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A COMPARISON OF THE CHARACTERISTICS
OF CHILDREN IN FOSTER CARE IN A
SELECTED SAMPLE OF MONTANA COUNTIES

Presented in Partial Fulfillment of
the Requirements for the Degree of
MASTER OF ARTS

by Gladys E. Hardin

A COMPARISON OF THE CHARACTERISTICS OF CHILDREN IN
FOSTER CARE IN A SELECTED SAMPLE OF MONTANA COUNTIES

BY

GLADYS E. HARDIN

B.A. THE UNIVERSITY OF MONTANA,

Presented in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements

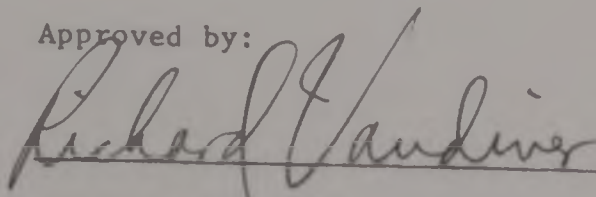
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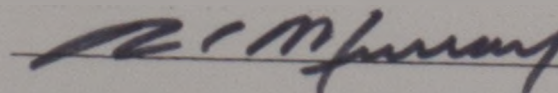
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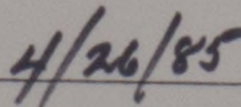
Approved by:


Richard Caudiver

Chairman, Board of Examiners


R. Murray

Dean, Graduate School


4/26/85

Date

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INTRODUCTION

Foster care placement, also known as substitute care, is defined as 24 hour care of a child provided outside of his own home as an alternative to parental care (Social Services Manual, 301-1, 1979). The Community Services Division of the Montana Department of Social and Rehabilitative Services is responsible for licensing facilities which provide foster care, for the payment of foster care providers, and, along with juvenile probation officers, aftercare workers and private social service agencies under contract to the State, for the placement of children and youth in foster care.

In December, 1983, the Administrator of the Community Services Division asked the Evaluation Bureau of the Division to address the question of why some counties had higher rates of foster care placement than did others. She requested that a report be prepared within six months, utilizing only Evaluation Bureau staff and disturbing social workers and other field staff as little as possible.

Using these guidelines, the Evaluation Bureau identified possible sources of information and agreed on some secondary questions which might contribute insight into the central question. This paper is a report on a comparison of foster care populations in high and low placement rate counties, the relationship of factors identified with high or low placement rates to stated foster care policy and other factors which might influence placement rates.

In addition to this comparison of the foster care populations, the Evaluation Bureau undertook other studies to obtain further

information about foster care placement decisions. These included a questionnaire for social workers and supervisors which asked about office structure and procedure, an attitude survey which asked about attitudes toward placement, community resources and community influence on foster care placements, a log of referrals to social services offices and an inventory of available resources which could serve as alternatives to placement. Results of these additional studies are cited where appropriate.

PURPOSE

The purpose of this study was to address the following questions:

1. Are there differences in the foster care populations of high placement rate counties and low placement rate counties which might affect the number of children placed in care and the cost of foster care placement?
2. Are low placement rates related to (a) use of other means of family assistance or (b) ignoring problems?
3. Is placement per 1,000 children under 18 years of age in the population an adequate measure of foster care effectiveness or are other measures needed to explain differences in placement rates?
4. Is there a relationship between application of agency goals and policies and placement rates for different counties?
5. Are reductions in foster care placements and the related cost of foster care possible within current agency policy?

This report utilizes existing information to shed light on the major question of why the high placement rate counties and the low placement rate counties place different ratios of the children in their counties in care, and on the five sub-questions listed. It does not purport to state causes for these differences. It is intended to document actual differences in individual county's foster care populations, to suggest to Division personnel factors that may influence foster care provision and to recommend possible changes to improve the program.

METHODS

The Division has a computerized file of information on all children who have been placed in foster care since March, 1982. The file is constructed from information provided on a written placement document (called a CSD-1) which is sent to the Division immediately after placement of a child by the placing worker, and which includes information about the child and about the placement (Appendix I).

Information from this file was used to compare the foster care population of counties with high placement rates and counties with low placement rates in fiscal 1983 (July 1, 1982 through June 30, 1983). Census data from the 1980 Decennial Census of the United States were used in conjunction with the file information to calculate foster care ratios. Differences in the foster care population in the two groups of counties were then reviewed in relation to specific Division policies

concerning foster care. Since this report is intended to encourage discussion as well as to provide information, other factors that may affect foster care provision are also suggested.

Given time and resource limits, it was necessary to work with a sample of Montana Counties rather than seeking information from all of them. Rather than selecting a random sample we chose to eliminate some counties on the following bases:

a. Very small counties with few or no foster care placements were not included since they might shed very little light on the central question of why some counties place higher proportions of their population under 18 years of age in foster care.

b. Counties with many staff vacancies were not included since the absence of workers might be more relevant in explaining differences in placement rates than policy decisions themselves.

c. Counties with recent or ongoing staff reorganization were eliminated since such reorganization could affect placement rates temporarily.

These exclusions were made to control extraneous factors which might unusually or temporarily produce artificially high or low placement rates. Fourteen counties were excluded because of size, 8 because of understaffing in the county and 5 because of recent reorganizations.

From the remaining 29 counties, eight were selected for this comparison. The counties were selected from the list (Appendix II) in pairs (one from counties higher than the state average and one from counties lower than the state average) which were similar in:

1. size of population under 18 years of age,
2. size of county social work staff,
3. amount of turnover among the social work staff, and
4. nature of county social service organization; that is whether staff specialize, e.g. in child protection or family services, or respond to all referrals. The selected counties were chosen to represent different social service districts and different geographic areas of the State. The eight counties selected were, in the low placement rate group: Missoula, Gallatin, Valley and Teton, and in the high placement rate group: Yellowstone, Lake, Park and Custer. These eight counties represent approximately 60% of the total foster care population of Montana.

Even after careful selection, some potentially affecting differences remain in the sample. Two low placement rate counties are the smallest of the selected counties in population and are characterized as rural, agricultural areas with relatively stable populations. In the kind of economic, social milieu of Valley and Teton Counties, informal resources may assist families with their children, discouraging formal, government solutions (Bertsche, Clark and Iverson, 1982). In contrast, two of the high placement counties, Lake and Park Counties, are economically impacted by tourism, and a third, Custer, by oil/coal development, providing a less stable family environment. Two of the high placement rate counties and one low placement rate county are located adjacent to or include parts of Indian reservations. The availability of 'helping' resources in the counties varies considerably.

I have attempted to note these differences where they are likely to influence results.

This study addresses the questions posed through a comparison of foster care data for the two groups of counties on the specific variables:

- A. age
- B. race
- C. sex
- D. reason for the placement
- E. legal authority for the placement
- F. long-term goal for the placement
- G. service offered or type of placement provided
- H. length of time a child spends in care
- I. number of separate places a child stays during his time in care, and
- J. number of returns to foster care after release.

The calculation of further foster care ratios from the data file and census data provide additional insight. Finally, comparisons of the computer information with written Division policies concerning when placement is appropriate, time spent in care, the goals of foster care and most desirable types of placement are made to point out how the two groups of counties vary in their adherence to State-wide policy (See Appendix IV for additional discussion of Methods).

FINDINGS

There are statistically significant differences in the foster care populations of the two groups of counties as measured by the variables of age, reason for placement, legal authority for placement, length of time in care, type of service provided and foster care goal. The differences are presented in this section along with other factors which may be related and an analysis of how the differences relate to Division policy. No significant differences were found between the two groups of counties as measured by the variables of race, sex, number of placements or returns to foster care.

A. Reasons for Placement

The authorization for placement (CSD-1) allows the placing social worker to list up to three reasons for the placement. These should be "primary" reasons for placement, but are not listed in any priority order (Administration Manual, 101-5). Table 1 shows the percentage of children in each group by the reason for their placement.

Some of the differences noted may be due to subjective decisions by placing workers about which reasons to use; e.g. parent abandonment or parent absence, abuse or sexual abuse, etc. Combining related reasons into groups highlights where this may occur. For example, combining all reasons related to a parent's unavailability (parent absent, parent abandonment, parent ill or parent deceased) results in the disappearance of the significance of differences between the high placement rate counties and the low placement rate counties for reasons of parent absence and parent abandonment.

On the other hand, combining court ordered placements and those adjudicated (need of care, need of supervision and delinquent) increases the statistical significance of differences in placement for these reasons to .0008 (chi square =11, df=1)(Nie, et al.,1975).

TABLE 1: REASONS FOR PLACEMENT OF CHILDREN
(Percentages of Total)

REASON	LOW PLACEMENT RATE COUNTIES	HIGH PLACEMENT RATE COUNTIES
Parent Request	38.4%	34.9%
Neglect*	36.5	31.6
Parent Substance Abuse*	19.6	16.7
Child's Behavior	18.1	16.5
Parent Absence*	17.7	11.2
Abuse	16.6	15.7
Court Order	6.3	11.8
Adjudicated: Need of Care*	4.8	8.7
Parent Ill	4.4	7.4
Sexual Abuse*	4.4	9.1
Child Multiple Handicap	3.3	2.9
Child Emotional Handicap*	3.0	8.9
Adjudicated: Need of Supervision*	2.6	6.2
Child Physical Handicap	1.5	2.1
Parent Abandonment*	1.1	7.2
Parent Deceased	1.1	2.1
Adjudicated: Delinquent	.7	1.2

* Chi square indicates statistically significant difference.

Note: Since each case may have up to three reasons for placement listed, these percentages will not add up to 100%. In practice, social workers listed an average 2.1 reasons for each placement.

The effect on the foster care population of higher percentages of placements with a reason for placement of court order or adjudication is discussed later in this paper. Briefly, when the juvenile court is involved in foster care placements, the placement is likely to last for a longer period of time and also to be in a more restrictive and more expensive facility.

Other reasons for placement which show significant differences between the high placement rate counties and the low placement rate counties are neglect, child emotional handicap, child behavior and sexual abuse. Like parent absence, the statistical significance of sexual abuse as a reason for placement disappears if it is combined with abuse. Since there is some question whether these differences indicate actual differences in the foster care populations or only differences in social worker preference for one reason over another, when significance disappears if the reason is combined with very similar reasons the differences are not considered further.

When the reasons for placement are grouped into child-related and parent-related reasons, it can be seen that both groups of counties are more likely to place children in care because of parent-related conditions. This is true nationally also, where 79% of children placed in care are placed because of a parent or guardian's problems or conditions (Tatara, 1983).

