

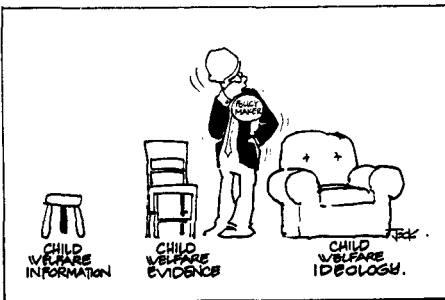
Preventing Out of Home Placements

Brian Wharf

The following article by Professor Brian Wharf is based on programs operating in the USA. There are some signs of placement prevention programs being embraced by government bodies and non-government child welfare agencies in Australia and in Canada. His experience of developments in Australia, during a recent visit, prompted him to put forward this article for publication in Children Australia. There appears to be a remarkable similarity of interests between child welfare issues in Australia and Canada, particularly round the question of whether protection and prevention services should be integrated or provided by separate agencies or departments. Children Australia hopes this will be the first in a series of exchanges between Australia and Canada.

The Adoption Assistance and Child Welfare Act of 1980 in the US, has resulted in the development of a number of programs and projects designed to prevent the out of home placement of neglected and abused children. No such legislation at the national level exists in Canada, and in the absence of national leadership and for a variety of other reasons much less attention has been given in Canada to the prevention of out of home placements.

This article consists of three sections. The first reviews projects conducted in the US, the second identifies common denominators of these projects and the concluding section analyses these lessons in the context of a comprehensive policy for child welfare in Canada.



The primary reason for undertaking this review is that policy in child welfare as in other areas of social policy is largely determined by the

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ideological positions of policy makers and is only dimly influenced by information and evidence. Thus policy makers who hold a residual position, and this group has dominated social policy in recent years believe that social services should be made available only as a last resort. In child welfare this perspective holds that families are capable of providing appropriate care for children and that only when crises result in neglect or abuse should state supported agencies intervene. The consequence of such intervention is that apprehension is frequently the only feasible option available to child welfare workers. The opposing policy position is that all families require assistance in the often difficult task of raising children, and that services such as child care, counselling, new parent discussion groups and other supports to families are most appropriately offered prior to crises and in a way which does not label the users as failures.

The debate between the two positions is usually acrimonious and as indicated above uninformed by evidence or information. In addition, given the current context of national and provincial debts, proponents of new programs which require additional funds find themselves in the unenviable position of having to supply unequivocal evidence that their proposals will be effective and will save money. Since it is usually difficult to provide such evidence prior to programs being established, the arguments of those pushing for new preventive programs have fallen

on deaf ears. And as will be evident in the discussion which follows providing definitive statements of effectiveness in the child welfare field is riddled with difficulties.

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My particular interest in reviewing the available evidence of effectiveness stemmed from a long standing concern about child welfare service in British Columbia (BC). Despite the innovative recommendations of the Royal Commission on Family and Children's Law of 1975, BC, under a series of Social Credit governments has adopted a residual approach to social welfare. The Family and Child Service Act (1981) contains no provisions for preventive services and because of this deliberate omission and its brevity, the act has been characterised by critics as "lean and mean". However, at the time the Act was enacted it was nested within a number of Ministry and voluntary sector programs designed to provide a range of supportive services to families. As a consequence the residual nature of the Act was less severe than would otherwise have been the case. However, in 1983, citing the need for restraint as the reason, the provincial government cancelled its own programs and reduced funding to those provided by the voluntary sector. The

most important of these programs and certainly the one which most closely resembled a placement prevention program was called the family support program. In its 1980 Annual Report the Ministry lauded this program stating that:

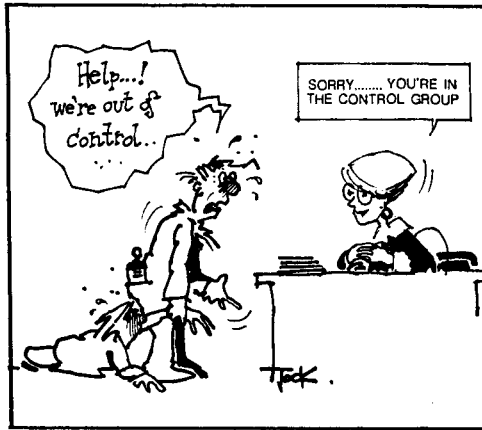
1000 fewer children were in care than in 1975 - an encouraging measure of the success of the program. (Ministry of Human Resources, 1980.)

