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MASTER OF SOCIAL WORK
AUGSBURG COLLEGE
MINNEAPOLIS, MINNESOTA

CERTIFICATE OF APPROVAL

This is to certify that the Master's Thesis of:

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has been approved by the Examining Committee for the thesis requirement for the Master of Social Work Degree.

Date of Oral Presentation: June 11, 1997.

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AN EXPLORATORY STUDY:
OUT-OF-HOME PLACEMENT PRACTICES IN TWO MID-WESTERN COUNTIES

Augsburg College
George Sverdrup Library
Minneapolis, MN 55454

Michael I. Frafjord

**Submitted in partial fullfilment of
the requirement for the degree of
Master of Social Work**

**AUGSBURG COLLEGE
MINNEAPOLIS, MINNESOTA
June, 1997**

ABSTRACT

An Exploratory Study: Out-of-home Child Placement Practices in Two Mid-western Counties

The purpose of this study is to explore the criteria used by social workers in two mid-western counties to place children out of the home. This exploration has been done using a questionnaire that asks questions intended to identify a consensus among workers about the criteria considered to place children. Out-of-home placement for the purpose of this study will include any placement done by a county agency either on an emergency basis or by a plan, started at the beginning of a worker/client relationship. These placements are those in which a child has been removed from the home or from the primary care giver and placed in an alternative living situation.

A consensus was established and many opinions regarding county policies were expressed. The opinions followed two themes, internal and external. The external dealt with community resources and the internal dealt with specific county policies and procedures. The concern most often expressed was that the counties tended to focus too heavily on financial matters.

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INTRODUCTION

Since the passage of the Adoption Assistance and Child Welfare Act of 1980, county agencies in the United States have been mandated to use reasonable efforts to prevent out-of-home placements of children. In 1993, the Omnibus Budget Reconciliation Act was set up by the United States Congress to provide one billion dollars for early intervention, prevention, and family support services. This act has set provisions specifically for the prevention of out-of-home placements. Both laws were meant to prevent the break up of families by providing a means for agencies to prevent, track and limit the disruptions caused by placements.

The number of children being placed outside the home has continued to increase. In 1982, 243,000 children were in one of several forms of out-of-home placement; by 1992 this figure had increased to 429,000(Dubowitz, 1994; Sudia, 1986).

The purpose of this study is to explore the criteria used by social workers in two mid western counties to place children out of the home. This exploration will be done by using a questionnaire that asks questions that will help to establish a consensus among workers about the criteria they use to place children. Out-of-home placement for the purpose of this study will include any placement done by a county agency either on an emergency basis or by a plan started at the beginning of a worker/client relationship. These placements are those in which a child has been removed from the home or from the primary care giver and placed in an

alternative living situation.

Current Policy

Policy on a national level is driven by the Adoption Assistance and Welfare Act of 1980 as well as the Omnibus Budget Reconciliation Act of 1993. These two acts establish both protocols and funding streams for agencies to provide services to families that include prevention of out-of-home placements. The goals of these policies are to provide a temporary, safe, and nurturing environment for children while they cannot live in their parents' home and to achieve a safe, permanent home for children with either their biological or adoptive parents that will minimize the effects of the placement(Goerge, et al. 1994; Sudia, 1986).

The primary means to provide the prevention of placement and family disruption has been through family preservation services. These services are based on determining families/children that are at risk of placement and providing a variety of services to minimize that risk(Wells, 1994; Goerge, et al., 1994; Rittner, 1995; Theiman & Dail, 1992; Berrick & Lawrence-Karski, 1995).

Within the Federal policy, that counties must use reasonable efforts to prevent out-of-home placements and use family preservation services as a tool to accomplish this task, can be found the county policies and practices for this study.

Other factors influencing the placement of children have to do with resources. The cost of placing a child outside of the home has more than an emotional cost. The actual monetary cost of supporting a child and a foster home have become an important factor in the policies of counties.

The two counties that were chosen for this study are currently reconsidering how they have placed children in the past and are working toward a new policy that considers issues including the effects of placement on children and families as well as the cost of placements.

In the past year, Dakota County has mandated that social workers reduce placements by 25%. The actual reduction at this time has been closer to 60%. The change in the policy appears to have been verbal and implies that placements will only be made if the child is in imminent danger of harm. Emergency placements are to be done by the Crisis Team and non-emergency placement must meet the criteria set by a placement consultation team.

Chisago County is likely to undergo a policy change. The policy change in this county will be due, in part, to getting a new director in Jan. of 1996. The new director has a reputation of being able to provide a nurturing environment for both clients and workers. This likely policy change may encompass new ways of making, reviewing, and concluding placements. To this point in time, the placements have been made in this county using the placement committee model. That is, if a placement needs to be made the case has to be

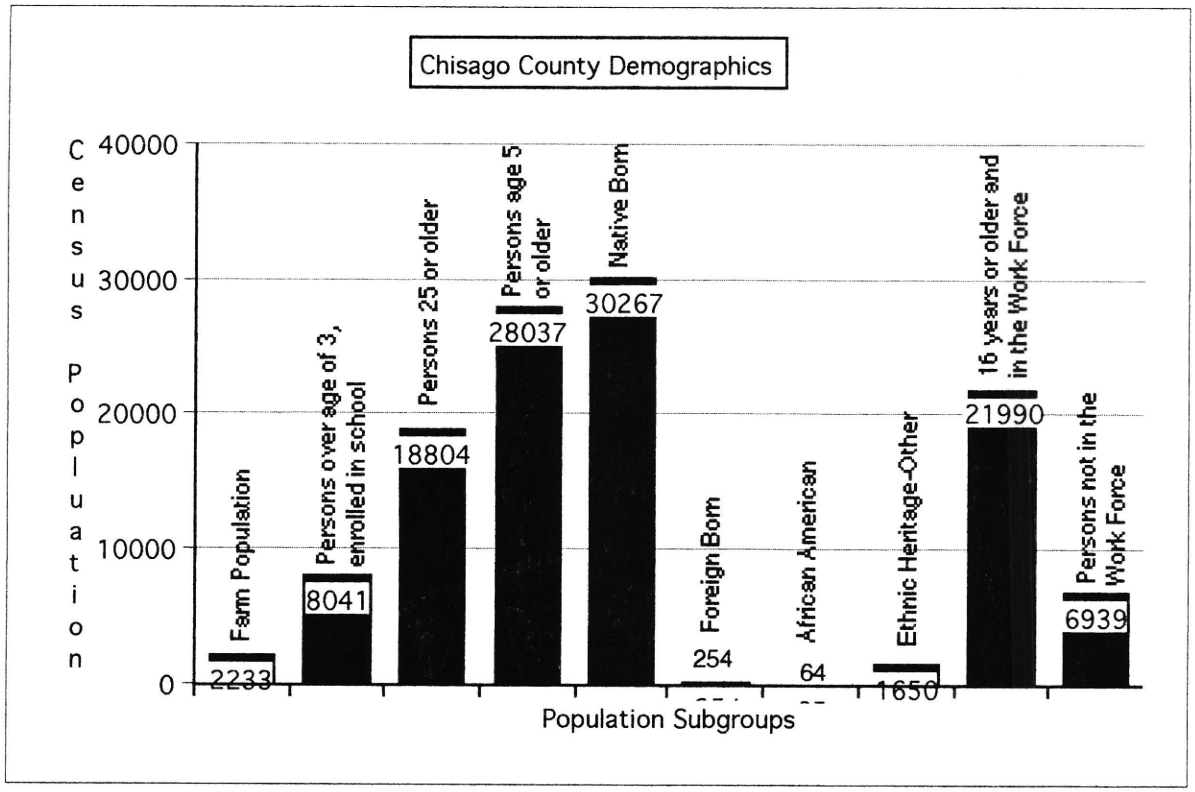
approved by a committee that has some expertise in the area of budgets and placements. An emergency placement would go to the committee after the event to identify the next step in the plan.