TABLE 2: CHILDREN PLACED FOR PARENT-RELATED OR CHILD-RELATED REASONS
(Percentages)

REASON	LOW PLACEMENT RATE COUNTIES	HIGH PLACEMENT RATE COUNTIES
Parent-Related	64.4%	69.5%
Child-Related	35.6%	30.5%

Division foster care policy states that children "are best protected by enabling the existing home to provide the proper environment," (Social Services Manual, 201-2) and that social workers

should "exhaust all appropriate means of keeping the child in his own home" (Social Services Manual, 301-1). Yet the low placement rate counties place one of every 200 children in their population in foster care, and the high placement rate counties place double this number, placing one in every 100 children in their population in foster care.

Part of the reason for placing so many children may be that "appropriate means" are easily exhausted. Elizabeth Cole, of the Child Welfare League of America, in a conference on alternatives to foster care called attention to the fact that "we've devoted the least amount of our resources up to now, historically, to those services that would keep the families intact" (Cole, 1983:1). Social workers in the eight study counties agreed that resources were not sufficient (Bartells, 1984). Lists of resources available indicate there is a direct negative relationship between resources available in an area and the number of foster care placements in the area (Evaluation Bureau, 1982).

Even where resources are available, they may not be able to help. Few parenting classes deal with the specific problems of families with adolescents, particularly families in transitional areas where extended family or other long-term social ties are weak (Whittaker, 1981). Mental Health Centers are available in all the counties studied, but vary greatly in capability and are often overloaded, so that long waits for appointments are not uncommon (Hardin, 1984).

If more homes are to be helped to provide the proper environment, as policy suggests, it seems likely that resources to meet the needs of children and families will need to be expanded and made more

uniformly available.

Differences between the high placement rate counties and the low placement rate counties in their reasons for the placement of children in foster care widen when the children are grouped according to age. (See Table 3.) These differences may be indicative of worker attitudes about the effectiveness of foster care.

TABLE 3: REASONS FOR PLACEMENT BY AGE GROUP
(Percentages of Children)

REASON	LOW PLACEMENT RATE COUNTIES		HIGH PLACEMENT RATE COUNTIES		
	Age	0-12	13-18	0-12	13-18
Parent Request		38.2	35.4	39.2	32.8
Neglect		51.3	19.7	39.6	24.9
Parent Substance Abuse		22.9	13.4	20.7	14.7
Child's Behavior		4.9	35.4	2.8	26.7
Parent Unavailable		31.2	18.1	34.1	21.8
Abuse, Sexual Abuse		15.0	29.1	24.4	25.2
Child Physical Handicap		5.8	3.7	4.6	6.0
Child Emotional Handicap		1.0	5.5	1.8	14.7
Youth Court		7.6	22.0	15.2	38.4

Note: Reasons which are highly subject to social worker's interpretation, e.g. abuse/sexual abuse or parent absent/parent abandonment are combined in this table, as are court orders and adjudications. It is also possible that this subjectivity is involved in the low placement rate counties' increase in placements due to child's behavior and the high placement rate counties' increase in child emotional handicap.

National research indicates that the use of alternative resources to maintain children at home can be an effective preventive to placement (Stone, 1979; Knitzer, Allen and McGowan, 1978). This should be especially true of older children. Children are expected to increase in their capability for assuring their own welfare as they grow older and thus to be less likely to be placed in foster care for reasons

involving incapacity of a parent or guardian to care for them. Yet, the high placement rate counties continue to place a high percentage of children over the age of 12 for parent related reasons. Children of this age should be able to dress themselves, feed themselves, travel some distance away from home and communicate their needs to others outside the family. Appropriate means for assisting these older children to remain in their homes might include assistance directed toward the child: clothing, lunch at school, support groups, alternatives to staying at home, if necessary, as well as assistance more traditionally directed toward the parents, such as parenting classes, a homemaker, day care, etc. Since low placement rate counties place fewer children over the age of 12 for parent-related reasons, it could be argued they are making greater use of alternative resources to maintain children at home. Support for this suggestion is found in other differences between the foster care populations of the high placement rate counties and the low placement rate counties, including greater involvement of parents in the low placement counties, even after the child is placed in foster care.

The policy of exhausting alternatives before placing a child in foster care is partially based on problems resulting from foster care placement. Child development specialists believe that separation trauma, the fear and disruption caused in a child's life by removal from his family- increases with the time he has spent in the family, and that children over ten years of age have more difficulty forming new family relationships and are more likely to develop problems in school and with peers when removed from their families (Goldstein, Freud and Solnit,

1973). Placement of children over ten years old, then, seems more likely to create problems than does the placement of younger children. Division policy requires workers, in addition to exhausting appropriate resources, to consider whether "placement will create more problems than it solves" (Social Services Manual, 201-2). Significant differences in the number of children over this age placed in foster care by the high placement counties, where 64.2% are over 10 years old, and by the low placement rate counties, where only 55.7% are over 10 years old ($\text{sig.} = .05$), may indicate greater concern for possible problems as well as more commitment to keeping the child in his home. A survey of the social workers in the eight counties studied confirms that workers in the low placement rate counties were less likely to consider foster care placement a viable alternative than were workers in the high placement rate counties (Bartells, 1984). Resource availability and social worker attitudes both apparently contribute to the higher placement rate for teen-agers in the high placement rate counties.

As the children increase in age, placements because of the child's behavior or because of emotional problems increase markedly. This is true in both high placement rate counties and low placement rate counties, but the increase occurs in placements for emotional handicap in the high placement rate counties and in placements for behavior in the low placement rate counties. Since these reasons are closely related, there is some question about whether workers in the low placement rate counties simply prefer one definition, and workers in the high placement rate counties prefer the other. However, even when

the reasons are combined, the significance of the increase remains. Since children placed in foster care for these reasons tend to stay longer in care and to be placed in more expensive, treatment facilities, this increase affects the foster care program and budget in much the same way placement because of adjudication or court order does (Appendix III, Tables C and D).

It should be noted here that beginning social workers are not required to have specific education or experience in the problems of adolescents and that Division sponsored workshops do not focus on the problems of this age group. Lack of information and skill in working with the existing home may contribute to the social worker's tendency to place the older child.

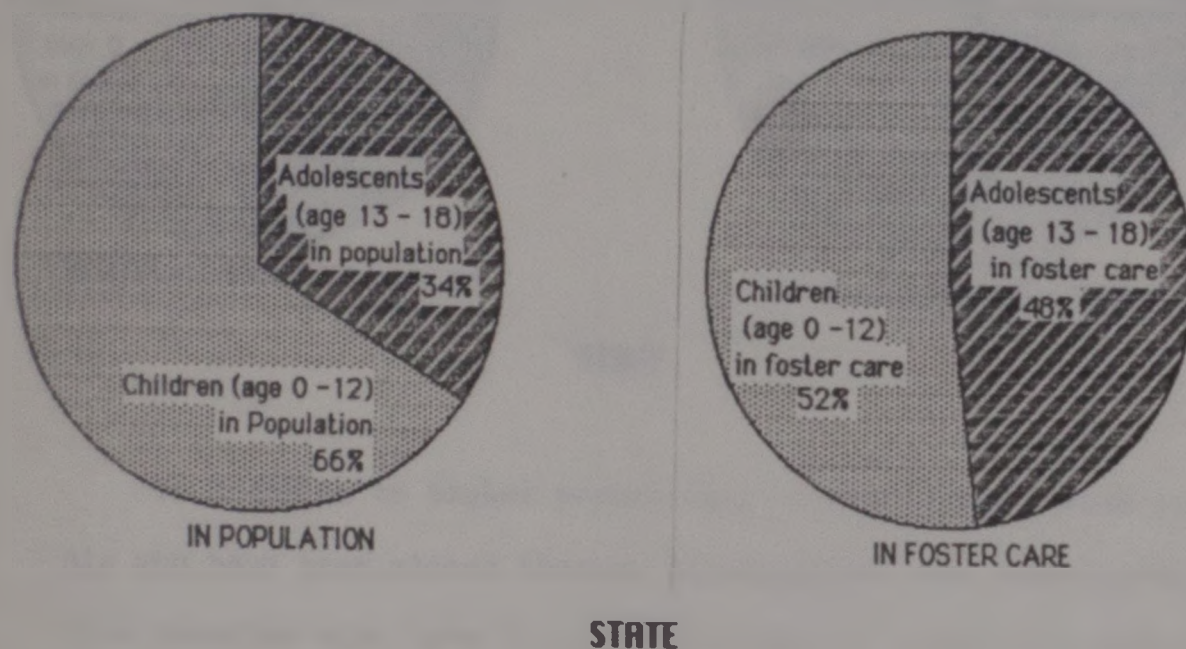
The influence of age differences on the foster care populations of the two groups of counties studied is considered further in the following section.

B. Age

All of the counties in the study have more youth over the age of twelve in care per 1,000 in the population than children twelve years old or younger. The ratio of youth over twelve years old in care per 1,000 in the population varies from a low of 5.19 in Gallatin County to a high of 21.0 in Lake County. For children twelve and younger the variation is from a low of 1.36 in care per 1,000 in Gallatin County to a high of 7.40 per 1,000 in Park County (Appendix V). Almost half of all children in foster care in Montana are 13 years old

or older, although this age group makes up only about one-third of the State's population under eighteen years old (Figure 1).

