INNOVATIVE RESPONSES TO CHILD PROTECTION

In 1984 and again in 1992, VCPN examined Child Protective Services (CPS), both past and present. The articles presented the system as it had developed, the increase in complaints and investigations over the years, and the significant risk for worker burn-out. The 1992 report also focused attention on the growing emphasis on family preservation whenever possible. Prior articles also acknowledged that limited resources make it increasingly difficult to provide intensive services to families. Rather, the focus often shifts to child and family crisis.

Once again, VCPN is reporting about the CPS system. At this time, CPS is a system in evolution. Virginia has always advocated a community multidisciplinary approach to the problem of child abuse and neglect. In the recent past due to escalating numbers of reports, the CPS system has increasingly centered upon responding to complaints, designating a disposition of “founded” or “unfounded” and service provision. Currently, CPS is moving towards a system which is promoting community involvement and partnerships to provide active treatment and prevention services to high-risk families.

This article will review and update CPS history and structure. Then, it will explain the national movement toward Community Partnerships. Finally, it will report about the exciting and innovative programming occurring in Virginia.

Historical Perspective

Child protection began in the late 1880’s as a private, non-profit concern for the protection of children (see VCPN, Summer, 1984). By the 1920’s there were approximately 250 Societies for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children (SPCC) in the United States. “These organizations took an active role in protecting individual children and in advocating better legislation and public sector commitments to safeguard children’s interests” (Protecting Children, 1995, p.4). These agencies uncovered cases of abuse and neglect. Eventually, staff worked with law enforcement and were given the power to take custody of vulnerable children pending an investigation. These private organizations, then, began their movement into the public domain. In the 1920’s only one state, Indiana, actually had a governmental body which fulfilled the duties being covered by SPCC elsewhere. By the middle of this century, however, that changed. Public agencies were developed to take responsibility for delivering services to abused and neglected children and their families.

By the 1930s, many of the older humane societies no longer performed protective services for children, their functions being taken over by a variety of public and voluntary organizations such as juvenile courts, juvenile protective associations, family welfare societies, children’s aid and local boards. Some humane societies and SPCC’s merged with public welfare agencies so that in many of the newly formed government boards, personnel long associated with SPCC tradition continued to carry out policy (Protecting Children, 1995, 5).

The growing acceptance by states, counties and municipalities of responsibility for child protection symbolized a new era in the child protection movement (Protecting Children, 1995). The Social Security Act of 1935 marked the federal government’s foray into child protection. Two titles, Title IV-A and Title IV-B addressed the needs of children. Title IV-A established ADC (later AFDC) acknowledging the financial needs of children. Title IV-B (Child Welfare Services) “encouraged states to develop,

Continued on page 3
Prevent Child Abuse, Virginia

Affiliates at Work

Contact PCAV at:
P.O. Box 12308
Richmond, VA 23241
(804) 775-1777
(800) 267-VCAP
FAX (804) 775-0019

The Prevent Child Abuse, Virginia affiliate network continues to expand, bringing a variety of services into communities around the state. There are currently 23 local organizations affiliated with Prevent Child Abuse, Virginia and they are as diverse as the communities they serve. Here is a sampling of the services being offered state-wide:

Lynchburg
In Lynchburg at the Child Abuse Prevention Center, “A Time to Heal” is a support group for adults molested as children. This group is offered in collaboration with the Lynchburg sexual assault program. A Nurturing Program for the parents of children ages four to 12 is currently offered at CAPC. The program for parents of children ages newborn to five will be added this summer with an adolescent program scheduled to begin this fall. In addition to these programs, the Parent Aide Program, an intensive home visiting program, continues to serve families in the Lynchburg area. In this program, volunteers visit at-risk parents a minimum of four hours each week for the first 12 weeks following a child’s birth. Contact: Jory Hingson (804) 947-7426.

Montgomery County
The Child Abuse Prevention Coalition of Montgomery County/Radford offers parenting education classes and distributes literature on parenting skills and child abuse. The group sponsors the “Hugs & Kisses” sexual abuse awareness and prevention play for elementary school students, and provides literature to middle and high school students on teen issues. For Child Abuse Prevention Month, the Child Abuse Prevention Coalition runs a grocery bag art program in which 6000 children decorate grocery bags with the “Be a Hugger, Not a Slugger” slogan. The bags are then returned to the merchants for use. Contact: Joyce Beliveau (540) 961-2102.

Hampton Roads
In the Tidewater area, the Hampton Roads Committee to Prevent Child Abuse specializes in public awareness, education, advocacy and technical assistance to other organizations. HRCPCA is a co-sponsor of the Parent Connection, a parent support group modeled after Parents Anonymous. At present, the Parent Connection is offered in three locations: the Norfolk YMCA, at Mt. Trashmore YMCA in Virginia Beach, and the Children’s Harbor Day Care Center in Chesapeake. A joint project with Navy Family Advocacy is in the works. Contact: Betty Wade Coyle (757) 440-2749.

Roanoke
The Child Abuse Prevention Council in Roanoke has joined with the Advertising Federation of the Roanoke Valley to produce an ad campaign... “What Kind of Mark Will You Leave on Your Kids?” Along with public awareness events and educational programs, the organization offers “Something’s Wrong at Lucky’s House,” a puppet show aimed at elementary age children that focuses on all types of abuse and neglect. Parenting classes are offered on subjects as diverse as child development, child safety, discipline, nutrition and stress management. The M.I.L.K. Program (Mothers/ Men Inside Loving Kids) is offered to parents in the Roanoke City and Roanoke and Salem County Jails. The Nurturing Program is offered for teenage parents and their families. “Partners in Healing” support groups provide a supportive environment for adult survivors of sexual abuse and their partners. Contact: Shannon Brabham (540) 344-3579.