At the time the Ministry defended the cancellation by arguing that the only factor which determines the number of children in care is the number under 19 in the general population. However, despite this argument the increase in the number of child neglect and abuse cases, and particularly child sexual abuse, which occurred during the eighties caused the Ministry to restore some funds to the voluntary sector. The Ministry also undertook a reorganisation to separate child welfare services from income support, and in many ways has sought to overcome its image as lean and mean. However, the Ministry has not re-established the family support program. (For an extensive review of child welfare in BC during the eighties see Callahan, M.J. 1989, and for a particularly crucial view see Cruikshank, D. 1986).

Despite the fact that policies are developed as a consequence of ideology rather than information and evidence, my curiosity in ferreting out potentially useful information has continued over the years. During 1987-89 I prepared the first of what was to be a series of drafts on preventing out of home placements. This 1991 version will probably not be the last.

At the outset it should be noted that a contentious issue of methodology surrounds this topic. Some take the position that definitive conclusions can be reached only when projects have been evaluated by experimental designs. This approach requires that one group of families, the control group, experiencing difficulties in providing care for their children receive no services, whereas a second and similar group receive services designed to prevent out of home placement. After a designated period of time the number

of children taken into care from each of the two groups are compared. Given that the services provided represented the only difference between the two groups and given a difference in the number of apprehensions, a conclusion can be drawn that services are effective or ineffective.



One leading US researcher in child welfare defends this position in very unequivocal terms.

One may feel confident that preventive programs that claim without benefit of a control group that all of their cases were at risk of placement and that they, therefore, "prevented placement in all cases in which children did not enter care are making wildly excessive claims for their programs. In fact without some sort of control or reasonable comparison group, absolutely no claims about the success of preventing foster care can be made. (Jones, 1985, p.147).

While not disputing the claim that experimental designs are desirable, practitioners raise several questions about its use in the human services. First, they object to denying services to families in the interests of research. Even when this argument is refuted by designs which allow the usual range of services to be provided, to the control group, practitioners believe that all families should receive the best possible services. Second, they note that experimental designs cannot control all of the relevant variables simply because of the real life nature of social service research. Hence while defenders of the experimental approach argue that this design is pure and scientific, practitioners are inclined to dispute this as a spurious claim. Third, practitioners note the utility of longitudinal studies where a

group of families with children at risk are tracked over long periods of time to determine whether apprehensions occurred. Finally, practitioners point to the difficulty of securing funds and approval for any kind of research, let alone the most expensive.

It is suggested here that experimental designs are possible and can be used to a far greater extent than has been the case in the past. For example, given a commitment to prevention, provincial ministries could develop a comprehensive research design whereby some regional offices would provide the usual range of services, while other offices with similar populations provided an array of programs specifically designed to prevent out of home services. The results of usual versus placement prevention programs could then be tracked over a three to five year period to determine the difference in the number of children taken into care. Such a plan would require additional funds for both services and research.

In the absence of experimental designs other approaches, such as longitudinal designs should be developed. Given the rudimentary state of research in the social service, careful follow up studies, case studies tracing the evolution of programs and before and after accounts can provide useful information.

The above discussion is not intended to leave the impression that research even if well funded and well designed will provide complete answers. It is extraordinarily difficult to mount research programs which are sufficiently extensive in terms of numbers, and sufficiently intensive with regard to the details of behaviour over a long period of time. Thus it is not uncommon to find research involving a large number of subjects which asks only a few questions, and conversely intensive studies of only a few subjects. And typically research is of a short rather than long term nature.

The hope that an evaluation will provide unequivocal answers, convincing enough to extinguish controversy about the merits of a social programs is bound to be disappointed. (Cronbach, 1982, p.3).

With that lengthy introduction in place, I turn now to a descriptive

review of US projects to prevent out of home placements. The review is divided into two sections. The first describes reviews presented in the literature in the last decade, and hence consists of a review of the reviews. The second describes projects reported in the Annotated Directory of Family Based Services compiled by the National Resource Centre of Family Based Services at the School of Social Work, University of Iowa. The directory lists and briefly describes one hundred and thirty-nine projects designed to prevent out of home placement. The majority of these projects were developed by agencies in an attempt to serve families in a more effective fashion. Hence evaluation and research were secondary considerations, and the evaluations, where conducted, clearly reveal this priority.

