

# Child & Family Policy Center

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## MAKING WELFARE WORK

*Families bring more than employment needs into the welfare office. If we are to succeed with families on AFDC, our strategies need to be comprehensive and, in some instances, extend beyond employment-related education and training and work-related incentives and sanctions.*

We need to recognize the following about AFDC families in fashioning self-sufficiency strategies:

- o Fewer than one-half of AFDC heads-of-households hold a high school diploma, and their expectation for securing family-sustaining employment in the short-term is slight.
- o A significant portion reside in "underclass" areas where there are few employment options, and community-wide rather than individually-focused strategies may be needed.
- o Families on AFDC are at disproportionate risk of losing their children to the foster care system, with resulting social and economic costs.
- o The majority of children who will start school "unready to learn" reside in AFDC households, meaning that welfare reform must complement efforts to achieve the first educational goal.

In designing new covenants with families on AFDC, options should exist for states to view the needs of families holistically and seek to improve outcomes across a broader dimension than employment alone.

-- Bruner, January 24, 1994



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Tanager Place

*Linking research and policy on issues vital to children and families.*

Federal Welfare Policy and  
Comprehensive Service Reforms:  
Challenges and Opportunities

Selected Materials from the  
Child and Family Policy Center

December 1, 1993

**RETHINKING  
WELFARE REFORM**

"We have met the enemy and he is us."

-- Pogo

Currently, the federal administration and the states are considering major changes to the nation's welfare system, to, as President Clinton has said, "End welfare as we know it."

No one likes the current system -- not AFDC participants, not eligibility workers, not public officials, not taxpayers.

Over the last decade, a new goal for the welfare system has been established, reflective of changes in society as a whole. It is to make welfare a "transitional" system from dependency toward self-sufficiency, with expectations that AFDC heads of households enter the workforce rather than stay at home with their children. Rhetorically, it is based upon families, and not the state, taking responsibility for their lives. This goal resonates with the public, taxpayers, and with AFDC participants themselves.

To date, however, the means to achieve this goal have been described largely in employment and training and job search programs, economic incentives to find and maintain employment, and sanctions against those receiving benefits if they do not pursue gainful employment.

This narrow approach ignores at least two critical issues. First, whether economic self-sufficiency can be accomplished at an individual family level -- or instead requires larger changes in the country's economy -- is doubtful. Second, whether an

economic strategy alone will address many of needs that AFDC families have -- e.g. needs that impact upon their capacity to raise children into productive adults -- also is doubtful.

If we are to avoid another wave of failed welfare reform efforts (which may be used to further blame the poor), we need to take a broader approach to welfare reform. This requires that we recognize the following:

- o that AFDC families have multiple needs and obstacles to self-sufficiency, often contributing to multiple societal costs, which all must be recognized and addressed, and
- o where AFDC families are concentrated in distressed neighborhoods, reform will require a broader and more concerted effort to regenerate the economy of the neighborhood as a whole, rather than a family-based strategy to increase the employability of individual families.

These currently are not issues that are at the heart of most state welfare reform discussions. The federal administration can help to raise these issues through the policies that it enacts in this new federal round of welfare reform. In particular, it is important that welfare reform be placed in the context of broader issues of service system reform -- and in the context of what currently is known about effective community-based, family-centered, service strategies.

One approach is to making this connection is to link welfare reform efforts with achieving the first national school readiness goal. A second approach is to connect welfare reform with community revitalization efforts, specifically with respect to development of enterprise communities and empowerment zones.

The following materials represent initial approaches to framing welfare reform in a larger context, based upon the work

of the Child and Family Policy Center and Iowa's Family Development and Self-Sufficiency demonstration program. They are consistent with the principles of service reform prepared by the National Center for Service Integration, which also are provided.

Attachments:

1. Testimony at the Memphis hearing from Charles Bruner and Sis Vogel to the working group on welfare reform, family support and independence.

2. Letter from Charles Bruner to Bruce Reed, David Ellwood, and Mary Jo Bane outlining possible welfare reform strategies involving more comprehensive approaches.

3. Principles of service reform developed by the National Center for Service Integration.

4. Analysis of Iowa welfare reform waiver and Des Moines Register article regarding Mary Jo Bane and Tom Harkin visit to Iowa FaDSS programs.

CFPC -- December 10, 1993

WELFARE REFORM AND  
SCHOOL READINESS --  
COMPETING OR COMPLEMENTARY GOALS?

Remarks to the Working Group on  
Welfare Reform, Family Support and Independence

Charles Bruner, November 9, 1993  
Memphis, Tennessee

The Clinton Administration currently is developing a welfare reform agenda that potentially will impact more than four million households and seven million children.

The passage of the Family Support Act in 1988 involved a fundamental shift in the AFDC program's mission -- from providing an economic safety net for children in families denied a source of parental earning support to transitioning single parent families off public assistance through employment.

The primary thrust of many state welfare reform initiatives since 1988 has been income- and employment-related. Initiatives have been built around expanding training and educational opportunities leading to employment, active job search activities, and employment-related supports (child care, transitional child care, and transitional medical coverage). They have sought to improve child support collections to supplement income from employment.

At the same time, however, families on AFDC, most of whom are headed by single parents, have responsibilities for raising their children. The First National School Readiness Goal states that, "By the year 2000, all children in America will start

school ready to learn," and emphasizes that parents should have access to "the training and support they need" to "be a child's first teacher and devote time each day to helping [pre-school children] learn."

In fact, 3.6 million pre-school children (0-6) reside in AFDC households, 17 % of all pre-school children in America. AFDC households with pre-school children score extremely high on a variety of risk factors associated with school unreadiness -- single parenting, poverty, adolescent parenting, adult educational dropout. For this reason, it is likely that at least two-thirds of all pre-school children who will start school unready to learn currently live in AFDC households.

The question this raises is obvious. *How can welfare reform efforts complement and support efforts to achieve the First National Educational Goal?* In other words, how can welfare reform efforts support families in their role of nurturing their children as well as in entering the workforce -- and how can welfare reform resolve situations where these two goals are in conflict? While elements of some state welfare reform efforts have addressed family concerns, most of these have addressed specific issues or concerns rather than general issues of family support.<sup>1</sup>

There is no easy answer to this question. It is clear, however, that addressing this question requires a broader view of welfare reform than employment of the head of household. It also requires attention to several issues that often are not discussed in the context of welfare reform.

Issue # 1. Young women with children frequently have men in their lives. Further, the relationships that women on AFDC have with these men are significant and must be addressed in developmental work with the family. Often, these relationships

are abusive or co-dependent ones and therefore threaten both child development and well-being and movement toward economic self-sufficiency. The experience of Iowa's Family Development and Self-Sufficiency Grant program in working with AFDC families has been that one of three things generally happens in working with families -- that the man joins in the work, that the woman leaves the man, or that the woman leaves the program. The lesson for welfare reform initiatives is that successful work with many AFDC families will require work with the family and the family's significant relationships.<sup>2</sup>

Issue # 2. Economic incentives in a welfare system can be designed to move families out of poverty or to move families off of welfare, but for many families they are unlikely to be able to achieve both. A number of states are working to construct a "ladder out of poverty" through re-establishment and expansion of earned income disregards. This allows families to keep a portion of the income they earn and offers an economic incentive to employment. At the same time, it means that families can earn more before they lose eligibility for AFDC benefits. It does not mean, however, that they necessarily earn enough to be economically secure without AFDC. In fact, the earnings potential for many single-parent families on AFDC, given educational and work background, is likely to be insufficient to achieve economic security even when employed full-time. The lesson for welfare reform is that expectations for economic independence from welfare may not be realistic, even when families enter the workforce.

Issue # 3. Providing a nurturing home environment while working full-time is a difficult challenge, particularly for single-parent families with pre-school children. For some families, there are likely to be conflicts and tradeoffs between achieving the school readiness goal and transitioning families off welfare. One rationale for requiring all families on AFDC to



seek or prepare for employment is that most parents now work when their children are very young. While the majority of two parent families with young children work (66.9%), however, a minority (31.1 %) work full-time, full-year. It may be unrealistic to expect single parents both to work full-time and to provide the nurturing their young children need to achieve school readiness.

The implications to these issues are that working with families on AFDC is likely to require efforts that go well beyond employment. While the goal in working with AFDC families should be to help those families achieve self-sufficiency, self-sufficiency should be defined in the context of family stability and child development as well as economic security and attachment to the labor force. In the long term, it may be of more important to society's economic well-being whether the 17 % of pre-school children residing in AFDC households start school ready to learn than whether their heads-of-household (whose numbers represent less than four percent of the current civilian labor force) secure employment.<sup>3</sup>

Further, given the proportion of pre-school children at-risk of starting school unready to learn who reside in AFDC households, failing to address school readiness issues within welfare reform may render other efforts to achieve that school readiness ineffective.

#### ENDNOTES

1. Some state efforts have provided incentives or sanctions for specific actions such as school attendance, family formation, and childhood immunizations. Others have sought to better link families on welfare with pre-school and Head Start programs. In some instances, states have provided limited case management services to help improve school attendance, childhood immunizations, or other non-employment activities by AFDC families. In most cases, however, the state has identified specific desired behaviors that its efforts will seek to produce,

rather than individually tailoring services and supports to achieve family goals. For discussions of these efforts, see the following: Levin-Epstein, Jodie and Mark Greenberg. The Rush to Reform: 1992 State AFDC Legislative and Waiver Actions (Center for Law and Social Policy: November, 1992); Wiseman, Michael, "Welfare reform in the states: The Bush legacy," Focus (Vol 15, No. 1: Spring, 1993), p. 18-35; and Scott, Steven, "Background on Welfare Reform and the Family," (Briefing paper for a seminar for congressional staff and administration officials: The Urban Institute: June 1992).