Winchester
Serving the Northern Shenandoah Valley, The Child-Parent Center in Winchester provides parenting education groups to parents of children from birth to 12, and to teen parents. Parent support services are offered to parents who are at risk. Divorce groups are available for separated and/or divorcing parents who wish to minimize the effect of their marital problems on their children. In-home interventions are available for families experiencing difficulties with parenting and whose children may be at risk of out-of-home placements. Workshops and training sessions are also offered to professionals and lay organizations on topics related to parenting, to child abuse and to prevention. Contact: Barbara Tinsman (540) 662-7732.

Fredericksburg
In Fredericksburg and its surrounding counties, the Rappahannock Area Council for Child Abuse Prevention provides public education by participating in a number of community events throughout the year. The council supports a Parents Anonymous support group for area parents and convenes the Rappahannock Area April Blue Ribbon Coalition for Child Abuse Prevention Month. A “Parent of the Year” essay contest in elementary and middle schools was sponsored by the coalition. Contact: Karen Clark (540) 659-8733.

More affiliate news will be published in the next issue.

Be a Blue Ribbon Parent.

Spend time with our children... talk to them, play with them, create a family spirit.

Blue Ribbon Campaign to Prevent Child Abuse and Neglect

Call 1-800-CHILDREN
In 1980, Congress passed PL.96-272, the Adoption Assistance and Child Welfare Act. This was an attempt to develop a national child welfare policy. The Act tied foster care funding to the implementation of policies related to family preservation and permanency planning (see VCFA, Spring, 1992). It also provided that each identified child have a case plan and that the plan be followed. However, since the mid-1980's the full implementation of PL.96-272 has been hindered by both the increasing number of children identified as abused and neglected and the serious limitations of service resources in most American communities" (Protecting Children, 1995, p.6).

Weber comments about the evolution of child protection. "By the 1980's the system had become rigid, formal and adversarial. One response was being given to all complaints. It was an investigative system rather than a 'family-friendly' one. It developed primarily legal overtones, with evidence becoming a primary focus. This is the system we have today," he laments.

At the same time, states were seeing a steady increase in the number of reports. The American Humane Association statistics indicate that by the end of 1993 there was a 547 percent increase in reports of child maltreatment over 1976 figures. The focus had shifted to investigation because it was mandated and staff was stretched too far to both investigate and to provide services. Foster care had become a primary intervention strategy due to lack of intensive treatment. Education and experience requirements for child protective service staff had declined. Ninety percent of states were experiencing difficulty recruiting CPS staff. Nationwide, there was variation in policy and program implementation for child protective services. And, there was an increasing lack of public confidence in the CPS system both by those utilizing the system and by those administering it (Pareseal, 1995).

CPS had become the largest component of child welfare services in terms of staff, with an estimated 30,000 workers nationwide by 1990 (Farrow, 1996). "This rapid expansion came at a price. To maintain some semblance of quality control, CPS became highly centralized. Hotline switchboards were often hundreds of miles from mandated reporters themselves. CPS workers were grouped together as specialty units within central offices, only rarely teamed with other welfare staff, much less deployed to community outstations. Paperwork increased exponentially: the need to document every action and every decision meant that the paper flow among child welfare workers, supervisors, police, courts and attorneys accounted for an increasing part of everyone's time" (Farrow, 1996, p.5).

"The situation we have now," explains Weber, "is one where we have a rigid, intrusive system responding to an unbelievable number of reports. Capacity to respond is not increasing, so the threshold for response continues to rise. Therefore, the system is geared toward investigation of the most egregious cases." In 1990, the U.S. Advisory Board on Child Abuse and Neglect concluded that child abuse and neglect represented a national emergency. They found the sheer scope of the problem to be overwhelming, and reported that the CPS system was failing. They found that the nation was spending an enormous amount of money on a system based on the nation's failure to prevent abuse and neglect. It is a system focused on reporting and investigation. "Too often an investigation seems to occur for its own sake, put succinctly, the system is not child-centered" (Melton and Barry, 1994, p.5).

At that time, the Board put forth a strategy for a new response. It suggested that federal programs be: a) sufficiently intensive and diverse as to provide communities with the support they need to develop a comprehensive neighborhood-based, child-centered and family-focused approach to child protection; and, b) sufficiently flexible so as to adapt to the needs of specific states, tribes and communities as well as to the necessary changes as neighborhood-based strategy is tested and evolves. They suggested a specific strategy with five basic elements: 1) strengthening urban, suburban and rural neighborhoods as environments for children and families; 2) reorienting the service delivery system so that providing services to prevent child maltreatment and other forms of family disintegration is as easy as placing a child in foster care; 3) improving the role of government in child protection; 4) reorienting societal values that may contribute to child maltreatment; and 5) strengthening and broadening the knowledge base about child maltreatment.

It is at this juncture that change is beginning to occur. More and more, states and localities are looking for options to a system which appears to some to be unresponsive and ineffective. Alternatives are emerging all over the country. It is an exciting time...
Innovations continued from page 3

in child protective services. There is consensus for generating a more comprehensive response to families in crisis, moving away from an allegation-focused system to creating supportive services for families and garnering funding streams for a more holistic response (Winterfield and England, 1995).

Strategies for Change

Many states are meeting the challenge to change how child protection in this country is working. One suggestion has been to discontinue a dual investigative system where CPS investigates child abuse reports where the perpetrator is a caretaker and law enforcement investigates reports where the child and offender are not related (Krugman, 1997). This proposal would give law enforcement the responsibility to conduct the investigations, thus freeing millions of dollars of time for social workers who could then concentrate upon intervention. The social worker, then, would not have the dual role of investigator and helper.