Given the rudimentary state of research in the social service, careful follow up studies, case studies tracing the evolution of programs and before and after accounts can provide useful information.

The intent of the following discussion is to describe projects rather than to analyse them and determine, for example whether the services provided were appropriate to meet the objectives of the project. Similarly, no comments are made with regard to the adequacy of the research designs. However, as noted in the introduction the intent of the concluding section is to determine whether any common characteristics can be identified, and to speculate about the utility of these characteristics for child welfare in Canada.

I should add that there is surprisingly little duplication of projects in the reviews in the literature, between these reviews and the projects reported in the Iowa Directory. A total of forty five projects are identified from the literature reviews and from the Directory. Of this total only one, Homebuilders of Seattle, is mentioned in four or the five listings, and two, the New York Preventive Service Project and Parents and Children

Together of Detroit are mentioned in three reviews. No less than thirty-two are mentioned just once. One and perhaps the main reason for this single rather than double or triple mention is that many projects are described only in agency reports and not in journal articles or books. However, not even the reviews in the literature report on the same projects. Thus in *A Second Chance for Families*, Jones covers four of the five projects mentioned by Magura some four years earlier, but only two of those in the Stein review completed at roughly the same time. The most recent review by Nelson, Landsman and Teitelbaum refers to only two of those reviewed by Jones. Clearly there is a need for an ongoing and cumulative review of projects, and although the Iowa Directory makes the most committed effort it too fails to mention projects described in other sources.

Reviews from the Literature

One of the first reviews of projects to prevent out of home placement was conducted by Magura in 1981. He identified and analysed ten projects, three of which used an experimental research design. Magura concluded that:

... neither crisis intervention nor intensive service projects have had marked effects in preventing placements although it is difficult to assess the true effectiveness of some projects because of the absence of control groups (Magura, 1981, pp193-212).

Experimental designs were not lacking in a review conducted by Stein in 1985. All seven projects were based on this design, and only three reported statistically significant results. Stein concluded that:

... the results of these investigations do not provide reason for optimism that preventive efforts will be markedly successful" (Stein, 1985, p.118).

A third review of preventive programs is contained in *A Second Chance for Families* (Jones, 1985). Seventeen projects are reviewed and all reported successful outcomes. However, only five were based on an experimental design, and *A Second Chance for Families* develops a devastating critique of the studies lacking this

design.

There are three major shortcomings in the reviewed studies. The first is the lack of comparison or control groups in most of the studies. ...Without a control group one is left with no idea about whether or not children would have entered foster care had the families not received special attention.

The second major shortcoming is the brief and unsystematic way in which projects determined who entered care. ...The reporting of entry into care often even usually, omitted cases that dropped out of or completed service, (many of whom were likely candidates for entering care) relied upon unsystematic and incomplete monitoring procedures and covered a brief period of time.

The third major shortcoming on nearly all of the studies reviewed is that they fail to report on the characteristics of the clients served, the services provided or differential outcomes by either client characteristics or service patterns (Jones, 1985, p37).

These criticisms are well taken and it is to Jones' credit that they cannot be levelled against the study she directed.

A Second Chance for Families reports on the findings of a large scale project based on an experimental design and conducted over a five year period in the state of New York. The project consisted of five sub projects and in three the outcomes for the experimental groups were superior to those obtained in the control groups. The percentage of children placed in care during the five years of the project ranged from four to seven for the experimental groups and eleven for the control groups. Two projects reported the reverse outcomes. Nevertheless despite the slight difference within the five projects Jones concluded that:

...a comprehensive social work model of preventive services, of medium to low intensity, delivered for a few years to a primarily urban, poor, multi problem, minority, female headed families, known to the child welfare system can prevent or retard the entry of children into foster care" (Jones, 1985, p150).

The most recent review comments on the outcomes of nine projects, and develops a three part classification of placement prevention programs: crisis intervention, home based and family treatment. (Nelson, Landsman and Teitelbaum, 1990). A brief comment

on the outcomes and distinguishing characteristics of these three approaches to placement prevention are noted below.