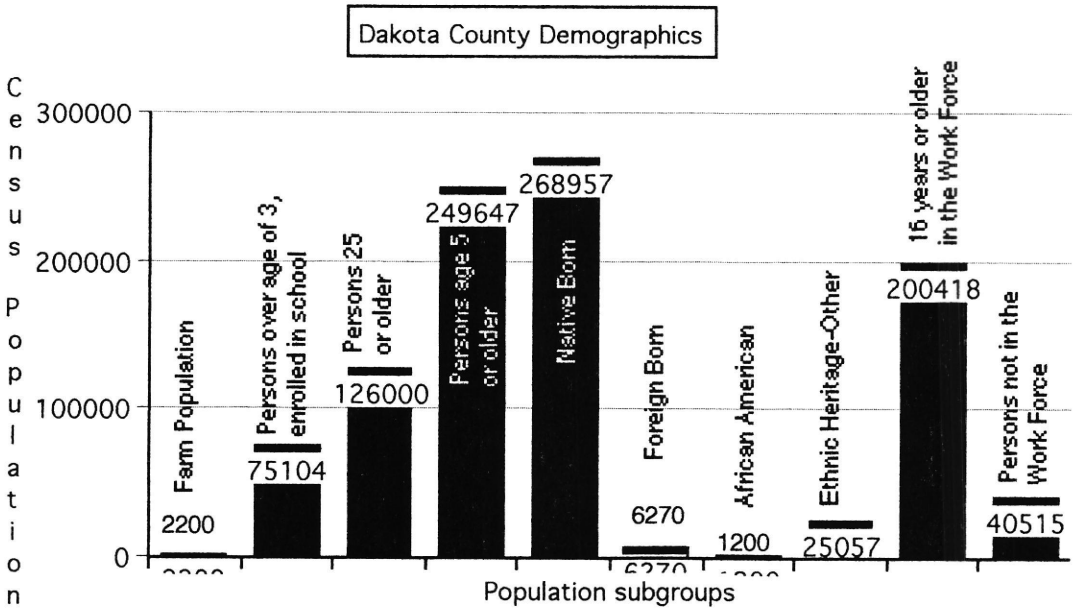
THE COUNTIES COMPARED

The Graphs

The following two graphs are a pictoral representation of each counties demographic make up. The first graph, for Chisago County, is based on a total population of 30,521. The second graph, for Dakota county, is based upon a total population of 275,227.

Each graph is broken down into the following representations. First is farm population, this is defined as people not living in a city/town whose income is based on farm production. Second is the number of people over the age of three enrolled in schools, no distinction was made as to whether the schools were public or private. Third is the total people aged 25 or over. Fourth is people aged 5 or older. Fifth is people who are considered native born, that is, born in their state of residence. Sixth is foreign born, that is born somewhere other than their state of residence. Seventh is the total African-American population, this was the only race specifically identified in the data. Eighth is people whose ethnic heritage is listed as other. Ninth is people 16 years or older in the work force. Tenth is the number of people who are unemployed.


Chisago County Demographics
Census Population
40000
30000
20000
10000
0
Farm Population
2233
Persons over age of 3, enrolled in school
8041
Persons 25 or older
18804
Persons age 5 or older
28037
Native Born
30267
Foreign Born
254
African American
64
Ethnic Heritage-Other
1650
16 years or older and in the Work Force
21990
Persons not in the Work Force
6939
Population Subgroups



Two counties were chosen for this study because of the continuum they provide. The counties are at the extreme north and south ends of a large metropolitan area. Both

counties are in the same mid-western state.

The data for this comparison is taken from the 1990Census Bureau Report(1990).

Chisago County

Chisago County has a total population of 30,521 and is considered 100% rural with only 2,233 citizens listed as actual farm population. There are 8,041 persons over the age of three years enrolled in schools.

This county has 18,804 persons who are 25 years of age and older. 80.1% of them are high school graduates or higher; while 11.9% hold a Bachelor's degree or higher.

Persons aged five years and over numbered 28,037. The census bureau reports that 30,267 of the persons in Chisago Co.are native born. That is, born in the state of residence. 254 persons report being foreign born, this includes persons born outside the U.S., as well as outside of the state of residence. Less than 1000 of the total population reports "Do not speak English very well". The non English languages are listed as Spanish and Asian/Pacific Island.

This county is predominately of German, Swedish, and Norwegian descent. Only 65 persons listed African as their ancestral heritage, though 1650 are listed simply as "Other".

Persons aged 16 years and older in the county number 21,990 and 68.4% of them are in the work force. The census

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bureau reports a 7% unemployment rate(1990) and lists 6939 as not in the labor force. A further break down of the labor statistics shows that 59.7 percent of females who are 16 years old and older are in the labor force. 65% of woman who are 16 years old and older with children aged 6 years and under are in the labor force and 81.4% of woman aged 16 years and older with children aged 6-17 years are in the labor force.

The income status of this county as of 1989 is, Median household income $31,281, Median family income $35,229, and the median non family income $13,908. No distinction was given by the census data between household and family income.

The poverty status as of 1989 is; for all persons, 7.8% live below the poverty level. 7% for persons aged 18 years and older; 9.7% for persons aged 65 years and older; 11.5% for related children under age 5 years and 8.5% for related children aged 5-17 years. Of the female head of household population, the percentage living below the poverty level is 25.7%; with related children under age 5 years it is 52.1% and 32.4% with related children under age 18 years.

Dakota County

Dakota County has a total population of 275,227 and is considered 94.4 percent urban with a farm population of 2,200. There are 75,104 persons over the age of three years enrolled in schools.

There are 126,000 persons aged 25 years and older in this county. 90.7% of them are high school graduates or higher with 27.6% reporting a Bachelor's degree or higher.

Persons aged 5 years and older number 249,647. The census report in this county is that 268,957 residents are native born. In Dakota Co., 6,270 persons report being foreign born. About 3600 persons reports "Do not speak English very well." The non English languages are again listed as Spanish and Asian/Pacific Islander.

In Dakota Co.the ancestral heritages are predominately German, Irish, and Norwegian. About 1200 persons listed African as there ancestral heritage, though 25,057 had listed "other".

Persons aged 16 years and older in the county number 200,418, 79.8% of those are in the work force. The census bureau reports a 3.8% unemployment rate(1990)and lists 40,515 as not in the labor force. A further break down in this county shows that 72.6% of females who are aged 16 years and older are in the labor force. 71.1% of women who are aged 16 years and older with children under age 6 years and 84.5% of women aged 16 years and older with children age 6-17 years are in the labor force.

The income status for the county as of 1989 is; Median household income is $42,218; Median family income is $47,136 and the median non family income is 26,348.