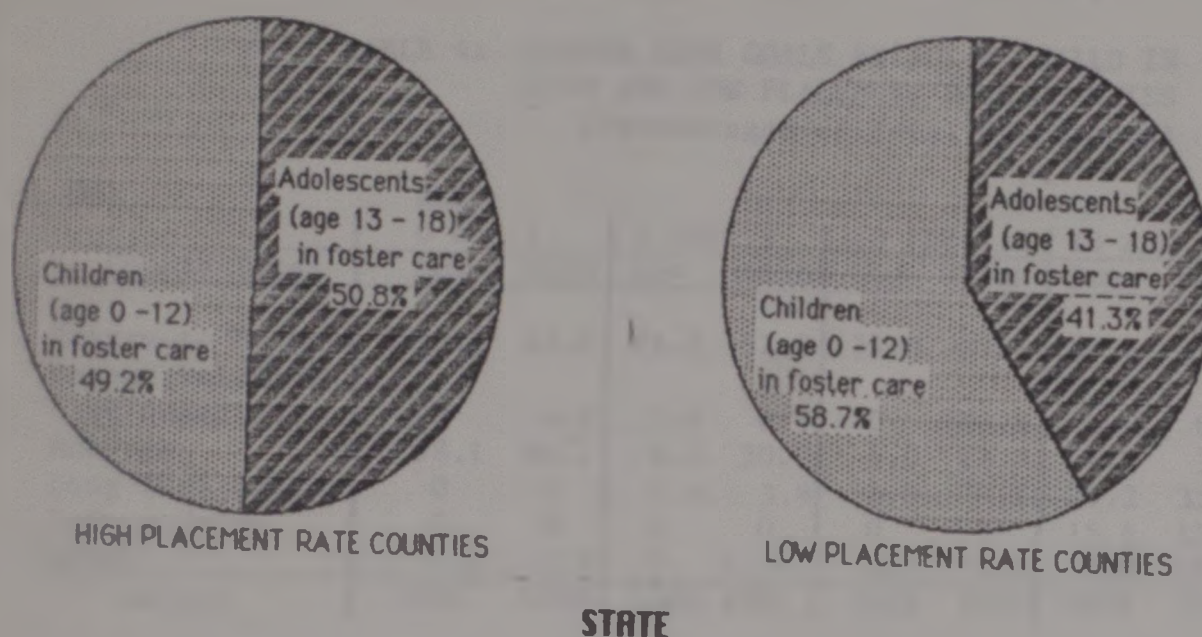
FIGURE 1: CHILDREN IN POPULATION AND CHILDREN IN CARE BY AGE



Actual percentages of adolescents in the population, calculated from 1980 Census figures, range from 29.4% of children under 18 years of age in Rosebud County to 41.6% in Carter County. In the eight study counties, 50.8% of the children in care in the high placement rate counties were over twelve years old, and in the four low placement rate counties 41.3% were over twelve. (Figure 2).

The impact of disproportionate percentages of adolescent placements on the foster care program is highlighted when age is correlated with other variables. I have already mentioned the relationship of age to reasons for placement involving the juvenile court and for behavioral or emotional problems of the child, and the further relationship between these reasons for placement and longer, more expensive stays in foster care.

FIGURE 2: PERCENTAGES OF CHILDREN IN CARE BY AGE



In addition to higher percentages of youth over twelve years old who have been placed through adjudication, the high placement rate counties also have higher percentages of youth over twelve years old who have been placed in the custody of the Department of Social and Rehabilitative Services (S.R.S.). Almost half of youth over twelve years old who are placed in foster care in the high placement rate counties have been placed in temporary or permanent custody by the courts. Only 25% of this age group is placed in the custody of the Department in the low placement rate counties (Appendix III, Table A).

Age is also related to the foster care goal the social worker lists on the CSD-1. This goal is identified in the case worker's plan for the child and is the intended result of the placement (Table 4).

TABLE 4: FOSTER CARE GOALS BY AGE OF CHILD IN HIGH AND LOW PLACEMENT RATE COUNTIES (Percentages of Total Placements)

GOAL County Type	AGE							
	0 and 1		2 thru 9		10 thru 12		13 and older	
	Low	High	Low	High	Low	High	Low	High
Return to Parent	35.5	25.5	81.5	52.8	76.0	39.1	46.3	31.9
Parent, Relative or Guardian	0	4.0	7.6	6.3	0	10.8	8.0	6.2
Adoption	58.1	64.7	4.3	30.7	4.0	13.0	1.0	3.1
Long Term Care	0	0	6.6	3.9	12.0	26.1	25.2	35.4
Independence	0	0	0	0	0	0	15.4	13.4
Other	6.5	5.9	0	6.3	8.0	10.9	4.0	10.0
TOTALS	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%

For infants and very young children the predominant goal in both groups of counties is adoption. For children from two years old on up return to a parent is planned for most children placed in the low placement rate counties. As children increase in age, fewer expect to return home. In the high placement rate counties long term foster care becomes the predominant goal for those over twelve years old and a goal of independence increases in both the high and low placement rate counties. The Division's stated goal for foster care placement is "reuniting the child with his family at the earliest possible time," (Social Services Manual, 301-1) but this goal seems to be subverted when the child is a teen-ager. In both high and low placement rate counties, teen-agers are not expected to return home as often as are younger children. Factors which may be related include the increasing numbers of children who are placed in foster care, not by S.R.S. social workers, but by probation officers or by order of a court. In the high placement

rate counties 14.2% of youth over 12 years of age are placed under the authority of the youth court but only 6.6% of this age group are placed under youth court authority in the low placement counties. The goal for children placed under the authority of the youth court is more likely to be long term care or independence (Appendix III, Table C). This is not surprising, since S.R.S. policies are less likely to be considered when the placing agent is a probation officer rather than a social services worker. The involvement of the youth court in placements of children over the age of twelve in the high placement rate counties is more than double the involvement of the court in the low placement rate counties for this age group. Whether the court's involvement is cause, effect or simply an associated factor, the impact is substantial.

Additionally, the increasing number of children over 12 placed for behavior or emotional problems are less likely to return home. They, too, are often placed in treatment facilities and are expected to remain in long term care or to reach independence.

C. Type of Service Provided

Foster care services are provided in a continuum of settings from the foster family home, which is least restrictive, to a secure treatment facility, depending on the placement needs of the child. Division policy states that:

. . . when placement is necessary, it shall be in the least restrictive setting able to meet the needs of the child. These settings include in order of desirability, 1. a member of the child's immediate family, 2. other relatives, 3. a licensed family home, and 4. a licensed foster care facility (Social Services Manual, 301-1)

and adds that "foster family care should be utilized for the majority of children placed " (Social Services Manual, 301-2). Good social work practice suggests that placement should be in close proximity to the parents if at all possible (Whittaker, 1981) and that workers and foster care facilities encourage the involvement of the natural parents in decisions about the child and in preparations for him to return home (Social Services Manual, 301-1).

Differences between the two groups of counties in the type of service provided to children in foster care are significant. Table 5 indicates that the high placement rate counties performance is closer to policy concerning desirable placements, placing 71% of all placements in foster family homes, while the low placement rate counties use foster family homes for only 53% of placements.

Rather than placing most children in foster family homes the low placement rate counties place large percentages of children in short term (attention or receiving home) group care.* Group

*Attention and receiving homes are licensed group homes designed for limited stays up to 30 days. Attention homes are usually licensed for children over the age of 12 and often provide counseling or therapy; Receiving homes usually accept younger children and provide only basic care.

TABLE 5: PERCENT OF FOSTER CARE PLACEMENTS IN EACH TYPE OF SERVICE FOR HIGH AND LOW PLACEMENT RATE COUNTIES

SERVICE TYPE	LOW PLACEMENT RATE COUNTIES	HIGH PLACEMENT RATE COUNTIES
Foster Family Home	52.8%	70.9%
Group Home	8.9	7.1
Attention Home or Receiving Home	33.2	7.5
Treatment Facilities, inc. In-State, Out of State and Volunteers of America	5.2	14.4

chi square= 93.32 df= 3 sig= > .0001

statistics are, however, highly misleading. ALL children placed in short-term group homes in the low placement rate counties were placed by Missoula County, where 47% of all children in care were placed in these services. All the children placed by the high placement rate counties in short-term group homes were placed by either Yellowstone County or Lake County. Missoula, Yellowstone and Lake are the only three counties studied where a short term group home is located within the county.

Short-term group home placements tend to be shorter than other placements. This is partly true because stays in these facilities are strictly time limited - the social worker must find or develop other alternatives within the 30 days allowed. Since placement in a foster family home is not time-limited, workers may feel less pressure for action. Foster parents may also influence the length of time children spend in their care. While workers in the high placement counties could conceivably use foster homes for short-term

placements, foster parents may find short, emergency placements less rewarding and more disruptive and resist these placements (Ryan, McFadden and Warren, 1981). In fact, Yellowstone County does designate emergency foster homes for short-term placements and does find it difficult to keep families interested in providing this kind of care.

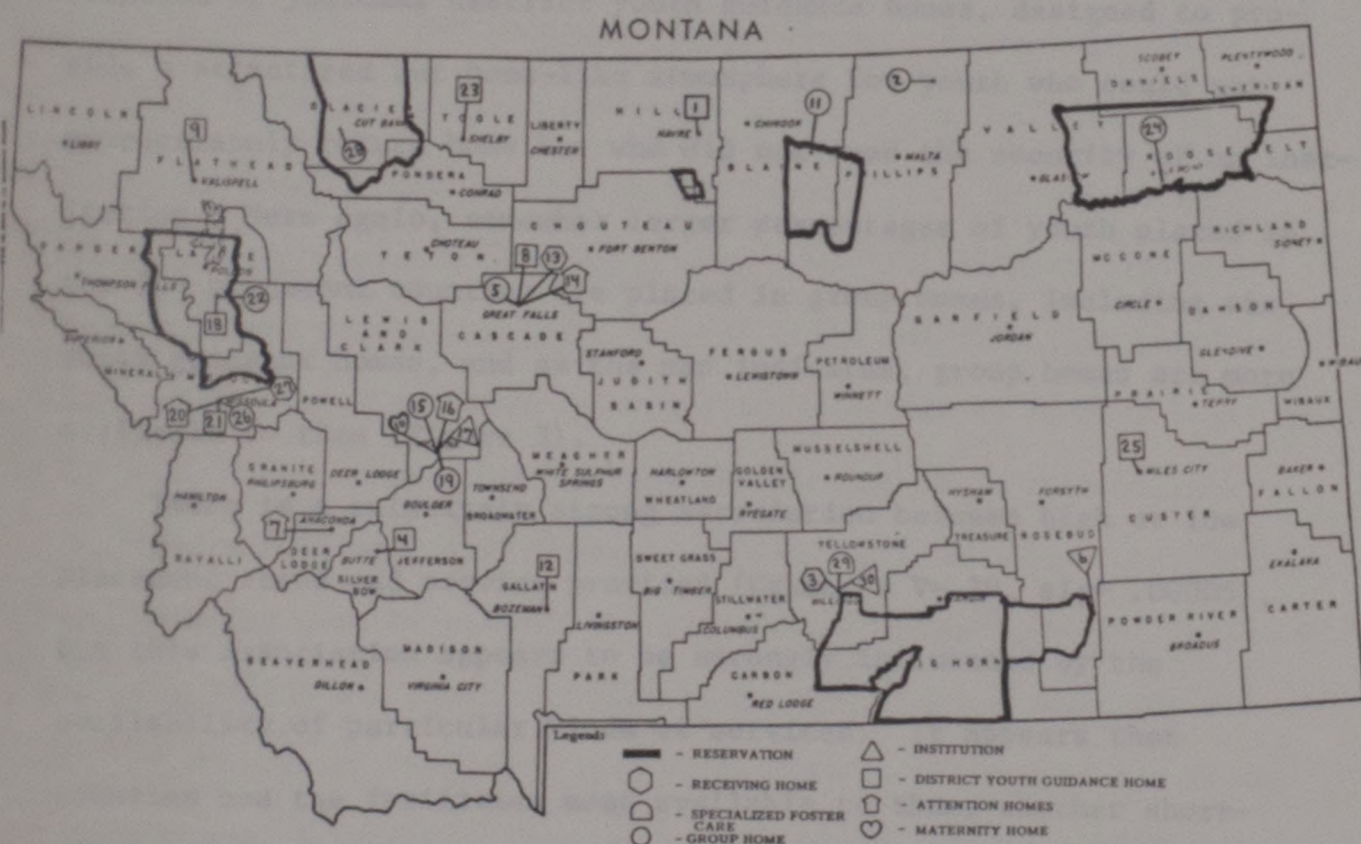
The short-term group homes are usually more expensive than foster care homes, which may also influence workers to keep stays short. On the other hand they are available 24 hours a day, every day, so may encourage placement. In a county where a short-term group home is unavailable, an arrangement might be made with a neighbor or friend to keep a child temporarily.