This idea has found only limited support. The assumptions of reallocation of funds from investigation to intervention are not supported historically. Police, while possibly more skilled at investigatory procedures, are not trained to assess family needs and begin therapeutic intervention. Nor are police generally trained in child development, child interviewing and specialization in child abuse investigation techniques (see VCPN, 44, "Police-Social Work Joint Investigation Teams"). Since assaults against children constitute a small portion of police complaints, without the influence of CPS, many child abuse or neglect cases may not receive the priority and response required for effective intervention (Hutchinson, Dattalo, and Rodwell, 1994).

Furthermore, history suggests that dual relationships between CPS and others have been beneficial in the past. For example, the joint police-social work investigation teams are considered highly effective in the investigation and prosecution of child sexual abuse cases. Also, community and multidisciplinary teams have functioned very effectively for diagnosis and treatment planning.

A second strategy for change is the development of possibilities for more than one response to complaints (Multiple Response System) and the formation of community partnerships. The focus of this article will be on this response model.

Community Partnerships

In his presentation to the National Association of Child Public Welfare Administrators at a 1994 conference, Michael Weber discussed a program for community protection of children. In his presentation, he was careful to articulate what functions need to continue to be a focus in child protection and what functions need to be changed.

According to Weber, several things need to be preserved. These are: a clear focus on child safety; resources for authoritative intervention to protect a child when necessary; and the availability of staff willing to persist in an overwhelming task because of their commitment to children.

By the same token, Weber suggests, many more aspects of CPS must change. These include: the investigation and collection of evidence to be presented in court; the extent to which the process is (or appears to be) intrusive, punitive and blaming of families; the minimal amount of services received by families and the limitations on the scope of services which can be received; the overwhelming workload imposed on staff; the insufficient attention to major policies such as expedited permanency for children, reasonable efforts to preserve families, and best interests of children.

Several states have begun the process of change. In reviewing their actions, one finds that states and communities choose different starting points for change. Some have changed the investigative process, necessitating legislative action. Florida, Missouri, Hawaii, Virginia and Iowa are examples. Others have begun with the focus on service delivery at the local level rather than changing statutes and the CPS investigation process. An example can be found in Louisville, Kentucky. These programs will be discussed shortly.

Enter the Edna McConnell Clark Foundation into this area of change (see box on Foundation for more information). Mike Weber explained its relevance. “For many years, the Edna McConnell Clark Foundation has been invested in Family Preservation programming as a response to child safety. Recently, they considered making a shift in emphasis within child protection but were uncertain as to what to do. They solicited my help in investigating the possibilities.”

Weber began investigating the status of child protection around the country. Was there a concern? Was there any consensus on a need to change? His investigation took approximately a year and led to some important discoveries. First, he found an almost urgent readiness for change. Secondly, he found that in many communities and states, change was already occurring. Based on his research, the Edna McConnell Clark Foundation wanted to become involved. They wanted to support a movement toward community-based, multiple response systems where CPS partners with agencies and citizens to provide better services to families-at-risk or already experiencing abuse and/or neglect.

What does it mean for the community to be responsible for protecting children? According to Frank Farrow, Director, Children’s Services Policy Center for the Study of Social Policy, there are many possible responses, both large and small. These include:

- Neighbors helping neighbors. A neighbor can offer babysitting or moral support.
- Networking. Major helping agencies can combine efforts to provide intensive service or accomplish a specific goal.
- Engaging parents. Community forums, door-to-door contacts, child health fairs or other outreach can offer assistance to parents.
- Community planning. Local data, desires and opinions should shape the services offered. Communities can examine what works and what does not.

“The Edna McConnell Clark Foundation decided to develop a request for proposals. They wanted to provide assistance for communities that were already moving from crisis response to prevention initiatives; from agency responsibility to community responsibility; and from a unilateral response to multiple responses,” Weber explains. The result was the community partnership grants to four locations: Jacksonville, Florida; Louisville, Kentucky; St. Louis, Missouri; and Cedar Rapids, Iowa.

Jacksonville’s Community Partnership for the Protection of Children, Duval County, Jacksonville, Florida

Legislators in Florida, like those in many other states, have received numerous complaints about CPS investigations over the years. This and other factors led to legislation allowing for major change in the CPS system.

Florida’s new statute called for a dual-track system: Investigation and Family Service Response. For the investigative track, the system may require the development of a specific partnership between CPS and law enforcement during the investigative process. The Department of Children and Families and the Department of Law Enforcement created several pilot projects throughout the state that required shared responsibility for receiving, disseminating and investigating reports of serious abuse and neglect (Farrow, 1996).

The Family Service Response track is for cases assessed to need services only rather
than adjudication. Initial CPS contact in these cases is expanded to include a comprehensive assessment of family needs, assets, and resources, as well as a broad picture of risks to children. In most areas of the state, families receive a family service response as part of the initial response to a complaint.

According to Theresa Pringle, Program Administrator in Duval County working with the Community Partnership Project, each county was allowed to develop this new system as it best fit the area. “Essentially, we were allowed to change anything about our present system that we wanted, as long as we were focusing on service to families in addition to the investigation of cases that met legal criteria for child abuse and neglect”, Pringle explains. “Our county didn’t want to change our investigation process. Rather, we wanted to develop a process which would allow us to divert to community agencies those cases which are appropriate.”

It became clear that, in order to make the desired changes, CPS would need an agreement with families and community agencies. Thus, the development of the Community Support Agreement was an important component of the new response system. This agreement was welcomed by the community. Pringle credits this support to the fact that the leaders of most agencies were already meeting monthly to discuss common issues and concerns. “These folks supported the concept from the onset. Their attitude was ‘we will help this community do what is needed!’”