Crisis Intervention

As the title clearly indicates, crisis intervention programs are based on the rationale "that most families are open to change during a period of crisis when typical coping patterns can no longer maintain family stability and independence" (Nelson, Landsman and Teitelbaum, 1990, p.6). The best known and most successful crisis intervention program is Homebuilders which began in Seattle and has since been replicated by Homebuilders in other states and by other agencies using the intensive, 24 hour approach initiated by Homebuilders. Whether using an experimental or more usually a follow up design, the outcomes of crisis intervention programs have been extremely successful (See, for example, Haapala, 1979 and 1988 and Kinney, 1988).

Home Based Services

Projects falling into this category combine family therapy with concrete services like home maker, day care and occasionally financial assistance. The outcomes of the projects reviewed by Nelson, Landsman and Teitelbaum were as impressive as those achieved through crisis intervention. For example,

...in Maryland eighty families who received intensive family services were compared to one hundred and eighty families who received traditional child protective services. The placement prevention rates were 82% for the first and 67% for the second" (Nelson, Landsman and Teitelbaum, 1990, p.9).

Family Treatment Model

Projects classified as family treatment were also based on family systems theory, but unlike the home based service, projects provided no direct services. Again the outcomes were extremely positive, but were evaluated using only follow up studies.

Nelson, Landsman and Teitelbaum conclude that projects based on crisis intervention and family systems

theory are successful in preventing out of home placement.

Projects in the Iowa Directory

As noted above the Iowa Directory lists one hundred and thirty nine projects, and ninety-six reported to the Directory that an evaluation had been completed or was underway. In 1987 I wrote to these ninety-six projects asking for a copy of the evaluation. Forty five responded and of this number six reported that plans for an evaluation had been dropped. Of the remaining thirty-nine responses, eight evaluations were so flimsy or incomplete that I discarded them from further consideration. Thus the following analysis is based on twenty-seven projects, conducted in thirteen states under both public and voluntary auspices.

All but one of the twenty-seven projects reported that their efforts to prevent out of home placements were successful. One project reported a 100% success rate, twelve reported success in the 80-90% range and a similar number in the 60-80% range. A summary of the projects, the programs offered and the time lines is contained in Appendix A. The common features and distinguishing characteristics of the projects is presented below. However, before proceeding to this analysis, a brief note on the unsuccessful project and on methodology is necessary.

The project which reported an unsuccessful outcome was a county department of social services. In the year under review the county placed nine more children in foster care than it had in the previous year prior to the project being introduced. However, the report also noted that the number of complaints of child abuse had risen dramatically during the year. Thus despite the increase in foster home placements, the project may have been successful in keeping apprehensions to a relatively small number in relation to the incidence of child abuse. Moreover the report claimed that the project had changed the image of the agency from one interested only in apprehension to one

committed to supporting parents. Hence whether this project can be recorded as a failure is open to question.

With only one exception the Iowa projects did not use an experimental research design. As noted above these projects represented the efforts of agencies to provide better services. Research was a secondary consideration. Typically the projects served families where the children were deemed to be at risk. The assumption was that unless some intensive assistance was provided the children would in all likelihood have to be apprehended and placed in foster care. Outcomes were determined by tracking these at risk families over periods of time ranging from three months to three years and recording the number of children placed in foster care. Thus in considering the success experienced by these projects the cogency of Jones' criticisms must be kept in mind.

The cumulative record of the projects reviewed here, including some which did use experimental designs, is impressive.

One project, the Placement Alternatives Commission in Colorado, did use an experimental design. The Commission was created to provide a framework and funds for counties to provide the programs deemed to be most appropriate for the needs of families in their jurisdiction. The Commission included the ten largest counties in the state which in turn accounted for 85% of the children in care plus twenty rural counties divided into control and experimental groups.

The report summarising the experience of the Commission concluded that:

The volume of placement in out of home care has gone down and stabilised in the Placement Alternative Commission counties. The total expenditures for foster care have been reduced and have been stabilised.

The Commission has been credited with creating new services, expanding existing services, reducing restrictiveness of care and improving the quality of services to

children and families in those counties where reforms have been implemented. Placement alternative commissions have proven to be effective in stimulating local participation in the planning of children's services (Cooper, et al. 1984, p.1).

To summarise the discussion to this point it is apparent that the claims of success of projects which did not use an experimental research design must be viewed with caution. In addition, Jones' criticism that some projects fail to identify the characteristics of the client population and to specify the services provided are extremely important. Nevertheless it should be recalled that many of the projects in the Iowa directory were not designed as research studies, but were put in place by agencies attempting to provide better services.