Differences in the use of short-term group homes by the high and low placement rate counties is certainly due partly to their availability (Figure 3). Three of the low placement rate counties have seven such facilities within one hundred miles, whereas the high placement rate counties have access to only three such facilities within that distance. One low placement county and two high placement counties do not have access to these kinds of facilities within 100 miles.

Availability may also be a factor in the high placement rate counties' higher percentage of placements in treatment facilities. Yellowstone and Custer Counties place 18% and 16% respectively, of all their placements in treatment facilities, either in or out of State. Park and Lake Counties place only 9% and 4% of their

placements in treatment facilities. Gallatin County, one of the low placement rate counties places 17% of its placements in treatment. It is probably no accident that the three counties with the highest percentages of children placed in treatment are the closest to the treatment facilities (Figure 3).

FIGURE 3: LOCATION OF FOSTER CARE FACILITIES IN MONTANA



From Montana Group and Child Care Agency Foster Care Resource Directory, Evaluation Bureau, Community Services Division, S.R.S. 1984.

In addition to the low placement rate counties' use of short term group homes and the high placement rate counties' use of treatment facilities, both groups of counties tend to place adjudicated adolescents in group home care (Appendix III, Table B). Historically, youths adjudicated delinquent or in need of supervision have been hard

to maintain in foster homes. Usually temporary custody is retained by the court or granted to the Department of Institutions and case planning and supervision provided by probation or aftercare workers. Until recently, there were few alternatives for these youth and many were inappropriately returned to their homes on probation or placed in juvenile institutions. In 1979, legislation provided for the creation of judicial district youth guidance homes, designed to provide a structured but home-like atmosphere for youth who could not appropriately return home but who did not need the security of an institution. Here again, somewhat larger percentages of youth placed in the low placement counties are placed in group homes, including the youth guidance homes, and as the map indicates, group homes are more available to them (Figure 3).

There is a relatively strong association between high or low placement rates and service provided (Cramer's $V=.29$, $\text{sig}=.00005$), but this association appears to be strongly influenced by the availability of particular kinds of services. It appears that counties use the facilities most available to them, whether short-term group placements or treatment facilities, when foster home placement seems inappropriate.

Availability may not explain all the differences, however. Use of short-term group facilities appears to be a choice between available alternatives for the low placement rate counties. Foster family homes are available to workers in these counties as well as to those in the high placement rate counties. There are a number of

licensed foster family homes in the low placement rate counties who do not have current placements, and most of the youth guidance homes and regular group homes also have places available. In addition, resource development personnel are available in all districts to seek and license additional foster homes. Since foster family homes are available to both high and low placement rate counties, the use of different types of service by the high placement rate counties and the low placement rate counties indicates other factors are involved.

The types of services used most often by the low placement rate counties are correlated with their greater use of parent agreements as authority for placement, with identification of return to parent as the foster care goal for the child and with less involvement of the juvenile court in either adjudication or custody hearings. It appears from these related factors that the low placement rate counties are placing more emphasis on working with parents to "enable the existing home to provide the proper environment" (Social Services Manual, 201-2) and involving parents in planning for their child's care. Workers in the low placement counties confirm that for them, foster care placement is seen as a last resort (Hardin, 1984). They also believe that the short-term group homes provide valuable assistance both for the youth and for the worker in planning alternatives to placement (Hardin, 1984). This additional assistance is probably another reason Missoula County social workers use these facilities so heavily.

D. Authority for Placement

Comparisons of the legal authorities under which children are placed in foster care show a significant difference between authorities used by the high placement rate counties and the low placement rate counties.

TABLE 5: AUTHORITY FOR PLACEMENT IN FOSTER CARE
(Percentages of Cases)

AUTHORITY	LOW PLACEMENT RATE COUNTIES	HIGH PLACEMENT COUNTIES
Temporary Hold	2.6	1.4
Parent Agreement	43.2	32.2
Stipulation	2.2	0.4
Temporary Inves. Authority	19.2	16.9
Petition Filed	2.2	2.1
Temporary Custody	13.7	18.8
Permanent Custody	8.5	17.8
Youth Court (Adjudicated)	5.9	7.4
Other	2.5	3.0
Totals	<u>100%</u>	<u>100%</u>

chi square=21.479 df= 8 sig=.0015

The significant difference in the authorities for placement is influenced by the high placement rate counties' greater involvement with the juvenile court; in an adjudication, a custody hearing or where a petition has been filed. In the low placement rate counties, these authorities for placement account for 30.3% of all children placed, but in the high placement rate counties they account for 46.1%. It has already been noted in the discussion of reasons for placement and in the discussion of types of service provided that adjudication by the juvenile court is related to longer and more expensive placements. The same is true for those

children placed in either temporary or permanent custody of the Department of Social and Rehabilitative Services (Appendix III, Table B).

In contrast to the higher percentages of court-related authority for placement in the high placement rate counties, the low placement rate counties place 45.5% of their placements under a legal agreement with the parent. (This includes both parent agreement and stipulation.) Placement under a parent agreement is associated with shorter stays in foster care than any other placement authority except the time-limited emergency hold, which is legally limited to 48 hours (Table D).

As with the difference in type of placement provided, these group differences in authority for placement may be somewhat misleading. Missoula and Gallatin Counties transfer custody far less often than the other two low-placement counties, and Custer County is substantially more likely to transfer custody than the other three high placement rate counties. (Table 6). Causal relationships are not possible to determine from this data, but again it seems clear that some counties are more influenced by the courts than are others. Why this is so deserves further study.

TABLE 6: PERCENTAGE OF CASES IN PERMANENT CUSTODY BY COUNTY

HIGH PLACEMENT RATE COUNTIES

County	%
Custer	27
Lake	16
Park	11
Yellowstone	16

LOW PLACEMENT RATE COUNTIES

County	%
Gallatin	6
Missoula	5
Teton	20
Valley	14

It should be noted here that some custody statuses are influenced by the placement desired for the child. A child cannot be placed for treatment under the authority of S.R.S. unless the court has granted either temporary or permanent custody to the Department. Policy also places limits on other legal authorities for placement, suggesting that temporary investigative authority, which gives social workers legal authority to act in the best interest of the child, including authority to place in care during an investigation into possible child abuse or neglect, should not be used for a period of longer than three months. Temporary custody should be limited to one year and "be used when the child must be placed but the plan is aimed toward return of the child to his natural family" (Social Services Manual, 201-8). In addition, temporary hold is an emergency placement limited by law to a period not to exceed 48 hours.

Policy statements notwithstanding, the goal for children placed in temporary custody is return to the parent in only 26.4% of cases in the high placement rate counties and only 40.5% in the low placement rate counties. Additionally, in the high placement rate counties, the length of time children in temporary custody remain in placement exceeds one year in 46.6% of cases, and in the low placement rate counties, 56.8% stay in care over one year.

In addition to longer stays in care, children placed in the custody of the Department, adjudicated or where a petition has been filed make up a greater proportion of those placed in more expensive, treatment oriented placements. A whopping 73% of children placed in treatment facilities in the high placement rate counties

are placed under these legal authorities (Appendix III, Table D). As previously noted, the use of treatment facilities by the high placement counties is related to the lack of other appropriate resources as well as the availability of treatment facilities in close proximity. The relationship of service type to these particular authorities for placement appears likely to be at least partly due to the requirement that custody be placed in the State before placement in residential treatment facilities can be made.

E. Goal of Placement

Placing social workers indicate on the placing document (CSD-1) the long range goal for the child and a projected date for the goal to be achieved. Although Division policy concerning goals and planning explicitly states that "substitute care services shall support the goal of reuniting the child with his family at the earliest possible time," (Social Services Manual, 301-1) there are significant differences in how social workers in the high placement rate counties and the low placement counties list foster care goals (Table 8).

TABLE : PERCENTAGES OF CHILDREN IN PLACEMENT BY GOAL LISTED IN HIGH AND LOW PLACEMENT COUNTIES

GOAL	LOW PLACEMENT RATE COUNTIES	HIGH PLACEMENT RATE COUNTIES
Return to Parent	60.5%	37.0%
Other Parent or Relative	6.2	6.4
Adoption	9.2	17.6
Long Term Foster Care	13.3	23.3
Guardian	0	.8
Independence	6.6	7.5
Other	4.1	7.4

Cramer's V=.2459 chi square=43.96 df=6 sig.=.0001

The frequencies given in Table 8 are consistent with the differences noted in authority for placement of children in the high placement rate counties and the low placement rate counties. Higher percentages of children with a goal of adoption or long-term care are placed in the custody of the Department, and higher percentages of those for whom a goal of return home is listed are placed under an agreement with the parent (Appendix III, Table B).

When return to his /her own home is not feasible, Division policy states that "all children in substitute care shall be afforded the opportunity of a permanent plan which assures the right of a child to the stability and continuity of a family" (Social Services Manual, 307-1) and adds "adoptions should be considered for all children who are deprived of care by their natural parents; if legally free, and if capable of a family relationship" (Social Services Manual, 601-3). If this policy were scrupulously followed, the foster care goals for children placed in foster care would be first, to return the child to a parent, second, to place the child in an adoptive home, and last, to arrange other permanent families.

