, with 19 spending over 50 percent of their time involved in writing reports. The workers stated that as much as 75 percent of their time was spent in investigation and related paperwork. One of the jobs that require a large portion of time is court preparation, networking with community agencies, and case management. More than half spend at least 30 percent of their time
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as these duties (17) with nine people spending over 50 percent of their time on these activities combined. Thus, investigation, paperwork, case management, court and making referrals takes most of the available hours of the workers' day, leaving very little time for direct treatment or prevention work with the abusive families. Virginia's social workers appear to face the same dilemmas as social workers throughout the country. Families with abuse and neglect problems are identified, children are offered some protection of protection, but caseloads are too high for workers to spend the time necessary to effectively follow up or to treat the identified problems.

Stress and Burnout
Stress can affect many aspects of job performance. Stress increases rates of absenteeism, equates job changes and increases the occurrence of illness and death. Stress negatively affects blood pressure and pulse rate, cholesterol levels, adrenaline and noradrenaline, and levels of free fatty acids, triglycerides and cortisol. Increased stress is associated with deterioration or breakdown of physical and mental health. Prolonged stress leads to "burnout." "Burnout can be defined as a state of mind that frequently affects individuals who work with other people (especially but not exclusively in the helping professions) and who experience themselves as contributing much more than they get back from their clients, supervisors and colleagues" (Gibson, 1983, p. 80).

The signs and symptoms of burnout are varied. The most telling sign of burnout in professional social workers appears to be the switch from caring to indifference or negativism. It can be thought of as a regression in the social worker's growth process. Rather than becoming better able to do an effective job, the workers find themselves becoming increasingly apathetic and bored with their work. Other signs include low job satisfaction, negative feelings about the work itself, physical and emotional exhaustion, and negative attitudes about clients, staff and oneself. In addition, "burned-out" workers may avoid contact with clients and may become totally dissatisfied with their work.

Pines and Maslach (1982) suggest that workers employ defensive techniques in an attempt to combat burnout. They suggest that work begins to become detached from the client, showing emotional 'detachment.' They may intellectualize highly emotional situations in order to protect themselves from the intensity. They begin to clearly compartmentalize the work part of their lives as totally separate from their personal lives. Stressed workers may turn to other staff for advice, comfort and release from tension.

Workers are faced with many stressors that could lead to burnout. Among them are the increased caseloads they are attempting to manage. With the increase of reports, and therefore investigations, caseloads become an important concern. The Child Welfare League of America has suggested that each case be given a minimum of 10 hours for investigation. They also recommended 17 ongoing cases per month (Virginia Department of Social Services, 1990). They encourage each state to adopt this standard.

The National Commission on Child Welfare and Family Prevention found some startling results in their national survey of the 50 human service agencies and the District of Columbia that provide child welfare services (1990). They report that 13 states have not adopted any caseload standards for child protective services. In addition, the number of cases in which the average caseload per worker exceeds its established standard is greater than the number of states in which the average caseload per worker is equal to, within or less than the state standard.

According to a study in 1981, Virginia CPS workers spent an average of 3.8 hours to investigate each child abuse complaint. This is half the 10 to 12 hours that national child abuse experts recommend as the minimum time needed to perform an investigation. In its report to the House Appropriations and Senate Finance Committees on the Child Protective Services Program (1990), the Virginia Department of Social Services addresses this concern. The department notes that the level of staffing reported for FY 92 would allow an average of only 8.7 hours per investigation. To achieve a level of services consistent with CPA standards would require 40 additional positions.

Workers commented on the problem of caseload increases in their responses to VCNF's survey. Fifty of the 62 workers surveyed have seen a substantial increase over the last two years in cases they are handling. Most workers said that their cases have increased by 5 to 6 cases per month. Many suggested that increased caseload was a major reason.

The National Association for Social Workers recommends that a child protective service worker have no more than 20 to 25 cases at a time. CPS workers in Virginia routinely handle between 23 and 30 clients, according to a survey conducted by the Virginia Department of Social Services (1988). In some agencies, workers had loads of 50 to 99 cases and four agencies had caseloads of over 100 per worker.

Another stressor relates to the difficulty of the cases and the multitude of problems these families face. The severity of cases has increased. Workers are seeing an increase of serious physical abuse and more and more threatening situations for the child. Child fatalities are increasing, with 28 children losing their lives in Virginia alone in FY 90 compared to 34 in FY 89. Sexual abuse is increasing each year. In Virginia there were almost as many sexual abuse cases in 10 months of FY 90 as were founded in all of FY 89. In FY 91, founded sexual abuse cases totaled 1,892. These are difficult and emotional cases for workers to handle.

People who neglect and abuse children are fraught with major problems. In Virginia, many perpetrators had their first child before they were 20 years old and had not received a high school diploma. Other problems include serious lack of knowledge of child development, personal or emotional problems, alcohol and other substance abuse, major financial problems, housing problems, and no support systems. Barbara Green, CPS supervisor with Ronnie Department of Social Services bring up the long term effects of the "crack" cocaine epidemic. "Recently, we have seen a number of 5- and 6-year-olds with significant gang problems. In the last two months we have worked with approximately six cases of out-of-control children who need to be placed in specialized treatment centers. We are seeing an increase in seriously emotionally disturbed children."

Major stressors in the lives of the perpetrators are use going to be resolved without major services. Trying to provide these services while also attempting to investigate and adequately document cases proves an incredible challenge for the worker.

Safety is a major concern for workers and their superiors. In an environment of growing violence, workers attempt to investigate cases. Those accused of abuse are not appreciative, and the results can be physically threatening to the oneweaver.


These are the physical dangers CPS workers face in conducting their jobs. It also represents the workers' dilemma: helper versus authority. "The social worker paradox remains: you offer help but represent authority at the same time, with clients who become angry, resentful..." (Schultz, 1989, p. 55).