2. The Iowa FaDSS programs is one of the few efforts to link family support and welfare reform. It employs "family development" specialists who work comprehensively with families at risk of long-term welfare dependency. See: Bruner, Charles, and Megan Berryhill. Making Welfare Work: A Family Approach (Child and Family Policy Center: 1992).

3. There are approximately 4.4 million households receiving AFDC, with a small percentage (approximately 8 %) employed full-time or part-time and the remaining 4.0 million not working. This number is approximately 3.4 % the size of the civilian workforce of 116.9 million. Obviously, when AFDC families enter the workforce, they compete with other workers and potential workers and may displace other workers, some of whom are supporting young children with their earnings. The rationale for establishing welfare-to-work programs is not solely economic, of course. There may be social and psychological as well as economic values to having the head-of-household employed. If the goal is social and psychological as well as economic, however, welfare reform should recognize the strains to families that this employment can produce.

TESTIMONY OF S<sup>rs</sup> VOGEL, NOVEMBER 9, 1993

During my tenure as a FaDSS Family Development Specialist with Mid-Iowa Community Action, known as MICA, I have worked with thirty seven families including my current caseload. I now work halftime and carry a caseload of twelve families. Thirteen of those families have been successful in moving off of Aid to Families with Dependent Children and I project success for the current families.

The MICA FaDSS grant dictates that we work with families of all ages who have been in the welfare system two years and longer. These are the families we believe to be at risk of long term welfare dependency. Due to this category, we expected to find participating families who experienced a number of major life barriers. The actual percentage of families facing numerous barriers was substantially greater than our projection. A report reflecting those numbers has been provided to you.

Reporting such as this is necessary in our work. However, we do not view our caseloads as numbers or percentages, but as families. These families are made up of mom, her children, and in many cases Mom's significant other. Each family member has their own needs to be met and dreams for the future.

My role is to join in a partnership of trust with each individual family member and with the family as a unit to assess their needs, explore their vision, assist them in setting and achieving realistic goals to fulfill their vision and link them with their larger community while offering support and advocacy throughout the process. The majority of this takes place during visits with the families in their own homes.

We offer what the families themselves have told us they need but have not experienced within the welfare system or elsewhere. Those needs are respect, healing and opportunity.

In witness to the validity of their stated needs, I offer you the following brief examples of my work with actual FaDSS families.

- A Cambodian woman spent nearly six hours pacing the floor while relating to me the chronological details of her experiences of horror at the hands of the Khmer Rouge, her flight with her husband and family to the U.S. and her subsequent divorce. Her dialogue was punctuated at intervals with the words " I need you to hear this ". When she was finished, she told me that I was the first person to listen. Then, and only then was she ready to take my job referral. Today, she and her five children are free of welfare.

- Another middle aged woman was born and raised in America with the belief that her role was to marry, have children and live happily ever after. I met the family after mom had been through two abusive marriages. The two youngest of her five sons were still at home and in school although one of them was on the verge of being kicked out of school for behavior problems. The family had been in and out of the welfare system for almost twelve years.

Mom told me that she had never before felt in control of her own life or the lives of her sons. However, she had always been the one to accept the blame for all of the families many problems and pain.

Together, we addressed a multitude of needs and the family began to build a vision. As a result, they are now healthier. The boys remain in school, Mom is employed full time and they are off of all public assistance.

- A much younger woman actually physically trembled when I went to her home to invite her to become part of FaDSS. When I asked her why, she told me that I was the first professional to enter her home without threatening to take her children away.

- Yet another young woman has removed herself and her son from almost four years of public assistance dependency and a debt load of almost \$2000.00 due to our intense budget counseling and our referral to a full time job.

- Then there is the story of a family in my current caseload. We have worked with mom, her two sets of twins and her significant other when he was in the home.. We have addressed issues of drug addiction, physical and emotional abuse, sexual abuse, substandard housing, lack of transportation, isolation, relationship patterns, self esteem and budgeting. Not all of these issues are totally resolved. However, the family is now at a point where we are beginning to address the issues of education and employment.

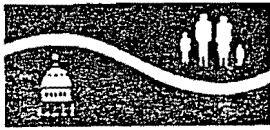
There are many more stories I would like to share with you but time constraints prevent their telling.

In summation, we believe that anyone can help a single mom enroll in school or refer her to a minimum wage job. However, our experience has taught us that the same single mom will not succeed in school or remain long on a job site if she has not first addressed and resolved the safety needs of herself and her children. In order to accomplish this, the entire family must be offered respect, healing and opportunity.

FaDSS  
Caseload

Total Active Caseload 5/3/90 - 91

<u>Issue</u>	<u>#Known</u>	<u>%Known</u>	<u># Suspected</u>	<u>% Suspected</u>	<u>Potential Total</u>
Adult survivor of sexual abuse / incest	31	34%	24	26%	60%
Current cohabitation with significant other	32	35%	5	6%	41%
Current victim of domestic violence	20	22%	13	14%	36%
Past victim of domestic violence	46	51%	7	8%	59%
Current substance abuser	10	11%	15	16%	27%
Past substance abuser	28	31%	8	9%	40%
Record of incarceration	15	16%	1	1%	17%
Current child abuse / neglect	13	14%	24	26%	40%
Past child abuse / neglect	23	25%	2	2%	27%
Adult child of alcoholic	48	53%	14	15%	68%
Co - Dependency	31	34%	41	45%	79%
No employment history	25	28%	0	0%	28%
Never married	26	29%	0	0%	29%
Other Issues (Not reported by all counties)					
Unplanned pregnancies (3 counties)	37	41%			
Victim of physical abuse as child (3 counties)	14	15%			



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December 1, 1993

Bruce Reed, David Ellwood, and Mary Jo Bane, Chairs  
Working Group on Welfare Reform, Family Support and  
Independence  
Washington, D.C.

Dear Chairs Reed, Ellwood, and Bane:

During the Tennessee Public Forum on "Welfare Reform, Family Support and Independence" held in Memphis, Tennessee on November 9th, 1993, one speaker indicated that policies and regulations governing different government programs serving AFDC families often work at cross-purposes with one another. Your working group expressed a special interest in hearing from participants on specific policies and regulations that fell into this category.

From the experiences of participants in the Iowa Family Development and Self-Sufficiency (FaDSS) program, there are at least three federal rules that have served as barriers to the progress of families toward achieving economic self-sufficiency through employment. They are as follows:

1. The requirements under JOBS participation for twenty hours of classroom participation. Particularly for FaDSS recipients attending community colleges, the requirement for twenty contact hours per week has been seen as unreasonable both by AFDC participants and by their workers. In particular, it does not reflect the amount of time that participants are expected to study outside the classroom. It does not reflect the individual capacities of different participants. More flexibility would provide for much more effective use of educational services by AFDC families.

2. The limitation of eligibility for case management assistance to three months following receipt of employment allowing families to leave AFDC. Experiences from both the FaDSS program and from Project MATCH in Illinois have shown that AFDC families entering the workforce face substantial challenges in



maintaining that employment and building a work history that can lead to permanent attachment to the workforce. Families often need assistance in making transitions from welfare to work, especially during the first year of that transition. Again, more flexibility would provide for a continuity in developmental support to families that would assist in making this important transition.

3. The treatment of the savings of children, in particular, and of the family, in general. In one instance, the fourteen year-old daughter in an Iowa AFDC family, a top student in her school, was saving money from her paper route for college. Her family was informed they would no longer be eligible for AFDC when her earnings reached \$ 1000. As long as she spent the money she earned, there was no problem with the family's eligibility. If she saved, however, it would be considered a family asset. While specific instances like this may be rare, they point to the need to re-examine current rules regarding asset accumulation, particularly when that accumulation is designed to support human capital development and employability.

These are specific policies and regulations experienced by FaDSS families which families and workers both have identified as working at cross-purposes with the goal of achieving self-sufficiency through employment. We hope these issues can be addressed in the administration's welfare reform proposals.

At the same time, however, one of our primary contentions is that families on AFDC bring more than employment needs into the welfare office. AFDC families face a variety of social and psychological as well as economic stresses and are heavy users of the child welfare, juvenile justice, and special education systems. Their children form a large proportion of all children in America not starting school ready to learn. Currently, the welfare system pays little attention to providing developmental opportunities for AFDC families that extend beyond parental job readiness and employment. We see a number of ways that the federal administration could support states and communities to take a more holistic view of helping AFDC families achieve self-sufficiency.

First, we believe that the federal administration can help in knowledge-building in the design and development of more comprehensive, family-focused, welfare reform efforts. The federal administration could encourage and financially support demonstration projects and/or waivers for initiatives that take a cross-system, family development orientation to welfare reform. Either through demonstrations or through waivers, the federal administration could:

- o agree to partner with states in constructing initiatives that would incorporate "welfare-to-work"



with "school readiness," "family support," and "community development" through comprehensive, community-based work with families,

- o through the leadership of the working group, assist states in integrating resources and strategies across federal programs and agencies that serve families and children, and particularly in developing a system of frontline support for families that is comprehensive and does not involve multiple "case managers," and
- o assist states in designing evaluation systems that capture program impacts across different programs and across social, economic, psychological, educational, and developmental dimensions.

We believe that a service strategy that works more comprehensively with AFDC families requires low caseloads and is substantially more intensive and long-term than what is being proposed by most states in their welfare reform efforts. We also believe that it may be possible to justify such a service strategy as being cost effective if its impact is measured across a variety of dimensions. If it is measured only for its impact upon employment and reduced welfare benefits, however, its potential value will not be fairly examined. For this reason, we believe that demonstrations in this area are needed.