As a practical matter, return to the parent is the most commonly listed foster care goal, although it is used substantially more often by the low placement rate counties, and adoption is the next most often listed goal. All children who cannot be returned home, however, cannot be placed in adoptive homes. Lack of legal authority, age of the child, which often makes formation of new relationships less likely (Knitzer, Allen and McGowan, 1978), emotional handicaps or extensive physical handicaps all mitigate against the possibility of adoption. Ideally, a legal status of permanent custody should coincide

with a goal of adoption, especially for young children. However, prior to 1980, a designation of permanent custody could be one of two types, a limited permanent custody which gave the Department physical custody of the child but did not include the right to consent to adoption, and full permanent custody, which did. Since data on which permanent custody cases are full and which limited were not collected by the agency, there is no way to determine whether one group of counties is more effective in arranging adoption. For those who are not appropriate for adoption, Montana does have a procedure for making permanent foster care agreements (Social Services Manual, 305-1) which guarantee maintenance of a child in a permanent foster family home when close family ties have developed but adoption is not feasible. Again, the information in the file does not identify where permanent agreements exist, so whether permanency has been achieved in this way cannot be determined.

The low placement rate counties do indicate shorter stays in care for children when the foster care goal is adoption, suggesting that children are placed in adoptive homes more expeditiously (Appendix III, Table H). However, since the low placement rate counties list adoption for far fewer percentages of children placed than do the high placement counties, particularly for those past infancy, it may be that they simply list other goals for all but those most likely to be adopted. This position is supported by the fact that actual number of adoptions per 1,000 children does not vary significantly between the high placement rate counties and the low placement rate counties.

The high placement rate counties list adoption as a goal for larger percentages of children over one year old as well as for larger percentages of children listing various handicaps (Table 4). Social workers do have a relatively new option of providing a subsidy for adoptive placements where it is appropriate. This option should make it easier to place some children who are 'hard to place' in adoptive families, but as in other states, funds for this program are limited (Knitzer, Allen and McGowan, 1978).

In order to place a child for adoption, the Department must have either permanent custody or a waiver of parental rights, which can be accepted by the court at the time of adoption proceedings and custody of the child transferred directly to the adoptive parent. Use of a waiver is more likely when the child is an infant. Most older children who are available for adoption have been placed in the permanent custody of the Department. The smaller percentage of cases in the low placement rate counties for whom adoption is listed as a goal after infancy may be related to the lower involvement of the court in foster care placements in these counties. The court may be reluctant to grant custody of children to the Department, or equally possible, social workers in these counties may utilize other resources, and work closely with parents to avoid requesting custody. Additional research is needed to identify how counties use adoption and foster care agreements to achieve permanent homes for children in care.

Goals listed for children past the age of twelve are more likely to be long term care or independence, both of which increase with an

increase in percentages of placements with an authority for placement of permanent or temporary custody or adjudication. Although the involvement of the court increases for both high placement rate counties and for low placement rate counties, it increases more among the high placement rate counties. The low placement rate counties place more children under the authority of a parent agreement, regardless of the ultimate goal for the child.

F. Length in Care

As previously stated, agency policy is to "reunite the child with his family at the earliest possible time"(Social Services Manual, 301-1). However, this analysis indicates that many children in both high and low placement rate counties stay in care for extended

TABLE 9: PERCENTAGE OF CHILDREN IN CARE BY LENGTH OF STAY IN HIGH AND LOW PLACEMENT COUNTIES

LENGTH	LOW PLACEMENT RATE COUNTIES	HIGH PLACEMENT RATE COUNTIES
Up to 2 days	13.7	3.1
2 to 7 days	11.4	5.8
8 to 30 days	14.4	11.4
Total under 30 days	39.5	20.3
1 to 3 months	14.8	12.8
3 to 6 months	10.3	12.8
Total under 6 months	64.6	45.9
6 to 9 months	7.4	10.5
9 to 12 months	6.6	8.7
1 to 4 years	18.5	26.7
Over 4 years	3.0	7.9
Total	100%	100%

Cramer's V=.2662 chi square=53.5067 df=8 sig= .0001

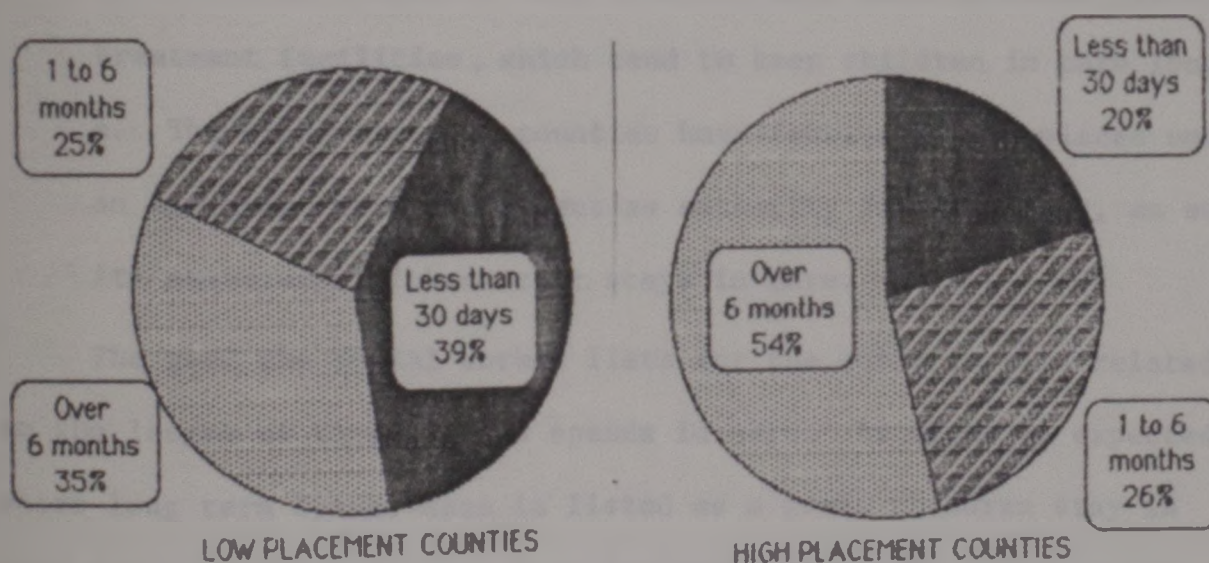
periods, even when the ultimate goal is to return the child to a parent or to place the child for adoption (Appendix, Table H).

The length of time a child spends in foster care is an important measure of foster care effectiveness as well as an index to cost. Research on the effects of foster care on children indicates a 'crucial' period at 30 days in care (Maas and Engler, 1959). This period is supported by agency policy in several ways: short-term group homes are limited to 30 day stays without special approval, workers are required to develop a case plan within 30 days which addresses the need of a "child to the stability and continuity of a family" (Social Services Manual, 307-1), either his own or an adoptive or permanent foster care family. The low placement rate counties release 40% of the children they place in care within this 30 day period. Far fewer children, only 20% of all placements, stay for 30 days or less in the high placement rate counties.

In addition to the 30 day period, a further 'crucial period' occurs at six months (Maas and Engler, 1959; Goldstein, Freud and Solnit, 1973). This time period has also been recognized by both State and Federal authorities. Federal Law-the Adoption Assistance-Child Welfare Act of 1980, Section 427 (a)(2)(b)-prohibits use of federal funds for foster care payments unless a review of the placement has been made at at least six month intervals. Beginning in 1982, Montana State Law requires a foster care review committee to review all foster care placements supervised or paid for by the Department every six months (Social Services Manual, 307-1). In addition, placement under the authority of a parental agreement is limited to six months, after which the child must be returned home or a new agreement obtained

(Social Services Manual, 301-3). Here again, social workers in the low placement rate counties appear more successful in keeping stays under the crucial time, with 64.6% of all children placed in care for six months or less. In the high placement rate counties 46% of children placed are released from care in six months or less. Figure 4 graphically illustrates the shorter stays in care in the low placement rate counties.

FIGURE 4: CHILDREN IN CARE FOR CRITICAL PERIODS



It should also be noted that in the low placement counties 58% of those who had been in care for over six months remained in care for one year or more, and in the high placement counties 65% of those in care over six months remained in care one year or more. Figures from Table 9 support the Maas and Engler study's conclusion that children in care longer than six months are likely to remain in care for extended periods (Maas and Engler, 1959).

The longer stay in care in the high placement rate counties is related to several other factors, some of which have already been discussed:

1. The high placement rate counties place more adolescents, who tend to stay in care longer.
2. The juvenile court is involved in more of the high placement rate counties' cases, and cases where the court is involved tend to stay in care longer.
3. The high placement rate counties have more children placed in treatment facilities, which tend to keep children in care longer.
4. The high placement counties have fewer children placed under an agreement with the parent as authority for placement, an authority associated with shorter stays in care.

The goal the social worker lists for the child is also related to the length of time a child spends in care. As might be expected, where long term foster care is listed as a goal, children stay in care longer. While this is true for both groups of counties, the smaller percentage of children for whom this goal is listed in the low placement rate counties tends to offset the effect on budgets. Also, there is a large difference in the average length of time children whose goal is adoption stay in the high placement rate counties over the low placement rate counties. This difference is probably related to the larger percentages of older children and children with handicaps whose goal is listed as adoption by the high placement rate counties.

By definition, attention and receiving homes provide short-term care. Since the counties which have access to short-term group homes utilize them often and have generally shorter stays in care, I tried to determine if other types of services were substituted for short-term homes in the high placement rate counties.

The most likely placement if short-term facilities were not available would be a short stay in a foster family home. However, since the data indicate very little difference in the length of time children from the high placement rate counties and from the low placement rate counties remain in foster family homes, it appears unlikely that counties where short-term homes are not available use foster family homes in the same way the other counties use the short-term group homes. In the high placement rate counties, 25.2 % of children placed in foster family homes stay less than 30 days, and in the low placement rate counties, 24.1% (Appendix III, Table E).

The other likely substitute for short-term group home placement would be a short stay in a treatment facility. However, comparisons indicate that not only are fewer children placed in treatment in low placement rate counties but they also stay for shorter periods of time, 13% remaining in care 30 days or less, while only 1.5% of children placed in treatment facilities by the high placement rate counties stay 30 days or less. Consequently, while some of the difference in length of time in care may be related to the availability of short-term group homes in the low placement rate counties, it appears that other factors also work to keep

foster care stays shorter in the low placement rate counties. Limited possibilities for family home, group home or treatment placements in the low placement rate counties do not seem to be an influential factor, since licensed foster family homes exist which do not have children currently placed, and most group homes and treatment facilities have vacancies in their licensed capacity.

Since Division policy states explicit time limits for some authorities for placement, these were reviewed to see how close the counties operate within the limits specified. The data show that all children placed under the emergency temporary hold stay in care for the allowed 2 days or less in the low placement rate counties. In the high placement rate counties, however, 14% exceed the 2 day limit (Appendix III, Table D). Additionally, both the high placement rate and the low placement rate counties tend to exceed the three month limit for temporary investigative authority, with almost half the children in both groups staying longer than three months in care. It is possible that workers simply have not brought information up to date for these children, but this suggestion needs further review. If this many children are exceeding stated time limitations, further information as to why this is happening and what action should be taken should be gathered.