Violent reactions noted in a national study take many forms: aggressive verbal threats including threats of murder to the worker or the worker's family, property damage including destroying worker's glasses, clothing, cars or possessions. "Intentional clothing damage took the form of torn or ripped coats, shirts or blouses; biting through clothing; throwing liquids that stain, or smearing the worker with vomit, feces or semen" (Schultz, 1989, p. 57). According to Schultz, violence was most often directed toward inexperienced female workers who had frequent contact with male clients.

Richards (1992) discusses the frustration of having a job that requires a knowledge of self-defense when he says, "Self-defense is something we are not trained for as child Protective service workers, despite some common sense training the police gives us..."

There are several committees including personnel, legislative, employment services, budget, adult services, child welfare services, family services, public relations, membership, and professional development program. Membership is open to practitioners or non-practitioners who have an interest in the purposes and activities of the Alliance. Membership is $15/year.

Virginia's Children's Resource Center (V) in Virginia Department of Mental Health, Mental Retardation and Substance Abuse
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Many of Virginia's child advocates assembled at the Virginia Department for Children's (VDC's) final board meeting in June, 1991. As of July 1, 1991, VDC ceased to exist as a "stand alone" agency. VDC's core functions have now been transferred to the Department of Mental Health, Mental Retardation and Substance Abuse Services (DMHR SAS) as the Children's Resource Center. The Children's Resource Center is housed in the Office of Prevention, under the direction of Harriett Russell.

Many of the functions of VDC will continue. The Children's Resource Center will continue publications of AWARE six times per year. The center will also publish the Statistical Profile for Virginia's Children and the Child Advocates Guide to the General Assembly. These publications are available free of charge. The center will continue to sponsor Child Advocacy Day and will track legislation. A children's legislative information network is planned.

Karen Kean will continue the "Please Be Seated" prevention program funded by a DMV grant. Staff will provide support to an HHS grant for homeless youth and to the Virginia Council on Teen Pregnancy Prevention. Staff transferred from the Department for Children are Carla Clayton, Gerardo Luongo, Joseph W. McGeal, PhD, and Ada Rivestenah.
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try to instill that through my support and by ensuring that we have a relationship with the police such that we can ask an officer to accompany a worker going into a potentially dangerous situation. It speaks to the issue of child abuse being a community problem, not just our agency’s problem. We all need to work together.”

Diane Hylbiak, Senior Social Work Supervisor with the James City County Department of Social Services, adds that the recession is causing her to employ more creative methods to ensure worker safety. “I have had to send a secretary out with a worker so that the worker would not have to go alone. We also have an excellent relationship with the police. They will go with a worker if it is known as dangerous, which is almost daily to a known drug area. We work together to protect the staff.”

Workers are very cognizant of the importance of their safety and take several measures in addition to going in pairs. They visit homes in daylight whenever possible, leave their purses in the office, ask people to come to the office, attempt to measure the person’s reaction so that they can remove themselves quickly if necessary, and position themselves for a quick escape.

Schultz (1989) makes some practical suggestions for maximizing worker safety. These include:
1. informing employees of the dangers of the job and educating them as to safety precautions.
2. adequately recording and publishing accounts of all visits.
3. using a second/second-environmental changes such as painting with silting houses and installing shatterproof glass in windows, doors and pizzazz frames.
4. provide stress management education and support.

Workers also endure stress caused by lack of administrative support, lack of training and low salary. Salaries have not kept pace with the hours and demands of the job. The National Commission on Child Welfare and Family Preservation (1990) did a state-by-state comparison of direct service workers using data presented in a 1987 National Survey of Public Child Welfare Salaries. This comparison indicates that salaries have kept pace with the inflation rate in only 17 of 44 states (39 percent). “In the remaining 27 states, minimum and maximum salary levels have either stayed the same as the actual 1987 levels, decreased from the actual 1987 levels, or increased less than the rate of inflation.” (p. 4). The researchers state “this comparison demonstrates a step backward in enhancing the remuneration of child welfare staff. Since salary levels are outside the control of child welfare agencies, this problem represents a significant additional obstacle to reform of an already encumbered system…” (p. 73).

In response to administrative difficulties and work stress, the trouble agencies are having recruiting and retaining staff. The National Commission on Child Welfare and Family Preservation (1990) reports that almost 50 percent of states report difficulty in recruiting child welfare staff. Staff shortages are most acute for direct service workers in child protective services. More than half the states are dissatisfied with the administrative structure for screening and hiring child welfare staff.

The commission reports that retention of direct service workers is also a problem. There is a disparity between the average length of service for workers and supervisors, with supervisors staying longer. They suggest that this disparity exists because of differentials in salaries, greater workload for workers, the problems and challenges that direct client services provides as compared to supervision, and the tremendous stress of the direct service position, leading quite frequently to burnout.

In 1990, Virginia Institute for Social Services Training Activities (VISSTA) (see separate article, this issue) conducted a public social work turnover study. The results indicate that the annual turnover rate among all public social workers employed by the state of Virginia is approximately 10 to 25 percent. Workers in Virginia retained an average of three years. Some workers are slowly trained before they leave. Supervisors felt that the causes for high turnover were high caseloads, low salaries and the constant demands of a system in crisis.

National Worker Profile

Winkle-Kaplan and Hartmen (1990) report a national survey conducted by the National Child Welfare Center in 1991. They received responses from 510 supervisors and 966 workers. The results provide a national profile of practitioners providing child welfare services over a decade ago. Both supervisors and workers tended to be female — 86 percent and 72 percent respectively. Supervisors were older than workers — 40.1 years and 35.2 years respectively. Seventy-eight percent of the supervisors and 80 percent of the workers were white, 15 percent of the supervisors and 13 percent of the workers were black, and 7 percent of both workers and supervisors identified themselves as from another racial background.