Second, we believe there is an opportunity to foster greater innovation and more complete use of JOBS funding if localities are given the opportunity to develop reform initiatives and draw federal matching funds, at least for JOBS dollars not currently being drawn by the state. In Iowa, Mid-Iowa Community Action and other FaDSS grantees sought to leverage unused federal JOBS dollars through raising local matching funds. They found the process for securing such additional funding nebulous, requiring negotiation with the state that offered no assurances that matching funds raised by them would be directed back to their programs. Obviously, this was not a high priority of the state, and, despite statutory authorization in Iowa for such activity, a process was never established. We believe the federal administration could establish a process for other levels of government to access unspent federal JOBS funds that would make it easier for this to occur and, at the same time would instill some competition into the system. We believe that, at a minimum, such federal action would encourage states to make fuller use of their JOBS funds.

Third and finally, the federal administration could define the appropriate elements of a "new covenant" between government and families on AFDC that should be included within "self-sufficiency contracts" between families and the state. Increasingly, states are defining expectations for AFDC families

to move toward self-sufficiency, based both upon the family taking responsibility for its future and making progress toward achieving its established goals and the state providing the reasonable supports needed to achieve these goals. We believe such contracts or plans are at the core of any reform efforts that seek to transform welfare from "an income support program with an employment component" to an "economic self-sufficiency program with an income support component." We would suggest the following be incorporated into federal policies guiding states in the development of new contracts with families:

- o a process for the development of state rules governing those contracts that includes the following:
  - an assessment of the barriers that AFDC families face in achieving self-sufficiency, including non-economic barriers such as family functioning, parenting capacity, child development, housing, substance abuse and mental illness,
  - an assessment of the capacity within the state to provide employment opportunities to AFDC families and to address other barriers families face to achieving self-sufficiency,
  - an assessment of the level of support (e.g. caseload) needed from workers and the skills those workers need to have to develop contracts with families, monitor progress, and adapt goals to meet new challenges,
  - cross-system participation in both conducting the above assessments and in plan development, including representatives from education, special education, child welfare, juvenile justice, mental health, substance abuse, and housing, and
  - participation in these assessments and in plan development by current AFDC families and community-based service systems working with those families across different dimensions (e.g. community action agencies, Head Start programs, local civic and church organizations).
- o requirements that the policies governing such contracts contain (or consider) certain elements:
  - a description of the rights and responsibilities of AFDC families in the development and implementation of their plans for self-sufficiency,

- a description of the rights and responsibilities of the state in the development, monitoring, and enforcement of these plans,
  - a description of the rights and responsibilities of the AFDC family and the state in selecting (or rejecting) a specific worker for each family,
  - a delineation of the manner in which non-employment related goals of families are incorporated into such contracts (e.g. parenting goals, child development goals, family functioning goals, housing goals, etc.), either because these are: (1) important to the ability of the family to achieve long-term economic self-sufficiency, or (2) important to the capacity of the family to achieve self-sufficiency (and reduced use of remediation services) along social, psychological, health, and child education and development dimensions,
  - establishment of a process for determining family progress toward achieving contract goals that reflects the family's, the state's, and outside factors' (ecological) contributions to that progress or lack of progress, and
  - delineation of the manner in which the contract will be enforced, including the manner in which any adverse effects upon children through imposing sanctions will be minimized.
- o a monitoring and evaluation system that not only examines economic gains related to employment but also examines social, psychological, health, and child education and development impacts, either as: (1) directly connected to the contracts' emphasis upon achieving self-sufficiency in a broad, social as well as economic, context, or (2) as evidence of related consequences of seeking to achieve economic self-sufficiency through employment.

Federal guidance in these areas need not mandate that states adopt a particular policy toward establishing contracts with AFDC families. It need not require that such contracts be individually tailored to the specific circumstances and needs of families. The federal administration can, however, provide leadership to the states in developing such contracts that will assist states in at least examining their service strategies in more comprehensive, cross-system ways. Without such federal leadership, we think it is likely that states will place less emphasis upon establishing their service strategies than they

will on establishing economic structures, rewards, and sanctions. Many will fail to see connections between their welfare programs and other programs serving the same families to achieve different but interrelated goals. We therefore believe it is important that the federal administration require states to follow a broad-based process in establishing their policies, examine a broad range of issues in defining new contracts with families, and evaluate their efforts broadly.

We are encouraged by the administration's commitment to reforming the nation's welfare system and to your effort to obtain extensive public comment. We believe that effective welfare reform efforts will require new service strategies and will involve significant experimentation and innovation. We have offered here an overview of our perspective on federal welfare reform policies that can support new strategies and program innovation.

Further, as there needs to be a new partnership between families on AFDC and the AFDC system, based upon new responsibilities for both, we also believe there needs to be a new partnership between the federal administration and states and communities. We believe that guidelines that support innovation in the above areas will represent a new federal partnership with and provision of guidance to states.

Thank you for the opportunity both to testify in Memphis and the invitation to comment further on federal policies related to welfare reform. We would be happy to provide you with more detail and specificity on any of the points raised in this letter.

Respectfully submitted,

Charles Bruner, Child and Family Policy Center  
On behalf of the Child and Family Policy Center Staff



## NATIONAL CENTER FOR SERVICE INTEGRATION

WATTECH, INC.  
CHILD AND FAMILY POLICY CENTER  
NATIONAL CENTER FOR CHILDREN IN POVERTY  
NATIONAL GOVERNORS ASSOCIATION  
POLICY STUDIES ASSOCIATES, INC.  
THE BUSH CENTER

### Principles of Systems Reform

Three outcome goals drive the NCSI agenda and are imbedded in all of the activities and products which we undertake to reform and restructure the services delivery system. They include:

- The economic self-sufficiency of families,
- The cognitive, social, and emotional development of children to their full potential, and
- The development of communities whose informal and formal structures support the achievement of child, family, and individual development and self-sufficiency.

The policies and procedures which affect how and what services are delivered are critical to the achievement of these family and community outcomes. Children and families should have access to effective services--educational, physical and mental health, social and housing--in a safe and secure living environment to allow them to realize their full potential. NCSI subscribes to the following eight principles which are crucial to any effective service delivery system:

- (1) Services should be delivered in a comprehensive, integrated, "seamless" system that transcends individual programs and provides continuity of support, in that it can respond to the needs of families at each stage of progress toward self-sufficiency, and to children at each stage of development from prenatal care to productive adult life. Services should not be fragmented, duplicative, or stigmatizing, and should be easily accessible.
- (2) Services and supports should be tailored to meet the needs of children and families, rather than based on existing funding streams and professional service boundaries. Where appropriate, they should be preventive rather than crisis-driven. Those served should be involved in tailoring these services to their particular needs.

FOR GENERAL INFORMATION CONTACT

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- (3) Any service system reform effort should be driven by specific outcomes for children and families. Ideally, these outcomes will be determined through a comprehensive, collaborative process involving neighborhood residents, community organizations, the business community, and the public sector, including federal, state, and local governments.
- (4) Initiatives should build upon and strengthen existing neighborhood and community resources and sources of public and private financing, including an emphasis upon strategies to improve neighborhood and community development.
- (5) Service systems should recognize and build on the cultural strength and diversity within neighborhoods and communities being served and reflect this diversity in the planning, implementation, personnel selection, and evaluation of services.
- (6) Service systems should have accountability structures that fairly establish responsibility for meeting state and community outcome goals and that offer appropriate incentives to encourage reform.
- (7) Sufficient resources, both fiscal and technical, must be provided for training, staff development, collaborative and strategic planning, and necessary support systems to maintain quality and consistency in service delivery. Evaluation systems must be capable of tracking progress toward meeting goals and identifying specific areas of concern or need for attention.
- (8) The federal government should move beyond a financing and oversight role to act as a facilitator for state and community reform efforts. Governance structures at the state and community level should reflect new partnerships to reduce the level of fragmentation of authority and funding, and bring together top-down and bottom-up efforts to improve service delivery.

**CHILD-CARE CONCERN**

# Welfare dad pleads case at hearing

By **PHOEBE WALL HOWARD**  
REGISTER STAFF WRITER

Mike Naylor of Des Moines went to the Statehouse Thursday and pleaded for help.

"I want to be a taxpayer, not a tax moocher," he told county and state officials who met to discuss how to find child care for thousands of low-income working Iowans.

Naylor — with his 4-year-old son Scooter in tow — explained that the jobs he can obtain pay so little that he remains on welfare and can't afford child care or doesn't qualify for child care assistance for his three children. He wants to leave welfare voluntarily to qualify for child care money that is available, but current regulations prohibit that.

**"People Are Suffering"**

Rep. Ed Fallon, a Des Moines Democrat, called the meeting and pushed for immediate action.

"People are suffering adverse effects. I'd like to get it settled as soon as possible," he said.

Doug Howard, an administrator overseeing welfare reform, said, "The goal of this meeting was to recognize there are situations out there in which individuals receiving assistance feel trapped. We need to look to some other solutions. We're moving in that direction."

Rep. Johnie Hammond, an Ames Democrat, suggested looking into the possibility of shifting money from other areas of human services to help with child care.

**Out of Reach**

Hammond and Fallon serve on the House Human Services budget subcommittee. The two lawmakers support changing state rules so existing child care money that is out of the reach of many Iowans can be used.

Officials are having trouble figuring out how to get money that's in a fund referred to as transitional child care and available only to Iowans purged from the welfare lists for earning too much money.