The Jacksonville program also encourages families, friends, neighbors and other involved persons to maintain an active role in keeping individual children safe. As a part of the process of a CPS worker plan-

**DEPARTMENT OF SOCIAL SERVICES (STATE BOARD OF) NOTICE OF REGULATORY ACTION PUBLIC COMMENT PERIOD FINAL REGULATION entitled: CHILD PROTECTIVE SERVICES (22-VAC 40-705-10 et seq.)**

October 31, 1997 -- Written public comments may be submitted until this date. Notice is hereby given in accordance with 9-6.147.1 and 9-6.149.1 of the Code of Virginia that the State Board of Social Services has adopted as final the regulation entitled, “CHILD PROTECTIVE SERVICES” (22 VAC 40-705-10 et seq.). The State Board of Social Services made no substantial changes to the proposed regulation other than amendment of 22 VAC 40-705-50 (B). The purpose of 22 VAC 40-705-50 (B) is to clarify circumstances in which an inter-

view with the alleged victim child would not be audio taped. Because the Board believes that this change may be considered substantial by other parties, the Board will accept additional comment. Accordingly, additional written comment concerning 22 VAC 40-705-10 et seq. may be submitted until October 31, 1997 to Jesslyn Cobb. The final regulation will be published in the Virginia Register, on September 1, 1997. The State Board convened a public hearing in Roanoke, Virginia at the Hotel Roanoke on September 29, 1997.

Written comments should be sent to: Jesslyn Cobb, Program Consultant, Child Protective Services Unit, Virginia Department of Social Services, 730 East Broad St. Richmond, VA 23219.

Fax: (804) 692-2215 E-mail - cps2@dss.state.va.us

For a copy of the proposed regulation, please call (804) 692-1255, or contact Website address, www.vip-view.net
of the family resource system, and are located at the facilities. Iowa's PATCH team is composed of the Department of Human Services, the health department, Family Support Staff, housing, schools, and mental health/substance abuse services. Winston describes how it works. "While we each maintain our individual professional roles, we must know about the eligibility requirements and services of others. We are all responsible for serving families in the neighborhood and for the most effective use of our combined skills. Therefore, child protection serves families as a part of a team rather than alone. In fact, they are called assessment workers under our system. This model allows us to make a quick, coordinated response and makes access to services much easier. And, more importantly, we all have responsibility for the protection of children."

Complaints come to Iowa's CPS system in the traditional manner. However, once received, an assessment is conducted. If risk is severe, an investigation is completed. If risk is lower, services are offered. Winston gave an example, "One of our Family Support Staff was working with a mother and her child in the home. The worker noticed a bite on the child's arm. When she asked the mother about it, the mother said that she had bitten her child. The worker told the mother that it is her job to help protect children, so she had to call the Assessment Worker. However, she also assured her that she would stick by her and that they would all figure out what to do. An investigation was done, and an assessment of needs made. They worked with the mother on appropriate ways to deal with the child when the child was misbehaving and the mother was stressed. The result was that the mother called our worker later and said, 'I need help today. If I don't get help, I am afraid I will hurt my child.' After a discussion, it was determined that what she needed was a break. So, we found some child care and gave her a break. This mother's feeling about the system was that it is there to help rather than to be punitive."

Developing neighborhood partners is another important aspect of this program's success. Neighborhood partners are people who work with families who live within a block's radius of them. These are natural helpers who listen, support, encourage positive efforts, help families identify and build on strengths, and connect the family with community-based informal support systems. They help their neighborhood become a better place for families and children. Neighborhood partners plan events and activities, such as block parties. They also encourage participation in Family Support Center activities and in the Neighborhood Association. Neighborhood Associations are becoming active partners in the program. One example is offering single mothers a break the first Friday and third Saturday of each month by providing child

Referenced throughout this report is the Edna McConnell Clark Foundation, the primary benefactor of the four national programs described in the main article. Just what is this foundation and how did it begin?

David Hall McConnell was a door-to-door book salesman in New York State in the 1880's. He also offered a vial of homemade perfume which proved to be more popular than the books! He recognized a market and, therefore, formed the California Perfume Company in 1886. He expanded his products, and recruited housewives to sell them from their homes. The company grew, and in 1936 became the Avon Company. David McConnell died in 1937. Edna McConnell was David's daughter. Her husband, Van Alan Clark, worked for the company and became the chairman of the board in the 1950s.

Avon prospered and so did the family. The Clark family decided to put some of its resources in a small foundation. Over time, the foundation grew and has become one of the largest foundations in the country. Total assets as of September 30, 1996, were valued at $568 million.

The Clarks and their three sons were directly involved in grantmaking activities. The trustees originally decided to concentrate the grants on goals in four specific areas: the poor, children, the elderly, and the developing world. Their mission over the years has been to improve conditions for people who live in poor and disadvantaged communities.

In 1996, the Foundation's Program for Children implemented the Community Partnerships Program. It specifically targeted grant monies and technical assistance toward assisting communities which were restructuring their systems of child protection by engaging various organizations and individuals in a collective community effort to keep children safe from abuse and neglect. Program staff spent two years developing a strategy for child protection reform, building upon a belief that the community must be willing and able to keep children safe and to prevent child abuse and neglect. It has worked closely with four cities - Cedar Rapids, Iowa, Jacksonville, Florida, Louisville, Kentucky, and St. Louis, Missouri - all of which have developed innovative, community partnerships for protecting children. These community partners, who are CPS agencies, schools, law enforcement, mental health professionals, civic groups, nonprofit organizations, tenant associations, and citizens, work together in neighborhoods to keep children safe. Together they embrace the notion of collective responsibility for child safety.

In addition to these four programs, the Foundation is offering smaller grants and technical assistance to select communities engaged in child protection reform. In addition, it is supporting national, state and local organizations which educate and generate the involvement of parents, legislators, child welfare administrators, judges, police officers and child advocates.

The Foundation also continues to make a limited number of grants to advance intensive family preservation services. The foundation has supported this work for over 14 years, reflecting a belief that an effective system of child protection must make every effort to keep families together if this can be done safely.