Supervisors generally had completed more education than workers. Nearly two-thirds of the supervisors held post-baccalaureate degrees as compared to about one-third of the
the workers. Post-baccalaureate degrees of supervisors were notably lower to be in social work, with 56% of the workers and compared to 37 percent of the workers having received either an M.S.W. or B.S.W. VCPN's survey of workers found some interesting comparisons to the national profile. In 1981 some 10 years later. Like the national profile, Virginia's 62 surveyed workers are predominantly female (53 out of 62). The large majority of workers fall within the 25-45 age group (47 workers) with five who are under age 30. The largest five- to half -34 workers have 0-3 years experience, 10 have 4-7 years experience, eight have 8-10 years and, 10 have 11+ years. One worker had over 30 years experience.

Most workers (44) have four years of education beyond high school. Four workers have six years past high school, while two have two years of education beyond high school. Most are educated in a human service discipline [52] such as psychology, social work or counseling. Of those not educated in human services, a large variety of disciplines are represented: elementary education, history, political science, divinity, business administration and therapeutic recreation.

Training

Availability of training was another concern addressed in the 1990 report by the National Committee on Children and Family Preservation. Less than half the states require pre-service training for child welfare staff. Forty percent report no in-service training for direct service workers. However, 48 percent report on average 72 percent of the states and assessment of competency to 40 percent. Child welfare workers come to the system with a variety of educational backgrounds.Put child welfare worker training at over 15 years, had been reclassified over the years. A study by the National Child Welfare Resource Center at the University of Southern Maine found that 44 percent of states do not require a college degree for child workers. Thirty-seven percent require a bachelor's degree, but do not specify a field of study; and only 17 percent require a bachelor's degree in behavioral science (National Child Welfare Resource Center, 1987). A study conducted by Olsen and Holmes (1983) suggests that "a majority of children and their families were assigned to caseworkers with bachelor's degrees in fields other than social work" (p. 97).

Olsen and Holmes analyzed the relationship effectiveness in child welfare settings of B.S.W., M.S.W. and D.S.W. workers, and experienced workers with training. While non-professional staff did perform well in child protective services, there were several areas where non-professional staff did not perform as well as professional staff. "They were less successful in providing substitute and supportive services to children, and environmental support services to families. They also had difficulty in maintaining sustained contact among families whose children had been removed from their homes" (p. 101). These results led Olsen and Holmes to state that there is a need for professionally trained staff, and that non-professionally trained staff must have adequate in-service training.

In the past, Virginia has hired CPS workers based on their "knowledge, skills and abilities." Thus, there were no specific degree requirements and CPS workers were not necessarily professional social workers. In 1990, however, the State Board of Social Services re-instituted a requirement of a bachelor's degree in a social work related field for employment as a CPS worker. A bachelor's degree in a non-related field may be considered if the applicant has related job experience.

Given the disparity in entry level requirements, in-service training becomes crucial for CPS workers who must display a variety of high-level skills in performing their duties. It is important to determine the competencies necessary to perform the job and insure that each worker gets adequate training in all areas.

This difficult task is compounded by lack of resources. Miller and Dore (1991) demonstrate that federal, state and local funds have failed to match the growing demand for CPS training. "Title XX, one of the major sources of CPS funding for many states is nearly half of what it was in 1978. Although Title XX funding for child welfare services has increased, the act has never been fully funded and most of the additional money has been directed toward emergency planning..." (p. 438).

Public welfare agencies are having to develop innovative ways to provide support and training to workers. Miller and Dore (1991) describe four training programs mentioned over and over again by national child welfare experts. The programs were the result of a program according to several criteria including validation and evaluation of training programs, curriculum content, training format, design, and training qualifications. These four programs are described below.

Florida Department of Health and Rehabilitative Services

Recognizing a need for more comprehensive training for CPS workers, state legislators passed the Child Welfare and Juvenile Justice Training Act of 1986 which mandated that the Department of Health and Rehabilitative Services (DHRS) maintain training academies and that all child welfare staff workers be required to successfully complete training. Ongoing monies were guaranteed through the Child Welfare Training Trust Fund with money received from a $1 surcharge on non-criminal traffic violations and on dissolution-of-marriage filings. Four training academies were established. There is an initial two weeks of core training for all new workers followed

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ON BEHALF
OF VIRGINIA'S CHILDREN...

On Behalf of Virginia's Children ... is a briefing book for advocates and legislators during the 1990 General Assembly Session. The booklet covers 10 areas of child welfare. For each, existences are offered, policy considerations are summarized, and legislation is likely to be introduced is explained. This is a well written, concise summary of major concerns about issues such as child abuse, child health care, education, foster, children in poverty and troubled youth.

CHILD
PROTECTIVE SERVICES
ANNUAL REPORT 1990 - 1991


This 46 page report provides a detailed picture of the problems of child abuse and neglect in Virginia. Every year since 1975, the Virginia Department of Social Services has published an annual statistical report. Copies are available from Diane Maloney, CAMS Supervisor, Child Protective Services Unit, 8007 Discovery Drive, Richmond, VA 23229-8699, telephone (804) 662-9081.
Ohio Department of Human Services

The Ohio Department of Human Services (ODHS) recognizes the need to train CPS workers to handle increasingly complex issues. An advisory committee on training was established and the Institute for Human Services (IHS), a private, non-profit training and consulting firm, was asked to serve in an advisory capacity. Since then, the ODHS, IHS and the Public Children's Service Association of Ohio formed a cooperative venture, The Ohio Child Welfare Training Program, to provide ongoing training to public agency staff.

Eight training centers have been established across Ohio. These provide needs assessment, marketing and delivery of training. IHS is responsible for the day-to-day administration of training, including monitoring and program development. New workers are required to attend 10 days of core training which is standardized for four workshops: child protective services, case-process work, case planning and permanency planning; normal child development; and separation and child development. The core training is conducted at the local agencies through contracts coordinated by the regional training centers.

Upon completion of the core training, at any late point at which the supervisor and worker think necessary, an individual needs assessment is conducted by each worker to identify areas in which additional training is necessary. Results are entered into a computer network at each regional training center, and workshops and other training activities are based on needs gathered from all the workers. Three types of evaluation are built into the Ohio program: worker satisfaction pre- and post-assessment to assure utilization of knowledge and quality of training; and continued evaluation of impact on performance.