State agency workers will call other states to learn how they increased access to transitional child care money, Howard said.

Inquiries will be made immediately. But solutions to problems encountered by Naylor — and other parents — may take months.

"This is frustrating," Naylor said.

**EAGER TO GET TO WORK**

# Success of welfare reform cited in visit with Harkin

By **PHOEBE WALL HOWARD**  
REGISTER STAFF WRITER

U.S. Sen. Tom Harkin and a top Clinton administration official listened Thursday as tears spilled from the eyes of Jeanette Carr-Shepherd, a post-welfare success story.

"I'm an accounting specialist with a major mortgage company now," said Carr-Shepherd, 31, of Des Moines. She credited programs of the Polk County Family Enrichment Center.

Harkin and Mary Jo Bane, an assistant secretary at the federal Department of Health and Human Services, spent the day visiting Davenport, Cedar Rapids and Des Moines. Their mission: To hear what works when it comes to getting Iowans off welfare and into self-sufficiency.

Bane, an expert on welfare who's working on President Clinton's welfare-reform plan, listened quietly to the speakers.

**"Need To Make Changes"**

"We have heard, I think, all day, variations on this same theme of welfare recipients who are so eager to get off welfare, get into work, make things better for themselves and their families," said Bane, a former commissioner of the New York State Department of Social Services. "It reinforces for us both the need to make changes in the welfare system ... I've gotten a lot out of the day."

Harkin, who's pushing to pattern national reform on Iowa's model, wanted Bane to come to Iowa to hear about its successful programs.

"Welfare reform is high on the agenda, both with the Clinton administration and with myself," Harkin said. "The welfare system in America today is unfair. It's unfair to the people who are on it and it's unfair to the taxpayers. We've got to change it. We've got to change it totally."

"I believe what we've done in Iowa — like in Polk County — we've shown we can do innovative things and really have great success."

The team heard reports on three different aspects of how Iowa is getting people off the public dole, Harkin said:

- Getting welfare recipients to start successful businesses.
- Designing programs that target very young women with children.
- Working one-on-one with welfare recipients who may be older and



BOB MODERSOHN/THE REGISTER

Mary Jo Bane of the federal Department of Health and Human Services and Sen. Tom Harkin learn about welfare programs at the Polk County Family Enrichment Center in Des Moines.

married. Working with complete families — spouses and children — can break the cycle of dependence.

Harkin said he is drafting legislation that would essentially put the Iowa welfare-reform plan at a national level, tailoring specific solutions to each welfare recipient.

"The Clinton program is talking about two years and you're off. That's not going to work," Harkin said, adding that cases may require more or less time, depending on the

circumstances.

Robin Harryman, 36, of West Des Moines told how she has been on and off public assistance for 17 years. Her life finally changed for the better after she participated in a personalized program this year, she said.

"Now I have a job. It was the help and support of these people," she said. "I know they're not going to let me fail. I know I can succeed this time."

## Campbell, Grandy get AFSCME's nod

ASSOCIATED PRESS

The state's largest public employees union Thursday endorsed Democrat Bonnie Campbell for governor and gave a Republican primary nod to Fred Grandy over Gov. Terry Branstad, who has had a long feud with the union.

Democrats, who dominate the American Federation of State, Coun-

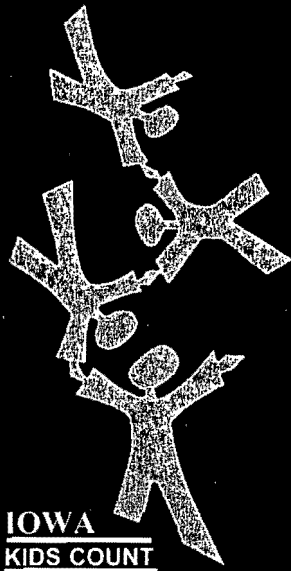
## Norwalk's Lass expects twins

**LASS**

Continued from Page 1M

person that I care what people think."

Pat Alexander, a sister of Lass, said the people she knows couple



IOWA  
KIDS COUNT



# Iowa's Welfare Reform:

*Critical issues;  
No easy answers*

- Iowa begins welfare reform
- What was the impetus behind Iowa's welfare reform?
- Iowa welfare reform creates a pathway out of poverty
- Iowa's welfare reform: No easy answers

by

**Stephen Scott**, Senior Research Associate, Child & Family Policy Center  
**Charles Bruner**, Executive Director, Child & Family Policy Center

Iowa Kids Count  
Quarterly  
Winter, 1993  
Vol. 3, No. 1

## Iowa begins welfare reform

### Iowa's Family Investment Program

**I**n August, the United States Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) approved Iowa's waiver request to implement the **Family Investment Program**. Enacted by the 1993 Iowa General Assembly, the program calls for fundamental changes in the state's Aid to Dependent Children (ADC) program. Its intent, according to the legislation, is to "*replace provisions which encourage dependency with incentives for employment and self-sufficiency.*"

To achieve this goal, the Family Investment Program (1) increases work-and-earn incentives; (2) expands the amount of assets that families can accumulate; (3) eases the eligibility requirements for two-parent families to receive ADC; (4) requires that most recipients enter into agreements to participate in education, training or work programs; and (5) calls for the eventual termination or reduction of benefits under terms provided in these agreements.

Iowa's reform efforts represent part of a third wave of welfare reform that has taken place in little over a decade. In 1981,

President Reagan and Congress reduced program benefits in order to make ADC a safety net and nothing more, with most reductions affecting working families. Building upon several innovative state welfare-to-work efforts, Congress adopted the Family Support Act in 1988. This legislation expanded work and training programs for recipients, improved child support collection efforts, and provided additional support for those who earn enough to leave welfare.

The Clinton administration is now developing additional changes that will, in the President's words, seek to "end welfare as we know it." The goal is to transform welfare into a transitional, time-limited program, where, after a maximum two years of education, training, and job placement assistance, recipients will be working.

Although Iowa's program does not have a specific time limit, the approval of its waiver request is consistent with the new federal philosophy. The impact of these reforms will be felt by almost all of the 36,000 families now receiving ADC and by other low income families. (See insert 1 on page 2 for a description of ADC recipients in 1991.)



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## **Clinton Presidential Records Digital Records Marker**

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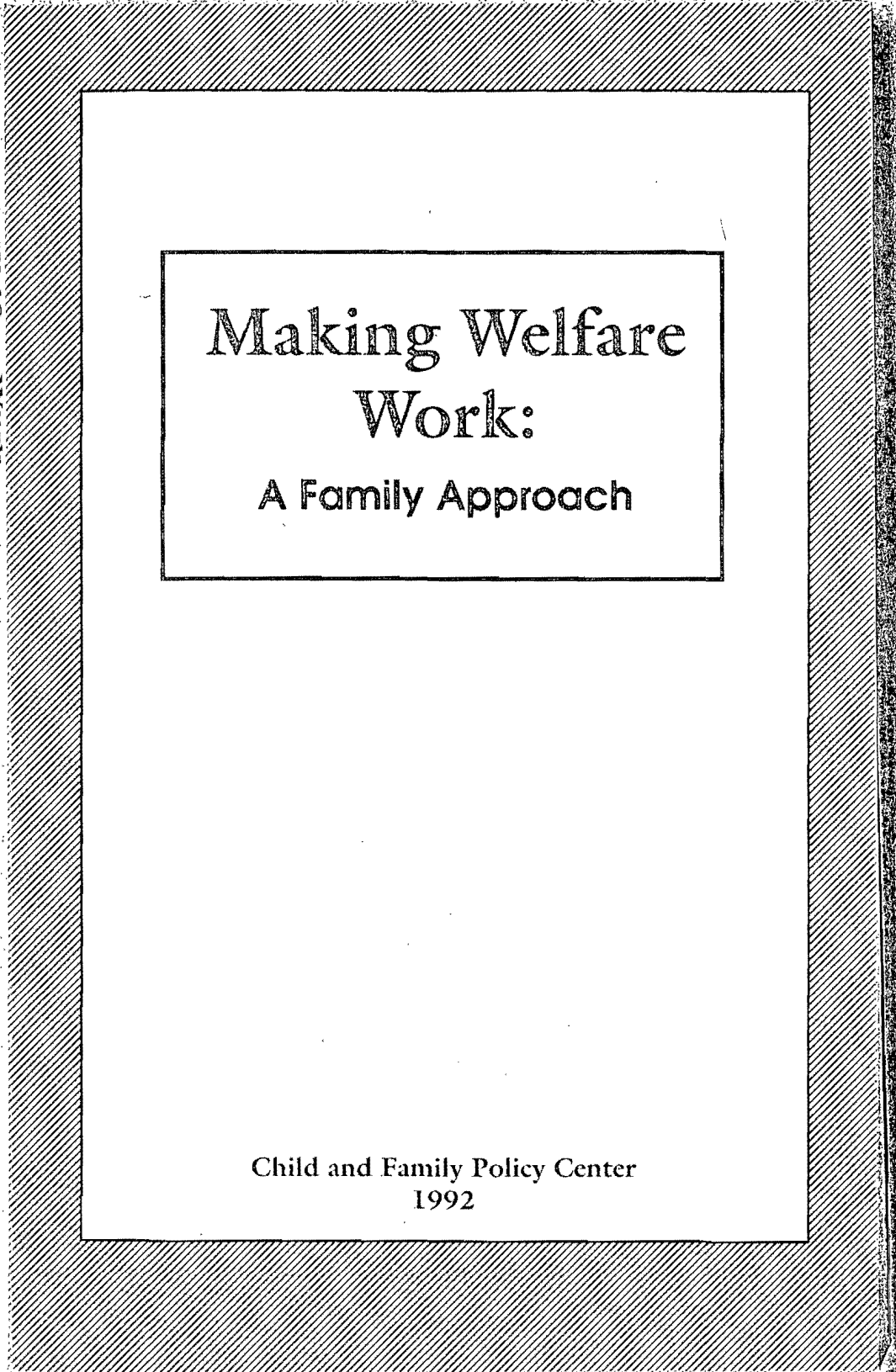
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**Making Welfare  
Work:  
A Family Approach**

Child and Family Policy Center  
1992

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## **Clinton Presidential Records Digital Records Marker**

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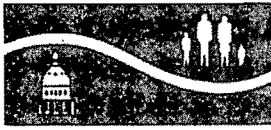
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## EMPOWERMENT ZONES AND ENTERPRISE COMMUNITIES

The empowerment zones and enterprise communities legislation will create a number of laboratories with the potential to fundamentally reform service systems to assist in economically and socially regenerating distressed neighborhoods and communities.