Finally, the length of time children spend in care may influence the total number of children in care and hence influence the placement rates, which determined which counties were included as high placement rate counties and which were included as low.

Placement rate for all counties was calculated by dividing the number of children eighteen years old and younger in the county by 1,000 and then by the number in placement to find placements per 1,000 in the population. In order to determine the effect of longer stays in care, another rate was calculated, separating the children into those placed before the beginning of the year and carried over and those newly placed in care during the current year. When the eight counties are ranked by the new rates—new placements per 1,000 and carryover rates per 1,000—the rankings change substantially (Table 9).

TABLE 9: NEW AND CARRYOVER PLACEMENTS PER 1,000
POPULATION 18 YEARS OLD AND UNDER

COUNTY	NEW PLACEMENTS PER 1,000	RANK	CARRYOVER PLACEMENTS PER 1,000	RANK
Custer	6.54	3	10.66	1
Gallatin	2.86	6	4.59	7
Lake	3.90	5	10.62	2
Missoula	6.95	1	8.60	5
Park	6.88	2	9.35	4
Teton	1.84	8	4.14	8
Valley	2.85	7	5.99	6
Yellowstone	5.53	4	10.05	3

Missoula County, one of the low placement rate counties, actually ranked the highest of all eight counties studied in new placements, and Park County, which ranked first of the eight counties in total placements per 1,000 fell to fifth place when only new placements were counted. Since total number in care per 1,000 includes carryovers plus new placements, keeping children in care for long periods of time results in an expanding number of children in care and an increasing

rate of children in care. Relying on only the ranking of counties by total number of children in care per 1,000 in the population masks the effect of the length of time spent in care. Achievement of the agency goal of permanency as quickly as possible is important to maintaining an effective program and to budget containment.

SUMMARY

This analysis of information on foster care populations in eight counties of Montana was designed to identify possible differences in the way they provide foster care.

Information on all children placed in care in the eight counties was compared using a computer and the results discussed in reference to relevant foster care policies adopted by the Division of Community Services, which is responsible for foster care management in the State.

The questions posed for the study are answered as follows:

1. Significant differences between counties with high placement rates and low placement rates were found in the reasons children are placed in care, in the age of children in placement, in the length of time children spend in care, in the authority for placement used, particularly the amount of involvement of the juvenile court, in the kinds of services provided, particularly the use of short-term group homes by the low placement rate counties and in the goals workers identify for the children placed.

2. While it is difficult to determine whether lower foster care placement rates are due to use of alternatives or inactivity, available information points to the use of alternatives which reduce the need for placement. The low placement rate counties have substantially lower increases in the ratio of youth thirteen to eighteen in care per 1,000 in the population than do the high placement rate counties. An opposite result would be likely if problems of younger children had been ignored. The four low placement rate counties have the four lowest ratios of youth thirteen to eighteen in placement. When children in care are divided into those carried over from the previous year and new placements, the low placement rate counties were not significantly lower in new placements, and one county was substantially higher than the high placement rate counties, indicating that placements are made when appropriate, but that shorter stays in care influence the total placement rate. Finally, the low placement rate counties have lower percentages of their placements in treatment facilities than do the high placement rate counties, a situation not likely if problems had been left to grow.

3. The analysis of the length of time children stay in care and the numbers of adolescents in the two groups indicates that these two factors significantly influence the rate of children per 1,000 in the population who are in foster care. Consequently, the simple rate per 1,000 is not a sufficient measure of good management of the foster care program. Policy personnel require an understanding of the impact of high numbers of adolescents and of

longer stays in care as well.

4. Causal relationships are not possible to document with this kind of information. However, the relationships between stated agency policies and differences in foster care populations in the high and low placement rate counties have been discussed. There is some evidence that workers in the low placement rate counties do exhaust more resources to keep children in their own homes, that they keep children in care for shorter periods, keep parents more involved during placement, and return children to their parents more often than workers in the high placement rate counties. On the other hand, workers in the high placement rate counties apparently operate closer to Division policy in placing more children in foster family homes and in seeking adoption for larger percentages of children in care than do the low placement rate counties.

5. Differences in the foster care populations of the high and low placement rate counties suggest some activities which might be useful in reducing disparities. These include working to increase uniformity in the way social workers and probation officers approach foster care, increasing social workers' understanding of the problems of adolescents and their families, assuring that policies are made available and interpreted uniformly to social workers in all areas of the State, and exerting more effort to utilize existing resources and to develop additional resources as needed.

Additional study is suggested on such questions as how and why the use of short term group homes affects foster care placements,

how Gallatin County approaches child and family problems while keeping placement rates low, what the special needs of adolescents and their families are and how they can best be provided and how the juvenile courts become involved in and affect foster care placements and budgets.

RECOMMENDATIONS

This study has found significant differences in the foster care populations of the high placement rate counties and the low placement rate counties studied in reasons for placement, legal authorities for placement, service provided, goal of foster care, age of children placed and length of time children spend in care. These differences suggest that Division policies are not applied uniformly throughout the counties. Other factors which may be related have also been suggested, though many of these are very tentative, based on past experience with the foster care program, observation, and personal communication. The following recommendations are also tentative. Practitioners of social work in the field and in supervisory positions will think of other ones and will be better able to assess such factors as cost, motivation and final effect. These are intended to provide a research 'ground' for the development of theories about foster care, as suggested by Glaser and Strauss in their 1967 book on grounded theory (Glaser and Strauss, 1967:6).

1. Because disproportionate percentages of adolescents are placed in care in both the high and the low placement rate counties, and because adolescents tend to stay longer and are more likely to be placed in expensive, treatment facilities, they have a high impact on foster care services and budgets. The Division should place more emphasis on the problems of adolescents and their families. The currently sponsored Child Abuse and Neglect workshops could be revised to include more emphasis on older youth or a separate workshop could be designed. Since a large percentage of adolescent placements involve the juvenile courts, S.R.S. workshops concerned with the problems of youth and their families should be available to probation and aftercare workers as well as S.R.S. social workers. A concentrated effort should be made to see that information is provided and presented in a uniform fashion and that youth workers of all placing agencies participate.

2. As children grow older, more are placed for reasons involving behavior or emotional problems. Since a large percentage of adolescent placements are made for these reasons and since resources for treatment of these problems appear to be insufficient and not uniformly available, the Division should begin a study of the extent and kinds of problems likely to result in placement of the adolescent in foster care. The study should include an assessment of resources currently available and additional resources needed, with an eye toward future involvement of the Division and individual social

workers in development of added resources where necessary and toward more efficient use of existing resources.

3. The effect of the juvenile court on foster care placements is so large it should not be ignored. Continued effort should be made to encourage cooperation and coordination among all the agencies responsible for the supervision and welfare of youth. Uniform procedures and policies governing the placement of children into foster care should be considered whenever possible.

4. In light of the evidence that availability and use of short-term group homes can reduce the length of time children spend in care, the Division should reassess its policy that "foster family care should be utilized for the majority of children." An in depth study of short-term group homes should be done and information obtained used to modify foster care policy and to encourage development of additional facilities where they are appropriate.

5. Placements in treatment oriented facilities are costly to the foster care program both because of their daily cost per child and because children tend to stay in such placements longer. A study of why children are placed in treatment facilities and the kinds of treatment offered should be undertaken to determine whether some of these placements could be dealt with more effectively or efficiently in other types of placements.

6. Gallatin County has a low ratio of foster care placements per 1,000 in its population, a low ratio of adolescents in placement, low rates of new placements and carryover placements and relatively

short stays in care for children it placed. A careful look at how Gallatin County operates its foster care program could provide a better understanding of how the problems of children and their families can be alleviated without placing the children in foster care and could suggest techniques that could be useful in other areas.

7. Since this study was completed, Yellowstone County has instituted a special intensive preplacement unit with the intent of working closely with children and families to avoid foster care placement whenever possible. This program should plan for a continuing evaluation effort to provide information about the program's operation and identify successes that might be shared by other counties.

8. Given the wide variation of success in applying Division policy, the Division should put more emphasis on disseminating and explaining foster care policy. Informational workshops on agency policy and expectations should be mandatory for all staff, with refresher courses at specified intervals to reinforce policy positions, disseminate new information and share ideas with local social workers and supervisors. The availability of uniform information should encourage more uniform activity.

9. The evidence is that social workers use the resources that are most available to them, regardless of policy. More effort is needed by the Division to increase the availability of appropriate alternatives to foster care placement. Professionals in the fields of education, medicine and mental health could be recruited to help plan and cooperatively develop the additional resources needed to

help children within their families. In line with its policy that children are best protected by enabling the existing home to provide the proper environment, the Division should work to develop a continuum of resources that are available in all parts of the State. Social workers should be encouraged not only to seek and use existing resources but also to assist in the development of additional resources as an integral part of their work.

APPENDICES

APPENDIX I

SRS-CSD-1 (REV. 3/82) (OTHERS OBSOLETE) STATE OF MONTANA DEPARTMENT OF SOCIAL AND REHABILITATION SERVICES INDIVIDUAL FOSTER CARE PLACEMENT AUTHORIZATION

① SEC ② CHILD'S NAME LAST FIRST INITIAL ③ DATE OF BIRTH ④ SEX (Circle one) 1-Male 2-Female

⑤ CITY (Circle one) ⑥ MARITAL STATUS (Circle one) ⑦ STREET ⑧ CITY ⑨ STATE ⑩ ZIP

1. Caucasian 2. Black 3. American Indian 4. Alaskan Native 5. Vietnamese/Cambodian 6. Asian/Pacific Islander 7. Hispanic 8. Unknown

1. Married 2. Widowed 3. Divorced 4. Separated 5. Never Married/Sgl 6. Unknown

⑪ COUNTY NO. (Specify)

⑫ REVIEW DATE MO. DATE YR. ⑬ EUG. CODE (See reverse) ⑭ EUG. DATE MO. DATE YR. ⑮ DATE FIRST PLACED INTO FOSTER CARE MO. DATE YR. ⑯ FOSTER CARE RE-OPEN DATE MO. DATE YR. ⑰ SOC. NUMBER POSITION NO.