The poverty status for 1989 is; for all persons, 4.3% live below the poverty line. 3.8% for persons aged 18 years

and older, 7.2% for persons aged 65 years and over; 5.4% for related children under 18 years of age; 6.8% for related children under 5 years and 4.7% for related children aged 5-17 years. Of the female head of household population, the percentage living below the poverty level is 17%; with related children under 5 years of age it is 41.2% and with related children under 18 years of age it is 22.9%.

Who Does out-of-home placements?

In Minnesota, in general, no out of home placement can be done without the local Police departments' aid. If a social worker encounters a situation in which they feel a child has to be taken out of the home, they have to call a police officer and have them remove the child. The police may also contact the social service agency with a concern about a family. But a child cannot be removed from a home by a social worker alone.

In Chisago Co., placements are done by on-going line workers and the assessment workers of the county. These include emergency and non-emergency placements.

In Dakota Co. placements are done in two ways. An on going worker, i.e. child protection, children's mental health, can plan a placement through a placement committee that reviews the reasons for placement and the permanency plan. This placement is usually based on the mental/ physical health/safety needs of the family or the child in

specific.

The other type of placement is the emergency placement. This is done by this county's Crisis Response Unit. The child has to be in danger of imminent harm from self or others in order to be placed via this route. The determination is made by the Crisis team and involves a site visit to assess the severity of the situation.

Summary

These two counties provide a contrast in demographics that may contribute to the delivery of out-of-home placement services to families. The Census Bureau data show Chisago Co. to be smaller in population as well as monetary income, with a slightly larger percentage of the population living below the poverty line.

Dakota Co. is a larger, more urban county with a larger tax base and median income status. Dakota Co. has been actively examining their out-of-home policies/procedures to provide a better means of service delivery.

REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

To Raise a Child

County social service agencies have been assisting parents in their role by providing needed services and goods.

Often by providing services such as out-of-home placement of children has resulted in the county taking on more of the parental role. The goals of out-of-home placement have been to provide a temporary, safe, and nurturing environment for children while they cannot live in their parents' home (Goerge, et. al, 1994).

The two counties in this study have recently begun to change the way they place children. They are trying to take more of an advocate role than a parental role in the raising of children. Both counties have provided services to assist families but placement was often a major part of the service. Temporary placement as a "cool down" time for families was also part of the service. The counties will still provide services such as mediation between parent and child, housing, and other support services but before considering placing a child out of the home. Though there is no one leading cause for the change, these efforts are, in part, the result of the Adoption Assistance and Child Welfare Act of 1980 and the new move toward fiscal conservatism and cost effective service.

The question of who should raise the child becomes more convoluted when issues such as physical abuse/neglect, sexual abuse, and other special needs comes into play. The likelihood of placement as well as the length of the placement is likely to increase with special needs(Rittner, 1995; Petr, 1994).

To Protect a Child

In the tradition of human parenting, the parent assumes the responsibility for protecting the child. This duty has become the responsibility of an outside agent when the parents are not able to protect a child. The use of foster placement is one of the ways the outside agent can protect the child.

With the use of foster placement a new issue arises. What sort harm is caused by taking the child out of the home? American society has been ambivalent about the role of placing children out of the home but these placements continue to flourish(Petr & Spano, 1990). When placement works, the family will receive services that will be appropriate to their needs and placements will be short or prevented altogether. When placement or placement prevention efforts fail, the costs to families, children, and society are high(Petr, 1994).

The most important of these costs is the potential damage to the child. Petr(1994) says that children in placement may develop new emotional problems caused by the trauma of separation from their families. Some children may experience several different placements(Rittner, 1995; Petr, 1994). The paradox is becoming obvious. We remove a child to protect from a harm but cause a harm by removing the child. The role of protector becomes complex and confusing because one has to weigh the possibility of doing additional

harm by placing a child.

Out-of-home Placement

Out of home placement can be defined in several different ways. Most have to do with a child being taken from a caregiver's home and placed in another home. The care giver need not be a parent, that person could be a grandparent, aunt, uncle, or a family friend. The other home may be an institutional setting such as a hospital or residential care, a therapeutic foster home, a foster home that is run by strangers, or the home of another relative.

The NASW's Social Work Dictionary(1995) defines foster care as the provision of physical care and family environments for children who are unable to live with their natural parents of legal guardians(p.140). Goerge, et. al(1994)uses the same definition but adds that placement should be used while establishing a permanent and safe home for children.

Criteria For Out-of-home Placement

In the early 1980's, Meddin(1984)did a study in Cook county, Illinois, designed to determine if a consistent set of variables was used to make placement decisions. What Meddin discovered then was that some consistent criteria did exist among the workers surveyed.

Those results showed that the age of the child played an important role in the decision to place. The next important factor was the age of the child coupled with the severity of the situation. The highest rated factor was risk and severity combined. How risk and severity was determined was not addressed.

Though it is difficult to say if Meddin has done this study again since 1984, there have been other studies to determine how placement decisions are made.

Other factors such as challenging behaviors and inadequate support and service systems can lead to an out-of-home placement(Petr, 1994). The variables of sexual abuse, physical abuse or neglect, cooperativeness of the care giver, and past history of the client also play a role in the decision making process.

The individual worker must decide, using both training and experience, how a placement will be made. The trend in the literature is toward trying family preservation services unless the child is in immediate danger of harm(Petr, 1994; Berrick et. al 1995; Goerge et. al, 1994; Walton, et. al, 1993; Compher, 1983).

Issues and Consequences of Placement

Attachment Issues

Bowlby(1982)says attachment is evident when someone is

strongly disposed to seek proximity to and contact with another, especially when faced with an unfamiliar or threatening situation. Social attachment theory should play a major role in placement policy and practice.

Bowlby's initial exploration of attachment issues began in 1969 and was grounded in Freudian psychoanalytic work. Bowlby used direct observation of children rather than retrospective observation to determine that children as young as six months did better in stressful situations if they had indeed formed an attachment to their mothers. He added that this attachment seemed instinctive and had the goal of maintaining proximity to or communication with the attachment figure.

Attachment behavior leads to development of affectional bonds between parent and child and later between adults (Grigsby,1994). Loss of this bond or even the threat of lose of the bond can arouse anxiety, sorrow, and anger. The way a person's individual attachment behavior becomes organized within the personality influences how that person's bonding will happen all through their life.

If children do not experience reliable parental care or for some other reasons the parental bond fails, that child may bond with a sibling(Hegar, 1993; Grigsby,1994; Goldstein et. al, 1979; Bank et al, 1982). The sibling does not have to be a significant care giver for this bond to happen. Goldstein et. al(1979) uses the term "psychological parent" for an attachment that is not the biological parent, this

term applies to sibling bonds as well.

At stake with the attachment issue is the possibility of endangering the attachment process of children when they are placed outside the home. Grigsby(1994)says that the decision to remove a child in order to "protect" the child must be weighed against the possibility of traumatizing the child in the foster care situation. Preserving the attachment bond of children to parents and surrogates is an important goal in child placement(Hegar, 1994). Stone and Stone(1983) caution protective workers "to work with the utmost caution in placing children," as interruption of the parent-child attachment relationship through separation of the child can have life long effects.

The ability of a child to make a positive and long lasting attachment bond may be at risk if placement is done without consideration for where the child and parent are in the attachment process. Workers should be aware of the Attachment theory and how it affects what they do regarding placement of a child outside the home.