These laboratories will be charting new territory and deserve access to the most thoughtful assistance available in their process. They will demand fundamentally different approaches within the public sector, specifically in:

- o constructing federal-state-community-neighborhood relationships that partner and mutually problem-solve
- o fostering cross-system collaboration and accountability based upon shared responsibility
- o designing service systems that are truly consumer-driven and community-based and effectively bridge the public and private, the professional and voluntary, and the therapeutic and normative
- o integrating service strategies with community and economic development efforts

At the federal level, this will require cross-system leadership and new intergovernmental relationships, both horizontally and vertically. It will require a structure that can draw upon the best thinking and foremost field-based experiences in implementing reforms. It will require some locus of authority supporting and advocating for comprehensive, cross-system reform efforts and initiatives.

-- Bruner, January 24, 1994



Founded by  
Tanager Place

*Linking research and policy on issues vital to children and families.*

# Materials on Comprehensive Community-Based Service System Reforms

1. *Breaking the Categorical Mold.* Mock federal guidelines that suggest a fundamentally different federal role in supporting states and communities in developing comprehensive strategies, involving decategorization of federal funds.
2. *Going to Scale -- Challenges in Service Design.* Occasional paper outlining issues that will face serious efforts to go beyond demonstration efforts to reach all eligible families within a service territory.
3. *Federal Policy and Comprehensive Services: A Perspective from Cutting Edge Initiatives.* Synthesis of interviews with directors of nine of the country's most ambitious service reform initiatives on federal barriers and opportunities for reform.
4. *So You Think You Need Some Help? Making Effective Use of Technical Assistance*

*Charting a Course: Assessing a Community's Strengths and Needs*

*Who Should Know What? Confidentiality and Information Sharing in Service Integration*

*Getting to the Bottom Line: State and Community Strategies for Financing Comprehensive Community Service Systems*

*Making It Simpler: Streamlining Intake and Eligibility Systems*

National Center for Service Integration *Resource Briefs* designed to provide practical advice to state and community reform efforts on issues in designing comprehensive, integrated, community-based service systems.

**Breaking the Categorical Mold --  
Constructing Laboratories Around  
Service Integration and "Reinventing Government"**

One of the reasons for "reinventing government" is that the current categorical, fragmented, reactive, and regulatory system of federal programs does not provide states and communities with the opportunity to respond flexibly and effectively to the needs of vulnerable families, neighborhoods, and communities.

If greater experimentation is to occur at the state and community level, however, federal leadership and encouragement will be needed. It is not just a matter of "getting out of the way." States and communities themselves will need all the help, technical support, encouragement, and guidance that they can get and this will require new relationships and roles among all levels of government. In short, the federal government will have to learn together with state and local governments to make this happen and will have to assume different responsibilities than it has in the past.

This new form of partnership calls for a new form of federal solicitation of state and community laboratories for this activity as well -- well beyond traditional guidelines established by the federal administration for experimentation and demonstration projects. The federal administration itself needs to spell out its new roles and responsibilities as a part of the guidelines and the laboratory.

The attached document represents a first iteration of what federal guidelines might look like in soliciting state and community laboratories for "breaking the categorical mold" of existing federal funding restrictions to produce service systems at the community and neighborhood level that are more community-based and community-owned, individually-tailored to meet family and neighborhood needs, comprehensive and holistic, and accountable to improving outcomes at the child, family, and neighborhood level.

The document is presented in the form of federal guidelines to move from the rhetorical to the operational level of thinking. While the guidelines presented are subject to much discussion and debate and modification and refinement, it is the contention here that a serious effort at the federal level to support state and community experimentation must begin with an examination of the many operational issues addressed in these guidelines. If states and communities truly are to "break the categorical mold," the federal government will have to play a lead role in facilitating this effort.

Charles Bruner, Child and Family Policy Center, June 25, 1993

## Breaking the Categorical Mold:

### A Federal Initiative to Support State and Community Redesign of Services and Supports to To Vulnerable Families Within Their Neighborhoods and Communities

.....

**\*\*\* Draft Mock Federal Register Guidelines \*\*\***  
**\*\*\* For Dialogue and Discussion \*\*\***

#### **1. Background. The Current Fragmentation of Federal Funding and Its Impact Upon State and Community Service Delivery.**

Currently, the federal government provides financial support and regulatory direction to states and communities for a broad array of programs designed to improve outcomes for children and families and the neighborhoods and communities in which they live. Such support is provided through entitlement programs, block grants, programmatic funds, and demonstration projects within and across the Department of Health and Human Services, the Department of Education, the Department of Labor, the Department of Housing and Urban Development, the Department of Justice, and the Department of Agriculture. While many of these programs provide necessary and vital supports, the result of their relative independence from one another has been a fragmented array of funding opportunities and regulatory mandates to states and communities to serve vulnerable families and distressed neighborhoods and communities, often with overlapping goals and frequently with the same target constituencies.

At the level of service provision, the categorical boundaries created by these federal programs have resulted in the development of specialized treatment approaches and have trained people to think in specialized roles. As a result, interventions often are targeted to a single, presenting problem or diagnosis relating to an individual, rather than to more general approaches which see any presenting

issues in the context of the family and the family's needs. They often have focused upon remediation or crisis-intervention rather than prevention, and geared toward reliance upon professional services rather than community supports. They have had difficulty in responding to the needs of the individuals and families they serve that extend beyond their specialized, professional boundaries.

The consequence for many vulnerable children and families has been a system which is seen as bureaucratic, unresponsive, and disempowering. The consequence for society has been that too many of these vulnerable children and families fail to succeed, with little overall accountability for their general success or failure built into any of the separate programs supported through federal funds.

To seek to counter this fragmentation and increase cross-program and cross-system coordination, greater flexibility in the use of funds in many of the major federal categorical programs designed to serve vulnerable families and their children has been authorized. In addition, the federal government has mandated cross-agency planning and advisory bodies within many federal programs to counter this service fragmentation and develop more comprehensive and seamless services (sometimes itself resulting in a "fragmentation of coordination" at the state or community level through the proliferation of such cross-agency planning groups, each with control over its own specific federal allocation).

While this flexibility and emphasis upon cross-system planning is helpful to states and communities, however, it does not fundamentally alter many of the obstacles to developing more comprehensive and seamless services to families and their neighborhoods.

Even if states and communities are able to think outside of categorical lines and boundaries, they are likely to find they must secure funding from a number of federal funding sources and themselves integrate those funds to support any new or alternate service strategies they develop, while retaining accounting systems that justify that they are meeting all the categorical requirements embedded within the federal funding streams. Moreover, the categorical nature of federal (as well as state) funding has created territorial constituencies within communities oriented to protecting their own funding interests, constituencies that establish superior expertise in navigating and interpreting federal regulations and requirements governing their categorical programs.

The logistical barriers to developing a more comprehensive and seamless system of services and supports themselves represent a powerful deterrent to such action. Even if it is technically possible for states and/or communities to pool federal resources through waivers, plan amendments, or other actions, it is time-consuming and difficult to undertake such efforts, with the result that state or community requests for waivers to truly decategorize funds have been rare, marginal, and incremental.



Beyond the logistical barriers, however, such actions require that state and community leaders already think outside the existing "categorical mold" and have a vision of how current funding streams could be restructured to better serve vulnerable children and families. The current service paradigm -- based upon individuals rather than families, discrete presenting problems rather than underlying family and community needs, and professional services remediating those problems rather than informal and community supports and connections preventing the needs for crisis intervention -- is a powerful one.

The purpose of these guidelines is to offer selected states and communities the opportunity to enter into a partnership with the federal government in thinking beyond the current paradigm, with the opportunity to broadly pool existing federal funds. As this initiative calls for fundamental changes in the manner in which the federal administration finances services, this "reinvention" applies to the governance of the initiative itself. These guidelines emphasize the importance of changing the role of the federal government to one of leadership, facilitation, and technical support, rather than regulatory control, over actions taken at the state, the community, and the neighborhood level. They go well beyond "getting out of the way" of state and community reform efforts, with the federal government sharing responsibility for identifying and dismantling federal barriers and for helping develop and design new approaches. They call for the same shift in roles for states with their communities and communities with their neighborhoods.

For this reason, the selected states and communities will share in the governance of the initiative itself. The guidelines themselves spell out first directions in the structure of reforms envisioned by the initiative, but these directions ultimately will be shaped by the participating states and communities, with the federal government in a supportive and partnering role.