⑱ INITIAL Update Reopen

⑲ REASONS FOR PLACEMENT (See reverse)

99001 - abuse 99002 - neglect 99003 - sexual abuse 99011 - child multiple handicap 99012 - child emotional handicap 99013 - child physical handicap 99021 - child substance abuse 99022 - child behavior problem 99031 - parent/caretaker substance abuse 99032 - parent/caretaker absence 99033 - parent/caretaker request 99034 - parent/caretaker illness 99035 - parent/caretaker abandonment 99036 - parent/caretaker deceased 99041 - adjudicated in need of supervision 99042 - adjudicated in need of care 99043 - adjudicated delinquent 99051 - court ordered placement

AMOUNT OF PAYMENT BY SRS: _____

PAYMENT AMOUNTS/NON SRS: _____

PLEASE USE CODES ON REVERSE SIDE AS KEY TO COMPLETE SECTION BELOW

SERVICE CODE	START DATE MO. DAY YR.	TERM DATE MO. DAY YR.	PROVIDER ID NO.	FACILITY NO.	SVC GOAL CODE	WAITING LIST	STATUS REASON

① K NUMBER ② MEMB NO. ③ ESTIMATED GOAL ACHIEVEMENT DATE MO. DATE YR. ④ YR CONTRIBUTION AMOUNT DAY MONTH YEAR ⑤ TRIBAL AFFILIATION (Circle one)

BL Blackfoot CR Crow SX Sioux FL Flathead AS Assiniboine XX Not Indian NC N. Cheyenne SA Salish KO Kootenai CC Chip Cree GV Gros Ventre Other (Specify) BD Blood PI Piegan NP Nez Perce SH Shoshone UU Tribe Unk.

⑥ LEGAL STATUS ⑦ CUSTODY STATUS DATE MO. DATE YR. ⑧ CONTRIBUTION SOURCE (See reverse)

COUNTY SIGNATURES: Social Worker _____ County Director _____ Board Chair _____ Date Submitted _____

SPECIAL NEEDS JUSTIFICATION: _____ DISTRICT SIGNATURES: _____ SWS III _____ Date Submitted _____

STATE OFFICE ACTION

FIELD SERVICES OPERATION: Special Need Approved Denied

MANAGEMENT OPERATIONS: Legal Document Attached Yes No

TERMINAL OPERATIONS: Operator's Initials _____ Date Completed _____

Date of Action _____ Ass't Adm Initial _____ Staff Initial _____ Date Submitted _____

(This information is confidential and is used by Community Services Division for administration of service program according to policy section CSD 104 of the Division Administrative Manual) Original - State Office Copy - County File File - Work Copy

ELIGIBILITY CODE (Item 36 on front)		FOSTER CARE SERVICE CODE (Item 24 on front)	
Code	Description	Code	Description
CWR	Child welfare, non IV-E	101	Foster care clothing allowance
CWW	Child welfare, non IV-E and ward Indian	102	Regular foster care home
EVE	IV-E, voluntary, non ward Indian	103	Specialized foster care (foster adopt only)
ECE	IV-E, court order, non ward Indian	104	Group home care
EVW	IV-E, voluntary, ward Indian	105	DD group home care
ECW	IV-E, court order, ward Indian	106	Attention home care
MAF	Payment for MA only	107	Receiving home care
MAP	Foster Care for MA under IV E	108	In-state treatment facility
NON	No SRS payment being made	109	Out-of-state treatment facility
REF	Refugee foster care	110	Care and professional treatment
SSP	SSI/payment by SRS	111	Subsidized adoption
SSN	SSI/no SRS payment being made	112	Out-of-state foster care home
YCA	Youth court (after care use only)	113	DD client SSI allowance (only with eligibility code SSP)
YCP	Youth court (probation use only)	114	Special foster care payment (corresponds to justification for special placement on front). (Monthly rate in addition to regular rate, must have begin dates in item 23)
ADE	IV-E subsidized adoption (use only with service code 111)	115	Adoptive placement service (for use as a contract service only)
ADS	CWS/state subsidized adoption (use with service code 111)		

SERVICE GOAL CODE (Item 28 on front)		CHANGE IN PLACEMENT REASONS (Items 29 & 30 on front)	
Code	Description	Code	Description
A	Return to home removed from	I	Subsidized adoption placement
B	Placed with parent/other than home removed from	J	Placement broke down
C	Place with relative/other than home removed from	K	License expired/not renewed by agency
D	Place for adoption	L	License revoked by agency
E	Long term foster care	M	Provider quit
F	Place with legal guardian/other than home removed from	N	License expired/not renewed by provider
G	Independent living	O	Provider moved to another area
H	Emancipation	P	Needed care not available in current placement
D	Other	Q	Needed services not available in community
		R	Needed less restrictive care
		S	Contract limitation
		T	Runaway
		U	Other (i.e., rate changes, etc.)

SERVICE TERMINATION REASON (Item 21 only on front)		WAITING LIST REASON (Use only when child is waiting for this service and is recorded in item 22 on front)	
Code	Description	Code	Description
A	Return to home from which removed	1	Foster care resource not available/no space available
B	Placed with parent/other than home removed from	2	Foster care resource not available/contract limits
C	Placed with relative/other than home removed from	3	Waiting for adoptive placement custody or legal custody sufficient to make a treatment facility placement
D	Placed with legal guardian/other than home removed from	4	Waiting for interstate arrangements to be completed
E	Independent living	5	Waiting for facility to be licensed
F	Placed for adoption	6	Waiting for adequate funding to be arranged
G	Runaway	7	Referral has not yet been accepted
H	Court ordered return	8	Adoption resource not available
W	Reached age of majority (18-21 yrs. depending on SRS or probation/aftercare)	9	Treatment source not available/no facility identified
X	Placed into state facility (i.e., Boulder, Childrens Unit, etc.)		
Y	Placed into correctional facility (i.e., Pine Hills, Mtn. View, etc.)		
Z	Other		

LEGAL STATUS CODE (Item 35 on front) (Must be included on every child)		CONTRIBUTION SOURCE CODE (Item 38 on front)	
Code	Description	Code	Description
HD	48 hr. hold under authority of 41-3-301 MCA	EST	Estate/trust fund - non Indian
PA	Parental agreement	IND	Indian monies
PC	Agency permanent custody	INS	Insurance
PF	Petition filed	MIX	More than one source
ST	Stipulation of youth court	PAR	Parent
TA	Temporary investigative authority	SSA	Social Security - non-SSI
TC	Tribal court	SSI	Supplemental Security Income
TP	Agency temporary custody	VET	Veteran's benefit program
YA	Youth court (aftercare use only)		
YC	Youth court (need of care) (probation use only)		
YD	Youth court (delinquent) (probation use only)		
YS	Youth Court (need of supervision) (probation use only)		
OS	Another state has custody		

ADDITIONAL REMARKS

APPENDIX II:

Comparison of Financial Counties By Ranking Of
Population under 18 Years to Ranking Of
Placement Rate Per 1,000 Children Population
FY83

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<u>Population Ranking</u>		<u>Placement Per 1,000 Ranking</u>			
1	Yellowstone	33,644	1	Glacier	16.93
2	Cascade	25,009	2	Rosebud	13.56
3	Missoula	21,848	3	Deer Lodge	13.23
4	Flathead	16,574	4	Park	12.11
5	Lewis & Clark	13,412	5	Lake	11.25
6	Silver Bow	11,546	6	Meagher	10.80
7	Gallatin	11,528	7	Custer	10.66
8	Ravalli	7,264	8	Lewis & Clark	10.66
9	Lake	6,401	9	Cascade	10.16
10	Lincoln	6,342	10	Yellowstone	10.14
11	Hill	5,836	11	Wibaux	09.66
12	Big Horn	4,251	12	Lincoln	09.62
13	Custer	4,126	13	Richland	09.51
14	Richland	4,060	14	Hill	09.42
15	Fergus	3,953	15	Powell	09.40
16	Glacier	3,899	16	Carter	09.34
17	Dawson	3,879	17	Phillips	09.00
18	Deer Lodge	3,854	18	Roosevelt	08.47
19	Rosebud	3,836			
20	Roosevelt	3,778		Statewide	08.27
21	Park	3,633			
22	Valley	3,503	19	Missoula	08.06
23	Sanders	2,795	20	Carbon	07.83
24	Beaverhead	2,532	21	Silver Bow	07.62
25	Blaine	2,528	22	Beaverhead	07.50
26	Jefferson	2,407	23	Flathead	07.36
27	Carbon	2,356	24	Mineral	07.18
28	Pondera	2,260	25	Blaine	06.33
29	Teton	2,064	26	Golden Valley	06.04
30	Powell	2,021	27	Pondera	05.75
31	Chouteau	1,886	28	Sanders	05.72
32	Toole	1,784	29	Valley	05.71
33	Phillips	1,781	30	Ravalli	05.37
34	Stillwater	1,692	31	Stillwater	05.32
35	Madison	1,562	32	Fergus	05.06
36	Sheridan	1,548	33	Toole	05.04
37	Musselshell	1,368	34	Granite	04.80
38	Fallon	1,266	35	Gallatin	04.77
39	Mineral	1,254	36	Dawson	04.64
40	Broadwater	1,063	37	Big Horn	04.52
41	McCone	959	38	Wheatland	04.20
42	Sweet Grass	910	39	Sheridan	03.87
43	Granite	834	40	Musselshell	03.68
44	Daniels	832	41	Teton	03.39
45	Judith Basin	832	42	Treasure	03.27
46	Powder River	812	43	Jefferson	02.50
47	Wheatland	713	44	Fallon	02.37
48	Liberty	698	45	Broadwater	01.88
49	Meagher	648	46	Liberty	01.43
50	Prairie	552	47	Daniels	01.20
51	Carter	535	48	Judith Basin	01.20
52	Wibaux	507	49	Sweet Grass	01.10
53	Garfield	496	50	Chouteau	01.06
54	Golden Valley	331	51	McCone	01.04
55	Treasure	306	52	Madison	00.64
56	Petroleum	219	53	Garfield	00.00
			54	Petroleum	00.00
			55	Powder River	00.00
			56	Prairie	00.00
	Statewide	246,520			