The cumulative record of the projects reviewed here including some which did use experimental designs is impressive. The record supports the conclusion of *A Second Chance for Families* noted earlier that:

...a comprehensive social work model of preventive services... can prevent or retard the entry of children into foster care" (Jones, 1985, p.150).

Why do Placement Prevention Programs work?

Except where noted, the following discussion refers to projects listed in the Iowa Directory. I recognise that attempting to identify reasons for the success of placement prevention projects by asking those associated with projects with the weakest research design has definite limitations. However, given the record of achievement by these projects, it seemed that some useful information could be obtained from practitioners and administrators. I then wrote a follow up letter to the twenty-seven respondents asking the simple question, "What were the reasons your program worked?" Twenty responded and their views are summarized below.

1. Comprehensive and accessible services.

The vast majority of the projects offered a comprehensive range of services including:

- crisis counselling to families and children
- short and long term therapy with families and children
- behaviour modification programs with children
- support groups for parents
- lay therapy with and without supervision from professionals
- parent training and education
- home maker service and education
- financial assistance and emergency grants
- referral to other services
- a combination of many of the above

There is an evident desire on the part of many researchers and practitioners to identify the particular service required to assist particular clients. However, the indication from Iowa projects is that the search for precision is inappropriate. Most families served by placement prevention programs require many forms of assistance, and the capacity of these projects to meet the multi-faceted needs of clients is a major reason for their effectiveness.

Respondents to my inquiry also noted the importance of services which fit client rather than agency schedules. Thus sixteen projects provided services in the home when required by clients. Many provided 24 hour round the clock service, but all strove to be responsive to client needs in terms of time and location.

The above responses support the conclusions of Magura, Jones and Shyne in their attempt to identify the requirements for effective placement prevention programs.

1. An appropriate array of services must be available
2. Outreach efforts are essential
3. It is important to direct services to several family members including children
(Jones, Magura and Shyne, 1981, p.67-81).

2. Family Centred and Blame Free Services

Regardless of type of service offered the majority of the respondents commented on the crucial importance of involving all family members rather than singling out the child or

the mother for attention. This focus is consistent with the conclusions of the Nelson, Landsman and Teitelbaum review and the work of Magura, Jones and Shyne. Another leading writer in the child welfare field expresses this view in the following terms:

Family centred practice brings with it a conviction that the greatest proportion of time, energy and financial resources of the child welfare system must be devoted to preserving families. Child welfare is then defined as a service primarily geared to the enhancement of the welfare of children within their own homes or to the prompt reunification of families when temporary placement is required (Laird, 1985, P.363).

A second and important factor which contributes to the success of placement prevention programs is a philosophy of service which is based on respect for clients. One respondent described this philosophy as one which "helps families to reframe their situations in positive, non-blaming ways" (Pecora, 1987). A second emphasized the need to "foster motivation instead of seeing it as a trait which does or does not exist in a client, and to reach out to families and respond to needs when and where they are experienced" (Sister May Paul, 1987).

3. Mission Oriented

All of the respondents reported a strong commitment to their programs and to the objective of preventing out of home placements. And despite the absence of experimental designs they exhibited confidence about the outcomes achieved.

While caution is advised in interpreting and generalising about the positive results of this follow up study, the influence of the Family Support Centre service on parent child interaction is dramatic. No FSC child was abused or neglected three years later according to the county records (Armstrong, 1987).

Since the Centre is almost nine years old and we have ongoing contact with many families who have been clients, it is very clear to us that a very small percentage of foster care placements occur later and that we are not merely postponing placement (Sister Mary Paul, 1987).

It is interesting to speculate whether a sense of mission is supported by and easier to maintain in small agencies

and departments than in large, formal organizations characterised by rules and regulations. The majority of the placement prevention projects were conducted by small private agencies and by units within state departments. These latter units were established with the specific purpose of providing preventive services and did not have responsibility for the major child welfare function of the investigating complaints of child abuse and neglect. Hence these projects enjoyed a distinct sense of mission, and their structural arrangements ensured that this mission was protected from the extremely complex and crisis ridden functions of child welfare.

4. Caring for staff

Although only a few respondents specifically mentioned the importance of staff commitment and morale in these projects, these individuals made a strong case that staff are indeed the crucial ingredient in effective programs.