The Edna McConnell Clark Foundation publishes an annual report which outlines information about the Foundation and the programs it supports. It also includes information on its publications as well as how to apply for grants. For further information about the Foundation, write or fax: Office of Communications, The Edna McConnell Clark Foundation, 250 Park Avenue, New York, NY 10017-0026, FAX: (212) 986-4588.
Resource Reviews


Setting standards and improving practice in child protective services has been a goal of the Child Welfare League of America since its formation in 1920. This publication is its latest articulation of its examination of 1) current practices; 2) the professional literature and standards developed by others; and, 3) a study of the most recent experiences of social work and related fields. In addition, it presents issues related to management and governance components of child welfare practice.

Chapters related to management and governance include the following topics: core values for management and governance of public and nonprofit child welfare organizations; techniques for establishing organization mission statements; vision and goals for the organization within the community; leadership; advocacy; human resource concerns including recruitment, employee development, staff development, personnel policies and procedures; business management issues; marketing practices and programs; and, resource development. Finally, the appendix contains ethical principles and standards for professional fund-raising practices.

This manual provides a significant amount of information that could prove useful to anyone planning, organizing and administering services in nonprofit, child-serving organizations.


Available from: The National Clearinghouse on Child Abuse and Neglect, P.O. Box 1182, Washington, D.C. 20013-1182. 800-394-3358 or 703-885-7565, FAX: 703-385-3206. E-mail: Nccanch@cslb.com Web site: URL: http://www.csib.com/nccanch

In 1991, the story of the death of 5-year-old Adam Mann at the hands of his stepfather and his mother led Congress to ask the U.S. Advisory Board on Child Abuse and Neglect to recommend: 1) a national policy to reduce and ultimately prevent such fatalities; 2) changes to achieve an effective Federal role on the implementation of the policy, and 3) changes needed to improve data collection about child abuse and neglect fatalities. This report is the result of the efforts of the Advisory Committee to address the challenge set forth by Congress.

In this book, the Advisory Board reports that 10,000 children have died at the hands of their young caretakers since Adam's death. It is estimated that about 2,000 infants and young children die from abuse and neglect by parents or caretakers each year, or approximately five children each day.

In this report one finds a discussion of existing efforts and opportunities that assist in understanding and preventing child abuse and neglect. It also provides a close look at the weaknesses and obstacles in present systems, including the lack of resources and commitment of policy makers to take action that could save children's lives. They offer 26 recommendations for addressing deep-seated problems within law enforcement, child protection, health agencies and the courts. It is hoped by the Advisory Board that "this report will awaken America to the national shame of child maltreatment-related fatalities and will galvanize all Americans to act now to prevent such tragedies."

RESOURCES FROM THE ANNE E. CASEY FOUNDATION


This resource is a national and state-by-state effort to track the status of children in the United States. Data reflecting the educational, social, economic and physical well-being of children is profiled.

Success in School: Education Ideas that Count

A series of brief (one page, front and back) concept papers. Each of the nine attractive sheets explains the concept, describes at least one program using the concept, and lists 5 to 12 addresses for more information. The concepts that are known to be effective are: school readiness, small schools, standards, family participation, school-community partnerships, decentralization, professional development, school-based accountability and innovations and experiments.

Getting Smart, Getting Real: Using Research and Evaluation Information to Improve Programs and Policies

Believing that research and evaluation are critical and integral components of comprehensive reform, the Casey Foundation convened its own evaluators, its staff and other researchers to explore key issues in reforming systems. This report offers highlights of the 1995 conference.

Images and Reality: Juvenile Crime Youth Violence and Public Policy

The National Council on Crime and Delinquency prepared this report which summarizes trends in juvenile crime and their implications for public policy.

Available from: The Annie E. Casey Foundation, 701 St. Paul St., Baltimore, MD 21202, (410) 547-6600 or (410) 223-2890, Fax (410) 547-6624, web site: www.aecf.org


This booklet reports on the First African American Child Welfare summit convened by the Black Administrators in Child Welfare, Inc. and sponsored by the Annie E. Casey Foundation. At the Summit, prominent African American leaders in child welfare shared their visions and offered proposals for addressing the increasing number of African American children being removed from their families and communities. Almost half of children nationwide in out-of-home care are children of color. There is also an acceleration in the placement of African American children in juvenile justice facilities. The summit formulated strategies and recommendations concerning child welfare issues and out-of-home placement as well as articulating a vision of the African American Community of the Future.

and who had missed 15 days of school - the caller would be referred to the Community Resource Team, in this case at Neighborhood Place Ujima. The complainant calls the center and a team member visits the child's family to gather information, assess the needs, match needs with resources and help the family develop needed resources. Resources can include formal education resources such as parenting education or GED preparation, mediation, mental health and drug/alcohol treatment. Or, the resources can be informal community resources such as the Community Partners and Natural Helpers.

However, if the call does meet criteria, an investigation by a child protection worker is conducted. If a severity criteria is met, the children may be removed in an emergency and the case goes to court for adjudication. If severity criteria are not met, but the case does meet substantiation criteria, the willingness of the family to cooperate with services is assessed. If the family appears willing, the case is assigned to a Child Protection Coordinator who is a part of the Community Resource Team. An assessment will be made and a plan developed by and with the family. The Coordinator will follow the case until goals are met, at which time the case will be closed. However, if at any time during the service stage it becomes clear that the family cannot or will not become a partner in protecting their child, the case will be reviewed by child protective services and by the Court.

"We are very excited about this proposal," exclaims Eugene. "We believe that there is a serious commitment on the part of all of the partners. While our most formidable task is the identification of Natural Helpers and Neighborhood Partners, we are encouraged at the support we are getting from the community surrounding Neighborhood Place Ujima. We wanted them to be active participants in developing a strategic plan. However, we have had to overcome some barriers that we identified during the process of focus groups and community surveys. For instance, there are some fears about getting involved with professionals in a collaborative way. There are child care needs, so we have paid child care expenses in order for parents to participate in the strategic planning. We have learned the importance of careful listening as these community members teach us to reach out in a less intense, more informal way. It has been a fun and gratifying process."