TABLE D LENGTH IN CARE BY STATUS

STATUS

LENGTH	Temporary Hold		Parent Agreement		Permanent Custody		Petition Filed		Temporary TIA Authority		Temporary Custody		Youth Court	
	LOW	HIGH	LOW	HIGH	LOW	HIGH	LOW	HIGH	LOW	HIGH	LOW	HIGH	LOW	HIGH
Co. Type														
1 - 2 Days	100.0 %	85.7 %	15.7	2.1	0.0	0.0	16.7	0.0	13.5	6.1	2.7	1.1	7.7	0.0
3 - 7 Days	0.0	14.3	13.2	10.6	0.0	0.0	16.7	0.0	23.1	9.8	0.0	2.2	7.7	0.0
7 - 30 Days	0.0	0.0	28.1	23.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	1.9	12.2	10.8	4.4	0.0	5.2
30 - 90 Days	0.0	0.0	16.5	18.4	5.0	4.5	0.0	30.0	13.5	22.0	13.5	6.6	15.4	16.2
91 - 180 Days	0.0	0.0	9.1	17.2	5.0	5.6	16.7	10.0	17.3	11.0	2.7	9.9	15.4	29.7
181 - 365 Days	0.0	0.0	12.4	17.1	20.0	7.9	33.3	30.0	17.3	25.7	15.8	28.6	23.1	16.2
1 - 4 Years	0.0	0.0	4.1	9.9	65.0	49.4	16.7	30.0	13.5	12.2	51.4	40.0	23.1	32.4
Over 4 Years	0.0	0.0	0.8	1.4	5.0	32.6	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	4.4	6.6	7.7	0.0
Totals	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%

TABLE II: FOSTER CARE GOAL BY LENGTH IN CARE

Goal	1 - 2 Days		2 - 7 Days		7 - 30 Days		30 - 90 Days		90 - 180 Days		180 - 365 Days		365 + Days	
	LOW	HIGH	LOW	HIGH	LOW	HIGH	LOW	HIGH	LOW	HIGH	LOW	HIGH	LOW	HIGH
Return to Parent	75.7	66.7	83.9	53.6	65.9	45.3	67.6	58.5	71.4	38.7	53.6	45.5	25.6	16.4
To Other Parent	8.1	6.7	3.2	14.3	2.4	5.7	0.0	1.5	7.1	4.8	0.0	1.1	0.0	1.8
Relative	10.8	13.3	0.0	3.6	0.0	5.7	0.0	0.0	7.1	1.6	2.4	2.2	5.7	3.6
Adoption	0.0	6.7	3.2	10.7	24.4	22.6	13.5	21.5	3.6	9.7	7.3	20.0	7.1	18.9
Long-Term Foster Care	0.0	0.0	9.7	7.1	2.4	5.7	2.7	9.2	7.1	22.6	19.5	16.6	44.6	40.8
Independent Living or Emancipation	2.7	0.0	0.0	3.6	2.4	3.8	8.1	4.6	3.6	9.7	12.1	6.7	14.3	10.1
Other	2.7	6.7	0.0	7.7	2.4	11.3	8.1	4.6	0.0	12.9	4.8	7.7	3.6	8.6
Totals	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%

M4/o

PROCEDURE

Two (2) data files were created by writing programs using CULPRIT to access the data tape containing all data base entries. The data file named DBDATA was created by selecting all foster care services provided within the eight (8) counties selected for the time period June 1, 1984 to June 30, 1984. This data file thus contains a record of all services provided. Since a child may have been moved from one foster care placement to another, this file presents a duplicate client count. It was used to calculate total days in care, continuous days in care, number of services per child and reopens, which were then transferred to the client file, and also to calculate average length of stay by service type.

A second file, named PLACDATA was selected from the data base files by county, date and service code as above, but also selected only the most recent service for each client, resulting in an unduplicated client file. After manual addition of total days, continuous days, number of services and reopens to this file, using data from DBDATA, this file was used for the remaining analyses.

Using the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) (Nie, Hull, Jenkins, Steinbrenner and Bent, 1975), a file was prepared to access each data file, defining and naming variables and creating a subfile structure by county. Data selection, definition and modification and data analysis were done using these files.

Frequencies were run from both SPSS files on all discrete variables in order to check the set-up of the data file. Counties were then grouped as high or low placement rate counties and a new variable named PLACELVL created. Crosstabs were run using PLACELVL as the dependent variable with variables age, status, goal, continuous days in care, sex, race and reopens and requesting chi square as a test of significance. Since the information was intended to be somewhat preliminary and to stimulate discussion of differences as well as to document where they existed, a significance of .10 was selected rather than the more rigorous .05 or .01 usually used in social science research. Status, goal, continuous days in care and age all indicate differences significant at levels greater than our pre-determined .10 level.

After grouping the subfiles into high and low placement counties cross tabulations were run on a number of variables. This gave two-way tables controlling for placelevel. Comparisons between high and low placement counties on these variables are based on percentages of total cases rather than number of cases because of the large difference in N for each group. Total cases in the high placement rate counties was 484, in the low placement rate counties, 271.

Service codes indicate the kind of foster care service which is provided, according to the table provided on the CSD-1 (Appendix A). Codes 101 and 103 have been deleted since they do not represent foster care placements, but are additional services, e.g.

clothing. Children are often placed in more than one kind of care during their stay in foster care. For example, a child may be placed in a receiving home for a short period for evaluation and then moved to a foster home. The service codes used here are the codes for the last listed service. In the case noted, the service code will be listed as 102 (current placement) rather than 107 (first placement).

Legal status codes indicate the authority under which a child has been placed in care. They are defined on the reverse side of the CSD-1. Various groupings of the legal status of the children placed are made during the analysis, e.g. they may be grouped according to whether custody has been transferred by a court to an agency of the State (PC, TC, YC) or retained by a parent or guardian (ST, PA, TA, TH). Since a petition for custody (PF) usually results in transfer of custody from the parent, it is included with permanent and temporary custody for some comparisons. Parent agreement and stipulation are often combined since both involve consent by a parent or guardian to the placement.

Early computer runs comparing high and low placement counties left a growing impression that some counties had large numbers of children who had been in care for extended periods. To identify whether this was a significant factor, we calculated each child's length of stay for each service and for total time spent in care. The report was reviewed for accuracy in total days in care, continuous days in care, number of service per case, and cases reopened. These figures were manually added to the file PLACDATA for compari-

son with other variables. Days in care were combined into groups determined by legal, policy, and research considerations, and the grouped data compared with other variables.

RANK ORDER
PLACEMENT RATES BY COUNTY

Per 1000 Children Under 18		Per 1000 Children 12 and Under		Per 1000 Children 13 to 18	
1. Glacier	12.05	1. Glacier	13.15	1. Lincoln	11.39
2. Deer Lodge	10.90	2. Deer Lodge	11.22	2. Sanders	10.99
3. Carter	9.34	3. Carter	9.62	3. Deer Lodge	10.40
4. Lewis & Clark	6.93	4. Cascade	6.41	4. Park	9.94
5. Missoula	6.91	5. Wibaux	6.15	5. Carbon	9.84
6. Lincoln	6.78	6. Missoula	5.99	6. Glacier	9.69
7. Park	6.61	7. Lewis & Clark	5.55	7. Lewis & Clark	9.16
8. Cascade	6.42	8. Silver Bow	5.49	8. Treasure	9.09
9. Yellowstone	6.09	9. Yellowstone	5.41	9. Carter	8.97
10. Silver Bow	5.80	10. Blaine	5.38	10. Powell	8.46
11. Hill	5.65	11. Toole	5.08	11. Stillwater	8.36
12. Custer	5.09	12. Mineral	4.99	12. Custer	8.11
13. Mineral	4.78	13. Park	4.95	13. Missoula	8.10
14. Carbon	4.67	14. Meagher	4.88	14. Phillips	7.99
15. Phillips	4.49	15. Hill	4.63	15. Hill	7.69
16. Toole	4.48	16. Lincoln	4.34	16. Lake	7.47
17. Lake	4.37	17. Roosevelt	3.92	17. Yellowstone	7.39
18. Stillwater	4.14	18. Flathead	3.91	18. Rosebud	7.09
19. Flathead	3.98	19. Beaverhead	3.61	19. Granite	6.87
20. Roosevelt	3.97	20. Custer	3.40	20. Silver Bow	6.35
21. Blaine	3.96	21. Pondera	3.29	21. Cascade	6.07
22. Powell	3.96	22. Gallatin	3.15	22. Broadwater	5.76
23. Wibaux	3.94	23. Lake	2.92	23. Richland	5.67
24. Sanders	3.58	24. Phillips	2.60	24. Sheridan	5.18
25. Beaverhead	3.56	25. Big Horn	2.45	25. Jefferson	4.64
26. Pondera	3.54	26. Fallon	2.35	26. Mineral	4.42
27. Rosebud	3.39	27. Valley	2.15	27. Wheatland	4.42
28. Treasure	3.27	28. Fergus	1.97	28. Big Horn	4.30
29. Meagher	3.09	29. Carbon	1.94	29. Flathead	4.12
30. Big Horn	3.06	30. Judith Basin	1.92	30. Roosevelt	4.08
31. Richland	2.96	31. Rosebud	1.85	31. Pondera	4.05
32. Gallatin	2.78	32. Stillwater	1.83	32. Ravalli	3.76
33. Sheridan	2.58	33. Sweet Grass	1.63	33. Fergus	3.48
34. Fergus	2.53	34. Dawson	1.52	34. Beaverhead	3.45
35. Granite	2.40	35. Powell	1.52	35. Toole	3.32
36. Fallon	2.37	36. Ravalli	1.52	36. Madison	3.16
37. Ravalli	2.34	37. Richland	1.42	37. Teton	2.81
38. Valley	2.00	38. Musselshell	1.07	38. Fallon	2.40
39. Broadwater	1.88	39. Sheridan	1.03	39. Musselshell	2.29
40. Jefferson	1.66	40. Broadwater	0.0	40. Gallatin	2.12
41. Dawson	1.55	41. Chouteau	0.0	41. Valley	1.70
42. Musselshell	1.46	42. Daniels	0.0	42. Dawson	1.60
43. Wheatland	1.40	43. Garfield	0.0	43. Chouteau	1.58
44. Judith Basin	1.20	44. Granite	0.0	44. Blaine	1.17
45. Sweet Grass	1.10	45. Jefferson	0.0	45. Daniels	0.0
46. Madison	1.04	46. Madison	0.0	46. Garfield	0.0
47. Teton	0.92	47. Sanders	0.0	47. Golden Valley	0.0
48. Chouteau	0.53	48. Golden Valley	0.0	48. Judith Basin	0.0
49. Daniels	0.0	49. Liberty	0.0	49. Liberty	0.0
50. Garfield	0.0	50. McCone	0.0	50. McCone	0.0
51. Golden Valley	0.0	51. Petroleum	0.0	51. Meagher	0.0
52. Liberty	0.0	52. Powder River	0.0	52. Petroleum	0.0
53. McCone	0.0	53. Prairie	0.0	53. Powder River	0.0
54. Petroleum	0.0	54. Teton	0.0	54. Prairie	0.0
55. Powder River	0.0	55. Treasure	0.0	55. Sweet Grass	0.0
56. Prairie	0.0	56. Wheatland	0.0	56. Wibaux	0.0

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