Geographic Issues

Geographic concerns have to do with placing a child into a foster home, whether family or stranger, that is located in a different community. This may mean having to go to a different school, making new friends, getting used to the layout of a new neighborhood, or living in a rural setting

all of which can add to the stress of being taken from the home(Johnson, et al, 1995).

Another geographic concern is the proximity of the foster home to where the child's parents are located. Attachment is aided by frequent visits from a parent but if the foster home is not within the parent's reach the attachment process may be impaired(Grigsby, 1994).

Protection Issues

Often a child is removed from the home because of some on-going protection issue. The issue may be physical neglect/abuse or sexual abuse, two issues that constitute imminent harm to the child. In most placements the danger of harm to the child through physical abuse outweighs the possibility of harm from a interrupted attachment issue(Petr, 1994; Grigsby, 1995).

Although placements that fall into the imminent harm category are done more quickly than other placements, even these should not done without some due process. After a report is filed an investigation must be done to determine the extent of the danger. This investigation can happen on an emergency basis or as an on-going assessment.

Placement for protection issues can be a difficult task. If a child has been traumatized by an abuse event often adding the stress of taking that child out of the home to be placed with strangers can be additionally traumatizing.

Sensitivity on the part of the worker is required to meet the needs of the child.

Issues of Parent/Child Conflict

The most often requested type of placement comes from parents who have had an intense argument with an adolescent child(verbal report of Crisis Response workers). Very little research literature exists regarding parent/child conflict. Many workers have stated that part of what they have tried in a situation where the child and parent cannot communicate without an argument is to place the child(MacDonald, 1992). This placement is always short term and used as a "cooling off" period. The worker then tries to mediate between the parent and child during this time.

The danger with this practice is that it puts the child at risk for multiple placements(Rittner,1995; MacDonald,1992). Parents who rely on agencies such as county social service to take responsibility for the child also run the risk of never resolving the issue that caused the crisis(MacDonald, 1992).

Sexual Abuse Issues

Another issue that requires sensitivity and training on the part of the worker is a child who has been sexually abused. The literature available on this topic equals that

on an entire separate study. Intensive treatment is suggested whether the child is placed or not(Skibinski, 1995).

Socioeconomic Issues

Children have been placed outside of the parents' home because of economic issues(Thieman, et.al, 1992; Berrick & Lawrence-Karski, 1995). Placing children considered at risk for homelessness or other physical living conditions is a placement that may be avoided. Using an ecological(Daro & McCurdy, 1994; Hay & Jones, 1994)approach, a worker can connect a family with community and other resources to alleviate the economic conditions that put the child at risk for placement. When the community is enlisted to help a family with the economic issues such as housing, heat, and power, a worker can focus more on the emotional reason to place a child.

Pervasive poverty is a significant factor in placement decisions(Rittner, 1995).

Cultural/Ethnic Issues

The literature shows that little correlation exists between ethnicity and placement of children. The major factors that workers report considering is the nature of the situation and the age of the child(Meddin, 1984). Once placed, however, minority children are more likely than white

children to be placed with relatives(English, 1991; Hutchison, 1993). Rittner(1995)says that minority children placed with relatives and economically disenfranchised are more likely to experience several placements.

Issues of Foster Care Drift

Foster care drift is a concept that came out of the 70's and 80's movement that inspired the Child Welfare Act of 1980. Foster care drift refers to the circumstance of a child getting in to the foster care system, whether an emergency placement or not, and not getting out again.

The alternative to foster care drift is Family Preservation services; these are labor intensive and comprehensive services designed to prevent placement in the first place. The preventative nature of family preservation services comes in several different approaches and will be discussed in greater length on the next section of this review.

Alternatives to Placement

The Adoption Assistance and Child Welfare Act of 1980 puts forth the following mandates that case plans for each child:

> (1)Be a written document, which is a discrete part of the care record, in a format determined by the State,

which is available to the parent(s) or guardian of the foster child; and

(2)Be developed within a reasonable period, to be established by the State, but in no event later than 60 days starting at the time the State agency assumes responsibility for providing services including placing the child; and

(3)Include a discussion of how the plan is designed to achieve a placement in the least restrictive (most family-like) setting available and in close proximity to the home of the parent(s), consistent with the best interest and special needs of the child; and

(4)After October 1, 1983, include a description of the services offered and the services provided to prevent removal of the child from the home and to reunify the family.(45 C.F.R.§1357.15)

The Act appears to assume that placements will be the first thing to happen and that the worker needs to at least list the efforts made to keep the child out of placement.

The Act goes on to define what some of the mandated services should be:

Furthermore, the act provided a list of services states may offer. These include 24-hour emergency caretaker services, homemaker services, day care, crisis counseling, individual and family counseling, emergency shelters, procedures and arrangements for access to

> available emergency financial assistance, and arrangements for the provision of temporary child care to provide respite to the family for a brief period as part of a plan for preventing children's removal from the home. Other services that the act identified as necessary and appropriate include home-based family services, self-help groups, services to unmarried parents, provision of or arrangements for mental health or drug and alcohol abuse counseling, vocational counseling, vocational rehabilitation, and post adoption services(45 C.F.R.§1357.15)(Alexander & Alexander, 1994).

The Social Work Dictionary(1995;168) defines home-based services as "The provision of health care, homemaker, and social services to clients in their homes." The program most often mentioned in the literature is one that began in Tacoma Washington called Homebuilders.

Homebuilders type services try to prevent out-of-home placements of children who could remain safely in their homes with the provision of services. The Homebuilders model is based on social learning theory[Bandura 1985] and emphasizes cognitive and behavioral training such as parent effectiveness training, emotion management, interpersonal skill acquisition and assertiveness training(Kinney et. al, 1991). These services are custom made for each family. Often the services include a social worker who has daily contact with the family for as many as six to eight hours and then is

on-call for the family the remainder of the day. The worker usually has only two families on their case load. While the worker is in the home they do whatever it takes to help the family, this can be as diverse as modeling how to wash clothes and clean the house to teaching parenting and conflict resolution skills(Wells, 1994).

As good as Homebuilders programs sound, there are some problems with the model. One of the problems is in replicating the model in settings other than where it began. Wells(1994)says that some of the issues with replicating the services are that the treatment plan is designed for case by case use rather than general use; the nature of the facilitators of and obstacles to the program in agencies, services systems and communities. Other issues raised are: in evaluation of these programs few control groups have been used; flow of clients through the program and agency have been poorly documented; data collection procedures are not clear and/or monitored; assessment of change relies on a single variable analysis; clients are voluntary creating the problem of self selection; and the criterion for imminent risk is poorly defined and inconsistently applied(Thieman & Dail, 1992;Wells,1994).

Long term studies of Homebuilder type programs show that though the placements of children in those programs were less than children in traditional programs after 12 months the number of placements was about the same(Feldman, 1991). Another long term study by Pecora et. al (1991) showed that

placement rates for children in family preservation programs, like Homebuilders, was half that of children in traditional programs.

The literature shows that if a Homebuilders type program can be successfully implemented and carried out that it may be a prevention to out of home placements. Two studies show quite different results. Some of the reasons for the difference in results are the difficulty in assessing risk, the wide variability of the characteristics of the family and the nature of the problems they face(Theiman & Dail, 1992).

Another alternative program was outlined by Barth(1994) is called Shared Family Care. This is a program where an entire family goes into a treatment facility and is treated as a unit. This model eliminates the emotional risk that separating parent and child may produce, as well as, providing a safe nurturing environment for a family to learn how to deal with daily stresses. Currently there is a program like this in Minnesota run by Human Services Associates that has about a two thirds success rate.