"I see the process of developing the Community Partnership for Protecting Children on two different levels," says Michaletsyk. "One is intellectual where this is a concrete expression of everything that the Neighborhood Place concept is about. The other is practical, which recognized that the work of the initiative not only takes place in a steering committee but also in the grocery store, over a fence, or door-to-door, where parents recruit other parents for the Partnership."

Clearly, Louisville is working hard to develop a realistic yet innovative approach to protecting children. They have full support of the state for structuring child protection in an innovative way. The challenge for the state will be to evaluate this approach and consider a re-engineering of child protection throughout Kentucky.

Outcomes

It is too early to address the issue of outcomes of these innovative projects except to say that the Clark Foundation has developed specifics to be measured. These are: 1) children in participating neighborhoods will be less likely to be abused and neglected; 2) when children come to the attention of the community system for protecting children, they will be less likely to be re-abused or re-neglected in the future; and 3) the rate of serious injury to children due to abuse or neglect will decline in participating neighborhoods. The Edna McConnell Clark Foundation will be pro-
allegations (House Document No. 74, 1996).

Public hearings were held throughout the state. Voices were mixed in their complaints of and praise for the child protection system. Some were concerned about the amount of power a CPS worker holds and the potential for a worker to abuse the power. Some stated that investigations were not thorough enough. Others took the opposite view. Workers were sometimes seen as intrusive in their quest to protect, while at other times seen as not protecting children adequately. Some praised the CPS staff, suggesting that they were doing an excellent job given the lack of resources and the burdensome level of their caseloads.

The work of the subcommittee led them to learn of the initiatives other states have implemented. These response systems appeared to be efficient and cost-effective as well as less punitive and intrusive because of limited use of investigations and increased use of family assessments.

The final recommendations of the subcommittee were many. One was that Virginia develop a pilot project using a multiple response system. That recommendation was placed in a bill which came before the 1996 legislative session. It passed both houses and was signed by the Governor.

The law stipulates that “by March 1, 1997, the Department shall establish a multiple response child protective services system in at least three and no more than five areas of the state selected by the Department” (Code of Virginia, 63.1-248.18). This put the Department on a fast track to developing a new CPS system in some communities.

“Once the legislation was signed, the Department developed a work plan to establish the Multiple Response System. Local agencies were invited to apply to pilot the Multiple Response System through a Request for Applications issued August 23, 1996 with a deadline for applications October 15, 1996. The Request for Applications described the Multiple Response System philosophical model, local agency requirements, and offered up to $10,000 per pilot agency to use in implementing the Multiple Response System in the first year,” explains Nan McKenney, Project Director at the Department of Social Services.

**Pilot Sites**

The five agencies selected were the City of Portsmouth, the counties of Albemarle, Loudoun, and Montgomery, and the combined agencies of York-Poquoson. These agencies are geographically distributed across the state. The four county agencies are medium-size agencies representing nearly half the localities in Virginia. The City of Portsmouth is the largest agency in the pilot and is representative of larger urban agencies.

The five pilot agencies received 2328 Child Protective Service complaints in 1995-1996, 6.6 percent of the state total. Portsmouth received 1043 of these complaints. The rest were distributed among the other four pilot agencies. While there are similarities in the agencies, there are important differences among the pilot agencies that may impact the Multiple Response System implementation and evaluation. These differences will help pinpoint implications for the potential statewide expansion of the Multiple Response System.

**Multiple Response System Implementation Training**

Recognizing the drastic shift in focus for the child protective service programs in the pilot agencies, Virginia’s Department of Social Services decided to bring all pilot agencies and their community partners together to “kick-off” the Multiple Response System pilot. In December, 1996, Michael Weber, Associate Director, National Committee to Prevent Child Abuse, presented a thought-provoking presentation about child protective service reform and community partnerships. His address seemed to energize the nearly fifty attendees.

Virginia’s Department of Social Services, in conjunction with Virginia Social Service Training Institute (VISSTA) of the Virginia Commonwealth University, developed an extensive pre-implementation training for all pilot agency staff. This training was delivered in February, 1997. The three day training emphasized the philosophical shift of the Multiple Response System as well as new policy and procedures. In addition, each participant received a Training Resource Notebook that included articles about child protective service reform, Virginia’s initiatives, and Family Empowerment Strength-based Assessment.

In June, 1997, two 2-day training sessions were conducted for the staff of pilot agencies and domestic violence programs. The purpose of this training was to provide opportunities for these groups to discuss their respective programs and how they might work more collaboratively with families. The training was developed by state social service staff and staff from private and non-profit domestic violence programs, with support from VISSTA.

**Introducing the Multiple Response Child Protective Services System**

**What is Virginia’s Multiple Response System?**

Virginia’s CPS Multiple Response System allows local departments of social services selected as pilots to respond differentially to reports of child abuse and neglect. The Multiple Response System encourages local departments to formalize agency and community relationships that offer assistance and intervention to families at risk of child abuse and neglect. The Multiple Response System recognizes the need for formal agreements with law enforcement and the Office of the Commonwealth Attorney that support a joint response to the most serious child maltreatment reports.

The three responses available in the Multiple Response System are:

- **Referral Response Track** - If the child protective services report does not meet the definition of abuse or neglect, the local department makes referrals as needed and appropriate.

- **Assessment Response Track** - If the CPS report is valid, but safety concerns for the child appear to be low and the report is not mandated to be investigated, the CPS worker conducts a family needs assessment. When appropriate, families are offered services through the local department or community agencies that emphasize prevention and assistance.