## **2. The Federal Commitment to Sharing Authority and Responsibility for Systems Reform with States and Communities**

For the federal government to encourage states and communities to "reinvent" their service strategies to be more preventive, flexible, comprehensive, efficient, and outcome-based, and to create the needed organizational and governance system by which to achieve that reinvention requires the federal government to commit to the following:

- A. allowing states and communities to use federal funds in much more flexible ways, including the pooling of funding across existing federal programmatic and departmental boundaries and the elimination of multiple requirements for cross-agency planning and advisory committees,

- B. initially defining the principles upon which such pooling of funds and delegation of authority will occur (with such principles based upon state and community plans to serve vulnerable children and families and their neighborhoods and communities in more comprehensive, flexible, and preventive ways and within a broadly inclusive and participatory governance structure),
- C. offering leadership, encouragement, guidance, and support to states and communities in constructing organizational structures capable of implementing such reforms and in supporting the process of continuous improvement at the state and community level through research, technical assistance, investments in staff development, and information feedback,
- D. providing financial and technical support to plan and design new service strategies at both the state and community level and to experiment and to transition from the existing categorical system to a more flexible and integrated one, and
- E. partnering with states and communities in the evolution of this initiative, establishing a federal-state-community governance system for the initiative itself that provides equal representation for participating states and communities with federal departments and agencies, and which will be responsible for the following:
  - (1) establishing expectations for improving outcomes for children and families on a neighborhood- and community-wide basis that help guide state and community actions,
  - (2) developing new means for monitoring and assuring accountability for the expenditure of federal funds to insure they conform to the initiative's principles, connect to the improved outcomes sought by the efforts, and are established without hamstringing the innovation, experimentation, and risk-taking that are essential to the success of this initiative, and
  - (3) designing and implementing an evaluation system that captures the lessons learned from the initiative.

Initially, the federal administration intends to select up to fifteen communities in up to five states, based upon the interest demonstrated at the state and community level for such flexibility and reform. The commitment of the federal administration under each of the above five points (A-E) is described.

*A. Delegating authority over the restructuring of federal funds to the state and community level.* During the state and community planning process, the federal administration will provide technical assistance and support in identifying all major sources of federal funding that are available within the participating communities and identify the range of flexibility in using those funds that can be achieved without the need for federal statutory changes, and the federal statutory changes that will be sought, if needed, to provide sufficient flexibility to meet all needs set out to allow community-based funding decisions on the use of federal funds consistent with the principles set forth in subsection B., below.

Among the federal funds that shall be subject to consideration for restructuring at the state and community level are the following: AFDC, Medicaid, JOBS, Title IV-A Emergency Assistance, Title IV-E, Title IV-B, WIC, Food Stamps, Head Start, CSAP Treatment and Prevention Funds, Community Services Block Grant, Social Services Block Grant, Community Development Block Grant, Stewart McKinney Homeless Funds, JTPA Title IIA, JTPA Title IIB, JTPA Title III, Carl Perkins Vocational Education Funds, Wagner Peysner Funds, Vocational Rehabilitation Funds, Maternal and Child Health Block Grant, Migrant and Community Health Center funds, School lunch funds, summer lunch funds, Chapter I, Public housing subsidies, CASSP, OJJDP funds, Educationally handicapped funds, Bilingual education funds, vocational education funds.

States and communities are not required to pool, integrate, or decategorize all, or even most, of the above federal funding sources; but the federal administration is committed to making it possible for states and communities to select to do so, consistent with the principles and goals for their initiative. Through technical assistance and support, the federal administration will make it possible for states and communities to more clearly identify their options and to recognize the extent and locus of federal funding resources being committed within individual communities. The federal administration believes that such efforts also must occur with respect to state funding sources provided to communities in order for the initiatives to plan effectively. The work at the federal level will be facilitated by an interagency body that can help identify and overcome obstacles that may exist within existing federal programs and departments that are regulatory or administrative as opposed to statutory.

*B. Defining principles under which such restructuring of funding shall occur.* An initial set of principles upon which this initiative is based are enumerated below and will help guide the planning stages for reform. These principles have been adapted from the work underway in a number of state and community service reform efforts. While they will serve as principles in the initial planning process, they will be refined and modified as the planning proceeds, in accordance with subsection E., below.

The initial set of principles are as follows:

(1) a primary emphasis in service system reform is to help families and children help themselves move toward self-sufficiency, drawing as much as possible on informal and community support networks as opposed to professional services and seeking to strengthen neighborhood and community capacities to provide such support,

(2) broad-based participation is needed in establishing community goals and outcomes for children and families, with those outcomes tracked and forming a basis for measuring initiative progress and charting new activities,

(3) duplication in services and in case management should be reduced, with an emphasis upon providing a continuity of relationship with children and families needing services and supports and a more "seamless" system of services and supports,

(4) initiative efforts should build upon and bolster neighborhood and community resources, including an emphasis upon bolstering neighborhood and community development as well as individual family development,

(5) provision of services and supports to families should be individualized and flexible to meet the needs of families, rather than funding-stream driven and based upon the service offerings of service providers,

(6) consumers should be given a role in helping design and evaluate services being provided,

(7) initiatives should recognize the cultural strength and diversity within neighborhoods and communities being served and reflect this diversity in service strategies, and

(8) governance structures should be developed at the state and community level that reflect a new level of partnership and that reduce the level of fragmentation of authority created through separate control over different funding sources.

*C. Supporting new organizational and governance structures.* As the federal administration seeks through this effort to provide new authority to states and communities and restructure its own responsibilities in this process, the administration also seeks to support new organizational and governance structures between states and communities and among communities, neighborhoods, and their residents that move authority and responsibility from more remote and institutional to more community-based systems of control. Of particular importance will be the

greater inclusion of informal support networks and the building of public and private partnerships that seek to reduce reliance upon public and professional service interventions. The administration will offer technical assistance and support to this effort, but will base this technical support not on an examination of federally-based initiatives and efforts but rather upon innovations which have been emanating from the state and community level. Participating states and communities will be involved at the outset in the design and development of this technical assistance capacity. The goal of the federal initiative is to develop an organizational structure managing the initiative (and, over time, a formal governance structure) that can support the reforms envisioned at the service level within the initiative and can perpetuate itself despite any subsequent changes in visionary or political leadership. The responsibility of the federal government in this respect is to support the process of continuous improvement and evolution through appropriate research, technical assistance, and investment in staff development and information systems' design.

*D. Providing financial and technical support for the infrastructure needed to plan, design, and implement service reforms.* The impact of this initiative ultimately will be based upon the extent to which changes in practice occur at the level where children and families come into contact with service and support systems. The goal of the initiative is to support a form of frontline practice among both publicly-financed services and informal networks of support that is more community-based and community-owned, individually tailored to child and family needs, family-focussed, preventive, comprehensive, and directed to achieving family and community self-actualization and sufficiency. To achieve this goal, it is anticipated that the skills, responsibilities, expectations, and incentive and reward structures for teachers, social workers, mental health professionals, juvenile court officers, police, job training and employment counselors, youth service workers, and other frontline workers serving children and families will change to become more collaborative and flexible and adaptive in their response to unique family and neighborhood needs. The administration will offer technical assistance and support in changing frontline practice to embody these characteristics, not only in direct support to communities and states in the form of technical assistance (and financial support for states and communities to secure that technical assistance) but in its own examination of the infrastructure of training and support it provides within each of its own agencies and departments as part of its general operations.

In addition, the federal administration's technical assistance will include substantial support for planning and strategic examination at the state and community level of the resources available within communities to support changes and the implications of continuing the current system, in terms of the "costs of failure" society can be expected to bear. The assessments needed within communities to ascertain how current funds (including but not limited to major federal funding streams) are being used are one part of this assessment process, but

the administration believes most states and communities will need significant additional information gathering to proceed in an initiative of this scope and significance.

*E. Partnering with states and communities in the governance of this effort.*

While the federal administration expects to provide leadership and direction to this initiative through its financial and technical support and through its work in decategorizing existing federal funding sources at the state and community level, the federal administration also seeks to establish a true partnership with states and communities and not unilaterally control the initiative. Therefore, as soon as states and communities are selected for participation in the initiative, a governance structure for the initiative will be developed that involves equal representation from states and communities and the federal administration and that seeks to operate on a consensus basis in the ongoing evolution of the initiative. This governance structure will have the responsibility to authorize, develop, and modify the initiative and direct the federal activities described under A-D above. In addition, this governance structure will be used from the outset for the following three purposes:

(1) *Establishing expectations for improving outcomes.* The goal of the initiative is to improve outcomes for vulnerable children and families and the neighborhoods and communities in which they live. This requires that indicators of child and family well-being and of neighborhood and community vitality be collected on an ongoing basis and used to inform initiative design, implementation, and modification. While each state and community may define family and community goals somewhat differently, many will remain consistent across initiative sites. The federal administration will offer technical assistance and support to states and communities in designing indicators that are operational and collectable on an ongoing basis for children and families and neighborhoods and communities and in using these indicators to help inform decisions on initiative design, implementation and modification.

(2) *Developing accountability structures for this initiative.* In moving from the current, largely input- and categorically-based accountability system to a new, more outcome- and family- and neighborhood-based accountability system, the federal administration will negotiate with those selected states and communities on how fiscal and performance accountability can be achieved. The emphasis, over time, will be on using system level outcome (as opposed to individual program) performance measures as the basis for accountability. Again, a set of principles initially will guide this negotiation, which will include the following:

(a) fiscal tracking and management information systems will complement the goals and principles of the initiative,

(b) fiscal tracking systems will be sufficiently detailed, timely, and capable

of audit to identify any fraudulent use of funds,

(c) sufficient controls will exist to prevent favoritism and and patronage in the awarding of contracts or grants,

(d) sufficient controls will exist to prevent arbitrary uses of funds or discrimination,

(e) sufficient sanctions will exist and be enforced to effect compliance,

(f) systems developed to track expenditures of funds shall seek to provide a family- and neighborhood-based accounting of expenditures, and

(g) participating state and local governance structures will support the accountability structures as reasonable, fair, and effective.