In response to staff commitment I believe that we have found that it is possible to maintain staff commitment to families, their jobs and the organization. We actively work to maintain the morale of staff by providing what we consider to be good supervision and backup, educational opportunities to grow, a sense of organisational family, constructive feedback and an environment where families change in response to staff involvement (Haapala, 1987).

It should be added that the above comment comes from one of the co-founders of Homebuilders which is widely regarded as an extremely effective placement prevention program. The same comment cannot be applied to most state and provincial departments of social services in the US and Canada. Many inquiries into the quality of work life in social service agencies have identified and described the emergence of the industrialisation of social work practice (See among others, Lipsky, 1980, Fabricant, 1985 and Attridge and Callahan, 1989). The concept of industrialisation of practice is based on a management philosophy which reduces professional autonomy and discretion, breaks functions and tasks into small and specific chunks and surrounds work with a complex web

of rules and regulations. This philosophy is consistent with a residual approach to child welfare, and has occurred at a time when budgets for child welfare have been reduced and when the incidence of child neglect and abuse has risen rapidly.

...a convincing case can be made that placement prevention programs should be separated from the statutory functions of investigation of child neglect and abuse.

The consequence of these forces, an inappropriate management philosophy, reduced budgets and increased work loads have combined to bring about a poor quality of work life for staff and a poor quality of service for clients.

Some Suggestions for Child Welfare Policy and Practice in Canada

Can any suggestions to improve current policies and practice in Canadian child welfare be derived from the US experience in preventing out of home placements? Several suggestions are noted below, but the article concludes with the argument that placement prevention programs, necessary as they are, represent only the tip of the iceberg of reforms required to make substantial changes in Canadian child welfare.

First, it is abundantly clear that preventive placement programs can substantially reduce the number of abused and neglected children now being placed in foster care in Canada. The essential characteristics of placement prevention programs include a comprehensive range of services, offered to families in a blame free and accessible fashion. Such services are expensive, but by no means as expensive as the costs incurred in apprehending a child, in court hearings and in foster or other forms of substitute care.

This article has avoided the cost issue. Some projects in the Iowa Directory reported that substantial savings were achieved by prevention programs over the costs of foster care. For example,

Homebuilders claim that the cost of their intensive, 24 hour crisis intervention programs is \$11,000 lower than the cost of foster care and \$16,000 lower than residential care. Similarly, the state department in Kansas reported savings of \$600 per month per child. However, information on costs was not provided by all projects listed in the Directory, and it proved impossible to establish a base line given the differences in reporting, ages of children and length of project. In addition, it is noted that eliminating support programs in BC had the consequence of increasing the in care costs of service from \$60,000,000 to \$75,000,000 in a three year period (Callahan and McNiver, 1988, p.14).

Second, a convincing case can be made that placement prevention programs should be separated from the statutory functions of investigation of child neglect and abuse. These programs should be managed by voluntary agencies, or units within provincial departments which have as their sole responsibility the operation of preventive programs.

...the experience of Homebuilders indicates agencies providing these programs must care about staff, provide consultation and staff training and encourage staff to participate in setting programs.

Third, placement prevention programs require a distinct sense of mission, and staff who are committed to this mission. In addition as the experience of Homebuilders indicates agencies providing these programs must care about staff, provide consultation and staff training and encourage staff to participate in setting programs.

It is tempting to conclude the article on the optimistic note that child welfare in Canada can be reformed by initiating placement prevention programs. However, these programs are essentially tertiary prevention programs. They come into play at the point problems are well established, and seek to ensure that further problems do not occur. In the writer's

view they are necessary but not sufficient. As a brief and concluding note the question is raised whether child welfare agencies should address the issue of poverty and other basic living conditions affecting the lives of their clients. Should child welfare agencies be content with the tertiary responsibility of placement prevention and avoid engagement with primary and secondary prevention?

This question has been identified by many writers and practitioners in the field. The authors of a study on family support programs in Ontario argue that child welfare policies and programs have been fundamentally flawed. They suggest that child welfare agencies have been preoccupied with changing the behaviour patterns of parents and children, rather than changing the social environment. They claim that:

1. Social problems and the lack of resources are the major contributors to family breakdown.
2. To prevent family breakdown it is necessary to relieve the pressure on families and facilitate their access to resources.
3. It is possible to design interventions which provide valuable

supports to families (Cameron and Rothery, 1985, p.276).