Washington State Department of Social and Health Services (DSSH)

The Revised Social Health Service (DSSH) program is a public health program especially geared to the needs of young and old child under CPS supervision moved DSSH to thoroughly examine the CPS system. A major outcome was a recommendation for more stringent training of CPS workers. The Washington legislature established a law mandating DSSH to implement a plan for a Children's Services Training Academy. Workers were to meet minimum performance standards. While a six week training program was developed and field tested, severe budget constraints forced the program to continue training in a three week course.

All new workers attend a residential program in Bothell, Wash. The first week consists of orientation to DSSH, its functions, and to CPS theories and policies. The second week introduces workers to issues in CPS such as child maltreatment and interviewing children. During the third week, workers are taught all aspects of case planning and intervention. Trainees must pass an examination at the end of each week and must have 95 percent attendance throughout the course.

During each week of residential training, the resident workers receive a week of on-the-job training. An individualized training plan based on the Training Protocol Guidelines for Training Line Staff is developed jointly by supervisors and workers at the beginning of training and regular supervisory conferences to review the worker's progress. Financial constraints have not allowed the agency to track attendance or to evaluate impact of training on worker performance.

Training issues are also important to Virginia CPS workers. "With the sophisticated services and complex of problems, workers need more specialized skills than ever before," says Green, a VISSTA trainer. (See insert about VISSTA program), she believes new workers are better trained that ever before. Mickey Reynolds, Backup Supervisor for CPS with the Bedford Department of Social Services, agrees. "I've had a lot of excellent training in CPS. I remember well the Advanced CPS Training at Mountain Lake in 1985. That was three weeks of intensive training. However, VISSSTA training gives workers exposure to a lot of collective knowledge and experience that I have never received. I believe this kind of training contributes to the well-being of the CPS worker." Flemming agrees. "Ongoing training is vital to CPS work. It is a tool for doing a good job, and it is essential if agency social workers wish to be seen by the public as professionals. Our program makes use of any training opportunities that we can find that are free, such as VISSSTA. The criminal justice, social service, and school training, and it, too, is often free. Or, we will pull resources with other community agencies to be able to provide better training. I really believe in the community working together to train our workers and their well-being. Training is one of many ways to bring professionals together to discuss the issues."

Hybicki is not only a VISSSTA rater, but has written several training modules for workers and supervisors. "I have heard a tremendous amount of positive feedback regarding the training workers and supervisors are getting from VISSSTA. People tell me that they have wanted and needed this training all along." Virginia CPS workers are taking advantage of training options. Of the workers interviewed, 30 had attended VISSSTA training. 41 completed training offered by the State Department of Social Services and 22 had obtained other training. In addition, workers were asking for training in specific areas. The most important training area requested by the survey respondents were legal issues and court testimony, drug and alcohol abuse, sexual abuse, and adult psychopathology. Other areas mentioned frequently included cultural awareness and treatment case management.

This resource directory provides names and addresses of key national organizations and agencies working towards child advocacy and child abuse prevention. It also covers general resources on child abuse and neglect such as where to locate literature searches, media materials, statistics and self-help groups.


KIOS COUNT is supported by the Annie E. Casey Foundation, established by the founders of United Parcel Service. The nation’s largest philanthropy devoted exclusively to disadvan-
taged children, this mission is to strengthen national, state and local responses to the needs of families and children in order to improve future outcomes for at-risk youth. KIOS COUNT is a project of the Center for the Study of Social Policy. The center’s mission is to promote change through the analysis of existing and proposed social policies and programs in the areas of income support, human services, disabilities and health care. KIOS COUNT provides state grants to non-profit organizations, state agencies and univer-
sities. They are to be used to monitor the condition of children at the state and local level and use the data to improve children’s lives.

KIOS COUNT also publishes the Kids Count Data Book, State Profiles of Child Well-being. It gives specific information on eight indicators of child well-being for each state and the District of Columbia, percent low birth-weight, infants, infant mortality rate, child death rate, infant death rate, percent of births to single teen, juvenile custodial rate, percent of children in poverty, percent graduating high school in four years and percent of children living in single parent families. It ranks each state overall and ranks each indicator shows how the condition of children has changed over time. The Data Book is a fascinating and disarming introduction to their data, the 1990’s and the data of defense for the nation’s children. The trends must be reversed.


Richards describes his job as a child protective service worker during a particularly intense phase of his 18-year career. In the process, he advocates humor, conflict between workers “in the trenches” and supervisors behind the desk, and impact of “always a case waiting.” He poignantly describes the frustrations of dealing with a public that expects a quick response to any case, no matter what other, more serious cases arise. He bemoans how the system is drained by bogue complaints from divorcing spouses and angry neighbors. He relates how the tension of dealing with hostile and unreason-
able parents, upset professionals and callous supervisors impact upon his work. This is an honest and disarming book that underscores the need for highly trained workers for sensitive and caring supervision. Richards does notilianize or glamorize the job. Those who deal with child protective services will benefit from reading this book.


This issue of Practice Digest is full of advocacy ideas. Advocacy has always been part of social work. However, most practicing social workers, struggling to pitch up individual cases, have little time to devote to advocacy aimed at preventing problems through changes in public policy. Advocacy skills, different from practice skills, may be underdeveloped in this issue may assist in developing a perspective on family advocacy.


— Are you baffled by how libraries are organized?
— Are you unclear about which reference books are likely to come to your aid?
— Do you feel there is an overwhelming number of journals?
— Are you unsure about how to stay up-to-date?
— Do you need statistics to support your grant proposal?
— Do you need literature searched and data bases searched in a foreign language?
— Do you have trouble locating government documents?
— Do you need to locate a court decision?
— If you wish to conduct your research in a system, efficient manner, this guide will help you many times over.
— The author, a bibliographer and reference librarian, writes with an obvious enthusiasm for information systems and libraries.