(3) *Designing and implementing an evaluation system for this initiative.* As with the development of outcome expectations and an accountability system, the design and implementation of an evaluation system for the initiative will be a joint effort of the federal government, the states, and the communities. Interactive and formative evaluation components are expected to be included in this evaluation design, with a guiding principle that the evaluation structure should conform to the goals and efforts of the initiative, even if this requires the development of new evaluation methodologies.

### **3. Initial State and Community Responsibilities**

As the federal administration seeks to share authority with states and communities, states similarly are expected to share authority with communities and communities to share authority with neighborhoods and families. The initial commitment expected from states and communities not only is to participate at the federal level in a new partnership, but also to establish a new partnership between states and communities in the implementation of this initiative and new partnerships within the communities with their neighborhoods and with their vulnerable children and families. Initial responsibilities from states and communities in this initiative are the following:

A. Participating in the governance structure for the initiative at the federal level, with agreement to abide by the decisions reached through that structure,

B. Establishing a governance relationship between state and community and between community and neighborhood consistent with the principles undergirding the initiative,

C. Completing assessments within each community that are necessary to provide the information to redesign the service strategy within neighborhoods and communities, including a review of all major federal funding sources within the communities,

D. Developing a strategy for redirecting any federal, state, and community resources to better achieve state and community goals, including the identification of transition or conversion resources needed to implement this strategy, and

E. Committing to the basic principles undergirding this initiative.

A. *Governance structure participation with the federal initiative.* States and communities will be expected to select representatives to participate in the overall operation of the initiative. In this participation, states and communities must agree to abide by the decisions reached within that governance structure and to resolve disputes arising from interpretation of the initiative within that structure. Communities shall be provided representation in that governance equal to state representation.

B. *Governance relationships within the state/community/neighborhood systems.* As the federal government seeks to "devolve" (not abrogate) its responsibilities to states and communities, states are expected to "devolve" responsibilities to communities and communities are expected to "devolve" responsibilities to neighborhoods and their service structures. As with the federal governance structures, states and communities must establish structures to manage their initiatives within the state and agree to abide by the decisions reached within that governance structure and to resolve disputes within that structure arising from interpretation of the initiative.

C. *Completing assessments needed to shape the initiative's redesign of services.* Given the scope and importance of this initiative, the need for information and assessment tools goes well beyond that currently available within states and communities and requires community assessments that are both qualitatively and quantitatively different than those that have been conducted in the past. Simply tracking the many major federal funding resources already within use by states and communities will represent a new challenge; but the initiative further will require that many of these resources also be identified on a neighborhood as well as a community level. In building community ownership and support, involvement by residents within distressed neighborhoods and by vulnerable families in identifying resource needs and supporting informal networks of support will require labor-intensive work within neighborhoods. Identifying how resources currently being expended within neighborhoods can support neighborhood employment and stability represents another significant challenge in information collection that may be essential to achieving community goals. While the initiative is not intended to



preclude actions until an exhaustive assessment has been completed (and the assessment activities are designed to represent ongoing and sequenced efforts within communities that continually help guide initiative evolution), there must be a commitment to such assessments in order to systematically address community and state needs and goals.

*D. Developing an implementation strategy.* This initiative does not draw a sharp distinction between planning and implementation and believes that continuous planning and redesign are likely to be essential to any successful efforts to innovate and restructure. While many of the assessment efforts under C., above, must occur before action can be taken in many areas, however, it is not sufficient to engage in an assessment process without constructing an implementation strategy. The initiative presumes that there may exist significant transition costs in making recommended conversions and these should be identified in the process. States and communities, however, must enter this process with an openness to fundamentally altering their service systems and supports, should the principles guiding the initiative and the assessments conducted of the current system warrant that change.

*E. Committing to the initiative's basic principles.* The initial section of these guidelines provided a statement of the problem with the current system of federal financial supports to children and families through state and community agencies and organizations. The problems with the current system for financing services and supports extend beyond federal funding streams, however. State and community regulations contribute to this fragmentation, their accountability structures contribute to inflexibility, and the locus of decision-making removes localized control and direction. A commitment to this initiative includes a commitment not only to help the federal government "devolve" authority, but to seek appropriate devolution at other governance levels as well. This "devolution" itself, however, does not constitute abrogation, but is based upon a set of principles about service delivery that must be incorporated into the service system. Above all, states and communities must be committed to these principles and to building broad-based support for their incorporation into redesigned service systems for children and families in neighborhoods and communities.

#### **4. State and Community Application, Time Frame, and Funding and Resource Commitment**

##### *A. Application from States and Communities*

The federal administration seeks to partner with up to five states and three communities within each of those states in this initiative. Communities need not be specific political jurisdictions within the state, but must be of a sufficient size to

encounter most obstacles to service system reform and to have an understandable definition at least with respect to the residents who reside within their boundaries. The application shall include the following:

1. a joint application from the states and the communities, with a letter of commitment from the Governor at the state level and letters of commitment from at least three leaders from each community provided as part of the application.

2. an explanation of why the leaders from the communities who provide the letters of commitment are representative of the community and capable of building an inclusive structure of support for the service reforms that represent the initiative's potential.

3. a statement of no more than eight pages of the principles under which the initiative will be organized and governed within the state, representing a partnership between states and communities and communities and neighborhoods and families, to which the state and community leaders submitting the application have agreed,

4. a statement of no more than twelve pages describing the expectations for the initiative in terms of the following: improving outcomes for vulnerable families and children and for distressed neighborhoods and communities; establishing broader-based ownership of services and supporting informal networks of support for families and neighborhoods; and constructing more efficient and effective public service delivery, including how this effort can reduce the "fragmentation of coordination" if that currently exists within states and communities,

5. recommendations, of no more than two pages each, of the critical issues that should be considered by the federal administration in meeting its obligations under subsections A-E in section 2 of this application,

6. a proposed budget, for use by the state and by communities, over the first two years of the initiative, and

7. identification and description of those who will constitute the initial planning and implementation team, whether or not they are directly funded by the initiative, and the portion of their time that will be devoted to this effort.

#### *B. Time Frame*

The initiative is expected to evolve over time, with the first three years involving assessment and strategic planning at the state and community as well as the federal level, with potential implementation of some reforms over that period as

well but with a goal of significant redesign and implementation occurring from the end of the second year through the life of the initiative, which is expected to extend at least eight years for the initial five participating states and fifteen participating communities. As the federal administration and the participating states and communities gain experience in this new partnership, the federal administration will consider both of the following: (1) expansion of the initiative to new states and communities. and (2) generalizing specific waivers received within participating states and communities or redirection of funds to be a part of general federal authorizations and policy.

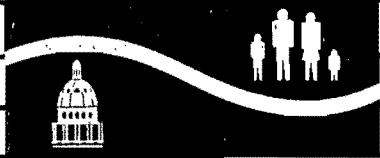
### *C. Funding Support*

The federal administration will provide up to \$ 10 million per year in direct financing to states and communities (\$ 2 million per state and its selected communities) for planning and infrastructural support over the first two years of the initiative. In addition, the federal administration is committed to redeploying existing federal administrative resources necessary to provide the technical assistance and support required for the administration to meet its responsibilities under Subsections A-E of Section 2 of these guidelines and to providing direct staff support for the governance structure established in these guidelines in the amount of \$ 8 million per year from funds drawn from the participating federal agencies.

In addition, the federal administration will seek further funding for subsequent years, based upon recommendations from the governance structure established for the initiative regarding the needs for continued planning and infrastructural support, any transition and conversion support, and any evaluation and technical assistance support. It also will seek support from the U.S. Congress for any statutory changes or waivers to existing federal funds needed for initiatives to implement their plans.

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June 25, 1993

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Occasional Paper # 2:  
*Issues in Developing Comprehensive,  
Community-Based Service Systems*

**GOING TO SCALE --  
CHALLENGES IN SERVICE DESIGN**

Charles Bruner

Child and Family Policy Center

March, 1993

## GOING TO SCALE --

### CHALLENGES IN SERVICE DESIGN

by Charles Bruner

Occasional Paper # 2. *Issues in Developing Comprehensive, Community-Based Service Systems*. Child and Family Policy Center Occasional Paper Series (March, 1993).

Providers, advocates, and policy makers have been heartened by the promise shown by a number of small, community-based programs in improving outcomes for vulnerable families and children. These programs have been characterized by their responsiveness to the needs and values of the families they serve and by their ability to offer comprehensive supports that can enable those families to provide more nurturing environments for their children -- and thus for their children to achieve success across health, educational, social, and economic lines.

The core attributes of these exemplary programs are characterized as family-centered, neighborhood-based, community-owned, flexible, individually tailored to meet family needs, preventive, and comprehensive.

State, community, and federal demonstration projects have been constructed to hasten the spread of these program attributes in two ways: (1) through creation and expansion of new programs and services designed to embody these attributes; and (2) through planning and fiscal incentives to incorporate these attributes within (and across) mainstream systems.