The above argument is supported by common sense, practice wisdom and the results of formal research studies. The majority of children served by child welfare agencies come from poor families (Pelton, 1981 and National Council on Welfare, 1975). All families require an adequate income, decent housing and access to medical care and day care. Without these resources the evidence is persuasive that many children will be at risk of neglect and abuse. However, child welfare agencies do not possess the mandate or the resources to meet the basic human needs of their clients. The consequence of serving poor clients and not being able to alleviate the condition of poverty, has over time resulted in child welfare staff reframing the problem of child neglect and abuse from one largely brought about by socio-economic problems to one attributable to marital, and parent child relationship problems. In the words of C. Wright Mills (1957), public issues have been transformed into private troubles.

While child welfare agencies do not have the mandate to alter conditions

such as poverty, they can report on the impact of these problems on the lives of the clients they serve. They can advocate for increased social assistance benefits, affordable housing and adequate day care. For example, the Family and Children's Service in London, Ontario has adopted the following statement on advocacy.

The Board of Directors accepts a responsibility to make representation to governments or other community organizations with respect to legislation, gaps in services and social issues which affect families and children. This includes making public statements or meeting with elected officials after undertaking studies or gathering information relevant to a particular issue (Family & Christian Service of London and Middlesex, nd.)

It is acknowledged that it will not be easy to include the documentation of the impact of social conditions on the lives of children, nor to advocate for changes in these conditions. Yet in the long run repetitive reporting on social conditions will provide a cumulative record which will not allow the convenient but inappropriate reframing of public issues into private troubles. ♦

APPENDIX A

Projects designed to prevent or reduce out-of-home placements reported in the Iowa Directory.

PROJECT	PRACTICE APPROACHES	TIME FRAME	OUTCOMES
1. Placement Alternative Program Dakota County Minnesota Public/Country agency	Home-based counselling Homemaker Education/support	In place since 1981	903 placed in 1981 751 placed in 1982 "The project has halted the trend of increasing growth in child placement
2. PACT (Parents & Children Together) Detroit Private Agency	Home-based counselling Group sessions Provision of material goods needed to improve family functioning	In place since 1977	1984/85 - 94% success rate 1985/86 - 125 families & 315 children at risk. 88% stayed at home 50% of children in care returned home
3. Intensive In-Home Family Centered Treatment N.E. Iowa Private Family Service Agency	Parent skill training Intensive family therapy Assessment and Evaluation	In place since 1977	88 at-risk children in 25 families 99% stayed at home
4. In-Home Family Counselling Program Des Moines, Iowa Private Family Service Agency	In-Home family counselling Therapy Parent skill training Leisure and recreation	In place since 1977	363 at-risk children 87% stayed home

Appendix A (continued)

PROJECT	PRACTICE APPROACHES	TIME FRAME	OUTCOMES
5. The Young House Family Services Burlington, Iowa Private Family Service Agency	Diagnosis and evaluation Family and group therapy Parent skill development service Community assistance	In place since 1984	1984 – 8 families/2 children 73% success rate 1985 – 19 families/53 children 69% success rate 1986 – 39 families/97 children 85% success rate
6. Alternative Human Services St. Petersburg, Florida Private family service agency	Crisis intervention Short-term counselling Parent support groups	Not available	82% of 240 families maintained as intact units
7. La Plata County Colorado Public/county agency	Intensive family therapy Family support services	Continuing program	1986 Annual Evaluation Training program: 54 families 97 children at risk – 9 placed. 83% success rate Support program: 22 families 49 children at risk. 100% success rate
8. Intensive Home Treatment Fergus Falls, Minn. Lutheran private agency	Individual & family therapy Parent education	Continuing program	1985 Annual Evaluation 73 children served in 1985, 84% remained at home
9. Intensive Probation Supervision (Reduce out-of-home placement for delinquent youth) Ramsey County, St. Paul Public/county agency	3 programs: Intensive supervision Family counselling Intensive training	In place since 1983	64% success rate for IS 62% success rate for FC 66% success rate for IT Annual saving of one million since project began
10. Homebuilders Seattle, Washington 4 sites in Washington State 1 site in New York City Private agency	24 hour-per-day in-home services Wide variety of counselling, education services	In place since 1974	Numbers served 1974 – 1986: 2,976 3 month followup success rate of 94% 12 month followup success rate of 82% with a sample of 182 cases Reduction of \$11,000 in foster and \$16,000 in residential care per child per year
11. Baker Hall New York Private – Hospital/clinic	Individual/family counselling	In place since 1983	80% of youth served by the preventive services program have avoided placement: Savings – 5M.
12. Ashland County Wisconsin Public/county	Emergency cash grants Family counselling Para-professional family life specialists	1983–85	Increase of 9 children placed in a 2 year period
13. Intensive Home Care FSA Brown county, Wisconsin Private family service agency	Counselling In-Home support	1982–86	85–90% success rate over 4 years
14. Northern Pines Unified Services Centre Wisconsin Private agency	For delinquent youth Intensive home intervention	1980	35 high-risk adolescents Only 9 institutionalised
15. Boulder Dept. of Social Services Public/county	Wide variety of counselling /support programs: (1) elementary day treatment (2) adolescent day treatment (3) intensive family therapy (4) Family crisis intervention	1985/86	All programs were successful in that at-risk children were maintained in their current placement and not transferred to a more restrictive placement. No attempt made to ascertain the reasons for varying rates of success.