Kinship Care

Though not really an alternative to out-of-home placements, an alternative placement option is in a relative's home. Kinship care sends the child that cannot stay at the parent's home to the home of an uncle/aunt or grandparent. The continuity of keeping the child with family

is present in this option.

One of the problems with this option is the question about how appropriate is it to keep a child in a system that may be responsible for the need to place(Duerr-Berrick et. al, 1994; Iglehart, 1994). Another problem is the financial burden that accompanies having an additional child in a home. Often the benefits that would go to a foster home will not go to a relative. A grandparent who is living on a fixed income may not be able to adequately provide for the physical needs of a child.

Dubowitz(1994)reports that an additional concern with kinship care is that children who are placed in a relative's home tend to stay in the foster care setting longer than children who go to a strangers foster home.

THESIS STATEMENT

In the course of practicing social work with Children and Families, each worker may be faced with the possibility of placing a child out of the home. This possibility brings with it the responsibility of keeping the child safe from additional harm. There are many factors for a worker to consider. The intent of this study has been to determine what those factors are and how much weight each is given.

Each county social worker charged with the responsibility of placing a child outside the home is familiar with the factors used to determine how urgent the

need is for out of home placement. In addition to being aware of the needs of each child a worker encounters workers also know what works or does not work in each of their agencies. This study tries to get a consensus among workers of two counties as to what the factors are and how those factors are prioritized.

To balance a child's safety with protecting that child's development while finding a way to make any placement action be financially feasible is an issue that each child/family social worker is aware of. The workers polled for this study are not an exception to that notion. Each of these workers have identified an area of concern in their agencies and have offered ideas on how to address each area.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The introduction portion of the study explores the two counties chosen for the study. The U.S. Census Bureau was the main source for the demographic information used. Though the census data is from 1990 it reflects the trends in population in both counties. The census information offered a full range of comparisons for each county only those related to age, ethnicity, income, employment status and actual population numbers and distributions were used.

The Literature Review section of the study explores some of the current trends and theories involved in out of home placement. Several electronic libraries were used to find

research articles on the topic of out of home child placement, family preservation and related topics. A search under the heading family preservation yielded approximately 1200 articles, those dated 1980 or later were reviewed for use in the review. Other criteria for the literature search included, but were not limited to, prevention of out-of-home placement, out-of-home child placement, family reunification, Family Preservation legislation, and issues in child protection.

The research for this study was a questionnaire based, in part, on a study done in 1984(Meddin). The questionnaire asks county social workers in two counties to rank criteria they might use in making an out-of-home placement decision. The workers chosen in each county are ongoing child protection workers who have the responsibility for making an out of home placement decision. Twenty five questionnaires were distributed in Dakota County and five in Chisago. The twenty five in Dakota county were a random sampling of the entire child protection division whereas the five in Chisago represented the entire division. The thirty questionnaires were sent in two mailings, two weeks apart. Fifteen questionnaires were returned, representing a fifty percent return rate.

For quantification and generalizability the questions are primarily limited in their scope offering choices discovered in the literature review. The balance of the questions called for opinion. The opinions asked for were to

offer a balance between what workers saw as an integral part of the placement decision and how they could actually carry out the decisions. The essay questions focus on current county policy, future policy, lack of current policy, and what resources would be helpful to the decision process.

ANALYSIS OF THE DATA

Thirty questionnaires were sent to the two agencies. The questionnaires were sent out twice, in two week intervals. Fifteen questionnaires were returned.

The fifteen that responded represent 100% of the workers in Chisago county and approximately 25% of the workers in Dakota County. One of the respondents sent a note explaining how that position did not fit the research criteria. One other respondent answered only the first two questions leaving the rest of the questionnaire blank. Ten of the respondents were female, four were male, one did not answer. The work experience of the workers ranged from 1.5 years to 20 years. Over half of the respondents had ten years of experience or more. The average was 10.75 years. The educational level was five MSW, six BSW and two who stated they had BS degrees.

The number of placements made by this group of workers in the six month period from January 1, 1996 to June 30, 1996 tended to fall into the lower end of the choices. The 0-5 placements choice having 9 of fourteen possible responses.

The 6-10 category had four responses and the 11-16 category had one. The second question, dealing with the length of placement had eight that were in the "other" category. Of the numbered choices, two were placed for 1-4 days, one for 1-2 weeks, and three for 3-4 weeks.

DISCUSSION OF RESULTS

The results from the first two questions has exposed the first flaw in the research. It is unclear from the results if eight workers made zero or more placements. The eight responses in the "other" category for length of time would lead me to believe that perhaps eight workers made no placements during that time period. The alternative is that those eight had few placements that were more than four weeks in duration.

Question three asked if the placements made involved family(kinship) or stranger placements. The results were nearly even. Eleven workers said they placed with family, ten reported that they had placed with strangers. The "other" category had three responses. When read, those three responses fit the stranger category. One was foster home, another was a shelter and the third was residential placement. Though shelters and residential do differ slightly from what I had planned for this study because both tend to be long term placements, they do constitute stranger placement. Bringing the total stranger placements to 13.

The next question ties in to the previous because it asks workers to state their preference, either family or stranger placement. Roughly half of the responses preferred family placement because it tended to be less emotionally damaging to a child to go to a familiar setting such as family. Two respondents preferred stranger placement due to the possibility that family could be more damaging to the child physically or emotionally depending on the situation. Five of the responses were in the no preference category, not so much because they had no preference but because they felt that there was no correct answer. Sometimes a stranger placement can be more disruptive than a family placement and the opposite can also be true. All respondents agreed that careful assessment of the situation and circumstances was essential to making a proper placement.

When asked to rank the placement considerations, thirteen of the workers responded. Each of the criteria listed has been averaged based on the thirteen respondents.

The ranking is:

1=Most important
2=Somewhat important
3=Not important.

The criteria were:

1. Age of the child ranked--1.69
2. Sex of child ranked--2.38

3. Race/culture of child--2.00
4. Previous history with Child Protection/Police regarding placement issues--1.61
5. Severity of current situation--1.07
6. Functioning of child/care giver--1.15
7. Cooperation of care giver--1.61
8. Location of child/care giver--1.76
9. Financial considerations, i.e. who pays?--2.92

From these results it seems possible to make some conclusions about how this groups of workers makes a placement decision.

First, the workers consider the severity of the current situation. Both counties also support making placement decisions on the idea of imminent danger to the child or others. The workers tended to give this consideration considerable weight. On this criteria, the policy and the workers agree. The second criteria was the functioning of the child/care giver. The vulnerability of a child or the ability of the child's care giver to continue to provide a safe environment shared an almost equal ranking with the severity of the situation. Tied for third place in the order of importance were cooperation of the care giver and previous history with Child Protection or the Police. Some of the workers commented on the idea that these two could often be tied together in the field, for example, care givers tended to be more or less cooperative depending on how extensive a

history there was with that individual case.

Ranking fourth in order of importance was the age of the child. In the 1984 study by Meddin, age of the child ranked second unless it was coupled with the severity of the situation, then it was ranked as a number one concern. There was no mechanism in this study to combine the rankings. However, the ranking of age being number four seems to suggest that this group of workers does not weigh that as heavily as other criteria.