- **Investigation Response Track** - If the CPS report is mandated to be investigated and/or where safety concerns for the child appear to be high, the traditional CPS response is performed. In most instances, investigations will be conducted with law enforcement agencies.

**Intake/Determination of Appropriate Response Track**

The local agency worker uses a Child Abuse and Neglect Intake Screening Form to collect data about the report which is evaluated for child safety and to determine the response that is needed. A tool, the CPS Multiple Response System Report Matrix, guides the worker in this decision. The evaluation is documented in writing on a Child Abuse and Neglect Intake Screening Form and signed by both the CPS worker and the CPS supervisor.

*continued on page 14*
Referral Response Track

If a report does not reach the criteria for a CPS complaint, but is child welfare-related and requires further action, either by the local agency or other community resources, it is placed in the Referral Response Track. The purpose of this response track is to formalize the child abuse or neglect prevention and/or early intervention activities of the CPS program.

The local department takes the appropriate action to link the family to community resources. These actions may include, but are not limited to, information about referral to another community agency or a home visit by the local department to offer services. These activities are to be completed and documented within 45 calendar days of the date the report is placed in the Referral Response Track.

Assessment Response Track

Reports placed in this track meet the criteria for a valid CPS report, but do not reflect an immediate concern for child safety, and are not mandated to be investigated. The local agency worker contacts the family and conducts an assessment of the child’s safety and the needs of the family. This assessment is documented on a Family Needs Assessment form and is completed within 45 to 60 days.

The information for the Family Needs Assessment is based on face-to-face contact with all household members as well as incorporating information from pertinent collateral contacts. The local agency decides with whom to initiate the assessment based on the case situation. In many instances, the first contact will be with both parent and child. The emphasis is upon determining the family strengths available to protect the child if there is a safety risk.

Another tool the CPS worker uses in the Assessment Response Track is a Family Risk Assessment that identifies generic child abuse and neglect risk factors. It is used in conjunction with the family information documented in the Family Needs Assessment Form to help the CPS worker determine the level of risk to the child or children and if a child safety plan is needed. If it is determined that a child is not safe, the worker and family develop a written plan to assure child safety.

If the family and the CPS worker agree that services are needed, they can be recorded on the Family Service Agreement. There is a place on this form to include those services to be provided by another community resource.

Reports placed in the Assessment Response Track can be reclassified if information is obtained to support placement in the Investigation Response Track. However, reports cannot be reclassified to the Investigation Response Track solely because the family declines services.

Investigation Response Track

The local agency may investigate any CPS report, but certain reports are required to be placed in the Investigation Response Track. The CPS Matrix specifies these reports that are indicative of severe maltreatment and high safety risks.

The Investigation Response Track is a continuation of the existing CPS process. An investigation is completed within 45 to 60 days to determine whether there is clear and convincing evidence that the alleged abuse or neglect occurred. A disposition is made. If there is a finding of abuse or neglect, the abuser’s name is entered into the Central Registry. The disposition can be administratively appealed. Services are provided to the child and family as needed.

Progress to Date

The Department has provided assistance to local pilot agencies by developing the policies and procedures to be used in implementing the Multiple Response System. Ongoing technical assistance is being provided to pilot agencies by the Department.

Program evaluation is a key component of the pilot. Virginia Polytechnic and State University has a contract to conduct the evaluation. A comprehensive plan has been developed to determine if the Multiple Response System should be expanded when the pilot ends in 1999.

One of the key indicators of success of the Multiple Response System is the extent to which the communities in the local pilot areas share the responsibility for child protection. The Department and local agencies will be emphasizing activities that strengthen this commitment and that support parental responsibility for the care of their children.

VCNP staff talked to CPS supervisors in the local agencies responsible for implementing the pilot programs using the Multiple Response System. Having just begun implementation in March, VCNP was wondering what attracted each locality to this pilot project, perceptions about the training and how local social services staff are feeling as they begin the implementation process.

Interest in Pilot

Generally, each supervisor stated that in the Multiple Response System the emphasis was upon service to families rather than investigation and intrusion. “Most of our families are experiencing situational incidents rather than pervasive endanger-

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This report details an extensive study of the child protective services system in Virginia. The study concluded that many of the problems identified are also faced by other states. A major recommendation of the subcommittee was the establishment of pilot multiple response sites in the Commonwealth. The subcommittee introduced the legislation which required the State Department of Social Services to establish a three-year pilot multiple response system for responding to reports of child abuse and neglect in three to five areas of the state.

ment”, says Judy Randle, Social Work Supervisor with the Albemarle Department of Social Services. “Flexibility in response is one of the advantages of the Multiple Response System.”

Carl Johnson, CPS Coordinator for the Portsmouth Department of Social Services agrees. “There is a significant difference in the severity of cases we see in CPS. However, we were responding to all complaints in one way: an investigation which could put families through significant distress for 45-60 days. We wanted the same goal of protection for children, but a legally sanctioned approach which is different and which allowed us to make sure children are safe while also strengthening the family. This approach appears to allow that.”

Ann VanDeventer, Chief of Child Protective Services for Loudoun County, views this program as harking back to the original intent of social work in child protection. “The philosophy behind the Multiple Response System is one that goes back to the middle 70’s when child protective services formalized. I liked it then and I like it now.”

Training

To the person, the supervisors were complimentary of the training they received in February, 1997. It covered much more than policy and forms. It included strategies for implementing a strengths-based model for case management. Research suggests this approach results in a high level of individual goal attainment, improved vocational and independent living status, and high levels of consumer satisfaction (VISSTA Training Materials, 1997).

The strengths-based system embodies six principles which guide the intervention process. Adapted for the Multiple Response System, these principles are:

1. Most persons with allegations of child abuse/neglect possess the inherent capacity to learn, grow and change.
2. The focus is on individual strengths, not deficits or pathology. However, in CPS, factors which may impact on safety of the child must be identified quickly.
3. The helping process is guided by rigorous standards of consumer self-determination as long as safety of the child can be maintained.
4. The consumer-case manager relationship is primary and essential.
5. The community is viewed as an oasis of resources, not as an obstacle or a target to blame.
6. Community integration is fostered by assertive outreach.