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Virginia's Picture

Virginia's workers are faced with all of the social problems being experienced nationwide. Virginia, similar to other states, has experienced a significant increase in reported cases of abuse and neglect over the past decade. In FY 1981, cases of abuse and neglect increased to 27,217 from 15,982 in 1980. Workers have had to change because of more requests for social services. Workers spend more time in crisis intervention and less time providing treatment services. Workers are the ones who are left last. Prevention cannot become a priority in a crisis. Gordon Ragland, the senior case manager of the Henrico Department of Social Services, concurs, saying, "We are focused on investigating and making recommendations for disposition of cases rather than providing services. The children are the ones who are left last."

Another source of difficulty for Virginia's workers is the increasing number of cases with court action. According to Fountain, "There has been an increase in requirements for local workers to issue a due process order, and abusers' legal rights have come to the surface. Workers are faced with an increase in requests for greater detail in documentation and notification to abusers, more data collection and more appeals. Worker involvement is much more complex." Hybridic agrees, "There are approximately the same number of social workers doing the job as were doing it 10 years ago. However, the numbers of cases have quadrupled. Documentation is extensive. Court involvement is greater. Therefore, we are having to spend one-fourth of the time on each case as we used to spend. We have become very efficient! But, we knew we weren't doing enough in services and prevention 10 years ago. It's too good to feel good about what families are getting from us now." Fournier adds, "The intent or purpose of child protective services is the last to go as it was 10 years ago: to investigate cases and to help families with stressful problems that are detrimental to children. However, our attention gets diverted from helping in so many ways."

Flemming says that the internal issues facing social workers are further mitigated by the community's attitude. "Communities expect child protective services to intervene on behalf of children in situations that may not be clearly identified as a child abuse or neglect problem. We are supposed to be all things to all people. The agency definition of the role of child protective service worker and the community definition seem to differ significantly! We are seen as a way of getting services for families and that, I believe, is a misuse of the system. The intent of child protective services is to intervene on behalf of all children alleged to be abused or neglected and to help the parents become better parents. We have many mandated requirements that the staff have to do the prevention work often requested by the community. However, when we don't accept a case because it is inappropriate the community gets frustrated. Instead of working towards a different orientation, we are left hearing, 'Well! If something happens to this child it's on your shoulders!' Our workers are really stretched. They are stretched at the end of each day. Many people have been involved in the child's worst job and seeing a person inside. Workers need acceptance and respect, and often do not get this from the community."

Workers confirm that they are stressed. They have much to say about what causes stress in their lives. Among these things are "making decisions that affect other people's lives," "not knowing what the day will bring," "removing children," "sexual abuse," "being on-call 24 hours a day," "not enough time to do 'a good job'" and "tension," and "court." Many workers just said "the job itself is stressful to me."

When asked what would make their job easier, responses included "more money," "more staff," "making my work more efficient," and "having more concrete, clear mandates and priorities." "Making my work more efficient and prevention oriented rather than investigative," "less paperwork," "more respect," "adequate funding," "less paperwork," "less paperwork," "more respect," "adequate funding," "more respect," "adequate funding," "less paperwork," "more respect," "adequate funding," and "assistance with obtaining better morale."
Prevention of Burnout

Several things need to happen in order that burnout be prevented and to ensure that the child-protection system is viable. The system must be designed so that the people who work on-the-job lives and their personal lives for strangers. Workers need to evaluate client related and organizational stresses. For instance, examples of a recent on-the-job client related stress may be a high number of cases being handled, personal safety issues and stress of making decisions for "at-risk" children. Examples of ongoing work stresses include adjusting to changes in policy, scarce resources versus high client need, lacking confidence in agency management and coping with staff conflicts.

What is happening in each personal life both recently and ongoing? Recent stressful events may include illness, death of a loved one or separation. Ongoing conditions may include concerns about daycare, financial concerns, health issues or spending little pleasant and productive time with family. When workers have done a complete personal assessment of stressors, the next task is to prioritize them and develop strategies for managing them. Personal strategies for coping have not changed since VCP's last looked at the worker and burnout. These strategies include adequate exercise, relaxation, nutrition and support away from the work setting.

In addition, assertiveness and open communication on the job are important in on-the-job management. It is essential for supervisors to listen to and work with their workers concerning on-the-job and personal stressors so that they can assist in finding solutions at work.

CORRECTION

Some copy in the last issue (Vol. 35, Court Appointed Special Advocates) was printed incorrectly.

- The first line on page four should be inserted before the first line on page 12.
- The last line on page six should be inserted before the first line on page 10.
- The first three lines on page seven should be inserted after the last three lines on page 10.

The State of America's Children 1999, 170 pages, $12.95

Available from: Children's Defense Fund (CDF)
152 C St. NW
Washington, D.C. 20001
(202) 688-8787

This message of this book is clear—America must struggle for its conscience and its future. We must question our values as we spend $500 million a day for Desert Storm, and $90 million a day to bail out savings and loan institutions, but cannot find additional money for child care for working families and increase Head Start by only $100 million per year.

The growth of child poverty, drug abuse, family violence and family disintegration poses a greater threat than any external enemy, says this report. Over the past two decades, significant progress has been made. Yet more is needed. CDF's legislative agenda includes providing funding for Head Start, child care, child immunizations, family preservation, homelessness, nutrition, prenatal care and programs to eliminate poverty.

The report is full of data that support the recommendations on each key issue. Model programs are highlighted. This is not a "dry" report, but an exciting, living, breathing vision of a better America. If you are dealing with funding sources or politicians who demand data to demonstrate the need for a program, this report is a "gold mine."

Marian Wright Edelman, president of CDF, implores us all to believe that we can make a difference. "Let's together make it. American for any child to be poor or to be left behind." Read this book, and you will see the need. Perhaps you will be inspired to serve.