The question regarding the location of the child/care giver may have been a bit vague. Two of the respondents answered with question marks. The rest felt that the location was only somewhat important. In a mostly rural county, if a child/care giver are in a remote location is the likelihood of abuse more prominent or is the placement likely to happen far away from the child's home? This question would be asked in a more direct manner upon reevaluation of this study.

The race/culture of the child scored an even two which makes it a "somewhat important" consideration. According to the Census Bureau both counties have a small proportion of non-white residents. The sex of the child tended to receive a "somewhat to not important" rating. The financial considerations were the very last thing any of the workers tended to consider. In fact, many of the essay questions and answers will address the financial aspects of placements.

When asked to consider alternatives to placements, all

of the choices had been used and several more were suggested. Thirteen of the possible thirteen found that home-based counseling and home-based paraprofessional services were available in their counties. Eight found that inpatient services were accessible and eleven used outpatient services. The other responses included day care, home-based crisis parenting education, and brief therapy sessions. Both counties provide these services and the majority of workers polled seem aware of them or have actually used these type of services. When asked if services designed to prevent placements were available seven of the respondent said "Yes" one said "No", and five stated that "sometimes" would be the correct answer. The "sometimes" was qualified with saying, that depending on the circumstances, there were prevention services. The circumstances that were mentioned most often were those dealing the older adolescents(16 and older). Several workers expressed some frustration at their county's apparent willingness to ignore this population or write them off as unhelpable.

The final ranking question asked the workers to rank by order of importance, placement alternatives.

This ranking is similar to the previous one:

1=Most important

2=Somewhat important

3=Not important

4=Not applicable

The placement alternatives were:

1. Home-based family therapy--1.23
2. Home-based parent education/skills training--1.15
3. Clinic(out patient)based services--1.61
4. Hospital(in patient)based services--1.30
5. Family Preservation services--1.22
6. Community Support services--1.45
7. Other--1.00

This question was intended to identify and rank alternatives to placements. Each of the choices is briefly described in the Literature review chapter of this study. Each of the service choices are similar in nature and content. These services have some differences that tend to be in the areas of intensity, demographic issues, funding issues, agency philosophies, and availability of services.

The choice that was given the most important ranking was Home-based parent education services. This choice implies that home is the best place for children and children could stay in their homes if parents had a clear understanding of the roles and responsibilities of parenting. The second most popular choice was that of Home-based family therapy and Family Preservation services. A typical Family Preservation service, like Homebuilders in Washington state, has a home-based therapy component, as well as components of all the

other options mentioned. Home-based family therapy is often the same as out patient services, just the location of the service delivery changes.

Surprisingly, the respondents chose inpatient services over Community Support services and out patient clinic services. The latter are the less restrictive of the three. This may indicate that Community Support Services and Out patient clinics are either lacking in these two counties or are seen as less effective. It may also indicate a trend among workers to prefer inpatient treatment.

Only three workers chose the "other" category. These three filled in the blanks by saying that crisis intervention and conflict mediation services can be an effective means to prevent placement.

There were five essay type questions included in the survey as well as the rating questions. The essay questions will now be discussed.

Question number five: In your opinion, what county policies enable child placement?

The answers to this question were very consistent. Several workers acknowledged that current state and county child protection/placement mandates were one of the best tools that they had. In addition to the law, workers liked their county's emphasis on the protection of the child and the availability of safe and reliable foster homes. Other observations expressed an appreciation of a readily available crisis management staff.

Question six: In your opinion, what county policies are in place that hinder the placement of a child?

There were two basic themes. One theme was internal in nature addressing specific county issues. The opinion stated most often was one that addressed a lack of a review process and accountability for placements. A consistent concern of note was that review systems that are in place tended to be closed systems. The suggestion from several workers was that the review process include input from sources outside of the agency, perhaps review committee members from the community or parents of placed children.

Another internal issue had to do with financial constraints. Several responses suggested that policies seemed unfairly weighted toward the financial concerns of placement rather than the best interests of the child. Due to financial constraints, workers felt, caseloads are high enough to prohibit adequate contact with a family in order to properly assess the possibility of protection/placement issues.

One last concern had to do with the reasons the county would support the placement of a child. One concern was that the only criteria used was that of imminent danger to the child. While being an important consideration it was not the only reason a worker wished to be able to place a child outside the home. The other reason that workers want to place children is to resolve or dissuade parent/child conflicts. These opinions suggested that to place a child because of

parent/child conflict was a valid reason. The literature suggests that the opposite may be true. Placing a child outside of the home runs the risk of disrupting the child's emotional development. The risk of endangering the child's emotional development, however, is most likely to happen in younger children who are just beginning the bonding process with an adult care giver. The literature does suggest that even with older children, in home supports and education are more effective than placements.

The external theme of the answers for this question dealt mainly with the lack of services or access to services in a given county area. Each county has experienced a lack of services or a shift in the focus of services that tend to make prevention more difficult.

Question seven: What is your view point on the county's direction regarding placement?

Most of the viewpoints offered for this question had to do with the restrictiveness of county policy. Some workers felt that to support the least restrictive, shortest placement was the proper way to go. Others felt that to stick to a least restrictive notion was then very restrictive for the "sickest" kids who really needed a structured, somewhat restrictive treatment milieu.

Some workers felt that the county they were in was "right on track" using only the imminent danger criteria for to justify placements; while others felt that their county was short sighted and narrow minded, letting issues other

than the best interest of the child drive policy decisions. Along this line of opinion also came some frustration about unclear and confusing information regarding placements from the administration. Other opinions stated frustration with a county's moratorium on placements because of budget shortfalls.

Question nine: Given your county's current financial climate, what suggestions do you have to improve placement practices?

This group of workers tended to be proactive in their suggestions about what would improve the work they do. Several of the suggestions were to treat each placement as an individual case rather than "lumping" them all together as a financial burden on the county's budget. The next step in this process would be to review every current and impending non emergency placement to determine the appropriateness of the action. Workers also suggested that supervisors take a more active role in reviewing and questioning placements that have lasted longer than "average". This process should include additional planning on the part of the supervisor, worker, and parent to successfully end the placement. Concern was expressed for supervisors to be more active in dealing with parents/care givers who were not cooperating with agreed goal plans. Another issue for supervisors to consider was to have faith in the line worker. The worker is in the field, often at the location of an impending placement, and has to make a decision based on the situation

and the safety needs of the child, cost considerations can be addressed after the child's safety has been assured.

Other suggestions were for the counties to put more emphasis and money in to prevention programs, reduce the number of bureaucratic expenditures, and reduce caseloads sizes. One worker suggested raising taxes to meet the needs of the county.

Question thirteen: What suggestions would you have for serving the child's best interests and providing adequate delivery of services?

Many of the suggestions listed for this question were not very different than some of the suggestions in previous questions. Several workers suggested forming and using more community wide collaboratives to aid in the prevention of placements. Some workers suggested simple collaborative work between different areas within the county, i.e. child protection and probation. Most often an additional suggestion with these collaboratives was that some means of clearer, more efficient communication be established between the service providers involved in each county. The idea of collaborative efforts was clarified by one respondent who laid out a plan to involve as many areas of a family's life as possible. These areas would include, but are not limited to schools, churches, extended family, county and private social service agencies, and any other aspect of a family/child's safety and well being.

Streamlining the intake process to speed up the actual

delivery of services was one suggestion. Spending more time, money and effort toward prevention of placement was yet another suggestion.