Appendix A (continued)

PROJECT	PRACTICE APPROACHES	TIME FRAME	OUTCOMES
16. Kansas Dept. of Social Services Public/state	Family counselling Family support - parenting skills Purchased services	1985-86	1986 - 1,480 families 64% closed following achieving goals Savings of \$624 per month per child
17. MELD Minnesota Primary preventive program which supports wellness Private agency	Support groups for new parents and teenage mothers Information and education	In place since 1978	Repeat pregnancies reduced Teenage mothers stay in school Clients report satisfaction with program.
18. Conserving Families - the Home Based Approach Iowa Private, non-profit corporation	Intensive individual & family therapy Crisis intervention	In place since 1979	84% of placements avoided Costs 23% of fostercare 39% of group home care
19. Family Support Centre Pennsylvania Private agency	Home-based counselling Neighbourhood support Family school - CC program	In place since 1977	A follow-up study of 35 families conducted 3 years after project finished, revealed no incidence of neglect and abuse. (Effectiveness improved when clients involved in all 3 programs)
20. The Parent Assistance Centre Santa Fe Private agency	Volunteers as parent aides supervised by professional staff	In place since 1981	Outcome measures limited to client satisfaction survey but these are extremely positive
21. Centre for Family Life Brooklyn Private sectarian agency	Ecological approach Intensive family-centered services Employment services Foster grandparent project Community school projects	In place since 1978	Consumer satisfaction survey 80% very 10% some 2% not 1986/87 - 1.2% of 949 children served placed in out-of-home care
22. Exchange Club Child Abuse Prevention Centre Winston Solin, N. Carolina Private agency	Lay therapy		50% of families continued in treatment. Of this group, 88% of children were considered to be safe in home after terminating
23. Mendosa Mental Health Wisconsin Public agency	Behaviour modification Family therapy	1969	87% success rate placement prevention 56% some or significant change in family environment
24. Family & Children's Services Milwaukee Private agency	Family therapy	1977	73% placement program prevention 41% some or significant change in family environment
25. Mental Health Institute Winnebago Public mental health agency	Behaviour modification	1977	80% in placement program prevention 70% some or significant change in family environment
26. Wisconsin Social Services Public agency	Behaviour modification Family therapy	1977	70% placement program prevention 56% some or significant change
27. Reducing Bureaucratic Barriers to the Delivery of Human Services. A study of alternatives to out-of-home placement for children in Colorado Public agency	A state/county partnership formed for the purpose of developing local level plans to prevent out-of-home placement	1977-83	The number of out-of-home placements and expenditures for foster care have been reduced.

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Editor's Note

In *Children Australia* Vol. 16, No. 2, 1991, the gremlins in the machine combined forces to damage important points being made both in the Editorial and in Chris Goddard's **Point and Counterpoint** concerning deinstitutionalisation.

The last paragraph of the editorial should conclude:-

"Chris Goddard's reflective column provides more food for thought about institutional abuse - a timely reminder that the elimination of institutional abuse and neglect involves more than simply moving into smaller locations in the community."

In Chris Goddard's article, on page 31, the penultimate paragraph in the middle column should read:-

"This is a potent analysis of institutional abuse and one that throws a harsh light on deinstitutionalisation. According to this framework, the act of deinstitutionalisation does not prevent further institutional abuse. Many children who once would have spent too long in one or more institutions, are now likely to spend too short a time in too many foster placements."