More Resource Reviews

Core Training for Child Welfare Care- workers, $370 complete or $75 each component

Available from: Child Welfare League of America P.O. Box 7816
300 Maryland Parkway Easton, MD 21601 (410) 638-2562

The Core Curriculum for Child Welfare Care- workers is a 14-day in-service training curriculum that teaches four-walled level knowledge and skills to caseworkers who provide child protective, family-based and child placement services. The curriculum addresses 52 competency areas and is divided into four integrated modules.

Module I: Child Protective Services, a three day (18 hour) curriculum includes identification of maltreatment assessment of family dynamics, risk assessment, cultural issues and the service delivery process of intake, screening, investigation and in-home family services.

Module II: Casework Process and Case Planning, a five day (35 hour) unit covers interviewing skills, case assessment and planning, the casework relationship, dealing with resistant clients, record keeping and termination.

Module III: The Effects of Abuse and Neglect on Child Development is a three day (18 hour) module, as is Module IV: Separation and the Placement Process.

Each of the modules can be free standing. Each integrates numerous opportunities for experiential learning and application of content.

The curriculum has had extensive field testing and use.

Facebook on Public Welfare Services and Staff, 199 pages, APAWA members $45, others $45

Available from: American Public Welfare Association
810 First St., N.W., Suite 500
Washington, D.C. 20002-4205
(202) 686-0100

FAX: (202) 389-6555

This textbook is a product of the American Public Welfare Association's (APWA) Natural Commission on Child Welfare and Family Preservation. It presents the findings of the August, 1985 Data Collection Instrument for Public Child Welfare Agencies, a national survey of all 50 state human service agencies (District of Columbia) that provide public child welfare services. The report details the extent to which public child welfare services are available, describing the changes that have occurred in the last 10 years.

This report is organized into two major sections: services and staff. It presents both aggregate and state specific charts and tables on over 100 topics. Part A, the services section, is composed of 28 tables. These include child protective programs, out-of-home care services, adoption programs, court-related program services, treatment services, juvenile and single-parent programs, adoption services. Part B is a playwright's survey collected on five areas: personnel policies and administration, position descriptions and worker qualifications, training, standards, and total program cost. This textbook is full of fascinating information about the child welfare system and is comprehensive in providing specific facts about each state. It is helpful in information in assessing strengths and weaknesses, and may provide agencies the needed ammunition to convince power bases in their state and federal government that the system is failing short of providing adequate family and children's services, that workers in the forefront are severely stretched; and that agencies are not able to attract the most qualified personnel.
The Children's Defense Fund (CDF)

123 C St., N.W.
Washington, D.C. 20001
(202) 659-6475

CDF is a private, non-profit organization supported by foundations, corporate grants and individual donations. Goals are to provide a strong voice for America's children, particularly the needs of poor minority and disabled children. CDF focuses on programs and policies that affect large numbers of children and stresses preventive environments. An annual legislative agenda in the U.S. Congress is pursued.

American Public Welfare Association (APWA)

810 First St., N.E., Suite 500
Washington, D.C. 20002
(202) 882-0100

APWA is an organization concerned about effective administration of publicly funded human services. Its affiliates, the National Association of Public Child Welfare Administrators (NAPCWA) is designed to promote and enhance the delivery of child welfare services.

Child Welfare League of America

Child Welfare League of America (CWLA)

920 First St., N.W., Suite 310
Washington, D.C. 20001-2085
(202) 636-2945

CWLA is comprised of more than 600 leading children's agencies throughout America. CWLA publishes books, the Journal Child Welfare, several newsletters and a quarterly magazine, Children's Voice ($5 in 4 issues to members) which reports on program and policy developments in child welfare. The Washington Social Legislation Bulletin (SILS) ($60) reports on federal legislation and agencies. Legislative Alert is published as needed and sent to members to encourage action at critical points in time. Children's Monitor is published monthly for members and Children's Campaign staffs. It provides a national perspective of issues affecting children. CWLA also sponsors conferences and provides training and consultation for members and others.

Coalition for America's Children

1710 Rhode Island Ave., N.W.
Washington, D.C. 20036
(202) 857-7829

The Coalition for America's Children is a coalition of advocacy organizations working together on non-partisan public and voice education activities for the 1992 election cycle. The cooperative effort will broaden the impact of children's advocacy efforts by creating a unified campaign. The coalition includes 75 major organizations, representing roughly three million members. The coalition recently released a State of the Child report which summarizes results of a survey of 6,100 American mothers in 12 states. Copies are available for $10 each from NACHRI, 401 Wythe St., Alexandria, 22314.

The National Association of Social Workers

The National Association of Social Workers Inc. (NASW) is the largest organization of professional social workers in the world. It has 130,000 members in 55 chapters throughout the United States, its territories and abroad. NASW members are professional social workers who work in a variety of settings. They must meet strict education or experience requirements. The organization offers nationally recognized professional credentials:

1. Academy of Certified Social Workers (ACSW) recognizes social worker who meet its requirements for independent, self-directed practice.
2. Academy of Certified Baccalaureate Social Workers (ACBSW) recognizes baccalaureate practitioners who have met national standards and
d. plans are underway to implement certification of social work professionals beginning this spring. NASW's goals include the following:
   a. advance the quality of social work practice, improve the knowledge base required for that practice and promote professional development;
   b. promote the strength, unity and recognition of this social work profession and the use of standards to protect the consumer; and
c. propose and promote sound public policies and programs aimed at meeting human need and improving the quality of life.

Services to members include arbitration about jobs, access to research abstracts, 10 issues of NASW news and six issues of Social Work Per year, chapter membership, discounts on publications and conferences and various insurance programs. There are several mem- bership programs. The membership price depends on the program joined.
Virginia's chapter of NASW is located at 1500 Forest Ave., Suite 224, Richmond, Va. 23208, (804) 282-0788.
National Coalition to Abolish Corporal Punishment in Schools (NCACPS)
155 West Main St., Suite 100-B
Columbus, OH 43215
(614) 221-8829
NCACPS provides fact sheets, resource materials and consultation on state and local actions to ban corporal punishment in schools.