In a more negative vein, some workers suggested getting and keeping experienced, knowledgeable supervisors, while others suggested getting and keeping more experienced, knowledgeable workers. The issue of smaller caseloads and less emphasis on the financial balance sheet were also prevalent in these answers.

All through the five essay questions there were some recurrent themes. One of the themes was the counties' appearance of placing more emphasis on budgetary concerns than on the child/family's best interests. Budgetary matters inhibited the kind of intervention workers felt they would like to be able to do. Another theme along that line of reasoning was the caseload size. Every question that asked for a change or to point out what did not work had a response about caseloads. Each response stated, to some degree, a frustration about the large size of individual caseloads.

Another common thread throughout the survey was the relationship between worker and supervisor. Several of the respondents did not feel that their supervisor was experienced enough or helpful enough to enable better service delivery. Some felt that adequate communication between workers and supervisors was lacking. Communication was a general theme. Not only was the communication between administration and workers an area of concern but the

communication between agencies providing services also.

IMPLICATIONS FOR SOCIAL WORK PRACTICE

The literature review for this study suggested that prevention was better than placement. It also indicated that to place a child was not always the best avenue of service. The danger of causing emotional/developmental damage to a child by making a out of home placement needs to be considered with each placement.

The intent of the Adoption Assistance and Child Welfare Act of 1980 was to prevent out of home placement. The Omnibus Budget Reconciliation Act of 1993 provided funds for the establishment of intervention, prevention and family support services.

Since 1993 several agencies have developed programs for the specific purpose of preventing out of home placements.

The Social Work profession has and can still play a major role in this process. Children are not allowed to vote, plus parents and other adults make most, if not all, of their life decisions. Children make up a significant portion of the population of any given area yet have the least amount of input about how they should live their lives. This lack of control/self determination can have devastating results for a child and a family if decisions are not made based on accurate knowledge of a child's needs. The implication for social workers is to be aware of childrens' developmental and

safety needs so that when they are faced with a situation that may result in a placement action they can make an informed decision.

Social Work education, both academic and field work should attempt to establish and maintain a working knowledge of developmental stages, communication skills and successful prevention methods.

Though adequate financial management is vital to maintaining the quality of service an agency can deliver, the perception by workers in these two agencies suggests that the agencies are focusing on money rather than service. This is not a universal perception in either of these counties, however. In fact, some of the workers were happy with the direction the counties were heading with placement issues and policies. County social workers should not be surrogate parents, agencies should be available to help children/parents in difficult times. Social work as a profession can find ways to balance the need for funds and quality service delivery.

The implications for each county appear fairly evident. The consensus among the workers was that each of them had too high a caseload to feel like they could do more than react to a situation. Several workers expressed frustration at the perceived emphasis on budgetary matters in their county. Perhaps the presentation of those issues by county administrators could be done more smoothly, focusing on how best to serve the children/families that come to the agency

for help while balancing the county budget. Enlisting the aid of workers will complicate a budget meeting but may well produce results satisfactory to everyone involved.

Each county may want to explore the possibility of a community review board for their placements. Such review boards could consist of volunteers from the community as well as professional from each agency.

Further implications for each county may be for each of them to expand the study to seek an adequate definition of imminent danger.

The workers that responded to the questionnaire provided a consensus of criteria to use when considering if a child should be placed. Using this consensus in addition to suggestions from the respondents the two counties could formulate a clear policy/procedure for dealing with safety and placement issues for their child population. Working together, supervisors and workers can reach a similar consensus on how to offer the best service to the population of the county.

Further application of a study such as this one could be used to formulate policy for the ten county metro area. The study could be refined and done in all ten counties to establish areas of strength in service delivery and areas of concern. When the areas of strength have been identified each county should pursue policies and procedures that enable workers to continue the quality. Similarly, when areas of concern are identified, counties can, with input from the

social workers, form policies and procedures that will ultimately improve the quality of life in each county.

Social workers are also responsible for improving the quality of service delivery. By continuing to speak out and help county agencies identify and change policies, the lives of children and families can be improved.

LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

The scope of this study has been somewhat limited by several factors. First, the size of the sample was very small. Using only two counties in any area creates a specific, usually nongeneralizable, study size that may be good information for the specific counties but cannot be used beyond those boundaries. Another limiting factor is the logistics of such a study. To be more than just a small study, the questionnaire could have been refined and distributed to the entire ten county metro area of Minneapolis/St. Paul or for more generalizable information to each county agency in the entire state of Minnesota. A study conducted in the ten county metropolitan area is simply too large given the time and financial constraints of an MSW program. As the questionnaire was reviewed, some need for refinement became apparent. The intent of two of the questions appeared difficult to discern, though the intent was fairly clear, more careful wording would have been helpful.

Another possible limitation in this study was that the two counties provided a considerable contrast. Though contrast was sought as a remedy to the small size of the sample, that contrast also may have been a limiting factor.

IMPLICATIONS FOR FUTURE STUDY

In a metropolitan area as large as the defined ten county metropolitan area, children and families may best be served by providing uniformity of policy regarding placement issues. To establish uniformity, a study such as this one could be conducted to identify areas of knowledge as well as areas where knowledge is lacking. To identify these areas is an important first step in establishing uniform policies.

Given the current environment of welfare reform and budgetary cutbacks, social workers who practice in the field of Children and Family services may be the best resource for balancing the best interest of the child with the best interest of the county. Workers in the field on a daily basis can see what a child or family needs and are aware of what a county agency can or should provide. The willingness of workers to offer concerns and possible solutions to those areas of concern in this study imply that similar results may be gotten from a large scale study of this type.

Another implication for possible future study is for schools of social work. If a school of social work wants a curriculum that is based as much on "hands on" practice as on

theory, that school could conduct a study like this to create a curriculum geared specifically to this topic area. Students who are educated about real life social work issues may be more likely to succeed at difficult tasks such as placing a child out of the home.

One last area of future study would be for each supervisor of a unit that does out-of-home placement as part of its' regular responsibilities. These supervisors would be able to assure that their workers were providing the best service possible to children and families if they knew that their workers were all working with the same assumptions about placement practices.

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APPENDIX

An Exploratory Study: Out-of-home Child Placement Practices in Two Mid-western Counties.

1 October 1996

Dear Social Worker,
I am a graduate student working toward a Master of Social Work degree at Augsburg College in Minneapolis, MN. For my thesis, I am researching social workers perceptions of what the out-of-home child placement practice looks like in their county. I have chosen Dakota and Chisago counties in which to conduct my research. You were selected as a possible participant because of the role you have in regard to placing a child outside of the home. I request your participation in this study and ask that you read this form carefully.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

This research study is being conducted to provide me with information for my Master of Social Work thesis. My hope is to identify common assumptions among workers regarding out-of-home placement practices. The completed thesis will be available to each county in summarized form. If you are interested in reviewing my thesis in a completed format, you may find a copy with Gerald Huber in Chisago County or Patrick Coyne in Dakota County.

VOLUNTARY NATURE OF THIS STUDY

Your experience and opinions are important! It is up to you whether or not to participate in this research study. Your decision will not affect your current or future relationship with Dakota County, Chisago County or Augsburg College. If you are uncomfortable with participating in this study, you may choose not to participate.