This paper seeks to identify the challenges the most ambitious of these initiatives (and their mentors) must learn to

conquer. Many of the programmatic initiatives currently being undertaken, of course, are not tied to any<sup>0</sup> vision for system reform, content to experiment and demonstrate the value of the approach on a small scale. Others, however, explicitly have been defined to move, over time, beyond a "demonstration" basis to become beachheads for broader system reforms and pathfinders for eventual jurisdiction-wide implementation. They are seeking to "go to scale" to produce systemic impacts upon child and family outcomes.

For these latter efforts, the implementation challenges are fundamental and profound -- challenges which variously have been characterized as "reproducing the unique," "institutionalizing the deinstitutional," "mass producing warm, human interactions," and "moving from marginal to mainstream." As these characterizations suggest, the challenges to "going to scale" are more than quantitative. While individual, exemplary community-based demonstration programs may co-exist with other services and even become sources of pride within neighborhoods and communities, universalizing them creates challenges different from the challenges faced in their initial creation and development.

The following is a first cut at describing some of the issues and challenges to service delivery that seem most important to be addressed by initiatives with pretensions of "going to scale."

1. *Establishing a definition of "scale."* Simply defined, "going to scale" is used in this paper to mean providing services to the full universe of those for whom the services are designed. This requires identifying a target population for services and then providing sufficient resources to effectively serve the members of that population. Hopefully, this means expanding the service beyond a small geographic area to become a community-wide

or state-wide service. It remains a fact, however, that most of the small, community-based initiatives so frequently cited as exemplary in their approach to families operate at well below this "scale," even for their neighborhoods they serve.

The following illustrates the purely quantitative challenge to building such "comprehensive, flexible, individualized" services "to scale." The widely- and deservedly-praised Beethoven Project in the Robert Taylor homes in Chicago -- a program that seeks to provide comprehensive services and supports to families from pregnancy to school age in one of the nation's most distressed public housing projects -- serves approximately 150 of the 900 families living within 6 of the 42 high rise buildings within those homes. It provides parent advocates who give support to those 150 families as well as broker necessary outside services. The Beethoven Project also provides pre-school programs and infant care and some health services. Its total budget is \$ 1.5 million annually. Its reputation is as one of the country's most intensive, comprehensive, and ambitious programs most nearly "at scale" within the area it serves.

In fact, however, there easily are an additional 150 families within the 900 families in those 6 high rises that meet Beethoven's definition for service need and that could be recruited to participate, if Beethoven had the resources to serve them. There are waiting lists for its child care services and it sometimes cannot secure substance abuse treatment slots, mental health counseling services, and other social services from community providers to meet the needs of its clients. Even in the 6 high rises it serves, the Beethoven Project is not nearly "at scale," despite its \$ 1.5 million budget.

While the Beethoven Project is an ambitious undertaking and much can be and has been learned from its experiences in service design and work with families, because it is not "at scale" it



cannot answers to many of the challenges that are described below. Moreover, even if the Beethoven Project were "at scale" within the 6 high rises it currently serves (or even within the entire housing project), it still would not be "at scale" for the larger city or the state. Different challenges exist for moving services to scale both within one geographic area (the 6 high rise) and for moving to scale across geographic areas (the city or the state).

2. *Effectively targeting services.* One of the challenges faced in "going to scale" is in effectively targeting services and reaching that population for whom services will have the greatest impact. Exemplary community-based initiatives frequently find that they become sought-after by community residents. They create their own loyal clientele. They also recognize that if they continue to reach out to new residents and clients, they will have difficulty serving those with whom they already are involved. Their orientation to inclusiveness militates against their denying services to the marginally needy in order to seek out those in greater distress.

Effectively targeting services to those most in need -- who also may be most likely to be suspicious or initially uninterested in receiving support -- represents a fundamental challenge in going to scale. At the same time, however, these families are likely to be "high opportunity families," families that the new service philosophy may reach and help that the mainstream service system has abandoned as unreachable.

First, it requires development of a recruitment strategy that is successful in engaging those who are most socially isolated and distrustful. Second, it requires discipline in focusing resources where they are most needed, rather than simply where the demand is most clearly articulated. With limited exceptions, most exemplary programs, after their "start-up

period," simply have not had to struggle in developing outreach strategies and have not placed priority on developing techniques to enlist those most difficult to serve. The result is that much remains to be learned about engaging those families. Moreover, to the extent these families are recruited and participate, they may change the character of the programs themselves. There is a distinct tension between serving those within a neighborhood's network of mainstream families while also recruiting and serving those at or beyond the margins of what is considered tolerable by neighborhood norms.

3. *Assuring access to needed services.* Exemplary small-scale, community-based programs often develop considerable skill in networking with other service organizations and securing for their clients a wide variety of other community services and supports. If the exemplary program serves only a small portion of the potential number of clients for these outside services, these organizations may be able to accommodate the program's requests and demands, although these accommodations may come at the expense of other persons within the community being served. As such services "go to scale," however, they lose this ability, as they now must compete against themselves for inadequate resources. Again, the Beethoven Project may be effective in brokering services for a large portion of its clients when it serves only those in 6 of the high rises. If it expands to the other 36 high rises, however, it will find that it is no longer as possible to find slots for all its families.

4. *Maintaining program quality and integrity.* When initiatives seek to "go to scale" to new locations or to expand within existing programs, they face challenges in maintaining some of their basic features. When "going to scale" through expansion of existing programs, the expansion risks destroying one of their distinguishing features to families -- their openness and intimacy, where everyone is on a first name basis.

As agencies grow in size, they must struggle to retain this sense of intimacy. Further, their inventors and leaders may not have the skills to manage larger organizational structures, however successful they were in designing the more intimate ones. IF they seek to go to scale through moving to new locations under new administration and leadership, the elan that made their flagship efforts successful may not be as easily transported. Reconstructing this programmatic vision is very difficult, and involves the creation of the same type of staff and community involvement and ownership as existed in the original location. It is very challenging to move from "efficacy" within small, exceptionally-managed programs to "effectiveness" on a broad scale, especially in social programs. Even when certain small-scale programs show their efficacy in improving outcomes, expansion of these programs while retaining the core elements that made them efficacious (often themselves related to exceptional, dedicated staff) has proved to be quite problematic.

5. *Maintaining program intensity and comprehensiveness (defining need for diverse families).* One of the most common sources of "model drift" and program dilution occurs when exemplary programs are discovered and asked to expand to serve additional clients. Moving from targeted to more universal coverage frequently results in a much greater expansion in families served than in resources provided to serve them. One of the best illustrations of program expansion that consciously has sought to resist this tendency to dilute has involved intensive family preservation services targeted to families at imminent risk of out-of-home placement. At the outset, the Edna McConnell Clark Foundation supported states in establishing and expanding intensive family preservation services, but only as a very specific intervention dependent upon extremely small caseloads to produce results. At the outset, caseload size was seen as one of the critical elements distinguishing intensive family preservation services from other intervention alternatives.

6. *Overcoming ticklish turf issues and barriers challenges.* In addition to programmatic leadership and vision, most exemplary programs also can point to a hospitable political climate as a part of their success. Most "demonstration" initiatives select their sites precisely because the political climate and the leadership base appears to exist or capable of development. When "going to scale" to a broader geographic area, however, it is not possible to select only propitious sites, to "cherry-pick" locations. Further, as "going to scale" produces systemic demands (# 3, above) as well as program replication/adaptation challenges (# 4, above), these challenges will be intensified when they occur in the more problematic, as well as the more propitious, political climates.

7. *Changing the mainstream service system.* Ultimately, this new service strategy is at fundamental variance to many of the mores and practices within mainstream services. At some point in "going to scale," these new practices are likely to reach a "critical mass" that threatens the way existing systems treat families. If services sufficiently empower families, the families themselves will expect treatment from mainstream services -- schools, social welfare agencies, employment offices, police departments, city hall -- that is similarly respectful and empowering. The reaction of these institutions to such challenges to their authority has at least one recent historical referent that deserves study -- the reaction to "maximum feasible participation" in the sixties.

8. *Designing new paradigms for evaluation.* One of the strongest forces behind change is the recognition of the inability of the current system to produce good outcomes for a large number of children. Rhetorically, there is an emphasis upon moving from a "process-driven" system to an "outcome-driven"

one, with accountability measured on the basis of the bottom-line. At the same time, however, a "flexible, individualized, family-centered" service strategy is likely to produce different outcomes for different families it serves.

A first challenge in fairly evaluating such efforts is in developing an evaluation strategy that captures these very different changes. Too often, evaluators tell programs, "I know that's what you do; but that's not what I measure," which results in evaluations that fail to demonstrate the effect of "flexible, family-centered, individualized" programs.

A second challenge relates to how they may be fairly evaluated, once outcomes have been defined. Since these initiatives are based in part upon their "inclusiveness" and their building a support system for the community as well as serving individual families, they deserve to be tested on the basis of their community, and not solely their individual, impact. Randomized trials, frequently cited as the only true way to determine program efficacy, violate one of the tenets of the services themselves -- to be open and inclusive. In effect, this means that these exemplary small, community-based services must be expanded "to scale" in order to fairly assess their capacity to affect outcomes for children and families.

Both of these require new evaluation paradigms. In both capturing individualized program impacts and in assessing community-wide service impacts, evaluators face new challenges in constructing their tools.

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The challenges discussed here are not separate and distinct, but often interconnected. They are raised as challenges, for they appear as important issues looming on the horizon for some

of the most ambitious initiatives being undertaken to date. To the extent that these challenges can be better defined, there is more hope that we can help those initiatives seek to address them, and learn from their efforts in doing so.

(A revised draft of this occasional paper is being published as a chapter in Family Support in a Changing Context being edited by Sharon L. Kagan and Bernice Weissbourd for publication by Jossey-Bass in July, 1994.)