National Child Protective Workers Association Inc.
27 Foot St.
Batavia, NY 14020-2328
(315) 635-4791
This organization started in 1981 under the direction of William Griffin. It has now been reformed after a temporary lapse of service. The new executive director is Larry Wright. The mission remains the same: to advocate for maltreated children and for child protective workers who serve the children. Annual dues of $25 entitle members to the newsletter, FRONTLINE.

National Center on Child Abuse and Neglect (NCBAN)
Administration on Children, Youth and Families
Administration for Children and Families
U.S. Department of Health and Human Services
P.O. Box 1132
Washington, DC 20013-1132
(202) 445-0386
NCBAN was established by the Child Abuse Prevention and Treatment Act of 1974. Its activities include conducting research, collecting, analyzing and disseminating information, and providing assistance to states and communities on prevention, identification and treatment of child abuse and neglect. Information is available through NCBAN's National Clearinghouse on Child Abuse and Neglect Information, (703) 365-7565; outside the Washington, D.C. area, call 800-499-0666.

C. Henry Kempe National Center for the Prevention and Treatment of Child Abuse and Neglect
205 Creдесят St.
Denver, CO 80220
(303) 321-3963
The center develops training programs for abused children, conducts training and offers technical assistance. A catalogue of materials and services is available upon request.

National Committee for Prevention of Child Abuse (NCPCA)
332 S. Michigan Ave., Suite 1600
Chicago, Ill. 60604
(312) 663-3520
The mission of NCPCA is to prevent child abuse in all its forms. NCPCA has established seven objectives for 1991-1996, which the organization hopes will result in a clear downward trend in child abuse. NCPCA publishes materials of general interest and a publications list is available upon request.

The Association of Child Advocates
The Association of Child Advocates (ACA)
P.O. Box 1873
Cleveland, OH 44107-0873
(216) 881-2225
Founded in 1984, ACA is a national association of state and local child advocacy organizations. ACA was established to provide leadership and service to the state and local organizations, to increase their effectiveness and to assist in the development of new advocacy groups. The association also publishes The Child Advocates' Information Exchange, a bimonthly newsletter.

American Professional Society on the Abuse of Children (APSAC)
332 S. Michigan Ave., Suite 600
Chicago, IL 60604
(312) 574-0106
APSAC promotes training, communication and support among multidisciplinary professionals who work with victims, survivors, families of victims and perpetrators of child abuse. A newsletter, The Advisor, is published and the group is working on national interdisciplinary guidelines to practice.

End Violence Against the Next Generation, Inc.
917 Kasper Ave.
Berkeley, CA 94708
(510) 527-0454
This organization is dedicated to eliminating corporal punishment in schools. They publish The Last Resort, a quarterly newsletter which describes which schools are free of violence and the benefits and reductions in the cost of violent schools. Subscription to The Last Resort is $10. They also publish a series of booklets useful to child protective service workers. Membership is $25.

The National Resource Center on Child Sexual Abuse

National Resource Center
on Child Sexual Abuse (NRCCSA)
107 Lincoln St.
Huntville, AL 35803
(800) 543-7006
NRCCSA provides information, referral, training and consultation to professionals working in the field of child sexual abuse. The organization also publishes NRCCSA News, a bimonthly newsletter.
The Virginia Institute for Social Services Training Activities (VISSTA) is a combined effort of the Virginia Department of Social Services, Virginia Commonwealth University School of Social Work and local social service agencies. In an attempt to be responsive to social service staff and their needs for continued training, the Virginia Department of Social Services initiated the collaborative effort to develop a comprehensive training system. State and local social service staff recognized the importance of competency-driven training that is training directly related to the tasks performed by workers (and supervisors).

State-central office trained staff for the excellent program developed by the Institute for Human Services in Ohio and endorsed by the Child Welfare League of America. The program was based on a needs assessment instrument called the Individual Training Needs Assessment (ITNA). The program came with four core course curricula:

- Child Protective Services—Overview
- Casework Process and Planning in Child Protective Services
- Effects of Abuse and Neglect on Child Development
- Separation and Child Placement

There was also an outline for legal issues related to child welfare services. The core curricula appeared to be excellent and exciting. However, Virginia's central office department decided to adapt the materials and develop others, especially a core curriculum for supervisors. Therefore, more curricula following the model purchased from the Child Welfare League of America were planned. It was then that the department saw an opportunity to form the collaborative relationship with the School of Social Work at Virginia Commonwealth University and local social service agencies. This arrangement would allow a broader perspective for curriculum development as well as research opportunities provided by a university setting.

The School of Social Work at Virginia Commonwealth University was awarded a grant to develop more curricula, and to recruit and train trainers. In addition, four local agencies were given grants to implement the training. These agencies include the City of Richmond, Henrico, Fairfax County and Montgomery County. VISSTA staff have developed a long list of potential training topics based on results of the ITNA since their beginnings in April of 1990. A complete list of potential topics is available upon request. The topics currently available for workers are:

- Child Protective Services — Overview
- Casework Process and Case Planning in Child Welfare
- Effects of Abuse and Neglect on Child Development
- Intake/Investigation—Child Abuse/Neglect

Topics for workers that are currently under development include: Adoption and Foster Care (Permanency Planning), Working with Adolescents, Sexual Abuse, Legal Issues in Child Welfare, Services to Single Parents, Family System Theory and Family Therapy, Cultural Competency, Substance Abuse, Adult Services/Adult Protective Services Overview, Adult Development, Legal Issues in Adult Services, and Casework Process and Case Planning in Adult Services.

In addition, several curricula for supervisors have been developed. Supervisory topics include:

- Managing Within An Organization
- Educational and Supportive Supervision
- Supervision and Managing Work Group Performance

Topics currently under development include: Supervision and Managing Work Group Performance, Supervision of Case Management in Child Abuse Services, Supervising Services to Adolescents, Supervising Permanency Planning, Supervising Intake and Investigation Services, Supervising Family-Based Service, Supervising for Optimal Job Performance, and Managing Cultural Diversity.