PROCEDURES AND ANONYMITY

I am surveying all those social workers who have the authority to remove a child from her/his home and place them into an alternative living situation. When answering the questionnaire please do not identify yourself. I can better assure confidentiality if I do not know who has responded to the questionnaires. Completed and returned questionnaires will be kept in a locked file drawer at my home and will not become part of any permanent record. I will destroy the questionnaires by 30 December 1996. Information from this questionnaire will be used for my thesis and will be shared

with each county in a summarized form only. None of the responses will be identified by county of origin, and only demographic information will be county specific. If you are not sure or are uncomfortable with any of the questions, you may skip any and move to the next question.

RISKS OF BEING A PARTICIPANT IN THIS STUDY

This research involves no direct or indirect risk to any of the participants.

BENEFITS OF BEING A PARTICIPANT IN THIS STUDY

There are no direct benefits to participating in this study. An indirect benefit may be information useful in setting policy directions. This will be an opportunity to compare and contrast out-of-home placements nationally and locally.

Will you please help in this research study by completing this questionnaire? The questionnaire is a one time commitment on your part and should take approximately thirty minutes of your time. Once completed, please return this questionnaire in the enclosed self-addressed, stamped envelope as soon as possible and no later than 7 October 1996.

Thank you in advance for considering this research study. In two weeks, everyone contacted by this initial letter will receive a follow-up letter and identical questionnaire requesting your participation in this research study. Please disregard the follow-up letter if you have already returned a completed questionnaire or chose not to participate in this study. The completion and return of this questionnaire will indicate your consent to participation in this study as well as conclude your involvement in the study.

If you have any questions regarding this research study, please feel free to contact me at 953-7217 or e-mail questions to <frafjord@augsburg.edu>. You may contact my thesis advisor with questions, Vincent Peters MSW, Associate Professor-Bethel College, at 638-6124.

Please keep this copy for your records.

Thank You!

Sincerely,

Michael I. Frafjord
Graduate Student and Principle Researcher

AN EXPLORATORY STUDY:
OUT-OF-HOME PLACEMENT PRACTICES
IN TWO MID-WESTERN COUNTIES

1. Approximately how many placements did you make from January 1, 1996 to June 30, 1996?

0-5_____
6-10_____
11-16_____
other_____

2. What is the average length of a placement that you have been involved in?

0-24 hours_____
1-4 days_____
5-7 days_____
1-2 weeks_____
3-4 weeks_____
other_____

3. Do these placements involve Relative(family)placement, Foster(stranger)care or another form of placement?

Family placement_____
Stranger placement_____
Other(specify)

4. Briefly, which do you prefer and why?

5. In your opinion, what county policies enable child placement?

6. In your opinion, what county policies are in force now that hinder placement of a child?

7. What is your viewpoint on the county's direction regarding placements?

8. Please rank these placement considerations using the following scale;

1=Most Important
2=Somewhat important
3=Not important

age of child#_____
sex of child#_____
race/culture of child#_____
previous history with child protection/police regarding placement issue#_____
severity of current situation#_____
functioning of child/care giver#_____
cooperation of care giver#_____
location of child/care giver#_____
financial considerations,i.e. who pays to have the child placed#_____

9. Given your county's current financial climate, what suggestions would you have to improve placement practices?

10. In your experience, what alternatives to out-of-home placement currently exist in your county?

Home-based counseling_____
Home-based paraprofessional_____
Inpatient services_____
Outpatient services_____
Other(specify)_____

11. Are the alternative services available to you effective in preventing placements?

Yes_____
No_____

12. Please rank these placement alternatives;
1=Most important
2=Somewhat important
3=Not important
4=Not applicable

Home-based family therapy#_____
Home-based parent education/skills training#_____
Clinic(out patient)based services#_____
Hospital(in patient)based services#_____
Family Preservation services#_____
Community Support Services(nonprofit community organizations)#_____
Other services#_____

13. What suggestions would you have for serving the child's best interests and providing adequate delivery of services?

Demographic Information

Female_____ Male_____

Number of years as a Social Worker_____

Degree(BSW, MSW, other, etc.)_____

AUGSBURG

C • O • L • L • E • G • E

September 12, 1996

TO: Michael I. Frafjord
14056 Dartmouth Path
Rosemount MN 55068

FROM: Rita Weisbrod, IRB Chair

RE: Your IRB application : "An Exploratory Study: Out of Home Placement Practices in Two Midwestern Counties"

I have received your memorandum and amendments dated September 9. Your application has now been approved . Your Augsburg IRB approval number is

96- 04 - 1.

This number should appear on your cover letter and survey instrument.

If there are substantive changes to your project which change your procedures regarding the use of human subjects, you should report them to me in writing so that they may be reviewed for possible increased risk.

Good luck to you on your project!

Copy: Vincent Peters, Thesis Adviser

2211 Riverside Avenue • Minneapolis, MN 55454 • Tel. (612) 330-1000 • Fax (612) 330-1649

CHISAGO COUNTY HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES

GERALD HUBER, Director

313 NO. MAIN STREET, ROOM 239
CENTER CITY, MINNESOTA 55012-9665

ADMINISTRATIVE	612-257-0352
ADULT PROTECTION SERVICES	612-257-0374
CHILD PROTECTION SERVICES	612-257-0337
CHILD SUPPORT	612-257-0329
FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE	612-257-0318
WELFARE FRAUD	612-257-0336
NORTH BRANCH	612-674-4433
FAX	612-257-0454
TDD	612-257-0300
HEARTLAND EXPRESS	612-257-0365
PUBLIC HEALTH	612-257-0301

AN EQUAL OPPORTUNITY EMPLOYER

March 4, 1996

Dr. Rita Weisbrod
Institutional Review Board Chairperson
2211 Riverside Avenue
Minneapolis, Minnesota 55454

RE: Michael I. Frafjord, MSW student

Dear Dr. Weisbrod:

I am writing to you on behalf of Michael Frafjord, MSW student at Augsburg College. Michael has asked my support and permission to conduct a research study entitled, An Exploratory Study of Out-of-home Child Placement Practices in two Mid-western Counties. I know this research will be a valuable source of information for our workers.

Michael has my permission to conduct his research with the workers in Chisago County Children and Family Services unit. He has been informed of our confidentiality policy and has agreed to follow it while doing his research.

Sincerely,

Gerald R. Huber
Health & Human Services Director

GRH:alr

DAKOTA COUNTY

Telephone: (612) 891-7400
Fax (612) 891-7473

SOCIAL SERVICES DEPARTMENT 14955 GALAXIE AVE., APPLE VALLEY, MINNESOTA 55124-8581

1 June 1996

Dr. Rita Weisbrod
Institutional Review Board Chairperson
2211 Riverside Avenue
Minneapolis, Minnesota 55454

Re: Michael I. Frafjord, MSW student.

Dear Dr. Weisbrod,

I am writing to you on behalf of Michael Frafjord, MSW graduate student at Augsburg College. Michael is completing his internship at Dakota County Social Services and will be conducting a research study at this agency entitled, An Exploratory Study of Out-of-home Child Placement Practices in Two Mid-western counties. I know this research will be a valuable source of information for our workers.

Michael has my permission to conduct his research with the workers in the Children and Family Services unit. He has been informed of our confidentiality policy and has been practicing under it during his internship.

Sincerely,

Patrick Coyne

Patrick Coyne
Family and Children Services, Section Manager.

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AN EQUAL OPPORTUNITY EMPLOYER

Augsburg College
George Sverdrup Library
Minneapolis, MN 55454