Related to these six principles are six functions in the helping process. They are important steps in the process. The first of these functions is engagement, which constitutes the initial stages of relationship building which is vital to any helping effort. At this point the CPS worker must educate the client about the investigation or assessment process, describe how involvement in this process can help families realize their own needs and desires, and create an atmosphere where client and practitioner get to know each other as people. Resistance and suspicion are viewed as normal reactions to an uncertain situation.

The second function is strengths assessment. Information is generated relative to the uniqueness and capabilities of each client. The focus is on his or her desires for the future and historical information which relates to specific issues to be addressed. Information regarding potential support people, leisure time interests and possibly long-looked skills is regularly gathered in a strengths-based system. It becomes a systematic process for developing trust.

Third, the process naturally progresses to the development of short-term goals and assistance in the implementation of these goals. The case manager becomes involved and provides ongoing opportunities for teaching and modeling functional behavior. The objective becomes to provide each client with a sense of mastery and empowerment.

The fourth function is constant and continuous collaboration between client and CPS worker. The goal of this function is to sustain client gains. A collection of support persons are developed and utilized in the client’s efforts to sustain gains, as support can have a profound impact on the client’s continuing growth.

Intertwined with assisting in sustaining client gains is advocacy, the fifth function. Community workers have often to know their client’s needs, desires, and strengths, use their knowledge to advocate for them with other systems in order to be more responsive to the client’s needs. Part of this function is to work with the client in assessing the resources in terms of availability, adequacy, accessibility and accommodation. If there are obstacles, these are addressed as a part of this process.

Lastly, the latter stages of case management results in gradual disengagement. As clients achieve a level of stability and safety in their family, the level of intensity in case management should change. However, graduated disengagement does not mean the relationship is ending. In fact, because of the importance of this relationship, a termination may be viewed as a negative consequence of getting better. Therefore, a personal connection is maintained. The case manager continues the relationship in the role as consultant.

This model for case management is essential under a Multiple Response System for child abuse and neglect. This collaborative and support-building approach enhances the chances of a family accepting services and, therefore, becoming better equipped to keep children safe in the future.

How are CPS line workers accepting this new approach? For the most part, quite enthusiastically. “I can tell a difference in the attitude of our CPS staff”, explains Carolyn Griffin, Child and Family Services Supervisor for the York-Poquoson Department of Social Services. “This feels so much less adversarial and it like that. They are also aware that this method requires considerable skill. It requires finesse to be able to meet with a family and explain the need for change and still engage them in services.”

Randle agrees, but adds, “You know, most people really do not want to hurt their children. Some parents merely need some redirecting and assistance in developing resources. My staff believes this system allows them to help rather than serve as a barrier. They think that they will be less feared. Rather, they will be seen as helpers.”

“My staff reports families as much less hostile and less passive-aggressive since we have started this system,” Johnson states. “We are offering services, and they are being accepted. This is causing significantly less stress to our CPS staff. That in itself is significant.”

continued on page 16
Virginia's Response
continued from page 15

Community Partnering

One very important aspect to the Multiple-Response System is partnering with community agencies. This is important for two reasons. First, agencies need to be educated as to the fact that the local CPS will be conducting business differently. Secondly, the agencies will be asked to become an active participant in helping strengthen families. Each agency needs to recognize the importance of this relationship.

Each agency is in the process of developing community networks. All are using the media to inform the community at large. Feature articles in the local newspaper and articles in agency newsletters are common. Local television networks have been helpful in presenting information through news reports and talk show opportunities. Brochures have been developed and disseminated. In addition, each community is designing a specific program for other agencies or professionals. An example was given by Griffith. "In February we held a Community Awareness Forum for all community stakeholders," she explains. "We explained the program: its similarities and its differences in relation to the old system. Of course, there was some skepticism. For instance, our local judge was concerned about the lack of tracking for assessment cases since they are not entered into the Central Registry. Otherwise, he liked the concept."

Other localities are choosing a more individualized approach to community education. "We are conducting presentations for many local agencies," explains Judy Arrington CPS Coordinator for Montgomery Department of Social Services. "For example, I was presenting to the local Child Abuse and Neglect Prevention Committee this morning. We have a presentation for middle school and high school guidance counselors planned for the near future. We hope to reach all interested groups before long."

Johnson took a different approach. "I did a great deal of educating during the request for proposal process," he explains. "When I solicited letters from all stakeholders, I sent a copy of the RFP and a letter explaining the new system. Each had an opportunity to ask questions and voice concerns during that process. In addition, we held a [redacted] as a part of Child Abuse and Neglect Prevention Month, and invited many stakeholders to come and visit. We had a good response."

Community education is obviously well under way. However, VanDeventer made an interesting point about community education. "You know, many people don't really understand child protective services as it was before March. It is complicated to describe. So in talking about the new program, it needs to be presented in a understandable way as possible."

Summary

Data is just beginning to be collected. Each supervisor finds that complaints are breaking out as they expected. The percentage of investigations are running between 16 and 25 percent of the complaints that meet criteria for child abuse and neglect. Some believe the number of investigations will decrease even more as the staff become more confident in the assessment track.

Clearly, the agencies interviewed are very happy to be providing a different service to the community. It is reminiscent of what social work is supposed to be, and that pleases them. At the conclusion of his interview, Johnson was especially enthusiastic about the role Virginia is playing in the area of child protection. "Virginia is on the cutting edge of CPS policy and practice in the nation. This is the wave of the future. It is my hope that either a multiple or dual response system will be adopted by all fifty states!"

References Provided Upon Request

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