Quality trainers are an essential part of the system. The VISSTA staff are responsible for training the trainers. "We recruit and certify trainers," explains Anith Prindle, curriculum development specialist and trainer with VISSTA. "Currently we have a pool of approximately 70 qualified trainers. The procedure for becoming a trainer is time consuming and requires a real commitment. We believe we have created an excellent training staff with in-depth knowledge and skills."

Indeed, training for trainers is comprehensive. In addition to the initial screening for comprehensive program knowledge and training skills, each trainer receives 2-5 days of training about being a trainer. Then each potential trainer decides upon areas of specialty in collaboration with VISSTA staff and receives an additional day of training for each area selected. After receiving a certificate of training in a specific area, the trainer can contract with an area training center to offer that workshop.

Since offering its first training in September 1990, approximately 700 workers and 300 supervisors have attended training sessions offered by VISSTA. The staff continues to evaluate training needs. "It is important that we keep the system responsive and focused," asserts Prindle. "We are constantly planning, developing and piloting curricula. Then, we evaluate and modify. For instance, we found through our evaluation that workers and supervisors are anxious for more advanced and specialized training modules. This feedback, provided by the ITNA and other sources, helps us set priorities for now and in the future."

All the training programs are based on a competency concept. The ITNA assesses the knowledge and skills a worker or supervisor possesses against a comprehensive listing of all the knowledge and skills required to do the job. Prindle explains that there is a misconception about the ITNA among some field staff. "This is not a performance evaluation as some think," she explained. "Instead, it is a method of assessing individual training needs, the frequency and locations of desired training topics, and in what order we should be developing curricula. We want to provide the needed training to the most people as efficiently and quickly as we can."

So, VISSTA doing "Very well," Prindle responds. "We are hearing good things and, more importantly, meeting wide acceptance."

Prince is also pleased with the way the department of social services is supporting the program. "I have nothing but praise for the department. During a time of serious budget constraints it takes considerable commitment on the part of central office not to sacrifice training. They see training as a priority and important to delivery of services in the state."

For this information is provided by the Virginia Department of Social Services, Child Protection Services, which is part of the State National Center on Child Abuse and Neglect, Administration for Children, Youth and Families, Department of Health and Human Services.
Governor's Advisory Board on Child Abuse and Neglect Recognizes the 1991 Outstanding Child Advocates

Each year, the Governor's Advisory Board on Child Abuse and Neglect recognizes outstanding child advocates and presents them with a Certificate of Appreciation Award. Nominations can be from corporations, public agencies, private practice, government, or can be voluntary. Those receiving awards have made outstanding contributions and shown unusual commitment to protecting children.

Nominations for the 1992 awards are due July 1, 1992. Nomination forms are available from Ann Children's, Child Protective Services Unit, Virginia Department of Social Services, 8097 Discovery Drive, Richmond, VA 23229-8699, telephone (804) 662-9081 or (1-800) 552-7096 TDD, FAX (804) 662-7330.

Danville Public Schools — Danville

In 1991, the Danville Public Schools spearheaded local child abuse prevention month activities, coordinating a multi-agency group composed of representatives from social services, mental health, and law enforcement. A major activity was the development of a set of guidelines for consistent school reporting to CPS. In April, the entire school division participated in the Blue Ribbon Campaign. For commitment to providing a safe environment for their student population, Danville Public Schools were recognized as an outstanding child advocate.

Beverly D. Brown — Culpeper

As director of Rappahannock County Department of Social Services, Ms. Brown has made a significant impact on her community. She has organized a child sexual abuse protocol team, child abuse prevention month activities, trained foster parents, and created a local adoption team. In addition, her "exceptional ability to humanize a difficult process" was cited in her nomination.

Linda Gera — Manassas

Ms. Gera, developed, coordinated and promoted the Staken Infrant Syndrome public education project and was instrumental in the formation of the Great Prince William Adolescent Pregnancy Prevention Coalition.
Supervisors can also help by varying activities a worker performs according to the needs and personality of the worker. Some people thrive on change while others seem to be comfortable with less variety. By paying attention to this aspect of the worker and the job, a supervisor can make the job interesting to the worker while reducing the level of stress.

Some aspects of child welfare work are outside the control of both the agency supervisor and the worker. These are primarily related to policy and to resources. The American Humane Association in its survey of the status of child welfare workers (1983) found that funding has not increased at the same level as needed. Their study confirmed that CPS workers are faced with dealing with larger numbers of referrals with severe and complex problems. However, there has been no significant increase in resources. The report strongly urges increased funding, but states that funding alone will not eliminate the problems within the system. Rather, funding along with implementation of national standards for effective CPS programs and practice is essential. When programs have higher standards in place, a higher quality of CPS practice exists.

In 1985, the Governor's Advisory Board on Child Abuse and Neglect issued a report, "Protecting Children From Abuse: Future Directions." The report documented the need for vigorous effort to find additional resources for the CPS system, noting "the intent of the law — to protect children by providing help to abusive and neglectful families — is not being met." From 1981 to 1985, as abuse reports increased steadily, the money devoted to child protective services in Virginia actually declined 29 percent (Childhood: A Special Report, 1989).

Too little has changed since the 1985 Governor's Advisory Board report. A legislative study of the CPS system in 1989 found shortages in money, workers and training such that "the credibility of the system is in danger."

There have been significant increases in training opportunities since the 1989 study. The establishment of the VISETA training is very encouraging. Increased training is a "bright spot" in an increasingly bleak picture. However, training is not enough to counteract the effects of caseload increases, lack of treatment resources, increased severity of the cases and a deteriorating and more dangerous social climate.

CPS workers are under tremendous stress, worse than ever before. It is essential that communities, administrators, policy makers and others concerned about child welfare respond to meet the needs.